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EMERGENCY ACTION NOW!



By Sam Maddox

SUPPORT BAKERY WORKERS

“We have a just claim. Our call goes out to all trade unionists for support. Our fight is your fight!”

As General Secretary of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, I appeal to all trade unionists to give the maximum possible support to our union in its fight to achieve a decent living wage for bakery workers.

A bakery worker with a wife and two children at present takes home only about £34 for a basic 40-hour week. On the dole he would receive £34.57!

Our members believe that more than a wage claim is at stake. The Bakers' Federation are out to destroy our union.

But the strike is growing stronger. At our special conference last Saturday a unanimous decision was made to continue the action.

I was asked to make money available for minibuses in all areas so that picketing could be tight-

ened. This is being done. We have pickets at the flour mills and yeast factories. Tanker drivers have given us excellent support. But we would like more help from bread van drivers.

During negotiations, a statement was made that in the very near

now; but soon it may well be that the van drivers will have to turn to us for help.

Some yeast factories have paid Securicor £75 a time to get yeast out. The Federation managements have been employing non-union, pirate drivers at up to £150 a trip. Yet

wage in the industry could be raised immediately to £62.

The employers have not disputed these figures. But they would rather give higher discounts to the supermarkets than pay a living wage to our members.

The real profit, however, is made on the milling side. The Big Two try to disguise their huge profits by separating milling from baking.

They will buy up a bakery that is losing money—because they can make up to 65% on milling. When we see the books, they still show

The General Secretary of the Bakers' Union explains their case

future bakeries would be turned into cash-and-carry establishments—and would have no need for most of the van drivers!

We are asking for help

they say they can't pay our wage demand!

ABF and RHM allow discounts of up to 30% to the supermarkets. By knocking just 3% off that discount, the lowest basic

Continued on back page

The bakery workers have stepped up their fight for more cash. Production of bread should be coming to a standstill. Their determination not to be cowed by the bosses, the mass media or the government deserves the support of every worker. Hence the special coverage in this week's 'Militant'.

BUT...to get this sort of material and more up-to-date, thorough and truthful coverage of issues in Britain and internationally, 'Militant' needs another £15,000 by the end of the year [i.e. in only 8 weeks]!!

The "dough" for our Fighting Fund has not been rising each week. In fact, it has been falling [see page 13]. So...step up YOUR fight for more cash for the 'Militant'. Take emergency action NOW!!

FORD WORKERS SMASH 5%

In mass meetings at the Company's main plants on Wednesday, Ford workers voted overwhelmingly for acceptance of a return to work on the basis of the management's latest offer.

Ford workers have well and truly smashed the 5% limit. Originally, Ford said they could pay no more than 5%, despite last year's huge profit of £270 million.

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Photo: Julian McKirrick (Militant)

-the shop-floor fight goes on

EDITORIAL

SECRETS ON TRIAL

After two trials spread over eleven weeks at an estimated cost of £250,000, the three defendants in the Official Secrets case were last week found guilty—but got off with token sentences.

The two journalists, Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey were conditionally discharged, and the ex-soldier, John Berry, was given a suspended sentence.

The result was really a significant victory for the defendants and a condemnation of those in authority—including the Labour Attorney General—who allowed these trials to take place in the first place.

Early in the second trial, the Judge, Mr Justice Mars-Jones, described the more serious 'spying' charges brought under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act as "oppressive". They were then dropped, a tacit admission by the Attorney General that there was no evidence to justify them.

Even more scandalously, it came out after the trial [the vague contempt-of-court laws made it impossible to publicise this information during the trial] that the prosecution had offered to drop the Section 1 spying charges—if the defendants pleaded guilty to the less serious Section 2 charges of receiving secret information.

What can this mean but that the Director of Public Prosecutions, with the collusion of the Attorney General whose permission is essential for such charges to go ahead, deliberately used Section 1 charges carrying sentences of up to 14 years' jail—to try to frighten the defendants into pleading guilty on lesser charges on which the prosecution had, at best, a very weak case?

The notorious Section 2, moreover, which the Franks Commission described as a "mess" and which allows anyone to be prosecuted for receiving anything from any file that a government official decides to define as "secret", is the very part of the Official Secret Act which the Labour government had already promised to abolish.

Explaining the new proposals to parliament, the Home Secretary had told MPs that, prior to the new Act coming into force, "it will no doubt be open to the Attorney General to take into account the government's intention to introduce legislation on the lines I have indicated in considering whether to bring prosecutions under Section 2."

So why did Mr Sam Silkin, Labour's Attorney General, ever allow these prosecutions to go ahead?

Were there really such momentous defence secrets at stake? Are the intelligence organisations of foreign powers so incompetent that they have to rely on 'Time Out' for their information? Are their spy satellites no longer working?

The main effect of the trials, in any case, was to

focus the maximum public attention on SIGINT, the government's secret electronic monitoring organisation used for eavesdropping on communications internationally—and at home.

The proceedings also underlined the extent to which these top secret SIGINT bases, referred to initially by code letters, had been described in books and newspapers.

The hapless Col. H A Johnstone—immortalised as 'Colonel B'—whose concern with security turned out to be mainly with "barbed wire and dogs", was forced to confess: "I'm not sure what is a secret and what is not."

The prosecution itself was forced to admit that it had not been aware of the extent of public sources on the subject.

So again, why were the secrets charges ever brought? It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that it was as a result of pressure from the tops of the defence staff and the secret intelligence services who want at all costs to preserve their cloak of secrecy—to conceal their nefarious activities, not from foreign spies, but from the public at home.

Another extremely alarming thing to come out of this case was the admission of jury-vetting. Coming after the abandonment of the first trial following broadcasting of the fact that there had been a row in court over the jury foreman having once served in the SAS regiment, Sam Silkin's statement that juries had been vetted [by the Special Branch, CID—the intelligence service?] in 25 cases in the last three years, revived historical memories of 18th Century state trials.

In the light of all this, Labour Party members and trade unionists will give their whole-hearted support to those left MPs who are calling for Sam Silkin to give an account of his actions.

It is a scandal that a Labour minister should have sanctioned such reactionary procedures and prosecutions, and Silkin should be brought to book by the movement.

We should also give every support to the NEC's demand for a full enquiry into the activities of the secret security services.

It seems as though right-wing Labour ministers are like putty in their hands. Yet their activities, presently directed towards journalists who threaten them with unwanted publicity, are ultimately directed against the labour and trade union movement.

The Labour Party should therefore instigate a full and thorough investigation to uncover the real scope of secret intelligence operations in Britain, so that the whole labour movement is made fully aware of what is going on—so it can counter the activities of these undercover agents of the capitalist state.

FIGHT SHIPYARD SACKINGS!

By Brent Kennedy

"Axe the workforce by a third. Destroy 12,300 jobs."

That is the magic 'solution' offered by the whizz-kid managers of British Shipbuilding to the loss of £108m last year. The past failures of the old private owners have to be paid for by the workers.

The utterly callous plans by out-of-touch gaffers to throw a third of Britain's skilled shipbuilding workers—12,300 out of 33,000—on the stones by 1980-81 must be vigorously fought by the whole trade union movement.

Whole towns face mass unemployment on a scale not seen since the 1930s. The closures and redundancies will hit the areas which already suffer the highest unemployment.

Already Merseyside, which has lost 19,000 jobs this year, faces the loss of 670 jobs at Western Shiprepairers (which once employed 3,000 men) and now 800 jobs are threatened at Cammell Laird's. How many more will follow?

The Tyne, Wear and Tees are expected to bear the brunt of this catastrophe, accounting for half the redundancies.

The workers' skills in these yards have built up a reputation over decades and centuries. Now they are to be tossed aside like a used welding-rod.

The bosses are very partial to accusing organised workers of being 'Luddites', but now it is they who are bent on destruction—the brutal destruction of the livelihood of whole working class com-



munities.

Incredible as it seems, they even seriously considered the option of a complete closure of merchant shipbuilding in these islands!

It is a scandal that the managers who are proposing such destruction are responsible for running the nationalised shipbuilding industry and were appointed by a Labour government.

Faced with a five-year-old world shipbuilding depression, the worst this century, governments in several countries have had to take over ailing shipyards to bail out the inept 'private enterprise' whose chaotic profit system is the cause of the international shipping glut.

Lavish over-compensation has been paid out from the taxes of the working class to satisfy the greed of the former owners who, in the case of Britain, had deliberately allowed the yards to run down.

For years they had squandered their profits in dividends rather than reinvesting into the industry. Any compensation paid out should

have been strictly on the basis of proven cases of need only.

Despite loud noises of opposition from the Tories, nationalisation of this bankrupt industry was the only way it could be saved, as the collapse of the private Western Shiprepairers has shown. The Tories simply wanted to make sure that any smaller, profitable repair yards were left in the clutches of their fellow capitalists.

But as far as Labour supporters are concerned, nationalisation should be the first step to reinvigorating and modernising industry for the benefit of the workers. These latest results of the capitalist management methods of the highly-paid appointees running British Shipbuilders just prove the need for nationalisation to be carried out under workers' control and management, with the boards democratically elected from the workers in the industry through their trade unions; from the TUC and from the government.

By making these elected representatives subject to re-

call and by paying them the same wage as a skilled worker, they would be accountable for their decision to the workers.

As it is, the workers only learned of their fate last week because their union leaders decided to 'blow the gaff' on the management's secret plans. Executives were obviously hoping that Boiler-makers' Society president John Chalmers, chairman of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' shipbuilding committee, would keep quiet. But the inevitable anger of the workers ruled that out.

Now the Boiler-makers have announced an overtime ban from 1st January to make a start in sharing out the work. Measures proposed to save jobs include an extra week's holiday; a shorter working week, and voluntary early retirement and compensation for the elimination of overtime.

However the details are worked out, any programme of work-sharing must include the principle of no drop in average pay and no redundancies—whether compulsory or voluntary.

No one has the right to sell a job and deprive a future worker or one standing in the dole queue the right to work. A campaign against such bribery must be launched by the unions.

It is inevitable that the excuse for the loss of jobs will be the falling demand for ships and the need for British yards to be more competitive against foreign 'rivals'. But that is what the bosses of every country are saying to the workers they discard.

The labour movement must declare its opposition to a single worker being thrown onto the dole because of the failures of capitalism, whether he works in Tyneside, Bilbao, Amsterdam or Tokyo.

If orders for ships are low, put the yards and the workers' skills to good use producing other goods and equipment. The Labour government must guarantee work or full pay! No redundancies!

THREAT TO KME CO-OPERATIVE

The government has withdrawn support from the KME co-operative in Kirkby—in contrast to another lavish hand out to a private firm.

By Roger Shives

Workers at Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering (KME) reluctantly agreed on 16 November to accept take-over proposals from a private central heating firm, Worcester Engineering.

For just about four years, workers at the factory have been running the firm as a co-operative. They faced, even then, the destruction of the heart of Merseyside's industry.

Now the dole queues are

its rejection of the idea of a take-over by the National Enterprise Board.

The government accepted, not the views of the worker-directors at KME, nor the feelings of experienced trade unionists, but trusted instead the cold capitalist logic of the report of a working party, chaired by a Business School professor.

This report complained that the firm had received £3.9 million to start as a co-op, but this had risen to £5.6 million, and more would be needed to keep the company afloat. Even though the government admit that these costs are far lower than the £9 million it could have cost the government in unemployment and social security benefits, they are accepting their recommendations.

The absorption of KME

will be recouped—after 30 years! If not, well, they still keep the money. No difficulties with credit, and no question of getting the money in instalments, depending on results, as KME did.

Again, unlike KME, no doubts are cast on the managerial ability of this firm, in assessing whether there is a big market for Lotus cars. Certainly they

into Worcester Engineering though, they say, could be economical—with the assistance of a large government loan! £3 million direct in the form of shares, plus £680,000 regional development grant and a £500,000 interest relief grant, amounting to half the cost of operation.

For the workers of Kirkby, KME has certainly been another bitter lesson of the difficulties of trying to operate a workers' co-operative in a hostile capitalist environment.

Nevertheless, it is vital that all the jobs at KME are saved.

Even the Worcester take-over depends on approval by a government board, and is not certain. The labour movement must fight any redundancies, and demand that KME be nationalised by this Labour government.

will not be selling many in Northern Ireland!

Does the government really think that wealthy capitalists producing sports cars for their friends, are more competent, and worthy of support than the workers at KME?

Will the workers of De Lorean itself one day face the same problems as their brothers and sisters at KME? Time will tell.

But there's cash for the whizz kids

The disgraceful abandoning of the KME workers is made worse by the announcement the same day that a private firm, De Lorean Motors, is to

receive £52 million from the government to set up a sports care project in Belfast.

De Lorean themselves dish out only £20 million. The government loan is £26,471 for each of the 2,000 jobs. In return, the government will get back £185 for each of the first 90,000 cars sold and £45 per car thereafter.

If the company reaches its production target, the money

BAKERY WORKERS' STRIKE

Warrington

"The offer wasn't up to what we were expecting to bring our living wage.

"The £10 would only bring us up to an average of £50. With stoppages you are still only going home with £40. The minimum that the government stipulate is £44-£45, yet we'd only be going home to live on £40.

"You get £12 out of that for your rent, then you've got £4 for your bus fares for coming to work, then you've got your gas and electric which averages £6 a week; you've not a lot to live on."

"At five consecutive Bakers' Union conferences, resolutions have been put in for that mobility clause to be thrown out, so we're not going to give them any more advantages. What we want to see is the mobility clauses thrown out altogether."

"There is no way we would ever do permanent night work".

"On our works' contract it states we're on days, and no way will we alter that for £4 odd."

"If they got the clause through that they could put you on any shift or hours they want, they could put you on any time: mornings one day, afternoons the next."

What about plants being started up irrespective of whether they are short-handed or fully staffed?

"Health and safety wise, how can any plant be run undermanned? They've got to break the Health and Safety Act to produce, to run a machine short-handed."

"I agree with the post-entry closed shop, and there's no way that we are going to give in to that one, not in this bakery anyway. Not as far as our members are concerned."

"There's been more aggro in this bake-house over the last six months than there's ever been in the last 30 years."

Joe Hearst and shop stewards at the Memory Lane bakery, Warrington talked to Terry Harrison.

Rochdale

At **Whittles bakery, Littleborough near Rochdale**, the workers are determined not to accept the 6% productivity deal which linked with 'conditions' is totally unacceptable to them.

The management had tried to get a consignment of yeast delivered, telling the supplier that it would be used to make bread for the hospitals and old people's homes.

When the yeast arrived the driver explained what it was for. The pickets told him they did not supply any hospitals or old people's homes. The driver returned the yeast to his depot.

They are still cheerful, despite receiving no strike pay. They wish to thank the unknown landrover driver who is supplying them with wood, a van driver who gave them a half bottle of whisky and the London Carrier's driver who turned up one night with bags of chips.

When I showed them the 'Militant', they said it's more coverage than they have seen in any other paper. When I left they were taking it in turns to read the articles.

Report by Linda Chester

Rotherham

At the **Mothers Pride bakery in Rotherham**, the canteen is like a 'dog kennel', the meanness is proverbial. "If they lose a penny, they get tuppence somewhere else along the line."

Workers are charged 1p for a slice of bread in the canteen and 3p for a breadcake. A pint of milk in the bottle costs 14p—"tell that to the Milk Marketing Board."

Some twelve years ago **George Beardley**, branch secretary, obtained a confidential Bakery Management magazine with an article by the former head of the group, Rank, who openly stated his aim was a price of £1 for a loaf of bread!

And for what? As one picket said—"We bakers are magicians. We are the only people who can make water stand up and then slice it."

The strike is now biting. Far from the union crumbling it was pointed out, it is the Federation, with one small firm after another breaking away and implementing separate agreements with the union at a figure above the national claim. The only way the Mothers Pride management can keep up morale is by sending empty vans scuttling around the streets of Rotherham.

The priority is to stop flour getting in. While the bakery's van drivers fully support the action, no lead has been given from their union at official level.

Meanwhile, the morale of the workers is sky-high. Three quarters of the membership are taking part in 24-hour picketing. A lot of young lads in their first dispute, are playing a leading role in picketing other areas. One lad alone has done 2,000 miles by car to help the strike.

With this determination, they are confident they can win, but support is urgently needed from the organised labour movement.

Report by Rob Jones

Plymouth

Bob Reed and Tom Harman [Plymouth LPYS] discussed the bread strike with Tom Stevens, branch secretary of the Bakers Union, in Plymouth.

The isolated **Mother's Pride bakery in Plymouth**, employing 300 workers, has given full support of the bread strike.

Despite police presence at 5.30 am, the right to picket was maintained, and morale is exceptionally high. A mass lunch-time meeting held on Tuesday 14th voted unanimously to continue strike action.

Tom Stevens suggests that had the strike been properly planned beforehand, it would have been far more successful. However, once the strike is over the union-management antagonism which has been developing will end any sympathetic relationships with the management.

The shop stewards recognise the need for a strong democratic union controlled by rank and file members, with active branch participation. Involvement is absolutely essential.

Report by Jeremy Birch



Pickets stop delivery driver on the picket line at H W Neville, Walthamstow

'we've won so far and we'll win in the end'

Newcastle

Bakery workers in the North East have responded fully to the national strike call. **Carriek's bakery workers at Cowgate in Newcastle** were determined not to give in, despite difficulties in picketing the factory's three entrances.

The arrogant attitude of the management, defying the strike, and making an offer which does nothing for the living standards of these low-paid workers, has been met with the response it deserves!

It is yet another example of the bosses' callous attitude—profits come first, preferably at the expense of the workforce!

Report by Keith Allen [Newcastle West LPYS]

Bootle

John Bayliss, chairman of the Scotts-Sunblest bakery BF&AWU talked to Terry Harrison.

There's no way that members of this branch will accept the conditions laid down by management, or the wages. Bearing in mind that the offer is 11% based over 60 hours, not 40, this will only bring us up to approximately £51 a week. The members of this branch just will not accept it.

Our members, over the past years, have fought for proper manning levels, and no way are we going back on that. We went on strike to end Bank Holiday working. We're not going back to where we were told Sunday was our lieu day and we had to work the Bank Holiday.

On working permanent nights, I don't think people realise that if you agree to this condition you're automatically giving management the right to come up to anybody and give them 14 days' notice that they are to be working nights. This involves women as well as the men.

The feeling at this bakery is that management is trying to set one bakery against another—they're trying to split us down the middle.

But we've got 100% support here, not only from the members, but also from the URTU, the drivers. When asked by management if they baked bread, whether they would take it out, they stated that under no circumstances would they cross our line with bread.

Scarborough

At **Wrays, (Mothers Pride) Scarborough**, scabs have driven vans under protection of the police to the outskirts of the town to meet vans from the flour mills such as McDougal's where loads of flour are transferred from van to van.

The range from Scarborough's picket line is "Picket these flour mills!"

Report by Bob Young and Mick Caver

Manchester

In the **Manchester area** the only bread being produced in the Federation bakeries is by management, and that doesn't amount to very much.

At the **Mothers Pride bakery in Wythenshawe**, there have been a series of incidents with the police as pickets have attempted to stop delivery vans leaving. So far two pickets have been injured and one arrested.

But on Monday morning, with forty police present and several vans parked around the corner in reserve, a mass meeting was arranged between the bakery workers and the van drivers. After a long discussion the van drivers voted unanimously to come out in support. That morning's bread was left in the bakery.

A further mass picket was held at the **ABF bakery in Brannington, near Stockport** to attempt to bring out the delivery van drivers again. The shop stewards asked for the help of the LPYS and 'Militant' supporters on the picket line.

One of the shop stewards said that you really see the dirty side of the law on the picket lines. With a shortage of police, they never have difficulty in finding enough to use against strikers. They had even been out trying to stop flying pickets travelling along motorways in the area.

Report by Margaret Crear

London

Hackney Labour Party Young Socialists visited the picket at **H W Neville [RHM], Walthamstow, London** before dawn.

Steve Edwards spoke to shop steward HS Sandhe.

"All 300 of our members are out, the T&G drivers are co-operating absolutely, and so are the maintenance men."

"At present 1,700 loaves are being produced daily under our control, to supply humanitarian need in prisons and hospitals. Normally 100 vans are in operation."

We saw 15 go out, all almost empty, and thoroughly checked by the pickets. The first few pass after being checked, then commotion.

Some bread has Sainsbury's wrappers. The drivers' steward assured them it would only be taken to the hospitals. Van is allowed to pass.

Management stand by grim faced, powerless, even with the police present, to stop this show of working class strength and solidarity.

The TV cameras pack up and go. How will this be shown on the news ask some strikers.

Interviewer asking what they thought about other factories going back—"Propaganda, we're solid, we'll stay out 6 months if we have to."

"Who believes the press; Forest Gate have been reported to have gone back; they're solid like us."

Birmingham

"Mere propaganda", was the attitude of the pickets at **Wilson's Bakery (Mothers Pride), Birmingham** to the Baker's Federation claim that 60-70% of normal production is being turned out.

No flour or oil has gone in since the picketing began, so unless something changes, the bakery will have to close in a couple of days. The picket line is manned around the clock.

While I was on the picket a giant flour lorry was turned back, and one of Wilson's supervisors appeared to tell the driver that nowhere else in the Midlands would take the load, they were all picketed.

There's no question of these bakery workers doubting their leaders' rejection of the management offer. They work 6 twelve hour shifts a week, to raise their £45 basic to something that they can live on. They are out to win, "to make a decent basic wage".

At **Wimbush's** the story is the same. Perhaps 20% of production is being got out, by the supervisors and a few scabs. But 98% of the 800 workers are out. The supervisors, who were in the salaried staff section of the union, have been disciplined for their behaviour in the strike.

Report by Jeremy Birch

Leicester families suffer Tory hypocrisy

The Conservative-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities has just demanded big changes in national policy to reverse deteriorating housing conditions.

They blame the decline on insufficient investment to meet the high improvement, repair and maintenance costs of old property.

However, these fine words must sound a hollow ring for families living in bad housing conditions in Leicester.

A taste of what life would be like under a Tory government was revealed at a recent meeting of Leicester City Council. The Tories have been in control of the council since May 1976 and have demonstrated their indifference to families living in

grossly inadequate housing conditions.

At the moment families in need have to wait 3 or 4 months for a council dwelling. The total waiting list is over 10,000 long.

The list was falling as a result of the policies of the previous Labour council, but now that the Tories have cut back on the housebuilding programme the situation will get worse again.

The Tories cannot blame lack of finance because

they have actually **underspent** their budget by £2 million. This money could have been used to improve and modernise older property as well as building new houses.

The Labour group warned the Tories last year that they should have planned in advance to spend the money because they underspent on the budget last year also. They have also been offered a further £491,000 from the Department of the Environment but they have had to turn it down because of their underspending.

This £491,000 could have been spent on garden fencing, closing streets to make play areas or even to provide new shops which are badly needed on the larger council estates.

Heather Rawlings spoke to Councillor Peter Soulsby



The Tories cannot blame the Labour government for this underspending.

One of the reasons is that the Tory council cannot get private contractors to do the improvement work. Private contractors don't find it profitable to modernise and improve individual houses. They prefer to wait until a block of 50 houses lie empty!

Obviously with the council waiting list as long as it is, this would be totally impractical. The Labour group believes that direct labour could have been increased to work on these houses. It would also have helped the unemployment situation in

the city.

The Tories show their callous disregard for the housing needs of working class families. Why should they worry about the provision of good council housing as long as they can afford to buy luxury homes for themselves?

Only by the election of Labour governments and Labour councils, pledged to fight in the interests of working people by implementing socialist measures, can the living standards of the working class be improved, decent housing provided for all and the hypocrisy of the Tories be exposed.

NOLS suspends labour club

At its meeting last weekend the National Committee of the National Organisation of Labour Students decided to suspend Sheffield University Labour Club from membership on the grounds that its constitution differed from the NOLS model constitution and included a clause permitting non-students to vote in club meetings.

It was alleged that the club had previously affiliated on a different constitution to that upon which it had registered to the student union. Mike Gapes, Labour Party Student Organiser, also read a letter from a club member complaining that he had been threatened with expulsion by the club's chairman for disruly conduct in meetings.

At no time prior to the National Committee was the club notified that it was to be discussed and was therefore unable to present a defence. In fact, the club's constitution differed from the model constitution only in a couple of minor points and included all the aims and objectives of NOLS.

Secondly, several clubs already affiliated to NOLS have two constitutions, one for NOLS and one for their

student unions. The allegations about club expulsions are spurious and untrue since the only decision taken was to ask the member concerned to come to a special meeting of the club. In reality, an argument in a club meeting has been blown up out of all proportion.

Sheffield University Labour Club is an active club with 84 members and at least deserves a fair hearing. Even the law courts assume one innocent until proven guilty.

The club has also been banned from sending delegates to NOLS conference in December. Perhaps it is no mere coincidence that the club has recently elected three 'Militant' supporters as delegates to the next NOLS conference.

We demand an emergency National Committee to reconsider the case and urge the Youth Sub-Committee of the Labour Party to discuss this question and to recommend the immediate reaffiliation of Sheffield University Labour Club.

Mark Morton, Geoff Stout, Vic Graves, Gary Horne, Harriet Stevens. NOLS National Committee members.



Students look to the labour movement to defend conditions photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)ii

Support for 'Militant' grows

After the recent breakthrough for 'Militant' in King's Lynn, yet another region has been opened up for the growth of the paper. Bill Hopwood travelled over 100 miles from Newcastle to a readers' meeting on 'Militant: What it stands for' in the small town of Egremont in West Cumbria.

Several criticisms of the paper were made, but they were all of a constructive nature. It was generally agreed that only through a united working class guided by Marxist principles, could our world's increasing problems be cured.

After Bill Hopwood's excellent talk it was argued that the reformist policies of the Labour government will continue to fail and the working class will begin to look for more radical alternatives. The programme of 'Militant' will provide the obvious guide to socialism.

It was resolved to hold a 'Militant' meeting every three or four weeks in future to examine more specific issues. Despite the small turn-out the high degree of enthusiasm among those present was illustrated by the £13 collec-

John Cummings
(Whitehaven LPYS)

ted for the 'Militant' fighting fund.

The spread of 'Militant's' ideas will continue to the extent that politically isolated areas such as West Cumbria will have a strong Marxist representation within the labour movement steering the working class towards victory.

★★★

After the London YCAU Industrial Conference come to a YCAU DISCO in the 'Green Man', Euston Road (opposite Great Portland St Underground), only five minutes' walk from the Friends' Meeting House. Hear Dick's Disco. 7.00 pm until midnight. Entrance 50p.

INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCES

The following meetings will be held on Saturday November 25th:

BRIDGEND

11 am-4.30 pm. Ogmere-CLP Rooms, Bridgend. Speakers include: South Wales NUM EC speaker; Muriel Browning [Leyland Shop Steward]; Chris Richards [Cardiff POEU]; Ted Grant [Militant Editorial Board]

PLYMOUTH

11 am-4.30 pm. Scott Lecture Hall, Plymouth Central Library. Speakers include: Albert Bennett [Sec. Plymouth Trades Council]; Bob Labl [Treasurer YCAU]; Dave Pengelly [Bakers' Union NEC]; Doug Hitchcock [TGWU District Officer]

GLASGOW

10 am-5 pm. McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. Speakers include: Dennis Canavan MP; Pat Wall [President, Bradford Trades Council]; Jim Brockschaw [AUEW]

LONDON

11 am-5 pm. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road [opposite Euston Station]. Speakers include: Eric Heffer MP [LP NEC]; Norman Atkinson MP [LP NEC]; Pat Byrne [CPSA NEC]; Phil Frampton [Nat Chairman LPYS]

BRISTOL

11 am-5 pm. Shepherds Hall, Old Market. Speakers include: Ron Thomas MP; John Sharpe [Sec. TASS Youth Committee, Rolls Royce]; John Blackley [AUEW Convenor, Rolls Royce]; Glenys Ingham [Editor, 'Left']; J Styles [AUEW Convenor, Smiths, Gloucester]; S Kuchannel [Reg. Org. Bakers' Union]

NEWCASTLE

1 pm-5 pm. Curtis Auditorium, Newcastle University. Speakers include: Joe Mills [Reg. Org. TGWU]; Bill Connors [Nat. Org. USDAW]; Tony Carty [ASOB]; Brian Ingham [Industrial Editor, Militant]

SHEFFIELD

11 am-5 pm. Graves Cinema, University of Sheffield. Speakers include: Dennis Skinner MP [LP NEC]; Bob Wright [Asst. General Sec. AUEW]; Walter Greendale [TUC General Council]; Peter Taaffe [Editor Militant]

BIRMINGHAM

1 pm-5 pm. Digbeth Civic Hall, Digbeth. Speakers include: Audrey Wise MP; Ken Cameron [Nat. Org. FBU]; Sid Harraway [TGWU Convenor, Ford, Dagenham]; Tony Saunols [LP NEC]; Emlyn Williams [President, South Wales NUM]

LEICESTER

11 am-5 pm. AUEW Hall, Vaughan Way. Speakers include: Joan Maynard MP [LP NEC]; Nick Bradley [YCAU Sec]; Dikes [USDAW NEC]

The following meeting will be held on Sunday November 26th:

LIVERPOOL

11 am-5 pm. St Georges Hall. Speakers include: Frank Aftan MP [Nat Chairman LP]; Joe Marino [Bakers' Union EC]; Kevin Roddy [CPSA NEC]; Colin Barnett [NUPE Reg. Sec.]

LEFT & RIGHT

Contempt for democracy

India, with its mass starvation, mass illiteracy and 20 million officially recognised as unemployed, is clearly on the verge of revolutionary upheavals. Faced with enormous unrest, the government of Indira Gandhi, overthrown last year, resorted to savage measures of repression which continue under the new Janata regime. After the 1974 railway workers' strike, 60,000 workers were arrested; and over half a million armed police with an array of repressive legislation kept 'order'.

Not all of the British ruling class were horrified at this undemocratic behaviour. According to the 'Sunday Times', former Tory Prime Minister Harold Macmillan commented at a lunch in Calcutta in 1976 that "We also have to do what you have done. We are living in a glasshouse in England and unless we adopt the same measures we shall not be able to save ourselves."

The vision of workers in Britain and in India fighting for their rights makes such capitalist politicians show their real contempt for democracy. It is only the strength of the working class in Britain that prevents their private plans becoming reality.

The young pretender

Prince Charles' 30th birthday has received massive publicity in the press. At a time of big class battles, it is quite useful to portray royalty as 'just ordinary people' with ordinary birthday parties with 400 guests and American pop groups playing at them. People above politics and above the class struggle. Some trade unionists unfortunately believe this, as one London NALGO branch has asked Prince Charles to mediate in the dispute between social workers and the local council, "as he has shown a special interest in the problems of the local community".

Despite the specially cultivated image of liberalism and concern for ordinary people, his real role as heir to the Monarchy is to act as a last line of defence for capitalism. Constitutionally the Monarch has to approve legislation passed by Parliament and can appoint governments and dismiss governments as the Australian Governor General [the Queen's representative] did a few years ago to a Labour administration which displeased the ruling class.

Prince Charles is already practising for these duties. According to the 'Sunday Times' he regularly receives boxes of state and Cabinet papers [not available of course to Labour MPs and such riff-raff]. The report says he is not averse to sending his views on them to the Prime Minister, and that when he meets politicians "he speaks his mind, which tends to be conservative."

Independent arbitrator? Above politics? Above the class struggle? Definitely not.

Every one a winner

Many workers dream of winning a fortune on the pools. Few have the luck of the Fortnum and Masons' syndicate of cooks and waitresses [normal wages about £26 a week] who've just won £14,000 each. Most are simply contributing regular dividends to the pools bosses. The promoters win all the time, of course. Robert Sangster, Vernon Pools boss, has just been able to make a private investment of £4 million. Not much interested in user production, he's opted for reproduction—buying up a Californian stud farm to further his horse-racing ambitions. This is an expensive hobby, but the bosses who are always preaching sacrifice in the national interest can well afford it—and the punters are always a source of new profits.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

"Cause for Concern" is not just another report on the plight of West Indian children in inner city schools. It came about as a result of concern by the local Black People's Progressive Association that West Indian children were not performing as well in schools in Redbridge as they could be.

The report is carefully researched and considers many reasons for the apparent failure of black children at school in a reputedly 'wealthy' outer London borough.

It dismisses the 'theory' that black children are innately less intelligent than whites. An appendix gives an excellent short rebuttal of the arguments of Jensen (and Eysenck) that blacks are of inferior intelligence. As the report says, the question is not just one for academic debate, since racialists find Jensen's arguments convenient to justify their actions.

What the report could have pointed out, but doesn't, incidentally, is that the same intelligence tests used to show that black children are 'inferior' are also those used to rate working class children low.

The factors of dialect and the different West Indian family structures are considered but are not rated as very important in determining attainment. Indeed, the report argues that blaming West Indian family structure for poor performance at school is in itself a racist argument.

Whilst factors of social class and deprivation had



Black school students: facing prejudice

some effect—for example, the report found more West Indian parents working shifts—it is suggested that two factors dominated the lack of progress at school.

One of these was the low expectations that teachers had of black pupils—expectations probably influenced by people like Jensen and Eysenck. Certain teachers made comments like 'bone lazy' and 'aggressive and colour conscious' about black school students.

The attitudes of teachers in themselves formed part of a more general racial hostility by white society. Black school students felt they were growing up in a society that portrayed them in a negative fashion.

The report argues that

these attitudes may be "internalised" so that individuals developed a poor self-identity and lack of confidence. The poor prospects and dead-end jobs facing most working class school students today certainly do not encourage high motivation, and it is suggested that for blacks (with the additional factor of prejudice against them) many would, with good reason, feel that the education system is a waste of time.

The report makes various suggestions for improving black education. These will certainly not cope with the vast reservoir of prejudice that exists, however. The worst prejudices are whipped up by Tory politicians to suit their own ends.

Socialist action to end

unemployment and eliminate the housing shortage would go a long way to eliminate the fears that drive some politically backward workers and middle-class people into the arms of the racialists.

Though the report does not put forward any political programme to combat racialism, it nevertheless contains much interesting material that can help in correcting misconceptions and racist lies.

'Cause for Concern' [price 40p] is published by: Black People's Progressive Association and Redbridge Community Relations Council, Methodist Church Hall, Ilford Lane, Ilford, Essex.

By
Roger Backhouse

"F-I-S-T"

This is one of the few films to go out on release which is sympathetic to the trade union cause.

It starts in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1937 with Johnny Kovacs (Sylvester Stallone) and his mate Abe Belkin walking down a railroad track bemoaning the lousy conditions they have to work under.

They work unloading lorries in a warehouse. The foreman's word is law. Anything that is damaged is stopped out of their wages. A man is sacked because he is partially deaf and doesn't hear the foreman's shouts.

This goes on till the workers, led by JK, revolt. The next hard lesson is learned when they trust their boss on a handshake: their grievances will be dealt with, he assures them.

Next day, they are locked out and all sacked. JK is recruited as a union organiser and turns out to be a class fighter.

All the pre-war activity seems to be based loosely on the Teamsters' unionisation battles in the 1930s and on Jimmy Hoffa's life.

The organising of the truckers into F.I.S.T. (Federation of Inter State Truckers) and the battles with the company goons, scabs and police are very realistic.

Despite getting viciously beaten up by hired company thugs and having the strike against a trucking firm,

'Consolidated', brutally smashed, a TU official is killed, the workers reorganise.

Led by JK they tactically smash the company, the police and their hired thugs but in doing so they hire five small-time hoods who are only interested in getting what they can out of it. Johnny Kovacs starts to rise up the union ladder.

Blunt refusal

One of the best scenes is when they negotiate with the boss of 'Consolidated' before the strike, a tactical battle at a big long table in the boardroom. At first they sit down opposite management. Then JK insists that they sit at the other end. The top man comes in late (for tactical reasons).

JK has to restrain his partner from getting up in deference: "why don't you come sit up here," he says. JK replies "why don't you move down here?"

The top man recognises these tactics. Both sides stay where they are.

The management are all polite at first till JK puts it bluntly: either you pay the men overtime pay, sick scheme, pensions, etc., or we'll "chew your balls off."

The masks are dropped. Management are shocked. A blunt refusal. The strike is on.

The film then switches in

time to 1956. F.I.S.T. is now a massive union with 3 million members. From a wooden building to a multi-story building. JK is now part of the TU bureaucracy.

Organised crime has moved in. The lifestyle is good. The jamboree style of American TUs is shown.

The second half of the film is taken up with JK who has now manoeuvred the general secretary out on a corruption issue and is now general secretary himself.

He then takes up the fight with a senator (Rod Steiger) who wants to clear up TU corruption. JK's old friend Abe has broken with him and the others over the use of underhand methods and corruption to get their way.

JK himself is depicted as

not a bad type. He never favours the position of personal lust for perks and privileges, but always wants to "fix it" his way.

The outcome is inevitable. The gangsters within the union shoot Abe before he can testify, then he himself is murdered. But he is still shown to have the men's loyalty. They drive their trucks into the capital outside the senatorial investigations and block the main avenue as a gesture of support.

The strong point of the film is its feel for the issues. But, of course, there is no explanation. This is its weakness; but it is still really worth seeing.

By Bob Faulkes

Militant Irish Monthly

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A SPY IN THE CAB?

**Sleep, eat, drive:
a machine to
tell you when!**

Should transport drivers accept the tachograph? Alex Ingram, himself a lorry driver, sets out the arguments—and suggests what the answer should be for trade unionists.

If you were to believe all that you heard from the media about the transport drivers' opposition to the tachographs to their vehicles, you would quite wrongly assume that drivers are a bunch of irresponsible morons, prepared to shrug off their responsibilities to the rest of society in order to safeguard their own selfish interests.

But that is not the case. The majority of drivers in the road transport industry are in every sense professionals, and would not be opposed to the fitting of a socially justifiable instrument in their cabs to monitor their work and the

performance of their machines—**provided they were paid a wage commensurate with their skills and responsibilities. This is what has to be settled first.**

We've been caught in the past. Trade union officials, whose job it is to look after the interests of the drivers and negotiate on their behalf, should honestly and truthfully present the full facts of the matter to government and the general public.

In view of recent tragedies at home and abroad involving road transport vehicles the latter have a right to know.



Transport industry—lifblood of the economy

photo: J. McKittrick (Militant)

The transport industry is the life blood of the community. If a large section of it grinds to a halt because of an unrealistic approach to the problem by union officials, or the lack of commercial expertise in management or because of the attitudes and actions of ill-informed government ministers, then it is they who must accept responsibility for the disastrous effects to the economy, that a serious interruption to the flow of traffic would create.

Trade unions, particularly my own union the Transport and General Workers Union, have in the past not looked after the interests of the transport worker as well as they should have done. At one stage, a large shift of membership to a breakaway union, the United Road Transport Union, emphasised

that fact.

Improvements in working conditions, particularly improvements in cab design, overnight accommodation facilities and general safety measures, etc., were spearheaded not by the unions, but by the professional drivers associations, technical correspondents in the transport trade journals, and even by a few (but only a few) progressive employers who realised that if drivers were to maintain and eventually surpass their already remarkable productivity record they would have to improve working conditions.

The unions didn't do a very good job negotiating wage claims for transport workers. The driver's basic wage is always at the lower end of the scale. The unions did, however, pay speeding fines, provide legal assistance, fight compensation claims—which, of course, we gratefully acknowledge, although some of us doubted the wisdom of the unions being prepared to pay speeding fines.

However, let us not look back, let us prepare for the future.

The first thing the unions must do is sort out the muddle of drivers' wages—and it is a mess.

Men with a basic wage of £53-£56 for a 40-hour week are earning £150-£200 on productivity deals that have been negotiated by union officials. To realise these earnings they must either be breaking the law or be doing two days' work in one.

Cowboys

This at a time of mass unemployment! That is hardly adhering to the fine trade union principles that highly respected trade unionists like my late grandfather fought and suffered for!

No wonder Alan Law and his happy band of amateur capitalists object to the tachograph. Getting rid of the cowboy element in the industry is one of the benefits the tachograph could bring.

Productivity deals that encourage speeding and irresponsible behaviour by drivers should be scrapped. Wage differentials, if we have

to tolerate them, should be related to skill and responsibility, and the high cost of living in a particular area, and nothing else.

The unions should immediately put forward a claim for a minimum of £70 for a 35-hour week, plus a reduction in work. When that is settled, and only then, accept the tachograph.

The tachograph is a controversial issue. If you disagree with Alex Ingram or think there are other points to add, we invite you to write to 'Militant' on this issue.

Government should then try to ease the burden of ever-increasing mountains of legislation that it heaps on the industry and should encourage management to exercise their grey matter and devise means of fully utilising transport for the benefit of industry and society as a whole.

MPs and government ministers who only pretend to have the interests of society at heart and often take a swipe at the road transport industry in the hope of securing a few extra votes, should think carefully in future before using that tactic.

Fragmented, weakly organised and easy prey for political

manipulators, the industry may be, but now the drivers are beginning to pull together in an effort to protect themselves from the divide-and-rule system.

The importance of a flexible transport system and its role in society should never be overlooked. The workers who man it deserve a better deal than they are getting at the moment. If as an MP it is vote that concern you, it is well worth remembering that the transport industry is one of the largest in the country and numbered in its ranks a high percentage of Labour voters.

Next time an MP or government minister discusses transport problems publicly, I advise them to think first not just open their mouths and let their stomachs rumble.

The rubbish that some of them utter when debating transport matters is of immense entertainment value to drivers who have to spend lonely nights away from their families but does little to solve the many complex problems that beset the industry.

If any of them can make a sensible, constructive suggestion that would help solve the tacho problem, I'm sure we would all be glad to hear it.

Growing Army of Victims

QUESTION: What do you do with a homeless, destitute, unemployed, spastic who can hardly walk, and who, in his helplessness at society's rejection, stands naked in the street throwing milk bottles at cars?

—Or a chronic schizophrenic who has been rejected by a mental home?

—Or a certified alcoholic?

ANSWER: A socialist society would provide the help and training to equip the spastic to lead a full and meaningful life; it would provide the necessary help for the schizophrenic in a humane environment; and it would eliminate the social conditions which lead to alcoholism in the first place.

A capitalist society throws all three into the nearest prison!

Such was the horrifying

fact uncovered by a 'News at Ten' team recently when they investigated Strangeways prison, Manchester: a cruel slant on the old music hall joke that "My brother had strange ways: now Strangeways has got him."

Nor are these three cases exceptions: they are the tip of the iceberg. British prisons are full of people with severe mental illnesses requiring specialised care and treatment—schizophrenics, catatonics, epileptics, spastics, alcoholics, psychopaths, so-called ESNs, and plain neurotics.

Norman Brown, prison governor at Strangeways, grimly remarks that hsi prison is more like a psychiatric ward than a gaol!

Prison officers estimate that 10% of all prisoners are mentally disturbed—the same percentage, coincidentally, as those thought to be innocent. Even the Home Office admits that 900 prisoners should

really be in mental homes.

But both prisons and mental institutions are already grossly overcrowded and there is no money to build more of either, or to improve all-round facilities at existing institutions.

Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, the nearest thing to an ostrich in British politics, even refused to face the twin realities of a prison officers' strike and a prisoners' revolt until they actually happened. Now Rees is to investigate prison officers' pay.

But not prison facilities for the inmates, nor conditions and facilities in mental homes. After all, capitalism can certainly afford to—and indeed must—improve pay and conditions for the gaolers of its growing army of victims.

There is no money available for the victims or casualties themselves!

Bill Alfred

(Dagenham CLP)

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RADIOGRAPHERS ORGANISE



Radiographers fighting to save Bethnal Green Hospital

Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

Cuts in the health services are creating staff shortages in all departments. One example is the extremely busy X-ray department, served by about 30 radiographers, at The London Hospital.

Sarah Bourne is a senior radiographer and ASTMS shop steward for the radiographers. In an interview she talked about some of the problems facing her members.

“Certainly we need more staff—we've been short of staff since I've been here (two years). The superintendent has been asking for seven more staff for a long time. Admin won't agree. We've been getting new types of equipment, and this makes things even more difficult. We feel the department is doing a lot of work—we are fully stretched at the moment.

Because of shortages in staffing it is difficult to get time off, especially from May to September when no one is allowed to take more than two weeks. In that period no one can take days off due to them. Officially, there should be no more than five radiographers off at a time.

There is a problem also in study-leave for courses. If

people are on study leave, this again reduces the number of people allowed off for ordinary leave. Higher exams are needed for promotion or specialisation.

Training

The London Hospital has a school of radiography. The students are supposed to get practical training in our departments. We give as much time to this as we can, but if there are only a limited number of radiographers in the X-ray room it is difficult to teach anybody. It is usually so busy in the departments, we don't have time to work and teach.

We have had cases where a junior radiographer has been

put in charge of a room and she is not as familiar with the equipment as other people and is not being taught properly. This could mean that a specialised procedure might not run smoothly. The radiographer could be blamed when it wasn't really her fault.

Nights

Because of lack of staff, the existing staff have to do more 'on-call' and night duties. This is for emergency only, but often we find we are asked to do non-emergency work.

We are on-call from home: we have to come in if there is a specialised emergency. For staying at home all night we get 75p. We also have to do stand-by in the hospital, for which we get a princely sum of £1.50—for being there all night. This is supplemented by being paid per call after a certain time—8 pm during the week.

A call lasts from when a patient arrives in the department until he leaves—so long as there is a gap between him and the next patient. If more than one patient comes to the department at one time, the one call lasts until there is a gap—which could be never.

There was really no kind of union organisation when I came here, but over the past couple of years we have been organising ourselves a bit

better. It all stemmed from when the Admin wanted to cut back our on-call money.

They seem to think we actually go and look for work—none of us really wants to do the on-call. Who would at such low pay rates? But we are willing to do it as the hospital has to cover for 24 hours. They haven't managed to cut our on-call yet—although they would still like to. Things are a lot better now we are organised.

With the closure of other hospitals, the number of patients coming here will be more—so will the number of patients wanting X-ray. Phase I is supposed to include most of the old X-ray department—even so, I just don't see there's going to be room. The facilities that are on site are totally inadequate for the kind of work we do, and I think totally inadequate for the numbers of patients we X-ray.

What we have to suffer now is bad enough—let alone going into the new block and finding it just as bad. The people on the committees can't see this because they are so remote and divorced from the actual patient contact.

The radiographers themselves are not told anything of what's happening—it's kept a big secret. It's a case of trying to find out as much as we can while we can do something about it.



CHANGE IN THE BANKS

The sharp rise in interest rates will swell the banks' already massive profits. Bank workers have had enough of poor conditions and paternalistic attitudes. Members of the National Union of Bank Employees are becoming increasingly angry.

Members of the National Union of Bank Employees have been balloted to decide whether a national strike should be called on December 22.

Four areas took part in the ballot, Leeds, Manchester, London and Avon, and if the vote is in favour the bosses will find themselves facing a strike for the first time since 1967.

In April the Committee of London Clearing Banks announced that they would not be closing High Street banks at 12 noon on the last working day before Christmas as had been the custom: workers would be expected to work a full day. Without a 'by-your-leave' they took away an established holiday.

Many union branches reacted strongly to this and demanded action from the Executive Committee, as the banks have eroded over a period many long-established privileges. Until last year branch managers could allow each worker a day off for Christmas shopping; that has been taken away. When the Sex Discrimination Act became law the banks, on the pretext that there would be a flood of applications for staff housing loans (previously not available to women), doubled the interest rate charged to all new borrowers. They also applied more stringent conditions.

Add to this the high-handed way in which the banks close branches without consultation, the experiments being carried out for the

streamlining of the branch banking system, which is bound to cost jobs, and it is clear why bank workers are angry. The bank workers' main demand is for meaningful national negotiation between the union and the bosses. The paternalistic employer of 20 years ago has disappeared. Bank workers are realising that they are engaged in a fight against their bosses, like all other workers.

Now we have decided to take a stand. To the bosses we are saying: "That's enough! The exploitation is over. We're fighting for our rights. We intend to make our union strong. We intend to make sure there will be no more holidays taken away and no decisions carried out without full negotiations and agreement from our union."

Meg Crack
(Bank worker)

NOTE: Since the above article was written the results of the balloting of NUBE members have been announced.

The decision was not to call for strike action. Significantly though, 65% of those who returned ballots were in favour of a strike, but this was not a majority of those circulated.

Also, National Westminster Bank managers had been instructed to offer a concessionary day's leave to their employees. Clearly, bank workers are determined to stand by their rights.

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Family Income Scandal

Workers on low wages will undoubtedly be pleased that Family Income Supplement (FIS) has been increased so that families with two children can claim this benefit if they earn under £50 p.w.

The scandal is that, under a Labour government, millions of workers still need to claim this benefit. Little is done to enforce the legislation on minimum wages.

In 1976, despite the fact that wages inspectors recovered almost £1 million for low paid employees (in itself only a fraction of the real amount), only seven employers were taken to court that year for breaches of the minimum wage law. Compare this to the

treatment of people suspected of defrauding Social Security!

The Tory press headlines don't scream in anger at this subsidy to the sweat shop owners and other employers who find the wages they don't pay made up out of public funds.

And the workers who claim this benefit? The latest calculations show that even more workers will fall into the 'poverty trap'.

The same family with two children will start paying tax on income over £33.37 a week. Approximately two thirds of FIS recipients will pay some of it back in income tax. A family which is at the same time paying tax and

able to claim such means tested benefits can find they gain little from a "moderate" wage rise.

It is now estimated that 72p in every £1 will disappear out of any increase through extra tax and national insurance contributions. And of course Family Income Supplement will be reduced.

For a worker with a family, a really large increase is needed to pull them out of the poverty trap. This makes the trade union struggle of workers like those in the bakeries even more vital.

Youth Campaign Against Unemployment

35 HOUR WEEK

'Living hell'

In Britain today nearly 1,500,000 people are being forced to go through what one described as a "living hell".

They are out of work; the most degrading and demoralising nightmare any worker can go through.

Families are broken up, hopes and aspirations destroyed and even suicide are the results of this curse now facing working people. Not since the dark days of the 1930s has there been such a waste of talent and skill which could be used to help raise the quality and standards of life for everyone.

Engineers, electricians, labourers and even scientists are simply rotting away in the seemingly never-ending line of the unemployed. For those involved, 5.6% of the total workforce, it's literally a hell on earth.

Boredom, poverty, frustration and degradation is

again. "It's like having your throat cut"—46-year-old plasterer.

For the first couple of months life on the dole may simply mean a rest. After that the rot sets in.

"You find yourself getting up later and later. Now I have real trouble getting up before 10 in the morning. It comes on after a while—you know there's nothing to do, so you stay in bed most of the time."—19-year-old, unemployed for nine months.

"The longer it goes on the more you get careless with yourself and about yourself. I sometimes wish I was dead and gone."—Unemployed 40-year-old labourer.

The campaign for a 35-hour working week is about ending this nightmare. The unemployed can wait no longer for an end to this misery and degradation.

For the young it means despair and not even the opportunity to taste the fruits of earning a living. For the middle aged made redundant in all likelihood it means never working

again. "It's like having your throat cut"—46-year-old plasterer.

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A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

- ★ A 35-hour week with full pay
- ★ An end to all wage cuts
- ★ A £70 minimum wage
- ★ Work or full pay
- ★ Nationalisation under workers control, of any firm threatened with redundancy
- ★ Trade Union control over hiring and firing
- ★ All new technology introduced under workers control, with no redundancy
- ★ A massive scheme of public works
- ★ A socialist plan of production to end unemployment



Share out

Hours of back-breaking work, overtime and crippling shifts are problems faced by millions of working people in every industry.

42.2 is the average number of hours worked. Yet in many factories workers have to do 20 hours' overtime to make up a decent wage.

It's hardly surprising that by Friday night most workers are simply just too tired to enjoy any real social life.

A 35-HOUR WEEK WOULD IMMEDIATELY ALLOW WORKERS MORE TIME FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS MAKING MORE JOBS AVAILABLE FOR THE 1½ MILLION UNEMPLOYED.

Yet the bosses are fighting it tooth and nail. 'Nothing to ease the life of

working people' is their motto.

For the employers in Fleet Street, on the docks, in engineering or anywhere else, new methods of production simply mean a chance of more redundancies and bigger profits. Yet if new technology was planned for workers and their families it would mean a raising in the quality of life that in the past was only dreamed about.

A 35-hour week would be only the tip of the iceberg as to what would be possible. It would mean that the time to study, pursue sporting activity and culture would be available to all, not just the privileged few.

A recent report to the government has proved that within 30 years all the material needs of Britain could be produced by only

Unemployment demands :

KNOW !

PROGRAMME
UNEMPLOYMENT
no loss of
restraint

workers'
threatening

of hiring

to be
made union
redundancies

of useful

reduction to

Fact and fiction

1.

"Britain can't afford a 35-hour week because labour costs would be higher than our foreign competitors."

This excuse is used by the bosses in every country! The struggle for a 35-hour week is being fought internationally by the labour movement. The European TUC has already called a one-day stoppage in favour of it. Belgian workers have already struck to win a reduction in their working week.

2. **"It would only mean more overtime being worked."**

Many workers are forced to work overtime to get a living wage. The demand for a 35-hour week must also be linked to that of a £70 minimum wage, of no loss in pay to workers

earning more than the minimum and an end to wage restraint. Excessive overtime could then be curbed by trade union monitoring of hours.

3. **"It would lead to greater unemployment by reducing productivity."**

With a 35-hour week throughout industry approximately 750,000 extra jobs would be made available. The unions would have to ensure that extra workers were taken on where the 35-hour week with no loss of pay was introduced.

35-hour week with no loss of pay was introduced.

The trade unions should have control of hiring and firing. The first thing British industry needs to raise productivity is massive investment to modernise—something which so-called 'private enterprise' has miserably failed to do. This can now be guaranteed only in a socialist economy.

In every major wage claim the demand for a 35-hour week has been raised. The Labour government must now give a lead and introduce a 35 Hour Bill into parliament making a maximum working week of 35 hours, with no loss of pay.

Profit lust

But, as the Equal Pay Act has shown, this must be backed up with the full weight of the trade union movement being mobilised if it is to be successful.

The battle must be waged on the industrial front — with the TUC backing every union's claim — until the mighty 12 million strong labour movement forces through the general acceptance of this maximum working week.

more besides, yet all they do is squander the talents of working people in the dole queues.

With a nationalised economy run under workers' control and a socialist plan of production all new forms of technology could be introduced without a single job being lost! It would mean a massive reduction in the working week and the freeing of the workers' potential.

THE FIGHT FOR A REDUCTION IN THE WORKING WEEK IS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE TO EVERY WORKER IN BRITAIN. A 35-HOUR WEEK IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF WHAT WILL BE POSSIBLE WITH THE END OF THE WASTE AND SQUANDER THAT CAPITALISM BRINGS WITH ITS LUST FOR PROFITS.

the work

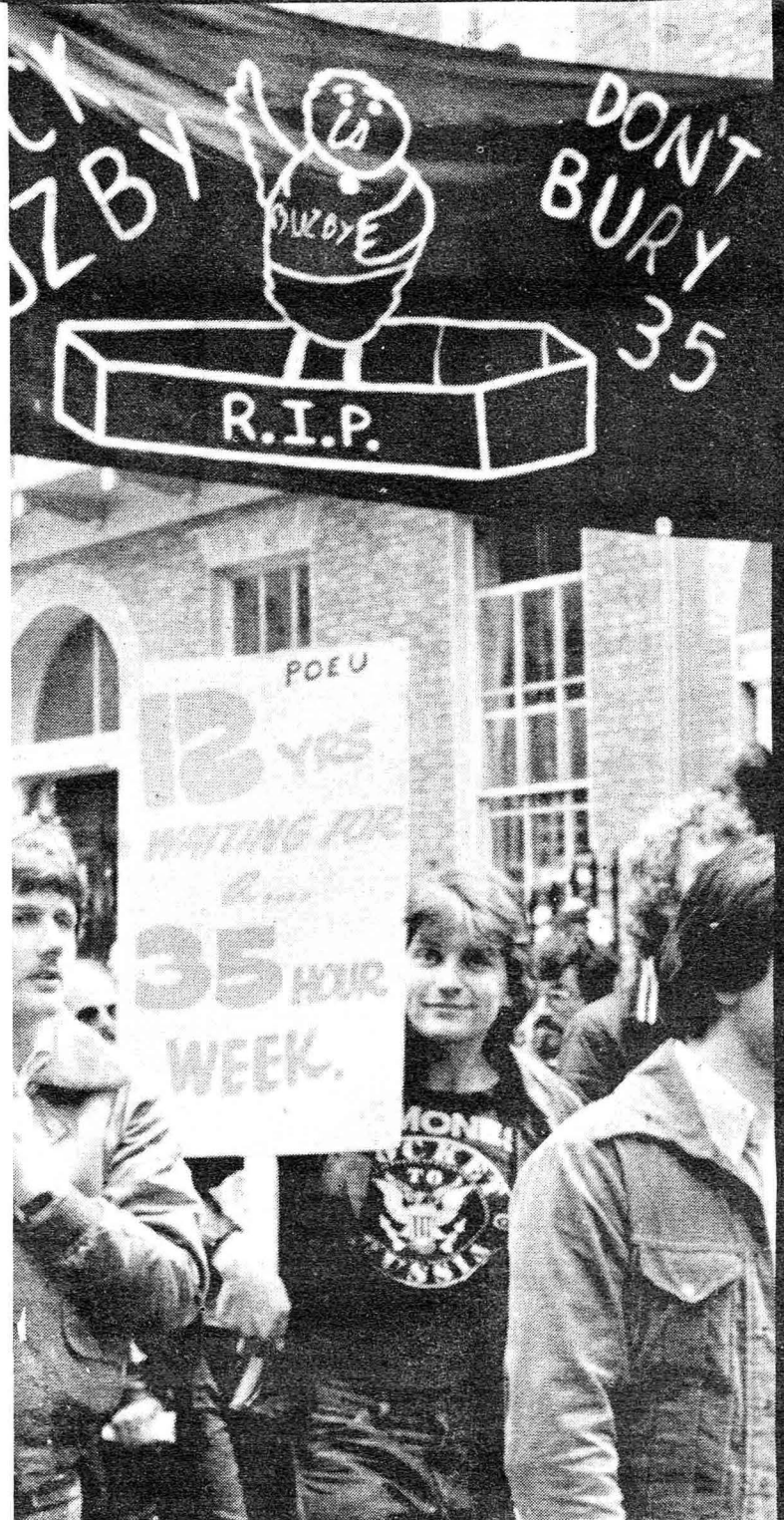
10% of the workforce. In mining, a two-shift seam with 22 men working it at present could be manned by only five men and double present coal output. No one need actually go underground except for maintenance.

12 million

Already in Japan an entire factory operates with only maintenance men employed on the shop floor. The question is, what will happen to the other 90% if this technology is to be introduced?

We have seen in the printing industry, that for the employers it simply means more workers being chucked onto the scrap-heap.

What an indictment of the employers! All the material needs of society could be provided, and



Post Office trade unionists taking industrial action for a 35-hour week
Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

JOIN THE YCAU

This weekend industrial conferences are being held in every region of Britain. They will plan a campaign of action for a 35-hour week to combat unemployment.

Hundreds of delegates from trade unions, shop stewards' committees, Labour Parties and the Young Socialists will attend. The conferences have been organised by the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment.

The YCAU is sponsored by several Labour Party National Executive Committee members, MPs, trade union leaders, hundreds of factory convenors and shop stewards, and backed officially by the Labour Party Young Socialists and several trade unions. Its vice-presidents are Eric Heffer MP and Emlyn Williams, President of the South Wales NUM.

Our two main aims are:
(1) Recruit the unemploy-

ed into the labour movement and involve them in a campaign to get rid of unemployment, to prevent them becoming isolated and demoralised.

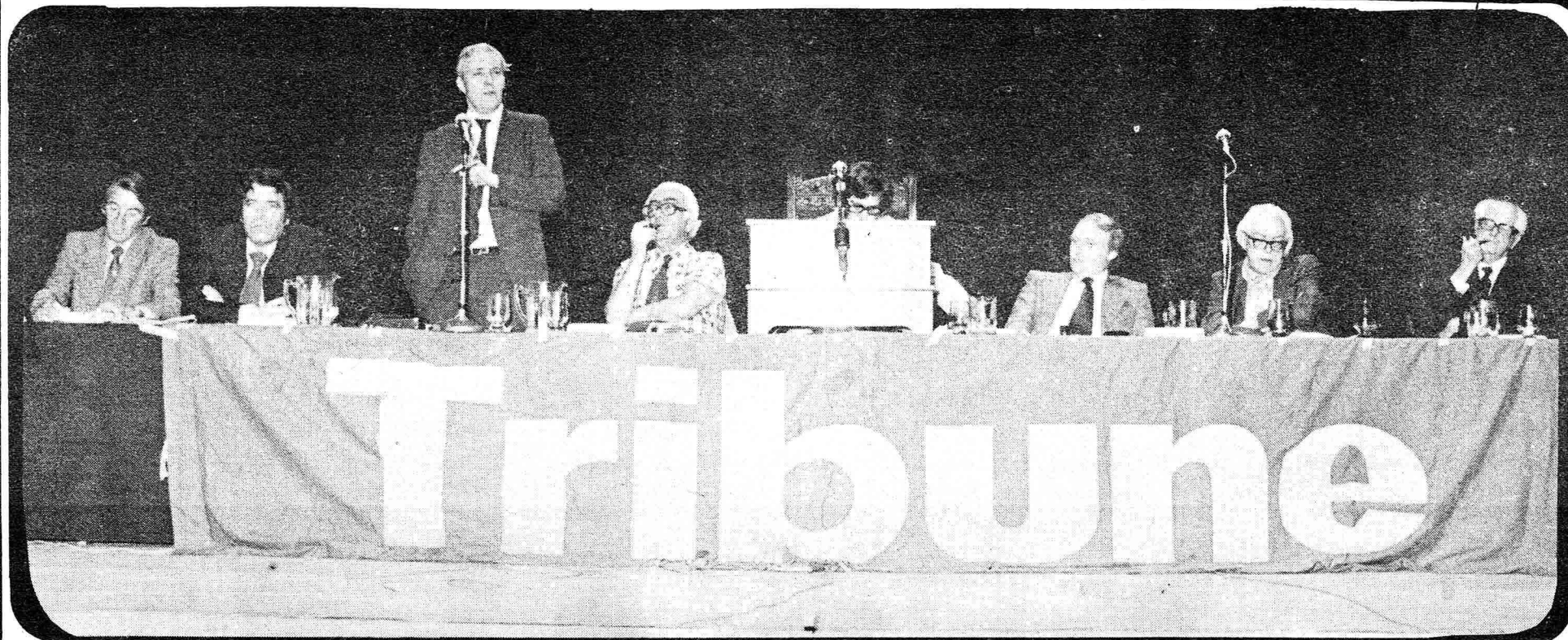
(2) Mount a massive campaign for a socialist programme against unemployment through the official labour movement, which has the duty and the power to fundamentally change a society which allows 1½ million workers to rot on the dole.

JOIN OUR FIGHT TODAY!

Write to Nick Bradley, YCAU, 435 New Cross Road, London S.E.14.

Pin up this broadsheet on your factory notice-board.

WOULD REFLATION SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS? PART 2



Platform at 'Tribune' meeting at 1978 Labour Party Conference

photo: J. McKittrick (Militant)

On the front page of their issue of 13 October, 1978, 'Tribune' carried the headline: "£1,000 million tax cuts create 39,000 new jobs/£1,000 million on public expenditure create 235,000."

The leading article, which puts the position adopted by Tribune MPs and a number of prominent trade union leaders, was based on the proposals of Stuart Holland and Paul Ormerod.

Their proposals were summarised as follows:

"[1] That £1,000 million worth of extra public spending could create 235,000 jobs in a year, compared with only 39,000 created by the government's current strategy if it were to cut taxes by the same amount.

"[2] That the money for increased public spending could be raised by an effective tax on big business which at present pays almost no tax.

"[3] That there is a case for a freeze on the prices of the top 30 firms."

Last week, Ted Grant showed that these proposals completely failed to take account of the real character of the capitalist system.

The present economic policies of the Labour government are not simply the result of misunderstanding of mistakes: because the Labour leaders are attempting to work within the existing economic framework they have been forced, under the pressure of big business, to carry out policies of capitalism in crisis—policies dictated by the logic of the system and its contradictions.

In Part II Ted Grant continues his criticism of 'Tribune's' alternative and outlines the basis for effective, socialist economic policies.

The Keynesianism of priming the pump has been so discredited that even the leading Keynesian economists and the Keynesian Tribune are not at the present time suggesting deficit financing but trying to find some way of putting taxes on the ruling class and on the rich in order to use the money for the benefit of the working people.

"They estimate," says 'Tribune', drawing on the arguments of Stuart

Holland and Paul Ormerod, "that by taxing companies that can afford to pay at the present nominal rate of 52% an extra £3,000 million could be raised from the corporate sector."

In reality, all such measures can be circumvented by the monopolies so long as they have the power and the control to decide.

In the past, the Tribunites and also the so-called 'Communist' Party, have always put forward the idea that by means of devaluation it would be possible to circumvent all the difficulties British capitalism finds on world markets in selling its goods. But the experience of devaluations of the last decade or so crushingly refutes this particular idea.

Of course, we are in favour of increased state expenditure to mop up unemployment. Not a miserable £1,000 million, but a whole programme of useful public works, of a mass building programme of housing, roads, schools, hospitals, on the basis of a plan to mop up unemployment completely.

The recent fall in the value of the £ of about 40% during the course of the last two years, should have had as an effect an enormous increase in sales of British goods on the markets of the world, at least for a temporary period until inevitably the rise in prices cancelled out the advantages. Instead, there was a marginal increase of less than 1/2% in the share of British capitalism in the markets of the world. Why was this?

It is because the 100 British monopolies that control 80% of the market of the goods which are sold abroad used this as a means of enriching themselves. In Heath's famous phrase, "at a stroke", they raised prices 40% in order to enrich themselves to the tune of thousands of millions of pounds.

All the fall in the pound succeeded in doing was to weaken the position of British capitalism.

The price of the manufactured goods that Britain imports went up enormously, thus adding to inflation. The price of food and raw materials also increased to this extent. The ruling class in Britain at that particular time were fortunate

in the sense that prices did not go up to the same extent as the devaluation because of the general fall in the prices of food and commodities on the world market.

Incidentally, that is one of the reasons why inflation has been kept down in the course of the last two years. It is a fairy tale that it is because wages have been kept down. The main reason has been the fall in the price of goods imported from abroad, manufactured goods, food and raw materials.

The measures of the Labour government in cutting state expenditure and holding down the wages of the workers also undoubtedly had as a consequence the cutting down of the market, and under conditions where the market is limited it is not possible for the monopolies to increase their prices at an enormous rate. The fall in inflation, therefore, has been due not at all to the cut in state expenditure and the cut in the standard of living of the workers (i.e. the real wages of the workers). It has been due to the fact that it was not possible to raise prices any further. Although, of course, it was perfectly true that by cutting state expenditure and thus cutting deficit expenditure, one of the main causes of inflation was thereby ameliorated.

The real issue at stake is that despite an increased bonanza of profits due to the holding down of wages, which was accepted by the workers and by the union leaders as a temporary expedient in order to end inflation, despite profits of over £6,400 million which was reached by manufacturing industry in the last year, there has not been any great increase in investment. This, moreover, is despite the subsidies and the tax concessions which amount to about £4,000 million a year.

It is an absolute condemnation of the capitalist system in Britain and an argument that the stewardship of big business should be ended, that they have completely failed in their role. Real investment in manufacturing industry, that is to say the production of real wealth, is not much higher in Britain in 1978 than it was in 1970. This, in turn, in real terms is not much higher than it was in 1950.

That means that on the basis of capitalism Britain is falling further and further behind her rivals abroad. As Giscard d'Estaing boasted, France has already outstripped Britain as a manufacturing

nation. China has outstripped Britain, India has more industry than Britain, and by 1980, if the present process continues, Britain will even fall behind Italy.

Of course, 'Militant' is in favour of increased state expenditure to mop up unemployment. Not a miserable £1,000 million, but a whole programme of useful public works, of a mass building programme of housing, roads, schools, hospitals, on the basis of a plan to mop up unemployment completely. That is why we campaign for a 35-hour week. This measure would instantly cut unemployment by half—by 500,000 to 750,000 according to different estimates.

The arguments of 'Tribune' for a puny £1,000 million increase in state expenditure is like a man standing in front of an avalanche and moving a few rocks from the path imagining that this will solve the problems that face the economy and the working people of Britain.

Marxists cannot support either deflationary or inflationary policies, but only socialist policies!

But 'Tribune's' front-page article is a perfect example of the refusal of the Tribunites to grasp the real issues and face up to the problems in a 'realistic' way.

There is no complete solution to the problems facing working people other than the nationalisation, with minimum compensation on the basis of need, of the 200 monopolies the banks and insurance companies, and the establishment of a plan of production under workers' control and management. It is not this or that aspect of the social system that has gone wrong: it is the problem of the workings of the entire social system of capitalism.

The problem with right-wing labour, with the capitalists themselves if it comes to that, and the Tribune wing of the Labour Party, is that they do not work on the basis of theory and of the laws of the social system.

They don't work on the basis of the past, the present and the future. They work purely empirically, that is on the basis of the immediate facts that face them, and are utterly incapable of working out the effects which the measures they suggest, even if they were implemented, would have. We saw for instance, the effect of the measures of Allende in Chile, which resulted in an explosion of inflation in Chile. This was the result of trying to solve the problems of the working people

a little at a time.

If production was used to its full capacity, it would mean an increase in production of a fifth. The needs of the working people could be satisfied. Instead of that, we now have the miserable production of steel this year of 17 million tons. Last year also, the production of steel was only a little above 17 million tons (17.4 million tons). Yet in 1970 British capitalism produced 27 million tons of steel.

And steel is an index of industrial capacity. Most of the goods which are produced involve the use of steel.

The original aims of the capitalists was to increase the production of steel to forty million tons in the eighties. That has been drastically scaled down and abandoned, and we now have the miserable situation where per head of the population not much more steel has been produced than in 1929 the year before the great slump of the pre-war period.

The working class will not allow the forcible cutting down of its standard of living in a vain endeavour to maintain the capitalist system.

The needs of the working class demand at the least that there should be a 35-hour week without reduction in pay in order to eliminate unemployment and, as a minimum, a £70 minimum wage, not only for those that are working, but for the entire population, the sick, the unemployed, and the old-age pensioners.

Every family should have as a minimum a wage coming in of £70 a week.

The productive forces of society at the present time are sufficiently developed for this to be entirely possible. If it is not being utilised at the present time, it is because of the contradictions of the capitalist system.

Therefore the labour movement must fight for a transformation of the capitalist system on the lines that have been suggested. If capitalism cannot afford a minimum decent standard for the mass of the population, then it is time to say that the working people cannot afford capitalism, and to strive for an entirely different system, for a socialist system of society—a democratic socialist system of society.

By Ted Grant

GHANA

A COUNTRY IN FERMENT

Ghana's military rulers have met a recent wave of strikes with brutal repression. But General Akuffo's junta is a regime of crisis. A Ghanaian socialist reports on events in his country and appeals for international support for the workers and peasants now engaged in a bitter struggle.

The declaration of a State of Emergency by the ruling Supreme Military Council in response to a wave of strikes has brought out clearly the repressive character of the regime in Ghana.

While Lieutenant-General FWK Akuffo pledged, when he led a coup against General Acheampong at the beginning of last July, that the military would hand over power to an elected government on July 1 1979, by the beginning of August he proposed a continuation of the ban on political parties for another five years, the parliament to consist of 'individuals' only.

The military have continued their policies in the interests of imperialism and capitalism, backed up by the use of various official and unofficial agents against any expression of dissent in the most violent and repressive manner imaginable.

The September devaluation of the currency, the cedi, by 58% has resulted in cost of imported goods rising by 140%, on top of the existing inflation rate of 150% and 500%: 150% if you are lucky to be able to buy basic goods at the controlled prices, 500% on the booming black market.

This is the background to more than 80 strikes of the past few weeks as workers demand wage increases to match the rocketing cost of living.

The police and army have recently led brutal and obnoxious attacks on students and other militant youth movements in various parts of the country. Their only crime has been to protest and mobilise against the repression, the chaos into which the country is being plunged and the recurrent food shortages—which are even known to the United Nations but which a British Parliamentary delegation led by a Tory MP refused to see!

This is all going on despite the utterances by both Generals Acheampong and Akuffo and the "Supreme Money Choppers" (the popular name for the Supreme Military Council) assuring citizens that they are free to exercise their democratic rights without fear of molestation and that the government's aim is to achieve love and unity.

Propaganda

The Junta, through its propaganda, regularly attributes the blame for the state of the economy to anybody and everything except itself.

The Head of State has told Ghanaians that the crisis in food production and food prices arose because he is not God and cannot make the rains fall. We Ghanaians were subject to a campaign in the newspapers attributing blame to hoarders and profiteers, the innate greed of Ghanaians as well as to low productivity.

But this completely ignores the responsibility of those who wield the state power and control the "commanding heights of the economy". We know that Ghana does not lie within the Sahel Zone (drought area) and that reports from the Meteorological Department on rainfall averages for the past five years indicate that the quantity of rain that has fallen during this period is comparable to the yearly average for any previous period. Therefore, explaining the serious food shortage by lack of rainfall is nonsense.

In fact, attributing the serious food shortage to the vagaries of the weather is only another instance of the hollowness and bankruptcy of the military regime.

However, even if one were to concede for a moment the "vagaries of the weather" argument, it is important to note that in this scientific age it has become standard to

harness rainfall for use by building irrigation works. Clearly a government whose main interest is not to organise production for the masses of the people, but rather to exploit the country's resources for the private gain of the government and its collaborators, would not be concerned to organise irrigation works.

In the Dawhenya and Veve projects, for instance, the land has been shared by retired army officers and other persons with access to state machine, while those who once farmed the land and lived off its products have now been turned into farm labourers who are exploited by the new breed of absentee farmers.

For far too long Ghanaians have been told that one of the principal sources of their problems has been that they are too lazy or unproductive. When this issue is raised there is a misleading implication that the country as a whole is involved in production.

However, it must be recognised that there are very definite classes involved in real production, namely the workers and peasants. In fact, the people who complain of "laziness", mainly the high government or public officials and the big businessmen, often leave themselves out and end up putting the blame on those people who are really involved in production, the workers and peasants.

The junta is lashing out because it knows that it is isolated and opposed by the majority of the people

There can be no doubt that the wealth of Ghana is produced by the hard, back-breaking work of the men on the farms and those who work in the factories and mines, and this they do despite their terribly low wages and miserable living conditions.

The crisis results from the ill effects of capitalism on the economy and the regime's complete irresponsibility and incompetence.

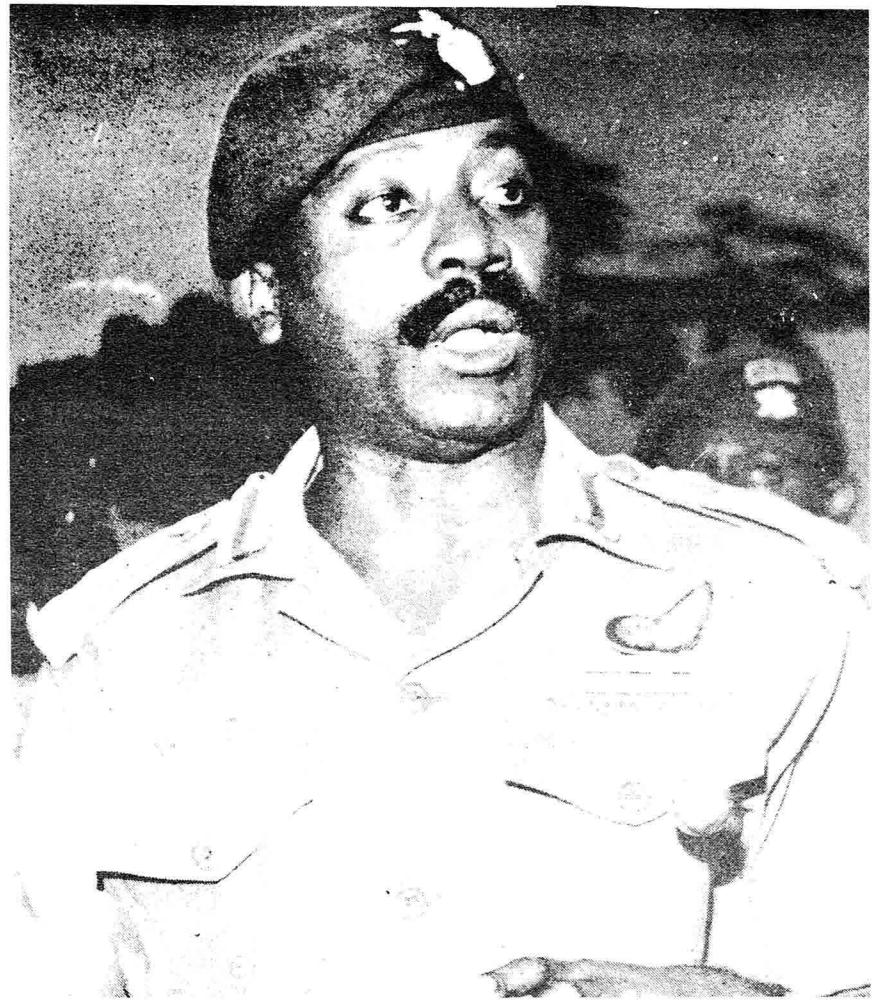
One of the main Ghanaian economic activities is the production of cocoa, which is sold for £1,800 a 30-Kg bag, while the farmer is paid £480, only about 25% of the potential value of his labour.

At the same time timber, diamond, bauxite, manganese and gold production all continue to be geared towards the needs of the foreign capitalist industries. Production is controlled and dominated by foreign companies, and continues to depend on

corruption of the government. According to the report (page 26), there was evidence of Briscoe sending advance notice to their counterparts in Europe and Asia about officials and Commissioners/Ministers travelling to see these areas, and requesting them special favour with the aim of influencing these officials to be favourable in their future dealings with Briscoe.

The exposure of two senior military officers, Lt. General Beausoleil and Lt. General Okai, who were members of the Supreme Military Council, as being in the pockets of Briscoe as their paid agents make a reality of the above assertion that the government acts for imperialism.

However, it would be a serious mistake to think that it is only Briscoe or Beausoleil and Okai who were involved in these corrupt arrangements.



Military ruler, General Akuffo—banned political parties

foreign 'investors' who are the best friends of a regime which hails imperialism and neo-colonialism.

While the exploitation of the toiling masses continues to become increasingly intensified, the members of the government, the official agents of imperialism, contend between themselves to see the number of houses they can build, the BMW, Mercedes-Benzes and Range Rovers they can acquire and the size of the foreign bank accounts they can obtain out of this agency.

General Acheampong is said to own \$600 million in Swiss banks! This opulence can be seen in the way in which Ghana's overseas ambassadors live.

The R T Briscoe Committee Report in 1976 clearly exposed the relationship between foreign capital and the

Numerous foreign companies which operate in Ghana have all kinds of relationships with government officials, by which means they manipulate Ghana's economy to facilitate greater exploitation of the people who continue to live in unbearable conditions.

It is only in the context of the intensified exploitation of the people by imperialism through the agency of the SMC, and the total irresponsibility and corruption of this truly incompetent regime that the present economic crisis can be understood.

Demonstrations

In order to maintain its position in the present economic order, the military dictatorship under General Acheampong resorted to more violent and increasingly brutal methods of repression, buying armoured cars, rifles and other equipment with the foreign exchange hard won by the labour of the workers and peasants.

When the mass of suffering people expressed their justified discontent, the brute might of the military and the police is called upon to repress and terrorise them. There have been many instances of workers on strike being beaten up, shot at and dismissed from their jobs.

There have also been numerous student and youth demonstrations expressing dissatisfaction against the deteriorating economic situation and the sufferings of the poor. These have been met by brutal methods of repression.

Various professional bodies which have tried to examine the government's policies critically have also had to face the violence of the state power.

It is obvious that the police and the military have not forgotten the lessons that colonial rule taught them about how to suppress movements for national liberation and democratic rights. Just as in 1948 the "Positive Action" strike of Ghanaian people against exploitation and oppression of colonial rule

was met by the use of brute force to terrorise and kill our people, so today we met the same reaction.

No one in Ghana today can doubt the accuracy and relevance of Lenin's observation in his book 'State and Revolution', that "the state is a special organisation of force...it is an organisation of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another."

The new wave of violence forms a pattern and is clearly organised to perpetuate the rule of the Junta—and through it the continued domination of the economy by imperialism. Repression is again rearing its ugly face and it is dangerous to take the position that the situation will somehow or other resolve itself and that providence will eventually liberate Ghana.

Rigged

The Junta is lashing out because it knows that it is isolated and opposed by the majority of the people. General Acheampong even had to rig the March 30 referendum on his plan for 'union government' to get a 54%-46% victory.

After that, the unrest built up so much that he was replaced by Akuffo to try to appease the people. But this trick has not worked as the continuing struggles have shown.

The acts of terrorism and aggression will not cow either the workers or the socialist youth and student movements. We are determined to resist repression in all its forms and in all directions.

We shall continue to fight relentlessly for the establishment of democratic rights and people's power in Ghana.

We call in particular on the international labour movement to denounce the recent acts of repression against defenceless workers, students and youth who have demonstrated in various parts of the country in support of the strikers.

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

LETTERS

TORY PRESS: FREEDOM TO LIE, FREEDOM TO CENSOR

Comrades

Over the past four months, a few sixth form students have set up a branch of NUSS in the local grammar school.

Despite the bureaucracy which the staff have imposed upon us and fears of victimisation (the upper sixth have recently had to gather references for application to universities and colleges) which the headmaster, although he must have known about them, has not refuted, we now have an active branch and so far well-attended meetings.

Our local newspaper has just started a new project where pupils submit articles connected with school life which are put in as a 'special feature' once a month.

I wrote a piece on the union, purely factual since I know from past experience that anything from the Labour Party leftwards is either not included, taken out of context or replied to in the next issue, at about four times the length by a Conservative councillor or something similar.

However, when the Press

Officer for the paper came to see our articles, anything critical of the school, the education system or Maggie Thatcher's hairstyle was struck off as "too extreme". Even in its present inoffensive state, it is unlikely that my article will get past the editorial office.

Freedom of the press? The only free press is a socialist press, free to tell the truth.

Yours fraternally
Pat Jenner
Eastbourne LPYS/NUSS

chance to do supply work.

This is yet another cut which has been made, unopposed by the teacher unions.

I felt like telling the Head who wrote the letter to stick his sadness! Teachers and workers must unite to oppose the education cuts, and restore full employment to every teacher in this country. We must demand a socialist programme for education, as spelled out in Militant Teacher.

We need to force this government to reverse the disastrous policies it is pursuing at the behest of capitalism before our education service is irretrievably destroyed.

Yours fraternally
Maureen Boyd
Brighton LP

sions, just as valuable as the actual course is the chance to discuss with trade unionists from other industries and hear their problems. After our first meeting a discussion began in the pub around the problems of Safety Reps in those industries where a fair part of the wages is "danger money", "hazardous conditions allowances", etc.

Many workers said some reps, will not thank you for removing perhaps £7 a week from their weekly pay packets even if this could mean seven—or seventeen—years added to each worker's life. They need the money too badly!

I felt the answer was to tie any such safety measures into the negotiations for a pay deal and to demand that workers' wages should not suffer because they have won improved conditions.

Nevertheless, there is clearly a problem here and I should like to hear how other shop stewards and safety reps reel about such situations and how they may have coped with them.

Yours fraternally
Terri Paterson
Falkirk Branch EIS

Safety versus wages?

Dear Comrades

As the union Safety Rep in a large school I found Ronnie Sookhdeo's article (November 3) of great interest.

I have recently started on a WEA course for Safety Reps—using a video tape of the current BBC TV series 'Working for Safety'.

As always on these occa-

Nothing but insecurity

revealed quite considerable distaste at having fallen to pressure to leave their friends and their home in the USSR.

Whether or not the reason for not going to Israel is "because of the treatment they have had", I don't know.

Soviet Jews are generally given preferential status in the Israel. They are, apart from anything else, Ashkenazim and they are generally given better treatment, more readily welcomed on kibbutzim than other Jews, such as Sephardim and Oriental Jews from southern Europe, North Africa and the other Moslem countries.

Presently Israel is desperate to welcome new immigrants—these rates have dropped

drastically in the last two or three years and nowadays the emigration rate means that Israel's growth is entirely through the birth rate. This is not surprising with the military and economic situation the way it is.

In the past, Israel was able to colonise, using the kibbutzim and other settlements with waves of new immigrants. The 'peace settlement' today should be seen partly in that light.

The Arab birth rate is greater by far than the Jews. Soon they will be outnumbered, the more quickly through hanging onto the West Bank which Israel cannot effectively colonise however it may try—because

of its numbers.

Israel tries desperately to persuade Soviet Jews at the Austrian transit camps to come to Israel. But who wants the insecurity and insolvency of Israel? Instead they are lured by the wealth and promises of rich US Jews and even those that go to Israel may well soon emigrate.

Israel, the 'homeland for the Jews', can no longer even pretend that it represents all Jews. Only the unity of working people in the United States, the USSR, Israel and Egypt can guarantee the survival of any race or culture, not a national capitalist state.

Richard Servian
Stockport North LP

Refused leave for union meetings

Dear Comrades

Branch life is supposed to be the basis of a trade union—but how many, particularly shift workers, can get to a meeting even when an important issue is on?

I'd like to explain the situation at James Neill's. I am an AUEW member who asked leave of absence to attend branch meetings, and was granted that leave of absence on three occasions, yet thereafter I have been refused permission to leave the premises.

If I did so, I would be given a written warning and threat of suspension. I did leave, as there was a ballot for district levy on the occasion of blacklisting at a Sheffield factory, Daniel Doncasters.

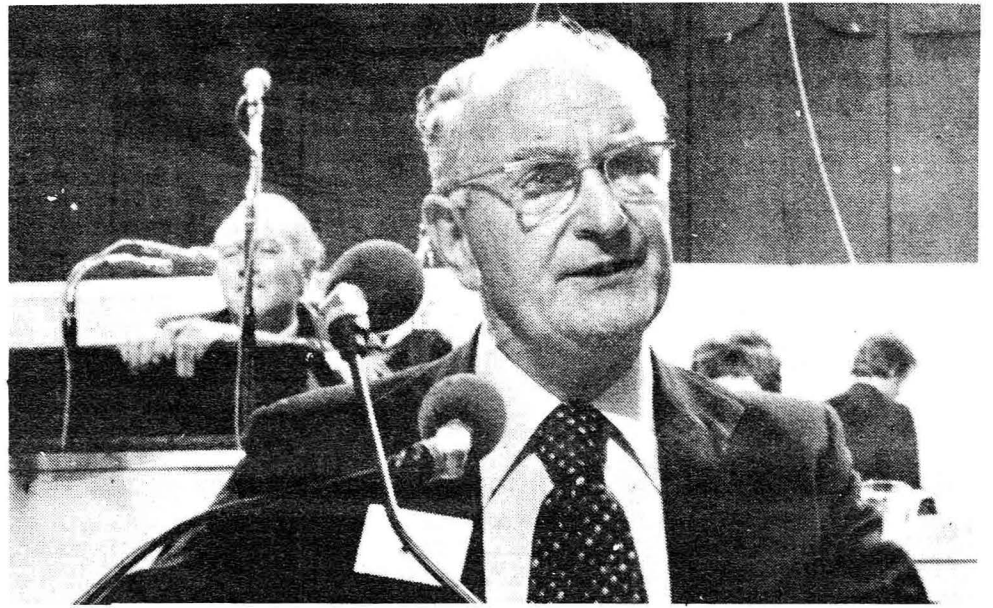
If I continue to attend my branch, I will have a further 3-day suspension, a written warning and then instant dismissal.

How can I, as a shift worker, attend branch meetings when important issues are discussed?

Yours fraternally

John Taylor

AUEW, James Neill's, Sheffield



Trade union leaders must live like members

Dear Comrades

A group of members of the AUEW (TASS) at a local factory (Cornings Ltd) are on strike for the reinstatement of their jobs. Management at that firm is using any tactics to break the strike, offering drivers backhanders to cross the picket lines, driving wagons themselves and so on.

The strikers wanted to hold a mass meeting at one of the sites and asked our Labour Club to help them by

picketing the other site so as many of them as possible could attend the meeting.

Whilst waiting for a lift to the picket line, who should drive past but AUEW leader Hugh Scanlon himself—driving a huge Jaguar car. Ah, we thought, charitably, he's on his way to Cornings to help out his members.

No such luck! He probably did not know one hundred of his members in the area were on strike.

As far as I am concerned, a union leader whose standard

of living is so much higher than those he represents is likely to have been bought off by the bosses. The sooner all union leaders are subject to yearly elections, the right of recall and wages on a level with their members, the sooner those leaders will really fight for the working class. Then strikes such as those at Cornings will get the support they so much deserve.

Yours fraternally
Dave Campbell
Chairman, Keele
Labour Club

Have you any points on, or disagreements with, letters or articles in the 'Militant'? Any experiences which make you angry? Let us know in a letter [preferably a short one]. Letters to arrive by Saturday morning to the address at the top of the paper.

Dear Editor

I recently applied for a teaching job which I didn't get. The reply I received from the Head read as follows:

"This is to inform you that an appointment has been made and, on this occasion, you have been unsuccessful. We were very impressed by the quality of the candidates and were saddened by the fact that so many well-trained people were still unemployed. We hope you will be successful soon."

Fortunately, I have had previous teaching experience, and am at least able to do supply teaching (working on a casual basis in different schools). However, many authorities have stopped employing college leavers for this work, so the newly-qualified teacher won't even have the

Dear Comrade

Phil Frampton's article on Soviet Jews in New York (27 October) supports my own experience of the plight of those Jews.

When I was in Israel earlier in the year, I spoke to a few Soviet Jews who wanted to practice English to use in the USA. Equally, they were keen on asking for dollars—not just because of the state of Israeli currency (whose devaluation has been greater than 50% in the last year) but to save up for going to the States.

They felt there was nothing for them there except insecurity, and their passports meant they were restricted as to where they could go. Chatting a bit further usually

DON'T LET US FLOUNDER

Healey may be tightening the money supply but he was made to give you another tax rebate this month!

Did you give yours straight to the 'Militant'? Did you ask every other reader you know to do the same? Or, if you haven't had yours yet, is it 'promised' to the 'Militant'?

**This week:
£884.41**

Something has got to be done urgently! Look at this week's total—£884.41—when it needs to be over £2,000 on average to get the 'Militant' that vital £70,000 before the end of the year.

'Militant' must grow, but without your help it will flounder. Please don't tighten our money supply. Follow some of the examples below:

We had fivers this week from M Walton (Hull UCATT), A Zancari (Wandsworth) and N Lampitt (Wales). A West Wales student donated £20, and a Bridlington reader sent us £18.

J Short (Wandsworth GMWU) contributed £9. The LSSP (UK) made a donation of £25; considering the level of subsistence in Sri Lanka so far as the active workers are concerned, this money represents a real sacrifice in the way that possibly some of the

money from Britain doesn't.

Thanks to A Hare (Stockton) for £3 and to all those who sent £2, including J Bell (E Notts LPYS), D McAsey (Birkenhead), L Flanagan (Jordanhill College Labour Club), B Lynch (AUEW Linwood), R Worth (Newton Abbot), P Tottersdill (Nottingham) and K McGrogan (Clay Cross).

£1s this week were received from I Clark (UCATT, Hull), T Waddington (NUR Hull), J McWha (Birkenhead), N Wheatly (Stockton), G Smith (Stirling University), E Ralston (TGWU Hillingdon), I Armitage and P Cousins (Plymouth), D Archibald (Newcastle) and M Swords (E Notts LPYS and USDAW).

Labour Party Young Socialist branches to have contributed this week include Hackney Central (£5), Wallsend (£10), and Chester (£1.60). Do the members of your LPYS branch read the 'Militant'? Have you asked them for a regular donation,

whatever they can afford? If the members of every LPYS branch raised between them only £1 or £2 on a weekly basis this would be a vital contribution.

'Militant' Readers' Meetings raised £14 (Manchester), £1 (Stevenage) and £3.90 (Spennymoor). An appeal at a Chipping Barnet CLP Political Education meeting sent us £3.47.

Supporters from far afield helped us this week: we received £1.70 from L Nilsson, a Swedish reader, and £34.03 from supporters in the Greenwich/Woolwich area. Readers in Weston-super-Mare sent £1.50, two Llanelli readers £3.50, a reader in Brixham £1.50, D Knights (Carlton) £1.60.

POEU members (London S Central) collected £1, Tim Smith from Rochdale sent us three Green Shield stamp books (full) and 294 cigarette coupons. Other events included sponsored walks which raised £10.80 in S London, £10.50 from pontoon tickets in Birmingham and Stirling, and £22.50 from a jumble sale in Hackney.

½ps and 1ps amounted to £9.51, thanks to collectors in Peterborough, Hull, Isle of Wight, Nottingham and Reading. A social in Sheffield made £4 for us and a 'drink in Brighton' £8. Extras can come to quite a lot: £5.10 was collected from workers at

FIGHTING FUND - TARGET £70,000			
Area	Target	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,400		2,723.70
Hants & IOW	2,100		2,368.80
Humberside	2,200		1,722.32
Lancashire	1,500		665.23
London: North	7,700		6,133.61
London: South	3,800		3,230.02
Manchester & Dist	2,900		1,889.21
Merseyside & Dist	4,500		2,747.89
Midlands East	4,400		2,836.95
Midlands West	7,400		5,527.70
Northern	4,900		3,484.09
Scotland East	2,500		1,721.07
Scotland West	2,900		1,777.43
South East	2,300		2,252.73
South West	2,300		2,116.52
Thames Valley	1,700		1,407.59
Wales East	2,000		1,575.51
Wales West	2,300		2,115.77
Yorkshire	5,200		3,042.15
Others	3,000		5,661.18
Total	70,000		54,997.47

GEC (Manchester) who read 'Militant'.

Peterborough's second-hand book sale (£1.50), gambling win (Newcastle) £4, and tips from work in Bristol (£2.70) all came in very useful.

Has your area planned special Christmas events to brighten things up and raise money at the same time? If not, get down to it straight away, comrades! You can advertise the events in the

'Militant' to get the best clientele!

The Christmas and New Year raffle books should now be available from your local seller—win a holiday in the USA for only 10p. Let's see which is the next area to go over the target for the year: it should be very easy with all these timely prizes.

We want every reader to put the 'Militant' on their list for a bumper Christmas present. If you can't manage

a whole fiver, take an appeal sheet round to everyone you know, and tell them how much is needed from your area and how they will benefit from giving generously to a Marxist paper.

If you can give a fiver or more, do it right away, before the money starts disappearing—but still ask everyone you know to follow your good example. 1,000 'Fighting Fivers' would give 'Militant' a real Christmas boost!

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MILITANT MEETINGS

PETERBOROUGH Readers Meeting 'The 5% and the Socialist Alternative'. Speaker: Mike Cleverley (Walthamstow CLP). Wednesday November 29th, 7.30 pm. Coalheavers Arms, Park St, Peterborough

NEWCASTLE Marxist Discussion Group. Every Friday, 3 pm. Students' Union, Level 6, Newcastle University. Phone Newcastle 774948 for details

LONGBENTON CPSA Marxist Discussion Group 'Iran' 6 pm. Tuesday 28th November. Brandling Villa, south Gosforth

RHONDDA Trade Union Discussion Group. Every Tuesday, Star Pub, Ystrad, Rhondda (back bar), 7.30 pm

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Send New Year greetings through 'Militant'

'Militant' will be featuring New Year greetings in the issue of January 5th. YOUR union branch, shop stewards' committee, Labour Party or LPYS branch should send its greetings to the rest of the labour movement.

Rates for semi-display are £4 for 6 column centimetres [maximum 25 words] and £2 for 3 column centimetres [maximum 15 words]. Rates for display are: £7 for one-sixteenth of a page; £14 for one-eighth of a page.

Greetings should arrive by Monday December 18th. Don't forget, post early to avoid the Christmas rush!



"The battle will be when we get back"



photo: J. McKittrick (Militant)

EETPU members occupying union HQ earlier this month vote to support their stewards recommendation

EETPU MEMBERS CHALLENGE EXECUTIVE'S RULING

300 Ford EETPU members gathered in the Ley Baths, Dagenham, to hear up to date reports on their struggle to obtain four weeks' back strike pay, about £60 per member.

John Aitken, shop steward and Ford National Joint Negotiating Council member, outlined the background to the meeting. He pointed out that it took picketing and an occupation of Hayes Court, EETPU headquarters, by 200 members (see last week's 'Militant') to get the promise that NEC members Bro Clayton, Bro Gannon and Bro L Britz (National Organiser) would attend this meeting to hear their grievances. Only Bro Gannon (plumbing NEC member) turned up.

Bro Gannon's explanation of the NEC's position ran as follows: Despite the fact that he voted on the FNJNC (which is made up of officials and shop floor representatives from all the Ford unions) for the strike action (it was a unanimous vote), the union's own Executive Council had to look at things on a "broad scale" when paying out strike pay.

Bracknell protest

At its meeting on November 15th the Bracknell branch of the EETPU decided unanimously to send a letter to the Executive Committee protesting at the refusal to pay members on strike at Ford's strike pay from the beginning of the strike. The branch called on the EC to rectify the situation.

By Terry Pearce, President Bracknell branch EETPU.

Three other groups of EETPU members are at the moment protesting about receiving no strike pay. The general policy was now to examine every strike before paying out benefits. He added that most TUs paid out between £6-£8 per week. The EETPU pay out £15.

He attempted to justify the NEC's (unanimous) decision not to pay out because "the procedure hadn't been followed." There had been four weeks of the contract left to go when the strike began; "a contract has to be honoured."

None of the members was satisfied with this attitude. On Bro Gannon's two-way voting on the FNJNC and the NEC, "did the NEC," he was asked, for the first four weeks "expect them to cross the picket lines with all the other workers on strike?"

If it was a question of the union not being able to afford the £15 strike pay, why did they raise the contributions to 35p at last year's bi-annual rules revision conference, precisely to pay out bigger benefits? These and many more points were levelled at the NEC member.

His only answer was that he had voted the way he thought right and that he was a plumbers' representative and didn't really represent the electricians.

But Orville Foulkes, Dagenham shop steward, pointed out that the issue needed to be broadened. The EC members—officials who were appointed, not elected—were out of touch with the membership. "We are carrying out TUC and Labour Party conference policy yet we were not getting support."

The need was to "fight to change the union from within along with its rules. The crisis

Halewood stewards rejection

Richie Roland, official spokesman for the Halewood shop stewards, reported on the shop stewards' meeting held here on Sunday 19th November: "The shop stewards' committee this morning has taken the report from our negotiators. We are disappointed that the Company seems only interested in talking about minor movement on the penalty clause aspect.

"Our view remains unchanged, and is one of rejection! We reject the penalty clauses on the attendance allowance, and also call on the Company and the NJNC to get an honourable response to the claim."

can be sorted out by the working class but we need leadership—we haven't got a leadership." This gained a big round of applause.

Lenny Newman, foundry shop steward, stated: "It's dishonest to say that our 35p contribution can't be paid out, because you're saving it for Fred or Charlie or other sections who may come out on strike. It is the Ford workers who are out now who need it." This was applauded.

John Aitken then proposed a resolution that was sent to the NEC, asking them to rethink their position and that the FNJNC decision be backed with the payment of back strike pay. This was unanimously passed.

By our Correspondent

"Ron and Reg, have you forgotten, we came out for £20 and 35 hours, and nothing else".

This summed up the mood of the Ford workers lobbying negotiations in Moscow Place last week.

While negotiations continued inside, I asked Alf Allen, EETPU Dagenham Auto branch treasurer, what he thought of the latest situation. "I think Ron Todd should have held off for another week.

"Phased return? Its got to be all together. We all came out together and we go back together, this has been the mood over the last period.

"Even if we don't get as much as we wanted we've busted the 5%. Vauxhall, Leyland etc wouldn't have got the offers they've been made."

How do you see the threat of sanctions?

"Ford make the cheapest car on the market; the government will climb down. Ford will probably go into the leasing business." Les Allen

AUEW Works Committee, added "I just hope we get the best deal possible. I'm not too despondent.

"I told Reg Birch (secretary of the Ford Negotiating Council) not to water down the penalty clauses but wash them out. We went on strike for four weeks in 1969 against the penalty clauses."

I spoke to Gina Norcott a T&GWU shop steward who has been a consistent lobbyist of the negotiations.

"There was twelve where I worked (imported spares in Slough). Eight are still left but only two left because of the strike. We haven't got the advantage of a mass plant although we link up with Langley.

"I don't want to see an attendance allowance with clauses, I would want it wiped out. It would be a retrograde step.

"I've worked at Fords for nine years. In the 1971 strike, none of us came out—we weren't 100% at that time, we had no TU representation.

"I'm glad we have broken the 5%, it shouldn't ever have come in. We haven't been offered 16½%, its 9½% on the rate, 2% on the holidays and 5% attendance allowance."

The news came out of the 33 to 12 vote by the FNJNC to accept the offer of slightly further watered-down penalty clauses plus time-and-a-third payments for Christmas holidays.

The overwhelming feeling was one of rejection and disappointment at its acceptance. No gains for the line workers, no shorter working week, or any improvement on the other points of the claim which have been ignored.

The argument particularly raged around the penalty clauses, but as one EETPU member put it: "the battle will be when we get back. We are strong, we will fight them—how we interpret them and how Fords will is not the same."

Report by Bob Faulkes

Labour Party support strikers

photo: John Sturrock (Report)II

Southampton Labour Party supports the Ford strikers. That was the message which came across at a meeting organised by the local Labour Party.

Over ninety people came to hear Steve Stamford, convenor at Ford's Swaythling plant and T&GWU branch secretary, Alan Whitehead, vice president of Southampton LP and PPC for the New Forest, and myself as a Ford workers' wife, supporting her husband on strike.

Steve spoke first, and outlined the case from the unions' point of view. He gave a blow by blow account of the negotiations, and exploded the myth that the mass meetings were undemocratic, with officials 'rigging the vote'.

He pointed out that the so-called attendance payment plan was nothing but a hollow sham; far from discouraging industrial action, the company would face one running battle after another. (Although we now understand management are prepared to "water this part of the plan down".)

When my turn came, I started off by correcting the idea that Ford and other car workers earn vast sums of money. In fact some Ford workers take home as little as £54 for a forty-hour week.

I pointed out that the wives of Ford strikers have an important role to play in the strike. After eight weeks on strike, understandably morale



Ford workers' wives march in support of the claim in Southampton

begins to slip a little.

By showing our husbands that despite severe financial hardship, we are still supporting the strike, this helps to boost morale. Of course nobody's euphoric about being on strike, but we believe in the wage claim and the 35-hour week.

In summing up I said that message of the wives to their husbands on strike was: **keep on fighting, we're with you all the way.** Not out of duty, but because we believe our wage claim to be a valid one.

We don't want our husbands to crawl back to work for a miserable offer with strings attached. We want them to walk back through the factory gates with their solidarity intact, secure in the knowledge that they have won their claim together.

Alan Whitehead outlined the Labour Party policy on

wages, and rejected the idea that wage increases are a major contributor to inflation. The Party Conference policy and the policy of the Labour government were vastly different.

A good discussion took place after the speakers had finished, and the few hecklers, about five in all, were well answered and their weak case defeated by the floor of the meeting.

The meeting was one of the most successful that Southampton Labour Party has held. It should help to boost morale at the Southampton Ford plant, by letting the men know that they are not fighting alone, they have the strength of the Labour Party behind them.

By Chris Kelly, Wife of Southampton Ford worker

Local journalists challenge Newspaper Society

Since noon on Monday November 20, some 9,000 provincial newspaper journalists will be operating sanctions against their employers, members of the Newspaper Society.

The NS has totally rejected a NUJ claim for £20 across the board increases from January 1st, a 35-hour week, improved holiday, sick pay, maternity and paternity leave, and a radical change in the treatment of young entrants to the profession.

Instead they are proposing

increases of just over 8% in the total wage bill, given government approval, and have written off most of the non-money demands as having "no justification." The scrapping of indentures for juniors is dismissed as likely to "aggravate existing problems with unscrupulous juniors."

Most juniors take home less than £25 a week, and a top senior journalist often has to be content with gross weekly wages of less than £70, well below national averages. The claim, and the plan of

industrial action, were drawn up at two national shop stewards' (FOCs) meetings, ratified by mandatory meetings at all local papers. The chapel by chapel vote in favour of imposing sanctions was 4:1.

Low pay

National organiser Noel Howell described it as "the biggest mandate for industrial action ever given by the provincial membership. They are determined to rectify the low pay rates."

All-out strike action had been called for by papers in the London region, and elsewhere. A series of lightning strikes and an eventual all-out strike are predicted if the Newspaper Society refuses to reconsider its offer.

Meanwhile sanctions will continue to disrupt provincial newspapers. **All trade unionists are asked to co-operate with NUJ members in their areas to assist the fight for a decent wage and better working conditions.**

By an NUJ member,
London

Militant Printworkers pamphlet 15p.

Takes up the problems facing all workers in the printing industry, and puts forward a clear programme for action to save jobs and defend conditions.

Order from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Please send 5p for postage.

Robinsons, Chesterfield

Angry response to bosses' attacks

A strike at Robinsons, Chesterfield's largest and most reactionary employer. 150 maintenance men walked out following the provocative laying off of one of their colleagues.

Robinsons has long had a hardline reputation among Chesterfield trade unionists. An EETPU full-time official described them as the most "obstructive management" he had ever dealt with in his life.

Following management's intransigence in wage negotiations, a work to rule had been in effect for over four weeks. They had refused to backdate the settlement to when negotiations were supposed to begin, and offered an unacceptable productivity deal including the introduction of shifts, moving men between departments, ending job-demarkation between fitters and electricians, and a cut in the workforce.

In face of stagnation caused by their own lack of investment, Robinsons' management, like others, are attacking the workers' wages and conditions to safeguard their profits.

The strikers are especially annoyed that management can hide behind the 5% pay policy of a Labour government. The Labour Party Young Socialists are actively assisting the strikers; the convenor and shop stewards have spoken at a Chesterfield LPYS meeting and £8.50 was collected for the strike fund.

The dispute is now escalating, with mass pickets being organised to stop scab lorries.

By Ray Davies

Chesterfield LPYS

Firemen demand action on shorter week

In Scotland, the men feel very strongly that the part of the agreement which conceded a 42-hour week in the Fire Service is every bit as important as money in the pocket.

When I entered the Fire Service in 1966 we were working a 48-hour week and the take-home pay was terrible. I think it was about £9.

A document had been brought out by the union which set out the plans for improving pay, hours and conditions, called 'Service for the '60s'.

The frustration and need for a pay increase were apparent, but the national claim was getting nowhere.

56 hours

That is when the employers offered a bonus payment—approximately £3.50, and all we had to do was work a 56-hour week. When industry was moving downward, our hours were increasing.

It took us six years to get back down to the 48-hour week, and then began the fight for a 40-hour week, more pay and better conditions. In other words for the 'Service for the '60s' ten years later.

By Ronnie Scott

Strathelyde FBU
Secretary

The fight culminated in Eastbourne on 7th November 1977, when the decision was taken to take the firemen out on their first national strike. It achieved two things for the men: the linking of our earnings to the 'upper quartile' of male average earnings, and agreement to introduce the 42-hour week for the Fire Service, as laid out in the Home Office feasibility study, as soon as agreement was reached on the implementation.

It is on this that the problems arise. **The employers are attempting to wriggle out of the agreement by putting impossible conditions forward as a basis for agreement.**

These conditions could never be accepted, even as a basis for discussion, as far as the majority of the membership I represent is concerned. The employers have purposely used scaremongering tactics to delay, and I am sure they hope to break up any plans of reaching a negotiated settlement.

The Scottish representat-



Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant

ives on the NJC have opposed the attitude of the other members of the NJC at every turn, and I'm sure will continue to do so. The obstructiveness of employers south of the border is dishonourable and, worse, it is dangerous because it shows that what a lot of people have been saying all along is true: that they cannot even be

trusted to implement an agreement reached by mutual consent.

Should the situation ever arise again where the membership of this union are asked to accept their word in return for industrial peace, then it is plain to me that their word will not be good enough.

The recall conference is due

on 28th November, and I do not know what the result of that conference will be. All I will say is that if we still have industrial peace in the Fire Service, it will not be because of the efforts of the employers.

And remember, it is you who elect these employers, and they are supposed to be representing your wishes.

Agricultural workers lobby

The South and East Devon Area of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers held their Annual Conference at Exeter, on Saturday 11th November.

The Chairman, Dennis Chapman, expressed concern at the way in which the Agricultural Wages Board were treating our application for an increase in wages for

the agricultural industry. **Our claim for £80 for a 35-hour week was fully justified.** Yet the farmers were not prepared to exceed 5%.

Mr Ross Pierson, addressing Conference as a member of the workers' side of the Agricultural Wages Board, was able to state quite clearly that the workers' side were never prepared to accept a 5% increase.

Colin Down, District Organiser for the area, said that it was absolutely necessary for the rural and allied workers to join the NUAAW, because wage levels in rural areas were in fact determined by the agricultural industry.

He urged all agricultural workers to attend the Agricultural Wages Board at the Ministry of Agriculture in Whitehall Place, London, on Thursday, 7th December, where a mass lobby is being organised through the NUAAW. Any Devon member wishing to attend should contact him before 29th November.

Emergency resolutions were moved from the Newton Abbot Area Branch by Mr Ray Venton and by the Totnes Branch by Mr Dennis Chapman, condemning the action of the farmers and the independent members of the Wages Board in suggesting that the agricultural rate should be restricted to the 5% limit.

Conference accepted that the agricultural workers would have to fight for everything they got.

Fight Leyland AEC closure

A blow to workers in West London! The AEC (British Leyland) plant in Southall is to be closed by June 1979.

This announcement came only 6 weeks after the company had called for 250 voluntary redundancies and given 'assurances' that closure was not being considered.

If the closure is allowed to take place, 2,150 workers face redundancy—many of them skilled engineering workers in their 40s and 50s, with little chance of finding similar employment elsewhere. And 2,500 workers in subsidiary plants supplying AEC will also be affected.

This is only one of a series of factory closures in this once-heavily industrialised part of London. The British capitalist class is destroying manufacturing industry through lack of investment.

AEC has made buses and trucks in Southall since the 1920s!

According to Mick Martin,

Barbara Humphries

Ealing North LPYS

works convenor, Leyland have been deliberately running down AEC since 1972. "In that year we showed a gross profit of 22.2% on capital invested. Now we are told that AEC is unprofitable. If it is, it is not because of the workers but because of the management's policy."

Undoubtedly there will be pressure on the workforce to accept redundancy pay. But the local labour movement, especially the AUEW, is committed to opposing the closure.

Last Wednesday Ealing North Labour Party unanimously passed a resolution in support of the AEC workers and called for the dismissal of both Michael Edwardes and Eric Varley. It is a disgrace that Edwardes, who began destroying Leyland jobs with the closure of Speke No 2 plant earlier this year, was

installed by a Labour government.

This latest proposed closure shows yet again the urgency of workers' control and management of British Leyland, to preserve both jobs and a future for the motor industry.

Docks—international strength

67 docks shop stewards from seven European countries met in Birmingham on Saturday 18 November at a conference called by the National Port Shop Stewards Committee.

It was the first such conference, and was chiefly concerned with exchanging ideas, experiences, and the situation in the docks in their respective countries, as a preliminary to further international co-operation.

Some horrifying pictures emerged. The Swedish dele-

gate gave 66 hours as a normal working week. In Antwerp, the casual system still operates, with union agreement; trade unionists can't elect their shop stewards, and 2,000 dockers have lost their jobs since the end of 1974.

Everyone spoke of the disastrous effects of containerisation, but it was clear that these had been softened in Britain by the action of a strong and well-organised section of workers.

Despite the language difficulties, a feeling of inter-

national solidarity emerged, with a recognition that national differences in organisation should not obscure the common problems. Many delegates, too, showed the need to overthrow capitalism and establish a socialist system. Another meeting was planned for February which will discuss a united programme of action—as someone said, if the bosses have one, it is high time the workers did!

By Wyn Jeffrey

Southampton Labour Party

'We'll fight the penalty clauses'

Orville Foulkes, senior steward, Fords, Dagenham, tells Militant his feelings on returning to work

As much as it breaks my heart to be going back through the gates with penalty clauses still tied to our ankles, the struggle begins when we return to work.

Our strike has been a tremendous achievement. We have shown other workers that 57,000 mem-

bers can alter the way the government thinks.

It was in some respects sad to see a division among the ranks [about whether to accept Ford's latest offer]. But what we've got to weigh up, if we call ourselves socialists, is that you cannot advance socialism without carrying the mass along with you.

We withdrew our labour to improve on the quality of life for our membership. From this point of view I feel the NJNC took the right decision when they said they would recommend acceptance of the offer.

If the Company think that by bullying people with the penalty clauses it will advance more production, these measures will prove to be counter-productive. The answers to a lot of what the company wants was actually in the claim itself. Better conditions for the workforce; things like line workers' allowance, more attractive holidays, better pension schemes. These are the things that make people respond—certainly not by bullying them or docking their time when the kids are not well.

If the company think they have lost a lot of production

over the years because of all these things, and they are now going to implement penal clauses, then I say that the production they have lost will be nothing to what they are going to lose.

Unfortunately, we've still not managed to make any headway on the 35-hour week, which I feel is as important as getting a wage rise.

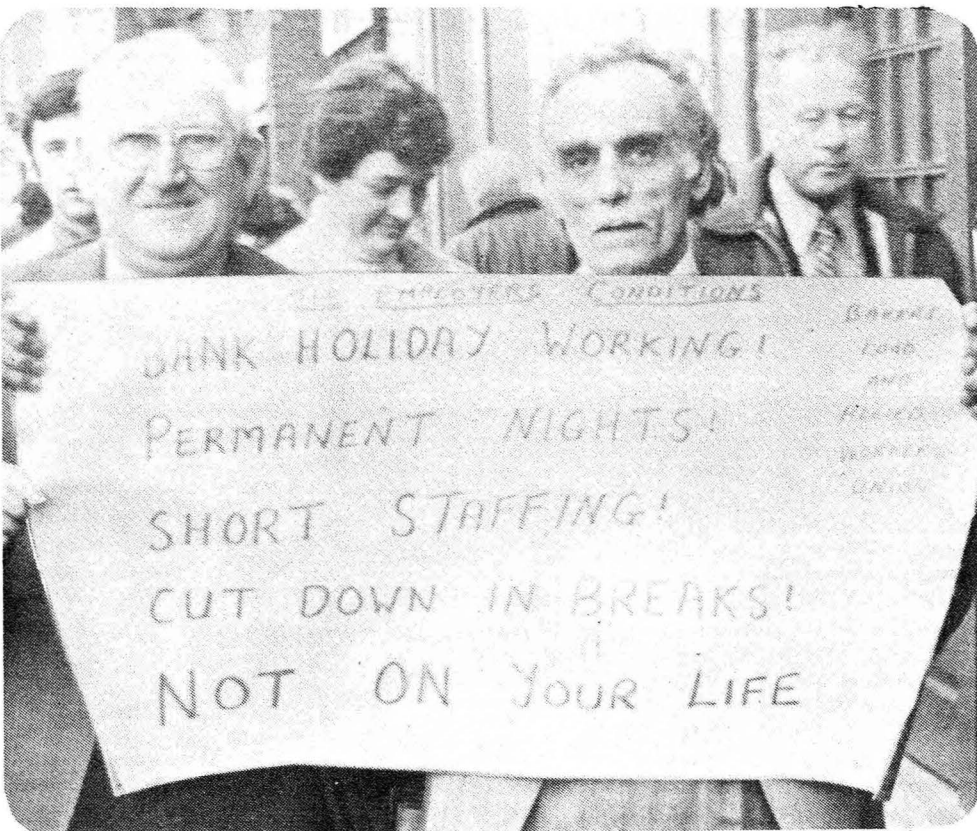
But this Ford strike has shown more workers than ever before the significance of achieving a 35-hour week. I don't feel that action taken by Ford workers alone will bring about a 35-hour week. We

need a national struggle, we need more backing from organisations like the TUC.

There are other aspects of the claim which have still not been met. We must go back, have a good think—and try again.

One of the most important achievements of this strike, for me anyway, is that people are more aware, they're more vigilant, and now they're beginning to see exactly what the situation in regards to capital and labour really is.

More on Fords, page 14



Outside the Bakers' recall conference on 18th November in Birmingham

FORD WORKERS SMASH 5%

continued from front page

In the end, they have had to agree to pay an increase of nearly 17%—9½% on the basic rate, 2% on holiday pay and 5% attendance allowance.

In the light of this, the majority of workers obviously swung in favour of acceptance, despite the shop steward's entirely justified reservations about the penalty clauses.

This sting-in-the-tail, in the form of the attendance allowance, remains in the company's offer—although the management were forced to water down the conditions before the National Joint Negotiating Council agreed to recommend acceptance.

At Dagenham, which employs about half of Ford's UK workforce, the vote was an estimated 5 to 1 for acceptance. At Southampton, only about 300 out of 3,500 at the mass meeting voted against a return to work, though there was no cheering as there was when the previous offer had been decisively rejected.

At Halewood on Merseyside, the stewards recommended rejection of the latest offer, but the mass meeting voted overwhelmingly for acceptance. This was not so much a vote against the stewards as recognition that the other plants were clearly in favour of a return.

Despite any disappointment at the limitations of the offer, particularly the penalty clauses, the strike has resulted in a substantial gain—and has strengthened the trade union organisation in the Ford Company.

There will now be a real determination to ensure that the management is not allowed to implement the penalty clauses in a way which is detrimental to the interests of the shop floor.

The demands for premium payments for line workers and for a shorter working week will remain as unfinished business to be taken up again

at the earliest possible opportunity.

The victory at Ford's will be a tremendous encouragement to other workers, particularly the bakers, now engaged in their own battle, and the local authority workers who will be fighting for a £60 minimum wage early in the new year.

If the Ford strike has done nothing else, it should have demonstrated to the Labour government that the 5% limit is not on. The Ford workers

made it certain that the Labour Party Conference decisively rejected the government's pay policy.

Now the whole movement must step up the fight to change the government's course. The Labour government must defend the just fight of all workers for decent pay and conditions—and carry through the socialist economic policies necessary to make this possible.

NEXT WEEK. SPAIN: The army's attempted coup/BELGIUM: Young Socialists move left/1918—eyewitness to the German revolution/BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS: Inheriting the bosses' crisis/FIGHTING THE NF: the CP's position answered/BAKERY WORKERS: Special centre-page feature.

SUPPORT BAKERY WORKERS

continued from front page

a loss. But we never see the books on milling!

To make industry viable it has got to be nationalised. The nation's bread would thus be produced for need and not for profit!

I have been a member of the Labour Party for 24 years. I'll always support Labour against the Tory Party. But I think the government should be supporting the policy of the Labour Party Conference. After all, that's what the conference is for!

The Labour Party Conference decided that the 5% policy was out. Then Jim Callaghan stood up and said he was sticking to it. He wouldn't hold office very long in the trade union movement with that attitude.

We are confident that we will win this strike.

The management have set themselves up with some scabs to bake bread. As time goes on, it is getting too hard

for them to continue.

On Tuesday morning, the management at Enterprise in Birmingham said they had had enough—and walked out.

People have been ringing up to ask if it's possible to appeal to the Executive against expulsion. Everybody has the right to appeal, and it would certainly help those who have broken the strike if they came out now.

Reports from the areas, see page 3

But, of course, the Executive are going to look very carefully at this situation. We don't want scabs in the ranks.

A vote of the membership will take place before any final settlement is made. There will be no second-rate deals done behind the scenes while I am General Secretary.

I have at least three meetings a week where I go down to the shop-floor. They can criticise me, slap me on the back or kick my pants. But I believe it is my duty as General Secretary to have these meetings.

Once you get your head in the clouds, you've lost contact with the working class. That is something I'll never do.

We have a just claim. Our call goes out to all trade unionists for support. Our fight is your fight!

SUPPORT THE BAKERS!
Militant Public Meetings
Speakers: Frank Childs [BF&WU National Executive]
Brian Ingham [Militant Industrial Correspondent]
NOTTINGHAM
Monday 27th November 8pm.
International Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Road.
MANSFIELD
Tuesday 28th November 7.30 pm.
Stag and Pheasant, Leeming Street.

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MILITANT: Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Editor: Peter Taaffe, Business Manager: Dave Galashan. Published by Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Tel: 01-986 3828. Printed by Cambridge Heath Press Ltd [TU], Mentmore Works, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.