

Industrial civil servants say— **NO MORE WAGE RESTRAINT**

The labour movement must answer the moans and groans of the Tories about the 'defence of the nation' with socialist economic policies in defence of the pay, conditions and living standards of the working class.

The growing frustration and anger of workers at the continued cutting of living standards through prolonged wage restraint was demonstrated on Wednesday in strike action by thousands of "industrial civil servants".

These workers—183,000 who include messengers, cleaners and drivers in government establishments, as well as industrial workers in naval dockyards and ordinance factories—have fallen way

behind even the restrained wages of their brothers and sisters in private industry.

Craftsmen and labourers in the naval dockyards are undoubtedly at the forefront of this particular battle. When talks between the government and the unions broke down last Tuesday, for instance, 6,000 angry workers at Rosyth—where the Polaris submarines Repulse and Renown are immobilised—confirmed their decision to go ahead with the

24-hour strike, despite a call from the leadership in London to call it off.

"On Wednesday morning," Nick Brooks reported from Portsmouth, "there were over 400 pickets at the Unicorn gate of the navy's dockyard, and over 100 at the main gate. About 13,000 workers, including some foremen and supervisors, were out in the area's two main dockyards, and every naval establishment in the area was affected."

By
Lynn Walsh

"Most drivers recognised the pickets, and little or no milk, post or other goods went in. Workers eagerly seized the 'Militant' leaflet. There was great sympathy for the strikers from local people."

Explaining the feelings at Rosyth, Paul Cunningham of Dunfermline Labour Party Young Socialists told 'Militant':

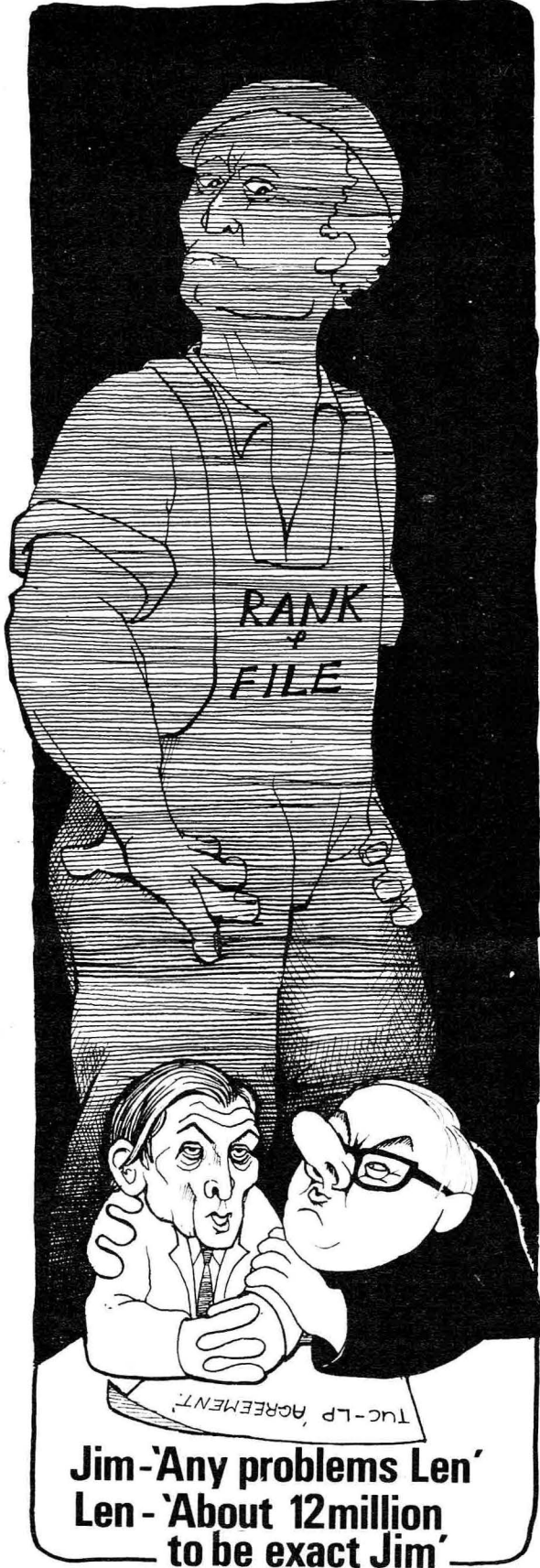
"In Rosyth dockyard there are men who are leaving at the end of the week with less than £40. It is hardly surprising that these traditionally 'moderate' workers are dissatisfied."

"They are also dissatisfied with an incentive scheme (DIBS) which has been whittled down from 30% to 4% of pay for 40 hours' work. A new dockyard wage structure was promised three years ago to replace the existing inadequate and obsolete scheme. Alas, it's still 'on trial'."

"These are highly skilled workers whose pay has not changed since 1970. Their wages for a basic 40 hours are in fact about 25% lower than the wages of comparable workers in the private sector. They also receive less paid holidays than most workers in the private sector."

"The dockyards are plagued with a bureaucratic administration

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**Jim - 'Any problems Len'
Len - 'About 12 million
to be exact Jim'**

**POEU
STEP UP
FIGHT FOR
35hr WEEK
now!**



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

Workers in the Post Office Engineering Union are at the forefront of the vital battle for the 35-hour week.

This week, however, the POEU leadership called off the overtime ban—which was so successful that the Post Office management have been obliged to reinstate most of the 100 men suspended for implementing the ban.

Instead, the Executive is now calling for a work to rule. The capitalist press and the television have presented this as a stepping up of the union's campaign. But the membership are far from satisfied at this change of tactics.

The immediate reaction of the membership is one of disgust at their

*The POEU and
the fight for a
35-hour week
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leaders' weakness, but also determination to fight on to victory. Although the overtime ban was costing many engineers loss of money, they realise the necessity of this form of action. The effect of a work to rule may well be wiped out if the work is made up by overtime working.

This backpeddling by the NEC has reminded members that the NEC were reluctant to put up a real fight for
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MOBILISE AGAINST

BRICK LANE'S LESSONS

Hard-core thugs of the National Front, with something more than a nod and a wink from the police chiefs, have in recent weeks turned the Brick Lane area into one of bloody attacks and violent clashes. The defence of the people of this area and the need to wipe the NF off the streets, is an issue for the whole labour movement.

The resounding defeat of National Front candidates in last May's local elections has led to their impatient and frustrated members launching cowardly attacks on innocent Bengalis. The spate of murders and other attacks such as the ones on the Bengalis outside the Brewery has brought thousands of Bengalis onto the streets.

The Bengalis (youth especially) will no longer tolerate such vicious attacks sitting down. This was indicated by the march and occupation of Brick Lane on 11th July followed by a strike of 7,000

workers, mostly Bengalis, on 17th July.

That was undoubtedly a victory for the Bengali community and a humiliating defeat for the NF and their protectors—the police.

The following Sunday, however, it was back to square one with over 100 NFers selling their paper at their usual spot, being protected by over 1,500 police, with hundreds more police in reserve.

Substitute

Why were the NF able to crawl back out of their holes and show their ugly faces on Brick Lane again?

The police had obviously learnt the lesson of the previous Sunday and had made sure that their forces outnumbered those of the anti-National Front demonstration.

For a relative handful of anti-fascists to have attempt-

ed to break through the police cordon and take on the National Front—which would inevitably have meant taking on the huge police contingent—would have been completely childish. This was the policy suggested by the ANL, and which a few of their supporters apparently tried to carry out.

Such Kamakazi tactics, which may sound "heroic" on the day, are actually a substitute for the serious and absolutely vital work of mobilising sufficient forces from the organised labour movement to ensure that the fascists are cleared out—and that the police keep a respectful distance.

To mobilise the organised workers requires more than denunciation of fascism and racialism. It needs a socialist campaign of explanation of the fact that these malignant trends are not just a threat to blacks, but a deliberate political weapon aimed ag-

ainst the labour movement.

Defence of the Bengali community cannot be left just to the Bengalis plus a few anti-fascists. At the same time, defence of the Bengali community is, in reality, defence of the organisational and political integrity of the labour movement.

Unionise

There is only one force of society strong enough to defend the livelihood, and indeed the lives, of black and white workers, strong enough ultimately to sweep away the social system which breeds racialism—the trade union and labour movement, now nearly 12m strong.

To leave the defence of Brick Lane to just Bengalis would lead to further attacks on immigrants, in the areas where they are not very strong. Therefore we have to call on the trade union branches, shop stewards'

committees, trades councils and Labour Party to come to the aid of Bengali community organisations who are quite correctly trying to organise defence of the area from fascist thugs.

We must root out the fascists wherever they raise their ugly heads. Two hundred workers at the Longbridge plant pointed the way forward when they downed tools and refused to go back to work until a known Nazi from their shop was removed.

A campaign for the defence of Brick Lane, moreover, must be linked to a drive to organise the highly exploited Bengali workers.

Most of the Bengali workers are employed in the sweatshop clothing industry often having to work long hours for low wages. Every effort must be made to bring the Bengali workers into the mainstream of the trade unions by organising them in the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers so the struggle against racialism is

linked with a struggle for better working conditions, wages etc.

Racialism and fascism cannot be fought in isolation. They are not abstract evils, but breed on the very real social evils produced by a crisis-ridden capitalist system. It is the mood of bitter disappointment and disillusionment with the Labour government's failure to solve any of these problems which has allowed the NF and right-wing Tories to appeal to sections of the middle class and more backward workers—which is why the fight against the menace of fascism must at all times be linked to a programme of socialist action capable of eradicating unemployment, dead-end job conditions, slum housing, and all the other rotten conditions produced by the present system.

By Sardul Singh

(LPYS anti-racialism committee)

"We must rely on our own forces"

For a mass mobilisation in Brick Lane on Sunday, 20 August—that was the clear call from a conference of Asian community leaders at a very valuable meeting held in the Indian Workers' Association headquarters at Southall, West London, last Saturday.

Vishnu Sharma, president of the Southall IWA, stressed the need for the whole Indian community and the whole community to be involved in the fight against racialism in the East End.

S Kardri, IWA general secretary, said that the greatest shield against racialism is the unity of the working class against the capitalist system. "Workers' unity, not just Asian, but West Indian and white as well, is the greatest vigilante group we can think of", he said.

Paul Halborough and other representatives of the Anti-Nazi League said they thought that "Asian consciousness" and Asian self-defence were the most important things to campaign for.

In contrast to the ANL position, Ed Bober, London Labour Party Executive, spoke of the need to mobilise all sections of the working class, black and white, to defend the Bengali workers in Brick Lane. Ed also stressed the need for a socialist campaign to defeat racialism by removing the fears of politically backward sections of the workers about unemployment, housing and slum schooling.

A debate erupted around the question of whether the conference should call for a special squad of police to deal with areas that have racial problems. Sardul Singh

(LPYS) stressed that such a demand would inevitably backfire on the Asians. The police will always be used to enforce racist and anti-working-class policies. It's not just a question of the motives of this or that policeman. "We must rely on our own forces, the strength of the working class to defeat the fascist threat," he said.

During the course of the debate, the ANL representatives changed their position and at the end voted with the LPYS and some of the Asian workers in opposition to such a force. However, the motion was carried by 17 to 11.

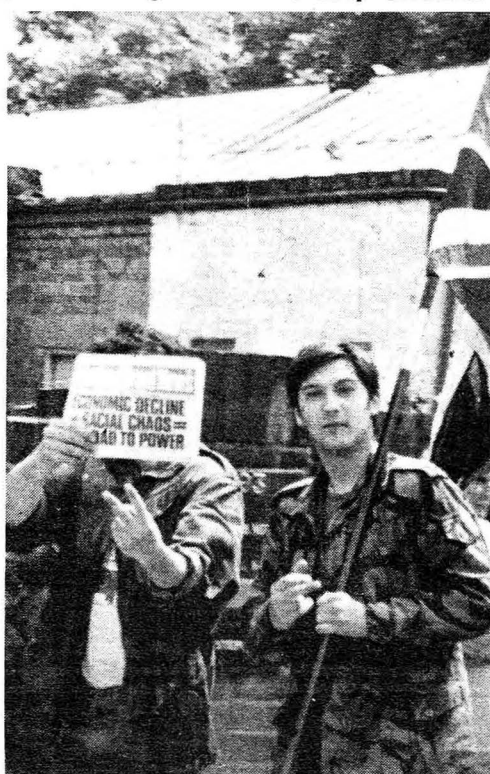
At the end of the conference, Joan Lestor, Labour Party Chairman, said in summing up that, although relations between the police and the Asian community were at an all-time low, we should remember that the police were also disliked by many other sections of the population, especially the youth.

Joan Lestor said that we must have confidence that the police can be changed and that the government must be made to do all it could to take action against police racialism. On the positive side, she pointed out that over 200 Asian workers had joined the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union in the East End during the Day of Action on 17 July.

Despite the political differences that existed among the delegates, the debate was extremely valuable, and the conference was unanimous in calling for a big mobilisation for the ANL Carnival in London on 26th September.

Chris Hill

(Chairman London Region LPYS)



Left: Anti-fascist Bengalis occupy end of Brick Lane [16 July]. Right: NF thugs shadow Enfield anti-racist march [15 July]; police ignore "threatening behaviour".

AN EFFECTIVE DEMO

Over 1,000 anti-fascists collected in Brick Lane, East London, last Sunday to prevent the National Front from selling their racist papers. It was an effective demonstration of solidarity with the Bengali community, which has been subject to numerous racist assaults, abuse and even murder over recent weeks.

The number of anti-fascists could not be counted exactly. The police, who were out in force, kept breaking us up into little groups and moving us on. But a large contingent of at least 200 assembled at the top of Brick Lane where the NF have in the past peddled their vile propa-

ganda. Many more demonstrators spread out along Brick Lane selling papers and giving out leaflets.

Socialists definitely made their mark on Brick Lane this weekend. About 100 copies of 'Militant' were sold, and 1,000 Labour Party Young Socialists leaflets distributed.

The NF, who were reduced to a pathetic group of about 30 thugs, lurked around a nearby corner, utterly demoralised. Towards the end of the morning they tried in desperation to enter Brick Lane. But because of the militant hatred of them by the Bengali workers in the area, who are able to mobilise hundreds of youth against them at a moment's notice, the police, in order to avoid an uncon-

trollable situation, were obliged to prevent the NF from coming into the lane.

In the afternoon, LPYS members went out visiting around the area to recruit new members from the Bengali youth. It was significant that the NF, who had been humiliated in the morning, chose this time to viciously beat up one anti-fascist in a cowardly way after the demonstration had dispersed.

This illustrated one important point that 'Militant' supporters have consistently made about these anti-fascist activities: that the real way fascism will be beaten and driven completely off the streets, is through a mobilisation of masses from the organised labour movement.

While the job of fighting fascism is left to the immigrant workers, and small anti-fascist groups, the NF will always manage to pluck up sufficient confidence to rear their ugly heads and crawl back out of their rat holes.

As the LPYS pointed out: this demonstration was a partial success, but the job now is to wage a political campaign inside the trade unions to explain the danger that fascism poses to the workers' movement, and to mobilise tens of thousands of workers, black and white, to defeat the fascists completely.

Ed Bober

(London L.P. Executive)

FASCISTS

FASCISTS SKULK IN BACK-STREETS



Sheila Peacock [Secretary/Agent, Tottenham Labour Party] being dragged across the road by the police

The labour movement must make it clear to the police and the courts that it will not tolerate victimisation of members exercising their right to protest against the activities of fascist thugs

In response to the call from Tottenham Labour Party following the arrest of four of its members the previous week, over 150 turned out last Saturday to demonstrate in Tottenham High Street.

The demonstrators, who occupied the NF's previous "pitch", had three main aims:

To show the labour movement's disgust at the police's vicious, discriminatory action against LP members;

To keep the Front from selling in the High Road;

And to expose the nature of racialism to the people of Tottenham.

Local NF members were recognised, as were some from Enfield, but the demonstrators effectively kept the Front skulking in back streets and in nearby pubs.

The Labour Party on 22nd July had been protesting against the National Front

peddling their racialist filth in Tottenham High Road, when the police moved in. Police dragged Sheila Peacock, the Party's Secretary/Agent, across the road and back. Sheila as a result blacked out, and was later treated for serious bruising of the back, as pictures in the local papers demonstrated.

Demonstration

Three other LP members, Norman Peacock, Cherie McAskill, and Vince Gillespie, together with a member of the Anti-Nazi League, were also arrested.

The CLP later issued a forceful statement condemning the attacks and the arrests. Tottenham's MP, Norman Atkinson, and other sections of the local labour movement, have protested to the Home Secretary. They are demanding that all charges be dropped and the officers involved in the arrest of Sheila Peacock be suspended pending a public enquiry.

Members of the LPYS, both through selling literature and speaking at the street meetings, took the lead in answering the fascists' lies and taking up the real bread and butter problems that give racialism a hold if Labour does not act to solve them.

The labour movement must make it clear, as it began to in this area on Saturday, that it

will mobilise against the provocations of the NF—and it will also make it clear to the police and the courts that it will not tolerate victimisation of members exercising their right to protest against the activities of fascist thugs.

By Nick Wing

(Tottenham LPYS)

Protest Endorsed

"This Constituency Labour Party deplores the arrest and the manhandling by the police of four members of Tottenham Labour Party and a member of the Anti-Nazi League on Saturday 22nd July in Tottenham High Road. We further believe it is a scandal that the NF should be allowed to sell their fascist and racist material with police protection. We there-

fore call on the Home Secretary, along with the members of Tottenham Labour Party, to investigate the conduct and behaviour of the police. We call for all charges to be dropped and with apologies made to all concerned."—Resolution carried unanimously by Hackney Central Labour Party last week.

Closure of Bright's Nursery would be a severe blow to working mothers



Linda Chester collecting signatures for petition

"It is such a tragedy. It is such a blow that everybody is still a bit numb."

That was the reaction of one of the staff at Bright's nursery on hearing that the nursery will close at the end of January.

John Bright Brothers is an old-established textile firm in Rochdale. In 1950 it opened the nursery that was to become so important to the town's workers. As well as employers' children, it takes children from outside and children with special needs.

It is a large, well-equipped building, and unlike local authority nurseries is open from 7 am to 5 pm all the year round. Mothers can also leave their school children there, with nursery staff taking them to and from school; and the nursery provides three meals a day.

Many of the mothers will have to give up their jobs if the nursery closes. Child-minders are no alternative for mothers with children at school.

Bright's have decided to close the nursery because they say they can no longer subsidise it. But the nursery has 200 places, employees pay £6.50 a week for each child's care, outsiders pay £13, and the DHSS pays even more than that for the 40 places it uses.

The DHSS pays this money whether it fills the 40 places or not. A third of the nursery has already been closed for some time, despite the obvious need of working mothers in this town.

The nursery could be taken over by the local authority, but this could mean that the hours the nursery is open

might be cut. Mothers from outside the Metropolitan Borough area could end up with no nursery places at all.

Also, the nursery nurses are not qualified, and that might mean they lost their jobs. This must be avoided at all costs.

Rochdale, and Heywood and Royton Labour Party Women's sections have been campaigning for more nursery places and nursery education for some months. The constituency's resolution to the Labour Party National Conference is on nursery education, and calls for a planned economy to enable us to carry out the demands of the resolution.

Bright's decision to close the nursery is an indication that working families can get even their basic needs only when profit can be made.

A good nursery system is the right of all working people. The government must immediately increase public spending to cater for this need.

In Rochdale the local authority should take over Bright's nursery and keep it open on the present basis. There must be no reduction of services to the people of Rochdale, and no redundancies among the nursery workers.

Not only must we keep Bright's nursery open, but working women everywhere must demand nursery education as the right of every child. A national programme for pre-school services, with hours flexible enough to cater for the needs of all working parents.

Linda Chester
(Rochdale Labour Party)
Sheila Woodhead
(Royton & Heywood LP)

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BETHNAL GREEN HOSPITAL CLOSURE

"in patients' interests"?!"



Casualty Department closes, August 1st. Matron, doctor and administrator leave.

Photo: Lawrence Sparham (IFL)

30th. Anniversary of the NHS

A Militant SLIDESHOW



'Militant' has produced a slideshow to illustrate and explain various aspects of the NHS. One section shows how the service originated, others deal with drug profits and safety. But most importantly, the slideshow provides an interesting way of alerting members of the labour and trade union movement to the dangerous developments taking place within the Health Service.

The slideshow is informative and thought-provoking. It is an excellent basis for a discussion at a day school or evening meeting. It is highly suitable for trade union, Labour Party and Labour Party Young Socialist branches, or shop stewards' committees.

The show lasts about an hour, although, if necessary, sections can be taken out to cut down on the time. Where requested, 'Militant' will provide a speaker along with the slides. A modest fee of £2 will be charged for each hiring.

To hire: please contact Ian Burge, John Ellicott Centre, The London Hospital, Whitechapel, London E.1. Tel: 01-247 5454, ext. 617.

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. V. 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 15 August

ALL WELCOME

"...I do not, therefore, propose to intervene in what is essentially a matter for local decision and I would urge the staff of the hospital to co-operate with the Authority to ensure, in the best interests of patients, that the plan is carried out in an orderly way."

This statement last week from the Minister of Health, Mr Roland Moyle, has dashed any hopes of a change of policy on the part of the Labour Government towards the run down of the health services.

"In the best interests of patients"—how many more times are we going to have this thrown at us? Is it "in the best interests of patients" to close down 360 beds while we have thousands of patients waiting to use them?

Is it "in the best interests of patients" to close down a casualty department that serves 13,000 patients a year and has already saved lives since management's first attempt at closure? Is it "in the best interests of patients" to deprive them of the staff for essential services?

Is it "in the best interests of patients" that staff are so overworked and conditions so bad that patients' health, even lives, are endangered in hospital?

At Bethnal Green Hospital, management have been conducting a psychological war. They have been threatening staff on their future prospects if they don't take up alter-

native posts elsewhere in the District.

They are hoping that the uncertainty they are creating will drive staff away. If anything this is tightening the resolve of the unions to resist the plans.

We have already been on strike three times in recent weeks. Any attempt to send in contractors to carry out conversion work will be met with resistance.

Such work has been blacked by the hospital unions. The

local trades councils and the South East Regional Council of the TUC have endorsed this.

The present plans for Bethnal Green are only part of a whole range of cuts in Tower Hamlets health services. But even the total of these cuts might well be only the thin edge of the wedge. Already there is concern about the future of the 380 bed Mile End Hospital.

Cuts on this scale are almost certain if we do not mobilise the labour movement now. Workers are ready to act to save their health

services.

The mood at meetings I have addressed around the borough has shown this. The Rally and strike action taken on August 1st also showed it.

But it would not be enough to merely follow one strike by another without any more perspective. This would lead to demoralisation and unnecessary sacrifices.

Industrial action will only be worthwhile if part of a general mobilisation, locally at first, in all sections of the movement to take up the question of the National Health Service and the cuts. The shop stewards' committee has embarked on this course in calling a conference of convenors, shop stewards, branch officers from all local workplaces. The object of this will be to organise a borough-wide stoppage later on this year.

If we have a Tory government this winter we can be certain that there will be enormous new cuts in the health services. If we have another Labour government it will be the same thing—unless we make our impression on the leaders and force them to reverse their whole economic policy.

We have the opportunity to begin this process in Tower Hamlets!

By Ian Burge

(Secretary, JSSC, London Hospital)

Day of Action

Management have withdrawn all the staff from casualty. Campaign supporters are sitting-in there to prevent any attempts to remove any equipment, except emergency treatment of course. The Campaign is also maintaining a 24 hour picket on the gates. This is to prevent delivery of geriatric equipment or any attempted access by contractors.

The Rally on Tuesday lasting about an hour and a half was attended by

about 500 people including many workers such as 150 from the brewery. Included amongst the speakers was Jack Dromey from the South East Regional Council of the TUC who re-affirmed the official blacking of the conversion work.

Management may be able, by withdrawing staff, to run down facilities. To us, this is but temporary. We continue to fight to get those staff back.

MILITANT NOTICES

LANCASHIRE Militant Supporters: Lyke Wake Walk. A 40-mile walk across the North Lancashire 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 16th—'Where is Britain Going?'; August 30th—'Workers' control and Management'. Contact Dave Farrar, 061-737 6751.

WALLSEND 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'.

SOUTHAMPTON Marxist Discussion Group: Wednesday 9th August—'The Russian Revolution (I): events leading up to October 1917' 7.30 pm, 66 Croydon Close, Lordshill. Wednesday 23rd August—'The Russian Revolution (II): Developments after October 1917' 7.30 pm, 49 Lewis Silkin Way, Lordshill.

NEWCASTLE WEST Militant Readers' Discussion Meetings: Monday 14th August—'What's happening in Africa?' Monday 4th September—'TUC Conference: what perspectives for the movement?' 7.30 pm, Pooley Road Clinic, Denton Burn.

CLASSIFIED

BRISTOL NE 'Reinstate the LPYS' Campaign Pamphlet—10p. Order from the secretary, 13 Camerton Road, Greenbank, Bristol 5.

Militant Trade Union Pamphlets
G&MWU Review 1978. 15p
Socialist Policies for the UPW. 10p
CPSA: The tasks ahead. 20p
A fighting programme for printworkers. 15p
'Militant' Teacher. 15p
Order your copies now from
World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace, London
E8 3PN. Please add 5p postage.

OUT NOW
Militant pamphlet
'In Defence of October'
By Leon Trotsky
20p + 5p postage
Order from 'Militant',
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

LEFT & RIGHT

HOLY EXPORTS!

It's not just oil sheiks who are taking advantage of the low value of the pound to have a shopping spree. The bishops at the Lambeth conference were shooting off in their lunchbreak to the ecclesiastical clothiers to pick up a few bargains.

Nine purple cassocks went in the first few hours, at £80 a piece. Many of the bishops 'particularly those from the Third World apparently save their clothes allowances for a glorious blowout every ten years at Lambeth' said the Guardian. With a standard chromium crozier priced at about £275 and a 'better class collapsible version' at £405, there's big money involved.

The export of capital to these countries brings benefits to the British bosses in terms of the exports of machinery which it induces. Evidently the export of religious ideas has just the same benefits to the balance of payments, and just as little benefit for the masses who are subjected to it.

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

'Militant' has always pointed out that though at first glance import controls might seem a simple solution to workers whose jobs are threatened by the decay of British industry, they offer no answer, and indeed would only add to the crisis, with

New import control measures have been imposed on clothes coming into Britain from outside the EEC, aimed at protecting Europe's clothing manufacturers. "Naturally says the *Mirror's* finance reporter, "they will...use up their quotas to buy more expensive clothes on which they can make bigger profits". Of course. But the big shop chains are still none too happy about it, letting the cat out of the bag about what the new measures will mean. Cheaper clothes will be hit hardest—"the poorer working wives are the ones who will suffer" said Tesco's. "...Shirt prices will rise by 25% in early 1979, anoraks by 25 to 30%." Warned Littlewood's managing director.

And these are the measures put forward by left wing "Tribune Group" MPs and the Communist Party as an answer to unemployment and the problems of British capitalism. Less choice, dearer goods and easy profits at our expense for some manufacturers. Not much of an answer!

DOING THE HONOURABLE THING

One man who has just got himself a job is Angus Ogilvy, Princess Alexandra's husband, newly-appointed non-executive [but well paid] director of the General Electrical Company. Ogilvy could, of course, only be a non-executive director [which means he has no direct day to day job in running GEC] because is so busy. For instance, in February last year he was also made a director of Sotherby's, the auctioneers.

For Angus these two appointments are a lucky break. Only two years ago he was saying that "the only honourable thing for me to do" was to resign his directorships following criticisms of financial dealings by himself and other directors of Lonrho in a special Department of Trade report. It will be remembered that the then Tory Premier Edward Heath called Lonrho "the unacceptable face of capitalism" when the scandal broke in 1973.

When the report was published Ogilvy was thought to be a director of 11 firms. He sent out two kinds of resignation letter, one saying "I hereby resign" and the other "I hereby offer my resignation". The two companies which received the second kind of letter, The Rank Organisation and the MEPC property group, refused to accept the offer and Ogilvy has remained on those two boards ever since. A shining example of capitalist morals and how the bosses solve their 'unemployment' problems!

A Soldier's life

In the first of a two-part interview, a soldier serving in the notorious Black Watch regiment of the British army in Northern Ireland, spoke to a Labour Party Young Socialists member about the conditions and mood of the rank-and-file troops.

Returning home from Belfast, I talked with a young soldier who was with his fiancée. He was a member of the Black Watch—which under 'Mad Mitch' (Lieutenant-Colonel Mitchell, who later became a Tory MP and Parliamentary Private Secretary) was infamous for its role in Aden prior to independence.

Since Aden, their movements have been restricted mainly to Northern Ireland and their base at Catterick. "Why Catterick?" I asked, as the regiment is Scottish.

He told me how they never got home postings—because 'civvy street' might become too much of an attraction. The discussion went on to the Glasgow dustmen's strike when the Labour government sent the troops in to break it.

Apparently they had to withdraw the first bunch of troops who, largely because of the threats and appeals of the Glasgow workers, were not willing to "scab" any more. He said that the Black Watch probably wouldn't have done it at all.



photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

I freely referred to the army role in Glasgow and during the firemen's dispute as scabbing. He agreed that they had scabbed, but what choice did they have? He had enjoyed the 'firefighting' as a break from boring routine.

"Weren't they cutting their own throats?" I asked. There was obviously a great deal of discontent in the forces over pay, and a victory for the

firemen would have helped them with their own wage increase.

Getting out

Ian looked resigned. "Yes that's true, many of us were on the side of the firemen. Our wages are awful. £38 to take home after board and taxes are stopped, and you lose £10 if you leave the North. How can you keep a family

in Britain at the same time?"

He'd be buying himself out in 18 months, following the other 150 out of 750 he said are leaving at the end of February. No, he hadn't got a trade, he was an infantryman, but anything would be better than life in Northern Ireland.

It was his third 'tour', and he was bored, homesick, shocked, and nauseated.

KEY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED

Marxist economics is one of the first questions that comes up when workers discuss socialism seriously.

The economic analysis of the development of capitalism underlies all strategies for socialism. There is a great thirst for information on this subject as the multitude of pamphlets at the LPYS conference bears out.

A recent addition to the books on the subject, 'Marxist Economics for Socialists' may catch some workers' eyes. Harrison's book aims at being a simple introduction to Marxist economics. Although it has some points to recommend it, it finally fails.

He starts by outlining the method of historical materialism and compares this with Proudhonism, the competing reformist doctrine of Marx' time. This brief sketch is oversimplified but useful.

He then discusses simple commodity production in an idealised village community to explain the law of value, and commodity production under capitalism. This section is an excellent simple exposition of the way in which the labour power of the worker is bought and used by the capitalist.

Part two discusses the

historical development of capitalism. On early capitalism he is brisk and readable. However the section on capitalist crises is far less satisfactory.

Harrison describes clearly the way in which a downward spiral to a slump occurs, once a crisis has been triggered off. But the reason that crisis occurred is not properly discussed. This question is vital.

Ducking out

He dismisses with a facile example the idea that the capitalists' rate of profit must fall as technical progress continues and instead attributes the falling profitability leading to crisis to increasing demand for labour making wages rise. In his words "the fundamental tendency is for accumulation to exhaust the industrial reserve army".

This is certainly not what Marx put forward, and does not hold up. There is no space to discuss this in detail, but if the major reason for capitalist crisis were lack of labour, the problem could be solved in principle by the expansion of capitalism over the whole globe. Especially at a time when the industrial reserve army of unemployed is obvi-

ously increasing internationally, this section is completely inadequate.

Harrison discusses the debate in the socialist movement in the 1900's on the perspective for the development of capitalism. Obviously the next step should be a contribution to the equivalent debate today, but he ducks away. A useful description of the present crisis and destruction of the arguments of 'right reformism' and 'left reformism' is given. Then he stops.

The origins of the post-war boom are not discussed because they are "the subject of dispute among Marxists". But these disputes are vital for distinguishing Marxism from the various trends of quasi-Marxism.

The facts are that while in 1947 a number of self-proclaimed 'Marxists' and Trotskyists were predicting a period of slump and further wars, only the supporters of what became 'Militant' predicted 10-15 years of boom. Later, when the 'International Socialists' predicted a new phase of capitalism with boom for ever-more, it was only 'Militant' which soberly pointed out that as the boom had begun so it would end. (Others, of course continued to predict slump. Like a barometer stuck at 'Stormy'

they were bound to be right sooner or later.)

Garrison's book seems to be saying "Here are the basic ideas of Marxism; here are the errors of social democratic ideas. Now you are on your own! (Such an approach has its advantages. It means that the book can appeal to readers of all 'Marxist' groups.

But its refusal to take a stand on the vital issues of the day damn it as a serious aid for workers. Just when it should be working up to a clear conclusion it stops.

A worker studying Marxism would leaf happily through the very readable and humorous first part. But the basic questions that he or she wants Marxist economics to answer are ducked. "Why was there a post war boom?", "Can there be another one?", "Can capitalism resolve its crisis?"

Harrison may have succeeded in providing a 'lowest common denominator' of Marxist economics, but workers who really want to get to grips with the subject will have to look elsewhere.

Geoff Jones

(Brighton Labour Party)

A review of 'Marxist Economics for Socialists' by John Harrison [Pluto Press,]

SUMMIT FOR NOTHING

In a second article, Andrew Glyn analyses the background to the Bonn Economic Summit

The Bonn summit, as we showed last week, completely failed to come up with a programme for expanding the capitalist world economy and regaining full employment.

But expansion was not the only issue discussed at the summit and other international economic meetings of recent weeks. For the stagnation of the world economy has intensified the competitive struggle for markets, and many of the measures announced recently can only be understood against this background.

Fall of dollar hits European capitalists

At first sight, it seems extraordinary that the Japanese and German capitalists have been pressuring the Americans to reduce their massive current account deficit, forecast at \$25 billion this year. But most of this deficit reflects extra imports of oil, rather than representing a market for Japanese and German manufactures.

In fact, the US deficit is highly damaging to its competitors because it drives down the value of the dollar and drives up other currencies—particularly the Deutschmark and Yen, the currencies of the 'strong countries' with balance of payments surpluses. This makes it less profitable for German and Japanese capitalists to export.

The president of the Keidanren, the Japanese CBI, was reported in 'Business Week' (24th July) as complaining that a record number of exporters (1,500 per month) were going bankrupt "directly because of the appreciation (rise in the value relative to

Whatever "agreements" on trade and exchange rates are patched up over the coming months will only be compromises on the degrees of protectionism as the capitalist world lur-

ches towards a full-scale trade war. All the sweet-talking cannot hide the fact that economic relations between states are fundamentally competitive under capitalism.

other countries) of the Yen.

Bankruptcy of exporting industries is not the only problem caused by the weakness of the dollar. As the 'Economist' explained (18 July) failure of the US to curb its deficit "is putting the world's whole monetary system at risk. For the dollar is the currency in which most of the world holds most of its international resources. The danger of a dollar slide, however well managed, is that at some point too many holders may finally decide to cut their losses and push the dollar off the precipice, sending unwanted tidal waves of money across the world's exchanges."

Carter fails to stem US oil imports

The pressure on the US also partly reflects the fact that it has increased its use of oil by 1% compared with 1973, whereas the other major countries have cut their consumption by 10-15%. The other capitalist countries realise that continued rapid growth of US demand for oil would soon eliminate the temporary glut of oil caused

by the reduced demand from the other countries. This would strengthen OPEC's power to raise the oil price.

Carter would like to reduce dependence on imported oil for strategic reasons; and the US oil producers have less patriotic motives for seeing a price increase of oil in the US to cut demand and thus imports. But the price rise is bitterly opposed by those sectors of American capital which have benefited from cheap fuel, and it is hard to see how Carter will be able to honour his pledge to raise the US price to world levels by 1980 and to cut imports by 2½ million barrels a day 1985.

Strong economies want new "snake" to strengthen their position

The German and French proposals to relink the currencies of Europe in a new "snake" which would then slide up and down against the dollar, also represents an attempt to maintain the position of the relatively strong countries. The funda-

mental advantage for them is that, by linking up with the weaker pound and lira, the Mark would rise less rapidly against other currencies (since March 1973 it has risen by 36% against the dollar). Holding down the Mark would help to preserve the competitiveness of German exporters in relation to American and Japanese firms. It would at the same time improve their position against their weaker European competitors (UK and Italy especially).

Since March 1973 the pound has fallen 45% against the Mark, but if tied in with the snake such a fall would be impossible. The low productivity growth (0% in the UK since 1973 and ½% a year in Italy as compared with 3% per year growth in Japan, Germany and France) could no longer be partially hidden behind a falling exchange rate. British and Italian capital would be unceremoniously bundled out of European markets.

The Germans and French capitalists are offering as a bait a huge 50 billion dollar fund to support the currencies of the weak countries. But this "generosity" is simply aimed at speeding up the business of taking over the

weak countries' markets. No wonder the British Treasury reacted to the scheme with "deep suspicion that the system is little more than a means of holding down the Mark and imposing restrictive policies on Germany's partners" ('Times' 11 July). Only eurofanatic Edward Heath argued that "it could greatly improve claims of more jobs" ('Times' 13 July), —without saying how, of course!

The "Tokyo Round": under the shadow of trade war

Despite desperate efforts to secure a dramatic agreement on trade in time for the summit, all that emerged was a "framework of understanding". After five years of bargaining, tariff cuts (cuts in taxes on imports) between the EEC and USA of one third are considered likely while "there is much discontent with the Japanese offers of tariff cuts, and the Community has gone so far as to reduce its own offer to Japan" ('Times' 18 July).

But even the reductions between the EEC and USA

are trifling, being spread over eight years and amounting to a cut of tariffs from about 10% to 6-7%. These will do nothing to counteract the host of special tariffs, quotas, special marketing agreements etc. which GATT estimates have been extended over the past three years to \$50 billion worth of textile trade and another \$50 billion worth of trade in other commodities (steel, electronics etc.).

At the Tokyo talks the bitterest battle is between the USA which wants many of the subsidies used to support ailing industries banned, whilst the EEC is objecting to the USA's use of import duties against any commodity which is subsidised.

But Britain and France are in turn pressing for the freedom to put selective import restrictions or any "disruptive" inflow of imports from a particular source, this being aimed at low-cost Far Eastern suppliers. Even Japan's pledge at the summit to prevent the volume of exports rising this year is empty as the rise in the Yen has already caused a 5% fall.

The necessity of socialist planning

Whatever "agreements" on trade and exchange rates are patched up over the coming months will only be compromises on the degrees of protectionism as the capitalist world lurches towards a full-scale trade war. All the sweet-talking cannot hide the fact that economic relations between states are fundamentally competitive under capitalism.

This becomes most obvious in the present situation of deep crisis and highlights the necessity for a socialist planned economy to overcome the anarchy of capitalism internationally as well as within the individual countries.

Against the overwhelming opposition of Health Service workers and local people, the Secretary of State has now ordered Bethnal Green Hospital to close its casualty department. This is intended as the first part of a plan to turn Bethnal Green into an exclusively geriatric hospital.

Shortly before the decision was announced, Myrna Shaw, a shop steward at the hospital, went as part of the delegation to see Roland Moyle, the junior minister concerned. Afterwards she gave a radio interview on London Broadcasting, which vividly expressed local feelings:

SAVE THE GREEN

Q: Well have you had your birthday present then?

Myrna Shaw: Certainly not. In fact I'm rather choked. We thought we'd get something out of the minister, especially a Labour minister. He gave us 45 minutes for a 7-person delegation, which barely gave us time to state our main objectives. He said that he would give consideration to our points. He didn't even give a reprieve of a week or a month while he thought about it.

Whilst we were actually speaking to the minister, there was a cardiac arrest in our casualty, which was treated instantly, and I wouldn't like to say what would have happened to that patient if our casualty was closed.

They are trying our patience too far. They are taking no consideration of the feelings of the people in the community or the feelings of the staff. They bring out statistics after statistics; but statistics are not people. It's people who are in Bethnal



Demonstration against closure of Bethnal Green hospital

Green Hospital.

Q: I understand feelings are running high.

A: We tried to convey this to the minister, but I think he thinks we are playing a game with him and that we are threatening because we say that feelings are running high

and that the trade unions are very concerned about Bethnal Green Hospital, because we are the first link in the chain that is going to lose Tower Hamlets District 300 acute beds. We are not threatening. We are not bluffing. This is how we feel.

Q: The Area Health Authority Executive, whom I spoke to earlier this week, said he thought that the other three hospitals in the locality would be able to cope. Will the other hospitals be able to cope?

A: Certainly not. If you want an emergency service only for somebody who is collapsing because he has got peritonitis instead of having had his appendix out or somebody who has a strangulated hernia because he has been on a waiting list for two, three or four years for a simple hernia repair... That's the service the people of Tower Hamlets will have.

Would you like to wait in casualty for four hours? That seems to be the norm. But just because it's the norm, it doesn't mean that we should accept it.

In Bethnal Green Hospital we treat Bethnal Green people. They keep saying that the London Hospital is only a mile and a half down the road. But that's not the point; it's how long you wait when you get there. The London Hospital is taking 64% of Tower Hamlets budget, but it's not seeing 64% of Tower Hamlets people. People come

to the London Hospital from all over the country, and so they should, it's a marvellous hospital with marvellous resources, but it should not be a drain on the people of Tower Hamlets. They must keep Bethnal Green Hospital as a community general hospital, which is what the people of Bethnal Green need. Doesn't anybody listen to what the people want any more?

And do you know how much it involves in keeping Bethnal Green Hospital open? A measly £350,000 a year. It's nothing these days.

Q: What is going to happen?

A: They are forcing us to strike. We are anxious to retain 300 beds in Bethnal Green Hospital, 300 acute beds.

What have we got in the way of housing, schools etc.? We've got Petticoat Lane, and Brick Lane, we've got racial tension, we've got tons and tons of aggravation and what do we get from the people [for whom] we voted loyally—we get nothing.

Interview from LBC with permission of Myrna Shaw.

Who are the real scroungers - Part 3

The Tory Party isn't happy

The Tory Party isn't happy with the present state of inequality in Britain. Instead, it wants more. On the one hand, 'scroungers' are attacked and, on the other, the Tories are very concerned about Engelbert Humperdinck, Michael Caine and other "tax exiles" being penalised.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, Tory shadow chancellor, wants to raise the starting point for 40% income tax from £7,000 to £8,000 and reduce the top rate of taxes from 83p to 70p in the pound. So the Tories' policies won't affect you and me. Obviously the rich come first on their list of priorities.

The distribution of wealth in this country has not changed. The average income after tax is only £42.30. 15% of the population still earn less than the rate to qualify for supplementary benefit. Meanwhile the top 5% own 47% of personal wealth, according to a recent Royal Commission Report, and the top 3½% own 90% of company shares and 96% of the land held as personal wealth.

Honourable men

For our children, we get £2.30 a week child allowance. The living standards of families with children fell between 1974 and 1977. This government has ended child tax allowances, although there are still one and a half million children in families below the official poverty line. Meanwhile, the real scroungers, like company directors, get cash payments from their firms in the form of higher education grants for their children. Since these offspring would get no grant as their parents' income is so high, then someone on the top tax rate of 83p, earning £22,700, gets an effective pay increase of £5,480!

Our children are discriminated against at school. In a Cambridgeshire school, free school meal children sit at separate tables from those who pay. They have to wait for second helpings until the paying children have had theirs. Only if there is any left can they have any. The Child Poverty Action Group conclude that "the humiliation of poor children is occurring every day on an epidemic scale."

Meanwhile, 90% of the real scroungers of senior management have a free company car. 50% have private medical insurance. They get cheap bank loans, free lunches—not in the café round the corner, but in the Ritz.

The press tries to hide this situation and distracts our attention by viciously attacking social security 'scroungers'. But this will hardly change the distribution of wealth. In 1975-6 the amount of money leaked from public funds through overpayments to social security claimants was £10.8m. When inflation is taken into account, it is much the same as in the previous six years.

Of the total, the DHSS attributes £2.9m to genuine

with inequality in Britain



Last week a select group of 'Top People' took time off to attend a Buckingham Palace garden party

photo: Julian McKittrick

-IT WANTS MORE

By George McDonald

(East Kilbride CLP)

mistakes made by claimants and £5m to errors made by staff, many of which are due to the pressure of work and the complexity of the system. The remaining £2.6m is attributed to some 80,000 cases of fraud [an average of £32.50 which is not going to make anyone rich].

It is tiny when we realise that £11,500m was paid out in 1976 by the DHSS and that the former chief of the First National Finance Corporation received a golden handshake of £50,000 as a 'fringe benefit' and to avoid tax.

It is also minute beside the estimate that over £800 million was avoided on death duties in 1969. Whereas the

DHSS has an army of investigators and there are tribunals and courts to deal with social security offenders, because of the hounding Tory press, there are only 30 unskilled people apparently employed by the Inland Revenue investigating tax avoidance.

Another way to look at this figure of £2.6m is to divide it by the total population of Britain. It does not take a mathematical genius to work

out that during the whole 1975-76 financial year the cost per person of social security fraud amounted to the slightly underwhelming sum of 4½p.

Perhaps, now, people like the Honourable Ian Sproat MP and his fellow travellers will do the honourable thing and admit publicly that it is not the loss of 4½p per person which is wrecking the British economy. Perhaps they will disgust even themselves with their cowardly and spineless campaign which has led to tens of thousands of desperately needy people not claiming money which is their right for fear of being labelled 'spongers' and 'scroungers'.

The Sale of the Century

PARASITES PROFIT

photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)



Boarded up house in Britain: all too typical

Attempts by Tory councils to dismantle council housing schemes have been rightly resisted by the labour movement. Despite the ravages of sky-high interest charges and the restrictions imposed by private ownership of the building industry, council housing has at least partially removed one basic human need from the direct grip of capitalism.

The Tory Greater London Council, however, last year announced their "sale of the century", when council houses, new or re-habilitated, were offered for sale to tenants. Such attacks on the working class were predictable. What was perhaps less expected was the monumental failure of the scheme so far.

The GLC wrote to its 72,000 council house tenants and most of its 140,000 tenants living in flats, offering them the chance to buy their homes. So far, about 1,500 have been sold, far fewer than the Tories hoped. More than a thousand houses, many of them new, are empty, boarded up and unsaleable.

There has certainly been no miraculous end to housing shortage in London; but the cost for wage-restrained workers is prohibitive. Some houses in Wandsworth and Roehampton have an asking price of £38,000. Some sale!

'The Guardian' reports that many other council houses have been vacant for at least six months. The GLC, whose leaders champion a policy of cutting "wasteful expenditure", have paid out £10,000 rates to London Boroughs on these empty properties, £208,000 to stop vandalism and lost £175,000 rent income.

Now, trying to remedy this situation, the GLC plan to spend a further £250,000 on an advertising campaign, with glossy colour brochures written "in a chatty yet interesting and persuasive style" with a "careful" selection of photographs, posted to all tenants, plus a huge radio and TV campaign. These freedom-loving spendthrifts will also dole out £2.25 million in estate agents' and surveyors' fees to push through the sales.

GLC housing stocks are being eaten away, whether or not the houses are sold; and

this in a period of virtual standstill in housebuilding programmes. The London Borough of Brent have a yearly quota of 900 families that the GLC undertake to rehouse. Of these, 442 families, nearly half, have been turned down as a result of these policies. Families needing rehousing in larger accommodation are shoved aside as these larger properties are capable of making handsome profits on the private market.

In a few cases, tenants have benefited, but at the expense of other workers. An ex-tenant in Surrey bought his house for £8,750 from his council a few years ago and is now reselling for £39,500. In other areas, like Manchester, council houses sold at discount a few years back are being re-purchased at market prices.

But for the majority, only misery is entailed, as council housing stock is cut back to only the least desirable properties. Workers in need of shelter suffer. Advertising agencies, estate agents and the innumerable leeches on the housing system prosper.

The labour movement should obviously demand that council house sales must stop. But while there is an opportunity for private profit in housing, the laws of the jungle will threaten to engulf the small enclaves of civilisation such as council housing.

By Roger Shriver

(Deptford Labour Party)

Devolution and Socialist Campaign

TARTAN

The recent Hamilton By-election was a remarkable victory for Labour. It was the first time that a party in Government increased its vote in a by-election since 1966. It also marked a major setback in the fortunes of the Scottish National Party, who had won a by-election in this very seat eleven years ago.

Following the SNP's failure to win the earlier Garscadden by-election and their losses in the Regional Council elections in May, Hamilton was seen by many in the Labour Party as marking the end of nationalism as a serious force in Scottish politics.

This is not necessarily so, however. There are three main reasons for the swing back to Labour at this time. One is the very slight improvement in the economic situation, with prices down for a temporary period, for which the Labour leaders claim to be responsible.

Second is the the Scotland Bill, which the Government has at last nearly passed through Parliament, which is seen as a step towards tackling the special problems of the Scottish economy, which were one of the main reasons for the growth of nationalism.

Thirdly, and most important, a polarisation is taking place in British society along class lines. Terrified at the prospect of a Thatcher-led Tory Government, working class voters are determined to ensure a Labour victory, despite their criticisms of the present Government's policies.

None of these factors have changed the basic conditions which gave rise to nationalism in the first place; it remains the smouldering force which could erupt again if the Labour movement does not implement a socialist programme which can tackle the fundamental problems of the Scottish workers and middle class.

There has always been in Scotland, especially amongst the middle class, a national consciousness, a sense of distinct identity. Yet nationalism, until very recently, was never a serious force.

The main reason was the British Empire, in which Scottish businessmen, large sections of the middle class and professional people and a small section of highly skilled workers were provided with an escape route to emigrate and build careers for themselves as administrators, doctors, engineers, etc. They thus came to identify themselves as British as much as Scottish, and the embers of Scottish national consciousness burned very low.

Meanwhile the Scottish industrial workers became an integral and indeed leading part of the British labour movement. They became totally united through the trade unions and the Labour Party with their fellow workers in England and Wales.

What has now changed is that on the one hand Britain has lost its empire and declined into a third-rank capitalist power. Scotland has been especially hard hit by that decline.

Consequently sections of the middle class have seen their privileged position in the British Empire whittled away, so that they now face many of the same problems and uncertainties as do the workers. Many have thus deserted the Tory Party, which

By Pat Craven Dundee Labour Party

as recently as 1955 had more than half the popular vote in Scotland, in search of a radical alternative.

On the other hand, the leadership of successive Labour governments and Labour administrations in local government are seen by these sections of the middle class, and a section of the working class, as no longer representing a radical force for change. On the contrary, they are seen as the instrument of some of the ills of society, such as reduced living standards, lack of job security and poor housing.

More evidence has recently been published, in a pamphlet "Poverty; the Facts in Scotland" by Geoff Norris, which illustrates the reasons for the anger and despair of a large part of Scottish society.

He demonstrates that by the Government's own definition of poverty, 750,000 Scots are poor, 14.2% of the population compared to an equivalent figure of 12.9% for Britain as a whole. The Government figure is calculated by taking 110% of the supplementary benefit level; if it had estimated poverty more realistically at 130% of this level, it would have shown that over a million people are living at or very near the poverty level.

The same pamphlet reveals that although weekly wage rates are nearly as high as the national average, hours worked are longer, thus reducing average hourly earnings. It also shows that the numbers out of work for more than six or twelve months are proportionately higher, and that 59% of those unemployed claim supplementary benefit, compared to 49% nationally.

Unemployment has been consistently higher than the national average. In the Strathclyde Region, which contains half Scotland's population, one in ten of the working population have been out of work for the last few years.

Even worse than the unemployment figures are those for housing. A Government Green Paper, which made the scandalous assertion that "the overall housing shortage is virtually a thing of the past in most areas and the worst problems of overcrowding and bad conditions have been dealt with", contradicted its own words by revealing that overcrowding in Scotland, by the "people per bedroom" standard is twice the level of Britain as a whole!



SNP members

Even using a standard which does not insist on there being a bath or shower, the Green Paper reckoned that 160,000 fall below it. The total number of households who require rehousing is given as a quarter of a million, yet in the first three quarters of last year, only 6,066 new houses were built by all Scotland's public and private housing concerns, compared to 8,693 and 8,441 in the same periods of 1975 and 1976 respectively. The Green Paper even hints that the Government may be considering lowering the standards of new council housing!

As a consequence of all these factors, a long dormant strain of nationalism has emerged, as a protest against the economic situation and Labour's failure to provide a solution. It is a symptom of the erosion of the power and self-confidence of the British ruling class, which once ruled a great part of the world, that they are now faced with a movement of nationalism within the heartland of the British state, so that they are no longer even confident that they can maintain the unity of Great Britain.

It is not just a protest movement, however. It has been able to build on the national consciousness of Scottish people and give the protest a nationalist direction, seeking to find a scapegoat for the ills of Scotland in "English" rule and the domination of Westminster over Scottish affairs.

Oil

Despite the fact that all the problems of Scotland are faced by the majority of people in England and Wales as well, the fact that Scotland suffers more than England as a whole has given credibility to the ideology of nationalism in the eyes of some sections of Scottish society. Those least affected are the organised workers whose links with the workers of England prove that they have far more in common with them than they have with Scottish businessmen and landowners.

It is from these latter sections of society in the main that the leadership of the Scottish National Party has come. On the one hand they hold out a glittering future for an independent Scotland—"The enormous wealth of

the oil and gas fields off the Scottish coast, allied our other vast resources, offers ever improving living standards to the people of Scotland...With a Scottish Government exercising effective control over Scottish oil, enormous employment opportunities will be created in Scotland and vast capital wealth will accrue directly to Scotland. This wealth can, and must, be used to secure for all time, prosperity, security and a satisfying life style for all the people of Scotland." (February 1974 Manifesto)

Capitalist

Yet on the other hand, they make it clear that this will be carried out strictly within the existing capitalist economic system. Margo Macdonald, supposedly on the left of the party, stated in 1974 that she didn't want to be called a socialist "because I've got this narrow minded attitude which says that socialism means the public ownership of everything. You know, if it moves nationalise it." (Glasgow News 12 March 1974)

A private sector in the health service, independent self-financing schools, increased housing rents, membership of the International Monetary Fund are among their policy planks.

Their attitude towards private industry was best demonstrated by Douglas Crawford MP in a speech in Parliament on 5 June 1975:—

"There is a great need in Scotland for venture capital for industry. We believe that the Scottish Development Agency should have an arm of its organisation to deal specifically with venture capital. It could invest with pride in the entrepreneurs who it is hoped will make profits and then the Government can sell its share to a merchant banker."

Thus it is a capitalist "independence" which the SNP offer, an absurd utopia in the present world wide economic climate, which is concentrating economic wealth and power into the hands of a few gigantic monopolies, which would totally dominate the economy of a tiny country the size of Scotland. It would be they, and not the people of Scotland, who would reap the benefit of Scotland's oil wealth.

There is no future for either workers or the middle class in the kind of phoney "independence" of the "Tartan Tories" of the SNP. On the contrary, they can only find any permanent solution to their problems by fighting in unity with the workers of the rest of Britain for the Labour Party to implement a socialist programme, which would not indeed stop at Britain but could lead towards a Socialist Federation Europe and ultimately the World.

At the same time, however, an integral part of that programme has to be an assurance that should a majority of the people

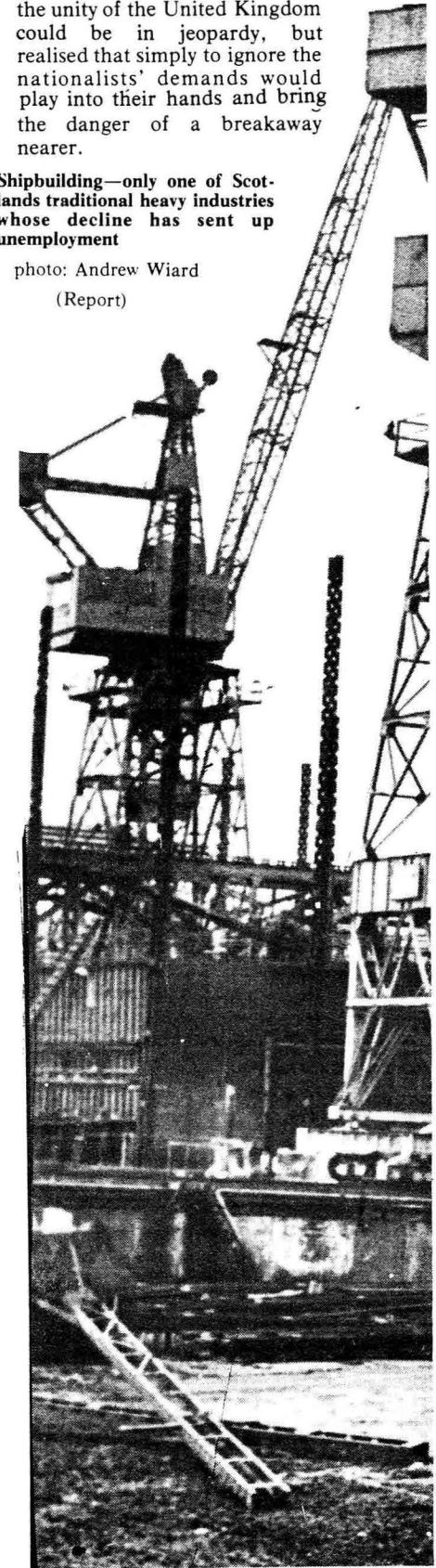
of Scotland or Wales demand it, then they have the democratic right to self-government. A Labour Government which stood, with the Tories, on a platform of British nationalism, in denying the democratic right of the Scottish people to decide for themselves their own future, would play right into the hands of the Scottish Nationalists.

The same applies to devolution. This idea of a form of limited autonomy was originally conceived by the opponents of nationalism within the ruling class, who were alarmed at its growth and the possibility that the unity of the United Kingdom could be in jeopardy, but realised that simply to ignore the nationalists' demands would play into their hands and bring the danger of a breakaway nearer.

Shipbuilding—only one of Scotland's traditional heavy industries whose decline has sent up unemployment

photo: Andrew Wiard

(Report)



Scottish Nationalism SIGN TO ROUT THE TORIES

So the idea was pressed forward of setting up a Scottish Assembly with the aim of heading off the rise of nationalism by appearing to go half way towards it, while in reality

setting up a powerless body in Edinburgh which would be quite unable to change anything fundamental and would not challenge the power of Britain's real rulers in the boardrooms of big business.

So devolution was popularised in the media, and the nationalists given more credibility, though of course never with any intention of letting them come to power. They were cynically used by the ruling class to draw the votes of ex-Tories and ex-Liberals away from the Labour Party, which was becoming overwhelmingly the biggest party in Scotland.

Under this pressure to introduce devolution, the Labour Government introduced its first attempt, in the form of the Scotland and Wales Bill, which eventually collapsed when the Government failed to get a guillotine imposed in Parliament. Its aim was to create an Assembly with all sorts of restrictions imposed on its activities by the Westminster Government, a total lack of financial resources of its own, and no control over the crucial field of the Scottish economy.

Despite the obvious flaws in such an Assembly, the general idea of devolution grew rapidly in popularity. Opinion polls, which showed no more than 20% in favour of independence, showed a clear majority in favour of varying degrees of devolution, with only about another 20% in favour of no change from the status quo.

Assembly

The idea that grew in strength was that an Assembly would bring decision-making nearer to the people, and would be able to tackle all the social ills of Scotland, without breaking the ties with the rest of Britain.

It is perfectly true that opinion polls have also shown that devolution is not high on people's list of priorities—it comes behind unemployment, prices, vandalism, housing and taxation, according to a survey carried out in Garscadden during the by-election there. The point is, however, that devolution is seen as a means of dealing with these issues. There is not a great deal of positive enthusiasm for devolution as an end in itself, but there would be a wave of anger if it were now to be scrapped, after so many expectations have been aroused.

These expectations, however will be no less frustrated if after being set up, the Assembly is found to have its hands tied behind its back and unable to do anything about the issues which are of primary concern to Scottish workers. Certainly the kind of Assembly originally

proposed would have been a sham, which would have done nothing to remove power from big business or the Westminster Government.

This was the dilemma facing the ruling class. If the Assembly were given too little power, it would be too obviously a cynical manoeuvre, it would achieve nothing and far from heading off nationalism would strengthen it. If on the other hand it were given too much, it could deprive them of some of their control over Scottish affairs.

In particular, they are terrified that with economic powers, a Labour majority in the Assembly, especially if there were a Tory Government in Westminster, could wreck attempts to impose anti-working class policies, not only in Scotland but in England and Wales as well, since workers would not tamely submit to wage cuts or reductions in social services, etc., if they saw Scottish workers escaping from them.

So to the ruling class, devolution has lost its attraction. They have done an about turn. Both the Tory Party and the Confederation of British Industry have turned against it. In the words of Tory MP Iain Sproat "Every time we open the Bill out springs some horrible monster."

Tories

Now they are raising the bogey of "separatism" and the fear that the Assembly will inevitably lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom. Their opposition to the Scotland Bill is based squarely on British nationalism and the interests of British Imperialism. With the help of a small number of Labour MP's they are now trying to sabotage the Government's latest devolution bill.

The type of Assembly proposed in the Scotland Bill was a step forward from that of the earlier bill. Most of the petty restrictions on the Assembly's power were scrapped; its powers were extended into some new fields, such as rents and rebate schemes and teachers' pay. The Tories, however, have been able, especially through the House of Lords, to impose even worse restrictions on the Assembly, depriving it of the right to deal even with things like airports, forestry and bus routes.

These amendments should be rescinded in the Commons, but the biggest restriction of all was imposed by the House of Commons itself—the scandalous manoeuvre to nobble the referendum on the Government's proposals by insisting that a minimum of 40% of the entire electorate, regardless of how many vote, must vote "YES".

The central defect of both devolution bills remains—the lack of any powers for the Assembly to raise its own finance. The Government claims that it is not opposed in principle to this, but that it cannot work out a practical scheme. Yet a move in Parliament to give the Assembly some very limited powers in this field was opposed by the Government and defeated.

This means that in practice the Scottish Assembly will have

no real autonomy, since the Westminster Government will always be able to use the threat of a reduction in the block grant to the Assembly to bring political pressure. It will thus be doomed to sterility, lacking the money to exercise its powers effectively and dependent on the generosity of a Government in London which might very well be of the opposite political party.

In the referendum, Labour will be fighting for a YES vote, but quite rightly refusing to join in any unprincipled all-party "umbrella" movement. This is the right approach; to advocate a NO vote on the deficiencies of the present bill would be to line up with the Tories and the CBI and the reactionary big business front called "Scotland is British".

Linked to the call for a YES vote, however, needs to be a demand by the labour movement for the Assembly to be given completely autonomous powers, leaving aside only foreign policy and defence. Only then would it be possible for a Labour majority in the Assembly to carry out a socialist programme to try and tackle the special problems of Scotland and fulfill the expectations raised by the creation of the Assembly.

At the same time, it is vital that in the referendum campaign, Labour maintains its attack on nationalism. In no way does the struggle for autonomy in Scotland cut across the class struggles being waged throughout Britain which can only be won by a united struggle by the whole labour movement, which the nationalists would seek to divide.

It has been argued that a victory for the YES campaign in the referendum would inevitably be claimed by the nationalists as their victory. In order to dash such a claim the demand has been made by the Scottish Council of Labour for a second question on the ballot paper on independence for Scotland. A big majority against independence, alongside one for devolution, would expose the SNP's lack of support on the central plank of their platform.

It would be a good move to have such a second question, and for Labour to mount a strong campaign for a NO vote to independence. But it would be entirely wrong to imagine that a vote against independence would mean the end of nationalism, any more than that could be said of the Hamilton by-election.

Just as it arose out of the economic and social ills of Scotland, so will nationalism only finally disappear when these ills have been cured, and that can only be achieved on a socialist basis.

This raises the question of what programme Labour should adopt for the Assembly. The answer must be a programme of reforms and improvements for

working people and their families, to bring about the "fundamental and irreversible change in the balance of wealth and power" which was promised in Labour's 1974 manifestos.

Measures like a 35 hour week with no loss of pay, a £70 minimum wage and a crash programme of public works to rebuild Scotland's ruined industries, its schools, hospital and housing provisions, will be central to this programme.

But they will not be carried through without a decisive attack on the stranglehold on the Scottish economy of the big monopolies, the bankers and the landowners. The Assembly will have to take, and make full use of, powers to take over Scottish based industries, sections of British or multi-national monopolies threatened with closure. It will then have to introduce socialist planning to direct resources to the regeneration of industry. Workers' control and management will need to be introduced in the nationalised industries.

Such a bold socialist programme will meet the uncompromising hostility of all the vested interests in the boardrooms of big business both in England and Scotland, including those in the leadership of the SNP. It could only be carried through with the active mobilisation of the mass of Scottish workers to back up the Labour majority in the Assembly and to thwart any move to sabotage it.

Most importantly, the active support of the workers of England and Wales would be indispensable to a Labour administration carrying through a socialist programme. There would be a ready response to an appeal for such support once the Assembly raised an appeal to their English, Welsh and Irish brothers and sisters.

Far from being a source of division amongst the workers of Britain, a socialist lead given in the Assembly in Edinburgh would be very rapidly followed throughout the country. Especially if a Labour Assembly were forced to defy a Tory Government, in order to carry out measures in the interests of working people, workers in England and Wales would not only rally to the defence of their Scottish brothers and sisters, but would be given a powerful spur to take up the fight for the same measures themselves.

The fight for socialism in Scotland is no more a diversion from the fight for socialism in Britain, than the fight for socialism in Britain is from that fight in Europe and the World. The struggle must waged at every level. If this programme is adopted, fought for and implemented by Scottish Labour, they will have performed a tremendous service to workers everywhere.

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HIRED GUNS TERRORISE BASQUE COUNTRY

The situation in the Basque country, as is generally known, has not been quiet for a long time. The news in the British press, when speaking on the Basque country, has been mostly dedicated to the Basque separatist movement and to the actions of the ETA's terrorist group.

However, they have almost always "forgotten" to speak about the most important factor in the Basque country: the labour movement. Since the early '60s, the strikes and demonstrations of the Basque workers shook Franco's dictatorship.

In recent years, since Franco's death, the movement has been growing and the workers' traditional parties—the PSOE [the Spanish Socialist Workers Party] and the PCE [the Spanish Communist Party] and their fraternal trade unions the UGT [Workers General Union, PSOE controlled] and the CCOO [Workers' Commissions, PCE controlled] have strengthened their membership, their organisations and their influence in the labour movement as a whole.

This is the background to the latest events in Pamplona, capital of Navarra, one of the four Basque provinces.



sound was cut (i.e. a political song was being sung); suddenly the image was cut (i.e. a Basque or a red flag was being waved).

And this year, the festival could not be different. There had to appear some political question. In such a case, after cheers from some of the crowd, boos from another part and some fighting on the stand, there would have been at least for the Festival days, again peace and harmony

Armed police officer and fascists salute side by side

thing was OK. It was the usual political demonstration of the 1978 Festival. They were asking for amnesty for some of their comrades arrested during the recent months in Pamplona.

These separatist militants are accused of the killing of a sub-lieutenant of the Civil Guard last April (by the way, the evidence about their guilt is not very clear). That month, there were some demonstrations for the release of other ETA supporters arrested before them.

The last few months have shown us one thing that has been confirmed in the July events in the Basque country, and more generally in Spain as a whole. **This is that the police and the fascist gangs have been working together.** The Guerrilleros de Cristo Rey (guerrillas of Christ the King), "los falangistas" (Spanish Fascist Party, formerly the only one legalised in Spain) act again and again without any serious measures taken against them by the police: for example in Pamplona, all these thugs are known by most of the population, and, curiously, the police seem to be the only ones who have no idea about the names and addresses of these fascists.

After the Mass for the civil guard killed, they marched together with several uniformed riot policemen and other army officers in plain clothes, on the old part of the city and beat up civilians, shopkeepers and students as well as separatists and counter demonstrators.

There are many photographs showing riot police and fascist thugs speaking together calmly and, also calmly, beating up the unarmed civilians. The fascists were completely armed with clubs, pistols, knives...and the police said nothing to them!

On the other hand, as soon as they see an apparent left-wing supporter carrying a bag, he is immediately arrested.

In San Sebastian (the other Basque town where another man was killed by the fascists the day after the Pamplona events), the fascist party "Fuerza Nueva" held a public meeting shortly afterwards. And again the fascist gangs were in action: shooting in the streets, beating people...the police did nothing against them. They helped each other.

These events are common in the Basque country. Most of the police officers are the same ones who were there in the dictatorship. The state apparatus is controlled by almost the same persons.

It is possible that the intervention in Pamplona,

and Renteria the week after, was a result of some police officers ignoring or even deliberately acting against the orders of the government as

the authorities claim. But it is possible too there was a manipulation.

In the same way that if you offer a drunk a drink, you would expect him to ask for the biggest one, if you tell a right wing riot police officer to act, for example against a group of separatists, you must expect him to act decisively. Then, afterwards, if he has done too much political damage, you can always blame him for the excess he has done.

Even if it is not a case of manipulation, the role of the riot police is becoming more and more clear every moment. They are the hardest and ugliest face of the state.

At the moment, Spain is not a fully "democratic" country. There is the right to demonstrate, but not always. There is the right to free expression, but not about everything.

There is the right to meet, but not in every case. There is freedom for political parties, but not for all. This is the case with the Basque Revolutionary Party, a separatist organisation, claiming to be "Marxist Leninist", which is the political wing of the ETA movement.

The contradictions of such a situation exploded in Pamplona. You can shout what



Riot police repeatedly beat a young trade unionist with rubber truncheons and leave him to bleed

By Domingo

(Pamplona Young Socialists)

The Pamplona Festival of San Fermin has usually been a semi-political one. Most of the population is involved in it and, therefore, it roughly reflects the feelings and the mood about the political issues raised. As Pamplona is an industrial town, it is the mood of the working population which is mainly shown in the Festival. Even in the darkest days of the Franco dictatorship, the audience at the bullfights sang political songs against Franco and the more hated "personalities" of the dictatorship. This was the reason why the state owned Spanish television (TVE) always had "problems" with the televising of the bullfights and the other typical events: suddenly, the

among the people wanting to enjoy themselves. Nothing important would have taken place. It is the custom of the town...

But this year, it was different: a man was killed and more than one hundred were injured. The riot police came inside and around the bull-ring and the nightmare began.

What was the reason they have pointed out for their "intervention"? They have claimed that the reason was that a small group of nationalists came down to the bullring with a Basque flag and asked for "Amnesty and Freedom". The entrance of the police in the bull-ring was a provocation.

Until this moment every-

you like, but you cannot ask for "amnesty and freedom" for the Basque separatists. This is when the police are used.

In the next period, their repressive character will appear again: they will be used not only on these issues but, more often and more drastically, against the workers' strikes, demos, picket lines and sit-ins. Now they are afraid of using them in this way because they know the bold answer they would meet with from the working class. The capitalist class remembers the late stages of Franco's dictatorship, when they were forced to allow big workers' demonstrations against closures, redundancies, the fall of living standards and for amnesty for political prisoners and full democratic rights.

In the week after the Pamplona events, the demonstrations and strikes, together

with other expressions of anger spread throughout the Basque country. But who were they in support of? Were they in support of the Basque separatists?

It is a very important question because the answer can explain roughly the real situation in the Basque country. The British press has tried to show that all this angry movement was closely linked with support to the separatist movement. Actually, the separatist movement does have some support in the Basque provinces.

Nevertheless, it is not big enough to be compared with the support for the traditional organisations of the working class in the Basque country, the PCE-CCOO and the PSOE-UGT. The 1977 general election gave a great victory to the PSOE and the factory committees elections this year to the UGT and the CCOO.

For the moment, the separatist movement is not the strongest one. But there is a serious problem for the labour movement there: the growth of nationalist ideas within more and more layers of the workers as is shown by the 77 results of the Basque Nationalist Party-PNV and the strong position of the nationalist trade union ELA-STV.

It is the task of the class organisations (and mainly the PCE and the PSOE) to "defeat" politically all these ideas which divide the wor-

kers and to give clear leadership on class lines, to the workers in the Basque country and in Spain as a whole.

Can, then, the separatist movements have such a big support? If they could, why did they not call for a general strike asking for amnesty for their supporters in Pamplona before these events? Why were there not great workers' actions in their support before the killings? Why did all this activity happen afterwards?

The answer is clear: because it was the determined and angry answer of the workers to the brutal actions of the riot police. The Basque workers have always acted in this way, in defence of democratic rights and against the brutal repression of the police, like in the big strikes in 1970 during the 1970 Burgos' trials of ETA leaders (and it was not in support of ETA's political position), ag-

representatives. Summing up, they are the most vicious defenders of the domination of the capitalists.

For the same reasons, neither the resignation of the civil governor nor a judicial investigation into the shooting in the bull-ring will be a definite solution. We must demand these things as a focus for a campaign of protest and propaganda, but have no confidence in them. Things will not change through the removal of a governor. A judicial report would not be worth the paper it was written on.

Some political parties, on the other hand, are claiming that the only alternative to solve the problem of the riot police is the creation of a "Basque police". But as soon as there would be any important strike, or any other great uprising of the labour movement in favour of the improvement of their econ-

omic, social or political standards, if the workers went beyond the limits the ruling class is ready to "accept", these police would act the same way as the old ones.

It is not a question of the colour of the uniform (grey in Spain, blue in France) nor of the place where they were born (Basques, Catalans, Andalucians). It is a question of their objective role in society, defending the bosses' state, the bosses' domination.

It is against this background that our "controlled democracy" has come. But democracy for the workers is not a theoretical question. It is a vital question. It means the use of democratic rights as weapons in an unfettered struggle for better living standards, better working conditions, an end to unemployment etc.

It means too that the riot police and the forces of repression are abolished: no more murders, no more savage interventions. Neither the first nor the second is taking place in Spain.

The riot police is "working" less than before, but when it works, it is more cruel than ever: May Day in Pamplona, San Fermin in Pamplona...all the anger ag-

ainst them has blown up in the last few weeks. The workers are not prepared to live in a situation of this kind when the riot police and the fascist gangs are masters of the streets between them.

Such democratic rights as do exist in Spain today were not graciously handed down from a "democratic" king or a suddenly "democratic" ruling class but were fearfully conceded under pressure following years of determined struggle by the working class. Yet the old apparatus of state repression remains intact. The old Francoists remain at their posts in the police and armed forces.

Only the mobilised strength of the labour movement—the PSOE-UGT and the PCE-CCOO — can sweep the fascists off the streets. One million were killed in the Civil War against the labour movement and democratic rights destroyed—today's fascists must be denied the right to repeat that carnage. No democratic rights to those who opposed those rights for 40 years and who seek to drown them in blood once again!

But the main threat to democracy comes not from the amateur fascist bands but from the bosses professional thugs—the State forces themselves. The horrors of fascism are too fresh on the minds of the Spanish workers for the ruling class to play that card today in the same way as in 1936.

Today the working class is on the offensive. Rather than having suffered demoralising defeats the new generation know only successful—if costly—battles against their class enemy. The workers are at present assembling their forces by building powerful mass organisations to defend and advance their living standards. They will not accept attacks on the liberties of those organisations without a fight.

As Spanish society flows with a left wing tide the ruling class must bide its time. But should the workers' leaders fail to overcome the problems of the Spanish economy to the benefit of the working people by destroying capitalism and introducing a planned socialist economy, by nationalising the banks, land and major monopolies under workers control and management, the ruling class would seek to capitalise on the ebb tide of inevitable frustration of the middle class and backward workers by launching a new offensive against the workers.

The fascist are so weak and unpopular that they can only crawl out into the open under the protection of the police. What better argument could there be for the immediate disbanding of the Civil Guard and the Riot Police?

While capitalism exists the danger of a return to dictatorship at some future date will always hang over the heads of working people. The only guarantee of existing democratic rights, and their extension, is the election of a Socialist government with a programme for the Socialist transformation of society and the creation of a Spanish workers' democracy. The removal of class privilege removes the need for forces of repression to protect those privileges from the majority.

Over 150 British firms still have subsidiary and associate companies in Rhodesia. Amongst these are multi-nationals such as Rio-Tinto Zinc, Lonrho, Courtaulds, Unilever, GEC, nationalised industries such as British Steel, and the owners of the 'Daily Express', Trafalgar House Investments. These assets are

worth over £400 million. It was the desire to maintain these investments and the concern that Smith was jeopardising their long-term security by refusing to make way for a pliable black and neo-colonial regime that led to the policy of 'sanctions'. The oil companies know that their interests were not threatened, so they constructed an elaborate scheme to supply oil to Rhodesia.

The operation was basically as follows. Shell (South Africa) would sell oil in Mozambique to a company called Freight Services, who would then sell it to a Rhodesian organisation called Genta. The oil companies were wary of selling direct to Rhodesia, but they wanted to ensure that each one of them was not outdone by its rivals. So Genta ensured that each company preserved its share of the pre-UDI market, e.g. in 1975 42½% of Genta's purchases were from Shell/BP (at UDI Shell/BP had 43% of the market).

Unfortunately, the only firm to lose out on this new arrangement was Lonrho who had a contract to supply Rhodesia with oil. So after years of fruitless protests to the British government, and concerned to be known as an "opponent" of the Smith regime, Lonrho supplied the information on their rivals sanction-busting.

In this way they hope to safeguard their interests in a black Zimbabwe. They already fund Nkomo and Sithole.

But these elaborate manoeuvres may be to no avail. All they have bought is time, and that commodity is running out of supply for the Smith regime, the capitalists and their black puppets.

So radicalised have the ranks of the Zimbabwean guerrillas become in the face of repression, exploitation and years of such cynical deals that their struggle for political freedom may well also lead to the economic liberation of the Zimbabwean people from imperialism through the nationalisation of these companies.



Young workers help a comrade injured by a rubber bullet fired by the riot police

Zimbabwe

BRITISH FIRMS BREAK SANCTIONS

-government turns a blind eye

As white minority rule in Rhodesia enters its last phase, the means whereby Smith has stayed in power is coming to light.

The most recent revelations have been on how the large oil companies, including BP and Shell, have secretly supplied Rhodesia with oil for the last 13 years. There are now articles in the capitalist press reporting a UN document which details these operations, and of course the press disapproves of this secrecy.

By Chris James

However, what the capitalist press have not revealed, and what 'Militant' can now report, is that much of the source material against Shell and BP comes from their capitalist rivals, Lonrho. When thieves fall out the results are often illuminating! Sanctions were never intended to bring down the Smith regime, just make him "see sense". Thus token sanctions were introduced—the British set up a naval "blockade" at Beira to stop oil entering Mozambique for Rhodesia. So instead all the oil went to Lourenco Marques a few hundred miles down the coast.

The British Embassy in South Africa sent officials to the Rhodesian border to see if any oil lorries were going over the border. Somehow these officials failed to notice that a Shell, Caltex and Mobil had built a 100,000 gallon depot just ten miles south of the Rhodesian border!

Successive Labour and Conservative governments turned a blind eye to such sanction-busting because they did not want to act against Western investment in Rhodesia and South Africa.

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

LEFT
RIGHT
AND
RIGHT

Dear Comrades

The ATV programme 'Left, Right and Centre' is rarely worth watching, especially as it's introduced by that defector from the labour movement, Dick Taverne. But last week's programme was an exception.

Two MPs, Tom Swain (Labour, Derby) and Jasper Moore (Tory, Ludlow, Shropshire) were profiled because they are both retiring soon. Tom grew up in the poverty of a Derbyshire mining town amid the struggles of the inter-war period. He got 1½d pocket money if he was lucky. In the Depression, he would scrape a few bob as a fighter at local circuses, then later, he went down the mines like most other workers in the town.

Jasper, however, was born into the luxury of a country estate. He got twenty times the pocket money of Tom. Later in life, after his private schooling, he 'chose' the legal profession and has lived 'comfortably' ever since.

When the two men reached Parliament, it was Tom, the miner, who felt isolated in the club atmosphere, the back-slapping, with hardly a working class person to be seen. Jasper found it "most agreeable".

And now, as he approaches seventy, Tom is looking forward to a bit of time in the garden and some fishing after all his years at the pit. But Jasper, once a prominent anti-Marketeer, thinks he'll "give the European Parliament a try." After all, once you're there, you're safe for life!

And they try to tell us it's a classless society!

Fraternally
Jim Hooker
Handsworth LPYS

A ROOF OVER
YOUR HEAD

Dear Comrades

I thought I would inform any comrades who are thinking of moving or those who have no indoor toilet or are overcrowded, about a house that is for sale.

Called "Scargraves", situated at East Woodham, Hampshire, it is a 12 bedroomed mansion, a bargain at only £200,000. It is owned by Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones pop group.

If this does not appeal, perhaps one of the following may: a £400,000 mansion at Old Windsor, Berkshire owned by Elton John, or a 79 acre estate at Sunninghill, Berkshire owned by Ringo Starr or perhaps a little place at Windsor owned by Rod Stewart. The unfortunate thing about his place is lack of room, there are only 32 bedrooms. There is a choice of either of the two mansions owned by George Harrison—the two together are worth more than a million pounds.

Maybe you have already got a place and are thinking of buying a car. If so contact Noel Edmonds the disc jockey. He has a bright red E-type Jag which he gave to his wife last week for their seventh anniversary. Now I know what to get my wife in 4½ years' time—I had better start saving.

He also has a priceless Ford G.T.40 Le Mans Special plus an XJ6 and an XJ5. Noel lives in an 18th Century Queen Ann house in Buckinghamshire.

I am sure that you will all agree that these people are the lowest of the low, living in these mansions about 2 months of the year if that, while thousands of people live in squalor with no indoor toilet or washing facilities. It is not on. I do not do a lot, not as much as I could but I'll do whatever I can for my fellow comrades in helping to get rid of these parasites and establishing a socialist society.

Noel Edmonds has now joined the 'Daily Mirror' for the next six weeks for the Junior Mirror swap column. In one copy there was an ad to cut out and send him if anyone had anything to swap. I sent one off, offering to swap my terraced house for Noel's mansion, or any two of his cars. I wonder if he will swap.

Yours fraternally
Anthony Tynan
Rhondda LPYS and S Wales NUM

TRIBUTE TO AN
OLD COMRADE

Dear Comrades

As an oldtimer, who shared with Herbie Bell of Wallsend-on-Tyne, many experiences during critical times for the labour and socialist movement, I would like to bear witness to his integrity as a fighter in our war. I never have known a better comrade.

Let us remember our dead. The countless numbers who have given a lifetime's unselfish service in our war—the war against greed, oppression and poverty. The war for the liberation of mankind from the restriction of national boundaries, from racial pre-

judices, from exploitation by the money changers: from the tyranny and cruelty of dictatorships.

I knew Herbie Bell—he was a comrade in our war. During very difficult days he was steadfast to his ideals. He was strong when many were weak. He did what should be done no matter what cost to himself. He inspired others.

In answer to the question, "Who would do the dirty work under socialism?" Herbie would. He gave himself that we should also give.

Old-Timer
Newcastle-on-Tyne

HUGE PROFITS—
NO TAXES

Dear Comrades

The Tories and big business are continually calling for cuts in all areas of public spending, except defence and the police, in order to reduce what they claim is an 'intolerable' tax burden. Big business in particular publishes accounts showing huge tax sums deducted from profits.

Corporation tax seems simple: a 52% tax on "taxable profits". The truth is different. A new book, 'The British Tax System' published by Oxford University shows that with remissions and allowances of various kinds most top companies in fact often pay no corporation tax at all on their profits.

The top 20 companies with combined profits in 1976 of

£4,276 million eventually only paid £117 million corporation tax in 1977. This includes BP—profits £1,784m, tax nil; Distillers—profits £91m, tax £7m; Ford—profits £122m, tax nil; Rio Tinto Zinc—profits £279m, tax nil; etc. etc.

It is interesting to see who has money to spare. The building industry employers have set up a body, CABIN [Campaign against Building Industry Nationalisation], through which they are financing anti-Labour campaigns in marginal Labour constituencies to the tune of £500,000.

Fraternally
Ian Hunter
Newcastle Central CLP

TORY POLICIES DON'T WIN VOTES

Dear Comrade

We have seen over the last three years, the workers submitting to wage restraint, at the cost of lowering of their living standards together with rising unemployment. Big business has achieved these measures with the co-operation of the trade union leaders and Labour, whose right wing policies have hoodwinked the mass of workers. (Remember the cry that the wages bill is the main cause of inflation? What an outrageous lie).

Today the workers who have had all these measures heaped upon them, see the country (in their terms) still in a mess, and that capital is still reaping vast profits from them. Banks; insurance, property speculators are paying out more than ever to shareholders, (only last week a company was paying back millions of pounds to the government for over-pricing, and still the company made a huge profit.)

Therefore the Labour government is in a dilemma. Either they continue the role of previous Tory governments, as spokesmen for big business, with the additional weapon of being able to confuse the Labour voter, and the unorganised workers who normally vote for them, or to change their policies to a more socialist view, as ad-

vocated at Party Conference, to shift the wealth of the country into the hands of the people, who would distribute the wealth into much needed industry, with a planned economy which would reduce inflation, unemployment, and many of the inadequacies of our present system.

The more politically aware the organised workers are, the more they are crying, quite rightly, enough! The policies of the right wing of the Party only cause confusion among the unorganised workers, resulting in the weakening of the Party and the Labour Government. The sacrifices we have made over the last few years have all been in vain, and have served no useful purpose. Inflation is still with us, and by the end of the year will soar again, accompanied by the expected rise in unemployment, recently estimated at double the 1974 figure.

The mass of voters and workers who have always related to the Party and a Labour Government see no alternative to accepting increased unemployment, inflation, and cuts in their standard of living, to keep what they have always considered their party in power. How long will this confidence last?

If we do not change to a

more socialist stance we will undoubtedly lose many voters, and workers who have placed their faith in the Party. The disillusion can be seen in the vast numbers of abstentions in recent General Elections.

These I am sure could be won back given incentive by our leadership. We must seek

to stimulate them with policies they can identify with, for the apathy we are now seeing has been caused by successive Tory governments and right wing Labour policies, which they have come to identify as one.

Fraternally
Cliff Cole
(Newham North West CLP)

BOSSES' WITCHES BREW

Dear Comrades

On Friday evening the 7th July all the workers from Ward Bros near Scarborough plus one guest each went to the yearly party held in a marquee outside the factory. All the drink and food was "free".

As the evening wore on, the drink was flowing and about 11 o'clock the Managing Director got up to make his speech. It became a very rowdy speech as he decried nearly every section of the workforce, managers who can't manage, typists who can't type, and shop floor workers who are always complaining.

During all this a lot of workers committed a serious crime by jeering, heckling

and telling him to get off. A lot of the workers' wives complained about the swearing by a man of such standing.

On the Monday when we returned to work there was a notice pinned on all the entrances and this is an extract from it: "What I will tell them now in building up this little empire, I know what fear is. I have made a study of this subject for 30 years.

"I have been responsible for the deaths of two men while I was in S Africa. I learnt a lot about witchcraft and the occult and whilst I can be the kindest man I can be merciless and ruthless as well as cunning.

"Watch what happens to

Value of
Marxist
Weekend
School

Dear Comrades

I was very dubious about sitting for a whole day listening to a discussion, at a students' school, on obscure topics. After only a few minutes of the morning session on 'Dialectics', I listened enthralled as Brian Ingham used examples, apparently from my, and every other worker's, daily experience, to demonstrate that to a Marxist, philosophy is drawn from the concrete reality and not from the clouds.

Britain, formerly the stable democracy, will be transformed into a revolutionary ferment as workers realise that all possibility of solving the problems of capitalism and providing decent living standards is gone. The least militant workers are transformed into leaders of the working class, as the events of their working lives force them into action. Brian showed that these events were not accidental, but the result of historical laws working themselves out in the lives of the working class.

School history used to be a recital of dates; kings and their mistresses. That history is over. Today, history is made by the working class in action.

That fact really came home to me from the afternoon session on 'Historical Materialism'. This really came to my help in understanding the last session of the school on 'World Perspectives', in which Roger Silverman showed that in every country the working class is moving into action against its ruling class.

Every worker would be better able to fight the battles ahead equipped with the theoretical understanding Marxism alone can bring. As news of this truly great weekend spreads around the movement, I believe that there will be clamour from the comrades for it to be a regular event at least once a year.

Fraternally
Mike Cleverley
Walthamstow CLP

these clever dicks in the next year. Those who have escaped will have left through fear of what may happen to them. What I start I shall be unable to stop until they are out of my control."

Could this be the new "magical" solution for the capitalist system? If the Tories are returned to power Margaret Thatcher, the biggest witch of all, will not be able to wave a magic wand to cure all the ills of capitalism.

More and more workers are looking to a saner solution, with a return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Fraternally
Mick Cavers
Branch Secretary AUEW
Scarborough

THIS WEEK: £1,327

YOU DID IT AGAIN

Now rush us your rebates

Last week the Militant's Fighting Fund got an excellent total of £1,309. We appealed for comrades to "Do it again!" and they did! This week's total is £1,327. Well done!

However...there is still an awful long way to go.

We were hoping for a £10,000 boost to our funds in response to our appeal for everybody's tax rebates and special donations to increase the protection of our premises. So far we have had under £1,000. £205.26 of that came from the tax rebates of only 10 workers at the Militant offices.

Just 500 readers doing the same thing would give us the £10,000 straight away. 1,000 giving just a 'tenner' and keeping the rest would do it, too.

But 1,000 readers giving the whole lot would put us well on our way towards our £70,000 target! Every other reader giving us something before the next two weeks is out and we should easily reach the £52,500 by October 7th.

It's not easy to part with cash. But it's not easy living in a capitalist society and it's not easy fighting for socialism. We have no support from the ones with money, precisely because they're the ones who want to maintain society as it is. If you want things to change, act now and follow any of the examples below that you can.

A Peterborough supporter sent £17 'rebate', four readers in Stevenage gave £1, one sold books to raise £2.50, S Wright of Ipswich donated a 'fiver' and M Strobel £2. An excellent £25 came from Norwich readers.

A 'spaghetti meal' in Dorset raised £4.42. A Allenby of Purbrook sent £2 from his first week's much needed Social Security money. Gosport LP Young Socialists donated £3.38 and L Beszant of Gosport £2.

'A wedding present' of £50 for the Militant was a marvellous way for two Humberside readers to mark the beginning of a 'new life' together. It was sent with another £28.48 including an ASTMS member's £10 'Conference Expenses', MATSA member, B Fleetwood's £2.50 and 50p from unemployed supporter P Brown. £11.42 was collected at a Marxist Discussion Group in Scarborough with A Abiola, E Hall and M Cavers giving 1.50, £3 and £5.

A Sowercroft (NGA FOC, Preston) echoing our sentiments, wrote "It's about time

Lancashire pulled their weight! Please find enclosed a cheque for two pounds—times are hard, but, as you say, every little helps." And the other £13 from that area will help with the premises appeal! too.

Several tax donations—£27s, £25s, £20s, £10s, £5s and £1s were handed over by London supporters. A Campbell of Deptford YS and UCATT gave £18. A Haines (NUR rep) gave £3. J Franklin (Newham) £5. J&T Pearson gave £10.25. £15 'course expenses' came our way and among the £1 contributors were Mrs Evers (Islington N), C Welch (Tower Hamlets), P Galvin (EE—TPU), J Turner (N London) and 'Austin' and J Short of Wandsworth G&MWU. Newham Readers' Meeting added £14.50 to our funds and an Islington Jumble Sale £12.

£52,500 NEEDED BY OCTOBER 7th

FIGHTING FUND CHART £70,000

Area	Target 39 Wks	Target 52 Wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	3,300	4,400		1,365.21
Hants & IOW	1,575	2,100		1,538.60
Humberside	1,650	2,200		1,017.18
Lancashire	1,125	1,500		361.03
London: North	5,775	7,700		3,038.92
London: South	2,850	3,800		1,694.25
Manchester & District	2,175	2,900		1,001.84
Merseyside & District	3,375	4,500		1,404.21
Midlands East	3,300	4,400		1,535.39
Midlands West	5,500	7,400		3,126.02
Northern	3,675	4,900		1,979.14
Scotland East	1,875	2,500		713.02
Scotland West	2,125	2,900		830.34
South East	1,725	2,300		1,379.12
South West	1,725	2,300		1,009.76
Thames Valley	1,275	1,700		844.43
Wales East	1,500	2,000		883.47
Wales West	1,725	2,300		795.94
Yorkshire	3,900	5,200		1,533.93
Others	2,250	3,000		3,352.87
Total	52,500	70,000		29,404.67

Progress towards year's target Towards October 7th target

MILITANT HOLIDAY RAFFLE WINNER



Brother J Myers (right) receiving the 2nd prize of a 3-roomed frame tent at his AUEW branch, presented by Hammersmith North Labour Party Chairman, Danny Harris. photo: Julian McKittrick

Mr Bill Parry of the Roebuck Hotel, Rochdale helped to make a social there a big success, by providing the room and refreshments free of charge. But Militant supporters even charged people for going out to visit the small room! But the £46 came also from donations like the £1 from P Lord of the YS. J Weiss of Manchester was another one to give £1, P Kennedy £1.62, E Farren a healthy 'fiver', £14.50 was diligently collected from readers at GEC Trafford Park, with an explanation about the NF attack on the Militant premises. Readers in Oldham responded too, with over £30. Many supporters in Mer-

seyside have donated in a similar way as well, sending money for singing at a Folk Night (£7.50) and having a haircut at a party that raised £18.30. R Quick in Wavertree gave a 'fiver', B Roberts of Llangollen and D&D Holt £1.

Appeals have been stepped up in the East Midlands area bringing in a total of £119.95—£17.30 of that from NE Derbyshire [Anon £15, T Turnill (Clowne) £1, Clay Cross and Chesterfield YS members £1.30] M Clove and M Faye (AUEW) gave £5 and £2 to the 'premises appeal' circulating in Nottingham and C Knight, £1.

Numerous W Midlands readers contributed last week but most notable were the T&GWU members on the Coventry buses in appreciation of the coverage given by Militant to their strike—Bros. Infantino, Ford, Sarkaris, Power and Joha!

Blyth Labour Party members, YS branches and members (Wallsend, Newcastle and Blyth), D Bowler, P Burnett, A Auld and a 'supporter in the oilfields' were all asked to push up Northern's total! and the resources of the Militant...and they did!

In contrast, just two individual donations came from the whole of Scotland. But it's the holiday 'shut down'. When everything opens up again we expect a deluge!

South East's contributions included J Sullivan of Maidstone £1.20, J McCewan of

Worthing £2, M Singleton of Hove £15 and £5 from J Porter of Thanet, in the thick of the POEU's fight for a 35 hour week.

£5.50 was collected on a coach from Bristol to Tolpudde, £6.20 (inc. S Newland's £1) came from Reading and some ingenious contributions from E Wales. £15 was raised on a coconut stall! at a Carnival against Racism, £16 at 'Trixie's Biryani Evening' and £4.80½p by asking for 'extra' on the price of a Militant. C Hobday (Chairman of Van Branch LP) and D Selwood (Secretary) gave £5 and £1. Mrs Cuthbert (Cardiff) Cllr. V Jones and R Doyle (SE YS) £1. £2 from a collecting jar.

The 'Stop Fortnight' in W Wales also seems to have been very effective! Just £2.89 reached the Militant last week!

Yorkshire readers still still managed £42.77 but we will be expecting a lot more. Every reader should follow the weekly collection from workers at Rowntrees, York. 'Little and often' means a lot!

SEND US WHAT YOU CAN WHENEVER YOU CAN. MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO RETRIEVE THE MILITANT FIGHTING FUND BY RETRIEVING YOUR REBATE, AND THAT OF ANYONE YOU KNOW WHO READS OUR PAPER, AND SEND THEM ALL DOWN NOW!

All cheques and POs to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

FASCISTS ATTACK LABOUR ROOMS



One of many London Labour Parties' offices which have been attacked by fascists.

Tories Attack Left

North Hammersmith Labour Party was once again subject to the attention of the National Front last Friday night.

This time, all doors and windows were daubed. The attack shows the NF follow events in this left wing constituency quite closely. Apart from their usual 'NF' sign, the slogans were: "Exterminate Labour Marxists", "National Front OK", "Exterminate the Marxist Sub-humans", "God Save The Queen".

This obviously reflects the desperation of local NF hooligans after a number of

By Keith-Dickinson
(Hammersmith North Labour Party)

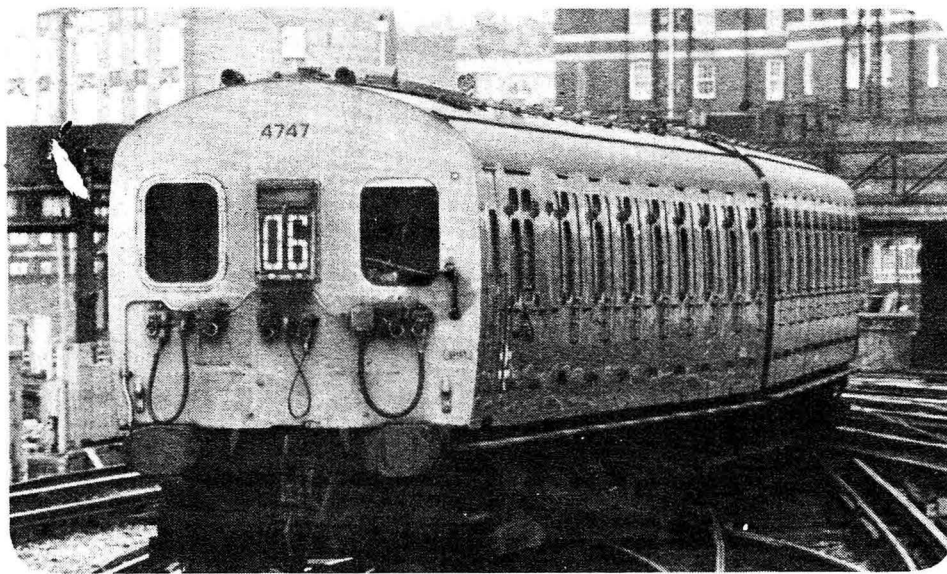
set-backs. Their last attempt to set up a youth group finished in a knife fight, in which a newly-appointed official was stabbed. More recently, their candidate in the May elections resigned.

Last week, moreover, the chairman of the Central Services Policy Committee of the Tory/Liberal coalition which now controls the Hammersmith Council—under pressure from the local labour

movement—upheld the former Labour council's policy which banned the NF from using council premises for meetings. At the same time, however, to mollify their reactionary supporters, the Tory Committee extended the ban to all "extremist" groups, naming the SWP.

The councillors and officials from North Hammersmith Labour Party were in the forefront of the fight for the original ban on the NF and have conducted leafletting campaigns locally against the NF. They will now also be fighting the Tories' all-embracing extension of the ban.

LOCO FITTERS MOVE INTO ACTION



"This is the best move we have ever made. We should have done this years ago," said a trade union representative for the locomotive maintenance fitters (known officially as regional shopmen) at the British Rail diesel loco depot at Stratford, East London.

His views sum up the feeling of the overwhelming majority of maintenance wor-

kers at the depot about the newly formed National Co-ordinating Committee, in effect a National shop stewards' combine. It is seen as a real breakthrough.

As the workers explained, for years now they have had increasing numbers of grievances and discontent has been growing. Unfortunately the national officials of their trade unions, mainly NUR, plus the Confed unions such

as AUEW, EETPU and Coppersmiths, have not been taking up these problems or giving any fighting leadership.

The poor pay rises presently being negotiated and their current bonus scheme—less favourable than the one operating in the Main Works of B.R. Engineering Ltd, basic rates of pay far below those in comparable jobs in other sections of industry,

have provoked the fitters into this action. Skilled men in B.R. motive power depots are on basic rates up to £10 below the nationally agreed minimum for the engineering industry.

By the time this article goes to print the fitters throughout the railway will have taken their first step in the fight for a better deal. On Tuesday 1st August there is a 24 hour strike, mainly over the bonus scheme but also in protest at the low basic pay and general conditions.

They will be looking for all possible co-operation from other railway workers. They deserve it. For as one loco driver remarked "it takes a lot to upset those lads."

The men are quite clear that in no way are they forming a "break away group". They see the need to fight within their own trade unions but with more control over negotiating their pay and conditions. As one representative put it, "this is real power now."

Martin Elvin (Stratford ASLEF) spoke to trade union representatives and other fitters at Stratford motive power depot.

HOSPITAL WORKERS CHALLENGE VICTORIAN MANAGEMENT

Disputes involving victimisation of workers for trade union activity in previously weak or unorganised places of work are becoming more common, not only in private industry but also in the public sector.

Up until three weeks ago, the union at Calderstones psychiatric hospital at Whalley, near Blackburn was weak and inactive. This began to change as the Health Service cuts bit.

Many workers, worried about the safety and conditions of the patients, became active in the union and a strong, active branch was built. Several gains were made; the branch succeeded in achieving manning levels of 569 when the management wanted 510.

The attitude of the Burnley District management is very backward and anti-trade union. Industrial relations deteriorated to such a point that an Independent Committee was brought in, and recommended that ACAS be involved.

Meanwhile an interim

agreement was drawn up. One point in this was that the stewards would be allowed reasonable time off for trade union activities after seeking permission from their immediate superiors.

A few months ago the Burnley District Management decided that, contrary to the agreement, permission would have to be got from higher management, and this new 'arrangement' was declared 'non-negotiable'. They used this to refuse time and stamp down on stewards' union activities.

The union then decided to interpret the document as stated. This was unanimously supported and the management were informed.

Shortly after this Tony Warren (Branch Chairman) and Peter Goode (Branch Secretary), attending a regular meeting with management

to discuss problems (one of the concessions that the union had gained) abiding by the branch decision, informed only their immediate superiors. They received a note saying that the management had not been informed of their absence—despite the fact that they had been at a meeting with them—and that disciplinary action was to be taken.

The Branch Executive, incensed by the management's attitude, decided to withdraw from all procedures with the management and informed them accordingly.

Following the branch decision the officers did not attend the disciplinary meeting and so they were sacked for 'refusing a management order'. The dispute is now proceeding through the official channels.

This is a clear cut case of a


'Victorian' management victimising union activists in an attempt to stamp out union activity. Health Service unions all over the country are beginning to organise. A defeat for the workers at Calderstones would mean

that the management in Burnley District felt they could attempt to stamp out union activity in their District.

Union organisation in Burnley if not the whole of Lancashire must not be set

back at a time when it is just beginning to develop on a wide scale.

Messages of support should be sent to: Tony Warren, 59 Scott Street, Padiham, Burnley.



**working
in the
union**

By Dick Massey

This week concludes Dick Massey's account of his trade union experiences, from which he has tried to draw out the lessons for today's shop stewards and union activists. The 'Working in the Union' series will continue, with other trade unionists writing about their experiences: organising the union, the daily battles in a modern factory, the differing problems in various jobs and industries and how they can be overcome, piece rates, shift work, the closed shop, union democracy, successful [and unsuccessful!] industrial action. Other workers may benefit from the lessons you have learnt—so write them down and send them to 'Militant'

HESTAIR DENNIS END WAGE RESTRAINT

Industrial action over a pay claim last week broke the normal calm in Guildford.

Over 500 workers at the Hestair Dennis motor vehicle factory walked out following the rejection by management of their annual pay claim of just over 10%. This is despite the fact that Hestair Dennis' profits were up last year. Management have said there is "no way" the increase will be paid.

Despite returning to work, the mood among the workers, members of the T&GWU, AUEW (who have a closed shop in the factory), EETPU, steelworkers' and woodworkers' unions, is getting more

angry. Ernie Pullen, works convenor, summed up the situation: "The lads are in no mood to be messed around at the moment. The walkout was unanimous. They are not very happy at all."

By Tim Harris
(Reading Labour Party)

The management tried to bypass the workers' representatives by speaking to a shopfloor meeting, rather than dealing with the negotiating committee, representing six unions. "We don't

think it's a very wise move," said Bro. Pullen. "The shop-floor elected us to represent them."

This dispute is unlikely to hit the national headlines, but it is indicative of the process which is taking place up and down the country. In places not accustomed to industrial disputes such as Guildford, in the heart of the stockbroker belt, workers are challenging not just management but government as well, after three years of rigid pay controls. If these members of the labour movement are going to turn out at elections to keep out the Tories, we must be fighting for the smashing of all pay controls.

The Old Man and the Mate tried in various ways to break our morale. While in port we were instructed to fill the midship sanitary tank. This would require us to haul up water some thirty or forty feet using a bucket and line. The same tank could be filled in a matter of minutes by the engineers opening a valve.

We refused, telling the mate to fill his own tank. We were logged 5 shillings for refusing his order and 5 shillings for insolence. They did not hesitate to log us for the most trivial offence, always threatening a bad discharge.

An Able Bodied Seaman's money in those days was £9 per calendar month—we could ill afford the money they were taking off us in fines. On top of this they were making us pay for any loss or breakage of tools, paint brushes etc. The only official way we could combat this indiscriminate deduction of our money would be on the day we paid off. I had never heard of a seaman who won a case against a ship master.

We discussed our position in the foc'sle. Some of us stood to lose nearly a month's pay and the voyage was not yet finished. The A.B. who had signed on in Galveston was a Dutchman: he informed us that he had signed to be paid off upon our arrival at Hamburg, where we were bound with a cargo of grain. I

knew that as an alien the Old Man would be put to a great deal of trouble if he was to be paid off in an English port. Provided our orders were not changed to sail to an English port, I could see a way out of our difficulties and to obtain a good discharge.

We arrived in Hamburg and the Dutchman was duly paid off. The cargo was discharged in a matter of hours and soon came the order to stand by for sailing. The five of us walked up to the bridge and confronting the Old Man, flatly refused to sail. He started to shout and swear but he knew we were well within our rights to refuse.

He next tried pleading, but to no avail. He admitted that he had tried without success to sign another A.B. but as we would be home in 36 hours he felt we could come to an agreement.

We had discussed among ourselves the action we would take and the form of agreement we would demand. We won our case—all loggings and deductions from our pay were cancelled, and all men received a good discharge. The next time you hear some one ask "What is the union going to do about it?" tell them to rephrase the question. "What are we going to do?"



POEU Lead the fight

PO. Profits – our jobs threatened

Last week's White Paper on the future of the Post Office leaves no doubts that POEU members are in for a hard time. The main theme of the White Paper is the intention to reduce costs by 5% annually for the next five years!

This is on top of the 6% rate of profit on net assets which is the minimum expected. In the last few years the P.O. has made super-profits (last year's was £392m and this year's is expected to be £380m) However, to meet these targets,

productivity must be kept apace with the new high technology, so the White Paper tells us.

Already P.O. engineers have a record second to none for productivity. The telecommunications system has doubled in the last 7 years yet the workforce has only increased by a mere 3%.

With the rapid introduction of the little known System X in the '80s, jobs are threatened and speed-ups and increased stress are on the cards. It is not

surprising that engineers are militant for the 35 hour week.

In my branch support for the action is solid. Exchange staff have refused to bring into service £½m extension of international subscriber dialling equipment since October; though the local Tory MP is putting pressure on management to open the equipment up.

However the White Paper is the thin end of the wedge, with the Tories declaring their aim to sell off the most

profitable sections of the business. This can only mean that the POEU will have to break with the tradition of being "moderate", and give a lead to the enthusiasm and militancy of the members in building a fighting union.

By Jeff Porter

(Thanet Branch POEU)

35 hours without cutting pay

To demand a 35 hour week is not enough. We must also demand no loss of living standards. This is being taken up in more and more industries.

Unless we can control new technology it could mean 6 or 8 million unemployed. Could we ever envisage that? It would be completely devastating. How would the out of work be supported?—the bosses don't care.

The young people are going to put up a fight. With great respect for the workers of 1926, their standard was nowhere near the standard of today. What young people expect is more than I ever expected when I got married. And rightly so.

£70 minimum

Even now they're beginning to feel the pinch. I work with young women, and it seems a small thing, but their social life—they can't go out for a night out, and a meal—not more than once a month—and that's where husband and wife are working. God knows what happens if there's only one wage coming in.

When you make a demand to cut overtime, it's got to be on the basis of no loss of earnings, and a £70 minimum wage. You can't tell workers, in our plant, young men with families, who're working overtime because without it their wage is nothing, you can't tell them "we must have a ban on overtime". They need it to make their wage up.

We must say, the unions must say: "We'll cut overtime, a 35 hour week, with no loss of earnings." Why should we suffer because of new technology? It should ease our burden and raise our living standards.

We must demand that any essential overtime be controlled by the trade unions. In most plants it isn't yet. Then we will begin to tackle unemployment, not at the expense of the working class, but of the bosses.

Muriel Browning

(T&GWU Shop Steward, Leyland, Llanelli)

NEW TECHNOLOGY - FOR WHOSE BENEFIT?

The latest edition of the TV programme 'Risk Business' once again revealed the media's anti-nationalisation bias.

The programme on the new telecomms system [System X] was designed to put all the blame for the failures of British telecommunications on the Post Office. It was a blatant advert for the American Bell telephone system, in an attempt to provide propaganda against the PO's monopoly and for "hiving off" profitable sections to private industry.

They filmed existing electro-mechanical strowger equipment which just happened to be the oldest and most out-dated. When they filmed the American exchanges they showed the most up to date equipment in colour, with professional advertising films. Hence, the "fair" comparison.

In fact the Post Office compares well with the American system, owned by capitalism in the interests of profit first and last. Fault clearance in Britain is in the main on a 24 hour basis.

By Phil Holt
(POEU Liverpool Internal Branch Secretary, personal capacity)



The waiting list is now very small! (although it has risen due to our industrial action). The biggest problem in the past was that the private firms had such a bad record of late deliveries (up to 2 years for line plant and exchange equipment).

When the PO spokesman (P. Benton) pointed out that where the Bell Company operates it has a monopoly more complete than the British Post Office, he was completely ignored. It has 80% of the USA sewn up, not just on the service side (as the

PO) but on the manufacturing side as well!

All our members were incensed by these distortions and the way the POEU General Secretary was given no chance to comment on the effect System X will have on our members. The programme has given added impetus to our branch's view of how the 35 hour campaign should now be conducted.

We will obviously get little sympathy or fair treatment from the media. Locally we have fought a number of battles involving thirty sus-

pensions, one mass walkout and four or five selective stoppages. The press and radio got the case and details wrong every time!

If we did our jobs as badly as they do theirs (deliberately or not), the telephone service would be as bad as they claim it is!

Militant supporters can help the POEU by attempting to get Labour Parties and unions to support us financially but more important, by action. With unemployment so high all unions should be taking action with us to

achieve the 35 hour week. Labour Party members should demand that their MPs reject the White Paper and give full support to our fight.

Meanwhile, we believe we should be working to rule nationally and blacking such institutions as the Bank of England, Stock Exchange etc.

The BBC programme did show that a unified effort is necessary to bring about a successful new telecomms system. However, we have three major contractors at odds with each other and with the Post Office over System X.

Our view is that if working people are to get the benefits of System X and all the wonders of the new electronic systems then the 35 hour week fight is only part of a general fight to bring about a planned socialist telecomms industry where the benefits could be shared with customers and workers. Quite evidently the present situation is breeding chaos and endangering the future of the industry for everyone.

Liverpool show blacked —due to management provocation

Part of the industrial action by the Post Office Engineering Union to achieve a 35-hour week is a refusal to bring new equipment into service.

Abiding by national instructions, the POEU Liverpool Internal branch applied this sanction to a new cable installed to provide, among other things, communications for the Liverpool Show. The members were instructed not to put fuses in the exchange for circuits served by the new cable, apart from existing circuits transferred over from an old cable, which had traditionally served the Show. So as not to precipitate an escalation to the dispute the branch allowed these circuits to go through.

However, this year the Post Office wanted a total of twenty-one circuits to the

Show, on the new cable. They adopted a heavy handed approach, threatening to send home any member not 'complying with instructions'.

On Thursday the officer in charge of Sefton Park telephone exchange, which serves the Liverpool Show, was sent home. The rest of the staff were threatened with the same, if they weren't prepared to connect up all the circuits.

However, they walked out in sympathy with their colleague and went to picket the Show. Members of the EETPU refused to put on electricity and water to the PO exhibition in solidarity.

In a further spontaneous show of solidarity, 250 engineers from the main telephone exchange in Liverpool came out in sympathy, despite the initial opposition of the union branch. Because the feeling

was so intense, their walk-out was made official.

The following day the other exchanges in the group were called out on strike, together with the City centre subscribers' fault control. The other members at Sefton Park were sent home.

The PO has suffered a loss of revenue and good will. Cutting off their nose to spite their face, they have lost even their original 7 circuits to the Show, apart from one emergency line.

Clearly, by taking a hard line the Post Office is escalating the dispute, sending members home and causing a severe disruption of service to the public.

By Bob Hughes
(POEU Rep, Sefton Park; Liverpool Internal Branch Committee, personal capacity)

EDINBURGH—Undaunted engineers demand national lead

Disciplinary action continues here against POEU members campaigning for the 35 hour week. All members walked out last week when an engineer was sent home by management.

Blacking of BBC telephone and transmission equipment continues after Corporation engineers crossed a Dundee picket line to transmit the Open Golf Championship. Two BBC unions, ABS and ACTTS, are likely to be reported to the TUC for allowing their members to operate microwave equipment, set up last week in Edinburgh to maintain transmissions and thwart the industrial action.

The POEU also refuses to work with colleagues temporarily promoted and recruited by the Society of Post Office Engineers, which has not given support locally.

No overtime or detached

duty [involving extra money for expenses] is being worked. "Some members have just realised how low their basic wage is without extras", one engineer told me.

Demands are growing for a firm lead by the NEC on a united, national campaign of industrial action. "The NEC is sitting back while individual branches are taking the brunt alone" I was told.

However, the union awaits the outcome of Lord McCarthy's deliberations on their claim. He is not believed to have a PO engineering background, but it is rumoured he is a Labour Peer.

The disciplinary action has failed to intimidate the engineers who have quickly responded with a stronger challenge and renewed determination to win.

By Tam Burke
(Central Edinburgh LP and CSU)

Militant

SAVE WESTERNS

Mass demo Saturday 5th August 10 am starts Yard gates, Church Street, Birkenhead
Bring banners
LPYS Public Meeting
Hear Des Billington and Kevin Scully
10th August, 8.00 pm
Birkenhead Labour Club, Cleveland Street

Western Ship Repairers – FIGHT TO SAVE JOBS

By Richard Venton
(Birkenhead LPYS)

Mass meeting at
Cammell Laird's
Western Yard in
1975



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

Western workers have since 17 July been picketing the yard to try to prevent care and maintenance workers entering following Laird management's decision to close the yard and sack 650 men.

A fight by the whole labour movement to reopen the yard and save these jobs is vital to halt the devastating big business offensive against jobs on Merseyside.

Over 9,000 redundancy notices have already been issued in 1978. There are now over 90,000 unemployed in the area. In Birkenhead itself, 8,000 people are jobless, not counting Westerns. Two housing estates, Ford

and Woodchurch, face 30% unemployment if Western's jobs go. What a disastrous future, for youth especially, if the bosses have their way.

Many more local factories, big and small, face the chop unless their workforce stop the rot now by backing up the Western's men.

The action committee set up to defend Westerns is circulating the trade union and labour movement of Merseyside with their case. Teams of pickets and Labour Party Young Socialists have been round all the main trade union headquarters and the bigger factories.

So far, the response is sympathetic. Despite holidays, many workers are expected on the demonstration through Birkenhead on Saturday 5th.

Trade unionists must push for messages of support, donations, visits to the picket and resolutions demanding official trade union backing—something unfortunately lacking so far.

All trade union officials must be made accountable to the needs and demands of their members. At Monday's mass meeting, the men called

on fellow workers to black all Laird's work. This must be taken up in the trade union branches and Trades Councils, as Lairds are obviously diverting their ship-repair work elsewhere.

Ship-repair workers, tug-boat men, dockers, seamen etc. should refuse to handle this work and force Laird's to reopen Western's or else concede to nationalisation.

Nationalisation, in fact, remains the key demand of the action committee. If Laird's re-opened on management terms, it would mean a drastic reduction in jobs.

The Labour government has a duty to reopen without loss of jobs through nationalisation. Then, with labour movement control of investment and planning, work-sharing could be implemented and alternative schemes of work investigated—schemes to benefit workers' families, not sack them.

The action committee are calling on Labour MPs—including Birkenhead's Edmund Dell—to fight for nationalisation of the yard. In

a press release, they explain:

"The men facing unemployment have been loyal Labour voters in the past. We have received support from Birkenhead Labour Party. We expect our parliamentary representative, Edmund Dell, to give similar support. He is in a position of influence as a government minister, and he must use his authority to help get the yard reopened through nationalisation.

"The action committee will be encouraging the men to join the local Labour Party to help persuade the MPs of this policy. Otherwise we believe they would not be fulfilling their tasks as Labour MPs and they should reconsider their position."

This statement was endorsed by Wirral Labour Party, and financial support given by Wallasey Labour Party. Eddie Loyden MP sent messages of support.

Westerns workers—indeed every trade unionist and housewife in the area—must join the Labour Party and make it a fighting organisation of the working class. Workers must ensure that the Labour Party and the Labour

government carry out socialist policies against unemployment.

Last week Edmund Dell told pickets he didn't believe in "meaningless gestures"—such as the call for nationalisation of Westerns. If every Labour MP fought for socialist nationalisation and explained its benefits, the vast majority of workers would support them and return a majority Labour government, pledged to socialist policies.

It is not good enough to hide behind the parliamentary minority. Workers must join the LPYS members and 'Militant' supporters in the Labour Party in the fight to make MPs accountable to party policy, and subject to recall if they fail to satisfy the requirements of a Labour representative.

Only then will the Labour government cease to bow to the demands of people like the Laird group, and begin to listen to their own supporters—the working class.

Messages and donations to Western Ship Repair Action Committee, c/o Des Billington, 29 Gaywood Close, Birkenhead. Tel: 051-653 0254.

MASS EVICTIONS

On July 18th a possession order was granted to the owners of Pearson House, Huntley St, WC1, making way for the biggest mass eviction in British history. 160 people, including 30 children, would be forced onto the streets.

The Labour controlled Camden Council say they have no obligation to rehouse, even though they have over 4,000 homes—over 10% of the total—lying empty.

The Area Health Authority (London and Islington), who own the block, intend to convert it into a car park and medical staff accommodation. However these homeless families have the sympathy of hospital staff. The AHA say they need the flats. Why do they insist on giving up nurses'

accommodation at Grafton Way and Maple St? This would mean a net loss of nursing accommodation overall.

The campaigners are quite prepared to move out if only offered alternative accommodation at reasonable rent and rates. The intention is not to jump the housing list. They only wish not to be physically evicted. They will not use violence if evicted as they have their children to consider.

Give support by writing to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Services, demonstrate outside Huntley St, raise the issue in your Labour Party and phone Huntley St—01 638 0528

Steve Lerpeiniere
(CPSA, personal capacity)

POEU

Continued from front page

a 35-hour week in the first place.

Many POEU branches have already been working to rule in addition to the overtime ban anyway, and it is certain that many more will vote to ignore the NEC and continue the overtime ban in addition to the work to rule.

Already the members in Bradford, after a 100% successful one-day strike, have voted unanimously to continue the ban and have agreed to a further 25p levy. They are also sending a resolution expressing no confidence in the Executive's action.

The next move for the rank and file must be to call for an immediate recall conference to democratically lay down the tactic for a campaign really corresponding to the present mood in the union.

NO RESTRAINT

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front page

which doesn't give one damn about the workers whose standards of living it is destroying.

"At Rosyth, HMS Repulse and HMS Renown have been blacked. The workers, some of whom are facing financial disaster, have been forced into this action.

"The government's use of the navy as scab labour clearly illustrates the need for solidarity of the workers in all defence establishments.

"The labour movement must answer the moans and groans of the Tories about the 'defence of the nation' with socialist economic policies in defence of the pay, conditions and living standards of the working class."

Militant

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