

Militant

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15p

UNION POWER CAN BEAT THE TORIES

DEFEND WOMENS RIGHTS!



Firemen demonstrate against cuts in Nottingham



The labour movement must campaign for the right of every woman to free abortion on demand

The fact that the last general election gave Britain its first prime minister is no consolation at all for the great majority of women in this country. The Corrie Bill, which would restrict even further women's chances of ending unwanted pregnancies, is only one of a whole programme of measures which will attack the rights of all women, and multiply the problems of working-class women in particu-

lar. Tory cuts, in health, welfare and education will all increase the burdens which fall on women. Rising unemployment is hitting women workers in particular. But women are fighting back. More and more women are joining the trade unions, and becoming involved in labour movement demonstrations and campaigns to fight big business poli-

A land fit for profits to grow in. That's what the Tories are out to create. In order to get it, they say to hell with the old, the sick, the very young, and working people in general.

In the new session of parliament, the Tory government intend to carry on as

5 MILLION ALREADY BELOW POVERTY LINE! ONLY THE STRENGTH OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT CAN STOP THIS GROWING

they started—viciously slashing the welfare state and attacking the living standard. CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

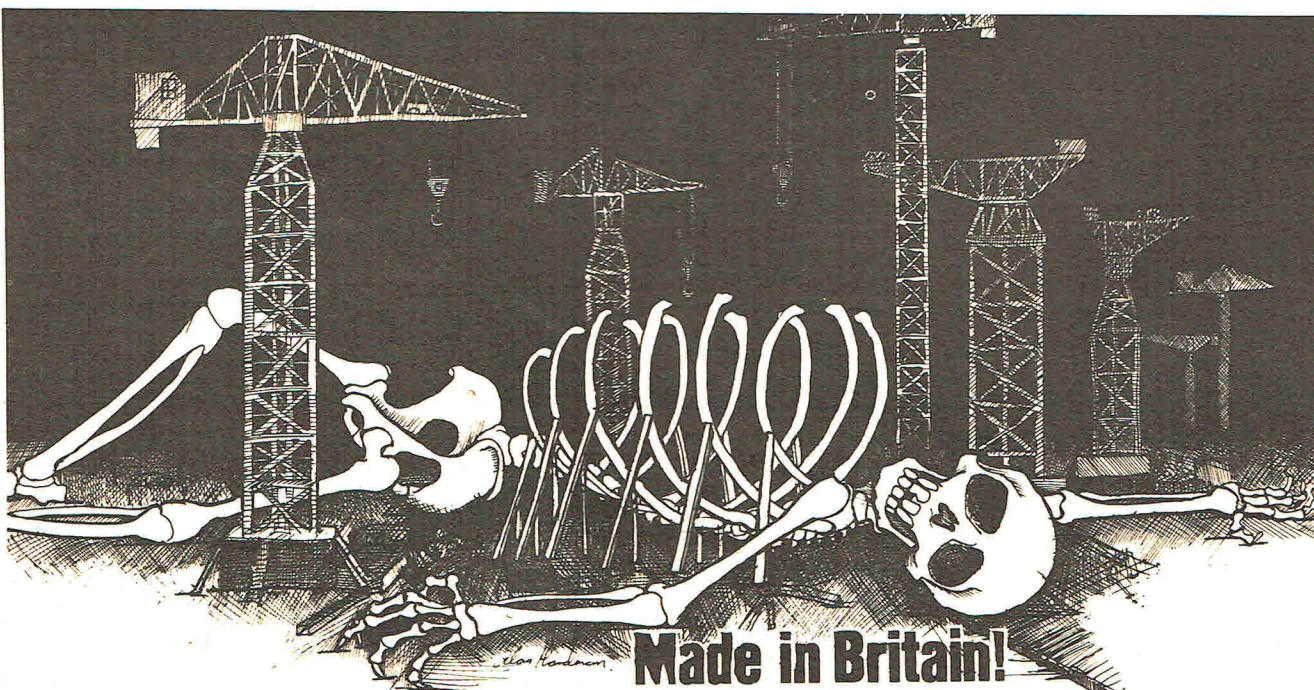
Working women in the front line See centre pages

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Shipbuilding workers still fighting for their jobs See back page

Militant

'TIMES' LOCKOUT DEFEATED

'The Times' management's attempt through an 11-month lockout to break the print trade unions has been defeated. This is the meaning of the agreement reached last weekend.

There can be no doubt of the management's intention to undermine the strength which 'The Times' workers had built up over the years. But, as one 'Times' director ruefully admitted to the 'Observer', "frankly we underestimated the unions' capacity to hold out...perhaps we were carried away by our oil money."

The idea of Rees-Mogg, 'The Times' Editor, and the rest of the bosses was to use

the huge oil resources of the International Thompson Organisation to teach the unions a lesson. The ITO set aside £25 million to pay for this battle. In the event it cost them between £30 and £35 million.

Although this may only be drop in the ocean for a big multi-national conglomerate like ITO it was playing with the livelihood of nearly 5,000 people. The ITO was prepared to lose millions in order to try to set an example to the rest of the ruling class on how to deal with their workers.

Imagine the hue and cry that would have been raised by the press and media if a

strike by workers had resulted in a loss of £30 million worth of production! But the capitalist press remained tight-lipped because they were all watching the struggle, hoping that 'The Times' bosses would win.

'The Times' management wanted to follow the example of the American press barons like the 'Washington Post' and the New York 'Daily News' who have savagely reduced manning levels. But these plans were stopped in their tracks by the magnificent solidarity of the printworkers both in Britain and abroad, particularly by the German printworkers.

From being amongst the lowest paid workers in Fleet Street, 'The Times' workers will be amongst the highest paid.

Whereas the Fleet Street bosses were all applauding the 'The Times' management when they first provoked the confrontation, they are now cursing them for agreeing to improved rates that will inevitably lead to new union claims on all the other papers.

There are lessons for the entire labour movement in the defeat of this vicious lockout. Lockouts are becoming an increasing feature of the British capitalists' methods.

For the first time since the great 1922 struggle a major engineering firm, Rolls Royce, locked out its workers during the recent dispute with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

The Confederation of British Industry will be demanding at their conference next month a change in the 'balance of power in industry' by the introduction of new laws attacking strikes and unions and by strengthening the bosses' ability to withstand industrial action.

This is the meaning of the proposed CBI anti-strike insurance fund which is in reality a lockout fund. Despite their continual evocation of the "national interest", moreover, the CBI is investigating setting up its fund in a tax haven, such as Bermuda or the Cayman Islands.

At the same time we have recently witnessed the increased use of the police to break picket lines, e.g. in the Vauxhall strike, in the Rose-dale Mouldings redundancy battle in South Wales, and the liberal issuing of injunctions by the courts against workers in struggle.

These indicators of the intensification of class tensions are a direct result of the

deepening crisis of British capitalism, which in turn is the underlying reason for the ferocity of the Tories' policies.

But 'The Times' workers have shown that the employers plans can be defeated, provided that they are met with the united strength of the labour movement.

Who are the real Luddites?

'The Times', along with the rest of the capitalist class, have continually accused workers of being Luddites, of being opposed to the implementation of the 'new technology' and the raising of productivity. Quite apart from the fact that it was the 'The Times' owners who themselves decided to suspend production, the labour movement has never stood against any 'new technology'.

In fact it is only through the raising of productivity that it will be possible to both increase production to remove scarcity and to free mankind from the everyday grind and struggle for existence.

But the working class will not accept the introduction of the 'new technology' in the bosses' interests, who, so long

as capitalism continues, will use it to attempt to throw millions of workers on the unemployment scrapheap and increase their profits. The massive advances in knowledge already could be used to reduce the working week to 35 hours or even lower, at the same time as raising living standards.

But this could only take place in a planned, nationalised economy, where production would be for need not profit. Where the means of production, distribution and communication would no longer be under the control of a small minority able to dominate the lives of millions.

Already the labour movement has demonstrated how, when it is united, it can defeat the employers' plans; that is the lesson of 'The Times' victory. Now the movement has to go forward, adopt and fight for a fighting socialist programme which will remove once and for all the ability of a small group of capitalists to play with workers' livelihoods by establishing a planned nationalised economy, the foundation of a socialist society.

DEFENCE CAMPAIGN: Settle in Labour Movement, not in courts

It is a scandal that a Labour MP should take a difference with a socialist newspaper to the courts, and that his union's executive should be giving financial backing to legal moves that could land 'Militant' with potentially crippling damages.

This again is the message which has been expressed loudly and clearly in further resolutions this week deploring the libel action of John Golding (sponsored as an MP by the Post Office Engineering Union) against 'Militant'.

Again, many of the organisations and individuals expressing support for 'Militant' have backed this with urgently needed cash.

One branch of ASTMS in Hull has sent in the magnificent sum of £100, the sort of practical solidarity really needed in this case.

Another Labour MP, Stuart Holland, MP for Vauxhall, has demonstrated his support with a cheque for £30.

And the UK branch of the new Sama Samaja Party, whose own comrades in Sri Lanka are faced with intense battles against the anti-working class repression, donated a generous £25.

Some of the Labour Parties and trade union branches which have sent resolutions to the National Executives of the Labour Party and the POEU, have also sent them to John

By
Andy Beadle

Golding's own Constituency Party, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

John Golding's CLP has evidently been embarrassed by the stream of protests about his high court action, and in attempting to justify it, the officers have resorted to somewhat emotive language.

The nearest they come to an argument, in one letter to a Labour Party which wrote to them about the case, is this:

"Do you seriously think that the reply to a man who questions the validity of statements about him should be to carry on a smear campaign about him as 'Militant' have done?"

"Have you made your judgement from listening to one side of the case as printed in 'Militant'? John Golding is suing 'Militant' to clear his name. How else could he do so?"

They refer to "one side of the case". But as soon as 'Militant' heard from John Golding's solicitors (which was the first 'Militant' heard about it) that he disputed the report of his NEC vote on including the 35-hour week in Labour's EEC Manifesto, 'Militant' published a statement which made it clear that he challenged the report, and also that Ron Hayward supported his version.

Subsequently, 'Militant'

has made it clear in its columns, and directly to the Executive of the POEU, that it would be only too willing to allow John Golding the right of reply. He has made no attempt whatsoever to take up this offer, but has proceeded—entirely through the union's solicitor—with his court case against the paper.

'Militant' is concerned to report the truth. If it makes a mistake, it is always only too willing to print a correction, as has been made clear in this case also.

But further enquiries, prompted by John Golding's complaint, showed that four members of the NEC (Dennis Skinner MP, Joan Maynard MP, Neil Kinnock MP and Tony Saunois LPYS) confirmed our report.

Since then, two other NEC members, Eric Heffer MP and Doug Hoyle of ASTMS, have unequivocally stated that our report was correct.

John Golding is welcome to put his case in our columns. But how can we retract a statement confirmed by six members of Labour's NEC, and challenged—to our knowledge—only by John Golding with the support of Ron Hayward?

As for the 'smear campaign' alleged by the Newcastle-under-Lyme officers, what is this supposed to consist of?

The fact that the Militant Defence Campaign circulated statements of the 'Militant's' position (which included John Golding's denial)?

Or the fact that the Defence Campaign drew the attention of the labour movement to the fact, documented with quotations from Hansard, 'The Times' and other newspapers, that in recent years John Golding has repeatedly spoken against the immediate implementation of the 35-hour week in Britain?

The letter from Newcastle-under-Lyme makes a number of sweeping assertions. But nowhere does it attempt to defend John Golding or refute the Defence Campaign's material with facts, evidence, or even reasoned argument.

In the overwhelming opinion of the labour movement, as has been made clear by the flood of resolutions we have been informed of, they are on a very sticky wicket indeed!

The donations received this week are once again too numerous to mention, but include donations from Labour Parties in Birkenhead and Newcastle North, and also many collections at meetings within the labour movement. Our thanks to all of these and to those who, for financial reasons, gave no money but have expressed support for 'Militant' through resolutions.

We still need this help to fight the attack on our paper. The costs of this case must not be allowed to silence the voice of 'Militant'. Your help can ensure this does not happen.

Send resolutions and further donations to "Militant Defence Fund", 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church Street London SE8

Unemployment

The Youth Campaign Against Unemployment in the Eastern Region have organised a march and rally against the cuts: Saturday 27 October, 2 pm.

Assemble, Colchester Labour Hall, Chapel Street, Colchester (behind ABC cinema).

Rally 3.15 pm.

Speakers: Oona McDonald MP, Dave Smith (District Officer NUPE), Nick Toms (National Committee, LPYS)

100 YEARS AGO - SAME STRUGGLE THEN AS NOW



You're OK with the bosses' press if you 'know your place'

The Black Country is threatened with another calamity. The nailmakers are again dissatisfied with their pay and it is probable that they will shortly be once more out on strike and that 20,000 persons will be idle.

It is only a short twelve months since their last strike, which lasted thirteen weeks and involved great sufferings on the people. Nobody denies that they are miserably paid.

Even the masters cannot conceal the fact from themselves, though they plead that the bad condition of trade will not allow them to be more liberal. But the work people must be careful how they proceed. Admitting that their present position is bad, is it likely to be improved by the untold misery of another long strike...?

BIRMINGHAM EVENING MAIL
20 OCTOBER 1879

(Sent in by Sue Arden, Northfield Labour Party)

MILITANT PAMPHLET

Inflation & the Financial System

published by West London Militant Supporters
Price 20p (plus 10p post & packing) from:
World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

PROTECTING PAST GAINS AND FUTURE NEEDS

Over two thousand people including nursery nurses, education students, firemen and local authority workers lobbied the Tory controlled Nottingham County Council on 16th October when it met to discuss vicious cuts in council services. The lobby showed the strength of opposition the cuts have provoked and the enormous opportunities which exist for the Labour Party if they put themselves at the head of this fight.

Two day nurseries are to be closed, forcing mothers to leave their kids with a childminder or perhaps give up their jobs.

Over 200 nursery nurses will lose their jobs. One of them Mrs. Chapman, said "It's ridiculous. It'll mean one nurse having to look after 20 kids. How can they give each one proper attention?"

Sally McGinty and Sandra Croft (student nurses) don't know whether there will be a job at the end of their training. And what are the prospects for school leavers hoping to follow in their footsteps?

"We're going to lose some part-time teachers off our course. Our meal and travel allowances have been reduced.

"A friend of ours can't get a grant and her mum can't pay because she only gets a widow's pension".

1,500 jobs to go

Fireman Jim Cairney said: "when you join the fire service they tell you you're getting a career and a future." But he and about 200 other firemen were on the lobby because the future doesn't look very rosy for 22 of them who may be made redundant.

Also a life-saving appliance is to be withdrawn from Dunkirk fire station which serves an industrial estate and Nottingham's newest hospital! Altogether some £3m is to



Lobbying Nottingham County Council

By
Chris Ridge

(East Midlands Labour Party Executive, personal capacity)

INDUSTRIAL ACTION PROMISED TO COMBAT CUTS

After a series of factory gate meetings at most factories in Sheffield, a public meeting of over 2,000 people was organised by South Yorkshire County Association of Trade councils, supported by the County and City Labour Parties, on Sunday 14 October.

The mood was tremendous as speaker after speaker hammered home the need to refuse to implement the cuts, to refuse to sell council houses, the need for Labour Party democracy, and the need for socialism.

It was explained that capitalism was the cause of the crisis and therefore of the

By Jane Hartley

(AUEW-TASS)

cuts. The deputy leader of the county council said that South Yorkshire had a record to be proud of, with low fares on the buses etc. It would not be another Clay Cross. Never again should a local authority stand alone.

Speakers said that the Heath government proved that the working class movement was something to be reckoned with, but that the councils could not do it alone, but the rank and file trade unionists had the power.

National lobby November 8th

Joan Maynard MP pointed out that the cuts were due to the capitalism system which past Labour governments should have removed. "If we mobilised our people they are

an irresistible and immovable force."

Arthur Scargill spoke last, saying that the Tories, our class enemy, had challenged us to war. He explained that even the tax rebates were bribes. Tax concessions amounted to £4,300 million, mostly to the privileged, while increased VAT had scooped back £4,700 million, mostly off working class people.

The Tories were prepared to smash the Health Service. He read out a letter sent out to a childrens hospital in London which stated "Money must be saved, even if by doing so the quality and level of services falls—all possible measures must be taken, no matter how drastic."

Scargill went on to explain over breaking the law that "our forefathers defied the law, and this is the only reason we are here today", and went on to comment that industrial action was needed if a Clay Cross situation developed. "You wouldn't accept a £10 cut in wages and the social wage is no different." The tremendous mood in the hall was shown by the collection of £1,900.

There were also speakers from ASTMS, NUPE, etc and the main themes were unity and the need for industrial action to back up councillors. This was a meeting to prepare for a lobby which they hope will become a national march and lobby on November 8th. This is a lead that other councils, trades councils and unions must follow.

HOUSING CONFERENCE

The Labour Party is holding a special one-day delegate conference on housing on Saturday November 24th at Central Hall Westminster. The conference is to launch a campaign against the sale of council houses and how Labour-controlled authorities should respond.

Delegates are one per Labour Party, plus one additional delegate from a party member of a local Tenants' Association if they want representation.

ces and turn to the Labour Party to fight back! We must eagerly draw them into our ranks by leading a campaign against the cuts.

Already constituency parties in Nottingham and other countries in the East Midlands Labour Party Executive has called a recall conference on this question for December 8th.

This conference has the task of mobilising a regional campaign by the labour movement to oppose the cuts. The Tories keep repeating they have a mandate to introduce cuts. We have a mandate to fight them.

and my family and to back up what my fathers and forefathers fought for."

Some of the trainee nurses expressed interest in the Labour Party Young Socialists and by the next morning the Labour Party agent had received two applications for membership in response to a leaflet put out by the lobby.

What a clear indication that the workers will draw political conclusions from these attacks on public servi-

be cut from the council's 1979-80 budget with the loss of over 1500 full and part time jobs and the reduction or disappearance of many services. And that's only the beginning!

If they get away with this it's proposed there'll be another £4m worth of cuts in the 1980-81 budget. One NUPE steward put in a nutshell what this means and why so many workers were there. "I'm here for myself

They're building a bonfire in Britain

The Tories deny that they intend to attack nursery education. Well try telling that to over 200 Stoke-on-Trent women who travelled to Stafford last Thursday to protest against Tory plans to reduce nursery provision to a half-day service, costing 60p a time.

The women brought with them a petition with 22,000 signatures and they joined 50 people from Stafford who gathered to protest against other education cuts. Together they jeered Tory councillors as they arrived. They made it

By Dave Griffiths

(Stafford & Stone CLP)

clear that they would stand for no attack on women's and children's rights.

"Pick on someone your own size," said one placard. "Maggie Thatcher, Nursery Snatcher", said another.

The police told us that we could only protest in the deserted streets outside the County building. But after the women had been assured that not everyone in Stafford was a Tory, 60 of them marched off through the town and

shopping areas. They showed people in Stafford that there was already a fight against the cuts on their own standards of living taking place.

This time the popular refrain rang through the streets.

"Build a bonfire, build a bonfire, put the Tories on top, put Thatcher in the middle and burn the bloody lot."

This was a largely spontaneous protest, but in Stafford and other areas, we have joint Labour Party/Trades Council campaigns against the

cuts, which we're confident will show the enormous strength of support that exists and can be taken and campaigned out to the mass of workers.

New 'Militant'
Pamphlet

'Defend the NHS'

Price 40p [plus 10p P&P]
from World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

RULING CLASS SHIELD FASCISTS



Martin Webster, Fascist organiser confers with police

The forces of 'law and order' are trying to ensure that the fascist National Front can hold their conference at Great Yarmouth this weekend.

Last Friday the Appeal Court upheld an earlier legal ruling and said that the conference should go ahead "in the interests of freedom of speech and assembly".

It will only be freedom of assembly for the fascists though. The police have sealed off the pier where the National Front are holding their meeting, and have banned the Trades Council from marching along the seafont.

Despite a massive police presence already gathering in the town to protect the fascists, the Trades Council have called on all trade unionists to ban all services to the conference, and to join in a picket on Friday morning, a meeting at the Labour Club on Friday evening [7 p.m.] and a demonstration on Saturday.

LONDON LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS MARCH AGAINST TORIES

"In Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham alone the Tories demand £5 million to be cut and when the Health Authority said this could only result in patients dying, they were sacked too!" said Bob Lee Secretary of the Peoples National Party of Jamaica [UK] Youth Section speaking at London Labour Party Young Socialists' demonstration against the Tories last weekend.

Over two hundred LPYS

By
Christine Jones

(Newham NW Labour Party Young Socialists)

members marched with banners and placards from Shepherds Bush Green to North Kensington. We received an enthusiastic response from shoppers and residents.

We were protesting against the proposed £55 million cut in education expenditure at a time when Eton are spending £400,000 on a new heated swimming pool. Tony



LPYS demonstration in West London last Saturday

Photo: PJ McKittrick/MILITANT

Saunois (Young Socialist representative on Labour's National Executive) made it clear that working people will be the real victims of Tory cuts.

He told how Tory-controlled Leicester County Council had taken away free school uniforms for one-parent families and were currently discussing

introducing a cafeteria system for school meals, charging 60p per meal and 10p for each glass of water.

We marched to show that the LPYS does not intend to bow to this blatant class intimidation without a fight. Our campaigning before the march, and the demonstration itself showed that

working class youth in London were right behind us and our demands for a guaranteed job for all school leavers, £80 national minimum wage, a 35-hour week and the reversal of all actual and proposed cuts in local government expenditure, social security payments and national public spending.

The London march has helped lay the foundations for the national LPYS march in February 1980.

TONY BENN AND PARTY DEMOCRACY

At a public meeting organised by Knowle Branch Labour Party, 60 people, many new to political meetings, came to hear Tony Benn and take part in a lively discussion.

Sue Beckingham, opened by saying that the excellent attendance reflected a mood building up for socialist change, as vicious Tory policies began to take effect.

Tony Benn then explained that the crisis of capitalism had its effect all over the country, e.g. closures at Singers' in Glasgow, the Corby steel industry. "A new generation of people are going to learn at first hand what Toryism is like."

He said it is the duty of all of us to understand the decay of capitalism and to strive for change through our Trade Unions and the Labour Party—and that we must see that these instruments are democratic and accountable to the rank and file.

In the discussion that followed, many speakers said that the Labour Party had failed in the past to make these changes, that it had been too soft and had bowed to the pressure of big business. Also many stated that we were losing our freedoms under the Tories — freedoms that the Labour Movement had won.

Sylvia Jones feared that

there was no future for her son except the dole and told us that he had said, when he heard how the Tories were going to deal with young offenders "They're going to build more homes to put us into— because we'll have nothing else to do".

Bryan Beckingham was applauded when he pointed out that we need control over our leaders, so that they could not be bought off by the rich—freedom goes hand in hand with democracy.

Pete Crack expanded on this by warning that Tory attacks on the Trade Unions were aimed at introducing more reactionary measures. Trade Unions must be defended and we must participate in the unions and the Labour Party to build a mass party committed to socialism—that was how to defeat the Tories.

The meeting clearly showed that we can build the Labour Party with bold socialist policies which are already receiving an echo in workers that previously did not involve themselves in the Party. A collection raised £30 for Party funds and over 20 'Militants' were sold.

By Alan Anderton

(Bristol SE Labour Party)

THE BEST WAY TO REMEMBER JOHN MACLEAN

By Jeannette Wylie

(E Kilbride LPYS)

Throughout the west of Scotland there have been many events recently to celebrate the centenary of the birth of John MacLean the famous 'Red Clydesider', and without a doubt the meeting which East Kilbride LPYS held last week must be one of the most successful.

A gathering of over 60 people heard Harry McShane, a contemporary of MacLean and still an active trade unionist at 88 years old and Bob Wylie of East Kilbride Labour Party, give accounts of the life and work of MacLean and the relevance of his ideas today.

The audience, which ranged in age from teenagers at their first political meeting to pensioners recalling their life's work in the movement, listened attentively to Harry

McShane giving details of the struggles MacLean led against the war, against the rent increases of the time, and against the entire bosses' system.

Harry emphasised the importance MacLean placed on Marxist education for the working class and stressed that the need is still relevant today. He pointed out that with the correct leadership Clydeship is ripe to take up the battle again.

Bob Wylie continued on this theme explaining that the wheel of history is turning full circle. He gave explicit details

of the depth of the crisis of capitalism which MacLean talked of in 1918. For example, between 1964-74 Glasgow lost 100,000 jobs in manufacturing, 1961-78 Liverpool lost 126,000 jobs and even Coventry, the pinnacle of British engineering prosperity, is now under serious threat.

Transform society

He showed how the demands of the LPYS which link day to day issues with the need to transform society in a

socialist fashion will provide the lever and can be used throughout the labour movement.

Undoubtedly the excellent work of the comrades in the LPYS distributing leaflets to the local factories and throughout the town centre, and having a massive advertising campaign in the local press and on posters throughout the town, paid off, both in terms of the number attending the meeting and in the excellent collection of £60.

OVERSEAS STUDENTS

While studying at Thames Polytechnic last year, I lived in the Hall of Residence. The cost per week for this 'privilege' was an unbelievable £19.20 (with two meals a day for five days only).

However had I been an overseas student I would have had to pay over £33 per week! The consequence of this, of course, was that most overseas students in Hall came from well-off families.

These discriminatory hall fees couple with quotas, have had a disastrous effect on the working class population in overseas countries wanting an education in Britain. In short they just can't afford to come.

This disgusting situation, allowing only a privileged few into our education system and then super-exploiting them when here, cannot be allowed to continue.

At the start of the year, Thames Poly Students' Union working in the London Student Organisation (LSO), fought a campaign against the increased hall fees. However, little if anything was achieved, but this is inevitable so long as students remain 'outside' the labour movement as a whole.

Students and low paid workers, and oppressed sections of society share the very same day to day problems, of high prices unemployment, and so on.

It is therefore necessary for students to forge links with the trade unions and the Labour Party (the mass party of the working people) if they are to effectively play a role in this battle.

By Richard Werth

Merseyside on Radio

Listeners to Radio 4's 'File on Four' last week were able to hear the views of activists in Bootle Labour Party. The programme examined how the local Party was moving to the left.

The presenter, David Henshaw, commented that this was far from being the work of middle-class bed-sitters, as the 600-strong membership was almost entirely working class. But people in Bootle he explained had not benefitted from the 'mixed economy' and were now demanding a different economic system.

Malcolm Lindsey [the Party's delegate at the recent conference] pointed out that if Labour took over the commanding heights of the economy, society could be transformed. Despite attempts by right-wingers on the programme to argue that such an approach would be electoral suicide, Malcolm stated that if Labour really campaigned and fought on such a bold socialist programme it would win.

Judging by the radio last week such an approach was already winning new members to the Party and convincing older members that a radical change was needed if the decline of Merseyside was to be halted.

LEFT and RIGHT

NEW CAREERS?

During the Labour Conference, party Chairman Frank Allaun rightly called on delegates to boycott the reception put on by commercial television companies, because of the ITV dispute. In a good show of solidarity for the striking television workers many delegates and visitors did just that. However, four people, who looked remarkably like the Labour leaders William Rogers, Peter Shore, Austin Mitchell and Roy Hattersley, were reported to have been seen wining and dining with the TV bosses and reps. It could have of course been a case of mistaken identity—in this incident that can only be described as a direct insult to workers on strike. But then again there are some right wing Labour leaders who did well to keep on good terms with the TV world, such as Brian Walden with his own lunch hour news programme, or Shirley Williams with her new cosy chat show. With the new democratic reforms endorsed by the conference, perhaps these four Labour party members are thinking of switching to a career with television.

LIGHTING FIRES

Clean shoes, shiny floors and dirty profits. That's what the polish and mustard firm Reckitt & Colman have been making in Chile. For nine years after Allende took over they did not reveal their profits from their Chilean company. They admitted "that one consideration for removing Chile from their balance sheet was fear of an adverse reaction from trade unions in this country."

Now apparently they feel free. Whilst elsewhere in the world company profits have slumped, in Chile they "have blossomed into a superb business," according to the Deputy Chairman. He announced profits last year as being 50% of sales, i.e. £1.7 million profit on £3.5 million sales.

Chile it is claimed has now acquired "political respectability". The vicious renewed clamp-down on Chilean trade unions this year may give Reckitt & Colman increased profits for a while, but they may well find that their intensified repression will light fires that even their mustard adverts cannot rival.

DESERT WASTES

The shop designing group, City Industrial Ltd, are to build a replica of Harrods in the middle of the desert wastes of Arabia, at the cost of several millions. The idea is to save the millionaire sheikhs those tiresome trips to London. The 'Guardian' [15 October] heralded this as "an area of export opportunity so far scarcely touched." Nonsense, the capitalists have been using this idea for many years. But they usually do it in reverse—two recent examples are Corby and Clydeside, where whole working class communities will be transformed into the emptiness of a desert waste-land with the closing down of key industries.

THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTIONS



Washington crossing the Delaware. Behind the battle scenes, a class war was in progress

The British Bourgeoisie wiped out the very memory of the seventeenth-century Revolution by dissolving all its own past into 'Gradualness'. British workers should open the story of the British revolution and find in it under the clerical husk, a mighty struggle of social forces". [Leon Trotsky—"Where is Britain Going"]

The capitalist class would have us believe that western society has developed through a process of gradual reforms—apart from minor 'kinks', the general flow of history has been in a straight line.

Yet the events of the English Revolution of 1640, and also the American Revolution of 1776 tell us something quite different.

Far from travelling in a straight line, the whole course of the historical development of the western world is stacked with periods of upheavals and revolutionary struggles.

Two of these events, the English Revolution (1640) and the American Revolution (1776), are analysed in an excellent pamphlet produced by West London Militant Supporters, titled "The Bourgeois Revolution and the Permanent Revolution."

A revolution is not simply a freak event in history in the same way as an earthquake or other natural disaster. Nor is personalities, as the school textbooks describe these upsurges.

The English Revolution would still have taken place with or without the personalities of the King, Cromwell, and Cromwell. It marked the culmination of a whole period of economic and political changes which forced the capitalist class to take over political control from the old order.

A similar situation in bourgeois textbooks occurs in relation to the American Revolution. It was not simply a war of the British versus the Americans, but was in fact a class war.

tation'. The stupidity of the British ruling class, who did not heed the demands, sparked off the revolution, although the pent-up oppression of the workers and artisans in the colony would still have come to the fore.

In both the case of the American and the English revolutions the petit-bourgeois radicals needed widespread support to defeat the old rulers. This was won by uniting the classes with abstract slogans such as 'liberty' and 'equality'. But events since have shown that different classes have separate and conflicting aspirations.

An example of the calls for liberty is the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence; "We hold these

kind of anti-government stuff to, buddy!")

The victors of the American Revolution were not the small farmers and workers, but the plantation owners and merchants. A similar situation existed in England after the revolution.

The so-called fight for 'democracy' which brought together various classes in English society was a fight primarily for the installation of capitalism. Indeed, a non-progressive, tyrannical order was destroyed, but it was replaced by a system which has since shown itself to have all the horrific and brutal qualities of early 17th century England.

Capitalism, once playing a progressive role in developing industry through the profit system, has today outlived its usefulness, and must now be replaced by a system which can work in the best interests of the whole of society.

To win support for the ideas of Marxism, it is essential to understand the processes taking place, economically and socially, in the world around us. And as the pamphlet points out, 90% of understanding this concept, the theory of the permanent revolution, is the understanding of the bourgeois revolutions of the past, understanding their relation to the history of class struggle, how and why they were won, and why their victories did not solve a single problem for the working people.

From this we can then see the need to change society further—a socialist transformation, where society is geared to the wants and needs of the masses of working people, and not for the profit motives of the privileged as exists in the capitalist system of today.

'The Bourgeois Revolution and the Permanent Revolution' is available from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Price 40p + 10p post and packing.

**By Suri
Krishnamma**

(Hackney Central
LPYS)

In both American and English revolutions, the radicals won by uniting the masses with abstract slogans such as 'liberty' and 'equality'. Events since have shown that different classes have separate and conflicting aspirations

The American colonies existed solely to finance the British ruling class through a series of trade restrictions and tariffs such as the Stamp Act of 1765.

Pent-up oppression

The American petit-bourgeois had no 'rights' to act against these laws and this raised the cry from radicals of 'no taxation without represen-

truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

(Incidentally, when researchers a few years ago tried to get people in Miami to sign the Declaration without explaining what it was, such was the disillusionment only 1 in 50 people would do so—as one person commented 'Be careful who you show that

CANNABIS-NO ESCAPE FROM HORRORS OF CAPITALISM BY-DULLING THE CONSCIOUSNESS

"I can think of few things more pleasant after a hard day's work than sitting down for a smoke of a joint and listening to Mozart." So said Charles Smedley, stockbroker and vice chairman of London's Young Tories. [London 'Evening Standard' 3 September].

The Tory press have recently been delighting in the new-found degeneracy of the gilded youth. Unable to put their sons and daughters forward as defenders of jobs, living standards or culture when the Tory cuts are affecting all of these, they now parade the Young Tories as 'radicals' because some of them want to legalise cannabis! Why?

In the past, the ruling class, through the church, education, and other institutions, cultivated its own 'morality' as part of their 'enlightened' oppression of the workers, setting certain standards and limitations on individual activity, alcohol, divorce, etc, in order to develop a disciplined labour force.

But now the ruling class is divided. Some clutch desperately at the old morality, some are indifferent, and some, recognising that the old 'moral' and religious opiates are being dissolved by the social crisis, see the advantages of more immediate drugs.

They are also eager to

exploit their profit potential.

A powerful lobby to legalise production and distribution of marijuana has built up in the USA, where cannabis sales are estimated at £20,000

By
Phil Frampton

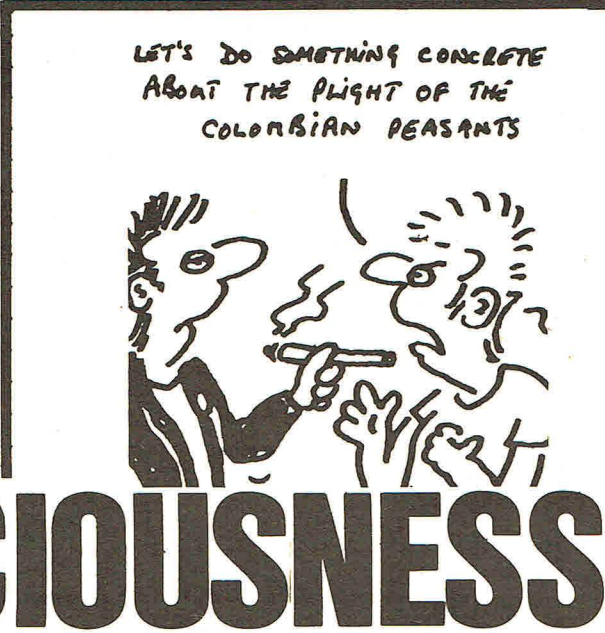
million a year. This year's California crop will alone be worth almost £200 million.

One British tobacco company has already commissioned plans for a massive advertising campaign in the event of legalisation. The tobacco companies especially would make huge profits.

A cry has gone up for legalisation from the middle class leadership of various youth organisations. The Legalise Cannabis Campaign now has support from the Conservative Students, the Young Liberals, Young Conservatives and the Labour Students National Committee.

On the other hand, the Marxists in the Labour Party and the Labour Party Young Socialists have opposed legalisation. Neither has any other working class organisation supported the campaign. A workers' organisation has to view all social issues from the standpoint of the working class's struggle against the bosses, and the tasks of strengthening the organisation and raising the consciousness of the class to carry through the socialist transformation of society.

Unable to see a solution to problems caused by low wages, unemployment, cram-



Cartoon (left) courtesy of 'The Leveller', which showed (June '79) the way in which the Columbian people have become even more exploited by foreign capital and the landowners as a result of marijuana production



ped accommodation and a system in decline, many people are tempted to find salvation from the horrors by dulling their own consciousness of it.

Over the last decade alcoholism and drug-taking have exploded in the western world. Four million American children are estimated to be taking marijuana while the army of seven million alcoholics swells by 200,000 a year.

In Britain alcoholic cases have trebled in two decades. In France, 37% of all male hospital treatment is for alcohol-related cases. In Italy the press dub this era as 'The Heroin Age'. Every three days one of the 100,000 heroin users is found dead.

It is not for socialists to promote this disease of escapism, but to point out its dangers—both to workers' health and to the struggles of the class.

The Legalise Cannabis

neither alcohol or cannabis can aid the working class.

Far from providing an 'explosion of consciousness' as the apostles of cannabis claim, it clouds perception of reality and dulls responses. The drug inevitably undermines political cohesion and determination to fight.

In Jamaica, the PNP (YO), the mass socialist youth organisation declare complete hostility to marijuana. On the other hand, Rastafari, a large religious sect, preach marijuana to the youth, leaving their thousands of followers hating the establishment but incapable of doing anything about it.

Rather than add another problem to the countless ones already facing the working class, the cannabis campaigners should take up the horrifying way in which drug laws give the police arbitrary powers of search and arrest. These powers are used to harass black youth and, like the 'Sus' laws, remain a threat to the socialist movement as a pretext for picking up activists. These powers should be abolished.

This demand would gain the sympathy of the working people, exposing the anti-working class nature of the law and its enforcers. Then the strength of the working class could be used to prevent such harassment.

But, however contradictory the laws' application in a capitalist society, it would be

ually—but from the point of view of working-class interests. In the case of cannabis, legalisation could in no way benefit workers.

Attempted diversion

Drug-taking arises from the rottenness of capitalist society. Those whose lives are dominated, and in some cases destroyed, by it are the victims of the crushing of individuality and personal relations in a system based on class exploitation and oppression.

While capitalism remains and the rich can make a profit on drug taking, it is unlikely that they will be able to crush the operations of the dope pedlars. So rotten is capitalism that trafficking is already partially integrated into the system. Many big pushers are protected because their fate is linked to the fortunes of property dealers, financiers and top officials in the state machine.

Thus the issues behind the cannabis diversion are class questions pointing to the need for workers to have control within society.

Class society makes life intolerable for millions. Yet scientific and technical development can offer man a new world, of the ten-hour working week with all its consequences for the development of culture, social relations and the lifting of the immense burdens which turn the oppressed to alcohol and drugs.

The Tories and big business have nothing to fear from workers winking to the seventh heaven under the influence of drugs. What they are mortally afraid of is a working class fully aware of its position in society, and conscious of the need to fight to transform society on socialist lines.

A workers' organisation has to view social issues from the standpoint of the class struggle and the need to raise the consciousness of the class to carry out a socialist transformation

term effects on people's health.

They forget that workers are employed in skilled and often dangerous work and have to organise such things as pickets and marches! At the point of production

ludicrous for socialists to oppose on principle laws which, despite their limitations, afford ordinary people some protection against the gross abuse of their health and safety. Particular laws have to be assessed individ-

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

There are now eleven top company directors officially paid over £100,000 a year exclusive of such perks as cars, free housing and schooling for the kids etc. When such greed is coupled with declining living standards and threatened redundancies for workers, and an atrocious record of neglected investment, then such information leaking out can be embarrassing for the 'captains of industry'.

The government are trying to ease this embarrassment. They have published a consultative document "Company Accounting and Disclosure" which recommends that certain companies should not be required to publish information on sales figures, directors pay

etc. Small companies employing under 50 people will not need to file a profit and loss account for public inspection, and hint that they may not even need to produce audited accounts. This may even be extended to subsidiary companies.

Sales figures would not be required from companies with sales under £1 million [possibly extended to those with sales under £5 million]. There would be no obligation to show the numbers of managers earning over £10,000. The new sum for disclosure would be £20,000. Directors pay need only be shown when it exceeded £40,000 p.a. [at present the minimum for information is £15,000].

Unions who would be deprived of important information for negotiations have until December 31st to

object to the Trade Secretary.

The economy may be feeling very little benefit from North Sea Oil but the owners certainly are. Profits are rising rapidly. In 1978 profits prior to tax and royalties were £2,700 million.

The estimate for 1979 is of profits of the region of £4,800m rising to £5,800m in 1980 and £7,600m by 1985.

Government royalties and taxes in 1978-79 amounted to £521m and are thought likely to be £1,390m this year, i.e. still less than a quarter of profits. In this way does the great hope for future prosperity pictured by the capitalist class disappear. Guzzled by the giant monopolies.



POVERTY, ETON-STYLE

A class of Eton boys were asked to write a story about poverty. "There was once a very poor family," wrote one 13-year old. "The father was poor. The mother was poor. The children were poor. Even the butler was poor."

From the 'Financial Times', 17.10.79

A SHORT, SHARP, SHOCK

By
Anne Beales
(Hackney South &
Shoreditch LPYS)

In a move which gratified the blood-thirsty upper class delegates to the Tory Party Conference, Home Secretary Whitelaw announced the setting up of two experimental detention centres for so called "young thugs".

They were designed to give a "short sharp shock" to young offenders with a new tough regime. As a residential social worker who has worked in a community school in a secure unit, I shudder to think what they could do to increase the cruelty and inhuman treatment found there.

I only worked there for three months as I couldn't bear the cruel treatment that the boys I worked with received.

Punishment was the order of the day. The punishment ranged from having to run around a race track made from hard brittle tarmac without shoes or socks on, to a verbal telling off from the headmaster in his office, stripped to their underpants.

One dormitory had 30 boys sleeping in it. It was patrolled by staff who had worked at the school when it was under the approved school system and for them it had not changed.

No wonder that some boys were still bed wetting—another punishable offence. One boy threw himself out of a second floor window, and another sniffed a powder which rotted his lungs.

The night watchman always carried a stick. His duty was to prevent boys escaping under the cover of darkness. Even so, an average of 11 boys out of 100 managed to find freedom for a while every week.

They were referred to by the staff as absconders and were dealt with harshly when they were recaptured.

Apart from school work, the boys were made to scrub floors and walls and do heavy work in the gardens. The 'best' staff were considered to be the biggest and the hardest who could control the youngsters by fear.

One member of staff had been put in prison for killing his brother in law shortly before I started work. He was still regarded as a great loss to the school!

What you may wonder, were the offences committed by these boys? One boy in my unit was convicted of several thefts, but only of food. He said he was hungry, as his mother never fed him or gave him any money. He was twelve years old but had the physical appearance of a nine year old.

Another boy shot his father in the foot with an air rifle. His reason? He said he couldn't stand seeing him beat up his mother again.

Should young people be

the parents form of escape from their situations.

I left there finally when a member of staff who had worked there for 25 years boasted how he had seen two generations from several families pass through his class. What a comment on the lack of success of the establishment. I didn't want to wait around to see the third generation.

63% of Borstal trainees discharged are reconvicted within two years. Obviously the cure by punishment is not working. So what is the Tories answer? Make the punishments harder.

The two new experimental centres are at Send near Guildford and Fleckton near Wakefield. Even 14 year olds will be subjected to lights out at 9.30 p.m. and rising at 6.45 a.m.

In the day they will have to do drill at running pace, then

work on concrete moulding or making chain link fencing.

They will be supervised by prison warden—types and will have to 'earn the privilege' of watching TV or playing games in the early evening. All will have to wear uniforms. These periods of 'short sharp shock' will last from six weeks to three months.

What happens to these youngsters? What happens, say, to an offender who is physically weak, as many are? Will any of them become more able to cope with the terrible conditions which pushed them into crime in the first place? NO! Whitelaw admits this is an experiment. But how dare anyone 'experiment' with over 100 children at a time.

I can remember the outcry when mice were used in experiments to test new drugs. These drugs could potentially help people. Yet

there is little protest from these same people on this atrocity, which will not help anyone.

At the same time, they are dropping on 'economic grounds' measures which have had far more success in helping young offenders—measures which have led to far lower levels of criminal activity afterwards.

Youngsters turn to crime as a desperate way to try to lift themselves above poverty, bad housing and so on. Of course even if the Tories tried to solve the underlying problems, they would fail miserably.

Poverty will rise with growing unemployment; and housing will deteriorate yet further with expenditure cuts. All are part and parcel of the capitalist system in decay.

So the Tories don't try to solve the problems but instead lash out in crude

schemes which won't reduce juvenile crime but will increase the suffering of the youth.

Britain already has more youngsters in prison and detention centres than practically any other country. Also in London alone 20,000 children are in care. What does this say about our society?

The unions, the Labour Party, and the Labour Party Young Socialists should take up the plight of these doomed young people in the centres, and realise the implications of their existence.

If this is the best the ruling class can do with those condemned to be failures of this capitalist society, what better have they in store, for example for the unemployed?

YOUR SAFETY—OR THEIR PROFITS?

The Health and Safety Commission, in a letter to Tory Employment Minister James Prior, have given a stark warning of the effects of Tory cuts.

Already, as this report from South Wales shows, lack of manpower and resources combined with the derisory fines handed out to employers found guilty of breaking the law (see 'Militant' 19 October) mean that the effectiveness of the Commission is severely restricted.

The use of new chemicals and other toxic substances, bigger and noisier machinery, job cuts, speed-ups and inadequate training, a lack of necessary investment in new equipment and safety measures as employers skimp in order to maximise their profits; all present growing dangers for workers, dangers which the HSC has not been able to keep pace with.

Even here, however, the Tories are threatening to swing the axe. They have demanded details of how the Commission could make 10%, 15%, and 20% job cuts.

Vicious effects

The Commission's reply outlines the vicious effect such cuts would have. The largest section of their staff, the Factory Inspectors, would bear the brunt. To cover 19 million workers there were 990 inspectors on 1st April 1979. At present they visit the



Tunnel miners protest at neglect of safety problems. Now workers could be subjected to even more danger

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

By
Eileen Short

average workplace once in five years.

A 10% cut would reduce this to 7.7 years, and at 20%, unless the union is vigilant your boss could more or less forget about safety—he could expect a visit once in 9 years.

Inspections of mines and existing nuclear installations would be substantially reduced. We would have to rely on the chemical industry bosses' to take responsibility for our welfare—as well as their profits. In agriculture, where increased use of chemicals dangerous machinery and poor working conditions are causing growing numbers of deaths and serious injury to farmworkers, inspection in some areas would become 'doubtfully viable'.

Research projects on toxic and hazardous substances and safer work practices would have to be abandoned; while the Tories propose more nuclear plants, the Commission would be forced "to

A report issued a few days ago by the Health and Safety Executive revealed that there has been a vast increase in the death and serious injury rate in the Mines of South Wales. In 1977 there were 8 deaths and 73 serious injuries, in the 37 NCB pits [employing 30,000 people] and the 112 private-owned mines which employ 1,000 in the South Wales Area. In 1978 deaths more than doubled to 17, with 86 serious injuries.

The Senior District Inspector of Mines and Quarries in South Wales, Mr Albert Davies, who compiled the report, says 'It is a matter for concern that fatal accidents increased more than two-fold and the increase in all accidents is 27%.'

A South Wales Area NUM safety inspector pointed out that the increasing use of outside contractors with large machinery had led to the high accident figures. He added "There seems to be a lack of supervision; we have to train our engineers so that the contractors are under better control."

The high jump in deaths was amongst surface workers. In 1977 only one man died, on the pit surface. In 1978 this had risen to eight. It seems that even in a state-owned industry, speeding up productivity and corner cutting for profit are considered more important than the well-being, even the lives, of workers.

eliminate all work on future reactor systems such as fast breeders."

Planning advice, production of leaflets and films and other publicity informing workers of work hazards

would be reduced or halted.

The Commission's chairman warns that the practical effects would be immediate and could "produce a sharp reaction from trade unionists."

The civil service unions have already taken up the fight to defend their jobs and services. But we cannot leave them to fight alone. These cuts pose a threat to workers in every area and industry.

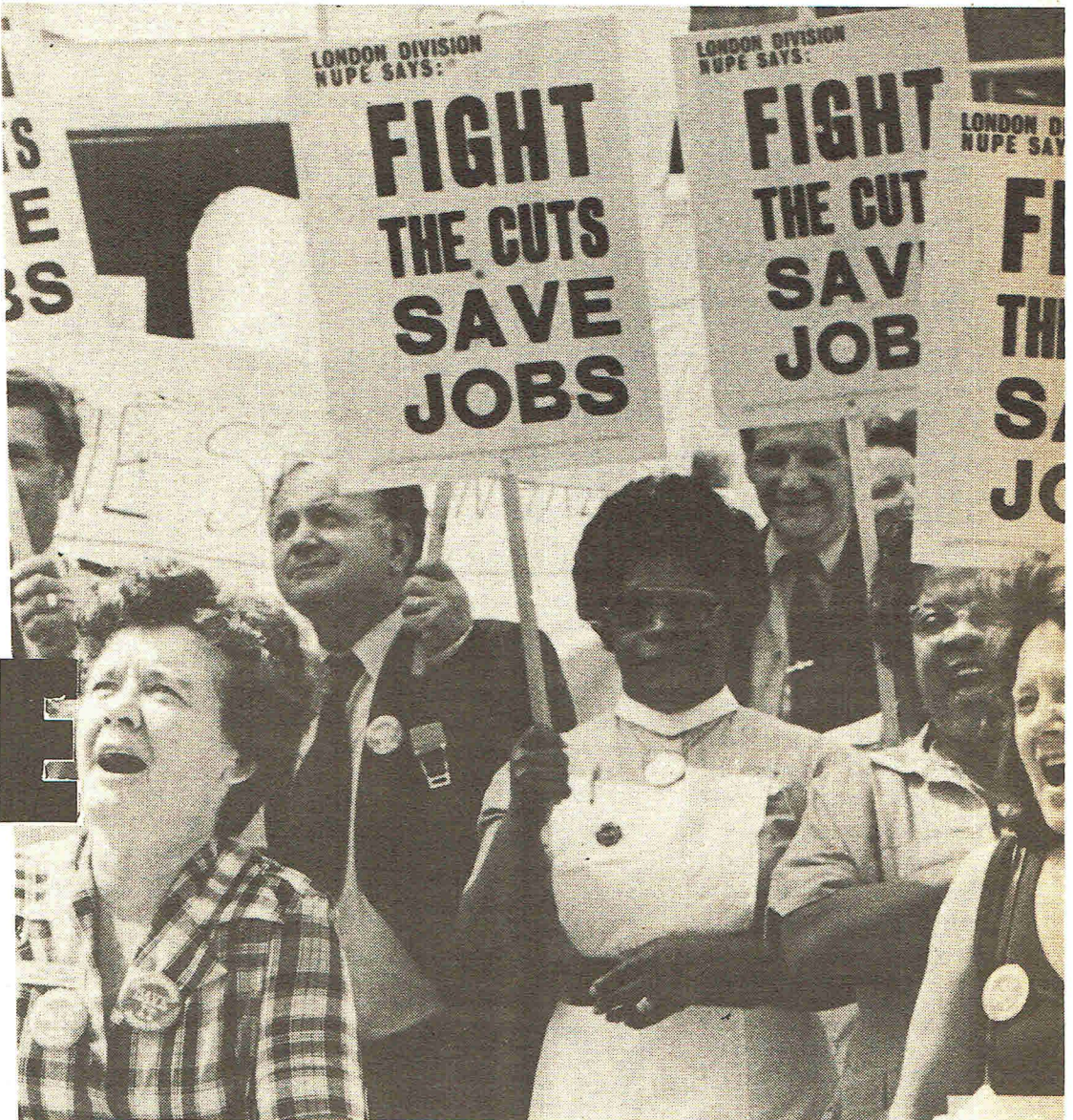
The full weight of every union and of the TUC must be thrown behind the campaign to stop this attack on the modest gains we have won. In 1977 514 workers were killed at work; 867 died through diseases contracted during their work; there were over 326,000 reported accidents.

We need more effective and stringent protection from the reckless profiteers, under the control of the unions, representing those who are at risk, both at work and during the rest of our lives. These cuts must be halted: they will, quite literally, cost lives.

Militant pamphlet "The 35-hour week and the fight against unemployment" By Brian Ingham Price 40p (+ 10p p&p) from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

WORKING WOMEN IN THE FRONT LINE

DEFENDING OUR RIGHTS—
AT HOME AND AT WORK



Demonstrations against hospital casualty cuts in East London

Nursery education: COUNCILS SAVE - WE SUFFER

“Now mothers will have to look after their children themselves”.

This was the retort of a Tory councillor when the whole of nursery education in Bristol was put under threat by Avon County Council's education cuts.

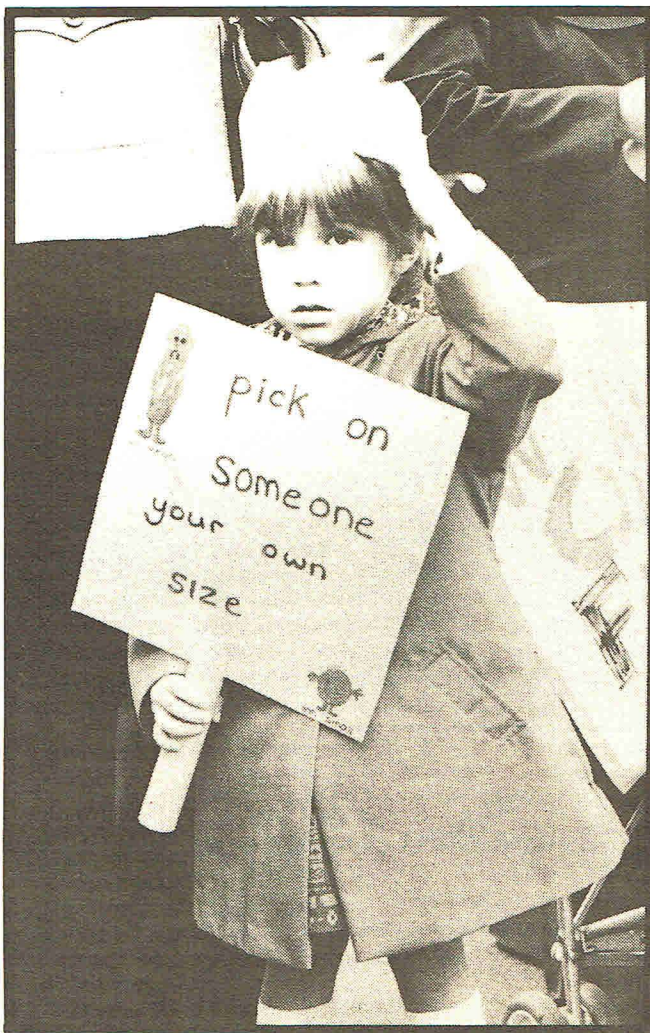
All aspects of the cuts affect the working class woman.

This Tory Council has one of the worst records in the country. Formerly the fourth-biggest spender on private education, it is now one of the most vicious in cutting back state education. Over £4 million has been 'saved' in education this year.

Nursery education in Avon is already pathetically inadequate—only 17 schools and 26 nursery classes, with no schools outside Bristol. So when mothers heard that the

By
Sue Beckingham
Bristol SE Labour Party
&
Avon Parents Against
Nursery Education Cuts
personal capacity

whole lot are on the reserve lists for cuts this year, and that there was a possibility that nursery schools could be closed by January, they moved into action. Within two weeks parents,



Demonstrating against nursery cuts in Nottingham

mainly housewives, from more than half the nursery schools in Bristol had set up parents' committees in the schools and formed themselves into a co-ordinating committee: 'Avon Parents against Nursery Education cuts', organising a petition against nursery and all other education cuts.

In my son's school of 80 children, 50 parents, mostly mothers, turned out to hear a Labour and Tory councillor speak. Far from being appeased, the comments of Tory councillor Lippen gave us little faith in his denials that nursery education would go.

Asked why private schools were still being subsidised while state schools were under

attack, he said "I have an interest in private schools—I went to one...Of course, there are some special children who need the special type of education that these schools provide!"

"Yes, they're rich!" was the comment from one mother.

Angry parents have flooded councillors with letters every day demanding that the nursery schools and classes are kept open. It is because of that anger that the Avon Tories have been saying no nursery schools will be closed this year. But with a further rounds of cuts next year, probably to the tune of £5m in Avon, the axe hangs over the whole of nursery education—unlike primary and secondary

education it does not have to be provided by law.

Nursery education is vital for kids; in these years they learn and develop more than at any other time in their lives. Far from being a child-minding service for lazy mothers, as some Tories would have us believe, it adds to children's lives things that can never be provided at home, unless you happen to have a cook, cleaner and wet nurse.

ten not entitled to unemployment benefit in their own right, would not register at dole offices, so helping to mask the real increase in unemployment.

The Avon campaign against nursery cuts reflects a real change in the consciousness of many women, some of whom must have voted Tory in the last election. It is a foretaste of the local tenants' and housewives committees that will snowball in the battle

It was the labour movement that fought for nursery education. Housewives must link with the labour movement to save it.

The reality for most women at home is battling to get the chores done while our kids squabble and are bored stiff. The provision of space, sand, water and play equipment, individual attention, the training in sharing and co-operating with other children and adults can never be provided in the same way in any working class home.

If the children benefit, so do the mothers. After years at home bringing up kids, many women feel useless, their confidence shattered, even bordering on nervous breakdowns. How much skill and talent is wasted in this way? Nursery schools are essential for women who wish to combine work with raising a family.

Of course, the reality is that more and more women are forced to find jobs to make ends meet. It is these families who will really be hit by the closure of nursery schools.

One woman I met in the campaign, worked nights in a hospital. The only time she could sleep was during school hours!

For the Tories, how convenient it would be to force women out of jobs by closing nursery schools. Women, of-

to defend our rights and services.

Campaigns such as these must not remain isolated. If nursery schools are saved, who will suffer instead? Will it be our kids in other schools, or the old age pensioners and the sick, the local authority and hospital workers?

Any campaign to stop nursery education cuts must also be a campaign to oppose all cuts in public services. A cut-back in other services only puts nursery schools on the top of the list next time.

The Avon campaign has agreed to oppose all education cuts and to support the Avon teachers' proposed half-day of action against the threat of 400 redundancies by January.

This must be a first step in linking up with the labour movement as a whole, fighting with the school cleaners and kitchen staffs, the hospital porters and nurses, dustmen and home helps, organised by their unions. Their jobs are our services.

It was the labour movement that fought for nursery education. Housewives must link with the labour movement to save it.



Photo: Ian McIntosh (IFL)

CUTS - START THE FIGHTBACK

Our children's education is already under attack.

In Hampshire the County Authority have been very crafty. They announced the total withdrawal of school meals on one day. A few days later they proposed to provide a main course meal for 57p and snack meals—such as beans on toast—for up to 40p.

Children who are entitled to free school meals will be given vouchers for 40p, in many cases denying them their only decent meal of the day.

They want to close the schools for longer periods at Christmas and make the summer holidays shorter to cut down on fuel expenditure. Once again this will put even more pressure on working mothers.

At the school one of my children attends, parents were asked [if they cared for their children] to come into school to listen to the children read or help out on the sports field. To our horror a teaching assistant was sacked. Due to the response from parents, the Authority no longer needed to pay this assistant's wages—parents were doing the job free.

For the under-fives, nursery places are already difficult to obtain. This will deteriorate still further as such 'luxuries' are chopped.

In the past the maternity and pediatric care provided by the National Health Service were held up as models to the world. Now we see maternity units closed with catchment areas changed to prove to the statisticians that they are no longer 'viable' in a given area.

By Pat Blatch

(Southampton Labour Party)

Waiting lists for children's operations have increased to an appalling level: circumcision 3 years, tonsillectomy 2¾ years. These are not generally urgent operations but delays cause a great deal of distress to the children and parents concerned.

For women, sterilisation waiting lists can be even longer. For some, the only way to get treatment is by getting pregnant and being sterilised straight after the birth, or going through the trauma of an abortion which is the only alternative for many women.

For older women the problem will not be any different. 30% of women over the age of 45 need hospital treatment for gynaecological problems. Waiting lists for painful conditions are already far too long [if you are an NHS patient] and they will get worse, as more hospital closures are announced.

Care of the elderly in geriatric wards, which are already under pressure, will become worse as they lose yet more beds.

For most working class families, the only alternative will be attempting to care for ageing and often sick relatives at home. With inadequate training, time or money, this will only add to the pressures on women and their families.

One area that the Tories have yet to make a statement on is council and private rents. Perhaps they remember with clarity the massive tenants' movement that sprang up in 1971 to fight the Housing Finance Act.

Massive action on a national basis was the order of the day. This, combined with the powerful protests of the trade unions against the Industrial Relations Act, culminated in public support for the miners' battles against the Tories, and brought down the Heath administration.

The horror of these cuts in all the services we rely on will only be stopped by similar mass action. The trade unions, constituency Labour Parties, housewives, tenants' groups, PTAs, school children: all will be forced to see the need for such action. This is the time to debate and formulate plans to fight the cuts and protect our standard of living.

Join us in this fight, push through resolutions in your Labour Party or trade union branch against the cuts, and start an effective joint 'No Cuts' campaign.

ABORTION - A RIGHT FOR ALL WOMEN

By Margaret Crear
(Royton & Heywood Labour Party)

Susan Bradbury was refused an abortion in spite of having a heart and lung disorder and only one functioning kidney. She died in child birth.

This should bring home to the labour movement the need not only to defend the Abortion Act from the Corrie Bill but to strengthen the provisions of the Act and extend the NHS, making abortion on demand a right for all women.

Contrary to what anti-abortionists would have us believe, abortions are not the result of any act of parliament. As long as the birth of a child means poverty, loss of a job or possible eviction, women will seek abortions. In the '50s and '60s illegal abortions ran at over 1,500 a year.

The other side of the coin, where women decide to struggle on and have the child, is the high infant mortality rate in working class areas, child battering and the increased numbers of children taken into care.

Labour MPs who voted for the first reading of the Corrie Bill should be reminded that this is a class question, not an 'issue of conscience'—there should be no free vote.

Wealthy women have always been able to control the size of their families. Abortion, like everything else, can be bought at a price. Working class women are demanding the same rights on the NHS—to vote for this Bill is to deny those rights.

Abortions will go on, no matter what legislation there is. What is at stake is the conditions under which it takes place, how many women survive the experience and who takes the decision in the first place—women who have

to cope with the problem or MPs and their friends in the courts. These people have no interest in the problems of the working class and have one if not both their eyes, fixed firmly on public expenditure.

The passing of the Abortion Act in 1969 marked a step forward. There was a sharp decline in deaths as a result of abortion: from 35 in 1969 to 8 in 1975. Cases of late abortions, sepsis and illegal abortions also declined.

Nevertheless the Act has serious limitations, demonstrated by the case of Susan Bradbury. Your chance of having an abortion at present depends where you live.

In Newcastle almost all abortions are carried out on the NHS. In Birmingham only 12% and in Wolverhampton only 7% of those women referred are accepted.

High-ranking doctors often ensure that the prejudices and religious dogma of a section of the medical hierarchy are perpetuated. Prof. McLaren in Birmingham said, "Trainees are picked by us. So a young man who said, 'I'd like to train as a doctor but I support abortions'; I'd show him the lift." These are the real 'abuses' of the Act.

The main limitation on the Act, however, is there was no requirement on Health Authorities to provide the necessary facilities.

With the cutbacks in the NHS, existing provisions will be threatened. The fight for the Abortion Act means fighting against the public expenditure cuts and for the extension of the NHS.

All socialists would agree that the best possible situation would be one where no abortions were needed. No one should underestimate the effect such decisions have on women—abortions are always a last desperate step and never undertaken lightly. But how is this situation to be achieved?

The demand for abortion arises not from the lack of responsibility or 'morality' of

individual women but from the social conditions in which we live. In advertising, on television and in newspapers, in school and through literature, 'motherhood' is glorified; all the available tools are used to mould our ideas, hypocritically telling women their place is in the home bringing up their children. At the same time, in practice, capitalist society puts every obstacle in the way of working class women with young children.

The supporters of the Corrie Bill are precisely the people who advised us to vote Tory at the elections, who gave sermons from the pulpit advising the congregation not to vote for Labour MPs who were known to support abortion.

They helped to return a Tory government which is now proposing to cut public expenditure, reduce maternity grants and restrict maternity leave, introduce charges at Family Planning Clinics, close nurseries wholesale and sell off council houses, reducing the stock of homes for young families. Their concern for the welfare of women and children, it appears, ends at birth.

The Corrie Bill is an attack, launched by backwoods, bigoted Tory reaction, in the guise of a moral crusade, against women's hard-won rights. The labour movement must fight for increased availability of contraception, for abortion on demand, and for improved health and welfare services, to allow women to choose whether or not to have children.

But the real solution to the problems of child rearing and the oppression of women can't be provided by capitalism. The labour movement must use its organised strength to take up the problems of women and children, fighting off the attacks of the Tories.

We cannot be satisfied with forcing the Tories to back down. The only way we can be certain that the reforms we fight for won't be taken back, is if the movement goes on to fight for a socialist society, so that we can look back on the barbaric attitudes of the Tories and capitalism as a thing of the past.



Women in the forefront—here, fighting to save Corby



AMERICA.

The United States used to be the land of milk and honey. Being the most advanced and powerful country in the world, it possessed the most class conscious and dynamic capitalist class. The American Labour Movement, on the other hand, was much behind the European workers.

All that is changing. There are two faces of American labour. On the one hand it lacks its own political party. American unions organise only 20% of the workers, mainly in the North Eastern States.

They still face reactionary legislation. The Taft-Hartley Act which gives the President the power to legally force striking workers back to work for a 'cooling-off' period of 60 days.

In the south quite a few states have 'right-to-work' laws which forbid picketing and closed shop. Many factories in the south actively resist unionising drives.

Union leadership is extremely bureaucratic and authoritarian and often acts as a strike-breaking force.

The right wing leaders tail-end the capitalist parties and the Democratic Party Presidential candidates whose 'liberal' wing might be bigger than of the Republicans, but which nevertheless remains a big business party.

This is one face of American Labour. The face which is shown to the world by the capitalist media. A favourite item of the press used to discredit the unions as a whole, is to point out the many links between organised labour and organised crime.

Everyone remembers the disappearance of Teamster leader Jim Hoffa, who was murdered by rival gangsters.

On Tuesday September 26th, the Philadelphia rank and file of Teamsters Union local 107, was disgusted by a new scandal. Two leaders were arrested by the FBI and charged with the murder of two labour organisers, attempted murder, arson bombing and the embezzlement of union funds.

Five years ago, the rank and file would have reacted with indifference, but now times have changed. Faced with an economic crisis, the workers again feel the need for a fighting organisation of their own and for union democracy.

Two opposition Teamster groups have merged in the struggle, an offshoot of a 'Ralph Nadar' consumer group and the more radical 'Teamsters for Union Democracy'.

These groups, who still remain basically weak because they don't have an alternative political programme, will nevertheless send 200 delegates to the next union conference. They are a reflection of the emergence of Labour's other face, the desire to struggle to defend their living standards and for another type of society.

The basis for this new mood is the world crisis which has also hit the US economy.

By
Michael Bauwens

(Belgian Labour Party)
recently in Philadelphia

For ten years, living standards had remained stagnant and the decline has begun since 1974.

Unemployment and inflation are rising. For instance, the take home pay of August 1979 is 4.3% less in real terms than a year before.

Chrysler is dismantling whole plants. 'Indefinite layoffs' by the US auto makers, totalled 88,100 last week.

1978 witnessed one booming sector: strikes! Mine-workers, steel, rubber, print and railroad workers...all went on strike.

Recently, Minnesota witnessed a strike against the Rock Island Railroad Company. The workers are protesting the refusal by the company to grant full retroactive pay, as agreed in their contract. The workers have defied Carter's 'back-to-work' order.

Also in Minnesota: the strike by grain workers against union busting measures.

At one point in September 43,000 teachers struck in over a dozen states. Since January, 121 teachers strikes have taken place affecting over 850,000 students.

Most of these strikes are defensive, defending declining living standards, fighting for a COLA-clause (cost of living adjustment) to be included in their contracts, against union busting and intimidation of their union representatives, etc....

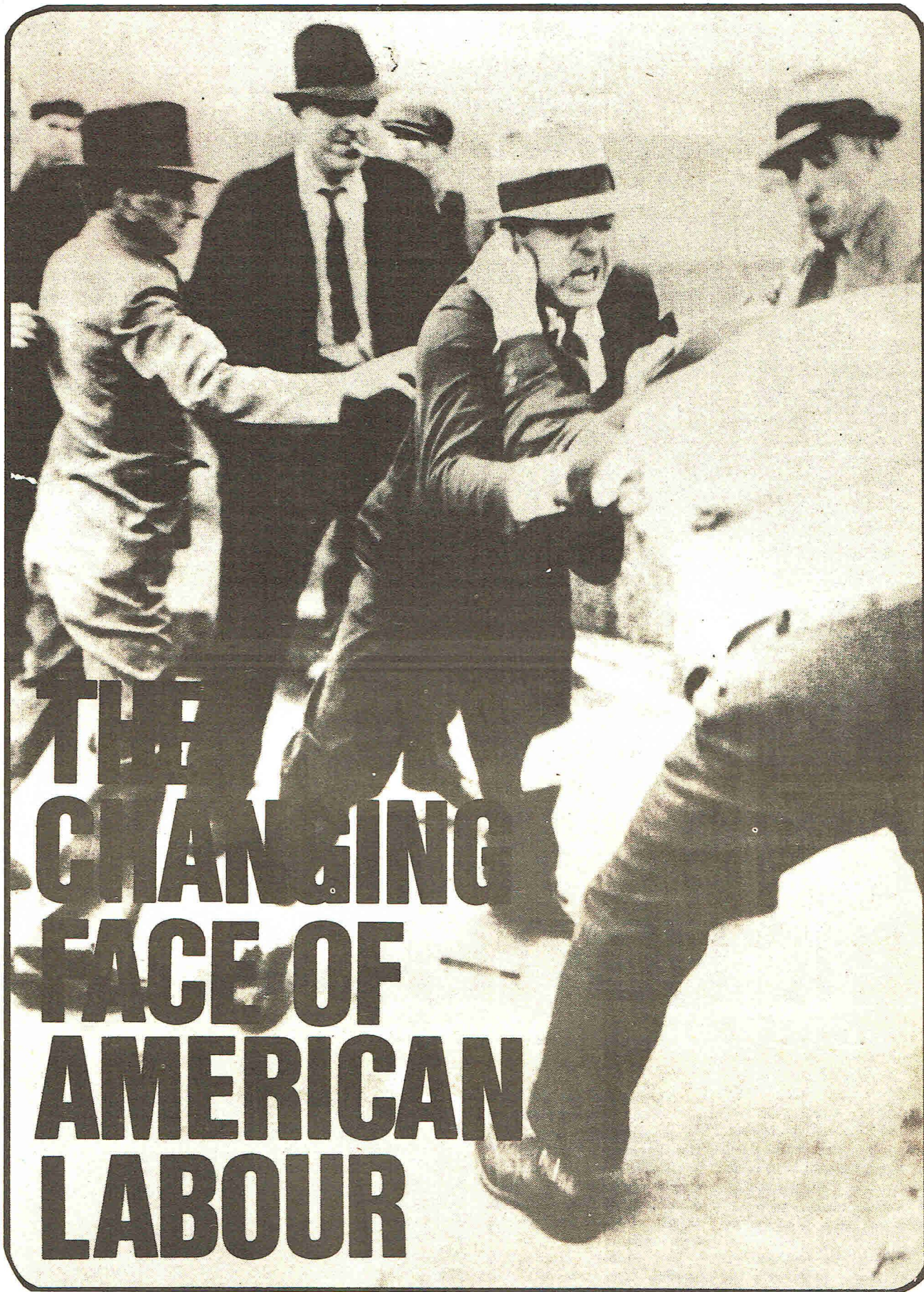
Most American workers have complied with their union advice to respect Carter's 7% (now 8%) wage restraint guideline, which means they're losing 5% a year (inflation is officially around 13%). This is laying the ground for a new wave of discontent in the near future.

Already there are countless small strikes, reported by local papers. For instance, in Philadelphia, 50 employees of the bankrupt Sarah Allen Nursing Home and members of the hospital Workers Union, have barricaded themselves in, refusing to release 140 elderly patients' as the Philadelphia Enquirer deceitfully screams.

They have been working six weeks without pay, while paying their patients food. Their action is aimed, not only to protect their jobs, but also their patients' right to live in smaller and more human institutions. The patients are in complete solidarity with the nurses.

The new mood of economic militancy is also reflected in a new political consciousness.

Dissatisfaction with the



THE CHANGING FACE OF AMERICAN LABOUR

American workers facing the new recession are picking up the threads of militancy forged in the 1930s. Above is the battle for union recognition at Fords in 1937

major parties is enormous. Only half of the registered voters vote.

Less than 20% of the Americans trust their elected President. On the other hand, for the first time since the thirties, many rank-and-file trade union groups and even leaders, are pressurising and talking about the need for a party of labour.

Faced with an economic crisis the workers again feel the need for a fighting organisation of their own and for union democracy

Last year Arnold Fraser, leader of the powerful United Automobile Workers, sponsored a conference with black and feminist leaders with the aim of enquiring about the possibility of such a party. Now he has backed down again because the 'time has not yet come'.

The union leadership has freed the union from its pledge to support Carter...in order to support Kennedy. Nevertheless the idea of a Labour Party, based on the might of the trade unions, is

gaining powerful support.

The Executive Council of the California Federation of Labor has voted unanimously to 'give serious consideration' to the idea of a Labour Party and is going to organise 'study groups' for that purpose.

Though the objective conditions for the creation of such a party are favourable, a number of subjective factors

Kennedy, who is likely to be the next President. The Kennedy myth has still an enormous appeal with the American people. The union bureaucracy won't do anything to destroy that confidence, on the contrary.

However, once President, his 'honeymoon' with the electorate will be possibly shorter than that of Thatcher's.

His policies are capitalist policies. He favours cuts in financial and social programmes, increase in armaments spending, reducing the corporate income tax, massive handouts to American business etc....

No amount of charm, propaganda and pseudo-reforms (his 'crippled-before-it-is-born' health care plan) will hide these facts to the American workers.

They will feel it in the amount of money to spend to feed and educate their kids, in the increasing bills for heating and health care, in unemployment and inflation. No one can save the capitalist system. As in the thirties with the Roosevelt New Deal, some reforms can be granted

(because of the enormous reserves that American imperialism still has).

They can possibly still postpone developments, but that would only lead to bigger crises. However, once a labour party was formed, things would change very fast. Such a party, faced with fresh workers could move faster to the left and towards adopting a socialist programme, than many of the social democratic parties of Europe.

When Trotsky was first exiled to Mexico, he at first glance thought that though the most advanced capitalist country, America would come to socialism last. A socialist Europe might even have to defend itself against American imperialism, he predicted.

However, at a later stage, he modified his prediction and said that it could not be excluded that America would be the first to enter the path of revolution.

This analysis remains valid today. Once the workers have shown their teeth and ceased to be the political appendage of the Democrats, the capitalists will understand how this is so.

The second man is Edward

FRANCE. EAST GERMANY.

FRANCE CATCHES THE 'BRITISH DISEASE'



Prime Minister Barre

Deep misery fills the faces of most French bankers and industrialists at the moment. For they have realised that their economy has caught the 'English sickness' with a vengeance.

Investment growth has slackened to British levels, inflation is well into double

figures and unemployment is even greater than levels here across the Channel. Sluggish

AND BARRE TOTTERS

production and the rising price of French exports has pushed a once healthy trading surplus into deficit.

This has put pressure on the French franc making it difficult for the government to maintain currency stability with the German mark, inside the Common Market monet-

alent of the British 'Times', 'Le Monde', said that the government had "failed in many fields" and a survey conducted by the right-wing weekly 'Le Point' found that 59% of French people opposed the austerity policies imposed by the government earlier in the year and 39% thought Barre should go.

That right-wing papers should voice this feeling about the government is an indication of the disillusionment that even the capitalists have with the Barre government.

For clearly even the stringent policies of public expenditure cuts, increased taxes and social security payments for workers have failed the ailing French economy.

In the three years of the Barre government prices have risen by 33% and are now

capitalism. The inequality of wealth in France is the sharpest in the advanced capitalist world: the top 10% of French families are 22 times better off than the bottom 10% of families; compared to 9.7% times better off in Sweden, 9.4% in Britain, 10.8% in West Germany, and 18 in Italy.

French housewives have to pay more for their shopping than their European counterparts and so expensive are some consumer goods that French workers have to put in more hours of work to pay for a motor car than even British workers.

The growing opposition to the government's measures from the trade unions finally forced Barre to concede certain increases in benefits to pensioners and low income families. Grants to the building industry and subsidies to firms so that they will employ young unemployed workers were also introduced.

For with unemployment at 1.4 million and rising at 15% a month, for the first time since the war the industrial employment sector is actually in decline. France is beginning to de-industrialise as Britain already has.

The economic crisis has prompted the trade union movement into action against the government, and with a Presidential election only 18 months away the leadership of the two workers' parties, the Socialists and Communists, are making efforts again to reach some agreement on future united oppo-

sition to the incumbent capitalist President Giscard D'Estaing.

Giscard was offered Barre's resignation by the Prime Minister following the barrage of criticism delivered against him in the capitalist press. However Giscard rejected it and urged Barre to continue with his austerity programme, probably with a view to replace him next year with a more 'liberal' Prime Minister such as Simone Veil, the former health minister and now President of the European Assembly or the foreign minister Jean Francois Poncet.

Despite the economic crisis Giscard D'Estaing continues to view events with a degree of calm because there is no serious opposition to him within the ranks of the capitalist parties.

The Gaullists are in disarray. With less than 16% of the votes in the June European elections (a drop of 5% 1978 elections) they are now only the fourth party in France. The Gaullist 'barons' have demanded that Chirac, their leader, re-shape his policies and drop his hard-faced attack on the working class.

However, the disastrous economic situation in France cannot be ignored and the mounting opposition from the ranks of the French labour movement will mean that there will be another major confrontation with the government, perhaps coinciding with the Presidential election just eighteen months away.

By Bob McKee
(Battersea Labour Party)

ary system.

So demoralised are French capitalists about the future that their publicists have openly attacked the government of Prime Minister Barre for its handling of the situation.

As French holiday makers returned from their August break (a period called the 'rentrée') to begin the autumn slog, the French capitalist press marked the anniversary of three years of Barre government with bitter attacks.

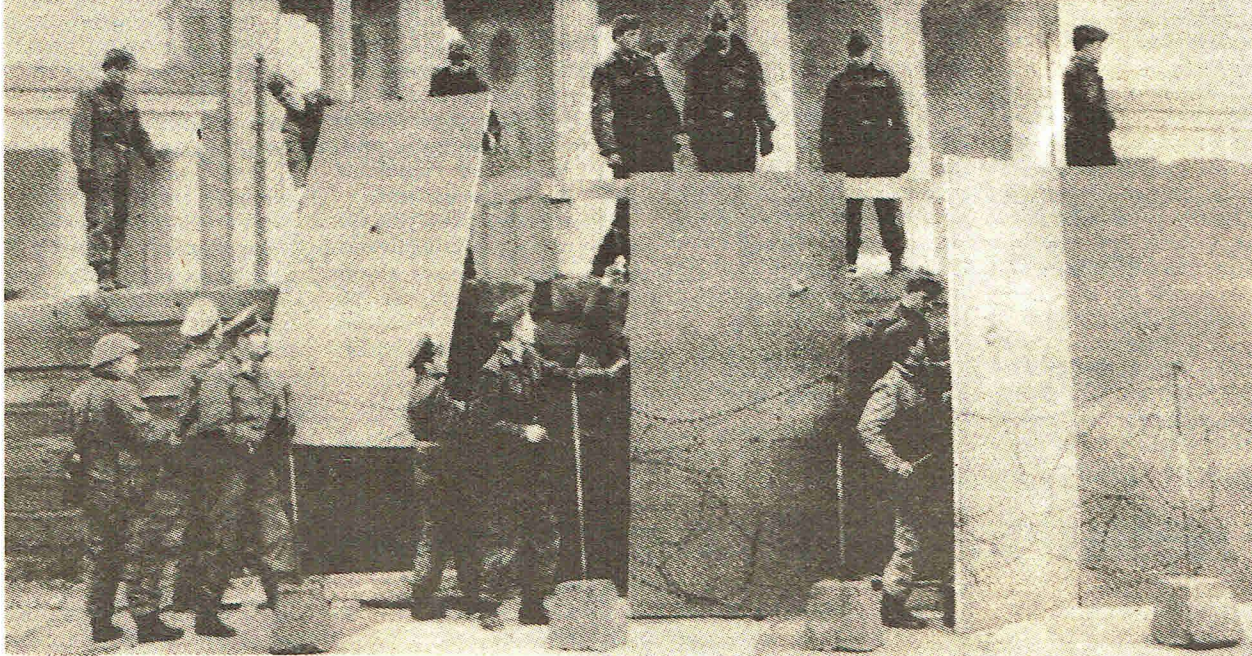
The eminent French equiv-

rising at an annual average of 13%. The government tried to blame this on rising energy costs and wages but fuel prices only constituted less than 3% of the overall rise.

The real cause was an immense increase in the money supply (44%) that a supposedly severe economic regime had still been forced to allow in order to counter the decline in production and investment—all to no avail.

And contrary to the views of many observers, French workers have not and are not doing so well out of French

LOBBYING FOR POLITICAL FREEDOM IN E. GERMANY



At Labour Party conference I was contacted by the Wood Green Party, over the emergency resolution that had been submitted by my constituency concerning West German Socialist Party [SPD] member Annette Bahner, who had been arrested in East Germany.

The resolution called for the "exclusion of the S.E.D. (i.e. East German) delegation as Annette Bahner, who is a member of the SPD, a sister organisation of the Labour

Party, had been arrested while merely exercising her democratic rights, freedom of movement, opinion, information and discussion." She had met others in East

Germany to discuss democratic rights and, in particular, trade unions free from state control.

However, before conference took place she had been released. But she told the International Campaign Against Repression, with which the Wood Green comrades are deeply concerned, that Bernhard Dietz, a young East German steelworker was still being held.

I went to the conference arrangements committee,

This week saw the 30th anniversary of the founding of the East German state. Yet socialists and trade unionists are imprisoned for expressing socialist views different from the ruling clique.

along with the Wood Green comrades to try and get Bernhard Dietz's name replaced in the Rochdale resolution. This was not possible, so I withdrew the resolution in favour of Wood Green's on Bernhard Dietz.

Reg Race (the MP for

By
Linda Chester
(Rochdale
Labour Party)

Wood Green) and I were invited to meet the East German delegation. Several other delegates, including Wood Green, also wished to meet the East Germans, but they refused, saying they had arranged to see only myself and Reg Race.

Reg Race told the delegation of his visit to their embassy, where he had been refused admission and they would not receive a letter. He had stayed in the embassy until they discussed the case with him. They finally gave him an interview, but the answers were extremely unsatisfactory. We got no better results at the meeting with them, either.

They told us we had no reason to be troubled about people being put into prison in their country. Their leadership had a humanist approach. Deitz and Bahner had violated their laws and had been condemned.

Reg Race kept asking what they had been charged with, but was told only that East Germany had "law and order" to maintain. Under their laws the fact that Deitz and Bahner had been arrested must mean that they were guilty. They said they did not have the details of the case, had no desire to have the details, and even if they had them they wouldn't have told us; but they would pass on 'our concern' to their leaders. Reg Race kept pressing for

details but to no avail. I said if their country was truly socialist then why not allow freedom of political discussion, if the ideas were considered nonsense then they would be classed as cranks. But if their ideas were constructive then surely it would benefit them as a socialist country.

He asked me if I had been to his country, I haven't. He then said where did I get my information from and how do I know what goes on there. He said that ideas were not stopped, and these young people had broken the law.

Reg Race asked again why not give us the information, why had they been arrested, what had they been charged with, and such information was a matter of principal. He also told them that Annette Bahner told him she had been charged with spying.

The East German delegation repeated that they were solely concerned with the real problems that exist for humanity, and peace and detente must come first.

I took this to mean that in order to preserve their perks and privileges they had to stamp on all manifestations of workers' democratic activities.

On Friday, after conference, I was collecting money for the Militant fighting fund, when one of the delegations who had been interested in the Deitz case stopped and expressed surprise that I was a 'Militant' supporter. He said he disliked 'Militant' but gave 50p for the fighting fund because he respected what I had done for Bernhard Deitz.

LETTERS

JOIN IN CAYU?

Dear Comrade

Whilst agreeing with Josie Aitman's view that the Liberals are nothing more than the second party of capital ('Militant' 473) I cannot agree that the Campaign Against Youth Unemployment does not look to the labour movement for support.

It was created at the initiative of the AUEW-TASS National Youth Committee and is sponsored by the National Organisation of Labour Students, Frank Allaun, Eric Heffer, Dennis Skinner, Hilary Barnard (President of the International Socialist Youth), and is supported by the Socialist Environment and Resources Association, the North West Region of UCATT, FTAT, as well as numerous trades councils and leading trade union movement figures such as Bernard Dix of NUPE and Colin Barnett of the North West TUC.

The CAYU is, nevertheless, a 'popular front', but it would be no 'class betrayal' for the labour movement to participate in it as long as it seizes the opportunity to upstage the Liberals (and for that matter the Communist Party too). It is the movement's duty to use such campaigns to get over the message that it is capitalism that is to blame. The same goes for the Anti-Nazi League, CND, and any other single-issue group.

The labour movement must be seen to be armed with a clear perspective. The power of the labour movement, properly mobilised, is such that the pressure of the odd Liberal or Stalinist will mean little or nothing.

Yours fraternally
David Turner
Secretary,
Gillingham LPYS
(personal capacity)

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

LPYS UPSETS THE BOSSES

Dear Comrades

About ten days ago, at my place of work, Shand Kydd's in Christchurch, I posted on the shop-floor notice board, a letter inviting union members to attend an LPYS and trade union day school, the following Sunday, at a local Labour Club.

A few days later, I was called to the manager's office, and told in no uncertain manner that political literature was not to be placed on the firm's notice board. In the meantime, he had ripped down the letter, and also the very humorous story of the early shift by an AUEW member in last week's 'Militant', which I had also pinned up.

The manager then went on to demand the removal of 'Tories Out', 'Don't blame me' and other badges from workers' overalls whilst at work, a demand which was treated with the contempt it deserved.

These provocative actions by the management angered many of the shop floor workers, but I suppose it is just yet another example of the bosses keeping the working class down. The sooner workers' control arrives the better.

Yours fraternally
Dave Lovett
NGA Chapel Committee & Bournemouth East CLP

NOT IN THE NEWS

Dear Comrades,

I would like to underline the points made by Steve Amor in his article on the Unemployment Statistics [Militant 473], when he showed how unemployment is a real threat to the working class, despite Mrs Thatcher's claim that it is decreasing.

About two weeks ago, Newcastle Trades Council Unemployment Centre was contacted by the BBC and asked to supply 3 unemployed school leavers for a feature on unemployment is to be shown on the 'Nationwide' programme.

However, when the school leavers went up to the studios the next day for the recording, the message was clear; the piece had been "dropped" from the programme, because the unemployment figures announced that day had shown a small decrease. Unemployment, it seemed, was no longer newsworthy.

This clearly shows the way the bosses media will cynically

use the issue of unemployment, not caring about the misery and chaos their system causes. The lesson is simple: it is up to the trade union and labour movement to put across the message that the BBC won't touch—one person unemployed is one too many!

If the BBC prefers to 'forget' the 1½ million people thrown on to the scrap-heap of the dole queue, then we must take the message out to the movement, using the 'Militant', and through the LPYS and the Labour Party. We must push the Party leadership for a REAL campaign against the Tories and the unemployment that their system brings—then we won't be dependant on the whims of the BBC to get our message across!

Yours fraternally
Kath Hardisty
Newcastle North LPYS

CUTS COST LIVES

Dear Comrades

Remember those cold days in December 1977 when the firemen were out for a living wage and shorter hours? Remember how the Tories and their press backers accused them of "threatening people's lives" and "holding the country to ransom"?

Less than two years later those same Tory hypocrites are coolly preparing reductions in the fire service. It's calculated murder, Tory-style.

Next year, 40 jobs are to be

cut in Nottinghamshire; from West Yorkshire 21 machines face the axe.

The Tories have no regard for human life. They bolster up the police and the armed forces but cut health and fire services.

The Fire Brigades' Union is organising to fight back. We must give them our full support.

Yours fraternally
Jim Hooker
Handsworth Labour Party
Birmingham

A frightening thought for tomorrow

Dear Comrades

Talking to a nursing sister working for an agency locally, she told me that at one nursing home in Worthing charging £180 per week, one tea bag had to do for two cups. No doubt this is the sort of freedom of choice the Tories have in mind for health.

One bloke where I work found out that having a tooth capped cost £95—with porcelain not gold. NHS dentists, as every comrade will know, are a rare species these days.

As this worker remarked, still feeling numb, it takes a hell of a lot of overtime to cover just a single capping. With 20% inflation forecast for 1979 what's it going to be tomorrow and the day after? A frightening thought.

Yours fraternally
Mike Singleton
AUEW

Thanks from a travelling comrade

Dear Comrades

I want to thank 'Militant'. For one year I was working in the United States, isolated in an entirely different culture. In such a situation it is easy to forget your lessons, to think everything is different.

Information about the 'old country', as the Americans say, was rare, although travellers brought some news. 'Militant' reported about the important events in and for the British labour movement and in other countries and, most important, explained them clearly and patiently.

By thoroughly studying the paper each week I understood better and better the things that were happening in this big and surely confusing country, and I could actually learn from them.

Thanks Comrades
Dieter Affeln
SPD Hamburg

Defend Direct Works against the cuts

Dear Comrades

In the five years I've worked for Oldham Direct Works, I've seen the department slowly run down.

When I started as an apprentice, working for Direct Works seemed very attractive. They had good apprentice schemes, the wages were higher than in private industry and there was more security of employment.

Since then the labour force has dropped from 90 to 52 in the painting and decorating section and the same is true of the others. Workers have left because wages haven't kept up with the rest of industry.

Direct works is not getting the big contracts it used to. Private firms have started undercutting, and most repairs are now contracted out to them. Because of all this, direct works no longer seems as attractive to workers.

At the same time as the labour force has dropped, the amount of supervision has gone up from 4 in charge of 90 five years ago to 10 in charge of 52 now. With the election of the Tory government, the department will be further run down. Work such as painting and maintenance in schools and repairs to social services' old peoples' homes will be cut back.

Already the Tory Council have been giving people money towards decorating council houses they're moving into—the money is nowhere near enough, not even for materials. This doesn't leave much work for us.

The future for jobs in direct works looks grim, with more cuts to come. We should campaign for the defence of direct works departments and nationalisation of the building industry instead of shelling out vast amounts of public money to cowboy private firms.

Fraternally
John North
Oldham Direct works
& LPYS

Did 'Militant' get it wrong?

Dear Mr Shrivess

In a document recently circulated to POEU Branches by the Militant Defence Campaign, the following statement appeared:—

"At a meeting of Cardiff External Branch one member correctly explained about the press coverage of the dispute, saying the press just put the management point of view all the time. 'It depends on which paper you read', another member replied and pointed to the 'Militant'. The Chairman agreed that the 'Militant' has always had

good coverage from the workers' side."

As Chairman of the Cardiff External Branch I am naturally concerned that any statements made, relating to either the Branch or myself, are factually correct. A discussion with fellow officers, committee, and Branch members confirmed my view that the report was incorrect.

I can, therefore, state categorically that the events described did not take place at any meeting of the Cardiff External Branch. Further-

more, I am at a loss to understand how such a report was concocted, or by whom.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you would publish an apology and a statement retracting the report, giving the same publicity and circulation to the retraction as you gave to the offending item.

Yours sincerely
PF Daly
Branch Chairman
Cardiff External Branch
POEU

Roger Shrivess replies for the Defence Campaign

In addition to sending the above letter to the Defence Campaign, Cardiff External Branch have also circulated a similar letter to POEU branch secretaries. We wonder why they are raising this point now?

Are the officers of Cardiff External Branch, by waxing indignant over this, trying to throw dust in the eyes of POEU members in relation to protests about John Golding's high-court libel action against the 'Militant'?

If, by challenging another report, they are hoping to create doubts about the

accuracy of our report on the January meeting of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, we would point out that six NEC members have confirmed 'Militant's' report that John Golding voted against the inclusion of the 35-hour week in Labour's EEC manifesto (on the grounds that it could only be implemented on an all-European basis).

'Militant' naturally values its reputation for accurate reporting, and is always willing to publish corrections and to allow the right of reply.

However, the first point about Cardiff External's letter, which they do not

mention, is that the lines they are complaining about—as was made clear in the bulletin—first appeared in the 'Militant' over a year ago, in our issue of 1st September 1978. As no one had challenged its accuracy before, the Defence Campaign saw no reason why it should not reprint the article in its recent bulletin.

The reference to members of Cardiff External was one of many to branches, branch officers, and individual members who had enthusiastically praised the 'Militant' for its support of the POEU members' fight for the 35-hour week, and for its thorough,

accurate reporting of the workers' case.

Our report a year ago was based on what we considered reliable information from POEU members. If, however, the Chairman of Cardiff External now says that he never praised the 'Militant', we are willing to accept that there must have been a mistake, and gladly apologise for any embarrassment that this may have caused.

From the overwhelming support for 'Militant' received from POEU branches and members, as well as from other organisations of the labour movement, in our defence against John Gol-

ding's action, we would think that it can hardly be so very damaging to be credited with praising the 'Militant's' coverage of the POEU's 35-hour week industrial battle from the workers' side.

Finally, on behalf of the Militant Defence Campaign, I would like to thank all those branches and the many individual members of the POEU who have made clear their condemnation of John Golding's action in taking high court action against a socialist newspaper and expressed their support for 'Militant' on this issue.

KEEPING UP WITH INFLATION

The value of money is falling at an alarming rate. According to "reliable sources", price rises are far higher than the popular press let on. This news make it even more important that we reach our modest target of £85,000 by the end of the year.

This week's total of £1391 is up on last weeks but is still not keeping pace with the £2,700 needed each week.

Look at it this way: from now on each £1 you give us will cost you less. The Financial Times [for the bosses] on 20th October reported that the 'Underlying trend is usually best indicated' by a price index running at 23.1% per annum!

But it does of course depend on which paper you read. The 'Daily Star' (for the workers) on the same day included the report 'Inflation last month soared to 16½%... government officials are confident that 17½% will be the peak'. (page 6)

A member of Totnes LPYS, N. Prouse, makes the point in a letter received this week:—

"Dear Comrades, Inside, you will find a postal order for £3 towards the Militant Fighting Fund. I am sorry that it is not more but I have not received my tax rebate (which I was hoping to send you this week) yet. As soon as I get it, if I get it, I will send it on to you.

After a short time in Totnes Young Socialists, I think that every time a young boy does a paper round, he is canvassing for the Tories, and their system. So the need for a socialist paper which will appeal to the masses of workers is imperative. The Militant can and will be this paper.

I will try my hardest to make regular donations to the fighting fund.

Yours Fraternally,
Nigel Prouse.
(Totnes LPYS and USDAW)

More tax rebates came in this week £45 from C Ramage (E London), £35 M Harbour (Stockport) £50 donations from K Hardisty (Newcastle N LPYS) and from a London couple are the biggest ones this week, but thanks to the following for other amounts of £20+: M Harkness (NUM, Dalkeith), J Legg (E Kilbride), a North Liverpool reader, J North (Oldham), GMWU member (London) and supporters in Shipley and Gwent.

Nine tenners were also no doubt helped by tax rebates and back pay. Students I Barrett, A Hill and R Thorp obviously believe in putting a proportion of their grants to the best use (any more before the term gets older?) while some of the others were from T Whitehouse (Oxford) A Allenby (Havant) and R

By
Steve Cawley

MacArthur (London).

Two dozen readers responsible for fighting Fivers include; M Hinks (NUPE Birmingham) (from a bet), M Gray (Ealing North LPYS), G Waring (Fleetwood LPYS), A Rogers (M.E.P., East Wales), J Lake (Secretary, Bridlington Labour Party), P Spooner and 'Pinky' (both Hull), and G Gill (Poeu, West London) and S Sanderson (Huddersfield).

Between £1 and £4 came from M + J McMurdo (Huddersfield), H Dunn and P Smith (both Blackpool), B Duncan (Banff, North Scotland), L Smith and J Beeson (Plymouth Sutton LPYS) P Felton (Middleton, Manchester), J Harding, (Bridlington NUPE), P Gregg (Luton LPYS), J Woollis (Cleethorpes LPYS) and P Brown and R Margetts (Liverpool NGA).

All the comrades who gave us £1 at the Hounslow curry evening, courtesy of Tilly, culinary director, helped us that evening to £48.27. Other £1s included S Marchini (twice), G Smith (Keighley CLP), G Park (Edinburgh North CLP), H Erasmus (school student, South Wales) D Mitchell (Cleethorpes LPYS), R Filer (Bristol), M Hindley (NW Leeds LPYS), N Cassidy (W London), and two members of Luton LPYS, M Murphy and D Gilchrist.

A good £22 was collected at a Southampton meeting against the cuts, £12 in Huddersfield and tenners from Redruth, Bristol and Manchester came from appeals, after expenses. Merseyside students forwarded £24 after NOLS meetings, whilst LPYS branches to have raised money for us included this week Garston, Bracknell (again!) and Newcastle.

Once again groups of trade unionists have sent us their regular donations: quite modest amounts per week look huge taken over the year. Thanks particularly to supporters in Knowsley, Bootle and at GEC Manchester.

Perhaps it's a sign of the times, but our largest single fund-raising item this time is £62 from jumble sales in Wales, Manchester and Yorkshire. However on the brighter side, over £56 came from badges, mainly from South London. Various wagers, games of more chance than skill, etc, left us £33.23 Why give satisfaction to a book-maker when you get the same thrill plus the satisfaction of having a go at the

Build

Area	Received
Eastern	2,603
Hants & IOW	2,199
Humberside	1,283
London North	5,435
London South	3,081
Manchester & Dist	2,127
Merseyside	2,406
Midlands East	2,085
Midlands West	5,527
Northern	3,042
Scotland East	1,594
Scotland West	1,979
South East	3,304
South West	1,947
Wales East	1,259
Wales West	2,078
Yorkshire	3,336
Others	9,932
Total	55,217

TARGET FOR THE YEAR - £85,000

Tories when you enter one of our competitions?

Last but not least, thanks to those whose contributions were from skittles, scrap metal, decorating fees, insults, post jumble-sale blues, sponsored walks, coffee, bed and breakfast.

Please continue to rattle tins and collect the extra change from the sales of Militant. We want the day to come as soon as possible when we can put into practice the ideas of Cde Prouse's letter

when a mass circulation socialist daily aims to lift and inspire our class, instead of spreading distortions and confusion.

But we need your material help NOW to set us on that road. Can YOU afford a regular weekly or monthly donation, be it pounds or pence? Write and tell us YOUR experiences in introducing Militant to your mates, and your commitment to building our socialist paper.

ads

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SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY

LANCASHIRE Militant Day School. 'What Trotsky Really Stood For'. Saturday November 3rd. Venue: Students Union Building Preston Polytechnic, Fylde Road, Preston. Refreshments, Bar and Crèche facilities

Agenda
10.30 a.m. Introduction; Film 'October 1917' Eisenstein.
12.30 p.m. Lunch
1.15. Discussion 'Trotsky, his ideas and their relevance today'.
Speaker, Jeremy Birch (Selly Oak LP & Militant Editorial Board). Film 'Mysteries of the Organism' (Reich), Rise of Fascism in Germany (banned in USA)
5.30 Close
6 p.m. Bar Open
8 p.m. Disco till late (50 p on door).
Price: all day £1 on door, 50p day session.

SOUTH LONDON Militant Readers' Meeting 'What Next after Labour Party conference?'
Speakers: Ray Apps (Brighton Kempton CLP delegate to conference); Gerry McManus (Vauxhall LP delegate). Tuesday October 30th, 7.45 pm, Deptford Town Hall, New Cross Road, London S.E.14. Stations New Cross, New Cross Gate (BR, LT)

ROCHDALE, ROYTON AND HEYWOOD Anti-racism sub-committee 'Fight Tory Immigration Laws'. Speakers: Javed Iqbal (Moss Side LPYS) and a representative of action group on immigration and nationality. Sunday October 28th, 2.30 pm, Labour Room, Smith Street, Rochdale

PECKHAM LPYS Public Meeting 'The Fight Against the Tories'. Speakers: Nick Bradley and Stuart Holland MP. Monday 29th October, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5. 7.30 pm

DAY SCHOOL, Sheffield Park LPYS and City Polytechnic Labour Club. 'The fight against youth unemployment'. Speakers include Jim McDonald (ROSAC chairman, BSC Corby); Richard Giborn (Euro MP); Graham Johnson (chairman, NE Derbyshire Labour Party); Jack Brown (chairman, Barnsley Trades Council).
11.00 am-4.00 pm, Sunday 28th October, Main Hall, Phoenix Building, Students' Union, Pond Street, Sheffield. Admission 20p, food and soft drinks available.

WOKINGHAM Constituency Labour Party 'Socialist Day'
Sunday 28 October 1-10 p.m. South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell
1.30: 'Which Way for the Labour Party?'—a debate between Alan Furley (Wokingham CLP) & Lynn Walsh (Militant Editorial Board).
4.30 pm: 'Youth in the Labour Party'—Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer) Crèche, Bookstall, social in the evening. Price £1.50 (including free beer); children free.
For tickets contact: TF Pearce, 16 Wagbullock Rise, Bracknell, Berks. Tel: Bracknell 21858, or on the door.

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HEATHROW: MAKE STRIKE OFFICIAL!

The dispute at Heathrow airport involving the long haul drivers [PSV and HGV] has now broadened.

One of the main issues was the attempt by British Airways management to arbitrarily impose the so-called 'pink roster' [see last week's report] which the drivers claimed contravened the new EEC laws.

An Enforcement Officer from the Ministry of Transport was called in to determine the legal situation but at the last moment because of the dispute—the Ministry didn't want to get involved. At the National Sectional Panel meeting however, management completely dropped the 'pink roster' from the discussion, thereby passively admitting that they were in the wrong.

The drivers are now fighting for the preservation of their living conditions. They have proposed that drivers work five days on, three off, which would provide adequate cover for sickness and leave and give the drivers at least one weekend off in three.

Management have rejected the union suggestions, and proposed an alternative four days on, two days off roster which is within both the EEC laws and the drivers national agreement but would provide no cover for workers, giving them at most one weekend off in every five. Lack of drivers at any time would then be made up through hiring out to sub-contractors.

**Steve Clare
(Uxbridge LPYS)
spoke to
Heathrow pickets**

As convenor Dave Peel said "the proposals are completely reactionary—they would put working conditions for the long haul drivers thirty years back, involving split rest days and constant changes from day to night work."

Feeling is running higher than ever. As one driver stated "I'd just jack the job in now rather than go back on their terms."

Mass meeting

The dispute has gone to ACAS, but no settlement is in sight. The district and national union offices are still refusing to make the strike official. In fact they recommended a return to work, but at a mass meeting this week 170 of the 190 drivers rejected their advice. The union officials left early, again!

The dispute has led to more contact between the various sections of the T&GWU on the airport. Engineers are blacking any components that come into the airport through other means. If British Airways win this dispute, the other sections face threats to their working conditions.

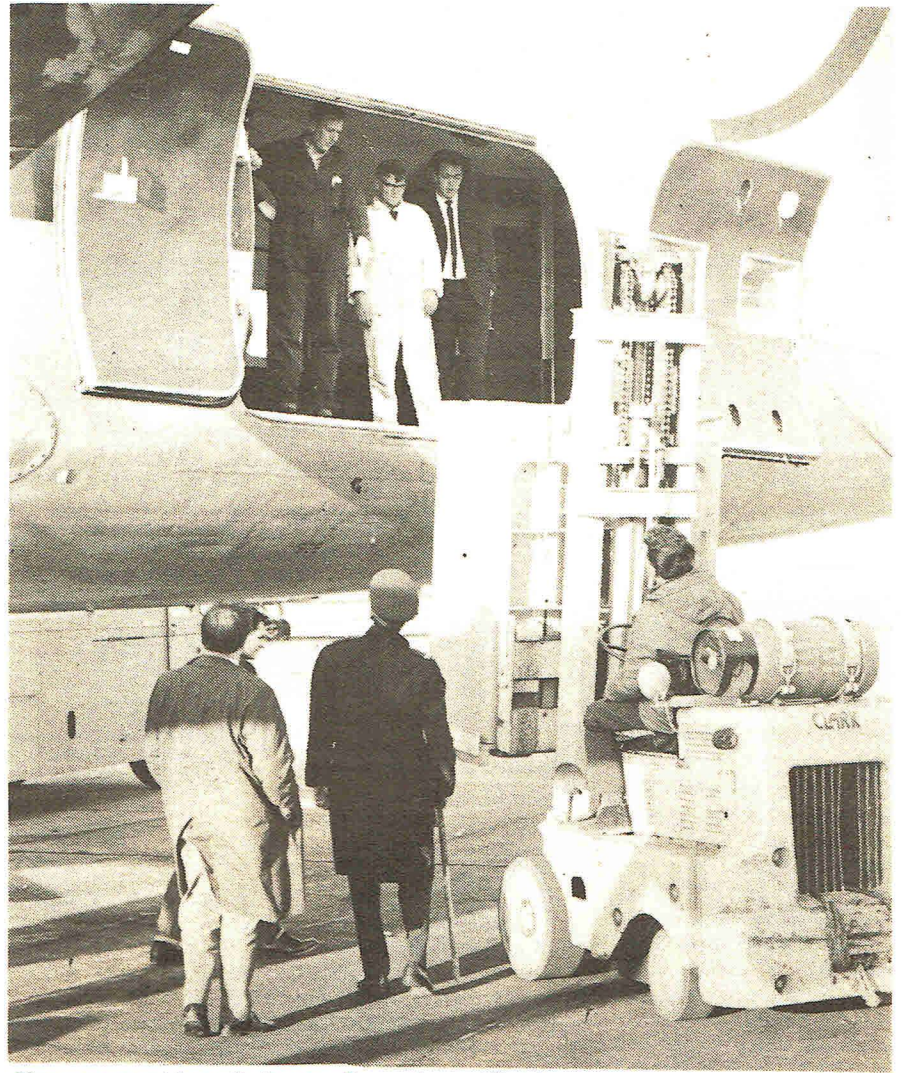
Shop stewards already meet regularly but if this system was strengthened with regular report-backs to their members, management would be less willing to provoke confrontations. A unified workforce would be a powerful weapon!

One shop steward summed up the situation: "This dispute can easily be summed up—management has not prepared to respect the intellectual ability of the workforce. Our suggestions would give the same work coverage with approximately the same workforce and at the same time both sides would retain some account of flexibility."

Yet again, the incompetence of British management has been demonstrated at Heathrow. The drivers are determined to resist these attacks, even if union officials fail to provide the support they should.

Round the clock pickets have been organised and most goods are being turned away. Morale remains high.

Management is assured of Tory backing in any assault on trade union rights—it is the responsibility of the T&GWU to back the Heathrow drivers to the hilt. **The strike must be made official.**



If management have their way, the workers will only get one weekend off in every five, at most

Saudi Crown dispute -

WE SHALL NOT BE SLAVES

The 'Saudi Crown', registered at Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, is laid up in King Edward Dock, North Shields. The crew, mainly from the Maldives and Sri Lanka, are refusing to let the ship sail.

On Monday night the bosses smuggled a German crew on board and attempted to sail the boat out.

But the crew, dressed in their sleeping garments rushed off the ship and stood on the quay. Without them it was impossible for the ship to sail.

Behind this dispute is a sickening story of exploitation and a barbaric form of slavery.

The contract signed by crew members gives the owners and agents 'ownership' of the crew for an indefinite period. The wages

paid are well below internationally agreed minimum rates.

An ordinary seaman receives a wage of about £60 per month. For this he is forced to work as many hours as the officers dictate, 7 days a week without any overtime payment.

The International Labour Organisation's agreed rate is £95 a month for a 5-day week, plus overtime and weekend payments.

The crew spokesman, Ibrahim Manik, told me that they are afraid to return to Jeddah. The crew of the Saudi Crown's sister ship the 'Saudi Prince' was involved in a similar dispute and on their return, the owner, accompanied by armed police, arrested the crew and confiscated all their money.

Ibrahim told me of some of the crew's other complaints. £45 of their wages is supposed to be paid direct to their families, but the last payment was in July and then only £20. They want to know where the money has gone.

The ship's stewards work a 15-hour day and when they finish they have to do the laundry, which can take them till 2 o'clock in the morning. Despite a promise of extra money none has been received.

Ibrahim is 32 years of age and has a wife and two children. He has worked since he was 14, and has been a qualified engineer for many years. "With my experience I should be earning four or five

times as much as I am now," he told me. "I can only terminate my contract at Singapore, so as long as the ship never goes there I can't leave."

They have been robbed and swindled by unscrupulous owners who care nothing for the crew or their families. Despite the threat of reprisals the crew are determined to hold out.

"There comes a point where you have to fight back. We can't remain slaves all our lives. We have been fair with the officers and they have treated us like the dirt on the road," Ibrahim added.

Today in Workington the German-registered ship 'Birkenhien' is anchored while its Chilean crew fight over the same sort of issues. Jim Woods of the National Union of Seamen described it as traffic in human flesh.

Send messages of support to Ibrahim Manik, Saudi Crown, King Edwards Dock, North Shields, Tyne & Wear.

By Jeff Price

(Newcastle North CLP)

Tugmen and pilots have blacked the 'Saudi Crown', where the crew are striking against 'slave' wages.

INCO 'DANGEROUS JOBS' WORKERS STRIKE

Seven hundred and fifty workers are now on strike in the West Wales Inco plant at Clydach.

They are determined to achieve their 35% wage claim and improved pension scheme. The plant, which produces nickel pellets, is at a complete standstill after a mass meeting last week rejected the 27% company offer.

The strikers are receiving support from other Inco workers in Britain and overseas. The Canadian workers, who have pledged their help, earlier this year ended a nine-month strike after the company conceded a 34% increase and a cost of living agreement.

Last year the Clydach workforce accepted a rise of 7.4% after management pleaded poverty and the government's 5% norm. However the national average wage increase turned out to be in the region of 16.5%.

In 1979 in Clydach alone

Arthur Evans (Craft Convenor) & John Lewis (T&GWU Branch Sec.) spoke to Mike Williams

the company produced £140 million worth of exports. So you can guess the sort of profits being made.

"With inflation verging on over 20% and the 10% really owed us from last year's agreement, we have put in a justified claim of 35%. On top of this we want pension negotiation rights as a top priority."

In the last twelve years the company pension has only increased once. Inco is receiving pensions only every five years and has only just promised "meaningful discussions" as the next review was not until 1981!

"There are millions of pounds in the pension fund but it is not being used for the benefit of retired members. Some members are on as little as £12 a month and we even

have widows on £11 a month."

This scandal must be ended without delay. The work at the plant is highly dangerous, involving materials which produce deadly cancer-inducing poisons. In the refinement of nickel, for instance, nickel carbonyl gas is given off which induces cancer of the lung and nasal cavities.

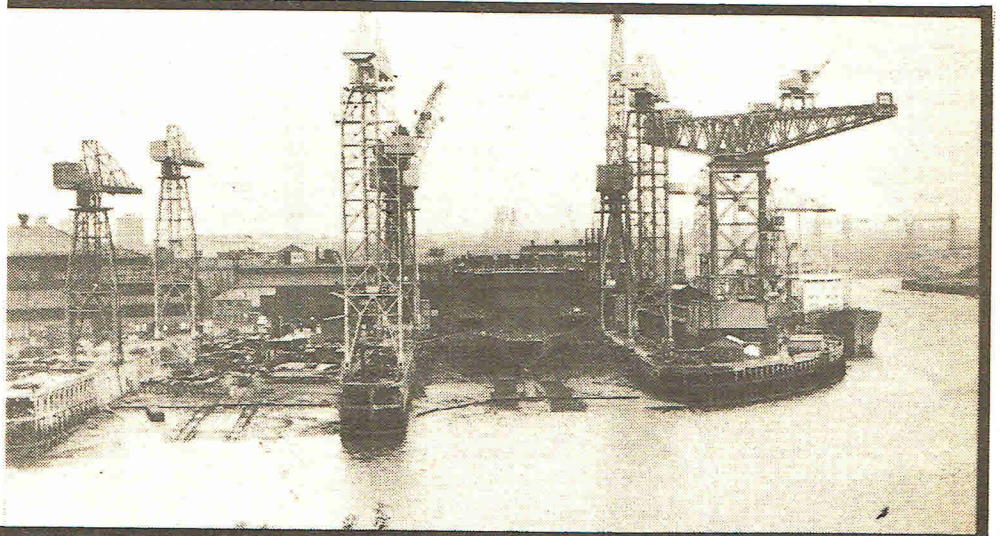
"This is the only company in Europe in this field and few GPs know about these diseases, so we have to rely on the company doctor for diagnosis."

There are adequate safety precautions, but this is due to trade union pressure. The men offered the company safety cover when the strike began, but the company turned it down.

Despite the hazards, the average wage for craft workers is only £79.50 a week; the average production wage is £70. This is far short of the average rates in the area.

"The workforce is united in this claim. We are therefore calling on all our fellow brothers who handle Inco products to black them."

Messages of support and donations should be sent to JR Lewis, Pensford Grange, School Road, Abercrave, near Swansea.



LEYLAND'S FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

The so-called Leyland recovery plan means a continuation of the chaotic twists and turns that have battered the firm in the past.

While management subsidise the sporting pastimes of the monarchy out of workers' pockets, such is the depth of the crisis facing Leyland and the British car industry that even the belated and utopian attempts to make up lost ground by partially modernising outdated plant and equipment, is to be accompanied by mass sackings and speed-ups.

Years of under-investment and mismanagement have reduced Leyland to a completely uncompetitive position in world and even home markets, out-paced by more efficient overseas rivals.

The press hailed BL chairman Edwardes as the saviour of Leyland, ready to sort out the unco-operative workforce. But his long-term plans have never been published.

There can no longer be any doubt that he is aiming at the complete break-up and denationalisation of the Leyland empire—wasn't that what he was brought in for?

Leyland is at the forefront of the fight against the de-industrialisation of Britain, with all that this would mean—massive unemployment, falling living standards and super-exploitation of those lucky enough to have a job.

Edwardes himself admits where the real root of Leyland's problems lie: "Motor industry observers will cite a history of completely inadequate invest-

By Bill Mullins

(Senior Shop Steward
SDI Rover Solihull)

ment. Not enough money was put back into the business, so new models became fewer and outdated factories remained in production which our competitors have been buying modern manufacturing equipment." ('News of the world' 21.10.79)

So what has been the response of the TU leaders to the onslaught on their Leyland members?

"Edwardes is the best boss Leyland has got," Ken Barker, President of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions told a meeting of Leyland convenors in Birmingham on 13th October. At that stage the Confed was still publicly opposing the Edwardes plan!

Bro. Baker went on to tell us that he had looked over the precipice (of opposition to Edwardes) and pulled back. The Confed EC then tried to get the convenors to support the Edwardes plan, but failed.

Ignoring the decision of this meeting to oppose the redundancies, the Confed EC then publicly gave "strong support" to the Edwardes plan.

Further confusion was caused when it was pointed out that the General Executive of the Leyland workforce, had already voted



BL workers on their recent march to save jobs

Photo: MILITANT

against the plan, but did not intend to campaign for a definite no vote in the management ballot.

In Rover, at meetings of the BL combine shop stewards' committee, a body not recognised by management or the trade union officials, we pointed out from the beginning that while welcoming the original stand of the Confed EC (prior to October 13th) the Combine should draw up its own battle plans against the closures and sackings.

But the leadership of the Combine, particularly the

But these were hollow threats. How could Leyland be closed completely? The whole of the West Midlands would have to be closed down.

It would mean tens and hundreds of thousands of redundancies throughout the region, where most employment is based on car and component manufacture. Even Mrs Thatcher knows she couldn't get away with that.

The fight to save Upper Clyde Shipbuilders forced management and the Tories to back-track, showing all workers the way to fight

of action:

★ All factories under threat of closure or partial closure should set up occupation committees now. We should not wait for the closure dates, which have staggered over the next 18 months.

★ The Combine should call a one-day strike of all 13 factories under threat, to show the rest of Leyland that they will fight.

★ This should be followed up with an all-Leyland one-day strike.

★ The Combine EC should

THE BOSSES ARE TO BLAME

leading Communist Party convenors, opposed this, saying we shouldn't rock the boat and upset the national officials while "they were on our side."

This failure to give a lead in fighting the plan, combined with Edwardes' blatant blackmail threat—he warned that if there is a 'no' vote he would not ask for financial support from the government and Leyland would close down completely—means that there is likely to be a majority vote in favour of the BL management's measures.

redundancies and unemployment. In the last week, the determined campaign by Robb Caledon shipyard workers forced the nationalised British Shipbuilders to abandon their plan to close the yard.

Even now it is not too late. A real fight for jobs would outweigh any number of empty words and pieces of paper.

The Executive of the BL combine committee should recall the combine immediately. We should go into battle with a clear programme

co-ordinate the occupation plans if management refuses to budge then the plans should be put into effect.

Combined with this, the Combine should carry out a mass propaganda campaign with leaflets and press statements, exposing the Edwardes' plans.

We must clearly show his real aims and spell out the alternative—the nationalisation of the whole of the motor industry under workers' control and management as part of a socialist planned economy.

WEST MIDLANDS BUSES

'OUT OF THE FRYING PAN'

On Tuesday 16 October only Coventry buses were running in the whole of the West Midlands due to the strike by semi-skilled workers. Full-time T&GWU and G&MWU officials were meeting management with senior shop stewards at the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive's head office.

A mass meeting was called on Wednesday 17th at Digbeth Civic Hall, with full time officials and the negotiating committee recommending a return to work. It was a very stormy meeting.

The only thing management were offering was consolidation of previous pay awards into basic rates and a watered-down version of the previous productivity agreement. We were told management would not pay us for the time we had been on strike but we would get paid for the day of the meeting.

Even though there was a majority for returning to work, many members feel that they were sold down the river—the only thing we got out of it was consolidation. This means that a cleaner will get about £63, a mechanic (II) £68.28 and a mechanic (I) £73.00 for a 40 hour week. The people who will benefit most will be those who work overtime.

The local paper, the 'Evening Mail' stated that the semi-skilled mechanics received £80 a week, and that the productivity package was worth between £2-£9 a week. These figures are a complete exaggeration—as usual with this Tory paper, when giving figures for workers earnings.

With our annual pay award due in January, and the drastic cuts in transport expenditure, our membership should be demanding a £70 minimum wage, a 35-hour week without loss of pay, extra holidays and retirement at 60.

After our return to work, the Craft Negotiating Committee, representing skilled workers, met management to talk about differentials. They told management they would impose sanctions and will not work with the mechanics.

Management have jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

BARTON HYMATICS- STRIKERS STAND FIRM

For the last 30 weeks a handful of workers have been on strike at Barton Hymatics. They are fighting for union recognition, better wages and an improvement in working conditions.

Production is at a standstill. A pneumatic hoist produced for the Coal Board stands rusting in the yard—the NUM have blacked it.

The owner/managing director asked a worker to spy on his workmates when they were about to join the AUEW.

When the strike began he

By David Behan

(Sec. Bromsgrove &
Redditch LPYS)

offered to 'look after' two workers if they black-legged and helped to keep production going. They refused, and were sacked on the spot.

The rates of pay at this firm leave a lot to be desired. They were paying a 20 year old in the drawing office 65p

per hour. Promised bonuses were not paid at Christmas—management offered the workers £2 bonus or sandwiches in the pub over the road!

The working conditions fall short of luxury, to put it mildly. There are large holes in the floor. There was flooding in the welding shop during the winter: the workers were told to carry on working.

There was no heating in the shop, and the workforce went on strike due to the cold. After lunch, when it was

warmer, they restarted.

An unqualified young worker was told to strip down a heater and rewire it. He refused, as he was not qualified, and was dismissed for alleged 'gross misconduct'. The heater, by the way, contravened safety regulations.

Help is urgently needed here. Messages of support and any financial help you can spare should be sent to Barton Hymatics Strike Fund, 40 Dragoon Fields, Aston Fields, Bromsgrove.

LESNEYS

BOSSES

TRY IT ON

The EETPU members at Lesneys in Hackney are at the moment back on day work. (See last week's article on 'Matchbox' dispute).

Management, however, doing their usual about-face, are saying that the token £1,500 payment for the sparksto return (about £35 per man) is a payment to buy out the 1974 agreement.

'No way' say the sparks. Union members consider

management's manoeuvring to be an insult. Negotiations are continuing, but this hard won agreement will not be taken away for peanuts.

Last week's article referred to the drivers at Lesneys, who played a key role in the EETPU members' victory, as TGWU members. A substantial number belong to the United Road Transport Union (URTU), and deserve their share of the credit.

Militant

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ROBB CALEDON SHIPYARD - WORKERS VICTORY BUT FIGHT GOES ON

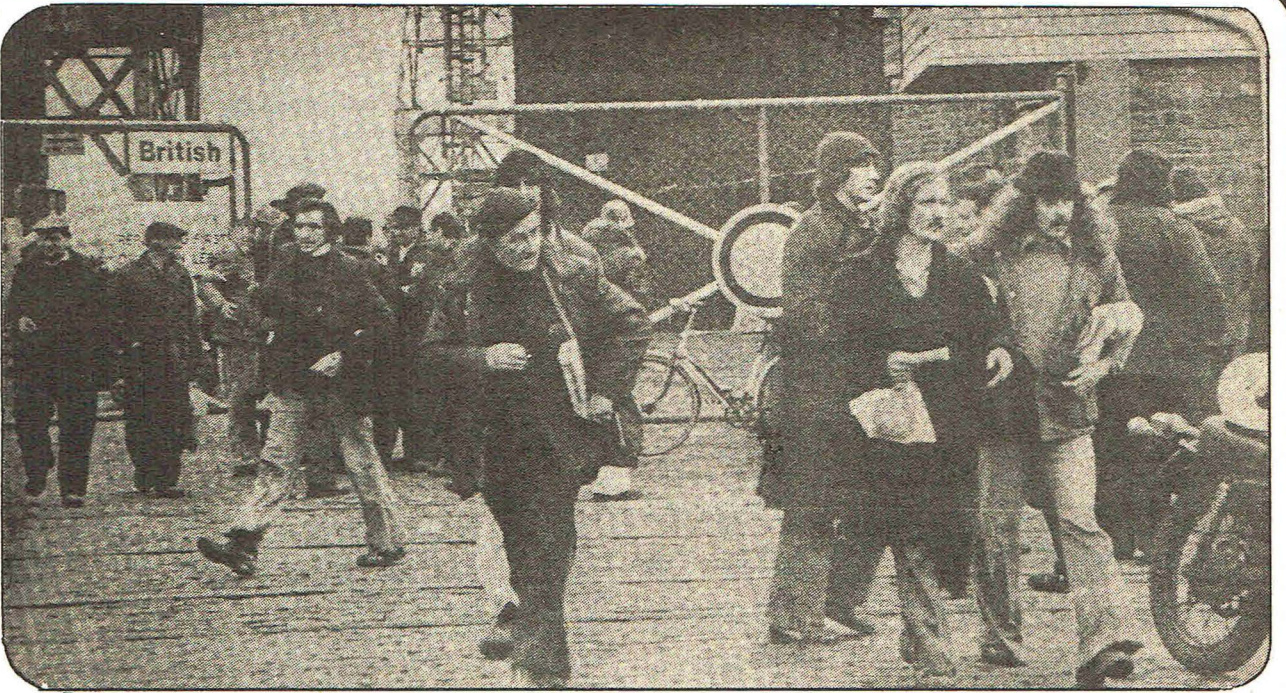
By determined action against threatened closure, the workers of Robb Caledon shipyard, Dundee, have shown how many Tory plans can be thwarted.

On Friday, 19 October, the Polish bulk carrier, Bytom, was launched from the Robb Caledon shipyard, Dundee. This ended the ban on all launches, sea-trials and deliveries imposed by the workers when British Shipbuilders announced the

By Pat Craven

closure of the yard as part of their "corporate plan" for the industry.

After the September vote at the Blackpool Shipbuilding delegate conference to accept Brit-



Robb Caledon workers: struggle continues

ish shipbuilders' revised plan which spelt the end of shipbuilding in Dundee — the Caledon workers unanimously resolved to carry on the fight to save the yard.

Dundee workers were just not prepared to see the yards put on a "care and maintenance" basis, accept "voluntary" redundancies, and sit on a working party to examine 'the possibility' of introducing ship-repair and off-shore oil work.

Only the retention of shipbuilding could secure employment for the yard's 1,100 workers.

Now the yard has been granted a reprieve. The workers have achieved a remarkable victory.

While nearly every other yard lifted the overtime ban and the other sanctions which were imposed when the plan

was first announced, Dundee continued to impose them. Instead of launching ships, they launched a campaign to save the yard.

A mass rally was held in Dundee. Delegations were sent to other yards, to the TUC and to the Labour Party conference. Mass meetings were convened to report back from these delegations and to keep the whole workforce involved in the action.

The first big success was the vote by Yarrow workers in Glasgow to overturn their shop stewards' recommendation and keep the sanctions — in support of the Caledon workers' action.

Now, thanks to their determination and solidarity, the workers have forced British Shipbuilders to renegotiate the clause in the Blackpool agreement which concerned Dundee.

The new agreement is a great advance on Blackpool.

It "reaffirms the retention of the yard with the potential for the construction of merchant ships" and gives the possibility of "continuity of employment for as many as possible of the existing employees, sustaining a balanced labour force commensurate with the needs of a shipyard."

Caledon workers have no illusions that, with a worldwide shipbuilding crisis, the future of any yard is guaranteed. There is still an enormous fight ahead.

But the great achievement of the Caledon workers is that they have shown how that fight should be conducted. They have demonstrated in practice that the fight can be won.

The argument that the Blackpool agreement was the only alternative has now been shown to be nonsense.

There are, of course, dangers ahead. Once the ships at present in the yard

have been delivered, British Shipbuilders could announce that the yard has failed to meet the level of productivity, reduced costs and delivery dates required, and therefore will have to be closed anyway.

Another, is that orders will merely be transferred to Dundee from another yard, leaving that yard in jeopardy.

The Caledon workers have shown the best way of facing up to these threats. In the last analysis, it will not be the level of productivity or other qualifications that will settle the issue, but the solidarity and strength of the campaign to keep the yard open.

The task now is to deepen and broaden the campaign to involve every shipyard and every other section of the labour movement in the shipbuilding areas.

The main demand must still be for the nationalisation of shipping, the modernisation of the yards, and a 35-hour week.

UNION POWER

dards and hard won rights of the working class.

The 'Guardian' predicted it would be the most controversial session since the 1945 Labour government. They intend in the first few months alone, to introduce legislation to:

- ★ strip the National Enterprise Board of many of its already limited powers.

- ★ strengthen private schooling and give parents "freedom of choice" [if they're rich that is].

- ★ sell off the aerospace industry and 'reorganise' shipbuilding with widespread redundancies.

- ★ try to lessen the power of the trade unions through a new Industrial Relations Bill.

Already, throughout the country, reactionary Tory councils have been taking advantage of the 'Tory freedom' to cut services to the bone. These latest attacks would even further redistribute wealth into the hands of the rich few.

The Tories claim that redistribution in favour of working people had "gone too far" under previous governments. A recent report by Professor Peter Townsend however, shows this to be utter nonsense.

Despite all the advances won by the working class since 1945, as much as one third of the population could be considered to be living below or near the poverty line.

The areas of high unemployment like Northern Ireland, Scotland etc, and especially groups like the old, one-parent families, and unskilled workers are particularly vulnerable.

Monday's 'Panorama' pro-

gramme interviewed a woman from Salford on how she managed to keep herself and her seven year old child on a grand total of £32 a week. Her rent took up £7 and gas £6 a week. Yet she is said to be ABOVE the official poverty line, which is clearly based on Victorian levels of deprivation.

Has redistribution "gone too far" for her? For her, keeping warm is a nightmare. She either has to sit in her coat or go to bed in cold weather because she can't afford huge heating bills.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Such levels of poverty, and FAR LOWER, still exist after thirty years of the 'welfare state'. What an indictment of the capitalist system! Now, even the pitifully small relief such as the free school meals, so grudgingly given to the poorest families, are under attack.

With five million people below the poverty line, and a further eleven million only just above it, any attempt to cut our services must be fought.

By Roger Shrives

And the Tories can be fought. Workers at 'The Times' and Robb Caledon have shown that, with determination, the bosses' plans for mass redundancies and for crippling blows at the working class can be halted.

Robb Caledon workers' campaign in the labour movement is an indication of what can be done [see above]. In Sheffield over 2,000 attended a public meeting on fighting the Tory-imposed cuts and trade unions have indicated their preparedness to fight, with indust-

rial action if necessary, to resist cutbacks [see page 3].

If the Labour leaders were to show the same degree of determination nationally, the effect would be enormous. A clear lead of outright opposition to all the Tory attacks on living standards is essential. A call for no cuts and no redundancies.

The attacks demand clear answers from the labour movement. Why are hospitals closing and schools in disrepair, when millions are out of work? We demand a major programme of public works, building new hospitals and new schools.

If the bosses say that such a programme would be impossible, because it is unprofitable, so be it. We would demand the nationalisation under workers' control and management of the few hundred monopolies whose interests lie behind these Tory attacks.

The fight must be stepped up to resist these Tory attacks; a fight for an end to the Tory government and the capitalist system which brings nothing but unemployment, cutbacks and poverty for the working class.

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