

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

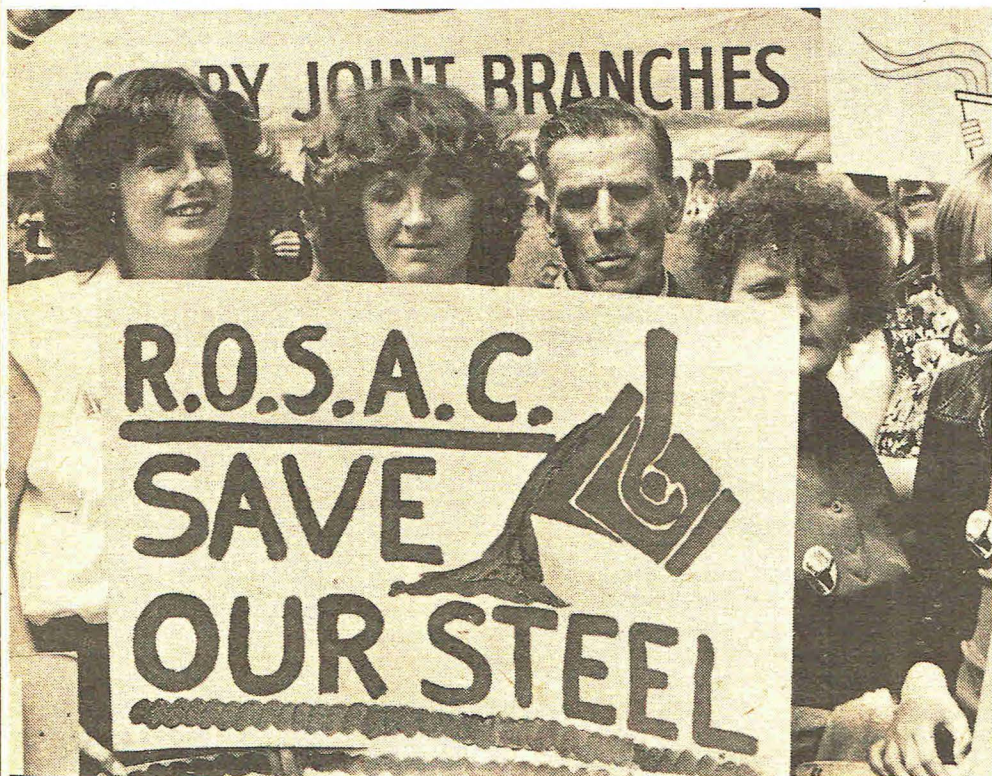
ISSUE 466
27 July 1979

15p

Labour Party Young
Socialists Conference
and Camp

pages 6 & 7

STOP STEEL DISASTER! NATIONAL ACTION NOW!



Steelworkers and Corby residents on lobby in London

"Remember, redundancy kills!"

"It kills hopes, aspirations, futures, towns, communities, families, and initiatives!"

This is the message from ROSAC [Retention of Steel-making at Corby], the organisation set up to resist redundancies and closure of Corby steel works.

By Heather Rawling

If the Board of BSC goes ahead they will be murdering all these things.

But: "The British Steel Corporation is determined to press ahead with the closure of iron

and steel-making at Corby, and the town had better come to terms with the fact."

This was the brutal dictat of BSC Chairman, Sir Charles Villiers, at the ISTC Conference a few weeks ago.

Corby thinks differently.

Over 5,000 steel wor-

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Militant EXCLUSIVE

reveals 'Rail Business Review' plans:



Jobs and services under the Tory axe?

Photo: MILITANT

ANOTHER 35,000 RAIL JOBS THREATENED ...

After shipbuilding and steel, the bosses want to vandalise British Rail. They are proposing to axe another 35,000 jobs!

In a confidential document circulating the management board of British Rail and the Department of Transport, plans are outlined to cut jobs and train services, and generally to run down BR, as part of a planned cut-back of the already depleted service.

This Report, scandalously, was drawn up under a Labour government. Now with the Tories in power it is certain they will attempt to carry out these plans of destruction, alongside the attempts to destroy the National Health Service and other nationalised industries, and to hand over the profitable sections to private enterprise.

The Report, 'Rail Business Review' describes the board's "firm objective" to slash 35,000 jobs through 'natural wastage'. "46,000 railway employees (including ab-

Yet already BR is grossly understaffed. In the 1960s the board set a target of reducing staff to 190,000 by 1979, and as the Review shows they have done a 'good job'. Today's workforce is 12,000 less than their target.

Yet the Report shows that actual productivity has been gradually rising alongside the whittling away of jobs—this is because the railwaymen, because of their low pay, are forced to do excessive overtime.

In the London region, it is quite usual for drivers to work a 12-hour day and six-day week, and in the Southern Region rail workers commonly only get one day off a fortnight.

If they didn't work the overtime, the service would literally fall apart because of the staff shortages. Already in London, rail-

By

Bob Wade

out a quarter of footplate men and guards) are now over 55 and will retire sometime in the next ten years.

"These retirements... and control over recruitment should make the savings forecast...attainable without recourse to a substantial programme of voluntary redundancies."

Through this "control" they estimate that by 1981 there will be only 166,000 men employed by BR, and in 1989 a mere 149,700!

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SERVICES WILL BE CUT!

DEFEND MILITANT

'Militant' has been served with a high court writ for libel damages by John Golding MP [see full statement, page 2].

This legal threat, if it is not successfully fought off, could cripple the paper with damages and costs in the region of £20,000 or £30,000.

Our report [Issue 441, 2 February 1979] of the

discussion and voting on the vital issue of the 35-hour week at the January meeting of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, has led to our being taken to court by John Golding MP, who is sponsored by the Post Office Engineering Union.

Unavoidably, the legal action being forced on us will involve us in heavy

legal expenses.

The law is not cheap: libel proceedings are not for the poor! We need your backing.

Just to retain our own lawyers to advise us and defend us in court could cost well over £10,000. This is quite apart from any damages and costs which may be imposed upon us should we lose the legal argument in the eyes of the court!

So, because of the legal battle being forced on us, we are appealing to our supporters in the labour movement—and particularly members of the POEU—for extra cash, separate and apart from the Fighting Fund which we need to build the paper.

Help the paper that fights for socialist policies for the Labour Party and trade union movement!

Rush urgent donations to "Militant Defence Fund" this week.

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MILITANT AND JOHN GOLDING

AN EDITORIAL STATEMENT

'Militant' has been served with a high court writ by John Golding claiming damages for libel as a result of our report of the meeting of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee in January.

One of the issues mentioned in the article was the NEC's discussion of Labour's EEC Manifesto, particularly on the vital issue of the 35-hour week.

We reported that an amendment to the final draft, moved by Tony Saunois [LPYS representative], that a declaration in favour of the 35-hour week be included in the Manifesto was agreed by 10 votes to 4.

We also reported that one of the four votes against this included John Golding, from the Post Office Engineering Union, who argued that it was not possible to get a 35-hour week in Britain until all the EEC countries had agreed to it.

Subsequently, John Golding, through his solicitors, informed us that he considered our reference to his vote mistaken, saying that far from opposing the resolution he had actually seconded it.

Having checked our story, we replied to John Golding's solicitors saying that we still considered our report to be accurate.

After that, John Golding's solicitors again wrote to us saying that he had not voted against the inclusion of the motion in question, and this time including a statement to this effect from Ron Hayward, General Secretary of the Labour Party.

Nevertheless, the recollection of others present at the meeting is different. Dennis Skinner MP, Neil Kinnock MP, Joan Maynard MP, and Tony Saunois [LPYS representative], and other NEC members recall the following:

In the general discussion which followed Tony Benn's introduction of the draft EEC Manifesto, Tony Saunois came in to make a number of general points, and also verbally moved the inclusion of the introduction of a 35-hour week.

John Golding did second Tony's proposal, but qualified it by saying that the 35-hour week must be accompanied by a reduction of overtime working and would have to be implemented on an all-European basis. He argued that there should be no unilateral introduction of a 35-hour week which would damage Britain's competitiveness in relation to European rivals.

In the light of John Golding's qualification, Tony was asked by the chairman if he accepted John Golding's seconding of the motion. Tony said he accepted the point about reducing overtime.

Consistent

Tony Benn, referring to John Golding's second qualification about an all-European basis, said that he did not support the proposal because he did not see why a 35-hour week should be delayed in Britain until it was established throughout Europe.

To clarify any confusion, Tony Saunois then exactly formulated the motion:

"To assist in the reduction of unemployment the Party stands in favour of a 35-hour week with a corresponding

reduction in overtime working." When the chairman asked for a vote, it was 10 for to 4 against, with John Golding as one of those voting against.

We would point out, moreover, that the arguments expressed by John Golding at the NEC meeting were consistent with his publicly reported views on the issue of the 35-hour week.

Although sponsored by the Post Office Engineering Union, which stands for the implementation of the 35-hour week, John Golding was also a junior minister [Secretary of State for Employment] in a Labour government which clearly opposed the implementation of this demand.

Speaking at the 1978 Trades Union Congress—which overwhelmingly endorsed the demand for the 35-hour week—James Callaghan bluntly opposed any early implementation of this demand.

"It was clear," 'The Times' reported him as saying, "that if they reduced hours in a way that increased industrial costs while their international competitors did not take similar action, they would make themselves less competitive and so reduce jobs."

"Therefore for the next 12 months the government's policy was that any negotiated

reduction in hours forming part of a settlement should either be self-financing or offset against the 5 per cent guideline. At this stage there were protests from some delegates..."

This was a position which, as a junior minister, John Golding consistently upheld. He told parliament on 25 May, 1976: "A general reduction of normal working hours unaccompanied by a reduction in earnings, would raise labour costs, affect our trading position, and impede the progress of the government's anti-inflation policy." [Hansard, 25 May 1976, column 171].

Opposition

Speaking to meetings and delegations of POEU members, John Golding was frequently even more forthright in his opposition to the implementation of the 35-hour week.

Members of the POEU, who regard the implementation of the 35-hour week as a vital measure to safeguard jobs and who went on strike in July 1978 to get the demand implemented, have themselves expressed strong criticism of John Golding's position on this issue.

Reporting the 'Parliamentary Report' section of the POEU's 1978 conference, for instance, the Union's own journal [July 1978, page 225] records the following:

"Lobby: Mic McCullough, Liverpool Internal, said that: 'On May 9th some of our Branch members took part in a lobby of Parliament to try and enliven some of our MPs to take action on the unemployment situation on Merseyside and we were entertained that day in John Golding's office.'

'We discussed several points with John and as you can expect one of the main points we raised was the 35-hour week campaign. We can say we were shocked by his reply because we had never heard before that John Golding did not believe in the POEU campaign for a 35-hour week and indeed he went further and thought that generally a 35-hour week would be disastrous for the working class of this country.'

'In fact, he thought that when we ever get a 35-hour week most of us would be rushing out to find part-time jobs. In the light of this, we went to ask whether the PMFC [the union's Parliamentary Management and Finance Committee] are satisfied with the parliamentary representation we are getting'."

NICARAGUA : SOMOZA GOES THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

"He may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch." President Roosevelt's words on installing the first Somoza as head of Nicaragua in 1933 came home to roost last week.

In the first successful mass popular uprising in Latin America since Castro came to power twenty years ago, the hated Somoza dynasty was overthrown.

American imperialism desperately tried to pick up the pieces and encourage a moderate new regime before too much damage was done to their interests in Nicaragua and before the revolt grew in the neighbouring dictatorships of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

The victory over Somoza led by the Sandinista guerrillas (FSLN) was a considerable defeat for American imperialism.

The American ruling class has always looked on Central America and the Caribbean as its own backyard.

In 1954 they overthrew a left-wing government in Guatemala which threatened the United Fruit Company. In 1961 they helped Cuban exiles invade Cuba in the abortive Bay of Pigs operation.

Even as late as fifteen years ago they sent marines into the Dominican Republic when it looked as if the people there might elect someone whom American leaders did not approve of.

They had wanted to send in troops this time too. But the US government proposal was defeated at a meeting of the Organisation of American States on 23rd-24th June. The Latin American leaders feared the repercussions to their own regimes if they openly supported an American invasion of Nicaragua.

They have seen the wave of revolt against the capitalist puppet regimes which has swept the small islands in the Eastern Caribbean this year. In Grenada and Dominica the

governments have been deposed. In Central America left-wing guerrillas have begun to cause major problems for the El Salvador dictatorship.

The American Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, has stated that he intends to make Central America and the Caribbean one of his highest priorities during his (last) one and a half years in office. One leading State Department official warned:

"There's not an island in the Caribbean that couldn't go the way of Grenada within five years. If you take Central America as the western point and the mini-states as the eastern one, you could say we've got the potential for a 'circle of crisis' right on our doorstep."

The crisis will not go away, as it is rooted in the capitalist economic system which throttles the area. In Nicaragua the popular unrest against the Somoza regime rested on an unemployment rate of 50-60%, an inflation rate of over 20%, on a GNP which fell by 7% last year, and on a foreign debt of \$1.8 billion.

In the end many business-

men turned against Somoza's rule. "We must have a political solution. Our economy cannot stand the crisis any more," declared the President of the Central Bank of Nicaragua. Many middle-class and businessmen sup-

ported the Sandinistas, and were the main supporters of one of its main groupings, the Terceristas.

They are now hoping to hold back the revolution. But already all of Somoza's holdings in the country have been nationalised. This means that with this one move much of industry and land is in the new government's hands.

Between an estimated one-tenth and one-quarter of the country's arable land; the national airline, shipping industry, a large fishing fleet, transport, newspapers, retail stores, cement construction and food-processing industries, together with extensive interests in property, banking and insurance.

The problems facing the Nicaraguan regime are enormous. Up to 40,000 people were killed in the uprising. In

a population of just over 2 million hundreds of thousands are homeless and starvation is a real threat.

One member of the junta stated: "We have to reconstruct the country, feed and educate the people, wipe out illiteracy, help the sick and mutilated. In sum we have to start from scratch."

Now the dictator has been overthrown, the people's aspirations are high. It will not prove possible to satisfy them by just maintaining the old system without Somoza. In Nicaragua and throughout the regime the struggle for a decent society will continue.

By Jim Christie



Out of a population of 2 millions, 40,000 Nicaraguans were killed in the uprising

The next edition of 'Militant' [issue 467] will appear on 17 August. Issue 468 will appear on 31 August, when we will be back to our normal weekly publication.

NOW TELL US IT'S ONE NATION

THE RICH....

The wealth held by the richest 1% of the British population rose from 22.5% of the total in 1974 to 24.9% in 1976, according to the recent Royal Commission on Income and Wealth.

The next richest 4% also improved their position, but the share held by the poorest 90% fell from 42.5% to 39.4%!

These were supposedly the first two years of the Labour government, in which Dennis Healey promised to 'squeeze the rich until the pips squeaked'. On this evidence, it seems that the working class were squeezed to the benefit of the super-rich.

The Commission found that "wealth is more concentrated at the top in Britain than in Canada or the USA. The richest 1% held about 30% of the wealth in Britain in 1970, compared with about 25% in the USA and about 22% in Canada." (*Financial Times* 12/7/79)

Admittedly, on incomes, the richest 1% did suffer a tiny fall in their share of the cake, but "the main beneficiaries were the other individuals in the upper half of the salary scale. Between 1949 and 1976/7, the bottom half of the income distribution had a relatively small increase in income share from 23.7% to 24.5%".

After 17 years of Labour government since 1945, nothing fundamentally has changed! There has been no fundamental shift in the balance of income, wealth and power whatsoever to

working people.

The Commission shows that incomes policies do not and cannot redistribute wealth or income. "A relatively large proportion of the income of the top groups came from investment and self-employment—45% in the case of the top 1%—and was not affected directly by incomes policies."

Taxation farce

The so-called 'progressive taxation system' is also shown to be a farce. Between 1959 and 1976/7, the average share of income paid in tax nearly doubled to 20.3%. The share paid by the top 1%, however, only increased from 43.2% to 48.5% of their income, and that of the top 10% only increased from 23.5% to 31.1%.

But some low-paid groups found their tax rate more than trebling. This meant that the richer paid a lower share of the total tax bill, and vice-versa. The share of tax paid by the top 1% fell from 34.5% in 1959 to 12.9% in 1977, while the share of tax paid by the bottom 80% increased from 23.5% to



Photo: MILITANT

Drinking the fruits of our labour

42%.

So much for the gradual, reforming road to socialism. The top 1% may be suffering a minute fall in their share of share of income, but they still increase their share of real wealth and power—at the expense of the working class.

The Royal Commission points to inheritance, stock exchange investments, and 'tax deductions' (e.g. mortgage interest) as explanations of the rich getting richer.

Meanwhile, the Child Poverty Action Group has reported that 15 million people are living in or around the margins of poverty. Let there be no doubt that there are two competing classes in British society, the workers and the bosses.

By Colin Barber

THE POOR....

This is the 'Year of the Child'—yet in this country alone there are nearly four million children living in poverty!

A new pamphlet from the Child Poverty Action Group just shows the absolute scandal of our society with millions condemned to the misery of appallingly low wages.

The figures on poverty are taken from government surveys carried out in 1976—they can only have worsened after three extra years of wage restraint.

The figures show that a total of 14,870,000 people are living in or around the margins of poverty.

This is made up of three main groups: over 4 million people living at the supplementary benefit level—that's £15 and rent payments a week!

And the report shows there are another 2 million people who are on even lower levels of income than this—below the state poverty line!

Added to this are eight-and-a-half million people whose income is only 40 per cent above the supplementary benefit level.

Poverty is a disgusting fact of life for these desperate millions—as the Action group says: "How do you feed, clothe, keep warm and meet

all the other needs of a 10-year-old child on 76 pence a day?"

For the ruling class 'The Year of the Child' means giving a few handouts to a minute section of the millions of deprived children. And when they do, no doubt the Tory press will be there to photograph the great philanthropists wiping crocodile tears away from their eyes.

But it will need more than charity to rid our society of low wages and poverty. Only fundamental socialist change, shifting wealth to the working class people who actually produce the wealth, can abolish poverty forever.

By Steve Amor

(Stevenage LPYS)

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE : THE AXE CUTS DEEPER

Last week it was £233 million in cuts on regional aid. This week the Cabinet are discussing cuts in public expenditure of £4,000 million for 1980/81.

By Mike Levene

(Coventry SE Labour Party)

vicious cut-backs. As the world economy moves towards recession such a savage deflationary policy would inflict serious damage on the sick British economy.

But just look at what effect the cuts announced last week will have on jobs.

On announcing his cuts of £233 million in regional aid over the next three years (over one-third of the total), Keith Joseph said: "There is no evidence whatsoever that in net terms, taking the country as a whole, there is any change in jobs."

However, it is probable that 100,000 jobs will be lost.

Until now, 43% of the working population has lived in areas assisted by regional aid. Joseph is cutting this to only 25%. Aid to 'intermediate areas', such as Yorkshire, Humberside, and parts of the North West, is to be virtually abolished, threatening some 50,000 jobs annually.

According to the Society of Civil and Public Servants, 16,000 of these jobs will disappear in the north west and 3,000 in Yorkshire and Humberside—precisely half of the original total of jobs

created in those areas by those schemes.

Aid to development areas is to be cut by 25%. It might have been even worse as a 50% cut had been proposed. It seems that a last-minute appeal by CBI leaders had softened the blow.

Bosses' warning

John Methven, the Bosses' Director General, warned that "in the present economic recession...aid is going to be cut before a reasonable level [of profits] returns, and trade and industry prospects in the region will be damaged." (*Guardian*, 18.7.79)

In other words, the bosses feel unable and unprepared to create the jobs chopped by the cuts in regional aid. Joseph would like to hive off as many state-created jobs as possible to private enterprise—especially firms owned by the NEB—but British capitalism is so bankrupt that it is unable to do so.

Likely first for the chop is the motorcycle co-operative at Meriden, near Coventry, where unemployment is already 40% above the national average. Joseph has waived the £1¼ million owed in interest on the 1975 loan of £4¼ million for only a few more weeks. Then unless an alternative is found the plant

will close. Seven hundred jobs are threatened.

Profitable sections of the National Enterprise Board will be hived off, and the most "unprofitable" sections will be scrapped.

The *'Daily Mirror'* (18 July 1979) described the Tory government's industrial policy as looking "more and more like a casino where the chips are the workers' jobs." This is true, and Labour's parliamentary leaders have strongly criticised Joseph's cuts.

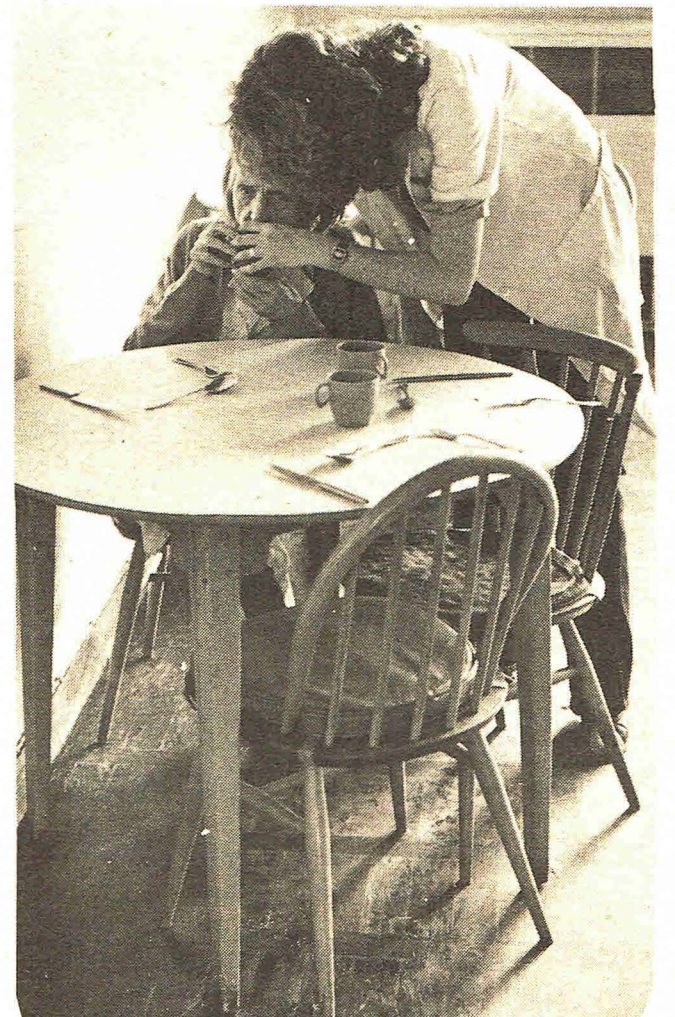
But Joseph reminded them of their own cuts in regional aid of £218 million in 1976! The implementation of capitalist policies by the last Labour government has paved the way for the Tory axe-men.

The trade union movement is rapidly declaring its opposition to the Tories' policies. But this opposition to the cuts must be organised and mobilised into victory over Thatcher's henchmen and the carrying through of a truly socialist programme for the labour movement.

'The Fight Against Unemployment'—
A 'Militant' pamphlet

25p including postage.

From World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN



Cuts will cost lives. An old peoples' home [above]

Photo: MILITANT

Labour Party Conference

LABOUR PARTIES CALL FOR PARTY DEMOCRACY

The defeat of the Labour government at the general election has not cowed the rank and file of the Labour Party. As the resolutions for October's annual conference show, the members of the constituencies and the trade unions are determined to fight the Tory government.

They are also prepared for a battle within the Party to ensure this struggle is carried out and to ensure that future Labour governments do not follow the disastrous policies which led to May's defeat.

Members of the right wing Campaign for a Labour Victory and ex-Cabinet ministers who are hoping for a return to 'moderate' policies in the Party will scour through the resolutions in vain. There is little to comfort them.

The Thatcher government's intention to redistribute wealth even more in the favour of the rich is understandably a main cause for concern.

Those who consider that the question of nationalisation is irrelevant should take note that, of the 387 resolutions, no less than 63 call for the re-nationalisation of all industries hived off by

By
Roger Shriver

(Deptford CLP)

the profit hungry Tories. Most of these stress that such re-nationalisations should be done without compensation.

The anarchy of the private enterprise system the Tories ruthlessly defend is most horribly shown in the unemployment figures. The misery caused by this scandalous wastage of human and other resources is enormous.

Many resolutions call for the introduction of a 35-hour week to reduce the level of unemployment, and most realise the need for socialist policies to ensure the end of the dole queues.

Similar resolutions are on the agenda on the question of cuts, and the attacks on education and the NHS. The way forward against the Tories is clearly laid down in the section on socialist policy which calls for support for Clause Four Part Four of the Labour Party constitution; the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management.



The Labour Party leaders at last year's LP Conference—Accountability and party democracy will be major issues

Photo: MILITANT

Only a handful of constituency Labour Parties and trade unions have put forward right wing resolutions, supporting the policies of the last Labour government on wage restraint and calling for an enquiry into Party organisation.

Experience of Labour Party activists on the doorstep during the election was clear evidence that it was the political questions, the five per cent pay policy above all,

that allowed the Thatcher government to be returned, not organisational weaknesses.

This dissatisfaction with the last Labour administration is most graphically shown in the questions of party democracy and overall policy. There are seven resolutions calling for adherence to conference decisions following on the blatant disregard for the 1978 conference decision on wage restraint which

sent a Labour government into headlong fight with some of the lowest paid workers in the country.

Twelve resolutions demand the election of party leader by the rank and file, most of them by conference. Fourteen resolutions call for automatic re-selection of MPs, and twelve resolutions (involving 25 parties) demand control of Party manifesto by Labour's NEC without interference by Labour cabinet or shadow

cabinet ministers.

Undoubtedly the experience of the Tory government is even now making the rank and file of the Labour Party see the urgent need for a fight-back by the labour movement. The clamour for socialist policies and accountability of the leaders, strongly voiced here, will become even louder.

MAKING THE NUSS RELEVANT TO SCHOOL STUDENTS

The overwhelming majority of delegates at the annual conference of the National Union of School Students [July 7-8] clearly recognised the need for a change in their orientation.

The NUSS has just passed through another year of bureaucratic and inactive leadership, which has seen our membership plummet staggeringly from

10,000 to an estimated 5,000.

John Mumford, ex-president and a member of the Young Communist League, previously the dominant group in NUSS, was singled out for attack—but by certain delegates in an infantile and abusive manner.

Mumford said in his defence that he had been left all alone in the office to do all the work—he then left the conference in tears.

Unfortunately the confer-

ence was not run in such a way as to promote debate on what policies were required to make NUSS relevant to the majority of school students. Many delegates seemed intent on turning the conference into a more childish version of NUS, with continual hold ups and petty wranglings.

This led to the disillusionment of many genuine NUSS activists. As one delegate—who signed up for the LPYS—put it, "I came to this conference really expecting that we could sort out how to take NUSS forward, but I'm really sick of the shouting and abuse."

Despite all the hold ups, there was more political debate than previous years. Motions were passed to oppose the cuts in education "in a militant fashion."

Important resolutions were passed supporting strike ac-

tion by low paid workers, teachers, meals staff and caretakers etc. by refusing to cross picket lines and organising solidarity action.

The NUSS conference once again pledged itself to fight fascism. Unfortunately, instead of recognising that only the labour movement has the strength to oppose the fascists, conference put their trust purely in the Anti-Nazi league and 'Skool Kids against the Nazis'.

As the experience of events in Brick Lane last year showed only organisation based on the working class could drive the fascists off the streets.

The acceptance of two resolutions on the labour movement marked a real step forward for NUSS. They called for a definite turn towards the labour movement, affiliation to local

trades councils and union bodies, full trade union rights for all school students, and a campaign for the recognition of NUSS in the labour movement.

Labour movement

NUSS must not be an isolated 'pupil power' organisation. To achieve any definite gains we have to link with the mass organisations of the working class—the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The election of the NUSS's 17-strong National Committee marked the end of the YCL's bureaucratic domination of NUSS. The new majority, including members of the Socialist Workers' Party, shout loud for 'action, action, action'.

They have no clear programme or tactics to campaign upon, however, and they have regrettably a sectarian attitude towards the labour movement, the only movement that can carry through our demands.

Although a disappointingly small number of LPYS members turned up for the conference, individual LPYS members made many very good contributions to the political debate. The writer was elected to the National Committee, standing independently on the programme of the LPYS and 'Militant'.

LPYS members up and down the country can build up support in NUSS before next conference. If we take our ideas, as in the 'Charter for Young Workers', boldly into the schools and NUSS branches we can build the sort of fighting socialist leadership NUSS deserves.

By Dale Ackroyd

(Chairman, Bradford NUSS, National Committee NUSS) personal capacity)



SRI LANKAN MARXISTS SPEAK IN BRITAIN

A Public Meeting has been called by the LSSP [UK] Branch, in London, Friday 17 August, 7.15 pm, at Conway Hall, nr Holborn.

'The Fight Against Repression in Sri Lanka'
Hear: V Nanayakkara [Leader, United Federation of Labour]; V Karunarathne [General Secretary Lanka Sama Samaja Party]
Admission 25p. All Welcome

'ONLY THE SLUMS WILL REMAIN'

About 50 tenants started a picket outside an office block in King Street W.C.2. on July 20th. The protest was over the Tory GLC's selling of council houses which has now been going on for a month.

Outside, the pickets set up a display of photos showing the rapidly declining state on many council estates. Of

course it will not be these properties that will be bought but the best council property. As their leaflet states: "As the best properties are sold off, only the slums and really bad estates will remain."

"Tenants who cannot afford to or do not wish to buy will find themselves living in the conditions of the 19th century."

All that the Tory spivs and get-rich-quick merchants are after is a killing on the market, while something like

"210,000 families are on the waiting list and thousands more...don't bother registering because they have no chance of housing."

Along with these desperate sections are the equally desperate childless couples and single people. Their chance of reasonable, decent accommodation is bleak. Also of course along with sales will go the ditching of the GLC direct labour force of 1,500 jobs if the Tories have their way.

This will give rise to a further decline in repairs and maintenance service. The Tories must be stopped in their tracks. The tenants and trade unions and Labour Parties must be mobilised to stop the sale of council houses and the slashing of jobs.

By Bob Faulkes

(Hackney Central CLP)

LEFT & RIGHT

V.A.T. FOR KIDS

If you are of slight build and into gymslips you may think you can get around the Tories' VAT increases. But no way—the Tories aren't taking any chances.

Although they said children's clothes [up to the age of 13] would be exempt from VAT, school uniforms for large kids will be taxed at the full rate. After all, as a Customs and Excise official explained to the 'Sunday Observer', "people could remove badges from school blazers and there might even be adults who liked wearing gymslips."

Well this might be true for a few punk rockers, but the majority of working people [and this might surprise some Tories] actually buy school uniforms for their children! But still, when you're a penny-pinching Tory you just can't be too careful.

IT'S CATCHING

Trade unionists across the water are upsetting the Irish ruling class with an ailment which is becoming common among workers in western industrial societies. Prime Minister Lynch has attacked workers in Ireland after the largest series of strikes in their history, saying workers are being affected by the 'Irish disease' ['Irish Times', July 9].

That's funny—weren't the British workers said to have caught the 'British disease' during the turmoil of Heath's government, and the Italian working class the 'Italian disease' when the Communist Party received mass support?

It must be the first disease that makes workers more healthy, and the symptoms of it are a determination not to accept falling living standards, solidarity with fellow workers and a general raising of the class consciousness. This disease can be helped along with regular doses of 'Militant' once every week.

STEEL BLUE

All you steel workers who may be worried about the future of your jobs and the steel industry don't worry—the Tories have the solution. In the 'Conservative Monthly', Tory Frederick Shaw put forward this suggestion when discussing the 'shortage of policemen'.

"The obvious way to remedy a shortage is to increase the pay. However, there is a corollary. The demand for steel has fallen off, and there are now far too many steelmakers. If the pay of the steelmakers were cut, these people might be induced to seek more remunerative employment in other occupations. Some might decide to become policemen."

It's hard to imagine Ebbw Vale with about 4,000 extra coppers, and it's doubtful that workers at Corby and Shotton will want to take up the job of protecting the capital—state which is desperately trying to dump them on the dole queue.

HEYM-FIGHTING THE BUREAUCRACY- PART TWO

The ruling bureaucracy in East Germany has shown a worsening attitude to writers who did not toe the party line. Their thinking is satirised in Stefan Heym's very witty short story 'The Queen Against Defoe'.

Once again he cleverly uses a historical setting—this time the England of Queen Anne—to make a comment of contemporary relevance. The story is based on a true incident in the life of Daniel Defoe.

Defoe had published anonymously a pamphlet 'The shortest way with dissenters' which parodied the lies of the High Church clergy and the Tory establishment by suggesting that all religious dissenters should be banished from England.

This greatly embarrassed government ministers, particularly the Earl of Nottingham, who took action to charge Defoe with publishing a seditious and scurrilous libel. He was tried and sentenced to stand in the pillory—but the case had aroused such a protest that the pillory was surrounded by crowds come to cheer Defoe and not stone him!

It is hardly surprising that this comment on censorship did not see publication for several years but Heym recalls a conversation with a leading East German "then quite powerful in the field of arts and letters". This comrade stated that he would never consider publishing the Defoe book. Heym replied "...this is a question of identification. If you identify with the Earl of Nottingham then you can't possibly permit this book to be printed...but if your heart is with Defoe the revolutionary as the heart of a Communist should be, then it's your damned duty to have the book published here."

It seems that the argument prevailed and the 'The Queen against Defoe' was eventually published in the DDR.

The latest of his books to be published in Britain is 'Five Days in June' and it is considered by many to be his best work yet. It centres around the strikes and mass demonstrations by workers in East Berlin during June 1953.

It is not one of his satirical works, but brilliantly describes the moods and aspirations, confusions and insights of the Berlin workers at that time. Needless to say, it has not been published in East Germany—the bureaucracy may be able to tolerate

satire but this is far too realistic, too inflammatory for them to accept.

Heym takes the lives of workers at the VEB Merkur engineering plant in East Berlin during 1953. The Ulbricht government had imposed norm rises of 10% to increase labour productivity and lower production costs. There was no prior discussion about these rises—instead there came the usual sickening propaganda that 'a large part of the working class had recognised that present norms impeded progress' and were 'voluntarily increasing their norms'.

The workers at VEB Merkur saw things differently—"produce more but for the same pay and stab your mates in the back."

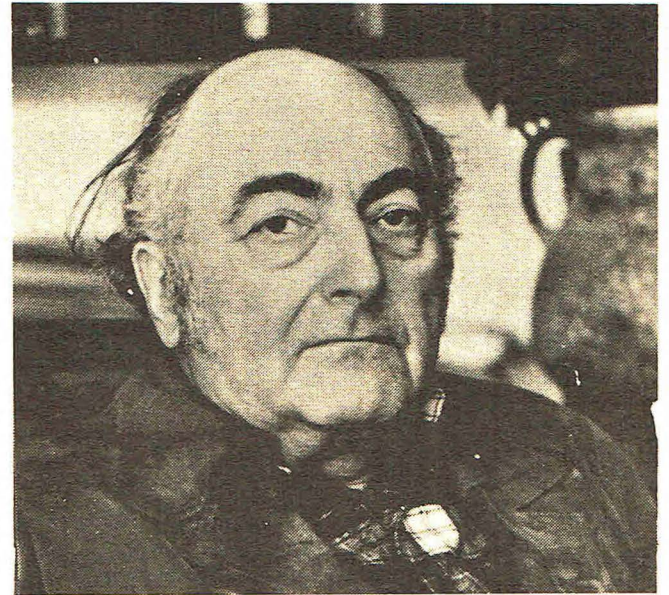
Strikes began on the prestige Stalinallee construction project and quickly spread throughout the city. The first demand was for the norm rises to be rescinded but these were soon joined with other demands—such as an end to the shortage of good food.

There is an ironical depiction of a state run food store, full of empty tins and cardboard boxes but with pictures of Marx and Walter Ulbricht in the windows. For this display the store was commended by district management but the women queuing inside aren't so sure as they complain about the prices and the shortages, "Do you want us to put a pat of Marx on the bread or a slice of Walter Ulbricht?"

But other elements are at work. There is the Widow Hofer and her spiv son who want a return to the glories of Hitler's day. There is the shadowy presence of Quelle, who claims to have influence everywhere through the East Bureau of the SPD, yet fails to produce a political programme that can appeal to the East German workers.

He wants a 'sign' of workers opposition to the Ulbricht regime but cannot see beyond that to the overthrow of the bureaucracy. After encouraging demonstrations and strikes the East Bureau of the SPD is seen to leave the workers uncertain and without a political programme.

The strikes led to mass



demonstrations which terrified the bureaucracy. It had to act—first by bringing in Russian tanks to surround the city and then by hastily rescinding the norm rises and promising more consumer goods. Ulbricht has to admit that "mistakes had been made", but the bureaucracy remained, undemocratic and parasitic.

Encouraged by the retraction of the norm rises, workers began to ask for more concessions—an end to the rise in the cost of living, no reprisals against strikers and free elections.

Questions were asked by workers—"We're the working class, where are we ruling? Dictatorship of the proletariat, and we're not permitted to dictate our own wages and our own norms". Workers say that they want socialism—but not the DDR bureaucracy!

Within the ruling Socialist Unity Party machine the splits became obvious. High up in the Party hierarchy there is conflict between the 'liberal' Dreesen and the hard-line Stalinist Pattenkofer.

Lower down, at the factory level some of the conflicts are described around the central character in the book, Martin Witte, a communist of long-standing who is now head of the union committee at VEB Merkur. He is loyal to the Party, but is also loyal to the workers who see him as their spokesman. Despite his long history of party membership he is distrusted by the Party and is barred from the plant. Later, attempts are made to discredit him as a Western agent!

It could be said that Witte

represents many of Heym's characteristics—a long association with the working class cause, deep loyalty to the cause of socialism, but a growing realisation that the Party bureaucracy strangles criticism and is parasitic upon the workers. Nowhere do the workers depicted in his writings seek a return to capitalism—their confidence in the benefits of socialism is unshaken—but they gradually come to formulate demands for the ending of the bureaucracy and its privileges.

Heym has commented that "only those can turn their face to the future who have faced their past...". In describing the abortive uprising of Berlin 1953 he hopes to contribute to the understanding of other revolutions—not to disparage, not for academic interest but for the benefit of other revolutionaries.

He describes himself as totally committed to the revolutionary principle and is opposed to its distortions in the DDR. In an interview (Published with 'The Queen against Defoe') he describes this attitude further "I think the more people are made to think, the better for socialism. It is not good to consider people as children who cannot be told the truth...thinking and criticism should be encouraged instead of discouraged."

His books are not idealised accounts of revolutions, but realistic descriptions of the conflicts that ensue. They add great strength to his work as a writer and a socialist.

By a NALGO member

DENATIONALISATION - No thanks

When Labour nationalised the Shipbuilding Industry to protect jobs there were howls of protest from the owners and their lackeys in the Tory Party.

However, now that the Tories are preparing to implement their manifesto promises, which include the denationalisation of some of the shipyards, it appears that the former owners are not as keen on the idea as the government.

According to the 'Daily Express', (16 July) the old owners are more concerned on getting their hands on the

massive compensation that Labour promised, rather than regaining ownership of their run-down yards.

It is the delay in the paying of this compensation that dominates the boardroom discussion of the former shipbuilders;—firstly pay the promised compensation, then we can start talking about denationalisation.

Sir John Rix, Chairman of Vosper, expressed his concern about getting the £25m they asked for, before even starting to think about taking back their nationalised businesses.

Significantly, London and Overseas Freight, the one company which has been paid its full compensation "is not interested in buying back at any price".

But perhaps its Vickers whose views are most representative of the former owners when they state that: "It is prepared to take back some of its old businesses, such as the Barrow Yard, but is quite happy to leave others in the care of the State".

Thus, the objectives of these former owners are clear—to get their hands on as much compensation as

possible and then hive off the most profitable sections of the industry through denationalisation, leaving the large run-down and bankrupt sections "in the care of the State".

Shipyard workers throughout the country should oppose the carving up of their industry for the benefit of the over-compensated bosses because the result will inevitably be the loss of thousands more jobs in the already depleted shipbuilding industry.

By Alex Thraves
(Swansea AUEW)

LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS

Labour's youth leads the fight back against the Tories

Young women are getting pregnant in order to be rehoused.

This shocking assertion by Wandsworth Council illustrates the desperate lengths today's youth are being driven to.

Young men wandering the streets all day to fool their parents that they have a job. Students, panicked by the pressure of exams; the fear of failure and the dole, committing suicide.

To get rid of one misery they are forced to create another.

In the last decade, alcoholism has risen threefold and drug-taking is common. But they are no escape, no solution to the ills of a class society which breeds these social diseases.

The task of the Labour Party Young Socialists must be to win young people away from despair and apathy, to the socialist alternative which offers the utilisation of the world's greatest resources of labour, materials, science and technology, to benefit all in a society under the control of working people.

The 1979 conference will have to judge our progress and plan the necessary measures for further building the membership and influence of Labour's youth.

In the sixteen months since the 1978 conference, the LPYS has indisputably taken great steps forward. The number of branches has risen by 12%, the membership of

individual branches has increased.

This was despite the disenchantment with the right-wing Labour leaders, who presided over a rise in youth unemployment, and cuts in public services which affected school students, young couples looking for housing and young parents.

The LPYS can be proud that while the party membership of other sections of the Party has unfortunately declined, we have grown. We went out to working class youth and campaigned on a socialist programme as the only alternative to unemployment, low wages and slum housing.

major factor in upping his majority by 9,000.

All our efforts were not enough to reverse the disillusioned and bitter mood among wide numbers of former Labour voters, however. Nevertheless, out of the election work came dozens of new branches.

The result could have been very different if the government had heeded the motion proposed by LPYS members and passed at the 1978 Labour Party conference, demanding an end to wage restraint and calling on the Labour government to implement socialist policies.

We also played a key part in building the campaign to

was won from areas of the NUM, from the Bakers' Union [for which we owe a special tribute to the late General Secretary, Sam Maddox], and even from the United Auto Workers Union in the USA.

Our representative on the Labour Party's National Executive, Tony Saunois, then successfully moved a resolution that a commitment to the 35-hour week be included in the election manifesto. Unfortunately the Labour leadership, rather than campaigning on this demand as a major blow against unemployment, campaigned on its record of creating a handful of jobs—while the dole queues doubled—through special projects.

On an international scale, the Labour Party Young Socialists convinced the European Young Socialist organisation of the need to launch a campaign against unemployment.

The growth of the Young Socialists and our activities around these and other problems such as racialism, leisure facilities and police harassment will be discussed in the debate on YS organisation.

The Bristol and Leicester marches against racialism, the London march against the 'sus' laws, the Manchester march against unemployment, the Liverpool march and mass canvass for a socialist Europe: all have valuable lessons for us.

This is the test of our programme and structure—our ability to grow and campaign even in times of political demoralisation among Labour's supporters. In

Phil Frampton, National Chairman of the Labour Party Young Socialists reviews the progress made since the last LPYS Conference.

The highlight of this work was the general election campaign. We were out in force and we worked with enthusiasm. The tactic of the 'flying canvass' was used to bolster up over 40 Labour marginals under attack.

Defeated arch-reactionary Tory MP Teddy Taylor [Cathcart] credited the LPYS activity with responsibility for his defeat. Labour MP Dennis Canavan [West Stirlingshire] praised the LPYS as the

cut the working week. Through the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment, in particular, the LPYS raised the call for the immediate implementation of the 35-hour week without loss of pay.

Hundreds of factories were visited, over a quarter of a million leaflets circulated. In November, 2,000 delegates from the labour movement attended conferences on the 35-hour week.

Support for the conference



LPYS demonstration in Liverpool June 1979 for a socialist Europe
Photo: MILITANT

that sense those who support the 'Militant's' policies have been proved correct.

Under the banner of Marxism, the LPYS has grown by one third since Labour came to power in 1974. Under the old leadership, the number of branches alone fell by over 25%.

Resolution 109 proposes changing the structure of the LPYS to aid this growth. Rather than increasing the effectiveness of the LPYS or the flow of democratic discussion, however, it would distort political debate and democracy.

The 'Clause IV' anti-'Militant' minority propose that the National Committee should give no 'recommendations or replies to debates', as if the leadership's views should be hidden from the members we represent!

They propose that a minority tendency of even two people should have the same speaking time as one of 200 or more!

They expose their motives

clearly when they demand the election of the National Committee by the whole conference instead of on a regional basis. In 1973 the minority defended the present structure; in May 1975 Clause Four again called for election procedure to remain unchanged.

Now, after not mentioning the issue for the last three years, they see their support in the YS declining hopelessly. So they demand organisational changes to regain the position they have lost through their political bankruptcy.

If the LPYS is to develop then, as composite motion No. 17 points out, we need more resources, more full-timers under our control and TV broadcasts to reach the millions of youth in their homes. We need to expand our shoe-string budget.

But above all we need to take socialist policies out to young workers and mobilise for action against the Tories.

YOUTH CHARTER WINS

LPYS recruitment drive in London

Photo: MILITANT



"This Charter looks into the problems facing working class youth, in their jobs, education, and living conditions. The Labour Party Young Socialists believe that until the demands in this document are met, the working class, including young workers, will never achieve their just rights."

Thus began the original edition of the Charter for Young Workers in 1969. A new fourth edition of the Charter is being presented to this year's conference.

Many of the problems facing working class youth this year are the same—if not worse. The 1969 Charter pointed to the scandal of 10,000 unemployed school leavers. After ten years of 'prosperity', the numbers have increased more than four times over.

These problems need answers. The Charter draws on the experiences of young workers, to map out a programme of fighting demands, linked to a socialist alternative.

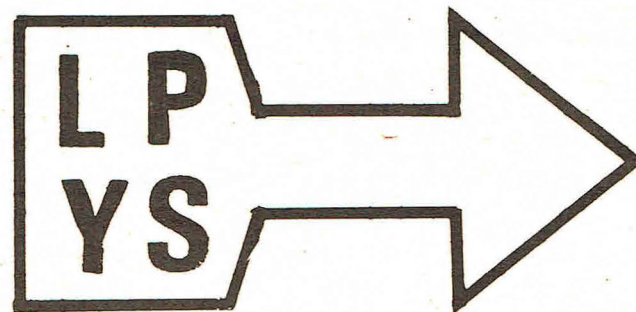
In the section on 'Youth on the Dole', it demands a

guaranteed job for every apprentice, trainee and school and college leaver, and the right of the unemployed to continue their education and be paid a full living wage. An end to all lay-offs and redundancies by sharing out the work with the introduction of a 35-hour week, without loss of pay.

How is that to be achieved? The Charter calls on the trade unions to open their ranks to the unemployed, to ensure that they are not cut off from the powerful solidarity of organised workers. We must demand the right to inspect the books of firms threatening redundancy or closure, to check the facts and see where the profits have gone. And if the private profiteers can't do the job, the firm must be nationalised, under workers' control.

The LPYS want to involve

CONFERENCE AND CAMP



LPYS DRAW UP BOLD SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

The discussions at the LPYS Conference this weekend will be against a bleak background. Youth in Britain are facing the worst problems since they were shipped off to war between 1939 and 1945.

The recent ITEM economic forecast, based on Treasury thinking, indicates that 1,000,000 young people will be out of work by 1981. Real wages will fall by 5% in the next year.

Nurseries, maternity units, schools and hospitals will be closed. Council houses will be sold, condemning people living in tower blocks to lifelong imprisonment.

That is the logic of the Tory government's policies designed to rob the low-paid, youth, pensioners and the sick to fill the pockets of the rich.

While rising prices of necessities have already eaten away most workers' tax increases, the company director on £30,000 a year will be wondering what to do with his £4,000 tax handout.

Even before the Tories came to power, Labour's failure to take determined socialist measures meant that capitalism in crisis put 600,000 youth out of work. The capitalist system now relies on 14 million people living below or just on the official poverty line.

Conference will open with a debate on the general election result, and preparations for the fight against the Tories.

The LPYS National Committee are presenting a political statement which will form the basis for the discussion.

The Tory programme to drive our living standards, social services and trade union rights back to the level of the Victorian era, coming so soon after the ignominious defeat of the union-bashing Heath government is not mere 'forgetfulness'. The stringent cuts in the Health Service, education, care for old people and the handicapped and all the other 'luxuries' that make up our social services, the price increases and unemployment hitting every section of workers, all reflects the vicious logic of capitalism in crisis.

Disillusionment

The experience of the last Labour government, when living standards fell and unemployment doubled, was not just because Jim Callaghan and Denis Healey fell down on the job. Attempting to defend and restore the profit system and big business, to 'put capitalism on a healthy footing', inevitably meant that working people had to pay the price.

This resulted in disillusionment, even of Labour's traditional supporters, and led to the election defeat. As the NC statement says, "a Labour campaign heavily built on personality, the government's record and the theme of 'steady as she goes, let's have more of the same', had no appeal to the mass of working people."

Against a background of world economic slow down and impending recession, Britain's problems are especially marked. The bulk of British industry is not even

able to compete with its rivals.

This is the inevitable result of a chronic lack of investment over decades. Rather than putting their profits back into research, expansion, new equipment and projects, the bosses went for the higher returns and bigger bank balances to be made from investment in lucrative—but useless—speculation in property, antiques, foreign currencies and works of art. Only higher profits from industry would persuade them to do otherwise.

As composite resolution 15 on the economy makes clear, to solve this strike of capital on a capitalist basis would require doubling the rate of profit through a "decade of austerity".

As crisis follows crisis, capitalism has proved beyond doubt that it no longer has anything but misery to offer us.

The idea that 'high' wages or 'lazy' workers are to blame is the theoretical prop behind wage restraint. It is answered by composite resolution 13 on wages policy, that "inflation is a sickness of the capitalist system and in no way can be blamed on workers who are forced to demand high wage increases to keep up with high price increases."

Wage restraint, "far from causing a fundamental and irreversible shift towards working people...has only served to boost the profits of the bosses and lower workers' living standards." The only consequence of this was to reduce the demand for the capitalists' goods (cuts in public spending had the same effect), so that there was no rise in investment despite the higher profits!

When we reject the policies of the right wing of the labour

Delegates vote at the 1978 LPYS Conference

Photo: Mark Rusher (IFL) II



movement, aimed at giving new life to an ailing capitalist economy, however, it is no use denying reality. Trying to plan the economy in the interests of workers, using planning agreements, import controls and limited nationalisation, while remaining within the confines of the profit system could be a recipe for an even worse disaster for the working class. The Tribune group and Clause IV, who support this 'left' strategy of reforms, demand import controls to protect British industry. They suggest that by defending British employers, jobs will be saved.

Dole queues

The Labour government defended the employers for five years with subsidies of over £10 million a day and cuts in corporation tax so large that 13 of the top 50 companies pay none at all. What good would further protective measures do when the trend of the last few years is to even less real investment in new manufacturing industry?

Protecting British bosses

from foreign competition does not stop them throwing workers on the dole. Are cheap foreign houses being imported into Britain? Of course not.

The construction firms have a monopoly of the market such as import controls would give other British bosses—but they still laid off 200,000 building workers. At the same time, they can exploit their monopoly position, selling shoddy, poor quality homes at extortionate prices.

Exactly what every capitalist would do if you gave him a guaranteed market, free from the competition of more efficient foreign manufacturers.

For an economy dependent on foreign trading, import controls would be suicidal. Importing countries would inevitably retaliate if the scale of controls reached an effective level.

No national economy today can be self-sufficient; if exports were squeezed as 'punishment' for imposing import levies or controls, the consequences for the British economy would be disastrous.

All attempts to 'interfere' with the working of capitalism, while leaving the main economic levers of power in the same hands would be seen as a challenge by the capitalists, who would use all their powers to wreak havoc with such measures, and thereby with the economy.

If the Labour government failed to get to grips with the problems of the capitalist economy, the results of Toryism will not be any more successful.

Already, the Treasury expect investment to fall in 1979, despite all the tax incentives and handouts to the rich! With higher interest rates, the money-bags obviously prefer to keep their wealth in the bank rather than invest it in productive industry, where their markets are likely to fall off.

In whatever way they try to dress it up, the Tories aim to off-load the crisis in their system on to the backs of the workers. They are quite prepared to see inflation soar over 20% and unemployment rocket over 2 million.

But it's not that simple. The mighty 12 million strong

trade union movement stands in their way. So they have no choice but to try to curb union rights and confront union power.

Mighty class battles loom ahead. Our conference can act as a rallying call for the labour movement, to combat the Tories at every level. We must pledge ourselves to fight against the cuts in government spending and the attacks on trade union rights.

Youth will be hit even harder by lengthening dole queues. The NC statement gives one example: "Tory cuts and cash limits will mean 50,000 young teachers being 'surplus to requirements' next year, and a worsening of standards of education for working class youth—so much for the Tory claim to 'raise standards'!"

The LPYS must prepare for the rapid spread of industrial action, and a new political awareness on the part of wide sections of the working class, especially the youth.

To do that, we must be armed with a programme around which young workers can fight back. For too long the labour movement has tried to resist capitalist assaults on jobs or living standards, while leaving the bosses in the driving seat to determine where the next attack will be.

We must argue for a linking up of organised trade union action with a socialist campaign to transform society. In the words of the NC statement, this would mean:

"Taking over the 200 or so major firms, banks and finance institutions which really dominate the economy, and have more power than the cabinet or prime minister, irrespective of which government is in power, bringing them under the democratic control and management of the working class movement itself, and without the payment of the gross overcompensation of the past."

This would put an end to the strike of capital, allowing for a massive increase in production, and the planning of that production in accordance with the needs of working people.

By John Cantwell
(LPYS NC)

YOUNG WORKERS

young people in the factories, in the schools, in the offices and wherever else they work in the fight around these demands, around a programme to end the misery that is all the bosses' offer.

Our "Charter" has a history going back many years, to the old Labour League of Youth in the late 'forties and early 'fifties.

It has been updated to keep up with changes. We have learnt from the battles fought by young workers, school students, the young unemployed—and in particular from the apprentices' strikes of 1960 and 1964, in which the Labour Party Young Socialists played a leading role.

We have produced a fighting call to arms for youth—a living testimony to the growing impact of Labour's youth. The LPYS today is a cam-

paigned, working class youth organisation. The original Charter played a central part in building it. Today members of the LPYS are firmly rooted in the trade unions, playing their part in all the major trade unions and political battles.

It was an LPYS member who moved the successful resolution opposing wage restraint at the Labour Party's conference last year. Another YS member seconded the resolution from NUPE opposing the slashing of spending on schools, hospitals and council facilities.

As the new edition of the Charter says: "The LPYS believes that there is clearly a need for more hospitals, for an occupational health service and for the opening of local community health centres. This will need more money and not less!"

It calls for the expansion of public spending and of direct labour departments to improve our hospitals, schools and transport services, with social centres on housing estates and in residential areas, youth clubs, cinemas and adventure playgrounds.

Now we have Maggie Thatcher though, youth aren't hench-men in government. They're already upping prices, stopping Job Creation schemes, selling council homes. They're cutting back spending on schools—bigger classes, sacking teachers and dinner ladies—while they hand out money to the rich kids' fee-paying schools.

Do you fancy a career on the dole? That's what the Tories are offering.

Unfortunately for Mrs Thatcher though youth aren't suffering in silence. School students, black youth, young

By Kevin Ramage

(LPYS National Committee)

trade unionists—they're all ready to fight.

The question is how—and the Labour Party Young Socialists' Charter for Young Workers is the answer.

The new Charter ends: "The task of the Labour Party Young Socialists is to strengthen Labour's ranks by recruiting new layers of young people into political activity in the Labour Party and to strengthen the fight for such thorough-going socialist measures throughout the labour movement." Our job now is to make it the corner-stone of a thriving, fighting LPYS; to turn those words into action.

CHINA NOW

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE BUREAUCRACY

In the first article, Peter Taaffe contrasted the enormous gains of the planned economy with the deadweight of the bureaucratic ruling caste; in the second, he showed the contradictions of the bureaucracy's economic policies; this week, he deals with international relations.

On the world arena, the Chinese bureaucracy have been prepared to trample in the mud every principle of socialism and internationalism in order to enhance the national interests of the Chinese state. It has been prepared to embrace every bloody dictator in the globe, on condition that this extends its power and influence.

It is a bonus for them, if at the same time this strikes a blow against the Russian Stalinists, whom, until recently, the Chinese leadership regarded as its principal enemy on the world stage.

Only months before his overthrow, the Shah was publicly supported by Hua when the latter visited Iran.

The Chinese Stalinists have also assiduously courted the reactionary sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf. China and Oman established diplomatic relations last year, and Hua visited Oman at about the same time. Yet, in the late 1960s, China actively helped the guerrillas who were attempting to overthrow the Oman regime.

Now, however, the Chinese Stalinists believe that this was not "a very wise

step"! Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states have also established relations with the Chinese regime. The guiding principle of the Chinese Stalinists is not the interests of the workers and peasants of the area, oppressed by the reactionary Sheikdoms, but the building of its power and influence in the region.

To support these regimes, moreover, is, according to the Chinese Stalinists, to strike a blow against the Russian bureaucracy. The same goes for their support of Mobutu in Zaire. They rushed to support him at precisely the moment when the workers and peasants in the Shaba province were rising in an attempt to overthrow this dictatorship. Indeed, the Chinese Stalinists upbraided the British capitalists for not playing their part in shoring up the Mobutu regime: "A senior Chinese leader recently asked a British visitor to Peking why Britain had not sent troops to Zaire, like the French and Belgians." (*The Times*, 5 June 1978)

This is music to the ears of Thatcher. It is no wonder that the Peking regime finds favour with the Tory leaders.

Moreover, in a step which nauseated the peoples of Latin America and the world the Chinese regime "got its ambassador in Santiago, Chile, to sing General Pinochet's praise." (*Le Monde*)

Deng, in his recent visit to Japan embraced Hirohito, who was personally involved in the invasions and rape of Manchuria during the Second World War. Deng fought with the Chinese Red Army against the Japanese imper-

ialists in the war. Hirohito had been condemned formerly as "number one war criminal."

The national interests of the Chinese state clearly takes precedence over the interests of the workers and peasants throughout the



Vice-Chairman Deng speaks in Peking

world. The Chinese Stalinists have attempted to play off US imperialism, in particular, against the Russian Stalinists.

"Joint endeavour"

US imperialism has been only too willing to exploit this situation. The cosy relationship which has been built up between both powers was indicated when Brzezinski, Carter's security advisor, and one of the most "hawkish" in the American administration, visited the Great Wall of China last year. *The Times* reported: "Mr Brzezinski [was] dispensing anti-Soviet jokes, and scoring a great hit with the Chinese sailors, who called him the tamer of the Polar bear. 'Which side were the barbarians,' he asked, at the beginning of the climb, from then on, he did not stop poking fun at the Soviet Union. 'If we get to the top first, you go in and oppose the Russians in Ethiopia, if you get there first we go in and oppose the Russians in

Ethiopia,' Mr Brzezinski joked with the Chinese accompanying him."

Such a "joint endeavour" between America and China in relation to Ethiopia is of course ruled out. Nevertheless, the fact that the representatives of American imperialism can jocularly refer to the possibility of joint action with China against another alleged "socialist power" shows the character of these regimes.

This was underlined recently in the clashes between Russia and China, and between Vietnam and the Cambodian regime of Pol Pot and the subsequent invasion of Vietnam by China. The Communist Parties in the capitalist world seek to explain these clashes in terms of "tragic mistakes" or as

THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE CHINESE STATE TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS THROUGHOUT

and China which resulted in the invasion of the former by the latter.

The sacrifice of Chinese workers' and peasants' lives, and their Vietnamese brothers, was made in order to satisfy the thirst for revenge of the Chinese Stalinists against the "upstart" Vietnamese Stalinists. The roots of the conflict lay on the one side in the desire of the Vietnamese bureaucracy to dominate Indo-China, and on the other side, of the Chinese bureaucracy's insistence that the region was its "sphere of influence".

"Revisionists"

The Vietnamese Stalinists leaned on the Russian bureaucracy as a counterweight to the pressure of the Chinese bureaucracy. Vietnam's joining of Comecon and the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam in turn aggravated the conflict between China and Vietnam.

The Chinese Stalinists justified their invasion on the grounds that it was necessary to "punish" the Vietnamese. This earned them the title of "the world's greatest Magistrate". At the same time, the Chinese bureaucracy began a frantic courtship with the national Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe, of Rumania, and Yugoslavia in particular, in order to create a counter pressure on the Russian Stalinists.

Its friendship with the former "revisionist" Yugoslavia brought it into conflict with Albania, the sole supporter of Mao in Eastern Europe, during his conflicts with the Russian bureaucracy. Among other things, the vicious Stalinist Albanian regime has been in a long conflict with Yugoslavia on the issue of the treatment of national minorities within Yugoslavia, who have ethnic ties with the population of



Chinese soldiers in Vietnam

Albania.

There are also, as with all the Stalinist regimes, claims and counter-claims on each other's territory. In all of these conflicts there is not an atom of socialism or of internationalism. The power, the privileges, their prestige of each national Stalinist regime, is of foremost importance.

USSR in 1917

Contrast this to the internationalist perspectives of Lenin, the Bolsheviks and the Russian revolution. This was seen even in the name of the first workers' state—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Lenin deliberately chose this name in order to show

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**INTERESTS OF THE
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THE INTERESTS
AND PEASANTS
THE WORLD**



Human rights demonstrators in Peking

With the Chinese revolution, one quarter of mankind stepped for the first time onto the stage of human history. A new supplementary revolution, a political revolution, which would eliminate the stranglehold of a bureaucratic elite, would have enormous repercussions throughout the colonial and semi-colonial world, and indeed in the advanced countries as well.

consequent political repercussions on the most vulnerable and unstable capitalist regimes in Europe.

The 'Financial Times' quite openly commented last year that: "Peking sees a welcome side-effect in propping up ailing European industry like British Steel, with substantial orders, to stabilise doubtful economies." (7 June 1978) In other words, the Chinese Stalinists fear as much, if not more, as the imperialists the socialist revolution in any of the advanced capitalist countries.

The socialist revolution in Europe, Japan, America, or the most industrialised states of Latin America, would bring crashing down not just capitalism, but also the Stalinist bureaucracy itself.

Despite the vicious denunciations of each other, at the same time, as the Marxists predicted, the Chinese and Russian bureaucracy will eventually be forced to come together.

The Russian bureaucracy have been compelled to accept China, and recognise it as a world power. At the same time, the Chinese bureaucracy has been cruelly disap-

pointed at the limited benefits which now seem possible from the trade deals with the West. Russia is an alternative, and a lot cheaper, source of high technology with which to industrialise China.

Both bureaucracies wish to cut down, if possible, the costly expenditure in arms and equipment which is entailed in defending their common borders against each other. If not immediately,

then when the wounds of the Vietnamese-China conflicts have receded, undoubtedly the Chinese and Russian bureaucracies will come to an agreement.

In the face of the growing radicalisation throughout the capitalist world, and the mounting opposition to the rule of the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe, China, Russia, etc., both the privileged elites of these regimes and the

capitalists in the West will cling together for common support.

As opposed to the Russian Stalinists, the Chinese bureaucracy is still able to play a relatively progressive role. To a certain extent, the Chinese regime is fulfilling the tasks which capitalism fulfilled in Western Europe in the past by developing industry, science, and technique. But in so doing they are producing their own grave-diggers in the form of a mighty working class.

Already, the Chinese working class has developed enormously over the past 30 years. Although 80% of the Chinese population still live on the land, mainly as peasants, the Chinese working class is a mighty force. This working class will not tolerate for ever the rule of a greedy, privileged and ignorant elite.

The socialist revolution in any of the advanced capitalist countries would undoubtedly provoke a political revolution in China. A similar development would take place if political revolution were to take place in Russia, in Eastern Europe or any of the other deformed workers' states.

On the basis of workers' democracy, all the potential, the colossal possibilities rooted in a planned economy, would be exploited to the full.

With the Chinese revolution, one quarter of mankind stepped for the first time onto the stage of human history. A new supplementary revolution, a political revolution, which would eliminate the stranglehold of a bureaucratic elite, would have enormous repercussions throughout the colonial and semi-colonial world, and indeed in the advanced capitalist countries as well.

The present regime appears to be very stable. Indeed, it is perhaps the most stable of all the Stalinist regimes. This is due to the enormous social weight of the peasantry, the fact that the working class is still a minority, and the fact also that the bureaucracy is still capable of playing a relatively progressive role.

However, mighty events in the capitalist world, or in the Stalinist world, could quickly see the downfall of the Stalinist bureaucracy in China. Once that happens even the colossal development of China over the last 30 years would be put in the shade.

The tremendous possibilities resulting from a planned economy would be exploited to the full under a regime of workers' democracy.

This would at the same time result in the collapse of the rotten landlord and capitalist system throughout Asia leading to an Asian Socialist Federation as part of a World Socialist Federation.



that the Russian revolution was only the beginning of the world socialist revolution. He looked towards more and more countries joining the socialist federation until the whole globe was encompassed into a World Socialist Federation.

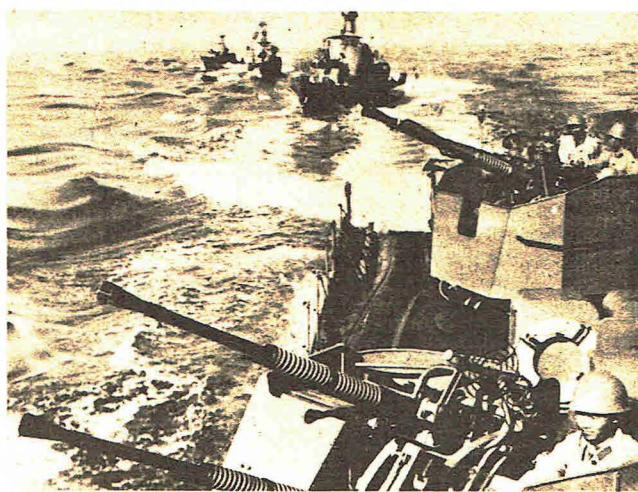
Yet the Stalinist regimes of China and Russia proved incapable of even forming a federation between the two countries. Such a federation would, for instance, have enabled a rapid exploitation of Siberia to the mutual benefit of both economies. Siberia is rich in natural resources but short of labour: China with its colossal labour reserves would easily be able to make up for this.

Such a scheme would be of enormous benefit to the

economies and peoples of Russia and China. It is the narrow nationalist bureaucracies which stand in the way of accomplishing this.

Fear

These bureaucracies, while locked in conflict with one another, and occasionally coming into collision with imperialism, at the same time have a common mortal dread of the prospect of either a socialist revolution in the West, or of a political revolution to establish workers' democracy in any of their countries. Indeed, one of the reasons for the revival of China's trade relations with the West is the fear of economic recession, and the



Chinese gunboats

**By
Kevin Ramage**
(LPYS National
Committee)

"Riot squad dog handlers singled out people from the crowd and set the dogs on them. The man was brought down by the snarling dogs and arrested—his clothing tattered and blood spilling from his head and legs." [*Cape Times*].

This is the barbaric treatment the South African regime hands out to those who protest at starvation wages.

Discriminated against in all fields of life, the reality of apartheid is quite horrific for the Black people of South Africa.

In the richest country in Africa, 20% of African children existing in rural conditions die before they are 5 years old.

An estimated 2,000 workers will die in industrial accidents this year, a gruesome tribute extorted by capitalism from black South African workers.

It is to expose the vicious apartheid regime, and the massive support it receives from British capitalism, that the Labour Party Young Socialists are launching a class campaign on Southern Africa.

The campaign will be based around the document on Southern Africa presented to this year's LPYS conference. It will on the one hand alert the labour movement to the role that Western firms play in South Africa, and on the other hand, fight for active solidarity action with the struggles of South African workers.

The whole African continent is in ferment. The last period has been one of deepening social upheaval, revolutions and coups. Amin's regime has come crashing down. Junior officers have overthrown the Ghanaian Generals.

Landlordism and capitalism has been eliminated in Angola and Mozambique. The Patriotic Front is carrying on a tireless struggle to overthrow the capitalist Muzorewa-Smith regime in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

In the South Africa the struggle has reached explosive proportions. And South Africa is the key to the whole situation in Africa. It is the economic giant not only of Southern Africa, but of the whole continent.

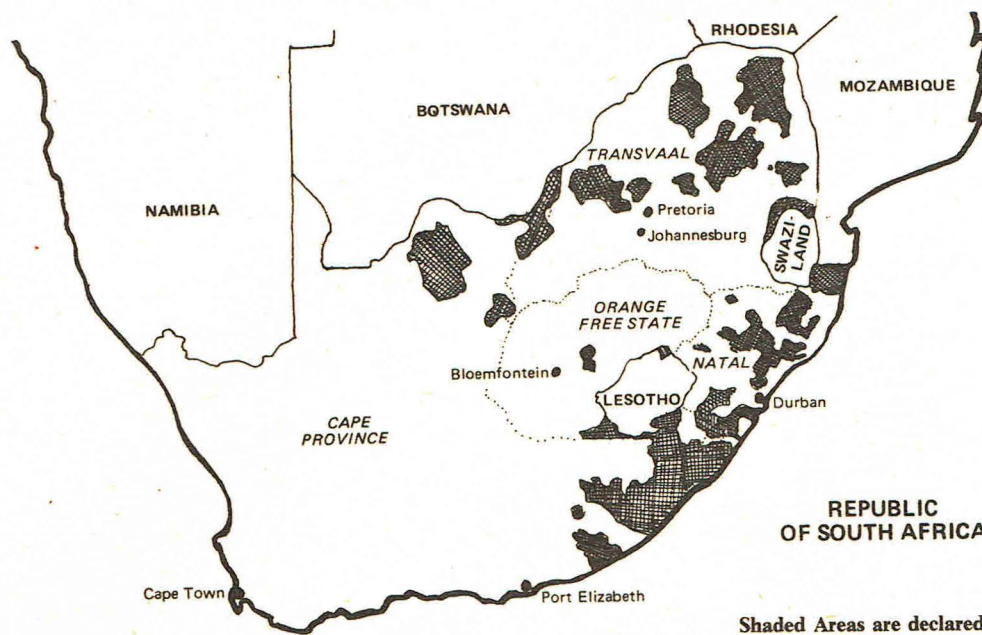
With only 6% of Africa's population, South Africa uses over 50% of the continent's electricity. The growth in world trade after the second world war strengthened the South African economy. The cheap labour offered by the virtual slave existence of the Blacks attracted huge foreign investments.

A report in 'Workers'



The Soweto Revolt 3 years ago [above] marked a turning-point in the Southern African struggle

LPYS LAUNCH CLASS CAMPAIGN



Unity' (journal of the South African Congress of Trade Unions) showed why the capitalists like South Africa:

"Forty-one black miners were killed on 2 December when a fire broke out 8,000 feet underground at Anglo-American's giant Vaal Reef's gold mine. Workers immediately organised mine rescue teams to reach the 121 men working in the affected area, and 80 managed to escape before the management ordered the rescue to stop. The area was then sealed off under management's orders to prevent the fire spreading to damage other parts of the mine. This left no hope at all for the 41 men still trapped underground."

Ruthlessness aids profits yet Anglo-American claims to be a 'liberal' firm opposed to the worst excesses of apartheid.

The apartheid system is

reliant on foreign capital for growth. British based firms such as GKN, Leyland, Barclays account for 60% of all foreign investment in South Africa—about £5 billion.

This massive foreign investment has bolstered the economy, but economic growth, as Marx explained, also builds and strengthens the position of the working class. Between 1946 and 1970 the population as a whole grew by 87%, but the urban population in the big towns and cities grew by 146%.

In other words there has been a massive shift from the countryside to the towns. The working class has grown in numbers and cohesion.

In 1973 a massive 1.3 million working hours were lost through strikes. Yet following the Soweto massacre, four million working hours were lost in a single day

(15.9.76)—three times the peak figure of the whole of 1973.

In addition 200,000 Cape Coloureds (who have a position of slight privilege over Black Africans) engaged in solidarity action. The strike movement around Soweto—undoubtedly the biggest in the history of the South African working class—has proved a turning point in the struggle.

Against this background of rising struggle of the Black working class, the support of the international working class is more vital than ever.

The fight against apartheid is also the fight against the financial interests behind the system. To achieve even their basic democratic rights Blacks in South Africa will have to combat international and South African business.

The main force in this will be the Black working class. In

the absence of any substantial African big business class, it will prove impossible to establish a democratic Black capitalist South Africa. The road to democracy is also the socialist road and in the LPYS campaign this clear class approach will be to the fore.

The sort of action required was demonstrated by Rover Solihull shop stewards' committee, who produced a broadsheet explaining to their members British Leyland's activities in South Africa, and the need for the blacking of production of Land Rovers used by the South African police.

The broadsheet pointed out:

"Over the last 5 years British Leyland has made 5 times as much profit from each of its workers in South Africa as it does in Britain."

1. By refusing to recognise the black Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU).

2. Expanding its operations in South Africa.

3. Continuing to supply South African Defence Forces and police with military vehicles—in the main Land Rovers.

Michael Edwardes, chairman of BL, recently proclaimed he was in favour of strong trade unions. Yet in South Africa BL refuses to recognise black workers' trade unions.

Such hypocrisy is shown by all British "democratic" capitalists with investments in South Africa. Socialists must fight for an end to all investments in South Africa and a trade boycott.

The Bingham report on sanctions busting in Rhodesia shows one thing clearly. Capitalists are solely interested in preserving profits. Only the working class is willing and capable of imposing sanctions on South Africa.

The ruling class introduced sanctions against Smith in an attempt to pressurise the regime into negotiations. They refused to aid the liberation movements who were actually struggling against white capitalist rule.

The LPYS has stood for unconditional financial and material assistance to be given to the liberation movements in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. Now as the Tories throw in their lot with the Muzorewa-Smith regime, it is doubly important that the British labour movement expresses its active solidarity with the Zimbabwe liberation struggle.

Throughout the entire labour movement the importance of solidarity action with the people of Southern Africa must be raised. It must be discussed at every level in the Labour Party, trade unions, Co-op movement and concrete decisions made as to what action can be taken.

The Labour Party Young Socialists are pledged to campaign in the labour movement for the following demands:

★ A trade union boycott of all trade with South Africa.

★ No more bank loans or investment in these countries.

★ Nationalisation under workers' control and management of British firms with interests in South Africa.

★ No Labour participation in imperialist schemes, an end to all secret diplomacy.

★ No British or United Nations troops in Southern Africa.

★ Labour movement and future Labour governments to give unconditional financial and material aid to the liberation movements of Southern Africa.

★ Unconditional right of asylum in Britain for all refugees from the regime.

With the effective enforcement of such a programme, then the working class will be able to give effective assistance to the revolutionary movements in Southern Africa and build the international solidarity which is vital to the struggle in all countries for the socialist emancipation of mankind.

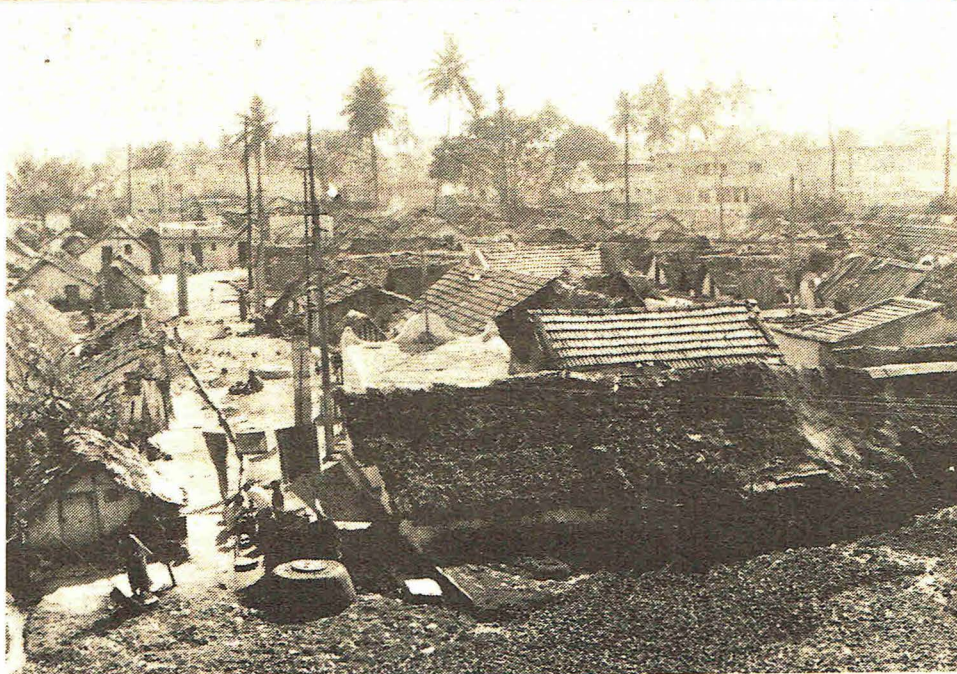
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INDIA - JANATA BREAKS UP AS MASSES MOVE INTO ACTION

By Roger Silverman



Janata promised an 'end to poverty' within ten years. But for those living in the shanty towns (above) and villages things have never been worse

The resignation of Prime Minister Morarji Desai and the disintegration of the ruling class, provides more striking confirmation of the explosive pre-revolutionary situation that has built up in India.

It is only 28 months since Janata was swept to office in a landslide election. Now, following the defection of some 92 MPs including 14 Ministers, the Janata Party is a corpse.

The breakaway party, which calls itself the Janata (Secular) Party, is dominated by the former BLD, the reactionary party of Charan Singh and Raj Narain, resting on the support of the rich Jat peasants of the North, the "kulaks", and incorporating the old right-wing Swatantra Party.

Firmly entrenched in control of the old Janata Party is the Jan Sangh, party of Hindu communalist bigotry. This sinister and dangerous party has 93 MPs and controls the administrations of Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

Its paramilitary sister organisation the RSS, which has systematically organised pogroms against the Muslims and other minority communities, now boasts a million members, with another 3½ million in 53 front organisations, 40 weekly papers and 8 dailies.

The split in Janata has mainly been the result of the falling-out of these former allies, the two strongest forces

within the Janata coalition. Both are reactionary parties resting on the middle strata of society, the BLD in the countryside and the Jan Sangh in the towns, whipping up lynch-mobs respectively against the harijans ("untouchables") and Muslims. Charan Singh, as Finance Minister, has promoted policies designed to enrich the kulaks, with lavish grants at the expense of the poor, in utopian "small is beautiful" cottage industry schemes.

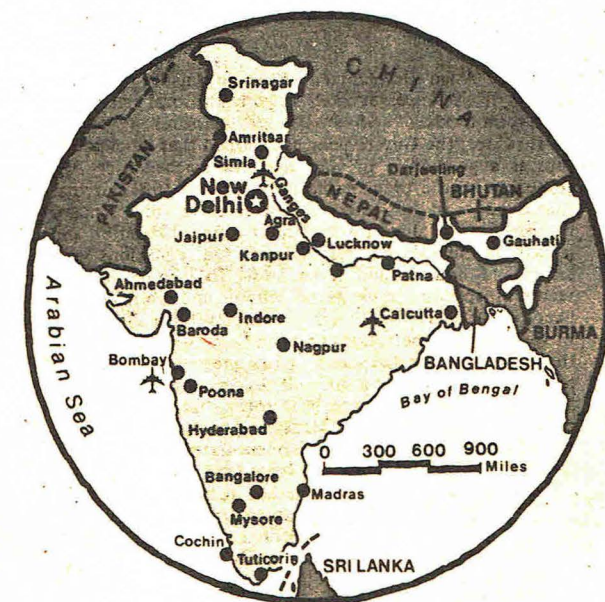
The Janata Party was hastily scrambled together, when those politicians cheated by the Gandhi clique of the fruits of patronage and corruption, sensing the mood of popular revolt, huddled together in an unprincipled syndicate to conjure up an alternative capitalist party, which under the cover of empty "democratic" prattle could divert the masses into safe channels and continue by other means to repress them.

Ever since there has been a growing crescendo of strikes, riots, communal and caste battles. 'Militant' has been alone in publicising the growing crisis in Indian society.

New 'militant'?

Today we can quote an independent observer: the Petroleum Minister, Mr Bahaguna, who has just resigned.

"The country has reached the precipice and courageous action is needed to pull it back from the brink...The nation is facing a great peril today. Frequent and prolonged communal riots have shattered their life, property and honour threatens the



secular basis of our nation... "The harijans have been victims of untold atrocities... The working class is up in arms against the government, and its wrath is mounting every day as the government...takes recourse to harsher measures to stifle their voice...Regional forces are raising their heads..."

"Secessionist activities are increasing in the North-East...Inflation threatens to overwhelm the economy...There could soon be acute shortages...On top of everything, the recent revolt of the security forces has raised serious questions about the survival of the democratic system."

Mr Bahaguna's statement reads like a centre-page article on India from 'Militant'!

The collapse of the govern-

ment coincides with the threat of cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis in the capital city, Delhi, as a result of a strike by 10,000 water and sewage workers. The production manager and security officer of a factory near Lucknow were beaten to death by workers last week.

Military

These violent events have come in the wake of the unprecedented armed revolt of police and security forces against army strikebreakers (see 'Militant' last week).

In this situation, no capitalist party can remain intact. After 30 years of stable and monolithic Congress rule, the last two years have seen political volatility with a vengeance.

The downfall of Congress

at the hands of the millions started a chain-reaction of splits in Congress, starting with the Congress for Democracy, then between the Party apparatus and the "Indira Congress", and now a further split within the Indira Congress leaving the old witch in a minority of her personally named party!

These splits provide a grotesque parody of the crumbling of Janata back into its component parts.

Whoever succeeds Morarji Desai as Prime Minister, there can be no respite to the social crisis.

Who are the rivals? Two more octogenarians: Jagjivan Ram, the tame pet Harijan, who is nevertheless a rich landowner and a Congress hack whose hands are stained in the blood of the Emergency in which he remained to the bitter end an accomplice; and Charan Singh, kulak leader and populist rabble-rouser who brings millions of Jat peasants to celebrate his birthday every December, which he modestly designates "Kisan Day" (Peasant Day)!

In 'Militant' (31.3.78) we sketched out the perspective of "political paralysis and a rapid secession of impotent coalition governments...like the French Fourth Republic or Pakistan prior to 1958." The collapse of the Janata government now opens up such a prospect, of shaky alliances, wheeling and dealing between rival factions, underhand manoeuvres, all impotent in the face of the powerful mass movement which has surged ahead.

The most grotesque realignments are being hatched up, including an intrigue between Charan Singh and Mrs Gandhi. But everything in Indian society is straining towards a left alternative. In this context, the most significant rumour is of a conference of socialists to be held to consider preparing the way towards a "third force".

Socialists

The socialists have only a narrow base, but they know that a coalition uniting nominally "democratic" forces against both the Jan Sangh and Mrs Gandhi would evoke a tremendous response from the workers, the poor and the dispossessed.

Such a realignment would be a classic Popular Front, in which pro-capitalist forces would exploit and discredit the workers' parties in the eyes of the masses.

But it would further boost the masses' self-confidence and prepare the way for a real United Front of the workers' parties: the two wings of the Communist Party, the Socialist and other regional left parties such as the RSP in West Bengal, which could draw behind the working class and the banner of socialism the harijans, the Muslims, the other minorities, the landless poor and small peasants, the women and the youth, to open up the real road out of the misery and bloodshed guaranteed by the survival of Indian capitalism.

GERMAN TORIES MOVE RIGHT

Reflecting the class polarisation that is affecting even the wealthiest capitalist country in Europe, West Germany, the German Tories this month chose as their new leader the extreme right-winger Franz-Josef Strauss. Strauss believes in extremely firm measures to combat trade unionists and socialists or as he puts it "chasing the reds back to their rat-holes."

His past record when in the German cabinet in the 1950s and early '60s was notorious. He was accused of accepting bribes for tank contracts and involvement in a 'missing files'



From being a power behind the scenes Strauss [right] emerges from the shadows

affair covering negotiations over the purchase of Lockheed Starfighters.

His persecution of the left was of course accept-

able to German capitalists. But in 1962 Strauss went too far, attacked the important liberal 'Der Spiegel' magazine and had

to resign after he lied to Parliament.

His selection as the Conservatives' candidate for the Chancellorship in the 1980 elections is a warning to the German labour movement.

During the steelworkers' strike for a 35-hour week last December, Strauss accused the trade union leadership of "having communist undertones...it is in the greatest danger of becoming completely socialist-orientated..."

His solution is to challenge the trade unions' electoral support for the SPD (Social Democrats) by "killing trade union

unity" in favour of "competition between unions."

The German Tories plan to spend £250 million in the next five years in building up their 'Christian TUC' (232,000 members) in opposition to the 7 million strong DGB!

Early indications are that Strauss and the Tories will lose. Opinion polls show that 16% of Tory voters prefer social democrat Helmut Schmidt to Strauss and 25% of Tories expect the SPD to win the elections. 68% of young people (under 35) prefer Schmidt.

The German labour movement cannot, how-

By Mick Levene
(Coventry SE Labour Party)

ever, be complacent. The Tory Party have a 4% lead over the Social Democrats. The SPD have been in coalition government for 13 years, and yet very little has fundamentally changed.

Indeed, disappointment amongst workers with the SPD is greater than ever, despite the threat of Strauss. To successfully resist that threat the ranks of the labour movement should be mobilised behind a socialist programme for the 1980s.

LETTERS

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

Musical for socialists

Dear Editor

7:84 Theatre Company are seeking the help of 'Militant' readers.

In the autumn we will be tackling our biggest venture to date—an effort to put the large scale musical to the benefit of the labour movement. We will be taking the musical, 'Bitter Apples' by John McGrath, to Nottingham, Liverpool, Basildon, Brighton and Swindon, and playing for either one or two weeks in each town.

This is an exciting venture for us, and if successful, we hope that it will be a real contribution to extending the scale of political theatre and entertainment in this country. The standard of entertainment will be high and the story will be one of relevance to everyone.

If your readers live in, or within travelling distance of, any of the towns listed above, we are seeking their help with publicity and the organisation of party outings. If anyone is interested, please drop me a line.

Yours fraternally
Alan Tweedie
7:84 Theater Company,
Unit 407, 31 Clerkenwell
Close, London EC1R OAT

MORE UPS THAN DOWNS

Dear Comrades

Having recently got a job as a shop assistant for the summer, I often had to check the prices of various items as I didn't know them.

Looking up the prices, I noticed that the book, 'Shaw's Guide to Retail', listed the number of price rises and falls in June. 3,688 basic grocery items went up in price in one month while only 17 fell in price.

These bring the half-yearly total of rises to 7,805 with only 214 falls. From this piece of information it is obvious that the Tory budget has attacked the living standards of the working class while the benefits go to the 'friends of the government', big business.

Yours fraternally
A shop assistant

"I'M NOT POLITICAL..."

Dear Comrades

While selling papers in a local street last Saturday, a young West Indian girl bought a paper off me.

I asked her if she was interested in the LPYS. She said that she wasn't interested in politics.

When I mentioned the

policies of the Tories, she said that if we wanted any help gunning down Maggie Thatcher we could count on her. And that's from someone who's not interested in politics!

Fraternally
Simon Heather
Selly Oak LPYS

Destination Ascot—not Skeggy

Dear Comrades

I had occasion to experience some of the "equalities of sacrifice" in our society the other week.

As you may know, British Rail cancelled all charter and special excursion trains during June and July owing to the oil crisis.

This included a special train chartered by the school where I teach—a train to take

500 children from inner Birmingham on a day trip to the seaside at Skegness. Many of those children would get no other holiday apart from this trip.

It was bad enough having to accept that our kids would not get a holiday. You can imagine my feelings when I discovered that there were to be two special trains running while all others were cancelled.

Their destination? The races at Ascot.

There certainly seems to be one law for the rich and one for the poor under capitalist society—especially during a crisis.

Fraternally
Tony Martin
Birmingham NUT
and Northfield LP

POLISH WORKERS WANT SOME SAY

Dear Comrades

As someone who has lived and worked in Poland, I was amazed to read the letter from Gavin Reed in 'Militant' (6th July). This comrade has either never been to Eastern Europe or if he has, he went round with his eyes closed.

Poland has progressed unbelievably since it became a "Peoples' Democracy". Supporters of 'Militant' would point out that this is due to state planning and the nationalisation of industry.

While the bourgeois press attribute all Poland's ills to this very same state planning and ownership, Marxists believe that it is a bureaucratic clique at the top of Polish society which is responsible

for the crisis—social, economic and political—which pervades Polish society. That such a crisis exists would not be denied by most Poles, including members of the PZPR (Polish Communist Party).

During my stay in Poland I had many discussions with sincere Polish socialists—both inside and outside the Party—who were most concerned about the position of the Polish economy. The economic crisis was obvious even to the most unobservant: the rationing, long queues for virtually unobtainable 'luxuries' like toilet paper, fresh fruit, butter etc.

Yet in sharp contrast to the life of the average Polish

worker, a daily struggle to make ends meet, was the life of a high-up official whose home I visited. This 'comrade' enjoyed a large and beautiful house with private sauna and swimming pool, two cars and holidays abroad every year; as far removed from the life of the average Polish worker as are bosses from workers in England.

There is no widespread unemployment or homelessness in Poland, health treatment and education are free to all. These are the fruits of the planned and socialised economy. But there is another side of the coin: Polish workers want more than a decent material standard of living—they want some say in

STEEL WRECKERS

Dear Comrades

Please find enclosed a donation of ten pounds to the fighting fund.

I was reading the 'Financial Times' yesterday, I am almost crying as I write this. Thousands upon thousands of workers are to lose their jobs in the steel industry and service and supply industries as British Steel go ahead with the closing down of plant at Shotton and Corby.

Just look at the headlines on page 7 of the 'Financial Times'—"Profit order quickens closures of steelworks" and a quote from that article, "The most potent new factor is government direction to British Steel to get the business back into profit

within a year."

More headlines on page 7: "Welsh problems increase", and below that, "Corby fears 20% unemployment." Across the page a little, "Industry (steel) faces static demand."

'Militant's' analysis of the crisis of capitalism and the consequent attacks on workers is being totally vindicated by capitalism's necessarily most serious publication, the 'Financial Times'.

On to a twice-weekly and a daily 'Militant'—we have produced a decisive weapon. Let's make the best use of it.

Yours fraternally
Paul Cunningham
Dunfermline

Anti-fascist appeal

Dear Comrades

On Monday 30th April the National Front held an election meeting at Rochdale Town Hall. A picket of the meeting was organised by the Labour Party anti-racism committee, Rochdale LPYS, the ANL and other anti-fascists.

The picket was peaceful and orderly. However, as the NF were being escorted away from the hall after the meeting the police suddenly charged at one group of demonstrators.

It seems that most of the arrests were simply those who could not run away fast enough from this police assault. There were 13 arrested, including two 'Militant' supporters and a member of the LPYS.

The first two cases were heard in Rochdale on 23rd May and they resulted in fines and costs of £95 each.

The Rochdale CLP/Heywood and Royton CLP anti-racism committee are making an appeal for funds to cover defence costs. We are calling on the labour movement for support.

Cheques, postal orders should be made payable to "Anti Racism Committee" and sent to the address below. Receipts and thanks will be sent to all contributors.

Yours fraternally
Tom Stott [Secretary]
Rochdale CLP/Heywood
and Royton CLP
Anti-Racism Committee
24 Finsbury Street,
Brimrod, Rochdale, Lancs.

Tory closed shop

Dear Militant

Just lately we have seen an attack on trade union rights, particularly the closed shop. But how did the Tories bring down the Labour Party? Through the Tory closed shop.

MPs want promotions, don't they? It is very doubtful whether promotions would be

forthcoming if they didn't vote when the chief whip told them to. Will Thatcher introduce a secret ballot at Westminster?

What Tory hypocrisy it all is.

Fraternally
J Hearn
Bridgwater

What does capitalism offer?

Dear Comrades

The recent letters about suicide amongst the unemployed reminds me very clearly of a tragedy I experienced while working at the Hackney Hospital last summer.

One night a Jamaican man came into hospital acutely ill with a stomach condition. He was about 45, living alone, and had been unemployed for about 6 years, unable to find decent employment.

He was living in a miserable bed-sit, severely depressed and lonely. When his condition began to make him sick, instead of seeing the doctor, he decided to starve himself to death; he saw no future in his life and wanted to die.

By the time he came to us his pain was intolerable and he was very emaciated. He had advanced cancer and died five days later.

What an indictment of our society that unemployment can drive a man to suicide. Hopelessness made this man refuse medical treatment until the pain of his condition became agonising.

Capitalism, as part of its internal logic, requires a permanent level of unemployment even in the so-called prosperous times and, as we are seeing, in a slump happily discards workers onto the dole queue. I look with dread to the future of Corby when the steel mills close and unemployment reaches 30%.

We must be quite clear that big business is responsible for this man's death.

Yours fraternally
Stella Gibling
Tower Hamlets LPYS

the running of their own workplaces.

What sort of 'socialist state' has no workers' democracy, no genuine trade unions to defend the living standards of their members?

When excessive price rises were announced, there was no protest from the official trade unions or so-called workers' party (CP). It was the workers themselves, in their own hastily set up committees and Workers' Councils, who forced the Polish government to change. It was ordinary workers, many of whom were killed or imprisoned, who attacked the CP headquarters in 1970, not calling for a return to capitalism, but for workers' democracy.

Would comrade Reed claim that the 1970 and 1976 events were the work of CIA agents and saboteurs?

I am sure that other readers will reply to the points Comrade Reed has made regarding the role played by 'Militant' supporters in Britain. On Poland, he should take a long cool look at the real situation within the country and the other "socialist states", including the USSR, before springing to the defence of aspects of those countries which have absolutely nothing whatsoever in common with socialism.

Yours fraternally
Kate Packham
Brighton Kemp Town CLP

Your tax rebate can... SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS

The Tory tax changes are supposed to slightly soften the hammer-blows being inflicted on every aspect of workers' living standards.

But how is a couple of quid going to ease the massively increased burden of VAT, rent and rate rises, the doubling of prescription charges etc that have already gone through?

How can a £15-20 rebate be a hedge against the proposed rocketing of school meal and transport prices, against the abandoning of a health service and the slashing of educational facilities?

Thatcher thinks she's got problems convincing her cabinet of the need for another £4,000 million off public spending. All they're worried about is whether private industry isn't being asked to pay too much and whether there won't be a little too much unemployment around.

If you are really worried about what the next three months of Tory rule has in store for you, help arm the fight back of the labour movement with policies that can provide a decent standard of living for all and end unemployment and poverty for ever.

Your tax rebate on its own won't be enough to solve your problems, so put it together with a whole lot of others to help the 'Militant'. It will certainly ease 'Militant's' problems of finding the £8,000 we're short of for the new camera-platemaker. And if you're really convinced that 'Militant' needs your support, the "couple of quid" a week could come quite painlessly our way as well!

This week's total is even down on last week's at £814, when it needs to be topping the £2,000 mark each week until October 6th.

So...what did you do with your rebate? If you've spent it, try and make it back up

By
Clare Doyle

and send it in to 'Militant's' fighting fund. If you haven't had it yet, make sure you allocate it to 'Militant' in advance—even send us a 'promissory note' to prevent yourself from backsliding.

If you have got your rebate and intend to give it to 'Militant', send it off now before it 'disappears' or, if you are going to the Labour Party YS Conference and Camp, take it (carefully) along there and put it in the bumper collection for 'Militant'.

Whatever you do, don't give it back to the Tories by refusing to help step up the fight for the socialist alternative! Collect from your work-mates, friends and comrades in the labour movement too, and send all cheques and POs to 'Militant' at 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN as soon as you can.

We must reach our ¾-year target or cut back on our spending and damage the effectiveness of our paper. Soften the blows of rising costs for the 'Militant' by sending us your Tory tax rebate!

Here is a 'blow by blow' account of the 'performance' of each area on the chart in the last week, and our thanks go to everyone who has contributed—mentioned or unmentioned. But as you can see, there is plenty of room for improvement!

Total from **Eastern**—£2.85 all (!) from Peterborough!

From **Hants & IOW**—£22.09, including badge sales in Portsmouth of £11.80.

Humberside—£7.70 including J Young (AUEW) £3.

Build **MILITANT**

Area	Target		Proportion of target received	Received
	52 wks	39 wks		
Eastern	4,700	3,525		1,691
Hants & IOW	3,100	2,325		1,426
Humberside	2,000	1,500		888
London North	9,500	7,125		3,446
London South	3,900	2,925		2,174
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	3,375		1,548
Merseyside	5,000	3,750		1,733
Midlands East	3,300	2,475		1,678
Midlands West	9,000	6,750		3,964
Northern	5,500	4,125		2,089
Scotland East	2,900	2,175		882
Scotland West	4,500	3,375		1,416
South East	4,500	3,375		2,090
South West	3,100	2,325		1,521
Wales East	2,600	1,950		935
Wales West	3,400	2,550		873
Yorkshire	6,800	5,100		2,502
Others	6,700	5,025		6,242
Total	85,000	63,750		37,106

Progress towards year's target Progress towards October 6th target

TARGET FOR THE YEAR - £85,000 TARGET FOR OCT. 6th - £63,750

North London — total £125.80 including "Metropolitan Supporters' Day's Pay Levy"—£45.50 (so far), £4 from R Allen, £1.10 from Awis of N Islington YS and another £1.10 from other members there. £1s from Mrs Sookhdeo (Snr), A Mustafa, A Ward (Romford YS) and G Faulkes, aged 7.

A collection of donations to the 'Militant' from LPYS members in Feltham and Heston, who saw the ideas put forward in the paper crush the Young Tories at the debate in the House of Commons last week—£15.63.

South London—just £18.71 from the Greenwich/Woolwich area.

Manchester and District—£35.44, including £8.74 collected "over the weeks" in Chorley and Wigan and £15 collected at the CPSA Civil Aviation Group Conference in Manchester.

Merseyside—£64.53 including POEU members R Hughes and D Cook £3.20, Anon £10, P Harvey (Woolton E Ward LP) £2, R Wilson and C Wilson £1.50, Cammel Lairds Militant readers' discussion £1.94, Birkenhead Discussion Group £6.60 and FBU members £1.

Most appropriate of all is the £9.50 collected from members of the Bootle Taxes Branch of the IRSF—W Clarke and A Runswick (£2), M Blinston, J Green, L King and J Cullen (£1s), and J Maney, M Murphy and C Heath (50ps).

Midlands East—£33.53, all from Leicester, and including: P Soulsby's £5, £2.50 from P Matts (NUPE), £11.25

THIS WEEK:
£814

(NUPE steward's union money), M Brown £1.50, and J Weaver £1, and 'extras' on sales £6.45. G and M Robertson sent £5 earned "for the torture of baby-sitting"!

Midlands West's total £94.86. P Polino £1.50, L Wright (PNP) £1.10, M Hyde 'Tote' £2.20 (before or after the race?!). Disco in Banbury an excellent £53.80 and various Oxford readers—£13.20.

Northern—£99.42 includ-

ing J Pattinson of Jarrow YS (£1), C Marshall of Wallsend YS (85p), £20 union expenses, various activities with beer and whisky in Sunderland (£24.80), Chester-le-Street readers' meeting £12, sponsored non-smoking £5 (so far!) and £21 from supporters in Hartlepool.

East Scotland—total £10 plus letter from P Cunningham in Dunfermline. See page 12.

West Scotland—£34.50 including R McKay (Barrhead CPSA) £1.50, four other CPSA members—at the NSB—£5, and 'Quatermass Disco' £11.

South East's £87.76 included £30 from book illustrations, £20.25 and £16.03 from jumble sales in Canterbury and Thanet, £3.50 collected at Ruby North's 21st Birthday party and £6.78 "Brighton sandwich-makers".

South West £57.27. Two flour mills' shop stewards (Bristol T&G) visiting 'Militant' offices gave £1 each, R Samson (Gloucs TGWU) 70p. Four Exeter YS members' contributions (including £5 from a grandfather!) £14, £13 from a Torbay-Totnes YS social, S Tout of Newton Abbot YS gave £3, M Ferney

(school student) £1.05 and D Moss of Brixham LP £3.50.

East Wales raised £27, all from Gwent area, while **West Wales** made £11—from Swansea.

Yorkshire's £51.90 total included £10 from S Brooke (Leeds POEU), F and J Thompson (Bradford) £5, R Barker and B Narey £2s, York CPSA members £1, 'Regional day of events (?)' £6.45. Just one Lenin badge fetched £3.30 and 20p was even raised on "badge loan"!

"Others" is still well ahead and should shoot up again as a result of the LPYS fundraising activities in Gloucestershire. This week it has moved up by £30—an IOU redeemed from the 'Militant' Sellers' Rally of May.

Any more redeemed IOUs and promises will be gratefully received but, above all, we want your commitment to give the 'Militant' anything the Tories give you—your rebate and that bit extra each week. We know they're whittling it away with the other hand but without a socialist fight, there won't be anything left! Act now and build the 'Militant's' fighting strength!

ads

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

LPYS CONFERENCE Militant Readers' Meeting

'Britain's crisis—a socialist programme for Labour'
Speaker: Ted Grant [political editor, 'Militant']
Venue: Bracelands Campsite, Coleford, near Gloucester
Sunday 29th July, 6.00 pm
A collection will be taken for the 'Militant' Fighting Fund. Make sure your LPYS branch makes a contribution

GREET LABOUR'S CONFERENCE

We invite you to place fraternal greetings to delegates attending the 1979 Labour Party Conference in 'Militant'.

This year's conference will be one of the most important ever. Make sure your trade union branch, shop stewards' committee, Labour Party or LPYS branch sends its greetings through our paper, which gets very wide circulation at Conference.

The closing date for copy is Tuesday 18th September. Rates for greetings:

Semi-display: £4 for 6 column centimetres [maximum 25 words]; £2 for 3 column centimetres [maximum 15 words].

Display: £7 one-sixteenth of a page; £14 one-eighth of a page.

MILITANT MEETINGS

SEAHAM Marxist Discussion Group. 'The State and Revolution' (Lenin). Thursday 2nd August, 7.30 pm. 6 William Johnson Street, Murton.

LEWISHAM Marxist Discussion Group. Thursday August 2nd: Marxism and the trade unions. 8pm. Deptford Town Hall, New Cross Road, SE 14.

SOUTH WALES MILITANT SUMMER CAMP

August Bank Holiday 1979, August 24th-27th
Horton, near Swansea
EXCELLENT COURSES ON MARXISM

PLENTY OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY!
Cost £6.50 per head. Under-fives free; 6-12 £2 [costs include snacks]

Write to Rob Sewell, 99 Penderry Road, Penlan, Swansea for programme
BOOK NOW! Cheques etc. payable to "R Sewell"
As always, we guarantee the weather!!

CLASSIFIED

Congratulations to Carl and Olly Mingard on the arrival of their baby son Benjamin Leon from Steve, Tony, Matthew and Des.

Beverly Madeline Susan, daughter of Jackie and Rob Walsh, sends revolutionary greetings to all comrades who've helped me make my first contribution to the fighting fund by guessing my birth weight which was 7lbs

NALGO MUST REJECT ANOTHER MEASLY OFFER



NALGO members march through London in support of the social workers' regrading claim, September 1978. Photo: MILITANT

The latest pay offer to NALGO members from the employers' side has been increased from 9% less costs of previous settlements, to 9.4% across the board on consolidated salaries, with a comparability study, to be applied from 1st January 1980.

This was reported by Jim White, vice chairman of the national Local Government committee, to a pay claim rally held in the City Hall, Glasgow.

The membership responded with outright indignation at such a derisory offer. Jim White was questioned about

the way negotiations have been handled and the way the leadership of NALGO have responded.

The mood at the rally was unequivocal—the negotiators were there to do a job on behalf of the membership, and members are determined that they are held to account.

These workers are waiting to flex their industrial muscle. Some members showed a keen understanding of the amount of disruption that can be caused to both local and national employers. The lessons of the civil servants' dispute have been learned.

No wonder workers are disgusted. Faced with a retail

price index and inflation rate of 15%, excessive fuel price rises and cut-backs in the offering, we are offered the sop of a comparability study. This is not a substitute for a living wage. When members see highly-paid executives such as Sir David Steel of British Petroleum already earning £105,000 and now getting a rise of £20,000 due to Thatcher's tax cuts for the rich, the demands for a minimum wage of £60 a week at 18 and a 35-hour week are the very least we expect.

The NALGO leadership must reiterate through the Local Government committee that this is a just claim. With

the Tories threatening harsher cash limits and redundancies, this wages struggle takes on greater political significance; we must take up their challenge and spell out the alternative.

The offer must be rejected. The anger of the Glasgow workers must be translated into action on a national scale. A bold strategy with maximum effectiveness, which we now all know can be achieved, and full involvement of all the members are crucial to achieve this claim.

By David Churchley
(Glasgow Division,
Strathclyde NALGO)

CIVIL SERVANTS CHALLENGE TORY FRAUD

Mrs Thatcher and her Tory cronies are planning massive cuts in the Civil Service, as they promised in the election.

The Tories speak of the need to cut 'bureaucratic waste' but the reality of their hatchet work shows their total contempt for the underprivileged sections of our society, whilst they bolster up the incomes of the privileged few.

Almost as soon as they get to power, they awarded massive pay increases to the heads of the nationalised industries and the civil service. So much for cutting bureaucratic waste!

Low grade civil servants know full well what they really intend: a massive cut in the grades where people actually do the work, expecting those left behind to slave harder than they already do.

In the Department of Health and Social Security, they plan to cut about 1,100 staff from existing work by April 1980, restoring 200 of these posts for additional fraud work.

This fraud work will be

aimed at those who claim benefits. Firms that fiddle National Insurance contributions will actually find they have fewer staff checking up on them. What hypocrisy!

By 1982 they plan to axe up to a further 20% from all departments. Most DHSS staff are already at their wits' end trying to maintain a service to the public, and morale is at an all-time low, but the attitude now is 'enough is enough'.

A total overtime ban has been implemented, and a ban on "worksharing" (which is when one person takes urgent cases off more than one box in order to cover up staff deficiencies). Additional action is taking place in the different sections and this will no doubt be stepped up as the situation warrants it.

One thing is clear—if the Tories intend to cut civil service jobs and the essential services we man, they will have one hell of a fight on their hands!

By Dave Spagnol
(CPSA DHSS SEC,
personal capacity)



Port Talbot steelworkers lobby the House of Commons—they need determined leadership

Photo: John Sturrock (Report) II

EETPU Inquiry into Bevan's election

The right-wing dominated Executive Council of the EETPU have ordered an inquiry into the recent election of an Executive Councillor in Division No 7 [South Wales and West Country].

The election resulted in victory for Port Talbot steelworkers' convenor, Wyn Bevan, an opponent of the present EETPU leadership, who defeated five other candidates in a secret ballot under the union's transferable voting system.

Bevan topped the poll in every count and eventually won by a majority of 700 votes, receiving 3,166 votes out of a total of 8,678.

He received a high percentage of the vote on a clear, principled programme. He criticised the present leadership and service from the union, opposed further wage restraint and called for

stronger union action on unemployment and the shorter working week. He also called for a number of democratic changes in the union's structure.

His election marked a major step forward on the road to building a powerful, democratic union, ready to galvanise the whole membership to defend wages and jobs from the Tory onslaught. It must be ratified immediately.

Under EETPU rules a strict code of conduct governs elections designed to prevent any "material interference by members or non-members." Although the Executive have never interpreted this rule to include Woodrow Wyatt and the Fleet Street press, inquiries, postponements and invalidations have marked union elections in recent years.

This time the inquiry

concerns leaflets distributed by the supporters of another candidate, Billy Williams of Cardiff, a member of the Socialist Workers Party. Part of the leaflet urged EETPU members to give their second preference vote to Wyn Bevan.

Bill Williams was the first candidate to be eliminated and only 270 second preference votes were transferred from him to Wyn Bevan.

Six months ago there was an inquiry into the division No 9 election (Yorkshire) following complaints by defeated left winger Harold Best, then the sitting EC member. He lost by 435 votes to Bill Hayes, a company director, whose company, N G Bailey Ltd, of Bradford, had received 460 ballot papers to pass on to their employees.

The EETPU Executive did

not consider this "material interference" sufficient to cancel the election, and the result stood.

The obvious conclusion from that decision would be that Wyn Bevan and his supporters have nothing to fear from this inquiry. However, twice in the past, inquiries following left-wing victories have resulted in invalidations.

EETPU members are awaiting the outcome of this inquiry with great concern. Full pressure must be exerted to ensure that Wyn Bevan is allowed to take his place on the Executive as the duly elected representative, to fight on the programme backed by the majority of EETPU members in this election.

US AIR BASES: PLAN TO HIT COSTAINS

Construction workers employed by Costains, the massive building contractors, on four air bases in East Anglia, have again been forced into a long and bitter strike.

They are fighting the arbitrary sacking of the Lakenheath convenor Chris Applegate, chairman of the East Anglian Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

The shop stewards explain: "Chris Applegate was dismissed for alleged misconduct. Is calling a union meeting misconduct?"

"Costains knew that a sub-contracting firm was pulling out that day—and the best way to get union

membership out of the gate is to sack a shop steward. Was Chris Applegate sacked for misconduct or as a means to stop work on the site?"

UCATT and T&GWU at Lakenheath immediately came out in support of their steward, and after a series of one-day stoppages at the other sites, victimisation, intimidation and lock-outs have led to mass picketing at all four bases.

The dispute is now in its seventh week. Costains have not even been willing to meet the shop stewards for negotiations. The shop stewards believe that the employers are deliberately hanging back; until a new sub-contractor is found to take on the steel erecting, men who are on

strike do not have to be paid.

The men are working, at least when they are allowed, on building plane shelters for American airforce fighter planes. Last year, in the middle of a bitter struggle involving steel erectors and AUEW construction members, attempts were made to bring in Italian scab labour.

That time the bosses were beaten, but the workers see this as another attack on union organisation at the sites. In this rural, isolated area, such union strength is not easily built, and it won't be given up lightly.

Shop stewards are trying to get an agreement with the US airforce base commander, that Costains' deliveries are limited to one gate. This will

mean that only one gate needs to be picketed, and domestic supplies for base personnel will not be disrupted.

Once this is achieved, the plan is to use the released men to picket Costains (UK) sites in the London area, including the Thames Barrier project. Workers will not be turned away, only supplies.

The Strike Committee believes that this will hit Costains where it hurts most. T&GWU officials have agreed that their members will not cross picket lines to deliver supplies to any Costains (UK) site.

By Roger MacKay
(Ipswich Labour Party)

NUJ PROGRESS AT GLEN

Striking East London journalists are making progress as their strike in defence of the closed shop reaches its fourth week.

Management have agreed to talks with the NUJ chapel, and it now seems the closed shop at Express Newspapers will be retained.

The strike began last month when management at Greater London and Essex Newspapers took over the Stratford Express newspaper group and proceeded to dismantle the closed shop and victimise trade unionists. Chapels at the Express and

GLEN group came out on strike last month, and with support from the print unions, Express titles were halted.

No progress has been made over the reinstatement of free-lance journalist Mike Jempson, however. He was dismissed from the Express group when GLEN took over—he had been a deputy group FOC prior to joining the Express group, and had played an active role during the national NUJ strike earlier this year.

As we go to press negotiations are carrying on between the union and management.

GEC -

In the year ending March '79, GEC profits rose from £325.3 million to £378.4 million. Cash balances of over £700 million in the bank alone are earning enormous sums in interest.

Little wonder their employees are demanding the going rate in wage settlements.



GEC construction and engineering workers picketing the Littlebrook power station site in June this year in a dispute over payment of bonus

COMBINE MUST LEAD THE FIGHT

The Annual site wage claim, for a 20% cost of living increase, at GEC Power Engineering, Stafford, was due to be settled on June 1.

Management of each of the 11 company divisions on the site are insisting that they make their own separate replies to the claim, in an attempt to divide the workforce. They are driving a coach and horses through national procedure agreements!

Following a mass meeting which decided in principle to maintain central site bargaining, domestic dispute procedure was exhausted. Management refuse to make one collective reply to the claim.

A national conference on 23 July at the Engineering Employers' Federation headquarters will probably only confirm the aggressive attitude being taken by the engineering employers.

GEC workers are in a militant mood following the frustrations of the past four years of wage restraint.

This is also shown by the workers of GEC Distribution Equipment and GEC Fuse Gear, Liverpool, who have been on strike since 5 July (see Liverpool report). GEC Industrial Controls, Kidsgrove, Stoke-On-Trent are in dispute over the implementation of a productivity deal.

At GEC Machines (FHP Motors Division), Newcastle-Under-Lyme, 500 workers walked out on 16 July after

suspensions by management. GEC Birlec, Walsall are working to rule.

This year has clearly shown the need for an active GEC Combine Committee, linking all the larger GEC factories. The opportunities for building a fighting GEC Combine Committee must be firmly grasped.

If the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions took a bold decisive lead to achieve the full national claim, GEC workers could be drawn behind national action to solve their problems and lay the basis for uniting engineering workers into a powerful national force capable of taking on the employers, and winning.

We demand

★ All out for the full claim!

★ No redundancies!

★ 35-hour week with no loss of pay!

★ Forward to a United Confed!

By Dave Mole
(GEC Stafford)

LIVERPOOL

Manual workers at Liverpool's East Lancashire Road site submitted their claim on 12th March this year. They demanded an increase in minimum earning levels to £80 for skilled workers, with pro-rata increases for other grades; a substantial increase in average earnings; bereavement, paternity and maternity pay and leave; improvement in the sickness payment scheme and medical severance pay.

Procedure exhausted, the only offer the firm had made amounted to an 8.34% pay rise.

Management tried to tell the workers that, with fringe benefits, it would be worth 15%. As one worker explained, "You don't have a member of the family die every week, and you're not sick every week!"

In previous years, management prolonged negotiations beyond the annual pay 'birthday' on 1st April, producing an answer just before the annual holidays. Then the message went out: "Think of all that back pay in your pocket for your holidays." Inevitably, the offer was accepted.

This year it didn't work. On 4th July the workers voted almost unanimously for strike action. With the prospects of a 20% inflation rate by the end of the year, they were determined.

Organised picketing is having an effect. Large quantities of fuse and switch gear are bottled up.

As a result of an intervention by the local MP, a four-hour meeting between management and the trade unions took place eight days later. A measly offer of 1% on the standard hour was made, dated from the return to work, with the condition that the toolroom, maintenance, garage and development workers agree to changes in their method of payment.

The members rejected this. Further "informal" meetings took place last week. Nothing came of these either.

Financial support and messages should be sent to A L Jones, 99 Hattonhill Road, Liverpool 21

Wally Brown, Chairman of the Liverpool East Lancs Shop Stewards Committee spoke to Terry Harrison



Fierce battles on the picket line at GEC Stoke, Coventry, in 1975

GANDY WORKERS DIG IN

All 160 T&GWU members at Gandy's in Wallasey are on strike. They are fighting for £10 on basic wages plus other benefits.

This is a culmination of years of frustration with the poor basic pay. The social contract £6 rise was the biggest ever received.

Women on production get £40-£45 for 40 hours, storemen about £45 and about £52 for inspectors. A bonus was negotiated a year ago, but has yet to be seen.

Gandy is part of the giant Armstrong Automotives—so it's not poverty that makes the bosses so bloody-minded.

Terry Minnis, T&GWU convenor, told Richard Venton [Birkenhead Labour Party]:

"Management totally rejected our claim, saying they wouldn't negotiate while 14 pre-form workers were on strike (over a dispute which has simmered for about two years).

"A mass meeting backed the claim. Top management arrived on the scene, promising an offer and 24 hours of negotiations if necessary. The meeting lasted 20 minutes.

"They refused to meet us until we returned to work. We had been told fairly tales by management.

"Next day 95% of the mass meeting voted to continue strike action until the claim is met in full.

"Management have since offered us one small concession on our claim—a holiday

bonus. We rejected it. The longer this goes on, the more we'll dig in."

The bosses have stooped to threats—one said he'd be back with padlocks to close the factory. A letter to all strikers hints at reductions in the pay roll.

The men and women picketing will not be intimidated after years of holding back on wages. T&GWU members should demand official support.

Messages, enquiries about solidarity action and cash to aid a speedy victory should be sent to the Gandy strike committee: c/o W Morris, 34 Waverley Street, Seacombe, Wallasey.

CHLORIDE ALCAD STRIKEBREAKERS BALLOT

Our shop steward informed us last week that our factory, Chloride Alcad, in Redditch, was expected to join the series of one-day strikes and overtime ban recommended by the AUEW and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Next day, supervisors were called to a meeting with management. They came back with a letter informing us that if we took part in this action the future development of old buildings, and plant that is nearly as old, would be in jeopardy.

They claim that output would suffer, but on the same day the 'Birmingham Evening Mail' reported that production was up by 30% [while our monthly bonus is going down all the time].

Before we received this letter some of the workforce were not too keen on taking action. When it came out, many of them changed their minds because they were being asked to help break a strike.

A mass meeting was called and full backing for the strike was given.

By David Behan
(AUEW, Secretary Bromsgrove and Redditch LPYS, personal capacity)

LETTER FROM ALCAD MANAGEMENT TO SHOP FLOOR WORKERS

We have been advised by the Negotiating Committee that hourly paid employees intend to take part in a series of one-day strikes and an overtime ban from 1/8/79.

...Tungstone are setting up a factory here and are already attacking Alcad's "bread and butter" home market. Tungstone are a Federated company, but they are not participating in the strikes, nor are they having an overtime ban.

...we are already selling in the USA at zero profit. We can only afford to do this if we sell in sufficient quantities elsewhere to cover this no profit situation. If we were to pull out of the USA, then 25% of our orders would be lost with obvious effects upon employment.

Chloride France have told Alcad that, unless our orders for the remainder of the calendar year are delivered on time, they will never buy cells from Alcad...

Alcad has already agreed to pay whatever "Minimum Time Rate" is negotiated nationally, so Alcad employees have no reason to take industrial action anyway...Going on strike for 3 days at £17 per day means it could take 2½ years for the average dayshift worker to recover his losses.

Because of the obviously very serious output losses that the company would suffer, and the future sales that we shall lose, the company is conducting the attached ballot of hourly paid employees to ascertain employees views. Will you therefore please complete the ballot paper and return it to your supervisor as soon as possible today.

You should note that this plant will be open for normal working on the days in question.

Will you be taking part in the series of one day strikes and the overtime ban from 1 August 1979, in view of the potential consequences to the future of the company?

YES NO (Please tick as appropriate)



Corby steelworkers pass BSC HQ on march to save jobs, in June

Photo: MILITANT

RESIST STEEL CLOSURES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Workers made it clear when they struck on Friday to give Villiers the message in the only language he will understand.

Workers from all parts of the steel plant, including the steelmaking side, the tube works [which is not immediately threatened], and the office staff took part in the strike and demonstration.

Only a handful of workers remained in the plant, mainly for safety reasons.

Even the apprentices came out on strike, risking dismissal in the process. But it is the youth and the apprentices who have the most to lose if the steelworks close.

Unemployment of 30% to 40% has been predicted.

Even if the steel works stays open, however, the future for the youth is not rosy. One apprentice told me that last year BSC took on only 60 apprentices out of a work force of 11,000.

It is no wonder, then, that the young workers at the meeting were the most determined in support of strike action.

Chants of "Fight! Fight! Fight!" was the message for the union leaders.

The meeting called for national strike action, pointing out that no steel plant is now safe from the Tory axe. Messages of support have been received from Shotton, Consett, and Redcar.

Even Bill Sirs, general secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, has now said that if Corby is prepared to

fight he is behind Corby—if the workers can prove that it is profitable.

But Bill Sirs and the ISTC leaders should be in the forefront of the fight, not 'leading' from behind!

Nor should it be a case of proving that Corby is 'profitable' according to the yardstick of big business.

A national plan of action is needed.

Steel workers in all steel plants must be drawn together in action to prevent any further steel closures.

This must be done by linking up the shop stewards' committees nationally.

Reasoned arguments on social, political or economic grounds will not save Corby—the only argument that BSC will heed is national strike action—which must be

taken until all threats of closure and redundancies have been withdrawn.

The workers of Corby and Shotton have already indicated their support for strike action. The workers of Corby have flexed their muscles, and felt their potential strength.

The whole labour movement must now support them in their struggle to save steel—and to save manufacturing industry in this country.

- ★ No redundancies
- ★ 35-hour week with no loss of pay
- ★ Open BSC's books to rank and file trade union inspection
- ★ For a socialist plan of production under workers' control and management.

RAIL CUTS EXCLUSIVE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

way workers cannot be released for 'road learning' (learning routes, signals etc.) because of the acute shortages. Railworkers have little to expect on the wages front either, as far as management are concerned.

Earnings below national average

The Review says: "Board members may wish to keep in mind, however, that 1979 is the fourth year in sequence when railwaymen's earnings have fallen behind the national average; they are now 8-10 per cent behind."

Not that they intend to do anything about this! "The Review has not made specific provision, however, for earnings in BR to catch up with the national average."

Not only do they want to make a saving on this, but they know full well that if they paid the workers a decent wage, the railwaymen wouldn't have to work the excessive overtime, and the staff shortages would not be covered.

Not only the railworkers suffer from this situation: passengers suffer too. The Review forecasts price rises in real terms of 10% for all fares, within the next two years alone! Some services, especially in inner city and suburb areas will be cut altogether.

Now, added to all this, big business is trying to creep into this industry through the back door of mass contract work.

Because of the cut-backs in public expenditure BR cannot raise the £520 million needed for the electrification of the railways (yet big business always made sure they had the £100 million needed a year that

BR pays out on fuel costs!). So now GEC and BICC, the electricity giants are going in for the kill with offers of doing the work, making vast profits for themselves.

Moves are also being made by the Tories to sell off the shipping lines and the BR hotel groups—they are making it quite clear they are following a path of de-nationalisation, with the profitable sections being hived off to private enterprise.

Opposition

But more cutbacks in BR and the attempts at de-nationalisation will not go unopposed by the labour movement. Even the bosses have realised this!

The Review states: "The economic climate during which those gains [cut-

backs in '60s] were achieved is very different from that of the late '70s or that seems likely in the first half of the '80s; we now have about 1¼ million unemployed and that figure could be higher over the next few years...

"This could well colour the attitude of the trade union movement to schemes for shedding manpower and could strengthen pressure for job protection!"

On this point, if on no others, the bosses have got it right!

Railway workers must fight to save their industry from Tory threats of de-nationalisation, and demand the service be restored to a workable and efficient position, through higher wages and a shorter working week for its workforce.

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ECONOMICS OF THE MADHOUSE

'Send the bailiffs in!' That is Sir Keith Joseph's answer to the problems of Britain's motor-cycle industry.

He will insist on payment of £1.2 million owed in interest charges by the Meriden co-operative near Coventry. This last remnant of the industry has only a few weeks to live.

When I spoke to Jim O'Grady, one of the Meriden workers, his reaction was bitter. "They just don't seem to give a damn about us."

After years of fighting for work the men face a bleak future without jobs. The Tory press will tell you that they are victims of economic reality.

The co-operative keeps 630 men in work making a unique

product for export. It has a world-wide reputation. There is a stable work-force of skilled men.

Even now thousands of Bonneville bikes stand in warehouses ready for the shops. The trade creditors are owed £1.3 million, yet they are willing to go on supplying materials.

To pay these men dole money would cost more each year than is owed to the government.

Under the capitalist system the 'common sense' view says throw them out of work. This is the economics of the mad-house.

By Gerry Hill
(Nuneaton Labour Party)

STREETLY - BIP DISPUTE

At BIP (British Industrial Plastics), Streetly, a wave of the arm by pickets turns away most deliveries.

Management are not so co-operative. After a 5% increase last year, the production workers were offered the grand total of 12% plus free safety boots and overalls. This came nowhere near the T&G

WU claim for 40%.

With procedure exhausted, management threatened to withhold holiday pay. All 400 shift and day workers are now on a 24-hour picket rota, 7 days a week, to win their claim

By Javed Iqubal

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