

NO TO 5%

Labour must eradicate low pay with a £70 minimum wage; the trade unions must restore the cuts in living standards with immediate wage rises.

The government's announcement that wage rises will be limited to 5% for the next year has come as a cruel blow to the hopes of 4 million workers earning poverty wages and the millions more whose living standards have suffered an unprecedented slump over the last three years.

By Brent Kennedy

The plight of the majority of the poor—those who do have full time jobs but are paid scandalously low wages—has severely worsened under the Social Contract. Wage restraint was originally sold to the trade unions on the

promise that the low paid would benefit.

But what has been the result? In the first year of wage restraint alone the number of workers earning less than the supplementary benefits level leapt from 130,000 to 210,000. By last year no

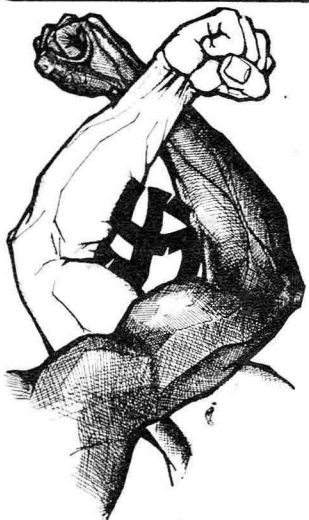
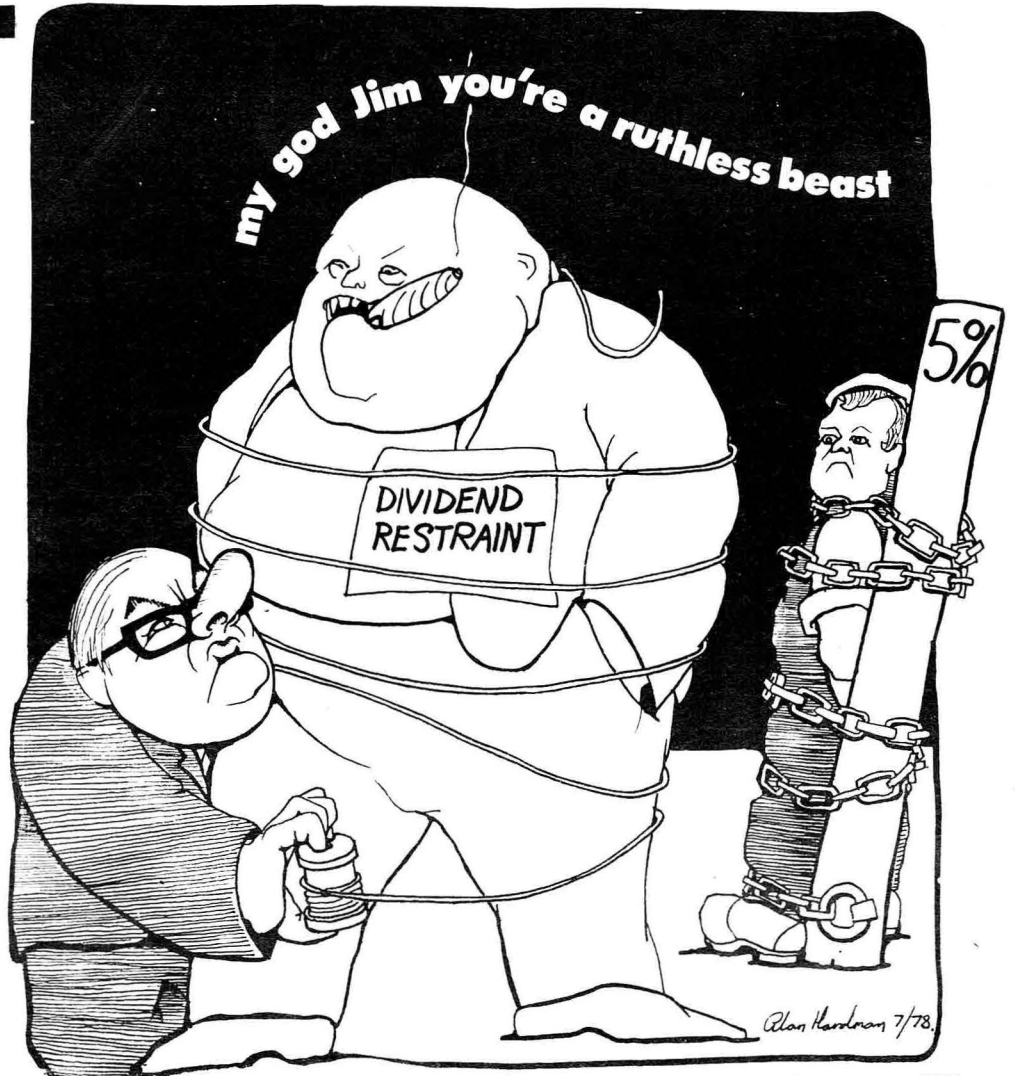
less than 3.8 million workers were earning less than £50 a week—the TUC target minimum wage figure (two-thirds of the average wage)—and if you exclude overtime earnings this included four and a half million people.

So who benefits from restrictions on wages? Obviously it's the big business employers who rake in the surplus cash in bumper profits.

But for millions of workers who produce the wealth of this country there was no popping of

champagne bottles as they faced the grim prospect of yet another year of sacrifices. Yes, sacrifice. A 5% wage rise, with prices rising faster, means another cut

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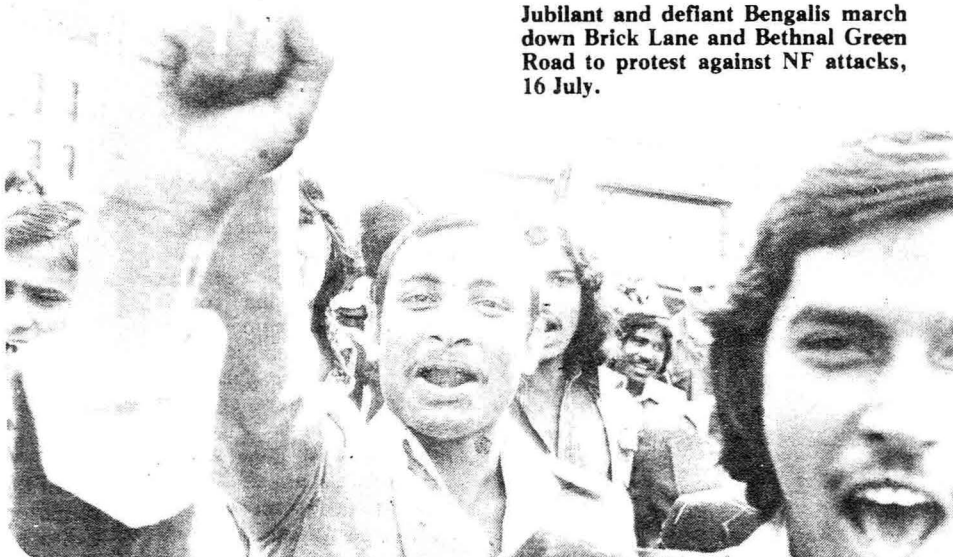


WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS MUST CRUSH FASCISTS

POLICE HARASS TOTTENHAM LABOUR PARTY MEMBERS

In a confrontation which revealed the blatant bias of the police, four members of Tottenham Labour Party were arrested last Saturday while demonstrating against a large contingent of National Front supporters shouting provocative, racist slogans in the High Road.

During the National Front demonstration in Tottenham High Road on Saturday 22nd July, a large contingent of NF supporters were trying to sell copies of their paper, shouting racist



Jubilant and defiant Bengalis march down Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road to protest against NF attacks, 16 July.

photo: Julian McKittrick

slogans and waving Union Jacks to draw attention to their activity. A number of Labour Party members

and others opposed to racialism gathered in front of the police cordon which surrounded the NF. Their

ON OTHER PAGES

Brick Lane/3/If you're Young and Black/5/Bengali Youth organise/4/

numbers were very small in comparison to the numbers of NF present.

They distributed leaflets opposing fascism to the shoppers and other passers-by.

The police decided to move all opponents of the NF to the other side of the road, to avoid any confrontation. The opponents of the Front co-operated peacefully and continued to distribute their leaflets from the opposite pavement.

Both groups started to shout slogans at each other. The police then suddenly and without prior warning moved across the road towards the people leafletting against the NF and made a

[Continued on back page]

HERBIE BELL

Six decades of class struggle

Herbie Bell of Wallsend-on-Tyne died on the morning of July 20th in his 83rd year. After more than 60 years of unstinting and self-sacrificing work, including some of the stormiest years in British working class history, Herbie will be long remembered by his comrades in the labour movement.

Brought up in a Northumberland village, Herbie started his life of agitating, educating and organising among workers soon after he volunteered to serve in the 1914-1918 war.

Herbie told many a tale of the victimisation and punishment he was meted out for spreading disaffection and "mutinous" ideas among the ranks.

Literally from his very first battles he was an uncompromising socialist and man of principle. He was not simply a pioneer of the 'old school' but drew his strength from a reading and re-reading of the works of the great teachers—Marx and Engels, Lenin and then Trotsky.

Herbie was above all an outstanding organiser and builder. In many areas of the North-East, and particularly in Northumberland, there are local Labour Parties that owe their very existence to the work of Herbie Bell. He was a founder member of the ILP in Blaydon, helped in the foundation of Newbiggin ILP a few years later, and throughout the inter-war period he was tirelessly engaged in arranging ILP propaganda meetings all over East Northumberland.

He was agent or sub-agent at Parliamentary elections in Blaydon, Scarborough and Berwick and was behind local election campaigns in literally dozens of other instances. At various stages he was himself elected an Urban District Councillor in Newbiggin, a Borough Councillor in Wallsend and a Northumberland County Councillor.

Herbie's activities span the whole length of the Northern Region—from Scarborough and Whitby in the south (where as agent in 1929 he helped increase the Labour vote from 800 to 6,700!) to Berwick upon Tweed in the north.

The work that Herbie put into the Berwick Constituency in 1951 was itself a monument to his commitment to the labour movement. The Berwick Constituency was at that time one of the largest divisions in Great Britain, covering 250 parishes and 15 county electoral areas, and over 90 polling stations. Herbie often talked in his last years about the campaign in Berwick—booking village halls for meetings, arranging meetings, dragging the candidate off to the next village, signing up new members, booking the next few villages, writing to the few Labour members there were scattered around, and so on—and Herbie was 56 even then.

In one year as agent for that constituency, apart from increasing the Labour vote from 9,000 to 11,000, he signed up over 500 new members! Even in his early sixties, at the time of the

debate over disarmament, Herbie's work-rate was prodigious—he covered 32 constituencies in a campaign urging the Parties to accept unilateral disarmament.

In 1944, when the ILP had dwindled and the Labour Parties were not meeting even, Herbie joined the Revolutionary communist Party. He remained a member until its dissolution—standing as the RCP candidate in the Wallsend election in 1945 on an anti-capitalist programme.

When he was not working full time as a party agent or unemployed (as he was for a harsh 5 years between the wars) Herbie was an active trade unionist, both as a miner and a sheet metal worker. Not least of the examples he set to all Marxists was the way he applied himself to any job. As a sheet metal worker he was revered on the Tyne not only by his work-mates but, legend has it, by his employers. They were torn by their desire to see him thrown out and blacklisted as a militant and their need to keep him on as a key worker in his trade.

Herbie was fond of relating vivid memories of the General Strike in 1926. As a despatch rider for the Northumberland and Durham Central Joint Strike Committee he was assigned to run his motor-bike between Newcastle and Glasgow, and to distribute strike bulletins. But he didn't get many trips in before he found himself in jail!

He would describe how he turned a corner in one of the villages in Northumberland and almost ran down a patrol of 'specials'—they promptly arrested him when they found he was carrying the bulletins. Undeterred, Herbie continued his political agitation as best he could—in Durham jail!

During the 2nd World War, when strikes were illegal, Herbie gave energetic assistance to the Tyne apprentices. They were organising strike action against the "Bevin Ballot" scheme of drafting youngsters into the pits. Herbie introduced them to the socialist movement, wrote letters on their behalf etc.—generally organising measures which were instrumental in acquitting the four leaders who were tried under the 'Defence of the Realm Act.'

Over the years many an "apprentice" in the movement itself was put to the test by Herbie in relation to selling papers. In this activity too, his name was a legend.

Those who were laggardly had to beware of Herbie. Part

of their training would be a visit to a pit village with Herbie to sell from door to door in the Miners' rows. In certain periods older comrades remember, 300 sold in a day would be no exaggeration.

"I'd do it again!"

Through Herbie's hands must have passed in their time thousands upon thousands of copies of the "Northern Star", "Socialist Leader", "The Miner", "Labour Leader", "Socialist Appeal", and, since its birth in 1964, the "Militant". It is worth recording that even in his last weeks, restricted by age and illness he found hard to accept, Herbie was selling a regular six copies of the Militant. He was donating 'fivers' to the fighting fund whenever he possibly could and was ever on the look-out for new readers to pass on to the "young folk".

In the North-East, and in Northumberland in particular, there must be hardly any



area that has not seen Herbie Bell's energy and activity devoted to it in some way over the years.

But it would be wrong to remember Herbie simply as a 'work-horse' for the movement. His Herculean efforts over the years were second to none—but his approach towards building the party was always political.

The clear perspective he maintained as a guide to action came from a painstaking study and thorough understanding of Marxist theory. He laid great emphasis on education and was always an enthusiast for the National Council of Labour Colleges; he himself took courses and lectured widely on many subjects including Marxist economics.

Looking around the present day Labour Party, Herbie often complained, and quite correctly, about the demise of the NCLC and the general lack of political education in

the Party. Herbie's kind of Labour Party was that which is being fought for today by the supporters of Militant—he wanted a fighting, working class party and he made no secret of his Marxist views. Not surprisingly those views often led to clashes with the right wing of the Party.

Herbie may have aged and in his 80's, he may have tired just a little, but he certainly never mellowed!

Only a year or so ago, the local "Wallsend News" carried an article under the headline "The Godfather!". It was based on a letter by Herbie about the bureaucratic manoeuvring of some Labour Party right-wingers in one particular ward. As a direct result, he was threatened with legal action—something he shrugged off and even found amusing! But the publicity went a long way towards helping the constituency as a whole to investigate and reorganise that particular ward branch.

Another 'legend' of his later years stems from a threat to remove him from the Labour Party for his "Trotskyist" ideas. Herbie would not do anything by halves, and rumour has it that he was going to organise a march through Wallsend with a colliery band at its head, to demand his reinstatement! Herbie Bell's life work itself is an uncontestable answer to the smug claims of today's right wing interlopers into the workers' movement that Marxism has no place in the Labour Party.

Herbie found it impossible to 'retire' from politics—he tried at least twice, in 1965

and in 1972 when he was given the Labour Party's Merit Award for long service. From his early activity during the 1914-18 war up to July 1978 he was a fighter for the working class.

Only three weeks ago, he was asked by Peter Taaffe, Militant's editor and a friend of Herbie's, what he would do if he had his life over again. "I'd do it all over again", was his reply.

The labour movement will mourn the loss of this great man, but the best possible tribute that anyone could offer for the memory of Herbie Bell is to emulate his dedication, his hard work, his 60 years of perseverance.

Above all, he would urge us to fight for the same goal—for a Labour Party and trade union movement based upon the ideas of Marxism, striving unstintingly for the interests and needs of the working class of the whole world.

FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT

The capitalist economists are rivalling one another in the depth of their gloom about the prospects for unemployment

Different capitalist economic organisations have been rivalling one another in the depth of their gloom about prospects for unemployment.

The Institute for Manpower Studies foresaw youth unemployment doubling by 1985. The Cambridge Economic Policy Group forecast that there could be 3 million unemployed by 1980 on present policies. An article in the current journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute says that a growth rate of 2 3/4% a year up to the year 2,000 would be necessary to prevent unemployment reaching 5 million.

Now a House of Commons Committee has finally wrung out of the Government a devastating admission that for some time they have been working out economic policies on the secret assumption that unemployment would total 1,700,000 next year. But the Government hastily appealed that these figures were out of date and that their latest forecast was for 1,550,000 unemployed in Britain on average during 1978/79.

When unemployment rose in July, Albert Booth, the Employment Secretary, said that he did not believe that the figures meant and end to the gradual decrease in the number of unemployed and some of his officials thought that the rise was "against the trend".

In fact, the increase in production over recent months has reduced unemployment in parts of the West Midlands and South East. In other areas though, the total has been static or rising. In the last 12 months dole queues have lengthened by 8.1% in Northern Ireland and 6.8% in Wales to mention just the worst areas.

But in any case there is already evidence that the limited consumer 'boom' encouraged by the recent tax concessions is petering out with no chance of an export or investment boom taking over. The government, in fact, has no convincing policies to support their own predictions of even a limited reduction in unemployment, let alone a return to anything like 'full' employment.

The tragedy is that the million rise in unemployment under Labour will be used in the election by the Tories, whose own policies of a tighter grip on the money supply and more cuts will inevitably push unemployment even higher.

When asked on a recent 'Panorama' programme where she would make the cuts, Thatcher replied that she would cut 'socialism', displaying a reluctance to openly outline the ruthless cuts in the social services which her backers in the City and big business are insisting on. The editorial in the most recent issue of The Banker made it perfectly clear that they could see no advantage in Thatcher becoming Prime Minister unless she implemented such hard-line policies.

Mass unemployment imposes terrible costs on the unemployed. But all other workers suffer as well from the waste of resources which unemployment represents. Full utilisation of society's resources would mean £25,000 million extra production, enough to bring living standards up to a tolerable level and to finance a massive increase in housing and the social services.

The labour movement must seize the offensive before the coming general election and explain that mass unemployment is the product of the capitalist system where workers only produce what society needs as an incidental by-product of producing profits for the bosses.

Far from being unable to "afford socialism", it is capitalism which is costing workers their jobs, living standards, health and their children's education. And this cost will inevitably mount up, to the Labour government's expense, unless it breaks with big business and carries out socialist policies.

A fighting programme
against unemployment
—see centre pages

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Only the labour movement has the strength to drive the National Front permanently off the streets

Defend our streets!
This is the slogan of the increasingly militant Bengali workers and their families in the Brick Lane area of East London. Sickened by repeated violent attacks by fascist thugs, their mood exploded at the deaths of Altob Ali and Ashaq Ali.

Time and time again over the past three months the Bengalis have come out on to the streets to demonstrate their refusal to be intimidated and to demand protection. The recent call by Asian leaders for multi-racial vigilante and patrol groups is a vindication of Militant's own call for full support to black self defence—while recognising it is the labour movement's responsibility to look after the safety and livelihood of all workers.

The angry and militant mood of the Bengali workers, particularly the youth, must be harnessed and given direction by the organised labour movement. It would be disastrous if, through lack of initiative by the mass organisations help in defending the area was left to the various haphazard committees which consist of sectarians whose sole aim is to create a base for themselves and who attempt this by trying to substitute themselves for the labour movement.

Recent demonstrations have shown that it is imperative that not only local Labour Parties and Trade Unions,

but the London labour movement must be mobilised for the defence of the Bengali Community.

As reported previously (*Militant* 415), over 2,000 people took part in a demonstration to drive the NF out of Brick Lane. While this was successful, last Sunday saw the NF return to Brick Lane in larger numbers as a result of a mobilisation. About 200-250 NF members, protected by police, congregated while about 300-400 Anti-Racists and LPYS members were cordoned off further down Brick Lane. The weakness of our forces and the presence of about 1,500-2,000 police made any attempt to stop the NF a useless adventure.

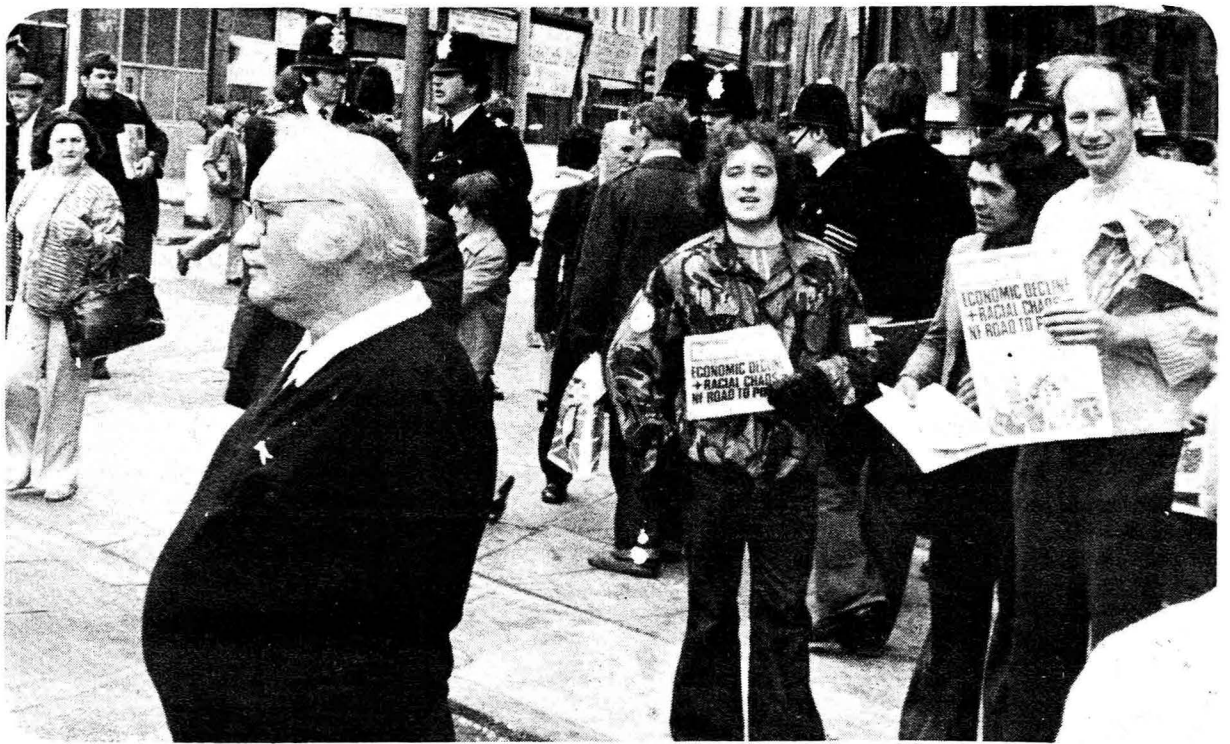
The strike action called by the Hackney-Tower Hamlets Defence Committee in solidarity with black workers again showed the need for the trade union movement to take positive action. Between 5,000 and 8,000 black and white workers struck for the day.

This alone indicates the mood and determination of the Bengali workers, but it also shows the need for further action. Delegations from the Bengali community should be organised to visit all factories, shop stewards' committees, trade union branches and Labour Parties.

The Labour Party, Trades Councils and local trade union branches must participate in the defence of Brick Lane. Delegations should be organised for every Sunday. Only the labour movement has the strength to drive the fascists off the streets.



Over 2,000 demonstrators on Sunday, 16 July, made sure the NF didn't show their faces in Brick Lane. A member of the LPYS and PNP Youth addresses a section of the demonstration.



Sunday, 23 July: the NF are back at the same spot with strong police protection. To keep these ugly thugs out of Brick Lane and sweep the NF off the streets the whole labour movement must mobilise against racialism and fascism.

SUMMIT FOR NOTHING

The Bonn Economic Summit between the heads of the seven most powerful capitalist countries was the fourth annual meeting of its sort. Taking place in a blaze of publicity and with statements from individual leaders as to their 'purposeful', 'frank' and 'constructive' nature, these meetings are supposed to give the impression that things are in hand, that the world economy is capable of being controlled in an effective fashion.

But the 'currency' issue by these summits—statements about the imminence of a sound recovery—has far exceeded their real effects. Just like any other currency issued in excess of real production, the result has been a devaluation—a scepticism about the real value of these jamborees. The cynicism with which the 'Financial Times' greeted the

Bonn get-together—"no real harm may be done" (July 15th)—was matched by the 'Economist's' verdict that "it steered just clear of disastrous failure" (July 22nd).

PARIS SUMMIT—NOVEMBER 1975
"We will not allow the recovery to falter...The most urgent task is to assure the recovery of our economies and to reduce the waste of human resources involved in unemployment."

In 1976 they set a growth target of 5½% a year until 1980; the increase in production in 1977 was 3¼%, and in 1978 will be about 3½%. Unemployment has stuck at around 5½% since 1976, and the inflation rate has only inched down—from 9% in 1976 to a forecast 7½% this year.

In 1977 Japan committed itself to a 6.7% rise in output for that year, but achieved 5%; West Germany reaffirmed a 5% growth target but grew at 2½%.

This time they were more

cautious. Federal Chancellor Schmidt undertook to take measures to boost demand by 1% of GNP, whereas Fukuda the Japanese Prime Minister, said he was "striving" for growth 1½% faster than the

previous year. The Italian Prime Minister undertook to raise growth by 1½% by, among other things, cutting public expenditure—a highly paradoxical 'solution' which will provide no consolation to the million Italian workers on the dole.

The *Times* (July 18th) summarised the prospects as follows: "If all the stimulus measures go into effect and if there is no downturn in other countries during the second half of 1979 it may be possible to get the overall growth of the world up to about 4 or 4½

per cent by the end of 1979. This would be enough to stabilise unemployment, although probably at a higher level than the 17 million in the industrial world at present."

The fundamental reason for the stagnation of the world economy is, as explained many times in *Militant*, the world-wide refusal of the

capitalist world fell by an unprecedented 11% in 1974 and 1975, and that its recovery subsequently has only been at half the 10% growth rate of previous expansions.

The capitalists themselves will not invest because their profits are low, excess capacity is very high, and they are

lapsed in a disastrous acceleration of inflation. The cuts in living standards and public services have not been enough to restore profitability but have further contributed to the stagnation of markets.

The mass unemployment has not materially weakened the trade union and labour movement, but together with the cuts has built up a legacy of bitterness likely to erupt in major industrial struggles. The prospect of 'left' governments in France and Italy has only been postponed. All these factors are reflected in the capitalists' profound 'lack of confidence', against which summits have no impact.

The summit statement says "we are concerned, above all, about worldwide unemployment because it has been at too high a level for many years," and that "we need an improvement in growth where that can be achieved without rekindling inflation."

But these are just crocodile tears and pious wishes. It was no accident that when pressed on what had been achieved Jim Callaghan hastily changed the subject to the agreement on terrorism.

NEXT WEEK: the competitive battle being fought out by the various capitalist countries.

By Andrew Glyn

PUERTO RICO SUMMIT—JUNE 1976

"Our determination in recent months to avoid excessive stimulation of our economies...has contributed to the soundness and breadth of [the] recovery."

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LONDON SUMMIT—MAY 1977

"We commit our governments to stated growth targets or stabilisation policies which, taken as a whole, should provide a basis for sustained non-inflationary growth."

capitalists to invest.

The recent report of the "authoritative" Bank of International Settlements shows (p 47) that in Europe investment in new factories and machinery is one third below the level it would have

totally demoralised about the prospect of a sustained recovery. The governments of the major countries know that their last attempt in 1972/3 to drive the world economy forward through tax cuts and money supply increases col-

DEFEND SRI LANKA TRADE UNIONS

Appeal from LSSP

Public Meeting called by LSSP [UK Branch]

“THE FIGHT AGAINST REPRESSION IN SRI LANKA” HEAR

VASUDEVA NANAYAKKARA

Former MP, Former leader of LSSP Youth League, imprisoned after 1971 JVP uprising, now a leader of the LSSP and the newly created United Federation of Labour.

DR. VICKRAMABAHU KARUNARATHNE

General Secretary, Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the mass workers' party, since its new Marxist leadership was elected last December.

And speakers from the British Labour Movement

Conway Hall, near Holborn. 7.15pm on Tuesday 15th August

ALL WELCOME



Vasudeva nanayakkara

Amid a climate of increasing attacks on trade unions and the masses' living standards, the workers are beginning to fight back. Three-quarters of Sri Lanka's bank workers staged a 24-hour token strike on July 20th in solidarity with textile workers locked out since April.

Later that same day 5,000 people attended the first

public meeting of the newly formed United Federation of Labour, the federation uniting those trade unions which support the policies of the new Marxist leadership of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the traditional mass workers' party. This federation encompasses the important Government Clerical Service Union, unions of railwaymen and teachers, and a majority of the 38,000 estate workers, as well as many other smaller

unions.

The meeting was part of the UFL's and LSSP's campaign for a token General Strike to be held in protest against the withdrawal of subsidies and increases in the price of basic foodstuffs. They have called on the other workers' parties and trade unions to present a United Front against the government attacks.

These attacks are so severe that even the unions supporting the United National Party

government protested at a draft union law which would virtually ban strikes and allow a boss to sack a worker, without reason, provided that he pays a fixed sum in compensation! Under pressure Jayawardene, Sri Lanka's President, had to say that this new law would only apply to government workers but, as 'Militant' reported last week, the UNP government has pressed on with passing other dictatorial laws savagely cur-

tailoring the workers' political and trade union rights, and driving down living standards.

In this situation the resolute stand of the LSSP is gaining support amongst the masses. Two days before the UFL's first rally the Communist Party and the old reformist wing of the LSSP held a joint public meeting which attracted under 2,000, a sign of their weakening support.

It is because the LSSP is in the front rank of defence of the masses' standards that it has come under attack and we appeal to all sections of the British labour movement to support our struggle. Messages, resolutions and especially donations should be sent to the Secretary, LSSP [UK Branch], 19 Hawthorne Avenue, Palmers Green, London N.13.



Asian youth at the recent Leicester LPYS rally against racialism

photo: Julian McKittrick

Bengali Youth Organise

In Leicester, the Bangladesh Juboshango [Bengali Youth League] called a public meeting demanding the formation of a National Council of Bengali Organisations [UK].

The recent deaths of two Bengalis in the East End of London and the attacks on the Bengali Community have resulted in Youth demanding action from their elders to protect their community whilst at the same time realising the importance of fighting racialism and Fascism within the labour and trade union movement.

The Bengali youth's response in the recent Leicester LPYS demonstration against racialism clearly showed that they are not prepared to sit back any longer. Due to the Leicester LPYS's campaign, the YS was personally invited to the meeting.

It is quite clear that the LPYS are well respected as the leading political fighters

against Fascism and racialism in Leicester. The response that we got from handing out Anti-Racist material, YS programmes and selling over 20 'Militants' reveal that the Bengali Youth are looking for an alternative to the 'do-gooder' organisations. The Bengali Youth demand fighting, positive action to defeat the cancer of racialism and Fascism.

To date, six members of the Bengali Youth League have joined the YS and we are expecting many more to join in the near future after our proposed joint meeting with them. The revolutionary traditions of the Bengali community, outlined by the role they played in defeating British Imperialism in India, will once again be borne by the Youth and the LPYS... "United we will never be defeated".

By Anil Singh
Leicester South LPYS

50 attend Young Socialist Meeting

Our area, Epping Forest, is known as 'strong Tory' but here, as everywhere, young people, faced with all the problems of economic crisis, are looking for political explanations and solutions.

Last Wednesday we held a public meeting addressed by Andy Bevan, (Labour Party National Youth Officer) and 50 people came along to hear and discuss the ideas of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Our policies and programme were explained by Andy Bevan, and discussed by many speakers from the floor. Some questioned par-

ticular points such as the call for workers' control of industry. In answer an LPYS member described how nearly everyday her father, who works in a local factory, comes home with a story of management stupidity and examples of how much better the workers themselves could run the firm. He wouldn't call himself a socialist, she said. But as Andy Bevan pointed out in his summing up, if the Labour Party really explained and campaigned on such issues it would win massive support and could change society. It's that goal which the LPYS stands for and

which wins young people to join us.

One girl, who's decided to come along and who had never been to a political meeting before, told me afterwards; "I was really surprised. I expected to be bored but I wasn't at all!" Its up to the LPYS to make sure every similar young person has a chance to hear our ideas. That way we can build the Labour Party and a mass youth organisation to fight for socialist policies.

By Beth Miller

Epping Forest LPYS

Militant Notices

HARLOW Militant Summer Party. Saturday 29th July, 8 pm till late. At Danny and Linda Purton's, 9 Willowfield, Harlow. Drink, Dance, Nosh, Chat. Entrance: 25p.

BLACKPOOL Militant Public Meeting. 'The Coming General Election.' Thursday 3rd August, 7.30 pm, in the Kings Arms, Talbot Road. Speaker: Brian Ingham (Militant Industrial Correspondent).

ROTHERHAM Militant Public Meeting. 'Eastern Europe: bureaucratism or workers' power?' Hear Pat Wall (President, Bradford Trades Council), Thursday 3rd August, 7.30 pm, 'Tollbar', Rotherham Road, Maltby.

LANCASHIRE Militant Supporters: Lyke Wake Walk. A 40-mile walk across the North Yorkshire Moors from Osmotherly to Raven Hall over weekend 11th-13th August. Walkers finishing within 24 hours obtain a badge to celebrate the 'feet'. All proceeds to Militant Fighting Fund. Sponsorship forms, sponsors etc. to Steve Crookes, 101 Wellington Road, Ashton, Preston.

LEICESTER Militant Public Meeting: 'What is Fascism?' Speakers: Bengali Youth League representative; Jeremy Birch (Birmingham Labour Party). 7.45 pm, Friday 18th August, Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, off Belgrave Road, Leicester.

SALFORD Marxist Discussion Meetings: August 2nd—'What is Marxism?'; August 16th—'Where is Britain Going?'; August 30th—'Workers' Control and Management'. Contact Dave Farrar, 061-737 6751.

WALLESEND Marxist Discussion Group. 'Industrial Perspectives in Britain'. Speaker: Rick Anderson. 9th August, 8.00 pm Stanley Arms, North Shields.

SOUTH WALES August Militant Camp. 25th-28th August 1978, Horton, Gower, near Swansea.

Political course: 'The History of Bolshevism'. (1) The Rise of Russian Marxism and the 1905 Revolution. (2) Preparing for Power—the February and October 1917 Revolutions. (3) Bolshevism in Power 1917-1924. (4) Stalinism and the Struggle of the Left Opposition; (5) Marxism in Britain: What it is and how to build it. Speakers will include Peter Taaffe (Editor of Militant).

Cost: £6.50 (under 5s free, 5-12: £1.50). Crèche available. Bring camping equipment. Bookings etc. to Rob Sewell, 99 Penderry Road, Penlan, Swansea. Telephone Swansea 33542. Cheques payable to 'R Sewell'.

Left & Right

Room at the top

Are you a businessman bored with your job? Fed up with speculating on the Stock Exchange? Well there's a job waiting for you, Thatcher is searching for a City figure to be made a Lord and join her Cabinet if she wins the Election.

Two weeks ago we wrote of the split in the Tory party. In an attempt to heal that split 'The Times' reported that "Thatcher is being advised to look outside her political ranks both in the present Commons and in the Lords, for an eminent figure who could reassure the City and business world".

The hope is that a businessman would be able to teach the Tories the art of subtly dealing with the working class rather than racing headlong into a confrontation which the ruling class are not sure of winning. Sections of the bosses fear that Thatcher's tactics will lose them the Election. As 'The Times' commented, "some senior men in the party privately wined at the language she used" in her recent Panorama interview.

The trouble for the bosses is that the decay of British capitalism has not only blighted the economy but also left the Tory Front Bench lacking in talent, something the labour movement will not lose any sleep over!

Suitable candidate?

One person who is looking for a new job is Colin Phipps, the Labour MP for Dudley West. He has applied for the £30,000 a year job of being deputy chairman of the State-owned British National Oil Corporation.

Already he has a second job in addition to representing 28,740 Labour voters. Comrade Phipps has his own oil consultancy and in the past has worked for Shell in Holland, Venezuela and the USA. In April he further sought to add to his income by putting his Kensington flat on sale for a cool £104,000.

Why does comrade Phipps want to quit as a Labour MP? Has he become bored with being an MP after 4½ years in the Commons, is he worried about losing his seat in the next election or does the £30,000 salary beckon him? Of course if he gets the post he can always demonstrate his lack of interest in feathering his nest by only taking the salary of a skilled worker in the oil industry and thereby concretely show he is not one of those careerists using the Labour Party as a ladder to success.

But whoever gets this job, workers in the industry will still raise the basic issue of who should control the nationalised industries: the working class running them democratically or directors replying to adverts because in this case the Government "could not find suitable candidates on the usual informal network" (Sunday Times).

Change the tune

A great tragedy struck the Soviet leadership at the opening ceremony of the World Chess Championship. The Philippines band played the 'Internationale' instead of the current Russian national anthem. Immediately the band finished a frantic Soviet official rushed up and complained to ensure that memories of 1917 did not revive.

The 'Internationale' had been the original anthem of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It symbolised both the internationalist policy of the Bolsheviks and the fact that the USSR was not meant to be a nation state but a free and equal federation of all democratic workers' states around the world.

But the victory of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the 1920's and early 1930's marked the coming to power of a clique which put its own narrow national interests first and internationalism became merely an empty phrase in their mouths. The 'Internationale' came more and more into conflict with the reality of Stalin's policies, such as the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact. In 1943 it was replaced by a national anthem stressing from the first line the virtues of 'great Russia'. At the same time the Communist International was dissolved.

The Soviet official was right to complain. The 'Internationale' has nothing to do with the cynical policies of the Soviet leadership who have dragged the ideals of Socialism through the mud in order to preserve their power and privilege. The 'Internationale' belongs to the world working class, not the Kremlin bureaucrats.

If you're young & black: TALKING BLUES

By Martin Ward

(Vice-Chairman,
Handsworth Labour Party)

Talking blues is about being young, black and living in an inner city area like Handsworth. The pamphlet, produced by a Handsworth community organisation [AFF-OR] on relations between black youth and the police in Birmingham, is a series of interviews with black youth, but also with some of the parents and one or two priests.

The pamphlet provides crushing evidence, in their own words, of the harassment and ill treatment that black youth suffer at the hands of the police. Interview after interview brings out stories of the daily indignities and intimidation that is undoubtedly part of police routine in dealing with the immigrant community.

Handsworth has recently had much more than its fair share of media publicity, with the publication of "Shades of Grey", a commissioned report on police-black relations. This was the subject of a half hour TV programme, shown twice this year. The national Tory press chose to present Handsworth as a decaying suburb terrorised by gangs of black youths. Because of the power of the press that is very much how Handsworth is seen by those who've never been and who haven't been allowed to see what lies at the root of the problems in Handsworth.

Talking Blues goes some way to putting the record straight—it's a good pamphlet to be distributed in the labour movement. It explains the fears of black youth as well as documenting cases of harassment and intimidation. Just one example from the first pages of the pamphlet, shows what it's about:

Cynthia: "As far as I can see, the more down and out a black man is, or the black youth is, the more advantage the police will take of you. If you happen to look dirty or scruffy or walking around midday when you should be working, the more the police harass you...if they see a young youth with a car they find excuses to stop him three and four times in one day on the pretext of just routine checks...it is reaching a stage where young people are always on their guard..."

She goes on to detail two specific incidents, one relating to her boyfriend and one relating to a group of friends and herself outside a Birmingham nightclub. In almost every interview there is a first hand account of similar incidents.

The black youth interviewed are angry. They see life in Handsworth as a blind alley with no escape. Youth unemployment amongst blacks in Handsworth is as bad if not worse than anywhere else in the City, housing is in poor decaying overcrowded property, all the social problems abound—and on top of that there is the attitude of the police dealt with in this pamphlet.

According to the introduction the aim of the pamphlet was to "communicate the experiences, the frustrations and sense of bitter injustice of young black people concern-

ing police behaviour." It does that well and even if it doesn't pretend to offer solutions, nevertheless it should be put to good use especially by

groups such as the PNP youth who are engaged in the struggle to change those same conditions so graphically outlined here.

'Talking Blues' is published by AFFOR, 1 Finch Road, Lozells, Birmingham. Copies 60p each.



Four to one: police out in force at the Notting Hill Carnival 1977

photo: Phil McCowen

Fight for Socialism - the only hope



Black youth at the Anti-Nazi League Carnival

Review by
Dave Gartrell

"Blacks Britannica" graphically captures the anger and frustration of the black population, particularly black youth, within the decaying capitalist system in Britain.

One black youth sums up the situation: "Its all drummed into you, you know, 'you're gonna need this and you're gonna want that,' and so on. 'You're gonna need a holiday at least once a year, and all them things. And you gotta study, you know.' And what they didn't tell you was that 'you're black and we're going to do our best to stop you getting all this'."

Another young black describes the hopelessness of finding work, how when job-hunting a black youth has to show more ability and capability than a white rival in order to stand the same chance of getting a job. The slums of Moss Side, Manchester, are shown; rather than make good deteriorating buildings the authorities have driven blacks into the "concrete jungle" of places like Hulme.

There is a growing alienation from the "establish-

ment". The simmering bitterness of black youth, at continuous harassment, particularly in areas like Handsworth, Moss Side, and the East End, stands out. The film shows the workings of the notorious "sus" laws, where blacks are picked up, charged, and sentenced merely on the say-so of a policeman.

"Sus"

The attitude of the magistrates is summed up by one who says he cannot accept that a policeman could come to court and give false evidence. The film shows a police officer briefing his men to the effect that the police must not wait until a crime is committed when they are suspicious, but must make the arrest before the crime has taken place! In another scene the bloodstained clothing of a black "detained" by the police is produced before an enquiry investigating allegations of police brutality.

Some black youth turn to crime, trying to gain the things that society denies them the right to earn through a decent job. This naturally provides ammunition for the defenders of the

very system that drives them to crime. The threat to the very existence of the black population posed by the National Front and other fascist groups is shown, and we see Enoch Powell speaking about "aliens" and Thatcher expressing fears that "Britain may be swamped".

Unfortunately, when the labour movement should be offering the way out, black youth are cynical and disillusioned about the Labour Party, whose leaders are seen in much the same light as those of the other main parties. Their failure to give a meaningful lead against the threat of racism and Fascism, the passing of immigration controls, and their failure to adopt socialist policies to counter the deteriorating conditions of life facing working people are at the root of this.

The inability of capitalism to guarantee a decent quality of life for workers is the central issue in "Blacks Britannica". Scenes of mass workers' demonstrations under the Heath government and of the picket lines at Grunwicks illustrate that the only hope for the immigrant population lies in the 12 million strong labour movement, where black and white workers together defend their rights and living standards. In the sequences at the Notting Hill Carnival, the revolutionary potential of black youth as an especially exploited and repressed section of society is shown. Their anger boiled over and took the form of a violent reaction against the police harassment which is a daily routine.

The fight by activists, especially in the LPYS and PNP Youth, for socialist policies in the Labour Party and trade unions is the key to winning black youth to the banner of the labour movement, and channelling that anger against the decrepit capitalist system which is ultimately responsible.

"Blacks Britannica" is currently showing at the Scala Cinema, 25 Tottenham St, London W1. (Goodge St tube) Tel: 01-627-9309

In February this year I reported a number of repairs needed to my home which is a council house. Among the necessary repairs one was a cracked window in the porchway which is an extension structure on the front of the house.

A representative from the local estate management office came to inspect the extent of the necessary repairs and when I pointed out the said window he informed me that tenants have to pay for broken windows themselves.

I then told him that I did not know who had done the damage and also pointed out that the porchways were after all, due to their structure and position, vulnerable to breakage externally, accidental or otherwise. I was still told that I would have to pay for a replacement window if I wanted the repair done.

During the run-up to the local elections in May my husband and I, as active members of the local Labour Party, canvassed in our district and came across quite a number of tenants who had received the same reply when applying to the Manchester Housing Department for repairs to broken or cracked windows and had accepted the reply and in order to keep their houses looking respectable had paid sums from £6 and upwards per window payable before the work is carried out.

They were also asked to identify the person or persons responsible for the breakage. This, of course, is often impossible.

TENANTS-

BY ELLA GAMWELL

(Ardwick Labour Party)

It would seem that due to the ignorance of tenants with regard to the law and their rights the bureaucracy can and does penalise them for trying to keep their houses up to an acceptable standard and the bureaucracy is getting away with it especially when the person who usually receives the housing representative when he or she visits is the housewife and therefore isolated.

Housing Act

It would also seem that the Labour-controlled Manchester Housing Committee are unaware or condoning the actions of the Manchester Housing Department representatives who after all are supposed to implement Manchester Council Policies which must work within the law.

The Housing Act 1961 Section 32 makes the landlord (in this case the Manchester Housing Department) responsible for repairs and maintenance to the structure and exterior unless the damage has been done by the tenant or his/her family.

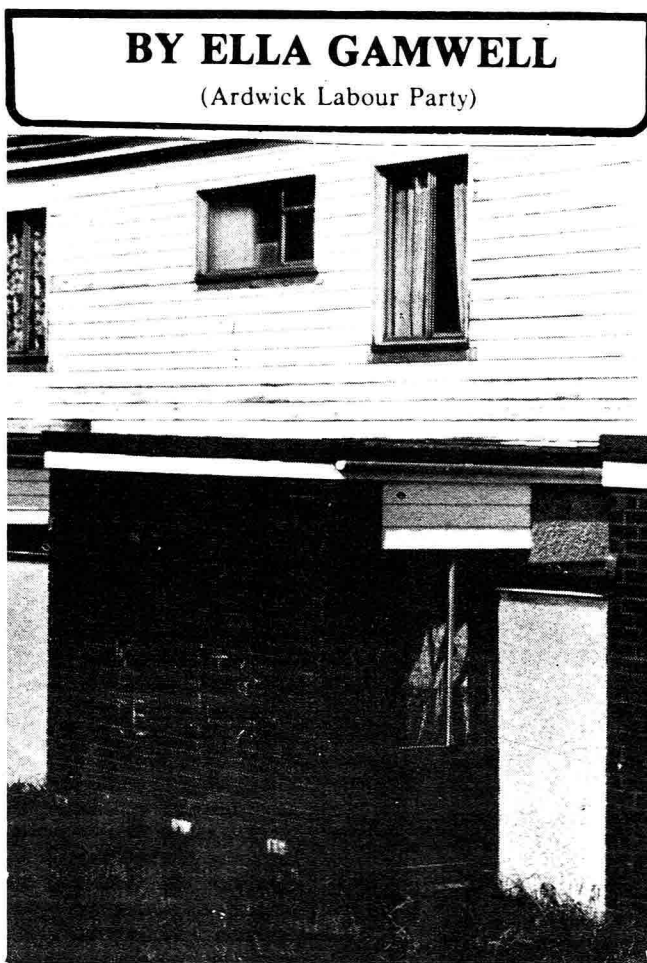


photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

This is covered with regard to tenant damage by a paragraph under "Conditions of tenancy" printed in the rent books, i.e. the tenant shall keep all internal parts of the premises, including the balcony if any, in a clean habitable condition and panes of glass broken by default or negligence must be paid for immediately.

While this paragraph is in accordance with Section 32 of the 1961 Housing Act, it does however contravene Section 33 which prohibits the landlord from making repairs and maintenance a condition of tenancy.

Not many people know their rights in full, much less the law with regard to housing. The bureaucracy, of course, are not forthcoming with necessary information. Many of the electorate believe that when the Labour Party "controls" the Town Hall committees, such as housing, that the departments under their jurisdiction are run by Labour Party council officials.

This of course is not true and many of the people in charge of departments such

as housing, education, welfare etc are Tories and it is in their interests to keep the ordinary people in ignorance and thus create disillusionment and apathy. Is it any wonder that phrases like, "They're all the same" are commonplace when canvassers go out during election campaigns.

The Labour Party, locally and nationally, must rid itself of this bureaucratic wrecking machinery such as exists in the Housing Department of Manchester and put the working class in control of the decisions which affect their lives.

Every tenant, whether council or private, must join the Labour Party and make every effort to attend their local branches and fight for their rights which includes the right to decent, habitable housing in good repair.

Resolutions

Resolutions demanding implementation of Section 32 and 33 to be distributed to every tenant and incorporated in the rent books plus demands instructing Housing Committees to stop what can only be termed as "extortion" by the bureaucracy, when payment is demanded from tenants for repairs, should be on every agenda.

Implementation of these resolutions would be a step in the right direction and give protection to the working class tenants by informing them of their rights. Join the Labour Party and fight for your rights!

Know your rights!

Health Service under the knife

'We have lost six patients this year'

The capitalist crisis has bitten deep—too deep for some.

More than 20 people on Merseyside whose lives could have been saved by routine heart surgery have died in the past 18 months because of the chronic cutbacks in public expenditure.

The only Cardiac unit in Liverpool cannot cope with the ever-increasing waiting lists and many patients are now having to wait up to 2 years or more for surgery.

For some however, the waiting has been too long. Take Ernie Griffiths for example. Last August he was told he needed major surgery fairly soon. The earliest available date for his operation was November 17th. That day turned out to be his funeral.

"We have lost six or seven patients this year" says Ben Meade, head of Cardiac surgery at Liverpool's Broadgreen hospital. "The cost of saving these lives would have been insignificant—£50,000 would do it".

Merseyside's queue is so long that some patients wait up to two years for catheter heart investigation and then two more years for surgery. The waiting list for investigations at Merseyside Cardiac Centre is between 400 and 500; 109 people are waiting

for surgery and 37 have been on the list for more than 12 months.

This month marks the 30th anniversary of the Health Service and after 30 years, the hospital waiting list stands at the same figure—more than 500,000! Even "Labour Weekly" commented that: "We have had thirty years to get it right and we have failed".

An indication as to why the NHS is in a shambles was provided by the Radical Statistics group, an independent research organisation, when it reported that the drug firm Pfizer patented tetracycline and sold it to the NHS at £65 per thousand tablets, when the cost of research, materials and production amounted to no more than £5 a thousand!

Yes, it's the same old story. As qualified doctors and nurses tramp the streets for any dead-end job, bosses and pharmaceutical empires ravish and gloat over bumper profits made at our expense.

Well enough is enough! We have been given a glimpse of what is needed. Lets take a leaf from the book of the workers at Bethnal Green hospital. There the staff are staging a work-in to save its casualty unit from closure, and follows sympathy strikes at five neighbouring London hospitals.

Murder

Nothing short of fundamentally changing society on bold socialist lines will stop capitalism from murdering

us. They are prepared to maximise profits and accumulate wealth whatever the obstacles.

Now is the time when we have really got to put our foot down.

★ Nationalisation of the drug supply and pharmaceutical industries under democratic workers' control and management!

★ Reverse the cuts in public expenditure!

★ Abolition of private practices, dental, prescription and optic charges!

★ For a massive building programme of hospitals!

★ Expand the NHS to meet the need!

Steve Higham

(Bootle LPYS)



photo: Laurence Sparham (Report)

NURSING SHORTAGE ENDANGERS PATIENTS

By Marian Preen (COHSE Shop Steward)

Nurses in training are an investment for the future; the quality of health care, particularly in hospitals, depends on the quality of nurses. This last year has seen a massive drop in trainee nurses while at the same time there are continual reports of hospitals dangerously understaffed.

England and Wales.
Nurses starting training

| | 1976/77 | 1977/78 |
|----------|---------|---------|
| students | 20,188 | 16,395 |
| pupils | 13,930 | 10,404 |

Registered mental nurse training is down by 20.69% and State Enrolled Nurse (Mental) by 32.56%. So much for the DHSS document "The Way Forward", which seeks to "remedy past neglect of services particularly those for the mentally ill".

Cutbacks in the budgets for training schools not only result in less nurses in training but also lack of books and educational equipment and demoralisation of teaching staff. Many hospitals have seen a change in attitudes amongst students because of this, a cynicism has crept in. You are taught to do things in the correct way and to treat patients as people but on the wards you find you are continually cutting corners, working unsupervised and getting the sharp edge of frustrated ward staff.

The past six years has seen a 50% increase in auxiliary nurses, who on the whole have absolutely no training and, of

course, get paid less, not that student nurses are overpaid. Second year Student Nurse.

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Basic pay | £34.19 |
| Allowances | £16.00 |
| Gross | £50.19 |
| Deductions | £19.01 |
| Net | £31.18 |

Many nurses' homes and hostels are Dickensian with inadequate kitchen and laundry facilities, but on a nurses wage how can you afford the privacy of your own flat?

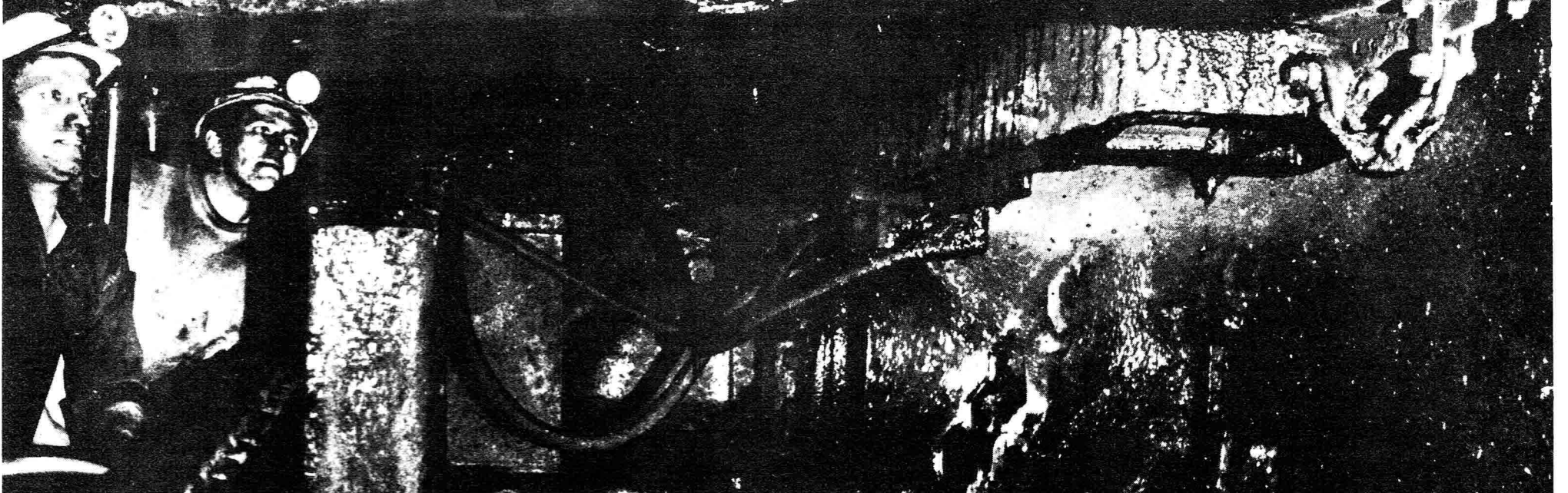
Students do the donkey work on the wards and despite the fact that they have to do ward based examinations usually get little or no teaching on the wards.

Many training schools have long waiting lists of people wishing to do courses, but the real irony is that those lucky enough to see the course through often have little hope of getting a job at the end of it.

At the recent COHSE conference in Scarborough the demand was made for a minimum wage of £80 for all health service workers and a shorter working week. This reflects the fighting mood of NHS workers, for too long have we been morally blackmailed to be moderate, our jobs and the very service is at stake.

All NHS workers should demand that student nurses, and all NHS trainees, should be extras to a department's requirements and have full student status. More money to be spent on health care, no cuts, no closures. Democratic workers control of the NHS!

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT



- a shift down the pit

Whilst the majority of people on a Friday evening are preparing for a night of leisure [ie drink and debauchery], there are certain sections of industry preparing for work. The workers in these industries are usually employed on a three shift basis, having to constantly adapt themselves to changing work times.

The night shift itself, as many will know, is anti-social, unnatural and imposed on the workers for no greater reason than increased production (and hence increased profit). Friday night working only accentuates the anti-social aspect and is reflected in the number of men absent.

In mining nights hit hardest of all. Dust and darkness are an effective combination which serve only to lower eyelids and raise accident figures. The following parable concerns a Friday night underground, but it's relative to all shifts and is meant to account for conditions as a whole (in our pit at least).

Leaving home at 10.00 pm (earlier if you're devoid of personal transport) brings you to the pit in time for a quick cup of tea (no substitute for a pint) in the canteen. Then its to the lockers, to change into whatever rags, old clothing or overalls you may possess.

After picking up your identity discs, cap lamp and self rescuer (filters air in cases of fire) its across to the pit top for the ride down. Definite treat this. 36 burly (or not so burly) men crammed onto two decks, the lot suspended by a cable no thicker than your wrist. Two minutes and 1/4 mile later its pit bottom (all change).

From there to the train is a short walk and when all are aboard its a mile ride to the meeting station. (After which British Rail are definitely above criticism). From there you're assigned to your jobs (if you're on or near the face, hard luck, 'cos its getting on for a couple of miles).

Noise in parts is deafening, dirt and water abound, potential accidents lurk under every railway sleeper and exotic smells linger occasionally upon the rarefied breeze. Dust is a constant, though not appreciated, companion.

If you were cold on starting the walk, the exertion plus the thin air will soon warm you up.

Rather than explain the nature of each individual job, it will suffice to say that if you're on the face, it is the most physically tiring, but at least you'll stay aware. If you're on supplies (a scaled down rail freight operation) you won't fall asleep either, not unless losing a limb or damaging some other part of your or someone else's anatomy is your idea of fun.

If you're assigned to a switch you probably will fall asleep, but as its illegal you'd better not. As literature seems to be frowned on (probably for some obscure safety reason as litter seems plentiful enough) the only way to stay awake is by either will power or large doses of snuff at frequent intervals.

Stampede

After 5 1/2 soul destroying hours (including 20 minutes for a coal dust sandwich) you're on the way out. This way's easier as you can ride most of the way on conveyor belts (usually for carrying coal or dust). The art of getting on and off these belts is soon mastered in preference to walking. After that it's another train ride, except for certain individuals who, being unobserved, have crept stealthily towards the pit bottom in the hope of attaining that supreme accolade—the first cage up.

For the rest it's a sight to see [and steer clear of]. As the train rolls in, the ensuing stampede is reminiscent of a cattle drive, pity all the aggression is wasted on one another.

After that its just a case of showering and changing before you're able to experience the delight and pleasure of a world awakening. (Noise, generally the product of a

profit orientated society, hath no consideration for the slumbering nightworker).

Despite all, the pits are laden with characters, and humour is easy to come by (Almost as easy as injury). Perhaps recruitment adverts should sport a government health warning. "Mining can damage your health"—one way or another.

What then can be done to improve our lot? Let's face it. No-one wants to work underground, nowadays. The majority of men employed are forced underground as an alternative to the dole. Many however, last no longer than a few months, as constant recruiting shows.

The following demands have all been stressed before by sections of the NUM and by the Militant. What is needed is a strengthening of democracy within the union. (All union officials to be elected, under right of recall). Only with an effective leadership can the fight for better pay and conditions be continued. Any official with the true interests of his men at heart, and not his own well being, would welcome more frequent elections and would accept a



wage equal to that of a face worker.

A most basic demand of: —A 30 hour 4 day week with £135 for face workers (with appropriate differentials)

Would serve to: —Attract more men to the industry (and more importantly retain them) —Lower the health risk (the less time spent underground the better) —Improve morale —Reduce absenteeism.

In conjunction with this a demand for more rest days and longer holidays must be made.

Productivity

Also the divisive productivity scheme should be scrapped. With an improvement in morale, output per man shift will almost certainly rise.

To improve conditions as a whole, the mining industry needs more investment (to provide newer, safer equipment, more research into dust suppression, even tiolet facilities). This can be done in two ways:

a) By implementing Labour's plan to nationalise banks and finance companies—this could lead to the scrapping of existing coal board debts and the provision of new interest free loans.

b) By nationalisation of the private suppliers, distributors and contractors—who make an exorbitant amount of money (public money, don't forget) out of the coal board. Money which would contribute greatly to the industry, by lowering overheads etc.

Finally, every worker in any industry should abide by and enforce all safety regulations. Management make a fuss safety-wise, with posters, competitions and the like and its all very commendable. However, to them you are a number, and when injured only represent lost days, lost production, and lost profit.

By H. Poole

(Somewhere under Shropshire)

Capitalism

ruins sport

Cyclists Go-Slow



Cyclists in the most grueling race in the professional cyclists' calendar, the 3-week long Tour de France, recently took the unprecedented step of holding a 'go slow' to protest about their conditions.

They rode deliberately slowly over one day's ride, and actually stopped before the finishing line and walked over it!

They were protesting about the over-harsh nature of this year's Tour. Riders race for 3 weeks, with only 2 rest days, for up to 150 miles a day at average speeds of 26 miles per hour, in the summer heat.

Yet when they finish the day's stage they are more often than not bundled into cars and driven to another town where the next day's stage will begin. This is a recent change in the way the Tour is run.

Previously the Tour ended and started in the same town, giving the riders the whole evening to relax and sleep. The riders want to return to this situation.

The Tour organisers have piled on the pressure, to fit in as many towns as possible, to squeeze the maximum publicity out of the Tour's prestige. On the Continent cycling is big business.

Competitors ride in teams sponsored by various car, petrol and bicycle firms, such as Peugeot, Esso, Citroen, whose sole purpose is advertising. The highly successful Raleigh team may find itself without a sponsor next year,

for instance, as the British Raleigh management calculate that since Raleigh bikes have now been promoted on the continent, a further year's sponsorship would serve no purpose.

Capitalism distorts cycling in the same way as it does every other sport. Money is all that counts to the sponsors. It is their interests which decide which races the riders will compete in.

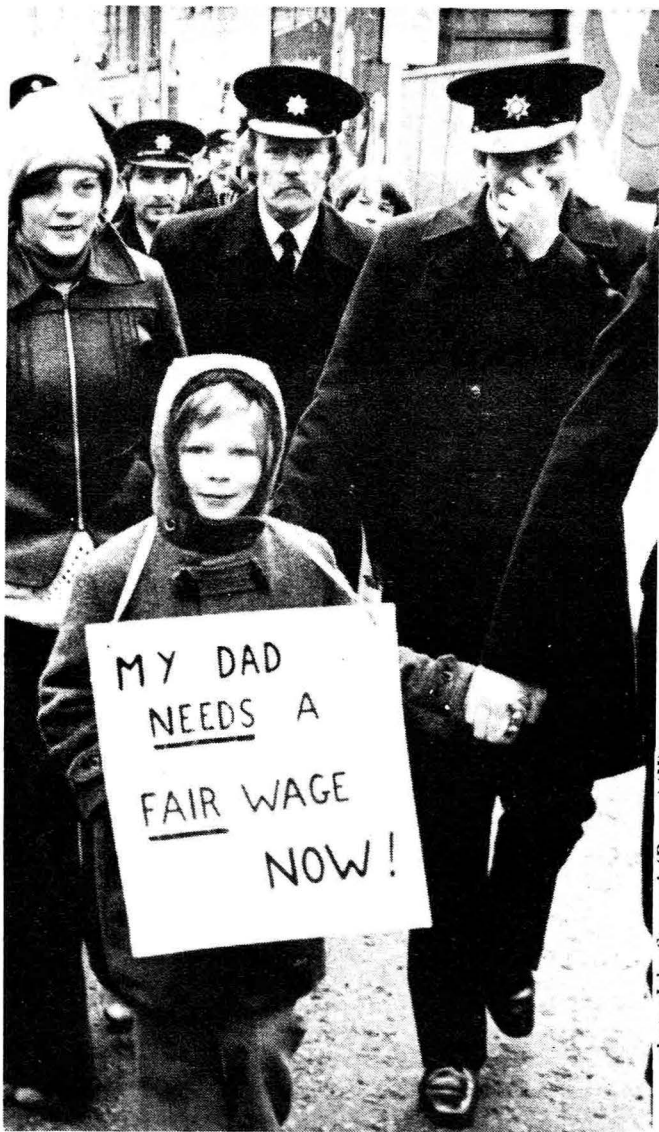
If the sponsors decide that more products will be sold by having their team ride in a local race rather than in a more prestigious foreign race, then that's what they do. Money decides the course of sport.

The riders in the Tour de France, although far removed from the smaller financial worries of the provincial amateur, are still acutely aware that theirs is a risky business. The size of their wage packets, or even if they find work at all, will depend on how well they do in the Tour de France.

Perhaps their recent industrial action will serve as a reminder to the big business interests that they cannot have things all their own way.

Pete Lee

(Cambridge Labour Party)



The firemen awoken to industrial action

UNION CON

Prep for acti

HOW THEY VOTED

| Unions against | Voting strength* |
|-----------------|------------------|
| UPW | 201,099 |
| ISTC | 104,073 |
| NALGO | 683,011 |
| APEX | 141,766 |
| GMWU** | 916,438 |
| AUEW(Foundry)** | 56,479 |
| USDAW** | 412,627 |
| NUTGW*** | 112,783 |
| NUT** | 289,107 |
| NUBE** | 111,609 |
| NUR | 180,000 |
| total | 3,208,992 |

| Unions for | Voting strength* |
|-------------------|------------------|
| AUEW(Eng section) | 1,168,889 |
| NUM | 259,966 |
| CPSA | 230,572 |
| SCPS | 104,910 |
| NUPE | 650,530 |
| AUEW(TASS) | 161,607 |
| ASLEF | 28,198 |
| TSSA | 73,842 |
| TGWU*** | 1,929,834 |
| NUS | 41,919 |
| ASTMS | 396,000 |
| Boilermakers | 128,403 |
| NSMM | 47,822 |
| NUSMWHDE | 75,049 |
| EETPU | 420,000 |
| UCATT | 293,521 |
| FTATU | 87,398 |
| SOGAT | 194,312 |
| NGA | 107,723 |
| ATWU | 44,102 |
| BFAWU | 56,135 |
| Tobacco Workers | 21,070 |
| NAAAW | 85,000 |
| POEU | 124,535 |
| IPCS | 100,233 |
| COHSE | 200,455 |
| Total | 7,032,076 |

*figures taken from 1977 TUC statistics
 **where conference decisions not absolutely specifically against further wage restraint or where conflicting or ambiguous resolutions passed
 ***Where no conference this year but policy decided by previous 1977 conferences

As the trade union conference season ends, our industrial correspondent Brian Ingham draws up a balance sheet of the decisions and points the way forward for the unions now.

On a whole number of vital issues which face the working class, the trade union movement is preparing for action. That is the central message of this year's trade union conferences.

The Fire Brigades' Union, having conducted the most important battle under the present round of pay restraint, has significantly helped to close the union conference season with an emergency conference in Blackpool.

The anger of the firemen has been fuelled by the contemptuous treatment meted out to them by the local authority negotiators. The FBU conference signalled the fact that they are far from broken by their historic battle. The very opposite is the case. A new section of the labour movement has been blooded in battle. The movement as a whole has been strengthened.

The firemen are demanding a 42 hour week. If this demand is not met then they will impose it unilaterally. 4,000 jobs will be needed for this demand to be granted.

And it is clear that the firemen will not be satisfied for long even with a victory on the 42 hours. They will join very quickly the number of unions who have nailed to their masts the demand for a 35 hour week.

A 35 hour week and no loss of pay! This demand has run like a clarion call throughout the trade union conferences. SOGAT, the Furniture trades' union, COHSE, NUPE, The General and Municipal Workers' Union, and the National Union of Seamen, to name but a few, all came out decisively in support of this demand.

In a concrete and a straight forward manner this demand expresses the desire of the working class to protect the jobs from the onslaught of factory closures and mass redundancies. It signifies also that workers are beginning to use their strategic position at the point of production on behalf of jobs for the 1½ million workers who are on the dole.

Out in the forefront of the struggle for the 35 hour week is the Post Office Engineering Union. The determination of POEU members to secure this has strengthened by sharp

degrees over the last few years.

This year they decided that only by intensifying their action will they succeed. Thus the POEU, a union which has had no national official strike action in all its 90 year history, is now at the centre of the stage setting the pace on this fundamental question.

The action of both the POEU and the FBU is an answer to all those cynics who have written off the working class as a fighting force, and to those sceptics who doubt that any progressive step will be achieved through a trade union conference.

Bureaucrats

It is true that the conference procedure of most unions is generally anything but democratic. At the G&MWU conference, for instance, the aspirations of the members expressed in resolutions from the branches, before they reach the floor of national conference, first go through the regional conference sieve. In other unions the compositing procedure is used to mutilate resolutions, often beyond recognition and sometimes without the knowledge or even grudging consent of the relevant delegates.

But in spite of these obstacles the moods developing at rank and file level certainly protrude, rudely at times, into the orderly flow of bureaucratic business. And

when the pressure is great enough then the unions are pushed to take action.

Nowhere has this been more vividly demonstrated this year than at the Iron and Steel Trades Conference. This conference has no powers. The delegates are told this bluntly in the standing orders sent out with their credentials.

But the formal boundaries of a strict union constitution were swept to one side during the conference when the threatened closure of the Bilston steel works was announced.

Sensing the explosive anger of the delegates, who in turn were reflecting the accumulated frustrations of the union members back in the steel works, the executive were forced to suspend conference and hold an emergency EC meeting to decide on their response to the provocation of the British Steel Corporation. Under the scrutiny of the members there was little room for duplicity.

Consequently Bill Sirs, the union General Secretary, was driven to state: "We are not going to tolerate any longer people taking decisions behind our backs. The credibility of our union and my own position is at stake". He concluded: "If this (closure) has not been renounced by August 6th then the industry will stop." At those words the whole of the conference rose to its feet and erupted into

spontaneous applause. At last the union was going to fight back!

That decision could well prove a turning point not just in the evolution of the ISTC but also in the struggle generally against unemployment.

But it will not be just on the question of jobs and the 35 hour week that we will see action as a result of this year's conference decisions. NUPE and USDAW, unions covering some of the lowest paid workers in Britain, have both already fired the opening shots in their campaigns for an acceptable minimum wage.

Wage restraint

And by their actions, in advance, they have answered those right wing cabinet ministers who have been idly speculating the possibility of conceding a lower working week (perhaps 38 hours) in return for meagre rises in wages. USDAW is calling for £55 for a 35 hour week and NUPE's demand is £60 for a 35 hour week.

NUPE is to hold hundreds of meetings nationally and is preparing to circulate half a million broadsheets in order to unite its membership in an effective campaign around these demands.

The organised revolt of the low paid is again imminent. The normally placid National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers was propelled by its conference into launching a struggle, against the wishes of its Executive Committee, for "£80 per 35 hour week as the minimum wage from January 1979...and £100 a week by January 1980." Therefore, though union conferences are only very imperfect barometers of the moods of union members, this year's round of conferences have

shown that the stifling effects of bureaucratic manoeuvres can be overcome. The aspirations of the ordinary members can be voiced.

On wage restraint this was certainly the case. No union which came out against restraint last year reversed its decision this year. Others joined the ranks of those in opposition. Against the advice of the National Council the NGA delegates voted for an end to incomes policy. And white collar unions like the Institute of Professional Civil Servants and Transport Salaried Staffs Association followed suit.

In only a few was the enthusiasm of the leaders allowed to run wild in favour of further wage restraint. If those in favour of wage restraint succeeded, their "victory" was usually, to say the least, dubious. At the USDAW conference for instance, the wages resolution contained a call for a return to free collective bargaining and a call for the EC to campaign for an end to the 12 month rule.

That resolution was passed unanimously. But an EC resolution which contained the call for an "orderly" return to free collective bargaining was also carried, this time by only a slender majority of 41,000 votes. In all probability the USDAW leaders will make an attempt to wriggle free of the unanimous vote against wage restraint by summoning to their aid that mystical word, "orderly".

Basnett

The G&MWU leaders have a little more elbow room. A call for a full restoration of free collective bargaining was only narrowly defeated by 204 votes to 199. David Basnett, the General Secretary, won the day with his call for "responsible collective bargaining".

But, undoubtedly, the situation would have been reversed but for the vehement attack by David Basnett on any deal with the government over wages policy: "There will be no agreed norm, no agreed phase 4, no agreed incomes



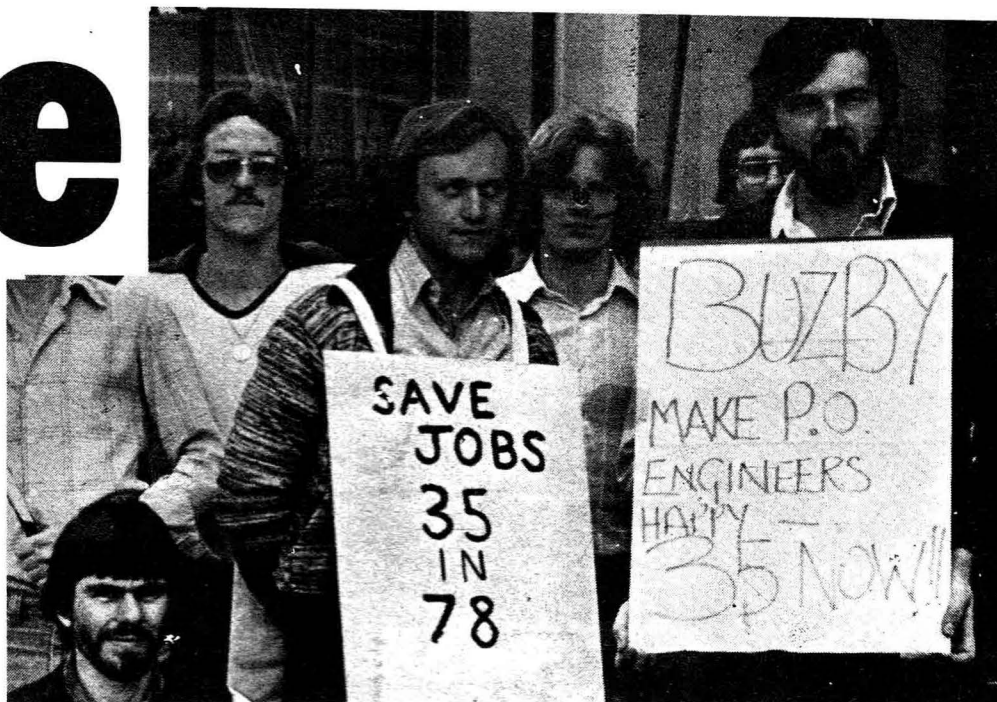
CPSA conference—left wing delegates jubilant on hearing the defeat of the right

INTERFERENCES

are

or

on



Young workers of the London POEU in their union's fight for a 35 hour week

photo: Julian McKittrick

Some union leaders will claim that by openly opposing this resolution at the congress they will harm Labour's chances in the election.

That will be their justification for trying to go against the wishes of their own union members. They should listen to those members, they should remember the debates at their union conferences, they should obey their mandates!

Rather than wage restraint helping Labour's chances of victory, it could provoke disastrous electoral consequences. The ranks of the trade unions have had enough of stagnant or falling living standards. A 209% increase in strikes in 1977 over 1976 is symptomatic of the rising tide of discontent.

Further attempts to impose wage restraint will lead to widespread disappointment which, if reflected in the election would only help the Tories. Because of the virulent attacks of the Tories on the trade union movement and their reactionary stand on such issues as immigration, crime and punishment and social security payments it is possible that the Labour government might be returned in the election even on the present policies of its leaders.

But the very best guarantee of a Labour victory would be for the government and the TUC to renounce their policies of the past three years and commit the next Labour government to an entirely new course which would take as its starting point the hopes and aspirations of 11.8 million workers gathered under the umbrella of the Trades Union Congress.

The fact that an election is imminent will be used by the right wing Labour leaders in an attempt to woo the TUC over to renewed wage restraint. And if they are successful at Congress then the election will be used as a bludgeon to bully the ranks of the movement into submission.

But as the leaders of the movement shuffle and dance around like tactical ballet dancers deftly trying to "pull one over" on their members they should take heed of the warning of the right wing journal, "The Economist": "There will be a rough wage round after the election— whoever wins."

By procedure and by exploiting long-standing loyalties, it is possible to chain in the grievances of the workers, for a certain limited time. The leaders have tried their luck again and again. It will not hold out much longer.

The signs are already there in the escalating strike figures —if the union leaders do not give official sanction to the demands of the rank and file then they could well face a barrage of unofficial action. One spark is all that is required to start a prairie fire. And so charged is the atmosphere amongst the British working class that if one group of workers achieves a major victory then they will propel into action a torrent of other workers, who will move

like aroused divisions of an army which sees its enemy fleeing in disarray.

The pundits in the Tory press are praying that the election of Duffy will upset this scenario. They will be disappointed. The election of Duffy was certainly a bitter set-back for the AUEW and for the movement at large. An iron wall of resistance will now stand in the way of AUEW members when they turn to their union for support in crucial struggles. But iron melts!

Frank Chapple of the EEPTU is hardly a militant, but even he has been pushed into condoning strike action. National official action on the building sites and the hospitals has been ratified by the

EEPTU in the recent past. If Duffy and his co-thinkers on the AUEW executive committee fail to respond to the inevitable pressures of the members then they will be by-passed and the chances of their swift removal will be significantly reinforced.

But it is of course possible that the right wing policies of Duffy would have catastrophic effects on certain individual struggles. In the trade unions leadership is always important: it can be decisive.

Indeed, perhaps the most urgent struggle now in the trade unions, is the struggle for a new leadership.

The trade unions have been moulded by 200 years of struggle under capitalism. The gains achieved by the unions in that time have given them an enormous accumulated authority in the eyes of the working class.

But rather than harnessing that authority in the interests of the union members, the right wing trade union leaders work assiduously instead to turn the trade union movement against the interests of the working class by ceaseless efforts to hold back the independent struggles of the workers and by striving for class stability and for a partnership with the capitalist class.

For a temporary period they have been able to score a measure of success, which has brought in its wake terrible consequences for the working class. But the "success" of the right wing would have been impossible if a viable mass alternative had been available. The left in most unions have been incapable of organising effectively and offering such an alternative. This was especially the case in the AUEW whose campaign of behalf of Bob Wright, the left wing candidate, was non-existent.

Militant supporters have made a significant impact on a whole number of union conferences this year. At each conference we have made attempts to strengthen the organisation of the left generally.

The CPSA conference stood out this year as an arena where the right wing suffered a humiliating defeat. That defeat was due in no small part to the activity of those CPSA members who support Militant.

Terry Adams, one of the full-time officials who agrees with the ideas of Militant was given the sack by the right wing NEC. Helped by others in the union who were sympathetic, Kevin Roddy, a Militant supporter on the CPSA NEC, organised the Terry Adams Defence Campaign which not only ensured a massive conference endorsement for Terry Adams, but was also probably the main factor in the defeat of the right wing.

Programme

But organisation is only one side of the weakness of the left. The other, more important weakness, which was evident again at the union conferences, is political. The programme put by the left in the unions makes concessions to the programme of the right.

Instead of linking the day to day struggles of the working class remorselessly with the burning need for the socialist transformation of society, the left will mix up calls for social ownership and social change with calls for adjusting the capitalist economy. And in practice, in important battles, it is the

socialist demands which get pushed into the background.

Also, at the TUC, in the last few years the few isolated words which mention socialism have been lost without trace; drowned in the compositing rooms, disappearing for good before they reach the final conference agenda.

The left raise the call for "import controls", and in doing so they join hands with the right wing. There is nothing remotely socialist in the demand! It is asking for higher prices, it is asking for unemployment to be exported to workers abroad and it is asking workers to line up on behalf of their bosses with their bosses!

The call should be for the workers to line up against their own bosses and the system of which they are a part. Together with this demand for import controls, the left calls for "inroads" into capitalism often through the agency of the NEB.

But 330 workers of Tress Engineering which was taken over by the NEB in January might have a few words to say to those who issue such calls. Tress Engineering was closed by the NEB in June and the 330 workers all lost their jobs.

Those who sow illusions about the possibility of a gradual transformation under capitalism until it vanishes into a socialist system are preparing the working class for severe defeats. The capitalists are trying to claw back all the gains secured by the working class in past battles. There is no room for a programme of fiddling with the capitalist economy and of piecemeal reforms. The task now is to connect indissolubly the struggle for reforms and the struggle to protect the reforms of the past with the fundamental necessity of transforming society along socialist lines. Only those who put forward such a programme will be able to offer any viable and consistent alternative to the programme of the right wing. There is no possibility of a middle course, the crisis of capitalism is too severe.

Army of labour

Industry is being closed down throughout the country in a spree of wanton destruction wherever the profitability of the capitalists is in question. And the education and health services are the subjects of devastating attacks. But in these attacks the bosses have unwittingly forced new layers of the working class to turn to the trade union movement. That is the force that can stop the bosses in their reckless sabotage of industry and of the social amenities of the working class.

Entirely new social layers are also turning to the trade unions. Women workers, immigrant workers, white collar and sweat shop workers are all joining in mounting proportions.

The trade unions express the desire of working people to take a hold of their own destinies. They are the most elemental class organisation of the working class, created to check the unbridled excesses of the capitalists. In the last 10 years the unions grew by 21%. The army of labour is an army the like of which has never been previously assembled on British soil.

Once it is armed with the programme of socialism it will be invincible!

Trade union conference delegates who support Militant have fought at this year's conferences for an alternative socialist programme. Individual parts of the programme have been carried at most of the union conferences. But the programme ultimately must be seen as a whole. Taken together these central demands provide an answer to the horrors of mass unemployment, falling living standards and the destruction of the Health and Social Services. This offers the only meaningful way out of the abyss of capitalism: the struggle for a planned, democratic socialist society.

- ★ An end to wage restraint—full and automatic support for all unions fighting government imposed wage norms
- ★ A minimum wage of £70 a week for all workers
- ★ Restore the lost living standards
- ★ All increases in pay to be tied to a cost of living index drawn up by committees of housewives and trade unionists democratically elected through the labour and trade union movement
- ★ For a 35 hour week with no loss of pay—full and automatic support for all unions fighting for a reduction in the working week
- ★ Reverse the cuts—full and automatic support for all unions fighting cuts in government expenditure, the "cash limits" policy or for an expansion in education and in the Health and Social Services
- ★ For a programme of useful public works with payment to those working at the average industrial wage
- ★ No redundancies and no selling the jobs of the working class
- ★ Share out the work with no loss of pay
- ★ Work or full pay
- ★ Nationalisation of firms threatening redundancies or refusing to pay a living wage
- ★ Compensation in all cases of nationalisation only on the basis of proven need
- ★ Workers' control and management of all nationalised industries
- ★ Nationalise the banks, finance houses and the top 200 monopolies
- ★ For a socialist plan of production under the democratic control and management of the working class



photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant

in the NEC elections

MIDDLE EAST

NEW LEBANON FIGHTING

For the second time in two years, Beirut has been subjected to devastating bombings and shootings. This time it has been the Syrian "peace-keeping" force, which used heavy artillery and rocket launchers, installed on a multi-storey block of flats, to batter the areas of the city held by Christian militias.

John Pickard

(Gateshead Labour Party)

There are widely differing estimates of casualties, from the Lebanese government's figure of 39 killed and 180 wounded to the Christian militias' estimate of 460 killed and 2,000 wounded. But there is no disputing the very heavy damage to buildings. A reporter for "Time" described the effect in the Ain Rumaneh district, in which "every house had been hit and many levelled. One man who ran upstairs during a lull to salvage an old family heirloom had his legs blown off".

The Syrian army was sent in to try to end the Lebanese Civil War. On the one side were the well organised militias of the more powerful and privileged Christian minority. On the other were the Palestine guerrilla groups based in the Lebanon and the forces of the Moslem majority of the country, which were generally on the left, as the Christian groups were generally on the right.

After months of fierce fighting, the Moslem and Palestinian forces were getting the upper hand. Victory for them would have posed the possibility of the overthrow of capitalism. This would not only be intolerable to the Israeli capitalists to the South and their American imperialist backers, but also to the military rulers of the Syrian deformed workers' state.



Syrian troops turn on former 'allies'

In Syria, capitalism and landlordism have been destroyed, under the pressure of the workers and peasants, a tremendous step forward, which struck terror into the hearts of every feudal and capitalist regime in the Middle East and the reason the Israeli army always struck hardest at the Syrians. The

regime which came to power, however, having used the masses as a weapon against their pro-capitalist rivals, then imposed a military dictatorship no more democratic than in many of the reactionary Arab countries.

The overthrow of capitalism in Lebanon, a more industrialised country with a

larger working class, would be an even greater step forward, an inspiration to the oppressed of every country in the region—including Syria, where the workers would undoubtedly be spurred to fight for an end to the military dictatorship.

The Syrian regime were therefore forced to intervene,

and crush the Palestine and left-wing militias. At the same time, the Israelis who feared a left-wing victory even more, since as well as provoking an enormous response from Israeli workers it would provide the Palestinian guerrillas with a firm base from which to attack Israel, began to arm and train sections of

the Christian militias, and even crossed the border to intervene directly on the side of the Christians, with the aim of creating a Christian buffer zone between them and the guerrillas.

An uneasy truce was established, and a UN force sent in, though it was utterly powerless to stop the frequent

While the peace talks between the Israeli and Egyptian Foreign Ministers were taking place in Leeds Castle, Kent, back in the Middle East fighting broke out. But the hostilities erupted not on the front line but in the Cabinet and Parliament, the Knesset.

The previous Sunday's Cabinet meeting was embroiled in a fierce clash over whether individual Israeli politicians should meet Egyptian leaders, culminating in the Defence Minister Weizman tearing down a 'peace' poster in Prime Minister Begin's office. In the Knesset, amid much swearing and shouting, Begin said he would stop leaders of the opposition Israeli Labour Party meeting Arab leaders, if necessary by not allowing them exit visas.

This was not a simple clash over protocol but reflected how the Israeli ruling class is

splitting under the huge pressures raining down on it.

At home Begin is faced both with developing militancy amongst the Jewish workers against the government's economic policies and the massive growth of the 'Peace Now' movement in favour of granting 'concessions' to the Arabs to avoid another war.

Abroad, American Imperialism, until now the Israeli ruling class's main protector, has shifted its position. Mortally afraid of a new Middle East war, which could lead to further massive oil price rises and have revolutionary repercussions

throughout the area, the Carter Government, has tried to force the Begin Government to grant some concessions to Egypt and Jordan.

But the Begin Government, made up of the most reactionary section of the Israeli capitalists, has refused to budge from what the

'Financial Times' has called its "narrow ideological commitments". But under the mounting pressure from home and abroad the Cabinet has already started to split. Weizman opposed Begin's plan for the West Bank [see Militant April 7] saying that it "would be found unacceptable by the US,

would worsen the country's political situation and would mean increasing the defence budget."

Begin's West Bank plan put a stop to the peace talks started last December until American Vice-President Mondale visited Israel at the beginning of July. After persuasion Begin agreed to

the London talks but Mondale, obviously not expecting to get much progress out of Begin, also encouraged Weizman and Peres, leader of the opposition Labour Party whose leadership is very close to the US Government, to also have talks with the Egyptian leaders.

'PEACE TALKS' SPARK ISRAELI TURMOIL

clashes which still occurred.

For neither the Israeli ruling class, nor the Syrian generals, could this situation remain. The Israelis, together with two of the different factions of the Christians, the Phalangists led by Gemayel and the National Liberal Party led by Chamoun, aim for the partition of Lebanon and the creation of a new Christian state.

This would be a disastrous step backwards; it would create a new "Israel", a tiny reactionary capitalist enclave, economically and militarily dependent on the Israelis, who in turn are a client state of American Imperialism.

For Syria this would be totally unacceptable. Yet the solution they favour, though they realise it is not practicable just now, the incorporation of the whole of the Lebanon into a "Greater Syria", is just as unacceptable to the Israeli ruling class who have the armed might to forcibly prevent it.

Conflict was therefore inevitable, and it was sparked off by a clash between the Phalangists, and a third Christian group, led by Franjeh, which backs Syria and demands that the Syrian army remains in the Lebanon. After a few sporadic battles with Syrian troops, the Phalangists attacked a group of Franjeh supporters, massacring 30 people, including Franjeh's wife, son and daughter.

Syrian reaction was devastating; in the words of their Defence Minister, "The Syrian army will strike with an iron fist to destroy the Phalangist and Chamounist gangs". Even with their new consignments of arms from Israel and, so it is rumoured, Israeli military "advisers", the Phalangist and National Liberals were no match for the Syrian heavy artillery barrage from the roof of the Rizk Tower.

For five days the terror continued. The Lebanese President Sarkis threatened to resign every day, only to provoke the reply from Assad, his opposite number in Syria, "Let him resign, we can always find another Lebanese President". Sarkis was a perfect example of a head of Government with no state. Power is in the hands of the armed bodies of men, and at this stage the Syrian army are the most powerful.

Nevertheless the barrage was stopped. Sarkis's threatened resignation had far less to do with this than eight Israeli jet fighters which flew over Beirut at the height of the fighting, breaking the sound barrier as they went. It was a warning to the Syrians that if they attack the Christians too heavily, they will intervene directly. Then the military balance would be very different. The Syrian army would stand no chance.

The Israelis however, are forced to act with restraint, at a time when their paymasters, the American imperialists are carefully trying to patch together a settlement between Israel and Egypt. War with Syria would blow the peace talks in Kent sky high, since the Egyptian ruling class could not possibly talk with Israel under such circumstances, and would be under great pressure to enter the war against Israel, and thus begin yet another full-scale Arab-Israeli conflict.

So for the moment, an even more shaky truce has been reached in Lebanon. Sarkis remains in nominal control of the Government. The Syrian Army dominates Beirut and much of the rest of the country. The Christian militias are getting more weapons from Israel and strengthening their position. The Palestinian guerrillas and the remnants of the left-wing Moslem militias remain in existence, and the UN forces patrol the border with Israel and the borders between the Christian and Muslim areas within Lebanon, but with insufficient forces to stop any serious fighting.

Lebanon illustrates graphically the impossibility of solving the problems of the Middle East on a capitalist basis. It has become the cock-pit of international rivalry, which will inevitably flare up again and again. The chief sufferers are always the Lebanese workers and peasants.

Only on the basis of the expulsion of all the forces of Israel, Syria and the UN and the coming together of the workers of both the Christian and Muslim communities and the Palestinian refugees to create a secular, non-sectarian socialist state, with full autonomy for the different communities if they wish it, can a way out of the present nightmare be found.

At first Begin agreed to these Weizman and Peres talks but then, pushed by other Ministers led by Foreign Minister Dayan, tried to stop them—quite clearly fearing that the US Government was determined to push through an agreement with or without Begin and company remaining as the Israeli Government.

The frantic manoeuvres of the American and Egyptian rulers show their urgent desire to avoid another war, not for humanitarian reasons but of fear of the revolutionary upheavals war would bring, and Sadat's need to show some positive result to his peace initiative to avoid being overthrown. The struggle in Israel's ruling circles is between those who have a better idea of what their long term interests are

than their short-sighted rivals.

There is no doubt that the Israeli and Egyptian masses long for peace, but a deal between their ruling classes would neither touch the real root of the conflict, answer the Palestinians' demands nor solve the enormous social problems which exist. Only a Socialist policy based upon the needs of the working classes and peasants of the Middle East can do away with the real cause of the conflict—landlordism, capitalism and Imperialist domination.

Bob Labi

(Hampstead
Labour Party)

BRAZIL



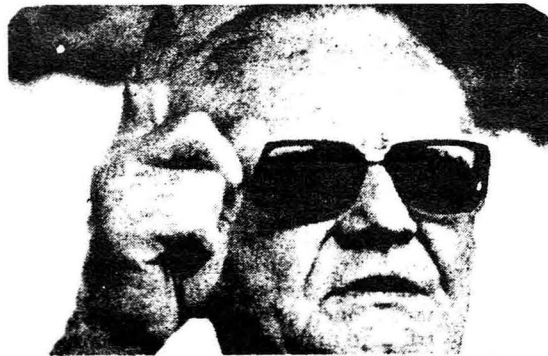
STRIKES UNDERMINE GENERALS' REGIME

After being stamped upon since the military coup in 1964, Brazil's working class defied the military, occupied the factories, demanding wage rises and justice. Some 50,000 were involved in disputes in Sao Paulo, with wave after wave striking for 20% wage increases, cheaper fares, cheaper meals and better medical services.

By Rob Sewell

The revolt of the Brazilian workers in May has struck horror in the hearts of all the dictatorships, not to mention their imperialist backers.

The military government, under General Ernesto Geisel in absolute panic declared the strikes illegal, which resulted in their spreading!



Brazilian dictator Ernesto Geisel

Once the workers are the move nothing can hold them back for any length of time. The Brazilian workers have recovered from their defeat in the late 1960's. The last strike in Brazil was in 1968 at Osasco, and ended when the workers were marched out, their hands over their heads, through lines of soldiers.

The law banning strikes was passed in 1964 which provided employers with the powers to dismiss workers, and punish strike leaders with a years imprisonment and a heavy fine. If charges were brought under the National Security law, they could be imprisoned for four years.

The military dictatorship has pampered the landlords and capitalists over the past 14 years, supervising the most vicious exploitation of the working population. According to the Financial Times (28 June 1978), "Since 1964 and the military coup d'etat, Brazil has been a country where the businessman has had an honoured place in society—and businessman with the most honoured place of all have been the bankers."

Huge multinationals, like Chrysler, Pirelli, Phillips, spear-headed the enormous foreign investment into Brazil. Sao Paulo became the world's fastest growing city in the "economic miracle" of the early 1970's. The rich became super rich as the workers, their organisations beheaded,

were ground into the dust. The classes became polarised as an explosion built up in the workers' districts.

In the words of Dom Sandalo, bishop of the poor eastern zone of Sao Paulo, "5% of the population has everything, while the other 95% lives in captivity in the most shameful conditions".

Inflation was at 45% (it has been admitted by the government that the price index was fixed) while wages remained controlled by decree. The slump of 1974/5 had a great impact on the Brazilian economy, causing the foreign debt to rocket to around 35 billion dollars. Earnings from commodity exports have fallen as production and prices both decline. Rich landlords speculate in the money markets with the grants they have received for agricultural investment.

Even so, as the "Economist" (6 May 1978) points out, "Only the very richest farmers have access to these juicy loans. Seven out of eight of Brazil's 11 million farmers get no loans at all..." The largest landowners have hired gunmen on a wide scale to evict peasant farmers.

The regime was sitting on a powder-keg. The May events are just the beginning. The regime is completely unstable: with splits opening up amongst sections of the ruling class: an indication of developing crisis.

When the military came to

power they established two new mock parties, the Arena (pro-government) and the tame Brazilian Democratic Movement "opposition". Recently splits have developed within the Arena itself. Clear signs of unrest have appeared in the armed forces, with a number of middle-ranking officers being disciplined for anti-government statements.

Discontent is wide-spread amongst sections of the ruling class over General Geisel's decision to appoint General Figueiredo as candidate for the Presidency, a typical military bone-head who could easily provoke sharp class conflicts. He make a statement recently referring to the people of the cattle lands of southern Brazil as "gigolos for cows".

As a leading opponent of the military said: "It is very difficult to foresee the future in this country. We are either a step away from power or a step away from prison."

As always a section of the more far-sighted of the ruling class are prepared to make democratic noises form above to protect the workers taking action from below. With greater speed than the conversion of St Paul when he fell off his donkey on the way to Damascus, a group of top industrialists, representing Sao Paulo area, have issued a statement (26 June) arguing for democracy.

The May strikes have shattered the nerves of the

landlords and capitalists. The workers have awoken. As one worker reported: "After the 12.30 whistle, one or two turned their machines on. But they saw that they couldn't really carry on or they'd get it. I almost cried when I couldn't hear any noise. It was strange to realise our power."

In most factories, commissions were elected to negotiate with management. The first hit was the Saab-Scania Company. So afraid were the management, that they they had the workers escorted to the lavatory to ensure that no plotting went on there! Eventually they conceded a 6.5% rise with more to come.

Fords refused point blank to meet representatives but later agreed to 15% in three stages. Individual firms made agreements one after another offering between 10-20% above the government's authorised increase.

The military's grip has been shattered with their authority openly flouted. The regime cannot last long. The new converts to "democracy" are attempting to head off the masses. These "democrats" would turn back to another general to rescue their privileges if need be.

Only the workers and poor peasants of Brazil have the real interests of democracy at heart, not for sentimental reasons, but as a weapon in the struggle for better wages and conditions. As the history of Latin America has shown, democracy, or the solution to any of the problems facing the Brazilian workers and peasants can never be attained on a capitalist basis.

Only the socialist transformation of Brazil, linked to a socialist federation of Latin America, could plan the enormous riches of that continent in the interests of the majority and end the squalor and exploitation once and for all.

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

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Army harassment of Militant

Dear Comrades

The Army last week prevented the monthly sale of the [Irish] Militant at the busmen's canteen in Belfast.

I had been selling for about an hour when a soldier roughly ordered me to "move on", on the excuse that I was "making people uncomfortable" because of "what that bloody thing stands for"—angrily pointing at the June paper. Army patrols in the area had, he said, been instructed to "lift" me if I moved back towards the canteen.

Because I was on my own, I decided to make an orderly retreat. I didn't fancy being the sort of treatment "suspects" get from the army. The hostile attitude showed clearly the fear of socialism.

The incident was typical enough of day-to-day harassment. Obstruction, bad manners and nagging annoyance, which don't make the headlines but which British workers should remember are part of life here.

Fraternally

Anton McCabe

[South Belfast Labour and Trade Union Co-ordinating Group]

Young people DO want politics

Dear Comrades

My girlfriend recently received a letter sent on behalf of the Young Conservatives by local Tory councillor Brando Bravo, assuring her of the Tories' "deeply held conviction that people's views do matter, should be heard and given proper consideration".

It seems that the way to have our say in the shaping of our future is to join in with YC activities such as car rallies, barbecues, discos, "travelling on a fact-finding trip to Europe", and various other social activities.

But where does the politics come in you may ask? "It is widely felt", we are told, "that people in their late teens and early twenties are too busy or in no way interested in politics of any kind". Therefore, politics is relegated to a small note about "discussions groups".

No wonder people aren't interested or don't have time after all those social events. It all sounds very nice but as my girlfriend and I are both on low wages, I think it's a bit out of price range, like most entertainments these days.

We have to live with our parents because we can't

afford to get married, and bus fares just to see each other are a big drain on our resources. Long hours at work and travelling mean that we don't have much spare time, but I can assure the Tories that some young people are interested in politics, but not in the style of the representatives of the rich minority. At the bottom of all our problems is the capitalist system itself.

While control of the means of production is in the hands of a few greedy bosses, our most basic needs will not be met. All the rights of the working class have been hard won and now we must fight to hold onto them.

If we are to have a living wage and time to enjoy it, decent, cheap housing and an end to the savage cuts in public spending we must transform the Labour Party, the mass party of the working class, into a fighting organisation armed with a thoroughgoing socialist programme. Young people who do want a decent future should join the LPYS and fight for it.

Yours fraternally

Rich Russell

North Nottingham LPYS

Why were they suspended

Dear Comrade

At its meeting in May the Labour Party NEC passed the following resolution "That the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party is deeply disturbed by the manifestly unfair procedures at the trial of Uri Orlof...."

In June the NEC suspended four Labour Party members in the West Gloucestershire constituency from holding office without making known any charges against them and without giving them the opportunity of defending themselves. The "Forest Four" as they are now known are:

John Ireland (President of the Forest of Dean Trades Council, Secretary, ASTMS Dean Forest Branch, Member of the General Committee West Glos. CLP)—suspended from holding any office in the Party for two years.

Gillian Ireland (Secretary of the Drybrook Branch, Member of the West Glos. CLP General Committee — suspended from holding any office in the Party for two years.

George Hardy (Membership Secretary of the Whitecraff Branch, Member of the General Committee West Glos. CLP)—suspended from holding any office for one year.

Mick McLaughlin (Secretary of the Whitecraff Branch, Member of the General Committee West Glos. CLP)—suspended from holding any office for one year.

The suspensions followed an inquiry into the affairs of the West Glos. CLP by John Cartwright MP, John Blizzard, SW Regional Council and Walter Brown Assistant National Agent. At the inquiry the "Forest Four" together with other party members submitted lengthy written evidence. The NEC has accepted many of the points made by the "Forest Four" and ordered the Constituency Party and the Regional Officer to take action on these points, yet apparently for bringing these points forward the four members have been suspended.

The question must be asked: were the NEC aware of what they were doing or did they rubber stamp the inquiry report?

Reg Underhill was quoted later as saying this was a "minor matter". How can depriving Labour Party members of their right to actively participate in the affairs of the Constituency Labour Party, without giving any reasons, be regarded as a minor matter?

Mrs Ireland has said "It's as if we went to court as witnesses and were locked up ourselves".

At the meeting of the Party Executive last Friday, five Executive members and myself resigned our positions. We felt we could not carry out the NEC's instruction to suspend these members.

The "Forest Four" have issued a statement saying "We intend to stay in the Labour Party and fight to remedy this injustice; never mind how long it takes. We shall continue to work for the return of our MP John Watkinson, and in the words of Jim Callaghan, our Prime Minister. '...we shall need continual vigilance to protect the citizen against the great bureaucracies, to protect the individual's fight to know, his right to complain and to have his grievance remedied. That is putting democracy above privilege.'"

Yours fraternally

Dave Short

Ex-Secretary, W. Gloucestershire CLP

Civil Service obstacle to socialism

Dear Comrades

Another stunning example of the press inadvertently exposing the myths that capitalism tries to protect itself with, was given by Ronald Butt in The Times (Thursday 13th July). The gist of his article was that the Labour Government is replacing, through its powers of patronage, existing members of government-appointed bodies by Labour sympathisers. Naturally Mr Butt was complaining about this, putting forward the view that these appointments should be politically neutral.

Yet his sheer hypocrisy was demonstrated by the following quote from the article, a section that The Times actually chose to highlight at the top of the article, probably not realising its implications.

"The Government appears to be using its powers to replace Conservatives and others by its own sympathisers on bodies which are not supposed to be political at all".

Apparently it's alright for Tories to be on these bodies but not Labour Party members. Yet Ronald Butt not only digs his own grave on this issue but buries himself in it too, because in his article is contained the following classic quote.

Referring to special Cabinet advisors he writes, "Their function is principally to act as encouragers of the Minister's party political conscience when he is beleaguered by impartial officials who stress the dangers and snags

of doing what he and his party would like to do". (my emphasis)

The myth of Civil Service neutrality is demolished in one blow. Obviously he and the rest of the ruling class regard the job of senior Civil Servants as being to obstruct and sabotage the work of Labour ministers, if they try even in a limited way to implement Party policy.

The true role of the Civil Service is well documented e.g. in Harold Wilson's memoirs, and those of Richard Crossman, and now we have the truth straight from the horse's mouth.

Earlier in the article he writes "Mr Callaghan and his party also understand the value of digging in and of capturing the places of influence and patronage". He has the nerve to complain that the Labour government is doing what he tacitly admits Tories have always done and which he obviously believes should be their sole prerogative!

Comrades should be under no illusions that a Labour government can neutralise the Civil Service simply by replacing individuals, even if the ruling class let it get away with such a strategy, but I hope this letter brings home the point that the Civil Service is an instrument of the ruling class, a fact which they clearly recognise and which they jealously wish to protect from hostile influences at all costs.

Yours fraternally

Ian Pollock

(Oxford LPYS)

BBC speaks with forked tongue

Dear Comrades

I was very surprised to read in 'Militant' (30 June) of the "Minimal coverage" given by the media to the massacre of 600 Angolans by South African troops at Cassinga, and letters published since then referring to "the unpublished massacre".

I have been unemployed for some time now, so can't afford a daily paper, and I am often out in the evenings when the news is on. But I often stay up until the early hours, because there's very little to get up for in the morning. So I spend a lot of time listening to the BBC World Service, with its regular news bulletins. This is why I had no idea that the British media had virtually ignored the massacre.

Comrades might be interested to know that the World Service gave extensive coverage to the events at Cassinga, ranging from one of the lead headlines in the 'World News' to a sickening eye witness account of one of the mass graves—"the first thing we noticed was the bright colours of the clothes, with here and there an occasional military style uniform. Women and young children made up a large proportion of the vic-

tims".

The question which must be asked is, why did the BBC ignore the massacre in the "Home" news bulletins, while giving so much information to overseas listeners? I think the answer lies in the countries to which the BBC world service broadcasts—including Africa and South Asia.

Listeners there are certainly going to have sources of information apart from the British media. In other words, the BBC is prepared to give details of 'controversial' news items to listeners who have already heard about them (though of course talking, BBC fashion, about "the Angolan Government alleging that..."), but it is not so keen to inform those of us who have to rely on the British press, TV and radio.

I would recommend that any comrade who is likely to be up late at night should listen in to the BBC World Service. Not only will the comrades get fuller coverage of international news, but they will also see at first hand the peculiar double standards which the BBC adopts to reporting.

Yours fraternally

Bill North

(Hove CLP)

CHEAP LABOUR

Dear Comrades

A friend of mine, having just left school, went down to the Employment Exchange to register as unemployed. From there she was sent to see the careers officer since she was under eighteen. An interview at a city centre office for the position of office junior was duly arranged for her the following afternoon.

The 37½ hour a week job would include such duties as typing, operating the switchboard, making the tea for the boss and his secretary and receiving visitors to the office. And the 'wage' for such a job? A mere £16 per week!

What is worse is that after being only officially unemployed [registered as such] for a week, she told me that rather than be thought of as [and I quote] an 'unemployed Scrounger' she was willing to accept virtually any job offered to her, regardless of pay, conditions etc. just to be able to say that she wasn't on the dole.

This is just one out of many examples of jobs offered to young, unemployed, demoralised people by the so-called 'careers' officers. I think it is about time that the careers officers are stopped from using demoralised youth as a feedstock to big business of cheap, slave labour.

Yours fraternally

Linda Zurawchuk

Openshaw LPYS

p.s. She didn't get the job after all.

30 apply for one flat

Dear Comrades

If anyone doubts the extent of the housing crisis, my experience this week should convince them.

My flatmate is getting married, so I put an advert in the local paper as I can't pay the rent on my own. In four days the phone has rung at least 30 times, and several people have called round. I could only speak to the first few, but they give an indication of the problem.

One lad who works in Birkenhead and lives in Liverpool was faced with ever-rising fares just getting to work. Another was paying £16 a week for lodgings in New Brighton. Several girls

called, under pressure at home because of conflicts with parents and wanting some independence.

It's no luxury flat, and was in a bit of a state when people called, but no-one said they didn't want it. The reason is the shortage of accommodation.

My flatmate advertised in the same paper for a place, but only got ONE reply. Every Housing Association he looked at had a waiting list of at least 6 months.

It's not right that people are forced to live in slums, pay high rents, or be trapped at home because there is nowhere else to go. UCATT, the building union, say that

half of their members on Merseyside are out of work.

The councils should get interest-free loans from the government, and build all the different sorts of accommodation we need, including for young people. Labour should take over the building industry and the finance companies and banks so this can be done.

The Young Socialists must push for a socialist housing policy so that the pressing problems that are blighting the lives of so many can be solved.

Fraternally

Alan Runswick

(Wallasey LPYS)

FIGHTING FUND TRIPLLED

**THIS WEEK:
£1,305**

DO IT AGAIN

By
Alison Rudd

Last week's fighting fund headline 'Follow Slump with Boom' certainly seems to have had the right effect on our supporters. This week we received a total of £1,305.47 [three times last week's figure!]. This now brings our overall total to £28,077.63.

Tax rebates of between £5.00 and £25.00 have been flooding in and the money for the 'premises appeal' has also just started to come.

From **Eastern Region** we received a total of £91.26. This was made up from: a social in Brentwood £10.00, a refund of union expenses in Cambridge £2.25, R. Aldridge (Stevenage AUEW) £1.00, 'banner making' (also Stevenage) £25.00, and £6.00 'misc' from Southend. From **Hants and IOW** we received £14.00 in total which came from 'sale of a fire extinguisher' £2.00, sale of badges £3.70 and silver coins collected £5.10.

Lancashire's total went up by £40.00 this week. This came entirely from Blackpool where the money was raised by 'digging gardens'. There was also a promise of more money to follow in the near future.

From **North London** we received £76.63. This came from P. Russo and C. Cole (Newham NW CLP) £3.00, R. Parry (Ilford North) £20.00, Wobey's (Hackney) £4.50, Southgate LPYS £5.00, a party in Walthamstow £10 and a Marxist Discussion Group in West London £1.35. **South London** raised £40.58 in total including £16.00 from G. Holt, Peckham LP members £2.09, a tax rebate of £10.00 from a Lewisham supporter, and £1.00 from R. Andrews (Dulwich).

Manchester and District's total went up by £204.48 this week, made up of the following: tax rebates in Ardwick £40.00, 'guess the Labour vote in Moss Side' £6.00, a sponsored wheel balance in Ardwick £6.00, tax rebates in Salford £10.00, in Rochdale £10.00, £50.00 from Oldham rebates and one in the South Manchester area £15.00. From **Merseyside** we

£52,500 NEEDED BY OCTOBER 7th

| FIGHTING FUND CHART | | £70,000 | | Received |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Area | Target 59 Wks | Target 52 Wks | Proportion of target received | Received |
| Eastern | 3,300 | 4,400 | [Progress bar] | 1,286.35 |
| Hants & IOW | 1,575 | 2,100 | [Progress bar] | 1,513.47 |
| Humberside | 1,650 | 2,200 | [Progress bar] | 925.28 |
| Lancashire | 1,125 | 1,500 | [Progress bar] | 346.03 |
| London: North | 5,775 | 7,700 | [Progress bar] | 2,763.94 |
| London: South | 2,850 | 3,800 | [Progress bar] | 1,579.15 |
| Manchester & District | 2,175 | 2,900 | [Progress bar] | 895.60 |
| Merseyside & District | 3,375 | 4,500 | [Progress bar] | 1,272.92 |
| Midlands East | 3,300 | 4,400 | [Progress bar] | 1,415.45 |
| Midlands West | 5,500 | 7,400 | [Progress bar] | 3,061.19 |
| Northern | 3,675 | 4,900 | [Progress bar] | 1,870.90 |
| Scotland East | 1,875 | 2,500 | [Progress bar] | 711.74 |
| Scotland West | 2,125 | 2,900 | [Progress bar] | 813.12 |
| South East | 1,725 | 2,300 | [Progress bar] | 1,345.76 |
| South West | 1,725 | 2,300 | [Progress bar] | 1,004.26 |
| Thames Valley | 1,275 | 1,700 | [Progress bar] | 815.80 |
| Wales East | 1,500 | 2,000 | [Progress bar] | 826.67 |
| Wales West | 1,725 | 2,300 | [Progress bar] | 793.05 |
| Yorkshire | 3,900 | 5,200 | [Progress bar] | 1,486.16 |
| Others | 2,250 | 3,000 | [Progress bar] | 3,350.79 |
| Total | 52,500 | 70,000 | | 28,077.63 |

Progress towards year's target Towards October 7th target

received £38.51 in total. M. Harrison (Kirkby) donated £20.00 and we received £5.00 from Sefton's five-a-side football game after a draw. The rest was made up from miscellaneous items and extras on paper sales.

Midlands East raised £23.72 this week including a tax rebate in Nottingham West, 'returned beer bottles' (also Notts West) £1.26, a sponsored 'giving up crisps' (North Nottingham) £3.00, and £3.00 from R. Jackson (Clay Cross LPYS). **Midlands West** total went up by £271.80 this week. This was made up from: Hall Green LPYS £1.72, M. Ali (Birmingham South) £10.00 and a Militant Readers' Meeting in the Birmingham area £102.92. The rest of the money came in as 'misc' items and 'anon' donations.

From **Northern Region** we received £70.94 which included £2.00 for sweeping a chimney (in the Durham area), £16.32 from a sponsored walk in North Tyneside, £10.64 from one in South Tyneside and £29.80 from a Tyneside Militant Readers' Meeting.

From **Scotland East** we received £2.28 which was £1.28 from B. McCosh of Edingburgh and £1 from P. Cunningham of Dunfermline. From **Scotland West** we received £5.00 which came entirely from Glasgow North and was made up of £1.00 from L. Jackson (Glasgow NALGO), plus 'anon' donations and extras.

Southern's total went up by £202.42 this week including B. Stonham (Brighton) 3.25, proceeds from a Co-op fair in Brighton £46.90, drink for

the fighting fund £4.07, a supporter's back pay (Brighton) £35.00, rattling tins (Canterbury) £5.00, S. Natrass (Littlehampton) £5.00 and A. Wood (Bexhill NUSS) £1.00

From **South West** we received £49.67 including money from J. Sharpe for 'sale of cigarettes' £8.00, I. Kirkland (Bristol NW) £2.00, C. Irwin (also Bristol NW) £2.00, and D. Morgan (Gloucester T&GWU) £1.50. **Thames Valley** target went up by £25.00 this week and came from a tax rebate sent in by I. Warrick of Reading.

From **Wales East** we received £37.50 from a jumble sale in Cardiff £25.00, a Marxist Discussion Group in Cardiff where the collection raised £10.60, and collecting jars £1.90. **Wales West** sent in £8.00 including £3.00 from



"Extras" from paper sales can mount up to sizeable sums for the Fighting Fund. photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

Port Talbot supporters.

From **Yorkshire** we received a total of £102.03: we received a letter from the National Woollsorters' Society in Bradford with a £5.00 donation enclosed, Huddersfield LPYS sent in £2.00 towards the premises appeal, £14.00 came in from a jumble sale in Leeds West area, B. Payne (Leeds) sent in £2.00 from the sale of pontoon tickets and Wakefield NALGO members donated £2.50. £18.00 came in from a Militant social in the Wakefield area and £14.00 from Wakefields 50 club. W. Rowan (Dewsbury) donated

£1, Dewsbury LPYS sent in £5.00 and another £5.00 was donated by an Ossett Labour Party member. £5.50 was raised at a collection in Sheffield and the rest of the money sent in from Yorkshire this week was from small donations, extras on sales and 'misc' items.

Many thanks to everyone who sent in money this week. We cannot afford to go down to such a low figure as last week's again. **Comrades must keep up the pressure and see if we can keep the weekly totals above the £1,000 mark all the time.**

School students join union



School students join Leicester LPYS

photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

School students at Shenfield School held their first union branch meeting last Tuesday.

The trade union successes in the outside world are teaching school students everywhere that conditions in schools can be improved by

mass action. The students at school are completely bypassed in decision making, even though most decisions directly affect the conditions they work under.

Interest in the National Union of School Students was first aroused at the Anti-Nazi

carnival in London when a union leaflet was found. Since then membership has increased to nearly forty and we have recruited members in 3 other local schools.

Two weeks ago a delegation went to see the headmaster and were favourably received.

PREPARE FOR NEXT TERM

We have also received recognition from the NUT in our school.

Our union meeting took place in a classroom at 3.40pm. At the meeting elections were held, and campaigns for the future suggested.

Needless to say, our progression towards this first meeting was not as smooth as we had hoped. The headmaster forbade us to put up posters advertising the meeting, and the promised notice in the weekly bulletin did not appear on Monday, hence there was virtually no publicity for the meeting.

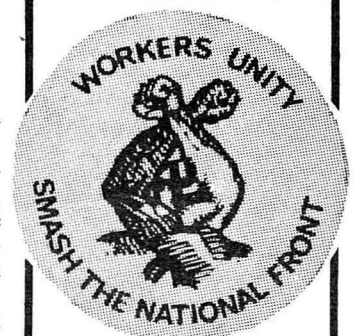
All school students should join their union, for only by having a mass organisation will our views be taken seriously and changes in the system consequently occur. We must fight for the socialist education programme of the Labour Party Young Social-

ists, including—

- ★ Fight for a fully comprehensive education
- ★ Increase education expenditure to reduce class sizes, replace slum schools, provide necessary books and equipment and pay teachers a living wage
- ★ A living grant for all students over the minimum school leaving age
- ★ Abolish school uniforms and end petty rules and discipline
- ★ Democratise the schools by setting up a school committee comprised of elected pupils, teachers, parents, and non-academic staff to run the school on a day to day basis
- ★ Overall management of education by the labour movement to break the domination of big business

Robert Lewin
Shenfield School NUSS

ADS



'WORKERS' UNITY' badge reprint. Bulk orders 12p per badge plus 10% p & p. Contact Simon Heather, 30 Mayfield Road, Moseley Birmingham B13 9HJ.

HOMAGE TO THE LATIN AMERICAN STRUGGLE to celebrate the assault on the Moncada Barracks, Cuba, of July 1952. Music, films, exhibitions from Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. Cuban refreshments. Organised by Latin America Society, London, 6.00 pm, 28th July, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Crèche provided.

35 HOUR WEEK

POEU solidarity shows fighting spirit

On Wednesday 19th, friction between PO engineers and management came to a head as two members at Bayswater Telephone Exchange [Dave Webb and Keith Alfrey] were sent home for action on union instructions.

In a classic example of union solidarity every member at Bayswater: in the Exchange, Subscribers' Apparatus Maintenance, and RSC, walked out. Later that day the lads on Bayswater External Maintenance walked out in sympathy.

The emergency sub-committee decided that in the event of any members sent home, all union members in the building concerned should follow the example of Bayswater and walk out, following which the building would be declared "black".

The "Tower" branch in the area have immediately responded to the management provocation by reverting to 8 am-5 pm working in the Post Office Tower. This action if continued could seriously disrupt Post Office systems. Other branches in the Centre area will decide on their own action this week.

A meeting was arranged with the General Manager, the outcome of which will be released to the workers in the form of an official union bulletin.

By Steve Waterfield
(Tyburn Branch POEU
London Centre Area)

Members should beware of so-called "Special Notices" etc. put out by management, which in our area have been used to mislead engineers, and which have already been used to weaken the action of the part-day stoppage on 12th July. Management led some engineers to believe that they could work until 12am and not 11am as stated by the union.

The action of the lads at Bayswater demonstrates the combativity amongst the broad layers of the engineers and their willingness to take on the Post Office, and should inspire the activists in the union to agitate, educate and organise the rank and file for even greater efforts to fight for 35 hours and to save jobs.



London POEU members picket Wood Green Exchange in solidarity with suspended members

photo: Julian McKittrick

**Militant Pamphlet
"FOR A DEMOCRATIC,
FIGHTING POEU"
Written by Militant supporters
in the POEU.**

Price 10p. Order from Roy Farrar,
74 Bull Lane, Liverpool 9

(please note—last week's advert carried incorrect address)

GOVERNMENT WORKERS' STRIKES SPREADING

At Aberporth Rocket Station, Tre-Cŵn, Haverfordwest Dockyard, Llangennach, and Morriston Licensing Centre, workers have come out on one day stoppages. The dispute [see 'Militant' 411, 412, 414] is over pay.

The unions have claimed consolidation of phases 1 and 2 plus 10%. The government have offered only a flat 9%, which has been rejected.

The mood among these workers, not previously militant, was shown at Llangennach, where the vote to take action was about 98% in favour, and many wanted more militant action than the shop stewards proposed. Some wanted a week's strike.

We had pickets out. Some of the lads wanted to stop any lorries going in, but there's no need for that yet, because there was no-one inside to unload them!

In Morriston DVLC again many wanted to shut the place for a week. We had a one day strike on Thursday, our first ever, absolutely solid. Now we are on an overtime ban.

We had two mass meetings last week, and there'll be more this week. We came out for a day to show we are in solidarity with Portsmouth and the others, and to prepare for future action.

The mood on this is such that the EETPU national officer is encouraging the

EETPU members at Royal Naval Stores, Llangennach, spoke to Kevin Ramage [Llanelli LPYS] men!

The workers, not previously involved in strike action, have learned very quickly. At one depot the management learned of a planned strike, and made alternative arrangements, so the day was changed! The idea of stopping lorries has clearly come from Saltley Gates and Grunwick.

What must be particularly worrying for the bosses and army chiefs is the militancy shown by these workers involved in naval stores, rocket stations and in one case an ammunition depot. What is needed now is a coming together of shop stewards from all government establishments to co-ordinate the fight, and link up with other trade unions, such as the CPSA at the Licensing Centre.

With the discontent on pay in the armed forces, a golden opportunity exists for unions like the TGWU to organise the rank and file of the forces, and link their struggle to the civilian workers. Action such as this would go a long way to drawing workers in uniform towards the labour movement and away from reactionary officers, showing their struggle is a common struggle of all workers.

Tight-fisted British Titan provokes sanctions

Members of ASTMS employed by British Titan Products on Teeside are taking industrial action for the first time. BTP is a "mini multinational", half owned by ICI, with 2 plants on Teeside, one at Grimsby, France, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and a half share in a plant in Spain.

Staff shift workers are paid for 37½ hours per week, but are on site for an average of 40 hours per week. They are supposed to get a half-hour meal break each shift, but are on call during meal breaks and are often called back to work during their meal breaks.

They often throw their sandwiches in the bin as they go home, having had no chance to take a break. BTP pays its payroll shift workers for their meal breaks. ICI, which is one of the biggest employers on Teeside, pays all shift workers for meal breaks.

In 1974, the staff unions made a claim for 2½ hours overtime per week for shift workers. In 1975, failure to agree was recorded at national level, but no action was taken by the staff unions. Early this year ASTMS members decided that this item could be left "on the table" no longer, and BTP was given notice that ASTMS would be taking industrial action. During that period, the only word from the company was that we were in breach of procedure, which we deny.

Industrial action consisting on an overtime and temporary shifts ban went ahead from 26.5.78. (Temporary shifts relates to a) day workers in some departments who work shifts from time to time on plant trials at which laboratory experiments are enlarged to plant scale b) day workers who work shifts as relief cover in control labs).

The company asked that the sanctions be lifted while they made a "meaningful offer" at local level, so the sanctions were suspended from 3rd to 7th July 1978. On 5th July the company made the following offer:

a) they would guarantee an uninterrupted break in the middle of each shift.

b) they would pay overtime for those breaks which could not be taken.

c) this would be on a 2-3 months trial run.

Sanctions were reimposed on 6th July!

There has been 100% support from our members, and T&GWU have offered their assistance. Reaction from the company has so far been muted, but the sanctions are beginning to bite. The company has stated on a number of occasions that they will eventually have to retaliate, and have hinted that they will suspend individuals. Should this happen, ASTMS will respond by using the only weapon available to the working classes for their self-defence.

By Keith Lee

working in the union

By Dick Massey

The stand we had taken on the painting of our accommodation proved a salutary lesson for all. It was my first experience as a spokesman but not my last. Needless to say the "Old Man" and the mate were bent upon wreaking their revenge.

We loaded iron ore in North Africa for Mobile Alabama, then to Galveston Texas, to load grain for home. While in Galveston one of our number met with a serious accident and had to be paid off. On the day of our sailing it came to our notice that no other man had been signed on to take the place of the sailor who had been put into hospital.

The ship's articles that the crew must sign, copies of which are displayed in the crew's quarters, quoted the total number of crew that the ship must carry and it states "of whom no less than (number) shall be Able Bodied seamen". In our case the number was six. (AB is a board of trade rating after a certain length of sea service.) We were the men who sailed the ship.

We decided that we would not sail short-handed and when we got the order to sail the five of us went up to the "bridge" to inform the "Old Man" of our decision. You can imagine his reaction. He "knew that I would finally lead my shipmates astray"; we were "all for it", "a full blooded mutiny if every he saw one."

It did not take him very long to have us all

ashore and in the "nick" but we refused his offer of consulting the British Consul. What chance would a crowd of striking seamen have with a British Consul? Instead we requested to be put in touch with the American Seamen's Union.

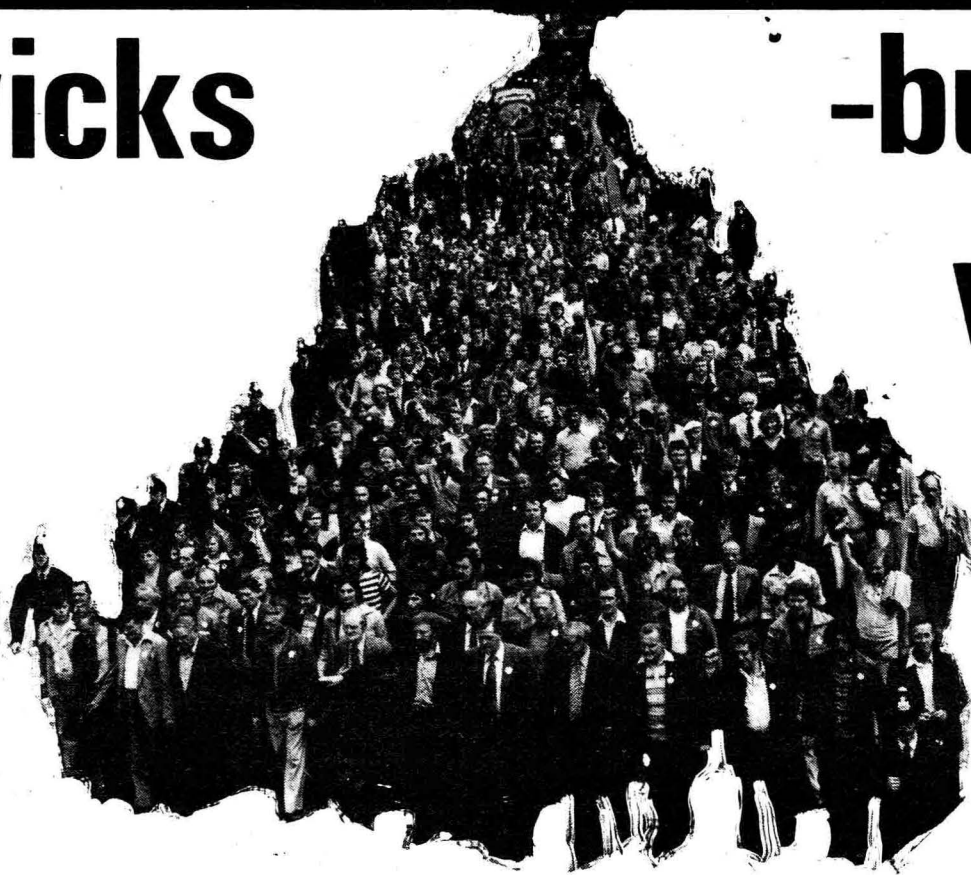
The "Old Man" was quickly put in his place. It was pointed out very forcibly that mutiny can only be perpetrated on the High Seas, and we had every justification for taking the steps that we had. Like all bullies he climbed down with very poor grace, and had the audacity to order us aboard ship as though we were in the wrong. I demanded that he sign on another AB before we even went aboard his ship: he countered by offering us "short hands" pay.

We asked the American union comrade to fix us up with hotel accommodation until the "Old Man" came to his senses. Then he tried the old ploy: he "really admired us for our principles", he "felt sure we could come to some arrangement." We walked out with our American comrade who treated us to a very nice lunch at his union's expense.

After a delay of some eighteen hours we sailed for home with a full compliment of crew. Had we not taken a stand about our living quarters and learned about our real strength in struggle, we would have sailed a man short. Once you have gained a victory, no matter how small, you will go from strength to strength, as we did.

Grunwicks battle over

-but the war goes on



One of the longest running and most important strikes in London and nationally has come to an end nearly two years after it began in August 1976.

The Grunwick Strike Committee made their decision to call off the strike, with regret. The leadership of their own union APEX, trusting in the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service to the bitter end, seemed almost certain to withdraw official support following advice from ACAS that nothing further could be done. The strikers had to make a decision in that light.

As Mahmood Ahmed, Chairman of the Strike Committee told me, obviously there is disappointment at this outcome. However, he was quick to point out that this strike is full of lessons for the

labour movement. It has already inspired other non-unionised workers—in the film industry in Leicester, the Garners Steak House workers—to take up the struggle for trade union rights.

This strike has shown up once and for all that the so-called impartial bodies such as ACAS offer no easy answer. As one striker stated, "ACAS was useless to us in this strike". In fact it is worse than that, as it actually

prolonged the strike, against the workers' interests.

The strikers are also quite clear that going through long legal proceedings will never benefit workers struggling against the bosses. Despite this set back the Grunwick strikers are more certain than ever that there is no alternative to the collective strength of the labour and trade union movement, and that if the enormous power of the trade unions had been brought to bear on the company, the strike could have been won.

The TUC did not use the enormous authority it has in the eyes of millions of workers, to give all support to the mass pickets. If coupled with the cutting-off of electricity, water and postal services, this would have brought the tinpot company to its knees, and thwarted any attempts by NAFF or any other reactionary elements to use the law against the Labour movement.

Facing new battles for union recognition, any victory the bosses think they may

have gained at Grunwick will ring very hollow. The coming period will see movements of the working class which will put the events of Grunwick in the shade.

But the tremendous courage of the Grunwick strikers in fighting for two years, the determined stand of the Cricklewood postmen in the face of the law courts, threats, and without any help from their national leaders, together with the thousands of workers who swelled the picket lines, bear testimony to

the solidarity and fighting spirit of the working class.

Frankly, the leadership of the Labour movement did not match up to the membership. Alongside the struggle for a better deal, challenging the low pay, nineteenth century conditions, and redundancies that capitalism is doling out, it is through battles like Grunwicks that workers will take up the fight also to transform their own organisations with democratic control by the members and a fighting leadership capable of matching up to the aims and aspirations of the working class.

Martin Elvin (ASLEF)
talked to Grunwick
Strike Committee
Chairman

GAYNORS - Organise against sweated labour

Joe Carney, a member of the G&MWU and Cheetham Labour Party spoke to Eddie Newman, secretary of Cheetham Labour Party, about his short and sharp introduction to working in an unorganised sweat shop in Miles Platting, central Manchester.

Eddie: How did you come to be working for this firm?

Joe: I have been unemployed. I read an advertisement in the local paper for a job as a machine operator at Gaynor (Packing Film) Ltd and I phoned up straight away.

At the interview I could tell from the superior attitude that there was no sign of a union. I was told pay is 92p an hour, and overtime after 4.00 pm is at time and a third. "You have got to work 12 hours and it is compulsory to work on Saturday morn-

ings. Any more than two days off and you're through the door," I was told.

The normal working week is 64 hours on the day shift. When alternating onto the night shift usual hours total 72. Anyway, a job is a job, and so I started work the following morning, supposedly for a four-week trial period.

Eddie: What are the working conditions like?

Joe: There is no canteen and the toilets are in a bad way. You get only one break of just half an hour in a 12-hour shift and you're not even allowed off the premises in your break. You stay by your machine.

A few women work on even lower pay on days from 8 till 4. Then some women workers are part time from 4-8 pm. A few teenagers work for about 50p an hour, driving stackers and the like.

But it's mainly almost non-stop working. There are opportunities for working Sundays and Bank Holidays although it is rumoured that the factory shuts for Christmas Day.

Eddie: So what did you try to do about it?

Joe: Well, I was a shop steward in my previous job, and I wasn't going to put up with these conditions. I decided to try to organise the factory.

Eddie: How did you go about it?

Joe: I did some ground work and then after the foreman had gone, I discreetly put some G&MWU recruitment leaflets around.

The following day I was approached by the manager and the foreman. The manager told me: "I don't think you're suitable for the job!" and gave me my wages. I replied, "Even I could think of a better one than that." "Get your coat and get off the premises," was his response.

As I was leaving the foreman slung some of the union leaflets at me and declared: "You can take those leaflets with you; we'll never have a union here, it's been tried before."

Eddie: So where do you go from here?

Joe: Well I think it's fairly obvious that I have been sacked for trying to start a trade union in the factory.

They didn't even let me finish my four-week trial.

I have already been on to the union and I am taking my case before an unfair dismissals' tribunal. **But what matters most to me is that the workers at Gaynor get organised.**

The firm's owners must be making a big profit. It's about time some of that profit reached the workers in the form of good wages and decent working conditions. Workers shouldn't be forced to do overtime in order to get something approaching a living wage. A strong trade union is vital and I will do everything I can to help establish one and to turn this firm from a sweat shop into a unionised factory.

Eddie: Finally Joe, what do you think about the 'Militant'?

Joe: I am really grateful that there is such a great paper as the 'Militant'. It really exposes the capitalist bosses for what they are—profit at all costs. It campaigns vigorously for a socialist society where all sweat shops, low wages, poor conditions at work and at home are part of the past.

I will be at the factory gates selling the 'Militant' to show the people working in such factories as this that their voice can be heard.

NUPE low paid campaign

Earlier this month the National Union of Public Employees in Swansea called a conference on the issue of low pay amongst its members. Derrick Gregory, the divisional officer for NUPE, explained to over 200 shop stewards attending, why NUPE had launched a campaign against low pay.

He pointed out that we live in a divided society where you have housewives who work at home being exploited at the rate of 30p-40p an hour, while the Chairman of ICI and Barclay's bank earn more than £1,000 a week. To the ordinary working man a wage increase of 10% is soon whittled away due to rising prices, but a wage increase of 10% to these big industrialists is worth around £20,000 more a year.

The campaign in NUPE is for the Labour government to implement its manifesto of 1974 for the major redistribution of the wealth of society towards the working class.

When asked about the fact that the government and the CBI are saying that a 35-hour week is not on and it will increase labour costs, Derrick replied by saying that with the introduction of new technology such as micro electronics, a 35-hour week can be achieved but this must go hand in hand with a £60 minimum wage to compensate a loss in earnings. He went on to say that new technology can be used for the benefit of the working class by reducing the working week only under socialism; under capitalism millions will be thrown on the dole.

The conference stated that they would do their utmost to return a Labour government to power, but if after a Labour victory Callaghan calls for further cuts in living standards and wage restraint, then NUPE would oppose that from the start and demand that the government carry through socialist policies to end unemployment.

Over the next few weeks NUPE will try and enlist support among the Trades Councils and the Labour Party and to see that their demands for a 35-hour week and a £60 minimum wage are included in the election manifesto. The Welsh TUC will be asked to call a conference of all unions in Wales to discuss the matter of low pay.

There will be a mass demonstration in Cardiff on September 16th while in North Wales there will be a similar conference on low pay on 29th July followed up with a mass demonstration probably in Wrexham on 30th July. It is up to union members to use the campaign to win low-paid workers to the trade union movement, and that we use our power to ensure that these demands are met.

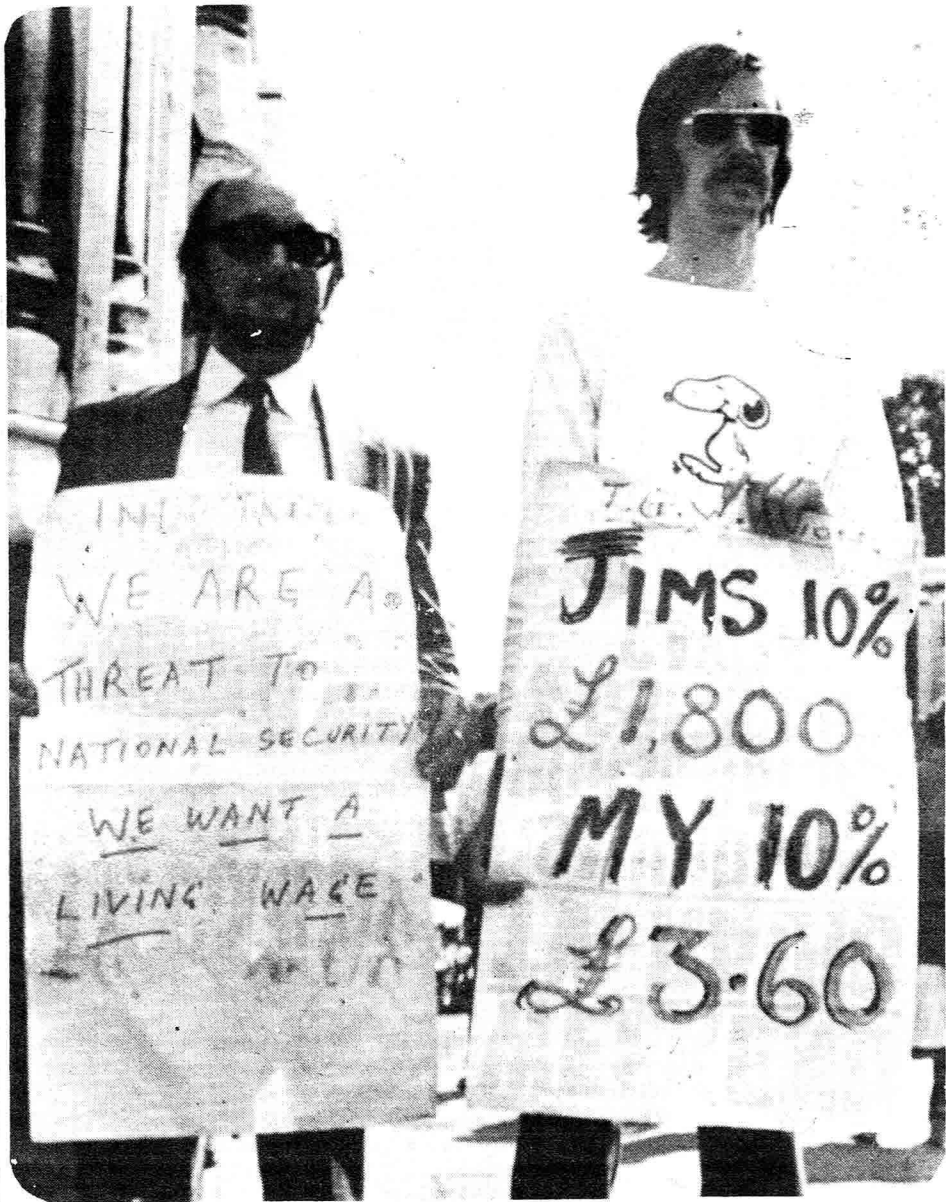
By Brian Lewis (Swansea LPYS)

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STOP NAVY STRIKE BREAKING



Over 500 industrial civil servants lobbied Parliament on Tuesday [25 July] in support of their wage claim [see page 15]. 5,000 Whitehall staff joined in with half-day or one-day stoppages. Action by official chauffeurs forced ministers and service chiefs to stand on their own two feet, or try out the underground.

On Wednesday, in violation of the most basic principles of the labour movement, the Labour government sent in the navy to break the civilian dock workers' blacking of

the Polaris nuclear submarine, Revenge, at Coulport on the Clyde.

Already, strike action in solidarity with the Coulport dockyard workers has closed the DVLC Licensing Centre in Swansea and the Royal Naval Stores in Llangennach.

All trade unionists must act to stop strike breaking by the armed forces. The defeat of the firemen's strike through the use of troops was warning enough to the labour movement.

WESTERN SHIP REPAIRERS

Management are prepared to destroy the yard and forget about the 650 men.

By Richard Venton
(Birkenhead LPYS)

yard but the official shop stewards failed to give direction to this fighting mood.

The pickets decided to call a further meeting on 24th July. 120 men agreed to elect an action committee to save the jobs because the old leadership had failed, even ceasing to attend the picket in some cases. The number of pickets has increased since then.

The Laird Group management of Western Ship Repair, Birkenhead, officially closed the yard and its 650 jobs on July 7th.

They have used miserly redundancy payments to bribe workers into selling their jobs. One electrician got £700 after 16 years' service. Many of the workers refused to give up so easily.

On 17th July, 200 men met and decided to strengthen picketing and refused the admission of care and maintenance workers to the yard. Management have refused to budge. Maintenance men have agreed not to cross the picket line.

A leaflet at that mass meeting produced jointly by Kevin Scully [EETPU Con-venor] and Birkenhead LPYS pointed out that the yard could have had a buyer. This buyer asked for government assistance, was promised it, but the Laird Group management rejected the offer.

They preferred to sack 650 men and lay plans to re-open with a tiny workforce. This disgusting treatment angered the men and many of them favoured occupation of the

Def Billington [Chairman of the Action Committee] told me of the latest developments. "Reg Mitchell director of Western Ship Repair and Solartex told us that they are strongly thinking of abandoning the yard on August 4th. They are also trying to sell equipment.

"Management are preparing to destroy the yard and forget about the 650 men and the seafront with dry docks. If the workforce had destroyed it they would have ended up in jail.

"The yard supposedly belongs to Lairds. It really belongs to the workers in Merseyside and must be saved."

The Action Committee will consider having a march in Birkenhead on Saturday 5th August which every trade unionist should attend. Move resolutions in your trade union branches giving support and demanding official backing for the men's fight, especially in GMWU, EET-PU, AUEW, UCATT, ASOB and TGWU. Send messages of support and urgently needed cash to: Western Ship Repair Action Committee, c/o 29 Gaywood Close, Birkenhead.

NO TO 5%

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in real wages.

For workers, on the other hand, the wage rise foregone under Phase 4 will never be recouped—unlike dividends, it is money lost forever! Such is the "equal" treatment meted out to the two classes in our divided society.

The labour movement must act against any further attacks on the living standards of the working class. The majority of trade unionists have clearly rejected wage restraint (see centre pages).

Now the Labour government must take heed of the ranks of the labour movement who put the ministers in power to represent the workers' interests. To fly in the face of the wishes of the working class is to court disaster and defeat, paving the way for a reactionary Thatcher government.

Labour must strike out poverty wages by setting a minimum wage of £70 a week and restore cut living standards with immediate wage rises.

Further erosion of living standards must be prevented by linking wages to a cost of living index worked out by committees of housewives and workers democratically elected by the trade union movement.

The TUC has spoken out against a Phase 4 and for a breaking of the fetters of free collective bargaining. But millions of their members will now demand "ACTION, NOT WORDS!"

The TUC must firmly and unambiguously declare its support for any union whose members fight to defend their living standards in the face of the 5% limit by mobilising the full weight of the 12 million strong trade union movement.

HARASSMENT

continued from page 1

number of swift, indiscriminate arrests. Four Labour Party members were charged with causing an obstruction or using insulting behaviour. We also understand that a fifth person, a supporter of the Anti-Nazi League, was arrested while leaving the scene to meet his wife.

In a statement issued by Tottenham Labour Party, they say: "The police action provides further evidence of the lack of any impartiality in these situations. The large number of NF supporters who blocked off the shops by the Plough represented a far bigger obstruction to the public than the small number of Labour Party supporters. "The police chose to act

solely against the NF's opponents and while four Labour Party members and one member of the Anti-Nazi League were arrested no charges were brought against any member or supporter of the NF."

Numbers of passing shoppers came forward as witnesses to the degree of unwarranted violence used by the police.

The first Labour Party member to be arrested was Sheila Peacock, Secretary of the Tottenham Labour Party, agent for Norman Atkinson MP. She is also President of the Haringey Teachers Association (NUT) and Chairman of the Borough Co-operative Party, and a mother of five

grown up children. She was seized without warning by a police officer, dragged across the road by her hair and then back again to be forcibly manhandled into a police car.

Her requests to see a police doctor were ignored. On being released she was examined by a doctor who confirmed that hair had been pulled out of her head and that she was badly bruised and grazed on her back.

Demonstration

The Tottenham Labour Party "deplores the way in which this situation was handled by the police." They are demanding that the charges be dropped from all those arrested and that the people involved should receive an apology, and are calling for an enquiry into the police

behaviour in this matter.

They have appealed to Labour Party members to discuss and pass resolutions supporting their action and opposing the police behaviour, and send them to the NEC, Merlyn Rees and any other relevant bodies.

A street demonstration has been organised for Saturday 29th July at 11.00 am, at the spot where the arrests took place. Speakers, including Norman Atkinson MP (Labour Party Treasurer), Ted Knight (Parliamentary Candidate, Hornsey), Reg Race, Ernie Large JP (Chairman, Tottenham Labour Party) and Councillor Bernie Grant (NUPE Organiser) will appeal for witnesses to the arrests and the police attacks to come forward, and link these events to the fight against racism and the fascist thugs of the NF.

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