

Steel workers halt Bilston closure

Over-confident British Steel bosses flung down the gauntlet to the steelworkers last week and were horrified to see them rush to pick it up.

When Bill Sirs announced that if the notices were not withdrawn by August 6th the industry would stop and not an ounce of steel would move, the whole ISTC conference was on its feet drowning the rest of his words in a standing ovation lasting several minutes.

It was obvious the big majority were enthusiastic for a fight and determined not to undergo another humiliation, like the unilateral closure of Shelton the week before, when workers were tempted to sacrifice jobs by the lure of extra severance pay. It was clear that if this continued, the bargaining power and the credibility of the union would be destroyed.

One Divisional Officer declared from the rostrum: it is not Bilston that is at stake, it is the honour of the Confederation. Things had gone so far that even an Executive Council which has so far completely failed to halt the run-down of the industry had to fight.

The lesson was there for all to see. Within a day, the BSC collapsed like a pack of cards. Just the threat of a strike was enough for the moment. BSC's surrender was called "ignominious" by the press: but it is a victory for all steelworkers.

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THIS WEEK

Miners:

Life and death of a coalfield

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South African mines

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Chips down for jobs

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30-YEAR CELEBRATIONS

EMERGENCY

SAVE THE NHS

Hospital workers, nurses and doctors at Bethnal Green Hospital, in the East End of London, were obliged to "celebrate" the 30th anniversary of the founding of the National Health Service by occupying the building.

The immediate reason was the threatened closure of the casualty department. But the whole hospital has for some time been threatened by the ruthless slashing of public spending.

A mass meeting of hospital staff called on all London hospitals and the trade union movement generally to back their fight against closure. They unanimously passed a vote of "no confidence" in the Area Health Authority management.

Scandal

Bethnal Green's casualty department handles about 13,000 patients a year. If it closes, the nearest alternative is the London Hospital in Whitechapel. Because of staff shortages there, waiting

By Ian Burge
(Secretary, Joint Shop Stewards Committee, London Hospital)

times of up to 5 hours have recently been recorded.

The closures of accident and casualty departments mean that in some areas ambulances now have to travel 12 miles instead of the 4 miles regarded as "normal" for emergency calls.

Acutely ill or seriously injured people, who would have been saved if services were up to scratch, are now dying as a result of the cuts.

In the twenty-one months up to September last year, the Secretary of State for Health, David Ennals, made decisions to close 6,240 beds. In the same period, 160 decisions to close hospital buildings were taken.



Bethnal Green Hospital workers demonstrate against closure (June 30)

photo: Julian McKittrick

At the same time, there are about 15,000 beds in new hospitals lying empty because there is no money to provide the staff and equipment to use them.

What a scandal! What a way to "celebrate" the founding of the Health

Service, one of Labour's greatest gains. The free provision of medical treatment to all, regardless of means, was the dream of generations and the envy of workers in other countries.

Now the spending cuts

forced on the Labour government by big business are threatening to kill this vital service.

It's no wonder that Britain, now spending less

Continued on back page

Champers on the dole?

Liberty!

For this sake only to thy dissonant cries
delight my discreet soul,
Else might all kings by bloody knout or
treacherous cannonades,
Rob nations of their rights inviolate.

The treachery is alive and well and at the moment raising its ugly head in Merseyside. The incident I am about to relate prompted me to find out more about Shipbuilding affairs.

Ignorance is bliss. Or is it? I hope that no one will be unaware of what is going on at British Shipbuilders.

A few days ago I went into an off-licence in Birkenhead. It's just a small branch. Stacked by the window were 12 cartons each containing 12 bottles of Veuve de Vernay—all clearly marked "Cammell Lairds".

The reason? On the 5th July Merseysiders are to have the company of Mrs Mark Phillips for a "ceremony" (not my definition) to launch the opening of the Reconstruction Yard.

On one of the cartons was a receipt—"paid with thanks, £612"!

Cammell Lairds Shipbuilders Ltd operated a virtual shutdown during the Spring Bank Holiday period. When the men returned to work, the royal route was lined with trees and the ground covered in expensive top soil. A re-decoration pro-

gramme had been carried out on Yard buildings.

It's horrific to think that part of the workforce will be on the stones when the trees blossom forth. It's ironic, too, that some men will be able to say that their last job as a shipbuilder was making a wildly expensive toy for Peter Phillips.

Under the counter?

The British fleet is the third largest in the world. Last year, shipowners bought 1.7 million gross tons. An unbelievable 1.2 million of this was contracted to foreign yards, while British Shipbuilders built the remainder. British shipowners don't have to say what they feel about the nationalised shipbuilding industry. Actions speak louder than words.

And remember, for every man employed in shipbuilding, there are five workers on the outside supplying him. Thousands of men in Britain await poverty when they are launched on to the dole queue. I assume the Unemployment Office have the 'champers' and cut glass hidden under the counter ready to offer to the jobless shipbuilders, with an invitation to drink, drink, drink!

By Alison Kelly
(Wallasey LPYS)

Princess Anne got a £10,000 increase in April—she gets £60,000 a year 'dole money'.



EDITORIAL BOSSES GET THOUSANDS WORKERS GET PEANUTS

Staggering rises of up to 100% have been recommended for state bosses in a recently published report of the Top Salaries Review Body, led by Lord Boyle, an ex-Tory minister. And the leaders of the nationalised industries have issued a threat to the government: "Pay up, or else!" They have warned of unco-operative anger if they fail to get their way.

What hypocritical arrogance! It is these very same leaders of the nationalised industries who never tire in their sanctimonious lectures to the trade union movement on the need for "wage restraint" and "moderation" in the "national interest". It is these people who have rigidly enforced the pay guidelines over the last three years. Now they want just one exception—themselves!

Not satisfied with their elaborate perks, with their chauffeur driven cars, their select dining rooms, inflated allowances, plush offices and already fat salaries, they want even more! Apparently, Sir William Barlow cannot manage on £25,000 a year. He demands £45,000! And Lord Glenamara, the former Labour cabinet minister, Edward Short, feels particularly aggrieved. He only gets £14,000 a year. He demands £28,000!

On their behalf, the 'Sunday Times' claimed that, after tax, these massive increases would amount to a mere £3,000 a year. What a nerve! Millions of working people never see £3,000 a year before tax, let alone an increase in pay of £3,000, after tax!

The labour and trade union movement will be incensed at reports that the right wing of the cabinet have come out vehemently in favour of paying this money. Denis Healey, according to the reports, has already promised the money to one of the state bosses. This concern for the well-heeled came in the very same week which was chosen by Jim Callaghan for his tirade in favour of a Phase Four of wage restraint. The trade union movement will only be allowed rises of between 5 and 7% [according to press leaks]. But state bosses will be granted up to 100%. So much for "fairness".

Potential Labour voters up and down the country will be sickened by this duplicity. They want an end to wage restraint and falling living standards. And they will consider that the heads of the state concerns are doing very well as things stand, without any hefty increases. By their actions the right wing cabinet leaders have shown how utterly remote they are from the realities of everyday life.

We want the Tories to be crushed in the coming election. But the Tories are practically the only ones who will be delighted by the government's actions. The Tories will correctly see that every act which disappoints Labour voters also hurts the chances of a Labour victory.

While the state bosses were being reassured, Jim Callaghan had this to say to the trade union movement at Eastbourne: "So don't view it with shocked disbelief and cries of anguish—as you probably will—when you hear what the government has in mind for next year." But whatever the right wing in the cabinet may have in mind, by an overwhelming majority, this year's trade union conferences have shown that the working class has had enough of wage restraint.

Moves will be made at this year's Trade Union Congress to tie the TUC to a policy of support for all unions that oppose government wage norms. The CPSA for one is to move such a motion at the September Congress. With the mood of resentment building up in the unions it is clear that another successful round of incomes policy is out of the question. Even Joe Gormley, who is hardly a fiery left winger, has been forced to state the obvious that miners will oppose all those who stand in the way of negotiations for the demands set by conference. "It is not a threat," he said, "it is just a statement of fact."

But even the very mention of incomes policy by the government will damage the chances of a Labour victory. The only way to guarantee the defeat of the Tories is for the government to make a complete break with the past. The policies of wage restraint should be buried.

The manifesto should contain a clear commitment to restoring wages to compensate for the drop in living standards over the last few years. And the manifesto should state in unequivocal terms its commitment to bold socialist policies aimed at taking the wealth created by the labour of the working class from the capitalists who own private industry and out of the hands of those who currently mismanage the nationalised industries—Tories and ex-capitalists almost to a man.

The Labour government should inaugurate a programme of socialist planning under the democratic control and management of the working class. Such a policy would abolish the need for wage restraint. And such a policy would ensure the defeat of the Tories, forever!

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Young Socialists march against racism

The Labour Party Young Socialists' opposition to the National Front came across loud and clear to the people of Bristol as the demonstration against racialism and fascism organised by the Bristol LPYS marched through the streets on Saturday.

By the time we reached our destination over 400, overwhelmingly young people, were on the march.

Once again the LPYS showed its determination to stamp out the poison of racialism and the menace of fascism. The fact that the National Front didn't dare show up only confirms their impotence in the face of a well organised and disciplined show of strength by the labour and trade union movement.

Bristol Trades Council, NUPE, the South West Regional T&GWU, Rolls Royce shop stewards and the Anti-Nazi League were among those who supported the demonstration.

The route of the march was carefully chosen to pass through the main immigrant areas in the city in order to reach as many young blacks as possible with socialist ideas and an appeal for them to become active in the labour movement (no empty back streets for us!). Black and white youths joined the demonstration and poured



draw them into the trade union movement and prevent them from falling prey to the lies and distortions of the National Front. Cheap facilities and day centres should also be provided for unemployed youth.

Valuable links were forged with several immigrant organisations such as the Pakistan Association, the Bangladesh Association, the Bristol Asian Council and the PNP, all of whom were represented on the demonstration and in the meeting.

The task now is to follow up the dozens of names and addresses of people interested in our ideas and to draw these young workers and school students into the Labour Party Young Socialists and the struggle for socialism.

Wayne Jones

(Bristol South LPYS)

out of the pubs, clubs, shops and houses to enthusiastically greet the march.

Scores of 'Militants', 'Lefts', PNP Youth Bulletins and 'Militant' pamphlets on India were sold, as the streets rang with vociferous chanting and socialist slogans.

Unemployed

The marchers then assembled for a public meeting. Frank Huff, Regional Organiser for NUPE, gave fraternal greetings from the trade unions. Tony Benn MP congratulated the LPYS on organising the demonstration and reiterated the Labour

government's opposition to all forms of racialism and the fascist nature of the National Front.

The loudest applause came when Nick Bradley, LPYS representative on the Labour Party National Executive Committee, demanded that the Labour government adopt socialist policies to eradicate unemployment, slum housing, low wages and inadequate schools and hospitals which bred racialism in the first place, and were the sole responsibility of the bosses and their profit system.

Nick also argued for the general workers' unions to take special responsibility for the unemployed youth to



Just one episode of the struggle Newham N.E. Labour Party members had to wage—this time against the bosses courts

NEWHAM N.E. shows the way

Newham North East Labour Party, which has been in the forefront of the present debate in the Labour Party on reselection of MPs, as a result of its struggles to replace former Labour Cabinet Minister Reg Prentice with a socialist candidate, clarified its position on reselection at its General Committee meeting on June 28th. Accordingly it agreed to submit a resolution on the subject to Labour Party Conference.

Choice

Clearly, many CLPs and even a number of trade union delegations will be guided by Newham NE Labour Party's decision.

At the Newham NE Executive meeting on June 8th it



Turncoat Prentice, removed under section 7[b]

had been agreed in principle to submit a conference resolution on reselection. There

was general agreement that the NEC majority report on reselection was totally inadequate but the EC was undecided between the options of supporting the line of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, which focuses attention mainly on the call for mandatory reselection, and the alternative line advocated by the NEC minority report which calls for mandatory reselection but which also calls for retention of the existing limited right of recall which is provided for in the Labour Party constitution as it stands.

As a result the two alternative positions were presented to the General Committee. After a thorough airing of the issues, the following substantive resolu-

tion was ultimately passed unanimously and now represents the policy of Newham

Minority report

NE Labour Party:

"This conference supports the call for mandatory reselection as formulated in the NEC Reselection Working Party's minority report drafted by Jo Richardson, Ray Apps and Bernard Kissen because this report, unlike both the majority report and the CLPD's proposed amendments, seeks to retain the all-important Rule XIV Section 7[b], the clause which has actually provided for reselection in Sheffield Brightside, Hammersmith North and Newham North East."

TORIES FEAR YOUNG WORKERS

Since when have the Tories been concerned with the problems facing young workers, school students and students?

The answer to this question is given in their recent report called 'A Time For Youth'. From the first to the last page they unwittingly tell why they are taking up some of the problems faced by working class youth today.

The party of big business, with sabre-waving Margaret Thatcher at its head, attacking the trade unions and immigrants, is terrified!

They look with dread and trepidation to the future. They fear like the plague the rebelliousness of youth.

Take away all the 'liberal' sounding sentiments in the report and you see the reason for its publication: "we face the frightening prospect of creating a generation, with a significant proportion of minorities which will be alienated from our society to an extent we have never witnessed before. This could produce great dangers for the stability of our system and the survival of our democracy."

In the Foreword by 'liberal' James Prior MP and the callous right winger Norman St John Stevas MP, they again discuss that "...We equally cannot ignore the threat that many young people through

By Tony Saunois
(LPYS National Committee)

their own early experience may reject the present form of society unless its opportunities and potential for their own participation in its development are made clear."

So that's what they try and do in the report. The mask of 'reason' and a 'liberal' approach replace the war-faring speeches of Thatcher and Joseph—for a few moments, anyway.

They come forward with "bold new initiatives" for schools, unemployment and student grants. School councils are proclaimed, youth forums, sub-committees and reorganisation of government departments are declared. To do what? **Nothing at all!**

In reality, if the proposals of these spokesmen of the rich were put into operation, youth unemployment, lack of housing, low grants and pathetic wages and training

would still be with us.

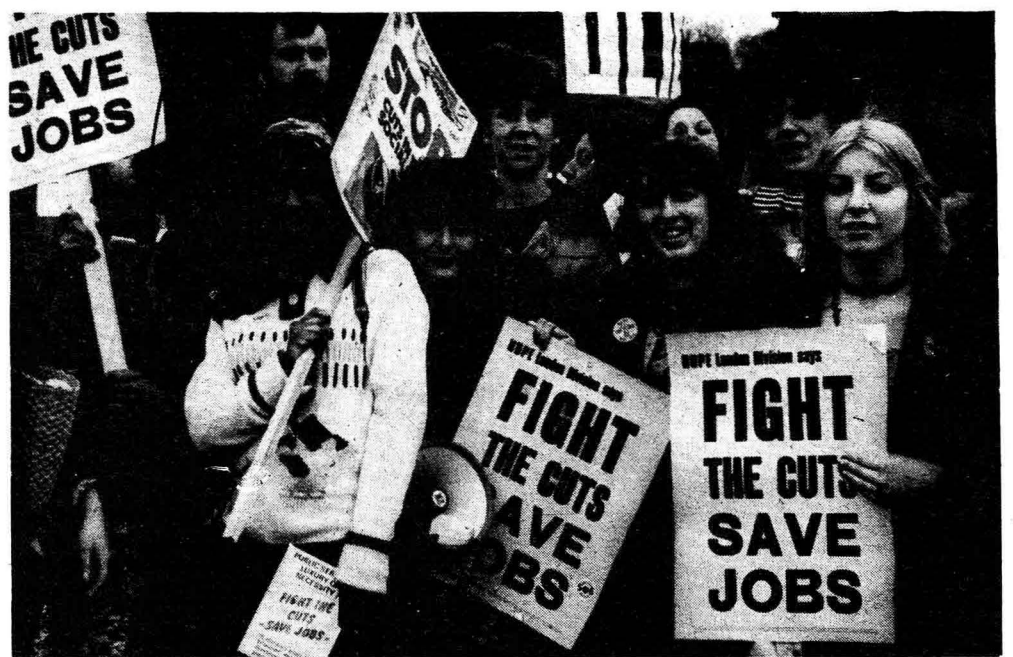
In effect they offer nothing to working class youth and only attempt to try and calm the rising tide of opposition to them and the system they defend. Not surprisingly the two largest sections in the report are on schools and unemployment. It appears that it is from these sections of youth that the parasitic spokesmen for the clique at the top of society suspect the most 'trouble'.

For school students they offer a few sops to try and keep them quiet. They call for school councils. So do the Labour Party Young Socialists, but we demand that they are made up of ancillary and teaching staff along with school students and that they have **real powers** controlling the day to day running of the schools.

"Democracy"

The Tories offer councils in an "advisory capacity only; responsibility for matters such as curriculum should remain with the governors, staff and local authorities." Timetabling arrangements and voluntary fund raising are what they suggest are "consultatively" discussed on the councils.

Not a mention is made of the rights of school students



Here's the real hope for the future of young workers—the trade unions

to join a union or to have a decent living grant for all those over school leaving age as fought for by the LPYS. The 'democracy' they offer extends so far as having one student on the board of governors with "certain matters such as staff applications and pupil discipline being 'reserve business' so that confidentiality can be maintained. Pupil governors might be allowed to take part in such business at the discretion of the other governors."

Not surprisingly they find it "disturbing" that "growing numbers of young people are maturing with the belief that our structure of society affords them no opportunities for the fulfillment of their views or aspirations." What they mean is that faced with the prospect of a job with low pay, little chance of getting a decent house or being among the hundreds of thousands of young people just left to rot on the dole queue, young people are beginning to look for socialist policies to solve their problems.

The demands of the LPYS for a 35-hour week, a £70

minimum wage, the right to a job and decent training, stand in marked contrast to the ideas of these pin-striped-suited gentlemen!

On unemployment they promise that "unemployment is going to get worse, perhaps much worse." What they don't do (not surprisingly) is give any policies for youth to fight the dole.

Unemployment

They talk of the "structural element in youth unemployment." In other words it's built into the capitalist system which they so enthusiastically defend and which offers nothing except, as they admit, rising unemployment! They call for a training programme for young people unable to find work. It hardly measures up to the demands of the LPYS for a guaranteed job for all school leavers and trade union control over training programmes with a decent wage along with full rates of pay at 18.

They suggest that the programme is financed with help from voluntary organisations. This presumably is to fit in with other Tory party plans to further cut back on public spending. They talk of £19.50 a week for being on this scheme and hint that after a two-year period it is quite likely you will be back on the dole again anyway!

The unemployed, however, aren't alone in getting nothing. Students, they point out, are on low grants and of those supposed to get parental help many don't actually get it. So

rather than fight for a living grant for all students they propose an inquiry is set up!

The Tories speak of the threat to democracy and the stability of their system if something isn't done for young people. Full marks! The threat to democracy they scream about is in reality a threat to their undemocratic class system which leaves millions living in slums, 1½ million on the dole and cuts in the NHS and education service. At the same time their class lives in the biggest houses, get princely wages and have private education and medical treatment.

The report is simply an attempt by the party of the crooks and gangsters which run society to quell the rising tide of anger among young people to their profit system.

Thugs

The real face of Toryism and their most likely programme was more accurately given in a speech by Eldon Griffiths MP when he said: "We need many more juvenile detention centres where the day starts at 6 am, where there is plenty of hard labour, a pretty basic diet, no television or visitors and corporal punishment for those who will not obey."

Thus the spokesman of big business declares war on working class youth! But we've got the best possible weapons to defeat these thugs who represent the rich and powerful—a socialist programme to end the misery of the dole queue and falling living standards forever.

"This pamphlet is an important part of the theoretical understanding of Stalinism and a lever for its overthrow and replacement by workers' democracy and socialism."

Europe's Living Dead



Last week the capitalist press of Europe fed in huge nauseating lumps to its readers 1978's most insipid piece of ruling class trivia—the marriage of Prince Rainier's daughter, Caroline.

The affair was notable for the brief appearance of Europe's living dead. History rolled back its shroud and out trotted some of its corpses: ex-King Umberto of Italy; Grand Duke Wladimir, the reigning 'Csar in exile', Archduke Joseph—ruling the Hapsburg Empire only in his senile imagination; and the Count of Paris who would have been Louis XIX of France but for an unfortunate mishap called the French Revolution: a gaggle of useless relics long ago swept away by the rising tide of history.

To prevent the world from having too close a peep at both the royal graveyard and his own pampered brat on her wedding day, Rainier imposed a ban on all photographers. In the best traditions of European despots he decreed that no helicopters were to fly over Monaco during the three days of the festivities.

"Anybody who uses a helicopter during these three days will be breaking the law," stated an aide. For good measure the police had in-

structions to force any helicopters out of the sky, confiscate films and cameras and take away the pilot's license (as the actual wedding festivities engaged only a few hours in total then presumably the rest of the time was spent in digging up Umberto and Co!).

The populace was also banned from manufacturing and selling wedding souvenirs—so much for "free enterprise!"

What a supreme insult to the working class of Europe was this lavish private party, replete with both the grotesque echoes of past tyranny, and the dictatorial whims and fancies of a man who claims the right of ownership of the skies themselves.

Meanwhile, across capitalist Europe seven million are already unemployed and many millions more face that bleak prospect as the next world slump heaves into sight.

It is an atrocity, and it will be repaid. In the coming period the Rainiers and their shambling auxiliaries of royal ghosts will be cast onto the refuse heap along with the rest of the ruling class.

Bill Alfred

TROTSKY



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and
Bolshevism

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NOLS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Majority threaten more undemocratic hurdles

The National Organisation of Labour Students' National Committee accepted at its meeting on June 24 a resolution proposed by 'Militant' supporters calling for the implementation of automatic reselection of MPs as suggested by the minority report of the Labour Party NEC working party. This indicates the growing feeling within the movement that our representatives in Parliament should not be there to build a career for themselves, but to fight for the interests of the working class.

The NC also resolved to urge Labour Clubs up and down the country to forge links with their local LPYS in the event of a general election

By Mark Morton
(NOLS National Committee)

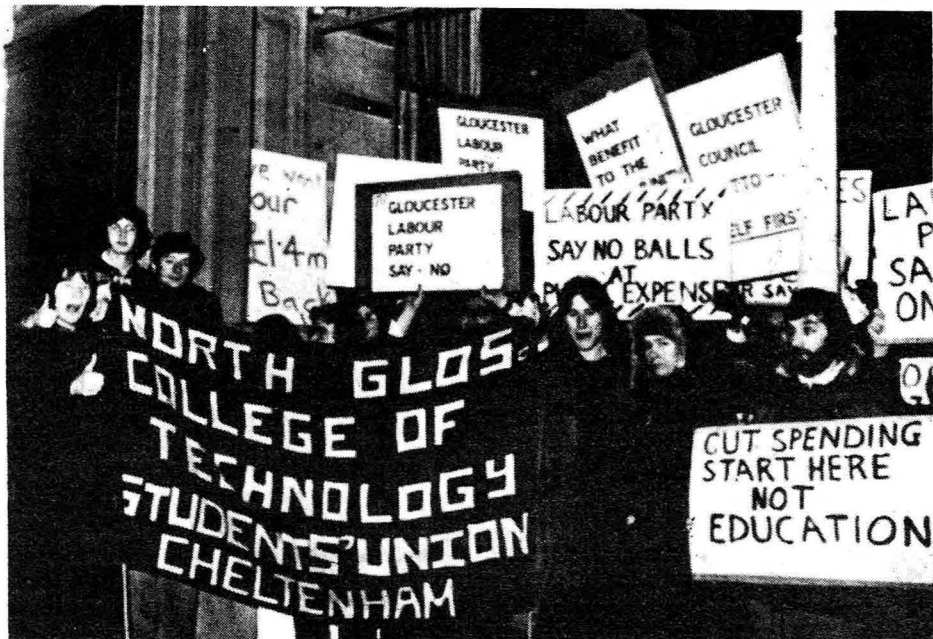
In order to draw students into the Party and the LPYS. The officers of NOLS were instructed to meet the officers of the LPYS to discuss election work. Priority must be given to this over the next few months by NOLS.

Rules

It was also felt that the Party's youth broadcast had not sufficiently been under the control of the LPYS and of NOLS and that any future such broadcast should be; and a letter outlining this point of view is to be sent to the Party's National Executive. However, since the last NC the officers have failed to

campaign around the issue of NUS affiliation to the Labour Party and TUC, a policy passed at the last conference and a matter given great importance by 'Militant' supporters within NOLS. Instead, it has been discussed by the NOLS/NUS Committee, a non-elected body; and a letter is to be sent to Sue Slipman, former President of NUS, asking her what she thinks!

This is not good enough. NOLS, more than ever, against the background of falling student living standards, must fight to link students to the strength of the organised working class. NOLS must establish itself as the representative of the



Students and Labour Party members demonstrate together

labour movement within the student field.

Also of great concern to activists within NOLS will be a number of organisational proposals passed by the National Committee. It was decided to invalidate the West Midlands Regional Conference on the grounds that one of the delegates was not a Labour Party member, despite the fact that she had applied for membership last October, and believed that her membership was valid. Her status was never challenged at the Conference itself.

The majority on the NC refused to accept these facts and therefore the West Mid-

lands is left without a Regional Committee or a National Committee member, until a new conference can be held later in the year! The moves against this delegate were started by the supporters of the right wing 'Campaign for a Labour Victory' in her Labour Party. The NOLS majority have conspired with the most blatant right wing elements in the Labour Party to pull off this coup.

Neither would the NC allow the deadlock—which has arisen in the Northern Region at the last two conferences between 'Militant' and 'Clause 4' supporters as a result of Newcastle University Labour Club being disaffiliated last autumn—to be resolved by holding a new conference on the basis of those clubs affiliated at the present time, as opposed to last December. Instead the NC has called a regional ballot—a ballot which will not take into account the present activity or political leanings of all the clubs in the region.

Two proposals were also passed to amend club constitutions. These will seriously hamper the work of clubs particularly in the run-up to NOLS conference which is already heavily laden with bureaucratic obstacles, and which has led to many clubs being undemocratically ruled out of conference over the last couple of years.

Firstly, a new quorum is to be introduced for any club meeting discussing NOLS business. This will be 8 or 15% of the membership,

whichever is the higher number. This means that a club of 150 members would need a quorum of 22; and, on past experience, this will be applied in an arbitrary manner.

Secondly, notification of any such meeting must in future be sent to the Labour Party Student Organiser three days in advance! Once again, this will be an added hurdle for club secretaries who are already burdened by the rules and regulations of NOLS.

Undoubtedly, protests will be coming in from clubs and NOLS regions against these changes which threaten to undermine the conscientious work of NOLS activists in building a strong and campaigning organisation at local, regional and national level.

A number of clubs were also disaffiliated for 'inactivity' and a number of others are to be written to 'ensure they are active'. The grounds given for suspicion were vague and lacked credibility since the Student Organiser, Mike Gapes, had written to these clubs when a number of the students were sitting exams or were involved on teaching practice.

It is necessary for NOLS to break away from top-heavy bureaucracy; only when the majority of members feel satisfied that their organisation is fully democratic will NOLS be capable of serving its main task—the winning of students to the banner of the labour movement and to socialism.



National Union of Students mass demonstration

LPYS Campaign in Penistone

Sheffield Labour Party Young Socialist branches are calling on all Young Socialist members and supporters in the surrounding area [Yorkshire and North Midlands] to attend a Mass Canvass on Sunday, 9 July, in Chapel-town. This is a working-class, but Liberal-dominated area. Meet 12-1 pm, Waggon and Horses pub, 30 yards from Chapeltown roundabout.

Transport: Sheffield, 80 and 91 bus from Bridge

Street Bus Station [West Bar] at 10 and 30 minutes past each hour. Rotherham, 116 bus from Platform E of the Bus Station at 15 and 45 minutes past each hour. Leeds and Wakefield — train — pay train Leeds to Sheffield stops in Chapeltown.

Contact your local LPYS branch for details of private transport arrangements.

Militant Notices

SALFORD Marxist Discussion Meetings: July 19th—'Is Russia Socialist?'; August 2nd—'What is Marxism?'; August 16th—'Where is Britain Going?'; August 30th—'Workers Control and Management'. Contact Dave Farrar, 061 7376751.

SUNDERLAND Marxist Discussion Group. Every other Friday starting at 8.00pm. July 14th—'The Future of the Labour Party'. For further details contact Diane English, Sunderland 44365.

BIRMINGHAM Militant Public Meeting 'A Marxist Programme for Britain.' Speaker: Peter Taaffe. Thursday 13 July, 7.30 pm. Assembly Hall, Dr Johnson House, Bull Street, Birmingham.

SOUTH MANCHESTER Marxist Discussion meetings. The Albert Inn, Walmer Street, near junction of Wilmslow Rd and Great Western Street. 8.00pm Wednesday July 19th—'Reform or Revolution?'

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LEFT & RIGHT

THE GOOD LIFE

The rich may not work for their money (after all, that's what workers are for), but isn't it nice to see how they enjoy themselves spending it? The social diaries of the debs, royals and well-heeled gentry must be in dizzy whirl. What with auctions at Sothebys, tennis at Wimbledon and the Ascot races—it's a good thing they've got servants to organise the details.

The demonstration against Prince Reza of Iran, a representative of the barbarous regime being wined and dined as the Queen's guest, was described by the gossip-columnists as the "high spot of a lively social day". There was the champagne drinking contest, with the winner, baronet-to-be Michael Du Pre, being urged on by Dai Llewellyn, "who produced a black whip".

Picnics in the car park, among the Mercedes and Rolls, with lobster laid out on white lace cloths, only tarnished by a cloud-burst (even money can't fix the weather—though if it could...) The Italian ambassador ate on, refusing to retire to his car. A figure in top hat and tails was seen on all fours, crawling along Ascot railway station. Perhaps an up-and-coming who wasn't quite accustomed to the bubbly?

But the fun and games aren't quite what they used to be. It seems there's no escape from politics and rowdy commoners. At Wimbledon, afternoons of strawberries and cream were threatened with indigestion at the prospect of angry demonstrators protesting at Buster Mottram, who wants to organise a tournament in support of apartheid. But there's no gratitude in the world—he was knocked out by an unseeded white South African!

LICENSE TO KILL

Who killed the Pentecostal missionaries in Zimbabwe on June 25th? The following are extracts from a 1976 mercenary recruitment bulletin.

"Presently there exists a long term contract in Rhodesia [Zimbabwe]... There are at least four military groups which mercenaries can get into... the S.A.S., Regular Army and Depot Police.

"The fourth group is currently unidentified... we understand you can only get into this fourth group after having served in the S.A.S. They paint themselves black, speak the language, and actually filter into the terrorist camps... if you are interested, you can contact Major Lamprecht at Army Headquarters, Salisbury."

Who stands to gain the most from seemingly senseless killings; the guerillas or the Salisbury regime?

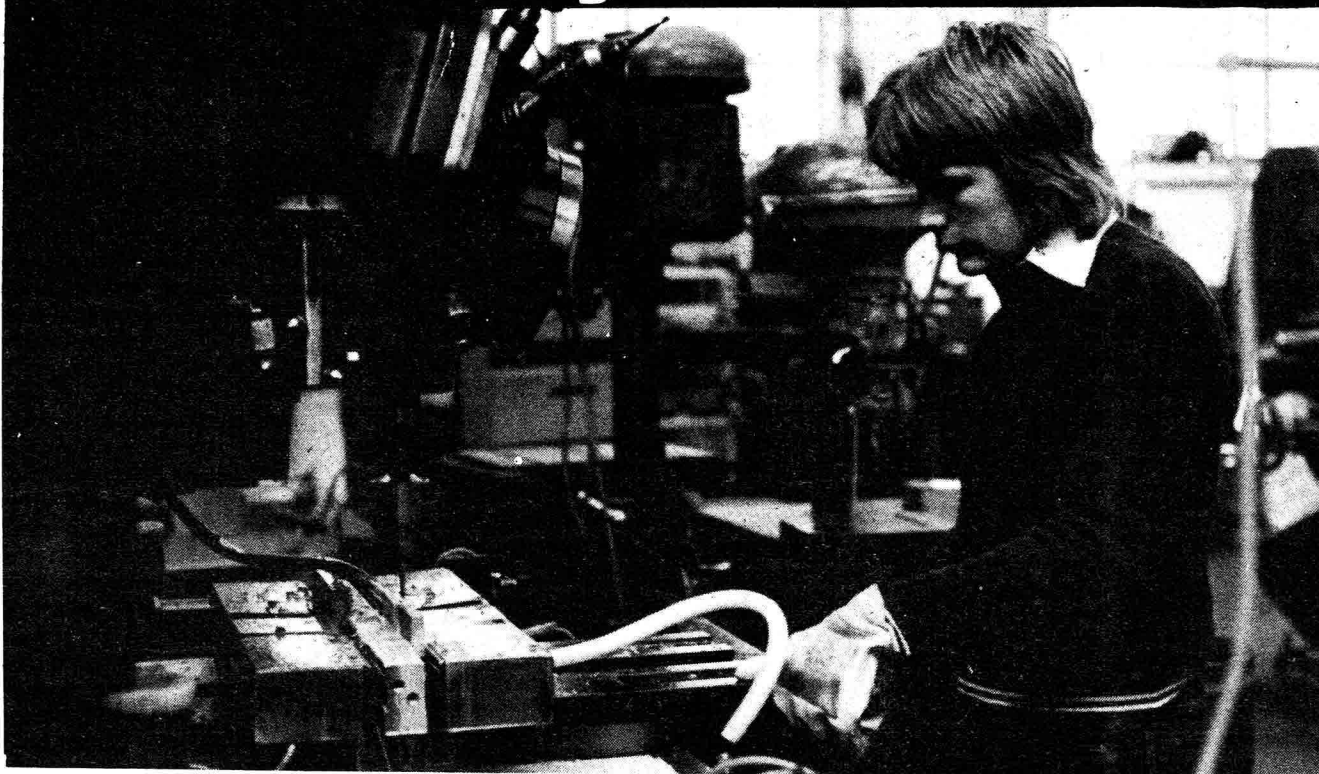
BUSINESS v. TREASON

An ex-public schoolboy was not long ago given a suspended sentence after an armed robbery in which he collected £40,000. The judge, faithful to his class, said he would be lenient owing to the prisoner's 'good' background and character. On June 15th another product of the public school, 24 year-old Julian Thorne, received a seven year sentence for robbing three London betting shops of £770.

What was the difference between the two cases? Julian gave his money to the poor, the other chap kept his takings. Apparently unlucky Julian was a youth officer working for the Inner London Education Authority and got so depressed at the conditions of young kids at his youth club that he turned to robbing bookies to pay for new equipment at the club.

Clearly robbery by the rich is 'understandable'; giving the takings to the poor is treason!

First days at work



LEARNING THE HARD WAY

By Rick
Anderson
(Wallsend CLP)

My first job, after leaving school, was in the machine shop of a small engineering factory which made drilling machines.

Six lads in all, we were shown around the shop and told that we were to be taken on as "trainee machinists". I was to operate one of the production radial arm drills.

This was 1969, and the gross wage we were offered was £12 10s (£12.50), about £9 less than the full rate. After six months, we were told we would come onto the full semi-skilled rate.

When we started the following Monday, with our new boiler suits and boots, we must have looked a bit funny, but we were in a fine fettle. We had entered the ranks of the employed, and looked forward to the excitement of learning to do a meaningful job and the self-respect that went with it.

After about the first two weeks the excitement had worn pretty thin—after our first week we had been working flat-out production time, and as yet we had been given no real training. The two apprentices on site were given the task of marking up jobs for us—the rest we had to learn for ourselves or from the machinists in the shop, who couldn't spare the time very often—they had their own jobs to do.

I remember one job I was given required four 1/2-inch holes to be drilled from the inside of 125 drill heads, for drainage purposes.

I started, and after finishing two components the drill wouldn't cut.

I went to the stores for a replacement, but the same happened again. When I returned the storeman protested that I must have set the drill speed too fast.

After checking the speed and asking the machinist opposite what he thought we came to the conclusion that the components needed tempering. Taking a few components, I waited about an hour until the process was completed. I went back to the machine, only to find that the drill wouldn't penetrate the job.

The foreman marched across to my machine, demanding to know why I hadn't finished. I tried to explain, but he shoved me aside not believing my tale, and rammed in the drill; there was a sharp crack as the drill-bit sheered, the jig tore

itself from its clamps, and thumped into the foreman's belly.

Luckily only his pride was injured: his cigar had shot out of his mouth and landed in a puddle of soluble oil, and the machine shop had a good laugh.

To save face he shouted that he was taking me off the machine, and that along with one of the other trainees we would work in the yard—stacking bricks! Our illusions thoroughly shattered, we stacked bricks, and tidied up the yard piling rubbish into the skips next to the small gateman's hut.

There was no union on site, although a kind of company committee existed, which was supposed to represent us. A few people were card holding members of unions but weren't organised and didn't want to be victimised.

Union

My friend Kevin and me had mixed feelings: we were both indignant at what had happened. I thought we should try and join a union and get organised in the factory. Kevin's reaction was

to smash the place up, and give the foreman a good going-over.

Eventually he agreed to join the union. He cooled down a bit, and instead of smashing the factory up, contented himself with putting a bit of wood through the gateman's hut window—accidentally, of course!

Getting people into the union wasn't easy—most were in favour but didn't want to join until everyone else had! We had to watch out for the crawlers, who were well known.

We had never been in a union before, and lacked caution and knowledge of how to go about setting it up. We managed to get together seven who agreed to join the AEF, with a couple of the older workers giving us support.

Unfortunately the foreman found out, and started threatening people one by one, and effectively stopped any waverers joining, i.e. the majority that we needed to get recognition. Meanwhile he breathed down our necks something rotten, and pushed us from one job to another, until we made a mistake.

He told us to take this batch of about 20 bars to one of the machines. We stacked the bars up on a barrow—I pulled and Kevin made sure they didn't roll off the back.

Sacked

Half way to the machine the foreman called Kevin aside, and after hesitating, Kevin told him that he would have to wait, or else the bars would roll off the barrow. The foreman screamed at him, so Kevin went over—and the bars rolled off the barrow. The foreman then sacked us both!

When I registered at the dole office I was asked what experience I'd had—when I mentioned the factory's name I was told to say no more: apparently they took on trainees and sacked them after six months before the full rate became due. About nine months later I met some of my ex-work mates in a pub: they had all either left or been sacked.

But I heard recently that the AUEW [engineering] has now established negotiating rights—not before time, I'm sure you'll agree!

Today - not so different

When I left school nine months ago, I started work as an apprentice optical glazier. I was told in my interview that there was a good future for me.

After nine months I have still had no training at all. All I do is run a glass cutting machine all day, every day. That is, apart from going to the shops for the boss's cigars, making tea and coffee, sweeping the benches and floors, and emptying the bins.

On Fridays, I have to clean out barrels of glass cuttings with a tablespoon as there is no proper equipment. Sometimes I get dozens of glass splinters in my hands as there are no gloves for me to use.

There are no real safety precautions, I have no face mask. The only

precaution I can take is to stand well back while the machine is running.

The workshop is dirty, the lino on the stairs is very dangerous and there are piles of dust.

I bring home £19 a week and of course there is no trade union—joining one would most likely result in the sack. I think the trade union movement should launch a campaign to organise small firms as I am no exception to the dirty tricks of the bosses.

The trade union movement must unite all workers and fight the bosses for a decent society and a good future.

Tim Igoe

(West Bridgeford LPYS)

WHO ARE THE REAL SCROUNGERS?

By Darryl Cozens
(Coventry Labour Party)

"But how are you going to have expansion when there's no incentive for anyone to make things grow?...Once you've made room in public expenditure, you can cut taxes and give people the incentive to go."

This is a familiar tune from Mrs Thatcher, sung time and again by all the Tories, and banged out by the bosses' press week in, week out. And this old-time favourite has a chorus, of course, a scurrilous refrain which heaps abuse on the victims of the capitalist crisis—the unemployed, the aged, the sick, the low-paid and the poor, who are viciously portrayed as "scroungers".

In this new series of articles, we intend to cut through the Tories' propaganda, strip away the lies of the capitalist press, and ask: Who are the real scroungers?

But the real picture of our bosses' plight is quite different. The following table shows quite clearly that the British executive has to give up a smaller proportion of his salary in tax than does his counterpart in a number of other countries. For executives

overseas in jobs earning the equivalent to £15,000 in Britain, with two children, the tax rate [leaving aside legitimate allowances and illegal fiddles] is as follows:

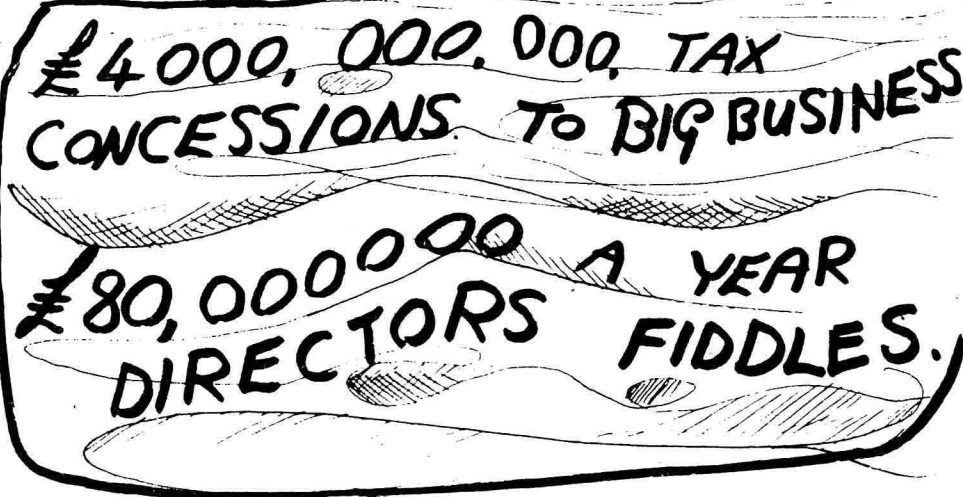
	Amount of tax paid
Sweden	66.4%
Denmark	56.0%
Netherlands	55.1%
Australia	51.7%
USA	46.8%
Belgium	46.5%
UK	44.2%
W Germany	42.5%
France	38.9%
Italy	36.1%

If we examine the U.K. economy when taxes were extremely low—for example, the 15 years before World War One—then the highest rate of income tax in this country was under 7%. From 1909 most earned income was taxed less than 4%. Yet this was not a time of vigorous enterprise responding to incentive, or of high investment in British industry: those 15 years were a time of stagnation, with no advance in productivity, no rise in real wages.

So we see that in practice the bosses are reluctant to risk investment, no matter how

favourable the tax 'climate'.

But even if we accept, for a moment, the claims of the bosses, then at least you would assume that they were paying their taxes, and that what they pay was really far higher than the rest of us mere



mortals. But neither of these claims stands up to examination.

A recent report in 'New Society' states the following: "The failure of Directors to pay taxes makes up most of the £80 million arrears due to the Inland Revenue under the PAYE system in 1975."

While the overwhelming majority of workers have their taxes deducted at

source before they get their wages, the directors draw their money without paying tax. This money is taxable but the tax man can only find out if the tax is paid by inspecting the firm's PAYE records, examining the firm's accounts, or by inspecting the director's personal income tax returns. If the tax man finds out that the tax has not been paid then

the firm forks out what is owing, not the director.

It seems that such detected tax arrears have increased from £20 millions in 1966 to £80 millions in 1975. This sum is clearly much, much greater than the comparatively trifling £2.6 millions involved in the social security 'scrounging' to which the capitalist press gives so much hysterical

publicity. Even the Auditor General is forced to conclude that a substantial part of these arrears "does reflect the failure by companies to apply PAYE properly to directors remuneration."

In other words, our 'overtaxed' bosses are on the fiddle and have been for years. It was recently claimed by the Head of the Inland Revenue section dealing with such fiddles that the bill to the Exchequer was running to hundreds of millions a year.

Furthermore, the Labour government has done the utmost to help out companies, like deferring some taxation. In April 1977 it was reported that this method had saved firms some £3,500m during the previous three years through stock relief concessions. Dennis Healey's latest budget confirmed that previously deferred taxation would be completely written off, thus at a stroke pushing up the big monopolies' recent tax savings to at least £4,000million.

In 1974, a person on £140.49p per week paid £45.94p in tax (under one third) and someone on £30.61p paid £10.13p (over one third). The poorer person paid a higher percentage in tax. So there we have it. The rich avoid paying tax like the plague and even when they are forced to pay it, they do better than the poor.

THE MERCHANTS OF DEATH

Can socialists who are sickened by the recent sales exhibition of arms in Aldershot, held under a Labour government, draw reassurance from the fact that the Minister of State for Defence, Dr John Gilbert, "takes no pleasure in sending large arms supplies to less developed countries"?

Evidence of the government's increasing involvement in promoting arms sales seems to indicate an eagerness and thirst for customers that belies those sentiments.

Britain is the fourth largest arms exporting country in the world. £1,000 million worth of arms will leave Britain this year. Despite the fact that British arms sales must have been of central importance in supplying the means to wage most of the 133 wars which have taken place since 1945, it is the economic and political considerations and not the moral ones which hold sway.

The present Head of the Defence Sales Organisation (DSO), Ronald Ellis (ex-British Leyland) has said: "I

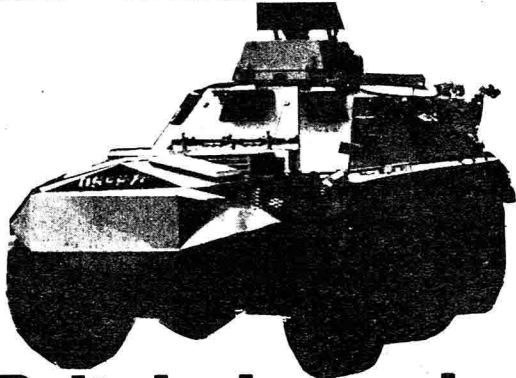
have no scruples about selling arms to any country with which the government says I can deal...I lose no sleep whatever on the moral issue. The morality lies with the user."

The present system of arms selling was set up following a secret report written by Lord Stokes (also ex-British Leyland) in 1966. At that time, Denis Healey defended the recommendation to set up an official arms dealing department which would take responsibility for the sales of the whole of this enormous industry.

600,000 people are employed by approximately 8,000 private companies, in addition to 22,500 people directly employed by the state in arms production in the thirteen Royal Ordnance factories. Healey justified government involvement on account of the lucrative international market in arms, claiming that: "British industry has the same right to a share of that market as the industry of any other country."

Quite apart from the obvious, stupendous, criminal waste of human and

DEATH



Britain is arming the dictators and equipping the torture chambers of the world

By Ian Sugarman
(Oxford Labour Party)

material resources involved in producing armaments at a time when all our basic services are being starved of funds, there are other aspects to this whole business which demand the attention of socialists.

It is quite clear that those regimes which are benefiting from these sales are some of the most reactionary and internally repressive in the world. Iran, by far the biggest of Britain's customers having already bought 1,000 tanks and with a further 1,200 on order, is a country in which the Shah was installed as absolute ruler by a coup engineered by the CIA and the British Secret Intelligence Service in 1953.

In Iran, opposition parties, groups and demonstrations are banned and there are 6,000 prisons and "delinquent detention centres" throughout the country. In the demonstrations that have taken place hundreds of people have been injured and many killed by troops using tanks.

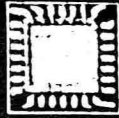
Also, with arms deals often

involving hundreds of millions of pounds there is obvious potential for corruption. In January, three men working for the Rascal group (specialists in selling electronic equipment to the military) were convicted of offering and accepting bribes over a £4 million contract to sell military radio equipment to Iran in 1972.

The £14,300 bribe was taken by a Lt-Colonel employed in the DSO and given by directors of a Rascal subsidiary company. During the trial it emerged that bribes are an integral part of the arms business and that all major companies expect to pay out around 5% of the selling price for this purpose.

All this may be dismissed by some as just one other unacceptable 'face' of capitalism. But in reality it exposed the utter ruthlessness and inhumanity of the whole system. For all capitalist states rely ultimately on the power of their military to preserve their ruling classes.

It poses the need for a socialist transformation of society as a matter of extreme urgency—not something just for the dim and distant future.



THE CHIPS ARE DOWN FOR JOBS

In a period of capitalist recession, micro-processors threaten millions of jobs. But with socialist planning this new technology would mean a society free from want in which all the dangerous and boring jobs would be abolished.

By Jim Hensman
(ASTMS)

Recently, the press and television have highlighted some of the possible effects on society of these new developments. A report prepared for the government, which examines the impact of technological change, concludes that with present trends and economic policies unemployment could be 3.5 million by 1982.

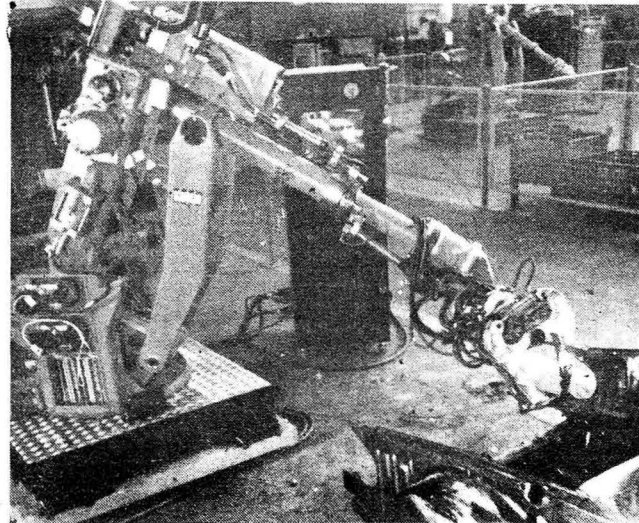
Already, industries such as printing, cash registers and the watch and clock industry have seen employment severely hit by new techniques. The government itself via the NEB intends to spend £50 million on developing advanced electronic devices. What are the developments taking place and what effect will they have?

Computers are nothing new. They have been with us since the last war. What is new is the complexity of circuitry and cheapness of recent innovations. Advances over the last five years in what are called 'large-scale' integrated circuits or 'chips' allow complicated electronic circuits to be produced on tiny slivers of the material silicon.

In 1946 one of the first computers was completed. It occupied a large room, weighed 30 tons, consumed 140 kilowatts of power and cost over 5 million dollars.

Today a simple micro-processor—a computer on a chip—more powerful than the 1946 computer runs off a single battery and can be bought for about 50p. Chips that 'see' objects and respond to them, even chips that respond to speech and ones that 'talk' are either produced now or soon will be!

The way the technology is



But what about the workers?

Period	Output per person in manufacturing	Manufacturing output	Manufacturing jobs
1950 to 1965	up 46%	up 64%	up 12%
1965 to 1977	up 36%	up 17%	down 14%

going is truly mind-boggling. At the present time, chips with the equivalent of about 100,000 transistors on them are available. The estimate for 1985 is 10 million.

Already chips exist which are as concentrated as the human brain in their complexity. The sheer power of some new devices is also staggering. Devices which will be used in future computers

can perform 20 thousand million operations in one second.

These developments mean that many of the functions associated with 'human' intelligence will more and more be economically replaceable by machines.

Neither is it just manual jobs that can be replaced. Recent reports have concluded that 40% of office jobs

and 30% of all jobs in Banking and Insurance could be replaced over the next ten years.

One example, telecommunications, indicates how far developments could go. The advanced computer-controlled exchanges that are being introduced today require little maintenance. If one part of the system goes wrong, another part automatically takes over and even finds out what the fault was.

This automation extends to the manufacture and even design of these systems. A computer can take the rough sketch of a circuit, check that it will work and give it to a computerised drafting machine to draw up.

Automatic machinery then makes and assembles the electronic boards for the total system. Even testing and documentation can be done by computer controlled equipment.

This kind of automation prompted Kenneth Corfield, President of the Telecommunications Engineering Manufacturing Association to estimate that when the changeover to the new exchanges was completed only one job of the original twenty five would remain.

Will new technology actually have this devastating effect? As some people like

Geoffrey Robinson, MP, have pointed out, automation in the past, for instance in the 1950's, has taken place together with an increase in manufacturing employment. However, the recent picture isn't so rosy—as the accompanying table shows.

Why is this? In a period of capitalist growth, as in the 1950's and early 1960's, investment and productivity increased, but markets and output increased faster. So more jobs were created. But in a period of capitalist recession, such as the one we are in now, markets are stagnant, output grows slowly if at all, and any investment that does take place tends to cut jobs.

What is worse is that the service sector, particularly government employment, is being cut back and therefore can't absorb any jobs displaced by industry.

That is why reports like that from the Cambridge Economic Policy Group have concluded that even without any dramatic technological changes and without any speed-up in the current rate of productivity growth, 2.9 million people will be unemployed in 1985, and 4.6 in 1990.

All new technology may do is accelerate and make easier a process caused by the crisis in the capitalist system.

New technology actually makes possible what our socialist predecessors could only dream about—a society free from want where all dangerous and boring jobs could be removed. A 10-hour and shorter working week would become easily possible. Undreamed of possibilities would open up in the application of new technology to industry, communications, education, health and daily life.

Either we have a programme of a shorter working week tied to the socialist transformation of society and a plan of production, which could utilise new technology in the interests of all, or else the spectre of mass unemployment with all its attendant horrors becomes a reality.

That is the choice.

ARE HEALTH SERVICE CUTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE

Stirlingshire T.B. Scandal

Within the last six months, no less than five cases of TB have been discovered, all from within two streets in the village of Banknock in Stirlingshire.

That so many cases should have occurred in two streets with a population of some 150 is scandalous enough. But what is much worse is the complacent and lethargic reaction of the health authorities. The first three cases, two children and one adult, came to light around Christmas/New Year. Right from the start, the attitude of the authorities was that there was nothing to worry about as the disease was not infectious.

A third child, however, was found to have TB in April. By this time, parents were becoming anxious; one, Mary Robertson, took her whole family to the Chest Unit at Stirling Infirmary for X-rays. Her daughter was found to have TB, the fifth case.

By now there was widespread concern. Villagers were demanding X-ray screening for everybody; teachers in the local school were considering taking action. In May all the pupils at two schools were screened, four months after the first outbreak. Not until 5 June did a mobile X-ray unit arrive in the village to screen adults, five months after the first cases!

It was announced that it would be open for two days, from 2.30 to 4.30 and from 5.30 to 7.30. The time available for people working normal hours was thus very limited, and as a result there was such a rush that many people were turned away.

One wrote to the local Residents' Association Bulletin: "On Monday 5 June, 1978, my husband and myself went to the mass X-ray unit in Banknock to be X-rayed. We arrived at 6.30 pm and were turned away as we were told that there would be no more X-rays that night. The notices clearly stated the unit would be open till 7.30 pm."

Complacent

Large numbers of residents are still waiting for X-rays. In the same issue of the Bulletin was a report on the outbreak. It clearly illustrated the complacency of the Forth Valley Health Board, whose District Administrator claimed that the situation was "under control", and advised the reporter to contact the Consultant Physician to the Health Board, Dr Robert McIntyre.

Dr McIntyre blandly stated that "there have only been a handful of cases reported from this area in the last year. In fact," he

continued, "in the two local primary schools there have only been four reported cases, two at Bankier and two at St Pat's in Denny and none of these, we are advised, are infectious. However, as a purely precautionary measure, screening has been carried out at both schools."

"Only" four cases, and all within two streets! If they are not infectious, then how did it spread so rapidly? If he is right, then someone else in the district must be carrying the disease.

Inevitably, rumours are spreading. There is a report that all the pupils at an approved school near Stirling were being screened at the infirmary, after four cases had been discovered there. There are reports of cases in other nearby areas.

The local Labour Party has discussed the question and instructed the Press Officer to write to all the national press. Only the 'Daily Record' printed his statement, in the form of a reader's letter. The members are convinced that at the root of the bureaucratic delay and inaction are the cuts in public spending, which have rendered the health service incapable of reacting promptly to a serious outbreak like this.

Mary Robertson is also angry about the attitude of the education authorities. Her

daughter has already lost four months' education and is likely to lose another two. Yet, despite the health authority's assurance that she is not infectious, they say that they cannot send a teacher or even books to the house for fear of infection!

She has also been advised to provide a separate room for her daughter, which in fact is impossible as the house is too small, and again, this seems to contradict the "non-infectious" line. The only positive step by the authorities has been to supply a free pint of milk each day!

If this scandal is to be cleared up and a repetition prevented, what is urgently needed is:

- ★ A full, public investigation into the outbreak in Banknock and the actions (or inactions) of the Health Board.
- ★ The democratic election of all bodies within the Health Service, so they have to account for their actions.
- ★ The reversal of all public spending cuts within the Health Service.

Arthur Donaghy and David Ferguson

(Banknock Labour Party)

In last week's feature article on Spain today Alan Woods revealed the stark economic problems besetting Spanish capitalism and the urgency, from the bosses' point of view, of the need to ruthlessly cut down the living standards of the working class. But after suffering the rule of capital for 40 years in its most naked and brutal form - fascist dictatorship - the workers are not prepared to accept any sacrifices for the benefit of their exploiters. They regard the victorious outcome of their ten year struggle for democratic rights - the right to organise and strike, to vote, freedom of speech and assembly - not as an end in itself but simply as a means to fight unhindered for a better standard of life. Accordingly, workers have flocked in their hundreds of thousands into the trade unions and into the Socialist and Communist Parties where, as Alan Woods explains in this article, titanic debates on how to achieve socialism now rage.

Bosses and workers SPANISH W

The bosses' fear of a head-on confrontation with the mighty and confident Spanish labour movement has forced the more perceptive section of the ruling class to consider seriously the possibility of allowing the various workers parties to form part of a government of coalition with the "left" of the ruling Centre Party.

In recent months the Spanish press has been filled with rumours about the possibility that the major workers' party, the Socialist Party of Felipe Gonzalez (PSOE) might join such a coalition. For their part the party leaders do not deny such a possibility and confine themselves to making mysterious Delphic utterances to the effect that the PSOE is an "alternative of power".

Not long ago, Alphonso Guerra, who likes to describe himself as the "Number Two" of the PSOE, stated publicly that he had been in contact with five different ministers in the Suarez government who, individually, sounded him out as to which section of the Centre the socialists would be prepared to govern with.

The same person declared that the PSOE could "bring down the government in 48 hours" but that "the socialists were not sure, at this moment in time, if certain sections, among which he cited the Bank, High Finance, the Church hierarchy and the Army, would accept a socialist government". (quoted from *Diario 16*, 8/5/78)

The problem is that the Spanish bankers and industrialists realise that the entry of the socialists into the government, even with the guarantee of a coalition with the "progressive" capitalist politicians of the Centre, would represent a very serious danger to them. They recall only too well the wave of radicalisation which swept through Spanish society in the aftermath of the municipal elections which led to the Socialist-Republican coalition of 1931, and even more so, the enormous mass movement sparked off by the electoral victory of the Popular Front in 1936.

In recent months, the Spanish labour leaders have leaned over backwards to show themselves publicly as "moderate, reasonable and statesmanlike" figures who, in the event of being "entrusted with power" would not place the rule of the banks and monopolies in jeopardy. Ever since the elections last June, where in spite of a rigged electoral system, the PSOE won 33% of the votes and PCE 9%, the leaders of these parties have striven to reach a "concensus" agreement with the capitalists and their government on all the vital questions facing society. But to their immense disappointment and chagrin, all their diplomacy and "clever-



Top: Santiago Carrillo
Bottom: Felipe Gonzalez

ness" has been met by a solid wall of abuse, mistrust and attacks from the opposition camp.

The employers continue to portray even the most moderate trade union leaders as revolutionary agitators bent on destroying the "private enterprise" system. The capitalist politicians persist in describing the PSOE and PCE leaders as Marxist demagogues behind whose mask of reasonableness lies concealed a secret plot to carry out the "dictatorship of the proletariat" by underhand means.

All the efforts of the labour leaders to prove the contrary only serve to increase the hysteria of the capitalists. Every step backwards taken by Carrillo and Gonzalez result in an immediate demand that they must take ten more.

The Socialist and "Communist" leaders are surprised and indignant at the "unreasonableness" of the employers and their government. They attribute to ignorance and personal caprice what is really the logical consequence of a situation in which the capitalists, with the best will in the world, are unable to respond with concessions and compromises.

The economic situation demands an attack on living standards. That is the only thing the bankers and industrialists require the workers' leaders to accept and carry out unquestioningly.

But what happens when the workers' leaders enter the government of a country where unemployment is inexorably advancing towards 2 millions (the equivalent in British terms of 3-4 millions)? There can be no doubt that such a government, from the very first moment, would find itself under enormous pressure from the workers, the housewives, the small farmers and unemployed. Despite all the assurances to the contrary what guarantee would the capitalists have that the Socialist leaders in the government would not be obliged, by the pressure of the rank and file, to go much further than what they themselves had originally intended?

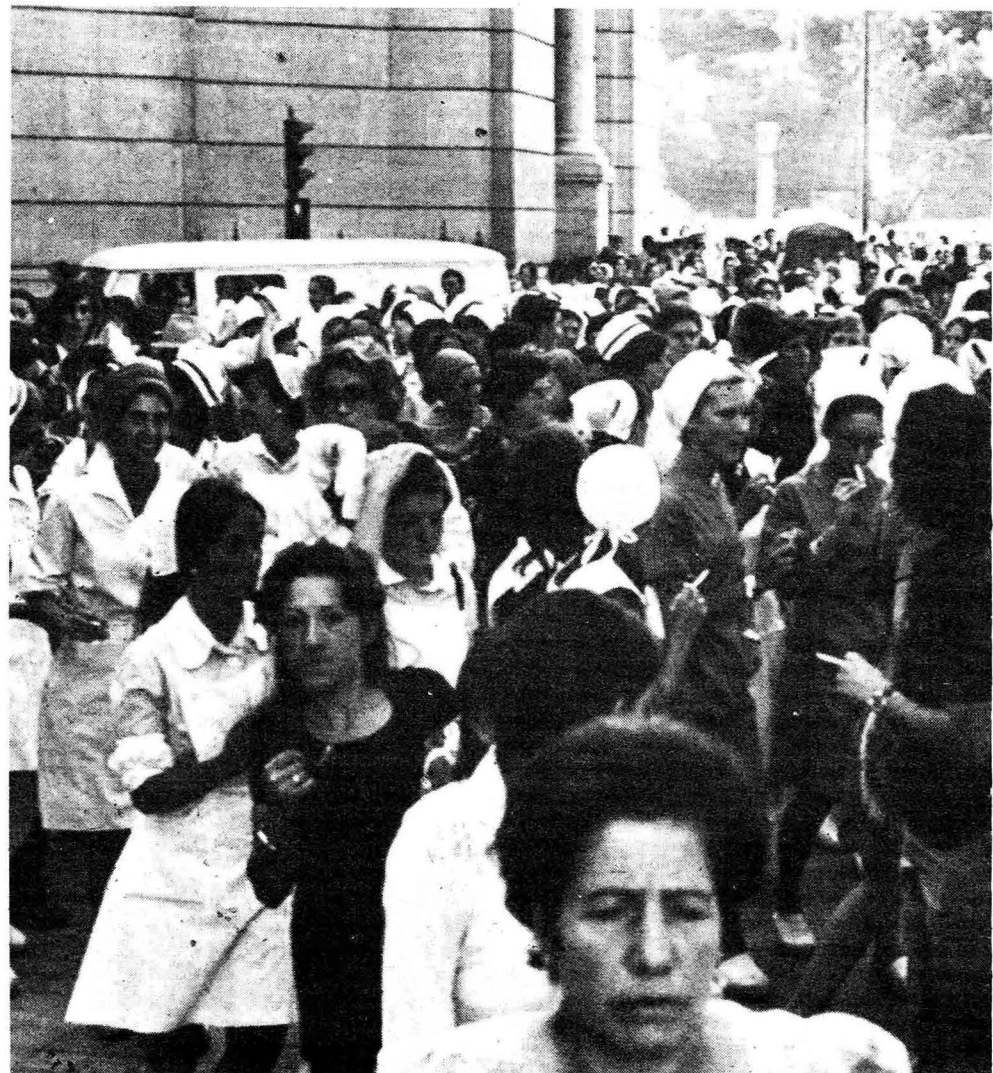
The spectre of a radicalised Socialist Party, its ranks swollen by the adherence of hundreds of thousands of workers and youth, newly awakened to political life, fills the bankers and capitalists with horror.

And yet, what other alternative do they have? At every step, the Suarez government seems more unsound, more divided and more impotent. At the first serious test, this motley crew of political invalids would break in pieces.

P.C.E.

And so the representatives of the banks and monopolies, together with their advisors in Washington and Bonn, have been frantically seeking to exert pressure on the leaders of the workers' parties, in particular the main one, the Socialist Party (PSOE). The smaller "Communist Party" (PCE) paradoxically, presents less of a problem, though undoubtedly an influential sector of the capitalists still regard it with the deepest mistrust.

Its leader, Santiago Carrillo has distinguished himself by his outspoken defence of the Suarez government, ("My only criticism of Adolfo Suarez is that he is not a member of the Communist Party"), the Monarchy ("The King has played the role of the motor force of the democratising process"), wage restraint, and practically any other issue which could convince the ruling class that the CP, in the words of its "programme



Nurses come out on a political demonstration for higher wages. Every section of the working class is now putting

WANT MA

manifesto", "does not present a threat to anybody."

At its recent congress, the first legally held in Spain since the Civil War, the PCE formally abandoned Leninism. At all the public meetings, demonstrations and rallies of the Spanish CP, alongside the red flag flies the red and gold standard of the Monarchy, the same flag which flew above the hoards of Franco in the Civil War.

The declared policy of the Spanish CP at least until recently, has been that of a "government of national concentration" including all the parties represented in Parliament, from the PCE to the ultra-right wing Popular Alliance, which still pays tribute to Franco.

So far, Carrillo has succeeded in foisting upon the CP a policy which is far to the right even of the Italian CP, which was described by the British journal *The Economist* as being to the right of the policies of Roy Jenkins and Hugh Gaitskell! The tradition of discipline and obedience to the leadership, plus the belief that what is really involved is a temporary tactic (a belief which has been sharply rejected by Carrillo in public) enabled the leadership to win all its positions at the Congress.

But this is not the same CP as in the Stalinist 1930s

Carillo, in repudiating the tutelage of Moscow, has, in effect moved closer to dependence on "his" national capitalists. But by destroying the old link with the October Revolution and the heritage of Bolshevism, even in a distorted form, Carillo has opened a Pandora's box of criticism, discussion and argument within the ranks of the CP.

It is impossible to maintain a Stalinist type of party organisation without a Stalinist policy with the blind obedience to the will of the leadership. The old monolithic party has been shattered beyond hope of recovery.

Already there are tendencies of a more or less clearly defined type, in the CP. As time goes on, these internal disagreements will intensify. The CP leaders will no longer be capable of keeping a tight grip on the rank and file.

The party will become the helpless prey to every gust of wind that blows, tossed about by every errant current of the class struggle. The CP of Spain, just as the PSOE, faces a stormy future, particularly if, at the given moment, Carrillo enters the government.

What is true of the CP is a hundred times more true of the PSOE, a party which has enjoyed a meteoric rise in the last eighteen months and is

now the main working class party. The more far-sighted representatives of Capital understand that there can be no possibility of a coalition to carry out an austerity programme without the participation of the SP leaders. But the internal situation of the party fills them with horror and misapprehension.

P.S.O.E.

In the underground, the PSOE, while numerically weaker than the PCE had a policy far to the left of the latter. However, in the last two years, as the party emerged from illegality, the leadership has gradually moved over to a more "moderate" stance, although not in the same degree as the PCE.

Many party members are firmly convinced that the new stance of Felipe Gonzalez has been conditioned in no small way by the pressures of the German Social Democracy, whose leaders have made no secret of the fact that they would like the PSOE to be a more "moderate" party and a "controlled" party, to use the expression of one of the German leaders.

The fusion of the PSOE with a whole number of petty "socialist" grouplets in the last period ("Convergencia Socialista", the Popular Soc-

'leaders seek class harmony, but WORKERS



the pressure on the capitalists Popperfoto

Marxism

ist Party, etc) was clearly intended to push the party to the right and reinforce the bureaucratic apparatus which in no small way had the same control over the rank and file as that of the PCE. The rank and file of the Socialist Party was and remains predominantly radical in its outlook, the vast majority considering itself as Marxist.

The programme adopted in the 27th Congress nearly two years ago, while containing many inconsistencies and ambiguities—which have been analysed and criticised by the Marxist tendency of the PSOE grouped around the journal *Nuevo Claridad*—is a programme far to the left of any other of the parties of the Second International. While publicly, the leaders of the PSOE remain committed to this programme, or at least are unable to criticise it openly, in private many of them consider it to be unfeasible given the present crisis of capitalism.

The right wing of the leadership would undoubtedly like to ditch the programme, or at least modify it radically to win the good graces of the bankers and industrialists. For their part, the capitalists are extremely uneasy at the prospect of the entry of the socialists in the government on the basis of a programme that envisages,

among other things, the legal 40 hour week (most Spanish workers work colossal hours of overtime, weekends, holidays, and in many cases, do two or three jobs in order to make ends meet), retirement at 60, free and obligatory education (at present education in Spain is neither) and the nationalisation of the big banks.

Members Protest

The capitalists are exercising heavy pressure both directly and indirectly, through the good offices of Willy Brandt, to push the leaders of the PSOE towards a more "realistic" position prior to entry into the government. But here they have a very serious problem: the radical mood of the working-class base of the party and, even more, the socialist trade union, the UGT.

When Felipe Gonzalez issued a public statement recently (evidently without consulting with the party's executive) to the effect that the PSOE should drop the work "Marxist" from the party programme at the forthcoming congress this Autumn, the reaction of the rank and file was swift and sharp. The switchboards of the party headquarters in

Madrid and Barcelona were jammed for hours as local party branches, committees and individual members tried to ring up and protest!

With a speed and vehemence which clearly took the leadership completely by surprise, the party membership showed itself to be implacably opposed to the rightward move of the leadership. At the Regional Committee of the PSOE in Madrid (the equivalent in Spanish terms, of the Executive of the Greater London Labour Party), a resolution was passed bluntly stating that Gonzalez's comments were unacceptable.

They stated, among other things, that:

"The Federation [of Madrid] defines itself as Marxist in the same way as Marxism is expressed in our declaration of principles approved in the XXVII Federal Congress of the PSOE, that is to say, not only as a method of analysis but also as an alternative for the revolutionary transformation of society."

Significantly, four of five party branches in Madrid felt so indignant that they actually went to the lengths of demanding disciplinary action against the general secretary for having publicly gone against party policy! While this was obviously not the way to pose the question, it revealed clearly the depth of feeling on the issue and the abyss which opened up in recent months between the increasingly radicalised party base and the rightward moving elements in the leadership.

Gonzalez's declarations provoked a reaction even in the parliamentary group of the PSOE where a group of MP's signed a written protest and Pablo Castellano, the most prominent spokesman of the left wing of the party, wrote an angry denunciation to the press in which he stated that "this was how the German SPD started off" and added that that party had ended up selling the interests of the working class to big business!

The move to eliminate the word Marxism from the party rules provoked a storm at all levels. While there was no publicity given, for obvious reasons, to the discussion in the National Executive, it is clear that there must have been angry exchanges between Gonzalez and the representatives of the left-wing such as Gomez Llorente and Javier Solana.

Within a matter of days, Alfonso Guerra was forced to make a public statement on behalf of the leadership to the effect that **the PSOE would remain a Marxist party** and hoped no-one would start a discussion on such a "foolish" issue. Meanwhile Gonzalez, after an initial feeble attempt at self-defence, retired to the sidelines and declined to make any further interventions, obviously judging discretion to be the better part of valour!

U.G.T.

Nevertheless, Gonzalez's statement indicates that the PSOE leadership wishes to prepare the rank and file for a change in the party's policy when they enter the government. The idea is clearly to dampen down the radical aspirations of the socialist workers and prepare the way for the carrying out of a new austerity policy, much on the lines of the "Social Contract" in Britain.

However, the chances of actually implementing such a policy in Spain are slim. After forty years of fascist barbarism, the workers will look to a Socialist government for the satisfaction of their heightened aspirations. Any attempts on the part of the leadership to back-track will be met with an enormous outburst of opposition, as was indicated by the storm over Gonzalez's statements.

At the Congress of the Socialist trade union, the UGT, there was a palpable mood of radicalisation and impatience on the part of the rank and file. This was indicated by the emergence of a clear opposition of at least 16 federations (each representing a province of Spain) which supported the Marxist line of the federation of Alava.

On the key issue of the Pact of Moncloa, 33 federations voted against any form of acceptance of such a pact—a clear majority against the line

of half-hearted acceptance followed by the leadership.

In his speech to the Congress, the UGT general secretary, Nicolas Redondo made it clear that the UGT, while it would support a Socialist government, was not prepared to give it a blank cheque, a statement which clearly implied a warning to the PSOE leadership that they could not count on the union to accept a policy which would mean a reduction in the members' living standards.

The Spanish Socialist party has had an extremely chequered career over the last period. Both the PSOE and its youth organisation mushroomed into mass organisations during the election campaign a year ago.

The mass of Spanish people believed that these elections would bring about a dramatic change in their situation. But these expectations have been dashed by the realities of Spanish capitalism: twelve months later, people ask themselves "What has changed?" Soaring unemployment and prices, the same surly policemen on the streets, the same fascist officials in the government offices and town-halls.

The endless bickering and torrents of paper declarations emanating from the Cortes (parliament) have produced a general disenchantment with "politicians" reflected in a massive exodus from the political parties (compensated by a great upswing in activity in the unions), which also seriously affected the PSOE and the Young Socialists (JSE). The latter organisation, once a promising youth movement, has been practically wrecked by the insane bureaucratic behaviour of the leadership with its hysterical fear of the Marxist opposition of *Nuevo Claridad*.

Witch Hunt

Its monstrous dictatorial methods have led to the virtual collapse of the PSOE's youth organisation, 70% of whose members have left in disgust over the last six months. Now a section of the party leadership wishes to repeat the process of expulsions in the PSOE as well.

They fear the effect of a coherent Marxist opposition could have in the party when Felipe Gonzalez enters the government. Without a doubt, the initiative for the disgraceful witch-hunt emanates not from Madrid, but from Bonn and even Washington, where the C.I.A. is keeping a close eye on the development of left-wing currents in the Socialist parties in Europe.

New Influx

But the attempt to remove the Marxists from the Socialist organisations is doomed to failure. The mood of the rank and file will not take kindly to a leadership which, on the one hand, wishes to throw the party open to former fascists and self-styled "social democrats" while expelling veteran militants who built the party and the JSE in the underground over years.

The recent by-election victory of the PSOE in Asturias and Alicante is an indication of the way things are moving. In Asturias, the combined vote of the PSOE and PCE was over 55% while in Alicante it was 51%.

There was a very large abstention, which indicates the widespread mood of frustration and disappointment felt by wide layers of the middle-class and more politically inert workers. Significantly, Gonzalez's attempt to win the "middle class vote" by repudiating Marxism was a total failure.

The PSOE vote, contrary to the leadership's expectation, actually fell a few points in both areas, while the CP registered an advance. In spite of its policies, that party is still seen by a section of the workers as a left alternative to the PSOE.

However, in a general election, the socialist vote would increase considerably. There will be a new influx of fresh members: the youth organisation will spring up again.

A new period will open up in which the workers will try, time and again, to test and re-test their organisations, striving to turn them into real revolutionary weapons to change society, with a Marxist programme, policy and leadership.

'Nuevo Claridad'
voice of the
Marxist left
in the
Spanish
labour
movement



SOUTH AFRICA



These are the South African bosses' answers to their black workers' demands

PORTUGAL: FIGHT FASCIST MENACE

About 200 fascists of the "National Commission for the 10th June—Portugal Day" demonstrated on 10th June in Lisbon and Oporto with the protection of the police and the regional governors [members of the Socialist Party].

At the same time, about 1,500 anti-fascists demonstrated in the same square, against the fascists and against the political protection given to them.

There were many Communist Party and Socialist Party activists in the counter-demonstration, although their leaders said: "We, the democrats, must stay at home to see the official celebrations of Portugal Day on the television!"

In the fascist demonstration we saw members of the "Hitler Youth" of the "Nationalist Youth" and of the MIRN [something like the British NF, the fascist movement of the colonialist General Arriaga].

All these fascist organisations have been responsible for attacks on left students [Communist Youth, Socialist Youth, and student members of leftist organisations] in the schools. The fascist slogans were: "Against the Betrayal of the Portuguese Colonies", "Against Communism and Socialism", "For a Nationalist Offensive", etc.

Despite this, the "democratic" police [this is the opinion of the CP and SP leaders!] attacked the anti-fascist demonstrators... In Lisbon, the police attacks resulted in one dead [a student member of the UDP, the main Maoist organisation] and a number of wounded.

These facts show:
★ We can't share the "constitutional illusions" of the CP and SP leaders;
★ We must mobilise a massive answer to the present fascist and right-wing advance;

★ We must fight in the workers' movement for a socialist government with socialist policies.

João Pedro Friere

(Oporto, Portugal)

Secret report exposed

The South African government's "Inter-Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Riots on Mines" was set up in March 1975. A year later, when questioned in Parliament, the Minister of Labour said that he was refusing to table the report because the contents were "in some respects of a sensitive nature."

It is now clear just what was "sensitive" about it.

★ It states that the migrant labour system itself—the foundation of apartheid labour control—is to blame for the "riots".

★ It admits that the mining industry is "very vulnerable" in the face of mass action by the workers.

★ It concludes that black mineworkers are highly conscious politically, and "will co-operate to an increasing

degree to realise their political aspirations."

★ It sets out detailed plans for cracking down on the black mineworkers and for meeting future workers' action with armed force.

From the first page to the last, the report reveals the thoroughly racist and anti-worker attitudes of the Committee of Inquiry. Typical of this, and of the rubbish which fills much of the report, is the Committee's "theory" of the so-called "inclination to become violent" on the part of the "Southern Bantu tribes".

Of more interest to workers is the fact that even this Committee (which speaks of African mineworkers as a "rabble") is forced to admit that the migrant labour system is the root cause of the uprisings on the mines.

One of the main aims of the

government's apartheid policy is to uproot Africans from the urban areas and turn all African workers into migrant labourers. This means that they are forced to wait in the "Bantustans" until granted a "contract" to work temporarily on the mines, the farms or in industry.

The migrant labour system (and the pass laws and compounds which go with it) is the method which the government and the bosses in South Africa use to keep the African workers in virtual slavery—to control their movements, to prevent them from organising, to keep wages down to starvation levels, and to deny them pensions and social welfare.

In past issues of "Workers Unity" we have explained how the migrant labour system is the cornerstone of

the oppression of Africans under apartheid.

Now the government's own Committee of Inquiry has had to recognise that it is this very system which is responsible for the violence in the mines.

"In our view," says the Committee, "it is the system of migratory labour, per se, that is creating the problem." (page 15 of the report).

Does the Committee recommend ending this system of migrant labour? Absolutely not! "There does not appear to be any practical alternative," it says.

No practical alternative for the bosses and their racist regime, that is. No alternative for those whose aim in life is to squeeze as much as possible out of the unpaid labour of the oppressed workers.

For the slave-owners in

time past there certainly seemed to be "no practical alternative" to slavery. So it is today for the capitalists and their political representatives in South Africa. They can offer no alternative to the continuation of their own crimes.

For the workers, the "practical alternative" is to organise and mobilise to smash this system by force. By their militant action the African mineworkers in South Africa have shown that they are moving in that direction.

"Workers' Unity", paper of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, can be obtained from SACTU, 28 Penton Street, London N.1. Order a regular copy now!

Barbaric plan to drown miners' revolt in blood

"It is our opinion," says the Committee of Inquiry, "that the vast majority of workers like discipline [!] and do not approve of strikes and riots..." What are the facts?

In the period of intense unrest between 1973 and 1976 an estimated 60,000 African mineworkers broke off their "contracts" and demanded to leave the mines. Some mines lost more than half their workers; three mines alone lost more than 16,000 workers at one time.

In the report, the Committee does not raise a single word of criticism of the police for brutally shooting down workers. The Committee's concern is to make future armed guards more effective, so as to maintain the order of exploitation and prevent the workers' resistance from disrupting production.

These are some of the measures it proposes:

★ Every mine should have a properly trained security unit equipped with patrol dogs, teargas, batons and "where practicable, an armoured vehicle." Every unit should "also practice regularly with units from surrounding mines and with the S.A. police."

★ The compounds and hostels must have lighting "which can be controlled from the outside" and which cannot be put out of order by the workers.

★ Key buildings, such as administrative offices, etc., should be built on the edges of compounds where they can be given "better protection".

★ Only one day's normal supply of liquor should be kept on the premises.

★ "All records and valuable documents should be kept in strong rooms."

★ The compounds should not be built with materials which can be used to make barricades or weapons.

★ There should be a road going around and through the compound.

★ Water hydrants should be placed in suitable places and "flammable material must not be kept in the compounds or hostels."

★ Electricity should be used instead of coal, because the workers have used coal as ammunition in uprisings.

★ Use should be made of special television equipment for the purpose of identifying "instigators". The "Chamber of Mines is currently inves-



The miserable conditions miners are forced to live under in the compounds

tigating this matter."

★ "There should be a proper foolproof system of communication in case of emergency" [e.g. walkie-talkies and loudspeakers], and "rooms from which administrative management personnel can continue with safety to exercise control and see what is afoot."

★ "The vigilance of the mining authorities must be so keen that incidents or possible causes of riots immediately come to their attention and are, as far as possible, smothered at birth. It shall be the duty of management and the security unit to maintain order until the police arrive."

★ Special cells should be built outside the hostels to hold workers until the arrival of the police. [The report's polite term for this is

"provision for incidental safe custodianship"!]]

★ "There must be regular and effective search parties for dangerous weapons in hostels and compounds." Past searches have not been thorough enough "judging by the number of weapons [many of them large and homemade]." Workers, says the report, "accept" searches. "In the process the mineworker has probably learnt a thing or two, e.g. how to deceive the investigator."

The Committee is very unhappy that the criminal penalties for contract-breaking were abolished in 1974. The report advises that future "contracts" should contain penalty clauses, ensuring that the workers are made to suffer if they leave the mines before their time is up.

It also proposes that "contracts" should be reduced from 18 months to 6 or 9 months.

"Inciters and instigators," says the report, "should, if possible, be summarily discharged after having been criminally charged and, in more serious cases, debarred from obtaining employment ever again on any mine. According to evidence the Chamber of Mines is busily engaged on investigating the possibility of a fully computerised fingerprint system whereby control will possibly be put into practice."

The Committee advises that "a central bureau should be brought into being so as to keep an effective black list."

The life and death of a coalfield



By Mark Chivers

(North Somerset Labour Party)

Next week: the traditions of the Durham miners.

"I remember the miners, when they heard that the Tzarist tyranny had been overthrown, rushing to meet each other with tears streaming down their cheeks, shaking hands and saying: 'At last it has happened.'" —Nye Bevan describing the scene, South Wales, 1917.

Exactly one hundred years earlier, across the Bristol Channel, with a similar revolutionary mood, 3,000 miners at Paulton in the Somerset Coalfield took over the local pits.

The disturbance was started when mineowners carried through a 10% reduction in wages. Such was the strength of the uprising that the Royal Lancers and the North Somerset Yeomanry were called to the scene and coming upon fierce rioting ruthlessly crushed the uprising.

Even earlier, in 1792, 4,000 miners went on a march to complain about the level of their wages and demanded a modest increase. However, with the strength and organisation of their body and the limited nature of their demands they were met.

STRIKES AND THE UNION

These two strikes set the scene for a whole line of industrial disturbances. Food riots were particularly common. Major strikes occurred in 1850, 1874, 1889 and 1893, two of which lasted for over four months.

The miners in the Somerset coalfield were extremely well organised, particularly if compared to their brothers a few miles north in Bristol, who had fifty of themselves arrested in 1738 for "mass highway robbery".

There was an upsurge in union membership after 1864 and the Somersetshire Miners' Association was set up in 1872, building to 100% membership in 1937. Tremendous loyalty to the union and its leadership existed, as this song of the 1889 strike shows:

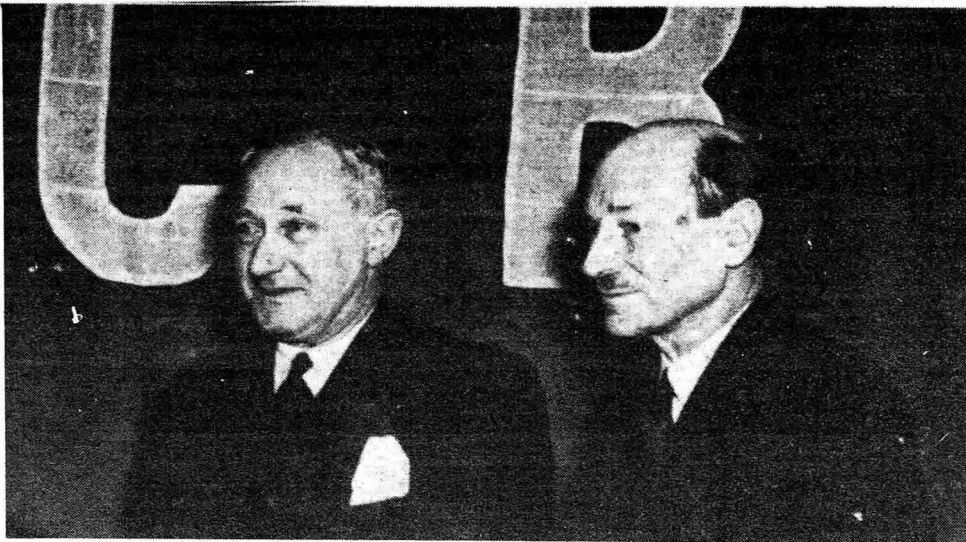
"Onward ye brave miners,
forward as to war,
Battles are not fought without
an honest scar,
Tyrants must be punished,
blacklegs made to run,
The future's bright before us,
if firmly we press on.
Forward be our watchword,
let us all unite,
And bravely fight for White-
house*, for union and for
right."

(*Miners Agent)

For three months all remained peaceful, until on the afternoon of Friday 22nd January the manager's son, Edgar, was overheard by pickets telling two blacklegs to ignore anything the miners said, debated or shouted at them. Classing this as a challenge or some kind of infringement of their picketing rights the strikers rallied forces for a demonstration.

scared he pleaded for leniency to be shown to those who were yet to be tried—five more miners were found guilty and sentenced accordingly. **Clearly, the bosses' courts were just as biased against trade unionists then as they are today.**

In 1926 the miners of North Somerset had no particular grievance and came out totally in solidarity with their brothers. The situation never-



Attlee and Shinwell on the day the mines were nationalised and the NCB was created

The twentieth century started with a particular brand of militancy and solidarity. During the summer of the first year of the century Radstock miners came out on strike. Funds for this strike were sent from as far apart as the Norwich Steel Workers and Cardiff Coal Trimmers.

Probably the most historic battle, particularly as far as local people and ex-miners are concerned, occurred at Dunkerton Pit in 1908-1909. The story is occasionally humorous but contains a number of important lessons.

The owners of the pit had a reputation for getting coal as quickly and inexpensively as possible. At the time of the disturbances, 700 men were raising about 3,000 tons a week.

However, youth are always the most revolutionary and in April 1907, 200 carting boys applied for a wage increase. The company rejected the application. Eighteen months of arguing followed with nothing achieved.

On 29th October, 1908, the carting boys came out on strike, with the whole workforce, apart from those on maintenance and exploration, joining them. Police and mounted police were drafted in to keep things under control.

By 6.15 that evening the demonstrators were reaching Heal's house. With his father still in Radstock, Edgar became slightly worried and fired two revolver shots above the heads of the miners to warn them off.

This angered the demonstrators somewhat, who closed in and started to hurl stones in the direction of Edgar and the house. Edgar by this time was, he admitted, "in great terror," and **obtained his father's shotgun and blasted blindly into the crowd injuring twelve miners.**

The atmosphere at Dunkerton was extremely tense. One blackleg needed an escort of twenty police and even then his house was stoned! Twenty-one strikers were arrested in the two days that followed.

Later at court, twelve miners were tried. Two were discharged, seven received three months' hard labour and three six months' hard labour. Virtually all these were offences against property, the smashing of windows and stoning houses.

Edgar Heal was tried a month later and for injuring twelve miners was given not hard labour, not even the same sentence as the miners, but was actually acquitted! However, still feeling slightly

theless was similar to that nationally.

An uncle of mine has a photograph of police at one of the local pits and their number is such that they almost hide the pit head gear behind them! One miner tried to cross the picket line but it's not too clear exactly what happened, however he never got through.

The depression also hit the area in exactly the same way that it hit other mining areas. The means of surviving it were exactly the same as those portrayed by Jim Allen in his book about miners in the early 'Twenties (recently shown in play form on TV)—'Days of Hope'.

BAD CONDITIONS

Conditions in the North Somerset Coalfield were particularly bad. The figures for those who suffered from the traditional miners' diseases, silicosis and pneumoconiosis, were second only to South Wales. At Dunkerton Colliery a white pony drawing a small cart was almost a permanent sight at the pithead, ready to take injured or dead miners back to their homes.

General accidents were about average. Potentially major disasters occurred all the time. One hundred men

were trapped by a flood of water and seven men and four boys drowned before rescue came.

In St John's Church graveyard, Midsomer Norton, which is a short cut for anyone walking from my estate to the town centre, lies a grave which bears the tale of: "In this grave are deposited the remains of the twelve undermentioned sufferers, all of whom were killed at Wells Way Coal Works on 8th November 1839 by snapping of the rope as they were on the point of descending into the pit. The rope was generally believed to have been maliciously cut."—An accident of a different kind.

OWNERSHIP

These conditions were due particularly to the bad geological structure of the coal and rock, but also because of the general disregard for safety displayed by the pit owners. As at Dunkerton, pit owners cared more for "quick and cheap to obtain coal" than installing safety equipment or procedures.

The ownership of the pits, as early as the beginning of the last century, was to a certain extent "monopolised". Roughly five families owned the whole coalfields (and the majority of its auxiliaries). These owners included the Rees-Moggs (ancestors of the present editor of 'The Times') and one of the richest millionaire estate agents in the area today is a descendant by marriage of one of the other pit owning families.

NATIONALISATION

At the time of nationalisation the pits had been run down to the ground. Maintenance of individual pits had been totally neglected.

Yet, despite all of this the mines of Somerset were said to contain towards 100 million tons of coal and "accessible" reserves of certainly 75 million tons. This would mean an annual production of 750,000 tons every year for the hundred years following 1947.

So, what has happened now? All that remains of the industry are the stories, the slag-heaps that dominate the horizon, the rows of miners' cottages in older parts of the town, disused pit railway lines and the ex-miners—many of them suffering with traces of the dreaded pit diseases pneumoconiosis and silicosis.

The National Coal Board, in one respect, set off on the correct footing, injecting public funds into the pits, £500,000 into one pit alone for a development scheme. Yet the Somerset pits were plagued with the same faults as the whole coal industry—high compensation, inefficient national management, a criminal private supply industry and the lack of any proper national fuel plan.

With the import of gas and oil, the local NCB's answer was closures, cut backs and more closures. Therefore, despite the calculation that there would be an annual production of 750,000 tons per year until 2047, despite production only ever reaching 690,827 tons in a year, despite going as low as 165,846 tons in 1963, despite being lower than 600,000 tons in 12 years out of 20, by the early 1970s, the NCB had closed every single pit in the Somerset Coalfield. But ask any local ex-miner and he'll tell you rightly of the tons of coal left underground.

The Somerset Coalfield was a relatively small one. The economics of the whole affair were obviously much more complex—what with pumping costs, transport and the like. However, the lessons of the Somerset Coalfield can be learnt by every miner and worker today.

Productivity deals mean disregard for safety and a return of the policy of "quick coal". Let's be clear, miners have suffered too long with inadequate conditions, hours and pay. Let's fight now for:

- ★ No productivity deals.
- ★ For £135 a week.
- ★ For a 35-hour week.
- ★ For retirement at 55.

A few years ago we had the story that North Sea gas was going to be the cure of all our ills. That failed and now, at the end of the Somerset Coalfield's history, comes North Sea oil, the black gold. But even now all the serious economists totally dismiss the idea that this will be any real cure to the cancer-ridden capitalist economy.

No pits should close if they contain coal—the whole affair is typical of the waste of capitalism. Let's stop dabbling with fuel and draw up a national fuel policy. Let's not waste any more coal by any more unnecessary closures.

★ Fight all closures except on the grounds of proven exhaustion or safety as determined by the union!

★ For a socialist national fuel policy and a national fuel corporation!

Somerset is the classic example of a bad method of nationalisation, so let's be clear for the future:

★ Compensation should be paid only on the basis of proven need, and on a social security level!

★ Let's nationalise now the supply, distribution and contracting industry!

★ For full workers' control and management!

Finally we must be perfectly clear and honest, the only safe future for fuel supply lies in a fully socialist planned economy under democratic workers' control and management. The local pits have been closed but closing others nationally due to the strength of the union will become increasingly hard.

The coalfield in Somerset has gone but socialism is just on its way.

LETTERS

A visit to the doctor cost me £1.40

Dear Comrade Editor
Congratulations on the excellent articles in the 'Militant' exposing some of the deficiencies in the medical care of working class people caused by the cutbacks in the National Health Service.

Although minor, my own recent experience showed me the way the NHS is certainly not run completely as a service. Last Wednesday, I suffered a bout of hay fever, so on Thursday I had to take the day off work to go to the doctor, whose surgery is in normal working hours.

The doctor gave me a prescription and I asked her for a sick note, to prove to my untrusting employers that I was genuinely ill and not skiving. Although a NHS patient, I was charged 80p for a sick note for the day. I was told that if I was off for less than three days, I was not eligible for the normal, free sick note.

So, together with the prescription charges, the cost of my visit to the doctor was £1.40—and I've still got hay fever.

Also, being short sighted, I have been contemplating

replacing a pair of spectacles, but the cost is prohibitive. Are we really far from a repeat of the days in the 1920s and 1930s when short sighted people went to Woolworths to fish among the piles of glasses, trying different ones on until they found a pair that seemed best for their eyes?

The labour movement, which fought to build the NHS, must defend it and make it into a genuinely free and available health service by abolishing all private fee-paying medical care, by nationalising the parasitic high-profit-making, drug companies, and by injecting the necessary resources into the NHS.

The only way to achieve this is if the programme of the 'Militant' is taken up throughout the labour movement, and we get a Labour government prepared to carry out socialist policies. The alternative is a Tory government that will continue the dismantling of the National Health Service.

Yours fraternally
Eddy Newman
Cheetham Labour Party,
Manchester

Management inefficiency

Dear Comrades
Following the recent articles in 'Militant' proving class bias and hostility of the

so-called "free press" towards the labour movement, I would like to underline one point from personal experience.

I work for a firm of engineering consultants and project managers, who place orders for various goods, that go mainly to the Middle East. Part of my work is progress chasing. The total chaos, irresponsibility and lack of organisation of some management is revealed. It takes me sometimes hours on the phone to find who is responsible for the contract, then of course Mr X thought Mr Y was dealing with it, and the other way round.

They hardly ever read the conditions, copies of which are always sent with the enquiries; then there is the typical answer of "I passed it on to so and so, ring him!" So and so, of course, has never received it, which never surprises me.

I could carry on and bore comrades with all the details, but I am sure it is perfectly clear to all comrades, that if that particular firm had lost that order, it was not through the greed and laziness of its workers, but the total lack of attention and ability of management. It makes me very cross to then read in the papers when one of these firms I have just tried to make sense of on the telephone, announces the closure of one or more of its factories through "lack of orders" or "loss of profitability".

It is abundantly clear that only after the workers, who produce the goods in that particular industry, have taken over the management side of it as well, in conjunction with all other workers doing exactly the same, will we have efficient, caring and reliable management. Then planning for overall need, and not for individual profit can supercede the chaos of capitalism as we now know it.

Yours fraternally
Julianna Grant
Brighton Labour Party

specify those substances which can be used in the baking of bread. We do not think that these provisions would permit the addition of baked bread to the dough mix.

However, only the courts can give an authoritative ruling.

Yours sincerely
F S Anderson
Food Standards Division
Ministry of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

Our daily bread 'FILTH'

Dear Sir
I am forwarding you the enclosed document, which has gone full cycle from Prime Minister and back to local government departments.

Attention has been drawn to contaminated bakery waste being put back into the mixing, to the 'Daily Mirror', the local newspaper 'Telegraph and Argus', my own local Labour Party and the Member of Parliament, Mr Tom Torney, and yet you are buying adulterated products.

I want this practice stopped as I believe it to be a national bread scandal. We have the 1963 Act, and an establishment that is not concerned enough to stop you or me or anybody else eating products that contain filth.

It is no good the employers denying this as support and corroboration can be obtained from members of my union that put this stuff into the mixing. The General Secretary of the Bakers' Union, Bro Sam Maddox, is disgusted at the way our industry is being used.

The closure of the Spillers French Bakeries was an affront to members of our union who had put years of service in the trade and who are still able to bake good bread, alas they are thrown on the scrap heap, so now you have the situation that companies are not only exploiting the worker but the national stomach.

Yours fraternally
A Nolan

...Minister's reply

Extract from Ministry's reply:
Dear Mr Nolan

You ask for the official view on the alleged addition to the dough of an emulsion produced from bread which has already been baked. We have no record of any firm seeking approval from the Department for this.

Had we been approached we would have drawn attention to the provision of the Bread and Flour Regulations 1963 (as amended), which

SHORT CUTS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

Dear Comrades

A psychiatrist at a mental hospital in Cambridge has come up with a bright new idea to facilitate old people getting beds in the hospital.

Apparently beds are empty at the hospital, and yet, because of "staff shortages", are not being used. Staff are not employed because of "cash restraints". In other words the cuts are biting.

So what has this psychiatrist come up with? He suggests that if people want their elderly relatives admitted to a hospital bed, then they should be prepared to do voluntary work in the hospital, helping with the meals and keeping old people occupied. In other words people should pay for their relatives by doing unpaid labour!

Trained staff are on the dole, yet this gentleman proposes that workers who

have already done a day's work should come in and do their work. How convenient for the bosses: they get the work done, without having to pay for it.

Ironically enough, on the same page of the local paper where this idea was reported, another article dealt with the massive profits being made by drug monopolies. The price commission criticised famous 'quick-relief' tablets such as Aspirin and Beechams.

The way forward for the Health Service is to nationalise the drug monopolies, and to use those profits for the benefit of precisely the patients who can't get a bed because of lack of money in the Health Service. But I suppose to a capitalist, his profits come before the lives of mental patients.

Fraternally
Pete Lee
NALGO Health



photo: Derek Spiers (IFL)

ARRESTS IN PERU

Dear Comrades

Under the state of emergency announced in Peru 2,000 people have been arrested including Hugo Blanco, a peasant leader and author of the book 'Land or Death', Eduardo Castillo, trade union leader and Cesar Levano of the Communist Party. Blanco, with eleven others, has been deported to Argentina.

These attacks follow the announcement of 60 per cent rises in petrol, transport and basic foodstuffs by the government. The government declared a state of emergency to prevent a general strike against the increases.

An appeal has been organised against the state of emergency and arrests. At its last meeting Brighouse Labour Party members' branch agreed to add its name to the appeal. If you want to add your name, contact David

Booth, 7 Parkside Close, Hull.

Yours fraternally
David Michael
Vice-chairman, Brighouse Labour Party members' branch

Since these arrests and deportations, several of those hounded by the military regime have been elected to the new Assembly. 'Militant' will publish a full feature article on Peru next week—EDITOR

Take over the 200

Dear Comrades

Where does this quote come from? "Today, fewer than 600 giant privately owned firms dominate the production, investment, finance and trade of the private sector of Britain's economy."

Is it a quote from an early Militant? Wrong. It's included in the Labour Party's 1958 policy statement, 'The Future Labour Offers You'. Since that time, through mergers and take overs the number of major firms has reduced to nearer the 200 mark.

So much for those faint hearts in the labour movement who sneer at Militant for being so specific on the number of monopolies that dominate the economy. In the 'Fifties the whole Party recognised that fact!

Yours fraternally
Bob Edwards
Harlow CLP

BOOTLE LABOUR DEMANDS RESELECTION —support minority report!

Dear Comrades

The following resolution was overwhelmingly carried at a recent meeting of Bootle CLP:

"This CLP deplores the decision of the NEC to refer automatic reselection to the right wing dominated working party. We recognise that this was a tactic to delay, frustrate and confuse the wishes of the Party's rank and file. Furthermore, we believe that the majority report of the working party is totally outside the terms and spirit of Composite 29 remitted to the

NEC last year.

"We therefore give wholehearted support to the report of the minority on the working party which proposes mandatory reselection and the retention of paragraph (b) of the present Clause XIV section 7. Consequently, we instruct the NEC to implement the pledge they gave to Conference 1977, to bring a proposed rule change to be voted on by Conference 1978 based on Composite 29."

Yours fraternally
Steve Higham
Bootle LPYS

Some shining examples to follow

£35,000 NEEDED BY JULY 8th

Record sales at Christies and Sotheby's have been hitting the headlines. Sotheby's commission on the Hirsch collection sale alone was about £4m (more than double that expected).

Candlesticks and paintings from the past are supposed to be a safer investment for the future than manufacturing things people urgently need.

But for the overwhelming majority of workers who have suffered real cuts in their standards of living, the only worthwhile investment for the future is in a paper that fights untringly for an end to class society—poverty and stagnation amid privilege and record profits.

Christies and Sotheby's are after a lot from the few. The Militant is after a little from the many. It relies entirely on the support of its readers. And this week has seen nearly a doubling of the weekly total of donations to the Militant Fighting Fund. Not including the proceeds of the Holiday Raffle, which will be added on next week, the figure is an excellent £1,277.03.

This figure has only been surpassed 3 times this year; when the new 16-page Militant was being launched, when over £2,000 was donated by Labour Party Young Socialists gathered for their National Conference, and when a mad dash was being made to reach the first quarter's target.

We hope next week's chart will show a similar burst of energy with many areas following Hampshire over the half year line by July 8th.

But the drive for cash won't end then. £70,000 is a lot of money to raise in a year and £11,000 in a week! So it looks as if there will be a lot of catching up to do. Don't let up on your efforts, step them up!

THIS WEEK: £1,277.03

Follow some of the examples from this week's contributions. From **Eastern**—collection at joint LPYS meeting in Harlow (to watch LP Broadcast) £7. 'Union expenses' donated £6. J. Jordan (NSMM) £1. From **Hants & IOW**—K. Bryan (Sou. hampton) a 'tenner'. P. Westmore (IOW) £7 and B. Morris (Andover) £1.76. Dorset copper collection £6. Southampton Readers Meeting £11.15. Curry Evening, a healthy £29.40.

From **Humberside**—£12.04 collected at Discussion Group in Scarborough, £8.45 from Hull NUPE shop steward's commission, £2.50 from B. Fleetwood (MATSA), £1 from P. Brown and P. Moate.

South London—Wandsworth G&M worker gave £50 "expenses", Lewisham railway clerk £30 'back pay', 'gas meter rebate' £5 (in 10ps and 5ps!), 94p collected after Deptford LP meeting, six weeks' 50ps from J. Short.

North London—Hendon South GMC £1.88 collected, TU Day School £9, Sponsored Walk £25.50 so far, Uxbridge YS 80p. 'Tenner' from 'Railwayworker' and 'Australian'. Fiver from R. McArthur. Copper collections, 'suntop sales', 'conscience money', lifts, bed and breakfast.

Manchester—Tax rebate of £9 donated, over £43 from another walk, £2.50 from M. Prediville. Books sold, cars repaired, banners made and drinks 'taxed'. **Merseyside**—Folk Night £40. Chester LPYS £5.10, A. Wynne a 'tenner', M. McCullough £5.

E. Midlands—Readers' Meeting, Leicester £15, K. McGrogan £2, 'extras' on sales £5.95 (including Mansfield USDAW members). **W. Midlands**—Individual donations

from Telford, Birmingham and Coventry including £7 from M. Glozier and £5 from J. Taylor (APEX).

Northern—A total of nearly £400 in one week from meetings. Young socialists, Student Labour Clubs, sponsored events, DHSS Office collection, 'printing', 'Taxi', curries, a disco, 'sandwiches', fruit machine and even a spelling competition!! Individual donations included £30 'bonus', £10 from Teeside GMWU member, D. Tricee £2.15, D. Harris £1, Mr. & Mrs. Chapman £5, S. Powell £2, P. Mahoney £1, H. Bell (OAP) £5.

East Scotland—similar efforts £42.48 from Dundee, included 'pontoon cards' £11.30, Discussion Group £3.35, J. Robertson £1, G. Ivers £4.30, 'storage fees', second hand books, beer kitty surplus and 1/2ps. M. Brown of Leith CLP gave £2, A. Mc Grawther £1.50, J. Kinnimouth a whole tenner, H. Armstrong £2. **West Scotland**—£11.50 from Glasgow included £1 from S. Porter and £5 from C. Murray.

S. East—'Fivers' from 6 Brighton readers, Lewes Rd. Ward LP £5, 'Drink for the Fund' £5.20, 'Stag Night' £6.

Thames Valley—Guildford reader £10, Tea £3, 1ps and 1/2ps £4.60 altogether.

Wales—Cardiff supporter gave 100 Saudi Arabian Ryals (£15.22)!! G. Davies (Bedwelly CLP) £5, Readers at a meeting £10.10, at a Chile evening £4. **Yorkshire**—"TV repaired for £2, Sheffield social £7, M. Nicholson £1, '50 club' £8.60, D&B Appleton another whole £10.

During the **NGA Conference**, £9 in extras and the last example, but not the least, one delegate Tony Mulhearn was persuaded to sing by the prospect of winning £7.34 for the Militant in sponsorships!!

Almost anything the above supporters have done you could try and possibly do even

Area	Target 26 wks	Target 52 wks	Portion of target raised	Received
Eastern	2,200	4,400		1,105.22
Hants & IOW	1,050	2,100		1,169.85
Humberside	1,100	2,200		895.39
Lancashire	750	1,500		311.83
London: North	3,850	7,700		2,257.05
London: South	1,900	3,800		1,258.92
Manchester & District	1,450	2,900		618.57
Merseyside & District	2,250	4,500		1,093.27
Midlands East	2,000	4,000		1,336.50
Midlands West	2,700	5,400		2,446.46
Northern	2,450	4,900		1,667.25
Scotland East	1,250	2,500		656.77
Scotland West	1,450	2,900		729.06
South East	1,150	2,300		1,006.86
South West	1,150	2,300		789.63
Thames Valley	850	1,700		609.34
Wales East	1,000	2,000		643.77
Wales West	1,150	2,300		743.95
Yorkshire	2,600	5,200		1,212.54
Others	1,500	3,000		3,238.94
Total	35,000	70,000		23,791.17

Progress towards year's target July 8th target

HOLIDAY RAFFLE WINNERS

1st prize [French holiday]: 0741, C Jones, Tredegar;
2nd prize [frame tent]: 27769, J W Myers, Hanwell;
3rd prize [caravette/British tour]: 15846, A Hopkins, Ipswich.

Pocket camera: 18685, P Robson, Scarborough;
Picnic set: 38278, A MacDonald, London S.W.9;
Sleeping bag: 24623, A Kacelnice, Oxford;
Camp bed: 12702, S Clough, Newcastle;
Deck chair: 7248, I Kearney, Birkenhead;
Battery lantern: 22868, M Elliot, Chester-le-Street;
Football: 13172, T G R Wright, Wakefield.

Result sheets available from 'Militant' offices. Many thanks to all buyers and sellers. Final figure next week on total profit to go to building a bigger and better 'Militant'.

HAPPY HOLIDAY!

better!! Many thanks to all our contributors—mentioned and unmentioned. Put your money in the Militant now, to secure a socialist future!

By Clare Doyle

Firemen thank supporters



photo: Derek Spiers (IFL)

One of the many benefits of being a regular reader and seller of the 'Militant' is that it allows you to keep in touch with the many changes and developments taking place within the labour and trade union movement. A workers' paper should reflect truthfully the victories and defeats, the everyday problems which are common to all, the proud moments and the solidarity of workers. Within the pages of our paper we can share all of these.

Experience

The first ever national firemen's strike gave many of us our first real experience of the struggle to maintain and improve wages and working conditions. On the Isle of Wight we learned at first

Cathy Wilson and Tony Beere (IOW Labour Party)

hand just what was entailed for workers and their families. The dispute is over but the real issues still remain. Negotiations between the FBU and the local authority employers continue and there is to be a recall conference of the FBU on August 1st.

Earlier this month the FBU (Newport IW) invited those in the Labour Party and LPYS who had helped during the strike, to come, as their guests, for a night out. Half-way through the evening the branch secretary, Reg Ormonde, gave a short speech and announced that there would be a number of presentations made. I received an enormous bouquet and an attaché case which bears a

small plaque inscribed: "With Thanks. FBU Newport."

The CLP Trade Union Liaison Officer, Tony Beere, received a tankard bearing the same message. Somehow we gave a speech of thanks, but there are no words that could express how proud we all felt.

Those gifts were accepted on behalf of every comrade who had worked throughout for the success of the firemen's strike.

The solidarity and resolve is stronger than ever, they went into the strike united and ended it united, let no-one doubt the capacity of the FBU rank and file to fight on.

A copy of the 'Militant' is to be delivered to the station each week, and we rounded off the night by selling £3.80 worth of 'Militant' raffle tickets.

ADS

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'.

ENFIELD Demonstration
Black and white unite!
Stop the racist attacks!
Saturday 15th July
Assemble 11.00 am,
Knights Lane (by Edmonton Town Hall), N.9.
Rally—2.00 pm, Chase Green, Enfield Town

AFTER THE DEMO IN ENFIELD
come along to a **GRAND SUMMER PARTY** to celebrate Mike Cleverley's 21st(?) birthday
Dance to our disco!
Join in the singing of labour movement songs!
★ Real ale available ★
Only 50p (30p for unemployed)
Cold buffet provided
From 8 pm, Saturday 15th July
14 Howard Road, E.17.

WORLD BOOKS
Book service for the Labour Movement
New Publications.

Grant—Menace of fascism. 40p
Taafe—Cuba: analysis of the revolution 10p
Silverman—Coming revolution in India 10p
Please add 5p postage for each pamphlet.

RHONDDA Labour Party Young Socialists Public Meeting. Speaker: Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer). Lecture Theatre, Clwynypia College of Further Education, Llwynypia, Rhondda, on Friday 7th July, 1978, 7.30 pm.

PORTSMOUTH DOCKS

Action Spreads

Following two weeks of industrial action, a mass meeting was held at Portsmouth Dockyard on 20th June during which the men were informed by their unions of the pay offer: the basic rate for a craftsman to be increased from £43 to £51 per week, part of the increase to be the consolidation of the Phase 2 pay award into the basic rate.

The official side would not consider consolidation of the £6 Phase 1 award, and

completely ignored our points in the claim which included: reduction of working hours per week from 40 to 37; increased paid leave from 3 to four weeks; paid leave at time and a third (to allow for loss of overtime and productivity bonus); sick pay to be based on average earnings instead of basic pay.

The reaction to this offer was an immediate one day protest strike and a continuation of the 'work to rule'. This action was taken by all

but a few government establishments in the Portsmouth area.

Solidarity

The following day, another mass meeting was called to consider a proposal from the Port Admiral, that normal working be resumed. With the reports of industrial action taking place in the other dockyards, solidarity

being the backbone of our action, the proposal was rejected almost unanimously, by about 4,000 to 1.

Next was the turn of the DOE PSA workers to take industrial action, as their wages are tied to those of dockyard workers. On 26th June they too held a one day protest strike.

Coaches are now being organised for another lobby of the Joint Co-ordinating Committee on Monday 3rd July. A far larger turn-out is expected

at this lobby and hopefully delegations from other Dockyards will be present.

We're not asking for a lot, just a decent wage, and time to enjoy it. But we must now impress upon the JCC that our ultimate aim is for pay parity with other ship-yard workers in the now nationalised ship-building industry.

By a Portsmouth Dockyard worker

The Lynemouth Alcan Aluminium smelter was put forward in the past as the saviour of the Ashington area, after a demoralising period of pit closures and high unemployment.

In the past few years it has had a seemingly trouble-free record, and the present strike by over 100 fitters and electricians has been greeted by silence in the local press.

One of the shop stewards reports on the background to the dispute:

"The Alcan dispute is the result of years of frustration suffered by skilled craftsmen working under a multi-skilled concept.

In July 1977 this came to the surface, and management promised that in 1978 we would be recognised for the important part we play in the efficient running of the plant. After weeks of complex negotiations it became apparent that the promises were not materialising and so the 1978 negotiations came to a halt.

The craft unions put forward a proposal of how the 10% increase should be distributed. The company have deemed that our formula for dispersal breaches the pay code. They took it upon themselves to write to the Department of Employment to present their case. An obvious answer was received in their favour.

Our formula for dispersing the 10% is similar to that used by the company to obtain it. It is on this technicality that the company say we are wrong. After being locked out for ten days it is apparent that other union members on site, including non-craft unions are carrying out our duties."

The men are determined to win and have the official backing of the AUEW and the EETPU. This dispute shows the lie of the claim that managements across the country want to pay more, than the government limits but do not dare.

Most workers have been forced to settle for the 10%, as these workers want to, but the explosion of anger shows the spirit that any further extension of pay restraint will be fought with.

Messages of support, especially from other Alcan plants, should be sent to 17, The Gables, Widdrington.

By Alan McGuckin (T&GWU) and Frank McGuckin (AUEW-TASS)

HEPWORTH IRON: POLICE ASSIST SCABS

The Hepworth Iron company have provoked an unofficial strike at their Penniston plant, South Yorkshire.

On the picket line, convenor Barry Almond, told 'Militant' that the dispute arose after T&GWU members had been sacked for attending a meeting to formulate a wage claim.

For years such meetings have been accepted 'custom and practice'. Out of the 800 T&GWU members, which represents all the manual workforce, only 100 have not come out. The management's action is seen as a clearly designed attack on the union.

The factory perimeter is 4 miles, mainly unfenced: the scabs are able to get into the factory over fields and moors. The workers who do go through the main gate, do so with police protection.

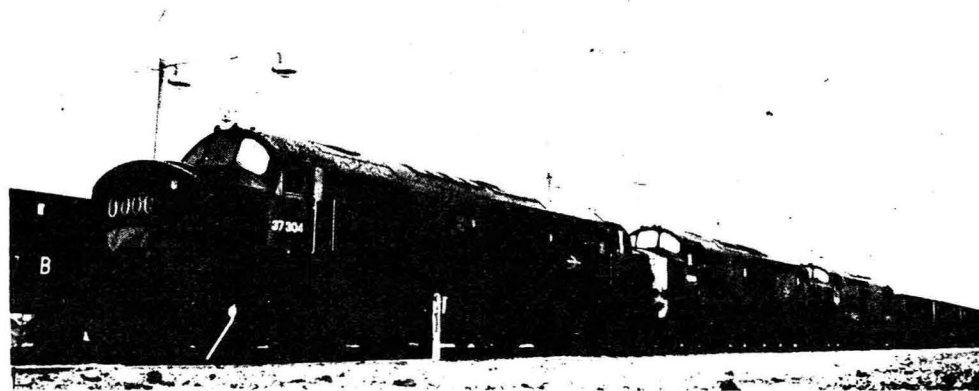
"They always know when to turn up to escort the convoys

of lorries off the site, and if that's not collaboration between management and police, I don't know what is", said Barry Almond. "I always respected the police, but now I've no time for them, their role is so blatant.

Support has come from the Hepworth Group plants in the North and Midlands, who make the same product, vitreous clay pipes. But other sections, producing other products, have not been approached for support.

The picket line is determined not to let management take away the hard-won right to assemble. All messages of support and donations should be sent to Terry Wright, Martins Nest Farm, Lower Common, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire.

Stuart Lowe and Steve Rollin (Barnsley Labour Party) spoke to pickets



ASLEF demand increased manning

By
Martin Elvin
(Stratford ASLEF)

The dispute between the locomen, members of ASLE&F, and British Rail management over the manning of the new Class 56 diesel locos, which almost led to a three-day strike recently, has been brewing for a long time.

The class of locos in dispute are the most powerful diesel locos to be built for BR and are designed to handle the heaviest freight trains.

The ASLE&F Executive Committee made it very clear over a year ago, that given the power of these locos and the increased loads they are capable of handling, this represents a further increase in productivity, and the union therefore put forward a six-point programme of demands aimed at gaining recompense for the increased productivity.

This programme included double-manning by two loco-

men at all times, plus protection of all Drivers' Assistants' jobs, and an increased rate of pay for all footplate staff.

In the meantime, we declared our intention to work these locos double-manned at all times, including when working diagrams normally single-manned under present manning agreements.

Suspended

But BR management rejected our just claims and in a provocative move—despite warnings of the consequences—suspended men at Shirebrook and other depots in the East Midlands when they stuck by union policy and refused to work other than double-manned.

Immediately all Class 56 locos were blacked and at

Shirebrook the men were for striking before any national call went out.

The EC only called off the strike after the management had capitulated and agreed to reinstate all suspended men, without any loss of pay and agreed to double-manning pending further negotiations.

But this is not the last that will be heard about this issue, which is in reality part of a far wider problem going back several years.

Increasing technology, far higher productivity, trains running at up to 125 mph (and faster still is planned) plus trains of 3,000 tons (and heavier still are planned), coupled with falling real wages and living standards due to wage restraint, are the recipe for an explosion in the near future, not just by ASLE&F members, but in fact all railway workers.

GEC COVENTRY Sacking threat

The seventeen computer operators on strike for 19 weeks in an official dispute at GEC Telecommunications Ltd., Coventry, have been warned by the company that unless they return to work by Monday 3rd July they will be deemed to have repudiated their contracts and their employment will be terminated.

At the same time, warnings were sent by post to 100 contract engineers also in

official dispute at the Stoke factory that they in effect would be locked out unless they returned to normal working, including the return of seven strikers out since the 15th May.

Growing anger

Over the past six months serious industrial clashes have occurred at the Stoke factory, Coventry. Millwrights, electricians, test engineers, storekeepers, production workers, fitters, draughtsmen, labour-

ers, as well as computer operators and contract engineers have all been involved. Low pay, hardship, and a sense of injustice has been the motivation.

The spontaneity of these disputes indicates how deeply rooted the discontent is at this factory.

As a result of a Central Arbitration Committee award 5,000 shop floor workers at GEC Telecommunications

By Alan Johnson

(ASTMS GEC Stoke, Coventry)

Coventry have recently obtained a 3% rise of between £1.50—2.50 per week under the Fair Wages Resolution.

With mock dismay the Company admit that they do lose some cases and they would hasten to correct their alignment with fair wages even if it meant extraordinary good housekeeping to stave off total bankruptcy.

POEU ANGER GROWS

Post Office engineers throughout Britain are banning overtime in support of their union's claim for a 35-hour week, and in solidarity with Scottish members who have been sent home by management for their part in the union's campaign.

14 POEU members in Dundee are among those who have been victimised. Norrie Ross, the Dundee Branch Secretary, described the events leading up to this.

Last year, according to 'The Guardian', the true profit of the telecommunications side of the Post Office was £700 million, yet there has been no tariff increase for telephones since October 1975. This has been achieved by the workers increasing their productivity at double the average rate, despite the fact that many of them earn £10 less than the average wage.

Now, new advances in technology open the door to even greater increases in productivity.

"This will have a revolutionary effect on employment; we should be thinking of 25 or even 20 hour weeks". For the moment however, the union is concentrating first on the 35-hour week, and then on the 35-hour 4 day week.

The present action began on 1st October when, following the 1977 National Conference, a ban was placed on co-operating with any new productivity deals, management studies and field trials. Then on 1st November, a ban

was put on the installation of any new equipment.

At a Special Conference in January, branches were asked to suggest local action. Dundee agreed to black the Open Golf Championship at St Andrews, and this was immediately backed by the Executive.

Eleven workers were asked by management if they were prepared to work on the site or on work connected with it. When they replied that their trade union was instructing them not to, they were sent home without pay. The same has happened to another three.

Immediately there was a mass walk out and half-day stoppage in the Dundee and Perth exchanges, and a total overtime ban was adopted a week in advance of the national ban. Only cases involving life and death will be excepted. Meanwhile collections are being held to sustain the 14 who have been paid off.

Norrie Ross is convinced that his branch was right to take the action it has. "Someone has to take a stand and defeat the establishment".

He linked the fight with the threat of the Tories to cream off the profitable sections of the Post Office. There is no doubt that this is now a crucially important issue for the entire trade union movement.

By Pat Craven

(Dundee Labour Party)

The Annual Conference of the NUR gives delegates an important opportunity to review the events of the past year and prepare for the stormy period ahead.

Sidney Weighell has been widely reported as being a firm supporter of continued wage restraint. However, the resolutions before conference show that the grassroots are in no mood to accept a further year of wage restraint.

The questions of wage restraint, shorter working week, minimum earnings and productivity deals will occupy most of conference time and prove to be a very uncomfortable time for Weighell and the NEC. Southampton branch state "the sacrifices made by millions who have nothing to sell except their labour power have resulted in record profits being made by companies". It goes on to urge the NEC "to reject any further measures of wage restraint and to revert to free collective bargaining". Ayr branch goes further by "demanding a substantial increase in wages and salaries... at the earliest possible date". Battersea demand a minimum wage of £65. These resolutions should be passed to form the basis of a fighting campaign on wages.

On the 35 hour week, an important question for all workers, a number of branches demand that the NEC

NUR - no more wage restraint



Examining pay packets at Manchester Victoria—railway workers are in no mood to accept another year of wage restraint. photo: John Sturrock (Report)

negotiate with the BRB for implementation. Bletchley branch "view with alarm the delay in achieving the 35 hour

week and instruct the NEC to pursue NUR policy and to use every means to achieve our aim".

On productivity deals, delegates must ensure that the appeal against the NEC decision is upheld and back

By Tom Doyle, NUR No 1 (Paddington) branch.

the resolution from Battersea which "recognising that all productivity deals lead to job losses and increased unemployment" demands that "this AGM declares total opposition to all productivity deals".

But it is not enough to pass resolutions. Conference must ensure that the NEC act. Over the past few years, despite good resolutions being passed and pious promises of action, successive NECs have failed to deliver the goods. Delegates should therefore support Liverpool 5's resolution, which instructs the NEC to ensure that "all future wage claims must be submitted to the membership".

Democracy

The agenda includes important resolutions on Union democracy and better representation. Six branches call on the NEC to ensure that all LDC reps are directly responsible to the union.

The recent publication of the Warwick report gives delegates an excellent opportunity to ensure that the whole structure of the Union is brought up to date and that the recommendations of the report are implemented. It

was commissioned as the result of a resolution passed at the 1976 AGM.

The Industrial Relations department at Warwick University found that the NUR "is singularly lacking in intermediary bodies between branch and NEC". An observation that thousands of activists know only too well.

The report goes on to point out that the NEC structure should be altered to make it more representative, and that the different National Grades Conferences, which are "relatively weak bodies with no constitutional support or powers" should be incorporated in the Rule Book "with their function and composition clearly defined".

This year's conference promises to be an important landmark in the history of the union. It gives the delegates an important opportunity to ensure that the mood of the membership is clearly imprinted on the minds of the leadership.

The message from the conference should be strong and clear: no more wage restraint; no more redundancies or productivity deals; for a fighting union for Railmen.

Steelworkers in fighting mood

Fainthearts who believe that the unions will never change were confounded by the ISTC conference in Scarborough last week.

This was only the third Annual Delegate Conference the union has held, yet in those two years the mood of steelworkers, as shown by the delegates, has sharply altered. Two themes in particular were clear: anger and frustration over the unending closures; and the need to turn ISTC into a fighting union with the road to change opened up by reform of the union's structure.

Bilston threat

The call for a national strike, against the lack of consultation over the run down and closure of Bilston was the culmination of a week when the delegates grew angrier and angrier. On the first day of conference an emergency resolution on Bilston was passed opposing the switch of any orders from there to other plants. When the news came through that BSC planned to begin the run down from August 6th there was determination to accept the challenge.

Villiers, the ex-army officer and former Tory councillor who heads BSC, actually spoke at the Conference and promised there would be consultation over Bilston. When he finished, delegates, furious with his pleas to 'focus on the product', (even Bill Sirs rebuked him for that, pointing out there were also

Report by Alan Hartley in Scarborough

people in the industry) queued up to attack. He had such a battering that in the end he was reduced to pleading for a right of reply!

The papers made much of ISTC joining the minority of unions which say they will support Phase 4. They did not point out that whereas the majority last year on the same issue was more than 5-1, this year it was less than 2-1.

The pace of change is increasing in ISTC—nowhere more clearly than in delegates' attitude towards the union's constitution. They voted, with only a handful against, to simplify the system of electing the EC, thereby abolishing the old divisive method of sectional representation. This was opposed on behalf of the EC by Feather, the National Staff Officer, in a rambling contribution which probably increased the majority for the motion. This contribution was described in his summing up, by the mover, Bro. Hansen of Lackenby 5 (to cheers), as "the biggest load of claptrap I have ever heard". Just to show there was no mistake, delegates went on to carry, with a similar vote, the demand for manifestos to be issued by all candidates standing for the EC.

They were concentrating on the EC because it has all powers under the Rule Book. Technically, all policy is

decided by the EC and the conference is only advisory. In reality, the members have shown that they insist on change and will have no opposition. When another motion came up to extend the conference itself onto a more representative basis, they swept aside the pathetic argument that it had no constitutional right to debate it, and carried it with one vote against.

So emphatic were these votes that even now the EC scarcely dares ignore them, but everyone will be watching for any sign of backsliding when the time comes to propose amendments to the Rules. There may be one or two King Canutes left, but it was noticeable that none of them were capable of putting up a defence of the status quo.

Leadership

Conference carried a number of hardy annuals like single status and various resolutions on work-sharing, but it showed clear understanding that the vital question first is to change the leadership: once that is done, passing resolutions will be preliminary to action.

A glimpse of the future was seen in the speeches of Bro. Hamilton of Cambuslang and Bro. Harrison of Shotton who both raised the need for socialist ideas to take the union forward, and the sales of 'Militant' and the 'Militant' steel pamphlet.

NGA - backs amalgamation

"One great industrial union for the printing industry must be our aim", said Tony Mulhearn from Liverpool moving support for the amalgamation proposals at the National Graphical Association's Biennial Delegate Meeting.

The step toward amalgamation with SLADE and the Wallpaper Workers was supported unanimously by the Conference. The debate clearly showed the prospects facing print workers in the coming years. John Jackson, General Secretary of SLADE, outlined the threat to print workers' jobs with the introduction of new technology. He summed up the position as being one of "amalgamation or chaos".

The debate on pay showed the determination of the membership to defend living standards. Tony Kitchener [Oxon and Berks] moving a resolution on pay, showed how 4 years of wage restraint had led to a reduction in living standards and cuts in public spending. Yet despite a huge rise in profits, investment had not increased. Tony Mulhearn, speaking in support, said "This Conference is charged with the responsibility of raising the living standards of the membership".

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The resolution calling for an end to wage restraint was carried against the advice of the National Council. However an amendment was passed from Manchester which may give them room to manoeuvre at the TUC.

The other major pay debate was on low pay. General Secretary Joe Wade explained how the low pay campaign had benefited 2,400 members covering 59 branches, 349 firms and had resulted in £¾ million increase in wages. The campaign, for a basic rate of £55, was called off under pressure from the TUC and Department of Industry. Barry Denny from London called for action on low pay even if it meant using strike pay. He summed it up by saying he "would rather have a poor union with rich members, than a rich union with poor members".

A resolution supporting a basic of £55 was passed. Unfortunately an emergency resolution from Liverpool

calling for the campaign to be re-opened was defeated, although as mover Ray Williams [Liverpool] pointed out, 12,000 members were still left on low pay.

On apprenticeships the NC are committed to fight for a full quota. This year it is nearly 2,000 short of the target of 3,000. A resolution was passed confirming previous Conference policy of an overtime limit of 16 hours. Finally a resolution was passed calling for re-selection of MPs as expressed in the 60-odd resolutions at last year's Labour Party Conference.

Democracy in the union will become a key issue with the impending amalgamation. A major blow was struck when the union's Financial Secretary, John Jones was called on to stand for election rather than see him appointed as the NC had wished, in clear contravention of rules.

The National Council is now committed to campaign on several key issues. During the next two years NGA members will undoubtedly be putting on pressure for Conference decisions to be implemented.

Report by
Richard Knights

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NORTHERN ANTI-NAZI CARNIVAL

Thousands of young workers, trade unionists, unemployed and school students are expected at the Northern Carnival Against the Nazis. Sponsored by the North West TUC, the carnival will start with a rally at 12 am on Saturday, 15th July, assembling on Bury New Road, outside Strangeways Prison, Manchester, and then march to Alexandra Park.

Thousands of young workers will be showing their opposition to the National Front and its racist policies. Labour Party Young Socialists in the North West and surrounding areas such as Yorkshire, East and West Midlands and the Northern Region should be converging on Manchester for the carnival.

Contact your local Trades Councils to find out if coaches have been organised and if the LPYS can get places on them. Alternatively, organise your own coaches to bring both young and older workers to the carnival. And don't forget to bring your banners.



Horrified at the second racialist murder within two months in London's East End, 250 local workers and residents marched from the spot where Ashique Ali was killed to Hackney police station, to protest at racialist attacks. In Brick Lane, police escort young thugs strutting provocatively through the streets of this immigrant area, to protect them from the anger of the local Bengali youth.

Confrontations between the labour movement and National Front paper sellers are a weekly occurrence. Granada TV's 'World in Action' programme [Monday 3rd July] provided timely and incontrovertible evidence of the Nazi aims and methods of the NF

photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

WORKERS' UNITY TO STOP THE FASCISTS

MOSS SIDE BY-ELECTION:

Labour must fight on socialist policies

Margaret Manning

(Merseyside Labour Party Youth Officer)

The Moss Side by-election on the 13th of July is crucial for Labour—with a majority of only 4,111 in October 1974.

It is, however, possible to ensure a Labour victory if a vigorous, socialist campaign is waged.

The Moss Side, Hulme and Lloyd Street wards have all the worst problems of an inner-city area. Unemployment is at least 18% and higher for sections such as school leavers and young blacks.

The other major problem faced by the working class people of Moss Side is housing. The crescents of Hulme and Moss Side, envisaged as "terraces in the sky" are now universally recognised as disasters—monuments to the corner-cutting policies of the private builders and planning without involving residents and building workers.

Local tenants and Labour Party members are picketing the ceremony at Manchester University to give an Honorary Degree to Walmsley, the architect who designed the "Hulme Five" crescents. Families are now being moved out of these deck access flats, such as the intolerable conditions they have to endure, but there are just not enough houses for all in need.

The crippling interest charges which the council has to pay on loans and the cutback on its housing grant from the government has

meant that there isn't enough cash to build the houses needed or to lend council mortgages to those who cannot get one from building societies. What better argument for the Labour government to nationalise under workers' control not only the land and the building industry to build homes, but also take over the big banks, to write off local authority debts and provide interest free loans to pay for building?

For many years Moss Side has had a large West Indian and Asian population but there have been few violent racialist incidents. However, resentment is building up, especially among black youth, against the treatment they receive, especially in the lack of jobs and harassment by police.

The PNP Youth is beginning to be established here and hopes to channel this feeling into fighting racialism and unemployment politically, posing the need for a socialist planned society to give everyone a fair deal.

The National Front have applied for six meetings this weekend. So far the council has refused to allow the use of schools for this. NALGO and NUPE members are refusing to open up premises for their use.

The Constituency Labour Party has in the past campaigned against racialism and is determined to counteract any NF intervention in the area. If the NF do appear, all the indications are that local black youth won't stand idly by—they realise the threat which the NF pose.

Already the election campaign has drawn in Labour Party and Labour Party

Young Socialist members from all over Manchester. By actively campaigning for the need not only to vote Labour but to join in the fight for socialist policies, the LPYS has already recruited many new members to the party.

Over this weekend (8th and 9th July) many more from all over the North West are expected to help with the mass activity of canvassing, visiting shopping centres etc., meeting at 11 am on both days at Hulme Labour Club, Bonsall Street.

Only by an enthusiastic campaign, based on socialist policies to combat bad housing, unemployment and racialism can the Labour Party hope to have a resounding victory.

SAVE THE NHS

of its gross national product on health care than any other advanced country, should be slipping down the world health tables.

Infant mortality, a key index of the country's health, has been reduced in England and Wales from 45 per 1,000 in 1948 to 16 per 1,000 in 1975. But in Holland it is down to 11/1,000, and in Norway and Finland to only 10/1,000.

The Health Service is dangerously deteriorating when millions of workers and their families need it more than ever before. The NHS almost completely eradicated polio and TB, which accounted for 23,000 deaths in 1948. But with the return of mass unemployment and poverty these killer diseases are now making a dangerous re-appearance.

The slow strangulation of the NHS must be stopped

Continued from page 1

now. The crisis at Bethnal Green is but one symptom of policies which are slowly but surely asphyxiating the whole health service.

By carrying through the cuts demanded by the IMF, the City of London, Tory backwoodsmen and big business, the Labour government is tragically squandering one of its most popular past reforms.

Stop the cuts

The labour movement must urgently mobilise its support for health workers fighting cuts and closures. We must fight for the implementation

of socialist economic policies which would allow the expansion and improvement of the NHS.

- ★ Stop all NHS cuts and closures.
- ★ Stop all redundancies.
- ★ Full support by all trade unions to NHS unions fighting against cuts and sackings.
- ★ Begin a massive expansion of free health facilities.
- ★ Abolish all prescription and other health charges.
- ★ Establish a democratic NHS under the control of the health service unions and the labour movement.
- ★ Fight for socialist economic policies to guarantee the extra resources urgently needed by the NHS.

STEEL THREAT

[Continued from page 1]

There is no excuse for complacency, however. Bill Sirs has promised tougher negotiations from now on. We shall see. It was the feeling in the plants that if BSC wanted a closure they were bound to get it in the end, that opened up the gate for men to be lured with severance pay. That period must now end with the taste of cold steel, for BSC clearly "do not like it up 'em"!

The haemorrhage can be staunch! Tony Benn two weeks ago offered the NUM a veto over pit closures. This was a recognition of the union's bargaining power, shown twice in the devastating strikes of 1972 and 1974. The steelworkers—potentially—are just as strong as the miners. By surrendering, BSC recognised this.

BSC, we may be sure, will return for the attack. They are licking their wounds now, but in six months or so they will probably try again. Were they to succeed, Corby and Shotton steelworks would surely follow. Steelworkers understand this. They know that the axeman will carry on until it is their turn.

If last week's events can set a pattern, not another job need fall through closure. If that happens, not only the ISTC but the whole labour movement will have turned the corner in the fight against unemployment.

By Andy Harrison

(ISTC No 7 Division)

Militant

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