

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 681
6 January 1984

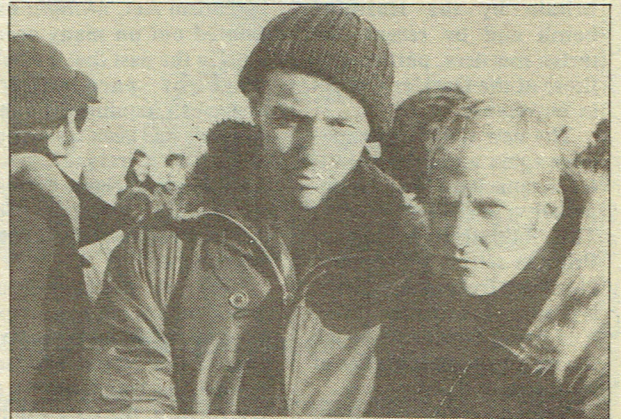
20p

Inside:

Orwell feature—page 7
1984—Time to take on the Tories
—pages 8/9
Nigeria—page 10

After nearly 2 years with no pay rise

Anger in the shipyards



SCUTTLED BY THE TORIES

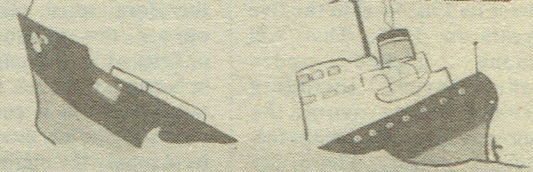


Photo: Mark Pinder

Not just jobs but whole communities are at risk.

WE ARE faced with a national shipbuilding stoppage from Friday 6 January. This strike has been looming large for some time but it must be made clear we have no alternative: strike and win or given in to British shipbuilders.

Our wages are a disgrace. 62% of manual workers receive some form of state support—reflecting our decline from being a well-paid industry to one of the lowest paid work-forces in manufacturing industry.

Two per cent offer

The bosses on the other hand have done very well thank you. British Shipbuilders 1980-81 Annual Report showed seventeen board members received £215,590 during 1980. The 1982-83 Report shows that fourteen members received £398,618 for 1983. Graham Day gets £80,000 a year. "Tighten your belts lads, while we live on your fat", is their motto.

We have been offered £7.00 a week rise. If we took this it would mean that over the 1983-84 agreement year we would be receiving a 2% wage increase.

Casual labour

Even this £7 is conditional on us accepting full interchangeability which will threaten thousands more jobs. Acceptance will also mean an end to the 1969 Blackpool Agreement which gave us secure and continuous employment for the first time.

This misnamed survival package will mean the re-introduction of a casual

labour force, the boss will hand-pick the men he wants. A recipe for black-listing activists.

Our leadership should make clear to British Ship-

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

builders that we will not accept any erosion of working conditions. Since nationalisation we have given enough. Now our turn has to come. We need a substantial

wage increase, now, with no strings attached.

Management are threatening us with the loss of orders if we strike. What lost orders? Last year our shipyard built five SD14s. This year we will launch three if we are lucky. Yet we have the capacity to build twenty SD14s a year. The orders have long gone. They

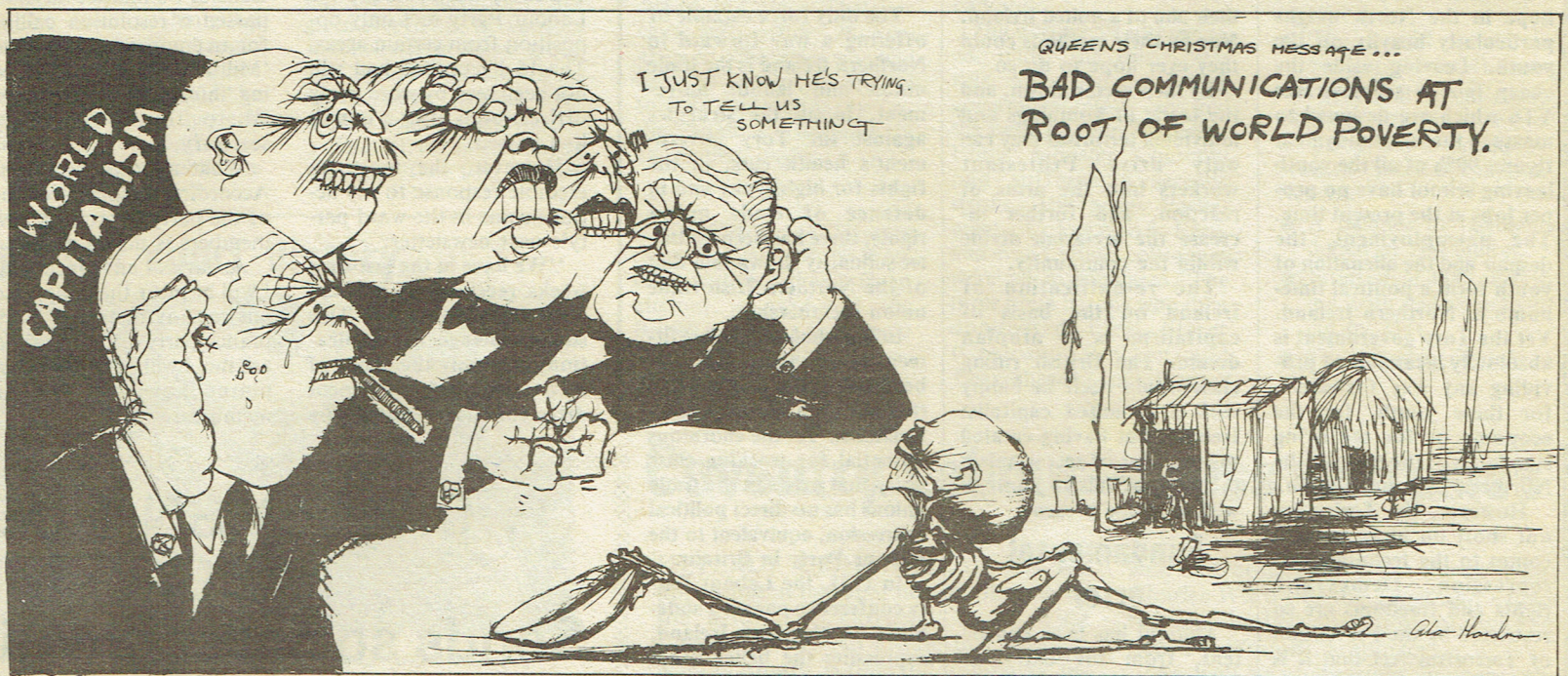
can only come back by reversing government policy. This can only be done by achieving an outright victory.

In the past our leadership has backed off from all-out confrontation. Now they must be prepared to lead. Once we are on strike the leadership should not accept any deals until they are ratified by mass meetings

and then by the full SNC (Shipbuilding Negotiation Committee), which includes lay delegates.

Victory is possible. Victory is the only way to save the shipbuilding industry. It can only be achieved by the full involvement of all shipyard workers.

(See reports page 15)



Urgent—deadline January 10th for your donations

NINETEEN eighty-three has confirmed that as long as capitalism survives, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

Profits soar while the factories close and the wages of the lowest paid are attacked on all fronts. On the eve of Christmas, thousands of homeless queued for soup and shelter.

On Boxing Day, Thatcher gave a lunch party which included on the menu, avocado with grapefruit and cottage cheese, salmon, rib of beef, gammon on the bone, venison casserole, navarine of lamb, sherry trifle and mince pies with brandy butter!

In the first few days of 1984 another gruesome statistic comes to light; children of the long-term unemployed are found to be

physically smaller than those whose parents are in full time work. Further proof that deprivation literally stunts the development of the human being!

Week by week, *Militant* exposes and explains such gross injustices and inequalities, not to sigh and to weep, but to agitate and organise. but, as the instances increase and the anger of the movement erupts, we need a Marxist

paper every day! None of the Fleet Street press is suddenly going to be converted to putting the workers' case—they'd lose all their advertising and all their loot!

To take the first steps towards a more frequent paper in 1984, *Militant* must reach its Fighting Fund target of £100,000 in six months. The deadline has been extended by a couple of days to Tuesday 10 January (see page 4) but it still means

straining every muscle for bumper donations and rushing them in!

Militant supporters are also being implored to make huge sacrifices for the acquisition of a building in which a Marxist daily could be produced. The raising of one-quarter of a million pounds in just over six months would be a fitting

Continued on back page

Militant

Northern Ireland: Labour must combat sectarianism

THE CHRISTMAS bombing at Harrods and the sectarian killings at end of 1983 inevitably raise in the minds of socialists the question of the future of Northern Ireland and, more immediately, the prospects for 1984. Workers in the North—both Catholic and Protestant—have been no less appalled than those in Britain by the Harrods' bomb and by recent sectarian murders, particularly those at the Darkley Chapel in November.

The new spate of killings once again underline the utter incapacity of British imperialism to resolve the issue. The 'initiative' of James Prior in setting up the new Northern Ireland Assembly, is hanging in tatters now that it is being boycotted by all the major political parties of Northern Ireland.

The economic situation, already worse than any part of Britain, looks like worsening in the next few years. The *Irish Banking Review* has predicted that unemployment will rise by nearly 20% over its 1982 level in the five years to 1987. That will mean 22,000 more unemployed, including 19,000 more from the already devastated manufacturing sector. There are already twice as many unemployed as there are working in manufacturing!

Youth on the dole

The experience of Northern Ireland is convincing proof that all the bribes and 'incentives' to big business to invest in the so-called development areas have failed. Two-thirds of all the jobs created by grants since 1945 have disappeared.

The lack of any economic hope in the North weighs particularly heavily on the youth. Leaving aside the cheap labour schemes like YTS which are designed to massage the unemployment figures 90% of all the youth leaving school have no proper jobs at the present time. The unemployment, the despair and the alienation of youth form a political time-bomb in Northern Ireland. Yet the Tory government is absolutely incapable of providing any way forward—for these youth, for the economy or for the living standards of the mass of the Northern Irish population.

However, the Tories are not short on ideas when it comes to the techniques of repression. Democratic rights and freedoms are so restricted by the Prevention of Terrorism Act that it is now commonplace for trade union activists and socialists to be regularly picked up and detained for hours without reason. The Act, ostensibly introduced to combat 'terrorism', has become a weapon for the daily harassment of workers who, as the army and the RUC are well aware, are activists in the labour movement but have nothing to do with the sectarian or paramilitary organisations.

Internment without trial may have been formally ended but many workers are bitterly opposed to the new methods of convictions by so-called 'super-grasses',

which amount to legalised internment. By this method, convictions are generally obtained in private, without any real evidence except the word of a paid informer.

The labour movement in Britain cannot ignore the threats posed by the curtailment of democratic rights and the use in Ireland of acts such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act. *Militant* has pointed out on many occasions in the past that a whole range of para-military weapons, equipment and methods has been tested out in Northern Ireland by the British ruling class, for use on the British mainland in the future against the labour movement.

Tens of thousands of plastic bullets are now stockpiled by police forces in Britain. After their baptism against the trade unions at Warrington, the state will be more prepared than ever to use special police units, with riot shields and riot equipment, against British workers in 1984.

The labour movement, therefore, must vigorously oppose the methods and policies of British capitalism in Northern Ireland. But that must be from a consistent class standpoint, one that rejects totally the methods and policies of the sectarian paramilitary organisations.

The Christmas bombing campaign has re-emphasised the absolute failure of the IRA/INLA policy to achieve any political or economic progress whatsoever for Irish workers. The methods of the Provisionals and the INLA have nothing in common with those of the labour movement, and, despite a frequent veneer of radicalism or socialism, they make no attempt whatsoever to win Protestant workers to their aim of a united Ireland. Nor by their methods could they ever hope to do so.

By their sectarianism, and the tactic of bombings and individual terrorism they can only drive Protestant workers into the arms of reaction, and further increase the sectarian divide within the community.

The re-unification of Ireland on the basis of capitalism is a utopian dream. The British ruling class would itself be happy with a re-united capitalist Ireland, but having created the monster of sectarianism in the past, has to contend with it in the present.

Fundamental error

Militant has been consistent, from the entry of British troops in 1969, in arguing for their withdrawal, but at the same time explaining that this could only be achieved by the unity of the working class, fighting for socialist change and at the same time creating organisations to protect workers from sectarian attacks.

The Provisionals and the INLA make a fundamental error in believing their bombing campaigns can succeed in driving British troops out of the North. What could be achieved under certain circumstances, would not be the removal of the border but a sectarian civil war that would re-partition Ireland

with a three-county instead of a six-county sectarian statelet.

The kind of monstrous slaughter seen in Lebanon during its bloody dismemberment in the last eight years would be the only result of civil war. Such a development would mean a serious set-back for the working class, leading to the split of the trade unions on religious lines, massive movements of refugee populations and new sectarian ghettos that would be a breeding ground for ultra-sectarian terrorist groups.

Trade union activists

Given the sectarianism of the various para-militaries and their political front organisations, it is all the more disgraceful that they should be courted by sections of the left of the Labour Party. It is a scandal that so-called "fact-finding" tours by Labour lefts should be based upon self-declared "nationalist" (in this context, *sectarian*) parties while at the same time the heroic efforts of trade union activists, fighting for workers' unity, are disregarded.

The vital struggles of the trade union movement—the class organisations of working people—are a closed book to the sectarian bombers. Nothing better demonstrates that than the bomb, defused days before the Harrods' explosion, which was set to go off on 14 December, on the NGA Day of Action, when a potential general strike was in the air.

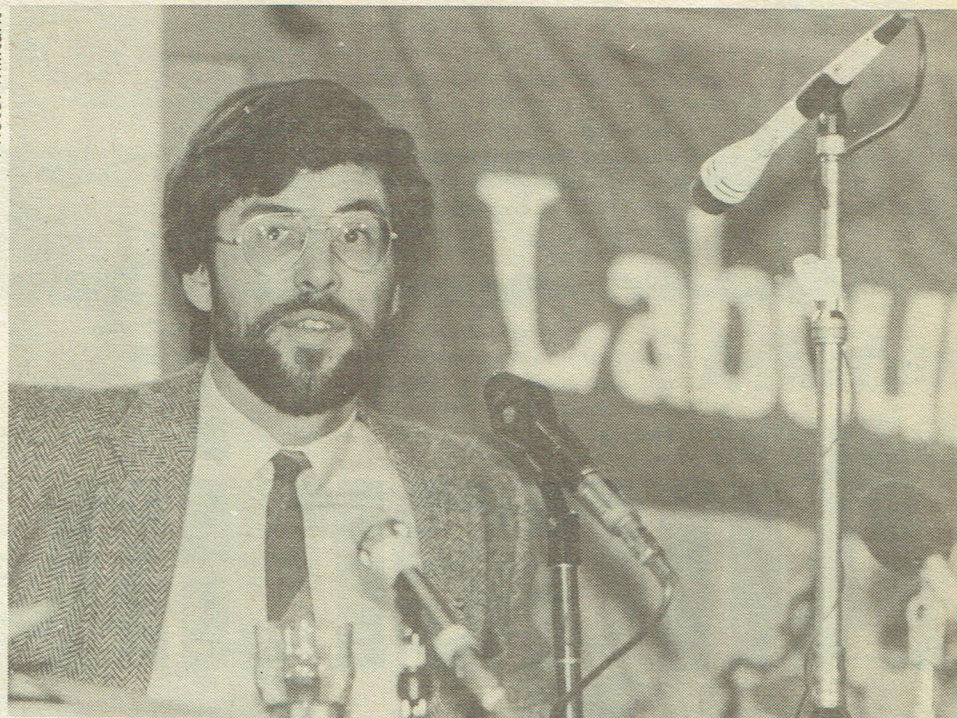
Labour Party needed

The only force capable of offering a way forward in Northern Ireland is the trade union and labour movement. In all the struggles against the Tory government's health cuts, in the fights for higher pay and in defence of trade union rights, there has been no better solidarity shown than that of the Northern Irish trade union membership.

In the whole of the last fifteen years, there has not been one trade union strike that has been broken by sectarianism. Yet the enormous potential for working class unity that exists in the trade unions has no direct political expression, equivalent to the Labour Party in Britain.

In 1981, the Labour Party conference passed a statement on Northern Ireland, expressing the belief "that interested trade unions in Northern Ireland should support a conference of trade unions, trades councils, shop stewards' committees and other labour movement organisations in Northern Ireland to discuss whether it is possible to form (such) a Labour Party."

If the Labour Party were to take up this issue, largely ignored to date, there could be a big echo for the formation of a genuine party of labour in the North. No better case exists for socialist arguments, for the programme of fundamental social change, than the decay and disintegration of the



Gerry Adams MP, speaking at a fringe meeting at 1983 Labour Party conference.

economy and social fabric of Northern Ireland.

Living in the shadow of sectarian politics for so many years, the mass of workers there would respond magnificently to a bold, authoritative labour move-

ment lead for social change. There is no mass basis, even despite recent killings, for sectarian para-militaries.

In the new year, therefore, the Labour Party in Britain can and must play a significant part in helping Nor-

thern Irish workers come together in common struggle for socialist change. Labour's New Year resolution for 1984 must be the implementation of its conference resolution of 1981.

Latest *Militant* 'crime' — recruiting Labour Party members

DURING THE summer I moved home within my constituency of Thanet North, which meant transferring into a new ward Labour Party branch.

Since the move, I helped recruit over 20 people to the Labour Party, which included 15 into my new branch, Park ward.

But my work to build the Labour Party met only opposition from certain areas. The 15 I recruited had still not been seen by ward party officers even after a month had passed.

However, the most incredible response to my actions came in the ward party's next newsletter:

"We have in the last four weeks received 15 applications for membership. This sudden deluge of applications is mainly the result of an unauthorised recruitment drive conducted and led by

a local *Militant* Barry Lewis. Barry has recently moved into our area. I am sure Barry will explain his actions and allay fears expressed by some members that this sudden *Militant* inspired recruitment is not a naked *Militant* attempt to take over Park branch."

The Constituency party's General Committee has now passed a resolution calling for an enquiry into the local 'Militant tendency' following 'information' being passed to the constituency secretary.

What a state of affairs! According to some sections of the party, recruiting new members is now a crime.

As far as I am concerned, I will be more than happy to answer any questions Park branch party officers wish to ask me. I will be happy to explain how to recruit members!

In the meantime perhaps they can explain to me how a ward party, covering a massive council estate, can be 'taken over' by a few new members? Why has the ward not held regular meetings in 1983? How many members am I allowed to join up in a month before the party is 'full up'?

All of us should be fighting the Tories, not new members.

By Barry Lewis

Margate
Militant Readers' Meeting
Monday 23 January 1984
7.30 pm

Venue: Dane Valley Arms,
Dane Valley Road, Margate
Speakers:

Steve Morgan
(LPYS rep on Labour's NEC)
& Cllr. Mike Harrison

CAMPAIGN GROUP OF LABOUR MPs

Sends socialist greetings to all in the labour and trade union movement and their families for 1984 and calls for the fullest political and industrial support for all trade unions facing anti-union legislation.

Chair: J Maynard MP

Sec: Alan Meale

Treasurer: Bob Clay MP

Happy New Year?

It may be the start of a new year, but as these news items that readers may have missed over Christmas show, there's no let-up in the inequality and hypocrisy of capitalist society.

EVEN THOUGH it's the first week of January, it's going to be difficult to beat the recent remarks of the Duke of Edinburgh as the silliest statement of the year. In an attempt to justify his hobby of blood sports, Prince Phillip said: "If you are involved in any kind of hunting operation on a sensible scale the hunter is the only person who wants that specie to survive."

When His Royal Highness is not busy killing animals for fun, he spends his spare time as President of the World Wildlife Fund.

TO HERALD 1984 virtually every paper carried articles showing why such a totalitarian society had not come about. Almost all of them wrongly interpreted Orwell's book as prophecy, rather than as a warning. All of them saw the book as an attack on Communism, rather than, as Orwell intended, an indictment of both Stalinism and Fascism.

Silliest of all the coverage was of course the *Sun* with their "20 things you never knew about Orwell"—and wouldn't want to; it was as inaccurate as a *Sun* "Exclusive". They even tried to imply that if Orwell was alive today he would have been a

strong supporter of Thatcher!

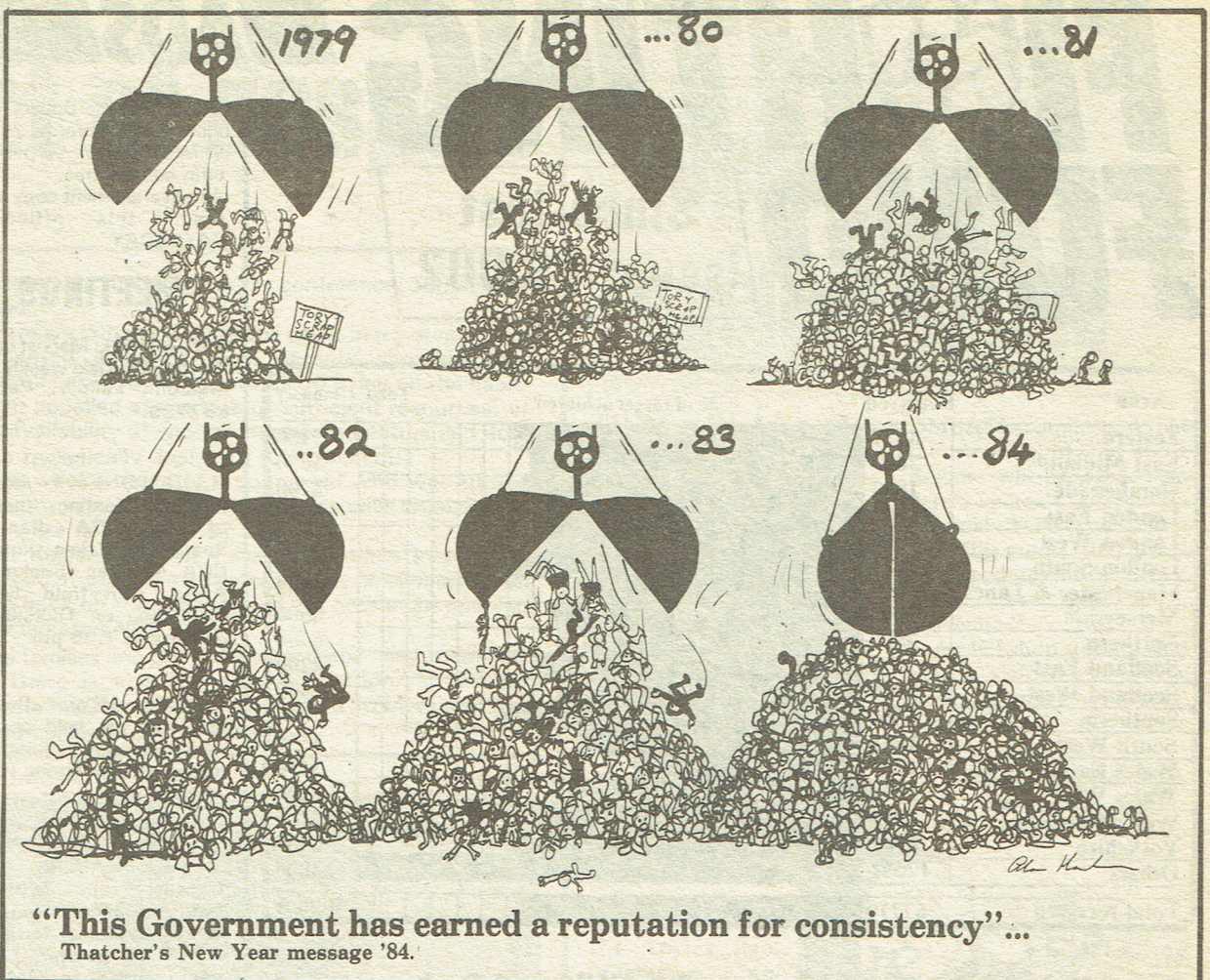
But perhaps the prize for most accurately capturing the 'Newspeak' of 1984 goes to the *Sun*'s stable-mate, *The Times*. It previewed BBC's programme (2 January) *Homage to Catalonia* as; "Orwell decides to go to Spain and fight the Communists".

THE FAR East 'good-will' tour by HMS *Invincible* is turning into a mini-disaster. The Navy faced protests in Australia and cancellation of a visit to Japan, because they refused to say if the ship carried nuclear weaponry.

Now they are facing a revolt of the crew. In New Zealand a dozen crewmen went to the *Auckland Star* newspaper to complain about conditions and discipline. Their complaints have been echoed by a letter from a crewman, published in the *Daily Star*, (2 January).

He says sailors are furious at being treated like skivvies by the officers.

"We have to hang up coats, clean out the hangar for them to have their parties, open doors and be humiliated at what they call guardrail station standing, to cordon off guests while the



band plays. To think we are specialists and it's us who make the ship run, makes us all sick".

Now we know why Prince Andrew enjoyed his stay on the *Invincible* so much.

ALTHOUGH THE Committee on Safety of Medicines has reported that two pain-killing arthritis drugs have been linked to the deaths of 573 people in Britain the government is still refusing to ban the drugs.

The report, published 29 December, was about the drugs Butazolidin and Tanderil made by the Swiss multi-national company Ciba-Geigy. For some years now doctors have been warned in product information sheets that the drugs have been linked with gastrointestinal intolerance and blood disorders. About one million prescriptions are given every year. In America a consumer pressure group has stated that the drugs could have caused over 10,000 deaths worldwide.

The firm is resisting demands that two of their

more profitable products be removed from the market. And Health Minister Kenneth Clarke has insisted that the drugs should continue to be available until a further report from a DHSS safety committee is drawn up.

IF PEERAGES are good enough for the monkeys, then why not for the organ-grinder himself. That seems to be the logic of Thatcher's New Year's Honours List. Tory Treasurer Alistair McAlpine has been given a peerage for raising record amounts for party coffers.

'Lord McAlpine' on the letter-head will not exactly discourage other businessmen coughing up for the cause—and an honour. Last month the Labour Research Department revealed that of the 41 peerages or knighthoods dished out since Thatcher came into office, 28 were given to companies who had donated over £2.75 million to Tory Party funds (for further details see *Militant*, 18 December, 1983).

CHRISTMAS CAME only three days late for the West German firm Allianz. In an attempt to take-over the British insurance firm Eagle Star, they had, in October, purchased 30% of its shares.

When their rivals for the take over, BAT, upped its offer to £7 a share, Allianz decided to sell out.

Their two-month profit on just buying and selling shares was a cool £163 million.

The Stock Exchange is in the same health district as Hackney. And for people there it was not such a merry Christmas. Two weeks before Allianz's windfall, the Health Authority announced the closure of four of the borough's hospitals. The cost of keeping them open—just over £1 million.

THE PRESS is full of speculation about the health and safety or otherwise, of Russian leader Andropov. And how scandalous it is that Soviet citizens are denied reports about his condition.

But documents just released, under the thirty year rule, show that the British government totally censored the news in June 1953, that Prime Minister Churchill had suffered a serious stroke. The press, Parliament, Conservative Party and even Cabinet colleagues were all manipulated. The three press barons who then dominated Fleet Street (Camrose, Bracken and Beaverbrook) all insisted

that no mention must be made of a stroke so the 'free press' of Britain refused to tell its readers about the health of its own leader.

IN BEYOND 1984, BBC 2, on New Year's Day, the programme looked at predictions for British society. Two alternative economic variants were run through the Cambridge Economic Growth Model, which both gave a grim outlook for the next seven or so years.

Variant one—this assumed that unemployment would stay at present levels with only a 1% growth in the economy possible.

Results were:

- Wage levels 7% lower than present.
- Inflation at 20% and rising.
- The pound would be worth just over 41 cents.

The second variant assumed the government attempted to bring down unemployment to "just" one million. Results:

- A balance of payments deficit of £60 billion.
- Inflation at 43% and rising, with real wage levels cut by 25%.
- The pound worth only 15 cents.

Newham Eight—partial court victory



Angry pickets outside the Newham 8 trial at the Old Bailey.

Photo: Andrew Moore

JUBILATION amongst East London Asian youth greeted news that charges against four of the Newham Eight have been dropped.

The remaining four have been charged with 'causing an affray', with Dalbir Johal, a member of Newham North East Labour Party, also being charged with common assault. These are far lesser charges than the original charge of 'conspiracy', although this has not been dropped by the court but 'set aside'.

This partial victory

follows an extensive campaign by Asian youth around the Newham 8 Defence Committee, with support from the labour movement in Newham, East London.

The eight were arrested when they came to the defence of the Little Ilford school in East Ham where Asian school children had been repeatedly attacked by racists.

The four have yet to be sentenced and the Defence Campaign are to call a protest outside the court on the day of sentencing.

Summing up the trial, the

judge called for 'racial harmony' in Newham. But as the Defence Campaign commented, the judge must be living in "cloud cuckoo land" if he thinks racism will simply evaporate. To emphasise their point, over the Christmas period two black youths were attacked by racists in Newham.

The Defence Campaign say as far as they are concerned, Asian youth will still defend themselves if they come under attack from racist groups.

By Mark Avis
(Newham NW LPYS)

Coventry Labour—press fantasies

UTTERLY DISHONEST reports are appearing in national newspapers about the affairs of Coventry South East Labour Party. An article in the *Daily Mail* (January 3) referred to a party enquiry that has taken place into the membership of the Coventry South East's St Michaels ward—although the *Mail* couldn't even manage to get the ward's name right.

Although it was right wingers who were accused of forging party membership applications, the *Mail* implied that *Militant* supporters had done so, and they tried to smear Coventry South East MP Dave Nellist by association.

Not to be outdone in contempt for the truth, the *Daily Telegraph* carried a report on 4 January which accused *Militant* supporters of "harassing Asians into joining the Labour Party"! Right wing officers of St Michael's, Joan McCoy and Charles Ward, were quoted in the *Mail* as defending their member-

ship as "bona fide". Yet the next day Charles Ward was the *Telegraph's* main 'witness' in their allegations of malpractices by *Militant* supporters.

As well as these right wingers, the constituency's membership secretary James Falconer—who imagines he is on the left—was quoted in both papers giving them internal party information which predictably the press distorted to their own ends.

Party members are appalled at this behaviour by individuals who failed to pull their weight during the election in trying to get our MP elected, and who have attacked the party's election campaign—yet they can find the energy to provide the Tory press with ammunition to attack Coventry South East Constituency Labour Party and the *Militant*.

By John Mutton
(Vice Chairman,
Coventry South East CLP)

FIGHTING FUND ADS

Since last issue: £8,002

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Total 7 January
Eastern	3577		5150
East Midlands	3009		5050
Humberside	1812		2700
London East	3903		6350
London West	2346		3650
London South	3921		5650
Manchester & Lancs	3603		6350
Merseyside	3993		6500
Northern	3500		6400
Scotland East	2710		4200
Scotland West	2948		4900
Southern	5306		7600
South West	1988		3550
Wales East	1559		3450
Wales West	2577		4200
West Midlands	3555		5700
Yorkshire	4742		6600
Others	12661		12000
Total received	67710		100000

Deadline 10 January. . . Deadline 10 January

DON'T DELAY — £33,000 NEEDED

SINCE THE last issue of *Militant* we have received over £8,000 towards our target of £100,000 by 7 January. This leaves just one week to raise £33,000.

1983 was a year of tremendous achievement for *Militant* with enormous growth in support for the ideas of Marxism. In 1984 we have to ensure that we carry on building on the gains already made. This means providing the finances to enable the paper to put across the workers' arguments in the face of continued attacks from the Thatcher government.

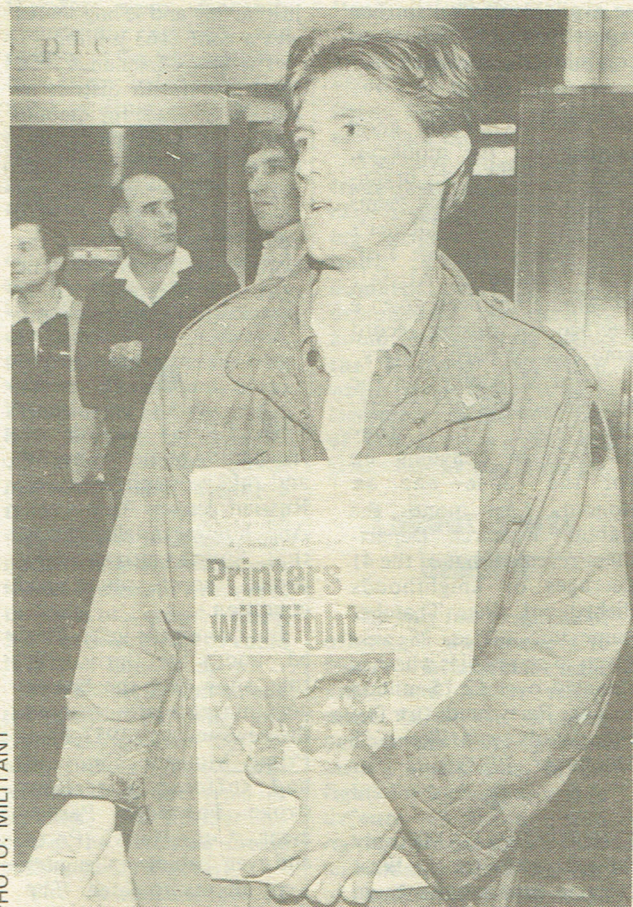
We need the support of all our readers. **Do not delay!** Send in your contributions immediately. Make your New Year's resolution to give a regular donation to *Militant* to help in the fight for socialism.

We could see over Christmas that the seasonal goodwill did not extend to Thatcher and the Tories. No new jobs, no new hospital wards, no pay increases for the low paid, no new accommodation for the homeless.

All we got from the Tories was cold comfort. We can guarantee that 1984 will bring more of the same. The Tories are going to be as determined as before to hit working class living standards. Our answer has to be more determined in the fightback.

Show your determination by backing the paper which backs the working class. If you guarantee the finance we will guarantee the Marxist way forward.

We start the New Year with some tremendous examples of the support given by our readers. W and M Spams (West London) and D Conway (Newham) made donations of £50. D Etheridge (Ipswich CLP), Andrew Ebdon (West Wales) and an anonymous reader in Alloa gave £20 each. £15 came from J Patterson (Luton) and M Dunn (Blackpool). Tony Gill (Leeds) gave £14, J Mahoney (Milton Keynes) £12 and Tony Martin (Birmingham NUT) £11.60. K Hardisty



Militant seller in Fleet Street during the NGA dispute. Help us counter Tory press lies.

(Hull) and J Barlow (West Wales NUS) both gave £10.

What we need this week is for each of our readers to follow their example and send us a New Year's tenner. Start 1984 with a huge success by getting us near our £100,000 goal.

If you cannot afford a tenner after the expense of Christmas then copy the following who each gave £5; Dave Morris (Nottingham NUS), Tracey Comper (Barking NALGO), Diana Gardiner (Tuebrook), John McKean (Perth ASTMS), Isobel Wilson (Rutherglen NALGO), Harry Dowsett (Sittingbourne) and S Wright (East Kilbride USDAW).

Other welcome contributions over the Christmas period were M and P Cottam (Preston) £4, Brenda Scott (Mid Lothian) £3.50, M Roos (Glasgow University Labour Club) £3, T Parkinson (Gedling TGWU) £2, Paul Reynolds (Oxford, unemployed) £2. Atul (FE student, Leicester) £1, Vince

Duffy (unemployed, Leicester) 80p, Lindsey Studd (New Waltham) £1, Alan Barrow (Manor Ward LP Sheffield) £1, Keith Simmons (Mossley Hill LPYS) 60p and Anne Godley (single parent, Kent) 25p.

We have also received large collections from appeal sheets in various areas. These should be used in every workplace and estate in the next week. Money has come in from various socials up and down the country where our readers have been enjoying the festive season. Any cash still to be dispatched should be sent straight away.

We have extended the deadline for accrediting money to the Fighting Fund to Tuesday 10 January so any money received by then will be counted. Make sure your area meets its target. Put us on the road to a daily paper.

By Nick Wrack

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

MEETINGS

HARTLEPOOL: Marxist discussion groups. Held weekly. Ring Malcolm Fallow, Peterlee 867789.

MAIDSTONE: *Militant* Readers' Meeting. "Lessons of the NGA dispute". Speakers: Wayne Jones + NGA speaker. Brickmakers Arms, Perryfield Street, Maidstone on Thursday 12 January at 7.30 pm.

THANET: *Militant* Readers' Meetings are held on alternative Monday evenings. For further details phone (0843) 291293.

FOR HANDICAPPED READERS

Cassette tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year. Write to: 'Militant Tapes', 26 Aston Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8, or phone (0527) 73795.

CALLING ALL Marxist athletes. Have you past the finishing post for your pledge for the Building Fund? No? Then start training for the *Militant* Marathon! Join this fund raising event to be held in early spring. Contact Paul Henry, c/o 10 Kensington Road, Chorlton, Manchester.



Get your 1984 poster calendar £1.00 including postage and packing from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN.

SELF CONTAINED two-bedroomed flat in Acton, West London. Available from mid-January. Close to bus and tube. Low rent—would suit two to four *Militant* supporters. Phone 01-749 7903 evenings.

ROOM IN shared flat. £15pw + bills in Forest Gate, London E7. Phone Jane on 01 552 3204.

"*Militant* Turn left for workers unity and socialism"

T-shirts—£3.50-white, yellow, navy black.

Sweatshirts—£6.75—grey, pale-blue, navy, dark green.

Small 32"-34" chest
medium 34"-36"
large 36"-38"
extra large 40-42"

All proceeds to *Militant* Fighting Fund. All cheques and postal orders with size and colour preference to R. Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancs.

New Years Greeting from BETHNAL GREEN & STEPNEY LPYS to all socialists

WIMBLEDON LPYS send fraternal greetings to the labour movement Fight for a Labour government in 1984

New Years Greeting "Hurry, hurry, tell Len Murray, Tolpuddle Martyrs: Yes Sell out artists: No Poplar Militant Supporters

New Year greetings from Militant supporters in Lambeth, Vauxhall

MILITANT STICKERS. Still available. 200 for £2.30; 500 for £5.60; 1,000 for £11.00. Contact: 'Militant Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

BIKE FOR sale. Raleigh RFW 3, small wheeled model. Needs new tyres, hence £25 ONO. Buyer to collect. All proceeds to the Building Fund. Ring Iain, 01-689 4690.

BOLSHEVIK Poster Calendars. Send 50p (includes p&tp) to S. Davies, 2 Keswick Avenue, Roath Park, Cardiff. All proceeds to Fighting fund.

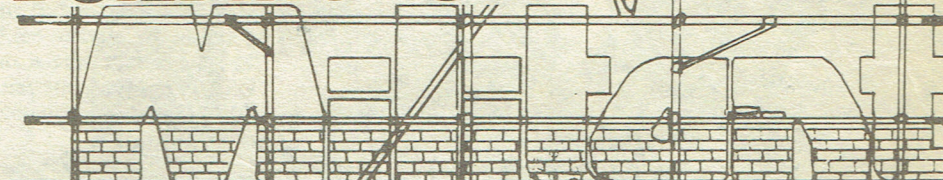
FOOTBALL programmes bought—Any quantity. Excellent way of raising money for fighting fund/Building Fund. Contact: M. Ingram, 206 Honeysuckle Rd, Southampton, Hampshire. Or ring (0703) 551420.

BROADGREEN LPYS send New Year greetings. Kick out the Tories in 1984. Forward to socialism.

BOW & POPLAR LPYS send New Year greetings to Militant For a fighting, socialist labour movement

Isle of Wight Militant Supporters wish all readers of Militant a Happy New Year. Forward to socialism in 1984.

BUILDING FUND



THE BOSSES' economists are all crowing in their New Year reports of recovery and prosperity.

Yet, in the year the daughter of a grocer was returned for a second term as Prime Minister, there was a record number of business failures in Britain—12,466. Of these over 3,000 were retailers!

What is bad news for the small businessman ironically confirms the predictions of Karl Marx whose Centenary was celebrated last year. The battle for the future of society will be fought out between the giant monopolies and the massed ranks of the army of labour with the middle layers being forced into one or other of the two "Great Camps".

For Marxists and the army of Labour, the first task is to

arm ourselves for the battles ahead with the facts, figures and arguments not available in the bosses' press. 1984 must see concrete preparations for a Marxist Daily and the first step is to find £150,000 for the Marxist Daily Building fund by the end of January.

So far we have promises of more than £100,000 and £25,000 in the bank. What better way to show your resolve to step up the fight for socialism in 1984 than to pay a grand lump sum to this **Fund Right Now**.

If you have to wait till the end of January before you can muster the cash, at least make sure we know what

you are going to contribute by filling in the form below. In the last week of 1983 we received a flabbergasting sum of £2,000 from one *Militant* supporter. We have also received equivalent sacrifices on the part of low-paid and unemployed workers, housewives, school students, etc.

Once we get enough in the bank, there should be no shortage of suitable premises; HALF the firms that went bust last year were in London and the South East!

If you want to see an end to the rule of Thatcher and of her big business backers, send us your cash!

I/We promise/enclose £. . . . for the Marxist Daily Building Fund. To be sent c/o 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Heroin - a product of despair

"WE'VE GOT to stop heroin getting into the country. The government turns a blind eye and it's our people who are getting killed".

These are the words of one parent whose 15-year old son died from heroin. She was speaking at a special conference convened by Terry Fields, Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, to discuss the alarming levels of heroin addiction on Merseyside.

On the same day it was reported that an 11-year old girl had experimented with heroin introduced to her by her 13-year old sister. The drugs are currently being sold freely on the streets and the pubs, and even in the schools. Heroin has reached epidemic proportions on Merseyside.

Yet there is a sparse lack of resources made available by the government to treat addicts, or tackle the problems that cause addiction.

As many parents pointed out, it's mainly young people who are affected, particularly the unemployed as they have nothing to do and nothing to look forward to.

Drug pushers live off human misery. They give heroin free at first to encourage more users, then once the victim is hooked they move in.

20,000 addicts in Britain

Many young people spend as much as £45 a day on drugs and therefore have to beg, steal or turn to prostitution in order to pay for the drugs.

Dr Robinson, of the Socialist Health Association, told the meeting that the number of people addicted to heroin in Britain today is now over 20,000. This marks a 25% increase on the figure since 1981.

"The reason people turn to drugs," Dr Robinson said, was because "they try to

By Josie Aitman

cope with life today, with its increasing pressures particularly on young women. Drug addiction as a whole is linked with the conditions people have to live in."

Dave San, a trade union official for CPSA Customs and Excise, described the massive increase of drugs coming into the country. No heroin is known to be manufactured here therefore it has to be imported.

Cuts aid pushers

Despite trade union warnings to the government, the customs services have been enormously weakened over the recent period. Between 1979 and 1984 one thousand jobs in the department that deals with drugs have been lost. In Liverpool only five customs officers deal with drugs which is totally inadequate. The government should put emphasis on stopping the drugs entering the country.

Many people at the conference had something that had happened to members of their own family. The problems of life all over Merseyside were linked with the dire social conditions, and the little hope for the future brought about by the policies of the Tory government.

Terry Fields stated that this is just the start of the campaign to fight heroin addiction and the problems that cause it; "We've got to have treatment centres immediately and adequate customs control. More important than that is to take the lessons out from this meeting and to make sure that people on Merseyside won't sit back and allow the youth to be destroyed."

IN A statement made before the conference, Terry Fields MP said:

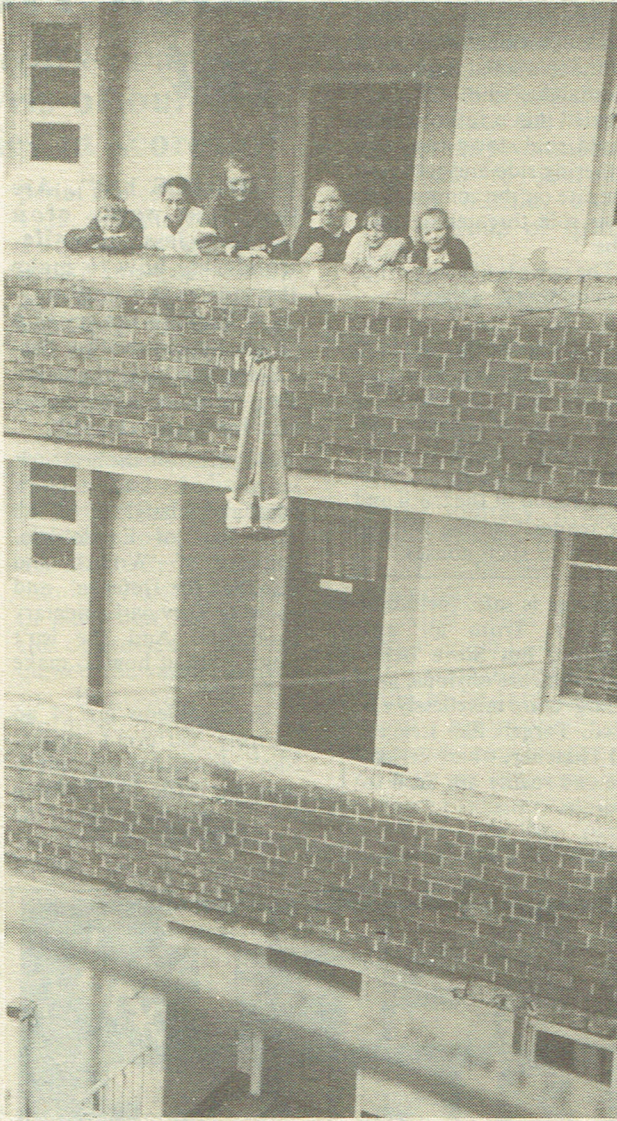
"There are hundreds of serious cases in my area. I have documented evidence from parents showing that youngsters are spending up to £200 a day on the habit. "I am appalled at the lack of sufficient resources, or of the availability of enough treatment centres and doctors to realistically deal with this problem.

"Last week I heard of a young girl who was turned away from several hospitals or clinics who either refused, or were unable, to help her.

"The dealers and the pushers continue largely unchallenged. If caught, many receive only small fines. Then they're back on the streets, and are now even pushing black marketed NHS drugs."

"The families and the victims are demanding treatment now. There is a crying need for action. These are desperate people trying to cope with a problem that has reached epidemic proportions."

Photo: Militant.



Youngsters in Liverpool's slums—easy prey for the pushers.

Unions fight nuclear waste

TORY PLANS to dump nuclear waste in the Billingham area were described by one worker "like a two-year old kid playing with a chemistry set".

This comment came at a well-attended meeting called by the local LPYS branch. The speakers pointed out that the Tories and the appointed company Nirex, plan to dump nuclear waste under the largest centre for the petro-chemical industry in Europe. It was said the Tories had created an economic wasteland of mass unemployment in the Cleveland area—now they wanted to create a nuclear wasteland.

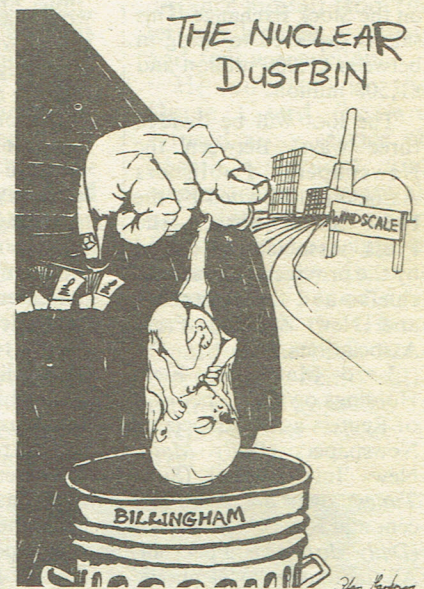
However, judging from the mood of the meeting, workers will fight the Tory plans. For years they have put up with the pollution from heavy industry, but now the Tories have gone too far. As one 65-year old housewife said, "I had to rewash clothes which never had time to dry on the line because of the black smoke coming from ICI chimneys across the street. Then we had to move to make way for a factory which has yet to be built. Now they want to poison and blow me up!"

Union Campaign

The difference with this campaign is that it has begun to be linked to the labour and trade union movement. Shop stewards from the TGWU, NUR and

GMBATU emphasised that the strength of the trade unions will be needed to defeat Nirex's plans. As regional TGWU secretary Joe Mills put it, "If TGWU workers don't move nuclear waste, the matter is academic."

An ICI shop steward said that a victory over Nirex would strengthen workers' confidence to win other



disputes—"We can fight and beat Nirex; after that nobody is too big for us."

There are some who claim that such a campaign should be non-political. The fact that after the meeting, eight people joined the Labour Party answers that claim.

Also, this is not just a local campaign to get the nuclear waste dumped elsewhere, and put the problem onto other workers' shoulders. It can be dumped at No. 10 Downing Street or nowhere!

By Phil Umpleby
(Stockton South CLP)

Youth exploitation

LOCAL LABOUR Party Young Socialists' branches in Huddersfield were horrified to hear about working conditions in the town's newest and most modern fashion shop, Jeanery.

Although young workers at the store are supposed to earn £35 for a 37-hour week, most workers in fact work over 40 hours for this pitiful wage. They stay on to clear up and shift stock with no overtime pay, and breaks and lunchtime are unpaid.

No facilities

Clearly Jeanery bosses are exploiting young, unorganised workers. What also angered comrades was that whilst Jeanery is an impressive sight with flashing lights and music, facilities for staff are non-existent. There are not even chairs for the staff room.

These conditions are typical of those faced by young shopworkers. Firms spend terrific amounts making their goods look attrac-

tive to consumers, yet neglect and exploit their own workforce.

At Jeanery, three out of the 15 young workers have left because of their treatment, and another, an LPYS member who was in the process of unionising the workforce, was dismissed from work and her post immediately replaced.

This is a problem these workers face—if they complain or try to fight back, they are out the door and replaced from the massive pool of unemployed youth. Indeed it is possible for a boss to replace a whole workforce.

It is vital for the Labour Party and LPYS branches to seek out instances where workers are being exploited and to bring these workers under the protective wing of the movement, to encourage the fight for democratic rights and acceptable conditions, and foil Tory plans to scare workers away from forming unions and taking industrial action.

By Ian Brooke
(Holme Valley LPYS)

Stop London school cuts

"THE SIXTH form at my school is going to stage a demonstration and a day of action to protest at the Tory attacks on education."

So said Christella Kyriatou, a school student at Woodbery Down School, at a packed meeting of over 200 parents, pupils, teachers and representatives of the labour movement in Hackney recently.

Save ILEA

It will mark the beginning of a London-wide campaign to "Save ILEA", (Inner London Education Authority).

Members of NUPE, NALGO and the NUT amongst others are calling a one-day closure of schools and colleges, throughout London on the 24 January. For working people the cut-backs in education are hitting hard. But the condi-

tions in many of the schools in the Inner London area are sinking to catastrophic levels.

As one person in the meeting explained "a factory inspector reported that 17 people had 'accidentally been killed' through dangerous conditions in the schools, that had arisen as a direct result of the level of cutbacks."

Many schools breach the Health and Safety Act. The schools are so filthy that many children cannot sit down to eat their food. And if they sit down to eat sandwiches they are charged a fee.

Most class sizes now mean 45 children to a teacher. What hope do youth have of receiving a proper education under such intolerable conditions?

School's out!

As a result, many school and FE students are being won to the ideas of the LPYS.

Since the beginning of this term over ten school and FE students have been recruited to the LPYS branches in Hackney.

As Christella said after the meeting, "If we organise this demonstration properly,

ACCORDING TO the Tories the Inner London Education Authority 'overspends' by £120 million—13% of its total budget.

But far from 'overspending' on education in London ILEA needs more resources. ILEA recently asked the Tories for £27 million to remodel (or rebuild in some cases!) some of its educational buildings—and remove dangerous asbestos from others. But the Tories only gave them £9.7 million. If the 13% cut is forced through, what other vital repairs will be cancelled, schools closed or FE colleges merged?

with the help of the LPYS, we can get the whole school out."

(See also page 3)

By members of
Hackney North LPYS

Much support is expected amongst teachers for the strike and demonstration called by GLC unions on 24 January (see back page). The London LPYS have drawn up plans to build for the demonstration. Already 20,000 leaflets have been produced and an organising meeting has been arranged by the LPYS Regional Committee for the 9 January, 7.30 pm, in the 1st Floor Common Room at the Polytechnic of Central London Student Union Building, Bolsover Street.

By Louise James
(Polytechnic of Central London Labour Club)

New bonanza for

FLEET STREET

NEXT TIME you read in the Fleet Street press about the urgent need for us all to tighten our belts and make sacrifices consider the nature of a society which, overnight, is likely to give parasites like Lord Matthews of the *Daily Express* some £120 million unearned profit.

Just before Christmas the directors of the most famous newsagency in the world, Reuters, announced plans to float the company's shares on the Stock Exchange. This sale is expected to bring in between £1,000 million and £1,500 million.

The loot will be divided three ways. Between the Newspapers Publishers Association—owned by the Fleet Street bosses—the Press Association—owned by the provincial newspaper chiefs—and the Australian and New Zealand Press Associations.

Lord Matthews' Fleet Holdings own 11.5 per cent of Reuters as do Associated Newspapers (*Daily Mail*), News International (*Sun/Times*) own about 10 per cent and Reed International (*Daily Mirror*) eight per cent. All stand to make telephone-number figures from the

Rupert Murdoch of News International whose paper *The Sun* recently carried a story exhorting its readers to "Get off your bums and work harder" may like to reflect what right he has to such huge sums of money through no work of his own.

The only reason Reuters has become so fantastically valuable is it has harnessed its news distribution system to supply high-speed financial reports on the world's money markets.

Reuters is supposed to be controlled by a trust set-up in 1941 to stave off wartime nationalisation of the country's chief news supplier. The trust was supposed to guarantee Reuter's independence for ever, overseen as it was by a Parliamentary committee.

The people who owned a share of Reuters were to consider it "a trust not an in-

By Mark Leslie
(North London NUJ)

vestment". No one single interest would ever be allowed to gain control of it and thus a possibly dangerous input into the world's news. It was never intended that it would be launched as a public company to get money for its trustees.

However when such huge sums of cash are at stake such trivialities as binding agreements are ignored—especially when you have a sympathetic government in office eager to keep its lackeys well-fed.

A few favoured employees at Reuters have been offered lucrative shares. But for most of the 300 journalists the future is uncertain. Mike Smith, National Organiser of the National Union of Journalists, said: "We are worried that a future owner would shut down the news gathering side and just concentrate on the communications side threatening their jobs."

The news is like any other commodity in capitalism—it is there to make a profit. Depending on the goodwill of parasites like Murdoch and Matthews to uphold integrity is pious naivety. Only a media under workers control, nationalised to meet the demand of the truth and the readers' needs, will put an end to such abuses.



Under capitalism, news is just another commodity—there to make a profit.

Photo: Andrew Ward

The lady who hasn't been to Buck House... yet

By Pete MacNally
(Coventry NE CLP)

"GOD IT'S hell". Are these the words of a working-class housewife, wondering how to make the money last until payday? Perhaps the cry of a single-parent mother describing the task of extracting supplementary benefits from the DHSS?

No, these are the heart-felt words of Lady Olga Maitland, daughter of the 17th Earl of Lauderdale, founder of 'Women and Families for Defence', and aspiring Tory parliamentary candidate. And she isn't talking about how to make ends meet.

Her problems are of an entirely different order. She's describing the mind-numbing difficulty of getting her youngest baby out of the bath without spoiling her make-up. And yet, against

even these odds, this model of British womanhood struggles on.

Not for Lady Olga the easy way out. Take breakfast for example. She could just get up and give her kids their meal.

Not Lady Olga, she's made of sterner stuff. She leaves to her nanny the task of filling the young mouths, while she battles her way across London to force herself to breakfast at a West End hotel. Such dedication.

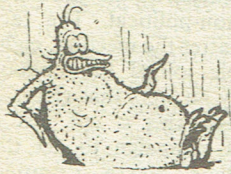
She is of course, committed to her children and picks them up from school three times a week. She says not even lunch at Buck House could interfere with that, not that she has been to lunch at Buck House, yet. How many other mothers could say the same?

Lady Olga has come into the public eye for her tireless devotion to defending the British way of life from the foreign threat. (Though Olga isn't everyone's idea of name for an English patriot, is it?). We have a free press here and Lady Olga can count on the 100 per cent support of the editor of the newspaper she works for, the *Daily Express*.

Luckily her husband also gives encouragement, taking over some duties like cooking. Lady Olga says, "when he was at university and had no pennies, the only way to get the girls was to give them seductive suppers". Thus Robin learned to cook, and I'm sure we can all sympathise with him not having any pennies.

'Women For Defence' has about 4,000 members and 40 regional organisers, so it needs a lot of support from Lady Olga, and even her week-ends are spent 'anchored to the telephone and the typewriter'. There must be more suitable things Lady Olga could be anchored to. I am sure this brief insight into the life of one of the leading women in the country will make all of us more determined than ever to see to it that Lady Olga will be able to retire as soon as possible.

The *If Chronicles*.
By Steve Bell.
Methuen. £2.50.



This is a collection of strip cartoons which appear in *The Guardian* newspaper. If you want some humour to start the New Year, this would be an excellent buy.

Wicked caricatures of politicians, journalists and public figures stalk the author's version of world and domestic events.

No-one is safe, including *Militant*, from an appearance, but Steve Bell's sympathies are obvious, and his targets are mercilessly exposed. Targets like Reagan and Thatcher, where caricature and reality are hard to separate.

Review by Paul Traynor

"What do they think we are?"

By John L Shelvin
(Ashton-Under-Lyme CLP)

A FEW weeks ago a local Labour councillor told me there was a vacancy at a building department for a labourer. All I had to do, he said, was to go and apply.

With three kids almost starting every second week, and Christmas around the corner I took the first opportunity to call in person. The personnel officer told me that there were no vacancies there, but obligingly gave me the telephone number of the building department in the next town.

Eight times I rang without getting through to the person concerned. Eventually after a full week of pestering I was finally told there were no jobs in that area but there were jobs coming up back in my area. I should wait 'till they advertised in the local press the following week.

I waited until the advert appeared and then went straight down. Again I was told that there were vacancies elsewhere. By now I was beginning to feel like a mouse who found that cheese was being taken away every time I got near.

This time I insisted and I had an interview. I was reasonably confident and was told to ring back the following Monday, as there had been so many applicants.

Come Monday I had to put myself through the mental preparation of telling myself that I hadn't got the job, in order that it wouldn't hit me hard; and if I had got it, it would be a bonus.

I rang up trying to be stay calm while my hands trembled with the receiver. In my head I had already begun to buy presents for my kids with my new-found wealth.

Anyway all the bloke at the other end said was, "Sorry you were unsuccessful—we didn't set any one". Honestly it hit me like a ton of bricks—mainly because of what it mean for my kids, but also because they had failed to employ anyone.

It would have been easier to accept it if they had taken the three people they advertised for, because they had presented themselves better than me. But not to take anyone on at all—what the hell do they think we are?

LEFT and RIGHT

Thatcher's packaged horror

What was Thatcher's first reaction to the horrific Harrods bombing? Shock or pity for the victims? Hardly. She coldly calculated how she could package an 'outrage'. At the time the bomb went off, she was at a carol concert.

Selected media representatives were invited to meet her there and she asked them: "Now then gentlemen, how would you like me to play this? Would you like me to set it against the background of the carol concert I have just been attending? Would you like me to tie it in with Christmas?" And that's exactly what she did.

Heseltine's right of reply

Some people say *Militant* is always moaning about how hard up the workers are and how easy the rich have it. So we have given the right of reply to Michael Heseltine to show the problems of the ruling class.

Mr Heseltine is finding the cost of living high. His family are getting fed up with the boredom of life at one of their three residences, the £750,000 mansion in Oxfordshire.

They had a genuine Roman mosaic floor, a lake, 400 acres of farmland for raising pheasants. But something was missing.

So he had to buy his daughter a 25-jump show jumping event course at £20,000. And then of course he had to buy a £5,000 horse to jump over the obstacles, then he had to hire a full time groom. (rumoured to be the first job Heseltine has ever created), pay for an all weather paddock and a new up to date stable block. Mr Heseltine's millions are disappearing fast.

Next week, Fleet Street gives right of reply to the working class...

New style vampires

Tom King, Employment Minister has a nicer image than Norman Tebbit. He'll still try to drink the unions' blood but he'll do a good PR job at justifying it. King says his success over the *Stockport Messenger* showed that, "under the legislation it is not possible to impose a closed shop on a whole lot of people who don't want it".

One man who is more honest than our Tom is Paul Roots, industrial relations director at Fords: "It is a perfectly legitimate capitalist aim to want to weaken the unions by law and there is nothing wrong in admitting it. What I object to is the hypocrisy of people who claim they want the laws brought in to protect the freedom of the individual."

Top hats on the rates

Now a story to remember next time you see newspaper articles about Labour local authorities spending too much on irrelevancies. At the Royal Ascot race meeting last year, Thames Valley policing had to hire ten morning suits for the duration of the meeting. After all, you can't appear in the Royal Enclosure improperly dressed. It's just not done. The cost was £237, payable by local ratepayers.

Nuclear fallout

No publicity is bad publicity they say, so Colin Croft of the National Association of Nuclear Shelter Consultants used the interest generated by the nuclear holocaust TV-film "The Day After" to advertise his wares.

Appearing on a phone-in on commercial radio station LBC one caller told him he was "a parasitic bloodsucker playing on gullible people's hopes". No, said Mr. Croft, he was only providing a service comparable to people who make life-jackets.

He also claimed that if the worst came to the worst people could always shelter in the tube stations when the big attack comes! Nuclear shelters were also tax deductible!

But does Mr Croft give a money back guarantee on his shelter if it does not work properly! I think we should be told.



GEORGE ORWELL 1984

A plain-writing English socialist

THIS WEEK we begin a series on the writings of George Orwell. In the next few issues we will publish reviews of most of his major works. We begin this week with an overall appraisal of his life by BRIAN ANDREWS.

ANIMAL FARM and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the two most widely-read political novels of our century, have run to millions of copies in scores of languages. They were written by an English socialist who used the pen-name, George Orwell.

If one of the internationally best known English authors who ever lived was a committed socialist, surely every socialist—especially those in the British labour movement—ought to know something of Orwell's life and work. He is, after all, part of our heritage.

Orwell wrote for a purpose. His aim was to use "good, plain, English" to stand on the side of "the common man" and to bring to life, in literature, the struggles and achievements of the mass of the people, reflected in his individual characters. He was a master craftsman of the novel, the essay and the political column.

Change of name

He became so committed in his political outlook that it is impossible to divorce any judgement of his work from his experience of the world he lived in and its social upheavals.

Far more than any other English writer whose work spanned the 1920s, 30s and 40s, Orwell wrote about the great issues and conflicts of his epoch. By commitment, energy and self-trial, he experienced these conflicts *in the flesh*—quite literally; tuberculosis and the wounds of war marked him as a result of his efforts.

Given his "lower and upper middle class" upbringing (prep. school and Eton), he had to set out consciously to achieve this range of experience. To aid the break from his own circle, Eric Blair wrote as "George Orwell" and eventually accepted that name for wide, everyday use.

Look at his life and works in terms of the great issues of the times: imperialism (*Burmese Days*); the depression (*Down and out in Paris and London*); revolution and civil war (*Homage to Catalonia*); war and nationalism (*The Lion and the Unicorn* and many of his other essays) and, overshadowing them all, the great theme that dominated his last years, totalitarianism.

Born in India in 1903 into a Colonial civil service family, Eric Blair entered the Indian Im-

perial Police in Burma in 1922, straight from Eton. Two things of lasting benefit emerged from this period in the police—knowledge of the military arts and a complete rejection of imperialism and colonialism.

He left Burma in 1927 and travelled to England. He set out to discover, from first hand but as an outsider, how the workers lived in depression in Britain and Paris, exploring in particular the lives of the oppressed "who occupied the same position in England as the Burmese in Burma" in a quest to get close to the "real England".

Wigan pier

His own standard of living became frugal. In poverty, he contracted or aggravated the TB which eventually killed him. *The Road to Wigan Pier* written in 1936, contains two elements; vividly descriptive passages and an outline of non-sectarian, democratic socialism.

The Spanish Civil War (1936–39) completely changed his life. In 1936, he went to Spain to see what was happening and almost immediately enlisted as a militiaman on the Republican side. Harry Pollit, general

secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, had refused him a letter of introduction because of Orwell's sharp attacks on sectarianism, including that of the Stalinists in Britain. So he drifted into the Lenin Barracks in revolutionary Barcelona to join the POUM militia, along with a group of British ILPers.

High point

Even so, at first he accepted the Communist's Party's shallow "common sense" line that revolutionary aims would have to be postponed until the military struggle against Franco was won. By 1937, he saw things differently:

"After what I have seen in Spain I have come to the conclusion that it is futile to be 'anti-fascist' while attempting to preserve capitalism... I do not see how one can oppose fascism except by working for the overthrow of capitalism, starting, of course, in one's own country... The whole struggle in Spain, on the government side, has turned upon this.

"The revolutionary parties, the Anarchists, POUM etc., wanted to complete the revolution, the others wanted to fight the fascists in the name of 'democracy', and, of course, when they felt sure enough of their position and had tricked the workers into giving up their arms, re-introduce capitalism. The grotesque feature, which very few people outside Spain have

Books by George Orwell

<i>Animal Farm</i>	£1.00
<i>Burmese Days</i>	£1.75
<i>Down and Out in Paris and London</i>	£1.75
<i>Homage to Catalonia</i>	£1.95
<i>Lion and the Unicorn</i>	£1.25
<i>1984</i>	£1.95
<i>Road to Wigan Pier</i>	£1.60
<i>Complete Novels</i>	£4.95

Please add 25p postage for each title—orders over £10 post free. *Animal Farm*, *Burmese days*, and *1984* are in the *Complete Novels* also:—*Crick—George Orwell: a life* £2.95 from: World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

The Nazis invaded Russia in June 1941. Before then, whilst the Hitler-Stalin pact still held, the CP and its allies opposed the war against Nazi Germany and crudely equated the issues of the Second World War with those of the First; they completely ignored the specific threat to workers' rights internationally posed by the massive military advances of the fascist Axis powers.

Home Guard

Orwell, right from the outbreak of war in 1939, wanted to stand with the "patriotism" of the British workers and to distance himself from the left intellectuals, pacifists and fellow-travellers.

He enlisted in the Home Guard (he was refused army service on health grounds) and wrote training manuals on defensive street fighting at the height of fears of mass German paratroop landings. Orwell saw the Home Guard as the basis for a territorial, democratic militia and appealed to socialists to "take it over".



In the Burmese police, 1922, Orwell back row (third from left).

socialist and an anti-Stalinist militant.

Homage to Catalonia, which many socialists regard as his finest book, reflects the struggles of the Spanish workers and carries a tremendous message of hope for the future of socialism. Soon after his return to England in 1937, he joined the ILP and plunged once more into writing. *Homage to Catalonia*, was followed by *Coming up for Air*—escapist, nostalgic, reflective and probably his best-constructed "realistic novel"

When the two great totalitarian states embraced in uneasy and unholy alliance in the Hitler/Stalin pact of 1939, Orwell decided—first in a dream, he says—to side with "democracy and liberty". If it came to war with Nazi Germany, he would fight on "England's side", but he still spoke, as a number of left ILPers did, of pursuing class objectives, of cleaning out the blimps from the officer caste and replacing them with anti-fascist fighters at the head of a "democratic army" as the only way of waging a serious military struggle against fascism. He understood the deep anti-fascist sentiment which underlay the workers' support for the war effort against Hitler.

Contradictory pressures formed the ideas expressed in *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1940) and in shaping Orwell's patriotism during this time—partly a reflection of popular or even revolutionary motives but with increasing traces too of concessions to wartime appeals for "national unity".

Totalitarianism

Throughout the war, Orwell's ability to cut against the grain was clear. Even after the Nazi invasion of Russia, when the whole of the left swung behind the call for aid to Russia and when even British government propaganda became very pro-Russian, Orwell continued to warn against Stalinism. There is no doubt that he felt that even a military victory over Nazism would leave a major totalitarian danger in the East.

From 1943 until his death in 1950 it was the theme of totalitarianism which gripped him and which produced his best-known books, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

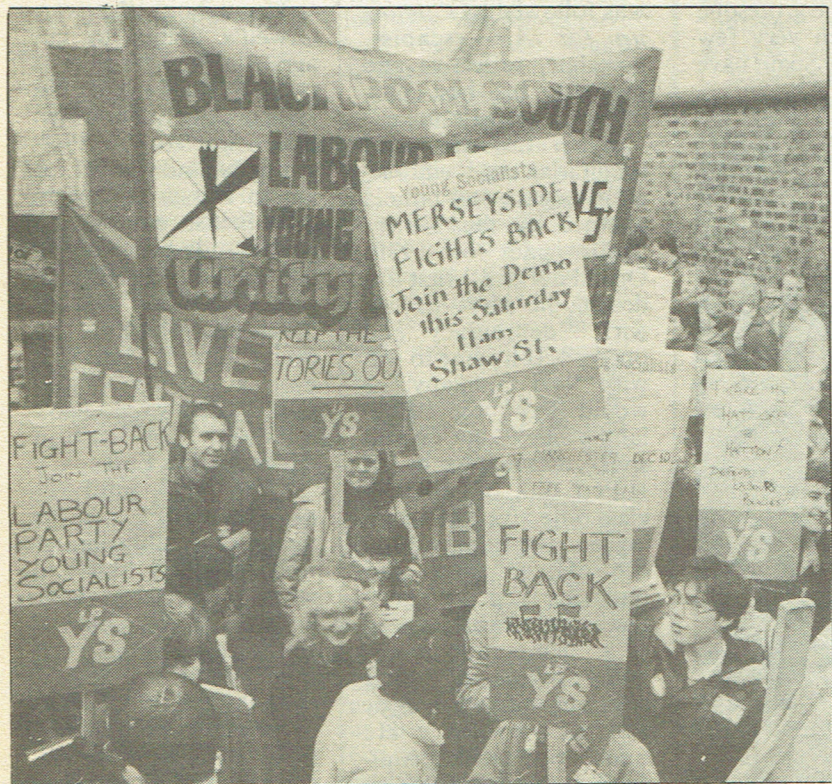
At the end of our series of reviews of Orwell's major works, we will carry a concluding article on "George Orwell and Totalitarianism: The Road to 1984"



With the POUM militia in Spain. Orwell at rear of photo.

1984 Time to take on the Tories

By Jeremy Birch



Part of the LPYS contingent in the mass demonstration in support of Liverpool council, in November last year.

THE TURN of the year is traditionally a time of reflection. to renounce bad habits. The labour movement should do this of progress in 1983, and determine to rectify organisational that have been exposed.

The year 1984 has assumed a special significance as a result of George Orwell's book "Nineteen Eighty-four". He chillingly warned of a totalitarian world regime where all democratic rights, even to think freely, are suppressed by 'Big Brother'.

But many workers will consider the current Tory government frightening enough. Surely even the most vivid imagination could not have conjured up a more repellent crew than a Cabinet of Thatcher, Tebbit, Lawson, Brittan and company!

When Orwell's book was published in 1949, the masses in the West were beginning to believe they had escaped once and for all from the poverty and privations of the thirties and the war years. What author then would have thought of portraying a future when mass unemployment and economic crisis would return? Or when all the post-war advances in health, education which were just being established, would be on the brink of destruction?

Yet that has been the story of 1983. And under Thatcherism another year does not herald a new stage of progress, but a further attempt to return the working class to the barbarities of the past. Not just a return to the thirties, but, in some respects, to Victorian values.

The Tories' anti-union legislation is designed to destroy the one obstacle to their welfare counter-revolution. The removal of trade union immunities, as in the case of the NGA, is reminiscent of the famous Taff Vale judgement penalising the rail union in 1901, at the very end of the Victorian era.

So how was it possible for the Tories to gain a second victory at the polls on June 9th?

Thatcher was able to bask in the glory of what was for her the good fortune of a short, successful war in the South Atlantic. The Falklands enabled Thatcher to give the impression of restoring Britain's past world might, and allowed her to pose as a strong, influential world figure, especially when compared to the Labour leadership.

Many ordinary voters were just not convinced that Labour was really capable of reducing unemployment to a million and rebuilding the economy, when similar promises by previous Labour governments had gone unfulfilled. But the biggest condemnation of the Labour leaders was their complete failure to inspire the new voters, the youth and unemployed.

The Tories successfully latched onto a temporary mood that is already vanishing. The illusion of Thatcher strutting the world was brought down to earth, when Reagan invaded Grenada, part of the Commonwealth, completely disregarding her views.

Tory 'decisiveness' has given

way to scandals, splits, confusion and mistakes. Whitelaw has now been appointed to shovel up banana skins, or whatever else the Tories may fail to see, before another Minister puts his foot in it. This, just 6 months after a massive victory!

Already Francis Pym has come out more openly than ever against the Thatcher wing of the Tory Party. He is clearly staking a claim for the leadership when Thatcher goes—after a defeat at the next general election, which he must already be contemplating, or perhaps sooner.

Of course it is not just Thatcher's perversity that has determined the government's policies. It is the desperate crisis of their system. Capitalism, especially in Britain, is in irreversible decline.

Economic devastation

Thatcher's remedy for resuscitation has merely prolonged British capitalism's death agony. Her monetarism has drastically pruned state spending in a war against inflation, even though the state made up 25% of the market for the purchase of goods from industry.

In a despairing drive to boost profits, loss making firms have been allowed to close along with the loss-making parts of profitable firms, and unemployment has been used to intimidate the employed into accepting lower wage rises. The result has been devastation—whole industries permanently destroyed.

Look at some of the major manufacturing companies. Since the Tories 1979 victory GKN has halved its workforce to 35,000, Lucas has closed 35 manufacturing and distribution units amounting to 2 million square feet of factory space.

Half the workforce of Tube Investments has disappeared since 1980, leaving only 32,000 employed. While pre-tax profits rose to £20m in 1983 from £4.8m the previous year, that is compared to £80m in the pre-recession year of 1978. Far from a boost in investment, TI's net assets have declined from £554m in 1979 to £32.8m in 1983. And over the same period consumer products—bicycles, kettles, washing machines etc—have represented an increasing proportion of those assets, doubling to 40%.

1983 was supposed to be the year the recession definitely ended. Indeed, there has been a certain pick-up in the consumer goods industry—fuelled by a temporary fall in inflation and increased credit.

But a recovery cannot be sustained unless it leads to major investment in the capital goods sector—machinery, steel, construction etc—thereby increasing productivity and production and the job prospects and purchasing power of the workers

employed in the capital goods sector.

But in a period of general overcapacity, when in both economic upswings and recessions the owners of industry cannot fully utilise all their existing capacity to produce, why should they invest in more spare capacity? Commenting on the prospects for his company's capital goods, the Chairman of TI commented, "I don't think that there is any doubt that the volume of world demand for some of these heavy products will be less in the future than at times in the past."

On the basis of capitalism, therefore, there will be no respite from unemployment and economic instability. Capitalism will never again recapture the prosperity of those exceptional 25 years up to 1975.

With current policies, 1984 will already see the rate of economic growth slipping down from the 2.5% of the 1983 'boomlet'. Unemployment will continue to climb and inflation, following the boost to commodity prices as the worst of the recession eased, will start to increase again.

But even the smallest signs of recovery can restore confidence in the strength and ability to struggle of the organised workers, who were partially quelled by what was to them a sudden, dramatic and unexpected rise in joblessness.

1983 witnessed the battles at Cowley over 'washing-up time', by the workers on the new, successful and profitable Metro model. Workers in newly-profitable Vauxhalls won a larger than expected wage increase. Even in the small Birmingham brewery—Davenport—where the shareholders enjoyed a 180% increase in their dividend, with just an overtime ban, the 300 workers secured an 8% increase.

1984 will see the complete evaporation of the myth disseminated by the capitalists and their press, and many of the leaders in the labour movement, that the working class had permanently renounced industrial struggle.

That was certainly the view that prevailed at the September TUC Conference. Yet since then there has been one battle after another. The Yorkshire miners, the Monktonhall miners, the POEU in the fight against privatisation, and the vital struggle to protect the closed shop and the future of trade unionism in the printing industry.

Warrington

After the scenes of police brutality at Warrington there is no doubt that a mood to fight the Tories and their laws was building up, and a determined lead from the TUC would have gained an enthusiastic response.

Over privatisation, wages or anti-union laws, 1984 could see

It is also time for making resolutions the same—make an honest assessment of weaknesses and political inadequacies

the start of class battles as big as a decade ago. But just as the big battalions of the working class are considering the necessity of a return to national industrial action, their 'leaders' on the TUC General Council have moved to the right and are looking for an accommodation with the Tories.

They happily accepted the press propaganda that unions are 'unpopular', that Thatcher enjoys mass support and that their own organisations have been fundamentally weakened. Moreover, all this fits in with the natural unwillingness to lead on the part of many of these 'leaders'.

The attitude of the TUC right wing to the capitalists' courts' 'flying injunctions' has been craven. When added to the fear of individual unions of being isolated, it cut right across developing struggles.

Murray

Len Murray advised the POEU to back down in their fight against Mercury, once the courts intervened. The General Council offered the NGA support only for 'lawful' activities, when it almost seemed that some Tory judge would rule it unlawful if Joe Wade crossed the road.

But the TUC leaders' attempts to reason with the Employment Secretary, to restrain their more determined members and to distance the unions from the Labour Party (which of course is also 'unpopular' and hardly likely to form a majority government again, or so they believe) will fail.

The logic of the class struggle in an era of economic crisis will compel ordinary workers to struggle, industrially and politically. The general strikes against Tory governments in Belgium and similar strikes in Holland, and the current strike-wave in Reagan's America, are all foretastes of what will happen in Britain.

Those who have prematurely written off the trade unions, indeed the working class as a whole, have written the Labour Party's obituaries too. "Demographic changes"—the increasing number of white collar to blue collar workers—has undermined Labour for good, or so they think.

But in reality the law of the class struggle that workers, unemployed, manual or white collar always turn back to their traditional class organisations, still stands intact. Already, the Labour party is picking up support again at local by-elections and could well win back control of a number of major local authorities, like Birmingham, in May.

Neil Kinnock's election at the 1983 Annual Conference was seen by many Labour voters and trade unionists who backed him as a victory for the left, and a break with the Wilson-Callaghan-Healey era. Many activists though, are suspicious

of his past record, including his support for the expulsion of the *Militant* Editorial Board, and his leaky commitments to Labour's socialist aims once he gains office.

Expulsion

Kinnock, Hattersley, and the new leadership would like to moderate Labour's 1983 manifesto to take account of what they think was 'a vote against socialism' at the general election. But ironically, the dramatic improvement in Labour's showing in the opinion polls, immediately after the conference, was party due to the election of the left Kinnock who talked about "capitalism" and "socialism" in his speech, unlike most of his predecessors.

The old year has past. But unfortunately many of the ideas prevalent in the labour movement, which are a lot more than twelve months old, still persist.

The programme of the old right wing—wage restraint, devaluation, nuclear defence still persist. At the same time the policies of the differing shades of left within the party, with the exception of the Marxists, still fail to grasp the depth of the economic crisis, and the impossibility of realising lasting improvements for working people within the framework of diseased capitalism.

It is the realisation of this by increasing numbers of ordinary Labour and trade union members, which has led to the growing support for *Militant*.

1983 was also the year of the election of two Marxist MPs. The ideas of real socialism passed the electoral test. Indeed if the Labour party nationally had secured the same swing in its favour as Terry Fields in Liverpool Broadgreen, it would now be in government.

In 1984, the labour movement should resolve to step up the campaign against the Tories, to challenge those who argue that some agreement can be reached with the Tory enemy. Full support must be given to any group taking on their employers or the government and its laws.

Labour workers must resist any attempts to water down the socialist content of the party programme, and maintain vigilance over the activities of their Parliamentary leaders. But unquestionably 1984 will mark another stage in the building of a strong Marxist wing in the Labour Party.

When dealing with the preconditions for the drawing of fundamental conclusions by the mass of workers, Leon Trotsky explained that neither impoverishment or prosperity was the key, "but the alternation of prosperity and impoverishment, the crisis, the uncertainty, the absence of stability".

That is exactly the picture emerging for 1984 and the rest of the decade.



The *Militant* Editorial Board, expelled because their views pose a threat to Labour's right wing. L to R: Clare Doyle, Lynn Walsh, Peter Taaffe, Ted Grant, Keith Dickinson.



Celebrations in Coventry SE. Despite the defeat of Labour nationally on June 9, the candidates here and in Liverpool Broadgreen showed that Marxist ideas can have a mass appeal to Labour workers.



The police take over the NGA van at the Warrington picket line. Later special police units with riot gear charged and brutally attacked peaceful pickets.

The new leaders at Labour Party conference. Bottom: The 'leaders' of the TUC in Blackpool.



Photo: Stefan Cagnoni (IFL)

Photos: Militant

Nigeria

WHEN NIGERIA, Black Africa's economic giant fell under a military coup last week it showed that no 'Third World' country is stable. If any country on the African continent was to escape from mass poverty, it would have been Nigeria.

It has vast reserves of oil, other minerals and fertile agricultural land. It has a large domestic market; over 90 million. One in every four black Africans is Nigerian.

Yet since independence in 1960, Nigeria has suffered five military coups, a horrific civil war which left tens of thousands dead, two general strikes, local rebellions and widespread disorder.

It was probably fear of renewed turmoil that prompted this latest military coup. Early reports seem to indicate that there is no fundamental class difference between the new regime and the civilian government it toppled.

What finally pushed the plotters into action was the announcement last week of severer austerity measures, cutbacks in spending and increases in tax. The day before the coup, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, "Many Nigerians fear that they are already at the beginning of a slippery slide into economic anarchy of the kind that has decimated Ghana over the past decade".

Government corruption

In Tunis this week, tanks were used to try and crush 'bread riots'. The Nigerian military decided to intervene before the situation deteriorated to this extent. There has been no welcome amongst the Nigerian workers and peasants for the return of the military. They know only too well the corruption, arbitrary arrest, imprisonment of workers' leaders and repression which existed before.

But neither was there any attempt to defend the corrupt civilian regime of President Shagari. By all accounts this coup was virtually bloodless.

Shagari had hired a public relations firm from the USA to project his regime's liberal image in the West, but for most people, reality was different. Last year's electoral victory was based on fraud (see letter from Nigeria, *Militant*, 11 November).

Nigerian novelist Wole Soyinka recently pointed out that in just one ward in his own town (voting population 10,000), the number of registered electors rose from 4,500 (1979) to 188,000 (1983)—and there are only 700 dwellings in the ward!

Political opponents were silenced, intimidated or bought off. Five of Shagari's critics within the ruling party were given N500m contracts to help build the new capital of the country at Abuja. (*Nigerian Daily Times*, 10 July, 1982)

Whilst corruption has been endemic in all Nigeria's governments, civilian or military, what pushed the mass of Nigerians into hostility against the Shagari regime was the savage cutbacks in their living standards.

One of the few reports to come out of the country since the coup mentions looting in the town of Benin, and demands for the reduction in the price of staple foods. It is a total indictment of Nigeria's rulers that the price of basic foods such as yams is actually cheaper in London than it is in Lagos.

Recession and successive government austerity measures have resulted in inflation of over 100%, shortages of basic goods, and widespread layoffs. There are no reliable figures on unemployment, but one of the country's leading industrialists commented last month: "If everybody put down in black and white how many workers they had laid off and added them up,

Nigeria

The return of the military nightmare

they would fall off their chairs".

In November, work on the Ajaokuta steel project (the largest industrial investment in black Africa) had to stop because the funds ran out. The new military regime has promised that now things will be different. But they have refused to say how, beyond the empty promise of all military regimes that they will "end corruption".

But Nigeria's problems arise from something far more fundamental than corruption of individual rulers. It stems from its oil-producing role within the international capitalist economy, and how it has been devastated by the recession.

Since the early 1970s, Nigeria's economy has been virtually dependent on oil. It provides 95% of export earnings and 80% of government revenue. The glut in the oil market because of recession in the industrialised West has been catastrophic for Nigeria. Its oil earnings slumped from \$22,400 million in 1980 to a forecast \$9,600 million for 1983.

Nigeria cut back its production of oil by nearly half in four years and the price by 25%. If, as seems likely, the price of North Sea oil is further reduced then Nigeria will have to slash its prices again.

The economy has plummeted during the '80's. In 1981 Gross Domestic Product fell by 5.2%, in 1982 by a further 2.4%. The last eighteen months have seen the country's reserves fall from £5.5 billion to £0.9 billion. It is estimated that the deficit on the balance of payments will be £2.6 billion for 1983.

This year the economic situation will be even worse. In its December 1983 budget the civilian regime forecast total export earnings of N8.5 billion for 1984. But N 3 billion (or £.7 billion) will be eaten up in paying off debts to international finance, so that leaves just N5 billion for imports.

Oil boom now over

That means more savage cutbacks in industrial production as machine imports and goods will not be available. It is all a far cry from a decade ago when Nigeria's towns took on the appearance of gold-rush towns as get-rich-quick merchants fell over each other to cash in on the oil boom.

The oil industry itself only employs 6,000 people out of a total labour force of 30 million. The revenue generated was syphoned off through the state and parastatal organisations. Suddenly 'national unity' became the cry of Nigeria's élite. Nigeria was being transformed from a fragmented state structure where regional élites took the surplus from peasant production to a centralised state system based upon the oil industry.

The newly rich élite cornered the fruits of the oil boom. Hi-fi im-



Deposed President Shagari.

PHOTO: MILITANT.

ports increased 1,000% from 1973 to 1976. Colour television was launched whilst the poor languished in horror conditions in the shanty towns. By the spring of 1978, 97% of the business of Lagos Port was in imports, and only 3% in exports.

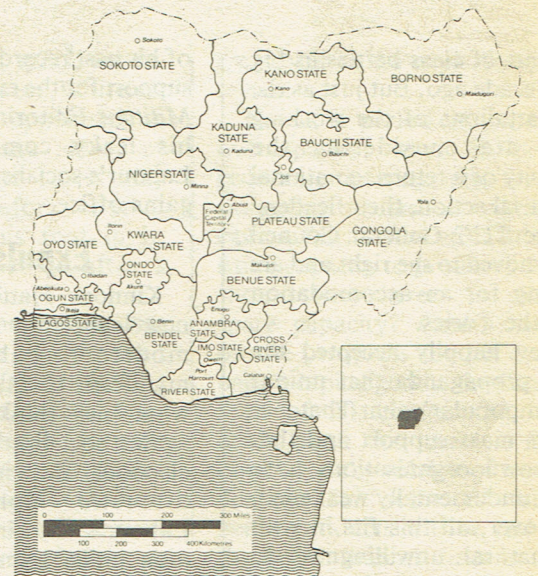
The anarchic nature of capitalist development even meant that by 1976 most petroleum used in Nigeria had to be imported in refined form. If fortunes could be made quickly, what need was there for planned industrial investment?

The élite wanted collaboration with foreign multi-nationals and introduced laws, such as the 1972 Indigenisation Decree, which stipulated that there should be a Nigerian presence on boards of companies operating in the country.

The multi-nationals did not complain too much. After all it was one way of recycling oil earnings into firms which remained under foreign control. The oil boom hurt other sections of the economy. The export of agricultural produce collapsed and today Nigeria is a net importer of food.

New manufacturing was neglected. Today manufacturing's share of the country's economy is lower than that in Kenya or even

Federal Republic of
NIGERIA



An Oil worker in Nigeria. The country's economy is almost totally dependent on oil.

Tanzania. Development may have been sudden, but it was patchy and only exacerbated the country's existing social divisions.

Shagari's civilian regime were faced with a general strike. Over 700,000 workers came out, and more joined them; after two days the government conceded.

Six months later when the government, facing bankruptcy, even considered lowering the minimum wage, a union protest stopped them. At Peugeot and Dunlop plants workers have moved into struggle.

It is the fear that struggles from the oppressed strata in Nigerian society could link up that scares the Nigerian bourgeoisie. Last year they expelled over two million 'foreign' workers in an attempt to cast nationalist dust into the workers' eyes.

Nigeria is plundered by a chain of thieves: the multi-nationals and merchant banks, the local commercial and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, speculators and politicians.

Now the military have stepped in to get their cut of the corruption cake, and to be available to crack down on any opposition against new attacks on living standards.

The whole post-independence history of Nigeria has shown that capitalism has nothing to offer the mass of the people of the country. Now the dark night of military repression has returned in an attempt to forestall opposition of the oppressed against a corrupt system.

But bullets will not calm the social whirlwind which is now gathering its first stirrings in Nigeria.

The élite may have their colour TV, but the electricity supply is unreliable. Their luxury cars have to travel down poorly made-up roads, and their ultra-modern well-guarded residences can often only be approached through the slums of the shanty towns. After midnight, Lagos is reportedly one of the most dangerous cities in the world.

Fear of workers led to coup

In such a society there can be no stability. Four years ago, Kano, one of the main towns in the north experienced mass riots as the unemployed and youth attacked the houses and cars of the rich. The civilian regime replied with bullets.

Elsewhere peasants driven off their land to make way for an irrigation scheme, which will benefit a few private farmers, have responded with armed resistance.

And workers have taken on the government and won. The last military regime disbanded the country's national union organisations in 1975 and introduced its own body. They banned strikes and jailed workers' leaders.

Seven years later, in 1982 their successors in government,

By Jim Chrystie

Sri Lanka



Protests in London this summer against the army atrocities.

Sri Lanka; government lie machine

FOLLOWING THE terrible massacres of Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Jayawardene regime has launched an unprecedented attack on the rights and living standards of both Tamil and Sinhala workers and peasants.

As explained in previous issues, sections of the government deliberately organised racial massacres in order to terrorise the Tamil community and divert the growing discontent of the masses away from their real enemy—the government.

These events were a serious defeat for the labour movement. But, because of the magnificent solidarity from working class organisations internationally, JR Jayawardene has, for the moment, been prevented from crushing the workers' movement and establishing a military-police dictatorship.

War declared on workers

Instead the ruling class have declared war on all the rights and benefits won by the workers' movement. Prices of essential goods and bus fares have shot up and a special income tax imposed on all workers. The price of a coconut (part of the staple diet) has jumped from two rupees (5 pence) before the July riots to seven rupees now.

Meanwhile, the government's propaganda machine pumps out millions of pounds worth of glossy booklets for distribution abroad. According to these, the July massacres never occurred but were the invention of Marxists in Britain and Sri Lankan emigré groups.

A typical example of the government's attempt to re-write history is the pamphlet *Sri Lanka—a House of Commons View* which contains not one single word of Dave Nellist's parliamentary speech on Sri Lanka but reprints instead the replies to it by two Tory MPs!

Another pamphlet attempts to show the Tamils are a privileged group in Sri Lanka, but it conveniently ignores the existence of the

million tea plantation workers who produce the economic life-blood of the country.

Plantation misery

This is because these workers live in the most appalling poverty and malnutrition, deprived of voting and nationality rights. World tea prices have now reached their highest level for seven years with an expected doubling of profits for

multinationals like Brooke Bond and increased revenues for the government.

Yet plantation workers are forced to eke out an existence on daily wages of under 50p. Thousands of these workers live in refugee camps today, too scared of racist attacks to return to the plantation districts. The recent doubling in the cost of passports is the latest disgusting method of the government to cash in on the misery of those workers who now wish to flee to India.

Labour Party condemns atrocities and repression

THE NATIONAL Executive Committee of the Labour Party has passed the following resolution:

That this NEC condemns the failure of the Sri Lankan government to protect the Tamil minority against racial attacks. It deploras the atrocities which have been inflicted upon the Tamil population and the participation in these atrocities of the Sri Lankan security forces.


The NEC calls for an immediate end to the banning of opposition parties and the other repressive measures imposed by the Jayawardene government.

We will arrange a delegation to the Sri Lankan High Commission at the earliest possible moment to convey the Labour Party's deep concern about the position of the Tamil minority inside Sri Lanka. The Labour Party demands that the British government end all military collaboration with the Sri Lankan security forces.

Labour movement organisations in Britain must keep up the pressure on the Sri Lankan regime by continuing to send resolutions and telegrams to the Sri Lankan High Commission (13 Hyde Park Gardens, London W2) demanding the lifting of the state of emergency, release of political prisoners, and the lifting of the ban on political parties.

The NSSP, although banned, continues the struggle to rebuild the confidence and power of the working class. Please send copies of resolutions and donations to: NSSP, 6 Ockenden Road, London N1 3NP.

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Chile

Sacked Chilean copper miner speaks out

DURING THE past 10 years, our working conditions have become steadily worse. Silicosis is two or three times as bad as before.

In the days of American ownership, conditions were bad. It didn't matter if five or ten miners died as long as the money kept coming in.

During Allende's government, there was much more safety. But today everything has deteriorated. The average wage after several years is 15-18,000 pesos a month (£1=120 pesos). A miner starts on 7,000 a month! New labour laws and regulations reduced our holidays to 15 days a year including time due to accidents and cut the special payments for years of work.

In March, the two unions in *El Salvador* pit struck against the government. The union representatives were against a strike because it was illegal. However we demanded they came out in favour of a stoppage.

The National Congress of the Copper Miners Confederation (CTC) in April agreed to call a 24 hour stoppage throughout the whole country on 11 May and agreed that "If any measure is taken against any union representative or worker, a strike would be called immediately."

However the union leaders were still against the stoppage, and on 5 May the National leadership of the CTC changed the strike to "days of protest".

For the next protest, 14 June, we decided to enter the mine 10 minutes late and not to use the lifts. The morning shifts caught management unawares and they went in without problems. But in the afternoon shift, gates to the mines were locked and management tried to scare us. "If you miss work, you will face the consequences".

The union representatives answered this immediately by organising a march from the mine to the town with the morning shift while the afternoon shift stayed by the gates. *El Salvador* miners stand up for their rights, and if we have to fight, we fight.

About 700-800 miners arrived in town. We were stopped by the police blocking the streets. To provoke us they started beating children from the town, who had come to have a look.

The firm kept the gates shut to the night shift but tried to divide us by opening them to the morning shift. Some workers were afraid the morning shift would back down, but we soon showed there was no danger of that.

strike in support of Seguel. The government reacted immediately with repression.

Tanks surrounded the town, aiming towards the mine and the union building. On every corner there was a soldier with a rifle. On the 17th, 1,400 workers received dismissal notes for supporting an illegal strike. At the same time, management visited some workers' homes accusing them of being "extremists" and political agitators.

Some were offered a return to the mine if they signed a letter denouncing union representatives and promising never to participate in a similar movement again. People were afraid, but we remained solid.

Every morning we met to discuss the strike. On the 17th an army officer entered our meeting and asked to speak. People shouted for him to leave. Many workers remembered a union meeting in 1966 when the army opened fire on the meeting killing 18 people. If we had to risk that we would, but we would not budge.

Outside, soldiers were waiting for us. When we left, they drove vehicles towards us to frighten us. That afternoon, the army shut the union building and arrested nearly all the union leaders. We ran away to the church; we heard shots and grenades. Through the local radio, the firm told us we had been dismissed. If we continued the strike, they would not pay us for years of service.

There was panic, and the strike started to break down. Soldiers went to workers' homes to frighten their families, started to infiltrate union meetings saying the strike had already broken down elsewhere. Most union representatives were in prison and they started arresting workers inside the church.

Slowly people started going back to work, though we went to the bus stops to dissuade them.

Of those dismissed, 700 were allowed to return after accepting conditions laid down by the firm, another 450 lost their jobs.

The next few days buses taking miners to work were filled with soldiers. Workers returning faced many difficulties, many lost their union membership, they also found that part of their work had been handed out to private contractors. To divide the workers, the firm gave wage increases to people brought in during the strike.

Most of these knew nothing about mining and there were many serious accidents including mutilations and deaths.

We, those who have been sacked, have organised two "common pots" one in *El Salvador* and the other in *Santiago*. But things are quite clear. Only a change of government can improve things.

Letters

Action not words

Comrades,

I've recently started selling *Militant* to a young GMBATU shop steward who told me how things have developed at his factory in the last few months. The company has the worst safety record in Darlington. One worker has been killed and many injured.

The average length of employment was under a year, because of the conditions and low wages, and of course no union was allowed.

But things started changing when three workers joined the GMBATU and were immediately made redundant. All the rest of the workers walked out and started a round-the-clock picket.

Within three days the boss collapsed and agreed to all the workers' demands. These included reinstatement, union recognition and better working conditions, etc. Since then the union has pushed the factories' inspector to make a 110 page report and have forced its implementation. They've also won a 20% wage rise—the first for three years.

So next time David Basnett and Co. tell us we shouldn't fight the Tories, do as his members are doing, not as he says.

Yours fraternally
Phil Laurie
Darlington LPYS

Struggle to watch?

Dear Comrades,

As a comedy it left me cold. I sat watching *Struggle* the series by Peter Jenkins, that looked like a mild spoof on poor old Ken Livingstone and the GLC, but all I got was froth and no bubble. Joanna Mc Callum was unconvincing as the bossy feminist Bunt, with her fetish for lifestyle politics and her phobia against men. Tim Pigott-Smith as Steve the militant municipal socialist and Ray Rogers as Reg his Stalinist hack, came across as cardboard cut-outs rather than gutsy characters, not even a good soap opera.

Perhaps I'm being unfair, unless it proves that Marx Bros satire on local government makes for lousy entertainment, I've had more laughs down my local Labour Club. Think I'll give the *Struggle* the thumbs down and pop down my local for a pint instead.

Fraternally
A Warner
Tameside

Keep up the good work

Dear Comrades,

Just to say keep up the good work on the paper, we enjoy it so much. There are no lies or deceptions in the peoples' paper.

We have been helping supporters in Blackburn against the witch-hunt. We think its disgusting to fight amongst ourselves instead of fighting the Tories. They must be laughing at us in the Labour Party. Fight on comrades.

Yours
John Hall
Oswaldtwistle

Who rules the air waves?

Dear Comrades,

Some early radio stations were run enthusiastically by 14-16 year olds. Such young people and the majority of ordinary people, like myself cannot afford the thousands of pounds required to become official in the eyes of the IBA.

The IBA rules the airwaves with draconian powers. Posing as neutral (like judges!) it tried to prevent the citizens band radio altogether and now allows this only after a mass campaign—but on VHF—the poorest quality wavelength.

Radio and television broadcasting, unlike newspapers, are subject to laws supposedly preventing political bias on the air. In fact, they more often than not act as mouthpieces for the Establishment and everything it represents. We sympathise with Radio Nova's attempt to break the monopoly of the Establishment over the airwaves, but have to point out that their action will not be nearly enough to succeed. It could even, certainly without mass pressure, lead to them getting ensnared in the law courts.

The way forward, if we really want to see the mass of the ordinary people with a real voice in the media, is to link up the unions and their party, the Labour Party. It is only the labour movement which has the power to challenge the courts. If the unions stand firm there is not a thing the bosses and the Tories can do.

Radio laws, like all laws, reflect the rest of society. Just a handful of people control the economy; which means our wages and the prices we have to pay for goods. They would even like to have the last say on what we can listen to in our free time. If we want to challenge this power, we must fight to bring the wealth in society under democratic workers' control—and ownership.

Yours
Pauline Maniscalco,
Leicester, and
Pip Serwin of Radio Nova

Paper round

Dear Comrades,

In the newsagent's the other day I heard a man of about 25 say: "Is there any possibility of me doing that paper round?" The newsagent mumbled that he thought the pay would be much too low. The man replied: "Well I'm desperate."

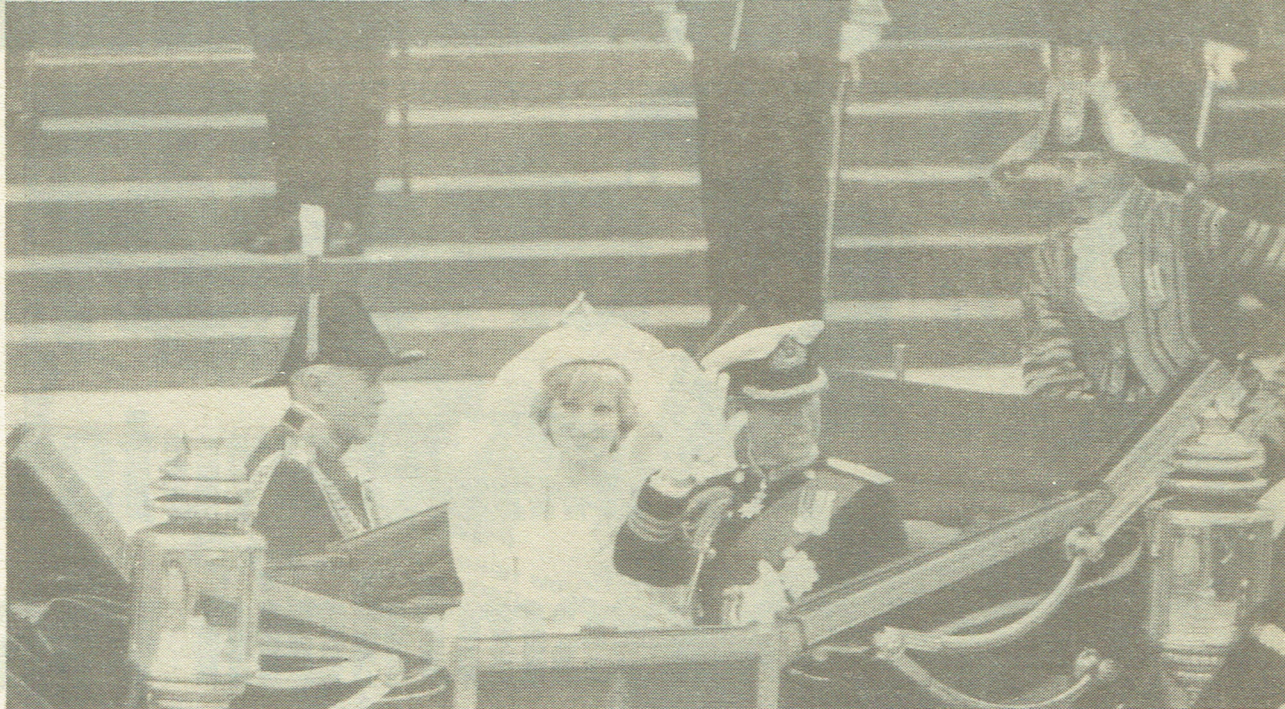
The newsagent went on to say that he was looking for someone permanent. The man said he would do it on a permanent basis. The newsagent had no choice but to agree.

When the man left, the three of us in the shop looked in amazement at one another. "He must be desperate," someone said.

The situation must surely be bad when grown men are now reduced to begging for jobs normally done by 14-year olds for a pittance.

Fraternally
Jo Eastop
London N3

Write to *Militant*,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN



Prince Charles and wife test the Royal pushchair.

Christmas contrasts

DAVE NELLIST, MP, received a letter from a pensioner in Coventry, who was horrified when she read in her local paper about the amount of money thrown away on the Royal Family at Christmas:

Dear Sir,

I think it is disgusting to read such things in the paper, when over three million people are out of work, and a good many won't have Christmas dinner at all, let alone spend thousands of pounds on Christmas presents.

I should think the Queen should be the first person to set an example and cut down, as she will be putting in for another big rise to pay

for all of this.

Another thing, we have got too many hangers-on in the Royals that we have to keep—let them spend a bit of their own money. Us pensioners have to manage on the bit we get, but I think Mrs Thatcher is trying to kill old people, as then she won't have to pay us pensions. Take the Queen Mother—all the money we pay her a year at her age—I had to retire

when I was 60 years old.

It is time the laws were changed, not one for the rich and another for the poor. We could do with another Robin Hood to rob the rich and give to the poor.

No wonder there is so much robbery going on and you can't blame people for doing it, as it is what the government has brought people to, as they (the government) rob us.

P.M.s questions

Dear Comrades,

Neil Kinnock: "... Given the recovery she talks about, if the present rate of progress was sustained, it would take 160 years to get back to the level of 1979. Is that 160 year rate a medium term or long term strategy?"

As the Tories say, recovery is just around the corner. Let us add—and down the hill, through the ditch, across the fields... Forget it. Rot on the dole.

Fraternally
Gary Freeman
Leicester West CLP

Disabled dream

Dear Comrades,

A programme on ITV showed electronic aids to help the disabled. Among those shown were pacemakers, a new hearing aid to help the profoundly deaf, a machine to help the blind to read books by converting printed letters in images in the brain, a machine to help the incontinent, and one to help paralysed people walk by sending electronic impulses to the legs.

All these inventions were marvellous—but unlikely to be available for the disabled in the near future. The only reason for this is financial. The programme even admitted that the projects had to be divided into those which were 'relatively cheap' and 'relatively expensive'.

The programme was called *The Real World*. Unfortunately, under the present system, this sort of equipment will remain a dream for most disabled people.

Even tried and tested things like kidney machines are unobtainable for many people.

Rarely has there been such a clear demonstration of the desperate need for a society where profit does not come before helping the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the lame to walk.

Yours fraternally
Lorna Watson
Hackney South CLP

Jobs suicide

Dear Comrades,

On the 22 November 1983 a young Glasgow girl committed suicide after learning of her impending redundancy. Andrea, aged 20, left a simple suicide note which read: 'No job, no future, sorry'.

This needless waste of life was caused by an uncaring capitalist society, motivated by greed. Is this the sort of society you wish to live in?

If this society is to be defeated the working class must unite in the labour and trade union movements, to bring closer the day when a socialist government is returned to power.

Yours fraternally
S Ferrier
Shettleston LPYS

Private health disgust

Comrades,

I felt I had to write in total disgust with some trade unions in this country who accept as part of their pay deal membership of private health insurance.

Do these unions not realise that they are in fact helping Thatcher and her cronies reach their final objective of splitting the Health

Sexist Militant

Dear Comrades,

We're told that *Militant* isn't anti-feminist, yet on the same page of *Militant* (2 December 1983) we read of the London Labour Women's Conference, and the vicious attack on Gill Abbot "chairman of Bermondsey LPYS. Isn't it time we stopped kidding ourselves that socialism will automatically bring with it equality of the sexes?"

While the fundamental sexism of referring to Ms Abbot as a man is still present in *Militant*, how can we propose that revolution will necessarily bring liberation to all who are oppressed by capitalism?

Yours
Nuala O'Sullivan
Cardiff

Service in two. A part for the people who can afford health insurance, and a part for the less fortunate in this capitalist society.

It is time that the TUC and the Labour Party openly condemn these practices and unite our unions to destroy Thatcher's plans for the Health Service. Let us all fight for a better Health Service—after all it's ours.

Fraternally
TU member,
Falkirk East CLP

Tory VIP

Dear Comrades,

Recently at work we were to have a very important visitor—none other than Tom King, Minister for 'Unemployment'.

First they ensured all the doors would be locked while he would be on the premises—perhaps he was going to try and escape. This meant that one shift had to leave early, and another had to be escorted in.

Our instructions were clearly displayed on the notice board. We must be ready to shake his hand and

answer his questions because he is renowned for wanting to meet people—so fond of meeting people that he didn't turn up! We got his deputy instead.

How can we trust the bosses when they toady to a government that is ruining British industry? What respect are we supposed to show?

The message to follow workers is clear—we will not associate with such a vicious government. The workers know what is best for them and must fight to get it.

Yours
ASTMS member

Bar room blues

Dear *Militant*,

A word in your ear. Next time you order a pint at your local hostelry spare a thought for the poor suckers behind the bar.

We suffer abuse from some, violence from others. We try to do our best for little or no thanks from either customers or management. All for the princely sum of £1.50 an hour before tax.

The hours we work are cut without notice. Boozers' labourers we are, working for a pittance because we can find nothing else.

We swap the legarthic insanity of the dole queue for the monotony of pulling pints because surely it is better than nothing. But where is our future?

The quest for profits by conglomerates like Allied Breweries has turned us into faceless liquid dispensers.

So please, next time you order a round make it: "Two pints of bitter please, and one for yourself". Believe me, with the life we lead, we really need it.

Yours
Chris Bain
Headingly Burley LP

Barking up the wrong tree

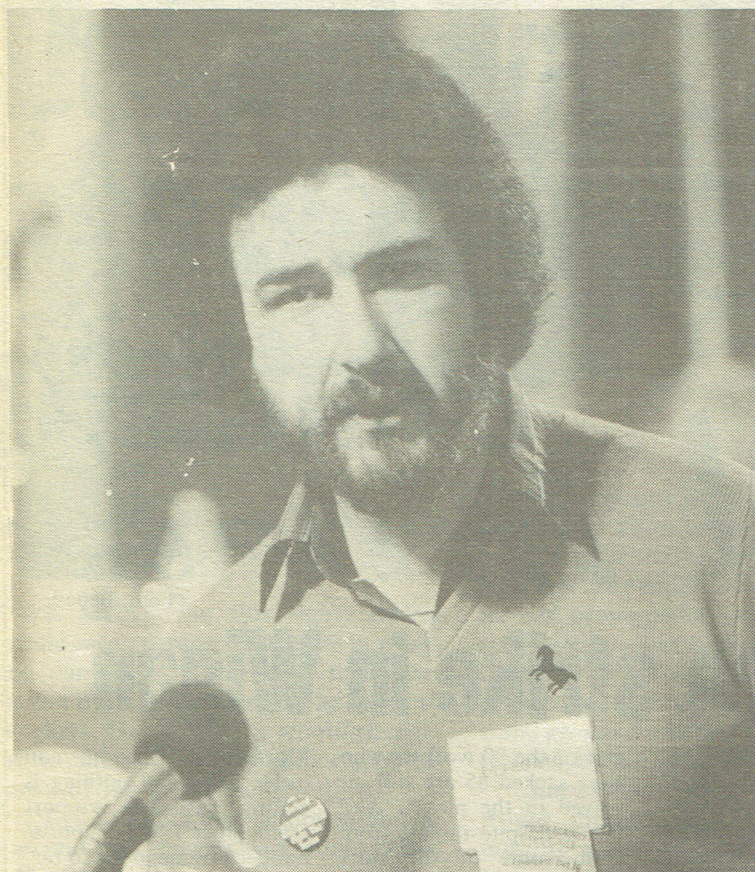
Dear Comrades,

I recently visited Barking Job Centre and I actually saw a job I could do—"One day's work/£25/Distributing leaflets in carnival". I went to the counter. The assistant dug out the information, took one look and burst out laughing.

I asked him what was wrong, and explained I'd given out thousands of leaflets, so I was a bit of an expert. He said: "I don't think you're suitable lad." and showed me the card. It said: "Must be prepared to wear a bikini". Better luck next time perhaps.

Yours fraternally
Dave Smith
Barking

Do you want a trade union?



Labour Party conference 1982—Mick Wainwright, a constituency party delegate, speaking about the need to unionise YOP.

MICK WAINWRIGHT is branch secretary of Blackpool Woolworth branch of USDAW. He was recently re-elected to the union's national Woolworth's negotiating committee with a much increased majority—to the dismay of the right wing in the union. Mick is also national secretary of the USDAW Broad Left. Here he talks (in a personal capacity) to Pat Craven:

How did your work in the union start?

I moved into Blackpool ten years ago and started working for Woolworths in the stock room, the same department I work in now. At that time the conditions were very bad. My wages were £18 a week. There was no union membership at all.

Union membership came about in Woolworths through the struggles that certain stores took on. South Wales was the prime example in the '60s. They actually went on a one-day strike just for the basic principle of joining a union. They got union recognition on a store-to-store basis.

But there were still no facilities whatsoever for unions. It was a matter of leafletting people and talking to them as they went in the doors. At our store the union organiser, along with a couple of individuals, started leafletting. It was never easy, even with people you worked with. Only a few individuals were prepared to join. At that time, six or seven years ago, joining a trade union was putting your job on the line.

Although a lot of people agreed with what we were trying to do, they were reluctant to join. They had families, mortgages, and so on. That period went on a long time. Just two or three of us, half a dozen at most, were pushing the idea that you've got to join a trade union to stand up for your rights. There wasn't anything that

wasn't a lot of activity in this branch, and there never tended to be any discussion around the problems in Woolworths. It was a branch incorporating British Home Stores and a few small jewellery shops.

If any Woolworths business came up it was in letter form; it was passed to us and we would discuss it back at the workplace. So, five or six years ago, when we had unionised three or four shops out of the seven in Blackpool and Fylde, we approached the union about setting up a Blackpool Woolworths branch, specifically to discuss the issues facing our members. After a bit of time convincing the union that our membership was sufficient to form a viable branch, they agreed.

I was elected branch secretary and the shop steward in our store was elected chairman. What we did then, as we still do now, was to hold a branch meeting every month. At the very early stage there was a lot of enthusiasm because Woolworths issues were brought to the forefront.

Since then we've got membership in all seven stores. I would say membership is no lower than 80% in any of them.

At present the big question is the mobilisation of the union and members to totally oppose the sale of Woolworths stores. Two years ago, we put a proposition to union ADM (conference) condemning all sales of stores and supporting industrial action if necessary. There have been stores sold since then, so it is obvious that the union leadership are not prepared to take it on, although it was overwhelmingly supported by the ADM.

How did you get involved in USDAW nationally?

For the last five or six years, I have been a delegate to the ADM, our annual conference. Four years ago our branch submitted a resolution on the question of the Woolworths negotiating committee not being elected; at that time it was appointed by the divisional officers and if you wanted to change the union and fight for your members, you were not appointed.

We called for all negotiating committees for retailing companies to be elected by the membership and that was granted about a year later, although probably USDAW would not say it was a result of our proposition to the conference! Two years ago I stood for the Woolworths negotiating committee and was elected by the membership to represent the whole of the North West.

No matter what committee you are on or what conference you got to, you are never representing yourself, but the membership you are delegated from. I saw at an early stage that the only way to get better conditions was to change the union into a fighting organisation. Obviously it can be a long process, but it is going on now.

What steps did you and others who share your view take to bring about this change?

For quite a few years there has been a Broad Left (BL)—people within the union who believe that the only way forward is a fighting programme and leadership.

Only three to four years ago, the leadership totally opposed a £50 minimum wage. They now have had to accept a policy of a £90 minimum wage, but say it's unrealistic, that we are never going to reach that target, and they don't intend to do anything about it.

We adopted the £70 minimum wage demand in 1979, but here we are in 1982 and shop workers still have not achieved that, although the policy of the union now is for £90. I think that is an indication of

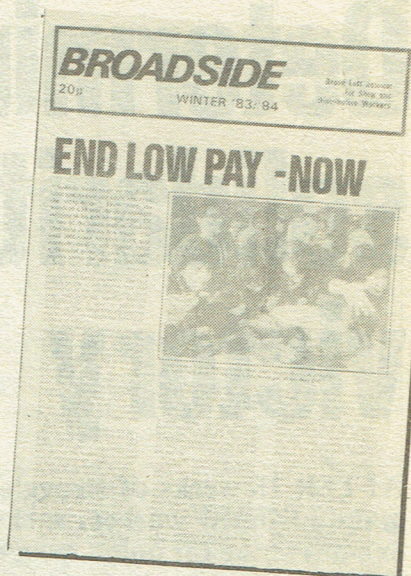
the way the leadership look upon these demands.

What we are trying to do now is to build the BL within the divisions, and, hopefully, as we do in the North West, have meetings on a monthly basis. We are organising activities around the issue of low pay, the main issue facing the members. We hope that it will generate enthusiasm among the rank and file and get more involvement within the BL.

From this work in the divisions, we are hoping that at the next elections to executive and divisional councils (DC) we will see a different result to what we have seen this time. Already on certain divisional councils there has been a considerable swing to the left. Southern division was a prime example—the DC swung to the left and the 2 executive councillors are BL supporters as well.

An example of how the union is moving is the question of the abuses that were taking place on YOP schemes. Twelve to eighteen months ago we submitted a proposition to the divisional council demanding a campaign to unionise YOP workers. A similar resolution we submitted twelve months earlier was overwhelmingly defeated but this time it was overwhelmingly carried. The union now see the need to unionise the young workers that are going to be taken on under the YTS. That is an indication of what can be achieved within one division.

We are an active branch. What we try to do is get more new members involved, more shop stewards involved, to send new members along to other bodies to try and show them that we are not



Broadside, journal of USDAW Broad Left. Order from, 14 Johnson Road, Blackpool, Lancs FY4 4DD.

just fighting by ourselves but fighting together in the labour movement. Confronting the Tory backlash it is more vital than ever to forge strong links between activists in the trade unions.

I hope as many USDAW members as possible will be at the Broad Left Organising Committee Conference in Sheffield on 24 March.

Our Broad Left has voted to support the conference and our chair, George Williamson is the BLOC organising secretary. The NGA dispute has shown the need to break the hold of the right wing and get a real fight going against the Tories and their backers.

Part 3 of a series on trade unions and the law

By David Brandon

IN 1874 a new Conservative government under Disraeli was elected, eager to woo those working class voters enfranchised by the Reform Act of 1867.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act was repealed and replaced by the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875. This once more legalised peaceful picketing and stated that no act should be punishable if done in combination unless the same act was criminal when committed by individuals.

Trade unions now seemed to have legal status and immunity when conducting industrial disputes. The Master and Servant Act was replaced by the Employers and Workmen Act, a small change in name reflecting a significant shift in the balance of class forces.

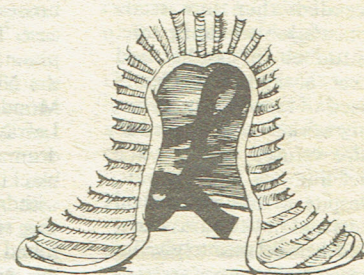
Imprisonment for breach of contract was also abolished except in some special cases involving vital public services or where there was deemed to be danger to life or property.

Moderation

The moderate leaders of the established unions of skilled workers (Lenin later described them as "Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class"), believing that the interests of labour and capital were the same, argued that all disputes could be resolved amicably by negotiation and conciliation.

"Moderation", they thought would gain acceptance and respectability for the trade unions and social prestige for themselves. Certainly, during the peaks of Britain's prosperity in the mid-nineteenth century the employers had been prepared to concede better wages and conditions to aid the 'labour aristocracy' whose skills were often in short supply.

The lessons of events, unfortunately not grasped by the moderate leaders, was that the capitalists, parliament and the courts were only



prepared to let the unions function within their own prescribed limits. The capitalists, class conscious themselves, were utterly determined to stop working class people creating and using organisations which would advance their class interests.

From the mid-1870s Britain's economic position started changing. It was caught up in international capitalism's cycle of booms and slumps. It also experienced growing competition on international markets.

The mass forces of unskilled or semi-skilled workers in key industries such as the mines, railways and docks experienced lay-offs or unemployment during periods of trade depression. Their experiences and the activity of Marxists within their leadership helped to develop a sense of trade union solidarity and class consciousness.

As is well-known, hundreds of thousands of these workers flooded into the "new" or general unions from the 1880s, and titanic battles were fought over union recognition and demands for an eight-hour maximum working day and a guaranteed minimum wage.

Even the ultra-cautious unions of skilled workers were threatened by changing technology which replaced craftsmen by cheaper unskilled machine operators. To assist 'rationalisation' the employers grouped together in federations and launched an all-out attack on both the new and more established unions.

Assisted by so-called "Free Labour Associations" they recruited an army of scabs to be used in strikes and lock-outs. In 1896 for example the Engineering Employers Federation organised a lock-out lasting nearly a year when they tried to destroy the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, winning the dispute but fortunately not destroying the union.

**Broad Left Organising Committee
National Delegate Conference
Saturday 24 March
Octagon Centre, Western Bank,
Sheffield 10**

Any bona-fide trade union body welcome to send up to five delegates. For credentials and further information contact George Williamson, Organising Secretary, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Lefray's, S. Wales

Determination solidarity victory

By Dave Reid

AFTER 18 weeks of struggle the sixty-five, mainly women workers sacked following a one-day strike for union recognition at Lefray Toys, at Aberbeeg in Gwent have won a partial victory over a Victorian boss.

The employers used the 25% unemployment level of the area to recruit scabs from the Job Centre (see *Militant* 675 and 676). The local community stunned the scabs.

Many of them were young girls, some even relatives of the sacked workers. They had no previous experience of the trade union movement and were faced with the prospect of years on the dole. With the pressure of the DHSS on their backs and no previous campaign by the movement to show its strength they were pushed into stealing the strikers' jobs.

Threat to jobs

But many local people understood that if the scabs succeeded then no trade unionist's job would be safe. A number of pubs and workers at the Leisure Centre refused to serve them. A few young workers sent by the Job Centre refused to cross the picket line.

Despite attacks by scabs on pickets and police harassment the workers refused to give in. Thirteen pickets were arrested and one girl was attacked by police so viciously she ended up in hospital. These mainly young workers are an inspiration to the whole movement. Despite weeks of intimidation they fought on.

Wide support

Rank and file trade unionists throughout Wales rallied behind the strikers. From the very start the NUM attempted to support the strike. The miners immediately gave the strikers a caravan for the picket line. The local LPYS branches and Labour Party gave assistance on the picket line, publicised the strike throughout the movement and raised cash for the strike fund. Abertillery LPYS put out a leaflet and won support on the streets.

The Welsh Labour Students organised coach-loads of students to support the picket line and collected money from the students. There were col-

lections in local factories and delegations of workers from pits and factories joined the picket line, particularly the miners and workers from Alcan, ICI and Ebbw Vale steel works. Lefray Toys were blacked by the dockers at Newport and by the shop workers' union USDAW.

Solidarity

This campaign of solidarity by the movement was decisive in forcing the employer to his knees. Only the week before settling, he said that he would never recognise the union. Representatives of the Institute of Directors were seen going into the factory to give advice.

An impending industrial tribunal was worrying the bosses, who on paper had no case. The first mass picket was planned with local lodges of the NUM, for the following Monday. And the blacking of Lefray Toys was having a dramatic effect. When the blacking and picketing was withdrawn after the agreement was signed, the factory was found to be stacked to the ceiling with toys. The strike hit the bosses when it really hurt—at Christmas.

The agreement meets most of the demands of the workers. They have won their jobs back with full seniority, and secured recognition for the union.

However, a number of question marks remain over the agreement. Because of the nature of the trade, January to April is the slackest period for the factory so normally there are lay-offs in this period. The management have used this to argue that they can't take back the strikers immediately, so now they are all laid off. They will be taken back when the jobs become available. All the workers are guaranteed their jobs back under the agreement by June.

Loop-holes

None of the workers underestimate the possibility of the agreement being broken. The boss was only



Picket line at Morris Textiles Ltd, Wigan.

Photo: Report

Textile women strike in Wigan

FOR THE eighty-five women workers, sacked for striking by Morris' Textiles Ltd of Wigan, the new year means a continued struggle against victimisation and exploitation.

Colleen Tatterall, a Tailor & Garments Workers' Union shop steward, spoke to Janice Hall and John Hunt just before Christmas:—

"We have never been on strike before. I have worked for this firm for eleven

years all together and one of the men has been here for 33 years. Over the years we have taken more and more cuts in our wages. Some of the girls are taking home £30 to £40 a week. Now we know we have to stand and fight. And we're not just fighting this employer. We're also fighting the Tory government who's anti-union legislation has given the employers confidence.

"Our morale is very high.

Out of the 90 workers who were sacked 85 are still involved in the picket. And this is despite threats from some of the staff whom are still working. One man threatened to throw a brick at us. That's why we need more support on the picket line and we are planning to call a mass picket in January.

"We are confident of victory because the blacking has been very effective. 90% of

Morris's trade is with mail order firms and nothing is getting out. The support from other trade unionists has been tremendous so far. We have had donations from workers in the NUR, ASLEF and the T&GWU and we would like to thank them all for their help." More help is needed, however. Send messages of support and donations to Mrs J Atherton, 37 Sycamore Avenue, Beech Hill, Wigan, Lancs.

concerned with getting the picketing and blacking lifted so as to move the goods. It cannot be ruled out that the company might close down at Aberbeeg and set up again in another development area.

Some of the strikers feel that the agreement leaves too many loop-holes for the employer, including a clause to allow workers back to work in order of "length of service, ability, suitability...". No one is guaranteed a job back before June and instead of going back to work as a group of trade unionists they will be going back in ones and two's

Important victory

Whether or not the agreement is honoured depends on the vigilance of the union in ensuring that the vacancies are filled by union members.

Nevertheless, Lefray workers have won an important victory for the labour movement. The strikers believed that this was the most that could be won after eighteen

weeks. Their tenacity and determination will inspire workers everywhere.

Unfortunately, the attitude of some of the union officials did not inspire anyone. After the arrest of eight pickets the TGWU district secretary said that it was a pity they ever joined the union! One regional leader of the union only turned up for 10 minutes on the picket line—to be filmed by the TV cameras—the strikers thought it had more to do with an impending election in the union than their struggle.

Workers from local factories were told to stay away from the picket line. A delegation of steel workers were sent away for—"picketing too vigorously". After 4 months of struggle the workers have won their jobs back. But as one of the strikers explained: "It is only the beginning... we've won a battle but we haven't won the war. First, we've got to get us all back in the factory and then the next battle is on wages."

Transport Workers' elections

RESULTS ARE coming in of the T&GWU General Executive Council (GEC) elections. One of the best results for the left is the re-election of *Militant* supporter Alan Quinn from the North-West with an increased majority of approximately 9,000 despite a serious campaign against him.

In Birmingham left-winger Dougie Gray unfortunately lost his seat by about 11,000 votes. In region 10 leading left Walter Greendale got more votes than all the other candidates put together. His and Alan Quinn's re-election represent major victories for the left at a time when a shift to the right is believed possible.

Carousel

IN GLASGOW another strike of young workers for recognition of their union, the TGWU, is continuing at Carousel Wafers.

Just before Christmas there was a mass picket of over 90 people—a welcome present to the strikers. Spirits were much revived: "We'll stand out here as long as it takes", said shop steward Carol Rogers.

A Glasgow East End support campaign has been set up to mobilise local support for the strikers and plans are being discussed for a lobby of the TGWU regional committee and a petition of TGWU stewards to canvass more support from the Glasgow district committee.

Donations and messages of support to: Carousel Wafers appeal, 47 Cuthalton Terrace, Parkhead, Glasgow

Residential social workers

THERE CAN be no doubt that the blame for the collapse of the residential workers' dispute, signified by the 'no' vote in the ballot for nine to five working, lies fairly and squarely at the door of the National Local Government Committee.

Unfortunately many residential workers will be demoralised and the employers at national and local levels will interpret this result as a sign of weakness. They will increase pressure on residential workers in order to destroy, or at least weaken, the original action.

Attempts to continue the dispute at this stage, though well intentioned, are doomed to failure, except to protect members from victimisation in certain branches. The recommendation to pursue the matter via ACAS sadly offers as much as any other approach, given the circumstances.

From the outset the Local

Government Committee failed to play an active role in leading the dispute. It became apparent early on that the industrial action was not being universally applied. In the main it was more forcibly applied in the urban areas by the more militant branches. With some notable exceptions the branches in the shire counties, often controlled by right wing management figures, have not supported the action too well.

This is a general problem of local government NALGO branches, and is not limited to residential workers. In recognition of this problem the group leadership should have launched a campaign in these branches to rally support for the dispute. Instead, when the actions of a portion of the branches affected produced no result they recommended escalation, ignoring the obvious point that no amount of escalation in a minority of branches can produce results in lieu

of nationally applied action.

Even when this failed to produce results, the Local Government Committee gave no serious tactical consideration to the situation. They produced the proposal of the ballot on 9 to 5 working on the day of a Delegate Meeting with no time for it to be discussed in the branches. Major blunders even affected the organisation of the ballot itself, with papers being issued, withdrawn and issued again.

This resulted in a delay in the ballot beyond the NJC meeting of 7 December, meaning that the employers would not make any constructive offer at all. With this tragic record nobody must be surprised that residential workers decided not to follow their inept leaders.

The employers' side of the NJC is split on political lines. In October, because of the unanimous support of the Labour Group, the employers only rejected negotiation on the claim by one vote. Labour councillors should have no common cause at all with the Tories in attacking trade unionists, and NALGO should abandon the

nonsense of political neutrality in order to actively seek links with Labour councils in opposition to the Tories. This will be especially important in battles against cuts which are likely in the new year.

The pattern of militancy and escalation encouraged by the leadership meant that Tory employers were under very little pressure, yet this group most vigorously opposed a settlement. NALGO should have escalated by putting pressure on the Tories, seeking at the same time to split the employers by creating a common front with sympathetic Labour councils.

Time and again these policies and tactics were backed by the residential workers, yet the committee chose to ignore them, to blunder on towards disaster. NALGO members in local government must call the group leadership to account at the Local Government Group Meeting in Brighton in June.

By Roger Bannister
(Secretary, Knowsley
NALGO Branch,
personal capacity)

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INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Shipbuilding:

Defend wages and working practices

INTERVIEW WITH AN EETPU MEMBER FROM SWAN HUNTERS ON TYNESIDE:

"WE MUST win this fight. Defeat would mean profound changes in working conditions. No longer would we have a trade. We would just be shipyard workers. Our whole life would change, we would work a three-shift system instead of the present single shift.

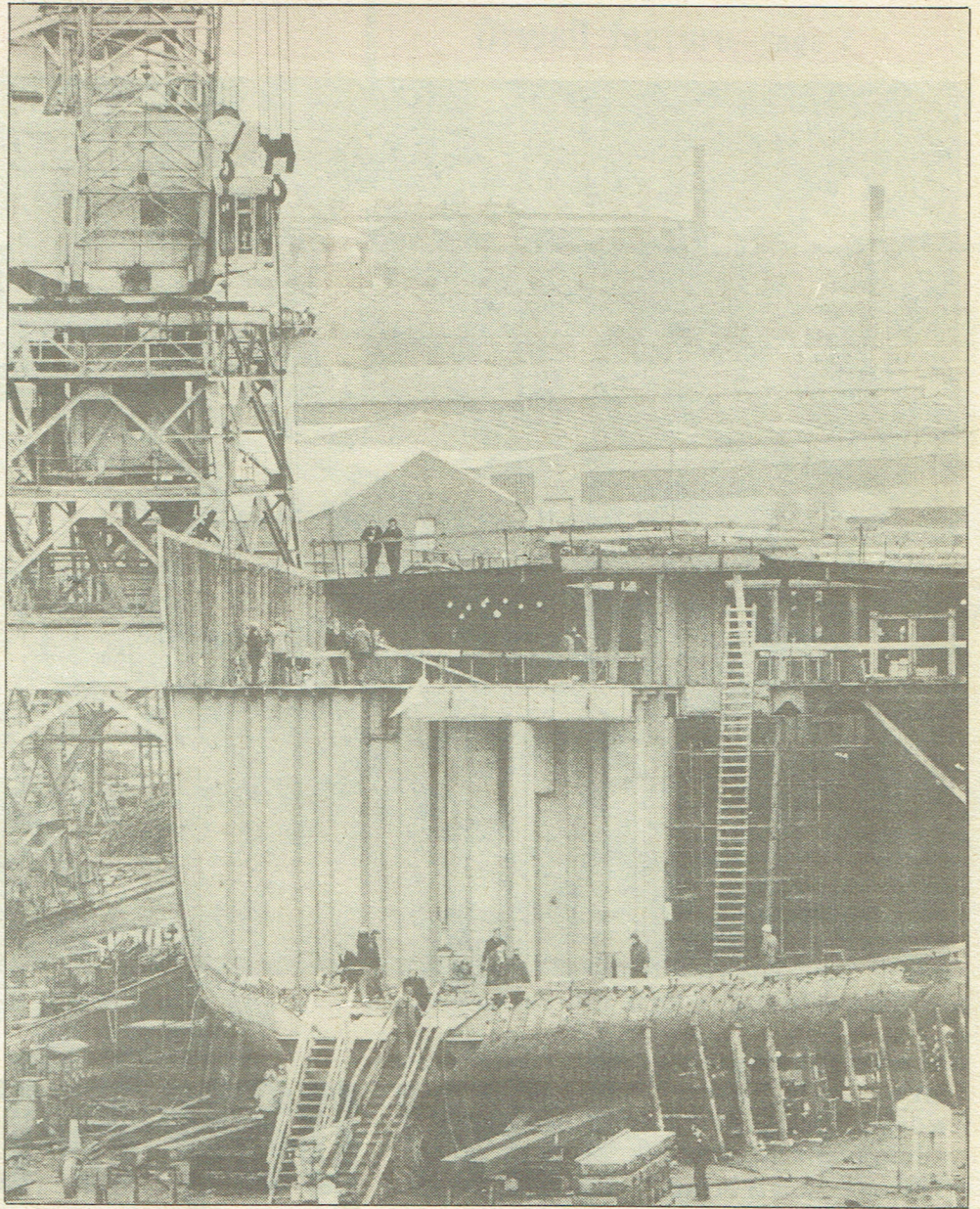
"Defeat would mean more redundancies and yard closures—we would be laid off at will—ready to be used by the bosses when they need you. There would be a special register of shipyard workers at each shipyard; when work is around you might get two or three days work.

"If you refused their offer of work your job would be threatened. Conditions would suffer. You would be scared to open your mouth in case you get sacked. We would be back to 'dog eat dog'.

"Management want a small permanent labour force and a larger floating workforce to be used when required. But they are running scared. Last week we had propaganda aplenty; they have sent letters to our homes, posters have been put up in the yards and they have even tried to organise meetings with small groups of workers, but these were resisted by the shop stewards.

"Shipbuilding News tells us a strike would threaten new orders. A few months ago they were telling us that because of the lack of orders 9,000 redundancies were necessary—its remarkable how ships can appear and disappear.

"As an electrician they could give me five days notice before I could be put on a grinder, buffing the decks, painting the decks, welding, caulking or even cleaning the toilets. In other words, electricians, or any other trade for that matter, will cease to exist."



Scott Lithgow: Take a walk on Clydeside

EVEN WITHOUT the closure of Scott Lithgow's shipyard, the Lower Clyde area is one of the most poverty stricken regions of western Europe.

Just over a decade ago the towns of Greenock and Port Glasgow were thriving industrial communities—today the woollen mills, shipyards, sugar refineries, rope works and engineering factories which once provided employment for tens of thousands lie silent and derelict. In the town of Port Glasgow 27.7% of the population are on supplementary benefit.

The Scott Lithgow shipyard, threatened with closure as a result of the cancellation of the Britoil con-

tract now provides 11% of total employment on the Lower Clyde. In addition to the 4,500 working inside the yard itself, many thousands are employed in the network of supply industries.

If Scott Lithgow were to close these would be wiped out immediately and unemployment would rise to around 50%. Moreover, hundreds of shopkeepers and other small businessmen would face instant ruin.

Catastrophe

Local community leaders and shop stewards have pleaded with Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, to

intervene and prevent the catastrophe. However, attempting to enlighten Tories about the effects of mass unemployment and poverty is like explaining advanced mathematics to an infant.

Younger who is a brewery tycoon in his spare time has already presided over the destruction of vast tracts of Scottish industry. His aptly named colleague John Butcher, Under Secretary of State for Industry, has made it clear that no more finance will be made available for Scott Lithgow yard.

The workers of Scott Lithgow believe that the government has had the yard

earmarked for closure for some time. The company who cancelled the oil drilling rig contract, Britoil, is itself a partly nationalised operation with the government controlling 49% of the shares. It is unlikely that the decision to cancel the order in mid-construction was taken without the acquiescence of the government.

Obviously there have been some problems in converting Scott Lithgow from a shipbuilding yard to an oil rig operation. However closure of the yard would be utterly insane not only because of the disastrous social consequences but also from an economic point of view.

When the Tories and British Shipbuilders management pillory shipyard workers because the industry is supposed to be unprofitable they forget to mention that only 25% of the cost of building a ship or an oil rig is determined inside the shipyard. Companies which supply the raw materials, the tools, the cranes, the fuel and the furniture and the banks who give the credit, all of these make colossal profits out of the industry.

UCS example

The idea of throwing millions of pounds of elaborate technology onto the junk heap and thousands of highly skilled craftsmen onto the dole queues is further evidence of the complete chaos of British capitalism. With shipyard workers once again moving into action to defend

their wages and working conditions the question of opposition to redundancies and closures must be raised as part of the general struggle.

In 1971 and '72 the historic Upper Clyde shipyards work-in inspired the building of a mass movement which reduced to rubble the so-called 'lame duck strategy' of the Heath government.

Such a movement can be recreated around the question of defending shipbuilding on the Lower Clyde—particularly if a viable alternative were campaigned for by bodies such as the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Scottish Trade Union Congress. Such an alternative would have to include a call for the nationalisation under workers' control and management of shipping lines and supply industries and the integration and reorganisation of the entire industry.

Bank workers strike

THE FIRST national bank workers' strike for eleven years took place on 23 December.

It was provoked by the banking employers' refusal to grant the bank workers their annual half-day's Christmas leave.

Bitterness

Redundancies, wage increases below the level of price rises and decreased promotion prospects, alongside the big banks making fantastic profits of £1720 million in 1982; all have led to bitterness amongst bank workers. Six years previously a union ballot for strike action over the same issue was heavily defeated.

Events at the Manchester Nat. West. 35 branch demonstrate the change in mood. Nat. 35 is a 'prestige' branch in the city centre. Union membership has risen from 30% to 66% over the last three years. However, while many

of the employees are ordinary working class youth the bank workers have long been loyal to their management.

Intimidation

In many parts of the country bank workers were unwilling to support the strike when faced with intimidation, the blighting of promotion hopes and all the old bank managerial attitudes. And while some of the smaller banks conceded over-time pay and holidays in lieu to avoid the strike, the big five banks clearly aimed to test out the strength of the union.

Nat. 35, the strongest of Nat. West. Manchester branches, became a local test of

strength, with other branches watching to see what would happen. Local and national management also fought to crush the Nat. 35 strike.

For many bank employees it was the first time they had seen the real, hard face of management. Workers were individually interviewed and asked not to strike. This intimidation was accompanied by rumours of strikers losing 4½-days pay, losing promotion and the office reps being sacked. Junior staff were even told to consult their parents as to whether they should strike.

A Manchester victory

At one stage the office rep's union facility time was cancelled and he was ordered not to talk to staff even in his lunch-break. When all this didn't break the workers' will the manager called a staff meeting to put his case. But this meeting only hardened the workers' feelings.

On the day of the strike the workers were apprehensive but when at 12 am only 32 of the 62 staff were left on the job this represented a great victory. They jubilantly marched off to the local pub, where even many who'd not come out on strike gave their support to the strikers. For example, one woman was in tears because her husband had forbidden her to strike.

Those women who stayed at work were each given a box of chocolates by a clearly shaken management, the men were given a bottle of wine! Nine new people joined the union. This important victory could have been mirrored all over the country with a fighting leadership.

Unfortunately, there was little national support from the union full-time officials. With no national leaflet to explain the case and discouragement of picketing—branches like Nat 35 were left to fight virtually alone and isolated.

The Broad Left must now use the experience of the strike to prepare for action on the 1984 pay claim and build itself as an alternative leadership in the struggles which bank workers face.

EETPU London Press branch

AFTER TWELVE months of bitter internal strife the tide appears to be turning in favour of those electricians fighting the attempted breakaway move in the EETPU London Press branch.

The Hull and Bridlington agreements were clearly in the path of any inter-union transfer. Many of our members were convinced by strongly-voiced arguments that this was not the case.

Transfer rejected

Following the inevitable rejection of the transfer by the TUC disputes committee the argument was then put that SOGAT 82 would, despite the committee's findings, still accept Fleet Street electricians into membership. This again was extremely unlikely as the TUC's response would have been to expel SOGAT 82.

After several meetings the SOGAT executive voted 26 to 9 to reject those members who have been issued SOGAT 82 cards by the SOGAT 82 London Machine branch. Again a new argument was used. The

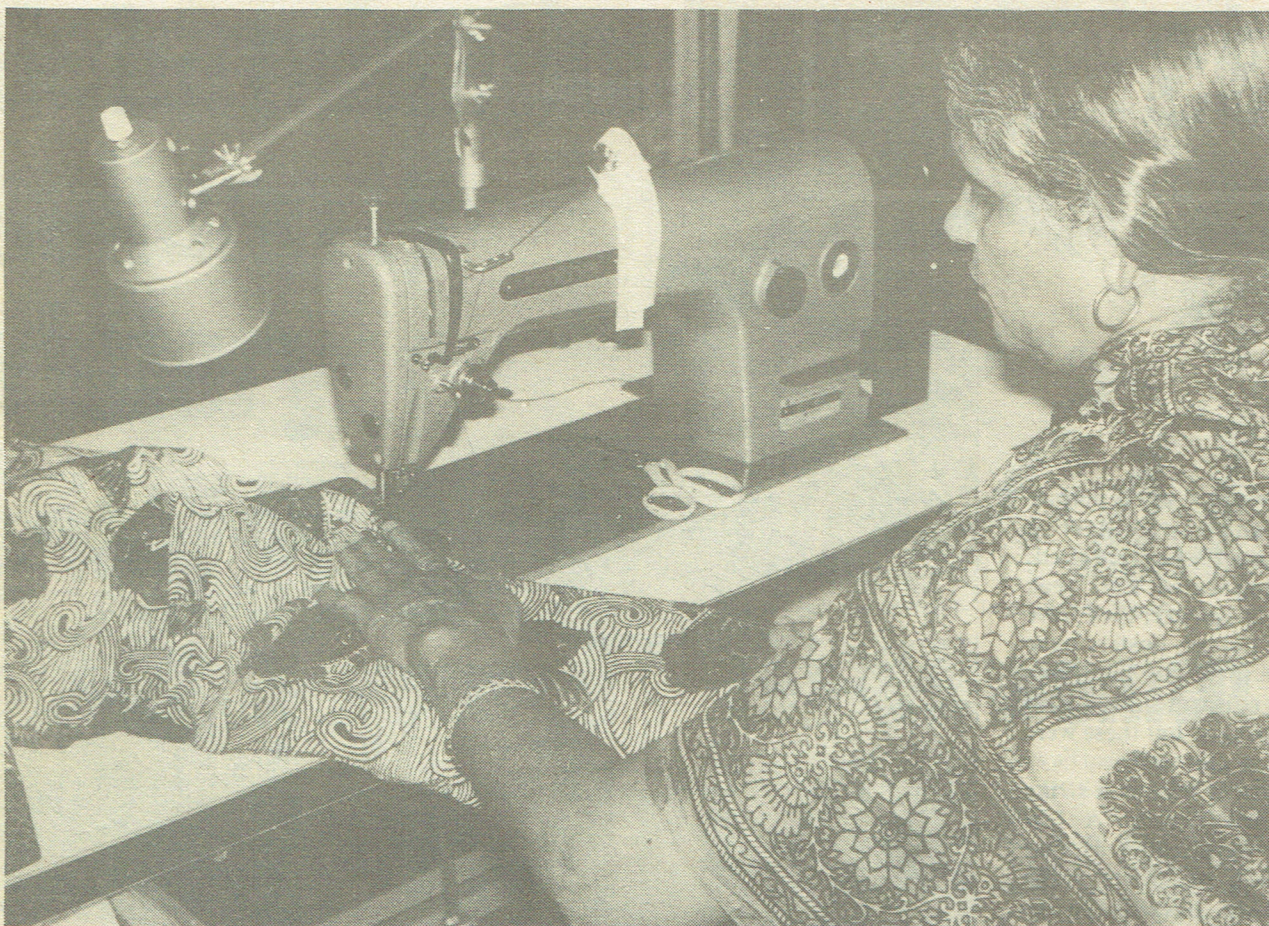
breakaway members were told that SOGAT 82 London Machine branch would take them into membership despite the decisions of the TUC and the SOGAT executive, and if necessary would go it alone to form a new union.

Closed shop

Many members are now getting dangerously near to being non-trade unionists because of arrears of contributions. This in itself is a direct challenge to the closed shop principle which helps to maintain wages and conditions in Fleet Street.

Many other members are now returning to the EETPU and following the recent decision of the Daily Express chapel to remain within the EETPU it is likely that many more will return to help recreate the unity that we once had within the London Press branch.

By Derek Spencer
(Father of Chapel, Daily Express, EETPU)



Women workers in sweat shops suffer the worst low pay.

Photo: Militant

MASS unemployment hits every worker, not just the millions on the dole. The recession is being used to cut the wages and conditions of people still in work.

Bit by bit the Tories and the employers are eating away at living standards. They started with the huge number of young workers without a job.

Last April unemployed 16 and 17 year-olds living with their parents got a cut of £3 a week in benefit. In April 1984, 18 to 20 year olds in the same category will suffer a cut of £3 to £21.45 a week.

This reduction will of course make the "alternatives" of the Youth Training Scheme and Young Workers Scheme look more attractive. The bosses would love that. Instead of having to pay about £5000 a year to train a first year apprentice, a YTS trainee gets his or her allowance of £25 a week paid by the government.

Slave labour

Dave Nellist MP has pointed out that even if the original level of allowance in 1978 had just kept pace with wages trainees would now be paid £37.60 a week. Slave labour is getting cheaper. Action by the unions has forced some employers to top up this allowance to a more realistic figure but most bosses get free labour.

The government also encourage low pay in the Young Workers Scheme where the bosses are given £15 if they employ a young worker for under £42 a week.

Low pay for school leavers depresses all wages. A *Panorama* programme on BBC TV before Christmas gave example after example of how employers pay their staff, quite illegally, way below minimum rates. Women workers were here the main victims, often getting £1 or 80p an hour.

Many low paid workers are covered by Wages Coun-

Low pay a threat to all workers

cils, set up supposedly to ensure poorly organised workers earned a survival wage. The government wants to abolish these Councils.

They have to revoke an international agreement and can't do that before 1985. But already wages councils are flouted by greedy employers, not all of them hole in the corner sweat shops.

Most of the 390,000 registered workplaces only have to fill in a questionnaire on whether they underpay their staff. They rely on the bosses' conscience to answer accurately!

But even if they get a visit, little happens. Of 23,000 establishments visited in 1981 no fewer than 9000, that is 40%, paid some of their workers below the legal minimum. Only seven cases were taken to court.

Many capitalist economists justify this by

saying low pay will bring back jobs. Michael Beenstock of City University Business School appearing on *Panorama*, argued for a 6% pay cut to halve the dole queues, coupled of course with reduced unemployment benefit.

No new jobs

But these arguments are nonsense. When some old wages councils were abolished, pay went down, the bosses' profits went up, but no new jobs were forthcoming!

Government policies are encouraging further pay cuts. For example, after privatisation of contract cleaning in Liverpool Inland Revenue, the new bosses introduced a cut of 12% to £1.50 an hour. The unions fear privatisation will lead to cut-throat competition to

undercut costs.

Under the Tories more and more workers have been forced into real poverty. Fifteen million people in Britain are estimated to have wages within 40% of the absolute poverty line. How many more would there be if the Tories had their way?

Low paid workers are not just accepting poverty, they have been fighting for a living wage, for example, in the health service and now in the shipbuilding industry where nearly two thirds of workers rely on some form of benefit.

Poverty pay affects the wages and conditions of all workers. The labour movement should have a New Year resolution for 1984—to end unemployment and low pay and the government which encourages them.

By
Roger Shriver

Blackburn Labour expulsions meeting

SIX BLACKBURN *Militant* supporters have now been summoned by the right-dominated Executive Committee to a special General Management Committee meeting on Monday 9 January.

The EC is recommending that the six should be expelled on the basis of totally spurious allegations made in a report drawn up over a year ago by Michael

Gregory, a stooge who claims to be a *Militant* "defector".

The six will be allowed only five minutes each, with ten minutes to answer questions, to reply to Gregory's voluminous pack of lies. Their detailed written reply has still not been circulated to all GMC delegates.

As with the EC meeting which recommended the expulsions, Labour Party members and trade unionists

will be lobbying the GMC to express opposition to this political witch-hunt and the undemocratic methods being used to carry it through.

The six appeal to as many comrades as possible to turn out with LPYS, LP and TU banners and placards. Assemble at 6.45 pm at the Rear Entrance of the Old Town Hall (near the "Borough Arms" adjacent to main shopping centre), Blackburn.

Donations

(Continued from front page)

testament to the enormous growth in influence and confidence of the *Militant* newspaper and its supporters in 1983—the year of Karl Marx's Centenary and of the expulsions of Marxists from the Labour Party.

Wheeler-dealers on the Stock Exchange can make millions overnight with the rise and fall of stocks and shares. Armed thugs can steal thousands of pounds in a few minutes. But it takes hard, honest work and sacrifice by tens of thousands of workers to build a Marxist paper.

As the rich get richer, only the poor can fight for the poor. Even if you're feeling hard-up after Christmas remember the worst is yet to come, unless the labour movement acts to end the rule of the bosses!

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know to start 1984 as they mean to finish it—fighting for a socialist future with the paper that never gives up! Say it with cash!!!

By Clare Doyle

Action to save GLC

A DAY strike and demonstration has been called for January 24 against the cuts and the Tories' plans to abolish the Greater London Council.

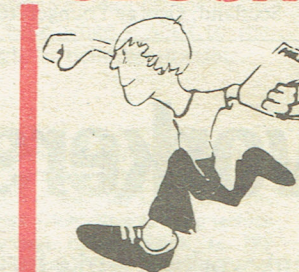
The action has been called by the Campaign Committee of 'Democracy for London', which includes representatives from the GLC Staff Association, GLC and the Inner London Education Authority NALGO, and the Trade Union Joint Negotiating Committee, which represents the 16 unions in the GLC, from the Fire Brigades Union to school caretakers.

The strike call is getting a good response in the education sector, and the GLC NALGO executive have sanctioned the action.

However, many union activists feel that there has not, as yet, been enough serious campaigning work amongst rank and file trade unionists to build support for the action. This must now begin in earnest, to ensure the action is a success and warns the Tories that their attempts to tamper with the democratically elected GLC will not be tolerated.

(See pages 3 and 5)

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