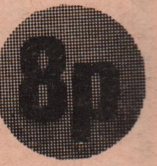


Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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IN
YOUR
12 PAGE
MILITANT

STEEL WORKERS FIGHT SACKINGS



Britain 1976



Spain
repression
continues

★★★

Plus—
Women
Education
Scottish Labour
Young Socialists

★★★★★

Reviews—
The Jungle
Cecil King's Diary

THE MAGNIFICENT, SPONTANEOUS response of thousands of steel workers to the threat of the British Steel Corporation to sack 44,000 men and break wage agreements has forced the management to back down, at least on some of their proposals.

BSC, which lost an estimated £340 million last year, aim to solve the problems of the steel industry in a short-sighted, Luddite fashion, with mass redundancies and lower wages to cut the wage bill by £170 million.

But sit-ins and strikes by 4,500 steelmen on Sunday in solidarity with men deprived of weekend work made the bosses think again. This was just a flexing of the workers' muscles, just a warning of what is to come if management think they can go around breaking agreements signed with the union and slashing steelworkers' take-home pay by up to £15 a week as a result. Ending weekend working can mean a 33% wage cut for many steelmen.

BSC got the message and will honour the agreement to guarantee 80% of the weekly wage when they fail to provide work. In addition 67,000 men will receive 5% cost of living increases.

Management have been forced to back down entirely due to pressure

By Brent Kennedy

from the steelmen themselves, the officials of the steel unions have been tailing behind their members rather than giving a fighting lead. But the threat of large-scale sackings still hangs over the heads of steelworkers. This is only round one of the fight. Now the union leadership should follow the example of militant action set by their members and organise a national campaign against any rundown of the industry and against any attempt to offload the problems of BSC onto the workers.

BSC Chief Executive Bob Scholey has bluntly threatened that the 44,000 jobs to be axed in the next two years is "just for starters." With unemployment estimated to reach 1½ million this year thousands of workers in other

industries are facing the same fight. They must fight unemployment together! A national campaign by the steel unions, the rail unions, the postmen, the carworkers and others faced with sackings could be the beginning of concerted action by the whole Labour Movement against sections of the working class being picked off one by one. Unity is strength!

The Tory press has had a field day trying to show that the sickness of BSC 'proves' that nationalisation is less efficient than 'private enterprise'. Far from it! If the whole steel industry was in private hands today the problems would be ten times worse. These problems date back to the days when the steel barons let the industry go to waste rather than reinvest their profit to modernise the plant. When BSC took over in 1947 and again in 1967 it inherited outdated, inefficient and run-down plant and machinery, much of which still needs to be replaced.

Bureaucracy

Yet the taxpayers are still paying out compensation to the criminally selfish former owners, many of whom are in management positions of BSC today.

It is not nationalisation of steel which is at fault, nor the steelworkers, but the way it was nationalised and the way it is run. 90% of the industry was taken over, but the remaining 10%, producing stainless steel and specialised steels, was by far the most profitable.

Irresponsible 'private enterprise' is totally incapable of investing the huge amounts of capital necessary to build up and modernise an efficient steel industry. The small private steel firms are cutting the working week by a third and making men redundant and now have the cheek to go begging to the Government for aid!

The public steel industry is held down under the weight of an inefficient bureaucracy, headed by Sir Monty Finniston who takes a salary of £28,000. While BSC are laying off workers and running at 60% capacity they are actually importing steel into Britain from other steel makers to meet orders for the car industry.

Bottlenecks, jams and wastage abound. Recently, members of the management have been caught fiddling. Bureaucracy, corruption and lack of

planning are inevitable without the democratic check and control by the workers. The only alternative to this is for the industry to be run under democratic control and management by the workers. The board should be elected, with one third elected by the steel unions, one third elected from the TUC and one third from the Government.

Damning

Last year the owners of capital ploughed back into manufacturing industry 13% less than in 1974. This year investment is likely to fall by another 5.8%. When the capitalists are no longer making sufficient profits they short-sightedly refuse to invest now for the future development of industry. On these damning investment figures the 'Financial Times' (6/1/76) concluded that "the long-term upward trend in investment both in manufacturing and in distribution, which characterised the 1950s and 1960s, has come to an end. The cyclical peak in manufacturing was slightly lower in 1974 than in 1970. The expected trough in 1976 will be slightly lower than the previous trough of 1972 in manufacturing and lower in distribution and service industries than in any year from 1970 onwards."

Bleak future

In other words, a bleak future ahead for 'private enterprise', which has now completely outlived its usefulness. But while the decisive sectors of the economy are in private hands, and the economy is therefore dictated solely by the profit motive, nationalised industry is also held back from realising its full potential. The superiority of nationalised industry over capitalist industry is its ability to plan its long-term development, but the present nationalised industries, like steel, are bedevilled by the ups and downs of the Stock Exchange, which determines the demand for steel etc.

The present hamstringing public industries will only be freed to produce their full capacity and expand for the benefit of everyone when the majority of the economy is also nationalised, with compensation only on the basis of proven need, and incorporated into a socialist plan of production.

NORTHERN IRELAND

ONLY LABOUR MOVEMENT CAN STOP

The assassination of five Catholics last Sunday followed by the murder of the ten Protestant workers the following day has sent a wave of revulsion through Northern Ireland. These workmen were cold-bloodedly machine-gunned to death. According to the father of one of the victims, the murdered men did not look as though they had been shot. They looked as if they had been chopped up by spades!

There was an angry response from the workers of the border town of Newry where over 2,000 workers stopped work to protest

KILLINGS

against the sectarian killings. This predominantly Catholic town saw workers from both sides of the religious community march together to a meeting organised by Newry Trades Council.

The murders are horrific proof of the terrible ordeal that workers, Protestant or Catholic, have to face daily from the gangster gunmen of both sides of the sectarian divide. As if the actions of the British army were not enough! These murders rival in bestiality the Derry massacre of Catholic workers carried

out by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday 1972.

The new wave of sectarian murders which has claimed 17 lives already in 1976, began with the New Year's Eve bombing of a Protestant owned pub in Gilford, Armagh which killed two men and a woman. Responsibility for the bombing was claimed by the 'South Armagh Republican Action Force', who also claim to have carried out Monday's massacre. All authoritative sources argue that the name of this group is nothing more than a 'flag of convenience' for the local unit of the Provisional IRA.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

year. The pace was uneven, both from year to year [1954 and 1958 saw output up and from country up over growth]. But industry notched average [half] all and

OUR SAY

12 PAGE PAPER

This first issue of the 12-page MILITANT is a great achievement, an achievement which is due as much to our readers as it is to the devoted and selfless work of those who support the paper and who work full time to get it out each week. At a time when the capitalist press is in a financial crisis, and particularly some of those journals which have recently launched a campaign of lies and slander against this paper, MILITANT is expanding in size! In the development of the paper from a black and white four page monthly in October 1964 to its present size and attractive layout we have not been able to rely on the backing of millionaires and rich advertisers. The resources which have enabled us to expand MILITANT has come from the sacrifices of our, mainly working class, supporters in the Labour Movement.

This increasing support is in turn the result of the growth in influence of the ideas and programme of MILITANT within the Labour Movement. We have provided the facts and figures to combat the lies of the spokesmen of capitalism and half-truths of Labour's officialdom, given coverage to all the important issues nationally and internationally as well as featuring articles which armed the active workers in the Labour Movement with a perspective and analysis of events. Above all MILITANT has increased its support because its warnings about the inadequacies of the Labour leadership's programme and our alternative to solve the crisis has been borne out by events. A lengthy article in this issue underlines the seriousness of the situation facing the Labour Government and the catastrophe which faces the Labour Movement if it continues along the present disastrous road.

Even our enemies are forced to grudgingly recognise the calibre of the articles in MILITANT: "The general quality of articles in MILITANT is high, particularly on industrial issues" ['East-West Digest', a reactionary right wing magazine].

But it is not just the industrial articles which have brought favourable comment from our readers. Our sellers have reported that the international articles, particularly those on Spain, Portugal and Greece, have been received well by the readership, especially by the shop floor. Through the 12-page paper we intend to continue and extend the international coverage which has always been one of the most important features of MILITANT.

In the same way MILITANT has charted the development of the Portuguese Revolution, the revolutionary turmoil in Greece following the overthrow of the military junta and the coming revolution in Spain. We have endeavoured to show to the advanced workers in Britain the inseparable connection between these events and the struggle to end the rule of capital here.

The 12-page MILITANT will allow us much greater scope to develop these aspects of the paper as well as including more articles about all aspects of the working people's lives, an extended letters column, more book and film reviews etc. But the success of the 12-page MILITANT depends upon you, the reader. Only if you write for the paper, sell the paper and above all build up our Fighting Fund, will we be able to make this venture a success. Why not immediately get your LPYS branch, Constituency Labour Party, union branch or shop stewards' committee to take out a bulk order.

It has taken us 11 years to build MILITANT to its present size. But Frederick Engels once wrote that developments over twenty years can seem like one day in the life of society, but then can come periods when one day can be equal to twenty years. Similarly in the stormy epoch we are moving into in Britain the events of 11 years can be compressed into 11 days. MILITANT must be prepared for this situation! We hope every reader and supporter of MILITANT will play their part with articles, increased sales and cash for the 12-page paper to ensure that we are prepared.

RECALL LABOUR CONFERENCE

With one and a quarter million workers unemployed and the prospect of the figure reaching one and a half million soon, there is mounting indignation with the Labour Movement at the failure of the Labour Government to take measures to eliminate unemployment. This has prompted 'Tribune' in its issue on 2nd January to float an idea of a special Labour Party Conference to discuss the issue. This proposal should be energetically supported by the whole of the Labour Movement. But if this is to be more than just a proposal it should be backed up by an immediate campaign throughout the Labour Movement, with the 'Tribune' Group of MPs giving a lead. Every Constituency Labour Party and union branch should be urged to press the National Executive Committee and their own union leaders to support the call. This should be coupled with the demand that the Conference should be organised in such a way that the voice of every section of the Movement should be heard at such a Conference. Unlike at previous Special Conferences it should be more than one day and all CLPs and affiliated organisations should have the right to submit resolutions. Only by compelling the Labour Government to introduce a socialist programme to combat unemployment will the Government, and the Labour Movement be saved from the disaster which looms.

We will carry an article dealing with 'Tribune's' programme for reducing unemployment next week.

By Cally Reeves

(Norwood Labour Party)

WOMENS

RIGHTS :

A

CLASS ISSUE

The Sex Discrimination Act has just come into force, along with the Equal Pay Act. Should we regard these as historical landmarks in the struggle for women's rights? Will they radically alter the centuries of double oppression suffered by women workers? Or are they merely sops to appease the growing number of women beginning to question their lot in society as a result of participating in struggles for higher wages, and for better housing for their families? Could such legislation actually be counter-productive if it directs women's attention away from seeing the capitalist employer as the main enemy of all sections of the working class and men as the stumbling block to 'equality'?

Women have always been used as a source of cheap labour. 60% of all women workers are in occupations where more than three quarters of all employees are women. 75% of all women workers are concentrated into four occupational groups—clerical services, professional and technical (e.g. teachers, nurses) and the retail trade. This concentration in 'women's work' means that there is often no comparable male job and therefore sex discrimination in terms of conditions, training and pay is inapplicable.

Barbara Castle actually gave employers five years to restructure their labour forces, to regrade jobs etc., so that there would be little chance of women being able to make claims under the Equal Pay Act. The employers have ensured that there are as few jobs as possible where men and women are doing the same work, and any regrading of women's jobs has only been up to the lowest male level.

There are numerous loopholes in the Sex Discrimination Act. Discrimination is allowed where sex is a "genuine occupational qualification", and this could cover a multitude of sins. Of more importance though, are the factors which any employer will consider before choosing a candidate for a job. Such things as experience, level of

skill, qualifications, amount of overtime required, shiftwork, nightwork and mobility are all likely to be to the disadvantage of a woman applicant. An employer has only to cite one of these factors to prove that he has not discriminated against a woman on grounds of sex.

The crux of the matter is that women do not have an 'equal opportunity' to achieve the qualifications necessary for the more skilled jobs in a capitalist society. This is largely because of the role of women in the family. The new legislation does nothing to alter the economic and social conditions in society which for years have determined the inferior role allotted to women.

Unrewarding

One third of all working women are in part-time employment, and of these 80% are married women. Although the number of married women as a percentage of all women in work has increased from 10% in 1931 to 42% in 1971, the main restriction on their economic activity is their role in child rearing. Women still spend more time doing unpaid and unrewarding housework than in paid jobs—an estimated 2,340 million hours a year of housework and 1,290 million hours a year working in industry!

Most women are forced to give up their jobs when they have children as there is a dearth of nurseries places—only five day nurseries for every 1,000 pre-school children! In London there are only places for 1½% of children under five. However, during the Second World War when women's labour was essential to the maintenance of industry, day nurseries were set up in most neighbourhoods!

Under capitalism women's education directs them away from the opportunity of developing their talents for mathematics, science, metalwork etc., and consequently closes the door to careers to many professions and skilled trades. In 1972 138,000 girls did Home Economics at GCE 'O' level and only 300 girls attempted woodwork and metalwork. There are rumours that infant school readers portraying the stereotyped images of mother in the kitchen and father doing the 'man's

job' will now be outlawed, but this will not alter the orientation of the entire education system.

The Sex Discrimination Act states that all pupils must be allowed to choose any subject in the curriculum. However, single sex schools are exempted and so girls' schools will not be forced to provide metalwork, woodwork etc. Co-education should be the premise for any comprehensive system.

Where women are doing like work with men, the Act says that an employer must ensure training facilities. In all other cases though, training is still at the employer's discretion. Whilst the present division of labour persists, there will be no change in the appalling lack of further education for girls. In 1973, 10.4% of girls in work had day release compared with 39.7% of boys; 7% of girls went into apprenticeships compared with 42% of boys. At the minimum, day release should be compulsory for all young workers up to the age of 18, and with no loss of earnings.

If an individual, male or female, brings a complaint of unlawful discrimination in employment it will be heard by an industrial tribunal. The burden of proof will be on the claimant, contrary to the practice in other industrial tribunal cases where the employer has to prove that a dismissal, for instance, was fair. Cases of discrimination over advertising, mortgages and access to pubs will go to a county court.

The Equal Opportunities Commission will be able to do little more than oversee the functioning of an Act which has very limited scope. It can initiate investigations and issue non-discrimination notices, but no fines or imprisonment are intended! An employer or company has to be informed of an investigation beforehand. Standard question forms which are ostensibly to help a complainant question her employer, will only give the respondent the opportunity to organise his defence.

In the present economic crisis, women will find that their jobs are the first to go, and yet they will still be expected to balance the family budget. But more than ever in 1976 it will be all sections of the Labour Movement who will suffer 'discrimination' from the bosses. In the last ten years there has been an influx of women into the trade unions, but this has been less than the overall increase of women workers. 32% of women workers are members of a trade union compared to 54% of all men. In the past, many trade unions have only fought for equal pay because low women's wages depressed the overall wage levels. The fight now, as never before, must be for a national minimum wage tied to the cost of living. Only in this way can the Labour Movement remain united. Women workers do not want an equal right to unemployment and falling living standards!

Above all the whole issue of 'women's rights' is a class question, not just one of sex. It is impossible to satisfactorily solve the problem of discrimination while both women and men workers are exploited by the common capitalist enemy. The struggle for 'equal rights' is part of the struggle for the emancipation of the whole working class.



Women workers at Plessey join in the fight against unemployment last year

Labour in Scotland unite on Socialist Policies!

The Labour Party in Scotland is going through its most serious crisis for years. Polls and by-elections show a massive swing away to the Scottish National Party. The Government's economic policies are totally failing to solve Scotland's deep-rooted problems, and in despair a small section of the membership is floating the idea of a breakaway Scottish Labour Party as a solution.

In a Regional Council by-election in a normally safe Labour ward in Bo'ness, a Labour majority of 322 was turned into an SNP majority of 1,520. The SNP actually received five times as many votes as Labour.

Now an opinion poll in the 'The Scotsman' has shown support for the four main parties as follows—SNP 37%, Labour 30%, Tories 28% and Liberals 5%. Even though polls can only be a very rough guide, that shows an unmistakable trend towards an SNP majority in either the next general election or the elections to the Scottish Assembly. The same poll showed 21% in favour of a completely independent Scotland and 28% in favour of a Scottish Assembly with far more powers than the one promised by the Labour Government in its White Paper. (See MILITANT no. 283).

The weak and half-hearted proposals for devolution put forward by the Labour Government in its White Paper will not stem the support for the SNP. In fact the White Paper, by proposing an Assembly with no economic powers, with innumerable restrictions and with a Westminster power of veto over everything it does, can only contribute to the slump in Labour's popularity. The SNP can claim that with an Assembly with powers, and they in a majority, all problems can be solved.



Winifred Ewing, first SNP Member of Parliament

Labour must demand the fullest powers for any Assembly (including powers to take over companies) so that a Labour majority in the Assembly can become a powerful mobilising force, as part of the whole British Labour Movement, to campaign for the implementation of a

socialist programme by the Labour Government.

For primarily it is the continuing economic decline of Scotland and Labour's evident failure to reverse it which lies behind this crisis.

3,000 redundancies at Chrysler's

Linwood factory and 5,000 in the Scottish steel industry are the latest body blows to the prospects of working people. 8,500 jobs at Rolls Royce are in jeopardy. In the Strathclyde Region alone, it has been estimated that by 1981 70,000 jobs will have been lost in ten years.

Prices up 27%

Glasgow District Council plans to cut its expenditure next year by £9.6 million, which can only mean less wages for its workers, redundancies, higher charges and worse services. Other cities are making the same kind of plans. As well as these cuts in the 'social wage', real living standards are also being savagely hit. While wage increases are being held down to a maximum of £6, it has been revealed that food prices in Glasgow rose by 27% between last December and this.

In this situation, it is inevitable that there will be a reaction from a section of voters, especially from the middle class, who have lost many of their former privileged positions in society. It is to nationalism that they have turned, attracted by the glib demagoguery of the SNP which makes 'England' the scapegoat for Scotland's ills. An indication of just how remote from the interests of ordinary people this party is given by their latest recruit, shipyard boss Sir Eric Yarrow, a staunch opponent of the Government's nationalisation plans for the shipbuilding industry!

But the reaction has been much greater as a result of the utter complacency of the Scottish Labour leadership, which has failed to make any kind of protest against the Government's retreats from its Manifesto policies. They have not only supported

the devolution White Paper, but propose a series of rallies on the theme of 'Devolution not Separatism'. This will only help to spread the illusion that the Government's proposals for the Assembly will be a means of solving problems which in fact it will have absolutely no power to do.

There has also been a reaction from within the Labour Party. In the main it has been a silent protest in the form of staying away from Party meetings. Many Constituency Labour Parties, especially in the Glasgow area, have dwindled into tiny caucuses, with only the LPYS branches bringing any new members and political discussion into them.

Now, however, one or two members of the Party have floated the idea of forming a separate breakaway Scottish Labour Party. Jim Sillars, MP for South Ayrshire, has resigned from the Scottish Executive and Alex Neil has resigned from his job as Research Officer. John Robertson, MP for Paisley, has expressed views similar to Sillars, claiming that the devolution proposals were "the straw that broke the camel's back," coming on top of the use of unemployment as an instrument of Government policy and indiscriminate cuts in public spending. "To condemn the Scottish economy for all of the foreseeable future to a slow decline," he said, "is to deny all the promises ever made."



Willie Ross, Minister of State for Scotland

These ideas may strike a chord in the minds of many Labour Party members, disillusioned with the way the Party leadership is moving. But the idea that they are hinting at, and which a group headed by Alex Neil and Bob Brown, the former Press Officer of the Scottish Executive, have openly proclaimed, of creating "a Scottish Labour Party," is a recipe for disaster.

Wilderness

The united Labour Movement is the strongest weapon in the hands of the British working class, the Scots as much as any others. Any divisions within the Labour Party or Trade Union Movement would be a step backwards, but a split on national lines would be a catastrophe. While socialists have always fought against national oppression and defended the right of nations to self-determination, they have fought for the breaking down of all barriers within the working class movement.

A Labour Party would not be one jot better simply by virtue of being 'Scottish'. It is the economic policies of the present Labour leadership which lie at the root of its political failures, its failure to stand up to the blackmail of the bosses, like Riccardo of Chrysler for example. But to breakaway on these issues would still be a tremendous mistake. To any member who is serious, the task is to change the Party's policies. To leave the Party is to opt out of the difficult struggle to achieve this, to seek an apparent easy-way-out which in fact leads only to the political wilderness.

By Pat Craven

Education Cuts begin to bite

By Louise Birch

(Nottingham North LPYS)

to eighty. It is not commonly known that since the war the number of nursery places has been slashed—the reason being that when it suits the capitalists to have more women workers as it did during the war, nurseries sprang up everywhere.

But there is one group of children who don't even get a place in school once they have reached the age of five—in 1973 14,000 handicapped children were on the waiting lists, of whom 5,000 had waited for more than a year. The DES had allocated no money for local authorities to spend to meet the backlog. Now the savings proposed by many areas show that the situation is going to be much worse. Gloucestershire is postponing opening a school for 130 educationally subnormal children in Tewkesbury to save £40,000 and a new school in Dudley is to stay empty for 18 months because the authority cannot afford to staff it.

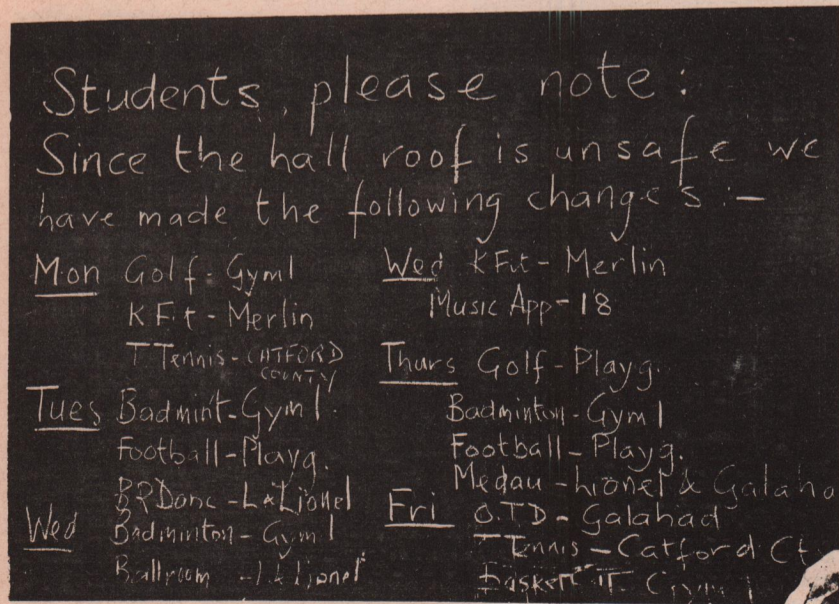
Inflation

All this and 5,000 teachers officially unemployed! The current cuts in student intake for Colleges of Education on the pretext of a fall in population seems to assume that the present situation is good enough—far from it! A fall in the population should be used as an opportunity for a real improvement in staff/pupil ratios

inflation has been hitting school supplies at the same rate as the housewives' shopping basket. At one primary school in Nottingham the parents were asked casually if they would send their kids to school with things like tissues, soap, toilet rolls etc.

Some more savings for the 'nation' are substituting vegetable protein for meat; shortening summer and lengthening Christmas holidays—to save on fuel bills; lower cleaning standards; cutting out the best meal of the year—Christmas dinner; book spending cut by 25%, as in Bucks, and higher rates for adult evening classes. The 'Sunday Times' recently looked at 7 authorities—none of which could guarantee maintaining their present staff/pupil ratios. In some cases the cost of 'O level' examinations exceeds what is spent per pupil over the period of the syllabus! And this does not surprise me if one comprehensive school in Nottingham is typical. In this school there is only one set of text books between the seven science teachers and none for the use of the pupils.

To fight the cuts and the situation of teacher unemployment the NUT has issued a threat that teachers will not be taking on extra workloads. We must give full support to this campaign, but the only way the cuts can be restored and education advanced is through a political campaign. When capitalism is in crisis and the Labour Government is talking about further cuts we can see that under capitalism a decent education cannot be guaranteed. Only by a socialist plan of production can the resources be made available for the

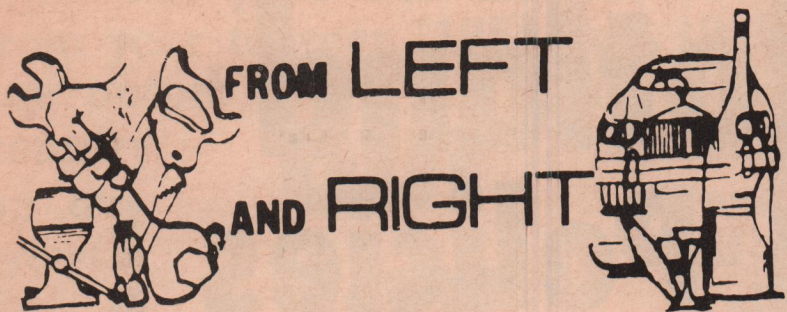


A decent education for all! That has been the call of the Labour Movement since the time of the Chartists and before. Now we are seeing vicious attacks on our living standards because the capitalist system is in crisis and education is being cutback as if it were a luxury! The reluctance of capitalism to invest in productive industry is being reflected in education, which is just as much investment for the future.

The extent of the cuts in education are not widely publicised and even less so the consequences. The scandal of kids going without

crowding.

Nursery education has been particularly hard hit because many authorities are having to take the Government's advice on priority for compulsory age groups (5 to 16) and this has resulted in some cases of new nursery buildings being used to house the overflow from the primary schools. Many studies have been carried out proving the importance of nursery education. Even the Tories maintained in their 'Framework for Expansion' that this was an area for priority. They allocated £30 million to this area—a pittance considering that half that amount was needed by one London authority alone to meet its nursery demands. An NUT body found



FUTURE LAID BARE

If you are a school-leaver, a girl, and unemployed, do not despair. There are still opportunities for you in 1976 in our dynamic society.

In the depressed North-East, where any office or factory job is impossible to get, out of work school-leavers are turning to striptease and topless dancing to earn a living. In the last month more than fifty girls have applied to one strip agency for a job. What was their reason? One such girl, 18 year old Julia Kelly from Middlesborough said, "I was desperate to get a job that would allow me to buy the nice clothes my friends have. Eventually I got around to thinking about strip." As the owner of the agency pointed out: "With most of these girls the story is the same. They have no money in their purses, no prospect of getting jobs and nothing to do. The desperation and misery on their faces is tragic."

When you consider that these girls are probably better off than the thousands who pour into London and other big cities looking for work and end up in similar jobs or worse in order to survive, it leaves a sour taste in the mouth when you listen to the pundits on the TV who talk about a year or two of unemployment being necessary and even desirable.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

While some cannot even get the lowest paid job, others use the best jobs to their own advantage. The final report from the Department of Trade on the affairs of Sir Denys Lowson reveals how this respected gentleman from the City squeezed millions of pounds out of his shareholders for his own benefit.

With the support of his Board members, he was able to sell the shares in South Winnipeg at a very low price to another of his family companies. The same brilliant scheme was adopted for shares in Angus Milling which were sold dirt cheap to Iowa Land, another Lowson company.

Sir Denys apparently was reluctant to reveal these share dealings to inspectors because, the report concluded, "Sir Denys was only too anxious to preserve the multiplicity of companies for reasons of secretiveness." Surprise, surprise! But waste not want not, and apart from how Sir Denys spent this hard earned money, the report revealed that his son was able to live in his lavish London flat by spreading the costs among all the Lowson companies. He didn't pay any rent until 1973 anyway!

Sir Denys has not been charged with any criminal offence. It is not against the law to do this, it seems, while somebody who pinches a pound of butter in a supermarket would not be so lucky.

A WORKERS'S MAN?

... Richard Marsh, head of British Rail, received a knighthood in this year's New Year Honours. This former Labour MP and Transport Minister is now being considered for better things according to latest reports. This ex-leader of the labour movement is among the likely candidates for the new Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry in succession to Mr. Campbell Adamson who leaves the job in the summer.

However, many of the big bosses are unhappy about the idea of a former participant of Mr. Wilson's 'Bolshevik' Government of 1964-70 becoming their new leader. But perhaps they are being too hasty. When asked if Mr. Marsh still considered himself a socialist, British Rail press officers said he was unwilling to disclose his political views. Maybe Mr. Marsh can see the overwhelming benefits of a capitalist system after all: at least for some.

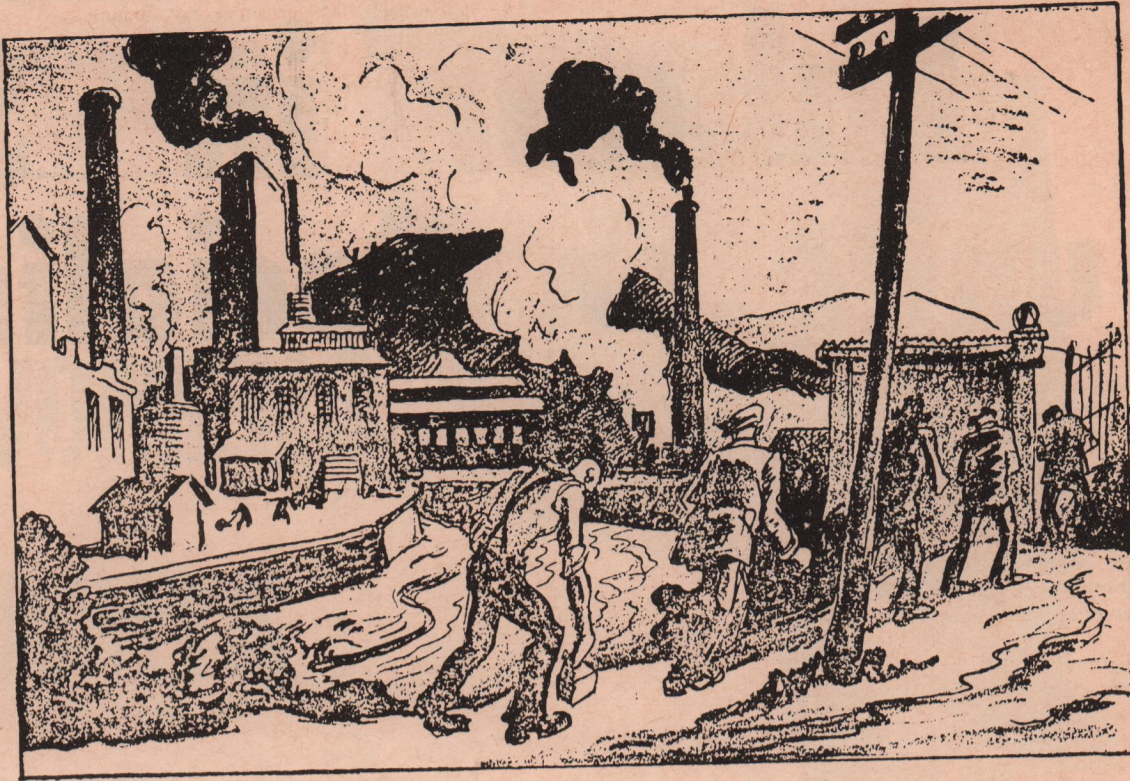
LET THEM EAT CAKE?

American bankers have made the latest move in the continuing process of processing or refining food until there is no goodness left in it, and then being forced to put back certain nutrients. As in Britain, many children in America go to school without breakfast. A US bakery has come up with a bright idea to sell a breakfast food for these children: "Astrofood". This is a chocolate cream cake fortified with vitamins, "balanced amino acids" and low in saturated fats. It is supposed to be "comparable to a breakfast of 4oz of orange juice, two slices of bacon, one egg, one pat of butter and one slice of bread" when eaten with a glass of milk. It is the latest spurious attempt to try and sell something by persuading parents they are buying a nutritious food for their children, when "real" food would be of far more value.

NO COMMENT

The BBC broadcast a film on French TV recently. It depicted conditions in Soviet Labour Camps. The French Communist Party issued a statement of shock and surprise at these revelations. Apparently people in the Soviet Union were being arrested and tried for merely expressing their political views! It requested from the Soviet authorities an immediate denial or it would condemn the situation.

The 'Morning Star' published news of this development without comment. But surely comment was in order! If the Soviet Union is a socialist country, or a healthy workers' state, how can this despotism and denial of workers' rights exist? We hear not a word from the French and British Communist Parties. Many leaders of these parties sat through the period of Stalin's monstrous crimes against the Soviet people not only without a murmur, but with vocal support of that despot. Now the French leaders register their surprise at these revelations. Their change of heart however has more to do with their



Socialist Classics

"The Jungle" AMERICA 70 YEARS AGO

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free." Such is the inscription on the Statue of Liberty at the entrance to New York harbour that has reflected the hopes and aspirations of tens of millions of European workers and small farmers seeking a new life in America.

For the first three quarters of the 19th Century migrants were mostly from Britain, Ireland and Germany. But in the last decade of the century and on into the 20th Century, the tide was mostly from the Mediterranean countries and Eastern Europe, where the poverty and political oppression was even greater.

Many of these came to Chicago, the cattle slaughterhouse of the world, a city which, by the end of the century, had grown in only decades from being a small Indian village to a sprawling city of seven million on the basis of the processing and canning of prairie cattle. Without planning, with open sewers and houses built on rubbish tips, mud roads which turned into rivers and quagmires after heavy rain, it was a city where all the jobs and the council were tied up by the few giant cattle and meat-processing companies that formed the Meat Trust.

Health laws

Upton Sinclair, a socialist writer who later stood for Governorship of California, wrote 'The Jungle' in 1906 for two reasons: to expose the inhuman conditions in the Chicago stockyards and the meat-packing industry, with the blatant disregard of health laws by the big companies, the use of diseased cattle in canning, and the overwork and dangerous conditions for the workers; and to show the political corruption that the Trusts fostered in the 'free' country of America.

The book caused an immediate uproar in America, and led to the passing of new health and safety laws to help eradicate the worst practices of the employers. To read the book today is a real education into the misery and hardships faced at the time by millions of Americans, especially the first generation immigrants, and an insight into the methods that made the Trusts of then and today so rich and powerful.

Jurgis Rudke is a young, big, strong Lithuanian, whose motto when faced with any problem was "to work harder" to overcome it. With his family—uncles,

**Reviewed by
Nic Boulter**

village had "made good". Their experiences form the basis of the book.

Typical of most families, they had emigrated full of optimism, full of the dreams that America was supposed to offer to all—a new life, with a secure job, at high wages, with a home of their own, a good education for the kids where they could learn to read and write and a government freely elected and controlled by the ordinary people.

But, strip by strip, their illusions are torn away by the realities of Chicago life. Wages are high, but so are prices. Rents, for flea-infested 'flats', are astronomical, so they are conned by a smooth-talking salesman to pool all their savings as a deposit to buy a new little house in the suburbs. But their 'new' house is not new, and their monthly repayments are really only rent, one default in the 8 year repayment period, and they are out, with no refunds.

Jurgis is still keen for his new life, and in order to meet the commitments, throws himself into work in the giant processing factory, working 14-16 hours a day in the most revolting conditions, on the killing beds, knee deep in blood; in the freezers; and in the dreaded fertilizer plant where the dust is so thick that it chokes the lungs of workers in minutes and cakes in their eyes and pores and makes them smell so horrible that they are forced to live a life apart from other workers. But this money is not enough, and gradually the whole family is forced out to work—the old men, who had hoped for a bit of peace in their old age, the women and even the children, who are taken out of school to sell newspapers in the freezing Chicago winters.

Even so, the family is forced into deeper and deeper poverty and degradation by the system—by the big Trusts who work them as slaves in appalling conditions, with no care for their safety or welfare; the doctors who charge a week's wages for a visit of a few minutes and some fake medicine and by the corrupt politicians who are paid stooges of the big companies which have the courts and the council in their pockets.

Jurgis refuses to join the union at the factory, thinking that his own physical strength will be enough to get them by. But, as for so many other families, the pressures become too great. Their old hopes and standards of morality are eroded. One of the old men deserts the family to become a hobo, to escape from the grind of the factory and the family poverty. Ona, by now married to

nearly kills the manager for this and ends up in jail. Without his wages the family is evicted (the house being sold as 'new' to another innocent family) and Ona dies in childbirth as they cannot afford a midwife.

No longer held to the family, Jurgis turns hobo and then, back in the city during the winter, unable to get a job, slips into petty crime. From here appropriately, he is introduced into the world of party politics, the world of razmataz, where votes are bought by drink and the highest bidder; where lies form the election manifestos, and fiddles the electoral technique. Here Jurgis, as an honest-looking working man, is able to earn five times the amount he did in the factories by going to union meetings and kidding blokes to vote for "honest Jow—the workers' friend", in reality a local employer. Not seeing the way in which he is being used, only the money in his pocket, Jurgis even helps strike-break against his former workmates. But in a world of tricksters, there is no security, and Jurgis finds himself back on the streets again, without job, money or home.

Socialist

Down at heel, Jurgis still has spirit and is far from broken by the system. He goes the round of election meetings as the only way to get out of the cold before the police hostels open at midnight. But one of these is a socialist meeting, not that Jurgis knew what a socialist was. But the friendly atmosphere, compared to the other meetings, forces Jurgis to listen to the speaker. He was vividly describing the social misery of the workers of Chicago and America, and the way in which they were being conned by the bosses and the council politicians.

Jurgis knew this to be his own experience. He was given an understanding of the causes of his own misery. And he was given a way in which he could fight for a better way of life, with new hope through combination, through political and social change, the same hope that socialist ideas have given to millions of workers the world over. Jurgis joins up with the socialists, organising and agitating and for the first time in his life, reading and understanding about the society in which he lives.

So the book is a strong description of all the horrors of life in Chicago for the workers and the corruption and wealth of the big companies. But it also offers a way forward through social and political change. It's a fairly long book 400 pages, but well worth reading.

'The Jungle' by Upton Sinclair

CECIL KING DIARY 1970-74

Reviewed by Peter Taaffe

When Cecil King published his diaries in 1972 - covering the period of 1965 to 1970 - it caused uproar [see MILITANT nos. 132 and 141]. The capitalists were outraged that their innermost thoughts, their fears and hatred of the Labour Movement as related to King, usually over expensive lunch, had been revealed for all to see. No less incensed were the Right Wing leadership of the Labour Movement whose contempt for the rank and file of the Labour Party was seen to be matched only by their fawning over King and his like.

Cecil King has now published another "gripping" installment which covers the period between 1970-74. In contrast to the first book this volume has attracted little attention in the press and the TV. But it is no less valuable for active workers in the Labour Movement. It lays bare the mechanics of capitalist "democracy", - the plotting and intriguing of the ruling class. This is despite the fact that the second half of the book was written after the publication of the earlier Diaries and therefore, as King remarks, those who spoke to him in the latter period were not as communicative as they might have been!

King gives a vivid account of the complete demoralisation of the British ruling class and if anything an intensified feeling of hatred of the working classes - who they blame for their decline. This is shown in the comments about the Heath Government. Thus King says of Barber, then Tory Chancellor, "If you were told there was a bright young man behind the counter of local Boots, who might make the grade as a manager one day, you would feel Barber about fitted the Bill". Heath of course comes in for ritual abuse and the boss of GEC, Arnold Weinstock says of Tory Attorney General Peter Rawlinson, "...he is so stupid it is hard to see how he passed his bar final."

COLLISION

This worthy also fulminates against the "excessive" claims of his own workers ... "Weinstock also said that equal pay for women, to which this Government and the last were pledged would cost his company £25 million... He thought the logical argument unanswerable, but the only practical solution was to pay the men the same as the women!"

But the book mainly records the discussions between King, the Tory leaders, and an assortment of businessmen on how to break the power of the Labour Movement. When the Tories came to power in 1970 MILITANT predicted that the Tory Government was set on a collision course with the Trade Unions which could have resulted in a General Strike. This was dismissed as fanciful not only by Right Wing Labour leaders but also by sincere Lefts within the Movement. The Diaries confirm the analysis we made.

Thus within a month of the 1970 General Election King was discussing with the "liberal" Whitelaw the possibility of a general strike. A month later he is discussing with Defence Minister Carrington the same issue.... "He has certainly thought of a confrontation ending in a general strike".

Shortly after this Heath realises that a major strike in the public sector will have to be fought. It might end in a general strike or its equivalent. "The intention of the Tory Government to bring the Trades Unions to heel was no perversity of Heath but reflected the desperation of British capitalism which has now become even worse.

They looked to the Heath Government to arrest the remorseless decline of British capitalism at the expense of the working class. Campbell Adamson, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, spokesman for the employers, agrees with King's prediction of a General Strike and the ruthless measures to ensure victory for the capitalists. "I said I thought a clash with the trades union movement would build up into something like a mild civil war and would have to be fought with the Government's gloves

What the ruling-class really think

Adamson went along with the rest but not with censorship!"

Adamson, who still leads the CBI, is the employers' representative in which the Labour Government places so much trust and faith following the recent Chequers accord between the "Government, the employers and unions!"

King shows the capitalists and their representatives as they really are: gangsters who are prepared to starve the families of strikers, drive down living standards and if necessary use force in an attempt to crush the Labour Movement. Subsequent events, particularly the 1972 miners strike, forced them to re-assess their tactics. It is interesting to note in this respect the grudging compliments which Harold Macmillan, a shrewd representative of capitalism, paid to the miners. Macmillan came in expressing surprise over the bungling of the miners strike. Mac said he had fought with the miners in the trenches - and they never gave in. In the battles that loom the capitalists will discover that the British working class as a whole and not just the miners possess these same qualities!



Harold Macmillan, shrewdest leader of the ruling-class

At the moment the ruling class are looking towards a Labour Government to carry out their demands for ruthless cuts in living standards. The threats of "Colonels coups" and Army intervention has receded into the background. But when it is seen that the Labour leaders will be unable to deliver the goods, due to the inevitable resistance of the working class, the capitalists will re-activate their earlier plans. In the first place they will look towards a National Government to check the Labour Movement but also envisage that if this fails at a later stage dictatorial methods will have to be employed against the working class. In unvarnished language King's big business friends spell this out.

Thus the former industrial correspondent of the "Labour" paper the Daily Mirror said to King in September 1970... 'So your revolution is coming nearer!'... I asked him what he meant and he said he thought the Conservatives would run away from a real clash with the unions and he foresaw the eventual outcome as a dictatorship of the Right. This feeling is evidently gaining ground in all sorts of unexpected quarters." Weinstock also confessed

authoritarian state, though there is as yet no indication how we get there... Weinstock held forth on the failure of our present Parliamentary democracy and the need to replace it with something else."

Nor were the British ruling class alone at this time in feeling that a bloody settling of accounts with the working class will eventually be necessary. One of King's banker friends ... "prophesied civil war in Italy" and "His man in Paris sees Couve De Murville (leading Gaullist) every week and Couve tells him that the future of France will be settled on the streets". In passing, in reference to last year's coup in Cyprus, he shows just how hypocritical are all the denunciations of "terrorism" by the capitalists ... "The coup in Cyprus seems to have been a complete success - the island is quiet and Makarios is on his way to New York. It is a pity he was not killed".

LABOUR LEADERS

But this longing for "strong measures" according to King also communicated itself to the right wing Labour leaders like Ray Gunter, "he volunteered the fact that 'in his darker moments' he did not see how a dictatorship could be avoided"! Thus this "terribly nice little man"—as King describes him—was prepared to countenance the coming to power of a dictatorship and the crushing of the Labour Movement. Let it be remembered that Gunter was no unimportant functionary but Chairman of the Labour Party in 1965 and Minister of Labour in the Labour Government of 1964-70! And he used his powerful position within the Labour Movement to hound the Left within the Party. Some of those who are now eager to begin a witch-hunt against the Left within the Labour Party now, sat on the same committees and collaborated with Gunter in his Parliamentary war on the Left. And how many Gunters still exist within the Labour Party?

The discussions with King by leading Labour Parliamentarians shows how far removed in outlook and life-style from the rank and file of the movement they are. Thus shortly after the victory of the Tories in 1970 he reveals that Douglas Houghton, then Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, said to him: "that Labour's defeat did no harm unless Heath is a failure"! (our emphasis). The victory of Tory reaction, which was viewed as a catastrophe by the working class, was considered to be harmless enough by this luminary. After all a Tory Government would not interfere with his wining and dining with King and his ilk.

King also recalls a conversation with Callaghan at a "Charitable Corporation dinner." He remarks that Callaghan "gave a solemn warning of the effects of inflation unless speedily curbed... I spoke to Callaghan and said his Party's policy was surely for further massive inflation. He said he was not dealing at that moment with the Party Conference." In other words speak with one voice to the capitalists and with another to the Party Conference! In reference to the practice of paying



Ex-Mirror tycoon, Cecil King, a friend of the top people

group] told me that when Denis Healey signed the letter in the Guardian with 100 Labour MPs advocating our joining the Market, he asked Denis to write a piece for the 'Mirror' on why he had changed his mind. Previously he had been mildly anti-Common Market. Denis duly wrote the article and received £250. Three weeks later he changed his mind back again."

It is impossible for the leaders of the Labour Movement to reflect the socialist aspirations of the ranks of the movement while they hob-nob with the rich and accept subsidies and expensive meals from them. The revelations of King add enormous weight to the demand of MILITANT for the Labour MPs to receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker—exclusive of expenses which should be audited by the ranks of the movement.

Equally that part of the book which details the behind-the-scenes discussions on the possibility of a national government are a terrible warning to the Labour Movement. King clearly shows that the capitalists feel that they have it in their power to determine which Government can be brought to power and what the policy of that Government should be. He writes for instance: "Jules Thorn (Chairman of Thorn Electrical Industries)...asked for an interview with Barber for himself, Bernstein, Thorneycroft and Spencer Wills, but they are being fobbed off with the Financial Secretary... The idea of Barber being too busy to see four men, all more important than him, is quite silly!"



Heath, not highly regarded by King

Even the most powerful Ministers are looked on as mere company clerks who must do their bidding. And if Governments hesitate to carry out their orders then they will use their economic and their political power to bring the Government into line. This is underlined by a discussion with Murdoch, owner of the 'Sun' in 1972, "He thinks Ted might win an election, as neither Rupert nor the 'Mirror' could support Wilson, Benn and the Labour Party in an election." In other words what's good for the press barons is good for Britain! When they decide that the time is ripe they will not hesitate to use the enormous power of the media to whip up support amongst the middle class and the politically uneducated workers for a coalition. The present retreat of the Labour Government is ploughing up the ground on which such a government could grow. In the four year period covered by this book the possibility, the inevitability, of a national government at a certain stage is

He writes that "Arnold Weinstock... met Harold Macmillan and said there were three alternatives before the country: (1) an extreme left wing government; (2) an extreme right wing one; (3) a national government. Macmillan thought the last much the most likely. I said that I thought a national government inevitable, and had thought so for a long time. I assume it will be a failure and will be replaced by some autocratic regime of the Right or Left." It is only the leader of such a government which is a subject for debate. Thus "Weinstock considers that the Labour Government will not be able to pay its way by printing money for more than a few months, and a national government under Callaghan would ensue. He did not think Wilson all that keen to stay on as PM." The capitalists can confidently consider a coalition as one of their weapons to use against the Labour Movement only because they know they can rely on the right wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party to support them.

In their ideas and sometimes even their standard of living some of these MPs share the standpoint of the capitalists. Thus King writes: "Lunch yesterday for Brian Walden. He told me he is making between £25,000 and £30,000 a year." No wonder Walden views the elimination of the "mixed economy" with such horror!

Cecil King's book was not written for workers. Yet it is the active workers in the Labour Parties, the Young Socialist branches and unions who would derive the greatest benefit from reading it. It would open the eyes of workers. They would see that the plots and conspiracies of the ruling class against their rights and conditions is not an invention of Marxism—as it is sometimes portrayed by the Labour leadership. At the same time on every page almost, are shown the divisions, the fears the lack of confidence of the ruling class. They recognise the colossal potential power of the working class in modern society and are not at all confident that they would be victorious in a trial of strength with the Labour Movement: "I said we were heading for a dictatorship...and much would turn on the attitude of the Army. (Lord) Greenhill said the Army could play no part—look at their impotence over the strike in Northern Ireland (the Ulster Workers strike). I said a sufficiently ruthless man with all the machine-guns and the power of the Government behind him, could surely be decisive. Greenhill would not agree, but when I said, 'Do you think a Communist takeover inevitable?' he wouldn't answer."

The impotence of the noble Lord reflects the weakness and senility of the British ruling class. They understand more about the real relationship of forces in society than do the present leadership of the Labour Movement. But they can only be made to vacate the scene of history if the mighty British Labour Movement is re-armed with a real socialist, i.e. a Marxist programme. This is the message of Cecil King's Diaries.

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BRITAIN 1976

BRITAIN

By Bob



Jarrow crusade against mass unemployment in the 1930s

Last week Harold Wilson spelt out his New Year message for the British working class when he said that there were "some pretty bleak months ahead" and it was going to be "a hard 1976."

That must be seen as an understatement considering the position of the British economy. Inflation is still at the level of 25% over the last year. It is likely that it will fall by the summer to about 17% annually, but there are still large price increases in the pipeline from the nationalised industries. Further large food price increases are certain. They recorded their biggest ever December increase on the 'Financial Times' index, and farmers are asking for further jacking up of price levels in 1976.

Unemployment is now at its highest December level since the war—1.2 million out of work or 5.2%. Production remains at levels below the period of the three day week two years ago! No doubt it will pick up a little in the latter part of 1976 but this is not likely to lead to any reduction in unemployment. In fact, if there is any recovery in the economy, it will still leave a pool of permanently unemployed of around 1 million. Investment dramatically slumped in 1975 and will continue to fall for the greater part of 1976, so that British industry will be totally ill equipped to take advantage of any revival of world trade that may take place in the coming year.

10% wage cut

Government borrowing is likely to be around £10,500 million during the year unless drastic cuts are made in spending. Any revival in world trade, given the weakness of British capitalism on world markets, is likely to lead to a large balance of payments deficit which will have to be financed in some way. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research predicts a deficit on payments of £2,300 million for 1977!

All these stark New Year facts demonstrate that the chickens have come home to roost for the owners of British capital who have for decades refused to invest and modernise their plant and technique. Now their backs are to the wall with the effects of a world wide recession.

It is the British workers who are paying for this disaster by a cut in living standards and the sickening development of widespread poverty amongst those least able to look after themselves. On average, according to the Confederation of British Industry, wage earners took a 7% cut in real take home pay. The minimum cut that can be expected for the year ending July 1976 will be 10%.

In 1974 there were over 6½ million workers earning under £30 a week. Over 40% of disabled people are on supplementary benefit, while there are over 650,000 families in Britain dependent on a single parent. 70% of those working earn less than £20 a week! These are the people who are really suffering and will suffer during 1976.

For the first period of Labour's rule the Government was subjected to

should "put the boot in" with the Government. "When our opponents are using karate, boxing to Queensbury rules is not always the best policy. We should bite the Government on the leg occasionally. And we should bite hard." Those ministers in the Government like Tony Benn who seemed to be attempting to carry out some of the reforms proposed in Labour's Manifesto came in for the roughest treatment. A campaign for a Government of national interests or unity was continually raised in the national press.

Yet since the summer of 1975, much of this campaign against the Labour Government has died down. In mid-November David Watt of the 'Financial Times' commented that "the Government's willingness to face its supporters with so much really unpleasant sacrifice at least argues some courage...of course the Government is acting too late and may be acting too little but it has taken a shorter time to face the realities at the centre of the economy than either the Heath Government or the first Wilson Government."

The terrible crisis in the capitalist economy demanded that drastic action be taken that could have been put off in the time of previous governments. Big business had demanded a reversal of Labour's policies as soon as they had come to office. The crux of the problem as the 'Economist' saw it was that "no market system can operate efficiently where investment and expansion are treated as great gods to be worshipped but the profit upon which the incentive to invest depends, is treated as the devil incarnate...sooner or later the truth will dawn. Jobs depend on investment. Investment depends on profits. Profits depend on lower public spending and wage restraint."

The reason for the new attitude of big business (and even the Tories who make only halfhearted attempts to defeat the Government on crucial votes) is that the Labour leaders are now attempting to carry out the programme of the ruling class. The Confederation of British Industry had been openly demanding an enforced incomes policy to cut living standards and through rising prices allow profits to rise. Since July the Government has adopted such a policy and is preparing to continue it during 1976 with another 'year for Britain'. The CBI demanded a disguised devaluation of the pound so that they would remain competitive on world markets at the expense of higher import prices for workers at home. The Government has carried out this policy to the letter.

£3,750 million

Above all it had demanded drastic cuts in public spending. The Government has already gone a long way to meeting this demand. Cuts have been particularly severe in local government where the rate support grant has been cut by 1% and current expenditure is to be held still during 1976. When it is realised that education expenditure has to increase by 9% per annum in real terms, just to maintain existing quality, it is clear what a standstill on spending will mean to educational standards.

Now the big business press is demanding further reductions in public spending to the tune of £3,750 million. The Cabinet has been discussing these

guide for the Cabinet deliberations.

As it is, Healey is withholding further cuts for the moment until world trade picks up. But the ruling class is demanding cuts now as a matter of urgency and events may force Healey's hand much earlier. So that as the economy begins to revive, then all available resources would be switched to industry and profit and away from wages and social services. This is the spirit of the so-called Chequers meeting of the Government, industry and the unions which baldly stated that "for the immediate future this will mean giving priority to industrial development over consumption or even our social objectives."

No wonder the Tories and big business are no longer in a hurry to see the end of this Labour Government! With the exception of measures to help trade union organisation (which in the case of the closed shop, the House of Lords has blocked) this Government has backed down on all its original proposals for reform. It said there would be no cuts in social services, transport, etc., but it has pruned spending. It proposed an Industry Bill that would give compulsory powers to force companies to plan investment in consultation with the Government and unions. But the Industry Act has come out with a National Enterprise Board with less powers than the old Industrial Reorganisation Corporation and certainly less money. Planning agreements are voluntary and not enforceable on firms. The wealth tax has been shelved; the Clay Cross Councillors left unprotected; and nationalisation of the ports dropped.



waiting in the wings...

All this goes with the new policy of accepting an inevitable rise in unemployment during 1976 to 1½ to 2 million and deliberately holding down wage rises below the cost of living.

Marxists have characterised reformism as a policy based on the idea that gradually, by step by step reform, the inequalities of income and wealth, the poverty and injustice of capitalism, can be ended and eventually after a long period a socialist, classless society will be established. This has been the overriding view of leaders of the Labour Party. It has always been opposed by Marxists as impossible and utopian. Now it is clear from the experience of the last two years of Labour Government that we have the

professed philosophy of the Labour leaders.

Yet it seems that these steps back by the Labour Government have been accepted by the majority of the working class. The £6 wage limit has been accepted with relative ease; even the miners have supported it in a national ballot. A certain reluctant acquiescence has set in amongst the big battalions of the organised working class. This has been reflected in the victories of the right wing in the elections for union positions in the AUEW and EETPU. The number of working days lost through strikes in the first eleven months of 1975 was 60% down on last year. The November figure was the lowest for nine years.

Wage restraint

The trade union leaders have been able to go along with wage restraint, higher unemployment and even cuts in Government expenditure and still participate in such jamborees as the Chequers conference. It seems that the trade union leaders, who under the Heath régime broke away from collaborating with state and government in policies designed to hamstring the actions of the working class, are now drifting back in that direction with comparative ease.

Why is this possible? Firstly, because the organised and politically advanced workers have a tremendous loyalty to a Labour Government that they worked and voted into power. And when the Labour leaders say, as Harold Wilson has done, that there is no other way, there is a willingness to comply with Government policies. This Labour administration has already carried out measures far beyond anything that the trade unions would have taken from a Tory Government.

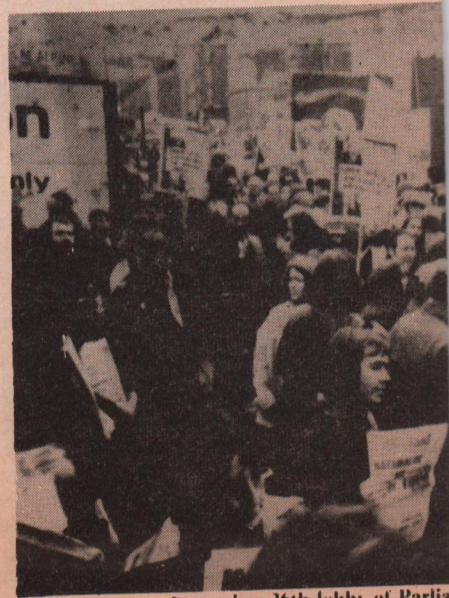
But just as significant is that no alternative has been offered to the organised workers to Government policies by any section of the Labour and Trade Union leadership. Benn and Foot remain in the Cabinet, Jones supports the Government policy and Scanlon at best remains silent. In such a situation, given high unemployment levels, workers will not consider attempting to challenge Government policy on their own and may temporarily accept the logic of their leaders' arguments.

They have found no clear answer by any Labour leader to the charge of the Tories and big business that wage rises are pricing workers out of jobs. Also the trade union leaders have acted as a brake on any opposition to the Government's policies, by their participation in the decisions of the state at Chequers and their refusal to support any official protest on unemployment e.g. the November 26th lobby of Parliament.

It is only amongst the less well organised that militancy has continued. For they have to fight to get even £6 from employers in industries like the hosiery and garment trade, or textiles. In these industries there have been the first ever nationwide strikes which are continuing into 1976. There is a real feeling of anger and discontent amongst these sections who are a barometer of movement from the big battalions in the future.

These developments have given a tenuous confidence for 1976 to the

WHAT FOR THE LABOUR



November 26th lobby of Parliament

This comparative lull in the class struggle could quickly, within a matter of months, give way to real opposition to the Government's measures. The real effect of the present social expenditure cuts will only be felt during 1976 and if the Government tries to introduce further cuts as it is doing now, then it could produce a schism within the Labour Movement.

In 1931 the split in the Labour leadership which brought about the setting up of a National Coalition Government developed precisely over the question of further cuts in Government spending proposed by MacDonald after the Cabinet had already accepted far reaching ones. The TUC had retreated and retreated in face of Government demands for retrenchment throughout the previous year. Finally it could take no more and put its foot down in opposing any cuts and the betrayal of the Labour Movement by the Prime Minister and his Chancellor then took place.

Coalition

The same danger of a similar course of events is inherent in the policies of the Government now. It remains the most likely development in the next year or so. Coalition politics can crystallise into a coalition government.

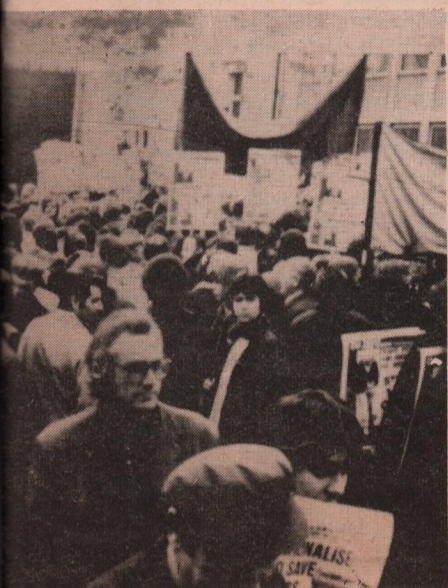
This is in spite of the fact that the ruling class in Britain fears the consequences flowing from a National Government. Labour is doing the same job so far, and the owners of capital in Britain are fearful of provoking more movement to the left within the Labour Party itself. The rejection of Prentice at Newham North East, the first Cabinet Minister to suffer such a fate, the strengthening of Left candidates on the NEC of the Party, all this has not gone unnoticed. Unlike 1931 when the split in the Labour leadership still left the Labour Party in the hands of the right wing of the Party, like Attlee and Henderson, a split in 1976 would be different. A split would engender an enormous shift to the left thrusting the 'Tribune' group of MPs into the leadership. But more worrying to the ruling class would be a geometric growth of Marxist ideas within the Labour and Trade Union Movement, so that a Marxist tendency could establish real roots within the mass organisations. This would open the way

McKee

FUTURE GOVERNMENT ?



Today's ever-lengthening dole queues



movement against unemployment

one hand big business opposes any nationalisation and demands redundancies and no support for lame ducks in the spirit of the Chequers agreement. On the other hand the workers demand no redundancies and the maintenance of the industry by public money and ownership. In the end the Government compromises and satisfies neither side. It spends public money in huge doses to the wrath of big business, and sacks thousands of workers to the disgust of the unions. Maybe it can get away with this situation at Chrysler, but already similar situations are appearing on the horizon in the railways, steel, post office, public services etc.

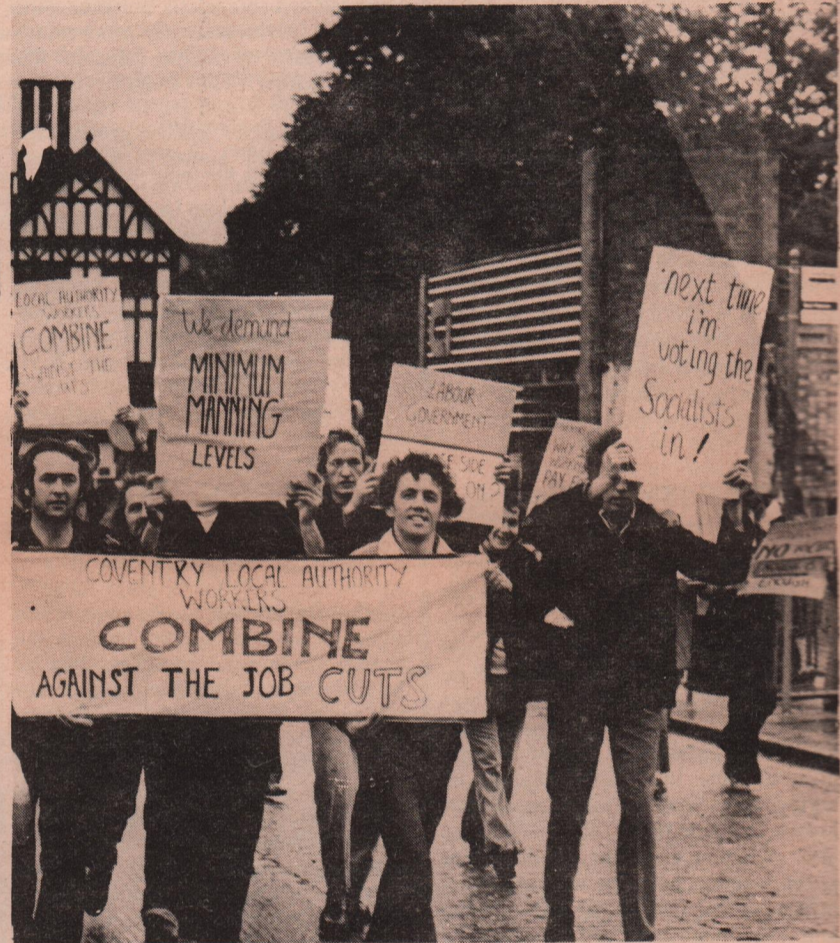
No Labour Government could survive while still trying to please both sides in an erupting class struggle over who should pay for the crisis in the capitalist economy. That is why the prospect of a National Government remains on the agenda for 1976.

But it is not entirely ruled out that Labour could survive these "bleak months ahead" and carry on. In such a situation there is a possibility of the return of the Tories in a General

from the trade unions. But it is precisely in this period that the Government may face its sternest test. For as the economy revives, profits rise, and the jobs situation eases slightly, then the organised workers will move into action to get their share of any 'boom' and make up for the losses of the last year or so. Just when the Labour leaders want to shift resources to industry and profit to revive investment, workers will be demanding more wages. If the official trade union leadership is not prepared to back such action officially, there could be a rash of unofficial disputes of even national proportions.

However the course of events unfolds in the next year, the position of the left wing in the Labour Party will continue to grow, especially if the right wing has broken away following a split or some Tory victory. The responsibility will then fall on the shoulders of the Tribune MPs in Parliament and their allies in the leadership of the trade unions.

But their programme for solving the collapse of British productive power



Coventry Council workers angered by cuts from a Labour Government

companies and banks under the management and control of the workers' organisations can ensure the planned expansion of the British economy to the benefit of the working people and not at their expense. But such a programme has not been clearly taken up by the 'Tribune' leadership.

Marxism

It is the role of the Marxist tendency in the Labour Movement to spell out the details and implications of such a programme. The growing strength of such a tendency as expressed by MILITANT and the Labour Party Young Socialists has now been recognised by the ruling class itself, as the recent attacks in the press have revealed.

Already the ruling class hopes to delay any return of a Labour Government controlled by the left. Under a National Government they have suggested the introduction of proportional representation. They have already test-

ed the use of the House of Lords to block legislation over the trade union closed shop. Then there is always the Monarchy to be used as a last resort. For as the 'Economist' put it recently:

"Royalty, as Bagehot also observed, depends on mystery... We must not let in daylight upon magic... if enough people start asking how the residual power of monarchs and governors-general can be justified in the age of universal suffrage, they will eventually be stripped away."

What can be said with certainty is that 1976 will confirm that the stable period of economic boom is over for capitalism. Tremendous upheavals lie ahead in which British workers will prove to themselves, through their own experience, that socialism is the only alternative to the bankrupt system of private monopoly 'enterprise'. It is of that certainty that the future development of a Marxist leadership for the mass Labour Movement is firmly founded.



Wilson and Healey, deaf to the protests of workers who elected them

Election. It is almost inconceivable for Labour to maintain its support from the mass of politically uneducated workers with the policies of 1975 and 1976.

The return of a Thatcher Government would inevitably pose major confrontation on the industrial front possibly leading to a General Strike. There is certainly no loyalty on the part of the big battalions of the Trade Union Movement to the Tories. The ruling class realises this perfectly clearly. As an economist put it recently: "the increase in the union's power has made many people wonder if a Tory Government will ever be able to govern effectively again." For the bosses, a National Government is preferable to the return of the Tories if it becomes necessary to remove Labour.

The Labour leaders are banking on surviving until the expected revival of the economy and world trade in the

and raising the standard of living for British workers is totally inadequate. As MILITANT has pointed out in the past, it is not sufficient just to call for 'an expansion of the economy'. Expansion under a capitalist system will only take place if profits are rising at the expense of wages. The workers must pay if the economy is to expand under a capitalist system.

Of course a programme of public works to meet social needs must be demanded. But this cannot be paid for by Government expenditure not backed up by real productive growth but only by the printing of paper money. The theories of Keynesianism have been rejected by all but the 'Tribune left'. Government expenditure of this sort only fuels the fires of inflation. That is why the capitalist class is opposed to such expansion otherwise they would do it themselves!

Only a programme of action to bring into public ownership all the major

manoeuvre of a National Government is a card that the ruling class will play very reluctantly.

The right wing of the Labour Party, most strongly represented in the Cabinet and Parliament by Tait, has been preparing for the possibility of a split. The Social Democratic Alliance with its big business backers is their pathetic attempt to organise in the grassroots. More serious is the misnamed Manifesto Group of MPs who have taken over all the Parliamentary Committees. The aim has been to block the implementation of the Manifesto not see it carried out! Yet the right wing would also like to avoid a National Coalition if they can find another way. For they realise it could mean their own political suicide either in 'the wilderness' with the likes of Dick Taverne or as a pawn of the Tories. They have not failed to notice the annihilation of other right wing breakaway groups from the Socialist Parties internationally e.g. Holland, Denmark, Australia, Italy, France etc. Again it is a step that they will only reluctantly resort to 'in the national interest'.

Labour's left wing in the Parliamentary Party have opposed the Government measures. But they have even been split on this question. Mikardo attacked Foot and Jack Jones at the Labour Party Conference for their support of the £6 limit etc., and Jones heckled Mikardo at the 'Tribune' rally. Only 46 of the 83 Tribune group of MPs signed a statement condemning the policies of the Government and launching a campaign in the constituencies. They remain fearful of a split also, perhaps because the responsibility for the success or failure of the Labour Movement would then fall solely on them. It is a challenge they are reluctant to face.

Chrysler

So everyone seems opposed to a National Government. Yet force of circumstances can override the wishes of individuals or groups. The crisis of an economy in mid-1976 with still near 20% inflation, 1 1/2 million unemployed, a run on the pound, demands by the CBI for another year of wage restraint, plus severe cuts in Government spending may be too great for this Wilson Government to paper over the cracks. Already the Chrysler debacle shows how the policies of reformism can be

WORLD BOOKS

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Spanish Workers resist continued repression

By A Spanish Young Socialist

"Democratic speeches and beatings in the street." That is how a journalist summed up the present situation in Spain. [By the way the magazine he works for is frequently withdrawn by the censors]. Whilst the King and the Minister make flowery speeches the ordinary Spaniards in the factories and offices continue to live under the police repression.

All the promises about 'democracy' only serve to embitter the families and friends of the thousands of political prisoners who did not benefit from the King's pardon. The pardon was well hedged with technicalities, but even so there have been cases of prisoners being released and soon re-arrested. Take for instance the Communist priest who was met by hundreds on his arrival at a Madrid railway station. Because he made a speech the police arrested him on a charge of "organising a meeting" which is a contravention of public order.

ROUND TABLES

For the capitalists however "organising meetings" has become a full time activity. The capitalists swing dizzily from one standpoint to another. Endless roundtables are organised on 'will we get into Europe with the present government?' Editorials wax poetically for 3 or 4 paragraphs on the importance of time in politics, ending by saying that Spain must change now before it's too late. "Before it's too late" of course means before the threat of mass action from the working class, constantly implied in the daily strikes and city wide stoppages, becomes a reality. The capitalist press have had a series of articles on Britain and Sweden as examples of monarchies with trade union organisations where things are settled peacefully and moderates are elected to leading positions in the trade unions.

However they hasten to point out that it is necessary to wait for these things without rocking the boat.

It is obvious that they want time to try and counteract the potential support which the working class parties have developed. For example Fraga Iribane has a 20% shareholding in a new daily paper due to start soon. The other founders have hastened to point out that 20% will not give him majority control. In other words, the other capitalist parties, apart from Fraga's, will also have a chance to try and build up some support. Needless to say not one workers' paper is or will be legalised. The only democracy for the workers' parties consists of going to an underground station exit, posting a

Apart from this the police are in 'business as usual'. 4 years prison and £427 fine for a woman who didn't run fast enough when an amnesty demonstration was dismissed! A young girl is lying in hospital after "shots in the air" at a demonstration. A socialist worker from Madrid came back from the demonstration outside Carabanchel with one half of his face fractured, and so on. The list is endless. There were about 300 arrests—many finishing with beating at just to mark the anniversary of the death of Pablo Iglesias the Socialist leader. The brutality of the police and the 'Guerrillas of Christ the King', the fascist action group, are directed against amnesty demonstrations even though it is clear that about 80% of the population (according to an opinion poll) are in favour of amnesty.

Day after day lawyers, priests, doctors etc., are handing in petitions for amnesty. Such is the pressure that even the present government may concede some form of amnesty. If an amnesty was quickly conceded it would create even greater appetite for change amongst the workers who would expect a democracy before the capitalist parties have had time to organise.

An opinion poll in Madrid showed about three quarters of the population in favour of democracy but it also showed almost half were sceptical as to whether the present government would bring in such a system, hence the present democratic speeches. Just as the ultra-rights tried to preserve Franco's corpse by freezing it, the present so-called 'evolutionist' regime hopes that they can keep their government alive in the eyes of the masses by a flow of speeches plus an occasional concession. Meanwhile they hint that they are achieving marvellous things in the face of opposition from the ultra-right generals and police chiefs. Of course these thugs would meet the same fate as the Portuguese PIDE if there was a democratic government. But for the Iribane-Areileze current they serve as a useful excuse for not doing anything.



Carlos, the royal franco

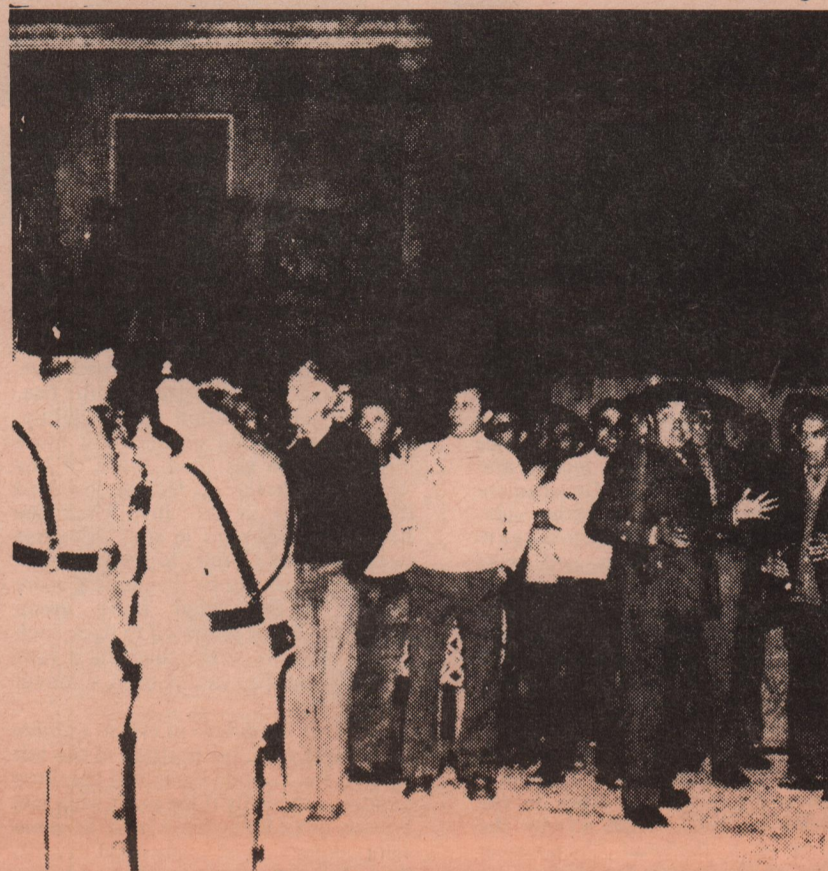
PETITIONS

lookout and then tinging a bundle of leaflets into the air so they drop amongst the crowd. Even then the stations in working class districts usually have a couple of jeeps of armed police and two sub-machine gunners parked by the 'metro' stations.

There is another democratic opportunity for the Spanish worker. From time to time leading capitalists are reported as having had meetings with the workers of such and such a district or factory to discuss the way to go forward together! (A satirical magazine had a cartoon in an office labelled 'Rent-a-worker Ltd.' a secretary was on the telephone taking down details of how many were needed and what

This is their only answer for the middle class professionals' demands for amnesty. But there is no answer to the workers who are now moving against the wages freeze. The Spanish economy grew for some years, the towns filling with former peasant families. But now, even though many of these workers have two jobs, working 16 hours a day, the boom has finished.

If Spain has less democracy than Europe she has even worse unemployment and inflation. The largest employer in Madrid, Standard Electric pays a basic wage of £30 to its unskilled workers. When you remember that the capitalist's prices are comparable to London's or worse, you can see that this



Guardia Civil in action in Madrid

Many things are so expensive that the rich fly to London on shopping trips in order to save money. Even though the workers of this firm have not a militant record—it pays lower wages than many others—they have now formulated demands of £50 a week minimum wage. Under the constant threat of police action (frequent in the past) they have held a partial strike. Stoppages of 2 hours every day have been taking place for several weeks. The workers assemble in a canteen to discuss the negotiations and also of course for collective security from police victimisation. The mood of the workers and its effect in the firm have been very strong. A number of technical workers, about 10% of the 14,000 in the Madrid factories who are designated 'exemplary workers' and receive salaries individually negotiated (to include secret bonuses), usually have the job of reporting to the bosses the names of any workers who go to meetings. Since about 90% of the workers are going to

the meetings the 'exemplary workers' have now publicly stated that they will no longer act as bosses' narks! Workers in the firm report on increasing politicisation of the workers as the daily meetings hear of the firm's only excuse for not paying a living wage—the government wage freeze won't let them!

It is a situation like this which led to partial general strikes in Madrid during the month of December as the workers' parties (on different days!) called for days of struggle for amnesty and trade union freedom. The potentially explosive mood of the mass of workers is not being co-ordinated and developed by the Communist Party and Socialist Party in joint action. Instead of working class unity both parties have alliances with 'liberal' capitalists. The two parties held demonstrations in Barcelona, on the 11th December in different place!

Also the workers in small firms in the Bajo Llabregat area of the region (which do not generally have party militants) are nearly all on strike. The workers in large firms who have more experience of struggle have been dampened by influence of Junta sympathisers. In the university Junta supporters demand a more liberal rector be selected who will not order the police to enter the university but at the same time were against the holding of a faculty-wide student assembly which the police would probably disperse after news had reached them. Instead they favoured meetings by class. Clearly the unity and strength of the student movement would develop in faculty assemblies rather than at class meetings!

MILITANT has several times explained the need for the workers' parties to provide the only real way to democracy in Spain, by their own unity rather than placing faith in alliances with the capitalist parties. So far the workers' parties have failed to co-ordinate and unite the movement around the programme of preparing a general strike for a workers democracy. But it is clear that the rank and file, of the Socialist Party especially, who are examining carefully their leaderships' alliance with the Christian Democrats, will not fail to reflect the mood of the Spanish workers in 1976.

EEC

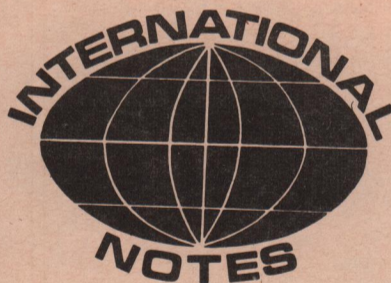
GREECE

INDIA

TURKEY

PASOK

TRIALS



The Greek police are using the killing of CIA agent Richard Welch is an opportunity to harass members of the Labour Movement who oppose individual terrorism. Andreas Papandreou, leader of the Socialist Party, PASOK, has protested that the police are concentrating their searches on the houses of people known for their resistance to the military dictatorship.

Greece's former dictators were given sentences of 5 months to life imprisonment for their part in the Athens Polytechnic massacre in which over 25 were killed and 1,000 injured. Most of the defendants were acquitted and many are being allowed to buy off their prison sentences at a rate of £3 a day! Papadopoulos and Ioannidis, who have already had death sentences commuted by the Karamanlis Government, were not worried by the 'democratic' Government's show trial: "We will have a new year tomorrow."

GANDHI'S NEW 'DEMOCRACY'

The Indian Congress Party met last week and agreed to Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, being allowed to continue the State of Emergency which was declared on June 26th last year.

Under the state of emergency, natural rights under the Constitution are suspended, detainees cannot be told the grounds of their detention and are forbidden bail. The courts cannot interfere. The Prime Minister, President and State Governors are now exempt from any criminal charges for life.

Indian 'democracy' has now been firmly curtailed. Over 50,000 people have been detained during the emergency, particularly workers' leaders and trade unionists. This is greater than British Imperialism arrested at the height of the independence movement! Politics is now the subject of debate in closed rooms where no-one can listen. It is true that some of the rich elite have been arrested or attacked, but only those who were opposed to the strengthening of the Gandhi clique in Congress. The measures against the trade unions have been received with open arms by Indian capitalists who after an initial distrust now argue that 'strong government' can

capitalism work better.

But that is an idle hope. While a bumper harvest crop has enabled food prices to come down, and allow some stockpiling of grain for future years, the basic problems in agriculture remain. The size of smallholdings for Indian peasants has continued to shrink, making more and more of the arable land unviable. Indian landlords and usurers (who are usually local Congress leaders) have bought or rented this land off the peasants who are forced to go into the cities to look for work. But they will be lucky to find any there. India has been hard hit by the recession. Of the 135 mini-steel plants, 102 are closed. There is a stockpile of 1 million tonnes of steel, and the car industry and machine tools are at 50% capacity.

Over 40% of India's population remain below the official poverty level. National income per head in the last four years rose by only 5.2% while population rose by 9% in the same period.

Whatever the dictatorial methods of the ruling class in India they cannot succeed in overcoming these insuperable contradictions in capitalism

ALL FALL OUT

Another clash of interests between members of the Common Market has been aggravated by the continued importing of cheap wine from Italy into France at a rate of 50 million litres a month. The French Government is to continue to impose an import tax against their EEC 'partners', contrary to the EEC regulations. So much for capitalist international cooperation and respect for the 'law'.

DETENTE?

Opening a huge Russian-built steel mill in Turkey last week, Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin said the mill was a concrete example of detente between European countries. In the last 8 years Russia has loaned £500 million to repressive Turkish governments to build an aluminium works, oil refinery, sulphuric acid plant and a fibreboard plant, with further plans for two joint thermal power stations, an irrigation dam and Turkish purchases of Russian electricity in an attempt to woo Turkey away from NATO to neutrality. A document on "Friendly relations and cooperation" was signed. Meanwhile, earlier in the month 4 young people were arrested in the same town that

EDUCATION MERCHANTS

Dear Comrades,

As a former pupil of the Mary Erskine School in Edinburgh I was pleased to hear a year ago that it was to be transformed from a fee-paying, all girls school to a Comprehensive run by the Corporation. Last week's Scotsman, however, revealed that the transition is not as straightforward as I imagined. The Merchant Company of Edinburgh who own the school are trying to sell it to the Lothian Regional Council for £2.7 million! I understand this is the sum they need to compensate themselves for the loss of the Government grant to their other schools.

Not surprisingly, the Government has refused to supply the cash necessary for the council to buy the school and the ridiculous situation has arisen where the Council is considering re-opening old school buildings which were closed down years ago because they were obsolete.

Some of the Labour Councillors do not appear to have drawn many lessons from this experience. The Chairman of the Education Committee is reported to have been satisfied with the agreement made with the Merchants of Edinburgh and only annoyed that the Government, in spite of its vast budget deficit, should so 'unreasonably' withhold the money.

He is right though to point out that it is irresponsible to pass laws without providing the means of putting them into practice—I would differ with him about what means are called for.

And so we have another classic case where neither the Labour leaders in Westminster nor the local ones in the Councils are prepared to face up to realities, but prefer to take part in a degrading slanging match. The new school building with its grounds and its swimming pool will either stand empty or remain as select and elitist as it was in my day, instead of being taken over, 'municipalised', for the benefit of the ordinary people of Edinburgh.

Yours Fraternally,
Charlotte Burns.

YOUR SAY

Letters to: Editor, MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

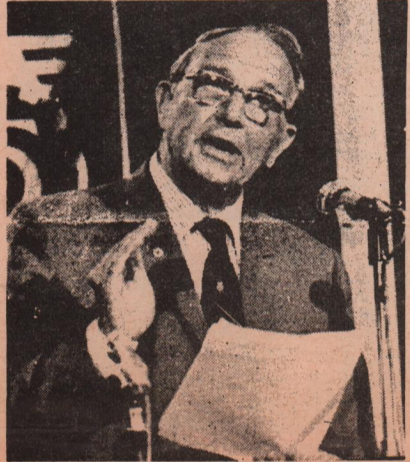
MAN OF THE YEAR?

Dear Comrades,

It was Kier Hardie who said: "If I get praise from the capitalist press, then I know I'm not doing my job properly."

If Jack Jones, General Secretary of the TGWU, takes a similar attitude he must be expecting to join a number of his members on the dole queues in 1976, as a reward for his work in 1975; crowned by what must be the most dubious honour Brother Jones has ever received. He has been chosen by the "Sunday Mirror" as their "Man of the Year" and eulogised in print by that well known member of the Labour Movement, Donald Zec.

And what deed has Brother Jones done to receive such praise from the paper that points out the wickedness of socialism and militant Trade Unionism?



The key can be found in one sentence:-

"His master-stroke was getting his mates—those loyal but highly sceptical millions—to accept the dismal package" (i.e. the £6 limit).

In a word, by getting the Trade Union Movement, for the moment, to accept the £6 limit, and therefore further cuts in their living standards, Jack Jones is now heaped with the praises of a grateful capitalist establishment.

Unfortunately, however, the £6 limit will not solve the crisis in capitalism, for it starts off from the false premise that inflation, unemployment and all the other problems facing capitalism are the fault of excessive wage increases and can be solved by holding down wage rises.

Let's see what Brother Jones, Man of the Year 1975, had to say when he was, according to the capitalist press, a "mindless militant" in 1970:

"...the proper Trade Union contribution to that is to fight for higher wages and better wage structures. There is nothing irresponsible in that at all! It is doing the job the Trade Union movement was created for and is supposed to do. Yet we are assailed and attacked on every hand for doing the job by pampered, academic people, including a few journalists who dishonour their profession by their snide smears and downright lies and unfortunately some politicians, the whole lot of whom, for the most part, have never worked for a living. Let them go down and work in the mines, or work in the rackets and tension of a machine shop or try to keep pace with a fast moving assembly line. Let them work in a dank, dirty hold-of a ship, sweating one minute and shivering the next, with rats and insects lurking about, and then say wage claims are irresponsible.

Jack Jones, certainly one of the most sincere and honest of our Trade Union leaders, has travelled a long path in five years, between the "mindless militant" and the "Man of the Year". For me I think the "mindless militant" spoke the most sense, but it shows that unless the leaders of our movement tie themselves to the bedrock of Marxism they will be forced onto the road of class collaboration.

To Brother Jones all I would say is do your own Union's education courses, re-read your old speeches and remember Jack, if the "Sunday Mirror" loves you, something you're doing must be wrong.

Terry Smith,
Chairman SE Leeds CLP.

why were we barred?

The following points which I report to MILITANT concerning the conduct of the "majority" delegates at the National Organisation of Labour Students Conference must be noted by all sections of the Labour Movement. For I must maintain that the control of NOLS now established by the unholy alliance known as the "Clause 4" tendency is the result of scheming and manoeuvres on a breathtaking scale.

Specifically I write in defence of the five delegates from University College Cardiff Labour Club, but the same arguments apply to other delegations as well. We were debarred from voting at the conference because Barry Clarke (National Youth Officer of the Labour Party) pronounced at the beginning of the first session that our affiliation to NOLS and our substitution of delegates' names arrived after the November 27th deadline. Mike Gapes, leading figure of "Clause 4", who was later to be elected Chairman of NOLS, moved acceptance of Clarke's report as if an unelected party official can make such a political judgement. This arbitrary axing was carried and the challenged delegations stunned by the speed of their summary dismissal.

In effect, what Clarke and "Clause 4" (in fact a minority of the delegates) said was: "We don't think that such-and-such delegates should be allowed to take part in the conference, and because we challenge them they cannot vote on the matter."

As far as the Cardiff Club was concerned, I have in my pocket a Post Office recorded delivery slip, proving our details to have been sent before the closing date. Every previous year the democratic procedure of accepting a club providing it had posted the material on time was sure ground for acceptance. It has always been ABC that a club would not be held to account for a Post Office delay and Barry Clarke himself two weeks previously at NUS Conference, when I had raised the matter with him, said that it would be cleared up at the National Committee. He gave no indication of doubt that our club would be accepted. When we arrived at the Conference we discovered that the NC, contrary to the precedent of

previous years, had been arranged after the first conference session and the whole matter was concluded before the NC even met.

The "democrats" of "Clause 4" eagerly seized on Clarke's declaration and refused any right of appeal to the challenged delegates. With the challenged clubs debarred from voting they had a majority. What section of the Labour Movement can countenance this bureaucratic steamrolling?

On behalf of U.C. Cardiff L.C. delegates I make the following accusation: It can be no accident, in our opinion, that of the 21 delegates so disenfranchised at a stroke every single one were likely to support the political ideas of the MILITANT. The leadership of the "Clause 4" group orchestrated deliberate removals of "Militant" supporting delegates. At a "Clause 4" caucus that first night it was admitted that the removal of Cardiff, at least, was a "tactical" device.

My club will take this to the Labour Movement in Cardiff sure in the knowledge that these "Clause 4" leaders, who claim the banner of Tribune, will only win revulsion of genuine Tribunites in the Labour and Trade Union Movement. Furthermore, the sheepish response of "Clause 4" followers to challenges by Cardiff delegates on the question of the exclusion shows the degree of shame.

Manoeuvres demoralise, Marxist argument and policies strengthen. The only convert to "Clause 4" made at this conference appeared to be Barry Clarke himself, always eager to consort with Mike Gapes and his followers. We, for our part, were interested in winning socialists to our ideas. This we shall continue to do and next year will win a genuine majority of NOLS to establish permanently the best traditions of working class politics in the Labour Student organisation.

Yours Fraternally,
Paul Copin, Cardiff.

SALES DRIVE

Dear Comrades,

In Hull we have decided to make a sales drive for the MILITANT which is long overdue, but which we hope will boost our number sold. Perhaps a copy of our appeal sheet would be useful for other comrades who are wanting to sell more papers.

Fraternally,
Mike Foster [W. Hull LPYS].
"At the moment the National Press has launched a campaign against the MILITANT, using the usual scare tactics of "reds under the beds" and

Bowie and Bovril

Dear Comrades,

I was wasting my time last Thursday watching "Top of the Pops" and couldn't help noticing the resemblance of David Bowie to the pictures of workers' demonstrations in the 30's.

This in itself would be trivial, but taken together with the re-release of the war years' Bovril adverts (which placed the emphasis on cheap forms of protein), the substitution of meat in school meals, and the general orientation in cookery circles on TV and in magazines towards economy, it is clear that something is afoot.

It is clearly becoming trendy to pretend to be poor. This is all part of the general attack on workers' living standards. We have seen it all before, for instance in the middle class womens' economy classes in the 1926 General Strike, and it is all being wheeled out again. The working class movement should beware of this old "nobility of self-sacrifice" line which will always be used to sugar the pills of unemployment and falling living standards.

"Marxist conspiracy in the Labour Party." Yet this is a reaction against the growing support for the policies and programme of socialism in the Labour Movement spearheaded by supporters of the MILITANT. It is our duty as MILITANT readers and supporters to answer these smear campaigns by increasing support for our policies of socialist change. One way of doing this is by obviously selling more papers. Can you, for example, take an extra copy to work to sell to your work-mates? If you agree with the socialist policies in the paper are you willing to take them out to yet wider layers of the Labour movement? It's a paper which puts forward a real socialist alternative to the present crisis, it deserves to have a larger audience.

Similarly, at 6p it is well worth its value (MILITANT still remains Labour's cheapest socialist weekly). But the printers are facing the harsh reality of rising costs, and at the same time are urgently wanting to expand our paper to a 12 page edition. For this, we need money. Next time you buy a MILITANT why not pay 10p instead of taking the change? If every reader in Hull did this, we could send in about £4 a week. Let us remember, MILITANT, unlike all the National dailies, is built solely on the workers pennies and without them it could not be printed.

If we sell more and give more then we can move even quicker to something we all want to see - a bigger and even better MILITANT.

Now that we have increased the size of MILITANT by 50% we have obviously needed to increase the price, but only by 33%, despite increased costs and continued inflation. Readers are now getting more than their money's worth. At 8p MILITANT is still Labour's cheapest socialist weekly.

-Editor.

Banners Bright

Dear Comrade,

Please would you let me know if any photos were taken of our banner on the Liverpool Unemployment March. Our banner was a NUM satin banner with Llynfi Lodge written on the front and on the back were some Welsh slogans. If any photos of it were handed in to your paper or, if someone from the paper took photos of the banner, we would like to buy prints of it and if possible the negative.

Yours Sincerely
Paul David (Sec. Maesteg YS).
54 Glanafon Tce,
Caerau,
Nr. Bridgend,
Mid. Glam.

Safety

Dear Comrades,

The letter in issue 284 of the Militant from Newcastle, on Health and Safety, ref: device known as "Airway". Arising from this letter in the paper our Safety Committee (comprising Union and Management at the Southdown Central Works, Portslade, Brighton, subsidiary of the National Bus Co.) have recommended purchase of approximately ½ dozen of these devices. I'm sure that all other Trade Unionists should make it their business to get similar devices in their places-of-work. They should get the Safety Committee and Stewards to take up these demands.

Yours Fraternally,
A Bus Maintenance Worker

START NOW FOR EASTER

Dear Comrades,

I would like to congratulate the MILITANT for going 12 page. This will be a spur to get people writing more articles and more letters to the paper, a duty and task of everybody who supports and reads MILITANT. We have a lot to teach and a hell of a lot to learn, so for these reasons I would like to inform the readers of the experiences of our YS branch last year, with the nearness now of the LPYS National Conference and Rally.

At a meeting last December we decided we wanted to get eight people to the LPYS National Conference, but we knew that the cost of sending each comrade would be £18-£20. We decided to raise 8 times £20. We sent out an appeal to Union branches, the GMC and Ward parties, and in all we got £20 from this source. We also made weekly collections from LP and YS comrades, the majority were not even going.

I would also like to point out that a section of our right wing tried to pour water on the idea, saying "over £100 is needed and you will never get all that." Well I must say it gave us even more encouragement. We were determined "to show 'em." We held house parties, discos, Jumble sales and a sponsored walk. Every avenue was explored. Nearing Easter we raised the full amount, we did "show 'em".

We therefore call on every branch of the LPYS to decide how many want to go [NOT WHO CAN AFFORD IT] and start working towards this goal, and we will make this year's conference bigger than the 2000 plus who were there last year. Comradely,

YOUNG SOCIALISTS

PLAN FOR 1976

1975 drew to a close on a high note for the Labour Party Young Socialists with the tremendously successful national march and rally against unemployment in Liverpool. But it has to be remembered that it was a success only in the sense that it was a militant and effective demonstration of the anger and frustration of working class youth at the scourge of unemployment which cast a blight on the Christmas holiday for millions who face the prospect of a new year with no enthusiasm whatsoever. The fight against unemployment must continue!

Using the head of steam gathered in the run-up to the Liverpool march, every branch and regional committee of the LPYS now has the task of pursuing the campaign against unemployment more energetically in its own area. A number of regions have already taken this to heart and given a fighting lead to the rest of us. The Yorkshire Regional Youth Committee of the LPYS is organising a demonstration against unemployment in Sheffield, an area hard hit by engineering and steel redundancies, on February 21st. On February 28th, in Sunderland, the Northern regional committee is holding a similar mobilisation.

It is vital that this kind of campaigning initiative is taken up by all areas. This particularly applies to LPYS branches in the steel towns and to places like Coventry, Paisley and Luton where Chrysler UK plan to introduce mass sackings.

In the course of this work, every LPYS member should be thinking of ways and means of involving more and more young workers in the activity of the Labour and Trade Union Movement. **Young trade unionists in the LPYS should be striving hard to get on their union delegation to the TUC 3rd Youth Conference which takes place in London at the end February.** Last year, LPYS members won tremendous support for our demands at the TUC Youth Conference when we called for democratic election of delegates to the Conference, for the right of the TUC Youth Conference to discuss motions, formulate policy, elect a National Committee and pursue a unionisation drive amongst the youth. The NUM in

By Andy Bevan

(National Chairman LPYS)

Derbyshire has set a fine example in recently establishing a youth section with the express aim of getting young miners more involved in the union's affairs. This is the type of thing we want to see more of in 1976.

And, of course, our work around the unemployment issue and our efforts in chasing around the factories and trade union offices, should from now on be linked to **the drive to get as many LPYS members as possible along to the LPYS Conference where they will have the benefit of the best week of debate and discussion to be found anywhere in the British Labour Movement.** The Conference is again taking place in Blackpool from Easter Saturday to Easter Monday 1976 (April 17-19). The Conference will be held in the Empress Ballroom, where Labour Party Conference itself is held. The Conference will be followed by a three day political rally as in past years.

This year, all social facilities associated with the Conference and Rally will be held in the Winter Gardens Complex, with the sole exception of this year's extra feature—the films, including such features as 'Z' and 'Viva Portugal', we hope, will be shown nearby on each afternoon of the Rally. The main Conference documents presented for discussion by the National Committee will be on "Unemployment and the Crisis of Capitalism" and "Spain and Portugal". The main sessions at the Rally, on each of the three days (April 20-22) will be as follows: "The Trade Union Movement; a power to change society?" (at which Ray Buckton has already agreed to speak). "Ireland" (with Stan Orme, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office) and "Which road forward for the 'Third World'?" (at which Judith Hart has been asked to speak).

This is just a foretaste of what Conference has to offer. Every branch should get down now to the task of raising the cash not only to send their delegate along, but also as many members as possible.



Young Socialists Rally against unemployment in Liverpool, November 29th

'The big boss The new God'

The crisis in the car industry provided the backcloth to the Militant Readers Meeting held just before Christmas in Brentwood. There was a lively cut and thrust in the discussion as low paid factory workers, unemployed tradesmen, students home on vacation, workers from the professions and housewives thrashed out the problems of the time.

"It's a myth that there is any element of private enterprise and competition left under capitalism. The real resources are wasted in the incompetence of the system": **Stuart Masters** [unemployed] "The multinationals are now so big they are enmeshed with the state": **John Huxtable** [AUEW].

"The big companies dominate life, they are bigger than the governments themselves, they are answerable to no-one but the big boss—the new God": **Dave Cameron** [unemployed]. "It's put around that workers in this

country are high paid, but many of us are on less than £30 per week. My company claims it can't pay us any more. It made £30 million in profits last year! At last the workers there are beginning to organise to get a return on our labours": **Steve Amore** [TGWU].

"It's the working class that put the Labour leaders there and its the working class that will give them the boot if they continue to carry through a programme which the Tories would be proud of": **Sarah Monaghan** [NUS].

"When it came to power the Labour Government had two choices, either a programme in the interest of workers or one in the interest of the ruling class. In a period of crisis there is no middle road": **Brian Bostock** [NUT].

Two questions from **Chris Huxtable** and **Maria Walsh**, perhaps expressed the conclusions of the meeting on the economic crisis. "Are the multinationals as super-efficient as they are

Painted?", and "How could the owner of Centre Point become a multi-millionaire when the building has never been occupied?" In summing up **Bob Edwards** pointed out that the capitalists through their incompetence, ineptness and complete decadence had forfeited the right to rule. The time was over-ripe for a democratic socialist economy. The working class, through the Labour Movement, must take over the control of the major monopolies.

The best contribution of the whole evening was **Ray Bourne's** financial appeal. "The MILITANT expresses all the aspirations and desires of the working class. We've no wealthy backers or sugar-daddies in the business world. We rely on the sacrifices of workers themselves. The future well-being of the class depends on it."

The collection raised over £15 from the thirty people present.

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LONDON MILITANT SUPPORTERS GRAND HOGSMANAY DRAW 1975 RESULTS OF DRAW

1st prize portable TV—ticket 12016 A. Darnton London. 2nd prize Camera—ticket 10939 'I. T. G.' London. 3rd prize casserole dish—ticket 10501 B. Jones London. 4th prize whiskey—ticket 09776 G. Lowndes Manchester. 5th prize record tokens—ticket 15731 R. Mortimer London; ticket 04515 A. Rowe Croydon; ticket 05089 L. McMennamin Glasgow; 8th prize a haggis—ticket 04352 D. Anscombe London. 9th prize a lump of coal—ticket 00015 S. Cameron

PRIZE WINNERS IN TYNESIDE MILITANT SUPPORTERS CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

1st prize cassette tape recorder—ticket 6629 Mrs. H. Cable. 2nd Prize food hamper—ticket 4040 Peter Felling. 3rd prize whiskey—ticket 0013 O. Cairns. 4th prize cigarettes—ticket 0496 S. Beale. 5th prize wine—ticket 0578 A. Day. Other prizes of cassettes and LPs won by: Ticket 6502 B. Benson; 6152 V. Mortakis; 1191 B. Fuge; 5319 S. Ramsey; 8197 Paul Richmond and 0939 Stan Pearce. Prizes not yet claimed are held by John Pickard

FIGHTING FUND

91% OF TARGET MADE

We've made it to the 12-page MILITANT and that's certainly something to be proud of, as one of our supporters in North London wrote when sending £10 to the Fighting Fund. "We must expand if we are to reach the workers with Marxist ideas." His donation was one of the thousands that have flooded us since the announcement of the extra 4 pages—£7,506 in the last 4 weeks.

Unfortunately, however, we cannot announce that we have made it to our £30,000 target for 1975. We have made it to well over £27,000 and that is quite an achievement in itself. We have had numerous phone calls about money that is 'on its way', but we have just had to close the books and look to making a grand start towards the 1976 target of £40,000.

A workers' paper can only rely on workers' pounds and pennies and of those we have received more and more. One outstanding example of just what these pennies can add up to was set last year, when Pete Gilman (TSSA Islington) struggled to the MILITANT offices with a year's savings of pennies and half-pennies, breaking and dropping bags and boxes 'all the way to the bank'. This year, he converted his bronze into 50p pieces as his tin filled up and brought in a magnificent £63 worth last weekend.

A MILITANT appeal sheet raised £5.65 from shop stewards and MILITANT readers at London Hospital. £6.44 was raised from Liverpool NGA members, £8.35 from supporters at Brynlliw Colliery and £1 was given by a London bus conductor. These are the sort of donations we must see many more of in the coming year, as the larger MILITANT gives more and better coverage to industrial issues.

We would also, of course, welcome more supporters dropping in to our offices, as one did last week, with a cheque for £500, but we know such occurrences are exceptional as are the very large collections at New Year socials, readers meetings etc., in the last few weeks—with 'fivers' being thrown in to boost the final total for the year. Last week saw another record broken with £2074.59 coming in. (The previous 'week' with a little more than that, was in fact a fortnight!)

Many thanks to ALL those who have donated in this last crucial week who cannot be mentioned by name, for lack of space. But see the chart and some details below to see how each area has fared.

£33.35 raised by Nottingham supporters by running a refreshment stall at the Labour Students' Conference, plus £13.48 from other sources, together with £20.10 came from Loughborough and £27.20 from Leicester, have taken the East Midlands line well over the end.

3 more 'fivers' from supporters in East Scotland still left them a long way

from the end but an excellent £99 from Cardiff, sees East Wales just off the chart. Money from Hull is 'on its way' but it leaves East Yorks still just £3.70 off their target.

Over £90 from Southampton still left Hampshire over £100 behind and last minute efforts from various parts of the Liverpool area, bringing in over £100, still left that black line one fifth of its way from the end.

Similar efforts in London, like the social in Hackney that raised £88.75 and a 'Drink-up' in Tottenham (£16), the raffle (see results page 10) and many more fivers, took London well over its very large target.

Cheshire supporters, even with £18 sent in this week, have still been left way behind, but may fare better next year when they go in with the Merseyside area.

Tremendous efforts in the Eastern Region with a social in Harlow raising £38, appeal sheets at the LPYS there (£5) and in St. Albans (£8), £58.22 from Peterborough etc., have taken their black line off the end.

Over £150 from Manchester, including many 'fivers' and a New Year's 'do' plus £9 from Preston have still left the Manchester area short. But supporters in the North East—over the target last week—still managed another £72, including a further £31.50 from their raffle and £8.60 raised in a collection at the draw itself!

South East supporters rested with a few pounds for the London raffle but will be well away again for the New Year. Bideford supporters sent £14.50 for 1975 and will not leave it all to Bristol next year. Nearly £20 from Bracknell and Reading still left £170 odd to get for the Thames Valley total.

West Midlands supporters tipped the scales with more donations from Birmingham, (including £13.66 from a New Year social) £13 from the Potteries and £17.20 from the Black Country. West Scotland was over the target before supporters there started emptying half pennies out of whisky bottles (£8.75). A total of £48.90 came in this week from Paisley and Glasgow. 'Others' moved up a little with £4.60 from Coleg Harlech and 75p from German visitors. £30 from Swansea could not get West Wales to their target and West Yorkshire supporters, with £105 coming in this week, were still hundreds of pounds short. An anonymous donation of £50 and £15 from Leeds LPYS show that the money can be got.

All we can say to those who didn't make it is 'Better luck next time' and to those who did, 'Well done and keep it up!'

By Clare Doyle

(Fighting Fund Organiser)

AREA	RECEIVED £	PROPORTION OF TARGET RAISED	TARGET
Cheshire	315.98	[Progress bar]	650
Eastern Region	1,353.28	[Progress bar]	1,335
East Midlands	1,183.78	[Progress bar]	1,110
East Scotland	502.00	[Progress bar]	765
East Wales	572.49	[Progress bar]	560
East Yorks	756.30	[Progress bar]	760
Hampshire	968.67	[Progress bar]	1,090
Liverpool and District	1,598.50	[Progress bar]	1,970
London	5,204.74	[Progress bar]	5,150
Manchester and District	1,297.64	[Progress bar]	1,540
North East	1,870.55	[Progress bar]	1,760
South East	1,397.84	[Progress bar]	1,360
South West	1,075.99	[Progress bar]	1,060
Thames Valley	626.88	[Progress bar]	800
West Midlands	2,568.15	[Progress bar]	2,520
West Scotland	1,134.80	[Progress bar]	990
West Wales	810.81	[Progress bar]	1,090
West Yorks	1,311.06	[Progress bar]	1,950
Others	483.98	[Progress bar]	540
National Events	2,334.46	[Progress bar]	3,000

A 9 DAY WEEK

for your pinta day

Most people will appreciate that a milkman has to set out pretty early in the morning and that his job has to be done whatever the weather. But few will know half of what's entailed in the job. We're not just milkmen—we're debt-collectors, clerks, book-keepers, grocery salesmen, public health inspectors, and social workers.

We are supposed to be on a five day week now, but everybody's expected to work the 7. It's about 7 hours during the week and 10-12 hours on Friday and Saturday with collecting the money. But the job is not finished when you bring the float back to the depot. There's all the book-work and you can't do that at work, with everyone coming and going, so you have to take it home. Nobody else will do it. You get an extra £2.50 for writing your books out. It takes 16 hours on average—another two days! That's a 9 day week! When the prices go up, it can take twice as long to work out the accounts (and twice as long to get in the debts!) but we get nothing extra. I do not see my children on Friday at all with working late. They are in bed when get home. If I am lucky I see them for a couple of hours on Saturday.

We're supposed to get paid extra if we go over our targets on special promotions. We had one on minerals last July—1 point for ordinary bottles, 3 points for cordials. Most of us went over the 100 points, but we haven't been paid yet! Plus we were not paid on

the first 600 points. They got the profits on the minerals alright, but we have to wait for our little share.

Dirty bottles

The other thing we're waiting for is payment for taking back dirty bottles. We have to look out for them all the time, to save the company bad publicity and loss of revenue. For our efforts we are promised 10p for every dirty bottle we spot before it goes on the door-step. But we don't get the 10p paid out as soon as we bring the bottle back to the depot. No, they have to be sent to a laboratory to be checked and tested—but we can see they're dirty. If a customer phones about a dirty bottle, she gets a pint of cream taken straight round to keep her happy but we have to fight for our 10p. We haven't had a

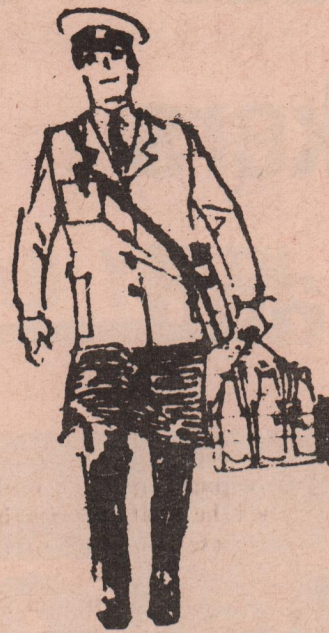
payment for this since last March! It's the same old story—"shortage of staff etc., etc."

That's the line we got when our rest day payments were being worked out wrongly for months. They were giving us extra time for Saturdays and Sundays worked but calculating it on a 6 day week rota instead of 5.

The management doesn't like to part with anything. We're out in all weathers. It's bitter cold some mornings at 5 o'clock. It can be blowing a gale with driving rain, sleet or snow and the only clothing you get offered, apart from 2 pairs of overalls, is a pair of cotton trousers and a cotton polo necked jumper. And we were expected to pay for them as well. We rejected the offer!

We've been fighting on this issue for three years and it'll come to the point where the blokes will say: "You supply

By Allan Darnton
(USDAW Shop Steward, Farnley Road Depot, South Suburban Coop)



the tools or we don't do the job."

At least we had a drying room 3 years ago but the manager came along and said "I'm just going to borrow your drying room to store some stuff in..." and we still haven't got it back!

Security

We've got a mess room about half the size of my back kitchen, with 1 table, 3 chairs and one wooden bench, a cooker and a wash-basin. You can't move in it—it's all crammed up and there are 50 of us working in that yard!

Another thing they don't supply is decent security boxes to keep your

cash in. Some vans haven't got any, on others they're all rusted up. Yet the insurance company specifies that you are not covered if you've got more than £10 in your cash bag. The security boxes are not properly maintained and there's more than one set of keys flying about for them anyway! On a weekend you can be collecting up to £300.

If you're short on your book any week, you automatically have to make up the difference out of your wages. It could be a mistake in the office, but you have to prove that first. It can amount to £10, £15 or even £20 in one week.

Commission

You're supposed to sell about £50 £60 worth of groceries every week. We get 5p in the pound commission—7½p if we get over £60 in a week. And it's difficult to sell groceries now, with the astronomical prices. A quarter of tea off the van is 2½p more than you'd pay in the shop. You don't like asking an old age pensioner to pay those sort of prices. You end up subsidising them out of your own pocket. And when you look at it, the firm is getting 5p on 23p worth of tea and they blame the high prices on the commission they have to pay—5p in every pound!

Every week you're supposed to get your debts down to a maximum of £80 by the Monday morning and that's unrealistic too, with the price of milk. You can have 450-600 customers. You only have to have 35-40 not paying for a week and you're up to the limit. The debts are bound to mount up at this time of the year and you've got other worries, like the Christmas hamper promotions...and so it goes on.

ALCOA site workers forced back to work

A combination of the threats from the employers, pressure from the union officials, and the approach of Christmas, forced the striking workers at ALCOA, Waunarlwydd to return to work without winning the re-instatement of the six workers made redundant by Holiday Hall, the building sub-contractors. (See MILITANT no. 279).

Alcoa threatened to abandon their plans to build a giant rolling mill in the area unless the strike was called off. Bernard Clarke, the Executive Council member for the EETPU in Wales, urged an immediate return to work because he said that over 1,000 jobs were at stake following the ALCOA threat.

Crazy

The answer of the workers to this threat had been clear. As Stevie Stevenson, secretary of the site Joint Shop Stewards, pointed out; "it seems crazy that a £35 million project would be scrapped for the sake of a contractor employing 6 men. Enough men have left the site for these six to be employed."

Tremendous support had been received during the dispute, particularly from the miners at Brynlliw Colliery, Gorseinon, where it was agreed to donate 20p per member towards the fight.

However as Christmas approached, the pressure on the lads reached breaking point. As one shop steward put it: "Some of the strikers have large families, and they're on the breadline."

Determination

Without any union support the majority of the lads felt there was no possibility of winning. Nevertheless, a mass meeting only voted 79 to 75 to return to work after three recounts.

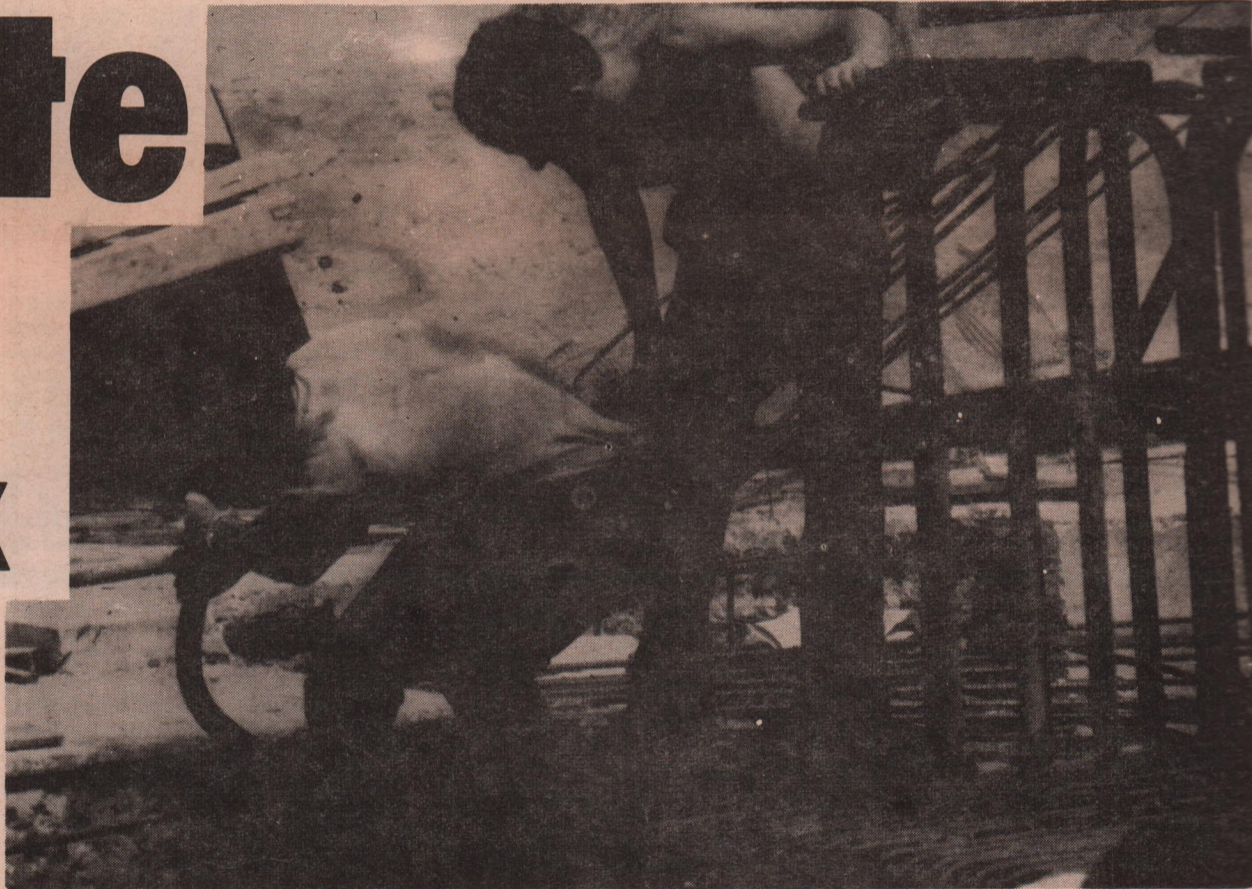
The clear aim of the employers was to weaken the power of the union on the site. All the six who were refused jobs by Holiday Hall were the most active on the site organisation including Stevie Stevenson himself.

They have now taken jobs offered by the contractor in Bristol.

The dispute highlighted the continual battle that workers, particularly in the building industry, have in protecting the gains made by union organisation. If the determination of the strikers had been matched by a similar will on the part of the union leaders, the result of the struggles could well have been different.

By Meirion Evans

(Brynlliw NUM Lodge Committee)



Shoe workers work on when bosses leave

Just before Christmas nearly 30 workers at J & J Closers took over their factory which makes womens' shoes. Three weeks previously EMMA SABOT the firm which supplies the materials and pays the wages, suddenly without warning, sent in the receiver, one Nigel Hamilton, to close down their firm. If this wasn't bad enough he added insult to injury by giving all the workforce only one weeks' pay, no holiday pay, no week in lieu and no redundancy payments. As far as the workers were concerned there was absolutely no case for closure. 85% of their products went into exports and they were considered a profitable concern.

Angered by this high-handed attitude they locked themselves in and the receiver out, after first holding him prisoner for a couple of hours. Despite the police being called no action was taken against the workers. At the present time they are working around the clock making their own orders and distributing them. I asked John Haynes, the co-ordinator of the work-in, what sort of support had they had. He told me messages of support had come in from the local population, including food (Christmas dinners etc..) from Labour Party Young Socialists and the Trades Council. The workers are determined to carry on as long as necessary in forcing the company to

guarantee their jobs.

The contempt for the lives and living standards of the workforce was shown when the receiver on one of his visits threatened to sell the entire stock at 20p a pair! One woman threw her wages at his feet saying "I'll take as many as you can get out of that." I asked John Haynes would he agree with nationalisation of the industry under workers control. He said he would only agree if the workers had control in the production and running of the industry.

Messages of support and assistance to John Haynes, 54a Well Street, Hackney E8. Phone 985 7873.

THORN TV

workers demand takeover of industry

Over 25% of Skelmersdale's workforce will be on the dole as a direct result of the decision to close down the Thorn Colour Tube factory in the new town.

On Monday January 5th, Thorn announced that the plant will close within the next two weeks and the entire 1,400 workforce will lose their jobs. With unemployment in the new town at present 14% this will mean that one in four workers will be looking for a job.

A statement issued by Thorn claimed the company made losses up to March 31st 1975 of £4.6 million and that the nine months up to December indicated that the 1976 figures will be even worse: "In the light of these figures the company has decided to withdraw completely from colour tube production in the UK."

The past year, they claim, has been disastrous and they blame the main source of their difficulties on the imports of colour tubes from abroad and on the 25% VAT imposed on colour TVs. (See MILITANT no. 268 for background details).

For the past week Thorn have been involved in "confidential discussions" with the Department of Industry in conjunction with Mullard (the only other makers of colour TV tubes in Britain) in an attempt to reach an agreement on the restructuring of the colour tubes industry. It has been disclosed that Thorn received a hand-out of £1 million from the Department of Industry in November ('The Times'

7th January).

Reaction from the local Labour Movement has been one of absolute outrage. Bill Conner, leader of the Labour Group of the West Lancashire District Council said: "This announcement by Thorn is a vicious blow to many new town workers and their families. It is one of the most catastrophic announcements in the history of this town. Bill Conner said that this was the result of a Labour Government continuing to carry out Tory policies. He said that pressure must urgently come from the ranks of the Labour Movement to make the Labour Government change its course. He called for the nationalisation of the entire TV tube industry under workers control and management.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Ince LPYS Public Meeting THORN COLOUR TUBES: MUST IT CLOSE?

Speakers: CHARLIE RUDDOCK (Convenor Thorn Electric) BILL CONNOR (Leader West Lancs. Council) BRIAN INGHAM (MILITANT Editorial Board) Chairman: STUART EVANS (Ince LPYS) Wednesday 14th January 8pm, GMWU 174 Club, Dignore Parade, Skelmersdale

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

At the beginning of December Thorn colour tubes announced that the factory would be going on short-time

By Frank Riley & Stuart Evans (Skelmersdale Labour Party)

MILITANT

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GMWU members in Skelmersdale were stunned with an announcement on Wednesday that Polythene Drums, employing 300 workers, is to call in the Official Receiver, and will close in two or three weeks. This on top of the threatened closure of Thorn Colour Tubes and turns Skelmersdale into a disaster area.

Thorn workers picketing their factory last year

working in the new year. In letters sent to the workers they stated that work would resume on Thursday January 8th and a three day week would be operated after that. They denied then that there were any plans for redundancies in the immediate future.

We spoke to Charlie Ruddock, the GMWU convenor about the threat that had been issued. They told us, "The meeting the Department of Industry had to discuss the TV tube industry decided that because Mullards are self-sufficient, where as Thorn import all the components of their tubes, they were prepared to let the Thorn part of the industry go to the wall. But I think Thorn is trying to do a Riccardio—get money out of the Government. I think he will probably get it. All this talk about Japanese imports is irrelevant. They do not even make the same type of tube, so how can they be a threat! It's the Americans who are the main exporters to Britain of the type of tubes we make in Skelmersdale and it is Thorn who import them. Thorn Colour Tubes Skelmersdale is 49% owned by

RCA!...Of course we can compete."

Charlie Ruddock explained to us that the stewards had been granted, by 99% of the workers, full powers to negotiate the best possible deal to keep the factory open.

Active support

"We hope," he said, "for a stay of execution until we can talk with the Government. We want to meet with Shore and Varley. But if the Government puts money in, we, the unions, want a definite say in running the factory."

When asked about the MILITANT's programme of nationalisation of the industry under workers' control and management, he replied: "I fully support nationalisation. We should nationalise the whole of the TV manufacturing industry not just the tubes. It's crazy to close down advanced industry and lose all that technology through lack of forward planning. Apart from this no man should be

allowed so much money and power that one day he can say 'a £20 million factory—build it!' and then another day four years later he can decree 'Close it!'"

Clearly if these jobs are to be maintained then some kind of action almost certainly will be necessary. At the time it will be up to the entire Labour Movement to come and give the fullest possible active support to the Thorn workers. A stand must be taken soon in Skelmersdale against the criminal level of unemployment. The fight of the Thorn workers is the fight of the whole Skelmersdale working class. Already Charlie Denton, President of the local Trades Council has indicated that support would be forthcoming from the local Trades Council. He said: "We cannot accept this, but the problem is initially for the Thorn workers and unions. We have no official comment at this stage, but our policy is to oppose all closures and redundancies. The Government should think again about taking over and not subsidising."

THE TRUTH ABOUT STEELWORKERS' PAY

figures quoted for steelworkers pay in the 'Daily Telegraph of £75 to £130 per week give a completely distorted picture. Not one in the plant where I work has a basic of more than £60 a week—for a skilled and physically demanding job.

So when overtime stops so does the money, but the responsibilities do not! Such as the case of one slinger who has two young children and an £84 a month mortgage.

British Steel have announced that it would be possible to obtain a reduction in the workforce which they claim they need, through 'natural wastage'. This must also be fought against for these jobs are just lost to the working class as a whole.

This hits mainly the youth, causing young workers to leave for 'greener pastures'. But where are these fabled lands?

The South East of London was one of these not long ago. But now with the closures of AEI, Johnson-Phillips, and STC in North Woolwich due in summer, and the running down of the gas works and the Arsenal, it looks like any other desert to the unemployed.

Full support must be given to the steel workers in their battle. We must demand an end to sackings and redundancies, and demand work sharing with no loss of pay.

By Pete Suret

(ISTC Greenwich No. 1)

IRELAND—from page one

The New Year's Eve bombing was followed up by a Friday bombing of Belfast City Centre; Saturday's attack on a Protestant owned Portadown Pub; and the shooting of several policemen. The reply was the murder of the 5 Catholic workers in their homes. These crimes all followed the now familiar pattern of retaliatory, no-warning sectarian attack.

The truce of the Provisionals is now definitely over with the bombings since Christmas. But there never has been any peace for the working class of Northern Ireland.

The murders are signs of desperation by these so-called Republicans who have seen their former base within the Catholic working class disappear in a swamp of sectarian intimidation. A new bloody chapter for the working class in Northern Ireland will open up unless the only force for unity, the trade unions, can act.

If these lunatic murders are twistedly justified as an attempt to drive the British out of Ireland, its result has been the exact reverse. Now 600 more British troops have been sent to Ireland and the tragic situation is that they may be welcomed and allowed to act with greater freedom as a consequence of the murders.

Whatever the professed aims of the 'South Armagh Republican Action Force' are, these deeds can only bring the horror of outright civil war closer. Such a war would lead to mass attacks on Catholic areas by Protestant militias, the possible intervention of the Irish Army, and eventually the physical forcing out of Catholics across the border. Thousands of Catholics could suffer the fate of the Palestinians, being herded into refugee camps across the border, where the already crisis-ridden Irish Republic would be unable to cope, while Belfast and Northern

Ireland would become a fortified highly sectarian Protestant state, with terror and counter-terror carried on across the border.

It is clear that the political parties, based as they are on one section of the community or the other, cannot find a solution out of this bloody trap. The permutations of an Assembly, direct rule, power-sharing, a Constitutional Convention, and now a mooted voluntary coalition have been tried but have dismally failed. It is a lesson for those who imagine that coalition across the class divide can succeed in protecting and improving the conditions of the working class whether in Ireland or Britain.

Workers' unity

Merlyn Rees, said at the time of the murders that "Something has got to emerge in the community to stop it, because extra soldiers and police just will not do it."

But what are the forces in the "community" that could create unity and avoid the chasm of civil war yawning ahead? The only organisations that unite the Catholic and Protestant workers are the trade union and Labour Movement. The embryonic signs of such unity were recently hearteningly demonstrated, when 5,000 Derry workers, Protestant and Catholic, answered the call of Derry Trades Council to demonstrate against the sectarian murders. Derry Trades Council have already endorsed the call of Belfast Trades Council for a conference of all trade union and labour organisations to work out a plan to defend workers in their homes and at work. The Newry march is another sign of the overwhelming desire by workers for a lead from the organised Labour Movement. It must not be forgotten that the ten murdered men were all members of the Transport and General Workers Union.

In response to these calls, the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU has agreed to a meeting of full-time trade union officials and branch chairmen on January 24th, but this half-hearted response is totally inadequate. The meeting will be unrepresentative and there is no clear agenda to discuss action by the trade union movement.

We have had the conferences of the politicians, now let the workers organisations show what can be done! Such a conference should involve shop stewards' committees, tenants' associations, and labour organisations and draw up practical plans to defend workers from sectarian attack. A defence force based on the trade unions is now a vital necessity. With factory committees, and street committees organised by the Labour Movement, workers could be

effectively protected.

Also such a conference should thrash out a programme of action to solve the pending economic problems which lie at the heart of the sectarian strife. Capitalism in Britain and Ireland cannot provide jobs, homes, and a living wage for the working class.

The Labour Movement must use its enormous power to fight for a living wage, houses and a job for all (so that discrimination is no longer necessary). That must depend on the ending of the grip of capitalism in Ireland and Britain by the taking over of the big monopolies and establishing a planned economy, democratically run by the workers of Britain and Ireland, North and South, in a Socialist Federation of Britain and Ireland.

By Peter Hunt

Militant

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