

LOW PAID FIGHT BACK



One million low paid workers are fighting back!

Unions representing over a million local authority workers are to present a claim for a £60 minimum wage and shorter working week to create jobs for the unemployed.

Many of these workers are desperate, having suffered a drop in living standards since the introduction of wage curbs under the Social Contract.

The Social Contract was only accepted reluctantly by the trade unions in 1975 on the understanding that sacrifice by higher-paid workers would benefit their low-paid brothers. But instead of the foregone wages going to the poor, the money has simply gone straight into the pockets of big business in the form of higher profits.

When the £6 pay limit was introduced in 1975 most of the low-paid never got anything like a £6 rise. When wage rises were limited to 4½%, prices were going up by about 15%.

Profits up 32%

And last year while wages were tied to 10%, profits rocketed by over 32%!

We are told that average male earnings last year were £72.89 for a 44.2 hour week. But what about the millions of:

- ★ women workers?
- ★ the unemployed?

★ those working short time?

All in all, 3½ million workers earn less than £50 a week. Another half million would fall under this level if they didn't work long hours of overtime.

Even the scandal of ruthless employers illegally paying their workers less than the minimum laid down by the Wage Councils for the low-paid still affects large numbers of unorganised workers in sweat shops.

The low-paid have been used as pawns for political propaganda—and then forgotten about. It is the pressure from their mounting anger and desperation

that is forcing the trade unions to fight the new 5% limit. They deserve the support of the whole labour movement.

★ No more wage restraint—make the bosses pay!

Figures show that last year the average family had to pay out £72 a week in food, transport and bills. Who, then, could argue against the justified demand for:

★ A £70 minimum wage for a 35-hour week!

By
Lawrence Coates
(Leicester NUPE)

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Special

Middle East summit : empty euphoria

The gloom and pessimism that prevailed in the press, after 10 days of absolutely fruitless negotiations in Camp David, has suddenly given way to a new bout of euphoria and optimism. However, the realities of the Middle East situation are actually better illustrated by the first 10 days than by the 'agreements' that were rushed through at the last minute for the benefit of President Carter's poll ratings.

United Nations resolutions on the Middle East are notorious for their deliberate ambiguities: the parties cannot agree, so a formulation is drawn up that can be open to various, almost contradictory interpretations, thus agreeing to put off the real questions to a future

occasion. The new treaty agreement referred to as the "Framework for peace in the Middle East" is built on the same false foundations.

capitalism has always been most prepared to make has been the withdrawal from Sinai, hoping thereby for a

separate peace with Egypt, the biggest and strongest of the Arab powers.

The Sinai has almost no economic significance, and its military and strategic value is limited, especially when UN troops, demilitarised zones and electronic surveillance are added. But on the main question, the main stumbling block to any negotiated peace, ie. the West Bank, Gaza and the position of Palestinian Arabs, there is only ambiguity.

The Israeli capitalist class can never reconcile itself to a fully independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza, because such a state would be from its very beginning in a condition of social, economic and political

upheaval. They cannot tolerate a revolutionary Arab state on Israel's doorstep. It is for this reason that the agreement on Gaza and the West Bank is so vague on the question of self-government, but is quite explicit about so-called security arrangements.

By John Pickard

The agreements refer to giving consideration to the "legitimate security concerns of the parties involved". It refers to arrangements for assuring "internal and external security" and so on.

These are not there by accident. These arrangements in effect rule out the possibi-

ity of an independent state. Some vague form of self governing authority will be worked out with the Palestinians and "mutually agreed" by "all parties"; then after five years there will be more negotiations.

But in the meantime, Israel's military machine will maintain "security" on the West Bank and will ensure the absolute absence of free democratic political expressions.

Sadat, despite protestation to the contrary, seems to be manoeuvring to get a separate deal worked out between Israel and Egypt—that is certainly the interpretation everyone is putting on the deal. But that is by no means

a good bet for Sadat, Begin and Carter.

The continued conflict and antagonisms in Gaza and the West Bank, the continuation of Jewish settlements and the class conflicts in Jordan and Lebanon; all these issues will revolve around the political situation in Israel. They inevitably would spill over into Egypt itself, despite any temporary Israeli-Egyptian peace over Sinai.

With or without agreement, Sadat's regime sits very precariously in the saddle at the moment, and future class struggles in Egypt will not leave the international issues untouched.

ABC SECRETS CASE

RE-TRIAL ORDERED AFTER JURY FOREMAN FOUND TO BE EX-SAS MAN

photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)



Campbell, Aubrey and Berry outside the Old Bailey

The "ABC" secrets trial at the Old Baily was halted by Mr Justice Willis on Monday following the mention on LWT's 'Saturday Night People' programme that one of the jurors was an ex-SAS paratrooper.

Judge Willis condemned the mention by Christopher Hitchen of the 'New Statesman' of this fact as "a piece of gratuitous journalistic gossip". Fair-minded people, however, may well think that it was a good reason for dismissing the jury.

One of the jurors later told the press that the former SAS man had already established himself as a dominant member, having volunteered to be foreman. This juror claimed that the man had talked freely and determinedly about the outcome of the trial.

At the beginning of the trial of the two journalists, Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, and ex-soldier John Berry, on nine charges—which they all deny—under the Official Secrets Act, defence council criticised the

pre-trial vetting of the jury by the security services. Later they challenged the impartiality of the ex-SAS juror, but this was overruled by the judge.

Now the trial will have to start all over again, through the prosecution has promised—or threatened?—to present a "more economical" case. The defendants are no doubt wondering whether the prosecution will continue to try to shroud the proceedings in cloak-and-dagger secrecy—almost comical breaches of which have from time to time enlivened the proceedings so far.

Judge Willis, himself an ex-Signals Corps Staff Officer, had ruled that the names of 52 UK and US installations were too hush-hush to mention. Never mind that the sites are well known, that they had featured in countless newspaper articles, were on official information handouts, were listed in the 'phone book, or that they had been plotted by schoolboys with map and compass. They all had to be referred to through a code of numbers and letters.

Last week started with an attempt to establish in court that the three men were arrested through illegal telephone tapping. But Special Branch Chief Supt. Harry Nicholls said he knew nothing besides his orders from "a senior Special Branch officer" Captain Wade who was acting on information received. These orders were simply to go to Berry's Muswell Hill flat and arrest the men as they came out.

Idiotic

Campbell's defending QC, Jeremy Hutchinson, asked Nicholls why only selected documents found on Campbell at the time of the arrest were presented in court. These dealt with the Post Office microwave communications system—which the

jury was told came under the OSA. But Campbell also had on him a book about the system which he was co-authoring for the Open University, which explained the other papers.

The judge's ruling came on Tuesday after the prosecution complained over the defence naming sites featured in photographs taken from Campbell's Brighton flat. Earlier, Wing Commander Donald Evans, senior RAF officer at the defunct Orford Ness radar station in Suffolk, admitted the official mystery surrounding his well-known base was "absolutely idiotic."

On Wednesday, the commander of three RAF stations, Squadron Leader Alan Fellows claimed "no knowledge" that one of them, Edzell, was the US's main British communications centre! "We have a policy in the

RAF. If you don't need to know you don't ask."

On Thursday the jury heard that boys from Ampleforth College went on a 'microwave treasure hunt' along the East Coast of Scotland. They plotted their way from station to station with a compass. Their teacher, Father Anselm, said he thought they were doing nothing wrong. If the stations were as innocuous as the Post Office claimed, just for improving telephone and TV systems, "there was no harm looking at it." Lord Hutchinson said: "Microwave tower spotting is no more harm than train spotting."

A boy was going to write an essay about it. But photographs of these installations from a large part of the evidence against Campbell. Later there was a wrangle over another 'hush-hush' spot—the well known tourist at-

traction in London, the West Drayton air traffic control centre. Campbell had a photograph of this as well.

It will be up to the new jury to deliver its verdict on the serious charges brought by the prosecution. But the wider issue is the way in which the wide net of the Official Secrets Act, which the Labour government formerly promised to amend, can be used to prevent journalists from informing the public about installations and activities which are certainly common knowledge among competent secret agents and well known to any foreign power capable of using spy satellites and electronic surveillance.

By Lynn Walsh

WHO MAKES THE DOUGH?

By Eileen Short

As the giant Spiller-French Milling last week announced their intention to close the Sun Flour Mill in Manchester and two smaller mills in Cardiff and Newcastle, an independent research group produced a devastating condemnation of the big bakery monopolies.

'Our Daily Bread: Who Makes the Dough?', published by the British Society For Social Responsibility in Science, warns that the present structure of the flour milling and baking industry

will lead to more job losses, increased bread prices and fewer small independent bakers. The report takes a wide-ranging look at the way wheat is grown, flour milled and bread produced in Britain, and concludes that radical changes are necessary.

The present system is controlled, in the case of bread, by two, and in the case of milling by three, multinational firms. The report shows how this control leads to increasing prices and the continued conning of the bread consumer.

Behind the advertising

myths used to sell today's poor quality bread are the reality of bread factories where poor conditions and high accident rates still exist. Growing wheat, from a farm worker's point of view, is far from the idyllic images of golden fields created by the monopolies' advertisers.

Who owns and controls the marketing of the products produced from the wheat?

Three companies—Rank-Hovis-McDougal, Spillers and Associated British Foods—supply 80% of the flour used in Britain today. This "flour is consistently overpriced," according to the report, yet it coincides with very low profits on the baking side.

This enables the "Big Three" to claim that their operations don't make excessive profits and at the same time allows them to continue squeezing out small bakers, who have to buy the high price flour, but can't survive on the low profit margins in baking.

Two of these companies, RHM and ABF, supply over 60% of all bread and as the closure of Spillers earlier this year shows, "no worker in the bread industry can be sure that his or her job is safe."

The BSSRS are also highly critical of the standard loaf. The concentration of the bread industry has led to "more air, water, chemicals and more boring work" in bread production.

A white sliced loaf is 75%

air by volume and 40% water by weight. The most nutritious and beneficial parts of the wheat, moreover, are most largely removed during flour refining—only to be used for animal feed or passed on to the high-price "health food market".

The report also says that pressures are such that workers are encouraged to take risks with their safety and even go into ovens at temperatures over 300°F rather than interrupt the production line.

The report's conclusions are somewhat woolly. The present monopoly structure needs to be dismantled and more local co-operatively based mills and bakeries encouraged, it suggests. Workers should combine and share experience in fighting for better conditions, subsidies should benefit independent bakers and millers more than the monopolies. Tougher policies should be adopted towards the monopolies by the government.

The conclusion that socialists would draw from reading this thorough, well-documented report, however, is that the only way to provide the most people with healthy, cheap bread would be to take over the big monopolies and run the industry under democratic control.

'Our Daily Bread: Who Makes the Dough?' from BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, London W.1., price 50p plus 15p p&p.

WORKERS VOTE CASH TO MILITANT

'Militant' asks workers to support their paper with cash [a] because the bosses won't and [b] because the more £s and ps it gets from workers the more it can supply the information workers want—to use every day in the struggles with the bosses and their system.

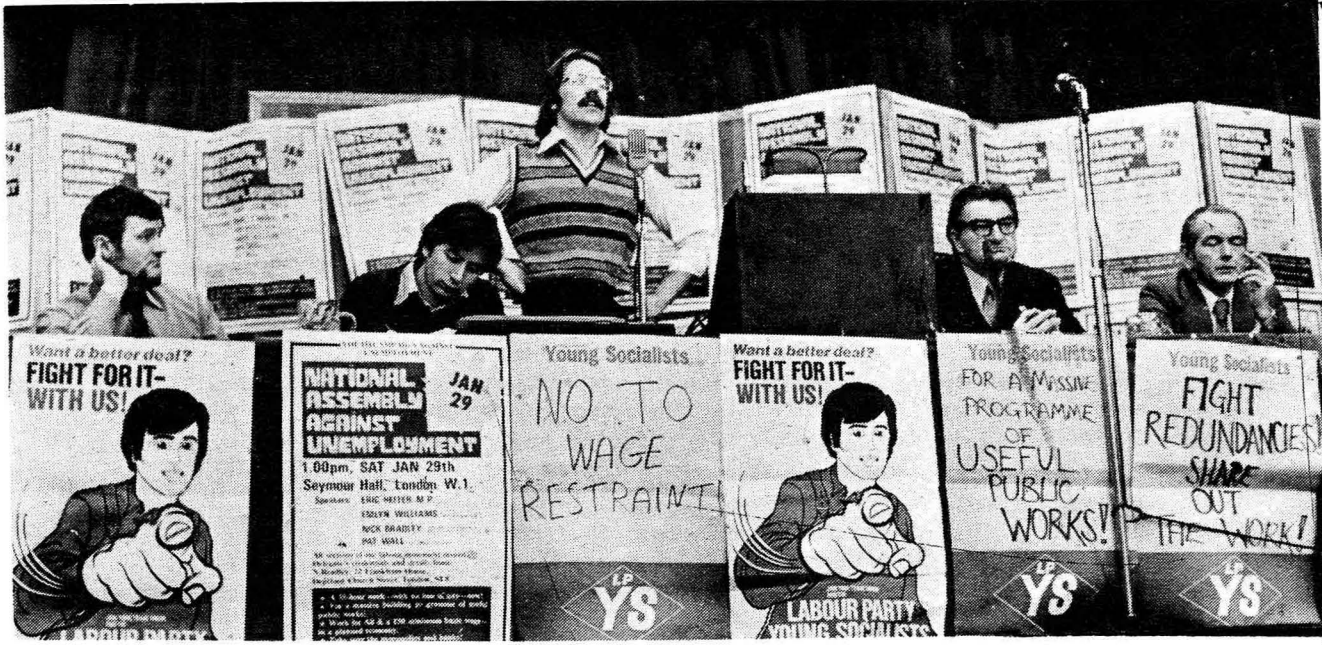
A militant convenor in South London was disappointed that, due to changed circumstances, he didn't get a tax rebate. He felt deprived of a rare opportunity of giving a lump sum to the paper he supports and sells. However, to compensate, he resolved to do something he had been meaning to do for some time—raise on the shop stewards' committee the need to give more support to the 'Militant'.

Hence a donation of £10 to our Fighting Fund from Cow Industrial Polymer's [Streatham] SSC! Now, to follow up, this supporter will be taking the 'Militant' September Appeal sheet in to work to approach each of the shop stewards to donate individually to the paper they buy each week from him. He will also be 'tapping' anyone else he can!

This is just one of the examples of how the 'Militant' can be built. See the Fighting Fund column on page 13 for others.

Raise cash for the 'Militant' in YOUR workplace! Raise it at your trade union branch! Get £10 [or even more!] from YOUR shop stewards' committee and take this appeal to EVERY WORKER!

NOW APPEAL TO EVERY WORKER



29 Jan 1977: YCAU National Assembly Against Unemployment, Seymour Hall, London

photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

YOUTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

Act on 35-hr week

The recent decision of the Trades Union Congress to mount a campaign for the implementation of the 35-hour working week must have brought a glimmer of hope to that scattered army of almost a million young people who are out of work.

The situation is becoming critical for tens of thousands of this year's school leavers. 100,000 are expected to be still unemployed at the end of the year.

Now the trade union movement has a chance to show that it has something to offer the unemployed and draw this section into the battle to defend workers' basic rights. A first step in the campaign must be to recruit the unemployed into the trade unions.

The current prospect of high unemployment for years

By Nick Bradley

(Labour Party NEC)

to come means that a shorter working week is vital if the right to work is to be preserved for the working class.

Considerable wage sacrifice by the workers has failed to persuade the employers to reduce dole queues. The hand-outs for taking on young people have only slightly reduced youth unemployment (and this at the expense of their elders).

While suggesting for years that wage restraint would mean more jobs, the employers have been unable to come up with the goods.

Costs?

In order to try and dampen down workers' enthusiasm for shorter working hours, the employers' mouthpieces are busy working on figures to show that a 35-hour week would be inflationary and have little effect on unemployment. The DoE published figures to suggest that labour costs would increase by up to 8% thus forcing companies to put up prices by 2%.

In other words they are saying that the bosses cannot afford a cut in their profits to help lift the British worker out of the poverty of unemployment.

But at Fords, where the unions are demanding a 35-hour week, profits rose from £121 million in 1976 to £246 million in 1977. Any company which is so unhealthy as to be unable to meet the needs of the workers should be taken over.

The dire situation means only a determined drive against the bankrupts of

British big business will end unemployment. The Trade Union Research Unit calculates that 890,000 people could be taken off the dole with a 35-hour week, so the choice is between profits and jobs.

The demand for 35 hours without loss of pay must be linked firmly to the demand for a £70 national minimum wage plus a clause for protecting wage increases from price increases. The unions could then move, on this basis, to institute a ban on all overtime with no loss of earnings.

Implemented in this way, the 35-hour week would soon cut unemployment.

Of course, as the DoE suggests, workers will be tempted to work more hours and thus decrease the potential for curbing unemployment. But only if wages remain as low as today. That is why the bosses' offer to cut

The Youth Campaign Against Unemployment

The Youth Campaign Against Unemployment was launched at the end of 1976 with the backing of leading members of the Labour Party Young Socialists and the support of the LPYS national committee.

The Campaign's joint-elected presidents are Emlyn Williams, President of the South Wales NUM, and Eric Heffer MP, a member of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee.

The YCAU has organised many local and national activities. In January last year a National Assembly in London's Seymour Hall brought together over 1,400 delegates and visitors from shop stewards' committees, trades councils, and trade union, LP and LPYS branches to hammer out a programme to end the tragedy of 1½ million on the dole.

Last November, the Campaign organised a highly successful Lobby of Parliament—over 1,500 attended this week-day lobby and public meeting.

But while the YCAU has already won significant support from labour movement organisations, there are still many trade union branches, joint shop stewards' committees, and even Labour Parties which have not yet been involved in the Campaign.

If your organisation has not yet sponsored the Campaign, write to Nick Bradley, 435 New Cross Road, London S.E.14., so the YCAU can send literature and a speaker to explain the Campaign's aims and activities.

hours if wages are held down is so pathetic.

Despite the supposed 40-hour week, the average bus driver works 10.5 hours overtime and his fellow conductor 9.8 hours. Signalmen work a 53-hour week and factory operatives do an average 8.5 hours overtime. The average manual worker in fact does a 45.8-hour week. Total overtime amounts to a colossal 16 million hours.

A cut in the working week will not by itself mean less overtime worked. Following a call last July by NUR leader Sid Weighell to increase jobs by cutting overtime, for instance, South London union reps angrily declared it out of the question as overtime accounts for 25% of their earnings!

That is why the demand for 35 hours without loss of pay must be linked firmly to the demand for a £70 national minimum wage plus a clause for protecting wage increases from price increases. The unions could then move, on this basis, to institute a ban on overtime with no loss of earnings.

The Youth Campaign Ag-

ainst Unemployment, therefore, is now mounting a campaign for immediate action by the labour leaders. In every area regional conferences should be planned to discuss this question.

Mobilise

A shorter working week alone will not solve unemployment. We need to press for an end to further redundancies and a massive scheme of useful public to be instituted by the government.

But if the Labour government were to introduce a 35-hour week, they would gain the sympathies of millions of workers and sweep to power at the next elections. With millions mobilised behind Labour, it would be possible to end the rotting capitalist system once and for all!

The YCAU intends to take this message into the party and unions. Leaflets, broadsheets, badges and stickers are being produced for distribution. Order your material now.

WHY WE ARE STANDING FOR THE NEC

We are seeking election to the NEC of the Labour Party, as Marxists and supporters of 'Militant', in order to fight for policies in the interests of working people.

Throughout the history of the Labour Party, the fight against the misery of mass unemployment has been taken up by the rank and file. Once again, with the developing crisis of capitalism, working people are faced with a rising swell of mass unemployment.

One and a half million are

on the dole, 50% of those are under the age of 26. Hundreds of thousands of school leavers every year are spending the first months of their "working" life signing on at the dole office.

More than at any time since the dark days of the 1930s it is now necessary for the Labour Party to take up a fighting programme against unemployment.

Giant leaps forward have been made in developing new technology, yet what has this meant under the anarchy of capitalism? Rather than being used to raise the quality of life for workers, thousands of

jobs have been lost. Millions of workers are forced to work overtime to make ends meet.

The Labour Party must once and for all get to grips with the problem. That is why we are standing for election to fight for socialist policies.

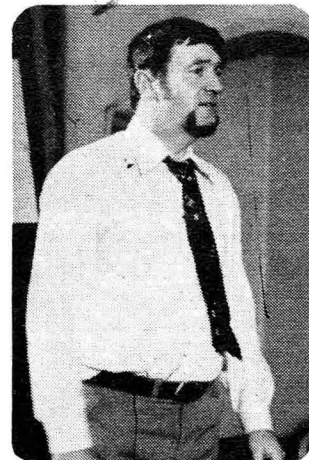
The introduction of a 35-hour working week with no loss of pay is now vital. If elected, we will fight for that demand to feature in the next election Manifesto. 750,000 extra jobs would be created if the working week was cut to 7 hours a day, five days a week. This demand must be taken up by the whole labour movement.

The Labour government should lead the way by introducing the 35-hour week for all public employees—immediately. If elected to the NEC, we undertake to fight for this demand, together with the introduction of a massive programme of useful public works to provide the houses, hospitals and schools that working people throughout Britain desperately need.

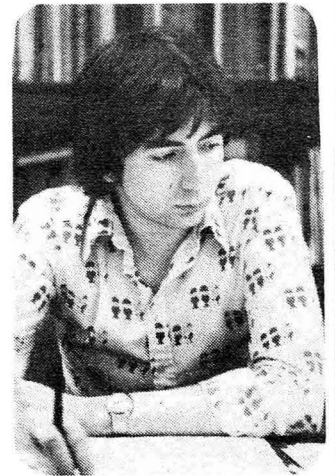
The employers tell us they cannot afford a reduction in



RAY APPS, Brighton Kemptown CLP, and signature to the NEC Minority Report on Reselection



PAT WALL, Shipley CLP, and President, Bradford Trades Council



NICK BRADLEY, Deptford CLP and, until conference, LPYS representative for 3 years on the NEC

the working week. It's time the labour movement took up this argument. Nationalisation of the major monopolies, under democratic workers' control and management to end the chaos of capitalism, to plan the economy, to meet the needs of

working people and their families. This is the programme to answer big business.

We ask all CLPs to support us in campaigning for a 35-hour working week and £70 minimum wage, a programme of public works and

the implementation of Clause Four, part four, as the only way to start the building of a socialist society. Elect us on the NEC to represent rank and file party members and fight for the implementation of socialist policies.

COUNCIL TENANTS THREATENED

Liverpool Liberals ATTACK COUNCIL HOUSING



photo: Chris Davies

Horace Cutler (right) supervises the 'Tories' 'housing lottery' of dilapidated empty GLC properties

LONDON

FIGHT TORIES' SLUM GHETTO PLAN

Since May last year the Greater London Council has been controlled by the Tories.

The housing policy of Mr Cutler and his Conservative colleagues is typical of their attempts to spread 'freedom and happiness' to Londoners.

In a city of 7 million people, the GLC has built 230,000 flats and houses, yet London still has the worst housing crisis in the country—rented accommodation has declined by two thirds in 15 years and virtually no cheap private houses are being built. Inner London has the greatest number of homeless people in the country,

and every night thousands of people sleep in cardboard boxes and empty dustbins in the City of Westminster alone.

What is the Tories' answer to this desperate situation? **They are no longer building any houses at all.** Not only that, but they intend to transfer all GLC estates to the boroughs and end for ever the role of the GLC as a housing authority.

All Labour-controlled boroughs have so far refused to accept any transfer of estates, except for three: Barking, Islington and Greenwich. The London Labour Party Executive are therefore call-

ing a special conference of CLPs, trade unions and Labour Groups later this year, to put pressure on these boroughs not to break ranks and assist the Tories in their "housing policies".

A united campaign will be needed, involving action by unions, tenants' associations, Labour Parties and Labour councils to stop any transfer to the boroughs. Otherwise, GLC tenants will exist only in Inner London, on slum estates, with no opportunity to transfer to better outer London areas, or to move into new houses.

By Roger Gow (Greater London LP Executive)

100 people met outside Liverpool's town hall last week to protest at the sale of council houses.

Liverpool City Council is controlled by the Liberals who with the help of the Tories are attacking many of the services working class families rely on. There are already plans to close down many of the City's comprehensive schools. The latest proposal is to get rid of council houses.

Liverpool has a council waiting list of 15,000, yet council houses are being sold on the open market. This is another kick in the teeth for those who are unemployed, on Social Security or low incomes and can never hope to buy a house.

This policy of the Liberals and Tories will mean worse housing conditions and more homelessness, and in the long term a real threat to jobs.

As the placards and banners at the lobby demanded: **"council housing should be provided on the basis of need, not the ability to pay!"**

Many sections of the labour movement and community groups were represented. Liverpool branch of NALGO, who called the lobby, were backed by many other trade unions and by Liverpool Trades Council.

Abuse

But perhaps the most decorative section were Netherly Flatdwellers Association. At a previous council meeting, the Liberal housing leader David Attan had singled out as the prime target for his abuse a woman tenant dressed in orange—(ironically the Liberal colour!) in the public gallery. This time all the women from Netherly dressed in orange, calling themselves "Rentamob" in response to the abuse he had given them last time.

There were representatives from other estates and tenants' associations which together with Netherly have some of the worst council housing.

In just a matter of months, the Liberals and Tories in the City are trying to destroy many of the public services. Liverpool already has one of the worst unemployment figures, some of the worst problems with health service facilities. Any more attacks will seriously affect thousands of working class families.

The right to decent council housing was won by the working class solely through the determined fight of the labour movement over a number of years. The Liberals and Tories are now threatening the concessions and reforms the working class has dragged from the bosses in the past.

If this is what we face after a few months of their control in Liverpool, then what future is there for all the hard-won gains of the labour movement if we allow a Tory government to return?

By Josie Aitman
(Chairman, NALGO
North West District
Young Members' Ctee)

CONFERENCE PROTEST

At a special meeting of the Sunderland North Constituency Labour Party earlier this month at which this year's Party Conference delegate was to be mandated, delegates were astonished to learn that our resolution on unemployment has been given the 'Bum's Rush' by the Conference Arrangements Committee for, allegedly, covering more than the one subject allowed under rule.

Unemployment

Upon reading the approved resolutions in the booklet published by the CAC it was immediately apparent that, on less sensitive subjects, resolutions covering more than one subject (that is by the CAC's definition) were plentiful—especially those by some of the unions. Readers may judge for themselves the content of our resolution, which was originally sent in by my own ward, as it is shown in its entirety below:

"This CLP is critical of the Labour government's economic strategies which have failed to make any impact on unemployment in Sunderland, the North East or the country generally. We therefore reiterate the call for more public spending, more public holidays, a substantial reduction in regular overtime working with no loss of pay—excepting only continuous processes and the like, a shorter working week, earlier

retirement with decent pensions and a system of work-sharing to be instituted without delay; all of which is in line with official TUC policy."

Comrades knowing conference procedure will doubtless realise, as we at Sunderland North did, that such a resolution would be composed anyway and the CAC's decision surprised many old hands in our party who have had years of experience in drafting resolutions etc.

Many people will know of the appalling rate of unemployment in Sunderland (it has the unwelcome distinction of being the highest in the UK, including the North of Ireland) and many ought to know of the scandalous treatment the town has received from the Labour government in spite of consistently returning Labour MPs to Parliament.

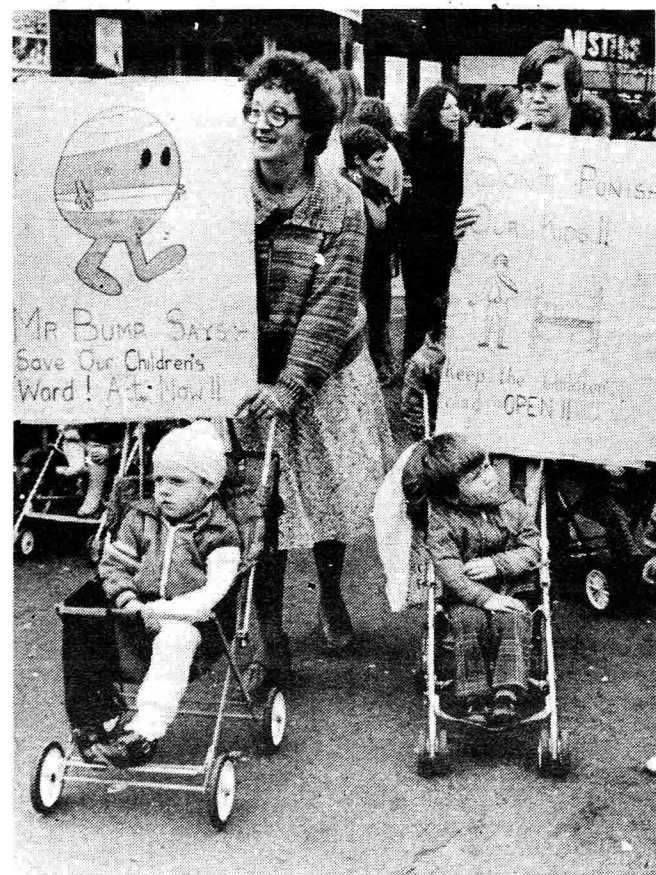
If our experience is anything to go by, one of the strongest lobbies at Conference this year will be the disgruntled CLPs etc. whose resolutions have been arbitrarily discarded by the CAC. We must make our voice heard and force the government and PLP to take conference decisions into account and forge a new path to security for the working class by strong and comprehensive socialist measures.

Bob Stothard (Secretary,
Monkwearmouth and
Roker Ward Labour Party)

Thanet workers act to save hospital

John Nicholson, Chairman of the Princess Mary's Hospital Action Committee, speaks for the first time nationally about the threatened closure of the hospital in Margate.

"Princess Mary's Hospital is closing." That statement shocked and astounded the staff, patients and the community of Thanet as a whole.



Demonstration of protest at closure of children's ward in Greenwich district hospital, London, to make room for some of the patients forced onto longer waiting lists by the reduction of St Nicholas to a 'cottage hospital' (see last week's 'Militant'). photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

The reason for the proposed closure was the overspending in the District of £234,000. After the initial shock the staff felt betrayed by the management, which was quite understandable, as they were repeatedly assured over a period of 18 months that PMH would not close. We now know that the management were lying and cannot be trusted in the future.

Out of this betrayal, a nucleus of resistance to the closure came into being. This was in the form of an 'Action Committee' of staff and other interested parties including the local Trades Council.

Information was given to the Committee that showed drastic cuts in the Health Service in Thanet. 350 beds are to be cut from the District by 1988.

This the Committee and general opinion in Thanet find intolerable. These cuts will not only affect local people but you if you come to Thanet on holiday. (Incidentally no finance is allocated to the district for the influx of holiday makers.)

Running true to form the District Management Team will try any back door methods to close PMH: (1) Panicking staff into leaving, then not replacing them; (2) Cancelling maintenance contracts, causing health risks; (3) Closing wards; (4) Any and every opportunity

to demoralise staff. The workers and patients are just obstacles in the way, not to be considered as human beings.

This blitzing of Thanet's hospitals is typical of the cruel cuts in public spending which have no regard for human disease and suffering. If the Health Service is so short of money the drug industries should be nationalised, not hospitals closed.

In our District there is a waiting list of up to four years for a 'hip replacement' operation, but £600 will get it done privately in a fortnight. This point alone shows how the system of health care acts against working class people.

Thanet East Labour Party have put forward a motion of 'No confidence in Mr Ennals and his policies'. This motion must be supported by every person who cares for the future of the Health Service and for the future of their families.

We of the Action Committee are prepared to continue to run the hospital ourselves through a work-in, so that the patients can still benefit from the services PMH provides, regardless of what the management may think or try to do. **Hospitals are for the people and for the people they will stay open!**

All donations to: J C Nicholson, 25 Grotto Road, Margate, Kent.

John Nicholson spoke to Barry Lewis (Thanet West Labour Party)

LEFT & RIGHT

FUEL FOR TORY PRESS

The 'Daily Mail' in a bout of moral indignation, reported recently that the Minister for Overseas Development, Judith Hart, had personally invited 21 guests to Britain. They are to stay at the £44-a-night Chewton Glen Hotel in Hampshire, served with what the Mail calls "ambrosial" food amid "exquisite" decor. As the guests were discussing the problems of the poorest countries in the world, such luxurious arrangements were not only inappropriate. They also gave a fine opportunity for the Tory press, who make no objection to the even more opulent life styles of their own class, to slander the Labour Party as the "party of hypocrisy".

HOW TO SPEND 5%

Fancy a winter break? The sunny Mediterranean? Jannette Charters will shortly be offering for hire a £3 million, 120 foot yacht. It boasts a master's room for the hirers, three suites for guests; and for the gourmet a supply of food and champagne together with a freezer and ice-making machine. A thick-pile carpet, a piano [upright, not grand unfortunately] and a hovercraft for quick trips ashore complete the homely atmosphere. It's a snip at £50 per hour, but if you want to have a whole day on holiday you'd better start saving.

12 MILLION SHEEP?

RENTAMOB
(Also known as Renta Picket etc.)

Dress Likes U.S. Army clothing (but hates U.S. Army). Wears baseball boots (but hates America Imperialist decadence). Wears 'CND' T shirt to show his abhorrence of violence (although he does not mind it if he is not being hurt personally). Wears his hair like an English Sheepdog (the reference to sheep does not stop there, however).

Equipment Placard displaying his fondness of port. Reefer; copy of 'Socialist Worker' which bears no relation to him as he never worked a day in his life.

Places Frequented Picket lines, demonstrations, carnivals or anywhere else where he may be able to kick or spit on police officers. Also frequents universities and colleges where he professes to study almost anything (except hygiene) and to be a lover of freedom (e.g. free love; free heroin on NHS; free handouts from the state). He would also like to see an increase in civil liberties and envisage a state with no government, no police and no armed forces. After many years studying he is eventually able to say parrot fashion "Police brutality" and "Fascist Pigs".

This thorough analysis of the people policemen will come across appeared in 'Forthright', the Lothian and Borders police magazine, "for the benefit of recruits and other interested parties".

'Criminals and troublemakers' are divided into handy categories, including 'Housebreaker', 'Irish Terrorist' and 'Rentamob'. The magazine's editorial wonders "how many other talented writers wait to emerge from obscurity"—perhaps the police chiefs get some comfort from these fairy tales: they must dearly wish they could label every miner or British Leyland picket as 'reefer-smoking sheep' and treat them accordingly.

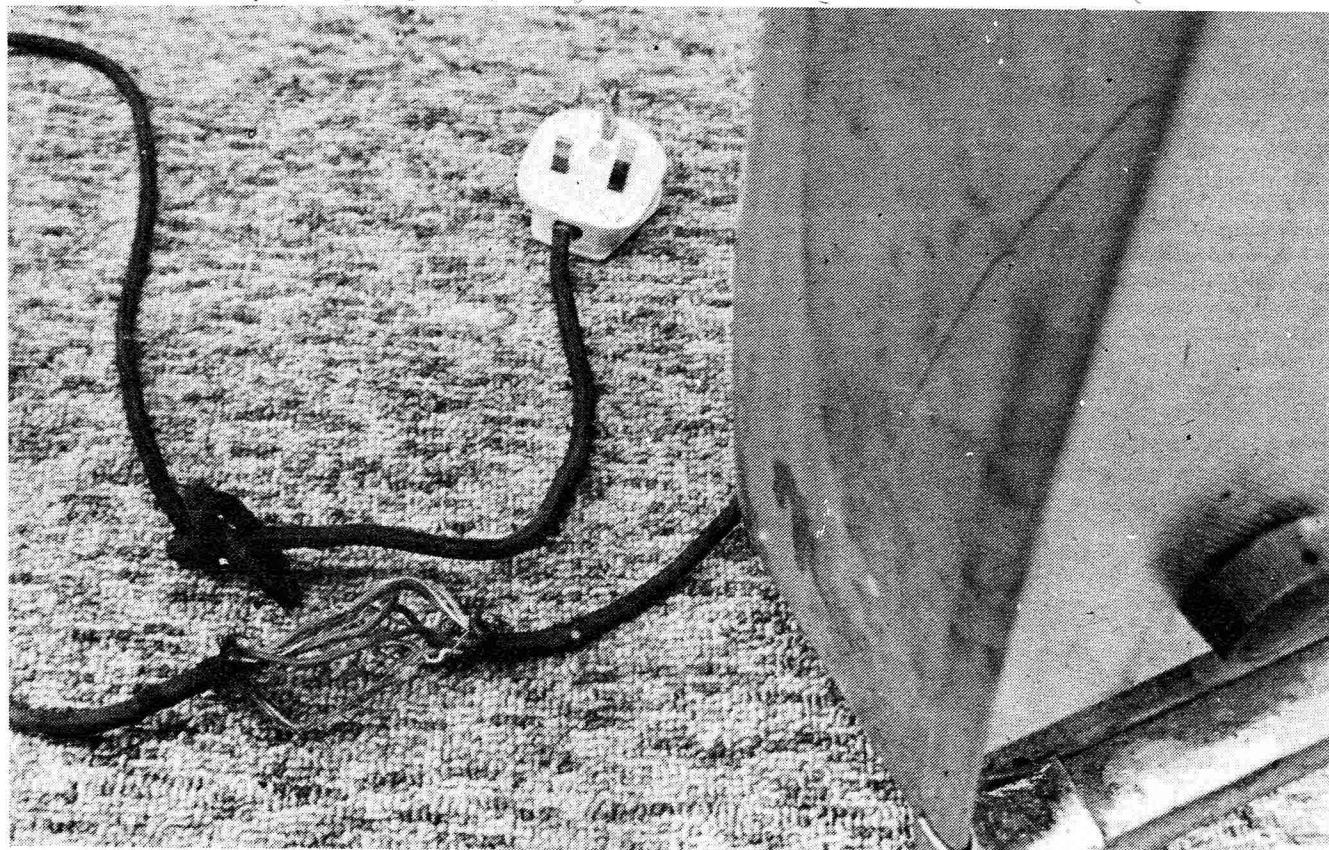
Sorry to shatter your dreams, but it's the 12 million-strong trade union movement that looms behind that picket line.

CONSIDERATION

The Bingham Report on the busting of oil sanctions against Rhodesia may cause some embarrassment to firms who have aided the Smith regime. But Whitehall ensured that this causes no immediate fall in share prices by timing the publication of the report for 3.30 pm; after the close of the Stock Exchange.

20 DEATHS A DAY IN THE HOME - Safety before profit

In Great Britain almost 20 people die every day on average from an accident in the home; a higher number than in factory accidents. Over 100,000 people per year receive hospital treatment as in-patients for injuries from home accidents, with over a million attending their GPs or out-patients clinics.



Elementary safety checks skimped

A publication from the Department of Prices and Consumer Protection (DPCP) shows that, of home accident cases recorded by Hospital Accident and Emergency departments, nearly half were children under 14. What a shameful indictment of a society when it cannot even provide a safe and healthy environment for the young to grow up in!

'Collection of Information: on Accidents in the Home' contains the results from a feasibility study for the introduction of a fairly comprehensive system for the collection of data not otherwise available. The main conclusion in the report is that the scheme would produce "reliable data for use by... organisations concerned with safety standards, publicity and education to enable preventive and publicity action to be directed where it is most cost effective." (Our emphasis)

While there is no doubt that the gathering and processing of such data could be of enormous value in improving safety conditions in the home, there is absolutely no obligation on the part of manufacturers, or building designers, to react by producing safer designs. Under the profit system it all comes down to cost benefits, competitiveness in prices, and profits.

It is not the main results, however, which are particularly interesting, for these only show for example that 34% of home accidents involved falls of some kind, or that the single most dangerous place appears to be the kitchen. Some interesting items emerge from incidental points in the report. For

example, 39% of accidents occur in rental council property, greater than the number expected from the distribution of ownership in the study areas. Also, 16% of the victims reported some kind of stress conditions at the time.

A separate detailed study from DPCP on child poisoning from household products

family than for the professional classes.

Once again then, it is the working class that suffers. Forced to live in cramped conditions, with inadequate safe storage space for medicines, household products and so on, it is almost inevitable that eventually there will be some sort of mix-up or accident.

Anyone who has attempted to fit a common or garden 13 Amp plug will know how fiddly and confusing it can be, especially with the cheaper brands which are all most people can afford.

In the UK there are about 70 deaths by electrocution recorded every year, of which about 10 can be directly attributed to faulty plugs. A recent survey by the Electrical Research Association [on behalf of MK Electric Ltd] found that 28.7% of electric plugs used in homes had one or more faults.

Cord clamping was found to be the main problem area, with 18.2% of the sample faulty due to inefficient cord clamping. 7.4% had faulty connections. 1.5% were found incorrectly wired. Many homes were found to be using plugs which had been damaged, probably as a result of having been dropped on to hard floors.

This means that 70 million electric plugs used in British homes could be potentially dangerous.

shows the importance of supervision of young children, for in 54% of the cases the mother said the child was alone. In 74% of the cases no adult was present.

The indication from the above facts, that class factors may be important, is not taken up in the studies. But if we look at the latest of the ten yearly supplements on Occupational Mortality (Office of the Registrar General) we find that of all the causes of death, accidents, poisonings and violence show the greatest difference, with a factor of four between the highest and lowest classes. Male deaths for examples from falls, fires and drowning are more than ten times greater for the unskilled worker and his

With long working hours, shift working, and often both parents working to make ends meet, children are often left unsupervised. Working class parents don't get enough time to properly train their children in such matters. The stresses of modern living conditions; the production line and shift working lead to greater likelihood of mistakes and accidents taking place.

Profits or safety?

But in their report the DPCP limit their horizon to "seeking the voluntary co-operation of the industry." Manufacturers certainly have not helped up to now. There are many ways in which they

could cut down accidents, such as by differentiating container shapes, and using colours, so that people can distinguish different types of content; clear and effective labelling, rigid testing and quality control. Homes should be built with safety a permanent consideration and with adequate and safe play areas.

The DPCP appeals for improvements, arguing that accidents cost money, not least from lost output. To them, safety must be cost beneficial. Much of their effort in the study has therefore gone into the costing of all the different types of accidents. A priority coding system enables manufacturers to tackle safety improvements only where dangers reduce profits.

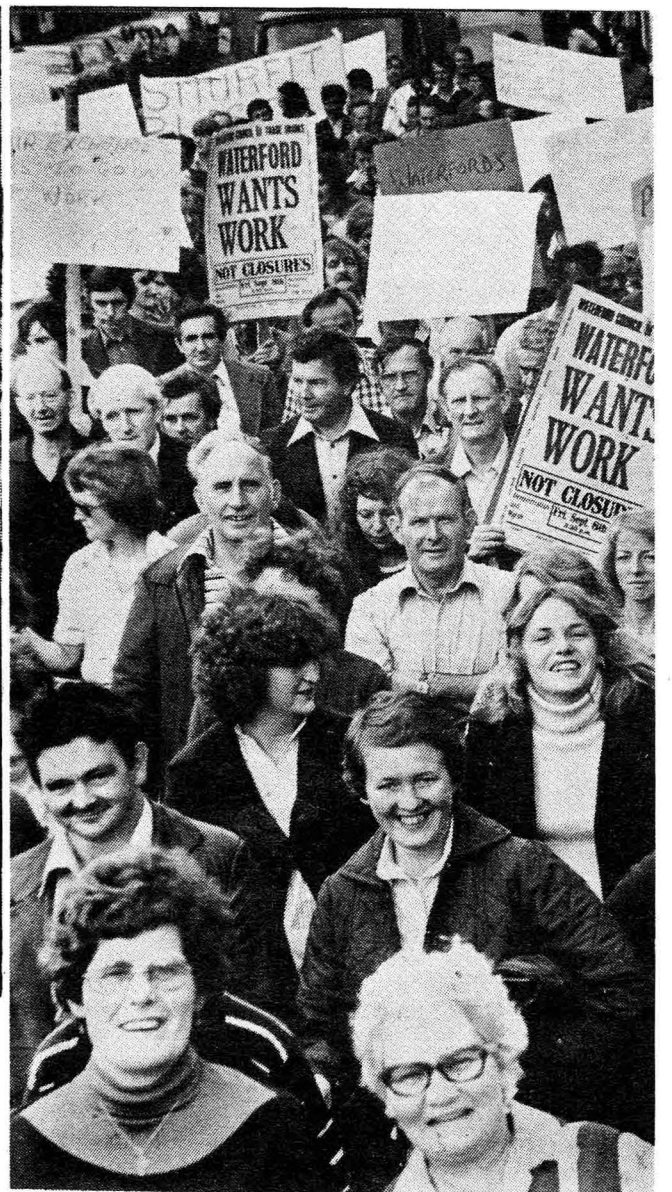
Socialists see the problem in a different light, as being concerned with bringing up our children with a good chance that they will survive to maturity, that they will not lead a life crippled through some unnecessary accident due to stingy manufacturers and builders. All manufactured goods should be subject to the most rigorous checks for safety at the design stage, after manufacture, and in use.

Only when control of design and production is in the hands of the workers themselves, when the pressure of cutting costs and maximising output speeds is lifted, will the workers be able to produce articles that are safe and of which they can be proud. We see it as producing for need—not profit.

By Ian Burge

(Secretary, London Hospital JSSC)

WATERFORD WORKERS



Photos by Derek Spiers/IFL

DEMAND WORK

The biggest demonstration by the labour movement in Ireland since the 1972 demonstrations against the shooting dead of 13 innocent civilians in Derry has taken place [8th September] in Waterford city.

Engineering workers, nurses, corporation workers, teachers, transport workers and the overwhelming majority of employed labour, downed tools at 3.00 pm on that Friday for two hours to swell the ranks of the 20,000 strong Trades Council march against unemployment and the refusal of the government to prevent the closure of a Board Mill.

By Tom Healy

(Irish Labour Party)

The threatened closure of the solid-board section of the National Board and Paper Mill with the lay-off of 280 workers has been the straw that has broken the camel's back for the workers of Waterford. They are no longer prepared to stand idly by as Waterford is stripped of industry and the profiteers make off with government handouts.

The present movement began when 500 workers took to the streets on a peaceful demonstration on the 25th of August. Although the police had been informed that a previous plan to block the bridge which alone connects the city with the roads to the North and the East was NOT to be put into operation, a large force of police were drafted into the city from surrounding counties. This was clearly a sinister attempt to bully

and intimidate the workers.

What was even more sinister was the presence of units of the army on both sides of the bridge. The last time anything like this happened was during the war when the army occupied Longford during a strike there. The police chief—who was present—warned that all necessary force would be used against anybody who obstructed the bridge. The army and police tops thought that they were now in a position to start flexing their muscles in front of the labour movement.

So infuriated were the workers that they very nearly went ahead and blocked the bridge. Michael Mullen, general secretary of the men's union, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, made a strong public protest against the bully-boy tactics of the state forces.

This outrageous incident provoked an enormous resentment amongst the workers of Waterford

Over 20,000 marched through Waterford on Friday, 8th September. The workers are no longer prepared to stand idly by as the city is stripped of industry and the profiteers make off with government hand-outs.

as was evident in the massive turnout on 8th September and the great applause given by the workers to the statement of one of the platform speakers—that they would not stand for the jackboot tactics of the military.

Blame

The police and army tops have suffered a humiliating kick in the teeth. On 8th September no soldiers were spotted

around Waterford, although a few policemen were sighted at the back of the crowd! They will think twice before moving against workers in the immediate future.

The bosses' media in the South of Ireland gave very little coverage to the whole demonstration, as the movement could very quickly spread to other parts of the country. The balance of class forces was best illustrated in Waterford by the fact that the local Fianna Fail mayor,

corporation councillors of Ireland's two Tory parties, Fine Gael and FF, took part in the demonstration. All the local firms and offices gave their workers two hours off without loss of pay.

From their point of view, there was no alternative, as the workers would have gone on strike otherwise. They also wanted to point the finger of blame for the unemployment situation away from themselves. Their last-minute conversion did not impress the workers. The mayor and town councillors, all dressed in robes, were rudely told to get away from the front of the demonstration. The mayor was prevented from addressing the crowd as originally planned.

These events in Waterford have important lessons for socialists and workers. They show the enormous preparedness of the working class to struggle. If a lead was given by

the Labour and trade union tops in other areas, there could be a movement leading to a one-day general strike right throughout the country.

It has been shown yet again that once workers move into battle they move through their traditional organisations—the Waterford Council of Trade Unions is the only body capable of calling a mass demonstration of the sort that took place in Waterford.

Change

Most importantly, these events show the great power of the working class and the relative weakness of the capitalist state forces to take on the workers at this stage. This demonstration and the actions that will take place in the immediate weeks ahead over the closure is an indicator of the changing situation in the South of Ireland. The period of lull is now over.

TOP 100 BRITISH COMPANIES INCREASE SHARE OF OUTPUT

British capitalism's 100 biggest firms are steadily increasing their domination of the economy. This trend is confirmed by the latest figures from the 1973 census of production, which have just been published (unfortunately they always take ages to come out!).

In 1949 the top 100 firms accounted for 22% of net output of manufacturing industry; in

1968 they accounted for nearly 39%. After standing still for two or three years, the top companies' share rose to 40% in 1971.

[Net output is roughly equal to sales less the cost of materials, transport and sub-contracted work, and represents (rather approximately) the value added in the process of production. It is the best measure of the contribu-

tion made by a company to national output.]

The official statistics almost certainly underestimate the real degree of concentration. In his detailed study, 'The Evolution of Giant Firms in Britain', professor Prais estimated the share of the 100 largest manufacturing firms as 41% in 1971. If his estimates are correct, the figure must be higher than that now.

Whichever figures we take, however, the trend is quite clear. The top 100 companies, many of which share the same directors and are domin-

ated by the same families and finance houses, have an enormous influence over the economy, and hence the lives of working people.

Percentage of:	100 largest manufacturing enterprises				
	1963	1968	1970	1971	1973
Net output	36.0	38.6	37.7	38.6	40.0
Sales	n.a.	n.a.	41.7	42.2	43.5
Employment	31.4	33.9	34.1	34.7	36.2

Source: Report on the census of production, Summary Tables, 1973 and Economic Trends, August 1976

Large-scale farming is big business. Agricultural land is the latest investment for speculators. The countryside provides a retreat for the wealthy and privileged. But big business has nothing positive to offer the people who live and work in rural communities. Bryan Beckingham reviews a new report on 'The Decline of Rural Services'.

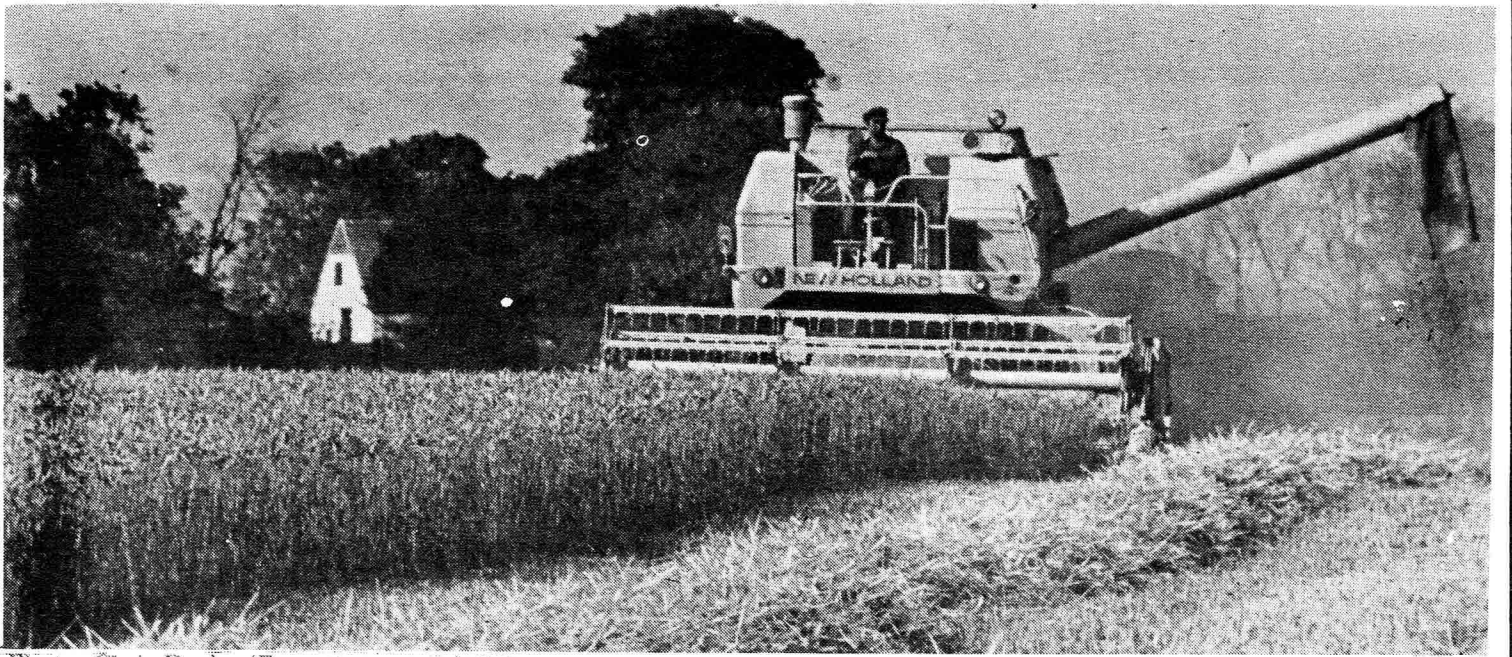


Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

ARE THE VILLAGES DOOMED TO EXTINCTION ?

By Bryan Beckingham

The Standing Conference of Rural Community Councils published a report at the end of August. Entitled 'The Decline of Rural Services', the report gives a graphic, if not tragic, account of the situation facing people living in rural areas. It provides a wealth of information, mainly about the declining services in

villages in the south west. Unfortunately it fails to offer any serious solutions.

First, some of the facts, as the report says, show that "many communities in rural areas are currently involved in a struggle for their survival, as more and more of their essential services are closed, and public transport links deteriorate, making it more difficult for the elderly and less affluent country dwellers to survive in these villages."

The report outlines a massive loss of rural services: ★ 3% of the villages in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire which had a village shop in 1972 had lost that service by 1977, in just 5 years. At this rate the village shop is doomed.

★ 8% of the villages in the same counties lost their sub post office over the same 5-year period—in Cornwall the percentage was even higher, 10% of the villages lost their post office in the 9-year period up to 1976.

★ The mobile shop is disappearing too—10% of the villages served in Devon by a mobile shop lost that service in the 8 years up to 1975.

★ 19% of villages in Cornwall with a doctor's surgery in 1967 had lost that service by 1976. 14% of the villages in Devon suffered the same fate. The fall in rural Hertfordshire

was even more dramatic—33% in the decade between 1968-78.

★ The loss of the doctor's surgery is made even more alarming by the absence from most villages of a dispensing chemist. Only 4% of villages in Wiltshire and 8% in Somerset now have their own chemist.

★ 9% of the village schools in Wiltshire had been closed in the 5-year period, part of the 800 closures reported in rural England since the Plowden report was published in 1967. As many as 1,000 may be under sentence of closure today.

More and more villages are becoming dormitory areas for richer commuters [those with two cars and children at private school], and provide weekend holiday retreats for the rich.

The solutions offered by the report include 'early warning systems' so that closures are made public, and asserting that "district and county councils have a duty to try to find alternatives"! It proposes more use of joint services, e.g. shop/PO/garage, a mobile postvan to provide for delivery

of groceries, PO counter services, etc. (the postman would have to be agile!). Part-time services, e.g. PO with services, travelling to villages, should be developed. Where commercial services are impossible, more use should be made of volunteers, e.g. for bulk buying. 'Support your village services!' calls the report.

The report puts the onus on the sections of nationalised industries, the state services and on the people themselves. In other words, private industry and capitalism offers no way to provide services and even small shops to the villages. Capitalism really makes it impossible even to survive without moving to a larger town, so the logical conclusion is to eliminate the basic causes of the declining services: the profit motive and market forces.

The loss of schools, doctors, transport and other similar services has been accelerated with cuts in public expenditure, of course. If hospitals in cities are being closed, many villages are losing their doctor and chemist at an alarming rate.

The village school is considered 'uneconomic' and of course the state hardly pro-

vides any boarding-type schools. It's the system of monopoly capitalism that decides what the nationalised industries do and in time of recession 'wasteful public expenditure' has to be cut. Thus the Labour government has presided over massive cuts. In addition, nationalised industries now make massive profits—partly by cutting the services to the rural areas (post offices, transport).

Capitalism prefers the huge urban conurbations with its easily reachable consumer market. The countryside and village community cannot provide the profit needed for big business.

Village population is rapidly changing. More and more villages are becoming dormitory areas for richer commuters (those with two cars and children at private school), and provide weekend holiday retreats for the rich.

In the 'Communist Manifesto', Marx puts in as one of the demands of socialism:

"Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industry; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country by a more equitable distribution of the population over the country." This was Marx's demand 150 years ago.

Capitalism in its development prefers the huge urban conurbations with its easily reachable consumer market. The search for profits cuts out 'wasteful' small communities. The capitalists, unable to plan, want readily available masses of labour and at the same time masses of consumers. The countryside and village community cannot provide the profit needed for big business.

Thus the rural village is doomed to extinction as far as the ordinary working class people are concerned. They will more and more become the second-home retreats of the rich. The ordinary people with families are forced out because of non-existent transport and schools.

The villages losing their services also lose their employment, thus forcing more people out. The small shopkeeper increasingly cannot compete with the super-

stores, and so these are forced out of business. That's OK if you are only in the village for weekends away: you have a freezer, and a car for shopping in the nearest town.

By a socialist plan of society we could end the terrible urban overcrowding and slums and at the same time reverse the decline of the villages, beginning the breaking down of the division between town and country.

Unlike the report, which fails to give the reasons behind the decline and therefore fails to provide a solution, we see the solution in the elimination of the profit motive and the blind forces of the market. By a socialist plan of society we could end the terrible urban problems of overcrowding and slums and at the same time reverse the decline of the villages, beginning the breaking-down of the division between town and country.

GOVERNMENT SURVEY SHOWS:

Millions paid poverty wages

The campaign for a 35-hour week and a minimum basic wage of £70 per week is being taken up by large sections of the labour and trade union movement.

The declaration by NUPE that: "Low paid workers are fighting for a decent wage packet" must be taken as a clarion call to the movement.

Recent statistics show that many workers have to work long hours for wages that still leave them below the national average wage. According to a survey carried out in October 1977 by the Department of Employment which covered the wages of manual workers in a wide range of industries, the average wage for men over

21 was £72.89 for a 44.2 hour week.

The wages for women over 18 was £44.31 for a 37.4 hour week, only 71.9% of men's earnings. These figures include overtime, shift pay, bonuses and any other pay supplements. Deplorable enough in themselves, they nevertheless mask the abject poverty which is suffered at the low end of the wage scale.

Cost of living

In many industries, the average weekly earnings fall far below the £72.89 level. For example, in local government service the figure for men is £58.14 per week and for

women £44.29; and in national government service the figures are £61.50 for men and £47.81 for women.

Manual workers in the furniture and upholstery, footwear, milk, hosiery, weaving and timber industries, among others, are all earning wages under the national average, and in many cases are working long hours.

Separate figures show that male agricultural workers were averaging £55.72 in the period April-September 1977.

Against these wage levels must be set the continuing rise in prices, fares, rents and rates etc.

The Family Expenditure Survey found that the average weekly outgoings last year per family on goods and services

was nearly £72. This figure was £10 or 16.4% up on the previous year.

Food alone accounted for £18 per week, with transport and vehicles accounting for a further £10.

These figures alone illustrate the poverty and hardship which is being suffered by millions of families which have to manage on a single wage of between £50 and £60, or even less.

Poverty in a capitalist society is not only reflected in wage levels, but as Child Poverty Action Group statistics starkly show, it permeates every aspect of life as far as the poor are concerned: 'From the cradle to the grave'.

Figures for 1970 in Scot-

land show that the infant mortality rate for babies from wealthy families was 12 per 1,000 as opposed to 25.4 per 1,000 for babies of poor parents.

£70 minimum

Similar statistics can be produced that show that job opportunities, educational prospects and housing standards are much lower for the low paid and their families.

We have seen a glimpse of what a Thatcherite government would mean for the low paid by the actions of Tory local councils.

The return of a Labour government at the next election is essential as far as the

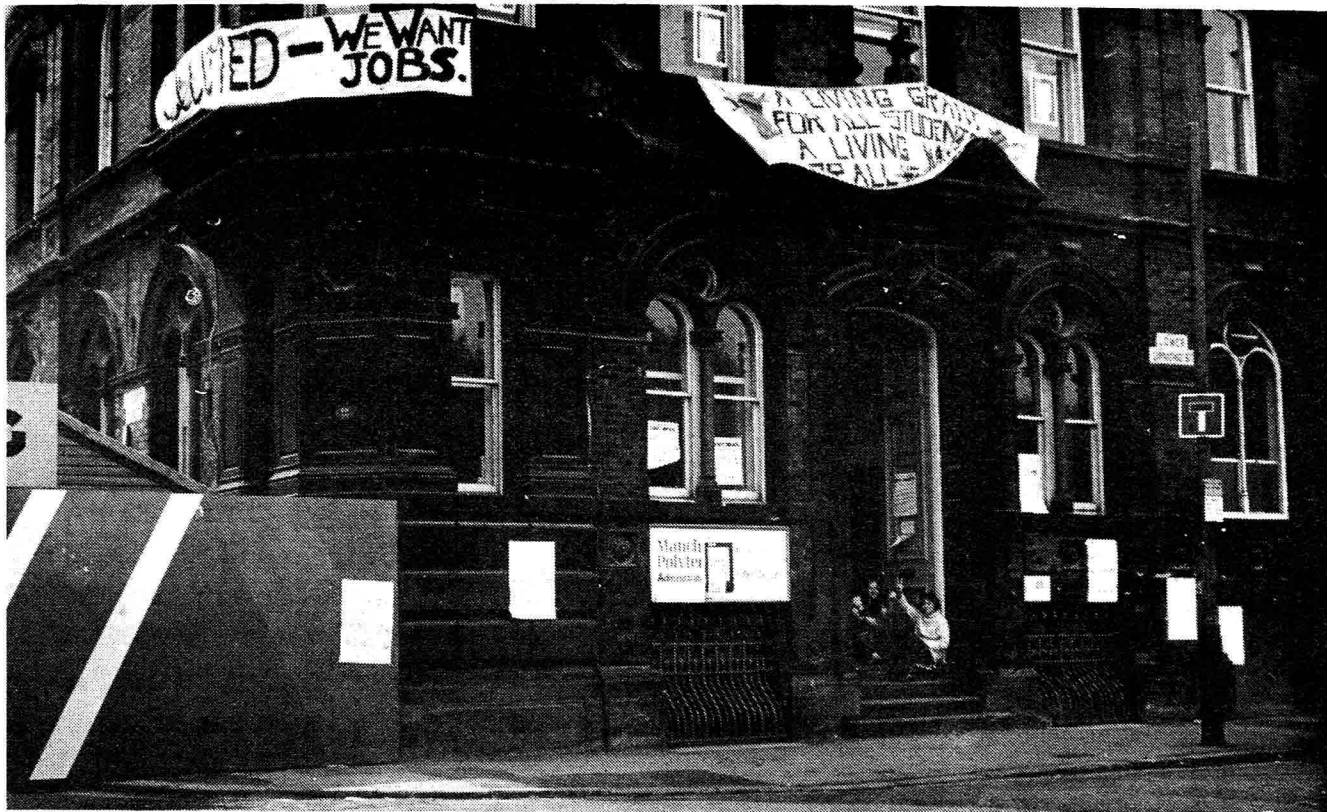
working class is concerned—but a Labour government armed with socialist policies which will destroy the parasitic basis of capitalism.

The whole movement must unite behind the campaign for a 35-hour week and a £70 minimum basic wage, for these policies linked to the demand for the nationalisation of the 'commanding heights' of the economy and the implementation of a socialist plan of production offer the only road out of this crumbling capitalist system, for the working class.

Terry Pearce

(Wokingham CLP)

HIGHER EDUCATION



Students occupy Manchester Poly

POLYS:

Best Qualified Dole Queue

Every student teacher going back to college this term must already be wondering what their chances are of getting a job at the end of their course.

For example, of the 1,000 teacher graduates from the five West of Scotland teacher training colleges, only 39 have found jobs in teaching. Teachers are wasting their lives on the dole queues or taking clerical jobs.

At the West Glamorgan Institute, only a handful of the 150 students who took final exams last summer had jobs to go to. Many were questioning the value of working for high grades, with no prospect of getting teaching jobs. One student had applied for 100 jobs, without being shortlisted for one.

And it is not only in teaching that graduates face unemployment. At Manchester Polytechnic, 14% of humanities students were unemployed six months after graduating last year.

As a result, there is now a trend among young people away from higher education. 13% of those sufficiently qualified don't go into higher education, whereas 10 years ago, more people went into higher education than those with the minimum qualification of two 'A' levels.

The proportion of young people staying in full time education has fallen by 7% since 1972/3, having doubled in the previous 11 years. The 'Observer' comments: "Unemployment and inflation in all Western countries seem to be encouraging a scramble by able young people for whatever jobs are going."

As one teaching graduate put it: "I'm going to join the best qualified dole queue in the world."

Mark Morton

(National Committee,

National Organisation of Labour Students)

EDUCATION ON THE CHEAP

The crisis in education has particularly hit Polytechnics. Unlike universities, Polys are financed through local authorities, and therefore have been doubly subject to cuts in expenditure, with a devastating effect.

There are many fundamental differences between the polys and the universities—not just in the courses offered, but in the facilities which they offer.

For example, at Christchurch College, Oxford, where 36% of the students are from "public" schools, the college has an income of over £1 million per year from investments. Last year, the Dons and staff drank over £10,000 worth of wine from the college refectories. Compare that with the tea machines at most poly canteens!

One student at Bradford College, interviewed recently in the 'Observer', commented "It's a two-tier system, isn't it." His college buildings include "gloomy relics of nineteenth century education, some outpourings of early Wilsonian enthusiasm, a dash of National Theatre concrete wedges, and an old hotel with art nouveau windows," compared to the "neat lawns and prestressed concrete" of the university just up the road.

The difference between polys and universities is also shown in accommodation. 45% of university students are provided with places in halls of residence. For polys, the figure is less than 10%.

It is at the polytechnics that students end up living in grotty bedsits, being ripped off by greedy landlords who know the students have nowhere else to go. This also means more students are forced to live

at home. At Manchester Poly, 35% live at home.

Polytechnic students also suffer academically because of blatant double standards. One student at Manchester Polytechnic compared his college library with the university one: "I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the Manchester University law library...It's about as big as the whole of the old polytechnic library."

Apprentices

At its own law library, the polytechnic has one seat for every 8 students. The normal figure for law schools is 1 for 3. These examples clearly illustrate what the "binary" system in higher education means. It means that students at polytechnic and other 'non university' colleges, although numbering just under half the students in full time higher education, are discriminated against in every way.

This is graphically shown by the current expenditure in higher education. In 1976/7, £660m was spent on the universities, compared to £304m on other colleges.

At my own college, Leicester Polytechnic, the number of young workers attending the printing col-

lege has risen, and it is bursting at the seams—because of the shortage of accommodation. These young apprentices have to work in conditions of extreme overcrowding.

Big business

The type of courses offered at polytechnics, such as Business Studies, Maths for Business, and many others are geared directly to the needs of big business. In the 1960s, when polys were set up, it was stated that to designate polytechnics, the Secretary of State would "take account of...the needs of industry."

The Advisory group which helped draw up the report included "individuals with experience of industry"—but not the experience of the shop floor! In a socialist education system courses will be related to the needs of the individual as well as society and industry, but in the education system under capitalism, they merely directly serve the needs of the bosses.

The growth of higher education since the war was meant to provide for "equality of opportunity" for education. The Robbins Report in 1963, which proposed the expansion of higher education, spoke of "courses...available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish

to do so."

Yet, in the 1970s, the percentage of students at universities from a working class background has gone down, from 26% in 1974 to 24% last year; while the number from 'professional' backgrounds rose in the same period from 34% to 36%.

The battle for comprehensive education is now being fought in the secondary schools, where only arch reactionary Tories are resisting its implementation. We call for this to be taken into further and higher education to break down the barriers between universities and other colleges whereby private employers can get educated labour on the cheap.

Slum colleges

- ★ A fully comprehensive system of higher and further education!
- ★ An emergency programme to end slum colleges and overcrowding and provide Higher Education for all as a right!
- ★ An increase in facilities and libraries in polytechnics and other colleges —to raise standards to the highest level!

Huw Morgan

(NOLS East Midlands Regional Committee and Leicester Labour CLub)

FIGHT

FIGHT FOR A SOCIAL PROGRAMME:

- ★ A fully comprehensive education system!
- ★ Abolish private education!
- ★ An emergency building programme and halls—no more slums!
- ★ An immediate grant of £100 million for living for all students over 18!
- ★ For a grant equal to the 1970-71 level—to make 'education for workers'!
- ★ An end to the exam system!
- ★ Break big business domination of education!

WITH A SOCIALIST ECONOMIC PROGRAMME:

- ★ Reverse the cuts—increased education, housing, health!
- ★ Nationalise the banks and put workers' control and management!
- ★ Pay compensation only in cash!
- ★ A socialist plan of production!

ON UNDER ATTACK

BACK

LIST EDUCATION

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colleges!

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photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

COULD IT HAPPEN TO YOU

The last students at Furzedown College of Education sat their final examinations in June. The college has closed for good.

It is ironic that this institution, which has a tradition of radical "progressive" ideas, devoted its last days to formal examinations. For three years students who had been given all the facts and figures which prove that examinations cannot possibly provide a fair assess-

ment, that they pervert and distort the purposes of education and so forth, then had to sit a series of three hour papers to prove it!

However, the Furzedown students took away with them certain 'lessons' which were not included on the timetable. The experience of fighting against the closure of the college, in particular the occupation of the college during the wave of sit-ins by student teachers, taught students more about the relationship between education and capitalism than a thousand soporific seminars could have done.

Divide and Rule

One lesson was the age-old tactic of "divide and rule" which was used in closing the college. Just as employers try to divide one section of workers against another on the shop floor, so the education authorities disguised the closure by calling it an "amalgamation" with Philippa Fawcett college in Streatham. Only when the storm in Furzedown had subsided did they announce the proposed closure of Philippa Fawcett as well!

Furzedown was often described as a "Hotbed of apathy", but when the duplicity of the Powers That Be was revealed, the transformation of the student body was remarkable. Student Union meetings suddenly became filled to overflowing with very angry young people, seriously demanding action from the "Broad Left" leadership of the NUS.

However, this leadership proved to be more broad than it was left. They had achieved their position by a policy of watering down

their programme and when the time for action came they were paralysed.

Leading from behind, they endorsed the sit-ins and immediately sought to limit the issue to one of teacher unemployment—whereas the students themselves were seeking to widen it to a fight against the scandal of unemployment and to link up with workers fighting redundancies. The NUS rank and file did not fall into the trap of seeing teachers as a "special case", which would only weaken the impact of the campaign.

By now most of us are equipped with a piece of paper which qualifies us to teach. However, on present trends, only a minority of us will get a chance to use that skill.

Could there be any clearer refutation of the liberal myth that education can be used to change society? Do they need any clearer proof that it is "society"—in other words big business—which dictates to education and not vice versa?

Big business—through the CBI—has demanded, and got, massive cuts in education spending. At the same time they have demanded that education be restricted to a "common core" of subjects necessary for industry—the basic skills of English and maths, one science and a foreign language.

Any student teacher leaving college this year who still thinks that teaching somehow places him or her outside the class

struggle is in for a bit of a shock. Education is under attack. The witch-hunt against the William Tynedale teachers was just a taste of things to come.

British capitalism is in a state of decline which cannot be permanently reversed. The ruthless cutting of public expenditure and reduction in workers' living standards will only provide a very temporary breathing space. Capitalism can no longer afford the health and education services which were built up during the boom years.

The struggle against the cuts has been, and will be, a hard and bitter one. Necessity has driven and will drive sections of the working class—such as teachers—into that struggle, however "unprofessional" such conduct may seem.

The lessons are clear from this defeat. The NUS must join with the teachers' unions in taking the campaign to where it counts—in the 12 million strong trade union movement.

The NUS must affiliate to the TUC and the Labour Party to get these mighty organisations to fight back with a socialist education programme and a socialist economic programme. Only then will education go forward, unfettered by capitalism, and teachers' jobs be guaranteed.

Derek McMillan

(Ex-student, Furzedown College)

Crisis at Teesside Poly

The false economy of the cuts in education expenditure has been proved by the disastrous situation at Teesside Polytechnic.

On the one hand, the capitalist class need the polys to provide them with skilled workers for industry. But, in a time of economic stagnation, they are desperate to cut state expenditure on such 'luxuries' as education in order to buoy up private profits.

The consequence of cutting to the bone is now starkly obvious. The Council for National Academic Awards has threatened to stop awarding degrees at Teesside, which would effectively mean the closure of the college, unless it makes "substantial improvements".

The inspection of the college found:

★ Academic staff "dispirited, confused and without confidence."

★ "No strategy, no vision, no policy, no sense of direction" in the college.

★ A "remarkably small" stock of books in the library.

★ Copies of some important library books in such short

supply that students could only borrow them for a four-hour period.

★ Lecturers having to lend students their own books so they could write essays.

★ A computer service "in imminent danger of collapse", because of a lack of accommodation and staff.

★ Science and engineering departments with too few technicians, and equipment that is in "growing danger of obsolescence."

The report also said that £500,000 more should have been spent on the library in the past five years. However, the real truth came out when the report implied that Cleveland County Council was partly to blame for **not providing enough money.**

Every student must be asking how many colleges are near to collapse? How many more might be near to being closed down?

Labour students must fight for a reversal of the cuts and a massive expansion of expenditure on education to provide the equipment, facilities and places for all who want to study.

Peter Lush

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USA

American bosses fear growth of union power



The miners defeated Carter and the bosses through determined action and solidarity from other workers. The last two years have seen bitter strikes by rubber workers, farm workers, steelmen, longshoremen and printers, with postmen next in line. It is the spread of such unions to new areas and new trades that the bosses fear.

Twice in the last year Congress has wiped the floor with American labour: the first time with the defeat of the Common Sites Picketing Bill; this time with the Labour Law Reform Bill which was filibustered into oblivion by big business-supported Senators.

Last October the House of Representatives by a vote of 257—163 approved the bill, and a Senate Committee holding hearings on it, endorsed it by a lopsided 13—2 vote. President Carter, paying his dues for labour's support of his election, supported it, but with something less than enthusiasm.

This year the bill came to the Senate for final approval before going to the President for his signature. The top labour leaders thought the whole thing was in the bag—how could they lose with the President supporting it? It was in the Senate that their hopes were dashed by a 19-day "filibuster" that killed the bill.

Wagner Act

The Wagner Act of 1935 (the National Labor Relations Act) was designed to redress some of the imbalance between labour and capital in the US, and to curb social turmoil in one of the most tumultuous periods of American history—the Great Depression—by recognising the right of the American workers to organise and bargain collectively. The law established procedures for reinstating a worker to his job without loss of wages if he were fired for joining a union and it developed a mechanism for government-supervised elections to determine whether workers wanted to be represented by a labour organisation. Where a majority voted in favour of a union the employer was duty-bound, by law, to negotiate a contract.

Republic Steel was compelled to rehire hundreds of strikers discharged after the 1937 "Little Steel" strike and pay them millions of dollars in lost wages. Workers fined for forming unions were generally reinstated in a short period of time. The unions made significant headway before and during World War II.

By Betty Traun in New York

But thereafter, business went on the counter-offensive. One way of getting around the intent of the law was to sign hundreds of "backdoor" contracts with moderate American Federation of Labor unions—so employers could avoid dealing with the new, more militant, CIO.

To undercut the CIO unions, the older federation leaders were willing to charter company unions, and then sign quickie agreements with employers in which the rank and file had no voice. "Organising the employers" rather than the employees became a widespread practice.

Business learned how to circumvent the Wagner Act by endless delaying tactics. Any employer today who wants to subvert the right to organise needs only a high-priced lawyer.

As of 1976, it took an average of eight months to hold a union representation election when a hearing was required, and in that time many discouraged workers lost interest, quit or were fired. The average time to take a course through the hearings and then through the courts is two years.

J H Cutter-Rex Mfg Co of New Orleans, Louisiana, which refused to reinstate 207 illegally discharged employees in 1956, managed to stall for 13 years until the Supreme Court finally ruled against it. The classic example, J P Stevens, still has no union at its textile plants, after a host of pyrrhic union election victories and favourable reinstatement decisions

brought the union nothing. There are hundreds of similar instances.

These delaying tactics and the increasing number of illegal discharges have had a severe effect on labour's organising effects. In 1950 unions won 73% of all factory elections, gaining the right to represent 759,038 workers. Twenty-five years later, a larger, wealthier and presumably more powerful labour movement won only half the elections for which it petitioned, and gained the right to represent only 158,000 new workers. Last year, labour lost more than half those elections, and its membership fell to the point where unions represent only twenty per cent of the workforce in the country.

The new Labor Law Reform Bill which labour so much wanted, and which was primarily designed to reduce procedural delays, was an extremely modest Bill. It called for elections within fifteen to seventy-five days, reinstatement of illegally discharged workers by injunction, and double pay for illegally discharged workers so that the employer would actually suffer a penalty.

Furthermore, corporations that willfully violated a final Board or court order would be denied Federal contracts. That so mild a bill could have been pigeonholed indicates how successful the persistent business counter-offensive has been.

If the Bill were passed, they argued, many small employers would be unionised, their workers could get higher

wages, the companies would have to raise prices, and the cost of living would increase still further for all. Right-wing business economists were quoted to the effect that "for each ten per cent increase in union membership there will be a corresponding 3 per cent increase in inflation."

\$100 million

Under such logic, the nation could get rid of inflation altogether by abolishing the 72,000 local and 170 national trade unions now in existence!

The second prejudice played up to by business was that reform would give the labour movement "too much power"—a replay of the idea behind the Taft Hartley Act of 1947. In actual fact the unions are being hemmed in.

The heavier industries are well organised, and recently there has been an influx of government workers. But in textile, chemicals, retailing, agriculture, finance, and most service industries, labour is miserably weak, and this weakness becomes more glaring as more and more businesses escape to the Sun Belt of the south with its "right to work" states which forbid closed union shops.

On the other side of the coin, big business is rapidly expanding into conglomerates and multinational firms, with vastly increased power and wealth. A hundred million dollars was spent by them to defeat the Labor Bill in Congress.

Never has business felt more powerful in forty years. The National Association of Manufacturers has created the Council on a Union-Free Environment.

It is particularly noticeable right now in the newspaper field where the once powerful craft unions are under attack. All daily newspapers have been struck in New York City, not because of wages, but because the publishers want to do away with fifty percent of the pressmen's jobs. Even the vaunted building trades, conservative hub of the AFL-CIO, are being bypassed by non-union employers and losing members in such labour bastions as New York City.

It must be borne in mind that George Meany and his supporters in the higher echelons of the labour movement have consistently practiced class collaboration with the leaders of industry. They have met socially and raised toasts to each other. They have been sitting as tripartite partners with the leaders of big business and the Carter Administration on the Labor-Management Group (the Dunlop Committee) which acts as a private advisory body to Mr Carter.

'Class struggle'

The labour leaders had not expected the unrelenting opposition of all business. From the Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers and the Right to Work groups yes, but not from the highest leaders of industry who sat with them on the Dunlop Committee! To be knifed in the back by "friends"—"Et tu Brute."

One of the eight labour members of the Dunlop Committee, Murray H Finley, president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union, plainly expressed his feeling of betrayal; the two sides, he said, had been able to talk to each other on potentially divisive issues because they had a tacit understanding. Labour would support free enterprise and business would support a strong democratic labour movement. Meany had never expected that his big business friends would join with the rest of business in the attack

on the Labor Law Reform Bill.

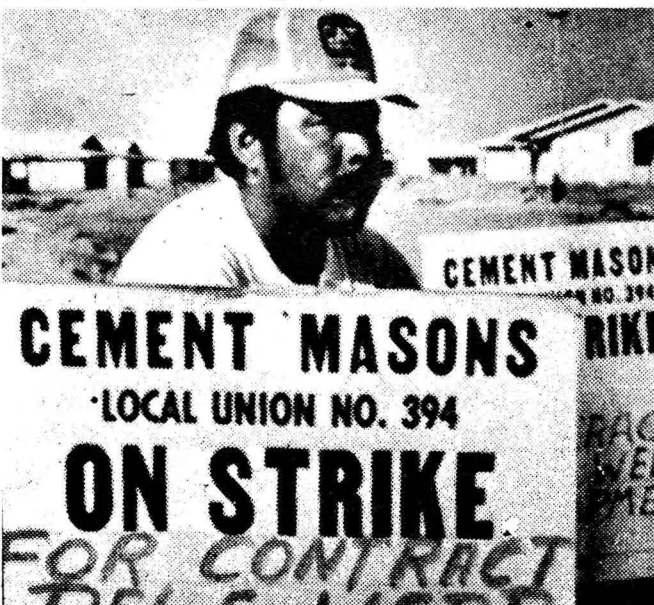
Now the two sides have been sent hurtling in opposite directions—the first schism between labour and industry. Douglas Fraser, President of the United Auto Workers Union, was the first to resign from the Labor-Management Group with a blistering protest over business's "dishonest and ugly" campaign against the Labor Reform Bill.

Today, some unfamiliar language is emanating from the higher echelons of US labour leaders. Fraser complains of a "one-sided class war" being conducted by business against labour. Thomas Donahue, a close aide of George Meany, speaks of "an on-going class struggle."

Lane Kirkland, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, charges that "the attack on the status of free and voluntary institutions in this country is being inspired, financed, and led by those who have profited most from that arrangement of human society. It is the Chambers of Commerce, the Right to Work Committees, and all those other Christian gentlemen to whom God in his infinite wisdom gave custody of the property of this country who are carrying on the class warfare."

The demise of the Labor Law Reform Bill marks the end of four decades when it was the policy of the ruling class to accommodate itself to collective bargaining and the existence of labour unions. Whether the gentlemen of labour are prepared to draw all the necessary conclusions from the obvious facts that they see is a moot question. Evidently their eyes—and, hopefully, their minds—are now open a bit wider than formerly.

But whether they act or not on their rhetoric, it is a foregone conclusion that the rank and file will put pressure on their leaders to fight back. There can be no doubt that this onslaught against labour unions, made necessary by the bosses' need to attack the workers' living standards, will push the unions and their members to the left, inevitably bringing a break with the two capitalist parties and raising the need for an independent party of labour.



NICARAGUA \ SWEDEN



SOMOZA, the doomed tyrant

The corrupt Somoza regime in Nicaragua has held on to power since the crisis began only by the most ruthless military means. It faces the anger of the overwhelming mass of the population: added to now by the imposition of martial law.

In Matalcalpa for instance insurgents, some as young as 12 years old, took control of two-thirds of the city, defending themselves behind barricades with homemade bombs, pistols, rifles and machetes. They fought the National Guard, who were armed with heavy machine guns, rockets and planes. Fatalities may reach the hundreds. The 'Washington Post' reports dead bodies stacked on top of one another like wood.

The desperate measures taken by the dying dictatorship indicate its ever narrowing base of support. After 45 years of repression even some of the wealthier strata have shown their opposition.

The native capitalist class, small and ineffective on

a world scale, has for decades entrusted its delicate fate to Somoza, as protection from the wrath of the poor. Now both the regime's corruption, on a mammoth scale, and its instability threaten the capitalists' interests.

Somoza had fingers in

The Somoza government, in a form of senile decay, sees reds under the most unlikely beds. The regime has banned both the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and the Nicaraguan Development Institute, equivalents of Britain's CBI, as communist controlled.

The general manager of Coca-Cola in Nicaragua, they assert, is a communist, and has been thrown in jail. The entire US administration is apparently under Marxist influence! Small wonder that the capitalist class pray in vain for a more intelligent representative.

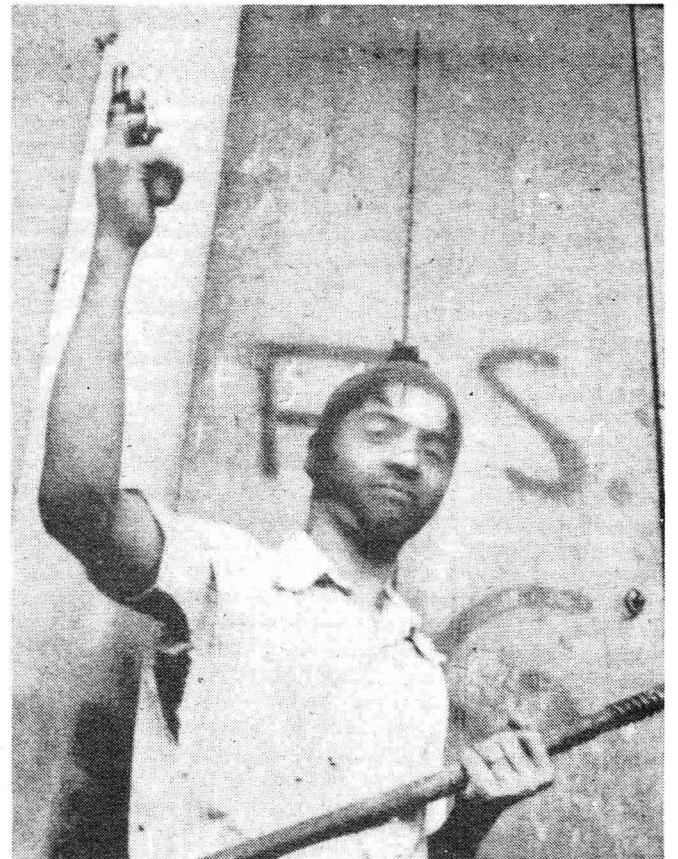
every pie, a stake in every arena of big business, airlines, shipping, land etc. After the 1972 earthquake he took for himself and his friends all the plum contracts for reconstruction. He had also monopolised banking. The Somoza family has run the country as a private fiefdom for years. Somoza controls the country's top 20 firms, owns a quarter of the

total arable land and has a nest egg of \$500m stacked away. Sections of the local capitalists have now joined the opposition and have encouraged anti-Somoza strikes!

Roger Shriver

The National Guard are also showing signs of wavering; some favouring more savage repression, others, seeing the writing on the wall, arguing for concessions. Other bulwarks of the dictatorship like the Finance Minister and the leader of the National Guard Armoured Battalion have fled to Spain.

The massing of the opposition in Nicaragua has presented US imperialism with a dilemma. Somoza, the man who held on to power by purchasing votes of the poor with cash and cheap rum, was supported by the US government as one of the main



A member of the Sandinista guerrillas

defenders of 'democracy', i.e. US capitalism's interests, in Latin America. Now they are looking nervously at the long term effects of Somoza's corruption in fuelling the mass opposition movement. They fear too close an identification with a doomed tyrant and don't want their dominating influence in Nicaragua to sink as this particular agent goes down. On the other hand, if they stand aside and watch Somoza's overthrow might not the response of the Nicaraguan people be to install a Central American Castro?

Drawing bitter comparisons with Portugal in 1974-5, where, intoxicated, as the capitalists saw it, by the lifting of a half century of repression, the working class

brought Portuguese capitalism almost to the end of the road.

The strategy of US imperialism is once again confounded by developments in a small and weak nation. Only six years ago US troops were dispatched after the earthquake to stabilise the regime's rule. Now, paralysed, they can do nothing.

Many cities and towns still appear to be resisting the government forces. Even if the immediate crisis passes without the regime's fall, the balance of forces in the country has totally changed. All the bloodshed inflicted by Somoza's troops can not extinguish for long the burning hatred of the dictator and all he stands for.

NORWEGIAN WAGES FROZEN

Faced with a reduced estimate of North Sea oil production, inflation at 8.5% and the appearance of unemployment, the Norwegian government has launched a severe austerity programme aimed at making the workers pay for the country's economic ills.

Wages and prices are to be frozen until the end of next year. The democratic right of collective bargaining has been suspended. Even pay rises already negotiated and due to come into effect soon have been cancelled.

The Labour government justifies its cutting of workers' living standards by

saying that Norwegian labour costs had been higher than in other industrial countries for years. Now they are to be cut to below average.

A new problem has also appeared in this social democratic welfare state. Unemployment in this land of 'full employment' has already gone up to 1.3% and is expected to double. What better proof than a Labour government cutting workers' jobs and living standards, that it is impossible to plan an economy without first nationalising it?

LAW AND ORDER



What was officially described as a "routine crime prevention operation" became a rather routine crime committing operation as hundreds of South African riot police went on the rampage against blacks in the Crossroads shanty town outside Cape Town last week. The police struck at 2 am, firing tear gas cannisters at the 20,000 squatters who live there.

Then at 8 am a second wave of police went in, batons flying. Two Africans were shot dead. Others were mercilessly beaten by gangs of police. A baby died on its mother's back, trampled in the rush of panicking people fleeing the guns.

For the South African police, it was all in a day's work.

'we're fighting for all workers'

—say Swedish car workers

"We are striking for the future of all workers". That was the message written on the banner carried by striking car workers as they marched through Boden, in the north of Sweden.

Scared employers succeeded in bringing in the "Labour court" in the middle of the holiday period to try to stop the strike. Their verdict was a £50 fine against each striker, the highest for a "wildcat" strike. The strike is for a wage increase of 20p an hour.

"We know that this is only on orders from the employers. The fines are high but we had expected worse," said Jörgen Lang, the shop steward of the 40 strikers. "This doesn't only concern us. Wage stops or piece work are brought up in all local negotiations."

The strike has been going on since 15th June and is one of the longest in the last decade. When the "Labour court" took up the case it was the first time they have done so in the middle of a dispute. The pressure from the employers was very hard, frightened that the strike would spread.

By Eva Eriksson

The owner of the factory is also the chairman of the car employers' federation. He knew that the losses will be paid by the SAF (Swedish CBI) as long as he doesn't agree to wage increases.

But he agrees with piece-work and says: "It is like kids when they are raking leaves, they work much harder if they know the reward is greater." The owner is also supported by his lawyers when they say that the strike provides grounds for sackings, and he has circulated letters to the workers saying that their employment is threatened.

"We are continuing the strike. Each of us took that decision and there was not even any talk about going back."

"We don't believe they will get anyone working here if they sack us."

These are the strikers' words and the confidence shown is proven by the support they are getting from other sections of workers in the north. The main sections being the powerful lumberjacks and mineworkers.

They are also very proud of their trade union branch and say: "Our own branch has acted as they should, on orders from us. After all, we elected them."

But they also go on to say: "We are very disappointed in the Social Democrats. We haven't heard anything from them, neither locally or nationally. And they are campaigning on restrictions in strike repayments. The Social Democrats are the biggest party and this would be useful to them in the coming election."

Sweden is no longer a dream country where all the evils of capitalism seem to have been eradicated. A period of counter-reforms has been started by the bosses' government.

This strike, and many others which we have seen in Sweden during the last years, is only the beginning of the class struggles we will see in the future. The campaign must be for a majority Social Democratic government on a socialist programme.

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

LETTERS

Health and Safety

Dear Comrades

Having been elected some weeks ago as safety rep at the small print firm I work for, I read Ted Mooney's article on Health and Safety reps with some direct interest.

The overall group of which our firm is part ran a course for the safety reps a few weeks ago, which I attended together with reps from plants in Bootle, London and Birmingham.

The course tutors (both ex FOCs, branch officials and ex-management!) regarded the Act as the first part of workers' democracy (i.e. Bullock style). While this is not altogether true, there still exist some of the possible damages, inherent in participation. Although the safety rep is an arm of the Factory Inspector, it could also be argued that he/she is an arm of management as workers stand to be fined without an accident occurring if in breach of the Act.

One particular aspect is the fact that the safety rep should in theory push every other consideration aside.

If, for example, on bonus schemes, a worker is not using a guard in order to obtain a higher bonus through higher output, the safety rep would have to disregard the bonus loss involved if the guard was used. This may lead to conflict between worker and worker (safety rep).

The point here is that as with the fight for the 35-hour week and reduction in overtime, the safety element cannot be separated from a living wage. If the Act is to be effective it can only be done by unions demanding the equivalent loss of bonus to be given and indeed the practice of piece and bonus work to be eradicated.

TORY 'EFFICIENCY'

Dear Comrades

Now and again the capitalist yellow press has a go at the nationalised industry British Rail: "inefficient, high price of fares and always increasing, overmanning, how things would be much better if the old railway companies were running the trains."

It is true that rail fares have risen. I would in no way defend the steep increases, especially since the cut in government subsidies. In October 1972 the day return Peterborough to London was £1.85; today the same ticket costs £4.90.

On the other hand there are a number of small private railways in this country, most of them tourist attractions, but all making a profit. However, when you look closer you find that they have a small full time staff and rely heavily on voluntary labour. In Peterborough we have a private railway 5 miles long. A return trip on this railway for an adult is £1.

Now if comrades work this out, it means 10 pence per mile. The distance from Peterborough to London is 76 miles. On the existing day return fare of £4.90 that comes to 3.2 pence per mile!

The private railway is charging more than three times the British Rail fare. If BR were to charge on the same basis of 10p per mile the return fare Peterborough to London would be £15.20!

Remember these figures the next time somebody tells you how efficient railways would be under private enterprise. £15.20 is what Keith Joseph would like to charge, making the workers pay and cutting out any subsidies.

Yours fraternally

Irving Nicol

Fletton Labour Party, Peterborough

TSSA Euston No 2 branch

However as Cde Mooney pointed out, the Act does provide an element of gain as far as workers are concerned. The fact that safety reps are more aware than management will allow some changes to be made as far as conditions are concerned.

It cannot be ruled out that as this Act concerns management more than any other by the government over the past few years (note this Act is dated 1974) that the Tories will attempt to weaken it if they gain power. It is essential therefore that safety reps are not divorced from the shop floor but become part of shop floor leadership.

Yours fraternally

I Warrick

Reading

Daily Telegraph comedian

Dear Comrades

On September 6th readers of the 'Daily Telegraph' were provided a new insight into the history and aims of the trade union movement when Warwick Collins explained "how union power has impoverished workers."

"Through a notorious system of job demarcation and over-manning, a hatred of profits and capital investment...the British trade unions have drastically reduced the efficiency and productivity of our industrial system," he wrote.

Mr Collins placed the blame for unemployment and inflation firmly in the lap of trade unions. Furthermore, trade unions do not work, and never have worked, in the interests of the working man!

"In countries such as West Germany, France, America and Japan, where the unions are less virulently concerned with destroying the level of profits...worker living stand-

ards are significantly higher. The average standard of living in Germany is now almost twice that here. Before the war the positions were reversed."

I was very surprised to read Mr Collins' ideas; but I doubt if I was the only one. After all, even German businessmen do not share this view. The Director of Osram Lamps, for instance, believes that "the biggest problem is the terribly inadequate investment...it's unbelievable the old 'bacon' [machinery] that is still being used for production here."

Of course, Mr Collins would merely suggest, as many Tories have done, that bosses cannot afford the risks of increased investment because of high taxation, the Employment Protection Act, and most important, too much trade union power!

Unfortunately, his idols—the German businessmen—disagree yet again: "An important peculiarity of British bosses is that they regard their firms above all as sources of personal income, and concentrate on the maximisation of their short-term profit," commented 'Der Spiegel'. Perhaps Mr Collins should go back to school and relearn economics!

In fact it is probable that he would be far more successful as a comedian—after all, the last paragraph in his article is a show stopper in any working men's club:

"The simple and astonishing fact is that, while Labour has been in power, we have been ruled by a government whose roots and nerves are buried in organisations whose overall effects have been to impoverish the working classes—those they claim to represent. This should be borne in mind against the ridiculous and sinister babble of Trades Union Congress as it meets for its yearly conference."

Yours comradely

A Zapple

Vice-chairman,

Plymouth Sutton LPYS

PRIVATE HEALTH CARE—FOR THE FEW

Dear Comrades

Yet again we see whose side of the fence the 'Daily Express' is on (4.9.78). The whole of page 11 was given over to a full-page advert for the British United Provident Association Limited (BUPA).

They are a private medical association, which means if you're one of the elite minority, you jump the queue. But for the rest, the majority, you can wait 3 months, 1 year, 3 years, maybe 5 years or even longer, if you actually survive that long.

BUPA boast that private health is expanding, with 19 new independent hospitals opening; 150,000 surgical operations ranging from minor operations to open-heart surgery are being performed in the private sector every year; 85% of the population in a recent NOP survey feel they should be free to choose between private and NHS (the NOP survey must have been taken at Tory Headquarters!) and finally the main advantage of independent health care is treatment at a time to suit you, a choice of consultant, the privacy of your own hospital room and a personal telephone and television.

That's what the elite minority can expect.

Back to reality. Walk into any hospital in the land and we see a chronic nursing shortage, that has now been stretched to breaking point, antiquated equipment. Local Area Health Authority management obviously have their hearts in the right places! To some AHAs, entertaining the bosses comes before a cardiac respirator or a kidney life-saving machine or even a mobile X-ray unit!

We hear the mass media expound about ill-treatment of patients. In over 6 years at my hospital I have never or am ever likely to see any of this. In the most impossible of circumstances, nurses always keep to the highest standards.

Nurses' living standards are back to 1973; low pay, long hours, poor conditions. We've seen what a future Tory government intends to do—the demands of private health sectors like BUPA will seem tame compared to the Tories' intended health policy!

The labour and trade union movement must as a matter of grave urgency campaign for the complete abolition of all private practice, both inside and outside the NHS, the nationalisation of the whole pharmaceutical industry, a 35-hour week for all NHS staff, a minimum weekly wage of £70 tied to the cost of living, an immediate and full building programme, democratic workers' control and management. Only then will we see a health service based on need and not profit.

Yours comradely

A Gloucester CLP

and COHSE member

Terrorism Act

Dear Comrades

I've just returned from a short holiday in the West of Ireland, spent with my father and younger brother.

Passing through customs at Dun Laoghaire my brother was asked to open his bag by an official, and asked where he was going and why. Not much wrong with that. Except on the way back he was

stopped again at Holyhead. And this time the "official" was a police officer.

He asked similar questions but was quickly convinced that there was nothing suspicious. Would it have been the same if our accents had been Irish, not Brummie?

Presumably such procedure is part of the continuing use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. And who, which groups, were responsible for giving the government the excuse to bring in this legislation? Those who chose to speak not through the labour movement but with bomb and bullet, namely the Provisional IRA.

While in Ireland I saw plenty of IRA slogans on walls and buildings. At first I was impressed, but on second thoughts plastering town centres with whitewash is relatively easy and is usually the work of small, isolated groups desperate to keep up a public face.

Yours fraternally

Pete McNally

Ladywood LPYS

Czech workers understood real issues

Dear Comrades

Whenever the masses struggle to overcome oppression, the apologists for the oppressors discover a "conspiracy"—secretly orchestrated by "evil" men. The mentality of oppressors and of their defenders does not allow them to appreciate that ordinary people are capable of self-activity and struggle—to them the masses are sheep who can only be "led".

Thus the Russian Revolution was merely due to the "evil conspiratorial genius" of the Bolsheviks, and the reactionary press blames "extremists" and "militants" for the workers' struggles. They can't [or will not] see the social and economic processes that create the conditions for mass struggles.

In his letter [issue 421] Vince Smith used these methods to explain away the tremendous movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968 as a CIA plot. Indeed, if he wishes to "prove" that there is no such thing as Czech Stalinism how else can he explain a movement that had the support of the overwhelming majority of the population?

His conspiracy theory avoids any need to explain the social processes that led to such a mass movement, and [more significant for one claiming to be a Marxist] it paints a picture of the powerful Czech working class as having no understanding of its own class interests. This is in spite of the 20 years in which the Czech CP [which VS thinks was based on genuine Marxism for most of this time] had a monopoly of published or broadcast ideas through the control of the state.

Vince Smith's letter has more in common with the approach of his own professed enemies than the method of a revolutionary socialist.

Yours

Gerry Lerner

Shipbuilding—nationalisation 'facile'

Dear Militant

Your article on Westerns, like so many of your articles, gives only an isolated view of a much broader problem.

The shipbuilding industry internationally is in a crisis. Where in 1966 70% of world shipping was built in Europe, the figure now is nearer 30%. Japanese costs are 30% lower than those of European yards and Japan itself is being challenged by new shipbuilding nations such as Brazil and Taiwan.

The effect this drop in demand has had in Europe alone is reflected not only in the shipbuilding industry but the steel industry, the coal industry and other ancillary industries which are contracting, causing an economic crisis and consequently unemployment figures in the region of 7 million, much of which is young unskilled labour.

Analysing the problem is easy, finding a solution is another matter. Well meaning but half baked crusades to nationalise an industry to save jobs are too facile to be taken seriously, and in the long run are not in the workers'

interests.

The problem is an international one. The best hope for European yards is that they should specialise in building those ships for which European expertise is best equipped, and that some agreement should be reached within Europe for a Community preference on shipbuilding where governments can guarantee that a proportion of orders go to European yards.

Don't forget that there are shipbuilders in France and Germany too facing the same problems as British yards. National plans alone, even if successful, can at best only export the unemployment problem.

Your paper would receive a much needed improvement if your contributors dropped more of the yah boo attitude and started to realise that problems are two sided and a certain amount of polemics are required to justify your point of view. It's amazing how your judgement is tempered using this technique.

Yours

Stuart Baker

Luxembourg

We need £4,840 this week

Three weeks to go and the money is coming in very well. Although we didn't manage to double last week's total we did receive £1,758.97 this week and we have had reports that there is a lot more money being raised in the areas.

This money must be sent in as it is collected however, because we don't want to fall behind again. A letter from Eastbourne makes this point.

"Dear Comrades
Find enclosed £14.50 for the fighting fund from readers in Eastbourne. It is raised from a sponsored walk. More is still to come but we decided to send some up as soon as possible because 'money is time'."

This is just the first of the sponsored 'activity' money to come in but a lot more is promised. An unusual way of raising money came in from Blackpool where 'standing on head in town centre' raised £1.

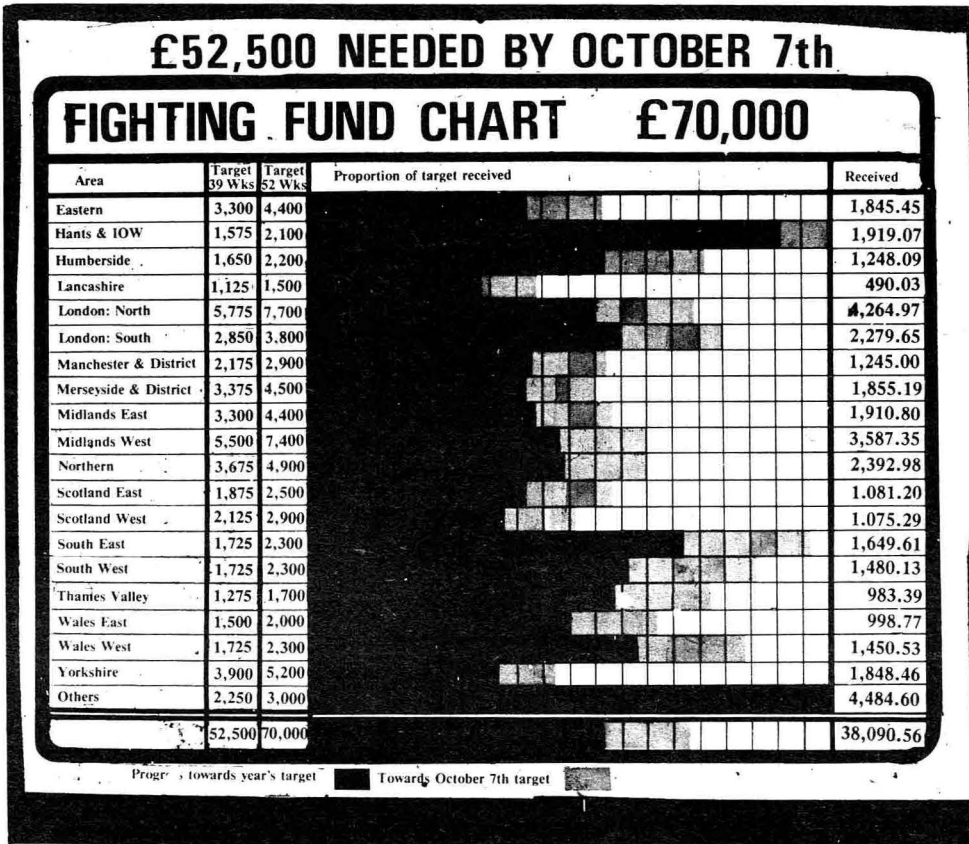
Obviously the most impor-

tant way of raising money is through the labour movement and every reader of the paper but every avenue must be explored if we are to reach our target. Sections of the labour movement which have donated this week include £15 from a collection among Executive Committee members of Greenwich Labour Party, Chester LPYS £5, Bristol LPYS £1.94 and Wallsend LPYS £2.94.

The promise of £400 mentioned in last week's paper was redeemed this week and many more promises of £25 and £20 have come in as well as promises to donate a day's pay to help build the Militant. A West London supporter this week sent in a day's pay of £15 and a supporter in Slough sent in £15 from his tax



Sales of Militant went well at the recent TUC conference, where over £350 was raised for the Fighting Fund



rebate.

Other individual donations this week include: £5 from two Croydon NE Labour Party members, other fivers from B Roberts (Llangollen), NGA Militant supporters in Merseyside, T Jones (Newcastle North LPYS) G Byron (Hillhead LPYS), P Gardner (Weston LPYS), £1.64 from A Tynan (Rhondda) and £1.50 from S Frazer (Glasgow). We also received a £3 donation from an 88 year old Marxist from Glasgow who "has been fighting for socialist ideas all his life and wished all young Marxists the best of luck in the continuing fight".

One pound donations came in from the following: J Cummins, H Mullineux and L Reeves (all from Portsmouth), D Wicken (Dagenham), B Curry (Garston CLP), J Allington (North Wirral FBU), C Summerton (Leicester MATSA), A Kisley (Birmingham ASTMS), S Parkinson (Bristol UPW), D Archibald and J Lawrence (both from Newcastle West

LPYS), and S Ganon (Chester le Street LPYS).

Lump sums for the special September appeal which have come in this week include £48 from Blackpool, £28 from Dorset, £62.30 from Leicester, £30 from East Merseyside, £16 from Newcastle and £26.20 from supporters in Newham.

Fund raising events have raised a lot of money this week including £30.50 collected in donations, raffles and film show at a very successful Northern Region LPYS weekend school held on Holy Island. Socials in different parts of the country have also been successful. One in Woolwich raised £32.52, one in Huddersfield raised £12, one organised by Littlehampton LPYS after a day school raised £18.65 and a raffle organised at a social in Hull raised £16.

The sale of pontoon tickets in Stirling has so far made £26.30 and the sale of back copies of the Militant in

Peterborough has raised £5.67 and the sale of Lenin badges in Gwent raised £6.

A coach collection and a leaving party collection in the Leicester area together raised £9.20, a collection in a pub in York raised £2, pennies collected in Isle of Wight, South East Dorset and Slough raised £1, £5 and £6.18 respectively and collections at Militant Readers Meetings include Blackpool (£40), Huddersfield (£9.73) and a Marxist Discussion Group in Stockton which raised £1.36. Many thanks to everyone who sent in money this week.

We have £14,500 to raise in the three weeks left which means an average of £4,840 per week. We can do it comrades, if all the promises are redeemed and all the fund raising events in the areas go ahead and are successful. If nothing is organised in your area yet, do something about it and help the Militant go forward.

BRING BACK THE RED

40 at Littlehampton meeting

Littlehampton Labour Party Young Socialists held a one day conference on September 9th at which over 40 comrades were present.

The day, split into one morning and two afternoon sessions, was a great success.

The first speaker was John Tizzard, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the Arunde! Constituency, on the subject of Southern Africa.

The general feeling of the

comrades was that the problems facing the black working class in South Africa, Rhodesia, Namibia, etc., could only be taken up and fought successfully with a clear socialist understanding and policies. The involvement of a Labour government and Labour Ministers in the recently reported sanction-busting operation in Rhodesia arose. Comrades left the meeting in no doubt that if such

involvement is proven, and there seems little doubt it will be, the labour movement must ensure that all those responsible be made fully accountable for their actions.

The afternoon session began with Bill North of Hove Labour Party giving an excellent introduction on the CIA and its involvement in World politics. Although time was obviously the enemy, the speaker managed to give an

historical background to the organisation, as well as quoting several examples of incidents and countries the CIA has actively intervened in: Guatemala, Cuba, Chile and Italy.

The conference ended with a lead off on the Socialist Way Forward given by Marion Preen from the IOW.

A social event which followed the conference managed, along with other donations throughout the week, to raise £18.65 for 'Militant', a further indication that comrades within the LPYS realise that it isn't sufficient simply to talk, but that sacrifices must be made if we are to build a democratic workers' paper to give a lead in the period of great struggles which faces the working class.

Jim McEwen
(Chairman,
Littlehampton LPYS)

ADS

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HARTLEPOOL Marxist Discussion Meetings. October 1st - Fascism: what it is and how to fight it. October 15th - 'Liberation Struggles in Africa'. The meetings start at 7.30 pm on Sunday at 18 Catherine's Street, Headlands, Hartlepool.

STOCKTON Trade Union Discussion Group Meetings. October 2nd - 'Fascism: what it is and how to fight it'. October 16th - 'Liberation Struggles in Africa'. The meetings start at 7.30 pm on Monday night, upstairs in the Spread Eagle, Dovecote Street, Stockton.

MILITANT JUMBLE SALE
Pensioners' Hall, Caerphilly. 2.00 pm, Saturday, 30th September.

WALLSEND Marxist Discussion Group. 'The role of a Marxist paper'. Speaker: Peter Doyle. 4th October, 8 pm. Stanley Arms, North Shields.

HARLOW Militant Social. Build the Militant appeal. Saturday September 30th, 69 Sycamore Field, Harlow. 8 pm. 50p including food.

HARLOW Militant Readers Meeting. 'Rhodesia: The Dilemma of Imperialism.' Speaker: Sean McCartney (Cambridge CLP). Thursday September 28th, Harlow Town Hall. 8.00 pm.

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DOCK WORKERS ANSWER

ATTACKS

Sections of Britain's bosses and their Tory press have recently been singling out sections of workers like carworkers and dockers for vicious attack. The workers in Southampton docks have been chosen for particular attention. The 'Daily Telegraph' described them as "wreckers".

Nick Brooks, of Southampton Labour Party, asked Richie Pearce, chairman of the dockers' shop stewards, about these attacks.

Nick Brookes: The Telegraph say there is overmanning, especially on the container terminal.

Richie Pearce: In fact we are undermanned. When the South African trade was containerised recently, the share of the trade handled by Southampton rose from 43% (under conventional shipping) to 98%. The conventional handling employed 750 men every day. Now containerisation employs 120 men a day. One container ship carries

more cargo on one trip than the old boats did in one year. They're turned round in 18 hours, whereas it used to take two weeks. With that sort of increase in productivity how can they talk about overmanning?

N.B.: They accuse you of cutting the working day and taking time off to collect your pay.

R.P.: The port works 22 hours a day, but of course there has to be time for shifts to change over. Over two thirds of the men have their pay put directly into a bank.

N.B. The Telegraph say you're using the issue of safety to cause disruption.

R.P.: That's a disgusting assertion, and shows how much value these people put on the health and safety of working people.

We've just had a strike over safety. It was ended when

management agreed to abide by safety procedures. They're trying to break agreed safety procedures, we're trying to enforce them.

N.B.: What about other disputes recently in the port? —maintenance workers have been on strike several times.

R.P.: No section of workers in the port is attempting to destroy it. But they've been forced into action by the attitude of management. They have had justified claims and grievances. The recent strike by dockers was the first since 1972, apart from a one day strike in protest at the proposed closure of Preston docks.

The British Transport Docks Board act like any management do. The chairman, Sir Humphrey Brown, is only part-time. Really he's a gentleman farmer. How do

people like him have any understanding of the problems facing working people?

The government is also to blame. Massive profits are being made out of containerisation, and we get no share of that, although it's created by our work, because of the government's pay policy. That's bound to have an effect on men's attitudes.

N.B.: Finally, Richie, what's your attitude to the 5% pay limit?

R.P.: Well, Callaghan has pulled his last joke this time and it's a suicidal course. We are totally opposed to it, since it would mean a further cut in our living standards. Our union, the T&GWU, has been opposed to pay policy for 14 months, and yet has done nothing, has frustrated the democratically decided wishes of the membership.

It's the right wing in the movement who are undemocratic, helped by the Telegraph and such like. We don't trust any of these people.

NALGO HEALTH ACTION

Professional and Technical staff in the Health Section of NALGO are in for a busy time.

They are pursuing a claim for a reduction in hours from 38 to 37 by a one day stoppage.

This action involves several unions, and committees of the unions involved are meeting to work out when to take the hour off in following weeks.

This claim goes back to 1975 when admin staff hours were reduced. Management have already agreed to the reduction but say it cannot be implemented until government pay policy allows. We say it can and are out to prove it. Not surprisingly management take the attitude that we will be in breach of contract, and in that situation things could rapidly deteriorate.

The professional staff are also involved in a form of work to rule over a pay claim. This involves district work staff, and their claim goes back to the reorganisation of the Health Service in 1974!

As hospital units got bigger, engineers and works' staff were expected to take on more responsibility and larger areas for no more money. They have been applying since then to have their jobs regraded, and management have finally agreed to the gradings. But again they say they can't pay the extra money involved because of the pay code.

Works' staff will be stopping overtime, refusing to do work which came into the Health Service from local government and suspending normal on-call arrangements. The mood of the members involved is solidly in favour of both these actions, even among the most right wing who generally oppose action.

In both these cases we have seen the most bureaucratic time-wasting on the part of management. They are helped in this by the Whitley Council system which is designed to drag out negotiations and get them well and truly bogged down.

A victory for this section of NALGO would greatly strengthen it and give a further push along the road of the transformation of NALGO into a fighting union. By Peter Lee (NALGO Health, Cambridge)



photo: John Smith (IFL)

A mass meeting of Manchester gas workers last Monday voted to continue their action in support of supervisors who had been "suspended indefinitely" by the North-West Gas Corporation.

The supervisors were suspended on 22nd August and since then, more and more manual workers have struck in solidarity with their fellow trade unionists. By last week gas workers—members of the G&MWU—in the North West, from Crewe to Barrow, had joined the action.

The Gas Corporation took their disciplinary action after MATSA members (G&MWU white collar section) refused to accept additional work which in the past had not been their responsibility. Management argued that the "unions" had agreed to this additional work and the Regional Joint Council had voted to accept it.

They conveniently forgot that the Executive consisted, on the union side, of five NALGO votes, one ASTMS vote, with MATSA having no votes.

Although none of the NALGO representatives were technical or service supervisors, they combined with and supported the employer against the ASTMS representative and the MATSA observers who were in the affected grades.

When it became clear that the affected grades had not been consulted, MATSA decided to support its members in refusing to accept the RJC ruling. Instead of negotiating the issue, NW Gas stopped bonus payments to supervisors from 17th July, and then a month later brought in the suspensions.

Since the MATSA members were locked out and the G&MWU gas workers struck in solidarity, the central issue has broadened. It became clear that NW Gas was trying to break support for MATSA amongst white collar workers.

Please send donations and messages to MATSA/GMWU Strike Fund, c/o J Glover, 60 Talbot Road, Old Trafford, Manchester.

By A Woolworth's Worker PART 2

working in the union

Another meeting was arranged in a meeting room of a local pub. Much to the surprise of the union activists, about fifty were present. When the district officer asked how many union membership applications had been received, he reported over eighty. What surprised a number of the key activists was the number of women, in charge of some of the sections in the store, who had gone out of their way to recruit new members. One, from the toy department, had recruited over twenty-five. "Never even knew she was interested," said a long time store worker.

Another surprise was the number of working wives at the store whose husbands were trade union activists and involved in the local TUC from other unions. All these emerged as natural leaders of the newly formed USDAW section. It meant that already two thirds of the staff had joined.

When the situation was reported to the top manager he was shocked. Immediately, on the notice board appeared a copy of the union/management agreement which laid down the conditions and terms for the members. At this stage even the few non-members were having second thoughts. The 'company loyalists' were recruited, to ensure that 'their voice of moderation should be heard'.

It has already been established that the subs collectors have half an hour of their time each week to collect dues. The shop stewards also have the right to act in that capacity when needed. Although well over two thirds of the full time staff are now members, whether or not that means a

closed shop situation still needs to be clarified. It will depend on the Saturday only staff, although plans are already being made to draw them in. They number over fifty.

One shop steward, who in the past had acted as a spokesman, already feels the extra strength of union backing. Things have moved so fast they'll have to sort out whether they can form their own branch, whether they are entitled to affiliate to the local TUC. There is already enthusiasm for the demand of £55 for 35 hours.

On the local side some of the issues are sorting out the maintenance position: over the years, floor walkers have been responsible for counter maintenance, store room boys for removing rubbish. In the past these were the responsibility of trained maintenance staff and extra cleaners. The staffing situation is one thing needed to be sorted out. Further, the local health inspector has made complaints over the standard of cleanliness in the past. This is another issue which will need to be settled.

Over the years, often niggardly grievances have been allowed to fester, as the workers had no real outlet for their complaints. Now the situation has changed. The manager used to rule like an absolute monarch, but already he sees that such a period has ended, revolution has taken place and now the staff have a set up where their voice and feelings can be expressed, and the opportunity to improve the quality of their working life.

MILITANT

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POEU SPECIAL CONFERENCE ACCEPTS 37 1/2 HOURS

By Kevin Patterson
(Secretary, POEU Leeds
Internal branch)

The Post Office Engineering Union special one-day conference called by the National Executive Council to discuss the 37 1/2-hour week offer, was held in Birmingham last weekend.

The proposed settlement consisted of a 37 1/2-hour week for all engineers with approximately half having the opportunity to work an 8- or 9-day fortnight.

The basic thinking behind the statement is that if Post

Office engineers do 40 hours' work in 37 1/2 hours, then we can have a shorter working week. Delegates who argued that this would not create any more jobs, or give the security of employment that POEU members were seeking, were correct.

Compromise

Throughout the debate the NEC stated that we could not win the full claim and that more important issues were not being dealt with: like pay,

modernisation and regrading. Unfortunately the same leadership who seem so ready to compromise the 35-hour week claim will be the ones who tackle these important issues.

It was with this background, however, that the vote on the 37 1/2-hour settlement was taken, the result being that the deal was accepted by 78,448 to 48,148. The membership, if not the NEC, still regard the 35-hour week as the ultimate goal, and the 37 1/2-hour week as a step towards it.

Bob Mann, secretary POEU Birmingham External, talks to 'Militant' after the conference:

"Since 7.45 this morning [Monday 17th] my phone has not stopped ringing." In many cases it was irate members complaining about what they see as a

sell-out at the special conference. "This is not the end of the battle as far as Birmingham External is concerned."

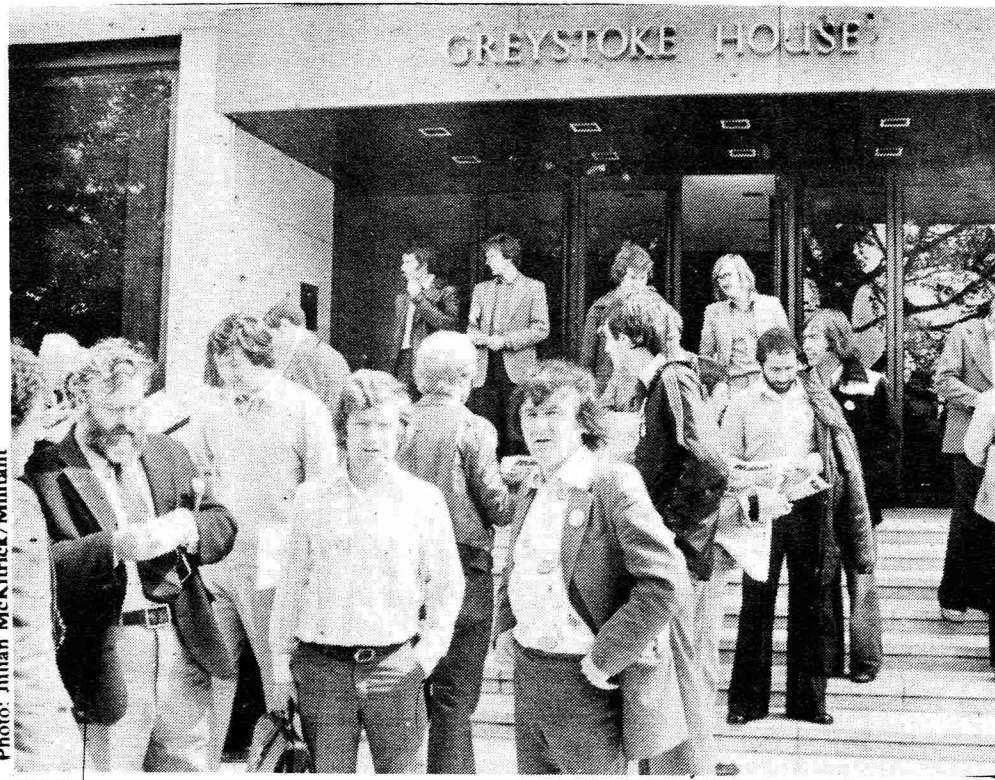
photo: John Sturrock (Report)

Commenting further, Bob said: "The trade union movement may think the 37 1/2-hour week is a great step forward, but they need to analyse this agreement to see what the benefits really are. The main benefits will go to the Post Office managers who succeeded in getting guaranteed cover plus eight additional productivity deals on top of that.

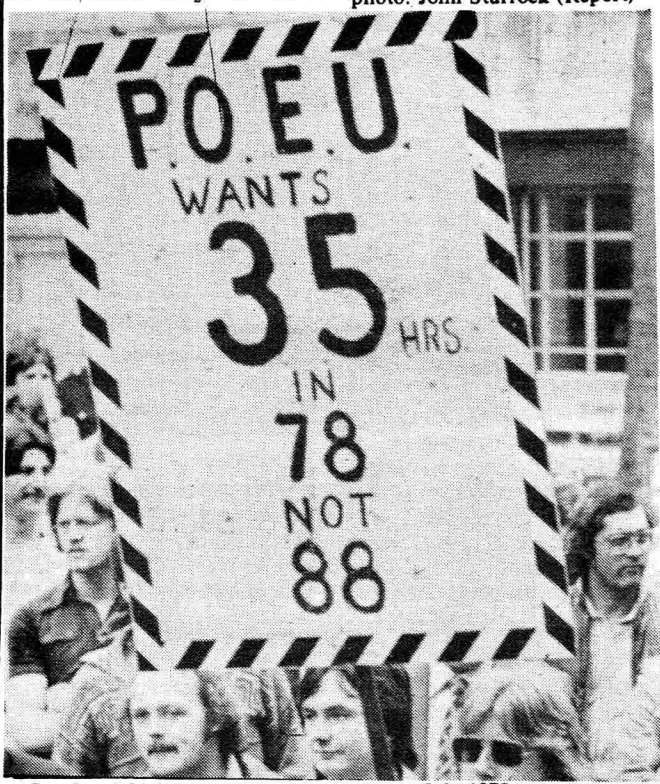
"The rest of the trade union movement can gain lessons from that."

At the June 1979 conference there will almost certainly be resolutions for a 35-hour week and demands for a leadership that will respond to the aspirations of the members. In the meantime, in Birmingham and all over the country there will be local resistance to productivity schemes.

This would not be necessary if the POEU leadership had shown the courage of their members who were united and winning. "If the 'Militant's' coverage, which was excellent, had been repeated by the NEC propaganda machine, victory would have been no trouble."



POEU members from all over the country at lobby of Union HQ after proposed deal was announced



London POEU members' demonstration, July 1978

FARO WARRINGTON: UNIONS CHALLENGE THE LUMP

Trade union organisation is under threat at the Warrington New Town development. The sacking of T&GWU members working for FARO Construction shows up the general strategy being pursued by the main builder, Sir Alfred McAlpine.

The men employed by FARO, a sub-contractor, faced many problems which had to be dealt with by the union. They elected a shop steward, Doug Byrne, with Oliver Hickey as deputy. The stewards reported to McAlpines that the job was organised. They also sought confirmation of whether the sub-contractors employed lump labour.

FARO's managing director arrived and announced that the two stewards plus another man were to be transferred to a short-duration job at Shotton. It was against policy to allow the transfer of shop stewards, and the men saw this as an attack on trade union organisation.

The managing director, McKenna, appeared again

demanding that the men sign a document accepting alternative employment or they would sack themselves. The document was torn up and a picket mounted at the site entrance.

Code of conduct

These workers are seeking reliable assurances from McAlpines that the industry's code of conduct is being observed. They want assurances that payments are not being made on a daily basis; that they are not refusing to pay overtime rates or avoiding the issuing of pay slips and contracts of employment; that they are not declining to provide a holiday stamp system; and that they are not employing "cowboy" sub-contractors. Trade union officials claim to have been told that the lump is operated, and FARO have also said that they will not re-employ the three men.

Victory is vital in this dispute. Against the back-

ground of growing unemployment among Merseyside building workers, Warrington New Town is a vital area of employment. FARO must not be allowed to challenge the security of building workers still further by undermining union rights.

They have the backing of Warrington Trades Council and Labour Party, as well as the T&GWU 6/626 branch. This strike must be declared official immediately.

UCATT official Jimmy Cousins is calling an emergency meeting of UCATT and T&GWU officials to set up an action committee to fight the lump on this site. Mass picketing and a demonstration through Warrington are among the proposals.

Doug Byrne, FARO steward, has declared his support for these measures and has called for this to be linked to an immediate campaign for the nationalisation of the industry and the setting up of direct works departments by all local authorities.

Terry Harrison

US AIR BASES: ACTION SPREADS

Following the strike of Italian Cimolai workers in support of workers in dispute at the US air-bases in East Anglia (see last week's Militant) in their fight against the use of Italian scab labour, the dispute continues, although the employers have now agreed to further talks.

Carter Horsley, the sub-contractors who provoked the dispute, met the strikers, but refused to withdraw their demand that piece rates are cut.

It has become clear that Costains, the main contractor on this NATO project to build air-craft hangers, were behind the bringing in of scabs. They threatened Cimolai, the Italian sub-contractor, with heavy penalty clauses unless the work was completed in the specified time.

The heavy-handed man-

oeuvering of the employers is provoking an angry response from trade unionists, and sympathy action is spreading. On Monday 18th, in a magnificent display of solidarity, Costains and Carter Horsley workers at Littlebrook Power station on the Thames estuary, on the new Dartford tunnel and at Bury St Edmunds and Ponders End came out in support.

At Bury St Edmunds, 120 workers took strike action, 50 of them joined a mass picket at the Lakenheath base and more joined pickets at the other bases.

The stewards from all four bases are holding a mass meeting with all the workers involved, in Woodbridge on Thursday 21st. United determined action to build support and solidarity will show these

employers that they are not dealing with one small isolated group of workers.

They have thrown down a challenge to every trade unionist, and the leaders of the trade unions involved must act now to ensure that they get their answer.

Air base shop stewards spoke to Teresa Mackay [Ipswich Labour Party]

TI PICKETS BITE

Tube Investments, Aston Cross, out for six weeks. Action at other TI plants escalates.

All deliveries have been stopped by flying pickets at Accles and Pollock and the Broadwell complex in Walsall and Oldbury, following a combine stewards' meeting on 13th September. Chesterfield Tubes closed after one day's picketing.

So far, management have only offered wage cuts and redundancies to these 700 workers (see 'Militant' 420). In return, with the aid of the combine, all Tube divisions of TI could be affected next week by flying pickets.

Pickets at TI house, Birmingham, not only embarrassed management but hit their coffee break, with milkmen, bakers and postmen refusing to cross the line. So unless management concede, TI could be brought to its knees.

Donations and messages of support to George Smith, Shop Stewards' Committee treasurer, 47 Meadow Gardens, Baddesley Ensor, Atherstone CV9 2DA.

Derek Astle (EETPU Shop Steward) and John Oliver (T&GWU senior steward) spoke to Brian Debus

SUPPORT THESE WORKERS

At Sandersons Fork Lift, Skegness, where workers were sacked in May of last year for taking industrial action in defence of their shop steward, the fight still goes on.

Phil Gillett, the T&GWU shop steward who was sacked in an attempt to intimidate the newly organised workers, is appealing to as many T&GWU branches as possible to send the following telegram to Stan Pemberton, Chairman of the T&GWU General Executive Com-

mittee, Transport House, Smith Square, London.

"We call upon the GEC to discuss immediately the dispute at Sandersons. TUC backing must be secured to conclude this 16-month struggle".

It is essential that these workers receive not only the full backing of the T&GWU rank and file, but also the active support of the whole trade union movement and its leaders. Sandersons must not be another Grunwicks.

Militant

16 MILITANT 22 September 1978



Labour-controlled Hackney Council must refuse planning permission for the National Front's proposed new headquarters. Apart from printing, publishing and political organisation, the NF plan to use part of their new building "to provide sports and club facilities for party supporters." The photo above shows NF fuhrer John Tyndall in Nazi-style uniform taking part in a "training session" at the Nazi's headquarters in 1962. The wallposter is a portrait of Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess. Are these the kind of "sports" the NF want to play in the East End?

Racialism the ill Socialism the cure

The Anti-Nazi Carnival in London on September 24th comes as another blow to the fascists. Once again thousands of young people will be demonstrating against the anti-working class thugs of the National Front.

An important change from the national carnival will be the sight of leaders of the labour movement speaking from the platform. For it is the role of the trade unions which has played a major part in the humiliation and retreat of the fascists.

The message went out to the rank and file of the workers' organisations alerting them to the dangers of fascism. And as a result thousands of workers have taken or promised action against the fascists in the factories and offices, on the railways and buses and even in the pubs, enormously weakening the NF's support.

But let us not be lulled into believing that the battle has been won after a few skirmishes, only let us take stock of the new situation which has arisen.

Their ranks falling away in confusion and demoralisation, the NF have been reduced to a hard core of thugs, seeking revenge on blacks and anti-fascists. This explains the increase in racist murders and attacks by hired young criminals on the immigrant communities. No amount of speeches can deal with these lunatics. What is needed are mobilisations to defend the immigrant community and anti-fascist activities.

The forces of law and order are not likely to do the job.

By Phil Frampton
(National Chairman
Labour Party Young
Socialists)

All summer we have seen the police tops unwilling to hunt down the fascist murderers or defend the people of Brick Lane. On the contrary, their main role in Brick Lane has been to harass the immigrants. They act on behalf of the employing class who seek to keep the issue of racialism on the boil and thus maintain a racist divide between the workers.

**Anti-Nazi League Carnival
Sunday 24th September
LPYS members please assemble at Hyde Park Corner at 10.30am.**

Even when the fascists are taken to court look at the treatment they get. Last Monday, two youths were denounced by a judge for using "nazi thuggery" in beating up and robbing a Pakistani in Hornsey. All they got was a suspended sentence and a £100 fine—so much for the Tories' call for tough action against crime.

Only action by the trade union leaders to call their workers onto the streets will protect the immigrants of Brick Lane. The force of the 12½ million organised workers in Britain could crush the NF with ease.

Further propaganda is required to keep the fascists on the run and to deal with the exposed Tory attempt to resurrect racialism in the coming general election. However, all anti-fascist workers and youth must be thinking increasingly of how racism can be completely eradicated.

They should be asked to consider whether blacks, blamed for unemployment, bad housing and poor education would be subject to attack if we didn't have these problems. Then ask who closes the factories, demands cuts in public spending and makes astronomical profits on interest charged for local authority construction schemes.

Class answer

It is a welcome move for the Anti Nazi League to have working class leaders at the Carnival, now let us see the ANL putting out working class answers to the problem of ending the causes of racism. This is the most vital turn which the movement must take, it is time the labour leaders exposed the crisis of capitalism and spelt out the need to take over the commanding heights of the economy as the Labour Party Young Socialists have demanded.

Nationalise the big manufacturing and finance firms under workers' control and management. Plan the economy on the basis of workers' needs, not on the basis of bosses' profits. That way the inhumanity of poverty amongst plenty will cease and with it will go any basis for racialism.

Oppose shameful support for Shah!

By Brent Kennedy

An autocratic regime which combines the Absolute monarchy of the middle ages with the most modernly equipped military dictatorship. A police state where newspapers are strictly censored and freedom of speech is not allowed; where criticism of the almighty ruler is treason; where workers' parties are banned and there are no trade union rights; where thousands of political prisoners rot in jails, many of them subject to the most barbaric tortures.

A backward society where millions of impoverished workers and peasants exist in squalor and illiteracy along side the opulence of an immensely wealthy elite; where widespread disease among the masses is tolerated whilst billions of pounds are spent on the latest thing in modern weaponry to protect the privileges of the few against the needs of the many.

Is this the despotism that was Russian Czarism a century ago? No, this is not the Romanov dynasty but that of Pahlavi, the occupant of the Peacock Throne, the Shah of Iran. If a similarity is apparent it is because the problems of the Iranian workers and peasants, plucked from the soil and put to work by the thousand in huge factories amidst semi-feudal backwardness, dragged into the whirlwind of industrial development by foreign finance, are the same as their Russian brothers' six decades ago.

In 1905 thousands of peasants marched in silence to present a list of their problems to the Czar, asking him to alleviate them. They were answered with hot lead and cold steel.

In September 1978 thousands aired their grievances in a peaceful march in Teheran. Their answers were delivered from British supplied machine guns and tanks. Serious estimates of the numbers shot in the streets vary from 500 to 3,000. Even the "official" whitewash figures of 97 or 110 are indefensible!

Following 'Bloody Sunday' in 1905 the British Labour Party rushed collections of money to the Russian Bolsheviks and Mensheviks to aid the families of those murdered and specifically to help the workers' campaign to overthrow the Czar.

Following the Teheran atrocity a Labour Prime Minister has rushed a message of support not to

capitalist banks and monopolies and the local corrupt elite of 'get rich quick' merchants.

The mass of the workers and peasants have received none of the benefits, only long hours of overwork and overcrowded slum housing. Their living standards are lower today than in 1964.

The real reason for supporting the Shah is oil. Foreign Secretary Dr Owen admits this in a letter to the Labour Party: "Iran plays a key role in promoting security and stability in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean area which is of vital importance to Western oil supplies and to our trade. Iran's importance to us may be

Oil

judged by the facts that in 1977 she took over £650 million of British exports and supplied over a quarter of our crude oil imports.

In other words, Western capitalism puts naked cash considerations before its supposedly sacred principle—or as the Shah's reactionary apologist Lord Chalfont puts it—the "luxury" of parliamentary democracy. We can expect nothing else from the open worshippers of the God of profit. But for a Labour Government to sacrifice the elementary socialist principle of solidarity with oppressed workers in other countries will provoke a massive opposition from Labour Party members.

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