

Militant

France,
May
1968

—see page 7

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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12p

Unions must say -

NO TO

All those in favour of another twelve months of lower living standards say "aye".

That is the Prime Minister's proposal to the trade union conferences taking place over the next few weeks.

"No" was the resounding reply from the 1,000 delegates at the Shopworkers' Union (USDAW) Conference on Monday. These low paid workers voted unanimously to

campaign against any further round of wage restraint.

Impoverished by three years when wages have been held way below rising prices and profits, they demanded a return to free collective bargaining, a 35-hour week, a £55 minimum wage and the scrapping of the '12-month rule'.

Low Paid

The myth that the Social Contract would benefit the lower paid workers is also

shattered by resolutions to the agricultural workers' conference this week.

While supermarkets and food monopolies have let prices rip, notching up super-profits for their rich shareholders, the workers who produce the food and who serve it over the counter have suffered. No wonder the call has gone up for an £80 minimum wage for farm workers by January 1979!

The writing is on the wall for the Social Contract. In by-elections and local elections throughout Britain Labour supporters who were

enthused by the prospect of social change in Labour's 1974 election manifesto have voted with their feet against unemployment and falling living standards.

'Sacrifices'

Yet Jim Callaghan's message to the white collar APEX Conference on Monday was the need for more sacrifices from the working class through yet another phase of the pay policy. With the magical North Sea oil coming in, we are "just around the corner" again from an economic boom. Prices and unemployment will fall—if wage rises are cut by half their present figures.

A more realistic economic forecast came on the same day from stockbrokers Phillips and Drew. They predict a balance of payments surplus this year of only £200m, not the Treasury's optimistic hope of £750m.

Inflation, they say, will rise

over 11% next year. Growth will be a measly 2% this year and even lower next year!

The Scottish TUC has already firmly rejected any attempt to impose further restrictions on pay. "My members have suffered a 20% loss in living standards over three years of incomes policy," a delegate from a civil service union declared.

The STUC backed his call for an organised campaign of "solidarity between unions threatened by government pay sanctions, both in the public and private sectors."

4m Poor

The forthcoming union conferences must follow this lead to defend the interests of their members. Wage restraint and the surrendering of union strength has done nothing for the poorest workers—4 million still earn less than £50 a week.

All these workers have to rely on is their own organis-

ation and the power of 11 million trade unionists. The fetters on their bargaining power must be burst asunder.

The trade union movement must unite behind the demands for a £15 across-the-board rise immediately and a £70 minimum wage tied to a cost of living index to be worked out by the unions and working class housewives.

Big business and the profit system has shown itself incapable of guaranteeing such a modest minimum, so why force the workers to make sacrifices in order to prop up this decaying system? If only a planned, socialist economy can guarantee jobs and higher living standards then so be it—the Labour government must turn to socialist policies and take over the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management.

No to Phase Four! Yes to Clause Four!

Brent Kennedy

PHASE FOUR

AUEW left defeated

The election of Terry Duffy as president of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers is a blow to the members of the labour movement generally in the struggle for a living wage and against the growing threat of mass unemployment.

Tory Press

Less than a third of the union membership voted in the second postal ballot, giving Duffy, who has campaigned "against strikes" a victory by 169,168 to 112,251 over the left candidate, Bob Wright.

The right wing also won several other union positions: Gavin Laird retained the Scottish Executive position by 19,074 votes to 10,173; Communist Party member Les Dixon lost his place on the national engineering execu-

tive, and Bill Pritchard replaced left-winger Laurie Smith as a national organiser.

"The Times' Labour Correspondent had already spoken of the part played by "judicious use of sympathetic media outlets."

The millionaire press has campaigned frantically for Duffy. In a union where elections are by postal ballots but election addresses only go to the branches, the press can have a huge influence.

We will carry a more detailed article on these developments in our next issue, on the dangers posed for AUEW members and other workers, and on the steps that must be taken to prevent these dangers from materialising.

Brian Ingham



80,000 demonstrate against the Nazis, Victoria Park, Hackney, last Sunday Report: see page 2

Photo: Julian McKittrick

NAZIS OUT!

SAY 80,000

The National Front, which recently just managed to drag a few ageing fascists under huge police protection to its national "youth rally" in Birmingham, received a devastating answer in London last Sunday.

Thousands of school kids, football fans, young workers and unemployed, students, punks and teddy boys, thronged through the streets of London to demonstrate their opposition to the National Front and its racist poison.

The music was undoubtedly a big attraction. Nevertheless, it was clear that the young people were definitely, consciously against fascism and racism.

As the Anti-Nazi League rally assembled in Trafalgar Square, among the vast array of banners the Labour Party Young Socialists and the People's National Party Youth (UK) stood out as the largest contingents from the organised labour movement. The majority of organised black youth at the rally were under the banner of the PNP.

The drizzle turned to sunshine and the streets were filled with enthusiasm. "National Front out—socialism in" was chanted with determination: "black and white unite and fight—smash the National Front."

Winding its way through the East End to Victoria Park, Hackney, the rally swelled to well over 80,000. No wonder the fascists stayed out of sight!

For many young people, particularly school students, it was their first demonstration. The programme of the LPYS and PNP Youth, linking the fight against racism and fascism with the fight for socialist policies, was eagerly taken up.

600 FASCISTS SNEAK PAST...

By Steve Edwards (Hackney North LPYS)

At 3 pm on May Day, traffic in Oxford Street halted while a procession passed, consisting of a police patrol van, a body of mounted police and a solid phalanx of police on foot, apparently bearing a number of Union Jacks in their midst.

As the procession went by shoppers and tourists could just about glean that the banners were in fact carried by a motley assortment of young thugs, elderly cranks and a few expensively-dressed individuals, forming a slender file between the 3, 4 and 6-deep ranks of police. The marchers occasionally shouted various well-rehearsed racist slogans: "The National Front is a racist front, join the National Front," "We've gotta get rid of the Reds," and "If they're black, send them back."

SOUTH WALES CAMP

South Wales Summer Camp, Friday 26th May-Monday 29th May 1978, Horton, Gower, near Swansea.

The camp is situated in a beautiful area of Gower, with two beaches only ten minutes away. A bar, coffee lounge and heated swimming pool are on site. Entertainment is being provided, with a live group, disco, quizzes, etc. Campers will have to

The magnificent march and carnival showed the enormous potential for mobilising as yet unorganised youth. The NF must have been really demoralised. But because the organisers confined themselves to vague humanitarian slogans—like "Hands off our people" and "We're all against the Front"—most of this potential went untapped.

Why bring eager young people together without any attempt to educate, to explain an alternative, to give a lead? It was a golden opportunity to show the roots of fascism, and bring home the need to combine mobilisation against the fascists with a campaign for socialist policies to eradicate the unemployment, poverty, and social oppression that allows reactionary racist prejudice to breed.

The rally lacked the stamp of the labour movement. The labour leaders have not taken up the initiative of the Young Socialists and the PNP Youth in launching an active campaign on racism and fascism. So the successful initiative as far as this massive rally was concerned was left with groups on the fringes who are themselves blind to the need to direct the radicalism and enthusiasm of youth into the mass organisations.

The labour movement should take its cue from last Sunday, and itself organise demonstrations, rallies and carnivals—but with socialist policies that can harness the energy produced for the fight to change society.

Eileen Short

Banners from Stechford and Edinburg indicated an attempt at a national turnout, but the handful of 500-600 took a mere five minutes to go past. More policemen—mounted, on foot and loaded into vans—brought up the rear.

The police obviously had this march well arranged, behind the back of the labour movement, to allow the fascists to march along part of the traditional route of London labour's May Day march. In the time it took me to walk the few hundred yards from the back of the NF march back to Oxford Circus, the head of the labour demonstration had appeared in Oxford Street, having missed a head-on clash with the fascists by minutes. The labour march had been inexplicably delayed by the police for half an hour!

provide their own tent and food, although snacks and refreshments will be provided free. A crêche will be organised.

The cost? Only £6.50 each! Children between 6-12 years £1.50. Under 5 years, free.

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Labour Party Young Socialists on the massive Anti-Nazi League demonstration

Photo: Julian McKittrick

FASCIST ATTACKS LABOUR PARTY CHAIRMAN

Late on May Day evening, the Chairman of Cheetham branch Labour Party, Tony Ramsay, was attacked in Cheetham, North Manchester, by a "patriotic Englishman".

Tony's unpatriotic act was carrying home the red banner of Manchester Central Labour Party Young Socialists from the May Day demonstration and gala held in Salford.

Tony had just got off the bus when a 6-foot thug suddenly grappled with him, shouting: "You've betrayed 'our' flag" (presumably the Union Jack). The thug attempted to wrench away the

banner, but Tony held on tightly.

Tony retorted that "May Day is international workers' day, and members of Cheetham Labour Party have a right to carry their banners."

In the struggle, one of the banner poles broke, but our banner remained intact and the thug ran off.

Although shaken up, within minutes Tony had alerted two other members of Cheetham Labour Party. The three

of us, together with a large alsatian dog, patrolled the streets of the neighbourhood for a time, but the assailant had crawled into the hole he came from.

This is not the first attack on a member of Cheetham Labour Party. Recently a West Indian mother and community worker, active in the party, had eggs thrown at her in the street. Also Labour Party posters for the local elections have been daubed

with National Front graffiti.

Clearly the police are not protecting the ordinary working people. The lesson we must learn is that in areas of growing violence it is only the labour movement that is capable and prepared to defend working class people.

LPYS IN ACTION

Members of Bristol Labour Party Young Socialists joined in a very successful Day of Action in Bath on April 22nd. The aims were to help the growth of the LPYS in Bath and to raise support for the Labour Candidate in the local election—Young Socialist Sean Sweeney.

Twenty copies of Militant were eagerly bought on the streets during the morning as the enthusiasm of the sellers found a ready response. We also gave out leaflets to shoppers. A further 11 copies were sold at lunchtime in two pubs and five left for sale at a record shop.

In the afternoon we canvassed for votes for the Labour candidate and sold another 16 copies of Militant. It was easy! Socialist ideas are just what people are looking for from the Labour Party—let's not keep them to ourselves!

We generated a lot of interest in Labour's Youth in Bath that day and as a result two people joined the Labour Party right away.

The candidate thanked the LPYS for their help in the best possible way—by agreeing to donate £1 regularly to the Militant Fighting Fund! Now the names and addresses we took of people who were interested must be followed up to build the LPYS and the ideas of Marxism in Bath.

6,000 ON MAY DAY MARCH

In London, 6,000 trade unionists, Labour Party and Co-op members, Young Socialists and immigrant organisations braved appalling weather to celebrate international workers' day on Monday. It was the biggest held in London, despite continual rain.

The march wound its way from the Embankment to Hyde Park, passing on its way a number of Garners Steak houses where workers are currently in dispute for union recognition. These establishments came in for a lot of stick from the marchers, and in particular from the large LPYS contingent who chanted slogans such as "scabs out—trade unions in."

The LPYS contingent was one of the largest, with at least 150 marching behind banners and a decorated float. Slogans demanding a "£70 minimum wage" and a "35-hour week" rang out.

At the rally following the march an enthusiastic response greeted Glenys Ingham, editor of the LPYS newspaper 'Left', who said: "The bosses are putting the blame on the backs of the workers, and yet it is the bosses' crisis. They are to blame for the 1.5 million unemployed in Britain, the 7 million in Western Europe, the 7 million in America and the staggering 300 million unemployed world-wide."

She finished to applause by saying that the power of the working class must be mobilised to end the anarchy of capitalism. She was followed by speeches from Alan Fisher, General Secretary of NUPE, and Labour Party Treasurer Norman Atkinson.



London May Day march Photo: Julian McKittrick

LABOUR MUST WIN IMMIGRANTS

-Says Rochdale Labour Party

On Sunday 23rd April, 30 people, the majority of them immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh, attended a meeting organised in Rochdale by the joint Labour Parties anti-racism committee. They heard Sardul Singh speak on the subject of 'Immigrants and the Labour Movement'.

Capitalism has used immigration to serve the needs of their system for cheap labour and now, when their system was in crisis, they use racialism in an attempt to divide workers.

But there is a growing recognition by the working class that this tactic must be fought, as was shown by the support received by the Grunwick workers, by the refusal of Longbridge workers to work alongside an NF member and recently, in Rochdale itself, where a resolution was passed by the TGWU demanding that union members should refuse to work alongside the NF.

Racialism was not an issue which could be taken in isolation from the rest of the demands and struggles of the



working class. It was only through the struggle for socialism and the establishing of a socialist society itself that the problems which give rise to racialism can be solved.

During the discussion, the

need for working class unity was stressed by several speakers, particularly for immigrant workers to involve themselves actively in the Labour Party and trade unions. The long wait facing

dependents, which one immigrant pointed to, was a result of the failure of the Labour leaders to stand up to pressure from big business and the Tory press. It was this lack of commitment to strug-

gle against capitalism and the remoteness from the effects of their own policies on working people on the part of the leadership that all workers must fight to change.

In Rochdale, before the

LPYS and Militant supporters convinced the Labour Party of the need to fight against racialism and to draw immigrants into the Party, Cyril Smith, the local Liberal MP, in his usual opportunist, patronising fashion went around trying to win support among immigrants by promising them 'equal treatment' with white workers. Recent events in Bedworth have shown the extent of Liberal commitment to fighting racialism.

Exploitation

But more important, as one speaker pointed out, the 'equality' the Liberals are offering is **equality of exploitation**, of bad housing and inadequate social services. The labour movement is much more ambitious. It intends to see all its members provided with the necessities of life and the time and facilities to develop their abilities to the full.

Capitalism is insane

"If a creature from outer-space were to land on this planet, after surveying capitalist society, he would immediately place the whole of mankind in the lunatic asylum."

This telling condemnation of the insane economic policies of world capitalism was made by Peter Taaffe at a Militant meeting in Islington Central Library.

"Fifteen million people are unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries alone, yet the capitalists have been building mountains of food—milk and butter are being fabricated into food to feed back to animals!"

He went on to paint a black picture of the economic mess of these countries which has now become a nightmare for workers. "Even their own economists predict that unemployment will be magnified to an unprecedented level in the next ten years."

"The 1½ million unemployed in Britain will become a permanent army of 4½ million by 1985. And one half the labour force in 1995 will be out on the stones. Coupled with rising unemployment has been the total lack of investment in manufacturing industries."

Using steel output as an index of the economy, he showed that Britain's share of the domestic steel market had fallen from 70% to 55%. Italy, the sick man of Europe, now produces more steel than Britain.

In manufacturing industries, the electronics industry was self sufficient 17 years ago. Now it has become a net importer (60%). At the same time the capitalists have been investing in non-manufacturing industries like land speculations, catering and tourism which have a higher rate of profit. Moreover, the big monopolies which control 80% of the economy have been investing abroad!

"Only genuine socialist policies can solve the terrible problems that have been created by this barbaric system."

90 HEAR ANDY BEVAN

Over 90 people packed into Calverts Hotel, Newport, on April 18th to hear Andy Bevan, Labour Party National Youth Officer, and Cathy Wilson, the Prospective Parliamentary Labour Candidate for the Isle of Wight. It was the Labour Party's biggest public meeting for over 20 years, since the visits of Bessie Braddock and that other Bevan—Aneurin.

Cathy Wilson placed special emphasis on youth and the vital role that the LPYS has in building the Party and creating a programme for the working class to mobilise on.

Cathy referred to the National Health Service as the greatest achievement of the British working class but graphically explained how it was being eroded and dismantled. She concluded by appealing to the many new faces at the meeting to join the Labour Party and fight for the realisation of Clause IV—"the cornerstone of the Labour Party."

"We've got to rebuild society on more humane lines," she said. "Everybody has the right to a home, to food, to a



Cathy Wilson

job, and the ability to live like human beings—not like animals. We can gain reforms, like the NHS, but the only way to guarantee those reforms is with socialism. Once we've got control of the economy, then we really can start to build things for people and not for profits."

Andy Bevan told the meeting how the Labour Party Young Socialists had been hitting the headlines recently, both nationally and locally on the Isle of Wight, over school students.

The spontaneous demonstrations of school students that had taken place during the teachers' industrial action

were a sign of "the burning anger that exists among school students and young people generally, and it is very easy to see why such a change in attitude has come about. In 1974, 59,600 school leavers were out of work. In 1977, 241,300 school leavers were out of work. This year, 300,000 young people will be leaving school with nowhere to go but the dole queue."

"Youth in this country can no longer afford to be cynical about politics when there are such threats to our job prospects and living standards, and this is reflected in this meeting where many young people have come to their first political meeting."

"If young people are taking such a hammering, and if we have the temerity to put ourselves forward—the Labour Party Young Socialists—as the champions of working class youth, then we have a responsibility to point out to the whole of the labour movement that a thoroughgoing socialist strategy is needed to open up some kind of future for our generation."

"Our message to young people is that the place to fight for change, the place to



Andy Bevan

fight for a better future is within the mass organisations of the working class—the Labour Party and the trade union movement."

The way in which our ideas are becoming more widely supported was seen in the fact that **eight people decided to join the Labour Party that night, and there are around twenty other names and addresses to be followed up.**

The success of this meeting was a tremendous achievement, particularly as Transport House delayed a decision to permit Andy to speak so long that we only had ten days to organise it. The Isle of Wight has provided Transport House with evidence; evidence that working people want to hear Andy Bevan and the ideas of the LPYS and that they will give Labour their support on the basis of socialism.

Brian Jones
(Agent, IOW LP)

Students occupy Southwark

On the 25th of April, at a students' union meeting at Southwark college, a unanimous decision was taken in favour of a "work-in" to show our opposition to the reduction of the canteen service and staff.

The Tory-controlled GLC have decided to stop serving hot meals during the exam period, because they predicted that hot meals were not making enough profit—without consulting any of the canteen staff (and their union NUPE), the students or lecturers.

At present and average of 80-90 students are having hot meals.

If the GLC's decision was put into action it would cause great inconvenience to the students who would have to take a ten minute walk to the 'Cut' branch of the college, where queues at present can last up to 45 minutes.

It would also mean that the fire regulations would be broken, as the dining hall at the 'Cut' branch measures only 2,000 square feet and can only cater for 250 students. At present there are 250 at the Blackfriars branch and 450 at the 'Cut' branch. Obviously students' welfare comes second to money-making enterprise.

The canteen staff would be dispersed over London—the staff's welfare has obviously not been considered either. The NUPE members are giving full support to the students' union.

Our action in occupying the college has been taken to force the GLC to reverse their dictatorial decision. We appeal to all Students' Unions, Labour Clubs and NUPE branches to assist the fight of the students and staff. Please send resolutions of support to the Students' Union, Blackfriars' branch, Southwark College, 209/215 Blackfriars Road, London.

Candida Burford
(Southwark College Labour Club)

MILITANT v NCP -80 attend debate

"A clash of ideas in the labour movement can only do good," declared Peter Taaffe [Editor of 'Militant'] arguing the case for the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment in a debate with the New Communist Party on which road to socialism.

Eighty people heard the reply to Ray Flint (NCP National Committee) which pointed to the utter impasse society found itself in. Every day brought more examples of the collapse of British capitalism: in Merseyside more were out of work than prior to the Jarrow march of the '30s.

To this NCP comrades argued for reflation, nationalisation (though not of the vital 200 monopolies which control the economy), a ban on both the export of capital and sale of land to capitalists, and import controls.

The similarity between these demands and those of both the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Tribune Group was pointed out in discussion. Moreover, rather than calling for reflation—a Keynesian demand with its inevitable boost to inflation, as Peter Taaffe pointed out—a restoration of the cuts and a programme of useful public works would have the effect of absorbing both the unemployed and providing much needed schools and hospitals.

Predictably, the main areas for discussion were the "com-

munist" of the Soviet Union and the Labour Party as a force for change in Britain. On the former, Comrade Flint identified 'Militant' with the capitalists in our "anti-sovietism" and "confusion of the working class".

From the floor, examples were given of the inefficiency of a bureaucratically controlled state while due recognition was made to the achievements of a planned economy: from the India of Europe, the Soviet Union had become the world's second industrial power. The differences between the ideas and actions of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky were revealed strikingly with reference to the Soviet constitution with its guarantee of the freedom of speech, assembly and right to strike. With a totalitarian one-party state

today, the situation was quite different.

Along with NCP members from the floor, Ray Flint saw the building of a new party as essential on the road to socialism. No future was clear in the Labour Party despite the complete discrediting of the ideas of reformism. Neither was the Labour Party's position as a traditional mass party understood and the reasons why the government had worked against workers' interests since the election.

The debate most vividly showed the need for a clear perspective and programme for with the catastrophic effects of capitalism the question of leadership becomes ever more vital.

Leon Kaplan
(Rotherham LPYS)

LEFT & RIGHT

Eating is dangerous to your health

Bophuthatswana—which became South Africa's second "independent" African "homeland" at the end of last year—has just issued a special set of postage stamps. According to the "Windhoek Advertiser" [which you may have missed this week] the stamps have been issued "to call attention to the World Hypertension Month."

The theme of the stamps is "Down with high blood pressure", a message on all the stamps, accompanied by various slogans and pictures. The 15 cent stamp carries a picture of a knife, fork and spoon, and a grim skull, plus the slogan "overeating is dangerous."

Apart from the fact that hypertension is hardly the most pressing issue for a campaign in this area, there is little danger of Bophuthatswana's people overeating. Quite the reverse.

The South African Government has now stopped the issuing of figures for death by malnutrition and starvation. But Dr Donald Mackenzie, the medical superintendent of the region's hospital, has written of the "appalling number of malnutrition cases which had to be treated this winter." He wrote that "many suffering from starvation died," and that this problem has been getting worse because of the Apartheid regime's policy of removing blacks from white areas and forcing them into the "homelands."

Still, isn't it nice to know that Vorster's government are concerned to prevent hypertension and overeating.

High class scroungers

Compared to the average worker MP's are not especially underpaid at £6,300 a year. Even so, the Member of Parliament with no other income is the exception rather than the rule. Especially fortunate are the 36 British delegates to the European Assembly in Strasbourg. One MP estimates that some of his colleagues may be pocketing an extra £3,000 a year for this bit of public service. But these Euro MPs receive no salary for the job. It's all done on expenses!

For a start, an MP can claim just over £50 a day subsistence allowance for each day at the Assembly, and they average 14 days a month in Europe. With all the wining and dining that goes on it's difficult to get through £50 a day, and anyway, it's possible just to sign the register and go home.

There's also a secretarial allowance set at a minimum of £88 a month. But this can easily be pushed up to £4,200 a year. There's nothing to stop an MP using a member of his family as a secretary.

But probably the biggest money spinner is the travelling expenses. MPs get £92 for the first 400km, and 9p per km after that. A journey from London to Strasbourg and back is 1,330 km, which works out at £176, a lot more than the air fare. Crafty groups of MPs have been getting together to charter a plane to make even more profit.

How many of the Tory MPs who get these perks have fulminated at social security 'scroungers'? How many Labour MPs put some of their little windfall into Party funds?

In the wrong party!

The strike by workers at Claridges, apart from being a great step forward by workers in one of the least organised trades, produced an interesting phenomenon. As described by the 'Times', pickets were on every door and the dispute was declared official by the GMWU. But who had crossed the picket lines to lunch? Lady Falkender—the former Mrs Marcia Williams, Harold Wilson's right-hand woman. She was quoted as saying: "I had soup and steak and thoroughly enjoyed it. I thought the service was very good." Clearly some people climb 'upstairs' on the back of the labour movement and then think nothing of blacklegging on the workers 'downstairs.'

The Russian Revolution showed how it was possible for the working class to break the power of the bosses and begin the task of building a genuine workers' state, where democracy and freedom can be established, without the fetters of a privileged minority of capitalists who rob the workers of the produce of their labours.

With the isolation of the revolution in backward Russia, however, there was an inevitable process of degeneration. Under Stalin, a new bureaucratic caste usurped the democratic power of the soviets.

The planned economy, on which the bureaucracy still ultimately rested, represented an enormous gain over capitalism. But the bureaucracy, which preserves itself in power by totalitarian methods, has become more and more of a burden on society, stifling initiative and giving rise to unimaginable waste.

We can see how the achievements of the planned economies of the 'eastern bloc' fall far short of the aims of Lenin and Trotsky by studying the official statistics. But how these distortions affect the lives of the workers themselves, we can only guess, basing our conclusions on our own experience of industrial conditions and on the limited material reaching us.

Prosecuted

Occasionally, however, first hand accounts of workers' conditions filter through to the West. "A Worker in a Workers' State" will be therefore eagerly read by Marxists, because it provides us with a real insight into the working lives of our brothers in the East.

Miklos Haraszti is the poet son of Communists, and has himself spent his lifetime supporting the ideas of Lenin. He was originally commissioned to write the book by the authorities but he was eventually prosecuted by them: the 'peoples' court' found the book "liable to provoke

BOOK REVIEW

"A WORKER IN A WORKERS' STATE"

A Worker in a
Workers' State'
By Miklos Haraszti
Published by Pelican
85p

Order from:
World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

hatred of the state."

One of the first things to strike a worker reading this book is how similar working conditions are in the "socialist factories" to those we are used to here. Because, officially, Hungary is a "socialist" workers' state, a hypocritical lip-service has to be paid to the idea that the worker has some control over the factory. Just as capitalist employers portray their firm as being something to which "we" all belong, so do the factory managers in Hungary.

The workers have learned to prick up their ears whenever the foreman says

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things like: "We must reach our targets by working harder"—meaning: "You had better put your backs into it, or else."

Many workers will be surprised to learn that the system of piecework exists in the 'communist' countries. Inevitably, quality is sacrificed in order to produce the maximum earnings. In Britain, at least the worker expects his shop steward to fight on his behalf over such matters as the timing of the job, or the amount of time allowed for rest. In Hungary the TU officials are part of the management and the worker has to accept the conditions given to him.

All pretence of workers' control through factory committees and soviets is replaced by the 'ad hoc' meetings called by management to hand down directives from above. The time used up in these ad hoc meetings has to be paid for out of the bonus system, as

sometimes happens in British factories.

Workers will not be in the least surprised at the results of the imposition of capitalist methods of factory management. Disregard for safety regulations, arguments among workers about 'good' and 'bad' jobs (i.e. jobs providing more or less bonus), boredom, weariness and cynicism are all rife on both sides of the 'iron curtain.'

Of course, the capitalist press in Britain will portray the book as though it condemns "socialism". Marxists must point out that Stalinism is a monstrous distortion of the socialism of Lenin and Trotsky. We defend the planned economy, which has improved the living standards of workers at an unprecedented pace.

In 1917, living standards in Russia were worse than in India. Russia was a semi-colony of the wealthy capitalist powers of Britain, France, Germany and America. The superhuman efforts of the Russian working class under Lenin and Trotsky laid the basis for the advance of Russia to one of the two greatest industrial nations in the world.

Haraszti's book shows how the monster of the state machine, created after the victory of Stalin over Lenin and Trotsky at the end of Lenin's life, now acts as a brake on the productive efforts of the workers of the 'Soviet bloc.'

At the present moment, the heroic stand being taken by workers in Poland against the increases in food prices decreed by the government, once again show us that many workers in the Stalinist states, far from being deluded that a return to capitalism could provide any solution, see a return to the programme of workers' democracy on which Lenin and Trotsky stood in 1917, and which was resurrected by the Hungarian workers in 1956, as the only way forward.

Mike Cleverley

(Walthamstow
Labour Party)

TV REVIEW

"State of Emergency"

ATV recently screened (15 March) an excellent documentary on the State of Emergency under the Heath government during the winter of 1973/74. For any activist in the movement watching it, it was almost like seeing a re-run of the 1926 General Strike, especially as regards the actions of the TUC leaders who arrived at 10 Downing street to try to end the dispute as soon as it had begun.

Of all the participants in the events of that winter who were interviewed, the one who most clearly explained the issues at stake and the part played by the leaders of the labour movement, was the Head of the Civil Service from 1968-74, Lord Armstrong. The top man in the capitalist state machine was fully aware of the implications of the actions of the miners and of the Heath government. His estimations of the "leaders" of the movement were very revealing.

In the first place, he knew

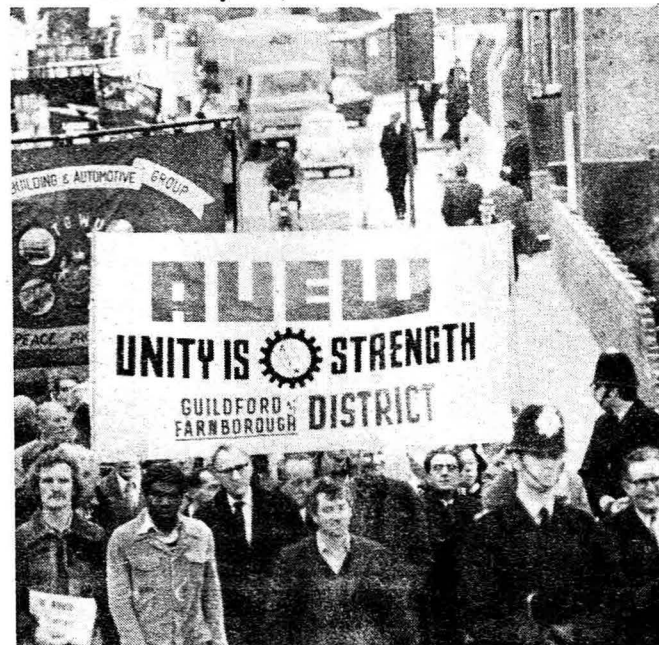
from the outset that Joe Gormley was "leading" the miners from behind, and was moving forward under pressure from the rank and file.

He also claimed that the TUC leaders arrived to negotiate a settlement of the dispute with Heath, but they did not know what the miners' claim involved. Heath himself had to acquaint them with the exact nature of the claim.

Union Strength

Finally, his revelations pointed to the scandalous nature of the TUC's offer to the Heath government. In return for their recognising the special nature of the miners' claim, the TUC promised to ensure that no other section of the movement would use the miners' claim as a guideline for their own claim.

Heath, however, feared that the rest of the working class would use the miners' claim as a model, and would not have been held back by the labour leaders. He believed that by calling a general election and getting a man-



date to rule from the electorate would be the solution to the problem. Armstrong realised, however, that even after an election, even if the Tories increased their majority, the position would fundamentally be the same. The strength of the organised labour movement would present a virtually unmovable obstacle for Tory policies.

The main lesson that we in the labour movement can learn from this important episode is the need to fight for a programme of the election of officials and the right of recall, and for no official to receive more money than

those they represent. This is more than ever a burning issue. If we want to prevent our leaders accepting adverse wage deals under a future Thatcher-Joseph Tory government, then we have to begin now the task of making the trade union and Labour leaders more responsible to the members, so that they will fight for our interests. Then we will have learnt the lessons of the State of Emergency, 1974 style.

Tom Smith
(Chairman, British
Leyland Special
Products Combine)

The horror of health cuts

- a father's bitter experience



After reading the 'Militant' pamphlet on the National Health Service I thought I would write and relate my own personal experience with regards the government cuts in public spending and how they have also affected the mentally retarded sections of our society.

My own son was born severely mentally retarded, and pressures arising from this led to the break-up of my marriage. I had to give up work to look after my son.

After a few years his condition so deteriorated that he had to be taken into permanent medical care. At first he was in the children's wing of a General Hospital and conditions there were fairly adequate, but due to the crisis of a shortage of hospital beds, he was transferred to a hospital catering exclusively for mentally retarded children of all grades.

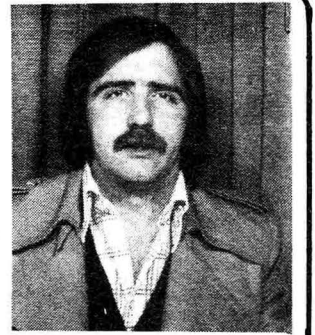
On my first visit to this hospital I was reasonably satisfied with its conditions. It was only after a short while that I became very uneasy about the apparent shortage of staff you would normally find in a hospital, i.e. doctors, trained nurses and especially physiotherapists, whom I thought would have been a necessity in a hospital where the vast majority of its patients did not have the use of their limbs.

On enquiring about these shortages I was informed by the hospital administration that a local GP called in

By Philip

McPhee

Provan CLP



about once a week and as far as the physiotherapists were concerned, that due to financial cuts they could not afford to employ "any at all".

Needless to say I was horrified at these revelations and I started a lone fruitless campaign to try and improve conditions in what I now found out to be a sub-standard hospital for mentally retarded children. Unfortunately, each time I faced the authorities I was given a sympathetic shrug and the excuse that the money was just not available.

Dying for Profit

My son has since died, although I hasten to add, not due to the conditions of his environment as he had only been given a certain amount of time to expect to live. But it is quite apparent that there are people dying due to the lack of experienced medical staff and basic medical equipment (e.g. kidney machines) while at the same time pharmaceutical companies are announcing record profits.

I recently joined the Labour Party because I believed that in the constitution of the Labour Party there is the facility available which, if implemented, would eradicate a system which puts profit before needs. That is Clause Four part four of the Constitution calling for the nationalisation of industry and the running of the economy by the workers, which I believe is a necessary pre-requisite for achieving the socialist society we aim for.

I should like to close by saying that although the cuts are government policy, they are contrary to the 1974 Labour Party Manifesto which pledged: "The Labour government will reduce regional inequality of standards; put emphasis on prevention and primary care and give a clear cut priority to spending on services for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped."

It is this manifesto, tied to the 'Militant's' fighting programme, which will keep me active in the Labour Party.

PLAID CYMRU

No solution for Welsh Workers' Problems

Plaid Cymru is not just a Welsh nationalist version of the Tory Party. Plaid Cymru is an amalgamation of people from all different shades of the political spectrum, from those who consider themselves "Marxists" to those who want to see nothing more than an independent Wales where Welsh rather than 'British' capitalists own and control industry.

On the left wing of the party are such elements as Dafydd Ellis Thomas who try to create the impression that they are the inheritors of the tradition of Keir Hardie and the socialist pioneers. But in the same party are such elements as Derrick Hearne who, in a series of six double-paged articles in the Plaid Cymru paper 'Welsh Nation', examined the "conflict between Socialism and Nationalism."

In one article he urged conscription into the army as an answer to youth unemployment while in another he lamented the fact that "The working people of this country have lost moral standards..." In order to restore these morals only "Christianity can give the discipline our nation needs to be ruled by."

Those in Plaid Cymru who consider themselves to be socialist must explain how they think that they can create a socialist Wales by being in the same party as outright reactionaries and those who would conscript youth into the army because there aren't enough jobs.

Unemployment

But despite being a very loose amalgamation Plaid Cymru does have a programme of sorts to deal with the problems of unemployment and homelessness. The 'Welsh Nation' in October of last year put forward a number of ideas to reduce unemployment in Wales.

One of the demands was for the nationalisation of the clearing and merchant banks in Wales but the control of these banks was to be left to

By Chris Burns

(Cardiff SE LPYS)

the Welsh Assembly, which means that they would be no more under the control of the working class than is the Bank of England, and if the mass of industry was left in private hands then these banks would still be tied to the desires and profit motives of big business.

The 1974 Manifesto of Plaid Cymru boasted that "Wales has the resources." "Rich oil deposits soon to be developed off the Welsh coast" was one of the proud boasts which has since proved to be untrue; "we produce 30% of British steel" was another boast, but with a world slump in demand for steel and with insufficient manufacturing industry to use the steel, the Welsh steel industry would be more of an embarrassment than an asset for an independent capitalist Wales.

"Deep water harbours" are no use when world trade is contracting and "self-sufficiency in dairy produce and meat" is no good when foodstuffs for animals are rising in price and when people are eating less meat than at any time since the war due to falling living standards.

In no way has Wales any way forward on the basis of independence—or as part of Britain—while industry, the banks and finance houses and land remain in private hands. The crisis in the steel industry in Wales and throughout Britain cannot be solved on the basis of nationalism. Julian Hodge, one of the main shareholders of the Commercial Bank of Wales, may be Welsh but his methods of

extracting profit do not differ from his English, Scottish, German or American counterparts.

In their manifesto Plaid Cymru answer some arguments against the separation of Wales. One argument is that of "working class solidarity". This argument is discounted by Plaid Cymru as being "not valid" because Wales is "a united and homogenous society, with no sizeable upper class."

But what they fail to understand is that the power of the ruling class doesn't depend upon its size but upon its economic strength, its control of the radio, press and television and in the final analysis its control over the army and police. The need for working class solidarity doesn't depend on some sentimental notion of internationalism but on the absolute necessity for the maximum unity of the working class.



Dr Phil Williams, Plaid Cymru Vice-president

The ideas of Plaid Cymru would split the working class and make such strikes as the miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974 much more difficult. At the root of Plaid Cymru's ideology is the idea that Welsh workers have more in common with their employers, with the capitalist class of Wales, than with the working class of England and Scotland.

In reality there is no real distinction on national lines

within the ruling class of Britain and if Wales were to separate then much of Welsh industry would still be owned by English capital. Plaid Cymru has no strategy to overcome this problem.

The degree of poverty, unemployment and homelessness in Wales is too great to be overcome by simply reducing the size of the area which a Welsh parliament would govern. If the majority of the Welsh people desire devolution—or even complete separation—then socialists will defend their right to have that demand met.

But the only final solution to the problems of the working class in Wales lies in a socialist planned economy throughout Britain which could ensure that the 30% of Welsh building workers on the dole could be found jobs building new houses to replace those which are unfit and for those people who are completely homeless.

Indeed only under socialism could the Welsh language and culture be safeguarded.

A socialist federation of Britain would combine all the benefits of a centralised, planned economy with the maximum amount of democratic control and autonomy. But this is a policy which must be fought for by the united working class movement of Britain and not by splitting that working class along national lines.

Workers' Notebook

BONE IDLE CAR WORKERS?

If ever an industry has been destroyed by capitalism it is the British car industry. Its success in the fifties was one of the reasons big business was able to keep going, but the decline since then is clear. In 1965, 1,722,000 cars were produced in Britain; in 1972, 1,921,000 were made. Last year was the third of three appalling years for production; 1,328,000 cars were turned out. The number of commercial vehicles made was also in a three year trough.

It is not as if there is no demand for cars. New registrations rose from 1,099,000 in 1965 to 1,324,000 in 1972. Nor were exports taking away production that could be used at home: they fell from 628,000 to 475,000 in the same period.

Bone idle carworkers? No—the real reasons are two-fold. First, an insane system of private enterprise which produces to economic demand and not for need. Second, the incompetence and stupidity of big business which does not plan and squanders the future. British Leyland has one new car on the drawing board. Fiat will produce one new model a year into the 1980's.

Society of Motor Manufacturers and Trades Motors Brief in March 1978.

On the night shift

HARRASSED, BORED AND ANGRY

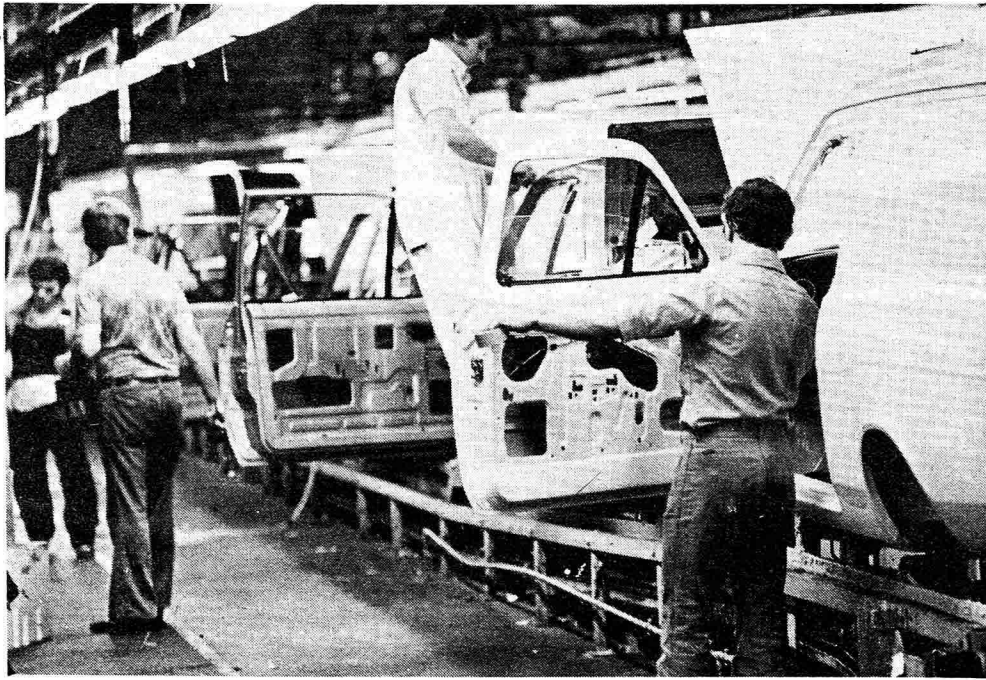
By an ex-Ford worker

Having once stated categorically that I would never work in "that place" it was with foreboding that I reported for work at the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant [PTA] at Ford's, Halewood. Twelve months' unemployment had crushed what resistance I had had to working for Henry Ford.

It was a bleak morning with drizzling rain when I and a group of 25 or 30 other men were told to line up at the gate. After a delay of some twenty minutes a personnel representative came and led us to a room for "induction".

This lasted for a couple of hours when the advantages of working for Ford were explained. The group, which had now grown to about 50, was then split up. Half were told to report for work immediately, the rest, which included me, were to go home and return the same evening for the night shift.

That evening I left home and trudged through the gate of the PTA. The night starters were told to report to a waiting room. At about midnight we were split up into smaller groups and taken to the assembly lines—by this time I felt like crawling into



On the assembly line at Ford's, Halewood.

Photo: John Sturrock Report

bed and not at all keen to start building cars.

The first contact with the assembly plant was appalling, with the clatter and din striking at my by now jaded nerves. We were now in groups of three or four and allocated to various foremen who were in charge of different stages of assembly.

The foreman I was allocated to—nicknamed "Clemmo" because he looked like Clement Freud—then showed us around the plant, pointing out the various dangers that exist in a car plant. He

emphasised the danger from the fork lift trucks which had a reputation for knocking men over as they walked from line to line.

After having been shown around the area, the time was now about 1.30 am, and having been up at 7.30 the previous morning my eyes began to close until I was almost asleep on my feet. That didn't matter to the foreman—who didn't seem put out about talking to someone who kept nodding off.

He introduced me to a line

worker named Dave who was attached to a gun on the end of an airline. His job was to screw strikers onto the tailgates on the Capris and to fit package trays into the Escorts.

By now my co-ordination through lack of sleep was badly undermined. No matter—I was told I would have three days' training on these two operations then I would be on my own.

Dave showed me how to sub-assemble the strikers, how to gun them into the tailgates, and how to fit the



Question Time

According to an answer from the Department of the Environment on March 8th, 39.5% of all dwellings that are unfit or lacking amenities are in the privately rented sector. Yet this sector accounts for less than 20% of the housing stock in Britain. Clearly people who are forced to go to private landlords are twice as likely to get lumbered with unfit accommodation.

A written reply from the Department of Employment on March 6th to a question concerning the number of strikes demonstrates the bitter mood of opposition among workers to continuing wage restraint.

Whereas the number of working days lost through strikes rose in 1973 and 1974 as a result of the Tory government's pay policy, the acceptance by the trade union leaders of the Labour Government's Social Contract meant a fall in strikes for the following two years. Now, however, workers have seen through the attempt to boost bosses' profits at the expense of their wages and are once again being forced to take industrial action to safeguard their living standards.

Government figures show the number of days lost (excluding the mining industry) to have been: 1973, 7,107,000; 1974, 9,125,000, 1975, 5,960,000, 1976, 3,214,000; 1977, 9,909,000.

trays into the Escorts. Dave was a decent lad and for the first and second nights he did most of the work.

This was just as well as the assault on my system induced by working when I should have been sleeping gave me the feeling of sleep-walking. The operation of gunning the strikers was easy enough, the trick was avoiding getting your finger trapped between the striker and the tailgate in the process, which could be nasty. Fitting the trays again wasn't difficult apart from the fact that after the first half dozen or so my hands began to feel raw.

I was told there were two twenty-minute breaks and an unpaid dinner break. This gave the line workers the opportunity of eating, reading or—the most popular—stretching out on packing trays and dozing off.

At 7.30 am, after a night which seemed like an eternity, the knocking-off buzzer went. Feeling totally exhausted and light-headed, I queued up to clock off. I boarded a bus outside the gate, paid my fare and promptly fell asleep.

On reaching home I forced some breakfast down and collapsed into bed into a drugged-like sleep. Later I learned I was lucky as some workers on nights can't sleep during the day because their systems refuse to adjust to the upset.

By the end of the first week I had begun to adjust to night work. My hands were a mass of cuts and scratches resulting from knocking against jagged edges on the car bodies. Two pairs of jeans needed major repairs resulting from damage sustained climbing in and out of the Escorts.

After a couple of weeks I became proficient to an extent where I could move up the line performing the operations and make time. Once having "cracked" the job boredom became the main problem. The repetitive nature of the work brought on mind-bending boredom.

It became so unbearable after a couple of months that I resolve to get transferred to

a different operation and was moved onto heater covers.

This particular operation entailed fixing covers onto heaters which had already been secured earlier up the line. The operation was slightly more complex than fitting trays. First of all the covers themselves had to be assembled on a work bench off the moving line, attaching various switches to the cover itself.

The heater covers thus assembled were then attached to the car body by means of four screws at the front and two awkwardly placed at the sides. Using a "yank", a ratchet-driven screwdriver, the operator drove the screws in.

The front screws were easy enough. On doing the sides though, an inexperienced operator would find the "yank" slipping off the screw and his knuckles would be raked along the jagged edges of the heater cover. By the end of the first night on this job my knuckles were skinned, dripping with blood and covered with sticking plasters.

This operation took a little longer to master than the previous job I had been on. Once having gained the necessary experience the boredom of repetitious work once again gained the upper hand.

It was the ambition of every operator I spoke to, to get off the moving line—many were even prepared to accept a drop in cash and accept a janitor's job, in order to get away from the pressure. Against this background there was an atmosphere of conflict between the shop floor and the company.

This was to break out into ferocious open conflict from time to time with the shop stewards treading an uneasy path between fighting on behalf of individual workers having trouble with their foremen, and attempting to dissuade the mass of the workers from taking action on issues which in their opinion did not justify strike action. A description of the conflicts that ensue at Ford's will be covered in another article.

Advertising What a waste!

When you get your wage packet home at the end of the week, a lot of people are determined that the money won't stay in your pocket for very long.

You can't pick up a newspaper, watch the television or even walk down the street without being urged to part with your hard earned cash for some product or other. These washing powders, tooth-pastes, shampoos, meat-cubes etc, are supposedly the passport to middle class affluence—a big house with a nice garden, and a smart car in the drive!

Big Money

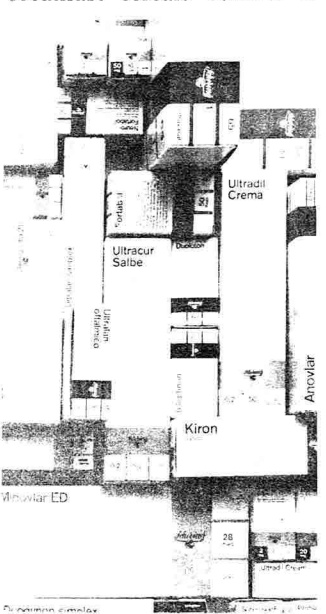
Advertising is an expensive business. At up to £15,000 for a 30 second television commercial, manufacturers certainly aren't just providing us with entertainment. Those glossy pages in the Sunday Times colour supplement cost them £5,500 each, and a page in Woman's Own £4,730.

The food market is particularly important—in 1975 British people spent £12,092 million on food. Now that living standards are under attack, there is often emphasis on budget meals, using sauces and flavourings to make up for deficiencies in food value. The £6 million advertising campaign for stock cubes is just one example of this.

There is now strong suggestive medical evidence that a bland diet based on processed foods causes digestive disorder,

ers, and that fresh foods high in fibre content are far more beneficial. Yet advertisements teach us that processed foods are more acceptable, and more enjoyable.

Marmite, which is usually shown being fed to babies, to imply that it is nourishing, was shown in a recent Sunday Times survey to contain mainly salt and starch. Many breakfast cereals contain a



high percentage of sugar and dieticians have said that for nutrition value, you might just as well pour milk over the cardboard packet and eat that! In 1975, £6 million was

spent promoting breakfast cereals.

In 1973 a survey showed that 25% of children aged 5 to 8 have five or more decaying teeth, and 45% of all adults wear dentures. Yet extra sugar is added to many processed foods from baked beans to pork luncheon meat and frozen fish shapes.

Advertising costs of biscuits, cakes, bread, snacks and deserts amounted to £15 million in 1975. Not surprisingly a further £2 million was spent advertising slimming aids!

The advertising industry provides an important means of maintaining and increasing profits. It is also a tremendous waste of resources.

Waste

Many different firms produce the same goods, and some firms produce different goods to compete against each other. For instance, there are ten major brands of washing powder produced by the two major washing powder manufacturers in Britain—Lever Bros. and Procter and Gamble—who share 90% of the market. In 1975, these two companies spent nearly £3 million in advertising, and the recent launching of New Persil was supported by £300,000 of television advertising in one week.

In the drug industry, the wastage of resources is again evident. When vital research is still necessary to find cures for fatal illness, many researchers are employed devel-

oping a different type of headache, or cold cure with a new gimmick to capture the market.

The table below shows the amounts spent on promoting different products—all with the same basic effect—in 1975. In that year £3½ million was spent advertising different cold cures.

Product	Cost of Advertising
Asprin	£861,000
Aspro	£27,000
Disprin	£402,000
Phensic	£277,000
Hedex	£150,000

There are approximately 100,000 drugs marketed at present. The World Health Organisation has said that 100-200 drugs could do the job. 85% of the drugs produced in Britain carry brand names, and in 1974 it was estimated that £38 million was spent promoting these brand names.

In 1974, at £900 million, expenditure on advertising in Britain was higher than in France, Italy or West Germany. This was paid for by the exploitation of the workers producing those goods, and increased costs to those who bought them.

This vast expenditure is an inevitable part of our competitive economy motivated only by profit. How much better could these resources be used in a rational socialist economy run for the benefit of all!

By Beth Hensman

May 1968



Ten million workers out! Hundreds of factories occupied and controlled by the workers!

Schools taken over by pupils and progressive staff! Capitalist newspaper lies 'censored' by printing workers!

Universities taken over! Docks, post offices, ships taken over. What a mighty demonstration of the invincible power of the working class when it begins to move!

What a crushing blow to the cynics, sceptics and apologists for big business who have written off the working class as "apathetic," "bought off" etc.—and to the professional orthodox economists, none of whose arduous study of the complex mechanics of capitalist economics could enable them to discern the gigantic force beneath the surface of modern society: the creator of the new society to come: the working class.

How clear it should be to even the most politically uneducated workers that their French brothers would be in power today, but for the cowardly policies of the French labour and trade union leaders!

Determined

The workers and population of France were incensed by the brutality of the special police (CRS) in their sadistic onslaught on the students (it was the first time police had intervened in the Sorbonne since Nazi occupation, the CRS used a potentially lethal gas). More particularly they were impressed by the success of the students in gaining their immediate demands without delay, through their determination to act.

The vast mass of students came out in a general strike throughout the country, protesting at the intolerable overcrowding, impossible work conditions, against the lack of opportunities afterwards, except for particularly successful careerists, and against the degenerate and inhuman "impersonal society" of modern capitalism. The 'Daily Express' reported that 80% of the population of Paris was for the students.

The industrial workers—and particularly the young ones—were emboldened by their success: "The students came first. They acted as a spark. They caused the government to yield...they gave us the feeling that we could go ahead," said one of them to a 'Times' reporter.

Immediately the workers outpaced their union leaders and refused to restrict their struggle to a harmless one-day strike. They proved that they would tolerate their grievances no longer.

The 'Observer' (11.5.1968) revealed that "5.6 million" people live below the subsistence level. One quarter of the population receive £12 or less basic weekly wage". At the same time, unemployment has dramatically increased

Factories occupied

Ten years ago this week a revolutionary situation opened up which threatened to engulf French capitalism. Ten million workers occupied their factories in a general strike so powerful that it not only paralysed the economy but petrified the ruling class and their state machine.

As the first of a series of articles commemorating this tenth anniversary, 'Militant' can proudly reprint below extracts from an article, "All Power to French Workers", first published in our issue number 38 in June 1968, showing the tremendous scope of the workers' revolutionary movement and how the leaders of the workers' organisations snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

Our prediction then that the concession of wage rises and reforms—used by the Gaullist state and the Communist Party leaders to induce the workers to give up their struggle—would be cynically stolen back through inflation has been verified by the experience of recent years. This week the French government announced increases in the price of coal, gas, electricity, post and transport of 9%-20%. French capitalism's attack on the workers' living standards are preparing a world premiere for which May 1968 was merely a dress rehearsal.

photo: Keystone

The red flag flies over occupied Renault factory at Boulogne-Billancourt as workers attend mass CGT meeting inside.



until it is now over half a million.

Some areas have been faced with a catastrophic increase: "In the Paris region it is a rise of 51% and in the north—home of France's traditional coal-mining, steel and textile industries—the increase is 59%." ('Financial Times')

Real wages have actually fallen over the last two years. Any actual wage rises have been rapidly eaten away by price increases: prices are "45% higher than in 1958. This rise is conspicuously the fastest of all EEC countries."

Even the farmers were in revolt at the rapid decrease in their incomes. Many have been ruined and driven off the land, some into the decaying houses which scar the big cities.

In Paris alone, over one third of the 9 million population live in inadequate housing. Significantly, it has been the youth which has been particularly affected by the slow-down of French industry. "Of the registered unemployed, about 23% are young school leavers" ('Financial Times' 20.5.68).

A gigantic wave swept from one end of France to the other. Not only the industrial workers but the bank employees, white-collar workers, and the catering workers have responded to the call to strike. While only 10% were unionised, over 50% of the labour force is involved, which is incontestable proof of the revolutionary energy and determination that has been unleashed.

Tidal Wave

As in all revolutions, from the cracks and depths of society, the formerly politically backward workers, the sweated and impoverished, the demoralised and the cynical, have been brought to their feet. The poor farmers have set up barricades round the city of Nantes and other cities "in support of the workers and students." ('Times', 21.5.68).

Exemplary order is maintained and, as even the capitalist press has been forced to admit, the workers "check and grease factory machines that are lying idle."

All the conditions for a successful overturn are there: the workers are determined to go the whole hog. The middle

class, particularly its lower layers, look with profound sympathy on the strike wave and in many cases join in. (e.g. On the ships "even the officers have joined the sit-ins begun by the crews." ('Times' 23.5.68)

It is the working class which has the effective power in the factories, the ports, the mines, and the streets. A classic revolutionary situation exists. Even the televising of the debate in the National Assembly was done only by permission of the workers' organisations, as even a Gaullist MP was forced to admit.

Those instruments of state repression which are still in the hands of the government, the police and the army, are completely unreliable. The police themselves have been touched by the hot flares of revolt.

Their union issued a warning to the government that "the police officers thoroughly appreciated the reasons which inspired the striking wage-earners and deplored the fact that they could not by law take part in the same way in the present labour movement...the public authorities will not systematically set the police against the present labour struggles" ('Times', 24.5.68).

In the event of a clash, many "serious matters of conscience" would arise, in other words, many sections, if not the majority, would go over to the workers. The army also would be split from top to bottom if the officer caste sought to intervene.

This is shown by the comments of a national serviceman when he was "asked if he would fire on the students and workers and replied 'Never. I think their methods may be a bit rough but I am a worker's son myself'" ('Times', 21.5.68). **If ever there was a time when the working class could take power peacefully that time is now.**

In every shop, factory and workplace, the workers' councils would naturally be the dominant form of organisation. Established at local level they would come together also in the districts and eventually at national level.

The unorganised sections would be drawn in until they embraced all the toilers: a parliament of the masses where their will and demands

would be exercised: real democracy as opposed to the sham of the jugglers in the National Assembly. Taking up the demands of the workers, the farmers, and the middle class, it would be possible to tie them together, feeling the common need for a drastic change, the need for a socialist society.

Once in power, the workers' councils, where all officials would be elected and subject to recall, from being instruments of struggle for power would then become the organs of management and control by the masses themselves.

That is what the French working class are groping for, as the strategists of capital so cunningly understand. The only thing that stands between them and extinction are the leaders of the mass labour organisations. They will try to use the prevarication and treachery of the CP leaders at a later stage, not only to discredit the latter but, with them, the ideas of Marxism in the eyes of the masses.

Leaders

The leadership of the Communist Party and the CGT, along with the Catholic unions and "socialist" Force Ouvrière, refuse to carry through what the workers have begun: the seizure of power. Gratified, the 'Observer' remarked: **"The Communist unions and Gaullist government they appear to be challenging are really on the same side of the barricades."**

At first the students came in for vicious attacks in the pages of 'L'Humanité', the CP daily newspaper. Later the CP leaders attempted to prevent all contact between students and workers.

They attempted to restrict the movement against its very nature to purely "economic demands"—as though these could be met for any length of time under capitalism! In spite of the utter ineffectuality of any opposition to the workers, they warned against "provoking" the government, causing bloodshed etc.

What alternative do the Communist Party put forward?

Over the heads of the workers they are supposed to represent they have agreed, in private negotiations with the representatives of big business, to send back the

workers they never called out in the first place on certain compromise terms: terms which cannot be maintained under capitalism without causing inflation, crisis and (particularly in view of the rising working population) unemployment.

What the bosses will be forced to give with the left hand—and they will have to do this or face the possibility of explosions which, despite the CP's role, could end their days—they will attempt to take back with the right hand tomorrow. Resulting inflation will be used in order to inflame the middle classes against the "excesses" of the workers.

Vague promises of "participation" will not, as all the capitalist commentators agree, satisfy the French workers. One thing is certain: the Gaullist "invincible" regime is finished. Whenever its demise comes, within weeks or months, its position has been irretrievably damaged. The French workers will not only have succeeded in bringing about its downfall, but also in beginning to undermine all the honeycombed theories of "social peace" which have proliferated in the Western labour movement in the last twenty years.

Not by accident did 'The Times' mournfully comment: "When Louis Philippe was driven from his throne in 1848 after a few brisk days of rioting in Paris and took refuge in London, there were revolutions all over Europe. Italy, West Germany, Belgium and Spain are in trouble enough without the Mother of Revolutions once again setting a bad example" (22.5.68).

How well do the ideologues of capitalism, with devastating realism, understand the threat that faces them! And how timid and treacherous do the Labour leaders' vague and pious hopes sound in comparison! The diseased state of British capitalism too is preparing an explosion.

Explosions

The traditional parties in all the countries of Europe will be shaken from top to bottom. Even if the CP manages to sell the deal with De Gaulle to its own rank and file, this will not be without internal rumblings.

No longer do the CP leaders exercise the mesmeric effect or hold the fanatical devotion of the rank and file as in the 1930s. Already this is reflected in the resignation from the CGT of one of its leaders, a prominent CP member, because he considers that the CGT is "not taking full advantage of the situation to overthrow the Gaullist regime."

In the event of a Popular Front the CP will precipitate a massive movement of opposition, which could end in a split, the majority going over to the genuine programme of Marxism. The enormous sense of power, the gigantic steps forward in understanding, the combativity and ability to fight of many workers who have viewed politics as the preserve of lawyers and doctors in the past, will still be there.

The French workers have unleashed a force that will yet end the rule of Rent, Interest and Profit in Europe and throughout the world.



Armed police stand guard as roads are cleared after the Latin Quarter of Paris credit: Popperfoto

Last week, part I set out the issues raised for the labour movement by the proposed Windscale development. It was explained why the development of nuclear energy means "deadly hazards of a new kind," hazards that will persist for incredibly

long periods because of the long life of lethal radioactive materials [24,000 years half-life for plutonium]. This week, part II raises the fundamental political issues involved in the nuclear debate.



The discovery of North Sea oil, for example, will be able to meet most of Britain's energy needs for the next few decades. But even the spokesmen of big business have now abandoned the illusion that North Sea oil is the panacea for decayed British capitalism. Although providing some immediate relief, North Sea oil will not halt the remorseless decline of British industry. Moreover, even if a big nuclear programme, free from major problems, were introduced in the next decade or so, it would decisively arrest the collapse of British capitalism.

Under capitalism, workers in Britain inevitably face mass unemployment and cut living standards. Nuclear energy is no magic solution. There is therefore no logic in the argument that to oppose the present nuclear plans is to accept cut living standards.

The same fundamental argument applies to the question of crisis in the underdeveloped countries. With or without nuclear energy they will be plunged into even greater crisis by the convulsions of the world capitalist economy. Nuclear power stations in India, for example, will no more lift the workers and peasants out of starvation and poverty while landlordism and capitalism continue, than did the quick-growing grains of the so-called 'green revolution' in the past.

Economic

Much of the debate about nuclear development, especially the pro-nuclear side, has been dominated by arguments about the technical viability of nuclear energy as opposed to the viability (or unviability) of the alternatives (wind, solar, tidal, geo-thermal). As with other new technologies, nuclear energy has been presented as a 'fix', a purely technical solution seen in isolation from the social and economic relations.

Even from a capitalist point of view (leaving aside the possibility of slump) the champions of nuclear power are far from having demonstrated the economic viability of nuclear power. A minority of capitalist economists and nuclear experts, who accept that fossil fuels will not last for ever, have posed a number of crucial questions:

* Can British—or American, or West German, etc.—capitalism actually bear the vast and ever-increasing cost of the investment required for a large-scale programme

"There is an energy crisis. Fossil fuels [oil, coal, gas] are within sight of running out. Nuclear power is the only alternative in the foreseeable future. All the necessary safety precautions must of course be taken. But solar, wind, tidal and geo-thermal energy sources are not viable alternatives. Without a large-scale nuclear programme, therefore, economic growth will grind to a halt and living standards will decline."

This, in summary form, is the argument generally used to support the development of nuclear energy. It is not only advanced by capitalist economists and the nuclear 'establishment', moreover, but is also widely echoed in the labour movement.

At last year's Labour Party Conference, speaking against a resolution opposing the extension of the Windscale reprocessing plant and the fast breeder reactor programme in general, Gavin Laird (AUEW) said:

"If the proposers of this resolution are honest, they must come to the rostrum and say, 'Yes, if our standard of living must fall, let it be.' Because there is no alternative. If we do not expand the nuclear energy industry, our standard of living must indeed reduce, and we are not for that at all..."

Also opposing the motion, Frank Chapple (EETPU) argued the dire consequences of halting or delaying the nuclear programme:

"...you have been told of the radioactive risk and the plutonium peril. But what of the peril to the world's growing millions if energy supplies run out? Death through cold, starvation and wars of conquest for the available remaining resources..."

The first point to make against these arguments (and others put forward in the debate) is that they approach the question of energy in isolation. They imply that the 'energy crisis' is purely the result of diminishing natural resources (forgetting, too, that uranium is also a scarce natural resource) as if the rapid depletion of resources had nothing to do with the economic system which dominates the world.

The arguments also imply that nuclear power (leaving aside whether or not it can be developed safely) can automatically provide abundant power and assure economic growth, as if the realisation of this technical

possibility had nothing to do with the viability of capitalism and the prospect of world economic crisis.

Abundant oil in the Middle East has not produced high living standards for the toiling masses of that region. On the other hand, the absence (until the discovery of North Sea oil) of oil in western Europe did not prevent the growth of capitalism during the post-war boom. In fact, the capitalist powers plundered the energy (and other natural) resources of the whole world—and squandered them in the most prodigal manner.

Waste

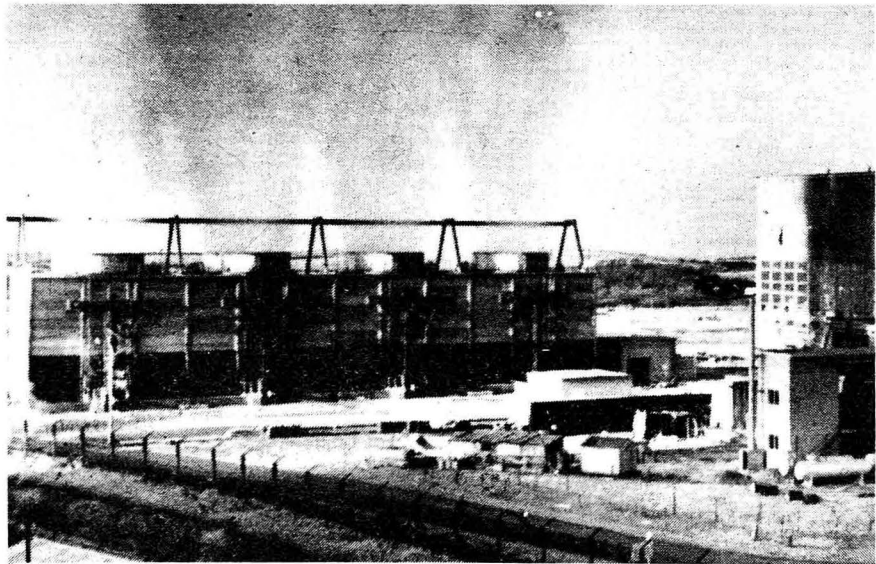
The champions of nuclear energy like to pour scorn on the conservationists' plans to save energy through such means as the better insulation of buildings. Much energy could certainly be saved through better-designed buildings. But such measures would be nothing compared to what could be saved through socialist planning.

Consider the energy wasted through the proliferation of private cars and the neglect of public transport. How much energy is wasted through planned obsolescence, wasteful packaging and advertising? If there is an 'energy crisis', it cannot for a moment be separated from the present dominance of the profit motive and the anarchy of the capitalist market.

Current estimates of existing coal, oil and gas resources and of future energy needs vary enormously. The estimates undoubtedly reflect the vested interests and pre-determined policies of those who advance them. In the United States, for instance, the Ford Foundation predicts a 50% increase in energy demanded by the year 2000; the USA government a 200% increase; and the General Electric Co. (with the biggest commercial interest) an over 500% increase.

In the present period, energy requirements are decisively determined by economic growth, not vice versa. In Britain, as in every other capitalist country, there are pensioners, unemployed and low-paid workers who cannot afford the gas and electricity that is available. With industry in the main economies working at only 80% capacity, or below, estimates of energy needs have been revised sharply downwards. Of course, a new boom would create renewed demand for energy. But the movement of the economy is determined by economic and social factors—which at the present time unmistakably point towards recession and slump.

NUCLEAR



programme of nuclear energy?

* Would a large-scale nuclear programme become a net energy producer in time to replace exhausted fuels resources effectively?

Here it must be remembered that nuclear plants take two to three years to 'repay' the energy used in their construction. It would therefore be a considerable number of years before a big construction programme (consuming more than it produces on a year-to-year basis) would become a net energy producer. This would also apply to conventional power stations, but they of course already exist: the comparison must be with other new alternatives.

* Are there adequate fuel supplies for a large-scale nuclear programme (at present involving about 2,000 reactors by the end of the century)? What are the uranium reserves? Fast breeders, favoured because of the plutonium produced (and therefore the most dangerous) take 20 to 40 years to produce enough fuel for one reactor.

* Would nuclear systems really be economically viable compared to possible alternatives, even from a capitalist point of view, given the high investment, rapid drop of efficiency as plants age (now thought to be worse than previously expected), the extra cost of transmission because of the remote siting of nuclear plants and the escalating cost of plant and technology?

Those who claim that the opponents of the present nuclear programmes are arguing for unemployment and cut living standards, have provided no serious answers to these questions—even on the assumption that a world slump, creating unprecedented unemployment and poverty, will be avoided.

"From a scientific and technical standpoint, there is no viable alternative to nuclear energy as a large-scale source of power in the foreseeable future." This is an argument repeated time and again as if it were an irrefutable 'fact'.

"The motion (opposing Windscale and fast breeders) oversimplifies the problem and abandons the facts," asserted Frank Chapple in the debate at last year's Labour Party conference.

He then went on to say: "On the best estimates for energy from wind, waves and water, solar and geo-thermal sources, we are thirty years at least from the practical application of such sources. Some experts say they will never be available in practical quantities."

This is highly debatable, to say the least. But leaving aside the specific arguments, what do the 'facts' represent? Who produces the facts, in whose interests? In reality, there are no 'pure' scientific facts, there is no 'neutral' technology, separate and apart from economic and class interests.

Nuclear reactors exist. They were moved out of the laboratory decades ago, mainly as a result of vast

MAGIC SOURCE OR RISK FOR DISASTERS

expenditure on research and development for nuclear weapons, to which reactors were related. But research on solar energy remains at a relatively primitive level. The 'facts' about tidal, geo-thermal and solar energy sources have not yet been produced, because the resources devoted to these areas, though now increasing quite rapidly, are still insignificant when compared to nuclear research. In January, for instance, the British government announced a £92,000 grant for a wind-power project—peanuts compared to the £600 million to be spent at Windscale.

The big majority of scientists and other energy experts are those employed by the state in its vast nuclear establishment and by the private firms with interests in the nuclear industry. Would it not be extremely surprising if these experts were not strongly in favour of nuclear development? Specialists working elsewhere, especially those known to be opposed to nuclear

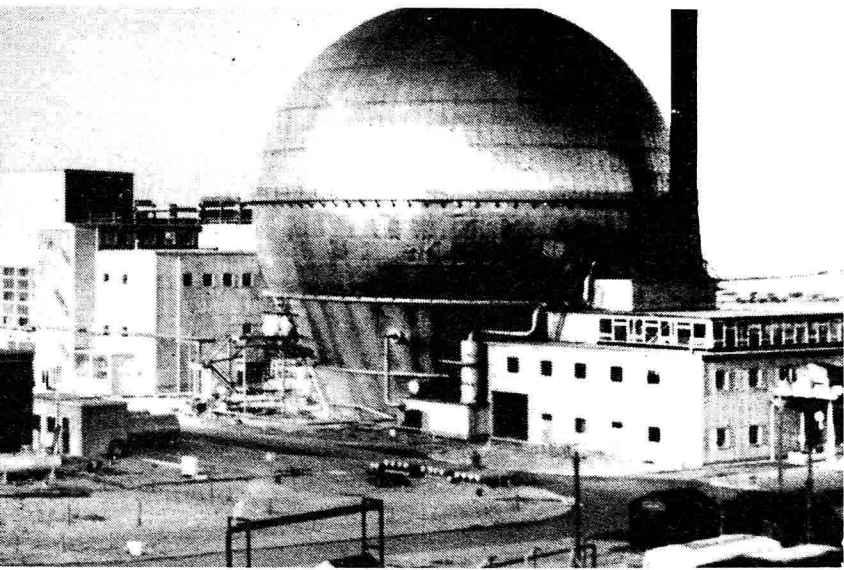


Anti-nuclear demo at Malville, France, bro



Thousands of gallons of contaminated milk from farms 200 miles around Windscale poured away after a radiation leak. But where did it end up? In the Irish Sea. Popperfoto

R ENERGY



OLUTION ECIPE ASTER?

development, face enormous difficulties in gaining access to the information they need to evaluate projects, let alone in conducting their own research with limited funds.

Apart from anything else, the call for much more resources to be devoted to research and development of alternative, non-nuclear energy sources is an elementary demand from the point of view of all-round scientific and technical progress.

Luddites?

In his contribution to the Labour Party conference debate, Frank Chapple broadened his attack on the supporters of the anti-Windscale motion in order to lump them together with those who oppose technological development in general and large-scale technology in particular. The implication was clearly there, that the opponents of

nuclear development are latter-day Luddites, threatening the development of science and technique. Nothing could be further from the truth as far as Marxists are concerned.

Some ecologists do mistakenly argue that because of the harmful effects of certain technologies, technological development must be halted and a consequential reduction of economic growth and living standards accepted. But the harmful effects of technology are not the inevitable consequence of technological development, but the inevitable result of the one-sided, narrow, profit-motivated applications of technology under capitalism.

Nor do the adverse effects of new technologies necessarily result from their large-scale character. The real problem is the use and abuse of powerful new techniques by vast multi-national corporations, which are more powerful than most governments and which organise international price rings one week and indulge in ruthless competition with their rivals the next.

It is precisely the giant corporations who already dominate the oil, aircraft and armaments industries which have moved into the nuclear field. The horrifying, gangster record of these giants hardly bodes well for the safe and efficient development of nuclear energy, with all the potential dangers posed by radioactive materials.

It is also hardly surprising that these giants are opposed to the development of alternative energy sources, which may well work more efficiently on a small-scale, decentralised basis, and which depend on renewable sources, like the sun and the seas, not so easily staked out and monopolised by the big capitalist predators!

Although the UK's nuclear plants are all nationalised, the government and the UK Atomic Energy Administration have already felt the pressure of ruthless international competition between the manufacturers of plant and equipment. This has been reflected in the argument about the relative advantages of the US pressurised water reactor and the UK advanced gas cooled reactor.

Leon Trotsky

But didn't the leaders of the Russian revolution speak of the tremendous possibilities opened up by the utilisation of nuclear energy? This is a point which has been raised in the debate which is now developing in the labour movement.

In the period after the October revolution, Leon Trotsky spoke of the "mighty hidden energy" of the atom. "The greatest task of physics," he wrote in 'Radio, Science, Technique and Society' (1927), "consists of pumping out this energy...Then the possibility will be opened up of replacing coal and

oil by atomic energy, which will also become the basic motive power..."

Trotsky, however, was clearly speaking of the possibilities for nuclear energy which would be opened up **under socialism**, with planned production under democratic workers' control and management, when "scientific and technical thought, in the hands of a socialistically-organised society, will advance without zig-zags, breaks or failures."

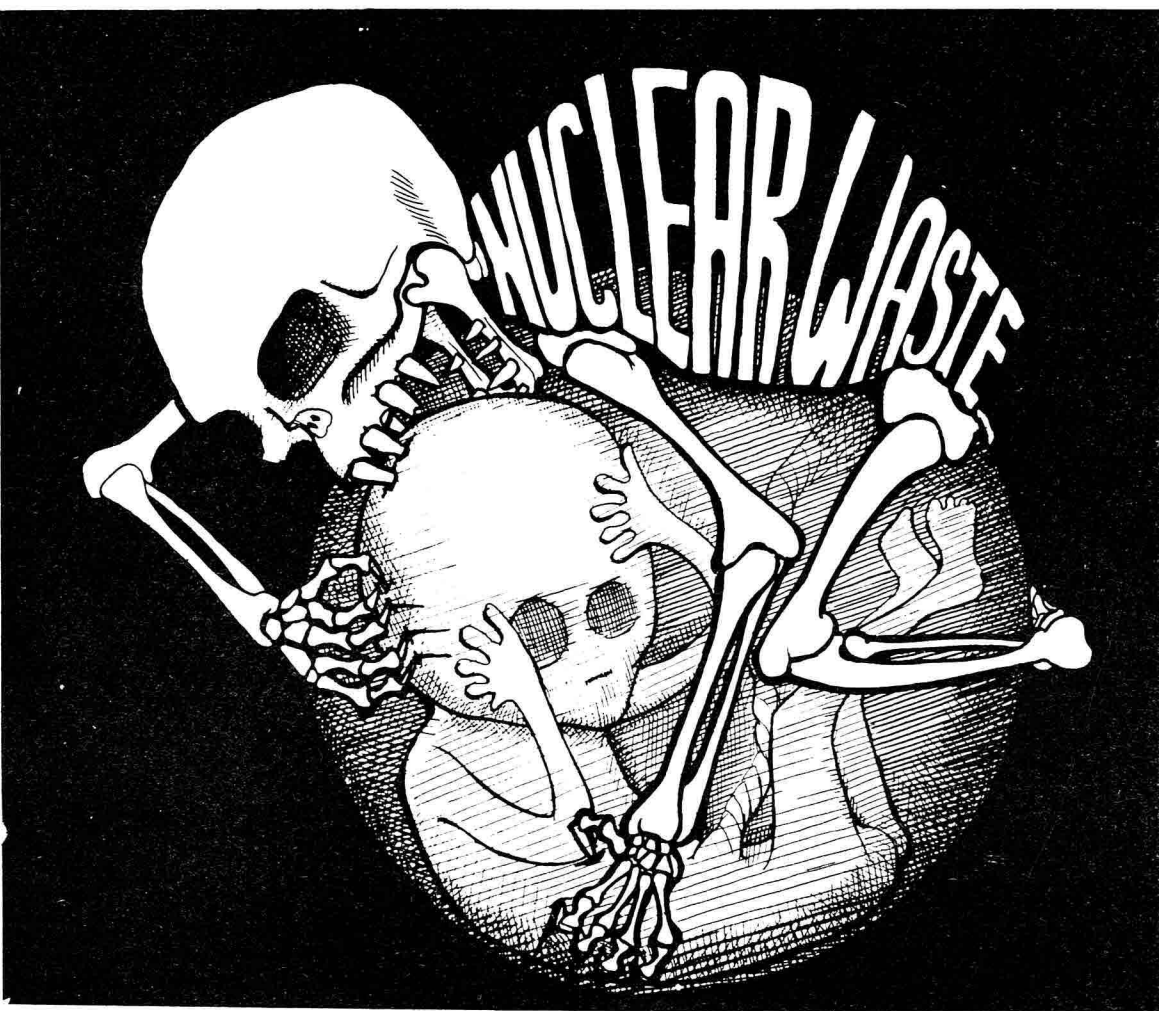
Unfortunately, the social and political premises which Trotsky assumed in outlining perspectives for science and technique were not established. The Russian revolution was isolated under conditions of extreme backwardness. Workers' democracy was ousted by bureaucracy. As the counterpart to this process, western capitalism survived, experiencing a new period of upswing after 1945.

Nuclear development continued. But for the capitalist class, the destructive, military aspects had priority. As a by-product, nuclear technology was developed as a new source of energy. But since Trotsky wrote—and since even the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament called for the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in the 1960s—the dangers involved (the problem of storing radioactive waste, the effects of radioactive pollution on the environment, and the long-term biological effects of irradiation) have come to be much better appreciated.

How could capitalism ever be trusted to take all the necessary precautions? The post-war boom has produced unprecedented scientific and technical advances. But the harmful side-effects of drugs, chemical fertilisers, food additives and many other products and processes are clear enough.

We could only conceivably entrust the development of nuclear energy, with the exceptionally dangerous hazards involved, to a social system in which we had complete confidence. Yet in the coming years of economic crisis and political upheaval, capitalism will inevitably become even more ruthless in defence of its power and profits, pay even less heed to the cost of its activities to the environment and humanity!

While opposing the development of nuclear energy under capitalism, Marxists would certainly not oppose further research in this field. Despite the formidable hazards which at present appear to be inherent in any nuclear process, it cannot in principle, be ruled out that safe methods of utilising nuclear energy could be developed. In particular, it is possible that reactors based on the **fusion** process, as opposed to the **fission**



By Vivien Seal (Lambeth Central Labour Party)

process now exploited, could provide a safe alternative.

But the problem, for instance, of storing or disposing of radioactive waste, which remains a hazard for thousands of years, would not automatically be solved by socialism. A planned economy would make it possible to carry out all-sided, balanced research and development, and to decide on an energy programme that made the optimum use of the available resources and techniques and would only develop processes compatible with the protection of health and the environment.

Starvation

When the champions of nuclear programmes argue that these schemes are necessitated by the probable exhaustion of conventional energy sources by the end of the century, they (and unfortunately their liberal opponents, too) forget one fundamental point: that in this time, the future of the capitalist system itself will be decided one way or the other.

Several thousand nuclear plants, even if built, will not insure the world economy against crisis. The power generated would not relieve millions and millions of workers and peasants from their present unemployment, poverty, starvation and oppression.

This is the task of the socialist revolution. Once there has been a fundamental reorganisation of soc-



Arthur Scargill addresses anti-Windscale demo

ety, a solution to the energy problem will be a relatively easy matter. With a socialist plan of production and the planned development of science and technique, there can be no doubt that the resources and technology will be found to sustain as yet unattainable rates of growth, without devastating the environment and without threatening human wellbeing.

On the contrary, with the much higher level of material existence that would be achieved for the whole of the world's population, human culture would be raised to new heights.



en up by police tear gas grenades Popperfoto



Demonstration outside Windscale in 1976

IRELAND / GREECE

IRISH LABOUR PARTY

SHIFTS LEFT

Last month the Irish Labour Party held its first conference since the coalition government [in which Labour was the minority partner] was defeated at the polls. 1,000 delegates attended — amongst the highest in the Party's history.

Conference showed that the Party is beginning to recover from the disastrous experience of coalition and is on the move back to an independent socialist position.

The result of the election for party chairman was the most significant event of the weekend. Michael D. Higgins, fighting on an anti-coalition ticket, won against the sitting vice-chairman who was pro-coalition and who was supported by the Parliamentary party and the platform. The vice-chairman's position was also won by anti-coalition member Pat Corral.

An indication of the swing in the mood of the party could be seen by the fact that for the first time since the party was formed in 1912 on the proposal of Connolly and Larkin, the 3 officers of the party, chairman, vice-chairman and financial secretary are all new to their posts. Along with this, of the 17 members of the Administrat-



By John Throne

John Throne is an Editorial Board member of the Marxist paper 'Militant Irish Monthly'. Fighting on the ideas of 'Militant', he was elected on to the Administrative Council of the Labour Party at the Wexford Conference.

ive Council elected at conference 8 are new to their positions.

In the June 1977 election Labour won 11.56% of the vote and 18 seats. This was the party's lowest share of the vote in 20 years. From the high point of 17% in 1969, when Labour fought on its

most left wing programme ever, the Party's support had slumped because of its coalition policies.

Even worse, in the 1977 election 440,000 new young voters were on the register for the first time yet half of these did not vote for Fianna Fail, the major capitalist party, who appeared as the only opposition to the conservative policies of the Fine Gael dominated coalition.

If Labour had continued on its independent path after 1969 at least 300,000 of these votes would have gone to Labour. This alone would have more than doubled Labour's seats in the Dail (Parliament).

Most likely, Labour would now be in a position of forming a majority Labour Government. Instead, Fianna Fail are in power with 84 seats in the Dail and a 20 seat majority.

Not only has this meant a betrayal of the interests of the trade union and labour movement in the South, but also in the North. If Labour had been fighting on socialist policies over the past years and had been building a mass base of workers and youth then the working class movement in the North would also



The platform at the party conference in Wexford.

Firm rejection of Coalition

Workers there, both Protestant and Catholic, would have seen the working class movement in the South fighting to build a new society and would have moved to build and strengthen the links. Workers' unity would have been developed.

While the painful lessons of this last time must be learnt a new era is beginning for Labour. The move of the youth and the workers to Labour which was beginning in 1969 has now begun once more. This is what the Wexford conference reflects.

While no debate took place directly on the Party's future strategy the resolutions passed showed that the Party has begun to move left. Resolutions were passed calling for nationalisation and workers' control of the commanding heights of the economy and for Labour Bills to be presented to the Dail to nationalise land and the mines.

terms is around 15% (official figures admit 10%). The Financial Times has forecast 25% out of work by the mid 1980's.



Party Chairman Micheal D. Higgins.

The mood amongst workers and trade unionists is shown by the increase in strikes and in the difficulty in negotiating the present round of the National Wage Agreement. 68% of strikes in 1977 were unofficial.

The leadership of the ITGWU, the country's largest union and which has traditionally been the mainstay of Wage Agreement was forced by pressure from its membership to campaign against a new agreement. In the end it was accepted only after increased terms and tax allowances, and even then it was accepted by its closest margin to date.

The mood of anger building up is shown also by the strikes in telecommunications and in the Irish airline. The telephone system is collapsing as workers now in their 11th week on strike fight the attempts of management to break their union. In the airline strike 500 air hostesses are refusing to cross picket lines.

This Fianna Fail government will be racked with crisis and confrontation. Though backed by the decisive funds of big business, they are in power in a new historical situation.

The 26 counties is now an industrial country where the working class make up the overwhelming majority of society. Over 50% of the work-force are organised in trade unions and unlike the past there is no escape valve of emigration.

Fianna Fail will be faced with the biggest ever movement of opposition in the state's history. If it lasts its 3-4 years more in office it will suffer massively at the next election.

If Labour maintains its move to the left we will see an explosion in its support. With socialist policies and with the correct strategy Labour could come to power at the next election.

The place for all socialists and workers is inside the Labour Party fighting for socialist policies and for a majority Labour government.



The trolley bus workers' strike headquarters.

Photo: Xekinhma (Greek Marxist paper)

Dear Editor,

I read in the Militant about the strike/lockout of the Athens trolley-bus workers and then moved the following resolution at my union branch meeting. It was unanimously carried.

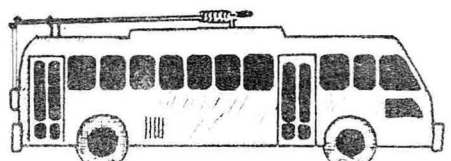
"This Branch No 5/42 of the TGWU notes the fight being carried out by the trolley-bus workers of Athens to protect and improve their conditions and pay against government attacks. It also notes that increasingly Governments are cutting public expenditure and therefore trying to reduce living standards of

transport workers everywhere.

This Branch expresses its full support for the fight of the Athens busworkers and hopes that it will be speedily resolved in their favour. This will be not only a victory for them but for transport workers in all countries."

We are also organising a collection for them. Today we collected £6 in 20 minutes, but we will get more next week.

Fraternally,
Vincenzo Infantino. T&GWU member, Coventry.



The trolley bus workers' union symbol

ΕΥΝΟΙΚΗ ΕΡΓΑΖΟΜΕΝΩΝ ΤΡΟΛΛΕΥ ΗΛΛΑΔΑ

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Unemployment in real

USA / INDIA

American Miners

"STARVED BACK BY UNION LEADERS."

By Betty Traun in New York

Despite the fact that 4.4 million dollars were raised by America's unions to sustain the more than 3-month strike of the coal miners, this most impressive show of labour solidarity to appear in the US in recent years ended in a contract not entirely satisfactory to the embattled miners.

The men had been prepared to stay out until they got everything they wanted, but the pressures of unpaid bills had accumulated and the huge sums of money which had been collected for them with the purpose of relieving those pressures had never reached them.

The cheques had been sent to the union headquarters, but were never distributed to those who needed them most. The cry that Arnold Miller, their union president, had "starved" them into acceptance of the final pact has therefore been raised.

There is bitterness left on the part of the pensioners who were left with small pensions, and a general distrust of Arnold Miller pervades the rank and file.

Five days after the miners voted to accept the latest contract, Miller suffered a stroke. The left side of his body is paralysed but this has not aroused the sympathy of the rank and file, who want him to resign.

Once one of the largest industrial unions in the US and one of the most militant ones under the leadership of its founder, John L. Lewis, the ranks of

the United Mineworkers Union included one million workers, but the rolls now show only 277,000 dues paying members.



Arnold Miller

There has been a continual turnover of leadership at the national and local levels. During the five years he has led the union, Miller has fired his entire staff, composed of reform-minded economists and organisers and replaced

them with people who the miners feel are not "coal field people."

As the solidarity cheques from the Auto, steelworkers, communications workers and other unions poured into union headquarters to a total of \$4.4 millions, Miller's staff members continued to pay themselves their own salaries out of this money (some \$2.5 millions) according to a report in the New Republic magazine written by Tom Bethel, a former United Mine Workers research director. It infuriated the miners who were, of course, going without pay.

The competence of the Miller staff is also being questioned. Since 1974, they have not unionised one major mine in the US, while permitting the opening of dozens of new, non-union mines in the West. They gave little organisational direction to the recent strike activities.

Leaders of other unions agree that Miller is incompetent. "If we had a membership like the miners we'd take over the state", an official of a New Jersey union said.

To survive as a major trade union force, the UMW must bite into the



West Virginia miners—let down but not beaten.

40-50% of the non-union coal production workforce. But that will be far from easy.

For one thing, the union contract has a benefit allowance that is not retrospective. This means that miners who have been working at non-union mines for 20 years would not get any pension benefits if they joined the union.

The new contract's "productivity bonus" clause, which would allow individual mines to set up a system of incentives for producing more coal, would in the long run set local unions in fierce competition with each other, according to Bill Thomas, labour reporter from West Virginia.

To keep the union out, operators of non-union mines had been raising

salaries and other benefits all along, some paying as high as \$100 a day, so that mines offered more in the short-run than UMW mines. The latter have excellent safety clauses in their contract, but the larger salaries in non-union mines appeal to the younger men who make up a large segment of the non-union population.

At the moment everyone in the United Mine Workers Union is looking forward to the coming constitutional convention which the union must call to raise dues. "Some of the men are looking at the convention as a place to raise other things," one rank and file leader said, "like the question of the president's salary or even the make up of his staff and bargaining teams."

A national leader has

not yet emerged to take Miller's place, but several local leaders from West Virginia and Ohio have distinguished themselves during the strike. So, if Miller remains in office, he will certainly be challenged during the next union elections.

But before those elections come up, Arnold Miller must negotiate another contract three years from now in 1981. The men have vowed to redress the shortcomings of the contract they signed this year in their next contract.

If Miller resigns for health reasons, then Vice President Sam Church, a red-baiting "old line" leader is next in line to lead the negotiating team.

The miners are not very happy about either prospect.

INDIA: bubbling cauldron of revolution

Every day provides fresh evidence that pre-revolutionary India today is like a bubbling cauldron.

The latest police atrocity to come to light is the massacre at Pantnagar Agricultural University, Uttar Pradesh, on 13th April.

Farm workers employed at the university were demonstrating for better wages and conditions when police opened fire. Teachers and students have presented the Chief Minister with a list of 161 persons "missing" since the incident.

The police have admitted to killing 13 workers. But workers have accused the police of having burned the bodies of the rest in the 10,000-acre farm attached to the university. Local journalists have actually seen the charred bodies, and the Home Minister has admitted that bones have been found. The workers' union says that demonstrators seized seven bodies from police who were trying to remove them.

The UP police have clearly added another 161 murders to those at Kanpur last December, where over 300 workers were shot dead and their bodies dumped in the Ganges [Militant, 17 February].

All over India the list of outrages grows day by day. If we quote only the official lying statistics, then in the last month alone three people have been killed by the police in Aurangabad, and 100 injured when police opened fire on a crowd in Patna, while in the three biggest cities of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad and Secunderabad, 9 people were killed and 80 injured. The real toll could well be ten times that number, on the evidence of Kanpur and Pantnagar, the latter incident

The latter incident was provoked by the murder by the police of a young man in their custody and the rape of his wife. There have also been bloody pogroms, religious and caste riots, and murderous attacks on striking workers and landless peasants, the length and breadth of India, in a crescendo of violence that has reached new dimensions in recent weeks.

All this, under a government that was brought to power on the crest of a mass wave of radicalisation over a year ago, preaching democracy and civil rights! But the fragile Janata alliance is disintegrating under the pressure of acute social upheavals. Once-monolithic India is now a chequered patchwork, its states variously ruled by all the assorted cliques and factions left in the wake of the revolutionary situation: Janata, the official Congress, Indira Gandhi's new Congress Party, Communist Party [Marxist], regional parties in the Punjab, Kashmir and

Tamilnadu... Now Janata, which is made up of various waves of deserters from Congress over the last decade, particularly in the last year, plus the sinister semi-fascist Hindu communalist Jana Sangh, is already suffering the same fate as Congress. Its first official split has taken place, in the key significant state of West Bengal.

The whole teeming sub-continent has entered a period of the most violent social explosions. The two mass Communist Parties each aligned with one or other capitalist party, have failed to fuse despite overtures by the CPI to the CPI[M] which has overtaken it in terms of power and influence. Neither has a programme corresponding to the spirited and defiant stance taken in the teeth of overwhelming odds by the heroic, organised working class, 20-million strong, or of the 200 million 'untouchable' outcasts and persecuted religious minorities, who have risen to their feet.

If the labour movement seething now with energy and elan and straining towards a clear socialist alternative to the horrors of capitalism, is not able to throw up a new marxist leadership capable of guiding their struggles to a victorious conclusion, then a terrible fate awaits India with a few years. If the capitalists today can so lightly shrug off the deaths of hundreds of striking workers at Kanpur or Pantnagar, then what fiendish lengths will they go to once the masses' energies are spent and a mood of demoralisation has set in?

Indian capitalism, the twin-headed monster of Congress and Janata, must be overthrown if one of the bloodiest defeats in the history of the international working class is to be avoided. Socialist revolution on the basis of workers' democracy and under an internationalist proletarian leadership, in the second most populated country in the world and its tenth greatest industrial power, would lift the whole of humanity to new heights.

By Roger Silverman



Mass demonstration by striking workers.

LETTERS TO: The Editor, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LETTERS

HIGH JINKS

Dear Sir

Because of my job—I'm a lolly-pop lady—I am able to come home between my duties.

Some afternoons when the television is on, a programme called "House Party" comes on. Well, how can I describe it? It is a toffey-nosed upper class load of rubbish.

As we sit down to have our egg sandwich, the women on the programme start showing you how to make prime beef snacks [!], gateaux, fresh fruit salads, and so on. We have to make do with this year's jumble, while they talk about the latest fashions.

Winter holidays in Corfu and Canada. One went on a world cruise! We are looking for a free camping site! [and then I've got to borrow the camping equipment]. We have to walk most of the way to town with the kids as the bus fares are too expensive.

These upper class women live in a world of their own. They don't show [because they don't know] how to make meals for people on my kind of income.

They worry about where they are going on their holidays. But our worries are about the gas and electric bills as well as shoes for the kids!

Yours
[Mrs] Pam Williams
Swansea

Shop Stewards should not eschew facilities

Dear Comrades,

I have been reading with interest the series of articles by Dick Massey, 'Working in the Union'. His attitude and approach are an example of how all activists should conduct their day-to-day work in their union and on the shop floor. It is vital that comrades like Dick Massey use the pages of the 'Militant' to pass on their experience and knowledge.

One of the issues that Dick

raised was the question of shop stewards' facilities (issue 401). He explained management's attempts to undermine the shop stewards' organisation in a factory where he was convenor in 1941. The management attempted to interfere in the elections of shop stewards and works committee members by introducing secret ballots, etc. Dick correctly opposed these manoeuvres. The trade union and shop stewards' movement

must at all times remain completely independent of management.

There is one point that Dick makes, however, that I think needs qualification. This is on the question of shop stewards' facilities, where he states: "A workers' representative is on the factory floor, at his own bench where the workers without let or hindrance may approach him." While it was obviously correct for Dick to

oppose management's crude attempt to 'buy off' the works convenor by offering 'office facilities' in his factory in 1941, it would be incorrect to argue that as a general rule, we should oppose the granting of facilities for shop stewards.

In fact, in most big factories, employing thousands of workers, it is absolutely essential that the shop stewards demand proper facilities from the management. These should include full-time senior stewards (paid by management), paid meetings of shop stewards, a convenor's office, meeting rooms for shop stewards, internal and external telephones, duplicating/photocopying facilities, and all the other essential equipment necessary to establish an efficient trade union organisation.

At the same time, the shop floor organisation must remain completely independent of management as regards the election of shop stewards/works committee and convenors and must also have its own funds collected from the members for the day to day running of the shop stewards organisation (to pay for stationary, time lost by shop stewards in attending meetings not authorised by the management, etc)

In the large modern factories, such as my own, these are essential and many battles have taken place with man-

agement to force them to concede these facilities. There are, of course, dangers to be guarded against in any large shop stewards' organisation.

At no time should the facilities granted be allowed to isolate the senior stewards and the works committee from the shop stewards or the shop floor members.

This can only be guaranteed when the shop stewards have direct control over the senior stewards, and when they are in a position to vote out of office any convenor who acts against the general interest of the members he represents—just as the shop steward should be accountable at all times to the workers he represents, be liable to be voted out of office at any time. These democratic controls are essential and must be protected at all times!

Yours fraternally
Bob Ashworth
Senior Steward,
Rover, Solihull.

This Sporting Life

Dear Comrade,

The other Tuesday I went down to Tranmere Rovers to see them play Gillingham. A couple of things struck me about the evening.

Firstly, the game was rearranged from its original Saturday date. The problems of Third Division Clubs were shown by the fact that the original programmes were on sale at half price, with an apology pointing to the cost of printing.

Transmere and a lot of other clubs are skating on thin ice—but some of their "supporters" seem to have a few bob.

Tearing myself away from the thrills and spills of two third Division Teams with nothing to play for, I read the following in the programme:

"Mr Pat Muldoon, owner of the highly successful sea pigeon, and a string of other well-bred horses, was so impressed by what he saw here at Preston park that he had adopted us as his club in the English League.

"Pat left his home in Perthshire at six o'clock on Thursday of last week and, in spite of traffic dislocation, managed to get to Preston Park by car, train, bus, plane and taxi in time for the film show run in connection with David Russell's Testimonial Fund.

"He also took the opportunity of getting a lesson in Crown Green bowling (he is a keen rink-type bowler) from Harry Pennington, a former British champion...

"From Preston Park, Pat was driven to Manchester Airport to begin a flight to Las Vegas to see the Muhammed Ali world-title fight. After the fight and a quick dash round the gaming tables it was back to England and hopefully to Preston Park for today's big game"

What a lifestyle! I could understand all that effort to watch Everton play—but Transmere Rovers?

Truly the ruling class have gone mad.

Fraternally
Alan Runswick
Wallasey LPYS

SCAB'S PHONE-IN

Dear Comrades,

Below is an advert which appeared in the Yorkshire 'Evening Post' concerning the Leeds bus strike. This is only one of many such articles which have begun to form part of a campaign by the EP to beat the striking busmen. Words such as "Dunkirk Spirit" and "true Yorkshire grit and determination" are all designed to build up hostility towards the busmen.

Needless to say, this shows the reactionary role being played by the capitalist press in general and in this case the EP in particular, which incidentally has a long history of hostility towards the trade union movement

M. Pawinski
Leeds

Come on! Ring our bus-strike hotline

How are you beating the bus strike? Have you any ideas or tips to pass on? Could we help with a problem, perhaps?

Can you offer lifts? We'll print your offer. Do you seek lifts? We'll publish your requests.

Ring the EP bus strikes hotline — Leeds 32701 Ext. 467 — between 9 a.m. and 4.30 p.m.

Spoonful of gravy browning

Dear Comrades,

The Homepride Bakery in Hull closed last Friday causing the loss of 160 jobs, including my mother-in-law and brother-in-law. At the "going down" party on the Saturday night I witnessed scenes of grown men and women crying, not just because of losing their jobs, but their workmates and friends as well.

But it need not have been. As the managing director of the local bakery said, these workers had worked with old machinery, but still been successful. In fact it was the second most profitable plant in the North East Division of Spillers-French.

Now while my mother-in-law looks for another job along with another 20,000 in Hull, my brother-in-law a maintenance fitter, is being kept on as a security guard until the plant is sold.

But what for? In their agreement with Rank, Spillers agreed that all bakery machinery must be sold for scrap to stop another company setting up in competition with Rank.

To justify the redundancies Spillers claimed to have lost £26 million in the last 5 years, but what of all the government's subsidies on bread [to keep the price down!]? Has that taxpayers' money been squandered or has it been pocketed by the

bosses and not shown in their accounts and losses?

The bosses claim that bread production is only at 80% of capacity yet it is common for bakery workers to work 80 hours a week, including 12-hour night shifts, and one day off a fortnight.

They claim bread demand has fallen, which is hardly surprising when the price has doubled in the last few years, and, when, as my brother-in-law told me, the only difference between white and brown bread at the Hull bakery was a spoonful of gravy browning!

Our Labour Party Young Socialist Branch passed a motion of support for the local Bakers Union branch and also moved a resolution at our Constituency Labour Party demanding the nationalisation of the three big bakery giants and their flour milling concerns as well.

Within the context of socially planned industry it would be possible to rationalise production of the Heinz 57 varieties of bread with only a spoonful of gravy browning between them and introduce decent living wages for a shorter working week, while maintaining quality and price control.

Yours fraternally
Alistair Tice
West Hull LPYS

Tories whip up Law and Order Hysteria

Dear Comrades,

This weekend Brighton saw its worst ever incident of football hooliganism, when Tottenham Hotspur hit town. As usual this provoked a predictable response from local Tories.

Andrew Bowden, Tory MP for Brighton Kemptown, is pressing for government action to deal with the problem. But before the government came up with any proposals Bowden has made his own ideas known.

These include identity cards 'short, sharp, shock' sentences for offenders, higher fines and powers for courts to ban offenders.

These ideas will gain a strong echo in all sections of society and could serve to drive some sections of the working class into the arms of Tory reaction (which is the main object of the Tory 'law and order' campaign).

But, from a socialist standpoint we must remember that soccer hooliganism is a symptom of capitalism in crisis. It is not working class youth that should be punished but the culprits of the crisis—the bosses.

It is capitalism that has driven youngsters to these desperate measures and the Tories (particularly the right wing where Bowden stands) that want to punish working class youth for rebelling against an inhuman system that throws them on the social scrapheap, in many cases before they have had a chance in life.

What use would short, sharp, shock sentences (the Whitelaw variety) do? From my knowledge of juvenile delinquency, these measures would only serve to make lads rebel more against society. Likewise with stiff fines.

On the subject of fines,

Bowden says that they should be much higher (even if they had to be paid in weekly installments)

Returning to the question of identity cards, the Tories even have a callous and cynical attitude towards this modest innovation. This is best summed up by the remarks of Tory Councillor Mrs Eileen Jakes. She accepts that this system would cost thousands of pounds, but also pointed out the damage caused by this one match must have cost a considerable sum. The same old Tory philosophy, property before people.

None of these ideas pose any solution. Identity cards are discriminatory against law-abiding supporters (which still constitute the vast majority). Punishment, whether it be physical or financial will only be met with the proverbial two fingers. And

banning offenders from matches would only transfer the violence from the football terraces to the streets.

Having said that, are Tories really interested in stamping out football hooliganism or just punishing the unfortunate offenders?

There is only one solution to football hooliganism. By taking society out of the hands of the present crew of profit-greedy parasites and handing over to the labour movement to plan society and provide the facilities needed to divert the energy of youth in more constructive pursuits.

I wonder how Andrew Bowden, this devout champion of law and order (and free enterprise) would rate our idea of punishing the real hooligans of society once and for all.

Yours fraternally
Clive Walker
(Hove LPYS)

Militant Fighting Fund

INVEST IN SOCIALISM

This week's total of £814.85 is a great improvement over last week. But if we are to reach the £35,000 by July 8th we must now be raising approx. £1,900 a week. So every comrade will have to more than double their efforts!

By now every area should have a supply of tickets to sell for the 'Militant Holiday Raffle.' If every supporter buys a book (or just a couple of tickets), and if people in the labour movement as a whole are approached about buying tickets, we would be well on the way to reaching the target.

This, however, is only a fund-raising idea and cannot take the place of the individual contributions. If every one who buys the paper believes in the ideas put forward they should be asked

This week £814

to support these ideas financially.

However small, every amount helps, such as the 10ps and 20ps collected in the Bristol area which altogether amounted to over £1. There were also many 50p donations including one from S Tarran (a Stevenage housewife) and one from two TGWU members in Llanelli and a 30p donation from J Grimes (a school student in Gloucester).

Other donations received this week include B Connors (Skelmersdale) £6; J Severs and H Cabal (Thirsk) £5.29; M Rodriguez (Chester) £14; and G Hold (Peckham) £5.80. Fivers were sent from S Devey (Wolverhampton), L Foster (Brighton) and M Hullin (Bristol).

Two supporters in the Manchester area donated

their labour movement expenses of £22. R Staniforth of Openshaw gave £4.50, S Kelly (Chester) £4, M Predeville (Manchester) £3, and B Fleetwood (Hull) £2.50. A magnificent £100 was donated from an ASTMS branch secretary's honorarium in the Hull area which has helped Humberside's total quite significantly.

Two pound donations were received from F Lapping (Walthamstow), P Nelson (Hull PTU), C Gilgallan (Paisley), and B Lynch (also from Paisley) and one pound donations came from B Underwood (Stevenage NSMM), S Harrison (Chester), D Merrit (York), B Mitchell (Ashington), and A Rees (Cynheidre NUM).

Students who have just received their summer term grants have been sending in donations, such as J Ithell from Newcastle University who writes: "I have just had my grant so I thought I would

£35,000 NEEDED BY JULY 8th

FIGHTING FUND CHART £70,000

Area	Target 26 wks	Target 52 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	2,200	4,400		762.10
Hants & IOW	1,050	2,100		842.18
Humberside	1,100	2,200		662.81
Lancashire	750	1,500		259.83
London: North	3,850	7,700		1,611.96
London: South	1,900	3,800		933.60
Manchester & District	1,450	2,900		353.94
Merseyside & District	2,250	4,500		817.64
Midlands East	2,200	4,400		1,037.54
Midlands West	3,700	7,400		1,680.62
Northern	2,450	4,900		964.24
Scotland East	1,250	2,500		847.57
Scotland West	1,450	2,900		409.76
South East	1,150	2,300		668.36
South West	1,150	2,300		531.87
Thames Valley	850	1,700		418.75
Wales East	1,000	2,000		425.75
Wales West	1,150	2,300		449.54
Yorkshire	2,600	5,200		865.98
Others	1,500	3,000		2,314.03
Total	£ 35,000	70,000		16,498.07

Progress Towards year's target Towards July 8th target

make my first donation of £1...I wish it could be more..." We also received £10 each from three students in the Brighton area and student 'travelling expenses' in the West Wales area which amounted to £80.

Money from fund raising this week has come from a variety of sources such as a 'football evening' in Croydon (£11), a book sale in York (£2.50), sale of badges in

Southampton (£1.80), collection on an anti-NF coach in Hull (£3.85) and the Hendon rattling tin (£1.54).

A jumble sale in Brighton raised £30.95, a drink for the fighting fund in York made £4.90, one in Manchester made £1.65 and the sale of pontoon tickets in Stevenage and Chester raised £4.50 and £1 respectively.

A Militant Readers' Meeting in Leicester raised £25,

and one in Telford raised £3.89. A collection at a Marxist Discussion Group in Bracknell raised £3, a collection at Bristol TUC Youth School raised £5.80 and one at Newcastle Poly Labour Club raised £1.30.

Many thanks to every supporter who donated money this week and don't forget to ask your local Militant seller for raffle tickets to buy [or sell].

MILITANT NOTICES

Militant Meetings

MILITANT PUBLIC MEETING 'May 1968'

Massive General Strike in France—over 10m on strike
Speaker: Clare Doyle (Militant Editorial Board)

'May 1978'

The French Elections and Perspectives for Europe
Speaker: Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board)

Plus: **Sud-Aviation**—rare film of workers' occupation and May demonstrations
Admission: 25p

Friday May 19th, 7.15 pm
Place: University of London Union,

Malet Street, London W.C.1.
Near: Euston Station (Northern, Victoria, Metro, Circle)

Buses: 14, 24, 29, 30, 68, 73, 77C, 77A, 170, 188, 239

SOUTH WALES

Militant Summer Camp

Friday 26th—Monday 29th May (Spring Bank Holiday)
Horton, Gower Coast Near Swansea

Political Programme

1. The Marxist Method
Ted Grant
2. The Class Nature of the Soviet Union
Peter Taaffe
3. What is Fascism
Ted Grant
4. World War—Future Prospects
Bryan Beckingham
5. Marxism and the Trade Unions
Brian Ingham

Book Now!

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

SOUTHEND

Militant Public Meeting

'After the May elections— which way for Labour?'

Speaker: Peter Jarvis

8pm, Tuesday 9th May

at the Labour Hall,

40 Cambridge Rd, Southend

CAMBRIDGE

Militant Readers Meeting

'The Menace of Toryism'

Hear:

IAN ILET (Peterborough Labour Party)

Monday 15th May, 8.00pm

Portland Arms, Mitehain's

Corner, Cambridge

TSSA CONFERENCE

Militant Meeting

Committee Room,

Torquay Town Hall

7.30 pm, Tuesday 9th May

Speakers:

Irving Nicol (Euston TSSA

Delegate)

Bryan Beckingham (Militant)

All delegates and

visitors welcome

Marxist Weekend School

Friday June 30th—

Sunday July 2nd

At Goldsmith's College Stud-

ents Union, Lewisham Way

SE14.

Programme:

Opening session: Role of Marx-

ism in Britain.

Courses:

Marxist Economics

Marxist Philosophy

International

Final Session: World Perspec-

tives.

Leading Marxist speakers for

each course.

Registration £2. Reading lists

will be sent on registration. To

register, write to: 'Marxist

Weekend School', 1 Mentmore

Terrace, London E8 3PN.

DUNDEE

Militant Public Meeting

'The Socialist Way Forward'

Speaker: Rob Sewell

Sunday 7th May, 7.30 pm

Labour Party Rooms,

Rattrey Street, Dundee

Leicester Militant Meeting

The Socialist Struggle

for a Living Wage

Speakers:

LIZ BLACKMAN (GMWU

Home Help branch)

HOME RAMSELL (AUEW

GEC Whetstone)

BRIAN INGHAM (Militant

Industrial Correspondent)

Richard II pub, Highcross

Street, Leicester. Monday 22nd

May at 7.45pm. Everybody

welcome.

GATESHEAD

Marxist Discussion Meetings

May 8th: The Degeneration

of the Russian Revolution (John

Flynn)

May 22nd: The History of the

Trade Unions (John Pickard)

June 5th: Workers' Control

and Management (Wilf Flynn)

Phone Gateshead 881165

SWINDON

'What we stand for'

The first ever Militant meeting

in Swindon.

Speakers:

BILL MULLINS (Senior Shop

Steward, Rover Solihull)

ROB CADWGAN (South West

LPYS Regional Chairman)

Sunday May 14th, 7.30pm

Co-op Small Hall, East Street,

Swindon.

SUNDERLAND

Militant Discussion Group.

Every other Friday at 8.00 pm.

May 12th—Italian Politics and

Perspectives.

Phone Gateshead 774948 for

further details.

NEWCASTLE

Marxist Discussion Group

for students, unemployed,

and shift workers

Fridays, 1.30 pm

Audio Room of Newcastle

Poly Students' Union

5.5.78—Stalinism—Could it

happen here?



MAY DAY GREETINGS

Plymouth Militant Supporters in Devonport and Sutton LPYS branches, send May Day greetings to the international labour movement

★ Forward to a mass Young Socialists!

Ruskin College Student Union
Sends fraternal greetings to all comrades and friends in the labour movement.

- 12.5.78—The Labour Party in Perspective
- 19.6.78—Role of Marxism in the Labour Movement

Militant Post-Election DISCO

Pirrie Ward Labour Club,

Walton

Friday May 5th, 8-late

(bar extension applied for)

admission: 60p

Islington Militant Supporters

present an evening of food, drink and folk on Saturday, 13th May, 8pm 'til late, in the Labour Rooms, 295 Upper Street, N.1. (near Highbury Corner, Victoria Line, buses 279, 4, 19, 30, 43).

Admission by ticket £1, or pay at the door. Includes dish of pasta, glass of beer and entrance to folk singing.

YOU could win

A holiday in France for two worth £250!

A 3-room frame tent worth £150!

A family caravan for a week or a "Galleon" British holiday worth £100!

Plus a pocket camera, picnic set, sleeping bag, camp bed, deck chair, battery lantern and a football, if you bought every ticket for the MILITANT HOLIDAY RAFFLE to be drawn on Saturday July 1st. But if you just want to take a chance and buy a few books and sell as many as you can—Order now from: Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Price per ticket 10p, ten tickets in a book.

Militant Supporters in Peterborough and District

send fraternal greetings to socialists everywhere—Workers of the World Unite

Oldham and Rochdale Militant Supporters and Oldham LPYS

send May day greetings Don't sack the bread-makers—take over the bakeries!

ADVERTS

RATES

CLASSIFIED: 5p per word, minimum 10 words

SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.

All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

PAYMENTS must be sent with advertisements. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to 'Militant'.

TRADE UNION

DISCUSSION GROUPS

NEATH: Full Moon Pub, The Parade, Neath. Every second Tuesday, 8.00 pm, from 18th April.

PORT TALBOT: contact P. Harris, 13 Beverley Street, Port Talbot, for details.

PONTARDULAIS: Kings Public Bar. Every Tuesday, 7.30 pm.

AMMANFORD: The Welfare Club. Every Monday, 8.00 pm.

GLYNNEATH: Dinas Rock Hotel. Every fortnight, from

Tuesday 25th April, 8.00 pm.

GWENDREATH VALLEY: every Thursday, 7.15pm, Upper

Tumble Social Club, Tumble.

Peace News/Leveller Defence Campaign Public Meeting—

'Whose Contempt'. Speakers from both papers, from the

Aubrey/Berry/Campbell defence campaign and trade

unionists. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Thursday 18th May, 7.00pm.

Young Socialist Medical Association holding first public

meeting, Tuesday 9th May, 7.30pm at the House of

Commons (meeting booked in name of Neil Kinnock MP):

Karl Brecker, Hounslow Occupation Committee, speaking on

'Can the trade unions save the NHS?' All welcome.

Newbiggin Hall Labour Party

Young Socialists Day School

FRANCE '68 AND '78

Speakers:

DAVE COTTERILL (Blyth

Labour Party)

JOHN HARGRAVE (Communist Party)

Saturday 13th May, 10.30am,

Labour Rooms, Westerhope.

Contact Steve Walker, Bedding-

ton 822181, between 8.30—4.30

Advance—London Labour Students Journal. New edition just out. Contents include: 1968: ten years on; Education in crisis; Labour clubs and trade unions; Price 15p each, over 20, 12p. Sale or return for orders over £1. Add 20% for postage. Order from Peter Lush, c/o Middlesex Poly, Queensway, Enfield Middlesex.

Campaign For Labour Party Democracy Conference "It does look, without a doubt, as if compromise proposals are being projected in order to protect MPs who are not prepared to carry out Constituency or Party policies"—

Emlyn Williams, President of South Wales Miners. We must organise to stop the NEC reneging on its pledge on automatic reselection in 1978!

Working Conference: Saturday 20th May, 2-5 pm, Ruskin College, Oxford. Speakers: Bob Wright (AUEW Asst. Gen. Sec. and Presidential Candidate), John Miller (T&GWU National Officer) and Dennis Skinner (MP, Bolsover) and you.

Credentials 50p from Terry Hunt, Basingstoke CLP, 19 Richmond Road, Basingstoke, Hants.

PNP Youth Movement [UK] Monthly Disco
Funk ★ Roots ★ Reggae
May 20th, 92b Ladbrooke Grove
Entrance 25p
Tube: Ladbrooke Grove, Buses 52, 15. Nine till late.

Who's tapping your phone? Find out in the new 'Leveller', the magazine that brought you Colonel B. Plus: Socialist disunity in Lambeth Central; Left Labour and local elections; Debate on Irish republicanism; John Berger interview; Pictures from Polisario; Unemployment grants; Noreen Winchester; Ped Brigade kidnappings; Jamaica massacre; Socialist theatre argument; Germany before the RAF and lots more good

ONE RATE FOR THE JOB!

"Grading is degrading," reads the placard outside the gate at the Royal Liverpool Hospital's boilerhouse.

Thirty-five electricians, plumbers and fitters have come out on unofficial strike over discriminatory rates being paid for the same job. The men are all members of the EETPU and AUEW.

Fred Pilgrim, one of the electricians, said that the workers had been asking management to end this system for 2½ years. However, all management had offered was "meaningful discussions".

Therefore, last Wednesday, the men decided to come out. Labourers, boilermen and semi-skilled workers are refusing to cross the picket line.

Senior engineers support the strikers, but due to their contracts, they cannot come out unless the strike is made official.

All the strikers are qualified tradesmen. They were not told about the grading system when interviewed for their jobs.

There are five grades for their jobs. £54 basic is the going rate for the top grade. Yet for grade 3 it is only £38. Despite this huge differential in wages, the job is the same.

The workers believe that anyone who has worked two years in the health service should automatically go on to the top grade. They hope that the management will agree to their very reasonable demand, but they are determined not to go back to work until it is met.

The strike is beginning to bite. The Royal Infirmary is now only taking in emergency cases.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: the Royal Infirmary Hospital's boilerhouse strike committee.

SPEKE

the fight is on

By John Scully

(T&GWU 6/612 branch)

"This is an historic decision that the whole of British Leyland was waiting for."

That was the response of Derek Robinson, Chairman of the Leyland Combine Shop Stewards' Committee, after a unanimous vote was taken to fight for our jobs.

Over two thousand hourly-paid and manual workers crammed into the Liverpool Boxing Stadium to hear our senior stewards' proposals for the continuance of operations at the Speke No 2 plant.

Every nut, bolt and jig, every fixture will stay inside the gates of that factory. It belongs to us and with the help of the labour and trade union movement what we have, we hold.

The vote signified the climax of a week in which effigies of Michael Edwardes were hung from makeshift gallows. Departmental managers were booed and jeered from the mess deck when they attempted to issue the company document for the proposed closure.

Pittance

The redundancy payments offered by the company are laughable. I have worked at Speke for two years and can expect a grand total of six weeks' pay, about £400.

Broken down, this is two weeks' pay under the Redun-

dancy Payments Act, two weeks' pay in lieu of notice and the "substantial" ex-gratia payment of another two weeks' wages. Couple that with the fact that I will not be able to sign on the dole for two weeks and have no prospect of getting another job in Liverpool for a long time.

Just who does this man Edwardes think he is?

This man, who took the food out of our mouths during the 17-week strike forced on us between November last and February, and forced us to explain to our kids that Father Christmas would not be coming this year, now expects us to give up our jobs without any fight at all.

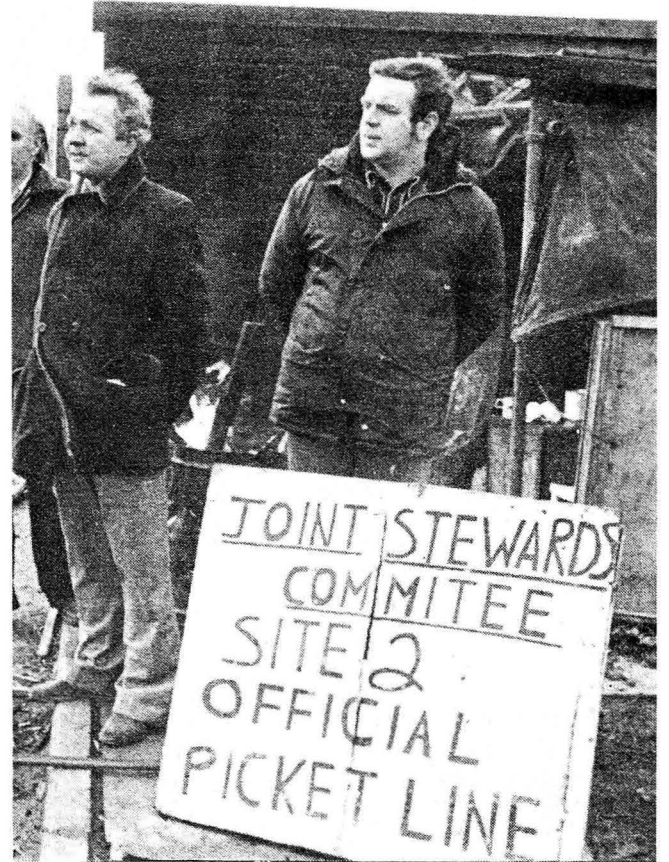
At the meeting in York last week, our convenors put forward several alternatives for the continuance of operations at Speke. While agreeing that there are alternatives the company are determined that closure will go ahead on May 26th.

On February 1st, Michael Edwardes promised there would be no plant closures. Michael Edwardes lied. On February 15th, Charles Skinner, the No 2 plant director, promised, in a letter to all employees, that there would be substantial ex-gratia payments. Charles Skinner lied.

When the TR7 was introduced for production at Speke the company promised it was the best specialist sports car since the TR4A. The company lied.

In fact we have had nothing but a pack of lies from their side of the fence in my two years' experience.

Hundreds of other redun-



Speke workers show their determination on the picket line earlier this year
Photo: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

dancies have been made on Merseyside. Liverpool is providing not only the champions of Europe but also the nomads with scousers moving from city to city, even across the continent, looking for work.

Strike

Now it is time to stop and take stock. No more! You have had all you're going to get out of Liverpool.

Edwardes beware! You were banking on a smooth ride at Speke. If you got that, the rest of the combine would be at your mercy.

Well, you haven't, you've got a fight on your hands. And what better place to start a fight than the Liverpool Boxing Stadium, with the unanimous support of over 2,000 men and the Liverpool Trades Council resolution for a one-day token strike and lobby of Parliament on May 9th.

BL, Cowley:

Workers strike to defend convenor

The threat of strike action by the shop floor at Leyland's Parts Depot, Cowley, has successfully averted the dismissal of AUEW convenor John Power for the moment. After prolonged union negotiations the management has suspended their decision to sack him.

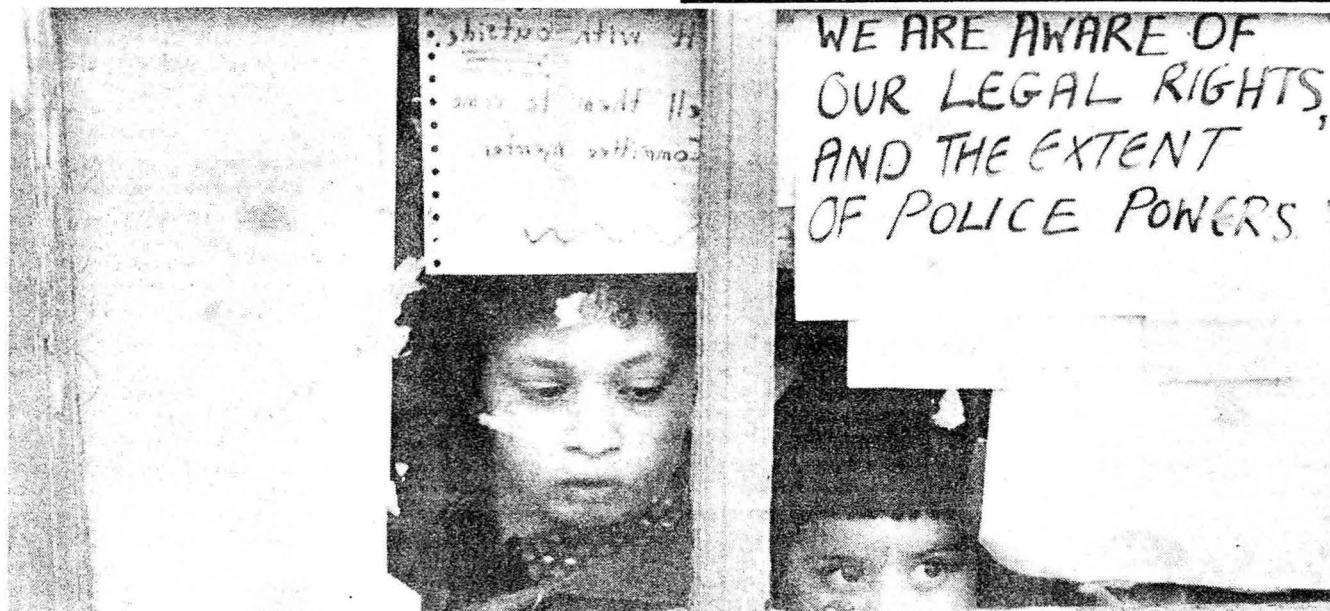
Feelings ran high in the depot last week when the company's action against their senior steward became known. Both TGWU and AUEW membership took part in various stoppages.

A special AUEW District

Committee meeting was called and decided that his dismissal was not warranted by the allegation which relates to travelling expenses for attending Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee.

The District Committee has urged full support for a campaign to ensure he remains at Cowley and are confident about obtaining official backing for any strike that may be necessary in his support.

AUEW Member, Oxford



Children watching for the bailiff at South Oxford Nursery School

OXFORD NURSERY OCCUPATION: EVICTED

The Oxford Nursery occupation is over. The bailiffs arrived first thing on Friday morning, with a court order obtained the previous day.

But the occupation committee, under advice from a lawyer, challenged their right to carry out the order without the presence of a county council official. So the bailiffs were forced to leave and return later in the morning. By this time television cameras and the press were present to record the events.

This is a serious set-back to the fight to save the nursery. But the occupation committee are not giving up.

They have withdrawn to other premises. A church building called "the Catacombs" has been offered and the children will continue to be cared for there.

The parents resisted council pressure to transfer their children to other nurseries by

taking up places due to other parents. By continuing to keep all the children together, it is hoped that the case can be made more effectively.

But now the council have taken possession of the nursery premises, the pressure on them to reopen it is greatly reduced. They have refused to yield to public opinion, the support of the local press as

well as national coverage.

Nor will they meet a delegation from the Oxford Trades Council to discuss the issue. But the chief function of the occupation, to highlight the Tories' single-minded determination to make cuts despite the obvious need for the expansion of nursery provision, has now been fulfilled.

Labour Policy

The policy of the Labour Party, passed at last year's conference, is to make it mandatory for councils to provide nursery education for

Photo: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

By Ian Sugarman

(Mid-Oxon Labour Party)

all who need it, fully financed by government grants. This must be acted on now!

Government inaction is offering credence to the Tory argument that the country "cannot afford" adequate nursery education.

Only one solution can offer hope to the thousands of working families up and down the country deprived of nursery provision—bold socialist action to take control over the economy, in order to plan its resources in a sane and democratic way, and provide the services working people need.

MANAGEMENT PROVOCATION AT GEC

"Further strikes explosion warning by GEC men on the brink." "Pickets cause traffic chaos." These were the headlines in Coventry last weekend.

Following the eight-week strike of storemen at GEC Telecommunications, Coventry, which is now going to arbitration, more staff workers joined with the computer operators, who remain on strike, in action against continual provocation by GEC management.

During a time of economic gloom GEC still manages to make excessive profits, while the workforce diminishes rapidly due to less labour-intensive technology. The employees involved in this new dispute are all working on the TXC4, SPC, RS22 and system X electronic systems and are making a large contribution to the profits of the company.

But the company does not pass these increased profits to the workforce; instead they go to the shareholders.

Workers in section EC 616 are responsible for commissioning these new telephone systems. They are required to be of high technical standard with City and Guilds finals or HNC finals, and in many cases have degrees.

They have to undergo thorough training and pass weekly tests. For all this the

starting rate of £59 with a maximum of £74 per week is extremely low.

We demanded a change of job description and a better pay structure which is more realistic. Having finally exhausted all procedures and got nowhere with the management for the last year, we registered a 'failure to agree' and held a one-day token strike.

Pickets stopped all vehicles entering the works to inform fellow-workers of the dispute. During the course of the day no goods or commercial vehicles entered or left the factory—demonstrating the strength and unity of the workers involved.

On Monday 24th employees in EC 616 were suspended for insisting on only doing the work for which they are paid—that of test engineer. **We are now more deeply involved in a struggle with GEC management because of this provocation and we shall be forced to prepare a programme of further industrial action.**

By Glyn Thomas
(ASTMS Stoke Works, Coventry)

UNION CONFERENCES: TSSA/EETPU/NUAAW

Unity of rail unions crucial

By Irving Nicol

(Delegate, Euston No 2 Branch, Fletton LP)

As the TSSA Conference meets, we have just received a wage settlement which we are told is 'quite reasonable'. Yet recent letters in the TSSA journal have shown that the old rates of pay were so low that a CO2 was entitled to free school meals, free milk, dental treatment and spectacles for his children.

If this was the position of a CO2 with a family, what about lower grades?

The last three years of the Social Contract have seen the biggest attack on our living standards since the war, and the fact is that the 10% ceiling imposed by the government is also a cut in living standards.

Workers have made sacrifices, big business has made really massive profits, but present-day investment is only at 1960 levels. Unemployment has not fallen, but doubled to 1,500,000.

Conference must follow the lead given by the Scottish and Welsh TUC Conferences and vote against Phase four or any form of wage restraint.

The united action by all three rail unions means that

the threat of Beeching-style closures has receded for the time being. What has not been achieved is any increase in investment in the railways.

Last year, British Rail moved 171 million tons of freight, the lowest this century. 25 years ago in 1953 when the Tories started to denationalise British Road Services, British Rail moved 285 million tons of freight.

No other railway system in the world has suffered such decline. The number of passenger journeys has fallen from 1,107 million in 1951 to 708m in 1976, a 35 per cent reduction.

This all happened during a

period of economic expansion. Today nationally and internationally there is economic recession. *The prospects for public transport are not good; the unity and strength of the railway trade unions is more important than ever.*

The railway industry is dependent on government money. The strength of the economic system determines the health of the rail industry.

The decay of the system is clearly demonstrated in the resolutions on unemployment and racialism, symptoms of the bosses' failure and the rottenness their system breeds. More than ever there is a need to challenge ailing

capitalism.

It was a Labour government who in 1947 made one of the biggest steps forward in transport history, the nationalisation of all inland transport to provide an integrated transport system. The attacks of the 1953 and 1968 Transport Acts by Tory and Labour governments reinforces the need for union members to play an active political role.

Wreckers

The run-down of the steel industry is part and parcel of the absolute decline of industry; there are even suggestions from some Tories that

British capitalism should pull out of manufacturing industry altogether! This would mean 5-7 million on the dole, and the total ruin of the railway system.

More than ever there is a need to fight in the trade unions and the Labour Party for a socialist programme to end capitalism and plan production under workers' control and management. Then we could ensure an integrated transport system that provided the service industry and working people need, and guaranteed a job and a decent wage for all transport workers.

EETPU Industrial Conferences:

Anger Growing

The EETPU Industrial Conferences taking place at Scarborough this week have a special significance for the membership—particularly over the policy of the union with regard to the Social Contract.

It appears that free collective bargaining has existed for some sections and, for others, there has been a rigid observance of the 10% limit. Contracting electricians, for instance, gained about 17%-20% increase, whereas contracting plumbers had to settle for the bare 10%, despite promises of a restructured grading system with some vastly increased rates.

In the case of the 80,000 EETPU power workers, the EC's recommendation to accept roughly 17% was passed with only a few hundred majority—a demonstration that wage restraint is sorely taxing the patience of our members.

The closeness of this vote and the confusing policy of our EC reflects the conflict that is taking place within the ranks of the members. On the one hand is the need of workers to fight for a decent living wage and on the other is the reluctance of workers to

take on the Labour government.

They fear without a change in its policies they could be responsible for bringing it down and ushering in a vicious right-wing Tory government pledged to attack our living standards further.

Electricians recognise the power that they wield in our modern industrial society. No government could function for more than a couple of days without their co-operation—no machinery running, office or industrial, no lighting, no newspapers, radio or television, few trains, no water, gas or oil being pumped...the list is almost endless. Such is the power of our members and such is the context in which these industrial conferences are taking place.

Militant

The EC can no longer ignore the wishes of the rank and file. This is demonstrated by the fact that, sensing the militancy of the power workers, they took the unusual step of holding a postal ballot. (There is still no guarantee that industrial action will not take place.)

The Conference on Monday

8th for government industrial workers is the first one to be held, and is in itself a step forward. This section probably has the least amount of industrial muscle and, being government employees, they suffer most directly from any government's policy.

They are the guinea pigs for wage restraint—along with workers in nationalised industries. Reductions in the civil service usually mean the lower paid industrials going first. Cuts in defence spending mean redundancies among the industrial personnel, in the Royal Ordnance Factories, Air Force bases, naval dockyards etc.

While cuts in the numbers of "civil servants" placate the baying of the Tory press, the work must still be done. The consequence is a proliferation of 'temps', contractors and lump workers in offices and on sites.

With this bonanza for 'free enterprise' comes the 'backhanders', the wining and dining of officials and all the other trappings of private industry in pursuit of lucrative contracts—a sickening sight for workers who are facing wage cuts and jobs lost in the interest of 'economy'.

The mood of this conference will reflect the growing anger of workers at the present situation. But what will the EETPU Industrial Conferences produce?

One day is totally inadequate to discuss the issues arising in each industry. Nor are the discussions binding on the Executive, anyway.

Dissatisfaction will remain amongst the delegates and the members they represent. This must be channelled into action for much greater democracy in the union and for militant policies on the major issues facing the membership. The following demands must be fought for, both at the conferences and on the shop floor:

No more wage restraint. A £70 minimum wage. Consolidation of all pay into the basic rate.

Contractors out, no redundancies, more recruitment.

Elect all officials.

Conference decisions to be binding on the Executive.

By an EETPU Shop Steward



Photo: Julian McKittrick

BEECHAMS:

'We won't work for nothing'

"If they close the plant we'll be out of work."

"We can't allow that kind of fear to force us to work for next to nothing."

"It's not our factory, we don't own it."

These comments were typical of what the T&GWU strikers at Beecham's soft drinks factory, Tottenham, were saying last week. They are determined that management will not cower them into an agreement giving more profits for their bosses but little or nothing for themselves.

Over the years the workers have co-operated to improve productivity and in 1977 the union signed an agreement which gave an increase of £5.50 to pay for it. In November, 1977, the union rejected a deal offered by the bosses. It would have given them a blank cheque to force as much work from the workers as they chose and denied the union any facilities to negotiate payment for the extra work involved—conditions that had never been raised before.

The annual pay rise scheduled for June, 1978, should be under discussion now yet the company, while refusing to specify what improvements in productivity it will seek in the future, is demanding new conditions which they say are paid for by the £5.50.

They are proposing: increasing the canning line from 620 cans per minute to 1,400 cans/min, producing three-quarter instead of half-litre squash bottles and installing a paletiser which will replace 15 men with two. These measures would result in a considerable saving in manpower, which the company say will be achieved by means of "natural wastage", but the workers have grave doubts about this.

At last Friday's mass meeting the men agreed to fight on by an overwhelming majority. Representatives of the Strike Committee have gone to other Beechams factories at Manchester, Lowestoft, Newcastle and Coleford, and a publicity secretary has been appointed to visit other factories in Tottenham to canvass support.

The labour movement must mobilise to help these brothers and sisters in their struggle. Messages of support from trade union branches, especially Transport and General Workers' Union; Labour Parties, Trades Councils, and LPYS branches, financial help, etc. should be sent to Bro. Bob Foskett, TGWU District Officer, 218 Green Lanes, London N.4., Tel: 01-804 4281.

Mike Cleverley

(Youth Officer, Walthamstow CLP, personal capacity)

Agricultural workers demand £80

The biennial conference of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers takes place this week. This union has always been loyal to Labour, but the mood of our members can be seen by the wages motions. Demands range between £60-£120 per week.

This year the union was allowed to exceed the 10% but the average farm worker is unlikely to be taking home more than £3.50 extra (10% or even 20% of very little is still very little!).

The figure of £80 supported in several motions, would give a real boost to farmworkers' living standards. How can

this target be achieved? Only by using the full weight of the membership and by being prepared to take industrial action if necessary.

Negotiating via the Agricultural Wages Board means defeat from the start by the so-called "independent" members lining up with the employers. The Board should be replaced by direct negotiation as called for by Askham Richard branch.

The union leaders should refer any offer back to the membership (Rippon District Committee's resolution) and also "set up a strike fund" (North Allerton DC). Conference should also support

Kirkby Hill's demand that "the election of the General Secretary should be every five years."

If accepted, Compton Dando branch's call for one union for all workers in the food industry (including bakers, shop workers, etc.) would produce a formidable industrial organisation. Further resolutions condemning the cuts in health, education, rural transport etc. show the need to form a strong fighting organisation committed to socialist policies.

By Trevor Young

(Delegate, Warwickshire County, personal capacity)

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GRUNWICK NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Sunday 14th May, Wembley Conference Centre,
Empire Way, Wembley, Middlesex

Speakers include:

John Taylor (London District Council, NUPE)

Jack Dunn (General Secretary, Kent NUM)

Jack Dromey (Brent Trades Council)

Cricklewood postmen, Labour MPs

Trade Union branches, Labour Parties and Young Socialists

branches are urged to send delegates (fee £1)

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Militant

CPSA:

For a fighting union with a fighting leadership

Among the 2,000 motions on the Agenda of the Civil and Public Services Association Conference a programme which could transform this body into a fighting democratic union.

On the part dealing with Civil Service issues, for example, Conference once more has the opportunity, by supporting Composite motion 1, to rid itself of the iniquitous pay research system of determining pay.

Elsewhere, the union's traditional hostility to wage control is reiterated. However, this alone is not sufficient. Already the leadership has shown its lack of a clear policy to give effect to membership demands.

Phase 4

At the pre-Conference NEC meeting, a motion from Kevin Roddy against the government's incomes policy was accepted. But an all important clause was deleted. It called for "a conference of trade union executives in co-operation with other unions as a means of opposing the plans for a phase four." The Conference must resurrect this demand.

The agenda is a whole list of criticisms of the leadership, e.g. for supporting the 12-month rule against Conference decisions; failing to mount a meaningful campaign of opposition to the cuts in public expenditure and failing to mount a campaign against racialism and fascism in line with 1977 Conference policy.

Again in the Civil Service section, 13 motions condemn the "failure to take serious

**CPSA CONFERENCE
Militant Public Meeting**
"What Militant stands for in the CPSA and the labour movement"
7.30 pm, Monday May 8th
Old Ship Hotel, Seafront
Speakers:
Kevin Roddy (CPSA NEC, personal capacity)
Peter Taaffe
(Editor, Militant)

action on the 1977 Conference demand for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay" (309) Over 30 motions raise the failure to pursue long-standing demands for improved leave. Composite motion 588 censures the leadership for their "abject surrender to the employer" over advances of salary at Christmas and Composite motion 1041 for lack of action on the closed shop.

This opposition to the right wing spills over to other parts of the Conference agenda. An avalanche of 172 motions condemn them for their attempt to sack Terry Adams and has forced them to back down unconditionally.

Democracy

Internal democracy is a dominant theme of the main conference. Motions call for the publication of the pay of full-time officials (2174); officials' pay to be based on the average of the members they represent; an investigation into methods of electing officials with a report back to conference 1979 (2210) and a large section censuring the NEC for overriding the 1977 Conference decision to publish election addresses. Three resolutions on the

problems of youth are tabled for discussion—affiliation to the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment; a re-organisation of the TUC Youth structure and the setting up of a CPSA National Youth Committee. These assume special importance in view of the Executive's latest decision to do nothing about Resolution 1168 on Youth agreed by last year's Conference.

The key issue facing the 1,200 or so delegates is the election of a new leadership pledged to advance all the interests of CPSA members.

Truemid

As 'Militant' warned after the 1977 Conference, the election there of a right wing NEC majority has led to a cynical disregard of members' needs and Conference mandates.

Instead they have advanced their reactionary, 'Truemid'-inspired policies—including a move to send observers to the Tory Trade Union Conference in Bradford!

At the pre-Conference NEC meeting, they voted in favour of a new restrictive strike policy.

The right wing portray themselves as "non-political" and "for membership control of their union." Their actions over the past year and their opposition to the election and accountability of officials are proof to the contrary.

The present alternative to the right wing, the Broad Left, once again enters the Conference elections optimistic, but poorly prepared. It has still failed to forge the necessary alliance behind a common programme designed to take the membership forward. However, despite its

weakness, it remains the only body which at present can defeat the right wing and is capable of defending members' interests.

In last week's issue, 'Militant' carried a report on the decision of the Broad Left Conference to transfer its support from the existing President and 1978 candidate, Len Lever, to that of Peter Cottman. 'Militant' supporters have not hidden their concern that this could lead to the election of the arch right winger and leading Truemid supporter, Mrs Losinska. This would be a heavy burden for those responsible to bear.

The 1978 Conference is dominated by the theme of accountability. As the unprecedented number of censure motions shows, the right wing majority have utterly failed the membership. The Broad Left must gain victory and pursue the policies which will improve the lives of CPSA members. These are the tasks ahead—for a fighting democratic union armed with socialist policies.

Vote

Vote for the Broad Left candidates for the NEC including the following who support the political position of the 'Militant':

Steve Appleton (DOE Leeds); Frank Bonner (CAA Prestwick); Pat Byrne (DHSS Central Sussex); John Reid (DTI Millbank); Kevin Roddy (DHSS Newcastle Central Office).

By a CPSA Conference Delegate

ASLEF MUST ACT ON PAY

There is no support for pay restraint of any sort to be found on this year's ASLEF Conference Agenda.

Most of the resolutions dealing with pay attack the Social Contract for its erosion of railwaymen's living standards. Quite rightly, the main demand is for the restoration of wages to the level achieved by the 1975 pay rise and there are calls for industrial action to achieve this if necessary.

Several resolutions deal with our increased productivity and the working of heavier and faster trains. But past experience shows that productivity schemes are divisive, unfair, open the door to manning cuts and are no substitute for a decent basic rate. Any resolutions calling for such should be rejected.

The Polmadie resolution draws attention to the deplorable level of unemployment and calls for a 38-hour week. The Stratford amendment along with other resolutions calls for a 32-hour week.

Such a demand needs to be seriously taken up and cam-

paigned for. It would be a powerful weapon against any future redundancy plans.

Continued attacks on the nationalised industries and public services and the experience of the firemen's strike shows the need for unity with other public sector trade unions to fight government policy on wages and cut backs. The Thornton branch proposal for a joint conference on these issues could be a great step forward.

On the issue of racialism, the resolution from Acton and Northfields must be supported without the amendments. It calls for the expulsion of fascists from the union, and points out that membership of the NF is incompatible with membership of a union.

In a multi-racial industry like the railways, only working class unity will achieve the other just demands on pay, shorter working week and better conditions.

Martin Elvin

Lock-out on Southampton docks

Five hundred maintenance workers in Southampton docks are at present locked out by management and the whole of the docks are practically at a standstill.

When, at the end of 1977 a new container berth was nearing completion, negotiations were also taking place on the new pay agreement. Management offered 10%, provided the maintenance men agreed to their manning levels on the container berth. The men's claim for parity with registered dockers, agreed by the management in 1974, was also rejected, since it was outside the government's pay policy.

The maintenance workers refused to man the new berth until parity was implemented. At the beginning of April, they were locked out although they were working normally in the rest of the docks.

Since then, they have been picketing the whole of the docks. Management's latest offer is 10% from January, 1978, and parity for August,

STOP PRESS: At 2.00 pm on Wednesday 3rd May, T Wallis, the second largest employer in the Royal Albert Docks, ceased trading. Without any warning, after a morning's work, 800 men were told that their jobs were gone. Full report next week. Jim Spencer, NASD Shop Steward, Royal Group of Docks

1978, if government pay policy permits, conditional on agreeing to management's manning levels on the new berth. This would have put the men in an even worse position, and was rejected at a mass meeting last week.

The maintenance workers on the docks are new to industrial action, and management are trying to make an example of them. They deserve the support of the whole of the labour and trade union movement in the Southampton area and from dock workers throughout the country.

MICHELIN, BELFAST

A shop steward in the Michelin factory, Mallusk, North of Belfast, was dismissed because of alleged malicious damage [never proven] to a tyre—worth approximately £10.

This is an act of blatant victimisation by a multinational company [Michelin is the only tyre manufacturing company in the whole of Ireland]. As workers described it, the attitude of management to trade unions in the factory is "Edwardian".

This action has brought total support from the 250 workers in the dismissed shop steward's department. Moss Evans and the F&GWU leadership have given support to the strike. One official said: "If we cannot protect our shop stewards, there is no way we can protect our members."

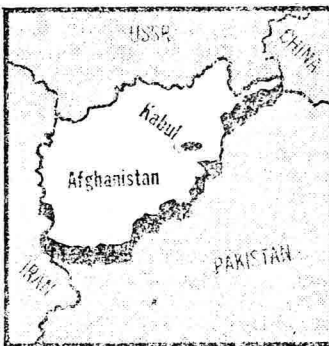
All workers are asked to give their full support to the Michelin strikers. All donations and correspondence to: Room 15, Floor 2, T&GWU, Belfast.

AFGHANISTAN—FEUDAL REGIME TOPPLED

The rulers of one of the poorest countries in the world were overthrown last week. With a population of 19 million, backward Afghanistan is the only large country that has no railway system. The average weekly wage in this semi-feudal country is a mere £1.

Following the death of the former President Daoud in last week's coup, Nur Muhammad Tarakki, peasant's son and head of the Communist Party, found himself taken from his prison cell and made head of State and Prime Minister of the new Democratic Republic. The coup, led by left wing officers under Vice Air Marshall Abdul Khadir, was a pre-emptive attack to prevent Daoud launching a bloody purge.

It would not have been the first purge in the old regime's repressive history. Daoud, afraid



of the banned Communist Party since its two factions fused last May, became desperate as famine threatened to produce food riots—which ironically swept him to power with the downfall of the monarchy in 1973. Riots had swept Kabul only last week following the murder of a trade unionist.

Reaction in the British press has concentrated on how the

overthrow of the right wing clique and the coming to power of an "anti-imperialist" regime backed by the Soviet bureaucracy will affect the interests of the British ruling class. But the international impact will depend on the social programme of the new regime.

If, following the experience of the Ethiopian revolution, the land is distributed to the poor peasants and what little industry exists is nationalised, it will act as a tremendous spur to the masses of neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. Riots have recently broken out against the Shah in Iran and the reactionary Pakistan government of General Zia may have to return troops from the embattled provinces of Sind and Punjab to hold down the peasants of Baluchistan and the North West Frontier on the Afghanistan border.

M Iqbal

Militant

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