

Militant

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15p

Bilston... Scunthorpe... Corby...

STOP STEEL SACKINGS

LPYS CONFERENCE..



Photo: MILITANT

So far 1,808 places have been booked at Blackpool for the 1979 conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists. With four weeks to go, the target of 2,000 should easily be reached. All the preparations have been

made for discos and regional evenings with folk singing and sketches.

A crèche in a well-equipped nursery with two full-time staff, is available for children going to conference.

On the Friday night, a rally on the theme of 'Workers of the World Unite' will be addressed by Peter Taaffe. Saturday night is the 'Militant' meeting, with Ted Grant speaking. Sunday night is the 'Left' meeting, with Tony Benn MP and Steve Glennon, LPYS National Committee, on the platform.

Visits have been made by the LPYS to regional and district union offices and factory shop steward branches. So far, about 60 union sponsorships have been given from TGWU, NUM, GMWU, NGA, ASTMS, Bakers, etc.

If your LPYS branch hasn't yet contacted the unions, shop stewards' branches, etc., then there's still time to do so.

Before the conference, to ensure the maximum involvement of every YS member, discussions should be held at the YS branches on the two conference documents, 'Southern Africa' and 'Charter for Young Workers'.

This conference will be taking place after a year of some of the most successful activity the LPYS has ever organised—a summer camp, a national week of action, a School Students Campaign, joint work with the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment for the 35-hour week, and successful regional conferences.

This will also be the year for the long-awaited general election when the youth organisation really turns out to campaigning and recruiting.

The national conference will be an ideal
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Workers from BSC plants lobby headquarters over proposed closures

"For every vacant job there would be fourteen unemployed people" fighting for work.

All told, 2,776 jobs would be lost, in the works and in associated industries.

This is an indication of the catastrophic effect the closure of the British Steel Corporation's Bilston works would have on the Wolverhampton area, according to a detailed study recently carried out by the University of Aston in Birmingham.

Yet last Friday, the BSC bosses announced their intention to shut down iron and steel making at Bilston by April next year.

This threat to 1,900 jobs at Bilston was accompanied by a similar

By Brian Debus

threat to 1,700 steel jobs at Scunthorpe, and follows the recent death sentence on iron and steel making at Corby where 5,500 jobs are at stake immediately.

Bilston steelworkers will now be pressing their unions for all-out strike action throughout the industry.

They should have the active backing of the whole labour movement in fighting this criminal attack on workers' jobs.

Bilston workers angrily reject BSC's assertion

that the plant has been losing money. But—as Graham Howe and John Bath [T&GWU members of Bilston's Joint Trade Union Liaison Committee] explained to me—Bilston's viability has been remorselessly devoured by the carnivores in BSC's management.

First, the highly profitable Birchley jobbing mills closed—with 80% of their business being farmed out to private enterprise.

Then, the Wolverhampton mills, which completed the semi-finished products from Bilston, were taken under the wing of the Sheffield Division.

The blast furnace has

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BSC MUST BE RUN BY WORKERS

PROMISES PROMISES!

The prospect of an election in June [and the danger of a Tory victory] should sound the alarm bells for every activist in the labour movement.

So should the short-fall on 'Militant's' fighting fund! [See page 13]

During an election, every politician tries to promise a better life for workers and their families. But 'Militant' campaigns for a Labour government implementing genuine socialist policies as the only way such pledges can be realised. 'Militant's' fighting capacity must be stepped up for the election [or elections!]—not jeopardised by a shortage of cash.

Pledge a donation now, get others to do the same and make sure our target is 'realised' by April 7th. Just three weeks from now!

Militant

LABOUR MOVEMENT MUST OPPOSE REPRESSION IN N. IRELAND

The publication of the Bennet report, which itself follows a growing stream of allegations of killings, brutality and torture by the RUC and the security forces, officially confirms that the British ruling class, incapable of finding any real solution to the burning economic and social problems of Northern Ireland, can only control the situation through the ruthless use of force.

Accusations and counter accusations about the Northern Ireland Office's attempt to smear Dr

Irwin—the police doctor whose public allegations forced the publication of the Bennet report—scandalous enough in itself—should not be allowed to divert attention away from the real issue: the systematic use of torture by the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] to obtain confessions from detainees.

The "dirty tricks" department, already used many times by the army, the RUC, and Mason himself, has been employed in trying to smear Dr Irving. But the shocking incident which has been dragged up—the brutal rape of his wife—itsself points to the criminal involvement of a soldier and a cover-up by the security forces.

The Bennet report itself

makes clear that Dr Irving's revelations followed his own and other police doctors' behind-the-scenes attempts to criticise and curb brutal torture of the RUC's prisoners.

As Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason bears responsibility for the RUC. It is a disgrace that a Labour minister should not only preside over the systematic use of torture, but also block attempts to investigate the behaviour of the torturers, and attempt to cover up the abundant evidence that has come out.

It is time that Mason was called to account by the labour movement to whom he should be made responsible.

For generations, British imperialism has maintained its hold in Ireland through fostering sectarianism, and ultimately imperialism bears the responsibility for the violence in the North. Nevertheless, it is the tactics of individual terrorism used by the Provisional IRA—which we have condemned from the beginning—that have played into the hands of the British ruling class, and even resulted in the toleration of repression by the working class.

Only the working class, through its own mass organisations—in which the basis of class unity is embodied—can find a way out of the crisis in the North. It is therefore vital for the labour movement to take a stand

against repressive laws and brutal practices by the state forces. In the future, moreover, these powers may be used against the labour movement on the mainland.

The Bennet report—which almost certainly does not tell the whole truth—confirms that "ill-treatment", i.e. torture, has been systematically used by the RUC to extract confessions from suspects in their custody.

The Chief Constable of Northern Ireland and, scandalously, Roy Mason, has tried to dismiss the report as merely unsubstantiated "allegations". But, as the highly respectable 'Financial Times' [19 March] commented, "most informed observers, not just the partisan commentators, believe that prisoners are mistreated."

Roy Mason claims that "the rule of law" applies in Northern Ireland as it does anywhere else in Britain. But it has long been clear that the emergency powers, which give the police powers to hold suspects incommunicado for days without being charged, and the special courts, in which there are no juries and defendants are denied all real rights of representation, are a strong encouragement to the police to beat confessions out of people.

In the last four years, over 12,000 people have been held under the emergency powers. In the resulting trials, only 6% of defend-

ants managed to be acquitted. An incredible 75% to 80% of the convictions depended on the "confessions" of the accused!

It is hardly surprising that there were 1,562 complaints against the police in this period. Of the 119 claims for damages against the RUC taken to court, the RUC actually agreed to settle 23 of them out of court—in practice, a clear admission of guilt by the police.

Yet with all these complaints, and despite official claims that they are all fully investigated, since 1974 there have been no disciplinary proceedings whatsoever against members of the RUC accused of brutality.

Alongside the emergency powers, moreover, the police have been able to use the Prevention of Terrorism Act, in Britain as well as Northern Ireland, to hold people without charge. Last week, three workers at the Falls Road dole office were arrested at dawn under the PTA—in connection with a fraud investigation!

This provoked an immediate walk-out by members of the Public Service Alliance, and this would have spread had two of the three not been charged that day. This is yet another example of the way the PTA—repressive enough in itself—has been increasingly used in relation to allegations which have nothing to do with terrorism.

It is now urgent that the labour movement launch a campaign against repression in Northern Ireland. We must demand:

★ A full enquiry, to be undertaken by the British and Irish trade unions, into the allegations of torture by the RUC and all other aspects of repression in Northern Ireland.

★ The rigorous prosecution of all members of the RUC and the security forces implicated in brutality or torture.

★ The immediate repeal of the Emergency Powers and the Prevention of Terrorism Act; the abolition of special courts, and the restoration of trial by jury and full rights of legal representation.

★ The immediate closure of Castlereagh and other police stations where police and prisoners have been ill-treated or tortured.

★ The disbanding of the Ulster Defence Regiment, over thirty of who have in the last few years been convicted of murders, shootings, bombings, or serious assaults.

★ The withdrawal of the British army from Northern Ireland and their replacement by a Trade Union Defence Force—which, based on the class organisations of the workers, is the only force capable of protecting workers, and ending the sectarian conflict and state repression in Northern Ireland.

IRAN — WORKERS RESIST KHOMEINI'S ATTEMPT TO TURN CLOCK BACK

"Sin may not be committed in Islamic ministries. Women should not be naked at work in these ministries... they must be clothed according to religious standards."

With these words, Ayatollah Khomeini, leader of the Central Revolutionary Islamic Committee, on 7th March launched a drive to force Iranian women to wear the traditional Muslim attire [the hejab], and in particular the chador [a veil] covering their hair.

Fanatical supporters of Khomeini immediately went into action attacking women not wearing a veil. Three Tehran secondary schools for girls were forced to close the next day as Muslim zealots attacked unveiled students.

Following the statement of the ayatollah's son-in-law, Hojatol-Islam-Esharqui, that all women "including those of religious minorities" should wear a chador, schoolgirls at the Mariam Catholic School in Tehran were also attacked by a mob.

Outside the Ministry of Agriculture, men shouting

By our correspondent recently in Tehran

"Naked women are no longer allowed here" turned away many of the secretaries trying to go to work.

But Khomeini's attempt to turn the clock back and enforce the permanent relegation of women to second-class status has aroused enormous opposition. There had already been women's demonstrations against the new regime's abolition of the Family Protection Law, which even though it was passed by the Shah, did give women some rights in matters such as divorce and family property, and against the ending of co-education in Iran.

Demonstrations began at once in Tehran against this attempt to turn society back to the dark ages.

Nurses in several hospitals went on strike until a decision was reached on whether they would have to wear a chador. Women's demonstrations and individual women on the streets were subject to violent attacks by religious fanatics.

But these attacks on the women were provoking protests from the workers and



youth.

When a bus driver—to give one example—started physically attacking a march made up of some 300 schoolgirls, aged between 13 and 15, bravely protesting at being forced to wear the chador, bystanders who had been standing watching the girls, immediately stepped in and vigorously dealt with the bus driver.

Fearing serious trouble over this issue, mullahs (priests) more in touch with the mood of the masses realised that some retreat had to be made.

Ayatollah Taleghani from

Tehran, who is more sensitive to the mood of the people than Khomeini, tried to explain that Khomeini's statement was "more of a wish than an order" and that "It is not a question of imposing the chador. When we talk about the hejab, we mean dignified dress, the veil of dignity, the veil of personality."

Despite this statement, however, demonstrations continued, and spread to Tabriz and Abadan. Such widespread anger at the attacks on unveiled women forced Khomeini's spokesmen to make statements denouncing the zealots, and even

Khomeini's Committee sent some of their militiamen to protect women's marches in Tehran.

Faced with this mounting opposition Khomeini himself, five days after his original statement, was forced to retreat. "The views expressed by Ayatollah Taleghani about the hejab," he announced, "are identical with mine."

The Iranian revolution began as a movement against the Shah's dictatorship and for an improvement in the conditions of the masses. The Iranian workers and middle class interpreted the speeches of the mullahs, especially

Khomeini, as a call for a struggle against the Shah and for freedom and a better life.

The reactionary, religious ideas of the mullahs played no part in rallying the Iranian people, especially the working class, against the Shah. This is why now, when the mullahs are attempting to turn the clock back and implement their reactionary ideas, they are being called to a halt by the workers and other radicalised sections who are determined that they will never again be forced to suffer a reactionary, repressive regime.

FIGHTING FOR THE NHS

In the middle of the struggle to achieve a decent wage, hospital workers in Westminster are also fighting for their jobs.

The District Management Team has already unveiled its 'redistribution' plans, which involve a loss of nearly 300 beds and 600 jobs, with several hospital closures. Already, the closure has been announced of St Columba's Hospital and of a ward in St Mary's Harrow, within the next month.

St Columba's, a terminal care hospital, is small, with 38 workers. Nevertheless, the District Joint Shop Stewards Committee has correctly seen its closure as the thin edge of the wedge and is prepared to fight to keep it open. At a meeting in the hospital, the DJSSC voted unanimously to support any action by the workers in the hospital to keep it open. If necessary, they will call a strike throughout Westminster.

The NUPE workers at St Columba's are considering an occupation and work-in at the hospital. The two consultants are to continue to work and are supporting the workers. Even the Assistant Administrator of the hospital and the Archbishop of Canterbury are prepared to support the workers.



A struggle for decent wages—and for jobs! Photo: MILITANT

Westminster hospital workers have come in for more than their fair share of abuse from the Tory press recently. Yet while they have been accused of harming patients and causing suffering it is the workers who are leading the

fight to save the area's health service.

During the Day of Action on 22 January, an ambulance sped through the picket lines at St Mary's, Harrow Road, on an emergency call, but was turned away—not because the

think of to get the council round the negotiating table."

"We secured no victimisation against any personnel involved in the Gateway action. There will be no victimisation from either side for the strike action.

"The union threw out the council's demand that a week's notice should be given for a return to work. The Tory council wanted to allow McGoverns, a private contractor, to clear the backlog of rubbish. This contract work comes very expensive on the ratepayer's pockets, yet the Tories are always hypocritically claiming to be concerned with saving money.

"We are fairly satisfied with the settlement, but there are a lot more improvements that could be made" said Maurice—"the shorter working week, unfortunately was thrown out. "Barnet say they will not follow Camden's example unless other councils come in line.

"This council will be the last to come in line, because it's so rank Tory".

"The holidays we asked for were thrown out; we wanted four weeks, the same as the white collar workers and depot management—at the moment we only get three weeks' plus one day.

Solidarity

"All the men we have been let down by our national negotiators—a lot of confidence has been drained out of the national leadership. But the officers at a local level have given us all the support

HEALTH WORKERS: DETERMINATION GROWS

Throughout the country, NUPE members are stepping up the fight for their claim, firm in their rejection of the government's 9% plus £1 offer which falls far short of a £60 a week minimum.

David Ennals' call last week for blackleg volunteers to scab on the health workers' industrial action—a disgraceful appeal from a Labour minister—has only strengthened NUPE members' determination.

In many hospitals, ancillary workers immediately walked out, and in Manchester over 600 occupied the headquarters of the North West Regional Health Authority.

Ambulancemen, in particular, have continued to

strengthen their action. Now, an estimated 85% of the country's ambulancemen are providing emergency cover only.

This week, about 500 of Britain's 2,100 hospitals will be admitting only emergency cases. Although the effect of NUPE's action is apparently being played down by the press and television—in contrast to the hysterical exaggerations and attacks at the beginning—the selective strike action has now been made more effective by greater concentration and co-ordination.

In many areas, the attitude of NUPE members has been stiffened by the arbitrary

tactics of management, who have attempted to undermine the effectiveness of the union's action, particularly by victimising leading shop stewards.

While NUPE is fighting alone as far as the ancillary workers are concerned, they have now been joined in selective action by the nurses [in NUPE, COHSE and in some cases the RCN] who have also had enough of low pay and appallingly long hours.

However, reports—as yet unconfirmed—that the government intends to offer the nurses 9% plus £2 'on account' pending a comparability study [instead of the £1 offered to the ancillary workers] have met with a sharp reaction from health workers. If this is the plan, it can only be as a divide-and-rule move to split health service workers. It has rightly been rejected by NUPE.

On Wednesday [21 March], the anger and determination of health service workers in London will be demonstrated by a simultaneous one-day strike by all 30,000 ancillary workers in the capital.

workers had stopped emergency cover, but because two days a week the hospital's emergency department is closed.

Apparently, working people in Paddington can only have emergencies on certain days

of the week!

Not a word of these closures appears in the national press. Yet the Fleet Street lie-sheets have waged a vicious campaign against the workers for striking for a living wage. What hypocrisy!

Messages of support to: Tom Dyke, St Columba's NUPE, 33a Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, London N4.

By Dave Reid
(Paddington LPYS)

TORY COUNCIL FORCED TO GIVE CONCESSIONS

In Barnet, local authority manual workers have won a local agreement for 5% attendance allowance on top of the national settlement.

"As a shop steward" says Maurice Tait, "I'll tell you, I'm not completely happy with this. Everyone should get a decent wage in the first place. There should be no need for overtime, and the increase should not be linked to attendance.

"A bonus has been offered, subject to observation and acceptance. As a steward I think this is rubbish; a bonus scheme only brings on skimmed work and allows management to foster favouritism.

Maurice Tait (GMWU) spoke to Ed Bober (Hendon S Labour Party)

"The National Joint Council says there should be a bonus of £1.50 per week. The unions see this as a minimum whereas the council see it as a maximum."

This was the reaction of Maurice Tait, General and Municipal Workers' Union shop steward, Hendon, who spoke to me about the outcome of the Local Authority manual workers' strike in Barnet. This action culminated in the occupation of the council's offices at Gateway House, Finchley.

A court injunction was needed to end the occupation, but as Maurice points out, "we occupied for only one reason—to show the continuity of the strike and to bring an early settlement. It was the only way we could



No paradise here. Local authority workers are still fighting for a basic living wage. The rubbish piles higher for every week of struggle

Photo: J McKittrick (MILITANT)

and leadership that we expected from the union. We expected this at a national level as well."

Maurice is also very critical of the lack of support from some of the other unions, despite sympathy from many of their rank-and-file members:

"We applaud our officers for their support, and the Labour councillors for at least meeting us when we occupied. But we wish they had been more active at the negotiating

table at the Whitley works meeting."

"Trade unionism should be one worker supporting another. This was not done by two unions, the EETPU and NALGO. Some of the members in NALGO tried to pressurise their Executive at a local level to take supportive action whilst at work. But their executive is made up of officers in the council, and they succeeded in defeating the calls for solidarity action. "These unions openly went

against the basic concept of trade unionism by crossing picket lines and openly abusing pickets on duty. There was one individual in the EETPU who openly defied the pickets and antagonised them. Even the policeman there said to us that if he had been spoken to like that he'd have hit the man!

"We would like to thank the Trades Council for their support and look to the South East TUC for the blacking of McGoverns in this area.

MILITANT READERS MEETINGS

SPENNYMOOR

A 'Militant' readers' meeting on "Trade Unions and the Labour Government" at Spennymoor on March 4th saw a very lively discussion.

Brian Gibson and Dennis McMahon, convenors from the local Courtaulds factory [see 'Militant' 444], gave an outline of their campaign to save the factory, one of the many fighting against the axe in the North East.

After Brian and Dennis, Bill Hopwood addressed the meeting. He began by telling the meeting of the enthusiasm felt by the working class in 1974 when the Tory government was brought down and replaced by a Labour one.

In explaining why this enthusiasm had been dampened, Bill pointed out that the acceptance of the social contract by Labour and trade union leaders was to blame.

A Labour government always had to make a choice. Either it accepts the present economic system or it says, enough is enough, we are going to proceed with socialist policies. Unfortunately the leadership of the movement accepted the former alternative.

Bill then asked: "What should we do?" Firstly, it was necessary to have the leaders of the movement accountable to the membership, but it was just as important that the active workers join the Labour Party to make sure that the elected leaders carry out the policies of Labour Party Conference.

Some doubt was raised about the desirability of being an active member of the Labour Party. But the overwhelming feeling in the meeting was that it was necessary to be active for change in the mass party of the working class.

By Ray Physick

"WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR LABOUR"

WARE & HERTFORD

Ware is one of the many small towns in the backwaters of East Hertfordshire. Our first ever 'Militant' public meeting took place recently outlining 'What Militant Stands For'.

Thirteen people turned up and nearly everyone had something to say about the mass private enterprise in, all over the world. But people also gave examples of the potential strength of workers to change society.

Chris Powell (Ware and Hertford LPYS) reflected the meeting's optimism about the consciousness of working people when aroused.

By Hope Lerner
(Ware & Hertford LPYS)

He pointed out that in 1917, reports from the trenches said that the first things any of the Russian troops asked for were books, newspapers and news of the revolution in the cities—at a time when the soldiers were in desperate need of food and ammunition and the majority could barely read!

The success of the meeting was shown with a collection of £13.50 for the fighting fund. Unfortunately over £5 went to pay for the tiny room hired—yet another small example of how society is run for neither people nor their needs...yet.



NORWICH

The first-ever Militant public meeting in Norwich was well attended, and proved a great success.

Bob Edwards, Harlow CLP, spoke excellently on 'A Fighting Programme for Labour'. This was followed by a lively and lengthy discussion.

Towards the end of the meeting, one comrade who has been active in the labour movement for a number of years, but for whom the meeting proved a welcome new experience, publicly congratulated Bob on his inspiring lead-off, and went on to say that if the ideas and policies of the 'Militant' were to find greater expression in the labour movement and the Labour Party, things would certainly be a lot different. The socialist transformation of society would be 'that much closer to hand'.

The meeting raised £5 for the fighting fund.

By Chris Grace
(Norwich LPYS)

SCOTLAND LPYS WILL FIGHT NEW WITCH-HUNT THREAT

The Labour Party Young Socialists in Scotland is once again obliged to mount a massive campaign on the question of democracy in the Labour Party. The recent Scottish Conference of the Party, at the request of the Scottish Executive, agreed to remit resolution 123 calling for an "independent" enquiry into the LPYS.

George Galloway, summing up the debate [in which the voice of the LPYS was not heard] said: "There is no such thing as an independent enquiry, ... as an enquiry independent of the views of those conducting it." He then went to ask for remission of a resolution calling for just such an enquiry!

But not before he had pointed out that such enquiries were a threat to every Labour Party member, not just the LPYS: "Today it will be the 'Militant' tendency, tomorrow the 'Tribune'..."

Is it not clear what the purposes of such an enquiry would be? The completely unfounded allegations made by the speakers for the resolution, and in the resolution itself, are reminiscent of the attempted witch-hunt against Marxists in the Labour Party in 1977. Now as then, every LPYS member, every genuine socialist, will fight against such a witch-hunt with all their strength.

The LPYS are accused of "fruitless sectarianism", of refusal to work with other bodies in the labour movement, of contenting themselves with "sterile debate".

By Jim Newlands
(LPYS National Committee member, Scotland)

What truth is there in these allegations?

The LPYS has a record unrivalled by any other section of the labour movement for campaigning on the issues facing working people today—unemployment, low wages, a shorter working week, and many others. In the recent campaign of the LPYS, the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment, they were able to organise a meeting in Glasgow of 250 delegates, comprising not just LPYS members but delegates from unions such as NUPE, GMWU, TGWU, AUEW, EETPU, POEU, CPSA, and many others.

The campaign was sponsored by the Scottish NUM and a great many shop stewards' committees, trade union branches, trades councils, and Labour Parties. In the course of the campaign, hundreds of factories, hospitals, schools and colleges were visited by LPYS members throughout Scotland, arguing for their socialist programme and urging work-

ers to join the Labour Party and fight for socialism.

Is this the "fruitless sectarianism" of which the resolution speaks?

And what of our "refusal to work with other bodies"? This is an allegation repeatedly made by the so-called 'Clause Four' group against the LPYS. At the regional conference of the LPYS, this allegation was made yet again, complaining of our supposed refusal to work with the Youth Advisory Committee of the STUC, and with the Scottish Organisation of Labour Students.

The LPYS has not only repeatedly declared its willingness. It considers joint work with these bodies essential. We are in favour of campaigns involving the broadest possible number of labour movement organisations. At the same time, however, we absolutely refuse to water down our programme, democratically arrived at by LPYS conference, for the sake of unity.

Unity

This is what really upsets the "Clause Four" group, who will stand for anything which they think will win votes in the short term. That is the real meaning of this allegation.

Last year, the LPYS Scottish Committee, anxious to forge links with the STUC YAC, offered an exchange of delegates between the two committees, but the YAC

refused. The YAC is under the influence of the Communist Party, whose programme is indistinguishable from that of 'Clause Four'.

While the LPYS fights for its own ideas—and has consistently opposed wage restraint and acceptance of mass unemployment—LPYS members rely on the strength of their arguments and the democratic traditions of the Party. We would, therefore, appeal to all Party members to oppose vigorously any attempt to curtail the discussion in the Party on these issues by bureaucratic means.

We urge all Labour Party members and trade unionists to raise this issue in their branches, shop stewards' committees, and at every level of the labour movement, to flood the SEC with resolutions demanding that resolution 123 be thrown out.

NUS Poly Campaign

The NUS Polytechnics Committee, at its first meeting of the year, faced up to the problem of building links with the trade union and labour movement. Alan Watson ('Militant' supporter and NOLS NC) has been given responsibility for this area of work.

A first step, proposed by Alan, was to send a letter to all Polytechnic Student Union presidents calling on them to give support to the struggle of the low paid workers, and to make it clear that students shouldn't cross picket lines.

Alan has also been given responsibility for overseas students, who have received little concrete support from

NUS in the past. Alan is putting proposals to the next committee meeting on the campaign that must be fought by NUS to improve the conditions faced by overseas students.

Please inform Alan of any campaigns or problems in your Polytechnic. He expressed his willingness to speak at any Polytechnic or Labour Club on the work of the Committee, and plans to give regular reports on the committee's activities.

Alan Watson
(NUS Polytechnics Committee) was interviewed by Peter Lush

LPYS/NUPE JOINT MEETING

"If you compare the earnings of catering staff with those of Garners workers, that would mean a drop in wages!"

This is how Berne Grant, NUPE Area Organiser, spelt out the sham of a comparability study when addressing a joint NUPE/Ealing North Labour Party Young Socialists public meeting at the local town hall last Thursday. Brother Grant outlined the

original claim, queried the tactics employed during the dispute, and ended on a defiant note by stating that the strike amongst hospital ancillary workers would continue.

Glens Ingham, Editor of 'Left', representing the LPYS, backed up Brother Grant's remarks and outlined the LPYS programme for a socialist society. Glens appealed to all those non-Party

members at the meeting to join immediately and aid the fight for socialist policies.

One thing which has emerged from the dispute is the strong link which has been forged between the LPYS and the local NUPE branch. This will be consolidated and strengthened in the future.

By Marcus Hosgood
(Ealing North CLP)

LEFT & RIGHT

A good example

There's no holding back the class struggle. The Tory faithful are following the example of the City shareholders who, as reported previously, laughed out the 5% limit for their own friends. But this time they're on the wrong side of Mrs T.

Watch out for hysterical press attacks on the 'greedy', 'heartless' and 'non-productive' workers at Tory Central Office [a third of them are in the 'belligerent' ASTMS] who are at present in negotiations with Tory Party leaders over a 30% wage claim.

A fool and his money...

"I left my country to help straighten things out. But it has had the opposite effect." That's the latest verdict of Iran's deposed Shah.

It seems that all the money in the world [and he has managed to grab a hefty share of it] isn't enough to distract the moulting peacock from the fate of his country's millions. Thought it's more likely to be the £ millions than the property-less masses he's worried about.

Having decided to set up home at a polite distance in sunny California [rather than one of the Pahlavi's luxury homes in London, New York and Los Angeles], the Shah is reported to be laying out some of his £20,000 million on a spy network to 'keep an eye' on the new regime.

"He intends to organise a major effort from his American HQ to overthrow Iran's new government when the time is right," US diplomats have told the press.

Whatever the Shah may think, the Iranian masses are having a good go at 'straightening out' the remains of the old regime. It will take more than this dethroned despot, with his ill-gotten riches, to turn back the clock.

Unsugared pill

With the EEC elections in the offing, the Common Market bureaucrats are trying to make life a little sweeter. But not for the average European.

Due to the enormous subsidies handed out to the farmers, Europe produces about double the quantity of sugar it needs. That's called planning, under capitalism. The result—two to three million tonnes of sugar which at current high prices no-one is buying.

The EEC's answer? Feed cut-price sugar to the bees, whose honey output is down, due to long winters, a poor summer and the lack of pollen. But to make sure greedy workers don't cash in, the sugar is being mixed with repellent powdered garlic. The trouble is, that gives the bees indigestion—so charcoal has to be added. All in the name of profit.

The big businessmen's club is doing its best to make sure that Europe's workers take their bitter medicine straight.

TROTSKY

The Capitalist View

This latest biography which attempts to portray the 'real' Leon Trotsky is by Robert Payne.

He sees Lenin's comrade-in-arms, the creator and leader of the Red Army, in the most contradictory light. Like all capitalist historians his attitude is totally hostile to the actions of Trotsky.

Although he pretends to appreciate his genius and magnificent grasp of major problems, when Trotsky translates these ideas into revolutionary action then bile and carping invective replaces grudging admiration.

Trotsky and Lenin are lumped together with Stalin as being responsible for the mass slaughter which accompanied Stalin's rise to power. Recognising and agreeing with Trotsky's characterisation of Stalin as a bloodthirsty, power-seeking mediocrity, who expressed and defended the interests of the developing privileged caste in Russia, Payne also suggests that Trotsky shared Stalin's bloodthirsty ruthlessness.

During the course of the book, however, Payne contradicts himself time and again. During the July days in 1917 a mass demonstration of sailors had descended on the headquarters of the Menshevik-controlled Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. They seized Victor Chernov who was the minister of agriculture in Kerensky's Provisional Government, clearly intending to vent their wrath on him.

Trotsky thrust his way through the crowd, jumped on the front of the car which held Chernov, and gave "a short ringing speech on proper behaviour during a time of revolution," ending with the words: "Those in favour of violence to Chernov raise their hands!" No one raised their hand, and Trotsky turned politely to the minister telling him that he was free. While Payne recognises Trotsky's bravery in this incident, he deprecatingly calls it a "conjuring trick."

Throughout the book, Payne attempts to belittle Trotsky's understanding of events. In Chapter 20, which deals with Trotsky's exile on the island of Prinkipo, he asserts that Trotsky had very little understanding of Hitler, "perhaps because he despised him as he despised Stalin." Considering the volume of material Trotsky wrote warn-



Trotsky with Lenin, 1917—brilliant leaders or 'executioners'?

Tony Mulhearn
(Liverpool Labour Party)
reviews 'The life and
death of Trotsky'
by Robert Payne

ing the German and international labour movement about the danger from Hitler, this is a remarkable observation.

Payne "corrects" himself later when he recognises Trotsky as the one major figure to prophesy the Hitler-Stalin pact.

Show trials

The assessment of Trotsky's understanding of Stalin is equally ludicrous. Incredibly, it is suggested that Trotsky lacked an understanding and was nonplussed as to the reasons for the monstrous Moscow trials staged by Stalin when all the leading old Bolsheviks confessed to the most heinous crimes. The penetrating analysis of precisely this determination of Stalin to cast himself as the only link with the October Revolution ranks as one of Trotsky's great contributions to Marxism, and today still provides the advanced workers of the world with an understanding of the nature of the Soviet state.

No capitalist biography would be complete without dealing with Trotsky's role in the Kronstadt uprising, which is regarded as the Achilles' heel of Bolshevik democracy. Payne makes no attempt to explain that the original workers and sailors who had been in the vanguard when the proletariat took power in October 1917 had been scattered to the four winds by the civil war, and had been replaced by elements hostile to the revolution.

In 1921 Russia was exhausted after four years of civil war. Shortages were rampant with whole areas of dissatisfaction for which Lenin and Trotsky were seeking remedies in terms of raising the living standards of the masses. Using the opportunity of this unrest, the mainly petit-bourgeois and peasant sections in Kronstadt led the

revolt. In order to save the revolution—and after appeals and warnings to the Kronstadt sailors—Lenin decisively ordered its suppression—no other course of action being possible under the appalling conditions facing the young Soviet state. Trotsky later endorsed Lenin's action.

As a result of this episode Lenin and Trotsky are described as bloodthirsty executioners. The responsibility of the white generals, fighting for Russia's old exploiters and the imperialist powers, is conveniently pushed into the background.

After Lenin and Trotsky successfully led the working class to power, one of the most graphically descriptive chapters records how Trotsky used the legendary armoured train to inspire the Red Army. During the civil war he travelled an estimated 200,000 kilometres, electrifying demoralised sections of the army, retrieving hopeless situations.

Petrograd

One of the great historic victories was the defence of Petrograd. Trotsky arrived there when the white General Yudenich was at the gates of the city. Returning on the train Trotsky found Zinoviev, nominally in charge, lying on a sofa having lost his nerve.

While the Red Army was being thrown back by Yudenich, Trotsky forged a new army, consisting of clerks, labourers, women, boys, everyone who could hold rifles. Every house was a fortress. The order of the day was: "Hold Petrograd at all costs."

By throwing all his reserves at the invaders, Trotsky drove them back and Yudenich fled. The defence of Petrograd proved to be the turning point in the civil war. The tide turned in favour of the Bolsheviks.

In Trotsky's final years in exile in Coyoacan, Mexico, he

is portrayed as a caricature of a revolutionary who, having been defeated in the struggle for power by Stalin, seeks to create his own phantom organisation which he can turn against Stalin. Payne is incapable of understanding the task which Trotsky set himself—that of building a new leadership for the international working class.

The biography closes with the attempts on Trotsky's life by Stalin's agents—and his assassination by "Ramon Mercader" who—as it was successfully proved—was acting on the orders of the arch-assassin in the Kremlin.

In spite of Payne's natural hostility to Trotsky and his willingness to seize on anything he considers to be a weakness, this author is compelled to recognise Trotsky's indispensable role in the October Revolution. Payne cannot but recognise Trotsky's great theoretical grasp of world events, his capacity to organise vast armies of men, and his genius in building the Red Army and leading it with such elan when he had no formal military training.

Even when trapped in the fortress at Coyoacan, Trotsky's powerful personality dominates, and continually provokes, the rage and fury of Churchill and Stalin.

While this is not an objective assessment of Trotsky's role in history, it is a book which, in spite of many distortions, gives a glimpse of Trotsky as seen through the eyes of the capitalists.

A 'MILITANT' PUBLICATION

**LENIN AND
TROTSKY—
What they really
stood for**

**By A Woods and
T Grant**

Price £1.50 (plus 50p P&P)
From World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

SPG: A SYSTEMATIC TERROR CAMPAIGN

Last November, 120 Special Patrol Group officers were posted into Brixton, South London. Ostensibly they were there to bring down the crime rate, but what followed was a systematic terror campaign against local blacks.

Concentrating on four council estates with high black populations, they proceeded to question over 1,000 people, arresting 430 of them. The black population of Brixton is less than 20% but they constituted 40% of those arrested. This included ten youths arrested in a Stockwell café during their dinner hour, and another 11 picked up in Central Brixton, who were also charged under the 'sus' law.

The SPG tactics involved sudden appearances in the street to pick up any black youths walking about; early morning raids on houses, road blocks, and attacks on youth clubs. The harassed blacks took to the streets in angry protest. However, Commander Adams of Brixton police force said: "I don't think reasonably minded people objected."

The SPG then moved their commandoes to harass the blacks in Hackney, Dalsfon and Stoke Newington.

These incidents are only a small part of a huge catalogue of police terror against the black population of Britain over the last decade.

The Cricklewood 12, the Stockwell 10, Capeltown 12, Islington 18, Lewisham 21 and the Mangrove 9 represent a steady stream of black youth put on frame-up trials by the police.

SPG activities have notably been confined to areas with high black populations, which they occupy for weeks on end, terrifying people with

a ritual of indiscriminate arrests; beatings and interrogations; road checks and raids. They use the 'sus' law as the loophole to arrest who they wish.

But black immigrants face even greater harassment. Laws on migrant workers again give the police the chance to arrest who they wish. Asian workers suffer terribly.

Seven Indian workers were picked up in East London in 1976. They were taken from their beds at 6.30 in the morning and held for 48 hours at a police station. Despite presenting passports and documents to testify the

legality of their presence in Britain, they were accused of being illegal immigrants. The police said the documents were forged. They threatened and beat them to try to get a confession.

One of the immigrants had been in Britain for 25 years. Another was unable to go to his own wedding, which the police then attended to pick up one of his friends. No

charges were made.

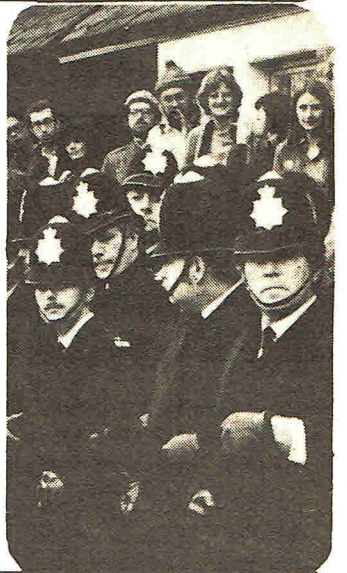
They were lucky. Abdul Azad, a 17-year-old Bangladeshi living in Oldham, was reported in the 'Observer' to have spent 15 weeks in remand because the police say he is an illegal immigrant. The only evidence they have is a signed confession which he has since withdrawn, saying he was beaten and starved into giving his signature.

By Phil Frampton

(National Chairman, LPYS and member of PNP Youth)

Case after case of such treatment of Asian immigrants have been reported. This harassment of black people by forces of 'the law' has been sanctioned by the Tories and gone unchecked by the Labour government. That has been shown by the failure to stop the use by immigration officials of 'virginity' tests to humiliate black women entering Britain.

It is one more illustration of the barbaric reality of British capitalism and its laws, which allow racist immigration officers, police and judges to make Britain a living hell for black communities.



WHO ARE THE SPECIAL PATROL GROUP ?

The Special Patrol Group was set up in the mid-1960s on the pretext that "a group of uniformed officers under supervision with adequate transport would be useful for preventive patrolling of estates subject to hooliganism and housebreaking." [Deputy Commissioner Webb, Scotland Yard, 1964].

Any illusions that this was the intended role of the SPG were stripped away in 1973 when two young Pakistanis were shot dead by its members at the India High Commission.

Rather than being used to prevent petty crimes, the SPG is used as a special strike force, trained and brutalised to carry out acts of repression in this country. The SPG are the domestic 'paras', a volunteer army of thugs trained in unarmed combat, the use of firearms, riot shields and road blocks, and breaking up pickets and demonstrations. All very useful to stop housebreaking!

In 'normal' duties they use charges of loitering with intent, sus, assault and obstruction of police to conduct random arrests and searches. In Brixton, Lewisham and Hackney they conduct random soakings of the area and wage a campaign of terror against local blacks.

Here they get their training for their job as an anti-working class organisation. What better way for them to prepare for the Grunwicks and Saltley Gates of the future than on a small beleaguered minority? Here they learn their tactics of harassment and lightning raids with advice from their friends in Northern Ireland. If they had launched such attacks on white organised workers there would have been an enormous outcry from the trade union movement.

It is no accident that the rabidly anti-working class Tory government of 1970 to 1974 doubled the size of the SPG to over 200 men. They understood the need to prepare their crack troops for the battles to come. Unfortunately, when Labour came to power, instead of taking the opportunity to disband these employers' thugs, they allowed the SPG to extend their activities [as shown below]:

	Number Stopped	Number Arrested
1972	41,980	3,142
1974	34,534	3,262
1976	60,898	3,773

Under Labour the harassment increased by 50% and the ratio of stoppages to arrests rose from 11 to 1 to 16 to 1—as if the SPG were getting clumsier! More sinisterly, the SPG extended their role from action not only in the Notting Hill Carnivals where they brought out the riot shields and gas, but on to attacking trade unionists at Grunwicks! They were openly seen to use provocateurs, shock tactics and grotesque brutality against the pickets. It should have been a warning to Labour.

We must demand the immediate disbandment of the SPG; abolition of sus; Labour action to end the activities of the Special Branch, the opening up of police files for trade union inspection and abolition of the laws of conspiracy and criminal trespass.

NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST ARRESTS: Why all the questions?

Last week 'Militant' reported on the harassment and arrest of pickets involved in a dispute with the savagely anti-union Nottingham Evening Post management.

Roy Bennet [Secretary AUEW Nottingham No 1] here gives an insight into police methods following his own arrest.

The pickets, about 300 trade unionists from as far afield as Cardiff, Norwich and Glasgow, were totally outnumbered by the police by about four to one. Picketing was carried out quite peacefully, with chants of "Re-instate the thirty eight".

Later several of us wanted to cross the road. Suddenly, an inspector said "we'll have that one". I was grabbed from out of the mass and bundled off to the Guild Hall (the local nick), about 50 yards away. I was relieved of everything in my pockets, and also my raincoat belt, trousers belt and my shoe-laces. My photograph was taken and then I was

put in a cell for a total of five hours.

Some time during the afternoon—they had also relieved me of my watch—I was taken to a cubicle where a police-woman in plain clothes asked me questions, and wrote down my answers on a form. When I queried the relevancy of this form she said I could refuse to answer her questions but the magistrates would look on this unfavourably.

Date of birth? Married? Children—ages and sex? Relationship with wife good or bad? Home conditions good or bad? Jobs and reasons for leaving over the last 12 years? Hire purchase agreements? Mortgage repayments?

Have you seen a psychiatrist lately? Have you ever had

psychiatric treatment?

Visions of being carted off to a mental institution!

I again queried the relevancy of these questions. She replied that all criminals have to be asked these questions, but she quickly pointed out that I hadn't been convicted as yet!

I asked for a copy of the form but was refused.

I still had not been informed of any charges against me. The only thing I definitely knew was that I had been arrested—but only because I overheard them ask for the arresting officer's name when I was taken to the police station.

Returning to my cell, I won't elaborate on its dimensions, except to say it was Victorian in design. I was left to talk to the walls for another two hours.

The police were mostly quite civil. Some threw in the odd remark about 'You can write about how well we've treated you'—two slices of bread and butter and half a cup of milk to ward off a diabetic coma (I have a

condition akin to diabetes). A little later, however I was offered a jam butty!

At approximately 7.30 pm I was taken to a larger cell where four other trade unionists were being held. They told me that in all, ten trade unionists were arrested, one of them was the editor of the NUJ journal.

Shortly afterwards I was taken to the desk, my belongings returned, and then charged under section 5 of the Public Order Act 1963 and Section 7 of the Race Relations Act 1965.

The charge sheet read: "On the 3rd March 1979 in the City of Nottingham (the accused) did use certain threatening, abusive, insulting words, behaviour with intent to provoke a breach of the peace, or whereby a breach of peace was likely to be occasioned."

I asked the charging officer why it stated this as all I shouted was 'Cross the street' and 'Reinstate the twenty eight' which everybody else was shouting.

He answered: "That's how

the Act reads and that's what you're being charged with." I replied: "But what it states isn't true in my case." He shrugged his shoulders and looked sheepish.

Whilst I was putting my shoe-laces back in my shoes I told an inspector this was the first time I had been on a picket line and I thought it was disgusting the way it had been handled by the police.

I also said that I would do everything in my power to organise the trade unions in this area to bring about the reinstatement of the 28 journalists. He replied: "You got a bloody nose at Grunwicks. You'll get a bloody nose in this dispute."

Talking to my little girl, aged 9, next day, she asked why I had been arrested. Relating to her the story she

said "well you shouldn't go on picket lines." I tried to explain to her that the need to support fellow trade unionists to get their jobs back, and in some cases to keep a roof over their heads, was a must for all trade unionists.

"Why not get rid of the bosses", she said, "then there would be no trouble"! A seed set for true socialism.

The point that worries me is why was all that information needed on my personal life! Will they give to Maggie Thatcher to use against me if they get in power and put into practice the reforms against trade unions which they are advocating at this time?

Food for thought, indeed, but a definite case of ensuring indigestion.

London LPYS/ PNP [Youth]
 March on Brixton
 'KICK SUS OUT'
 Saturday April 7th. Assemble 1pm,
 Camberwell Grove, S.E.5.
 (Near Camberwell Green)

STEEL CRISIS - THE REAL CULPRITS

Many false reasons are advanced for the problems which now face BSC.

It is argued that imports are forcing the early closure of British steelworks. Whereas UK producers made 94% of all steel consumed in Britain in 1970, they were making only 78% by mid 1978.

Nevertheless, however serious this is for British capitalism, this country still has less import penetration in steel than any other country in the EEC.

If imports are causing Britain's crisis, why isn't there a still bigger crisis in West Germany, where 30.6% of the home market is taken by imports? (see table 1)

The rise in imports in the 1970s occurred because BSC is run by an incompetent Tory management and because, despite nationalisation, private enterprise has been allowed to survive in steel.

Corby, for instance, has a tube works. Imports of tubes and pipes are running at 22% (see table 2). BSC want to close steel-making there even though that must jeopardise the future of the tube works. Yet Corby's heavy tubes cannot be made elsewhere!

Tube imports rose in the early 1970s when there should have been a bonanza for tubemakers because of the laying down of pipelines under the North Sea. Why? Because BSC was unable to produce tube to the speci-

fications required by the pipe-layers!

What an admission of failure for the third largest steel company in the world! What an indictment of capitalism! What an argument for the workers to take over!

Blunders of this kind are crippling BSC. Import controls would not protect Britain's steel industry. Only a fully modernised BSC will be able to meet orders, yet the vandals at BSC are cutting back. With a pro-big business management in the saddle, the Corporation cannot recover.

Who is doing the importing anyway? 'Mr Pastry' Villiers has bluntly said he will import in the event of strikes, and the Port Talbot dispute proved the corporation means it.

But the bulk of importing is done by the private sector. With folded arms BSC watched the stockholding firms which act as middlemen supplying industry shoot up everywhere in the country: there are now more than 200 of them. These are the main importers, cutting corners to boost their parasitic profits.

All stockholding operations should be within BSC, and then trade could be controlled. But nothing is further from the mind of the ex-Tory councillor and guardsman who now runs BSC than an extension of nationalisation.

It is easy to call for import controls, but one country's export is another country's import. What if other countries put up import barriers against exports of British steel, which made up 30% of all its sales in 1977? How many Works would close then?

And things could get worse. The USA might retaliate against British steel import controls with import controls against British cars.

Every car needs one third of



Sir Charles Villiers, Head of BSC. Called Mr Pastry but his policies are no joke

a tonne of steel. How long would the strip mills survive the falling demand from the UK car industry?

While everyone complains

Table 1
Import penetration in the EEC [1976]
Imports as % of national steel consumption

W Germany.....	30
France.....	41
Italy.....	24
Netherlands.....	94
Belgium.Luxembourg....	71
Denmark.....	81
UK.....	20

about imports, the real culprits escape scot-free. The private sector is expanding willy-nilly. A new private tube works, recently opened in Gwent, must take orders from the nationalised industry.

The 'Financial Times' in February reported that the private steelmakers were poised for the upturn".

These sharks, who all but ruined the industry before 1967, are ready to put the boot in on BSC.

They are no longer small operations, but a growing threat. With their ill-gotten gains from compensation for nationalisation they have bought electric arcs relieving them of problems over iron-making capacity.

Now that they have modernised they can complain about the cost of modernising BSC, and oppose modernisation of plants like Bilston at a trifling cost because of 'overcapacity'.

Steelworkers are asking: "What overcapacity"? Could it be possible that the private sector is afraid that BSC will fare better at meeting orders than 'private enterprise'? Private steelmakers have a larger share of the market than imports, and their slice of the cake is growing.

In the Tory press there are

still complaints about 'over-manning' at BSC, despite the scandalous shake-out during 1978. Is this the reason why works must close?

How can it be, however, when the hourly labour costs of the British steel industry are the lowest in the EEC? The truth is that far from the BSC feather-bedding its employees, the steelworker is subsidising the industry.

Sacking more steelworkers will not save the British Steel Corporation—it will simply make it even more difficult to meet orders. In many departments workers are overstretched. Productivity deals are taking things to the limit.

Not one job must go. If Corby closed, the local economy would be shattered. What sort of market for steel would there be in the area?

Steel closures not only mean less steel made, they mean less steel bought as well. As unemployment rises, income falls. As income falls, so too does demand, which means fewer and fewer orders for steel. Pressure for further closures then comes from the bosses, and so-on—until there is nothing left.

BSC is running round in ever decreasing circles. Every spasm of closures is meant to put the rest of the corporation on its feet. It never does.

There was a cycle of closures just after nationalisation, another in the early seventies, the 'Beswick' closures, and now they want to close Consett, Corby, Bilston and (probably) Shotton.

History shows that the more they have cut back, the more orders they have lost. BSC had 70% of the market at nationalisation but has only about half now. The BSC mandarins are like medieval apothecaries applying the leech: their treatment is as bad, if not worse than the disease itself.

What is the solution then?

It can be found only by fighting for socialist change.

First of all, the tide must be turned on closures: the pits were saved just in time from capitalism's throttling grip—the same must be done for steel.

But steelworkers must raise the demand for nationalisation of all private steelmakers and stockholders.

They bar the way. If a fully nationalised industry is plugged into a planned socialist economy, then it will be liberated from the anarchic

Table 2
Share of imports of finished steel deliveries in Britain [first quarter 1978]

Rod and bar for reinforcement.....	22%
Other light rolled sections and bars.....	28%
Plates.....	27%
Sheets.....	41%
Tubes and pipes.....	22%
All deliveries.....	22%

fluctuations of capitalism.

The steelworker has more practical knowledge of the BSC than the failed directors and managers of Grosvenor Place. There is certainly plenty of scope for redundancies at the top!

Let no one say that the workers cannot manage the steel industry: despite all the advice of the experts—who could be so much better employed by the workers' representatives — nothing could be worse than the appalling forecasting and production record of the last few years.

Workers' control and management could not be worse—in fact, with all the abundant skills of the workers and the initiative that would be drawn on through democratic control, it would be immeasurably superior.

By Michael Unwin

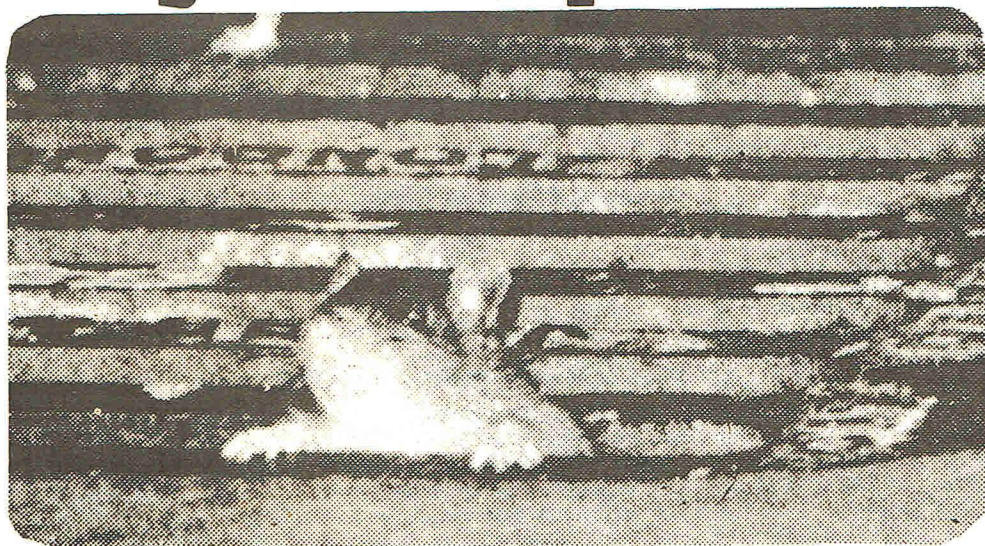
SEWER WORKERS

After you've pulled the chain

In last week's issue Peter Morris, Secretary, NUPE Soar Water Branch, told 'Militant' why Water and Sewer workers are dissatisfied with the recent pay deal. They are also angry at management's smears about "gross absenteeism" and "shirking".

"As someone pulls the chain", says Pete "it's something they don't want to know about: that's where our job begins!" This week he describes the working conditions:

"Workers employed on Water Reclamation Works (Sewage Disposal) are more prone to time off through sickness because of the very environment they have to work in. We have to work in wet wells 18 to 20 feet deep and sludge drying beds. Sludge, by the way, is a polite name for ****. There's sometimes a danger from toxic gases produced by trade effluents. We use breathing apparatus for certain



jobs. "We're working in all kinds of weather and in all kinds of conditions. We may be working up to our thighs in sludge and water. This means that workers are more prone to colds, chills, 'flu, rheumatics and so on. I've lost count of how many times a job has required a complete

change of clothing.

"We work on aeration units that send a spray of effluent rising into the air. As a result, you get workers suffering with head-aches, sore throats and upset stomachs caused by having to carry out maintenance or operational procedures on aeration units. They're working in that atmosphere!

"Workers on sludge digestors suffer from headaches and upset stomachs caused by the gas (which is highly inflammable) that is produced off this sludge. This happens mainly when the plant that controls the gas requires attention.

In the sewers you get effluent from slaughter houses (diseased cattle) and from

tan yards. There's the effluent from hospitals and trade effluents including effluent from breweries. When you're working with that about you can come out drunk. It's nothing to come across dogs and cats that people have thrown in.

"We have to be on guard against physical injury, dangerous atmospheres (oxygen deficiency), poisonous gases, flammable gases, flooding, bacterial infection and radioactive matter.

Physical injury is generally caused by tools or other articles being dropped down a manhole onto men working below. But ladders and walkways are a constant hazard. Grease and fat gets deposited on ladders and no matter how careful you are there's always the danger of slipping off.

"Sewermen work in dangerous atmospheres which can arise when there is a lack of oxygen or when poisonous or flammable gases are present. These may be caused by sludge decomposing in the sewer, but there's also leaks from gas mains or the

presence of petrol and various wastes from factories. Oxygen deficiency can cause a worker to become unconscious. Poisonous gases can cause dizziness and sickness.

There's also a risk from flooding. The onset of rain causes problems and breezes can push the water along. This can be caused by someone lifting a manhole cover.

"Sewermen are exposed to the risk of catching a form of jaundice known as Weils Disease. The infection can enter the body through breaks in the skin. That's why immediate attention is given to any scratches or cuts. I've known blokes to get a cut and their arm swells up like a balloon in no time.

"Our members are angry that management have tried to give the public the impression that we are idlers and skivers. The facts about the environment we work in have been buried."

Peter Morris spoke to Lawrence Coates [NUPE steward, Oadby and Wigston]

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

SUNDAY

FIGHTING FOR OUR

Sunderland [writes Bob Stothard], is a large town of 300,000 people, situated on the north-east coast some 12 miles from Newcastle.

The town has had several claims to fame over the years—the Venerable Bede had a monastery on the banks of the Wear, glass-making was first established here, the mighty ships built on the River Wear, and the now infamous Seaburn beach where the Job Creation Programme kicked off with youngsters cleaning it.

Sunderland AFC bene-

Some facts about Sunderland's areas of greatest need

	East Central Area	Eastern Bishopwearmouth	N Hendon	Sunderland
Male unemployment rate [1976 figs]	33.2	23.2	36.4	10.6
Households having access to a car/van	8.2	10.6	25.6	40.9
Proportion of households having exclusive use of basic amenities	86.9	58.0	58.7	92.0

fits unwittingly from the town's appalling employment record by providing just about the only success the working class can identify with, and even that has slid from the prestigious "Bank of England" club of the

1950s to promotion hopefuls in the Second Division.

As an illustration of Sunderland's losing battle with declining industry, my father left the town (being a pitman) in 1934 and cycled south to Don-

caster to find work in the Yorkshire coalfield.

The self-same pattern is being repeated today, with the youth of the town joining the armed forces, the hotel trade, holiday camps, etc., because jobs of any description are

virtually unobtainable.

The figure released for unemployment show an average of 14% registered for work available — a figure that when moonlighters, married women and those who simply do not register are counted is probably a good deal higher, maybe 20% higher.

In the East End of the town and Southwick, it is calculated that one in every three is workless, and over half of the total jobless are under 25, and most between 16 and 19.

ONLY SOCIALIST POLICIES CAN CREATE REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Successive governments have placed enormous sums at the disposal of the capitalists to bribe them to come to Sunderland and other parts of the north-east and set up factories.

That money and those factories largely disappear when the first sign of crisis is apparent at the parent company, and then add greatly to the general depression of the town.

Bribes of public money to the profit-hungry bosses will not do anything for Sunderland or the rest of the country. At this moment a massive £26 million a day is handed out to "private enterprise", and still the situation does not resolve itself: the town's unemployment figures are a real thorn in the side of those who argue on the platform of the "mixed economy" and naively believe that the present Temporary Measures Programme will tide us over until better times.

Of course, Temporary Measures are a boom to the bosses. Local employers use youngsters to skivvy for them [blandly called "Work Experience Programmes"] while they can keep higher-paid men employed elsewhere, thus increasing output.

These "benevolent" employers with the milk of human kindness running deep in their hearts rarely keep on any of the youngsters they "find" work for—neither do they pay them any wages

whatsoever: the government does that.

One local engineering company was receiving £20 per man per week Temporary Employment Subsidy because they were in "danger" of having to lay men off, and at the same time attempted to increase the working week as per contract from 39 hours to 40!

An estimated 800 youngsters under 19 are registered with the local careers officers, and about 1,400 are "employed" on Temporary Measures. This does not take into account the teenagers in full-time education because they can find no work, or those who have left the town in search of work.

The problem is so huge that already plans are being aired for a conditional "National Youth Corps" where school leavers will be encouraged to "do their bit" for one or two years, helping out in old folks' homes etc.

The old Job Creation Programme which was funded from year to year has gone and been replaced by the Youth Opportunities Programme [YOP].

YOP spans a large area including training workshops, community work, work experience, and so on. The Manpower Services Commission oversees all these projects and/or agencies which carry them out such as the one I worked for [temporarily...of course].



NUPE picket outside Sunderland Civic Centre

An integral part of the conditions laid down by the MSC provide for "training", to be undertaken by the youngsters on the scheme not just in areas helpful to their "jobs" but also in "social and life skills"—a fancy phrase for surviving in the callous world of today by acquiring skills in job applications[!], applying for and receiving welfare benefits, decision making etc.

However, should a 'trainee' fall ill or injure him/herself while at 'work' they should ensure they return to the job within three weeks—otherwise they are removed from the scheme! Sick pay is not paid either, and Sunderland Trades Council has made representations to the MSC regarding this, although no answer has yet been received.

By Bob Stothard

Sunderland North Labour Party and Transport and General Workers Union

To add insult to injury, the princely sum a 'trainee' can expect to receive is only £20.55 and travelling expenses etc. must come out of that.

YOP was instituted last April and will run until April 1983—a shocking admission of the lack of faith the ruling class have in their system and its ability to provide young people with work.

It is high time that this system was replaced.

The only way forward for the working class of Sunderland and the rest of Britain is

to take bold socialist measures to transform society. The economy must be planned and controlled with workers' control and management—which will only be achieved when the commanding heights of the economy have been taken into public ownership and a useful programme of public works put into operation.

Meanwhile, YOP will continue partially to disguise the unemployment figures in the way that cosmetic measures do—that a way to run society!

A frustrating experience

For the last three years, Tony Carty has been a trade union representative on the local Manpower Services Commission. This is how he sums up the experience:

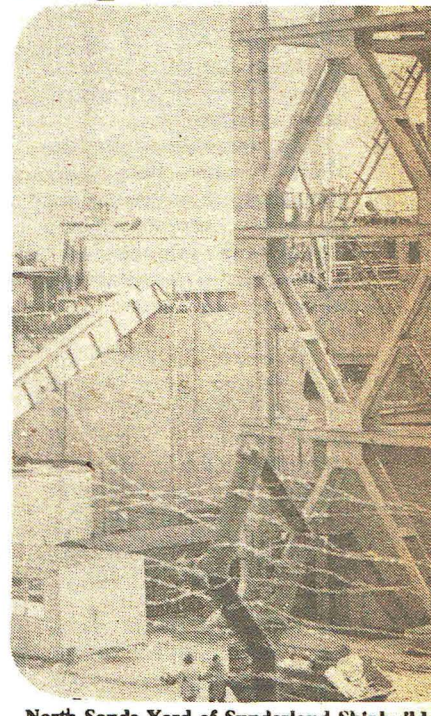
“When I first went on, I noticed that as well as trade union representatives, there were people on from the employers' organisations. Recently, the employers have stopped coming—there were only two or three at the last meeting.

Perhaps they've been frightened off by the criticisms we always make of them. The blame lies with them—and they didn't like the truth being thrown at them.

The MSC is frustrating. For three years—as the employment in the town has gone down and down, the reports always seem to be optimistic—there always seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel.

Now more and more the Manpower Services Commission seems to consist of trade unionists complaining and civil servants keeping notes on the unemployed.

Something urgently needs to be done. We have asked for years for a centre for new skills—even if there were new industry in the future there will not be the skilled labour to make it work.”



North Sands Yard of Sunderland Shipbuilders

SUNDERLAND

OUR FUTURE

SHIPBUILDING

IF SHIPBUILDING IS ALLOWED TO DIE, THEN IT WON'T BE A CASE OF SUNDERLAND DYING: IT WILL BE A TOWN MURDERED

We are better off for orders than many shipbuilding areas—and that shows how badly off the others must be!

Three of our yards on the Wear (A & P, Sunderland Shipbuilders, Pallion and Deptford) have work only up to 1980, whereas the North Sands yard of Sunderland Shipbuilders has no work beyond the ship they're on now.

We might suffer more than the national average from the intended cutbacks because we are all merchant shipyards here, we have no naval work.

But even if we only suffered redundancies in line with the projected national average—involving a 37% cut-back, then

By Tony Carty
District Secretary
Boilermakers'
Society
(personal capacity)

whole areas will be devastated.

Wearside as a whole would see male unemployment increased by 31%, where unemployment is already 13.7%. A very high proportion of shipyard workers have special skills and are unlikely to find work in other places.

Already there is a ratio of nearly 40 to 1 relating the number of unemployed platers and shipwrights to the vacancies.

The run-down of the skills can be seen by the reduced number of apprenticeships over the years. As a union we registered 202 apprentices in

1974 and that number has been progressively reduced—157 in 1975, 118 in 1976, 93 in 1977, 95 in 1978 and 19 so far this year. Even those figures may seem large to what the prospects will be in the future.

There are already hundreds of young people unemployed and hundreds more involved in Job Creation and similar schemes. I cannot see why my kids have to leave the area in order to get work.

If major industries go, it usually means that the service jobs go as well. We've lost Plesseys, Thorns, Greenwells, Jacksons and many others. All these are jobs lost, they will never come back.

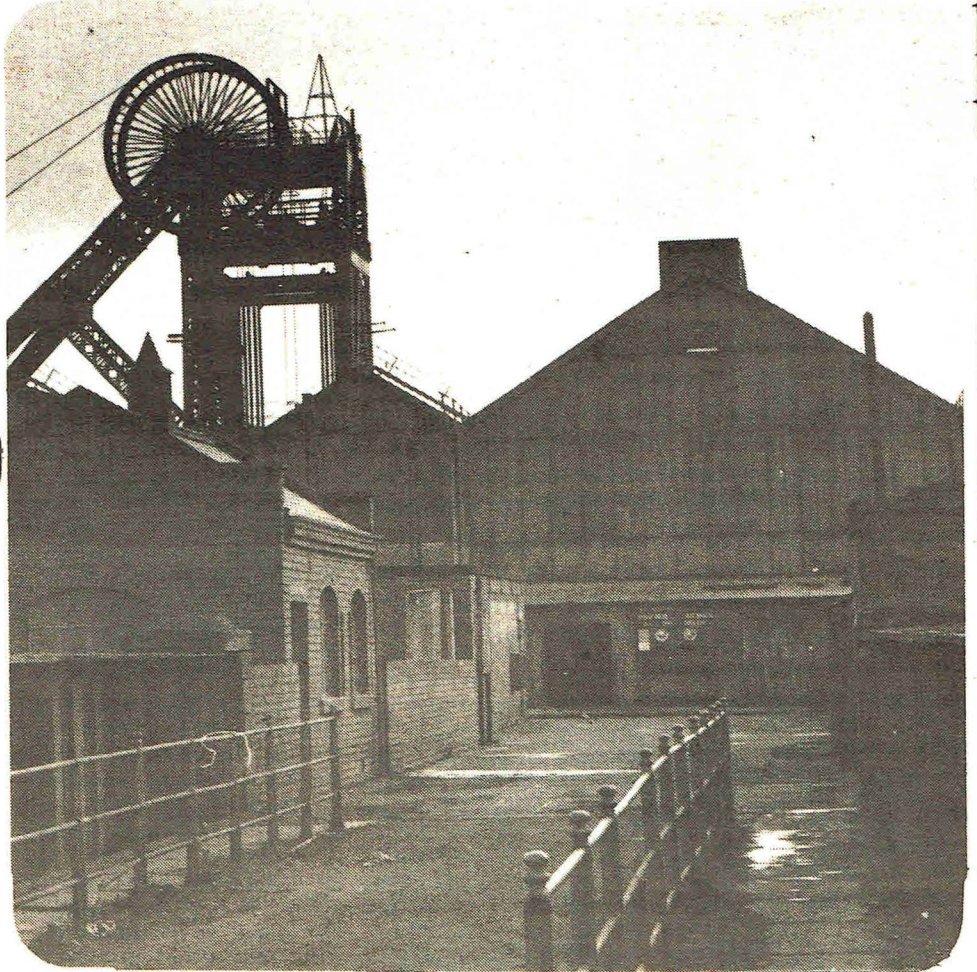
You can see the effects of unemployment in certain areas especially, in Southwick, in the East End and in Monkwearmouth! There are even empty shops in the town centre that cannot be filled—showing the gradual decline in the spending abilities of the community.

Getting back to the shipbuilding cutbacks, we've now had three mass meetings of all the shipbuilding shop stewards and we have hammered out a policy. **Redundancies will only be accepted as early retirements and then only provided that every job is replaced by a youth or an apprentice.**

Nationally, we need to have some means of getting new orders. Our union has put forward a policy of "scrap two and build one".

At the last TUC conference our union successfully proposed a composite motion calling for the extension of public ownership to the shipping lines themselves and the planned introduction of new orders. If industries like shipbuilding are allowed to die, if thousands more skilled and able workers are added to the 11,000 plus already unemployed in this one town, then it won't be a case of Sunderland dying, it will be like Jarrow in the 1930s: it will be a town murdered.

[Since this was written the North Sands Yard has announced 250 redundancies]



Pithead
Hylton Colliery

NO MORE PIT CLOSURES!

Twenty years ago there were over 140 collieries in the Durham area. Today there are 21. Apart from Hylton, another four collieries are being 'reviewed'. Even the big coastal pits with their vast undersea reserves are under a shadow at the moment.

In all these years, the Durham NUM has not fought one single closure, and for that reason we are looked upon as a weak area.

The NCB are using us as a test case—with implications for Northumberland, South Wales and other areas where collieries have been threatened.

Imagine the shortsightedness of the planners! North-East pits are threatened with closures, and yet there is talk of building a nuclear-power station on the Northumberland coast!

But this time they are not going to get away with closure easily! We are fighting it every inch of the way!

Hylton's closing date has been announced for May 26th. This was made without any consultation whatsoever with the area

Jack Caulif
Lodge Official
Hylton NUM
spoke to
John Pickard

officials, as a result of which the area union is bitterly opposing the closure.

Our own area geologist has said that there's no reason why we could not get the coal that is lying underground at Hylton—something of the order of 3 to 4 million tons. The NCB claim it's not economical, but as far as we are concerned there has been a complete lack of forward planning and a lack of capital investment.

We all knew the area was faulted, but the Coal Board has been looking for one big fault to shut the pit. The colliery has been run on a shoe-string, while for years we have been calling for new equipment.

We need, for example, new modern man-riders to cut down the travelling-time underground. From vesting day (on nationalisation) right up to 1974 we had the highest OMS (output per man/shift) figures in the country and in those years we never made a loss.

We could still have been extracting coal from the seams to the west of the pit but they were closed down as being "unnecessary" a few years ago.

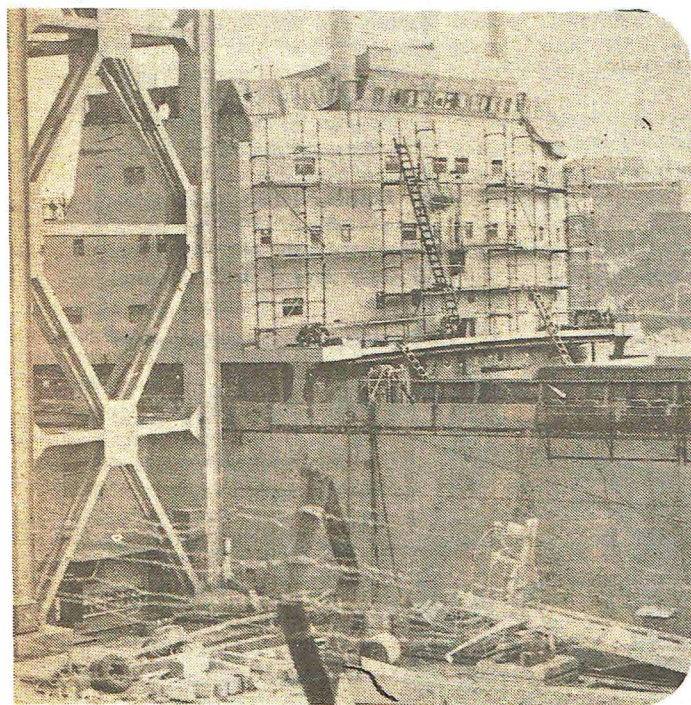
Over the last year we have bent over backwards to accommodate the management in order to keep the pit open. In eleven months there have been at least two shift changes—we've had a 5-shift system, a 4-shift system and now a 3-shift system. Even by miners' standards our working hours have been 'un-social'.

Time and again we've reorganised and rearranged to suit management. We have even gone back, temporarily, to hand-filling.

The incentive scheme gave us almost nothing: 15 men out of 400—the men on development work—were the only ones to get a substantial rise from the productivity scheme.

Our Lodge voted against the scheme in the first place, and we have been proved right—most weeks the incentive money has been about 80 pence!

The NCB are dangling the carrot of resettlement money in front of us. But the vast majority of Lodge members are determined to fight closure!



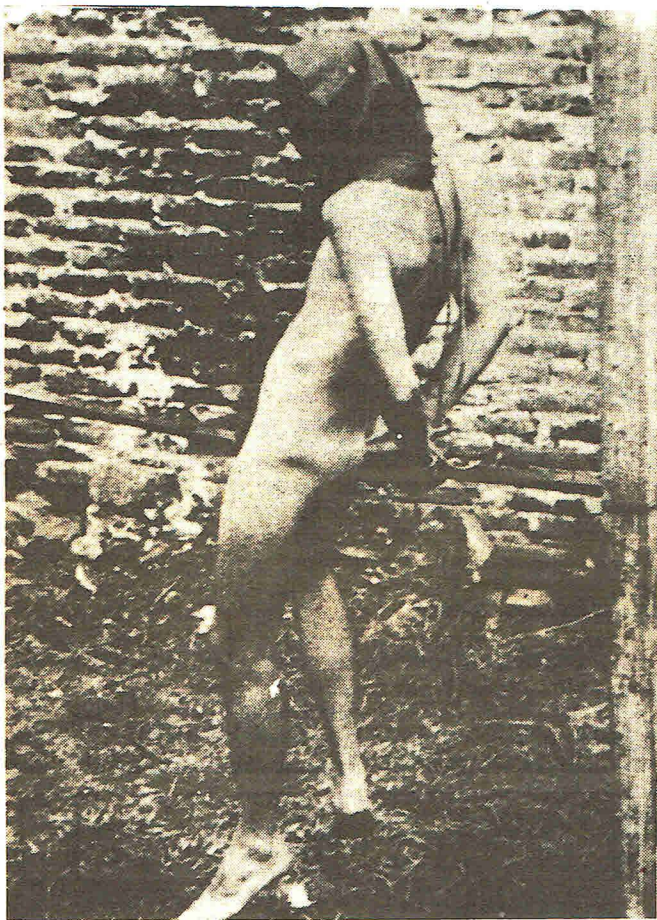
CARIBBEAN/INDIA



END OF A GANGSTER'S RULE

By Bob Lee
(Secretary PNP Youth)

Once again the Caribbean has become a focus of world attention. At dawn on Tuesday 13th March, a spokesman announced on 'Radio Free Grenada' that the "people's revolutionary forces" had taken control of the army barracks, the airport, that the police had surrendered and former government ministers had been arrested. The regime of Eric Gairy, one of the Caribbean's most brutal dictators, had been finally overthrown in a bloodless coup.



Torture is routine for all political detainees in Uruguay

The toppling of a regime "much favoured by Nixon" has come after more than five years of bitter struggle in which many workers and peasants have been murdered or have mysteriously disappeared at the hands of Gairy's private army of thugs (known as the "Mongoose Gang"). This gang was described by a Commission of Inquiry (headed by a Jamaican judge) as "an unlawfully constituted body of men", consisting largely of convicts personally recruited by Gairy to eliminate his opponents, who had "from their inception...inflicted unspeakable atrocities upon many citizens of Grenada, especially members of the New Jewel Movement". New Jewel is the main left wing opposition grouping whose leader, Maurice Bishop, now heads the government.

Some of the most bitter battles occurred during the period immediately preceding Grenada's formal independence from Britain in 1974. What began as a protest movement against police brutality and the activities of Gairy's "Mongoose Gang", quickly developed into a mass revolt to overthrow the regime.

Small businessmen, shopkeepers, professional bodies and the churches joined a mass strike of workers and peasants which culminated in huge demonstrations and open clashes in the streets between the strikers and the government's strong arm forces.

The dictatorship was almost brought to its knees



Maurice Bishop, leader of New Jewel Movement

when workers in the neighbouring islands of Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago came out in solidarity with their fellow workers in Grenada by going on strike to cut off food and fuel supplies to the regime. This movement eventually subsided after Gairy and his gangsters unleashed a series of brutal assaults, murder and arrests.

The calm did not last for long. Less than a year after independence, workers and peasants rose up again in a mass movement to overthrow the regime. The shaky economy, based upon a declining tourist industry and exporting spices (primarily nutmeg) was unable to provide a decent standard of living for the people of Grenada. In July 1975, workers, braving the bullets of the police, went out on to the streets yet again to demonstrate that nothing would halt them in their tireless march to bring down the imperialist stooge government.

Such was the mounting pressure on the regime, backed by Chilean arms, that in 1976 Gairy was forced to organise elections in a desperate attempt to cling to power.

But despite ballot rigging, the opposition Peoples Alliance (a coalition comprising the NJM and two right-wing parties who were opposed to the corrupt regime) won 6 of the 15 parliamentary seats. Given the sham nature of these elections this was a remarkable achievement and showed the level of opposition to the dictatorship.



At the time of writing, it is impossible to assess the precise direction the new government will take. The New Jewel Movement (Joint Endeavour for Welfare, Education, and Liberation) first came to prominence in 1973 when it launched a campaign for Gairy's resignation.

With a leadership comprised largely of intellectuals, the NJM rapidly developed as the main opposition to the regime. Its programme is based on building socialism on the "Tanzanian model", although in the recent times an increasing number of its supporters have looked to Cuba for a model.

The unstable balance of forces within the Peoples Alliance was almost blown apart during the election of 1976 when sharp differences emerged. Common opposition to Gairy held it together, however.

But now that the dictatorship has been finally removed, the coalition of anti-Gairy forces will inevitably come into conflict.

Next steps

The downfall of Gairy and his mobsters is a welcome step forward, not only for the workers and people of Grenada, but for workers throughout the Caribbean. The crucial task now is to mobilise the mass of Grenadan workers, agricultural labourers and poor farmers around a bold socialist programme to nationalise the economy under workers' control and management. This would consolidate the gains already made. But to ensure that Grenada would be able to withstand the counter-attacks of imperialism, the revolution would need to be spread, linking up the whole Caribbean into a Socialist Federation, thereby breaking imperialism's stranglehold on the West Indies.

Picket to save lives of Dalit leaders

In the Bihar State of India, six Dalits (oppressed caste) have been sentenced to death for fighting back against the landlords, who have been harrasing, raping and killing Dalit people. The Bharati Dalit Mukti Alliance (UK) who have called a picket of India House in protest explain the background:

"Thirty years of sham independence in India has brought no change to the conditions of the Dalit [oppressed] people. Torture, mutilation, murder, lynching, burning and rape are an everyday occurrence in the daily lives of the so-called 'untouchables'. According to the October 1978 issue of 'India Today' "there have been 10,879 cases of recorded atrocities on Dalits last year alone."

The Janata government has now sentenced to death six Dalits for daring to resist armed attacks by the landlords and their hired thugs. While these six poor peasants have been sentenced to death not even one of the landlords responsible for burning or killing Dalits has been given such punishment.

This is not the first time the landlords and their hired courts and police have tried to deal with Dalits, who have successfully defended themselves and their families from feudal terror. Two leaders of Dalits in Andra Pradesh were hanged by the Indira Gandhi regime on 1st December 1975 for the same reason as the six Dalits from Bihar."

Demand their unconditional release. Picket: India House, Aldwych, London, Friday 23rd March, 1 pm-5 pm.

In the face of terror

By Anthony Tynan
(NUM and Rhondda LPYS)

Uruguay must be one of the most repressive regimes in the world. In a continent almost full of military dictatorships, the Uruguayan junta has been one of the most vicious. Since it came to power in 1972, about 1 in every 50 people in the whole population has been detained at some time or another, according to Amnesty International.

Uruguay used to be known as 'the Switzerland of South America', famous for its relative prosperity. It had a welfare state and a strong trade union movement. To destroy all this, the military junta had to be exceedingly thorough and ruthless. All trade unions and left-wing parties were banned.

Even today, over six years since the military take-over, one in every thousand Uruguayans is detained as a political prisoner (3,000 out of a population of 3 million). Over 400,000 people have fled the country since 1972, some to escape political persecution, others to find work, because the junta has been totally incapable of developing the country.

The horror of political detention for those who remain was revealed recently

by a former torturer in the prisons. Speaking at an Amnesty International Press Conference on the 6th of March, ex-Lieutenant Cooper explained that torture was routine for all political detainees. The torturers worked in shifts, hanging their victims from beams, ducking their heads until they were nearly drowned, applying electric shock, raping and beating them senseless.

Workers' Courage

He told of one trade unionist, Ann Ferreira, whom he tortured. She was arrested during the night, beaten unconscious and taken to prison. There she was revived by a doctor, so that she could be conscious whilst she was stripped, raped and given electric shocks.

The turning point for Cooper was when he had to censor the prisoners' letters. The heroism and courage of the workers shone through. "There was something pathetic but almost noble there. I began to understand what I was doing." Finally after four months he refused to torture an old friend. He was arrested and detained for four years, before achieving asylum in Sweden.

In the end it will be this courage and power of the workers that will end the regime. Their determination will be fuelled by the growing opposition to the military juntas elsewhere on the continent, especially in Brazil, Peru and Chile. It will not be an easy or a swift path to freedom, but the long night of military repression will not last for ever.



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THE CHURCH AND THE MOSQUE

IS THERE A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL?

The first of
three articles
By Peter Taaffe

A vast crowd of three million people turned out to greet the Ayatollah Khomeini when he returned to Iran. One and a half million people welcomed the Pope when he visited Mexico in January. Similar numbers are expected to greet the Pope when he visits Poland soon.

Do the tumultuous greetings which these church dignitaries received herald a new religious revival across the globe?

The religious colouration which the Iranian revolution appeared to take has certainly confused many workers in Britain and in the advanced capitalist countries as to the significance of the mighty events in Iran. For their part, spokesmen for capitalism have of course deliberately played up and exaggerated the features of the 'Islamic revival' rather than the social context of the revolution.

In the advanced capitalist world, the Church seems to have recognised that religion—Christianity—is on the retreat. Last year, a report in the 'Evening Standard' (29 March 1978) summed up the feelings of the Vatican in relation to Europe:

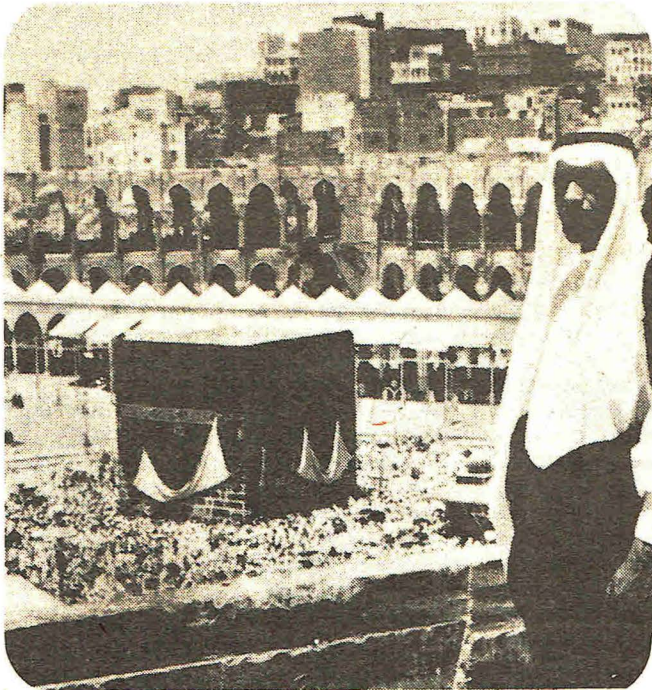
"Great sections of France, Italy, Holland, Germany are de-Christianised. Many people in these sections are not even baptised. Overall throughout Europe and the Catholic countries, there is no reasonable probability of a religious revival. Religion in the West is banished to the realm of personal belief and family life."

This verdict of the Vatican is borne out by the situation of the Church in Britain. The Church, which Lloyd George described as a power station serving all (ruling) political parties, has experienced a sharp decline in numbers and influence in the past fifty years. Some of the reasons for this are given in the interesting little booklet published last year, 'The Cross and the Sickle' by Mervyn Stockwood Bishop of Southwark.

He shows clearly that the church has been a staunch

defender of capitalism:

"I came to the conclusion slowly and sadly that the Church of which I was a minister had little to do with the world in which I lived. It was a bulwark of the established regime. In a crisis it could be counted upon to underpin the government.



Millions gather every year at Islam's holy shrines

"And what was true of Britain was true, with few exceptions, of other countries—Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, Franco's Spain, Stalin's Russia. The Vatican, when it thundered against the Left and connived at the Fascist and Capitalist regimes was the spokesman of most denominations, not least the Church of England." (pages 10-11.)

The open class bias of the churches, at least the tops of the church, was underlined recently in attacks on striking hospital workers by Archbishop Coggan. Mervyn Stockwood shows that this is one of the factors in their decline:

"It dawned on me that religion, especially as practiced by the Established Church, was being used to supply the spiritual varnish

for the status quo. It talked about brotherhood and justice, but it was usually on the side of those forces in society which were determined that changes should be restricted to modest amelioration.

"Moreover, the congregations of the churches, still more the legislative assemblies, were destitute of representatives of the working classes. The Church of England was, as it still is, largely a middle-class institution. A national church it certainly is not."

Another factor which has

undermined religion is the enormous increase in man's knowledge and power over nature. It was fundamentally the helplessness of the savage in his struggle with nature which gave rise to a belief in gods, devils, miracles etc. Throughout the ages the helplessness of all exploited oppressed classes in their struggle against the exploiters generated a belief in a better life after death.

But the tremendous increase in the general cultural level of the population has served to undermine the foundations of religion in the advanced capitalist world.

At the same time, the rise of socialism and Marxism—together with mighty organisations of the labour movement—which seek to arm the working class with an understanding of the workings of

society and a programme to solve their problems, has had the effect of striking a decisive blow at the influence of religion. But as Lenin pointed out sixty years ago:

"In modern capitalist countries the basis of religion is primarily social. The roots of modern religion are deeply embedded in the social oppression of the working masses, and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism which every day and every hour cause a thousand times more horrible suffering and torture for ordinary working folk than are caused by exceptional events such as war, earthquakes, etc.

"Fear created the Gods'. Fear of the blind forces of capital—blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the masses—a force which at every step in life threatens the worker and the small business man with 'sudden', 'unexpected', 'accidental' destruction and ruin, bringing in their train beggary, pauperism, prostitution, and deaths from starvation."

These conditions described by Lenin, which still exist in the advanced countries, are increased a hundred fold in the 'underdeveloped' areas of the world. There is a colossal reservoir of backwardness and ignorance amongst the masses in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

It is in these areas of the world that the various organised religions have had their greatest successes. There, they claim, the growth of religion is outstripping socialism and Marxism. The churches' task has undoubtedly been enormously facilitated by the complete failure of the socialist and communist parties in these areas to conduct serious struggles against the military-police dictatorships which sit on the back of the workers and peasants.

Opposition vacuum

Like nature, politics abhors a vacuum. Thus the first stirrings of the masses, particularly the rural and urban middle classes is reflected in the growth of the various Churches. There are many parallels for this in history.

Leon Trotsky pointed out that the only institution

through which opposition to the Nazis could be openly expressed, was the Protestant and Catholic churches. The discontent and opposition of the middle class in particular was first of all expressed within the churches.

Marxists—the Trotskyists—supported the Catholic and Protestant churches against the Nazi regime. They demanded freedom of conscience, equal rights regardless of creed, and the right to form organisations.

They hoped that the success of the church in the struggle against the Nazi state would prepare the ground for a successful movement of the German working class.

We have witnessed a similar process in Iran of the past period. The Shah's regime, as 'Militant' has pointed out, had many of the features of Nazi Germany, with the Shah's secret police SAVAK emulating all the bestial methods of the Gestapo. All the organisations of the working class, and even of the middle class, with the exception of the Mosque, were suppressed by the Shah.

The mullahs came into opposition to the Shah partly because the land of the Islamic Church was expropriated in the Shah's so-called 'white revolution'. Even when some of the land was subsequently returned to its former owners, the church did not receive a similar response from the Shah.

The enormous discontent of the middle class in the cities and in the countryside and also of a section of the working class was expressed within the Mosques.

In turn, the mullahs were forced to echo some of the social demands of the masses, if only in a confused and inchoate form. In general, the more backward the society, and the greater the influence and social weight of the middle class, particularly the rural middle classes, the greater the hold of religion on the outlook of the masses.

Throughout the 1970s, the rapid industrialisation of Iran created a mighty working class. Nevertheless, approximately half of the population still live in the countryside. At the same time, the Iranian working class is a young working class which has only recently left the countryside.

It has brought with it the religious prejudices of the rural areas.

Life expectancy in Iran in the early 1970s, was only 50 years, which was one year less than in India! Over 60% of the population is illiterate. These factors, together with the complete incapacity of the Tudeh (Communist Party) to organise an effective opposition to the Shah, resulted in the mass opposition first of all being reflected through the Mosques.

But, as Fred Halliday in his book 'Iran: Dictatorship and Development' points out: "The principles of Islam can be read to justify both rebellion and submission to authority." Each class has interpreted these principles according to its own lights and class interests.

The 'Financial Times', for instance, recently quoted a letter submitted by Algerian metal workers during the debate on the national charter in 1976: "Islam up to now has been distorted by the bourgeoisie who have interpreted the sacred text, deforming both its content and very essence, on the pretext that religion supported their actions. The working masses have been duped. That is why we ask for the broadening of the teachings of the true, austere, and militant Islam."

Islamic rule

In Iran, Khomeini's interpretation of Islamic principles is opposed by wide layers of the working class and those mullahs close to them. Opposition has rapidly built up to his recent antagonism to the introduction of "decadent democracy" into Iran, to his threat to re-introduce all those 'Islamic laws' which seek to perpetuate the enslavement of women, and the secret 'Islamic' courts which do not involve the democratic participation of the workers and peasants.

Very quickly, the Iranian working class—the main force which toppled the Shah—will see through Khomeini. The Russian revolution in 1905 started with a march led by the priest, Father Gapon. But in the fire of events the working class learnt very quickly and passed beyond Gapon's vague opposition to Tsarism. This process was of course speeded up enormously by the existence of the Bolsheviks.

One thing is certain: Islam will not put bread on the tables of the Iranian workers and peasants. Nor will it abolish illiteracy and eradicate all the features of backwardness inherited from the Shah.

Only a mass party with a Marxist leadership can achieve this by leading the Iranian masses in the carrying through of the socialist revolution.

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

LETTERS

A medal from bakers

Dear Comrades

The article on the drunken bakery manager was really well received at Landers [RHM], Mansfield.

George Breeden, District President of the Bakers' Union, told me that everyone had read it and had all had "a good titter". Apparently, everyone except the general manager himself, who remains in blissful ignorance, has seen or heard of the article.

A copy was stuck on the canteen noticeboard and lasted three-quarters of an hour before some lackey took it down. A copy has been sent to the union's journal—and to the regional management.

In the words of another baker, "Whoever wrote that article deserves a medal."

I enclose 80p 'extras' from the Landers paper sale.

Yours fraternally
John Dale
Mansfield LPYS

TORIES NEED AN EVICTION ORDER

Dear Comrades

A few days ago a young woman with two children was served with a notice to quit their council house for non-payment of rent.

Another case of social security 'scroungers' living off the state and falling hundreds of pounds into arrears? Well, not exactly.

The woman allegedly owed the York City Council the staggering sum of £16 [she had in fact paid the arrears the day before the notice was served]. Council rent in York is paid on a fortnightly basis—she had only missed one payment.

As she explained to us, the rent collector calls at a most inconvenient time, 8.45 am—just as she is taking her seven year old daughter to school. In order to make ends meet, she has to do two part-time jobs and this makes it very difficult to go into the council offices to pay the rent if she misses the collector.

Despite all her difficulties she has a good

record as a tenant and the council's action came like a bolt out of the blue.

This experience was distressing enough, but think how bad it could have been if these bully boy tactics had been used against the aged or infirm. This is quite possible; it is standard council policy to send out notices to quit with the second reminder of rent arrears.

Needless to say, York council is Tory-dominated. What an indictment of the callous nature of the capitalist system.

Today, the greatest crime against property is not to have any; the greatest sin is still to be poor. This is the lesson that capitalism has to teach us—let us learn it well and use our knowledge to end once and for all this diseased, corrupt and uncaring system and replace it with socialism.

Yours fraternally
Alan Beynon
York LPYS

Wages down or prices up

Dear Comrades

In the Saatchi and Saatchi Company Ltd annual report in 'The Observer', 4.3.79, the capitalists have given us another sight of their future plans for workers' living standards.

Saatchi and Saatchi speak up for themselves and advertising as a whole since:

"It produces such a growth of business that it saves in the unit cost of production... increases the profit by reducing the selling cost and not by increasing the selling price."

Does this mean that the consumer will be persuaded to launder all the household's clothes more often, to get through all that 'whiter than white' soap powder?

Saatchi and Saatchi answer the question themselves: "The continued surge in retail sophistication and technology... will help the distributor in the 1980s to retain his bargaining vis-à-vis the manufacturer."

That is to say, when the manufacturers (through the stimulated growth of hypermarkets and discount stores) get a hold on retailing, distributors will be pressed into increasing prices to obtain contracts with manufacturers.

If you can't hold down wages, then force up prices—the bosses' motto. Our motto: nationalise the monopolies under workers' control.

Yours
Robert Lynch

Bill Sirs and Corby

Dear 'Militant'

I think you should get your facts straight before you print inflammatory statements in your newspaper. Bill Sirs does back up the Corby steelworkers, so does the ISTC Executive. They have already expressed their solidarity.

Bill Sirs did not "disappear" to South Wales, he had an urgent appointment there. Bill Sirs thinks nothing of working an 18-hour day on behalf of the steelworkers.

Mr Jack Gavin, Regional Officer Midlands, attended the Steel Committee meeting and at Bill Sirs' request deputised for him. And Gavin gave the lads the facts.

Please, in future, get your facts correct.

Yours fraternally
John Cowling
ISTC Executive, Midlands

Long-term planning—in Tory hands

Dear 'Militant'

Aneurin Bevan once observed that you can't plan what you don't control and you can't control what you don't own. The government, it seems, knows better.

They have just decided to put money into the Society for Long Range Planning to study the relationship between company planning and government policy.

It would not take a deep thinker to work out that one of the reasons British capitalism is so moribund is because of its complete inability to plan, due to the anarchy of market forces.

But then this Labour government has not appointed a deep thinker to do the study.

They have chosen ex-Tory minister and chairman of the discredited Prices and Incomes Board Aubrey Jones to handle the research and spend the (undisclosed) sum made available.

It may be that Mr Jones' studies will lead him to the conclusion that the Marxist method and a planned economy are the only way forward. The money might then be thought well spent.

But if, as seems likely, Mr Jones takes some other view, then 'Militant' readers are likely to conclude that this is yet another example of a Labour government giving a job to a clapped-out Tory rather than solving the mass unemployment which afflicts its working class supporters.

Yours fraternally
Martin Upham
Hertford and Stevenage CLP



"We're moving into health foods now."

Cartoon from 'Who Needs the Drug Companies?' by the Haslemere Group.

DRUG COMPANIES' SICK PROFITS

Dear Comrades

While the Minister of Health, David Ennals, contemplates the merits of holding down the pay claims of the public sector workers he might like to take the opportunity to look further into the justifiable anger that has met the settlement.

He could use his time as he lies in bed not only to experience the day-to-day frustrations of workers in the health service, but also in seeing at first hand the effects that big business has on the patients.

By now Mr Ennals should need no reminding of the massive profits that the pharmaceutical industry are making from the working class both directly and indirectly in wage exploitation and price exploitation. As he lies there, capitalism is continuing to suck the veins of this social service dry and cut off the life support of the working class.

In this week's 'Financial Times' an article quite clearly shows where the bosses' real interests lie. Drug manufacturers have begun to cut off supplies of prescription medicines to wholesalers "...in an attempt to enforce pharmaceutical resale price maintenance..."

US-based producers have stopped supplying UK drugs' wholesalers. Beechams (a UK firm) have also "...reduced normal discounts offered on NHS prices from 15% to 10%..."

But this is not the full picture. This type of price-fixing scheme is government-approved and allows manufacturers to bring down the price of their products to retailers and chemists. Apparently, the aim of the scheme is to prevent a wholesalers' price war, which, the 'Financial Times' cries, would "...cause added suffering to the sick..."

Further on in the article, however, it is accepted that wholesalers breach this scheme. Surprise, surprise! And to add insult, the reason for withdrawing discount and cracking down on this breaking of ranks is not to stop the pirates in the industry but because "...the wholesalers could stay in business in the event of a price war but only by reducing the standard of service..."

If you've got the industry and the market sewn up, then just tighten the strings gently, not too tight, just enough to keep it going, and profits will eventually rise.

Mr Ennals, are you aware that big business is deciding not only the wages of the low paid but also how long we can live in order to spend them? There is no shortage of demand, but if you maintain consumption then you'll just manage to keep the whole sick system of capitalism going.

Yours fraternally
David Churchley
Cathcart CLP

Assemblies—Labour the loser?

Dear Comrades

I have just read your article on the results of the Scottish and Welsh referenda, advocating the setting up of a Scottish Assembly.

It is important to remember why the question of devolution came up in the first place. Until recently the SNP and to a lesser extent Plaid Cymru were receiving ever-increasing shares of votes in elections and there even seemed a possibility of the SNP replacing Labour as the major party in Scotland.

Devolution was dreamed up as a means of neutralising this. The Labour leadership latched on to it instead of arguing for the socialist answers to nationalism. To its shame, 'Militant' allowed itself to be dragged along with the call for devolution although you did at least argue

the socialist case as well.

As you have so rightly pointed out in the past, a Scottish worker has far more in common with an English worker than with a Scottish businessman. It is a pity that you did not remember your own words.

Those in the labour movement advocating devolution were playing with fire. If the Assembly is set up it will mean that Scottish MPs can vote on English education, roads, etc., but English MPs cannot do likewise on Scottish affairs.

The Tories have not been slow to seize on this anomaly. It is highly probable that if the Scottish Assembly is set up the next Tory government will reduce the number of Scottish MPs.

The Labour Party will be losers from that. If Wales had

voted Yes the situation would have been potentially even more disastrous; when was the last time the Labour Party got more votes than the Tories in England?

Your article says that the 40% rule was a device of big business. It was proposed by a Labour MP and supported by such notorious "spokesmen of big business" as Eric Heffer and Neil Kinnock.

The setting up of the Assembly would have tremendous repercussions, not only in Scotland, and it's only justification would have been if there had been a significant demand for it. With less than a third of the Scottish people voting Yes this is patently not so.

The argument about comparisons with general elections is not relevant. In a general election there are

several parties and a government must be formed; in a referendum it is a straight yes/no choice and the status quo is an option.

I believe that you should recognise the fact that you backed the wrong horse in Scotland and Wales. Now is the time to drop your advocacy of devolution and revert to what you do best: propagate socialism.

Yours fraternally
Chris Leeds
West Lewisham LPYS

EDITOR'S NOTE: 'Militant' has always supported a measure of autonomy in Scotland, and Wales for reasons which we have clearly explained. Next week, in a special feature article, we will outline the socialist case, and take up some of the points raised here.

Back issues

Due to increased sales our stocks of issues 441 and 446 are depleted. We appeal to sellers to return spare copies to the circulation department.

Janice Dale

HELP MAP OUT A NEW FUTURE

Build Militant

Recently, £340,000 was paid for an atlas drawn by Mercator, the pioneer map-maker, no doubt as a hedge against inflation. The maps were originally drawn to enable explorers financed by the courts and the nobility to take the trade and ideas of seventeenth-century Holland round Europe.

We have a similar need of patronage to enable the intrepid sellers of the 'Militant' to reach those parts of the county still lacking a regular supply of Marxist literature and discussion of socialist ideas.

Although we would obviously not be averse to contributions of the order of £340,000, we have been helped to get our bearings and map out the future expansion by donations such as those of £16 from J Cuthbert (Gwent) and readers in Caerphilly and in S London. Thanks also to J Smith (London), K Birch (Birmingham), T Warby (Derby) and a Trent Poly student for tenners.

We need this sort of support from many more of our readers to maintain the extra staff and features we were able to introduce as a result of the 1978 Fighting Fund, and to enable us to make further improvements.

At the present rate of £500 per week, we not only won't reach the first quarter's target, but we wouldn't get the £13,000 we need by the half year! The special 'pledge' sheets that the 'Militant' has produced must be discussed with every reader. (If any reader hasn't seen one, write to us.)

A truly massive effort is needed to reach the target over the next three weeks, but we know that if all our supporters make a special appeal to everyone in the

movement the necessary £4,275 can be raised.

Look at it this way: there are over 12 million workers organised in trade unions. It therefore requires that only 1 in each 3,000 trade unionists should contribute £1 to make up over £4,000!

£1s this week included those from R Jennings (Stevenage ASTMS), B Fitzsimmons (IOW, NUPE shop steward), R Lewis (Liverpool), R Andrews and I Buxton (Knowsley NALGO), C Mullins (Birmingham NUPE), R Hudson (AUEW shop steward, Gwent), D Wilkinson (AUEW Nottingham), I Smith and G Burrows (Sheffield) and J Bludgen (Nottingham).

Fivers are even more valuable, as M Wedderburn (CPSA), J Cooze (N London), C Wright (student, Leeds) and D Hughes (LPYS member, S London) realise. J&H Wobey sent us their regular donation £2 and another Hackney trade unionist sent £4. £3 came from N Gibb (Liverpool) and £1.50 from P Phillips (Newport).

Donations from LPYS branches included £1.40 from Birkenhead.

'Militant' Readers Meetings collections, after expenses, came to £25 in Oxford, £7.08 in Spennymoor and

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 13 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	1,175		397
Hants & IOW	3,100	775		281
Humberside	2,000	500		213
London North	9,500	2,375		776
London South	3,900	975		483
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	1,125		647
Merseyside	5,000	1,250		403
Midlands East	3,300	825		828
Midlands West	9,000	2,250		1,017
Northern	5,500	1,375		625
Scotland East	2,900	725		181
Scotland West	4,500	1,125		217
South East	4,500	1,125		553
South West	3,100	775		377
Wales East	2,600	650		126
Wales West	3,400	850		267
Yorkshire	6,800	1,700		815
Others	6,700	1,675		218
Total	85,000	21,250		8,424

Progress towards year's target

Towards April 7th target

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

THIS WEEK'S TOTAL: £578

£8.40 in Ware. The Birmingham Industrial Forum sent us £10.03, and a discussion group in Cardiff £10.

Students in Nottingham collected £2.66 and £1.85 in Leicester. A member of TSSA sent us £6 union expenses, and he suggests in his letter we appeal to supporters who hold union office to donate their honararium or part or all of their expenses. How about it?

A Manchester social organised by Fiona and Beth, with thanks to Phil, Delith and John, left us £40 better off! This is a good example of fund-raising without tears!

Another social in Harlow reached £33, and £15 more from the sale of cartoon books was transferred to the Fighting Fund. Obviously, the more we sell of this limited first edition, the more 'profit' goes in the Fighting Fund!

Other sources of cash were: Leeds raffle £2.60, Durham 'taxi' £1.72, Birmingham car £2, Isle of Wight coffee £3.18 and Portsmouth misc. £1.50

(including fruit machine win).

We must reach the 7 April £21,250 target, comrades. If we are to do justice to the enthusiastic reports coming in from all over the country, and from abroad, and which we can't print at the moment because of lack of space. We would also be able to extend the dead-line, and thus print more up-to-date reports and comment if we had newer and better equipment.

The latest pamphlet on Iran, which reproduces the main articles from 'Militant', is another venture that we should be able to extend as the revolution breaks out in different parts of the world. And of course, we would be able to reprint with new reports and articles a whole range of 'Militant' trade union pamphlets.

The target will be achieved if every seller approaches every regular reader for a pledge of £s in the next three weeks. Keep the 'Militant' on the map!

Clare Doyle

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

Alan Hardman Print Limited Edition

One of Alan Hardman's most popular cartoons [Thatcher and the tiger] produced in five colours 15ins by 9ins. Buy one for home, Labour Club, trade union or shop stewards' room.

Prints £1 plus 50p P&P. Fully mounted, aluminium-framed £10 plus £1 P&P. Send money to A Hardman Cartoon, 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

GLASGOW Militant Readers Meeting: 'Which Way for Public Sector Workers?' Hear: Ronnie Stevenson (Convener of shop stewards' committee, social work department) and Bob Wylie (NALGO shop steward), Room 4, City Halls, Candleriggs. Monday 2nd April 7.30 pm

HARLOW Public Meeting 'Revolution in Iran: Results and Perspectives'. Speaker: Bob Labi (London Labour Party EC) In chair: D Purton (Harlow TUC); Thursday 29th March, 8 pm. At Advice Centre, Town Centre, Harlow

ROTHERHAM Militant Bakers' Forum: 'Lessons of the Bakers' Strike'. Speaker: Joe Maring (Bakers' Union EC). Chairman: George Beasley (BFAWU Branch sec, Mother's Pride, Rotherham), both in personal capacity. Saturday April 7th, 1.30 pm, 'The Junction Inn', Greasborough Road, Rotherham.

GREENWICH & WOOLWICH Marxist Discussion Group Monday 26th March 1979 at 8 pm. 'What is Marxism?' Greenwich LP rooms, 32 Woolwich Road, S.E.2. All welcome.

WALLSEND Marxist Discussion Group. The first Wednesday of every month. Contact Wallsend 687678 for details

NEWCASTLE Marxist Discussion Group for students and unemployed. Friday afternoons in Newcastle University. For further details contact Roy Goodspeed, tel: 748001

BRISTOL PUBLIC MEETING 'What the 'Militant' stands for'. Speaker: Bill Mullins (T&GWU Senior Steward, Rover, Solihull). At the Jolly Sailor, Hanham, Friday 30 March 7.30 pm.

ROTHERHAM Marxist Discussion Group 'Trade Unions and the Fight for Socialism'. WEA Rooms, Corporation St, 7.30 pm, Monday 26th March

MORRISTON Marxist Discussion Group meetings. Contact Swansea 33542 for further details

CHESTER-LE-STREET Marxist Discussion Group, Mondays starting at 8 pm. For further details contact: Eddie Lowerston, Chester-Le-Street 88146

CLASSIFIED

MILITANT Northern Camp May 25-28 (Bank Holiday). Programme of discussion: Marxist Economics; Historical Materialism; Marxism and the trade unions; Perspectives for Britain; an international topic. Cost: £7, cheques payable to 'Militant Northern Camp'. For further details contact: Richard Knights, 3 Olive Mount Villas, Liverpool 15. Tel: 051-722 0928

NEW MILITANT INDEX Comprehensive, covers issues 300-436. 20p per copy plus 10p p&p. Cheques payable to 'Militant'. Order from Simon Heather, 30 Mayfield Road, Mosely, Birmingham B12 9HJ

GRIMSBY LPYS Public Meeting. 'The fight against low pay'. Speakers: Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer), Stuart Rouse (NUPE district organiser), St. James House, Grimsby. Thursday 29th March 7.30 pm.

IRELAND Socialist Review number 4. This issue focuses on democratic rights: articles on computerised surveillance; the labour movement and democracy; plus Carl Gardner on TV silences. 30p + 10p post or from bookshops. ISR, 60 Loughborough Road, London S.W.9.

Grants struggle needs fighting leadership

Between four and five thousand students marched from the DES to Hyde Park on March 9th as part of the NUS campaign for higher grants.

NUS are calling for a basic grant of £1,387, an increase of 27%. Yet, this would not compensate for the fall in the value of the grant over the past few years, and the huge increases in rents and prices for students. NUS should fight for a grant of £60 a week for 30 weeks i.e. £1,800 per annum. If this demand were linked to the campaign by the trade unions and the Labour Party for a £60 minimum wage, it could get an enormous response.

Roger Poole, of NUPE, speaking at the rally at the end of the demo stressed the need for NUS to link up with the labour movement. But the NUS leadership have consistently failed to do this in practice. The NUS leadership have not really tried to make serious links with the labour movement. They did virtually nothing to support the pay claim of the low paid workers. Yet only the power of the labour and trade union movement can win changes in education to benefit students.

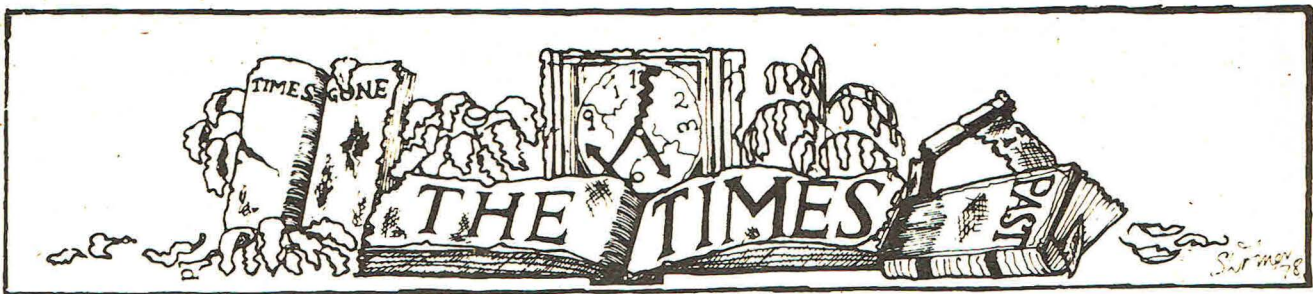
The leadership's campaign is completely lacking in any programme to explain how better grants can be achieved. The demands of the campaign—abolition of

the means test and parental contributions, mandatory awards for 16-19 year olds—are almost exactly the same as NUS was campaigning for in the early 1970s. Little progress has been made! But in a time of economic crisis, it is clear that more expenditure on education can only be achieved through the carrying out of socialist policies.

In the rally at the end of the demo, Trevor Phillips, NUS President, called on students to put pressure on all council candidates in the local elections for better grants. But students won't get much response from the Liberals and Tories! NUS should campaign for affiliation to the Labour Party and the TUC, so that the student movement can be properly integrated into the labour movement.

One demonstration should not be the end of the campaign. NUS should organise rallies in different areas of the country on the grants issue, and consistently campaign in the labour movement, linking the students fight to the fight against low pay. NUS should fight for:

- ★ £1800 for all higher education students
- ★ An immediate demand of £20 a week for all 16-18 olds in full-time education!
- ★ A massive expansion of public expenditure, as part of a socialist economic programme
- ★ Affiliation to the TUC and the Labour Party



Nottingham BOSSES DRIVEN TO THE COURTS

Readers of national and local newspapers may have noticed blank spaces in the adverts columns.

These were reserved by the newspaper bosses, "in sympathy" with the 'Post' against the print unions. United action by all unions at local and national level must be stepped up.

Their adverts have been blacked by the NGA and SLADE. The action has already forced some firms, e.g. British Rail, to withdraw adverts from the 'Evening Post'.

How effective it can be is shown by the reaction of one advertiser—Boots.

They have taken the NGA to court.

Six national newspaper groups have also applied for injunctions against the NGA's general secretary to withdraw the blacking. Tory MPs are frothing at the mouth about "secondary blacking".

NUJ pickets have been attacked by the police and now Boots and the newspaper bosses are using the court and

By Tony Cross
(East Nottingham LPYS)

the newspaper bosses, "in sympathy" with the 'Post' against the print unions.

United action by all unions at local and national level must be stepped up.

The Post's managing director, Pole-Carew, has just been appointed High-Sheriff of Nottinghamshire. 50 Labour MPs last week tabled a House of Commons motion in protest. Editor Bill Snaith's wife is a JP. Obviously T. Bailey Forman and Boots can pull a few legal strings.

But the union leaders must not be intimidated by the bosses' courts. Action like the NGA's must be not only maintained, but extended.

Nottingham Trades Council should, in co-operation with the NUJ, call a conference of Nottinghamshire trade unions and labour movement organisations, to discuss necessary action to break this union-bashing management.

UNIONS WIN FIRST ROUND

Last week along with my fellow workers I received a letter from Sir Dennis Hamilton, chairman and editor-in-chief of Times Newspapers Limited.

At first I was amazed that it got through the letterbox—it should have been a soggy mess with all the tears that had dripped on it as it was being composed. But crocodile tears are quite dry!

"This is a very sad moment for us all", he wrote. "...men and women who have worked many years, some most of their lives...will lose their jobs...It is tragic.

"The Executive Board sincerely and urgently want to conclude fair agreements..." And so on, ad nauseum.

This grovelling letter is quite different from those we received before the lockout. Then the management were firm and confident.

They were well aware of the disunity among Fleet Street workers. They were well aware of the fear of redundancy created by the 'new technology'. They were well aware that union leaders wanted a firmer grip on the

chapels.

They confidently calculated that combined, these factors would lead to a rapid collapse of opposition to their draconic proposals. They looked forward to a profitable future with a much reduced, tame workforce.

Management's expectations were not realised. The chapels and unions made it abundantly clear right from the start that they would not bow to threats, were not frightened by the lockout.

Management actually created the greatest degree of unity and solidarity that has ever existed at TNL. The chapels said that without reinstatement of all staff no progress could be made.

Four members of -NAT-SOPA who were under notice were instantly dismissed for refusing to do the jobs of sacked men. The NGA has said that if these men are not reinstated they will go out again.

A common view was; "We can win or lose. The management can only lose." Either TNL backed off or the papers would never appear again.

This explains why the management have crumbled. Why they have agreed to reinstate everyone sacked since printing stopped on 30th November. All workers are to be fully paid for the period of the lockout, half now, and half when the

presses roll again. On that basis, negotiations have now been agreed to.

Once again working people have proved that only by standing firm in the face of the bosses' threats can we hope to safeguard our jobs.

But during the lockout any information I had was a closely-guarded secret. We were under threat of excommunication from the chapel. We were not even allowed to discuss our 'chapel-business' in the Fleet Street AUEW branch.

In fact my chapel does not come out of this dispute with much credit. Some members were critical of the apparent eagerness of our chapel officials to 'go it alone' and reach an agreement before the shutdown.

The chapel decided to sign the diktat by 68 votes to 13. At the meeting where this vote took place the main arguments were that, in spite of what the agreement said about wages, 'the company have assured us that we will be at the top of the new wage structure'; that 'the company do not intend to apply the more onerous conditions in the agreement' (why put them in?); that the company were 'really after the moonlighters who don't depend on this place for a living' (more than a few engineers have 'sidelines') and that we would have the union against us.

In face of this, it is not surprising that most of the lads voted to accept.

The print unions did not picket 'The Times'. The NGA were able to pay subsistence wages to their sacked members and in the other unions, some members found two or three casual shifts in other houses.

However with the sacking of the last remaining workers the pickets were to go on. The Liaison Committee had decided that those still employed should go into work as no paper could be produced anyway and the wages would be a drain on the company.

In the first round, the printers and electricians seem to have won the day. Negotiations on the introduction of new equipment, jobs and the other outstanding issues are, however, only just beginning.

The fight is not over yet, and we should not fool ourselves that management won't try to wriggle out of the situation. Our brothers in the print unions will have to be vigilant to ensure that the new technology does not mean mass redundancies but improved conditions and a shorter working week.

By Jim Brookshaw

Times AUEW Committee
(in personal capacity)

MUD, GLORIOUS MUD

In Fareham, Hampshire 170 men, nearly all UCATT members, employed on a Laing's contract at Peel Common sewerage works, are out on strike.

For the last 12 weeks workers on this part of the £90 million Hampshire Water Authority contract have been literally up to their knees and higher in mud. This isn't just unpleasant, it is also extremely dangerous. There have already been serious injuries from hidden nails, glass and debris.

They have been waiting for action for 12 weeks. The site inspector was called in, but confined himself to examining the crane. Last Friday (16th) they finally decided to walk

out. The site was only recently unionised. Now 90% of the workers hold union cards—higher than most sites in this area. And they are ready to use their power.

At a mass meeting on Monday 19th they decided to stay out, at least until a further meeting at the end of the week. In the meantime they are trying to get the site inspector back again—for a more thorough investigation!

These newly-organised workers deserve the full support of the local labour and trade union movement.

By Nick Brooks
(Southampton Labour Party)

BUSWORKERS REJECT PAY OFFER

The employers in the bus industry, through the National Joint Council of the Omnibus Industry have made us an offer of 6%. This has been rejected by the National Delegate Conference.

The conference has decided upon the "moderate" course of a one-day strike to try to force a public inquiry into the level of wages in the bus industry. This would involve all companies in England and Scotland, all municipalities and (hopefully) London Transport.

As a bus worker bringing home £39 for 5 days, this is totally inadequate. Instead of public inquiries with their attendant delays and compromises we should be taking action now to illustrate the appalling wages we earn for working our basic week. 35 hours is a joke in bus

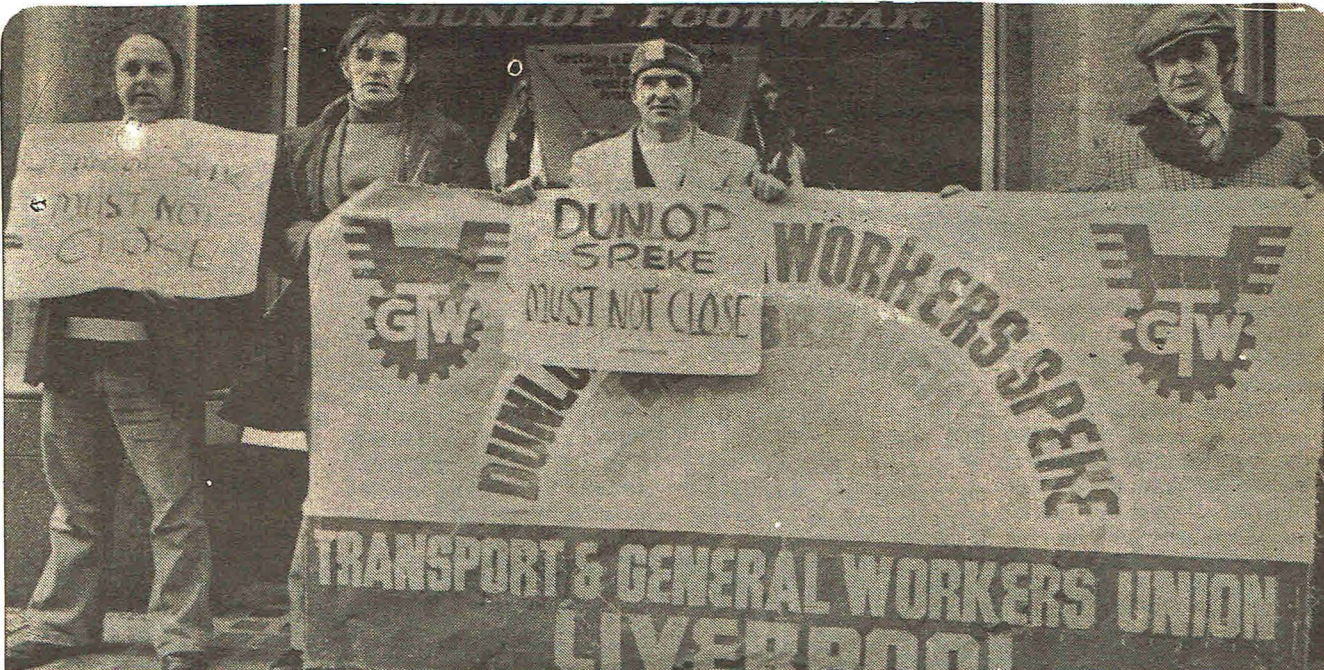
circles since you have to work at least 56 hours a week to earn a living wage (approximately £60 net).

Our own employers, the Scottish Bus Group, have come up with a separate offer which, when calculated out through the complicated structure of bus wages, would result in a driver who now earns £51.29 a week receiving £50 a week—this, of course, being backdated to 1st March!

Bus workers should attend their union meetings, move rejection of token strikes and call for national industrial action on a full basis until we are removed from the poverty line to which we have sunk.

All out for 35-hour week and £70 minimum wage!

By a bus driver
7/29 T&GWU



Dunlop workers lobby company offices in London to protest at job cuts and closures
Photo: MILITANT

GOODYEAR REDUNDANCIES Labour says "NO"

By Willie Griffin
(Bothwell LPYS)

In spite of accepting management proposals to work a Friday night-shift, 680 workers at Goodyear, Drumchapel are to lose their jobs.

This confirms the shop stewards' belief that the company has all along wanted to close the factory. The tyre industry is running at two-thirds capacity. Radial tyres last twice as long as crossply, less cars are now being produced than in 1970.

Four companies control 92% of the British market. Dunlops and Goodyear have already announced redundancies and closure—others will follow.

The idea that import controls can guarantee a future for the British tyre industry is a false one. Imports account for only 8% of the market yet the industry is running a third under capacity.

The Dunlop stewards have given a lead to all workers. Instead of the narrow demand for import controls, the trade unions have organised international action to fight redundancies.

The only future for the tyre industry lies in the policy passed unanimously by the Labour Party Scottish conference which called for: "Nationalisation of the tyre companies threatening redundancies and workers' control and management with compensation on the basis of proven need".

CIVIL SERVANTS Step up action, counter attacks

The Civil Service pay dispute has been forced to a head by suspension threats and emergency government legislation to by-pass the strike.

Already hundreds of members walked out on 16th March as a result of threats by the Scottish Office management to suspend staff (see report).

When the CPSA's National Executive Committee met on 12/13 March, the right wing majority defeated a motion from 'Militant' supporter Kevin Roddy putting forward an alternative strike strategy (see issue 447). Kevin argued that simply making a mess of government machinery was not enough. "The dispute would only be won by exerting political pressure and by showing up the hypocrisy of the government's position over the pay research comparability exercise for its own employees."

The right wing majority also rejected SCPS proposals for joint lightning strikes, work-to-rules and regional one-day strikes. Even the proposed introduction of emergency legal powers which would mean judges in Scotland could recruit strike-breakers to carry out the duties of striking court staff, failed to rouse the right wing

block.

The attack on the strike in Scotland, which has thrown the whole legal system into chaos, was met by demands from the left for a series of walk-outs and a one-day national strike in Scotland. This was rejected as a "panic measure".

The only step taken by the NEC was to add a further 150 members to the 1,139 already out on selective action. This was only secured when the right wing mixed up their votes.

The use of emergency legislation is unlikely to stop here. Attempts are reportedly being made to waive Inland Revenue stamp duty to get round the mountains of documents that are being stockpiled as a result of the strike action by the Inland Revenue "stampers".

The emergency legislation and suspensions show that the government are clearly rattled by the effect of the strike and the size of the pay increases civil servants are entitled to.

They fear the pay claims of the nurses, NUPE members and the forthcoming miners' ballot.

Although formally committed to the pay research system, its implementation could add to the determination of the other public sector workers. This is why

they have refused to allow negotiations to begin.

Meetings with Lord Peart and Roy Hattersley apparently set for 20 March, may give union leaders an indication of the government's intentions. It is even possible that the civil service negotiators may be allowed to make an offer.

The government will be guided by the balance of the different pressures it feels under. Although they may have taken some comfort from the selective action policy and the refusal of the right wing and senior professionals to escalate industrial action to involve key areas of the membership, they will be worried about the backlash against any suspensions and the possibility of unofficial action.

So they may opt to make an offer which they hope will gain majority support among the CPSA membership. The industrial action, they hope, will be suspended if an offer goes to ballot.

The NEC must act now to end the isolation of the 1,300 members striking on behalf of 200,000. A concerted programme of industrial action must be introduced quickly. The balance of forces must be firmly weighed in favour of the union.

This is the only way to



Pickets outside the Ministry of Defence, Liverpool Photo: MILITANT ensure that the full pay research increases which our members are entitled to, as analysed by the union's own research findings, are paid out in full on 1st April 1979. Co-ordinated action at airports by CPSA/SCPS members in Customs and Excise, CAA and Immigration must be introduced quickly. Section Executive and Area Committees who have been shut out of the developments

so far, must be called together to draw up strike plans.

Victory would assist public sector and other workers in their struggle to recapture what they have lost under successive pay policies.

The undoubted massive potential power in the hands of the CPSA and SCPS must be mobilised for that victory.

By Steve Appleton, DOE Leeds (personal capacity)

INLAND REVENUE

Finalisation of house sales above £15,000, property deals and stock exchange business is being held up by the strike of six CPSA members in the Inland Revenue.

The six, three each in Edinburgh and Glasgow, apply the official stamps to documents to verify that duty or tax is paid. The stock exchanges have been granted a temporary tax collectors' licence by the government to collect revenue on its behalf.

The strike has required the close co-operation of local CPSA and SCPS officers, showing that there is fundamentally more uniting the members of both unions than dividing them.

Union branches from all

over the country have sent us the basic message that "their fight is our fight", in recognition of the importance of this strike to all civil servants. Good co-operation has come from local CSU and IRSF members, whose unions have not called for industrial action yet.

This strike will last at least until the end of March to demonstrate the determination of all civil servants to have their just pay award by 1st April.

Ian Jardine CPSA IR (Scotland) branch & **Selma Cook** SCPS IR (Scotland) branch spoke to **Tam Burke**

Liverpool

At 3.30 pm on 16th March the Port of Liverpool closed down. Over a thousand customs officers walked out on a lightning strike in support of the victimised civil servants in Scotland.

The mood of the CPSA and Society of Civil Servants' members picketing the Ministry of Defence building was defiant and determined. "We will escalate the action if we have to, to defend our members and win our pay claim," one picket remarked. Already Customs and Excise workers have put a ban on overtime as part of the national action, alongside DHSS and Department of Employment workers. A West Derby DHSS worker warned the employers, "We're straining at the leash to come out in our place."

This is no irresponsible, lightminded attitude. A Garston DHSS picket described how his office immediately came out, and contacted other offices. "But we're not militants; we've been forced to be."

"How can Jim Callaghan, who was a civil service worker once himself, have this attitude? If the Tories did what a Labour government is doing to us, there would have been an all-out strike long ago."

This reluctance to take action against "our" Labour government shows a loyalty which has been exploited for too long. It's high time the justified demands of these workers were met in full.

Richard Venton (Birkenhead Labour Party) spoke to **Liverpool pickets**

Lockout provokes mass walk-outs

Thousands of staff from clerical assistants up to Principal, joined spontaneous strikes provoked by lock-out threats to 40 CPSA members in the superannuation and teachers' pensions sections of the Scottish Office.

The forty had refused to scab on 35 fellow members at the Scottish Office computer section, out for three weeks on official strike.

"This strike spread like wildfire throughout Scotland,

particularly in DHSS. But even Paddington DHSS and Darlington DES branches came out after hearing on the grapevine about the lock-outs."

Management's attempts to set up special payment units staffed by non-members were thwarted. Dozens of non-members now want to join the union.

Four data processors in Central Accounts, which handles all other Scottish Office payments, are also staying out. They too are

assured of support from their fellow members, who have been kept fully informed of all stages by local branch officials.

"The mass walk-out showed that our leaders, with their limited strikes policy, are dragging behind the members. All civil service unions should now be called out to fight together for the full claim."

John Smith (Assistant Secretary, Scottish Office branch, CPSA) spoke to **Tam Burke**

WESTERN'S - DEALS IN THE DARK

"The whole business stinks!" "This is a perfect opportunity for the Labour Party to expose big business."

These comments by pickets at Western ship-repairers reflect the bitterness and determination felt at the latest developments in this fight for jobs.

Since RE Butler took off his hat as a boss in British Shipbuilders, and put on his hat as managing director of the private Clydebank Engineering, offering the Westerns' men "well in excess of 200 jobs", a further profiteer has stuck his nose in.

Peter Sheppard is chairman of a Rochdale scrapmerchants, who tried to get planning permission for a ship-breaking yard in the middle section of Western ship-repairers.

Sheppard was refused planning permission by the local council, after lobbies and petitions by the pickets had explained that he would employ 6 men (at most!) and endanger a nearby Primary School by bringing blue asbestos fibre into the atmosphere. Now, according to a recorded conversation with a local journalist, Sheppard



Western's men defy snow and high winds in a picket to preserve jobs

Photo: MILITANT

claims to already own the middle of the yard, and feels confident of getting planning permission from Peter Shore.

This cowboy is playing with men's livelihoods. The Laird

Group would rather see men rot than release their grip on the yard.

They obviously hope to split the yard into three: sell part to Sheppard, sell the

drydocks to British Shipbuilders, and keep the rest for their own profiteering. Sheppard is part of their scheme to wreck this shiprepair yard, and the men's jobs.

They must be stopped. Peter Shore must be sent resolutions and letters calling for rejection of Sheppard's destructive plan—no to planning permission!

Why was Sheppard cocksure enough to buy the yard before getting permission to use it? Why should the Laird Group sell to Sheppard but refuse to even meet Butler? What deals are going on in the dark?

Labour Parties and trade unions should demand that the government force Laird's to open their books for a full government and trade union inquiry.

The evidence should be used to nationalise the yard to keep it intact, as demanded by the Labour Party conference in 1978, or else force Lairds to sell to a buyer giving written guarantees of long term employment for sufficient numbers under employment conditions which satisfy the trade unions and pickets involved.

Labour Party and trade union members must make sure the leadership end the terrible uncertainty at Western's by decisive action now.

Contact: **Western's Action Committee**, 29 Gaywood Close, Ford Estate, Birkenhead.

By **Richard Venton**

Militant

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Ireland... HUGE DEMONSTRATION SHOWS WORKERS ANGER

More than 150,000 trade unionists took part in a general strike and demonstration in Dublin last Tuesday [20th]. This was the biggest demonstration in the history of the 26-county state, and the largest show of trade union power in the history of Ireland's labour movement.

The action was called by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, supported by unions throughout industry and the services.

Buses and trains stopped running. Factories, offices and schools closed, for this massive protest. Pubs throughout Dublin were closed as barmen joined the march.

Despite the refusal of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Executive to back the strike, all the major unions supported it. Members of the few unions which did not officially come out in support, walked off their jobs in

**By Finn Geaney
 (Dublin Council
 of Trade Unions)**

thousands.

"The trade unions are the dominant power in the city" said Sam Nolan, speaking for the executive of the Trades Council at the mass meeting outside the Post Office in O'Connell Street. "We will say what will go and what will stop".

More than half an hour

after the meeting at the General Post Office in O'Connell Street had ended, trade union banners and delegations at the rear of the march were still arriving at the meeting spot.

The strike was initially called in protest at the unfair taxation system. 87% of all tax is paid by PAYE workers, though they contribute only 67% of national income. Only 6% of government revenue comes through taxation of business profits.

The Fianna Fail government have reduced tax on business profits from 43% to 10%. Exporters are un-taxed.

But it was not just the tax system which aroused workers' anger. Fianna Fail, the major party of big business in southern Ireland, were attacked in slogans and jeers throughout the march and meeting.

Falling wages, unemployment and rapidly rising prices, coupled with Fianna Fail's arrogance in forcing through their programme despite all opposition, made this a political demonstration.

The question of tax reform was the spark which brought the seething mood to a head.

Workers have been out in force all over the country. In Cork about 50,000 came out on strike and held a similar

demonstration. In Drogheda, 90% of the workers downed tools.

Over the past two weeks, workers in Limerick, Galway, Wexford, Nenagh, Navan and other industrial centres have taken to the streets in protest.

This Fianna Fail government is the most anti-trade union in the history of the state.

But 60% of the working population of southern Ireland are organised in trade unions, one of the highest figures in Europe. In manufacturing industry, the figure is over 80%. All the major industrial unions are affiliated to the Irish Labour Party.

Through a campaign to wipe out low pay and unemployment, by nationalising the banks and major industries, to meet the real needs of workers, the Irish Labour Party would rapidly gain support.

Workers have taken to the streets in protest at a government which gets its revenue by taxing them and letting the bosses off scot-free. Now is the time to translate this anger into the fight for an independent Labour government, committed to a socialist programme.

[Finn Geaney writes in a personal capacity]

STOP STEEL SACKINGS

Continued from front page

been cocooned, which means the 'tap to tap' steel production time has been considerably increased. Against all the odds, through their skill and effort, the workforce eventually made this cumbersome process profitable.

Yet BSC management is intent on sabotaging the viability of the plant.

Last week, London Works Steel ordered 2,300 tonnes, specifying that it should be produced at Bilston. In their wisdom, BSC let Bilston have 400 tonnes, and the remainder was passed over to private industry.

BSC did this because they were not, according to management, a 'traditional customer', although last year this firm received 46,000 tonnes, or one-fifth of Bilston's normal production.

Angry steelworkers, their livelihood at stake, feel that it is high time that BSC's 'dirty tricks department' was made redundant!

The Aston University report estimates that the "cost to society" of Bilston's closure would be £35 million.

But this figure—coldly calculated no doubt on the basis of business lost to the area, redundancy and unemployment payments—is as nothing to the real cost to workers and their families.

What price can be put on the waste and destructiveness of prolonged unemployment?

BSC has created a catastrophic mess. Although a nationalised industry, it has been run by its Tory-minded bosses in the interests of private big business, not workers or society as a whole. They are content to slash

iron and steel production to fit the needs of a diseased capitalist economy that currently leaves at least a fifth of its capacity idle and condemns 1.4 million workers to the dole queues.

Even BSC's limited modernisation plans involve massive redundancies as far as they are concerned!

Could there be a clearer case for real socialist planning?

With a democratic plan of production, based on nationalisation [with minimum compensation on the basis of need] of the commanding heights of the economy, there would be an urgent need for more steel, to build schools, hospitals and factories, and to turn out new plant and machinery.

This is the only alternative to capitalist sabotage of industry and jobs!

The present incompetent management of BSC—supposedly a public industry—should be kicked out and replaced by workers' control and management.

The industry should be controlled by a board of management made up of one-third elected representatives from the trade unions in BSC; one-third from the TUC to represent the trade unions as a whole; and one-third from the government.

This would alone open the door to the real modernisation and expansion of BSC in the interests of the working class.

The demand for workers' control and management must therefore go hand in hand with the fight to defend every single job in steel, and to improve the wages and conditions of all steel workers.

THE PRICE OF COAL

At a time when miners are being balloted on the reaction to the Coal Board's latest offer, a tragic incident in the Lancashire pits shows the horrifying risks our job entails.

On Sunday 18th March, three men died and eight were seriously injured at Golborne Colliery near Wigan in Lancashire. The price of coal was paid yet again. Not £50 or £60 a ton as in the paper money terms of capitalism, but in the life and death of miners.

Eleven men were carrying out maintenance work on electrical and ventilation equipment when an explosion occurred.

It is believed that methane gas ignited and a giant fireball burned until all the gas in the vicinity had burned away, making the area, 1,800 feet underground and 2 miles away from the pit bottom, a "living inferno". The heat alone must have been agonising.

Within minutes a miners rescue team from near Boothstown made a desperate bid to rescue the men. What they found must have made their stomachs turn. Four men were crying in agony, burns all over their bodies and clothes burned from their backs.

**Anthony Tynan
 (South Wales NUM)**

Six other miners were found scattered over a 200 yard stretch in a roadway 15 feet high and 13 feet wide. Two of them were dead; the rest badly burned. The rescuers took almost three hours to bring the last of the men up to the surface because the last man was buried under a roof-fall.

The eight survivors are critically ill. Whether the incentive scheme had anything to do with this accident we do not know. But it is adding to the perils of a job which as this disaster shows, are already great. The NCB have turned down justified NUM demands for improved wages on the grounds that the price of coal would rise. For these Lancashire miners, as for many others, the price of coal is already tragically high.




LPYS

Continued from front page
 opportunity for LPYS branches to discuss this work and start the momentum.

Every year, the conferences get bigger and better—and what an excellent way to spend

Easter, discussing the programme and policies of the LPYS, thrashing out in detail the direction of our work for the coming year.

See you in Blackpool!
 Glenys Ingham
 (LPYS NC)



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