

FIGHT BACK AGAINST TORY CUTS



More and more workers are moving into opposition to the Tories' attacks on working people. Regional demonstrations and meetings are a prelude to the mass lobby of Parliament against the cuts on 28 November.

By
Bob Wade

The 'Day of Action' called by the TUC must be turned into an organised day of mass activity and mobilisation, drawing in millions of workers.

One of the biggest of the recent demonstrations was in Lambeth, where 2,000 trade unionists and local people

marched against the cuts. In Liverpool, nearly 5,000 trade unionists, public sector workers and further education students demonstrated in torrential rain. In Newcastle, 7,000 marched—the largest section on the demonstration being a 300 strong contingent of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Trades councils in South Yorkshire, who initiated the call for the lobby on the 28th, and in

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ORGANISE MASS TURNOUT—NOVEMBER 28th

Occupations show students' anger at education cutback

Enraged at Tory education cuts, and especially at the crudely discriminatory way in which they are being introduced, over 50,000 students took part in college occupations and other action last Thursday.

The immediate issue was the Tory government's decision to force colleges to make huge increases in fees for overseas students.

At Queen Mary College, London, a union meeting of 1,000 students voted for a 24-hour occupation—400 occupied the administration block. This was the first occupation ever at the college. The local Trades Council and the campus trade unions supported the students' stand.

The NUPE workers said they were supporting

By
Peter Lush

the students because of the support given to them during last winter's low-pay strike. They called on the Students Union to

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Photo right: students march in Liverpool against the cuts



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LONG
WILL
SHE
LAST?

After six months of disastrous Tory government, what are its chances of survival. Analysis by Peter Taaffe, centre pages

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ZIMBABWE BEHIND THE TALKS

Worried that the time was running out for the consolidation of a neo-colonial regime in Zimbabwe, the Tories this week brought the Conference to breaking point.

Class polarisation inside Zimbabwe had increased with the continuation of the war. During the two and a half months of the conference alone, over 1,000 people have been killed, the equivalent of 10,000 in a country with Britain's population.

The aim of the Conference had always been to involve the Patriotic Front in a compromise deal—a deal accepting the inevitability of a radical African government but blocking the emergence of a regime which would follow Angola and Mozambique and overthrow capitalism in Zimbabwe.

The constitution was hammered out, but the real issue remained to the last—who would control the state forces, and whose army would be the base of a new Zimbabwe.

The Patriotic Front knew that to lay down their arms would be to sign their own death warrants at the hands of the murderous Muzorewa-Smith forces. Similarly, Muzorewa recognised that he would have no political future if 'his' army was disbanded.

British imperialism has backed the white-controlled army, hiding behind a smoke-screen of a few Commonwealth observers. They are demanding a ceasefire, with the white army in power.

If the whole of the Patriotic Front could not be brought into this sell-out, then British capitalism would try to split them, by trying to win over Nkomo and isolate the more radical Mugabe.

Last week, however, the Tories were already preparing the ground for all-out support for Muzorewa in the event of the Patriotic Front walking out. A Bill and draft constitution were rushed through parliament in order to put pressure on the Patriotic Front, particularly Nkomo, to make an agreement on the armed forces.

But even if such a deal was achieved, would it really lay the basis for a stable capitalist Zimbabwe? Undoubtedly, no!

The demand of the Zimbabwean masses for jobs, land and decent living conditions cannot be satisfied while landlordism and capitalism remain. Putting a black mask on a system does not alter its content.

Whatever the outcome of the Lancaster House conference, unless it results in the ending of capitalist exploitation, the struggle will continue.

The Muzorewa-Smith regime is incapable of taking this path. Only a government which took over industry and the land, and planned the economy for the benefit of all, could satisfy the aspirations of the Zimbabwe people.

By Jim Chrystie

Militant

How many more Tory cover-ups?

"I can see no case for a further round of Beeching cuts. Let me make it absolutely clear that the report in 'The Guardian' is untrue and I read it with astonishment.

"There have been no secret talks between my officials and the railways Board. I deplore the groundless anxiety which such inaccurate reports cause."

These indignant remarks came from Norman Fowler, the Transport Secretary, after reading in 'The Guardian' that British Rail were planning to axe 40 lines.

For several weeks now, 'Militant' has been publishing details from the confidential Rail Business Review, outlining the drastic cuts the bosses are planning, and extracts from letters showing how they were trying to hush up the proposals. Since 'The Guardian' took the cue from 'Militant' and also outlined the plans, Fowler has gone very quiet on the issue.

Why did Fowler try to make out that the plans

for cutbacks were nothing more than the figment of some journalist's imagination? Did he not know about these plans? Surely the Tories would not have us believe that a Minister of State, and a member of a government which has trumpeted its plans to cut public expenditure, does not know of the details of cuts in his own department?

These secret arms of the state are directed, not primarily against foreign powers, but against the labour movement.

The alternative could be that Fowler told a blatant lie. He, like the bosses of British Rail, knew that the severity of the cutbacks would be very unpopular. A memorandum between board members explained how the Board were to release only a section of the Business Review to the popular press—no doubt

they wanted to break the news gently to the public and over a lengthy period in an effort to defuse any opposition and to give the Tory press time to condition public opinion into accepting the cuts.

The confidential memorandum also says: "It is very important that neither the Minister nor the Department should initiate views to the public which could trammel us with a sense of failure."

Thanks to 'Militant', Fowler and the bosses have not been able to hood-wink the workers. But it is worth noting why the Tories, who came to power with rousing choruses of cut, cut and cut again, are taking such steps to keep the details of their public expenditure cuts away from the eyes of the public. Their Draconian plans are arousing widespread anger from the working people, including those who were tricked by the propaganda of the media into voting Tory, who had no idea of the real effects of the cuts.

So this time Fowler has been caught with his trousers down—but how many more secret documents concerning cuts of this scale are doing the rounds in the various departments and board rooms?

The Thatcher government is now taking extraordinary measures to tighten up state secrecy and even to control press comment about the government's performance. 'The Guardian' [13 Nov-

ember] recently revealed that the Central Office of Information is being used to monitor radio and television programmes and to exert pressure to ensure that government spokesmen have the last word.

In relation to official secrecy, the Tories are now pushing through a new Bill to strengthen their powers to curtail press freedom. The new Protection of Official Information Bill, which will be debated in Parliament near Christmas, will no doubt be presented as a 'reform' by the Tories because it abolishes the notorious section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

Thatcher is taking extraordinary measures to tighten state secrecy and control press comment about the government.

This means there will be no possibility of prosecution for revealing information in areas such as health and social security—but as the 'New Statesman' [9 November] pointed out, "Section 2 was never actually used in these areas anyway, and the new Bill offers no positive encouragement to more official disclosure."

But what the new Bill will do is give more powers for officials in the six areas already covered by the Official Secrets Act—these include defence and foreign affairs, security and intelligence and telephone tapping and mail opening.

In issue 473, 'Militant' published clear evidence of mail opening by someone connected with the Ministry of Defence—under the new law our report would be illegal.

The new Bill also covers "confidential information

from or about companies or nationalised industries"—no doubt the Rail Business Review would come into that category. The bosses, and also many Tories, would no doubt like to have the powers in this field such as those in the police states of South America. There the authorities can ban any news they like, and victimise and harass, and for that matter murder, journalists and workers who try to publish the truth. The difference is that in those countries, unlike Britain, the labour movement has been fettered or smashed.

In Britain, the Tories face a strong, well-organised, and confident working class, which will not stand by passively as the representatives of big business try to wipe out all the gains of the post-war period. That is why, in an effort to undermine opposition, the Tories are trying to give themselves stronger powers to suppress information—and to propagate falsehoods.

These steps must be resolutely opposed by the labour movement.

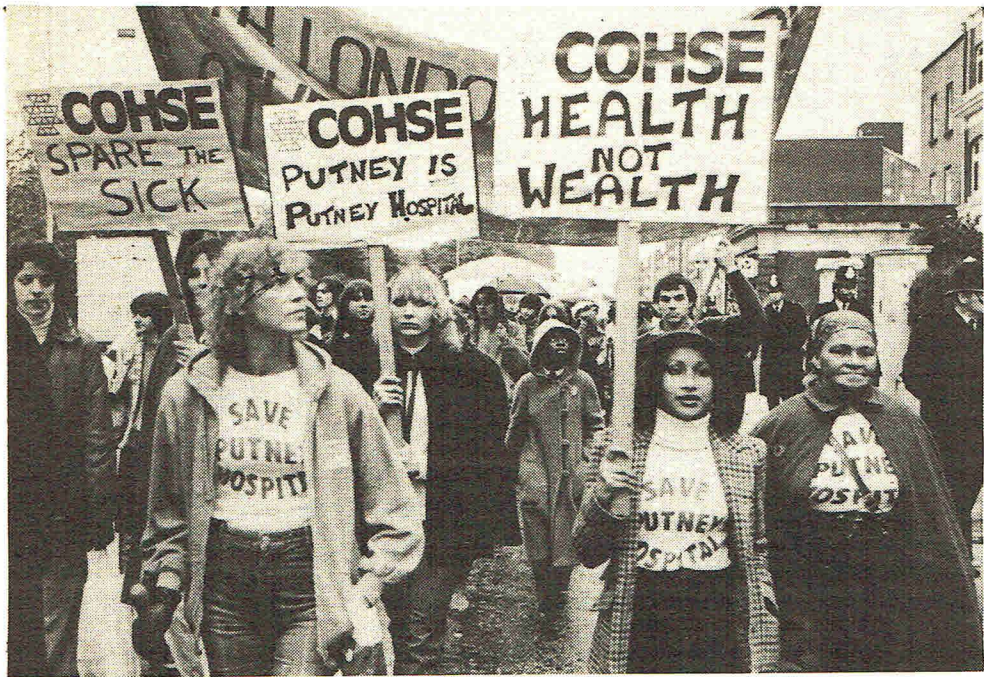
It is high time, as has been proposed by Tony Benn and other members of Labour's National Executive, that there should be a thorough enquiry, carried out by the labour movement itself, into so-called official secrecy and the activities of the intelligence services and the Special Branch.

The activities of these secret arms of the state are directed, not primarily against foreign powers, but against the "enemy at home", which for big business means the workers' organisations.

The case of the rail cuts, which the government has tried to keep secret—and would use legal powers to keep secret if its new Bill goes through—is a warning as to how a strengthened Official Secrets Act will be used against the labour movement.

LAMBETH TAKES TO THE STREETS

By
John Bulaitis
(National Committee,
LPYS)



One contingent of the 20,000 march, 7 November

Photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

"The Tory government has ordered Lambeth to cut £3 million this year, yet they're spending £3 million on a new heating system in Parliament... You can't keep most of the MPs awake as it is."

With these words of encouragement from Dennis Skinner MP, 10,000 Lambeth workers, supported by trade unionists from all over London, and beyond, began a march on Parliament last Wednesday.

The anger and size of this demonstration must have woken up many of those MPs to the determination of working people to fight this Tory government.

Every section of the labour movement was there: office and engineering workers,

tenants' associations, home helps, play groups as well. But most striking was the turnout of young people. Young firemen, young nurses and teachers, young apprentices from the direct labour, young NALGO members and students.

Lambeth teachers came out on a half-day strike. They were supported by their pupils!

School Students

A hundred school students from Vauxhall Manor School marched down Clapham High Street to the beginning of the march chanting: "Thatcher, we want you dead!"

As the march moved on from Clapham Common, the lamps of the Kent miners shone through the teeming rain. But the rain couldn't dampen the spirit of the marchers. Too much was at

stake. The stand of Lambeth Council, which has told the Tories: "We will not make any cuts," has generated enormous support from workers in Lambeth, and is a source of inspiration to workers up and down the country. As Ted Knight, Lambeth council leader, said at the rally that followed the march: "Labour councillors are elected on a mandate to defend the working class, not attack it—Lambeth Labour council will not do the Tories' dirty work."

Lambeth has given the lead. They must not stand alone. Every Labour council should follow suit and refuse to implement cuts.

The march in Lambeth last week showed the tremendous potential support that would be given to a Labour council prepared to make a stand.

CUCKOOED BY NEW TECHNOLOGY

Can't you hear the sighs of relief from the spas of Britain? 'The Times' is back on the breakfast table.

Retired colonels listening for cuckoos in Surrey must be relieved—for them, the absence of 'The Times' was as significant as, say, the departure of the ravens from the Tower or of the apes from the Rock of Gibraltar.

For the bosses it was a cruel blow. 'The Times' is their mouthpiece. It has a reputation for accurate reporting, objectivity and truth. As someone once said, it tells the truth 90% of the time, the more effectively to lie the other 10%.

For ordinary working people like us, the loss of 'The Times' would have zero importance but for the fact that 5,000 people depend on it for a living. The bosses used one of their most 'old fashioned' bludgements, the lock-out, in their attempt to introduce 'new technology' and throw half the workers on the scrap heap.

A couple of years ago 'The Times' said that if British industry introduced all the latest technology to bring it up to the level of its competitors, we would be 50% 'overmanned'. In other words it would mean 12 to 14 million unemployed.

Well, at least they tried to practice what they preach.

They set out to introduce computer type-setting in a way which, if successful would have led to the end of the skilled compositor.

Comps, like other workers, are not opposed to new technology on principle, but if it's an excuse to rob them of their livelihood they can and did, make it a non-starter. The bosses failed.

Times Newspapers Limited (TNL) wanted a guarantee of continuous production. We would all like to see that—but you can't force people to toe the company line with a scrap of paper. Continuous production depends on the attitude of management and on the availability of managers at any particular time who are able to take decisions.



They got a new disputes procedure. It starts from the principle of the status-quo—no changes in methods etc, without prior agreement.

They wanted it to include a clause establishing that if one section stopped work everyone would be off the payroll in 24 hours. From their point of view, that would give the procedure some teeth (or at least a tooth). It was extracted.

Some commentators have referred to the outcome as a compromise. I always thought a compromise was when both sides gave something! Whichever way we look at it, 'The Times' management failed in all their objectives, minor as well as major.

For instance, at one stage, they suggested an agreement saying breaks would be taken at the discretion of management.

The final version actually says 'with discretion'!

Let's tell it how it is: they were defeated. Defeated by what is probably the greatest example ever of unity, loyalty and determination by the print workers.

TNL counted on dividing the workers, playing off one section off against another. They actually created unity.

They also counted on the backing of the other newspaper bosses. They got it—for about a fortnight.

By then the others could see that TNL were on to a hiding to nothing, so they started to cash in by nicking 'The Times' ads and circulation.

Just to rub it in, they employed 'Times' workers on a casual basis, thus helping to sustain them through the eleven-month lock-out!

Now all the other papers

are lamenting that 'the Times' settlement will make it much harder for them to introduce 'new labour-saving technology' and will force them to pay higher wages.

They stabbed their colleague in the back and now they are crying because he was hurt. When thieves fall out...

It cost the Thompson Organisation £30 million to lose this fight (but they still made a profit of £137 million last year). No other press boss could bear that kind of cost to take on the unions and lose.

We all came out at the end with higher wages. That was when the issue of differentials came up. Whatever you think about differentials, you certainly can't have a negative one, i.e. the unskilled and semi-skilled getting more than the skilled.

That situation still exists for some of us and will take some sorting out. It will need discussion among more than one or two sections—everybody is involved, and this is one more reason why we need a joint negotiating committee of all unions at 'The Times'.

This is not the end of the road. TNL have not given up their aims. They have retreated to lick their wounds until they are ready to try to skin the cat by other means.

But the lessons of this dispute will stand everyone in good stead for the future.

What was brought out here was the question of how the marvels of modern science are to be used and in whose interest. That of a handful of millionaires, or of mankind as a whole?

By **Jim Brookshaw**
(AUEW, Times,
in Personal capacity)

LPYS

Saturday 2nd February is the date when the Tories will see again what working class youth, and many older workers, feel about their vicious cuts and massive unemployment. That's the date of the national demonstration 'Youth Against the Tories' which is being organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists.

It won't be a march past posh hotels in the West End of London. The march starts from Brixton, South London, where the cuts of the Wandsworth Tory council have hit especially hard, particularly for the thousands of unemployed black youth in the area. From Brixton, the march moves on to Lambeth, where the Labour council is resisting the cuts.

From Lambeth, we march across the river to a rally at Central Hall Westminster, where Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Dennis Skinner, Tony Saunois and Andy Bevan will be the main speakers.

The march will be an excellent opportunity for every LPYS branch to mobilise dozens and hundreds of the young workers and school students who are being thrown into political activity for the first time by the Tories' policies. In every area of the country, demonstrations, pickets and lobbies are taking place against the Tories.

If branches have supplies of the leaflets and broadsheet/posters, which will be available from Andy Bevan at Transport House in the next few days, they will be able to involve many of these young council workers, nurses, school students directly in the LPYS campaign.

There is no doubt that the campaign will get a sympathetic hearing in the Labour Party branches and trade union branches. Many will be prepared to send delegations, others to give financial support for unemployed and school students to attend.

If the campaign and demonstration is to fulfill its potential, it is vital the build-up work begins immediately, as the Christmas break will soon cut across meetings of the labour movement.

National Rally Against Tories

By **Kevin Ramage**

(National Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists)

ORGANISE NOW FOR FEBRUARY 2nd.

Assemble 12.00 am, Porden Road (near Brixton Tube) London S.W.2. Send-off rally with speakers from local labour movement, including Ted Knight (Leader Labour Group, Lambeth Council), and John Bulaitis (LPYS NC member, London)

March through Brixton and Lambeth to rally at Central Hall Westminster, 2.30 pm-5.00 pm. end.

Speakers include Tony Benn MP, Eric Heffer MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Tony Saunois (LPYS rep. on Labour's National Executive) and Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer)



London Demonstration, November 11th. Photo: Militant.

In Handsworth the LPYS had organised a local march and rally which attracted over 100 people to hear a representative from ZANU and Bob Ashworth, a Leyland shop steward who had recently visited black trade unionists in South Africa.

Over 3,000 people marched though London last Sunday in Support of the Zimbabwe liberation struggle and against the Tories' plans to consolidate a neo-colonial regime in the country.

Behind the Lancaster House talks, page 2

GET READY FOR NOV 28th

The mass demonstration and lobby of parliament initiated by the South Yorkshire labour movement on 28 November is an important milestone in the struggle against this vicious Tory government.

As the local labour movement paper 'Sheffield Forward' has stated—"In some quarters memories are being stirred of the battle of the Industrial Relations Act".

Nationally, the lead given has rapidly snowballed—with the AUEW and TGWU giving official support, together with regional councils of the TUC and a whole host of labour movement bodies.

In the South Yorkshire area, after mass leafletting and factory meetings thousands will converge on London. NUPE and NALGO have organised special trains to bring down lobbyists.

And the signs are that they

will represent one of the biggest expressions of working class political action in recent years.

This potentially tremendous movement needs to be clearly arrived to a political programme. The other side of the story to the cuts is the way local councils are tied to the money lenders through debt charges—Sheffield alone owes £28 million on its housing revenue stock.

A socialist lead has to be given, and allied to a bold stand of no cuts by Labour councils, then the badges that will be proudly worn by many lobbyists 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire' will be accurate, not only in South Yorkshire but in the country as a whole.

Meanwhile every section of the working class now has to make certain that this mass rally is a great success and a springboard to a movement to remove the Tories, and for a return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies.



Firemen demonstrating against the cuts in Nottingham—now get ready for the mass lobby of parliament

DEPTFORD READERS MEETING

Only Marxists have the answers

"Callaghan and the right wing will be like King Canute trying to hold the working class back."

This comment was made by Gerry McManus [Labour Party conference delegate, Vauxhall CLP] at a Militant Readers' Meeting in Deptford after he had described the mood of hostility at this year's Labour Party Conference, not just towards the Tories, but also to those in the movement who had blamed the Labour election defeat on the working class.

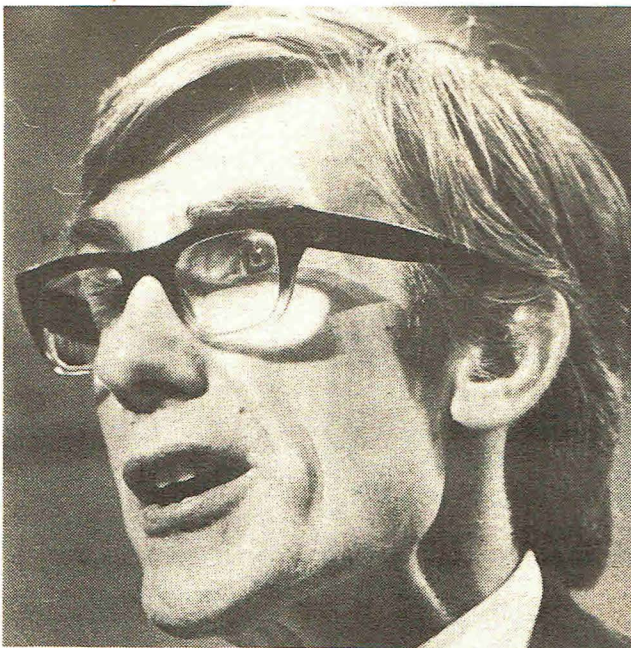
Gerry explained how the conference would go down in history as a watershed for the Party, not only because of the

By Tim Harris
(Greenwich CLP)

reselection victory but also because of the general turn towards more socialist policies.

He went on to say that the fight for democratisation of the labour movement was only just beginning, with the question of Trade Union democracy now a crucial one for activists, to ensure that the demands of the rank and file were truly represented by the leadership.

This was echoed by a comrade from Holland who attended the meeting, describing how striking tug-boat



Ray Apps—"Thatcher could vie with the Ayatollah or the Pope, on women's rights"

men and dockers in Rotterdam had received no assistance from the so-called "leaders" of their union.

Ray Apps [Bighton Kemp-town CLP] gave a summary of just a few of the Tories vicious anti-working class proposals. On the question of women's rights he said "Thatcher could vie with the Ayatollah or the Pope" and outlined how her party wanted to drive working women back to the kitchen sink, particularly by cutting jobs on the public sector.

A number of speakers from the floor gave first-hand experience of how the Government's policies would affect them and why in view of the cuts and attacks on Trade Union rights, the events at Labour Party Conference were so important, especially if a socialist alternative was to be provided to the bosses confrontation.

Pat Byrne [CPSA] described how after queuing all night for a council flat he discovered that the roof

leaked....and then discovered that the GLC's emergency repair service had been taken off. This experience did not dampen his spirit to fight the Tories, however!

"Labour councils must be prepared to resist the cuts and also not to take the option of increasing rents or rates in order to maintain services. A massive political campaign must be launched showing what the socialist alternatives are" said Eddie McParland [Greenwich CLP], who went on to describe how his party was opposing the cuts and sending a leaflet outlining their stance to every household in the constituency.

The mood of the meeting, which was attended by about 60 people, could be summed up in a phrase of Ray Apps: "The most powerful protest movement ever is beginning in Britain against the Tories and our role as the Marxists in the Labour Party is to provide a lead."

of Corby, where local workers heard Terry Harrison (Liverpool Trades Council) and Jim McDonald from ROSAC. £26 was raised for the fighting fund.

Other meetings in the country included one in Poole where Phil Frampton, former national chairman of the LPYS, spoke on 'Which Way for Labour after the conference?'

EDINBURGH- STOP DEBT CHARGES, STOP CUTS.

The resistance to Ma Thatcher's cut-backs is growing rapidly in the Lothian area.

By Tam Burke
(Edinburgh Trades Council Anti-cuts ad hoc Committee)

At the Edinburgh Trades Council anti-cuts conference speaker after speaker outlined the serious effects the cuts will have.

"No sector of the education service is immune. Supply teachers will be cut by 70% and nursery schools curtailed, along with specialist teachers in training", said sister Galt for the teachers.

Eddie Reilly [SCPS] explained that while cuts in social security departments are going ahead the Tories want to increase the number of fraud staff.

Mike Jones [FBU] said, "There has been no review of fire cover since 1958; in '77 £34 million was lost through fire damage to property, and this increased in '78—yet less time for calls is being proposed by the Tories.

"The redundancies in Nottinghamshire are a warning for the future."

He added that the Scottish region of the FBU have called on their executive to hold a recall conference to discuss national strike action to resist redundancies.

Gavin Strang MP described how the cuts of £20 million in industry grants would have a devastating effect on employment.

The alternative to the cuts was discussed at the conference, with some delegates pointing to rate increases as the only way to raise finance for our services.

But it was pointed out that rates increases were as much an attack on workers living standards, like any price rise. Cllr J Burnet [TGWU]

said, "Opposing cuts also means fighting capitalism. Lothian region Labour group had opposed cuts due to the council's large contingency fund but some councillors may falter next year when the money runs out. Councillors alone are insignificant and might be sacked by the government so it could directly implement its policies.

"The working class can defeat the Tories and councillors must give a clear lead now."

He said councillors should refuse to pay interest charges, which for Lothian region were £35 m in '79-80—that's 58% of Edinburgh District Council's budget! Rate increases must be rejected as this would cut the incomes of workers.

Martin Filmer [NUM] summed up the determined mood by saying "We don't intend that Mrs Thatcher will be in for five years."

Delegations from trade unions, Labour Parties, tenants, pensioners and other groups will be invited to form a co-ordinating committee. The ad hoc committee elected is now building for the TUC lobby on 28 November.

The conference was successful in pledging support to workers resisting the cuts, but a clear socialist alternative to the Tories has yet to be thrashed out.

MEETINGS ROUND UP

The policies of the 'Militant' are attracting workers to meetings up and down the country.

In Preston, Lancashire, over 30 people attended a 'Militant' Day school titled 'What Trotsky really stood for' to mark the Trotsky

centenary anniversary.

Two films, 'October 1917' and 'Strike' by Eisenstein were shown, and then a discussion on the ideas of Trotsky followed, with Jeremy Birch (Selly Oak CLP) as speaker.

In the evening a social was

held and over £50 was raised for the fighting fund. A similar day school will be held in Birmingham on 1 December (see ads for details).

'Steel Crisis—a socialist programme to save jobs' was a vital topic for a 'Militant' Readers' Meeting in the town

LEFT and RIGHT

RULE BRITANNIA

The action of the French government over the imports of English lamb has roused all the good old British hearts of oak. Leading the call for Britons to 'boycott everything French' is the Duke of Baccleuch. Why even he is "cancelling his order for a new Citroen car and giving up French wine" [*Edinburgh Evening News* November 1] Gosh! What lengths these patriots are prepared to go to.

But the Duke will probably be dismayed to learn that not many working people spend their time guzzling French wine, and that those who are able to scrape together enough money for any old car, let alone an expensive Citroen [brand new at that] would be prepared to give them up just because the capitalist class both sides of the channel have been reduced to squabbling amongst themselves by the deepening crisis of their profit system.

CUDDLES

Anyone who thinks that Tory MPs are merely heartless brutes will have been enlightened by a recent *'Daily Express'* feature. Tory MP for Yardley David Bevan shares his home with sixteen Teddy Bears. He refused to let a local museum borrow one of them because he "didn't think it was a good idea for my Teddies to be exhibited in public because they've got such delicate dispositions. They all have different personalities". A man who can cheerfully vote for cuts in children's education and health services but can be concerned for their toys is obviously destined for great things in this government.

A LIVING WAGE?

The president of the CBI Sir John Greenborough thinks a lot of our trade union leaders. He said recently that many union executives had a heavy load of responsibility, and should be paid like leading industrialists, on the level of £40,000 a year.

Not that Sir John is getting soft ideas on the working class as a whole being underpaid. He still believes in good old restraint for the average worker. He wants trade union leaders to have 'statesmanlike qualities' and be 'clearly in control of their members'. Someone who sees the other chap's [i.e. Sir John's] viewpoint. Someone who will live like a boss and not fight too hard for his members' wages, jobs, conditions etc.

He won't find many union memberships prepared to put up with that sort of deal. Union activists want their leaders to be more 'workmanlike', able to appreciate their problems, and living on the same sort of wages. We'll gladly see our leaders paid £40,000 p.a. Provided we can all get it. We're awaiting your offer with interest, Sir John.

KEEPING US AT HOME



"Times are getting harder and harder for young people. Food, rent, bus-fares, everything is going up. One wage doesn't cover it all. I don't ask to have the children but the women work because they have to."

This was how Phyllis, a 70 year old unregistered child minder explained the situation—she looks after eight kids for £5 a week—"like her own grandchildren."

Significantly when a film was made over ten years ago exposing baby farms etc. Phyllis was shown with her children.

If anything the situation is much worse today. More mothers are forced to work and cuts in facilities will drive more children into unregistered places.

'Man Alive' was discussing the question 'Working mothers—Should they? Can they?'

One million mothers with children under five are now working and a similar number would work if suitable care facilities were available.

The position is that local authorities provide 35,000 places and 30,000 places are provided in private nurseries. There are 86,000 registered child-minders and an esti-

By Louise Birch

(Selly Oak CLP)

mated 100,000 unregistered.

The panel of 'experts' including child psychologists etc. discussed the question should mothers work as though it was a moral question. The majority of mothers don't have the luxury of choice in the real world.

The debate came down to earth with a bump when Patrick Jenkin (Tory Social Services Minister) was invited to participate: "What nonsense—mothers need not be isolated in the home—what about the mother and toddler groups or 'drop ins'."

He was asked why the government didn't do more to help working mothers, because without the facilities legislation for equal rights was worthless.

His answer was "If the good lord had wanted us to

have equal rights he would not have created man and woman".

He maintained that it was a biological fact that a child needs its mother. Because of economic problems he said it was not possible to provide every facility, but if parents bring children into the world they should take responsibility for them. Mothers should stay at home and look after their children—if we take away this responsibility by providing facilities we would be destroying something in society! Baby battering perhaps?

Majority

We might remind ourselves when we are told by Tories and their rich backers to stay at home with our children that upper class women don't soil their hands on nappies—they employ nannies to rear their kids, then send them to boarding schools.

In the letters column of the *'Birmingham Evening Mail'* recently one person wrote "Women should not have children if they can't afford to stay at home and look after them."

Anyone would think these

responsible mothers were a minority rather than the vast majority of young women. It seems that now child rearing has become the prerogative of the rich!

Perhaps we shouldn't even get married in case we get pregnant, because the very same people who are demanding we stay at home condemn abortion.

It is a fact that women are being forced to work as one wage earner for a working class family is no longer enough. Yet the Tories are threatening even the inadequate facilities we have.

In Birmingham they threatened to make all child minding services part-time—one Tory said the service was being abused—mothers were leaving children then going home and back to bed! This is a blatant lie!

Women make tremendous sacrifices for their families and it is an insult to say we have no right to have children.

Working women are doubly exploited by having to look after a home and do a job. The Tories should beware—there is only so much we can take!



Long John Silver impersonations, songs and knockabout farce may not seem the normal vehicle for an attack on police corruption and repression.

'Belt and Braces' in their play 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' use all these and more to entertain, ridicule authority and make some telling political points.

The play was written by

Italian activist Dario Fo in 1969 after an anarchist 'fell' to his death from a 4th-floor window whilst 'helping the Milan police with their enquiries' into some bombings.

It had an important role in arousing public indignation at the cover up and police protection of the fascists who initiated the bombing campaign.

By its hilarious attacks on

authority it amuses and holds the attention where a more straightforward approach might not. It is street theatre at its very best.

At the end, however, there are several political speeches delivered straight at the audience. The contrast is too great; it seems like preaching.

And the solution it offers to police repression is at best ambiguous—are they advo-

cating individual or mass action as the answer?

But despite these limitations 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' is that rare phenomenon, a political play which entertains and makes a real impact.

At Half Moon Theatre, Alie Street, London E1
[Ends November 17]

EDUCATION -

Small classes = teaching

Large classes = crowd control

In 1919 the TUC, in a resolution calling for free and equal education for all, demanded a maximum class size of 30—to be achieved within three years.

For years NUT policy has been for a maximum class size of 30 in secondary schools [32 in primary schools, 27 in reception classes].

In 1977-78, like hundreds of others, I taught an English group of 35 thirteen year olds—and was told by the school rep that I could do nothing about it! In 1979 half of all primary school children and a quarter of all secondary school children are taught in classes of over 30.

About 60,000 more teachers are required to rectify this—and the Tories are talking of cutting 70,000 teaching jobs. A determined class size campaign is vital.

Tories pretend concern for 'educational standards'. Teachers know that a child cannot be taught adequately in an over-large class where 'crowd control' rather than individual attention and help is the order of the day.

A mongol child can be taught to read, given time, patience and resources. No child cannot be taught to read, but what we need to combat illiteracy is not stricter discipline and a return to the 'three Rs' but more teachers and better facilities.

What the Tories want from education is a creamed off elite to provide tame bureaucrats and technocrats (the pursuit of excellence, they call it) and a passive unthinking mass of factory fodder and, increasingly, dole fodder.

Reprinted
from
Militant Teacher

Large classes not only save the money but force on teachers increasingly authoritarian methods with the emphasis on discipline, rote-learning and the 'force feeding' of accepted truths—in no way encouraging future workers to think for themselves!

Decent class
sizes now

The labour movement regards education as a means for the fullest possible development of the individual—and thus of society as a whole.

If we demand that education should develop individual potential and confidence, should develop the ability to question and criticise, to think and act independently, we must first campaign for decent class sizes. That is a task for the labour movement—the Tories are frightened of education in its real sense.

The situation is worsening. With Tory proposals for massive cuts in education, all the gains of the past 50 years are threatened.

In order to boost profits—for those who send their kids to private school—they are slashing education, health, social services, care for the handicapped and elderly, attacking the weak and needy in society. **Teachers must**

fight back but must not stand alone.

Links (from the NUT—eds) can be built with the NAS/UWT at school level to demand a union say in such matters of school policy—with regular meetings of union members to ensure the maximum democracy within the school.

NUT policy for September 1980 is for a maximum class size of 30 in secondary schools, 30 in primary schools and 27 in reception. The union must demand that the employers nationally accept these unconditionally—backing up that demand with limited national strike action if necessary.

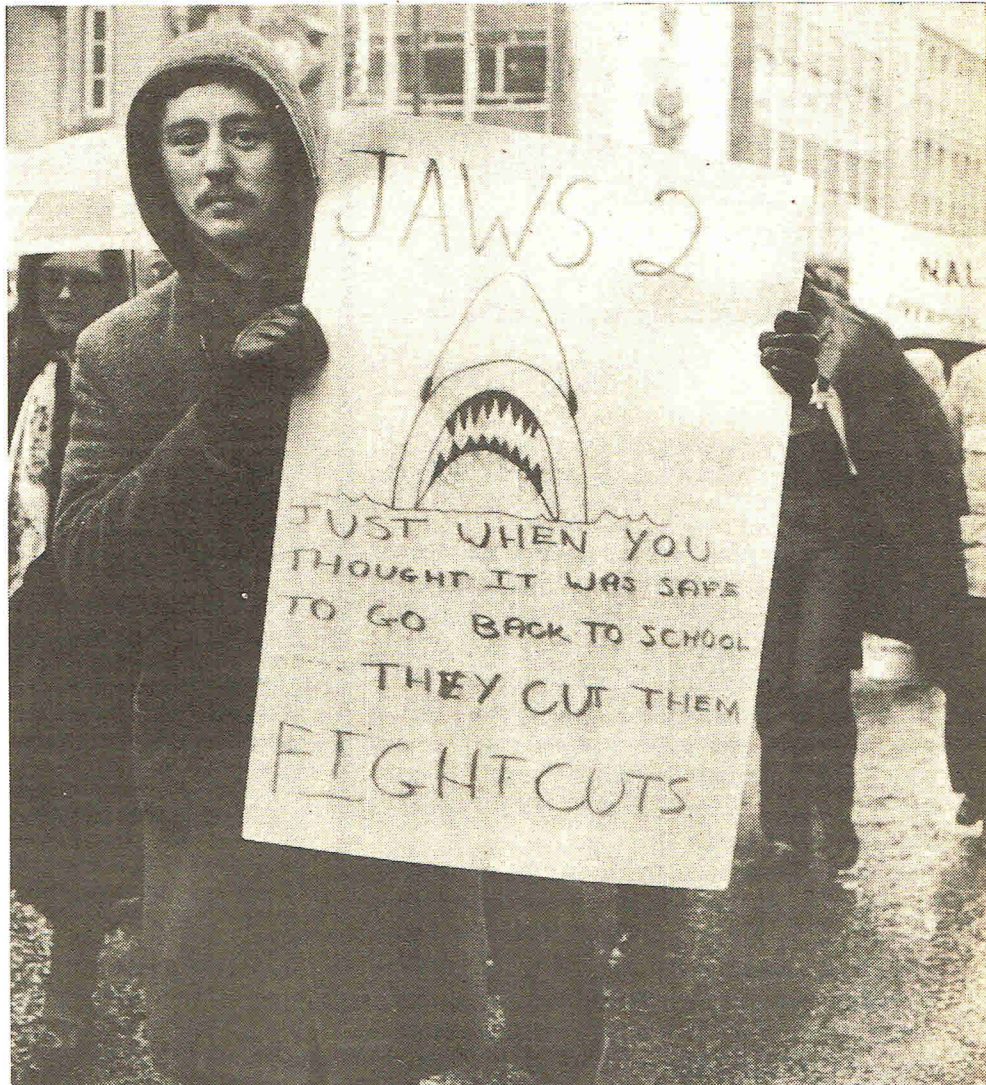
An ineffective class size policy is worse than none at all: it destroys the credibility of the union. Resolutions to this effect should be sent to NUT conference. Local associations can and must act immediately.

Resolutions on class size should be sent to the local trades council. If a campaign has not already been launched the NUT must take the initiative in calling for a campaign against all public spending cuts.

Only united with other workers can we defeat the Tory proposals. The resources do exist for decent education, health and social services. Only the labour movement can ensure that they are properly used.

A class size of 30 is still too high. Policy must be under constant review. Class sizes of 25 or 20 are not utopian.

They are necessary, but to achieve them we must challenge not only this Tory government but the economic system it represents.



Liverpool Anti-cuts demonstration, 6th November

Photo: MILITANT

Capitalism is, increasingly, unable to provide basic necessities for working people.

The struggle for a real improvement in education

demands that teachers, with the rest of the labour movement, take up the fight for socialism—so that the enormous wealth and power created by man can be

democratically controlled and planned to provide decent education, health care, etc.—a decent life for all.

Tablets and technology

There are no havens safe from the impact of technical change. Even the chemists shop on the corner cannot escape. As technology advances, these shops are closing at the rate of one a day.

A recent review in the 'Chemist and Druggist' suggests that computers will have made a major impact on pharmacy within five years. Now the Prescription Pricing authority and the main pharmaceutical wholesalers are developing computer systems to improve 'internal efficiency'.

Apart from the computer allowing for ordering of drugs and other items for sale, it can offer access to management information, stock control, patients' medical record facilities, etc.

These developments have the potential to benefit both workers in the shops and patients. For example, checks could be made to ensure that where a patient receives two medicaments, the drugs do not interact.

But in this society such technology will be seen as an opportunity for pushing up profits and throwing off 'excess' staff instead of greater safety and shorter hours for workers.

Retail pharmacy is notoriously backward and unplanned. One man businesses open up in competition to each other next to big health centres while rural areas may have no chemists for miles.

The new computer systems may not be connected to terminals in many retail pharmacies because of fear that slum clearance or re-

By
Jen Pickard
(ASTMS Newcastle
653 Branch)

located doctors' surgeries may lead to decline or closure of the shop.

Very few pharmacists, dispensers and sales assistants are organised into the appropriate trade union. They frequently work from 9 am to 6 or 6.30 pm, sometimes without a proper lunch break and for very low wages (£1 an hour for an experienced dispenser is not uncommon).

Instead of looking forward to the future of a properly planned pharmaceutical service integrated into the National Health Service, many small businessmen in pharmacy dream wistfully but unrealistically of the days of the entrepreneur and the skilled apothecary.

Many of the skills involved in compounding medicines are not being used in retail pharmacy as the pharmaceutical industry mass produces tablets and other forms of medicament. Instead of hankering after the past, pharmacists should develop new skills offering advice not only to patients in the shop but as part of the health service team along with doctors and nurses.

ASTMS took out a full page advert in the 'Financial Times' in September to warn of the effects of the silicon chip revolution on the jobs of white collar workers, and those in retail pharmacy would be no exception to this.

The advertisement, designed to appeal to the management range of white collar workers endangered by new

technology is a positive step. We would welcome attempts to draw all workers into the movement. But a far more active approach is needed.

Technological change brings the possibility of major improvements in the lives of all workers. A life of plenty where repetitive, monotonous and backbreaking jobs can become a thing of the past. But only if we, the working class, control it. Capitalist control of new technology won't mean plenty of anything except queues at the dole.

A campaign from the trade unions and Labour Party clearly showing the dangers and possibilities of new technology would have a galvanising effect on all sections of workers. A campaign based on a socialist programme, including the fight for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, and the nationalisation of the top monopolies under workers' control and management would be an invaluable weapon against redundancies.

It could also draw many people previously unsympathetic to the trade unions, like those in the pharmaceutical industry, firmly into the ranks of the labour movement for the huge fights that will take place to save and improve the NHS in years to come.

**New 'Militant'
Pamphlet**

'Defend the NHS'

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

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

● Thatcher has already outpaced Heath in provoking industrial battles. British industry lost more working days through strikes in September than in any month since the general strike of 1926. The biggest battle was in engineering, where the Confed unions' one-day and two-day strikes accounted for over 10.3 million out of the total 11.2 million working days lost in September. Altogether, over 1.6 million workers were involved in strike action. Apart from the engineering industry [where the total for the whole dispute is probably about 16 million working days] there were strikes or lock-outs at ITV, Vauxhall Motors Ellesmere Port, and Distillers in Scotland. The number of days lost in the first nine months of this year—more than 23m—means that the total this year is certain to exceed the previous recent high of 23.9m which stemmed mainly from the miners' strike under the Heath government. The annual total will then be the highest since 1926 when 162.2m working days were lost.

● Another firm that's certainly making the best of the capitalist depression is the Associated Communications Corporation. ACA is in the entertainment business. It produces television programmes, makes and distributes films, owns and manages top London theatres, manufactures records and cassettes, owns music publishing rights [e.g. Northern Songs], owns and manages property, and owns insurance and investment companies. For the year ending March 1979, ACA reported an 11% increase in profits over last year [up to £32.4m], and handed out £4.2m in dividends to their shareholders [a 20% increase on the previous year]. "Their shareholders" mainly means the board of directors who between them own two-thirds. The chairman, Lord Grade, owns 27.6% of the voting shares. His gross dividend this year was £20,353. This, however, is far from being his main return from the company: as chief executive he is paid a salary of £193,208 [that's £3,716 a

week]! However, the four other poor directors get salaries of "only" between £22,500 and £70,000.

● Foreign produced cars have accounted for over half British sales in quite a few months in the last period. But for the first time in the motor industry's history its overall balance was in the red in the first nine months of 1979. This was even before the effects of the engineering strikes, although the lorry drivers' dispute had some effect on the figures. Figures for cars, commercial vehicles, parts and other motor products produced by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show exports in the first nine months were £3,059 million an increase of only 3% on a year earlier. Imports, however, jumped by 36% to £3,194 million. The £134 million deficit compares with a surplus of £624 million in the same period last year. There is little chance of the industry even reaching break-even point by the end of the year.

Never mind the suffering - feel the profits

"They're talking about cutting school meals altogether in secondary schools—or pricing them out of reach. Children will just be wandering at lunch time. What are they going to do?"

"They could be charged for eating a packed lunch. If they haven't got dinner controllers—another 'expense saved'—the teachers aren't going to supervise them."

A housewife from Bracknell was talking to 'Militant' about the effect of just one item in the Tory government's latest round of cuts.

School meal charges are going up again anyway. Birmingham school meals were 25p until this term. Now they are 30p and shortly they will go up again. But how many areas will have school meals at all?

If the Tories have their way councils will be able to opt out of provision of meals of a certain standard. The Tories claim that the £240m cuts in school meals, milk, transport etc, won't hurt, but even the rights of the poorest children are being trampled over.

Prescription charges up

The duty to give free school meals to children from families on Supplementary Benefit or FIS has gone to be replaced with the clause that such "provision is made in the middle of the day as appears to the authority to be adequate." The Association of County Councils say they can't make £240 million cuts within the guidelines of the White Paper, so any vague discretionary duty will be ignored as are present discretionary schemes for free school uniform, clothing, etc.

"Never mind the suffering, feel the profits" is the motto of the Thatcher government. As we showed last week prescription charge increases will result in chronic illnesses remaining untreated.

Our correspondent in Bracknell works part time for a doctor. "Many people now ask for a prescription for two months," she said, "but doctors have been sent a directive to only prescribe one month's supply of any drug. The doctor said last week that half the people who get prescriptions should be able to get exemptions, but how many know this?"

Very few if the government have anything to do with it. They have refused to ask Post Offices to carry notices advertising free prescriptions.

The Low Pay Unit has recently calculated that even after the Clegg Compar-

Roger Shriver (Deptford Labour Party)

ability awards most local authority manual workers will be caught in the poverty trap and would be one of the few groups better off on the dole. Most council manual workers with children are eligible for Family Income Supplement.

Yet local councils and the government have the nerve to blame these workers for breaking the bank with their wage rises and making cuts necessary! Between 1974 and 1980/81 it is estimated that local government expenditure will have declined by 14% in real terms, with a smaller proportion of the money coming in from Rate Support Grant.

In Social Services, old people's homes in Liverpool and a children's community



If homes are shut down and the old people moved to hospitals they are likely to die

home in Hammersmith are among the first casualties. Social workers in Liverpool say that if old people are moved from homes to geriatric wards "they are likely to wither and die."

The City of London already charges the 'full economic cost' for home helps. Now the Association of Directors of Social Services are discussing upping

the charges for home helps and meals on wheels—often the only link isolated old people have with the outside world.

Spending on housing will be 5.6% down on this year's expenditure, and will be the lowest since 1974. Capital spending, i.e. new housing, acquisitions and improvements will be less than 45% of the 1974/75 total. New

building starts will be less than half the average for 1970/77.

"There is still a housing shortage. There are construction workers unemployed. How much better it would have been to put these workers to the task of enlarging the housing stock. Instead more building workers will be unemployed and more people homeless,"

commented Les Wood, general secretary of the building workers' union UCATT after the savage cutbacks in housing.

But that is not the logic of the capitalists or their political representatives. Logic, like concern for those in need, is a very poor second to protection of profits.

INFANT MORTALITY - THE PREVENTABLE TRAGEDY

"The first thing a civilised society gets right is the way it brings a new generation into the world." These words were from a recent BBC2 programme 'Man Alive' on infant mortality and handicapped children born in Britain.

The programme said that Britain was not "getting it right". In fact they proved that British capitalism would not and could not "get right" the level of care needed before and after pregnancy to avoid a high risk of still births and handicaps. And this was before the present round of spending cuts.

The 'high risk' women likely to give birth to premature babies were mainly either single parents or had unemployed or poorly paid husbands.

These mothers were unable to have the right kind of nutrition, housing or physical and mental well-being during pregnancy, let alone the correct ante-natal care. One in every six babies born to these mothers were likely to be still-born or premature.

Forty per cent of these still or premature births were preventable but virtually no money was being spent on prevention. Given the right amount of care 87% of low birth-weight babies would be normal.

In the Manchester Hospital which the programme chose, there were only 129 incubators, although the minimum number laid down by the NHS was 480. Fifteen out of every 100 babies in inner Manchester are low birth-

weight. The national average is 6 per 100.

Also, early and regular check-ups would minimise the risk of abnormal babies being born, but 30% of women do not attend anti-natal clinics.

The programme implied that many women were deterred from attending ante-natal clinics because they were "run like factories...the system is so overloaded that sometimes they don't know who you are and sometimes, it seems, they don't even care."

The hospital staff in these clinics are so pressurised that they are unable to give the women adequate attention. Pregnant women are often subjected to waits of up to three hours or more before they are seen. For a woman with small children to look after, attending an ante-natal clinic in these conditions could be a nightmare.

Most mothers remain in a hospital maternity unit for about a week following the birth and many find the rigid hospital routine unsuitable for mothers with new-born babies, particularly breast-fed babies who do not conform to the strict four hour feeding routine imposed by hospitals.

Mothers, anxious and unsure, often in a depressed state because of physical hormonal changes would be better off in the familiar home surroundings but this requires a high standard of home-based care by midwives. Midwives have been cut back by half, so this seems hardly feasible.

In contrast to the bad conditions at the hospital, the Man Alive team found that the Norton Medical Centre at Stockton-on-Tees provided a Community Medical Ser-



From awful housing conditions to poorly-equipped hospitals. Starting life in Birmingham.

vice.

During the sixteen years of its existence, it has had half the national average of premature and handicapped babies. The care of pregnant women was mostly home-based apart from the delivery in hospital. The mothers received consistent care throughout their pregnancies and would have the same midwife.

There was no possibility of a mother's case history going astray as often happens in maternity units. The background of the patient was also taken into account. One midwife baby-sat for a woman who had a number of small children so that she could attend the ante-natal clinic.

In Britain, 11,000 babies die and 30,000 are born handicapped each year. As

the programme pointed out, no-one lobbies Westminster about these 40,000 children; we do not hear much support from the anti-abortionists who support the Corrie Bill.

Much of this tragedy would be preventable, were the money to be made available. There is evidence that perinatal mortality (deaths within a week of birth) is higher among babies born at the weekends than weekdays: a direct result of understaffing at maternity hospitals.

A third of all handicapped babies have congenital abnormalities which could be prevented by offering the mother termination of the pregnancy, or improving the prevention of German measles. The technological means exist to detect foetal abnor-

mality at an early stage in pregnancy.

Yet the NHS does not have the skilled staff available to perform these necessary tests, or the equipment in the majority of hospitals. Meanwhile, 1,500 Spina Bifida babies continue to be born every year.

Yet the Tory government are embarking not on improvements but on savage spending cuts in NHS hospitals. This television programme was an indictment of an inhuman system which puts greed and profit before human life, and jeopardises the lives of new-born babies.

**By Maureen Boyd
(Brighton Labour Party)**

Photo: N Hedges (Shelter)

SIX MONTHS OF
DISASTROUS
TORY RULE

HOW LONG WILL THATCHER

No government in modern times has seen its popularity evaporate as quickly as the Thatcher government. Barely six months after its election victory, the Tory government is undoubtedly the most unpopular we have seen this century.

"The Leader" may have received a five-and-a-half minute hysterical and frenzied standing ovation by the Tory faithful in Blackpool, but the working class and large sections of the middle class have shown their opposition to this government in mass demonstrations and meetings throughout the country.

The government is already hated by millions for the barbaric cuts which it has inflicted on the National Health Service, on education, on housing and on the social services generally. We have been treated to the nauseating spectacle of Sir Keith Joseph sympathising with the disabled at the Tory party conference while his government has introduced measures which have had a devastating effect on the disabled, the unemployed and the sick. The intention of Tory minister Jenkins to withdraw assistance from those unable to pay electricity bills will affect almost five million people!

"The Guardian" summed up the effects of the cuts in the following way: "In the past 34 years there was one forecast which could have been confidently predicted about society tomorrow. It was going to get better, but for the first time since the founding of the Welfare State this is no longer true. If Mrs Thatcher proceeds with the cuts that she has threatened, society today looks far preferable to society tomorrow." [19 September]

Thatcher has declared class war against all the conquests of working people in the field of housing, social services, etc.

Only defence and police have escaped the axe. Defence and law and order spending will rise by 3% in real terms this year and next: "In order to make room for these increases, expenditure on the industry, employment, housing and environment budgets will decline in contrast to Labour plans for a rise." ('Financial Times'.)

This comes at a time when Professor Peter Townsend has shown that more than thirteen million people live on the poverty line. Their situation will be enormously worsened by the measures of the Tory

government.

At the same time, the Tories are hell bent on carrying through a counter-revolution against the concessions given under the Labour government in the field of employment, health and safety etc. The government is intending to change the rules on unfair dismissal in order to put the onus of proof on workers dismissed. At the moment, employers have to prove grounds for dismissal.

New companies with less than twenty workers are to be exempted from the unfair dismissal provisions for the first two years of trading.

The Tory government and employment minister Prior, an alleged 'liberal' Tory, originally intended to cut the rights of women to return to work after having children, but the outcry was so intense that even they were forced to beat a retreat. Indeed, so hell bent is Thatcher on carrying

It is not only Mrs Thatcher who is on trial—so too is capitalism. If the free enterprise system fails to create enough jobs—then it could well be "Goodbye capitalism!"

—Sunday Telegraph

through cuts that the test of the loyalty of the Tory ministers is how much they can lop off spending in their departments.

'Tarzan' Heseltine, it seems, "Is the most enthusiastic cutter in the Cabinet". ('Observer' 16 September)

At the same time, an essential part of the government's strategy in cutting the living standards of the working class is the assault on the trade unions and the democratic rights of the working class.

Labour and trade union leaders have condemned the callousness and wickedness of the Tory government and the measures that have been taken.

It is indeed sickening to see Tory ministers like Sally Oppenheim demanding more "sacrifices" from the poor while she has just sold land in Gloucestershire for £2,428, an acre which she bought for £838 an acre.

But it is not just the wickedness of Thatcher and her entourage that determines her policy. She has jettisoned all the policies of Macmillan—the so-called Tory 'one-nation policy'—because of the

By Peter
Taaffe
Editor of
'Militant'

changed situation which capitalism and this government finds itself in. The hysteria and the sheer viciousness of the Tories is in turn a reflection of the catastrophic crisis facing British capitalism.

With each day, capitalist soothsayers and the economists outbid each other in gloomy predictions for the future of British capitalism.

For example the 'Financial Times' declared recently: "The decay in our position is already truly alarming". The City stockbrokers, Jim Kapple and Co., declared in September that "the prospects for the UK economy are almost frighteningly bad". It is expected that the economy in Britain will drop by 2% to 4% within the next year. But for the existence of North Sea oil, British capitalism would be facing an absolute catastrophe.

This was recently underlined by the Independent Treasury Economic Model Club, whose report was published in the 'Guardian' (15 October). They estimate that total profits of British industry in 1979 will be £15 billion, but North Sea oil and gas profits will account for £4¼ billions of this. In 1980 it is expected that total profits will drop to £11½ billion and gas and oil profits will total £7½ billions of this figure. In 1981 profits are expected to recover to £13 billions, but oil and gas profits will account for £8¼ billions.

Thus non-oil profits will decline by £6 billion over two years to a mere £4¼ billions in 1981. This is a graphic reflection of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

Trotsky pointed out that the tensions between the classes increase at a time when the national income contracts, which in turn results in a struggle for a greater share of a smaller cake. This is the explanation for the ferocity of this present Tory government. However, its measures are incapable of restoring the position of British capitalism.

Its so-called "monetarist" policies are in effect the same old Tory policies of the nineteenth century and the 1930s.

Through a policy of savage deflation, of balanced budgets and strict control of the money supply, they seek to cut the living standards of the working class.

In this way, they hope to revive the falling profits of the capitalists.

But even if they are successful, their measures will in fact enormously aggravate the problems of capitalism. By cutting the share of the workers in the wealth they produce, they cut the market. This, moreover, is taking place at a time when world capitalism is entering a re-



'I've no idea why people keep attacking me'

—Margaret Thatcher, 1972

cession, with the slowing down in the growth of the world economy.

Even the apostles of the system have no faith in Thatcher being able to rescue them. This was clearly shown by Graham Turner in the 'Sunday Telegraph' (20 May 1979) just a few weeks after the Tory victory.

This worthy has specialised in the past in denouncing British car workers. But this is what he wrote about the government's prospects: "It is not only Mrs Thatcher who is on trial during the next five years—so too is capitalism. Indeed if in that time the free enterprise system fails to create enough jobs—the measuring stick by which the vast number of people will judge it—then it could well be 'goodbye capitalism'."

He goes on to show that

Conservatism is a rearguard action. The general in charge should never commit the whole army to forays against the egalitarian enemy—nothing is more unrealistic or irresponsible.

—Peregrine Worsthorpe

British capitalism is completely incapable of satisfying this demand: "Wherever you go in big business they are talking about shedding labour not taking it on. ICI has a third too many managers... 'no matter what the growth rate is in this country,' said one ICI

man bluntly, 'there is no way we are going to employ more people. The difference between a successful and an unsuccessful business strategy in the modern world,' he added chillingly, 'is the rate at which the numbers of people come down'."

He then goes on to show the gloom, pessimism and decay of the capitalists. "GKN was swinging away from manufacturing in this country, no new factories were planned and they would be putting most of their weight overseas or in building up service and distribution businesses in this country. It was like being told that Cammell Lairds was going into hairdressing".

Therein is the explanation for the collapse and massive de-industrialization of the British economy. It is not at all because of the so-called "Lazy British Worker", or their "exorbitant wage demands". On the contrary, the British working class has the lowest rate per hour in the whole of Western Europe. German, Belgian, Dutch and Swedish workers earn about £5.36 per hour, the American worker earns £3.31, Italian workers get over £3 an hour, Japanese workers earn £2.90 an hour, and the British worker comes bottom at £2.56 an hour.

The British capitalists have not ploughed back the surplus which they have extracted from the labour of the working classes. Instead, as this article shows, they are investing in service industries or are investing abroad.

Even members of the Tory cabinet have no faith in British capitalism being able to extricate itself from the morasse it finds itself in.

Turner says: "Another sen-

ior member of the cabinet who knows a good deal about business from the inside declares flatly that the middle class [read ruling class—PT] have lost all will, all nerve and all commitment. The people at the top no longer care enough to make the capitalist system really work."

But in seeking to redress the balance in favour of the capitalists, Thatcher has displayed a lack of touch, an incapacity to understand class relations in Britain, which has alarmed the capitalists.

On the one side, the CBI has enthusiastically backed this government in its onslaught against the working class. It is a CBI government. But at the same time, it has been alarmed at Thatcher's approach in the last six months.

Thatcher herself is a particularly inept and insensitive representative, who threatens to provoke a social explosion



Young workers and Fur show their angry opposit

HER LAST?

if she continues along the present road.

The British Ruling class has usually had its head leaders who had a certain sensitivity. These qualities are completely absent in Mrs Thatcher and her acolytes in the Tory cabinet.

This was shown in relation to Rhodesia. Her announcement in Canberra that sanctions would be lifted precipitated an immediate crisis in British capitalism's relationship with black Africa. This area is now far more important than South Africa as far as British trade is concerned. In the wake of Thatcher's announcement, the Nigerian regime nationalised BP. Only the prompt action of Lord Carrington managed to extricate Thatcher from her difficulties.

A similar situation looms in her relations with the working class and the labour movement in Britain.

Behind the facade of unity at Blackpool the split within the Tory Party remains, and has even deepened in the past period.

This in itself is an expression of the gravity of the social and political situation in Britain. "Revolution starts from the top", wrote Marx. The ruling class feels the growing discontent of the working and middle class. It searches for a way out of the impasse. In the process it splits into groups and factions.

The British ruling class in the past was able to conceal its divisions from the eyes of the masses. But an open split in the Tory Party surfaced when Thatcher replaced Heath. This was papered over by the jubilation of the election victory. But in the explosive social situation which will develop in Britain the divisions will burst out into the open again.

Indeed, a complete split in the Tory Party between the so-called 'liberal' wing and the right is not excluded. The Tory Party conference showed the depths of reaction in the right of the party. In the debate on immigration and Rhodesia semi-fascist elements surfaced.

From this section, together with the Monday Club and the 'liberal' Bow Group—who have called for the assets of the National Coal Board to be sold "Now that it is profitable"—could come a Royalist reactionary move-

ment which will look towards the establishment of a military dictatorship to settle accounts with the working class. This, however, is the music of the future. Any attempt to use these methods now would be crushed by the embattled and aroused working class.

In the final analysis, there is nothing to choose between either wing of the Tory Party so far as the working class is concerned. They both want to drive down the living standards of the working class. Thatcher is the mailed fist. Heath is the mailed fist in a velvet glove.

However, there are unprecedented rumblings of discontent and dissatisfaction with Thatcher already evident in the pages of the capitalist press. 'The Economist' recently remarked that Thatcher is referred to none too fondly by her cabinet colleagues as 'Atilla the hen'. Even true-blue Peregrine Worsthorne, political correspondent of the 'Sunday Telegraph', recently expressed doubts (14 October) in relation to Thatcher. He writes somewhat bemusedly in relation to the engineering strike:

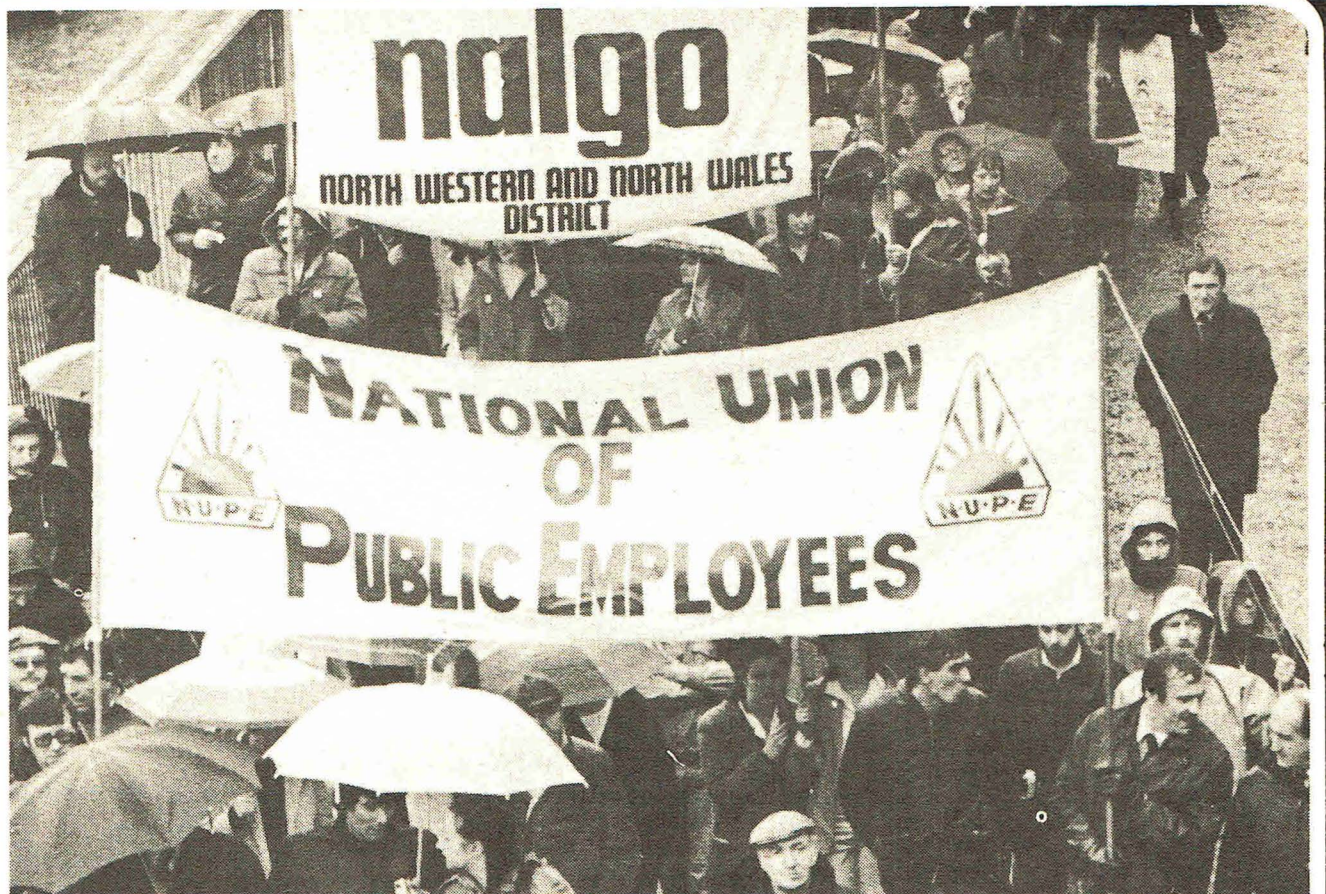
"It seemed to me certain that the engineering employers were bound to win their battle with the engineering unions. This conviction was formed as a result of talking to both sides. The bosses gave the impression of being unprecedentedly firm and among the workers there seemed to be no spirit for a fight."

"Much encouraged I wrote an article on this page about the decline of trade union power. But no sooner had the ink dried when the employers gave way. Clearly there was something missing in my analysis."

Worsthorne, as with the capitalists as a whole, had taken the prevarication at the top of the engineering union (AUEW) as an indication of the mood at the bottom. Support for the strike grew the longer it continued.

However, in the wake of the strike Worsthorne attempts to draw conclusions on behalf of the ruling class. He remarks: "What worries me a little about Mrs Thatcher is her naivete, even her starry-eyed enthusiasm".

He then seeks to excuse this display of disloyalty: **"Perhaps one should not express these kinds of doubt in public**



Thousands of trade unionists, students, and housewives joined the 6th November demonstration called by the Merseyside Joint Labour Party-Trades Council Anti-Cuts Committee.

All the measures and plans of this Tory government will flounder on the mass resistance of an aroused labour and trade union movement

in spite of their prevalence in the private councils of the party".

But **"To my mind conservatism is, was—ever since they cut off King Charles' head—and always would be a rear-guard action. This should not preclude forays against the egalitarian enemy. But the General in charge should never commit the whole army to such ventures or expect too much of them, for that is to under-estimate the strength of the enemy, than which nothing is more unrealistic or irresponsible"**.

In other words, in her collision course with the trade unions and the working class, Thatcher threatens to provoke a movement of the working class which could endanger the whole of the capitalist system. This is the meaning of Worsthorne's remarks.

However, it will not be words, or lofty editorials, which will sway Thatcher from the course which she has chosen. Tory Chancellor Howe has boasted that there will be "no U-turns". But events will completely falsify this boast.

It was the magnificent struggles of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' workers which compelled the Heath government to change course. A member of that Tory cabinet has subsequently revealed that the government was warned that if they went ahead and allowed the shipyards to close, this could have produced a situation in Clydeside where the police and even the army would have had to be brought onto the streets!

The Thatcher government's policies are wreaking greater havoc than ever the Heath government did. This has already provoked a greater wave of opposition at an earlier time than was the case with that government. Mass

demonstrations have taken place in opposition to the cuts. We have also witnessed a general strike in one town, Corby, for a few hours which involved not only the working class, but also sections of the middle class, such as small shop-keepers.

The effects of the government's measures together with the slow-down of the world economy and the aggravated problems of British capitalism, will result in a massive increase in unemployment to possibly two million by the summer of next year. On the issue of unemployment, on the cuts, and on the attacks on the trade unions, this government will come into a head-on collision with an aroused working class and the labour and trade union movement. Unless it beats a retreat it will be faced with regional demonstrations and strikes and even regional and city strikes as in Corby.

If it remains stony-faced against the demands of the working class and the labour movement this could result in a collision and a one-day general strike, to be followed by an all-out general strike.

The Tories and big business are calculating that the rise in unemployment will cover the working class and result in lower wage settlements than the rate of increase in prices in the coming period. The government's measures, together with other factors, will result in a rate of inflation well in excess of 20%.

In this situation, the working class will not accept wage increases lower than the rate of inflation. Indeed, in British Leyland, where the workers are threatened with massive redundancies under Edwardes' plan, they are at the same time demanding an increase in wages of at least 26%. Other workers are

demanding 20% and 30% increases. The Tory government will probably seek to head off this movement by resorting to a wage freeze.

Once the ruling class experiences the mass opposition of the working class, pressure will be exerted on Thatcher to draw back. However, such is the situation of British capitalism, that the ruling class will return again and again in an attempt to weaken and hamstring the unions, and drive down the living standards of the working class.

But if Thatcher proves to be too stubborn, the ruthless British capitalists and their representatives in the Tory Party will not hesitate to remove her from office. They have a deathly fear of this government being brought down prematurely.

This is connected to the swing towards the left in the Labour Party.

Rather than rejoicing at the divisions at the last Labour Party conference the Tory Party leaders in Blackpool remarked that it was "a bad day for Britain" (meaning the ruling class). They referred in alarm to the prospect of a mass Marxist Labour Party developing in Britain.

The ruling class and their Tory cohorts fear a Labour Party which is armed with a Marxist and socialist programme. They anticipate that a general election, particularly one that is forced on the Tory government, could result in the coming to power of a left Labour government.

A left Labour government would come under tremendous pressure to carry through a radical programme.

They therefore wish to avoid a general election for as long as possible. They would not hesitate to jettison Thatcher first, and replace her

with a more pliable figure. Even now, speculation is rife in the capitalist press as to who would be a possible successor to Thatcher. Pym and Carrington are already marked out as potential leaders of the Tory Party, if Thatcher should be thrown overboard.

A period of class tensions and of enormous upheavals impends in Britain. All the measures and plans of this Tory government will flounder on the mass resistance of an aroused labour and trade union movement. The defeats which have been inflicted on the employers in the 'The Times' lockout, and in the ITV lockout are an indication of the mood of the working class.

The defeat of the Tories alone, however, will not be seen as sufficient by the ranks of the labour movement. This time the return of a new Labour government must be on the basis of policies entirely different from those of the Labour governments of 1964-1970 and 1974-1979. This is the meaning of the last Labour Party conference.

The ranks of the movement gave massive support to the demands of democratic control, not as an end in itself, but as a means to ensure the implementation by their representatives in Parliament of real socialist policies.

It is this mood which has also led to the growing influence of Marxist ideas and support for 'Militant' within the labour movement.

Once this programme and these ideas become the programme of the labour movement, it will produce a force that will be invincible in the struggle to carry through the socialist transformation of Britain.



General Education students braved the rain to march to Tory cuts, Liverpool, 6 November.

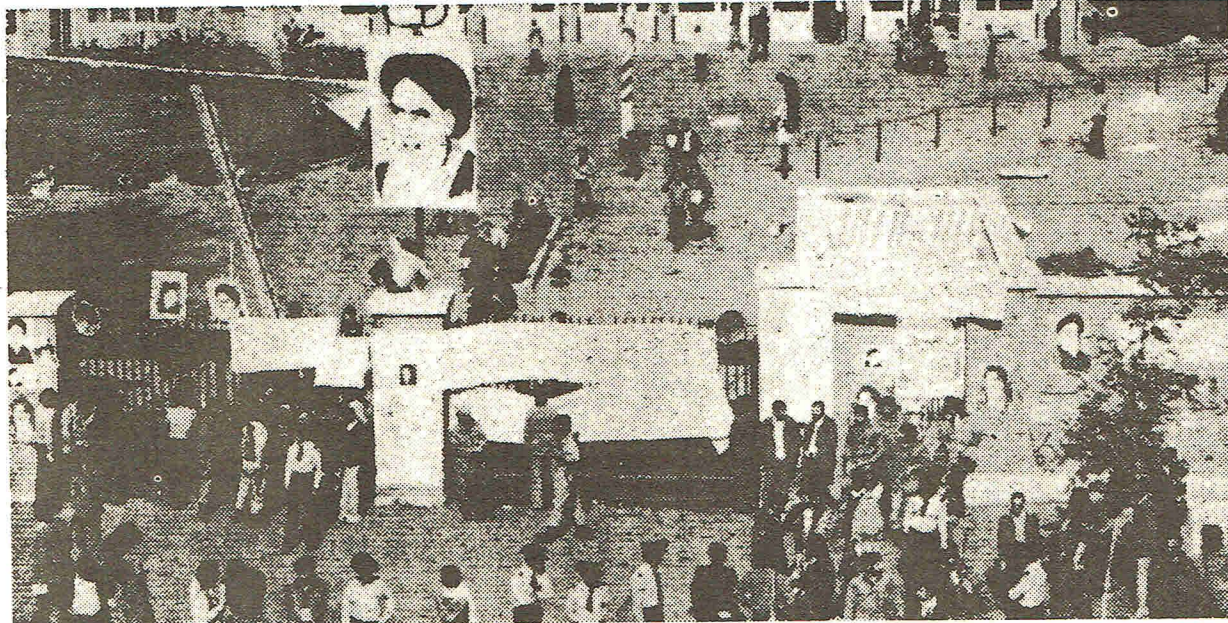


IRAN

The resignation of the Bazargan government and the seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran are only the latest manifestations of the revolutionary turmoil which is gripping Iran.

The Shah's overthrow has not solved, for the masses, the immense problems they face. On the contrary, unemployment has rocketed to 20% of Iran's ten million workforce, prices have jumped and shortages of essentials like cooking oil, eggs and meat have become commonplace.

Occupation of the American Embassy is connected with the suspicion that American Imperialism is intending to restore the Shah to power. But as Khomeini has stated such a development is completely ruled out. Ayatollah



Occupation of the American Embassy in Tehran

RELIGIOUS DICTATORSHIP STRENGTHENED

Khomeini is attempting to cement a mass movement behind the senior clergy and divert attention away from the fundamental problems by encouraging actions against symbolic targets like the US Embassy.

Khomeini is at present being pushed by different forces. At first, in concert with Bazargan, Khomeini sought to restrain the revolutionary movement.

But following the mass demonstrations of the unemployed in April, the rising tide of class struggle and the virtual shut-down of large sections of industry Khomeini's Central Revolutionary Islamic Council nationalised the banks, insurance and most of industry in July.

But despite this nationalisation, the economy has remained in crisis, mainly due to the absence of any economic plan which is impossible without a planned economy. The resulting unrest undermined Bazargan's attempts to re-assemble the state machine and prepare the way for their counter-revolution.

Bazargan struggled both to restrain Khomeini's actions and to co-operate with him to hold down the working class and national minorities. But this co-operation broke down as Khomeini responded with anti-capitalist measures to the masses demands and at the same time worked to consolidate the clergy's power.



Bazargan—happy to leave the fray

Just before his resignation Bazargan wanted to dissolve the 'Council of Experts'. This council has been elected, in elections controlled by the clergy, to review the draft Constitution approved by the government and Revolutionary Council.

But far from just reviewing the draft the Council of Experts was adding new clauses, the main one

which gave Khomeini supreme spiritual and political powers, including command of the armed forces and veto of presidential candidates. However while the cabinet drafted a letter to the council of experts they decided not to send it because it was clear it would not have the slightest impact.

For months now it has been plain that the Bazargan Government had no real power to control events. Even Khomeini has been unable to stop the disintegration of the country as the army is in no shape to suppress the national minorities.

Khomeini has been striving to consolidate a theocratic dictatorship, but it is clear that the Iranian workers will not accept Islam as the answer to all their problems. There will be no stability in Iran until the masses' demands are met, which is impossible on the basis of capitalism.

By Bob Labi

Haunted by political revolution

Of all the regimes in Eastern Europe, Poland's is the most unstable. Throughout the 1970's the strikes uprisings and protests by Polish workers against price rises and attacks on living standards have scared the bureaucracy.

Last month a remarkable document surfaced which showed the dilemma facing the Stalinist regime. It came from the 'Experience and Future Group', a group of 50 Party officials close to the leadership, and formally including both an economic advisor to Prime Minister Gierek and a Central Committee member who edited the 'Communist' Party's weekly magazine.

In their report to the Polish 'Communist' Party, the group stated that the 'Communist' Party should remain in sole control but warned that the country was facing "an acute crisis which has embraced basic fields of social, political and economic life".

It pointed out that the economy was only growing at 2% a year, but said the reasons for the crisis "are not of an economic nature but [concern] the way of conducting policy and wielding power".

In other words it was due to the dictatorial stranglehold of the bureaucracy. And the report warned that the future was dire indeed. "The expected fall in the standard of living for the next 2 to 3 years may go beyond all limits of society's psychological resistance".

They are then scared that the Polish workers struggle may escalate to threaten the bureaucracy itself. From the frightened voices of the ruling caste, comes the awful vision of the future—a political revolution to sweep away all the privileges and perks of the officials and establish a workers democracy in Eastern Europe.

By Jim Chrystie

Concessions or Repression in S. Korea?

The turmoil within the ruling class in S Korea continues after the assassination of President Park by his intelligence chief [see 'Militant' 9th November]. Some opposition leaders have been released, and there has been talk of amending the authoritarian constitution.

This is designed to try to head off the widespread protests against the slow-down of the Korean economy. Wage rises of up to 30% have been secured by the increasingly open struggle of the underground trade unions, with particular heroism being shown by the super-exploited women textile workers.

The South Korean regime has dug its own grave. The enormous growth of the economy has created a mighty working class concentrated in large factories and shipyards and living within expanding

urban areas.

With almost every democratic right withdrawn, even protesting Catholic priests and bishops have been imprisoned and brutally tortured. In the past the regime has been maintained by the large police force, the 600,000 strong army and the tens of thousands of spies and informers.

Now they may talk of some concessions, whilst maintaining the forces of repression. But neither concessions nor repression offers any solution for the ruling class in an era of economic decline. In the coming period the Korean workers will be able to build a mass socialist party as the basis for a new society and a better future.

By our Correspondent in Hong Kong

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THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

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Last week's military coup in Bolivia by Colonel Notush has provoked tremendous opposition. A 100% general strike paralysed the country. Tin miners [whose past battles were featured in 'Militant' 19th October] fought soldiers, as 35,000 miners came out on indefinite strike.

Faced with the mass opposition of workers and peasants, the military split with sections of the army dissociating themselves from Colonel Natush's action. The Roman Catholic Church has called for Natush's resignation.

American imperialism quickly recognised that Natush's coup would provoke a move to the left. So they suspended all non-food aid.

As the 'Financial Times' commented on November

6th, "The White House and State Department, which not so many years ago thought that the best guarantee for its interests in the region lay with authoritarian regimes of the right, are coming round quickly to policies of support and reformism."

They had backed Bolivia's return to civilian rule after a decade of military rule as the best way to avoid another Nicaragua. But the die-hards in the army did not agree. In the last year they have intervened three times.

Elections were originally held in July 1978 but the results were declared null and void following the discovery of an electoral fraud of such magnitude that the right managed to secure itself more votes than voters. The whole farce was ended with the 'loss' of ballot boxes in Lake

Titicaca and two military coups followed each other in rapid succession.

With a mounting economic crisis, and despite hostility from the right and sectors of the army, the caretaker government of General David Padilla staged a fresh bout of elections in July of this year. Predictably the left, as represented in the UDP (Democratic and Popular Unity) and the MNR (National Revolutionary Movement) wiped the board even forcing the deposed dictator Banzer out of his traditional stronghold of Santa Cruz.

The more left-wing UDP and MNR were unable to agree on a common programme and so they allowed Walter Guevara Arce to become caretaker President.

The economic problems facing Guevara were enor-

mous—rising unemployment, energy crisis, lack of growth. And he could only offer IMF austerity. The only Bolivian boom of recent years has been in sales of political literature.

The failure of the left to organise the support for revolutionary change which the working class and peasantry have shown in two successive elections paved the way for the military backlash.

But the response of Bolivian workers has shown that they are not prepared to put up with continued military rule. Already the new junta are talking of sharing power with the trade unions and the Congress, and holding new elections next August. That trap will not be able to contain the labour and peasant movement as Bolivia enters a period of mass struggle.

BOLIVIAN WORKERS RESIST COUP

SPAIN HOLLAND PAKISTAN

BASQUE GENERAL STRIKE AGAINST INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM

By Andy Beadle

(Deptford Labour Party)

Suarez's capitalism cannot end national oppression

The Basque country was paralysed last week by a one-day general strike. It was called in protest at the assassination of a member of the socialist trade union federation.

Factories were brought to a standstill, shops were closed and children were sent home from school.

Sr. German Gonzales Lopez, an official of the UGT, General Workers' Union was killed in Guipuzcoa, a province of northern Spain by members of the Basque separatist organisation, ETA. His death came just two days after the referendum on Basque autonomy which endorsed the government's proposals by a large majority.

ETA has consistently waged a campaign of individual terrorism which has played right into the hands of the Spanish bosses. It has provided the excuse for the Civil Guard's murders and intimidation of the Basque workers.

Decades of repression under Franco combined with the channelling of state funds away from the Basque provinces and even the suppression of the Basque language have reinforced the Basque people's opposition to the Madrid government.

The present Suarez government has tried to introduce measures to placate the workers. For example, in future the Basques will have the privilege of being shot by their very own Basque police force! Clearly the 'concessions' of Spain's Tories cannot end national oppression.



Previously, ETA had confined their killings to policemen and right-wing state officials. With this murder they have turned against the labour movement and are now making threats to other UGT leaders who supported the autonomy statute.

ETA's call for an abstention in the referendum was a flop. By their lunatic actions they have cut themselves off from the masses even more. A statement from the military wing of ETA said that the killing was the work of an isolated detachment. But this makes no difference. It is the logical result of their anti-working class policy.

The tremendous strike which was called by the UGT and Communist-led workers' Commissions shows the outrage of the Basque workers at this incident. They know they must rely on their own strength for defence.

In the four years since the death of Franco the power

and confidence of the Spanish workers has mushroomed. They have built up mighty organisations from almost nothing.

Yet the leaders of these organisations have failed to face up to the question of nationalism. This has enabled the various nationalist parties to win over half the electoral support in the Basque provinces. It is also a reason why some workers and middle class people have turned towards terrorist tactics.

Socialists stand for unity of all the working class. The way to unite the working people for a socialist Spain is to unconditionally recognise the right of self-determination for the Basques, Catalans and other national minorities. Only when the threat of national oppression is removed can the working class truly come together. It is vital that the Socialists and Communists put forward this demand now.

HOLLAND -

Where more profits means no jobs

The workers in the Amsterdam plant of British American Tobacco Company did everything the bosses wanted them to do. They worked hard, they did not do silly things like going on strike, in short they behaved themselves and produced a lot of profit for the company.

But the logic of capitalism is such that this peaceful, almost harmonious, situation could not last. Profits are good, but higher profits are better. Investment in new machinery, in new techniques is necessary to produce these higher profits.

BATCO-management knows this. So they took the profit produced by the Amsterdam workers and invested it. A completely new plant was established with modern equipment, some improved techniques.

This new plant can now provide for the whole Dutch-Belgian cigarette market. So the Amsterdam plant which payed for these investments goes against the wall.

New Belgian Plant

As early as 1971 management announced its plans. Too early, as they discovered. The new plant in Belgium could not deal with all the demand yet. So the plan was dismissed.

At the end of 1978 management thought that the time was now ripe. So the closure was announced again. Union intervention led to a court order forbidding a closure within the next twelve months.

BATCO-management broke the rules: it did not inform the unions in time. Well, better luck next time. At the end of 1979 the next time came.

The workers and the unions developed plans for action, solidarity campaigns were started and management started wavering. The plans were withdrawn, reannounced, and then postponed—all in the space of four weeks.

Obviously, management understood that there was a lot to be lost. Taxes on cigarettes go up from January 1st 1980. So demand went up quite dramatically as well.

A dispute now would stop the production in Amsterdam altogether and the Brussels plant was not yet ready to increase its production enough overnight to meet the increased demand.

For the time being the plants seem safe. But no-one doubts that as soon as this extra demand has gone and as soon as the Brussels plant is able to take over the Amsterdam production the 'old' plans will be announced again. In the period of uncertainty the banderolles (tax slips on cigarette cases) from Amsterdam have been brought to Brussels.

Management asked the Brussels workers to work overtime in an attempt to raise production to the required level necessary to do without Amsterdam. They were unsuccessful and that is why there seems to be a truce.

But the war has not ended, the logic of capitalism remains: BATCO-Amsterdam must die and BATCO-Brussels must increase its production.

Between 1973 and 1977 over £10 million of the Amsterdam profits were transferred to Brussels.

Co-ordinated Action Needed

Now the Amsterdam workers see how the profits that were squeezed out of them helped in an attempt to destroy their jobs. So far attempts to find a way of fighting the plan on the basis of co-ordinated action between the Dutch and Belgian BATCO workers have failed.

Faced with the inevitable new attack the Dutch BATCO workers have appealed to their brothers in the other BATCO-plants to organise solidarity action. The fight against this multi-national must be taken up in all the plants. Help the Amsterdam-BATCO workers now, you might be next.

Contact: BATCO action committee.
c/o W van den berg Brouwersgracht.
206B Amsterdam
Holland

By
Frans Hoffman

(Editor, Dutch socialist paper, Voorwaarts)

PAKISTAN: MILITARY POSTPONE ELECTIONS - AGAIN

Last month for the third time in two years Pakistan's military dictator, General Zia, announced that elections would be postponed.

Seizing power in July 1977 Zia has ruled with increasing ferocity. He has made widespread the practice of floggings, hand and foot amputations and stoning female adulterers to death.

Whereas he had some support on coming to power he now rules only by the gun and the rope.

He had hoped to crush Pakistan's main political party, the People's Party, when he executed its leader, Bhutto, in April. Instead this murder gave Bhutto a martyr's crown.

And Bhutto is fast becoming a saint, with some peasants telling of miracles he has performed since his death. Zia knows now that to hold elections would be to seal his own fate. The PPP would probably sweep back into power and seek revenge for Bhutto's murder.

So last month Zia turned to the whip with increased vigour. All strikes, political parties, marches and meetings were banned. Newspapers who did not agree with new censorship laws were closed.

"Martial law hereafter will be what martial law should be."

Along with his latest dictatorial decrees, Zia has feebly promised that 'democracy' will be restored at a future date. In reality he wants to lay the base for a stable military Islamic government, and has said he will hold a referendum on this.

Zia of course will decide who can vote. He has stated that he will exclude 90% of women, who "know nothing

beyond the four walls of their own homes."

Zia's hopes will be in vain. Like the military dictator Ayub Khan before him, he will be pushed aside. The Pakistani economy is in disarray and Zia's attempts to drag it out of its swamp is utopian.

Introducing his new measures, Zia proclaimed, "I hope that these steps will enable the country to recover from the incredible situation it is in and will enter a new era, where investors will not be afraid of investing."

But it is because Pakistan is economically bound hand and foot to international capital that it is in the mess it is. Foreign loans amount to over \$14 billion and interest repayments to over \$300 million this year.

Last year the trade deficit was \$967 million, a 150% increase on 1977. The growth rate has slumped to 1%, down from the meagre 4.3% obtained when the military seized power. All this despite

an inflow of over \$1,000m from Pakistani workers overseas.

Pakistan's economy suffers from the problems afflicting other so-called 'developing' countries, that of low productivity, lack of planned investment, lack of skilled labour and markets.

Zia's attempt to regualvanise the economy by de-nationalising the rice and cotton ginning mills has failed. The Pakistani capitalist class is incapable of taking Pakistan industry and society forward.

Zia will stagger from one expediency to another, whilst trying to preserve his military rule. But he cannot last. He will go the same way as previous dictators. Without social support, he becomes increasingly isolated.

Even a section of the army apparently disapproved of the latest measures, because they were afraid that Zia's unpopularity would rub off on them.

If there was an organised, principled socialist party then Zia's rule would be speedily ended. Unfortunately the

main party, the PPP, has failed to mobilise the people's opposition to oppression. It has no clearly worked out socialist programme.

In the past it mobilised for election campaigns on influential elders in the villages and towns.

It is undemocratic in that there have never been internal elections in the PPP. Its despotic nature and refusal in practice to rest upon the organised strength of the working class and peasantry has meant that it has proved incapable of organising and co-ordinating campaigns under illegality.

But Pakistani society will not stand still. Sooner or later the generals will be thrown out. In the absence of an alternative and despite its limitations, this will probably result in a return to PPP capitalist rule.

But a regime headed by Bhutto's daughter or another PPP figure would be short-lived. Unless a mass workers' party was created, the military would intervene again. It

is vital that this cycle of dictatorships and (limited) capitalist democracy is ended.

At present in Pakistan there are over 125 political parties, more than 20 of them claiming to be socialist. But these are mostly based around individuals rather than a socialist programme. They are more interested in their personal popularity than socialist change.

But in the coming struggles against the Zia regime and its successors, the workers will learn through their own experiences of the need to set up a mass socialist party. It is the missing subjective factor in Pakistan today.

Once established it would provide a way out from Pakistan's tragic cycles of repression and by ending capitalism and landlordism open up a new future for the mass of the people.

By Mumtaz Khan

LETTERS

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

Fifteen-hour shifts

Dear Comrades,

The following notice recently appeared on our notice board at work:-

"No officer must perform periods of attendance, either combined Duty and overtime or solely overtime which exceeds 15 hours 10 minutes (fifteen hours ten minutes). Any break between attendances must allow for 9 hours off duty".

Such is the state of this system that men are forced to become zombies to keep their heads above water. It would seem that the Tories are not taking us back to the 1930's but the 1830's.

The leaders of the labour movement must mount an immediate campaign not just to reduce the working week but to end this squalid capitalist system for good.

P.S. please don't print my name because I think this information could contravene the Official Secrets Act.

A Manchester Postman

NO CUTS AT ALL!

Dear Comrades

I've just read the letter in issue 474 by Clive Gravel 'Ghost of Christmas Past' and it made my blood boil. He explains how Islington Council, in response to cuts directed by the government, have turned down central heating temperatures in old people's housing and are advising them even to put newspaper between their blankets to keep warm.

Is this the society these old people fought in two world wars for? Is this a land fit for heroes? What's become of that much-used catch phrase 'you've never had it so good'?

Well! I think we've never had it so bad—and it's time it stopped. I refuse to grow old in a society where old age pensioners are not given the right to live—no I'm not going to kill myself but I am going to do everything I can to kill off the capitalist system with its vicious plans for our future.

Councillors in Newcastle have prepared a document which assesses what the cuts in public spending will mean to people in Newcastle. They generously state that they will try very hard to make the cuts as painless as possible. But what I say is 'no cuts at all' and I urge all comrades to say the same.

Make as much noise as possible, argue and fight until these councillors agree. If the representatives of Labour won't fight the cuts then the members of the labour movement will have to make them.

Yours fraternally
Catherine Ross
Newcastle North CLP

Tories remove ambulance cover

Dear Comrades

Following investigations made by John Duffin, Totnes Constituency Labour Party Press Officer, of a rumour circulating in the town, it can be confirmed that on 27th and 28th October there was no ambulance cover in Totnes between the hours of 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. and at Ashburton from 4 p.m. until 8 a.m. the following morning. This lack of cover was due to the refusal of the Ambulance Authority to allow normal overtime, which the ambulance men were prepared to work.

The Labour Party has also been able to confirm that during that period at least one 999 call was received in the Totnes area which had to be covered by Newton Abbot, resulting in a twenty minute delay in the ambulance arriving.

During the industrial disputes of last winter when the ambulance men banned overtime, many Conservative spokesmen were only too quick to claim that lives were

being put at risk by just such delays. Will they now condemn the same risks to life when they are a direct result of Conservative cuts?

The secrecy surrounding this withdrawal of normal ambulance services makes a nonsense of the Conservatives' boast that they are bringing greater accountability to local government. It is yet another example of financial cuts imposed by faceless bureaucrats in Westminster, spinelessly accepted by local Conservatives and resulting in an increase in the already unacceptable level of rural deprivation.

The Totnes Co-operative Party, of which John Duffin is Chairman, intends to raise this matter with Dr David Owen, MP for Devonport when he attends as main speaker at the Co-operative and Devon Labour Party rally against the cuts on November 17th.

Fraternally
Totnes Constituency
Labour Party

DRUGS—
You need a clear head to escape

Dear Comrades

The recent article by Phil Frampton on the legalisation of cannabis was a very well thought-out contribution to the discussion on this question. Although the topic isn't yet of major importance to the labour movement in this country, it is already a very vital one, as the article pointed out, in other parts of the world.

The ruling class know that they will have to use every dirty trick in the book to try to prevent workers from coming to socialist conclusions in the period of economic and political upheavals that lies ahead. They will seize on the promotion of any drug, and that includes ideological drugs like religion as well as

chemical drugs like alcohol and cannabis, in order to try to block the struggle for socialism. Why should we give them another weapon to use against us by calling for the legalisation of cannabis in this country?

Of course the day to day grind of life under capitalism, the monotony of the production line or the office, makes you want to escape. On a Friday or a Saturday night you might get boozed up with your mates to celebrate the end of the week and to try to obliterate the fact that Monday morning is going to come round again. But it always comes!

If going out for a drink, or getting high on other drugs, takes the place of political

activity, the bosses are laughing all the way to the bank. If cannabis was legalised, vast sums of money would be poured into an advertising campaign, even bigger sums of money would be made in profits by big business, and many more workers would be conned into taking what looks like an easy way out.

The revolutionary black youth of Soweto smashed up the beer halls and beer wagons that were used to keep their parents and brothers drunk and down. The only escape from capitalism is the struggle for socialism. For that you need a clear head!

Fraternally
Neil Hargreaves
Brentford & Isworth CLP

Attack the system— not drug users

Dear Comrades

Re 'Dulling the Consciousness' article, issue 476. I agree with Phil Frampton that drugs are indeed a dead end, and I am dismayed to think that the present generation of youth have to relive the mistakes that my generation went through in the 1960s.

We gradually switched from political involvement and action to 'fighting the revolution' by sitting listening to 'sounds' and 'getting stoned', all day, every day. By often painful experience, most of us learned that dope was not the way. And there were plenty of physical and psychological casualties as a result of our drugs revolution.

Dope is not hope (contrary to one of the sixties' slogans). In the final analysis it is a way of making the unacceptable acceptable, and so is alcohol.

But a worrying aspect of Phil's article is his underlying implication that we should support or oppose a law entailing harassment and repression, solely according to whether this advances the cause of socialism. To portray this as the sole determinant of what we do or don't support leads us dangerously close to the 'end justifies any means' philosophy of crude utilitarian 'Marxism' in the Stalinist mould.

At the moment the police have a free hand to enter houses, stop and search and generally harass people, courtesy of the drug laws. Does Phil think it right that people should be jailed for damaging their own health and well being?

While cannabis is illegal, we leave it wide open for control by organised crime, as happened in American alco-

hol-prohibition days. Agreed that were it to be legalised, the only consideration that big business would have would be how much profit they could get. So—restrict drugs' advertising and promotion, prevent profits being made from drugs.

As socialists we should not advocate restriction of damaging drugs by suppression of drugs users, but by education, help for those trapped by drugs, and by fighting to rid ourselves of the need for escapism. By ending the capitalist system, with its exploitation and alienation, building a socialist society where personal relationships can achieve a new meaning without resorting to drugs.

Yours fraternally
Ray Anchors
Oxford CLP

WORKED TO DEATH

Dear Comrades

In the last but one issue, my local paper carried a front page article and photo of a man who having worked 32 years for the same company had retired [with best wishes from all].

Unfortunately, what the next issue of the paper did not report was that before it had hit the streets [31.10.79] that

same worker had a heart attack and died...days after his retirement.

Surely this alone is argument enough for early retirement, so that workers can enjoy their years on a decent pension, as well as creating thousands of jobs.

Yours fraternally
Jim Newlands
Stirling LPYS

In order to allow the maximum space for readers' comments on our article opposing cannabis legislation we have been forced to cut all the letters printed this week. We welcome all letters, but they should be kept as short as possible. We reserve the right to cut any letters of more than 250 words.

Dear 'Militant'

I feel I must reply to Phil Frampton's article (issue 476) on why workers should be against legalising cannabis.

He says it is "another poison" and a "danger to workers' health", although it has been medically proven that "the moderate use of cannabis is not deleterious to health" i.e. it's about as harmful as tea, and considerably less harmful than alcohol or tobacco.

He declares that drug "trafficking is already partially integrated into the system"—rather an overstatement when one thinks of the 14-year sentences give to LSD manufacturers and the psychiatric treatment sometimes forced on those convicted of possession of cannabis.

He believes that drugs "dull the consciousness", clouding one's "perception of reality". Obviously, he understands nothing of the relation between the conscious and the unconscious, nothing about the limited nature of human perception, and therefore nothing about the nature of 'reality' itself. Drugs can have

revolutionary potential and can lead to new levels of understanding.

At best his statements are based on ignorance, at worst on puritanical bigotry. Perhaps alcohol or football or 'Coronation Street' should be banned as 'escapism' which "dulls consciousness of the struggle against capitalism"!

Finally, he concludes "legalisation could in no way benefit workers" even though this blatantly contradicts a previous statement that the anti-drugs laws were "a threat to the socialist movement as a pretext for picking up activists. These powers should be abolished..." Indeed, he supports the law because "it affords ordinary people some protection against the gross abuse of their health and safety". (These sort of reactionary sentiments would not look out of place in the 'Daily Telegraph'!)

Perhaps he thinks that workers don't take drugs; in this case he knows nothing of today's youth—for many of them dope is important.

Yours fraternally
Richard Parry

Where's
our
hockey
pitch?

Dear Comrades

I took a netball team to play an away game at another school (a Grammar turned Comprehensive) yesterday, and a comment from one of my players really made me think.

We were passing through a neatly laid-out grass quadrangle which separated their beautiful gym from the classrooms etc. when she turned and asked—'Miss, why can't we have grass?'

A quick answer might have been there's not much room for grass at our school. (There's not much room for anything!). Our 'gym' is a hall which gives the only access to two classrooms and is a general 'gathering space' at breaks and lunch-times.

Thinking about it a bit more I remembered the patch of waste ground round the corner from us that they've been promising for three years to turn into a hockey pitch. I could organise it myself if I had a bulldozer and driver for a day, a lorry load of turf, a groundsman with a roller and white-line machine. As it is we have the dubious pleasure of a slowly growing rubbish tip there instead.

So...Question: 'Why can't we have grass?' Answer: 'Because this rotten system is so bankrupt it can't even afford a decent learning environment for our kids.'

Forward to the day when we can sweep away crumbling capitalism for ever!

A teacher at an
Inner-London school

LAUNCH US INTO THE 80s

Reprieved again—you have another chance to build up 'Militant'!

The American military failed to blow up the world again last week—not of course for the first time.

This time it was a computer error. A faulty tape on a practice alert signalled a full-scale Russian attack last Friday. Jet fighters were scrambled—until a few minutes later it was found to be a false alarm.

But this nuclear 'war game' costs over £100,000, 000,000 every year just for the United States' and the Russian bureaucracy's military spending alone. What a grotesque waste of resources!

The squandering of massive resources on barbarous weapons of destruction (and the ultimate threat of nuclear annihilation if capitalist society is not replaced) is one compelling reason to contribute all you can to the cause of socialism, where rule by the majority means there's no reason not to help working people the world over.

But we've got quite a way to go yet. We're not asking even for one million pounds, just a few modest thousands to improve and

expand the scope and coverage of the 'Militant'.

You've seen the stakes: what can YOU afford?

This week's total of £1,678.45 brings us to nearly £60,000. That's £25,000 or just over £3,000 a week left to achieve the year's target.

The biggest sums this week came from sellers' rallies held in London and in the north: £732 and £133 respectively, after costs. Individual donations were topped by a Birmingham comrade whose tax rebate and trade union expenses came to £60!

Other lump sum contributions came from NW London (£30), Manchester and Scunthorpe £20 each, Strathclyde (£26) and another £15 from a reader in Irvine, also in West Scotland.

A comrade from Stevenage, Steve Glennon, has raised £13.90 on his sponsored slim, with more to follow, he says. A Glasgow reader gave us £12 with a donation from a union branch, and tenners included three from Edinburgh, R&J Bowler (Newcastle, removals) and M Slater (Wigan) among others.

Build

Area		Received
Eastern	4,700	2,945
Hants & IOW	3,100	2,431
Humber-side	2,000	1,378
London North	9,500	6,104
London South	3,900	3,334
Manchester & Dist	4,500	2,320
Merseyside	5,000	2,888
Midlands East	3,300	2,335
Midlands West	9,000	6,231
Northern	5,500	3,422
Scotland East	2,900	1,655
Scotland West	4,500	2,071
South East	4,500	3,686
South West	3,100	2,032
Wales East	2,600	1,276
Wales West	3,400	2,165
Yorkshire	6,800	3,521
Others	6,700	10,180
Total	85,000	59,974

TARGET FOR THE YEAR - £85,000

**THIS WEEK
£1,678**

A Chester supporter donated £6 from sale of scrap metal. Fivers included those from S Donnelly, T Thornton and J Sutton (London), D Wood (Bradford student) and again three Scottish readers.

Amounts between £1 and £5 included those from Geoff and Nigel (no surnames given) in Canterbury and J Sullivan (Maidstone), A Allenby ('a day's booze' Portsmouth), Mrs Gent (Newcastle housewife), J Greer (EETPU Edinburgh), S & C Kelly (Bradford) and from three stalwarts, J & H Wobey and P Frampton from London.

The £1 donations included Cllr D Robson (Bridlington), J Cuddy (NSMM, Birmingham), A Beere (NUSMWC&DE, Isle of Wight), I Cumming (Chilterns), T Webb (E Anglia), N Arnold (retired trade unionist, Nottingham), A Tanner and N

Cassidy (both London), M Prendiville (Birmingham), A Strafford (Canterbury) and B Narey and B Macarthy (both Bradford).

Over £34 came from an appeal at a meeting in Slough, when added to rebates, and over £14 from members of Hendon South Labour Party. Apart from the sellers' rallies, the Lancashire 'Militant' Day School provided the biggest collection with £43.60 and IOUs to come on top!

The West Scottish Graph-

ical Division of SOGAT donated £3. PNP members in Handsworth sent £9.10, and Chester LPYS £1.08.

The balance of £2.50 from a meeting in Corby shows that even where there's the best reason in the world for hanging on to hard-earned savings, it's recognised that a socialist paper like 'Militant' has to be supported by our class.

Thanks to contributors at discussion groups, and to brothers giving us TU and speakers' expenses.

Fund-raising events this week were headed by jumble sales in Peterborough (£51) and NE London (£32). A disco in Birmingham (£35) and a Manchester social (£15) together with Swansea's Spot the Ball game (rounded up to £16) were the other main sources.

Pontoon and bandit cards made £13, badges another £13, and another tenner from lifts, coffee and sandwiches. Pints for 'Militant', B&B, sale of plums, auction profits and Oldham's Bonfire Night completed the picture.

Can you help us to raise the necessary one four-millionth of the arms bill of the super-powers? £25,000 should be entirely within the means of our readership if every reader digs deeply.

What about a fiver—the cost of two small rounds of drinks—this week?

ads

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

MILITANT MEETINGS

LONDON Militant Public Meeting 'The Struggle for a Socialist United Ireland'. Hear: John Throne (Administrative Council, Irish Labour Party); Peter Hadden (Sec. N Ireland Labour & Trade Union Group). 7.30 pm, Wednesday 12 December, Waterloo Action Centre, Baylis Road, Waterloo

HAVANT Militant Readers' Meeting 'Ireland: a socialist solution'. Speaker: Eddie McParland (London Labour Party Executive & Campaign for a Socialist Solution in Ireland). Friday 23 November, 8.00 pm, at FOCUS, 230 Dunsbury Way, Leigh Park, Havant

BIRMINGHAM MILITANT Trotsky centenary rally

Agenda: 11.00 am: Introduction—film, 'October 1917'. 2.15 pm: meeting—'Leon Trotsky, what he really stood for'. Speaker: Ted Grant, Militant Editorial Board.

Stalls, refreshments and creche available. Saturday 1 December, at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham.

8.00 pm: social at Sheldon Centre, Sheldon Heath Road, Birmingham. Tickets: 70p. Tel: (021) 459 7903

SALFORD Youth Against the Tories public meeting. 'Stop the Cuts!' Speakers: Frank Allaun MP, Matthew Wrack (Salford LPYS); a Trades Council speaker. 8.00 pm, Friday 30 November, Ashfield Labour Club, Seedley Terrace, Salford

SALFORD Militant discussion meetings. Next meeting: 'Marxist Economics'. 7.30 pm, Sunday 2nd December. For more details tel. 793-5808

PORTSMOUTH Militant Meeting '100th Anniversary of Leon Trotsky'. Speaker: Ray Apps (Brighton Labour Party & 'Militant' Editorial Board) Friday 30 November, 8.00 pm, at Labour Rooms, 84 Kingston Crescent, North End, Portsmouth

CLASSIFIED

YORKSHIRE REGION Labour Party Young Socialists Youth Workers' Conference. 'Youth must organise against unemployment—fight back against the Tories!' Speakers: Pat Wall (President, Bradford Trades Council); Bob Cryer (Labour MP for Keighley); Joan Maynard (MP & Labour's National Executive); Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer). Saturday 8 December; morning session 10.30 am, afternoon 1.15 pm. Leeds Town Hall, Chapeltown Road.

Disco/social 8.00 pm at the Adelphi.

Sponsored by major trade unions in the region.

STRATHCLYDE Militant supporters' draw results. 10 November: 1st prize: 19&27, 2nd prize: 20&37

MILITANT Christmas social An evening with Peggy Seeger & Ewan MacColl plus additional music, beer and food
Friday, December 14th.

7 pm-12 pm, Colombo Sports & Community Centre, Colombo Street, S.E.1.
Tickets £2 from 'Militant' sellers or B Faulkes, 375 Cambridge Heath Road E2
Cheques to NE London Militant supporters

GET YOUR OWN BANNER! FOR TRADE UNION; LABOUR PARTY OR LPYS BRANCH.

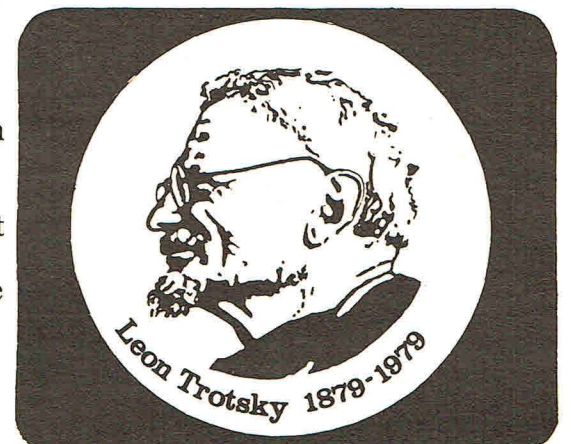
From £50
Contact: Stevenage Bannermakers.
Telephone:
0438 60313 or 0438 725135

You've seen the rest—now buy the best. 'Don't blame me' badges: 3 colours, 20p each plus postage. Order from B Faulkes, 375 Cambridge Heath Road, London E.2. Cheques payable to 'NE London Militant Supporters'.

MIKE LEVENE'S housewarming party. Saturday 24 November, 8 till late. 5 Sherbrooke Road, Carrington, Nottingham. All welcome; bring drinks!

LONDON Trotsky centenary rally

I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and, consequently, an irreconcilable atheist. My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today than it was in the days of my youth... Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence and enjoy it to the full.



**Hear Ted Grant
plus leading international speakers
Friday 30 November, 7.00 pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London W.C.1.
Admission 30p**

RAILWORKERS FIGHT CUTS, CLOSURES AND REDUNDANCIES

Railway workers are not standing by or retreating in the face of the cuts, closures and redundancies being proposed.

BR management, in collusion with the Tory government and civil service chiefs have plans for decimating the rail service, as was so accurately exposed and explained in recent issues of 'Militant'.

A recent report at our branch (Stratford ASLEF) from ASLEF District Council No. 1 gave many clear indications of the effects of BR management's policy of natural wastage.

There will be very few, and in some cases no loco drivers at all at several depots, if staff who leave, retire and so on are not replaced. That of course is in line with management policy to run-down manning levels by 35,000 over the next decade.

Already the situation is so serious at Southall Loco Depot that ASLEF's Executive Committee have actually overturned union policy, permitting rest-day working to cover the vacancies.

The rest of the report, dealing with the freight business, was equally disturbing. It revealed a further decline in wagon-load traffic and management plans to close, or cut-back many of the large hump and marshalling yards throughout the Eastern Region.

During the discussion of these issues, which stretched over two branch meetings, members clearly expressed determination to fight against management's plans, and laid the blame clearly at their door.

The present disastrous manning situation is due on the one hand to a deliberate policy of freezing or restricting recruitment in many areas. Added to this, particularly in the London and South Eastern areas is the effect of long hours, low pay and poor conditions of employment.

Workers are quite naturally not prepared to work rough shifts and weekends, sometimes six and seven days a week, to take home sixty to seventy pounds. It is impossible to recruit in sufficient numbers or to hold those who do start on the railway. So management are able to keep down numbers, providing the excuse to cut services.

BR are deliberately running down all freight except for container traffic, block trains and the limited, very lucrative wagon-load traffic with 'Speedlink'.

Locomotives and old rolling stock have been scrapped but not replaced so that BR cannot handle the traffic offered.

They are now arguing that railworkers must accept cuts in manning levels and existing freight facilities, higher productivity and so-called 'new methods of working' to make railfreight profitable enough to buy more locos and equipment and thereby ensure a rosy future!

No railworker should fall

By Martin
Elvin

(Stratford ASLEF)

for this con-trick. Such arguments were proved false under the last round of Beeching cuts.

The situation today, with mass cut-backs in steel, shipbuilding, projected cuts in car production and throughout industry will lead to even greater falls in freight traffic. The cuts in government subsidies by the reactionary Tories will make things even worse.

Following full discussion on these issues the Stratford ASLEF branch agreed to call upon ASLEF District Council No. 1 to wage a district-wide campaign to prepare the membership for the coming attacks.

We are calling for a mass meeting of all members in the district to discuss the issues and formulate policy. Two leaflets should be produced and distributed to all members, to explain the serious manning problems and to highlight the crisis of the freight business.

If the District Council accept this, as we expect, it will be a real step in the start of a fight-back, which must be broadened to include other areas, the other rail unions, and indeed the rest of the labour movement. The entire membership must be involved to ensure that the trade union leadership takes up the fight and prevent a repetition of the vicious attacks on steel, shipbuilding and Leyland workers.

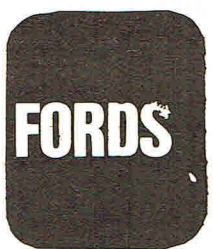
It is crucial that clear policies are adopted in this struggle. We must demand a joint trade union campaign for:

- ★ No further cuts in manning levels
- ★ No station, line, yard or depot closures
- ★ A mass recruitment campaign, under trade union supervision, to fill all vacancies
- ★ A 35-hour week and an £80 minimum wage.

This would improve the job and lay the basis for ending overtime and rest-day working.

A shorter working week is the answer to management claims of 'overmanning'.

Building support on this programme, the rail unions must join the whole labour movement in a fight to kick out the Tories and replace them with a Labour government committed to a nationalised, integrated transport system, run under workers' control, serving society's real needs on the basis of socialist planning.



Profits boom-workers demand better deal

After a nine week strike last year, Ford workers settled for a pay rise of 17%. We smashed through the Labour government's 5% limit and set the pace for last winter's wages round.

The rise, however, only amounted to approximately £10 per week. Of this, over £3.50 was an "attendance allowance" and therefore does not count towards shift premiums, overtime and holiday pay or pensions.

This year the unions opened negotiations by stating that they wanted the standard of living of Ford workers raised to the level of 1974. As they point out in a leaflet explaining the claim, Ford have made a total of £745 million profit in the last seven years, and are expected to net another £150-£200m this year

By John
Kelly
(T&GWU Ford
Southampton)

and next.

So they can afford to make up what our wage packets lost over the years of wage controls since 1974! This means a pay rise of £30 a week if the attendance allowance is consolidated into the basic rate; if not, we need a pay rise of £36.

With inflation well into double figures and rising, the

unions are asking for the deal to be index-linked to protect us against rising prices. "Under the Tories," the leaflet spells out, "we shall need it."

We are also claiming a line workers' allowance of one hour's pay per shift, to compensate for some of the extra pressure.

On the question of hours, instead of just asking for a straight reduction in the working week the negotiators have put a series of proposals to the company which will lead to a shorter working year equal to a 35-hour week. The negotiating committee has before it masses of evidence, in hard facts and figures, on the benefits this would bring in recruitment, in our health and performance, and in creating jobs for the unemployed.

The unions are suggesting that a form of 'leave' similar to that operated in the American Ford plants should be phased in over four years. By the fourth year employees

would be entitled to three months' paid leave for every ten years' service. Improved long service holidays are also sought, starting at one day for the first five years' service, rising by one day every five years until an extra five days' holiday per year after 25 years' service.

We are seeking various improvements on pensions. At present, after 20 years a 'Grade B' worker gets less than £11 a week. The main point is that a full pension should become payable after 30 years' service. This will lead to the same "30 years and out" scheme as operates in the States.

Although this is not as comprehensive as previous claims, if the company's response to the staff unions' claim of 12% is any guide, the negotiators are in for a tough time. But we are determined that some part of the massive £242 million profit which Ford made last year, despite the nine weeks' strike, goes to its workers.



Last year's claim smashed the 5% limit, but Ford workers are still way behind 1974 wages

VAUXHALL-

Preparing for battles to come

After twelve weeks of struggle, settlers at Vauxhall Motors have voted narrowly to accept the company's offer.

This ends the last of the struggles on the present pay talks. According to a VM spokesman, they are 'very pleased' and hope to have "full and uninterrupted

production" back in days. What a hope!

Already some workers who were waiting for work to start have been called back and then walked out again.

By Tommy
Baugh

(AUEW Vauxhall
Ellesmere Port)

After our struggle, the anger is still there.

These workers found out that not all their members had been called back. Although some were senior workers, the Company had deliberately left them out.

By a pure coincidence, some were shop stewards. No doubt this was an innocent oversight—I'm sure it wasn't a deliberate ploy to see how the membership would react to an attack on their representatives and their union.

Settlers at Luton have served 90-day notice of strike action, due up on 22 November. It will be interesting to see what happens.

Our task now is cementing the cracks left by the strike, learning the lessons of our long and bitter struggle. This need not be difficult.

Many Vauxhall workers have seen for themselves the

burning need for a strong combine shop stewards' committee uniting all the plants. This is top priority if we are to fight effectively on wages and conditions on a national scale.

Even though our action at Ellesmere Port did not bring any immediate direct gains, the message has now been spelt out for all to see. Facing the crisis in the car industry and in the whole capitalist economy, management are not prepared to spend money on new plant and machinery to update factories and increase production.

They have invested instead in a whip, trying to force us back to the '30s. They will fail as all reactionary bully-boy methods will.

The workers have been forced to go back by lack of funds. They are still on the boil, waiting to explode into action at the slightest hint of provocation or victimisation.

Now it is up to us, the union members, to harness this energy and channel it in the right direction—building and hardening our union organisation and preparing ourselves for the battles to come.

MINERS DEMAND £80 MINIMUM

On Thursday 8 November 500 miners from all the major London coalfields descended on London to lobby the NUM headquarters as National Executive members arrived for a meeting on the wage claim.

NEC members, notably those ready to compromise on the first offer, were given a taste of anger outside the Euston Road offices. Some had difficulty getting into the building, with miners demanding to talk to them at length.

They were forced to run the gauntlet of rank and file opinion; "don't sell us out", "carry out conference decisions", "for November 1st starting date now", "£140 for face-workers and £80 minimum for the lads on top".

As one placard expressed it 'peanuts are for monkeys, not for miners.'

Later in the afternoon, delegates attended a meeting in Conway Hall for a report given by the seven Joint National Negotiating Committee (JNNC) members committed to the full claim. The remaining seven members and the national president were conspicuous by their absence.

Michael McGahey, Scottish area president, began by reporting that by 13 to 12 the NEC had decided on a compromise of a November starting date in 1981. By the

By Ian Isaac

(Lodge Secretary, St Johns NUM, personal capacity)

same margin they voted to ask the NCB for more money the next week.

No commitment was given on the conference resolution unanimously carried at Jersey, calling for £140 for face-workers and a minimum of £80 for surface workers. The demand for a four-day week was virtually ignored.

Arthur Scargill, Yorkshire president, calculated that for miners to maintain the purchasing power achieved following the 1972 national strike, a coal-face worker needed a gross pay of £142 per week "to stand still". Other NEC members expressed anger and disgust at the way negotiations were being conducted, with Joe Gormley, the union's president, blatantly ignoring conference decisions, more concerned with peripheral issues that

would form a package without the four-day week and the £80 minimum wage.

Delegates were urged to invite speakers to their areas and pit-heads, to launch a campaign for the full implementation of the claim.

One thing is certain: the mood of the miners is beginning to harden. The incentive scheme is generally seen as a poor substitute for a decent basic wage. Its effect in disuniting the areas should be combatted by a campaign for the realisation of conference decisions. All areas present gave a commitment to attend the mass lobby of parliament on 28th November against the Tories' cuts. The Tory government's bogus policy of 'free collective bargaining' means accepting cuts in the social wage—and a further reduction in income in an attempt to bail out capitalism and restore profits, on our backs.

Already demands for £100 a week for surface workers are being voiced by formerly silent sections of the union. There is a ground-swell of determination in the NUM for a settlement which offsets the devastating effects of constantly rising prices, summed up in the little rhyme addressed to Joe Gormley, our national president: 'Joe, don't be naughty, go for £140'.



Lobbying the NUM NEC members to carry out conference decisions

'STREAMLINING' = REDUNDANCIES

Two major print factories in the West of Scotland are among the latest hit by redundancy threats.

Collins, the giant book company, operate at Europe's largest book-producing plant at Bishopriggs, north Glasgow, and 'Simplicity Patterns', at Blantyre.

Union representatives were recently issued with a 100-page document outlining the company's difficulties and proposing survival plans.

The "streamlining operation" outlined in the document included the loss of 617 jobs out of 2,600 plus "some investment" in new technology. The 617 jobs were across the board: bindery, machine room and caseroom, clerical and staff.

They would mainly affect members of SOGAT, although members of the NGA, SLADE, EETPU and AUEW are also affected. SOGAT members were also mainly affected in Simplicity Patterns where 70 people have been given notice of redundancy.

Real aims of management

Collins' real aims have become clearer in a further document containing draconian proposals on existing manning agreements (national and local), attacks on bonus schemes and on existing work patterns throughout the factory.

In effect, the company are attempting to use the present problems to cut wages and many of the union's other

By Jim Friel

(SOGAT DFOC, press & rotary chapel, personal capacity)

hard-won gains. The second document was produced as the union chapels were preparing replies to the first one. Most of the floor managers in the factory agreed that the chapel replies were viable and in fact, in some areas, a case was made for recruitment.

It is an open secret that a strong body of opinion on the Collins' board of directors favours an end to all manufacturing, remaining in the lucrative field of publishing. Printing could then be pursued in such havens of free enterprise as Taiwan and Singapore, where some Collins' work is already done, untrammelled by trade unionism.

The return of 'The Times'; see page 3

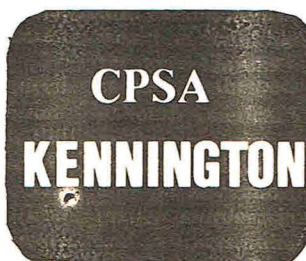
Our fear, therefore, is that they plan to close the Glasgow operation entirely.

The company losses are projected at around £2 million by the end of the current financial year. This is the first time in their long history (since around 1820) that they have failed to announce a dividend.

In 1976 profits reached nearly £4½ million; in 1977, £3,149,000 and in 1978 £3,559,000. The 'better' years before 1977-78, were a real bonanza, with record profits declared year after year. Nonetheless they have had their share of government grants—they have often been

the recipients of public money.

Collins must not be allowed to get away with this attack. Coming in the wake of the announcement of the closures at Singers, Clydebank, Massey Ferguson, Kilmarnock and the massive redundancies at Talbot-Linwood and the shipyards it is essential that we link together in the fight against unemployment and closures before the West of Scotland becomes an industrial desert.



Many DHSS office workers walked out on Tuesday after two CPSA and two Society members were suspended at Kennington DHSS. Further suspensions are expected by the end of this week.

As part of the campaign against the cuts in the civil service CPSA have banned all overtime and casual labour and temporary promotion and substitution.

Management at Kennington employed two casuals and upgraded two CPSA members. The CPSA branch applied to the national disputes Committee for permission to black the jobs, which was given after three weeks. Management gave written notice to the four union members and suspended them on Tuesday for taking part in the action.

Workers at the DHSS offices took supporting action. Pickets at Streatham DHSS office spoke to John Bulaitis (Beckenham LPYS): "management are trying to pick us off one by one, and it could be us next. This campaign against the cuts and the Tories started when Jenkins announced his 10% to 20% cuts.

"They've already stopped the Supplementary Benefit postal review and are threatening that it will be up to employers to pay the first six weeks of sickness benefits.

"We are fighting today to ensure our jobs are safe and to defend the service. We are also showing management that we can't work properly with the staff we've already got."

CROWN HOUSE ELECTRICIANS -

MAKE THIS STRIKE OFFICIAL

By Bob Faulkes

(EETPU and Hackney Central Labour Party)

lorries which were arriving early. Jim Steele, a strike committee member, told me that they "were having mixed success with the lorries—about seventy-three in our favour are turning back."

Some, like BOC workers and POEU members are to their credit refusing to cross the picket line.

Picketing of other Crown House jobs may also be organised. The biggest asset, however, would be official backing. At present, the men are fighting with one arm tied behind their back.

Mowlem's (the main contractors) and Crown seemed

determined to break the union structure. These workers cannot understand why their union's National Executive refuse to make their action official, with arguments that the men haven't exhausted all the procedures.

The 'City Recorder' placed high hopes in the full-time officials getting the men back.

Unfortunately for management it hasn't worked out that way. As many EETPU branches as possible should urgently move motions calling on the NEC to make the strike official. The Basildon branch has already done so.

The trade union and labour movement must give full support to the Crown House men to win this one. As Jim Steele commented, "They've got the 'City Recorder', we've got you."

Crown House electricians voted overwhelmingly to stay out at a mass meeting, despite pressure from union officials for a return to work. The men are determined to fight on and step up their battle.

Picketing hours will now be increased. This has already had some success in stopping

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS FIGHT SUSPENSIONS

NUNEATON

Four members of CPSA [Civil and Public Services Association] were on November 1st suspended from work at the DHSS office at Nuneaton. This was as a result of CPSA's campaign against Public Expenditure Cuts. Two more CPSA members were suspended last Tuesday.

As part of our fight against the Government's attacks on Public Services we have instituted an overtime ban, a ban on worksharing, and a ban on out of grade working.

The four CPSA members were suspended because they refused to handle work done by an individual who was not complying with our action.

Membership determined

The immediate result of the suspensions was that 22 DHSS offices in the West Midlands shut completely for the day, 14 were partially closed and numerous other offices held protest meetings. Messages of support and information about further action being taken across the country have been pouring into the office.

Two further members were suspended on Friday 9th November. We decided against withdrawing all our members at Nuneaton, as we still feel that providing a service to the public is a priority. However, with further suspensions it will not be long before the management has forced the closure of the entire office.

Offices are continuing to come out on a daily basis, and the whole membership is determined that we will not be defeated.

The solidarity action, which involves the blacking of all suspended members' work included inside meetings where there has been a full

discussion and broad-based decisions on the campaign.

Although there had primarily been some difficulty in getting full support for the ban on temporary promotions etc, the question of solidarity with suspended members has superseded all the particular issues.

In fact, in most offices the campaign is now tightening up, and the resolve and unity of members has been greatly strengthened.

We all understand that the battle for re-instatement is vital. If the management wins on this, the ground will be cleared for a massive shedding of jobs, between 10,000

and 20,000 as the Tories impose the 10% to 20% cut they have announced. This we will not accept.

Messages of support to: June Brown, Nuneaton ILO, Powell House, Church Street, Nuneaton

By Derrick McClelland

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Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH
 Editor: Peter Taaffe, Business Manager: Dave Galashan
 Published by Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3P. Tel: 01-986 3828
 Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office
 Printed by Cambridge Heath Press Ltd [TU]

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS FIGHT SUSPENSIONS

The campaign against the cuts has reached a new stage in the 4,000-strong National Savings Bank, Glasgow.

Management have retaliated with mass suspensions, provoking walk-outs in Glasgow and Newcastle.

At present the Civil and Public Services Association is operating a national overtime ban and other sanctions in an attempt to force the Tories to back off. The NSB itself is being threatened with possible closure. Union members here, therefore, kept solidly to the ban—until three weeks ago.

A breach was opened up when an area under enormous pressure presented a membership-inspired (!) petition asking for overtime. This was

grasped by the management as an excuse to offer overtime.

As a result of work by union activists only a handful of staff opted to work it. However when another area followed suit a mass meeting was called and backing for the national action against the cuts was overwhelmingly agreed. The meeting also agreed to black the work of staff who did overtime.

When the blacking began, numerous CPSA members were harassed and threatened, union officers were refused access to consult their members. All management's attempts at provocation, probably advised by senior government officials, failed to break the solidarity of the staff.

On Thursday 8th November as a last resort, suspension notices were issued. By Monday, 210 members had been suspended. A mass meeting of the branch that

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day voted to walk out in protest. In response to blacking the work of suspended staff, we have been threatened with more lock-outs.

Civil service trade unionists are incensed. Other areas are already taking action in support. The massive Newcastle Central DHSS branch and others have walked out in protest. Labour MPs are being lobbied to help step up pressure on our Tory employers.

The use of suspensions as an attempt to frighten and demoralise staff will fail. The NSB staff are aware that to back down now would open the way for future victimisation, reprisals and a loss of negotiating power. Management's attitude is likely to strengthen the resolve of the NSB staff in their attempt to convince the Thatcher government of the need to retain National Savings in particular and social expenditure in general. Moral and financial support is essential if we are to defeat the use of suspensions to drain the financial resources of the CPSA, forcing it to call off the action against the cuts. We call on all trade unionists and socialists to support our members. Letters of support and financial contributions should be sent to CPSA, Staff Association Room, National Savings Bank, Boydstone Rd, Cowglen, Glasgow.

CUTS

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Edinburgh have held anti-cuts conferences to consolidate opposition to the cuts from sections of the local labour movement—in South Yorkshire badges proclaiming 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire' are being snapped up by workers!

Opposition against the cuts can be found at every level—over the country civil service unions are taking industrial action against Tory plans to cut social services. In Stoke Mandeville, handicapped workers in wheel-chairs occupied a hospital ward threatened with closure.

All these local protests must be galvanised into a mass demonstration on the 28th—a mass demonstration

of strength by the labour and trade union movement to show the Tories, and the bosses they represent, that attacks on workers' living standards will not be tolerated.

The general council of the TUC has called for a 'Day of Action' on the 28th. This must now be made effective by thorough preparation.

Shop-floor and office meetings should be called everywhere to explain the vital necessity of action to stop the cuts.

Millions of workers will be involved on the 28th, but the public sector unions should ensure maximum support throughout the country, with only emergency cover in vital services.

Union branches, district committees, trades councils, should; as many already have, be organising buses and coaches to make sure every area of the country is represented on the national lobby.

Not everyone, however, will be able to get to London to demonstrate their anger and opposition to the Tory attacks.

In every town and city, the labour movement must make sure that—as already has been planned in many areas—there will be demonstrations, rallies and meetings to explain the harsh realities of the Tory cuts—and to put forward an alternative.

Talking to the millionaires at the Lord Mayor's banquet, Mrs Thatcher said the Tory government were aiming at a "return to the practical realities demonstrated in the

19th century 'when British policy rested on sound money and a modest regulatory role for government' ['Guardian' 13 November].

It is a pathetic delusion on the part of the Tories to think that they can return British capitalism, the sick man of the capitalist world, to its Victorian supremacy.

But to put more profits in the hands of the tycoons and financiers, the Tories are out to return the workers of this country to the barbarous, impoverished conditions of the 19th century.

That is what the destruction of the 'welfare state' and the fettering of the trade unions would really mean—if the Tories are allowed to get away with it.

STUDENTS ANGER

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mobilise with them for the 28th November lobby against the cuts.

Five hundred students marched through the East End at the end of the occupation, which had been very successful. The college was covered with anti-Tory posters! Over 60 Militants were sold during the occupation.

At the London School of Economics, a two-day occupation and a lecture boycott were organised. The occupation ended with a demonstration of over 1,000 students through Central London, i.e. one third of the college students. Leading NALGO members supported the demands of the occupation: for the non-implementation of the fee increases, and opposition to all fee increases. A committee has been set up to continue the campaign.

At Lanchester Poly in Coventry, students occupied the administration block in spite of a right-wing attempt to whip up opposition to the move and despite the police being called in by the college authorities. One student, chairman of the Labour Club was arrested.

Many of the engineering students who had been told all sorts of stories about 'plots' by 'childish lefties' and were brought along to oppose action themselves decided to join the occupation when they heard the debate of the general meeting.

At Thames Poly, members of the Labour Club were prominent in explaining the case for action and a general meeting of over 800 voted

overwhelmingly to occupy. This action throughout the country, however has been in spite of a marked lack of leadership from the Executive of the National Union of Students. The NUS has made little effective effort to establish links between the NUS and the trade unions in education and the public sector. This is vital, especially at a local level.

The initiative and enthusiasm for action on the cuts has come from below, from the students' ranks. This completely confirms 'Militant's' confidence during the recent years that students would again move into action and look to the labour movement for a way forward.

The leaders of NUS, however, who also claimed to be progressive or even socialist, adjusted themselves to a supposed 'turn to the right' among students, and have therefore not surprisingly been unable to respond to the growing wave of anger against Tory measures.

NUS must now step up the campaign against the fee increases. A national call should go out for every Students Union to mobilise for the lobby against the cuts on 28 November. Every Labour Club should call for full support for this national demonstration organised by the labour movement against the Tory axe-men.

The fight against the fee increases must be a political campaign, linked to the struggle by the labour movement to defend education. The first battle has been fought. The war must go on!

DEFEND MILITANT

Over two hundred delegates and observers to the special rules revision conference of the Post Office Engineering Union in Blackpool last week signed a petition condemning John Golding's action for libel damages against the 'Militant'.

The petition also condemned the use of POEU funds to back this action by one of the Union's sponsored MPs, and called on the Executive to withdraw support.

Rank and file members of the POEU clearly share the view of most of the rest of the labour movement, that it is against all the democratic traditions of the movement to

take an issue of this kind to the courts.

No one can gain from such expensive litigation, least of all John Golding who is challenging a report of the Labour Party's January Executive [NEC] meeting confirmed by at least six NEC members present.

From the beginning of the dispute, moreover, 'Militant' has offered John Golding space in its columns to put his version, an offer that he has made no attempt to take up.

'Militant', however, has received tremendous backing from the movement. This week for example, K Albison, a bakery worker in Oldham sent a magnificent £10 donation.

"As a baker," he writes, "the help we have received has been of great assistance to us, so the donation to

ensure your survival is small but needed by you more than me."

Two resolutions supporting 'Militant's' stand were carried unanimously at this week's meeting of Glasgow Trades Council. One was submitted by SOGAT, the other from ASLEF.

London North branch of the National Union of Journalists has agreed to donate £10 to the fund and has called upon their executive to give publicity to the action.

Labour Parties, not all of whom agree with 'Militant's' programme, have passed resolutions in support of the paper. Sheffield Brightside CLP's resolution, after deploring John Golding's legal action said:

"We further affirm that, whilst not agreeing with all its contents or editorials,

'Militant' serves a very useful role within the affairs of the movement."

Support this week has included £10 from Ladywood CLP, £5 from the Town Hall branch of Lambeth CLP and a £10 donation from Bill Geoghegan in Birmingham.

University Labour Clubs have not so far been very prominent in forwarding donations so perhaps the £20 from Manchester University Labour Club could help spur others into action.

To all the contributors of finance and resolutions this week, many thanks. It is absolutely vital that the donations keep coming and are increased to meet legal expenses.

Please send donations and messages of support to: Militant Defence Fund, 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church Street, London S.E.8.



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