

Militant

Indian
Capitalism
Falling
Apart

—centre pages

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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12p

School Students On Strike

Birmingham schools have been swept by a new mood of radicalisation. Last week, strikes and other action erupted in over thirty local schools.

The strikes and, in some cases, sit-ins were sparked off by students being locked out by Heads at dinner-time because of sanctions by teachers in support of their pay claim. There was nowhere for them to go, despite the rain.

Contrary to the press and television reports, however, the school students are not against the teachers' action but are mainly sympathetic to their claim. On Tuesday, about 300 school students marched to Birmingham Education offices, many demanding that the teachers' claim should be met.

Young Socialists

Members of the Labour Party Young Socialists have been round to a number of schools and received an enthusiastic welcome.

The demand for action and the initiative is amazing. Students at one school I visited came out, and then went round to others to get support. Schools previously accused of "blacklegging" the day before came out with the slogan: "We're not blacklegs, we're on strike!"

Students from Golden Hill-ock Comprehensive organised a meeting in a nearby bandstand to discuss the situation. The main slogan has been: "No school dinners, no school, OK?" But marching school students have also been chanting, "The workers, united, will never be defeated!"

Both striking school students and LPYS members handing out leaflets have been harassed by the police, who have tried to stop school students marching and force the kids to go back to school.

But the LPYS schools leaflets have been seized enthusiastically, stuck up on walls and taken in quantity to be handed out elsewhere.

This is really a situation in which the LPYS must give a lead. If we boldly put across our socialist policies for young people, we could win hundreds of new members!

Tony Gorman
(Birmingham LPYS)



Lisson Grove dole office in London: "All hope abandon, you who enter here"?

YOUTH FIGHT BACK

A mood of frustration and anger is sweeping the working class youth of Britain. And no wonder!

They are the ones who get the rough end of the stick of education cuts. School students are rebelling against overcrowded classrooms and the lack of equipment.

Unemployed

Apprentices are being exploited as cheap labour and given the boot as soon as they finish their time. Same with other young workers—many are chucked out after a few years of work when the boss has to pay them adult wages.

Worst of all, young people are bearing the brunt of unemployment. Half the unemployed are under 26. The thousands of last year's school leavers who still face the dole queue every week will find themselves competing with another quarter of a million when the next term ends in June.

Another batch will be turned out to the outside world, starry-eyed and wait-

ing to begin their careers. Money! Independence! New clothes, records, dances! Soon the dream will fade and turn into a nightmare of rejection by employers, interrogation by the social security and the humiliation of having no money and being forced to live off their parents.

The 'Job Creation Scheme' is just a cosmetic covering to hide the ugly face of capitalism. Taking a few thousand people on for six months when 1½ million need jobs is like draining the Atlantic Ocean with a teaspoon. In South Yorkshire young people have been put to work... counting lampposts!

No wonder young people are cynical about the 'politicians'. And with little government action to break through the dead end of capitalism, no wonder some frustrated youth lash out blindly through vandalism and football hooliganism—giving the Tories and their press the chance to attack them.

But that energy has to be used effectively and positively to fight for a better deal. This is just what the Labour Party Young Socialists are doing.

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Militant

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FRENCH ELECTIONS: THE FIRST ROUND

In the first round of the French Assembly elections last Sunday the left-wing opposition parties made significant gains, emerging narrowly in front of the government parties. The result reveals a strong desire for change in the direction of socialism, particularly among the industrial workers, and especially among the youth. The Union of the Left, however, failed to chalk up the clear overall majority necessary for a decisive victory in the second round on 19 March.

Nevertheless, while the capitalist press is already trumpeting about a "defeat for the Left," the result was a really big blow to the pro-government parties, which made few gains. The Socialists and Left Radicals polled nearly 7 million votes compared to under 5 million in the parliamentary elections in 1973. The Communist Party gained about 800,000 extra votes.

In percentage terms, with the highest poll since 1945 (82.7%), the Union of the Left took 45.1% of the votes [Socialist Party 22.5%; Communist Party 20.5%; Left-wing Radicals 2.1%] compared to the government parties' 46.5% [Gaullists-RTR 22.6%; Giscard's UDF 21.5%; Support for the President 2.4%].

The Socialist and CP leaders have now agreed to support each other's candidates where they are ahead, and so if the ultra-left groups [who took 3.3%] support the Union of the Left candidates, the Left could take 48.4% in the second round. If the "other opposition groups" [1.1%] and the Ecologists [2.1%] also support the Left Union, the left parties could gain a narrow overall majority of 51.6%. On the showing of round one—with the addition of the ultra-right and various pro-government groupings [who took 1.9%]—the government parties will take only about 48.4%.

But given the distribution of seats, which is heavily biased against the working-class urban areas and in favour of the conservative rural areas, it is by no means certain that 51.6% of the popular vote would produce a majority of seats for the Left Union in the Assembly, allowing them to form a government.

Why has the Union of the Left failed to assure a decisive victory, when the government's support is split down the middle and there is clearly a strong desire for change? Mitterand, the Socialist Party leader, has accused the Communist leaders of splitting the Union and "sabotaging" victory. But all the indications are that it is the backtracking of Mitterand on the Common Programme, together with the failure of Marchais to spell out a programme of the socialist transformation of the economy which alone could pay for all the reforms included in the Common Programme, which has resulted in the Left Union failing to secure all of its potential support.

The Socialist Party, which won only 9% of the vote in 1973 before its re-organisation, has continued to make gains. But its support fell short of the 7 million votes for itself [without the Left Radicals] at which Mitterand was

aiming.

The Communist Party, however, whose leadership has been pushed, by both rank-and-file pressure and fear of being outflanked on the left by the Socialist Party, into criticising Mitterand's retreat and demanding more socialist measures, has more than held its own. It improved its position in 44 Departments while the SP improved its position in only 18 Departments.

The outcome of the second round remains open. Within hours of the round one results being announced, the SP and CP leaders issued a joint statement saying that a government of the Left, in the first days of its office, would implement a minimum basic wage of 2,400 francs [£252] a month for a 40-hour week; increase family allowances by 50% by the end of the year; substantially increase pensions; raise unemployment benefits to two-thirds of the basic minimum wage; and take measures to create jobs. They also reaffirmed their intention of nationalising the banking and financial sector and a number of key firms.

Whatever the limitations of the Left's economic programme, in a country which still has the widest gap between rich and poor in the advanced countries of Western Europe, these immediate reforms may swing additional support behind the Left Union's candidates. On the other hand, however, it is by no means certain that all Socialist Party supporters will switch their votes to CP candidates, in spite of instructions from the SP leaders.

The formation of a Left government after next Sunday would mean the beginning of a new, tumultuous development in France, and through its repercussions, in Europe as a whole. It was a marked indication of the relief of the French capitalists, who took the first-round results to indicate that a Left victory is now, on balance, unlikely, that leading share prices rose on the Bourse and the price of the franc soared.

But if the Left fails to grasp victory and the government scrapes home, which would almost certainly be with a very small majority, France will by no means be assured of a period of peace and quiet. Disappointed on the political plane, the French workers, who are undoubtedly voting overwhelmingly for the Left, will turn to struggles on the industrial plane.

"The economy may well be disrupted by frustrated workers," comments 'The Times' [14 March], "whose trade union leaders for a year or more have dissuaded them from rocking the boat, and to a lesser extent by the efforts of the pro-government parties and the president himself to implement their campaign promises. The election result has once again revealed a France divided into two dangerously equal and apparently irreconcilable halves."

If Giscard d'Estaing's position is reinforced with a new right-majority government, the French workers may well be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the 1968 May events with something like a repeat performance.

WEEK OF SOLIDARITY

SOUTH AFRICA:

March 13th-21st has been designated a week of international trade union action in solidarity with the struggle of workers in South Africa.

The average wage of most workers in South Africa (African workers) is R20 a week (about £10), a bare physical subsistence wage for a family. This level of wages is the result of the apartheid system in South Africa. The bosses in South Africa make their profits because of the cheapness of labour. The apartheid state helped to create, and now maintains, this cheap labour system.

Apartheid

Apartheid denies to all workers the right to strike. Black trade unionists are harassed, imprisoned, and murdered. In the Bantustans there are up to two million black unemployed, set in competition against the employed workers. The ruling class has come to an accommodation with white workers, paying a price to ensure their collaboration in controlling black workers. At the same time, the black people are denied all political rights in the areas where they work.

But workers in South Africa are fighting back! After the long night of the 1960s, when their organisations were driven underground, they have once again taken up open struggle. In many firms in South Africa, including British Leyland, black workers are fighting a protracted struggle for trade

Mozambique and Angola, the gains of the Patriotic Front and SWAPO in Zimbabwe and Namibia.

British workers have a special role to play in this week of international action. British imperialism played a major part in the creation of the apartheid system, and has long benefited from the cheapness of labour in South Africa. In the period of the post-war world boom, British employers compensated for declining profit rates in Britain by export of capital, with a substantial amount (10% of British overseas investment) going to South Africa.

Returns on capital in South Africa reached the rate of 18%, among the highest in the world. British investment in South Africa now amounts to some £3 billion, over 50% of foreign investments in South Africa. The same companies which command the heights of the British economy—BP and Shell, Barclays, ICI, British Leyland, GEC, GKN, Dunlop, Tate and Lyle, Thorn Electrical—are just as powerful in South Africa.

Recession

Along with investment goes trade: in 1976 Britain accounted for 18% of South Africa's imports and 22% of South Africa's exports. Some 5-6% of British living standards result from trade with South Africa.

Now the South African economy, like capitalist economies around the world, has been hit by recession and crisis. Inflation continues, and unemployment rises.

WORKERS FIGHT BACK



union recognition.

In Durban, in 1973, black workers facing massive price increases secured wage increases through a mass strike. In Soweto and around the country in 1976 nearly a million black workers came out twice in three-day general strikes in protest at apartheid repression, particularly as directed against black students and youth.

Black workers in South Africa are encouraged in these militant actions by the speeding up of the revolutionary process in Southern Africa as a whole: the victory of FRELIMO and MPLA in

Profit rates are falling. Foreign capitalists, faced with this economic situation and with the political crisis caused by the rising militancy of the South African masses, grow more cautious; direct investment by companies is giving place to loan capital provided by banks at high rates of interest.

Diplomacy

The Western powers search with increasing desperation for means of dampening the revolutionary process in Southern Africa. Hence the diplomatic manoeuvres, first

of Kissinger, then of Carter and Owen. Their aim is to install new, black, but pro-capitalist regimes in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and to stimulate reforms of the racial system in South Africa which will encourage black private enterprise and bring the black workers to heel.

Thus the EEC recently drew up a "Code of Conduct" for foreign companies in South Africa, inviting them not only to increase wages, but to bargain collectively with black workers, and bring pressures on the apartheid state for reform.

SACTU

These manoeuvres of the Western powers cannot meet the aspirations of the workers of Southern Africa. Workers in South Africa are struggling, not just against repressive trade union laws, migrant labour, compounds, denial of political rights. They are demanding, through organisations like the South African Congress of Trade Unions, full political and economic liberation. They are calling, through SACTU, on workers around the world to support them in this struggle.

The current week of action, like the week in January last year, has been called by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, dominated by the trade union leadership of the imperialist powers. It is supported by the British TUC. The leadership of these organisations support the reformist strategy of the Western powers in Southern Africa.

The workers in Britain and around the world must transform the week of solidarity from a token—which is unfortunately all the ICFTU and the British TUC are interested in—into a reality,

by taking action at the local level, through stewards' committees, union branches, trades councils, local Labour Parties. Let us show the bosses and the government our real solidarity with the struggle of the workers in South Africa!

Internationalism

In South Africa, as in Britain, the only way forward for the workers lies in the nationalisation of the banks and the monopolies under workers' control and management. This is the policy of the liberation movement in South Africa, as proclaimed in the Freedom Charter of 1955.

The special links between British capital and capital in South Africa heighten the necessity for British and South African workers to act together. These special links show the absurdity of any attempt to build socialism on a national basis. Now is the time to act as internationalists! The current week of action is only the beginning of this campaign.

For a socialist South Africa and a socialist Britain!

British Leyland workers initiate solidarity action: see page 14

Greater London Labour Party Conference

Determined to fight Tories

"In County Hall, there is a living example of what awaits us if the Tories were returned locally in the borough elections and nationally in a general election."

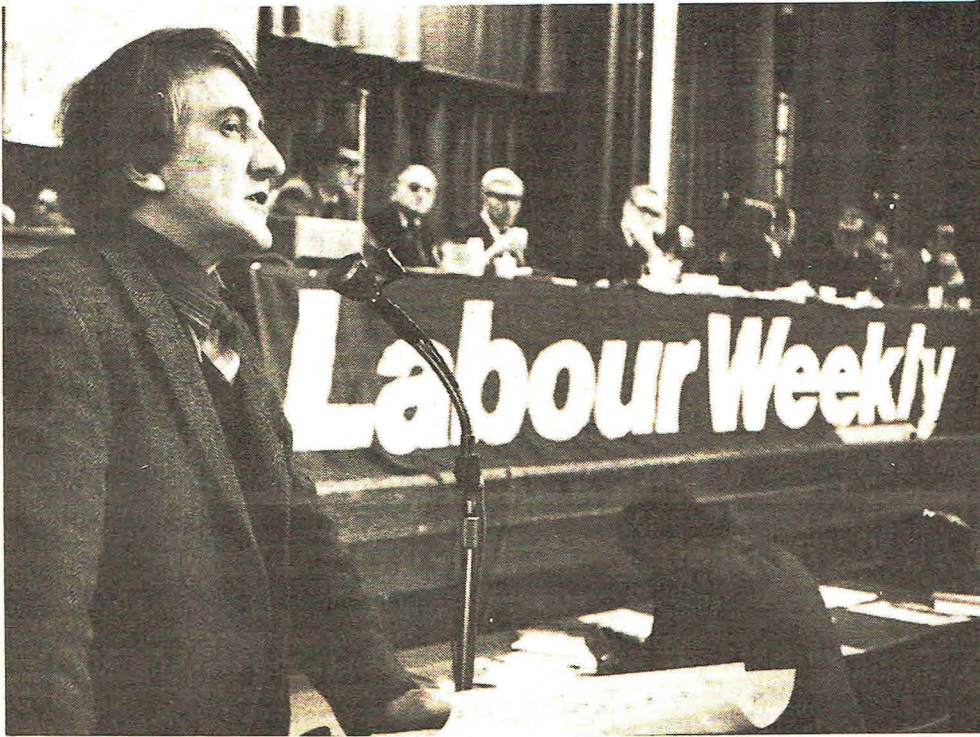
This point was made by Keith Dickinson in the opening debate on housing at the Annual General Meeting of the Greater London Labour Party Regional Council (March 4/5th). The conference was dominated by anticipation of the Borough Council elections and the possibility of a general election later in the year.

Cuts

The excellent composite on housing, moved by Hammersmith North CLP and seconded by NOLS London Region, which was passed by the conference, called for an end to the sale of council housing, no rent or rates increases, and the nationalisation of building supply companies, and of the banks and insurance companies under workers' control and management to make possible a huge building programme.

Another important subject for Londoners was that of transport. Routes are being cut and changed and bus and tube fares will soon be going up yet again.

The mover of the composite from ASLEF stressed the need for unity between all the rail unions in fighting for improved public transport through the "nationalisation of the means of production,



Keith Dickinson speaking at the Conference

Photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

distribution and exchange." Many other subjects were discussed and resolutions passed; but we now have to press the Regional Executive Committee to carry out these decisions.

Mood

As one delegate speaking in the debate on Health said, reflecting the general feeling of the conference, "Somebody's got to stop passing resolutions and start implementing the damn things!"

During the lunch-break on Saturday, an excellent 'Militant' meeting was held, at which Tom Doyle and Bob Labi, who were both re-elect-

ed to the Regional Executive Committee, explained our policies on various aspects of the conference. About £46 was collected for the 'Militant' fighting fund.

During the conference, many other donations were made to the fighting fund (including some from MPs and trade union leaders), and well over 150 papers were sold.

Overall, the conference's mood was clouded by apprehension at the May elections, especially after the Ilford North result. There was a grim determination to fight the Tories. A reluctance to 'rock the boat' undoubtedly muted the criticism of the

Party leadership.

But the Conference did come alive over the issue of racialism. The activists' determination to go out and fight the racials and fascists was clear to see.

Action!

The fact that all the 'Militant' supporters standing for the Executive in the Constituency section were re-elected showed that beneath the surface calm there is an enormous amount of pressure building up for socialist action.

Lorna Oliver

(Hackney Central LPYS)

Young Socialists' Regional Conferences prepare for action

Biggest and Best

The biggest and best so far! That was the verdict of the 70 or more delegates and visitors to the Eastern Region LPYS conference last Saturday.

The YS branches in the region have grown in size and numbers in the last year swelling the conference with new faces and new voices.

The events of the past year, the effects of wage restraint and cuts in expenditure really tempered the voices of delegates with anger as they spoke

of dole queues in Stevenage, hospital closures in the Peterborough area and new houses in Harlow where the doors and windows didn't fit.

Policies were adopted at the conference which if carried out by the Labour government would guarantee victory at the next election.

This point was made over and over again in the questions to Tony Benn who spoke in the afternoon. A Labour government with the present policies was definitely not what we wanted.

In the election for National Committee members Steve Glennon was re-elected with 16 votes to 5, 16 votes for the 16-page Militant, as Steve pointed out.

Pete Lee

(Cambridge Labour Party)

Fight Racialism

One hundred and forty LPYS members, including fifty seven delegates attended their Scottish Conference on the 18th/19th of February.

Conference discussed many of the vital issues facing the labour movement today. But the keenest debate of all took place on racialism, once again brought to the fore by Maggie Thatcher's outbursts.

In what was undoubtedly the finest contribution of the conference, Alan McCoombes speaking for the Regional Committee, said: "The YS has a proud record of helping to combat racialism. We are determined not to let organisations such as the National Front divide and weaken the workers' movement."

Answering the Tribune supporters' notion that full trade union and democratic rights should be extended to Fascists, 'to win them over by peaceful argument', Alan said:

"The labour movement was not handed democratic rights on a plate. They were won as a result of great struggles in the past. We should not give rights to people who would have them taken away, who have as their aim the destruc-

tion of the labour movement!"

Alan insisted that the only way to defeat Fascism was by mobilisation of the labour movement behind a socialist programme.

Comrade Ian Smart, giving the fraternal address from the Scottish Organisation of Labour Students, said:

"I would join with Tories, Liberals, Churchmen, or anyone in the struggle to defeat fascism." The majority of the conference, however, were not so confident that the Tories would be such a reliable ally against the Fascists.

The voting for the National Committee member was:

Jim Newlands (Militant supporter) 25
David Peden (Tribune) 5
Callum Macrae (Workers Action) 4

Thus the conference confirmed its support for the ideas of Marxism.

Militant supporters were also in the majority of those elected to the Regional Committee. It has been on the basis of their policies that the Scottish Region grew from 35 to 46 branches in 1977, this being the best growth of all the Regions of the LPYS in that year.

Greg Oxley

(Paisley LPYS)

The Economic Key

The Southern Region LPYS conference was dominated by one important theme—the need to change the economic system before any real improvements can be made to benefit the workers.

The conference, attended by delegates and visitors from all over the South of England, got off to a lively start with the major debate of the day, on the economy and unemployment. Delegates pointed out the crisis British capitalism faced and the disasters of unemployment and inflation that were the result of the Labour government's refusal to break with Tory policies, instead feather-bedding and

assisting the capitalists at the expense of workers' living standards.

Most of the resolutions called for socialist measures to overcome the crisis, particularly the nationalisation of the major monopolies which control 85% of the economy.

The support for the policies of Militant was vindicated by the fact that all places on the regional committee, save one, went either with no opposition or one vote against to Militant supporters.

John Cantwell was re-elected to the NC by 20 votes to 6. His manifesto and his comradely attitude in debates clearly differentiated him from the other candidates, and won the overwhelming support of conference.

Alan Huyton

(LPYS Regional Committee)

Sales Success

With tremendous enthusiasm comrades have set out to increase 'Militant's' readership. Examples of successes have flooded in from all areas. Last week, we reported paper sales in Torbay: since then the comrades have held a street sale and upped their total from 40 to 80!

A comrade in Stafford sold 50 copies of one issue—single handed—at a couple of factories, on a street sale and at the local Poly.

Congratulations to these comrades for their efforts! Congratulations to all our sellers who are increasing their sales by ones and twos, fours and fives.

The verdict on the 'new look' paper are unanimous: "excellent," "the best paper in the movement." Comrades who previously only read 'Militant' have been stirred to take copies to sell. A reader in Clevedon in the South West sent for ten copies to sell—and in no time he was back asking for more!

There have been sales at markets, football grounds, pubs, on estates and at factories—all too numerous to mention—in the drive to build the sales of "the best paper in the movement."

If you have only taken one or two to sell in the past, now is the time to raise your sights—take an extra one or two! If you have never sold 'Militant' before, send to the address below for details.

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Young offenders:

Our article on a typical day in a Detention Centre [Militant 378] provoked doubts in the mind of one reader.

Dear Comrades,

After reading comrade Grant's article on the subject of conditions in Detention Centres ["Militant" 21.10.77] I was, to say the least a little surprised.

I have very little experience of life in DC's, but I would like to raise the following questions:

Could you please name the DC where one has to get up at 5.00 am., and where the staff prepared to be on duty at 4.45 am. are to be found? It would also, no doubt be "revealing" to know the whereabouts of the "doorless" toilets.

Further details of the punishment "Block" would also be much appreciated. [the conditions outlined would, I believe be illegal.]

It would strike me as difficult to teach someone a trade in 2 months, if not well nigh impossible. [a 3 month sentence invariably works out as 2, one third being lost in remission, a point missed by comrade Grant]. But even so, the 3 monther's take part in different activities, such as various social projects [as well as education classes].

I'm also pleased to see the dedication of the governor in inspecting the troops so punctually at 6.30 in the morning.

You may well detect an element of sarcasm in my letter, the reason for which is that I believe comrade Grant has misrepresented the facts rather badly.

This is not to say that I condone the system, I do not. I believe the idea of just "locking up" young people is fundamentally wrong, whatever the Tory Backwoodsmen may say. It is however, no mandate for factual distortion.

Yours Fraternally,
Mike Dooley

So what is the treatment meted out in these "centres"? Are they, as Willie Whitelaw and the Tories claim, the answer to vandalism and football "hooligans"?

Continuing our series on Young Offenders, this week we print the first of a two-part account of an inmate's experiences.

Workers Notebook

"The old poverties of lack of property, low pay, poor health, inadequate education and bad housing still disfigure, and many would say disgrace, the powerful engine of production which we call industrial society." These are the words of Dr. A. Halsey, professor of social and administrative studies at Oxford University broadcast in the second BBC 'Reith Lecture'.

"The rate of registered unemployment is over six per cent of all employees...Four and three quarters million of us receive money from the Supplementary Benefits Commission. In other words, 4.75 million are living on the government's own estimate of the poverty line. And there are more below it who do not claim their due..."

The facts he quoted are a damning answer to those who claim that Labour Governments have or can reform away the miseries and horrors of capitalism. "In Britain now, the richest one per cent still own one-fifth and perhaps as much as one-quarter of all personal wealth...in 1974-75, the richest one per cent received about as much as the poorest 20%..."

"By 1974-5, before tax, the richest ten per cent took 26.6 per cent of income, and this was reduced to 23.2 per cent by taxation. At the lower end, the poorest ten per cent took 2.8% before tax, and this was increased to 3.1 per cent after tax. These figures can scarcely be interpreted as evidence of a hugely redistributive 'welfare' state..... the activity of the state makes for no dramatic reduction of market inequalities." ('Listener', 19.1.78)

INSIDE

An account of one youth's experiences in a detention centre

There I was, on the second landing of Dunfermline Sheriff Court surrounded by bored policemen, important looking lawyers conferring with their equally unimportant looking clients, irate mothers wrestling with screaming children, and the inevitable group of adolescent offenders trying to assume an air of confidence.

I felt tired and dejected. After a long wait they ushered me into the courtroom. The two things that upset me most were the presence of the local press and of course my parents, whom I glimpsed at the back of the Court.

It was over surprisingly quickly, a bit of an anticlimax I thought, after all the events of the past couple of weeks. I suppose everyone got the impression that I was cold and unmoved by the experience; but who could guess just what was happening to me inside? I was a turmoil of feelings; new and hurtful. I couldn't begin to understand it myself, so how could anybody else, least of all the Sheriff?

The Social Worker tried. Everything he said seemed intelligent but that didn't really help. Nobody understands me, I thought. What a bloody cliché. I remember feeling important being handcuffed to the policeman and escorted out of the main door into the police van, parked and waiting in the busy High Street.

Bogart

Outside the Sheriff's Court the bustle of pedestrians, busy about their shopping and all the other normal mundane Monday morning chores that respectable working class people pursue, all oblivious to me.

I wished I had a mac. Then I could resemble Bogart, that's how I felt. There they stood, the local dole birds and paper gangsters waiting for opening time. I could relate to them and yet I felt different.

They, and only they, acknowledged me, either with a shout, a wave or by yelling questions at me unembarrassed.

"How long did ye get, Mick?"

I produced three fingers with an air of Bogart casualness as two uninterested policemen bundled me into the van.

"Where's this one going?" "Glenochil," he replied, with a short knowing snigger. I didn't pay much attention and lapsed into reflection.

Breaking into the Bowling Club wasn't exactly the smartest thing I'd ever done. Looking back now it's easier to get things into perspective. The sharp pain in my ribs reminded me just how stupid I was.

Of course the police had



nothing at all to do with my sore ribs. I fell down the police station steps, didn't I?

Still, not to worry. I got off lightly. Only three months detention, nothing, or so I thought. I had heard stories about detention centre in Saughton. Just exaggerations, I said to myself. Everybody exaggerates in the jail.

"No very far to go now son."

My heart began to thump. Suddenly I was very apprehensive.

They say that distance lends enchantment to a view but not so for this. It's hard to say whether it looked uglier from a distance than from close up. My first impression reminded me of the old German Stalags. The only difference being that the POW camps were usually wooden and this was made of brick; concrete walls; barbed wire, sentry-like lamp posts.

As the police van drove slowly up to the large gates I glimpsed an official looking signpost. "Glenochil. Her Majesty's Detention Centre," I read out aloud.

Zoo

The driver got out and rang a bell. After a while the two halves of the gate were swung open by a man in plain clothes. The van drove through, only to be stopped by another large wire gate. The gate-keeper sauntered unhurried to the second gate after locking the first.

"There's one of the inmates, look!" the policeman shouted like some bloody kid pointing to a zoo monkey. I looked to the left and strained my eyes to see the monkey.

"It won't be long until you are like that." Ignoring that remark I looked at the creature more closely and was surprised to find that he did look like a monkey.

He was busy sweeping a floor behind the large glass windows of the main building. The inmate's hair was very closely cut revealing his large round ears. A large squarish nose did much to

Our series on Detention Centres continues with the first part of a personal account of life "inside"



"What's your name son?" "Mike Watson," I replied, smiling.

The next second I hardly realised what was happening to me. He hit me so hard I landed with a thud flat on the floor. The blood was wet and sticky on my face as I stared up. He still smiled.

"While you are here you will be respectful and polite. When speaking to an officer of this establishment you will call him Sir." I staggered to my feet using the wall for support.

"Yes...Sir." "That's better."

The guy was kinda big even for a screw. Resistance would have been futile. The officer pushed me unceremoniously in through a cubicle door.

The prison jargon for these cubicles is a 'dove box'. They are about the size of the average changing room in a public swimming pool. A new admission is usually locked in one of these for anything from half an hour to three hours, depending on how long it takes the reception officer to gather the appropriate forms.

The cubicle was furnished with a wooden bench and decorated with the usual graffiti, mostly the Glasgow variety. Glesga Cumbie, Tiny Govan Team and Tongs ya bas.

My injuries weren't as serious as I had first thought. After cleaning off most of the blood I discovered that it was only a small cut on the bridge of my nose. More serious was the emotional hurt.

Up until then I'd been pretty naive. I'd always thought that the police and the courts actually believed in the things they were meant to stand for; respect and decency, and that they lived by the rules.

Inside I'd never tried to tell myself that stealing was right. Rough handling only made me recognise and justify the war—us and them.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

GREETING THE 16-PAGE MILITANT

OLD SWAN [LIVERPOOL] LABOUR PARTY welcomes Militant's strides Forward for Marxism

BRYNLLIW LODGE NUM

wishes to extend greetings to the Militant for its consistent support of the coal miners' cause, for better wages and conditions, against the capitalist press

WAVERTREE LPYS send comradely greetings For workers' unity to defeat racialism

Eastbourne LPYS welcomes the expansion to 16 pages of the best paper in the labour movement

Left & Right

£s CUBED

Capitalist competition is more efficient we are always told.

For many years Oxo cubes have been an unassuming part of the larder, used for gravy etc. People buy about £20 million of Oxo a year. Now James Goldsmith has decided to attack by bringing in Bovril cubes, more or less the same stuff, made in a slightly different way. To convince people that they can taste the difference he has to launch an advertising campaign costing £3 million. To counter him, Oxo have to spend an equivalent sum.

So, assuming that people don't make more gravy this year than last, the advertising cost will have to be added to the cost of the product and the profit. Our £20m worth of gravy will cost us £26m this year. Perhaps it's a good thing we can't afford the meat to go with it.

VOTE CATCHER

Serious problems need serious answers. "Total employment is up slightly but of course the number of people who have gone on the [unemployment] register has increased the number of unemployed."

After this clear explanation of the appalling level of unemployment, Mr Callaghan went on to say that the government would have to turn more and more to public service industries, because "manufacturing industry as such will not be able to provide the jobs necessary to return to the level of employment I want to see." Unfortunately, he had to point out, the expansion of service industries would require more public expenditure, "and we are being limited on this."

Is this the programme he is offering to youth on the dole in the election?

DIFFERENT?

The exponents of 'Eurocommunism' protest that they are utterly different from the right wing social democrats because, even though their short term policies are the same, the Eurocommunists still have 'a commitment to socialist change.'

Let us suppose you catch two thieves rifling your pockets. The first (who might be called Crosland) replies "Stealing is my job. I enjoy it and I will go on doing it."

The second (Berlinguer) cries "I am terribly sorry for stealing, I don't want to do it and as soon as I have accumulated enough loot to settle down comfortably, I will immediately stop."

Should you let one off?

GOLDEN KEY

What did you get when you came of age? The richest bachelor in Britain is said to be the 27 year old Earl of Grosvenor who inherited £16 million when he was 21, and is now said to be worth nearer £20 million.

He is landlord of the London Embassies of over 135 countries, owns a few hundred private residences, the headquarters of the NCB and half of St George's Hospital. In addition he is chairman of a board of Trustees owning 100 acres of Mayfair [including one side of Oxford Street stretching from Marble Arch to Bond Street] and another 200 acres of Belgravia. He also owns a massive estate in Cheshire, and farming and fishing interests overseas.

The Grosvenor family motto is 'Virtue not Ancestry!' [Virtue, of course, is how they made their money.] The Earl, commenting recently on his wealth said: "My father has always been careful about money, and that has sort of rubbed off on me." A few months ago he sacked a gamekeeper for stealing two rabbits!

He sees his main task in life as the holding together of the family fortune—"there are still plans for land nationalisation, so it's going to be an uphill fight to hold on to our property." You bet it is!



Demonstrators protesting outside MI5 headquarters at the prosecution of Aubrey, Berry and Campbell under the Official Secrets Act.
Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Special Branch down Under

By Darell Cozens

(Coventry SE Labour Party)

'Militant' recently drew attention to a report which, claimed that 600 members of the Metropolitan police Special Branch were being taken off "port-watch" duties to be available for surveillance of Labour Party and trade union members.

This has been denied by Merlyn Rees. Nevertheless, Lord Harris, Minister of State for the Home Office, recently rejected a request in parliament to issue guidelines for the Special Branch to be made more accountable to parliament and to the local council police authorities.

It is a scandal that Labour Ministers refuse to give any real information about the activities of a branch of the police whose activities are mostly directed against the labour movement.

Recent revelations (reported in 'State Research', Bulletin No 4 Feb/Mar 1978) about the activities of the Special Branch in South Australia show the real importance of this matter for the labour movement. The sacking of the elected Labour government in November, 1975, by the Queen's representative, Kerr, and its implications for the labour movement have already been covered ('Militant' no 354).

Politicians

The activities of the Special Branch are just as menacing. In Australia, as in Britain, it was claimed that the Special Branch's activities were under the control of elected politicians.

In a recent official investigation, it was, however, reported that even the elected Premier of South Australia, Mr Don Dunstan, "was prevented from learning of the existence or nature of substantial sections of Special Branch files on political and trade union matters, in spite of specific inquiries by the Premier in October, 1970, July, 1975, and October, 1977." The Special Branch was accused by the Premier of "infringing basic civil liberties and engaging in political surveillance of a most biased kind."

In a manner reminiscent of the Watergate period, the Special Branch had become almost an independent arm of the state, removed from any kind of control

whatsoever. Over thirty years, it had built up 3,000 separate dossiers and 40,000 index cards on private individuals in a State with a population of only 1,250,000.

On the files were all the politicians of the Labour Party at State and Federal level, prominent trade union officials, and any others suspected of being "left" or "radical". An election file showed evidence of surveillance of Labour Party members and MPs at election meetings—but there were no corresponding files on Liberal or Country Party politicians [the conservative party and current national government].

Britain

The judge appointed to investigate these activities stated that the files were based on "the unreasoned assumption that any persons who thought or acted less conservatively than suited the security forces were likely to be potential dangers to the security of the state." In other words the so-called "impartial" forces of law and order took it upon themselves to watch over anyone who they thought posed a danger to the "security of the state" i.e. anyone who, in their view, might threaten the continuation of the capitalist system.

All this is not confined to a distant country. The Police Commissioner for the State, Mr Harold Salisbury, was previously Chief Constable for York, and of the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire. He has since been dismissed for his attempts at a cover-up.

Old habits, it seems, don't die that easy. The Australian Special Branch was set up following the British model after a visit to Australia in 1948 by Sir Percy Sillitoe, head of MI5 from 1946 to 1953. Just like its British counterpart, it too had the task of combatting communist espionage and terrorism, which now includes by implication the organised labour movement.

As a result of the investigations carried out it has been said that the files of the Special Branch have been burnt, except for some which are to be passed on to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. The ASIO, however, was the body that previously "supervised" the activities of the Special Branch.

For the moment the political representatives of capitalism have seen the need to curb the Special Branch's activities before they get completely out of the control of the state machine as a whole. As the investigating judge said, the Special Branch "believed it owed a greater loyalty to itself and its own concept of security than to the government."

In view of the past connections between the British Special Branch and its Australian protégé and the disturbing parallels between their activities, the labour movement should certainly support the call for the Special Branch to be made publicly accountable to parliament.

But the multiplying reports of Special Branch surveillance of trade union and Labour Party activists, together with Harold Wilson's recent admissions that, as prime minister, he did not know fully what was going on in the intelligence services, make it urgent for the Labour Party to instigate its own investigation into the activities of the Special Branch and the other intelligence services.

WORLD BOOKS

CIA and the Labour Movement

—Hirsch and Fletcher..... 95p

CIA Diary—Philip Agee £1.00

The Technology of Political Control

—Ackroyd and others £1.25

The Political Police in Britain—Tony Bunyan £2.50

State and Revolution—Lenin 25p

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Please add 25% to all orders to cover postage and packing

Scottish Council of the Labour Party

Answer Tories, SNP with



Scottish steelworkers lobby BSC; traditional industries are being decimated by Tory policies.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Socialist action

Delegates to this year's conference of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party are meeting under the shadow of a probable early general election.

In Scotland the Party will be faced with a twin threat. On the one hand are the reactionary backwoodsmen of the Tory Party moving further and further to the right, particularly with the viciously reactionary racist programme which the Thatcher leadership has borrowed from the National Front. On the other hand, Labour faces a major threat from the pie-in-the-sky Tartan Tories of the SNP peddling their fairy story of booming Scotland, based on North Sea oil and a reinvigorated independent Scottish capitalist economy.

Inroads

South of the border, the Tories have achieved massive swings of 10% and more in by-elections. Even a swing of some 7%, as at Ilford, would mean on a national scale a Tory parliamentary majority of 75 seats.

Meanwhile, in Scotland the SNP who came second in 33 Labour seats need a swing of 10% to win up to 28 of these seats. Labour leaders agree that in the forthcoming by-election, Garscadden, Glasgow, can by no means be considered a safe seat for Labour. And that's with a majority of over 7,000 at the last general election! Labour's concern is understandable when remembering that the SNP won every council seat in Garscadden in the last district elections.

Scotland's effect on the balance of power at Westminster is crucial, for without the 40-odd Labour MPs from Scotland the Tories would

have a permanent majority in parliament.

Foremost on the minds of delegates, therefore, will be the way in which Labour's traditional working class support can be saved from the Tory and Nationalist poachers.

Cause

The organisations of the movement which have sent resolutions and amendments to conference obviously understand the root cause of the waning support of working people. Fundamentally, it is the general economic crisis and mass unemployment and, more to the point, the pro-capitalist policies of the Labour government.



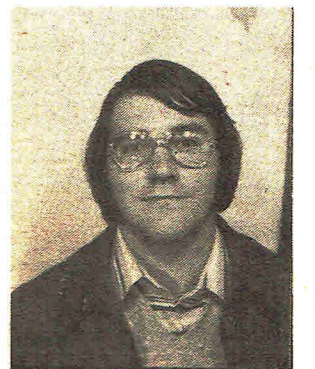
J FERUSON, GMWU, West Stirlingshire CLP (ex-member, SEC)

Unfortunately, the resolutions are not composed until the night before conference; but of all the main resolutions dealing with industry, unemployment and economic policy, there is not one which fully supports government policy.

For example, on the question of wage restraint, the excellent resolution from West Stirling CLP leaves us in no doubt where the Labour Party should stand on this issue:

"Wage restraint serves only the interest of capital and [this party] believes incomes policy can only benefit working people in the context of overall socialist planning."

Again and again, resolutions hammer home that it is



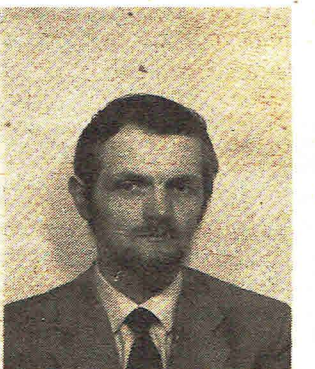
E PHILIPS, CPSA, Provan CLP (ex-member, SEC)

government policy which is the cause of Labour's decline and that only the implementation of socialist measures can defeat the pro-big business policies of both the Tories and the SNP.

The most repeated demand is that the government introduce a 35-hour week and early retirement at 60. This call comes not just from CLPs, but from practically all the major trade unions, including T&G, AUEW, NUR, POEU, EETPU, to mention just a few.

Plan

Most of these demands are in opposition to the scandalous level of unemployment and are put forward as a



D DICK, POEU, Pollock CLP

means of reducing the figure. The call for a 35-hour week and early retirement, however, must be taken together with a more rounded-out programme.

The resolutions from CLPs such as West Stirlingshire, Midlothian, North Edinburgh and Pollock, put forward a programme of socialist demands on which the Labour Party could really campaign, based on the demands for:

- (i) 35-hour week: work sharing without loss of pay.
- (ii) Early retirement at 60;
- (iii) £60 minimum wage now;
- (iv) Institute a useful programme of public works to reduce unemployment;
- (v) Nationalisation of any firm threatening redundancies or closure, under workers' control and management.

Further to these demands, the resolutions go on to call for the implementation of Clause Four, part four, of the Labour Party constitution: in other words, a socialist plan of production.

Hub

In the section on public ownership, the resolutions from W Stirlingshire, Paisley, Pollock, Govan and East Edinburgh CLP correctly point out the failure of government's attempts to prop up industry with huge subsidies and the failure of big business to invest. They point out that 83% of the economy is controlled by 220 major monopolies and that only by taking over this hub of the economy can production be planned for the good of all.

★ Nationalise the 220 monopolies and the Banks



T PATTERSON, EIS, Clackmannan and East Stirlingshire CLP

and Insurance Companies under workers' control and management.

The section on Housing is also critical throughout of government policy, particularly the scandalous 'Green Paper' on housing.

Resolution No 56 from Dundee West CLP excellently explains the causes of the housing problem and lays out a series of demands to solve this sickening situation.

Assembly

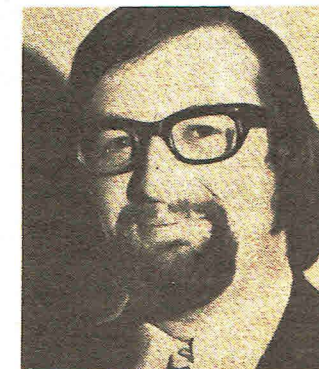
There are only two resolutions on devolution, but this issue will obviously be an important debate. Resolution No 104 from Dundee East CLP, which comes under Party Organisation, calls for the Labour Group in any future assembly to be accountable to SEC of the party. Although not a perfect resolution, it is on the correct lines and should be supported.

It is impossible to go into every resolution, especially when they have yet to be composed. In the other main sections, such as those on Education and Local Government, most resolutions are calling for a reversal of public expenditure cuts and an increase of spending on education and council programmes.

This year's conference could be one where the labour movement unites around a socialist programme and goes forward with confidence to face the approaching battles.

By Phil McGhee

(Edinburgh N CLP)



P MCGHEE, NUPE, North Edinburgh CLP (Member, Edinburgh District Council)

Why we are standing for S.E.C.

We are standing for the Scottish Executive of the Labour Party, Constituency Section, on the basis of our support for the ideas and programme of the 'Militant'.

This year, with the prospect of an early general election, the SEC should play a crucial role in giving the party a lead. With the SNP thirsting for blood, and the Thatcherite Tories spewing forth ever more reactionary policies, it is crucial that Scottish Labour has the policies to fight this twin-pronged attack.

However, we must understand why Scotland, such a traditional Labour

stronghold, is threatened by the Nationalists and the Tories. It is, in our opinion, precisely the policies of the present Labour government which have given credence to the 'Tartan Tory' Nationalists.

Policies of wage restraint and public expenditure cuts have meant a meteoric fall in living standards for workers all over Britain. Meanwhile unemployment has reached the catastrophic figure of 200,000 in Scotland—the highest figure since the 1930s!

In attempting to use capitalist measures to deal with a capitalist crisis, our

government has succumbed to the traditional economic ideology of the treasury Tories, but as By-election results have indicated, a widespread disillusionment with Labour among working class voters. In a general election, this would mean a massive Tory majority at Westminster, and a huge swing to the SNP in Scotland.

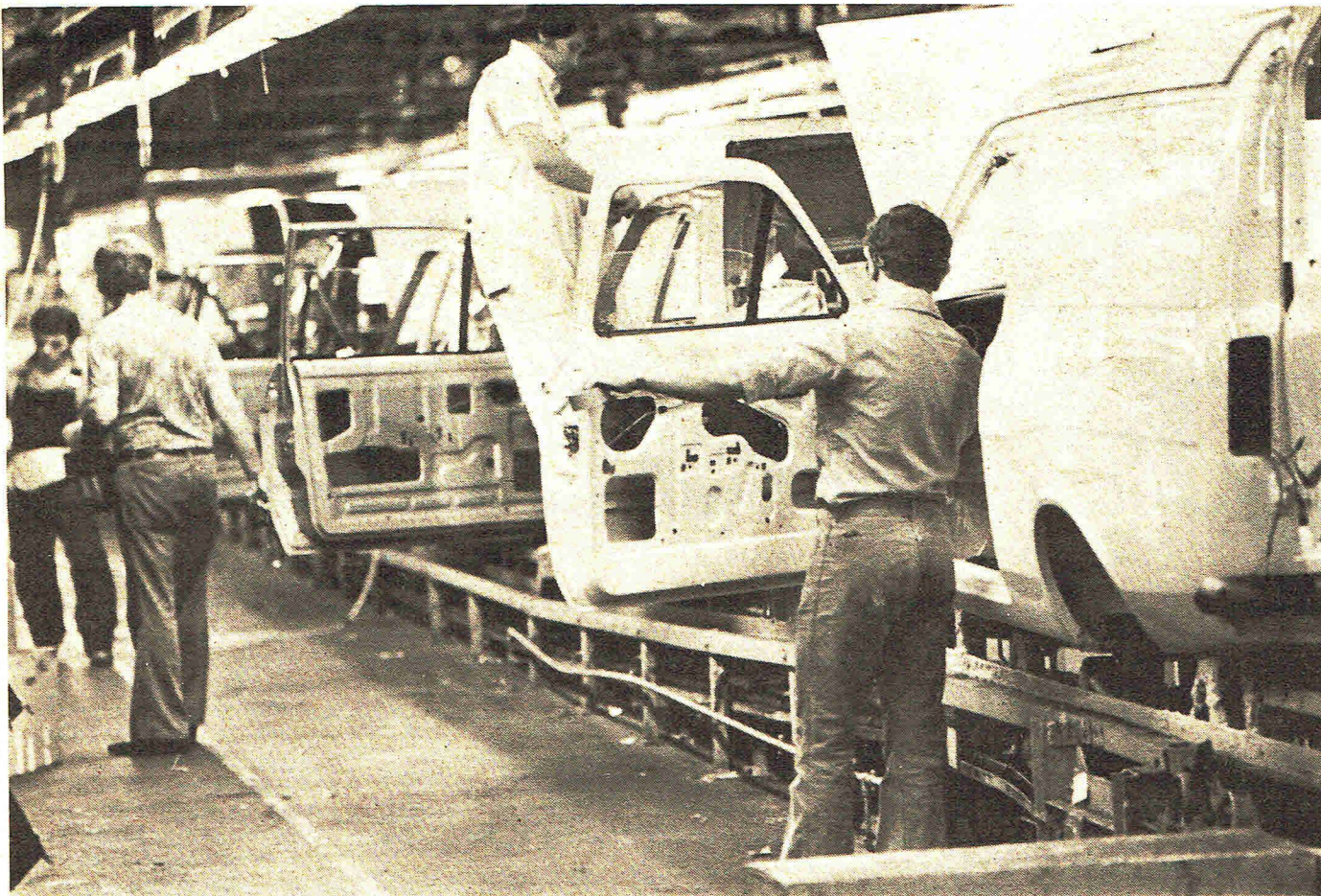
British workers have sacrificed enough for big business. The time has come to change course. NOW!

Last year, the SEC showed initiative by supporting the firemen's strike. On the whole, however, the SEC has

failed to play a prominent role in opposing the Tory policies of the Labour government, despite last year's conference decisions to support socialist measures to deal with unemployment and falling living standards. Only an SEC which supports a socialist programme, as outlined in the resolution from Mid-Lothian CLP calling for support for the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment, and has the will to campaign on these demands within the labour movement can hope to reverse the party's declining support in Scotland.

If elected, we would fight for the SEC to grasp the nettle, and campaign on a programme of socialist demands, which are the only ones capable of fundamentally changing society.

We also call on delegates to support the following left-wing SEC candidates: M Gordon, West Renfrewshire CLP; G Galloway, Dundee West CLP; D Brown, East Edinburgh CLP; B McGeechan, Kilmarnock CLP; G Brown, South Edinburgh CLP.



Broken ribs are a pleasant break from work on the track

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

No Workers' haven here!

After reading an article by a Ford worker in 'Militant' not long ago, Tony Scivetti was prompted to think a little about his own experiences on the line at Dagenham.

Ordinarily, I would not have time or inclination to sit and think, let alone write, about working for Fords. From the time you leave home for work it is a full twelve hours before you return. Working the normal eight hour shift, plus overtime, travelling from East Ham and back, there is very little time for anything.

Three weeks ago I fell on the Fiesta line and fractured two ribs. Now I have plenty of time to pause and really think about things. It is a rare luxury, a freedom often denied to the modern working man. It cannot be any other way when his chief pre-occupation is providing for himself and his family.

When you have never worked in a factory before you must be prepared for a few shocks. Coming straight from

a lowly paid office job as I did just under a year ago, I imagined that working for Fords would give me the chance of a better living.

I told myself the unions had the place sown up—high wages, long holidays, paid overtime. Get a union card and nobody could push you around! Such was the myth.

Probation

Once at Fords, I soon learned that this was no workers' haven. Among two and a half thousand other workers on that first night shift I felt lost and alone. They gave me a job to learn and a wandering 'C' grade man to get me out of trouble the first couple of days and after that I was on my own.

The first four weeks are a breaking-in period, literally. You are strictly on probation and frightened to put a foot out of line. The work comes hard. You are not used to it and very soon you develop all the aches that come with any prolonged physical strain. Cuts, sores, splinters and bruises, all these are suffered silently for fear of losing the job.

As soon as you master one job they find you another, and it's all new again and you are sweating just as freely as on your very first day. You do not yet know all the short cuts and you really have to sweat to keep up, to stay up the line. And all the time you never once answer back, you pay no attention to the old hands who tell you different, because you are afraid and you do not know any better. Because you have two small kids, maybe, and a mortgage and rates and final demands.

Then when you think you have made the grade and you have made your peace with the building society chief and the gas board and maybe one or two others, you are laid off. You never met this situation before. You spend three

hours the next morning queueing obediently at the Social Security offices and fill some forms, and they send you £5 and sixpence, and Monday you are back at work again.

The following week, another lay off and you are back at the DHSS, and you are angry because you are a full time Ford employee but the government must feed your family. Some of the lads on the shop floor get together and have a protest, and the union sits by and watches and waits.

There is a strike and it splits the plant right down the middle. The men want to work. We all want to work! But there is no work only lay off if we go back inside. So we man the picket lines and those inside stay put and get paid for doing nothing, and the union stands by waiting and watching.

The men on the picket line grow very bitter and more determined and the mood among the men inside is uneasy and gives way to alarm at the success of the strike. They are easy prey for management and union officialdom looking on.

Now the unions step in with compromise and empty deals and we are back at work. But there are deep wounds and many men leave to find some better job.

No Escape

“And so it goes on, not just a routine job but a daily struggle for survival. Because the enemy is on all fronts, all around us. It is not management, the TUC or the Government but the very system itself which makes each of us a competitor seeking as big a share as we can get.

No matter where you land in the system you have to keep jogging, whether in an office or at Fords. It makes no difference. No difference at all.”

“FREE” PRESS

Freedom of the press? A recent interview with Victor Matthews, chief executive of Trafalgar House and chairman of Express Newspapers (formerly Beaverbrook Newspapers), reveals just what the big capitalist proprietors mean by “freedom of the press”.

Last year Trafalgar House bought up Beaverbrook Newspapers for £13.6 million, and apart from trying to boost the circulation of the right-wing 'Daily Express', has plans for a new evening daily and a new Sunday paper.

“What I am about,” Matthews told 'The Sunday Telegraph' (5 March), “is management, successful management.”

Tight Grip

“Matthews' hold on 'Express' expenditure remains tight as does his grip on editorial policy. He has already indicated that he would not wish to emulate the 'Washington Post' in exposing the Watergate affair—a view which is anathema to many in Fleet Street.

Q: Do you still hold to your views on Watergate?

A: Yes. Look at the US today. There are other ways of doing things.

Q: You wouldn't have printed the Leyland slush fund story?

A: Certainly not. And God help an editor of mine who tried to. I would have gone to the government.

Q: Will you support the Tory party at the next election?

A: We will support any party that stands for capitalism and private enterprise. So the answer is yes. Unless another party appears.

Q: Have you met James Callaghan since you acquired the 'Express'?

A: No.

Q: And Margaret Thatcher?

A: Yes, several times. She represents my idea of the Tory party.

Matthews, as this exchange indicates, is not, by nature, a devious man. In his own words, “I am a builder. I am trying to rebuild Beaverbrook.”

What further comment is needed?

Next week: why the 'Daily Mirror' inclines to the left.

Save our Services

Andrew Glynn reviews the Government's White Paper on public spending.

After the cuts of the past three years, many Labour Party members looked forward to a major expansion of the public services in the late 'Seventies, in line with the Manifesto promises. The government's public spending White Paper, published in the middle of January, has dashed these hopes.

Broadly speaking, current expenditure, on keeping the health and education services going and on social benefits, is planned to rise in line with 'demographic factors'—the number of people needing these services and benefits. Meanwhile, capital expenditure on new hospitals, schools, roads, etc. will hardly grow from its present, slashed level.

Overall, real public spending will rise at about 2% per year till 1980, but this will rule out practically any improvement in services, and with staff having to cope in older and older buildings in many sectors, further deterioration is inevitable.

Here are some 'highlights' of this wretched document.

★ In 1981 total investment by the public sector will be only three quarters of the level of 1973; increases between now and 1981 will make up for only about one sixth of the cuts made up to now.

★ Subsidies made by the government to hold down the prices of food, goods and services provided by the nationalised industries, housing, etc. will be cut by a further £500 million from the present level and by 1981 will be only slightly above one half of the 1974 level.

★ Local authority capital expenditure on housing in 1981 will be more than 10% below the 1974 level.

★ School building in 1981 will be less than one third of the level of 1972.

★ Hospital building in 1981 will be two thirds of the level of 1972.

★ Despite an increase in number of teachers employed of 9,500 as compared with previous plans, the total number will still fall by 21,000 between 1978 and 1981. So much of the potential benefit of falling numbers of school children in reducing class sizes will be lost.

★ Debt interest in 1981 will be double the 1974 level, and about three times the level of spending on school and hospital building.

No less horrifying than these details from the document, are the underlying assumptions on which it is written. For the government is planning for growth in the economy up to 1981 of no more than 3½% a year. Not that this isn't an improvement on the last four years when there's been virtually no growth at all.

But this should not hide the fact that the government is quite openly budgeting for mass unemployment on into the 'Eighties. The White Paper suggests that those receiving unemployment benefit will fall from 710,000 this year to 510,000 in 1981. What it never makes clear is how much of this fall is due to a fall in the total number out of work, or to fewer of those unemployed being eligible.

Any conclusion from those figures that unemployment will fall by almost a third would be quite wrong. With output only growing ¼% faster than capacity (according to the government's estimate of 3% capacity growth), and with current excess capacity of around 20% (according to surveys of industrial capacity), it would take twenty years to reduce unemployment by one half.

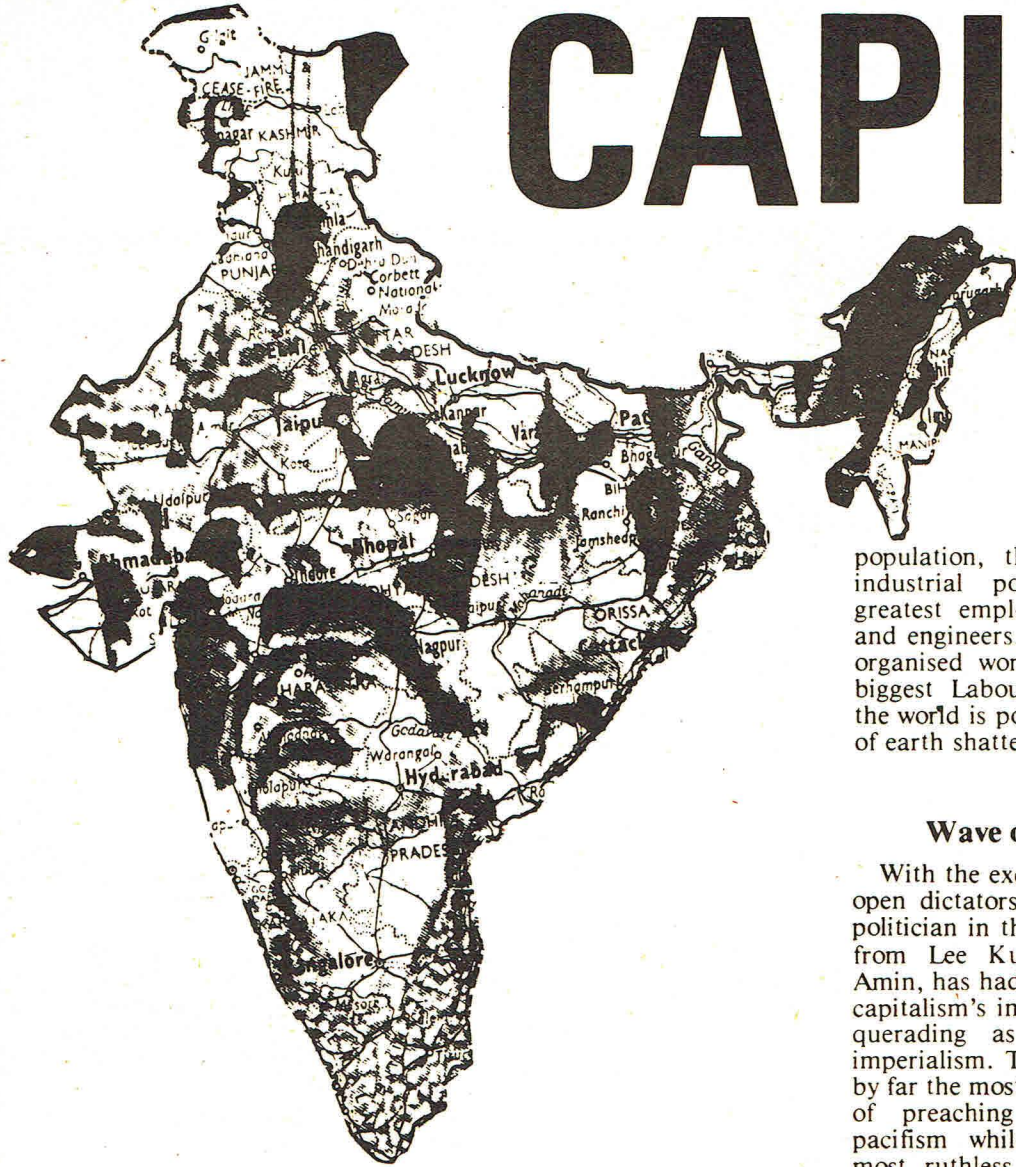
No more obvious example of the bankruptcy of the government's policies is imaginable. Any programme for regaining full employment rapidly must include a programme of public works to ensure the public services have up-to-date facilities.

But without real control of the economy, and without fitting the plan for public spending in a socialist plan for the expansion of the whole economy, any gains in reduced unemployment would soon be wiped out as firms took advantage of higher demand to restore profits to the level investors are demanding.

That is why the campaign against the Labour government's cuts cannot be separated from campaign to implement a socialist economic programme.

CAPITALIST IN

India is in the grip of a pre
With 20 million workers, o
in the world is poised on the



There could be no clearer example of the catastrophic effects on the colonial world of the capitalist economic crisis than the Indian sub-continent. Up until three years ago the rulers of its 750 million population could boast of a nominally civilian regime in Pakistan, a liberated Bangladesh, a long democratic tradition in Sri Lanka, and a showpiece of parliamentary government in India. Since then there have been four military coups in Bangladesh; a naked military dictatorship rules Pakistan; and a Presidential bonapartist regime is being erected in Sri Lanka; while in India we have seen already both the imposition and the overthrow of a bonapartist dictatorship.

Victim of Crisis

Do-gooders love to wring their hands lamenting the miseries of India. But it is not natural scarcity that condemns 260 million people to poverty, 22 million to unemployment (excluding the hundreds of millions of under-employed), and 200 million to illiteracy. India is rich in precious minerals, oil and agricultural potential. For while the charity brigades hawk around their begging bowls, the Indian banks are sitting on an embarrassing accumulation of \$5½ billion which cannot be spent! And while 25% of the population are starving, there are 20 million tonnes of surplus grain rotting in the warehouses! A hundred million acres of cultivable land lie waste or fallow. The people have no money and the capitalists will not invest. India is no natural desert, but the first and weakest victim of the disease afflicting the entire capitalist world.

All these contradictions have become further aggravated. While half the population earn less than the official poverty line of 60 Rupees (£4) a month, the real incomes of the rural masses who make up more than 80% of the population have fallen over the last fifteen years. In the last ten years, while capital grew by

over 70%, registered unemployment quadrupled and the peasants' debts trebled. Industry is crippled by the power shortage, and agriculture by lack of irrigation. But monopolies like Birla and Tatas which have amassed huge profits through parasitic speculation, have refused to invest. The population is growing by 2.3%, but productivity by only 1%. Iron and steel are currently working at 45% of capacity, and some sectors of light engineering at 23.6%.

These cold statistics mask a horrifying reality, an animal existence for hundreds of millions starving in the hovels and shanty-towns. But the nightmare is getting worse. The 1974-6 world slump led to the closure of one of India's three car assembly plants, and the EEC quota restrictions have ruined the textile and engineering export trade. Now the threat of a protectionist trade war between the big powers, and a new recession, spell disaster.

No wonder India's former precarious stability has gone. After 30 years in power, the the Indian capitalist class has proved incapable of resolving a single one of the tasks of dragging India out of the Middle Ages. Not urbanisation and industrialisation, nor the break-up of the landed estates, nor mass education, nor population control and medical care, nor protection from epidemics and natural disasters, nor an end to mass vagrancy and crime, nor the sweeping away of caste oppression, religious persecution, and the subordination of tribal populations.

Giant Awakens

The overthrow of Congress just a year ago showed the masses' determination to avenge the blows of emergency rule and seize hold of their own destiny. India is in the grip of a pre-revolutionary social ferment. Its reverberations could shake the whole world. For all its underdevelopment, by sheer size India is a giant: the second biggest nation on Earth, by

population, the world's tenth industrial power, the third greatest employer of scientists and engineers. With 20 million organised workers, one of the biggest Labour Movements in the world is poised on the brink of earth shattering events.

Wave of Revolt

With the exception of certain open dictators, every capitalist politician in the colonial world, from Lee Kuan Yew to Idi Amin, has had to pay tribute to capitalism's impotence by masquerading as an enemy of imperialism. The Gandhis were by far the most skilled at the art of preaching socialism and pacifism while practising the most ruthless and violent exploitation. But by the early 1970's, faced with an eruption of all the accumulated tensions in a

and her left balanced on the Communist Party of India. At the dictates of its masters in Moscow, the CPI had for twenty years grovelled before Congress, proclaiming it a "progressive" and "anti-imperialist" party. Hence, even under Congress' emergency rule the CPI deafened the workers with shrill appeals for restraint and sacrifice "in the national interest". The workers were disarmed and betrayed.

A year ago, when Indira Gandhi gambled on a rigged election to strengthen her authority, she was swept from power in a tidal wave of revolt. The CPI too got its just deserts in a humiliating defeat. It was not only the workers who were bitter. The deepest reaches of the desperate and wretched, for so long politically exploited by the cynics of Congress, had risen to their feet. Traditionally, the

Minister Morarji Desai was leader of the Syndicate which split away from Congress in protest at the nationalisation of the banks, and is himself a big capitalist. Finance Minister Patel was a leader of the reactionary Big-Business Party, Swatantra. Foreign Minister Vajpayee, now engaged in diplomatic negotiations with Pakistan, was until recently stirring up anti-Muslim pogroms as a leader of the rabid Hindu communalist party Jana Sangh, with its sinister paramilitary wing the RSS.

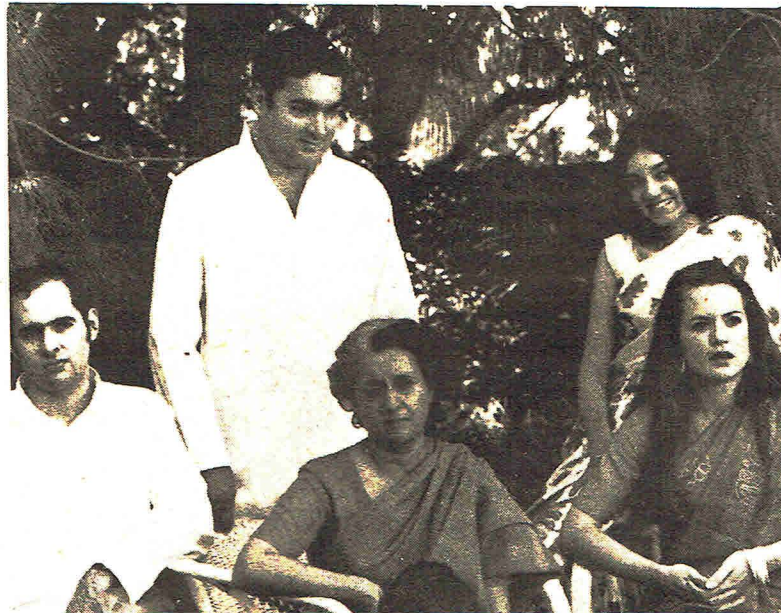
The "strong man" at the Home Ministry is Charan Chowdhury Singh, of the extreme right-wing BLD party which has its base among the rich Jat peasants of the North. The Deputy Prime Minister Jagjivan Ram, who is paraded around as the Government's tame "pet harijan", is another rich landowner and a leader of the "Congress for Democracy", his hands stained with the blood of the emergency, in which he was an accomplice to the bitter end.

The balance of forces within Janata is indicated by the allocation of its parliamentary seats. The Jana Sangh has 91 MPs, the BLD 79, the Congress Syndicate 56...and the Socialists 30! What is more, the Jana Sangh and the BLD have divided up between them all the Janata state chief Ministries. The Jana Sangh and RSS are steadily taking over the party apparatus. After a minor coup they have installed a corrupt gangster government in Madhya Pradesh. They even succeeded in preventing the Prime Minister from addressing a rally in his own home town, Bombay!

Cold statistics mask a horrifying reality, an animal existence for hundreds of millions starving in the hovels and shanty towns.

Why then did these enemies of the workers and poor peasants suddenly become apostles of democracy? To answer that, we must look back to the proclamation of the emergency. Obviously the dictatorship was welcomed by the monopolies as a golden chapter of unbridled profiteering. But it had not been proclaimed by their explicit choice. It was a daring putsch, executed by Indira Gandhi following the Allahabad judgement primarily not to save capitalism but to save her own personal neck as capitalism's leader. Even her own cabinet was never consulted about it!

The ruling class accepted it as a fait accompli. But they were uneasy at entrusting their fate to an unstable and corrupt clique. Gandhi's friends and family embezzled millions of rupees to line their pockets in banking



The clique that ruled India: Mrs Gandhi, her son and friends.

revolutionary upsurge in West Bengal, class struggle throughout India, and the revival of national-separatist trends, Indira Gandhi resorted increasingly to use of draconian powers such as the dreaded "Maintenance of Internal Security Act", the assassination squads of her son Sanjay's "Indian Youth Congress", and the ferocious squads of paramilitary security forces numbering a staggering 600,000 armed police, including her innocently-named personal elite force, the "Research and Analysis Wing." The jailing of 60,000 of the 2 million striking railway workers in the historic 1974 strike, revealed the extent to which Congress had already degenerated into a dictatorial regime with purely formal parliamentary trappings.

Her prestige fading, and her base in Congress crumbling under the blow of the Allahabad court ruling convicting her of electoral malpractices and disqualifying her from public office, Indira Gandhi imposed a state of emergency. The workers were ground under the jackboot. It was a classic bonapartist regime of victimisations, wage cuts, murder, torture and imprisonment. Perching astride the security forces, the dictator's right elbow rested on the thugs of the Youth Congress

solid bedrock of Congress support, the lowest castes and the religious minorities totalling well over 200 millions, wrought their revenge for the excesses from which they had suffered worst of all. The forced sterilisation campaign in particular had been a nightmare of Gestapo raids, brutally cutting the lifeblood of the poorest villages, especially in the Northern States, a police rampage, a pogrom against the harijans ("untouchables") and slum-dwellers, the landless and the Muslims—to whom the operation constituted a gross religious insult. Over ten million were sterilised—many of them several times over! These hitherto mute oppressed changed the course of Indian history.

But who gained the power? The Janata ("People's") Party which was hastily scrambled together within two days of the announcement of elections in January 1977, is a jumbled mish-mash of parties, lobbies and pressure-groups. Despite its adornment with members of the Socialist Party, notably George Fernandes the former railwaymen's leader who has now won the grudging approval of businessmen, it is nevertheless a coalition of undisguised representatives of the ruling classes in town and country. Prime

INDIA FALLS APART

...revolutionary social ferment...
...one of the biggest labour movements
...on the brink of earth-shattering events.

The first of two articles
by Roger Silverman

Part II on the role of the Marxist Party
will be in issue No 399 (MARCH 31)

rackets and Sanjay Gandhi's fraudulent Maruti car project. They did not trust the narrow Gandhi clique to avoid the crude and dangerous blunders like the sterilisation campaign, which threw the previously docile oppressed into revolt. Above all, they feared the danger of new left lurches under the momentum of Indira's own demagoguery, exceeding even the sensitive line reached with the nationalisation of the banks in 1969. They feared that without the checks and balances of a parliament, a 'free' Press and an independent judiciary they would be unable to curb any impulses to new excesses.

They wanted a dictatorship of their own choice, with proper preparation and timing, with as stable a social base as possible, under a leader more sensitive to the collective pressure of their entire class.

Naturally the last thing they wanted was to unleash the dogs of revolution by fighting the regime. But once elections had been called, sensing the scale of popular resentment, and fearing what a newly reinforced Gandhi regime might do, all those politicians excluded from the ruling clique and cheated of the fruits of office, banded together in order to conjure up in the nick of time an alternative capitalist party which could siphon off the tide of popular outrage into safe channels.

Workers Massacred

Their reasons for doing this were eloquently revealed by a survey of top Janata leaders conducted by the Indian weekly "Sunday". Asked what would have happened if elections had not been called and the Gandhi regime had stayed in power, they gave answers ranging from popular resistance and the overthrow of Indira, to chaos, violence, total disorder, and civil war!

They performed exactly the same conjuring trick as Suarez of Spain or Karamanlis of Greece. They too, now pose as democrats, but in the past they were respectively a Fascist youth leader and a semi-bonapartist dictator! Having dismantled the repressive machinery of one narrow faction of the ruling class, they are using the Shah Commission and other public tribunals to help restore power to the whole class, in an operation reminiscent of the Watergate episode in the USA.

The electoral victory of Janata nevertheless gave a tremendous boost to the masses' confidence, and emboldened them to move into action on a scale unprecedented in history. Even the scoundrels of Janata have been carried along on the crest of the wave, gritting their teeth and biding their time until the flood ebbs.

But what then? Every day provides new evidence of Janata's real intentions. Under a government still dutifully prattling about civil rights, so far at

least seven times police have opened fire on crowds of unarmed workers on strike. At the Swadeshi Cotton Mills in Kanpur (Militant 17 February) some 300 workers were massacred and their bodies secretly dumped in the Ganges. These were workers demanding nothing more than the backpay due to them! Women and children were shot dead alongside miners at the Rajahara mines. Workers have been killed at Dhanbad ISCO factory, Bokaro, Sahibabad, Mukund (Bombay) and Lucknow. According to the Government's own figures, these incidents have resulted in 24 deaths and hundreds wounded.

When it comes to the countryside, things have reached almost to the point of civil war in certain areas. A certain token number of landless harijans had been allocated portions of waste land under old cosmetic Congress legislation. Under the Janata Raj, landlords have mobilised armies of thugs to drive them off their lawfully occupied land. Where this has led to physical clashes, the police have again opened fire on harijans demanding only their legal rights! Some 50 harijans have been shot in Madhya Pradesh. In Uttar Pradesh, at least twenty were killed in one of a rash of religious pogroms, when Hindus staged a provocative procession through a Muslim ghetto.

In deference to the Hindu bigots of the Jana Sangh, the new government has instituted a strict censorship of the Press, television, films and school textbooks. A guide at the Gandhi Ashram (a museum) was twice beaten up for quoting from Morarji Desai's autobiography the fact that Gandhi's assassin was an RSS member, only to be sacked for insolence and told that Desai has since withdrawn this allegation!

The Janata Government has dismantled the emergency laws such as MISA only to replace them with new versions, such as the draconian Preventive Detention Act. In many states,

so-called "mini-MISAs" have been introduced. Under these laws, 20,000 out of the 80,000 striking teachers of Uttar Pradesh have been thrown into jail! The 78th birthday of Home Minister Charan Singh was even celebrated as "Kisan Day" (Peasant Day) with the authorities packing thousands of peasants into trucks to attend his rally! Such vulgar acts show the comic-opera character of this corrupt government. It is a farcical caricature of the Congress government it replaced, even down to such details as the cover up of the scandalous racketeering of the present Prime Minister's son.

Policies Improvised

The Janata government is fiddling while India burns. Its economic policies constitute nothing but appeasement of the rich peasant "kulak" lobby of Charan Singh's BLD. It has resolved to divert 40% of investible resources to agriculture, in a vain attempt to funnel purchasing power into the poverty stricken countryside. It has even embarked upon a utopian reactionary scheme to reserve the production of 500 identified commodities to antiquated and backward small-scale manufacture. Weaving, footwear and soap will henceforth have to be manufactured in rural "cottage industries"! This is an obstinate attempt to flout the law of uneven and combined development. It cannot work in a market economy and is in any case grossly inefficient and inflationary.

Certain limitations have been put on the multinational corporations—which own assets worth Rs 17.9 billion. These have led to the expulsion of IBM and Coca Cola. But the top Indian monopolies have been promised "a certain measure of growth".

These hastily improvised policies are as eccentric and irrelevant to the masses, crying out for decisive action, as the other notorious measures of the

Janata government, which are determined by nothing other than the crankish fads of Morarji Desai. In a fine moral gesture he has banned the export of frogs' legs. He has staked his career on prohibition although his Finance Minister complains that it would cost Rs 50 billion in lost revenue. By way of an alternative to alcohol he never tires of preaching the consumption of a daily glass of one's own urine as a health tonic. At least one Minister cannot follow Cabinet discussions because of the Jana Sangh's insistence that all business be conducted in Hindi! The entire Janata government is a monument to the superstition and hollowness of the Indian ruling class.

Meanwhile, the masses are taking matters into their own hands. Lenin described the three objective conditions for revolution. Rarely in world history can these conditions have been so brilliantly fulfilled as in India today.

Rulers Split

First, he pointed to a split in the ruling class. Revolution starts at the top. Through its hired soothsayers and clairvoyants, the ruling class is the first to see the abyss ahead, and splits into factions peddling their own panaceas and searching for scapegoats.

The Indian ruling class is shattered into fragments! Congress, first hit by the defections in 1969, suffered the mortal blow of the 'Congress for Democracy' split last year. Then after the Chavan-Reddi Congress leadership with the backing of the Party machine deposed Indira Gandhi, she led a new splinter group—the Congress (C) which has made sweeping gains in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. There are also two local Congress splits.

Meanwhile, the Janata Party too is disintegrating back into its component parts, with Jana Sangh's growing predominance and resulting strains on the Socialist party which is likely soon to find itself vomited out. In other words, the dialectic of history has played a dirty trick on the Indian capitalists. After

30 years of unchallenged monolithic one-party rule, both at the centre and with few brief exceptions in the states, it faces now the prospect of a succession of fragile unstable coalitions, short-term alliances founded on the shifting quicksands of parliamentary intrigue. With the threat of "Street campaigns" by Indira as she smarts under the blows of the Shah Commission, there is almost open warfare between the rival factions.

Secondly, the working class must be determined at whatever cost to fight for its needs. And in the teeth of the kind of police savagery described above, India is gripped in the convulsions of strikes, gheraos, (factory sieges), bandhs (token general strikes), and hartals (full general strikes and street demonstrations). Factories and offices are festooned with red flags, pickets and placards. In Bombay, at any one moment at least 30% of the factories are shut due to strikes or lockouts. Only the general slump of industry is softening the impact of these strikes on the bosses.

In Uttah Pradesh 80,000 teachers are on strike. And in Maharashtra, one million state employees stayed out on strike for eight weeks. (Militant 17 February). No small strike even by Indian standards, this was the most important in Indian history alongside the 1974 railwaymen's strike. It transcended all the age-old barriers of caste, language, craft, grade and sex. In January four million other workers came out in solidarity. On top of this, the phenomenal growth of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and its smashing electoral victories in West Bengal and Tripura show the political temper of the masses.

Middle Layers

Thirdly, the middle classes of town and country must at least be neutral in the battle between the two major class antagonists. But in India they are overwhelmingly hostile to the Establishment! Never has there been such a movement of the harijans, the landless peasants and the oppressed in the countryside. Meanwhile, an important feature of the strike wave has been the general sympathy for the workers among the middle class. The peasants helped to feed the Maharashtra strikers, the shopkeepers gave credit, and at Kanpur it was the local shopkeepers and even the factory security officials who refuted the police lies alleging that "only" 12 workers had been killed.

Only one more factor is needed to change society: a revolutionary party which has earned the trust of the masses and is capable of harnessing their energies. We will analyse in detail the policies of the CPI[M] which has emerged as the major party of the working class, to determine to what extent it can play that role.



Slums in Bangalore, India's fastest-growing industrial centre.

USA

US Miners defy Coal Bosses - and Carter

The veil of prosperity, class harmony and apathy towards the labour movement is being torn away by the American coal miners to reveal another side of American life—economic crisis, financial insecurity and a ruthless bosses' state prepared to use any methods, to protect profits at the workers' expense.

The miners' strike, the most significant industrial battle here for decades, has also revealed the latent militancy of the American workers, their determination to fight, their understanding of the power of workers' unity and the need for class solidarity.

It is a crushing answer to the sceptics who wrote off the American workers as a force to change society, and a vindication of the Marxist perspective that as economic crisis forces the bosses to attack workers' living stand-

ards and take back previous gains, the workers will turn to their trade union organisations to fight back.

Just before they began their nationwide strike three months ago, the coal companies, the press, and even some officials of the union itself were writing the epitaph of the United Mine Workers of America.

Effect

The doomsayers pointed to the declining share of unionised coal production, rivalries within the United Mine Workers leadership, and the huge stockpiles that coal users had built up in anticipation of the strike. They saw the weakness of the UMW in the challenge to its leadership not only from within the union, but from the Teamsters' and other unions, and from its rank and file.

The shrinking share of the union's production of coal

went from 82% in 1951 under UMW contracts, to less than 52% in 1977. At the beginning of the strike on December 6th, 1977, only 41 per cent of production was curtailed, but now the US Department of Energy estimates that this figure has risen to 75 per cent—half of the non-union production and almost all of the union production.

After three months of one of the most militant strikes in recent labour history, a resounding answer has come forward from the union's rank and file. Yes, the union is alive and kicking.

As the strike moved into its third month, it was clear that the miners' resolve—expressed mainly in the struggle to shut down non-union production—was firmer than either the coal companies or the union officials believed.

The self-reliant perseverance of the miners in the face of great hardships imposed by

a bitterly cold, harsh winter, evaporated the huge stockpiles of coal that had been the source of such arrogant complacency by the companies.

The miners' united action—braving scabs' bullets and police clubs—succeeded in shutting off half the supply of non-union coal that the companies were relying on to undermine the strikes' effectiveness. The shutdown of non-union mines by roving pickets had been critical in shifting the initiative in the strike to the miners.

Sell-out

Just as the momentum was shifting, Arnold Miller, president of UMW, struck a deal with the coal companies. These companies are almost all owned by the big steel and oil companies, and the tentative contract read like the original bargaining proposal of the United States Steel Co.

which, as a large coal operator, has taken the lead in attempting to chastise the union. The rank and file response was swift and sure.

In confrontation with union leaders, demonstrations, mass meetings, rallies, car caravans, and a tidal wave of telegrams to the UMW Washington, DC headquarters showed the reaction of the strikers clearly: "No way!"

The predominant feeling among the rank and file at that point was "We've come too far to settle for a sellout now." There was not a single reported expression of rank and file support for the proposed contract.

The effectiveness of the action is due to the determination of people with their backs to the wall, who have learned from years of practice how to survive a long strike.

A striking miner up from West Virginia to solicit aid in the New York area, told us at a meeting where tinned food and clothing was collected, that they earn \$63 a day, but shutdowns over safety matters bring this sum to about \$10,000 per year income. They had saved up their money for a long time, expecting this strike, and determined to weather it out.

With the strike on, the men learned to cook while their wives went out to work, and some were able to get temporary work. Some owners of non-unionised mines, he said, are willing to pay \$100 a day in wages, provided the workers stay out of the union.

Banks and other businesses in the coal areas are usually willing to defer payments owed by strikers because, as one miner put it, "the bank doesn't want a used car lot down there."

Miners have a strong mountain ethic of sharing in times of scarcity, so they had worked overtime and saved, and put up more canned vegetables to be shared.

As pressures increased upon President Carter to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act, a break in the stonewalling of BCOA operators appeared.

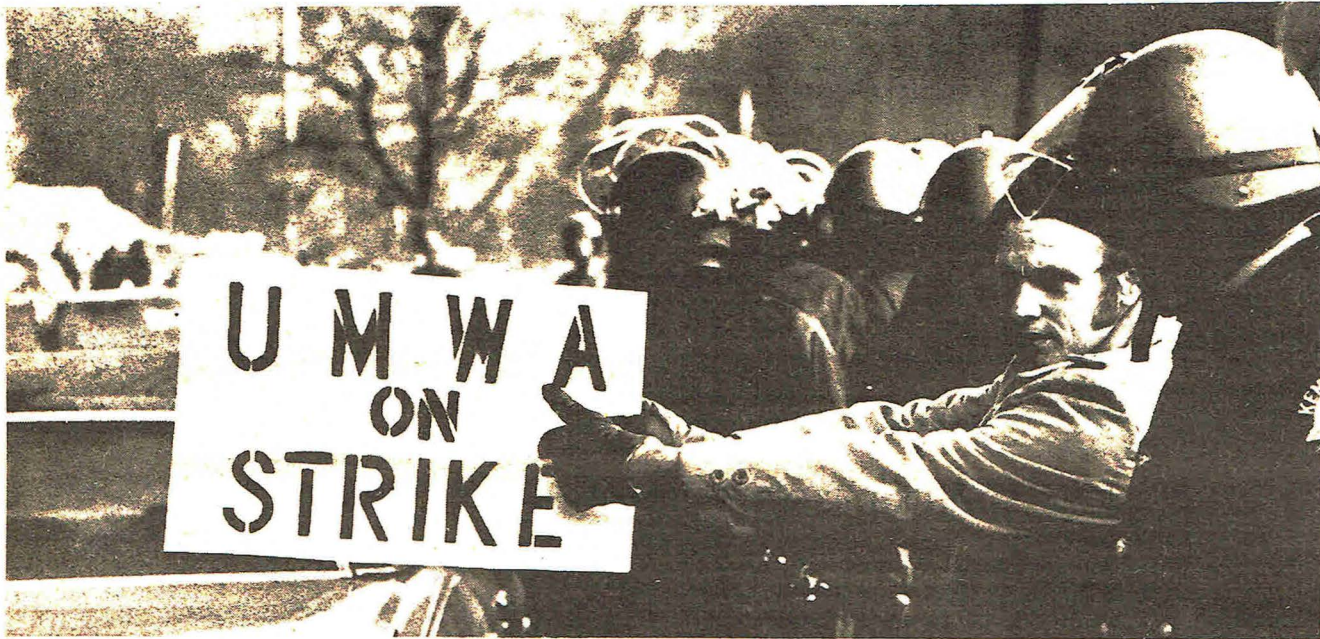
Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co. made a separate agreement with Arnold Miller's negotiation team. Bituminous Coal Operators, made up of steel and oil companies, refused to accept it as a model for an industrial settlement. However, they did agree to resume negotiations, and President Carter heaved a sigh of relief.

Both he and key Congressmen of both parties reiterated that a voluntary settlement would be preferable to any of several unpromising options for government compulsion to end the strike.

Penalties

Well they knew that invoking the Taft-Hartley Act would do them no good. Not one miner would return to work, since Taft-Hartley would be sending them back to work under the conditions of their old contract of 1974 for another 80 days.

The only issue which sep-



State troopers confront UMW picket

Unions give Support

The miners, their wives and families are prepared for a long and bitter struggle.

But they were also getting help from friends. District 29 has set up a relief fund to pay utility bills for those threatened with cut-offs. In Beckley, West Virginia, 14 doctors as well as other medical personnel, have set up a free clinic two evenings a week.

Unionists all over the country began to dig deep to aid the strikers. Six local United Electric [UE] presidents in Western Pennsylvania issued a statement of support which said: "The UE rank and file understands that defeat for the miners will encourage other employers to take on their workers."

"We believe it is time to learn a lesson from the past when great industrial unions fought side-by-side against corporate attacks and apply this same unity in the face of new and more dangerous assaults on the conditions of working people."

Blacking

Benefit concerts and rallies, demonstrations in Pittsburgh before US Steel's building, and a "labour plan of action" which included stopping the movement of non-union coal to power plants followed. A committee of 30 union sponsors called on steelworkers, railroad workers, teamsters, bargeworkers, and power plant workers to respect

UMW pickets and not to move any non-union coal for the strike's duration.

Money was collected at plant gates, and caravans of food and warm winter clothing were sent to the miners by UE. Support came from Los Angeles Steel workers who stated: "It was this great union [the UMW] which gave the impetus to the founding of our United Steelworkers of America, as well as other unions in the country. We can now show our appreciation and gratitude when the UMW is locked in a fierce struggle against the coal barons."

In addition to steelworkers, the United Auto Workers have just contributed about \$2m [£1m] to the special relief fund, and the Auto Union

locals backed up resolutions of support with contributions of food and money. The Chicago chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Chicago Federation of Labour, AFL-CIO, adopted support resolutions.

Historic

This historic struggle is marking out the battle-lines between US labour and the bosses. The mine-owners have assembled Congress, the President and the law on their side. But the miners have behind them the might of organised labour. This will be the decisive weapon in winning this strike.

What's at Stake

What are the issues that make the mineworkers declare "We have nothing to lose now and everything to gain"?

1] The union's comprehensive health plan that went bankrupt last June. The operators had said this was due to last year's wildcat strikes. They want to lower their costs by reducing medical and retirement benefits—great gains won 30 years ago.

2] The coal operators are determined to get a no-strike clause into the new contract. This follows in the footsteps of the Steelworkers' Union with its ENA [no strike] agreement in its union contract. The miners are determined to defend their right to strike over unsettled grievances. For this operators want strikers fined \$22 a day. Miners know their strength is in unity and have raised respect for a picket line to a first principle.

3] Miners see a workable grievance procedure as an answer to the wildcat problem. The present five-step procedure instituted with the 1974 contract has not worked. The companies have appealed many cases to the top review board, piling up a tremendous backlog and resulting in delays of up to one and a half years. The miners feel the process is biased against them.

4] Health and safety are concerns. 141 deaths and 14,000 injuries took place in 1976. The elected mine-safety committee now has power to close a mine if it is extremely dangerous, but they can be removed by the company and fired if they were wrong. This has a chilling effect on the committees.

5] The usual union demand for higher wages is not the real issue in this strike, but the cost of living has skyrocketed, so they do expect a sizeable increase.

USA / W.GERMANY

By Betty Traun in New York

arated the P & M settlement from that demanded by BCOA revolved around the wildcat strikes. Pittsburg and Midway would punish only leaders of wildcat strikes, not participants, thus honouring the union's strong tradition that a miner never crosses a picket line.

But the Association's provisions included money penalties and suspensions for wildcat participants, as well as automatic discharge for those who lead or "foment" such strikes. These penalties were a main cause for the rejection by UMW's bargaining council, and the Association said that was its last offer.

Defiant

On February 24th a "shot-gun" settlement between BCOA and UMW's bargaining council sent a contract package to the 160,000 Appalachian and Midwestern miners for approval, which was expected to take ten days.

Few details of the tentative pact were disclosed, but it was known to be similar to the separate pact made with P & M. In western Pennsylvania, the president of Local 1609 said the agreement "will never be ratified if it's similar to the P & M agreement. It takes too much away from us."

It maintains a provision for penalties, including firing of leaders of wildcat strikes. "How can you pick out a man [who is a wildcat leader]?" asked Terry Hodges, one Cabin Creek miner. "They'll [the owners] pick out who they want to pick out, some guy who raises hell at the mine site about safety," he said.

About 200,000 copies of the proposed contract with BCOA were rushed into type in Indianapolis, Indiana, to be distributed to the miners. Hundreds of union field representatives and regional officers were assembled and briefed on their week's mission: to return to the coal fields to persuade the miners to support the agreement.

Arnold Miller, whose presidency is under strong attack, will not himself go to the miners. He has called the agreement "a contract we can



Two Kentucky miners in jail for defying court injunctions limiting picketing to six men.

live with. I think our members understand that in collective bargaining you don't get everything you want."

But by a resounding two to one majority, the miners have thrown out the offer. They are challenging the mine owners and the government, and even their own leadership.

A movement for the recall of Arnold Miller is under way. "God gave me the right to strike!" said one miner. "Arnold Miller can't take it away."

In the face of this defiance, with coal-stocks dwindling, what is the response of President Carter?

The miners reject settlement by ballot, so it is to be forced on them by law!

He has invoked the Taft-Hartley Act, ordering them back to work for an eighty-day "cooling off" period. "You have the right to reject our terms," Carter is saying, "but if you do, we will force them on you anyway." And this is the hero of democracy and human rights!

Labour Party

If the miners refuse to be cowed into accepting this attack on union rights, they now face court injunctions, fines and the threat of jail.

But this is nothing new to them. Three times the Taft-Hartley Act has been used in coal strikes, and each time the miners ignored or defied court injunctions. They know that the courts and the law are only a desperate last weapon in the mine-owners' losing battle.

Once again, governments and Presidents, Republican or Democrat, have shown themselves for what they are: stripped of fine phrases, they

stand openly on the side of big business and employers in the drive to curb union power and attack workers' hard-won wages and conditions. The need for an independent party of labour is being brought home in the harsh language of betrayal and bitterness.

But Carter and the bosses are playing with fire. Whatever the outcome of the strike, the miners have shown the determination of American workers to defend their union rights.

The days of quiet and calm in the mighty US trade union movement are drawing to a rapid end.

As the strike went into its third month, a coalition of pro-industry forces began a nationwide scare campaign to turn public opinion against the striking miners.

The campaign reached its height in Ohio, the state hardest hit by the lack of coal. Headlines read: "Electrical blackouts." "Elderly people freezing to death in their unheated homes." "Food shortages." "Robbery, rape and murder."

Miners have braved scabs' bullets and police clubs. Some owners have hired gangs of thugs to patrol picket lines. A retired miner bringing hot coffee and doughnuts to pickets has been murdered.

But to listen to elected officials, businesses and media here, the guilty parties were the nation's striking coal miners. Rather than blaming the intransigence of the coal companies for the bitter strike, those forces were depicting the "violence-prone" and "greedy" miners as the villains.

In the wake of the worst snowstorm in the state's history, a veritable blizzard of anti-miner propaganda descended. It escalated to a near-hysterical level, with Columbus and Southern Ohio Electric Co. officials threatening massive evacuations of area residents in coming weeks when it would be "forced" to turn off electricity to homes and businesses.

Lies and Violence

Ohio Congressmen pressed for the 80-day cooling-off period of the Taft-Hartley bill to be invoked by the President. Columbus, Ohio, shut off all street lights, and supermarkets reduced hours and lighting "due to the coal strike". The Governor made spurious claims that the miners' strike would lead to massive unemployment.

In Detroit General Motors, Ford and Chrysler spearheaded a full-scale campaign against the miners, with the threat to lay off hundreds of thousands of auto workers, blaming "shortages" of coal. But the Auto Union pointed to a report in the 'Detroit News' which quoted officials of General Motors who claimed they had "stockpiled coal reserves before winter and have adequate supplies to keep nine Detroit area factory complexes operating."

Ford officials were quoted in the same article that they have coal supplies "that will last until April." The very next day they reversed themselves, stating that 300,000 workers would be

idled by General Motors.

The UAW stated this was an attack to divide, to get workers angry at the miners. "But they are not going to break labour's ranks."

Patrick Tobin, Washington representative of the International Longshoremen's Union, stated that his union had offered full support to the miners. "The rest of labour will take any attack on the miners, any attempt to break their strike as an attack on all of labour," he said.



German Printers fight for Jobs

"I tell you, it won't be long before the next civil war!" one of the pickets angrily assured.

"Our 'democratic' state," said another cynically, with reference to the mass media coverage of the strike. A third added: "There's no such thing as 'freedom of the press', only the freedom for the few rich."

For many of the print workers on this picket the strike really is a question of their whole future. "They want to do everything by computer—one set of news for all the papers, throw out the print workers and even more profit."

The printworkers' union [IG Druck] provides the facts: In the last five years, while the turnover of the printing industry has increased from 9.6 to 14.8 billion Marks [approximately £3.7 billion], 35,000 jobs have disappeared through rationalisation and new techniques. Also in the last five years the proportion of wages as part of the turnover has decreased from 37.1% to 32.8%. This is the thanks the workers get for their tremendous increase in productivity. For the production of 1,000DM worth of turnover a worker in the printing industry needed to work 29 hours in 1972; in 1976 the figure was only 17.5! [IG Druck und Papier, 1.3.78]. The result? Profits for the bosses, redundancy for the workers.

Arguments

A car drives past. A shout from the window. "Did you hear that?" asks one worker, "someone just drove past and shouted from the window 'you lazy devils!'"

"Ach, we're used to that," another said. "Arguments like 'you're ruining our democracy' and 'you lot never get enough money.' Shall I tell you just how much we really earn? For some of us the basic wage is up to five Marks less than for other professions.

"People don't know that, but it's true. The only way we get our wage up to a reasonable level is through overtime, nightwork and Sunday work. So look at what we have to sacrifice—we've got no time, no normal life." "And apart from that our family life is destroyed," another says.

The discussion picks up. More colleagues join in. Ten minutes ago we had arrived, two Jusos prepared and willing to offer what help we could and to learn from the workers about their struggle. "The people don't really know what it's like—they only get to hear the bosses' opinion!" "It's not us who don't want the papers to appear." "But the union could do more, I think—still they must know what they are doing, our leadership."

"I agree, we must give out more information. On Saturday anyway we'll be bringing out a national strike paper."

Another speaks out. "Y'know what? We should nationalise—nationalise the whole branch." "OK, but look at the other nationalised industries—have the redundancies stopped there? Do you really think they have no rationalisation? Or closures?"

There is a short pause as the workers think about this, their expressions serious and concentrated, as if they were trying to squeeze a solution out of the air in front of them. We raise the question of in whose interests the previous nationalisations were, and that the process of national-

isation must be done through the workers themselves.

Some workers are thoughtful, others agree. Obviously for some the word nationalisation—from their own experience—means one-time workers sitting at tables with the bosses and being used as figleaves for the bosses' dirty work.

Answers

A younger worker: "We couldn't just nationalise the printing sector." "No—the banks; we must take over the banks." We discuss this and other demands against unemployment with the pickets.

With lightning speed the discussion moves from local problems to national and international difficulties, propelled forward by the workers' own search for concrete answers, a clear idea of what's going on and what to do about it. What if the bosses try and get scab labour in? "Well I for one will lie across this entrance and if the police come and move me OK, and when they've gone I'll be lying in front of the entrance again."

The workers are in high spirits. "We can keep it up for weeks, months, if necessary," says one. Will the leadership want to? One thing is certain; with so many jobs to be slashed in the printing industry, the union leaders will be wondering where to find their rank and file if they don't put up a fight!

We show the workers

'Voran', Germany's Marxist paper. They are eagerly taken out of our hands.

"Comrades?" asks one, "magnificent!" A slight touch of irony reveals his disappointment with the SPD. Apart from ourselves so far there seems to be no-one from the local Social Democratic party.

We assure the printworkers that we will help all we can and they emphasise the political agitation we must do in the SPD—"more important than collecting for the strike funds," says one.

We have to go. The workers thank us for our encouragement. One of them says, "When you write it up for the paper in England, send the British workers our greetings."

Greeting

This strike alone is one of the best greetings the German workers could give. The labour movement in West Germany is finding its feet—and its head!

However the printers' strike ends and whatever the metalworkers achieve in their actions (it looks certain that they will be next to strike for better wages) one thing is clear. It has taken decades of relative peace on the so-called economic front to get this far; but once the German workers move, they learn in days what they have not know for more than forty years. The political lessons learned will be remembered by many.



Labour Secretary Ray Marshall [left] and Jimmy Carter discuss proposed settlement with Rober Strauss [Special Trade Representative]

LETTERS

Prices

Dear Comrade

The 16-page paper is really great, but perhaps one suggestion. The front page article on the profits boom raised an obvious question of a trade union check on prices to prevent workers being duped on the false 'cost of living' figures given by the media.

I think that with the expanded paper it can have a wider readership and that snippets from readers and housewives about increases in particular items would really bring it home to working people about the real increases in prices.

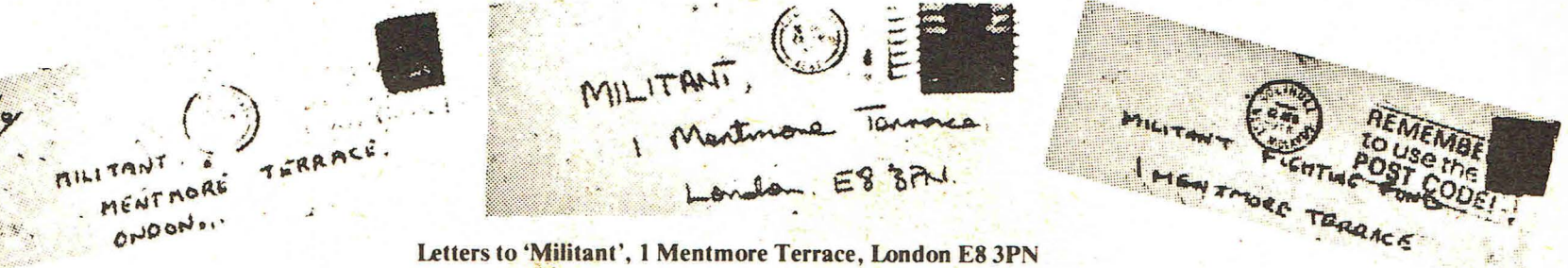
For example: last year my mother wrote an article to the 'Birmingham Evening Mail' which was actually published: "Last week carrots were 10p per lb, this week 28p per lb. I picked one carrot to be weighed, it cost 5 pence. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry buying one carrot."

This article should have been sent to the 'Militant' really, but anyway it should be up to the movement as a whole to check prices. It would be practical even for one union to take it up and publish their own price index. I am surprised that such a simple task hasn't been carried out already.

Perhaps the paper could use an expanded 'Letters' or 'Left and Right' column not just necessarily on prices but on small everyday experiences of working people to cater for a wider readership. Incidentally the 'Question Time' column was a step in the right direction.

Yours fraternally
Joe Foster
Erdington LPYS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Write and let us know what you'd like to see in the new, bigger 'Militant'.



Letters to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

NF'S True Colours

Dear Comrades

After the first visit of the NF to my school, I feel compelled to write. I am totally disgusted by the methods employed by these political outlaws in their attempt to get their views across to the public.

Not only did they lie and deceive politically infantile kids of the age of 14 but they spat and swore at anyone attempting to oppose them.

I would advise any school which has recently had a visit or are going to have one shortly, to prepare an offensive, in an attempt to reveal the NF's real ideology and to show their thuggery to the people.

The real danger they pose is their influence over kids of the age of 14 and 15. It was a political ploy by the NF in lowering their membership age to 14 in order to attract children into their party so that they can instill their dictatorial policies.

Anyone at this age with strong feelings against authority and education will join the bandwagon of these fascists and be totally misled.

It is up to us in the labour and trade union movement to prevent this from happening and show these youngsters the true colours of the NF.

Fraternally
G Hayes
Chairman, Rother Valley LPYS

The Mounties

Dear Friends

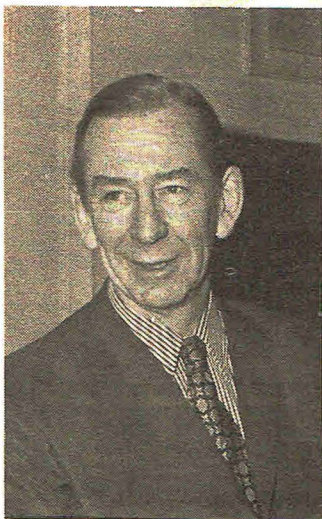
Regarding the exposure of the Mounties in Canada—the Prime Minister held a press conference which was carried on radio today, and several of the journalists were quite suspicious of the fact that Soviet spies had been exposed just at this moment by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, implying that it was very convenient as a means of improving the RCMP "image"! I must say that it does look a bit suspicious—but maybe it's only a coincidence.

Anyway, opening mail is now going to be "legal", after so many years of its being opened anyway!

Trudeau said at the Conference that Britain and other countries had always had the practice of legal mail opening—so now we are going the way of all flesh, and one more bit of freedom or privacy or right, whatever you like to call it, is being removed.

The worst part of the whole RCMP exposure is that mail received by MPs is reported to be heavily in favour of more power to the RCMP. We see increasing regimentation in the name of "national security", "protection of privacy", all the old gimmicks—Hitlerism encroaching, and accepted, except by us minority who try to expose it.

Eve Smith
Port Washington, Canada



Dear Comrade,

I have just been watching "Northern Scene", a current affairs programme on our local independent TV station.

The guest was one Sir John Methven, of the CBI [bosses' club]. From a capitalist I heard the following: "This Government in the last two years has listened more to industry than the trade unions." On industrial democracy the following gem: "The unions were demanding industrial democracy by taking half the seats of company boards but clearly the Government is not letting them get their way."

Sir John sees the present pay restrictions as a crusade by the government and employers who are struggling to hold down wages. Yet earlier he described the move from his job as Director General of Fair Trading to his present post at the CBI as a transformation from Gamekeeper to Poacher. Thus the task of capitalism is to poach from the community by demanding higher levels of profits for industry in return for the empty bellies of the working class.

Daily the Government is treated as a pawn in the hands of capitalism, a pawn which will be cast aside as a leper when it can no longer guarantee the passivity of the workers.

Comrades, we have tolerated this situation long enough. The days of the Labour Government are numbered unless it clearly appraises its position and begins to act on its manifesto pledges to bring about an irreversible shift in wealth to working people and stops pandering to the parasites of capitalism who patronise the working class with their talk of wage restraint as modern patriotism.

Whom does this patriotism serve if not the poachers of the CBI? For I have not had pheasant or salmon in my diet these past few months.

Yours fraternally,
Kev Gent [ASTMS 873 Branch]

Formal v. Modern

Dear Comrades

In reply to the letters by P Blatch and her young son in issue 394. I, too, am concerned about the cutbacks in education although I haven't noticed them at schools in the 'good areas' where I have done my teaching practice so far!

But please don't knock the 'grandiose schemes' like projects, school plays etc. that might seem to be taking up an undue share of funds.

Children benefit from taking part in a whole range of activities and learn from indirect means as well as by more formal work. We need the resources for all these types of learning.

The debate on formal v 'modern' methods of teaching can be a trap, even for socialists. It's all too often a cover-up by the establishment for the cut-backs.

Game-keeper turned poacher

WE SHOULD BE OPTIMISTIC

Dear Comrades

Comrade Gray writing in 'Militant' 395 suggests that this paper is too optimistic and is out of touch because it overestimates the level of political consciousness of ordinary people.

On the contrary those who write for the paper are only too aware of the realities of life in capitalist society and how these are reflected in politics. Many of us suffer the demoralisation of unemployment, the tiredness and lack of time for politics and union work that comes from working the overtime necessary to make a living wage, and the disillusionment towards parliamentary politics when we see a Labour government carrying out Tory policies.

But these facts of life don't mean that 'Militant' should cast its eyes enviously towards the 'Sun' newspaper for a few tips on how to become more popular. Unlike the 'Sun', the content, style and presentation of 'Militant' ultimately depends on the support, political and financial, which it gets from working people.

Essentially the purpose of a Marxist paper is to provide an explanation of the capitalist system and based on that understanding to arm the movement with a programme around which the mass of the working class can be mobilised for a socialist transformation of society.

We recognise that different levels of political consciousness exist among working people and we aim deliberately to reach the minority of the working class which is at present active in political and trade union work.

We also try through our material and our activities to reach all the other workers who, though equally affected by the ills of capitalism, are not yet convinced of the need for socialism. We do this, not

through abstract slogans but through demands which take up the everyday problems working people face and show how the only certain solution to these problems lies in the remaking of the economy along socialist lines.

Obviously there is difficulty even within the confines of a 16-page weekly to get exactly the right balance between the various kinds of material we need to include. We would, however, be entirely wrong not to include historical, theoretical and international articles because to do so would be to stoop to the worst standards of the capitalist press which deliberately provides its readers with trivia aimed at diverting their minds from seeking solutions to the problems the capitalist system imposes on them.

We must also avoid the mistakes of the ultra-left sects whose unspoken contempt for and isolation from the working class means that they try to reduce their material to just those simplifications that they believe working people are capable of grasping.

The decline of capitalism, the move to the left in the labour movement and the fact that our ideas and perspectives have proved correct in the experiences of increasing numbers of workers have enabled us to make a continued improvement in the size and content of the paper.

Comrade Gray can be assured that it is precisely because we are not 'out of touch' that 'Militant' is extremely optimistic that the development of Marxist ideas will continue and that these ideas will become a material force for changing society in the coming period. Forward to an even bigger, better and more frequent 'Militant'!

Yours fraternally
David Brandon
Peterborough Trades Council Executive

TRADE UNION FORUM

Dear Comrade

Congratulations on the production of the sixteen page paper, a great step forward.

What I would now like to see is some of your valuable space allocated to a trade union 'Forum' where fellow trade unionists may write to find an answer to many of the problems that confront them in their jobs. No other paper of the left seems to cater for the many problems that arise on the shop floor.

Not many factories are fortunate enough to have good capable left wingers to be elected as shop stewards or convenors. Many who are serving in this capacity are sincere in their desire to serve the workers but lack the experience so necessary. At

present they view the 'Militant' as being "only political" and do not link it with their day to day problems at their work.

I would like to see a full or at least half a page set aside for guidance to shop stewards, and all workers who have industrial problems.

I do appreciate that many problems may need legal advice. Apart from that many of our comrades who are in leading positions in the trade unions would no doubt be prepared to pass on the benefit of their experience and help to guide our less experienced comrades.

Best wishes to all comrades
Yours fraternally
Jim Campbell
AUEW

FIGHTING FUND DOUBLED!

This week's total of £1,416.84 for the 'Militant' Fighting Fund was double last week's record for this year.

The hundreds attending Militant rallies up and down the country contributed nearly £700 of it—£200 on Merseyside, £154 in London, £143 on Tyneside, £119 in the West Midlands (plus about £50 made on the stalls there), £53 in Manchester and £31 in Cardiff.

A social held in Winlaton (Co Durham), "to welcome the new paper", raised £20.11. A Stirling reader sent all of a tax rebate of £16.50 to the new Militant—more than the £1-a-page we have been appealing for! T Kinveen, a socialist student at Hull Tech. College, managed an excellent £15 and I Stiff of Ipswich £10.

What better way to celebrate the bigger and better paper than by sending a donation! That's what J & S Bell of Salop did with nearly £6. "We would like to add our congratulations to the hard work and dedication necessary to achieve the 16 page Militant."

From the Treasurer of Canterbury LP Young Socialists a £5 donation and "Congratulations for the impressive 16-page newspaper with which Militant paper sellers in Canterbury are delighted and will sell with extra vigour and enthusiasm."

We received a cheque for £8 from Leeds YS City Committee, £2.50 from Bristol SE, £1.99 from Stafford YS members, 60p from Kirkdale, £2.44 from Torbay LPYS, 95p from a raffle at a joint LPYS meeting in Bristol, and the same amount from two Hull LPYS members—B Venton and J Morrison, and £1 from two Exeter YS members. We are looking to you to give as much as you can in your local branch and at this year's conference of Labour's youth.

Older (?) Labour Party members have also made a considerable contribution. Look at the list of just some of the contributors of £1s and 50ps over the weekend of the London Labour Party Conference.

Sid Bidwell MP; Jo Richardson MP; John Tilley [Lambeth Central Labour Candidate]; Richard Balfe [London LP Executive]; Dave Chaloner [FBU National Executive]; George Savill [ASLEF Executive]; Diane Brown [Newham NE LP]; Clier E W Goodall [South Suburban Co-op Party]; Ian Smedley [Chairman, Croydon NE LP]; Bob Irwin [London LP Executive]; Mick Gilbey [sec, Plaistow FBU]; E Hillman [GLC Councillor]; Christine Butterworth [Chingford CLP]; B O'Kane [Carshalton LPYS]; S Peacock [Tottenham LP]; G Colton [AUEW London District Committee]; and Pete Fordham [Hendon South CLP] donated £5.

£14.45 was collected at the lunchtime meeting.

Yorkshire Militant supporters collected an excellent £63.05 at the Regional LP Conference in Scarborough the same weekend. Well done and thank you, comrades!

Wherever Labour activists are gathered together, they should be asked regularly for donations to "the best paper in the movement." Blyth LP members donated another £1.50 when asked this week and four councillors contributed 50p each to the £5.50 collected at Leicester West's GMC meeting. West Stirling Labour Party agreed as a body to send £3 to help build the Militant. Get your Labour Party and LP members to follow these examples!

Use the new Militant collector's card. £3 was raised with one in Stirling, £4.40 from readers in the Gwent area and £10 from Wandsworth GMWU members.

M Hill, EETPU member in Newton Abbot, paid two instalments amounting to £6 this week. P Bloomes of W Bridgford LP gave £4.50, M Dewdney of Plymouth £4, a 'pools winner' in Oxford gave his £4 win and a Bingo winner in Port Talbot donated £9 from "expenses to the TUC Youth Conference."

A Christchurch reader sold a bike to get £10 for the Militant. Some W Midlands supporters wrote:

"Please find £55 raised at a bazaar organised by Militant supporters from Perry Barr, Sutton Coldfield and Eving-

ton. Comrades got soaking wet walking up the High Street with sandwich board and microphone, but it was worth it."

Every contribution is "worth it"—the 20ps from readers like D Daly and J Dunlop, that are given every week, the 50ps from L Marston (Taunton), Mrs Hughes (Christchurch), student S Masters (Bristol) and UCATT members from Stevenage and Hull—M Pickersgill and B Cammish. Maybe this was in appreciation of the article on their union last week.

Undoubtedly the 40p from a GEC striker in Coventry was because of the coverage of his dispute by the Militant. The £2 from an unemployed worker of Exeter YS is no doubt in appreciation of the campaigning of the Militant on the scandal of youth unemployment. To these readers, the sacrifice is worth every penny to get an even bigger and better Militant to help them in the common fight for socialist policies.

Adopt the same approach! Follow the examples here: 'Fivers' from: A Mares (Leeds), J McTaggart (Stirling), S Needham (Wavertree YS) and a Peterborough reader.

£1s from: A Nottinghamshire miner, Brixton FBU shop steward, T Morgan, Alcoa worker, D Buckland, Wavertree LP's parliamentary candidate, Coventry readers S Chinn and G Hill, B Shaw (Torbay) and I Kirkland (Bristol), 80p from D Davies (NSMM, Birmingham), 70p from S Sibley (Dorchester) and 60p from M Spittle (Stoke).

Fund raising efforts included: selling guinea pigs, holding table-tennis tournaments, selling tote tickets, running weekly raffles, cooking curries, letting out rooms and washing machines (!), providing discos, collecting drinks and beer levies for the Militant and saving ps and ½ps, coupons, stamps and even 'Jolly Green Giant' grocery vouchers.

Many thanks to all contributors. Congratulations on this week's total! Let's have double each week for the next three weeks to get way over £20,000 by April 1st!

£20,000 NEEDED BY APRIL 1st

FIGHTING FUND CHART £70,000

Area	Target 12 wks	Target 52 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	1,260	4,400	████████████████████	290.33
Hants & IOW	600	2,100	████████████████████	186.52
Humberside	630	2,200	████████████████████	265.52
Lancashire	430	1,500	████████████████████	68.77
London: North	2,200	7,700	████████████████████	711.68
London: South	1,080	3,800	████████████████████	389.84
Manchester & District	830	2,900	████████████████████	209.19
Merseyside & District	1,280	4,500	████████████████████	570.43
Midlands East	1,260	4,400	████████████████████	197.21
Midlands West	2,120	7,400	████████████████████	720.50
Northern	1,400	4,900	████████████████████	485.93
Scotland East	710	2,500	████████████████████	271.00
Scotland West	830	2,900	████████████████████	205.76
South East	660	2,300	████████████████████	311.37
South West	660	2,300	████████████████████	338.35
Thames Valley	480	1,700	████████████████████	190.15
Wales East	570	2,000	████████████████████	210.32
Wales West	660	2,300	████████████████████	193.21
Yorkshire	1,480	5,200	████████████████████	547.00
Others	860	3,000	████████████████████	41.52
Total	£ 20,000	70,000	████████████████████	6,404.60

Progress Towards year's target ██████████ Towards April 1st target ██████████

MILITANT NOTICES

Militant Meetings

COVENTRY

Militant Readers' Meetings are now on the second Monday of each month, beginning at 7.30pm at the 'Elastic Inn', Lower Ford Street, Coventry (opposite Theatre One).
'The National Health Service—How it was built and how it's being cut'. Monday April 10th. Speaker: Ian Burge (Secretary, London Hospital JSSC).

MILITANT MEETING North West

Labour Party Conference
Saturday 18th March
Starting after afternoon session (approx 5 pm)
'What We Stand For'

Speakers:
Eddie Loyden MP
Eddie Newman, Chairman, NW LPYS
Tony Mulhearn, Vice-president, Liverpool Borough LP, and prospective parliamentary candidate, Crosby Opera House Foyer Annexe

NEATH VALLEY

Militant Discussion Groups
Resolven: further details: Peter Harris, 95 John Street, Resolven
Glynneath: further details: Derek James, 21 Avon Street, Glynneath

SUNDERLAND

Militant Discussion Group. Every other Friday at 8.00 pm.
March 17th—Fascism and the National Front.
March 31st—Devolution and Socialism.
April 14th—The Paris Commune.
April 28th—Franch 1968 and 1978.
May 12th—Italian Politics and Perspectives.
Phone Gateshead 774948 for further details.

SOUTH WALES

Militant Summer Camp
Horton, Gower Coast, Near Swansea
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4. World War—Future Prospects
5. Marxism and the Trade Unions.

Book Now!
Cost £6.50 per person (Cheques payable to R Sewell)
Further Details:
R Sewell, 99 Penderry Road, Penlan, Swansea. Tel: 33542

NEWCASTLE

Marxist Discussion Groups for students and unemployed. Every Friday, 1.30 pm.
Next meetings:
March 10th — Communist Manifesto Part II.
March 17th — Communist Manifesto Parts III and IV.
Audio Room, Polytechnic Students Union.

Publications

NEW POSTER!

New posters now available for advertising new 16-page paper, one with a blank space for meetings and slogans, plus advertising broadsheet out soon. Send for details to Militant.

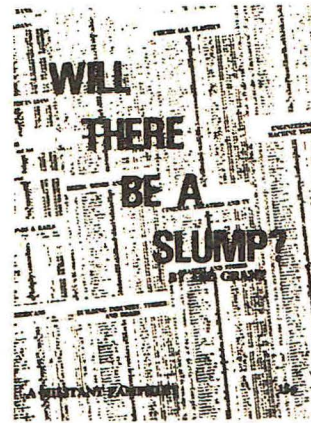
Hastings Militant Supporters

new 'Militant' Index. Issues 268-372. 20p + p&p single copy. Bulk orders welcome, 20p each + 20% p&p. Available from G Clyde, 61 St Georges Road, Hastings TN34 3NH

Cardiff North supporters are producing a new issue of Militant badges. Further details available soon.

Other MILITANT publications available from World Books

Bureaucratism or Workers' Power?—Roger Silverman and Ted Grant. 30p
Marxism Opposes Individual Terrorism—Leon Trotsky and Peter Taaffe. 15p
Spanish Revolution 1931-37—Ted Grant. 30p
General Strike 1926—Leon Trotsky, Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe. 30p
Lenin and Trotsky: what they really stood for—Alan Woods and Ted Grant. £1.50



NEW REPRINT:

'Will There Be a Slump?' Article written in 1961 by Ted Grant. Price 15p plus 5p postage.
Order now from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

TROTSKY

Against the Stream



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Leon Trotsky—'Against the Stream' (with an introduction by Bob McKee). Price 20p plus 5p postage.

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POEU—The Way Forward 10p
CPSA—The Way Forward 15p
NUM—A Programme for Action 15p
A Fighting Programme for Railway Workers . . . 10p
A Socialist Programme for Engineers 20p
A Militant Programme for Steelworkers 18p
A Fighting Programme for Print Workers 15p
A Socialist Programme for the EETPU 15p
A Militant Programme for the GMWU 10p
NALGO Special 6p
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TGWU Special 6p

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LPYS Conference. Islington has 10 places available in a b&b near conference hall. £3.75 with bar. Anyone interested please ring Dave Cartwright. Day: 01-353 7474, ext. 3357; Night: 01-607 8613.

TRADE UNION DISCUSSION GROUPS

NEATH: Full Moon Pub, The Parade, Neath. Every Tuesday, 7.30 pm.
PORT TALBOT: The Progressive Club, Station Road, Port Talbot. Every Thursday, 7.30 pm.
PONTARDULAIS: Kings Public Bar. Every Tuesday, 7.30 pm.
AMMANFORD: The Welfare Club. Every Monday, 8.00 pm.

Putney LPYS folk and instrumental concert. Alton Youth Centre. Saturday 18th March, 8.00 pm. In aid of LPYS Conference 1978. Refreshments available. Admission 30p.

CROSS HANDS LPYS

Public Meeting
'What Future for the Mining Industry?'
Speaker: Ian Isaacs, St John's Maesteg Lodge Committee
Cross Hands Public Hall, 7.15 pm, Tuesday 21st March
All Welcome

NEW PAMPHLET 'Marxist Economics'. Four articles on: Marxism In Our Time; Crisis of World Capitalism; Decline of British Industry; Inflation. Produced by Blyth LPYS. Price 20p. Order from I Mearns, 8 Church Street, Cramlington Village, Northumberland.

What did you do in World War II, Comrade? Read 'Resistance and Revolution in Europe in World War II' by Lesley Thompson. Published by Brighton 'Militant' Supporters, price 20p + 7p postage; ten copies or over, post free. From J Walsh, 252 Freshfield Road, Brighton.



On the picket line at Kirkby

Workers Will Resist Closure

The future of the Birds Eye Food factory at Kirkby, on the outskirts of Liverpool, remains uncertain, despite the fact that the company issued a statement on Monday 6th March which seemed to suggest that the factory would be closed down. Later statements suggested that all that had happened was that the 1,200 hourly paid workers had been sacked and the company might be looking for new workers to take their places.

This situation was thrown into further confusion when some workers who went to pick up their outstanding holiday pay and collect their P45s were informed that they could not have them because they had not been sacked at all. This illustrates clearly the cause of the confusion, for every single hourly paid worker had received through the post a letter informing them that they had been dismissed.

Issued in the fifteenth week of the engineers' strike at a time when a small minority of the workers involved were beginning to re-assess their position and look for a speedy resolution of the dispute, it was calculated to demoralise and destroy the unity of the strikers. The company were well aware that the national officials of the AUEW and the T&GWU had done little to actively support the strike and the ETU national officers had demanded that their members return to work; if necessary crossing the picket lines of their fellow workers. Despite this the ETU members stood fast.

Setbacks

Unfortunately, the strikers had also suffered other setbacks. For weeks we had picketed the Birds Eye factories at Yarmouth and Lowestoft with little success except from Unilever drivers. On one or two occasions the workers at the east coast factories had hurled abuse at the flying pickets and it was only at Grimsby and Hull that sup-

port had come, mainly financial.

Long before the announcement of closure the striking engineers had been looking for an honourable way out of the dilemma in which we had found ourselves. However, when the announcement did come it did not have the effect calculated by the company. If anything it hardened the attitude of the workers and clearly demonstrated the ruthlessness of the company.

On the other hand, the attitude of the trade union officials was one of capitulation. Doug Palmer, the regional officer of the TGWU called the engineers' strike committee together and along with Eddy Roberts, the local official, demanded complete capitulation to the company.

They went further and made it quite clear that if necessary they would encourage the production workers who had been laid off during the strike, to cross picket lines and work with scab labour. Already, Jerry Russel, the AUEW national official, had conceded defeat when he met the company at national level.

Against this background the engineers' strike committee were forced to meet the company to hammer out a formula for a return to work. What emerged was a compromise that fell far short of the original demands and which involves redundancies of about 30% in the engineers' department and 450 throughout the factory.

Most workers think that the compromise is unpalatable, involving the loss of so many jobs, but they are wise

enough to appreciate that without the support of the unions and other factories they can only remain isolated and perhaps suffer further crushing defeats.

The formula, if accepted, is the best that could be obtained under the circumstances and besides does not represent an utter defeat, having achieved a wage increase that would have been acceptable prior to the strike. The main defeat lies in the heavy redundancy programme.

The important point about the dispute is that the workers remain more united than ever and the organisation remains intact and strengthened.

Apart from this the lessons are clear. It is absolutely essential to forge links with other companies throughout Unilever. This has been tried and met with only little success but will have to be developed in the future. Further, the so-called benevolent attitude of the company has been exposed as the ruthless employer that it is.

It is clearly understood that a thorough clean-out of trade union full time officials is necessary—particularly in the ETU who are the only union to have not made the strike official. But equally important is it necessary to cleanse the AUEW of its right wing national officers and for the T&GWU to realise the necessity of electing its full time officers.

The dispute is by no means over and will continue beyond doubt into its fifth month. The outcome remains uncertain, except for one thing. Attempts to close the factory indefinitely will be resisted to the full. Too much is at stake and the workers realise it.

Ted Mooney

(AUEW, Strike Committee, Birds Eye)

LEYLAND WORKERS BOYCOTT SOUTH AFRICA

By Bob Ashworth

(Senior Steward, Rover, Solihull)

Workers at two Leyland plants have decided through their shop stewards' committees not to handle any goods to South Africa during the International Week of Action [13-21 March].

This decision, taken by workers at the Rover plant at Solihull and at the Cowley plant in Oxford, came in response to the call by the British Leyland Combine Committee for workers throughout the Company to campaign against apartheid during this week. It is known that workers at other plants within Leyland will be holding meetings shortly to consider what action they can take.

This action in support of the struggle of black workers for trade union rights is an important step forward in the international campaign against apartheid. By initiating direct action, Leyland work-

tion. Yet, despite the fact that the TUC officially supports the campaign it proved slow in circulating its branches with information and suggestions for carrying the campaign to British workers.

In February of this year, however, workers within Leyland took matters into their own hands. Two resolutions put forward by the Rover shop stewards' committee were submitted to the Leyland Combine meeting in Birmingham which offered a fighting programme on which the campaign could be based.

Unanimous

The first resolution called for the campaign within Leyland to be geared towards the blacking of all goods to and from South Africa during the week. This resolution received the unanimous support of the delegates at the meeting. A second resolution called for the establishment of an International Section of

be jettisoned in the process. Then there was the announcement of the closure of the Speke factory in Liverpool.

The two resolutions on South Africa should not be seen as isolated from these other events. British Leyland, like other big firms, is an international concern. While Leyland is announcing closures in this country it is busily expanding its operations inside South Africa.

The South African 'Financial Gazette' (20.1.78) recently quoted the Managing Director of Leyland in South Africa as saying that "his company has already approved projects covering increased facilities at the Blackheath plant as well as the establishment of a new large branch operation for the truck and bus division." He

Just Out!

'Militant' Special Broadsheet on Leyland in Crisis:

'STOP THE SABOTAGE!'

Written by leading Leyland shop stewards
4p each. Single copies: add 7p postage. Bulk orders: write for details
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ers in Britain have helped to change the campaign from one based simply on moral opposition to apartheid to one based on active working class solidarity.

SACTU

The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which has been forced into exile because it represents all South African workers regardless of race, has fought to establish an international campaign along these lines. After years of continual pressure by SACTU the International Congress of Free Trade Unions eventually went ahead at the end of last year and called for an International Week of Ac-

the Leyland Trade Union Committee to facilitate the "building of links between all British Leyland workers throughout the world in order to strengthen our organisation and defend our common interests." This resolution, which insisted that priority should be given to forging links with workers in South Africa, was referred to the executive for ratification and implementation.

These two resolutions came at a time when Leyland workers in Britain are coming under increasing attack from management. First, there was the recent announcement by Leyland's new boss, Michael Edwardes, that he intends to reorganise the company and that 12,500 jobs are going to

added: "In addition, other projects are awaiting approval by the board." In this way Leyland, and other companies like it, try and play off workers from one part of the world with those from another.

The only answer to this divisive policy is that put forward by the Leyland workers themselves: to work to strengthen the bonds between workers throughout the world. This is the only answer, a truly international answer, to the machinations of international capital.

The oppression of black workers in South Africa ultimately means oppression for British workers. Less brutal, perhaps, but oppression just the same.

Broadsheet

The campaign for workers' solidarity on South Africa, however, is still in its infancy. Speakers from SACTU have addressed a number of factory and shop stewards' meetings which have been organised in factories across the country, and more are planned during the week of action. It is important that more of these meetings are organised in the future so that the issue of international solidarity is raised on the factory floor.

Shop stewards' committees might also produce a leaflet or broadsheet which spells out their company's involvement in South Africa and distribute it in their factories. The Rover shop stewards' committee produced an excellent broadsheet along these lines which has been widely circulated within Leyland and has been partly reproduced in SACTU's underground paper, 'Workers' Unity', for distribution among workers in South Africa.

TUC Women's Conference Lacks Socialist Answer

By Ann Jones

(Delegate, Brighton Trades Council)

The TUC Women's Conference was held in Scarborough on March 9th-10th. Unlike the Labour Party Women's Conference, which is for women only and can discuss any subject, the TUC conference can only discuss resolutions which deal specifically with women and youth but unions and Trades Councils can send delegates of either sex.

The restriction on resolutions means that although demands for improvements can be made for example in health care, it is not possible to debate how such demands can be implemented in the present economic situation and whether a fundamental transformation of society is needed.

One union had fought for proper training for its members so that they could get access to traditionally male jobs and also increase promotion prospects but now unemployment was cutting across this essential area because women were 'first out' and unemployment itself discriminated against women. Thus capitalist economics are making a farce of formal 'equality'.

Bridget O'Toole (ASTMS) pointed out that the Equal Opportunities Commission was even less effective in the economically

deprived area of Northern Ireland than in the rest of Britain. Abortion was practically unobtainable without a special case being made by doctors. The divorce laws are more difficult than in England and Wales.

Working women 'lucky' enough to escape the huge unemployment faced low paid jobs. She pointed out that the TUC and the Women's Advisory Committee could help. The trade union movement was the only non-sectarian force, but to bring women into the unions you needed policies to enthruse them. The trade union movement must show that it is prepared to fight and campaign for the interests of women.

This Conference showed its understanding of the problems faced by the working class and passed resolutions which, if implemented, would go a long way to make life better for women. But, as particularly pointed out by health service workers present, reforms won for the movement can be taken away in times of economic cutback. **What this Conference lacked was a socialist programme to solve the economic crisis and ensure that the resolutions passed could be translated into action.**



ASTMS delegate Bridget O'Toole speaking to the Conference

Photo: Laurence Sparham (IF-L)

CPSA endorses Terry Adams:

A VICTORY FOR UNION DEMOCRACY

The right wing majority of the CPSA National Executive Committee were last week forced to abandon their attempt to sack Headquarters Officer and 'Militant' supporter Terry Adams.

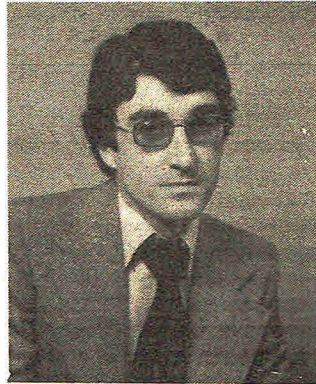
Faced with an overwhelming display of opposition and contempt for their move by the membership, they were obliged to vote for the confirmation of Terry's appointment.

Marxist

The final decision will still, formally, be taken at CPSA delegates' conference in May. But with scores of motions supporting Terry already submitted and in the absence of NEC opposition, a favourable decision seems certain.

This is a tremendous victory for those in the union who have defended Terry against the attempt to witch-hunt him out of his job because of his Marxist ideas. But no-one should be fooled by the somersault of the right wing on the question.

The motion to reverse the previous decision was put forward by the two leading right wingers on the Executive, Charles Elliot and Kate Losinska. They claimed that



Terry Adams

Terry's performance of his duties since the previous decision had made them change their minds.

Yet as recently as last October Mrs Losinska told the Executive that her prime motive in opposing Terry was his political allegiance to the ideas of the 'Militant'. That

always was the reason for the attempt to sack Terry and, glowing though the reports submitted to the Executive on Terry's performance of duties were, they were no more

favourable than all previous reports.

The real reason for the somersault is the pressure that the right wing have been subjected to from members and branches. They are now merely trying to avoid a crushing defeat in the delegate conference in May.

Honest

The unprecedented outcry from the membership, thousands of whom have openly spoken out for Terry, came as a tremendous shock to the right wing. The way the 'Terry Adams Defence Campaign' has been run, taking the issue to the rank and file and honestly explaining the political differences involved, shows how bureaucratic manoeuvres by union leaders can be successfully blocked. This can point the way for militants in all unions working for a fighting, democratic leadership accountable to the membership.

The Campaign was established last October to fight the NEC decision. Most important areas of the union have representatives serving on the Committee and our campaign has been remarkably effective.

Our prime task was to



By Kevin Roddy

(Secretary, 'Terry Adams Defence Campaign' and CPSA NEC (personal capacity))

ensure that the facts of the attempted dismissal were made known throughout the union. At the Rules Revision Conference of the union held last November we distributed an NEC statement (which the

right wing had tried to suppress) by Alastair Graham, the Deputy General Secretary, in which he completely refuted the absurd charges made against Terry by Mr Elliot over the Gibraltar dispute. We also organised what was possibly the biggest ever "fringe" meeting at a CPSA conference in Terry's support.

Debate

In January a broadsheet which carefully countered every accusation and which contained statements supporting Terry from the membership was circulated to practically every branch and sub branch of the union. Those NEC members who had voted against Terry were publicly challenged to defend their position before their own branches in debate with Defence Campaign representatives. (This demand for accountability was described as "vicious" by one right winger during a subsequent NEC debate.)

Faced with this pressure the right wing initially tried to intimidate the opposition. They used their NEC majority to push through a motion at the January NEC meeting which instructed Len Lever, the President, to ban those associated with the Defence Campaign from future NEC meetings.

This would have disenfranchised the 12 'Broad Left' NEC members. Fortunately the President ruled that the motion would not be put into practice. Now they have surrendered, but only because they are powerless to carry out their original intentions.

Endorse

If the right wing think they can avoid having their actions debated at Conference through voting for Terry at this late stage they are wrong. There are no plans to wind up the Terry Adams Defence Campaign until after the conference decisively endorses Terry's position.

WOMEN DEFEND UNION RIGHTS

The Royal Russell School [Patron HM the Queen], a posh public school on the outskirts of Croydon, has a strike on its hands.

Although fees are as much as £1,800 per year, women cleaners are paid only 57p an hour! Discontent over pay and conditions has been brewing for some time and the majority of the domestic staff, mostly mums from the nearby New Addington Council Estate, have joined the G&MWU.

Victimisation

The strike was sparked off at lunchtime on Monday 20th February when the workers received their pay-slips. Non-union members received a 10% rise with the promise of 15% more in two months' time while union members received nothing!

They were told that the union was negotiating on their behalf. Yet every approach by the union had been ignored and the school has refused to recognise it. In face of this clear victimisation, 30 women serving assistants, cleaners, laundry and kitchen



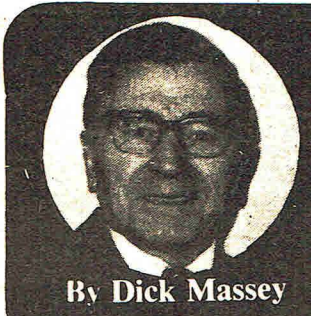
staff decided on strike action, and are determined to stay out until their union is recognised.

Mass Picket

Local support has been tremendous and essential supplies like oil and food are not getting into the school.

But action may have to be stepped up. A mass picket was held last Sunday which was well supported.

This is another example of an employer refusing workers their basic right to organise. These women deserve the support of the whole trade union and labour movement.



working in the union

By Dick Massey

I left the docks and got my first job working on aircraft, at Duple's coach building firm. They were part of a wartime organisation known as the London Aircraft Production (LAP).

This firm, situated in N W London, was notorious as being anti-trade union. The electrical shop was organised, but as far as I could ascertain, no-one else.

I had been there a couple of weeks when one afternoon I was approached and quietly asked if I would join the union. I suggested that we meet that evening in the pub a little higher up the road. There I met two AUEW members who, after two weeks of furtive inquiry, had collected about about twenty or thirty names of potential union members.

I booked a very large room in the pub for the Friday evening. Our plan of campaign was very simple, we contacted the union organiser, asking him to be present at the meeting, then next day we went into work and told everyone about the great meeting where everyone would be able to join the union.

We whipped up enthusiasm and the result was a very successful meeting. Our next move was to obtain recognition for the hastily elected works committee.

On the Monday morning I was sent for by the works manager and promptly sacked. I called a meeting for the lunch break, and went to see the National Service Officer (NSO). After finally getting an interview with him, I persuaded him to phone the personnel officer at Duple's who confirmed that I had been sacked for "gross misconduct" by forming a union. As the wartime 'Essential Work Order' was then in force, I was immediately reinstated and returned in time for the meeting.

During my absence two women who had attended the Friday night meeting had also been sacked. This matter of course could have been very simply adjusted by referring it to the NSO, but I persuaded the new works committee to adopt a different tactic.

The meeting I had called was attended by most everyone, and the women were furious over the sacking of their colleagues. I explained

the position to the workers, we elected a deputation of women workers to see the managing director, and accompanied by about twenty women, I stormed the offices and obtained an interview by the simple expedient of knocking and opening the door.

I then left it to the ladies who left no doubt in the managing director's mind that not only had the men formed a union, but they had also joined and demanded the two women be reinstated without loss of pay. Very badly shaken by this experience, the gentleman accepted my invitation to meet the works committee and discuss the many questions pending—but not before he informed the manager that the ladies in question were to be reinstated without loss of pay and arbitrary sackings stopped.

Workers learn by their own experience. The victory gained by the women workers and their manner of winning it, acted as a great spur. They suddenly realised the power of organisation and we went from strength to strength, the women often leading the way.

Series continues next week

WHO IS RUINING SWAN HUNTER?

The management at Swan Hunters, Tyneside, showed yet again that nationalisation hasn't changed their attitude to the workers. Late on Monday March 6th the management informed the nearly 10,000 hourly paid workers not to come to work tomorrow due to industrial action by 80 security men who are members of APEX.

The firm's excuse was that they didn't have proper emergency cover. They had been carrying out limited sanctions in pursuit of a pay claim and the company decided to suspend them, and then complained about lack of cover. The security men were sitting in and were prepared to cover in emergencies.

When the workforce were told of the layoff they were surprised but also furious. The vast majority reported to work normally on the Tuesday morning and demanded to be let into work.

Later in the day they were sent home again with the company

planning to shut the yards down. The unions, however, made it clear that they would be back for work every day.

By late Tuesday night the management had agreed not to shut the yards and had agreed to pay for the lost wages on Tuesday. The comments of some of the union officials show the anger. John Chalmers, boiler-makers: "The lay-off has got the hallmark of a decision from a mad-house."

Dave Hansen, Secretary of the outfitters' joint committee: "The lads are furious about the

management's decision. Everyone I have talked to is determined to keep working."

The quick and determined reaction of the entire workforce to the management's action forced the company to back down. The action, however, is a clear warning of the future for Swan's and the other yards unless there is united action from all the unions to change the course of British Shipbuilders.

Bill Hopwood

(AUEW, Newcastle)

FTATU Strike Over

The strike of FTATU members at E & H Architectural products, Langley Mill—the longest running strike in the history of Derbyshire—has finished.

A sum of money was given by the firm and shared out among the strikers and union recognition was granted, although no union members work there now.

Dennis Paine, Chairman of the Strike Committee, will be writing in 'Militant' soon.

Militant

31,000 more
East Moors Steel
jobs to go



Local Labour Parties lead march against racialism and fascism

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

LP AT FOREFRONT

Over 1,500 people marched through Rochdale last Saturday to demonstrate opposition to both NF and Tory racialism and support for socialist policies. Labour Party members were encouraged to see the party where it should be, at the forefront, giving a lead to the local working class. Young immigrants turned out in large numbers, many showing particular interest in the Young Socialists.

To chants of 'Racialism out: Socialism in' and strains of the Red Flag, the march wound its way to Cronkeyshaw Common, an historic Chartist meeting-place. There were several speakers, including local MPs, but the best response for Gerry Lerner, from Salford Labour Party, who pointed out that the labour movement had been able to mobilise more people for a local march than the NF had for national ones. He stressed the need to fight for a socialist programme to eradicate

the social problems on which racialism feeds.

The march passed the new, glossy bus station into streets of terraced houses where working people were trying to make the best of atrocious housing conditions. If the LP regionally and nationally had taken up the fight against racialism as sharply as the two local parties have done, then the outcome would be in no doubt—the labour movement would win hands down.

The anti-racialism committee has been in existence for just over a year, and has countered every threat by the NF. More important, the ideas of socialism have been taken out to hundreds of working people.

The march and rally was another step along the road to making our area a stronghold for a socialist labour movement where racialism can't get a foot in the door.

Margaret Creear

CADBURY PRINTERS STRIKE

Twenty-four members of the National Graphical Association are on strike at the Bournville, Birmingham, factory of the giant food monopoly Cadbury Schweppes.

*Cadbury's presses are the biggest in Birmingham, apart from the 'Birmingham Mail' (which have ignored the dispute).

Blacking

The strike is over a pay claim lodged in September 1976. In 1970 Cadbury's promised the printers parity with other trade groups on the site, but have subsequently used government pay policy as an excuse for not paying up.

The national agreement between the British Printing Industries Federation and the NGA is not being met in

Chris Newis
(NGA Birmingham
Branch Committee)

respect of holidays and shift premiums despite Cadbury's being signatories.

Strike notice was given on 28th February and national blacking of all Cadbury/Schweppes print and packaging has been put into effect.

The picket line has already been effective in turning away supplies. The solidarity of lorry drivers in not crossing the line has been encouraging.

The one real advantage the bosses have, unfortunately, is the lack of united action from other unions in the plant, despite the fact that all 16 unions on the site are in the same boat. Not one of the unions has settled its 1978 claim, many of which should

have been concluded in February.

Eventually, there will be no wrappers for the 'rock' which will cause layoffs. Cadbury's are not known for their generous lay-off pay. SOGAT who were involved in the claim right up to the eve of the strike will be the first to be affected.

Unity

The support of other unions would bring Cadbury's to heel in no time, benefiting all groups. At national level, the important thing is an agreement with the TGWU not to cross the line with print, board or packaging materials.

Messages of support and donations to A Jordan, 9 William Street, North Birmingham B19 3QH

Resist Redundancy Disaster

After 16 hours of discussion on 8th March, 31,000 steelworkers are now to be made redundant from East Moors steelworks in Cardiff.

An extra 4,500 could also lose their jobs in the supply industries. And even GKN, the profitable, private steel industry producer, are planning up to 1,000 redundancies.

Too Old

Over 3,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Cardiff over the past 5 years. Cardiff now faces the prospect of 14% unemployed very soon.

The press is claiming that many of those facing redundancy will get about £6,000 or more. But of those workers being made redundant face the prospect of never working again. Many have already accepted voluntary redundancy have already found it impossible to get jobs.

"Once an employer finds out that you're over 45 they just don't want to know," one redundant steelworker told 'Militant'. "I took voluntary

redundancy because I thought that if I got out before the Works closed I would be able to get a decent job. But there are no jobs around.

"The BSC haven't kept any of their promises. They promised to get alternative industry to come to Wales, but nothing has happened. Beswick promised that the East Moors would stay until 1980, but they haven't kept that promise."

A few workers will get the marvellous figure of £17,000. But most will get the equivalent of no more than two years' wages.

Bit by Bit

All along BSC have played a game of divide and rule—in the case of East Moors, Ebbw Vale and Shotton—shedding the workforce bit by bit to soften the opposition to closure. The ISTC leaders and the TUC Steel Committee have not led any effective opposition to these closures, preferring to negotiate about redundancy payments rather

than oppose closures and redundancies.

But the basic crisis in steel is the lack of orders. No real solution can be found to the recession in steel until the general decline of the economy is reversed. As people's living standards fall, so does the demand for all types of goods—most of which use steel in some way during their production.

The only alternative to the sackings in the steel industry—which have only just begun with East Moors—is an end to wage restraint and a minimum wage of £65 a week; complete nationalisation of the whole steel industry under the democratic control of the working class; and nationalisation of the steel users—the big monopolies—to form a socialist plan of production which would include an expanded and modernised steel industry.

Chris Burns
(Cardiff SE LPYS)

YOUTH FIGHT BACK

★ Continued from page 1

They are organising the school students and students to fight education cuts. They are organising young workers into trade unions. And they are recruiting the young unemployed into the ranks of the 12 million strong labour movement—the only force powerful enough to change society.

In every main town in Britain the Labour Party Young Socialists have gone into the streets and factories to fight unemployment, holding mass street meetings and days of action. In Birmingham last month they led thousands of teenagers—many of them rival football fans—in a united march against racialism.

While the National Front schools campaign has gone down like a lead balloon, hundreds of school students are turning to the LPYS. After leafletting schools, Nottingham LPYS recruited 18 new members. Sixteen queued up to join the Blyth branch after a morning's leafletting.

Bold Lead

At a time when the Labour government is retreating in the face of big business, compromising itself with the Liberals and holding down wages, the Young Socialists are everywhere leading the fight for bold socialist policies where it counts—within the Labour Party. In Regional

Labour Party Conferences throughout the country, Labour's youth have won increasing support for socialist action to provide jobs, houses and decent wages.

This rising tide of militancy will be reflected next week when nearly 2,000 LPYS members hold their national conference. It will be the biggest ever. Many new branches will be represented for the first time.

This conference is of vital importance to the future of working class youth. The pressure that is building up must surely lead to social explosions soon. At this conference Labour's youth

must hammer out a fighting programme to arm young workers with a socialist alternative to the dole queue and low pay.

Hundreds of new members will be going to the conference as well as young trade unionists sponsored by their unions. Every young person reading this should seize the opportunity to attend, to join Labour's youth and join the fight for socialism on the four main themes of the conference:

Fight racialism!
End unemployment!
Keep out the Tories!
Socialist policies now!

COME TO LLANDUDNO

The LPYS National Conference takes place over Easter weekend, March 25th-27th in Llandudno, North Wales. Every LPYS branch should be represented with a delegate to make its views heard—delegates will be accepted up to the opening day of conference. [Note: delegates should not miss their compositing meetings at 4.30 on Friday 24th.]

As well as the Conference sessions there will be evening meetings where visitors can join in the questions and discussion. After that you can enjoy yourself at the discos, concerts, film show, folk evenings and other entertainment all laid on in the Conference centre—all for £1!

You don't have to be a member of the LPYS to come along. If you want to know more about socialism, come along—you'll be made welcome! Contact your local LPYS branch or 'Militant' seller to arrange cheap transport and accommodation or write to the Conference Organiser, Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London S.W.1. for details.