

inside...  
**PAGE 15 CIVIL SERVANTS  
DEMAND A JUST WAGE!**

## CONCORDAT NO ANSWER - NO MORE WAGE RESTRAINT

# PAY £60 NOW

Who can live on less than £60 a week these days? Who can keep a family on less than that?

Yet the low-paid public service workers, who have been battling for five weeks for a living wage and a shorter working week, have been offered a derisory £3.50 to add to their scandalously low basic of £42.40 a week.

This 'nine per cent of nothing' has incensed these essential workers, and in meetings throughout the country this week thousands will rightly reject this insult (Comment, page 3).

The promises of comparability payments next August and in April 1980 are little consolation. If public-sector workers are underpaid and deserve more to catch up, why can't they be paid now?

For some, though, there is no waiting!

By Peter Jarvis

This week, while the low-paid were told the 'country' (i.e. big business) couldn't afford to pay them a living wage, Whitehall did give its approval for one particular increase.

For Norman Castle, a boss of the big food-trading company, S & W Berisford, collected a £4,080 a week pay rise. His annual salary leapt 350%, from a mere £60,500 to a rather better £272,672.

Board-room parasites in general, moreover, are not doing so badly. Public service workers are being held to 6%, less than the current rate of price increases.

Yet last year (first 9 months) profits were up 21% over 1977. **Continued on back page**



Low paid workers brave the snow on march organised by Hackney Trades Council and NUPE

Photo: MILITANT



## The man who plays 'Monopoly' for real

Just occasionally we catch a glimpse of how the rich live. Normally, it's when they fall out with one another.

This week it was in the obituary notices for one of Britain's richest landlords, the Duke of Westminster.

Just for starters he owned the land of 33 embassies, the south side of Oxford Street, most of Mayfair, and the whole of Belgravia. He was the one person who could have played Monopoly for real.

The new Duke and his wife, a descendent of the Tsarist Grand Duke Michael, will inherit the lot through the family business, Grosvenor Estates.

In case he finds it difficult to eke out a living on his London holdings, he will also own 100,000 acres in Scotland, 14,000 acres in Wales, an estate in N Ireland, and a mere 900 acres in Shropshire.

Abroad, he enjoys the possession of a 12,000 acre industrial site in W Canada, the city centre of Vancouver, parts of Hawaii, plus estates in Australia and Africa.

The new Duke only has three homes and will continue to live in his modern 14-bedroom country mansion, surrounded by 13,000 acres near Chester.

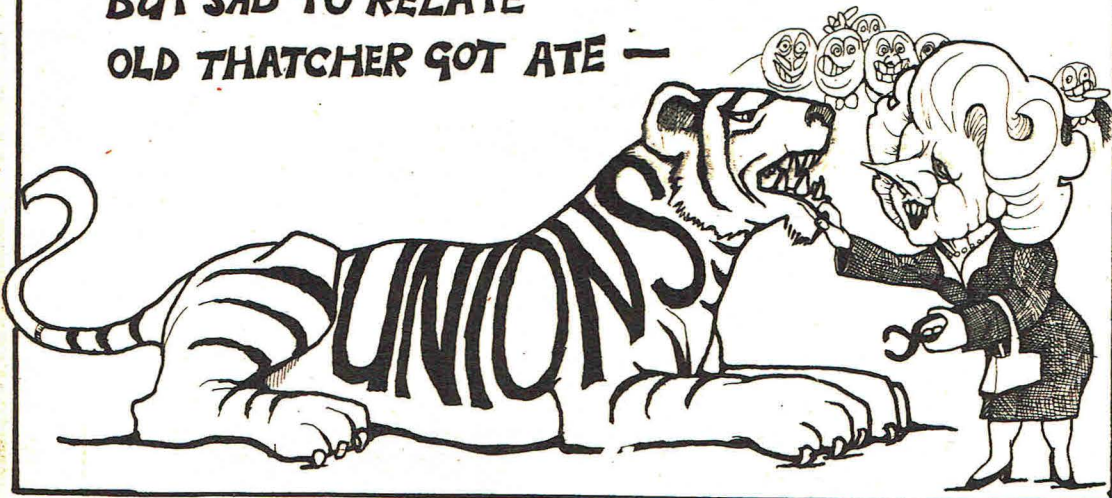
Finding good servants is, as always, a bit of a problem these days. Luckily Gerald and Tally (the new Duke and Duchess) have got a butler, housekeeper, chef, three maids and gardeners to be going on with.

The whole inheritance, according to the latest estimates, is worth about £2,000 million. "Prudent" legal arrangements, however, mean that none of this will be gained by the country in death duties. So much for the "penal" capital transfer taxes our aristocrats and capitalists always love to lament!

Now what was it Tory and right-wing Labour politicians say about it being 'one nation'? Perhaps they could tell us what on earth a worker has in common with the likes of the Duke.

First prize, a game of 'Monopoly' (only the board version, I'm afraid).

SMIRKED THATCHER WITH BOSSES BEHIND HER  
"I'LL RIP THE TEETH OUT OF THIS TIGER."  
BUT SAD TO RELATE  
OLD THATCHER GOT ATE -



- AND THE SMIRK  
WAS TRANSFERRED  
TO THE TIGER



Alan Hardman 18/2/79.

# DEFEND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

# Militant

## IRAN- POWER RESTS WITH THE ARMED WORKERS

Marxism explains that state power rests on 'armed bodies of men'. The correctness of this is shown by the development of the revolution in Iran.

The remaining thin threads of the Shah's power in Iran rested on his army commanders and the rest of the officer caste who remained loyal to the absolutist regime. It was on them and his Prime Minister, Bakhtiar, that the Shah rested his hopes of a counter-revolutionary comeback.

In every revolution the generals have muttered in their clubs: "Give me one reliable regiment and we will restore law and order", meaning the crushing of the workers and peasants so that the capitalists and landlords can again enjoy in tranquillity the surplus extracted from the labour of the workers and peasants.

In Iran, however, the soldiers and airmen were affected by the movement of the workers and middle class against the Shah's regime and its fig-leaf successor.

The generals had a reliable regiment, purged of dissidents, the Imperial Guard, the Shah's crack troops. These were used in an attack on the Air Bases, which were threatening to become bastions of revolution. "Put these down, execute the malcontents, purge the army, and then crack down on the masses with brutal repression," the generals calculated.

But as Karl Marx pointed out, the revolution sometimes needs the whip of the counter-revolution. The fighting at the Air Bases provoked an uprising, above all, of the workers.

Their Air Force comrades distributed all the spare weapons and ammunition to the insurgent masses. The attack of the Imperial Guard was beaten back and the regiment ingloriously

disintegrated.

The armed workers attacked the barracks of the troops in Tehran. Most of the soldiers, given an alternative to the hated regime, came over to the side of the revolution. They too are the sons, brothers and relatives of the workers and peasants. After 48 hours' fighting, the masses, principally the working class, were completely victorious.

In Tehran alone there are now 70,000 armed workers. They have fraternal relations with the soldiers and airmen who only too willingly hand out revolvers, rifles and machine guns. Even some tanks have been taken over by the masses.

The armed workers attacked the barracks. Most of the soldiers, given an alternative to the hated regime, came over to the side of the revolution.

Bakhtiar and many of the generals have been arrested. The worst criminals among them, who headed the monstrous SAVAK secret police and gave the orders to fire on unarmed demonstrators [killing over the last few months 10,000 to 20,000 people], have been executed. This was due to the pressure of the masses on the Ayatollah Khomeini, demanding justice for the murders committed by the gangsters in uniform.

But the real power in Iran now rests with the armed workers and the roused rank-and-file soldiers. As yet, they are not fully conscious of this power—though it has put fear and

dread into the hearts of the capitalists, landlords and big merchants.

The imperialist powers who backed and armed the Shah regard this development of the revolution with dismay and foreboding. For 25 years they backed reaction and military dictatorship in Iran as they did in Vietnam, Pakistan and other colonial countries. Now they have reaped the consequences.

Now with the new development of the revolution they are frenziedly clinging to the Ayatollah Khomeini for fear of worse from the masses. Khomeini has faced with misgiving and fear the revolutionary movement which has brought to power his nominee, Bazargan, and with him the liberal representatives of capitalism like the Foreign Affairs Minister, Sanjabi.

The Ayatollah's policy as revealed by his writings is thoroughly reactionary. He wants a return to the religious regime of the past when the Muslim religious hierarchy were handmaidens to the State with tremendous power.

He is fully in favour of capitalist property rights, apart from the Utopian objection to usury [interest in capital]. But modern capitalism cannot function without it, so if he retained power and influence the Ayatollah would inevitably be compelled so long as capitalism remains to bow the knee to Iranian and international bankers.

The main preoccupation of Khomeini and the new

government is how to break this new-found power of the masses.

This is why the Ayatollah has declared it a sin to possess arms. The government has demanded the handing back of the arms which have been seized by the masses. This gives them the real power.

Khomeini is also insistently demanding that the soldiers return to barracks. The worst criminals have been shot as a sacrifice. But Generals who are no different [except they were not so closely identified with the old regime's worst crimes] are to resume their commands.

Of course this is no

Khomeini faces with misgiving and fear the revolutionary movement which has brought to power his chosen government.

accident. Sanjabi, Bazargan and Khomeini all came out in favour of "the army" and the police [i.e. capitalist control of society through the officer caste] before the revolution had gathered strength. As far as they were concerned, the removal of the Shah and Bakhtiar were all that was required. A few cosmetic gestures: but everything else should remain intact.

But the masses see things differently. The armed workers do not wish to surrender their weapons, and at this stage can only be compelled to do so by force. They have fought bare-handed and with only sticks before. Their rifles are a firm comfort and an obstacle to reaction.

The SAVAK Secret Police have disappeared. Who is to force their disarming? Mass demonstrations of thousands of soldiers have taken place demanding the removal of the generals, refusing to return to barracks, and demanding a new "revolutionary army".

As a gesture to the masses, the government has "dissolved" the already disintegrated 'Imperial Guard' but there is no word about the Shah's generals put in 'command' of the troops. The government is hiding its time, hoping that the revolutionary mood of the masses will ebb as they return to work after months of general strike.

Here is a classical revolutionary situation as explained by Lenin. The real power is possessed by the armed workers and soldiers. There are committees of workers in the oilfields, factories and even the banks and offices.

A Marxist party in Iran now would suggest the open setting up—they may even exist now in secret—of delegated and elected soldiers' committees. These would be linked up throughout the country with a central committee in Teheran.

Even now the workers are distrustful of the liberal

government and have not complete faith in Khomeini either.

Yet instead of putting forward Lenin's policy in a similar situation in Russia—power to the committees and no trust in the government, with the expropriation of the banks, big business, the big merchants and landlords—the so-called Iranian Communist Party, the Tudeh, puts forward a policy of support for the government and the Ayatollah.

The British and other Communist Parties enthusiastically support this disastrous policy, the policy of Menshevism in the Russian Revolution. This new government is a Kerensky government in religious garb. It is suspended in mid-air. For the moment it has no armed forces on which it can rely except the volunteer guerrilla Muslims. They would not, as yet, be prepared for a clash with the armed workers and rank-and-file soldiers.

The government exists in a vacuum. There is no organised alternative in sight. But the imperialists are worried that the government will not be able to maintain control. They see that there will be new outbreaks, strikes and demonstrations when the masses see that the government will make no fundamental changes in the economic system and thus to their lives.

The submission and acceptance of capitalist slavery is ended. The masses are thinking, discussing and trying to find an alternative course.

The government, after some hesitation, have announced the 'radical' gesture of expropriating all the property of the Shah and his family.

That is an extensive part of land and industry in Iran. But appetite comes with eating. Most of the property in Iran is owned by 22 families, all cronies of the Shah. They gained this wealth by plunder, swindling and the favour of the Shah. The demand should be put for the expropriation of these 22 families.

The revolution in Iran in many respects is in advance of the revolution at its peak in Portugal. But the programme of the government is a purely capitalist one. Sanjabi has declared for a "democracy with an Islamic

identity. The economy will be mixed and both private investment and enterprise preserved." This is capitalism without the Shah.

For the moment, open reaction is weak. But unless the workers consolidate their power, it will inevitably develop. There is no room for a "liberal" capitalism in Iran. Inflation and the sickness of capitalism internationally means that the speculators will have a bonanza in Iran.

If there were a Marxist tendency in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, it would grow rapidly in the new workers' organisations, trade unions, committees, etc., which are springing up in Iran.

If the movement does not end in a victory for the socialist revolution there will be a dreadful reaction. The capitalists, landlords, the officer caste, and the imperialists are burning with a suppressed desire for revenge on the revolutionary masses.

The Shah gave the admonition to a secret meeting with his generals: "You must kill two million" to pacify the insurgent masses and restore control.

The Shah's regime is in the dustbin of history. But capitalists and landlords, as in Hitler's Germany and Franco's Spain, would be prepared for even more savage measures to safeguard the rule of capital.

In one day of revolution,

however, the masses learn more than in a year or a decade of 'normal' capitalist rule. The masses are continually discussing and thinking about events, as workers do in strikes, but with even greater tension and movement.

This is the essence of socialist revolution. The submission and acceptance of capitalist slavery is ended. The masses are thinking, discussing and trying to find an alternative course.

If they throw up a Marxist leadership, the socialist revolution will be victorious in Iran. The masses, armed with perspectives and clear goals, and mobilised for action, especially where they are armed as in Iran, are invincible.



## Public service offer falls far short of demands

## UNIONS MUST STEP UP FIGHT FOR VICTORY

workers have an outstanding case. With a basic rate of pay of £42.40 per week it came as no surprise to see the tremendous response to the one-day strike on January 22nd. Since then selective strikes have affected nearly every public service in the country. Roads have not been

A significant feature of the strike has been the uniting of the four trade unions at the workplace. Past rivalries and competition has been put to one side as shop stewards have jointly coordinated their action to maximum effect.

Management has been faced—in many cases for the first time—with the united opposition of the unions. Strike committees—elected from all the unions—will remain after the strike as Joint Shop Steward Committees which will break down union barriers and begin to make industrial unionism a reality.

## Delay

Workers in the water service have won a 16% pay increase without taking national strike action. The lesson is clear. What would these workers have won if they taken strike action? Their full involvement in the public service strike would have ensured a speedy and successful conclusion.

If the water workers were to have struck it would have

been more than an irritation—it would have been a major industrial conflict. The government reacted quickly to break their own 5% pay limit in order to avoid such a situation.

## The 9% offer is completely inadequate and must be rejected

Many workers in the water service will have become increasingly frustrated by their union leaders who week after week persuaded them not to strike "until the next week". Those frustrations should be positively channelled through the union machinery to develop and improve upon it.

Local authority, health service and ambulance service employers have now formally offered a 9% pay increase and an agreement to a comparability study with a payment in August 1979 and a further payment in April 1980. There has also been the offer of a small increase payable from a self-financing productivity deal.

Public service workers will be betterly disappointed with this offer which falls far short of the original claims. The question that all public service workers will be asking is: If the comparability study is going to show that these workers need a substantial increase, why can't this money be paid now?

It doesn't take a comparability study to show that £47.40 is a pathetic payment for a 40-hour week.

There is also the strong possibility that the government will subject any "comparability" payments to the incomes policy it is still trying to uphold.

The other question being asked is: what will such an agreement be worth if Labour were to lose the next General Election? The Tories would do nothing to improve the pay of these workers and would probably refuse to implement the findings of such a study.

A commitment now by the Labour government to the claim of the public sector manual workers and the battle against low pay would give a massive boost to the chances of Labour winning the election.

The effects of the union's selective action has varied from one part of the country to the next. In fact, only a tiny minority of the unions' membership have been involved in all-out strike action. Although this "guerrilla action"

can maximise the union's strength it can also create divisions and arguments among union members—a minority on strike and a majority at work.

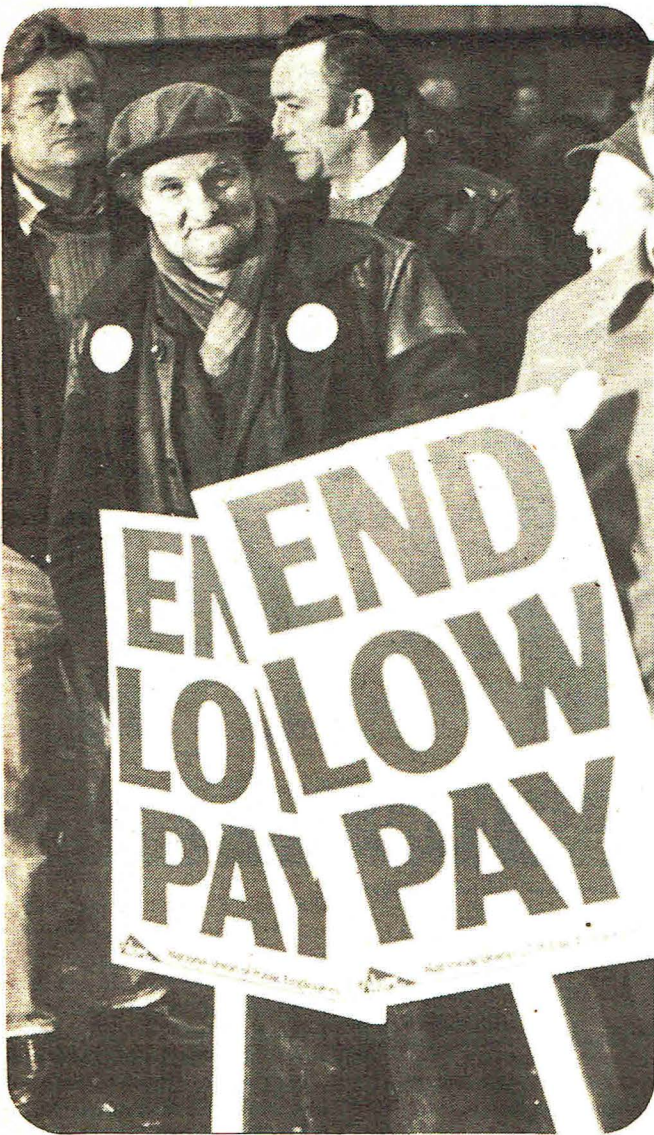
A quick and successful conclusion to this dispute is still possible. Not on the basis of a £3.50 per week increase and the promise of money for a comparability study—but on the basis of at least the increase won by the water service workers.

The union leaders should now be organising meetings throughout the country explaining the reasons for the present impasse and preparing the members for more extensive strike action.

If every service in the country—except emergency cover and services affecting the very young and the old—were to be brought to a standstill then the government would have to act quickly. They would soon find more money in the kitty to pay a decent living wage.

'Comparisons', 'promises' and 'sympathy' do not pay the rent or the bills.

The National Joint Coordinating Committee of the four unions should be transformed into a body which directs and organises effective strike action. The union's members have tremendous confidence and faith in their leaders and would quickly respond to such a strong and bold call.



Public service workers have now been on strike for five weeks.

Determination to win a decent pay increase has hardened as the press, media and TV have conducted the most vicious attack ever on workers in an industrial dispute. With complete hypocrisy millionaire newspaper magnates like Woodrow Wyatt have viciously attacked these low-paid workers, whilst ignoring the fact that cuts in public spending have closed hos-

pitals and extended waiting lists.

The press care to ignore the tens of thousands of old people who die every year from hypothermia. They care to ignore the hundreds of thousands who live in slums and poverty. Yet the members of NUPE, T&GWU, G&MWU and COHSE, who have taken strike action, are the very people who spend their lives looking after the old, the young and the sick.

No one can deny that these

## Worth a mention!

Joe Cox, a delegate to the Northern region conference of Labour Party Young Socialists gave a graphic example of conditions in the National Health Service.

Recently Joe suffered a burst ulcer for which he had to go into hospital. Originally he was told that he would have to stay in hospital for ten days. However, after six days he was told he would have to go home—because of a shortage of beds.

For his ulcer he was also prescribed tablets which the doctor told him cost £48 for two bottles. The doctor also remarked that the drug companies were ripping-off the NHS.

Joe was therefore sent home—but without the drugs, as there were no stocks. Two days later an ancillary worker brought the tablets around to Joe's house.

This was in the worker's own time and his house was twenty minutes walking time away from Joe's. Bet this would get a mention in the press.

## Report of LPYS Northern Conference next week



## Rubbish for Rubbish

Reg Deacon [Chairman Cardiff No 18 branch GMWU] and Doug Toutt on the picket line spoke to 'Militant':

Cardiff's dustmen initially voted to work during the low pay dispute, and about two-thirds of the refuse would have been collected. But management [i.e. Cardiff Tory council] told them they would work as normal or not at all. This deliberate provocation has led to an all-out dustmen's strike in Cardiff. Doug's wage slip showed a

take-home pay of £43 after being paid a bonus. This was for a driver—assistants get less and many have to claim FIS to make ends meet.

Because the employers' offer does not cover bonuses it would mean only 70p a week for most of the men!

Picketing has been very successful. If Jim Callaghan tried to cross the picket line, said Dave, they would persuade him not to. But if he did, it would show him up in his true colours. All the pickets felt angry

that they had been forced to take this action under a Labour government. They felt the government's attitude was bound to disillusion Labour voters. One thing was certain, however: the last person they wanted was Margaret Thatcher.

"We want £60 a week—I'm fed up of collecting rubbish and getting paid rubbish for it."

By Andrew Price and Chris Burns

## ANGRY RECEPTION

The workers of Portsmouth are about to be "graced" by a visit from Prince Charles. Local authority workers can't be paid a living wage, but his royal highness can, it seems, be granted the "freedom of the city".

However, the strike committee are organising a mass demonstration against the event and are holding up preparations for the visit.

Meanwhile, repairs to the heating system in the civic offices have not been done and many staff went home, despite management objections that legal minimum temperatures did not apply in an industrial dispute! Pleas from Tory councillors for "loyalty" and "Dunkirk spirit" fell on deaf ears.

Relations between the strike committee and NALGO are good with NALGO having an observer.

Sid Parkinson, Portsmouth NUPE branch secretary and Chairman, NUPE National NHS committee, told 'Militant':

"Since the action began we have had in Portsmouth branch 13 resignations and 65 applications for membership—so much for our unpopularity and divided ranks."

Sid emphasised that action has been taken to affect management not the patients.

"We are against volunteers. If any come in here this will mean a walkout and there will be no emergency cover.

Volunteers are not trained and will do more harm than good, particularly with children and dialysis patients.

"The lowest grade of porter on £36.60 is expected to know how to recognise and change up to ten types of gas cylinder: they must be right first time or the patient is dead."

## LPYS/NUPE MEETING

Following a rejection of strike action at a poorly attended mass meeting representing all public sector workers and unions in the London Borough of Ealing, Harry Leggett, NUPE branch secretary, told 'Militant' why he thought strike action is vital.

It would make all the difference in the world. Our shop stewards will meet this Wednesday to consider separate action by NUPE. If we went on strike we could close the schools when mock exams should be on, and we could get support from home helps, and from our members in special schools for handicapped and old people's homes.

There is to be a joint NUPE-LPYS public meeting on the public sector workers' dispute and low pay, at Ealing Town Hall at 7.30 pm on Thursday 8th March.

# YOUNG WORKERS NEED ORGANISED VOICE



TUC Youth Conference

Photo: MILITANT

## LPYS CONFERENCE

"I was sponsored to attend the conference by Area 4 of the NUM.

"You can't be a trade unionist without being politically minded; even the fight to get a decent standard of living has to be political.

"Conferences like this give us the assurance that someone is still fighting for a change in society.

"Other areas definitely ought to sponsor delegates to YS Conference. If they heard this kind of discussion, these ideas, blokes wouldn't withdraw Labour Party subscriptions, or let the Tories in."

Tom McGrady—Rossington Pit [Yorkshire NUM]

"It's been an excellent conference. I've learned a lot—it's been a really good education. It will certainly make a difference to me as a shop steward. The unions, the organised labour movement, are the key to the struggle for socialism. Trade union delegates to YS Conference are of paramount importance. Anyone who came this year will want to come back. The standard of debates, the fringe meetings were far superior to any I've ever experienced."

Bernard Lynch —Chrysler Linwood AUEW

These are just two of the comments made about last year's conference. They indicate that this year's conference is a must for every worker involved in a union or in the Labour Party.

Easter 1979 in Blackpool will be especially important as, in the three days of debate, the major item on the agenda is the new revised, 'Charter for Young Workers'. This is a campaigning document being put forward by the National Committee for discussion.

The Charter originates from the apprentices' str-

uggle to secure a government which will act in workers' interests. Probably that is why Joan Maynard of the Labour Party NEC once referred to the Charter as 'Dynamite', it blows a hole in the myths that young people are better off today and that they have to accept what the employers give them. Using the Charter, the LPYS have strengthened the official links with the trade unions. This year three joint schools have been held with the young members of the miners' union and one with the firebrigades' union. Hundreds of union bodies have supported the LPYS's Youth Campaign Against Unemployment. If you are a young member of a trade union don't leave it too late to see your local officials and see if they will send you and your friends to the conference.

If you can afford to pay for yourself ask the union to sponsor someone who can't, young apprentices, school students or unemployed. Your local LPYS branch will give you more details, but if you don't know where to find them write to Andy Bevan, Secretary of the LPYS National Committee, Transport House, London SW1.

Phil Frampton National Chairman LPYS

## TUC YOUTH CONFERENCE

By John Wilson (T&GWU delegate) and Steve Glennon (NSMM delegate)

The mood at this year's TUC Youth Conference was that this year something had to be done to give us a voice.

The major debate was on youth unemployment. John Golding MP Junior Employment Minister was the main platform speaker. His explanation of why youths can't get jobs was scandalous. He said:

"We have a substantial problem of unemployment among groups of young people. In a few areas the problem is general—in most, though, the problem of youth unemployment is primarily among the 'rough and tumble'—those who are not only least qualified, but are less attractive in other ways to employers, and also among black, ESN or handicapped youth".

Golding praised the Job Creation Schemes but did not seem to have any answer to the massive unemployment brought about by capitalism. His complacency was not matched by the delegates. From the floor young trade unionists raised the demand for the 35-hour week. Golding is sponsored by the POEU who have campaigned for such a demand.

But he told the conference "I only support the 35-hour week on two conditions, one if it doesn't mean more overtime and two that unit costs don't rise". As one delegate pointed out, that meant as long as it

doesn't eat into profits.

Time after time delegates put forward socialist solutions and class unity. Unfortunately Golding tried to divide conference between clerical and manual workers: "I'll accept arguments from UCATT every day of the week but I haven't much time for clerical workers." This was answered by a delegate from a Civil Service union who catalogued the working conditions facing young Civil Servants. The mood amongst delegates was not anti-Labour, but they were arguing against the Tories, Liberals, and right-wing Labour and in favour of socialist alternatives.

The afternoon saw another lively discussion, this time on democracy and the TUC youth. This mainly revolved around a National Society of Metal Mechanics motion which had been remitted at the 1978 conference. The resolution had called for a two-day Youth Conference, the right to discuss motions and the formulation of a youth charter.

Glyn James (NSMM and LPYS) moved that the Youth Conference should vote on this motion in order to express its views to the TUC

General Council. This was seconded, but then the Chairman ruled it out of order. Conference erupted. Delegates demanded the right to vote as a basic democratic right. The Chairman said that it was up to the individual unions to inform the General Council what they wanted.

We are sure that young trade unionists will now take this matter up in their branches and districts and call for a Conference along the lines of the NSMM motion.

The final session of conference was on a document on industrial strategy. The majority of delegates criticised the government's handouts to big business. These handouts and tax concessions are not reflected in increased production of wealth. Kevin Patterson (POEU and LPYS) pointed out that there was only £8,500 worth of capital investment behind every British worker compared to £23,000 for a German worker and £30,000 for a Japanese worker.

Another delegate took out his Labour Party card and said the only industrial strategy we needed was printed there in Clause 4 of the Party's constitution. And that summed up the mood of the conference—angry at present-day unemployment but determined to fight for an alternative socialist future.



Western workers outside the High Court last Friday when a judge threw out the bosses injunction against pickets. But there are battles yet to come Photo: MILITANT

# LABOUR PARTY FIGHTS

## FALMOUTH DOCKS CLOSURE

Falmouth constituency Labour Party held an extraordinary meeting to discuss what action to take over the announced closure of the local docks. This closure will result in the loss of 1,400 jobs, —in an area where unemployment is already double the national average.

After a heated debate the following resolution was passed:

"This GMC of Falmouth-Cambourne CLP resolves to defend the workforce of Falmouth Docks from closure and fully supports the proposals of the candidate P Tebbutt that the docks be made into a co-operative under workers' control and management.

"We further propose as a guideline that the management board of such a co-operative be composed of one-third representatives elec-

ted from the workforce of the docks who are most acquainted with the day-to-day work of the place, one-third representatives from the wider trade union movement and one-third representatives from central and local government involved in planning and administration most relevant to ship repair.

"We further resolve that we will fully support any action that the workforce undertake to obtain the fulfillment of the above demands."

The resolution will be included in a leaflet which will be circulated to the dockworkers, the town and the NEC of the Labour Party.

It will explain that the present type of nationalisation is capitalist based and therefore subjects the lives of the workers to the anarchy of the markets and finance. The alternative is nationalisation

as posed in the resolution which will democratically give the workforce and the labour movement control over the yard. It puts the onus on the Labour government to fulfill its responsibilities to serve the working class by co-ordin-

ating and making sure the supply of resources and work for the docks.

By Tim King

(Falmouth-Cambourne CLP)

## Stevenage Readers' meeting

A recent Stevenage Militant readers' meeting heard some quite revealing points from local workers.

A social worker pointed out that a pensioner member of the T&GWU she had met was only on £8.50 a week pension after 20 years' service as a porter at a local hospital. His wage slips for the six month period up to November 1978 showed an average of £35 per week and he said he had to work 14 hours' overtime to earn £42.

He was so sickened by the TV reporting of the public service workers' dispute that he was going to help on the picket line every day at the hospital although he had never done anything like that during his working life.

A hospital worker told the meeting that the day before Ennals had accused strike hospital workers of threatening lives, he had been responsible for the closing down of a kidney unit in a West London hospital.

# LEFT & RIGHT

## A Dog's Life

A round of applause please for gallant Matthew Parris. Our readers will of course remember him as the Tory who keeps jumping into the Thames to save dogs. Now he's busy saving Britain from a more vicious threat—strikes. Recently Parris has been touring South London collecting rubbish. But pity the poor lad—he's now finding the bags a bit heavy and he can't get a van for next week either. Parris' interest in rubbish is no part-time concern. His full-time job is working for Margaret Thatcher.

## Coalition = Collision?

David Steel is probably congratulating himself on the response to his recent party political broadcast. Apparently 20,000 letters were sent to the three Party leaders and MPs in support of Steel's tentative call for coalition government. Sometimes, however, slips of the pen reveal the real truth.

One of Steel's supporters wrote in to back up, in error, the Liberal leader's call for a "collision government". But that's the real dilemma for the capitalists. They would like a coalition government with a massive Parliamentary majority to attack the trade unions. But where would opposition go then? The Labour Party would split and its left wing could move far to the left.

Or as Margaret Thatcher put it recently: "if you combine all the good and talented men and women in one government to whom do you turn when the nation is disenchanted? To the extremists?"

## Car Politics

Judging a society by its cars does have its pitfalls, but it can be useful. The Soviet Union with minimal inflation and a centrally planned economy could easily become as big a car maker as the USA, according to the 'Financial Times' of 7th February. If it exported to the UK it would be up to 20% cheaper than most Western cars. This shows the enormous possibilities when ownership is removed from private hands.

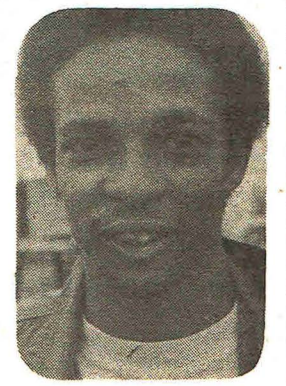
But those possibilities would be immeasurably more if control rested democratically with the working class instead of the bureaucracy. Cars in the Soviet Union tell you that also. A normal family saloon will cost more than two years wages of the average worker. But while Moscow workers wait for their buses, they might well see a Chaika go past. These apparently "follow the local custom, ignore red lights and people on pedestrian crossings, but attract salutes from every policeman." [Financial Times 7 February].

They might well "attract salutes". For the Chaika cannot be bought by private individuals; it is a vehicle for VIPs and near VIPs. But if you're a real top bureaucrat, you get driven round in a Zil, a car reserved exclusively for top 'Communist' Party officials.

Not exactly workers' control and management—yet.

# HEATHROW TESTS

## Typical of racist immigration controls



By Bob Lee  
(Secretary,  
PNP Youth)

The recent announcement a few weeks ago by the Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, that "internal" gynaecological tests on immigrant women are to be stopped has been cautiously welcomed by the black population in Britain and elsewhere.

The announcement was made following a wave of protests from black organisations and Labour MPs when it was disclosed in the 'Guardian' (1.2.79) that an Indian schoolteacher had been requested by immigration officers at London's Heathrow Airport to sign a form giving her consent to a "gynaecological examination, which may be vaginal, if necessary", in order to establish, say the Home Office, "whether she was, in fact, a bona fide virgin, or fiancée."

"I was most reluctant to have the examination," said the woman, "but I didn't know whether it was normal practice...I was frightened that otherwise they would send me back."

The woman, frightened and nervous, signed the form and was taken to a room where she was told to remove her clothing by an interpreter. She asked for a dressing gown to cover her body, "but it was not provided." She also asked to be seen by a lady doctor—a perfectly reasonable request for any woman not wishing to have her body molested by a man—"but they said no." She described the terrifying ordeal that followed:

"He [the doctor] was wearing rubber gloves and took some medicine out of a tube and put it on some cotton and inserted it into me. He said that he was deciding whether I was pregnant now or had been pregnant before. I said he could see that without doing anything to me, but he said there was no need to be shy."

### Degrading

It is not difficult to imagine the outcry that would follow if the same thing happened to the daughter of a Tory MP in a foreign country. So what is the justification for the use of such "tests" in so-called "civilised" Britain?

According to a statement issued by the Home Office, the school teacher, who had entered this country as a fiancée, was examined because an Immigration Officer "suspected that she might have been married and wanted an opinion on whether she had borne children."

The entire labour movement must unequivocally condemn these barbaric tests. Socialists, who are opposed to all forms of immigration controls, should not enter into argument concerning the marital status of black women who choose to emigrate to this country. We support (without any qualification) the right of any worker to settle in the country of his or her choice.

In this particular instance, given the obscene nature of these tests, it is essential that we expose the spurious reasoning used to justify them and look more closely at the real motives that lay behind gynaecological examinations. The plain truth is that "virginity tests" are totally unreliable and prove absolutely nothing! They cannot conclusively show whether a woman is a virgin, and certainly cannot prove whether a woman is married.



What reception will she get in Britain?

In a statement Dr Robert Winston, a gynaecologist at Hammersmith Hospital said: "Any kind of internal examination for a woman can be extremely emotional and psychologically disturbing and cannot be the equivalent of, for example, listening to the heart." The tests could not prove "that she had been pregnant" or that "she was even a virgin."

These tests which are not carried out anywhere else in the world, are a particularly sordid example of the endless harassment and persecutions black people have to face before and after they enter this country. Sanctioned under the racist immigration laws, the tests are assigned to degrade and humiliate immi-

grants. That is the motive behind them.

The question now being asked by many black workers is why has it taken so long for the Labour government to abolish this scandalous practice? These tests have been going on for at least ten years. Indeed, immigrant organisations had reported cases of women being subjected to this treatment as long ago as 1968.

This question assumes even greater importance now that the labour movement has learnt that this practice was, in fact, abolished some years ago by former Labour immigration minister, Alex Lyon MP, who has said that he gave explicit orders to immigration officers in Britain and

in the Indian sub-continent to stop the tests.

The fact that a directive given by a Minister of the government was completely ignored raises some very important questions about the relationship between the civil service and a Labour government, particularly in the grey area of immigration controls.

The immigration laws confer a wide range of discretionary powers on the officials who administer them. And many of them have been shown to be out and out racists. Not long ago one immigration officer at Heathrow openly boasted of being a member of the National Front, and admitted that many of his fellow officers were either members or sympathisers.

### Fight harassment

These are the type of people black immigrants have to face daily; officials with powers that virtually make them a law unto themselves. The Immigration Act, 1971, provides a licence for immigration officers to carry out a systematic campaign of harassment and persecution against blacks.

The immigration laws, and the wholesale victimisation of blacks by the state, presents an enormous danger to the entire British working class. White workers in Britain cannot afford to allow black workers and their families, the most oppressed section of the working class, to bear the brunt of the oppressive racist laws, and the state apparatus that enforces them, any more than they can allow blacks to be used as the scapegoats for the failures of the capitalist system.

While we must welcome the Home Secretary's decision to abolish internal gynaecological tests, at the same time it is important to recognise that only a concerted socialist campaign to end all immigration controls, organised and enforced by the labour movement, can ensure an end to racial and class oppression.



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# WORKING MOTHERS DEMAND A FAIR DEAL

Only two out of every hundred children under five whose mothers go out to work have places in local authority day nurseries. Even less have places in employers' nurseries or creches.

These startling facts came to light in a Gallup Poll survey commissioned recently by the 'Woman's Own' magazine.

It shows that, scandalously, at least 100,000 children aged 5-10 regularly have to be left alone for all or part of the day; in a quarter of homes where the mother goes out to work neither parent is at home when the kids get back from school; and that 27% of women with children under five and 20% with school-children over five don't work but would like to.

Why do women go to work, or want to, despite these difficulties?

According to the survey, for a quarter of working mothers, one wage packet is not enough to support the family. A further third work in order to afford little 'extras' for the family. An estimate has been made that three times as many families would be eligible for 'supplementary benefit' if the mother did not work.

Four out of five of those at

By Lorna Oliver

(Hackney Central LPYS)

work and at home said they would still, however, want an escape for at least some of the time from the pressure of home and kids by going out to work, even without financial pressure.

The jobs working mothers are forced to take are often part-time, with unsc. hours and low wages. Two-thirds work as semi-skilled unskilled manual workers, compared to one-third of all women workers and one-fifth of men.

The average wage of working mothers is about 90p per hour compared to £1.48 for women workers, and £2.49

Many are forced into homeworking, with extremely low wages—often below 30p an hour.

More than a third of women with children under five work evenings or nights—



Working on poverty wages

Photo: Angela Phillips/IFL

because the only adequate child care they can get is when their husbands are at home.

'Women's Own' also takes up the question of the fathers' part in child care. They show that overwhelmingly women are left with the responsibility of looking after the children. Society, through school, books, TV and the Church, conditions us to believe that women's role is to be a wife and mother.

But things are changing: 96% of those interviewed for the survey believe local authorities should provide facilities for children during school holidays, and more than half want enough nursery places for pre-school children to meet demand. Two-thirds of mothers with children already at school believe that mothers shouldn't be forced to stay at home and that care should be provided

for children under five.

'Women's Own' put part of the blame on the fact that the responsibility for children is split between the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of Education and Science. They want readers to lobby both political parties for better child-care facilities.

But however good the intentions, all the polite lobbying in the world won't

outweigh the harsh fact of life, that capitalism puts profit first. Lobbying the Tories is a bit like applying to the CBI for a living wage—nothing, however just or necessary, that cuts the bosses' takings will be 'given' willingly.

## Unions

Working class women have been the first to feel the effects of cut-backs: in jobs, wages or in basic public services like nurseries, precisely because they are regarded as a temporary part of the workforce, too disorganised to fight back effectively.

But increasingly they see themselves as women and as workers, with a right to a job and a decent wage. Women are joining the trade unions in large numbers—over 3½ million in 1977.

This is where the real fight must go on for full nursery and child care facilities for all who want them, for a minimum wage, training and job opportunities. It is only fighting as part of the labour movement, for a society in which need is put before profit, that working men and women will win a 'fair deal' for themselves and their children.

## STEEL CRISIS

### - a condemnation of capitalism

By Eileen Short

Steel workers face catastrophe. 17,000 jobs have disappeared in the steel industry in the last year alone.

This is the bleak picture of British industry's relentless decline drawn in this year's report by the iron and steel working party, set up by the National Economic Development Council.

In Britain, demand from industry for steel has not risen noticeably after the slump in 1975-76, and with the prospects for the shipbuilding, construction, mechanical engineering and car industries 'poor in the short term'; the working party, made up of employers, the steel unions and civil servants, holds out little hope of much improvement. By 1985 demand, they say, may regain 1973 levels.

The British Steel Corporation is losing money—up to an estimated £350 million in this financial year. Some private companies are 'barely profitable'; "profit expectations are poor."

And who is expected to pay the price? The workforce. Both private steel and, scandalously, the nationalised BSC, show no hesitation in throwing off labour as the vagaries of the market dictate. Furnaces shut down, whole works closed and silent, traditional steel areas reduced to ghost towns. Workers idle, their skills wasted, with little hope of another job.

The report states that although world demand for steel is rising, the British industry is failing to corner a share. Among the major steel producing nations, Britain had 4% of the export market in 1978, compared with nearly 7% in 1971.

With much of its plant starved of investment over more than a decade, outdated and inefficient, even the home market is being lost to foreign imports. Britain's steelmakers' share of the home market fell to below 80% for the first time in 1978.

'Unfair', 'dumping', squeal the owners and management. The working party complains that European steel companies are refusing to "honour the spirit of the Davignon plan by continuing to sell into the United Kingdom at

very low prices." But if British steel costs more than its international rivals, then clearly it will be undercut.

Less than 70% of steelmaking capacity is being used; an accusing finger is pointed at 'overmanning' and falling output per employee. But in its own words, the report indicates the real root of the problem. In the newer, expanding areas of the market—strip, heavy plate and special steels—the inefficiency, under-investment and bad planning show most clearly; British producers are dwarfed.

Given its present state of decay, the British steel industry, if it cannot compete, will inevitably be driven to the wall. Without investment, research into new production techniques and uses, linking up with the changing needs of industry, it is doomed to extinction, and with it the jobs of millions of workers.

But the same could apply to the rest of run-down British industry. Without a quick profit to be made, for capitalism there is no logic in investing in manufacture, construction or any of the traditional British industries. If property speculation, antiques and paintings, tourism and service industries are more lucrative, that's where the money will go.

The 'logic' of capitalism is no logic at all. If, in the interests of profit, the jobs, communities and very existence of the mass of the population are to be sacrificed, what is the justification for that system?

Of course we need steel—to re-tool and modernise industry, to build homes and replace the slums, for new schools and hospitals. Developing countries are crying out for farming equipment, machinery, transport systems.

BSC has been sucked dry by private industry; with all its most profitable sections hived off to private owners.

If the whole of the iron and steel industry were taken out of the hands of private owners and run democratically by the labour movement as part of a rational plan for industry, to serve the needs of society rather than the whims of capitalism, then the threat of wholesale destruction to the steel industry—the life blood of industry—can be averted.

## LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY:

### A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

A number of crucial decisions have been taken at the February meetings of the sub-committees of Labour's National Executive Committee. All of them have yet to be ratified by the full NEC, but they represent a tremendous step forward for the Labour Party.

At the Organisation Committee a move led by Frank Allaun to recommend the waiving of the three-year rule and allow the issue of re-selection to be discussed at this year's party conference was carried. Last year's conference, after a heated debate, was robbed of a decision when Hugh Scanlon cast his delegation's vote the wrong way and thus allowed the NEC's proposals to be carried despite much opposition from delegates.

The issue of re-selection is undoubtedly of crucial importance to Labour Party activists, a fact that was highlighted at last week's meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party in the speeches of some MPs.

Jack Ashley was reported as saying that people shouldn't blame the government for the present situation, but "should be condemning the better-paid workers." Another said: "The working class is better off today than at any time in history," and that the PLP is entitled to "ask the trade unions to realise the realities of life."

One MP, a solicitor by profession, even called for "a law to protect, and in some cases prohibit, the expulsion

of people from unions."

Statements like these from people drawing a basic salary of over £6,000 a year, more than millions of union members earn, clearly demonstrate the need for more control by Constituency Labour Parties over MPs. Would these "Labour" MPs argue the same points to their CLPs or to public service workers as they apparently do in their private meetings of the PLP?

At the 1974 Labour Party Conference a number of CLPs tabled a resolution calling for the PLP and the government to be "directly responsible to the Annual Conference of the Party, and that between conferences the activities and politics both of the PLP and the Labour government as such, shall also be subject to the fullest control of the Executive Committee of the Labour Party."

Does this not apply as much today as it did in 1974?

The propaganda work of the Labour Party is crucial if the Tories are to be defeated at the next election. The Press and Publicity Committee's decision to call for all party political broadcasts to be under the direct control of the NEC through the press committee would be a giant advance for the party. It would remove the calamitous control that 10 Downing Street has had in the past over broadcasts which has resulted in party policy rarely being mentioned on key issues such as "wage restraint"! The refusal to allow any reference to a 35-hour week in the youth broadcast last summer was one example of what has happened in the past. Clearly reflecting the

pressure of the rank-and-file, the NEC is now beginning to take up policy decided by conference and not that dictated by the government.

The decision of the Home Policy Committee to back a motion from Tony Sauniois (Young Socialists representative) supporting the efforts of the public service workers "to eradicate low pay"—in line with last year's conference decision calling for a minimum wage—is an indication of this. This, however, was too much for some of the right wing like John Goulding, who fought unsuccessfully to defeat the resolution.

The Youth Committee also took some important decisions in supporting a move to include Tony Sauniois from the LPYS in discussions on the work of the National Youth Officer during the general election, something the right wing had tried to block at the previous NEC.

These decisions of the NEC sub-committees mark a big step forward for the Labour Party. Pressure must now be put on all NEC members from CLPs and unions to ensure that they are endorsed at the full NEC.

Clearly the days when the party leaders and officials could have it all their own way are over. Now the NEC must lead a real campaign on the issues of party democracy and a socialist programme to ensure the aspirations of the labour movement are fulfilled.

By George Williamson

# COUNCIL RATES

# Where does the money really go?

For the last few weeks the press, radio and television have screamed us that if council manual workers get a penny more than 5% there will be rates rises of at least 30-40%, in particular, they claim, in 'spendthrift' Labour councils.

The media plug the Tory line (echoed unfortunately by the Labour leaders) that wages must be held down, council rents rise and expenditure be cut back for the fourth or fifth year running to prevent a huge jump in the rates bill.

This is the line for public consumption but the London 'Evening Standard' blew the gaffe on this on their city page. They showed where the councils' rate money really goes by revealing gleefully that London's Camden council is borrowing £1,500,000 at a new high interest rate of 13.375% per annum.

Camden's debt now totals £325 million, an increase of 71% in three years (this means that £1,719 is owed to the money lenders by every man, woman and child in Camden!).

Debts have been incurred by Labour councils over the last few years, particularly in inner-city areas all over the country as the cost of tackling the terrible problems of the thousands of homeless and the millions living in housing lacking basic necessities.

They have been incurred at the cost of building sheltered accommodation and day-care centres for the elderly and handicapped, and of provid-

**By Malcolm McAskil**

(former Islington Councillor)

ing parks, sports facilities and youth clubs.

The list is endless. Yet we are told these vital services have to be cut to keep rates rises at a reasonable level. No mention is made of the crippling cost of interest payments, which go not to those in need, but to the grasping banks and insurance companies.

Islington is an Inner London borough where in the late 1960s most of the housing was multi-tenanted Victorian terraces, heavily overcrowded and in very poor condition with a waiting list of at least 10,000 families.

It was probably higher as a large percentage of immigrant families were unaware of their rights or did not qualify under rules in force at the time. The borough also has one of the lowest amounts of open space (parks and games pitches) in the country.

Another problem was that the de-industrialisation of Inner London deprived the boroughs of a lot of their rate income as well as jobs. This type of problem also inevitably meant greater expenditure on social services was necessary.

The Labour council was determined to tackle these problems. Revenue expenditure rose from £15 million in 1973/74 to £38 million in 1978/79 and in the same

The two articles on this page show that the cost of giving council employees a living wage could be easily met by tackling the problems of interest repayments and the use of private contractors.

period capital expenditure rose from £33 million to £53 million. Most of this went on new housing.

The rate rose from 44 pence to 82.3p over the same period. But the main result of this expansion was that borrowing from the money lenders

increased.

The total debt on March 31st 1974 was £137 million. This year's budget projects it reaching £353m by this March.

Debt charges, i.e. the cost of interest, increased from 1973/74's £10 million to an estimated £36 million for 1978/79. Rate income for the same periods by comparison was £20m in 1973-74 and £40 million this year.

Therefore in the current financial year 90 pence in the pound of all rates income in Islington is going directly to the money lenders!

The total council wage bill for 1978/79 was budgeted at £27 million for about 5,700 staff. That is £9 million less than is swallowed up by the money lenders.

This is even more glaring as £32.7 million interest charges are paid on the housing account yet wages only cost £7.8 million to the housing account.

These figures must finally blast the lies of the capitalists. It is they who are bleeding the councils not trade unionists seeking a living wage.

The only solution to the problems of councils like Islington must be the nationalisation of the banks and insurance companies with an immediate moratorium on investment charges.

This must be the policy fought for by Labour councillors when cuts and increases in rates and rents are threatened. Why should workers suffer to benefit the rich shareholders in banks and financial institutions?



Banks rob man. Above: Council housing [Inset: Bank of England]

# CONTRACTORS

Apart from the unbelievable sums spent on repayment of debt charges, one of the biggest drains on council finance is their frequent reliance on private contractors, for building work in particular. Southwark Trades Council have produced an excellent broadsheet in response to the threatened run-down of the local council's main direct labour department to a quarter of its present size.

Quite apart from showing the effect this will have on employment in Southwark, the broadsheet is a clear indictment of the stranglehold private firms can have over council housing plans.

They show the colossal delays and overcharging associated with contract work. Every building scheme put out to contract in the borough had overspent their original estimates: on average by 32%. This amounted to £8 million! In the worst case a large firm overshot the mark by £2 million on one 300 house development. And they were 2½ years behind schedule. So much for the efficiency of private 'enterprise'. On average these schemes were over a year late on completion.

In a number of instances

**By Roger Shrives**

Protest against private builders in S London



the contractors have gone bankrupt leaving the direct work schemes to pick up the pieces. Many other boroughs suffer similarly due to the unreliability of contract work. In Southwark's case it is made worse first by the cutbacks in Southwark Construction, and secondly by the fact that private contractors even have their fingers in the direct work scheme.

For Southwark Construction is not an ordinary Direct Works Department. All the senior management positions are taken by management from that well-known philanthropic organisation, Bovis Ltd., the contractors (director Sir Keith Joseph), who get £140,000 consultancy fees plus £156,000 from the council for payment of seconded staff.

To quote the document:

"Bovis is a private contractor. Its parent company, P&O, gave £7,500 in 1977 to British United Industrialists—a backer of anti-nationalisation propaganda and the Tory Party. Whilst managing Southwark Construction, Bovis has also undertaken housing work itself for the council.

"Bovis is also a member of

# CONTRACTORS HAVE A STRANGLEHOLD

Direct Labour. Rebuilding Southwark Construction available from Southwark Trades Council, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. Price 5p.

the London Builders' Conference. Its members agree to swap information on tender bids. The conference claims to know details on 60% of all contracts in London and the South East over £60,000.

"Its director has admitted in the trade press that members 'cover price', or, in other words, they put in artificially high bids. The effect of this is that the contractor with the lowest tender looks as though they won the job in fierce competition.

"At least five other contractors building houses for Southwark are in the London Builders' Conference...

"Southwark Construction has no estimators to draw up tender bids for work in competition with private contractors.

"This is done in Bovis' head office. Yet Bovis not only manages Southwark Construction, but is also a private contractor out to win work, a member of the

NFBTE (which attacks direct labour), and a member of the London Builders' Conference."

So, in a borough with 8,000 families on the waiting list, and 1,375 building workers on the dole, housing is left to the tender mercies of contractors hungry for profits.

The cutting of the direct labour force will make matters worse. Clearly workers in Southwark will have to struggle not only to maintain Southwark Construction, but to ensure it is under the democratic control of the Labour council and the labour movement.

But the broadsheet will be of interest not only in Southwark but to all workers, as a graphic example of the leech-like activities of the private contractors, and the clear superiority of a decent direct labour scheme.

# BRITAIN

Many workers must be surprised at the fury and the hysterical bayings of the press, TV and radio against the organised workers in the unions.

This has been orchestrated by the CBI, the monopolies, the Tories and the Liberals. To their shame, many right-wing Labour leaders have joined in this hyena chorus of capitalism.

This outbreak of capitalist mental sickness has been caused by the strikes of the railwaymen, lorry drivers and council workers. But the utter cynicism and depravity of the media, probably unequalled by the yellow press anywhere in the world, are shown by the exposure in our paper of the lies distortions and trumped-up cases of distress "caused by strikes", particularly concerning the low-paid public service workers.

Not a word appears about the nightmare of living on wages inadequate to cover rent, food, clothing and other essentials. Nothing is too vile or too false to use to incite the middle class and backward layers against workers fighting for a bearable civilised standard of living.

This is the class struggle carried to an 'extreme' by the representatives of the monopoly millionaires. But it is the sickness of capitalism not the severe winter conditions which has driven the

capitalists insane. There is method in their madness.

British capitalism is losing ground year after year in the struggle for world markets and even in its own home market.

There have now been three years of belt-tightening and sacrifice by the working class through the social contract and cuts in the 'social wage' (education, health, social services, transport).

The Chancellor, Dennis Healey, boasted to the Institute of Directors that Britain (i.e. British capitalism) had the lowest wages and the biggest subsidies to big business of any industrialised country in the world. In fact, the working class have been reduced to the position of being the 'coolies' of Western Europe.

On the other hand, the social contract resulted in a bonanza of profits for big business. In 1976 profits shot up to £7,408 million after allowing for stock apprecia-

tion, an increase of 28.9% in comparison with the previous years. In 1977 they further increased to £10,767 million, up by 45.3% over the previous year.

In the first nine months of 1978, profits amounted to £9,498 million, an average increase of 21% on the first nine months of 1977.

But the figures for investment did not go up. In fact, between 1975 and 1976 the amount invested in manufacturing industry actually fell from £3,522 million to £3,345 million. In 1977 there was a small increase to £3,513 million and in 1978 to £3,860m (all at 1975 prices). None of these figures though reaches the investment level of 1970 (£4,196 million).

British capitalist industry has become monopolised and parasitic. The capitalists are short sightedly grasping at the most immediately profitable investment. Thus they invest enormous sums abroad; in service trades; exploited industries like catering; in property speculation, Stock Exchange gambling, tourism and land. Anything but productive industry.

The amount invested in 1970 (in 1975 prices) in the service trades was £3,669 million. By 1978 it had reached £4,690 million, far in excess of that in manufacturing. The estimate for 1979 is £4,920 million. This shows an increase of over a third. That leaves out of account vast sums invested outside Britain. In consequence, British capitalism (in the words of an article tucked away in 'The Times' business columns) is in "irreversible decline."

## Competitiveness

Chancellor Healey, thundering against the workers for breaking the 5% limit, does not take the same stern attitude towards the capitalists. He accepts the crisis of capitalism and tries to unload the burdens on to the backs of the working class.

But the failure to invest means that British capitalism cannot compete on home and foreign markets.

The steel industry's plight is indicative of the general position of British capitalism. One German worker produces as much as three British workers. One Japanese worker produces as much as three German workers. So nine British workers produce only as much as one Japanese steelworker, not because Japanese or German workers work harder, but because more is invested there in modern industry.

It is estimated that this year 54% of cars sold on the British market will be of foreign make. Britain has dropped from second place in the production of cars to sixth or seventh.

Despite greater profits than their rivals in the past (and even now) the British capitalists have failed, even under the most favourable conditions of wage restraint to

use the surplus extracted from the labour of the working class to invest adequately in manufacturing industry.

The 'Financial Times', the journal of big business, for December 17th, 1978 quotes Chancellor Denis Healey as saying to a TUC strategy conference in Birmingham: "The reason why Britain's rate of economic growth is expected to fall off next year is because industry will be unable to stand up sufficiently to competition either in home or export markets."

Manufacturing and semi-manufacturing imports increased by 14% in 1978. Manufacturing and semi-manufacturing exports only by 7%. We have the frank words of Dennis Healey that in 1979 the position will be even worse.

For him there is no question of screaming at the CBI and the capitalists for "letting down the country". On the contrary his strictures are against the low-paid working class victims of the social contract.

As Britain's decline continues, no doubt the right-wing Labour leaders together with the press, CBI and Liberals will blame the disastrous situation on the

workers. The working class has the temerity to fight to regain living standards lost over the last four years of "austerity"!

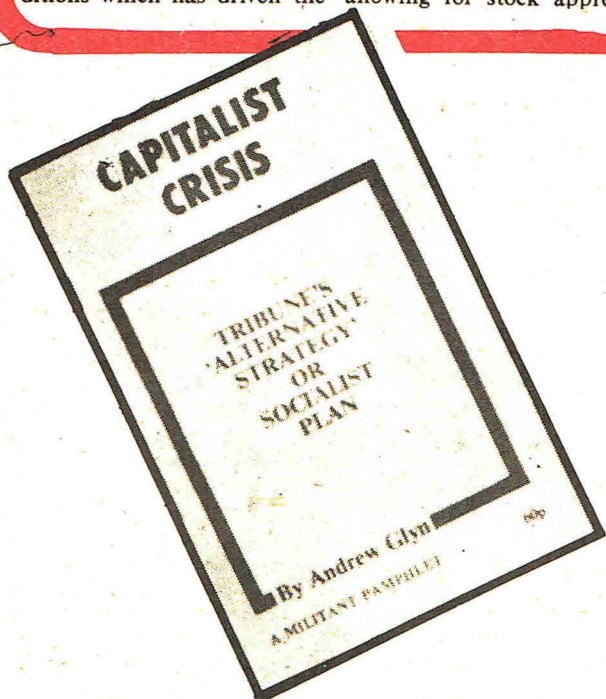
But as a result of the capitalist crisis, the workers are on a treadmill. The monopolies will try to cancel out wage increases by raising prices despite the problems of world competition. Failing to succeed in this way they will exert pressure on the government or engineer a devaluation by provoking panic on the foreign exchange markets.

## Inflation

This debasing of the currency "at a stroke" will wipe out the gains of the Herculean and heroic struggles of the workers to regain living standards. Then the reactionary media will glibly trumpet out that higher wages have caused inflation.

But inflation will be caused by higher prices for the food, raw materials and manufactured goods imported. This is because the £'s 'value' will fall in relation to other currencies.

In any event, prices of food and raw materials, as well as manufactured goods on world



For a full analysis of the British economic crisis—read 'Capitalist Crisis: Tribune's "Alternative Strategy" or Socialist Plan" by Andrew Glyn

Price 60p (+ 10p postage and packing) from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN





# IN CRISIS



An analysis of the British economy by Ted Grant

**CAPITALISM**

markets are increasing, inevitably giving a twist to the inflationary spiral.

However, after their previous painful experiences of devaluation, one of the main causes of inflation, the ruling class will only turn to this drug reluctantly. It requires bigger and bigger doses to have the same effect. On the road of devaluation there is only a dead end.

But the 'alternative' of incomes policy, which means squeezing out a greater surplus from the labour of the working class, has been tried since 1948 by successive Tory and Labour governments. When the workers have seen that it is just a racket to increase the share of the employers at the expense of the working class, they have inevitably resisted and the policy has broken down.

The policies of reformism, of gradually reforming capitalism, have been shown to be bankrupt. We have consequently had from the Labour government the adoption of vicious Tory policies. They abandoned the policy of increasing state expenditure (except for arms), and adopted the policy of slashing cuts.

The renegade Prentice, now a Tory candidate for Parliament, has blurted out

that there are at least four Cabinet Ministers and dozens of Labour MPs who agree with him and his Tory policies.

This is because many of the middle and upper class Labour MPs live no differently from their Tory peers.

They believe in capitalism, the so-called "mixed economy", and therefore are prepared to hold down the living standards of the workers in order to bail out the system.

Consequently the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party are forced into the position of openly advocating strike-breaking; of crossing picket lines to try to defeat workers struggling for wage increases. But it was Trotsky who wrote that nobody can break the will of the working class to transform society.

It is because they can see no other course than trying to prop up 'diseased' capitalism that the right-wing reformists behave in this way. Not prepared to 'take on' big business they are forced to 'take on' the working class.

On the basis of accepting the capitalist system, without fundamental changes, there is a crazy logic in this position. It is the needs of the economic system which forces them to

the position of counter-reformism.

Neither inflation nor deflation can serve the interests of the working class. Of course 'Militant', as a Marxist paper, supports increasing vitally necessary state expenditure on social services. It supports every struggle for wage increases. But when there is a fundamental crisis of capitalism these gains are cancelled out.

## Transformation

There is no enduring solution to the problems facing the working class under capitalism. But in the struggle for higher wages and better conditions and hours the workers will come to recognise the need for a fighting socialist programme and the transformation of both the Labour Party and the trade unions. It is necessary to make Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution a living reality.

The programme of 'Militant' will become the programme of the working class and the labour movement. There is no other course for the working class if they are not to face catastrophe. It is impossible to plan capitalism. The national and world markets are dominant in this system.

The labour and trade union movement must break with capitalism. Labour must be committed to introduce an Enabling Act to break the power of capital. The House of Lords and the Monarchy, both of them reserve weapons of capitalism, must be abolished. The banks and insurance companies plus the 200 monopolies which control 85% of the wealth must be nationalised with compensation only on the basis of proven need.

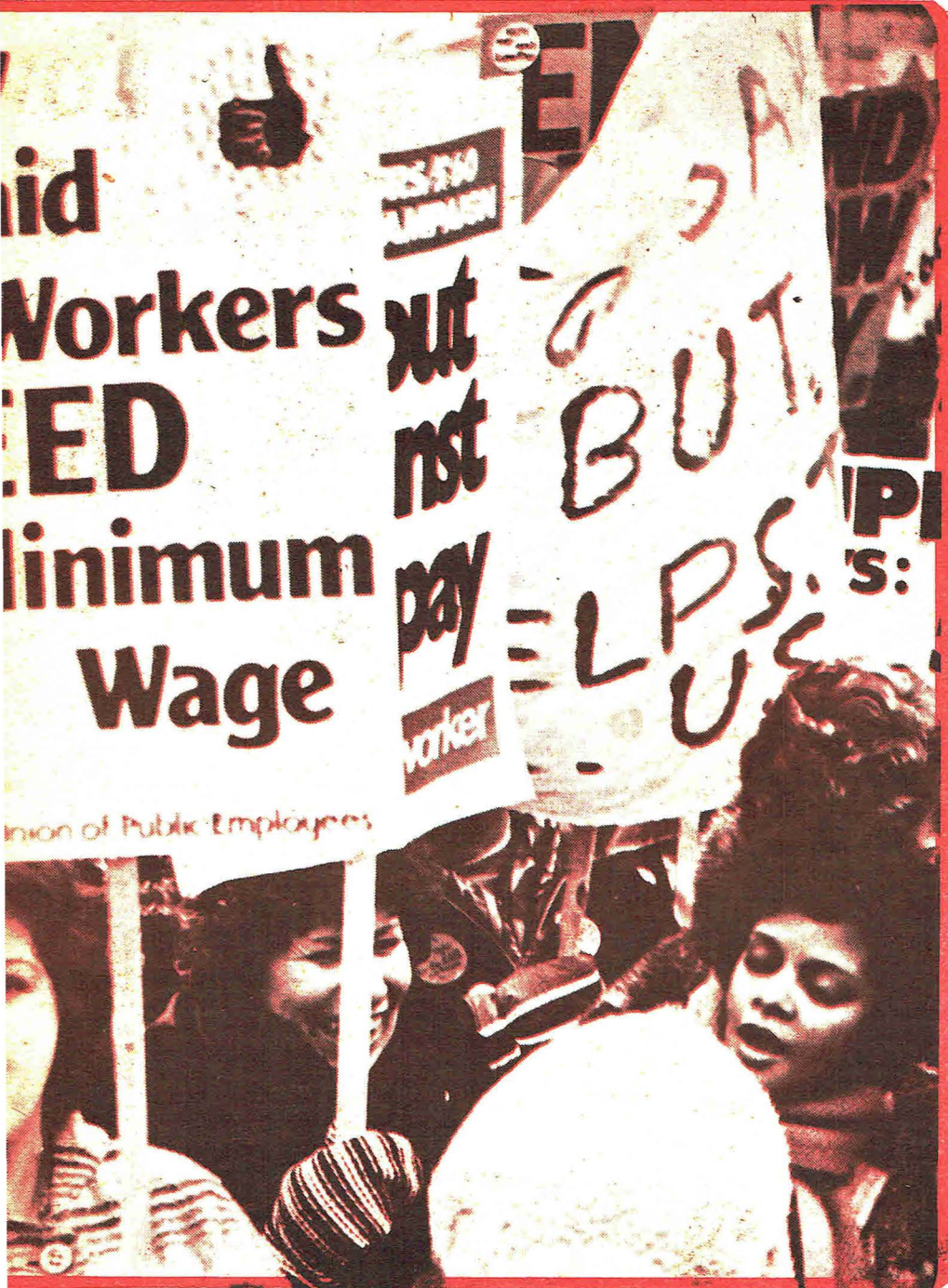
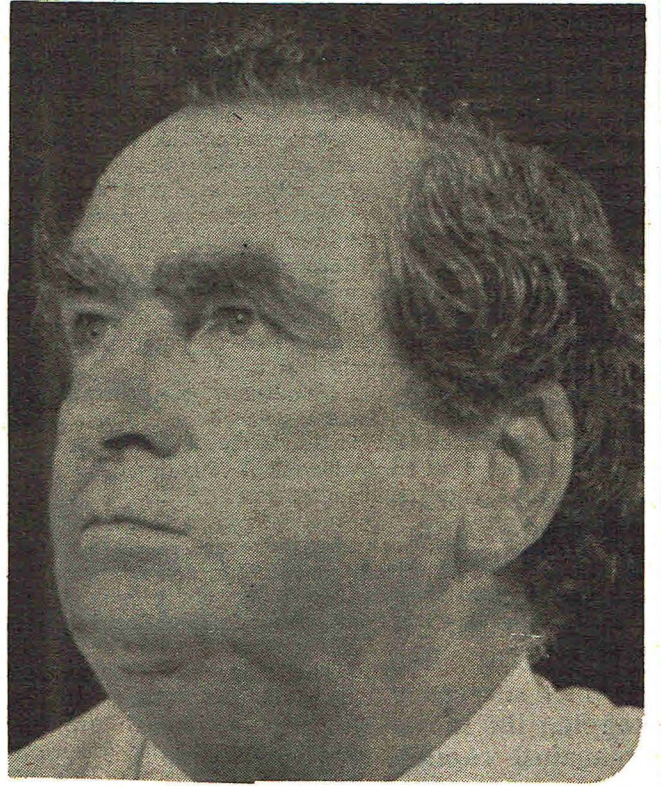
By mobilising the trade union and labour movement to carry this programme out we can ensure workers' control and management of industry and the state.

A plan of production would rapidly modernise British industry to produce an abundance of goods for all. A monopoly of foreign trade by the state would regulate Britain's world trade.

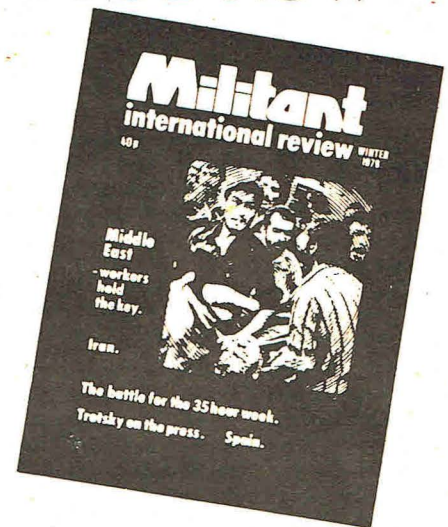
One and a half million unemployed are compelled to rot in idleness. Capitalist economists themselves have pointed out that given productive work in industry they could produce at least £15,000 million of wealth. That is £20 per week for every family in Britain.

At the moment they are paid £4,000m to do nothing. That alone amounts to nearly £6 a week for every family if they were back at work. This does not take into account the enormous increase in production that would follow once the workers take over society.

A £70 minimum standard for all including the old age pensioners, widows, the sick and the disabled with a 30-hour week would be entirely possible in a socialist Britain.



## OUT NOW



### MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, Winter 1979

Articles on:

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The election as President of Colonel Benjedid Chadli laid bare the real power structure in Algerian society. Chadli, the acting army commander, was nominated by a Congress of the FLN [National Liberation Front] made up of 3,298 delegates, of which 600 came from the army. This Congress, the first to be held since 1964, had no choice but to accept Chadli because the army "is the only really organised body in the country" [*'Financial Times'* 31.1.79]. As the FLN nominee, Chadli was the only candidate in the subsequent election.

While mouthing phrases to trick the masses about upholding Algeria's 'Socialist Revolution', Chadli has his interests firmly in the camp of capitalism which was developing at that time. Oran's largest hotels, owns a villa and a yacht and is regarded by the capitalist press as a 'moderate', i.e. pro-capitalist.

Chadli is Algeria's third President since it won independence in 1962, replacing Boumedienne who had been President for 13 years until his death last December. Boumedienne came to power in June 1965 in a coup against the first President Ben Bella which succeeded in stopping the movement against capitalism which was developing at that time.

### Bob Labi

The eight-year war for independence from French imperialism, which left one million Algerians dead, and the crisis which gripped the country after 1962 had produced an enormous radicalisation among the Algerian masses. Under this pressure Ben Bella was forced, from October 1962, to begin to take measures against capitalism. But these measures were not planned in any way, they were a response to the pressure of the situation and the masses.

Ben Bella himself attempted to balance the conflicting forces. At the end of 1962 the Algerian Communist Party and the FLN Federation in France (which was the most left wing section of the FLN) were all banned, while four months later all enterprises 'not being properly run' were nationalised.

The 1964 FLN Congress drew up the 'Charter of Algiers', a radical programme, but still one which was not thoroughgoing. This resulted in Algeria drifting along without any coherent

course; inroads had been made into the power of capitalism but there had been no decisive break with capitalism. In this situation either the overthrow of capitalism had to be completed or else there would be a counter-revolution. Ben Bella's government hesitated, did not provide any lead and was toppled by Boumedienne in June 1965.

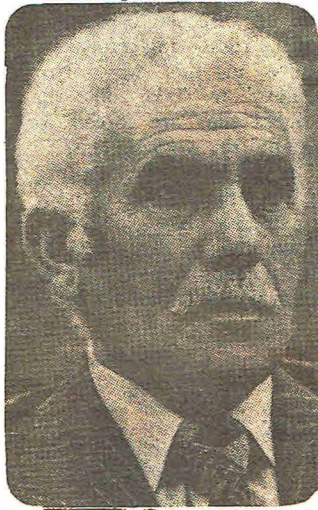
Under the Boumedienne regime state ownership of the basic economy remained, but a sizeable private sector developed in textiles, rubber, plastics and engineering. In a relatively under-developed country like Algeria it is impossible for capitalist concerns to develop without the aid and protection of the state; even in Britain, capitalism lives off lavish handouts from the state. In Algeria the Ministry of Industry and Energy accounts for 50% of all investment.

But this state intervention has nothing to do with socialist planning, although it demonstrates the inability of so-called 'private enterprise' to develop the economy without lavish assistance. In Algeria there has been no decisive break with capitalism, no overthrowing of the capitalist class and introduction of a planned nationalised economy.

Indeed since the late 1960s many steps have been taken to create opportunities for private investment and control. The *'Financial Times'* reported recently on steps being taken to "return to

private hands some of the lands taken over under the agrarian reform" (28.1.79). In any case the 1970-72 land reform was mainly aimed at the big absentee landlords and did not touch the more modern and profitable medium scale farms.

Algeria has seen in the last few years a great economic development, largely because of its oil revenue which has funded other sectors. The number of workers in industry, transport and services has increased from 600,000 in 1966 to 1,900,000 last year. But in spite of this Algeria has enormous problems.



President Chadli

Algeria's population is growing at a rate of 3.2% a year. In 1971 the population was 14.3 million, by 1977 it was 17.3 million. In 1977 54% of the population was under 18 years old and 25% were under five. The development of industry, agriculture,

services and housing has not been able to keep up with this growth. This has led to massive unemployment, estimated at between 500,000 and 700,000 in the cities, with a further 500,000 Algerians working abroad.

The years since independence have seen a massive movement to the towns. In 1966 31% of Algerians lived in urban areas, last year the figure had risen to 41%. This has given rise to a terrible housing shortage and a reappearance of shanty towns. In Algiers it is common to find 15 people living in a three-room flat.

On present estimates Algeria's oil is starting to run out and the government is staking all on the development of the natural gas industry. But this is requiring enormous amounts of investment, 3 billion dollars a year between 1977 and 1982. To finance this investment, Algeria is having to borrow much of the money. This is putting an immense strain on the economy as already 21-22% of the Gross National Product is paid on debt servicing, which will rise to at least 25% by 1983.

This spending, coupled with the massive importation of food, is limiting the government's ability to invest elsewhere, provide social services etc. It is also fuelling inflation, which is already over 30% a year. Quite apart from the strain which this investment is putting on the Algerian economy today, the reliance on natural gas mar-

kets, particularly the USA, will tie the Algerian economy even closer to the world capitalist economy and its booms and slumps.

It is in this situation that even the hand-picked FLN Congress reflected the developing tensions in Algerian society. The Congress was split into two main wings. The right wing around Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the 'international playboy' Foreign Minister, and the left around Mohamed Yahiaoui. The army presented Chadli as the 'compromise' candidate and were able to get his nomination rubber stamped by virtue of the fact that the military officers are the main power in the country.

The Algerian working class, strengthened by the development of industry, has already shown that it has recovered from the defeat which it suffered in the 1965 coup. The summer of 1977 saw the first big strikes since those in protest at the overthrow of Ben Bella when the Algiers transport workers moved into action. Certainly the increased dependence of Algeria on a fluctuating world economy and the mounting internal problems will produce further movements of the Algerian masses, who showed before that they were able to defeat French imperialism, and will be able to ensure that Chadli will not be able to rival Boumedienne's 13 years as a military dictator.

## International Notes

### Zaire

It's tough at the top. The world's richest rulers are finding that out the hard way. Top of the pile was the Shah now so unfortunately on 'holiday' in Marrakesh, Morocco. Perhaps he will soon be joined there by his replacement as richest ruler, General Mobutu of Zaire. Two weeks ago Mobutu had to call in 200 Belgian paratroopers as unrest spread nearer to his capital Kinshasa.

It seems that problems just won't go away for Mobutu, one of the most vicious and corrupt rulers of Africa. It was only six months ago that he had to call on the forces of Western imperialism to put down a rebellion in Shaba province. Now there are riots and demonstrations in the capital as people protest against 100% inflation, scarcity of food and lack of jobs.

But Belgian troops won't be able to fight forever for

Mobutu—the social convulsions in Belgium would be too great. So perhaps Mobutu too will soon be on the road to Marrakesh, which would leave Queen Elizabeth II as the then richest ruler in the world.

### Switzerland

One of the most alarming pieces of news for the real big time crooks has been the recent announcement by the Swiss Socialist Party that Swiss banking secrets should be opened up. A radical group in Lausanne estimated that the banks currently have: £27,000 million in undeclared personal fortunes, £55,000 million in tax-free investment and £550,000 million in profits from currency speculation.

Much of this money comes from exploitation of the very poorest in the world. Over \$2,400m was deposited in Swiss, Israeli and American banks in the last two months of the Shah's rule. And African dictators Mobutu and Bokassa also have luxury homes in Switzerland. But

how much longer will they be able to use these bolt-holes to escape the wrath of their peoples?

### SE Asia

As the war in Kampuchea [Cambodia] continues, so does the sabre-rattling from the bureaucratic dictatorships in the USSR and China. Vietnam has reportedly committed ten divisions to the war in Kampuchea. So China has invaded Vietnam to help relieve the pressure on the Kampuchean guerrillas and also to step up its battle with USSR-backed Vietnam. In return the USSR has sent four warships to Vietnam as military solidarity and threatened retaliation if China does not withdraw its forces.

What greater condemnation of these bureaucracies is there, than that they are prepared to act in such a manner. The interests of working people lie in moves towards a genuine Socialist Federation to plan a co-ordinated attack on the problems of poverty and disease in all their countries.

### Mexico

The writing is on the wall for US-Mexican relationships. Literally. Greeting Jimmy Carter, the Mexican President Sen Portillo pointed out that Carter's visit had aroused great interest in the media and also in "signs on the walls". San Portillo did not elaborate on what the signs were. But he did not have to—Mexican workers did it for him. Eight American companies in Mexico were hit by strikes in protest over Carter's visit and in support of a 25% wage increase.

Carter wants to ensure that US oil companies get preferential treatment from Mexico's new-found oil riches. Estimates of Mexico's reserves [200,000m barrels] put it higher than those of Saudi Arabia. American business sees Mexico as a possible new bonanza. But judging by the signs on the walls and in the factories it might go a similar way to the last oil-rich bonanza country—Iran.

## INDIA

In India the vicious repression of the lower castes continues as capitalists, landlords and their political servants maintain their rule. The following report from our correspondent in Bangalore shows how this operates in practice.

Near our town Chintamani there is a small village called Vladavi. In 1972 the government gave land to the poor people. It gave a record to all the applicants except to twelve Dalit (very low caste) applicants. Sites were sanctioned of the latter but were not distributed because the landlords were using them, and of course the landlords influenced the government.

In 1978 the Dalit organisation, the Dalit Songarsha Samiti, strongly called for the distribution of these lands to the twelve applicants. In the end they were given a right to the land. But on December 27th 1978 when they went to dig their land, they were

attacked by the landlords.

B Banyana is one of the twelve Dalit applicants and the local Dalit leader. He owns just one acre of very dry land. On his land he had stacked his whole food crop. At midnight on December 27th the landlords came and burnt down the whole stack. Now Banyana has no grains to eat or feed his animals.

In another nearby village (Dibur Palli) one Dalit man recently borrowed 200 rupees from a landlord for his marriage. As he could not pay in time his land (value 8,000 rupees) was confiscated. This meant he was unable to pay back an earlier small debt to the landlord on time. So the landlord took him, tied him to a tree and beat him mercilessly.

No police came to his help, because the landlords are members of the ruling party. The Dalit community felt unable to demonstrate on this because of Congress and Janata Party thugs.



## SCOTLAND

Changes are certainly needed: Shopping in Glasgow 'on the Hill'.

# Vote yes for Assembly!

# Fight for Socialist change!

## WALES

### LPYS COUNTER NATIONALISM WITH CLASS APPEAL

In Wales the Labour Party/TUC/Co-op party are organising a joint campaign in favour of the assembly. This represents a big step forward from the EEC referendum campaign, when leading members of the Labour Party spoke on joint platforms with Tories, and other reactionaries.

The refusal to join with Plaid Cymru in an 'all party' campaign means that the issues can be fought on a class basis—arguing for a 'Yes' vote, but cutting across the nationalist fervour that Plaid Cymru will undoubtedly attempt to whip up (especially as polling day is March 1st; St David's day).

Socialists will have to make sure that along with the arguments for devolution, the need for socialist policies to end the economic chaos in Wales and in Britain as a whole are brought to the forefront.

Another big step forward is that the Regional Executive of the Labour Party have seen the need to have Labour Party Young Socialist speakers on campaign platforms. LPYS branches in Wales must ensure that YS speakers are on the labour movement 'Yes' campaign platforms.

The LPYS can play a crucial role in ensuring that the demagogic appeals that Plaid Cymru will make gain no echo amongst youth. We will be able to explain that the unemployment, bad housing etc. are not caused by 'Westminster', but by capitalism itself.

If the YS plays a full and active role in the referendum campaign than we will undoubtedly be able to recruit many members, and show the value of having LPYS speakers on future campaigns and election platforms.

**By Kevin Ramage**  
LPYS NC (Wales)

The most recent opinion poll on the likely voting in the referendum on devolution for Scotland shows an increase in the percentage of 'No' voters and 'don't knows', and a decrease in the percentage of 'yes' voters.

Since February 1978, the 'System Three' polls, published by the 'Glasgow Herald', have shown the 'yes' votes outnumbering the 'no' votes by two to one, with about 20% undecided. For example, the February 1978 figures were: Yes 55%, No 28%, Undecided 17%.

The recent figures published on 12th February show the Yes vote to have fallen to 45%, the No vote to have increased to 35%, and the 'don't knows' to be standing at 20%.

### 40% vote

If these poll figures are an accurate reflection of what will happen on polling day in just over two weeks, then the result of the referendum could be much closer than originally expected, and the size of the 'yes' vote may well be insufficient to satisfy the 40% rule in the Scotland Act.

This rule demands that at least 40% of the whole Scottish electorate vote "yes" before the Assembly is set up. This clause is disgraceful gerrymandering proposed by the out-of-touch Labour MP George Cunningham, and means that abstentions and dead men's votes will count in the final result.

If the Scottish electorate did vote as the most recent poll suggests, then the turnout required to satisfy the

**By Bob Wylie**  
(East Kilbride Labour Party)

40% rule would be 72%. In the referendum on the Common Market, for instance, the turnout in Scotland was 62%.

This shift of opinion reflects a number of processes.

Firstly, it shows that the 'no' campaign, which has been more evident in recent weeks, is having some effect on public opinion. The main campaigning force on this side is the Scotland Says No group which gathers under its umbrella some of the most reactionary elements in Scottish political life today.

The campaign is supported by the Scottish Tories, its chairman is Lord Wilson of Langside, and its leading spokesman is Teddy Taylor, the Tory Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland who makes Thatcher look almost like a liberal.

Scotland Says No is being unashamedly financed by big business to the tune of £80,000 and the main slant of its propaganda is against devolution because it could lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom.

This stance reflects the fear of big business that the creation of an Assembly could be a Pandora's box for capitalism. They realise now that it is a step into uncharted waters, and that the Assembly could pose serious problems for the rule of big business, given the continuing crisis

affecting the British economy.

If the powers of the Assembly remain the same, it will be seen as ineffectual, with possible serious consequences. This could lead the Scottish workers at present favourable to an Assembly to conclude that the struggle for socialist policies is more important than the location of the seat of government.

An ineffectual Assembly could also give rise to increasing demands for action, which given the likely Labour majority and a further move to the left in the labour movement could result in the Assembly being used as a platform for socialist policies, which would spark the flame of a socialist movement not only in Scotland, but throughout the British Isles.

The other main organisation campaigning for a 'no' vote, apart from this big business front, is the Labour Vote No campaign. Its main leaders are the Labour MPs Tam Dalyell and the Tribune, Robin Cook. The chairman of the Labour Vote No campaign, a leading left winger, Brian Wilson, heralded the recent poll result as a "breakthrough".

### Separation

While Dalyell's appeal for the rejection of devolution is based on similar lines to the Scotland Says No campaign, the general argument of the Labour No campaign is that devolution is the slippery slope to separatism.

This approach ignores some important facts. The first is that the coming of devolution has significantly coincided with a dramatic decline in the fortunes of the SNP. The second is that the

Assembly could be used as a lever in the advance towards socialism.

And the third is that if Labour were to ignore the popular demands for an Assembly, nationalism could in the future be strengthened rather than exposed for the sham it is.

However, the swing towards the No campaigns must also be explained in the light of current national events and the way in which the Yes campaigners on the Labour side are approaching the issue.

To its credit, the Labour Party in Scotland has taken a class stand on the structure of its campaign, basing itself on the labour movement, and having nothing to do with false coalitions with the SNP and pro-devolution Liberals, in contrast to the all-embracing, non-political, approach of the Scottish Communist Party.

However, this step forward has been followed by two steps back since the Party in Scotland has not used the issue of the Assembly to argue for socialist change. Instead of using the referendum to argue for and explain the need for socialist policies, the leadership has, to date, presented the Assembly as a watered-down alternative to separatism.

When this is combined with the fact that the main emphasis of all the Labour Yes propaganda is to push the fact that Jim Callaghan supports the Assembly, then the recent loss of ground becomes more understandable. The picture of Jim Callaghan on posters all over Scotland urging people to vote 'yes' must be confusing many trade unionists who recognise that the same man

also says No to justified wage claims and Yes to the crossing of picket lines.

The best way for Labour to ensure a resounding turn-out in favour of a Yes vote would be to link the Assembly with the crisis of Scottish and British capitalism, and to offer the promise that the Assembly could mean real socialist change in Scotland.

### Socialist Road

The picture of a glorified county council to be added to the already gigantic morass of Scottish local government is not likely to ensure a big turnout, despite the fact that the granting of an Assembly is a recognition of the democratic aspirations of the Scottish people.

The road to socialism is not as straight as Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street, and the rise of nationalism has been a serious obstacle to rapid progress along that road.

However, it would be entirely wrong to ignore the events of the recent past, to cast a blind eye to the rise of the Nationalists, in the hope that they will vanish from reality.

It is essential that there is an overwhelming Yes vote for the Scottish Assembly and that that body is used to implement socialist policies. Otherwise the future could see the embers of nationalism fanned anew which would be a serious diversion from the need to create not only a socialist Scotland, but a socialist Britain as an important part of the essential foundation stones of a socialist world, rid entirely of the petty chauvinism of national boundaries.

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

LETTERS

How can we have political education in schools?

Dear Comrades  
I think that we all agree that political education in schools is essential as an alternative to the political education that many school students obtain from reading the Tory press every day of their lives. But political education in schools must not be inserted into the curriculum and treated like any normal subject—what kind of education would that be?  
Political education should be run in schools through the NUSS with regular trades union speakers promoting free discussion and an atmosphere where school students can come to their own conclusions.  
The 'Militant' and all organisations of the labour movement must campaign to establish NUSS branches in all schools and to get the NUSS recognised as the voice of school students everywhere in the country! NUSS members must be able to use the benefit of free speech without fear of victimisation!  
Yours fraternally  
Tony Marks  
Southend LPYS

Why do health workers need a 35-hour week?

'£25—50-hour week...if you're keen'

Dear Comrades  
I applied to a local dentist recently requiring a chairside assistant. Hours were 8.30 until whenever the job was finished, plus Saturday mornings.  
"A girl's got to be really keen if she works for me," the dentist told me. Obviously; he was offering £20 per week, rising to £25 after a month! It's not possible to exist on that while paying rent, food etc. He explained to me that his wages bill astronomically high—and that the highest wage earned there was £36 per week [not by any of the dentists, I bet].  
He also told me about the house he'd just bought near to where I live—six bedrooms, two bathrooms, four acres

etc. It can't have cost him under £40,000. Yet he "can't afford" to pay a decent living wage to his employees!  
This incident indicates the position of young people trying to get off the dole today—take a job and no money, or get some kind of income on the dole and suffer the despondency and demoralisation of being jobless. What a choice!  
The employers have us over a barrel. Young people are being penalised for their youth. It's time we had a 35-hour week and a basic minimum wage for all.

Fraternally  
Sarah Harman  
Banbury LPYS

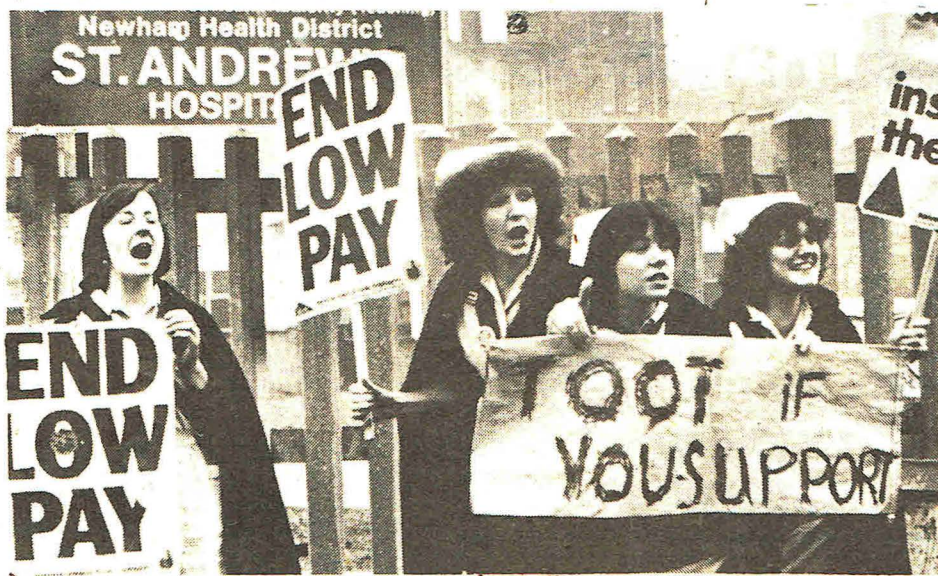


Photo: MILITANT

Coming soon—'Doctor on the Dole'?

Dear Comrades  
In my last job I had to work 80 hours a week and occasionally have been on duty for 136 hours in one week. Reading Mike Singleton's letter (Militant 439) reminded me of an incident that happened to me.  
I was examining a miner who'd been brought into hospital about 10 o'clock one evening. He'd been gassed underground.  
He said, "I suppose you'll soon be going off."  
"No, I'm here until 5 pm tomorrow," I replied.  
"Oh, you've just come on."  
"No, I've been here since 9 o'clock this morning."  
Of course, I may get some sleep but it's not unusual to have to work through to 5 am—sometimes three nights running if it's a weekend.  
Working these hours can make me irritable and short-tempered with other staff, especially the day after I've been up all night. I think slowly and am more likely to make mistakes, which could be potentially disastrous, e.g. writing down the wrong dose of a drug.  
I also find I get very hungry. Sometimes

I've worked 12 hours without a break, snatching a sandwich while writing some notes. In case you think it's for the overtime, the rate is one quarter the full rate, i.e. four 'unsocial' hours equal one normal hour.  
A shorter working week for doctors really could be a matter of life or death for somebody. Expanding and re-organising medical training could make a 35-hour week realistic.  
So it is quite incredible that by the early 1980s there will be too many doctors—for the inadequate number of jobs. Perhaps a new TV farce will appear—Doctor on the Dole!  
The reactionary British Medical Association have responded by calling for a cutback in the number of medical students being trained. This must not be allowed to happen.  
Junior hospital doctors must join the trade union movement and demand more doctors, more jobs and less hours. As part of a big expansion of the NHS this would help get rid of the waiting lists as well.  
Yours fraternally  
A Junior Hospital Doctor

Poverty is the real disease

Dear Comrades  
As Marxists we always point out that capitalism, once a progressive system taking mankind forward, has now become degenerate and is incurably sick.  
Confirmation of this came on Friday 9th Friday watching the ITN news.  
In Naples, Southern Italy, over the last few weeks 60 babies have died from an unknown virus infection. Many more are receiving intensive care, but it is certain more will die.  
This news made me angry, sick and disgusted at capitalism. Why? Because this virus was produced and thrives in the appalling conditions of the Naples slums. Apparently this is not unusual as different virus infections appear every few years, the last being cholera five years ago.  
Bankrupt Italian capitalism forces people to live in these slums, because it cannot afford to give workers a decent standard of living. To ask for that would be just too much—after all it would cut into the profits of the capitalists.  
The lesson is there for all of us to see. If we don't kill capitalism soon, then this outmoded social system will kill all of us.  
Never have Marx's words rung more true, that mankind is faced with a choice— "socialism or barbarism".  
Yours fraternally  
Alan Turner  
ASTMS 507

Picketing legal— if it's ineffective

Dear Comrades  
The recent injunction granted to United Biscuits against a T&GWU picket is the latest chapter in the long history of persecution of the trade union movement by the bosses' courts dating back to the Combination Act of 1800 which declared trade unions to be illegal organisations.  
The law on picketing states that "peaceful picketing" is lawful if "in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute." This legislation, enacted by the Labour government in 1974, leaves loopholes enabling the judges to interpret "peaceful" as anything which allows scabs through picket lines and to decide that so-called "secondary picketing" is not "in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute".  
In other words, workers are conceded the right to strike and picket as long as they don't do so effectively!  
Trade unionists should not lose sight of the fact that these democratic rights were won through the struggles of the working class despite the hostility of the courts whose function is to preserve the social status quo of privilege and exploitation by a small clique of wealthy property-owners.  
Yours fraternally  
Dave Warren  
UCNW Labour Club

Write for Militant

Letters—as short as possible please, on anything you disagree with or want to comment on, incidents humorous or annoying, international or local, should be sent to the address above, to arrive the Saturday before publication.

Capping 'Tribune'

Dear Comrades  
John Cantwell's article on Common Agricultural Policy (Militant 439, 19.1.79) showed clearly the contradictions in the policies of the 'Tribune'. These comrades advocate import controls to protect jobs in Britain on the one hand, then on the other oppose membership of the Common Market, pointing out (correctly) the waste of the Common Agricultural Policy.  
The effect of CAP is high prices and inefficient farming protected behind high tariff barriers. Import controls in Britain would result in high prices, and a decline in already pitiful investment levels. In effect CAP is the same to Europe as import controls are to Britain, yet 'Tribune' calls for import controls while opposing the CAP.  
The inability of European capitalism to plan its agricultural production will not be solved by the tariff barriers. Nor will import controls help to solve the problem of unemployment. 'Tribune' falls between two stools—protectionism at home, denouncing protectionism abroad.  
The only answer to the problems facing the working class is in a consistent approach. It is only in socialist policies that we can end unemployment, not by exporting it via import controls.  
Kevin Ramage  
Swansea LPYS

£20 GRANT ONLY A BEGINNING

Dear Comrades  
Comrade Dale Ackroyd's letter [Militant 443] does a service to the Labour Party Young Socialists and readers of the 'Militant', in raising the issue of mandatory grants and questioning the LPYS demand of £20 for all 16-18 year old school and college students.  
The LPYS are proposing to the Labour Party's National Executive Committee that this demand—for a £20 a week, non-means tested, mandatory grant—be included in Labour's 1979 general election manifesto.  
As Dale points out, a decent income is essential for working class youth to be able to stay on at school. The Cabinet have agreed the principle of grants but are now back-peddling: offering measly sums of £8 and less on a discriminatory basis.  
The LPYS wishes to drive home the point that in the Youth Opportunities Programme the government is offering youth of the same ages £20.55 a week. If they see this as essential for 16-17 year olds being trained on the YOP, then why do they exclude students at schools and techs?  
By their own arguments, Shirley Williams and the Department of Education have shown the reasonableness of the demand for a grant. Now the LPYS must take up the job of agitating to ensure that school students and the labour movement accept no backsliding on the grants question.  
We believe the concession of a mandatory grant will be a major step forward for youth, raising immediately the need to treat school and further education students as 'young workers in training', who should receive a decent living grant, allowing them to live full and independent lives if they so wish.  
Yours fraternally  
Phil Frampton  
LPYS National Chairman

# INVEST IN A SOCIALIST PAPER

THIS WEEK'S  
TOTAL: £760

## Build **Militant**

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 13 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	1,175		189
Hants & IOW	3,100	775		134
Humberside	2,000	500		68
London North	9,500	2,375		487
London South	3,900	975		309
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	1,125		388
Merseyside	5,000	1,250		241
Midlands East	3,300	825		595
Midlands West	9,000	2,250		580
Northern	5,500	1,375		408
Scotland East	2,900	725		68
Scotland West	4,500	1,125		135
South East	4,500	1,125		367
South West	3,100	775		315
Wales East	2,600	650		36
Wales West	3,400	850		195
Yorkshire	7,000	1,750		345
Others	6,500	1,625		74
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>21,250</b>		<b>4,935</b>

Progress towards year's target

Towards April 7th target

**TARGET FOR THE YEAR £85,000 - TARGET FOR APRIL 7th £21,250.**

The housing shortage in London doesn't exist—for some.

You can take your pick of a house in Knightsbridge [lease 75 years] for £425,000, or there's a smaller place in Chester Terrace for £325,000 [84 year lease].

To avoid producing a glut on the market, the Tory GLC has cut new building from about 6,000 per year to 1,000 in order, they say, to reduce the debt of £2.268 million on the housing accounts.

With interest rates near record level, these figures mean that every family in London through rates pays about £2 per week in interest charges, without including local borough debts. And what return do we get for this investment?

'Militant' is fighting for a society where we will be able to use the skills and resources of society to build decent homes (not just in London) instead of paying bankers ten times over to pay builders to make a fat profit on blocks of flats that look more like prisons than homes. But we need your help now.

With half the first quarter year gone and £21,250 to reach by April 7th what has each area to get in the next few weeks?

From Eastern region this week we had £58, bringing their total to £189: thanks to the £35 from LPYS regional conference collection, £15 from Peterborough, £2 from Ipswich, £4 from Stevenage and £6 from Luton. Another £986 to go for the quarter year target! Another £23 from Hants/Isle of Wight, last year's leaders, included £1.70 from Gosport LPYS and £1 from Charlie Tweed (Isle of Wight), together with £10 from supporters in Dorset. The area needs another £641 for the first quarter.

Another £10 came from Hull LPYS in Humberside with good luck for the new year. Thanks comrades! Are there any other LPYS branches able to wish us the same? NUPE pickets in Scarborough contributed. However, Humberside supporters will need to make an even bigger effort to reach the £500 April 7th target—another £432 needed!

London North are beginning to warm to the task, with £5s from T and J Reason, S Donnelly and J Franklin, and

By Steve Cawley

£1s from L Churcher and G Blackmore, amongst others: £14 came from a public meeting and £20 from a 'broken engagement' party (whose was the lucky escape?). London North have £1,888 to get by April 7th.

London South have nearly reached one-third of the April 7th figure: another £45 came in this week to total £309 to date, or £666 to go. Thanks to GMWU member (£10), LPYS regional conference 'catering' £21.30, and Jane (E Lewisham LPYS) 85p. A total of £15.68 was collected at the London LPYS Conference.

£85 came from Manchester and District including £3 from C MacAlister (Stockport), £2 from J Weiss (Withington) and a magnificent £30 from N Barker, a student at Salford. The readers in Manchester and Lancashire are just £737 short of the first quarter's total, but they've started well.

Merseyside student supporters sent us £8.50, and Warrington GMWU, SOG-AT and ASWKW members donated £2. Knowsley NALGO members enclosed £1, and Merseyside NGA supporters £13. Readers in the Kirkby district collected £31 for the 'Militant' at meetings and by donations. Merseyside have £1,009 to go for the first quarter's target, so the £56 we received this week must become a base-line for improvement in the coming weeks.

Midlands East managed only £9 this week, with £1 coming from A Gardiner (Nottingham). Although only £230 more will take this area to the target, they won't make it at this rate!

Midlands West's £63 included £5 from Oxford branch Bakers' Union (for services rendered), P Bunn (Oxford) £8, Birmingham public meeting £7, Stafford readers £22 and £5 from J Bell (Telford). K Hallam in Cov-

entry raised £2.20 from a 'Roads to Socialism' game. A big effort is called for to get the £1,670 outstanding by 7th April.

Northern readers left us only £18 better off this week, including £2 from "sweeping Meadowfield chimney" and £6.50 from a Durham student. Northern have reached one-third of the April target so far—don't let up now!

Scotland East pushed their total to £68 after the Scottish LPYS conference, with the promise of more to come from a social, leaving £657 for the target. If every reader donated a pound or two, or whatever they could afford, this figure would look less daunting.

Scotland West have reached £135 but the target is £1,125 in the next seven weeks. Again, we ask every reader to seriously consider whether they can afford not to invest a pound or two (or five!) in socialism.

South East's £112 this week included £10 from A Kirkup (student, Brighton) and money from sale of a fridge and masonic regalia (proceeds a secret). £8.50 came from readers in Slough, and £6 from Eastbourne, where supporters tell us they will be

holding sponsored walks and charging for lifts! A Littlehampton reader has persuaded a sympathetic shopkeeper to organise a raffle for 'Militant'—£16 came in from Eastbourne, and South East's total is £758 short of the target.

South West readers collected £84 this week, including £30 at the regional LPYS conference and £1s from K Bessant (Cheltenham), N Gilbert and S Masters (Bristol). With only £460 to raise by April 7th, South West readers are showing an example!

Wales East (£2 only this week) are unfortunately lagging sadly: they need £614 by April, while Wales West (£5 from P Ware, Baengwrach NUM) need £655. What about some parties on March 1st? (Strictly for fund-raising of course).

Yorkshire's £26 this week came mainly from readers in Bradford (£22) and £1.30 from Rother Valley LPYS. You're nearly a quarter of the way to £1,750, comrades!

Others included T Care (Evesham) £1.40. All out investment next week to increase 'Militant's' share of the market!

## ANTI STRIKE MARCH FLOP

On Saturday 3rd February Labour Party and trade union members organised a counter-demonstration to a so-called housewives' anti-strike march in Bracknell.

For over a week local press and radio had given it wide coverage. Time, date and venue along with points from the so-called 'declaration' to be read to out to the gathered masses (from the steps of the police station!), were carried in both the local evening and weekly newspapers.

We were assured that the people behind the march were not politically motivated, merely sick of strikes and

disruption.

As the day of the mighty march approached, the local press became yet more excited at the prospects of big anti-strike activity in the town. The feeling was generated that housewives were all busy fashioning banners for the big day.

In the event the 'march' consisted of two women, one from miles away, and two children. The counter march,

hastily organised, of trade unionists, Labour Party members and Young Socialists was thirty strong. The 'anti-strike march' was joined by two leading local Tory ladies and one or two middle class women from the outlying 'true blue belt'.

The 'declaration' was the usual anti-trade union hysteria, including a call for the return of conscription for the unemployed and an end to social security benefits for the families of strikers. The bevy of photographers who turned up to take pictures of the 'march', spent most of their time snapping the counter-demonstrators.

The frenzied attacks and wild distortions of the press have not lessened the determination of the public sector workers. Reports from all over the country show a large increase in membership of NUPE, the main public services union.

They also failed to fool the workers of Bracknell despite the enormous publicity the anti-strike march received.

After the counter-demonstration, fifteen 'Militants' were sold in the town centre, so as far as we are concerned the Tory ladies can organise a march every Saturday in Bracknell.

By Terry Pearce  
(Wokingham CLP)

## ads

### RATES

CLASSIFIED: 5p per word, minimum ten words  
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres  
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY

### MILITANT MEETINGS

'Militant' Public Meeting  
**'The Future of the Power Engineering Industry and Stafford'**  
Speakers:  
John Byrne (AUEW)  
GEC High Voltage Switchgear, Manchester  
Dave Rothwell (AUEW)  
Senior shop steward, Castle Works, Stafford  
Chair:  
Dave Mole (ASTMS)  
GEC High Voltage Switchgear, Stafford Upper Room.  
Rose and Crown Inn, Market Street, Stafford  
7.00 pm, Friday  
23rd February  
All welcome to put their views

LEICESTER Militant Public Meeting. 'Can Nationalisation work?'. Geoff Pearson Assistant Secretary UPW Leicester. Speaker from Corby steelworks, Richard III public house, Higheross, S. Leicester. 7.45 pm, Friday 23rd February.

OXFORD 'Militant' Public Meeting. 'Which way forward for Labour?'. Speaker: Ray Apps (Brighton Kempton Labour Party), Langdale Hall, Witney, Oxon. Friday 23 February. 7.30pm

ROCHESTER 'Militant' Public Meeting. 'Do wage rises put up prices or unemployment?'. Speakers: Ray Apps (Brighton Kempton Labour Party); Brian Ingham ('Militant' industrial correspondent), Rochester and Chatham Labour Hall, New Road, Rochester. 27th February 8pm

CHESTER-LE-STREET Marxist discussion group. Mondays starting at 8pm. Feb 26: 'parliamentary Democracy, its uses and limitations'. For further details contact Eddie Lowerson, Chester-le-Street Tel: 88146

SUNDERLAND Marxist discussion group. Meetings: 8 March—'Keep Thatcher Out!'; 22 March—'Is Russia Socialist?'. Venue: Morrision Public Library, Treherne Rd., Morrision. Meetings start 7.30 pm prompt. Contact Swansea 33542 for further details.

NEWCASTLE Marxist discussion group for students and unemployed. Friday afternoons, in Newcastle University. 23 February—'Nationalisation'; 2 March—'Cuba'; 9 March—'Trade unions on the shop floor'; 16 March—'Spanish elections'. For further details contact Ray Goodspeed, Tel: 748001

MORRISTON Marxist Discussion Group meetings: 8 March—'Keep Thatcher Out!'; 22 March—'Is Russia Socialist?'. Venue: Morrision Public Library, Treherne Road, Morrision. Meetings start 7.30 pm prompt. Contact Swansea 33542 for further details.

WALLSEND Marxist discussion group. The first Wednesday of every month. Contact Wallsend 687678 for details.

MILITANT Northern Camp May 25-28 (Bank Holiday). For further details contact Richard Knights, 3 Olive Mount Villas, Mill Lane, Liverpool 15. Tel: 051-722 0928

New 'Militant' Pamphlet IS INDIA ON THE BRINK'  
By Roger Silverman

Essential up-to-date information on the developing social and political struggles in India.

### CLASSIFIED

YOUTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT Demonstration and Rally Saturday 24th February Assembly: 12.30, Platt Fields. Rally: 2.30 pm, Hulme Labour Club. Speakers: Rodney Bickerstaffe (NUPE National Officer Local Authority Workers), Phil Frampton (National Chairman LPYS), Joe Marino (E.C. Bakers Union), Malcolm Clark (Moss Side LPYS)

# SPENNYMOOR CLOSURE ?

Courtaulds have announced their intention to close the Spennymoor factory, Co Durham, with a loss of 1,600 jobs.

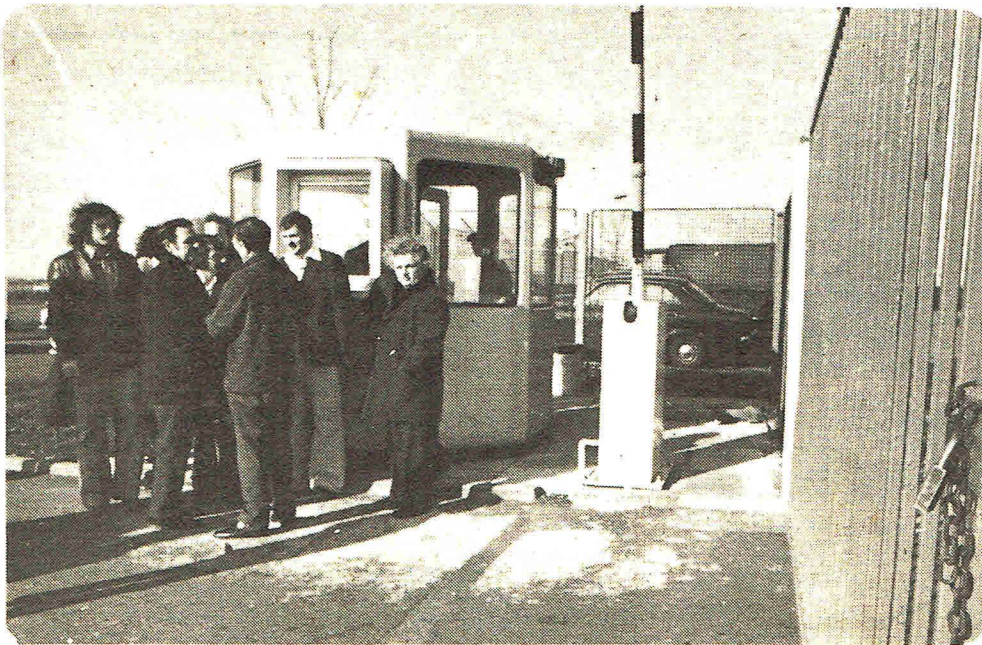
It is the largest worsted spinning factory in Europe, purpose-built only ten years ago, producing Cortell fibre ready for knitting.

The company claim that the closure is due to a fall in demand because of changes in fashion and increased imports. The workforce is doubtful; in the past the company spoke highly of Spennymoor and its future and as late as February 1977 were intending to expand.

Courtaulds argue that the site makes a loss but this is mainly a book-keeping exercise. The raw material is bought from Courtaulds and the product is sold to Courtaulds. The company's pricing policies can determine where the profit and loss appear.

Originally the firm said the workforce would have to accept 560 redundancies, a new shift system and a £7 drop in wages from £75 to £68. This, it was said, was not negotiable. When the work-

## NATIONALISE COURTAULDS



Skelmersdale Courtaulds workers fought unsuccessfully against redundancies

force rejected these terms the closure was announced.

"We only break agreements we don't agree with," management have said. During negotiations, a senior manager told lower manage-

ment, "You'll speak the truth in your own time, not in ours."

The workers are determined to resist the closure. They have already collected facts and figures to argue their case

but need more. They have written to and lobbied MPs calling for disclosure of information under the 1975 Industry Act, questions to be raised in the House of Commons, and for a public

enquiry, to expose Courtauld's policy of taking government aid—at a minimum £90 million since 1970—and cutting jobs by 28,795.

The shop stewards are angry at the lack of control over the money the government hands out. "They are repeating the same closure policies they've used several times, as at Skelmersdale."

As Spennymoor's only supplier and customer is Courtauld's, it would be impossible to go it alone by setting up a co-operative. Brian Gibson said: "The only answer is to nationalise all of Courtaulds."

As well as applying pressure through MPs and their unions to save the jobs these workers are appealing especially to the dockers for the blacking of Courtaulds.

Support especially from Labour Parties, other Courtaulds' factories and dockers is needed. Please contact: Brian Gibson [AUEW Convenor], 7 Magdalene Place, Broom, Ferryhill, Co. Durham, and R D McMahon, [NUDBTW Convenor], 17 Pear Lea, Brandon, Co. Durham.

Bill Hopwood spoke to Brian Gibson and other shop stewards

**WATER  
WORKERS  
WIN  
CONCES-  
SIONS**

Wirral Water Authority workers returned to work today, the 19th. The press has described the settlement as a 16% increase.

As usual, this is a distortion. In fact it is an increase of between £3.11-£4.89, plus a £5 efficiency bonus, with some of the strings removed.

The improved holidays amount to an enormous three days' increase, after ten years' service, to 21 days.

This was a result of the workers' own determined action. Many are bitter at the role of their national union leadership.

"Our action swayed the thing our way. If we hadn't come out then the G&MWU wouldn't have won even these concessions," one worker told us.

# TEACHERS' PAY LOBBY

The NUT committee at Vauxhall Manor School, London, has called a picket of the NUT's headquarters at Hamilton House, Mabledon Terrace, off Euston Road on Saturday 24th February, the day the NUT's regional delegates meet to discuss the current wage claim.

The claim is for a 35%

increase. This would mean up to £5,000 for school heads, while teachers on scales one and two would get peanuts, teachers at Vauxhall Manor say. We're asking for a £25-£30 increase for all teachers, rather than differentials; that's why we're picketing.

We are producing a leaflet

and sending letters to 300 NUT union reps in the London schools, explaining the issues. We plan to organise a follow-up conference to see where we as a union can go from here.

By Sid Wills  
(Vauxhall Manor School  
NUT Committee)

**working  
in the  
union**

Gerry Lerner, [AUEW-TASS] continues his account of his experiences as an apprentice, and the incidents which brought home the need to organise independently in a trade union. If you want to comment on this or any other aspect of your own trade union work and the issues you face, write to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

The second incident was more serious and really drove the issue home. At the interviews before we had started work we had been given to understand that should we fail our exams at technical college we would then either take them again or be put onto a craft instead of a technical course. After the first year, one lad failed and was sacked.

There was a lot of anger over this because we felt it was a breach of faith by the management. We sent a delegation to protest to the manager.

He did us the favour of telling us what he considered to be a few home truths. He made it plain that as it was management that provided the jobs it was their right to take them away and we had no say in the matter; furthermore, delegations such as this were entirely out of order and we would be disciplined if we persisted. However if we went back to work he would overlook our misconduct.

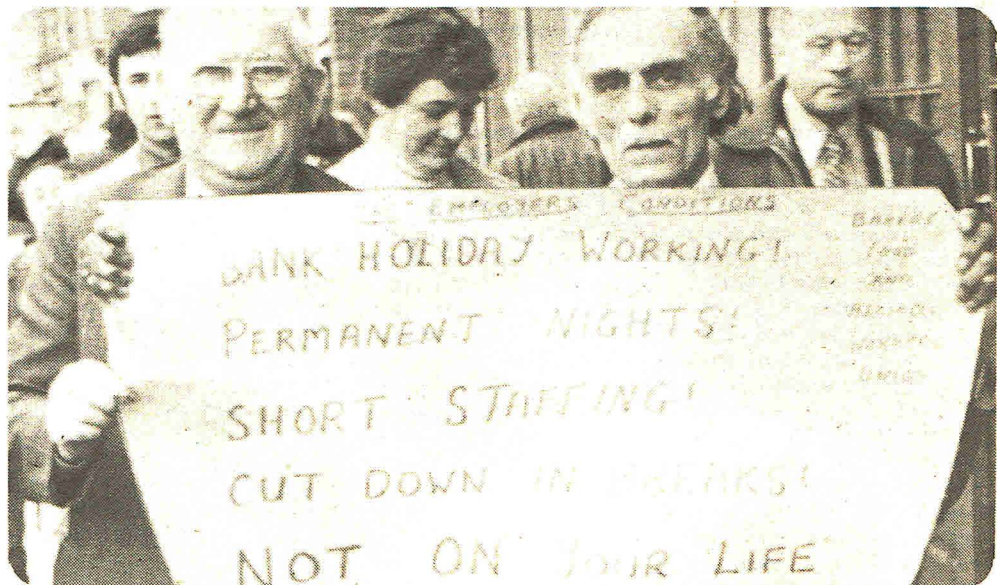
A hard-core of us wanted to join a union there and then. Others were a bit wary but prepared to watch which way the wind blew. Firstly we had to decide which union. We were technical apprentices so we knew it would be either ASTMS or DATA (now the TASS section of the AUEW).

I was delegated to phone up the main factory and speak to the convenors. I first phoned the ASTMS convenor whose response was "I hope you realise you are talking to a foreman". I hung up and phoned the DATA convenor who explained he was very busy but would come round as soon as he could.

The manager's warning had subdued our section and some of us were expecting to be jumped on from a great height, so when a stranger in a smart suit came into the department and spoke to the training officer and I heard my name mentioned I thought it was someone from the personnel department come to deal with the 'troublemakers'. When I was called out to the front my deadpan expression covered a multitude of fears.

The stranger introduced himself as the DATA convenor. He explained the basics of trade unionism to us, gave out the application forms which we all filled in and then he left.

The very fact that he was able to walk in, stop work and discuss openly with no repercussions from the seemingly all-powerful education department was an object lesson in the power of the trade union movement. In fact it was the first lesson in the beginning of my real apprenticeship in the labour movement.



Bakery workers at the Union's recall conference during the 1978 strike

# Bakery workers fight wage cuts

The bakers' strike has ended, but not the battle. At our branch we were told by management that due to loss of orders during the strike, economies have to be made, the economies to be a cut in wages for the shop floor and redundancy for the only five members of our salaried staffs branch to retain membership of the union.

Cuts in wages take me back to the terrible days of the hungry 'thirties when a worker going for his wages was told that due to the depression they had to be cut, and if he protested he was out.

Before the strike we worked six shifts, including Sundays, for £65, £72 and £76 gross for the morning, noon and night shifts. The strike brought us a £6 increase which took pay to

£74-£80. With the economies proposed by management our wages would be cut by between £10 and £14 and some shifts would start at 4 pm and end at 2.30 the next morning.

At a meeting held to discuss these proposals the members left no one in any doubt about what they thought about them. They were rejected unanimously.

We had Frank Booth from Almonds Branch, Manchester, and Val Dunn from Manor Bakery, Wythenshawe at our meeting. Here the battle is really on.

After hearing Val speak, our members are much more determined than ever not to give in to the capitalists' bully boys and satisfy their desire to

make more and more profits at the expense of us on the shop floor.

Since that meeting was held and the vote given to management they have come up with new shift patterns with slightly more social hours and wages of £69, £72 and £79. The position of our salaried staff members remains the same, pending a joint investigation by union and management representatives.

However, it means big cuts on two shifts and will be fought! We did not strike for five weeks for nothing!

By Pat Dunne  
(Branch Secretary,  
BF&AWU Mother's Pride  
Branch, Stoke)

# CIVIL SERVANTS DEMAND A JUST WAGE



By Pat Byrne  
(DHSS Section  
CPSA)

This Friday, 23rd February, the Civil and Public Services Association, with 23,000 members, is calling out all its civil service membership on a one-day national strike. The one-hundred-thousand member Society of Civil and Public Servants will be doing the same.

Not since 1973 has the membership's feeling been so strong over the falling pay levels.

In my union, this strike takes place against a background of bitter internal struggles. The result of the recent mid-term rerun of the CPSA National Executive election, brought about by the right-wing 'moderates' group accompanied by completely distorted press comment and a wide-spread smear campaign, was a right-wing majority of 17-11 on the NEC.

'Militant' supporters at the time said the result did not indicate a stemming of militancy. It was clear from the ballot result that there was increased participation by new and larger layers of the membership, especially in the very small branches. This

increased participation which contributed to the right-wing victory, has ironically led to more interest and determination over pay.

Far from the new NEC being able to sit back, members want action and results now!

'Militant' supporters on the new Executive Committee, supported by the left, argued for special branch meetings leading up to a special conference, to decide on the best tactics to pursue. This would have meant full membership participation in discussions on our pay strategy.

However, the union's senior officials, supported by the right-wing majority, swept such democratic demands aside, and decided on a course designed to minimise discussion and involvement and hopefully result in a poor response to the call for industrial action. No campaign, no regional rallies and no propaganda—such was our leaders' enthusiasm for action.

But the membership, in a large poll, voted by 2 to 1 to take strike action. In some departments, like my own, it was as high as 20 to 1. Clearly the Executive found them-

selves on a hook they could not wriggle off.

The idea of a system of pay comparability for public sector workers is now being floated as a solution to the present disputes. The new government/TUC 'Concordat' gives this idea official

At the special meeting of the CPSA NEC, called on Tuesday 20th February to consider the response of the government to the demand of the civil service unions for full comparability with other workers—as is laid down in the Pay Research agreement between the civil service unions and the government—NEC member Kevin Roddy submitted a motion which "noted the current press speculation about a staged

currency. The aim is to regularly compare public sector workers with their counterparts in private industry, thus ending low pay and removing the need for industrial action.

Let these workers know that Civil Servants have been on exactly this system since

1956, and it doesn't work! Civil servants today are among the lowest-paid workers in the country.

Take-home pay of £25-£30 is common, and the maximum we can earn after 8 years as a clerical worker is £63 before stoppages. Bon-

implementation of Pay Research comparability findings" and reaffirmed "that CPSA's objective remains the full implementation of PRU from 1st April 1979." The motion pointed out how it would be "dishonest" of the government to refuse full and prompt comparability as laid down in the agreement, and that "our programme of industrial action to insist on payment in full will go ahead."

uses and overtime are non-existent for most civil service staff; this represents nothing short of poverty wages.

How did this decline take place? By the very same pay comparison system now being touted for low-paid public sector manual workers.

The Civil Servants' current

industrial action is to force the government to give us what their own unit, supervised by a government-appointed board, has recommended for us. The latest figures show that we are 25% behind private industry. If despite our industrial action, we are refused the award recommended by the pay research unit, our members will be quite justified in withdrawing from this farcical 'comparability' in future.

Our top superiors, the heads of the nationalised industries, the judges, the army and the police force have all been awarded their review recommendations. Now it is our turn.

But to withdraw our labour for one day is only a protest. A planned campaign of action is needed to win our just demand. On the day of the strike there will be joint rallies of the CPSA and SCPS members. These will provide a chance for members to ask our leaders about the plans for future action.

The new right-wing NEC of the CPSA have decided to exclude some of the most militant sections of the membership because they work in "socially sensitive areas"—

DHSS and the Department of Employment. The Post Office group are not even being called out on the one-day strike. They decided not to levy members at work to support those out on long-term strike action. As a result, the NEC are only calling out 1,000 members on the long-term selective action, arguing that they can't afford to bring out more.

Members must demand reversal of these restrictions. All-out action is necessary to win the claim.

Nevertheless, the fact that we are all coming out for one day is a tremendous step forward. It will have an important effect at all levels in both unions. It will accelerate the trend towards one fighting trade union for all the main grades of civil servants.

- ★ All out on the 23rd
- ★ For a realistic campaign of industrial action
- ★ For a 25% across the board rise



Civil servants lobby on pay

## BRITISH LEYLAND

### Longbridge workers ready to fight

Our strike at Longbridge was called off after only a week.

The national press jumped on this and tried to give the impression that the strike was a total failure. But this is far from the truth.

When we downed tools immediately after the mass meeting, we thought that the rest of the Leyland factories would follow suit. Unfortunately this was not to be. The lads at Longbridge realised that to struggle in isolation would not bring about a successful result.

But we proved that we can organise an effective and disciplined strike. Despite a massive show of police strength at some of the gates, no lorries were allowed through unless they were for



Edwardes—he will have a fight on his hands

essential services, health, safety etc., and even these drivers had to obtain special passes from the strike committee. All car drivers and staff employees had to show their union cards.

The pickets covered each gate 24 hours a day and spirits were very high. The back-to-work movement that got so much publicity in 1977 didn't get off the ground this time.

If Edwardes and his cohorts think that the lads on the shop floor are now easy meat for even more attacks by management, they should

think again. The workforce now realise that all the promises given in the last 18 months have been broken.

One thing I feel is certain: although things may quieten down for a while, the next time our wage increase is due there will be a massive battle in British Leyland cars. We have had enough and now we are going to fight back. Edwardes may be in his tax-haven quicker than he anticipated.

By Bob Geoghegan  
(T&GWU Longbridge)

## Cow Polymers vote for action

Workers at Cow Polymers Ltd., Streatham, South London were voting early this week on whether to step up action over anomalies in the job evaluation scheme and for a pay increase.

Job evaluation was introduced in 1976 as a means of enforcing equal pay for hte many women at the factory. As soon as the scheme was drawn up various anomalies became apparent, but only small steps have been made so far by management to put these right.

Management have tried to argue that this is because some workers are being

overpaid, but the union is insistent that no one will suffer a cut in wages to put these anomalies straight. They are also asking for an increase of 10% on the highest grade, grade H (which amounts to £7.79) to be paid across the board.

This together with the union's demand for higher pensions and shift allowances amounts to an average 24% increase. Management say they cannot afford this and have offered 6.2%.

Up till now the operatives have been supporting the supervisors' one day a week strike by blacking any work

for which they are needed. At the time of going to press a majority of the shift workers had voted to go out themselves for one day a week and there is also a possibility that the engineers will decide to strike on another day so that the factory will be producing only two days a week.

However, a section of the operatives have voted for an all-out strike and the action taken now depends on how the day workers and those on the night shift vote on Tuesday.

Cow Polymers shop  
stewards spoke to  
Marie Walsh

## Plessey lock-out in Beeston

"Lockout!" "Offered what 3 out of 5 workers here refused!" read placards outside Plessey's factory in Beeston, Notts., this Monday.

Yet another group of workers not used to industrial action have been forced onto the picket lines, this time by the giant (and wealthy) Plessey company.

Engineers at Plessey Communications Systems, organised in ASTMS, have been locked out. "Our lads are usually a moderate lot, but they've been incensed by the company's actions", Bro.

Abbott, Chairman of the Sheffield engineers who had come to picket the Beeston head office, told me.

Their claim for a 20% rise was lodged in September. After all procedure had been gone through, Plessey's offer was only 8.3%.

On 1st February, sanctions in the form of an overtime ban, plus what was described to me as "a very mild sort of work to rule" were introduced. Plessey's answer was a letter saying that if this action was not stopped within a week they would not pay the workers.

Of course, the action continued, so the workers now find themselves locked out.

Other ASTMS members at Beeston are meeting next week to decide on their attitude to the dispute. Three of them were on the picket line.

This action is typical of the attitude Plessey has increasingly been taking recently, Brian Harrison, Chairman of the Beeston ASTMS branch told me.

By Tony Cross

# Militant

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## YCAU MANCHESTER DEMO AND RALLY



## END LOW PAY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The demonstration and rally against low pay and unemployment organised by the Manchester Youth Campaign Against Unemployment on Saturday 24th February is gathering support from all sections of the labour and trade union movement.

The demo will start in Platt Fields Park at 12.30 pm and will march through part of the Moss Side constituency, an area of high unemployment and an important marginal seat in the next general election.

The march will end with a rally at Hulme Labour Club at 2.30 pm where the speakers will be Rodney Bickerstaffe, NUPE National Officer for Local Authority workers, Phil Frampton, National Chairman LPYS, Joe Marino, Bakers' Union EC, and Malcolm Clark, Moss Side LPYS.

**Brian Gilmore**  
 (NW Region LPYS Committee)

The organisation for the demo has really gained momentum in the last few weeks. Every Trades Council, union district office, NUPE branch and CLP in the area has been circulated with details of the demonstration and already support has been promised from Salford Trades Council, Salford AUEW-TASS, Bakers Union, Manchester Graphical Society

and Moss Side, Ardwick and Central CLPs.

A number of North West Labour MPs have also expressed their support for the demonstration.

In the past few weeks many of the hospitals and local authority departments in Greater Manchester have been visited with leaflets and we have gained a sympathetic response. LPYS branches have organised leafletting of schools, youth clubs, Tech colleges, shopping centres and housing estates.

A special youth leaflet has been drawn up calling on youth workers, unemployed and school students to join the demonstration and to help us in the fight around the demands of the YCAU and the LPYS.

- ★ 35-hour week and £70 minimum wage
- ★ Full rate at 18
- ★ Guaranteed job for every school leaver
- ★ Decent training for all
- ★ Open trade unions to unemployed.

Join us on February 24th. All TU/LP banners welcome.

## £60 NOW

Continued from page 1

dends, the unearned income of the rich, were up 24% (first six months).

Those who work for a living and produce the country's wealth, however, are still lagging way behind. By the end of last year, average real take-home pay had only just got back to the level of 1974. We are at least five years behind. Yet we are being asked to be 'responsible'; to make more sacrifices, to wait for decent wages and conditions. Following the Ford workers, the lorry drivers,

and other trade unionists, the public service workers are demonstrating that they are prepared to wait no longer.

Unfortunately, however, the Labour government has not been convinced of the need to pay a living wage to all workers.

The new 'concordat' between the government and the TUC leaders rejects the idea of a legally enforceable incomes policy but clings to the policy of wage restraint in another guise.

The main idea floated is of a yearly meeting between the government and "both sides of industry", to make a "national assessment", to review economic prospects, and to reach an overall

consensus on the distribution of wages.

But what "consensus" can there ever be between the parasitic handful who run industry for their own profit and the millions of workers who toil to produce the wealth?

What benefits would there be for working people? All the sacrifices of recent years have not revived the diseased British capitalism or wiped out mass unemployment.

The low paid, especially, will be unconvinced by the 'Concordat'.

There is no mention of a minimum wage, whether of £60 or £70. There is no promise of action on the 35-hour week. No question of

## PORT OF TYNE ANGER AT SECRET CLOSURE PLANS

News of the secret plans to close the port of Tyne [published exclusively in 'Militant'] brought an immediate storm of protest from dock leaders. The closure plans were handed over to the shop stewards at the Newcastle Quay, NEP Parsons, and Spillers Flour Mills.

In each case none of the unions concerned had heard anything of the proposals. Particularly at the docks, the reaction was one of anger, and swift action followed. Eddie Nellist, Chairman of the Docks stewards immediately contacted the full time official and within hours they had taken the problem to the top.

Interviews have now been arranged with Transport Minister William Rodgers and with local Labour MPs. In this way they hope to find out the full plans of the Port of Tyne.

As Eddie pointed out, without the information from 'Militant' they would still be in the dark. Despite the fact that a G&MWU official is a representative on the local board of the Port of Tyne, it would seem that none of these proposals were discussed in his presence. So much for the process of consultation!

However, because of the

would call for if these proposals were to go ahead.

Condemnations have followed one after another from local Labour councillors and trade union officials. This outcry has pushed the Port of Tyne into the open.

Initially the representatives tried to deny that such proposals existed.

Nevertheless, Mr Gillespie, managing director of the Port of Tyne said "I think that in due course the Quay will progressively close." In other words, actually confirming such proposals do exist.

Furthermore, the deputy leader of Tyne and Wear Council has confirmed to the local press that Newcastle Quay is to definitely close.

From the statements and denials of the Port of Tyne, it is clear that their intention is to move operations to the mouth of the river. Obviously involved here is the modernisation of facilities at the mouth. But what then of the 180 dockers at Newcastle Quay? What of Parsons and the transportation of their 600 ton generators? What of Spillers and the unloading of their flour shipments?

In any case, why can the modernisation and investment not take place in the upper reaches of the river where the traditional industries and dock labour force already exist? The only way these questions can be answered is if the Port of Tyne reveals its secret proposals.

By  
 Dave Cotterill

## MILITANT EXPOSURE TRIGGERS TU ACTION


disclosure, he believes the dockers would be able to mount a real fight against the proposals. In no way would they be prepared to accept the closure of dock facilities along the main stretches of the Tyne.

The decision will also be backed nationally where a decision has been taken that any port closure will be met by a national strike. This is what the dockers leaders

## BACKING FOR LOW PAID

Reports have reached us that at the last meeting of Labour Party's Home Policy Committee it passed a resolution in support of the public sector manual workers. The Committee called for them to be granted a basic wage of £60 and a 35-hour week. Those in favour of the resolution included Dennis Skinner MP, Eric Heffer MP, Joan Maynard MP, Norman Atkinson MP, Frank Allaun MP, and Tony Saunois [LPYS]. Against the resolution was John Golding of the POEU.

[Fuller reports, page 6]



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