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for labour and youth

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ON OTHER PAGES:

SYRIA

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YUGOSLAVIA

STEEL

ACTION TO BRING DOWN TORIES!

By PETER TAAFFE

The December 8th strike against the Tory Government's proposed anti-union legislation is the first warning shot of the organised Labour Movement. Hundreds of thousands of workers—possibly over 1 million—are out to show the bosses and their Tory hirelings that they will not acquiesce in the most blatant attempt to undermine basic working class rights for a century. The right to strike, solidarity actions such as blacking, the freedom of the Labour Movement's press to back striking workers, and other rights are under attack (see article in November MILITANT for detailed explanation). The dockers, the engineers, the miners, the car workers and many other sections of the advanced workers, despite the massive, hostile press barrage against the strike and the prevarications of their own Trade Union leaders, show that that they understand the implications of the Tory legislation. It is an attempt to tie one hand of the worker behind his back while loading and aiming the weapons of the employer. It has been hailed in unison by the press barons—even the SUN had to step

Joseph—has revealed itself as a virtual stooge of the CBI, almost as its administrative sub-committee. As if to confirm the point, ex-chief of this "employers' union" Davies is immediately propelled into the Cabinet and blurts out in the Commons the hatred which the captains of industry have for the so-called "lame ducks" i.e. the old, the sick, and the infirm. It is these sections along with the working class as a whole upon whose shoulders responsibility for the decay of the economy is heaped. And it is this poorer section who the Tories have determined will pay the price of their attempt to recapture the diminishing power of British capitalism.

RICH AND POOR

Thus they have given with the left hand miserly tax cuts and other "reforms". With the right hand double and treble that amount through health and other charges have been taken back. The hypocrisy of the Tories' tax "bonanza" was scathingly revealed in a letter to the Times by a middle class reader... "The man on £20 a week, with two child-



Mass demonstration defeated Labour leaders' anti-union plans

FORCE ELECTION!

Bring back Labour — on a Socialist Programme!

into line after briefly flirting with a pale opposition to the Tory measures. The more vicious representatives of the capitalists such as the ECONOMIST, which is not generally read by workers, openly exulted that "the Bill will virtually ban the closed shop... Those who blackleg against unofficial strikes will have absolute protection for their jobs." (10/10/70). While denouncing the "conspiracy" of the Trade Unions and Labour Movement the capitalists are conspiring together and using their enormous means of propaganda to prepare the ground for clipping the power of the workers' organisations. They are at the same time frantically egging on the Tory Government to cut living standards. The Confederation of British Industries has discussed "ways in which its members could offer each other financial assistance, if they faced a strike by standing out against an inflationary wage demand". In other words, the capitalists are already preparing lock-out measures to go together with anti-union legislation and vicious cut-backs on the social services.

BUSINESSMEN'S GOVERNMENT

Thus the Tories have already within their first five months of power demonstrated more clearly than ever before that they represent Rent, Interest and Profit. The interlocking of the big monopolies with the state has never been more glaring. The Cabinet, which reads as a Who's Who of Big Business—from Securicor director Carr to Bovis leading light

ren, gains £3 a year (less than 1/2 a week) on income tax. Even the £30 a week man only gains £12... My wife and I, a well paid professional couple, will be more than £200 better off. If Mr Barber carries out the pledge to tax husbands and wives separately we shall be at least £1,000 better off... This is a simple transfer of wealth from the poorer to the richer". But the damage wreaked by the Tory measures does not stop there. The increased health and school meals charges together with the abolition of school milk for over 7's alone will directly contribute to the deterioration of the health of millions of working class children.

MALNUTRITION

Already dietary experts have pointed out that fully 57% of schoolchildren have an insufficient diet, in particular calcium deficiency. Free school milk was one of the means of the poorer working class kids compensating for this lack in the home diet. Even the staid British Medical Association has pointed to the reappearance of rickets and malnutrition as a reflection of the falling diet and health standards of those workers at the bottom of the social pit. Even before the mass unemployment and poverty of the 30's has re-appeared their attendant diseases are revealed in the poorest working class districts. The claim of the Tories that the poor will be able to claim back any increased charges on health and welfare is belied by the statistics of social security experts, some of whom claim "that

as many as half the families of all kinds entitled to benefit from social welfare are successfully deterred by means testing", (SUNDAY TIMES 1/11/70). And it is the same Tory spokesmen who urge that the copers and shillings given to the poor should be carefully "scrutinised", with all the social stigma attached to this, while a cool £60 million can be doled out to Rolls Royce to "assist" the millionaires who control this monopoly. Even the limited access to culture for working class children, e.g. the British Museum, the Science Museum, etc., will now be cut off for many by the miserly decision to charge admission to National Museums. This was of course greeted with delight by those who had been put out by the "rabble", who had dared to invade the halls of culture... "On Sunday entrance (to the Louvre) is free. In late September, the galleries were so crowded that it was distinctly uncomfortable to visit one's favourite pictures"! Lady Parker (letter to Times). Nor will the Tories stop there. They are already discussing the possibility of library charges. Walker, the mis-named Minister of the Environment, has naturally bowed to pressure from Whitbreads, a main contributor to the Tory Party, and allowed them to build in a designated Green Belt area of Lancashire—with a £½ million cash grant from the Government! But the attacks on the working class' right to enjoy the museums, the libraries, and the country side free of charge is small beer compared to Walker's and the Tories projected attacks on council housing. The cutting of the subsidy to local councils by £100-£200m. will lead to massive rent increases in all the main working class areas. By means of the so-called "fair rent" committees—which have more than demonstrated their unfairness to the 57% of private tenants in some areas who have had their rents increased by them—they hope to carry through the de-controlling

of millions of private flats and houses. The re-appearance of Rachmanism on a big scale which is built into the system of landlordism and capitalism will be the inevitable result.

ATTACK ON LIVING STANDARDS

The Tories have spelt out to the Labour Movement that if they are allowed to get away with it they will carry through an offensive against the power of the unions, and the living standards of the working class the like of which has not been seen for decades.

Yet in this situation the Labour Leaders have given no clear lead to the Labour Movement. They have not spelt out in practical terms how the Tory proposals and the Tory Government can be defeated. On the contrary Barbara Castle still defends the Labour Government's attempt to introduce "In Place of Strife". Wilson and Jenkins have both defended the introduction of prescription charges when they were in power, because of the "difficult economic situation", claiming that it was ostensibly "quite different" from the present Tory proposals. The reality is that the Labour Leaders gave the Tories the stick with which they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

MILITANT INTERNATIONAL

REVIEW,

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SYRIA: What Kind of Regime?

By ROGER SILVERMAN (Fulham C.L.P.)

Yugoslavia:

PAPER "SOLUTION"

By CLARE DOYLE
(Gateshead L.P.)

Reeling from the shocks of the civil war in Jordan and the repercussions of Nasser's death, the great powers have now focussed their attention once again on Syria. This nation of 7 million people, consisting of Druses, Christians, Bedouins, Alawites and Damascenes, has for some years been the most sensitive point in a highly explosive area. The key to the whole complex situation in the Middle East can be found here.

For it is in Syria that the development of the Arab revolution has reached its greatest expression. Recent events completely vindicate the analysis made by MILLIANI, both of the growth of the colonial revolution in general, and of the relationship of class forces in Syria itself.

CLASS STALEMATE

The worldwide flood of national revolt swept aside the direct instruments of French colonial rule in 1949. However, in Syria as in every backward nation, no social class was strong enough to fill the vacuum and wield its own power directly. The feudal landlords only survived as anachronistic puppets of imperialism. The weak naive bourgeoisie had no chance of creating a viable capitalist regime in competition with the gigantic Western monopolies, and could only function as their middle-men and errand-boys. The peasantry, primitive and fragmented, in any case has no independent class identity and no future in a modern society, either on a capitalist or a socialist basis. And the urban working class, which could alone have offered society a future by uniting the poor peasantry behind its banner of workers' democracy and proletarian internationalism, was organised into parties which had no perspective of taking power. The Communist Party acted only as a tool of the Kremlin, opportunistically seeking to curry favour with the ruling cliques.

Marx explained that the state can be reduced basically to "armed bodies of men". Wherever the class struggle has reached utter deadlock, wherever the impotence of the ruling class and the political inertia of the rising class balance almost exactly to near-complete class equilibrium, the forces of armed coercion gain a certain freedom of action. Rival cliques of army officers engage in endless feuds for the privileges of power. One putsch follows another. The people remain immobile, paralysed for want of a revolutionary lead, passive bystanders to the generals' military gang-warfare. Meanwhile, for two-thirds of humanity capitalism in the backward ex-colonial sector of the world has meant rising unemployment, increasing starvation, abject exposure to disease and disaster, and falling living-standards, even during the major economic upswing of the last 25 years. Against this background corruption and speculation are rife.

MONOPOLIES TAKEN OVER

One Syrian government after another was dashed against the rocks of economic catastrophe. Governments toyed with the dream of union with Iraq for a time in order to forestall the mounting discontent of the population, then in 1958 embarked on a hasty union with Egypt. The petty rivalries of the nationalist leaders blasted the union wide open when Nasser demagogically turned towards a policy of nationalisation in 1961, to avert internal criticism.

The new Ba'ath "Socialist" Government, faced by similar pressures, applied similar measures against the foreign monopolies. Confronted with economic crisis, lacking a broad basis of public support, hungry for the fruits of office, and largely freed of the constraints imposed by a virile ruling class, the Syrian leaders found themselves pushed into policies that went much further than Nasser's and seriously threatened the capitalists' very existence. Not only were the petrol companies taken over in late 1964,

but within weeks large industry and finance houses were likewise nationalised. The very logic of their ambition, and the crying needs of a chaotic system, demanded state intervention. Immediately the Muslim church hierarchy, the merchants and the small shopkeepers mounted a shrill campaign of propaganda and civil disobedience. Vacillation or compromise now would have spelt downfall and probable execution for the political leaders. At that juncture the only salvation lay in mobilising the masses in their support. Peasants flocked to Damascus; shops were broken open and their stock impounded; the power of the church was crushed.

The Western imperialists, with their massive stakes in Middle Eastern oil, used every trick from flattery and bribery to outright armed subversion against the unfolding revolution. When the junta capitulated to their diplomatic pressures, a new coup in February 1966 brought to power a group of junior officers, more sensitive to the aspirations of the masses. The imperialists' reply was to organise a military counter-revolution in September. In a desperate fight for survival, the new junta mobilised the trade unions into a workers' militia of 2,000, and a vast peasant army. All state institutions were rid of the most blatant reactionaries at gunpoint, the army command was purged. To the extent that it is possible in backward, illiterate Syria, a new state machine was created free of the exploiters' influence. 85% of the land and 95% of industry was turned into public property.

DEFORMED REVOLUTION

The new regime, like the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe and Asia, rested on the foundations of a nationalised economy, allowing a planned growth in production. Like them it also denied the masses political control of the state. The workers were immediately disarmed, and the bureaucracy held sway by manoeuvring between the classes, wielding the primitive peasant militia as a blunt battering-ram of authority.

POPULAR MILITIA

The emergence of a new deformed workers' state in the heart of the oil-well country was the main factor provoking the war of June 1967. Initially the advance on Damascus was the primary Israeli objective. It was because here, unlike Jordan and Egypt, they encountered the resistance of a popular militia that was 300,000-strong that this failed. The revolutionary content of the struggle was shrouded in confusion by the fact that the Syrian leaders were quite content to join the unholy Arab alliance with sheikhs, kings and bourgeois dictators.

The war and its long-simmering aftermath debilitated the planned economy and stunted its potential growth. Already in February 1969 a protracted power struggle ended in an uneasy compromise with the "moderate" general Assad. This year, the unbearable tensions and contradictions within the Arab alliance burst it apart in all-out civil war in the feudal monarchy of Jordan, and in governmental upheavals in no less than nine Arab states.

The armed conflict between the Palestinian guerrillas and Hussein's Bedouin warrior caste put to the test all the reams of brave words of the last two decades. The Iraqi self-proclaimed Ba'ath Socialist (Pan-Arab) Government, with 12,000 troops in Jordan, made no attempt to assist the guerrillas even during the most barbaric massacres. Now the Vice-President has been dismissed as a sacrificial hostage to popular outrage. Syria, on the other hand, originally intervened with two armoured brigades (2,000 troops), Assad (then Defence Minister) sabotaged this operation by refusing to sanction air cover, and the troops were ignominiously withdrawn under Soviet and Egyptian pressure.

This humiliation brought to a head the antagonisms between the regime's civilian and military wings. Strengthened by his modest triumphs in 1969, Assad made a cynical bid for power last month, when he forced President Atassi to resign but narrowly failed to arrest Jadid, the effective Party leader. In response to his naked threat, Jadid, leaning on the trade-union wing, summoned an emergency Party Congress which dismissed Assad and his fellow-conspirators. Within 24 hours Assad had placed Atassi (who had revoked his resignation) under house arrest and clapped Jadid and his closest colleagues in jail. The 22nd government in 21 years was formed.

Arab and Western governments alike have hastily welcomed the news. The "Financial Times" has described Assad as "a militant who wants words rather than deeds... a realist", and the "Times" refers approvingly to his "absence of doctrinaire extremism".

NO RESTORATION!

However, the last word in this chapter has still to be written. Threats abound of a general strike. Workers, students and peasants have publicly demonstrated in the teeth of police fire against the "military clique". There has already been sporadic street fighting. Atassi, the wily opportunist "arbiter" between the two factions, has shown his own scepticism about the regime's viability, in refusing to sanctify it by resuming the nominal Presidency, and instead accepting house arrest. Before the fundamental gains of the revolution can be reversed, hundreds of thousands of armed workers and peasants will have to be reckoned with first. Assad has apparently bowed to reality and avoided provoking the masses' anger.

TOILERS, UNITE!

The fact that power has temporarily passed to a section of the bureaucracy that is even less responsive to the feelings of the people does not in itself mark a decisive defeat for the revolution. The material basis for socialism can still be built, while the means of production are owned by the State. But now as before, the workers will have to overthrow the political elite in order to establish socialism, which stands for conscious control by themselves. The spectre of revolution is rapidly taking on flesh in Sudan, the Lebanon, Iraq, Libya, and potentially throughout the Arab world. On an internationalist basis, the Israeli workers could be won for a class solution to the conflicts, pooling the natural and industrial resources of the area to the common benefit of all its working inhabitants.

A revolutionary programme on the lines of the Bolshevik programme of October 1917 could unite the toiling masses of the Middle East and construct a harmonious Socialist Federation.

MILITANT LEAFLETS

Militant has produced a large number of leaflets recently to cover the many events effecting the Labour Movement. These are available to all readers either singly or in quantities. Please send a nominal payment for single copies. The cost per 50 copies of each leaflet is:—

- G.E.E.C. Workers Fight Redundancy 2/6d
- No Rent Rises. For a Socialist Housing Policy 2/6d
- Trade Unions Must Fight (100 year of the T.U.C.) 2/6d
- Rolls Royce, Fight Redundancy 2/6d
- Fight Legislation With Socialist Policies (Answers "In Place of Strife") 3/6d
- Fight Pit Closures! For a Socialist Fuel Policy 1/6d
- Stand Firm For Teachers Demands 2/6d

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The image of "liberal" and "progressive" Yugoslavia has been tarnished further in recent months by the trial of the students who supported miners who had gone on strike against a wage cut and Tito's announcement of the eventual replacement of the Presidency by a Federal Presidium. Both events reveal the increasing economic, national and social difficulties of Tito's bureaucratic regime.

Underlying the popular discontent developing in Yugoslavia is the slowing down of the economy and consequent unemployment which is brought about by bureaucratic mismanagement. The rate of unemployment is increasing and would be over a million but for the fact that "one in five gainfully employed Yugoslavs is working abroad" (FINANCIAL TIMES). The cost of living spirals upwards at a massive 10% for the first six months of this year. In its wake the antagonism between the six main republics and the various nationalities is exacerbated as the poorer republics slip further behind the more advanced such as Croatia and Slovenia. According to the Financial Times, which draws its figures from official Yugoslav Government statistics, "the gap between the "rich" and "poor" has not narrowed but continued to grow". That this disparity between different republics exists 25 years after the establishment of "Yugoslavian Socialism" is condemnation in itself of the bureaucratic caste. It has in turn fed the discontent not only of the workers and peasants in the backward regions but also the bureaucracies in these areas. The result is that they have tried to ape the industrial framework of the advanced republics. This has led to the crazy duplication of the same industries in each area... "the six republics are simultaneously engaged in the planning or construction of four aluminium plants, several refineries, two major power plants and in expanding the capacity of half a dozen steel mills". Thus not only do the former "Balkans" of Eastern Europe remain Balkanised under Stalinism, but within Yugoslavia we see a graphic example of the inability of the privileged elite to build a real fraternal union of the workers and peasants even in one country. At a time when capitalism in the West demonstrates the incompatibility of the productive forces with the nation state—through the half hearted and inevitably doomed attempt to come together in the Common Market—the Stalinist regime in Yugoslavia can only lead back to a further entrenchment of national divisions. Tito's attempt to create a Presidium is aimed at papering over the national fissures. All to no avail! It will be left to the workers and peasants of Yugoslavia when they have thrown off their backs the parasitic elite to create a real democratic and socialist union of the peoples of the area and of the rest of Eastern Europe. The slogans of the students in 1968 denouncing the "Communist princes" and their replacement by socialist democracy will be taken up by the workers and peasants in the explosive situation which is developing in Yugoslavia.

Please send me MILITANT for the period indicated below:—
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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

We have received a letter from J.M. Chappell, of Cambridge criticising the position of the MILITANT on the Pilkington dispute. In the past, as our readers will know, we have never hesitated to publish oppositional views to that of our journal. This was the case, for instance, with the important issue of the Rent struggles in Liverpool and the May events in France in

1968. But we have been prevented from publishing this letter so far because of pressure of space in our last two issues. However, we believe that it deserves a thorough reply. Hence we will reply to the arguments of comrade Chappell and other tendencies in the next issue of our theoretical magazine MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

are now beating the Labour Movement. Their retreats even on their minimum reform programme arose from their attempt to manage capitalism better than the capitalists themselves. Not once have they indicated that they have learnt the lessons of the Tory comeback, which was prepared by their policies when in power.

SOCIALIST FIGHTING PROGRAMME

But neither have the TUC, the "Left" TU leaders, nor the Left Wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party countered them by giving a clear class lead. On the contrary Victor Feather has sought to keep the opposition to the Tories within "respectable" limits by means of soothing phrases and has even hinted at the TUC complying with a "voluntary" incomes policy. TRIBUNE, the official mouthpiece of the Parliamentary Left, attacked the NGA journal "Print" for refusing to publish an advert of the DAILY MIRROR which backed up the Tories anti-union Legislation. This knightly courtesy, under the heading of defending "democracy", demonstrates the confusion which reigns within the Tribune Left at the moment. The capitalists already have overwhelming superiority to argue their case through their control of the mass media. Not one precious inch should be wasted in the fight to defeat the Tory Bill. On the other hand Jack Jones forcefully warned his union membership in the T&GWU monthly journal RECORD "...If one of your representatives—one of your own mates—decides it's all unfair he could end up in jail. This is really serious business!" Yes indeed!! But what have Jones and Scanlon, and other Left T.U. leaders done in practical terms to use the massive weight of their unions to ward off the danger? They have given "the nod and the wink" to the most militant section to go ahead but, as yet, have not committed their unions to industrial action. The official union machinery and the leaders command enormous, sometimes decisive authority, in the eyes of the politically unaware sections of the workers. It has been left to a few unions such as DATA and SOGAT to point out that only industrial action will stop the Tories in their tracks. A campaign for a one-day general strike coupled with a political drive to explain the class basis of the Tory legislation and the need for the return of LABOUR TO POWER ON THE BASIS OF A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME, committed to taking over the 250 major monopolies, would shake the Tories and rapidly lead to their downfall. Any suggestion that the fight is "non-political" can be dispelled by the statements of the ruling class itself. They recognise that their party, the Tories, is in the saddle to represent them. Thus the TIMES explodes Heath's "One Nation" theme in a few simple lines: "THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY BELIEVES THAT ITS NEWLY CHOSEN GOVERNMENT KNOWS THE ANSWERS AND WILLS THE MEANS TO THAT END" (10/11/70). So much for "democracy"! At the same time the statements of the capitalists, of Heath and the Tory Ministers as a whole, together with their threats to go to the

lengths of a General Strike, Hailsham's warning comparing Britain with the "Weimar Republic" which preceded Fascism in Germany, the possibility of "dictatorship" (OBSERVER, 22/11/70), are a clear warning to the Labour Movement. A General Strike poses the question of power before the Labour Movement. It can either lead on to the establishment of workers' power or lead to a crushing defeat for the whole Labour Movement and a cutting of the living standards of the working people as a whole. Such is the decay of British capitalism, with its strategists talking about being reduced to a "Banana Republic", of Italy enjoying a higher per capita income by 1980, that a titanic clash between labour and capital is implicit in the whole situation. The threats to the council workers, the warnings to the miners, the clear declaration of the CBI and the Tories to use the full resources of the State to fight the power workers and the battles which loom on the railways and engineering industries makes a General Strike sooner or later a very real possibility. To go into this conflict without serious preparation by the Labour and Trade Union leaders, to declare that the Tory Government will win, as Callaghan maintained at the Labour Party Conference, is a confession of bankruptcy and defeat before the battle commences. On the other hand for the Parliamentary Left and the TU leaders to close their eyes to the possibility of a General Strike, to dismiss it as "hypothetical", is to dangerously lull the Labour Movement to sleep. The capitalists and their Government are not playing a game of chess! Their intentions are deadly serious, to clip the power of the unions, and to cut the share of wealth going to the workers in order to provide the wherewithal to plough back into production and make them competitive on the world market.

It is necessary for the Labour Movement to answer the Tories with a mass offensive. The fight on anti-union legislation, the struggle on wages, the demand for a living wage for the old, of whom "90,000 each year die from the cold" (RECORD) and for the victims of low wages and poverty—so tragically and clearly illustrated in the TV programme "HARD TIMES"—can and must be shown to be tied-in with the need for the socialist re-organisation of society.

LENIN CENTENARY LENINISM REASSERTED

read

LENIN & TROTSKY

WHAT THEY REALLY STOOD FOR?

(A reply to Monty Johnson of the British Communist Party on Lenin, Trotsky and Marxism).
by Alan Woods & Ted Grant
5/6 post paid from

MILITANT

197 King's Cross Rd., London, W.C.1.

STEEL: Vultures Hover

By DAVE GALASHAN (Islington L.P.Y.S.)

The word "rationalisation" in the mouth of an employer means "unemployment" in the worker's dictionary. The present discussions on "rationalising" the British Steel Corporation has added an additional meaning: "How to lop off the profitable bits off the nationalised industries".

The capitalists don't know which way to turn. Their fear of nationalisation is because it may have a snowballing effect. Yet, the steel industry was so sluggish with its outdated plant, that it needed to be boosted with State money, which in the main adds up to the money paid in taxes by the working class. They were not willing to invest themselves, so why not let the State get the industry out of lumber? The sections of the Tory Party who would like to see the industry denationalised, realise that a demolished steel industry would not be able to compete with the steel giants in Europe, America and Japan. So, what to do?

With sure instinct, they take the course which is dearest to their hearts. The Labour Government has already grossly overcompensated the former steel barons. They did not nationalise the 10% of the industry which accounts for a third of production and which was making a profit. Now the idea is to hive off the money-spinning Special Steels Division based on Sheffield. The rest of

the industry is in the main so antiquated that they have little hope of attracting private investment for a long time, so an eventual solution envisaged is some form of joint private-government enterprise along the lines of British Petroleum. A Tyne-side worker commented to a Militant supporter that these methods were like "cutting the arms and legs off a human body and holding up the trunk as an example of the horrors of Socialism".

The future of the Chemical and Constructional Engineering divisions are also coming under discussion. The vultures are already gathering... "Competitors have already begun ringing the divisional headquarters, I understand asking whether this or that juicy morsel is for sale!" (FINANCIAL TIMES)

The State is already providing the money for two-thirds of the research carried out in this industry. The capitalists want to be free to make as much profit as they can, yet the productive forces are straining at the bonds imposed on them by the Capitalist system of production. This explains the present crisis in the ruling circles. Only a Steel Industry under workers' control can offer a way out of this dilemma and clip the wings of the carrion who are benefiting from it at the moment.

PAPERBACKS ALL SOCIALISTS SHOULD READ

- The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist
by Robert Tressell 7/6
 - Stalin, 2 volumes
by Leon Trotsky each 12/6
 - Labour in Irish History
by James Connolly 3/6
 - Wage, Labour & Capital
by Karl Marx 1/6
 - The Communist Manifesto
by Marx & Engels 1/-
 - The State and Revolution
by Lenin 2/6
 - The Age of Permanent Revolution.
A Trotsky Anthology 9/6
 - A.B.C. of Communism by Bukharin & Preobrazhensky 8/-
 - History of the Russian Revolution (3 volumes complete)
by Leon Trotsky 30/-
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"THE MIDDLE CLASS CHANGE THEIR IDEAS LIKE A MAN CHANGES HIS SHIRT"—TROTSKY.

John Silkin, Chief Whip for three years in the last Labour Government, has joined the left-wing Tribune group of MPs and attended their first meeting last night.

"I have always been left of centre, really," he tells me. "It's natural to belong to them. In Opposition a more left-wing attitude can have a good deal of influence."

"In Government it would have been difficult. Of course, then I had to be totally impartial; but what would have been unnatural then is perfectly natural in Opposition."
(Evening Standard 10/11/70).

PRINTERS:

Fight splits — for one big union!

The years 1969/70 marked the turning point for the workers in the printing industry. This is emphasized by the threatened break-up of SOGAT (membership 235,000 into its two constituent parts—Division A, the former union of paperworkers and bookbinders (membership 18,000) and Division 1, the former union of printing trade operatives (membership 55,000). Also the possible fusion of Division 1 with the main craft union, the NGA (membership 100,000). This crisis within SOGAT, the result of the short-sighted attitude of the national officials of both unions, interested only in bureaucratic self preservation, each within their own little empires, is demonstrably criminal when the background to this situation is considered.

In the general printing trade, increasing monopolisation and rationalisation, together with the introduction of new techniques, resulting in many smaller firms being pushed to the wall by the giants, have led to a large reduction in the labour force causing unemployment in the industry and, and for the first time since the "thirties", in some areas printing workers have on chance of being employed within the printing industry again. This, and the holding back of living standards, has resulted in an upsurge in militancy, and to a revolt, particularly within the NGA, against the union bureaucracy. This revolt broke the surface in October 1969 when after the national officials had hastily concluded a pay agreement of £1 a week they were forced to reopen negotiations, eventually securing a further £2.10.0d in August 1970. In Liverpool, the revolt reached its highest expression in the branch, demanding that all officials be subject to re-election every three years, their pay to be based on an average wage of the trade, and for annual conferences to be held to decide union policy.

In the national newspapers, the crisis broke out last May/June. The contributory factors were the technological developments eroding craft skills, and the continual decline in the number of national newspapers, reducing jobs and putting even greater power into the hands of the few press barons who decide what millions of people shall read (and shall not read). Productivity bargaining is also reducing the labour force. The Economist Intelligence Unit estimated in 1966 that the number of workers on the national dailies could be reduced by an average of 50%! These factors—sacking and growing insecurity amongst the workers, with no real lead against the press overlords by the union officials, has resulted in demarcation disputes in order to save jobs, and this has been exacerbated by the bureaucracies of both unions who have played on the real fears of the men in order to defend their bureaucratic positions and petty privileges.

But the crisis last May, shortly after the National News Officer, John Clifford, deserted the NGA for the board of IPC, brought home forcibly to the national officials of the NGA and SOGAT the need to merge into one union if only for the purpose of bureaucratic self-preservation. Briginshaw of SOGAT Division 1 has for a long time stated his readiness to merge with the NGA. It now appears that Bonfield of the NGA and Briginshaw would favour a merger at the expense of SOGAT Division A which would be left out in the cold. This seems to be the cause of the present crisis in SOGAT which is in the hands of the receiver pending the proposed split. While from the point of view of the two bureaucracies within the Home Counties a merger at the expense of the bookbinders seems feasible, in the provinces such a break-up would have dire consequences, possibly resulting in

(REG LEWIS-NGA, Liverpool).

the women workers, drivers, office and security staff etc. becoming completely unorganised, causing a serious breach in the closed shop. Such a branch would play right into the hands of the bosses who would have the opportunity of inserting a lever into the gap blowing the closed shop wide open in a period of unemployment in order to discipline the workers far more effectively than any state laws, and so erode the gains fought for over the last quarter century.

Even on the wages front, in the last few years, the crazy policy of the union leadership of marching separately has played into the hands of the employers. The folly of this attitude is such that in the last wage negotiations, the two leaderships within SOGAT put in two different claims—one for 20%, the other for 25%.

At the time of writing, SOGAT Division A has decided to call on the section of the membership to stage a 24-hour strike on December 8th against the Tory proposed anti-union legislation. Of itself this is a great step forward—the first section of the whole labour movement to call a national strike on a political issue. But examined more closely, what a ridiculous state of affairs it is when not only is there no general agreement amongst the bureaucrats of the two major unions but the two bureaucracies within the

one union cannot form a united policy on this vital issue. This could sow confusion amongst the printing workers and so play right into the hands of the Tories.

At one time there were nine printing unions and mergers have only been effected when the interests of the various union hierarchies have been threatened and where the larger unions have been able to absorb the smaller to the mutual benefits of the bureaucracies concerned. But in order to face the problems that lie ahead, the need for one union of printing workers has become imperative! The need for change, long overdue, must begin on the shop floor and within the branches. The rank and file, the ordinary members, must effect that change to bring about a transformation of the ossified structure of the printing unions. The campaign must begin by uniting the printing workers in the demand for one union for the whole of the printing industry, to demand that all officials be subject to re-election; that officials' salaries be based on an average wage of the trade; that annual conferences of a new united printworkers union be the governing body to which the officials will be answerable, and for the right to recall officials who are not carrying out the instructions of the membership. It is necessary for printworkers to formulate a full programme—a programme against unemployment, against the employers, and for one industrial union for all printing workers until we wrest the control of the industry from the control of private capital and the press barons, and so establish a truly free press which will serve the working class in its struggle for Socialism.

BUILD "MILITANT" FIGHTING FUND

The increased tempo of developments in Britain, with the Labour and Trade Union Movement shaping up to defeat the plans of the Tories to attack the unions and the social services, has in turn impelled our supporters to intensify their efforts to build the MILITANT FIGHTING FUND. Our Liverpool supporters continue to lead the way with a magnificent £117.2.6 in November. But the Brighton supporters and those in London have set targets for the Fund of £300 and £500 respectively which they are determined will equal the efforts of the Merseyside comrades. London supporters began their drive with a jumble sale in Kensington which raised a useful £24. We would urge all those who wish to assist in spreading the case of Marxism, who understand the need to take the ideas of MILITANT to ever wider layers of the Labour Movement, to take similar action in their own area. Every £, the pennies and shillings count. It would not "hurt" too much if one or two drinks a week, or a packet of cigarettes, less, were taken by our supporters. And if the money saved was sent to us, it would enormously assist the MILITANT to build up the resources necessary to go into production on a fortnightly and eventually, within a very short period of time we hope, on a weekly basis.

Already our programme is more and more accepted by the advanced layers of the unions, the Labour Party and L.P. Young Socialists. This is shown by the sharp increase in the circulation of the paper. We reported in our last issue that we had to print an extra 500 copies of the October issue. We also found that we were short of papers in November and have now decided that we will need a regular 500 more than previously and possibly an extra 1,000 a month. This is a very good sign but we still need to spread the influence of the MILITANT even wider. We would urge our readers to press their union branch, their ward, their Constituency Labour Party to take out regular orders for the paper. We rely on our supporters and readers for our support. You are our only

means of building a powerful Marxist voice within the Labour Movement. An extra few shillings a week or month, by means of a bankers order, would be of enormous assistance.

We are also prepared to send speakers to explain our case to the LP's unions and YS branches. In the past month alone spokesmen for the MILITANT visited Carlisle, with an excellent and responsive 50 members of the Local Labour Movement attending, a YS weekend school in the London region, where Ted Grant of the Militant Editorial Board debated with Michael Barnes MP on the Common Market, Tyneside and Bristol. In all areas the Marxist case is gaining ground. The rank and file activists are increasingly realising that we have to learn the lessons of the past six years of Labour Government and the already vicious record of the Tories. It is not a question of regurgitating the limited reform programme of 1964 and 1966. To attempt to temporise with the capitalist system is similar to making soothing whispers to a charging bull. As we have shown in this issue of MILITANT, in relation to anti-union legislation, the capitalists are deadly serious in their plans to cut the workers' share of the wealth produced by their labour. Only the Marxist tendency has warned the ranks of the Labour Movement that capitalism would drop its "democratic" mask when threatened. Marx himself, more than once committed to the dustbin of history, the capitalists now recognise awkwardly rises like the Phoenix from the ashes... "CAN WE BEAT KARL MARX?" (Guardian 9/11/70). The whole of the Labour Movement will answer them in the negative in the explosive period which is opening up in Britain. We call on all supporters and readers to make this a reality by beginning now to build up the circulation of our paper, to rush donations, big and not so big, to sign the subscription form if you have not already done so, and to spread the ideas and influence in all sections of the Labour Movement.

Workers Fight Tory Attacks on Post Office

By DAVY DICK (P.O.E.U.)

Having successfully begun to hand over routes worth £6 million to the airline spivs the Tories are now looking eagerly towards the de-nationalisation of other profitable sections of State owned industry. The telecommunications section of the Post Office has always loomed large in the bosses greedy calculations. With relish they have discussed behind the scenes the enormous profits that they would be able to amass by taking over this growth industry. Now their plans have exploded like a bombshell with the sacking of Lord Hall as the chief of the Post Office. The immediate strike and demonstration of 50,000 Post Office workers in protest against this was in reality not so much concerned with the fate of the noble Lord, with his salary of £17,500 a year 15 company directorships before he took the job and a £70,000 "golden hand shake" on leaving, but a determined show of force to indicate the kind of mass resistance which the Tories can expect if they go ahead with their plans. This was clearly shown by the statement of one worker on T.V. on November 25th, who interpreted the sacking as a move in the direction of de-nationalisation. The reports which have appeared as we go to press further illustrate this... "To chants of 'Political traitors', 'It's bloody disgusting and 'Sack the Tories' about 2,800 workers crowded into narrow King Edward Building". (Evening Standard 25/11/70).

All the statements of Hall himself show that the Tories were not prepared to tolerate the slightest obstacle to their schemes... "the new leadership have certain objectives in mind for the future and I hope to God they are for the well-being of the Corporation". Through his opposition to the Tory proposals Lord Hall has probably reflected the opposition of sect-

ions of Post Office bureaucrats, who have warned of the ruinous consequences of de-nationalisation; not the least of the factors being the threat to their own income and prestige. Many top officials indicated during the last election campaign that the Tories threatened the present development of the Post Office!

Lord Hall further hinted at the bonanza which awaits the lucky recipients of the shares of a denationalised telecommunications section when he said:—"I own no Post Office shares—I wish to heaven I did." (Evening Standard).

No time should be lost in preparing to stop the Tories' de-nationalisation measures. They should be warned that industrial action involving all sections of the workers in the Post Office will take place. The London workers have magnificently demonstrated the temper of the workers. The unions must tie this in with a campaign to bring down this rotten Government which represents the moneybags, spivs and speculators. Not one worker should be left in any confusion as to the class role of the Tories. It is not a question of defending the 'integrity' of the chief of the Post Office, as some of the union leaders have done, but to defend the wages, living standards and conditions of hundreds of thousands of Post Office workers. As a beginning let the unions come out solidly for the December 8th strike. What a magnificent opportunity to link the fight to defend the Post Office with the struggle against anti-union legislation and the replacement of the Tory Government by a Labour Government committed to ending the power of the monopolies by carrying through the process begun by the nationalisation of the Corporation and nationalising the handful of private monopolies.