

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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TORIES LET PRICES RIP

There was an explosion of anger in the shops last Monday when people saw the new price of goods with 15% VAT added on.

At a stroke — to use Heath's unfortunate phrase — Howe added over 4% to retail prices by raising VAT.

But this is only the start of a prices explosion which will swell big business profits and engulf working people in the coming months.

Even before the Budget, the official retail price index jumped by 10.3% [for the year to mid-May].

"The underlying rate of retail price inflation", reported the 'Financial

Times' [16 June], "has been rising steadily in recent months, well before the post-election round of price increases, let alone the impact of the Budget, have had time to work through."

Apart from the Tories' measures, world-market commodity prices are again moving upwards — all will sooner or later work their way through to the shops in Britain.

By Roger Shriver

WAGES MUST BE LINKED TO PRICE RISES!

In his Budget speech, Howe said he expected inflation to reach 16%.

Petrol up

Next day, Patrick Jenkin, Tory Social Services minister, let it out that the government expected inflation to reach 17½%.

Then at the weekend it was revealed that the Treasury's economic assessment predicted inflation would rapidly

reach 20%.

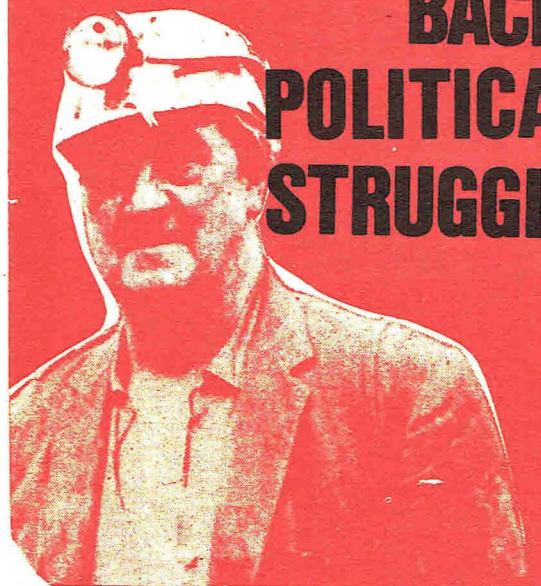
No wonder that ministers instructed their officials to keep quiet about this!

Apart from VAT increases on most consumer goods, massive rises in energy prices will push up general prices even more.

Petrol already costs more than £1.10 a gallon, and a further OPEC rise will come into effect in

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SCOTS MINERS BACK POLITICAL STRUGGLE



No section of the trade union movement was quicker to react to the Tory budget than the Scottish miners.

Their annual conference sprang to life with an explosion of anger, when an emergency resolution deploring the budget was passed unanimously.

The delegates were enraged by what Willie Clarke called 'a budget based on wealth and privilege'.

He singled out the 125% rise in prescription charges, the 'sale of the century' of BP shares, and the £35 million reduction of the rate support grant in Scotland.

Action

The Scottish President, Mick McGahey, summed up the Tory theory as "if you can't pay for it, you're not getting it."

The income tax cuts for those on low incomes, he said, will mean practically nothing, while the public expenditure cuts will bear most heavily on the low paid.

The leaders of the previous Labour government did not escape criticism either. "How could you expect 18-year-olds denied a job to vote for a Labour government which had denied them a job?" asked Jimmy Ritchie.

What enraged the Tories

and their press, however, was that the resolution did not stop at denouncing the budget. It demanded action.

"Conference calls upon the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the General Council of the Trade Union Conference to meet together in order to organise a national campaign of opposition to the draconian measures of the Government."

"We can create the conditions for an early general election as soon as possible", asserted Mick McGahey, "and the sooner the better".

"Think of the power of the labour movement—once it has been mobilised in action, then no force can stop it!"

The resolution concluded with a call for "a massive campaign throughout the country to create the conditions for an early general election and the return of a Labour government committed to Labour's commitment for an irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power to the working people."

"For far too long", declared Willie Clarke, "the working class has been the anvil. It is time we became the hammer!"

By Patrick Craven



Carter and Brezhnev, amid a great fanfare of publicity, signed the SALT II agreement in Vienna last week.

The Strategic Arms 'Limitation' now agreed means that each super power will be 'restricted' to 'only' 2,250 missiles and bombers, with 'only' 10,000 nuclear weapons each.

The working class and oppressed people of the world, however, can take little consolation from the Vienna accord.

US imperialism and the Russian bureaucracy still

By Lynn Walsh

have enough nuclear weaponry to wipe out the whole world about 200 times over.

About £1,000,000,000,000 [a million million pounds] is squandered on arms throughout the world every 4½ years.

The incredible advances of science and technology,

which could be used to transform the life of mankind, are squandered on grotesque weapons of destruction.

Because of the balance of nuclear terror, the super-powers' stockpiles of arms cancel each other out. Literally, they have the power to wipe each other out.

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Militant

TREASURY PREDICTS GRIM FUTURE

Despite the huge tax hand-outs to the rich and savage attacks—through inflation, spending cuts, and higher unemployment—on the working class, the Tories and big business see no real prospect of a revival of Britain's 'sick capitalist economy.'

Huge tax cuts for the rich minority, claim the Tories, will provide the incentive for new investment, and in the long run this will mean more jobs and greater prosperity for workers.

But this spurious justification is belied by the government's own economic predictions.

The Treasury background papers, published on budget day, predict that Gross National Product will fall by another 1% in the next year. Manufacturing output will fall even more, by 2½%.

Despite all the tax incentives, private investment is still expected to fall by ½%. In reality, it will probably fall more.

With higher interest rates [14% plus], it will be more profitable for capitalists to keep much of their cash in the bank rather than invest in industry.

The budget also provides unprecedented freedom for companies and individual capitalists to invest abroad.

Together with the expected 4½% fall in investment by state corporations and a 2½% fall in government spending on goods and services, the fall in private investment will accelerate the already rapid decline of British industry—even in its home market.

"Export volumes", says the Treasury assessment, "are held back by poor competitiveness, and the upward trend in the share of demand met by imports may continue."

What a deathly diagnosis when already over 50% of cars are imported, and when 80% of office machinery, 70% of computers, 72% of stereo equipment are all imported!

British capitalism, moreover, is now facing the prospect of a permanent trade deficit, and even the balance on invisibles [profits from investment abroad, shipping, insurance, etc] is being steadily wiped out.

North Sea Oil revenues, once heralded as the salvation of the British economy, do little more than balance out Britain's net payment to the EEC.

The balance on interest, profits, and dividends," says the Treasury, "is also likely to worsen, particularly for oil, where North Sea Oil profits accruing to foreign-owned companies are increasing rapidly."

These disastrous trends

will have calamitous consequences for the working class.

So bad are the prospects for prices and employment in particular that, according to 'The Observer' [17 June], the government has so far suppressed two key Treasury background documents.

One of them admits that inflation could well reach 20% next year, compared to Howe's budget-day prediction of 16%.

The other prediction is even more explosive. The Treasury now considers that unemployment will rapidly rise from 1.4 million to beyond 2 million.

Yet what solution do the Tories have for the unemployed?

Last week, when he visited Glasgow, where 900 Prestcold workers are in danger of losing their jobs and another 1,000 at Massey Ferguson are under threat, Keith Joseph revealed the Tories' completely callous attitude.

"He told the Prestcold workers", reported the 'Financial Times' [16 June], "that they would have to do what nearly 100,000 others did in Britain every week—find new jobs."

Has the Minister for Industry not heard that there are 165,441 men and women unemployed in Scotland [8.3% of the male workforce]?

The Tories' economic policies are a declaration of war against the working class. On behalf of big business, they intend to offload the crisis of the profit system onto the workers—with a draconian cut in living standards on the scale of the 1930s.

But they still face the enormous organised power of the labour and trade union movement. When the workers feel all the effects of the government's policies, and begin to draw the necessary conclusions, the Thatcher government will face unparalleled resistance from the trade unions, even greater than under the Heath government.

The actions of the Tory government themselves will ensure, as under Heath, that the individual battles of different sections of workers will be increasingly unified into a struggle of the whole class against the Tories and their system.

Industrial battles are inseparable from the political fight. Contrary to what Callaghan said again this week, the Labour Party must give full support to all trade union struggles against the Tories.

Within the framework of capitalism, there can only be an enormous increase in exploitation, in misery and poverty, for working people.

This Tory government must therefore be stopped in its tracks and the labour movement unified around a bold programme for the socialist transformation of society.

THE RICHER YOU ARE

To those who already have, more has been given. No wonder they're laughing.



THE RICHER YOU'LL

The Tories' tax cuts are put over as a great boon for all. But the richer you are, the more you will gain from Howe's budget.

GET

By Alan Hardman

While a married worker on average earnings (now officially about £100 a week—though millions of workers find it hard to believe this figure!) gains a mere £1.30 a week, the wealthy minority will be paying tax at the lowest top rate (60%) since 1929-30.

Howe boasts he has taken 1.3 million out of the tax net. But if the basic threshold had been raised only 9% (in line with official earnings) 600,000 would have 'escaped', so Howe let off only another 700,000.

The low-paid workers concerned desperately needed to be relieved of their scandalous tax burden. But by raising the thresholds for the higher

rates, the Tories have reduced the number of higher-rate tax-payers from 1.2 millions to only 550,000!

Just how much is being handed to the rich can be seen from the totals of revenue lost. Changes in the higher rate threshold and rates and increase in the investment income threshold alone, will cost the Exchequer—and save the rich—£863 million a year.

The £30,000-a-year couple will have £4,262 more to spend this year, while the £2,000-a-year couple will have

£70.

But because the child allowances have been withdrawn (replaced by £4 a week cash allowance per child to mothers) the man with two children on £50 a week (about half average earnings) will find his own take-home pay only 52p a week higher this year than last.

Hand-outs to wealthy

'The Economist' (16 June) has produced some figures which put Howe's hand-outs into perspective. They show what—allowing for child benefit, NI contributions and the tax changes, and assuming a 15% cost-of-living increase—someone would need to earn in 1979-80 to maintain their 1978-79 stan-

dard of living.

A married man with two children under 11 earning £2,665 (½ average earnings) in 1978-79 would need £3,060 in 1979-80—an increase of 14.8%.

A man on £26,650 (five times average earnings) in 1978-79, however, would only need to earn £23,480—11.9% less.

But the judges, service chiefs, and top civil servants have just been given a 25% increase in salaries! And we may be sure that company directors—£30,000 to £80,000 for top directors is not exceptional in big firms now—will not be lagging behind.

Perhaps Howe hopes that the relatively sizeable tax rebates in July (when allowances are adjusted) and October (when rates are down) will sweeten the new pay round.

But by that time, workers—already angered by the blatant class bias of the tax cuts—will find that their tax savings have almost been eaten away by price rises.

ANGER AT THE BUDGET

A small crowd had gathered round a colour television set [only £355.90!] in the foyer of the Co-op on budget day.

Guessing what the fuss was all about, I joined them. "I can't believe it," gasped one elderly woman.

"I voted for them expecting a bit more, and this is what we get. I'll never vote for that lot again!"

Several others nodded in agreement. "Beer and cigs are the only small pleasures I have," commented a council worker.

A heated discussion was

By David Robinson (Bradford LPYS)

developing with Co-op staff joining in. The crowd were predominantly angry.

"They should be forced to live on my pension," said a pensioner, as she stormed out.

The cynical meanness and

lies of the Tories is illustrated here without the least equivocation. The pennies in income tax cuts that working people will receive will be more than offset by the increases in VAT, and on beer, cigarettes, petrol, prescriptions, lending rates and all the rest.

Meanwhile, the rich are given enormous concessions.

The labour movement will be absorbing the lessons of the past few weeks in the coming months and 'Militant' supporters will be ramming home the message of this budget.

The movement must demand that every single anti-

working class measure introduced by the Tories is reversed by the next Labour government.

But this is not enough. A massive and bold socialist programme is the only way in which the perennial problems of the working class will be solved for ever.

As I got home, I heard Michael Brotherton, cast-iron Tory reactionary, commenting on the budget on TV in which he said "an explosion" was needed in Britain.

Indeed it is! Not an explosion of 'free enterprise', but of socialist planning under workers' control and management.

BLAIR PEACH



Mourners at Blair Peach's funeral

Photo: MILITANT

PRESS FOR AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY

Five thousand teachers, pupils, and trade unionists attended the funeral procession of Blair Peach—a far cry from the “few hundred” predicted on early morning radio broadcasts.

The three-mile silent procession, from his school to the East London Cemetery with banners from national and local trade unions and a joint Labour Party Young Socialists/ PNP Youth banner was a tribute to a fallen fighter in the battle against racialism and fascism.

Blair Peach was murdered by ‘persons unknown’ armed with a lead-filled cosh. Although a number of SPG members are reported to have been interviewed at length about Peach’s death, no one has yet been charged.

The press has been consistently mentioning the coshes reportedly found in SPG

lockers as “mementoes”, as if there were no question of policemen using these unofficial, and potentially lethal, weapons.

The delay in releasing any information and the general silence of the press is in marked contrast to the sensational treatment given to police injuries, many of them minor or trivial, at earlier anti-fascist demonstrations.

The brutal murder of Blair Peach must not be whitewashed. The labour movement must throw its weight behind the call which has already been launched, for an independent enquiry; not an enquiry only to find a scapegoat, but to investigate the whole role of the police, and in particular the ‘Special Patrol Group’, at Southall and similar events.

It has been the role of the police, allowing and defending the National Front’s deliberately provocative meetings, which has been respon-

sible for violence, injuries, and now the tragic death of Blair Peach.

Only when they are faced with the might of the organised working class will the National Front be decisively driven off the streets. Only in this way can we prevent there being future martyrs to the fight against fascism.

It was fitting that the funeral has been attacked by Woodrow Wyatt in the ‘pro-Labour’ ‘Sunday Mirror’, and in an editorial of the ‘Daily Telegraph’. The movement awaits criticism from these characters of the original decision to allow the National Front to meet in Southall.

The end of the funeral, with the singing of the ‘Internationale’ as the coffin was lowered, pointed the way forward—through socialist internationalism.

Kevin Fernandes

MARXIST WEEKEND SCHOOL

ONLY ONE WEEK TO GO

The Marxist Weekend School organised by ‘Militant’ for 29 June—1 July will be the best chance of the year for a detailed discussion of Marxist theory.

The savage attacks on the working class in the budget show the importance of every ‘Militant’ supporter having the ammunition to argue for a socialist economic programme. Thus, the course on Marxist Economics will be a very good one for any ‘Militant’ reader to attend. The speakers are Ed Bober and Ted Grant.

How does society change? How do Marxists analyse the development of history? What

role does the individual play in history? What is a Marxist analysis of the developments in Science? These will be some of the issues covered by Lynn Walsh in the Marxist Philosophy course.

The final session of the School, a debate on ‘A Socialist Programme for Labour’ between Peter Taaffe, Editor of ‘Militant’ and Geoff Edge, MP for Aldridge-Brownhills until the last election and a regular contributor to ‘Tribune’, will be an excellent opportunity for a clash of ideas between the two main trends of opinion on the left in the Labour Party.

The other courses offered are: ‘Marxism and the Trade Unions’, with Brian Ingham and Bill Mullins (Senior Shop

Steward, Rover Solihull) speaking: ‘The Russian Revolution’, speakers: Roger Silverman and Peter Taaffe; ‘Ireland—History & Perspectives’ with a leading speaker from ‘Militant Irish Monthly’, and ‘The Labour Party’ with Rob Jones and Ray Apps speaking.

The first session of the School is the film ‘Harlan County’, the Oscar winning account of the fight for trade union recognition by miners in Kentucky. Not to be missed by any trade union activist!

If you haven’t already sent in your bookings do it today! Send it to: Militant Marxist Weekend School, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. For details see advert, page 13.

LPYS CONFERENCE

GIVE FLEET ST. A FRIGHT

The Tory ‘Daily Telegraph’ once blurted out the truth. Before the Labour Party Young Socialists’ Conference in 1976, their editorial said:

“Such pressures as the new leader of the Labour Party will be subjected to are amply indicated in the resolutions to be submitted to the Young Socialists’ Conference at Blackpool next month.

“Are these the hallucinations of those who have never seriously considered how political obedience is procured? To say so would be unjust.

“What concerns the Young Socialists at the moment is not primarily the creation of a new society, but the dismantling of an old one.

“Of course, the new Prime Minister will not be appointed by the Young Socialists...But

he will lead a party whose élan and sense of direction is supplied by the Young Socialists, who are concerned not with preserving a State, but with making a revolution; and this, after all, is precisely what his party has always asked for.”

The Daily ‘Torygraph’ lets the cat out of the bag.

The ruling class view with fear the crucial role that the LPYS play politically, fighting for a clear socialist programme within the Labour Party.

LPYS Conference 1979 will have the task of hammering

out how the most reactionary Tory government since 1926 is to be fought.

The Tory press recognises the “élan and sense of direction” the LPYS gives to the Labour Party. Undoubtedly LPYS conference 1979 will fulfill their worst fears!

Every branch should make sure immediately that it is fully represented with a delegate and as many visitors as possible to make the conference the most representative yet.

Come along and live up to the fears of Fleet Street!

Kevin Ramage

DETAILS:

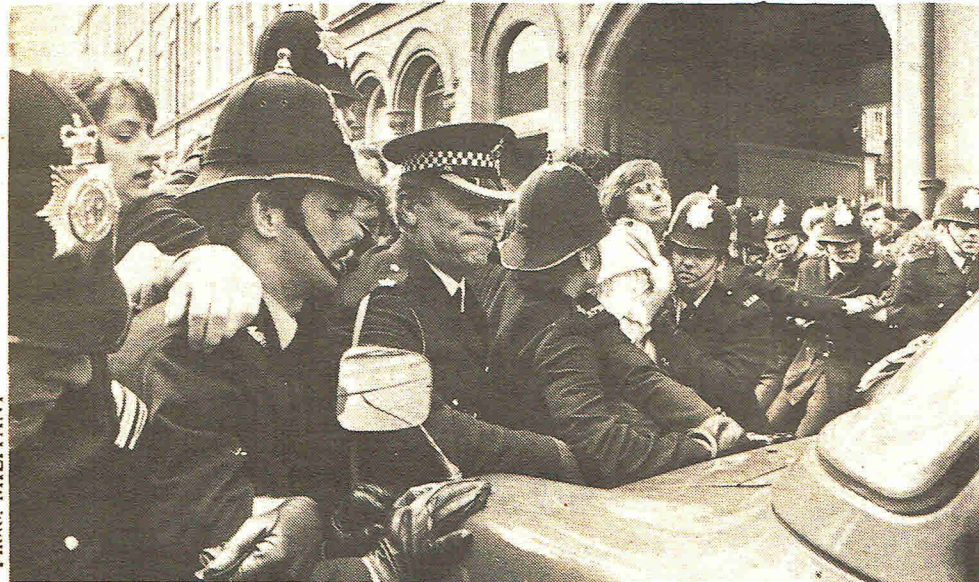
LPYS Conference and Camp ford, Gloucs. 1979:

Conference Saturday July 28th, 1 pm, until Sunday 29th at 4 pm, followed immediately by the camp until Saturday August 4th. At Bracelands Campsite, Cole-

Cost approx. £25, meals included [children half price, crèche organised].

Send deposits of £5 [£2 for children] to Andy Bevan, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA

POLICE PLAN TO CENSOR CRITICISM



Police in action at the Nottingham Evening Post demonstration. To be censored by the BBC and police?

The day before the funeral of Blair Peach the British Broadcasting Corporation published its latest agreement with the Metropolitan police.

I was never very likely to have the right-wing bosses of the BBC would allow any programmes to go out which were too critical of the police, but the new agreement gives the police a virtual veto over any ‘sensitive’ material.

Programmes about the opening of new police

stations or the introduction of a new type of buttons on police uniforms will still be allowed, of course.

But potentially ‘sensitive’ programmes about, say the deaths of anti-fascist demonstrators or arrested pickets accidentally falling down the stairs on the way to the cells will have to be passed to department ‘P’ of the Metropolitan Police for a little friendly discussion before they are even made.

Perhaps the most ‘sensitive’ subject of all is the role of the paramilitary ‘Special Patrol Group’ which was formed to deal with ‘terrorists’ such as the Anti Nazi League or the Grunwick pickets.

They are trained in all the

methods perfected during the last ten years in Northern Ireland, and are expected to have ample opportunities to earn the latest police pay rise in the forthcoming industrial confrontations in Britain.

Even rank-and-file policeman are upset about the activities of what they call ‘the Cobra’. It should be remembered that many young workers are more-or-less ‘conscripted’ into the police force as the only alternative to the army or the dole queue—they are not conscious class traitors or ‘fascist pigs’.

They are attracted by the image of the police as friends of the community, helping old ladies and fighting crime.

When workers see ‘the Cobra’ protecting the Nation-

al Front and escorting black-legs through picket lines, these ‘workers in uniform’ get tarred with the same brush.

In the struggles which lie ahead it is important to bear in mind this split in police ranks which could be crucial. In France in May 1968 the ordinary Paris police were affected by the mass movement of the French workers and actually went on strike, whereas the CRS (De Gaulle’s equivalent of the ‘Cobra’) remained loyal to the regime.

In Britain in the future, such a development remains possible if a class appeal is made to the ranks of the police force, some of them will want to participate in a movement against the real criminals in society—the snivs

and speculators of big business and their National Front henchmen etc.

The increases in pay for the police and the army, combined with the censorship of TV programmes indicate that the ruling class have drawn the lessons of the French events of 1968.

First, they intend to ‘buy off’ any potential militancy in the repressive arms of the state. Second, they recognise that the TV coverage of the police brutality against student demonstrations in Paris played an important role in galvanising the French workers into action.

While the ruling class are consciously preparing for the inevitable class struggle which the Tory Government’s mea-

asures will provoke, the Labour leasers are imitating the late King Canute in trying to persuade the tide to hold back.

The Tories have no compunction about taking ‘extra-parliamentary action’ when their vital interests are at stake. It is about time our leaders took a lesson in loyalty from these loyal representatives of the rich.

Derek McMillan

SOUTHERN LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

FOR SOCIALIST POLICIES-AND PARTY DEMOCRACY

Most of the resolutions at this year's Southern Labour Party Conference were drafted some months prior to the election. Their main aim was to hammer out a socialist programme; fighting policies to keep out the Tories.

The postponement of the conference due to the election, and the Tory victory at the polls has not lessened their relevance.

The conference, held in London this Saturday [June 23rd] will be important in the fight for socialist policies and Party democracy.

Every resolution dealing with the economy is critical of the Labour government's performance and demands socialist policies—for example, Reading South CLP dealing with unemployment declares: "Only a planned socialist economy could solve this problem, where production is

for the needs of the people not for the profit of a few."

Wycombe CLP encapsulates such a programme with its demand for:

(a) A 35-hour week with no loss of pay—amended by AUEW-TASS 26 division to include trade union control of overtime working;

(b) a £70 minimum wage;

(c) no redundancies: share out work with no loss of pay;

(d) nationalise the top 200 monopolies and finance institutions under workers' control and management;

(e) for a socialist plan of production.

Eastbourne CLP, agreeing, demands; "that this be included in Labour's Manifesto for the next general election."

Following—as Worthing CLP puts it—the dubious circumstances surrounding last year's vote on re-selection, a number of resolutions demand that the three-year rule be waived to allow a debate on the re-selection of MPs at this year's annual party conference. These have the support of the Executive



Delegates vote for election of party leader at 1978 national LP conference. Party democracy is still a burning issue.

Photo: MILITANT

and seem certain to be carried. Even though the European elections have now been concluded, the EEC, and the effect it has on workers, is still a major topic.

Portsmouth South CLP cuts through the fog of nationalistic jingoism with an amendment that concludes:

"As internationalists we stand for European unity, and recognising that this can

only be built on a socialist basis, call for opposition to the capitalist Common Market; for Labour to fight the European elections to expose the European Parliament as a sham with no real powers; for a campaign by the European labour movement for nationalisation of the major monopolies in Europe to create the economic basis for a real federation of Europe—a Socialist United States of Europe."

All the indications are that this will be a well-attended and lively conference as we face up to our problems and prepare for the future.

What is sure is that the youth will be well represented. The Executive report pays tribute to the Labour Party Young Socialists who played a vital role in the recent elections. The year has seen the number of LPYS branches grow from 36 to 42, and with many more branches in the process of being established, the future of the Party in the region looks good.

Geoff Jones

(Delegate, Brighton Kemp Town LP)



Trades councils in Northern Ireland have grown tremendously over the last four years

Photo: Mark Rusher (IFL) II

TRADES COUNCIL VISIT TO N.I.

Some three years ago Trades Councils in Northern Ireland staged successful demonstrations against a wave of sectarian killings, raising a number of basic economic and social demands.

A motion in response to this welcome class action was tabled for Newcastle Trades Council by the local branch of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation.

The motion, addressed to Derry Trades Council, sought fraternal links and bore fruit in a recent delegation to Northern Ireland from Newcastle Trades Council.

The general impression on this delegate was of severe general unemployment. In Belfast it affected the Catholic areas most but is likely to bite as deep into the Protestant areas with a slim order book at Harlands and an uncertain future for Mackies.

In Derry we heard of victimisation of trade union

activists as exists the world over, of the 'Derry Rate' (of pay), of local industries paying poor wages and multinationals paying little more and grabbing all the subsidies going.

Members of the Creggan Community Association told us of streets with just three people working, high heating and other costs and the deprecation of the Payment of Debt Act.

We heard of Protestant workers proud of secure jobs but found on asking to be on £14-15 a week. The sectarian divisions clearly serve someone very well!

There was little general support for the 'gunmen' and a feeling that they ignored either totally or in degree, their pressing economic and social problems.

The particular violent acts against the person are abhorred, and seen to help nothing. But the events of 1968: Bloody Sunday, and the various killings of unarmed workers, Protestant and Catholic, all recruit for the para-militaries as, of course, does the continuing harrow-

ing operation of the British troops.

I encountered no-one who hated the British. But many hated, with justification, acts and functions of people who happened to be British. It is by performing the tasks of capitalism that ill-feeling is met by young men whom unemployment has driven to a job of sitting in shop doorways in the sun in flak jackets.

There appeared to be a stalemate in the military field, and a vacuum in the political. Various 'grand plans' are being advanced with the British government doing little except learn how to deal with insurgents.

The most elaborate 'plan' is associated with Glen Barr and the Ulster Policy Study Group. This suggests an independent Ulster with a constitution like that of the Lebanon (!), guaranteed by the USA.

We were told by Barr that the constitutional problem had to be solved first, then worry about socialism. In this he is at one with the republicans. They are both

wrong.

His plan was floated in consultation with the French Ambassador in Belfast, political science departments of continental universities and American charities. It paid scant regard to trade union interests as the composition of the proposed safeguard committees showed.

If these planners were serious they would get down to involving the trade unions and start on the foundations now, of a party of labour without sectarian allegiances or content, able to combat the ravages of capitalism.

The mutual suspicions found made it clear that Northern Ireland's working class can only free itself of the problems it faces, including the British military presence when it stands up on those aims, the only aims worthy of support from Catholic and Protestant workers alike.

Report by a delegate

HAZARDS OF WORK

On the platform, the speaker put on a pair of ear muffs, then a pair of goggles and then a face mask. "This," he said, "is management's solution to work hazards."

Pat Kinnersley, the author of 'The Hazards of work' [Pluto Press] was speaking to 450 safety reps from the Sheffield area who attended a one-day conference on Health and Safety organised by the local Trades Council.

He claimed that only strong shop floor organisation can ensure the health and safety of workers. A NUPE safety rep also pointed out that legislation has been used in the past not to aid workers but to defeat them.

But G Bright (G&MWU) stressed to the conference that there was a fundamental opposition of interests between workers and manage-

ment and that their trade union strength had to be mirrored on a political level if workers are to be rid of the scourge of health and safety hazards created by the bosses' drive for profits.

There was a note of controversy when a NUPE safety rep decided to leave the conference after it was revealed that he stood in the election for the National Front.

In his defence a Tory safety rep said the man in question had represented their interests well. "Politics should be kept out of health and safety" she claimed.

Perhaps she will remember these words when the Tory government announce the cuts they intend to make in the public sector after the budget!

By Jean Greatrex

(Penistone CLP)

CLASS BUDGET

"The Tories' 'class budget' is a reflection of the chronic decline of British capitalism. At the same time, it is a refutation of the reformist policies of the last Labour government."

Terry Wilson (North East Leeds Labour Party) was speaking to the first-ever 'Militant' Readers' Meeting in the South Leeds constituency of Merlyn Rees, which attracted an audience of 16.

Terry explained that Geoffrey Howe was retaining the Labour government's capital tax laws and writing off the corporation tax 'deferred' by the Labour government; thereby keeping taxes on the profits of big business to a minute level.

But Sir Geoffrey did not share the illusion that the ruling class would re-invest their wealth in industry. This

accounted for the abolition of controls on overseas investment and the purchase of gold coins.

The absolute failure of the ruling class to invest and halt the decline of British capitalism, despite the sacrifices of the working class; coupled with crisis of world capitalism would entail untold political ramifications in the trade unions and Labour Party.

The working class will look for a socialist alternative. Terry pointed out that this first-ever Readers' Meeting, following on the establishment of a lively LPYS branch in a working class constituency was a reflection of the beginning of this process.

A collection raised £8.30 for the fighting fund.

Clive Heemskerk

(Leeds District LP)

LEFT & RIGHT REVOLUTIONARY MULTI- NATIONALS?

"Latin America needs a revolution."

Now who could disagree with that statement made at a recent conference to discuss the problems of the sub-continent?

As one speaker pointed out: "The present population of Latin America is around 346 million people, of whom 230 millions are undernourished; by the year 2,000 there will be 710 million people, most of them undernourished."

The only question is, what kind of revolution? For this conference was called by major multinationals and was held in Brazil.

Businessmen were worried that unless there was change "social convulsion and violence are inevitable."

How could they prevent another Cuba, or more recently the social conflicts of Nicaragua and Iran? They had their solution. The local representative of Volkswagen gave the answer. [He is also the chairman of the Motorcar Industry Association, founder of a main multinational investment bank to fill in his spare time.]

He declared: "We businessmen have to be included among the conductors of this revolution."

He might well find that he faces another revolution, for capitalism has proved unable to take the continent forward, even in the so-called miracle of Brazil [see article on pages 10-11].

STRUGGLE GROWING FOR WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

Where does this quotation come from:

"We who are many throughout the country are suffering, live badly and in need, while the few live well, have everything, go in want of nothing. We have nobody to turn to, no one listens to us, no one understands or wants to know anything about us. We are always promised that we shall live better, but in fact we live worse and worse."

From workers in India, Brazil, Western Europe? No, from trade unionists in so-called socialist Romania.

It comes from the founding declaration of the Free Trade Union of the Working People of Romania [SLOMR]. Set up in March this year, SLOMR has attracted the support of 2,500 workers. This new organisation has built upon the major miners' strike of 1977.

The bureaucracy of Romania has cosy relations with Western imperialism, because of the bureaucracy's nationalist differences with the Soviet regime. But the Romanian bureaucracy is one of the most vicious in E Europe for suppressing workers' rights.

Already they have arrested many members of the independent trade unions. But the growing demand for real workers' democracy will not be easily crushed.

Marion Morrison dies

By Jim Chrystie

All cinema has a political context. It may not be overtly stated, it may not always be conscious, but it is there.

The films of John Wayne had a consistent context—racist, sexist and anti-socialist.

Born in 1907 as Marion Morrison he changed his name to the more masculine-sounding John Wayne. Starring in over 250 films Wayne conveyed his views in the caricatures he portrayed.

"I don't act. I react," he once explained.

In Wayne's westerns the male hero, strong and silent, protects the 'womenfolk and children' from alien beings, the Indians or money-grabbing outsiders. The moral values of his Westerns were transmitted throughout his other films and political activities.

His jingoistic war films concentrated on the enemy without. At first this was the Japanese in the Second World War. Later it became Communism in Korea, Wayne backing the war with the slogan 'Make the army your Korea'.

For Wayne the enemy was always devious, sly and power-hungry. There were no social reasons for conflict, just wicked people wanting to take away freedom.

So as the Vietnamese people moved against American imperialism in the 1960s, Wayne financed, co-directed and starred in his own film on the conflict, 'The Green Berets'. Here the heroes are the American Marines, protecting the Vietnamese from alien Communism.

If the enemy without was one Wayne fought in his films, he devoted even more energy in fighting socialists and radicals inside the United States. Describing Joseph McCarthy as "one of the greatest Americans that ever lived," Wayne produced a film dedicated to him, 'Big Jim McLean'.

This showed how Communists were planning to poison the harbour water and were only prevented from carrying out their wicked designs by the intervention of investigative Big Jim.

Crude and simplistic Wayne's philosophy may have been. But it was consistent.

Wayne supported every reactionary cause in America over the last 40 years. He supported Goldwater, Reagan, and did not exactly approve when his idol, Nixon, was attacked by other investigators, this time from the 'Washington Post'.

One film critic aptly described Wayne's politics as being "distinctly to the right of Genghis Khan."

Wayne has now gone. But the reactionary views he stood for continue in the modern cinema. They may have a more subtle rebellious gloss to them, and may be more implicit but they are still there in many of the films produced by the major film companies.



Shooting it out—with US imperialism's enemies

IN THE NAVY

About ten months ago to a year ago, I thought about joining the Navy. My parents were quite keen on the idea, but I found out that it amounted to learning how to 'murder legally'.

When I first applied, I waited for no less than two months for a reply. And I thought they were supposed to be desperately undermanned and the "country" undefended.

When I finally got the entry form through the post, I also received quite a few leaflets showing what a wonderful time you can have. One booklet shows a sailor on the front smiling, and surrounded by girls.

The reality of the Navy comes a bit later. The booklet gives figures of how many people join the Navy, but none of how many people leave. I wonder why not. Some of the ships are shown (28 different types) and weapons like torpedoes etc.

The booklets are proud of the British sailor being a 'Professional'. What do they mean? Is it because he joins of his own free will? Or because he is trained to kill like a professional assassin?

It's not as if the pay is that good. As a junior over 16½ years old, you can earn a whole £28.91 a week. Well, not quite. Out of this has to come £7.84 for accommodation.

And then there's food. At

By Danny Cooke

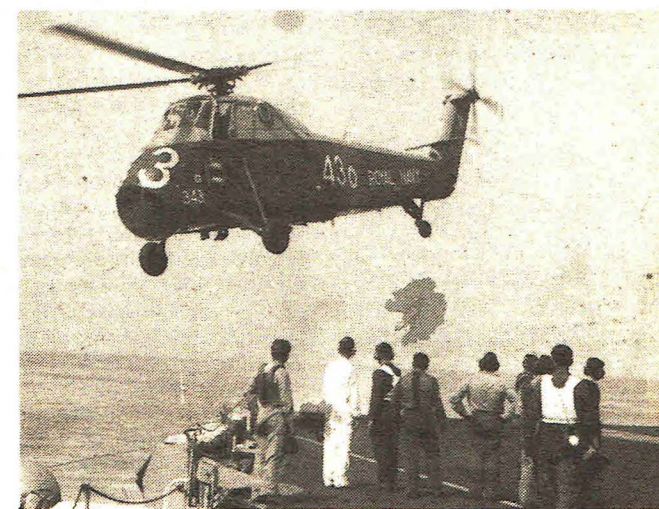
(Tower Hamlets LPYS)

least £2.10 comes off, and it can be £5.32 (it probably depends whether you have chips or not).

There are 39 different jobs offered to school leavers. How many of them are as well-paid in the Navy as in Civvy Street? My guess would be none. It's not even a guarantee of getting a trade when you come out.

And that's another thing. If you are getting a bad deal at a civilian job you can leave. In the Navy, you have to wait up to 18 months or pay an astronomical sum for the 'privilege' of freedom.

If you are leaving school and can't find a job, I would advise you, don't join the



No guarantee of learning a trade in the forces

Navy. Join the LPYS and fight to end the unemployment that pushes young people into the Forces, and also for a decent living wage of at least £70 per week.

KNOW YOUR BOSS

'Open the books' is a demand workers often raise when involved in negotiations. The bosses will give as little information as possible, but legally they are now obliged to disclose certain of their activities.

A new booklet from the Labour Research Department explains the legal rights gained by trade unionists since 1974 and the disclosure requirements established by existing company law.

The guide to Information Disclosure deals concisely with the requirements of the Employment Protection Act and Companies Act. Other sections cover the information aspects of redundancy, terms of employment, itemised pay statements, reasons for dismissal, and the Health and Safety at Work Act.

It is an invaluable guide for shop stewards because, as the booklet illustrates, companies often ignore their legal re-

quirements unless pressurised by their workforce. 220,318 companies did not even file a 1978 annual return by the required date. Laws on the statute book change little. But used by trade unionists they can help in making demands upon the bosses.

The LRD Guide to Information Disclosure, price 48p [inc. p&p] from LRD Publications Ltd., 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF.

MINERS ASK: DEEP DUFFRYN NOW - WHO WILL BE NEXT?

The National Coal Board have announced that Deep Duffryn colliery in the Cynon Valley is to close on 18th August.

The miners of South Wales have declared war on this closure and on any future attacks on the coalfield. Several thousand miners and their families on the recent South Wales miners' gala in Cardiff gave wholehearted support to the joint committees of the miners' lodges in the Cynon Valley in their fight to keep Deep Duffryn open.

Placards at the gala read: 'Deep Duffryn now—who next?' The NCB intend to close mines one by one but the South Wales NUM are organising a united fight to keep Deep Duffryn open.

At the gala Arthur Scargill, Yorkshire Miners' president, pledged his area's support and raised the demand for national strike action to keep the pit open. As he pointed

out, this fight will not be won on logic and arithmetic but on power and action.

If Deep Duffryn closes it will mean the loss of 450 jobs. There are already 1,200 men unemployed in the Cynon Valley, an unemployment rate of 8.9%

Between 1965 and 1976 over 4,000 jobs were lost in the Valley, over 3,000 of them in the mining industry. Over the same period the population of the valley has declined by over 5,000. That is why the miners and local community are determined to win this fight.

Miners are united

About 200 people turned up to a recent public meeting in Mountain Ash, the village where most of the miners live. It was organised by Mid-Glamorgan county council who are supporting the Action Committee in their fight.

Peter Evans, Lodge chairman of Deep Duffryn NUM,

explained why the NCB were trying to close the pit and why the miners are determined to win. "In the tripartite talks, 18 pits were earmarked for closure; then it was 10, now it's just us.

"Either we fight this fight now or we fight on another pit in six months time. The NCB have tried to divide us with this insidious productivity scheme but the miners are not divided; we are united."

Both Peter Evans and the chairman of the joint lodge committee in the valley gave examples of the inefficiency of the NCB in running the industry. Some of the machinery at Deep Duffryn is stamped 1893 and repairs to roadways never appear to be done until someone is killed, as has happened at Deep Duffryn.

Determined mood

When accidents happen, the NCB blames the miners. "They expect us to do the job

of management, yet they will not do the repairs that we want done." Emlyn Jenkins, the local miners' agent, said: "My problem is not getting the miners to come to meetings like this. My problem is keeping the miners at work. They want to come out now in defence of Deep Duffryn."

If pits are losing money, then it isn't the miners' fault. It's because the profits are going to precisely the same people as before.

The mood of this community is determined and the NCB must recognise that they are in for a bitter struggle if they pursue their closure plans.

Messages of support should be sent to Peter Evans, lodge chairman, 12 Gwernifor St, Mountain Ash, Mid-Glamorgan.

By Chris Burns

(Chairman, Welsh Region LPYS)



Photo: MILITANT

Working class children: most affected by cuts in education and attacks on living standards

CHILDREN PAY THE PRICE: EDUCATION

At one school in Northampton there are just 19 copies of the basic physics textbook between 220 thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds taking the foundation physics course.

Similarly, the English Department had 60 copies of the basic English language textbook for 600 students. These stark figures, given in an article in the 'Observer' of June 10th clearly demonstrate the effect the capitalist crisis is having on education throughout Britain. The article "how pupils pay the price for economy" specifically studied education cut backs in Northamptonshire. But as the article correctly points out "Northamptonshire is not unique".

The Northampton Tory council's 'answer' to the predicament is made clear by the chairman of the county education committee Mr John Soanes. He suggested that parents and teachers should raise £500,000 by voluntary means to fill the gap. Education of working class youth is obviously not a priority for capitalism. If you cannot scrape together a few hundred thousand pounds then too bad.

Not surprisingly the sugges-

tion be paid for by voluntary fund-raising has been greeted with extreme anger. Mr Derek Roberts a headmaster commented: "Teachers do a lot of fund raising work already. You wouldn't expect the police to have a jumble sale to raise money for petrol for their cars or doctors to give a wine and cheese party to raise cash for catgut and anaesthetic before they carried out an operation."

A Northamptonshire teacher was quoted as saying "Once we start getting parents to pay for books and materials, the principles of free education will be lost."

The Tories will attempt to dismantle the welfare state brick by brick. The living standards, the education, welfare and social services which workers have struggled for and won, through many decades will be attacked to keep the heart of a sick capitalism ticking.

The labour movement, allied with local community organisations, can resist cut-backs and force greater expenditure on education and other services.

But overall, a political answer is needed—a socialist answer. With a planned socialist economy, education would not only be safeguarded but developed enormously. No school would be without basic books—and no teacher without a job—

26,000 are today.

It has been estimated that the lost production in society due to unemployment deprives us of £20,000 million [at 1975 prices] worth of goods and services [see A Glyn—'Capitalist Crisis']. Imagine the benefits of this in education as well as housing and so on.

Turning to the Business Section of the very same 'Observer' of June 10th is very enlightening. While the cut backs continue and the living standards generally of the working and lower middle class suffer it should come as no surprise to find that big business seems to be holding its own. The 'Observer' reports that the Hawker Siddeley Group made pre-tax profits of £118 million last year. "De Vere Hotels and Restaurants...was on its best form last year, lifting pre-tax profits by 44% to £2.2 million."

The 'Observer', not surprisingly, fails to relate these profits to its article on cutbacks in education.

As Marxists we do. We are able to understand that this anarchy will continue until the system is changed from one where guiding objectives are the attainment of profit to one whose goals are the needs of the majority.

By Bill Doggett

CHILDREN PAY THE PRICE: HEALTH

Being born the son or daughter of working class parents can be a disadvantage, not only in education or housing, but in size as well.

A survey of 5,000 pupils at all infants' schools in the Brighton area [reported in the 'Evening Argus'] revealed that children from the working class council estates like Moulsecoomb or Whitehawk were far more likely to be very short than those from the affluent areas of the town. In some cases, growth hormone treatment had been considered for these children.

The doctor running the survey said: "A child living in Moulsecoomb with another six kids in a house and parents who cannot afford to buy them nourishing food, is bound to be smaller."

The survey came soon after the story hit the press of a schoolgirl in Moulsecoomb who had

eaten potato peelings and scraps from school rubbish bins. Her two-year-old sister was suffering from chronic starvation and her eleven-month-old sister was badly underweight.

A headmaster at a school on Whitehawk also pointed to the sharp dividing line noticeable in Brighton between working class areas and the well-off districts: "When our children play football or netball against other schools, it is plain we seem to have no bulky children." This division can be seen throughout the country.

And beware! The Tories' round of attacks on the working class threatens to increase the discrepancy, not only in living standards, but in the physical development of our children.

EGA BATTLE GOES ON



Massive support for the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in London, particularly from the labour and trade union movement, has been successful in keeping the hospital open and working, despite the combined efforts of management and health authorities to get it closed.

A final decision was still awaited from the Secretary of State when the election intervened. The Tory Secretary of State has announced that the EGA can stay open—but with less than half the present beds and reduced facilities, and provided that charity helps fund the hospital.

The Area Health Authority apparently intend to close all the beds before 'modernisation' commences. The "Save the EGA" campaign are not accepting these terms and are determined to continue the struggle.

They are demanding no cuts, no charity, and call on all to defend the NHS.

For further information or messages of support etc., contact Pam Jones (NUPE), 01-387 2501, or write to 'Save the EGA Campaign', c/o 30 Camden Rd, London N.W.1.

EQUAL PAY AND EQUAL RIGHTS

The warning bells should be ringing in the labour movement. The Equal Opportunities Commission has produced a report which proposes to remove safeguards established by the labour movement over a century of long-drawn-out struggle.

In the name of Equality, the Commission is proposing the repeal of legislation which restricts women's daily hours to nine, and weekly hours to 48; their starting times to 7 am and finishing times to 8 pm; and prohibits night work in factories.

The report also recommends the repeal of provisions specifying separate maximum weights which men and women can handle.

These restrictions were imposed during the course of the 19th century after a long struggle by the trade union movement to prevent the extreme exploitation of women and children by the capitalist class.

work is monotonous and arduous, particularly at a time when you are below your peak, and consequently the work is possibly dangerous.

Where night work is essential, then we should do everything to insist on the best methods of protecting the health of both men and women—for example, shorter hours, ample rest days and longer holidays.

The Commission also argued "that the continued existence of the legislation was part of the reason why the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts had not

guaranteed equality of pay and status." What madness!

Despite the existence of such legislation, the bulk of the low paid are made up of women, as figures show. The argument that shift work would remove the employers' ability to get round the Equal Pay legislation is ludicrous. What evidence is there to show that they would not find another loop-hole in the legislation? The employers would have the best of all possible worlds — women working night shift without equal rates.

The real reasons for low

pay are clear to see. It is not due to the lack of legislation. It is the weakness of trade union organisation, particularly in those industries where women are concentrated — the distribution trades, clerical and textile industries.

'Freedom of choice'

The Tories, who are in favour of implementing these recommendations, argue that they will remove restrictions on women's "freedom of

and it would be even worse for women with responsibilities for running the home.

Male trade unionists, in particular, should not be taken in by the false arguments of equality. There is nothing progressive about imposing conditions on other workers which have been established over the years to our own disadvantage.

The recommendation of the Commission must be actively opposed. Only through the organised labour and trade union movement can women achieve the struggle for equal pay and equal rights. Women's liberation does not mean equal opportunity to go down the pits, to be unemployed or work night shift.



Night work for women would be an increase in exploitation, not in equality

We are against shift work for men and women. Women's liberation does not mean equal opportunity to go down the pits or work night shift.

The emancipation of women lies not with legislation or tribunals, but through the labour and trade union movement organised around a programme to free all working people from drudgery and exploitation.

- ★ Equal pay for equal work.
- ★ Minimum wage of £70 for men and women, to be increased with the cost of living.
- ★ End night shift—except in essential services.
- ★ Cut the working week with no loss of pay.
- ★ Union meetings to be held in working hours to enable working mothers to attend.
- ★ Free nursery facilities.

By Dave Cotterill

Equality of exploitation?

The Equal Opportunities Commission, using an entirely false argument, states that "legislation restricting the hours and shifts of women inhibits equal opportunity and causes discrimination". In reality, they wish to give to industry a free hand in equally exploiting men and women.

To their credit, the Trade union representatives, Mrs Marie Patterson and Mr Jack Eccles, disassociated themselves from the recommendations and rightly argued that the protective legislation should be extended to men.

The other members of the Commission revealed their true sympathies on this point. According to them, "absolute restrictions on weekly hours of shiftwork would have undesirable economic effects." They simply forgot to add at the end of the sentence —for big business!

The question is bound to arise, however, of why should we be opposed to shift work for women if we are in favour of "equality".

Firstly, let's make it clear that we are opposed to shift work for men and women. The medical evidence shows that shift work, particularly night shift, the working of

long hours in a monotonous job, is detrimental to your health.

In one survey, 75% of men who worked shifts said they felt physically below par. They blamed this mainly on difficulty in sleeping and loss of appetite. A German survey found that the ulcer rate amongst rotating shift workers was 8 times higher than fixed shift groups.

Women suffer most

Night shift is socially disruptive, leading to all sorts of family problems. And it is here that women obviously suffer the most. The reality is that many women still do two jobs. They work to earn money, and they work in the home.

Repealing the laws on shift work now would simply increase the pressures on women and their families. Simply because men have been forced by big business to bow to its needs should not mean that women must now be delivered up in order that equality of exploitation is achieved.

It is true, of course, that many women do work nights—for instance in hospitals and hotels—but there is an obvious difference between this type of work and production line techniques where the

EARNINGS:
April 1978—average earnings in Britain

Male manual:	£80.7	Female manual:	£49.4
non-manual:	£100.7	non-manual:	£59.1

6.4% of male workers earned less than 50% of the national average
57.2% of female manual workers earned less than 50% of the national average

choice". From these supporters of the "free enterprise" system this is the final irony. What greater restriction could there be than the 1½ million unemployed, or the fall in living standards, which forces many women to seriously consider working shift work in order that they can supplement the family income and earn a living wage?

Shift work only benefits the bosses. It has a ruinous effect on health and on family life

The Organiser,
Chile Committee for Human Rights
1, Cambridge Terrace,
London, N.W.1.

Your reference:
Our reference: EMS/BB

9th. May, 1979.

Dear Sir,

I am most grateful for the illiterate pamphlet handed to me as I entered St. Michael's Church yesterday evening.

I was previously unaware of the extent of this Bank's involvement in Chile and was delighted to have this information. As a committed Christian, I wholeheartedly approve of this support for the present anti Marxist Government.

Yours faithfully,

E.M. Smith
Manager.

"PROFITS COME FIRST"

The capitalist class often make hypocritical statements in support of 'human rights'. But when the interests of capitalism are at stake, these are forgotten.

Over 30,000 people have died, torture and repression of trade unionists and opposition groups have been the norm since the Pinochet military junta took power in 1973.

Since 1977, Lloyds Bank International have loaned over \$200 million to the junta. Their attitude is well summed up by this letter to the Chile Committee for Human Rights.

When Pennsylvania was nearly wiped

With the future of their nuclear energy programme at stake, the Carter administration and the nuclear industry covered up the horrifying dangers of the accident at Three Mile Island, Harrisburg, putting the lives of millions at terrible risk. Betty Traun reports from New York.

In the last week of March, 1979, millions of people in the United States narrowly escaped an abyss of nuclear disaster. The whole state of Pennsylvania could have been transformed into a wasteland, contaminated, deadly, uninhabitable.

The welcome spring rains and winds which nourish our flowers and crops would have turned into killers bringing to other areas the deadly radiation spewed forth by a radioactive inferno plant on Three Mile Island in the Susquehanna River, and situated only 16 miles from Harrisburg, the state capital.

At four o'clock in the morning of 28 March, the loud whistle of highly pressurised steam escaped the confines of Three Mile Island's Unit 2 nuclear power plant. The noise was loud enough to wake nearby residents from their sleep, as told to reporters. Others slept, heard nothing, were unaware of the drama that was about to engulf them.

The men in the control room of Unit 2 working the "graveyard" shift knew what the sudden escape of steam meant. The plant's generating turbine had for some reason shut down. This caused the shutdown of the secondary feedwater system which carries heat away from the radioactive primary cooling system by way of two large steam generators.

Just within seconds the primary cooling system overheated. A relief valve on the pressuriser of the reactor's primary cooling system then opened, venting the excess steam thus relieving the pressure. This was the sound that the people had heard in the night.

After that a computer automatically directed the reactor's control rods to descend around the cylinders of uranium pellets (which produce nuclear fission) thus halting the fission, and shutting off the reactor. Within 30 seconds the computer turned on the auxiliary feedwater system to cool the steam generators.

But what the computer didn't know was that the feedwater system was shut off by valves. One emergency cooling system was useless. Programmed to assume that the valves were open, the computer began to lose control of the nuclear power plant.

There followed a series of mishaps too complicated to describe here, but in the days that followed there was a spillage of 250,000 gallons of radioactive water over the containment room floor, the escape of radioactive steam from the auxiliary

building, and a hydrogen explosion in the containment building which caused a hydrogen gas bubble that floated to the top of the reactor pressure vessel.

The Metropolitan-Edison Company which runs the plant did not see fit to notify the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in Washington until 7.45 am that morning. It should have done so immediately as the accident occurred under nuclear regulations. Thereafter ignorance and wilful misrepresentation combined to deceive people and endanger their lives.

Decades after the introduction of nuclear power, the citizens of the United States have no idea of the effects of a major accident, or what to do if one occurs. There has never been an accident so catastrophic in nature as threatened to erupt at Three Mile Island that week.

Met-Edison and Carter concealed the partial melt-down and refused to activate evacuation plans

It was Friday afternoon, 30 March, before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission finally began to speculate openly about the possibility of a "meltdown"—the ultimate accident—and fully two-and-a-half days before the Federal government itself, which has full responsibility for administering nuclear power, gave evidence that it was taking the situation seriously.

It took three days before the final measurements for radiation outside the plant were taken.

We in the United States have had our experience of natural disasters—flash floods, bursting dams, tornadoes, hurricanes—and in each case the machinery of government has swung into action immediately. If any of these disasters had occurred at Three Mile Island the population would have been told to evacuate and the federal government would have stepped in with every conceivable form of assistance.

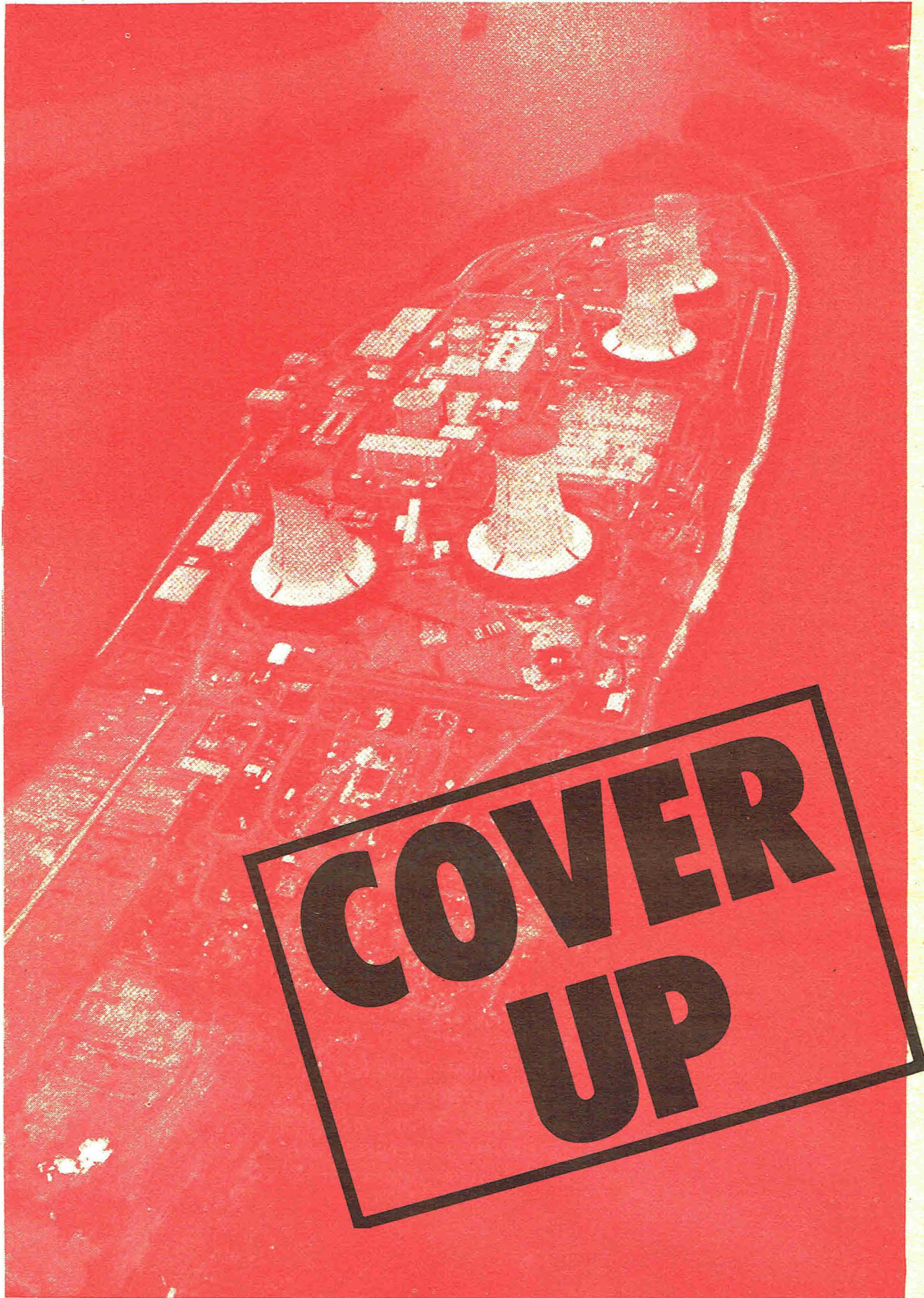
But on Wednesday 28 March to Tuesday 3 April, no orders for evacuation of the area were issued. Pennsylvania's new governor, Richard Thornburgh, did the next best thing, though. On Friday 30 March, he urged pregnant women and small children to leave the area within a 5-mile periphery, and ordered schools closed.

The residents of central Pennsylvania are no strangers to fear. In the past century the Susquehanna River has twice flooded its banks, causing millions of dollars worth of damages and sending residents fleeing.

The half million people who live in the Harrisburg area still vividly recall the record flood of 1972 when the fire trucks passed through the streets at midnight, broadcasting the grim eviction message over loudspeakers. The mass hysteria was very real then, too. But with the flood they knew it would recede, and they would be able to return to their homes, even though damaged.

But radiation run amok doesn't come in such a neat package. It produces a raw, gut fear, a bone-chilling fear of the completely unknown.

With the future of nuclear power itself on the line, the people of



Metropolitan-Edison's nuclear plant at Three Mile Island, near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania found that their lives were being batted back and forth between Harrisburg, Pa., and Washington DC like volleyballs.

Just how negligent the Carter administration was in these crucial early days can be gauged from the activities of the Environmental Protection Agency. The agency not only has responsibility for monitoring radiation, it also has at its disposal an extensive network of instruments and technicians to measure contamination of air and water in any part of the country.

By noon, Friday (30 March) it had done nothing. Its spokesmen recited a Supreme Court ruling that was supposed to inhibit its intervention in nuclear accidents. They said that the state of Pennsylvania now had to invite the federal government to enter its territory before the Agency could act.

Even so, it was claimed they were sending one man to the site to find out for himself what was happening. Such was the response from the federal government until open talk of a meltdown began.

On Friday morning, James Schlesinger, the government's top energy official, was declaring in Congress that the Three Mile Island accident **merely underlined the safe record of nuclear power**. Even after the news Friday afternoon that a

meltdown was possible, a Schlesinger aide said that the Secretary stood by his earlier statement.

Very shortly after the accident—amid desperate attempts by Metropolitan-Edison officials to conceal the fact that a partial meltdown had **already** occurred and that in fact an explosion had occurred—environmentalists began to urge evacuation.

Whatever the theoretical potential of nuclear energy, big business cannot be trusted to handle it safely

They found it impossible to get any attention.

On Friday morning, after Metropolitan-Edison engineers had dumped 400,000 gallons of radioactive water into the Susquehanna River and allowed a radioactive steam "plume" to escape without telling anyone, Governor Thornburgh contemplated evacuation from areas around the plant. He was talked out of the idea by company officers and federal officials. A phone call from President Carter urged that there be no "panic" and that Thornburgh not

go off "half-cocked".

At midday Friday, Senator Kennedy announced he would hold hearings Saturday on the health and safety implications of the accident. These plans were abruptly cancelled at the request of the White House, on the grounds that major figures scheduled to testify would be busy in Harrisburg.

By Saturday morning, information which had been coming from the different government departments stopped altogether. Instead, all calls were referred to the White House or the Nuclear Regulation Commission. The information was now being centralised and controlled.

It could be argued that this was a virtue in an emergency. It could also be argued that it is a technique for suppression. Only on Sunday, with Thornburgh at his side in Middletown Borough Hall near the plant did Carter refer to evacuation but

DEFEND THE CLOSED SHOP

SHOP

Once again the cry goes up by the Tory government and the kept press of big business—supported by Labour renegades like Woodrow Wyatt and Reg Prentice—for legal measures to be introduced against the trade unions.

The fact that such a demand is being raised again by the opponents of the working class is no accident—nor was it merely an election gimmick on the part of the Tories. Central to the Tories' whole strategy of boosting the profits of their rich financial backers is the fundamental issue of the power of the organised trade union movement. Britain's capitalists see this power as being the major factor which stands in the way of their once again becoming a major power in the markets of the world.

They invoke particular hatred against the closed shop, and particularly the pre-entry closed shop. The former is where workers have to join in order to continue employment, the latter is where a worker has to be in the union before he takes up employment.

Naturally, in many cases this deprives the employers of being as selective as they would like in filling vacancies, and it gives the unions the power to undermine the blacklisting of trade union activists.

The closed shop has its roots in historic trade union struggles, the gains of which have been passed on to present generations of workers by the pioneers of the movement. It is firmly established in traditional craft industries like engineering and printing.

The recent hysteria generated in the press in connection with the incident in Bradford where a worker had his union card withdrawn for having worked in a factory blacked by the union sixteen years previously, was an example of the spokesmen of big business seizing on an emotive aspect of the struggle in order to discredit the closed shop.

What was not explained in detail by the press was that the firm, Denby's, had locked out the workers for thirteen months and broken the union in the factory. They also introduced a black-list which they circulated throughout the textile industry—a move which resulted in the sacked shop-floor leaders being unemployed for nearly ten years.

The press screamed that the tyrannical closed shop had ruined Christmas for that worker's children. What they didn't comment on was that the action of the employers sixteen years before had ruined the Christmases of victimised workers' children for ten years. The union involved, the Dyers and Bleachers, have a proud history of

By Tony Mulhearn



Tony Mulhearn is a member of the National Graphical Association and Vice-president of Liverpool Borough Labour Party

struggle. They won the fight for the nine-hour day in Bradford 100 years ago, as well as securing a minimum wage.

The shop stewards' organisation and shop-floor democracy represent in embryonic form the elements of a new and higher form of society, in which the working class will democratically own and run industry and the state in the interests of the big majority.

For the bosses, the closed shop represents an "intolerable encroachment" on their divine right to manage. The trade union power embodied in the closed shop gives the workers' shop-floor representatives certain powers of checking and veto, vital elements of workers' control.

In fact, the shop stewards' organisation and shop-floor democracy represent in embryonic form the elements of a new and higher form of society, in which the working class would democratically own and run industry and the state in the interests of the big majority.

This is why the employers and their Tory spokesmen are so bitterly hostile to the closed shop. It is not just a matter of political prejudice: there is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict of class interests.

The closed shop means that the unions can veto the employers' rights to hire and fire. The closed shop means that the employer cannot draft in potential scab labour in order to prepare for a dispute, nor employ workers who would be prepared to work for less than the established union or shop-floor rate.

It gives workers on the shop floor a feeling of solidarity which is now taken for granted by the new generation of workers who know no other conditions of working than where they themselves control many aspects of working life.

One factor of the last Labour government's policy which irritated the bosses in many sections of industry was the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act which pro-

vided for closed shops (post-entry). This provision made it compulsory for workers to join the appropriate union after taking up employment in a place where the closed shop was established.

In many cases, this legislation merely formalised existing custom and practice, and even sections of the employers themselves were prepared to tolerate the position—especially during the period of the Social Contract when the official trade union organisation became virtual policemen of shop-floor workers and ensured the maintenance of wage restraint.

But once the rank and file had declared their opposition in action to any further wage restraint, then the closed shop became the focal point of the employers' anger.

This was underlined by statements made by Sir John Methven, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, who called for legislation to outlaw the closed shop. Immediately after the Tory victory in the general election he reiterated this demand and called for provision to be made for the right of workers not to belong to a trade union.

Here we see expressed the yearning of the employing class in Britain to return to the "good old days" of the 1920s and '30s when the bosses could select any number of workers from the unemployed and pay them starvation wages, using this as a threat to the rest of the workforce. If they did not get in line, sackings would then take place and their jobs taken by the wretched unemployed who would work for a pittance.

Nowadays, even with a million or more unemployed, workers are not prepared to go back to the practices of that dark period. Each non-unionised worker in a factory is a Trojan horse for the employers who will use them to undermine the solidarity at the point of production.

So far, even Thatcher is exercising caution in her approach to grappling with the question of the closed shop. They obviously still recall Heath's attempts to break what is now a symbol of workers' power in Britain—and also in many other countries of the world.

At this moment in America, the American Federation of Labour/Congress of Industrial Organisations are campaigning against the so-called "Right to Work" Law—sponsored incidentally by "liberal"

Democrat Teddy Kennedy—which forbids the closed shop in those states where it is now legally recognised.

Heath originally outlawed the closed shop. He quickly learned that what had been established as a result of decades of struggle cannot be removed by passing legislation in Parliament.

Even before the serious struggle began against his Bill, which became known as the 'scabs' charter', concessions were made which recognised the 'Agency Shop'. For a time, this, along with the 'Official Solicitor', postponed the titanic conflict between the Tories and the trade unions which culminated in the miners' strike and the destruction of the Heath government in February 1974.

However, the deep crisis of the economy, where output and productivity is only a third of the level of 1960-73, will compel the Tories, in a desperate attempt to deliver the goods to their paymasters, to launch an attack as a prelude to driving down wages and, even more, to give the bosses the untrammelled right to hire and fire labour at will, and to introduce short-time working as and when it suits them.

Like Heath before her, Thatcher will bite off more than she can chew. The Tories will learn that workers will not lightly give up a part of their organisation which is now an accepted part of life in many sections of industry. They will not hand back to the employers the absolute right to determine wages and working conditions.

The closed shop is now rooted in the consciousness of the shop-floor worker, and any attempt to outlaw that conquest will meet with the fierce resistance of the organised trade unions.

The struggle at 'The Times' between the print unions—particularly the National Graphical Association—and Lord Thompson's representative Marmaduke Hussey, which is now entering its seventh month, is a struggle for the continuation of the closed shop in the newspaper industry.

The closed shop is now rooted in the consciousness of the shop-floor workers: any attempt to outlaw that conquest will be met with the fierce resistance of the trade unions.

At stake is the right of the typographical unions to operate equipment which will directly replace traditional methods of production. So far every attempt to break the solidarity of the production workers—even to the extent of printing 'The Times' abroad—has been thwarted by the local and international solidarity of the workers involved.

Any weakening of the closed shop will make the employer's task that much easier. 'The Times' management's objective is to reduce the labour force by at least a third. The six months' lockout on 'The Times' has not broken the will of the unions to fight. This determination is a legacy of the closed shop.

As well as being symbolic of trade union strength and organisation, it represents the practical means whereby workers' working conditions and wages are protected and improved. Any attack on the closed shop must therefore be met with the full resistance of the trade union and labour movement.



An official Central African government poster showing what happens to thieves [or anyone who tries to take part of Bokassa's Empire away from him]

FRANCE BIDS FAREWELL TO THE EMPEROR

Last month in an hypocritical display of virtue France announced it was cutting off military aid to the Bokassa dictatorship of the Central African Empire.

Apparently French imperialism had just discovered the monstrous nature of the Bokassa regime, whose only parallel in Africa is that of Equatorial Guinea where slavery still exists.

The French President, a regular visitor to the Central African Empire for his shooting trips, was shocked to learn from Amnesty International that 100 children aged from 8 years upwards, had been battered, bayoneted and smothered to death by Bokassa's troops.

And awful as this massacre was, it was nothing new in the Central African Empire. Back in 1973, for instance, Bokassa himself entered the jails randomly to beat up and kill prisoners.

This was the man who in 1977 spent £10 million (given by France) to crown himself Emperor. Whilst the majority of the people lived in grinding poverty, Bokassa had a golden throne, a £3 million diamond-encrusted crown flown in for his coronation.

No protests from France

imperialism then.

The real reason for the current displeasure of French capitalism is that the unpopularity of Bokassa amongst the people of his 'Empire' is beginning to rub off on French business interests.

In earlier disturbances last January, students singled out French buildings and French ministers (in the government) for attack.

Bokassa could not even rely on his own army to put down the students—he confined them to barracks and called in those from the neighbouring dictatorship in Zaire.

Worried about the movement against him, Bokassa decided to reflect some of this opposition and put a complaint against France down on the agenda of the Franco-African summit last month. It was this, not the murder of school-children, which aroused the wrath of French imperialism.

The French Minister of Overseas Development stated [before the Amnesty Report] that by making this public attack on France, Bokassa had signed his political death warrant.

France has now decided to distance itself from the regime, and allowed the Central African Ambassador in Paris to announce he was resigning to set up a libera-

tion movement (with himself as President).

Bokassa has not proved a totally reliable ally for France, since coming to power in a coup in 1965. In 1969 a number of French firms were expelled and it took a visit by the French President to repair the damage.

Uranium

The country's most important natural asset is uranium, and here again Bokassa has been somewhat unreliable.

France is expecting that the Central African Empire, together with neighbouring Chad and Niger will be providing 60% of its uranium requirements by 1985.

In 1969 a mining company was set up with 80% of the shares owned by French business and 20% by Bokassa. Annoyed by French delay in mining, Bokassa unilaterally decided to give the mining rights to a Swiss firm.

This time it took a visit by the French President's cousin to sort matters out, leaving French business with 30% of the shares, the Swiss firm with 30% and Bokassa with 40%.

French imperialism is now clearly worried that the dictatorship they helped to create might result in damage

to their interests.

They can see how Bokassa tries to switch partners. He is apparently now in discussions with the Chinese and North Korean regime on moving his royal palace up country to his home village.

In the past he has been wooed by the Libyan dictator, Gaddafi. Gaddafi visited Central Africa in 1976 and persuaded Bokassa to become a Muslim. When the promised money did not materialise, Bokassa reverted to Christianity.

French imperialism, it seems, has decided to begin to cut itself off from Bokassa. It will not cut off all ties as it is maintaining a £18 a year of non-military aid. The ending of military aid has been a warning to Bokassa.

France will safeguard its military position in the area by the new base it is establishing at Bouar, which will cover operations in Zaire, Chad, and Central African Empire.

But as recent events in Chad showed, this will not be able to shore up for long French imperialism's crumbling position in the whole of Central Africa.

By Colin Barber

BRAZIL Miracle, wh

Every day they bury 40 babies in the Sao Paulo churchyard. The babies cannot stay, however. The pressure on space is too great.

After two years the 3,000 bodies are dug up, the markings removed and fresh graves prepared for the newly dead.

That is the reality of the Brazilian 'economic miracle'. A miracle which has seen the infant mortality rate shoot up by 30% to 80 per 1,000 live births.

Even if they survive into youth their problems are not over. With living standards having declined by 25% over the 15 years of military rule, families cannot afford to feed their children.

An estimated 15 million children are thought to be abandoned, i.e. 25% of the country's juvenile population.

Survival into adult life brings new difficulties. If you are fortunate enough to have a job (one in three of the urban population are unemployed) your wages are likely to be abysmal.

Workers on the national minimum wage would have to work 167 hours a week to purchase the official basic diet.

Fifteen years after the miracle began, most people are far poorer. A labourer would have to work twice as many hours to earn 1964 wages.

When the military came to power in a coup in 1964, they recognised that only the labour movement offered a real threat to their rule. One of their first acts after overthrowing a left-wing civilian government was to make strikes illegal.

They banned all existing political parties and created two themselves, one for government and one for

opposition. Successive presidents dismissed 100 senators and congressmen for stepping out of line.

The President also was given the power to take away citizens' rights for ten years and to imprison people indefinitely without trial.

These measures were accompanied by a Death Squad which ruthlessly hunted down opposition. Repression allowed profits to rise and industrial production mushroomed.

Industrialisation

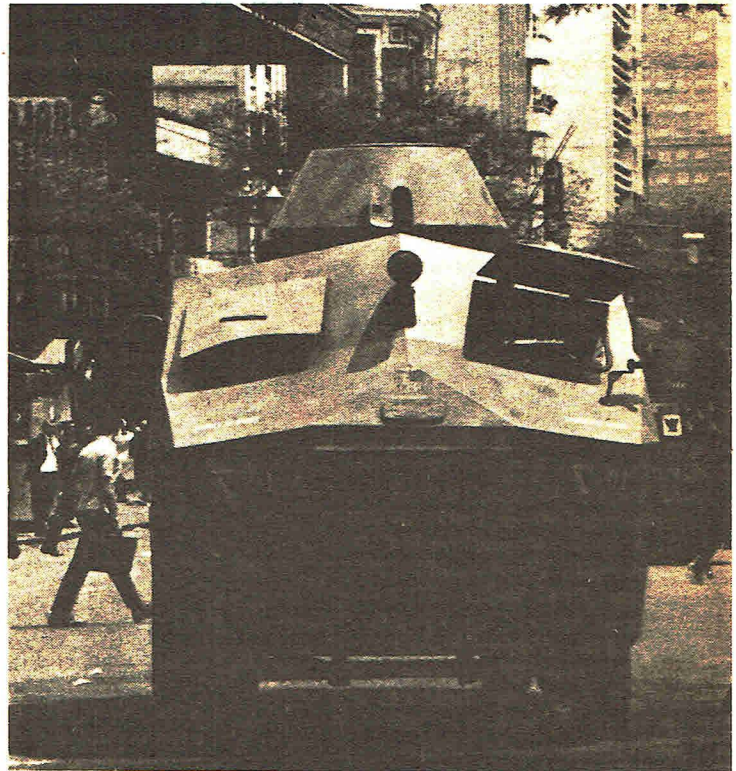
The last fifteen years has seen the transformation of Brazil from a nation exporting coffee and sugar into the tenth largest industrial producer in the world.

52% of exports are now manufactured products. Multinationals have flooded into the country. 75% of industrial production is foreign owned.

The growth of industry has led to the creation of a mass working class, with 61% of the population in the urban areas.

It is this working class drawing other oppressed sections of the population behind it, which now threatens the regime. Just as in Iran, it is a new young, working class prepared to battle with a dictatorship.

"I admit miracles can happen because I believe in God but I can't let them if they rob those who already have nothing. We want to get back what was taken away from us at the time of the so-called Brazilian miracle."



Curbing the workers

By Phil Frampton

at Miracle?

Luis da Silva, Brazilian union leader [*Financial Times* 10.1.79].

In Brazil, ever mounting waves of strikes are threatening to topple the rule of the generals. Some of the industrialists, fearful that their wealth will be carried away by a movement of the oppressed classes, have been moved to demand an end to the reign of terror.



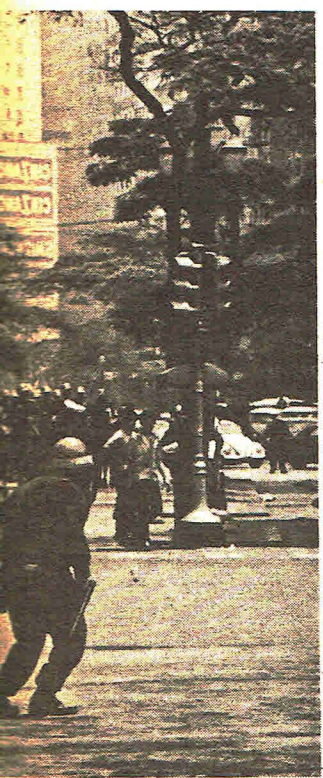
Ex-President Geisel's reforms were a sham

One of the first signs of the re-emergence of the working class as a fighting force came on May 12th 1978.

The Sao Bernardo metal-workers struck for a 20% wage increase and the strike spread like wildfire through the Sao Paulo industrial zone. 50,000 workers came out.

The government henchmen in the unions were by-passed as the strikers set up factory committees and issued manifestos demanding the right to strike, independent unions, more wages etc. In the face of arrests and dismissals, the workers have once again discovered their power.

A new surge of strikes began in September last year but this time there were 250,000 industrial workers out and they were joined by doctors and bankworkers.



Women took to the streets at the same time demonstrating against rising prices.

But a *'Times'* reporter (13.11.78) glibly described the Brazilian worker as "reliable, and rarely goes on strike. There were stoppages of a few days earlier this year but these were the first in a decade."

Others were not so intoxicated by the past. They could see the stormclouds all around. Unrest in the army had led to officers being disciplined and even football stars were openly demanding political amnesty.

Demonstrations had taken place attacking racial discrimination against blacks and one Catholic bishop was demanding revolution.

Back in July some top industrialists had issued a statement calling for more democracy. As the autumn strike wave began retiring President, General Geisel, announced several sham reforms.

They were "a contrivance to maintain authoritarian-

ism," declared General Benes, leader of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (the MDB is the official 'opposition').

At the same time, the *'Financial Times'* hurried to calm British investors: "Many observers here feel that if the Brazilian regime has sought to 'open up' it is because national circumstances and the national mood make it inadvisable to continue autocratic control." (28.9.78).

This national mood was demonstrated by the farcical elections in November with the two official parties competing. With voting compulsory, protest votes were channelled through the MDB who received over 60% nationally and an even higher vote in the main cities.

Mass strikes

In Sao Paulo it went 5 to 1 against Arena, the government party. In addition 10% abstained and 15% deliberately spoiled or left their paper blank. All told, a 70% vote against Geisel but Arena still remained in power!

General Geisel has since been replaced by General Figueiredo as president. On the day of his inauguration in March, 250,000 workers in Sao Paulo began a strike for a 77.1% wage increase (inflation is now over 100%).

This time bus drivers and teachers joined in. For two weeks they engaged in battles with the police and army.

The police took over the union headquarters. These

strikes received the support of millions and the backing of the Catholic church. Although da Silva subsequently called off the strike many of the employers caved in.

"Brazil will not be another Iran," were the bold words of Figueiredo's attorney (*'Guardian'* 15.3.79). The generals in April began a hesitant retreat in the face of more strikes and an emboldened opposition.

Fleury, head of the Death Squad, was killed by 'an accident on his yacht'. Increased taxes on the rich, price controls and even democracy by 1985 have now been promised.

But this is unlikely to halt the mighty force of the workers which has developed during the 'Brazilian miracle'.

How can the Brazilian ruling class meet the needs of the workers? If in a time of boom and plenty they impoverished the workers, the problems created by the fierce competition of the current world slowdown dictate even worse measures if Brazilian capital is to survive.

The wealthy see more battles ahead. The working class is young (with half the population under 19). Witnessing this new force, even sections of the MDB are discussing the formation of a socialist party.

However, even if they were to nominally form such a movement their record of slavish kneeling before the junta would make it impossible that they could lead the



70% voted against the military's main party. They stayed in power.

workers to topple the capitalists.

The formation of a party able to lead a struggle to expropriate the multinationals, the banks and large landowners remains the task of the leaders of the new factory committees who, welded in struggle with the farmworkers and peasants could overthrow the generals and the ruling elite and begin the construction of a socialist

Brazil.

Under the leadership of the working class, all oppressed strata could be drawn into united and organised struggle against the capitalists and their 'miracles'. The horror of early death which stalks every worker's family in Brazil could end, and a country which potentially has so much to give its people could actually begin to realise that potential.

REVOLT AGAINST ROYAL DICTATORSHIP

The Nepalese masses are in revolt.

The students of Nepal from the primary school to the university level are on strike demanding release of political prisoners and democratic rights.

Peasants are demanding tenancy rights and security of tenure. They are starving and demanding cheap grains.

Workers of several industrial towns are on strike demanding the right to form unions, fair service conditions, permanency and reasonable wages.

For the last two months demonstrations have been taking place every day all over Nepal. The King's palace and army are resorting to firing on and killing demonstrators.

So far about 500 people have been killed and about 1,000 injured by the police. About 1,200 people have been arrested.

Having failed to put down the upsurge, the king is taking steps to defuse the situation. He is reported to have conceded all the demands of the students and even to have released some political prisoners. But the agitation continues.

The present dynastic rule of the late King Mahendra and his son Birendra came to power in 1950 taking advantage of

the popular uprising against the previous Rana regime.

After assuming power King Mahendra maintained his rule through terror. He suppressed all the democratic desires of the toiling Nepali people; putting in jail all those who protested against his tyranny, banning all radical political parties who fought for establishing a democratic and egalitarian society in Nepal and prohibiting all legitimate trade union activities of workers and any mobilisation of the agrarian proletariat and poor kisans against their oppressors.

Feudal

After Mahendra's death in the year 1972 his son Bihendra, trained and educated in Harvard (USA) the so called centre for supplying democratic values to the world, took over the regime.

He follows admirably in the footsteps of his father. In some respects he has even surpassed him.

Like the Czarist rule in Russia prior to the 1917 revolution the King's dynastic rule personified the backwardness of Nepali society. Compared to Nepal of 1979, Russia was industrially and politically far more advanced under the Czar.

Even today 96% of the Nepali population lives in villages. Hardly 2% of the labour force is employed in industry.

The countryside suffers from all possible forms of feudal and semi-feudal oppression. There is an excessive concentration of land in the hands of a small minority

consisting of royal families and their henchmen.

The overall percentage of literacy is hardly 15% and among women it may not be higher than 0.5%. The pathetic plight of Nepali womanhood can be realised from the extremely high rate of female suicides in Nepal and large scale recruitment of Nepali girls as prostitutes in India and other nations.

Even after the introduction of so-called land reforms, land concentration has hardly been affected. The same glaring inequalities in distribution of land-holdings prevail as before the land reforms, though with certain shifts.

Initiation of so-called National Panchayat (Council) System under the growing pressure for democracy by the Nepali toiling strata is a big fraud perpetuated by the King to hoodwink the people and improve his image abroad. Under this scheme the King nominates his own stooges as a representative of the Panchayat Samiti at the local and national levels.

Exploitation

Similarly the King also nominates the Prime Minister and a Cabinet in order essentially to blame them for his doings whenever he so desires.

No wonder then that the political situation in Nepal is quite unsettled and disturbing. Considerable discontent prevails in rural as well as urban areas against the brutal exploitation by landlords, Sahukars and capitalists and against the oppressive rule of Monarchy.

In various parts of Nepal in the countryside, the poor kisans and agricultural labourers have started mobilising, forming their Secret Committees and agitating for minimum wages and equitable distribution of land.

In cities the proletariat and the students have become more vocal against the tyranny of the monarchic rule.

Murders

Unfortunately despite the growing discontent of the toiling strata, a political party with an adequate organisational basis evenly spread in rural and urban areas and working on a clear Marxist, Leninist revolutionary perspective which could mobilise the exploited and properly articulate their demands appears to be missing.

As a matter of fact, left parties have split into various smaller groups at loggerheads with each other. Bourgeois parties are also divided.

For instance, ex Prime Minister Koirala's bourgeois Congress Party has been divided into four groups over the mode and nature of co-operation to be extended to the King in order to transfer the present absolute rule into so-called constitutional Monarchy.

Koirala's breaking with and making up with the late King Mahendra and now with his son Birendra has become proverbial. In his latest instance he has now joined hands with the King, and has started extending willing co-operation to the King in perpetuation of his tyranny.

The depth of the degradation to which Koirala has

reached could be seen from the fact that he has no moral courage even to oppose the brutal murders of two revolutionaries Bhim Narayan Shrestha and Yagya Bahadur Thapa who have been recently executed for protesting against the tyrannic rule of the monarchy.

The King at the moment is busy wooing rightists as well as left political groups under the pretext of introducing some constitutional form of government under his overall sovereignty, with a view to throwing some positions to the aspiring opportunistic leadership of those parties and thereby obtaining political sanction for his oppressive rule.

One can get a faint idea of the tyrannical rule from the figures of the persons executed by the King since 1951.

NUMBER OF PERSONS KILLED

Under the pretext of 'encounter'—769

Executed—31

Shot—5,000

In jails (as reported)—12,000

At the initiative of the Nepali Samajwadi Parishad some of the left groups have forged a solidarity front named 'Nepali Krantikari Ekta Manch' (i.e. Nepali Revolutionary Unity Platform) with a view to mobilising the toiling masses of the Nepalese society to unitedly resist the tyranny of the King and jointly strike to overthrow the monarchy and establish a workers' democratic state in Nepal.

R R Sarwaha
(President, Nepali Samajwadi Parishad Mayur Society)

LETTERS

Putting profit in their tanks

Dear Comrades

Local motorists on the A66 in North Yorkshire are now faced with a round trip of more than twenty miles after the only petrol filling station in the area was closed down.

The reason was that turnover at the site was not large enough to justify delivery of a few hundred gallons every month. So the other day a tanker siphoned off the remaining fuel and the oil company announced they would be filling the tanks again soon—with concrete!

Rural areas of the north-east are dry of petrol while government ministers talk of ending the crisis of supply by letting prices rip to reduce demand.

The capitalist class and their Tory lackeys are quite insensitive to our needs. They insist on reducing public transport, plus some freight services, to lower the public sector demand for oil—and yet what does this mean except an increase in the demand for fuel for transport of goods which then will have to be moved by road?

In other words more profit for the road hauliers but higher prices for you and me as a result.

It is only by planning the use of finite fuels; the adoption of a fuel policy and an integrated transport system within a socialist economy that these crises can be averted and people live in comfort.

In the next few months the working class will learn by bitter experience the necessity of the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy.

On this basis we can plan production and consumption for the needs of society instead of the piracy of Blackbeard Joseph and his cut-throats!

Fraternally
Kevin Gent
North West Durham
Labour Party

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

COMMON MARKET MADNESS

Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

Dear Comrades

A lot of cant marked the Tories' Euro-Election campaign. The honours however must go to Nicholas Ridley, known to the movement for his plans to "take on" certain unions whilst steering clear of others.

At a meeting in Nottingham he referred to the scandalous "surpluses": wine and milk lakes, apple and beef mountains as "human error". So here we have it: the 6,000 tons of cauliflower and half a million apples ['Militant' 455] destroyed were a mistake.

Far from it! Policies are deliberately calculated to maximise prices [and so profits]. There is every incentive for overproduction—as farmers are guaranteed a buyer [governments using taxpayers' money].

The only "human error" is that we allow this crazy system and its representatives to carry on for so long!

Fraternally yours
Leon Kaplan
Rotherham COHSE



Pick of the voters

Dear Comrades

I would like to bring to your attention a letter I came across in the 'Bristol Evening Post'.

The person writing in says that it is far too easy for any one to vote. He says that 'voting should be a privilege obtained by a licence given only to those who show they know the basics of politics in Britain'.

The man suggests interview boards be set up and people should answer questions to assert their political knowledge in order to obtain a licence.

He hopes that by the time of the next election people would have a better political knowledge and education as, he claims "The vast majority of the British working class have as much political understanding as a brussel sprout".

I wonder who he thinks would choose the people on these boards and who would test them to see whether they have enough political knowledge to say whether other people could vote.

It seems to me that he is a Tory who instead of returning to the 1930s would like to return to the 1830s when only the rich and privileged could vote.

After all, if the author of the letter had his way only the rich and privileged would be on the boards and undoubtedly only those who show their capitalist views would be given the licence to vote.

Yours fraternally
K Hawkins
South Gloucestershire
LPYS

It's Christmas—if you're rich

Dear Comrades

Now that Christmas has arrived early for the already wealthy in our society—the hospital consultants, Appeal Court judges, admirals, field-m Marshals, and similar productive workers, then surely the majority in our society, ie. the working class can look forward to similar percentage type increases—in relative if not absolute money terms—now that the green light has been activated.

Of course, some will argue that admirals, field marshals,

etc need another £70 to £80 per week, with petrol prices now around the £1 mark when they are so unfortunately saddled with their Mercedes and similar energy saving machines; so necessary if they are to travel in comfort after a gruelling day on the golf course or even occasionally at the office.

Thatcher's promised tax cuts will do little for the country's 8½ million pensioners or 1¼ million unemployed, and it is incontrovertible that increases in VAT

lacking in political theory.

I tried to rectify this by embarking on a programme of reading.

I had barely begun my task when the election campaign began, and this, of course, took precedence. During the campaign I discussed politics with many people who held all kinds of views.

I believe that I successfully answered most criticisms and question, but I was occasionally unable to give satisfactory answers. I always made a point of discussing these particular incidents with

experienced comrades.

On each occasion I was given a good reply to use if I was later confronted with the same arguments. Thus my own personal experiences have shown me that 'Gut Socialism' is not enough.

You must have a sound grounding in theory, which if it is allied to 'Gut Socialism', will enable you to answer all criticisms and questions.

Yours fraternally
Simon Duerden
Ipswich LPYS

Political action—what alternative?

Dear Comrades

I write to apologise that I'm not worth the 25% pay rise our bosses are getting! I am a psychiatric nurse, working eleven hours a night, often short-staffed and sometimes looking after two wards at a time, occasionally having to deal with unusual situations.

Obviously a boss sat on his backside all day, except to get up for a round of golf, is worth 25% extra when the rest of the workers are expected to live on peanuts.

Our 9% rise recently has already been eaten up by higher taxes—(what a shame

I'm not one of the elite few, otherwise I could have benefited from the Tories' promised tax cuts) and an increase in hospital food charges. In fact the list is endless.

We've all read of school students and college students taking their own lives because of the bleak prospect of unemployment, ordinary workers committing suicide because of redundancy and old people killing themselves because they simply cannot afford to live.

Yet we now have Callaghan asking us not to take any political action to achieve a

socialist society. Of course the rank and file of the labour and trade union movement have more sense.

We know the only way of defeating the evil and rotting capitalist decay is by implementing a socialist planned economy. What is the alternative—faced with this most reactionary Tory government ever—to commit suicide?

Yours fraternally
Stuart Russell
Gloucester CLP and
COHSE

Read the 'Militant' every week

see back page for subscription form and rates

EEC—Bosses' 'unity' a sham

Dear Comrades

With the European elections now behind us I think it is worth again considering our position as socialists towards the EEC, or indeed any attempt to unify Europe on the basis of capitalism.

My attention was drawn to a passage written by Trotsky in his book 'The Permanent Revolution' (p 112). He wrote in 1905 whilst discussing the prospects for revolution in Europe:

"European governments, from the moment the proletariat began to stand on its own feet, have always feared to place before it the choice of war or revolution.

"It is precisely this fear of the revolt of the proletariat that compels the bourgeois parties, even while voting monstrous sums for military expenditure, to make solemn declarations in favour of international arbitration courts and even of the organisation of a united states of Europe.

"These pitiful declarations can, of course, abolish neither antagonisms between states nor armed conflicts."

If only the Labour Party nationally had taken up the demands of the 'Militant', pointing out that the interests of the workers in this country are identical with those abroad.

If they had called for the uniting of countries throughout Europe on the basis of socialism, with all the planning that goes with it, then we would not have seen the inevitable low turnout on Thursday.

With what lies ahead, the slogan 'Workers of the World Unite' is even more necessary.

Yours fraternally
Suri Krishnamma
Vice Chairman IOW LPYS

If you believe this...

Dear Comrades

Just recently advertisements for jobs at British Leyland, Longbridge, have appeared in the local newspapers. One part of these adverts claimed "Earn up to £135 a week".

After various, rather annoyed people demanded explanations, a company spokesman replied that a maintenance fitter working permanent nights, with full parity rate, night shift allowance and ten hours overtime per week could reach this figure.

Unfortunately we haven't received any parity pay yet, and an agreement within the plant limits overtime to thirty hours per month so this figure is not attainable.

I think Saatchi and Saatchi had better watch out. Our Personnel Dept could be after their jobs.

Bob Geoghegan, T&GWU
Longbridge

Immediate prospects of 2 million unemployed and 20% inflation—that's official! It's in a Treasury report that's meant to be circulated through government departments for 'guidance'.

But it's also something the government doesn't want to shout about. In fact, as our editorial shows, they tried to keep it quiet, in case those most affected—the working class—decided it had had enough and moved into action against the people responsible.

Coming straight on top of the budget this little piece of news certainly should at least prompt every 'Militant' reader into action. It only bears out, after all, just what 'Militant' has been saying.

Make sure that YOU get the paper that tells the truth every week. Sell a copy to as many workers as you can reach. Let them see the facts about exactly who is responsible for the mess we're in and let them also see our appeals for cash!

We urgently need another £15,000 by July 7th to reach our target of £42,500. Every penny is vital in getting the resources to step up the campaign for socialism! And the pennies all add up.

Supporters in Bracknell demonstrate the point this week. The pennies and ½ pennies they 'put by' amounted to £3.66 for the 'Militant'. Every reader could take this kind of action and make a regular donation.

Thousands of readers, however hard up, give amounts like the 45p and the 60p that M Pitman and Y McGregor in Norwich gave this week.

Many hundreds, we are confident, could pledge themselves to £1 or even £2 a week to build the 'Militant' and, at a push find a fiver or even a tenner on 'special occasions'.

But fewer—only the rather lucky 'Militant' supporters, like J Sheppard of Kirkdale who won a £25 prize can afford to give larger amounts. We particularly welcome the 'expenses' given to trade unionists and Labour Party members handed straight back into the labour movement via the 'Militant'—its Marxist voice and weapon in the class struggle.

Last week POEU supporters collected £105 at their conference, and NALGO supporters are expected to raise even more! But perhaps the most heartening contributions this week were the £6.50 collected from workers at the Alan Smith Group (AUEW) Leeds and the £5 from Littlehampton Labour Party "in recognition of the good work done for socialism by the 'Militant'."

These and many other contributions (some of them listed below) have helped reach another excellent total of £1,831.51. Every supporter must endeavour to follow their example in the coming 2-3 weeks.

The one most unlikely to be followed, however, in terms of amount [though we hope it will be in terms of the spirit of conviction] is the gigantic £1,000 donation from a young supporter who no doubt could have found other ways of spending it!




















'Militant' is a workers' paper and depends for its staple diet on the pennies and pounds of the mass of its readers. We welcome anyone from a more privileged background 'throwing their lot in' with the working class as a

WANTED

£15,000

IN A FORTNIGHT

Build MILITANT

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 26 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	2,350		1,288
Hants & IOW	3,100	1,550		1,050
Humberside	2,000	1,000		734
London North	9,500	4,750		2,310
London South	3,900	1,950		1,368
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	2,250		1,231
Merseyside	5,000	2,500		1,207
Midlands East	3,300	1,650		1,411
Midlands West	9,000	4,500		2,935
Northern	5,500	2,750		1,650
Scotland East	2,900	1,450		535
Scotland West	4,500	2,250		958
South East	4,500	2,250		1,566
South West	3,100	1,550		1,176
Wales East	2,600	1,300		600
Wales West	3,400	1,700		563
Yorkshire	6,800	3,500		1,981
Others	6,700	3,250		5,273
Total	85,000	42,500		27,836

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

whole, especially when 'Militant' becomes the 'beneficiary'.

But look at where we would have been this week without that £1,000! We doubt if there will be another such

'windfall' next week or the week after and we now need £5,000 a week 'till July 7th!'

The raffle should be energetically pushed and every reader asked to make a special effort. We don't

expect a flood of £1,000s or even £100s (though, of course, we won't refuse them if they come) but we do appeal for a stream of tenners, fivers, and ones, to give us what we need for the next step forwards

with the 'Militant'.

Many thanks to all this week's contributors including the many who gave to collections at 'Militant' meetings and discussion groups (especially in Leeds and

Gosport). Also congratulations on the many excellent donations from Labour Party Young Socialists and Labour students. Oxford LPYS sent £60 and Perry Barr and Erdington £27 between them! Reading and Royal Holloway College students sent a help-ful £4.91.

Individual donations included: £10: Mrs S Salingar (Hull), M Mearns (E Kilbride). £8: J Legg (E Kilbride) S Russell (Gloucester COHSE). £5: S Brooke (Leeds POEU). £4: J Donnelly (E Kilbride). £3.65: Andy Herbert (Hammersmith). £2.50: I Lowes (G&MWU Convenir; Liverpool Corporation). £2: S Marchini (EETPU Hackney), R Barker (Bradford LP). £1.50: K Slattery (Germany). £1.20: P Gunn (Salford).

£1 came from: Jane Pulsford (school student, Cardiff), P McKellion (student, Nottingham), Jackie Pickles (day's tip from a waitress in Poole), S Sherlock (Teeside), E Williams and J Gallacher Westgate LP, Gloucs), D Meades (Gosport), L Marsh (Tyneside), H Erasmus (Caerphilly LPYS).

Fund-raising events included: a weekend Euro-cavass £20 (Liverpool); jumble sale £24 (Oxford), 50s Club Wakefield £21.20, Dave's 'non-smoking' £4 (Bridlington) and John Woulfe's TV appearance £2.

"Tories Out" badges £1.75 (Nottingham), pontoon: F Wardal £14 and E Goodby £2.50 (Birmingham), pontoon £5 (E Kilbride) and fur toys £7 and "kids and comrades" evening £3.33 (Bracknell).

Mick Levene's farewell party got £22.50 for Coventry (nearly 200 people attended this historic event). Collecting tin £2.30 (Hackney), lifts £2 (Dagenham), £2 (Liverpool), laundry £1 (Portsmouth), iron £1.50 (Slough).

Tea and coffee: £2.44 (Ryde), £1.35 (Shanklin), £1 (Slough), "fags" £2.80 (Newport IOW), sandwiches £1.66 (Nottingham), Euro-bet £2 (E London), election book £1.10 and beer levy £2.10 (Gloucester), Russian stamps £2 (Leeds), selling a book £2 (Stevenage) and Christchurch supporters £12.

By Clare Doyle

ads

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

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.

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.

NEWCASTLE Militant Readers' Meeting: 'The Oil Crisis—who is to blame?' Speaker: John Pickard. Sunday 1st July, 7.00 pm, Newcastle Trades Council Centre for the Unemployed, 9 Queen Street, off the Quayside, at the bottom of Dean Street, Newcastle.

WEST MIDS Militant supporters '500 club' draw. Results announced on 16th June: 1st prize (£200)—ticket 519. Steve Willis (Erdington LPYS); 2nd prize (£20) ticket 815, Pat Dunne (Bakers' Union, Stoke); 3rd prize (£10) ticket 956, L Ali (Erdington). 4th prize (4 prizes each of £5 each): ticket 621, Jim Hooker (Handsworth Labour Party); ticket 992, R Tidmarsh (Rover Solihull); ticket 742, W Lowe (Wythenshawe LPYS); ticket 926, Martin Kavanagh (Rover Solihull TGWU).

SEAHAM Marxist Discussion Group: 'The Communist Manifesto parts 3 and 4'. Thursday July 5th, 7.30 pm, 6 William Johnson Street, Murton.

EASTERN REGION LP CONFERENCE Militant Meeting: 'After the elections: future prospects for Labour'. Hear: Teresa MacKay (delegate, Ipswich LP); Bob Edwards (Harlow LP member). Chairman: Jane James (Stevenage LP and YS regional chairman). Ipswich Town Hall, room 2, after conference—5.15 pm start. Saturday 23rd June, social afterwards.

HOUGHTON - LE - SPRING Marxist Discussion Group: 'The Communist Manifesto, parts 3 and 4'. Thursday June 28th, 7.30 pm, 13 Finchale Court, West Rainton, near Houghton-le-Spring

CANTERBURY book raffle result: 1st prize (collection of socialist books): Mary Walm-sley (UKC Labour Club); 2nd prize (collection of socialist pamphlets): Peter Hutson (UPW Canterbury)

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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 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

ENGINEERING WORKERS REJECT DERISORY OFFER

NATIONAL ACTION FOR THE FULL CLAIM

Engineering workers have reacted with disgust to the news of the Engineering Employers' Federation's offer in response to our national claim. The offer is seen as direct provocation.

The employers complain that our demands are excessive, at a time when they and their likes have just had enormous pay rises and a bonanza from tax cuts.

The Tories' policies, dictated by these same bosses, will give another boost to rising inflation. Our negotiators must demand that our claim is met in full.

We have been offered a skilled rate of £68 a week, a £3 improvement on the previous offer. This is conditional however, on the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions agreeing to refer the other items of the claim, including the 35-hour week, improvements in holi-

days and overtime rates, to a joint working party, together with discussion on amending the guaranteed week agreement in the employers' favour.

The Employers' Federation obviously feel strengthened by the return of a Tory government, and by the apparently hesitant and weak leadership of the AUEW during the negotiations.

At the recall National Committee, union president Terry Duffy appealed to delegates to "adopt a softer approach to the current pay negotiations" ('Guardian' 13/6/79) and for the power to go back to the employers with freedom to agree to an unspecified figure, provided a common settlement date is agreed.

Gavin Laird, the AUEW Executive Committee member for Scotland, indicated that the Executive would be prepared to "give a lead to our members" in "recommending the principle of establishing a joint working party on the basis of movement" ('Proceedings at a National Conference' book No 3)—i.e. if the Engineering Employers' Federation would put up the minimum time rate.

The right-wing leadership



AUEW members talk to Terry Duffy during the lobby of negotiations with the EEF in London on 9th May

have already indicated that they would like to do away with national negotiations. For them, working parties will be seen as a way of avoiding national action on the claim.

Our claim is for an £80 national minimum wage. But there are indications that some of our negotiators are already prepared to settle for considerably less. "Are you prepared to recommend a sum of £70 to your member firms?" Terry Duffy asked the employers during negotiations ('Proceedings at National Conference book No 3).

This has been blocked by the recall National Committee. It stipulated four conditions for any settlement: a commitment to the full £80 minimum time rate, a one-hour reduction in the working week this year and a 35-hour week by 1982 and two days

extra holiday this year, to be introduced commonly from April 1979.

This means that industrial action will have to be called by the AUEW leadership, much as it may displease them. As the 'Guardian' put it, "an overtime ban and a series of one-day strikes are now inevitable in the industry, and they will be led by right-wing Mr Terry Duffy, elected as president of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers on a platform of opposition to most forms of industrial action."

Terry Duffy is up for presidential re-election next year. He will have to make some move on the claim if he is to avoid further discrediting himself in front of the membership.

The National Committee, now with a slender Broad Left

majority, will have the responsibility for safeguarding members' interests and ensuring that the Executive do not backtrack.

To date, we have been hampered by the lack of information provided on the national claim. This must be reversed to prepare the membership for a national fight. The National Committee must insist that the Executive immediately send material to the branches and shop stewards, explaining the case for the full claim.

One-day strike

Our demands must be for the full claim now. We must reject any form of working parties.

The Executive should call an immediate overtime

ban and a one-day strike as the beginning of a campaign of national action to win the claim.

District Committees should organise conferences of all shop stewards, to unite all the factories in the district, and develop an effective fighting strategy. Rallies of the membership should also be called to explain the case and build up the campaign.

A full national strike, involving the whole membership, can defeat the Employers' Federation and win the claim.

By Steve Davison

(AUEW convenor, Anderton International, Bradford)

END PAY DECLINE-ACT NOW DEMAND BSC CRAFTSMEN

By a BSC shop steward

After years of procrastination by the British Steel Corporation management, watching our relative pay slump dramatically since 1974, BSC craftsmen in South Yorkshire are in an angry mood.

In 1974, the last time we had free collective bargaining, we were eighth in pay terms of a mill team of 40. Now craftsmen are thirty-fifth!

This is the result of the years of government pay restraint, when the only opportunity for increases at local level was through self-financing productivity deals.

Unlike other unions in the steel industry, we refused this—we know it only causes redundancy. Our stand is that a job does not just belong to the individual worker but is held in trust for the whole working community.

We relied solely on pressuring the National Craftsmen's Co-ordinating Committee (NCCC) for decent increases at a national level. Government pay policy virtually put a stop to that.

Management policy has

been made clear: to close all doors except the one they want to herd us through.

Two years ago we in South Yorkshire yet again made representation to management for payment on a tonnage basis.

Management turned down our representations—which had the sympathy of production workers. Instead they put forward ideas of flexibility and group working practices.

The document they produced outlining this proposal is frankly incredible. We were expected to be octopuses—knowing and dealing with electronics, fitting, pipefitting, joining etc, linked in small 'commando action' groups of 4 or 5 men ready to tackle anything.

The reward for this particular piece of fantasy was to have been an extra £7 a week!

Since that first meeting there have been prolonged and fruitless negotiations, while our pay has fallen further and further behind. It has been taken up at national level.

After we threatened a one-day strike and overtime ban, BSC 'conceded' that

such flexibility can be introduced in each locality only if mutually agreed.

We say this is wrong. We need a policy at national level, to counter the threat of a minority of members doing a deal against the interests of the rest.

Our members in the five South Yorkshire plants are now at boiling point. This is the time to take action.

There is not, for the moment, official government pay restraint. For the next few months BSC has a boom in orders. They need tonnage.

We will not have a better opportunity to take action.

In South Yorkshire, in rejecting management's terms, we decided to go through procedure quickly to get official backing. Our counter-claim demands parity with the higher-paid production workers.

We are calling a divisional mass meeting in Sheffield on the 27 June to report back to our members and consider industrial action.

Other basic issues arise out of this dispute.

It opens up to serious question the role of the

full-time officials and the NCCC itself. Full-timers tend to be isolated and insulated from members' conditions and feelings.

This is fully reflected in the NCCC which is solely composed of full-time officials, appointed by the ECs of the different unions.

At every level we need lay representation, so that those who negotiate for us are elected and subject to recall by the membership.

BSC craftsmen need to establish links on a national scale to unite rank and file members, overcoming the dangerous geographical isolation. Moves are afoot to surmount the problems and we are in constant contact with craftsmen's leaders, particularly in Scotland and Wales.

A successful conclusion to this dispute can provide a springboard to transform our unions and their methods of representation.

BSC management rely on tax payers' money to buttress themselves against industrial action. They lost £85 million through the craftsmen's strike at the Port Talbot plant

alone.

In South Yorkshire, there would be five plants immediately involved—Rotherham, River Don, Shepcote Lane, Stocksbridge, and Tinsley Park. How much more tax-

payers' money is to be wasted by a bloody-minded, irresponsible management's refusal to recognise long standing and legitimate grievances?

Fight Prestcold redundancies

"You'll have to find a job somewhere else." This was Sir Keith Joseph's advice to Prestcold workers lobbying him on his visit to Glasgow.

A mass meeting of the Prestcold workforce overwhelmingly endorsed the joint shop stewards committee's recommendation to fight for the retention of Prestcold's operations on the Hillington industrial estate.

They were authorised to immediately reject any co-operation by the workforce with company proposals for the run-down of Scottish operations.

A mass meeting of all interested parties in the labour and trade union movement has been organised to rally support and help

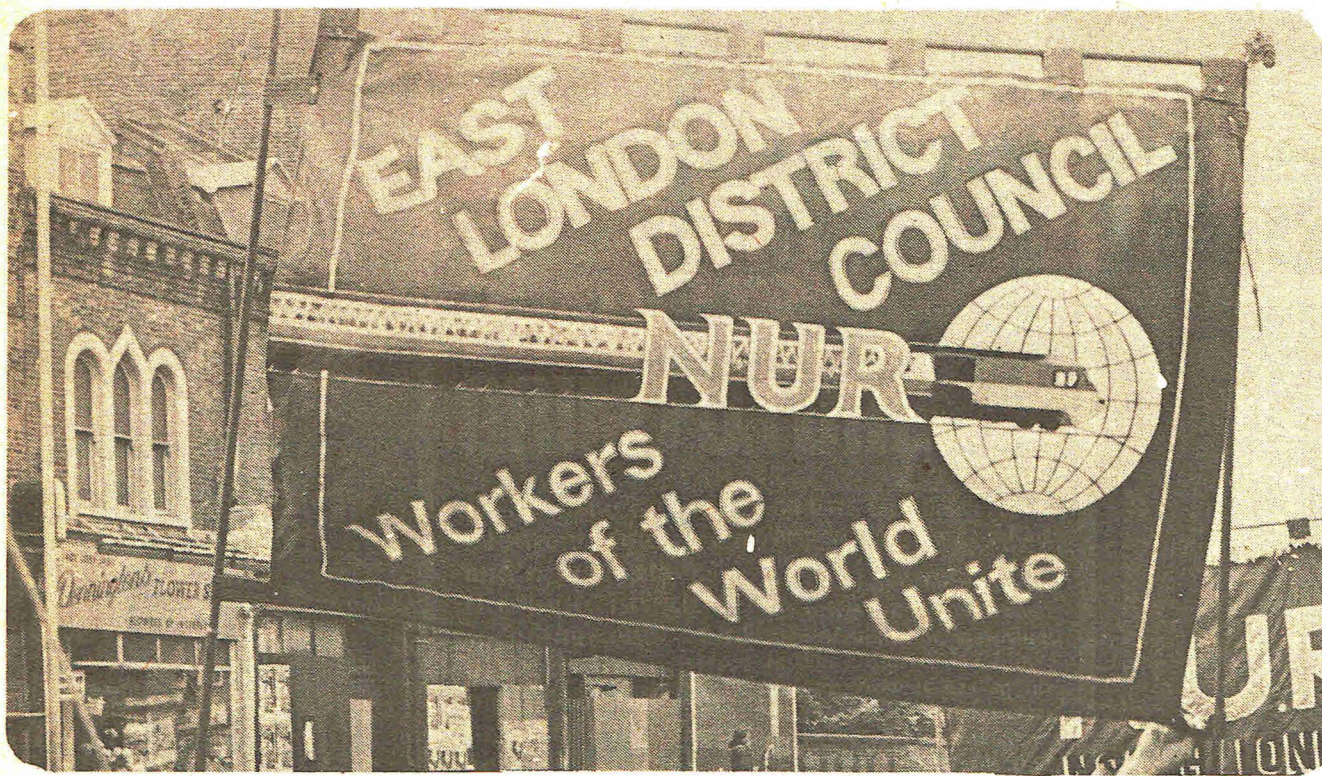
in developing a struggle against closures and mounting unemployment.

Impending redundancies at Monsanto, Massey Ferguson and scores of other factories in Glasgow, show that the fight for jobs is not isolated to Prestcold.

Full support must be given to the conference organised by the Prestcold stewards. It will be held in the Rossevale Cinema, Dumbarton Rd, Glasgow, on Friday 22nd June at 10 am. Bring trade union credentials with you.

All telegrams and messages of support and donations to the Prestcold fighting fund should be sent c/o AUEW office, 7 Ince Street, Paisley.

Charlie Stevenson
(Shop steward, Prestcold)



NUR members on the Blair Peach funeral march in East London, 13th June 1979

Photo: MILITANT

NUR CONFERENCE UNITED FIGHT NEEDED TO DEFEND RAIL PAY AND JOBS

Sir Geoffrey Howe's budget, bumping up prices and prescription charges, and slashing spending on the public services, is the first taste of what the Tories plan to do to rail workers' living standards and jobs.

The recent 2½-5% cut-back in services due to the oil shortage must be challenged—the fuel will be wasted, not saved, by a transfer to private transport.

If the services are not reinstated immediately they will be lost for ever. The BRB will use this as an opportunity to introduce further economies

and redundancies through the back door.

It is not clear at the time of writing whether London Underground members will be forced into all-out strike action to get a reasonable pay settlement. But their anger and determination is unmistakable.

The frustration and anger of all railworkers is building up. The majority of our members are on miserable pay.

We are not a small, weak union. The 'wait and see', 'we'll take what the others get' attitude is an abdication of our responsibility to defend members' interests. The Tory boot-boys will regard us as easy meat.

We must take a lead from our brothers on London Transport. We must fight for a substantial across-the-board increase and a national minimum wage below which no one is allowed to fall.

We can use the full power of our union to stamp out low pay once and for all.

In the battles we face to defend and improve wages, jobs and conditions, maximum unity is essential. The fragmented, divisive approach of past years plays straight into management and Tory hands.

'Militant's' call for one unified union for railway workers has found an enthusiastic echo among the rank and file of all three major rail

unions. It is time to forge that unity at rank and file level, and put an end to the public bickering which our leaders, to their shame, have indulged in.

A number of resolutions from branches up and down the country have criticised this behaviour and our general secretary's defence of wage restraint. At the moment, however, we have no direct means of ensuring that our officials put forward the views and wishes of the membership.

With a membership of over 170,000 this year's AGM will be attended by only 77 delegates. More than half of the branches will have no direct representation.

As the union's governing body, the AGM must represent to the full the feelings and aspirations of the membership. This can only be done by ensuring that every branch has the right to send at least one delegate.

The recent Warwick report should be taken up, despite its limitations, to ensure that grades' conferences are fully recognised as autonomous bodies with the right to determine policies and action in their own specific areas.

The next five years are crucial. Our general secretary reminds us that he is a socialist, committed to a change in society. If this is so, he can have nothing to fear from agreeing to re-selection

and the right of recall over all officials.

All full-time officials should be paid a members' average wage, with expenses checked and paid by the union. Then we would see what they think of wage restraint!

This should be the main plank of the fight for democracy in our union.

Then, armed with a programme to defend members' interests and the service we provide, the NUR will stand as a shining example to unite all railway workers and establish an integrated transport system in a socialist planned economy.

By Tom Doyle

(NUR Sheffield City branch)

POEU CONFERENCE: NEW TECHNOLOGY - A PROMISE OR A THREAT?

Report by
Wayne Jones

The effect of modernisation and new technology in the telecommunications industry made this year's conference one of the most important for years.

The Conference welcomed developments in science and technique that could enrich society and provide a better and more efficient service. But delegates were determined to ensure that this was not at the expense of their jobs, as has so often been the case in other industries.

A job security agreement negotiated between the POEU NEC and the Post Office was carried. It 'guaranteed' that no redundancies will result from changes in switching systems or different work patterns.

It was only passed however, after the deletion of a paragraph specifying that this 'guarantee' (from the PO) did not apply if 'external' events occurred beyond the control of the PO. This was meant to cover such things as the actions of a Tory government, or recession in the economy! It would have made a mockery of the whole agreement.

The other black cloud on the horizon for the POEU is the Tory government's threat to hive-off the lucrative telecomms section.

Conference was unanimously prepared to fight against this with every means possible.

A decent living wage was demanded in the pay debate, and a 25% claim was agreed upon. If it's good enough for Sir William Barlow, chairman of the PO, (a £3,500 rise to £38,945) it's good enough for us, was the attitude of conference.

After the recent industrial action to secure a shorter working week the need for trade union unity was expressed in motions calling for amalgamation with other Post Office unions.

A motion from Glasgow to initiate discussions with the Post and Telecomms section of CPSA was carried. Another motion from London Overseas Telegraph to include the LPW was withdrawn but will undoubtedly come up again.

The 35-hour week struggle was a test of the present right-wing leadership. A bold lead could have secured complete victory, given the magnificent display of deter-

mination and solidarity by the membership.

Many PO engineers are beginning to draw the conclusion that they need a leadership capable of giving resolute direction and carrying out the wishes of the membership. It is only a matter of time before the change and ferment taking place throughout the union is reflected in the NEC.

This process will be quickened by the growth in influence of the Broad Left. It emerged at this conference as a serious, campaigning force.

'Spark', the Broad Left paper, got a good response as did the BL document on modernisation which illustrated the dire consequences of new technology under capitalism.

'Militant' supporters must continue to ensure that a clear socialist alternative is spelt out in the Broad Left. Trade unions have a key role to play but ultimately, as was pointed out at the 'Militant' Public Meeting, only when industry and finance is under the democratic control and management of the working class will new technology be a promise not a threat.

NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST

Over a thousand trade unionists joined in a mass picket of the Nottingham Evening Post last Saturday. NUJ members at the Post have been locked out for six months, since their national strike ended.

The lobby was supported by most of the print unions and many trades councils, with trade union and labour movement banners from all over the country.

NGA speaker Tony Mulhearn described the battle at the Post as a defence of trade union rights and the closed shop. If the employers won at the Post, he said, it would encourage them to try elsewhere.

Pickets were undaunted by the large police mobilisation; they enthusiastically took up the Grunwick slogan, "the workers, united, will never be defeated." Delivery vans were held up, but eventually got through under police escort.

Now the campaign and the mass pickets must be stepped up to defeat these anti-union bosses.

Chris Ridge [Nottingham Labour Party Young Socialists]

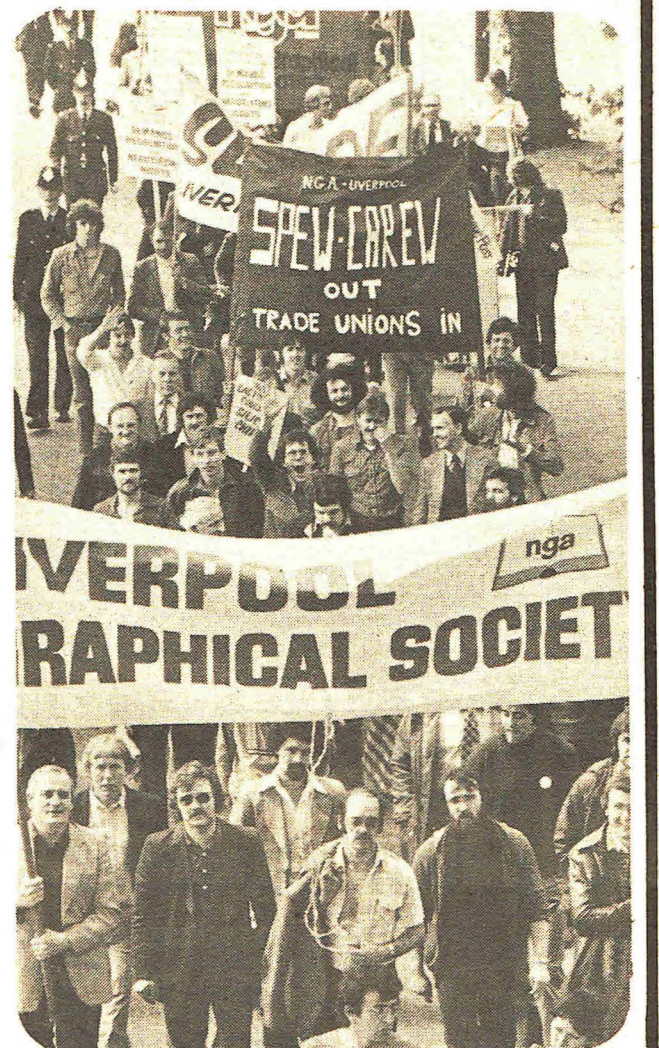


Photo: MILITANT

EETPU Conference

In our report on this year's EETPU conference (Issue 459) it was incorrectly stated that the Broad Left allowed resolutions calling for the 35-hour week to be withdrawn. In fact the resolution they allowed to fall called for a 35-hour week without loss of

pay. This was withdrawn in favour of one committing the union to work towards a 35-hour week, but without any guarantee on pay.

We apologise for any confusion caused to readers and union members.

GOSS, PRESTON: We wouldn't wish them on our worst enemy

Free collective bargaining in practice meant a "take it or leave it" offer of 5% for AUEW members at the Goss plant in Preston.

The shop floor workers at this Lancashire subsidiary of the giant American company, Rockwell International, have

been on strike since 18th May.

The Goss management even offered cash bonuses to the workers if they introduced their friends to the company—with an extra bonus if they stayed for more than three months. Most workers treated

this as a bad joke which they wouldn't play on their worst enemy, let alone a friend.

The basic for skilled fitters is £70.30 with the possibility of extra through a piece-work bonus. As Goss make custom-built printing machinery, the piece-work earnings can vary

dramatically and the shop stewards have been trying to get this system abolished in favour of a standard skilled rate.

The strike has been made official by the AUEW.

By Gerry Lerner

ISTC UNION MUST DEFEND- STEEL JOBS AT RISK

Everyone is to blame but me.

This was the gist of Bill Sirs' attempt to explain away the defeats of steel workers over the past few years at the opening of this year's conference of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation.

When the steel industry in Britain and throughout the entire world, is facing a catastrophic crisis of technical backwardness and capitalist over-capacity, there was no lead from the leadership on fighting policies necessary to defend the thousands of steel jobs now in serious jeopardy.

After the Bilston workers fought long and hard for the retention of steel-making in the Midlands, Bro. Sirs has insulted them by claiming they wanted the redundancy money and would sell their jobs for 30 pieces of silver.

Bill Sirs then blamed the low-paid workers for the defeat of the Labour government, echoing the cries of the Tory press and the right-wing of the Labour Party.

He went on to accuse those pressuring for more democ-

By
Andy Fenwick
(ISTC, Lackenby
Quality Control)

racy in the union of being long-haired university students and intellectuals, not union members.

This was answered by Albert Hansen, from Lackenby No 5. He wanted to know what had happened to resolutions passed at last year's conference, on issues such as executive council reform and the publishing of addresses for the ballots to elect union officials.

He showed that ordinary ISTC members do want an improvement in the democratic working of the union.

The ISTC has a long fight ahead to defend jobs at



Corby steelworkers—the ISTC must prepare to defend their jobs

Corby. This needs a democratic union with the feelings and wishes of members acted upon, not left in mid-air.

The union must in future defend its members from the vicious attacks planned by the Tory government.

These attempts to drive down the living standards of steel workers and their families must be defeated, if necessary by industrial action.

Negotiations alone will not stop the Tory axe-men.

TORY RULE AT THE GROSVENOR

Helen Mumford
(Westminster South
LPYS)

The workers at Trust House Forte's Grosvenor House Hotel in Park Lane are still on strike in support of Ellen Gallagher and 30 other chambermaids sacked by the hotel management.

The basic wage received by Ellen Gallagher before she was sacked was £34 per week, about two-thirds of the cost of a night's stay [with breakfast] at this swish hotel.

The total profit of THF, the largest hotel employer in

Britain was £55.5 million in 1977-78. The company chairman is Lord Thorneycroft, chairman of the Tory Party.

For struggling for a decent wage from these tycoons the

Grosvenor House workers have been sacked. This is the reality of a society governed by Tories like Lord Thorneycroft in the interests of bosses like Fortes.

Help is needed in the fight. Send messages of support and donations to: Grosvenor House Strike Fund, FTAT, Fairfield, Roe Green, Kingsbury, London N.W.9.

Euro-draw: the road to Rome

Only two weeks to go to the half-way mark in the 1979 Fighting Fund. One sure-fire method of raising the finance we need is to sell our Euro-affle tickets.

The first prize in our 'Euro-draw' is a week's holiday for two in Rome (or £300). Rome is a beautiful

city to visit in spring, summer, autumn or winter, so whenever the winners go they will enjoy it.

Other prizes include a weekend in Amsterdam (or £100), a crate of wine and many others.

But the only way your road can lead to Rome is by buying some raffle tickets. Make sure that you buy and sell tickets, which are available at 10p each and in books of ten.

In the little village of Chapelhall, Lanarkshire, one supporter, Andy MacDonald, sold no less than £25 worth of tickets for the 'Militant' 'Euro-draw' Raffle.

Order either from your local 'Militant' distributor or from 'Militant Eurodraw' 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Buy now! Sell now! And good luck!

SALT AGREEMENT

CONTINUED FROM
FRONT PAGE

Arms spending threatens to cripple the economies of both Russia and America, such is the burden. With appalling overkill, what is the point of even bigger increases?

But this is not the road to peace, simply to an uneasy balance of terror—in which both sides still search feverishly to find a "first strike" capacity capable of knocking out their opponent's nuclear arsenal, eliminating fear of retaliation.

This is why both sides are continually manoeuvring

over the question of "supervision", on which neither side can trust the other.

In Russia's case, nuclear stockpiling is a preventative measure for fear of imperialism. In the case of the US, it is because of Russia's overwhelming superiority of conventional forces, which could take Europe in weeks.

Underlying this is the fundamental conflict between the two opposing social systems, of capitalism and workers' states, however deformed.

heaval and the threat of possible movements of their own working classes at home, are desperate to reach a compromise.

War and peace, however, is not decided by diplomatic agreements, but by the relationship of class forces.

Failure to achieve socialist democracy in the West and to restore workers' democracy in the Soviet Union in the coming decades would open up the possibility of barbaric reaction in the West, in which bonapartist dictators like Pinochet would be unbalanced by the capitalist crisis and try to find a way out through an attempted "first strike", which would inevitably end in nuclear annihilation for mankind.

But, while the organisations of the working class remain intact, and while the capitalist class itself is still in direct control, it is impossible for imperialism to launch a world nuclear war.

So while the fundamental conflict between imperialism and Stalinism remains, the leaders on both sides manoeuvre against each other to marginally limit the arms drain and preserve the world's precarious status quo.

Only the intervention of the organised working class can change this precarious balance of terror and open the way to harmonious collaboration between the peoples of the world to produce universal prosperity and an undreamed flowering of culture.

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Prices rip

CONTINUED FROM
FRONT PAGE

the next few weeks.

We will suffer, but the big oil companies who control the world's oil supplies will be making even more fabulous profits.

Coal will go up between 10% and 14% soon, and this will push up electricity prices at least 4%.

London Transport bus and tube fares were raised by 7.5% overall last Sunday, and Horace Cutler, Tory GLC leader, announced a further rise of at least 12% in September.

Fares throughout the country will inevitably rise as the result of higher fuel costs—because of reduction in local authority subsidies imposed by government cuts.

Rates will again go up steeply this year as the direct result of Tory cuts in the rate support grant and other subsidies to local authorities.

Mortgages for house-buyers will go up soon if there is no subsequent reduction in the interest rates, after Howe raised the minimum lending rate to 14% in the Budget.

Rents, too, will begin a steep upward climb as the result of the acute housing shortage and the relaxation—and possible removal—of rent controls by the Tories.

Food prices are going up all the time [although exempt from VAT].

But the Tories' steps to get a 5% devaluation of the EEC's 'green pound' will

mean higher subsidies and bigger profits for British farmers—and higher food prices in the shops.

In spite of Howe's tax cuts—paltry for the workers compared to the massive savings for the rich—workers on average earnings or below will need a 12% to 15% increase in wages to maintain last year's living standards in real terms.

But this is assuming 'only' a 15% rise in prices. With inflation of 20% or more, workers will need at least 20% increases just to avoid yet another cut in living standards.

Fearing a head-on collision with the trade unions at this stage, the Tories are out to cut the share of the wealth going to the working class by deliberately allowing a higher rate of inflation.

Manufacturers, service industries, and retailers will all be taking every opportunity to push up their prices as much as possible—to swell their profits, now freed from dividend controls and liable to only piddling taxation.

The labour movement must fight this attempt to drive down workers' living standards to almost primitive levels.

★ Fight for a £70 minimum wage for all

★ Link wages to the cost of living, with regular upward adjustment to keep pace with prices rises.

★ No productivity deals

★ No redundancies or job losses through 'natural wastage'

★ For a 35-hour week without loss of earnings to fight unemployment



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