

Militant

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THATCHER'S GOVERNMENT- OF THE RICH FOR THE RICH BY THE RICH

As the Stock Exchange opened at 9.30 am last Friday, the financiers' jobbers broke into a lusty rendering of 'Land of Hope and Glory'.

This outburst of patriotic sentiment was unashamedly inspired by the prospect of bigger profits for the wealthy few in a Tory Britain.

Even before election day, over £1,000 million had been added to share prices as financiers and big businessmen anticipated a Tory victory.

"The new Tory government," commented one of the partners of city stockbrokers James Capel, "is potentially more favourable to the stock market than any since the war."

"We have a government administration which is both imaginative and forward-looking," said an executive of Barclays Unicorn unit trust—the real point being: "Investors could be on the verge of big things."

The hopes of the big landlords, financiers and businessmen were amply confirmed by Mrs Thatcher's cabinet appointments.

Public-school breeding, an Oxbridge education, service in the cavalry or a period at the Bar are, it seems, virtually obligatory for Tory cabinet ministers.

Enormous wealth, vested in land, property and industry, is certainly something they all have.

By Eileen Short

Even for the Tories, this must be one of the wealthiest cabinets for decades.

Share prices have risen in the City in expectation of a "freer business climate". In particular, big business expects the early abolition of the Price Commission, removing even this flimsy barrier to unrestrained profiteering, and the ending of dividend controls, allowing wealthy invest-

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Epitomising the wealth and power of Thatcher's ministers: Lord Carrington, Foreign Secretary, a wealthy aristocrat born into landed estates, and a board-room baron with lucrative directorships including Barclays Bank and mineral-giant Rio Tinto Zinc.

NOW POSTMEN GO FOR FULL CLAIM

The Tory government's attitude to public-sector pay is now being put to the test by teachers, probably the power workers, and by 190,000 postmen.

Phil Waker, UPW East London Counter Branch, puts the postmen's case:

The Post Office pay offer for members of the Union of Post Office Workers has been overwhelmingly rejected by the membership.

In spite of the fact that the UPW executive council had recommended that the offer be accepted, branches voted against by a massive 6-1 majority.

The offer amounted to a total of 12-13%, but it was the strings attached which

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**IF YOU WANT A WORKERS'
PAPER IT'S UP TO YOU**

The role of 'Militant' during the general election campaign—exposing the class policies of the Tories and boldly advocating genuine socialist policies—has been vital.

A growing number of trade unionists, Labour Party members and young people—those we can reach with our present resources—look increasingly to our paper as a vital weapon in the fight for a socialist society.

Throughout the campaign, the capitalist press attacked the Labour left in general and the Marxists in particular [like David White in Croydon, report page 16].

They claim there is no support for Marxists: yet they clearly fear the

growing support for our Marxist policies in the labour movement.

But we still urgently need more resources to strengthen our paper.

In particular, we now need to find an additional £10,000 for the use of new plate-making equipment. This is exactly the amount by which we have fallen behind our target.

We must have this money by 7 July!

If we don't have the cash, we will have to postpone our plans. It is up to you to make sure we can go forward!

See fighting fund column, page 13.



UPW workers lobbying their union headquarters [24 March] Photo: Laurie Sparham (IFL)

Militant

WHO IS TO BLAME?

In the aftermath of defeat—with Labour winning its lowest share of the vote since 1931—Jim Callaghan and the right wing are saying that people “voted against last winter.”

But Labour's rank and file will utterly repudiate this attempt to blame defeat on the workers who were pushed by the government's own policies into taking industrial action—the Ford workers, lorry and tanker drivers, and above all the low-paid public authority workers.

This has been a defeat not for socialism but for the leadership's discredited right-wing policies. Labour's ranks are now demanding a return to fundamental socialist aims.

Responsibility for defeat lies with the Labour right's pro-capitalist policies.

Labour governments have now been in power for seventeen of the post-war years. Yet there has been no fundamental social change.

In the last four years, because of the worsening crisis of decayed British capitalism, unemployment doubled, inflation doubled, real wages fell, and, despite some reforms, education, the NHS and the social service were undermined by cuts.

Big business, through their press and television, impudently blamed the ills of their own rotten system on the Labour government—when in reality, because of subsidies and tax concessions to private industry and the effects of pay policy, they were the main beneficiaries.

Given the failure of the Labour government, the persistent propaganda of the capitalist press and media could hardly fail to have an effect, especially on the middle class, but even on the politically backward sections of the workers.

The wonder is that the working class remained so loyal to Labour.

In Scotland, Northern England, and South Wales, workers voted solidly against our class enemies,

in spite of bitter disillusionment with the Labour government.

Even in the South, class conscious workers still voted Labour. In many lost marginals the Labour vote hardly fell—or even increased—but was swamped by committed Tories, former Liberal voters, and previous non-voters turning out solidly for the Tories.

How could Labour expect to win middle-class votes simply by arguing for the status quo?

Sections of the middle class were undoubtedly panicked by the Tory press's hysterical denunciation of last winter's strikes, and particularly of the unskillful tactics occasionally adopted by some of the public service workers—who had little or no previous experience of strike action.

Inquest

But why were there strikes? Sections of workers, particularly the low-paid, were forced into a battle to improve poverty wages held down by the government's disastrous 5% policy.†

The labour movement will now hold a serious inquest. As the result of defeat, we will face a period of savage attacks from the Tory government. These will be vigorously resisted, just as they were under the Heath government—but the movement must draw the lessons and prepare for the future.

Tony Benn and a number of the Tribune MPs have rightly called for a return to fundamental socialist ideas.

Regrettably, the parliamentary left's opposition to the leadership's policies was muted during the campaign. But, although the right has temporarily been strengthened in the Parliamentary Labour Party—because a number of left MPs held marginal seats which fell in the general swing against Labour—the rank and file will enthusiastically endorse the demand for a firm commitment to socialist policies.

Left turn

In the constituencies, right-wing MPs—the Prentices who remain within the Labour Party—will be called to account. Re-selection will again become a key issue.

The Labour Party will undoubtedly turn further to the left in the next period. Fear of this has already been expressed in the capitalist press.

The rank and file of the Party will demand that a future Labour government should be committed to the socialist transformation of society as the only way forward for the working class.

In practical terms, this means the nationalisation of the commanding heights of industry, the banks and finance houses—with minimum compensation on the basis of need—to be run under democratic workers' control and management.

Only these Marxist policies will halt the decline of Britain and allow the planned growth of production in the interests of all working people.



TORY ATTACKS WILL AROUSE MASSIVE OPPOSITION

By Lynn Walsh

The Tories have swept to power. However, it is by no means the unqualified landslide claimed by the gutter Tory press.

When Mrs Thatcher moved into No 10 she was cheered by the usual crowd of on-lookers. But she was also met by boos and catcalls—unprecedented for such a traditionally soppy occasion.

“She's got nothing to offer us,” said one bystander: “They're already talking about putting up the tax on beer!”

Such down-to-earth criticisms are but a small sign of the enormous hostility and opposition that will face this government.

The Tories are boasting about the biggest swing in a general election since 1945. But the strategists of the ruling class are well aware that it represents nothing like the profound social movement underlying Labour's post-war victory—and they are already sounding a note of caution.

“The results in Scotland alone should serve as a warning for the future”. (“Financial Times” 5 May). Resolutely opposed to the Tories' class policies, the workers and sections of the middle class voted solidly for Labour.

Propaganda

Apart from the SNP losing 9 of its 11 seats, the Tories significantly lost Teddy Taylor's seat in Cathcart.

Strong Labour loyalty, born out of the suffering and experience of generations of workers in the older industrial areas, also prevented the Tories from taking many marginals from Labour in Northern England.

In London, the South East, and to a lesser extent in the Midlands, the Tories clearly



Hundreds of thousands of workers march against Heath's anti-trade union law, February 1971.

succeeded in drawing the votes of politically backward workers, including trade unionists, together with the expected middle class votes—thus gaining a significant number of constituencies.

Yet even in these areas, the

Tory gains are built on sandy soil.

Where fear of high unemployment is less acute, sections of workers, particularly, it would appear, skilled workers in the new industrial towns, were persuaded to vote Conservative for a reduction in burdensome levels of income tax and for free collective bargaining, which as far as they are concerned means the restoration of earnings eroded in recent years.

But what happens when they find out that Tory tax-cuts mean pennies for the workers, and pounds, or millions of pounds, for the wealthy? What will happen when they find higher money earnings—if conceded by the bosses—are rapidly eroded by the higher inflation that will inevitably follow in the next period?

There will also be inevitable disillusionment with Tory panaceas when workers feel the painful effects of the savage public spending cuts Thatcher's government intends to implement.

One very significant poll—carried out by the BBC on election day—has received very little publicity. “Voters were asked whether they preferred lower taxes or the keeping up of government services: 70%, including majorities from all parties, said they would rather have the services than the cuts.” (“Guardian” 8 May).

This poll pre-figures the reaction among workers who have been tricked by propaganda into voting Tory, and even among some middle-

class Tory voters, when Thatcher's axe begins to hack into education, health, social services, and housing.

Contradicting the trend in the general election this reaction has in fact already been revealed in the simultaneous local elections.

In towns and cities where people have already felt the rough edge of Tory controlled councils—returned under the Labour government as the result of disillusioned abstentions and protest votes—there has been a marked turn back to Labour.

Labour, for instance has won Coventry council, where Audrey Wise lost Coventry SE; and Labour also took several other midland towns where the Conservatives gained in the parliamentary elections.

Volatility

In Tameside, Labour turned a two-seat Tory majority into 18-seat Labour control—a clear reaction to the Tories' much publicised attempt to sabotage local comprehensive education.

“The name of the game has been, and is, volatility,” warns the “Financial Times” (5 May).

A measure of the ruling class's lack of confidence in the solidity of the Tories' social base and their fear of a Labour landslide in the future is the fact that suggestions for a drastic re-distribution of seats to favour the Tories even more, or for proportional representation to block a Labour majority, have already been raised in the capitalist press.

For all the public euphoria, big business strategists are privately all too conscious that British capitalism is still the sick man of Europe and that the working class remains powerful, well-organised, and determined to resist attacks on its living standards and rights.

In the words of the Political Editor of the “Financial Times”: “Nothing has changed in Britain except the government.”

THATCHERS CABINET: Titled landowners and boardroom barons

The characters assembled in Mrs Thatcher's cabinet leave no doubt as to whom the Tory government will be representing.

The list of ministers is like a roll-call of the rich and powerful.

Mrs Thatcher herself may boast of being grammar-school educated and "self-made"—brushing aside the wealth of her husband, who among other things sold his company to Castrol for a reported £500,000 in 1965—but she has certainly made up for any lack of breeding by surrounding herself with Old Etonians, ex-Guards officers, hereditary landowners, and big businessmen.

Only two of Thatcher's new cabinet did not go to 'public' (i.e. exclusive private) school. Seventeen went to Oxford and Cambridge, and eight were and dined in elite army messes (six former Guards, two former Cavalry).

Five members of the cabinet come from the profession of the wealthy par excellence, the Bar (i.e. they are barristers, three of them QCs).

There is no shortage of landed wealth, either. Lord Carrington (Foreign Secretary) inherited big landed estates in the Chilterns and Lincolnshire. Willie Whitelaw (Home Secretary) around Glasgow.

Without exception, all Thatcher's ministers are wealthy, some with huge business interests. Some of the richest have bought themselves land: Peter Walker (Agriculture) has 400 acres in Shropshire (having just sold 300 more in Worcester). Heseltine (Environment) 400 near Banbury. Pym (Defence) 400 in Bedfordshire (with perhaps another 2,000 spread among other members of his family).

A brief look at the business interests and life-style of individual Tory ministers immediately shows how many million miles they are removed from working people.

Perhaps the most provocative appointment is that of Lord Carrington to the Foreign Office—as a Peer he will not be answerable to the

Commons. His own business interests, moreover—among his lucrative directorships have been those in Barclays Bank and Rio Tinto Zinc, two firms which profit enormously from Apartheid—make it extremely likely that he will push for a right-wing foreign policy, especially in areas like Southern Africa.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, the new Chancellor, is already preparing his budget hand-outs to the rich. In the 1940s he opposed coal nationalisation, and more recently has been a member of the management council of the country's second largest private medical scheme, Private Patients Plan.

Sir Keith Joseph, Industry,

the mad monetarist himself, claims to have once worked on a building site, but daddy founded the big building firm Bovis, and he himself once lived in a suite in Claridges, one of Park Lane's most expensive hotels.

Another of Mrs Thatcher's disciples who shouldn't be left out of this highly select list, is Michael Heseltine, at Environment, the golden-haired capitalist hero. Now comfortably a millionaire through his shareholding in Haymarket Press alone, Heseltine previously made another fortune through property deals. Not surprisingly, he is one of the most zealous advocates of selling off council houses. ■



More than one raspberry in store for Thatcher

devaluation of the green pound during the campaign," comments the 'Sunday Telegraph' (6 May), "the Conservatives may have yielded a hostage to fortune..."

Another group of bosses presently less than ecstatic at the Tories' plans are the National Federation of Building Trades Employers. They cannot afford to give unqualified support for Tory spending cuts.

Economies should be made, they say, on current spending (never mind the deterioration of education, health services, etc), rather than capitalist investment—i.e. building projects with lucrative profits for private builders!

Trade union 'reform'

But the biggest anxiety for the strategists of big business is the prospect of increasing wage demands and trade union militancy.

For all their tirades against the unions, the less blinkered bosses have heaved a sigh of relief at the appointment of the 'moderate' Prior to the Department of Employment—indicating a cautious approach to attempts at trade union 'reform'.

They are mindful, perhaps, of a warning from the 'Economist' (5 May): "Britain's labour force is more heavily unionised than others...its shopfloor more militant...its employers more vacillating and less able to sit out strikes..."

Rises in prices—higher VAT to recoup income tax cuts and higher EEC food prices—will inevitably lead to higher pay demands. Not only that, Thatcher's demagogic vote catching attack on the Labour government's pay policy has fostered the idea that the Tories really believe in 'free collective bargaining'—which for workers means the right to fight for pay rises which compensate for inflation, or better.

"Skilled workers may believe that they can do better under free collective bargaining," cautions the 'Financial Times' (5 May): "but that begs the question of how Mrs Thatcher can manage the re-entry into a free-market system..."

In plain words, this means: how can the Tories open up a free for all and yet hold down real wages? Bosses may not like 'government interference' on pay; but since when have they liked paying out adequate increases?

Already, the serious spok-

esmen of the capitalists are predicting a U-turn on this issue.

Commenting on the appointment of the non-Thatcherite Peter Walker as Minister of Agriculture, for instance, the 'Sunday Telegraph' cynically reports that he "privately believes that actual experience of government will bring them round to his own views, on the need for an incomes policy among other things..."

Painful education

When Thatcher gained the Tory leadership after the unsuccessful Heath had been unceremoniously booted out, some of the capitalist commentators were sceptical about Maggie's wild, 'true blue' policies.

"However," they said ('The Times' 12 February 1975), "leaders are educated by the facts of power..." Well, Thatcher & Co. are about to find out that an election victory has not changed anything as far as the crisis in British capitalism is concerned.

They are about to begin a painful education. ■

FIRST FOR THE CHOP

First on the list of the bosses' "deliveries" from Thatcher's government is the abolition of the Price Commission.

The Commission's prompt post-election capitulation to Whit-

bread's — allowing them the full 3p a pint rise sought in February but blocked by Hattersley — is unlikely to save it.

In case Mrs Thatcher shows any signs of dithering before the kill, the CBI has produced a report damning every aspect of this Labour-created body so hated in the City.

According to CBI calculations, the Commission has managed to curb the rate of inflation during its first year, from August, 1977, by a tiny 0.1% of the retail Price Index.

Yet, at the same time, they argue that the effect on companies has been drastic.

The CBI report, according to the 'Sunday Telegraph' (6 May), claims that 19 companies whose price increases were rejected or frozen recently lost nearly £25 million in profits.

The 'allowable cost' rules, claims the CBI, have probably depressed overall industrial profitability from anything between £3,500 million to £8,500 million. Commission intervention on profit margins has possibly reduced profits by a further £300 million.

The bosses, who refer to the Commission as though it were some kind of soviet, also complain in exaggerated terms of the time and money wasted in co-operating with Commission investigations.

Clearly, they resent any outside scrutiny of their books and even the slightest curb on their profiteering.

Monopolies' power

'Militant' has always argued that, in a capitalist economy, there is no real way of effectively controlling prices. The big monopolies will always find a way round them—or withhold investment until they do.

Nevertheless, there seems some contradiction between the CBI's claim of a negligible effect on price levels and the huge profits they are claiming to have lost.

Whatever the Commission's actual short-lived effect on prices, the wide-ranging £3,500-£8,500 million lost profits claimed by the CBI gives an indication of the scale of profits they clearly plan to recoup in the first period of the Tory government.

How will they do it? Obviously, one of the main ways will be by pushing up prices, giving renewed momentum to the escalation of prices—while the Tories will then no doubt try to blame on 'excessive' wage increases.

No wonder the big business directors and City financiers are cock-a-hoop at the Tories' victory! ■

IS THE FIRST U-TURN IN SIGHT?

Amid the bosses' euphoria at a Tory victory, some of the more serious capitalist commentators have already struck a more sober, cautionary note.

"Edward Heath became prime minister in 1970 in a very similar atmosphere," recalls the 'Observer' [6 May].

"Within two years, he was castigating industry and British management for failing to raise to the challenge of lower taxes and less government interference..."

Within four years—and after a number of major U-turns—the Heath crew was out.

"Will the same happen to Mrs Thatcher? The omens are certainly not good for the rapid revival of British industrial performance. The global context is bleak."

Indeed, far-sighted Tories may already have caught a glimpse of the reefs on which Thatcher's

government may well be wrecked...

While adding its voice to the loud chorus for the abolition of the Price Commission, for instance, the Food Manufacturers Federation has also warned the Tories against any "sudden or rash proposals for devaluing the green pound".

Yet this is precisely what the leading Tories—among whom big landowners are well represented—have been promising.

The effect of a devaluation of the green pound would be to boost EEC subsidies to farmers—but by the same measure it would immediately put up food prices.

This would mainly hit workers—but it would also hit the Food Manufacturers' profits as some foods were priced out of the workers pocket.

The other EEC countries, —who get more out of the Common Agricultural Policy than Britain—are pressing for big increases. "In promising a

The Background to the Crisis

"The Tories have been fighting this election on the most reactionary programme for 100 years. They want to take the working class back, not to the '30s, but to Victorian times."

This was the warning Ted Grant of the 'Militant' Editorial Board gave to an enthusiastic audience at the all-London readers' meeting four days before the election.

Vivid examples were given by speakers of the policies the Tories had lined up to solve the capitalist crisis at the expense of the working class. Bob Lee from the PNP Youth showed the real racist nature of their policies. The Tories were openly talking of restrictions, quotas, even implying passes for immigrant workers.

David White, the candidate for Croydon Central, demonstrated the response to a campaign based on socialist policies. He showed the response of trade unionists, and Labour Party members, and big meetings in the working class areas.

One speaker among many in a lively discussion from the floor contrasted David White's fighting campaign with that of his own Labour MP who had circulated a press report saying how popular he was with the Tories.

Polarisation

Ted Grant's excellent analysis of the economic and political background to this election was warmly received. Ted stressed the class polarisation of the election, showing the distance between this election and those of the '50s when 'Butskellism', the hybrid of right-wing Labour and 'liberal' Toryism seemed to rule. The crisis in world capitalism has put an end to this.

Within the crisis of capitalism internationally is the crisis in Britain, which had slashed British capitalism's share of the world export market from its 1950 position of 25% to 7½% now. That



The platform at the London meeting

Photo: MILITANT

was what had propelled the Tories to the right.

The Tories have launched attacks on the workers organs of defence, the unions, labelling the Basnetts of the world, revolutionaries.

But what had been the Labour government's record? In the last government, the CBI had asked for £5 billion cuts in expenditure. The Labour government gave them £8 billion. The bosses' 'union' begged for £3bn in subsidies. The government upped this to £4bn.

The Labour Manifesto promised many reforms which we would support, but these had been in the 1974 Manifesto and not implemented in five years of government which had instead carried out counter-reforms.

Why was this? Their programme didn't tackle the root causes of the crisis so they were forced to try to work the unworkable capitalist system.

The programme of Marxism was the only one which could guarantee lasting benefit for the working class.

GLASGOW

A PROGRAMME TO FIGHT THE TORY ONSLAUGHT

A magnificent collection of £210 was evidence of the positive reaction to the ideas of 'Militant' at the pre-election meeting in Glasgow.

The discussion involving comrades from Prestcold's Chrysler's, various other trade union branches, Labour Parties and Young Socialist branches, showed their determination to defeat Toryism and arm the Labour Party with a fighting socialist programme.

From the platform, Dougie Miller, works convenor from Weir's of Cathcart, revealed the bitterness of trade union activists at the hesitancy of the trade union and Labour leadership in taking up issues facing the rank and file of the movement.

"The demand for a 35-hour week is always the first part of the claim to be dropped," he said. Like so many others, this attitude had kept Dougie from joining the Labour Party. "I'm not a member of any party. I've never found one good enough."

Calling for socialist measures, Dougie laid the responsibility for apathy from the movement on so-called 'moderation', which has no appeal for the working class.

Peter Taaffe, editor of 'Militant', described the election as a watershed in the development of British society. "The Tories intend to completely reverse the gains made by organised labour in the post-war period."

The promise to cut direct tax is nothing but a massive con-trick. Among the rich, "only fools" pay tax. Price increases will hit the poor.

Peter explained, "Gone is the 'one nation' policy of

Macmillan, replaced by one of class confrontation." He put forward the programme of 'Militant' as the only way of combatting the onslaught.

Thunderous applause met both the speakers' contributions. Comrade Dougie Miller, perhaps reflecting the mood of others in the 140-strong meeting who heard the ideas of 'Militant' for the first time announced: "This meeting has really shaken me up. Now I can see there are young people, dedicated socialists in the Labour Party, I'll have to get involved. All this has given me new heart."

Greg Oxley
(Bothwell CLP)

ROUND-UP

"Socialism as I see it"

In Bristol, 60 people attended a readers' meeting where the speaker was Brian Ingham, Industrial Correspondent of 'Militant'. The meeting attracted many new faces, particularly young workers who had become involved in politics through the election.

Other meetings in the South West also saw good meetings: in Gloucester, Bath, Plymouth, Exeter, Redruth and Newton Abbot. There was enthusiasm for Marxist ideas even in the smallest towns.

Meetings in South Wales also had a good response. In Rhondda, one member of a local Labour Party made the comment that "At last something has come out of the Labour Party which represents socialism as I see it." A feeling that was echoed in many meetings up and down the country.

BIRMINGHAM

GRIM FUTURE UNDER CAPITALISM

"We don't care how big they are—we have nowhere else to go." With this fighting call, Arthur Connolly, T&GWU shop steward at Dunlop Speke expressed the feelings of workers picketing the plant and main Dunlop factories when he addressed a 'Militant' public meeting in Birmingham.

Arthur, who had come straight from picket duty, gave a graphic illustration of the chronic shortage of capital which had led to the closure. Some workers still had to use equipment to produce tyres which was originally bought for a mere

£72 in 1927.

It was now used to produce motor cycle tyres for sale at £67 to £68 a pair. How could the industry possibly be competitive with this kind of underinvestment, he asked.

Arthur explained the problems facing workers of a vast multinational company (aided by government subsidies) moving its investments out to South Africa, Brazil, Malaysia and other countries with no trade union organisation.

Bill Mullins, T&GWU senior shop steward, Rover, Solihull took up Arthur's theme. He showed that the facts about underinvestment were part of the general crisis of British capitalism and

exposed the myth that idle, work-shy workers were somewhat responsible for the closure at Speke.

84% of the output of goods and services in Britain was still in the hands of private ownership. But only one quarter of all domestic investment was generated from private sources.

On the basis of capitalism, the only future the working class could look forward to was more cuts, unemployment rising to between 3 and 5 million by 1985 and a further driving down of living standards.

The whole programme of the Tories in the election, said Bill, was the logical pro-

gramme for continuing capitalism, but the Labour government unfortunately had not taken up the challenge.

Even the policies put forward by 'Tribunites' and others could not solve, but only exacerbate, the real crisis of capitalism.

The justification of socialism was not a moral question, said Bill, it was based firmly on the total inability of capitalism in crisis to mobilise and utilise the immense resources and skills at the disposal of society. "A shift to the ideas of socialism," he ended by saying, would "take on a new speed."

Nigel Walshe
(Ladywood LPYS)

LIVERPOOL

200 hear the Marxist alternative

More than 200 people attended one of the best 'Militant' readers' meetings ever on Merseyside when Peter Taaffe ['Militant' Editor] spoke at the Liverpool pre-election rally.

Eddie Loyden, Labour candidate for Garston, Terry Harrison, candidate for Liverpool in the European elections, and Josie Aitman from the LPYS National Committee also received a good response.

But possibly the most heartening factor was the liveliness of the contributions from the floor. One young NGA apprentice asked what relevance the programme had to someone like himself. "I've heard you complain of the

Liberals and the Tories. How can this help me? Can it create jobs?"

Another NGA member, Ray Williams, advised him that to become active in his trade union and the Labour Party was the only way to be able to make the policies of the labour movement which alone could create a better society.

Even in voting, it wasn't a question of a vote of confidence in the government but of fighting for a change in society.

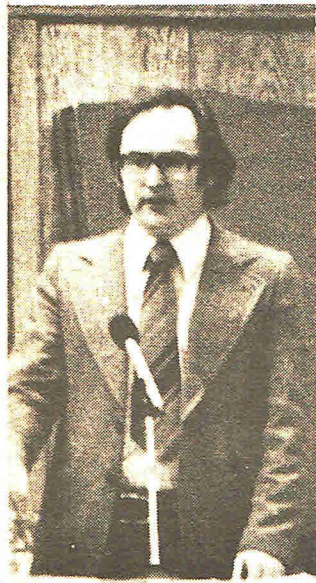
As Peter Taaffe said in summing up, 'Militant' supporters were the most enthusiastic workers for Labour. But the struggle for basic rights like a 35-hour week and a £70

minimum wage needed a socialist programme.

The class struggle didn't originate in the minds of Marxists, but in the reality of capitalism. Marxist ideas would find an echo because of the needs of the working class which could not be fulfilled by capitalism.

To give the lie to those who say that Marxism scares off workers, as always, after the meeting, people wanted to join the Labour Party on the basis of our ideas. As one person at the meeting said, "For the first time I feel I am amongst friends."

Sylvia Shaefer
(Edgehill CLP)



Peter Taaffe

NORTHERN ENGLAND

A Heritage of industrial decay

Unemployment has been a feature of Northern life for so long that it has become ingrained. Any worker in the north will tell you that when Britain catches cold, the Northern region catches pneumonia — and then he'll go on to tell you that Britain has had a cold for sixty years! For this region has suffered the effects of economic decline for sixty years.

Today unemployment is about 60 per cent above and income about 15 per cent below the national averages. The north is being de-populated by a net emigration of workers and closures and redundancies are rapidly de-skilling the workforce.

In 1914 the region's 216,000 miners produced over 50 million tons of coal. There were 70,000 employed in iron and steel-making and 125,000 workers in shipbuilding and engineering (mainly heavy engineering).

In the 1880s a quarter of Britain's steel was produced in Cumbria; in the 1890s the North-East coastal yards produced two-fifths of the world's tonnage of ships and four fifths of Britain's tonnage!

These four industries in 1914 accounted for 40% of the total employment in the region; they are a heritage which still leaves its mark.

The concentration of northern workers into a few heavy industries gave an enormous impetus to the growth of trade union solidarity. It is no coincidence that the Labour Party's most solid traditional base is in the pit villages, steel town and river banks of the region.

But the decline of these industries has meant the decline of the whole area. Capitalism always seeks the

greatest profits in the shortest possible time: its expansion is always totally haphazard, with no thought or planning to correct past mistakes. Old ground is never ploughed over—profits and investment in new industries are channelled to cheaper new grounds.

The concentration of northern workers into a few heavy industries gave an enormous growth of trade union solidarity

After 1914 the North's basic industries suffered dramatically from American and European competition and, being export-dependent, they have never recovered. The new industries developed in the inter and post war years



Bosses wept crocodile tears about Jarrow in the 1930s. But 40 years on, there are still no jobs

were centred on the Midlands and South where there was some tradition of light engineering and manufacturing; the North's previous industrial advantage had now become its disadvantage.

Employment in the four basic industries fell and wages were driven down. Capitalism found it too expensive (i.e. not profitable enough) to re-train, re-equip and otherwise re-invest in the north.

Massive unemployment developed—towns like Sunderland, North Shields and Jarrow had 25% unemployment for almost the whole of the 1920s and 1930s!

The general picture today remains the same. Despite short-term upswings from time to time, coal, iron and steel, shipbuilding and engineering were sinking further and dragging the region behind them. Despite this, in 1959 35% of workers still depended on these key industries for their jobs.

Government agencies have tried for four decades to fill the gap that 'private enterprise' has refused to fill—with government factories, trading estates, grants, incentives and so on and on.

Some northern workers have moved out of the traditional industries and into textiles, light engineering and other new jobs. This has been

due solely to government intervention however; the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism seems to have died.

But the government-sponsored schemes have served as little more than palliatives. The rapid run-down of jobs in the post-war years has been nowhere near matched by the provision of new jobs.

In the six years from 1957 to 1963 the coal industry lost 40,000 jobs and shipbuilding 18,000. In the 1960s as a whole there were 10,000 jobs lost in the coal industry and 3,500 from shipbuilding every single year!

The levels of unemployment have been disguised by the emigration from the region, reaching a peak of 17,000 a year in the early 1960s and 11,000 a year in the late 60s.

Even the measures of nationalisation have not solved the problem. The industries taken over were all run down by their owners long before they were nationalised. In most cases the tax-payer was paying out massive over-compensation for a heap of scrap.

On top of that, industries were nationalised in the most bureaucratic manner possible and run on the same lines as before—except that the public carried the losses instead of the private owners. Workers

were pushed onto the dole in the name of 'economy', while big business had the benefit of cheap coal and steel.

Today the basic industries that were the foundation-stone of the British economy are near the point of extinction. It is projected that by 1991, 13,000 jobs will be lost in the primary sector; 7,000 in heavy manufacturing, as against a gain of 3,000 in other manufacturing and a loss of 15,000 in construction.

The Northern region with its industrial monuments, its years of depression and its decades of dole queues, stands as a wretched testament to the capitalist system

Even these figures, published some years ago, are now beginning to look a bit sick. It was hoped that the service sector would absorb up to 99,000 new jobs. Public expenditure cuts will salvage

that hope. These 'optimistic' statistics projected a male job shortage of 145,000 in 1991.

We do not nostalgically hanker after the 'good old days' of back-breaking work in stinking holes in the ground or in iron-foundries. Workers do not regret the demise of the old traditional industries. They do resent the lack of new ones.

The measures of nationalisation have not solved the problem. The industries taken over were all run down by their owners long before they were nationalised

The Northern region with its industrial monuments, its years of depression and its decades of dole queues, stands as a wretched testament to the capitalist system.

What is needed to change the face of the Northern region is a government committed to a wide-reaching socialist programme to take control of the economy and industry, and to plan investment and job provision in such a way that it benefits society as a whole, north and south.

Only socialist nationalisation can harmonise industry and the economy

Real control can only be taken out of the hands of the profit-hungry private ownership system by socialist nationalisation—with compensation based solely on need, with democratic workers' control and management—so that industry and the economy can be harmonised to the needs of the community.

These are the measures we must fight for if the Northern region and the other depressed areas of Britain are ever to climb out of the morass of unemployment and poverty.

SUBSIDIES NO ANSWER - ONLY SOCIALIST PLANNING CAN REVERSE DECLINE

After years of incentives, regional aid and development programmes, the age-old problems of stagnation and unemployment still haunt the north of England. National and international recessions magnify the chronic decay.

Today there are 114,000 unemployed, and the number is growing rapidly. Vickers, Courtaulds, British ship-builders are all adding workers to the dole queues.

In the desperate search for some new solution, the

impact of the Scottish devolution campaign has led to demands for Regional government and 'a Minister for the North'. The Regional Council of the Labour Party remains committed to a Development Agency (on the lines of the Scottish Development Agency).

There is nothing new about these ideas, however. They are merely variations on the same old theme—the problems can be overcome if we hand out enough incentives to big business.

In the ten years up to 1973-74, regional aid, in the form of capital grants, tax allowances on investment and regional employment premium are estimated to have cost £500 million. The effect of this has been to create 50,000 jobs: £10,000 for each job.

Alongside this, the traditional industries have dispensed with 40,000 jobs. There is even evidence to show that grants have been used to subsidise investment in capital-intensive industries, making way for heavy cuts in the workforce.

According to one group of

economists—the Northern Region Strategy Team—"the overall employment situation is likely to be more unfavourable in 1981 than to-day". Ten years of trying to bribe so-called private enterprise to invest has been tried and tested...and failed.

The new ideas now being canvassed are for a Development Agency or Regional Parliament, to achieve more democratic control over directing investment.

Of course socialists would welcome more democratic control over the operations of big business. But would a

development agency or an Assembly really give us any control?

Special Ministry or Assembly?

As long as profit considerations continue to dominate the economy then such measures would only be of cosmetic value. Neither a 'Minister for the North' nor an Assembly could better the miserable achievements of the past few years, while the crucial investment decisions

are taken in the boardrooms of the big monopolies.

Real planning for jobs and development, in the north and nationally, can only be achieved by a Labour government taking real control over the mighty resources of industry and the economy.

By Dave Cotterill

(Gateshead East Labour Party)

YOU DONT NEED A DEGREE

As a very slow reader at the best of times, I thought it might be useful for me just to write down why I think it is so important for workers, young and old alike, to read theory.

As I didn't start reading until 13, and only got through my second book at 17, I think I can say I still find great difficulty in reading.

Given a lot of people have a similar problem and some just don't bother, I want to give a few reasons why they should try.

In the past few months I have read two books, the first, 'Trotsky on Britain', which after starting I couldn't put down, and the second, Volume I of Trotsky's 'History of the Russian Revolution', which was a bit harder to get into but still captivat-

ing. focuses the mind on what a revolutionary situation is really like. The confusion, the way to work, and the way different ideas are put to the test and discarded by the masses.

But these books, like books by Marx, Engels and Lenin are full of pitfalls for readers. There are unfamiliar Russian names, long words, new political terms, complex events being explained, and the ideas expressed clash with many of our pre-conceived ideas implanted by this system.

I have a method of dealing with these problems. First with names I can't pronounce I just give them nicknames, which makes the reading flow easier.

Secondly, I read the whole paragraph even when I don't understand it at first, and then go back over it when I've got it in context.

There's not much you can do with complex explanations except read them when you can give them your full attention. Pre-conceived ideas can sometimes be useful, as after questioning new concepts you can usually understand them better.

As for long or obscure words, sometimes it helps if you have got background knowledge, anyway, of what you are reading. For example, before reading 'Wages, Prices and Profits' by Marx, read 'What is Inflation?' by Mick Brooks.

It is also helpful to read lighter books between the heavy ones, such as George Orwell's 'Homage to Catalonia', and Jack London's 'The Iron Heel', and similar.

'Gut socialism' not enough

I know that there are other people in the movement with a prejudiced attitude to theory, let alone reading it. We should not be hostile to such people—you can learn from some of them, but as active Marxists we have to resist such ideas as "Gut Socialism"—when it comes to the test you can guarantee that such contempt for theory will only lead to defeat.

Gut Socialists are in danger of ending up with their guts on the bayonets of reaction.

Everyone has a contribution to make to the movement, but those with the understanding of the Marxist method, have much—oh so much more!—to give.

You don't need a university degree to understand theory—in fact that's sometimes a hinderance. All you need is a sound class-consciousness.

If this article has helped anyone to read one book, it will have done its job.

By Steve Glennon

(Stevenage LPYS)

Insight

What did I get out of these books written over 50 years ago?

Firstly, I consider myself a fairly experienced socialist after being active for over eight years. I have been President of a Trades Council, delegate to the TUC and a shop steward, as well as having important positions in the LPYS and Labour Party.

But given all that, it still doesn't give me insight into the major events that will be testing all socialists in the future.

It's the same as anything else: if you start a game you have never played before, it is always better to read the rules before you start. You can pick them up as you go along, but that means you are very likely to lose a few times to those who do know the rules.

We, however, are not playing games, so it's far more important to know the method and, if you like, the rules of changing society. You can't just learn as you go along—it can cost dearly.

The first book is as relevant today as it was when it was written—you can't help reading into it things that are taking place today. It may not teach you anything completely new, but what it does is to clarify your own experiences in a way impossible in a meeting or a discussion.

The second really shows Marxist understanding in action, and not in easy circumstances.

It graphically, step by step,

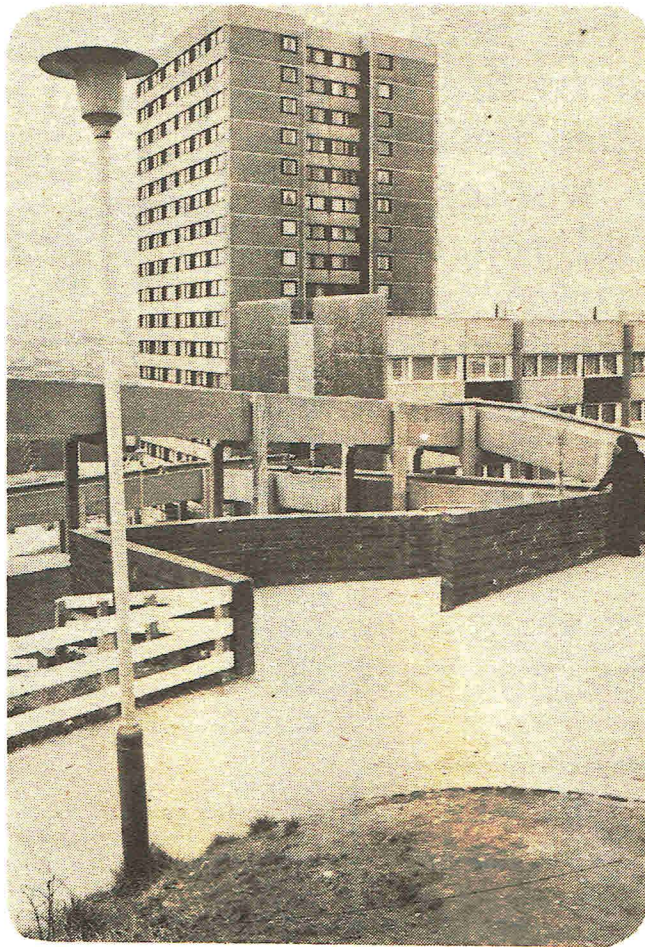
St Cuthberts - A MODERN, EXPENSIVE PRISON

Your feature on St Cuthbert's village, Gateshead, ['Militant' 6 April and 20 April] vividly illustrated this modern prison from which we escaped after a seven-year sentence.

Like most of the first tenants moving in there in 1970, from a damp old flat, we thought it was marvellous—young married couples having the chance of a brand new, centrally heated maisonette.

At first, we could afford to use the central heating, but with massive rises in electricity costs—at one point reaching 120% in 13 months—like most other tenants we had to switch off the central heating (which can only be done by removing the fuses since the thermostat setting only switches to 'low', meaning the heating is still being run when the temperature falls below that).

Even then, the last bill we had before escaping to a gas heated home was £120 for the winter quarter of 1977! Yet the Housing Director of Gateshead MBC in a BBC North East programme,



Only the moneylenders benefit

Photo: MILITANT

'Slums of the 'Sixties', rejected the idea that tenants were paying any more than £50 per quarter.

Many have in fact installed paraffin or calor gas fires to cut down on costs, and even recently the electricity meter

reader advised one woman to switch off her heating as she would be getting a bill for about £150 and she had only been moved in seven weeks! Tenants are now making photocopies of the last quarter's bills of £200-£300 to send

to this Director.

But it is not just the cost of heating and the dampness (which has caused tenants to throw away wardrobes full of mouldy clothes), but the design which is at fault.

Supposed to be family dwellings, there is little open space where children can use their energies. I have seen children sitting astride the walls that surround the concrete roof 'gardens' and climbing on old furniture perched at the top of a badly lit flight of stairs. A real adventure playground!

To their credit, most of the Labour councillors would regret the building of St Cuthbert's—an alternative high density to high-rise flats. Gateshead probably has one of the best records for slum clearance since the war with new estates springing up all around the town.

But it is no use replacing old slums with new. The only people to benefit from this planning disaster are the building companies and moneylenders from whom the council borrows over 60 years.

So even if the council could erase St Cuthbert's and miraculously re-house 700 families, they would still be paying for it! The council should demand interest-free loans to enable them to build houses for need and not to line big business's pockets.

By Jen Pickard

A New hospital - for the rich

The Tories hypocritically claim they are in favour of "freedom of choice" (i.e. encouragement for the rich to buy private health treatment) and the improvement of the NHS.

But private health facilities inevitably develop at the expense of the NHS, as will be shown this week by further public hearings on the application made by the private Wellington Hospital, St John's Wood, to build a 100-bed extension.

The key issue is: will the Wellington's plans to recruit 142 nurses "to a significant extent interfere with the performance by the Secretary of State of any duty imposed on him by the NHS Acts"?

Health authorities throughout North London have written to the Health Services Board pointing out that it certainly will.

Shortages for the NHS

Wards and operating theatres are already closed because of nurse shortages. In the three weeks after Christmas, for example, 100 beds at the nearby Royal Free Hospital could not be used



And a lot more under a Tory government

Photo: J McKittrick

There's a lot of it about.

because of a lack of nurses.

Charging their wealthy clients £130 a day for basic "hotel" facilities (which include food and nursing: medical treatment is extra) the Wellington can easily afford to outbid the NHS for nursing staff.

The Wellington has no plans for nurses' accommodation, so obviously intends to recruit locally. Nor does the Wellington train nurses, it simply poaches those trained in the NHS.

If the Wellington's applic-

ation is rejected, it is feared that the big businessmen behind the hospital will easily find a way out. If they form another company and build for 99 rather than 100 beds, they can avoid the need for the Board's permission.

This is why the American Medical is building a 99-bed hospital in Harrow.

This case is a foretaste of the damage that could be inflicted on the NHS by private health firms if the present restrictions are in any way relaxed.

THE SHAH OF NORWICH?

Does the 'Eastern Evening News' provide a clue to the Shah's future plans (perhaps anticipating a Tory victory)? Look in the accommodation column (28 April): "Iranian family looking for furnished accommodation, must be good condition, central heating, telephone if possible. If good condition, money no object." Is the Shah contemplating a life of obscurity in East Anglia?

By Chris Grace

NO TO THE E. E. C.



French steel workers like their British brothers face closures. Workers action internationally is the only way to unite Europe in workers' interest.

Photo: J Sturrock (Report)

FOR A SOCIALIST EUROPE

With the Parliamentary elections over, the labour movement has to turn its attention to the elections for the European Assembly on 7 June.

What are the issues at stake in this, the first ever Europe-wide Common Market election?

Before voters' minds become boggled by such terms as EEC, EMS, CAP and MCA, let's ask ourselves, just what is the Common Market and what does it mean for working class people?

Quite simply, it's an international bosses' club designed to allow the big multinational firms to maximise their profits.

For working people in Britain all it has meant in the six years since the Tories took us in has been the disgusting scandal of seeing millions of pounds' worth of food being deliberately destroyed in order to make us pay higher prices in the shops for what's left.

Workers have had to pay the entrance fee to this exclusive club for the

privilege of seeing their own bosses get in on the action in the European markets.

Entry into the EEC was portrayed by big business and their representatives in the Tory party and the right wing of the Labour Party, as the gateway to the promised land. Whereas Britain had only managed a miserable rate of growth throughout the boom years of the '50s and '60s, falling behind in the world league table, Germany and other EEC countries had enjoyed an 'economic miracle'.

Rather than face up to the stark fact that British capitalism's relative decline on the world market was due to its abject failure to reinvest its profits to re-equip and modernise industry, the ruling class preferred the pipe-dream notion that if they joined the club then—abracadabra—Britain would gain the magic ability to cure all her economic ills.

Indeed, as the Treaty of Rome guided the countries of Western Europe into a united whole, with a single currency, single tax and transport systems, and even a common foreign policy, all the old

national antagonisms would be overcome and capitalism itself given a new lease of life in a market of 250 million.

Yet 20 years after it was created and 6 years after Britain joined, the EEC is as far as ever from these utopian aims. It remains what it began as—a glorified customs union, in which all the national contradictions and separate, selfish interests of the ruling classes of each country stand exposed.

As Marxism has always explained, so long as the ownership of the means of production rest in private hands and are operated simply to satisfy the capitalists' lust for profit rather than the workers' needs, a united Europe is impossible. And as 'Militant' consistently predicted, as the problems of capitalist economies become more acute, the contradictions between capitalist nations are inevitably sharpened.

Since Britain's entry, the imbalance in Europe has become heightened, with the gap between Germany and the 'sick man of Europe'—Britain—becoming even wider. French wine producers have rioted in the streets and set fire to lorries to keep out cheaper Italian wine surpluses. Britain stands outside the "snake" which links the various European currencies.

Now it has become clear that Britain, one of the poorest EEC countries, has become the biggest contributor to the EEC budget, while Denmark, with the highest income per head of population, is a net beneficiary.

The Labour Party's mani-

festos for the EEC elections points out that: "In 1977 we paid into the budget some £737 million and received back £368 million—a net contribution of £369m. But by 1980, our net contributions, for that year alone, will have risen to no less than £895 million—a total over the four years from 1977 amounting to nearly £2,800 million

And what do the workers get in return for this bill, the money for which has to be paid out of their taxes? The privilege of looking on as millions of tons of food are destroyed to keep prices—and profits—rising.

The latest scandal of the Common Agricultural Policy is the ploughing into the ground of half a million unsold apples at a cost of something like £100m. Last year 6,000 tons of perfect cauliflowers were destroyed at a cost of £35 a ton paid to the farmers.

Such is the anarchy of the capitalist system! Such is the crazy logic of the "free enterprise" profit system whose apologists brand as "extremists" those who argue for a planned economy!

The EEC now also stands as a threat to the jobs of workers in every European country. Like the powerful steel barons of old, this international cartel is trying to hold back the amount of steel produced and to keep the price high now that heavy industry faces crisis.

The EEC's answer to the shipbuilding crisis is perfectly simple—sack 75,000 workers in Europe! It wants shipyards to cut their 1977 output of 5.4m tonnes of shipping by

half. A great step forward for mankind!

But if the panacea advanced by the Tories and Labour's right wing has failed, it is no solution simply to call for Britain's withdrawal—like the Tribune left and the Communist Party.

In or out of the bosses' club there is no solution to inflation, unemployment and economic stagnation as long as the British economy lies in the grip of the four big banks and the 200 giant monopolies.

'British private enterprise' was responsible for massive attacks on workers' living standards before the Treaty of Rome was signed. And when we hear that Brussels and Strasbourg have taken away 'our sovereignty', we must ask: when did the workers ever have any sovereignty? When did workers ever have any control of the economy?

Irrespective of what is discussed in Brussels or Westminster, the real decisions which affect workers' lives are taken behind closed doors in the boardrooms of the monopolies and multinational corporations—like Chrysler, whose boss, Riccardo, "placed a pistol to our head" in the words of Harold Wilson.

Withdrawal from the EEC would simply mean that British capitalists would have to pay tariffs on goods exported to the continent, increasing their selling price and making inefficient British capitalism even less competitive in overseas markets.

Nor is there any possibility of Britain restoring the old arrangements which allowed the importation of relatively cheap foodstuffs from countries like Australia and New Zealand. While the Common Agricultural Policy has undoubtedly added to British food prices, it is also the case that world food prices have risen considerably—and leaving the market would by no means automatically mean cheaper food in the shops.

The very expansion and development of the productive forces in society demonstrate the burning need for the old obstacles of national boundaries and divisions to be swept away to take society further forward.

More trade barriers, tariffs.

By Brent Kennedy

import controls and other forms of protectionism would only have a disastrous effect on world trade, plunging capitalism deeper into world slump than in the '30s.

Through the failures of the Common Market, capitalism has clearly demonstrated that it is incapable of overcoming these barriers. It has outlived its usefulness in raising the level of civilisation even in its strongest continents.

Yes, international economic union is needed, but only the scrapping of the profit system can bring that about. History now looks to the labour movement for a way out of the chaos of glut and want, shortage and unemployment, through an international socialist plan of production.

In the coming EEC elections workers should elect as their spokesmen Labour candidates standing on a socialist, internationalist programme:

- ★ For a European-wide 35-hour week to cut unemployment!
- ★ Neither capitalist free trade nor capitalist protectionism!
- ★ For an international socialist plan of production—take over the banks and the big monopolies that dominate the British and European economies, with compensation only in cases of proven need, and under workers' control and management!
- ★ No to the bosses' EEC: For a Socialist United States of Europe!

THE RIGHT TO MISMANAGE

Lack of incentives for management and Luddite trade unions are continually blamed by the bosses for the backwardness of British industry.

But many serious investigations (summarised recently, for instance, in a NEDO survey "International price competitiveness, non-price factors, and export performance") point to chronic under-investment by the bosses and hopeless planning by their top managers.

Commenting on one of the papers at a recent conference

Audio industry

organised by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, GF Ray said: "There cannot be much doubt that slow adoption of technological innovations is one of the causes" of Britain's lack of competitiveness, in spite of its relatively low wages:

"To take just two examples: the British audio industry, which had been signifi-

cant, lost most of its markets because it neglected the growth areas of the tape-recorder, the cartridge and the cassette; in the past five years about 10,000 jobs have been lost in the television industry through lack of Research and Development...

"Digital watches and handheld calculators are other examples, but the best illustration can be found in the pathetic record of the UK motorcycle industry, which totally failed to recognise consumer needs; its market was first flooded with Italian

scooters and mopeds and later by Japanese models which offered better performance at very competitive prices. The outcome is the virtual disappearance of the British industry."

From 'De-industrialisation' edited by Frank Blackaby, NIESR/Heinemann, 1979, page 75.

The bosses claim the "right to manage", and it is they who have presided over "de-industrialisation" — i.e. the degeneration and decline of British industry.

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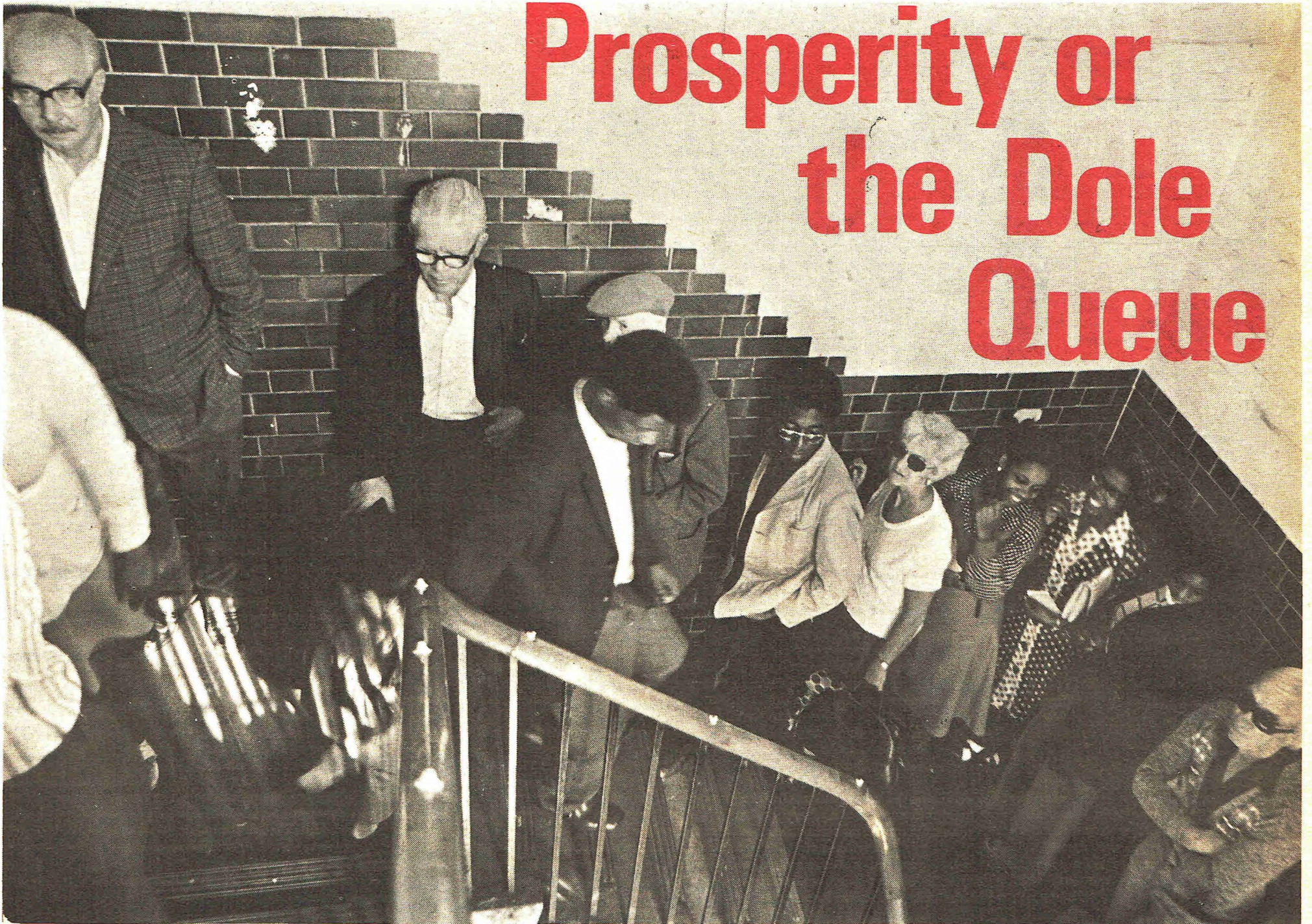


Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

Is this the beginning of a second industrial revolution?

With the rapid development of microelectronics in the last few years, this is the kind of story that has been put forward by the popular press. But what are the implications of the 'silicon chip' for working people and the labour movement?

As early as the 1960s, there was talk of technology, which had developed at a colossal pace in the post-war boom, offering undreamed of plenty for working people. This was summed up in Harold Wilson's election slogan of 1964: Britain was to be transformed by the 'white heat of the technological revolution'.

But, as we can see today, it never happened. Instead, there was a continuing development of technology, and this was most rapid in the field of computers.

Industry was not transformed by colossal automation, although there was a gradual tendency to increase automation. This resulted in a gradual whittling away of jobs in industry and commerce.

However, throughout the sixties, the world post-war boom continued apace, although at a gradually slowing down rate. This meant, that

although the British economy was falling behind its capitalist rivals due to lack of investment (a sickness that today affects the whole capitalist world), the decline of British industry was masked by the still expanding world markets. Economic growth meant that, although the wholesale introduction of computers and limited automation in factories caused a cutting down of many jobs, particularly clerical jobs, this did not create unemployment, because new jobs were appearing due to the economic growth.

In fact, by the 1970s, had computers magically disappeared overnight, it would have taken an army of hundreds of thousands of clerical workers and scribes to keep the capitalist machine running.

So what is new about the 'silicon chip'?

It was the development of the transistor in the 1950s that ended the days of huge bulky valve radios, and reduced radios to battery-powered machines small enough to fit in your pocket.

It also meant that computers, that is 'intelligent' calculating machines, which had originally been developed for military use during the second world war, became viable

for general use. Transistors meant smaller size and greater reliability. Large scale computer manufacture at a fat profit was now possible.

This caused explosive growth in the computer industry throughout the 1960s, and even the 1970s, despite the overall decay of capitalist economy.

During the sixties and seventies, development of electronics continued, spurred on particularly by the American space programme, which was in turn intimately linked to American capitalism's drive towards ever more deadly sophisticated weapons of war. This led to the development of 'integrated circuits', making possible the manufacture of whole electronic circuits onto a microscopic silicon chip.

By the late 1960s, silicon chips

computer industry, which had just begun to slow down.

All these developments did not cause talk of a 'second industrial revolution' and the social impact was fairly superficial. But the latest developments with silicon chips have changed this.

It is now possible to manufacture 'chips' that are thousands of times more complex than those early integrated circuits. Today an entire small computer can be manufactured on one chip, and bought for ten pounds or less! And before long, even more complex 'chips' will be produced.

Electronics companies are already near to producing chips that can store 64,000 bits of information on one chip or roughly 8,000 characters. This means that an enor-

reduce prices still further, as mass production picks up.

It is these latest developments that have led to this talk of a 'second industrial revolution'. Electronic 'intelligence' has now become so cheap, that large scale automation in production and commerce is now becoming an increasingly profitable venture for the giant corporations.

In Japan, a consortium of companies is building a factory that will be entirely automated. IBM, the giant American computer company with a turnover greater than many countries' state budget, is developing robots which could be used for assembly work.

Warehouses already exist which are completely automated, with computer controlled fork-lift trucks. In more and more car factories robots are being introduced to carry out such tasks as welding car bodies. The car bodies of the Fiat Miafarori car are welded in this way.

The British National Coal Board is planning to introduce automatic mining equipment which they hope will enable them to cut the labour force by 90%! In the clerical field, the development of word processors can eliminate typing pools and thousands of other clerical jobs. Other developments in this field of 'information technology' will threaten wide layers of clerical workers.

These developments are perhaps reminiscent of the introduction of the 'spinning jenny' at the turn of the last century, which caused large scale unemployment in the craft textile industry as huge factories were set up producing cloth at a fraction of the earlier cost.

It was the Luddites who tried to reverse this trend by smashing the

Only a socialist society, planned and run by working people could exploit the benefits of new technology to the full.

had arrived. But these early 'silico-chips' were not very complex. They meant that circuits of hundreds of components such as amplifiers for hi-fi systems could be produced on one component.

This led to a boom in hi-fi and other areas due to the increased profits to be made from selling cheaper stereos etc. It also gave a further impetus to the growth of the

mous amount of information can be stored in a component of an inch or so in size!

Over the last few years, this has created a boom in mini and now microcomputers. A small micro-computer can now be purchased for a thousand pounds or less, and as with the advent of electronic calculators and digital electronic watches, rapid price cutting will

THE WORKING CLASS

Jon Aylett analyses the impact that technological change is likely to make under capitalism, and the possibilities with a socialist plan of production.

machinery in many factories. But this desperate action did not prevent the inexorable development of the large scale textile industry.

So what kind of future does 'new technology' offer?

Two reports published recently paint a horrifying picture. One, produced by the Department of Industry, expected that the introduction of this technology would raise unemployment to between 2.5 million and 3.5m!

"We are probably contemplating levels of unemployment of 10% to 15% of the work force. Such a level is roughly that of the peak of the 1930s depression, but with the difference that today's society is much more highly organised."

The other report, produced by Professor Tom Stonier of Bradford University, for the government's 'Think Tank' is even worse. It suggests that within 30 years the introduction of new technology would throw 90% of the working class on the stones! And this would include every kind of job, skilled and unskilled, clerical and manual.

The catch is, that if this new technology is not introduced, British capitalism would fall further behind its rivals than ever, causing economic collapse and mass unemployment.

Clearly, the implications of this new technology could be disastrous for the labour movement. But what is the answer of the Labour government?

Albert Booth, the minister for employment, addressing an AUEW (TASS) conference recently said: "there is no certainty about job loss if we do apply micro electronic technology. There is absolute certainty about job loss if we do not".

To justify this incredible statement, Mr Booth went on to say: "Perhaps it is not too optimistic to suggest that the productivity gains that microelectronics technology can bring us can help the advanced economies out of recession and restore the pattern of fast economic growth that characterised their performance throughout the 1950s and 1960s".

Anyone who believes that 'new technology' could usher in a new epoch of capitalist boom and upswing is living in cloud cuckoo land!

By itself, there is no reason why a rapid advance in technology will solve the enormous economic crisis facing world capitalism.

In the 1920s and 1930s, despite general economic decay and crisis throughout the capitalist world, certain sectors of industry nevertheless developed quite rapidly, expect for the worst slumps such as 1929. The 'new technology' of motor vehicles and aviation, which was then entering the economic field in terms of mass production, had significant social effects.

But there was no way that this by itself could solve the crisis facing world imperialism at that time, that led to slump, mass unemployment, fascism and world war.

In contrast to this, we can see that although the invention of the spinning jenny created mass unemployment amongst weavers, this did not last. This was because the 'new technology' of the 'spinning jenny' was introduced at a time when capitalism was developing apace, large profits and new markets were there for the taking for any ruthless capitalist to exploit. So unemployment which under capitalism always tends to be created by the increase in the productivity of labour produced by new technology,

was 'mopped up' by the rapid economic growth.

A similar process actually occurred during the post-war boom, when the productivity of labour increased many times, but co-existed alongside 'full employment'.

Marxists are not opposed to developing technology. We are not luddites. On the contrary we are for a socialist society where advances in science and technology can be directed and used to better the life of working people—not, as at present, at the expense of workers and to swell the profits of the big corporations.

In a capitalist society, production is under private ownership and control, and only for profit. If there is no profit, then there is no production.

For this reason, capitalism will use any developments in technology to boost profits. This means redundancies. We have already seen this developing in the case of the 'Times' dispute, which is precisely over the question of introducing new technology.

The owners of the 'Times' would like to introduce this and make redundant hundreds of workers whose skills are now 'surplus to requirements', enabling them to exploit the remaining workers even further, and thus boost profits.

How can the labour movement resist these attacks on employment that will begin to spread more and more throughout industry and commerce in the next few years?

The 'Times' workers have in fact gained a partial victory, or a temporary respite, through a defensive action by the craft unions involved.

But, defensive actions of this kind can only hold off and not prevent the evil day when by hook or by crook the bosses will throw these workers on the stones.

What is required is a campaign against the bosses' system by the trade union and labour movement.

The rallying call of such a campaign would be that if this new technology is so wonderful, then we demand that it is used to better the lives of working people, not to boost profits.

The campaign should call for:
★ **Work-sharing with no loss of pay**
★ **A 35-hour week, as a step towards a four-day week and less.**
★ **Trade union control of the introduction of new technology.**
★ **The provision of full retraining programmes under government and trade union control.**

These kinds of demands, if campaigned on by the movement, could not only prevent the doom filled prognoses of the 'experts' from coming true, but could also be used to show the need for a socialist society, planned and run by the working people, which could exploit the benefits of their new technology to the full.

Because of the anarchy of private ownership of production, it is impossible for capitalism to realise the full potential of this new technology.

This is even more the case because of the economic crisis. This will slow down and even prevent the introduction of new technology except in areas where higher profits can be realised immediately. With production in the capitalist world using only 80% of capacity, without the miraculous development of new markets, automation within factories will generally develop slowly and only partially.

After all, a mechanical robot is

still expensive even if its electronic 'brain' is dirt cheap. The only areas where the introduction of this technology will be very rapid are those areas which cut the overheads of a capitalist firm. This has already been the case in computer based data-processing.

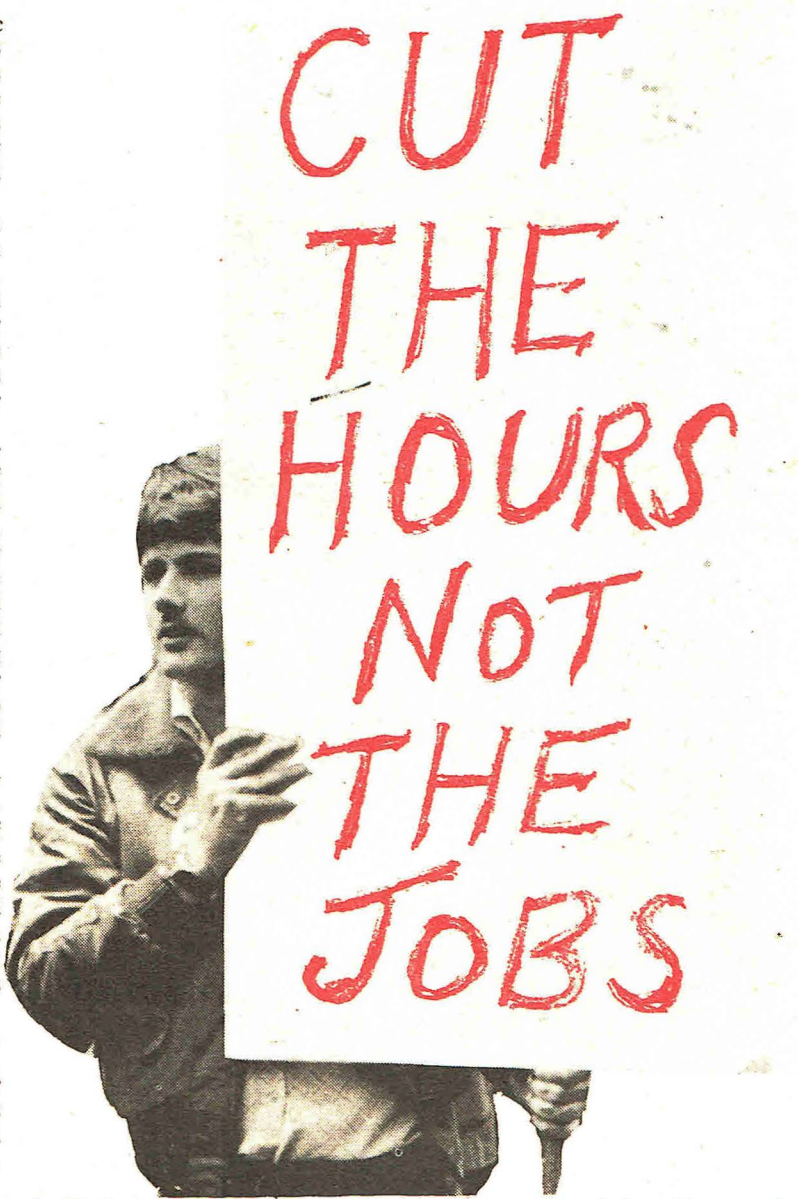
These are exactly the areas which have been protected up to now from the full ravages of unemployment. That is skilled and unskilled clerical jobs. Unions like ASTMS, and their members throughout industry are going to be in the front line of this onslaught by the bosses for higher profits.

To answer this, the labour movement must explain that if society were rationally planned under the control of working people, the benefits of this new technology would be huge. The dreams of the early socialists could be realised within a generation, of undreamed of plenty, of very short working hours, of an end to all dangerous or boring jobs, enabling individuals to develop themselves to the full, and really enjoy life.

So, we can see that 'new technology' is a tremendous challenge to the labour movement. If that challenge is not answered, the results will be to worsen the future prospects for working people and their children. Prospects which even without new technology would include the development of mass unemployment and poverty.

But if this challenge is answered, the future should be bright. Thus, any campaign waged for shorter working hours and better conditions must also raise the need for a socialist transformation of society. We must demand:

- ★ **Nationalisation of all new technology production and development**
- ★ **Nationalisation of any company carrying out redundancies**
- ★ **Nationalisation of the giant corporations which control 80% of production, banks and financial**



- ★ **institutions**
- ★ **All nationalisation to be with minimum compensation, on the basis of need, and to be run under workers' control and management**
- ★ **The introduction of a democratic socialist plan of production**

under the control of working people, so that the full resources of society can be used, and in particular the benefits of new technology can be exploited to the full, in the interests of working people.



Visual display units, one of the advances which can mean leisure and affluence—or redundancy

LATIN AMERICA. NICARAGUA. USSR.

DOWNFALL OF A TYRANT?

"I'll give this country peace, if I have to shoot every other man in Nicaragua to get it."

By Roger Shriver

That was the proud boast of 'Tacho' Somoza, in 1933, father of the current president.

His son is living up to this boast.

Last month he sent his trained thugs of the National Guard into the city of Esteli to put down opposition to his regime.

The Somoza dynasty have ruled Nicaragua since 1933 and done very well out of it.

Running the country as his private business empire, the current President Somoza owns 15% of arable land, has control of banks, building, shipping and TV companies and has grown fat on pickings from drugs and crime.

In the last year opposition to his regime has exploded.

This has taken the form mainly of the 'Sandinista' guerrilla army, who take their name from a guerrilla leader murdered in 1934.

Last September, with massive popular support and general strikes, the 'Sandinistas' took control of four main cities.

Somoza responded with his sole means of 'persuasion'—brutal repression. Towns were surrounded and then bombed from the air.

Repression matches Chile

An estimated 10,000 people were killed. In a country whose population is 2½ million, the scale of these massacres matches the atrocities committed by the Chilean regime.

The September uprising rang warning bells in the heads of American capitalists.

Somoza's father had been installed in power by US imperialism in 1933 as a protection for 'American', i.e. US capitalist, interests.

Ruling by bribery of electors, up to his neck in business corruption, and dependent on assassination and imprisonment of opponents, the Somoza family were nonetheless maintained by the USA as upholders of 'Western style democracy'.

But this political support and plentiful supply of arms has now dried up. US capitalism's strategists are not able to directly intervene militarily to save Somoza.

Neither do they want to be too closely identified with the Nicaraguan masses to seek 'extreme' solutions. Instead they have had to be content with diplomatic pressures on Somoza to hand over power to a moderate successor before he and his capitalist supporters were forced out.

But Somoza's 'successful' riding of the storm last autumn has given him no



Mourners with the body of a slain Sandinista guerrilla fighter

more than a breathing space. Not only has his external prop collapsed.

Events have eaten away his social basis in Nicaragua. The poor, the workers, the peasantry, who showed their hatred of Somoza last autumn are not appeased.

Also the middle class and even members of the capitalist class, squeezed out by Somoza's corruption and fearful of the stability of Nicaragua have deserted their one-time trusted defender.

No support for regime

When in April the Sandinista took control of the city of Esteli there was no opposition.

Somoza of course responded with force. Government troops raged through the streets reducing whole areas to heaps of rubble to flush out the guerrillas.

Although they were then forced to retreat to the hills, Sandinista units are now operating in and around Leon, one of the main centres of fighting last autumn.

In fear of the same brutal treatment from the armed forces as the population of Esteli, people in Leon have begun to move out.

National Guard tanks are on the streets. House to house searches; a raid on the Red Cross Hospital; a rocket attack on civilians by government planes. This is the reply of an increasingly desperate regime.

In the absence of a real social base, Somoza is forced to rely purely and openly on state repression.

And as last September's experience showed, the army is not immune to the pressure and propaganda of the masses. Somoza's day of reckoning, postponed last year, seems to be fast approaching.

The poverty of the masses, the brutality of the state machine and the corruption of the rulers make it unlikely that the attempts of US imperialism by means of 'diplomacy' to instal a 'moderate' capitalist replacement will succeed in restoring long-term stability.

The fears expressed in Washington last year of another Cuba created on the doorstep of the United States may become reality.

LATIN AMERICA- UNDER REPRESSION ONLY POVERTY FLOURISHES

'Protect the family,' 'Care for the child,' was the plea by capitalist politicians in the British general election.

The reality behind this hypocrisy is shown where capitalism has a free rein, and the workers' movement has been repressed.

"Human beings and human relationships must not stand in the way of profit," is then the capitalists' refrain.

Nowhere is this more true than in Latin America, where a recent report from the United Nations points out what unrestrained capitalism means for the people of that continent:

"For millions of Latin Americans, inhuman poverty is a humiliating whip that shows in the wages of hunger, in unemployment and under-employment, in malnutrition and infant mortality, in poor housing and health problems."

The report estimates that in Latin America 150 million children under 14 years old suffer from malnutrition.

They mostly live in city slums, have poor housing, schooling and inadequate health facilities.

"The most serious problems of these children, bio-

150 million children under the age of 14 suffer from malnutrition

By Colin Barber

logical, mental and social can be attributed to poverty."

Many are scarred for life. "Look at the faces of children beaten by poverty even before birth, with their way to human fulfillment often blocked by irreversible mental and physical damage."

The report analyses the problems but despairs of a

FRESH WAVE OF PROTEST IN USSR

The fight for workers' democracy in the Soviet Union continues despite vicious repression from the ruling bureaucratic elite.

One of the most important developments in recent years has been the attempts by groups of Soviet workers to form their own genuinely independent organisations.

To date, these have been ruthlessly crushed by the Soviet secret police.

Opposition to the regime is often portrayed by the Western press as attempts to turn the clock back to the "good old days" of capitalism.

Whilst this might be true for a number of intellectual dissidents such as Solzhenitsyn, in the main most opposition to the regime wants to preserve the gains made by the Russian revolution.

Most opponents want to create a genuine free democratic socialist society building upon the existing basis of the nationalised industries.

One group which has recently attracted the ruling bureaucracy's fury is the Revolutionary Communist Youth League (RCYL).

This group comprises both Marxists and anarchists. In one issue of its

solution.

It projects the future as one of an estimated 607 million population in Latin America by the end of the century, 230 million of whom would be under 15 years of age.

The only proposals it comes to are: restoration of family values, prayers to God, and trust in the UN with its International Year of the Child.

But for the youth of Latin America this International Year is a sick joke. Like most UN-designated 'International Years', it solves nothing.

It cannot remove the root causes of poverty in the so-called '3rd world', because then it would have to face head on the power of international capitalism.

The tears cried by the bourgeois politicians for the poor children are only that. But the children's misery ensures their profits.

Only the Latin American labour movement has the power to transform the situation. It is the true defender of children, and decent free human relationships.

And the labour movement is rising to its feet again, in Brazil, Peru and even now in Chile.

For capitalists, human beings are just expendable units of labour.

But the workers are fighting for an alternative, for a society free from repression, poverty and the crushing dead hand of capitalism.

By Jim Chrystie

journal it contained articles for and against the Kronstadt Uprising of 1921.

The RCYL is apparently mainly a student group and its predecessor, the 'Leningrad Commune', ran a political discussion club over 18 months for young people from Leningrad, Moscow and the Baltic republic.

Last October two leading members of the RCYL were arrested.

They are currently being charged with: publishing the magazine 'Perspectiv', of distributing the

brochure 'Torture in Georgia', and of trying to organise an "All-Union Conference of Left-Wing Groups".

Their arrest prompted one of the largest unofficial protests (by Soviet standards) in the Soviet Union for some time.

On 4th December over 200 people, mainly students, held a demonstration in Leningrad. They carried placards and distributed leaflets.

The police intervened, arresting 20 people, all of whom were subsequently released.

During the 1960s workers and students in Leningrad organised a number of left-wing groups. This has now been continued by the new organisations.

No matter how hard the parasitic ruling caste in the Soviet Union try, it will be impossible for them to prevent indefinitely the movement for workers' democracy and a return to the original ideas of the 1917 October Revolution.

[Information from 'Labour Focus on Eastern Europe', March-April 1979]

The explosive nature of India today causes upheaval throughout society. Everything is affected by the crisis.

An indication of this is the effect on culture.

The heroic battles of Indian workers, peasants and daliths [oppressed caste] who are facing police bullets day in and day out have found a powerful reflection in proletarian art and literature.

The entire cultural milieu of India is charged with such tremendous socialist fervour that no writer who has any feeling for the people around him can honestly believe in remaining neutral.

He has to choose now: he is either on the side of revolution or against it.

It was this irresistible sway of socialist art and literature which attracted hundreds of proletarian and dalith writers—not drawing-room revolutionaries but real militants among working people—to the Bandaya Sahithaya Sammellana (revolutionary literature conference) in Bangalore last month.

The revolutionary conference mainly analysed the

By
M Ramesh

basic tenets of formalist aesthetics.

The usual arguments of bourgeois writers that: "art should remain above politics, class and caste", "that beauty is the only literary criterion", "innovations in form the only 'revolution'", were discussed at length and dismissed as the rubbish they are.

Dr Nagaraj, the author of the play Kattale Dari Dura (which has become a tremendous success), said that literature cannot be evaluated by the present literary standards which are purely formalist and disgustingly superficial.

"We will have to use non-literary standards, that is the standpoint of the oppressed classes, to judge the real worth of a work of art," he said.

Dangers of introspection

Siddalangaiah, the powerful Dalith poet whose songs have become the clarion call of revolution to the daliths, said that literature should be pro-people, pro-life and not

individualistic and introspective.

"It is criminal to become introspective when Daliths are being butchered everyday in places like Belchi and Villipuram," he asserted to thunderous applause from the audience.

The conference was inaugurated by the great Naxalite poet from Andhra Pradesh, Sri Sri.

His poems have already become a part of the popular consciousness and folk culture of Andhra Pradesh.

But being a Naxalite, Sri Sri is a blind supporter of the Chinese bureaucracy.

When asked about the Chinese attack on Vietnam, he brazenly said that China, being the only 'true' socialist country, could never do anything wrong! Upon this, there were murmurs of dissent among the delegates.

One of them was heard saying later: "What does Sri Sri mean by that—China can never do anything wrong! How the devil does he explain

China's support to Pinochet's regime in Chile or the dictatorships in Pakistan?"

Disagreement with Sri Sri's irresponsible statement was so widespread among the delegates that the conference adopted a resolution condemning the Chinese attack.

Prasanna, a popular drama director, spoke on behalf of Samudaya, a group which has been staging socialist plays to raise the level of consciousness of the people. A report about their play 'Struggle' which deals with the heroic battle of workers against a multinational company has already been published in 'Militant' (A letter of support to these workers from 'Militant's' International Editor, Roger Silverman, is read by a character in this play).

The conference was by and large dominated by Daliths.

It is heartening to see these youths of the most oppressed section of the society coming nearer to the mainstream of revolutionary struggle.

Earlier, they were mostly behind the sectarian organisations such as Dalith Panthers, Republican Party and even Congress (Indira). The Communist Party of India (Marxist) was not able to win failed to recognise 'untouchability' as a peculiar social problem and also because it supported the Janata which is dominated by a communalist RSS volunteers.

But now, thanks to Siddalangaiah and the Dalith Action committee who have linked up the agrarian question with untouchability, they are coming closer to the CPI(M).

Revolutionary culture

The conference rightly regarded Dalith literature as a living tissue of revolutionary culture. The concept of Dalith literature is by no means sectarian.

Since the Daliths face double oppression—social ostracisation and economic exploitation—it is natural

that their hopes and aspirations can only be authentically documented by Dalith writers.

As long as Dalith writers struggle in unison with the other exploited people, there will be nothing sectarian about them.

The conference was a great success not only in terms of the enthusiasm it aroused but also in terms of the conclusions it reached.

It decided to organise a cultural movement throughout the state to support the struggles to:

- (1) Safeguard the democratic rights of workers and peasants who are being threatened by the capitalist government,
- (2) To stop atrocities against Daliths,
- (3) To fight communal and fascist organisations,
- (4) To fight all forms of exploitation.

Surely this will sound the death-knell of reactionary culture.

NEW PROPOSALS TO MAINTAIN APARTHEID

After two years considering what to do about black workers, the South African government's Wiehahn Commission reported last week.

The Commission was set up in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising and its report reflects the dilemma of the ruling class.

It tries to balance the capitalists' need to try to win over sections of the African middle class with not antagonising white workers altogether.

Its proposals have been lauded in the capitalist press as proof of the bosses' desire to get rid of 'apartheid in the workplace' as a first step towards removing it throughout society.

This is a direct lie.

The Wiehahn Report proposes changes in the way that the system of exploitation and oppression is organised, nothing more.

The Commission proposes lifting formal job reservation on the basis of race (it only applied to 2% of jobs in South Africa). This would not lift the burden black workers suffer in the whole system of apartheid.

Genuine independent African trade unions will not be allowed. Instead tame unions will be tolerated as a means of controlling the workforce.

The changes proposed are both a response to political revolt and the dire position of South African capitalism.

As the economy becomes



Black workers queuing for buses at 6 am to take them from the Dieptkloof township to Johannesburg. New proposals will not end discrimination.

more mechanised the bosses want to undercut the privileges white workers have accumulated over the past decades, mechanise and replace them with cheaper labour.

With mechanisation the need for supervisory staff increases and there is a growth of the African middle class.

This middle class, the bosses envisage, could also play an important political role in curbing the aspirations of African workers.

But the proposals are built

on sand. They cannot put an end to the desire of African workers and peasants to change society.

The Wiehahn Commission's offer is clear: for a few workers—promotion into supervisory and white-collar jobs; for most workers—either permanent unemployment or continued low-paid drudgery, with no effective union allowed.

African workers will still be without land, food, housing and a decent education for children. They will still suffer the pass laws, the police

raids, the bulldozers, loss of citizenship and denial of political rights.

No trust can be placed upon the capitalists' new proposals for maintaining apartheid. The fight for genuine free independent unions will continue.

This, coupled to a socialist liberation struggle, centred around the African workers, is the only way to bring true freedom to the people of South Africa.

By Ian Ilett

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LETTERS

TORY CUTS ARE LETHAL

Dear Comrades

While canvassing for the general election, I have frequently encountered the question "What is the difference between Labour and the Tories?"

In answering this, I have referred to my school, which depends upon the Tory-controlled county council for money. Because there is so

little money available from the council, we don't have enough class-rooms and therefore have to use our only gym for lessons.

Recently, while there was still some snow on the ground, some first-formers who were supposed to be doing PE in the gym had to do cross-country, despite the weather, because of the lack of room.

One lad slipped on the road and was killed by a car which couldn't stop in time.

The difference between Labour and Conservative? It's a matter of life and death!

Yours fraternally
John Rubinstein
Secretary, Haltenprice
LPYS

Hob-nobbing with the Weinstocks

Dear Comrades,

I notice in a Court Circular printed in the 'Telegraph' (10.4.79) that his Excellency the Ambassador of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Mme Lunkova, Lord and Lady Glentoran, Lord and Lady Edmund-Davies, Dame Diana Reader Harris, and Sir Arnold and Lady Weinstock have arrived at Windsor Castle.

GEC workers, many of whom have their livelihoods threatened by redundancies, expect Weinstock to hob-nob with the Lords and Ladies of this world but they must be wondering what an 'ambassador of socialism' is doing there.

Yours fraternally
John Severs
Stafford LPYS

Charter to defend apprentices

Dear Comrades

As I will be leaving school soon, I went for an interview for an apprenticeship in sign-making at Peare Signs Ltd. in Leicestershire.

At the interview, I was insulted to learn that the top sign-making firm in Europe was only paying apprentices £22.70 for a 40-hour week. How can anybody be expected to get by on that sort of money? It's just cheap labour.

They know that young people are desperate for any sort of job—a job with training is a rare thing indeed. They think they are doing you a favour by offering an apprenticeship.

As long as the bosses call the tune on apprenticeships there will be the worst kind of pay. We need trade union control of all apprenticeships. The LPYS 'Charter for Young Workers' should be used by the trade union movement to campaign for better conditions and opportunities for young people.

Fraternally
Paul Lynn
Harborough LPYS

Shop stewards get Militant

Dear comrades

Recently 'Militant' supporters in East Kilbride have started selling the paper at a number of factories. The factory I sell at is a large tool-making factory.

Last week, my first week, I got a lot of sympathetic smiles and nods, a few 'you must be effing joking's, and four sales. Better than a poke in the eye, and well worth the 6.45 am. rise.

This week there seemed to be more 'are you effing joking's and several 'who are you kidding—Marxists in the Labour Party', although by about the time of the hooter I had still sold three papers.

Then out of the blue two of the shop stewards came out of the factory and asked me how many papers I had left. I felt sure they were going to point out to me that the fact that I had fifteen papers left indi-

cated that I was wasting my time. Instead, they bought the lot to distribute in the factory!

Three cheers for these East Kilbride shop stewards. They made my day. Get selling in the factories comrades; the early paper seller sometimes meets the shop stewards!

Fraternally
Bob Wylie
East Kilbride Labour Party

FIGHT DOLE-QUEUE DESPAIR



Dear Comrades

Unemployment is the social cancer of today's society. At least one and a half million of our brothers and sisters have been thrown on the rubbish heap by capitalism.

I've been on the dole for six months and I've never undergone a more severe attack on my self respect and personal dignity. And I'm one of the lucky ones: I haven't got any kids to feed and clothe and I can just about keep my head above water, albeit on tick.

I've almost gone under, its only the ideas of socialism and the support of my girlfriend which has kept me going. She's been made physically and mentally ill by the situation we're in. Surely then it's no surprise that I have an intense hatred of the system which wastes the most precious resource of all, men and women.

But our ideas aren't enough, comrades, if we don't act on them. Campaign with all our strength for the 35-hour week! Get the unions to open their doors to the unemployed! If we don't recruit them to our ranks the bosses might well use them against us. Despair is a powerful corrosive and we shouldn't kid ourselves that working class solidarity is immune from it.

Work should be a right, not a privilege. In order to gain that right we'll have to fight tooth and nail for it. They won't give, so we'll have to take.

Thank you comrades.

Paul Phillips
Chairman, Coventry SE LPYS & T&GWU

The other side to the bosses' Daily Lies

Dear Comrades

I believe that I speak for all comrades when I say that access to the press is the right of all political tendencies and parties [except fascist organisations] and should not be, as it is, the private preserve of the monied elite.

I read the Daily Mail (sorry comrades—my parents' choice) and every morning I see the same rubbish in headlines. This morning the headlines was 'Extremists go to war on police'.

The 'Mail' claims, along with the rest of the media, that 'extremists' infiltrated the anti-fascist demonstration at Southall Town Hall and prompted the demonstrators to attack the 'unprovoking' police.

Also on the front page is a large picture of one of our 'boys in blue' who has been hurt—no picture of some of the demonstrators who were equally badly beaten up—by policemen.

I think it is a good job that we have got 'Militant' to advance an alternative socialist point of view, to counter the lies and slanted half-truths put forward by a capitalist controlled press. Forward to a daily 'Militant'.

Yours fraternally
Tony Marks
Secretary, Southend LPYS

Should women work nights?

Dear Comrades

I must disagree with the point about opposing night-work for women in the article in Issue 452.

The labour movement should oppose such a discriminatory demand for several reasons.

It overlooks the fact that in over a quarter of families, the woman is the only or main breadwinner, and that virtually half of working women are single.

By denying them the chance to work at night, this not only prevents them from

maximising their usually meagre incomes (on average, just half of men's) but also reduces their employability.

By calling for an end to women doing night work the labour movement could find itself indistinguishable from the voices of other interests, including the bosses, in times of economic crisis as we have now—who are all too ready to lay women workers off first.

As opposed to supporting what is both a misguided and sexist measure, we should be highlighting the stresses that result from night-work (and

indeed, shift-work in general) for male workers as well—a problem which is no less acute.

The 'Militant', and the labour movement, should be pushing with far more energy than they have done so far, for free crèches and nurseries to be provided at all workplaces as well as in the community as a whole, and supporting moves such as the Homeworkers' Bill, as just a start to remedying the situation.

The labour movement should be at the forefront in

demonstrating the case of all shiftworkers, and fighting for the rights of all workers, male and female, in this and every respect; and not, despite the obviously greater exploitation of women that occurs, try and solve it by supporting such a backward-looking measure.

Does anyone seriously think for a moment that this 'double exploitation' of women will cease if they are relegated to the home?

Yours fraternally
Linda Castle
Uxbridge LPYS

A sick system

Dear 'Militant'

I am writing this letter to bring to the attention of those reading 'Militant' the plight of members of our society who, due to their persistent hard work on the factory floor, fall foul of one of the capitalists' sickening jokes—those involved in industrial accidents.

Of course we have all heard of the Social Security benefits that are dished out to those unfortunates. But little fuss is made of the subtleties which surround any entitlements.

It seems common (I personally know of two cases) that many workers are thrown on the scrap heap because the Medical Boards (which provide medical opinions for the claims' decisions) come to the conclusion that the victim had an inherent genetic defect prior to the accident, etc, etc. These 'doctors' do not accept that degenerative diseases such as arthritis are accentuated by injuries and a life time of industrial work.

These workers thus have a rougher deal than most, since their interests are left unrepresented. So-called 'advisory organisations' are pitifully inadequate, mainly because the persons in need are not aware of their existence.

The victim at this stage has realized that he has become a reject and is too proud to spend his time 'begging' (what would the Tories say!).

Under such circumstances it is left to you and I to speak up and say 'enough is enough' Unions must defend not only those who work, but also those being exploited and maltreated when they cannot work.

Fraternally
Mike Krokos
Cardiff LPYS

MAKE OUR FIGHTING VOICE LOUDER

This week: £1,118

During the election campaign, only two of the mass circulation daily papers argued for a Labour victory—the 'Guardian' and the 'Mirror'.

But like all the others both of them depend for their existence on the continuation of profit-greedy capitalism.

So it wasn't surprising that the Sunday version of the 'Mirror' threw all the venom it could muster at the 'militants in the unions' and the 'left-wing extremists in the Labour Party' who they claimed had lost the election for Labour!

No blame for the policies of wage restraint and public spending cuts—they were, after all, the policies dictated by big business.

Activists in the movement must have the facts, figures and argument with which to convince the mass of workers of the crying need for socialism, countering the distortions of the bosses mass media. The urgency of building the 'Militant' has never been greater.

"The fighting voice of the labour movement" we called it in last week's financial appeal. That voice can only grow louder and louder with your help.

This week's total of donations reflect the success we can have when Militant's bold campaign for alternative policies to arm the labour movement is matched by bold appeals for cash. The £1,118 received this week included nearly £450 from election meetings organised by Militant supporters and £100 from one reader's union honorarium (Hull).

In the coming weeks there will not be so many big meetings and our supporters rarely have £100 to spare. So the £2,800 we now need each week for the next nine weeks

will have to come from a real drive for individual donations from every reader.

Those we received this week included:—£40 from another Hull trade unionist's expenses, £28.80 from G Checkley of Berwickshire (sent with a subscription to Militant), £25 'GMWU expenses' (Plymouth), £20 from an Oldham reader and 'tenners' from a Durham miner and from D Campbell (Stoke).

'Simon' of Ipswich gave £6.40. G Hold (Peckham LPYS) £5. A Wood (Bristol T&GWU) £3. £2 came from D Moss (Torbay CLP) and from P Reed (POEU), A Taylor and B Hancock (all Luton LPYS members).

M Starr (Bristol South LPYS) donated £1.40, F Kemp (Agent for G Radice MP in Washington, Co. Durham) £1.30, M Hill (Plymouth) £1.05. £1s came from K Norton (IOW), C Donovan (Liverpool), A Baddeley (Leeds AUEW), P Barber (Leeds sewage worker), M Wracy (Salford), E Spence (Birmingham PNP) and 'Andy' of Ipswich.

Regular donating and regular collecting will get us back on target. A works collection at Anderton's Engineering, Shipley, for example, raised £1.32 last week. A collection at Rother Valley LPYS raised £1.30.

This sort of amount every week from every workplace and every LPYS branch where Militant has a supporter would get us to our £85,000 target long before the end of the year!

Other ways of fund-raising that would help every area reach its target include **socials** (one in Huddersfield last week raised £21.70); **sponsored things** (B.D.&M Fleetwood and P Carmichael of Hull have have just walked to raise £41, a member of Chester le Street YS has raised so far £23.80 from giving up smoking etc.); **selling pontoon and tote tickets** (Leeds (pontoon) £6.40 last

Build Militant

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 26 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	2,350		978
Hants & IOW	3,100	1,550		631
Humberside	2,000	1,000		531
London North	9,500	4,750		1,727
London South	3,900	1,950		1,085
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	2,250		939
Merseyside	5,000	2,500		776
Midlands East	3,300	1,650		1,217
Midlands West	9,000	4,500		2,041
Northern	5,500	2,750		1,145
Scotland East	2,900	1,450		407
Scotland West	4,500	2,250		640
South East	4,500	2,250		1,283
South West	3,100	1,550		830
Wales East	2,600	1,300		566
Wales West	3,400	1,700		540
Yorkshire	6,800	3,500		1,455
Others	6,700	3,250		517
Total	85,000	42,500		17,263

Progress towards year's target ██████████ Progress towards July 7th target ██████████
TARGET FOR THE YEAR £85,000 - TARGET FOR JULY 7th £42,500

week and Birmingham (tote) £2.20; running a weekly raffle (Ipswich's latest—£3.70).

Every area will be able to boost its income for Militant by 'getting cracking' with the new 'Eurodraw' tickets immediately (see advert).

All sorts of other ways of raising money have been pursued with particular vigour during the election campaign. 'Extras' on sales and ps and ½ps saved up reached well over £60 this week. 'Fares' went up! One driver in Croydon collected £3.55 in a day! Coffee after canvassing in Chester le Street raised £3 and a 'political levy for beer' during the IOW campaign raised £4 and 'beer tasting' £4.33.

Collections—on Days of Action in the IOW amounted to £13.33, Mav Day in Hull

£18, 'after canvass' meeting in Rotherham £18, on Stirling Rally bus £5, from 'domino kings' in the North £11.76 and from Militant buyers at the AUEW Foundryworkers' conference £3.65.

Over £30 was raised on election day in Croydon through 'Guess the Vote' competition and the first instalment of money from a 'book' run in Manchester was £4.

A London Young Socialist who was going to go to the LPYS conference at Easter gave Militant £30 that he saved when it was put off. M Hyde of Birmingham sent £7.50 for the same reason. There should have been literally £100s more coming to Militant from this source, if only from what comrades would have donated at the

Militant meeting, let alone what they didn't have to spend on fares and accommodation.

We appeal to every reader who had saved up to search their bank accounts, pockets and consciences in order to send us a big donation this week!

Finally, the collections at those Militant meetings that have taken place were as follows:—London £173 (net), Manchester £32, Rochdale, Birmingham £101 (before expenses), Rotherham £13, Newcastle £11, Spennymoor £36, Bristol £18, Notts £15, Coventry £6, Harlow £8 and—before expenses—Redruth £14, Plymouth £10, Exeter £10, Newton Abbot £15 and Blackpool £21.32 with the following report:

Richard Venton gave an

excellent lead-off, outlining what would happen to the workers if the Tories got in, and putting forward the ideas of the Labour Party Young Socialists, campaigning on a socialist policy.

One of the older people at the meeting had just retired, and after the lead-off he stood up and said how pleased he was to see younger people carrying on the fight. To prove his point he donated £5 to the fighting fund.

Many thanks to this and every other contributor for the examples they have set!

By Clare Doyle

ads

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

MILITANT MEETINGS

EAST OF SCOTLAND Militant Public Meetings. 'After the election—what faces the labour movement?' Speakers: Ted Grant ('Militant' Editorial Board) plus local speakers.
Stirling: Monday 14th May, 7.30 pm, Cowane Centre, Stirling.

Dundee: Tuesday 15th May, 7.30 pm, Shepherd's Hall, Seagate, Dundee

Edinburgh: Wednesday 16th May, 7.30 pm, Trade Union Centre, Picardy Place, Edinburgh

NEWCASTLE Militant Rally. 'After the election...which way now for Labour?' Speakers to be announced Thursday 10th May 1979 at 7.30 pm in the Curtis Auditorium Lecture Theatre 2—just behind the Haymarket Cinema, Newcastle.

BASILDON Militant Readers' Meeting: 'After the election—Which way for Labour?' Speakers: Nick Toms (LPYS NC); Bill Hodge (Basilidon LP and TGWU). Wednesday May 16th, 8.00 pm, 'Plough and Tractor', Great Knightly, off Laidon Link.

MILITANT Meeting—Northern Region Labour Party Conference. 'Which Way now for Labour?' Saturday 12th May 7.30pm in the Collingwood Room, Park Hotel. Speakers: Gordon Bell (delegate from Chester-le-Street), Dave Cotterill (Gateshead LP, 'Militant' supporter). All delegates and visitors welcome.

Button badges made to order. Discounts to Labour and union groups. SAE for details from Martin Pearce, Maprographics, 32 Worpole Road Mews, London SW 19.

£500 WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE WON IN 'MILITANT'S' FORTHCOMING "EURODRAW"!!
 Date of Draw—July 7th 1979.
 Tickets 10p each in books of 10
 Order, if you can, from your local 'Militant' distributor, otherwise order from 'Militant Eurodraw', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

THE BRITISH ELECTIONS

AN AMERICAN SOCIALIST VIEW

In an interview with Betty Traun from New York [readers will know of Betty from her articles in 'Militant' on the USA], I asked her views regarding the election.

Betty was helping in the fight to build up support for Labour in the Crosby area, where a Marxist candidate, Tony Mulhearn, was standing. The following was her reply:

In the USA, the AFL-CIO (American TUC) at this moment are campaigning against the so-called 'Right to Work' law which forbids 'closed shops' in those states where it has been passed.

The last state to face the issue was Missouri, where the electorate taking part in a referendum were thought to

be about 60% in favour of the law at the beginning of the referendum campaign.

The final outcome was reversed. 60% voted against and 40% voted in favour.

The AFL-CIO succeeded in Missouri, by concentrating on the working class areas where you have support or sympathy.

And I think in Britain, even in a Tory stronghold in Crosby, you have been right in concentrating on the working class areas, as well as in the marginal areas such as Garston.

I attended the Labour Party Conference in October and was so excited at the speeches of the young Labour Party members, that I made my mind up to attend the

LPYS conference.

I had an idea that they would be enthusiastic and very confident—then the conference was cancelled. I decided, however, to keep my flight bookings and came over to help in the election.

And you know, when canvassing, the LPYS have really been tremendous. I am really enjoying working with them—they're a great bunch!

Finally, Betty said that there are developments to "get a Labour Party in the States and we could do with a few of your Young Socialists!"

By Steve Higham (LPYS North West Regional Committee)

CPSA AND P&T, USDAW, FBU

FBU:

FIREMEN NEED A FIGHTING UNION

The dust has settled. Firemen and their families now enjoy a working week of 42 hours and are approaching the wage of the 'upper quartile' of skilled industrial workers. But is everything rosy?

In November our package runs out and we start again. The big fight will be to stay on parity with the upper quartile—otherwise we go sliding back down as in years past, until Firemen are once again drawing social security benefits.

Doubtless, Mrs Thatcher and her Tory government will dangle a carrot in return for a no-strike agreement for emergency services. She claims that her government will treat us as special cases. If she is going to treat us so well, we won't need to go on strike: why bother with the agreement?

What she is saying is that we can have a union as long as it has no muscle. Agree to a no-strike deal and she would walk in and ruthlessly slash the service.

Don't forget the Tory manifesto promises to cut public expenditure by something like £6,000 million.

The Health service, education and welfare services have already been decimated. The Tories' accountants must be licking their lips at the thought of a service as yet relatively untouched.

A union without teeth would be disastrous for

By John Allington
(Branch Secretary,
Canning Place Fire
Station, Liverpool)

firemen and their families. Apart from the obvious issue of wages and conditions there are many others equally important to individuals: disciplinary charges, redundancies, compensation claims.

On Merseyside the 42-hour week was introduced on January 1st 1979. To achieve this we lost 10 pumps (fire engines) and six special appliances (turntable ladders, snorkels) because we didn't have the men to ride them.

There are over 90,000 unemployed in Merseyside—we could have had the recruits in plenty of time for the 42-hour week to be introduced in November '78 as was agreed on our return to work in January '78. We didn't have them simply because of the employers' delaying tactics in recruiting.

They used these delaying tactics to force through cuts in the service. Men were so frustrated at not having the 42-hour week when it was promised that the delegate conference, wrongly in my opinion, accepted some cuts in return for its introduction.

Here on Merseyside, many stations have been reduced to one pump from two. What does that mean to the public?

If you have a fire in your house, only one fire engine may turn up immediately,



Firemen on the march in Manchester in December 1977—supported by the rest of the labour movement. Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

instead of two; the fire station for your area may have been reduced to one pump. Lives are saved—or lost—in the first few minutes.

We must fight any further cuts. To do that effectively we need a strong union allied to the labour and trade union movement.

After the strike a number of firemen, including myself joined the Labour Party; not out of admiration for the Labour government but because we realised that Labour is the mass party of the working class.

The real fight is in the Labour Party. The fight for re-selection of MPs and representation must be taken up and won this time. Then we shall start to see Labour governments fighting to defend the interests of the working people they are elected by.

Over the next fifteen years,

if we continue with this crazy capitalist system the Tories stand for, the working class are going to suffer terribly, with unemployment forecast at 5 million, ravaging inflation, bad housing, social and health services slashed.

Already we see the public service workers suffering appallingly low wages, reduced by wage restraint and inflation. What is happening to the public sector now will happen in the private sector tomorrow—if we let the bosses get away with it.

We must continue the fight for the 35-hour week, a minimum wage of £70, no more redundancies.

Nationalise the top 200 companies under workers' control; put an end once and for all to the miseries of unemployment.

Join the Labour Party and fight with us. ■

CPSA P&T GROUP

Reject the offer - for the full claim

The CPSA P&T Group Conference meets this weekend [May 13-15] in the heat of battle.

The mood of delegates in Brighton will be one of anger and determination. Anger at the most insulting offer from the Post Office (after 3 months' waiting) and determination to make them pay up!

Pay rallies were held nationally on 27th April, resulting in a near 100% walkout of the membership (see 'Militant' issue 453). Followed by selective strikes in key areas, the action has provoked an offer from the Post Office.

But what an offer! 9% from 1st April, 2¼% from 1st July (if we agree to change the pay implementation date from 1st April to 1st July) and 3½% if we accept the proposals on 'regrading' or in reality downgrading.

This should be unanimously rejected. We must demand the full implementation of our claim, ranging from 13.8% to 28.5%.

However, many members still have serious doubts about the determination of the Executive Committee (GEC) to see the campaign through to the end.

There has been a lack of directive from the GEC and there is a danger that members involved in the selective action will become isolated from the mass of the membership unless walkouts and other action involving the entire membership are staged on a more regular basis.

The offer from the Post Office was directed towards all Post Office unions. We

By Dave Bell
(Belfast GMO, delegate
standing for the
Group Executive)

should use this as a plank to forge closer unity with the UPW, SCPS and POEU in particular, with a view to joint action.

The other major issue for discussion on the conference agenda is regrading.

The Post Office proposals clearly demonstrate their disregard for our members, and we were fully justified in taking action to get them dropped.

The GEC proposals are, at the same time, far from satisfactory and if taken as a whole, delegates should reject them. Members will not tolerate any downgrading or the introduction of a new OAT grade.

On the question of a 35-hour week, there has been little or no progress. Delegates must support **motion 50 [Swansea GMO]** which proposes that "Failure by the Post Office to accept implementation...for CPSA members by September 1979, will result in unilateral implementation..."

Conference should also give full support to **motion 58**, calling for 6 weeks' annual leave, withdrawal from the Industrial Democracy experiment by the end of the year (**motion 145**) and the **Liverpool motion (141)** which "instructs the GEC to look into the feasibility of one union for Post Office workers..."

- ★ Joint union action over pay!
- ★ Full implementation of our claim!
- ★ 35-hour week now!

TSSA: Fight Tory denationalisation plans

Conference meets under the cloud of a Tory government pledged to hive off profitable sections of the nationalised industries to private industry.

A prime target for denationalisation is the National Freight Corporation, which made a profit of £14 million in 1978. Delegates should give full support to the amendment calling for a combined union campaign against denationalisation of any of the nationalised transport industries.

The TSSA must make a stand on this issue. The NFC must not go the way of Thomas Cooks.

Last winter the working class showed they had had enough of wage restraint.

The TSSA along with the other rail unions must have a clear commitment to defend living standards against the attacks of the Tories. That means no to incomes policy or wage restraint of any kind.

Conference must have something more than mean-

ingless phrases about "substantial increase in wages and salaries." What is required is a clear commitment on pay.

A start can be made by a demand for a £70 minimum clerical rate in the April 1980 wage negotiations.

In the election campaign Labour certainly warned against the dangers of a Tory victory. But a campaign needs to be more than just anti-Tory.

Labour's 1979 Manifesto went backwards, not forwards. For transport workers the disappearance of the commitment to nationalise road haulage was a bitter blow. The 35-hour week was relegated to the late 1980s.

Who made the decisions about the contents of the Manifesto? The questions of Labour Party democracy and the honouring of conference decisions must be raised in the labour and trade union movement.

The job of a Labour MP must be to represent the

interests of the trade unionists and of working people who built the Labour Party and elect members to Parliament.

The Tories plan to turn their attacks against the transport industry. This will call for the closest unity of the three rail unions.

The lessons of the 1979 Labour defeat must be learned. TSSA members, along with every other trade unionist, must begin the fight now for united resistance to the Tories' attacks and for a clear commitment to socialist policies.

With democratic control of our union and of the Labour Party, we can ensure that this is the programme Labour adopts, to defend and improve our jobs, our living standards and our future.

By Irving Nicol

(Euston No 2 branch,
TSSA)

USDAW:

LEFT SUPPORT GROWS

The USDAW conference met only two days before the General Election, in a more subdued mood than the previous year.

Propositions calling for £70 for a 35-hour week were all defeated on the recommendation of the Executive Council, in favour of the 'target' of £55 for 35 hours.

This will be a great disappointment for thousands of USDAW members trying to improve and protect their living standards, and looking to the union leadership to achieve this.

Throughout the three days, out of solidarity with the Labour government, conference supported the more 'moderate' approach. A resolution was passed expressing full support for the government and the 'Concordat', and calling for a Labour victory.

Although the right wing

By Jeff Price
(Newcastle F180)

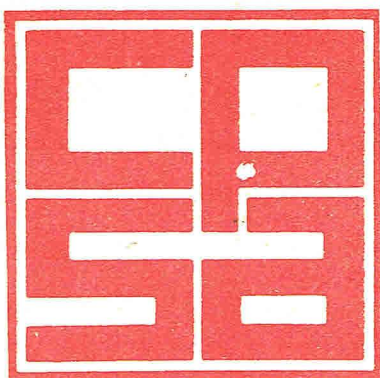
appear, on the face of it, to have won the day, the Broad Left was considerably stronger. **This was reflected in the vote for the new general secretary, in which the Broad Left candidate received 41% of the vote against the winner Bill Whatley's 59%.**

This is a bigger indication of support for a change in leadership and policy than ever before. The Tories' election victory will test our union still further, and speed up this trend.

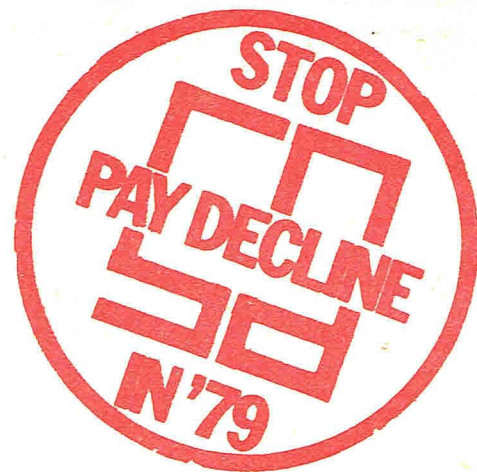
UPW CONFERENCE 'MILITANT' PUBLIC MEETING 'WHICH WAY FOR THE TRADE UNIONS NOW?'

Speakers: Phil Waker (delegate, East London counter branch, personal capacity)
Brian Beckingham (Bristol SE Labour Party)
Tuesday 22nd May, 7.45 pm,
Committee Room, Bournemouth Town Hall

UNION CONFERENCES: TSSA,



A LEFT NEC TO FIGHT TORY ATTACKS



The CPSA Annual Conference in Brighton from 12-17 May will be one of the first major trade union conference under a Tory government.

It is also likely that public sector workers like the CPSA will be the first in line for Tory attacks.

If the CPSA is to defend its members' interests, a left NEC must be elected with policies which can effectively counter attacks on the civil service and nationalised industries.

The prospects the Tories hold out for workers are frightening. The 'Economist' (21st April) spells out their intentions: "The British public sector...is a monster...if a Thatcher government is to make the tax reductions it is pledged to make, it knows it must tackle this monster with a savagery never known before." (our emphasis).

The 'Observer' explained in more detail: "The Conservatives are committed to honouring the awards by the Clegg Commission [on pay comparability] and to achieve this through off-setting manpower economies. But if these cannot be achieved by natural wastage, this will provide the first major testing ground between the new Tory government and the unions." (6.5.79 —our emphasis).

These are the massive staff cuts the Tories have in store. Council housing, social services, schools and welfare will be viciously attacked. Thatcher's advisors are also pointing to the quick money to be made by selling off nationalised and part-nationalised industries.

An attack on "the inequality of public sector pension indexing" is also on the Tory agenda.

We cannot pretend that members in the Post Office, British Airports and the Civil Aviation Authority will escape. British Airways and British Airports are already on the Tory list for selling off.

The Post Office, with its expanding and profitable Telecomms and National Giro Service, is a probability for attempted de-nationalisation. Sections of the postal business are looked at with envy by private firms.

These job-cutting policies will be supported by the butchers at the Civil Aviation Authority who are already planning a further round of massive staff cuts.

For members in these industries, a fighting union leadership at industry and national levels are vital.

The outlawing of the closed shop in the Civil Service; legal powers to restrict picketing rights; Tory Government intervention in union affairs by funding postal balloting etc. are key to the Tory plan.

The bosses have called for "a major shift in the balance of power from the unions to the employers".

The present CPSA leadership, which includes active Tories and their sympathisers have already shown their attitude to these plans. They have demanded postal balloting and are proposing to the '79 Conference measures to divorce the election of the leadership from the conference policy-making body.

The senior full-time officials have also shown complete disregard for the membership and for conference policy.

Ken Thomas signed the "Better Way" and "Concordat", in the face of repeated CPSA policy decisions against incomes policy. Alistair Graham (and the right wing NEC) actually support the abolition of so-called "secondary picketing"!

The policies we adopt take on new importance

The policies adopted by the Conference will also take on new importance following the pay campaign and the election result.

At all the separate industry-based Section and Group Conferences, delegates will need to fight for policies to strengthen the unity of the union. However it is the Civil Service and national conferences that will be decisive in determining union policy.

The vote on the civil service pay offer has meant the end of the 1979 pay campaign. CPSA members fought alongside their SCPS counterparts in a magnificent demonstration of unity and determination.

More could have been achieved, however, with determined strategy and leadership. As 'Militant' supporters on the NEC reportedly argued, the right-wing undermined the campaign by excluding DHSS

and Department of Employment members, except for two 24-hour strikes, and refusing to escalate strike action at the airports over Easter, despite pressure from the CAA Group.

But if we now go on to grasp the lessons of the strike, the experience gained will serve the union and its members well for the future. Even the gains which were made were won in spite of the right-wing leadership and full time advisors!

Members are now facing the unavoidable conclusion

numerous sorts of public servants whose numbers need to be sharply diminished," although "sharp diminution is not going to be easy," (21.4.79, our emphasis).

The discussions on differentials and pay-rates for CPSA Executive Officers point to the logic and necessity of amalgamation with the SCPS. The branch structure of an amalgamated union can be arranged to off-set any problems of intimidation by senior staff.

Over recent months, CPSA and SCPS members up and

Technological Change and Departmental Restructuring Claims".

We oppose this document. The proposals in favour of "departmental productivity" and "departmental bargaining" will weaken the unity of our union. It could lead, with Civil Service Department and Tory support, towards the abolition of national rates of pay.

The document also embraces different subjects which makes it impossible to accept sections individually.

Its theme is towards productivity bargaining (to supplement the pay research system!) in return for selling jobs. Our attitude must be: **jobs are not ours to sell!**

This document is not the answer to grading anomalies. Its proposals should not be used as a basis for "investigations" or "explorations with management".

Defend union democracy—control must be in the hands of members

Technology must be used to benefit workers by reducing their working hours. On the issue of "the shorter working week" the Conference will be correct in censuring the right-wing NEC for their total inactivity.

Motion 860 sets out a better strategy on the development of new technology.

Conference should also support the abolition of substitution and the more beneficial use of temporary promotion [437]; recruitment under the control of the union [562]; a complete review of the promotion system [652]; improvements in Health and Safety resources [767]; a campaign on the closed shop [973] and full political freedom for civil servants [1022].

The objective of this Conference must be defending and strengthening the rights of members and branches and CPSA democracy from the attacks of the Tories, the right wing and the bureauc-



CPSA members march against the National Front, London, April 1978

Photo: MILITANT

that the pay research system has once again failed them. As Ken Thomas declared at the April NEC meeting, "the pay research system is a type of incomes policy."

The campaign has also clearly demonstrated that the periodic election of all full-time officials is vital to exercising democratic control over the union bureaucracy. We must now fight for control by the membership over all aspects of pay claims, negotiations and settlements.

A more determined effort must be made on scale shortening than that put forward by the present right-wing NEC. The Tories plan to split members, playing off one section against another.

'The Economist' has recommended "below average wage rises for the more

down the country have fought alongside each other on picket lines. Tensions and problems have sometimes arisen because of divergent NEC decisions. Contrast this with the power of an amalgamated union.

The pay campaign, the forthcoming battles on public expenditure and jobs and the future of the civil service trade unions will be immeasurably strengthened by an amalgamation with the SCPS and other unions like the CSU.

Unity is vital

One of the important debates at conference will be around the NEC document "Future Policy Towards

ry. The appointment of officials must be taken out of the hands of the self-perpetuating machinery at CPSA HQ. Motion 12 is an important step in this direction.

The right of all workers to strike and the rights of members in DHSS and DE must be protected. The union's journal 'Red Tape' will take on an increased importance in the coming battles. An Editorial Board should be democratically elected by Conference.

The move by the right wing to change the representation at Conference must be defeated. Every branch should be represented, but not at the expense of under-representation of larger branches.

In every major debate, however, the spectre of a Tory government will loom.

Members, other trade unionists and even the Tories will be looking to us for an indication of how the trade unions will react to the election result.

Whether Thatcher accepts the cautions of her advisors or not, attacks on the working class are inevitable. The Tories cannot boost the profits of their rich backers without attacking the working class and their organisations.

In spite of the policies of the Labour government, 11½ million workers voted for the Labour Party, more than in October 1974. Labour is still the traditional party of the working class.

The CPSA's fight to defend members' interests against Tory attacks would be strengthened by affiliation to the Labour Party.

Inside the Labour Party, the CPSA can join in the fight to commit Labour to policies in the interests of the working class and begin the fight to return a Labour government at the next election on a bold socialist programme.

- By
- Kevin Roddy (DHSS)
 - May Trodd (DHSS)
 - Frank Bonner (CAA)
 - Steve Appleton (DOE)
 - Pat Byrne (DHSS)
 - Jim Baugh (DNS)
 - John Ship (MOD)

(all in personal capacity)

ANGRY TEACHERS FIGHT FOR A DECENT WAGE

Teachers are among the first group of trade unionists to confront the Tory government.

Following their Easter conference, members of the National Union of Teachers have 'withdrawn goodwill'—the out-of-hours work, use of their own cars and dinner-time supervision duties for which they are normally unpaid.

Members have responded in every area, and some schools are being forced to bring in assistants or close each afternoon.

Their claim is for a pay increase to restore the cuts in real wages during the last five years of incomes policy and wage restraint.

The response has been an offer of less than 9% on basic pay, with comparability payments staged over the next two years.

Fred Jarvis, general secretary of the NUT, has stated that both the measly 9% and

By an NUT member

the staging terms are unacceptable: "The longer the staging element, the less the increase is worth in real terms." The union have produced a leaflet for parents, explaining the teachers' case and asking for support.

Angered by the freezing of negotiations by Shirley Williams, Labour's ex-Education Minister, and by the Tories' failure to re-open them swiftly, NUT members in many areas are demanding that the action is stepped up.

Members of the smaller National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, are taking up their threat to work a strictly limited 5-hour day, based on the Burnham Committee's calculations used to deter-

mine pay rates. This may affect supervision of public exams in some schools.

Even the Assistant Masters' and Mistresses' Association, not renowned for its militancy, has held a half-day protest.

The millionaire gutter press is already launching its usual smear-and-lies campaign against the teachers. But what are the facts? An NUT member explains:

Short hours, easy work and massive pay packets? For the teacher in the classroom, this is a mere fantasy.

The true picture is very different from that drawn by the Tory press.

Firstly the "35% claim". The National Union of Teachers have claimed a 26% or £14 per week rise for scale 1 teachers on around £60 per week and 43% or £101 per week for headmasters on £235 per week. Headmasters make up 0.5% of our union membership.

Many teachers are paid wages well below the national average. This is the result of education cuts and a teacher dole queue of 20,000. Our

real wages having fallen by 36.5% in five years.

Our working conditions are not a joy ride, either.

No ordinary teacher worth their salt can possibly put in less than 45 hours per week. Most schools are cramped, badly designed and in ill-repair due to false economies in building.

The pressures of falling living standards at home, bad housing and education cuts have weighed heavily upon working class kids who become embittered.

Neither teachers nor pupils enjoy or benefit from education as they could if schooling was democratically organised to meet the needs of the majority of the population.

Educational opportunity should be equal for everyone, and organised so as to realise our children's full potential, so wastefully squandered in 99% of today's youth.

In the meantime it is in the task of socialist teachers to build a strong union capable of fighting the vicious attacks on education facilities. Winning a decent wage is a part of that fight.

CROYDON CENTRAL-SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN BUILDS LABOUR MOVEMENT

The bold socialist campaign in Croydon Central unfortunately failed to halt the general flood tide to the Tories in the South East; but the energetic, socialist approach to the election has nevertheless meant important gains for the labour movement in the area.

David White, Labour's candidate in Croydon Central, was singled out for attack by the Tory press, notably by the 'Sunday Express', as the "worm in Labour's apple"—out, in their view, to destroy democracy and the "British way of life".

The reaction of the gutter press showed that they were scared of the campaign that Croydon Central Labour Party were waging, a campaign based on socialist ideas, and the policies adopted at Labour Party Conference. David particularly highlighted the 35-hour week; the £60 minimum wage; expansion of the health, education and transport services; and the implementation of Clause Four, Part Four of the Labour Party constitution which calls for the nationalisation and democratic control of industry.

Despite their attempts to whip up a red-scare and witch-hunt against David White, the press campaign—as usual—backfired, with working-class people. The general reaction was summed up by one bus driver who came up to a team of canvassers and David White and said: "Good luck to you, if these bastards are attacking

By John Bulaitis

you, I think you are well worth supporting!"

The campaign waged in Croydon was an enthusiastic, fighting campaign. Six public meetings were organised, together with two outdoor meetings on smaller council estates.

Meetings were held inside and outside factories. Debates and speakers were organised in schools, and all the activities were well attended and supported.

Three hundred turned up at six o'clock on a Saturday evening to hear Tony Benn, 100 the previous Saturday to hear Neil Kinnock. These turn-outs contrasted sharply with Tory meetings which attracted only between 15 and 20 people.

A Trade Union committee for a Labour victory was set up with the support of all the key local unions. Activities were organised in shopping centres and at the football matches.

The Labour Party Young Socialists were magnificent in their support for the campaign. Between 25 and 30

LPYS members were canvassing most nights and three mass canvasses were organised with 80, 100 and 250 turning out.

On polling day, 250 LPYS members descended on the constituency which, together with 250 local Party workers meant there were 500 Labour Party workers on the day with four loudspeaker vans.

A real mood of enthusiasm was generated on the council estates on polling day with kids and older people wearing stickers and badges, and we felt a real keep-the-Tories-out mood in these areas. During the course of the campaign, 150 LPYS members were made, 1,500 'Militants' at least were sold, and the LPYS and 'Militant' are now really

well known in the Croydon Central area.

The result of the campaign showed that socialist policies and a bold campaign doesn't frighten voters away—quite the opposite.

The swing was about average in the South East. The Labour vote went down 1,700, while the Tories gained about 6,000—due mainly to the collapse of the Liberal vote and the growth of a new middle-class area in the constituency at a time of very little council house building.

The balance of the constituency may have swung somewhat to the middle class and the Tories. But the work done in the election, the potential revealed in new Labour Party and Young Socialist members, augurs well for future elections and the labour movement in this area.

POSTMEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

aroused most anger.

Post Office workers were unable to fathom out why a modest 8% increase in basic pay, a long overdue but small reduction in the age-based wage scales, and consolidation of previous government pay supplements into basic pay should only come with an agreement that opens us up to future attacks on our conditions.

The agreement involved close monitoring of members' work, obviously aimed at even more staff reductions, the introduction of more part time workers, and a reduction of overtime, which we are forced to work to get decent take-home pay.

No pay increase would

justify these threats to our conditions, let alone the poor current offer. We do not want to work long periods of overtime, but we need a basic rate that allows us to manage without it.

At my own-branch meeting, which was very well attended, only one person voted for the deal, and reports suggest that this is a reflection of the feeling in most branches.

Even the implied threats that a change of government might, if the offer wasn't accepted, made no difference. The newly-elected Tory government would not be wise to try and force this deal on Post Office workers as part of their planned attacks on public service workers.

The UPW Conference, coming this month, is going to have to show a clear resolve to fight for the full claim.

[Phil Waker writes in a personal capacity]

Militant

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FOR THE RICH BY THE RICH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

ors to rake in the profits of others' labour without restraint.

Above all, big business is eagerly awaiting the promised cuts in personal taxation. The big corporations pay hardly any corporate tax anyway

For the year 1975/76, company tax was less than 2% of trading profits [compared to 16.5% in 1973] and was still only about 6% last year.

Now the Tories want to give huge hand-outs to the rich and super rich who rake in fabulous unearned income from property and investment.

By comparison, PAYE reduction will mean paltry sums for workers. And the tax cuts will cost us a lot more than we gain in higher prices and savage cuts in vital public services.

Mrs Thatcher claims to care for the old, families and children. But a confidential DHSS memorandum leaked to the 'New Statesman' [4 May] makes it quite clear who will be hit by higher indirect taxation: "It is

the pensioner and one-parent families, many of whom pay no income tax but who do purchase taxed goods, who would lose most."

In 1977, the poorest 10% paid 19% of their disposable income in commodity tax, while the richest 20% paid only 15%. Under the Tories, indirect taxes like VAT will inevitably hit the lower-paid even more unequally.

But will the Tories' 'incentives' to the rich revive the backward and stagnant British economy? Even the serious big-business commentators doubt it.

When the Heath government "set the rich free", they put most of their cash in property speculation, works of art, overseas investment, and anything else—bar manufacturing industry—which would give them a quick, big profit.

There is no sign that the capitalists intend to do anything different this time.

The Thatcher government will not reverse the decline of diseased British capitalism.

But regardless of the unemployment, the poverty, the deprivation, and the suffering of the working class, they are hell-bent on dramatically boosting, at our expense, the profits of Britain's parasitic ruling class.



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