

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 460
15 June 1979

15p

BUDGET BONANZA FOR RICH

This must be the most vicious anti-working class budget of the post-war period. Through massive tax cuts at the top end of the scale, the Tory chancellor has produced a bonanza for the rich.

For workers, the paltry tax cut on average wage earnings will be wiped out by inflation almost as soon as the taxman can put it into effect.

“This [commented Joe Gormley of the NUM] is a Budget for people who are never ill, don't smoke or drink, are prepared to eat less, and do not intend to drive to work.”

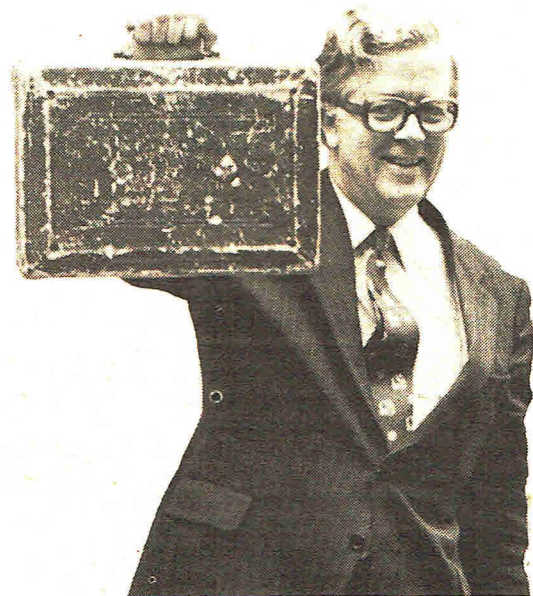
Anyone can see that this sort of tax cutting benefits the rich far more than the low-paid. A married man with two children earning £90 a week will save £3.72 a week; a man on £200 a week will save £6.95.

Company directors on £30,000 a year will save an almost incredible £4,329.

Haven't the rich got what they want! Howe's "Opportunity" budget means that the handful of wealthy parasites who control the country's productive wealth can now rake in profit to their heart's content.

While the standard rate is down by 3p from 33p to 30p, the top rate is down from 83% to 60%.

About 1.3 million people have been taken out of the tax net altogether—as they certainly need to be—but this is nothing compared to the concessions to the rich and super rich.



The number of rich sur-tax payers has been halved [from 1,300,000 to 650,000], and those paying the investment income surcharge reduced even more, from 850,000 to only 300,000.

Combined with the new loop-holes and evasion methods that will rapidly be worked out by City accountants, this means that the British capitalist class will be paying one of the lowest tax rates in the advanced capitalist world.

**PRICE
RISES
WILL
WIPE
OUT
WORKERS'
TAX
CUTS**

By Lynn
Walsh

Howe claims that the only way to achieve a successful and prosperous economy is through encouraging successful and prosperous individuals.

But he can hardly believe this himself: one of the measures causing most rejoicing in the City is the lifting of the limits on overseas investment. Families can now take £100,000 out of the country every year before

CONTINUED
ON BACK PAGE



THE
'OPPORTUNITY' BUDGET!

Labour Women's Conference

micro-chip automation in the office
page 9

'One Hand Tied Behind Us'
page 5

Italy—crisis
continues
page 11

Defend Steel Jobs
page 6

HOTEL STRIKE GOES ON

Women at Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, are still out on strike with the support of UCATT, EETPU, and other exhibition workers.

The strike started with the sacking of FTAT shop steward Ellen Gallagher after a dispute over the allocation of work [not pay, as we said last week].

The management of Trust House Forte's most prestigious hotel are still refusing to reinstate the women sacked for support.
CONTINUED
ON BACK PAGE

'RIDICULOUS' 8% REJECTED BY TUBE MEN

“The Tories have increased VAT to 15%, up nearly 100%. That will put up the price of everything.

“When they give the increases of £5,000 to some people, more than some of us can earn in one year, I back this strike to the hilt.”

This remark by a tube worker shows the mood of London Transport Underground workers who are organising for an indefinite strike from Monday, 18 June, over the 1979 wage claim.

Every department, the operating side, maintenance, trainees, station staff, conciliation and workshop grades, are all making preparations.

In Branch meetings, union meetings, and mass meetings, the workers are voting overwhelmingly to support this action.

Following the strike

By Martin Elvin
[Stratford ASLEF] &
Stan Godwin
[ASLEF Morden]

call, made by the NUR, ASLEF have also made it clear that they will join in unless a satisfactory offer is made at the eleventh hour, [which seems doubtful].

The Confed unions also are 'massing up' at Acton, Neasden and elsewhere and seem certain to back the rail unions. Pickets are being planned and strike committee rooms organised for what will be the first all out strike on the Underground for many years.

When London Transport's miserable offer is examined it's not sur-

ASLEF Conference
review, page 15

prising that the strike call is getting such support.

London Transport have offered around 8% to all grades except motormen, and then with the aim of getting the unions to accept a productivity deal in future.

Motormen are being offered 13.2% but only on the totally unacceptable condition that they agree to sell guards' jobs, by agreeing to one man operation of trains [OMO].

The trade union claim is for consolidation of the remaining £2 of the £6 limit into the basic rate of pay, and then an 11% pay rise, plus the return to 1974 pay structure and differentials.

This claim at least, it is felt, would go some way to restoring the value of wages lost in years of pay

CONTINUED
ON BACK PAGE

Militant

EEC ELECTIONS: A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE

The very low turnout of under a third of the electorate in the European Assembly elections, which led to Labour winning only 17 seats, clearly demonstrated the mass opposition which exists, particularly in the working class, towards the Common Market.

At the same time, this was not a purely British phenomenon. While the other countries which voted on 7 June had a higher turnout than in Britain, in most cases it was much lower than in national elections.

The Common Market is popularly seen as the cause of inflation, particularly in the price of food, and unemployment. None of the benefits which were promised when Britain joined or during the 1975 referendum have materialised. On the contrary, the situation facing many workers has considerably worsened since then.

Most workers who were anti-Common Market did not see the point in voting for the European Assembly, especially as it had been made perfectly clear that the Assembly would be merely a talking shop with no real powers at all.

Canvassers were often told by workers that they were anti-Common Market and therefore could see no reason in voting, an attitude which can only be changed on the basis of both clear opposition to the EEC and explanation of the need not to allow the Tories an election victory.

Labour's failure to win a large number of seats was not the result of the fact that the Party's National Executive Committee produced an election Manifesto which was more radical than suited Callaghan and the right

wing.

The real reasons lie in the mass mood of opposition to the Common Market, coupled with the effect Labour's general election defeat had on Party activists and the limitations of the Party's national campaign.

These factors came together to produce the very low turnout, especially in normally rock-solid, working-class Labour areas. But at the same time, where a fighting lead was given there was a response, from the more politically aware sections of the working class.

It is significant that one of the few areas where large scale canvassing took place was on Merseyside where 'Militant' supporter Terry Harrison was Labour's candidate.

"Red" scare

A "red" scare campaign was conducted by the Tories and Liberals and their friends in the media, particularly in the 'Liverpool Echo' and 'Daily Post' in the days before the election. They were assisted in this by the Social Democratic Alliance, Tory infiltrators into the Labour Party, who urged Labour voters not to support Labour.

But this scare campaign had a minimal effect. The defeat of Terry Harrison [Conservative 49,646, Labour 42,419, Liberal 17,650—Con majority 7,227] was mainly due to the mass abstention of Labour voters who were opposed to the Common Market and saw no point in voting for a toothless Assembly.

The hollowness of the Tory victory is shown by the fact that a mere 12% of the electorate put the Tories in the Assembly.

The clear socialist programme which Terry Harrison stood on aroused the enthusiasm of Party members and struck a chord among wider layers of the working class, in spite of not being able to counteract the national trends. It is noteworthy that in Merseyside there has been a steady flow of applications to join the Labour Party in response to Terry Harrison's election Broadsheet, which clearly outlined a socialist alternative to both the capitalist crisis and the Common Market.

This response shows that the election result was not a narrow nationalist revolt against the Common Market, as Terry Harrison stood quite openly "Against the Bosses' EEC" and "For a socialist Europe."

This election result also gives the lie to those who saw Thatcher's general election victory as representing a swing to the right, towards support for the Tories' open capitalist policies. This low turnout shows the deep seated opposition to the Common Market and the policies which it represents, policies which are fundamentally the same as those of the Tory government.

The mass opposition to the Common Market is but a foretaste of the huge unpopularity which will undermine the Tory government as it openly attacks living standards and democratic rights.

But this election nevertheless shows that mass opposition is not enough to beat the Tories. The labour movement has to put forward a clear alternative which can both arouse enthusiasm and at the same time prove in practice that there will be a fundamental difference between the next Labour government and the previous Tory and Labour administrations.

CONSULTANTS PAMPERED AT EXPENSE OF THE N.H.S.

The low pay dispute was, last February, greeted with much condemnation and squealing about the cheek of the unskilled workers to be asking for £60 per week, let alone using their mass power to fight for their demands.

One consultant was reported as turning away any patients who were members of any union, including a Post Office worker.

Now doctors and dentists are getting a 25% increase. Even this massive rise is 10% down on the initial recommendation.

This comes hand in hand with a new 'Contract' for consultants which allows them to specify the number of sessions in the NHS per week they wish to do. Ten sessions is equivalent to the old salary level; 15 sessions (a 50% rise) would be a full working week, but consultants are allowed to contract for 13 sessions keeping two 'free' for private practice.

This is a deliberate betrayal of the principles of a NHS by openly allowing private practice to flourish.

If a consultant 'chooses' not to do 15 sessions, what happens to the two he doesn't do? Can the patients 'choose' to see him in Harley Street, rather than the Hackney Hospital, for instance?

However, even if a consultant magnanimously chooses not to do private practice, his salary will rise from £9,500 to £11,500 pa (at the lowest levels) to £15,000 at the highest levels.

He is likely, as well, to supplement his income by getting a 'merit award' which, at the highest level, will double his yearly salary.

These awards (paid for by the NHS) are secretly given as a reward for "service to the medical profession" by a select and closed group of consultants and a permanent salary increments from at least £1,000 per year. Probably at least a third of all consultants end up with such awards, which are never publicised.

As well as maintaining

their privileges financially by landing pay rises double that of the ancillaries, further underlining the polarisation in society between the capitalist class and their hangers-on and the working class, the consultant élite also manages to control most of the decision-making bodies in the NHS, where, for instance, they are appointed to key positions on the AHAs, district Management Teams etc. Here they happily "nod through" and implement cuts and closures, staff shortages and many other small savings, reducing operating time and lengthening waiting lists amongst other things.

This seems to cause little concern; understandable.

"Ambulances are paying up to £1.80 a gallon for petrol to stay on the road."

"South West Thames Regional Health Authority, which run all London's ambulances, is paying suppliers these sky-high prices, double the normal rate for its fuel, to try to offset a cut of about 30% in its allocation".

'The Observer' [10 June] The Tories government is refusing to give ambulances, or other vital services any priority.

What a scandal! Yet the 'popular' press, which vilified the ambulance men when they were fighting for a living wage, says nothing.

really, when long waiting lists supply a steady stream of patients for the private clinics.

Five hundred operations were lost during the Barts' low pay campaign, causing much squealing. However, the imminent closure of 40 surgical beds at St Leonards, ten years ahead of schedule due to debts in the District of over £2 million, causes little consternation.

Given the recent threat of the newly-appointed 'Flowers' working party to "rationalise" medical education in London by closing or amalgamating one or more of London's medical schools (thereby threatening a large

number of medical jobs) is doing little more than allowing an intensification of "in-fighting", with each college trying to save its own neck at the expense of someone else.

The medical profession see it as in no way their responsibility to defend the NHS against the cuts. They are regrettable but necessary (the argument goes), and must be made in such a manner as to cause as few problems as possible.

When I recently asked an eminent Professor if he would consider pressurising the AHA to provide extra funding for badly needed teaching staff, he laughed incredulously. After all, his pockets must be 'well-lined'.

The resentment about the 9% is still there amongst the ancillaries. Urgent action is needed to prevent further damaging cuts (as Dave Hollis outlined, 'Militant' 31 May).

We must not forget the lessons of this February, and trade union campaigns, like the Bethnal Green Hospital Campaign. Only a strong and concerted trade union action coupled with strong political leadership can prevent these hawks from picking the flesh of the NHS. We must not attempt to curry favour with such people; rather, we must work to build the mass strength and political awareness of the trade unions.

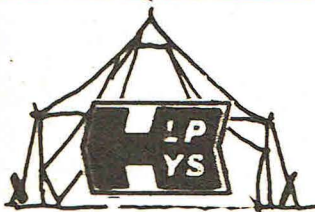
By Stella Gibling
(St Bartholomew's Hospital)

THE 35-HOUR WEEK

The Fight Against Unemployment

A 'Militant' pamphlet

25p including postage
from World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN



I will be at the 1979 Labour Party Young Socialists' National Conference, because, quite simply, coupled with the summer camp at Coleford, Gloucestershire [July 28-August 4], this promises to be "the event of the year."

Last year's conference was tremendous. The enthusiasm, confidence and determination of Labour's youth movement, stick out uppermost in my mind. This year's promises to be even better.

The camp will follow the conference (which is to be held on the weekend of 28/29 July) and includes three meals a-day, social activities, political debates and plenty of time to do whatever takes your fancy!

For a whole week, this will cost a measly £25! You'd pay

at least treble that to stay in a hotel at this time of year. What great value for money!

So what's the catch? That's just it, there isn't any (yes, I was speechless too!) except that deposits of £5, or £2 for children should be posted off to the 'LPYS Summer Camp fund' at Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA as soon as possible.

And that means right away! With only six weeks to go, LPYS members like myself, will be rushing off 'bookings' to Transport House, and areas will be organising transport now. Contact your national or regional committee member to find out what is planned!

Undoubtedly the highlight of the week will be the conference. The debate on the 'Charter for Young Workers' which is the document being presented by the National Committee, will be of particular value to trade unionists like myself and the union-sponsored visitors. These comrades incidentally should be encouraged to stay on for the whole week although if that is not possible a special weekend facility of £7 does not exist for delegates and union sponsored visitors.

The Conference presents us with an opportunity to draw up our battle plans for use against the profit system and its party of privilege. Every

LPYS member, particularly the new recruits who assisted in the election work, should ensure their attendance and forward their experiences of canvassing etc in order to get full value which the conference has been so accustomed to offering.

Why did Labour lose? Where do we go from here? These are important questions which will be asked at the conference. Make sure you're there to answer them.

What role can school students play in the struggle for socialism? School students—come and tell us. If you are not sure, come and listen to the answers.

This conference can be the

best ever held if massive representation is assured. Every LPYS branch should be made sure it sends its delegate and as many visitors as possible.

The Conference will commence at 1pm on the Saturday and the closing date for delegates—June 29—must be strictly adhered to.

Don't miss the boat! All aboard for Camp Coleford!

By Steve Higham

(North West LPYS
Regional Committee)

PARTY DEMOCRACY MUST BE DEBATED AT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE

Constituency Labour Parties throughout the country are demanding that the issue of Labour Party democracy is allowed to be debated at the Party's conference in October.

Over two dozen CLPs have now sent resolutions to the Labour Party National Executive Committee calling either for the waiving of the three-year rule or new proposals allowing for mandatory re-selection to be placed before the conference.

Dozens more are expected to flood into the NEC within

the next few weeks.

Re-selection of MPs and the election of the Party leader are now amongst the most crucial issues in the minds of many party members.

Apparently, a constitutional amendment is before the NEC Organisational Subcommittee which would leave the election of the leader in the hands of the Parliamentary Party. This move will be against the wishes of many Party members who are now demanding that conference should elect the leader.

Little debate was allowed at last year's conference. In the aftermath of the election, CLPs and union branches are demanding that conference should elect the leader. In the aftermath of the election, CLPs and union branches are demanding a change.

The governing body of the

Party should elect the leader. How else can he or she be accountable to the rank and file of the Party?

If the three-year rule is applied in October, then we will be denied the right to debate these two vital issues of party democracy. The application of the three-year rule is reportedly to be discussed at a joint meeting of the Organisation Committee and the Conference Arrangements Committee.

Pressure must now be put on the NEC to ensure this undemocratic rule is removed from the Party constitution. It has always been used to prevent the rank and file raising key issues at conference. Public ownership, the 35-hour week and now possibly party democracy could all be axed under this rule.

Right-wing Party leaders,

however, have never had any trouble about getting it waived. Gaitskell, for example, managed to get disarmament discussed two years running, without a whisper of it being applied.

Conference must be allowed to discuss freely whatever it sees as being important. CLPs and union branches will now undoubtedly be demanding that their NEC members vote to defend Party democracy and waive this undemocratic rule.

The NEC Home Policy Committee has been inundated with resolutions demanding to know why the election Manifesto was not based on conference decisions, and why the Labour government failed to implement them when in office. According to one report, Leicester South CLP, for

example, demands to know why nationalisation of the banks, a minimum wage, and "an unequivocal rejection of wage restraint was not included."

Others (submitted prior to the election) were demanding that the Party supported the fight of the public sector workers to get a decent wage. Reportedly, South Gloucestershire CLP was "appalled by the behaviour both in the House of Commons and in the media of members of the Cabinet and the PLP" towards the local authority strikers.

The meetings of all this week's NEC sub-committees will undoubtedly indicate whether the elected leadership of the Party is prepared to respond to and implement the demands of the Party's rank and file.

One likely clash between left and right could develop over a resolution reportedly tabled by Tony Benn. He calls for the leader of the Party to refuse to appoint any peers to the House of Lords, or, if they are appointed, for party members to refuse to accept. If passed this will be in line with Party policy to abolish the House of Lords, another measure regrettably excluded from the Manifesto.

All these issues before the NEC sub-committee indicate what the rank and file of the party are demanding.

After the election defeat, the Party ranks must now face up to the building of a mass, socialist and democratic Labour Party. In this task the NEC has the responsibility to give a lead to the Party.



Labour ministers must be responsible to the Party

Photo: MILITANT

BLAIR PEACH FULL ENQUIRY STILL NEEDED

The funeral of Blair Peach must not mark the end of the campaign against those responsible for his murder.

Ever since April 23rd, the police have engaged in a massive cover-up and delay. If it had been a policeman who had died in Southall, the press would have been full of attacks on left-wing demonstrators and someone would certainly have been charged by now.

An independent pathologist has now reported that Blair Peach was killed by an instrument which could have been "a lead-weighted rubber cosh or hose pipe filled with lead shot."

Apparently, some similar instrument was found last week in a locker of a Special Patrol Group member. After spending a few days "helping police with their enquiries" he was released.

Eyewitnesses have testified that Blair Peach was viciously attacked by the police. Even if one policeman is finally

charged with causing Peach's death, this must not be seen as closing the affair.

It is vital that the whole question of how the police operated in Southall is independently investigated. It was the activities of the Special Patrol Group that brought about the systematic terrorisation of the Asian community in April.

Disband SPG

The labour movement locally and nationally must back the calls for an independent enquiry into the police activities.

But the black community and the labour movement has continually to face police harassment and the armed thugs of the Special Patrol Group.

The SPG should be disbanded immediately and the labour movement give its support to an independent enquiry into the whole events of 23 April, and in particular the death of Blair Peach.

TORIES GIVE BUMPER PAY RISE TO 'TOP PEOPLE'

Two million workers are currently planning industrial action in order to win a living wage. Yet top civil servants, judges, armed forces chiefs and the top executives of nationalised industries have just been awarded a huge pay rise by the Tories.

They have been given another 13% on top of the 12% already agreed by the Labour government. These awards will be backdated to 1st April and cost £8 million.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, for example, will get an increase of £3,000 to take his pay to £32,792 a year. Next year, it will be increased to £37,000.

The top three civil servants and the top three officers in the armed forces are also to get rises of £3,000 a year.

As the 'Daily Express' so aptly put it: "More sizzling pay rises for top people in the public services." And with the tax relief for high incomes that the Tories will include in the budget, it really is bonanza time for these dignitaries.

Chairmen of the nationalised industries have also done very well. The Tories' hostility to nationalised industries evidently doesn't extend to their friends in the boardroom.

The pay of the Chairman of the British National Oil Corporation, for instance, will go up to £44,210 (from his present £40,710). After next April he will top the £1,000 a week mark, with pay of £53,000 a year.

Other Chairmen of nationalised industries who won't have to worry about where their next six-course meal is coming from include the National Enterprise Board (£43,635 from £40,135), British Steel (£41,695 from £38,195) and the Post Office (£38,945 from £35,445).

Also, 84,000 NHS doctors and dentists will get pay rises of 25.7%—at a total cost of £22m a year.

These pay rises will undoubtedly amaze and anger all those low-paid workers who had to struggle for a paltry pay increase last winter. Sid Weighell, General Secretary of the NUR, commented that the government were "creating two standards in our society—those who are all right and those who are not."

When the government have frozen civil service recruitment, and are proposing to

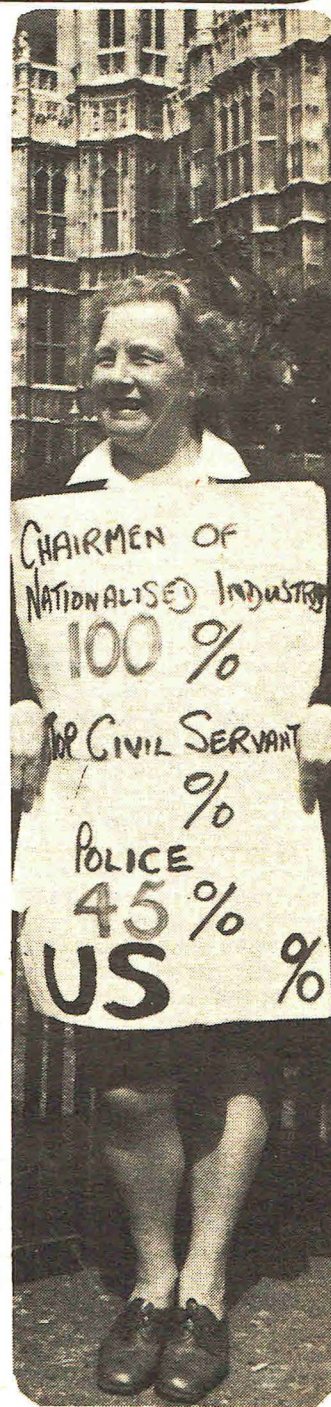
cut 133,000 jobs in local government, these rises are horrifying. David Basnett, General Secretary of the GMWU, commented: "The increase in the salaries for professional groups will contrast with the prospective sacrifice of jobs for the lower paid in the public sector, given Tory policy on reducing public expenditure."

But astonishingly, Bill Kendall, Secretary of the Staff side of the Civil Service Whitley Council, supported the increases, saying they were "justified by the facts and therefore welcomed."

However, the effect of these rises won't just be felt in the public sector. The 'Daily Express' warned: "In the Budget, Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe is likely to show that all the rises will be offset by savings elsewhere in the public sector." In other words, by cutting the public service working people rely on.

And these rises won't be forgotten when workers are submitting wage claims in the next few months, only to be told to reduce (or "moderate") them in the "national interest".

By Roger Shrikes



Industrial Civil Servant demanding genuine comparability

NORWICH - 'A DECLARATION OF OPEN CLASS WARFARE'

"On the surface, the Tory government seems strong, but it will come up against the mighty force of the working class".

With these words Peter Taaffe (editor of 'Militant') summed up the prospects for the next few years of British political life at the second 'Militant' readers' meeting in Norwich.

May 3rd was one of the blackest days for the British working class, Peter said. Proposed cuts in public spending would mean longer council house waiting lists, a massive increase in rent and the selling off of the better council houses leaving only the not so good and tower blocks for the rest.

Their increases in prescrip-

tion charges and hospital "hotel" charges will produce a swing away from the basic principles of the NHS. The only area of increased public spending, it seems, will be that of arms and the armed services.

Those who will not "benefit" from their cuts in income tax, i.e. those on low wages, pensioners, the unemployed and the sick, will still be hit by the increase in VAT needed to subsidise the tax cuts of the rich.

In fact, open class war has been declared on the British working people. Tory action against the alleged "power" of the trade unions in Britain is no more than an attack on the rights of the working class.

But the main feature of the election was the class polarisation, most clearly seen in

the north of the country, and the government will come up against the powerful working class.

But people learn more by action than words which is why we must show in action that Labour policies really work to their advantage.

The election has been a turning point; the Labour Party must stand on a bold socialist programme which, once explained and shown to be real workers' democracy and not the totalitarian regime put across by the gutter press, would cut the ground from under the Tories' feet.

It is vital that we, in the Labour Party, put forward now policies to include: (1) 35-hour week and £70 minimum wage; (2) A massive programme to build

houses, hospitals and schools; (3) Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies under workers' control with compensation only on the basis of proven need.

In his summing up, Peter Taaffe said that the scene is now set in Britain for a mighty explosion. We have a harsh teacher in this government but, as the struggle continues, the labour and trade union movement will grope towards the ideas of Marxism.

Armed with these ideas we will move forward to socialism, not only in Britain and Europe, but throughout the world.

By Jane Law
(Norwich LPYS
and CPSA)



Benn speaking at Labour Party Conference

Photo: MILITANT

TONY BENN SPEAKS IN EURO-CAMPAIGN

"We look forward to the return of a Labour government on a socialist programme, and I think we heard the leader of that government [Tony Benn] speaking here this evening."

Thus Fenner Brockway summed up the mood of a meeting of Labour supporters in Mitcham during the recent Euro-election campaign. The enthusiastic response of rank and file Labour members and voters was not a response to Benn's "charisma" or "personality" but to the clear class appeal in his speech.

Benn made it clear that his opposition to the EEC was not based on narrow nationalism but on the fact that the Treaty of Rome "enshrined the principles of capitalism". It is not a matter of "Britain for the British" but of Europe for the workers.

He saw the European parliament as a platform which Labour members should use to help unite workers in the EEC countries in the struggle against the big monopolies.

This was the sort of lead Labour workers were waiting for during the recent British national elections. These are the kind of ideas which will awake an echo throughout the organisations of the working class in Britain as the Tory

attacks intensify the class struggle.

But these ideas need to be crystallised into a clear programme of action if they are to be carried into effect.

Benn is quite right to say that the trade unions and the ballot box are the means by which workers defend themselves against the effects of free market forces and that these weapons should be used to control the big firms which dominate the economy of Europe.

But also you can't control what you do not own—it is only by nationalising the 200 monopolies which do control Britain's economy that it will be possible to implement a plan of production to eliminate the evils of unemployment and the other consequences of capitalist anarchy.

Secondly Benn was right to point out that the working class has a tradition of fighting for democratic rights, going back to the Chartists and even to the Levellers in the 17th century English revolution.

But it is still true that workers need to fight for democracy within their own organisations—for all officials to be elected and subject to recall, for the leader to be elected by Party Conference and for all MPs to be subject to re-selection.

Such a programme would give Labour workers confidence that a new Labour government would mean a real change and not another shambles with Labour leaders carrying out Tory policies.

Of course it would arouse the fear and frenzy of the Tories and their kept press, but the organisation of workers—in particular the 11 million strong trade union movement—is quite strong enough to sweep these gentlemen aside forever.

Capitalism is incapable of uniting Europe—the ludicrous squabbles over currency agreements show this. For them it is like trying to build a house on foundations which keep moving in nine different directions. The coming oil crisis will only expose the sham unity of the EEC more fully.

A real fight for socialist policies in Britain would undoubtedly galvanise workers throughout Europe, encourage them to cast off reformist policies and open the door to a Socialist United States of Europe.

By Derek McMillan

(Mitcham and Morden CLP)

Conjuring tricks won't save the Tories

Nearly 40 people, many of them young people attending their first political meeting, packed a room in Stirling's Cowane Centre to hear Ted Grant answer the question: 'After the Election, what faces the labour movement?'

Ted condemned the Tory leadership as "the most viciously anti-working class government of this century" and exposed the "conjuring trick" of tax cuts. "They will put £5 in your left hand pocket," he said, "and take £6 from your right-hand pocket as prices leap ahead."

The ruling class, Ted went on, had tried every method, almost every kind of economics, to solve the problems of capitalism. But the problems of capitalism cannot be solved.

The one brand of economics that had not been tried was Marxism. Only socialism can solve the problems of unemployment and poverty that face us today.

The Thatcher government was now trying the desperate measure of head-on confrontation with the unions.

They had not embarked on this course lightly or even willingly, but they had no options left. Wages must be held down to increase profits.

One speaker from the floor pointed out the difference between the sort of society 'Militant' worked to attain and that of the so-called 'Communist' countries of Eastern Europe etc.

This comrade drew attention to the massive benefits these countries have obtained under a planned economy but showed that these were but a shadow of the benefits which could be attained in a democratic socialist society not held back by the dead hand of the bureaucracy.

LPYS speakers also took the floor, recalling the excellent work done by the LPYS in the election campaign especially in W Stirlingshire and urging other young people to join their ranks now. The YS, they said, must be in the forefront of any struggle by workers.

In his summing up, Ted dealt with questions from the floor and particularly the struggle for reforms and the

transformation of society. 'Militant', he argued, will support any struggle for reform but reform alone will never be enough.

At the moment, we face counter-reforms as capitalism tries to take back the benefits wrested from the bosses in the past. These moves must be fiercely resisted.

During this struggle it must be made clear to workers that capitalism cannot afford these reforms [even those already won] on any permanent basis.

Such rights will always be vulnerable while capitalism remains—even the "sacred" right of free speech. Only socialism will secure these rights and many more for ever.

Workers in the course of their battles will come to see the real root of the problem more clearly and must, in the end, move to the socialist transformation of society.

It is a measure of the enthusiasm which greeted Ted's ideas that the collection for the Fighting Fund raised £48.28.

By Terri Paterson
(Clackmannan and East Stirling CLP)

CAMBRIDGE: LPYS branch formed

After a long, and at times bitter struggle, Cambridge Labour Party have finally agreed to the setting up of an LPYS branch.

The resolution had been delayed because of the election, and on the night the chairman tried to put it off until the following month, but was overruled. Indeed we had to win votes four times to get the motion carried.

The first to get it debated at all, the second to extend a one-sided debate to allow more supporters of the reso-

lution to come in, the third to suspend standing orders past 10 pm to enable us to take the vote, and the final one to pass the resolution.

Few delegates voted against it, but noticeable among them were the delegates from the University Labour Club, one of whom also spoke against it.

Presumably, then, they would also agree to give up the 'Labour Student' page in the LPYS paper 'Left'.

The agent also spoke against a YS, claiming that YS members did not stay in

the Labour Party after 25, which is strange because his own wife is an ex-LPYS national committee member.

Anyway, we've got a YS and the task is now to build it. We've seen three new members in the last week, so this should not be too difficult.

By Pete Lee
(Cambridge CLP)

LEFT & RIGHT

The good life?

In last week's 'Militant', John Throne outlined the difficult times facing workers in Southern Ireland. Unemployment, low wages, inflation, etc. have forced workers into strike action on a scale never seen before.

But the Irish National Manpower services and Industrial Development Authority, in an attempt to recruit about 500 skilled workers from Britain are doing their best to ignore it.

An advert placed in the London 'Evening Standard', among pictures of lakes, golfers and the normal fare of glossy tourist guides, boasts of Ireland's 'Good Life'.

"The highest growth rate in the EEC", 'expanding economy', a 'country of opportunity with living standards comparable with those enjoyed by counterparts in the highly developed EEC' were some of the claims.

As to the wave of strikes in Ireland, the Development Authority say they regard the situation as 'obviously unfortunate' but, they say, more in hope than with any assurance, 'not long lasting'.

Sell your castle

Do you find parties in council flats with a few cans of beer, a bit lacking in style? Why don't you follow Lord Brooke's example? He entertained 900 people, reportedly all close friends, to a party at the Cafe Royal.

He invited some bands, bought an estimated 500 bottles of champagne and entertained famous people like Douglas Fairbanks Junior and Mick Jagger. All to celebrate his daughter's 21st birthday, and her forthcoming marriage to a son of Lord Lovat.

Possibly the only thing that would stop you following his lead is the price. It cost £50,000. But Lord Brooke has made a bit of money from selling his ancestral home, Warwick Castle—£3 million in fact. So now you know, all you have to do is sell your castle and you too can be a Cafe Royal reveller.

Boosting exports

Patriotism, it is said, is the last refuge of a scoundrel. It was for purely 'patriotic' motives, Sir Shapoor Reporter claimed, that he sold the Shah of Iran £800 million's worth of arms in the early seventies. He merely wanted to boost British exports. For his efforts, he was awarded a knighthood by the Heath government.

When he later made about £1 million from just one deal involving a defence electronics firm, his love of country seems to have disappeared, for he has paid no tax on his gains, and reputedly spends his days mainly in France, scraping by on the few millions he has left, hiding from the Inland Revenue.

To add to his troubles, Ayatollah Khomeini now has him on his wanted list. It must be a hard life.

ONE HAND TIED BEHIND US

The Rise of the Women's Suffrage movement, by Jill Liddington and Jill Norris [Virago, £3.50; available from World Books, add 25p postage]

School history books, in their effort to ignore the role played by the working class, present the women's suffrage movement solely as the property of the suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union, and in particular of the Pankhurst family.

Yet in the 1880s, 1890s, and the first decades of the 20th century, the women cotton workers of Lancashire were waging an energetic, painstaking campaign for their political rights.

They saw the vote not as giving them some abstract equality with men, but as one weapon in a wide-ranging campaign for equal pay, better working conditions, educational opportunities, birth control, child allowances and communal facilities.

As Jill Liddington and Jill Norris show, their campaign didn't happen in isolation. It was based on a tradition of radicalism in the area, and accompanied intense activity in the labour movement, with the recruitment of unskilled workers into the unions, strikes, a mushrooming of political education groups and political organisations, such as the Independent Labour Party, Social Democratic Federation and the Labour Party itself.

In Lancashire, a quarter of a million women were employed in textiles. The membership of the weavers' union alone rose from 40,000 in 1884 to 81,000 by 1900. Two-thirds of its members were women.

Many of the leaders of the radical suffragists, such as Sarah Dickenson and Ada Nield Chew, had started work at 10 or 12 years old. They received a political education at the hands of the bosses, being forced to take a stand on pay or conditions and therefore to draw into the union the women they worked with.

Their trade union activity gave them valuable experience of organising and speaking at large meetings. Naturally when they began their campaign for political rights they turned to the trade unions for support.

The book draws a sharp contrast between their campaign and that of the WSPU. They always linked their campaign to the need for a Labour Party to represent the interests of working people. For them, the vote was a class question. They split with the WSPU when they treated all candidates, whether Tory, Liberal or Labour, as the same, judging them only on the single issue of votes for women.

They were also alienated by the life-style of the suffragettes, with their rich backers, letters to 'The Times', and testimonial banquets at the Savoy Hotel. Many of the suffragists had to work long hours in the mill, cope with housework on a low budget and without today's labour-saving devices.



Ada Nield Chew campaigns at by-election in Crewe in 1913

Yet still they found time for politics. The book's title itself comes from Hannah Mitchell's expression of the hardship and frustration they faced: "No cause can be won between dinner and tea, and those of us who were married had to work with one hand tied behind us."

They were also hounded for their general 'subversive' views. Advocating independent labour representation, they often fell foul of Liberal employers, who often sacked them.

Alice Collinge, a schoolteacher who joined the campaign, lost her job because of her opposition to the child labour system and refusal to wake up half-timers (children who worked early morning to midday in the mill) when they fell asleep in her class.

Unlike the WSPU, they always co-operated closely with male socialists. Nowhere in their material are there anti-male statements. Their class approach won them support. They reported on the encouragement they received from men as they took their petition for the vote round the cotton towns.

As the Labour Representation Committee developed and more Labour MPs were elected, the position of the cotton workers became even more contradictory. The third Labour MP, elected for Clitheroe, was financed, both his campaign and his salary, from the funds of the cotton unions, i.e. mainly by women who were not allowed to vote for him.

As the campaign grew, they contacted women workers in the Potteries and Cheshire. They took their case to the TUC, ILP conference and Labour Party Conference.

At national level, they came up against the prejudices of the time and above all the political outlook of the trade union leadership, who in many cases were still very reluctant to break away from the Liberals.

The cotton workers recognised that they were a special case. As many as 80% of them would receive the vote by a Bill giving women the

vote on the same terms as men. But in recognition of the fear of male workers, that such a Bill would mainly enfranchise wealthier women who would vote Tory or Liberal, they put forward the demand for womanhood suffrage, i.e. the vote for all women over 21.

In response to this demand, the right wing, who had not intended to discuss any form of suffrage, scrambled together a resolution for "adult suffrage". Under the guise of embracing the right to vote of men still excluded by the property qualifications, the advocates of "adult suffrage" were out to avoid an explicit commitment to the more—in their view—inflammatory demand of votes for women. This caused some demoralisation and fear amongst the women that their cause would be forgotten if full male suffrage were achieved first.

The debates on the issue continued until 1912. Anger at the blocking of all reform by Tory and Liberal alike, and concern at the antics of some Labour MPs, led the Labour Party Conference, whilst still supporting adult suffrage, to add that the PLP should oppose any Bill which didn't include enfranchisement of women.

This dispelled the doubts of the suffragists, and they threw their considerable energy and enthusiasm into building the Labour Party.

The war cut across the development of the campaign, but the drawing of women into work in growing industries spread more widely a feeling of independence and self-confidence among the cotton workers.

This, together with the general rise of working-class militancy after the war, ensured that the vote was won.

The book draws an inspiring picture of the struggles of working class women against great odds. Through their extensive, original research in local newspapers and archives the authors have rescued a courageous and tenacious struggle of working-class women from the obscurity to which they have previously been abandoned by academic historians.

The book shows the determination of women once they are convinced of the need to fight, and the extent to which they are able to overcome prejudices and suspicion by a class campaign.

Although the campaign was localised and based on one group of well-organised, relatively well-paid workers, the Lancashire cotton workers kept the demands for women's rights alive for 30 years. They took the debate into the growing labour movement and in particular into the Labour Party in its formative years.

Working-class women have always advanced their own case along with the general demands of the working class at a time of militancy. It is not surprising, then, that many of the demands of the radical suffragists are being taken up again today. Activists in the labour movement could learn a lot from their campaign.

By Margaret Crear

(Heywood and Royton Labour Party)

Jill Liddington and Jill Norris:
'One Hand Tied Behind Us'
£3.50 plus 25p post and packing

Anna Coote and Tess Gill:
Women's Rights: a practical guide
£1.25 plus 10p post and packing

Sylvia Pankhurst
The Suffragette Movement
£3.95 plus 25p post and packing
Available from World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

BILSTON

Five hundred of the 2,300 workers employed at Bilston steel works have been handed the cyanide pill of redundancy.

On Friday May 25th these lads went out of the gate for the last time. "It's a sad day" commented Graham Fazez, chairman of the Bilston ISTC joint branches. "Some may be celebrating but in 12 months they won't."

"One strapping lad no more than 25 broke down after he had his redundancy notice. He didn't know what to do. A lot of the blokes who were silent are now saying we don't want it to close."

"Seventeen years for this," was one steelworker's angry view. "I've looked round for a

Report by
Brian Debus

job and there's not much going," another redundant worker said. "I could still be out of work after my 2 years' money has run out."

The leadership [or rather lack of it] within the ISTC and TUC steel committee must take the main responsibility for selling the jobs at Bilston for a copper handshake.

The negotiations on May 1st between BSC and the Steel Committee were variously

'JOBS SOLD FOR A COPPER HANDSHAKE'

described by John Booth and Graham Howe [TGWU shop stewards as "the most undemocratic ever, with Bill Sirs in the chair refusing to allow leading members of the liaison committee at Bilston and one of his own officials to speak, a complete charade", "a waste of time", "Mr Sirs has been made closure manager of Bilston."

"The message to the lads at Corby, Consett, Shotton and all other plants is that it's "hard militant action" that will win the fight, not written reports or logical argument about men's livelihood or a community's future."

John Booth continued: "If someone in Corby asked for advice, I would say don't fight

the way we did, we won the battles but lost the war. Fight the war.

"You won't beat them with a pen, we have to use more than written reports. With two arms tied behind your back they can kick hell out of you."

"If we had to fight again we would use different methods. We have been banging on doors and they have been opened and shut again with no answers. It's not words that count, it's action."

Originally BSC wanted to shut down Bilston apart from the mills, giving temporary employment for 400 workers. Now they want to maintain present production levels to the summer shutdown, and

cut wages by £6 to £20 a week.

They haven't said who is to be retained or made redundant out of the 1,500 still on the site. Management "expertise" is such that they do not know how they will operate the mills-only scheme.

Union leaders capitulate

BSC are going for manning levels that will require 'bionic men'. 'Bionic' is certainly not the word used by Bilston workers to describe the TUC Steel Committee or the ISTC leadership.

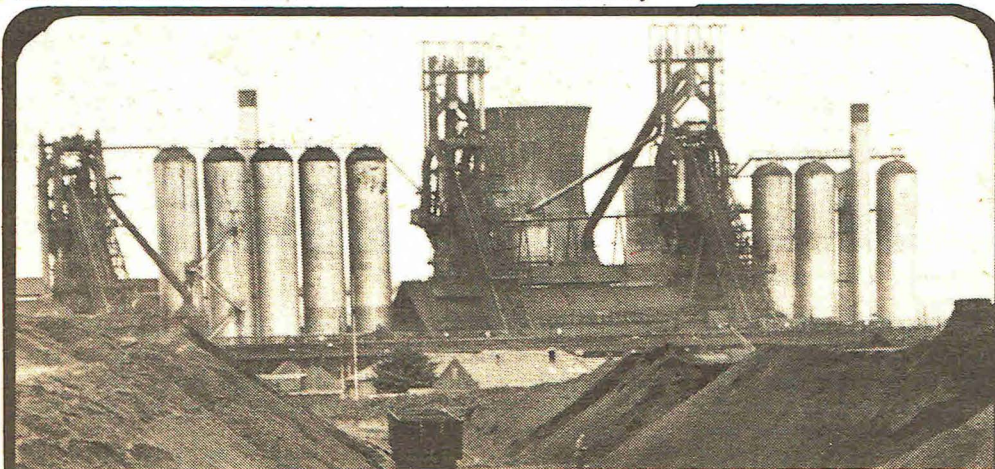
The following statement on April 12th takes the biscuit.

"The TUC Steel Committee reluctantly accept closure of the 200-year old Bilston Steel Works as being in the best interests of the workforce."

This shows the vast gulf that exists between the workers and their so-called union leaders. We need the right of recall over these leaders who tend to capitulate at the first opportunity, when faced with what seems to them to be an awesome prospect—leading a struggle.

'A Militant Programme for Steelworkers'

15p plus 10p P & P. From Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



ISTC-For a fighting, democratic union

In 1976 the ISTC, Britain's biggest steel union, held its first annual conference. It was a one day affair which finished early.

The 1979 conference has swollen to four days and there is every prospect of a full week conference before long.

Representation has also improved, with three delegates for every thousand members instead of only one per thousand as before.

Yet it is still not a branch delegate conference, nor does it have policy-making powers.

The need for democratic control of the union is shown clearly by the demand for Executive Council reform, overwhelmingly supported at last year's conference. Twelve months on, absolutely nothing has happened.

The present EC who came to power through the existing system, have in their hands the right to decide whether that system is changed. Although for some reason no resolution appeared on the agenda, conference will undoubtedly want to know why its wishes have been ignored.

The Corby resolution demanding policy-making powers for conference, has been put at the very end of the agenda, with the one from Lackenby calling for the election of all paid officials by the shop floor. Delegates will have to make a determined effort to ensure that these items are debated.

These moves to put the union in democratic, fighting shape must go hand in hand with the struggle for fighting policies.

The dominating question last year was the closure of Bilston. The call for national strike action against BSC's arbitrary attempt to close the plant won enthusiastic support. But since then Glen-gamock has been run down, and the closure of Bilston has been finally agreed.

In the face of the most severe crisis the union and the steel industry have faced for decades, the Executive seem to see their job as negotiating redundancy payments. What is needed is a militant, fighting lead against all closures (as demanded in resolution 20 from Corby) and redundancies.

Motion 30 from Glen-gamock (a closed works), expresses the mood of the majority of members when it calls on the EC "to improve on this very dismal record of success in the handling of resolutions that are accepted by them."

Other sections of the agenda take up pay and wage bargaining. A Bilston resolution on free collective bargaining will probably pass without much contention this year, with a Tory government in office. The membership will still be keeping a watchful eye on negotiations by means of resolution 23, which calls for ballots on the acceptance

of national wage increases.

Resolution 16 from Corby on buying British steel will probably get a sympathetic hearing. But unless the issues are fully explained, it could lead us into a trap.

It is true that steel imports have been rising. Why? Because lack of investment, research and development makes BSC less competitive.

A question which is often overlooked is the role of the private sector. Every closed BSC works means more areas for the private sector, which is building a bigger and bigger share of the market.

Resolution 1 calls for industrial action against any threat to denationalise BSC. Such a call would rightly receive active support. But action is urgently needed to stop the slow denationalisation taking place as conference meets, through loss of orders.

Steelworkers' eyes will be turned to this conference after the dramatic events and bitter struggles of the last year.

Delegates will have to be vigilant. Decisions must not be nodded through by the leadership, with nothing being done for another year.

Democratic reform of the union and a halt to closures: these are the two key questions. On them depends the future of the steel industry.

By
Heather Rawling

ISTC MILITANT MEETING: Wednesday 20 June, 7.30 pm
SAVE STEEL JOBS Speaker: Heather Rawling, 'Militant'.
The Norfolk Hotel, Richmond Hill, Bournemouth

MEANWHILE AT THE ROYAL ENCLOSURE...



Photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

HAMPERS AND CHAMPERS

The royal enclosure at Epsom on Derby Day. Far removed from the problems of steel closures and redundancy, these ladies and gentlemen of permanent leisure have no troubles worse than getting champers bubbles up their aristocratic noses.

A makeshift heliport was available for those who didn't like traffic jams, for £216 for 15 minutes return journey. Sir Arnold Weinstock's father-in-law can now afford to pay his gas bill after getting £153,000 for owning the winner, with up to £2 million when

it becomes a stud horse.

Strawberries, gull's eggs and enormous hampers-full of chicken's legs were washed down with champagne. "A lot of working class chappies getting in one's way going home. Better get another helicopter, I suppose."

What did the Croydon Central Campaign achieve?

It is indeed essential for the labour movement to draw the lessons of the recent election defeat. But this must be done in an honest way, not through innuendo and snide comments—the method of the right wing, which Comrade Willsman regrettably adopts.

He uses the same argument that the right wing used against many left-wing candidates—that it was the left-wing programme they fought on which was responsible for their defeat. In other words, workers do not want to support left wing policies, and prefer the policies of the right wing. Is this why Audrey Wise, Brian Sedgemoore, Arthur Latham and Eddie Loydon lost?

Comrade Willsman's letter approaches the election purely in organisational and statistical terms. But the debate about the election result must be a political one—yet there is not one sentence of political argument in Comrade Willsman's letter.

Where is his political alternative? Where are his political criticisms?

The right wing ran the campaign and controlled its political content. They have tried to unload some of their responsibility for the defeat by blaming left-wing candidates. Are we to assume that Comrade Willsman agrees with them?

An election campaign cannot be judged only through a crude examination of voting 'swings'.

After five years of a Labour government with the worst record of any since the war, the right wing fought a campaign for 'more of the same'. Even Callaghan has admitted that Labour's programme wasn't radical enough.

When the Labour leaders did come up with new policies it was only to 'tailend' the Tories, and take up issues they raised. Jim Callaghan raised the question of tax cuts, Shirley Williams called for trade union reforms... after the Tories had raised these issues.

Effectively, it was a 'me too' campaign by Labour, which is not the way to win an election.

But the main cause of the defeat was the 5% pay policy. If the Labour leaders had run

Letter: "Militant's" approach questioned

Dear Comrade: Your recent article commenting on the defeat at Croydon Central gave the impression that this result was a fairly good one for Labour. The actual figures seem to tell a different story.

The swing to the Tories in Croydon Central was 7.7%, whereas in Croydon

North West it was 2.7%, in Croydon North East 5.4% and in Croydon South 5%. In fact the swing in Croydon Central was the highest among the 17 constituencies in that part of the South East.

This analysis of the swings would be insignificant were it not for two things:

Firstly, the fact that in Croydon Central we are told there was the staggering number of 500 workers and therefore a much better organisation than in the

neighbouring constituencies. Secondly, the fact that David White fought on the 'Militant' programme for which 'Militant' spokesmen have been claiming almost magical powers.

For example, some two years ago, shortly after the Bournemouth East by-election Ray Apps addressing the Canterbury Labour Party claimed that rock solid Tory seats like Bournemouth East could be won if Labour fought on the 'Militant' programme.

Obviously, the local campaign in Croydon Central

could not have outweighed the disastrous effect of the right wing national campaign. Nevertheless there should have been some indication at Croydon Central—incidentally also on the Isle of Wight where another 'Militant' supporter did very badly—of the major electoral advantages of the 'Militant' programme.

Yours fraternally
Pete Willsman



"Youth for Labour" rally, Croydon Central, 22 April

Photo: MILITANT

a campaign in support of the low-paid workers, and for a £60 minimum wage and a 35-hour week, the result could have been very different.

The middle class, whose living standards had also been affected, massively went over to the side of the Tories. Labour had nothing to offer them. The result killed the idea that the way to win the middle class is through 'moderate' policies.

A number of writers, intellectuals and academics, as well as former Labour MPs from this background, went over to the Tories.

The election results reflected a split along class lines. The industrial areas of the North, Scotland and Wales stayed solid for Labour. It was in the Midlands and the South East, where there are not such strong memories of the 1920s and 30s, that the Tories gained.

In the South East, excluding London, only 7 out of 132 seats were won by Labour.

Comrade Willsman makes no specific criticisms of the campaign in Croydon Central or the political material that was used. An election campaign cannot be judged only through a crude examination of voting 'swings'. He shows his lack of knowledge of the campaign that was run in Croydon Central, and the gains that were made.

It was a very enthusiastic campaign, putting forward

socialist policies which got a magnificent response on the doorstep. The canvassing returns towards the end of the campaign—when the local material had made an impact—were noticeably better than those at the start of the campaign.

A large number of new and potential Labour Party and LPYS members were found, particularly on the New Addington estate. The 'Labour News' issued during the campaign resulted in more applications for Party membership than ever before.

Very successful work was done with the trade unions. A local 'Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory' Committee was set up, which helped mobilise support for the campaign. The factories in the Constituency were regularly visited, and David White also spoke at a number of trade union branches.

Six public meetings were held, including one at which around 350 people came to hear Tony Benn at 6.00 p.m. on a Saturday. This meeting on the New Addington estate, was a reflection of the enthusiasm locally for the campaign. The election material issued in the constituency also got an excellent response.

Hundreds of copies of 'Militant' were sold.

Had Croydon Central been fought on the programme of the right wing, it could have been a disastrous result. This was the case in other seats in

the South East.

Was this not why Labour lost Basildon (10,000 Labour majority to 5,000 Tory majority); Stevenage (9,000 Labour majority to 1,200 Tory majority)—despite the enormous TV coverage given to Shirley Williams; Upminster; and had its majority in Harlow slashed from 13,000 to 1,300?

Labour also lost seats such as Brentford and Isleworth, and Hendon North, where changes in the composition of the constituencies should have made them winnable for Labour.

In Croydon Central, the change in class composition had become worse for Labour since 1974; because of the complete lack of building by the council, young working class voters have moved out of the Constituency.

Given these factors, the Labour vote remained fairly steady. The swing against Labour is also accounted for by the collapse of the Liberal vote, which mainly returned to the Tories.

In Croydon North West, population changes, with the building of new council houses, and an increase in older large houses becoming flats, made the seat more favourable to Labour. This was true of Croydon North East as well.

In neither of these seats was a radical campaign run. Are we therefore to conclude that Willsman believes that the result in Croydon Central would have been better if a

right wing programme had been put forward? Isn't that the implication of his letter?

We must also consider why the Tory 'yellow' press, as part of their anti-Labour campaign, particularly singled out David White and Croydon Central for attack.

The 'Sunday Express', 'Daily Express' and 'The Sun' all tried to use the 'red scare' tactic. They failed.

The workers will come to understand that only the programme of Marxism can solve their problems.

When the 'Evening Standard' printed—by Fleet Street standards—a relatively fair report, the editors took it out of the second edition! The Tory press recognises the impact that was made by the campaign, and showed the fear they have of the growth of support for 'Militant'.

The Tory press, reflecting the wishes of big business, want to be able to choose the candidates for the Labour Party, as well as the Tories. They want a game of 'Tweedledum' and 'Tweedledee' instead of class politics.

They want people such as Reg Prentice, George Brown and Richard Marsh as Labour candidates, who are content to leave rent, interest and profit intact, and in practice defend the system of big business.

Surely the finest compliment for any Labour candidate is to come under fire from the capitalist press. Why does Comrade Willsman seek to provide them with extra ammunition for their attack on the left in the Labour Party?

As Tony Benn said recently, three times now since the war Labour has bailed out capitalism. We must learn the lessons of the past five years, and fight to re-arm our movement with a socialist programme.

It will not be re-armed through the cynical approach of Comrade Willsman. The right wing blamed the low-paid workers' strikes last winter for Labour's defeat.

Comrade Willsman by implication blames 'Militant's' programme for the defeats in Croydon Central and the Isle of Wight. In that, he sides with the right wing in believing that workers do not want to support a fighting socialist programme to transform society.

The growth in support and sales of 'Militant' is the real answer to Comrade Willsman.

As the crisis in Britain grows, and workers learn through their experience the inadequacy of both the right wing and left reformists, support for Marxism will grow. It is from these workers that the transformation of the Labour Party and the trade unions into fighting organisations carrying out policies in the interests of their class, will come.

Armed with a fighting socialist programme, explaining to both the working class and wide sections of the middle class, who are economically exploited by their current Tory political leaders, the benefits—for example—to small businessmen of nationalisation of the banks and major monopolies, then even seats like Bournemouth East could perhaps be won for Labour.

The mobilisation of the labour movement around a Marxist programme, as put forward by 'Militant', for a democratic socialist Britain, would lead Labour to win a massive majority.

In the day-to-day struggles which lie ahead, the workers will come to understand that only the programme of Marxism can solve their problems and guarantee them a decent standard of living.

Generally, the national issues decide the trend of the election results. Although an individual campaign can make a difference, it cannot alter the general flow of opinion on a national scale, which is decided by the national campaign.

In Croydon Central, with an even more unfavourable class composition than Basildon or Stevenage, the changes in the constituency can account for the loss of Labour votes.

This does not reduce the impact made by the campaign, and the base that was laid for building the Labour Party in the future.

By Peter Lush

LABOUR WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The arrival of Mrs Thatcher as Britain's first woman prime minister has been heralded as a great breakthrough. But for working class women it is of no comfort.

The continued decline of the economy is particularly hitting women's jobs and pay levels, and the Tories' reactionary measures, particularly more cuts in education, health, and other social services, will inevitably throw additional burdens on women.

Mrs Thatcher has made great play of her support for 'the family', and claims to be especially concerned with the welfare of women and children. But what can this monied and privileged champion of big business really know about the problems of working women and their families?

The idea that "a woman's place is in the home" has long been shattered by reality. Women now form 41% of the workforce and can expect to spend on average 30 years of their lives in employment.

The resolution on the agenda at this year's conference reflect the problems women face both at home and at work.

One-quarter of all working mothers work mainly because the family does not have enough money. A staggering three times as many families would be entitled to supplementary benefit if mothers did not work.

But a Tory government has been elected since the writing of these resolutions and so the proposals in them take on a far more urgent note.

Bigger gap

There are resolutions congratulating the Labour government for introducing legislation aiming to bring about the equality of women; but they also recognise that serious inequalities and disadvantages still exist.

A recent survey carried out by a women's magazine revealed that the average earnings for working mothers was a scandalous 90p an hour! This compares with £1.48 for women generally and £2.49 for male workers.

The gap in pay between men and women has been widening since the Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1975.

Many resolutions take up the problems of low pay and call for a national minimum wage of £70 a week to end

By
Heather
Rawling

poverty wages. They recognise that low pay is a problem for men as well as women, and the resolution from Manchester Moss Side CLP calls for the implementation of Clause IV part 4 of the Labour Party constitution as the only long-term solution to the problem of low pay.

Resolutions also deal with the question of unemployment, and show particular concern at the danger for the development of new office technology has for women employed as secretaries and in other office jobs.

Only the resolution from Llanelli Women's Council, however, really gets to grips with the whole issue of unemployment. This motion recognises that unemployment is a product of the deep and intractable crisis of capitalism and puts forward realistic demands to overcome unemployment.

The resolution demands that every worker should be entitled to a job and calls for nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management of all firms threatening redundancies and a socialist plan of production to ensure the most efficient use of resources.

Nursery places

Inevitably, many resolutions take up the need to provide more nursery facilities to allow mothers to go out to work. A mere 2% of mothers with children under five find nursery places for their children.

There are only 5 day nurseries for every 1,000 pre-school children in London. Yet during the war when the economy desperately needed women to go out to work, nurseries sprang up everywhere.

The lack of nurseries and child care facilities means that employers can take advantage and exploit women even further.

It forces working mothers to work unsocial hours, often without any extra payment or shift allowance.

Militant Meeting HOW TO FIGHT THE TORIES

Speaker: Tony Saunois [LPYS rep on NEC]
Monday 18 June, 7.30 pm
Felixstowe Town Hall

SOCIALIST RESOLUTIONS ON AGENDA SHOW THE WAY FORWARD

The resolution 36 from Heywood and Royton, Royton and Wardle Women's Section, should be supported by all delegates. It not only demands that nursery day care and education should be seen as a right of every pre-school child, but it deals with the way these demands can be implemented.

demanding reforms that should have been carried out twenty years ago. With the election of the most reactionary Tory government since the war, the Labour Women's Conference needs more than ever before to take up the issues on the agenda and campaign in the broader labour movement for their

On unemployment, even more urgent for women workers with the threat from new technology, only Llanelli's resolution really comes to grips with the issue. It calls for the nationalisation under workers' control and management of all firms threatening redundancies

Many resolutions on the agenda state what reforms are needed, but they do not say how these reforms can be implemented at a time when capitalism is in crisis and the bosses are looking to prune the welfare state not extend it. Resolution 36 refers to the need to establish a socialist planned economy to provide the resources for improvements in child care.

On the agenda at this year's conference are resolutions

implementation.

Because the burden of family responsibilities, whether it is looking after the young or the old, falls mainly on the shoulders of women, they will be particularly hard hit by any cuts the Tories intend to inflict on the welfare state.

Class solidarity

Women need to stand together with their brothers in the labour movement. A growing number of women are seeing the need to join a trade union (1,320,773 more women joined a trade union from 1962 to 1975).

More women are seeing the need to take action to defend themselves. The recent low-pay dispute involved a large number of women workers



Ellen Gattagner, victimised shop steward at Grosvenor Park Hotel where chambermaids have been sacked.

who were forced to take action because they were unable to survive any longer on poverty wages.

It is for this reason that resolution 75, which states that "those employed in essential services, e.g. electricity and gas industries, police, etc. should not be allowed to strike" should be thrown out by conference.

If this resolution were implemented, it would throw away the basic right to strike

and lead to a further decline in the wages of workers who are already badly paid.

If the Women's Section took the socialist proposals on the agenda to the broader labour movement and launched a campaign for a socialist planned economy, then we could begin to talk about what Engels wrote over 100 years ago... "the human family would jump from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom."



December 1978: G&MWU members from Wandsworth Council picket Square in low-pay campaign

AUTOMATING THE OFFICE — WHO REALLY BENEFITS?

Office work is traditionally little associated with capital investment. Now we are faced with a bewildering variety of complex machines thrusting their way into the office environment.

These 'advances' are of vital concern to women workers. Employment amongst women is concentrated precisely in those areas of the economy which stand to lose most from the onslaught of this new technology.

Presently, clerical and office employment provides three million women with employment, i.e. employment for two out of five of all women workers.

Prospects for the future can only be guessed at. But West German suppliers of office equipment, Siemens, estimated that office employment in Germany could fall 40% by 1990. This would mean a loss of two million jobs.

Word processors

The publication 'Computers in Offices', published by the Department of Employment, estimated a net loss of 400,000 office jobs between 1964-79, directly as a consequence of computerisation.

This is nothing compared with the impact of micro-processors on office work and office employment. A disturbing trend is already emerging. From January 1976 to September 1978, male unemployment rose by 29% whereas female unemployment rose by 67%.

Predictions about the automated office are based upon silicon chip technology, which has dramatically reduced the

cost and size of electronic aids.

Office work consists primarily of acquiring, storing, transforming, presenting and sending information. The computer, word-processing machines, and electronic accounting machines represent the machinery by which means this information can and will be handled in the future.

It is the word-processing machine which is currently attracting a great deal of attention. Consisting of a keyboard, a visual display unit and printer, with facilities for storing text, these machines are capable of boosting typing output by up to 400%.

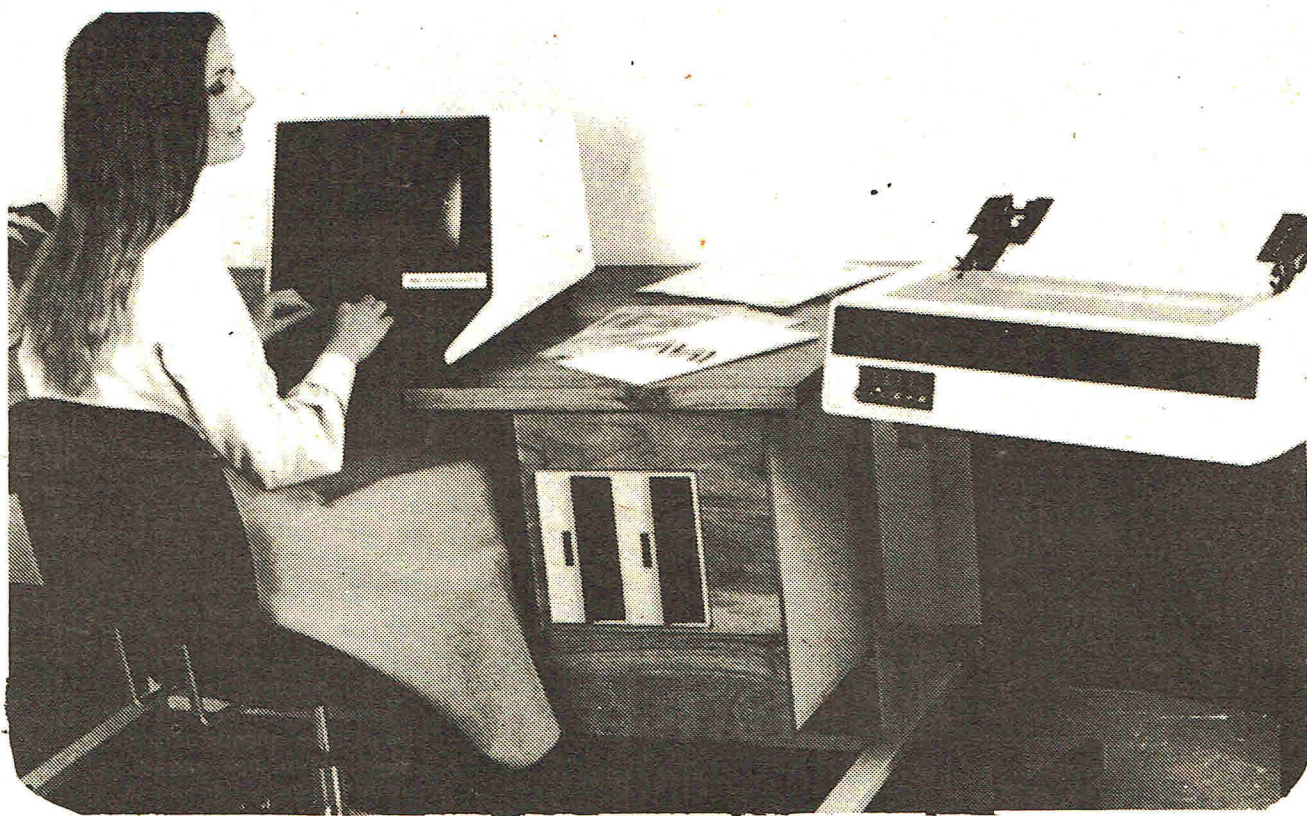
In their most advanced form, the machines are capable of printing at the rate of 20,000 lines a minute. As the machine automatically centres, indents and justifies margins, the skills required of the typist are reduced. And this is only the start.

Already it is possible for word-processor terminals to communicate with each other over a telephone wire—electronic mail untouched by human hand!

Over 9,000 of these machines are currently in use in the UK. By 1981, the number will have doubled. Most large business use them and are "saving" staff as a result. Bradford Council, for example, installed nine word-processors and reduced its typing pool from 44 to 22.

Despite the far-reaching consequences for employment, the trade union movement has been slow off the mark. This has been partly due to the relative weakness of trade unionism in this area (a situation which is changing rapidly, e.g. female membership of APEX grew by 92% between 1967 and 1977).

But it also reflects a failure by the unions to realise the implications and a failure to take effective action. In the civil service, for example, not until management were specifically asked about the



The new word processor—'progress' threatens millions of people's livelihood

situation last year did it come to light that 34 stand-alone word-processors were already in use in 12 different departments.

These machines are now the subject of trial and evaluation. Their future use will be brought under control and terms for their employment will be set by the union.

More intensive

Impact on jobs is just one aspect of the problems which will be created by the new technology. Increased capital investment in the office will lead inevitably to pressure for more "round the clock" working.

These pressures must be resisted. However, it is worth noting that in 1964 only 17% of large users of computers use them for more than 120 hours per week. By 1969, this figure had grown to 63%.

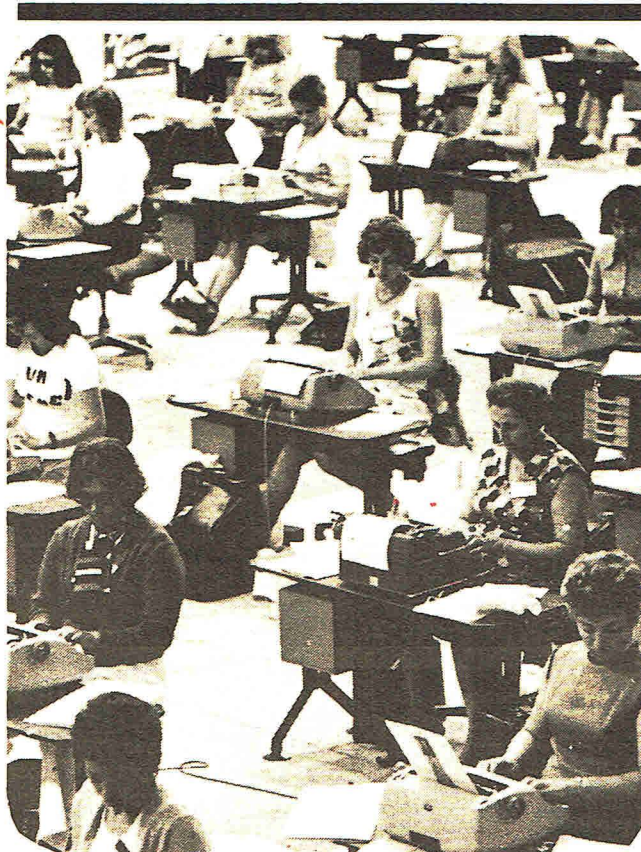
Increased control over workers is a further dimension. Micro-processors give the employer the opportunity to programme equipment to record the work rate of the operator.

Supermarket checkouts provide one example where the speed of each operator in manipulating the till keyboard can be automatically recorded. Operators in Norway refused to submit to this indignity.

Word-processors and data preparation machines (PCK) provide further examples. Operators at the Premium Bonds office in Lytham are blocking the re-programming of their machines. This re-programming would enable the machines to identify the operators and measure and record speed of work and actual time spent working.

Health hazards associated with the new office technology are still being explored. These range from the obvious, e.g. effects on the eyesight, to the less obvious, e.g. nervous tension.

Stephanie Walker, Civil and Public Services Association, CAA Group Assistant Secretary, examines the effects of new technology on office jobs



The women who will be out

Continuous monitoring produces strain. Systematic removal of "non-productive" tasks, e.g. filing, copying, increases intensity of work and cuts down the opportunity for developing any form of social relationships. Office workers increasingly tied to their machines in much the same way as a

factory conveyor belt is the vision for the future if the bosses have their way.

In whose interest is this technological "progress"? As things stand, there is very little advantage to the worker. Safeguards crucial to workers under this new technology are not forthcoming within the framework of capitalism.

Evidence of this is the 1.3 million workers who already cannot be found employment.

T.U. safeguards

In a socialist economy, the new technology based on micro-processors would have enormous potential. In the area of administration, documentation, filing and communication could be made infinitely more efficient. Human labour now squandered on boring, routine work, could be released for more beneficial work—with much more free time into the bargain.

But in a capitalist economy, where the profit motive and the anarchy of the market turns progress in its opposite, the trade unions have no choice but to defend workers against the negative effects of electronic innovations:

★ No new technology without a substantially reduced working week. For clerical employment, this must mean a 30-hour week.

★ No loss of posts, sharing of work if necessary with no loss of pay. No selling of jobs for lump sum redundancy payments.

★ Introduction of all new equipment to be subject to union consultation and agreement. No downgrading of jobs.

★ No extension of unsocial hour working.

★ Full examination of health hazards associated with new machinery. Time limits on working with generous fatigue breaks.

★ Outright opposition to these machines monitoring workers' output and effort.

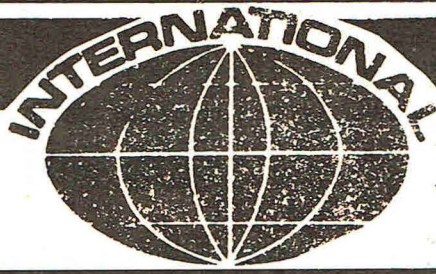
Stephanie Walker writes in a personal capacity.

Much relevant information is set out in the latest Counter Information Services report, *The New Technology* (75p)



management HQ in Belgrave

'One Hand Tied Behind Us'
—Review, page 5



POLAND: FORWARD INTO THE PAST?

The Western press has given enthusiastic coverage to the Pope's recent visit to Poland. According to the Western media, the crowds flocking to see John Paul II show how the Polish people really reject communism and want to return to capitalism.

That many Polish people have channelled their opposition to the ruling bureaucratic clique through the Roman Catholic Church is not in doubt. But opposition to the dictatorship does not mean they want to get rid of the state ownership of industry.

Polish workers in revolt against the regime have repeatedly called for real socialism based on workers' democracy to be introduced.

The mood of Polish workers towards the regime is shown in the following report of a recent visit to Poland by a LPYS member.

"The smouldering fuse of the Poles' disgust with the ruling caste is easily seen. Curses greet the appearances of party officials on the TV. Sardonic quips give the lie to kept academics' references to 'socialism'. Cynicism and sullen glares follow the limousine-encased bureaucrat and his police escort.

But the Poles' naked hatred is reserved for the militia. A hatred that increases in proportion to the amount of repression experienced in the 1976 'food riots'.

The militia are rightly seen as the coercive arm of the bureaucracy. The Poles express their feelings toward the militia quite bluntly: "...if one dropped in the street no-one would lift a finger."

One young woman speaking outside the 'Tomb of the Unknown Warrior' made sure that the army soldiers guarding that Second World War monument heard her: "I see Russian troops have taken to disguising themselves in Polish uniform."

When I first arrived I was puzzled by references to "The Mafia".

Enquiring how such a thing could exist under the nose of such a harsh regime, I was

told that the "Mafia" referred to the government itself.

It had earned this title because "the only people who get rich here are the Party and their crooks."

Poles discuss politics as British male workers discuss football. The only difference is that the Poles must discuss their favourite topic in private.

Hopes expressed to me centred on a democratisation of the existing system. Workers' control instead of bureaucratic control. A political revolution.

"We need a return to the communism of Marx and Engels"—the view from an older car worker: hardly a plea for "free enterprise".

And as some young people explained: "Even the most anti-Stalinist sections of the intelligentsia do not believe that it is possible to return to a capitalistic system."

Roy Medvedev, a Russian dissident, explains the situation in the Stalinist states thus:

"Having removed control of their workplaces from the bureaucracy, the workers are hardly likely to hand power over to some capitalist class."

Despite criticisms of the

bureaucracy, there was considerable support for the planned economy and state ownership of industry and the economic benefits it had brought. Rents, gas and electricity are incredibly cheap. The state provides free travel to and from work, nursery facilities, and a comprehensive health service. The education system is praised without reservation.

But there was great anger at the astronomical prices of consumer products, especially food.

Food prices

In 1970 a Polish family spent 50% of their income on food. A young couple I spoke to estimated that they spent nearly 80% of their combined income of food—even though the husband was earning higher wages than those of most skilled workers.

It was the announcement in June 1976 that food prices were to go up 60% which finally triggered off mass protest.

Led by the dockers many of the Baltic towns came out on strike. The Ursus factory complex struck.

A general strike erupted

into rioting. A mood of militant discontent swept the country. After two days the price rises were withdrawn.

People who participated in these struggles told me of the following:

In one suburb a pregnant woman was cold-bloodedly shot by a militia man for agitating against the price rises. This provoked a local strike and a mass of hatred which culminated in an assault on any militia men found on the streets.

The workers fought with coshes and hand-guns, with paving stones and fists. Thirty militia men were killed; many hundreds injured.

No figures were available for the population's casualties. The militia were totally absent from the area for days.

When workers in a nearby suburb heard of these events they immediately struck in solidarity. The militia vanished.

Here again not a uniform was to be seen for several days. However, the workers were to pay a price for their defiance.

After the price increases were withdrawn and people began to return to work, lorry-loads of the militia



Off to see the Pope

poured into the trouble spots. Anyone found on the streets was severely beaten.

When the workers of one particular factory returned to work they found vans of militia men waiting outside the factory gates. All were beaten with coshes as they attempted to enter their workplace.

Surreptitiously since 1976 the regime has increased the price of food. As they re-established control, and no organised opposition was able to successively sustain a battle against the regime, workers returned to two main 'escapes' from the drudgery of everyday life: the Catholic Church and alcoholism.

Eighty per cent of the population go to church and there is now a tacit, although tense, alliance between the hierarchies of church and state.

Many workers also find comfort in alcohol.

Vodka is the national drink and is taken at any excuse—including breakfast, and toasting Gierek, the present ruler, when he catches the flu.

It is not unusual to find people asleep on grass verges or collapsing on the way home from work. Drinking at work

is a major problem; the accident rate among industrial workers is high.

But the deadening of the mind, either by religion or alcohol, offers no solution to the problems facing Polish workers.

The regime is scared of the workers' power, in whose name they rule, and shies away from direct conflict. That is why they have allowed the Pope's visit, as a dead-end channel for discontent.

Despite the Pope's criticisms, the Roman Catholic Church is now a bulwark for the regime.

Many workers, especially young people, whom I met were prepared to struggle for an alternative. They felt intimidated by Russian military might.

But they had drawn the lessons from the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, that gradual reforms were a suicidal blind alley.

Only a political revolution to replace the ruling clique offered any hope. And the struggle for a workers' democracy in Poland would have enormous repercussions in Eastern Europe and could cut across intervention by the other ruling cliques." //

COUP IN GHANA

Last week's coup in Ghana is an indication of the instability, economic chaos and mismanagement which capitalism has brought to the country.

Ghana has been tied by the world capitalist market to the export of one main cash crop—cocoa. But production of cocoa is now down to 1958 levels, the economy is in ruins with inflation at over 100%.

Last year the IMF granted Ghana \$98m in loans—on condition. Firstly a devalua-

tion of the currency (depressing the cocoa price still further) and then a programme of economic austerity.

This aroused great opposition from the Ghanaian people. They demanded an end to corrupt and inefficient military rule and the generals were forced to make concessions.

Elections were due to be held next week, with the transfer to civilian rule on July 1st.

It is not clear at present

whether the Revolutionary Council who have now taken over will allow this process to take place. The junior air-force officers who took over last week were undoubtedly affected by the people's hostility to the officer caste in the army.

Their coup was that of the radical petty-bourgeoisie. On the Revolutionary Council there are three majors, a captain, several NCOs and a private.

Their leader, Fl Lt Rawlings, has talked of

cleaning up the country so that Ghana could "go the Ethiopian way."

In this he reflects the impossibility of Ghana continuing to stagger on in the same capitalist manner. The economic and political impasse of the country is clear.

But, military coups, from however 'radical' a source, cannot really build a new free society. That would entail as a first step real power coming into the hands of workers, small farmers and peasants of Ghana.

NICARAGUA

In a renewed offensive against the dictator of Nicaragua, the Sandinista guerrilla movement attacked army posts in all the main cities last week. This was combined with a general strike in the capital, Managua.

The Sandinistas are clearly hoping that this will prove to be the 'final offensive' against the dictator Somoza. For forty-two years, he, his brother and his father have plundered the country.

Even his ally, the USA, has now turned against him as they want him to be ousted before Nicaragua becomes another Cuba. [See 'Militant' 'Downfall of a Tyrant?' May 11th]. The American imperialists' 'change of heart' may well be too late as whole sections of the Nicaraguan people now enter the struggle against their own exploitation.



VORSTER GOES, APARTHEID CONTINUES

The resignation of Vorster as President of South Africa has not weakened apartheid rule. If anything the 'Muldergate' disclosures have strengthened the forces of repression.

The new Prime Minister, Botha, relies even more than his predecessor on the armed forces as his power base. He has now established the routine of the Chiefs of the Armed Forces meeting with him the day before Cabinet meetings to discuss political business.

In the aftermath of the scandal disclosures, the South African ruling class have tightened up the censorship

laws to protect the police, oil purchases, strategic investments in defence, and further fettered the press with new restrictions.

Vorster had to go because he had been found out. His 'crime' was not the murder or repression of thousands of Africans during his rule as Prime Minister and before that Police Minister.

For the South African ruling class that kind of action is acceptable and necessary if they are to maintain their privileges and power.

It was not either the secret policies of creating pro-gov-

ernment newspapers or buying up foreign press agencies which forced Vorster's resignation. After all, Botha's Finance Minister, Owen Horwood, who approved all these secret projects, is still in the Cabinet.

Vorster's sole sin was that he had become a political liability for the South African ruling class. He had to go to make it easier for his successor.

Botha is now engaged in a new tactic of trying to buy time for capitalism in South Africa by giving minor concessions to middle-class Blacks. He has used the

Muldergate disclosures to weed out many of those in the ruling Nationalist Party who wanted to cling to the old tactics.

'Muldergate' has shown the splits amongst the South African ruling-class, on how to prevent the exploding revolution in the sub-continent.

Vorster's going does not alter the maintenance of apartheid one whit. But it is a further indication of the political crisis which overshadows everything in South Africa today.

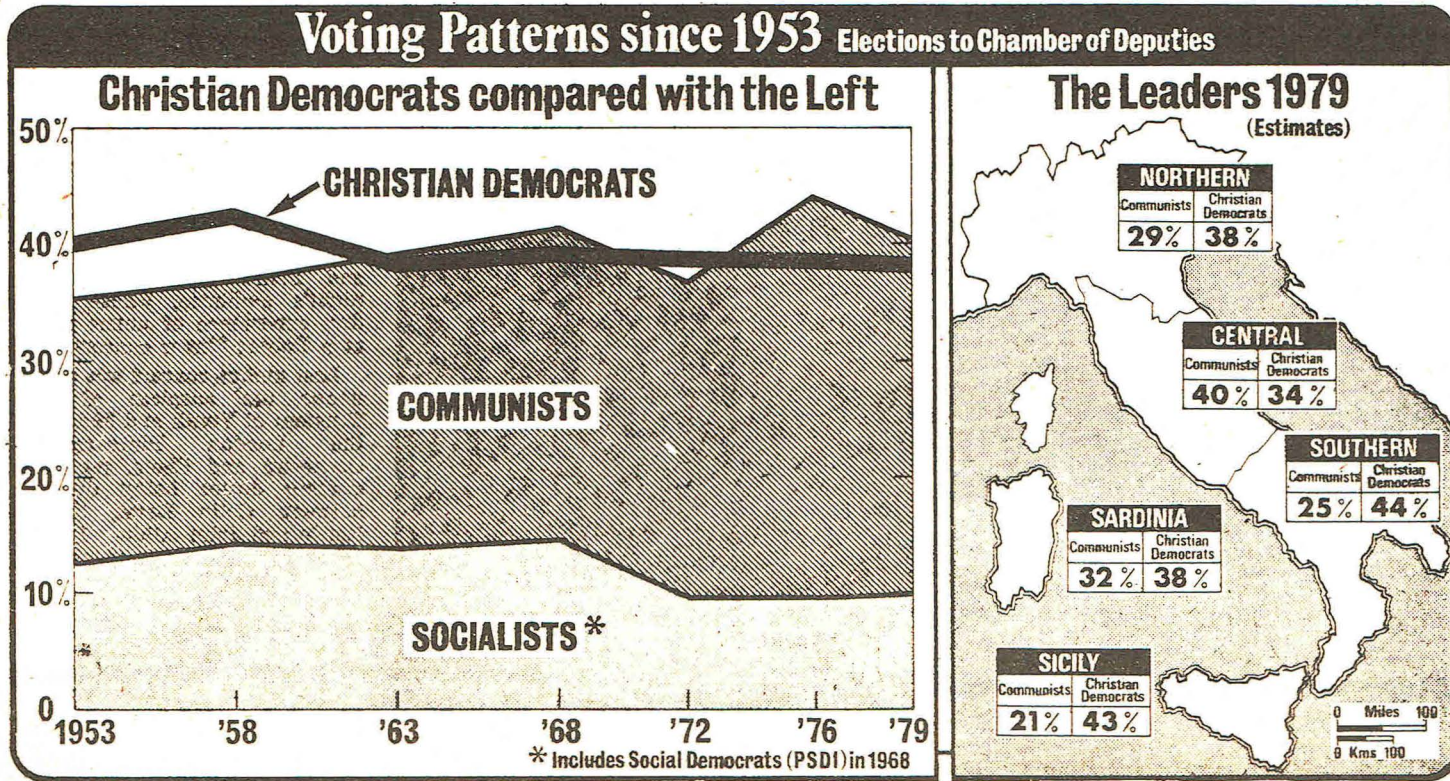
Militant International Articles on Review

★ Iran ★ Middle East ★ Britain

Price 40p (plus 10p P&P) from 1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

Communists lose votes but.....

No solution in sight for Italy's capitalists



The sharp drop in the Italian Communist Party's [PCI] vote in the Italian election has not solved a single problem for the Italian ruling class.

In fact the Christian Democrats continued on their slow decline, losing another 0.5% of their share of the national vote and 1 seat.

The 'Morning Star' quoted one PCI leader, Aldo Tortella, as admitting that "many voters who had voted Communist in 1976 for the first time, hoping to see quick changes had been disappointed and had registered a vote for one of the smaller parties as a protest at the way things had gone." (5/6/79).

This election is a devastating comment on the PCI's leaders' strategy of trying to form a coalition (an 'historic compromise') with the Italian Tories—the Christian Democrats. From the autumn of 1976 until January of last year the PCI leaders kept the CDs in office by abstaining in key Parliamentary votes.

Then they were forced by the pressure of the working class to oppose that government. But the PCI leaders then helped resolve that particular crisis by agreeing that they would be part of the parliamentary majority supporting the new CD government under Andreotti, who had also been Prime Minister of the previous government.

But neither of these two Tory governments (in spite of PCI support) have been able to resolve Italy's crisis in the interests of working people. On the contrary, as would be expected from a big business government, both Christian Democrat administrations attempted to introduce austerity plans and fell in the face of working class opposition.

The very fact that these

elections were held two years early and that the previous parliament had seen two governments collapse is a testimony to severe strains throughout Italy.

Unemployment last April was 1,600,000, 7.5% of the working population. 70% of the unemployed are under 30 years old. Inflation is officially running at 14.3% a year and has been accelerating every month so far this year.

Stagnation

Investment has slowed down as during the last five years the average return on capital invested has fallen from 10.6% to 6.5%.

Added to this economic situation, there are the social ills afflicting Italy.

The death of scores of babies in Naples earlier this year provided just one glimpse of the appalling conditions under which many Italians live. In Naples 24,000 families have no running water, while 30,000 dwellings have no flush toilets.

10% of the 1,500,000 people who live in Naples are unemployed and in the words of the 'Financial Times' eke "out a hand-to-mouth existence in a maze of insalubrious streets and unsavoury tenements" (25/5/79). In Southern Italy, the Mezzogiorno, 25% of under 30 year olds are unemployed, compared with 15% in the north and a national average of 18%.

It has been these factors which have lain behind the last eleven years of class struggle in Italy. These years have seen a series of magnificent movements by the Italian workers not only to win reforms but also to change

society.

A common slogan which has been chanted on the workers' demonstrations this year is "Andreotti you're wrong! The working class is the ruling class!"

But tragically the workers leaders have diverted the demands for a workers' government, an alternative to the Christian Democracy, into attempts to pressurise the CD to accept the PCI into a coalition government.

The PCI leaders have consistently either restrained the workers' movement or merely used it to pressurise the CDs into making some concessions. After the 1976 election the PCI leaders supported the Andreotti governments in the hope of proving to big business how 'responsible' they were.

At the same time the PCI union leaders, like Lama, publically spoke of the need for wage restraint. But, unfortunately for the PCI leaders, this policy did not give them Cabinet seats. The CDs and big business could see no reason to let the PCI into the government, so long as it was ably supporting it from outside the Cabinet room.

Unrest

At the same time this policy of supporting the capitalist government naturally began to provoke dissatisfaction among workers who could not see any positive results from it. Each time Andreotti attempted to introduce an austerity plan the PCI leaders were forced to oppose it by mass pressure from below.

The union leaders were finding it increasingly difficult to 'control' their members. The strength of the so-called autonomous unions—those unions not affiliated to either of the big three federations, the CGIL, CISL or UIL—was increasing as

they were prepared to lead struggles.

When the main unions did organise campaigns they were beginning to lose control of the direction of the battle. In the Alitalia and Ali airline strikes at the beginning of this year the workers forced 'battle committees' which took over the running of the struggle.

The last government, Italy's 40th since 1943, collapsed when the PCI and the Socialist Party (PSI) combined to defeat it on a confidence vote. The two workers' parties had been

'Scala Mobile', the agreement whereby wages are automatically increased in line with inflation.

This sharp clash of interests has resulted in a whole series of strikes.

In this situation it will be impossible for Italian big business to create a stable government. Andreotti will remain head of a caretaker government until the new parliament meets.

Then there will be an attempt to patch up a new coalition or basis of support for a minority government.

Whatever weak government emerges will be plunged into crisis and the capitalists will be forced to look towards including the PCI leaders in the government in order to use them to restrain the working class

forced to do this by the massive opposition which had built up to the austerity plan prepared by the then Treasury Minister Pandolfi. (see 'Militant' February 2 and June 1).

As the 'Financial Times' commented "by last January the contradictions of...being, in the words of Sig. Enrico Berlinguer (PCI General Secretary), a party of 'struggle and government' had become too great, and the disgruntlement of party militants too big to ignore" (9/4/79).

Throughout this year the pressure from the working class has been building up. The wage agreements for over ten million workers have to be negotiated this year.

Already Guido Carli, president of the bosses' organisation the Confindustria, has pledged total opposition to the workers' demands for a shorter working week and the bosses have, in addition, demanded an end to the

But whatever arrangement is put together the government will be incapable of implementing the severe measures which the Italian capitalists have been demanding to hold down living standards and reduce public spending. Every time a government has attempted such measures it has either been forced to retreat or collapsed in the face of working class opposition.

'Hot autumn'

It is because of this situation that it is probable that in the near future the PCI leaders will enter a coalition government, despite the PCI's recent loss of votes. The PCI's loss of support will encourage many workers to look to industrial action to secure improvements in their conditions.

It is highly likely that Italy will face another 'hot autumn'

of class battles.

Already Italy's three biggest trade union federations have called a four-hour general strike for June 19th—one day before the new Parliament is due to meet. The strike is part of the fight for a decent wage in the engineering, construction, textile and clothing industries.

In such a situation whatever weak government emerges from the backdoor parliamentary dealings will be plunged into crisis and the capitalists would be forced to look towards including the PCI leaders in the government in order to use them to restrain the working class.

Coalition

But the entry of the PCI leaders into the government would be a double-edged sword. On the one hand the PCI leaders would be able to use their authority as leaders of the workers' movement to appeal for 'calm', 'restraint' etc. But at the same time they would be under enormous pressure to deliver concrete reforms.

Millions of workers hope that the entry of the PCI into the government would mean that the working class would have a say in running the country.

But these hopes will be dashed, because the capitalist CDs would only be prepared to form a coalition with the PCI on the basis of the PCI leaders agreeing to operate within the capitalist system. This would rule out such a government producing any lasting reforms.

The dashing of workers hopes would have a profound effect on the PCI itself. Already the PCI leaders' policy of supporting the two previous governments has produced enormous strains inside the party and the PCI-led CGIL.

Future

Opposition has already been expressed to this policy, last year, for the first time in years, party membership fell and now this election setback will increase the dissatisfaction and doubts about the leadership's policies. But this questioning is nothing compared to the turmoil which would begin to develop inside the PCI when its leaders are sitting in a coalition government which is carrying out capitalist policies.

Already many Italian workers are attempting to draw a balance sheet of their experiences over the last decade of struggle. In both the Italian workers' parties, the PCI and PSI, conflicts have been opening up.

The strategies of both the PCI and PSI leaders have not advanced the parties in this election and the active layers will be beginning to come into opposition to the leaders. These pressures, added to the class battles which will explode this year, are laying the basis for a rapid growth in support for a Marxist programme which will arm the Italian working class with the policies necessary to carry through the socialist transformation of society.

By Bob Labi

LETTERS

Send your views and comments on the issues that affect you to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

"Change in government policy" = dole queues

Dear Comrades

The full significance of what the Tory government means was brought home to me last week.

A student friend who for the last two years has spent his summer holidays working in the Department of Employment was accepted again this year. However, last Monday he was sent a standard letter which regretted that "due to a change in government policy" they were unable to accept him after all.

This was enough to bring home the harshness of Toryism, until two days later I received a similar letter which regretted the fact that they could no longer consider me for a permanent job in the civil service. Thousands of young people must be in the same position.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Jim Prior, the Tories' "employment" spokesman should shrug his shoulders last month when unemployment, at least officially, went down. His message was that it should top two million before long.

How could it fail to with the policies of the most right-wing administration in living memory?

Fraternally
Lewis Matheson
Kelvingrove LPYS

Spanish workers future lies with Marxism

Dear Comrades

The recent vote at the PSOE Congress to retain the Marxist identity of the party and the subsequent resignation of the Schmidt inspired 'social democrat', Felipe Gonzalez, bears witness to the fundamental Marxist orientation of the mass party of the Spanish workers.

After the spectacular socialist gains in the local elections in March, it is clear that the Marxist alternative has a real attraction for the steely Spanish working-class.

As a result of this Congress it is even more clear that the future of Spanish society and the victory of socialism in Spain lie in the hands of the Marxists within the PSOE.

Yours fraternally
Anthony Begley
Stafford and Stone LPYS

FASCISM— A MENACE TO THE WORKING CLASS

Dear Comrades

Having read the letter ['Militant' 458] 'Support Free Speech', I think the Comrade should bear in mind that Hitler himself admitted that had he been challenged in the beginning he would never have come to power. To ignore fascism is to encourage it.

There are thousands of working class people, young and old, who are either unemployed or working for starvation wages, many live in appalling conditions and have neither the energy nor the heart to try to change things. It is this demoralised and despondent section of people

who are most vulnerable to the demagoguery of the National Front and other groups like them.

We should learn from the lessons of past struggles and remember that whenever the working class have been under attack the ruling class has allowed fascism to flourish. This menace to society should be actively fought by us in every way possible.

While we have capitalism we will have fascism. Capitalism we cannot ignore, fascism we must not ignore.

Fraternally
Pam Tweed
NSMM

Scottish Trades Councils

Dear Comrades

'Militant's' article on trades councils (issue 456) referred only to England and Wales, where trades councils are independent of the TUC.

In Scotland the situation is different in that we have 44 trades councils affiliated to the STUC. In effect we are the agents of the STUC and its policy, which is decided at each annual conference. Each trades council in Scotland is allowed up to 3 delegates to annual conference and one representative is elected to the General Council.

Although trades councils are expected to carry out the general policy of the STUC, this does not restrict us from being actively involved in any issue we think is important to the community both locally and nationally.

By working closely with the STUC we are able to draw on the vast experience of the more than 1 million trade unionists which it represents. We are also in a good position to criticise the shortcomings of the leadership and the sometimes lumbering attitude of General Council in fighting for our aim of achieving a socialist society.

I believe, like the 'Militant', that trades councils will, as in 1926, play the leading role in co-ordinating the movement when the inevitable confrontation with the capitalist class takes place. I am confident that if we are armed with a Marxist programme put forward by 'Militant' we can overcome all obstacles.

Yours fraternally
Richard Vivian
Midlothian and East Lothian Trades Council

Thanks to the LPYS and 'Militant'

Comrade Editor and Comrades

Through the letters page of 'Militant', I would like to thank the LPYS comrades and 'Militant' supporters for the great help given to us during our mass canvass for Terry Harrison, our "Euro" election candidate.

Through this help we were able in one weekend to

canvass an area that took 3 or 4 of us over a week to cover during the May election. One can appreciate how heartening it was for us to have the ideas of socialism taken out to people [and being well received] in what is considered a "safe Tory area".

Comrades, if we could have had you here for a week, I'm sure that this "Tory area"

would not have been quite so "safe"!

Your efforts are very much appreciated, and have provided another step in building a viable and fighting Labour Party branch here.

Fraternal greetings to all
Dave Power
Secretary, Liverpool Church Ward Labour Party

Fight for socialist leadership

Dear Comrades

I read an article in a Sunday paper a few weeks ago by Sir Harold Wilson on whom he thought would be the likeliest successor to Callaghan.

His reply was—Roy Mason! One of the most right-wing members of Callaghan's Cab-

inet in the last government.

Every socialist knows especially the suffering people, of Northern Ireland, what this would do to the labour movement both in Ireland and Britain.

So rally round comrades, and fight for socialist policies

and leaders.

Fraternally
Tony Kelly
Secretary Banbury LPYS and NI Labour & TU Group

Making a profit out of nature

Dear Comrades

'Militant' readers may have heard that the Nature Conservancy Council have recently bought part of the Ribble Estuary.

This was the climax of a huge campaign by conservationists to save an important wildlife habitat. Needless to say certain capitalists managed to make a killing out of it.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in the Summer edition of their magazine 'Birds', reported that when the RSPB entered into negotiations last summer to buy the 5,500 acres in question, the District put a

price of £560,000 on the land. They were, however, unsuccessful and developers bought the land for a rumoured £1 million.

Had the land been reclaimed, it would have destroyed an important habitat for wild birds and other animals. Instead the developers sold it to the Nature Conservancy Council nine months later for £1.725 million.

By just threatening to destroy this habitat, they made £¾ million.

The RSPB are calling for planning controls so that threatened sites can be protected from this blackmail by

speculators. No real solution will be found, though, until all land is taken under public ownership and control.

Development could then take place under proper control, with due consideration given to the need to conserve important wildlife habitats in order to protect the species of animals that live there. Such areas would also provide a place for education and recreation in the increased leisure time that a technological society is capable of giving us.

Yours fraternally
John Brierley
Leigh Park, Hants

AM I BEING EXPLOITED?

Dear Comrades

I'm a trainee construction engineer with a well-known northern-based building company. As a trainee engineer I occasionally see confidential company documents. Last week I saw one which sums up the system under which we live.

It was a letter to another

company, from my own, claiming compensation for time spent by our engineers sorting out faulty material sent to us.

According to the letter, the company value me at £60 per week. They pay me at £33 per week! Am I being exploited?

Yours fraternally
An AUEW TASS member

Hobbies have been noted exclusive British makers of the incredible NG range. These fine O gauge models are engineered to the highest possible standard and hand assembled and finished by Switzerland's leading model engineer. The SPANISCH RÖTTLI-BAHN illustrated is a fine scale 1 gauge fitted with high quality electric drive, all exposed brass parts are gold plated. Loco and coach certainly follows the proto-type to the finest detail - has been described as the best value model train offered at this year's Nuremberg Fair. Expensive? yes, £5,000 then quality never comes cheap! Come and inspect this fine model, and form your own view about its worth in years to come.

EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A HOBBY

Dear Comrades

I have often wondered exactly what the rich do with all our hard-earned cash when they are not buying yachts, Rolls Royce cars and travelling the world.

'Militant's' articles on the products retailed by Harrod's were most enlightening and in the same vein, I thought the enclosed extract from a model

magazine might be of interest to any workers with £5,000 to spend on a toy train.

You will of course need a house with extensive grounds to accommodate the track which will be four or five inches wide.

Yours fraternally
T Wrightson
Manchester

MILITANTS BUDGET

Build Militant

With little or no growth forecast by all the major economists, it is obvious that the enormous sacrifices of the past years on the part of the workers and their families could do nothing to revive the ailing capitalist system.

Yet the Tories have shown with their budget, that they will persist in demanding MORE!

'Militant' claims that only a socialist organisation of society can guarantee growth. Every week it provides more facts, figures and argument to back up its case. It helps you to convince other workers of the need to take an active part in changing their grim conditions of existence.

But we cannot produce the material we do without the money that you give! We ask unashamedly for sacrifices on the part of our supporters as it is the only way a Marxist paper can grow. And, unlike the sacrifices you are forced to make for the bosses, these bear immediate results.

Witness the growth in the size and resources of our fighting workers' paper. The next step is dramatically to improve the photographic processing and plate-making facilities of the 'Militant' at an immediate cost of £10,000.

So...achievement of the half year target is not just a 'luxury', it is vital! To do it, the 'Militant' needs more money coming in...much more! More even than this week's excellent total of £1,157. In fact, to reach the £42,500 figure by the July 7th deadline we need £16,495 more.

Broken down into the areas on the chart it means the following:

Eastern region supporters must send another £1,090 to reach their half-year target. £20 this week included £5 from a 'Militant' meeting in Luton.

Hants & IOW needs another £559. Just £3.85 for this week must be vastly improved on!

Donations from every reader should get **Humberside** the necessary £285. R Leggott and K Oxborough of Cleethorpes, NUPE member J Kinnard and unemployed workers D Mitchell and M Moorland set the example this week.

In **North London**, M Godson, F Blair, E Castle, C O'Brien and N Grant were among the many contributors to a total of £90. That still leaves an enormous £2,457 to raise in four weeks!

South London supporters must find £582 which means many more contributions like the £5 from H Atkinson of Croydon.

Another £1,046 must reach the 'Militant' from **Manchester and District**. Last week, M Prendeville gave £3 and S Bush of Blackburn donated his refund on LPYS Conference visitor's tickets but next week a hundred readers must be asked to follow their

By Clare Doyle

example!

The two most interesting contributions from **Merseyside** this week were £5 from Eddie Loyden of Garston (ex-MP for the constituency) and £1.60 from sale (as mementos) of "Tory leaflets attacking the 'Militant Trotskyite' Young Socialists in Birkenhead, who were the main workers for Frank Field"! Audacity and initiative are the qualities most needed now to get £1,379 by July 7th!

Only £265 has to be raised in the **East Midlands** but more than one contribution a week (£5.88 from Derbyshire this time) will have to come in!

£90 from **West Midlands** supporters included a £20 donation plus £8.50 from D Jones and £7 from J Phillips 'to build the 'Militant', £3 from V Gates and £20 from a collection of £51 at an Oxford Militant Meeting. Still another £1,797 to go, though!

Northern region supporters have £1,119 to raise in four weeks. They need to catch up a bit as most of the £47 sent this week came from the general election period—cannass teas and sandwiches, election social evening, appeal sheet, 'round for Militant', paper sales 'extras', and £1 from J Hodgson, a 'Tribune' supporter who bet that Labour would win with a 20-40 majority (mistaken perspectives are costly!).

Similar contributions made up nearly £100 from the Falkirk area of **East Scotland**—more than £48 from a meeting collection. J McKay of Pentlands gave £1.40 and Newbattle LPYS came up with another £25—£15 from a social and £10 more "in return for the excellent material contained in 'Militant'." Many thanks comrades, but there's another £916 to get for the half-year target!

By contrast, just £3 (from R Miller) reached us from the **West of Scotland**! Where's the other £1,338 going to come from?

A meeting in Reading that raised £28 and a social in Thanet (£13) helped **South East's** line to within £729 of the end of the chart.

South West is within £393, thanks to contributors like W Coombes who gave £25, R Hartill who gave £6, M Starr (£2.60) and readers at Clark's (Bath) an excellent £10. East Wales can't afford to

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 26 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	2,350		1,260
Hants & IOW	3,100	1,550		991
Humberside	2,000	1,000		715
London North	9,500	4,750		2,293
London South	3,900	1,950		1,368
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	2,250		1,204
Merseyside	5,000	2,500		1,121
Midlands East	3,300	1,650		1,385
Midlands West	9,000	4,500		2,703
Northern	5,500	2,750		1,631
Scotland East	2,900	1,450		534
Scotland West	4,500	2,250		912
South East	4,500	2,250		1,521
South West	3,100	1,550		1,157
Wales East	2,600	1,300		586
Wales West	3,400	1,700		563
Yorkshire	6,800	3,500		1,844
Others	6,700	3,250		4,217
Total	85,000	42,500		26,005

Progress towards year's target  Progress towards July 7th target 

TARGET FOR THE YEAR £85,000 - TARGET FOR JULY 7th £42,500

stay still when there's £714 to get by July 7th and **West Wales** certainly needs more than £1.35 a week to get its £1,137.

A readers' meeting in Wakefield raised £12, Rotherham '50 Club' £8.60, Leeds student Amanda Mares gave £3 and B Robinson (GMWU Rowntree) who has just been in dispute gave £2. But £1,656 from **Yorkshire** in four weeks is going to take many, many more such contributions!

The "Others" line is the only one already at the end of the chart. Nevertheless one

anonymous donation has boosted the total by a very welcome £450. Just as much appreciated amounts like the £42.88 from the Bakers' Conference and £2.80 from R Eskilsson of Sweden have left 'others' with a total of £4,217 and the overall total standing at £26,005.

This figure is a marvellous achievement but to reach our full targets we appeal to every reader to look at their own budgets. Cut back on just one form of expenditure to help 'Militant' expand—budget for growth of the 'Militant'!

THIS WEEK £1,157

£16,500

STILL NEEDED

BY JULY 7th

ads

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

MILITANT ADS

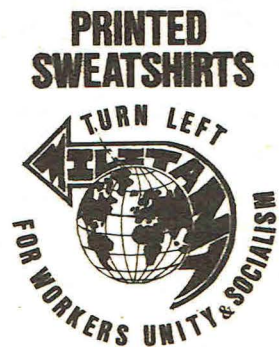
BIRMINGHAM Militant Public Meeting: 'Spanish Socialist Party moves left'. Speaker: Darrell Cozens (Coventry SE Labour Party). The Foyer, Doctor Johnson House, Bull St, Birmingham City Centre. Friday 22nd June 7.30pm.

CAERPHILLY Militant Readers' Meeting: 'Which way forward for the Labour Party after the General Election'. Speaker: Andrew Price (Cardiff South East CLP) Tuesday June 19th 7pm

CLECKHEATON Militant Public Meeting: 'Which Way forward for Labour?' Speaker, Peter Watson (Bradford Labour Party). 7.30pm, Tuesday 26 June, at Marsh Hotel, Bradford Road, Cleckheaton

DAGENHAM & EAST LONDON Militant Public Meeting: 'Fight the Tory attacks'. Speakers: Jim Brookshaw (AUEW 'Times'), Dennis O'Flynn (AUEW Senior Steward, Foundry, Ford Dagenham). 7.30 pm, Monday 25 June Dagenham Labour Hall, Green Lane, Dagenham.

BLYTH Militant Public Meeting: 'Lessons of the Tory government 1970-74'. Sunday 17th June 7.30pm at Blyth Labour Club (off Waterloo Road). All welcome. Plenty of time for questions and discussion.



IN NAVY, RED, BLACK, BOTTLE, SKY, MAROON WITH RED MOTIF
 Sizes: S—32-34"; M—34-36"; L—38-40"; XL-40-42"; Child's—26", 28", 30"
 £5.50 incl. postage & packing Offer lasts until July 13th
 Send size and colour preference with postal order to: R Harris, 249 Margate Rd, Ramsgate, Kent.

ALL PROCEEDS FOR FIGHTING FUND

FELIXSTOWE 'Militant' Public Meeting
 'How to fight the Tories'
 Speaker: Tony Sauniois (LPYS rep on LP NEC)
 Monday 18 June 7.30pm
 Felixstowe Town Hall

PECKHAM LPYS PUBLIC MEETING
 'Which Way for Labour?'
 Speakers: Stuart Holland MP, Andy Bevan (LP National Youth Officer). Monday June 18th, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5. 7.30 pm. All Welcome.

CLASSIFIED

Memorial meeting in memory Comrade Jagmohan Joshi, gen sec, Indian Workers' Association on Sunday 17 June at 2 pm at Birmingham TGWU House, Victoria Square, Birmingham

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE IMMIGRATION LAWS—Public Meeting: 'Fight Thatcher's plans for further racist controls'. Speakers from Black Groups, JCWI, plus Jo Richardson MP. Thursday 21 June 7pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London W1. All Welcome.

MILITANT WEEKEND SCHOOL

Friday June 29th to Sunday July 1st
 At: Goldsmith's College Students' Union, Lewisham Way, London S.E.14.

Courses on:

- ★ Marxist Economics
- ★ Marxist Philosophy
- ★ Marxism and the Trade Unions
- ★ Ireland: History and Perspectives
- ★ Russian Revolution
- ★ The Labour Party

Friday evening: film 'Harlan County'
 Plus: Debate. 'A Socialist Programme for Labour'
 Speakers from 'Militant' and 'Tribune'

Registration: £2.50—whole weekend, £1.50 for Saturday or Sunday only, 75p for Friday evening only.
 To register, or for further information, write to: Militant Marxist Weekend School, 1 Mantmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

BAKERS' UNION: DETERMINED TO GAIN IN STRENGTH

"Over recent years we have seen Labour ministers and union leaders wining, dining, living to a very high standard themselves and expecting nurses, hospital porters, railwaymen, hotel workers, bakers and many others to be restricted and to accept small increases on already small incomes."

These were the words of Terry O'Neill, opening the Margate conference of the Bakers' union. They featured prominently in press reports the following day. In previous years those same papers would not even have bothered to send reporters. Last winter's bitter strike has pushed this small union to the fore of the trade union movement.

The union was in the front line in the fight for a living wage last year. They felt the full ferocity of the Employers' Federation, the police and the press. The serious manner in which the conference discussed future industrial strategy reflected a determination not to repeat the mistakes made in 1978, but to gain strength out of the lessons of that hard and bitter struggle.

Joe Marino moved a resolution to change the basis for electing delegates to conference. He said that it was vital that all members were fully involved in the life of the union. All branches will now have delegates to the conference: before they were elected on a district basis, which left out the smaller branches.

The resolution calling on the Executive to ballot members before strike action was carried, as the conference felt the need for time to campaign for action in order fully to involve the members and overcome one of the weaknesses of last year's strike. Then the strike call took

many by surprise, leaving some confusion in the ranks.

Other resolutions calling for co-operation with other unions and a tactical master-plan on how to wage a struggle were also carried. In these debates, all the major issues of the strike were drawn out. As one delegate put it: "Next time we must be as prepared as the employers."

Frank Booth pointed out that the bosses had entered the fight with all their plans worked out. "They even had back-up plans in case their first ones didn't work out".

The conference still felt there was a need to overcome the effects of the strike: the loss of membership, the need to consolidate and rebuild the confidence and organisation of the members. This was shown by the resolution on wages.

Two decisions indicated the lessons learnt in the school of class struggle. Firstly, the overwhelming vote from the floor of conference that all employers' representatives in the visitors' gallery be removed. Conference also unanimously decided that no fascist be allowed to hold office, and that anyone propagating fascist ideology should be expelled from the Bakers' union.

In these debates the gut feelings of the workers on the picket lines were given expression.

At least one in three of all conference delegates bought a copy of 'Militant'. Others already got the paper weekly at work.

A 'Militant' public meeting held on Tuesday was even more successful than the previous year's. The discussion was both sober and enthusiastic.

Report by
Gerry Lerner

IPCS

This year's conference of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, traditionally perhaps the most conservative of all the civil service unions, saw a mood of anger and frustration at the latest pay settlement and the role played in it by the NEC and General Secretary Bill McCull.

While delegates reserved the main thrust of their anger for the civil service management, it was also expressed in resolutions, the NEC ballot results and in the setting up of 'IPCS Left', the first real attempt at setting up a left pressure group in the union.

Some members of the NEC are known to have worked during the recent civil service wide one-day strike.

Several emergency motions appeared on the order paper calling for the naming and

resignation of those involved. More than one delegate pointed out that to work during a strike which the NEC themselves had recommended to the members was a betrayal of those who did strike.

The NEC said that there should be no resignation over this single issue and that delegates had the right to make their feelings known through the ballot box. However, since they would not reveal who had worked during the strike, it was difficult to know who not to vote for!

It was obvious, however, that large sections of the conference knew who was involved—at least one NEC member lost her seat and another had his vote almost halved.

By an
IPCS member



Bakers on picket line in Walthamstow last year

Photo: MILITANT

UNION CONFERENCE ROUND-UP

NATFHE

The election of a Tory government intent on cutting necessary public expenditure, cast a shadow over the entire conference of the 64,000 strong National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

Already the Tories have announced a £48 million cut from the Youth Opportunities programme, a scheme set up under the last government in an attempt to alleviate youth unemployment.

Conference overwhelmingly passed a resolution from the

NEC committing the union to a campaign against reductions in educational services, seeking the co-operation of other public sector unions.

Lecturers are not prepared to stand idly by while education spending is curbed. Words must now be translated into action: through that action members will realise the need for trade union loyalty and solidarity and for a socialist alternative to end cuts in jobs and services.

By Robin Clapp

DYERS' AND BLEACHERS': Time to fight back

For the first time the Dyers and Bleachers have a policy of nationalisation of the textile industry.

In moving the executive's recommendation of support, Bill Maddocks, the new general secretary-elect, stressed that the textile industry had been 'deprived of capital for decades' and that the real battle in the industry was between private and public ownership, a battle that had to be fought through to a socialist conclusion. This was passed unanimously by the conference, and also by the executive.

Delegate after delegate

pointed to the rapid decline in the textile industry. General Secretary Bro. Dyson said that the number of workers in wool textiles had declined from 123,000 in 1968 to below 60,000.

Another delegate reeled off redundancies pending in the industry; Courtaulds, Associated Weavers, Carrington Viyella, Monsanto, Straud Riley are all threatening more lay-offs.

Dennis McMahon made a fighting speech describing the cynical closure of Courtaulds, Spennymoor, with the loss of 1,500 jobs.

The monopolies and hol-

ding companies came under heavy fire for "gambling with workers lives". Les Priest, from Huddersfield, newly made redundant, described how holding companies used small mending firms with low pay to get government subsidies in order to make fast profits which never showed up on small firms' balance sheets.

Conference agreed to reduce overtime working, to implement early retirement and a 35-hour week. These linked to the nationalisation of textiles and a planned campaign against threatened redundancies, must be acted

NUFLAT: JOBS AND SERVICES UNDER THE HAMMER

The National Union of Footwear, Leather and Allied Trades met at the end of May, at a critical turning point for the industry. The footwear and leather industry is literally fighting for its survival.

Clarkes and the British Shoe Corporation are emerging as the biggest shoe firms. Already Clarkes have 50% of the children's and 35% of the men's market.

Most factories are in small towns—working people in the area are completely dependent on the industry. Now whole towns will have to struggle for their very existence.

The whole industry is under the hammer of imports. Small firms are up against the wall. At least 4,000 jobs are directly dependent on the Temporary Employment Subsidy, which the Tories plan to axe.

In 1978 footwear lost 900 jobs. Exports were 2 million pairs down on 1977; a staggering 100,500,000 pairs were imported.

The Labour government handed out £9m to the small firms last year to save jobs, but although many jobs were preserved temporarily, most of the money was clearly not re-invested and jobs are still in the firing line.

Fraternal delegates from Belgium, Germany, Austria and Sweden spelt out the same message: it is not just a British crisis, it is part of the world recession.

In Denmark the shoe industry is only one-fifth of its original size. In Belgium over 90% of shoes are imported; even in previously prosperous Sweden a struggle is on for jobs and wages.

The union has not been particularly militant in the past; but things are beginning to change.

"Last summer," one delegate told me, "there were 100 attending branch meetings; that was over the wages issue. It's gone down now to 30 or so, but it will never be back to the old half dozen."

Out of the 110 delegates present, 30 had never been to

the conference before. This reflects the resurgence of interest at a rank and file level throughout the trade unions.

The Footwear Trade Group resolved to fight for a reduction in the working week from 40 to 35 hours; a £7.50 increase on the minimum weekly wage with compensatory increases for workers on incentive schemes, and an extra week's holiday plus additional service days.

"What can the bosses afford?", "Can the firm remain viable?" are the questions constantly thrown at these workers.

Their problems cry out for political solutions. There is no way of reconciling their interests with those of the profiteering bosses.

The books of all firms must be made open to the inspection of the shop stewards, to see what they really can afford and how they have been spending their profits. The union must not be dictated to by the bosses and their agony stories. Did they offer to share the pickings in the 'good' years?

A massive programme of re-investment and reorganisation is vital.

The industry is appallingly run down and ill equipped. One delegate told me how, when a 1936 machine broke down, the firm had to go to a museum to get the spare part!

Many speakers in the conference pointed out how wages, jobs and conditions were being undermined by imports from countries where workers are denied union rights, or have been until recently. Neither the workers in these countries nor the British workers should be made to pay the cost of the world slump.

If the bosses cannot afford to raise workers' living standards then the workers can no longer afford the continued existence of the bosses' system.

Report by
Ed Bober

Report by
Peter Watson

ASLEF- UNITED FIGHT FOR JOBS AND WAGES

With the industrial action by locomen on British Rail last winter, the possibility of a strike on London Transport starting during conference week, and above all the election of this reactionary Tory government, the 1979 ASLEF conference could well prove to be the most important held for several years.

Pay and conditions dominate the agenda. The main demand is quite clearly for a substantial pay rise to make up for what has been lost under wage restraint.

Several resolutions, including those from Darlington and Neville Hill refer to the high skills, responsibility and productivity of locomen. This most certainly needs to be acknowledged, but it must not detract from the main issue—the need for a united fight by all railway workers for a decent wage.

By Martin Elvin
(Stratford ASLEF)
and Colin Lawson
(Edinburgh No. 1)

Several resolutions refer to the regrading of other rail workers to increase their pay, and the Portsmouth and York resolutions call for the regrading of drivers. We must remember, however, that management have largely used regrading to play off staff against one another, paying one section of workers and not another and undermining a united fight.

Under the Tories, such



Union conference vital for locomen in future year

back-door means of getting a pay rise will become increasingly difficult. Those resolutions which call for productivity deals (eg. Nos 40 and 41), and the Bescott resolution calling for attendance payments, should be decisively rejected.

One of the main issues of last winter's dispute was complete opposition to these divisive deals. Attendance payments could lead to men coming into work when they are not fit because they need the money. That would not be good for our members, for safety, or for productivity.

The best resolution on pay is probably the one from Southall, calling for the immediate consolidation of all social contract supplements into basic pay, a substantial increase in wages, and "protection of the real

value of wages through a sliding cost-of-living related clause"—in other words, a sliding scale of wages.

The demand for a shorter working week also figures prominently on the agenda. This is as relevant on the railways as anywhere, with management claims of over-manning and the threat of large-scale yard closures.

The predicted drop in freight traffic, plus the Tory government's plans to cut back the nationalised industries also make 35-hours an urgent demand. We must answer that jobs are not going as they did under the Tories in the 50s and 60s.

Such resolutions have been passed at conference before, however. This year we must make it clear to the Executive that we expect them to lead a fight to implement them.

The St Leonards resolution writes off the need for free collective bargaining. It considers that our members would be better off abiding by future government pay guidelines. The experience of the last few years of wage restraint sharply contradicts this.

The resolution from the Severn Tunnel, on the necessity of supporting the Labour government's fight against inflation and keeping Labour in office, goes on to instruct the EC to negotiate wage increases in line with the average wage obtained by other unions.

The disastrous result of the General Election has already given these brothers their answer: workers were not prepared to make sacrifices which simply lined the bosses' pockets while they suffered lower living standards and

cuts in all the basic social services.

The Aberdeen resolution, which calls for the rejection of the incomes policy philosophy of the Labour government, pointing out its futility when we do not have total control of the economy, comes nearest to giving a positive way forward.

Railway workers have consistently been to the forefront of the fight to elect Labour governments, and for socialist policies. We are now likely to find ourselves in the forefront again, in the fight against the Tories.

The only way to defend our interests is by presenting a united fight of railway workers, and by fighting on clear socialist policies which spell a way out for rail workers and all working people.

ENGINEERS-WE NEED £80 MINIMUM AND A 35 HOUR WEEK NOW

Engineering workers, members of the AUEW, from as far afield as Dundee, Crawley in Sussex, and factories in West London, were in Central London last Thursday to lobby the negotiations between the engineering industry trade unions and the bosses at the Engineering Employers' Federation HQ.

That many of them had travelled such distances was a measure of their feeling.

Fred Ricketts, AUEW shop steward at APV, Crawley, explained the problems of his factory and the relevance of the AUEW claim:

"We are demanding £80 minimum a week for skilled workers and pro rata rates for all others, plus the immediate introduction of the 35-hour week.

"The employers, however, are offering only £60 top rate and a 37½-hour week which

they want to introduce over several years.

"At APV, average take home pay for a 40-hour basic week is only £45-£50, with overtime it's only £60, and you're putting your health at risk.

Bob Faulkes spoke to Bill Clarke, AUEW Convenor, Hoover's Perivale, one of the shop stewards lobbying the Engineering Employers on 7 June:

"Come Wednesday or Thursday, blokes are complaining of tiredness as they're working seven days a week for a living wage. The body can only take so much.

"Also, if four men work a weekend of ten hours, that's forty hours. In effect, you're keeping one man out of work, and there are 1.4 million out of work at the moment.

"The £80, 35-hour week claim could mean better health for workers, and a cut

in unemployment."

What is the feeling about the 35-hour week? The members are willing to fight on this. But we are looking for national leadership. The Executive have to get their priorities right on this.

In the past, the national claim has been reduced to area and regional activity. What are your views on this?

This would dissipate support for the claim. It's not the way to mobilise for a national claim. The membership will have to be shown a way which everyone will be able to identify with. Regional action will just dissipate our energy.

What about the claim itself? I can see our officials begin sold short on this. There may be some modest improvements, like apprentices' wages, the qualifying day (for bank holidays etc.). I'm worried that the EC could get sidetracked. The EEF will try delaying tactics, and if there are no priorities set by the EC, it will be difficult to see the membership responding to a call for action.

CPSA P&T- EXECUTIVE MUST TAKE FIRM ACTION

Post Office management's behaviour is reminiscent of the Dickensian era. Chairman Sir William 'Scrooge' Barlow receives £250 a week extra, but has the gall to offer us a measly 9%. What hypocrisy!

Under the Boyle top salaries review, Barlow rang up a 50% rise, jumping £13,000 to £38,945 a year. Next April he is due for another, taking him to a fat £48,500 annually, as much as most workers earn in a lifetime.

In answer to our pay claim, which amounts to less than £10 a week in most cases, management have offered 9% on present pay scales, about £5 a week, linked to 20 clauses which we are seriously expected to accept (work study, increased efficiency, etc).

From management's viewpoint, however, I suppose we should be grateful that anything at all has been offered. It took them three months to respond to the claim, which they only discussed a month after the operative date.

Since then we have received nothing in writing. Barlow at one point ordered our negotiators to get back to work because the CPSA "didn't have the muscle" to beat the Post Office anyway.

What a blatant expression of their attitude to CPSA post and Telecommunications Group members, whose efforts over the past year have

By Steve Higham

(CPSA P&T Group,
Liverpool,
personal capacity)

raked in £4 million profit for the Post Office.

CPSA members started action at the end of April, with massive walkouts involving the Group's 38,000 members. Since then selective industrial action has taken place in key areas. The co-operation from workers in other unions, notably the T&GWU, UPW and POEU, has been magnificent. The POEU have donated £1,000 to our strike fund.

One example cannot go unmentioned. Last week in Liverpool the PO invited 3,000 visitors and the Lord Mayor to an exhibition of the latest Post Office telecommunications developments—viewdata, prestell etc—on the 'Busby train'. Members of ASLEF, the train-drivers' union, in a magnificent display of trade union solidarity, made sure that the train never arrived in Liverpool. Busby was grounded!

Shamefully, unlike the Liverpool branch, the Group Executive Committee have yet to show such initiative. They refuse, despite conference instructions, to escalate the action except in instances where suspensions or other management provocations have forced them to do so.

There has not been a GEC

meeting since conference, nearly four weeks ago. Generally speaking, despite militant all-member circulars, there has been a lack of direction.

The Liverpool branch sent the following telegram to CPSA headquarters: "We are disgusted at the inept manner shown in the handling of the Busby train (in London where the train was allowed to stop). Your total lack of ability to co-ordinate this industrial action is only equalled by Barlow's hypocrisy. You have betrayed us. We refuse to be martyrs".

What the GEC can't or won't understand is that management have taken such a determined stand because their plans for the telecomms business depend on it. They intend to introduce advanced technology to raise 'profitability' which means the loss of thousands of jobs.

If they can seriously damage the union in the first round they will not hesitate to do so. That is why this pay fight is so important.

The GEC must pull their finger out. The Liverpool branch at the moment are practically leading the strike. On Thursday a Liverpool delegation will be arriving in London to picket Telecommunications HQ, to demonstrate to the GEC what they should and could be doing.

The GEC must take firm action. This is one dispute we cannot afford to lose.

resignation honours reinforces need to ABOLISH THE LORDS

It is a scandal that at the very time Labour's NEC was discussing the non-implementation of the Party's policy of abolishing the House of Lords, Jim Callaghan should produce yet another resignation honours list.

For Party members this is a slap in the face, and it can only increase the cynicism of workers about Labour politicians, arguing one moment about privilege and power, and then donning the symbolic ermine as soon as they get the chance.

Harold Lever, reputedly one of the richest men in parliament, will no doubt

successive Labour prime ministers?

Callaghan has also been quite blatant in rewarding his friends. His personal doctor is knighted and his Sussex farming partner gets an OBE.

LP members should refuse titles

At least none of these—as the 'Daily Mirror' remarked—are helping the police with their enquiries. But the fraud allegations against Lord Kagan and his wife are a reminder of the discredit that an embarrassing number of those included in Harold Wilson's honours list have brought on the Labour Party.

What will cause even more disgust in the labour movement, however, are the titles for trade union leaders and former left-wing MPs.

Judith Hart, for instance, played a prominent part in the Movement for Colonial Freedom: yet she now becomes a Dame of the British Empire. Former Labour NEC member Lena Jeger becomes a baroness.

John Boyd, general secretary of the AUEW, is now a knight, and Derek Gladwyn, southern regional secretary of the G&MWU, gets an OBE.

Surely, their members will want to know why these officials have been awarded titles originally created for members of the ruling class and their loyal functionaries?

This honours list, issued with blatant disregard for the Labour Party's firm policy, emphasises the need to commit the next Labour government to the immediate abolition of the Lords.

The Lords is both a symbol of the state power still firmly held by the ruling class, and a powerful obstacle standing in the way of radical measures by a Labour government.

In the event of a political crisis, its latent powers, like those of the monarchy, would be re-activated for use against a democratically-elected Labour government.

In the meantime, the Party should press for the acceptance of Tony Benn's proposals that Labour Party members should refuse to accept honours.

By Lorna Oliver

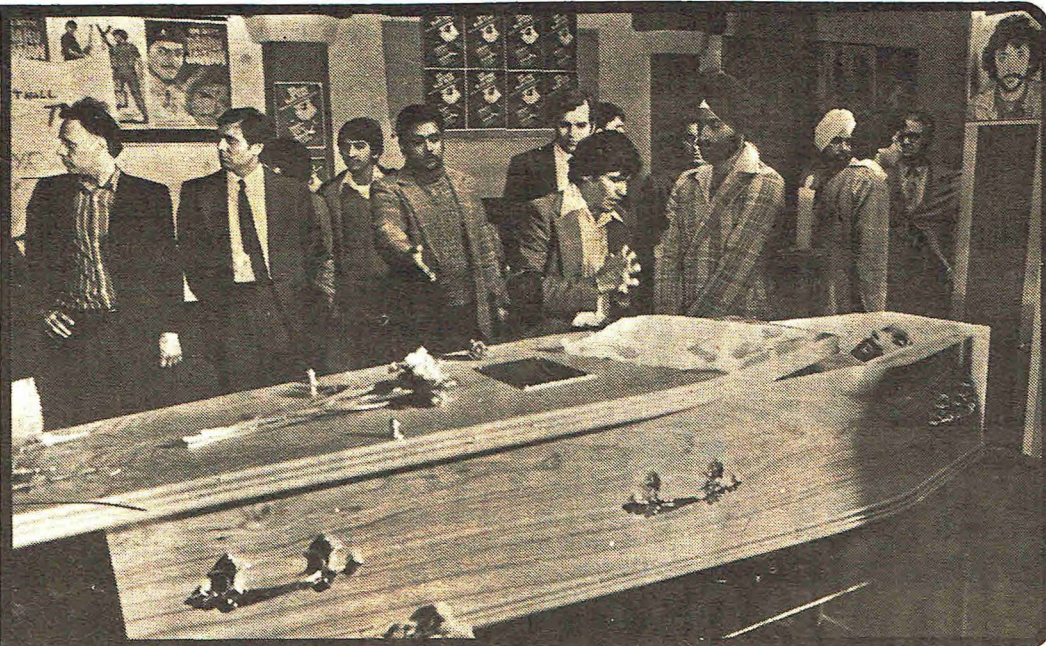
feel at home among the aristocracy. The only question is: What has he been doing in the Labour Party all this time?

Reg Underhill, the Labour Party's retiring National Agent, has also been elevated to the peerage. Will the Lord Chancellor now be calling on him to prepare a report on the activities of ex-left-wingers planted in the Lords by

BLAIR PEACH FUNERAL

Anti-fascists pay their last respects to Blair Peach, the ANL organiser killed at Southall: Article, page 2

Photo: MILITANT



BUDGET

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

they become liable to the currency premium.

Dividend controls, moreover, have gone the same way as the Price Commission: from August it will be uninhibited profit-taking for British capitalists.

Howe has boasted that a married man on the average earnings will now save about £1.30 a week in tax, and now has the 'freedom' to spend it as he likes. But the staggering rise in VAT to 15% and increases in petrol and other duty will soon wipe this out in the next few months.

The single rate for VAT also means that luxuries will now carry no more tax than other items: another measure clearly favouring the big spenders.

The Treasury has itself admitted that inflation will rise to at least 15% by the end of the year, and serious private forecasters put it even higher at 18% or 20%.

Apart from the budget measures, there will certainly be further rises in the price of petrol and other imported commodities—which will all work through to prices in the

shops.

Workers will also be hit hard by more cuts in public spending. Howe intends to slash another £2,500 million [apart from selling off £1,000 million worth of the government's BP shares] and impose rigid cash limits.

Jobs in particular will suffer. Industrial support to decrepit firms and employment programmes for school leavers and unemployed will be cut drastically. This is in addition to the massive threat to civil service jobs already

Tories up top salaries by 25%, page 3

announced by the Tories.

The principle of the NHS is also further undermined with a steep rise in prescription charges to 45p. Dental charges are up too.

Higher interest rates [up to 14%] will mean that local authorities and public services will be spending even more of their cash on interest and debt charges.

The Tories will try to make the most of the apparently substantial increases in pensions [up £3.80 for a single pensioner and £6.10 for

couples] and the increase in social security benefits to be announced.

But as people on benefits and pensions do not pay tax, these increases are no more than enough to compensate temporarily for higher prices resulting from the budget.

Howe, moreover, has said the government will link pensions to prices, not incomes, so there is no chance of pensioners improving their real standard of living under the Tories.

Although the Tories claim this budget will be a turning point for the British economy, Howe admitted in his speech that there would be no significant increase in output of industry this year [1978 manufacturing output was 4% less than in 1973].

"Without higher profits we shall not see the new investment and jobs we so urgently need," said Howe. But what earthly guarantee is there that the huge bonus handed to private investors will go into productive investment?

With a higher interest rate it is much more likely to stay in the bank or to be invested abroad.

Howe claims to be fighting inflation, but he has given the biggest single twist to the

inflationary spiral in living memory.

Insisting for the moment at least that they have no intention of trying to impose an incomes policy, the Tories are clearly out to reduce the share of the wealth going to the workers through deliberately allowing prices to rise.

Tax reductions, as promised in the Tory manifesto, may give the Tories a certain respite. But in the coming months workers will feel the real effects of the Tory measures.

Inflation will savagely undermine living standards. Cuts will have a tragic effect on working class families. Hundreds of thousands more workers will be thrown out of work.

Howe's budget is a blatant class attack on working people. The labour movement can now be in no doubt as to what this Tory government means.

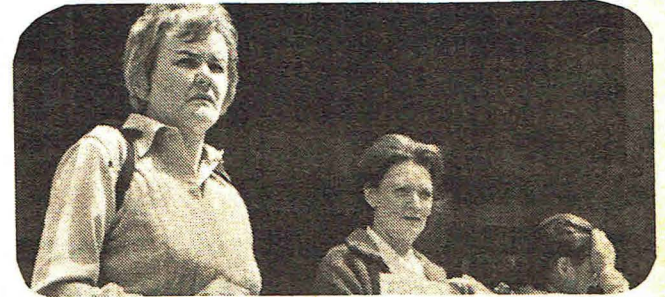
The trade unions and the political arm of the movement, the Labour Party, must be mobilised to fight back against these savage Tory attacks and win mass support for socialist policies capable of providing a way forward for working people.

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

Tel: 01-986 3828

Editor: Peter Taaffe, Business Manager: Dave Galashan. Published by Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Printed by Cambridge Heath Press Ltd [TU]



HOTEL STRIKE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

porting Ellen.

Women who have worked at the hotel for up to 19 years, and lived at the hotel, were unceremoniously thrown into the street.

But THF must be losing a bomb, especially as their Antique Fair had to be put off (though workers fear they will try to hold it later).

Unfortunately, despite sympathy among the chefs,

and a 24-hour stoppage, these key catering staff have not come out. Things were not helped by a G&MWU official originally telling them to cross the picket lines, which provoked protest from trade unionists when reported in the press.

The Grovesnor House Hotel workers, only one section of the highly exploited hotel and catering workers, urgently need the full support of all trade unionists who can bring pressure to bear on THF.

By Helen Mumford (Westminster LPYS)

TUBE MEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

restraint. No wonder that feeling is running high!

As NUR signalman Vince Gillespie stated: "Nobody wants to strike, but so far as we are concerned this is a completely derisory offer.

"My hourly rate is £1.27; we haven't had a real pay rise for three years, now they offer us this, plus the cut of 137 guards' jobs. The men are determined to see the strike through."

Another worker in the

Earls Court Branch, said:

"Unless they come up with the money then we are out, and if we are out for any length of time then we will be looking to British Rail workers for support also.

"So far as Earls Court Branch are concerned, we are not interested in productivity deals, bonus schemes or anything else. We want a straight 15% pay rise.

"The electricians' rate is £59, so 8% of that is a ridiculous rise. It works out at around £3.50 per week, and by the time the tax man takes some, how can that last one year with prices going up the way they are?"



GET Militant

BRITAIN	26 Issues... £5.60
13 Issues... £2.90	52 Issues... £11.20
EUROPE	REST OF WORLD
[Airspeeded]	[Airspeeded]
26 Issues... £6.10	26 Issues... £7.10
52 Issues... £12.20	52 Issues... £14.20

Name.....

Address.....

Make cheques payable to MILITANT and return to the Circulation Department, MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Bulk orders available, sale or return.