

Militant

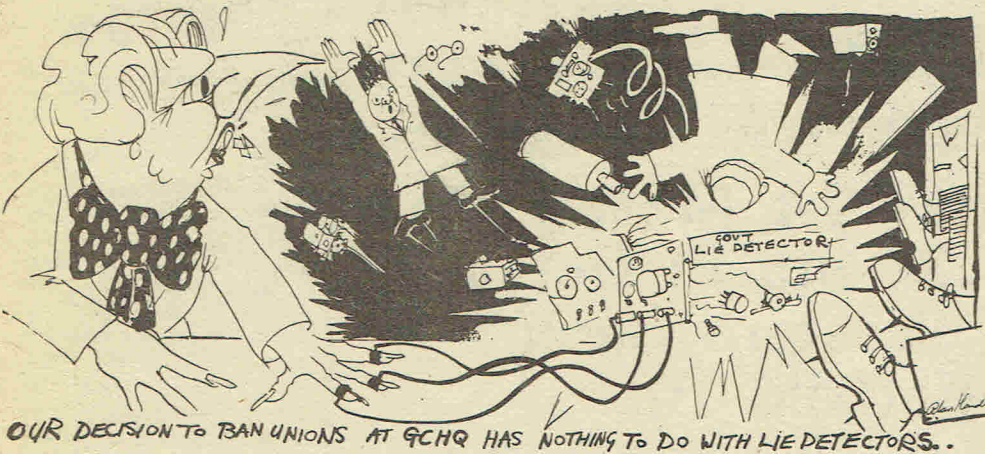
THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

Government blackmail... unions banned

Defend your rights!



A SPONTANEOUS wave of strikes throughout the civil service showed what civil service workers thought of the Tories' ban on trade unions at GCHQ in Cheltenham.

Trade unionists wonder if it is purely coincidence that the Ministry of Defence Staff Association (MODSA) a right wing alternative to the established unions have been recruiting recently.

This "alternative" offers a guarantee that none of its members will ever strike. Which is just what the Tories want.

Seven thousand workers at General Communications Headquarters have been denied the aid of a union. They have been tossed a one off payment of £1000, the Tory version of thirty pieces of silver. They can join a staff association "approved

By Bill Boyle

by the Establishment Director."

While trade unionists reaction at Cheltenham and elsewhere in the civil service was swift and angry, the response from the union leaders has been very low key.

Len Murray, TUC General Secretary, described the ban as "... a bolt from the blue". Alistair Graham, General Secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association, said he "... did not expect this from the

Prime Minister of a democratic government."

Both seemed surprised by this new hammer blow from the Tories. Yet they themselves paved the way for this new onslaught by their refusal to back the NGA in its dispute with Eddie Shah. Had that battle been won the Tories would never have been able to embark on this latest episode.

Len Murray has offered Thatcher an olive branch and she has answered with a blow-torch. Even now, when Thatcher has said she will meet the Unions but "... it will not be a negotiating meeting.", Len Murray is still prepared to talk. But the last few years show that Thatcher will only understand action.

"Jaruzelski" Thatcher

The hypocrisy of the Tories is staggering. While

condemning the Polish government for banning Solidarnosc, Thatcher is testing the water about banning strikes in many public services such as health, gas, and water.

No compromises

Unions must stand firm against this new attempt to whittle away the rights which the trade union movement has fought for over decades of bitter class struggle.

Those Civil Service trade unionists who voted SDP at the last election have had their eyes opened by the suggestion of David Owen MP that the answer would be to slap a no strike agreement on GCHQ. This suggestion incredibly has been picked up by some union leaders as a way out of a fight with the government. Alistair Graham hints at such a attitude as does John Sheldon, General Secretary of the Civil Service Union, the largest Union at GCHQ. But the right to strike was fought for over many years.

It is not to be thrown away at the whim of a union leader with no faith in his own membership. The effects of this attitude would be catastrophic. As Ken Gill, General Secretary of TASS has pointed out, this could seriously affect his members all over the country.

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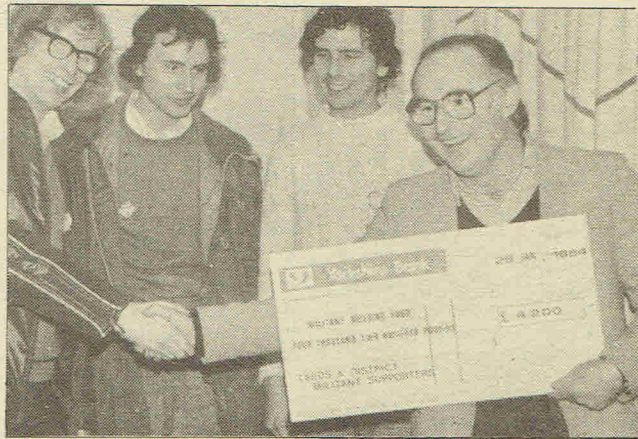
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The Liverpool option

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Deputy Leader, Liverpool City Council
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Unemployed build for the future



Peter Taaffe receives the giant cheque from unemployed socialists.

TICKETS FOR last Saturday's night Leeds *Militant* social invited people "to celebrate with a clear conscience and peace of mind". They did just that as they had collected £4,200, in over 70 individual donations for the *Militant* Building Fund.

There were no large individual windfalls in this total; the largest single donation was £250. However, the comrades who had presented the cheque to Peter Taaffe *Militant's* editor had made a special effort; all four were unemployed and together they had given a magnificent £275.

Peter Taaffe praised their sacrifice, saying it showed that the unemployed had nothing to lose under

capitalism and everything to gain from the struggle for socialism. Peter also praised the low paid who had made every effort to bring new premises and a more regular paper into being.

For many of those who contributed, the Building Fund won't go away. They will be paying off their bank 'loans' over the next six, twelve or even eighteen months. Following a successful social, after being 'entertained' by Keith Narey on vocals and Mike Higgins on piano stool, a further £150 was raised for the Fighting Fund.

P.S. MPs Dave Nellist and Terry Fields have pledged £100, and Eddie Loyden and Allan Roberts £50.

Birmingham jobs

12,500 into 600 won't go

THE TORIES have broken more than a few records in the last four and a half years.

They have thrown a record number of workers on the dole. They have closed a record number of factories and caused record bankruptcies.

Now Tory Britain has taken the world record for the most applications per job. After one advert in the local *Evening Mail* for 60 jobs as baggage handlers, porters and ground staff at the new Birmingham Airport, 12,500 applications came in.

Nothing to boast about

The advertising agency employed by the West Midlands County Council to publicise the jobs is even going to register it in the Guinness Book of Records. After all it really is something to boast about—the desperate searching for work by literally thousands of Midlandsers cast on the dole by the capitalist crisis and Thatcher's policies!

Just before Christmas the careers office in Northfield in Birmingham was besieged when news spread of 400 new jobs at Austin-Rover at Longbridge. But those clamouring for work arrived only to be told that the company would choose from the waiting list it already had.

A job as a guinea pig?

Even in the temporary economic boom that has apparently arrived there is no relief—jobs are still disappearing. 1,200 will go in Land Rover as production is centralised just at the Solihull plant; another 140 jobs are to be lost at Fort Dunlop and the closure of TI in Aston has just been announced where 240 jobs are threatened.

So little prospect is there of real jobs that unemployed people and others on low pay have been prepared to act as guinea pigs testing out a new drug against bladder cancer for a private research

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Tory racists uncovered

The Tories are desperately trying to play down the 'discovery' that a number of Tory MPs are involved with ardent racist and anti-semitic groups.

Panorama (January 30), following up a report by the Young Conservatives, exposed some of the party's racist MPs. During the programme, Tory party chairman John Selwyn-Gummer was interviewed. He wriggled about in his chair trying to dismiss the facts presented to him, saying there was "insufficient evidence" for the party to take immediate action.

Racist groups

Yet *Panorama* turned the spotlight on three racist Tory groups; Tory Action, Focal Point and WISE.

Tory Action, which claims the support of 24 Tory MPs is run by George Kennedy

Young, a former deputy director of MI6 and former stalwart of the Monday Club. Among the 'policies' this neo-fascist stands for is a 'pre-1832' Parliament, hereditary peers only for the House of Lords, and sending in the SAS against 'communist activity'. The Tory Action journal, *Round Robin*, has carried pro-repatriation and anti-Jewish 'conspiracy theory' articles.

The second group is WISE (Welsh, Irish, Scottish, English). This is an extreme right wing umbrella group bridging the gap between the far right of the Tory Party and Nazi groups. Tory MPs have addressed its meetings, at which prominent Nazis attended and where Nazi literature has been circulated.

The activities of four Tory MPs were highlighted:

● **Harvey Proctor (Billericay):** he has addressed WISE meetings where prominent Nazis were present and is a virulent exponent of repatriation. During the 1979 election, the fascist NF magazine *Bulldog* supported him—when challeng-

ed with this he replied he was "not embarrassed" by their support.

● **Gerald Howarth (Cannoct and Burntwood):** son of a founder member of the National Front, he formerly worked for the Society for Individual Freedom. While he was employed there the group produced an anti-semitic pamphlet.

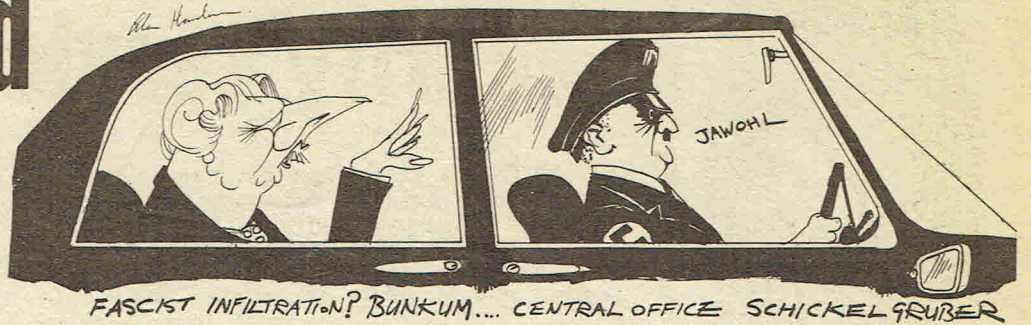
● **Warren Hawksley (The Wrekin):** involved with Tory Action and WISE.

Student reactionary

● **Neil Hamilton (Tatton):** *Militant* supporters remember him from his days at Aberystwyth university for dressing up as a Nazi. While a student, he edited *Feudal Times and Reactionary Herald*. He has attended a congress of the Italian fascist party, the MSI.

But these four are only the tip of the iceberg. Many other Tory MPs have been involved in unsavoury activities which *Panorama* did not mention:

● **Sir Patrick Wall (Beverley):** he attended the



conference of the World Anti-Communist League, held at the European Parliament in September last year. WACL is an international organisation linking far right groups around the world, including European fascist parties and Latin American Nazi terror groups.

● **Keith Best (Yns Mon):** he attended a WACL conference in 1981.

● **Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle):** contributor to the racist and anti-semitic *Liverpool Newsletter*, which also carried adverts for Nazi literature. He is also a prominent member of the anti-CND Coalition for Peace through Strength and Security.

● **Julian Amery (Brighton Pavilion):** in the late '70s he shared a platform in Brighton with Almirante, leader of the Italian fascist party, the

MSI.

● **Nicolas Winterton (Macclesfield), and John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge)** have also addressed WISE meetings.

At local level, many

former NF members and Nazis are turning up in the Tory party, sometimes being selected to stand for council seats. *Panorama* reported 30 such cases.

Gummer slurs *Militant*

THE TORIES with the aid of Fleet Street have been trying to sidetrack this issue by comparing these racist and neo-fascist elements with the so-called 'Militant Tendency'.

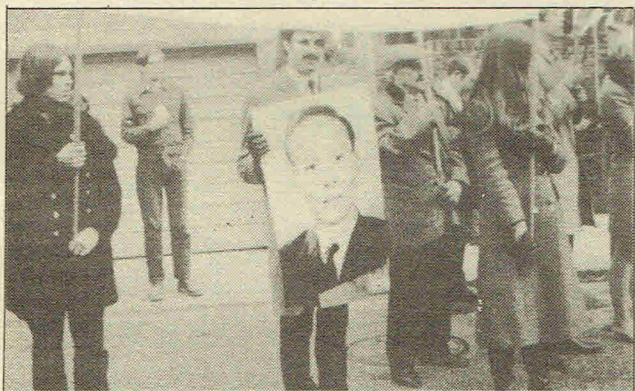
Selwyn-Gummer himself, during the *Panorama* interview, tried this tactic. He even produced a copy of *Militant* and crudely attempted to link us with the IRA (whose sectarian politics and tactics *Militant* has always opposed).

This is a disgusting slur on the Marxists within the Labour Party. There is no conspiracy on behalf of *Militant* supporters—support for Marxism in the Labour Party has grown as more and more ordinary members have turned to Marxism as a solution in the face of the growing capitalist crisis. *Militant* supporters can in no way be compared to the extreme right wing whose activities include violence and intimidation against black workers.

And who are the real 'extremists'? The Tories and

their press try to present capitalism as the 'norm', and any deviation from that is therefore the 'extreme'. Yet these 'moderates' preside over the extreme policies of mass unemployment, plummeting living standards and the accumulation of nuclear weapons that can destroy the world umpteen times over. The neo-fascists on the far right not only defend these policies but through dictatorial powers want to chain down the working people even further.

Yet the forces of Marxism want to change society. *Militant* stands for full democratic rights, the right to work and for decent living conditions for all working people. We have been in the forefront of the battles against fascism and racism. To compare *Militant* with the anti-democratic dark, reactionary forces hiding beneath the stones in the Tory party is a disgrace and an insult to thousands of ordinary, decent workers who hold socialist ideals.



Harvey Proctor (second left) with friends in 1972 delivering an anti-immigration petition to Downing Street. With him is George Kennedy Young (right) and prominent fascist supporter Lady Birdwood (second right).



Neil Hamilton (centre) demonstrates his support to South Vietnamese dictator President Thieu back in 1973. The character on the left is a member of the MSI, the Italian Fascist party.

Chesterfield by-election campaign begins

The Chesterfield by-election, now set for March 1, got under way on Monday night with two public meetings. One was addressed by Tony Benn and Eric Heffer—the other addressed by Shirley Williams.

The class difference of the two audiences was very pronounced. The Shirley Williams SDP meeting was dominated by the credit card set. However, a Labour Party contingent made it's pressure felt with some very pertinent questions. Shirley looked shocked when questioned why Lord Sainsbury and other millionaires had donated to the SDP funds.

"We don't rely on their money", she said. "They have no more influence than any other party member". To which a reply came from the audience; "if the SDP didn't need big business donations they should give them to the unemployed".

Another LP member brought the house down by saying, "It was an absolute disgrace that someone like Mrs. Williams could climb to

power on the backs of the labour movement and then stab it in the back when the party started to return to it's socialist roots and she found herself in a minority".

At the Benn/Heffer meeting the major issues there were nuclear disarmament, unemployment, the attacks on the NHS and, with Cheltenham in mind, the attacks on the trade unions. Eric Heffer called for a massive campaign of parliamentary and 'extra parliamentary' action to defend the unions and defeat the Tories.

The one disappointment was that the SDP meeting was larger. This was due to poor publicity for the Labour meeting with the venue sighted well out of town. If we are to succeed in counter-acting the media and getting the arguments of socialism fully across to the electorate, this must not re-occur. However, the Labour meeting was by far the most enthusiastic, and the audience left with a mood to fight for a Benn victory and socialist policies.

By Roy Davies
(Chesterfield CLP)



BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

National Delegate Conference

**Saturday 24 March
11 am—5.30 pm at Octagon
Centre, Western Bank,
Sheffield 10**

Sessions to be opened by David Blunkett, Leader of Sheffield Council and LP NEC, and Joan Maynard MP.
Main speaker: Tony Benn.

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

SUPPORT FOR the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) conference is now growing throughout the trade union movement.

BLOC report that in the West Midlands leading trade unionists have pledged their support for the conference.

These include: Jack Lanwarne (NUR Divisional officer), Mick Atherton (NUR District President), Jack Collingwood (convenor at Canon Industries and West Midlands AUEW Broad Left chairman), John Brian (Regional Secretary of the Bakers Union), Ken Barlow, (UCATT regional organiser), Tom Henderson (NUSMCHDE/TASS district secretary), Chris Newis (NGA National Committee), Brian Moore, (TGWU convenor at Davenports Brewery), and Phil Page, (Wolverhampton NALGO branch secretary).

Birmingham Trades Council have also sent out 300 letters to all its delegates and are

following this up with another mailing to all 200 affiliated branches. Delegates so far from the Birmingham area include the NUR District Council, NUR S&T dep., NUPE Social Services branch, and Birmingham Trades Council executive.

In the North East, some 250 union branches have been contacted. A special broadsheet has been drawn up by BLOC for shipyard workers—with the assistance of the local LPYS branches, some 2,000 of these have been distributed.

Long Benton CPSA Youth Advisory Committee are sending delegates, as are the branch executive.

BLOC report that other delegations received for the conference so far include Sussex TGWU District Committee, TGWU Brighton branch and also Worthing Trades Council.

LPYS regions meet

IT'S REGIONAL conference season for the Labour Party Young Socialists.

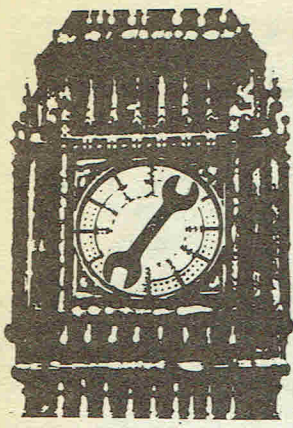
Four conferences were held at the weekend. Guest speaker at the East Midlands conference was Tony Benn, while Dennis Skinner appeared at the Welsh regional conference, addressing 120 delegates and visitors.

Preparations are underway in Eastern Region. The LPYS are preceding their conference on February 11/12 with a demonstration through Stevenage, assembling at 10.30 am. The theme of the demonstration will be 'Give Youth a Future'.

The conference itself is expected to be well attended, with delegates present from the newly formed branches of St Neots, North Beds, Hertford and Stortford, Suffolk Coastal and Great Yarmouth.

The London YS hold their conference on February 11/12, with guest speakers including Terry Fields and Ken Livingstone.

The South West region also hold their conference on February 11/12 with the North West on February 3/4, Scotland and Yorkshire on February 25/26, and West Midlands on March 3/4.



Out of Order

WHEN SIR Geoffrey Howe dropped the bombshell that the GCHQ unions were to be banned, he said that the government had made the decision only after "long and careful consideration".

They were certainly "careful"—they didn't consult the unions, nor the Security Commission (the Parliamentary body that overlooks 'national security') or even the Tory MP for Cheltenham, Charles Irving. He found himself floundering around trying to attack his leaders for the "fundamental removal of a democratic right".

The Tory press have quickly come to the aid of the government saying the unions must go because of the "threat to national security". But the reason given for not consulting the Security Commission was that, according to Howe, they are only consulted in cases "where there has been a breach of security."

Howe did say that industrial action by GCHQ unions could lead to a security breach. He must have a short memory though. His predecessor, John Nott, declared in parliament during the civil servants' dispute in 1981 that there was no such problem at Cheltenham.

What the Tories are really saying is that trade unionists can't be trusted. That's a joke coming from their ranks. As Dennis Skinner put it, "What evidence is there that trade unionists are more likely to hinder national interests than those who come from Eton and Harrow—the belly of the establishment? How many shop stewards have betrayed their country? Almost without exception every person who has done so has come from the ranks represented by Conservative members."

Clearly the real reason for the ban on GCHQ unions is that it is a test case in the Tories' wider strategy of attacks on the trade union movement. I called on Howe to admit "this action begins a process of taking legislation on trade unions back to the 19th century, to the days when gas and water workers were banned from taking industrial action."

Howe, in beginning his speech, said, "I can assure the House... that it is not our intention to introduce similar measures outside the field of security and intelligence." We shall see.

By Dave Nellist MP

Militant

Security services in whose interests?

THE BANNING of the trade unions from the Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham raises wider questions for the labour movement, other than the issue of trade union rights, as serious as the latter may be.

In particular, the press and the Tory government have hinted that the presence of trade unions at the establishment constitutes a "security risk". The extreme right wing press have fallen over themselves to suggest there were sinister "cells" of the "Militant Tendency", consisting of 6,9 or 12 members, depending on which particular journalist was making up the story. One of the Sunday gutter-papers followed this innuendo with the revelation that the convicted spy, Geoffrey Prime was, "after all", a trade union militant.

How should socialists answer these none-too-subtle hints and inferences? It is ludicrous to imagine that genuine Marxists in Britain would engage in espionage or conduct their trade union

activities in such a way as to consciously further the interests of the Stalinist states of Eastern Europe. *Militant* supporters are opposed to the foreign policies and methods of the capitalist class, but they are no less opposed to the totalitarian bureaucracies of Russia and Eastern Europe.

But to even pose the question in this way is one-sided and fundamentally false. It is necessary to examine the real functions and class basis of establishments like the GCHQ and to understand why the Tories see trade unionism as a threat to them.

Spying on the labour movement

The British security apparatus has always been kept away from the prying eyes of the workers' movement.

When the Tories explain that these function in the "national" interest, they mean, in reality, that they serve the class interests of capitalism, specifically British capitalism. The

whole paraphernalia GCHQ represents an arm of the capitalist state, serving the international interest of British big business.

The capitalist class will jealously guard its interests against all its rivals internationally although most international security agencies are probably in regular contact with each other anyway. By far the greater part of the 'secrecy' is that directed against the working class.

A huge and increasing effort goes directly into the secret surveillance of activists in the labour movement, and it is from this area especially, that the representatives of the ruling class will strive to bar trade union members and socialists. Showing how right wing this apparatus is, GK Young, head of the extreme right wing, anti-semitic and racist Tory Action group—featured in the report on Tory 'infiltration'—was at one time deputy director of MI6.

The operations of the political police are not subject to any democratic control, even through Parlia-

ment. In a debate in the House of Commons this week, Labour spokesman Gerald Kaufman referred to the "five million" files on national police computers, many based on hearsay, gossip and pure fancy, and tens of thousands, we would add, on left-wing political beliefs.

Secret Conspiracy

Top police officers, recently asked about Special Branch investigation of a woman who wrote to her local paper, have even stated that it is legitimate for the police to investigate members of CND.

The secret political police, in other words, are a thriving part of the capitalist state, their budget and manpower levels kept secret even from Parliament. They are a means of holding in check the labour movement and of forestalling any potential moves to transform society: they are a potential and actual means of 'subverting' the democratic rights fought for and achieved by workers

over generations.

The labour and trade union movement, therefore, must be implacably, opposed to such restrictions of democratic rights and to the operation of secret surveillance and control methods directed against it.

The trade unions must continue to defend their right to organise all workers in order to maintain and improve their job conditions, wages, and other benefits. But socialists must continue no less resolutely the struggle for the socialist transformation of society and for an end to the secret conspiracy against working people.

The best "defence"

A socialist society, with its democratic planned economy servicing the needs of the whole population, would not need to rest upon an apparatus of secrecy, surveillance and coercion. Its best 'defence' would always be the system itself—shining out like a beacon as an example to workers internationally.

PHOTO: John Harris (IFL).



Civil servants at GCHQ organise a picket on 26 January.

THE RESPONSE of the Cheltenham workers was rapid and eloquent—at GCHQ they held the best attended union meeting in recent history. Whenever Thatcher's name was mentioned they booed, shouted and hissed.

A spontaneous wave of strikes swept from Lerwick to London, from Swansea to Liverpool. Tens of thousands of Civil Servants took immediate strike action.

On Friday walkouts were still occurring. The strikes were not restricted to the normally active layers of the union. DHSS offices in Wick, Kirkwall and Inverness came out. CPSA members in the Cabinet Office came out later and sent a delegation to Downing Street to complain about the Tories' behaviour. It is not known what response they met with.

Huge responses were reported in the Customs and

Excise Department and in the Department of Employment. Many Ministry of Defence establishments were hit, amongst them MOD Bath, MOD Liverpool and MOD Rostyn.

In one Department of Employment office in South London 27 non-union members immediately joined the CPSA as a result of the GCHQ announcement.

Tory reaction

THE REACTIONARY quote of the week comes from Ian Lloyd Tory MP for Havant. He thinks all those who took part in 1981 industrial action at GCHQ were guilty of treason, which is still a capital offence.

Mr Lloyd was formerly a member of the South African Board of Trade and Industries. He presumably approves of his ex-homeland's way of dealing with "troublemakers". South Africa has just about

the highest rate of executions in the world.

Mr Lloyd is regarded in the Conservative Party as a bit of a liberal.

Workers response

MRS DOREEN Purvis Branch Secretary Newcastle Central Office.

"My phone has not stopped since the Tories' announcement. Ordinary union members are aghast at what has happened.

"Their attitude is, it's GCHQ today, DHSS tomorrow, Dept of Employment to follow. There was a lot of hot air about in the Tory Fleet Street rags during the Eddie Shah dispute with the NGA about peoples' right NOT to belong to a trade union, well what about their right to belong?"

"One of my members has said that £1,000 is a poor price to be paid for the privilege of trusting yourself to Maggie without any protection. An airline ticket out of the country would be more appropriate.

Defend your rights

Continued from page one

Once employers know that employees will never take industrial action because they cannot, they will walk all over us. Once conceded, a no-strike clause would be an Achilles Heel for the unions. The Tories would use that precedent to force no strike agreements wherever they could.

No union gains were made without struggle. From the Chartist to the Pentonville Five, workers have been prepared to fight when basic trade union rights have been at stake.

Civil servants will be asking themselves how much more they can take from Thatcher. Thousands of jobs have been axed, pay ruthlessly kept down, and massive job losses are planned through the introduction of New Technology.

Now, the Tories want to eradicate the only organisations capable of defeating them. GCHQ is only the beginning.

Alistair Graham, outspoken critic of unlawful industrial action, heads a union which, last Thursday and Friday, indulged in massive secondary (ie illegal) industrial action. How ironic for the man who so

facetiously commented on the NGA dispute, that the TUC would step in if transportations to Australia took place.

But action needs to be decisive. Given even the slightest vacillation by the TUC or the Civil Service unions, Thatcher will move in for the kill. Cheltenham will only be the first. Having softened up GCHQ she would dearly love to do what Reagan did to the American Air Traffic Controllers and dismiss those who would defy her dictates.

But Thatcher cannot beat an organised union if it is boldly led. The Council of Civil Service Unions must act immediately. Already Militant supporter John McCreddie has placed a motion calling for an immediate CPSA NEC meeting to discuss the issue.

The executives of all Civil Service Unions must call on their members to support GCHQ. If action in the civil service alone is not sufficient then the fight must be widened to take in the whole trade union movement.

Thatcher's ban has had the opposite effect to the one planned. She had hoped to intimidate the workers but the massive wave of spontaneous strikes shows that a huge politicisation has taken place within the civil service. The government has already lost the fight if the leadership measure up to the task which the movement has handed them.

Police raid ex-civil servant

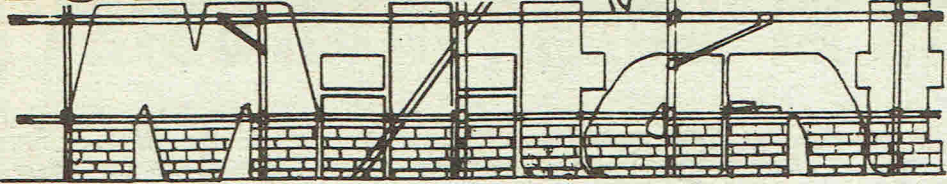
BOB BLENKINSOP lives in Stroud, a town near Cheltenham. He is a *Militant* supporter, and used to be a civil servant, in the Land Registry, not GCHQ, but left over a year ago.

While working at home on 24 January, he heard a noise downstairs and found a policeman in his front room. He had let himself in with a key! When Bob asked what he was doing there, the

policeman said, "Oh, we had a report that you'd fainted. But you're obviously all right now" and rushed out and sped off in a panda car.

What is up? Are the police checking up on and harrasing every *Militant* supporter in the area? The labour movement must take action to stop such infringements of liberty of trade unionists and socialists.

BUILDING FUND



Help build the resources for a Marxist daily.

Photo: Militant

£22,000 raised in one week

THE RESPONSE to our appeal for appeal for funds to obtain new premises has been tremendous. To date we have received £61,997 in cash for the Marxist Daily Building Fund with a further £45,000 in unredeemed promises.

There can be no doubt that this total represents a fantastic level of sacrifice on the part of those who support the ideas of Marxism. It has obviously been extremely difficult for our readers to find sums of this size. Living in Tory Britain means that no working class person has money to spare. This is what makes the current amount in the Fund all the more remarkable. It is because of the attacks launched every day by the Tories that it is essential to have a daily immediate answer to their vicious policies.

We cannot allow the vital work of explaining the ideas of Marxism to be held up for

want of the required finances. We are extending the deadline for promises to the Building Fund to be paid up by one month. So now you have the bonus of four more weeks in which to raise the £150,000.

One month extension

Every reader should ensure that they take advantage of this extension and follow the marvellous example of sacrifice we have had so far. We expect every reader of the *Militant* to make a contribution and then to extend the campaign far into the labour movement. For suitable premises capable of producing a daily we will need even more than £150,000—but that is the minimum to enable us to open up negotiations!!

NGA members and shipyard workers show that there is no respite in the fight against the bosses. We must ensure that the armoury of the working class is strengthened by the production of a daily Marxist paper capable of showing the line of march.

Leeds *Militant* readers have proved they see the point with their massive donation. Others who have sent money in the last few days include: S Bimson (Wirral) £250; PH Rowe (Liverpool) £500; Ken Brown (Glasgow) £250; Martin Hornby (Teesside) £500; G Dudley and L Marsh (Tyneside) £500 and Liz Coleman (Cardiff) £200. Amongst those who have donated £100, are: Bill Wynn (Lancashire); Sue Norris (East London); John Boadle (Coventry); George Knell (Bradford); and Larry Cooke (West London). I Nichol (Cambridge) and D Marshman (Manchester) are among those who have sent in £50.

If you have not yet participated in our campaign for new premises make sure you don't miss the opportunity. With the four weeks extension to reach £150,000 we should be able to do it—but only if you help! Send off your contribution today and look forward to a daily Marxist paper knowing you have helped to make it a reality a reality.

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

Accommodation

ROOM to let, all in, £20 per week. In Tooting Broadway. Contact Box 3, *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

For Sale

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

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

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

BADGE: Militant enamel stud badge—£1.00 p&p

CALENDAR: 1984 poster calendar—£1.00 p&p
Cheques made payable to *Militant*. Send to 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

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

FOR HANDICAPPED READERS

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

"Militant Turn left for workers unity and socialism"

T-shirts—£3.50-white, yellow, navy black.
Sweatshirts—£6.75—grey, pale-blue, navy, dark green.

Small 32"-34" chest medium 34"-36" large 36"-38" extra large 40-42"
All proceeds to *Militant* Fighting Fund. All cheques and postal orders with size and colour preference to R. Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancs.

Militant

MEETINGS

For events in your area contact your local *Militant* seller.

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

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

BLACKBURN: Wednesday 15 February at 7.30 pm, at King George's Hall. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*), Terry Fields MP.

MILITANT MEETING at Greater London LPYS Regional Conference
Speaker: Peter Taaffe
Saturday, 11 February at 5.30 pm,
Kingsway-Princeton College, Sidmouth Street WC1

STIRLING: Thursday 9 February at 7.30 pm at Cowane Centre, Stirling. More details from A Wilson, 28 Banded Road, Badeath.

CHORLTON: Marxist Discussion Group. 'How can socialism be achieved?' Tuesday 7 February, 8 pm. Contact: M Reynolds, House 2, 48A Sandy Lane, Chorlton, Manchester. Anyone welcome.

SOUTHWARK: "No to council cuts. Save jobs. Save services. Tuesday 6 March at 7.30 pm. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor: *Militant*), Derek Hatton (Deputy Leader, Liverpool Council). Chair: Brian Kelly (Southwark Councillor). At North Peckham Civic Centre (corner Old Kent Road/Peckham Park Road).

ADVANCE NOTICE! ADVANCE NOTICE!

Militant's 20th Anniversary National celebration and rally on SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER, 1984 At the Wembley Conference Centre. Speakers from the British and international labour movement. More details in later issues.

World Socialist Books

BOOKLIST 1984

HUNDREDS of books and pamphlets available by Marx, Lenin, Engels, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Connelly, Plekhanov, Grant, Cannon, Gramsci and many others. Writings on economics, philosophy, politics, science, war and peace, nuclear weapons, socialism, women, international developments, etc.
Send for your copy of our new booklist. Available (free) from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

SRI LANKA: The tasks today. New pamphlet from the Nava Samaja Party (UK Branch). Obtainable from World Socialist Books (see address left). Price 75p plus 10p postage.

BIRMINGHAM Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign. Demonstration against Tory attacks on youth. Saturday, 11 February. Assemble 11.30 pm, Chamberlain Square, City Centre. March to rally 1 pm. Duddleston Manor School. Speaker: D Nellist MP.

FIHTING FUND

This week £2,970

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 7 April
Eastern	116		2500
East Midlands	116		2900
Humberide	108		1500
London East	305		3250
London West	114		2050
London South	137		2650
Manchester & Lancs	178		3520
Merseyside	140		4000
Northern	222		3350
Scotland East	124		2150
Scotland West	109		3000
Southern	248		4300
South West	115		2000
Wales East	270		1880
Wales West	239		1650
West Midlands	206		3500
Yorkshire	179		4100
Others	46		2000
Total received	2970		50,000

DONATIONS THIS WEEK INCLUDE:

John Rowse, Chairman, London Press Branch, EET-PU, £10; E McCarthy, Sidcup CLP, £15; John Boocock, Coventry, £10; J Riach, Rutherglen, £4; J Day, Hayes CLP, £5.70; Ron & Gladys Johnson, Leeds, £5; Pete Ball, Wakefield, £5; J Bell, Nottingham CLP, £2.53; S Lawton, Walsall, £2; Jim & Stuart, Staggs Pub, Musselburgh, £2.

P Spencer, Youth Officer, Nottingham North CLP, £1.45; Mike Gibbs, Wakefield, £1; A Dodd, Coventry, 60p; Johnnie Woodleigh, unemployed, Neath, £1; Liverpool NGA members, £13; Liverpool, collections from AUEW Local Authority Workers, £2; Workers at British Gas, Easington, £4.20; Members of Hull AUEW No 12 Branch, £4.20; Gateshead East LPYS, £2.13; Members of South Yorkshire County Council Labour Group, £10.

POOR RICHARD Giodano last year faced a drop in pay and bonus of over a £1,000 per week! Despite that he still received more than £500,000. Mr Giodano is chief executive for BOC. The company's annual report and accounts show

that his pay last year fell from £579,000 to £521,000—a drop of £57,000! Last year BOC's pre-tax profits were only £95.8 million which, perhaps, explains the need to cut wages.

What a situation! One man's pay cut equals ten

people's annual wages. But Richard can at least take comfort from the fact that, despite the cut, he remains British industry's highest paid executive. If we followed the Tories' argument that high wages cause unemployment are we allowed to ask how many workers is Mr Giodano keeping out of a job? It is obvious that the bosses are prepared to lavishly reward those who do the job of screwing the maximum profit out the workforce.

Help us in the fight to end this ridiculous state of affairs by giving us a donation to our fighting fund. We don't expect the same sacrifice as Mr Giodano makes but every pound you send speeds up the day when his likes are no longer able to thrive at our expense.

By Nick Wrack

On the NHS frontline

LIKE MANY young people today, I looked to the health service for a career. After waiting three years to get a place at a hospital, I got a 'learner nurse' post at Park Hospital in Manchester.

By Margaret Caran
(Davyhulme LPYS)

I was lucky—I'd applied to 22 hospitals and most of them had up to five year waiting lists.

When you do get an interview they ask you crazy questions: "Do you believe in God?" or "Would you walk off the ward in a strike?"—they never mention working conditions.

I really believed I'd be able to give my best to look after the sick, I thought it would be all new technology and smiling nurses. I soon came down to earth with a bump.

We couldn't believe our accommodation. For £50 a month we get a tiny room. The heating is not turned on until mid October. For the 60 people in our nurses 'home' there is one shower, four baths and a tiny kitchen with a stove (only one ring works) and a toy-town fridge.

Because it is freezing in the rooms you don't feel like studying for your exams. The corridor is warmer—you usually find a few girls sitting on the floor in the corridor listening to the radio. And this is our time off—work itself is worse.

Nearly every night someone's got to do an extra hour or so. Its more like full time work than a 'learner'. You rush around all day missing breaks and often dinner. You find the only time you can be cheerful is when the visitors come because the pressure eases off. Visitors say nurses are dead nice; the patients know what it's really like—we don't have time to be nice.

Seriously understaffed

For example, you've got to toilet ten geriatrics, which means lifting them onto a commode single-handed. Some weigh more than 13 stone. Most geriatrics just want you to talk to them, but you haven't the time. It's really frustrating because you're taught as a nurse to sit and listen to people and you just can't.

Many patients could be taught to do loads for themselves, if nurses had the

time to rehabilitate them. We're understaffed yet there's many young people who want this sort of work but can't get in. There were 14 of us taken on yet 400 applied.

Industrial action

I'd take industrial action now, not just for my own pocket or to improve conditions, but for the patients. They wait up to three years

to be admitted, often in pain. When they get in, even doctors admit medical standards have dropped since the Tories got in. If we really care about our patients we've got no alternative but to strike—obviously properly organised so that staffing can be maintained while other nurses join the picket.

Given these conditions, not surprisingly 50% of all 'learners' drop out in the first six months. Yet even at the end of my training, I'll

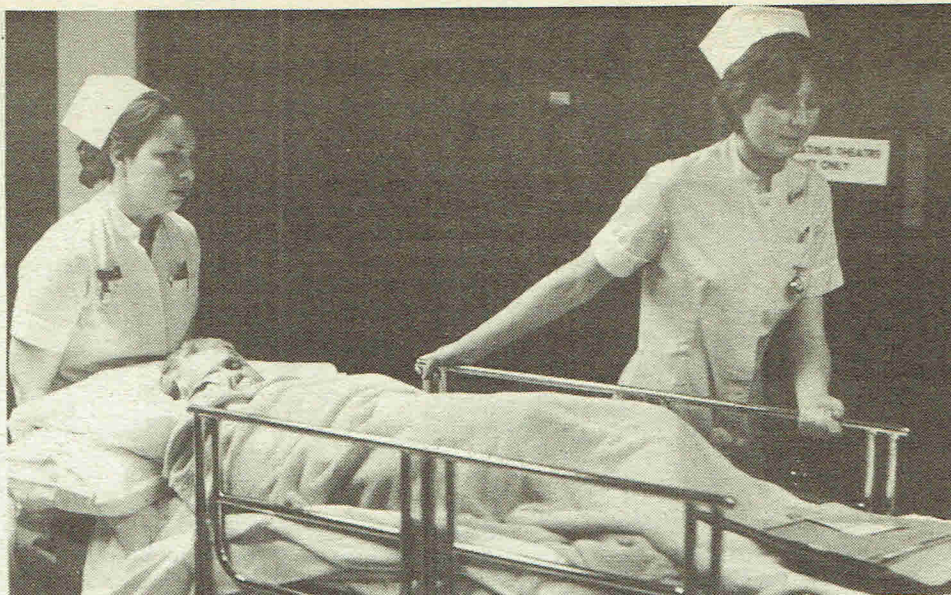
probably end up back on the dole like the majority of student nurses last year.

The profit system makes nursing a joke. You're taught the important thing about geriatric care is to keep the patients' dignity and pride. Yet in summer on our ward they said we could take the patients out—some women had not been outside for three years because there just wasn't enough staff.

Every night at 9 pm you put 20 people to bed—you listen to 20 people's problems that you know with a bit of time and effort could be alleviated—but you're just too tired.

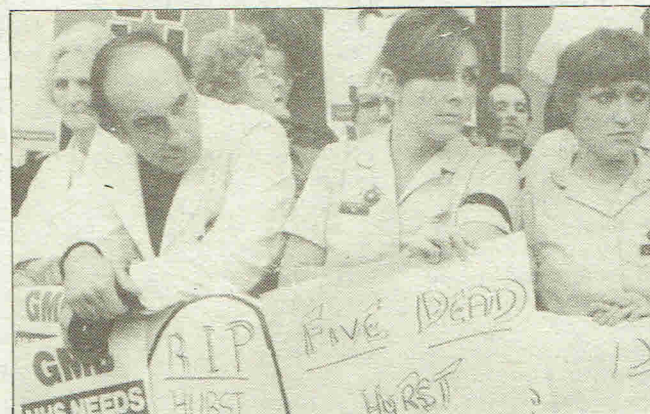
Angry and anti-social

It makes you angry and anti-social. You want to tell everyone what's going on. People can't believe these sort of things are happening—I certainly didn't. Now I know.



Understaffing puts more and more pressure on poorly paid NHS staff.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)



A 'funeral service' for closed wards at Guy's Hospital, London.

Victimised for fighting back

By Tania Eadie
(Shettleston LPYS)

UNTIL DECEMBER of last year, I was a student at Longside College. I tried to set up a Labour Club. With other LPYS members, we did paper sales, flyposted and leafleted for meetings etc.

However, all the meetings that we planned were stopped by the college bureaucracy. Usually they had given permission then at the last moment stopped us

for some petty reason.

At one point I was told that I was too interested in stirring up the "generation gap" and to forget any idea of setting up a club as the students 'didn't need one.'

Apparently, according to some of the staff we didn't have things such as gas bills, rent etc to pay. All we did was fritter our grant away in pubs. When they realised

that a Labour Club would be campaigning for higher grants, better facilities they started clamping down. Attempts at meetings with YTS workers within the college, other students etc, were stopped. Even political discussions in the classes were stopped.

In December my grant was stopped because of my "attendance and

behaviour". My attendance was as far as I can gather not yet at the minimum. I can only suppose that behaviour refers to getting some of the students to discuss socialism, and stirring up some of the senior staff. Apparently being a socialist is now a crime with the education dept.

Losing my place at college has made me fight all the harder for socialism. Those

who are at college and involved in their Labour Club must see that those who control our grant will find all kinds of excuses to get rid of us. It's up to us therefore, to continuously fight on. We'll still be at the mercy of those who control grants but if we don't take up that fight then we're going to be under them for a long time.

YS around the country



DESPITE THE adverse weather conditions, 20 people turned out for a public meeting in Sutton to hear Gary Ransford, the LPYS National Committee member elect for the East Midlands area. Two ex-glue sniffers in the audience were won over to the ideas of socialism and will come to the East Midlands LPYS conference.

THE ANNUAL London debate between the LPYS and the Young Conservatives at Parliament was almost a non-event when the Tories bottled out at the last minute. However, Liz Barker of the Young Liberals agreed to debate with LPYS Na-

tional Chairman Willie Griffin although it was a bit one sided—150 Young Socialists turned up with the YL speaker the only Liberal!

The YL speaker, besides blaming the trade unions for unemployment(!) also claimed the future for youth lay with the Young Liberals and that they had a proud record of bringing young people together for demos. Unfortunately for her, a Hackney North Young Socialist told the meeting how he had been in the YL's for two years and only received three leaflets and one phone call in all that time. Now he was in the LPYS carrying out political activity every week.

WHY I JOINED THE



THIS WEEK Malcolm, a YTS trainee, tells why he became a member of Derby North Labour Party Young Socialists.

I left school last year with O level English, Computer Studies and grades in Maths. I wanted to stay on, but the teachers told me I had a good chance of finding work.

I went for an interview for an apprenticeship but all I was offered was a Youth Training Scheme. I refused, but then three months ago I went on YTS as there was nothing else.

On my scheme the workers are good blokes and conditions themselves are good. But all us YTS workers are given jobs like sweeping up and cleaning toilets, when we are supposed to be trained in different skills. The other day me and

three other YTS workers were clearing snow in the customers' car park—while it was still snowing! We had no shovels but used 'for sale' signs which did not have a proper handle and cut into our hands.

Of course if we had a union this would not happen. But the firm I work for is non-union. The last time someone tried to form a union they were sacked.

Organise a union

I am in a union, but at the moment I am keeping my head low, although I hope to get one organised in the future.

The first thing that should be done is that Regional union officers should go around the factories where YTS people work and check

on conditions and try and organise YTS people into the union. Trade union membership should also be opened up to the unemployed as they could be used as a source of scab labour by firms such as mine if we tried to set up a union.

It's through the LPYS that I have realised how important trade unions are in a struggle against the bosses. A year ago I wasn't interested in politics but it's through my own experience that I joined the YS. They seem to be the only section which really wants to change society.

Have you recently joined the Labour Party Young Socialists? What made you join? Write to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

about us? what





GEORGE ORWELL 1984

Roots of anti-Stalinism

STEVE DAVIES reviews *Homage to Catalonia*. Price £2.25 (inc p+p) from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

LIKE MANY other English-speaking socialists I owe a personal debt to George Orwell for first introducing me to socialist ideas in a written form. And probably his most important socialist book is *Homage to Catalonia*.

It may not be his best work in the literary sense—indeed he was criticised for ‘ruining’ a good book by detailing the political splits and conflicts that took place behind the Republican lines. It is not even the best book on the Spanish Civil War (that honour goes to Felix Morrow’s *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain*).

However, it is important for a number of reasons: it captures the atmosphere and sense of power that workers felt in 1936 in Red Barcelona and details many of the changes they introduced to make life more civilised in ‘their’ city; Orwell shows how the militias were able to take workers and peasants, with no military experience, and mould them into a passable fighting force.

Popular frontism

But the real value of the book lies in its exposure of the treacherous role of the ‘Communist’ leaders and the lessons that socialists today can draw from the disastrous policy of Popular Frontism.

Orwell had gone to Spain in late 1936 to gather material for newspaper articles; he almost immediately joined the militia “because at that time and in that atmosphere it seemed the only conceivable thing to do”.

He describes the enormous changes that had taken place in Barcelona and made

such an impression on him: women fighting alongside men in the militias; bootblacks organising themselves into collectives; revolutionary posters and flags everywhere; no unemployment; hotel lift-boys refusing tips as an insult; anarchist notices in the barber’s shops and a general feeling that “the working class was in the saddle”. He writes that “above all, there was a belief in the revolution and the future...Human beings were trying to behave as human beings and not as cogs in the capitalist machine”.

At the beginning of Franco’s rebellion workers had spontaneously risen up to resist the fascists. They quickly organised themselves into militias “everyone from general to private drew the same pay, ate the same food, wore the same clothes, and mingled on terms of complete equality.”

Orders were obeyed, not because of fear of punishment, but through a political understanding of the orders given. And it worked. While Orwell was acting-lieutenant he “never had the slightest difficulty in getting an order obeyed or in getting men to volunteer for a dangerous job.”

Spain made a deep impression on Orwell. In a letter to a friend he wrote “I have seen wonderful things and at last really believe in socialism, which I never did before.”

The Spanish Civil War had been presented by Communists, Liberals and others as a classless battle between fascism and ‘democracy’. but, as Orwell points out, it was “not merely a civil war but the beginning of a revolution.”

From the time however that the Soviet Union began to supply arms to the Republic, there began a series of governmental changes. At the beginning of the war the working class had virtually taken power but had neglected to organise on a national level and had left the central government nominally in control.

Shift to right

As time went on this government gradually regained the reins of power and slowly but surely shifted to the right. A year later after the outbreak of war and revolution it was composed entirely of right wing socialists, liberals and communists.

The Communist Party argued that in order to defeat Franco it was necessary to create an alliance between the workers’ parties and the ‘anti-fascist’ bourgeoisie—a Popular Front. It was not as though they were proposing an alliance with a still powerful group of capitalists. Most had either joined Franco, fled or been expropriated already.

The CP’s strategy amounted to an alliance with the shadow of the bourgeoisie. But even so there was a heavy price to be paid for such an alliance—the collectivisation of land was halted, factories were return-

ed to their owners, the militias were disbanded and there began a systematic purge of revolutionary elements on the Republican side.

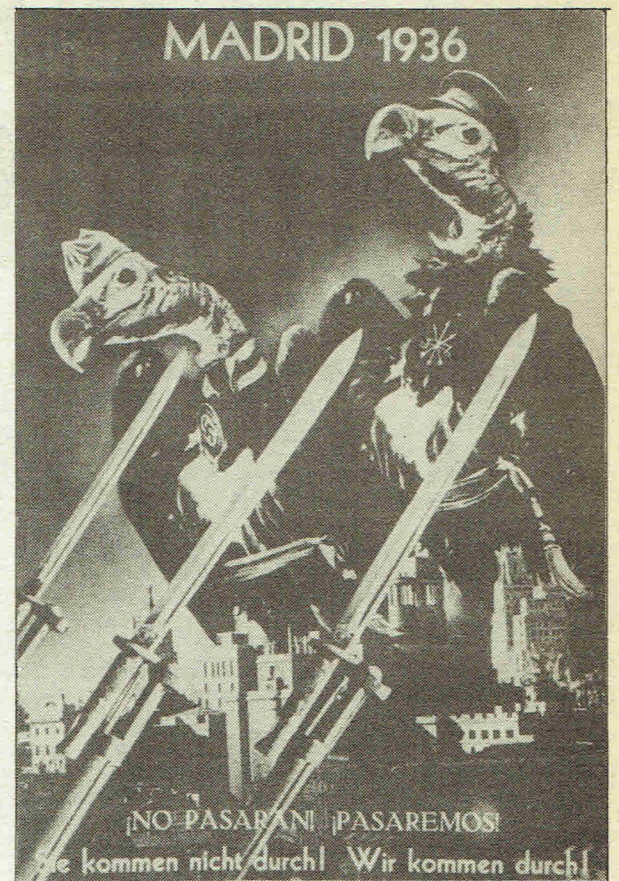
Orwell described the Popular Front as an “unholy alliance between the robbers and the robbed.” He argued that after what he had seen in Spain it was “futile to be ‘anti-fascist’ while attempting to preserve capitalism...and the mildest democracy, so-called is liable to turn into fascism when the pinch comes.”

Russian bureaucracy

Orwell served with the militia attached to the POUM (a small anti-Stalinist socialist party) and had to leave Spain pursued by the Stalinist controlled secret police. The Soviet bureaucracy, not wishing to jeopardise their diplomatic wheelings and dealings with the west for an anti-German pact, and fearful of the shock waves in Russia of a successful workers’ democracy in Spain, did all in their power to derail the Spanish revolution.

Instead of assisting the Spanish and other European workers to take power as the best guarantee against the Soviet Union, they backed the Popular Front. It was a disastrous failure. Over a million Spanish workers died.

Invalidated out of war, Orwell found that his anti-



1936 Republican poster. (Translation: They will not come through. We are coming through.)

actually an overnight success. Only 1,500 copies were printed and there were still copies in stock when it was re-printed in 1951 after the success of his later novels.

Emotionally a socialist before he went to Spain, Orwell’s life there deepened his understanding and made

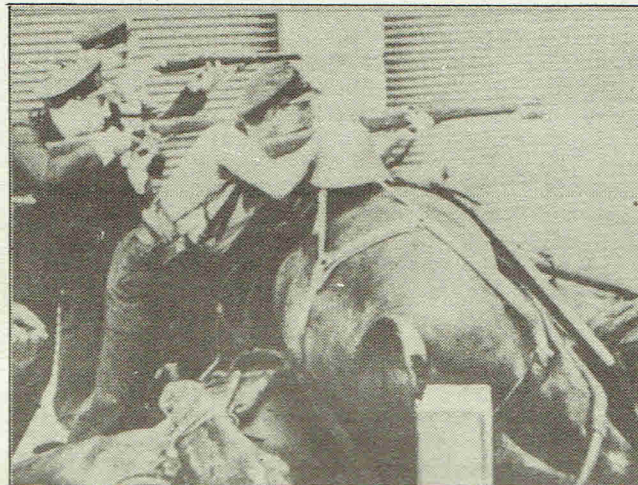
tragedy of Spain. But this is not so. The Chilean workers in 1973 paid dearly for their leaders’ inability to learn the lessons of Spain.

And today these dangerous illusions still persist. The ‘esteemed Professor Hobsbawm’ (an historian no less!) recently advocated a Labour—Alliance coalition in the pages of the British Communist Party’s ‘theoretical’ journal—only to change his mind a few weeks later.

Homage to Catalonia is an important book and its lessons are clear. The middle class and backward layers of the working class will never be won to the side of socialism by pandering to their prejudices or by reinforcing the illusions that they have in the capitalist parties.

Middle class

We can and must win these people to our flag but it can be done only by an uncompromising struggle against the so-called liberal capitalists and by showing in action to the middle-class that their interests lie with the labour movement not with the political charlatans that misrepresent them.



Street barricade.

Stalinist criticisms were too much for many on the so-called left. The ‘New Statesman’ refused to print his articles on Spain. Whilst recognising the power of ‘Homage To Catalonia’, his normal publisher Gollancz would not publish it for political reasons.

When Orwell finally did

get it published, by Secker and Warburg, it was not ex-him a fervent anti-Stalinist. It was these experiences which laid the basis for his later novels ‘Animal Farm’ and ‘1984’.

We could be forgiven for thinking that the theory of Popular Frontism was permanently discredited in the

LEFT and RIGHT

From the horse’s mouth

If the Tories are serious about trade union democracy then perhaps they had better look a bit nearer home—at the Conservative Trade Unionist (CTU) organisation, for example. For according to its ex-chairman Eric Langaster the CTU is one of the most undemocratic, farcical organisations in the country.

His latest article in *Open Shop* (a CTU journal edited by his wife) is entitled “Democracy—OK for the unions, but not for CTU”. He alleges that rules have been flouted “making a complete farce of the CTU rules and sharply hitting on the head the holier-than-thou attitude that we can tell the unions all about democracy”.

Motorway monitored

The first motorway the Government opened this year is living up to true 1984 expectations. The eight-mile stretch of the M25 between Epping Forest and Potters Bar contains no fewer than 42 television cameras capable of zooming-in on a face or number plate from a mile-and-a-half-away.

All the pictures are fed into a central police control at Chigwell and no doubt into the Scotland Yard computer if needs be. So if you want that all-alone feeling—go the long way round.

Police posed as opinion pollsters

Humberside Police went to great lengths to deceive the public over an opinion poll. Just before Christmas they got a market research firm to do a local survey on the public’s attitude to the police. But unbeknown to the public, two-thirds of the interviewers (20 out of 30) were policewomen. Only if they were specifically challenged were the policewomen to admit their true identity.

The public were told that none of the papers would be seen by the police, but clearly at least two-

thirds of them were. As Labour MP Kevin McNamara, who has accumulated the facts about this, told *The Guardian* (10 January): “The exercise, on the face of it, was perfectly laudable but if the Humberside Police were prepared to go to such subterfuge in pursuit of a laudable exercise, to what extent would they be prepared to go to deceive the public if they were engaged in other matters of a more serious nature?”

Sir Sirs?

Bill Sirs, steel union leader is busy collecting honours. Recently he was given special recognition by the most undemocratic body in the country, the businessmen who run the City of London. This month they have just made him a Freeman of the City. Now just what his Bill done for them, and are more honours from the bosses in the offing?

(Amongst this week’s contributors to Left and Right were: Tim White, Kevin Ramage, Steve Cawley and Alan Watson.)

IF YOU come across something which will make a good ‘Left and Right’ send it in—if printed we’ll acknowledge it.

Contrasting the two faces of business

Stock market gamblers....

STOCK EXCHANGES all over the world are booming. The *Financial Times* index of shares quoted on the London Exchange keeps registering new records. The Tory government and the capitalist press trumpets this as the dawn of a new prosperity. Is there any sign of this where you live?

Unemployment figures remain obstinately stuck on a postwar high plateau. What is the meaning of the Stock Exchange boom?

In today's terms ownership of the means of production means owning shares. The capitalist class secures its monopoly over the means of life through buying shares, which entitle them to a dividend, a share in the unpaid labour of the workforce of their company. Once issued, the shares seem to take on a life of their own. They are traded on the Stock Exchange and their use and fall need bear no relation to the real assets of the company.

Surges on the Exchange likewise do not necessarily mirror the movement of the real economy. As a whole a rise does not necessarily mean you have a better chance of getting a job.

Why have share prices gone up? In 1983 they rose 30% - their owners could sit at home all year without so much as lifting a phone and find themselves 30% richer at the year's end. That beats working for a living!

They gain we lose

Capitalist production is production for profit. Last year British profits went up 21%. Capitalists are prepared to pay for shares because they believe that profits will feed through to higher dividends.

That gives no cheer to working people. Profits have risen at the expense of our living standards. "Since 1980, output per person has risen 10% in the whole economy and by 17% in manufacturing industry. Unit labour costs rose only 2% in the first half of 1983. Selling prices rose more and British profits with them." (*Economist* Dec 3 1983)

In other words more profits have been made by holding down wage costs through improvements in productivity - they gain and we lose.

Since productivity means less people doing more work, mass unemployment looks here to stay as far ahead as the eye can see. That is particularly so as the present world 'boom' is wobbly and likely to go bust in a year or so.

What have they done with the money wrung out of us? They haven't invested in chronically antiquated British manufacturing. As the *Economist* explains "In 1983 they have saved more than they have invested in physical capital". They've just used much of it to pay off old debts.

Apologists for the mysteries of the Stock Exchange claim it raises money for industry. This is not true. If a share is sold at a higher price, all the profit goes into the pocket of the seller. Not a penny provides new investment for the company concerned.

Nevertheless capitalists claim that booming share prices enable

By Mick Brooks

them to issue new shares thus sucking pennies out of the pockets of punters that could go to renovate British industry.

In 1983 British manufacturing firms have been trying to cut back their debts to finance capital and to raise their assets through share issues. When new shares are issued to the public, that does syphon money into corporate pockets.

Whether that cash is used for investment in industry is another matter. Despite the record of £5,000 million raised in this way by the Stock Exchange last year, manufacturing investment last year was as flat as a pancake.

And British industry is still grievously stretched for cash even with the bumper injection of funds. Normally only 5% of assets for British companies are provided by new share issues. The lion's share is still provided by ploughing back profits made from the workforce or, increasingly, by borrowing from the banks.

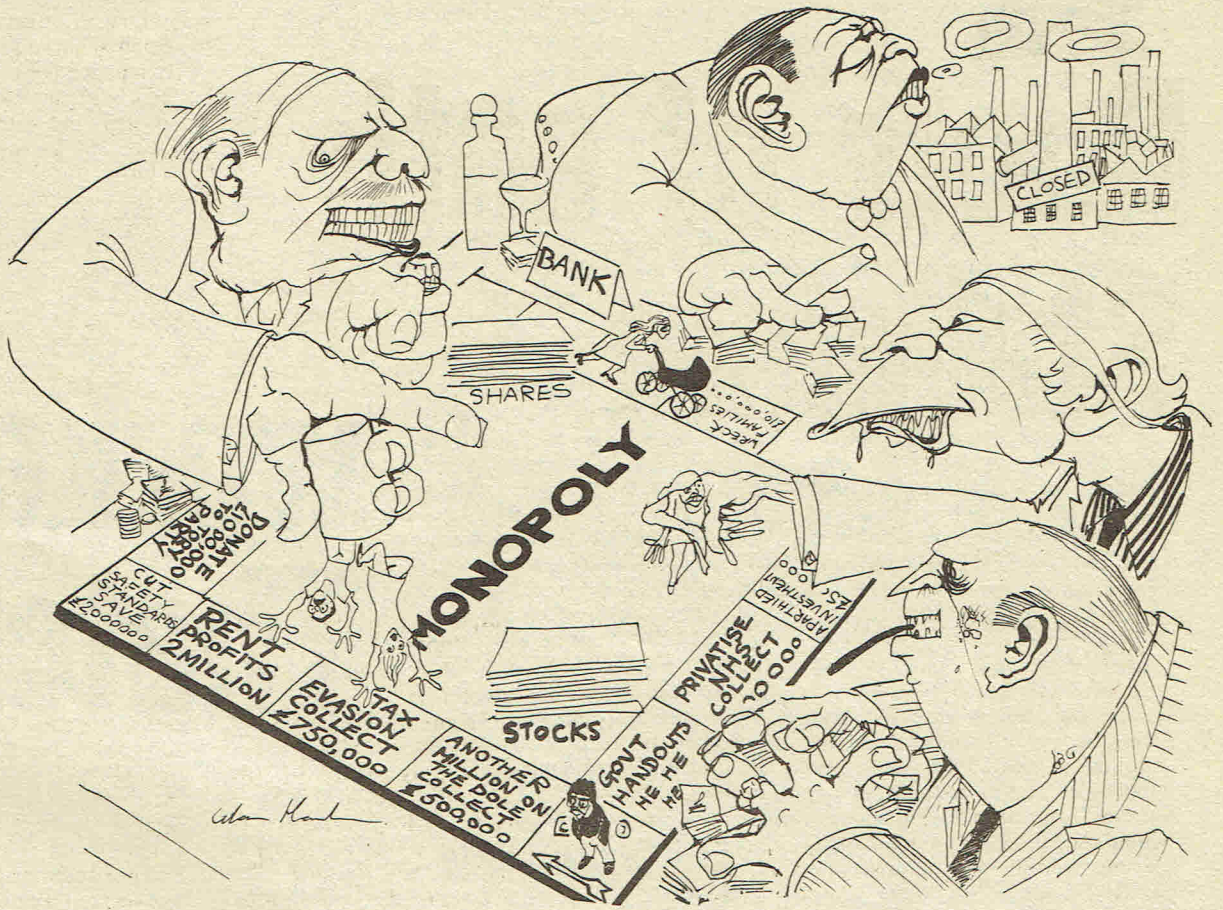
Funds for Stock Exchange speculation are increasingly provided by the 'institutional investors' such as insurance companies (which provide 20% of the funds) and pension funds (over 25% comprising £100 million). This development has been welcomed by Labour leaders who see this demonstration of capital as leading to a 'share owning democracy'. In fact the personal ownership of shares is more unequal than that of wealth in society generally—1% of the population own 75% of personally owned shares.

With the growth of occupational pensions middle class and working class people pay for up to fifty years before the start to get the benefits. In the meantime their contributions are a gift to the company and the raw material for massive speculation.

Using the share capital

It's the same with insurance companies. The homely 'Pru' has a share capital of £121 million but investments of £13,000 million—a hundred and ten times as much! What is really happening is that the savings of ordinary people are handed on a plate to the capitalist corporations to build up their wealth and power.

The Stock Exchange is a seismograph. Frequently its movements reflect nothing more real than the drugged euphoria or blind panic of the people who are making such a mess of running the country. Though the index is now soaring this reflects the capitalists clutching at straws after two years of undiluted gloom. Though its movement may diverge from the real indicators of economic crisis for a time, the conditions are developing within the world economy to bring the speculators off cloud nine and down to earth with a crash.



..struggling as a shop-keeper

THE TORIES have traditionally regarded small shopkeepers as firm supporters of their party.

Marxists on the other hand have always argued that they are an exploited section of society whose interests are closer to the workers than the big business interests and the Tories.

One shop-keeper who agrees with the Marxist view is ABDUL RASHID, from Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland, who spoke to PAT CRAVEN:

"The small shop-keeper these days is a working class person. I worked in factories and saved a bit up for ten years, then it became hard for me to do that kind of job, so I set up a small business. But I never considered that I was upper middle class or a businessman; I still think of myself as a working class man.

"The Tory government is encouraging people to set up small businesses because it is in their own interest. When there are a lot of shops there will be competition. They will work hard, for long, unsocial hours and go to the cash and carries or warehouses, usually every other day.

Exploited like workers

"This benefits the companies who get the money, so they can set up more cash and carries and warehouses. They let the small shop-keepers fight with each other and their profit margin is the same.

"So we are actually more exploited in my opinion than some workers,



During the general election socialists had a clear, class approach to winning support from small businessmen. (Above: Pat Wall, right, canvassing support in Bradford).

those in unions. If the union is strong and militant they can stand on their feet (though sometimes the Tories take their feet away), but for the small businessman, there are taxes, accountants, VAT and unsocial hours, which we have to do to maintain our families.

"In my opinion the only alternative for small businessmen is to join the Labour Party and put all their efforts, sacrifice and money to change society. When we change society, I would not like my son or daughter to be small businessmen. I want to see them engaged in production rather than work 84 hours a week and not even have a decent wage.

"I came from Pakistan in 1962. I was a teacher there, making £5 a month, so I came to this country. The British imperialists, faced with competition from other advanced industrial countries, wanted cheap labour power from the Commonwealth countries, their ex-colonies, in order to exploit them again.

"They worked hard, in textile, transport, hospitals; they did night shifts; they were paid less, especially the textile workers; they were not given proper facilities—I can point out two or three factories where they didn't even have a toilet—no telephones, no health precautions, nothing.

Racialism

"Racialism too is a problem for coloured people from the Commonwealth countries. Unemployed school leavers have no future, so they pick on small shopkeepers or coloured people, tease them, go into their shops and call them names, and say, 'we have seen on the TV that you are here and we can't get a job—better go back to your own countries'.

"They are not educated properly; they don't have any political education; that is not their fault, because they have been kept in the dark; it is the education system. The working class is one class, beyond colour,

creed or nationality, and the capitalists are one class—maybe they are living in Britain, or India or Bangladesh, maybe they have white skin or black skin, but they are together, jointly exploiting working class people.

"That is why I suggest, and insist that all the working class should unite together to fight for better conditions of living, for their future and their children, and to change this economic and social system, to defeat the capitalist class and the Tories who represent them.

"The political future of both workers and small businessmen is only with the Labour Party, not with the Labour Party of the right wing, but the militants, the left wing who believe in scientific socialism, who want to see basic changes in the economic and social structure. They must not just join the Labour Party; they should be in the vanguard, sacrifice more time and more money and educate themselves and others."

A WALL of silence has cut off British workers from news of the many strike movements taking place around the world. Some, like the one described here in British Columbia, Canada, have gone to the lengths of a general strike. The press conspiracy is deliberate.

The capitalist class, in whose interests Fleet Street doctor their news, do not want British workers whose own living standards and rights are under attack to see examples of workers struggling against governments like their own.

The strike is described here by a correspondent in Canada who gives the background to the battle last year and also shows the way the workers organised among the community as a whole, forcing the Provincial government to back down.

THE EVENTS of the second half of 1983 in British Columbia, the most westerly province of Canada, are of great importance to the labour movement internationally. During this period organised labour came together, mobilised behind it many of the middle layers in society, took on the right wing Social Credit government of Bill Bennett, and forced it to retreat.

In a report on these events the British Columbia Federation of Labour explained how it saw the battle they had fought: "It marks the first time a labour movement has effectively stood up to the spread of the reactionary policies fostered by a Ronald Reagan, a Margaret Thatcher or a Bill Bennett. We must view our achievements in that light.

"Our effective opposition has undoubtedly caused many other governments, especially across Canada, to take a second look at bringing in similar legislation".

The right wing Social Credit government came to power in the Province in the May elections of 1983. On 7 July it introduced its budget proposals and an unprecedented package of 26 bills.

The *Wall Street Journal* of 23 November 1983 summed up the objectives of this proposed legislation:— It was to result in "reducing the Province's public service by 25% within the next year, civil servants job security, stripping tenure from university professors, increasing government control over doctors' payments schedules, freezing all welfare payments, cutting housing allowances for welfare recipients, removing all rent controls, allowing landlords to evict tenants without cause and abolishing the province's liberal human rights commission".

Business backing

The *Vancouver Sun* called the government's proposals "a radical social document unprecedented in a democratic state". With the full backing of big business the Bennett Government was, as one trade union leader explained, "trying to undo all the gains we have made in the last forty years".

A closer look at the government's proposals show how determined they were to break the labour movement. Bill two in the package would have legislated out of existence any negotiated agreement regarding hours of working and work schedule, shift working, overtime and vacation scheduling. All seniority substitution, pay and protection against contracting out was to be eliminated.

Bill three stated—"notwithstanding the Labour Code and the Public Service Labour Relations Act, a public sector employer may terminate the employment of an employee without cause". Outright dictatorship for management was the aim in the public sector.

The overall objective of the government was to centralise all power in its own hands over wages, employment and working rules in the public sector and to bust the unions.

The government claimed that its objective was the reduction of the Province's budget deficit. Yet the July budget increased government spending by 12% and the deficit was a record Canadian \$1.6 bn.

The cut backs on wages and social spending were more than off-set by a 90% increase for the Ministry of Finance and an increase of over 20% for the Ministry of Industry, Trade and small business.

The Executive Committee of the BC Federation of Labour, in its report to its Annual convention in November 1983, summarised the government's intentions: "We should not lose sight of social credit goals. They are to produce an authoritarian society in which property rights are promoted to the detriment of social and democratic rights.

Law of the jungle

"They want a society in which the rich and powerful can use their wealth and positions to generate even more wealth and power for themselves. They want a return to the law of the jungle in which the strong devour the weak. The labour movement is one of the few obstacles in their path and we must ensure that that path remains blocked".

The statement correctly outlines the objectives, not only of the Social Credit government of British Columbia, but also the objectives of Thatcher, Reagan, Kohl and other representatives of capitalism world wide. The difference between them and Bennett is that he, inflated with his election victory, stated with absolute clarity all his aims at the one time and sought to bulldoze them through the Parliament by means of his majority.

But by doing so he provoked the labour movement and many of the middle layers of society into rage and a fierce opposition.

The main lesson for the labour movement internationally lies in how organised labour in BC responded to this challenge.

In BC 49% of the workforce are organised. However, only between 50% and 55% of the trade union movement affiliated to the British Columbia Federation of Labour. The first task was to unite all of organised labour.

"Operation Solidarity"

In order to overcome constitutional difficulties facing a number of unions if they were to affiliate to the BC Federation and to move immediately to a united body, all unions agreed to the formation of "Operation Solidarity". This body named—as can be seen from the banners produced—after the Polish trade union organisation, united all the unions for the battle against the government. This was the body which led the struggle.

However, the trade union movement did not stop there. They then went on to set up the "Solidarity Coalition". This body had as its spine the trade unions but it also brought onto its leading and local bodies, representatives of tenants' associations, parents' associations, the human rights groups, women's rights groups, and all those sections of society under attack by the government.

Locally, the trades councils—in Canada known as Labour Councils—organised the fightback by turning themselves into Committees of Action, with delegates being elected onto them from all

British Columbia : workers take on a Thatcherite governm

the various local bodies such as tenant, parents associations etc.

In the Operation Solidarity Report to the BC Federation of Labour Convention in November 1983 it was stated: "The labour movement has long recognised that there is a 'natural majority' in the community, consisting of all those who work for wages and salaries, along with the retired and the disadvantaged". The setting up of Operation Solidarity and Solidarity Coalition turned this "natural majority" into a powerful fighting force under the leadership of organised labour.

Programme of Action

Along with these measures every working member of all the unions paid into a Fighting Fund. \$45,000 was provided for a weekly paper called *Solidarity*. \$200,000 was spent on publicity. Under the leadership of Operation Solidarity and the Solidarity Coalition the fightback began.

On 27 July over 20,000 people demonstrated at the Provincial Parliament. Rallies were held in the areas in the days following. 40,000 people attended a rally on 10 August.

On 20 August an eight week programme of action was announced. This was to make the case for Solidarity's opposition to the Budget and the 26 bills by local activities such as rallies, meetings, workshops, petitions etc.

For example, 5 September saw the beginning of Human Rights week, 12 September Workers Week, 19 September started Women's and Children's week, 26 September Tenants and Co-ops week. In this way, all the various sections of the "natural majority" had explained to them the real nature of the budget and the 26 bills, and how they themselves would be affected.

Strike action

On 15 October up to 70,000 people took part in a demonstration at the Hotel Vancouver, where the Social Credit Party was holding its Provincial Assembly. All of these actions were preparations for the events of 1 November.

It was on this day the strike action began. At one minute to midnight, on 31 October, a deputy sheriff began the countdown, and at midnight as the British Columbia Employees Union moved into place with their pickets he announced—"We are now officially on strike".

The strike was solid up and down the province as the 35,000 workers took action. On 8 November the teachers joined the strike. As it was illegal for teachers

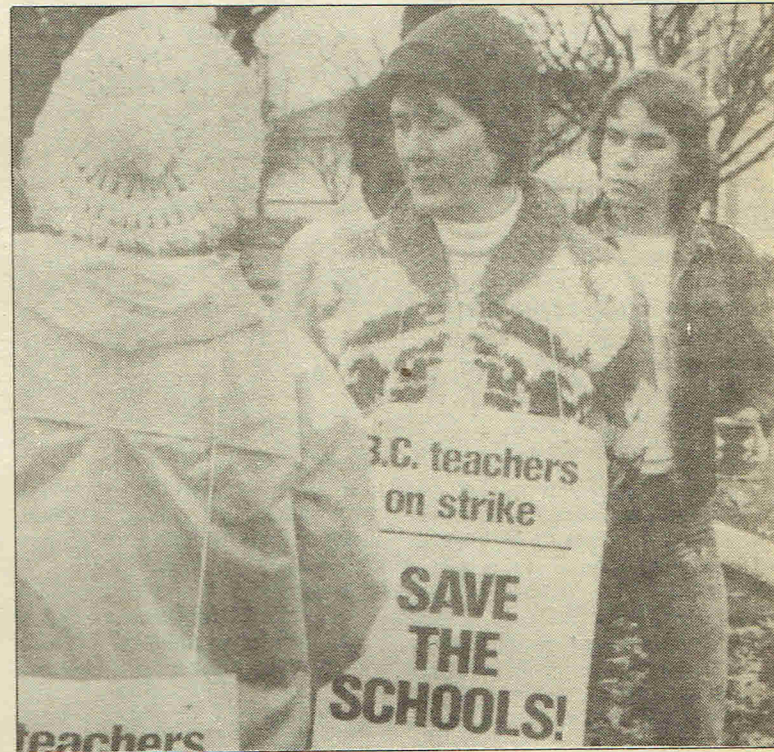
to picket, other members of the Solidarity Coalition such as the parents and the community groups provided the pickets and the strike was solid. Teachers' pay cuts and sackings and cuts in education had united the parents and the teachers.

With 80,000 workers on strike and with plans to bring out transport workers and other sections in the following weeks, the province was well on the way to a general strike. Then this "strong" government, with its parliamentary majority and the full backing of big business, was forced to come to the bargaining table and to listen to organised labour and its allies.

organise the movement as whole in the struggle.

In British Columbia the strike action was called off after 13 days and before the transport workers and other sections of the workforce who were set to come out in the days following could add their weight to the movement. In a private discussion between Bennett the Prime Minister and Jack Munro, regional president of the province's most powerful private sector union, the 50,000 strong International Woodworkers of America, a deal was struck.

The agreement included a withdrawal of Bill three which



Teachers and parents collaborated in the campaign to defend union rights and education expenditure.

The lessons of these actions in Canada should be learned by the labour movement internationally. Not matter how strong a government may be in terms of parliamentary seats, no matter how right wing and determined it may be, it can be defeated.

'Natural majority'

The way to do this is to unite the labour movement, involve the minority groupings and the middle layers of society who are also under attack, explain the issues involved and then mobilise in a united struggle the full power of this "natural majority". There is no power in society which can prevail over such a force.

In those countries where monetarist, Thatcherite governments have not yet been stopped in their tracks it is because the labour leaders, instead of uniting the movement and mobilising it, have let one section after another go into the battle alone and refused to

allowed sackings "without cause". Bill two, which would have legislated out of existence most union contracts and gains, was also destroyed when the government, as part of the agreement, gave a new contract to the British Columbia Government Employees Union who had been first on the picket lines. This was a major victory for the unions.

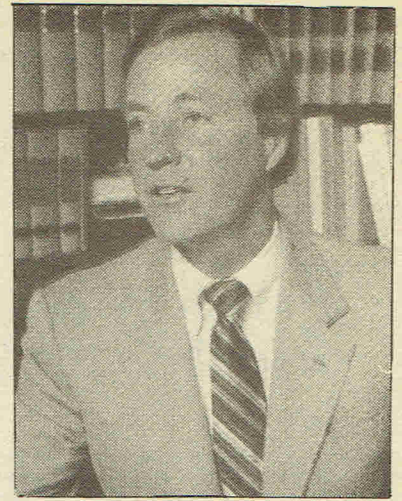
Only promises

However, on the other issues such as human rights, social services cuts and possible changes in the Labour Code all that was won were promises to set up consultative committees. The human rights groups, and parents' organisations were angry at an agreement being made by Munro, rather than by the Solidarity Coalition.

Most activists were also angry at the movement being called off when it was clear that support for



(Right) Bill Bennett, right wing Prime Minister of British Columbia. (Left) Part of one of the many demonstrations against his monetarist policies. The Solidarity movement included many campaign groups and involved the NDP and its youth section.



ment

continuing the action was overwhelming and that the government itself, not to mention the budget and the 26 bills, could have been utterly defeated.

Labour milestone

However, the strikes and mobilisations of the last five months of 1983 in British Columbia constituted a real step forward for the labour movement there, in the North American continent, and throughout the world as a whole. "Operation Solidarity" as the report to the BC Federation of Labour 1983 Convention said, "represents a milestone in the history of the labour movement in Canada. Whatever the outcome of the current struggle, things will never be quite the same again".

This was very evident to anyone who attended the Convention, held in Vancouver from 28 November to 2 December 1983. The convention hall was filled with delegates from the affiliated unions, delegates with only speaking rights from the non-affiliated unions and delegates from the various bodies such as the human rights committees, tenants etc, who had speaking rights during the debate on the struggle of Solidarity Coalition.

The most obvious effect of the struggle was that the unity of the movement was strengthened. At every mention of unity and the need to overcome past divisions waves of applause rolled through the hall. The struggle put firmly on the agenda the need for unity of all unions in BC in one federation.

Workers' power

At every call for a renewed fight and "no talking to the government or business," applause and shouts filled the hall. The struggle had shown workers their power.

As one delegate stated, "what has been won has been won on the picket lines and demonstrations". A programme for action which was put to the convention by the executive committee and which contained no plans for action was decisively rejected. Calls for a regional general strike were heard.

Irrespective of the fact that outright victory was not gained in BC the struggle has enormously strengthened the workers' movement. Big business and its government is now weaker and the working class stronger. This new balance of forces has come about because the movement took action and out of this action it has strengthened itself.

The mobilisation of organised labour and the various minority groups has also had effects on the political voice of labour in Canada—the New Democratic

Party. Its leader, Dave Barrett, got a prolonged and enthusiastic standing ovation at the union convention.

The parliamentary part of the NDP had filibustered in the provincial legislature (parliament) and this gave more time for the Solidarity Coalition to get organised. The Executive Council of the BC Federation urged greater participation by union members in the NDP.

Another effect of the struggle was to strengthen the Left Caucus in the NDP in its struggle to take the party in a more openly socialist direction, and given the crisis facing Canadian society, it is only a socialist programme that offers a way out.

In British Columbia there was a fall in the growth rate of 6% in 1982. With a population of 2.7 million in the Province there are 200,00 unemployed.

In Canada as a whole there is 11% unemployment according to official figures. The Canadian Mental Health Association believes that real unemployment is over 19% and costs the country Can \$50 bn per year. The Canadian GNP fell 4.4% in 1982. And while it rose an estimated 3% in 1983 capacity utilisation remained at only 70%.

Canadian capital is fleeing the country or being employed in speculative ventures. Between 1974-81 the book value of Canadian investment in the US more than quadrupled to US \$27.4 bn and much of this went into real estate.

At the BC Federation convention a resolution was passed calling for the nationalisation of the banks. Another motion, calling for the taking over of the major corporations, was referred back to the executive. The two motions should be placed in a dominant position on the banners of the unions and the NDP.

One convention delegate put it bluntly, "the major corporations are the enemies of the people of British Columbia".

Will to fight

The workers in British Columbia have shown that they have the will and the power to fight. Given a strong leadership, and fighting on a clear socialist programme, a movement could be built which would stop the bosses and their governments in their tracks in all the provinces of Canada. This is what has to be done if working people are not to be driven back to the conditions of the 1930s.

With a NDP government in power in Canada, backed by the power of the "natural majority" and carrying out socialist policies, the first steps would be taken towards the transformation of Canadian society and the North American continent as a whole.

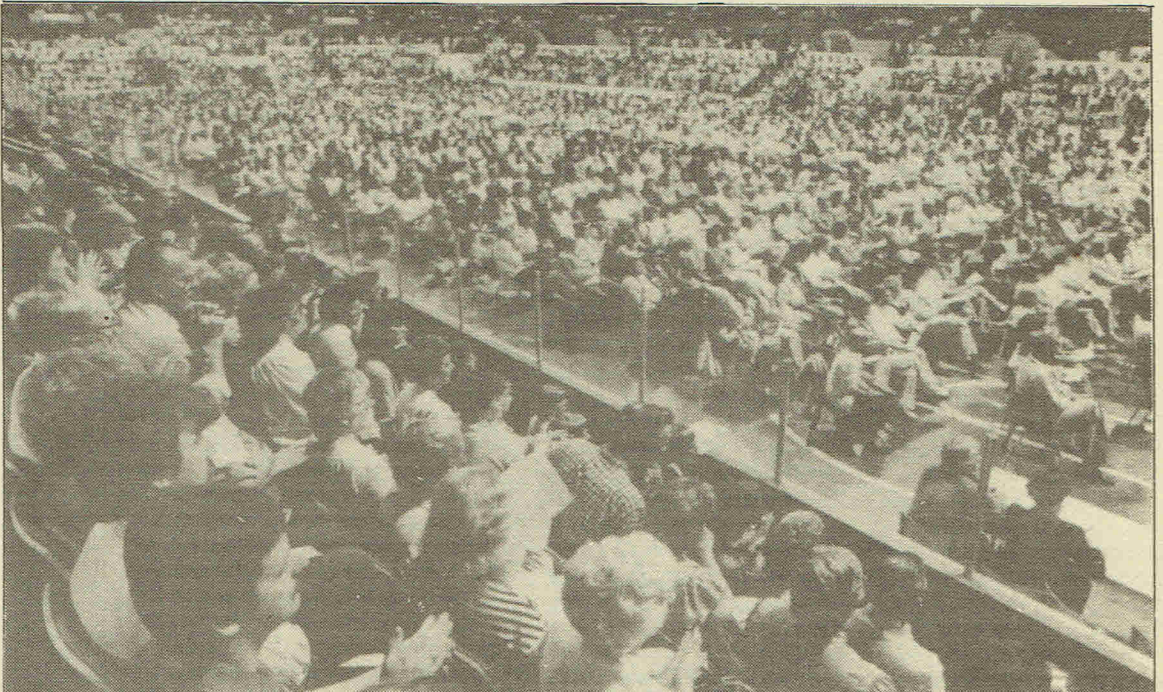
By Rob O'Neill



The 1983 British Columbia Federation of Labour annual convention included representatives of all the Operation Solidarity unions and community groups from the Solidarity Coalition.



A union official addresses a co-ordinating meeting of the Federation of Labour.



The Solidarity Conference drew in thousands of workers and community groups, most of whom had never been involved in any protest activity before.

Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador

Report from Nicaragua

Mass support for social gains

WILLIE GRIFFIN, LPYS National Chairman, recently visited Nicaragua with the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY). In the first of two articles, he outlines some of the advances made since the Sandinista revolution in 1979.

BLAZONED ON a hill are the giant white letters FSLN. They look down on the huts with corrugated tin roofs that make up Managua the poverty-stricken capital of Nicaragua.

At a bank in the city centre, a banner above the main entrance, celebrating the fourth anniversary of the 1979 revolution reads "Death to Imperialism-Long Live the revolution".

The slogan "NO PASSERAN" blares out from billboards along the main highway, it is sung out from the radio and TV and accompanies the numerous murals all over the city usually depicting victorious Sandinista guerrillas.

Tremendous enthusiasm

There is tremendous enthusiasm for the gains made since 1979. We spoke to a woman about fifty years old, from Sandino city, the biggest working class suburb in Managua. She bubbled with enthusiasm as she gave us a tour around the market place where she worked.

It had all been built since the revolution; before then she would have had to travel 10 Km into Managua. The new market also included an adult education centre where everyone was learning to read and write but she was most proud of the nursery which she said "had liberated the women who work in the market because they no longer had children under their feet."

Young militia

Over 60% of the population of Nicaragua are under the age of 20. With no oil or other important mineral wealth these young people are the most important natural resources in the country. The militia start as young as fourteen; those not in the militia are organised into Student Production Battalions and help collect the coffee harvest.

They work from 6 am to 2 pm, six days a week, on a basic diet of rice and beans and sleep in hammocks or on blankets on wooden floor boards. Yet despite all the hardship, poverty and danger they face there is no questioning their enthusiasm for the revolution.

Their feelings were best expressed by a member of

The Somoza dynasty

TO UNDERSTAND the enormous enthusiasm for the Nicaraguan revolution, you only have to look briefly at life in Nicaragua under the brutal Somoza dictatorship. The first member of the dynasty, Anastasio Somoza installed himself in power with US backing and the National Guard took over the role of the marines.

The Somoza dynasty which lasted up until 1979 is brilliantly described by Eduardo Galeano in his book 'Open Veins of Latin America.'

"He (Anastasio) ruled Nicaragua for a quarter of a century and then bequeathed the job to his sons.

"Once in power he organised various massacres and grand celebrations for which he dressed up his soldiers in sandals and helmets like Romans. He became the country's biggest coffee producer with forty plantations, and raised cattle on fifty-one additional haciendas."

While the banana republic Caesar paraded round the presidential palace and made himself a fortune, the masses lived under intolerable

conditions.

Before 1979, infant mortality was 46 per thousand births, life expectancy was 53 years, at least 57% of the population was illiterate and unemployment was officially 22%. The bottom half of the population shared 15% of GNP while the top 5% took 30%.

In 1972 a earthquake devastated the capital of Nicaragua, Managua, reducing it to rubble. Despite receiving millions of dollars in aid from various foreign agencies, not one single penny was spent on rebuilding the city, instead it went to swell further the personal bank accounts of the Somoza family.

The regime became increasingly isolated, support for the Sandinistas grew culminating in a bloody civil war where between 35-40,000 died, 100,000 were wounded and 200,000 families made homeless. The indiscriminate bombing of towns and villages under FSLN control in the last days of the Somoza regime is still remembered by many people and has left an enduring bitter hatred of Somoza.

"Worse than losing their lives is the possibility of losing their future and the possibility to build a better world."

—Sandinista youth

possibility to build a better world."

The revolution of 1979 resulted in the overthrow of Somoza. All Somoza's property and substantial personal wealth were nationalised and the FSLN embarked on a programme of social and economic reforms.

Much of what was destroyed in the civil war is slowly being rebuilt, including new schools, libraries, housing and hospitals in Managua.

A literacy campaign has successfully reduced the number of illiterates in the country to less than 10%, mainly old people. It is only by understanding the terrible losses of the civil war and relatively speaking the enor-

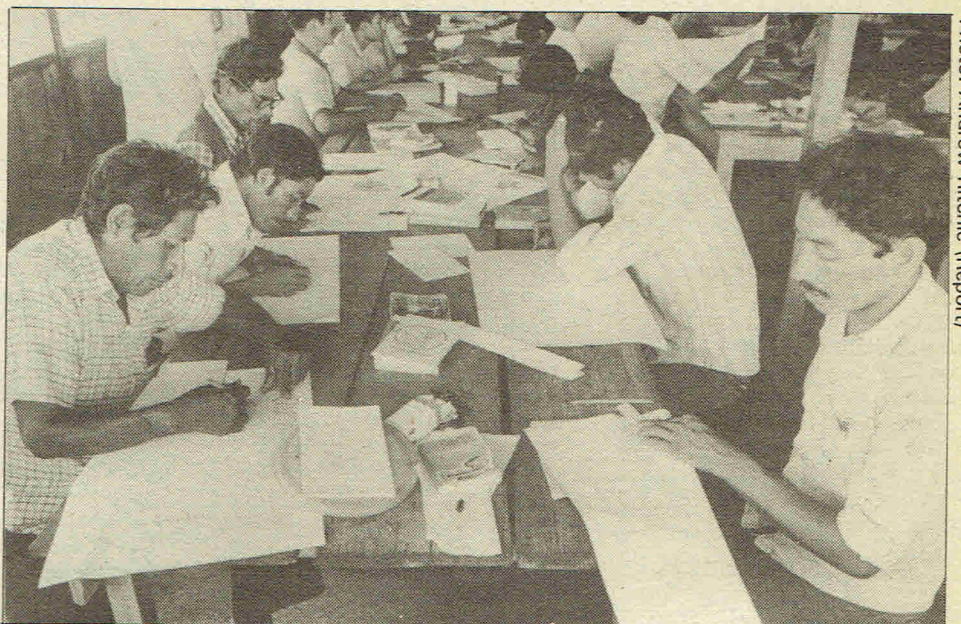
the Sandinista youth who said "today to be young in Nicaragua is a magnificent thing but you have to be prepared to die. To raise the coffee harvest, to implement the health programme—anything, must be paid for in human lives. If we do not pay it the price would be much greater. Worse than losing their lives for young people is the possibility of losing their future and the gains by the masses since the revolution that you can understand the popular support the FSLN presently enjoys.

Recent events, including the shooting down of a USAF helicopter pilot on the Honduran-Nicaraguan border and the publication



High school students going to work on the coffee harvests in the school holidays, paid at standard agricultural rates.

Photo: Andrew Ritchie (Report)



Tackling the problem of illiteracy. Campesinos learn to write at a rural church.

Photo: Andrew Ritchie (Report)

of the Kissinger report have focused attention on the question of possible US military intervention in Central America.

The United States have always had a heavy military presence in Central America. Panama is the headquarters of the United States Southern Command. (Southcom) with 14 military bases and about 14,000 American Soldiers, including the HQ of the 8th United States Special Forces, the Green Berets, who played a key role in the invasion of Grenada last year.

Southcom also supervises training of officers for military dictatorships in Latin America at the "School of Americas" nicknamed "School of coups" at Fort Gulick, in the Panama canal zone. In October 1973 over 170 graduates of the "School of Americas" were heads of government, cabinet ministers, commanding generals or head of intelligence in their own countries.

The head of the World Bank, Robert McNamara when he was United States Secretary of State for Defence said of the "School of Americas":

"I need not dwell upon the value of having positions of leadership men who have first hand knowledge of how Americans do things and how they think. It is beyond price for us to make friends of such men."

But the American ruling class are not just relying on indirect methods of control. US military involvement in Honduras has increased dramatically in the last few years. Every aircraft, every round of ammunition is pointed at the heart of the Nicaraguan revolution.

TO BE CONTINUED

The murder regimes

Guatemala

WHILE REAGAN accuses Nicaragua of being an undemocratic country he is selectively blind about the murderous right-wing regimes in the area. An arms embargo to Guatemala has been lifted to allow the government there to play its part, the US strategists hope, in destroying Nicaragua.

In 1954, US action including aerial bombing led to the overthrow of the radical government of Jacobo Arbenz, which had been trying to implement land reforms and to create an independent capitalist Guatemala free of the US monopolies' control.

After the coup the new regime abolished the 500 trade unions which had grown up, and arrested 9,000 trade unionists, many of

whom were tortured. Land was returned to the big landowners. To stabilise the area the US pumped in large sums of money which led to Guatemala becoming the most industrialised country in Central America, with the biggest working class. It also has considerable potential oil wealth.

Regimes since have ruled by repression. 1,000 US Green Berets helped the Guatemalan government slaughter 8000 people in moves against small guerilla groups from 1966 to 1968.

Another round of devastation in the early '70s killed 15,000 people. Right-wing death squads today carry out much of capitalism's dirty work, but the government and army are responsible for most of the 4000 to 5000 murders in Guatemala during 1983.

El Salvador

THE VICIOUS gangs of government-backed thugs in El Salvador, murder squads like ORDEN, have killed thousands of workers and landless peasants. Even doctors, teachers, nurses and priests who have a humanitarian concern for the poor mark themselves off for assassination by these right-wing vigilantes.

The regime themselves are expert at terror tactics, especially in confronting the biggest threat to their profit system, the strong and militant trade union movement. On 19 January, the misleadingly named "security forces" raided the premises of the equivalent of the TUC, the CGS in the

capital San Salvador where inside, the revolutionary trade union federation (FSR) were holding their fifth congress.

More than 82 people were taken prisoner by civilian-clothed and paramilitary police and army, including two representatives of the European trade union movement, whose presence they had hoped would prevent such an act. A representative of the Catholic legal aid office, Socorro Juridico, was also arrested.

Raul Beltran, a local journalist with YSKL radio was killed during the raid. By the evening, all arrested had been released except 15 FSR members. The Army have claimed responsibility for the raid, though they deny Raul Beltran was killed.

Pages from labour history

When US women workers took on the textile barons

From sweat shop to picket line

By Leslie Holt
(Liverpool Women's Council)

NEXT TIME someone says 'you can't organise women', tell them to read *The rising of the women*, by Meredith Tax and Lawrence: the Bread and Roses Strike.

30,000 textile workers in New York in 1909, and 20,000 out of 90,000 in 1912 in Lawrence struck for union rights.

80% of the New York workers were women, and 50% in Lawrence. Industrial and political battles brought these women to the fore—rising with their class.

The most down-trodden, depressed, least organised, least politically conscious section can quickly turn to its opposite. Tens of thousands of women leapt from inactivity and apathy to become orators, organisers, leaders of pickets; overcoming many obstacles of sex and race in the battles.

One small issue can catch a mood, and open a floodgate of anger and militancy. For the first time, the unskilled march onto the union scene.

Vision of a better life

The American Federation of Labour (AFL) catered for skilled craft workers, excluding many women. Gompers, its head, dismissed women as having no idea of organisation. The bureaucrats were hidebound, afraid of democracy, afraid of mass involvement.

The AFL had refused to allow women to be apprentices, and were reluctant to recruit women, who were seen as cheap, non-union labour undercutting skilled workers, instead of a force to be organised in the fight for shorter hours and decent pay.

A Chicago woman described being "too weary for anything, sometimes union meetings, yes, because I must go. But I have no mind and nothing left in me... we must get a living wage... and a shorter work day, and many more girls must do some thinking. It isn't that they don't want to think but... are too tired... the best thing about the union, it makes us think." Thus women fight not only for economic demands, but with a vision of a better life 'not just bread, but give us roses'.

Working conditions

The struggle for union recognition in New York was one of the biggest ever by women. It began in three sweatshops. There were several different issues, but the most explosive was working conditions. Forewomen followed girls to the toilet, all sorts of fines were imposed. Charges were made for electricity, thread and needles to the extent that the firms made 20-24% profit on these! 'Learners', about 37% of the workforce, earned \$2.50-\$4 a week.

50% of the more experienced women workers earned \$9, while skilled men earned \$15 to \$23—for 56 hours plus overtime in the busy season and lay offs in the slack season.

Firms subcontracted down, within the factory and to small sweatshops. The skilled men were 'bosses', and ran the union too. Despite this, there was unity in the strike.

Earlier, Clara Lemlich, a Russian Jewish immigrant, had organised in 1906 with seven girls and six lads. In 1908 she discovered the men in her own factory were going to strike without telling the women. She explained that if they all went out, they'd win. They did. Girls had also struck to save subcontractors from dismissal.

From a hundred members in November 1909, in the four weeks before the strike the International Ladies Garment Workers Union branch grew to 2,000 members. 20,000 members joined during the strike. A mass meeting to call all-out action was called on 22 November. Next morning 15,000 struck, by night it rose to 25,000, in many cases women rose as a body and went out.

seventeen times before and had six ribs broken.

The employers wanted to accept arbitration on pay and hours, but avoided the closed shop. The middle class withdrew support when the strikers held out. Morgan's friend, also a friend of Gompers, Eva McDonald Valesh began a vicious press campaign against the socialist influence.

Lack of democracy

The local leadership allowed individual agreements to be made and unity was weakened. The strike ended on 13 February. Thirteen 'shops', 3,000 workers were left. Nevertheless, gains in wages and confidence were made.

In 1913 and 1916, the union called more all-out strikes, but the AFL used them to let off steam, having reached a deal already. A union official in 1916 got mobbed by women strikers for trying to call a strike off.



Women strikers lead a march in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Pregnant women were beaten up, two miscarried but the strike went on.

As the union branch was so tiny, the strikers, 80% women, ran it themselves. They were helped by the Socialist Party and the Women's Trade Union League, an alliance of women of different classes, but in favour of helping the AFL.

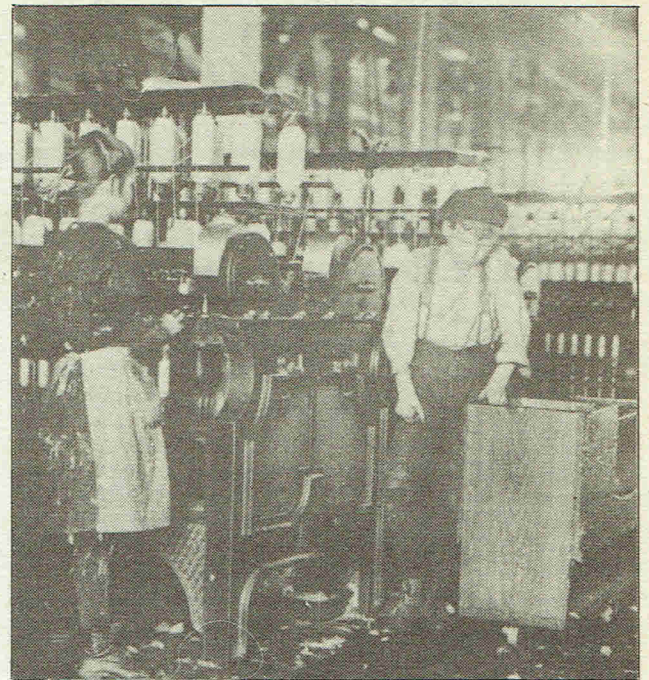
The 'allies', the middle-class members, didn't mind unions trying to convince naughty employers, but didn't like the idea of changing the system, of the overthrow of capitalist society.

At first women like Anne Morgan, daughter of JP Morgan, the banker, raised funds, helped in court cases. Consciences were stricken by fifteen and sixteen old picketers being called prostitutes by police and sentenced to the work house. 600 girls were arrested in thirteen weeks. Clara Lemlich had already been arrested

Lack of democracy meant women very quickly left, coming back again later in struggle. In 1911 membership was down to 3,800. In 1913 the all-out strike drew 20,000 again.

Buying cheap, selling high

To keep women active requires a specially conscious effort. Trade unionism isn't enough, and gains made in a boom can always be taken away by recession. The heroic struggle at Lawrence proves this. Created by a handful of monopolies, Lawrence was built on cheap immigrant labour. "We... buy cheap and sell high," said the Lawrence brothers. Child labour, even of five year olds, had provided firms like the American Woollen Co with \$65 million assets, 27 mills,



Lawrence, in the early years of the country, super-exploitation of child labour and women workers was common.

one alone of 30 acres, and 100,000 workers.

Hours were long, fifty-six plus overtime, often for \$56 a week. In slack periods men would do children's jobs for children's wages.

The final straw came, ironically, with a reform. Massachusetts state cut hours from 56 to 54, but the Woollen Co. cut pay, by 30 cents, representing five loaves a week. So desperate were the Lawrence workers, they struck. We can see the need today to link shorter hours with an adequate minimum wage.

Mass picketing

20,000 decided spontaneously it was "better to starve fighting than to starve working". Sprayed with freezing water (this was January), beaten, shot at, the strikers were determined.

The International Workers of the World (IWW or 'Wobblies') played a vital role in the leadership of the strike. They had split from the AFL in 1904 to build mass unions, 'one big union'. A member sat on the strike committee.

Workers came from thirty nations, speaking forty-five languages. Deliberately fostered divisions were overcome in struggle, and the strike committees reported to 27 nationality groups.

Particularly through Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Bill Heywood, two IWW leaders, the IWW set out consciously to involve women. 50% of strikers were women and they threw themselves into mass picketing, the first mass pickets ever, and the idea of strikers themselves. They organised relief, fund raising, speaking and publicity, especially the famous 'exodus of the children'.

Women brave police brutality

Special meetings for women were held, and also for the 'children', many of them textile workers. The aim was to involve the whole working class community especially women at home.

The ruling class also recognised women's fierceness in struggle. "It takes one policeman to handle ten men, but ten policemen to handle one woman". In revenge for sexual harassment on the picket, women caught a lone policeman and began to strip him ready for the river, but reinforcements arrived.

A young girl was shot on the picket line. Despite the risks, thousands of women offered to go on the front line, pregnant women included. Beaten by police, two miscarried. Yet nothing could break their spirit. Even some militia were sickened by their role as an arm of the state.

Pressure built up. A national campaign of publicity reached its height over beatings up at the railway station during the 'exodus of children'. Starving children were sent to relatives and workers' homes in other towns, carrying banners and placards and met by demonstrations of support. A Senate inquiry revealed child labour and other horrors.

The American Woollen Co gave in, not to the Senate, but to labour's organised might. A rash of strikes broke out across New England. A quarter of a million textile workers got pay rises.


Bosses revenge

While monopolies like the American Woollen Co were in private hands they could still withdraw their investment. In revenge in the following years deliberate closures took place. Recession also followed. Confidence and reforms were replaced by reprisals and fear.

Reaction set in in Europe in the First World War. Women sank with their class back to drudgery, but they had a taste of struggle, of class, of organisation, a vision of socialism.

To quote Clara Lemlich: "They used to say that you couldn't even organise women. They wouldn't come to union meetings. They were 'temporary' workers, well we showed them!"

THE RISING OF THE WOMEN



by Meredith Tax

"The rising of the women" by Meredith Tax (Monthly Review Press)

£5 including postage and packing from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Letters

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

Self employed under threat

Dear Comrades,

To be self employed in Thatcherite Britain, contrary to popular belief, is far from rosy. I have been a self-employed roofing worker for a number of years. I receive a reasonable wage, if you compare it with the millions of workers who are forced to survive on wages below the official poverty line or on unemployment benefits.

I am also a home buyer but only because my wife works also. We both work very hard. I sometimes work in very dangerous conditions.

Recently we were overjoyed at the news of my wife's pregnancy. Now she will have to go on maternity leave to have the baby. So difficult times are to come.

Times are different from when my parents set up home during the peak of the '50s and '60s boom. My

Spending thousands to save money

Dear Comrades,

The DHSS in Northumberland recently undertook a study designed to see how much they would save if they closed the local dole offices at Amble, Prudhoe and Haltwhistle. This was on the grounds that small rural offices were inefficient and a waste of money.

Northumberland Association of Trades Councils and Blyth Centre for the Unemployed did some research too. They found that the cost of the study was

father got a job with Rover in Solihull, Birmingham and bought a house on a new estate in Coventry. A far cry from the slums that they were familiar with. Even at the time when some crumbs fell from the plates of the capitalists to the workers, my parents had a difficult time and were faced with losing everything on a number of occasions. Those times have now returned. Prices for houses in this area range from £25,000 to £30,000, far out of the range for today's young workers.

My work is supplied overwhelmingly by councils in the Midlands area. I am constantly under threat from Tory cutbacks. I support full heartedly the Liverpool council in their fight against the Tories' cuts, that battle should be given the full backing of Labour councils and workers up and down the country.

Yours fraternally
Allan Smith
Coventry

approximately £11,000. Also one result of the closure would be to increase the cost of bus fares for people coming to sign on from outlying areas. This was up to around £4 return, or the equivalent of more than a day's dole money for a single person.

When the DHSS finished their study, they found the estimated saving from closure of the biggest office would be the princely sum of £400 a year. In other words it would take 26½ years to save the equivalent of the cost of the study!

Your fraternally
Terry McParlan
Tynemouth LPYS

Lucky draw—unlucky fans

Dear Comrades,

A typical example of capitalist greed came with a recent decision made by Brighton and Hove Albion FC.

Being drawn at home to Liverpool in the fourth round of the FA cup, the club saw an opportunity to make a bit of extra money to compensate for dwindling attendances. They decided that anyone who didn't buy a ticket for the game before the match would have to pay a dearer admission charge.

This ranged between an extra £1 for a terrace ticket to an extra £4 for the dearest seat. This makes the top price for admission £10—you could get a seat

Defend the NHS

Dear Comrades,

In the past year I have had much to thank the NHS for, due to the fact that my little boy was in hospital for the first seven and half months of his life, having had four operations to save his life.

He has to have several

drugs one of which, I discovered recently, costs £150 for just 28 days supply. He will have to take this drug for the rest of his life as it keeps the balance of his hormones correct.

My husband, like many people in work, has the threat of unemployment over his head. So how we

would afford to pay, on top of the other bills, for our son's drug. I do not know.

Maybe I should ask Mrs Thatcher for some advice, she seems to cope especially well, does she not!?

This information has only made me feel more determined that I will fight as hard as is humanly possible

to save the NHS from the Tory hatchet.

The marvellous care they gave my son will never be forgotten. I shall always be in those nurses' debt. Fight for the LPYS!

Yours fraternally
Richenda Chiverton
Dorset



Angry health workers protest at last year's Tory party conference.

Photo: Militant

Do it yourself health service!

Dear Comrades,

Over a year ago I was unfortunate enough to contract a serious illness which necessitated a whole series of tests, operations and treatment to cure it.

The craziness of the NHS cuts really comes home to you when you find yourself doing 30 mile round trips to the only body scanner in the area (bought by charity), and a 40 mile round trip to the regional radiotherapy centre. However last week at one of

my regular 'check-ups' a relatively small incident astounded me beyond belief.

A small swelling which was causing me some concern was examined by the doctor, who told me there was no need to worry and that he didn't want to see me again for three months.

On my way out he called me back and asked where I worked. I told him I worked at county hall. He then asked if I could get hold of any measuring calipers.

Puzzled, I said I probably could. He said in that case I was to bring them in next time so as the swelling could be measured. It appeared that the hospital didn't have any!

This prompted me to ask, should I need an operation, whether I would be required to bring my own bed and scalpel. The doctor wasn't amused.

What price do the Tories put on the lives of working people when due to their

cuts, not only are life saving body-scanners not provided, but even the smallest of NHS implements are overlooked in the search for profits.

Still, should Mrs. T or any of her cronies ever need an operation and a surgeon isn't available I would be quite happy to do it for them myself. I would of course be prepared to bring my own bed and scalpel.

Yours fraternally
Mick Richardson
Wakefield LPYS

Labour and youth

Dear Comrades,

In a major article in the *Daily Mirror* (23.1.84) Labour leader Neil Kinnock expresses his anger and "overwhelming rage" at the way the Tory government treats the youth of today. He says: "A nation which turns away from its young dumps its own future as well as theirs". Quite right of course.

The point is that the very same criticism can be levelled at the Labour Party itself, which over the last two years has cut the Labour Party Young Socialists' annual budget from £37,000 to £7,000. And let's make no bones about it, there is plenty of money in the labour movement to rectify this situation despite what we hear about Labour Party finances.

For example, the unions can find the money to finance lavish parties at Labour Party conferences. Labour MPs receive massive incomes and on the whole donate very little back to the Party. Come on Mr Kinnock, let the party hierarchy sacrifice a little luxury, put its money where its mouth is and invest in the future. Let's finance and build the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Yours fraternally
Chris Peace
Cardiff North Labour Party

Too good to be true

Dear Comrades,

I am a housewife on a council estate which has been taken over by Barretts, the private building firm. When they were in the process of getting their hands on the estate, Barretts promised the earth to local people. They said they'd employ so many 16-25 year old, to give them experience as brickies and labourers, and that everyone else they needed would be employed from the estate.

The young lads leaving

cheaper at last year's FA Cup Final.

Apart from being a disgraceful act of money grabbing by trying to exploit to the full the luck of the draw, it's also a stupid decision. The match is being televised live!

Yours fraternally
Clive Walder
Brighton LPYS

Alliance's plain speaking

Dear Comrades,

I thought your readers might enjoy this 'plain mans' guide to economics taken from the Liberal/SDP Alliance's newsletter in Balham, South London:

"The admen sold as the big lie that our economic

problems are the same as the rest of the world's. Anyone who goes abroad on business knows that this is rubbish."

This must have struck a chord amongst the many globe-trotting entrepreneurs in the working-class stronghold of Balham. Anyway, you don't have to be in this category to know that all is not exactly milk and honey in other countries where private enterprise reigns supreme.

It may well be the case that Thatcher's policies have worsened the situation in Britain. But the irony is that the SDP/Liberal's economic policies are not so very different from the Tories.

Yours fraternally
Terry Adams
Balham Labour Party

school couldn't believe their luck. A job waiting for them? It was a dream come true. Barretts also promised jobs to men of the estate—unemployed skilled men filled in the application forms which promised a five year contract.

My husband and I, both *Militant* supporters, knew this too good to be true. Sure enough, Barretts 'Tory-ness' soon came out.

They didn't really want the young lads. They wanted people aged 30 years and upwards. My Dad who is 42 filled in a form and got a start—and about four more:

that's all!

Then after five months' work Barretts finished all the men on the site and brought in outside contractors. Five year contract? More like five minutes.

My dad and all the other men are now picketing the site to keep their jobs. It's a sorry sight. I'd like to see Thatcher work for five minutes and then be forced to stand on the picket line in the middle of January with no chance of another job.

Yours fraternally
Mrs K Dempsey
Stockbridge Village Estate
Kirkby

Royal poser

Dear Comrades,

"Princess Diana will be presented with her greatest challenge to date..." (*Daily Record* 20 January). No, she wasn't going to sit around the Social Security for hours trying to get a Giro to pay for bed-clothes for her child. Nor was she trying to get the gas fire to produce heat without any 50p coins.

No, her dilemma was which colour dress to wear when she has an audience with the Pope. As you know working class women come across that problem daily. They solve it by nipping down to their local fashion designer, who fixes you up for a mere thousand pounds, which as we all know, is a snip at the price.

Personally I would recom-

Flights of fancy

Dear *Militant*,

At a recent meeting of Nottingham City Council three left wing Labour councillors voted against a proposed rent increase which stopped the decision being passed.

This caused a lot of fury amongst the right wing in Nottingham and at the District Labour Party meeting some of the right wingers got so het up they lost all sense of proportion and engaged in flights of

mend the colour red. This would remind us all that her privileged position and wealth is gained from the blood and sweat of working people.

Yours
Mark O'Donnell
Glasgow

Quote plea

Dear Editor,

I am compiling a booklet of political quotes which, when finished, will be sold for the fighting fund. I would be grateful if your readers could help by sending any interesting quotations they have come across (with the source) to my address.

Many thanks, send to:
S Davies
2 Keswick Avenue
Roath Park
Cardiff

fancy.

One councillor who represents my branch said that she had been approached in the street by one tenant the day after the decision, and was chastised for not putting the rent up!

The next thing these people will come out with is that workers don't want a pay rise. I always thought it was *Militant* supporters who were supposed to live in an unreal world!

Fraternally
S Lawlor
Nottingham North LPYS

Local councils are facing tough choices these days. Liverpool City Council has refused to accept the dictates of the Tories and cut jobs and services. Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader of the council explains...

The Liverpool option



DURING THE coming weeks Labour councils up and down the country will be preparing their spending plans for the next financial year. It is vital that in the discussions take place that the position of Liverpool City Council is clearly understood and explained.

RICHARD VENTON asked DEREK HATTON, Deputy Leader of the City Council, questions being raised in the movement about Liverpool.



Liverpool City Council Deputy Leader, Derek Hatton.

When will the crunch come?

Probably at the end of March. We have been advised that we must by that time produce a balanced budget. Our proposed expenditure for the next financial year, 1984/85, must match our proposed income.

To do so though would be impossible. We would either have to raise our rates by almost 200%, or sack 5,500 of our workforce. We will not do either. We will refuse to balance the books and this can be challenged in the courts by any creditor or ratepayer on the grounds that we are guilty of 'wilful misconduct' for not levying a rate to cover all anticipated expenditure.

The courts could then appoint receivers who could take over the financial control of the city council to secure the money of creditors.

What do you think the government will do?

As the courts could give receivers power to levy a rate and make cuts and redundancies it is probable that the government would then take steps to bring in Commissioners.

We have to understand though that the Tories can use a variety of measures to run the council. The tactics they use will obviously depend on what they think will give them most mileage. The point is that whatever particular stick the Tories attempt to beat Liverpool does not alter the choices we face at the end of the day; either massive cuts or stand and fight.

One thing is certain—the Tories will be using all their resources to try and blame us for the crisis they have created.

Will the council go bankrupt?

Very unlikely. Our 'crime' will be refusing to balance the books and only if this remains unchallenged would we actually run out of money, possibly around October 1984. However, this can be ruled out as the Liberals have already said they will take us to court. Even if they fail to live up to their promise (which is usual) I'm sure some other group or creditor will take action.

Some leading Labour Party members are saying that Liverpool is 'jumping the gun' and 'going it alone'. How do you respond to that?

We appreciate the fact that many other councils will not find themselves in our position until next year. They have been able to absorb Tory attacks through raising rates, creative accounting etc, etc. The position we are in means that we cannot wait until 1985. Most people who have criticised us have done so from ignorance of the facts.

We are striving to ensure that all the facts are available and we are confident that anyone in the labour and trade union movement who becomes familiar with our case will give us their support. Anything else would be siding with the Liberal/Tory wreckers.

Will the city council Labour Group stay behind party policy?

We have 51 councillors and the Liberals/Tories have 48. At this stage the District Labour Party and the Labour Group are united in opposition to the Tories and Liberals. The support and pressure of the trade unions, however, will be a decisive factor in ensuring a united Labour Group.

Obviously we do worry about the prospect of surcharge and bankruptcy. If we all stick together though especially if we have a national campaign, the Tories will be powerless to act. This is not just a fight conducted by and on behalf of 51 councillors—it is a fight for the whole movement and must be conducted by the movement.

What steps have you taken to build support for the council?

To be successful we need the support of the council workforce, workers in the private sector, the community in general and other Labour councils.

The city council workforce have indicated

Progress so far

LIVERPOOL CITY Council is now coming under the spotlight nationally as a result of its refusal to accept the Tory government's cuts.

Its campaign to mobilise

support within the Labour movement has blazed a trail for every other Labour council to follow. In this interview, Derek Hatton summarises the successes of the council so far:—

“ Our first achievement was our refusal to implement a Liberal/Tory budget which would have meant: 1200 redundancies from the council workforce; a £6 million reduction in services which was unallocated by the Liberals—they weren't prepared to be honest to the electorate about where the cuts were going to be made; a huge rent increase and the certainty of a rate increase which would be purely to compensate for Tory cuts.

Our second achievement has been to create 1000

new jobs and to increase services quite considerably, restoring the council as a service-offering authority, rather than looking towards privatisation to get it off the hook.

By the end of the year there will have been a start on 1000 new council houses, which wouldn't have happened before. There has been a commitment to seventeen priority areas within the city, where not only housing but the environment and every other aspect of living conditions will be considered.

Repairs are being hurried up in a way they never were before. There is a general commitment to public housing that also wasn't around under the Liberals.

The difficulty with the rent issue was that if we gave a simple £2 a week rent reduction, it would have meant there would be something like £1 ½ million given back to the government. Over 50% of our rent payers are on social security, so the £2s would be deducted by the DHSS and go straight back into the coffers of the government. We have gone for a decoration grant so that everybody will get it.

After years of hedging and hesitation, years of destruction of education, the schools are in a deplorable situation, where most fail to offer even 50% of the possible A-level choices. We had to grasp the nettle and come up with the well-known District Labour Party policy

of neighbourhood comprehensives. We decided to shut every school in the city and then open up 17 new comprehensive schools.

We have also set up playgroups. There have been public meetings in all areas to discuss this and there has been a great amount of support for the sort of pre-school education we are starting now.

We took a decision not to increase social service charges for home helps and other services; we decided to put a freeze on that, not even raising them by the level of inflation for the rest of the year, so that nobody has to pay extra for social service provision. We are already £500,000 overspent on the staffing budget for social services because we have refused to implement the cuts in the budget we inherited which would have meant a complete rundown of services. ”



The people of Liverpool have suffered from years of Liberal/Tory neglect.

full support and we intend to keep it that way by informing and consulting with them every step of the way. We have held a mass meeting for all stewards explaining what is happening. Since the tremendous demonstration on 19 November when 30,000 marched through the city we have held many workplace meetings and will continue to hold these meetings over the next period.

We have continued to develop our links with the private sector trade unions by showing our full support for workers in struggle. We will soon be holding a series of factory gate meetings similar to those we held during the build up to the 19 November demonstration. Several of those meetings attracted between 100 and 250 workers to hear our case.

We will be holding 18

public meetings throughout the city and issuing a further council newspaper giving workers the real facts. We have just set up a Campaign Working Party (see *Militant* 684) bringing together councillors, trade union leaders from the private and public sectors, representatives from community groups and adjoining Labour councils. This committee will play a valuable role in promoting and communicating our case.

We have been active in seeking support from other Labour Groups and we have received many encouraging responses.

What would happen though if a Liberal/Tory budget was approved by the end of March?

For one or two reasons it is possible that such an event could happen, particularly if

it became clear that the movement was not prepared to support the council. However, we would still continue our campaign and go into the municipal elections in May 1984 on a platform of refusing to carry out those cuts.

In the final analysis it is whether the movement is prepared to support our lead that will determine the outcome and I'm confident we will get that support.

What concrete support can the rest of the movement offer?

Explain our case in the local Labour Parties, trade union branches—as widely as possible—and seek solidarity and support for us.

Obviously in the case of Labour controlled councils they should be backing us by refusing to carry out Tory cuts and by implementing

reforms like Liverpool in jobs, housing and services. They should afford their workers facilities to discuss our case and arm themselves with the facts. They should also take the fight into the private sector and hold factory gate meetings similar to those we have held.

If we can generate enough support I'm sure we can inflict a defeat on the Tories and secure enough resources for the city to tackle some of the worse problems of unemployment and bad housing.

Our programme to begin to tackle some of Liverpool's problems has been described as the work of "mad Marxist loonies". Our answer to that is—look at the disaster inflicted by the bosses, Tories and Liberals in Liverpool—who are the real loonies?

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Miners' overtime ban — fight and unite

OVER THE last three months the media has grabbed every opportunity to weaken the miners' overtime ban. They have become 'champions of the ballot'.

Scabbing winders have been portrayed as David fighting Goliath. An opinion poll was commissioned to prove the editorials reflect the mood of the miners. To their horror it showed over 60% backed the ban and the NUM National Executive.

Even the result of their own poll didn't stop the bloodhounds howling after any small break in our ranks. The ballot for general secretary was presented as a referendum for a ballot.

By a NUM member

At the same time NCB propaganda has been given the full treatment. Every word uttered by MacGregor is explained and emphasised along with a crocodile tear about our 'lost' wages. When have the press ever worried about us, let alone our wages?

The 5.2% offer would have little effect on the pittance of a wage which forces many to do overtime in the first place. The ban has shown that to produce the previous level of output it would require 20,000 extra workers. Maybe the press will take up the plight of the unemployed and advertise that fact?

Campaign cannot stand still

The unwritten conspiracy between the media and the bosses is working overtime. It is essential for them that the miners are defeated. The Tories' plans would suffer a severe set back if we successfully defend the industry and win a decent wage rise. A victory would lift the morale of the whole working class.

In many areas support for the overtime ban is above 80%. In such areas as Staf-

ford, previously considered a moderate area and a weak link the workers' call for a ballot was expected to receive a sympathetic ear. It resulted in an explosion of anger, expressing the desire to get on with the battle. Such feelings can soon wane, however, and then turn into their opposite.

The overtime ban has shown the solidarity within the union and united the membership. It is now necessary to examine the stage reached in the struggle and to give a clear lead for the next step.

During the run-up to the 1974 strike, a work to rule complemented the overtime ban. This added another turn to the screw. Along with only achieving (at most) the minimum target this should have been introduced again.

This would certainly step-up the action. But the danger exists that time is running out. Escalation of the dispute, to be effective, must be before spring.

The argument advanced by some on the left, that the overtime ban should stay until summer and beyond is dangerous. It will strain the loyalty of the members. It will allow the press and NCB to play up the idea that there is no end of the sacrifices in sight. The NCB will continue with its programme of pit closures.

It is absolutely imperative a clear strategy is worked out. Lack of clarity creates

confusion.

The NCB are playing a waiting game, not wishing to provoke a national strike. If the miners were already involved in a stoppage, NCB strategists reason, it would be harder to win a "No" vote and undermine the leadership's position.

New closure threats

Local management, under instructions from Hobart House have tested the water—as in the Stafford coalfield. The answer has been swift and they have had to quickly retreat.

The whole of national and area resources must be used to focus attention on pit closures. The verdict on the appeal of Cronton Colliery will shortly be known. Polmaise colliery in Scotland is now threatened. These and the other possible closures should be made the central plank of the campaign for stepping up the action. The national executive must re-launch the campaign to save the pits with much more vigour.

This campaign must have the basic aim of leading to a national all-out strike. The only language this Tory government understand is pressure. Every step taken back and they will push you back another.

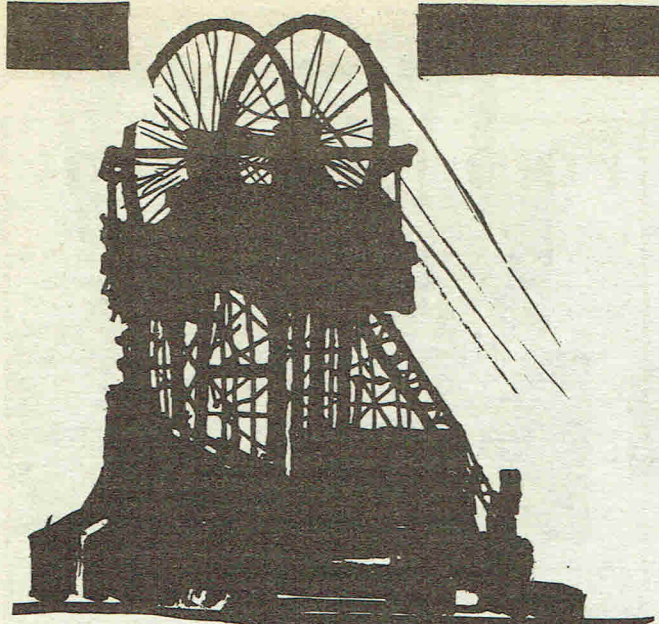


Photo: John Hami (IFL)



Picket at Silverdale Colliery in the N. Staffs Colliery, to persuade safety workers not to go into work. Over a hundred police attempted to intimidate striking miners.

Polmaise — no pit safe

ON THURSDAY 29 January Albert Wheeler Scottish area director of the NCB was given a rough reception when he arrived at Fallin Miners' Welfare Club to announce the closure of Polmaise Colliery in Fallin near Stirling which employs 250 men.

If the NCB are successful it will be the fifth pit closure in Scotland in the past year. The miners at Polmaise are determined it won't be.

In the past three years a total of £22 million has been spent on the development of a new seam at Polmaise. It has been suggested that they are sitting on 1 million tonnes of coal nearly ready to come out and only five weeks work is needed to reach a seam with six million tonnes of coal, giving the pit a life expectancy of thirty years.

But the NCB are now arguing that the pit must be closed, using the hoary old arguments of "geological faults" and because there is no market.

Same old story

These arguments are totally refuted by the NUM locally. John McCormic the pit delegate has argued: "the geological faults they refer to are absolutely minimal and could be easily overcome. As far as having no market for the coal, it's the first time in my 25 years in the industry that I've heard of a pit having no market for its coal. We could have the best pit in Scotland here. We will fight all the way to save it."

The warning signs were quite clear over the recent struggle at Monktonhall. Now Polmaise has proven the point beyond doubt—no pit is safe from the NCB axemen. The fight to save Polmaise is the fight of all miners.

The delegate conference of the Scottish area NUM this week must give a bold and decisive lead in the dispute using its industrial might to halt the NCB in its tracks.

The labour movement must take up the struggle as well. The significance of any pit closures extends far beyond the mining industry.

The Labour Party and the Young Socialist branches in Fallin and Cowie and Plean will be doing all in their power to assist the miners in their struggle to save their livelihoods and those of future generations.

By Willie Campbell
(Fallin LPYS)

Cheshire Fire Service

FIRE BRIGADES Union members in Cheshire are taking industrial action over job cuts proposed by Cheshire County Council.

When each Party announced their budget plans at the beginning of January, the Labour group proposed no actual cuts in the Fire Service. But the County Council is being run by an alliance of Tory and Liberal councillors despite Labour being the biggest group.

The Tory plans proposed downgrading one fire station at Birchwood near Warrington from a permanently manned shift station to a semi-part time daymanning station, with the loss of 24 jobs. Their cuts would also mean reducing the number of stations designated as key stations. That would mean ending the usual practice of appliances from neighbouring stations being called in to maintain fire cover when one station's appliances are called out.

The Liberal's proposals were even worse. They too wish to downgrade Birchwood

station. Their plans would eliminate not just some, but all stations as key stations, and further reduce the number of firemen at two other stations by manning emergency tenders alternately. The effect of that would be, for example, to have two fire appliances and only enough personnel to man one.

So far these are only proposals, but the FBU members in Cheshire recognise that if the Tory/Liberal alliance are able to carry out these cuts, more are to follow.

For that reason there has been a unanimous agreement by the FBU in Cheshire to answer emergency calls only. It is likely this action will be maintained until the full Council meeting in February unless there is a change of heart by either the Tories or the Liberals.

By Mick Eaves
(Vice Chairman, FBU
Cheshire Brigade
Committee)

Carousel continues

THE STRUGGLE at Carousel Wafers in Glasgow continues. Young workers are fighting for recognition of their union, the TGWU.

This strike is no local storm in a teacup. It is a challenge by the bosses to basic trade union rights.

These young workers have demonstrated their commitment and ability to fight the Tories and they must be given the full support of the labour and trade union movement.

A victory at Carousel would act as a beacon to young workers everywhere in the

£25 wage cut

SOUTH WEST Thames Regional Health Authority management are stopping subsistence allowances that have been paid to my members for over thirty years.

In order to meet the demands of the government on cash limits, the RHA is refusing to pay allowances up to £25 a week to our mobile workers and night telephonists at the National Blood Transfusion Centre in Tooting, South London.

This loss of earnings is disastrous for people who only earn £62 basic for a 40 hour week. In order to make a living all our workers do a 60, 70, even 80 hour week, including lates and nights and weekends.

Our night telephonists work from 5pm to 9am. Because they do not have meal breaks—there are no canteen facilities—they had a local agreement made 25 years ago that they would have a subsistence allowance in lieu plus 10% bonus. The bonus was

supposed to rise to 25% but it never was raised. The allowance which is only earned for weekend work is worth £4 a night.

Recently management announced in a letter that they were ending the allowance for all the telephonists and for the mobile workers where trips were less than 3 miles from the centre. There was no consultation with us, no negotiation. When we complained they threatened to end the bonus payment as well!

Our members have decided that if they are not going to

receive their allowance, then we will return to the centre every lunch-break to eat. This will mean a serious loss of time for collecting blood. The telephonists are stopping selecting and distributing the blood. Now they answer the phone and call in a doctor or technician to handle the job—this will cost the RHA around £20 a call.

It remains to be seen what management will do.

by Kelly Mannah
(Wandsworth COHSE
Branch Secretary)



Health workers in North-East demonstration in support of 1982 pay claim.

COHSE election

KEVIN MULLINS, a Militant supporter, has been elected onto the NEC of the Confederation of Health Service Employees from the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Kevin's vote at the regional council, which was double the vote he received last year, means that he and left-winger Chris Brace represent this region, a complete transformation since the 1982 dispute.

Committed to fighting for the implementation of conference policies, Kevin's manifesto outlined the main demands that he would be campaigning on: 35 hour week, national minimum wage, restoration of the cuts, all COHSE policy.

In addition Kevin argued

the need for election of all officials and stressed that as an NEC member he will not be accepting any privileges that are not available to ordinary members.

One disadvantage of being an NEC member is that you are not able to speak at COHSE conference, but those who know Kevin will realise that you cannot keep a good man down—it will take more than a few rules to keep him quiet!

The task now is to build on the traditions already established and make COHSE in Yorkshire and Humberside a model of what a democratic, campaigning union should be. What has been achieved here must also be taken to the rest of the country.

Kevin Mullins spoke to
Colin Piper
(COHSE 257 branch)

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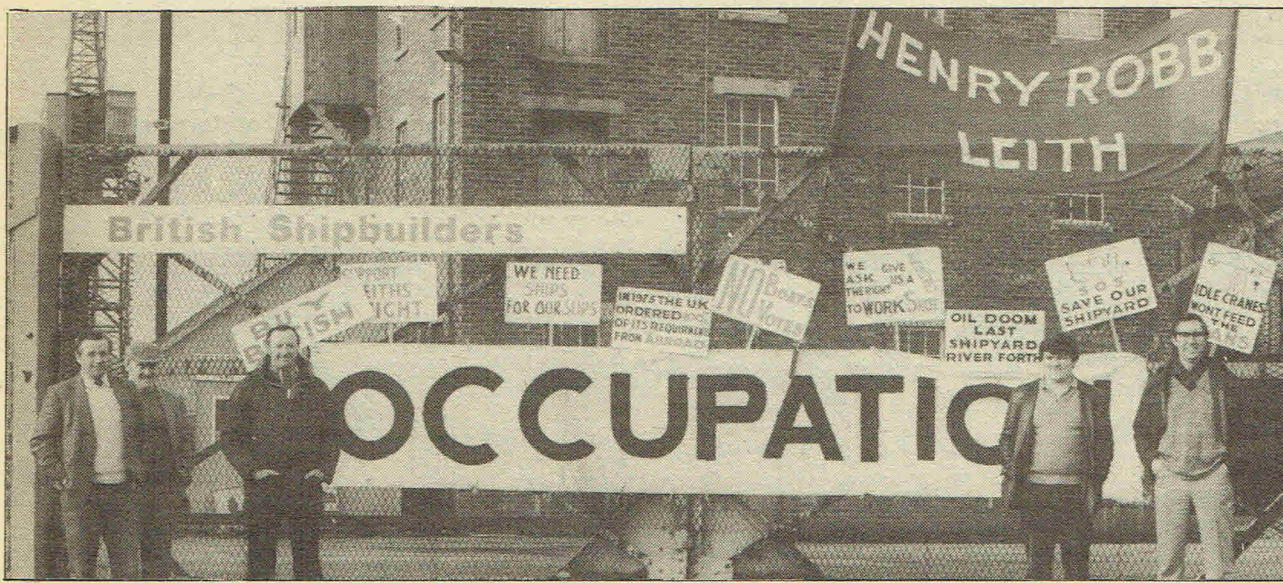


Photo: Rick Matthews (JFL)

Support for this shipyard operation to: Henry Robb Occupation Committee, c/o Leith Labour Party, 12 Leith Walk, Edinburgh.

Henry Robb's kidnapped submarine

"BETRAYAL IS a strong word, but that's what happened here".

This remark from John Bogie, a fourth generation plater at Henry Robb shipyard in Leith, shows the bitterness and anger that workers are feeling about the attempt to close Robb's in Edinburgh with the loss of 390 jobs.

The yard was officially closed by British Shipbuilders last Friday and is now the scene of a work-in. The workers at Robb's are determined to save their jobs and keep the yard alive.

Since the men occupied the yard 12-hour around the clock shifts are being worked. "There is no question of the management stopping us", a spokesman for the shop stewards said. The campaign has already received strong support from the labour movement and the whole community.

Local Labour MP, Ron

By Eddie Donaghie

Brown, is playing a prominent role in the fight to keep the yard open. As he said: "What is happening at Robb's is happening all over Scotland. Big works closing down and making whole communities jobless. We have got to say enough is enough. If we do not face up to these problems we will be engulfed by

Disaster Leith

disaster. Unemployment is our main social problem which is becoming a time-bomb. The increase in crime and use of drugs are warning signs."

Edinburgh and Leith in particular already has a serious unemployment problem. Along with the growth in drug abuse, (including heroin) it is a damning indictment of the government's failure, especially for young people.

Robb's are presently working on a submarine, which the workers intend to finish and will be holding "hostage" as part of the fight to stop the yard's closure. British Shipbuilders wanted to move the work elsewhere, but John Keggie, shop stewards' convenor at the yard said, "there is no way it is leaving this yard until it is finished."

Despite the decision of the workforce to vote against the national shipbuilding strike the men are learning that they have to fight to save the yard.

1984 has begun badly for many workers in Scotland, with proposed job losses at BL Bathgate, Scott Lithgow on the Clyde and now Robb's in Edinburgh. The Scottish Trade Union Council should

be co-ordinating a fight-back against the Tories' attempts to dismantle the industrial base of Scotland. Many workers, however, will be dismayed at the attempts of the STUC to enter into talks with Mrs Thatcher.

Fight essential

Workers are having to stand up and fight back to save their livelihoods. It is about time the leadership showed the same courage and determination as demonstrated by one of the Robb's workers who said, "We have great faith in the old port. Leith is a community. You can walk down the street and nod to a hundred people. They are not going to let us give up the ghost".

Humber Graving Dock

Grimsby has been shocked by the sudden announcement that private Humber Graving Dock (a ship-repair yard) is to close this week with the possible loss of 500 jobs.

Mass meetings will be held later in the week. But reaction of some of the men was bitter. One boilermaker told me they had just taken a £50 chop in wages to keep the yard open. Another suggested that the

owners were selling up only to reopen in another name but with a reduced workforce.

In an area where unemployment is already above the national average it is crucial every job is fought for. Workers will be looking to the unions to make a stand against this closure.

By Mike Foster

Scotts bakery

THE MOOD of strikers at Scott's Bakery in Liverpool is even more determined.

Strikers on picket duty said "we would rather see this place closed than go back under these conditions. Already one bloke gets home after 8.30pm and has to be here by 7pm in the morning. He has no family life. That's before they even introduced these measures."

Scotts have asked for fifty-eight redundancies out of 400 bakers. There is a total workforce of 800 and this in fifteen months after 155 redundancies.

To maintain the same production the change in the shifts would equal a 69½ hour working week less ½ a day for meals including 4 shifts of 12

hours, one of 11 and one of 9 or 10. This is going back to Victorian days.

A meeting with management took place and all management offered was to hold off for a fortnight - but it would make no difference to their plans.

We have now started Saturday picketing and have total support from all other bakeries. We went up to Cooksons, Lytham St Annes to black this particular bakery. At the moment secondary pickets are only trying to get bakeries out for a day but we will be reviewing this. We still need finance. Money and messages of support should go to the Bakers Union, Priory Road Anfield, Liverpool 4. Ronny Draper and pickets spoke to Lesley Holt.

Beauty Care

TRANSPORT & GENERAL workers at the Beauty Care factory in Eccles, Manchester, are now in the 15th week of their official dispute over trade union recognition and poor and sometimes dangerous working conditions inside the factory.

Some of the workers because of their financial difficulties, have returned to work. Others, rather than go back to work for Beauty Care, were forced on to the dole. However, five of the original

Ford jobs threat

A MASS MEETING of the Ford's Dagenham workers took place on Sunday 29 January, with a good turnout of 10,000 workers.

The high turnout was a clear indication of Ford workers' concern over the future of their jobs. Many felt bitter and angry that Ford Motor Company seem likely to pull out of the UK in future years. The mood was undoubtedly, 'not just words, let's take action'.

Ron Todd pointed out that we had already seen the closure of small operations in Ford, for instance the power station which just a few years ago was capable of supplying the whole of Dagenham with electricity during power cuts. At this point workers were chanting that action should have been taken then.

Strike suspended

Todd went on to say that Sam Toy, chairman of Ford UK, had refused to give any indication of the role that Ford workers in Britain would play in Ford's European operation.

Without any doubt the mood was for action on the 13 February, so it came as some surprise when Ron Todd announced that the NJNC had decided to suspend action until the 22 February when they are due to meet Ford management again over the future of the Dagenham estate.

Ford's have lied once over the foundry and so as to

avert a strike they will no doubt lie again. They have also started threatening loss of redundancy money if industrial action goes ahead. But most foundry workers do not want redundancy they want jobs.

Clear lead

The motion put to the meeting was exceptionally confusing, with many workers abstaining. It seemed to be a vote of confidence in the NJNC, but many who voted against did so because of fear of Ron Todd and his team wavering on the decision to take action. Ford workers have long memories, they don't forget past sellouts in particular the 1981/2 pay dispute when strike action was called off at the last minute.

Many workers were clearly concerned about another sell out over job losses. Ron Todd, however, gave a definite assurance that the future of the Foundry was "non-negotiable."

Ford workers will be more than angry if the leadership let them down. We could even see a mood develop as in the '78 pay dispute when the rank and file moved over the heads of the officials.

A clear lead is required from the trade unions. Most Ford workers know that their own jobs are under threat and a fight is necessary.

By Colin Adams
(AUEW, Ford Foundry, Dagenham)

National action now!

Fordworkers must prepare for all out action to defend jobs.

The decision of the Dagenham mass meeting, to give the National leaders a mandate for all out action shows clearly the mood to fight is there.

At every level serious preparations must begin now for all out action, but the lead must come from the top. Talks with management will lead nowhere unless backed up with action.

A strategy must be drawn up nationally including:

- All out strike.
- Occupation of the

Foundry.

- Solidarity support from other trade unionists.
- International backing through blacking of Fords cars and materials.

This is the only language Fords understand. Who can trust them now? they have lied through their teeth about the future of the Foundry.

The £100m investment in Cologne to produce petrol engines casts a shadow over the Dagenham engine plant. The future of Halewood, with 11,500 workers, is in jeopardy.

Every Ford worker's job is on the line. Fight now!

British Aerospace

AT A mass meeting on Friday, 20 January, 6,500 AUEW shopfloor workers at Walton Division of British Aerospace indicated their disgust at management's derisory pay offer by voting for a walk-out, to be followed by a one-day token strike and overtime ban.

Negotiations have indicated a hardening of attitude by the management who have adopted a take it or leave it approach. The workers, at present involved on the advanced Tornado and Jaguar aircraft are angry that while shareholders receive increased dividends we are offered a less than cost of living increase.

Jobs and pay

They have seen the chairman's wage increase by £16,000 to £73,378 in the two years since British Aerospace was privatised whilst their own pay has not kept pace with

inflation.

As well as being some of the lowest paid aircraft workers in Europe they also face the prospect of redundancy. 850 were announced last week at Manchester and Chester, bringing the total since privatisation to nearly 6,000 throughout BAe.

These job losses are due to a weak management giving in to the Tory government's demand that a 'leaner' aircraft industry is required.

What management should be demanding is immediate government backing for the A 320 Airbus, the advanced turboprop and the Agile Combat aircraft instead of sacking its most valuable asset—its highly skilled workforce.

Unions at all BAe sites must combine and fight for a fairer wage offer and guarantees of no redundancies.

By a Militant supporter
in British Aerospace

BRITISH AEROSPACE workers in Manchester are faced with redundancies for the third time in less than a year.

The latest announcement is of 850 jobs to go between the Woodford factory in Manchester and the Broughton factory in Chester. At Woodford this would mean slashing the workforce by one-third.

Workers will find management's demand unacceptable. Losing a job today means a struggle on the dole in an area where engineering has been decimated.

For those who are left behind there will be no respite as the package includes a massive attack on pay and conditions. For the fifth year running management intend to hold wages well under the rise in the real cost of living.

Not too late

The canteen facilities will be sold off and those workers will also be sacked. Management intend to introduce new productivity deals without giving us any say in the matter.

Union leaders have tried

everything to avoid a confrontation while our pay and conditions have been eroded. Our industry has to an extent escaped the most vicious Tory attacks in the past. But surely this breathing space should have been spent creating real links with other workers in Aerospace and building a combine committee able to fight on a national basis.

It is not too late but the fight back must start now.

By Frank Clayton
(British Aerospace, Woodford, Manchester)



Soupdays at Scotts bakery picket

Photo: Bill Parkinson

will force them to negotiate.

We realise that there are many disputes nationally and have made many visits to other strikers. We also realise that the Beauty Care dispute, because it is about union recognition, is the hardest to win. But we are determined to win this dispute.

"The time is never more ripe for the trade union movement to stick together and abolish job schemes and right-wing Tory union laws."

By Paul Henry
(Gorton LPYS)

GEORGE MCGILL, a welder who has worked in the Scott Lithgow yard since he left school seven years ago, has now been laid off. But the mood is to fightback and save the lower Clyde yard; George is now "sitting in the cabins"—taking part in the 'work-on' to defeat Tory plans.

The future of the yard is unclear. Thatcher now looks set to sell the yard off—at a giveaway price—to the Trafalgar House Group, who just happen to be one of the largest contributors to Tory party funds.

Either way, thousands of jobs are at risk, in an area that is already an unemployment blackspot.

George spoke to *Militant*:

The effects of closure in this area would be disastrous—4,200 men would be laid off, but about 8,000 people in the whole area would be without a job. And it could hit a whole lot of other places too. Places that give us the steel for instance.

Devastation

There is no other work in this town. The biggest employer in the town now, apart from us, is IBM. There are 2,500 people there, but it has taken them 30 years to build up to that number. It would take them another 60 years to employ the people that are in here.

The rig they are building here is at the forefront of what anyone else is making. If they finished it there would be plenty more orders coming, because there is a lot of oil in deeper parts of the North Sea, and that rig can drill up to 4,500 feet. There is no other rig that can do that.

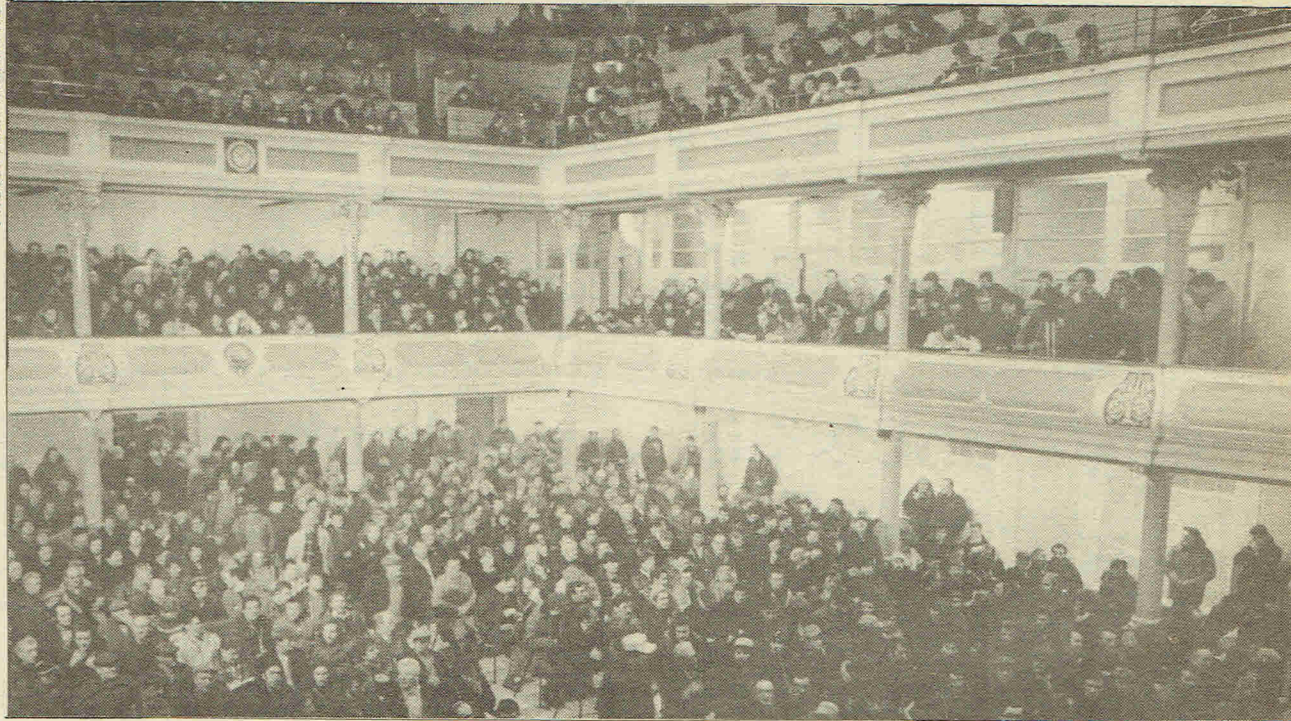
Once they start more exploration and find more oil in deeper places they will want more rigs, so this will be the place to build them. If we can build one, we can build more.

In the papers, they are blaming mismanagement, but the one we have got now is quite good. They have cut costs and saved £7 million by getting rid of sub-contractors. It is the managements of the past—a lot of it has really been their fault.

I have seen a small section—only about 20 square yards—that has been there for eighteen months; taken apart, fixed again, getting bars put on it, and then torn off again. All because Ben Odeco, the American firm designing the rig, were changing the plans. They'll send a plan over, the platers get it and build the section, but they are re-adjusting the plans over there in America and then sending a different plan over, so we have got to take the section apart again and build it up the way that

Scott-Lithgow will fight

Photo: Rick Matthews



Scott Lithgow workers hold a mass meeting on 20 January at Greenock Town Hall.

they want it. Then they will change it again; it keeps going on like this, costing money all the time.

You can't blame the men. They are building it the way they get it in the plans, nobody says this to the papers.

All this has been orchestrated by this government. It is definitely political. They have put a lot of money into Scott Lithgow and they have had a lot of losses because of all the messing about. They have had three different chairmen

in there in the last four years.

It is a good workforce. They got an Oil rig expert in there and he says that the workforce is great and if they keep the yard going it could be in the forefront of this type of production within six months.

If we don't get these orders they'll have to go up north to Nigg or somewhere. We are paid £3 an hour. But if I were working up north I'd be getting almost £6 an hour.

The last job that I was doing in the yard was a

specialised job. They would give someone £8 or £9 an hour up north, but they only gave me an extra 50 pence for doing it here. It is the most highly technical thing you can get and we are building it for coppers. Yet they are still wanting to close us down.

Build support

Next week we are hiring buses and we are going to Glasgow and other places for talks with MP's and union

officials from other yards, to see what sort of support we are going to get. We are getting financial support now from other British Shipbuilders yards.

We won't give up

We don't just want to lie down and give our jobs up. We want to fight to keep the yard open.

Birmingham jobs

(FROM FRONT PAGE)

Birmingham demo
—see details on page 4

unit. They are paid £250. Is that the nearest the capitalist system can find to a job?

The labour movement must call a halt; we've taken too much already. A fighting campaign to tap the moun-

ting hostility to the Tories is a burning priority. Force out the Tories and ensure a socialist Labour government provides jobs for all.

By Jeremy Birch

Liverpool battle plan

THE MERSEYSIDE labour movement looks set for an unprecedented campaign to defend the Liverpool City Council from Tory attacks. Plans are being drawn up to hold the largest series of factory gate and workshop meetings ever held in the area, to prepare workers for the coming struggle with the Tory government.

Budget day

The Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Movement Campaign Committee, which called the highly successful November 19 demonstration, has mapped out a programme of action in the build up to the council's crucial 'budget day' on 29 March.

The week of the 29th coincides with the TUC's 'Local

Democracy' week in defence of local authorities. To strengthen this TUC campaign, the committee are calling for a 'Day of Action' on March 29. They will be calling on the local movement to hold a 24 hour stoppage and support a mass demonstration on that day.

The plan includes; **February 6-16:** public meetings will be held throughout the area to build public support for the council.

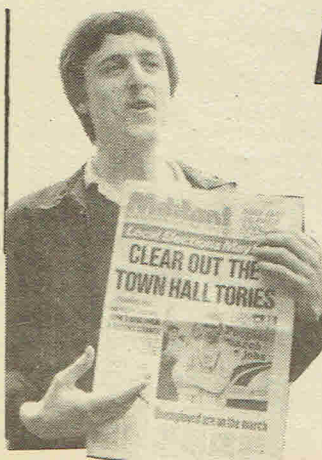
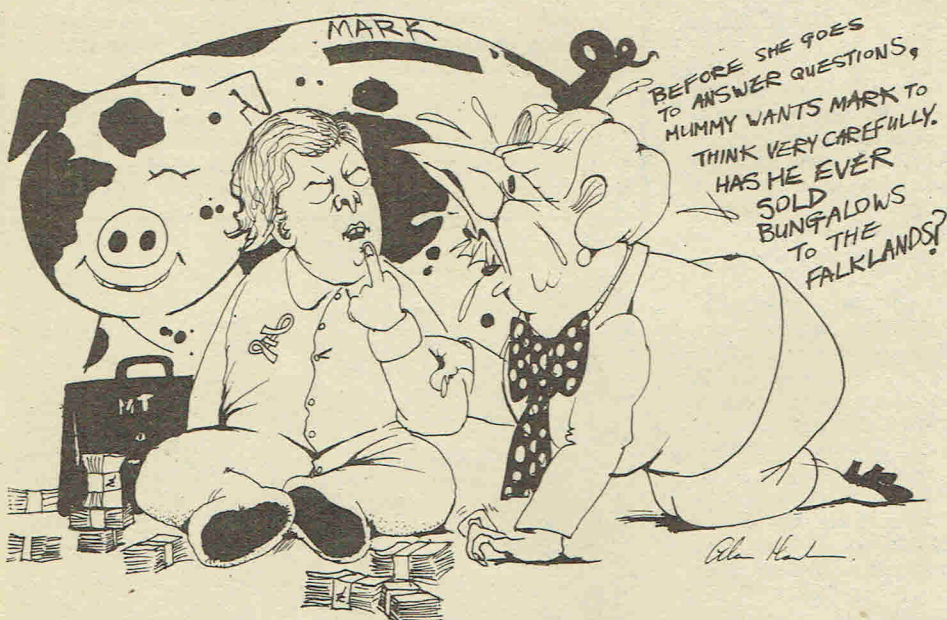
February 9: a meeting of trade union activists will be called, to prepare for a special conference of delegates from the Merseyside labour movement on **February 27.** This will discuss the shopfloor campaign and raise the question of a stoppage on Budget Day, March 29, as a show of strength to the Tories.

Also there will be a lobby of Parliament by councillors, trade unionists and activists on **March 22.**

Industrial action

After this extensive campaign, a re-call conference is planned for **March 26.** This will report back from the workplace campaign, discuss plans for March 29 and also plan out action, including the possibility of an all-out stoppage, should any on the Liverpool councillors be surcharged following Budget Day.

Interview with Deputy council leader Derek Hatton—see page 13.



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