

Militant

**ZAIRE
INTER-
VENTION**
—the real
reason
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THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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PRICES RIP-OFF

Last week Treasury officials were boasting that prices in the shops are now going up by "only" 9.1% a year!

Apparently, with a new crop of seasonal foods coming into the markets over the summer months, we are to get a breather before rising costs of imported commodities send prices rocketing again in six months' time.

But what happens to the extra that you have to pay over the counter? Take, for instance, the household medicines that are bought every day in supermarkets and chemists.

Last week the latest report of the Price Commission revealed absolutely scandalous over-pricing of several well-known, much-used patent medicines—and condemned the exorbitant profits made by the firms producing them.

Five products with sales of over £1 million a year in the United Kingdom—Anadin, Disprin, Milk of Magnesia, Rennie's and Beecham's powders—are all receiving lavish advertising spending and making huge profits—"that would be justified only in exceptional circumstances," says the Price Commission.

By Eileen Short

The Commission's report points out that one product, Optrex eye lotion, sells at five times the amount it costs the company to make it!

A spokesman for Optrex couldn't deny this. But, he said, the Report's statement was "very misleading for consumers." Surely it is the high-pressure advertising and the inflated retail price which is painfully "misleading" for consumers?

How on earth can it be

justified? Only, of course, by the enormous profits gained by the big firms concerned!

The Price Commission found that in the eye treatment products it examined over half (52%) of the sales price goes to "overheads" and profits. Over the whole range of products considered—pain killers, cough and cold remedies, stomach medicines, vitamins and tonics, and eye products—the

IN SPITE of Actress Glenda Jackson's advertising boost, Boots, the giant High Street chemists, disappointed the market today with profits of £107 million for the year to end-March, against £91.1 million last time.

Some people are never satisfied! ["Evening Standard" 18 May]. How many Boots workers enjoyed a rise of 17.5% last year?

amount spent on marketing and advertising varies from under 10% to as much as an incredible 65%.

In other words, more is spent on persuading you that you need their patent remedy than on producing the substance in the first place.

Because of the high-



Worried faces at Sainsbury's checkout

photo: Julian McKittrick

pressure advertising on television and in papers and magazines, branded products like "Anadin", "Disprin", and "Panadol", for example, face little competition from their plain, "British Pharmacopia" products—Aspirin BP, Soluble Aspirin BP, and Paracetamol BP—which are just as good and much cheaper.

Buying "own brands", however, is not necessarily an

answer for shoppers in search of a cure. The Commission found that although Boots' "own brand" products are generally cheaper than others, their profit margins are above average and almost as high as those for branded products.

What the Price Commission has just exposed in relation to a few products, however, is undoubtedly just the tip of the iceberg. Exactly

the same profiteering goes on elsewhere.

And what does the Price Commission intend to do about it? In short, nothing!

Just as scandalous as the Price Commission's revelations is the complete lack of any proposals for curbing the money-spinning activities of

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PRINT WORKERS FEAR MASSIVE REDUNDANCIES

The national newspapers are again making their own headlines.

As the deafening presses end their run in the early hours of the morning after producing many millions

of copies for the breakfast table or the journey to work, it is nowadays almost certain that they contain at least one item on their own industry.

Behind the headlines there

By Peter Jarvis

(London Region NGA)

is a well-orchestrated campaign to discredit the unions in Fleet Street and to whip up public support for modern

technology and lower manning levels, which—if introduced as planned by the management—would mean the loss of a third or more of the present newspaper print jobs.

All the major papers are

laying down the gauntlet to their workers: accept what we want, or we will close down. With over 50 million copies lost so far this year, the big corporations—which have many other financial interests—are intent on making their newspaper operations profitable.

The present serious dispute at the 'Observer' originated when the Aston family still ran the paper. Then the paper's prospects seemed

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Labour's Youth Broadcast

After again being called into question, Labour's youth broadcast due to be screened on 15 June now seems very likely to go ahead following a meeting of the Labour Party National Executive Committee last Wednesday. [24 May].

Expressing the enthusiasm of the Young Socialists for the Broadcast, which is being linked to a Week of Action, Nick Bradley [LPYS representative on the NEC] sent a letter to NEC members urging support for the proposed broadcast.

"Although the majority of young people are pro-Labour," he pointed out, "many of them do not bother to vote in elections. The Party needs to make a direct appeal to young people in a lively and stimulating way."

Top Gear

"The Party should be prepared to face the anger of the Tory press—and make a socialist appeal to young people. Far from harming Labour's electoral prospects this would enthuse our members and supporters and help to ensure the return of a Labour Government at the next election."

The expanded outline for the broadcast presented by Nick was enthusiastically supported by Eric Heffer, Tony Benn, and accepted by a majority of NEC members.

Final details of the programme will be worked out by Eric Heffer, the LPYS National Committee members, and the Party's technical advisers.

Phil Frampton, LPYS National Chairman, later told 'Militant':

"The Youth broadcast, as worked out by the national committee, will give an enormous boost to our Week of Action beginning on June 10th.

"In every part of the country, our recruiting activity is moving into top gear. Marvellous initiatives have been planned. The Week of Action—and this will be true whether or not the Youth Broadcast goes out as planned—will undoubtedly be a landmark in the growth and development of Labour's youth organisation."

By Lynn Walsh

LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY: Wednesday's NEC meeting approved the majority report of the Working Party on LP Democracy by 15 votes to 4. Full report next week.

The newspapers and the television have been full of horror stories of massacres of whites in the Shaba Province of Zaire. The aim of these stories has been to justify the intervention of Belgian, and particularly French forces on "humanitarian" grounds.

But what is the real reason? The right wing press which has hysterically supported intervention has blurted out the truth. The 'Daily Express' for instance, which represents South African interests, said:

"Shaba province...is one of the richest mineral areas in Africa. It is the world's prime producer of cobalt, and huge western investments are involved in tapping its still uncharted reserves of copper. Neither in strategic nor in business terms can it be lost."

"There is huge French investment in Africa that needs to be protected," confirmed 'The Times' [25 May]. And 'The Times' Business News [22 May] added: "The fact that the French and Belgian governments found it necessary to send their paratroops into Zaire to protect their nationals last week is proof of the fact that economic colonialism took over from the time imperialist colonialism left off."

This exposes the complete hypocrisy of the capitalist class and the media. Did they show such "humanitarian" concern, for instance, when King Leopold of Belgium ruled the Congo and the country's population was reduced by half through slavery and forced labour?

The capitalists have long boasted how "good" they were in granting independence to their colonies. But as soon as the economic neo-colonialism which replaced direct rule is threatened,

paratroopers. Giscard's action has been criticised for this reason by the Belgian government which was making efforts

"The fact that the French and Belgian governments found it necessary to send their paratroops into Zaire to protect their nationals last week is proof of the fact that economic colonialism took over from the time imperialist colonialism left off."

they are once again supporting military intervention.

In any case, the massacre of Europeans in Zaire was actually to a large extent provoked by the invasion of French

to evacuate the whites in Shaba.

At a time when, after its defeat in Vietnam, American imperialism has been obliged temporarily to relinquish its role as world policeman,

the French ruling class under Giscard d'Estaing is trying to build itself up as Africa's gendarme. French



ZAIRE - the real reason

"Shaba province...is one of the richest mineral areas in Africa. It is the world's prime producer of cobalt, and huge western investments are involved in tapping its still uncharted reserves of copper. Neither in strategic nor in business terms can it be lost."

'The Daily Express'

forces have been sent to protect French investment. But the French ruling class also has the illusion that it can protect the economic and strategic interests of western imperialism.

French forces went in to prevent the fall of Mobutu, one of the richest and most corrupt dictators in the whole of Africa. The fact that this is the second major revolt in a little over a year is an indication of the rottenness of his regime.

However, while western big business was quite prepared to prop up Mobutu in the past, and applauds the French government's attempts to save him, their more far-sighted strategists are now questioning the wisdom of intervention.

They are afraid that Giscard has grabbed a tiger by the tail—and will find it very hard to let go.

French forces may succeed in bolstering up Mobutu for the time being. But it is unlikely that they will be able to save him. Apart from the discontent and opposition that has been build-

ing up for a long period anyway, Mobutu's new dependency on French forces will only stimulate the movement against him.

The Tory press in Britain is also hysterically denouncing alleged Angolan, Cuban, and Russian assistance to the rebels in Shaba. As far as the Angolan government is concerned, however, they are simply giving Mobutu a taste of his own medicine. During the long struggle of the MPLA against Portuguese colonialism, Mobutu's forces obstructed, and at times actively fought, the liberation movement. During the civil war, Zaire became an undercover channel for CIA and South African support to right wing forces in Angola.

The labour movement in Britain must demand the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist forces from Zaire. The people of Zaire must decide their own future without brutal imperialist intervention.



Soldiers sent in by Mobutu to retake Kolwezi airport

OBSERV-A-ROT

When the 'Observer' came back on Sunday, 21st May, following a dispute over continuation of low manning levels agreed on a temporary basis when the future of the paper was said to have been in doubt, it was evident from the business pages that the whole of British industry is

operating on borrowed time.

The paper analysed eleven key sectors of manufacturing industry and compared the share of the British 'home' market going to foreign imports. In only one sector, non-ferrous metals, imports had not increased by at least 50% since 1970! Sectors

where imports had more than doubled since 1970 include iron and steel, electrical engineering, vehicles, other metal goods, textiles, clothing and footwear.

The prediction that follows these figures will not come as any surprise to regular readers of the 'Militant': at the end of the tourist season and when election considerations

By Steve Cawley
(Leyton Labour Party)

have induced the government to slightly ease the cutting of real wages, the average family will spend more of the "extra" on imported goods

than on British goods. Obviously, this will be mainly

because they are cheaper, but also are likely to be of more modern design and better suited to the purpose as well.

What will happen then? The capitalists, of course, will demand bigger and bigger handouts from the government to 'keep jobs in Britain'. What a cheek! Out of the 32 leading manufacturers, 26 had increased their profits in the last financial year.

Clearly the wage controls have been to their benefit. Those of us still lucky enough to have jobs, or rather to be in

well-organised trades, have had to work all the overtime available to try to keep up with prices. Yet the 'Observer's' Labour correspondent points out that, as far as the basic working week is concerned, manual workers have longer hours than anywhere else in Western Europe—except France.

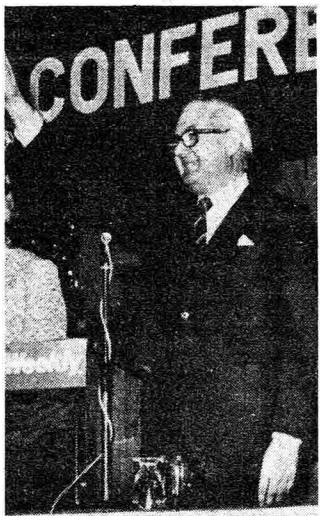
If I were the owner of the 'Observer', I'd be too embarrassed to pick a fight with the workers on the question of the efficiency of the private ownership of anything!

Debates voice dissatisfaction with government's record

By Margaret Creear

(Royton and Wardle Labour Party)

Despite repeated reassurances from Callaghan, Ron Hayward and Hattersley about "the success of the last three years of Labour government", the debates gave the lie to the rosy picture painted by our labour leaders that inflation is now only 9%, that "Labour has implemented four-fifths of its manifesto", jobs have been saved (!) in steel and the car industry, providing we do not return to free collective bargaining.



James Callaghan addresses the conference

Far from being satisfied with Callaghan's supposed 'increased public spending', resolution after resolution called for more social services, pensions, housing, jobs, nursery provisions and day care, and grants for all students over the age of 16.

What was lacking, however, was any directive from the platform to channel the slow anger of many delegates, and the vague gropings towards socialist action. As one COHSE delegate expressed it: "It's not just a place to let off steam!"

One of the most important

Prices and wages

Unfortunately, one of the best resolutions, from Llanelli, supporting the LPYS and YCAU demands against unemployment, fell. Other resolutions, on prices and incomes [11, Manchester Ardwick] when 'Militant' supporters Ella Gamwell, Margaret Creear and Linda Chester showed how wages did not cause inflation, how inflation had gone up—milk 19%, soaps 11%, electricity 145%, bus and rail fares 121%—and profits up 32.9%—but no corresponding increase in wages. Subsidies went straight into the hands of big business, and one man's "self-financing" productivity wage rise was another's job. The call for a £65 minimum wage was well received, but was opposed by the T&GWU on the grounds that they wanted only freedom from wage restraint! This resolution was defeated, but with the support of about a quarter of the conference, and the Conference remitted Composite 4, expressing concern about the implication of accepting wage restraint.

sections, on re-selection of MPs, was pushed right to the back of the agenda to avoid discussion. Policies to represent our interests will never be achieved without re-selection—good MPs will have nothing to fear, said Margaret Creear (Royton and Wardle) and other delegates, to applause. But how can MPs represent us if they are sending their children to private schools, living far above our living standards? This was passed overwhelmingly.

The platform concerned itself with making reports and studies rather than hammering out a fighting programme around which to organise a campaign to organise women,

such as homeworkers paid only 3p an hour or ½p per box of earrings, into the labour movement. Even resolution 44 giving school milk to secondary school students was asked for remission, on the grounds that 'there had been no demand for it, so it was a waste!' There were jeers when the platform said 'there were financial difficulties in speeding up' retirement for men and women at 60! Only one voted to remit this (res 15).

Conference did not confine itself to 'women's issues'—shown by resolutions on South Africa, the Neutron Bomb, nuclear energy, human rights and racialism, and the general political tone of many contributions.

There was overwhelming support for the total nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry.

Despite this, and overwhelming support for a campaign to expose racialism and rejection of the sale of council houses, there was confusion and little explanation was given in most of the resolutions as to why cuts were taking place, and why capitalism is at the root of women's low pay, unemployment, falling living standards. This was shown in the purely emotional debate on the human rights resolutions in which there was no explanation of the role of the British Army in Northern Ireland.

Resolution 44 on housing (Rochdale CLP) was narrowly defeated on a show of hands, and two votes had to be taken—this called for massive public works and nationalisation of the building industry, banks, building societies.

When Marxist ideas were expressed, they received an enthusiastic response, as shown by these two resolutions, and in the discussion groups on transport and the environment.

The debates at this year's

ings in works time.

The collection raised £20 and over 60 'Militant' were sold, as well as pamphlets and raffle tickets. Despite difficulties in selling these in the conference, by and large we received a friendly response.

Lively 'Militant' meeting

A real socialist alternative was developed in detail at the Militant Readers' Meeting, where more than 20 delegates and visitors listened to Muriel Browning [T&GWU] and Julie Maclean [Toxteth, and Labour candidate in the local elections]. Marxist ideas had got a response

when campaigned, as in Liverpool—imagine the response Labour leaders would have on such a programme.

A lively discussion ensued on how to activate women in the labour movement, by campaigning women's sections, organising trade union meet-



'Militant' supporter Ella Gamwell [Manchester, Ardwick] speaks in debate at conference

photo: 'Southport Visitor'

Racialism: call for action

Delegates responded enthusiastically to Marxist ideas. This was particularly so in the debate on racialism, one of the liveliest of the conference, though cut short by the platform.

Carole Fitch [Brighton Kemptown CLP] in moving composite 7 on fighting racialism and fascism welcomed the campaign by the Labour Party National Executive Committee and the Anti-Nazi League, but they had limits. Legal action as in the Race Relations Act was not enough; we have to drive the fascists off the streets, as the Mosleyites were in the 1930s. The seconder from South Hertfordshire said "civil liberties can't exist alongside the

NF" and called for councils to stop the use of council property for NF meetings and called for a campaign to organise black workers into the unions and the Labour Party.

This was passed almost unanimously, but the conference was split and confused on immigration controls. Margaret Manning [Moss Side] and Linda Chester [Rochdale] warned against any form of immigration controls: they would always be used for racist purposes; black workers in many areas would be intimidated. The resources exist to provide for everyone. On a show of hands this was lost 75-76, then defeated on a card vote.

About 300 hospital workers and supporters were successful in blocking the main Euston Road outside the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital in London last Friday.

The sit-down demonstration had been hurriedly organised by shop stewards and the Save the EGA Campaign in protest against David Ennals' final decision earlier in the week to close the EGA in July.

His decision follows the recommendation of the North East Thames Health Authority a couple of weeks ago when members of the authority had spoken of there being "no place today for a special hospital for women" and of the hospital not being "viable".

As often is the case with these health authorities, the views of the hospital staff in the EGA and the

area as a whole, the views of the patients, the views of the trade union movement, and even expert medical and financial evidence supporting the retention of the hospital, were all cast aside. They simply want to save the money.



EGA THREAT
photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

Militant meetings

150 discuss

LESSONS OF MAY '68

150 people turned up for Friday's London Militant meeting to commemorate the occupation of French industry by 10 million workers ten years ago last week.

Militant Editorial Board member Clare Doyle gave a vivid account of the tremendous movement of students and young workers in Paris and how the scenes of brutal police violence against demonstrators sparked off protests by workers and peasants throughout France.

Once the workers took up their own demands against a ruling class which maintained the most imbalanced distribution of wealth in Western Europe, and when the middle class and troops were won to their side, capitalism itself hung in the balance. Only the Communist Party and CGT leaders managed to "snatch defeat from the jaws of victory" by persuading the workers to end their spontaneous general strike.

Occupation

The revolutionary aim of the working class in 1968 was displayed before our eyes in the film 'Sud Aviation' shown after the discussion. It recorded the occupation of a large factory in Nantes, where workers, peasants and housewives elected their own Action Committee which began to



Massive workers' demonstrations in France, May '68—capitalism itself hung in the balance.

run society in the whole area. Cathy Sandler, who translated the film commentary, outlined the socialist programme of 'Militant'—for a

shorter working week, a minimum wage tied to prices, nationalisation and workers' control—and gave the lie to those sceptics in the labour



A section of the audience at the meeting—it is crucial for workers today to learn the lessons of past struggles.

photo: Julian McKittrick

movement who dismiss such demands as utopian. These were the very demands on placards and on the lips of the 40,000 workers who marched through Nantes!

Brent Kennedy explained that 1968 was the end of an epoch of apparent stability of capitalism when the idea of workers fighting to transform society was scorned. The French working class had opened the present epoch of revolution—and as Chile showed, of counter revolution where no determined leadership exists.

The loss of votes by the Communist and Socialist parties in the General Election that ensued—where the CP

Report by Brent Kennedy

tried to out-bid the Gaullists as the party of respectability and "order" against "anarchy"—showed how watering down a programme so as not to frighten the middle class always backfires and delivers them to reaction.

Linda Taaffe concluded from the role of CP leaders in calling off a General Strike which they had never begun and thus saving French capitalism from collapse, that the determination of the workers must be matched by a new leadership. She called for democratic control over elected trade union and

labour representatives, their wage to be no more than a skilled worker's.

Ted Grant concluded the meeting by posing the tasks facing the French and British workers today. The horrors of capitalism in decline—unemployment, poverty, racialism—would force the working class to struggle again and again to change society, but the opportunities would only be grasped with a Marxist leadership.

For this reason it is necessary to learn the lessons of the international workers' experiences, then we could build a Socialist United States of Europe and a Socialist World.

MAKE MPs ACCOUNTABLE

Over 20 people heard John Rouse, former member of Newham NE Labour Party General Committee, and Ray Apps, rank and file member of the Labour Party NEC Working Party on reselection, at Reading's second Militant public meeting.

John outlined his first hand experience of how the party tried to remove Reg Prentice

MP who has since joined the Tories, and the constitutional problems involved. He said: "If you have been through it, with writs flying around everywhere, you wouldn't want to go through with it again." He pointed out how the Tory press and the courts supported Prentice and drew attention to the right-wing position of the so-called Campaign for a Labour Victory.

Ray Apps explained how the campaign for reselection is not an abstract struggle, but a political one, and went on to outline the way the NEC had reneged on party policy by setting up the Working Party at all.

Less Democracy

If the majority report is accepted at this year's Labour

Party conference, we could end up with less democracy on this issue than previously—that in emergency situations, without Clause B of the Constitution, the General Committee will be unable to pass a vote of no confidence in its MP. Ray urged support for the minority report which retains this basic right.

During the discussion the repercussions of the campaign to oust Prentice were

mentioned, how the local trade unions became more involved with the Party, with dockers and Ford shop stewards joining the Party. The General Committee swelled five fold.

Policies

It was said though, that we shouldn't have to wait to oust our MP to build the party,

but we have to campaign on socialist policies which offer a solution to the problems facing the working class, and that the issue of party democracy should be seen as working in tandem with this.

By Tim Harris and Mike Abrahams

(Reading Labour Party)

MILITANT NOTICES

GATESHEAD Militant Public Meeting 'What We Stand For'. Speaker: Dave Cotterill (former National Chairman, LPYS). Thursday May 18th, 7.30 pm at Gateshead Labour Party Rooms, Whitehall Road, Gateshead (above the Co-op)

OXFORD Militant Public Meeting 'What is happening in Italy?' Speaker: Lynn Walsh (Militant Editorial Board). Friday May 26, East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Cowley Road. 7.30 pm.

ISLINGTON Militant Public Meeting 'The Labour Party and the Need for a Socialist Programme'. Hear: Chris Hill (Greater London Labour Party Executive Member and Chairman London LPYS Regional Committee). Friday 2nd June, 8 pm. Small Hall, Islington Central Library, Holloway Rd (5 mins Highbury Tube)

WALLASEY Folk Night. Ewan McColl and Peggy Seeger plus guests. Wednesday 14th June 1978, 8 pm. Wallasey Labour Club, Church Road, Wallasey. Tickets £1 from Paul Harrison, 051-630 3438

Militant Badges: 'Workers Unity and Socialism'. Bulk orders available. Contact Cathy Wilson, 24 Belvedere Street, Ryde IOW, Tel: Ryde 66938.

ROTHERHAM Militant Discussion Group. 'Which Way Forward for the Trade Unions?' Speaker: Rob Jones (Militant Editorial Board). Thursday 1st June, 7.30 pm. Place 'Tollbar', Rotherham Road, Maltby.

CHESTER LE STREET Militant Public Meeting 'Which Way Forward for Labour?' Speaker: J Pickard. Community Association, Ravensworth Rd, Birtley. Wednesday 31st May, 7.30 pm.

Jumble Sale Saturday 3rd June, 295 Upper Street, Islington. 10 am to 2 pm. Help and goods welcome. All proceeds to Militant Fighting Fund.

Events

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.

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 Beekingham
5. Marxism and the Trade Unions
Brian Ingham
Cost: £6.50 per person
Cheques payable to R. Sewell. Further Details: R. Sewell, 99 Penderry Road, Penlan, Swansea. Tel. 33542.

LEFT & RIGHT

SEEING THE LIGHT?

For the trade unions to link their shop-floor struggles to the fight to change society is wrong. The role of management is to manage.

Who is this moderate chap? asks the Tory Sun. "These eminently sane and responsible views come from none other than our old friend Hughie Scanlon."

So has Scanlon decided, in his ageing wisdom, that the Engineers should not have fought the Tory straight-jacket of the Industrial Relations Act? That the miners were wrong to bring down the three-day week government of Heath?

"What a pity so many trade union bosses see the light only when they are about to retire!" the Tory gutter-press rejoices. With praise from papers like that for Scanlon, the one-time champion of the AUEW Broad Left, is it any wonder that workers' confidence in the Broad Left candidates in AUEW elections was undermined?

BUREAUCRATS ROB WORKERS

Alfred Herberts, the State-owned machine-tool group, is investigating the purchase of its Coventry offices. It appears that an intermediary, Kingsbridge Advances, made £225,000 profit out of the purchase price of £1.2m. Herberts' chairman, Sir John Buckley, was "anxious not to take too much time on this irritating side issue."

What is not being investigated is that Herberts re-sold the property to S Yorks county council for almost £1m profit. This is insane! A company, financed out of taxes paid by workers through the National Enterprise Board, is left free to make huge killings from county councils, financed through rates from other workers.

One thing is sure. This deal would not have happened if Herberts had been under workers' control. Sir John also warned about possible future redundancies. Perhaps the workers should take over, and send him his cards with 90 days in lieu.

UNEMPLOYED ON £5,000 —THANKS TO TORIES

With over one and a half million people on the dole in Britain, you wouldn't think the unemployed were hard to find. But the Tories seem to be having problems.

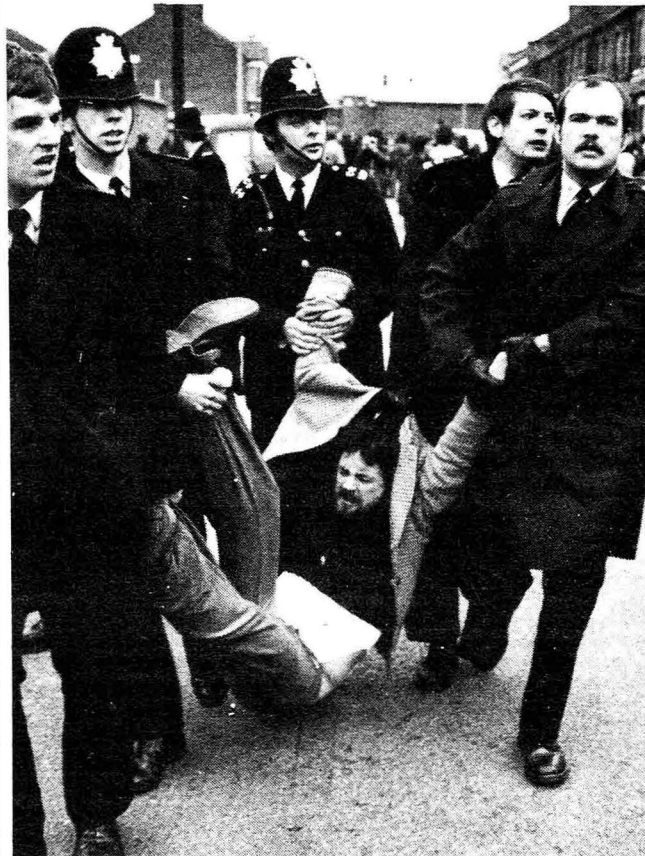
They have admitted, that in last week's Conservative Party political broadcast, the people queuing to collect their money were not really unemployed. They had to hire actors, laying out over £5,000 for their few minutes of nostalgia and distortion.

"A lot of people in real dole queues," said Gordon Reece, Tory Party Director of Communication, "just would not want to be recognised." But there was another motive, Reece confessed. "That and the fact that an awful lot of people in dole queues might not want to be in a Conservative Party Commercial."

The "free enterprise" gloss the party of big business try to put on doesn't go very far when the same bosses who throw you out of work are the ones who fill the Tory Party coffers.



"Watch him lad, he looks like a dangerous customer. I think we had better call for assistance."



"That's better. Five to one. We should be all right now."

THE LESSONS OF GRUNWICK

TU Leaders didn't Match up to Ranks

By Ed Bober
London Labour Party
Executive

This new 25-minute colour film would make a good background for discussion at your LPYS or trade union branch.

The film brings out very clearly the feeling of anger felt by the pickets towards the police because of their role in protecting the scabs and the Grunwick management. The unedited sequences on the police rampage of November 7th will be a valuable historical record of what happened.

This piece of film shows the full vicious extent of police violence, in a way which no other documentation could do. When you see the film it is easy to understand why 243 pickets were injured.

The film attempts to draw out the main lessons of the Grunwick dispute and to relate them to other struggles, such as the current one at Garners. It tries to show how workers cannot depend on the law to safeguard their interests in any way, and the fact that they must rely on their own strength.

It is guilty of a certain oversimplification when it deals with the role played by the TUC and the trade union leaders. The TUC conference voted in favour of stepping up action in support of the strikers. The problem lay in the failure of the TUC leaders, and the leaders of other unions, to translate fine resolutions of general solidarity into concrete action that could have strangled George Ward out of business.

Nevertheless, the main point comes across very well, that the TUC leadership

played into the hands of the bosses, and laid the basis for the fizzling out of support in spite of the tremendous willingness of the trade union ranks to take action.

As the title "Look back at Grunwick" implies, the fight is already over as far as the union officials are concerned. But even in the dying days of the dispute a victory could be achieved if the leaders of the labour movement were really prepared to take action.

One of the criteria laid down by Labour under the Attlee government for nationalisation of firms was "unsatisfactory industrial relations". There can be absolutely no doubt that on this score alone George Ward deserves to have his firm taken out of his hands and placed under the democratic control and management of the working class. This would create the possibility of the re-instatement of the strikers and the recognition of the unions.

This film shows that amongst the strikers themselves there was an understanding of the sort of policies that were needed to win victory. And amongst the working class their was a willingness to support and fight for the strikers. What blocked the road to victory at every stage was the failure of the trade union and Labour leaders to put words into action.

The main lesson that comes out of this dispute now is that the leaders of the labour and trade union movement must be made accountable and recallable by those whom they are supposed to represent.

'Look Back at Grunwick' is a 16 mm colour film lasting 25 minutes and can be hired for £12 from The Other Cinema, 12 Little Newport Street, London W.1.

THE ITALIAN ROAD TO WHERE?

Last week's episode of the ITV documentary series, 'The Faces of Communism', focussed on the 2 million strong Italian Communist Party [PCI], the main workers' party and the party with greatest electoral following in Italy.

Any socialist, trade unionist or thinking Communist Party member watching this programme would have been sickened by what he saw. Out of the mouths of leading PCI members came the most degenerate statements of how they would solve the problems of Italian capitalism.

From "we do not want to be the sole party in power, we only want to be part of a coalition with the Christian Democrats" (Tories) to Napolitano who gave "categorical" pledges that they would do nothing too "extreme". This

was followed by another leading PCI MP who was not only opposed to further nationalisation of industries but was "in favour of denationalisation of some sectors."

Right Wing

The interviewer, Robert Kee, you could see was enjoying this: "But your position is to the right of the British Labour Party, at least they have down as policy nationalisation of the insurance companies"! "Well each socialist party has to determine how much nationalisation they need," was the reply.

Another leading member proceeded to explain "if Marx and Engels were alive today they would understand the situation and what we are trying to do." He believed

they would "dampen down" some of their radical policies (like ending capitalism?).

As the documentary unfolded a picture of a vast gulf between the party tops to the rank and file was seen. While workers are struggling to survive, organising strikes and sit-ins, while many students marched in protest against the PCI as being part of the establishment, further leading party MPs were shown to be enjoying the benefits of one of Rome's private hospitals.

Another was taking a course in banking, explaining that "finance is the lever of power." His way of controlling the "lever of power" was to become part of it.

The incredible depths of class collaboration to which the leadership have sunk was shown again and again. It was even more highlighted by

hearing it from their own mouths.

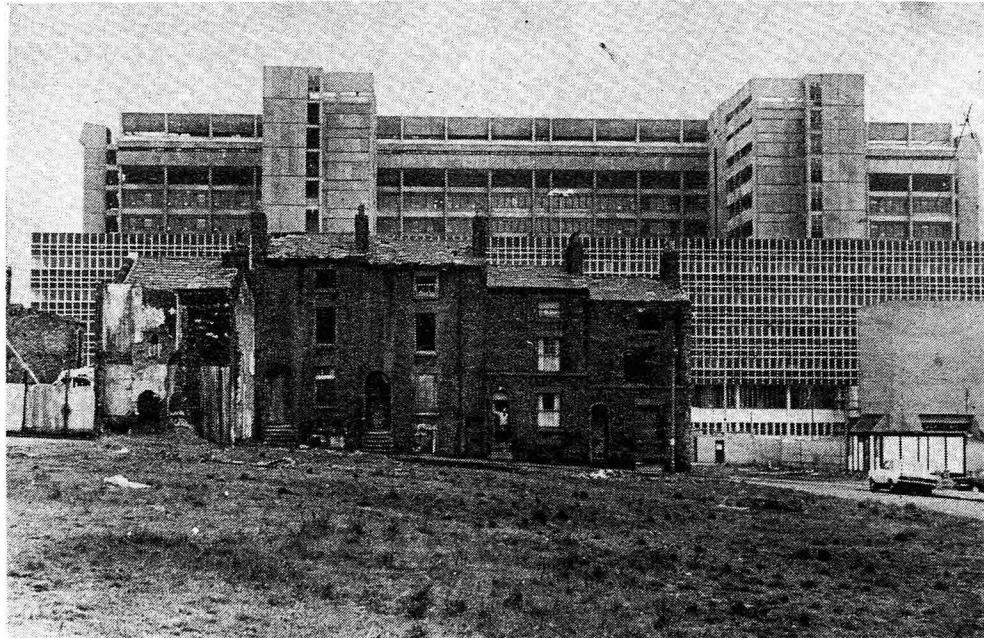
In total contrast you saw the membership, many still with illusions, but others who were starting to question and disagree with the leadership. One scene showed an old founder member of the Party harangue the local party leader from Naples at a meeting. You could see the embarrassment in his eyes as he squirmed in his seat.

This scene and others showed the hope for the future of the Italian working class. Out of the class battles that lie ahead, the workers will fight to create a real fighting, socialist leadership. That fight will take place inside the PCI, the Socialist Party and the trade unions.

Bob Faulkes
Hackney Central
Labour Party

The view from Prospect Street

Story: Richard Knights Photos: Report



A row of half-demolished, condemned houses, one of them still inhabited, is dwarfed by the new Liverpool Teaching Hospital. One of the most modern in Europe, the hospital cost over £40 million. Around about, however, expenditure has not been so lavish. No. 22 Prospect Street is surrounded by a wasteland. The council began to pull the houses down way back in 1966, but evidently shelved its redevelopment plans some time ago. But Felix McClean and his family continue to live in No. 22—still waiting for adequate compensation.



Felix McClaren bought his house in 1960—for £600. In 1966, when they began to clear the area, the council offered him the magnificent sum of £68. After protests, they raised this to £205.

In the late '60's and early '70's the property companies, finance houses, landlords and speculators of every kind made fabulous profits from property speculation. The construction companies and the money lenders made enormous profits from council redevelopment schemes. They still do. But the local authority were not even prepared to pay Felix McClaren the officially estimated "market value" for his house.

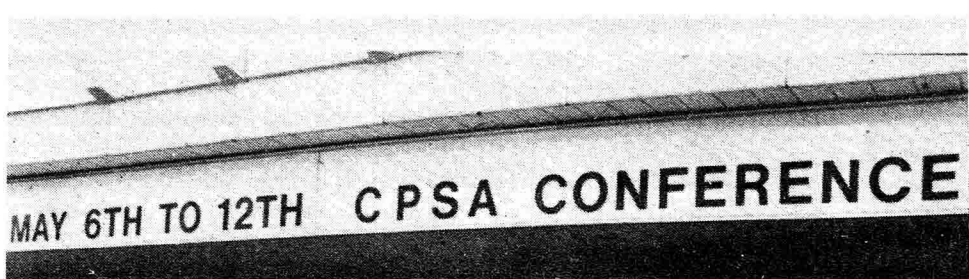
One of the many official letters he received [in this case from the Department of the Environment in 1974] stated:

"Full market value is paid in all cases except for a house condemned as unfit for human habitation. Since the structure of an unfit house is regarded as worthless, compensation in these cases is basically restricted to the value of the site cleared of buildings. That is, the amount the cleared site would fetch if offered on the open market".



Not prepared to accept the derisory sum offered in compensation, Felix McClaren refused to move. "We used to get letters from the council nearly every week", Felix told 'Militant' last week. "Now we don't hear from them. I think they must have given up". Felix describes the system as "not compulsory purchase, but compulsory robbery".

How many others have been forced out of their house with derisory compensation for their investment in a home? Or been obliged to move to soulless new estates, miles away? Or been left living amid demolition debris in the middle of a wasteland waiting for re-development plans which get postponed year after year?



Conference photos: Julian McKittrick

Sweeping victory for Left in CPSA

Four 'Militant' supporters were among Broad Left executive candidates swept to victory at the conference of the Civil and Public Servants last week. A 16-12 majority last year for the right has been turned into a 22-6 majority for the left.

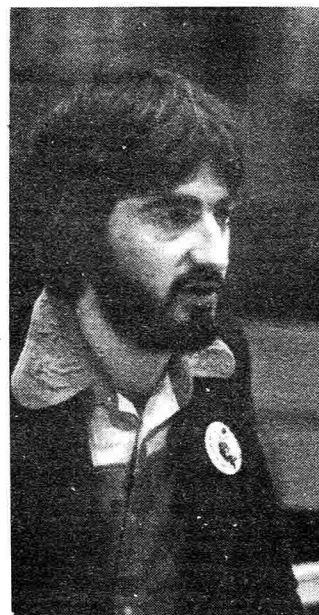
Other impressive gains were made. Kay Losinska—Trumid activist—was heavily defeated by Len Lever, the retiring president. Two Broad Left candidates took the vice-presidential positions.

Reasons for the crushing defeat inflicted on the right wing were not difficult to find. At a time of the growing impatience of members with restrictions on wages and benefits and cuts in living standards, the right wing had failed completely to provide any sort of leadership during their year of office. The myth that "moderate" policies were capable of delivering the goods has been well and truly shattered.

Democracy

The size and victory of the left also owed much to membership rejection of the right wing's desperate and vicious attempts to consolidate themselves in power. The attack on internal union democracy represented by the November Rules Revision Conference was one such example. The unsuccessful attack on Terry Adams—the first name on the right's political hit list—provides another, probably the major, reason.

Only a handful of Conference delegates supported the right's attempts to sack 'Militant' supporter, Terry Adams, a national official of the union. Although directly aimed at stopping the vicious political witch-hunt against Terry, there is absolutely no



By Pat Byrne

(CPSA National Executive, personal capacity)

number 1, was defeated by 74,556 to 105,893.

Although undoubtedly a set-back, this decision must not be made the excuse for not mounting an effective campaign on the pay front. Researches by the union clearly show that the low-paid workers represented by CPSA have suffered pay cuts of about £10 per week, and that we lag behind other workers employed outside the Civil Service, a fact which will have been accentuated by the miserable 9½% pay increase just negotiated.

The leadership of the union are deceiving themselves and the membership if they think that the mere existence of Pay Research provides any possibility of a decent wage increase without a struggle. Whatever the method used, Civil Servants will get screwed once again unless the strength of the union is brought into play.

No to stage 4

Conference's unanimous vote against any form of incomes policy showed the tremendous pressures building up in the labour movement against attacks on workers' living standards. CPSA must immediately take the lead in demanding of the TUC a Conference of Executives to oppose Stage 4 by all possible means. If the TUC will not act, CPSA must then take the initiative in calling a Conference. This was the proposition put forward by 'Militant' supporter, Kevin Roddy, at the NEC prior to conference. The right wing emasculated this suggestion, but the left must resurrect it.

Additionally, the list of major demands which the new left Executive will need to take up includes shorter pay scales; a 30-hour week (or 35 hours, including lunch breaks); and a 6 week leave allowance for all members.

Conference showed its determination to concentrate on these basic issues by defeating suggestions which would di-

doubt that the effect of the Terry Adams Defence Campaign was catastrophic for the right.

While CPSA Conference represented a marked move to the left, however, this was not always reflected in Conference debate and decisions. Members are still very much influenced by the old ideas and hesitancy of previous leaderships. This showed itself in the cautious approach to determining pay.

Despite its size and strength of membership, CPSA has always taken its lead from other clerical workers—often less well organised—outside the Civil Service. This it has done through the Pay Research machinery, where pay negotiations are restricted to confidential (i.e. not available to members) information on pay and conditions provided to unions and employers by a so-called independent body.

A move was made to get rid of this system, especially as it is now to be policed by a Board of government nominees. On a card vote, the anti-Pay Research Motion,



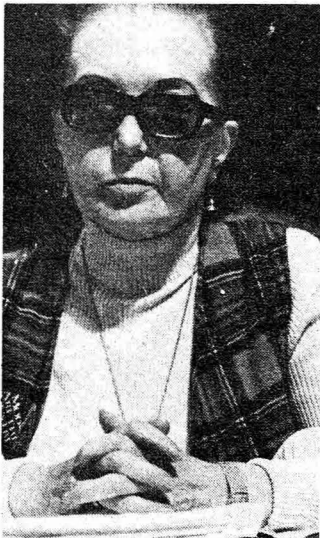
Delegates at 1978 CPSA Conference

vide members, e.g. large town allowances and productivity deals. **Most interesting of all was the decisive rejection of a call to improve the rate of overtime payments.** 'No' to overtime; 'Yes' to a decent basic wage and creation of jobs for the unemployed: this was the message that came over loud and clear.

Closed Shop

If the union is to gain these improvements, struggle will be unavoidable and a strong union will be required—a fact which the Conference hammered home when severely censuring the Executive for not achieving a closed shop, a policy outstanding for four years. The membership expects results and soon. Nor will the union settle for the closed shop offer of the government after consultation with their Tory counterparts: a closed shop referendum for all staff, including non-unionists, freedom for existing non-members to continue opting out, the opportunity at any time for members to opt out in favour of charity donations.

The need for independent struggle by the union for change led to the re-affirmation of opposition to "industrial democracy". A policy put forward by 'Militant' supporters was instead favoured, comprising full union organisation, full consultation, full information and a status quo clause.



A disconsolate Kate Losinska

Democracy in the union and membership involvement will benefit from the decision to publish election addresses on behalf of candidates for all major positions.

A move towards the election and accountability to members of union officials was defeated on a card vote. This was a disappointment. But the card vote with 85,651 for and 117,822 against the proposition clearly showed a

substantial basis of support within the membership for the principle of election of officials.

If a serious campaign were to be mounted on this issue over the next few years then, without doubt, a clear majority could be convinced.

By decision of the November Rules Revision Conference, CPSA is committed "to oppose any force in Society which seeks to foster divisions based on race, creed or religion." This Conference decided on affiliation to the Anti-Nazi League. 'Militant' supporters supported affiliation, but, at the same time, emphasized that the League has not taken up the question of the atrocious economic and social conditions on which fascist propaganda depends for its success. A determined Labour government carrying out socialist economic and social policies would cut the ground away from under the fascists' jackboots. And it is only through the mobilisation of the labour movement that the strutting, swaggering leaders and followers of the Nazi National Front will effectively be cut down to size.

Opposition to public expenditure cuts, concern at the level of unemployment, a call for a campaign against racism and a demand for the unrestricted right to strike for Post Office workers were the major political and economic subjects at the concluding stages of the conference.

Tactics

The CPSA conference was without doubt overall a major step forward for the membership, for 'Militant' supporters and the left generally. But there remains the question of the Presidency. Communist Party member, Peter Coltman, complained in the 'Morning Star' on Tuesday 9 May that had 'Militant' supporters observed Broad Left decisions, he would have won the Presidency (Lever—103,622; Losinska—66,420; Coltman—37,059). This statement overlooks a number of points. A large number of Coltman's votes came from branches where 'Militant' supporters have an influence. Secondly, branches which backed Lever did so of their own volition. He had won a degree of respect for his role in blocking the right wing's attempt to rewrite the rule book. But also and more importantly—as we argued within the Broad Left—members correctly saw the prime task as stopping Losinska, the standard-bearer of the right wing machine.

We understood the instincts and mood of the membership and that is the truth of the matter.

'Militant' supporters did attempt to go along with the Broad Left decision and discipline in supporting Coltman for President. His nominations prove this. But there was no stopping the overwhelming desire of members to inflict a defeat on Losinska.



Kevin Roddy

The old right wing leadership have suffered an ignominious defeat. No doubt they will work frantically over the next year in an attempt to recoup their position.

They will be aided by the capitalist press, which has already worked assiduously since the conference to divide the membership from the new executive. Hysterical scare stories of "Reds" controlling the CPSA have poured forth from the press.

The members will judge the new executive committee by its actions. Mounting frustration exists throughout the union on a whole range of issues.

Start

The election of the left NEC is a start, it is not the end. That NEC must show that it is determined to defend the interests and reflect the aspirations of CPSA members. Whenever these aspirations or interests are threatened, then that leadership must go to the members, explain the issues, and put forward a policy and strategy which will unite the union in action.

With that kind of leadership, the members will respond and the CPSA will come of age as a union.

HOTELS AND CATERING: JOBCENTRES ADVERTISE ILLEGAL PAY RATES

The recent strike at Claridges, the continuing struggles at Garners, and any number of other disputes, have drawn attention to the scandalously low pay and poor conditions in the catering industry.

Last week, the Low Pay Unit published a report, 'Unequal Portions', by Ceri Thomas, which is a scathing attack on the hotel and catering industry. The Unit found that 56.2% of men (21 and over) and 93.8% of women (18 and over) are paid less than £50 a week, the minimum wage suggested by the National Union of Public Employees last year as the gross wage necessary to equal the current level of social security entitlement for an average family.

The Low Pay Unit's nationwide survey also found that staff at Jobcentres are not kept informed of the legal minimum rates of pay for the catering industry determined by the Wages Councils.

Jobcentres

Jobcentre staff reported that they are not sent wages orders displaying the rates by another section of the same government Department, with the result that a number of jobs advertised were offering rates below the minimum—while the Wages Inspectorate is conducting a campaign to stamp out illegal underpayment. Last year the Wages Inspectors found that one in six of all hotel and catering employers were underpaying their workers.

Male catering workers are the lowest paid men of any industry listed in the government's annual earnings figures: even when the value of meals and accommodation supplied by the employer is included. On top of this, catering workers are taxed on tips—sometimes when they didn't even get them. And for thousands of workers the first £6 of tips earned goes straight into the employer's pocket.

The Unit's national survey of Jobcentres found that the average wage offered in advertisements was 85.3p an hour—and this included jobs for better paid grades of workers such as chefs. One job advertised for a chef at a wage of £25 for a 54-hour week—estimated at £13.20 a week below the legal minimum.

The Unit calls on the Department of Employment to inform Jobcentres of wages council rates and to make sure that this information is passed on to applicants. They also call on the Manpower Services Commission to instruct Jobcentres to refuse to service jobs paying below the legal minimum rates. The CPSA, which represents most Jobcentre staff, has itself put forward this demand.

The Unit has also called for unlicensed hotels to be brought under a wages council to lay down minimum rates.

But even the minimum

EXAMPLES OF JOBCENTRE CARDS

Vacancy: Waiter/ess
Area: Brighton
Pay: £20 pw
Hours: 9 am to 6 pm
× 5 days

Establishment: Café
[Calculated underpayment
£8.54 per week]

Vacancy: Chef
Area: York
Pay: £25 pw [living in all
found]

Hours: 11.30-2.30 +
6.00-12.00
× 6 days

Establishment: Licensed
Restaurant
[Calculated underpayment
of £13.20 per week]

wage target proposed by the Low Pay Unit, which would be £55 a week for 1978, though it would be a marked improvement for most catering workers, would still not be a real living wage—which should now be at least £70 a week.

Although the enforcement of wages councils minimum rates would be a step forward, the fact that they are widely ignored by both the industry and other government departments is another symptom of the problems in the industry.

Organise

Only the organisation of hotel and catering workers into a strong trade union and a national fight for a living wage and decent conditions will radically change the position of this section of highly exploited workers. That is the importance of the strike at Garners now, and of the campaign of the Transport and General Workers' Union to organise the industry—a campaign which must be stepped up and supported by the whole labour movement.

'Unequal Portions: a survey of pay in the hotel and catering industry' by Ceri Thomas and Andy Erlam (50p from Low Pay Unit, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG)

Workers' Notebook

Incomes of unemployed people as a proportion of average earnings were lower when the latest statistics were collected than in the early 1970's.

In 1971 unemployment benefit was worth 77.9 per cent of the average wage to a married man with two children. But October, 1976, benefit had dropped to 67.3 per cent of the average wage.

The calculations contrast the value of unemployment benefit plus earnings-related supplement with the net income of average earnings after deducting tax and national insurance contributions. Family allowances are taken into account in both instances.

In October, 1976, a married man with two children on average earnings received a net income of £51.66 per week. His income out of work in the first six months of unemployment was £34.75 a week more than two thirds of his income in work. In 1971 his income in work was £25.85, and out of work £20.15.

Nor has unemployment benefit kept pace with wages for single people and childless couples.

"Social Security Statistics 1976"

The recent report of the Health and Safety on Manufacturing and Services Industries, 1976 makes it clear that while work is gradually becoming safer, a horrifying number of accidents are still taking place. In 1976 382 workers were killed in main industrial processes. The number of serious accidents during that year was a horrifying 33,640. Other types of accidents numbered no less than 171,900!

But while the cases heard by courts, following prosecutions by the Factory Inspectorate, overwhelmingly led to convictions, the average penalty imposed in 1976 was a miserable of £87. Workers' lives are valued cheaply by capitalism.

Health and Safety Executive: Manufacturing and Service Industries, 1976.



FRANCE: THE

When the moved t

After a lapse of more than three decades, the Popular Front is back on the agenda of the workers' movement in Western Europe.

In France—notwithstanding the defeat of the Left in the elections—in Spain and in Italy new versions of the pre- and post-war Popular Front governments will undoubtedly come to power in the turbulent period which lies ahead. As a preparation for such a possibility, the “theoreticians” and spokesmen of the Communist Parties have look for support—and seek to justify their tactics—in the experiences of past Popular Fronts.

Thus in Britain Eric Hobsbawn and Monty Johnstone, “dissident” members of the CP, have recently undertaken a defence of the Popular Front “strategy”, particularly in Spain and France in the pre-war period.

This is not at all accidental. During a period of economic upswing and relative stability the capitalists prefer to rule through their traditional parties. But faced with economic or social crisis and the resulting mass discontent, with the weakening and discrediting of their traditional parties, the capitalists invariably resort to the coalition tactic. They seek to break the movement of the masses by pushing the leaders of the workers' parties into an alliance with the capitalist parties.

In Britain in the 1930s the ruling class pressurised the renegade Ramsay MacDonald to form a “National government” with the Tories and Liberals. The same conditions as pre-war are now re-appearing in Western Europe.

CP theoreticians invariably appeal to the writings of Lenin to justify this tactic. Yet running like a red thread throughout Lenin's writings is an explicit denunciation of the policy of alliances with the liberal capitalists.

Clear position

On March 6, 1917, from Switzerland, just after the February Revolution, Lenin wrote to the Bolsheviks in Russia: “Our tactic: absolute lack of confidence: no support to the new government; no support of Kerensky especially.” The Provisional Government was the equivalent of the latter-day Popular Front—an alliance of the leaders of one of the workers' and peasants' parties, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, with the liberal capitalists.

Some of Lenin's erstwhile followers, such as Stalin and Kamenev, through the Bolshevik newspaper ‘Pravda’, were

prepared to give support to this government: “in so far as it struggled against reaction or counter-revolution.” Lenin compared this to preaching against sin to a brothel keeper!

In his famous ‘Letters from Afar’ he pitiously condemns the policy of Stalin and Kamenev—and by implication the present leaders of the CPs in Western Europe. He wrote: “He who says that the workers must support the new government in the struggle against Tsarist reaction is a traitor to the workers, a traitor to the cause of the working class, to the cause of peace. For actually, precisely this new government is already bound hand and foot by imperialist capital, by the imperialist policy of war and plunder.”

Lenin never at any time justified a programmatic bloc with the leaders of middle class parties as a means of winning the little men of town and country to the side of the working class. On the contrary, the history of Bolshevism is a history of a war against such notions, not just in Russia either.

When Millerand, the French Socialist Party leader, formed a bloc with the leaders of the Radical Socialist Party at the

turn of the century, he was condemned by Lenin. The Radical Socialist Party was characterised by Lenin as “the most vicious and consummate representatives of finance capital, the political exploiter of the peasants and middle class.” The way to win the middle class, said Lenin, was not in a coalition with these “political exploiters” but by unmasking them before their followers, and by demonstrating in action that only the working class was capable of solving their problems.

In Russia in 1917 this policy—implacably opposed to the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary versions of the Popular Front—succeeded in winning the peasantry to the side of the working class. In Spain and in France in 1936 the “strike breaking conspiracy” of the Popular Front succeeded only in pushing the peasantry and the middle class into indifference and opposition.

Clear limits

Lenin was sometimes prepared to co-operate with the Liberals on practical or technical matters such as the transport of revolutionary literature, joint action against the fascist Black Hundreds, etc. He



In the first of two articles, Peter Taaffe, Editor of ‘Militant’, recounts the experience of the French Popular Front government of 1936, takes up its latter-day apologists, and analyses the vital lessons for today.



Children join mass demonstrations in support of the Popular Front government. Above left next to headline: Fascist thugs on the Place de la Concorde, February 1934.

was prepared under certain conditions to have common voting lists on the second ballot with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. But at no time did the Bolsheviks form a programmatic bloc, have common organisations, or subordinate themselves to the Russian “Republicans” or “Radicals”.

Lenin revised

In a shamefaced way, Eric Hobsbawn is prepared to concede that the idea of the Popular Front flies in the face of all of Lenin's teaching: “...coalitions of communists with social democrats and certain middle-class parties which were not seen as the immediate preliminary to revolution and working class power. Such governments had always been condemned by the revolutionary left” (‘Marxism Today’, July 1977). But, argues our sage, it was entirely justified by the “new situation” which had developed in France and Spain pre-war. Elsewhere, ‘Militant’ has detailed the catastrophic role of the Popular Front in Spain. But in the light of recent events, Eric Hobsbawn and Monty Johnstone have attempted to refurbish the image of the French Popular Front of 1936.

In reality, the titanic sit-down strikes of May-June 1936 stand

as a crushing condemnation of the policy of Popular Frontism. Between 1931 and 1936 the French working class had seen their already meagre wages reduced by an average of 30%. Their growing radicalisation was reflected in the elections of 1936. The Popular Front received over 5½ million votes compared to the 4½ million for the right wing National Front. The revolutionary ferment amongst the masses was reflected in the Radical Party's loss of a half million votes, its reduction to third place in votes, while at the same time the Communist Party doubled its vote to 1½ million.

This dramatic collapse of the Radicals is airily dismissed by Monty Johnstone. Seeking to justify the CP leaders' alliance with the Radicals he writes: “Whilst the Radicals were to lose one half million votes...the one and a half million votes that they received showed that they were still a force to be reckoned with...whereas between them the Socialists and Communists obtained only 218 out of 618 seats, the Popular Front as a whole won an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies with 378 seats.”

He does not mention, of course, the gross bias towards the Radicals in the allocation of seats within the Popular Front. Thus on the first ballot they got

POPULAR FRONT, 1936

the workers

Towards power

Then, in the last week of May and the first two weeks of June, a mighty wave of sit-in strikes was begun by the French working class. Beginning with the metal workers in Paris, all corners of France and all layers of the working class joined in. On the eve of the strike trade union membership stood at 1,200,000, just 20% of the labour force. Yet upwards of 3 million joined the strike. For the first time in French history the trade unions ran out of membership cards! All those workers, the most exploited and sceptical, were roused to their feet by the sit-in strikes. The horror of international capitalism is reflected in the reports of the British press at the time. The 'Manchester Guardian' reporting on the strike in the department stores and the pleasure-spots of the rich said: "Paris Coty's perfumery workshops; the Galerie Lafayette; all the chocolate factories...the drivers of the 'black Marias' in Paris struck today and prison vans had to be driven by police inspectors...the Trois Quartiers and other department stores were declared 'occupied' by the employees this morning...six thousand persons, including 3,500 women, are employed by Galerie Lafayette" (June 4th, 1936).

Opportunity

On 11 June the same newspaper reported: "Coachwork factories in Paris, several cinemas and two or three dress-making firms which were 'occupied' by the 'midinettes' went on strike today...the stable lads have 'occupied' the racing stables and several hundred undertaker societies and tombstone manufacturers have joined in the movement...The syndicate of concierges has asked for holiday with pay and automatic buttons for opening front doors at night!"

The loss of production was bad enough, but the occupations and strikes began to affect the stomachs of the rich: "The rather abrupt manner in which the waiters' strike began in some of the restaurants while some of the customers were in the middle of lunch was rather unpleasant" ('Manchester Guardian' 12 June, 1936)

"The Times reported on 11 June that: "The lifeboat men on the Seine have put up a notice to say that they are on strike and forbidding passers-by to throw themselves into the water. Another warns that so long as the strike continues only mothers-in-law will be saved"! Nor did religion escape: to the consternation of the local priest workmen engaged on redecoration at the church of St Vessaine went on strike, occupied the church and slept in the confessional boxes for the duration.

At the same time, "even the rural areas are now infected by the strike virus and in the Seine-et-Oise Department 3,500 agricultural workers joined in" ('The Times', 11 June, 1936). In



CP leaders Duclos, Thorez, and Cahin [centre, from left to right] head the PCF contingent on a mass demonstration of the parties forming the Popular Front.

the ports, sailors marched through the towns with arms linked singing the 'Internationale', and the police fraternised with the workers.

Here was a unique opportunity for the French working class to have taken power peacefully! The forces of French capitalism were completely paralysed. Not so! declare the latter-day attorneys for the pre-war CP leaders—Monty Johnstone and Co. The sit-in strikes, they assert, were concerned not with "politics" but merely with wages and conditions. **On the contrary, in May/June 1936, the French working class was groping in the direction of power.** All the serious capitalist commentators at the time show this. The 'Manchester Guardian' reporter wrote on 30 May, 1936, at a time when the sit-in strikes were beginning to spread: "The Conservative press is greatly disturbed. The 'Intransigent' declared: 'In short the Ministry

of the Masses is trying to take the place of the Front Populaire'."

Even more striking are the comments of one picket to the same reporter: "Our boss," he said, 'has been treating us as dictators. Well I told him that we preferred this sort of dictatorship within the framework of a democratic regime to the dictatorship of Hitler and Mussolini.'" How much wisdom there is in the simple words of this French worker.

But the leaders of the French workers' parties were terrified by these developments, which had taken them by surprise and were threatening to get out of control: "Several Communist deputies to whom I spoke were visibly embarrassed and alarmed. They declared the strike to be 'untimely', described it as an uncontrollable mass movement, and declined all responsibility for it" ('Manchester Guardian' 3 June, 1930).

In next week's article, Peter Taaffe analyses the balance of forces in 1936, examines the danger of reaction, and shows how the Popular Front derailed the revolutionary movement.



Marcel Cachin, the CP's first Senator in France, argues for an anti-fascist front at a meeting in 1935.

25 seats, yet on the Second Ballot, entirely due to the concessions given by the CP and SP leaders, they got 116 seats. Throughout the election campaign, moreover, the CP leaders covered the Radicals with a revolutionary aura—in complete contradistinction to Lenin, who used elections to unmask liberal capitalists before their middle class supporters.

Sit-down strikes

The Radicals openly boasted that they would be a brake on the "excesses" of the socialist ministers. Thus the Radical leader Daladier declared: "Whatever may be said to the contrary, the Front Populaire programme is really impregnated with the true Radical spirit" ('Manchester Guardian', 23rd May 1936). This programme promised important reforms such as the 40-hour week but came out only for the nationalisation of war industries and the banks.

But the suspicion of the masses—and their doubts about the willingness of their own leaders to implement the Popular Front programme—was shown in the events which followed the election. Thus on

25th May, 1936, half a million workers marched past the spot where the Communards were shot "carrying red banners and wearing red flowers, and including many women and children many of them in perambulators..." ('Manchester Guardian'). The procession was nearly two miles long and lasted from early afternoon till late evening.



Leon Blum, socialist leader of Popular Front government.

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USA/EGYPT

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE MINERS' STRIKE

U.S. WORKERS FOLLOW SUIT

The American miners' strike which lasted 112 days cost the industry 120 million tons in lost production, \$2 billion in unretrievable sales, and \$200 million in vanished profits.

In resorting to the weapon of the strike the miners paid a heavy price, forfeiting a good portion of their hard-won income. The managers of the mines continued to draw their comfortable salaries.

Although there is much grumbling on their part about wildcat strikes and "productivity" problems in the coal fields, they have enjoyed handsome profits in recent years—profits so handsome that the energy conglomerates of oil and steel find the coal fields very attractive for acquisition.

Occidental Petroleum, which owns the fourth largest coal enterprise, saw its pretax profits per ton of coal climb from 69 cents in 1973 to \$8.90 in 1975. The oil giants now control over 85 per cent of the entire US energy industry, and over the last 15 years the coal industry has

been transformed into an oil company-controlled one.

As the strike ended and the strike-weary coal miners returned to their difficult and dangerous work many were voicing dissatisfaction with the contract. Financially hard pressed, they had ratified it but were not happy with it.

Throughout the coal fields miners were raising questions on how the contract would affect their health and pension benefits and their safety in the mines. Many miners felt the contract offered them less than did their now-expired 1974 contract. The backward move is represented in the loss of the free medical care they had enjoyed in the past.

In 1946 John L. Lewis, founder of the union, had negotiated the first industry-wide UMW health coverage plan which could not be controlled by the mine owners though they paid for it with royalties collected on production. The new contract eliminates the union's health fund and transfers health coverage to commercial insurance plans. The miners will be required to pay deductibles up to \$200.

The miners point out that the union health fund had

been used to sustain a growing network of clinics in remote regions of Appalachia, areas which are medically under-served. The clinics had improved health care for everyone in the region. Since it was free it encouraged preventive health care. The existence of these clinics is seriously threatened by the new contract.

Over the years, the UMW "medical card" not only became each miner's most important possession but was also the union's ticket to

organising new mines. Even during the dark and stormy years of Tony Boyle's presidency, it was a beacon light for miners, not only because of the extraordinary scope of coverage but because of something equally significant: it meant independence for UMW members.

The coal companies had chafed under this arrangement for more than a quarter of a century, but never had the opportunity to undo John L. Lewis' outstanding achievement. Not until now.

If health insurance had been the only controversial item in the new contract, the miners and their union representatives might have stopped the mine owners in their tracks. But the miners were confronted with an array of obnoxious new provisions and could only raise a general cry of protest.

They had no real leadership to shape the protest into an effective counterattack. The union's bargaining council, weary and confused, passed the second contract, and it went out to the membership to be ratified or rejected. On March 6th the miners overwhelmingly rejected it, demonstrating a solidarity that surprised everyone in Washington and put their own leadership to shame.

But the miners could only defend themselves in saying "no" to the mine owners, because their leadership was not carrying the ball for them into the territory of the enemy. Miller was inadequate, and none of the negotiating team had the skill and stamina to go on the offensive, lacked the internal spark to take over from Miller.



UMW officials and coal bosses negotiate in the White House

Sadat's 'open door' to millionaires



Not even Allah can save Sadat

Addressing a meeting of 20,000 workers in an industrial district of Cairo, President Sadat announced that the priorities of the government were: "raising production, reducing prices and raising wages."

He may as well have promised the moon.

Despite the sacking of the economics minister and a Cabinet re-shuffle, and despite making a lot of noise about "firm decisions", there were probably only a handful of people in the whole 20,000 who seriously believed Sadat's words. The dire economic crisis facing the Egyptian government leaves no room whatsoever for increases in living standards.

Indeed, the miserable standards of the workers and peasants will continue to erode. Measures introduced by the government to reduce subsidies (postponed 16 months ago in the face of mass opposition, but re-introduced on the quiet) are adding to an inflation rate already running at 30 per cent.

The much-vaunted "open-door" economic policy has created quite a few new millionaires in Egypt, without really adding anything to the productive capacity of industry or agriculture. Yet the workers and peasants have paid dearly in terms of their own standards to "open the door" for the sharks and speculators. Having given

the rich a free hand to further enrich themselves, the government has inevitably come under pressure from the right for even greater concessions to "free-enterprise".

The fake Parliament that Sadat set up, which he hoped would function as a safety valve for the opposition, has begun more and more to reflect real opposition.

More significantly, and more worrying for the government, the Assembly has become something of a focus for left-wing opposition to the regime. Both inside and outside the Assembly the workers' voices are filtering through

in the speeches and in new opposition publications.

The paper 'The People', the only left-wing journal in Egypt, now sells all its 100,000 printed copies within a few hours of its production and many are passed around and read several times over.

Tied up to the economic questions are the questions of peace and international security. The biggest drain on the country's resources is the huge expenditure on arms and the presence of a large standing army.

Just as Sadat, in the economic field threw in his lot with the West and "free enterprise", so also in his diplomatic plans he threw

in his lot with the USA—in an attempt to force credible concessions from Israel. Hopes were high last November at the time of the celebrated visit to Jerusalem.

Now, it looks more and more as if those hopes have been dashed. Sadat has thrown away the diplomatic credibility of Egypt in the eyes of Egyptians and with it he has thrown away his own.

There is no political commentator anywhere in Egypt now who does not testify to the growing opposition to the Sadat government. The President may gain some time by making the bold promises of "higher wages" and "lower prices", but it is only a matter of time before moves are made against him.

Army

In a country where the power is so much based upon the army, it is inevitable that some of the workers' and peasants' anger will filter through to the military itself, even among the lower-ranking officers, and it is possible that military opposition could develop in the coming months with the stimulus of growing discontent among the workers.

John
Pickard

(Gateshead East
Labour Party)

President Sadat's victory in this week's referendum, the outcome of which was a foregone conclusion, has been confirmed. It came as no surprise that about 98% had voted for a package of six questions giving the government greater powers to clamp down on growing opposition to the regime. However, the securing of powers to keep atheists out of political and trade union positions and to mute press criticism is a Pyrrhic victory for Sadat.

Firstly, the endorsement of Sadat's proposals in a referendum—the traditional electoral manoeuvre of Bonapartist regimes—does not carry much weight in society. Voting is not strictly secret; the franchise is restricted to 11 million out of a population of four times that; campaigning was limited to the pro-Sadat, state-owned media [the latest issue of the left-wing paper 'Al Ahaly' was banned]; and intimidation was evident from the arrest of several members of the Progressive Unionists' Party and others.

The 'Guardian' indicated the mood of those entitled to vote: "Only a fraction of that number would take part, in view of the widespread opposition to the referendum plus the traditional apathy on such occasions of an electorate which is persuaded that however many 'yeas' and 'nays' are cast makes no difference, since the outcome is preordained." [22.5.78]

The content of Sadat's appeal consisted of stirring up religious prejudice and the implication that 'strong government' could solve the pressing economic problems burning into the voters' pockets.

Secondly, Sadat was only forced to concede limited democratic rights recently because of the irresistible pressure from below. Although he made his political opponents the scapegoats for Egypt's economic ills during the referendum campaign, spectacular if well-orchestrated successes on the political surface cannot erase the worsening crisis of the economic foundation. As long as the deterioration of the economy persists, a further build up of political opposition is inevitable.

It is one thing for Sadat to win approval for giving himself another stick with which to beat the left, it will be another thing to actually wield it for any length of time.

SPAIN/NOTES



Left: miners and their wives demonstrate against Carter.

Right: members of the United Electrical Workers' Union giving food to striking miners

Genuinely concerned about the future of the union, afraid of being "balkanised" by government pressure to open up separate regional or even local-to-local negotiations, they waffled. In that atmosphere, a third agreement emerged.

It represented an improvement for the miners over the first two agreements, but compared to the 1974 agreement, it represented a setback in every area except wages. The miners accepted it, reluctantly.

The new contract gives the mine owners the right to dismantle John L. Lewis' legacy—the health insurance plan—but it also gives them the right to negotiate with local unions to establish "incentive productivity plans". This entails paying bonuses when miners exceed production quotas.

Such plans kill people, and the UMW historically was always opposed to such plans. As the quota is met and exceeded, it is ratcheted upwards and the bonus made

more substantial.

Miners take short cuts, and their own elected safety representatives are put into the impossible position of trying to enforce safety standards which inevitably would reduce production. Sooner or later everyone begins to look the other way because "the price is right"—and that spells murder in the mines.

The price the miners paid for their contract is staggering. After 16 weeks of striking, the average UMW member lost \$6,000; many

lost more. They have not much to show for it but the glory of the moment when they stood firm in their battle and said "Nuts!" to everyone up to and including the President of the United States, who now stands exposed to everyone in the labour movement as a strike-breaker pure and simple.

Taft-Hartley

Four Presidents of the United States have stated their objections to the Taft-

**By Betty Traun
in America**

Hartley Bill for its strike-breaking provisions, and the same four Presidents have invoked it to break strikes. None of them were successful in their intentions.

But in returning to work, the rankling bitterness of having given up what they had sought for from the mine owners, of a leadership that had sought from the mine inadequate President of the Union, brought forth the vow to carry on the fight against the obnoxious provisions of the new contract they were signing when the next contract would come up in 1980.

The coal miners can expect that both government and coal operators will now intensify their push for greater "productivity", thus increasing the risks in America's most hazardous industry. About 100,000 miners have died of work-related injuries in this century (more than 1,000 have died since 1970), and some 125,000 have been disabled since the beginning of this decade. **But it is the stated aim of President Carter's energy plan to double coal production by 1985, an aim enthusiastically embraced by the energy conglomerates and private utilities.**

In Energy Secretary James Schlesinger's view, the nation must not again be "held hostage" to a similar work stoppage. So he calls for "institutional" changes in the labour laws.

Needless to say, these changes are not intended to enhance labour's power. It can be stated as a foregone conclusion by this writer that organised labour will never permit Mr Schlesinger to realise his vision.

Bandwagon

Meanwhile, the militancy and duration of the coal miners' strike has left a tremendous impact upon the country and especially its labour unions. It has toughened their backbone for the contract talks which are now going on.

The coal settlement of nearly 40% in wage and benefit gains is having its effect on workers' expectations, and their leaders are constantly referring to the coal miners' victory. The Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks now negotiating with the nation's railroads is asking an increase of roughly 33% over a 3-year contract to fight inflation. Others are jumping on the bandwagon. This is creating dismay in the ranks of government and big business, because the settlement of the coal strike is considered by the capitalists to be a flame to inflation.

President Carter's new chief "inflation fighter", millionaire Robert Strauss, states that it would be an "outrage" for industry and labour to follow the 37% wage and benefit package that ended the coal strike. His voice rising with emotion, Strauss told the annual conference of the Financial Analysts Federation, "That agreement cannot be followed in other industries. Is that clear? It would be an outrage for that contract to be taken as a pattern."



NIGERIA

Opposition to the military regime in Nigeria spilled over into rioting two weeks ago, but reports in the foreign press have been forcibly muted by government censorship. Dissatisfaction is mounting in the wake of last month's big increase in the price of staple goods like rice and grain as wages were held down.

Student protests against the overnight tripling of college fees sparked off general riots when students and bystanders were killed by armed police. Government buildings were attacked and official cars burned in anger at the killings.

BRAZIL

Industrial workers are braving the armed forces of the repressive Brazilian regime in conducting trade union struggles for better wages. Profit-hungry foreign monopolies must be dismayed, having built factories in this concentration camp of 160 million people to exploit the cheap labour of a workforce deprived of democratic rights.

The Dutch Phillips' 2,000 Sao Paulo workers are on strike for a 20% wage rise and 4,500 textile workers nearby threaten to follow suit if they are not granted 15-20% within two weeks.

The car workers are particularly self-confident. Mercedes and Ford workers have already struck and other foreign firms facing demands are the British Perkins, the German Volkswagen and the Swedish Saab-Scania.

These workers have shattered the Generals' dream that they could 'order' away the class struggle.

SPAIN

Further gains were made by the two major workers' parties in Spain last week as the Socialist PSOE won two seats in Parliamentary by-elections. PSOE won 34.6% of the votes in Alicante and 32.6% in Oviedo, both traditional Socialist strongholds.

The Communist Party increased their vote by 75% and 100% in both seats, indicating the continuing shift to the left in Spain.

Meanwhile, the biggest movement of workers in Catalonia since the crumbling of the Franco regime was seen in a one-day general strike. Nearly a million workers closed engineering and textile factories, hotels and restaurants.

Free Education!

On the 21st April 65,000 teachers commenced a national strike throughout Spain.

The immediate issue was the fact that the increases in salaries that the teachers were due in January were delayed for months without any explanation. Later, as one of the teachers in the strike committee said, "after we heard of the ridiculous increase of only 4,000 pesetas we went on strike."

"Some of our most important demands are in regard to stability and security of employment, more democratic management of education and the confirmation of degrees. We also demand the right to belong to a trade union; because we are classified as civil servants this basic right is denied to us and so we are demanding trade union recognition and collective negotiations."

One reason for the low increase of wages is the fact that parents are forced to pay fees to the state schools which go to pay part of the salaries. But as one strike committee explained: "At the present time when wages are so low we depend on these earnings."

"Free education is a myth, parents are forced to partially subsidise the education of their children. We are fighting for a totally free education paid by the government where every working class child can get a free education and without the usual problems of trying to find a place in schools."

As the strike has progressed more teachers have come out. There are now approximately 90,000 teachers on strike and more demands have been added to the list.

"We want this strike to have general consequences and change the quality of education. We want the



-demand Spanish teachers

schools to be run by representatives of labour organisations, trade unions, neighbourhood associations, parents, etc. Their participation in running the schools is vital due to the authoritarian character of general education.

Education was under tight control under the Franco regime. 50% of the teachers died during the civil war and after. Teachers were forced to implant ideals of national glory and patriotism, they were forced to teach the history of fascist leaders like Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera.

There was very tight control over all the staff, and headmasters were instructed to take harsh action against teachers who were suspected of not attending mass! It looks as if things have only changed very slightly.

Apart from the fact that the minister has just refused to

meet and talk to the strike committee, he has sent telegrams to headmasters instructing the to report daily on the activities of the strikers. He has told them that for every day on strike, a day's wages will be discounted.

If headmasters do not report back two days' pay will be suspended for each day a report is not sent. As one of the headmasters said: "The government is expecting us to spy on the strikers. The minister is wrong if he thinks that the strike will be broken by forcing a confrontation between us and the teachers."

"We support the strike and think the demands are totally justified. We have in fact sent a list of what we think are urgent requirements which should be implemented now if education is to be at all satisfactory. Some of the demands are health precaution, hygiene, libraries,

laboratories and classes of no more than 35 pupils."

Obviously the press has done everything possible to antagonise the teachers from public opinion and this has greatly embittered a great number of the strikers who point out that they only came out on strike after having exhausted every possibility of negotiation.

The teachers' strike is a great challenge to the education system. It threatens the whole way education has been conducted for the past decades and seeks to replace it by a real democratic system where teachers, school staff, pupils and parents, and the labour movement can control the planning and running of education to free it from the straightjacket of Spanish capitalism.

Rosita Pueblo

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

LETTERS

Surrealist Dreamers

Dear Comrades

I disagree with the article on surrealism (issue 405). The surrealists wanted to free art of all constraints and so their pictures and poems are about dreams. Is this revolutionary?

Don't middle class youth take drugs in order to explore their individual dream worlds? Unlike them we don't want to escape from reality we want to change it.

To change society we need to understand how it works. Revolutionary art should not turn its back on reality but should help explain the real relations between phenomena.

For example to understand economic law and to put it to our use we need a planned economy under workers' control and management. The bourgeois professors and Tory witch doctors tell us the opposite, if we let the rich do as they like, the "free market forces" will magically take care of us—like hell!

The surrealists want to free art from all constraints, they make the same mistake as the anarchists do about the economy. It is no accident that the strongest surrealist movements in the pre-war crisis were in Spain and France where anarchism was strongest.

We on the other hand want to free culture from what is worn out and rotten—from the capitalists and their degenerate ideas.

S Humby
Brent South GMC

Degraded and angry

Dear Comrades

I felt I had to write to somebody and tell them of my experiences as a 'social security scrounger'.

Circumstances at home recently forced me to leave my husband. I and my two children stayed at a friend's house overnight, but had to leave the next day and try to get some help. Another friend took me to the 'Women's Aid Centre', where the lady there spent several hours 'phoning round trying to get' help for me.

As I had no money I at first contacted the DHSS where I was told "we can't help you dear, go and make it up with your husband and ask him for money." I told the girl that he was in rather a vicious mood at the time and I was frightened to do so. "Well borrow some money from your neighbours then," she said.

I finally got an appointment for a week later and had to borrow some until then. A week later I finally got to see someone at the social security office. Again I was told to make it up with my husband, and that it was his responsibility to maintain me and the two children, not theirs.

He did this for a few weeks, but due to his having to pay a high rent at a guest house where he was staying, this payment to me stopped. That week, without even 10p for the electricity meter, I phoned them in desperation, when again I was told, "Oh well, perhaps by Monday you'll make it up with your husband, and he can give you money, or couldn't you borrow from your neighbours?"

Eventually I managed to get a Girocheque, which I have received each week. But there is something else which has happened this week, which has prompted me to write.

My cheque got damaged indoors and the Post Office refused to cash it. So I borrowed my bus fare and went to the DHSS to do it.

I arrived at 11.30 am. I was seen at 12.30 and then told to sit and wait while they found my records. By 2.30 I was absolutely fed up and distraught, as was my 3-year old son who was with me.

By 3.00 he was so bored and hungry that I tried to draw attention to this. I was told, not too politely, to sit and wait [yet again]. By 3.30, I could stand no more.

In tears I marched to the

counter and demanded attention. I was told to go home and come back the next day. How could I? I hadn't even my bus fare!

Finally at 3.45 I was given an emergency cheque, as they still hadn't found my records, although they had been used the day before to send the cheque. I came out of there feeling tired, frustrated and utterly degraded, as if I was a beggar or something.

But while I was there I had time to observe some of the other 'scroungers'.

An old lady who sat there all day, in tears because she had no money for food, being ignored. Young school leavers, eager to start their first job, but couldn't because they didn't have the right clothes to wear, which their parents couldn't afford. They waited from 10.00 to 3.30, before being told to 'come back later'.

What system drives respectable people to this sort of degradation? A system where people don't count, only profit. The sooner it is changed the better—the struggle will be worth it.

Yours fraternally
Jackie Attwood
Soton LPYS

What role for the Anti-Nazi League?

Dear Comrades,

An LPYS coach attended the National Front's St. Georges Day by-election meeting in Leeds.

Although the anti-NF picket was disappointing in size, with the Yorkshire branches of the LPYS providing the biggest contingent, we still outnumbered the NF by 10 to 1, and only the massive police presence prevented them getting a beating. Since then, the police are investigating allegations that the NF forged signatures for their nomination papers, so little support have they got.

On the picket were a large contingent of the Anti-Nazi League who seem to be playing a leading role in organising pickets, demonstrations and the Carnival. They have also gained a certain response in the labour movement, including the affiliation of our own Trades Council.

However, they do not appear to offer a socialist programme as an answer to the fascists and consequently have enlisted the support of many celebrities in the sporting and entertainments field, and also vicars, Liberals and Tories. We feel that there could be great dangers in taking the Anti-Nazi campaign away from the mobilisation of the working class although the support of others is obviously welcomed.

What do readers in other areas think from their experience?

Yours fraternally
Alistair Tice
West Hull LPYS

School Uniform

Dear Comrades

I feel I can only disagree with comrade Evans of Southampton on his defence of school uniforms. My experience in Byker, Newcastle, shows that as soon as school is over poorer children are instantly recognisable; because the better off go home and carefully fold their uniform for the next day, the poorer children have no change of clothes, their uniform is all they have. Hence their uniform quickly becomes shabbier than the

others, and the question of obscuring class differences becomes a hideous joke.

Uniforms are, and always will be, an essential de-individualisation for a society which has no use for humans but which requires 'work-units', 'military-units', and, a natural concomitant of the capitalist 'winner-takes-all' system, 'prison-units'.

Yours fraternally
N Rides
University of Keele
Labour Club

Can't hide class differences

Dear Comrades,

In his letter (issue 405) on the LPYS demand for the abolition of school uniforms, Brother Evans states "the wearing of uniform is merely a covert attempt to subject school students, through subservience, to the will of a corrupt and bankrupt system."

This is strikingly underlined by the recent report of the measures taken at a South Devon Comprehensive to "encourage" the wearing of school uniform: where it is not worn, school students are to be refused school leaving testimonials, involvement in work-experience schemes; and limited access to the school library.

It is therefore surprising the comrade should argue in favour of a school uniform. Far from bringing pupils down to the same level, it is still possible to distinguish between rich and poor as the standard of the material varies greatly—and if that did not, the frequency of replacement would.

JOB CREATION SHARES OUT THE MISERY

Dear Comrades

Last week I was false-alarmed for an interview. The vacancy was for an architectural technician with a conservation project: "Townscape". However, the pay was from Job Creation Projects.

Here the trouble starts. The government has a compulsory work-sharing policy with these schemes: one year's worth of Job Creation employment and that's your lot!

Dear Mr Craxton

Unfortunately our receptionist was not aware that you had already had almost a year's JCP employment when she made an appointment for interview with Townscape. Under JCP regulations people can only work for 52 weeks.

Townscape have asked me to cancel your interview because they would rather employ someone who can work for the full project. I apologise for any inconvenience.

Yours faithfully
K MacLachlan

If, however, we had real work-sharing without loss of pay, throughout industry and public services, there would be no need for Job Creation or any other candy-floss measures.

A reduction of the working week to 35 hours with a decent living wage would itself create 800,000 vacancies, such is the level of overtime worked. Restoring public expenditure cuts, and a massive programme of useful public works would rapidly end unemployment.

Such policies have been hammered out by Labour's youth—if the government wants re-election then it should take note.

Yours fraternally
Martin Craxton
Newcastle Central LPYS

Food Anarchy

Dear Sir

I would like to recommend the LPYS pamphlet 'Socialism and the Rural Worker' to all LPYS branches and workers' organisations.

I know from my own experience of working in agriculture that agricultural workers and working farmers have been forced to accept low living standards and almost non-existent services due to successive capitalist food policies. The old Annual Price Review, by fixing prices and paying subsidies, reduced returns to agriculture to the minimum which wealthy farmers would tolerate.

By keeping food prices down the capitalists aimed to make it easier to hold down industrial wages. Now the European Capitalist Club, the EEC, carries out the same policy through intervention buying.

By the Common Agricultural Policy, CAP, they have tried to regulate production but the anarchy caused by the market system has got steadily worse with at one extreme butter mountains and skim mountains, followed by extreme under-production and sky-high prices.

Recently the EEC has been trying to abolish the Milk Marketing Board (MMB) which would have caused great instability in the liquid milk market, higher prices and an end to doorstep deliveries. Clearly only a socialist plan, with a guaran-

teed wage of £60 tied to the cost of living for agricultural workers, cheap credits and loans to small working farmers—only possible on the basis of nationalised finance and banking,—and nationalisation of all large farms under the democratic control of the agricultural workers will lead to a planned use of agriculture in the economy benefiting all workers and capable of responding to the great expansion which the socialist transformation of society would bring about.

To this end agricultural and industrial workers must unite.

Yours faithfully
Bill Wynn
South Leeds LPYS

A boost to sales!

To all at Militant

I am a student at Aberdeen College of Education and have been selling 'Militant' to a few students in Halls of Residence and in college for the past few weeks.

Perhaps you could send me 10 copies instead of 6 this week—hopefully I'll be needing even more as the weeks go by!

Kay Timmins

BREAK THE 10% 'LIMIT'

You might be feeling hard done by with your wage rise held to 10% this year. But...spare a thought for the Royal family, getting, on average, just 6½%! How are they going to manage? Well, the secret of course is what you were getting to start with.

Even a 50% rise on your income is not likely to work out at £13,000. It does for the Duke of Gloucester! 25% means £12,000 for the Duke of Kent; 12.9% for the Queen Mother is a mere £20,000. Princesses Anne and Alexandra are getting £10,000 and the Duke of Edinburgh will no doubt be pleased to make the gesture of staying 1.8% below the government guidelines and still get £8,500 extra!

A look at the Civil List might make you feel a bit dissatisfied and want to get a few things changed. A look at the 'Militant' will give you an idea as to how it can be done. But a look at the list of areas on the Fighting Fund chart and what percentage rises they have got should also cause a bit of dissatisfaction and determination on the part of readers to change things in relation to cash.

Nearly £19,000 in 19 weeks is quite an achievement. But, by the end of the year the average per week will have to work out at 50% more.

This week's total: £2,768.39

This week's total is below £1,000 again at £768.39. What happened in your area?

Eastern—increase 15%! Best of the lot! Contributions included: £9 from Southend Readers' Meeting, £19 Ipswich jumble sale, £21.66 Harlow social, £5.43 May appeal sheet and £15 May Day celebration (also Harlow). £5 came from May Day Social, Peterborough, plus £5 'plumbing', £4.90 drink abstention (Cambridge) and two £1 donations—D Webb (Stevenage) and P Lusardi (Cambridge). Well done!

Hants & IOW—increase 2%. £12 from IOW supporters, £6.80 from Portsmouth and £5.43 from Dorset including 50p from a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate.

Humberside—increase 0% this week but still way ahead.

Lancs—increase 0% this week and still with the tail-enders.

London N—increase 3% from: Barnet LP Young Socialists (£1), from T O'Connor of Newham NE a fiver, from L Faulkes, J Turner and J Locke (£1s), from Mr and Mrs Wobey (£4), collected by J Thomas (£2), an enormous anonymous donation of £20 plus a few others. **London S—in-**

crease 1%: £5.64 from Wandsworth readers, £2 from J and E McEwn and £2.88 from a 'Lewisham sandwich-maker'.

Manchester and District—increase 2%: 'Guess the Labour Vote'; collection at GEC and other donations from Ardwick made up £40. A readers' meeting in Oldham meant £15.28 for the paper. **Merseyside—increase 1%** from V Livsey £2, P Jones £1, A Shields £3, others and 'extras' on paper sales in Garston and Wallasey £6.21.

Midlands East—increase 1%. £11.64 from Nottingham supporters and £1.24 from Mansfield.

Midlands W—increase 10% and that meant £183.81 in one week: jumble sale in Stafford £50, 10% of that (£5) from M Jarrod and 10% of that (50p) from T Bark (Stoke). 'Drinks and lifts' in Stafford accounted for £7, a readers' meeting £6.08 and T Dix £3. 55p was collected at a Coventry AUEW branch, £5.44 as 'extras' on sales in Coventry plus £4.03 from SCG workers, £1 from P Hackett and £2.20 from B Jelly. £53.12 from Birmingham, of which £18.60 from pontoon tickets (Rover, Solihull), £1 from P Troden and £2 from Mrs C Mullins.

£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		933.56
Hants & IOW	1,050	2,100		917.36
Humberside	1,100	2,200		775.23
Lancashire	750	1,500		259.83
London: North	3,850	7,700		1,801.22
London: South	1,900	3,800		985.47
Manchester & District	1,450	2,900		416.48
Merseyside & District	2,250	4,500		877.70
Midlands East	2,200	4,400		1,067.38
Midlands West	3,700	7,400		2,049.18
Northern	2,450	4,900		1,082.28
Scotland East	1,250	2,500		527.48
Scotland West	1,450	2,900		449.21
South East	1,150	2,300		740.13
South West	1,150	2,300		651.15
Thames Valley	850	1,700		511.21
Wales East	1,000	2,000		553.55
Wales West	1,150	2,300		509.70
Yorkshire	2,600	5,200		923.59
Others	1,500	3,000		2,940.21
Total	35,000	70,000		18,971.92

Progress towards year's target (solid bar) Towards July 8th target (dotted bar)

Northern—increase 4% made up of £1.70 donation from D Darling, £1 from B Mitchell, £3 from first 'Militant' meeting in Redcar (with another £4 from Teesside readers), £11.65 from Gateshead RM, £1.20 in 'extras', £3 from Cramlington and £18.50 from Newcastle students.

Scotland E—increase 6%, mostly due to a £23 donation from a GMWU branch chairman. H Armstrong gave £4, K Timmins (Dundee) £1.50 and A Smith 50p. **Scotland W—increase 4%.** Total of £16.50, all from Glasgow—£2 from Hillhead LPYS members and other donations including £1s from I Hackett and G Byron.

South East—increase 3%.

Contributors: M Singleton (£4), L Foster (£5.50), S Lerpiniere (£2.50), B Campbell of Eastbourne LPYS (£1) and others. **South West—increase 5%.** £7.50 from D Bowdler, £7.34 from D Evans, £1.60 C Burgess, £1 B Sylatych, "abstainer from cigarettes" £4 and various other sources. **Tames Valley—increase 3%** with £16.06 arriving from Reading supporters.

Wales E—increase 9%. The £44 included £16 from a dance in Caerphilly, £5 from R Hill, £4 from a Cardiff collecting jar, £1 from Mrs George and £10 from Gwent readers. **Wales E—increase 3%.** £16.10 included £3 from Port Talbot and £1 from P McCarthy.

Yorkshire—increase 2%, just from Wakefield and Rotherham. R Haycoil gave £1, M Johnson £1.50, and 'anon' £9.50.

Others increased by 2% with £6.75 from J Bossano (Gibraltar) and union conference collections (after expenses): ASTMS £11.61, SCPS £22.15 and TSSA £16.50.

Only one (the first) area got over the 10% but some excellent examples have been given. Break the 10% with your efforts for your area's total. Help build the best paper in the labour movement!!

Clare Doyle

LABOUR STUDENTS PREPARE FOR FRESHERS' WEEK



'Militant' bookstall at Blackpool NUS Conference April 1978

photo: David Hodge

As the end of the academic year approaches, it is useful to review the work and progress of 'Militant' supporters in NOLS and the NUS.

This has generally been a quiet year in the student movement, following the upheavals of 1976 and 1977 on teacher unemployment and overseas students. However there have been isolated outbreaks of militancy in the technical and FE colleges, against the deplorable conditions these students face.

There has been a real growth of Marxist ideas in NOLS, despite the narrow victory of the 'Clause 4' tendency at the National Conference at Christmas. Overwhelmingly now, the majority of the activists in NOLS support the ideas of Marxism, it is only the 'dead wood', and packed meetings that allow the present leadership to maintain control.

One of the most important roles of students who support Marxist ideas is to use Labour Clubs to build links between students and the labour movement. All over the country, 'Militant' supporters worked in the colleges to build support for the firemen during their strike. For example, at Nottingham University, Labour Club members, armed with a petition and collecting tin, raised £30 for the firemen in one hour at the college.

At Bristol University, after the convenor of the Rolls Royce factory had spoken at the Labour Club, he issued an invitation for Labour Club members to visit the factory, and attend a joint shop stewards committee meeting. This gave the Labour Club members an excellent chance to discuss with them, and win young workers to the LPYS. Members of the Labour Club regularly sell 'Militant' at the factory, and had won

the respect of the shop stewards through their consistent work. This example should be repeated by every Labour Club next term—really making the Labour Clubs part of the local labour movement.

Some Labour Clubs have also involved members of staff who are Labour Party members in their work. At Preston Poly, for example, students and staff run a 'Labour Group' which has had a wide variety of meetings this year.

'Militant' supporters now have majority support in 5 of the NOLS regions. All of them are organising activities and campaigns. The North West Region are publishing a document on Housing as part of a campaign on this burning issue.

A number of regions are planning anti-racism campaigns. The West Midlands region are publishing a pamphlet on racism, and others are issuing leaflets for Labour

Clubs to use in their work in colleges.

The South West region held a day school earlier this term, with sessions on "The Rise of Fascism in Germany" and a debate on "Fighting Racism" between the LPYS and the Anti Nazi League. It is very important that Labour Clubs continue this work.

Further Education is another area in which Marxists in the student field should be active—working with the LPYS to build Labour Clubs in these colleges, where the majority of working class students study. The Welsh and Yorkshire regions are planning activity in this area, because both regions are mainly composed of university Labour Clubs.

The Northern Region has no active regional committee at present because of a 'stalemate' at the recall regional conference. Therefore, the Labour Clubs at Newcastle University and Newcastle Poly are planning to launch campaigns themselves. Last term, they made a very successful intervention in an NUS picket of the council on discretionary awards and are planning to launch a campaign on this issue next term, aiming to build new Labour Clubs in the FE colleges.

The main work for Marxists in NOLS in the next few weeks will be building support for the 'Marxist Weekend School'. Every Labour Club should be organising to bring a party to this, not just of Labour Club members, but of LPYS and Labour Party members as well. It is an unprecedented opportunity to discuss in detail the ideas of Marxism, and every comrade can benefit from it.

If the Freshers' Campaign next September and October is to be successful, plans must be made now. Every Labour Club should be arranging meetings with big name speakers for the start of the term, booking book-stalls at Freshers' Fairs, and writing articles for Student Union handbooks and papers—something that is often neglected.

Approaches should be made to the local LPYS and Labour Party for support in this work, as they will also benefit from a successful Freshers' Campaign. Labour Clubs should also be deciding which colleges they are going to try to start new Labour clubs in, and approaches made to the Students Union now.

If there is a General Election in October, this will provide an excellent opportunity to build the Labour Clubs. Every club should have plans to issue a 'Students for a Labour Victory' leaflet, explaining why students should vote Labour, and work for the Labour Party.

Debates should be arranged on campus with the Liberal and Tory students. Canvassing parties of students should be organised to work in the most marginal and the working class seats. In 1974, under Marxist control, NOLS made a tremendous intervention in the elections.

If there is an October election, every Labour Club must be fully mobilised to keep the Tories out, and to build NOLS, as the only force in the student field with direct links with the labour movement.

Mark Morton
(NOLS National Committee)

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'.

Young Socialist Medical Association 'Preventive Medicine—Education or Legislation?' Introduced by Dr Peter Draper. Meeting on 8th June, 7.30 pm, at 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1. (nearest tube St James). This meeting will discuss the vital issue of the role of the NHS and its policies for the future.

New LPYS recruitment leaflet for week of action. Produced by London LPYS Regional Committee. Out soon. Only £3.50 per 1,000 plus p&p. Enquiries to John Bulaitis, 10 Winbourne Court, Croydon Road, London SE20

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.
GWENDREATH VALLEY: every Thursday, 7.15pm, Upper Tumble Social Club, Tumble.

Fraternal greetings from Maltby 'Militant' supporters to another Young Socialist, Anika Kelly, born to Steve and Lorraine Hawes.



Pickets outside Thorns' headquarters in London

photo: Julian McKittrick

TV Engineers v DER and Thorns

"DER are a thorn in our side." "DER the lowest paid engineers in the trade." "We will not cave in Sir Richard" (Sir Richard Case, head of Thorn Electricals).

These were the slogans on the placards of some 200 DER TV engineers picketing Thorn headquarters last Wednesday. They expressed the anger of the men who have now been on strike some five weeks (since April 24th) for a basic rate of £80 per week.

The average wage for a Grade 1 engineer is about £65 (gross) with a take home pay of between £45-£50 per week. As their appeal sheet points out: "Despite record profits over the past ten years and the constant introduction of sophisticated new technology, e.g. ultrasonic remote controls, video recorders, Ceefax, Oracle, and new forms of television news media, the management have refused to enter into any real negotiations at the annual review of wages and conditions."

What is more, DER are now advertising that they provide TV repairs under false

pretences. 60,000 customers have been let down so far as a result of the strike. When the world cup starts next week there will be uproar.

I spoke to W Barnes, an engineer from Penge. "I'm fairly confident we will win this. We need support from the other companies, Radio Rentals, Multi-Broadcast, Rumbelows (subsidiaries of Thorns). We are the first in line—these other companies will gain from our fight."

It seemed that the picket and the chanting had some effect. A delegation sent into Thorn House reported that management had agreed to meet the senior shop stewards for negotiations. This in itself is a breakthrough.

This is a national dispute the men are determined to win. There are DER shops in most high streets: show your support to the pickets in their just fight.

Report by Bob Faulkes
(Hackney Central Labour Party)

MEM

Birmingham—

"Delta strike backed by Jordan, Duffy and Cure" proclaimed one placard on the AUEW picket line.

Over 90 toolmakers at Midland Electric Manufacturing Company, Reddings Lane, Kings Road Plant in Birmingham and at Holyhead North Wales, all part of the Delta group, are in their third week of official strike action. This dispute is the culmination of years of pay restraint and management's 'pig-headed' refusal to honour a commitment made in 1969, to give toolmakers a differential commensurate with their skills.

Blacklegs

As a result, they are on strike for 10% plus a firm commitment from management to pay a differential of £8 a week at the next wage round. The basic wage at the moment is £64 bottom-line, £67.68 top line. You get more when you are on holiday, due to the national agreement of £70 a week holiday pay!

Management have not only blacklegged by sneaking press tools to other contract toolmakers, but are trying to create divisions between the T&GWU shop-floor production workers and the AUEW. There are large cardboard placards stuck up by management inviting drivers to cross the picket line and phone the T&GWU official Mr Fairbairn for advice.

It is unusual for management to offer such facilities to trade unionists, but all of

MEM's drivers are being instructed to cross the picket line by the T&GWU. One outside driver even had a letter from the T&GWU giving him their "blessing" to cross the picket line.

It is to say the least unfortunate that the T&GWU officials appear to be working in collusion with the personnel director, Mr Tuck, who pickets stated had been made redundant from his previous three jobs because he helped close those firms down.

Lucas toolroom workers are already organising collections for the strike fund. Help these workers to win their fight by assisting on the picket line and blacking Alton Engineers, Corshan, Wiltshire [a contract toolmaker being used by MEM].

Don Gibbons (shop steward, Reddings Lane), Ray Paul (vice-chairman, negotiating and Ted Brazier (shop steward, Kings Road) spoke to Brian Debus (Erdington Labour Party).

Michelin, Mallusk—

SUPPORT ESSENTIAL

Workers at the Michelin factory at Mallusk, outside Belfast, are continuing their strike against the sacking of T&GWU shop steward Billy Shannon. Management have refused to negotiate unless the men return to work, and the steward stays sacked.

Workers believe that the "no negotiations" policy comes straight from the top of the company. Michelin are a hard-line anti-union company. One steward describes their attitude: "They still think they're the lords and we're the peasants."

But the hard line management has made the workers more bitter, and keen to hold out: "I'll eat grass before I crawl back in their," another

steward said. They need support from other workers—especially Michelin workers.

In Michelin's Ballymena [Northern Ireland] factory, workers have banned overtime in support of Mallusk: they expect production to fall by 40%. The T&GWU have called for active support from all Michelin factories and depots in the UK.

The men must be supported in the factories in Dundee, Burnley, Stoke and Aberdeen. All donations and messages to: Michelin Strike Committee, Room 15, Transport House, Bridge Street, Belfast.

Anton McCabe
(ASTMS)

DON'T CROSS OUR PICKET LINE!

London Docks national fight to halt closures

Following the abrupt closure of the T Wallis group on London docks, the axe is now poised over whole sections of the industrial heartland of London's East End. The chairman of the Port of London Authority has already stated that they plan to shut the West India Docks by December 1978 and the Royal Albert by December of next year.

If they were allowed to implement them, the thousands of redundancies these plans would mean would be another nail in the coffin of job prospects in the area.

Sue Atkins (Southampton Labour Party) for Militant, asked Richie Pearce, Chairman of the Southampton dock shop stewards' committee, about the proposed dock closures in London, with particular reference to the threat to jobs.

Richie Pearce: The docker, like the dodo, is a dying breed. In 1968 there were 91,000 registered dock workers and by 1978 this had fallen to 26,000. It is time to call a halt and hold on to the jobs that remain.

The proposed closure of docks in London is a threat to all docks, and a direct attack on the National Dock Labour Board Scheme which the Tories intend to dismantle, should they get back into power. If the employers get away with these closures then the writing is on the wall for dockers in Liverpool, Manchester and all over the country.

Big business wants to turn the old dock area of London into one big yachting marina. When the Hayes wharf was closed, blocks of flats were built, and the cost of a one-bedroomed flat is £34,000, which is all very well for those who are going to make profits from it, but doesn't do anything to make jobs for the workers.

'Militant': How do the employers hope to get the dockers to accept these redundancies in London?

RP: Through the severance scheme—but this is blood money, a cheap way of buying off jobs and once a job is gone, it is gone for ever. We have reached the point where we must definitely oppose all severance, because what future is there for youngsters leaving school for instance, when jobs are disappearing like this?

M: What is the attitude of the National Ports Shop Stewards' Committee to this?

RP: There has been a good response from all the ports including Southampton, who are all against the closures, and willing to take action to save these jobs. But we're in a state of limbo at the moment, because the London dockers are waiting on the government's response to the employers' request for government investment before deciding on any course of action.

Invitations to all meetings of the National Port Shop Stewards' Committee are sent out, and I would like to stress the need for all ports to be represented and attend.

M: There was an attempt last year by the Tory-controlled council in Preston to close

down the docks there. How did the dockers win that battle?

RP: The Tory council wanted to close Preston Docks which only employs 78 dockers, because they said it was losing money. The NPSSC agreed that action was needed to stop this closure and decided to lobby Jack Jones, who would only see us when we staged a sit-in at Transport House, but even so would give no commitment on the issue.

So it was decided that the only thing to do was to call a 24 hour national dock strike and this was 99% successful, with a march through the streets of Preston. All the major ports came out solidly in support of this action, and this led to an enquiry by the National Ports' Council, who decided that Preston could become viable, with only a small amount of investment being needed, which the government agreed to. So Preston docks have remained open.

M: What should workers be pressing for now?

RP: We want a complete halt on the loss of jobs in the industry but we also need full nationalisation of all the ports and direction of shipping at a national level under the control of the trades unions in the industry. Without this the employers will attempt to play one port off against another.

But if the workers in the industry were to get together and hammer out an agreed policy over all aspects of dock work then there would be enough work for all.

PIT RESCUE STRIKE SHOWS GROWING DISCONTENT IN YORKSHIRE COALFIELD

The discontent mounting in the Yorkshire coalfields over the operation of the incentive scheme came to a head last week when 20,000 Yorkshire miners stopped work over the grievance of the 36-strong pit rescue team.

A prolonged battle was only averted by a decision to suspend the action until June 1st, to allow negotiations to proceed. While a settlement may be reached by this date, there is no doubt about the wide-spread unrest in the coal field over pay and general conditions as well as sympathy for the rescue team's case.

3p an hour

Rescue brigadesmen in the Yorkshire collieries get 90 pence for 70 hours standby duty on top of their 40 hour week. As one picket said

"Who else would accept 3 pence an hour overtime? We have to sit by the phone all that time. Our social life is ruined."

They came out on strike for a concrete offer of 100% of the productivity bonus and for 80 pence an hour for standby time in line with the part-time rescue men. At the moment these hand-picked men get only 40% of the bonus.

Sympathy

They were fully supported by the part-time rescue men who man the 'B' stations.

On just two days 25 pits in Yorkshire were completely out in sympathy, plus two in the North Midlands. This is in response to the rescue men's flying pickets around the area. The Doncaster and Rotherham NUM Area panels promptly gave full support.

A man from Wakefield

depot said "We get no extra pay for working weekends. We have to retire at 45 but we don't get any pension until 65."

"Every year we get a stringent medical. If we fail it, it means we're out of a job. We have to find another job or go back to the pit."

"The NCB don't even guarantee us another job. Our homes are tied to the job. So we are kicked out of our houses. The NCB don't guarantee us another house either."

A rescue man from Doncaster added "We are just fed up. All the NCB has added is a 'working party' to look into the hole the last working party has been buried in. So we are on our first strike ever—since 1911."

Tim Lewis

(Wakefield Labour Party)

The National Association of Unions in the Textile Trade [NAUTT] which is the federation of wool and textile unions in the industry representing 59,000 workers, recently held its annual conference in Bradford.

Gary Armitage, General Secretary of the National Woollsorters' Society (NWS) and well known for his support of the 'Militant' was President of the NUATT in 1977/78. However this year when seeking re-election he was defeated by a right winger, a member of the Yorkshire Society of Textile Craftsmen.

Democracy

The reasons for this stem from the fact that the NWS submitted a resolution on trade union democracy, and the need to put to a full ballot all future wage settlements through the NAUTT. This was opposed by the right wing including the National Union of Dyers and Bleachers and APEX, and the resolution was consequently defeated.

Gary Armitage, because of his stand on union democracy, was therefore with the combined vote of the right wing not re-elected.

This issue raises very important political points as far as union democracy is concerned. The reasons given for opposing the resolution showed up the attitude of those who voted against.

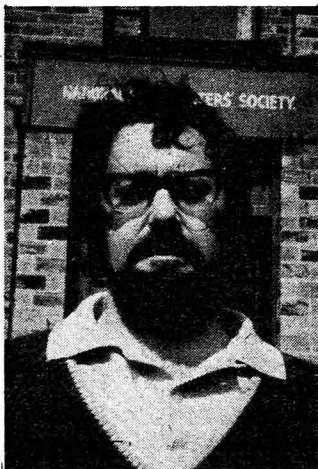
It was unconstitutional and would require a rules revision conference of the Dyers and Bleachers, said Fred Dyson, General Secretary of that union and also secretary of the NAUTT.

Peter Booth, research officer of the Dyers and Bleachers, said that a ballot would be impractical in his union's case. He said that in reply to a recent branch circular, they only know where 40% of their members in the Bradford area worked!

The APEX delegates, full-time officials, said that the ballot form would have to be dealt with very carefully, as

FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN TEXTILE TRADE UNIONS

Geoffrey Stout [Bradford South Labour Party] reports on the Conference of the National Association of Unions in the Textile Trade



Gary Armitage, Woollsorters' General Secretary.

the workers would not easily understand the details relating to the pay award! Another delegate from the Dyers and Bleachers said: "Just about enough democracy is in evidence and no more is required."!!

Ronnie Oldfield, President of the NWA, moving the resolution, said that the idea was put forward in the light of an eventual amalgamation of the NAUTT affiliates. The move is a step in the right direction and of assistance if we can open the

NAUTT to democracy.

Enquiries on the shop floor have found that the principle of the members having a say in what is an acceptable wage claim is universally accepted. What were those people who opposed the motion afraid of?

The new president of the NAUTT, Fred Towels, General Secretary of the Yorkshire Society of Textile Craftsmen, has the dubious honour of coming from a union which was expelled from the TUC in 1973 for refusing to de-register under the Tory Industrial Relations Act, and have never sought re-affiliation to the TUC, nor as a consequence to the Labour Party, or represented on any Trades Council.

Control

Gary Armitage said after the meeting: "My union stands for the rank and file members of the textile trade unions controlling wages and working conditions through the democratic process, and we consider that for too long textile workers have not been involved sufficiently in the decision making processes of the organisations of the

working class.

"As it now stands, the negotiating committee of the NAUTT is comprised of 12 people, who attend the annual negotiations, and have the right to settle first, without even any reference to their respective national executives."

Fight on

These tactics by the right wing, who live in fear of workers' democracy inside their unions, will not stop the workers themselves demanding more say in the running of their own affairs. The NWS has absolute confidence not only in their members, but in all members of the NAUTT in the industry as a whole.

The NWS will continue to pursue this basic trade union issue as vigorously as possible, and will stand on the issue of trade union democracy again next year. In the meantime they will be gathering support for these ideas among the textile workers through meetings and a leaflet is being drawn up explaining how democracy has to be fought for by all workers concerned.

UPW

MILITANT MOOD

At the UPW Conference 1978 the discussion on Grunwicks and the UPW Executives' handling of the issue during the summer of 1977 highlighted the growing mood of militancy.

The magnificent struggle of the Cricklewood branch has undoubtedly caught the imagination of Post Office workers. The vote of censure on the EC was closely lost—90,330 to 96,940, indicating a tremendous shift from last year's conference. In addition, on the card vote, many of the large delegations were closely split on the issue.

JUST OUT: Militant pamphlet—'Socialist Policies for the UPW', price 10p. Order from World Books.

The EC's case was only carried by hiding behind supposed legal threats to union funds. This argument was answered by examples from the history of the trade union struggle, and how the courts failed to cow the trade unions in the Pentonville Five case.

The 1977 conference had voted against action on Grunwicks. But by the summer the situation had been completely transformed. The EC should have called a special conference in order to mobilise the membership behind the Cricklewood postmen.

An overwhelming vote of

censure on the TUC was passed over Grunwicks, condemning their failure to take any decisive action to bring this tin-pot firm to heel.

On wages, Tom Jackson, arguing for keeping the door open for further incomes policy, persuaded conference to accept his view. His arguments were false through and through—he claimed that wage restraint has brought inflation down and UPW members were better off under incomes policy.

The conference decided to delay a final decision until a promised special conference on wages in November.

There was an enthusiastic response to calls for a reduction in the working week, and Jackson's call for "sharing out an enforced and undignified leisure which is the lot of the unemployed, and to turn it into positive leisure for all of us. When overtime is regular, then branches should make sure that unemployed are taken on."

UPW members should immediately fight for a 35-hour, 5-day week with a basic wage of £65 which would change Jackson's vague ideas into concrete demands which the UPW members could grasp as a rallying call for united struggle.

By Bryan Beckingham in Bournemouth

NSMM YOUTH: LPYS member delegate to TUC conference

There was a 100% increase in attendance at this year's NSMM Youth Conference.

67 delegates took part in the best youth conference the union has held.

Although the youth section is not part of the rule book, the union leadership has seen the need to involve young members.

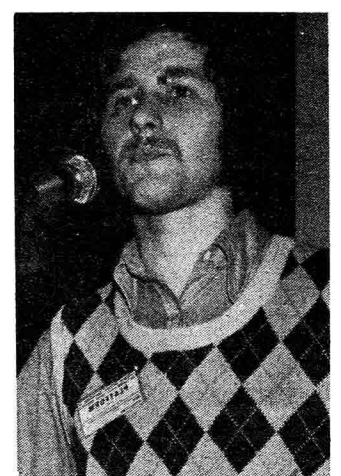
A lively first session took up the problems of education, law and the trade unions and reports from the delegates to the TUC Youth Conference and the full TUC. One of the youth delegates, Vic Seaden was given a very warm reception after the National President told conference that Vic has spent three months in prison after attending the mass picket at Grunwicks.

AJ Lees

Brother Neils told the conference that there was a "little Grunwicks" dispute at AJ Lees in Birmingham. A collection raised £44 and a pledge was given to support the metal mechanics' mass picket on June 7th.

In the afternoon, I gave fraternal greetings to conference from the LPYS, and dealt in some detail with the programme of Labour's youth and the need for young workers to be organised in it. I took up the big question of the Labour government playing at—pointing out what the Tories would do if they came to power and the role of the newly-elected Labour government after the next election.

We then moved on to the



By Steve Glennon Stevenage NSMM

(personal capacity) and LPYS National Committee election of delegates to attend this year's TUC Conference, as a part of the union's delegation with full voting rights. I was moved and seconded along with Vic Seaden who had earlier said that Labour MPs were just Tories.

The vote was close, with myself receiving 33 and Brother Seaden 29. But it proved that the policies of the LPYS can stand out against the emotional, superficial appeal of the SWP and the sympathy of the delegates.

At the end of the conference, everyone I spoke to said they had enjoyed it and learned a lot. Two days later at the full union conference, a resolution was passed, with only two or three branches voting against, on democratising the TUC Youth Conference and developing the role of youth within the TUC.

Agricultural Workers

This year's conference of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers in Southend, reflecting the cuts in living standards of their members, passed a composite motion against the EC's recommendation "to demand £80 per 35-hour week as the minimum wage from January 1979...and £100 per week by January 1980."

The attitude of the EC has acted as a brake on the development of the union with their opposition to resolutions setting out a fighting programme for the union. The presidential elections reflect the division between right and left, with John Hose defeating Joan Maynard 59 to 29.

A composite was passed, calling for "optional retirement for men at 60...and a substantial increase in pensions." Another composite passed called for the reversal of government policy so that rural areas be provided with the light industries and services they need i.e. social services, schools, hospitals, health centres etc.

Report by Trevor Young and Paul Houldsworth [NUAAW]

Tress Engineering: ANTI-UNION MANAGEMENT ON GOVERNMENT MONEY

All 220 manual workers at Tress Engineering, Newburn, have been on strike for six weeks. The strike is in support of the annual wage claim.

The unions involved are the AUEW, G&MWU, ASD, EETPU and T&GWU. The AUEW has made the strike official.

The unions' claim is for 10% of gross earnings and a self-financing productivity scheme. The company's offer was approximately 7% with no productivity scheme. The 7% was conditional on nearly total flexibility.

Opening mail

The attitude of the management was clearly shown in the fourth week of the strike when they notified the shop stewards in writing that from now on all their mail would first be opened by the firm.

This was a complete change from the established practice.

The shop stewards decided to contact the local branch of the Union of Post Office Workers and ask them not to cross the picket line, which the postmen agreed to. After three days, senior management in London said there had been "a misunderstanding" and that they would not open the stewards' mail. The local manager was moved to another area.

NEB

Tress was taken over by the National Enterprise Board after the recent financial difficulties of the Fairey Group. This strike and the firm's attitude to trade union organisation shows how the NEB has the same sort of management attitudes as a privately-owned company. This situation clearly shows

the need for genuine workers' control and management of nationalised industries.

The mood of the strikers is determined and confident, with pickets on from dawn till midnight. Financial support is already coming in from some factories and shipyards, as well as staff and apprentices at Tress. To ensure victory, more support is needed by:

- ★ putting pressure on the NEB
- ★ blacking all Tress work
- ★ messages of support and financial support.

Donations, made payable to Tress shop stewards' committee, should be sent to C Hocking, 22 Downend Road, Westerhope, Newcastle. For further information contact A McFadden, 9 Cornhill Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle.

By A. McFadden Tress Convenor (AUEW)

Militant

NATFHE CONFERENCE

NATFHE, the union for teachers in Higher and Further Education, holds its conference at Bournemouth this week.

The conference takes place after a set-back for its members. The latest pay award means a real decline in living standards.

The claim submitted by the union amounted to 19%, in line with the recommendation of the Houghton report and to make up for the loss caused over the previous year by inflation. The teachers' panel eventually agreed on an increase of 9.6% and consolidation of phase I and II supplements.

Another important part of the claim was for the lecturer grade I (the lowest grade) to be allowed to rise into the lecturer grade II scale, known as the 'merger' between the grades. This measure would have allowed many LIs to progress up the wage structure and would have helped those on the verge of retirement to boost their earnings.

NO CUTS - EXPAND FURTHER EDUCATION

What was agreed to was a sop. 15,000 extra promotions to LII is a once and for all thing and does nothing to ameliorate the present unsatisfactory situation. These measly awards reflect something that needs to be done in the union.

Like NALGO some years ago, we are dominated in the union hierarchy by our more

senior colleagues. The union itself is highly centralised, and there is very little branch life.

Alternative

Decisions are taken centrally and passed on for ratification. The failure of the leadership to mobilise the

members behind the full claim means that many were confused and saw no alternative but to accept the offer.

But there is an alternative. We should be fighting for an expansion in Further Education so that people of all ages may study for their own benefit, and to end the use of Further Education as a cheap way for the bosses to train a workforce without paying the full cost.

To generate such an alternative the union needs to be democratised and real power given to liaison committees to organise campaigns against cuts locally. We must demand an expansion of courses rather than cutting back.

NATFHE has moved forward on the question of racialism. Recent decisions ban members distributing racist literature. This, however, does not go far enough. No NF member or other fascist should be allowed to remain in the union.

By Derek Blunn
(NATFHE West Midlands)

PRINT REDUNDANCIES

[continued from front page]

really black, and in an attempt to save it the National Graphical Association machine minders agreed to reduced manning levels.

But the situation has changed. The 'Observer' is now owned by a big US Oil Company, Atlantic Richfield. Richfield's management are demanding more pages per issue, and the men are themselves asking for increased manning levels.

Management are determined to have it their own way or the paper, they threaten, will close.

In spite of NGA members offering three alternative proposals which would have ensured publication, the management shut down and preferred to lose the entire issue at a cost of over £200,000. Like all bosses, they calculated their losses would be more than recouped in the future if they can now beat the machine minders into submission.

Unfortunately, under a threat by the NGA national leadership to suspend the men and take away their livelihood, 11 of the 25 original men went back to work. This denunciation of the men's action by NGA leaders further played into the hands of the media, providing more ammunition for their union-bashing exercise.

All the disputes in Fleet Street are a reflection of the uncertainty and frustration felt by the print workers. At the moment they see the joint declaration by both management and union tops, "Programme for Action", rejected by the membership, being introduced by the back door. The management's aim is to introduce new technology and cut manpower, offering big handouts to induce the men to accept redundancy. At the Mirror Group this resulted in 70 lost compositor's jobs.

Unfortunately, the print union leaders see the fight to maintain existing newspapers and preserve jobs only within the present framework of

private press ownership. But while the press is controlled by big business and run, like any other industry, for the maximum profit, it is inevitable that thousands of skilled jobs will be threatened.

Coverage of recent disputes in Fleet Street, as well as the usual grossly distorted and biased news of trade union disputes generally, underlines the need to challenge the domination of the press and the media by big business and their Tory propagandists.

There is little chance of new technology being used to shorten the working week, improve the conditions and pay of all print workers, let alone of a democratic press, while the local and national papers are run by big corporations like Atlantic Richfield ('Observer'), Thompson ('Times'), 'Sunday Times', numerous magazines and local papers), Reed Group ('Daily Mirror'), and numerous other journals.)

The print unions, and the labour movement as a whole, must demand the nationalisation of press facilities (with minimum compensation based on need) to be run under workers' control and management thereby guaranteeing democratic access to the press by organisations, groups, and individuals on the basis of their real support in society, and not simply the size of their bankbook.

But Fleet Street jobs are not the only ones under attack. The threat hangs over every worker in the newspaper industry.

A London area NGA delegate meeting must be called so all members can play an active part in hammering out the union's answer to the employers' offensive. If the programme outlined above were adopted, we could not only halt redundancies, but actually increase job opportunities and for the first time introduce a genuinely free and democratically controlled press, ending the present Tory stranglehold.

GARNERS DAY OF SOLIDARITY

Last Saturday about 300 Labour and trade union activists met at Speakers' Corner for a march of solidarity along busy Oxford Street, to Trafalgar Square for a rally.

Habib Rahman of the Strike Committee graphically outlined the shocking pay and conditions, iron discipline and no job security at Garners. Combined with refusal by the management to grant any of their requests this drove the workers to join a trade union despite threats of sackings. Victory at Garners was important for all catering workers, and he was confident that the power and solidarity of the trade union movement would win this strike.

When Rod Todd, the National Organiser of the T&GWU spoke, he drew attention to the enormous power of the 12 million strong labour movement. He also spoke in support of trade

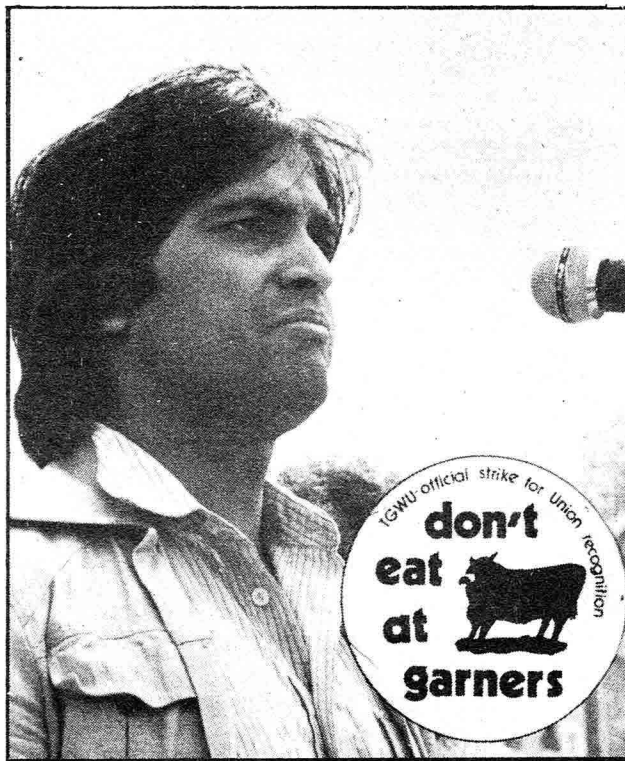
union legislation and ACAS.

Surely the experience of this strike alone, not to mention Grunwicks and countless other disputes shows that "impartial" bodies like ACAS are powerless when faced with reactionary bosses, prepared to ignore them. At least they achieve nothing and at worst can rule against strikers. **Workers can place no trust in such bodies, but put their confidence in the power of the Labour movement.**

Help vital

The maintenance of an effective 24-hour picket is vital, to turn away customers, and equally important, the various tradesmen who would not serve the steak houses, provided there is a picket line.

The LPYS, Labour Party and trade union branches throughout London can play an important part in helping



Habib Rahman, Garners strike committee, speaking at the rally

Photo: Julian McKittrick

to maintain the pickets. They should contact the strike headquarters now and arrange this.

With only £6 per week strike pay, finance is also a very pressing concern. Comrades should get their Labour and trade union branches to give all possible financial support as well as picketing.

Above all, however, it is time that the T&GWU lead-

ership, nationally, used the enormous potential strength of its two million members to win this strike and the just demands of these catering workers who have already spent so long out on the stones.

All picketing and financial aid, contact T&GWU offices, 12/13 Henrietta St, W.C.2., Telephone 01-240 1056.

Martin Elvin

PRICES RIP-OFF

[Continued from front page]

the medicine makers. The Commission ordered no price cuts. It merely "warned" that future applications for price increases would be "carefully scrutinised".

In the case of Optrex eye lotion, the Commission said that it would not order a price

cut because this could damage the firm's healthy export business. Presumably, we are expected to put up with any kind of profiteering if it helps to produce a healthy trade balance!

This report was described by 'The Times' (19 May) as "one of its hardest hitting yet." If so, this only goes to

show how little we can rely on the Commission to keep prices down for working class consumers!

The only remedy for this particular disease is for the labour and trade union movement to set up its own elected committees, representing trade unionists, working class housewives, and

small shopkeepers in order thoroughly and systematically to scrutinise prices, advertising spending, and profit margins—and to demand real action from the Labour government to freeze prices and curb the profiteers.

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