

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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## 8,000 Talbot Jobs at Risk :

# CAR WORKERS FIGHT FOR JOBS

Photo: Militant



Talbot workers lobby Parliament on 9 December .  
Over 5,000 jobs have gone since Chrysler was taken over .

### A 16-hour working week and two weeks' holiday at Christmas and New Year — a glimpse of a socialist future?

No. This is happening today in Thatcher's Britain..... well, it is if you work for the Talbot Motor Company.

It's not that the hard-nosed owners, the Peugeot-Citroën group, have suddenly acquired philanthropic tendencies. It's just that they can't sell their cars.

Over the last twelve months, nearly 3,000 workers have been sacked at the Linwood plant in Scotland. Many workers see the one-day and two-day week at the plant as a "lead in" to the "Buroo".

Like most car plants in Britain, Linwood is years behind the Japanese, Germans and French in its production facilities. The only robots you are likely to see here are dressed in pin-stripe suits.

In a survey taken a few years ago, the average age of plant in Japanese car factories was three years, in Germany five, and in Britain 14 years old. To put these figures in a more concrete way,

Toyota of Japan will produce more cars than the whole of the British motor industry next year.

Already, over one third of Britain's car production next year is built and either sitting at the dealers' or stock-piled.

This month the share of the British car market taken by foreign manufacturers is below half for the first time in several years. BL has increased its share with the Metro.

But the car makers are fighting over a shrinking market, and the recent expressions of anger at BL Longbridge show workers will not go on sacrificing their living standards for ever—especially when they are blamed for every failure of the bosses and management.

Talbot's position, however, is the most precarious of all. With just

## Faced with bold action bosses can be forced to back down!

over 5% of the British market and £20 million losses in the first six months of 1980, the prospects for Talbot workers are extremely bleak.

As 'Militant' said at the time of the Peugeot take-over from Chrysler, "changing one group of exploiters for another is no answer for the workers and their families."

While the French bosses continually defer a statement on the future of their British car plants, the shop stewards at Linwood have initiated a campaign to fight any further sackings.

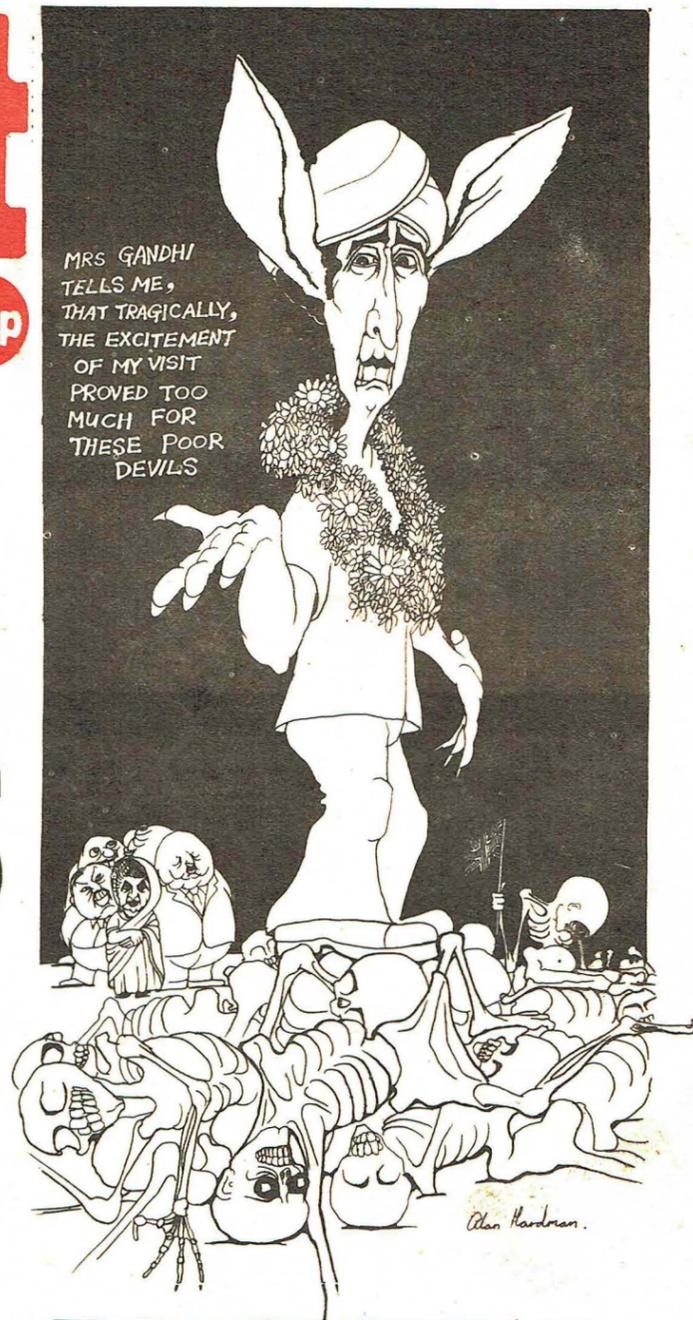
A recent meeting in a local hall attracted over

seven hundred workers from the plant. We agreed to lobby parliament on 9 December and raised over £3,000 to finance it.

The response was overwhelming—workers from other Talbot plants, including Stoke [Coventry] where 380 redundancies are due this Friday joined us. 300 of us, representing staff and production workers, did some plain talking to MPs.

The stewards have given a positive lead, and the workers in the plant are responding. With unemployment over 13% in the Strathclyde area [and it is much higher

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MRS GANDHI TELLS ME, THAT TRAGICALLY, THE EXCITEMENT OF MY VISIT PROVED TOO MUCH FOR THESE POOR DEVILS

### PLUNDER WOMAN MUST GO!

SOCIALIST CARTOONS DRAWN FOR MILITANT BY ALAN HARDMAN



Now, even more of Alan Hardman's cartoons are available in the latest cartoon book "Plunder Woman must Go!" An ideal Christmas present. Details see advert page 13.

## OUR APPEAL

My response to the "Children in Need" appeal, introduced by Terry Wogan on BBC television last Friday, is to send a cheque for Militant's Fighting Fund.

The BBC's marathon appeal made me furious. Example after example showed how children are suffering under this rotten system.

Dozens of trade union "personalities" made appeals for particular charities. It was so patronising, playing on the good nature of ordinary people—urging them to send in their hard-earned pennies.

Surely any decent society would have the best facilities available for the young?

"Children in Need" follows the mammoth "Telethon" appeal put on by London's Thames television recently.

By Louise Birch

But what is most worthy of support? Children who needed hearing aids costing £900, holidays for children in high unemployment areas of Wales, research into "cot deaths," kidney and heart disease—or what?

To put this into perspective, £3½ million was raised, yet on Monday the Tories cut hundreds of millions from public expenditure.

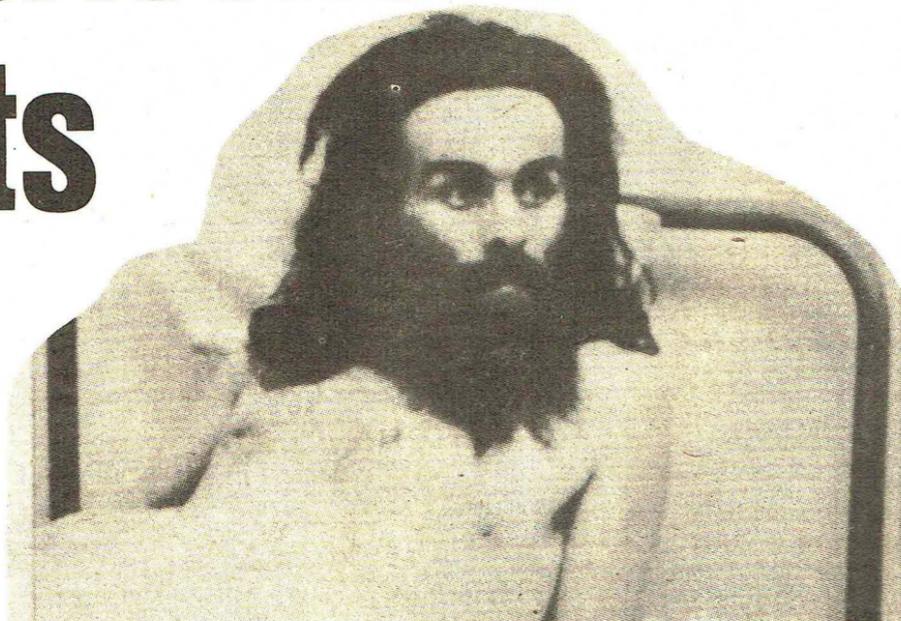
By their own reckoning 1¼ million people will be worse off—not the better off, but the long-term

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# H-BLOCKS

Editorial  
Comment

## Labour must fight for prisoners' rights



**By the time this article is printed, if the H-block hunger strike is still continuing, all of the seven hunger strikers will be close to death.**

By Christmas, unless the issue is resolved, all seven will almost certainly be dead. The condition of the three women prisoners in Armagh who have joined the hunger strike will be critical.

Such an outcome would spark off a fresh wave of bloody fighting on the streets of Northern Ireland. It would increase sectarian tensions to an extent the province has not had to face for years.

The Tory government, which is facing a storm of opposition to its reactionary anti-working class measures, has so far been able to take an intransigent, ruthless stand on H-blocks.

This is undoubtedly because most workers recoil in horror from the violence which has torn Northern Ireland apart for the last decade. The strife arises from decades of exploitation of Ireland by British capitalism, and from the deliberate fostering of sectarianism in accordance with the "divide-and-rule" policies of the British ruling class.

But far from undermining and defeating imperialism as the Provos claim, the tactics of individual terrorism have played into the hands of the state, allowing the tops of the army, the police, and the judiciary to strengthen all the means of repression.

The shootings and bombings, with the killing and maiming of ordinary workers, including in Britain, have outraged workers, providing successive governments - Tory and regrettably Labour, too - with all the excuses they need to intensify repression.

It is vital that the labour movement takes up the issue of repression and prison conditions in Northern Ireland. Firstly, the atrocious conditions in H-blocks and Armagh are a denial of the most elementary human and democratic rights which all prisoners must be entitled to. Secondly, the repressive methods now being perfected in Northern Ireland could in the future be directed against

**The labour movement must take up the issue of the H-Block prisoners on a non-sectarian class basis**

labour's own ranks.

If the H-block issue, moreover, is left in the hands of the sectarian organisations, the explosive repercussions of the deaths of hunger strikers will also rebound on the labour movement. Only the labour movement, through policies of class unity, can provide a way out.

The removal in 1976 of certain rights enjoyed by Republican and Loyalist prisoners—granted by a previous Tory government when they feared the growth of a mass movement on the streets—began the H-block protest. The prisoners refused to do prison work or to wear prison clothes. The authorities retaliated by imposing a regime designed to break the prisoners, morally and physically.

Since then, every protest action by the prisoners has been answered in a most brutal fashion.

From this emerged the worst prison conditions in any advanced country. The H-block inmates have been forced to put up with conditions which no prisoner, no matter who, should have to endure.

They have been locked in their cells 24 hours a day, with no furniture and no clothes. They have been denied access to reading and writing materials, to TV or to any physical or mental pursuit.

They have been subjected to beatings, to degrading strip searches, which include the probing of the anus, and have been denied proper medical treatment.

In Armagh one woman prisoner, Pauline McLaughlin, has lost almost half her body weight. She now weighs 4½ stone. Her limbs are so thin that she cannot receive injections, because the needle hits the bone. Yet she has repeatedly been denied proper medical treatment.

Irrespective of how the situation developed, this brutal treatment must be oppos-

ed. These prisoners, as with prisoners in general, are entitled to reasonable living conditions while they serve their sentences.

The hunger strike is a desperate attempt to break the four and a half year old H-block deadlock. As one woman prisoner in Armagh put it: "surely a more dignified death than having to die a daily death in the filthy cells of Armagh jail".

The granting of decent conditions would resolve a large part of the issue which has given rise to this hunger strike. But to advocate that these prisoners should be granted reasonable living conditions is not in any way to condone or support the policies or methods of the Provisional IRA. The Provisionals, particularly if they now step up their bombing campaign and especially if they do so in Britain, will make it all the easier for Thatcher to smash the hunger strike.

Decent conditions for those in H-block and Armagh—and for prisoners generally—this was the gist of the resolution recently passed by the National Executive of the British Labour Party. All sections of the labour and trade union movement should immediately press the government to implement the terms of this resolution for all prisoners, including both the Republican and the Loyalist prisoners in Northern Ireland.

The main demands of this resolution were: for the right of the prisoners to wear their own clothes; to receive two food parcels and two visits a week; to negotiate a choice of work, training and to proper educational facilities; and to belong to trade unions and receive trade-union rates of pay.

If a prison regime along these lines were established the hunger strike might be called off.

The labour movement, however, cannot give its

support to the demands for "political status" or "prisoner of war" status for all Republican prisoners.

Before the hunger strike began, not even the Provo leadership was calling for this, such was their isolation. The desperate tactics adopted by the prisoners leading up to the strike, were, on the one hand, a reflection of the intense pressure of the prison regime, but on the other hand, an indication of their isolation from an effective movement of support from outside.

In the absence of a real lead from the labour movement when the present troubles began, thousands of young people turned to the blind alley of Republicanism and individual terrorism. Mistakenly, they believed they were fighting British imperialism. The Provo's campaign has carried many of these young recruits into the jails. Undoubtedly, many of the Republican prisoners have been framed under Northern Ireland's special laws.

However, because of the sectarian policies of the Provisionals and the Loyalist organisations, it is difficult to raise the demand for "political status" in the labour movement, and even more difficult to get support. A campaign for "political status" would split the trade unions in NI on sectarian lines, and would receive little or no support in Britain.

Nevertheless, it has to be recognised that the actions of many Republican and Loyalist prisoners arise from the special, terrible conditions which have existed in Northern Ireland for decades. They are not "ordinary" prisoners, which was recognised by the Tories themselves when they granted "special category" status to prisoners, a number of whom are still classified as such in the Maze prison.

Many should therefore be seen as political prisoners. However, there is widespread

opposition to granting such status to cold-blooded sectarian murderers. On both sides of the sectarian divide, there have been those who seized on the troubles as an opportunity to intensify sectarian hatred through gruesome murders.

It is therefore impossible to give support for "political status" for all prisoners in the H-block. The entire question of repression and political status must be taken up by the labour movement in its own class terms. The movement must intensify the campaign for decent conditions for the prisoners in the H-block and in Armagh, and at the same time initiate its own review of prisoners' cases to decide according to class criteria which prisoners should be regarded as political prisoners.

Many of the H-block inmates, Loyalist and Republican, are in prison as a result of the systematic frame-up and torture possible under the special so-called "judicial system" in Northern Ireland. When internment-without-trial was abolished by the Tories in 1973, it was replaced by a new system of "internment" through mock trial, which continues today. Emergency legislation allows for seven-day detention periods without charge.

The governments' own Bennet Report and the reports of Amnesty International have confirmed that beatings and torture while in police custody have been common. The most notorious case was of a young trade union activist, Brian Maguire, who was found dead in a police cell in Castlereagh barracks during one such interrogation period.

The purpose of this police ill-treatment is to extort 'confessions' which between 70% - 90% of cases are the sole evidence of guilt.

Pauline McLaughlin, for instance, was convicted on the basis of such a confession which she signed and which was accepted as evidence, despite the fact that she could neither read nor write.

At the infamous "Diplock" courts, the word of the police or a signed—or sometimes even unsigned—confession, has been enough "proof" to secure a remarkably efficient 94% conviction rate.

Alongside a fight for decent conditions for all prisoners, therefore, the movement should conduct a review of the cases of all those who have been convicted on offenses arising from the N.I. troubles, whether or not such convictions were obtained in "Diplock" or jury courts.

On the basis of such a review, the movement should then decide who is in prison solely on the basis of frame-up or torture and who, by its own standards, could be viewed as a political prisoner.

The movement would then campaign for the release of these people - making it clear that it will never fight on behalf of vicious sectarian murderers.

The hunger strike is giving renewed license to bigots. South Belfast Unionist MP, Robert Bradford has proclaimed that convicted IRA men should be regarded as political prisoners—and should therefore all be shot as spies for treason.

It is urgent that the labour movement and trade unions puts a stop to such sectarian venom, by posing the issue in a class manner, uniting Catholic and Protestant workers against all forms of repression.

**Merseyside  
LPYS  
Hammer  
the  
Tories!**

**"You are all jobs - I bet most of your mothers are professionals..."**

**This insulting taunt hurled at the Young Socialist by a Young Conservative summed up the Tories' contempt for working class youth. It also reflected their political bankruptcy.**

Over 250 packed into the AUEW hall, Liverpool, for this debate between Merseyside Labour Party Young Socialists and the Young Tories. There were only about twenty-five Tories, most of them clearly identified by their college scarves.

The meeting showed the massive potential for growth of the LPYS on Merseyside following the 29 November demonstration. Many of the LPYS supporters were attending their first meeting. They lost no time in showing their hatred for the Tories, jeering their speaker before he had said a word!

**"When's the next meeting?"**

When the Tory went on to proclaim: "we are not a class party," almost the whole hall erupted into laughter. Another Tory, attempting to explain the 'workings' of capitalism asked, "Who gains when Freddy Laker runs cheap flights?" (As if the unemployed are jet-setting to America!) Dozens of people shouted back the one answer he obviously wasn't expecting: "Freddy Laker".

Another Tory had half the hall on their feet in anger when he calmly "explained" that "everyone knew unemployment would be a price of reducing unemployment."

At the end of the meeting—during which members of the LPYS showed that socialism is the only answer to the problems of youth—people were literally queuing up to fill in LPYS membership cards. Dozens had already joined up in the previous week. "When's the next meeting?" was what most were asking.

Afterwards, the arguments spilled out onto the streets. Groups of 20 and 30 youth surrounded pale-faced Tories and explained to them in no uncertain terms the realities of life for working-class youth.

The meeting and the mood showed that Merseyside youth are burning with anger and hatred at the Tories, and eagerly searching for an alternative.

The LPYS, boldly campaigning for socialist policies, is all set to grow dramatically in the next period.

**By Josie Aitman**

(LPYS NC member, North West Region)

# DON'T LET THEM DESTROY DUNDEE

"The Tories must be told that Dundee will not accept, nor tolerate, further reductions in our basic industries, more unemployment and the decimation of our city.

"We must act quickly—to wait can only mean further closures and redundancies."

These words are from the leaflet calling on the workers of Tayside to demonstrate on Wednesday 17 December in support of the fight to save shipbuilding at the Robb Caledon yard. Four marches from all corners of the city will converge on the city square for a mass rally.

As the leaflet explains, "The Caledon campaign can be the launching pad to revitalise the industrial base of Dundee. The fight will only be successful if the labour and

trade union movement, and the community support it. Let us take the first steps now."

**By Pat Craven**  
(Dundee Labour Party)

## Rising Unemployment

These are the grim statistics of Dundee's crisis: Unemployment in October:

Total: 12,514  
Youth unemployment: 1,014  
Job vacancies: 304."

For every job lost in shipbuilding, another three ancillary jobs are lost. The loss of the largest employer of apprentices in the area, the loss of £6 million to the economy of Dundee, means these skills are lost forever. Taken with the collapse of our other basic industries, this, if it is allowed to continue, will reduce Dundee to an industrial wasteland.

The small concessions which have been forced out of British Shipbuilders because

of the militant stand taken by the Caledon workforce have given heart to the whole movement. Although the yard's future is far from guaranteed, there can be no doubt that it would by now have no future at all if it wasn't for the determination of the workers to save their jobs.

## Labour Council

Parallel with the fight to save jobs is a campaign in the city to support the stand taken by the newly-elected Labour council against the

Tory government.

They have made these promises:

We will not sell your council houses;

We will not raise your rents;

We will not cut your services;

We will not create any redundancies.

In support of the council, the Labour Party is holding factory gate and shopping centre meetings. A leaflet being distributed throughout the city spells out the case.

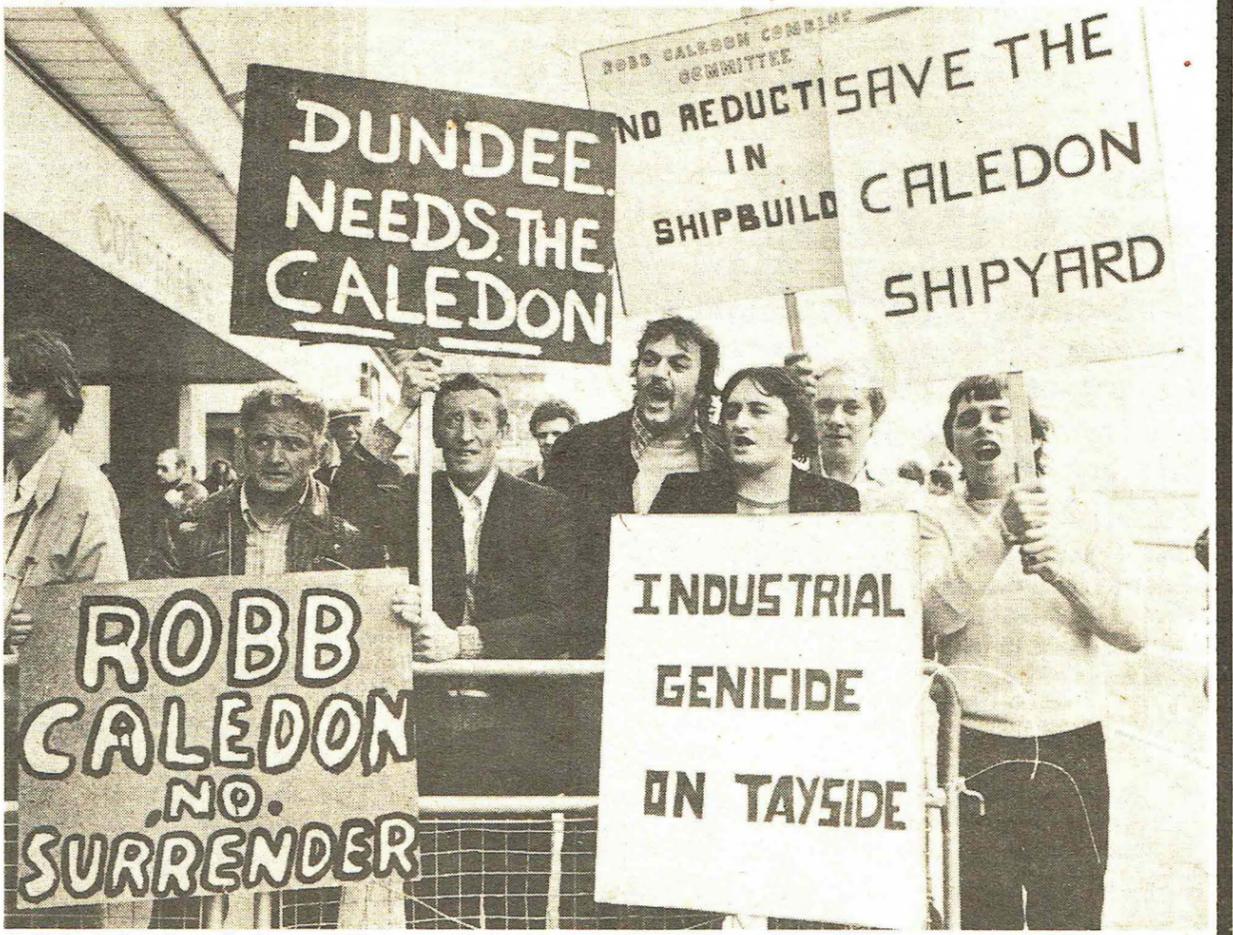
"Unemployment is the highest since 1937—yet they demand more jobs be axed. The cost of living has gone

through the roof—yet they demand a £3 a week rent rise!

"Thousands of families need a better house—yet they want to sell off the best council houses, leaving the poorest, oldest and dampest for the rest of us.

"Out with Mrs Thatcher... defend your Labour council!"

On 17 December, Dundee will be setting a fine example to the whole of the rest of the labour movement. They will be demonstrating how this reactionary anti-working class government can be driven out, starting by the mass mobilisation of the organised labour movement on the streets.



Lobbying Labour Party Conference, 1979

Photo: Militant

# Next stop - Hampstead dole queue?

The tide of unemployment continues to go up mercilessly, current rates rising at over 100,000 per month.

The economic pundits all expect the horrific total of three million to be reached before the end of 1981. With this growing tide come the soul sisters Poverty and Desperation. What future is there for workers under this system? In January 1981 one man who will become just another reason for fighting the Tories is Roy Jenkins, the President of the EEC Commission.

Way back in 1976 when Roy deserted the Labour Party to take on this four-year stop-gap job, he obviously thought that things would be better by 1981, and when the time came he could pick something else up.

Roy even tried last November to forestall redundancy by raising a job creation project—in the form of a new "Centre Party"; as yet nothing has come of it.

So for Roy life will become a depressing search for another job. Slowly but surely he'll fall foul of the unemployed syndrome of sleeping well beyond mid-day to miss breakfast; sleeping is not eating, and you've got to eke out every penny you've got.

**By Bob Wylie**

Mind you, for the first three years of unemployment Roy will have more pennies than most who sign on—two million, eight hundred and forty thousand pennies each year to be exact.

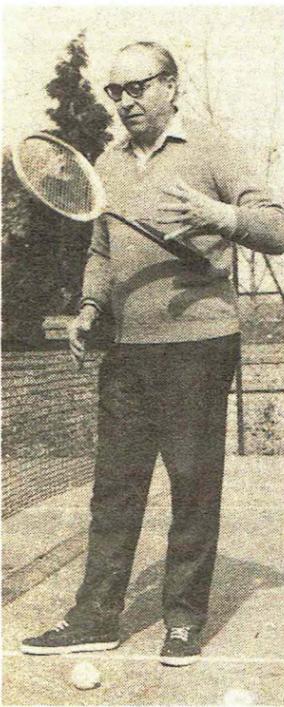
You see—and I'm sure you understand—the dole can be a traumatic experience for a man who has been used to earning £56,000 a year since 1976. Think of the tax problems for a start.

Thankfully, however, the EEC pays Roy a "transition allowance" of £28,400 for three years after he's been thrown on the stones.

There's still the worry, of course, of whether he will have managed to put enough by for old age. But Roy can take his head out of the gas oven, because our sources ('The Times', 2 December) reveal that Roy will get a life pension of ten grand a year when he is sixty-five.

Mind you, is that much after a lifetime of sacrifice for the movement, especially with inflation clocking the way it is?

When Roy's farewell speech was reported on the telly last week, millions probably wondered about the quiet courage



On his way to Centre Court of the man.

Going out to the unknown, lifting his packet for maybe the last time.... Yet not a word about his predicament, only praise for the European monetary system and the directly elected—not to mention very costly and completely impotent—European parliament.

Another statistic added to the figures of the grim reaper Thatcher. The plight of Roy Jenkins should be a symbol to encourage us all to sort out the sorry state of things and build a socialist Britain.

# UNITE AGAINST EDUCATIONAL BARBARIANS

"Boyson?—He's just a cave-man." This comment on the Tories' attack on education by Peter Doyle (District Officer of the public workers' union NUPE) brought enthusiastic applause at last Wednesday's student demonstration in Newcastle.

The demonstration called by Tyne and Wear Area NUS attracted over 2,000 students, with the largest and most militant turn-outs from the Further Education and Technical Colleges. Although the

demonstration had been called to protest against Boyson's attack on Student Union autonomy, the anger of working-class students made the march a massive anti-Tory demonstration.

Despite the views of some students union officials that the demonstration was "non-political", the mass of students disagreed. Newcastle echoed to chants of "Maggie, Maggie—Out, out, out," and "What do we want?" "A union." "When

do we want it?" "Now."

At the rally afterwards Peter Doyle called for the bringing down of the Tory government. Peter said that the attacks on students' unions will be developed into attacks on all unions, and called on all public sector unions to unite to defeat the 6% pay policy.

Pointing out that all the gains of the past were under attack, Peter called on students to join the fight to change the capitalist system into a socialist system. Common misery called for common struggle; the students' union (NUS) must affiliate to the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party.

**By David Maples**  
(Newcastle University Labour Club)

## UNIONS FUND LPYS

Trade unions are beginning to respond to the Labour Party Young Socialists special appeal for £4,000. The Fire Brigades Union have sent £50 and T&GWU No.1 region, £25.

This money is a measure of the respect won by the LPYS is shown by the £20 sent by the NGA Evening Argus and Weekly News Chapel in Brighton. The cheque was sent with a note thanking the LPYS for their 'moral and practical support' when the NGA were

locked out earlier in the year.

The Metal Mechanics in Wandsworth have also sent £5 but the best donation from London was the £97 collected by 2 LPYS members on a train up to the national march. Reading YS also raised £40 on their coach. Socials, sponsored walks and rides are all being added to the drive to pay off the debt incurred by the LPYS for material for the national march.

## LPYS Charter for Young Workers a fighting programme for young workers

Available, price 30p (inc. P&P) from A. Bevan, National Youth Officer LPYS, Labour Party Headquarters, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

# Labour Shows its Power

**On Saturday 29 November, Margaret Thatcher, the Tory government and their rich backers were told exactly where they could get off as 150,000 workers took to the streets of Liverpool.**

**The demonstration has got to go down as one of the most important events in the last 50 years of Labour history.**

For weeks the local LPYS branches had been preparing for the big day: sticking up posters, holiday meetings and leafleting.

The only YS posters pulled down were the 'Not Wanted' posters. These last about an hour before the portrait of Thatcher is totally unrecognisable. On one of the days of action organised by Toxteth LPYS, a lad (now a YS member) planted a portion of chips right between her eyes!

All the major factories on Merseyside were leafleted. All the comprehensive schools, cinema queues, youth clubs and amusement arcades too. In fact Merseyside accounted for 200,000 of the million leaflets the YS produced.

We had only 5,000 left on Saturday morning. People at factory gates and in the street were demanding a few leaflets to take into work to give out themselves. Pubs and cafes had leaflets or posters on the walls to advertise the demo.

If you were on the demo you were probably a bit surprised to see Maggie herself protesting against

Tory policy (on closer inspection 'Maggie' turned out to be Lesley Holt of Kirkdale LP).

'Maggie' has been turning out on quite a few YS days of action recently, calling on people to join her worst enemies, the LPYS! 'Maggie' even picketed 'Thatchers', a Tory owned tea shop in Wavertree. The shouts of 'Maggie! Out!' certainly brought out a bad day for business at that tea shop!

The work that the whole YS put into the demo preparations has really paid off. Just in the weeks before the demo we have almost doubled the size of the Merseyside YS; branches which six weeks ago didn't even exist have been set up, some having twenty members. Other YSs have enough names and addresses to keep them busy for weeks following them up (although there is some argument over who should visit the address in Norway we picked up in Church Street!).

A major part of the work was the preparation for the YS rally in St Georges Hall on the eve of the demo with about 600 people attending. The meeting was called by the YS and SOGAT, with Josie Aitman, North West YS national committee member in the chair.

The mood in Liverpool that night was electric. It was like the night before the cup final:

everyone knew something big was going to happen the next day! YS members in Church Street sold 115 'Militants' in 90 minutes that afternoon. 'Socialist Youth' sold like hot cakes.

Everywhere people were ready to fight back against Thatcher and the Tories, from the little kids running around with bundles of leaflets to the old lady who must have been 70 at least leading the chant on the big day of 'Maggie! Maggie! Maggie! Out! Out! Out!'

The police estimate of the demo's size is 50,000. If that's true, then they must have been walking in a big circle! Liverpool was a sea of banners, placards and red flags. The streets were crowded for hours after the demo ended. At 2 am, after the YS 'winding down session' you could still hear shouts for Thatcher's blood drifting across the city.

This is only the start of the fight. We have to arm the fight against the Tories and whole bosses' system with socialist policies. There is no other choice to make. If you hate the Tories, if you hate the bosses' system, join us in the Labour Party, the Young Socialists and the unions. The 29th showed the power of the working class. We must start now to kick out the Tories out on their ears!

Reports by:  
**Jim Hollinshead**  
(Merseyside LPYS)  
**Dave Clark**  
(E Flints CLP)  
**D G Beck**  
(Gosforth LPYS)  
**Eddie Phillips**

Photo: Militant



Part of the LPYS contingent on the Liverpool march

## Youth coach

Awoken at 6 am. I proceeded to scramble down breakfast and then trudge about a mile through inch deep snow. (The Tories even seem to control the commanding heights of the weather).

My LPYS branch had laid on a 52 seater bus. It arrived at 7 am prompt, but the driver expressed grave concern at weather reports. Comrades were a bit anxious at this news.

Stopping at a service station, we met comrades from Hull and Newcastle West YS.

Several papers were sold by enterprising comrades, despite the watchful police presence.

We arrived at the outskirts of Liverpool just before noon. Difficulty in getting through the traffic gave us some idea of the size of march. Comrades occupied their time by singing and waving to corresponding coaches and curious members of local public.

We finally made Sefton Park, amidst mounting excitement and anticipation. After searching for the rest of the Northern region LPYSs we finally assembled alongside Blyth, Cramlington, Newcastle West and North,

Wallsend, Gateshead and finally the proud Jarrow banner.

On the return journey our coach was filled with intense discussion; comrades particularly younger ones, expressed a sense of awe at their experience of mass action.

Stories were swapped, even the local press coverage was excellent. Mass merriment greeted the radio report giving the estimate of 50,000 on the march. Arriving back in Newcastle at 8.30 pm, we exchanged farewells till the next time.

## Police and Media

In the weeks building up to the demo, the local paper, the 'Liverpool Echo', did its best to persuade its readers not to go along on the 29th.

It did this by claiming that the demonstration might lead to 'riots'.

Then when its sabotage campaign failed and masses of workers turned up on the day, the 'Echo' produced a special edition to sell to the demonstrators in an attempt to cash in!

The media's attempt to play down the numbers

present was quite blatant. Just after the march had moved off, a full time official of my union, ASTMS, asked the Chief Inspector in charge of the police in Sefton Park what his estimate of the number of demonstrators was. He said 125,000.

Later, on the 2 o'clock news on the radio a police spokesman was quoting the number of demonstrators as "about 20,000" and when this was put to the same Chief Inspector he said "I know we're told to play it down but that's a bit ridiculous."

## Union train

I was booked on the 7 am. Glasgow Trades Council Trades Council train so had to get up early. Arriving at Central Station, I was the first person selling 'Militant' (or anything else). I was not alone long. As the hundreds of trade unionists arrived every entrance was covered by our sellers.

On the train we sold more papers, plus badges etc. One young comrade sold ten books of raffle tickets. Brilliant stuff. As we arrived at Liverpool's Edge Hill station we were really into a Tory-

bashing mood. Chants of 'Maggie Out!' greeted the police on the platform as we got off.

About noon we arrived at Sefton Park. What a crowd! The first marchers set off at 12.30 but being in a union that is not (yet!) affiliated to the party, we didn't begin to march until after two.

As we passed one shop we all burst out laughing. Its sign, 'The Cobblers Shop' had been improved for the day by the addition of 'To Maggie' under Cobblers. How appropriate!

As we approached the pierhead we could see tens of thousands of people who had arrived maybe two hours before us. Just catching the last couple of speeches a friend told me that Denis Healey got a very cool reception. Strange that people who claim the support of the grass roots should get this kind of treatment!

The meeting finished and we headed back up towards the station. People were still marching towards the pier. An hour after the meeting had finished people were still

marching!

On the train back I chatted with a couple of SOGAT members from Hamilton. The crisis in the paper industry and its solutions was our topic. Whatever the answer is both agreed that import controls would solve nothing. I suggested to them that they should join the Labour Party and this idea was treated sympathetically. We all arrived back elated and with a tremendous sense of achievement.

## Concessions Won for Unemployed

Thanet West and Thanet East Labour Party Young Socialists have scored quite a victory. We have been engaged in a campaign to get council facilities provided free for the unemployed.

In a period of six weeks we collected 1,500 signatures with widespread support from the employed and the unemployed. As one outcome, the local trades council are to set up an unemployed workers' centre — open two days a week.

This is a real step forward in an area where, when the tourist season is over the dole queues reach

By Karen Nicholson  
(Secretary, Thanet West LPYS)

crisis length. On 24 November a motion was put before the council, which is Tory controlled. A demonstration was held outside the council offices when the petition was presented to the Chairman of the Leisure Committee.

As we sat through the council meeting we thought there was little hope of getting the demands accepted. But to our surprise the motion was accepted, at least in principle, and

concessionary fares for the unemployed was passed. There was a cheer when the result was given.

The success of our campaign should give encouragement to other LPYS branches even where the odds seem impossible. If a Tory council can agree in principle to schemes that can at least ease the boredom and frustration of the dole queues, then other LPYS branches should redouble their efforts for action from Labour councils and organisations of the labour movement.

## Discussing Socialism

By Andy Allenby  
(Southern Regional Committee, LPYS)

Over the two days of the Isle of Wight LPYS weekend school some 50 people attended the various sessions, coming from as far afield as Sussex and Surrey.

The school began with the topic of Northern Ireland, lead off by Tim Harris from Greenwich Labour Party.

The second topic was one increasingly raised amongst young people; 'Will there be a 3rd world war?' with Dave Farrar as speaker.

The school discussed CND and the election of Ronald Reagan in the USA.

On Sunday morning the Assistant Regional Organiser spoke to the school on

Whitehead for 'Clause 4' termed it.

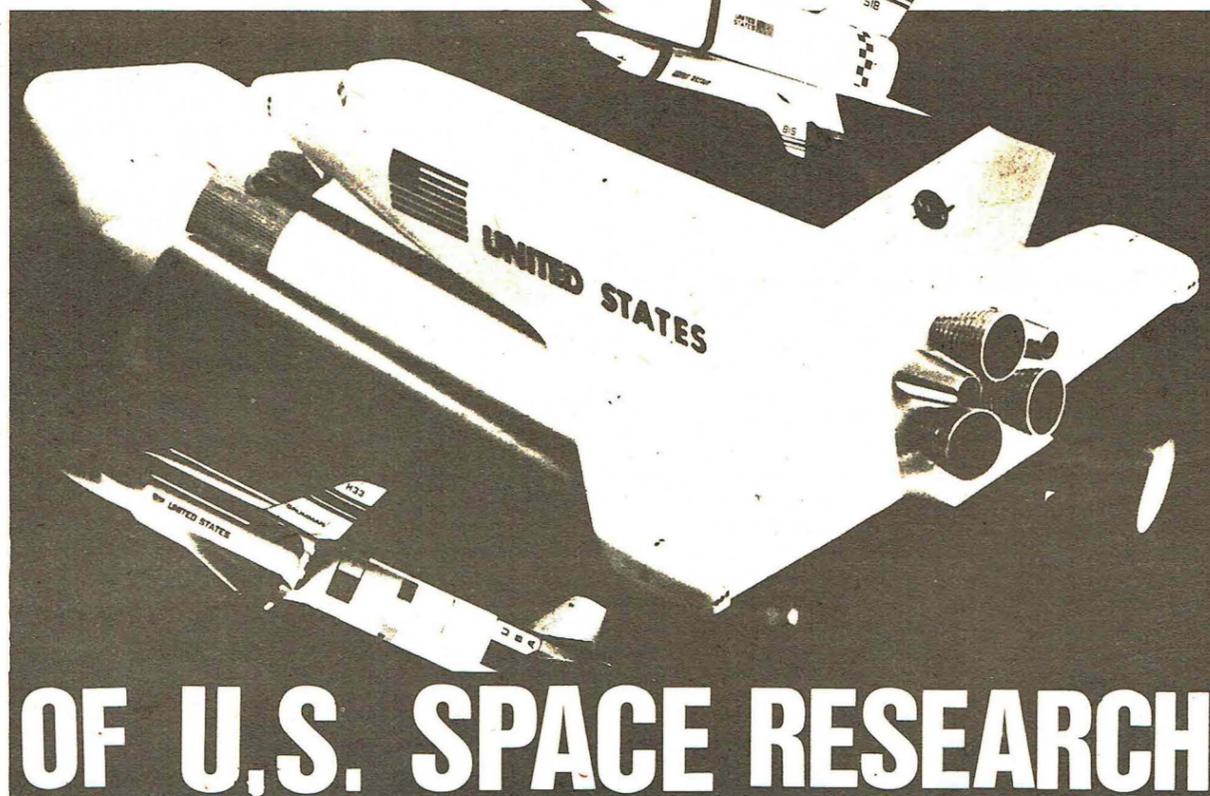
Alan Huyton, for 'Militant', showed that 'Militant' is proud to follow in the traditions of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, and that capitalism cannot be reformed away.

The school was undoubtedly the largest and most wide ranging ever held in the Hampshire/IsW area and probably the largest held in the whole southern region for some time.

As was pointed out in the organisational debate, there is a pressing need for more of these schools to be held covering particular topics over which there is some controversy.

A collection at the end of the National YS campaign fund raised over £10.

# SHUTTLE MARKS DECLINE



## OF U.S. SPACE RESEARCH

By Lynn Walsh

Spectacular photographs of Saturn and its rings are only one aspect of the Voyager's achievements. The wealth of data transmitted by Voyager I and II will, as it is analysed over the coming months and years, provide much new information about the planets.

The drive to extend our knowledge of the Solar system hardly needs justification. New information will not only provide important clues as to the structure of the Universe, but also help to elucidate some of the most basic physical processes.

But NASA (the US's National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is living on borrowed time. The Voyager mission, it should be remembered, was launched three years ago. Incredible as it may seem, drastic cutbacks in NASA's programme even threaten Voyager's nerve centre. There is the real possibility that the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's mission control may be cut off well before the still-functioning Voyager reaches Uranus.

Apart from Voyager's results, there is now little or no prospect of big new advances in planetary exploration. NASA's Galileo space craft may reach Jupiter in 1986, (long behind schedule), and there are some plans for launching a space probe to Venus.

The main reason for the decline in American space research is the space shuttle, which has eaten up a growing share of an increasingly restricted budget.

The shuttle was conceived during the "heroic period" of manned space flight, which culminated in the moon landing of Apollo 17 in 1972. The shuttle was seen as part of a plan to put man on Mars, a re-usable vehicle which would take astronauts to orbiting stations, from which more powerful rockets could be launched. This was to be the first step towards interplanetary voyaging.

But the high point of the American space programme—launched by President Kennedy in 1961 to beat Russia to the moon—coincided with the defeat in South East Asia which marked a drastic undermining of US imperialism's world power.

Within America, there was growing protest at the wide-

spread poverty and oppression still prevailing in the world's richest country.

Henry Kissinger laments, in his book "The White House Years," that the top administrators responsible for the space programme became "demoralised" by the massive protests against the Vietnam war and the strength of the demands for social reform and civil rights. Even they found it hard to justify the vast expenditure on space exploration when funds were denied to vital social welfare, Medicare, and so on.

Increasing economic difficulties for US capitalism, moreover, made it harder to sustain the vast expenditure necessary for a large-scale space programme.

### A new period of decline

Nixon authorised the shuttle in January 1972. But from the start, under pressure from Congress, the administration imposed strict "cash limits" on the project, allocating it only a quarter of the funds which it took to get Apollo to the moon.

Even though the original plans were scaled down, the shuttle was an ambitious project. Each shuttle was to be capable of about 100 missions, launched from a rocket and capable of re-entering the earth's atmosphere from orbit.

But the strict economies gave rise to an ill-fated attempt to build the shuttle more or less from "off-the-shelf technology". There was also a "success orientated strategy," meaning that no real provision was made for serious failures, the need for spares, or the possibility of major modifications.

While the Voyager has been a great technical success—with only one of Voyager I's ten experiments failing—the shuttle has already been delayed for three years by costly failures.

The shuttle's engines have suffered 17 major test failures since 1977. The heat-shield, vital to successful re-entry, is based on marvellous heat-resisting silicate fibre tiles—the only problem is that

mechanically they cannot stand the stress, and as yet NASA has not found a fool-proof way of sticking them on the shuttle.

The first launch is now scheduled for March 1981, but this is in doubt.

Why has the project gone ahead? There can be little doubt that the shuttle owes its survival to its military potential. The Pentagon are interested in its ability to carry out surveillance from space and to carry a deadly new breed of space-borne nuclear weapons.

Because the shuttle can lift only limited pay-loads into low orbit around the earth it is of much less value to space exploration, at the present stage of development, than the much more powerful rockets which can launch satellites or long-distance space probes.

The shuttle mainly concerns the technological problems of construction and avionics (the advanced electronic system necessary to control its flight, as yet completely untested).

The scientific data about space from the shuttle, even if

it is successfully launched next year, will be very limited compared to the wealth of results from Voyager.

The decline of NASA's space programme clearly reveals the dependence of science and technology on economic and social developments.

Capitalist science—which is now obviously dominated by America—may certainly achieve many new discoveries despite the crisis in society. But the exhaustion of the long post-war boom and the beginning of a period of decline and crisis spells the end of major new projects depending on vast technical and manpower resources.

Under modern conditions, however, scientific discovery depends more and more on vast, astronomically expensive, collaborative projects.

The crisis in NASA's space programme is therefore a sign that in some fields capitalist science has already reached its limits.

Further great voyages of discovery require the fundamental re-organisation of production and science.

## A REAL CLASSIC

By Liz Morton [Brighton Kempton CLP]

If you are usually daunted by the black shiny covers and "scholarly" introductions of the 'Penguin Classics', make an exception for Emile Zola's 'Germinal'. You will be surprised.

It is written in a refreshingly direct way and deals with the subject nearest to our hearts and minds, the inevitable conflict between capital and labour.

Set in a coal-mining region of Northern France in the late nineteenth century, Zola's novel describes the misery of the lives of the mining families, their awakening to

the possibility of changing the order of society through class action, and the struggles that ensue.

The workers' lives are shown to be brutal and sordid. The reader cannot but be filled with rage and hatred.

I won't tell you the story, you'll have to read that yourself. But it is a classic, not in the academic, "literary" sense (though it is undoubtedly that as well) but a classic of socialist literature.

Make time to read this book—you will not be disappointed.

## Militant at Christmas

Issue 533 [Friday 19 December] will be the last 'Militant' before the Christmas break. Issue 534 will be published on Friday 9 January.



A faithful band of Fabians gathered in Mecklenburg Square, Bloomsbury, last Sunday to honour the memory of Professor RH Tawney, one-time theoretician of the Fabian society and now one of its Patron Saints. A commemorative plaque was unveiled by former Labour MP, Lady Lena Jeger. Tawney would have found this ironic. On one point, at least, he certainly had the right idea. Offered a peerage by Ramsay MacDonald, Tawney refused it with the biting remark: "What harm have I ever done the Labour Party?"

"Economic witch-doctors" has often been our characterisation of the confused and bankrupt economists who speak for the capitalist class. Our view has now been vindicated in a most authoritative quarter. On the BBC's Radio 4 last week, economics correspondent James Long attempted to answer why, contrary to the witch-doctors' "conventional wisdom", the pound has remained strong on the world currency markets—despite a 2% cut in Britain's Minimum Lending Rate. "Perhaps," he quipped, "no one knows how the system works any more"! After all, even among the professionals, economics is known as "the dismal science".

The police should intercept coaches carrying flying pickets "just as they intercept motorcycle gangs of young hooligans." This blunt statement of Tory hostility to the trade unions came [13 November] from Leonard Neil, a member of Sir Keith Joseph's "Centre for Policy Studies". Sir Leonard is also the member of the British Railways Board responsible for industrial relations! Jail is the Centre's answer to strikers in essential public services. They do not propose including the miners or transport workers, as this "would make the scheme excessively unwieldy, large and [wait for it...]—unworkable." They generously propose that in return for giving up the right to strike, public service workers should be rewarded with rates of pay slightly above the norm. Some hope, when these are precisely the workers hit first by the 6% limit!

Management has blundered again, but this time the workers are not complaining. A group of Vickers' shop stewards at the London office of the Engineering Employers' Federation for talks the other day were pleasantly surprised by the unexpected buffet lunch that was laid on. While they were wolfing it down in room 309, however, an embarrassed catering manager suddenly realised the food should have gone to room 308—for the Engineering Association's lunch. So while the hungry bosses irritably awaited their lunch, the embarrassed caterers were hunting round for emergency supplies of vol-au-vents and petits fours to feed the bosses in the manner to which they are accustomed.

In China the show-trial of the "Gang of Four" is being used to batter the ideas and policies of the period of the "Cultural Revolution". While denouncing the excesses of Jiang Qing [Mao's wife] and company, the new Deng leadership is busily working to rehabilitate incentives and privileges for the leadership. About 300 favoured families now have cars, big apartments, colour televisions, refrigerators, and other items that are still great rarities in China. There is even some attempt to regularise privileges, with "high level" officials [grade 13 and above on a 26-grade scale] being allowed various perks according to hierarchical position. Official press criticism of privileges is directed against those who are not officially entitled to them, the friends, relations and hangers-on of top officials. These parasites, it seems, are getting the official bureaucrats a bad name. Cynical jokes abound among ordinary workers. "When you get to the top," one recently revived proverb goes, "even your chickens and your dogs go to heaven."

# 'We'll only get what we're strong enough to take'

## NUM Branch officials speak to 'Militant'



PHOTO: Above: George Dolman and Austin Fairest with a worker at Highmoor colliery

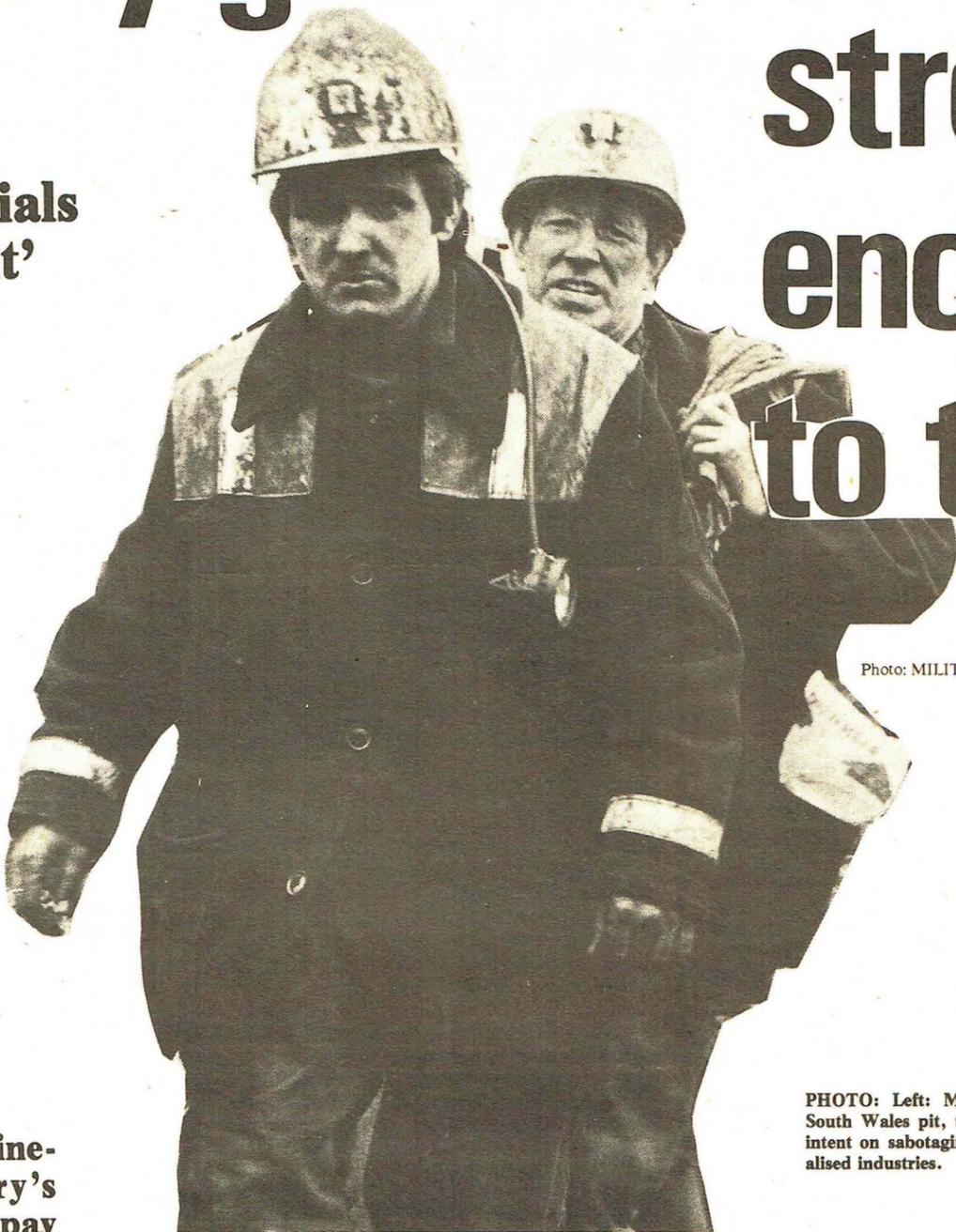


Photo: MILITANT

### The National Union of Mineworkers' Branch Secretary's office is situated opposite the pay office and a few yards away from the canteen.

An ideal situation for Austin Fairest, the Branch Secretary at Highmoor pit, Derbyshire, as grievances, queries on pay, etc., can be raised and sorted out quickly by branch officials.

Our visit was at one of the busiest times of the day; a shift was just finishing and the men were picking up their pay dockets.

We were ushered into the branch office amid a hive of activity as colliers came in and out exchanging news, greetings, and problems. George Dolman, the Branch President, greeted us, still covered in coal dust, before he went off to shower.

With the 'rush hour' mainly over we were able to begin our interview with Austin. Highmoor is renowned in the area as one of the most militant and best organised pits with a large element of workers' control.

The National Coal Board's offer of 13% in response to the miners' pay claim had been accepted by the NUM Executive Committee that day. We asked Austin for his reaction.

"We will hold a meeting in the canteen but I think it is inadequate and I would argue for outright rejection. We will not accept dictates from the Tories. Unfortunately we have problems with Joe Gormley, who accepts hard luck stories

**Austin Fairest and George Dolman spoke to Tony Cross and Wayne Jones**

from Derek Ezra. "Is it merely coincidence that the NCB want to save £80 million and their first effort is £86 million? This offer is not even 13% on basics but includes bonus and other payments.

"Our original claim of 35% is valid because the incentive scheme can guarantee nothing. We don't know the level of bonus next year. Incentive payments are the cream on top of the cake, but the basic rate is the key.

"The NCB accounts are in a strong position but the Tories are trying to sabotage the nationalised industries, like they have in steel, by withholding subsidies.

"We can't compete on world markets when countries like West Germany are subsidised by almost twice as much as in Britain. Then the NCB talk about closures because we can't sell enough coal and therefore can't compete!

"We have always been told we are not needed—ever since 1911. That is why we have to fight the NCB and the government for control—we will only get what we are strong enough to take."

By this time, George

Dolman had returned and we moved the discussion on to the present set-up at the NCB. We related the famous story of how Sir Derek Ezra had fainted within an hour of his first visit down a pit.

The Coal Board, like other nationalised industries, was run by ex-capitalists on capitalist lines, with no workers' control and no workers' management.

The bosses, we said, were remote from the lives and aspirations of ordinary workers—especially given their enormous inflated salaries.

Austin agreed, and said he thought this was true of area bosses as well who were unable to relate to life in the pit. He added, "Workers' control is not merely taking the manager's job—that way means alienation from your own people."

Both Austin and George agreed that it was a question not of merely changing the personnel to democratise the running of industry but by changing the system. Austin explained that on a day-to-day level it was possible to have a big say in the running of the pit, but this could only be achieved with strong and effective union organisation.

He told us the secret of this success at Highmoor. "George and myself and the rest of the branch committee are servants of the members. We are sensitive to the wishes of the men and fight for them on their behalf.

"Our ten committee men go into the pit and talk to the men, encourage them to

speak their minds and discuss with them. We show the bosses that we do not accept their assumptions and decisions and will challenge them and fight them if we need to—constructive militancy, not bloody mindedness.

"We never hide the truth from the men, our job is to give leadership but we can only do this with their backing.

"When an issue comes up we call a mass meeting in the canteen, present the facts to the lads, give our recommendations, discuss it and then take a vote. Once we have done this we carry this out and all move together.

"We did this for May 14th. We explained the importance of the Day of Action, that it was important enough to lose a day's pay and protest against the Tories and their policies.

"Our recommendation was supported and the pit was at a standstill for the day—we didn't take any rest days." (In some other pits it was recommended that instead of strike action, a rest day be taken and no pay lost).

"Our office door is always open, so members always feel free to approach the union. Confidence and trust between officers and members is essential to a healthy, democratic and strong union.

"We have regular inspections of the pit to maintain safety. The pit features regularly in safety competitions." Austin has full facility time as Branch Secretary, but still goes

underground three shifts a week to keep in touch at first hand. "Every single part of the pit is visited over a two-week cycle."

We discussed some improvements gained and innovations made. "Chargemen are not appointed by management but elected by the team from amongst the men themselves. The chargemen record and document stoppages and time lost which is then compared against the figures of the management for the working out of bonus on the incentive scheme.

"We have just introduced a retired members' scheme, where we deduct £4 from each member per year and give every miner a good send off when they retire. We believe this is far superior to the old system where individual collections were made. It also cuts out any favouritism."

A few disgruntled comments were heard at the loss of the first £1, but Austin reminded those who complained that it had been discussed over a period of time and then decided on by the men themselves.

"99% will be OK but we do have some with elastic bands on their money," he added wryly.

This generosity and workers' solidarity does not only extend to workmates. Over £300 was collected for the steel workers during their dispute, a substantial amount from just 560 who work at the pit.

"We don't just leave workers who appeal to us to their own devices. If they visit the pit, a committee

man accompanies them to encourage donations."

The branch would like to have more control over hiring and firing. "We want more say in the selection of who we work with so that management can't bring undesirables into the pit intent on undermining and disrupting the union. We believe we should have the right not to work with someone."

"We would also like to open the books so that we can see for ourselves the true state of the finances and accounting and not have to rely on the figures of the Board."

"I used to say 'stuff politics', trade unionism is enough, but it is not possible to fight closures, kick out the Tories and change the system by trade unionism alone, no matter how strong you are. We will be represented at the march against unemployment on November 29th."

We began to discuss the need for socialism and the importance of industrial workers like miners bringing their experience into the Labour Party in order to transform it along socialist lines and elect committed socialist fighters, prepared to implement Conference policies.

Unfortunately, at this point we had to go, but left in no doubt that further improvements in pay and conditions would be fought for and gained at Highmoor. As Austin said as we left, "Everyone has the right to a decent standard of living."

# ROBBING THE POOR

The Tories turn a blind eye to the activities of gilded tax dodgers like Lord Vestey who are allowed to escape paying tax on their enormous unearned income.

By Tam Burke

(Edinburgh Central Labour Party)

To those who have, more shall be given, is their motto. Those who have nothing, on the other hand, are to have even this taken away.

The Tory government have managed to increase public spending by swelling the ranks of the unemployed. They are trying to put a stop to this, not by cutting the dole queues, but by cutting the entitlement of the old and sick and the unemployed.

The cabinet Scrooges have implemented a major attack just in time to sour the Christmas of numerous families.

Until 24 November anyone on low income could apply for an Exceptional Needs Payment (ENP) paying for a big fuel bill, home repair, warm clothing or special needs.

You could claim for an ENP by writing out what you needed, what it cost and why you couldn't afford to pay. The list could be sent to the local social security (DHSS) office.

When the decision was made by DHSS, even if you are not satisfied you could appeal saying "I wish to appeal against the decision dated.....to award me £....."

Your appeal was heard by an informal tribunal, which cannot take away the money that the DHSS has already awarded to you, and may grant even more.

Before, anyone on a low income could apply for an ENP. Since 24 November only those people who were already in receipt of supplementary benefit (SB) on that date are eligible for an ENP as well.

If you are on supplementary benefits, don't be put off by the scrounger stigma. It's your right to claim help. The money is provided from taxes that we pay or our parents pay, everybody but the Lord Vestey's of this world pay!

If you find the official rigmarole of forms, tribunals, and rules too much, ask friends, shop stewards, union officials, town councillors, your MP, local citizens rights, advice centre and the Citizens Advice Bureau for help in dealing with the DHSS.

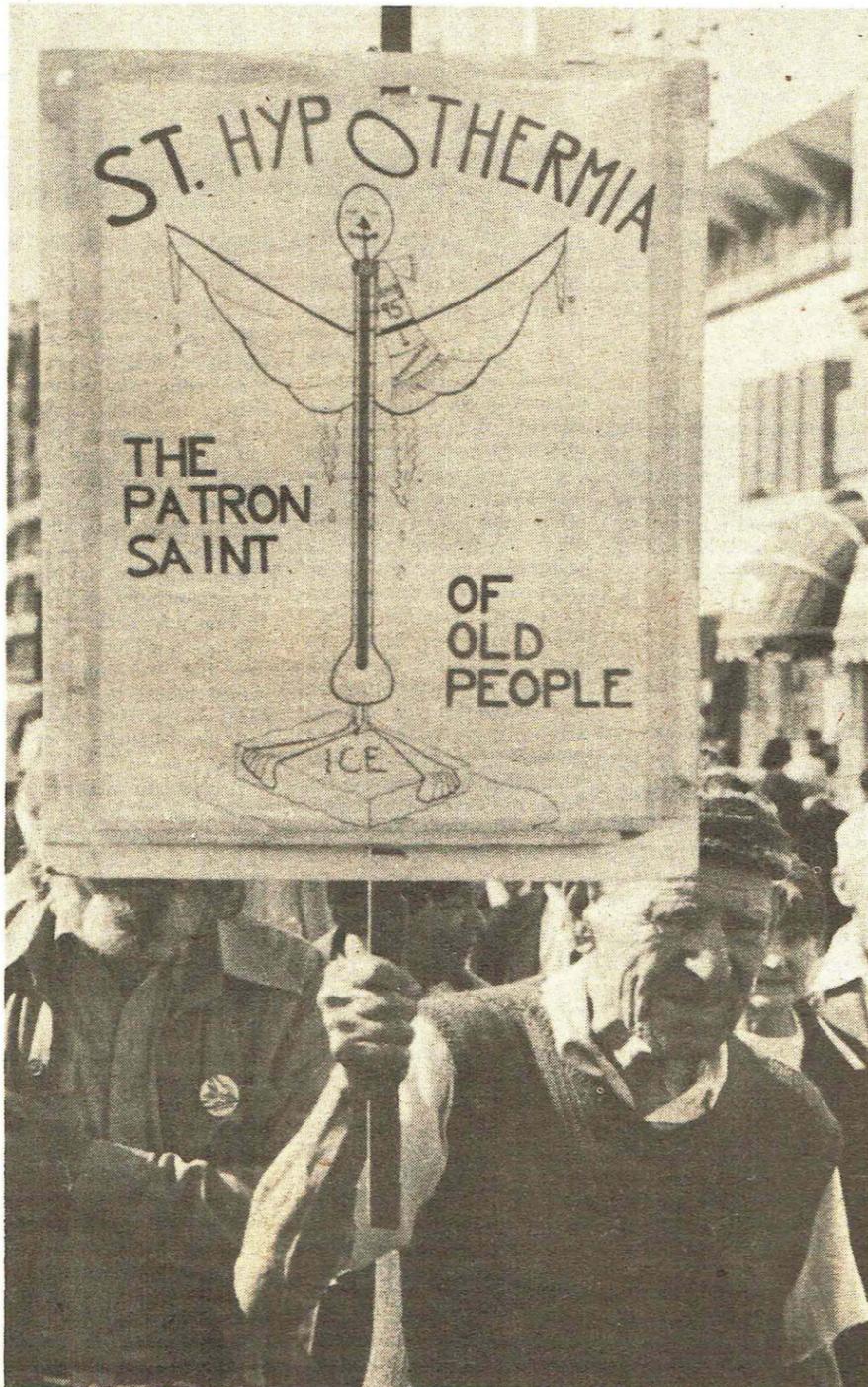
There's a lot more money available as over £300 million worth of benefits are unclaimed each year.

But now, the Tories are withdrawing the meagre protection from poverty provided through social security. The worst measures:—

★ School leavers can't claim SB until after the school holidays after their school leaving date

★ The rise in benefit rates is being restricted to 16½% when inflation is already higher

★ Sickness and unemployment benefits are only being



Old age pensioners protest at low level of pension payment. Hypothermia is a killer every winter for the old. Attacks on benefits increase the risks for younger people on supplementary benefits too.

benefits which represents a further 5% cut.

★ Pensioners' rises are now being linked to the price rises rather than the higher of either wages or prices. At the moment wages are, officially, rising more than prices—this means that pensioners are being robbed.

★ Child benefit is being raised by 75p when to keep up with inflation a rise of £1.20 is necessary.

★ Earnings Related Supplement to Sickness and Unemployment Benefit is to be phased out over the next two years, thus throwing more people onto means-tested supplementary benefit.

★ If a worker is made redundant and is given a lump sum of £2,000 or has saved £2,000 or more, he or she will not qualify for SB. This is already the experience

of the ex-steelworkers at Consett.

★ Strikers will be more heavily penalised than before by being unable to claim SB for their dependents.

★ Some families will lose up to £10 per week because the date at which benefits are increased has been put back to 24 November this year, saving the government £125m.

The next logical step back to the hungry '30s will be an officially declared means test along with cuts in dole benefits.

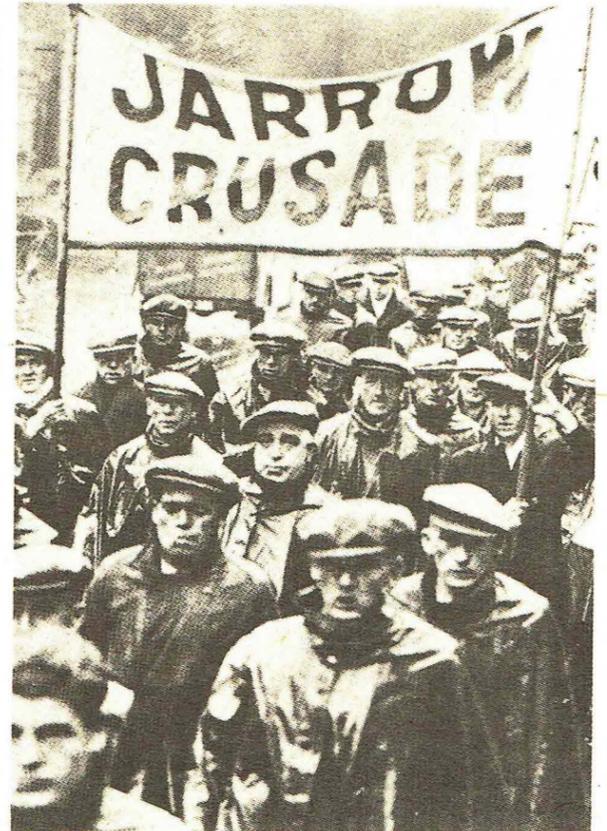
EOSS (Lothians Oppose Social Security Cuts) have issued 1,500 leaflets showing that divide and rule tactics amongst wage earners and benefit claimants "keeps the rich in power and maintains the system whereby they are kept rich off the backs of the poor."

EOSS wants a "guaranteed minimum income to be paid to all, in or out of work regardless of whether or not the present system is able to provide paid employment. Everyone is entitled to an acceptable level of maintenance and the unemployed should not be made to pay for the crisis of capitalism."

It is essential that the labour and trade union movement defends our right to these benefits and gives a clear undertaking to restore the Tory cuts.

The full resources of the movement must also be used to expose society's real scroungers in the board rooms and build a united workers' movement to eradicate them and the system they represent.

## The voice of experience



The old adage runs that he who has the youth has the future. But the energy, vitality and confidence of youth must always be tempered by the wisdom of experience.

Jim Mills is a class fighter. He was born in 1915 in Parkhead, Glasgow. Two stark images dominate the memory of his early years—the German soldier's war helmet with the spike on top and lines of gaunt, tired men queueing at the Labour Exchange.

Jim lived opposite the Parkhead Labour Exchange and to him the vacant land beside the Exchange seemed to be permanently filled with men standing in line. The only difference between the '20s and the '30s was one of degree. There were more of them in the '30s.

He was born into the "war to end all wars" and the slaughter of the Somme, Marne and Paschendaele. Lloyd George pledged he would build a land fit for heroes, but you had to be a hero to live in it.

He remembers kids at school in bare feet, school dinners, and unemployment reaching one-and-a-half million in 1922.

He remembers the crunching noise of baton on skull when police charged the General Strike crowds in Glasgow when he was eleven years old and he remembers breadlines everywhere in the richest country in the world, America, when Wall Street crashed in 1929.

In 1931, the 'Gang of Three' of yesteryear, Snowden, Thomas and McDonald, betrayed Labour and formed a national government which cut unemployment pay and introduced the dreaded means test.

It was in the days of the Jarrow marches that Shipbuilding Securities Ltd made one million pounds sterling from closing down shipyards. In these times Jim lived with his mother in a service flat where their only income apart from

parish assistance was half a crown from taking in washing.

Want, poverty and starvation were general in the hungry '30s at the end of which the Rowtree Truist reported that 1 in 3 of the British people were suffering from malnutrition.

He remembers market gluts causing tons of oranges to be thrown into the River Clyde when most of the kids in Glasgow had never seen an orange, never mind eaten one.

He joined the Young Communist League in 1936 when Franco's fascists started the Spanish Civil War. In 1939 he marched with tens of thousands of Clydeside apprentices against conscription.

But the object of the march, led by the YCL, was changed in mid-course when news of a possible rapprochement between Stalin and Churchill broke. Change the line, change the line" the cries went up.

They walked into the Kelvin Hall to hear the speeches and see the leaders tearing down the "no conscription" banners on the stage.

Jim thinks the wheel of history is turning full circle. Now we have robots to make robots and robots to supervise robots, the means to produce abundance in a system which works on scarcity.

Jim Mills' favourite quote comes from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam:

'Oh love could you and I with fate conspire To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire Would not we shatter it to bits

And then remould it Nearer to the heart's desire'

Jim Mills spoke at a recent meeting of the East Kilbride Labour Party Young Socialists and you could have heard a pin drop.

By Bob Wylie

(East Kilbride Labour Party)

# NO FUTURE FOR LABOUR'S RIGHT

## A SECTION OF THE RIGHT ARE READY TO SPLIT FROM THE PARTY

By Peter Taaffe  
Editor, 'Militant'

**The recent speech of Shirley Williams clearly demonstrates that a section of the right-wing are preparing to split from the Labour Party and form a new "Social Democratic" or "Centre Party".**

**The "lurch to the left" within the Labour Party, evident in the decisions at the last annual conference is the reason given to justify this threat.**

The enemies of the labour movement greeted the historic victories on Labour Party democracy with a mixture of dismay and hysteria. By the same token, the working class and labour movement rejoiced at the Blackpool conference decisions.

The "Sunday Times" dubbed this event as "the October revolution." Blackpool's Winter Gardens, the conference venue, was compared to the Winter Palace in Petrograd in 1917!

The right's fears were further re-inforced by the election of Michael Foot as the leader of the Labour Party in Parliament. This outcome to the leadership election would not have been possible without the conference decisions, particularly those on the mandatory re-selection of Labour MPs and the principle of the electoral college for the election of party leader.

However, the right-wing, egged on by their millionaire backers in the capitalist press, interpreted these decisions either as some kind of historical aberration or the result of devious left-wing plots.

**Serious commentators recognise the swing to the left**

But the more sober representatives of capitalism have been compelled to admit that the decisions reflected the big swing towards the left amongst the most active workers in the constituency Labour Parties, trade union branches and shop stewards' committees. A leftward movement has been particularly marked since Labour's defeat in the general election 18 months ago.

The day after the leadership election result, "The Times" declared that the election of Michael Foot "was unmitigated folly".

But a few days later Hugo Young, political editor of the "Sunday Times", commented: "The broader leftism app-

arent at the conference over the years is also not artificial." Commenting on the leadership election, he said: "For Mr Healey to have been elected the leader of the Labour Party now would have been strikingly eccentric."

This was underlined by the boos which greeted Healey at the 29 November anti-unemployment demonstration in Liverpool.

The right-wing, however, are not reconciled to their situation. In the most unscrupulous and desperate fashion they have fostered the legend that the victories of the left resulted from "undemocratic pressures" and underhand methods within the constituency Labour Parties. "Militant" supporters have particularly been singled out as using such methods.

**Debunking the myth of the 'Poly-technocracy'**

At the same time, reporters of the "Financial Times," in a recent series on the Labour Party, admitted that the "Militant" supporters have built up their support by arguing in a patient manner and by conducting themselves in the best democratic traditions of the labour movement.

Its correspondent, Margaret Van Hatten, commented (3 November) "where it (the left) is strong its strength derives partly from a high degree of activity and organisation, but equally from the fact that the most active party members do not object." She then goes on to debunk completely the right's charges: "More important, they appear to be doing nothing dishonest or unconstitutional — there is nothing to stop the right-wing from adopting the same tactics, but they are not doing so."

In a later article, however, she demonstrates the difficulties in the path of the right-wing in mobilising support for their ideas. She shows, for instance, that in Neville Sandleson's constituency, the right-wing Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington received just one vote in a recent meeting of his management committee!

In passing, the article also completely demolished the myth that the swing towards the left has been the result of

the "entry" of the so-called 'polytechnocracy', that is the university lecturers, doctors, dons etc. On the contrary, in Hayes and Harlington "the committee members are predominately working-class trade unionists."

Another article also showed that the right-wing Labour MP for Toxteth, Liverpool, Richard Crawshaw, "has the support of only 8 of the 30 members of the general management committee."

The "Financial Times" correspondent also shows the support and tolerance of 'Militant' ideas and supporters by Labour Party rank and file, even amongst those who do not agree with all aspects of our programme.

**Trade union activists are beginning to reclaim their own party**

Margaret Van Hatten relates the comments on 'Militant' supporters by an older worker in Liverpool: "They are a breath of fresh air," according to a Liverpool councillor, a middle-aged member of the old unionist left who welcomes 'Militant', while disagreeing strongly with some of their views."

This reflects the collapse in the right-wing's support in the constituency Labour Parties, trade union branches and shop stewards' committees. In the past, the leaders of the trade unions were at least looked on as loyal props for the Rodgers, Gaitskells and Williams of the movement.

But now, the trade unions are one of the main forces undermining the position of the right-wing. So much so, that according to the "Financial Times" (4 November), "a Labour Euro-MP last week angrily described the Yorkshire miners' activities in mining constituencies as 'entristism'."

This demonstrates how far removed the right-wing are from the ranks and the traditions of the labour movement. During the post-war boom, when reformism appeared to be 'delivering the goods', the active participation of trade unionists within the Labour Party was at a low level. This was the period when the Tory and Liberal infiltrators, like Prentice, dominated the Labour Party.

But the widespread disillusionment with the last Labour government in particular has resulted in a changed mood within the unions. The rank and file of the unions, as with Labour Party members, have come into collision with Labour MPs who supported right-wing Labour cabinets which took decisions opposed to their interests.

This in turn has led to the beginning of a movement into the Labour Party, which is only in its first stages at the present time. An indication of this is the shift towards the left in the Yorkshire coalfields which has led to the movement of the miners into the Labour Party. This has put the position of the right-wing Labour MPs like Roy Mason in jeopardy.

The capitalist press denounced the Yorkshire miners because of the pressure they exerted on the right-wing MPs in the leadership election contest. This was presented as "gross interference with an MP's rights." The communication of the views of the ranks of the movement to the parliamentarians is seen as an attempt to "terrorise" MPs.

Yet for too long, the pressure of the capitalists through the press, through the connection of Labour MPs with big business, and through the wining and dining that takes place in the House of Commons, has been the dominant force brought to bear on Labour MPs.

It is only in the relatively recent period that the ranks of the movement have begun to exert pressure on their representatives. As soon as this is done, right-wing Labour MPs, cocooned in the House of Commons for too long, begin to shriek about "undue pressure". They recognise that the pressure of the ranks had a decisive effect on the Labour Party conference and in the leadership election contest.

Indeed, all the evidence shows that the right wing were preparing to ignore the wishes of Labour's rank and file and impose Denis Healey as Leader. These plans were thwarted by the decisions at the Labour Party conference.

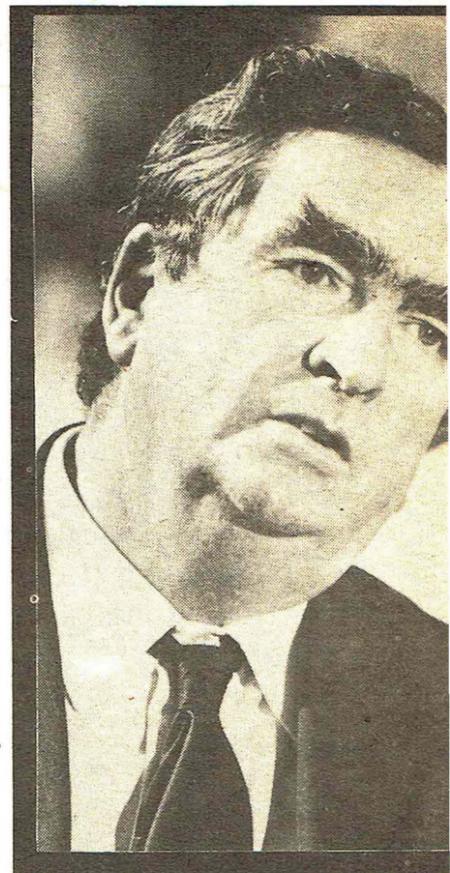
Even some right-wing MPs voted for Michael Foot, conscious that re-selection will be taking place in the next period. Also, some MPs obviously understood that if the right-dominated Parliamentary Labour Party voted for Denis Healey, this could have been overturned by the contest through the electoral college.

This would have been the signal for a head-on collision between the PLP, on the one side, and the Constituency Labour Parties and the trade unions, on the other.

The left-wing shift within the Labour Parties and the trade unions is also reflected in the fact that of the MPs elected for the first time in the last general election, 26 reportedly voted for Michael Foot and only 13 for Denis Healey.

It is clear that the right-wing are in retreat in all sections of the labour movement.

This is not contradicted by



[Photos by Julian McKittrick].

The right from left to right: I

the shadow cabinet elections, which resulted in a victory for the right of the PLP.

Smarting from their recent defeats on party democracy and the leadership, the right got their revenge by voting down Tony Benn and Eric Heffer, the two lefts most identified with these changes.

However, this underlines just how distant the majority of Labour MPs are from the feelings of party members. The result will make the rank and file even more determined to use re-selection to bring the parliamentary party into line with the party as a whole.

It will also reinforce demands for the shadow cabinet and the cabinet itself when Labour is in office, to be elected at Conference through the electoral college.

But like all groupings which are shown to be historically obsolete, the right wing are incapable of reconciling themselves to their decline. In their death throes, they are even attempting to re-write the history of the last 30 years. For instance, Denis Healey in his recent speech on the alleged "decline" of the Labour Party typifies the dementia of the right wing.

He points out that "the Labour vote in the last general election was three million lower than in 1951." The number of Labour Party agents has drastically declined during this period. According to him and Shirley Williams, the Labour Party is "in a shambles", to use their favourite expression.

Unbelievably, responsibility for this is placed on the shoulders of the so-called "left-wing-dominated National Executive Committee." We could be forgiven for thinking that it was the left which had the stewardship of the labour movement in its hands over the last thirty years!

**The right, not the left, presided over Labour's defeats**

In reality, it has been the disastrous ideas, programme and policies of the right wing which held sway over the Labour cabinets of 1964/70 and 1974/79.

Out of the last sixteen years we have had eleven years of Labour government. Yet during this period the conditions of the working class have worsened. Unemployment and prices doubled under the

last Labour government.

It is not true, as Healey suggests, that Labour has lost electoral support because of alleged "left policies". On the contrary, the most moribund and inactive parties are precisely those which the right wing have dominated.

The recent individual membership in Newcastle-under-Lyme Labour Party, represented by John Golding, one of Denis Healey's most ardent supporters, was 196. In William Rodgers' party the membership was 176 in 1977. However, this rocketed to 200 by 1980! In Glasgow Craigton it was 160.

Moreover, the most precipitate decline in Labour Party membership came in 1964/70 when it dropped from 830,116 to 680,191. This was when the intense disillusionment with the right-wing Labour government was most pronounced.

Contrast this to the increase in individual membership by more than 10,000 from May 1979 to the beginning of 1980. This was when the Labour Party began to move left.

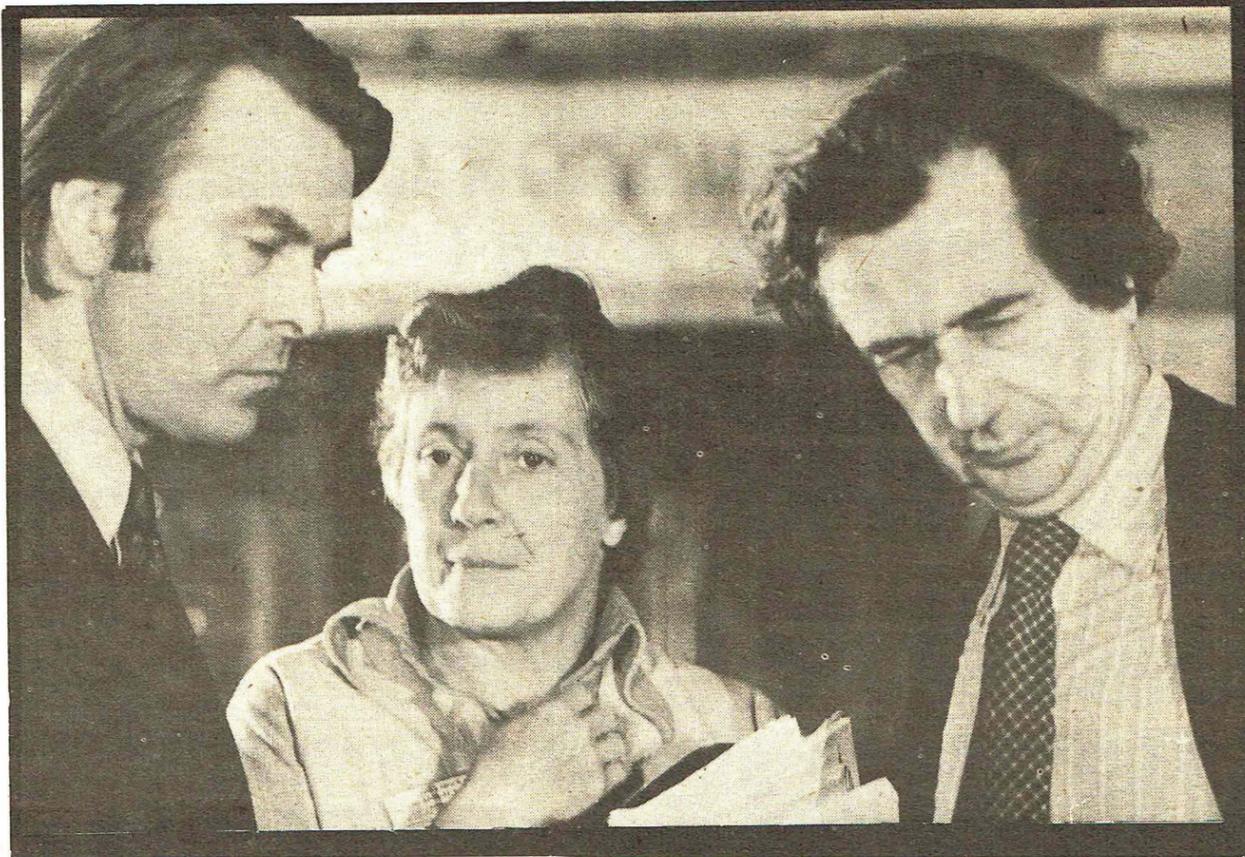
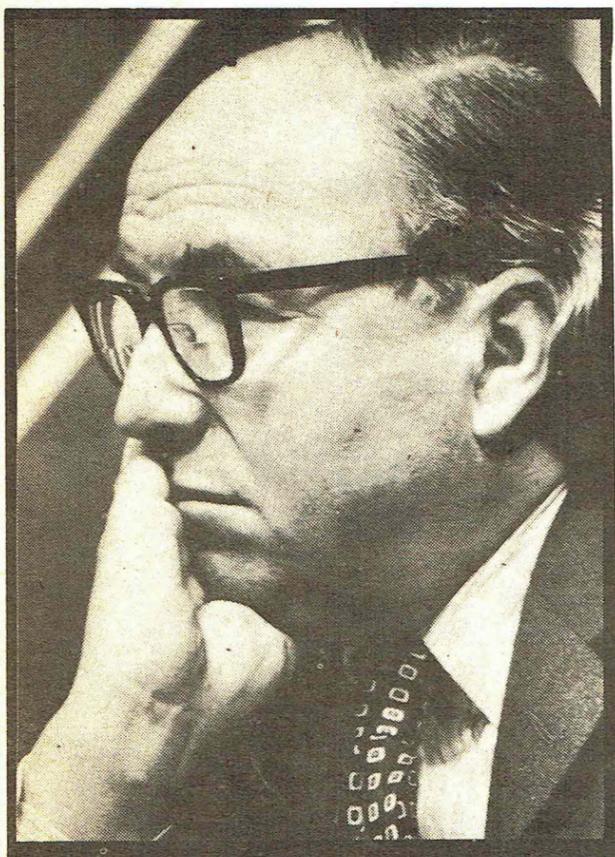
**The trickle of new members would become a flood, if Marxist policies were adopted**

Yet this trickle into the Party would become a flood if a real fighting socialist and Marxist programme were adopted. This was shown by the response to the Labour Party broadcast produced by the Labour Party Young Socialists earlier this year. Over 2,000 applications for membership resulted from this, although the YS had not been allowed to put their full programme. Up to that time it was a record for applications following a Labour Party broadcast!

Under the pressure of an aroused rank and file, the labour movement, for the first time in decades, is beginning to mount active campaigns against the Tory government. This is shown by the magnificent demonstration in Liverpool on 29 November against unemployment, and the earlier demonstration against the Tory cuts.

The Marxist left of the Labour Party, 'Militant' supporters, have played a key role in these changes.

On the other hand, it is clear that the right wing have



Denis Healey; "The Prince across the water," Roy Jenkins; "The gang of three", David Owen, Shirley Williams, and William Rodgers.

exhausted any historical role they may have had. They have increasingly come into collision with an aroused and conscious Labour Party membership. They therefore wish to abolish the rank and file! This would be the end result of their proposals to take decisions for policy, selecting parliamentary candidates, and the leadership out of the hands of party members and put them into the hands of the "party members".

### The right uphold the 'mixed economy'—that is, capitalism

They wish to dissolve the active, fighting Labour Party members into the amorphous mass of "party voters". Backed by their friends in the press, they then calculate that they will be safe.

However, there is no possibility of their schemes being accepted. It is a formula for converting the Labour Party into a fan club for a parliamentary clique.

It is the active, thinking workers who will build the Labour Party. By mobilising the inactive workers, moreover, they will also win elections. Even the 'Financial Times' commented: "It is not just the 'academic' far left [most academics support the right—PT] but the rank and file trade union activists who are demanding a socialist programme."

The right wing take their stand full square on the basis of capitalism. They proclaim their adherence to the "mixed economy", that is capitalism, and pour scorn on the socialist aspirations of Labour Party members. At the same time, they seek to identify all of those who stand for socialism as conscious or unconscious advocates of "political monolithism", i.e. a one-party, totalitarian regime.

This is what Shirley Williams recently wrote in 'The Times': "The reformers cannot divorce the political system of pluralist democracy from a pluralist economic system, a mixed economy. A pluralist democracy complements a pluralist economy, a monolithic political system complements monolithic economic ownership and control."

In plain language, this means that the "mixed economy" (i.e. capitalism) equals "freedom for political par-

ties," whereas state ownership and a socialist plan of production automatically mean a one-party, totalitarian regime. How then does Shirley Williams explain the fact that the "mixed economy" in Chile, Argentina and Turkey have led to the establishment of military-police dictatorships of a "totalitarian" character?

Her arguments echo those of the strategists of the ruling class, who in attempting to counter the arguments for socialism and Marxism do not hesitate to distort them. Implementation of the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies in Britain and the socialist plan of production would not mean the establishment of a one-party, totalitarian regime.

Such are the democratic traditions and level of culture of the working class in Britain that a one-party, totalitarian regime would not be tolerated. On the contrary, a socialist plan of production, by cutting the working day and giving the working people the opportunity to participate in the running of society, would mean an enormous flowering of democracy. All parties, including the Tories and the Liberals, would have the right to compete for acceptance of their programme and, on the basis of majority support, to form a government.

Does Shirley Williams consider the monopoly exercised by the six millionaires over the British press as democracy? A socialist and democratic Britain would take the undemocratic control over the media exercised by the press barons out of their hands and put it under the democratic control of the labour movement. Then all parties, in accordance with their support in elections, would have access to the media.

The arguments of the right wing are merely warmed-up policies which led to the ship-wreck of the last Labour government. Even figures like Harold Wilson, who commanded enormous support in the past, are now seen as exploded shells. They make no impression when they attempt to stop the movement towards the left within the Labour Party from taking shape. Wilson cut a pathetic figure in his recent television appearance on 'Panorama.'

Seeing the ground increasingly torn from beneath their feet, some sections of the

right wing are toying with the idea of splitting from the Labour Party. A sum of £15 million has been dangled before the "Gang of Three" to tempt them in this direction. The ruling class are weighing up the advantages of some kind of "centre party" which can be used as a wedge against a left-ward moving Labour Party.

Shirley Williams tries to draw a fine line between this kind of party and a "social democratic party". But it is a rose by any other name. However, it is not at all accidental that she attempts at this stage to differentiate herself from the Liberals and so-called "left-wing" Tories.

If any new party is seen to be merely a version of the Tories and Liberals it would not attract support from former Labour voters, even from the middle class. Hence the attempt of Shirley Williams to maintain the fiction that she is a "woman of the left".

Together with Roy Jenkins, the capitalists calculate that a centre party, possibly including Shirley Williams, Owen, and Rodgers, in an alliance with the Liberals, could act as a safety-net for those workers and sections of the middle class who are bitterly disillusioned with the Tory Party and threaten to go over to

### Waiting hopefully for the 'Prince across the water'

Labour in a general election.

Where this has been tried by the right-wing social democrats in other countries like Japan, Holland and Australia, however, it has come to grief. With inevitable class polarisation taking place, these right-wing split-offs, after some initial success helped by press backing, have gradually lost support.

The capitalist press fondly refer to Roy Jenkins as the "prince across the water", using an analogy with "Bonny Prince Charlie". However, "the bonny prince", after some initial success based on the most backward and reactionary section of the population, was eventually defeated!

So it will prove to be the case if a centre party is formed. The right wing have not yet decided to take the plunge. It is possible after the

special Labour Party conference in January, particularly with the process of re-selection taking place, that 15, 20 or more of the most extreme right-wing MPs will attempt to form some kind of party with Jenkins.

If they decide to stand in by-elections they will receive massive backing from the press. At the same time, the right wing, while preparing to desert, are also seeking to inflict the maximum damage on the Labour Party.

### The right will not succeed in separating the Marxists from the labour movement

They are attempting to instigate another witch-hunt against the supporters of 'Militant'.

Any attempt to drive the Marxists out of the Party will be ferociously resisted by the Labour Party members. It will result in a big upheaval in the Labour Party. The right wing are unconcerned. They think that a damaged Labour Party would be easy meat for a Centre Party.

They will not succeed in separating the Marxists from the labour movement.

But if the right wing do not split off in the next period, this does not mean that the danger from them has completely evaporated. Even if a split comes next year, some will bide their time and cling to their positions in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

In the event of a new Labour government, even with Michael Foot as prime minister, they hope to form the majority in that cabinet. They will act as a Trojan horse for the capitalists. Big business favoured Denis Healey precisely because they correctly calculated that he

would be a bulwark against rank and file pressure for socialist and left policies.

Despite the fact that Michael Foot loyally supported the right-wing policies of the last Labour cabinet, they see a government led by Foot, particularly in the explosive social situation developing in Britain, as susceptible to the pressure of an aroused working class and labour and trade union movement.

### Preparing to stab Labour in the back

Thus, Ronald Butt, writing in 'The Times' (13 November) bluntly comments: "Capitalism in the mixed society is obviously in some present danger." Coupled with this are also the "dangers in Mr Foot," writes Butt.

So even at this stage the capitalists can see a new Labour government coming under terrific pressure from the working class for radical measures to be taken to solve the economic crisis. Therefore, they will be suggesting that the right wing adopt a division of labour. Behind the scenes, they will be advocating that some of the right stay in the Labour party as an obstacle to socialist measures in a new Labour government.

In the event of a new Labour government, the right wing will reflect the pressure of capitalism within that cabinet. We could therefore have a repeat, on new historical foundations, of the Labour government of 1929-31.

As is well known, the right wing in that government, led by Ramsay MacDonald, stabbed Labour in the back and went over to a National government, i.e. a Tory government in disguise. However, many right wingers stayed within the Labour

Party with the tacit approval of precisely the deserting right wing.

For instance, Herbert Morrison, wanted to support the National Government in 1931. He was only persuaded from doing so by none other than Ramsay MacDonald, who told him in a conversation on Westminster Bridge to stay within the Labour Party "where he was needed".

Either before or after the general election, the right will split. The danger from this quarter can only be avoided if the labour movement adopts a clear socialist and Marxist programme.

The ranks of the movement, by drawing a balance-sheet of the last Labour government, will see that that government failed not just because of the personal deficiencies of the Labour leaders but because it attempted to operate within the framework of a decayed, bankrupt capitalism.

Such is the crisis of British capitalism that it cannot any more afford lasting reforms. This is underlined by the experience of the last two Labour governments.

The demand for a break with the past and the call for an alternative socialist programme was received with great enthusiasm at the Liverpool demonstration on 29 November.

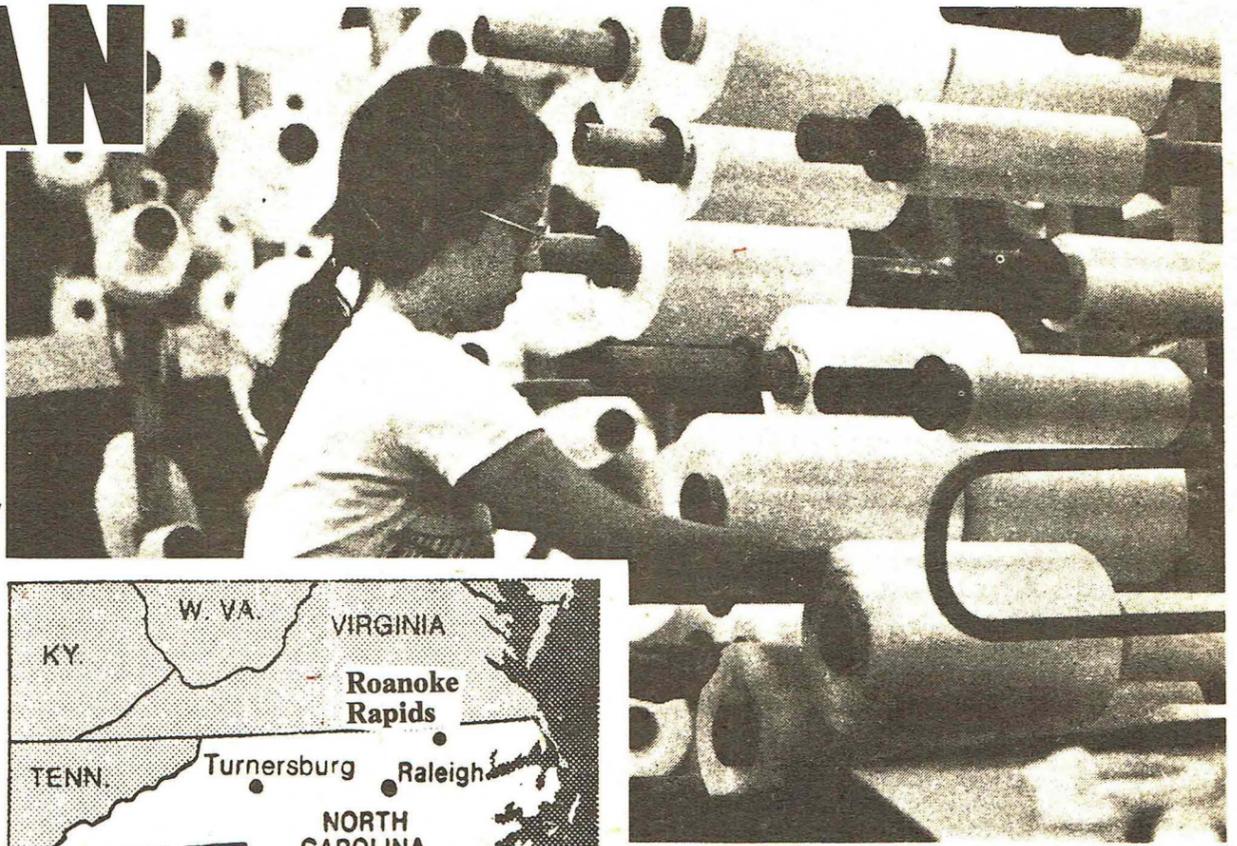
The struggle for reforms is bound up with the demand to implement Clause IV, part 4 of the Party's constitution, nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy.

This would mean nationalisation of the 200 monopolies, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need. This would lead to the introduction of a socialist plan of production, which could eliminate "at a stroke" unemployment and all the other miseries of capitalism in decline.

## LABOUR'S RANKS ARE DEMANDING A BREAK WITH THE PAST AND A COMMITMENT TO BOLD SOCIALIST POLICIES



# AMERICAN UNIONS GAIN A VICTORY



The almost two decades-long battle of the textile workers of southern United States to force their corporate outlaw, J P Stevens, to end its union-busting practice and agree to collective bargaining has been won.

It is an historic victory which will be written into the labour history of the United States.

By Betty Traun  
in New York

The non-union textile giants have served as the mainstay of the open shop anti-unionism of the entire South. And now that monopoly will be cracked.

The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (ACTWU) is already chasing a drive to unionise other non-union textile giants besides Stevens. The next target will probably be the Cannon Mills with its 16,500 workers, based in Kannapolis, North Carolina. In 1974 Cannon Mill workers did not win their election, but voted 45% for the ACTWU.

JP Stevens has agreed to drop its practice of challenging in the courts collective bargaining election victories won by workers in Stevens plants. Now the rapid unionisation of JP Stevens throughout the country will be facilitated.

Also, it was agreed that whatever contract terms are reached covering wages and benefits at Roanoke Rapids (the plant that won recognition) will cover all other JP Stevens plants where workers vote to have the ACTWU represent them.

In fact, with this breakthrough at Roanoke Rapids, the union has won approval of a "master contract" system covering all other JP Stevens plants.

What brought about this sudden change of heart was not that JP Stevens had become "born again" Christian after all these years of fighting the union. No, the victory is due to the militant steadfastness of the Roanoke Rapids workers who never gave in, most of them black textile workers.

In its attempt to split the workers' ranks and smash the union, JP Stevens bought off

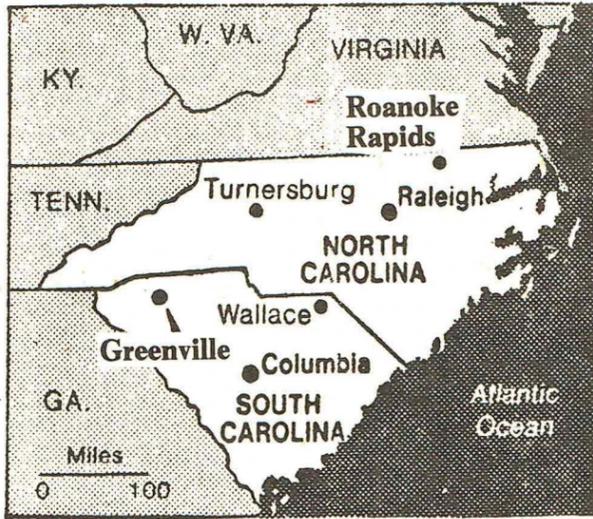
the workers at its other plants with an 8½% wage increase last year and a 10% increase this year. For two years in a row JP Stevens offered the same increase to the Roanoke Rapids workers, if they accepted a new contract which in effect would have destroyed the union.

The ACTWU leadership and the branch's bargaining committee recommended against acceptance of the union-busting manoeuvre. For both of those years, the workers voted overwhelmingly to support their bargaining committee although it meant a loss of \$1 per hour in wages—a total loss of \$40 a week—for workers whose wages are only \$4.50 per hour (£2). The new contract will wipe out this inequity.

### Using bosses' links

Further unionisation of Stevens plants will not always be an easy walkover. The 10,000 workers in the Greenville South Carolina plant have voted against ACTWU representatives. However, in recent years the ACTWU won two bargaining elections at Stevens plants in High Point and Allendale in North Carolina, and postponed balloting at the Tifton plant in Georgia.

The High Point and Allendale workers voted for the union even though JP Stevens told them "look at the Roanoke Rapids workers. They didn't get their 10% raise." A union activist said "We think the fact the Roanoke Rapids workers held the line, sacrificing those wage increases, convinced JP Stevens that it was hopeless. They knew they would never



be able to break the union."

There was another major factor in the victory. The union initiated a "Stevens Corporate Campaign," with Edward Allen as associate director. One feature of the establishment is the use of "interlocking directorates" for capitalists' corporations.

The representatives of insurance companies and banks sit on the Boards of Directors of the corporations to whom they lend money, and vice versa, representatives of the corporations sit on the boards of the insurance companies and banks. JP Stevens' representatives sat on the Board of Directors of those banks, insurance companies and corporations which provided the capital for the textile giants and ACTWU made its effort to isolate JP Stevens from these interlocking companies.

It began a drive to force the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., one of the great giants in the United States to hold open elections for the Board of Directors with every policy holder having one vote. This was aimed at removing JP Stevens' agents from Metropolitan's Board of Directors.

"It would have been a hard job to reach 23 million policy holders, but Metropolitan's insurance agents are unionised workers. They would have helped us," said Allen.

Above all else, these great insurance companies fear even quasi-public control, says the union spokesmen. ACTWU staged a picket line at the headquarters of Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. and at the headquarters of the Sperry Corporation the picketers protested at Metropolitan's role in providing up to one-half of JP Stevens' long-term credits.

The union source says Metropolitan Life has become so sensitive to publicity about its ties with JP Stevens, "that anything we do to pressure

Metropolitan Life shows up immediately in our bargaining with JP Stevens."

He states flatly his belief that Met had finally passed the word to JP Stevens to settle the seemingly endless union-busting campaign.

### The union concentrated on the links between the textile company, J P Stevens and its financial backers. So frightened were the banks and insurance companies by public pressure, that they made J P Stevens concede.

On Sept 11 1978, ACTWU called for open elections for the Board of Directors of new York Life Insurance to replace anti-union members sitting on it. The target was James T Finley the chief executive officer of JP Stevens, and architect of its anti-union drive, and member of New York Life's board. The next day Finley resigned from the Board of New York Life.

Subsequently Finley was forced to resign from the board of manufacturers Hanover Trust Co, one of our leading banks and a few months later stepped down as chief executive officer of JP Stevens, although he remains chairman of the executive committee of the board at Stevens.

Last July 29, supporters of the JP Stevens workers showed up at Sperry Corporation's annual stockholder meeting in New York City to protest at Finley's nomination to the board. "We had mobilised tens of thousands of postcards from trade unionists and pro-labour religious and political groups protesting the ties of

In recent years American capitalists have turned towards the 'sun-belt' of the South and West to open up new plants where union organisation is weak. The winning of the battle for recognition by the textile workers could now begin to see the unionisation of these plants.

these corporations like Sperry to JP Stevens," said Allen.

On the front page of its proxy statement handed to every stockholder at that meeting was a statement that Sperry Corporation would lose up to £1 million if Finley was elected to the board. The Sperry Committee which nominated Finley consisted of the chief executive officer of Metropolitan Life Insurance, the chairman of the JC Penney Co, the chairman of the Sperry Corporation and JC Garven, chief executive officer of Exxon Corp., and also head of 'Business Roundtable' a notorious top corporate union-busting brains trust which advises corporations on how to get rid of their unions.

"Here was the nominating committee consisting of some of the most powerful corporate leaders in the United States combining to name to Sperry's board the chief architect of JP Stevens union-busting drive," said Allen. The stockholders voted ag-

ainst Finley. JP Stevens had to capitulate.

As Allen states, the giant corporations of our Establishment fear "quasi-public control" above all else, and herein lies their vulnerability. Public pressures do work, as we have seen in the case of JP Stevens.

But the real heroes of the long, long battle against Stevens is a relatively small group of 3,000 workers in Roanoke Rapids who won their victory through determination and "the old fighting spirit of the '30s."

They will set the example for all other still unorganised workers in the South, and we will now go forward from a low of 20% for organised workers in the United States, to a much higher figure, to the smashing of the anti-union "right to work laws", to a change from "business unionism" as used by our labour hierarchy to a bright future for labour in these United States.

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# The spies go out in the cold

Last week the junior ranks in the Indian security police came out on strike. They picketed their headquarters and openly defied the government.

Thirty-two secret policemen were arrested and over 90 suspended. This action follows on from the 1969 police strike, which has led to the historically unprecedented creation in India of a trade union for the intelligence police.

The great police strike that swept India in 1979, brought a million policemen into action, including armed con-

By Roger Silverman

flicts on the picket lines with army strikebreakers.

This strike terrified the ruling class, and won for the police substantial pay increases and—more important—recognition of their right to organise; though, in deference to the feelings of the ruling class, their negotiating organisations have been des-

ignated 'welfare associations' rather than trade unions.

Even the riot police (CP) and other paramilitary security bodies are not proof against the winds of class struggle. Now these have penetrated right into the very heart of the capitalist state: the Intelligence Bureau (India's counterpart to the British MI5).

A document has come into our hands, an open letter to a senior official of the IB, which helps to explain the difficulties encountered by Mrs Gandhi in her attempt on behalf of the capitalist class to "restore authority and discipline"! Extracts are printed below.

being treated like...domestic servants. This practice must stop immediately or else the IBEA would be forced to identify such black sheep and deal with them accordingly...

You have to provide the lead in keeping the authorities posted with any injustices or wrongs that are being perpetrated and pull your full weight to see them redressed. A witness to an injustice is as much guilty as its perpetrator.

All I am requesting you is to perform your job sincerely and fearlessly. Going after short-term gains will ultimately be a self-defeating process...

Please do not spill away the chance afforded by the formation of the IBEA which is a unique association of its type in the whole of India. Needless to say that the whole of the IBEA will be behind you in any endeavour you may embark upon to clean the cobwebs.



Mrs Gandhi cannot rely on the forces of state repression to curb the growing explosion in India

## International Notes

### Turkey

When the military took over Turkey in a coup in September, their action was quietly praised by the international capitalist press. "The sense of relief was not felt only within the establishment. It engulfed the left" was how the 'Times' correspondent, 22 September, tried to portray the situation. The military would end the killings, the coup was 'different' was what the bosses media proclaimed.

A different picture emerged last month in a report from the human rights organisation, Amnesty International. They stated that under the military "torture of political detainees was widespread." They detailed eight cases of deaths in detention since the coup. In four of these Amnesty's information suggested that their deaths were the result of torture, and in two others the police have been charged with murder.

According to the authorities three people jumped from the same 5th-floor window. But the autopsy on one of them, a trade union lawyer, showed electric shock treatment and beatings. Not surprisingly, Amnesty's request for a second autopsy in the presence of an Amnesty observer has received no reply.

### S Korea

US and Japanese governments are expressing increasing concern that the South Korean military dictatorship is about to execute the main opposition leader, Kim Dae Jung. Kim faces the death penalty, after having been guilty of treason in a secret Military

court.

Amongst the trumped charges against him was the one that he had organised the students of Kwangju to revolt; which would have been difficult as he was in prison at the time. It is not the first time that Kim has been in prison. After he got 46% of the vote in South Korea's last presidential election in 1971, the constitution was changed. Kim was kidnapped and later put in jail.

It is not that Kim is in any way 'left-wing'; according to the 'Guardian', 5 December, "his anti-communism would make Mrs Thatcher look a blushing pink." What does scare businessmen is the mighty power of the South Korean working class.

International capitalists got a shock last year during the insurrection in Kwangju. Then the military were finally able to restore order, but can they do this indefinitely? The bosses want reforms, and Kim would be the safe capitalist politician to carry them out; he has popular support because of his opposition to the regime.

But the monstrous military dictatorship which Western capitalism created in South Korea doesn't agree. It wants to crush all differing views. But this is perilous for Western capitalism, as it deprives them of a fall-back position, in a vital area to its interests.

### C America

In a desperate attempt to shore up their crumbling regime, the El Salvadorean junta kidnapped and murdered six opposition leaders two weeks ago. They hoped by this to save their military regime, which has virtually no

public support.

The junta can only rule by vicious repression, as recent TV documentary showed [reviewed 'Militant' 28, November]. But despite this, the opposition movement grows and becomes more radical. On the day of the funeral for the opposition leaders, a general strike paralysed the capital, San Salvador.

And the people's resistance to the US backed junta has caused dissension within the strategists of American capitalism. A 'dissent paper' against current and probable future US policy has been openly circulated by State Department, Defence and CIA officials. They are especially worried that Reagan's proposed hardline policies for Central America will fail and not end the civil war. Instead they call for a negotiated solution, along the lines of the Zimbabwe settlement.

But even if such a respite were achieved it would prove to be temporary. Throughout Central America, the movements against the corrupt juntas have grown in recent years. In neighbouring Nicaragua, where the Somoza dictatorship was overthrown, the most open capitalist representatives have recently left the government.

During the election, Reagan's advisers called for an economic blockade of Nicaragua and the formation of a new counter-revolutionary army from remnants of Somoza's National Guard to overthrow the government. Such a policy would probably prove counter-productive.

It was this kind of lunacy which pushed Castro in Cuba into taking over industry and the economy. US imperialism is caught in a dilemma within its own previously secure 'backyard'. Neither repression nor reform offers it any long-term security.

INTELLIGENCE BUREAU EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, New Delhi

August 28 1980  
Circular letter  
No 1/IBEA/80-600

My dear Shri

I have the proud privilege of addressing you as the President of the IB Employees' Association. I am sure you are not unaware of the momentous events of the last year or so and the circumstances in which the IBEA was set up. It gives me immense pleasure to inform you that the IBEA has acquired a membership of about 9,000.

We have, in the process, buried all differences on account of rank, cadre, class and category. We are engaged in the sacred task of pulling the Bureau out of the quagmire it has been thrown into by a succession of its administrators...

You are as intimately aware as we are at the IBEA Headquarters of the manner in which a class of administrators looks down upon the departmental staff and treats them no better than bonded labour...The senior bosses have become a law unto

There is a general complaint that some of our gazetted colleagues treat our Class IV employees...very shabbily. Some of them are

I am appealing to your conscience. History does not forgive them who waver...

Yours sincerely  
BB Raval  
President IBEA



# Letters

VIEWERS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?  
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## Left is right

Dear Comrades

This is the first letter I have ever written to a newspaper of any kind, but come to think of it, it's the first time in my 27 years we have had a reactionary, right wing Tory government sufficiently extreme and heartless, to incense ordinary working people to such political activity.

Despite the right wing propaganda currently being churned out by the capitalist joke papers or national dailies, especially surrounding the recent Labour Party leadership issue and the constitutional changes within the Labour Party, I invariably find that 99.9% of the time, Left is right and Right is wrong. It would have been a disaster for the working class movement if another right wing, pro-capitalist professing to be a socialist, had become the leader of the parliamentary Labour Party.

You only have to read Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution, to see what our party was formed to achieve. If the founders of our party could have seen the way the last two Labour governments were taking us, they would have turned over in their graves.

The policies of the so-called right wing and Healey type 'socialists' are Tory monetarist policies with just a spark of humanity added. Socialistic capitalism is an economic impossibility; the only way forward for the labour movement is to go to the people, the electorate of this country, with a truly Marxist manifesto.

If, as the right of the party claim, the people are not yet ready for true socialism, we must keep up the good work of political education and enlightenment, while another five years of reactionary Tory misrule and social injustice convinces them that socialism is the only way to equality, freedom, and social and economic justice.

We must bring up our children to be free from greed and exploitation. We must struggle to build a better world for them to live in—where poverty, injustice and deprivation will be things of the past.

Yours fraternally  
Dave Marshall  
LP member  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire

## Fascist thuggery

Dear Comrades

After their poor showing at the last general election, the National Front went through a phase of demoralisation. They were busy in-fighting, finding causes for their electoral defeat.

The National Front divided into warring factions and lost many supporters. However, while recognising the general decline in support for fascist groups, I think we must be attentive to the new developments over the past six months or so.

Older workers who may have voted for the NF in the past, have fallen by the wayside. But the new Nati-



Pensioners rally calls for TUC action—Thatcher promised to 'help the family', but even widows are forced to fight.  
Photo: MILITANT

## Widows' tax trap

Dear Sir

I enclose a copy of a letter sent to Mr W Harrison, MP for Wakefield. I thought it might interest you.

Dear Mr Harrison

Will you please, please try to do something for the widows of this country?

Today I received a pension increase of £3.85. Yesterday I received a new tax code, F38—5% [amended after protest to F31—5%]. One

would think widows were millionaires.

This, by the way, is a special code! A colleague and I, both widows, both nearing sixty, with small part-time jobs, walked out of our houses yesterday and wandered the town, we were so depressed.

We took part-time work to give us a little extra money and make us more independent of our families, and we are slayed by the tax.

## Keynes—the answer?

Dear Comrades

Having bought a copy of your paper, I am astonished to learn that you share Thatcher's dogma that a balanced budget is necessary to fight inflation (Editorial Statement, 28 November). The bit "If... the government resorts to the printing press...this will merely fuel the fires of inflation" sounds like a standard extract from Tory propaganda.

Haven't you read—or heard of—John Maynard Keynes, and how he advocated deficit budgets to fight unemployment? Or is the

Keynesian answer to inflation—an incomes policy—still unthinkable despite our recent disastrous experience of "free collective bargaining"?

Or—a truly alarming thought!—have you been infiltrated by the Monetarist Tendency?

Yours sincerely  
Philip Jones  
Morden, Surrey

## Barlinnie

Dear Comrade

There have been several articles in 'Militant' recently on the appalling conditions

in British prisons.

Obviously under our present social system the ruling class have no interest in improving these conditions and will only do so if forced by labour movement action. However from what I've read about the special unit in Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow, the regime there seems to be a step in the right direction.

I wonder if any reader, perhaps in Glasgow, has any comments on the unit made famous by Jimmy Boyle, and on the Scottish Office's efforts to undermine and possibly close the unit.

Yours fraternally  
Kevin Fernandes  
Hackney North and  
Stoke Newington LPYS

Why widows? Are widowers classed as married men? If so they get £20 a week personal allowance more than widows. We have the same overheads as a couple.

Tax us on our wages at a normal rate. Give us our pension. We mothers have earned it.

Yours sincerely  
GM Ingham [Mrs]  
Wakefield

## Liverpool—the inside story

Dear Militant

'60,000 march against Maggie' was the bare-faced lie in the so-called Labour 'Sunday Mail', which greeted the many thousands returning to Scotland from Liverpool after Labour's mass demonstration against unemployment on November 29.

It's not as if the editors can blame the Press Agencies for giving them false reports. They had duly despatched ace reporter Ruth (I'm a socialist) Wishart on one of the special trains carrying hundreds to the demo from Glasgow.

What this journalistic giant lacks in arithmetical skills she certainly makes up for in her in-depth analysis of 'Militant'. She wrote next day "The usual percentage of professional protesters were there—the earnest-faced young men who strode the corridors dispensing 'Militant' magazines and instant dogma." Next time we'll all wear party hats and give out save-the-whale badges!

At least she was right when she said there were many on the march "who had never done anything similar in their lives"—a real reflection of the mood of discontent caused by the Tory attacks.

The capitalist press have their own reasons for trying to play down the level of working class opposition to the Tories, but workers in thousands of workplaces all over the country will have heard the true reports about Liverpool from the activists who were there.

The size of the protest can only bolster the morale of trade unionists and unemployed workers in their struggles against the Tories. It must also be seen as only the beginning of a mass campaign by the Labour Party and TUC to mobilise the working class in direct opposition to the bosses' government and return Labour to power on a socialist programme.

PS At least Cde. Wishart brought an LPYS 'Save jobs—sack the Tories' badge!

Fraternally  
Frank White  
LPYS Scottish Chairman

## —that didn't make the news

Dear Comrades

If you popped into your local newsagent on the Monday after the Liverpool march you may, like me, have seen the headline "40,000 march for jobs in UK—Thatcher policies denounced," on the front page of a newspaper together with a photo of the march.

Nothing odd about that, you might say, although you might dispute the number of marchers given. But this paper was the American 'Herald Tribune', not a British newspaper. Upon

searching through the 'Sun', 'Guardian', 'Mail', 'Mirror', 'Express', 'Times' and 'Telegraph', I found that not a single one had either a report or photograph of the march on its front page.

What a testimony to the fear of the bosses' press when workers begin to move into action, that news worthy of international coverage should be hidden away on the inside pages. Let's carry the movement forward and kick out the Tories for good, as a first step towards a socialist world.

Yours fraternally  
Dave Gartrell  
Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

## Unity with black workers—not their exploiters

Dear 'Militant'

I welcome the article (issue 524) by comrade Bob Lee concerning a common struggle towards the prospect of genuine black workers' organisations being affiliated to the Labour Party at national level.

I emphasise the word genuine, because with all the Asian organisations I have encountered, I have not witnessed many genuine workers' organisations. Most are more or less dominated by businessmen and intellectuals (in some cases people of higher caste).

I was having a conversation with my brother-in-law about our local Pakistani organisation, where the organiser once called together some very influential people from the Pakistani embassy. When the workers, including my brother-in-law, turned up

expecting to discuss their problems, they were left in a separate room while the more influential members and businessmen were introduced to the embassy officials and later entertained.

The workers, after seeing this degrading gesture, left in disgust.

One of the organisers is also a right-winger in the local Labour Party, a position he achieved by bringing in Asian workers who were naive about politics—some could not even speak English—to vote for him.

There are a million more similar examples, where these leaders will sacrifice their socialist principles for a career.

I would welcome more properly elected Black and Asian organisations affiliating to the Labour Party at national level to strengthen the party, but I would be very cautious about more black Reg Prentices and George Browns coming into our ranks.

Yours fraternally  
Abdul Shakour  
Coventry SE  
Labour Party

For Christmas and  
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20p each inc. post  
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to Steve Amor  
1 Mentmore Terrace  
London E8 3PN

# ads

CLASSIFIED: 5p per word, minimum ten words  
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.  
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY

**NEATH MILITANT DISCUSSION GROUP** Every Wednesday night 7.30pm At the Full Moon Pub, The Parade, Neath. (100 yds from Railway Station) Further details: Tom Jenkins Neath 56669.

**LIVERPOOL Militant Christmas Dance** 8 till late, Friday 12 December, at the Pyramid Club, Temple Street, Liverpool. Admission £1. Contact L Holt, 48 Arkles Lane, Liverpool 4

**GRAVESEND Christmas Party** in aid of 'Militant'. 1 East Terrace, Gravesend, Kent on Saturday 20 December. Real ale, snacks and live entertainment. All welcome. 50p.

**Newcastle Latin American Society** meeting on El Salvador with three representatives from the Revolutionary Democratic Front (SDR) plus the film 'El Salvador—Revolution or Death' 5 pm Friday 12 December, Curtis Auditorium, Physics Building, Newcastle University

**GRAND CHRISTMAS BAZAAR** in aid of Militant Fighting Fund Saturday 13 December 11am-3pm at St Osmund's church, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset.

Stalls, Father Xmas, Hot snacks/teas.  
AND 1p.m. Performance by "Red Nettle"—Socialist Theatre Group from West Dorset.

**MILITANT CHILDREN'S PARTY** Sat. 10th January 2pm John Marshall Hall, Blackfriars Road, London SE1. Please contact C. Doyle at Militant offices.

**CLYDEBANK LPYS Public Meeting** 'Fight back against the Tories'. Hear: Greg Oxley (Scottish Regional Committee, LPYS). Venue: Kilbowie Primary School, West Thompson Street, on Tuesday 16 December at 7.30 pm. All welcome.

**Preliminary notice:** The Rotterham and District Trades Union Council are to hold a conference on all aspects of unemployment as it affects this locality, on Saturday 28 February 1981.

**DON'T MISS THE LONDON 'MILITANT' BAZAAR** Saturday 13 December 2.00 pm  
St Matthews Meeting Place  
Brixton Hill, SW2  
[2 mins from Brixton Tube, opp. Town Hall]  
Admission 5p

**Militant Christmas Cards** featuring Alan Hardman cartoon  
10p each, cash with order from: E McParland  
81 Troughton Road  
Charlton, London SE7

And now...the  
**"PLUNDER WOMAN MUST GO"**  
Cartoon Book



41 of Alan Hardman's best 1980 cartoons collected in an attractive 11in. x 8in. book with red, black and white cover.

Send only £1 plus 20p post and packing [orders of 5 or more post free] to Cartoons, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Cash with order please. All proceeds to Militant Fighting Fund

**As demonstrated recently in Liverpool**

**"DUMP THE TORIES"** posters. Approx 15in x 23in with bold red and black slogans. Special price while stocks last £1 for 20 post free. Send cash with order to Dump Tories, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Ideal for meeting-rooms, banners, paper selling etc.

**NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS IN 'MILITANT'**

Send greetings to the labour movement in the New Year's edition of 'Militant'.

Rates:  
Semi-display, 3 column cms...£3 (up to 15 words);  
6 column cms...£6 (up to 25 words).  
Display: one-sixteenth page...£10; one-eighth page...£20;  
one-quarter page...£40.

Cash with copy please, to arrive by Saturday 20 December. Cheques/POs payable to 'Militant'. Send to Circulation Dept., 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

## Subscription offer!

Take advantage of our special subscription offer now. Unfortunately, postal charges will be going up in the New Year, which means higher sub rates for the paper.

But if you renew your subscription now it will still be at the old rate. Why not take out a 'Militant' subscription as a present for someone? What better present than a copy of 'Militant' through the door every week!

# Build Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target for year
Eastern	3879		5,000
East Midlands	3636		3,800
Hants & IOW	4214		4,600
Humberside	1634		2,500
London East	5578		6,200
London West	3150		4,700
London South	4803		4,700
Manchester & Lancs	2984		5,100
Merseyside	3906		6,000
Northern	4514		7,300
Scotland East	2284		3,200
Scotland West	4122		5,000
Southern	4970		5,900
South West	2259		3,200
Wales East	1596		2,800
Wales West	2990		3,100
West Midlands	6764		9,000
Yorkshire	4582		7,300
Others	10307		10,600
<b>Total received</b>	<b>78172</b>		<b>100,000</b>

## TARGET FOR YEAR-£100,000

# YOUR TENS CAN REACH MILLIONS

# THIS WEEK £1,399

By  
**Steve Cawley**

The £1,400 in this week is an improvement, but still leaves another £21,800 to be raised by 10 January! By the time you read this, you'll have only another month [including Christmas and the New Year].

The most important New Year's resolution has got to be that every regular reader of 'Militant' assists us financially on a regular basis.

We've had in some large donations, from meetings such as those in Brighton, Nottingham, Ellesmere Port and Hartlepool, and from individuals who found they could spare it. Thanks to Anon (Brighton) £70, Blackpool reader £50, tax rebate recipient (Manchester) £20, and Anon (Sheffield) £20.

A comrade from Birmingham, L Birch, responded to Terry Wogan's

"Children in Need" appeal by sending us a tenner (see page one). We're getting now more regular donations at Labour Party and trade union meetings but have all our supporters been round with appeal sheets? Have you?

Groups of trade unionists as usual have helped us again, including SOGAT members in the West of Scotland, POEU members on the South Coast, and miners in the East Midlands. One of the main reasons, incidentally, why the East Midlands line is nearly all the way across our chart is that our supporters there have developed 'revolutionary prodding' into a fine art. It's said that in one case, 'Militant' sellers have only to walk into a certain meeting hall and immed-

ately all present reach for their wallets!  
A Stafford supporter has collected £6.20 on extras on sales of 'Militant', which he says in a normal week would be 35p. Is there some untapped source amongst the local readers of 'Militant' in your area as well? For example, a reader in Bristol has his paper delivered to him and we save the postage, which he is prepared to donate.  
A lot more cash this week came in from sales of calendars (unfortunately sold out now), pontoon and raffle tickets, and the first sales of the new Plunder Woman cartoon book. (See adverts column.)  
There was a large number of individual donations including G McDonald (Birmingham) and Ellesmere Port LPYS members A Pink and S Starkey (both tenners), Dulwich Labour Party members R Andrew, J Mulrenan and C Peckham, G Nicholson and S Scheer from Bermondsey, R Allen (Southgate), D Lee (CPSA) and K Pattenden (USDAW) from Leicester, G Smith (Stirling), A Jones (Penis-

tone), V Kaufmann (BAC Bristol), and J Marston (Wavertree, Liverpool).

In order for us to have a prosperous New Year, we ask our readers to remember the Christmas present for the 'Militant'. Times are harder for the majority of workers, but this is the time when we can't afford not to have the 'Militant'. In previous years we've asked for Christmas fivers—this year we're asking all our readers who can afford it to contribute Christmas tenners to our funds.

Unfortunately, they're now worth less than the Christmas fivers were a few years ago! The alternative is to buy £10 worth of our raffle tickets for the Winter holiday abroad. That way you stand to help our paper and have a holiday to remember!

But seriously, can any of us afford another year of the Tories? If you can't what's the alternative? If you agree with us, we need your help to convince first the thousands, then the millions. With your tens we can reach millions!

## SALE OF THE DECADE!

Not only was the Labour Party demonstration magnificent in its opposition to the Tories and unemployment, but the sellers of 'Militant' broke all records. There were more 'Militant' sellers than ever before but a huge 7,500 papers were sold with more money to come in!

Many sellers sold over 50 on the day, the record so far claimed is a seller in Salford who sold 120. Let us hear if you sold more! Our supporters in Hants and Dorset should not be forgotten who on the same day sold 75 on a

demonstration in Southampton.

The demand for the 'Militant' is exceeding all previous levels and for the November 29th we exceeded our record print order by 5,000! New areas are being reached with the 'Militant' with new sellers in Bury St Edmunds [Suffolk] and Canvey Island [Essex].

Make sure our supply of the best Marxist paper in the world reaches the demand of the working class for a fighting Marxist programme to transform society.

## MILITANT WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

Win a winter holiday abroad for two worth £500—can be taken any time mid-January to mid-April!

Second prize: a weekend for two in Paris! Eight other prizes include record tokens and a portable TV.

Tickets only 10p from your 'Militant' seller. All proceeds to the 'Militant' fighting fund.

# Industrial

## in brief

Geoffrey Finsberg, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Environment, has written to UCATT general secretary Les Wood, stating that the government would no longer support the National Joint Council for the Building Industries' declaration that building trade workers should be directly employed. The UCATT leader said, "The Tories are intent on allowing lumpers and tax dodging cowboys to take over what is left of the building industry. It will be a lumpers' charter."

Workers in the reproduction department of J A Dixon, part of the Dickinson Robinson Group of companies, have been threatened with redundancies in the Isle of Wight.

The employees claim they cannot afford to inject capital into the section. The union involved, SLADE, had never been informed of problems and workers had lower wages and conditions than SLADE members on the mainland.

Following Dixon's statement that work would be transferred to other companies SLADE members throughout Britain are refusing to handle work emanating from or destined for this company. Messages of support to N Petty, 3 Kennedy Close, Wootton, Isle of Wight.

The depth of the slump in shipbuilding internationally has forced the government to increase the cash limit for British Shipbuilders from £120 million to £135 million for the current year. Already 17,000 redundancies have occurred this year. In merchant shipbuilding, numbers have been more than halved, from 38,000 to below 18,000 in just three years.

The devastating impact of the present crisis on jobs for youth has made many trade unionists aware of the need to tackle young workers' problems. A new Junior Workers Committee of the AUEW has been set up in the Blackpool and Fylde area of Lancashire.

The jobs of many of the 300,000 women who work in the school meals service are at risk—one of the casualties of savage cutbacks in this basic provision. Nearly 20,000 jobs have already been lost.

Northamptonshire, for example, have upped the cost of school dinners to 55p, and there has been a 54% drop in meals served between the spring term and the summer term this year. Not only is the health of school children affected, and the family budget, but now the authority intend another 800 redundancies to follow the 170 already implemented out of a total of 2,100 staff.

# Gutter press attacks NUPE

Photo: Laurence Sparnam (IFL)

"Strike against the children" screamed the 'New Standard's' headline last Friday.

Yes, a strike, but one that was entirely the responsibility of management at Great Ormond Street hospital. Management are only too ready to disrupt the hospital in its eagerness to pick off the fighters for the low paid.

I spoke to NUPE shop steward John Clarke at Queen Elizabeth hospital in East London, where the reasons for the dispute (which is now over) began.

Management had disciplined a porter there for refusing, in his lunch-break, to do work that went against procedure, established with the union and signed on behalf of the Board of Governors by Audrey Callaghan—Jim's wife.

Ancillary workers supported the victimised man and the porters were on official strike for three weeks. All are now suffering financial hardship and contributions would be gratefully received.

Great Ormond Street porters gave limited supportive action. Management seized this opportunity to sack the NUPE branch chairman, Conway Xavier, on the most ridiculous of charges. This in turn brought about a near all-out strike in sympathy by other ancillary workers. It is management who should be charged by the 'New Standard' of a 'strike against the children'!

The hypocrisy of the 'New Standard' is typical of the

Tory press. It is our children who live in housing that should have been pulled down years ago. It is our children shown lying dead on pavements after paraffin heaters have gone up, and our children sheltering in sheds after evictions.

If the 'New Standard' was really interested in the welfare of this country's young they would be headlining the Black Report 'Inequalities in Health'. They would be telling the

By Myrna Shaw

(Sec., Tower Hamlets District JSSC, personal capacity)

country that in the period 1970-72 nearly 10,000 children died, only because they were born to parents who were partly skilled or unskilled manual workers; the Report states plainly that "a class gradient can be observed for most causes of death."

Is the 'New Standard' going to headline the tory MP who in parliament on Friday claimed that the government were leaving 5,000 babies to die each year, in order to save 0.5% of the health budget?

## Tories' rule by fear

If they were really interested in our children they would join the Black Report in its call for the abolition of child poverty in the 1980s. This would entail a substantial increase in child benefit, an increase in the accessibility of ante-natal and child health clinics, day nursery places for all under-fives, increased community care, free school milk and the provision of meals at school as a right.

In its attempt to rule by fear this hated Tory government, aided by the gutter press, will launch attack after attack, particularly on public service workers, already threatened with a 6% pay limit until 1982.

Let us make our own position clear right away. As a trade union movement we are concerned for all our class, all our children, and we will care for them in our way.

We will not be victimised. We will protect our interests. We will take the first steps to bring into office a Labour government committed to giving the resources back to the people whose labour produces them.



Health workers have a tough job doing their best to care for the sick as the Tories unleash cut after cut on the health service. But when the workers attempt to defend the service, the Tories, through their barons in Fleet Street, go into a frenzy of distortion and lies.

## POTTERIES READY TO FIGHT

This Saturday, North Staffs Trades Council has called a Conference of the "broad labour movement" to discuss practical ways of opposing cuts, and most importantly in the Potteries, unemployment.

A member of the Ceramic and Allied Trades Union sets the scene in the area.

"Thatcher is always telling us that high wages mean unemployment, that militant trade unions and restrictive practices mean unemployment.

"But in my industry the lowest basic pay is £58 for a 40 hour week. There have been few disputes in living memory, and we have no 'restrictive practices'.

"At one engineering firm, Bamfords, the workers accepted a 5% pay cut to save jobs. Three months later, they faced redundancy.

"Unemployment in the area has doubled in the last year, to 20,500 with 9,000 on short time, about 20% of the remaining workforce. The local evening paper rubbed it in when they announced this figure three weeks ago. In the middle of

the column, in big letters, they advertised "44 jobs in tonight's Sentinel".

"Every week, more redundancies and short time working are announced, the latest being 340 from factories in one of the biggest groups, Wedgewood. Their chairman, Sir Arthur Bryan, in contrast to his workers, is one of the highest paid company directors in Britain. He has threatened factory closures and more jobs to go. Thatcher, after the industry's history of under-investment and poor management, is hitting the industry hard.

"But Thatcher has got it wrong. We are not sitting down and giving in! Workers in my factory are joining the Labour Party, and talking in terms of if they want to close this factory, we will organise a sit-in/work-in. The spirit is coming from the grass-roots, and will push our leaders into adopting socialism."

By Steve Martin

## NALGO - bold lead needed

The strike by Manchester's Housing Department is now over.

The dispute began at the beginning of November when five NUPE and five NALGO members were sacked by the council for carrying out union policy, of not covering for unfilled vacancies. The 800 workers in the department came out on strike, in support of the ten sacked workers.

After a successful one day strike action, with a demonstration of over 2,000 on November 20, the 10 workers have now been re-instated. The council has also agreed to enter discussions on what constitutes one person's work, and on the re-structuring of the department.

However, union members will be keeping a close watch to ensure unfilled vacancies are not covered by existing staff.

Disputes of this kind have yet to be settled in day centres. Also, new cases are repeatedly springing up, for example, in the adult training centres and nurseries.

The union's executive have up to now, given official backing to these disputes, but what is really needed is a national campaign of action opposing cuts and building support for union policy of refusing to cover positions.

The executive should give a lead on this. Disputes on this issue have been won such as the Leeds Social Day Centres - members throughout the country should be informed of this to aid them in their own struggles.

It is only by developing a strong national campaign that the union can hope to implement its policies and hopefully help to save our services, and restore those already axed.

By Margaret Manning (Manchester NALGO)

## Fighting 'Gruge the Scrooge'

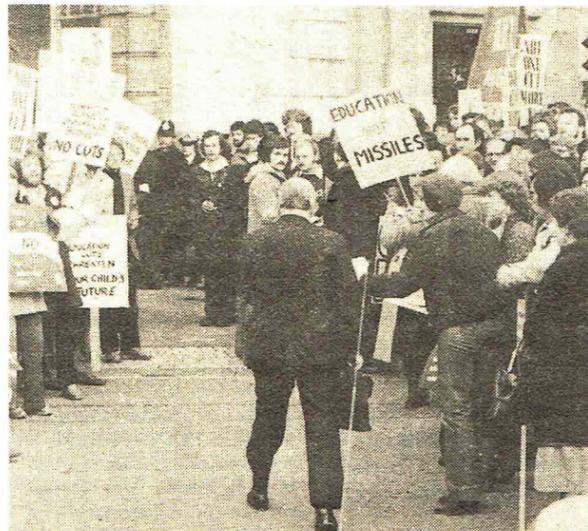
Last month, hundreds of angry teachers, backed by groups of parents, student teachers, and other trade unionists, came from all over Kent to lobby the Kent County Council.

The Leader of the Council, Sir John Grugeon, refused to accept a petition against the cuts signed by thousands of people in the Medway area.

Teachers told parents of vermin in classrooms, exams in basic subjects having to be cut out because of lack of textbooks, and rearrangement of school terms to cut heating bills,

which gave school leavers a shorter final year.

Next year's NUT conference should see enormous support for changes which will give teachers a union geared for action. Teachers must press now for joint action by all the public service unions, to smash the Tories' programme of cuts. Children's lives are too precious, childhood too short to allow this government's policies to wreck their lives. Only the labour movement has the strength to defend our weakest members, and achieve a fair and decent life for all.



The demo at Kent

Photo: Ann Sherwell

# Reports

## FBU president speaks to Militant

**The Fire Brigades Union meets this Thursday to discuss what future steps to take in the face of Tory attempts to cut back the fire service, financially and through redundancies.**

**It seems the union's executive will urge acceptance of the 18.8% pay offer, and it is likely this will be accepted by the firemen.**

Attention must now be turned to the fight against the employer's 'cuts charter', the Green Paper, and a programme to defend jobs and the service must be initiated at this conference.

The firemen showed their strength through united action in forcing the employers to back down over the 6%. Bill Deal, President of the FBU, spoke to Mike Levene (Canvey Island Labour Party) on how the bosses were rebuffed:

“Back in the summer when we knew a dispute was likely, because of all the signs of trouble, we made a conscious decision to have a series of meetings throughout the country that either myself or the general secretary would address.

The cuts really began at the end of August. We addressed the people and we took in two sides: firstly the pay formula, and secondly the 'green paper' on the cuts in the fire service.

The mood of the members then, by and large, was very low key, because they had had a strike three years before that had gone on for nine weeks. And at that time, the employers did their best to climb on the back of that to make

By  
**Mike Levene**  
(Canvey Island LP)

conditions worse in fire service.

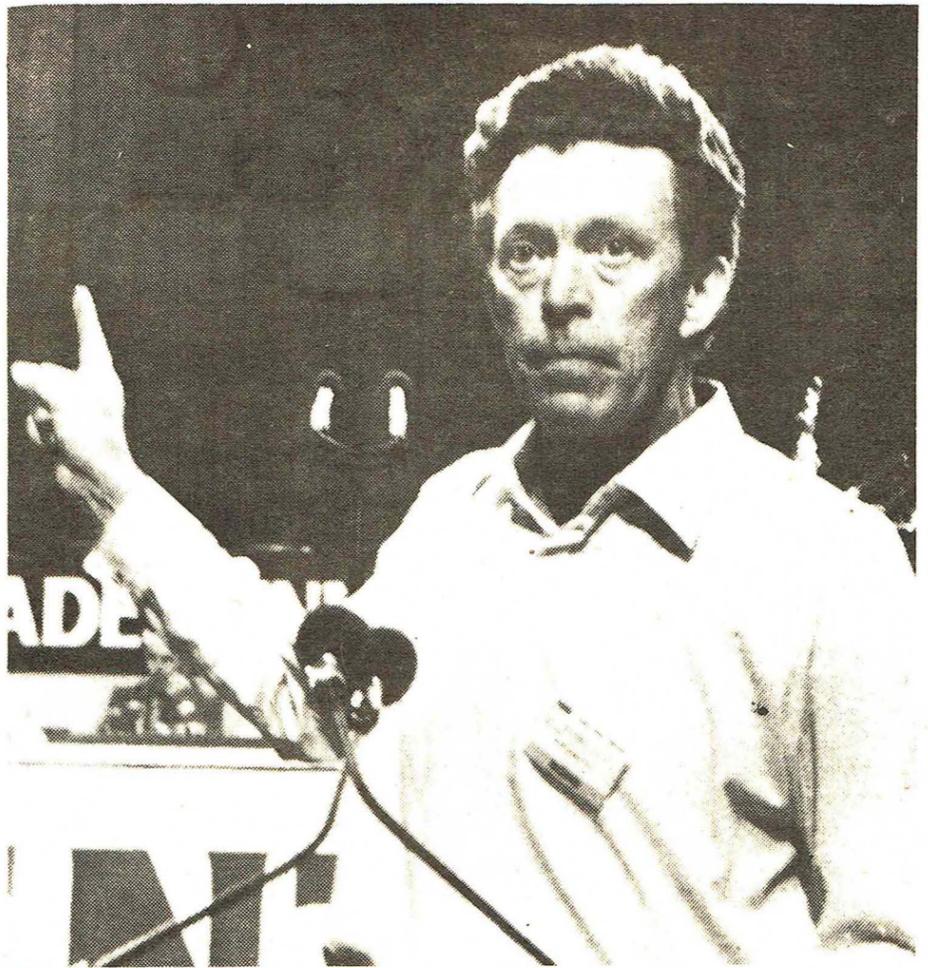
The three months preceding November, we had a bit of a task when we started off with these mass meetings. I think these wound the members up to a degree; they began to understand the seriousness of the situation that faced them.

They were moderately confident that they would be paid, as the authorities and the chairman of the Fire Brigade kept suggesting they were going to get the 18.8%, as in the agreement.

But they said 6%, and the firemen exploded.

I'm not sure that the employers ever meant 6%: I think they expected us to negotiate for something in between and settle for something around 10%, which would have suited them very nicely, thank you.

I believe that when we rejected it out of hand, called a conference and



Bill Deal

decided to undertake one day strikes, which are very difficult for the employer to combat in the fire service as opposed to an all out strike: and then the National Association of Fire Officers joined us; all of a sudden it wasn't like it was before. It was the whole of the trade

unions in the fire service prepared to take action.

Also, this time we had a Tory government, and every part of public opinion was swinging against them.

One of the things that we found most helpful, more so when we were actually on strike last time, was the

words of encouragement that came from people like the Young Socialists, Labour Party and trade unionists, whether they were young or old, and who joined us on the picket lines.”

## Battlelines drawn up

As a result of British Rail management's attempt to speed up the rationalisation programme for the marshalling yards and the Collection and Delivery (C&D) Parcel Services (see issue 530), the NUR have withdrawn from negotiations.

They demanded a meeting of the railway staff joint national council, which took place on 20th November.

The British Rail Board (BRB-the management) have stated that they are having "great difficulty in maintaining the fabric of the system," and they require £972 million for 1981 just to keep going. The government has offered £855 million; even with the projected £80 million savings from closures, the BRB will be £60 million short!

The BRB went to the joint council with the following proposals; accelerating marshalling yard closures for 1981, and rationalising the C&D parcels services; 5%

reduction for rail services; 'streamlining' on administration; continued union co-operation on good house-keeping; the joint council to meet urgent agreements on national practises, to be resolved by March 1981; and the Minister of Transport to raise the external borrowing rate.

The response from the NUR was to ask the BRB for a joint approach to the minister, calling for the following:

—the BRB external borrowing rate to be increased by £960 million.  
—re-negotiation of approved rail support grant.  
—government support for a freight subsidy.

—endorsement of the electrification and rolling stock programme.

In the event of the minister opposing the NUR proposals, the NEC are expected to call upon the members to take industrial action.

## Mosedale

**Fifty Transport and General Workers Union members have been sacked from Mosedale's brickworks in Flixton, near Manchester, and are now picketing the works.**

The dispute arose after it was discovered that the few remaining non-union members were being paid higher rates of bonus than the agreed rates. The shop stewards demanded that the higher rate be introduced for all the workers concerned.

But management said that the discrepancy in the bonus payments was an 'oversight'. However, in one case this 'oversight' has been going on for over ten years!

By a 'Militant' Reporter

After talks with the management failed to find any solution, workers voted to strike on Tuesday 25th November. After a mass meeting, the following day, and with the advice of the union full time official, the workers decided to return to work.

However, the workforce arrived for work within a deadline set by management, but were told that the works were closed and all the union members sacked. Even members who were off sick or who were on holiday were sacked.

Mosedale's have a long history of anti-trade unionism. The present organisa-

tion has only been established for about three years, and when the workers were sacked, the owner Frank Mosedale said "I'd had enough of the unions being in power for the last three years."

This is a clear attempt to smash the unions. Alan Monaghan, shop steward, said "They expected us to come trailing back without a union but we won't."

The company have another works at Rixton, near Warrington, but the union there is very weak. The workforce at Rixton have been intimidated and threatened so that they have so far refused to support the Flixton workers. When the pickets from Flixton attempted to speak to the Rixton workforce the management began to take the names of all workers who stopped to listen!

A mass picket at Rixton is planned for Thursday 11th December. One mass picket has already been held at the Flixton works, which was supported by workers from Gardners and from Shell, Carrington.

These workers need all the support they can get in their battle against the prehistoric management at Mosedale's. Transport and General Workers Union members, and the building workers in particular, should raise support. Money is needed as well as support on the pickets at the works which are at Carrington Road, Flixton.

Donations and messages of support should go to: The Mosedale lock-out fund, c/o J. Brown, Mosedale Strike Committee, 216 Irlan Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester.

## Never trust the bosses

Events of the last twelve months at BTP tioxide must serve as a warning to all trade unionists.

In December last year, management gave the staff unions six months notice of termination of the joint negotiating agreements, and have since refused to negotiate new agreements.

While they are prepared to recognise TASS for the purpose of grievance procedures, they have refused point blank to have any contact at all with ASTMS.

By Bill Burns

They have been able to exploit differences of opinion between various groups of ASTMS members to their advantage. Unfortunately, some of the stewards being taken in by the various stories management spread about the different sites.

In October, 120 were made redundant at BTP's Billingham site. At the

Greatham plant workers went on a two-day week this month rather than face redundancy.

On Friday December 5, 140 redundancies were announced amongst monthly paid staff on Teesside. These were carried out in the most brutal manner imaginable.

The main reason given for the redundancies was lack of money due to the lack of sales caused by the recession. Not content with spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on luxury

cars, they recently donated £100,000 to the Cleveland Health Centre, a new private hospital that is being opened. These incidents show where their priorities are, and workers should raise the demand that BTP open the books to show where they have squandered their profits.

A fightback by the trades unions will be extremely difficult—management have cleverly picked off the most experienced and class conscious stewards, those remaining being in the main inexperienced. This situation could cause the complete collapse of union organ-

isation.

There are a number of lessons to be learnt from this defeat. Firstly, union members must learn that it is useless acting in a gentlemanly manner when dealing with a management as ruthless as BTP.

Secondly, the shop floor unions will have to overcome their indifference towards the staff unions. They have got to realise they are fighting a common enemy, and agree to set up a company wide joint shop stewards committee, embracing both staff and shop floor unions.

It is the only way that the

reactionary management of this company can be fought. Too often in the past management have been able to play one group of workers off against another.

There is now a need to mount a campaign amongst the workforce, particularly the staff, to build up organisation and morale so that a fightback can be started—activists must put forward a programme of demands around which such a campaign can be mounted.

steel-coal  
rail — all  
in crisis:

# UNITED ACTION AGAINST CLOSURES

Just 12 months after the British Steel Corporation's disastrous run-down plan was published, steel workers face another, more serious dose of the same medicine.

In December 1979, the bungling steel bosses cut back capacity to 15 million tons, chopped viable works, and sacked 50,000 needed workers.

By Bill McCord  
(ISTC Normanby Park)

Far from putting the Corporation right, this self-inflicted wound has worsened its plight. BSC losses are more than twice what they were, tens of thousands of steel workers are jobless and unable to buy steel-based goods, and imports are rising fast.

Capitalism and its most bovine representatives, the BSC executive board members, are all set to repeat the mistakes of the last 13 years. Their eyes are fixed on BSC's five steel-making centres.

Will they succeed? Only the labour movement bars their path. The tragedy is that the unions' enormous potential power has not yet been mobilised behind threatened plants.

Fine speeches—and even blood-curdling threats—cannot stop bulldozers. Steelworkers need to feel confident that they can succeed. That is why the mooted triple alliance is such a vital and needed step.

If this is to be a real triple alliance and not a "cripple alliance", as its ill-fated predecessor turned out to be, then a copper-bottomed mutual guarantee is needed.

If the Tory vandals try to

close one plant, one pit, one railway line, then the full industrial strength of the three unions—plus in the first instance, the unions in other industries affected—must be used to stop all work in the threatened sections. There must be no "let-out" conditions which can later be used to allow back-sliding. The situation is at crisis point: the only question is which industry is affected first.

It now seems likely that BSC boss McGregor will move soon to savage the strip mills divisions of BSC. In this case, Llanwern, Port Talbot or Ravenscraig will face the first threat.

There are also ominous implications for the divisions manufacturing plates, rods and bars, in which case Scunthorpe or Templeborough will face attacks. The full or partial closure of any of these would reverberate through BSC, bringing further losses, sackings and decline.

As Bill Sirs said at the special conference of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, "the responsibility for maintaining a viable steel industry has passed to the unions."

Let us see this declaration translated into bold effective action.



Photo: Julian McKirrick (Militant)

Mass demonstration in Cardiff, 28/1/80, in support of the striking steelworkers—the Welsh TUC has promised industrial action to stop job losses.

## CAR JOBS CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

in engineering) people are realising they are just not going to go out and find a job.

But neither Talbot nor any other factory can stand alone. The labour movement must put its weight behind any factory or group of workers fighting redundancies.

Unity is strength! Two thousand supply firms are threatened by Talbot's run-down.

The recent call by the print union SOGAT, west of Scotland branch, for the establishment of a permanent "Strathclyde shop stewards" committee" must be welcomed by all workers fighting for their jobs or to defend working conditions.

Such a committee is long overdue. Would Goodyear, Massey Ferguson, Prestcold

and scores of other plants have closed if the bosses had realised the fight against redundancies would gather support from the whole area? They would not be so confident in their actions.

The workers at the Gardeners Engine Plant in Eccles, near Manchester, have shown the way to fight all redundancies! When the bosses are faced with well-organised opposition and militant determination, they will back off.

Permanent measures against the bosses must be taken if, in the long term, the workers are to be successful. If they cannot guarantee work then we say - away with them!

Let the workers run industry, then the 16-hour week wouldn't be a hardship imposed on workers because of economic crisis, but a permanent improvement which would be easily possible with a Socialist plan of production.

## APPEAL CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

social security claimants and the disabled—the poorest section of the community!

"Nationwide" has its own appeal for gifts for Christmas, "Operation Christmas". Gifts are needed for the old and young. Particularly useful for old people would be "hot water bottles, blankets, perhaps fuel stamps to help with ever increasing fuel bills"

"How can many families give their children the extras for Christmas?"

A family was shown. The mother was divorced and had £34 a week to provide for four children. The 18 year-old was mentally handicapped and a younger child was physically and men-

tally handicapped!

This mother must face a daily struggle which the Tories are out to make "less easy". Christmas must be a nightmare.

I think that many people listening to these appeals must despair that mere charities can go any way to alleviate these problems.

In Birmingham, money has been raised to buy kidney machines—but they lie idle as NHS spending has been cut back!

I would like to make a special appeal to all readers: please give generously to the fund which pledges its resources to exposing and fighting against the system which perpetuates such scandals!

Make your cheques payable to 'Militant'.

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