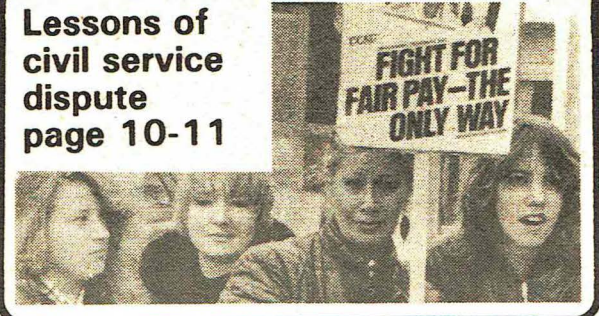


Lessons of  
civil service  
dispute  
page 10-11



# SMASH THE TORIES!

By Julie Taylor  
(Liverpool City Councillor)

## Sack Oxford. Make police accountable!

The Tories have no solutions to the problems of Toxteth.

Tory minister Heseltine's travelling flea circus which visited Liverpool offered only pious hopes of reinvestment in the area.

Meanwhile, the police continue to act as if force was the only 'answer' to the city's problems.

This Saturday (15 August) there will be a demonstration in Liverpool calling for the sacking of Merseyside's Chief Constable, Kenneth Oxford.

Local residents have been appalled at the persistent harassment in the Toxteth area. Even people who had previously been sympathetic to the police have been turned by the indiscriminate use of CS gas and the vicious attacks on local people.

Following the death of David Moore, an enquiry is to be held into this incident.

But how much faith can anyone have in this when the police

themselves are in charge of the investigation? It took Mersey police days even to come up with the name of the police driver of the car involved.

By itself, the dismissal of Oxford would solve little. Only moves to make the police accountable and under democratic control could help to solve this problem.

Merseyside's police budget is the costliest outside London, at £40,000 per thousand inhabitants. When the cuts which Liverpool's Liberal council have rained on the area's services threatened to affect the police, Oxford accused even the Liberal-Tory council of "piracy" and "criminal negligence".

The real criminal negligence has been the social conditions which have driven the Toxteth youth to riot. Here, too, the Tories



Heseltine on his visit to Liverpool. His class have ruined cities like Liverpool. We must not rely on them to solve the problems now. Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

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BACK PAGE

EDITORIAL: Make  
police accountable  
Page 2

## US AIR TRAFFIC DISPUTE - SOLIDARITY IS VITAL

By Frank Bonner  
& Alistair Nicholson  
(CPSA CAA group,  
personal capacity)

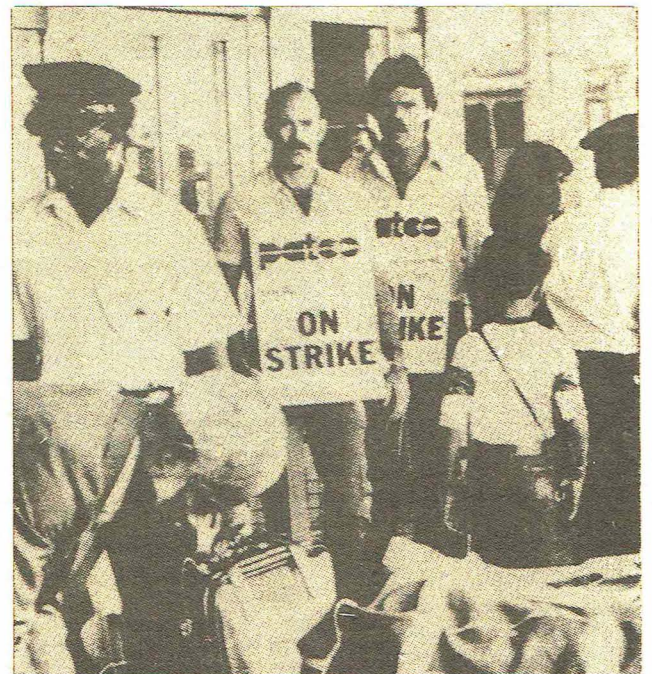
"US government arresting striking Controllers and putting them in handcuffs, leg irons and chains in transporting them to jail.

"Strike continues regardless of firings, chains and imprisonment. Intimidation, threats and blatant insensitive union busting tactics will not work. Fraternally, PATCO.

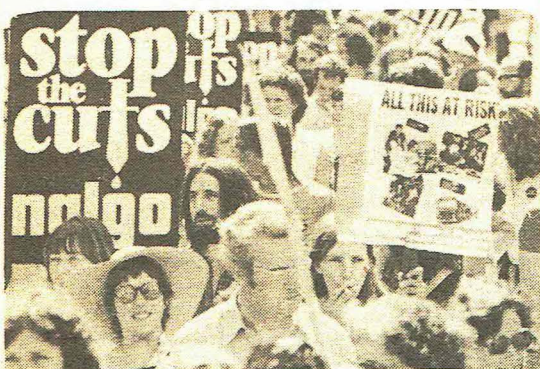
reply the Trade Union Side of the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) received from the United States last week. It was in reply to our

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Further details on the  
dispute—page four



Striking controllers in New York



LOTHIAN FIGHTS

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LPYS SUMMER CAMP

—page 3

This was the dramatic

# Militant

## Make police accountable

The first demand of Saturday's demonstration in Liverpool will be for the sacking of Mr Kenneth Oxford.

Liverpool's police chief has become a notorious symbol of aggressive, provocative, and racially biased policing.

However, the demand for Oxford's sacking, which in itself might change very little, raises the question of the democratic accountability of the police.

The street clashes which have erupted in Britain's decayed inner-city areas arise from the appalling conditions created by the decline of British capitalism. But the immediate cause, in almost every case, has been provocative action by the police.

For years, anger has been building up at the methods of the police, particularly amongst young people, especially blacks, who bear the main brunt of aggressive policing methods.

Socialists are not opposed to the police fighting crime and arresting criminals. This is just a crude smear used by the Tories and the police chiefs as a blanket "reply" to any criticism

levelled at their methods.

To fight real crime and arrest the real criminals—as even more intelligent, 'liberal' policemen like Alderson, Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, recognised—needs the support of the people generally.

For the police to use force and more force and generally behave like "an army of occupation" is entirely counter-productive as far as effective measures against real crime are concerned.

Lacking any real democratic accountability, the police in recent years have more and more acted as if they are a law unto themselves. This has been encouraged by the Tories.

And there has been a steady accumulation of evidence of more and more repressive and arbitrary methods being used by the police.

There have been numerous cases of the police arbitrarily stopping and searching blacks and young people; of bending or ignoring the law; of twisting evidence or blatantly framing suspects; of beating prisoners; and of the death of prisoners in police custody.

There have also been numerous scandals of police



Toxteth resident in conversation with Michael Foot last week. Behind: Tony Mulhearn, Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate for Toxteth.

involvement in bribery and corruption, with a growing suspicion that more and more is being covered up.

In recent weeks, many ordinary workers who were previously prepared to give the police the benefit of the doubt have had their eyes opened by the brutal response of the police to recent events in areas like Toxteth, Moss Side and Brixton.

Oxford, Anderton, McNee and other police chiefs cast in the same mould have only one answer—force and yet more force. But their statements also make it quite clear that they not only favour more forceful methods against rioters, but they advocate the strengthening of the police's repressive apparatus for use against the labour movement itself.

In their eyes, anyone who criticises the system and ad-

vocates radical change is a dangerous 'subversive'.

Marxists do not encourage rioting. We defend the right of workers, youth and black people to defend themselves and their homes against attack. But we do not support looting, arson and the throwing of petrol bombs.

However, the labour movement must recognise that it is the Tories and their rotten system which is responsible for the violence which has broken out on the streets. They have created the intolerable conditions which have produced a spontaneous, angry and often blind movement of revolt.

Labour must provide a bold, socialist alternative to channel the movement of revolt into effective channels. The labour movement must demonstrate in action that it stands for an end to

the horror of capitalism and for the socialist transformation of society.

The labour movement cannot stand aside and allow the police chiefs and the Tories (unfortunately with the support of some right-wing Labour leaders) to use revulsion at looting and burning as a pretext for strengthening the repressive apparatus of big business.

While not condoning petrol-bomb throwing and looting, the labour movement must strongly defend those unjustly arrested as a result of the riots. Members of the Labour Party and the trade unions have themselves seen scores of arbitrary arrests in police "mopping up" exercises in Brixton, Toxteth and elsewhere.

Rioting, moreover, does not justify the police going on the rampage, with the vicious beating of prisoners

and bystanders and arbitrary, destructive house-raids. There can be no justification for the police fabricating evidence to support trumped-up charges. And there is no justification for young people being sent down for long prison sentences entirely incommensurate with their alleged crime.

The labour movement must therefore take up the defence of those unjustly arrested, and demand a full review of the convictions and sentences resulting from the clashes on the streets.

Above all, however, the labour movement must demand that the police be subject to democratic accountability. The sacking of Oxford, in itself, will not fundamentally change the role of Merseyside's police.

The police must be subject to the supervision of democratically elected watch committees, which will have the power to appoint and dismiss senior officers as well as to supervise and check the role and methods of the police.

Democratic watch committees must be able to discipline and, if necessary, dismiss any police officers found guilty of serious misconduct or illegal actions. There can be no doubt that there are some corrupt and racist elements within the police, and they must be kicked out.

At the same time, however, the labour movement must campaign for full trade union rights for policemen and police women. In the past, the police themselves have taken strike action and have at various times demonstrated sympathy for workers in struggle.

It is in the workers' vital interests that the police force should be made democratically accountable and that the police ranks should be brought into the trade union movement.

## WHY WE'VE CALLED LIVERPOOL 8 DEMO

Liverpool Labour Councillor, Pauline Dunlop, spoke to members of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee about the problems facing black youth and the reasons for calling Saturday's demonstration.

If young black people go shopping in the big stores in town they are always followed by floor walkers, and continually approached by shop assistants. No black people are employed in any of the major city stores.

There has been also a lot of press mis-representation about the role played by the defence committee. When the patients in the hospital were in danger because of the fires the police were nowhere to be seen, and it was the defence committee, along with local people, who evacuated the area with the help of the staff.

Yet the next day the press reported that it was the police who had evacuated the hospital, and that ambulances were being stoned. That was a complete fabrication.



Costa del Toxteth? Part of the slum clearance programme that has virtually ground to a halt.

Photo: A Wiard (Report)

I asked why the defence committee was set up. Initially, I was told, it was set up to assist people in the area because of the number of people arrested, to organise visits to people be-

ing held on remand in Risley, for instance. Before the defence committee stepped in, nobody was getting bail, and the committee has assisted in getting people bail and also in providing legal

facilities. Because of the police harassment there was large mistrust in the area, and the defence committee lodged complaints. People who go to see the defence commit-

tee at the Charles Wooten Centre can speak more freely there. It is a place where people can come and see that help is available.

The defence committee have received a lot of sup-

port from the social services and the probation service and in fact, in some cases, do a lot of the work for them.

The defence committee is also paying for the reconstruction of the killing of David Moore. All funds are for either David Moore or the defence committee, and receipts are given for all donations and the accounts are open to scrutiny by the community. A monthly list of finance will be published.

The defence committee is calling Saturday's demonstration first and foremost for the resignation of Oxford, the Merseyside police chief. The resignation of Oxford is not the only problem.

But because of Oxford's policies, they see this as the first step to ending police harassment. In their words, Oxford has declared war on people in the area. They have a right to be on the streets, people have a right to live peacefully in their homes without the police breaking in and ransacking them.

Police harassment, however, is not the only issue by any means. One of the Defence Committee asked what future can people see for their children. It's a sick society which has to be changed.

## Militant Readers Meeting

**"When the Marxists gained the majority in the Young Socialists at the beginning of the 'seventies, our ideas met a conspiracy of silence in the Tory press. We cannot complain today! Although, of course, the Tory press does everything it can to try and discredit and distort the ideas of the 'Militant'."**

Peter Taaffe, editor of 'Militant', addressing a Militant Readers' Meeting which most of the camp attended, explained the impact our ideas were now having on British society.

The British ruling class feared us, he said, as British society increasingly goes into crisis. Society has reached its 'Rubicon', or crucial stage: "The period of social peace of the boom years of the 1950s and '60s are now over. We are entering a period of shakey booms and deepening slumps."

This had polarised the face of British politics, but only the Marxists could offer the way out to the working class. The Tory Party, with its process of 'rising damp' amongst the government 'wets', was increasingly looking towards dumping Thatcher, as the government's policies of monetarism were provoking the wrath of workers against the capitalist system. The Social Democrats were being built up to act as a safety valve for British capitalism, as the ruling class feared the election of a 'left' Labour government.

However, the right wing of the Labour Party, and along with them, many so-called 'Lefts', looked at the situation and drew totally the wrong conclusions.

Marxism was winning support amongst the working class. Peter quoted the example of the recent Irish general election, where in Galway a Labour candidate stood on the radical policies accepted at conference by the party's rank and file.

By doing so he was able to mobilise 200 local shop stewards behind him in the election campaign, and was duly elected. In contrast, the right-wing leader of the Irish Labour Party failed to get re-elected.

This point was highlighted by a comrade from Stafford LPYS. He told how in a campaign against unemployment in their area, they mobilised 200 people for the first ever demonstration held by the labour movement in that town. During the four-week campaign running up to the demo, they raised £400 by canvassing for support—one doctor agreed to give the local Youth Campaign Against Unemployment £5 every month!

And raising money stayed on the agenda for the fighting fund collection—this raised £1,088!

# Singing in the rain!

**We are always prepared for sharp turns and sudden changes. Last week's 'Militant' told how the annual LPYS summer camp was basking in blazing sunshine.**

However, by the time that issue reached the 600 Young Socialists camped out in the wilds of the Forest of Dean, the deluge that was sweeping Britain brought teaming rain to the site.

Far from being downhearted, however, many Young Socialists celebrated the fact by having their picture taken standing in the pouring rain proudly holding up the article in

last week's paper. It was titled 'Sunshine and Socialism'!

But whereas capitalist society was thrown into chaos by the severe weather, the YS were prepared for this 'sudden change' and the camp organisation went into top gear to make sure discomfort was kept to a minimum. Convoys of transit vans ferried damp clothing to and from local laundrettes, and marquees opened up to the few people who were 'flooded out'.

For the children, the

crèche organisers laid on cartoons in the film tent and trips out to local cinemas and tourist attractions (their main problem was keeping the 'adult' children out of showings of Woody Woodpecker!)

While many of the sporting activities were curtailed by the rain, other entertainment carried on. The London team, the 'Brain Cells', won the quiz competition (a rival London team, the 'Mentmorons', were knocked out in the first round!).

And as usual the highlights of the week were the two club nights, where Young Socialists made their own entertainment, drawing on the wealth of talent within the LPYS.

This year nearly 600 joined the camp. Judging by the response of those who came for the first time, there will be many more there next year, come sunshine or rain.

It was great. What did I like best? The Militant Readers' Meeting, the club night, the sport, I enjoyed everything really. What got me most was the atmosphere. There's nae bother. You've got people here from every walk of life but there's no hassle. Everyone's on an equal footing.

—Gary Armstrong, Gateshead East LPYS



What surprised me was how well organised the camp has been. It's run very smoothly, but not from above. Rather, everyone takes part. I really enjoyed the Irish band Crusheen, who played on the first weekend.

—Frank McDonagh South Herts LPYS



I think like for most members, this has been an excellent holiday for me. What's made it is the comradely behaviour. While the social events in the evenings have been great, I think the pub down the road is worth a mention with its scrumpy at 40p a pint!

—Terry Watts from Erdington



I think the camp has been very good. In Sweden, supporters of the Marxist paper 'Offensiv' hold similar camps, although the Swedish Young Socialists organisation itself only holds such camps every so often. I thought the Militant Readers' Meeting very good. In Sweden, Marxists within the Socialist Party are under attack, with supporters of 'Offensiv' being expelled. But this week has inspired me to fight even harder for the ideas of Marxism in the Swedish labour movement.

—Maria Berg Swedish Young Socialist

## Summer Camp reports by Bob Wade

For me the best debate was the seminar on the army and the attitude the Young Socialists should take to soldiers. It was a real good discussion. On the social events, I thought the discos in the evening the best.

—Liz Matthews East Cleveland LPYS



It has been a very good balance of politics and fun. What astonished me was how highly organised everything was, even in the heavy weather. I particularly liked the seminar on the monarchy. Coming from Germany, and after seeing the Royal Wedding events the week before, I was confused as to why the monarchy seemed 'popular'. But after the seminar and after discussing with the English comrades, I have a better understanding of the situation and realise the factors involved.

—Dieter Janssen German Young Socialist



The summer camp proves you can mix politics with pleasure. The balance is just right. It is ironic that on Wednesday, when the camp sports day was held and there were no political seminars in the afternoon, there were quite a few people left wondering what to do, with no meetings to go to!

For me, the best seminars were held by Mick Brooks on the origins of British capitalism. This comrade has the art of explaining things well. Economic subjects can be dry and dusty affairs, but Mick puts it into a language everyone can understand, and he has quite a sense of humour.

—Pete Medhurst full time official, National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers



The Irish folk band 'Crusheen', performing their brand of folk music, reels and Irish labour songs. Photo: Militant

## Militant v Solidarity

**"The Labour Party has moved to the left, and I have moved to the left with it!"**

Comments such as these from David Ennals MP during his debate with Peter Taaffe, editor of 'Militant', raised many an eyebrow among the Young Socialist audience.

This debate was the highlight of political events during the second half of the week at camp. David Ennals a member of Solidarity, argued against the policies of 'Militant'. However, the debate was somewhat one-sided—as Peter Taaffe said, "Putting it mildly, David Ennals' views do not correspond with those of the Young Socialists."

In putting Solidarity's programme, David Ennals outlined a 10-point plan which he believed would unite the party. He said Solidarity MPs would take 'serious note' of policies agreed at Labour Party conference, but said they had the 'right to disagree'. He did not believe in 'loyalty oaths', rather the need for 'free debate'.

But the Young Socialist audience took 'serious note' of David Ennals' statements on what would be the reaction of the Parliamentary

Labour Party should Tony Benn be elected Deputy Leader of the party. He said he felt Labour MPs could not be led by "someone who could not command the support of us in Parliament." He said he would be prepared personally to make a 'constitutional issue' of this, although he added he would not advocate this road "at the moment".

In concluding, he said Labour could not win unless it stood as a united party.

However, Peter Taaffe exposed some of David Ennals' 'bedfellows' in Solidarity, pointing to those who had advocated witch-hunts.

He also told of the 100 MPs who came to the support of Reg Prentice when the rank and file of the Newham North East Labour Party fought a battle to remove him as Labour MP. When Prentice lost, he simply joined the Tory Party and is now a sitting Tory MP. Referring to the rank and file LP members of Newham, Peter remarked, "How wise they were!"

Peter added, "David Ennals has not understood that the shift to the left in the Labour Party has not happened by accident or by 'Militant' supporters parachuting down into constituencies and taking them over—to believe that shows

contempt for the labour movement."

The failed pro-capitalist policies of past Labour governments had been exposed in the eyes of the rank and file of the labour movement, he said, and the deepening crisis of British capitalism had led many Labour activists to seeing the urgent need for socialist policies. 'Militant' had grown in support, not through conspiracies, but by its supporters patiently explaining our ideas and programme over the years.

Commenting on the policies now put forward by the right wing and some members of Solidarity, Peter said it was the same dish that had been served up by failed Labour governments, but spiced up with a few new policies in an attempt to take away the bad taste left in many workers' mouths.

Peter warned of the dangers that would face the labour movement if it failed to take up the socialist transformation of society. The recent orgy of the Royal Wedding was no accident, he said. The forces of reaction were being built up in this country as a counterweight to a future left Labour government.



Mick Brooks speaking on the 'Origins of British capitalism'

Photo: Militant

# US AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS:

# DEFENDING HARD WON GAINS

**PATCO started new contract negotiations earlier this year for wage improvements to protect living standards.**

Working controllers, who are the majority and who carry out the real arduous tasks of controlling aircraft, earn \$16,000 a year rising to a maximum for top grades of \$38,000—and calling for working hours and earlier retirement.

The latter demands reflect the extraordinary stress of their jobs and the fact that many of them become medically unfit by the age of 45 and even lower, well before the current retiring age of 50.

The volume of air traffic in the USA, coupled with the constant equipment failures, put the job high up on the league table of "stress and strain" occupations!

A provisional agreement was reached in June by PATCO negotiators and the Federal Aviation Authority (The FAA is the counterpart of the UK Civil Aviation Authority).

The offer was rejected by about 95% of the controllers, but the FAA refused to re-open the negotiations and the controllers decided to withdraw their services.

Despite a hastily obtained court injunction by the FAA, the controllers walked out.

Reagan decided to take on PATCO. He obviously felt (like Thatcher with the Civil Servants) that they would be a "push over" and an easy victory would intimidate organised labour, particularly in the public services in America not to fight to defend their

**By Frank Bonner and Alistair Nicholson**  
(CPSA CAA Group EC, personal capacities)

interests against Reagans' harsh cuts in public expenditure.

## Massive fines

A US Federal judge in Kansas City ordered a number of PATCO officials to jail for contempt of court. He ruled that they had violated a temporary restraining order against the strike.

The judge also imposed a civil penalty of \$100,000 on the local union. This has been followed up by a Federal judge in New York imposing fines of \$100,000 (£55,000) an hour, or \$2.4m a day on the union to apply for as long as the strike lasts.

That was on top of the \$250,000 a day fine levied by a court in Washington at government request.

## Reagan orders "sackings"

The attempts to financially cripple the union failed. Reagan then personally decided to authorise the sacking of the striking controllers. Dismissal notices have begun to be issued.

The ranks of PATCO have remained firm. Like Thatcher, Reagan has been proven wrong. The Controllers have shown they are

no push over, and the strike now looks certain to be a protracted one.

## US support

PATCO has received support from some groups of US workers. However, the AFL-CIO (TUC equivalent) has not yet instructed all US unions to observe the PATCO picket lines or organise solidarity action.

The AFL-CIO must seek to black all U.S. airports and rally public service workers in support of the Controllers and against the brutal anti-union policies of the Government and the 1955 "No strike" law for Federal employees.

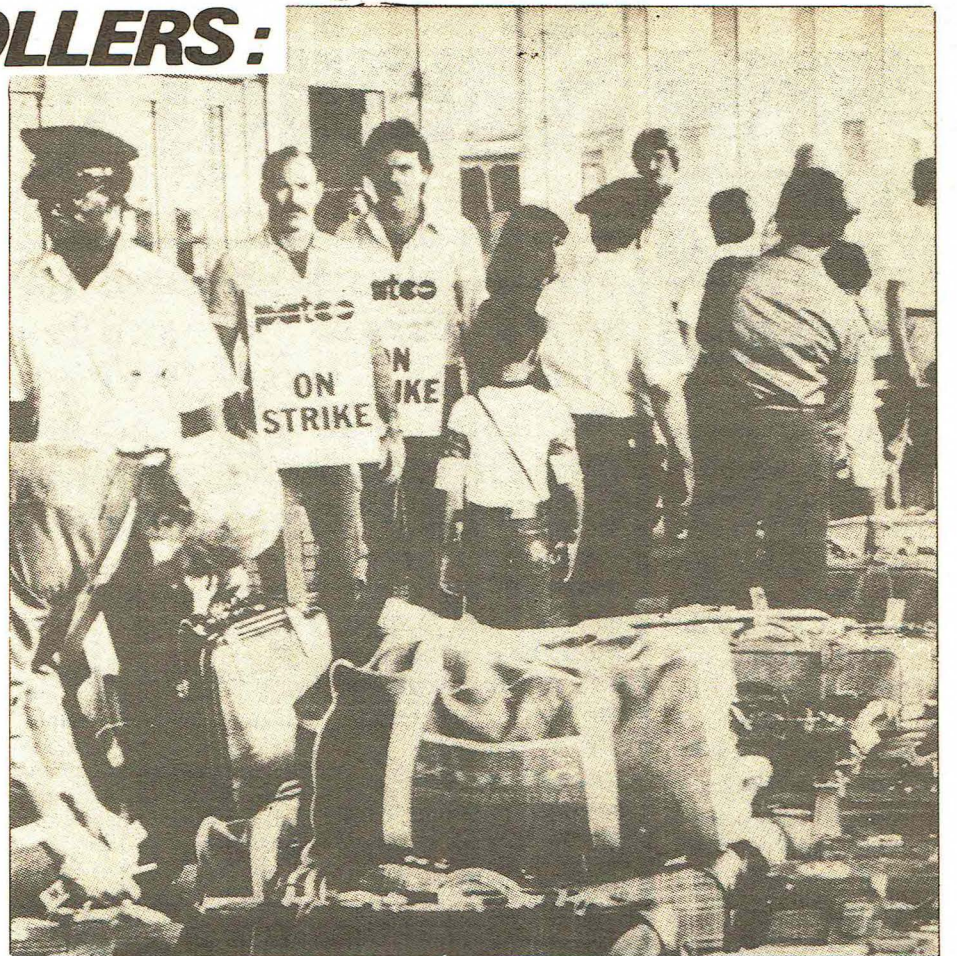
## International solidarity

Sixty US airport towers have already been closed. 50% of US commercial flights have been cut. Passenger levels have fallen. United, the largest airline in the US, has already seen a drop of 20,000 passengers a day indicating passengers' concern over air safety.

The strike is costing the airlines an estimated \$35 million a day. Air transport is of vital importance in the USA for both trade and communications.

It costs \$139 to fly from Washington to Los Angeles. It would cost you more for the petrol to drive your car. There are 14,000 domestic flights a day criss-crossing the country carrying about 3 million passengers.

The controllers' dispute



**PHOTOS: Above. Striking controllers in New York. Below: Reagan's Wild West answer to trade union action: An air traffic controller in chains and leg irons.**



raises vital questions of the economic recession in the USA, the nature of the Reagan government, the need for trade union organisation, international ATC solidarity and once again the need for a party of labour linked to the trade union movement.

It also gives British workers a glimpse of what Thatcher and the bosses would like to see in Britain. A 'Daily Mail' editorial (8 August) called for similar laws to those being used by Reagan to be introduced in Britain.

While the British bosses already fear that such a move would see a general strike and the bringing down of the Tory government, the trade union movement must not be taken in by the soothing words of Prior & Co.

The objectives of the British Tories and Reagan are the same.

- ★ Release the jailed PATCO officials
- ★ Reinstate the controllers
- ★ Drop all charges and fines.
- ★ Victory to the Controllers.
- ★ Defend controllers' living standards, health and working conditions.

# SOLIDARITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

telegram of "fraternal greetings and best wishes to their brothers and sisters in PATCO."

The American union PATCO (The Professional Air Traffic Controllers Association) are determined to win their claim (see details above), despite legal and financial attacks, the use of military personnel and the recruitment of strikebreaking force.

Even though the controllers were released from imprisonment when they were dismissed from their posts, the

struggle is arousing intense interest and support in the USA and internationally.

Even though air traffic controllers are a comparatively well paid section of the working class, trade unionists will not stand by and see these basic rights stripped away.

At the request of the Civil and Public Services Association CAA Group secretary, John Macreadie, representatives of CPSA (representing air traffic control assistants) and Institute of Professional Civil Servants (IPCS) representing the con-

trollers, met to discuss the dispute on Friday 7 August.

The unions decided to publicise the dispute in the UK and consult their members on supporting action.

The two unions have publicly expressed their concern about the safety of air traffic in the USA. They are drawing attention to the following factors:

- It is now being handled by unqualified civil staff;
- Military personnel unqualified for civil systems are controlling live traffic in some airports which handle UK generated traffic, eg Los Angeles, Chicago and New York;
- They are using "Management" staff who have no recent experience of air traffic control;
- Also being used are staff

who have previously failed the strict qualifications criteria either medically or professionally;

□ Staff who have been retired on medical grounds have been threatened with cessation of compensation if they do not return to duty. The present situation is extremely dangerous and had so far resulted in 25 near collisions in the USA (3-6 August).

□ The initial training programme for replacement controllers of six months has been shortened to 40 days and it is the apparent intention of the FBA to operate a "no fail criteria"

□ Many controllers are now obliged to work a 63-hour week, eg the New York ATC Centre, the busiest Centre for UK passengers to the states.

These facts and the fears

over air safety have also been expressed by IFATCA (International Federation of Air Traffic Control Associations). IFATCA has asked all national member Associations to "black American registered aircraft" and "not to clear traffic into American airspace".

Support for such a policy has come from Canadian, Norway and New Zealand Controllers. The British unions are not members of IFATCA, although this is now under review.

Positive support has not yet been forthcoming from the UK Controllers union, the IPCS, although the CPSA (who represent the Air Traffic Control Assistants) and the IPCS are meeting again on the 13 August.

Recognising that UK

ATC staff here just come out of the lengthy Civil Service strike and that the state of union strike funds are precarious, the meeting must nevertheless agree to call on their members to take direct action to give further support to the American workers.

Joint CPSA/IPCS membership meetings should be held urgently to secure support for protest action.

In the meantime, the unions have called on the PSI (Public Services International) to convene an immediate international meeting of all ATC unions to coordinate action. A letter of protest over the actions of the US Government has also been sent to the US Embassy in London.



"We cannot for three decades impoverish our educational standards by 'progressive' methods...advocate the permissive society; destroy children's respect for their parents, describe the lazy 'drop outs' who will not face up to the challenge of ordinary living, as 'Idealists' "

"...Workers backed by their Trade Unions must co-operate with employers to improve productivity, production and our competitiveness..."

"...Meantime, our Police forces must be strengthened, provided with adequate defensive equipment and encouraged to believe that the public has faith in them in their difficult dangerous job".

All the above were taken from a recent editorial on the riots. The Sunday Telegraph? Or the Church Times? No! It was in the AUEW Journal, written by AUEW General Secretary Sir John Boyd. Amongst contributory factors to the riots, he includes 'uncontrolled immigration' and 'manufactured unrest by professional agitators'.

Perhaps if trade union right wingers like Boyd were to give their backing to workers actions in firms like Lawrence Scott, unemployment could be defeated. This would be a far better way of stopping riots than pious hand wringing.

And now for a hard luck story to bring tears to the eyes! King Juan Carlos of Spain missed out on the beanfeast of that wedding because of that "diplomatic incident" over Gibraltar. As if this wasn't tragedy enough, the other night he missed out on another banquet!

He gave his Chef the night off (such a benevolent King), and went out to dine. But he got caught in a huge traffic jam in Majorca, and couldn't get to the restaurant! He had to drive home and wait for his chef to return to make him an egg on toast. It's a hard life being a King!

The Social Democratic Party obviously intends to be at the forefront of the struggle for the liberation of women. Celia Goodhart and Ruth Levy, who work as organisers for the SDP at its expensive Queen Anne Street HQ in Westminster, are among the first nine women ever to be proposed for membership of the exclusive Reform Club.

Ruth Levy told 'The Times' that really she was "not a clubby person". It is not for herself that she is climbing into this Pall Mall citadel of the supposedly radically inclined hangers on of the ruling class: "I rather thought of my grandchildren and how it might affect their lives". It sounds like a variant of that old socialist proverb "Social Democratic ladies believe in the emancipation of women—one by one, beginning with themselves"!

The SAS action in the Gambia was not the only support the Tories gave to dictatorial regimes last week. They also sent £1m special aid to the vicious military junta in El Salvador and they provided a new Army Commander for the Sultan of Oman's forces, General Sir Timothy Creasey, former head of UK land forces and Ex-Commander Army Northern Ireland.

# Diary of an unknown activist

A chance purchase of an old diary at a jumble sale gives a fascinating insight into the life of a trade union activist in the Bradford/Leeds area in 1909.

The unnamed man's clear, but staccato, entries show he was a member of the dyer's union employed by a Mr R.

As a committee member of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), his union branch and Bradford Labour Club, he was obviously kept very busy. On Christmas Eve 1908: "Set off at 12.00 with the ILP choir".

He lists the people visited and records "spice cake, cheese, tarts, beer and spirits at every one. Cigars round at H. Slater's. Arrived home 5.40am. Went to bed 11.00am."

When he was not at the temperance home, or planting leeks, or meeting 'Sara', he was out cycling with the Clarion club or fund raising for the ILP. One entry reads "Nov. 13th. Rabbit pie supper at ILP. 8d per head. Very good".

Numerous entries relate to sermons of a Rev. Alwyn which the comrade found particularly good. This minister was clearly quite sympathetic to the labour movement, for we learn on 29th September "Rev. Alwyn given notice for preaching socialism."

A keen collector of gramophone records, he enjoyed trips to recitals in Bradford. He recalls how he caught the 11.25pm train from Bradford and arrived

By J Greatrex  
(Penistone  
Labour Party)

home in Yeadon at 12.30am. (Bradford had a better transport system then than it has now!)

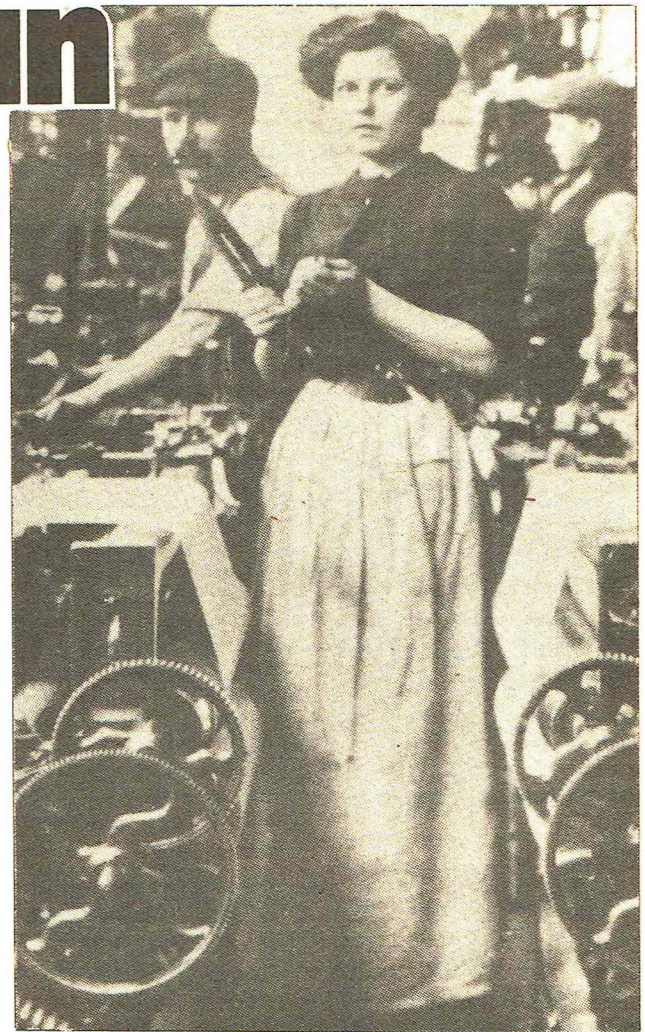
At work he must have held the equivalent of con-venor status. He is asked to find four men for "Mr R." He records who is "on sick at 8/-" who is thrown onto the club, and who is discharged.

He "engaged 2 wagonettes for the Dyers and decorated them for the Yeadon carnival." Success with his float led to a 5/-prize and a shield. There is a photograph of him with the shield on 25 July.

His organisational skills must have been put to the test soon after this. The following entries illustrate union/management relations in the run up to the traditional Yeadon feast in late August. On August 12th, "Mr R. put notice up 'These works will not be closed during feast week'."

Saturday 14th "Procession round Yeadon. Trade unionists mass meeting in Town Hall Square, Hay-hunt, Swales, Lockwood" (These were the ILP speakers at the protest). 18th Wed. "Notice up giving 3 days holiday."

A management concession in the face of mass pressure perhaps, though not without some repercus-



Mill worker in Lancashire 1900s

sions. 21st Sat: "Mr R. wants apologies from dyers concerning mass meeting".

Anyway, they had the three days off. The entries of the 23, 24, 25th of August show how well he filled the Yeadon Feast holiday: 23rd Mon. "Yeadon Feast—rained all day." 24th Tue. "Ada and I went to Morecambe". "Went to Haysham". 25th Wed. "Went to York races on bike. Got wet though. Card sharps and pickpockets". The next day's entry simply records "work at 6.00".

Finally, he records his involvement in a strike at old mill towards the end of 1909. Whether the issue was redundancies or sackings is unclear. The dyers committee held a special meeting on 18 November and the next day "On strike at old mill".

There followed a week of intensive activity. He records how blacklegs were escorted into work and home again and how he has 'visited' two blacklegs. On each night of the week he records a meeting and on Sunday an ILP meeting. A week later all the members of the dyers agreed to pay a

6d levy to aid the strikers.

Such tension built up during the strike that a week later, in Yeadon, a general riot broke out when mounted police were used.

Three weeks of strike action had turned workers outwards and by 11 December premises were being attacked. In particular Mr Watson (The mill owner?) suffered the workers' wrath. "Watson's windows broken. Wife escapes in nightdress."

By Mon. 13th Dec. there was a meeting of the conciliation board. The next day the strikers had got 24 men re-instated, with the rest to resume "as the opportunity arose". "Wages and conditions to be settled between Watson and Hayhurst".

With a week to go before Christmas the comrade's mind turned to the festivities, his 15lb turkey and a rest: "25th Dec. Stayed at home all day".

Here for a change, is the diary of an unknown activist. These are the real heroes, the men and women who built up the labour movement.

## FIREMEN KNOW THEIR ENEMY

The national strike by workers in the Fire Service in 1977 brought about a fundamental change in our conditions.

The determination of members of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) gave us the Fire Service Pay Formula and the subsequent 42 hour week.

The 42 hour week heralded a new dawn in the Fire Service. It gave the chance for the creation of a large number of jobs.

The slogans rang out. Join the Fire Service—a job with a future. However, firemen were forced into battle again with the advent of a Tory government, who were not going to recognise our new pay policy agreed after the 1977 strike with the Labour government.

This time we had TUC backing; even our officers supported us. The result

R G Chalmers  
(Strathclyde FBU)  
looks at Tory plans  
for the Fire Service

was not the pay formula, but as near as dammit.

This we got by fighting. But our battles are not over. Tory minister Whitelaw introduced a Green Paper looking into the viability of reducing Britain's fire service by about third of its strength. This survey was to be conducted by an ad hoc committee made up of everybody but the Fire Service.

The Tory government assured us that this was only a "discussion document" but the results so far are cuts of 1,200 jobs, about 88 appliances and numerous other cuts. Is this the thin edge of the wedge?

The annual FBU conference passed a policy statement spelling out once

again that any attempts by this government to pay off one fireman, or to interfere in our formula would be met with the strongest possible industrial action.

We may have to fight. Heseltine's attacks on rate support grants could decimate the public sector if they are allowed to happen. The Fire Service would clearly be a prime target.

Where are we heading? Our manning levels are being raided to squeeze every last penny—but at what cost?

The first half of the year saw three firemen's lives lost. If these next cuts go ahead how long before we see multiple deaths of firemen and other victims of fires.

The Tories seem willing to sacrifice lives as well as livelihoods to gain its monetarist salvation. We are not, we are a humanitarian service. Britain's firemen will not

accept this government's policies. We'll fight all the way as we learned to in 1977 and last year to protect jobs and our pay.

We will fight all the way for a Labour government committed to real socialist policies.

In doing so we know where we are heading.

'A Fighting Programme for Firemen' Militant pamphlet

20p (+ 10p p&p) from World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

# LOTHIAN-STAND FIRM

In a defiant stand against the Tory government, Lothian Regional Council has this week again refused to cut its budget.

Faced with the threat of £47 m being withdrawn by George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, the Labour Group has so far remained united in opposition to cuts in jobs and services.

At Tuesday's council meeting, Tory, Liberal and SDP Councillors failed in their attempt to carry out cuts of £26m and distribute it back to the rate payers.

Now the Tories will start withdrawing the £47m, at the rate of £1.5m every week until April 1982. This will plunge the Council into severe financial crisis.

Lothian Region has infuriated the Tories by maintaining the highest levels of services in Scotland. They have at least partially offset some of the effects of the economic recession and the government's assault on living standards.

Thatcher and Younger want to make an example of them. Already they have reduced the level of Government financial support to the lowest percentage in the country. Now, under the new local govern-

By Pat Craven

ment Miscellaneous Provision (Scotland) Act, they are taking the unprecedented step of withdrawing money in the middle of a financial year.

They will starve the council of vital cash, needed to pay wages and purchase supplies. They are determined to compel a Labour Council to become its agent

## LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS

'Youth against the dole demonstration'

Saturday 22nd August  
Assemble 11am West  
Pilton Park, Edinburgh  
Rally 2pm Leith  
Academy Duke St.

Speakers Eric Clark  
NUM, Ron Brown MP  
plus the 'Trial of Maggie  
Thatcher.'

and drive down living standards. If necessary they will bankrupt it rather than see social services maintained at their present level.

They must not be allowed to succeed. The Labour Councillors were due to meet as we went to print. It would be a terrible set back, if in response to Younger's attack, they were now to cut back their budget after all.

There have been references by some coun-



Lothian Day of Action, 30 June 1981 Photo: M Tate

cillors to "being in a different ball game" after the Tories withdraw the cash. An article in 'Labour Weekly' last week reported that then the Labour Councillors would be prepared to cut, having hopefully pinned the blame on the Tories.

This policy has never been agreed or even proposed at any Labour Group meeting. If it represents the secret thoughts of one or two councillors, then the group must emphatically disown them, because it is not "a different ball game". Cuts implemented before or after Younger starts withdrawing the money, will have exactly the same serious effect on jobs

and services.

To back down now just when the labour movement is rallying round the Council would be a disaster. The Lothian Region Joint Trade Union Committee has declared that it will call all out strike action if jobs are threatened. (Also see resolution this page). The Labour Party Scottish Executive is organising a demonstration on 12 September. If the Labour Group climbs down now, this growing movement of support and solidarity would be dealt a severe blow.

It will certainly be no answer to put forward a smaller package than the

Tories (£10 m has been talked about) and argue for the lesser of two evils. Younger would never agree to such a package and the group would have started down the slippery slope of haggling over how much to cut.

Most important of all, a climb down now would deal a savage blow against building national opposition to the Tories.

If a principled stand of no cuts is maintained Lothian could become the inspiration for Labour Councils throughout Britain. If Lothian hold out these other councils who are now fixing their budgets for the next financial year will have no excuse for not

following their lead.

Faced with the threat of 100 Lothians, the Government would be unable to continue its attacks. The combined strength of the labour movement can force the government to retreat.

**No compromise.  
No cuts in jobs and services.**

**All out industrial action if the Tories deprive the council of money for wages.  
Full support for the Labour Party demonstration on September 12th.**

**National action to mobilise the entire labour movement behind Lothian Regional Council.**

## Local workers support

The following resolution was discussed and passed by the No 1 Edinburgh Branch of the National Union of Public Employees on 7 August.

"This branch recognises the serious and imminent threat to jobs and services within the Lothian Regional Council caused by Tory cutbacks in the rate support grant. If Younger's proposals are implemented, up to 15,000 jobs would be in jeopardy.

"This branch applauds the stand taken by the Labour Group in facing up to the Tory onslaught and resolves to give the Labour Council its full industrial backing as follows:-

"1. An all out strike of regional employees immediately any employee is issued with a redundancy

notice, any post is abolished without trade union agreement or wages cannot be paid.

"2. For no compromise with the Tories and fight for no cuts, no redundancies and no job losses.

"3. For the establishment of a standing joint shop stewards committee to meet on a regular basis as necessary"

The resolution has been sent to the Scottish TUC, NUPE's Executive, Edinburgh Trade Council, Lothian Labour Group, the Lothian Joint Trade Union Action Committee, and the Labour Party's National Executive.

By Graham Wilson  
(NUPE, Edinburgh No 1 branch)

## PRESS GLAMOURISE SAS THUGS

By Jim Chrystie

"Maggie orders SAS to rescue," proclaimed the 'Daily Express' as it went into raptures over the successful intervention of Britain's elite killer squad against left-wing rebels in the Gambia.

Yet only the day before the same paper had denounced foreign interference in Britain, with its ludicrous 'exclusive' claim that Soviet embassy official, Victor Lazine, was 'The red behind the riot'.

And the 'Express' belief that the crisis in British society could all be blamed on a few Russian spies was as much a fairy tale as their portrayal of the SAS as heroic defenders of civilisation against crazed African 'Marxists'.

For the SAS were sent into the Gambia to perpetuate the twenty-year long corrupt rule of Dawda Jawara. Whilst Jawara was

junketing in London at the royal wedding the country's para-military police force took control and proclaimed that the Gambia would now be following the path of 'revolutionary socialism'.

The mass of the population welcomed the change as all that capitalism had offered them was deepening poverty. One of the poorest countries in Africa with a per capita income of less than £40 a year, the Gambia has been devastated by the international recession.

The increasing cost of imports, the oil price rise, declining revenue from tourism has gone hand in hand with a fall in earnings from groundnuts, the main export earner, as production has declined from 132,000 tons in 1973 to 78,000 tons this year.

Neighbouring Senegal, which borders the Gambia on three sides and is itself facing severe economic problems, quickly sent in its army to crush the new regime which threatened the rule of business and to prevent the

contagion of revolt from spreading. And with them went the SAS as a specialist squad to release hostages.

None of the hostages were harmed by the rebels. When one of President Jawara's wives became ill they took her along to the hospital.

A British doctor persuaded the para-military to leave their weapons outside the building and inside they were captured by armed SAS troops. This was the 'heroic' action painted in glowing terms by the 'Daily Express' and the rest of Fleet Street.

The SAS intervention in the Gambia continues their lengthy record of intervention to help colonial or dictatorial regimes. They fought against socialists in Malaysia, Borneo, Oman and most recently undertook widespread assassination of Republicans in Northern Ireland.

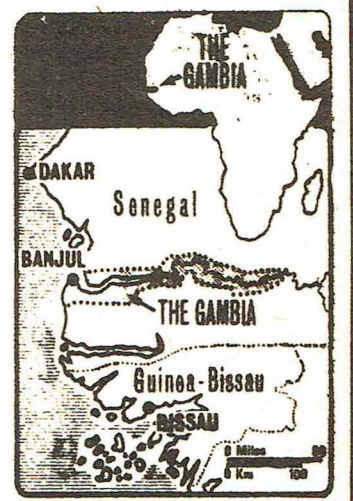
For years their vicious activities were kept secret. But their exposure on TV during last year's Iranian Embassy siege has led to attempts by the bosses' media to glamourise the SAS as 'superhuman' tough men.

Last week the press reported the intensive training undertaken in the Welsh

mountains by the SAS, but forgot to report that three SAS trainees had lost their lives in thirteen months on such courses. And in their glamourising of the SAS rescue of the Iranian Embassy hostages they toned down the attempts by the SAS to drag the terrorists back into the Embassy, after the siege, to execute them.

Activists in the labour movement must not be misled by the bosses' attempts to glamourise the specialist band of killers. Their activity and record stands as a direct threat against a labour movement attempting to carry out fundamental social change.

In future they could be used against activists in Britain, as they have been used elsewhere. It is essential that the next Labour government disbands this squad of brutalised killers.



# INDIA:

India is on the threshold of a new period of bitter class struggle. Mrs Gandhi's Congress government faces an explosive movement of the working class to defend their living standards against soaring inflation and countless other pressures.

In an attempt to arm itself, the government has passed a decree to ban strikes in "essential services", to dismiss strikers and strike organisers, to arrest them without warrant and try them at summary trials headed by 'special' magistrates.

Also workers who refuse to work overtime can be arrested, as well as workers whose conduct is "likely to result in cessation or substantial reduction of work in any essential service" (e.g. working to rule). Even donating money to strikers is now a criminal offence.

Transport, banking, oil, hospitals and telecommunications are all classified as "essential services". The punishment for strikes is six months in

prison plus a fine. Strike organisers will be sentenced to a year's imprisonment plus a fine.

Trade union meetings are being called all over the country to protest against these measures. In the coming trial of strength between the organised workers and the reactionary Congress (I) government the leadership of the Indian workers will be put to the greatest test.

Reports received from correspondents in India vividly illustrate the crisis in Indian society, the struggles in different parts of the country and the policies of the worker's leadership. From these experiences vital conclusions can be drawn for the period ahead which need to be absorbed not only by working class fighters in India but also by their comrades in every part of the world.

The first report deals with West Bengal under its Left Front government led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist). It shows the disastrous consequences of reformist policies within a rotting capitalist system.



Peasants in a land grab in W. Bengal

## The masses fight The leaders retreat

**It was a mass movement of the exploited and the oppressed in West Bengal which paved the way for the Left Front government, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to take over the state government.**

The bloody repression of Indira Gandhi from 1972 to 1977 forced the toiling masses to mobilise themselves and come out on to the streets to demand their bread and butter and other democratic rights.

The wrath of the masses could have been moulded into a revolutionary passion to bring about a qualitative change of society. The horizon was bright with signs of socialist revolution, if the left leadership had been prepared to take up the gauntlet.

Instead the leadership held back the struggle to an innocent demonstration through the ballot boxes. The tremendous crystallisation of mass discontent was dispersed in the election of a left front in West Bengal.

The Left Front on the eve of the election produced an election manifesto in which it pledged to redress the most pressing needs of the toiling mass, but at the same time making it clear that its powers were limited and so everything would depend upon the co-operation of the central government.

In the first phase, when the Janata Party was in power at the centre, the left front blew hot and cold. It was very vocal but took every precaution to characterize the Janata government as friendly and well meaning.

But rumblings of protest could be heard against central government. The most popular issue which the left front picked up during this period was the relation between central government

**By our correspondent  
from India.**

and the states.

In theory India is a federal, quasi-liberal state. In reality state power in India is highly centralised. All effective powers are vested in central government and the provinces depend on central government for practically everything.

The Left Front government of West Bengal started a campaign to reverse this oppressive relationship. It demanded more power for provincial governments in planning and mobilising economic resources, to enable them to do something positive for their areas.

The Janata government turned a deaf ear. The Left Front made propaganda but no attempt was made to launch vigorous mass action.

It may be said that the demand for decentralisation was largely rhetoric. But it had one useful effect. It made the people more aware of the nature and content of state power in India.

During this period also, workers in West Bengal went into action both in the industrial and agricultural sectors. Although these movements were never allowed to gather momentum, the toiling mass were having a taste of their own power.

Under this pressure from below, the left front government carried out some popular reforms. After an interval of nearly fourteen years Panduyat (village council) elections were held, in which the Left Front was very successful.

The LF government also took steps to ensure the rights of share-croppers. A monthly dole of about £3 was introduced for the unemployed.

In government-controlled

and aided schools, students were exempted from paying fees. The police were restrained from interfering in democratic movements. More industrial disputes were resolved in favour of the workers. More efficient relief measures were taken for victims of floods.

At the same time, conscious efforts were made to play down the mass movement. Still, under the Janata Party regime, the Left Front government of West Bengal exuded an air of confidence and some boldness.

The situation changed dramatically with the return to power of Mrs Indira Gandhi. The confidence and boldness of the Left Front received a serious jolt. All of a sudden the fear of being dislodged gripped the Left Front, which took up a defensive position.

On the other hand, the lumpenproletariat, unorganised, unemployed, and frustrated youths under the banner of Congress (I) began to assert themselves. The attempt of Congress (I) to terrorise the masses which was eloquently exposed in a Bangla Bandh engineered by Congress on 3 April 1981. The lobbing of crackers and molotov cocktails by lumpens resulted in a number of deaths. But the Left Front sought to counter this, not by organising all-out mass action, but only by propaganda.

Since Mrs Gandhi became Prime Minister of India, the Left Front has become more subdued. The only thing worrying it is its own premature exit from power.

This anxiety has become so dominant that the Left Front is trying to contain all sorts of movements. The demand to rationalise the



Begging in Calcutta

relation between the central government and the states is no longer heard.

The Left Front is trying to drive home the idea that mass struggles will be treated by Mrs Gandhi's government as a pretext to topple the Left Front from so-called power. For them the prime need is to stick to power and that can only be done they claim, if there is no serious mass movement.

In other words, the Left Front in West Bengal is trying to hang on to power by appealing Mrs Gandhi and not by relying on the masses. Mrs Gandhi, on the other hand, is shrewd enough to learn from past experience. So, instead of making the Left Front martyrs in the eyes of the masses, she is slowly discrediting it by cutting financial aid from central government.

Thus for instance, the Left Front has had to scuttle the food-for-aid programme, because central government refused to give wheat. For want of funds, the modest dole to the unemployed is being withdrawn.

Various laws passed in West Bengal state assembly are not being given consent

by central government. The Left Front, instead of facing the challenge boldly by mobilising mass struggle, is simply blaming the central government in press statements and speeches.

The people are gradually losing confidence in the Left Front, tired of listening to hackneyed propaganda of central government conspiracy when these complaints are not backed up by action.

At present, West Bengal is virtually the only state where law and order is more or less maintained. Industrial struggles are less acute, and no movement challenges the authority of Mrs Gandhi. West Bengal is less troubled than any state governed by Congress (I), so Gandhi at the moment hasn't the slightest intention of toppling the Left Front government.

But the leaders of the Left Front are in mortal fear of being toppled. For this reason, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the leading partner of the Left Front in West Bengal, even supported the Congress (I) government in Assam for a few months.

In this situation, the fighting mood of the masses

is being sapped. They are being lulled to sleep, which will make them demoralised and easy victims to the repression which has already been unleashed by a Mrs Indira Gandhi. Strikes have been banned in so-called essential services, a repressive National Security act has been passed and similar measures will follow.

So if we judge the performance of the Left Front government from a working class viewpoint, then it must be said that it has undermined the workers' struggle. This is a great danger for the toiling peoples as a whole.

But the outlook is far from pessimistic. The rank and file of the various left parties are gradually realising the bankruptcy of the existing leadership. This is goading them to build up a revolutionary leadership for the struggles that lie ahead.



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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## Competing for poverty

Dear Comrades,

A few months ago I wrote to tell you how my 16 year old sister was ruthlessly thrown onto the dole after a serious illness.

Luckily, she was able to find a job in a hotel through YOPs. After the six months training, she was given a certificate saying that her attendance had been 'fairly good' (though she had only missed one day's work in that period).

Then she was told the hotel could only afford to employ one of the two YOPs trainees on a permanent basis and they would have to compete for that job over the next month. What a disgrace! To put two young people in competition for a job!

Against all the odds (the family of the other trainee are friends of one of the hotels directors) she eventually got the job and is now working 40 hours a week to bring home the princely sum of £34. But these 40 hours aren't a normal week by any standards.

Some days begin at 7am and end at 11pm, with only a couple of hours break. Others don't end until 2.30am, a terrible situation when you start all over again at 7am.

Not surprisingly, this establishment is not unionised, and all attempts to change that situation have been actively discouraged by the management.

The sooner we end the system where this can exist, the better it will be for all concerned.

Yours fraternally,  
Steve Black  
Washington LPYS

## Grim faced army of police

Comrades,

In the recent police riots in Toxteth, the small petty events have often annoyed more than the big acts of brutality.

After the first wave of fighting died down, the people in my sister's street decided to build a den for the kids to play in. Everybody had a lot of fun making a hut out of the vast amounts of debris lying around.

With a touch that proved ironic, they painted it red, white, and blue in honour of the royal wedding.

You can imagine everyone's surprise some nights later when a gang of cops knocked on my sister's door and threatened to wreck every house in the street unless the den was demolished. They spent the rest of the night marching up and down shouting threats and obscenities.

The next day the den was pulled down and used as furniture in a street party.

The media made much of the cheerful Mr Plods lining the route to St Paul's for the royal wedding, but forgot to mention the grim-faced army occupying Toxteth.

Fraternally,  
Jake Shepherd  
Breckfield Labour Party

## Gutter press

Dear Comrades,

The editorial of the Wolverhampton *Express and Star* on 24 July concerned Tony Benn and 'unilateralism'.

The editor puts the questions, "Does he really think we can contract out of a holocaust, or that Russia will disarm simply because Britain does?"

"Or does he, more likely, believe that the capitulation of Britain would bring the world socialist Utopia that much more theoretically nearer?"

The inference is clear enough; Tony Benn wants

## Exploitation Experience

Dear Comrade,

What a farce the latest measures by the Thatcher government are. They say they will help the youth of this country, but what they are doing is creating an army of cheap labour. It's an incentive for the bosses.

If we look at it, employers paying under 18 year olds less than £40 per week are to get a weekly subsidy of £15. This will undermine the workers in their struggle for a decent living wage.

Another 100,000 places on the YOP scheme. What training is this, being taught to push a broom around or something similar for £23.50 per week?

We all want the youth to have training but something that will be beneficial, a

Britain to disarm so the Russians can take over!

This scandalous libel is an example of the depths to which the capitalist press is prepared to sink.

Surely every person with a grain of intelligence should be asking himself why the capitalist—controlled media make such scurrilous attacks on the Left, and why, at the same time, they give such tremendous publicity to the 'Social Democrats', both inside and outside the Labour Party.

For the sake of the Labour Party? For 'freedom'? For 'the country'?

Yours fraternally,  
Jim Parkes,  
Walsall

skill that will benefit them and the country.

The company I work for is not fully unionised. We are recognised and have about 60% membership and it's a hard job trying to convert the Tory-minded.

Just recently we had to shed eight filling and packing operators, which was done through natural wastage. The next thing I knew we had one or two schoolboys working on the lines. When I enquired I was told they were on Work Experience.

The last schoolboy taken on said he was fifteen years old, and had 1 year and three months to do at school. He then told me he was paid only his bus fares, dinner and snacks.

This is a disgrace with so many on the dole queue.

Yours fraternally,  
Mike Wright  
Plymouth

Crossman in 1955 is most relevant to Kinnoch and other 'left' MPs today who choose to backslide on the deputy leadership issue:

"In moments of crisis when the knives are out, equivocation is tantamount to treachery."

Yours fraternally,  
Andrew Price  
Cardiff SE CLP

## Class ridden pay structure

Dear Comrades,

I think the time is right for the Labour Party Young Socialists with the rest of the labour and trade union movement, to start a campaign against low pay in this country. All too frequently the rates advertised in Job Centres are below the legal minima set by wages councils.

While I am in favour of Labour's plan to implement a decent national minimum wage, it would be to our advantage if we made our voice heard against employers who use the recession as an excuse for paying out poverty wages to millions of people. It must be obvious to all *Militant* supporters that we can't achieve socialism while we have a class-ridden pay structure in our society.

Yours sincerely  
James Nugent (Jnr.)  
Croydon South CLP

## We won't wait two years

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you for the tenants in Basford flats.

The flats are causing a problem to many people: when it rains, water seeps in, so damp spreads. It is going to cost £1½ million to repair.

The council has asked this government for help, but it is sticking to its policy—so no money. The tenants will have to put up with it or find somewhere

From: William Whitlock, MP

William Whitlock's letter to Basford tenants



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1st August, 1981

Mr. P. Jackson,  
723, Polmont Hill Court  
Old Basford,  
Nottingham.

Dear Mr. Jackson,

Thank you for your letter in which you complain about the problem of damp in the flats at Old Basford.

As I have previously pointed out to you, I am not one of your Councillors and as a Member of Parliament I have no authority whatsoever over the Council. Council problems should be taken to Councillors.

Again as I have previously pointed out to you, the Conservative Government has a large majority in the House of Commons and it does not matter how many times the Labour Members of Parliament speak against and vote against Government policies, the Government obtains a majority for those policies. The British electorate gave the Government that majority at the last election and only another election can change that situation.

Yours sincerely,

else to live.

So many flats stand empty because they are not fit to live in. The cost of keeping them empty is put onto the tenants.

The work can be done, and people will be able to move in. But till the government give the money to the council, the flats must stand empty.

I wrote to our MP, William Whitlock (see reply below). I feel very strongly about this: to think that a Labour MP can say he has no connection with the local council!

I fully understand that

the Tories have a majority in the House of Commons, but I would like to see some action this year, not in two years time.

We must fight to get housing repairs done, and to get the Tories out. It was the Labour Party we voted in. Didn't we vote for William Whitlock to work as an MP, helping us with our problems, not to spend time criticising the Militants?

Yours faithfully,  
P. Jackson  
North Nottingham  
Labour Party

## Bricks in the bank

Dear *Militant*,

The *Militant* has carried some excellent articles over the past few years on housing, graphically highlighting the plight of the homeless. The facts and figures you produce have no doubt helped every reader to argue the case for a socialist housing policy.

You will therefore ap-

preciate the up-dating of these figures as the crisis deepens. *The Sunday Times* (12 July), in an article entitled "Anyone want to build 50,000 houses" published the following figures.

The stockpile in Britain as a whole for the first quarter of the year is 1,152 million—and that, they say is a gross *under* estimation.

The stockpile of unwanted cement now totals 1,100,000 tons.

Council house starts were only 13,100 in January to May this year; half the number of for the same

period last year.

Unemployed building workers now total 425,000—nearly half a million.

What was the reaction of the London Brick Company? A spokesman said "Running a brick bank is something we have practised through a number of recessions."

We can only endorse Labour's reaction in describing this situation as "obscene".

Fraternally,  
Mike Foster,  
Grimsby

## The Mad Monk's bus ride

Dear Comrades

On Saturday I saw Sir Keith Joseph on a London Transport No 22 bus travelling down the King's Road.

I was staggered by his casual manner—he is after all one of the most hated men in Britain. He asked the bus conductor, "Can I go as far as I like for 25p?"

He got off the bus in the expensive part of Chelsea and strolled down a side street, no doubt dreaming of strikers in chains. If we gave him 25p hopefully he would go to hell.

Yours  
Bob Chesterman

## Expanding Sun—no joy for workers

Dear comrades,

The front page of 'The Sun' (3/8/81) was dominated by the earth-shattering headline that average daily sales during July had reached 4,109,000.

The Sun is not a newspaper that is slow to criticise 'greedy workers', as it will undoubtedly do if the railway workers go on strike and as it did with the civil servants etc. Considering this record the end of this front page article is quite interesting.

It says 'we are having terrible trouble keeping pace with demand. So we beg

you, dear reader to place a regular order with your newsagent, otherwise you could be disappointed.'

Obviously the 'Sun' bosses hadn't thought of keeping pace with demand by expanding their production facilities with their huge profits and providing jobs for unemployed printers. That would, of course, be too expensive.

Yours fraternally  
Clive Walder  
(Hove LPYS)

WRITE TO MILITANT



Build

Militant

ads

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target	
			10 Oct	for year
Eastern	3117		4970	7100
East Midlands	2567		3850	5500
Hants & Dorset	1782		3640	5200
Humberside	1245		2450	3500
London East	3608		5320	7600
London West	2012		3360	4800
London South	3169		3850	5500
Manchester & Lancs	2118		4060	5800
Merseyside	2542		4620	6600
Northern	2789		6020	8600
Scotland East	1515		3080	4400
Scotland West	2792		5250	7500
Southern	3777		4970	7100
South West	1665		2450	3500
Wales East	1057		1820	2600
Wales West	1551		3220	4600
West Midlands	3364		6020	8600
Yorkshire	3609		6300	9000
Others	9010		8750	12500
<b>Total received</b>	<b>53,289</b>		<b>84,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>

**KEEP UP  
OUR MONEY  
SUPPLY**

**TARGET FOR YEAR- £120,000**

**THIS  
WEEK:  
£2381**

Nearly £1,000 in 'actual money' as well as over £115 in IOUs from the LPYS Summer Camp helped to make this week's total of £2,381 the sort of sum it should be every week.

But if the £1,400 collected (excluding the camp) can be raised for us in a week when hundreds of comrades are away on holiday, this only goes to show what can be done in a "normal" week by all our supporters.

A Sussex supporter writes, "It is with great pleasure that I enclose a cheque for £100 for the Fighting Fund. The money comes from part of the proceeds of a will left by a reader of *Militant* who never had a lot of money himself, but what little he did possess would give willingly towards the fight for a socialist society..." And similar sums have come from a West of Scotland Militant Supporters Disco.

£121.50, with still more promised, from the 'Driffield Dance' Disco, has helped the Humberside line

By Steve  
Cawley

on our chart over the half-way mark. Oxford supporters also sent us £120, of which £80 came from a successful jumble sale. Thanks to TGWU 5/909 branch for their £20 donation, to Darlington bus drivers Derek and Harry for donating the £16 earned on 29 July, and to Newcastle readers for £26 raised on a bus trip on the same day.

Merseyside trade unionists (members of NALGO, SOGAT, USDAW and IRSF) contributed £14, and amongst the LPYS branches assisting us this week were Wakefield, Burnley's Left Discussion Group, and Manchester Wythenshawe, who are also supporting the Lawrence Scott dispute and Tony Benn's campaign fund. Is your LPYS branch prepared to help us?

Keep the momentum going! Make your contribution straight away!

## HARLOW: Fascists turn tail

An attempt by the Fascist British Movement on 1 August to march from Harlow Town Station to the town centre, ended in a U turn before they reached any built up areas.

Thwarted from holding any marches in major industrial towns the fascists obviously hoped to succeed in a New Town like Harlow. They were spurred on no doubt by the thought that the skin-head band at the Southall riots come from Harlow and that growing unemployment leaves a whole layer of young people rejected, demoralised and frustrated with the set up.

Saturday showed them the extent of their support. Only 16-18 turned up and they were all from outside the town.

Over 100 turned up on a labour movement counter

By a  
correspondent

demo, in spite of being peak holiday week in Harlow. Police had been bussed in by the coachful.

In spite of their derisory number the Fascists tried to march behind a St George flag, escorted by police three deep. When the labour movement blocked the road, they were forced round, over the parkland.

Just as the first signs of human habitation were sighted, the march did a quick about turn and back to the station. A terrific cheer went up from the demo. A complete victory; all over in twenty minutes.

The fascists rushed to catch a train, the police returned to their fleet of buses, and feeling much lighter in spirit and more confident the labour movement marchers returned to their homes.

## GMWU: Consulting the members?

The General and Municipal Workers Union have decided to consult the membership as to whom the union should support in the Labour Party deputy leadership contest. But the consultation will only take place with the Regional Councils (10 in all).

A Regional Council consists of 1 delegate per 1,000 members in the Region, elected on a region-wide ballot. The delegates represent the Region, not their own branches, yet union rules expressly forbid anyone attending branch meetings other than their own, so who would Regional Council members consult with to ascertain the membership's views?

What about those branches who do not have a member on the Regional Council?

There are over 3,000 branches in the G&MWU, yet the 10 regional councils consist of approximately nine hundred members.

The decisions made by the Regional Councils will virtually be based on the individual views of Regional Council members. It has been suggested that branches could write to their Regional Secretary expressing a view. What use is this? It will not affect the vote taken by the Regional Council.

We must campaign for a

conference to be called in each Region—to which every branch may send a delegate in order that the views of the membership are known. Branches should send letters, resolutions, etc. to their Regional Secretaries for the attention of the Regional Committee, calling for such a conference.

By a GMWU  
Regional Council  
Member

**SOCIALISTS ONLY!** South Herts Parliamentary candidate—Radlett branch of the Labour Party invites applicants for selection at its meetings in October and November. Write Robin Page, Sec., 7 Shenley Hill, Radlett, Herts. Tel. Radlett 7719.

**MILITANT READERS' MEETING** 'The Defence of Living Standards—can the trade union movement succeed?' Thursday 27 August, 7.30 pm. Lea Bridge Library, near corner of Church Road/Markhouse Road, Leyton E10

WYLIE Jeanette and Bob Wylie are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter, Susan Jane, on Sunday 26 July. A sister for David. "Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence, and enjoy it to the full."

**SOCIALIST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** (Cardiff Branch) Public Debate, 'The Future of the Labour Party'. Allan Williams MP (Swansea West) versus Peter Taaffe for 'Militant'. On Friday 11 September, 7.30 pm, at Committee Room, Empire Pool, Cardiff. All welcome, plenty of time for discussion.

## SIXTH SOUTH WALES MILITANT SUMMER CAMP AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY 1981

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- ★ Fascism in Germany—Jeremy Birch
- ★ The Spanish Revolution—Ted Grant
- ★ The Hungarian Revolution—Pat Wall
- ★ Marxism and the Labour Party—Ted Grant

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## APOLOGY

In our issue of 24 July, we credited John Merrill as the chairman of Leicester West Labour Party. He is, in fact, Vice-chairman and Assistant Secretary.

Our apologies to all concerned for this error.

# CIVIL SERVICE-

## Lessons for the future

The Civil Service dispute, the longest national dispute since 1926, is now over.

Civil Servants have returned to work on the government's 7% plus £30 final offer. This is far below the union demand for 15% with a £10 underpinning minimum, and it is little different to the original 7% offer. Nevertheless, it would be entirely wrong to write off the strike as a defeat. And it would be short-sighted of the Tories to claim a big victory.

The monetary gains may have been negligible, but the civil service trade union movement has gained invaluable industrial and political experience. This battle could help bring about far stronger and healthier civil service trade unions more willing and able to defend the interests of civil servants. To ensure this, it is vital that the membership study carefully the events of the strike and draw the necessary lessons.

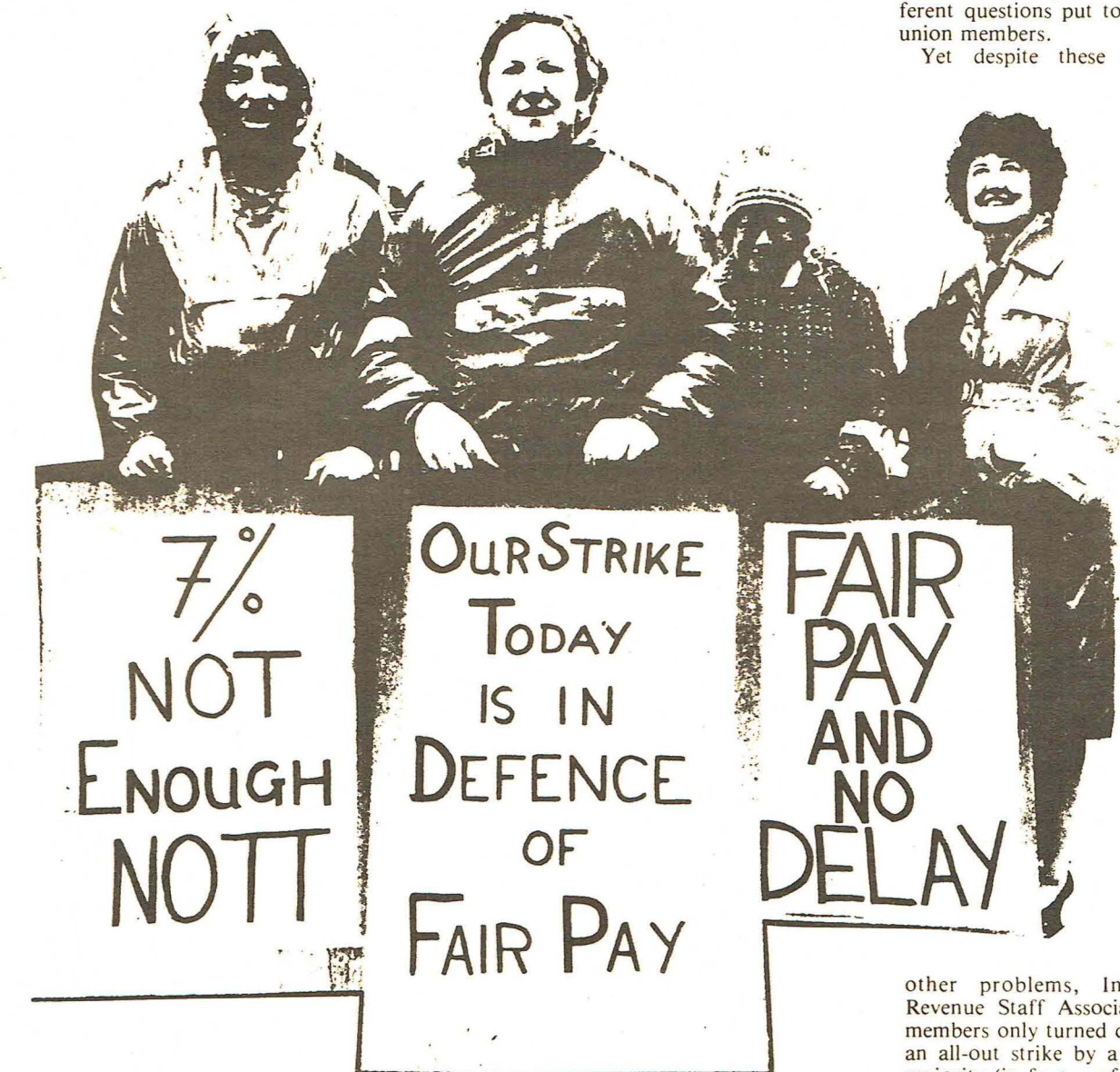
*Militant* supporters are proud of the role they played throughout this strike, not only in the branches and Council of Civil Service Unions Committees but also in fighting at every stage for the tactics that could best ensure success.

The claim which united the entire civil service trade unions was drawn up by *Militant* supporters, agreed by the CPSA Broad Left, and then backed by the Special CPSA pay conference in January 1981.

*Militant* supporters agreed with the general idea of selective action as opposed to immediate all-out action, although normally it is preferable in a national dispute for all workers to fight shoulder to shoulder together from the outset.

We recognised that with most civil servants having little or no experience of industrial action, massive illusions existed in the potential of selective activity and that therefore an attempt at the outset to apply all-out action without strike pay would have been massively rejected. We favoured a strategy of intensification so that before all-out action was posed the members of the unions could see that all other possible avenues had been exhausted.

The damning failures of the union leadership was



that they failed to grasp the opportunities that arose during the struggle as the determination of Thatcher and the Tories to try and crush civil servants became clearer, as members' anger and indignation rose, and as the members' understanding of the reality of the struggle deepened.

The dispute can be summed up as a series of missed opportunities. One example was 1 April—the day in which civil servants were due for pay increases. Instead of a day of nationally co-ordinated protest action organised from the top, it was left to each local strike centre to try and organise something. Even these efforts were cut across by the leadership urging members to stay at work and give money.

The CPSA right-wing leadership did not even issue a circular to members about the rallies organised by the local strike committees.

When the union conferences met in early May (with the dispute in its third month) there was a golden

chance for the unions to lift and strengthen the campaign. The CPSA conference overwhelmingly carried a motion moved by a *Militant* supporter, Dave San, which called for: the closure of the ports and airports; indefinite strike action by passport office staff; continuation of the selective strike areas; and an increase in the levy.

All this would have meant applying the selective strike tactic to the maximum degree possible, something that should have been organised by the union leaders at an even earlier stage of the campaign. If this CPSA conference resolution had been acted upon then, seen a determined show of strength by the civil servants it is quite possible that the government would have capitulated.

But the resolution also specified that if these measures failed to move the government then a 5-day strike (with a mass lobby of parliament) should have

By Kevin Roddy  
(DHSS Section  
Organiser,  
personal capacity)

major—but unspecified—escalation of the dispute. The members waited for this escalation, but again, it never materialised.

Instead, the ill-thought out gesture of action in the DE/DHSS computer centres was initiated along with a "consultation" exercise among the members on how to proceed. Three alternatives were posed: all-out strike, continuation of selective action, or a return to work on the government's 7% offer.

The consultative exercises produced a confused result. *Militant* called for the all-out strike. Unfortunately, however, as selective strike action had never been applied fully in all the most decisive areas, certain illusions in this action remained, especially as till this time most leaders had been saying that selective action alone would win.

Also, the union unity was conveniently abandoned and the consultation was applied differently from union to union, with different questions put to the union members.

Yet despite these and

Secretary Ken Thomas said that there were no secret talks or deals. Two days later he boasted that the previous weekend (before he made the "no secret talks" speech) he had met government ministers. The CPSA right wing readily accepted this as being part of his job!

The final indictment of the leaderships was when they accepted Thatcher's pre-conditions that the unions would ballot their members if a revised offer was made and that they would not recommend rejection. This was followed up by circulars which can best be described as "return to work rationale". Also before the balloting had ended senior council speakers appeared on TV saying that a return to work was now inevitable. This clearly influenced votes.

Had the unions come out on a united recommendation against the offer and in favour of an all-out strike, and had this been put at mass meetings of all union members, then the result would have been entirely different; Thatcher would have been put on the defensive!

The realisation that the leaders had proved incapable of offering decisive leadership again was a big factor in influencing the vote against all-out action, nevertheless, in the IRSF, despite all the hurdles, a majority for all-out action was recorded.

But with other unions voting to accept, the dispute ended. What then are the lessons of this battle? *Militant* will carry a separate article on the issue of industrial action in DE/DHSS where we believe these members must be brought into national action from the outset, but with an emergency service operated under the control of the civil service trade unions.

There are many other lessons from this battle. For instance, strike pay must be reviewed and drastically curtailed. The idea of buying a strike victory has been shown to be false. Should another battle be necessary to defend the living standards or jobs of civil servants (as it inevitably will) then, after the experience of struggle which this battle has provided, all-out action must be considered at the start.

But the key lesson is the need for fighting leadership in the unions armed with the confidence in the members and a programme for victory. That programme must include unity of the civil service unions. A properly integrated democratic union could have led to a different outcome.

Members working in CCSU committees have worked hand-in-hand across union boundaries. The fight for one union should now begin in earnest.

Also internal union democracy must be high on the agenda. Real effective control of the campaign rested firmly in the hands of the nine Union General Secretaries. This was possible because of years of relative inactivity which had produced a climate in which members had become used to leaving it all to the leadership.

The strike, the secret talks which led to the final offer, the way in which the offer was put out without recommendations, etc. All this will have led members directly to the conclusion to

other problems, Inland Revenue Staff Association members only turned down an all-out strike by a slim majority (in favour of continuing selective action) and CPSA members actually voted for all-out action.

*Militant* supporters on the CPSA Executive then argued that the option of an all-out strike could not be left on the table indefinitely. CPSA members, in particular, having voted for all-out action would begin to lose faith in the dispute if it simply drifted on as before. The argument was put for fixing a date for all-out strike which would at the same time allow a couple of weeks more to demonstrate that the selective action was not sufficient at that stage to win.

On 17 July we said, "even at this late hour, if the union leaders were to go boldly to the members with a call for all-out strike action, the dispute would still be won."

By this time, however, it was becoming clear that behind the usual rhetoric the leaderships were preparing to capitulate. Secret talks were taking place with ministers.

At one meeting of the CPSA Executive, General

been organised.

This would have pulled the 500,000 civil servants together in a massive show of strength behind the claim and would have led on to an all-out indefinite strike if the government had remained intransigent.

The motion also recognised the probability that an all-out strike would be necessary and called for serious discussions in preparation.

This was a strategy for victory. Had it been implemented then without doubt the Tories would have been forced to retreat.

But instead of a show of strength, the Tories saw continual hesitation and weakness on the part of the union leaders. The Tories therefore decided to remain absolutely intransigent.

The union leaders began to beg the government for talks without preconditions, thereby jettisoning the claim. They backed up this plea for talks with an empty threat that failure to settle the dispute would lead to

# RAIL UNIONS: PREPARE NOW FOR STRIKE!

**“We are at a vital point in our history and everyone needs to understand and take part in making the decision on which way we are to go.”**

This was the way Mr R B Reid (chief executive British Railways Board) ended a letter, distributed to all railway employees, in order to try and instill a bit of Tory “common sense” into his workforce.

The truth is, that despite patronisingly talking of “everyone” and “our” industry, Reid cannot alter the fact that BR is being run along guidelines set down by the Tory government.

They are attempting to solve BR's acute financial difficulties at our expense, not only by driving down the real value of our wages, but also by massive redundancies.

The BRB's attitude to the rail staffs national tribunal recommendations on railway pay levels is scandalous. Inflation is currently running at 12.6%; in order to restore railway pay levels to their 1975 value, a 29% increase would be needed.

Yet the BRB have refused to abide by the tribunal's award of 11% from 1 August, attempting instead to pay only 8% with the other 3% being dependent on the unions showing commitment to stringent productivity measures.

The BRB's cavalier attitude on this matter will not be tolerated by railworkers, and the NUR and ASLEF have already called a strike from 31 August.

However, 31 August is still more than two weeks away and rank and file railworkers must ensure that this time is not used to reach a compromise with management. Any compromise, however small, on this issue will inevitably be a sell-out.

The message from railworkers to their union

**By Stuart Hammond**  
(Stratford ASLEF, personal capacity)

leaderships should be one of determination to win certainly nothing less than the full tribunal award of 11% from 1 August with no productivity strings attached. This is not just a battle over the additional 3%! It is a battle over jobs, conditions of service and the BRB's attempt to arbitrarily implement what they want. The BRB's productivity measures on their own are enough to warrant a battle. They mean widespread redundancies and loss of earnings if implemented.

Already the Tories, the BRB and their kept press, the Fleet Street rags, are denouncing our just claim and attempting to pressurise and mislead railway workers, and the public generally.

The rail unions must fully prepare the membership politically and organisationally for what could be a bitter struggle against the Tories. Regular bulletins, leaflets and information must be put out to the membership to answer the lies and hypocrisy of the bosses, such as the letter from the BRB.

Already the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, with some 18,000 members in British Rail Engineering Ltd workshops, have agreed to support the strike call. This is the kind of support which can ensure victory.

Despite the loss of rail traffic over the years, and the present effects of the capitalist recession, railway workers still retain enormous power. Some 70% of coal traffic goes by rail, so

does 70% of Royal Mail traffic, whilst in motor manufacturing and steel production, where rail is part of the productive process, the effects could be devastating. Furthermore, the rail unions have a history of solidarity and support to other workers in struggle. The miners and steel workers and others have publicly thanked the NUR and ASLEF for the assistance they have received from railworkers in recent years.

It is this kind of initiative which will ensure that the type of plans now being made between the car companies and road hauliers to break any strike are defeated. Such plans show the panic of companies such as Ford and British Leyland, but they also are a warning to the rail unions of what to combat.

The future of railway workers and their families and the industry they work in could hinge on the outcome of this impending battle.

## TSSA—call special conference

Many activists in the Transport and Salaried Staffs Association were disappointed to hear that the union had not supported the proposed strike action of the other two rail unions, and even more disgusted to hear the report that their general secretary, Tom Jenkins CBE, an award given by Mrs Thatcher, had called on members to cross picket lines!

The railway board has historically played one section of the workforce against another and this time the T.S.S.A. has fallen into this trap.

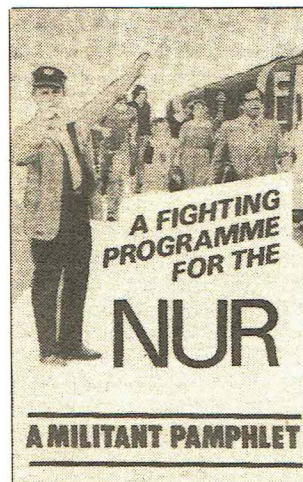
The T.S.S.A. has never had a militant history and has a reputation for riding on the backs of the other two unions. But this inaction at the present time jeopardises the proposed federation of rail unions, which would be a historical step forward to one rail union.

In its recent history, unofficial industrial action

up for next year and preparations made—through propaganda, mass meetings, etc.—to defend the claim. It should be made clear that given the attitude of the government action may again prove necessary. Arbitration for next year has been written into the agreement. If the government throws aside an arbitration award as it is doing at the moment with rail workers, then another fight by civil servants in 1982 is entirely possible.

Civil servants are following this battle drawing the lessons that public service workers need to unite

**‘A fighting programme for the NUR’**  
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A MILITANT PAMPHLET

by technical staff has shown that militancy gets results, by a series of up gradings and a 11% relativity award, which has not been implemented since its administration was left in the hands of the T.S.S.A. executive.

Now that the N.U.R. is starting to respond to the pressure from its membership to stop selling jobs for ‘productivity’. So T.S.S.A. too must be made to respond to the same pressure and show its executive and BR that they are sick of being pushed around.

The T.S.S.A. membership must try to keep faith with their A.S.L.E.F. and N.U.R. colleagues by using rule 39 where 20 branches can call a special conference of the union to reverse the decision of the executive.

**By Alan Docherty**

(Newcastle P&T Branch TSSA, personal capacity.)

together in one common struggle against the government, instead of allowing the government to tackle each group separately. This idea will be discussed at the forthcoming Trades Union Congress.

But perhaps the main lesson is the need to join other unions inside the Labour Party, where they should fight to throw out the Tories at the earliest possible moment, and to campaign for the election of a Labour government firmly committed to bold socialist action.

## LEE JEANS - STILL FIGHTING

**By Alan McCoombes**

**Six months ago the British director of the giant multinational Vanity Fair Ltd payed one of his infrequent visits to the company's Lee Jeans factory in Greenock.**

“Happy New Year” he declared. Then as an afterthought he told the 200 workers that the factory would soon be closing and that they had better start looking for new jobs.

But the Lee Jeans workers, most of them young women, had other ideas. They locked out the management and occupied the factory.

“No matter how long it takes, we will continue fighting until every job is secure,” declared the shop stewards at the beginning of the sit in. Six months later the women of Lee Jeans have shown that they meant what they said. The factory is still occupied and the workers are still united and are determined as ever to succeed.

Negotiations are now taking place between the VF Corporation and a London business man, who has indicated an interest in buying the Greenock factory. But what these negotiations have shown above all is the vicious cynicism of the multinationals and their callous disregard for the livelihoods of working people. Offered £99,700 for the

plant and machinery, VF have refused to sell. “It falls £150,000 short of what we want” said a spokesman for the company.

But as one steward pointed out, that figure represents a drop in the ocean compared to the vast profits which the company have plundered from their various operations. Last year, they amassed a huge £30 million profit. Only this week they announced an increase in their quarterly profits of over £1 million.

Yet for the sake of squeezing a few thousand pounds more out of the situation, they are prepared to kill off any possibility of jobs being saved by a buyer.

This only underlines the burning necessity for the labour movement to expose the methods of the parasite millionaires and to launch a massive campaign for nationalisation of companies threatening redundancies. However, while negotiations about the purchase of the factory appear to have come to a standstill, the Lee Jeans workers are continuing their fight.

They have now succeeded in building a mass movement of international solidarity. Railway men, lorry drivers, seamen are refusing to handle VF products. Dockers in Britain, Ireland, France, Norway and Sweden are blacking the company's goods. Whatever the outcome of current negotiations the workers will continue to fight till every job is saved.

Donations and messages of support to Ellen M Lee Jeans Occupation Committee, 55 Cambridge Road, Greenock.

## WESTERN DISTRICT POST OFFICE

**At 10.20pm August 4, management of the Western District Post Office locked out the night shift workers.**

**By Pete Giblet**

Management were attempting to enforce overtime working, after the postmen and sorting workers had stopped this. The morning shift was also locked out.

Since November, the District Postmaster has been shedding jobs through “natural wastage”, and sacking workers for offences where a warning would normally be given. Since Christmas, only 38 new workers have been taken on while an estimated 200 duties have been lapsed.

Workers on all three shifts have been expected to work overtime to cover this. Angry workers told me, “We have to work a 43 hour week, then we are expected to work extra shifts to stop any backlog.”

Union negotiators made a deal which enabled the 15,000 postal workers to return to work, although by 10pm most workers on the night shift had not received telegrams informing them of this. A meeting organised for that evening by the union failed to take place.

Reports of the dispute in the Tory press could not have been further from the truth. The ‘Daily Express’ claimed “men were protecting their large amounts of lucrative overtime”! It added there was a “huge backlog of 250,000 letters”.

A union Broad Left member explained, “we had to stop overtime because management expected us to cover the lapsed duties. There has not been any backlog of mail, as they had paid a contractor to cover all the boxes. Customers also got an extra delivery last week which we lost pay to deliver”.

The ridiculous claim of the London newspaper, the ‘New Standard’ was that “postal workers desire to work extra overtime has cut back recruitment levels”! But the workers have been fighting extra overtime and demanding increased recruitment.

Negotiations have continued over the weekend, aiming to bring these workers inline with the rest of London; an all-London agreement will be made in due course.

Continued from page 10

put control over the officials and the direction of policy is crucial. Access to the Executive minutes issued quickly after each meeting, the election and re-election of all officials, details of voting records, these and many other issues must be fought for and secured.

Also annual pay conferences must be established so civil servants can continue to decide their annual pay claim and the strategy necessary for success.

For the future a Committee of Enquiry has been set up to come forward with a

system of bargaining which the Tories intend to be far less favourable to civil servants even than the old Pay Research Unit system, which was usually loaded in favour of the government! Civil servants must now prepare for the report which will be published by this Committee which will almost certainly be heavily weighted in favour of the government.

It is clear now that civil servants can only defend their interests if they are prepared to struggle.

A claim designed to protect civil servants' living standards should be drawn

## AEI BIRTLEY - Fighting for our wages - and our jobs

Workers at AEI Cables Ltd, Birtley, Co. Durham, are in a determined mood. Last Monday (10 August) 800 production workers began official strike action in support of their wage claim.

The action follows a 75% (secret ballot) vote in favour of strike action. The workers are all members of GMWU, whose National Executive Committee have fully endorsed the action being taken.

Wages for production workers at Birtley have, until recent years, been governed by the National Joint Industrial Council (JIC) for the cable-making industry. Two years ago, as a result of pressure from the Trade Unions Membership, the J.I.C. decided to introduce two-tier bargaining.

This year an increase amounting to 7.5% of the basic rate, with effect from 1st May, was agreed at National level. Increases above this figure can be negotiated locally, and are given in the form of a supplement. The union is asking for a £15 increase on the 'Birtley supplement'.

A Supervisory Managing Director of G.E.C., has told the workforce at Birtley that the business cannot afford any further

**By Mick Appleby**  
 (GMWU,  
 Personal Capacity)

pay increases unless this is paid for by "improved productivity".

Over the last two years, there has been a worsening of industrial relations at Birtley as the Company have appeared to align themselves with the CBI and Tory government policies, adopting an anti-trade union line.

The growing resentment of the workforce was evident when the above-mentioned Director spoke to them on each shift about the alleged state of the Company.

On one of the shifts, the workers began to leave while he was still speaking. This is because the workforce recognise his motive in attempting to undermine the trade union by appealing to them directly. On the night-shift, he was booed and jeered at as he left the building.

A second tier factory productivity scheme, recently put forward by the Company, requires the re-deployment of 50 people to finance the scheme. This would involve changes in shift patterns in some areas, changes in work practices,

and introduction of individual bonus schemes.

The Company have not disclosed to the trade union Representatives which areas or individual workers would be affected.

The present bonus scheme which operates on the Birtley Site is thought by the workforce to limit production. Many aspects of the scheme are counter-productive, but the Company are very reluctant to change the system of individual bonus schemes.

The scheme acts unfairly on sections of the workforce and does not give an equal opportunity to everyone to earn bonus payments.

Counter-proposals put forward by the trade union representatives have been rejected out of hand by the Company. The proposal was for a site scheme, giving payments to all production workers for increased tonnage.

The Company's attitude is one of confrontation. They have indicated that what they are after is increased productivity and they are prepared to 'waste away jobs' to do it.

Support is vital now to safeguard our jobs and living standards.

Please send messages of support to:

Mick Appleby GMWU,  
 29 Alnwick Court, Ox Close, Washington, Co. Durham.



Workers on strike at AEI Birtley, part of the GEC combine which made £467 million profit last year. Workers here are facing a multi-national company, the CBI and the Tories. They need the full support of the labour movement. Photo: Denis Doran

## SMASH THE TORIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

are not giving us any answers—only new problems.

Eighteen months ago, 22 sites in Liverpool 8 were set aside for council house building. The Liberal council has now axed these 1,100 houses, condemning 1,100 families to stay on in the tenements of Myrtle Gardens or Kent Gardens, or Entwistle Heights' high rise blocks.

There were 14 areas designated as tenements that were due for demolition and the people to be re-housed. Now the Liberals have cancelled that too, so people

still live in Pitt Street and Stanhope Gardens.

Much of the rioting took place in Kingsley Road, one of the areas regarded as having the worst housing in the area.

Yet the Tories, Liberals and the police chiefs can see no link between these problems and the events that have taken place. They see no link between the council cut-backs and the massive unemployment of Liverpool, where over 15,000 building workers are on the dole.

To add insult to injury, Toxteth residents may have their rates put up to pay for the damage the police have caused, as if £10 a week rent and £10 a week rates was not enough.

Heseltine's suggested solutions are typical of this Alice-in-Wonderland government. The "entrepreneurs" will come to Liverpool's rescue. No new resources will come from the government.

Businessmen themselves seemed less impressed and very far from enterprising.

One banker who accompanied Heseltine on his tour of Merseyside said: "We would love to finance buildings for factories." But he thought it unlikely that businessmen would be asking for loans to build them. Others warned of the need for profitability.

The Merseyside Economic Development Office has created about 4,000 jobs in the last three years through 'encouraging' private industry. But in the last month alone, private industry, which is encouraged only by profits, put a further 7,000 on the dole in Merseyside.

The Tories, and capitalism as a whole, have no answers for the cities.

In Liverpool 8, their 'answer' has been police attacks on the youth of Toxteth.

Saturday's demonstration is calling for the end of

police harassment, and a fair and independent police complaints procedure, with an independent enquiry into police action in the recent weeks.

It also takes up two demands (initially raised by the Labour Party Young Socialists in their first leaflet) for the dismissal of Oxford and the democratic control and accountability of the police.

This is now seen as a central issue in the area.

The demonstration is being supported by Liverpool Trades Council and the Liverpool District Labour Party, and must be supported by all sections of the labour movement. The Liverpool shop stewards' committee has also given the march its full support.

The demonstration should be seen as a part of a campaign to put an end not just to police harassment but to all the Tory policies which have devastated Liverpool.

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