



Railmen and Nurses...

DEMAND A LIVING WAGE

Sheer anger. That was the reaction of the ASLEF train drivers at Miller Hill marshalling yard, near Edinburgh, to last Friday's allegation in the 'Sun' newspaper, that train drivers are a bunch of lazy layabouts who take home £150 a week.

The drivers were anxious to show me their typical wage slips. For example, a full week of 40

hours, including shift allowance, netted £78. With one day off for a relief

By Dick Vivian
(Secretary, Mid and East Lothian TC, personal capacity)

driver, the take home pay was £48.

The two drivers took me to see their duty sheets. In one week, they had five different starting times, with four hours' difference between them. When I asked them why some starting times were typed in red, I was told that these times

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Photo: MILITANT

Over 6,000 nurses crammed into Trafalgar Square last Sunday in a demonstration in support of their pay demand. Some nurses had marched in relays 200 miles from Land's End and they were joined by other delegations from all over the country. There were speakers at the rally from all the major parties but the Tory representative, Tom Benyon, was given a rough reception by the thousands of nurses present. As he tried to justify the government's miserly 4% offer, he was greeted with thousands of voices chanting, "Out, out, out!"

One in Eight on the Dole

There are now well over three million on the dole.

Even the perjured figures produced by the government now have to confess that unemployment has burst through the three million mark.

In reality the number out of work is far higher, the Trade Union Congress estimate the true toll as four million and worse still, anticipate a rise to five million in the next few years.

By Roger Shrivs

3,070,621

The policies of the Tory government have added millions to the dole queues. Whole industries like steel and textiles have been devastated, the car industry has gone into sharp decline and a sword hangs over the railways.

The Tories have now given us three million reasons why they should be

handed their cards.

But it isn't just a question of Tory madness. In the EEC countries, over ten million workers are on the stones, one in eleven of the population. The whole capitalist system stands indicted by the dole figures.

In Britain over twenty per cent of productive capacity lies idle because the owners

of industry don't find it profitable to invest in their own firms. Capital investment in manufacturing industry fell by 13 per cent last year while their money was sunk in non-productive investment or vegetated, very profitably, in the booming British banks.

Britain's financial institutions have invested, at a

conservative estimate, £4.5 billion overseas in the two years since exchange controls were lifted, almost the same as they invested in all British companies in the same time.

No we can't leave it to the Tories or the bosses to safeguard jobs. We must give full support to all struggles like those of workers at BL and Plessey in Bathgate who are occupying to counter the threat to their jobs. (see page 14)

But this must at the same time be a political fight. The leaders of the Labour Party and trade unions must see as their first priority building a major campaign to kick the Tories out of office and elect a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

The labour movement must fight for:

★ A 35-hour week for all workers with no loss of pay to create new jobs.

★ A minimum wage of £90 a week. Slave labour schemes such as YOPs and the new Youth Training plan are no substitute for real jobs with real pay!

★ A massive injection of finance for a huge programme of public works, essential to renovate slum housing, antiquated hospitals and Victorian schools.

Kick out the Tories and their system which builds dole queues and destroys hope. For the 3 million plus on the dole and the rest who suffer from the consequent decline in living standards, there is no alternative.

**BUILD FOR THE YOPS
LOBBY 25 FEBRUARY**

Militant

Millionaire Press heaps abuse on Workers

While the railway drivers are struggling to make the British Rail Board honour an agreement that they made last year, the daily press are pouring out a stream of misinformation, lies and abuse against them.

The anger of the railwaymen—both those in ASLEF and NUR—that led to the blacking of the Murdoch group of papers is completely justified.

Murdoch's paper, the 'Sun' published the front page story about supposed abuse of duty rosters, not in the interests of objective reporting, but purely in order to blacken the train drivers, to discredit them in the eyes of the public.

Further front-page stories in the Sun and other papers are now trying to give the impression that train drivers are offering violence against those making the allegations—throwing more lies after the first ones.

But the 'Sun' is not alone in this deliberate campaign of vilification of ASLEF members. Last Monday the headlines of the 'Daily Mail' suggested that BRB

Chairman Peter Parker should "stop the talk and shut down." The 'Mail' went on, "Britain's kamikaze locomen have forfeited any claim they may have had to public sympathy"....referring later to the "bloody-minded intransigence of the ASLEF drivers."

The 'Mail' story described train drivers as "bullies" and the public as "victims", finally declaring that "Sweet reason has failed with the locomen. Now they must be hit hard where it hurts them most. In the pay packet."

After the blacking of the Murdoch newspapers, the 'Daily Express' editorial said that the action was "a public disgrace and a scandal." Even the 'Daily Mirror', supposed by some to be a friend of the workers, said "the train drivers have only got themselves to blame for the damage that has been done to



Photo: Denis Doran

The officials of the Kings Cross ASLEF branch named in the High Court injunction, Steven Forey and Dennis Cadywould, had to give an undertaking to request their members to lift the blacking on the 'Sun'. This they did, but the members voted to continue it. Referring to the article in the 'Sun', and their 'offer' of a reply, Mr Cadywould said, "Two of our drivers took it upon themselves to go to the offices of the 'Sun' with the books, trying to present the true facts, explaining the job we do, but the 'Sun' refused (at that time) to see them."

their case."

The Television and Radio, of course, are little better. The TV news will always be prepared to interview irate commuters who want to say something nasty about railway workers, but they would run a mile from giving the same coverage to the workers themselves.

Real facts are hidden

The real facts are completely hidden from the view of the public:

FACT 1. The 3 per cent agreed last year was based on an agreement only to negotiate, on productivity. This ASLEF have done, in good faith, putting forward

many ideas for improving productivity themselves.

FACT 2. The 3 per cent was never at any time based upon ASLEF having to relinquish the 8-hour day.

FACT 3. The 3 per cent has already been given to NUR train drivers without any prior agreement on productivity.

These facts are a damning indictment of the case of the BRB, yet the press have not blazed these across their front pages.

But just as railwaymen are being crucified in the press today, it was other trade unionists in the past—lorry drivers, dustmen, dockers, miners or car workers—and it will be others in the future.

Whenever there is an in-

dustrial dispute of any kind, even if common sense dictates that it always takes two sides to make an argument, the position of the boss is always assumed to be right and the workers wrong.

Trade unions should have access to the press

The 'Sunday Times', another of Murdoch's papers, criticised the secretary of the ASLEF branch that started the blacking, saying that he had a "subjective, one-sided approach to the truth which

has nothing to do with press freedom."

That is precisely the point. "Press Freedom" for these papers means the "Freedom" for a handful of millionaire press barons to pour out their filth day after day, without any redress by the workers.

These papers, owned by a tiny handful of capitalists, represent only the interest of capitalists when they decide what news to print, what news to hide and how to print. "Press Freedom" means precisely the opposite for the vast majority of the population, especially 12 million trade unionists.

The press complain hypocritically about totalitarianism in Poland, but before their briefly-held rights were snuffed out by martial law, Solidarity had access to the state-owned press. In other words, for a year or so, the Polish workers enjoyed rights denied to workers in the West.

The latest attacks upon ASLEF members show once again the need for genuine democracy in the press in Britain. That can only be achieved if the press and printing facilities are nationalised, with minimum compensation, and then made available to all political and social organisations, according to their membership or support.

A state-owned press, run democratically, (unlike in Eastern Europe) would mean that organisations like the TUC, with 12 million members would have at least one daily paper, to put the views of trade unionists, rather than none as at present. The Labour Party and Tories would get press facilities apportioned according to their election support, so that Labour's point of view could go out to millions, unlike at present with the vast majority of the press supporting the Tories.

These policies have now got to be taken up seriously both by the TUC and the Labour Party, to be made part of Labour's programme for the next Labour government.

After Bishops Stortford — Right wing resume witch-hunt...

In his New Year's greeting Joel Barnett MP for Heywood and Royton told the Labour Party to join him in "an active campaign to rid the country of Mrs Thatcher and rid the Labour Party of those who do not believe in Parliamentary democracy". Now we know what an active campaign means—against the left of the local Labour Party.

The GMC on Friday 22nd January dealt with a composite resolution opposing the use of a political veto by the NEC on Parliamentary candidates, opposing witch-hunts and expulsion and supporting the LPYS. All three sections of the resolution had amendments negating the original intention.

Those supporting the NEC veto on the Parliamentary candidate

and criticising the LPYS were lost. However, there was an amendment expressing concern as to whether 'Militant' is in breach of Clause 2 section 3 of the Party constitution and supporting the committee of enquiry. This was carried 18 to 17 with the chairman's casting vote. There were 6 abstentions, including one from a "Tribunite" whose ward has come out clearly against the amendment and against the witch-hunt.

There is no doubt that a small number of delegates honestly believe that the inquiry will completely exonerate the 'Militant' and clear the air, ending the matter.

But those delegates should ask themselves why resolutions sent in by our CLP and many others a few months back calling for the NEC to investigate CIA

links in the labour movement have not been taken up and why the investigation is only into the 'Militant', and not into, for example, the Manifesto Group.

It is clear that 'Militant' has been singled out for special treatment because of its political ideas. This was confirmed by Barnett at the end of the meeting when it was pointed out that a resolution passed on the casting vote of the Chairman was not a clear mandate for him to press ahead with his active campaign to rid the party of anyone.

He turned to a local 'Militant' supporter and said "when the inquiry reports, if the cap fits you will just have to wear it", which is all very well except that the right wing are trying to ensure that the hat is made to measure!

Reports by Margaret Creear and Steve Cawley

At the same GMC meeting the secretary read out a letter from the Baker's union saying that, due to the assistance given to them during their strike (largely by the left and 'Militant' supporters) they decided to affiliate to the CLP.

This underlines real situation those people who are leaving the party do not want to fight for the interests of the working class and they are being replaced by working class people whose bitter experience with the Tory government and the capitalist system has taught them they need to fight on the political as well as the industrial field.

...while others defect

Yet another caring MP who has honoured the Labour Party by representing it in Parliament has found it necessary to sever his links with it.

Bryan Magee, member for Leyton since 1974, explained to his General Management Committee on 22 January that owing to his commitment to private education, private health, the Common Market, and the Western Alliance, he could no longer remain a member of the Labour Party.

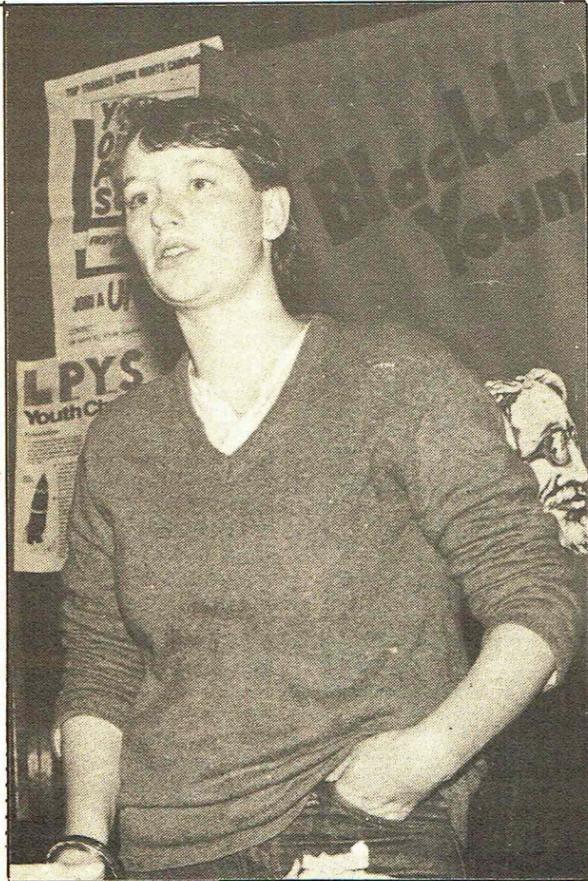
Magee wished to stay to 'discuss the position' (no silly ideas about resigning his five-figure salary, and expenses) but it was moved and carried overwhelmingly that he should leave the room, forthwith. And that's the character who derided the ideas and policies of the LPYS and 'Militant' as being entirely

without support in the working-class.

Now, those trade unionists who supported his nomination (Leyton was in the middle of re-selection) on the grounds that nothing should be done to "push him over the brink," will have to face up to reality.

In the 1964 selection a popular left-wing member, Reg Sorenson, was pushed aside by Harold Wilson so that Patrick Gordon Walker could be found a seat. Unfortunately many members of Leyton party refused to canvass for Gordon Walker and he lost the bye-election. Leyton CLP undoubtedly wants (and deserves) a candidate who believes in a fight for socialism, and is prepared to stick with the workers through thick and thin, until we get it.

FIGHT FOR OUR FUTURE!



Shareen Blackall, YTURC activist from Merseyside, speaking at conference. Photo: Militant

“I’ll be leaving school in the future, then I’ll be on the dole. We’ve got to fight. Job conscription’s what the Tories offer us. It’s no future. As soon as I’m old enough, I’ll join the LPYS to fight for the future.”

With these words Tim Murphy (13) summed up the unanimous mood among the YOP workers and trade union activists who gathered at the YOP Trainees Union Rights Campaign activists assembly last Saturday 23 January.

Speaker after speaker called for the full might of the trade union movement to be used to prevent Tebbit’s economic conscription plans for £15 a week training, ever seeing the light of day.

The mass YOPs rally and lobby of Parliament on February 25th is now doubly important, both to spearhead the campaign to organise YOP workers in the fight for better conditions and trade union rates of pay, and to bring together YOPs, school students and trade unionists to prepare the fight to defeat Tebbit.

Delegates at the assembly reported on the plans being laid for the lobby throughout the country.

Undaunted by distance, over 100 are expected from Glasgow who like Liverpool are block booking coaches on trains (if they are running!). In many areas trade unions including NUPE,

TGWU and GMWU are organising coaches for local YOP workers.

A delegation will even be coming from Northern Ireland, where Tebbit’s proposals are due to be introduced later this year.

Linda Hutchings (Liverpool Walton LPYS) pointed out why every section of youth should organise to come to the lobby. “Young people? We’ve got no future.

“I’m still at school. We’ve got to start organising at school, get involved in politics, fighting for a future. And YOP is no future.

“My mates are on YOP. One is on a YOP at the Adelphi hotel. She’s bitter, she gets £25 and then sees them all with their wealth, their cars, etc.

“A union has got to be built among YOP workers, to fight for a future for all youth.”

By Kevin Ramage
(National Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists)

TEN YEARS ON

Ten years ago on Sunday 30 January 1972 thirteen unarmed demonstrators were shot dead by British Army gunmen on the streets of Derry in Northern Ireland.

Detachments of the paratroopers indiscriminately gunned down defenceless men and boys, some of whom were shot in the back. In ‘Militant’ of 4 February 1972, ‘Militant’ supporters in Derry gave the following eye witness reports.

“I was in Chamberlain Street when the paras attacked. The crowd retreated in panic and I ran into the courtyard at the back of Rossville flats, but I stopped when I saw that we had been outflanked by soldiers, who had taken up positions at the corner of the flats.

“Most people dashed across the open courtyard and I turned left and followed several others behind a wire fence. I heard bangs, which I thought were rubber bullet guns, but then I saw an unarmed man fall in the middle of the yard, and lie motionless.

“Suddenly I realised it was gunfire. I dived behind a wall. I looked up and saw a para who fired his rifle and hit a youth who was only 12 feet away from me.

“Someone shouted, ‘Look, he’s been wounded’, and we rushed over and carried him to the other side of the block and he was taken to hospital. The man was unarmed and he was shot down by a British soldier as he ran for cover.”

Another ‘Militant’ supporter also managed to get a number of eye-witness accounts of shootings.

“William McKinney, aged 27, was shot dead by troops. When Mrs Collins went to help him, she was told to leave him alone by a paratrooper. When she persisted, she was hit on the head with a rifle.

“Later, when she was

able to reach the boy, along with the ‘Knights of Malta’ and McKinney’s mate, McKinney was dead. Mrs Collins said that she neither saw nor heard nail bombs or shooting before the paras opened up.

“Mrs Friel saw unarmed Bernard McGuigan, aged 41, run round the corner of Rossville high flats, out the way of the paras. She then saw half of his head blown off by the advancing paras. She also saw Patrick Doherty, 21, crawl out from behind cover to help an old man who was wounded, and was then shot dead himself and left to die unattended.

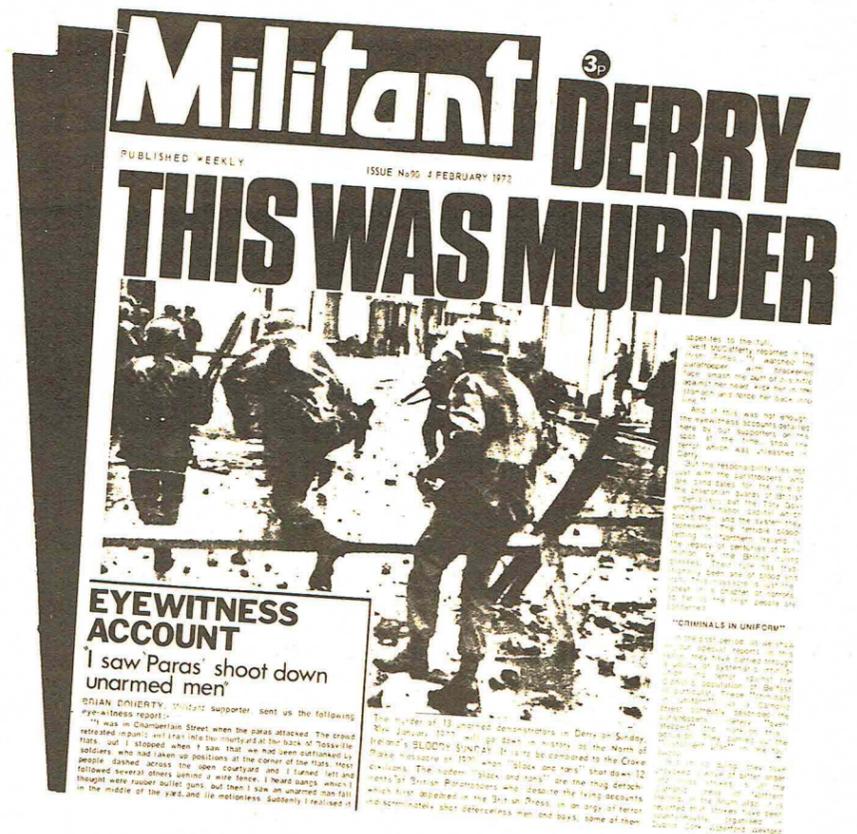
“James Rea, say the residents of the maisonettes opposite Rossville flats, was sheltering for cover already wounded in the arm, when paratroopers approached him. “Don’t shoot, I haven’t got a gun,” he shouted. The paratroopers

then demanded that he surrender, which he did, and then he was shot dead.”

As ‘Militant’ pointed out (4 February 1972), “the responsibility lies not just with the paratroopers, who are candidates for the role of the praetorian guards of British imperialism, but the Tory government, finance capital which backs them and the system they represent.

“The terrible blood-letting in Northern Ireland is the legacy of centuries of domination by the British ruling classes. Their rule has traditionally been one of blood and iron. This massacre is just the latest in a chapter of horrors, so far as the Irish people are concerned.”

These events are not just a page of forgotten history. In Northern Ireland, vicious repression, the horrors of Army attacks and the H-Blocks still exist in 1982.



“Bloody Sunday”, ‘Militant’s’ front page of 4 February 1972

DON'T GIVE IN TO TORY FARES THREAT

By Jeremy Birch

now talk of an expected 16% fall in passengers.

West Midland busmen have already been pushed into industrial action against the Labour council to improve their pay offer. Now they suspect forthcoming job losses and redundancies.

But there is real anger in the local labour movement that the county leaders gave in so meekly. Coventry South East Labour Party urged their three county councillors to vote against the fare increases in the full council meeting 25 January.

Having fought the May '81 elections almost on the sole platform of cheap fares which were a welcome relief to thousands of ordinary families, the councillors have turned tail even before any court action begins, showing the total lack of

confidence in the willingness of the Labour Party, the unions and just ordinary people in the region to support the council.

This way Labour stands to lose all ways round. Even the propaganda that it is the Tories, who probably don't even use the buses, who are responsible has been blunted by the council's submission.

Workers in the area have already paid the 14p in the pound County supplementary rate and in Birmingham they will not even get a rebate but only credit off future rate demands. And of course they now have to pay the inflated fares on top.

Then in just two months' time the district councils (five out of seven are Labour controlled) face reelection. Even though the Tories are responsible ultimately, what are working class voters to make of rents up, rates up, fares up and services reduced—all at the hands of Labour authorities all accepted without a fight.

The county Labour group should immediately rescind this decision and carry out a real campaign of opposition to Tory cuts policy.

In the absence of a clear lead of opposition from the labour movement, the Bloody Sunday massacre gave an impetus to the Provisional IRA's campaign of individual terrorist activity.

The provo campaign has tragically led sections of the working class in the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland into a blind alley. Individual terrorism can solve none of the problems faced by working people in the North.

As ‘Militant’ has consistently stressed, it is now up to the labour movement to provide the lead in building a united movement of Catholic and Protestant workers to sweep aside the system which has spawned sectarianism, mass unemployment and poverty and the terror exemplified by Bloody Sunday.

There will be a fuller analysis in a future issue of ‘Militant’.

It must insist on the right to spend the rate precept already costed as it was mandated to by the voters and to defy this reactionary government and their unelected legal puppets.

Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear transport authorities have all implemented fare cuts and now face the same threat as London Transport and West Midlands.

The councils must fight to change the law which penalises authorities that subsidise fares and force the government to give sufficient grants to allow cheap fare policies without continually increasing the rate burden.

A campaign throughout the county on such a programme could win massive approval not least amongst transport workers. A one day West Midlands public transport strike and even the threat of non collection of fare increases would gain the sympathy of local people.

To give in now without even token opposition will be to stamp on the confidence of working people and will be no more than carrying out the Tories' dirty work for them.

STOP YOPs EXPLOITATION

The dustbin of history

Northern Ireland

Launched last summer the YOP (Youth Opportunities Programme) Trade Union Rights Campaign set itself the goal of winning trade union rights for young people employed in YOP schemes.

Much progress has been made since then. Thousands have joined a trade union.

By Michael Murray
(Ballymena Young Socialists)

A successful conference was held in November to discuss the demands of the campaign. A lobby of Parliament is planned on February 25th, to press YTURC demands for improved pay and conditions.

In Northern Ireland, too, the Young Socialists, the NI section of YTURC, have found an eager response among YOP workers. There are over 10,000 of them in the North.

In Belfast, Derry, Ballymena and elsewhere local trade unions have worked with us to bring them into a union.

One scheme we visited in Belfast had seen a number of sackings. Those sacked had no right of appeal, or agreed procedure for dismissals.

Now all 100 on the scheme belong to the National Union of Public Employees and a strong priority will be getting the workers protection from unfair dismissal.

We are fighting to get all YOP workers brought into trade unions, with their own elected representatives and a province-wide body

elected by these representatives to co-ordinate their struggle.

The urgency of this has been highlighted by the Tories most recent "training" scheme. YOPs have been a disaster, leaving young people the victim of unscrupulous employers.

The Tory remedy is to open the way even further to greater exploitation.

From September 1983, all school-leavers approached to do so must join a "new training scheme" for a year or lose supplementary benefit. Most insulting of all, an "allowance" of only £15 a week is being planned.

The scheme will largely rely on private industry, with the government paying the wages bill. With an offer like that there should be no shortage of bosses queueing up to assist. This conscription of the youth highlights the demands of YTURC even more.

We stand for full trade union rights and rates of pay on YOPs or any training scheme. YOPs get £23.50 now and the Tories in effect plan to reduce this. They must be fought. We also demand



Cash in hand. Just £23.50 a week. YOPsters must organise. Photo: Militant

guaranteed jobs for all. The Tories offer a piece of paper at the end of each training period specifying "progress" made.

It is also vital that YOPs and training be expanded into a massive scheme of public works and genuine

training, under trade union control.

The YOP scheme, and the Tories latest plan, is more a means of making employment figures look brighter than anything else.

We will be approaching many more YOP schemes in

1982. We also intend asking the unions to send their YOP members' representatives to the lobby of Parliament in February.

A fight back against the Tories by the youth is essential.

Stop the Tories!

By Anne Lees (Sheffield Park LPYS) and Daryl Collins (Brightside LPYS)

If Norman Tebbit had been at the Sheffield Advisory Service when his new proposals for Youth Training were announced he would have got a very hot reception.

When the Labour Party Young Socialists in Sheffield leafleted the service recently to collect signatures on a petition opposing the new scheme the response was very enthusiastic to our call for full pay on YOPs and guaranteed jobs for all school leavers.

The majority of youngsters we met signed our petition and wished us luck. We collected fifteen names of young people interested in joining the YS. They had made their

usual trek to the Careers Advisory Service hoping that perhaps today there would be the chance of a job, but no. Overwhelmingly they expressed their anger and frustration at the slave labour of the YOP schemes and the fact that they would afterwards be dumped back on the dole.

At last, somebody told us, someone had recognised that something must be done to stop the Tories and their policies.

Earlier attempts to start a campaign with YOPs workers had had an indifferent response. What was different about that day? This time we were organised, using leaflets, posters on the wall, placards with our demands on, and petitions to get people to stop so we could talk about their experiences and what we were

doing in the area.

One young lad after reading a leaflet said he was going to send off for further details about the LPYS. He did not know what the LPYS was but he knew we had organised the leafleting. Activity will win people towards us.

Our aim was to get people to picket the Manpower Services Commission over the lunch hour. The day before we had put out a press release. The local radio mentioned the picket and both local papers came down as did Yorkshire TV to film us on the picket.

The original seven LPYS members collecting signatures had grown to over 40, some had come from the Careers Advisory Centre and others had heard about it on the radio and wanted to give us a hand giving out leaflets!

Most people at the MSC signed the petition. One young girl rather surreptitiously "so my boss doesn't see it" though in

fact her "boss" had probably already signed.

Our work ended with a very successful street meeting and another ten names for the LPYS. The next night the YS were on TV again, with one YS member and one unemployed lad who had come to the picket because he thought Tebbit's £15 unfair and wrong. Another chance to get across our views on how to fight the Tories.

Following visits to trade union offices, The National Union of Public Employees, the Transport and General, the building union UCATT and the engineers union were all in favour of our picket. Moreover the GMWU agreed to set up a YOPs branch of their union run by YOPsters themselves!

A neat few days for building the labour movement in Sheffield and a first step to a mass and socialist youth section of the Labour Party.

BUILD FOR THE LOBBY 25 FEB

Lobby of Parliament, Thursday 25 February. Rally at Royal Festival Hall, 2-5pm. Speakers include Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Rodney Bickerstaffe (General Secretary-elect National Union of Public Employees) and Peter Taaffe.

LPYS 1982 CONFERENCE

Easter isn't long off now, and arrangements are already well ahead for the Labour Party Young Socialists Conference. Guest speakers already confirmed include Alan Sapper (President of the TUC), Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner.

The conference takes place over Easter weekend (9-12 April) in Bridlington, and will be a superb four days of political debate and social activities, with a disco and/or live band every night, a theatre group, etc. etc.

Start making your arrangements now! Every LPYS branch and region should be booking transport and accommodation. If you want further details contact Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Stevenage and Luton LPYS didn't quite relegate Thatcher to the dustbin of history, but we did have her sitting in the waste bin in Stevenage town centre on 16 January.

As the centre piece of our day of action the lady retained amazing posture as young kids threw snowballs at her and shoppers hurled abuse. The hatred for Thatcher and her cronies was well and truly clear.

A crowd of young kids, all about 10 years old stood with their hands in pockets kicking snow at Thatcher. When I asked them what they thought of Mrs Thatcher one boy replied: "I think she's a witch! Every time she comes on telly my dad always shouts "get that old...off!"

After talking to them for a while about the YS they all wanted to come along to our public meeting. The response to the day was shown with over 40 papers being sold.

The main theme to the day was a protest at the appalling conditions and wages of YOPs workers about a hundred people signed the petition calling for union rights for YOPsters including some who were already on the schemes themselves.

The activities culminated in a street meeting. Four comrades took turns to speak. All in all, the day gained the best response we'd had.

Janice Glennon

(Stevenage LPYS Regional Committee)

FIGHT THE REAL ENEMY

Labour against the witch-hunt

Three resolutions have been passed recently in the Burnley area against the enquiry into 'Militant' by Labour's NEC.

They also condemned the enquiries into Pat Wall and Peter Tatchell's nominations as well as any witch-hunt against the left wing of the party in general.

On 12 January Burnley Labour Party passed a resolution put forward by the Young Socialists covering the above subject by a 2 to 1 majority, despite an effort by a right wing councillor to stop it being passed.

He asked all delegates to show their voting cards for this resolution. I have been on the GMC for twelve months and not once have delegates been asked to show a voting card. This move was obviously made when the right wing realised they were not going to stop the resolution going through.

Luckily the chairman sided with the people who protested against this. It was pointed out that there were several delegates in the room who had been on the GMC for years and had never even been given a voting card!

On the previous evening two 'Militant' supporters were kindly invited by Rosehill ward of Burnley CLP to speak to them about 'Militant's' political views.

After a lively discussion and a lot of questions, the ward passed a resolution condemning the recent NEC decisions.

The previous week the committee of the 6/93 branch of the TGWU Burnley and Pendle joint Transport also passed a similar resolution to the above and sent strong letters of protest to the local and district Labour Parties.

In the Lothian area, resolutions against the witch hunt have been passed in Labour Parties in East, West and North Edinburgh constituencies, at Edinburgh and District Trades Council and Mid and East Lothian Trades Council.

A debate between 'Militant' and Robin Cook

the MP for Central Edinburgh has been arranged for Saturday 6 March. Cook has recently spoken in favour of the 'enquiry'.

"We call on the NEC to reaffirm the right of all constituency parties, including Bermondsey, to select a parliamentary candidate of their choice and right of all party members to speak their mind on issues without fear of a witch-hunt." This amendment to a resolution was passed at Coventry North West Labour Party this month

During his parliamentary report, the local MP, Geoffrey Robinson said that he would have been perfectly happy if the NEC had decided that his selection as the constituency's prospective candidate wasn't in order and had not endorsed him!

A member of the General Management Committee suggested that the lack of vigorous attack on the SDP by Labour MPs may be due to the fact that many Labour MPs are very close to the SDP both in policy and ideology.

Mr Robinson said that this silence was a matter of tactics which he supported. Attacking the SDP too much would give them undue credence, he claimed. By staying silent, the Social Democrats will discredit themselves by squabbling with the Liberals over the carve up of parliamentary seats!

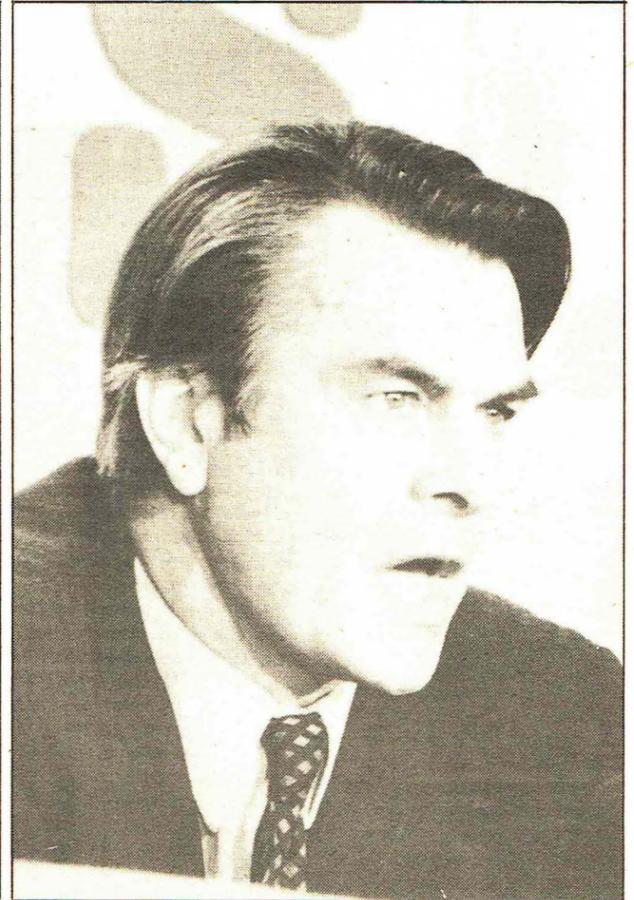
We must only attack the SDP apparently when they publish a list of their policies (a manifesto?) and we then have something concrete to attack them on.

Labour Party members know what the SDP/Liberal Unholy Alliance stand for. What is needed is a campaigning lead to expose to the public all the Tory policies which are making life increasingly tough for working class people.

Labour Party members want an all out attack on all the Tory parties, Thatcher's, Steel's and the SDP. Hunt down the Tories not the socialists!

**Reports by
J P Johnstone,
John Forbes, Dave
Cumberland, Roger
Bannister, Lee Waker
and Stan Natrass**

Photos: Militant



Kick out the Tories!

Stop the SDP bandwagon!

Hands off Militant!

Huyton

The rabid attacks on 'Militant' by the press and the Labour Party right wing has caused unprecedented interest in the ideas of Marxism.

As the meeting advertisements on page 13 show, 'Militant' supporters and sellers up and down the country have held public meetings on 'What Militant stands for.'

Approximately one hundred people crowded into the Rose and Crown hotel in Huyton on Merseyside on 18 January to hear Ted Grant, political editor of 'Militant' explain the truth about the policies and aims of the paper.

The meeting was called in response to the Huyton Constituency Labour Party's decision to call for the expulsion of 'Militant' supporters from the Labour Party, at its December meeting.

We had to meet in the hotel because the local Labour Party refused to allow the use of the Labour Club. That's what democracy means to the right wing of the party in Huyton: the obstruction of socialists who attempt to refute lies and distortions made about them.

Ted explained how the crisis of capitalism had shown up the bankruptcy of the policies of Labour's right. Throughout the boom years they attempted to prove socialism obsolete. Then it was possible for the bosses to grant reforms to the workers.

Now the boom is over, the policies of the boom are a miserable failure, and these same politicians attack the living standards of working people through wage restraint, unemployment and counter-reforms.

The old guard right wing are attempting to halt the growth of support for socialist policies and to prevent the accountability of elected representatives to rank and file party members which goes with it.

Ted pointed out how the right wing had attempted to wreck the party, initially by setting up the Social Democratic Party and, when this failed to destroy socialism, by attempting to witch-hunt the Marxists in the party.

In the lively discussion that followed, much criticism was voiced of the local Labour Party, and particularly of the right-wing Knowsley council. Several speakers who had joined the party in the past but had left, frustrated at the daunting task of changing the right-wing leadership, declared their intention to rejoin the party, enthused by the feeling of the meeting and the policies put forward.

Other people asked Ted if it was worth campaigning for the election of the type of right-wing representatives chosen by the local party, whose ideas appeared far removed from those of socialism.

Ted stated quite categorically that all 'Militant' supporters automatically worked for the election of democratically selected Labour candidates, even notorious right wingers like Sean Hughes, who has been chosen by Huyton Labour Party to replace Harold

Wilson at the next general election.

A collection for the fighting fund raised over £76, an impressive amount given the massive rate of unemployment in the town. Most of the audience remained behind to continue the discussions in an informal way.

There can be no doubt that the feeling is growing among working people in Huyton, to join the Labour Party, to campaign against the ideas of right wing candidates and councillors and to change the face of politics in Merseyside's last remaining right-wing bastion.

Dagenham

Over 60 people turned up for a meeting in Dagenham, East London, to hear Peter Taaffe, editor of 'Militant', speak, along with Mike Waddington, an AUEW TASS member at Ford Basildon.

Unfortunately another 20 or so people, members of the fascist National Front, also came along, not to listen but to try to ruin the meeting. They did not succeed.

Although some people were seemingly put off from attending by the unwanted presence of these thugs, good stewarding prevented them causing damage or disrupting the meeting. The fascists constantly heckled the meeting but were eventually worn down by the good reception the ideas of Marxism received from the audience.

Everyone in attendance was very impressed by the meeting as was shown by the collection for the fighting fund which raised over £100 after expenses.

Littlehampton

But it isn't only in the solid working class areas that 'Militant' has been explaining its views.

Littlehampton is in the solidly Tory constituency of Arundel, but an active socialist Labour Party has managed to boost party membership and obtain for Labour its only council gain between Portsmouth and Brighton in last year's elections.

Ray Apps recently addressed a meeting in the town on 'What Militant stands for', outlining in concrete terms what clear Marxist policies could do for the working class of Britain.

A 35 hour week must become a priority, and with the appliance of technology under democratic workers' control and management even a 5-hour working week wouldn't be too distant on the horizon.

Although invitations had gone out to all members of the Labour Party and about seventeen braved the arctic conditions, the right wing were noticeably absent. But, after all, how would their failed policies have fared in competition with those of Marxism.

An excellent end to the evening's meeting was a collection of £19.75 which was quickly rounded up to £20.



WHY 75% OF RAPES ARE NOT REPORTED

If you'd been raped, would you report it after watching last Monday's episode of BBC's "Police?"

In the programme a rape victim was "interrogated" by three male detectives and asked such questions as: "Have you ever been on the game?": "How many men have you had sex with?"

The woman, obviously distraught and intimidated by the line of questioning, then had to suffer insinuations about her mental stability (all because she'd had a nervous breakdown after her divorce). This line of questioning implied that she was "fantasising"

about her rape.

At the end of the questioning the detective said "this is the biggest load of bollocks I've ever heard—you must have been a willing partner to it!" Eventually after a mixture of bullying, intimidation and humiliation they "persuaded" her to drop her case and encouraged her to go home and "try to get over it".

BRUTALITY

As if this programme wasn't bad enough we now hear of a rape case in Glasgow where a woman was slashed so badly with a razor that she needed 168 stitches. Police dropped the case after a psychiatrist said

that the woman would have a mental breakdown if she had had to give evidence in court.

The woman however, says that she was prepared to give evidence and that the first she knew of the case being dropped was when she read it in the papers.

The prosecution also claimed insufficient evidence to convict three teenagers although they had in their possessions: 1) an alleged confession from one of the boys 2) a witness to the attack 3) blood samples from the clothes of the alleged attackers which matched the woman's.

Would the prosecution have dropped this case if the woman had died from her wounds? Their refusal to prosecute implies that

rapists should be as brutal as possible with their victim, for then she will be less capable of offering evidence against them.

Women everywhere have the right to question the role of the authorities in both these cases and many others.

The events of the last few weeks are enough to deter many women from reporting rape. The Rape Crisis Centre estimates that 75% of all rapes already go unreported, mainly because women are worried about having their past sex lives dragged through the courts; insinuations made that "they asked for it" or that "they led their attackers on".

There must be a complete review of the way rape cases are investigated by the

police. All victims should be interviewed by female officers and examined by a female doctor.

The last thing a woman wants after being raped is to be interrogated by three aggressive male detectives. The police should be prevented from questioning women about their previous sexual activities. All women, whether prostitutes or virgins, have a right to equal protection.

HYPOCRISY

These measures would go some way to making it less traumatic for a woman to report rape, but obviously they would not prevent the rape itself. Rape, like all

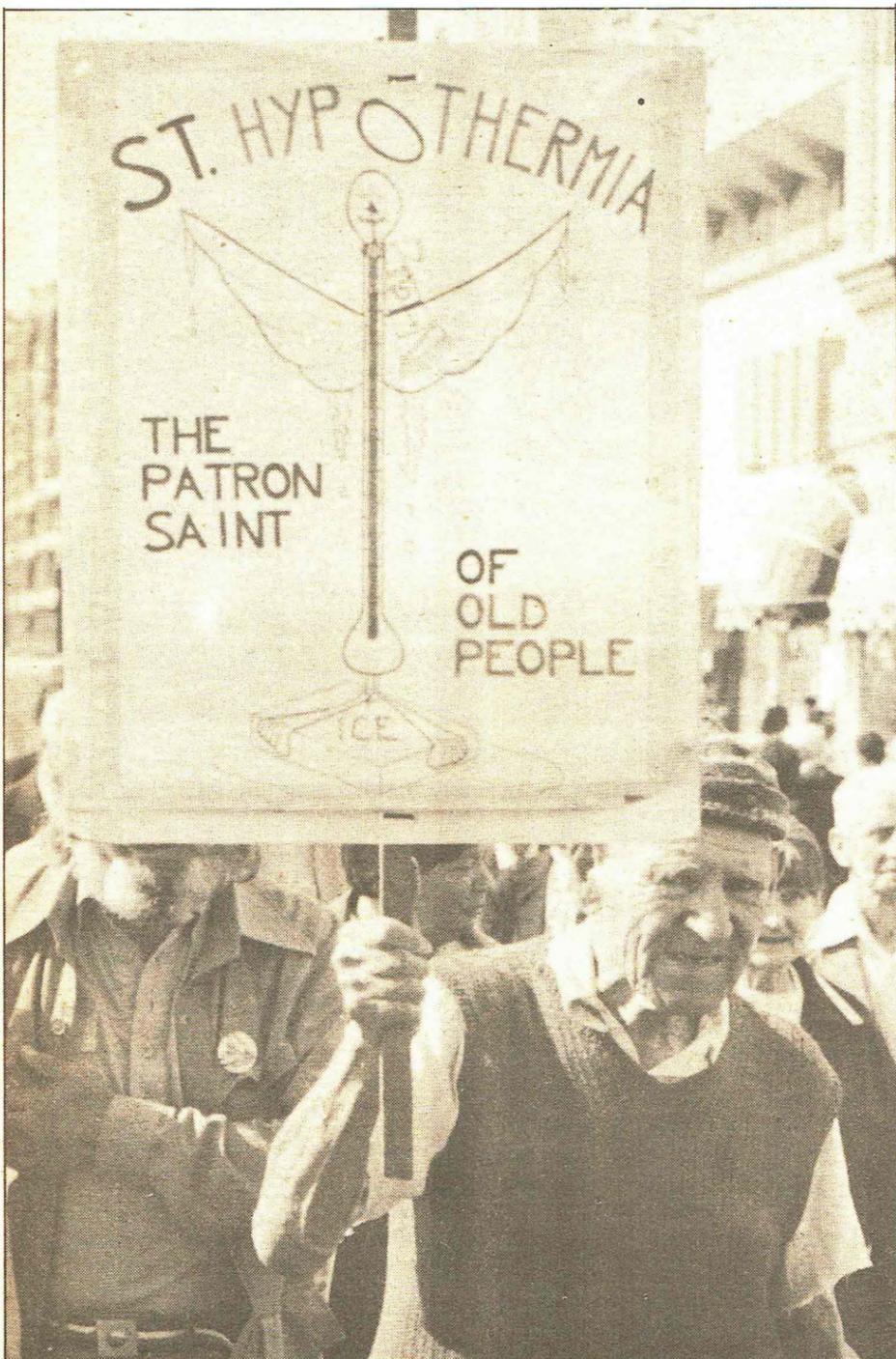
violent crime, is a product of the sick society we live under.

The labour movement must condemn the sheer hypocrisy of Thatcher and other members of the ruling class who call for the jailing of all rapists and offer token criticism of the police and law courts, whilst at the same time they propagate the very bankrupt capitalist system which breeds these crimes. Women and men will only be truly free from violence and crime when this sick property-orientated society is replaced by socialism which puts human values and interests first.

By Anne Spiller
(Tower Hamlets LPYS)

Tory Council makes age a crime

48,000 more old people die during a 'normal' winter than in summer. Now Kent's Tory Council plans to cut home helps. (Below) OAP's lobby 1978 TUC Conference. PHOTO: Militant.



A society can be judged on how it treats the old.

The improvements in health care over recent decades means more people are now living longer. This should be giving them marvellous opportunities, with the time and facilities to develop interests.

Instead, the reality of our society is that many elderly people face a nightmare existence.

Abandoned by a system which can no longer make a profit out of them, the old struggle to survive. Over the last few months this bad weather has seen thousands more elderly people die from hypothermia.

In many cases they have the fires to keep themselves warm, but are terrified of getting into debt. Instead, they sit around for hours in cold and damp conditions.

Local Council's home helps provide a tremendous service to those elderly who get little, or no support, from relatives, friends and neighbours.

DISTRESS

But reductions in public expenditure has meant that local authorities have also cut, or plan to cut, their home help service. In the garden of England, the county of Kent, these cuts have already taken place with horrifying consequences. The County's Director of Social Services has himself admitted that people are dying as a result.

One home help in Gravesend explained:

"It's unbelievable they could think of doing this. I work with twelve old people and they need me desperately. In the hour to hour-and-a-half I spend with each person, I shop, cook, clean, bath, nurse and feed them.

"I take them to the toilet, wash soiled bed linen and am often their only friend and contact. Their need is desperate.

"Bad news to some of the more dependent is that I

By Nick Bradley
(Area Officer, Kent National Union of Public Employees)

won't be coming any more. I often work unpaid over the hours I should, and when they are ill I stay with them.

"What would happen to them without this sort of help would break my heart. So many cannot shift for themselves. The life would go out of them."

As this home help spoke, one of her ninety-year old elderly clients had tears in his eyes as he said:

"I'd be lost without her, she comes every weekday, gives me breakfast and cooks my lunch, I couldn't do without her."

The home helps in Kent are members of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and have an active and well-organised County Stewards Committee. They have been fighting a magnificent campaign to force the County Council to spend more on the home help service; weeping old and disabled people have begged them not to leave them.

The distress caused to frail, confused and lonely people has developed an anger never seen before in the home help service. Mass meetings of home helps have been held throughout the county. Thousands of people have been signing petitions drawn up by the union.

MPs' and Councillors' surgeries have been bombarded with home helps, demanding that the council finds extra money. The campaign has shaken the Council and its officers.

The pressure has already forced the council to accept that they will have to overspend by at least 5% this year. Even that is completely inadequate to cope with the present crisis.

The very humanity of the home help is, ensuring that, despite the cuts, some kind of help will be given to the elderly. There cannot be a home help in Kent, or anywhere else in the coun-

try, who is not working unpaid overtime, to help their old folk.

Countless home helps go round to see their elderly clients at all times of the day and night. They are, in most cases, the only contact many old people have with the outside world.

Undoubtedly a very strong bond develops between the home help and their old people. That very humanity is being cynically exploited by councils throughout the country.

Council officers know that home helps would be extremely reluctant to ever take any kind of strike action. If they did, the undoubted consequences would bring untold suffering to elderly people.

HUMANITY

In Kent, NUPE is discussing with other groups of workers to see if they will take action on behalf of the home helps. Meanwhile, home helps have now linked up with their supervisors, home help organisers, who are members of National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO).

The NALGO members have decided not to implement any cuts, in defiance of instructions from chief officers. Despite threats of disciplinary action the County Council has so far failed to take any such measures, fearful of the reaction of other council staff.

The crisis is of national proportions. A recent report from the Association of Directors of Social Services indicated that every authority has, to one degree or another, cut expenditure on home helps, meals on wheels and closed old people's homes. Cuts in the health service have meant that geriatric beds have declined in number, producing increased pressure on local authorities.

Labour Parties throughout the country should be linked up with the relevant trade unions to assist in the development of local campaigns, arguing the case for a massive injection of funds to help the elderly. If the labour movement does not fight this battle, no one else will.

A SOLDIER'S STORY...

"Oh, quick, get him in." That's what they actually said, when I was at the Army Careers place having an interview. They asked me if I'd been in trouble with the police and when I said no I was in.

Once in I didn't really enjoy the army. But you have to lump it because you've got to do three years so I had to do three years. Some others, who signed on for six or nine years also had to serve for three years before they had the chance to buy themselves out.

Most of the lads I was with were Northern lads, some from Lancashire and a few Cockneys, but their attitudes varied. There were a lot of them who wondered if they'd made a mistake by coming into the Army and were always in trouble, always getting heavy fines, going absent and ending up in the cells for twenty-eight day stretches.

A lot of them really hated it, hated the officers and took the mickey out the young lieutenants who were only about twenty years old, younger than many of the privates. These young lieutenants hadn't a clue. We often said on exercises that they'd have everyone wiped out because of their stupidity.

Eighteen months after joining we went to Northern Ireland. Before going there we thought we were going to South Armagh, then it was Derry and eventually we went to West Belfast and our company ended up in the Ballymurphy area.

The conditions in barracks were poor on the four month tour which we were on. We were in these little forts—they have them in strategic places all over West Belfast—corrugated metal, with breeze blocks behind them and barbed wire on top and nets in front of the pillboxes.

Inside they've small prefab huts with small rooms, about four or five to a room...and they had showers and washing machines to wash your kit.

In the four months tour I stripped off to sleep between the sheets only about four times...otherwise we usually just had time to lie on the top of the bed, put a combat jacket over us and grab a couple of hours sleep.

I remember my first impressions of Belfast. Coming across on the boat from Liverpool on the ferry one lad said as we came into Belfast harbour, "Hey, look, they've got houses just like ours."

Another lad said, "Well what the hell do you expect them to live in, rabbit hutches?" But when you see places like Unity flats and the Divis block you realise that you're right to mention rabbit hutches, because the housing conditions are really appalling.

I had the impression before going over there that bad conditions were just in



Photo: MILITANT

Based on an interview by a Tyneside ex-soldier

The lads were worried about going to Ireland. Most were saying, "I hope I don't come face to face with a gunman."

Catholic areas. I said to my mate, "We must be going through some Catholic area."

But then we saw a Union Jack and realised it was actually the Shankill Road. The conditions in both areas, in all areas, are really appalling.

The lads were worried about going to Ireland. The situation was such that most soldiers were saying, "I hope I don't come face to face with a gunman because I don't want to have to shoot at anybody." The lads were pretty nervous, me included.

We were there less than

twenty-four hours when part of our Battalion were ambushed, resulting in the deaths of two young privates. The Padre got three bullets in his back and a driver was wounded. One of our officers was also slightly wounded; he caught one in the arm for which, incidentally, he ended up getting some sort of medal.

One certain incident will always stick in my mind. One day in August, the anniversary of Internment, we were out on the streets at the time there was a lot of trouble. We were out from nine o'clock at night till six the following morning, so

when we got relieved they told us to grab a couple of hours on our beds.

Not long after I was woken up by a young soldier who told me that a young sixteen-year old Irish lad had been shot dead by the Army for allegedly throwing a petrol bomb at a factory. Then, four hours later, a twenty-one year old Yorkshire lad was shot by a sniper, which was classed as a retaliation.

Then they took us in the Briefing Room. We were cold, wet and hungry with cuts and bruises, and in walked a lieutenant colonel who was immaculately

dressed. We had never seen him much, he was always at general HQ.

He came in and said, "Well chaps, it is a sad thing that we've lost one of our soldiers today but we had a good kill this morning." There was disgust among the soldiers at that statement: for him to say that about the death of a sixteen-year old lad. This officer was actually classing the young lad's death as sort of compensation for the soldier's death.

It really made us bitter because it gave the impression that they (the officers) didn't give a damn about

the working class Irish or the working class soldier. All he said at the end was, "Keep up the good work lads," and we never saw him again for weeks on end.

All the national newspapers could report was how bloody smart he kept himself during operations in the field. But they never once mentioned that it was his batman, an ordinary working class soldier, who had to wash his clothes and iron them.

Before joining the Army I thought the British Army sounded like the best Army in the world...you see, you get the impression that they

SRI LANKA WORKERS AND STUDENTS FIGHT UNP CUTS

never do anything wrong.

I remember I used to go out on the streets and pack my pockets full of sweets...all the young ones, most of the time, used to crowd around you and I used to offer them the sweets. They used to grab your beret and most of the time fun about with you and ask to see your bullets.

At first some hard core soldiers used to mock me, maybe because they thought I was soft-hearted or something. Then they cottoned on to an idea; the next thing you knew there were a few of them packing their pockets full of sweets, giving them to the young ones and asking, "Has your daddy got a gun like ours in the house?", trying to con them with sweets.

Eventually the mothers cracked the kids across the ear and said, "Don't talk to them British bastards", and dragged them into the house.

I talked to a few people and they're pretty hard. I was walking by one old woman who was sitting on a rocking chair outside her home. I said, "Good morning", to which she replied, "It was until you bastard spoke".

Yet on another occasion, some women were shouting and bawling at the soldiers when a gunman opened up and wounded one of the soldiers. The women came out with blankets and pillows, full of tears. They were really quite shook up.

We heard, a few days later, that these women had been in touch with the Provos and told them there was to be no more shootings in the Ballymurphy area for at least a month. True or not, there were no more incidents for a while.

We were often used for house searches—and it's not the searching of one or two houses every four or five weeks, but whole streets searched every other week. We must have searched eight streets in the Ballymurphy area and three in the New Barnsley area within one week alone.

Ireland had an effect on every soldier

About four o'clock in the morning big armoured vehicles stop on either side of the road, cordon off the area and you had to knock people up.

I know unemployment is high in Northern Ireland, but could you imagine the harassment for those people who did have to go to work: getting knocked out of bed at that time in the morning? And we, as ordinary squaddies, didn't want to get up at four o'clock to go trooping around and waking people up. Nevertheless, we had to do it.

Being in Ireland always had an effect on a soldier. I was a prime example myself. I began to take a nationalistic point of view. Some would sway one way, some the other—some said, "we shouldn't be on Irish soil" while others, after IRA atrocities, would sway the other way.

A lot begin to ask questions—"we are working class. They are working class. Why then are we standing face to face with the Irish workers and why are we carrying rifles?" Some

soldiers asked "why can Catholic and Protestants live together in England but not in Ireland?"

Others asked, "How would we like it if Irish troops were on our streets?" Some would be very anti-Irish but after being there they would end up sympathetic to the problems of the ordinary people, but still be very anti IRA and UVF.

It was really easy to sympathise with the people, especially when you see mothers with young bairns getting stopped and searched. When you looked at the houses and see the conditions in which the Irish have to live you sometimes forget about looking for gunmen because you were so amazed by the state of the houses. They looked as if they were falling to bits.

It's at this point when you begin to ask, what's the government doing to help? Does the government really want to solve the problems or are they just prepared to sit back and watch?

I left the army with no trade at all

People are wrong when they say that the working class soldier is an enemy or a Fascist because basically they come from the same conditions and same background.

For example, when we were fire fighting in Britain, the talk was, "just imagine if we were organised and had a union behind us, we wouldn't have to cross the picket lines." But, of course, if soldiers did this at the present without a union they'd be put in Army prison and classed as mutineers.

In fact there were often discussions about trade unions. It was split both ways because even those who argued against it wanted to know how it would work. But if it could work, everyone agreed they would like to have the trade union rights.

In the army you get messed around from pillar to post. You join up believing that you are getting a job, a real trade. But as often as not you end up not getting a trade at all. They tell us, "you want to be an engineer? Right, just join the Army and we'll try and get you on an engineering course." But then they tell you that you can't be an engineer because you haven't got the qualifications. In which case you end up stuck in the Infantry for three years and you can't get out.

I left the army with no trade at all. They were going to teach me how to drive but even that fell through. I remember how they promised to take you to "wonderful countries" like Hong Kong and Germany.

Yet in the three years that I served my "wonderful countries" consisted of Six weeks in the Kenyan Jungle, one week guarding Edinburgh Castle and four months in Ireland. The rest was spent at Catterick Garrison. In other words when you leave the Army its... "That's it, here's your discharge papers, good luck, goodbye"—that's it. Now I'm on the dole.

Thousands of students in Sri Lanka have clashed with the police in a public demonstration against a ruthless attack on education by the right wing United National Party regime.

A White Paper making vicious cuts in education spending was to be presented to parliament on 6 January, but was postponed until this week due to the pressure mounted by students and educationalists.

Sri Lanka is one of the few countries in the 'Third World' which made impressive advances in educational and social welfare after the war. The reforms and higher welfare spending were largely due to the strength of the labour movement.

Between 1946, when Ceylon ceased being directly administered by the British authorities, and 1980, the literacy rate jumped from fifty-seven per cent to eighty-five per cent. The number of children starting school rose from under fifty per cent to nearly a hundred per cent, producing an aware and educated working class which knew how to organise industrially and politically to protect their living standards.

The powerful trade unions were also able to force a doubling of government per capita spending on social services in the 1950s, with a reduction in the infant mortality rate from 141 in 1946 to 37 in 1980. These figures in themselves are a damning condemnation of the role of British imperialism and the tea companies which milked the island colony. It also shows that real improvements are possible in Asia, given a genuine growth in the economy and a strong

Brent Kennedy
(British representative, United Federation of Labour)

labour movement.

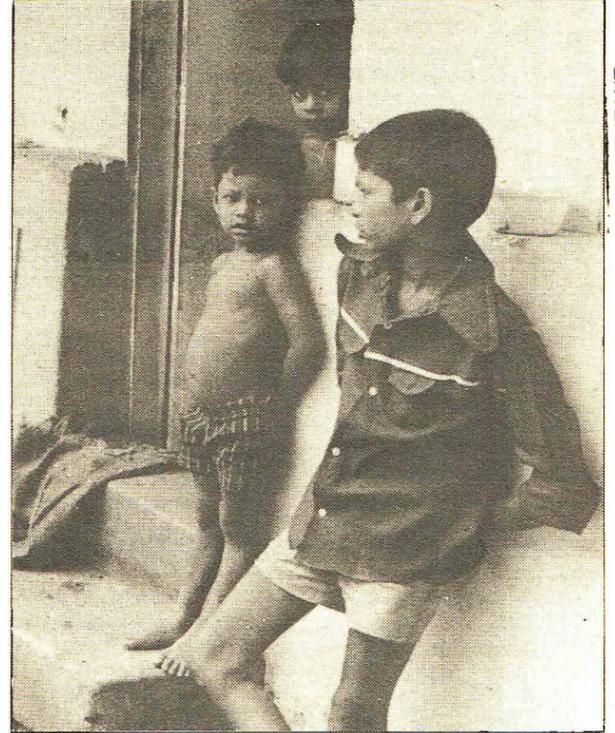
But under the blows of world capitalist recession, falling prices for primary products (tea, coconut and rubber are Sri Lanka's main exports), and the rise in oil prices and interest rates for foreign loans, the Lankan bosses have unleashed a ruthless assault on these living standards and welfare provisions.

This started under the 'liberal' government of Mrs Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Between 1973-5, the infant mortality rate actually rose, and by 1976 six per cent of all schoolchildren were acutely under-nourished, with a third of all pre-school children suffering from an inadequate diet.

These callous attacks have really been stepped up, however, by the UNP government, whose first act in power was to rob the poor of the free rice ration and subsidies for milk and other basic necessities.

With many adults suffering from the mass unemployment (with no unemployment benefits) and with the workers having their real wages reduced to about the lowest in Asia, many children of the poorest families are now forced to give up school to find ways to help feed themselves.

With permanent mass youth unemployment, this rich man's government obviously believes that further education is an unnecessary, wasteful luxury for the majority, and with a budget deficit amounting to a third of total government spending, housing and



The UNP government are taking away the future of these children—their education, health and democratic rights.

education are easy targets to attack.

In effect, the government is going to reduce educational standards to colonial levels to satisfy the economic demands of the IMF, Western bankers and multinational businesses, as they have already destroyed living standards and trade union rights.

Those who struggled for independence decades ago must ask, 'what kind of independence is this?'

The protest by the students already marks a turning point, since such demonstrations have been banned for months under a State of Emergency imposed by the UNP regime. In the past this was used to arrest union leaders and prevent peaceful picketing of

workplaces, but for the first time the police were unable to disperse the two thousand students and others, despite their confrontation tactics.

The Ceylon Students' Federation and several other bodies now plan further rallies in Colombo's Hyde Park and in the centre of the capital, to resist these attacks on education.

The trade union movement has always been at the forefront of educational progress, and students, teachers' and youth organisations in Britain should help their brothers in Sri Lanka to defend these gains, by sending messages of support to the Ceylon Students' Federation, 17 Barrack Lane, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka.

French capitalists 'dream' compensation

In what was clearly a political decision, against the policies and programme of the Socialist Party, the French Constitutional Court last week rejected the government's nationalisation laws.

The blocking of the nationalisation bills was based upon the compensation terms offered to those being bought out. Yet the left of the Socialist Party and Communist Party were complaining before this—and quite correctly—that the terms were already over-generous.

In fact, before the decision of the Court, it was already obvious that the shareholders were looking forward to being bought out. **Whereas the French stock exchange, the Bourse, showed an overall decline last year—by over 17 per cent—four out of five of the industrial groups and three of the banks due to be taken over actually showed an increase in share prices.**

"The Times" commented,

"It is perhaps significant that the two banks which expressed the most violent opposition to nationalisation were the ones to record the sharpest decline." The rest in other words, were quite happy with their pots of gold.

But now the French government has rushed out even more lucrative terms to buy off the Court's opposition. Instead of taking the issue of the Constitutional Court to the working class and mobilising support from the trade unions in the companies concerned—something that would have given Mitterrand the power to by-pass this clearly political judgement—he is following the footsteps of Anuerin Bevan, who when faced with opposition by doctors to the

establishment of the NHS, decided to "stuff their mouths with gold."

Now, the overall compensation will cost the government 24% more (see table). The 'Financial Times' commented that "shareholders in some of the big enterprises being taken over will make large windfall taxes." The Chairman of Credit Commercial de France, formerly one of the fiercest critics of nationalisation, commented that he was "happy" for his shareholders, and other brokers talked about "dream take-

over prices."

The French capitalists have found it easy to get Mitterrand to capitulate over the terms of compensation. Mitterrand, for his part, is more and more embarrassed by the growing anger and opposition in the left of his own party.

"The Times" correspondent noted, "there have been reports that President Mitterrand has regretted in private that the Socialist domination of Parliament is so complete."

Nevertheless, when it becomes clear that the limited policies of Mitterrand are failing to hold back the rising tide of economic crisis, he will inevitably come under even more fierce pressure from the capitalists, and much stronger criticism from his own party rank and file.

Table showing compensation terms before and after the rejection by the Constitutional Court: (Francs per share)

Company	Total compensation before	and after
Saint Gobain	156.18	171
CGE	334.15	485
Rhone Poulenc	135.98	126
Thomson-Brandt	255.71	300
Pechiney-Ugine-Kuhlmann	104.64	123
Paribas	218.70	310
Suez	327.35	436

INDIA

Despite massive government intimidation, millions of workers struck in India last week against the introduction of anti-trade union laws. The twenty-four hour strike—India's first ever general strike—was supported by all but one of the trade union organisations and was against the National Security Act and the Essential Services Maintenance Act which are designed to paralyse the power of the trade union movement.

These acts give the government the power to detain without trial. They reduce trade union rights in all respects. For example, overtime in the public services can be made compulsory by the boss and refusal to work overtime can lead to dismissal.

The acts, as is shown by the accompanying article written by an Indian trade union leader, are the culmination of a whole series of attempts by the Indian capitalist class to shackle the unions. Only last month, on December 28th, the government won a Supreme Court ruling, giving it powers to unilaterally change the wages and conditions of workers in India's biggest insurance company.

The government responded to the call for the protest strike by mobilising all the resources of the state machine against the workers, and over 8000 trade union leaders were arrested before the strike began. By the end of the strike 25,000 were detained. They were arrested under the terms of the very legislation they were protesting about.

The police were given orders to shoot where demonstrations refused to disperse, resulting in at least twelve workers losing their lives and a further 50 being injured by the police.

Nevertheless, the strike clearly had massive support. The Financial Times correspondent in Bombay reported that "virtually every shop, factory, school and office was shut. Riot police patrolled main roads and silent factories."

The city of Bombay was already witnessing, even

Bangalore correspondent

before the all-India protest, a strike by 250,000 textile workers from 62 different mills, demanding a wage increase of 50 per cent.

In Delhi only one newspaper was printed because of the strike. Two workers were shot by the police in Uttar Pradesh and two others in Thanjavir in the south. In Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, police with tear gas and batons broke up demonstrations of workers.

It is clear that the government of Indira Gandhi is trying to move once again in the direction of a bonapartist dictatorship, but it is equally clear that there will be enormous opposition from the workers' movement.

The promulgation of the Maintenance of Essential Services ordinance by the President of India did not come as a surprise.

In fact, after Mrs. Gandhi returned to power it could have been foreseen that the class conflict would sharpen and the ruling class

would attack the democratic rights of the working class.

There were many indications that some legislation banning strikes would be enacted by the Government. Leading industrialists and employers' organisations were periodically pleading for this.

The State labour ministers at a conference in September 1980 (which barred the ministers from West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura) had favoured a central legislation thoroughly undemocratic and anti-working class.

The National Security Act and the ordinance on the maintenance of essential services are entirely in tune with the Government's general policy towards popular movements. These measures aim to restrict trade union activities and contain the working class.

Attacks on the working class have been consistently on the increase throughout the last decade. The year 1974 witnessed, what can be termed as a watershed in the history of Indian Trade Union Movement—the 21-day railway strike.

The world economic recession was the worst since the second World War. It invariably had a telling effect on the Indian economy. The capitalist

Gandhi moves again to crush workers' rights

class was in no position to grant any more concessions to the working class. The "Congress Party Reformism" had come to a final halt.

The social upheaval that we witnessed in 1974 and 1975 was the direct result of this economic crisis. The confused opposition movement of J P Narayan and the Railway strike unnerved the ruling class. It could not have saved its power without semi-Bonapartist measures.

Therefore, we saw the ruthless repression of the Railway strike, the arrest of J P Narayan and a host of other political leaders, killing many socialists in the guise of "encounters", and finally imposition of the Emergency. The press was gagged, and trade union rights were taken away.

The Emergency was an ad-hoc solution for the survival of capitalism. Even

under the subsequent Janata Government, we saw an effort to curb trade union rights in the garb of an "Industrial Relations Bill". However, the Janata government could not react to the demands of the workers any more liberally than the Congress government, as the class composition of these two parties remained the same.

In the wake of Mrs Gandhi's return to power the capitalist opposition parties have disintegrated beyond redemption. The left parties,— CP(India), CP(Marxist), Revolutionary Socialist Party, and the Forward Block—which are in power in West Bengal, and Tripura have been trying to appease Mrs Gandhi, fearing that she might topple their governments any time, as happened in Kerala.

Though Mrs Gandhi has a massive backing in the Parliament, the Congress (I) is still a party of warring factions. The MPs elected by the personal patronage of Sanjay Gandhi have no social base at all.

The Congress is no longer a stable party as it appears to be. Mrs Gandhi, is therefore trying to consolidate her position by winning as many as possible of those leaders who were her opponents at one time or other. As a result of this there hardly exists any capitalist opposition party worth the name.

The left parties who have gained mass support in the states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura do not pose a serious threat to Mrs Gandhi at the national all-India level.

In spite of the fact that all is not too well for Mrs Gandhi in her party, with a

comfortable majority and an opposition fading day by day, she does not see any danger to her power within Parliament. But it is also necessary for her to face up to the economic crisis. Inflation of 15% has hit the people hard. The "black money" has created a parallel economy. The growth rate of infrastructure is barely 1.2%, that of Agricultural 3.5% and GNP 0.7% during 1979-81.

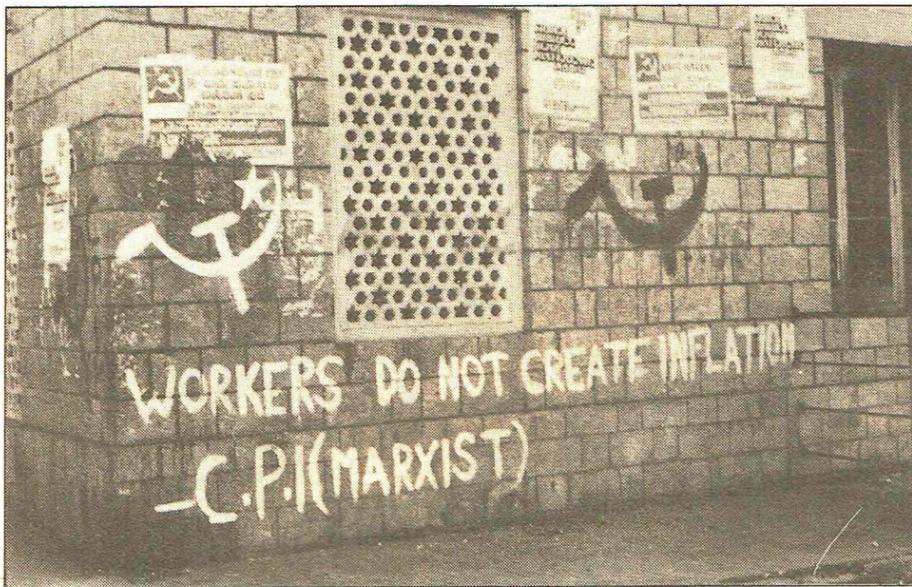
There is a huge trade-gap between imports and exports. There is decline in investment and the food-stock position is alarming.

On the basis of capitalism, there is no way to improve the condition of the masses. The system is impoverishing people day by day. The standard of living has come down drastically. In the last 28 months from June 1979 the prices have gone up by 52%.

In the background of this chaotic economic situation, we witnessed a series of agitations by the farmers all over the country for the support of prices for their produce. The workers are demanding more wages. There have been militant and protracted struggles by the working class.

The recent public sector strike has resulted in a colossal loss of production. The tension is developing on account of failure of the ruling class to ameliorate the conditions of the masses. There is growing unity among the workers and this is causing serious anxiety to the ruling class.

Mrs Gandhi has realised that the new mood of the working class would be the potential danger to her power. In the absence of a powerful opposition in



It is the workers' movement which provides the only real opposition in India today.

LABOUR PARTY/ AAM CONFERENCE: Solidarity with South African

The conference on South Africa called by the Labour Party jointly with the Anti Apartheid Movement on January 30th provides a new opportunity to strengthen the links of solidarity between workers in struggle in Britain and South Africa.

During the last two years in South Africa a continuous wave of strikes has built the strength of the trade unions and confirmed the working class as the driving force of mass opposition to the apartheid regime. "Labour is becoming the focal point of the political situation" admits the Minister of Labour.

Many of the strikes and recognition disputes are in British-owned companies. As well as the dispute at Wilson-Rowntree in East London, which has moved into its tenth bitter month, workers have been on strike recently at Reckitt and Col-

By Harry Thompson

eman, Norcross, Dunlops, Glenwyd, Croda Chemicals, GEC, ICI and Automotive Products.

In these strikes, as in others, the terrified bosses call immediately on the police, and are engaging in mass dismissals of workers. Facts given by the Minister of Police himself show that police have been called out to suppress workers on strike once every three days in the last two years—quite apart from the daily pass-

law harassment. Among British companies who have dismissed workers en masse are Dunlop Flooring, GEC and ICI.

As shown in the SALEP publication, "Profiteering from Cheap Labour", British companies benefiting from the cheap labour of apartheid are the same ones who are throwing workers out of jobs and cutting real wages in Britain. Thatcher's Tory government, orchestrating this attack on the British working class, is at the same time looking for every means of restoring the apartheid regime to the fold of "Free World respectability".

But in South Africa the huge forward strides of the workers' movement are

shown by the recent surge of strike action which forced the government to postpone for three years the introduction of an anti-workers Pensions Bill.

The ruling class is hitting back against this new-found power of the workers. Many trade unionists throughout the country have been arrested—and some will be charged in what may be set up as a show "conspiracy" trial.

To defend the gains of the South African workers, there is the urgent need to strengthen the bonds of common interest between British and South African workers fighting the same struggle—against reactionary governments, and often against the attacks of the same multinational

employers.

January 30th is an excellent opportunity for discussing strategy and tactics on these questions—how to isolate the apartheid regime and the South African bosses, and how to build factory-to-factory and union-to-union links.

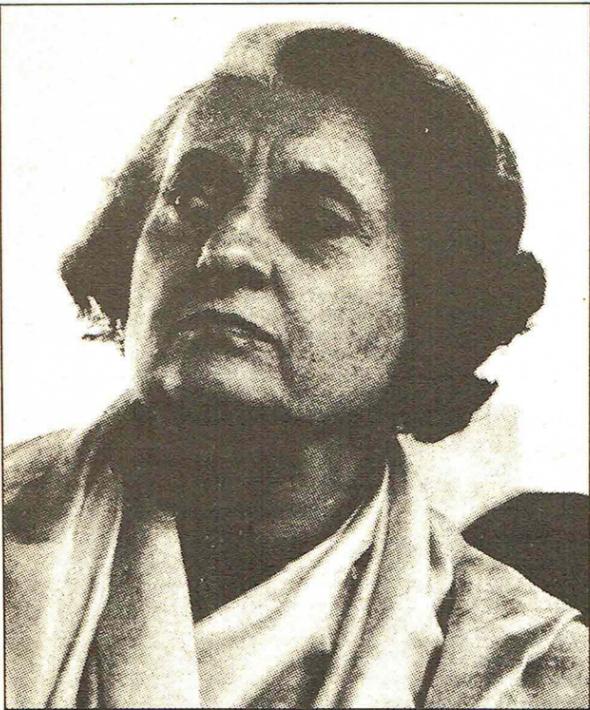
The recent support given to Rowntree workers on strike in South Africa by their fellow workers in York shows the instinctive internationalism that is mobilised when the facts are fully provided.

Unfortunately the Anti Apartheid Movement (AAM) has not given a clear lead in mobilising support for the strike wave of black workers. Despite some activity around Wilson-

Rowntree, the AAM leadership has actually questioned the need for direct links between workers in Britain and South Africa! While the trade union movement in South Africa calls urgently for support from fellow-workers internationally, the AAM places the stress instead on cultural boycotts and appeals to the United Nations.

The only basis for developing effective solidarity between the working people of Britain and South Africa is the conscious understanding of the need for common socialist policies in the struggle against the nightmare of capitalism and the repression that goes with it.

Labour Party activists at this conference should urge



Indira Gandhi likes to wear the mantle of a "popular leader", but her regime represents only Indian landlords and capitalists.

Parliament, the mantle of opposition has fallen on the working class outside.

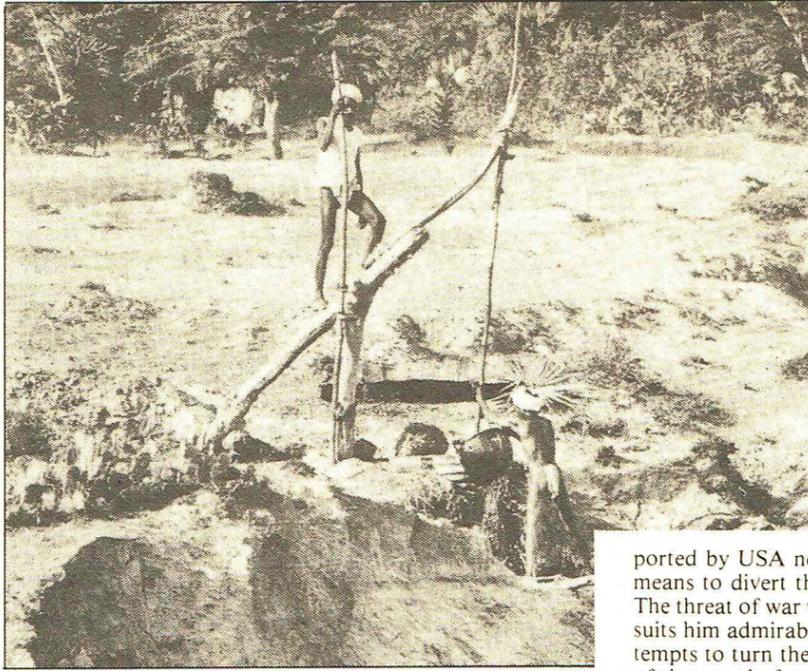
The many concessions announced by the government to industrialists in the last budget have not been able to woo them. They are worried about the labour unrest, and at the same time they are not prepared to give any concession to the workers at the cost of their regular profit.

They see no point in investing in the industries without adequate guarantee by the Central Government against the labour unrest. They have been insisting some legislation to protect

their profit.

The capitalist class has no potential to develop Indian society and carry through land reform, democratisation and modernisation. It is utterly bankrupt. Hence we see the social tensions developing all over: the Assam Agitation, the demand for Khalistan, the problems of the Nagas and the Mizos, the attacks on the Dalits and the repression of women.

The ruling class see a danger of another social upheaval, this time led by the working class—hence the necessity to arm itself with more powers. They



There is no possibility whatsoever that India can drag itself into the twentieth century on the basis of capitalism.

calculate that the ban on strikes would keep Mrs Gandhi in the safe corridors of power.

The ordinance has therefore come as one of the series of the measures following the National Security Act to take away trade union rights and to leave the working class weakened. The crisis of capitalism has resulted in unleashing a series of attacks on the few democratic rights workers have.

Also India has had to get a loan from the IMF—a further indication of the grave economic crisis in the country. Yet the IMF loan

will only further wreck the economy. The IMF always insists on certain conditions however strong the recipient country might be. For the sake of its own investment it would therefore, in the circumstances obtaining in India, support the banning of strikes and an imposition of a wage freeze as first conditions.

The other justification used by Gandhi is the threat of war with Pakistan.

With social unrest fast developing in Pakistan, and the people there moving towards mass campaigns for democratic rights, the military dictator Zia sup-

ported by USA needs some means to divert the people. The threat of war with India suits him admirably. Zia attempts to turn the attention of the people from burning issues like inflation, mass hunger, political and trade union rights.

So Pakistan is going ahead with the manufacture of nuclear weapons, which is especially criminal and ruinous under the present economic circumstances.

The US has also agreed to supply Pakistan with F-16 fighter aircraft.

The present government in India are taking advantage of all this to consolidate their own position in power. A war psychosis is created there also to detract the people from the main issues, and to discipline the political parties and trade unions.

The capitalist political parties, however insignificant they are in their strength and stature, are behind Mrs Gandhi in this. The left parties, standing alone, bereft of their democratic allies, will be contested to take a firm stand. And that is what Mrs Gandhi wants.

The suppression of trade union rights is an attempt to cripple the strength of the Communist Parties as their strength lies mainly in the working class. The national question also has always been used by the capitalists to divide the workers.

It is clear that the National Security Act was a prelude to the promulgation of the ordinance for the Maintenance of Essential Services and this ordinance will itself be a prelude to a move to further repressive measures, towards the establishment of a bonapartist regime.

It is a real challenge for the communist parties and the working class.



TURKEY

While NATO chiefs are busy condemning the Polish regime for the suppression of democratic rights there, they are conveniently turning a blind eye to even greater repression carried through by one of their own members, Turkey.

There are over 30,000 detainees in Turkey, overwhelmingly trade union and socialist activists. Since the military coup over 200 prisoners have been shot 'while resisting arrest' and Amnesty International has files on more than 60 people who have died while in custody.

CANADA

After a strike had started in the Montreal transport system, the Quebec state government passed a law making it illegal. Despite threats of stiff fines, the 6,400 transport workers have defied the law and continued their strike.

BELGIUM

After a special vote in the National Assembly, the conservative government in Belgium has been given sweeping powers to carry through economic policies by decree, without prior discussion and approval in the Assembly. This will now permit the government to carry through a whole range of policies designed to attack the living standards of workers.

The Special Powers Act was passed despite fierce opposition from the Socialist and other opposition parties. Some trade union federations are already planning a twenty-four hour general strike in protest against the Act.

The Act will mean that the government will be able to reduce workers' cost-of-living wage increases, cut public expenditure, and at the same time cut taxes, mainly for the better off.

Belgium has the highest rate of unemployment in the EEC and it is likely to go even higher now. Both the Flemish and the Walloon (French-speaking) Socialist Parties have indicated their support and encouragement for the 'extra-parliamentary' opposition organised by the trade unions.



Workers and students demonstrating in Delhi and demanding the resignation of Mrs Gandhi.

Trade Unions!

From the 'Financial Times', [18.1.82].

"DE BEERS, the South African mining company which dominates world diamond marketing, has blocked publication by the British Government of sensitive figures on shipments of diamonds from the Soviet Union to London.

Because of the move, which affected Britain's trade statistics from the beginning of last year, the Government is no longer

providing figures on clandestine shipments of Soviet diamonds to London, where they are sold through De Beers worldwide marketing network.

The link in diamond marketing between the two countries at opposite ends of the international political spectrum has been known for years. But it is not formally admitted by either side, and is a subject of considerable embarrassment particularly for the Russians."

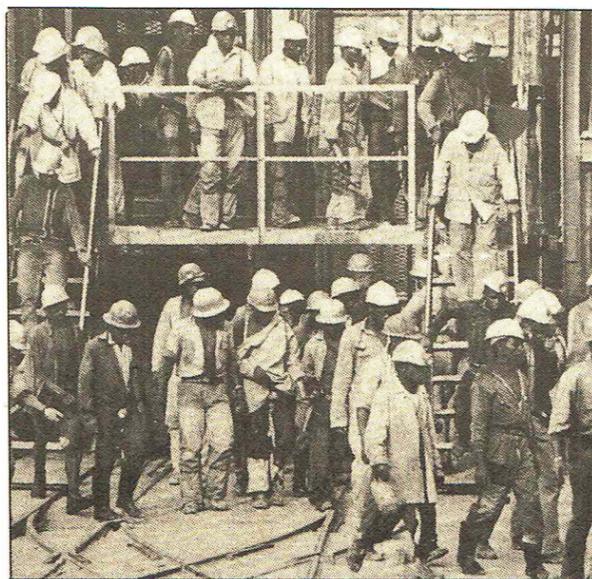
a joint lead by the Labour Party and AAM to provide workers in British companies with all the facts needed to support workers in struggle in South Africa.

Direct links can be strengthened through exchange visits by trade union activists leading to the formation of international combine committees.

The Labour Party must put its full weight into mobilising workers' support for the independent trade union movement in South Africa, together with support for the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Confederation of Trades Unions (SACTU). The work of socialist education carried on by the South African Labour Education Project (SALEP) should also be actively supported.

At the same time, the necessary level of support for the struggle in South Africa will not be achieved until the Tories are removed from office and replaced by a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Such a government would be able, with mass



Links must be forged between trade unions in Britain and South Africa.

mobilisation in the labour movement, to impose sanctions against the apartheid regime and commit its full

weight to supporting the struggle for national and social liberation in South Africa.

Read INQABA YA BASEBENZI

Appears quarterly. Postal subscriptions for readers outside South Africa can be ordered from the following address: BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX. Subscription rates, including postage, for 4 issues: Africa £2.40 (airmail £6.80). Britain and Europe £3.20. Rest of world £3.20 (airmail £7.90). Cheques or postal orders payable to INQABA YA BASEBENZI should accompany all orders.



Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Why Labour won in 1945

Dear comrades,

It is important for Labour Party members not to lose their nerve in face of the massive propaganda put out by the media against the leftward movement of our party. Any comrades that may be tempted to moderate their views should look back to the 1945 General Election. Then Labour was elected with a majority of 146 seats over all other parties, on a radical left wing programme. The proposals included; the raising of the school leaving age to 16, the establishment of the National Health Service, and the nationalisation of coal, gas, electricity, inland transport and the iron and steel industries. All this after Churchill had won the war for us! And what was Churchill's comment in his first election broadcast at that time? "Socialism is inseparably interwoven with totalitarianism and abject worship to the state". He also said that a Labour government would need a "Gestapo" to carry out its policies!

Yours fraternally
Tony Gill
NE Leeds CLP.

BR—stop this age of the strain

Dear Comrades

With a national rail drivers' strike, British Rail is still saying that rail staff are only asked to do a reasonable period of overtime. This usually means that rail staff are working more than a 54½ hour week; over time of 14½ hours or more. And BR still have the audacity to call this 'reasonable'.

With a ban on overtime and rest day working by ASLEF the two day strikes will disrupt travel especially in the London area. But if the strike were to go on for an indefinite period I think people would come to realise how much they depend on the BR drivers to get to work etc. Britain would literally come to a stand still. There would be no coal to generate electricity to light homes and keep the wheels of industry turning, because a vast amount of this vital fuel is moved from the pits to the power stations by train. Deliveries of mail and other supplies would also be badly affected. So with the drivers on strike Britain would be in deep water.

So I would urge the government and the bosses of BR to wake up. Give the drivers their pay rise, because it's these blokes who get up at 4.30am so that people can get to work on time. They are the backbone of the British workforce. Prevent this period turning into the age of their discontent and the age of the strain!

Pete Wilkinson
Carlton YS, Nottingham

Hillhead no land of milk and honey

Dear Comrades

So it is now confirmed that Roy Jenkins will be standing as the Alliance candidate in Hillhead, the last Tory bastion in Glasgow. In case any of our readers think that Hillhead is a land of milk and honey, I would like to inform them of a little incident which happened recently.

A hotel in Hillhead announced that it was going to re-open and advertised for staff. There were 160 vacancies in all and interviews were to be spread over a number of days starting on a Thursday between 1pm and 7pm.

On the first day over 2,500 people turned up! In order to cope the time was extended to 10pm and the

interviewing staff was increased from 5 to 17.

Short of a miracle I fail to see what the SDP can do about the chronic unemployment. And if Roy Jenkins or 'Buffalo Bill' Rodgers or any other of the SDP cowboys can perform miracles then I hope walking on water is one of them because the people of Glasgow are sure to chase these chancers back across the Clyde.

But a most disturbing factor about the hotel fiasco is that amongst the 2,500 applicants, there were people with degrees, 'O' levels, 'A' levels, and a multitude of other qualifications who were made to accept jobs washing dishes and carrying cases.

The SDP are not offering us a kind of society where people's talents will be used

to the fullest use whether it's profitable or not. That is the task of a socialist Labour government. Roy Jenkins is standing in Hillhead because he is a careerist and Hillhead is an empty seat, and any empty seat will do for Roy so long as he can get back in to Parliament. At my local pub people are frightened to leave their seats to go to the toilet in case Roy Jenkins is sitting in it when they come back!

What must be brought home to the people of Hillhead and to the people of Britain as a whole is that the only way to end this ludicrous situation where we have gifted and intelligent people washing dishes while morons run the country, is to fight for socialist Labour government.

Yours fraternally
Danny O'Donnell
Clydebank LPYS



Young Socialists join the massive Labour Party demonstration against unemployment in Glasgow on 21 February, 1981. Photo: Militant

Mass unemployment in Dunfermline

Dear Comrades

There are now 400 young workers after every job vacancy in Fife. 1982 has brought no joy to the unemployed. Due to school leavers, youth unemployment rose by 500 to 1,811.

In one town, Dunfermline, there are now 500 young workers on the scrap heap. In December 630 young people left school in Fife. Of those only 30 have

managed to find work. The regional total for youth unemployment in Fife is 20% higher than it was at this time last year. Including those on the Youth Opportunities Programme, the total number of people unemployed is now approaching 20,000 in Fife alone!

"If, a few years ago, someone had said that the figure would reach this level we would probably have laughed. Yet it has arrived" explained Councillor Henry McLeish to the local Education Committee.

Mrs Thatcher advises people to move about Britain in search of work. Let me say to the unemployed workers who read 'Militant' this week in Manchester, Liverpool, London or elsewhere, if you're thinking of moving to Fife in search of work—at the end of December we had nine registered vacancies for regular unemployment throughout the whole region!

Yours fraternally
Paul Cunningham
Dunfermline LPYS

Mark Thatcher had a choice—old people don't

Dear Sir

I am angry, very angry indeed at publicity given to Mark Thatcher—was his life more valuable than the thousands of elderly people condemned to death by a non-caring Premier and government? When the press thought there was a

danger of the Premier's son being dead in the desert, the concern of the British press was massive. Will they show the same concern towards the elderly people dying in their thousands from hypothermia because of lack of money to purchase fuel to ward off the cold?

The Premier's son had a choice, he went on the rally with the full knowledge of the dangers involved. I hope the shock of nearly losing her son has impressed upon the Premier the meaning of

the word 'compassion.' Messages of concern were sent to Mrs Thatcher, but does she show concern for the thousands of elderly people who she is morally responsible for? One remark she made when she knew her son was safe 'Now life can begin again.' But not so for the elderly who have died—their life is finished! What price old people's lives these days?

Yours faithfully
J.A. Lester
Blackpool

Party unity can be won around a socialist Labour Party

Dear Sir

I am writing to you in a mood of disillusionment over the recent events in the Labour Party. Although only sixteen and a member of the YS for a few months, I have been reading and supporting 'Militant' since I was thirteen.

I was educated to believe in the socialist ideas of the Labour Party. So as you will understand the recent actions of leading members of the party have disturbed me. They have joined forces with the capitalists and their press in an attempt to drive out of the party those who have outlined a programme which would carry out the true traditions of a socialist Labour Party.

The real cause of the adoption of socialist policies and increasing support for 'Militant' is not through Marxist infiltration but because of the failures of policies adopted by previous Labour governments and their supporters. There may be problems with infiltrators in the party, but they come from the right wing, not the left. And what of the deceit of the Social Democrats, prepared to use the party for their careers until it did not suit them? It is with this I urge support for party unity. Support 'Militant' and fight for a socialist Labour Party.

Yours fraternally
Isobel Stewart
Cathcart LPYS

What the cuts meant in Haringey

Dear Comrades

At one time Haringey Council owned a residential holiday centre in Surrey called Woodlands. It provided a valuable service for deprived children in Haringey. It was a chance to see the country. The food was modest but the kids were happy.

Last year, under pressure of the cuts, Haringey Council sold the centre for £300,000. It is now a hotel and conference centre used by rich businessmen. For as little as £65 you can get a night's accommodation, and English breakfast. A free bottle of champagne is thrown in as well!

When you need a rest from all the 'brainstorming' there are distractions like swimming, shooting and fishing. And if that makes you a bit thirsty you can always raid the bar in your room which has a minimum charge of £20.

When times are hard, we all have to make sacrifices. Nevertheless, the cuts are necessary for the good of the 'country'. Makes you feel better, doesn't it?

Yours fraternally
Dave Cartwright
Wood Green LPYS

Is 'Militant' wrong about Stalin?

Dear Editor

In what amounted to a gross parody of Trotskyist denunciation, Roger Shives ('Militant' 15/1/82) attempted to write off the last 50 years of Soviet history by the invocation of the magic word of 'Stalinism'. With all the enthusiasm of a Reaganite Cold War warrior he hammered home the Soviet 'shock horror' story of to the point where, if I were to take it all in, I should not sleep soundly at nights lest I knew that Cruise-Trident et al were keeping those Eastern barbarians at bay!

Unfortunately, in his haste to put over the 'treacherous bureaucrats repress workers' thesis, Shives chose to ignore the crucial historical episode (perhaps he cannot bear the thought that Stalin was at the helm) of the Soviet's titanic struggle against, and final victory over, the fascist menace in Europe.

And here, as a socialist who glories in the working class defeat of fascism between 1933—45, I must take Shives gravely to task. I find it disgusting that, in order to make a cheap propaganda score, he should dismiss the greatest tragedy of the 20th century in the following distorted way: "...through his (Stalin's)...determination to personally conduct the war (he) was responsible for many of the 20 million war dead." I suppose the huge Nazi armies, and their accompanying Death Squads, bent as they were on the conquest of the Soviet Union, were still nevertheless, mere accessories after the fact of Stalin's crime?

For pity's sake come clean! Without the heroic resistance of the Soviet people (Stalin and his bureaucrats included) the whole of Europe, as included would have succumbed to Nazi tyranny. Leaving aside Nazi mass murder, the Soviet armies for most of the war, contended against nine tenths of all the German forces. In comparison, the Western war effort, tremendous as it was appeared as a mere sideshow. The Soviet sacrifice lifted the spectre of fascism from Europe and that is truth that Cold War warriors and pseudo-Trotskyists alike will never be able to conceal. Their sacrifice regenerated at least the hope of progress towards socialism worldwide.

I leave the last few words to AJP Taylor, writing in 1978; "The Soviet political system has great faults. It is often oppressive and sometimes brutal. But the greatest crime of the Soviet Union in western eyes, is to have no capitalists and no landlords."

Yours
E Hughes
Bradford

The full glare of the TV lights came down on Militant supporters in Leeds last week. But for once it wasn't just a hack journalist's denunciation of so-called 'infiltration'.

Look North BBC were filming part of the Militant rally in Leeds. Over 140 people turned up to hear Peter Taaffe, the editor of 'Militant', speak. They came from every section of the labour and trade union movement.

Peter Taaffe explained the traditions of the labour movement and how 'Militant' was aiming to revive the socialist origins of the party.

It was for this reason that the Tory press had launched a full scale witch-hunt against the 'Militant' newspaper. Peter went on to outline the need for a clear break with the old policies of the last Labour government.

Workers who were at the meeting for the first time were taken with the theme at the meeting of a Labour government campaigning for a 35-hour week, £90 minimum living wage and a huge increase in public expenditure.

When asked whether this programme was popular, Peter explained that workers, if they could see that Labour was ready to provide the goods, in particular ending unemployment by socialist economic

Rallying to Militant

By Jane Ingham
(West Leeds Labour Party)

planning would not only support Labour over the SDP but also sweep the Tories right out of office.

This came across even in the TV report of the meeting, when a worker from Sulzers engineering was shown. Eric Lindley, an AUEW member, explained how many workers see no difference between the Tories and right-wing Labour.

He went on, "It seems as if the likes of Denis Healey and James Callaghan don't give a monkey's chuff about the working class." Eric said that if 'Militant' was being attacked by these types then 'Militant' must be all right.

A full four minutes of the meeting was shown on the Look North programme the following night. The reporter asked Peter Taaffe if the people assembled could attract the ordinary working class voter.

At the same time the camera scanned the audience which included full-time union officials, Labour councillors, constituency secretaries and a whole host of shop floor representatives of local unions, and a section of hospital workers. Engineers of Leeds were represented by District Committee members along with the

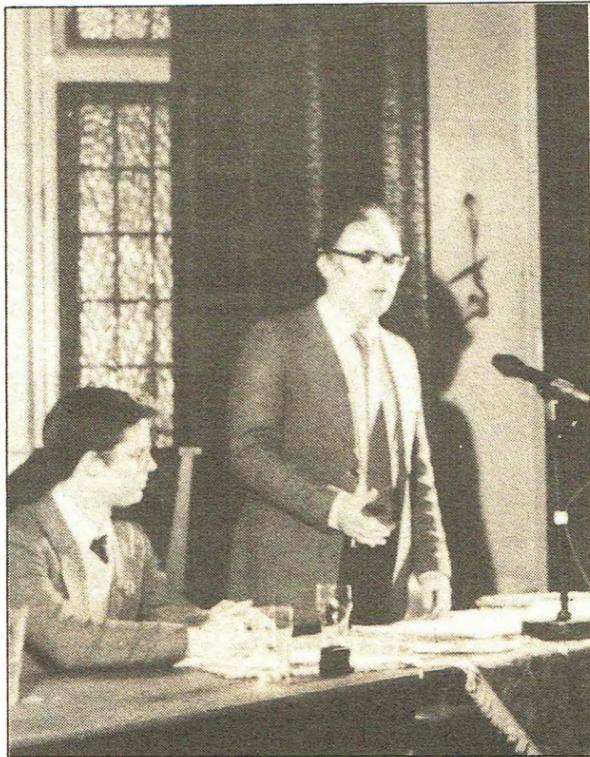


PHOTO: Peter Taaffe speaking in Leeds.

convenors at Sulzers and Kirkstall Forge.

As Gerry Wright explained in the financial appeal, it is ordinary workers that 'Militant' turns to for its support and its cash. This was proved at the rally with a total of over £320 being

raised during the night. £140.75 came on the door and a clear £180 added in the collection.

The political event which started at 6.15 pm on Sunday night was followed by a successful folk night.

SAY IT WITH CASH

By Steve Cawley

"Please find enclosed a cheque for £15 to help with the Fighting Fund. The money comes from expenses received from my union USDAW."

"I can't think of a better way of using the money. It's vitally important that we build a bigger, better paper as we are at present being attacked from all sides...by building a bigger, better paper we will be able to get the message across that the socialist transformation of society is the answer."

This letter from Merseyside reader Tony Gavin is happily now typical of our postbag, every day. When the top bosses 'earn' £2,000 more in just one week than the majority of workers see in a year, it's not surprising that more and more new readers want to help build 'Militant'.

Collections at 'What Militant Stands For' meetings from Bishop Auckland, Leeds (nearly £200), Dagenham (over £100), Newcastle, Chester and Littlehampton added £403 plus over £100 in IOUs which we will count as soon as they are paid!

Young Socialists at a London LPYS Weekend School collected £40 and donations from LPYS branches included those from Newcastle North and Gateshead East, while students at Trent Poly sent £9. Thanks

also to Valley LP members (Liverpool) for £17 from a raffle, and to Isle of Wight LP members for another appeal sheet returned.

Merseyside print supporters sent £7 and an EETPU branch which opposes the witch-hunt of 'Militant' readers sent £5. N Byrne (N London CPSA) sent us £14, a tenner came from A Rogerson (Bermundsey LPYS) and £6 from J Holloway (Winchmore Hill).

Amongst the fivers this week, thanks to Leicester readers N Ashton, and J and P Leavy, A Snedden (E Kilbride), R Annand (Chester), 'Glen' (ASLEF member, Gorton), Bath readers S Everett and M McNerny, Alan from Totnes and S Flynn (Jarow). Between £2 and £4 came from C McNulty (Feltham), D Bond (Barnsley), T Hogan (Jarrow), K Eardley (E Kilbride), and B Morrey (Norwich). £2s from L Carrington (Finchley), R Marshall (BFAWU, Hackney), A Moon (TGWU, Hull) P Swift (NUHKW, Leicester) and Corby readers R Luckins (USDAW) and T Mellon (ISTC) illustrate how our supporters span most of the trade unions.

The largest number of individual donations each week come from paper 'extras' in change donated and £1s. We appeal particularly to any new reader who may not be able to afford some of the larger amounts men-

tioned here to think about giving what you can afford regularly, for example 50p per week is £26 a year!

£1s included this week those from M Rumney (Washington LPYS), S Cully (Gosport), Notts miners S Gregory and J Proffitt, and E Thompson (Hull Boiler-makers), and those odd 5ps and 10ps added up to £54.90!

Of course, you don't have to buy a 'Militant' to save up 1ps and ½ps. J Osbaldson from Blackburn sent us £1.30 this week from a pennies jar, and we know of several readers who save up 1ps for us (what else can

you do with them?).

Socials in Cambridge and Leeds, sales of teas and coffees, drinks for 'Militant', a £10 radio interview fee, sales of Bradford rock and Rotherham jumble made up the weekly figure to £1,232 plus more promises redeemed from last year.

But there are thousands of workers who would be eager to read 'Militant' if we could get it to them! To do this we need the resources and we depend on you to get us to our £35,000 target by 11 April! Send in your donation straight away!

The best antidote to press poison

GET THE FACTS!!!



Obtainable 20p from local 'Militant' seller, or from 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. (Add 10p p&p, orders more than 10 post free).

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

ads

"What We Stand For" Meetings

STEVENAGE: Thursday 28 January, 8.00 pm, Committee Room 1, Stevenage Leisure Centre. Speaker: Clare Doyle.

WARE: Wednesday 3 February, 8.00 pm, Garden Room, Priory, off Ware High Street.

EASTLEIGH: Monday 8 February, 8.00 pm, Labour Rooms, 69 Leigh Road, Eastleigh. Speaker: Alison Hill (Gosport Labour Party)

PORTSMOUTH: Wednesday 3 February, 8.00 pm, Labour Party Rooms, 84 Kingston Cres., North End, Portsmouth. Speaker: Nick Brooks (Southampton Labour Party)

GOSPORT: Thursday 11 February, 8.00 pm, Labour Club, 145 Brockhurst Road, Gosport. Speaker: Cathy Wilson (Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Isle of Wight)

YEOVIL: Thursday 4 February, 8.00 pm, Labour Club, Vicarage Street, Yeovil. Speaker: Nick Brooks (Southampton Labour Party).

WASHINGTON: Speaker: Brian Ingham (Militant Editorial Board) 7.30pm, Sunday 14 February. Oval Community Centre, Concord. For further details phone Sunderland: 653994.

EAST KILBRIDE: Peter Taaffe, Editor of 'Militant' Saturday 30th January, 10.30 am, Murray Hall, Drumchapel.

GREENOCK: Thursday 18 February, Summerhill Primary school. Greenock: local press for details. Further details - Bob Wylie: 03552-29082.

EAST EDINBURGH: Monday 1 February, 7.30 pm, Brunton Hall, Musselburgh. Speaker: Peter Taaffe (Editor, 'Militant'); Chairman: Keith Simpson, (Musselburgh Labour Party).

Labour Party Young Socialists Rally: "Stop the SDP bandwagon". Sandy Smeaton (Chairman, Glasgow District Labour Party), Peter Taaffe (Editor, Militant), Norman Buchan MP. Buffet room, City Hall, Candleriggs, Glasgow (note change of venue from N British Hotel). Sunday 31st January, 7.30pm.

Roy and Frances Nelson announce the birth of their daughter Leona, on December 21st. Forward to socialism.

Ipswich Marxist Discussion Group: 'Wage, Labour and Capital'. Speaker: Martin Smidman. Venue: 8 Tolworth Rd., Ipswich. 8.00pm Thursday 11th February. For further details ring Ipswich 713179.

Ipswich jumble sale in aid of Youth Campaign Against Unemployment. Entrance 10p at All Saints Church Hall, Blenheim Road, Ipswich. Saturday 20 February 2.30pm.

CHESTERFIELD: Thursday 4 February 7.30pm. Speakers: Bill Mullins and an NUM member. Rooms 3/4, Market Hall, Chesterfield.

BROMSGROVE: Hear Jeremy Birch (Selly Oak LP). United Reformed Church Hall, Windsor Street, Bromsgrove. Thursday 4 February, 7.30pm

WEST BROMWICH: Hear Kevin Ramage (LPYS National Chairman). Wednesbury Labour Club, Hilltop, West Bromwich. 8.00 pm, Wednesday 10 February.

YARDLEY: Wednesday 10 February. Hear: Jeremy Birch. The Malt House, St Giles Road, Tile Cross, Yardley.

AYLESHAM: Hear Tony Sauniois (ex-Labour Party NEC) at Snowdown Colliery Welfare Club, Aylesham. Wednesday 3 February, 7.30pm.

KIDDERMINSTER Readers' Meeting: 'Socialism or Nuclear Annihilation'. Friday 5 February. Hear: Jeremy Birch. The Railway Bell, Comberton Hall, Kidderminster.

COVENTRY SOUTH EAST Labour Party Membership drive. Sunday 7 February. Meet at TGWU Hall, Short Street (junction of London Road and ring road). 10.00am. Crêche available. Ring Coventry 89235 if you would like to help.

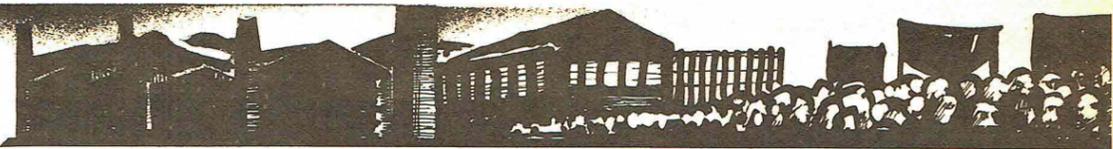
SHEFFIELD: Friday 29 January, 7.00 pm, AUEW House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield. Speaker: Ted Grant (Political Editor, 'Militant')

WALLASEY: Monday 8 February, 7.30 pm, Wallasey Labour Club, Church Road, near ferry. Speaker: Derek Hatton (Liverpool Labour Councillor)

HACKNEY: Thursday 4 February, 7.30 pm, Hackney Labour & Trades Hall, 96 Dalston Lane, E.8. Speaker: Bob Faulkes (Hackney Central Labour Party)

Manchester University Militant Supporters Society. Monday 1 February: 'Youth on Poverty Schemes: the fight for trade union rights.' Speaker: Colin Wolfenden, YOP Trainees Union Rights Campaign. Monday 8 February: 'Can the trade unions defend living standards?' Speaker: Pete Dodd, Union of Communication Workers. Monday 15 February: 'South Africa: towards revolution?' Speaker from SALEP. Monday 22 February: 'Marxism and the state: can socialism be achieved peacefully?' Speaker: Lesley Holt, Kirkdale Labour Party.

Industrial Reports



Chamberlain Phipps

After four months out of work the sacked workers of Chamberlain Phipps fight on for their jobs. They have had to fight on all fronts, not just their former employer. Their union, NUFLAT, unfortunately refuses to support them and instead backs the scabs presently at work. The government refused to pay any benefit claiming they were in dispute not unemployed. The 'Wallpaper Warriors' as they have come to be known have waged a determined campaign. They appealed against the Department of Employment's decision. As well as the appeal, they launched a campaign using the local media, holding a march and rally and getting their MP to raise the issue in parliament. The united pressure of the campaign paid off. The adjourned hearing decided they were entitled to benefit including back money. This is an important victory for all workers fighting for jobs.

However, one victory doesn't win a war. The fight continues. The recent bad snow and the decision by 'English Industrial Estates' to try to stop them picketing hasn't stopped them. The support they have gained nationally and locally has clearly embarrassed the union leadership and the company. Neither have decided to change their decisions against the 'Wallpaper Warriors'. The 'Warriors' are appealing for blacking of the raw materials and products of Chamberlain Phipps. Messages of support, or offers of blacking, write to Matty Smith, 26 Howard Close Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham.

NALGO pay

The decision to have a flat-rate component only in this year's pay claim for NALGO's administration and clerical staff within the health service is a big step forward for what has been up until recently a traditionally more cautious section of the union.

The claim, which was formulated by branch delegates to the recent special health group meeting, also includes demands for a 35 hour working week and a basic annual leave entitlement of 30 days, neither of which may be used as a 'lever' in possible difficult negotiations.

However, although the final settlement date is April 1982, the National Health Committee failed to outline a coherent strategy as to how the claim can be realised if talks with the Tories break down. This seems likely, since in order to win the claim we will have to smash the Tories 4% public sector pay limit. To do so, mere rhetoric will not be enough! We have to begin now to prepare the members for a struggle during which all out industrial action cannot be excluded. Meetings should be organised to fully explain the justice of the claim and why we need to unite with other trade unionists in the public sector to break the Tories' pay limit!

By Steve Grant (Mersey Health Branch, NALGO)

CPSA pay

CPSA is awaiting official rejection of their 1982 pay claim. The claim is for 13% with an underpinning minimum of £12.50 a week. The trade union movement in general and public sector unions in particular will anxiously await the outcome of the civil servants claim.

Although the securing of the claim in full would be seen as a

victory against the Tories' public sector pay policy, it would nevertheless amount to a cut in members' living standards.

At the January meeting of the CPSA executive the right wing majority turned down the Broad Left's demands for a special pay conference and the resurrection of campaign co-ordinating committees at local level, to prepare for a fight on wages this year. The right wing seems to be pinning all their hopes on arbitration. CORRECTION. Bill Boyle was incorrectly described as CPSA Broad Left Secretary in last week's issue of 'Militant'.

SDF strike

Five hundred AUEW members at SDF in Kidderminster (part of GKN) have been on strike since Friday 22 January. Management's answer to their claim for a 'substantial amount' was £3.50, adding just 2¾ per cent to the total wage bill! As well as over 100 redundancies in the last year, the workers have already accepted postponement of their wage settlement date from 1 August. So the 2¾ per cent is really for 18 months, not just a year. The company are still pleading poverty but the workers have just had enough.

Ideal Bakers

A mistake appeared in issue 584 of 'Militant' in our coverage of the Ideal Bakers dispute. We wrote "The branch secretaries went round the members ensuring support." This was incorrect. It should have read, referring to how members of the Bakers Union built up support for action against declining conditions inflicted on the workers at the Ideal Bakers factory in Shaw by management; "Some members of the union branch took up a petition to get support for their action." We apologise for any inconvenience this mistake may have caused.

'Militant' has also received a letter from the Ideal Bakers branch of the Bakers Union, thanking us for the support the paper and 'Militant' supporters have given to the workers. Keith Albison, branch secretary, wrote, "It is at times like this that we look toward fellow trade unionists and members in the labour movement to give us the kind of support that you gave us both in monetary and active terms. Once again may I take this opportunity on behalf of the Strike Committee and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union to thank you for your support."

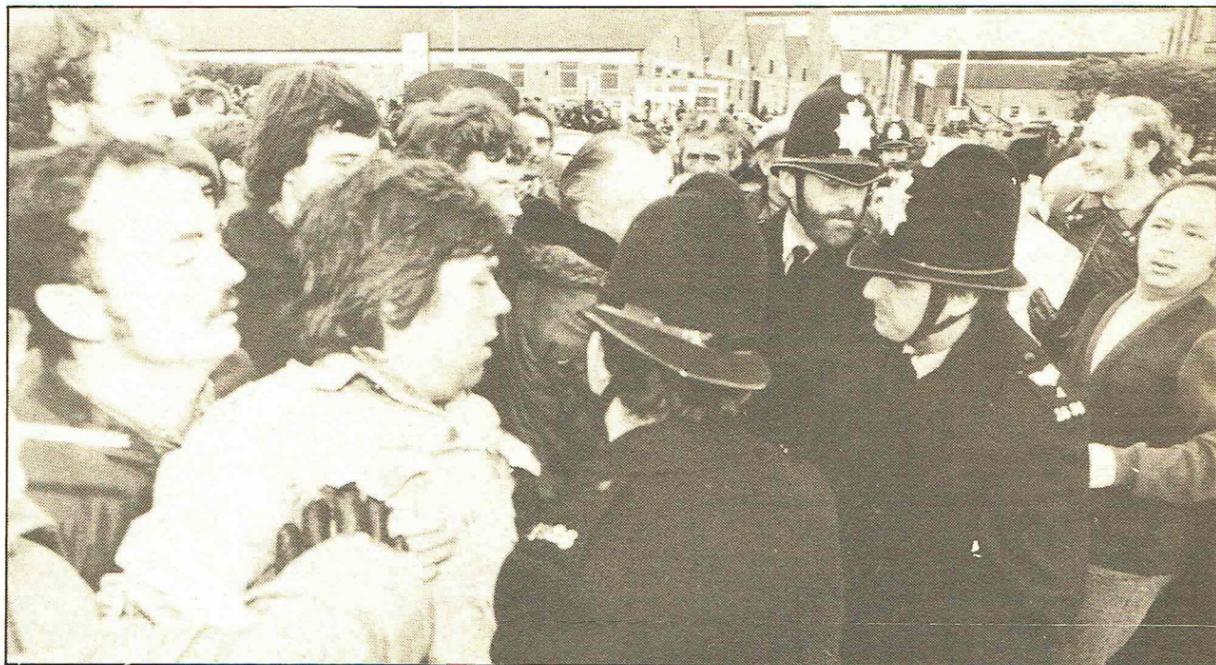
TWU activist sacked

The workers at the British and American Tobacco factory in Liverpool have been locked out after a dispute. The dispute arose after the assistant branch secretary of the Tobacco Workers Union Clerical Section was sacked for alleged fraud, over expenses for a trip to London. His section supported him and walked out.

When management take business trips inflated expense accounts aren't even challenged. Only weeks before a tradesman in a better organised section of the factory had been found to have clocked on 12 workers—he received a reprimand. The steward said "This is a plain case of the bosses attacking the weakest element. If these officials go, and no one else comes through, the union in clerical would fold completely."

1,300 jobs at the Liverpool site are under threat. But this latest attack has been met solidly by workers in the Liverpool factory.

BRITISH LEYLAND



Mass picketing—the biggest mass pickets in BL's history—at the Cowley plant in Oxford during last year's dispute. Now Scottish and Lancashire BL workers are moving to the forefront of the struggle against Edwardes and his Tory backers. Photo: Militant

OCCUPATIONS START FIGHTBACK

Four thousand workers in Bathgate, West Lothian, have occupied two factories, fighting to save jobs. In a town of only 14,000 population, this represents a massive mobilisation of workers, struggling to stop their area becoming an industrial desert.

The factories are the Plessey site and the BL Truck and Tractor plant, one of the biggest factories in Scotland. The workers took over the factory on 22 January. "The whole place is under our control," explained Deputy Convenor, Chris Bett.

The dispute centres around BL's restructuring plan which would involve the selling off of Bathgate's tractor plant to a private firm, Marshall's, and the transfer of volume truck production to Leyland in Lancashire. 1,365 jobs would be lost.

"The company have refused to negotiate. They simply told us they had sold the tractor plant," said Chris. "Millions of pounds of public money have been invested in BL and the trac-

tor is a winner. Now they are selling it off, with all the machinery and spares, to a private company".

The MP for Lothian is to demand an enquiry into the Marshalls sale. This firm had already taken on an order for Nigeria in anticipation of getting the Bathgate plant. The workers' action means that they cannot fulfil it.

The transfer of volume production has also been halted by the refusal of the Lancashire workers to touch the Bathgate trucks. A full meeting of the BL Truck and Bus Groups is to be held on Saturday to link up the united struggle.

The press has claimed that there has been a flood of applications for voluntary redundancy. Chris Bett, however, has seen dozens of tractor related workers turning up offering to help with the occupation.

A meeting of all shop stewards in West Lothian was to take place on a Wednesday and already the local labour and trade

union movement have begun to mobilise. Financial support is needed urgently. Please send it to Margaret Smeddon, Leyland Vehicles Joint Action Committee, 13 Badallan Place, Fauld House, West Lothian.

The 300 workers at Plesseys took over their factory on Monday. AUEW Convenor, Ina Scott, told me that 90% of the workers are taking part in the occupation, the majority of them women.

Plessey's have announced that the factory which makes capacitors, will close completely on 31 March and all the machinery will be transferred to Italy.

"All we are demanding" claimed Ina, "is the right to have a job. Support from the local trade unions has been fantastic."

Support is vital; send messages etc to Mary Murphy, 30 Main Street, Fauld House, West Lothian.

By Pat Craven

OVERNIGHT GHOST TOWNS

At one stroke by British Leyland's management, the Lancashire towns of Leyland and Chorley are ghost towns.

In Chorley BL is one of the biggest employers, and in Leyland itself the only employer.

For Edwardes' plan to make over 1,800 redundancies at Leyland's bus and truck plant has seen fierce resistance from the workers.

At the midday meeting on Thursday 21 January, the hourly paid workers voted by 95% to strike in order to save their jobs. The demand they have made is that Leyland continues not only to assemble buses and

trucks, but also manufactures parts and engines. It is the intention of Edwardes, under his corporate plan, to do away with the manufacturing side, and exploit cheap labour in the Third World to produce the engines.

This plan has been obvious to the union for some time. About £7½ million has been invested in the assembly process, yet nothing has been invested in the manufacturing side for years.

So far the company have not even been prepared to meet the strike committee to negotiate a settlement, saying it is sticking to the corporate plan, and will not even listen to the trade union alternative.

Local Tory MP, Den Dover, has tried to make some political capital out of

the situation. But he has fallen flat on his face, as far as the strike committee goes, by asking the management for a six-month deferment on the corporate plan to get a return to work. This has already been refused by the management, when the unions asked for this in order to give time for the discussion on the trade union alternative.

But the company has shown now it has no intention of changing their plan for redundancies, unless they are forced to by strike action. Many pickets also question whether an MP who supports the government, which is backing Edwardes to the hilt, has the workers' best interests at heart. One picket reported that when Dover held his surgery last weekend, he came with a police escort,

so popular is this 'man of the people'.

The fight at Leyland is vital—not only to the town, but to the entire car industry in Britain. Leyland could be a rallying point to challenge Edwardes' and Thatcher's destruction of jobs, and so deserves the support of the entire labour movement. This support will be necessary as Edwardes is already planning to subvert the strike by bringing in machinery from overseas, for instance from the Ashok Company in India.

All donations to Austin Senior, 240 Leyland Lane, Leyland, Lancashire. (Make payable to Leyland Vehicle Strike Fund).

By Mick Hogan



Industrial Reports

Railways

ALL OUT FOR VICTORY!

The action by the train drivers' union ASLEF continues with no wavering in their determination to win.

Like the members, ASLEF's leadership have remained steadfast in their defence of the eight-hour day, despite the frenzied attacks of the ruling class through their kept press.

This steadfast stand by the leadership reflects the resolution of ASLEF members not to see the eight-hour day, won by the railmen in 1919, destroyed by the acceptance of BR's management's demand for flexi-rostering. ASLEF members understand that behind the British Rail bosses stand the Tory government who are itching to smash one of the best organised unions in the labour movement, thus making the way clear for an onslaught on the rail industry.

Throughout the country the two-day stoppages have been solid, with in most areas non-co-operation being carried out to the letter during 'normal' working days and work to rules.

Pressure is building up for an all-out stoppage, which will be the only way to bring BR to heel. But the leadership must ensure the fullest activity in the strike through full use of picketing etc., and, even with the present action, a

proper appeal must immediately be made to the whole labour movement to ensure the action is effective bringing increasing pressure on the British Rail management.

It has been reported that coal for power stations in the south, usually moved by rail, is being transported by sea. Fleet Street papers, not only when various titles have been blacked, but throughout the action, are being transported by road and air. And industries like British Leyland have made mysterious references to 'contingency plans' should an all out strike be called.

At present, some officials in other unions say their 'hands are tied' when approached by ASLEF locally, because they have no official request for support from the ASLEF leadership.

The attempts by the bosses to break the strike must be countered, and this can only be done with appeals to the labour movement for blacking action.

Similarly, financial appeals to build up funds must be made to not only trade unions but political organisations as well, such as local Labour Parties.

If the ASLEF leadership extend their action with appeals to the labour movement for support they can win.



NUR guards gather at Unity House, the union's headquarters in London, on January 22. They made it clear to the NUR executive that in no way did they want the flexible rostering that the NUR leadership have already agreed to

Photo: MILITANT

But while ASLEF can be congratulated on its steadfast action, the same cannot be said for the leadership of the National Union of Railwaymen. The widespread strikes by NUR guards, throughout the country shows the resentment of the membership over the leadership's agreement to 'flexible rostering' without the consultation of their members.

The remarks of the NUR general secretary, Mr Sid Weighell such as "Anybody who says that this agreement makes their life more difficult is a liar..." or "When I make an agreement the obligation of the membership is to honour it" (*The Standard* 21.1.82) have only fuelled the anger of the NUR members. The NUR leadership have clearly misjudged the mood of

the membership.

No doubt pressure on the leadership will continue, with branches calling for the negotiations to be reopened and similar appeals made to the AGM.

The NUR guards are not being 'irresponsible' as Mr Weighell claims. They are fighting in the most difficult circumstances to defend their working conditions and defend the eight-hour

The anger of railway guards, members of the National Union of Railwaymen, was shown by the strike action on Friday 22 January at a whole number of depots on the London-Midland Region and Southern Region.

The strike action was combined with a lobby of Unity House, NUR HQ, by about 80 guards to make quite clear to the union executive their total opposition to flexi-rostering.

Although the lobby started outside Unity House, because of the pressure of those taking part the leadership was eventually received the members. Without success several of the union leadership attempted to explain the 'advantages' and 'gains' to be made from flexi-rostering.

Scandalously one guard was threatened with the NUR rule book, with a section which includes provision for expulsion of members from the union. Nevertheless the membership went away from the lobby more determined than ever.

day. Indeed they are fighting to defend official NUR policy. At the very least the leadership should re-negotiate saying no to flexi-rostering and a return to the status quo.

The NUR guards are clear that their union executive must reverse its mistaken decision, which clearly runs contrary to the wishes of the membership.

On Thursday 23 January management paid for coaches and taxis to take members of LDCs (Local Departmental Committees) to two meetings—one at Croydon for Central guards, with taxis being laid on from Brighton, Bognor, Horesham etc., the other meeting at Gillingham for the Eastern region with taxis from the London area and Ramsgate!

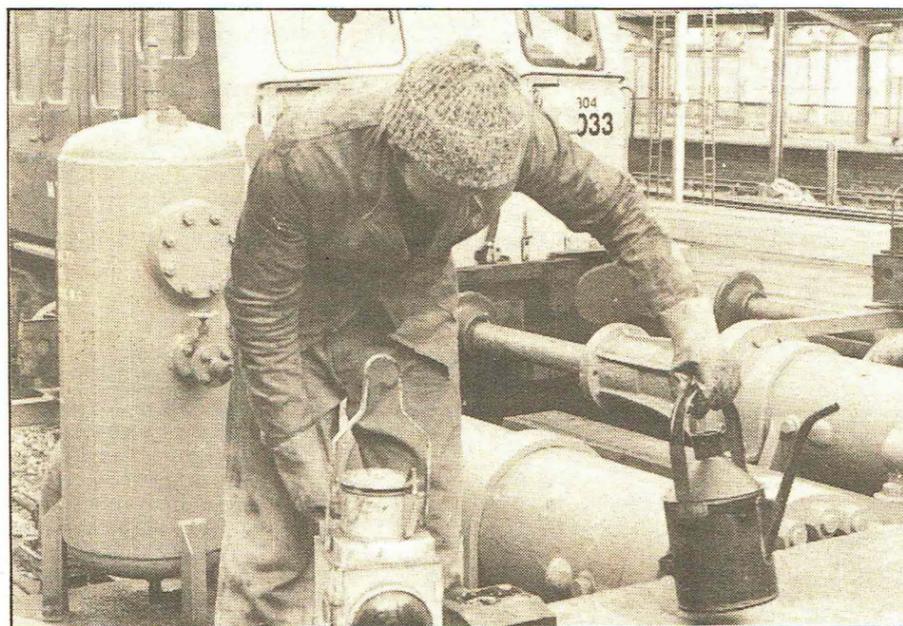
Management were joined by union officials to explain the new roster system and we were lectured on unofficial action.

It is a pity this meeting like other meetings with local LDCs weren't arranged before this flexible rostering agreement was signed by our union leadership! If this was done then the men could have left our

By Max Riach
(NUR LDC rep,
London Bridge
Guards,
personal capacity)

union leadership in no doubt what the members thought of flexi-rostering.

Action has already been taken at London Bridge Central, Cannon Street, Ramsgate, Streatham Hill, West Croydon, Coulsdon, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Addiscombe, Slade Green. NUR members were locked out last Sunday. Management hoped that the loss of pay would stop the 'naughty boys' taking further action. But they are wrong—for these guards are not 'naughty boys', they are angry men!



A railman at work at Crewe Station. NUR guards at Crewe took strike action on January 22.

Photo: MILITANT

The support that is coming in to ASLEF at local level was discussed by the Scottish District Council of ASLEF last week.

Jack Tran, the chairman, read out a list of maintenance depots where staff were offering support, such as working to rule, not moving engines and so on. These depots included Motherwell, Hyndland and Eastfield.

By David Chapman
(Eastfield ASLEF)

It was also reported that guards in Scotland were up in arms over union officials not calling meetings to discuss flexi-rostering and just telling the membership that it was accepted. Some NUR branches have called for the resignation of the general secretary, Mr Sid Weighell, over this. It was also reported about the situation in Ravenscraig steel works. There have

been approaches made between Motherwell ASLEF and the ISTC.

A discussion followed on the strike bulletin that the district committee is now producing once a week. The strike bulletin was calling for local level joint committees to arrange regular meetings to iron out joint policy whereby no work will be carried out that will undermine our action.

A report was then given about the progress, or lack of progress, at ACAS. Even after Len Murray was called

in they could still not reach an agreement with the British Railways Board. They would not move an inch.

It was also reported at the ASLEF executive would pursue a number of cases through the courts. This is a very dangerous development because we all know the bias of the courts towards the labour movement.

Two resolutions were then put to the meeting, the first supporting the executive in its fight to main-

tain the eight-hour day, and adding there should be no further meetings with ACAS. The second called for the executive not to pursue any action through the High Courts. Both of these were carried unanimously.

There was a varied discussion on a letter from the Scottish LPYS offering support in our struggle. Thanks were expressed for this support and it will be reprinted in the next strike bulletin. No other political organisation in Scotland has yet offered support

From when the present dispute started the men in our depot have not been co-operating with management.

On Tuesday 19 January we signed on as normal. Dave Rideout, a driver and our LDC rep., was getting the loco—DMUs (Diesel Multiple Units)—ready for work. He found some faults on one unit. Management normally wouldn't be involved here as it's the driver's duty to check and make sure everything safety wise is in order.

But since the strike they've been double checking. They are determined to play down the situation in Cricklewood and get a service running at any cost, in other words to chase and harry the drivers. Dave was accused of 'faulting' the DMU unnecessarily and arising out of this he was sent home for the day.

We had a meeting in the mess. The unanimous decision was we all go home in solidarity and as a way of protesting at management's attitude. Our decision was relayed to union head office.

We won't tolerate these types of provocation.

By Steve Norton
(Cricklewood
ASLEF)

TORIES' WEALTH OR WORKERS' HEALTH?

The Tories last week showed their real priority —to plunder the health service to benefit the rich.

Having refused the nurses' demand for a living wage, they turned over the site of St George's, a London hospital recently closed, to the richest man in Britain—the Duke of Westminster.

This thirty year-old aristocrat, who has never worked in his life, owns Grosvenor Estates, the landlords of the prime hospital site at Hyde Park Corner.

Now that the site is no longer to have a hospital it must be sold back to Grosvenor estates under a 250 year-old agreement at the same price it was purchased for in 1906—£23,700.

When the Tories closed St George's two years ago they said it would help those most in need, by providing a new streamlined health service. Workers occupied the hospital, but the Tories ignored them. Later they rejected six proposals from the St George's Hospital Residents' Committee to keep the site as a hospital.

By Bob Wade

The first proposal, for a community hospital, was based on plans drawn up by consultants and doctors. 'I've been a cancer patient at St George's for twelve years. Now I have to make the journey from Victoria to the new hospital at Tooting. We need a local hospital here,' said Oliver Fuller, Secretary of the Residents' Committee.

But the Tories decided to support their rich friends, not the sick.

It has been estimated that the St George's site is worth over £20m. The Duke of Westminster can play Monopoly for real. He owns much of the richest land in London, in Mayfair and Belgravia. Thirty-three embassies are built on this land which was stolen from the people by the Duke's ancestors.

In addition to this he owns 100,000 acres in Scotland, 14,000 in Wales, an estate in Northern Ireland and 900 acres in Shropshire. Abroad, he

owns a 12,000 acre industrial site in Western Canada, the city centre of Vancouver, parts of Hawaii and estates in Australia and Africa.

When he and his wife, a descendent of the Russian Grand Duke Michael, inherited all this three years ago no death duties were paid. When you are very rich you can employ the best accountants so that taxation becomes almost optional.

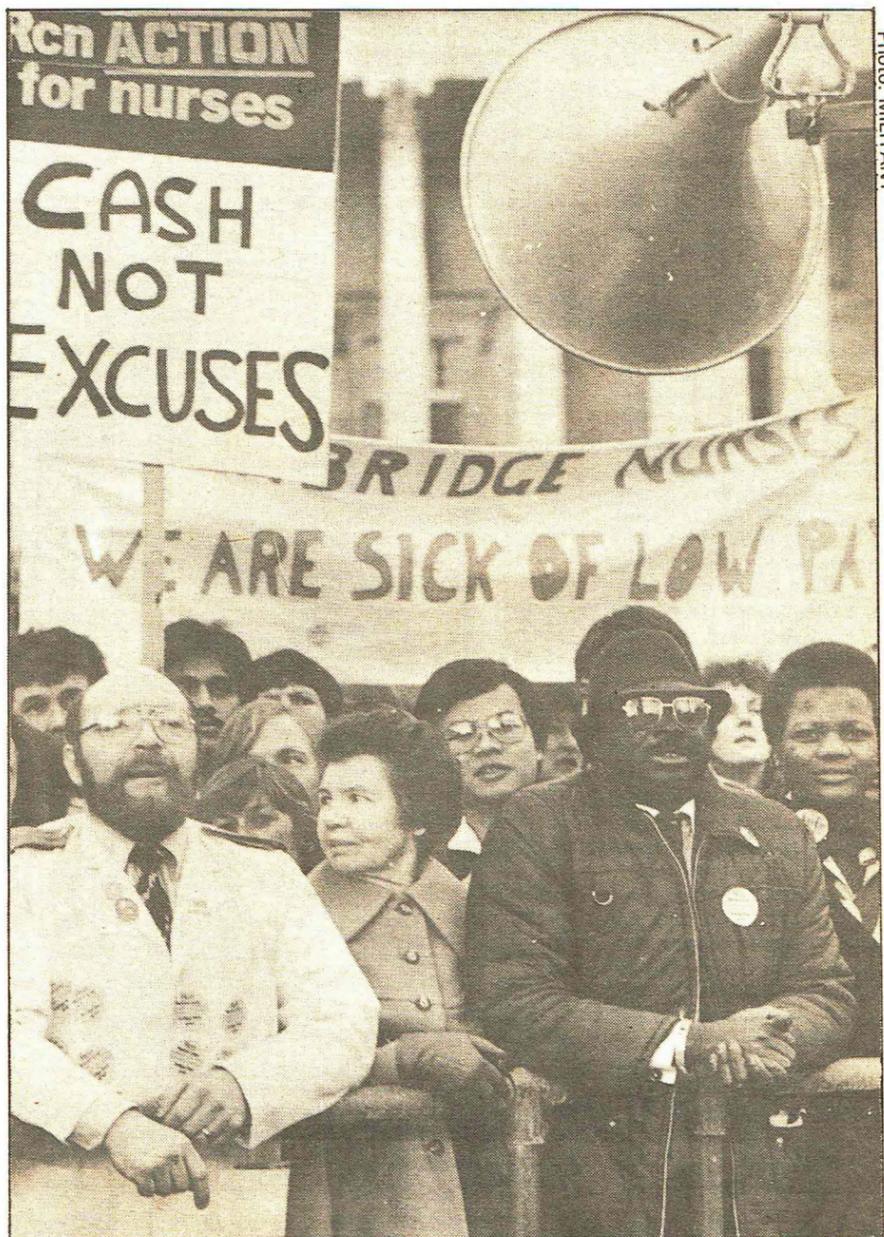
The Tory Health Minister has dismissed criticism of the wealth of the Duke, estimated at over £2,000m, as being based on, 'envy, jealousy and malice.' What he means is social justice.

Why should people be denied a proper health service and nurses be told there is no money for a decent wage when such characters as the Duke of Westminster can have so much personal wealth?

He has three homes, including a 14 bedroom country mansion set in 13,000 acres of the Cheshire countryside. To keep him pampered he has a butler, housekeeper, chef, three maids and a gardener.

At the same time there is rising poverty, homelessness and illness. Old people are dying because they cannot afford to pay fuel bills. That is the reality of the capitalist class system in Britain to-day.

The Tories have shown us their priorities. It is now vital that Labour shows ours and ends the rule of rich landlords and industrial giants by introducing a society where health and social welfare and not profits are the priorities.



Part of the 6,000-strong nurses' demonstration in Trafalgar Square. The Tories will not pay them more than 4% but they are selling off £4m sites for peanuts!

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ROSS FOODS

'No rise—no pies', is the notice on the gates of the Ross Groups pie factory in Hull. There, 340 workers, mainly women, have been on strike for two weeks over their annual pay claim.

Cheap labour is the only way to describe the £66 a week wages that most of them receive. After the last 7% rise, when management pleaded poverty, they have spent £1 million to modernise the factory, a new Rover for the manager, 70 extra workers have been taken on, and the night shift reinstated. Their present offer (a 50p increase at the beginning of the all-out strike!) is now for £71 for nine months, and from September £73.50. Although Ross is a big

company, there is no national claim or common negotiation date and Hull is the first in line to settle. They are already receiving support from Grimsby, who have refused to take any of their work. Unfortunately the office staff have not come out despite being offered even less.

The strike is official, and weekly mass meetings are being held. Also additional stewards have been elected to help run the strike. At first, a 24-hour picket was mounted and well attended. But now, after some trouble with the police and the office staff crossing the picket line from last Friday, mass pickets of between 100 and 200 have been held.

Messages of support and donations (particularly Ross Group factories) to Terry Jackson, the Senior Steward, 8 Stratton Close, Lonhill Estate, Hull.

RAILMEN

FROM PAGE ONE

could be altered back or forward, at very short notice.

At the side of the duty sheets, was a list of names of drivers who were off sick. I was told that there is a high sick rate amongst train drivers, because of the unsocial hours which play hell with their health. Climbing into a frozen train at 4 o'clock in the morning during the winter didn't help.

Back at the yard's bothy (canteen), the drivers were in no doubt that the dispute was not just one of pay and rostering. They also made it clear that they have no trust in ACAS.

They realise that the dispute is also a political

dispute. "If we don't make a stand on this one, we are finished, and ASLEF will never recover," one driver told me. The government are deliberately cutting down on passenger stocks because they don't regard the railways as of crucial need, and they are quite prepared to hand the freight over to private road hauliers.

The drivers at Miller Hill are determined to win this dispute, even if it means stepping up the action, and they feel confident that their brothers and sisters in the NUR will back them up, although they were angry that the NUR leadership have accepted flexible rostering in principle.

Four drivers in the bothy bought a 'Militant' and I was welcomed back at any time to sell the paper and give support.

SEE REPORTS OF ASLEF DISPUTE INSIDE, page 15