

Militant

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Unions must start campaign to- **PUT TORIES ON THE DOLE**

The massacre of the Welfare State and the creation of a living hell for millions. That would be the effect of Tory cut-backs in social security and in unemployment benefits, to be introduced in Chancellor Geoffrey Howe's budget next week.

By **Suri Krishnamma**

(Hackney Central LPYS)

Proposals to scrap the linking of unemployment benefit to the cost of living would result in a 5 per cent cut in real terms from November, for those unable to get a job. For a married man, presently on a flat rate of £29.95, it will mean a loss of about £1.50 a week in real terms.

The Tory vultures are determined to attack the weakest and poorest section of workers and their families.

Child benefit will now only be increased by 75p. Even official figures point out that even to keep up with inflation, an increase of £1 is needed!

The government is out to save £300 million in the next year. They intend to abandon the Earnings Related Supplement scheme. After years of tax contributions, this payment, designed to ease the plight of the unemployed for the first six months, is to be confiscated.

In a blatant attack on trade union rights, the Tories also seem likely to cut benefit paid to the



Thatcher plans massive cuts to boost big business

families of workers on strike. They plan to take £12 a week from the social security payments received by these families.

Even though only a minority of striking workers actually claim this benefit, the average sum received last year was a mere £15.51 per week.

That would leave a mere £3.51 to support an entire family! The clear purpose of this measure is to starve trade unionists and their families,

fighting for their jobs and wages into submission.

This government understands nothing of the problems facing the working class.

Howe's budget proposals must be thwarted. The Tories must be driven out.

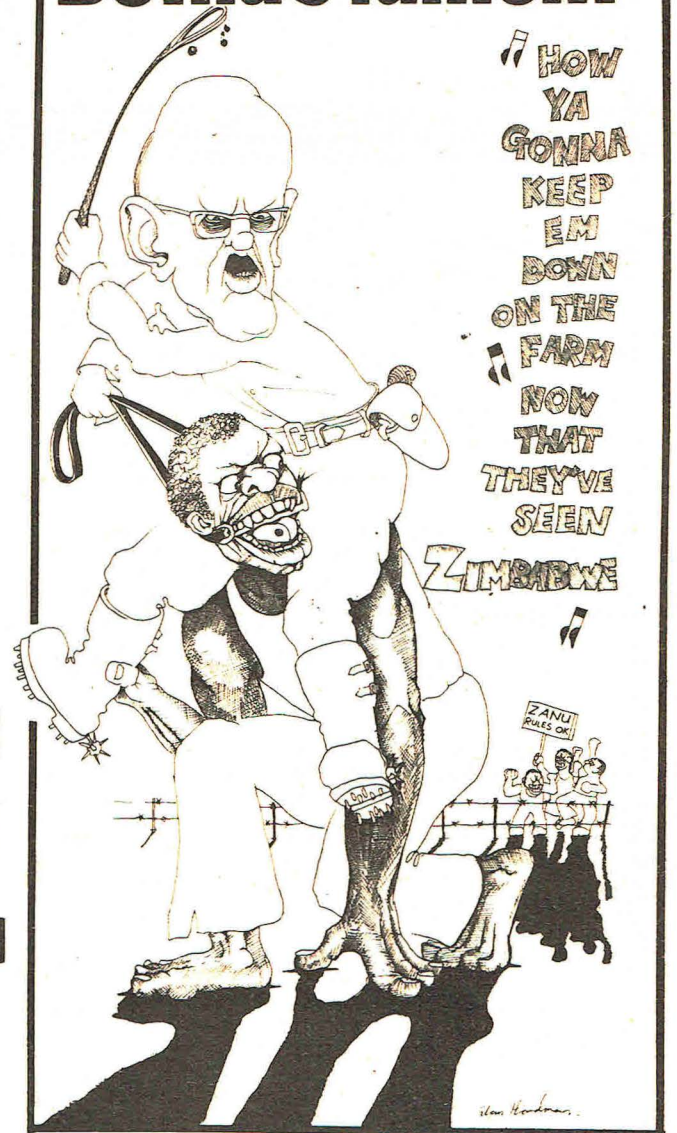
Only the mobilised strength of the labour and trade union movement can do that. A 24-hour general strike on 14th May, the TUC's day of protest, would be a launching pad for a mass

campaign to force the Tories out.

The NUR executive has urged the TUC to call all affiliated unions out on 14th May. Every trade unionist, Labour Party and shop stewards' committee must take up this call.

Everything must stop on May 14th as the first step to oust the Tories and return Labour to power on a socialist programme.

Botha's lament



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YS CONFERENCE

ACT NOW!



Since the Labour Party's last party political broadcast, organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists, over 2,000 people have applied to join the Labour Party.

This is three times as many as for the previous youth broadcast—and the highest number of applicants for any Labour Party broadcast ever!

Come to Llandudno this Easter [April 4th to 7th] for the Labour Party Young Socialists' Conference.

Join in the fight to kick out the Tories. Join the fight to return a Labour government committed to a socialist programme.

Come to LPYS conference at Llandudno!
See page 3 for details.

Militant

IMPORT CONTROLS -No answer to capitalist crisis

The catastrophic collapse of British capitalism is now openly recognised. Cambridge economists have produced a report which predicts a 10% fall in industrial production over the next two years and a steady rise in unemployment to the nightmare figure of 3½ million by 1985—a future of horror for the working class.

The collapse is now not even hidden by the ruling class. In an expensive campaign of advertisements sponsored by BL, British capitalism chooses to advertise its own bankruptcy.

The "Buy British" campaign presents devastating evidence of decline. The motorcycle industry collapsed with the loss of numerous jobs following the drop in its share of the market from 98% to a mere 2%.

The BL advertisements show that the rest of British capitalism can offer no better future for the working class. What levels of unemployment do the employers have in mind when they complain of the greatly increased import penetration of the British market?

Agricultural imports rose from 22% to 44% during the '70s, and machine tools from 28% to 48%. 99% of dishwashers, 44% of automatic washing machines, 70% of cutlery and 96% of portable radios are now imported.

In the first two months of 1980, 58% of all cars sold in Britain were foreign made. A recent article in 'The Times' could say with relief that "import penetration has significantly increased in the last two years in only about a third of the home markets of Britain's 60 main manufacturing sectors."

The trade situation has seriously deteriorated. Imports of manufactured products bought in Britain rose from 24.3% to 25.7% in the two years to September 1979. Meanwhile exports fell as a proportion of British manufacturing companies' sales from 24.9% to 24.5%.

The industries worst affected are not necessarily

the oldest. Two sectors which both increased the percentage of imports and reduced level of exports were the motor car industry and the vital machine tools industry which largely govern the industrial potential of any country.

BL's publicity for British industry cynically puts the blame on the consumers—predominantly the working class—for buying foreign goods. "Once," says the advertisement, "our standard of living was the highest in the world. Now we're not even in the top twenty." They claim that it is up to us to "Buy British" in order to prevent mass unemployment.

But what has caused the industrial ruin of what was once the workshop of the world? The chaos of capitalism and the consequent total collapse of investment in the bedrock of the economy—manufacturing industry.

Looking for guaranteed and quick profits, the capitalist class have completely failed to re-tool and re-equip industry. Last year manufacturing investment remained static—in fact seeing the prospect of an economic recession in 1980, manufacturing investment fell rapidly in the last quarter of 1979 and is expected to fall by about 7½% this year.

On the other hand investment in distributive and service industries which are more profitable rose by 8% during 1979, and the Department of Industry expects a further big rise during the current year. For capitalism profits come first—and to hell with the consequences as factories close and workers find themselves on the dole queues.

Ten years ago, manufac-

turing industry made up 54% of the total investment in Britain. In 1980 it will be about 40%. In real terms manufacturing investment is still not much more than a third of the 1961 level!

Every form of profitable investment is preferred by the ruling class to manufacturing—but manufacturing production is the only source of real wealth. Antiques, stamps, speculation in land, and property in Britain and abroad. All have been fruitful sources of profits—and prime causes of inflation—but disastrous for industry.

Already by 1970 productivity had dropped to 65% of the West German level in terms of value added per employee and 47% of that in Japan. By 1977 the figures were 61% and 38% respectively—as a result of this short-sighted withholding of industrial investment.

The Tory government have added extra fuel to this process with their policies, not only in their attempted destruction of steel, shipbuilding and other ailing industries. The dereliction of the steel industry would obviously have a disastrous effect on the rest of industry.

But the effect of high interest rates is also ruinous. The banks and finance houses have benefitted from the 17% minimum lending rate, with profits increased by up to 90% for the big clearing banks. Nobody else has gained, certainly not the rent payer, or the mortgage holder.

Even industrial capital has suffered. High interest rates attract large sums of money invested from abroad as well as from Britain. This has strengthened the pound—and made exports more expensive and imports from abroad cheaper.

Even the cost of pro-

Capitalism has caused the problems of British industry through years of non-investment in manufacturing industry.

ducing has spiralled upwards. 'The Times' calculates [12 March] that borrowing costs constitute a huge burden on industry given such steep rates of interest. Japan is no less under the control of capital than Britain but the inter-linking of finance and industrial capital does at least mean that there is no middle man raking off huge interest payments before profits.

Businessmen can get bank loans for investment at 7% repayment rates. In Britain loans over two years with a normal interest rate of about 20% means that approximately a 65% return is needed before a new investment becomes worthwhile to the capitalist. As even 'The Times' points out, "with market forces in control", it takes no crystal ball to work out who invests and survives and who does not.

Crisis-ridden British capitalism, with the added load of the Thatcher government's policies, now faces

the prospect of a complete collapse of profits in industry. The London Business School forecast that, excluding oil, industrial profits might fall 60% this year.

Profit is the unpaid labour of the working class. If profits are threatened then the capitalist class will move heaven and earth to get the working class to pay through bankruptcies, mass redundancies and severe cutbacks in living standards.

In view of this threat, it is no surprise that the idea of import controls should begin to gain credence in the working class and labour movement. Previously only the Tribune group and the Communist Party had it as a main plank of their platform. Now other Labour figures like David Owen who refused to contemplate such policies when in government have taken up the theme.

Even Denis Healey, who rejects import controls in general, says he would consider them for certain industries. Some back bench Tory MPs and even the CBI have added their voices to the cry.

It is easy to see why workers facing the prospect of unemployment should be seduced by the idea. But import controls are no solution to workers' problems.

The most important sphere where British capitalist industry faces problems is in manufacturing—and here the main competitors are industrial giants like West Germany, Japan and the USA. Only a few per cent of imports are from "third world" countries. If the import controls introduced were to be in any way effective these countries are in a strong position to take retaliatory action.

A modest form of import control was introduced by

thus save jobs is utopian. Aneurin Bevan once described import controls as building a wall around chaos. The threat to workers' jobs comes from the workings of the capitalist system, not from foreign competition.

The parasitic British ruling class have spurned every opportunity to re-tool industry. Even when in the last Labour government, export possibilities were high due to the de facto devaluation of the pound, the bosses merely increased prices and took windfall profits. But still there was no investment.

No policy which breaks the international unity of the working class can benefit British workers. Neither capitalist free trade nor capitalist protectionism offers a way forward. Only socialist policies offer a solution for the working class

Import controls would not give a "breathing space" to reinvest. Without the restraint of foreign competition, the British bosses would merely again raise prices of their goods. This would not even save jobs, as the extra twist to inflation would cut into workers' real living standards, reducing the market even further, and again unemployment would be threatened.

Import controls also break the vital international traditions of the working class, links which have become even more essential with the growth of the multinationals. Steel strikers in Britain have received enormous support in their struggle for jobs and living standards from workers throughout the world.

A move towards import controls, particularly one supported by the trade unions, would allow nationalism to cut across this as capitalists in Germany, USA, etc. mounted an hysterical campaign to rally workers behind their call for retaliatory measures. Whether in Britain or internationally, nothing which breaks workers' unity can benefit the working class.

It would also be a backward step to allow for the contraction of world markets. The post-war economic upswing gained enormous impetus from the erosion of trade barriers shown in agreements like GATT. The end of the boom period during the last decade has seen the re-introduction of numerous disguised controls on imports through subsidies to national industries. The EEC has been making half-hearted attempts to

stop the Dutch and Belgian governments giving investment grants which are little more than bribes in a period of intensified competition.

The economic recession will undoubtedly push all capitalist governments towards protectionism. Right-wing Tories and the capitalist class would be the keenest supporters, seeing it as a golden opportunity to whip up national fervour and over-ride, they hope, class conflicts.

The Tory government may well introduce a form of import controls, despite Thatcher's publicised dislike of interventionism. But

the labour movement should not inscribe on its banner the demand for import controls. As in Victorian days, neither capitalist free trade—at present fostering the de-industrialisation of Britain—nor capitalist protectionism will provide any solution for the working class.

Import controls are often raised as part of a programme for 'planned trade' but it would be nothing of the kind. History is littered with unsuccessful attempts to plan capitalism like the abortive 'National Plan' of 1964.

Real planning of the economy would require a state monopoly of trade which could only be on the basis of the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses, and the major monopolies.

The only solution to the anarchy of capitalism is on an international working class basis. Capitalism caused the crisis—only socialism can cure it, overcoming the restrictions of the private ownership of the means of production and of national barriers.

The labour movement cannot look to nationalistic capitalist solutions to its problems. The strength of the labour movement must be mobilised behind the demands for:

★ A 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

★ No redundancies. No selling of jobs.

★ A socialist plan of production based on the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies which control 85% of the economy under workers' control and management with compensation on the basis of need.

The labour movement must fight for a socialist plan of production.

'Why we're going to LPYS conference'

The AUEW Youth Conference recently decided to send six visitors to LPYS national conference being held in Llandudno this Easter. This is an example which should be followed by every section of the labour movement.

The keenness of young engineering workers to attend the conference was a reflection of the general shift to the left which took place among the 32 delegates representing district committees at this year's AUEW Youth Conference.

All of the debates, demonstrated the anger of young workers at the policies of the Tory government. At the same time much discussion centred around how Thatcher was able to win the General Election, and what the tasks of the next Labour government would be.

Brother Dave Boardman, from Bury district AUEW pointed to "The shortcomings of the last Labour government, of policies of wage restraint, and cuts in public spending. Where was the shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people?" As several delegates stressed it was these policies which had paved the way for the Tory victory.

Bro. Pete Skerret (Coventry AUEW), in moving an amendment based around the programme of the LPYS, explained that: "The Labour government was not elected to hold back workers—but to defend them. The Tory party defend its class—it's about time the Labour Party did the same and fought for workers' interests."

He pointed out to conference that Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution, which calls for the common ownership of the commanding heights of the economy under the control of the working class still remained to be implemented. This socialist clause was more urgent now than ever if problems workers faced in society were to be solved.

Despite being opposed from the Chair (!) by Terry Duffy (AUEW President) the amendment which called

for:

- ★ A 35-hour week with no loss of pay.
- ★ A National minimum wage
- ★ A massive scheme of public works.
- ★ A bold socialist programme based around the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy.

was carried by 22 votes to 8 with 2 abstentions.

During the discussion on recruitment of youth to the union, several delegates expressed their anger and bitterness at the way in which the AUEW leadership had backed the 'Edwardes Plan' for 25,000 redundancies in Leyland.

Bro. Ken Cure (Full-time official responsible for Leyland) tried to explain that faced with the threat to close down the whole of BL, another 75,000 jobs would be lost. That would mean 100,000 more on the dole!

Bro. Cure then claimed 'when a patient has gangrene you don't leave him to die, you cut the leg off—that is if it is the leg that is infected'. No doubt 25,000 BL workers will be angered at the suggestion that they are 'gangrene'.

Even more to the point—if BL has developed gangrene then who is to blame—the workers or the management with their years of under-investment?

The debate during the conference showed clearly how more and more young workers will be looking for a political lead in the battles which will take place against the Tories and employers in the next period.

Undoubtedly, many of the policies adopted by the AUEW Youth Conference will offer the kind of fighting socialist alternative which will be capable of drawing those workers into activity.

A big step on that path is undoubtedly attending LPYS conference and seeing a conference of 2,000 working class youth hammering out clear socialist policies as an alternative to the crisis of capitalism.

Other unions should follow the example of the AUEW in sponsoring young members to attend conference.

By Kevin Ramage

(LPYS National Chairman)

PHOTOS: Right: LPYS members on the February 2nd anti-Tory demonstration Below: Young workers in the forefront at the Nottingham Evening Post dispute. All young trade unionists should come to LPYS Conference!



Photos: MILITANT



IRELAND

50 Irish Young Socialists will be travelling to Llandudno for the Labour Party Young Socialists' conference at Easter. They come from the Irish Labour Youth in the south and the Youth for Socialism group in the north.

Audrey McCreadie [National Committee, Irish Labour Youth] explains why:

"Many of our members went to the LPYS conference in 1979. They are really looking forward to meeting the British LPYS again, to hear the debates and to discuss the common problems of the youth in Ireland and Britain.

"The mood of the workers over here is increasing anger at the attacks on our living standards. Already we have had a general strike in the south and now on April 2nd the workers in the north will follow suit."

In the tradition of previous LPYS conferences, some of the Irish Young Socialists will be organising a Folk night/Irish night. Anyone else attending the conference with musical talent will be welcome to participate. Start practising now!

Come to Llandudno

Come to the 1980 Labour Party Young Socialists' conference. Three days of debates, discussions, discos and social activities. Don't waste your Easter—come to Llandudno from April 4th to 7th. Contact Andy Bevan, National Youth Officer, Labour Party, 144-152 Walworth Road, S.E.17, or your local LPYS branch.

TORY SUPPORT DIVES AT SOUTHEND

The result of the Southend East by-election has shown that the Tories no longer have the support of the people. The Conservative majority is only 430 in a traditional Tory area.

The campaign organised by the Labour Party was fairly energetic but very disorganised. Canvassing and leafletting were done very haphazardly and no youth speakers were allowed at any election meetings.

The LPYS, which was the only section of the Party to campaign effectively in the General election was not allowed to campaign as a

unit. Leaflets and election speeches stressed the damage done by the Tories and the personal virtues of Colin George the Labour candidate, but posed no political alternative.

Only a socialist programme combined with an effectively organised campaign can win to Labour the 40% of Southend's electorate who thought that all parties were "the same" and so did not vote. If this is done, Labour will win Southend East at the next General election with an enormous majority.

BRIGHTON DEMO.

The fascists are trying to boost their flagging support in Sussex by organising a march and rally on Saturday the 29th March. No fascists have been called in protest at the Brighton Level, Lewes streets of Brighton since 1950. They plan to end their march with a rally on the Level at Brighton. This is the traditional rallying point for the labour movement and will remain so. A demonstration has been called in protest at the Brighton Level, Lewes streets of Brighton since 1950. They plan to end their march with a rally on the

NO CUTS, NO RATE RISES!

The past three months have seen an intense debate within the trade union and labour movement in Liverpool over what position should be taken over the Tory government's cuts in local authority spending.

The thrashing out of the issues relating to the cuts has strengthened the links between the Labour Party and the local authority unions to an unprecedented degree, and has laid the foundations for the inevitable fight with the government.

Liverpool District Labour Party have an absolute policy of no cuts in jobs or services, and this is being conducted by the Labour Group.

This stand attracts very little difference of opinion within the Labour Party in Liverpool. Where the differences have arisen is over the way in which this policy is carried out.

Three months ago it was proposed that it would take a 35% rate increase to maintain the local government services, and this proposal was presented to a District Labour Party

meeting. During this meeting, a clear and campaigning alternative was presented and passed. It was stated that it is a myth to talk about there being only two alternatives to fighting the cuts—'small harmless cuts' or 'massive rate increases'. There was a strong mood from the Labour group for the latter, on the basis that the movement wasn't ready to take on the Tories.

But this was thrown out and at the next District Labour Party meeting a resolution was accepted which called upon the Labour group to present a budget, based on the policy of no cuts in jobs or services, and a 13% rate increase.

This 13% rate increase was justified, as it was the level of inflation at the time that the government calculated the rate support grant.

This proposal, of course, meant a deficit financing budget of high proportions. With the City of London's stranglehold over council fin-

ance, the fight would be on.

There is no justification whatsoever to place the burden of the Tory government cuts on the shoulders of the working class in Liverpool. If the Tories want to make the cuts, let them do it—it is not the job of the Labour group to do their dirty work for them.

The government has set a national average rate and any local authority that goes above that figure will have it taken off their Rate Support Grant—meaning more rate increases. This would then leave us in the very position whereby confidence would have been lost by the very fact that high rates were proposed in the first place, and the Tories and Liberals would be seen as opponents of high rates.

However, the Labour group at present does not have a big enough majority against the combined votes of the Tories and Liberals. If the Labour Party policy of uniting with local authority unions to defeat the Tory proposals is to be a reality, there needs to be an overall majority in the May council elections. This will be highly unlikely if Labour puts forward massive rate increases, as the Liberals would ride through the middle blaming the Tories nationally and the Labour Party locally.

Also, the next Labour government must nationalise the banks and building societies and cancel the debt charges to local authorities. This past year, Liverpool has paid back £73 million to the moneylenders—£13 million in capital, and £60 million in interest charges.

As a result of this proposal being passed, a meeting was therefore called between the District Labour Party Executive Committee, the Chair-

men and Deputy Chairmen of all spending committees, and the local authority unions.

After this meeting, the debate continued within the movement on Merseyside and with most of the local authority unions discussing the issue. As a result, the Merseyside Anti-cuts committee pledged to fight the cuts along the lines laid down by the Liverpool District Labour Party, at a very well turned out meeting of the Liverpool District Trades Council.

Although differences arose about how to fight the cuts, the whole issue of local government finance was discussed as a serious item, and the Labour Chairman—in an unprecedented move—presented their budgets to the District Labour Party and Executive and local authority unions for discussion before taking them to council.

If nothing else, this will form the basis of a unique link between the labour movement groups, and the thin end of the wedge has been driven firmly into the traditional relationships between Labour councils and local authority groups—i.e. employer and employee.

This debate was then continued at the Municipal Policy conference where unfortunately because of the poor turn-out from the delegates, the original 13% increase in the rates proposed by the District LP was defeated.

Many arguments were presented at the policy conference for a substantial increase in the rates. There were fears that there would not be enough money to pay the local sector workers, and that the public sector unions had already indicated that rates should be increased to what-

By Derek Hatton
[Liverpool District Councillor]



Derek Hatton speaking at last year's Labour Party Conference

ever level necessary to save jobs.

As a result of the policy conference decision—or lack of one—the Labour members on the Policy and Finance Committee moved a budget of no cuts in services but with a 50% rate increase.

The local press blasted the Labour Party for this extravagance and the Liberal leaflets were out in their thousands, in line with our prediction.

All this was reported at the District Labour Party Annual General Meeting the following week, where a resolution against huge rate increases was carried overwhelmingly. Although there have been many heated arguments, U-turns in policy and numerous hours spent discussing the issue of cuts and how to pose it, the consciousness within the movement in Liverpool has developed considerably.

Whatever else may happen,

the entire labour and trade union movement is committed to opposing any cuts in local government spending and jobs, and the growing realisation that raising rates by large amounts is not the answer. The campaign is also developing on a definite political base, accepting the lunacy of high interest repayments and calling on the next Labour government to reverse all the Tory cuts, wipe out those interest charges, and to nationalise the banks, insurance and finance houses.

The Merseyside National Conference against the cuts will be a major step in the campaign against the attacks on local authorities. Thatcher's demand for a further cut of £2 billion in public spending indicates and intensification of the struggle. It is for that continuing struggle that the labour movement must prepare.

TEACHERS FIGHT THE CUTS

Liverpool

At a special Liverpool teachers' meeting of nearly 200 NUT members, John Hamilton, leader of the Labour Group, outlined Liverpool's financial crisis.

Roughly 70% of Liverpool's budget goes on education, mainly on wages. The city's education is £6m in deficit now, and every shortfall of £1m equals the loss of 300 jobs.

John Hamilton explained Labour has budgeted not to cut jobs, but saw a rate rise of 50% or even 60% as a necessity to maintain services and jobs.

Since an NUT special conference, NUT members have taken extended strike action in Avon and Trafford against the cuts. Although Liverpool has been spared this year, education has been cut to the bone in previous years.

The Liverpool Teachers' Association called upon the city council to fight all cuts, not just those in education.

The bond between teachers and other local authority workers now needs to be strengthened by affiliation to the Liverpool Anti-cuts campaign.

Already the council has been told to cut an extra £2m from the polytechnic from this April, which has resulted in proposals to close whole departments down, and a threat of reduction of 100 in staff.

One local teacher training college has already had science taken away as a subject—during a shortage of science teachers!

If, as the Tories demand, £7m is to be cut from Liverpool's budget, £5m would be borne by education, i.e. 1,000 jobs.

The NUT in Liverpool has now pledged to support the council in any confrontation which may arise out of refusing to implement cuts in jobs or services. Unfortunately it was not in favour of the District Labour Party's policy of a fight against rate rises.

Rate rises appear at the moment to be the alternative to many, including John Hamilton, but they still mean working people pay. The confrontation with the Tories

cannot be postponed indefinitely.

The success of the meeting, however, showed that there will be a response by NUT members to a lead in refusing to accept cuts.

By Lesley Holt (LTA NUT committee, personal capacity)

Leicester

At the end of last month, over 2,000 teachers, public service workers, parents and school students besieged the county council in Leicester in protest over the Tories' proposed £6 million cut in the education budget.

Over thirty schools were closed and scores were affected as the National Union of Teachers called a one-day strike in conjunction with NUPE, TGWU, and the GMWU, and other unions involved in education.

At an overcrowded meeting held in a cinema in Leicester, speakers outlined the serious effects that the cuts would have.

The NUPE divisional organiser explained how children were becoming political

pawns for the Tory government who aimed to take education back to the Victorian era, when only the wealthy could afford education.

A NATFHE speaker gave local examples of the current state of further education in Leicestershire—the engineering course at Hinkley College was about to be closed as the machinery more than resembled museum pieces; at Southfields College, the printing equipment did not give students a proper training due to antiquated machines. He also pointed out that had the current winter been bad, the litho room ceiling at Charles Keene College would no longer be there.

This is a clear example of how the cuts in education by past and present governments are being felt. The present proposed national cuts of £506 million will have a catastrophic effect on our children.

The tremendous response by trade unionists at the lobby of the county council in the afternoon showed the revulsion felt by the local community to the cuts.

By Don Finlay (NUT)

A turn to the left

“Scottish working people are no longer prepared to accept the cuts in living standards being handed out to them by the Tories.”

This was the message of one young delegate from Stirlingshire to the annual conference of the Labour Party in Perth. The assembled delegates were in an angry mood, anxious to draw a balance sheet of the last Labour government and also to draw up a programme to fight the Tory attacks.

This, however, was not reflected in the Executive, who attempted to avoid being committed to any specific policies by opposing or calling for remittance of most of the main composites. Despite this, conference committed the Scottish Party to total opposition to the sale of all council housing “by any government”; reversing the cuts in the NHS and for a massive campaign against the Tory cuts.

On Ireland, discussed for the first time in many years, conference agreed to establish links with working class and community organisations in the North and to develop a distinctive labour movement policy on the question.

Conference was particularly

roused by Alec Kitson's fraternal address from Labour's NEC, when he said: “If we are going to get real socialism in this country, we must get to the commanding heights of the economy. There are 200 leading companies and I hope the National Executive council of the Party will go back to having a look at the situation.”

There was a sharp turn to the left in the elections to the executive council. Left wingers won all ten places on the constituency section and the left now have an overall majority of two.

At the Militant Readers' meeting on the Saturday night delegates and visitors had the opportunity to hear the need for a socialist programme, spelt out by Tony Saunois of the NEC and Jim Flockhart F.B.U. Over 50 people attended the meeting and £70 was raised for the fighting fund.

By William King

(Scottish EC, LPYS rep.)

LEFT and RIGHT

A New Rent Rebel....

Tories clearly live in a different world. but sometimes they come face to face with reality—and they don't like it. Sir Michael Havers, Tory MP for Merton and Thatcher's Attorney-General, wants a London flat.

"Local estate agents," reported the 'Daily Mail' [7 March], "estimated that £50 a week would be a reasonable figure for the flat in a sought-after district on the edge of Wimbledon Common."

With a salary of £21,000 a year, you'd think Havers could afford even that exorbitant rent. In fact, he has been paying only £15 a week—and now he is up in arms because the landlady is asking for a £10 increase.

He's offered her an extra £2.30, and threatened to bring in the rent officer! Aren't the Tories usually denouncing the "iniquitous" rent review procedures introduced under Labour's "socialist" Rent Acts?

But the Havers clearly think they're being exploited. "It is hardly the place to which you would bring the Queen," said Lady Havers. The flat wasn't "exactly luxurious".

Clearly, the Havers are unaware that thousands of people are paying £15 a week or much more for bed-sits with rotten conditions. If they lose their battle with London's landlords, they may have to retreat permanently to their country home in Suffolk—to which, no doubt, they could invite the Queen.

From their own mouths

Out-Torying the others, Labour-renegade Reg Prentice lost no time in launching a well-publicised campaign against "social security scroungers" after Mrs Thatcher had made him minister of Social Security.

But this represents a further reactionary degeneration even for Prentice. In response to the last Tory government's scrounger-bashing, Prentice, still hiding in Labour's ranks said: "The myth about widespread abuse is perpetrated by some of the most reactionary newspapers in the country and is used by the Tories for party reasons. Apart from the damage done in general, awful damage is done to individual people in need, because these myths help to create among some people....the sense that there is something shameful about applying for benefits to which they are entitled."

Absolutely correct! So what's changed? Only that Prentice has gone over, and to prove he's a true blue has quickly moved to the Tory Party's rabid right wing.

Chapple's new ally.... Reagan

Many trade unionists regarded EETPU general secretary, Frank Chapple's plans to negotiate private health schemes for some of his members as a scandal. He would be far better occupied in a campaign to save the National Health Service from the attacks of the Tory government.

But some people admire his actions, Ronald Reagan for example.

The former film star who stands on the far right of the Republican Party in the USA said in his primary campaign in New Hampshire that Chapple's plans were "the most significant thing that has happened in the last few years".

He attacked the very mild scheme for socialised health care put forward by Kennedy on the grounds that only "free enterprise" medicine worked. "English labor unions" Reagan claimed "now negotiate a premium for private health insurance so they won't be dependent on the government programme".

Perhaps "English labor unions" will find ways of avoiding dependence on the government programme which Reagan wouldn't be so fond of. Such as chucking out the government.

When the right-wing ruled ...

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the death of Gaitskell in 1963. With the failure of right reformism, the labour movement has taken big strides to the left. The former Gaitskellites in the main, have been reduced to the Parliamentary Party.

It is now ironic that the publication of Gaitskell's biography coincides with a battle for survival of the right wing in the Labour Party. Roy Jenkins, Gaitskell's collaborator and literary executor, has now abandoned the Party and has called on the 'social democrats' to split and form a new centre party.

The book, written by 'an old admirer,' is very pro-Gaitskell, but provides a detailed account of the meteoric rise of a middle class intellectual to become leader of the Labour Party.

Hugh Gaitskell was born in April 1906, the child of a well-to-do family. Educated at Winchester and later at New College, Oxford, he mixed socially with an upper middle class elite.

However, according to his biographer, "where his father and brother had followed the family tradition of service abroad, Hugh felt it his vocation to work for better conditions at home." He sympathised with the plight of the working classes.

During the 1926 General Strike, where the vast majority of undergraduates remained true to their class values and became blackleg volunteers, Gaitskell sided with the strikers. The effect of his first contact with a new 'species'—Nottingham miners—is described as "profound."

In true opportunist fashion, Gaitskell was selected at Chatham in 1935: "the local Labour Party was looking for a left-wing candidate, and for the one and only time in his life Gaitskell filled that bill!"

Many workers were rightly suspicious of this eager 'outsider'. Eager to 'get on', he was selected two years later for the safe Labour seat of South Leeds.

However, due to the war, he didn't enter Parliament until July 1945. His biographer noted that he was greatly impressed by Churchill. His smooth middle class character and aspiring careerism were soon noticed by the Party's right-wing.

In less than a year he became Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Fuel and Power. In October 1947 he was promoted to Minister of Fuel and Power. By early 1950 he became Minister of State for Economic Affairs and finally Chancellor of the Exchequer in October!

Labour's defeat in 1951 saw a revival of left-wing opposition in the Constituencies headed by Nye Bevan. Gaitskell saw this as a threat to his position and prepared to crush Bevan.

At the Morecambe Conference in 1952, the growing

Cartoonist's view of right-winger Morrison's desired 1954 Conference speech. Even Wilson is considered 'wobbly left'.



opposition was reflected in the election of six Bevanites to the NEC. The defeated Gaitskell ended up with only one third that of Bevan's vote and half that of Wilson and Crossman.

Gaitskell, the champion of the right, later gave an hysterical speech opening up a witch-hunt against the left: "I was told by some well-informed correspondents that about a sixth of the Constituency Party delegates appeared to be communists or communist-inspired. This figure may well be too high. But if it should be a tenth, or even a twentieth, it is a most shocking state of affairs to which the National Executive should give immediate attention!"

The Bevanites, like the Militant tendency today, were accused of "organising a party within a party" with demands for the 'Tribune' to be closed down. Right-winger Dalton accused Mikardo and Co of undermining non-Bevanite MPs in their constituencies. Morgan Phillips, the Secretary, called for 'privately-organised factions' to disband.

In the post-war period, the large trade unions were firmly in the hands of the right-wing. Leaders like Arthur Deakin (TGWU) and Tom Williamson (GMWU) ruled their unions with an iron fist. It was upon these 'labour lieutenants of capital' that the right-wing PLP rested.

Their reformist policies differed little from the direct representatives of capitalism—the Tories. Thus the term 'butskellism' was coined to describe these consensus policies, Butler being a conservative Chancellor.

Yet with the crisis unfolding and the slow down in world trade, the unions were to move to the left in the 60s and 70s, where the right became largely isolated in the movement to the PLP.

In 1955 the right used the dispute over the H-bomb to try and get rid of the Bevanites. Callaghan and Ede proposed the withdrawal of the whip from Bevan. Gaitskell warned them that they would have to expel Bevan to solve the problem.

Gaitskell said there were parallels between Bevan, who proclaimed himself a Marxist,

and Hitler! Over 150 protests came in from local parties and the expulsion proposal was defeated by one vote...so much for the tolerance of the right wing claimed today.

With the defeat of the Party in the 1959 General Election under Gaitskell's leadership, the right had raised the need to drop 'socialism' as the aim of the Party. Douglas Jay went as far as to call for the dropping of Clause Four, severing connections with the unions, dropping the name 'Labour Party' and urged merger with the Liberals!

These defenders of capitalism in the movement wanted to turn the Party into a version of the American Democratic Party. But this was to provoke a revolt from the rank and file.

Even Gaitskell's own Party in Leeds disavowed his policy—and that was a bastion for the right wing 'Campaign for Democratic Socialism'. "The fight is on and I must see it through" stated Gaitskell,

but he was decisively defeated over the issue.

Nowadays the desertion of right-wingers like Brown, Jenkins, Wyatt, Prentice and Co. represents the desertion of Tories who have infiltrated the Party to further their own careers.

They have abandoned Gaitskell's advice to "fight, fight, and fight again" to keep the party completely under the control of big business. The boom of the 1950s has disappeared and so with it has the basis of Gaitskellism, the ideology of the right wing.

'Hugh Gaitskell' by Phillip Williams, Published by Jonathon Cape 1979. Price £15.

.....and lost!



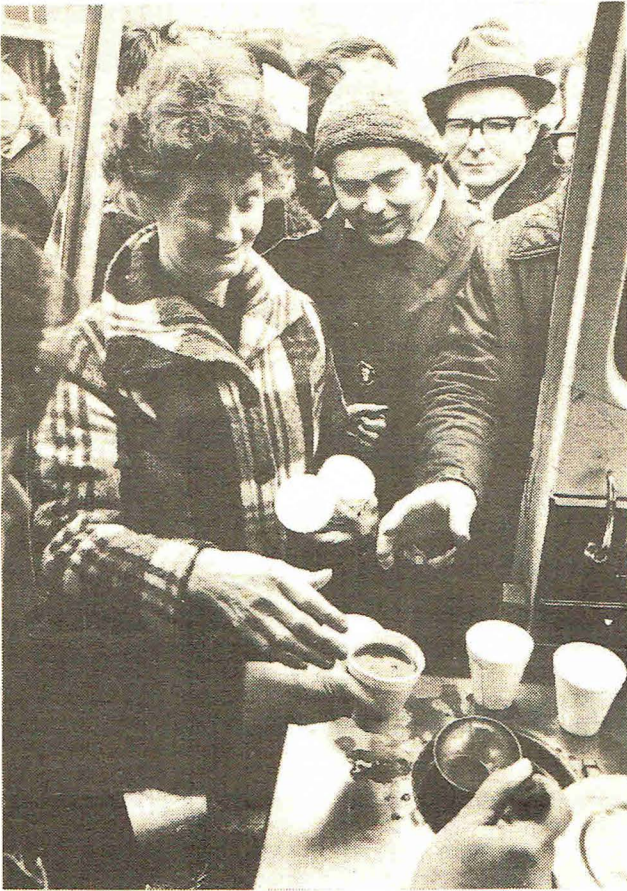
Gaitskell at the 1960 Conference, where he was defeated



SOUTH WALES



Photo: MILITANT



Pickets eagerly take lunch from a soup wagon which visits every picket line—the van, organised by the ISTC, is manned by canteen staff at the steelworks who are striking with the steelmen

AT THE FRONTLINE OF TORY ATTACKS

“BSC is the biggest employer around here. Everything else, even the mines, depend on the steelworks. If we let it go then it will be a catastrophe for the area.”

As the steel strike reaches its 12th week, so a picket outside the Signodes private steel stockholders near Port Talbot explains the determination of the steelworkers, and for that matter, the whole South Wales community, to fight the Tories' plans of closures.

The ISTC for many years had been a dormant union, especially in South Wales. Yet the Tories' insulting 2%

offer incited an explosion of discontent with the sudden realisation of the threat of closures.

Only for a very few of the fifty pickets outside the Signodes was the strike simply a matter of wages. The decimating effect of closures on its workforce was explained by one young steel worker:

“I can't believe this Tory government. I mean Tories are not usually nice people anyway, but this lot are bloody mad. Look at their policies: they're using economic strategies from the last century. Everyone hates them

around here.

“My dad's a steelworker also; but he wants to take the redundancy money. After all, he's 56 and has had two heart attacks, so obviously the thought of redundancy money so near retirement is a good idea to him. But he says he'll only take it if he knows for sure a youngster will get his job. He reckons it's getting just like the 'thirties and I agree with him.

“He tells me I should move to Germany and get a job. I've got the skills, but what use is that? I've lived in this area all my life, all my roots are here, and all my friends and family and anyway, why should I have to move to Germany to do a job when we need this sort of work in Wales? Besides, what would happen if every steelworker decided to go to Germany?”

It hasn't taken the steel workers long to learn of the biased way the Tory press cover industrial disputes:

“We get the 'Daily Telegraph'. Of course we know it is a right-wing rag, but it did give you some information. But since the strike started I've just looked at the headlines and read the sport. You soon realise the sort of rubbish they're trying to push down your throat.”

“I've learned quite a lot about the daily press since the strike began. All they have written about the strike is isolated incidents where there

has been some trouble, or given mass publicity to places such as Hadfields. They don't want to know the truth, but of course it was these very same papers that were telling us all to vote Tory last year.”

Almost every steel picket can give an example of how the 'law of the land' has no justice when it comes to dealing with strikers. ISTC branch secretary Hywel Phillips told the 'Militant' how one of his young members was hauled out of a crowd and arrested during a demonstration for no reason, and was given a hefty fine.

Yet when some pickets were following a 'cowboy' lorry driver carrying steel, the lorry driver stopped, went over to the pickets' car, and smashed all the windows and threatened the people inside. The pickets gave clear details to the police about the incident, yet no charges have yet been made.

But the ISTC has been transformed through the experience of three months on strike—the bosses will think twice before taking them on in the future. As a picket outside the Morgan Rees private firm near Swansea told 'Militant': “As for the fight down here, I think we have done very well. It has given us a lot of practice in it, and if they take us on again next year, it wouldn't last half as long, because next time we will know what to do.”

A question of subsidies

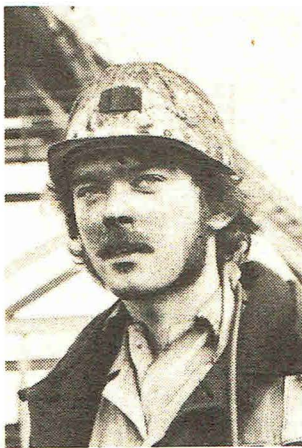
Meirion Evans is a trainee collier at the Brynlliw pithead near Swansea. Meirion, a 'Militant' supporter and NUM Lodge committee member, described the mood of the workers in his area:

“The response to the Wales TUC call for a day of action on January 28th was tremendous; although the miners and the steel workers were the largest contingent on the Cardiff demonstration, but in

all somewhere near 200,000 workers were on strike. Unfortunately the national leaders of these unions hadn't given clear directives as to the real impact of the closures would have meant for their particular members and the effects for their particular members. I don't think enough was done nationally to mobilise the members themselves.

“What was encouraging was the fact that there were huge numbers of youngsters on the march. One example was a group of tobacco workers, who had gone into work that particular morning, held a meeting and decided that those who were prepared to work would stay and those who wanted to go on the march would go, and over half attended the march.

Militant: In this area, there are figures that up to 25 per



Meirion Evans

cent of coal used in industry is imported. Among the rank and file of the mineworkers, is the demand for import controls very strong?

“There is certainly a growing demand for this, but the consequences haven't really

been looked into. It's really a case of the subsidies foreign coal gets from its governments.

“The fact that in Australia, for example, the coal is subsidised due to the development of the coal fields, because of the vast expanses of land. The government pays money to particular corporations to develop roadways and so on, to expand the industry, and coal is subsidised in that way.

“Here the NCB have agreed to use part of their allocation for investment over the next year, to subsidise part of the coking coal that is coming into South Wales. Obviously I think that some pressure has been put on by the government to try and take the miners out of the struggle in South Wales at this particular time.”

WILL MAESTEG SURVIVE?

“What's the use of a pay rise if you're going to find yourself out of work in a few weeks' time?”

“Wages aren't really the question at the moment—keeping and guaranteeing your jobs, that's the issue.”

Mark, a striking steelworker, explained the determined feeling behind the workers of South Wales. Mark was one of a group of young workers from the Welsh mining town of Maesteg who explained the situation facing their small community. The group included Alan and Carl, electricians at a colliery, Steve, an AUEW shop steward, Ian, unemployed, and Ian Isaac, an NUM lodge secretary.

II: “Maesteg has been fairly sheltered, it's been protected for a whole number of years, really. During the 'thirties, it still retained three collieries, right up until about two years ago, when we lost one colliery.

“There's 1,500 people employed by the NCB in Maesteg, there's about 700 steelworkers, and I would estimate there's a further 500-700 working on the trading estate in Bridgend. Then there's 1,500 at least employed in local factories.”

S: “If the Port Talbot steelworks shuts down it'd decimate the place. It's seven miles up into the valley from here, and up until recently there hasn't been—if you go back about sixteen years—any other industry here in the valley but the pits and the steelworks. It's only recently

we've had the factory sites.”

C: “Yes, and two-thirds of those employed in the local factories are women so they wouldn't soak up the male unemployed from the pits and steelworks.”

A: “It's been quite prosperous in the area—we've even got a posh furniture shop in the town now.”

S: “On the 28 January, the 28th, it would be fair to say this valley came to a stop. Every factory, every pit in this valley stopped. Even if the majority are women, the feeling is there—in general in this area women workers are not so politically aware, but everybody knows that if the steelworks closes then this valley will literally go. It just won't be.”

“The figure for pit closures in this area being banded about is 11,000—for Maesteg that means about 2,000 or 3,000 jobs at least would go. And would be all men. And that would affect about 12,000 people altogether, with their main source of income being lost. And that's in a town of 22,000.”

S: “I think the pit nearby is only 27 years old—that's very young for a pit. But they're saying now that, because of the cuts, anyone put on the dole over 35 will never work again. I think our whole livelihood here in South Wales depends on the pits and the steel works—it's as simple as that, there's nothing else down here. You shut it down, you shut South Wales down.”

Fighting for the community

In any dispute, workers become radicalised through the experience of industrial action, coming into confrontation with the capitalist class.

And of course their dependants—wives, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, children and so on—are obviously drawn into the dispute themselves.

This has become intensified in South Wales, as the steel strike has brought to the fore the very existence of the traditional steel and mining industries, and the majority of the community has placed itself alongside the ranks of the ISTC.

One housewife who joined her husband on the picket line said:

“I was a bit annoyed at first when my husband came home and told me he was going on strike. I immediately thought 'what am I going to do about looking after the kids, how am I going to pay all the bills' and things like that, but when I sat down and thought about it, I realised just what this strike means. If they close down the steelworks, what will my husband do? What will I do myself? This is why we've got to win the strike.”

The future of the steel industry is the question of the hour in every aspect of South Wales life. Lyn, a member of the LPYS who works in a supply industry to the Port Talbot steel works, explained the effect the strike has had on the people she works with: “I work in a clerical department with 15 other women. In the past they could not be

described as ardent trade unionists to say the least. But since the strike started their attitude has changed dramatically. They realise that if the steel works goes, then so do their jobs.

“This has been reflected in the recent round of pay talks—we are now talking of pushing for a 15 to 20 per cent rise, against the 12 per cent offered, and are prepared to back this up with industrial action. We are now stronger trade unionists than the men on the shop floor, where the traditional struggles have taken place.”

Many of the small businesses in the area—the shops and pubs and so on—are sympathetic to the steel strikers too.

A tobacconist whose shop is near the Port Talbot works entrance said, “I didn't agree

with the strikers at first—I lose quite a bit of money when they're not working and haven't got any wages to spend. Being right beside the steelworks, they often come in here to get cigarettes and newspapers and things like that. So when, at the beginning of the strike, a picket came in I told her what I thought about the strike. She just turned round and said, 'Well you won't even have pickets coming in here if they close the steelworks down.' That made me think just what this strike is about. If they close the steelworks then the whole community will suffer.”

MORE MUSCLE FOR THE 'WORKERS' PARLIAMENTS'

The forthcoming National Conference of Trades Councils, meeting in April, gives a great opportunity to make the trades councils still more effective in the struggles that face the labour movement.

By Dudley Edwards
(Brighton, Hove and District Trades Council)

and given the complicated structure of the British trade union movement it was probably inevitable that the number of TC delegates had to be restricted.

Included on the conference agenda will be a resolution, which if passed and then endorsed by the TUC, could have a big effect in enhancing the authority of trades councils throughout the country. It has already been endorsed by the Trades Councils Association.

This resolution has been submitted by the Brighton Hove and District Trades Union Council. It requests the General Council of the TUC to reconsider the possibility of direct representation of shop stewards' committees and joint councils on local trades councils.

Should such representation be agreed, it would enable trades councils to become the real 'workers' parliaments' they were originally intended to be.

Powers reduced

Over the years the trades councils were reduced to purely advisory bodies with little real authority to effectively co-ordinate the local industrial struggles of the workers.

This was not always so. As a matter of fact it was on the initiative of the trades councils which preceded it that the TUC itself was created. At the first two conferences of the TUC in the 19th Century a large number of delegates actually came from trades councils.

Later the powers of trades councils were unfortunately whittled away and finally their delegates to Trades Union Congresses were excluded.

Historical circumstances no doubt justified the change in the form of election to TUC,

In spite of this, even though shorn of any real powers, the trades councils continued to play a vital part in building the unity of the organised workers. Today the whole movement is moving into a period of sharp industrial struggles against the attacks of the most anti trade union government for generations.

It is therefore essential that



Shop stewards' committees and JSSCs are now the lifeblood of the unions

Photo: MILITANT

the shop stewards, who today are the life-blood of the trade union movement, should be directly represented on the trades councils.

In the general strike of 1926 the trades councils played an absolutely indispensable organising role,

despite the absence of direct contact with the factories, and what is happening today on the industrial field clearly shows that the possibility of a general strike cannot be ruled out in the years ahead.

The resolution to be moved by the Brighton and Hove

Trades Council seeks to establish direct links with the stewards representing the majority of workers in factories and offices, without in any way impinging on the rights and responsibilities of union branches which would continue to constitute the

main body of trades councils.

The struggles of the working class will need an effective trades councils movement in the years ahead. The steps outlined in Brighton's resolution could play a vital role in this development.

Health service - Emergency treatment?

By Len Bates
(Hertford & Stevenage Labour Party)

I recently came face to face with the reality of the declining quality of our health service and its effect, literally, on the man in the street.

Mid-Friday morning I pushed open a swing door at work (indicated by a large sign, incidentally, as a Fire Exit). Half way it jammed and the resultant collision of handle and arm was bad enough for the Company nurse to send me to hospital for an X-ray.

After giving name and full details at the 'Accident and Emergency' reception I was told to sit and wait. Four other people were ahead of me. Time passed. More people came, sat and waited.

A building foreman, face and hands black with dirt, joined us. Renovating a 400 year old building in central London at a cost of over £5 million to provide luxury flats was his present job. Making good massive cracks in the walls, no damp course, no

real foundations—the maintenance costs would be terrific.

But no doubt the intended occupants, diplomats, company executives and the like, would have no worries finding the extra cash.

Clearing out behind a radiator a glass splinter had gone through his hand. The first hospital had turned him away as they had no casualty department. They gave him some lint to hold though, as he said, to stop blood dripping on their floor.

I realised ¼ hour had passed. I made my first complaint. The receptionist smiled and told me she understood, but there were only two doctors—and besides us walking wounded they were treating the ambulance casualties as they came in at the back!

After 1½ hours punctuated by complaints from several

others waiting in pain, the building foreman made a final appeal. It made no difference. He had to make up the wages. He left. All the NHS had given him was a piece of lint and a wasted couple of hours.

I complained again. I was told there was only one person in front of me. "But you said that an hour ago. Look, there's a woman kneeling, holding tissues for her child to be sick into."

The fact that it worried the receptionist made no difference. They had seen it all before many times—and worse no doubt. But that was no consolation to those for whom it was the first time, waiting in distress.

The book-rack had what you would expect in hand-out health literature including anti-smoking leaflets. But the several knee-high ash-trays were evidence that such long

waits were far from unusual. No doubt their presence was a concession to past complaints from irate injured smokers waiting hours without a fag.

A youth came in, blood streaming from the back of his hand. He was cleaned up then told to wait. A woman came in with her friend: "Oh, we're private."—"Across the road." Across the road, I suspected, there were no two-hour waits.

They told me I was next. After only 2¼ hours! Three quarters of an hour later I was seen. The examination was of no higher standard than a person with basic first aid knowledge would give. "Are you a doctor?" I asked. No, she was a 5th year medical student.

After 2½ hours waiting, nearly four hours after the incident, I was allowed my right of a 'free' X-ray, the cost of which I had paid a hundred times over week by week. I was relieved to learn the bone was not broken and to know that I had survived the endurance test of being an emergency patient.

I left the hospital three hours almost to the minute after walking in. The assumption I had had then of receiving prompt, efficient and caring attention had been shattered.

I was all right, but what about the building worker?

He had a gash through a hand, which was covered with filth from work. Would his own doctor be contacted to phone him or call round and see him? When I asked, there was no answer.

How would those already finely stretched resources consisting mainly of highly skilled and dedicated people respond to a mass emergency? How much worse will it become after layer upon layer of cuts are made? How can it improve if a parasitic private medicine/health care industry is encouraged to develop?

The X-ray was done by a competent but unqualified assistant while the radiologist was dashing about preparing for two anaesthetised patients next door. The examination was by a medical student.

The patients I saw there were predominantly working class. The attention they received was make-shift and intolerably lengthy. The only doctor I saw said the problem is lack of money.

The lack of finance for non-profit making concerns like hospitals can have tragic consequences. But the criminal diversion of finance to subsidise so-called 'free enterprise' can only be resolved by changing society's economic base. Such twisted logic is an essential ingredient of capitalism in crisis.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

● The Tories new Employment bill has clauses discouraging applications to industrial tribunals for redress in such matters as unfair dismissal and equal pay. The latest figures published show that the use of the tribunal system by workers is already on the decline. Industrial tribunal hearings have gone down from 47,804 cases in 1976 to 41,244 in 1979. Every year has seen a decrease, and the total decline has been of 14%.

The Equal Pay Act has seen its tribunals hearings slump from 2,376 in 1976 to a mere 207 in 1979. There has not suddenly been a decrease in unfair dismissals or breaches of the Equal Pay Act. One reason for the decline could be that the

tribunals have a low success rate for workers. In 1976 tribunals rejected 64% of unfair dismissal claims. By 1978 it had risen to 72%. Trade unionists will undoubtedly resist any intrusion on the legal rights gained by their struggles, but these figures show the impossibility of relying on either the courts or "impartial" tribunals dominated by employers, to safeguard our rights.

● Research and development spending in Britain has for many years been at a low level in Britain. In the private sphere it is nearly defunct. But now even expenditure by the state is becoming less and less geared towards research on industrial production.

The proportion of research and development spending on defence has increased from 45% in 1968/69 to 52% in 1977/78 [the latest figures available], according to Hansard. In other words, defence research expenditure exceeded that on agriculture fisheries and forestry, aerospace, energy, the environment, transport, health and social security, the Natural Environment and Science Research Councils and all other research sections put together.

● British industry is already highly monopolised. It is likely to be even more dominated by just a few giant firms within a few years. The amount of money spent by industrial and

commercial companies on mergers and takeovers was higher in 1979 than in any year since the peak period of 1972.

In 1979, £1,656 million was spent on mergers, £752 million of this in the last quarter when there were a number of large takeovers. EMI by Thorn Electrical; Avery's by General Electric; Spillers by Dalgety and Oil Exploration Holdings by London and Scottish Marine Oil Co.

There were considerably fewer transactions than in 1972 but the firms involved were generally bigger. The top 31 acquisitions accounted for two thirds of the total spending. Merger activity seems to be more concentrated at the top of industry, a trend continued in 1980 with the takeover of Decca by Racal for £101 million.

MILITANT FIGHTS FOR:



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WHEN LABOUR'S RIGHT CALLED IN MI5

Among the right-wing leadership of the Parliamentary Labour Party there is no enthusiasm, to say the least, for the National Executive Committee's current enquiry into penetration of the Labour Party by the British security services.

In fact demands for an investigation—and demands also for an investigation of CIA interference—have provoked an almost hysterical reaction.

Why? There is ample evidence of such interference by the under-cover organisations of the state. One scandalous reason is that in the past Labour's right-wing leadership actually secretly called on MI5 and MI6 to investigate the left within the Party.

Confirmation for this comes from Chapman Pincher, for many years a journalist on Beaverbrook's right-wing 'Daily Express', in his 'Inside Story' (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978).

In chapter two of this amazing book, Pincher relates how the Labour Party leaders, headed by the late Hugh Gaitskell, and through the then George Brown (now Lord George-Brown) called in MI5 and MI6 (with a bit of help from Chapman) to uncover the so-called "crypto-communists" within the Party.

By his own admission, Pincher was for years used by the security services to publish official inspired leaks, as well as deliberate "misinformation". Nevertheless, for some obscure reason, Pincher enjoyed the highly privileged position of being well-informed about the activities of the secret service. If the astounding revelations published over a period in the 'Daily Express' had been printed in a journal like 'Time Out', the journalists, editor, and publishers concerned would undoubtedly have been the victims of ruthless prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act, and would probably still be rotting in jail now.

But Pincher was not only able to publish this material in the right-wing Tory press, but he has lived to bring it all together in his book. Many of Pincher's revelations confirm and even amplify articles and books published by far more critical observers of the security services.

By Lynn Walsh

A secret committee was set up to expose "fraudulent" socialists and expel them

Chapter two is "A Lunch with George Brown", to which Pincher invited George Brown, then Labour shadow defence spokesman, (now the Lord George-Brown, who in the May 1979 election called on people to vote Tory) at the expensive Ecu de France restaurant in Jermyn Street, in 1961.

George Brown, who was concerned about Labour's press image in the anticipated general election (which came in 1964), "revealed that the Labour Party leaders, headed by the late Hugh Gaitskell, a true Social Democrat, had decided to rid themselves of the public criticism that some of their MPs were crypto-Communists—dedicated pro-Russian Communists posing as Socialists because they could exert more influence that way and might eventually achieve ministerial office..."

"...a small committee had indeed been established secretly for the purpose of exposing the fraudulent Socialists and then expelling them from the party. The committee consisted of Gaitskell, Brown and Patrick Gordon Walker..."

The Labour leaders hoped that from their surveillance records and telephone taps, the Security Service would provide them with evidence against "crypto-communists" in other words their left-wing opponents in the party!

The security services agreed to help, but produced results which were disappointing for Brown and the Gaitskellites. "Brown was called to the presence of the MI5 chiefs to be given the results."

"He was told that inquiries about MPs had proved negative but security men had discovered an agent of the Soviet bloc Intelligence in a high position in the Labour Party machine in Transport

House."

But this was not the whole story. According to Pincher, "Brown had misinterpreted what the MI5 chiefs had told him about the unproductive search for crypto-Communists, or had been deliberately misled."

It was better for the Tories if people continued to believe Labour was riddled with "dangerous subversives"

There was evidence, Pincher claims, but the Tory prime minister, Harold Macmillan, had forbidden any disclosure about MPs. It would be opening up a Pandora's box of unforeseen and potentially dangerous political repercussions. In any case, "Macmillan was astute enough to appreciate that it was better for the Tory Party if the public continued to believe that Labour was riddled with dangerous subversives."

MI5 opposed taking action because they were unwilling to produce their evidence in public, as this, they claimed, would dangerously prejudice their sources.

So they, too, had the best of both worlds. They could continue to feed a propaganda campaign against the Labour Party, and especially the left, without being obliged to produce any hard evidence. Their material, which really amounted to elaborate smears, was always ably retailed by Pincher, the right-wing 'Daily Express', and other Tory papers.

Pincher's credibility rests on his close, not to say intimate, relationship with the intelligence services. But his evidence is no stronger than theirs, which is conveniently secret.

"Through my friendship with one of the girls who worked in the MI5 registry in Curzon Street, where dossiers on some two million people are kept on file," claims Pincher, blandly admitting a blatant breach of the all-powerful Official Secrets Act, "I learned that more Labour MPs than Brown believed were officially suspected of being crypto-Communists."

Well, who are these "crypto-Communists"? "Regrettably, libel again restricts disclosure..." How convenient these otherwise irksome libel laws can sometimes be!

Nevertheless, Pincher persists with his allegations, which are periodically aired in the Tory press to try to damage the Labour Party. "Crypto-Communist", like the official definition of "subversive", is an all-embracing term which can be readily used against anyone fighting for a real change in society.

"As regards those crypto-Communists still sitting in Westminster," Pincher continues, "I can quote from a 1978 Intelligence report in my



George Brown [Now Lord George-Brown]. Who were the real "fraudulent socialists"?

possession which states that 'at least fifty-nine serving Labour MPs—19 per cent of the Parliamentary Labour Party—have current or recent connections with Communist, Trotskyist or other Marxist organisations. The incidence of such activities has increased enormously over the past five years.' A list attached to this report names the MPs and gives details of their activities. It includes five ministers and four junior ministers."

Wilson's campaign manager said Labour was penetrated by MI5 agents

Such allegations emanating from the intelligence services are not surprising. Their hostility to the labour movement is not in doubt. More serious are Pincher's comments on the security services' penetration of the Labour Party.

"The security surveillance of certain Labour MPs goes back long before the Gaitskell-Brown attempt to make it official. The late George Caunt, once Wilson's election campaign manager, told me that as part of this process the Labour Party was penetrated by MI5 agents. Some of these were MPs and others were insinuated into Transport House. Caunt recalled that he was approached himself as a possible contact by an official of Transport House who was already working for MI5 in 1963..."

More specifically, Pincher goes on:

"I know of two Labour back-benchers who were on the payroll of MI6, the Secret Intelligence Service, though there are probably more than that in the Parliamentary Tory Party. I have little doubt either that both major parties have been penetrated for many years by agents of the CIA. One of these, now dead, was a senior Cabinet minister in a Labour government..."

These revelations—just one chapter of a book full of information which has alarming implications for the labour movement—fully justify the decision of Labour's NEC to begin an enquiry into the activities of the secret intelligence services. Almost every week brings to light fresh evidence which underlines the urgency of a full and thorough investigation.

The security services are the deadly enemies of the labour movement

It is a scandal that former Labour leaders themselves approached the security services, which are among the most deadly enemies of the labour movement, to investigate members of the Labour Party. Even some of the leadership, at least at one time, began to realise the danger posed by the secret service.

Harold Wilson himself once raised (and then quickly dropped) the question of the dirty role played by the intelligence services. Shortly after his resignation, which still has not been fully explained, he urged two journalists to "Investigate the forces that are threatening democratic countries like Britain."

In 1924, British Intelligence agents faked the so-called "Zinoviev Letter" which was used to fuel the hysterical anti-Labour campaign which helped bring down the first Labour government. Nothing much has changed as far as the outlook and aims of the security services are concerned.

We may be certain that, as the industrial and political battles arising from the capitalist crisis intensify, they have plans, together with the police and the army, to intervene even more actively and ruthlessly to disrupt and ultimately destroy the labour movement.

That is why there must be a full investigation of the activities of British and foreign security services, and a campaign to warn the rank and file of the danger they pose.

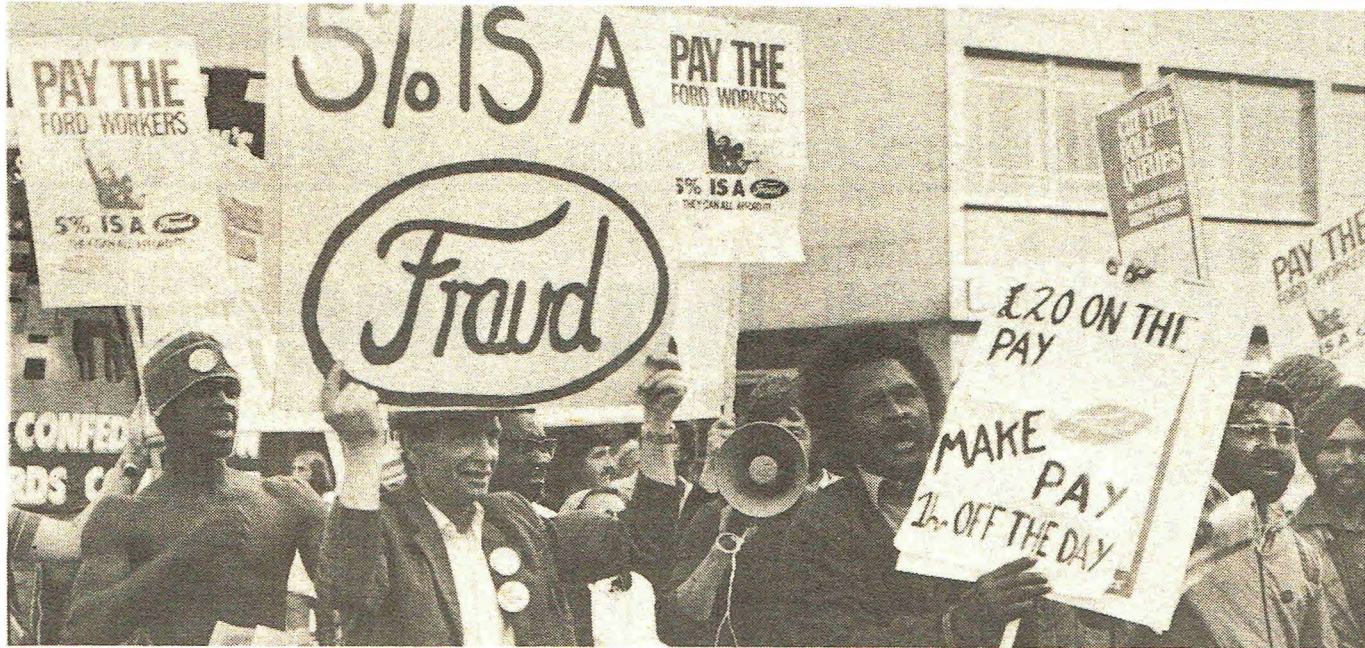
Still available: "The CIA and the labour movement" by Fred Hirsch and Richard Fletcher [Spokesman Books]. 50p including postage from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Investigate security service penetration of the labour movement

Labour Party enquiry.

Ford workers had to fight—like many sections of the labour movement—against the last Labour government for a decent wage. That government's pro-capitalist policies explain why party democracy has become such an issue.

PHOTO: MILITANT.



NO REVERSAL OF CONFERENCE DECISIONS!

The steps taken in Brighton to democratise the Party made last year's Labour Party Conference the most important since 1918, when the party adopted its socialist constitution.

The overwhelming ratification of the constitutional amendment on automatic reselection of MPs, and the decision in principle to give the National Executive Committee the final say on Labour's election manifestos, reflected a profound disillusionment with the last Labour government.

It also showed the determination to ensure that in future the Party leadership would be democratically accountable to the Party.

The constituency delegates regarded the adoption of reselection as a long overdue democratic reform, which would have been passed long before but for manoeuvres against it at previous Conferences.

But a positive decision was clinched in 1979 by support from key trade union delegations, reflecting a swing to the left in the union ranks, which had themselves been involved in battles with the Labour government, particularly over the 5% pay policy.

These crucial democratic reforms, however, are now once again in the balance, as the committee of enquiry on Party structure considers them along with all other aspects of the Party organisation.

Many constituency parties and individual members welcome the committee of enquiry as an opportunity to put forward proposals for much needed improvements in the Party. But it has become quite clear, from the battles over the composition of the enquiry and the

virulent press campaign against the left which has accompanied them, that the right wing of the Party see the enquiry primarily as a means by which they can block the democratisation of the Party.

The main aim of the right, as is clearly shown by the statements of the Campaign for Labour Victory, is to ensure a re-structuring of the National Executive Committee. "The group that we are after," said David Owen at a recent private meeting of the CLV, "is the NEC."

Through such a move they hope to undermine the present left-wing leadership of the Party, to guarantee the right's continued domination of the Labour leadership, and thereby to neutralise any further moves to democratise the Party and commit the leadership to socialist policies.

The CLV, however, are trying to seduce the rank and file by including in their proposals the idea that the constituencies should have increased representation on the NEC. At first sight, this is an attractive suggestion. But it would be part and parcel of moves to downgrade the position of the NEC and give much more power to the right wing.

Move to left

In the past, similar moves were made by the right to restructure the NEC when Aneurin Bevan increased his support in the NEC elections in 1951 and the right were faced with the danger of the Bevanites winning a majority on the NEC.

In his biography of Bevan, Michael Foot describes how the right-wing leaders of the big unions, Arthur Deakin of the T&GWU, William Lawther of the NUM, Tom Williamson of the G&M-WU, came together with

By Tony Saunois

(LPYS Rep. on Labour Party NEC)

other right-wingers "not only to stop Bevan, but to crush the Bevanites."

"One way to achieve that, might be," writes Foot describing their thinking, "to alter the clause in the Party constitution whereby—in a fit of weakness way back in 1937—seven places on the Executive had been bestowed by the unions on the ungrateful CLPs. The unions could use their whip hand before matters got worse." ('Aneurin Bevan', Vol II, page 351)

Last year's conference confirmed that the left wing now have the overwhelming support of the party membership. Not only did Conference vote left-wingers onto the NEC, but in its policy decisions categorically repudiated the disastrous pro-capitalist policies of the last Labour government.

But the right wing, as in 1951, are clearly preparing, with the help of some union leaders, to push through new constitutional changes which would undermine the position of the left leadership which reflects the position of a majority of the membership.

Concretely, the CLV is proposing that the NEC should be composed of: 18 members nominated by the trade unions; 11 members, 1 each from regions of the Party (including Scotland and Wales); 7 members of the PLP, to include the leader and the deputy leader of the Party ex-officio; 1 member elected from members of Labour groups; 1 member elected from the delegates to the Women's Conference; 1 member elected from delegates to the LPYS conference; and 1 member elected from the delegates appointed from socialist societies, co-op, and other affiliated organisations at the annual conference. This would mean an increase in the size of the NEC from 29 to 40 members.

Superficially, these changes have the appearance of strengthening the trade union representation—and we would be the first to argue that it is necessary for the trade unions to have a

dominant influence in the Party—and as mentioned give more influence to the rank and file in the constituencies.

But the real intention of these proposals is to diffuse the power of the NEC, making it a much less influential body. With a much bigger membership and a composition designed as the right wing argued, to balance various interests in the Party, the NEC would be incapable of acting as a coherent political leadership of the Party.

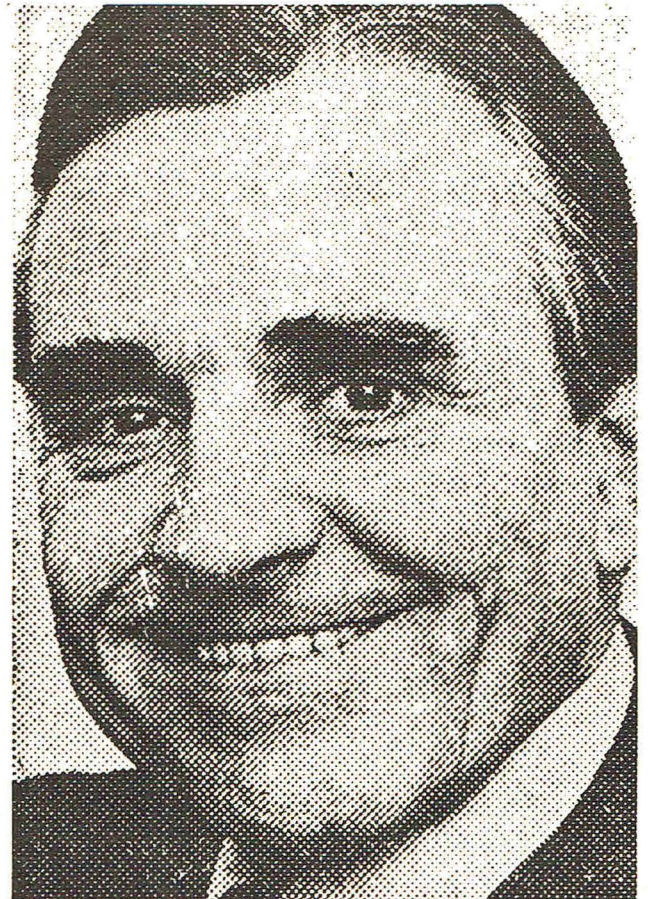
On the other hand, the Parliamentary Labour Party would remain, vis-a-vis the NEC, a much more influential body. This would especially be true, of course, if the right wing managed to torpedo automatic reselection and thereby insulating the MPs from control by the parties, thus ensuring a continued right wing majority in the PLP.

Arguing in favour of the CLV proposals in 'The Times' (28 December, 1979) Sidney Weighell, general secretary of the NUR, made it quite clear that the changes would radically downgrade the importance of the NEC vis-a-vis the Parliamentary leadership and the union tops.

He coupled the CLV proposals for a re-structuring of the NEC with the idea that in future policy should be formulated, and decided, in an entirely different way.

Research documents, he proposes, would be produced by the Labour Party Research Department. They would then be discussed by regional conferences. Finally, they would be discussed at annual conference by study groups (into which conference would be broken up) and then they would be ratified in short, plenary sessions, by the whole conference.

Clearly, such a process would undermine the decision-making powers of the annual conference and consequently reduce the authority of the NEC. Sidney Weighell admits this in so many words: "The effect of this proposal would be to diminish the role of the NEC



Sidney Weighell—NUR General Secretary.

in policy-making and to broaden the whole process."

"Broaden" is meant to imply that the new process would be more democratic. In practice it would undermine the democratic power of the Conference and reinforce the disastrous tendency of Labour's Parliamentary leadership to ignore the policy decisions of the rank and file.

Weighell ignores the fact that the reason there has been such a bitter battle over re-selection is precisely that the rank and file want to ensure that the Party as a whole will be sure of parliamentary representation and a parliamentary leadership which is committed to implementing the policy of the Party.

Sidney Weighell claims that the CLV proposals are the recipe for a strengthened party and for successes at the next general election. "We failed [at the last election] because we failed to project the right policies," says Weighell. But the right policies are left policies.

He and the CLV conveniently forget that it was

precisely the right-wing policies and the record of the last Labour government—reformism without reforms—which led the Labour Party to a catastrophic defeat last May.

Many Parties and unions are now submitting their own proposals to the committee of enquiry. But we face the very real danger that the committee is being used as a weapon against the decisions on democracy already taken.

The paramount concern of the rank and file must be to make it clear to the committee as well as to MPs and the Parliamentary leadership, that the Party will tolerate no reversal of these long awaited decisions on reselection and control of the manifesto.

For a majority of active Party members, these two changes were only the beginning of a thorough democratisation of the Party—to open the way to the development of a mass socialist Labour Party. In this light, Labour Party members should resist changes in the structure of the enquiry.



Brandt Commission on World Poverty

'Capitalism has the technology ...

Willie Brandt, former West German Social Democratic Chancellor, and organiser of the right-wing cause in the international labour movement, warned a few years ago of the danger for Western Europe of fascism or communism within a decade.

His medium-term fears for the West are only outmatched by his almighty dread of immediate upheaval in the colonial countries.

That is the real import of the Brandt Commission, and its recent report 'North South: A Programme for Survival.'

It is the survival of capitalism's domination in the '3rd World', that is at stake. Without some alleviation of the desperate crisis there, imperialism will face a succession of Cubas, Angolas and even Afghanistans.

Is it any wonder that the benefits of capitalism should be questioned by the intellectuals or the military elites in the countries most impoverished and humiliated? Brandt depicts an underdeveloped world of human degradation and despair.

Two poverty belts reach across the heart of Africa, from the Sahara to Lake Malawi, and stretch from Yemen to the Indian sub-continent and SE Asia. And the notches are being tightened year by year.

Amongst these poorest of the poor, one child in four dies before their fifth birthday. 80% of the population in 34 lands are illiterate, and in the 29 "least developed" annual income per person is just £65.

While surgeons in the metropolitan world grapple with the fine intricacies of heart transplants, 1,000 million could die from malaria. 20 million people are doomed to river blindness.

The Tory government justifies spending cuts because health care is the responsibility of the individual. But it will take more than flag days and BUPA to raise the \$560m for research and \$2,500m in control costs to eradicate malaria.

One person in six in the world—800 million people—are destitute and in absolute poverty. And without social security one in three people in the underdeveloped world, has no work. But by 1990 food production in the poverty belt will be a third below the very barest needs.

It is precisely in these very poor countries, where human existence becomes intolerable

within the grasp of mankind to raise the standard of life of the masses in Africa, Asia and Latin America to the level of the West. Assuming, which Brandt does not, the application of socialist planning to the world's wealth.

No-one could better expose the chaos of international capitalism, than Edward Heath, one of the Comintern's members. "The industrialised developed world has large unused resources," he explained.

"We have 18 million unemployed in the OECD countries. We have spare capacity variously estimated at between \$250 and \$400 billion a year. The developing world wants the resources, wants to make use of them, wants to have the capital equipment we can supply."

But where the wheels of industry do turn, millions of dollars and pounds are squandered manufacturing military hardware, depriving the world of useful production. Global military spending has reached \$450,000 million a year, when official aid is only \$20,000m.

For the cost of just one jet fighter 40,000 village pharmacies could be established. The countries of the developing world themselves frittered away \$14,000m in imported military equipment in 1978.

"If only a fraction of the money at present devoted to military uses," the report majestically proclaims, "were diverted to developments, the future prospects of the Third World would look entirely different."

To the Brandt Commission it all appears straightforward. With goodwill from both sides, North and South, the world economy can be reorganised to their mutual advantage.

In line with the World Bank's view, it proposes a system of international Keynesianism. The so called 'Third World' is currently indebted to the West to the

tune of \$247,000m.

Interest repayments for some middle income nations account for 20% of their export earnings. They are taking out loans to repay loans.

Yet when 'third world' economies only survive on HP, Brandt suggests pumping in a further \$100 billion through the IMF. The Commission had also hit on the idea of a World Development Fund financed by international income tax, and even levies on arms sales and travel.

Providing the backward countries with the wherewithal to purchase from manufacturing industries in the West, will not only raise their standards, but also help avoid the depths of world recession. Or so Brandt believes.

In the real world the stronger powers aim to maintain their export volumes, even in a shrinking market, by crushing their weaker competitors. And Britain, by the way is one of the weakest. The growing protectionist

By
Jeremy Birch

that social revolution looms. Whether it be in Ethiopia where 90% of the people were outside the cash economy or in Afghanistan where 'The Times' correspondent described villages which "remain virtually unchanged since the days of Genghis Khan."

Even in the semi-industrialised, middle income bracket—like Mexico or South Korea—what civilised life will be possible, when as Brandt anticipates, their rapidly growing cities swell to thirty million by the end of the century? A flood of humanity is enveloping the cities, exchanging landless poverty in the countryside for the urban squalor of the shanty towns.

Brandt can read the danger signals, "the world has become a more dangerous place. Unemployment has grown, inflation has raged, many countries have built up dangerous deficits...after hunger, chaos threatens."

He may not have the solutions, but his report is at least a crushing reply to the gloom and doom brigade who put world poverty down to lack of resources.

The evidence of the Brandt Commission proves that it lies



In the last year imperialism has seen defeats for its agents in 3 continents of Africa [Rhodesia], Asia [Iran], and Central America [Nicaragua] [Above] the Sandanista revolution in Nicaragua.

...and utopian solutions'

one.

If only the world were made up of men of sense and reason, like Brandt and Heath. And not conflicting nation states and their rival capitalist classes, each striving to steal a march on the other.

It's a hard world, and Brandt will find little more than sympathy in the corridors of power.

But even Brandt, perhaps without noticing it, hints that it may be the profit motive that inhibits production to satisfy world needs.

Struck with horror at the prospect of 15,000 million people on the planet by the year 2,000, the report notes that China expects to reduce population increase from 2.3% a year to nil growth. It should cause no surprise. For poverty and overpopulation are inextricably linked.

And despite the burden of the lack of workers democracy' and the continuing purges amongst the leadership, without capitalism China is abolishing poverty. But in India with two-thirds existing below the poverty line, the population will more than double to 1,200 million, when the new century opens.

Worldwide it is even clearer that nothing else but a socialist plan could utilise the

West's well detailed over-production for the benefit of the poor and undernourished.

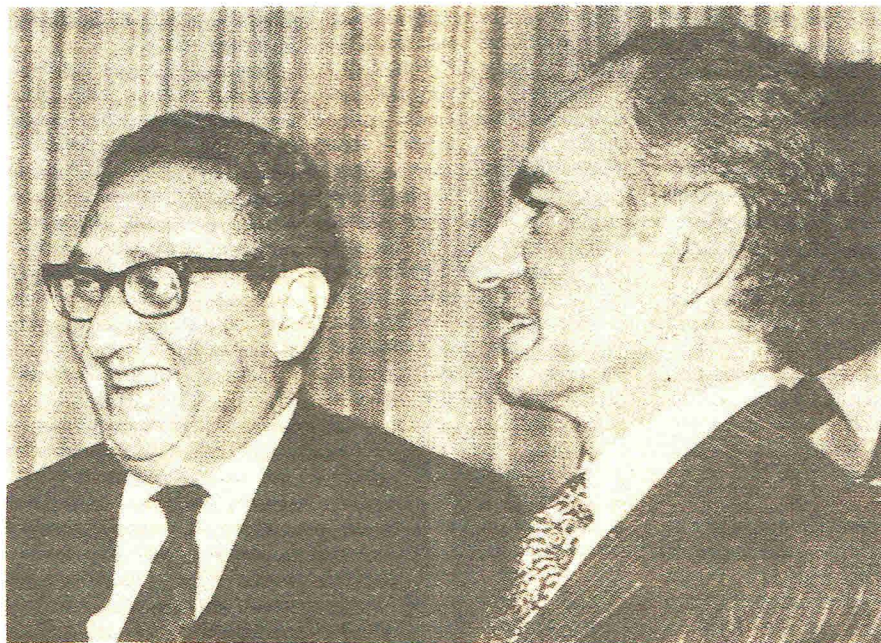
The marvels of science and technique that can build neutron bombs to annihilate man and leave buildings and machinery virtually intact, applied to agriculture could feed the hungry millions.

Brandt's dream pales into significance beside the grandiose schemes of Japan's Mitsubishi Research Institute. "We have the technology" they say to build another Panama canal, to tap solar energy and for greening the Sahara, Sinai and the Arabian desert.

All it would cost is \$500 billion. The equivalent in current prices of America's total expenditure in the second world war.

The Brandt Commission hopes that by appealing to imperialism's self interest, its plea for '3rd World' assistance will be considered realistic. But in an age of economic recession, when sharpened national antagonisms come to the fore, it is pure fantasy.

The struggle for international socialism is the only realistic alternative to the nightmare of an underdeveloped world of teeming millions unemployed, disease ridden and starving.



All the money, arms and aid from the US imperialism was powerless to prevent the overthrow of the Shah.



Kurdish militants being executed by the new Iranian regime

THE STRUGGLE FOR KURDISH RIGHTS

“The Kurds have no friends.” So the Kurdish proverb goes. And considering the position of the Kurdish nation at present, it is hardly surprising that the people have come to find such an expression in their language.

The Kurds are the fourth most numerous nation in the Middle East, numbering somewhere between a minimum of 7 million and a maximum of 17 million.

The Kurds can also claim a separate and identifiable history of their own, stretching back to at least three thousand years in the same geographical area, a history that has also given them their own language and culture. Yet the Kurds have no state.

They are one of the largest nations in the world not to have a separate state of their own, scattered as they are between Turkey, Iran and Iraq (in that order of population), with smaller groups in Syria and the USSR.

The vast area of Kurdistan, covering over 500,000 square miles (greater than the total area of France, for example) is divided between these three main states and in each case the Kurdish areas are among the most backward and underdeveloped of all their regions.

The states that have come into being in the region (and for that matter in many other parts of the world) owe nothing to the ‘natural’ ethnic or national divisions between peoples, but on the other hand owe their shape and size to the history of capitalist intervention in the first part of the century.

Thus, the state of ‘Iran’ was created where the Iranians were an actual minority of the peoples (Turks, Turkomans, Arabs, Baluchis, etc

being the majority) and Turkey and Iraq likewise were formed as patchwork states covering a multiplicity of national groups.

The victorious capitalist powers divided the spoils of World War 1 without the slightest interest in the aspirations of the colonial masses, and it was at this time that these three modern states were formed. Despite the 1920 Sevres Treaty—which gave a commitment towards the setting up of a state of Kurdistan—the imperialist powers who were signatories made no attempt to prevent the crushing of Kurdish national aspirations.

Time after time there have been national uprisings of the Kurds, and in each case these have been drowned in blood. The national movement at the beginning of the century was partly influenced by the events in Russia, so that in both 1905 and in 1918, soviets were set up in parts of Kurdistan.

After the promise of statehood in 1918-20, the national movement was viciously suppressed by Kemal Ataturk, the ‘founder’ of modern capitalist Turkey, with the death of 250,000 Kurds, according to the estimates of the Kurds themselves.

Towards the end of the second world war a new Kurdish republic was set up under the influence of Russia, but with the withdrawal of Russian troops in 1946, that also was crushed, this time by the Iranian army, backed up by British and American imperialism.

TURKEY

Since 1924 the Kurdish language has been banned in Turkey. Despite the fact that up to 8 million people are

John Pickard, in the first of a two-part article, looks at oppression of Kurdish people. In a later article, he examines the situation in Iran, and the question of self-determination for the Kurdish nation.

Kurds, the language is in effect confined to the home. There are no publications in Kurdish and the language cannot be taught in schools.

The government has even banned the wearing of the Kurdish national costume. The official ‘Turkification’ has even gone to the extent that the government refuses to accept that there is a Kurdish nation—they are referred to as ‘mountain Turks’ in official circles.

The Kurdish parts of Turkey are the most underdeveloped in an already underdeveloped country. There are fewer roads, vehicles and social amenities of all kinds, as compared to the rest of the state.

There is almost no industry. Illiteracy and disease are far more prevalent in these areas than in Turkey as a whole.

Recently, as a result of the Iranian revolution, there has been a resurgence of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. Official government circles were horrified and shocked when the work ‘Kurd’ even appeared once or twice in newspapers and when a government minister, himself a Kurd, admitted to using the language in the privacy of the government office, there were even calls for his resignation.

The predictable response from the ruling class in Turkey to the Kurdish question has been the re-imposition of martial law, so that all 16 Kurdish provinces are now under military jurisdiction.

The military law has not prevented many attacks on Kurds and other national minorities in eastern Turkey by neo-fascist thugs from the Turkish National Action Party.

IRAQ

The same under-privileged position that applies to Kurds in Turkey applies also in Iraq. Despite the fact that the Iraqi economy is almost entirely dependent on oil—most of which now comes from the Kurdish regions around the town of Kirkuk—only three per cent of industry is in Kurdish areas.

The percentage of Kurds in secondary schools is half that of the Arab population, less than seven per cent of university places go to Kurds (who are about twenty per cent of the population). Illiteracy and infant mortality are higher than in the rest of Iraq...and so the story goes on.

Unrest Sweeps Central America

Reform and repression from above to prevent revolution from below. That is the tactics announced by the military junta of El Salvador this month.

US imperialism is desperate to prevent the spread of revolution in Central America. They have learnt the lessons of last year’s events in Nicaragua, where their last ditch defence of hated dictator Somoza led to the violent overthrow of the regime and the coming to power of the Sandanista guerrilla movement.

So last October the extreme right-wing dictatorship of General Romero was replaced by a ‘reformist’ junta. And now this junta has announced its decrees on the most pressing econ-

The Kurds in Iraq have been engaged in a more prolonged and bitter struggle for autonomy than elsewhere—although the Iraqi government have been forced to grant greater concessions in the way of language and education than have the Turks, nevertheless these offers have been completely inadequate as far as economic and political rights were concerned.

While publicly proferring the olive branch, the Iraqi government has over the years been engaged in the most bloody and brutal suppression of the Kurdish movement. For a few years up to 1975 the Kurdish guerrilla army was able to increase its size and effective fighting strength with the assistance (for his own reasons) of the Shah of Iran.

The Kurdish revolt in those years took on the scale of a bloody civil war in which the Iraqi regime was forced to deploy a big proportion of its regular army, involving the most sophisticated tanks, aircraft, and so on.

By the time that the Shah and the Iraqis came to an agreement, in 1975, to seal their border and starve the Kurds of weapons and supplies, hundreds of thousands of Kurds have been driven from their homes.

In the decade and a half up to 1975, nearly 750,000 Kurds were displaced from their homes as a result of the genocidal war policy of the Iraqi government (aided, in later years by Russian arms and advisers). About 100,000 homes and 1,500 villages have been destroyed or partially destroyed.

In order to strengthen its position after the defeat of the Kurds, the Baathist government in Iraq has been following a policy of ‘Arabisation.’ 300,000 Kurds have been forcibly moved from their own region to the southern regions of Iraq to face hardship and unemployment in an unfamiliar surrounding.

At the same time the government have tried to encourage Arabs to move north in order to alter the demographic balance of the oil-producing areas of Kurdistan especially.

Militant International Review

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omic and social issue—land. With the most densely populated country in the Americas [565 people per square mile] and a population increase of 3% a year, demand for land has reached fever pitch.

In the past when the peasants demanded land they were massacred—30,000 in a mass protest in 1932. Now repressions would lead to explosions. Already an undeclared ‘civil war’ between left-wing guerillas and the junta has seen 200 deaths this year alone.

To try to cut the political ground from the growing left-wing movement, the junta has now moved against the 14 families who control landholding and finance.

Banks have been nationalised. Very large farms will be expropriated, and coupled with a proposal to later take over large farms it is expected that this would give land to 250,000 to 300,000 families [out of a population of 4.6 million].

But peasants and workers will not be involved in their ‘liberation’. With the land and bank decrees has gone the declaration of a state of siege.

US imperialism hopes that this will stabilise the situation. Unfortunately as even Archbishop Rouero explained “the junta still has no support from the people”. It seems that the revolution in El Salvador and Central America continues.

LETTERS

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

Defending cuts with a Union Jack

Dear Comrade,
Bournemouth Councillor Kenneth Baily recently spewed much venom at the Labour Party Young Socialists, when he objected to children of "tender ages" reading leaflets about government cuts which Poole LPYS had been distributing.

Kids of "tender ages" have a perfect right to know about issues which affect them and their families. It didn't occur to Baily that those same kids are going to suffer severe hardship and deprivation because of these cuts!

Councillor Kenneth Baily is "a fine upstanding member" of the local community, who writes a name-dropping gossip column in the local paper. He doesn't like pickets, men with beards or women who wear jeans. He is frequently seen prancing around Bournemouth in his "Union Jack" outfit.

At the recent demonstration against the cuts in Dorchester, more than 600 people acquainted our councillors at County Hall in no uncertain terms, with just what they thought of Thatcher's policies.

Kenneth Baily was on the steps waving his Union Jack. The workers told him exactly what he could do with it, and after spewing more venom, he eventually scuttled off.

What sickens me is that parasites like Baily appear to flourish, here in Dorset. One reads his column with pity and revulsion. What does he get paid for writing such drivel I wonder?

'Mad Hatter' Baily likes the world to know that he's a "patriot". Who was it who remarked.... "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel...."?

Sincerely,
Lomond Handley,
Poole, Dorset.

AFGHANISTAN— INVADED....

Dear Comrades,

Although a 'Militant' supporter I found myself in some disagreement with Lynn Walsh's article on Afghanistan in Militant No. 491.

Lynn says that a victory for the rebels would inevitably mean a victory for reaction. Admittedly the rebels are receiving guns and ammunition from Pakistan but I cannot see how this means that the Afghan people will willingly give up the social gains which have been achieved in the last few years,

particularly after the experience of Iran, where a reactionary religious leadership has been forced to carry out nationalisation and land reform under enormous pressure from the masses.

Another point that Lynn failed to deal with is the right of nations to self-determination, which is surely crucial in this situation where the vast majority of Afghans are so manifestly opposed to the Russian occupation.

I would have thought that a

Marxist position would be to support the Afghan people in their struggle against the Russian bureaucracy, while explaining that the next step in Afghanistan must be towards a healthy workers' state, a planned economy and peasant ownership of the land.

Yours fraternally,
Chris Evers,
Islington North LPYS/
Islington COHSE.

PROMPTING WIDER CONCLUSION

Dear Sir,

Book and film reviews are a welcome addition to the pages of 'Militant', but when they are given insufficient space, the exercise becomes redundant. The superficial treatment of 'Apocalypse Now' is a case at point.

As Jim Christy complains, the film is "empty of explanation". What he fails to mention, however, is the devastating power and horror of certain scenes in the film, which really hammer home the insanity and futility of war.

Its liberal message is infinitely preferable to the dubious sentiments expressed in the "Deer Hunter", which ends, after three ponderous hours, in a bombastic rendering of "God Bless America"!

True, the political stance of 'Apocalypse Now' is limited to condemning the horror of war. But like the best art forms, it prompts the audience to draw wider conclusions about why those wars come about.

Yours fraternally,
Roy George,
Leeds.

....OR LIBERATED?

Dear Comrade,

While generally agreeing with your stance on the presence of Russian troops in Afghanistan, I disagree with your paper when it says that socialists should not agree with the initial entry of the troops, because it gives them a bad name among workers in western countries.

Workers in Western countries might be hostile to the presence of Russian troops in Afghanistan because they are told to be by the capitalist press. The mass media here brainwashes the workers to oppose the Russian assistance to Afghanistan.

This does not justify 'Militant' jumping on the bandwagon and joining in with the anti-Russian clamour of the capitalist press. If the Russian assistance to international socialism can bring a little light to that backward, barbarous country, then good luck to it.

I'm not a member of the Communist Party and do not consider Russia to be a workers' state, but Russia does play a progressive role in the third world countries.

Yours fraternally,
Tom Crow,
Hillingdon.

'Pay the steelworkers' is our answer.

Dear Comrades

Yesterday I was working at the ISTC Divisional Office in Middlesborough. That morning several of the brothers and sisters on strike had received ballot papers.

Feelings were running extremely high and the anger and bitterness was obvious. Several of them told me what they had put on the form (some of the replies were unprintable!)—but clearly the most popular was 'Pay the Steelworkers' written right across the ballot paper.

The ISTC produced a leaflet on the ballot which points out that voting 'yes' is voting for closures, redundancies and lower earnings. It says "After nine weeks on strike he ('Black Bob' Schol-

ey) believes you are weak, cowed and humiliated and that you will crawl back to work on any terms.

"His offer is a last desperate attempt to save himself. He is clutching at straws... We are not straw tigers... We are men of steel."

Whatever the result of the 'Black Ballot' I am confident that the activities of the last few weeks have been a real lesson and eye-opener to the BSC workforce, who have seen management use every trick in the book to try and break the strike.

Yours fraternally
Kath Hardisty
Newcastle North LPYS

'100 APPLICANTS— 1 JOB'

—BOAST ANTI-UNION BOSSES

Dear Comrades,

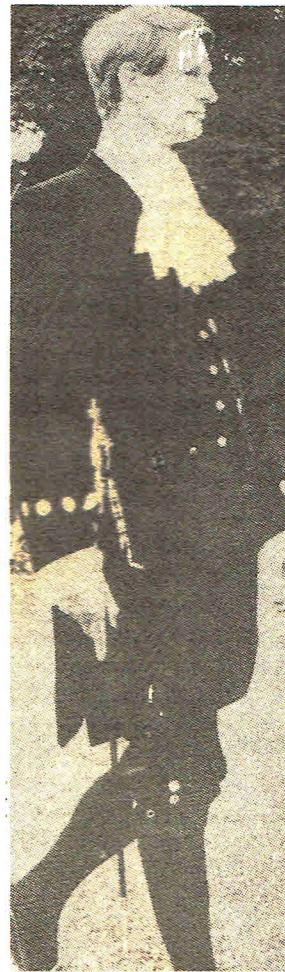
An advert from the infamous 'Nottingham Evening Post' which a neighbour passed on to me, boasts of "100 applicants—1 job!", as a plug for their vacancies column service.

The Post's management, who sacked all their journeymen in an attempt to smash trade unionism, are exploiting the terrible unemployment levels to say to employers: "you cannot fail to fill your vacancies quickly, [if they have any, that is] because there are hundreds of people looking for jobs".

They are confident they will get the 'right' people—do they mean those desperate enough to work for a pittance?

It's sick how this management can gleefully look at unemployment as a blessing. The sooner we rid society of these sort of people the better. Forward to workers' control of production.

Comradely,
Gary Freeman,
NALGO Exec. member,
Derwent Water branch.
[personal capacity]



High-Sheriff of Nottingham and NEP proprietor Pole-Carew exploiting the unemployed to give to the rich....

Windsors on £260 m- tax-free

Dear Comrades,

I greatly sympathise with the sentiments of Mr J. Shawler (issue 491) on the Royal Family. In the last five years alone, over £50 million has been spent on the upkeep of royal palaces, the royal train, Queen's flight and salaries for the Queen's 473 servants.

Additionally, since the reign of Queen Victoria, the nation has paid for exempting its hereditary sovereign from both direct and indirect taxation.

Not surprisingly then, the Queen is known to be one of the richest (if not the richest) woman in the world.

She currently owns around 410,000 acres of land, 300,000 of which are mainly agricultural. At present market values, this provides an income of between £6 million and £9 million from estates worth around £670 million.

The remainder consists of residential and industrial properties in the Home Counties (shops, flats, houses and factories) and property gold-mines in Central London and the Strand, where land is currently selling at around £5 million per acre.

In a 1956 parliamentary debate, income from this estate alone was reckoned to be at least £50 million. In 1971, Labour MP Willie Hamilton estimated this figure to have risen to well over £150 million (from properties worth over £1 billion).

These figures indicate a present cash accumulation of well over £2¼ billion which, if invested would produce a return of over £110 million a year. On these estimates alone, the Queen and her family can confidently expect a tax-free income of at least £260 million a year, financed by the taxpayer, at a time of high inflation, rising unemployment and savage cut-backs in public expenditure.

The Labour Party must have the courage to live up to its professed socialist ideology—the abolition of the monarchy and the return of the Queen's wealth to the people would enable these colossal resources to be put to better use.

Yours sincerely,
PV Flitcroft,
Stockport, Cheshire.

£18 FOR A 6-DAY WEEK— and they "can't stand unions".

Dear Comrades,

An article recently appeared in our local Tory rag, the 'Evening Echo', which pointed out the scandal of riding school workers on a wage of £18 a week.

One riding school owner admitted that the grooms received £18.50 for a six-day, 50-hour week. "Some places", she said, "pay around £5 because they say the youngsters are being trained".

She finds it difficult to get workers at these rates. "It

seems stable boys and girls or grooms can get more money signing on for unemployment benefit," she said. "It just does not make sense to me!"

Tom Delaney, National Secretary of the stable lads' association, says "working at riding schools is probably the lowest-paid job in Britain; the attitude of the owners is Dickensian". A new union, the National grooms association, is being formed to represent stable boys and girls.

The attitude of the owners

was made clear by a Mr Greenway from the Belfriars riding school, Leigh: "Personally I can't stand unions. But qualified staff take their case to a tribunal, and get about £44.50 a week," he said. "But we wouldn't employ anyone here who started getting involved in that sort of thing".

Mr Greenway refused to discuss individual rates of pay but said his girls received less than £18 a week.

The paper tried to defend this exploitation by claiming

that the profits of these firms are small, but on the contrary many of these riding schools make exorbitantly high profits through charging excessive rates of hire for a horse (£1.50 for half an hour), preventing working class children from riding.

The sooner an £80 minimum wage and 35-hour week are implemented, the better!

Yours fraternally,
Des Heemskerk,
Secretary,
South East Essex LPYS

DON'T SPECULATE - BUDGET FOR MILITANT

With only a week or so to the Budget, the press is full of political pundits speculating on what Tory chancellor Howe has in store.

You don't need a crystal ball to predict that those who go in for other kinds of speculating—on the stock exchange; in commodities or property—won't be weeping too bitterly at the end of Budget Day.

The bosses' government will again try to push the crisis on to our backs—probably with increases in tobacco and beer and vicious cuts in social security.

But there are only a few weeks to go before 'Militant's' own "budget" reaches a crucial stage. April 12th marks the end of the Fighting Fund's first quarter—the first stage in building the resources of the paper which is indispensable in the struggle to chuck out the Tories—budget and all.

At the time of writing there are just four weeks to go to April 12th.

Every area should be making plans for 'End of quarter' socials and a big drive for contributions to ensure that all parts of the country go over the target. We must reach the £20,000 required in order to go forward. Has your area organised anything yet?

Individual donations are the most important source of income for 'Militant' because they reflect the amount of support we have for our ideas. Large and small amounts are received with equal gratitude.

On the TUC demonstration on 9 March, steelworkers on the ISTC contingent commented, "We may not agree with all the policies in the

'Militant', but the sellers' enthusiasm in selling the paper and putting forward their ideas warrants buying a paper and giving a contribution (20p)."

Many thanks for a contribution from a section of the working class who are fighting for all workers—and living on a very small income!

This week's income of £1554.33 making a total of £12,954.40 means we have £7,046 to raise—£1762 per week. We can easily achieve this—if the money is sent in regularly.

From **Eastern Region** we received £86 leaving £197 to raise. This money came from: D. Kear (Basildon) £9.00, M. Murphy (Luton) £2.00, G. Day (also Luton) £1.00, union expenses (Peterborough) £5.00, 'home brew' (again Peterborough) £2.70, 'Meal for Militant' £4.10, and paper extras of over £25.00.

Hants & IOW sent in a total of £74 mainly made up from small donations. **Humberside** did not send in anything this week and have £325 to raise.

London East raised £109 (taking them over the target—well done comrades!). This came from sale of badges £56.00, S. Donnelly (Leyton CLP) £4.40, and extras on sales of the Paper (mainly on the TUC Demo).

£142 was sent in from **London West** (again taking them over their target—congratulations!). This includes

By Alison Rudd

Build Militant

Area	received	Proportion of first quarter's target	Target 1st Qtr	Target for year
Eastern	803		1,000	5,000
East Midlands	638		760	3,800
Hants & IOW	504		780	3,900
Humberside	175		500	2,500
London East	1240		1,240	6,200
London West	962		940	4,700
London South	586		800	4,000
Manchester & Lancs	417		1,020	5,100
Merseyside	891		1,200	6,000
Northern	923		1,460	7,300
Scotland East	464		640	3,200
Scotland West	711		1,000	5,000
Southern	813		1,180	5,900
South West	311		640	3,200
Wales East	229		560	2,800
Wales West	224		620	3,100
West Midlands	1280		1,800	9,000
Yorkshire	867		1,460	7,300
Others	916		2,400	12,000
Total received	12954		20,000	100,000

TARGET FOR APRIL 12th - £20,000 TARGET FOR YEAR - £100,000

THIS WEEK
£1,554

£4.00 from C. Burford (Paddington), sale of Latin America pamphlets £2.00, £1.00 from F. Curtis (Ealing N. CLP), £6.00 from Hounslow YS, and £125 (before expenses) collected at a 'What We Stand For' public meeting in Willesden.

London South raised £61 including £5.00 (Erith YS) students at Thames Poly £2.05, J. Gregory (FBU and Kingston CLP) £1.00, and paper extras. This means £214 must be raised to reach the target—come on, comrades! Don't let the rest of London stay ahead of you.

From **Manchester & Lancs.** we received £91 leaving £603 to raise, mainly made up of small donations, paper extras etc.

Merseyside sent in £59 including £3.00 from R. Walsh (Kirkdale LPYS), a Liverpool Marxist Discussion Group £26.00, and other small donations. This leaves £309 to raise.

Midlands East sent in £26 made up almost entirely of small donations and paper extras, leaving a total of £127 to raise while **Midlands West**

sent in £41 including £10.00 from L. Hughes (NUPE and Handsworth LPYS). This means they have £520 to raise.

Northern region sent in a total of £71 including £19.00 collected on the train down to the TUC demonstration, D. Jennings £1.00 and D. Curtis £2.00 (both from Middlesborough), Teeside area Militant Readers Meeting £25.00. This leaves £537 to raise.

From **Scotland East** we received £106 (leaving £176 to raise) being £6.20 from J. Greer (Edinburgh EETPU), Mrs Turnbull (Dalkeith) £1.50, £12.70 from a Militant Readers Meeting in Falkirk and £61.76 was raised during

the course of the Scottish Conference of the Labour Party. **Scotland West** sent in a total of £98 (leaving £289 to raise) including £38.50 from a Militant Readers Meeting in Paisley, plus small donations and £61.76 again raised during the Scottish LP Conference.

Southern region sent in £165. This came from: Militant Readers Meeting after the southern Region LPYS Conference £166.50, £10.00 from a 'Bracknell Technician', and £28.30 from Canterbury supporters, this leaves £367 to raise.

From the **South West** we received £35 (leaving £329 to get) including £5.18 from a

Marxist Discussion Group in Bristol, £5.00 from D. Pengelly (Plymouth) while from **Wales East** we received nothing leaving £331 to get. **Wales West** sent in £45 being made up entirely of small donations leaving £396 to raise.

Yorkshire region sent in a total of £105 (leaving £593 to raise) including £1.00 from C. Harker (Leeds), commission from Xmas cards and lifts (also Leeds) £13.00, £20.00 from a NALGO member in Wakefield, £10.00 from M. Chandler (also Wakefield), Wakefield Militant Readers Meeting on the NHS £18.40, 'prize tango dance' in Rotherham £1.00, £20.00 from a raffle organised at the Yorkshire Regional Conference of the Labour Party, and S. Reid (Rotherham) £3.00.

Many thanks to all those readers and supporters who donated money—unfortunately we do not have the room to mention every one of them. Keep the money coming in comrades—and make certain we get over the £20,000 before the end of the first quarter. Don't just speculate, budget for growth with 'Militant'!

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 Readers' Meetings

SOUTHERN REGION Labour Party Conference Militant public meeting. 7.00 pm, Saturday 22 March, Ann Marie Hotel, Fort Crescent, opposite Winter Gardens

NEWHAM MILITANT READERS' MEETING: Afghanistan—Why the Invasion? Speaker: Ted Grant. Tuesday, March 25, 8.00pm Labour Hall, 241e High Street North, London E12 (Near East Ham Underground).

SALFORD Marxist Discussion Group: "Tribune's Alternative Strategy" 7.30pm Sunday 23rd March. Ring Salford 793-5808 for details.

Classified

CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY Public Meeting.
Speakers: Richard Balfe MEP, Dave Wetzel. Chairperson: Anne Shenow 1.00pm Sunday 23 March, Winter Gardens, Margate.

CIVIL AVIATION NEWS Meeting: John Smith MP, Russell Kerr MP. Dave Wetzel (CAN Editor). Chairman: Gordon Clark. Monday 31st March 7.30pm. Queens Building, Heathrow.

BADGES MADE TO ORDER. 1 inch, 1½ inch and 2 inch button badges made to order, no charge for artwork. Fantastic Fund Raising, ideal for local campaigns. Also A3 posters, Tee-shirts, and leaflets designed and printed. Large SAE for details; Dept M, Maprographics, 32 Worpole Rd, Mews, London SW19.

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MAY DAY GREETINGS IN MILITANT'S 500th ISSUE

May Day 1980 is a special occasion for Militant. It marks our 500th edition. For over fifteen years Militant has campaigned for socialist policies and supported workers in struggle.

Get your trade union branch, Labour Party and YS to back Militant. Send your greetings to the workers of the world this May Day.

Rates: semi-display 3 column cm (up to 15 words)...£2
6 column cm (up to 25 words)...£4
display one-sixteenth page.....£7
one-eighth page.....£14

Closing date for copy, 15th April. Cheques payable to Militant. Send to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

STRATHCLYDE Militant supporters' draw results, 16 March.
1st prize: 40 with one of 25, 28, 31, 37, 46. 2nd prize: 11 with 4 or 6.

MILITANT MARXIST WEEKEND SCHOOL

Courses: Introduction to Marxism; Marxist Economics; Marxism and the trade unions; The Life of Trotsky; China—History and Perspectives.

Film: 'The Battle for Chile'
Debate: The lessons of Chile 1970-73.

Date: Friday 27 June to Sunday 29 June.

Venue: Goldsmith's College Students' Union, Lewisham Way, London SE 14.

Cost: £3 for whole weekend. £1.50 Saturday or Sunday only. £1 Friday evening only.

To book, or for further information, write to Militant Marxist Weekend School, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. (Cheques payable to 'Militant')

Rising demand for 'Militant's' policies

By Dave Farrar

On the massive demonstrations and protests that are happening all over the country the 'Militant' is proving to be in great demand. In fact, at the TUC demonstration on March 9th, we completely ran out of supplies!

The steel strike has been prominently featured in our paper, and the coverage has been judged to be excellent. On a demonstration in Scunthorpe, over 100 were sold. At the Scottish Labour Party Conference over 200 'Militant's' were sold as well as the 'Militant Irish Monthly' and the Militant International Review.

Not only was the Southend East By-Election a shock for the Tories, but the energetic comrades

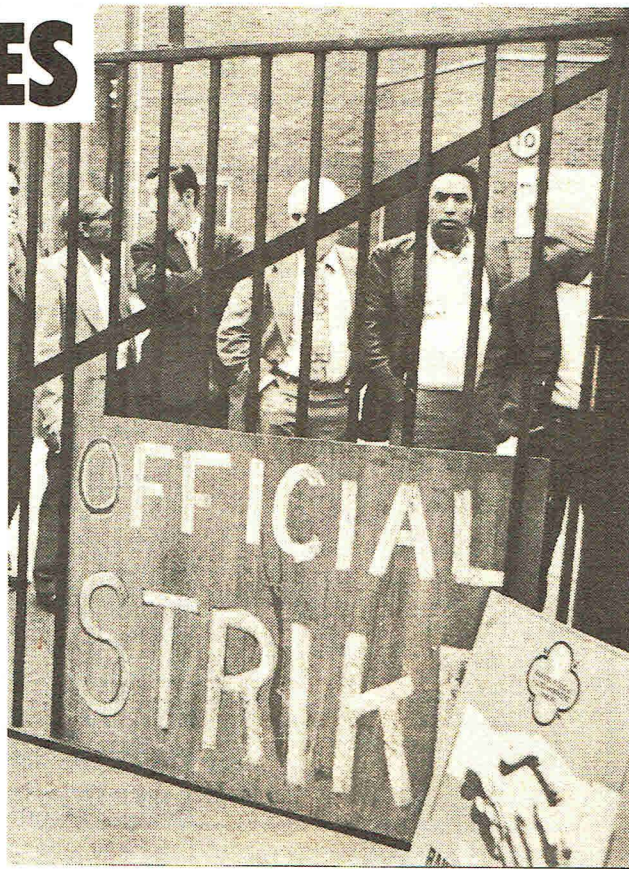
selling Militant in Southend also put the wind up the Tories with sales of over 125 in one week. It isn't just the numbers of papers that are sold every week that is important, as Councillor Pete Brown [from Middleton, Manchester] said this week when increasing his bulk order, "the message that the 'Militant' puts forward should be shouted from the rooftops." Is the 'Militant' an integral part of your fight against the Tories, if not, why not? Get 'Militant' and sell the fastest growing socialist paper in the country!



Limited run red and black "Plunder Woman" Posters 50p each [Post Free]. Order NOW from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Bulk Orders: ½ price with order [other half to the Fighting Fund].

COUNTRY MAID: ALLIED BAKERIES TRY TO SMASH UNION

Photo: MILITANT



Bakers' Union pickets queue for strike payments during the 1978 dispute—lessons for Country Maid strikers can be drawn from this struggle

The strike against victimisation of four trade unionists at Country Maid bakeries, Saltney, continues.

As the shop stewards' committee leaflet put it: "we must fight management in every way possible to end this strike and bring back respect and pride, as well as rights to the working people of this bakery."

"Only we as a union together, showing solidarity, will win this dispute."

The local Bakery Union executive member explained they had no hesitation in supporting the Saltney members. ACAS had offered to set up local negotiations to achieve a settlement; the Bakers' Union had agreed to this but management refused.

Then the bosses try to convince the public that the 'stubborn' unions are prolonging the strike.

Managements' aims are clear. As Peter Martin, branch secretary, explained "We've been walked all over in the past at Country Maid. We won't let it happen again."

"If we let them beat us here, next it will be somewhere else and eventually there'll be no Bakers' Union."

Allied Bakeries obviously laid plans for this strike to break the union.

Within two hours of the walk-out against victimisation, scab managers from all over the country had arrived to start baking. Scab managers from Blackpool, Ipswich, Lincoln, Bristol and Stoke have already been identified.

Is it just a coincidence that just before management provoked this dispute, moves were being taken to form a joint shop stewards' committee in the bakery?

The URTU drivers who have crossed the picket should take note: they will be next if management succeed against the bakers.

A meeting of North-West Bakers' shop stewards issued a call for a work-to-rule in all North-West Allied Bakeries, to force management round the table. The meeting raised £70 in a collection for strike funds.

Pickets at nearby Shotton steelworks have donated back the money Country Maid workers previously gave to them. This is the kind of solidarity in action needed to defend trade union rights against the assault of the bosses and their Tory government.

Management are using scab drivers to bring in flour-rigs from Warrington mills, after pickets had successfully tur-

ned away union drivers. It is vital that URTU (a TUC-affiliated union) call on all its members to black supplies to Country Maid and call out its members at the bakery.

Bakers' Union members throughout the country should investigate any 'missing' management and report this to the union. URTU members should flood their head office with demands for solidarity action.

Bakers in the North-West

and West Midlands regions in particular, should send a delegation to the one-day mass picket of Country Maid later this week. For details and other enquiries, information and donations ring Peter Martin, branch secretary, Tel. Chester 672983.

By Richard Venton
(Birkenhead Labour Party)

ASLEF reject BR job cuts

At an all-Scotland ASLEF district council meeting in Glasgow, Bro. Charlie Rogers the Scottish EC member, outlined the proposals put forward by the British Rail board in their "Into the Eighties" document.

These proposals, he concluded, are aimed at cutting staff and conditions fought for over the years. They should be totally rejected.

He reported that ASLEF would be going for a wage

claim that takes into account inflation, with a shorter working week and longer holidays. While saying he couldn't see the claim being easily met, he urged a strong call for unity among all railworkers.

Speakers from the floor pointed to the failure of the government to give workers a decent living and the different struggles taking place, particularly that of the steelworkers. Finally a motion was

passed calling on ASLEF to use their fullest power in achieving our claim, including industrial action.

The mood of ASLEF members was clearly reflected in the support given for action on 14th May and the call for a 24-hour general strike, raised during the meeting from the floor and the platform.

By Colin Lawson
(Edinburgh No 1 ASLEF)

HP sauce isn't flowing

HP workers at Aston Cross, Birmingham have now been out for three weeks for their 25 per cent wage claim.

Although part of the Imperial group, which recorded massive profits last year, the company has only offered 14 per cent, with strings attached. These include a review

of the status of the T&GWU full-time branch chairman.

He is paid by the company but since the strike management have refused to let him on site to use his own office. It's clear what a review would mean.

The offer has been rejected and all movement of HP

sauce has now been stopped. For the first time the eleven depots around the country were picketed and workers there have guaranteed not to move HP produce.

The workers at HP are determined to win.

By Jeremy Birch
(Selly Oak Labour Party)

Stone Platt fight for jobs

The 850 workers in occupation at Stone Platt in Oldham are fighting to save their jobs. Their determination has forced a small retreat by the management.

The initial plans for 117 redundancies on 1 April have been dropped. But the threat of closure at the end of the year remains.

In an attempt to widen the dispute pickets have been sent to the nearby Stone Platt Industries (STI) Scraggs plant and to Crawley. But the workers are "distressed" at the length of time it is taking the AUEW executive council to follow TASS, APEX and ASTMS in making the dispute official.

"With the growing number of disputes like this one, we feel that the divisional organisers should be authorised to make them official. What's important is not just the strike pay but being able to approach other trade unions with national backing from our own."

In the fifth week of occupation the morale of the workers is growing. "A spirit of comradeship is developing. We are at war with this company, and also with the Tory government, whose policies encourage employers to attack workers."

Send messages of support and donations c/o Eddie Holland, 70 Lord Street, Oldham, Lancs.

ASSAY WORKERS FIGHT FEUDAL BARONS

Feudalism is alive and well at the Birmingham Assay Office.

The hallmarked office for the local jewellery trade is governed by 36 self-appointed Guardians, who appoint the management and the Assay Master. They also decided to declare 43 of their workers redundant.

The Guardians only meet twice a year—for a fee of £1,000. So why wouldn't they meet the union? "It's against tradition."

No doubt the five-week picket outside the Assay office is also a break with the past, but what alternative did the National Union of Gold,

Silver and Allied Trades have? Management refused to even discuss the union's plan for work-sharing.

So on 14th March the striking serfs picketed the colonels and the double-barrelled toffs as they went into the Board of Guardians' meeting. The Chamber of Commerce (renamed the Chamber of Horrors) building has not often seen anything like it.

Up they drove in their Porsches, Ford Granadas and a chauffeur-driven Bentley. The picket line held.

"Drive straight through" the well-dressed passenger appeared to indicate to his

man. The pickets forced him to speak to them. Perhaps it was the shock, but he didn't even seem to understand what the strike was about.

At the very least the young NUGSAT pickets have got a healthy disrespect for the old boy's club that runs their place of work. They are fighting the Guardians for their jobs and their right to work.

STEEL STRIKE WEEK 12:

AROUND THE COUNTRY

TORBAY

Despite the conspiracy of silence by the BSC, CBI and the government, the steel strike is definitely biting. That was the conclusion of steel pickets at Torquay. The fact that the bosses have been forced to smuggle in 1,000 tons of steel through Torquay is proof. Pickets estimated that this shipment cost the bosses ten times as much as British-produced steel; this alone shows the desperate straits they are in. The steel was landed at Torquay by the non-unionised stevedores. The tremendous solidarity and support that other sections of the movement are giving the steel strike has closed most other ports to steel.

Dave Williams, vice-chairman, Llanwern steel works committee, explained: "Torquay is the only port normally not handling steel that gave a haven to the scab ship carrying scab steel handled by scab labour. It is a blemish on the seaside resort

of Torbay which will result in steelmen throughout the country not coming to Torbay for their holidays.

"Pressure will be put on affiliated members of the TUC not to hold conferences in Torbay.

"Morale is as high as it was on the 2nd January, in face of the adversity, and prostituted Tory propaganda published in the press. Steelworkers are determined to win this battle, for if we are beaten the working class will be defeated, which is something we are not prepared to see happen."

The Labour Party Young Socialists in Torbay and throughout the South West have agreed to play their part in the strike by watching out for any attempts to dock steel in the area. We will be in touch with the ISTC if any attempts are made.

By Mick Whale (Exeter LPYS) and Nigel Prouse (Totnes LPYS)

WOLVERHAMPTON

On Friday 14 February, Cable Street Brynbow Works, Wolverhampton, was faced with a mass picket of South Wales, Corby and Wolverhampton steelworkers.

Tom Burns, one of the ISTC members from Corby, relates: "A lorry stopped. We were talking to the driver then he moved forward and pushed blokes out of the way and we got a bit riled.

"The police started on us and picked on a fella and they tried to take him to the police van. The next minute I was thrown on the ground and my head crashed against the gates.

"The police were only out

to make arrests. They arrested the bloke referred to and the wagon got in."

Jimmy Sewell, also from Corby, went on: "When trying to get the one lad into the van, an inspector ended up in a puddle with his glasses cracked. His trousers were all manky and his arms muddied up, with his wee hat in a puddle.

"Management said after this that no more wagons would be loaded."

Brian Debus (Erdington Labour Party) talked to steel workers in Wolverhampton

LONDON

The pickets from Consett have moved on. Now Scunthorpe workers are taking their turn in London, picketing Macready's, a steel stockholder. But the mood is still the same: "We want the 20%."

Some would concede; "17% with no strings" would probably be acceptable, but no less.

The strikers are making enormous sacrifices. Stuart Barker, aged 20 and single, told me. "I have to pay £15 a week for lodgings. I'm getting £6 a week at the moment and I'm going to be made redundant in a couple of months' time." Others had similar

stories to tell.

"We should have done like the miners in their strike: they stopped all the coal moving, nationalised and private," one picket pointed out. "We should never have tolerated the likes of Hadfields and the rest. If we had done that it would be all over by now."

But despite the hardship and some cynicism about the way the strike was being run, the mood is determined.

By Bob Faulkes
(Hackney Central Labour Party)

HOW TO WIN THE STEEL STRIKE

STAND FIRM

★ The latest "three-day charade" of negotiations, as one T&GWU negotiator put it, have broken down. The considerable compromises offered by union leaders were still not enough to satisfy BSC's demands for blood. There can only be one conclusion: compromises are seen as a sign of weakness; they will achieve nothing. There must be no wavering; steelworkers—and their leaders—must stand firm.

MAKE BLACKING BITE

★ The way to force BSC's hand is to make the action bite. Where T&GWU members are rigorously implementing national instructions, blacking all steel and refusing to cross picket lines, the effect has already been felt. The bosses' organisation, the CBI, warned last week that in the West Midlands, action against imports and transporting of steel has become more effective and companies "could be in extreme difficulties within two weeks."

MAINTAIN SAFETY COVER

★ The national joint all-union strike committee has again raised the call for the removal of safety cover at all BSC works. This recommendation was not made lightly. After three months on strike, workers are looking for ways of exerting pressure on their leaders and bringing a speedy and decisive victory.

But this is a tactic fraught with danger. Removal of genuine safety dispensations would mean leaving blast-furnaces to cool and crack, taking months to repair or rebuild before work could resume after the strike. What confidence can we have that the bone-headed wreckers at BSC, who have already admitted to writing off £353 million investment as 'abortive expenditure', would not decide to close even major new works?

This strike will not be won on BSC territory. Only by squeezing the supply arteries to private firms, hitting their profiteering brothers where it hurts most—in the bank balance—and by showing the strength of trade union solidarity, will the Tories and BSC be forced to back down.

PICKET BR DEPOTS

★ Sid Weighell, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, has said that his members will not cross picket lines, in response to the court order instructing British Rail to release steel from its depots. Effective picketing can again force the courts to back down.

STOP SUPPLIES TO INDUSTRY

★ The ISTC has drawn up a list of major steel-using firms where pickets will be concentrated to halt supplies. This is the way to bring speedy victory. The Tories and their lap-dogs at BSC would make a prompt 'U'-turn if their paymasters on the boards of the big manufacturing companies began to feel the full effect of the strike.

A concerted national plan of action must be drawn up and put into effect quickly, involving all TUC-affiliated unions. Union leaders must make an unequivocal call for blacking of steel and observance of all picket-lines.

When Sheffield engineering and private steel plants stopped work last week, T&GWU leaders undermined this important solidarity action by back-tracking on their call for support. How can T&GWU members at BSC and in other industries build support for the strike if their leaders prevaricate?

INVOLVE ALL WORKERS

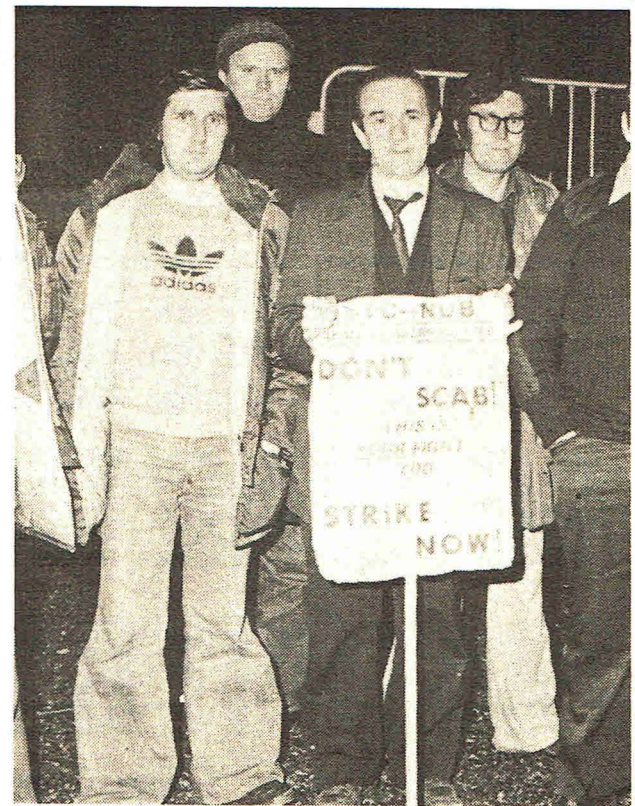
★ The determination shown on the picket line must be reflected at all levels. The call for removal of safety cover is a reflection of growing impatience among activists with the lack of a clear national direction from union leaders.

Regular mass meetings must be held involving all those on strike, to explain the issues, refuting BSC's propaganda with a renewed vote of confidence in the unions' action. The facts, figures and arguments provided in 'Steelworkers' Banner', the excellent ISTC strike bulletin, must be spelled out at public rallies, street meetings and in broadsheets, so that workers and their families understand clearly why, after weeks of hardship, a firm stand is essential.

In Sheffield, mass meetings were organised to expose the employers' 'Black ballot', and decide on tactics. This is the way to cut across any isolation, and sharpen determination.

NO TO CLOSURES

★ The magnificent demonstration in Consett shows that for steelworkers, this fight is now as much to save jobs as to defend wages. BSC are attempting to tie every penny of the wage settlement to the slashing of jobs. At Consett, Bill Sirs and Hector Smith pledged the unions' support for the fight against closure at every threatened works. The unions must spell out this message loud and clear: the fight is not only to protect living standards, but to save an essential industry.



Determination on the picket line—South Wales ISTC members spell out the message on midnight picket duty Photo: MILITANT

TUC MOBILISE SUPPORT

★ There is a massive reservoir of public support, much of it still untapped. The welcome given to the steelworkers on the TUC demonstration was ample evidence that organised workers see the steel strike as part of their fight against a hated Tory government.

Demonstrations and rallies should be organised in every town and city. Practical support should be organised, with the TUC launching a massive campaign of blacking and financial help, gathering information through union and factory committees on movement of steel and level and whereabouts of stocks. The call of the Sheffield Confed division, for all unions to follow the T&GWU in issuing national instructions to members on blacking and picketing, must be taken up. A victory for the steelworkers will be a victory for every trade unionist.

At the recent NUM conference, delegates declared that "the steelworkers' fight is our fight." French dockers have impounded steel destined for Britain at Boulogne; imported tinplate has been halted at Heathrow.

If the lead from the top is firm and clear, no steel will move and the bosses will learn that workers have the power to bring them to their knees. Trade unionists must insist that their leaders take action now.

STANTON

The anger of Blastfurnace-men on strike at Stanton has boiled over.

For weeks BSC drivers have been crossing their picket lines. Last Thursday they took their picket to the T&GWU office in Nottingham to see the full-time official, Ray Thorpe, who they hold responsible.

Despite Moss Evans' instruction to T&G members not to cross picket lines and repeated approaches by NUB representatives, he seems to have told Stanton drivers they have dispensation. "With

that attitude to trade unionism, we wouldn't have him as a member, let alone an official," said one NUB member.

Members in other areas who are on strike or not crossing the line will surely want to know what's going on here, with BSC lorries still on the road from this works. A clear lead from the top could quickly sort this situation out, and for the Stanton steel workers, it's urgently needed.

By Tony Cross
(East Nottingham LP)

CONSETT

The rain and drizzle that hung over Consett on Friday morning did nothing to dampen the spirits of the 5,000 people taking part in the biggest demonstration Consett has seen since the 1930s.

They came to protest at BSC's plans to close the Consett works. Thousands more lined the route and cheered them on their way.

A mass meeting afterwards was to be held in a local cinema. In fact two had to be used to accommodate everyone, with the speeches relayed to the cinema next door.

Standing ovations were given to Bill Sirs and Hector Smith as they outlined the case against closure. The full backing of the ISTC and NUB was promised to prevent any job-loss in Consett or in other plants threatened with closure.

A great cry of anger went up when it was reported that Thatcher, in discussion with the steel unions, said that she did not know about the

closure. These were details which were left to others, she said. The jobs of thousands of people are just mere details to her.

Roland Boyes, the Euro-MP, told the meeting that the fight was a fight that all the people must be involved in, not just left to the politicians.

The demonstration was an excellent start to the 'Save Consett' campaign. If the momentum is maintained then Thatcher has got herself another problem to worry about.

One speaker referred to a book written in the 1930s by Jarrow's MP called 'The Town that was Murdered'. He hoped no book like that would ever be written about Consett, but that one would be written called 'The Town that Fought and Won'. On Friday the first chapter was written.

By Jeff Price
(Newcastle North Labour Party)

By Roger Tovey

(Secretary, Caldicot Area Strike Committee)

By Brian Wright
(Scunthorpe ISTC)

'We'll defeat the Tory war-lords'

This article is written in the tenth week of the steel strike, something that the Tories and their 'hatchet men' on the BSC board would never have believed possible. We have stuck out the frustrations of media slanging, misguided leadership, and morale-shaking CBI reports.

This week has seen two major changes which the rank and file on the picket lines have desired since the early days of the strike. These are, a united front by all the steel unions and the positive involvement of the T&GWU.

In the Bristol area where the Caldicot area strike committee has concentrated

its efforts lately, there has been a morale-boosting change of attitude by union drivers and the threat of 'blacking' to scab drivers and their firms now has teeth. The strike is biting, albeit a long time after it started.

The infamous "Scholey Ballot" and the BSC's expensive advertising campaign in the national newspapers can be read as signs that 'Black Bob' is cornered and looking for a settlement, using all the usual dirty tricks. Cases of deceased employees receiving ballot papers are a source of great amusement on the picket lines. BSC truly believe that the age of miracles is not yet past.

Fellow trade unionists in the west country have given the Llanern pickets tremendous support both morally and materially and many friendships have been made, particularly among Labour Party members from both areas. This working-class consciousness is essential and must be spread to enable workers in all spheres of life to unite and bring about the downfall of these class war-lords masquerading as a government.

The Caldicot pickets have organised as a community involving all unions in picketing and setting up a food co-operative to assist families experiencing hardship. A

'slimline' for Caldicot is more like anorexia, with 20% unemployment the ultimate reward for increased productivity.

The message to 'Militant' is to keep up your good work, and the necessary unity will be achieved and, hopefully, the anachronistic capitalist system replaced by a genuine socialist society.

IPSWICH

We began the week with 16 pickets from Scunthorpe at Cliff Quay and West Bank docks in Ipswich, doing a token picket really. Lorries were carrying out steel coil from West Germany every day.

We asked drivers coming into the docks not to take steel, but they refused. Some are cowboys, but most were T&GWU members. The local T&G official has said he asked branches not to break the picket.

More pickets from Scun-

thorpe arrived on Wednesday 12th and we were more successful, stopping a few lorries with steel from entering the dock area. More police, most of them Specials, came to the picket line, outnumbering the pickets two to one.

They restricted the pickets, four to a lorry. When five went up to one lorry, one picket was grabbed round the waist, thrown against a fence and then taken away to be charged. I was nearly arrested myself, just for dropping a

paper.

We have been told that dockers are being paid over the rate to load steel—£8 an hour—but we don't know if this is true. The lorry drivers tell us we didn't support them in their strike, but I know a lot of steelworkers were laid off as a result of the lorry drivers' strike. As for the cowboy drivers, this strike is milk and honey for them, with extra money for crossing picket lines.

There is bitterness about this lack of co-operation, but

the feeling of our men has hardened over the ten weeks of the strike.

The lorries have got to be stopped and mass picketing is the only way to do it—we all feel the same about this. We won't go back for less than 20%.

COMPTON'S SWINDON

'THEY'RE NOT GETTING THIS FACTORY BACK'

Workers at the Comptons clothing factory in Swindon are engaged in the first industrial action in the company's 100-year history.

Initially it was a fight for more redundancy pay. Now it is an all-out struggle to save jobs.

The 250 workers, most of them women, were told in February that the factory was to close after the 90 days' statutory notice. The company couldn't afford severance pay they were told, and the redundancy rates would be kept at a minimum.

However, in an article in the 'News of The World' (9/3/80) Comptons boasted of the £2 million profit they had made in the last financial year. The women, some of whom have been in the factory over 30 years, decided they'd had enough.

"Is this all we get for our years of loyalty; for putting up with miserable wages and ancient factory conditions?"

asked one bitter worker on the picket line.

After some discussion, the workers "downed tools" on 10th March. When management threatened to call the police and withhold redundancy payments, the workers, unsure of their rights, left the factory. However an all-night picket was formed to prevent any material or finished garments being moved from the factory.

Tuesday morning saw the

Clothing workers in the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union on the March 9th demonstration

Rebecca Surinder
 (Swindon Labour Party Young Socialists)
 spoke to workers at Compton's

entire workforce outside the factory with placards (temporarily on loan from the local LPYS). At a mass meeting over half the workforce, previously not unionised, joined the union, and the indefinite 24-hour occupation began. Management were locked out of the factory, and have not been allowed back.

On Wednesday a squad of 40 flying pickets was posted at the local GPO supplies depot, where a shipment of cloth was

to be taken to the firms' Newport factory. The women, standing in pouring rain for four hours and more, turned back the Newport lorry. They were jubilant.

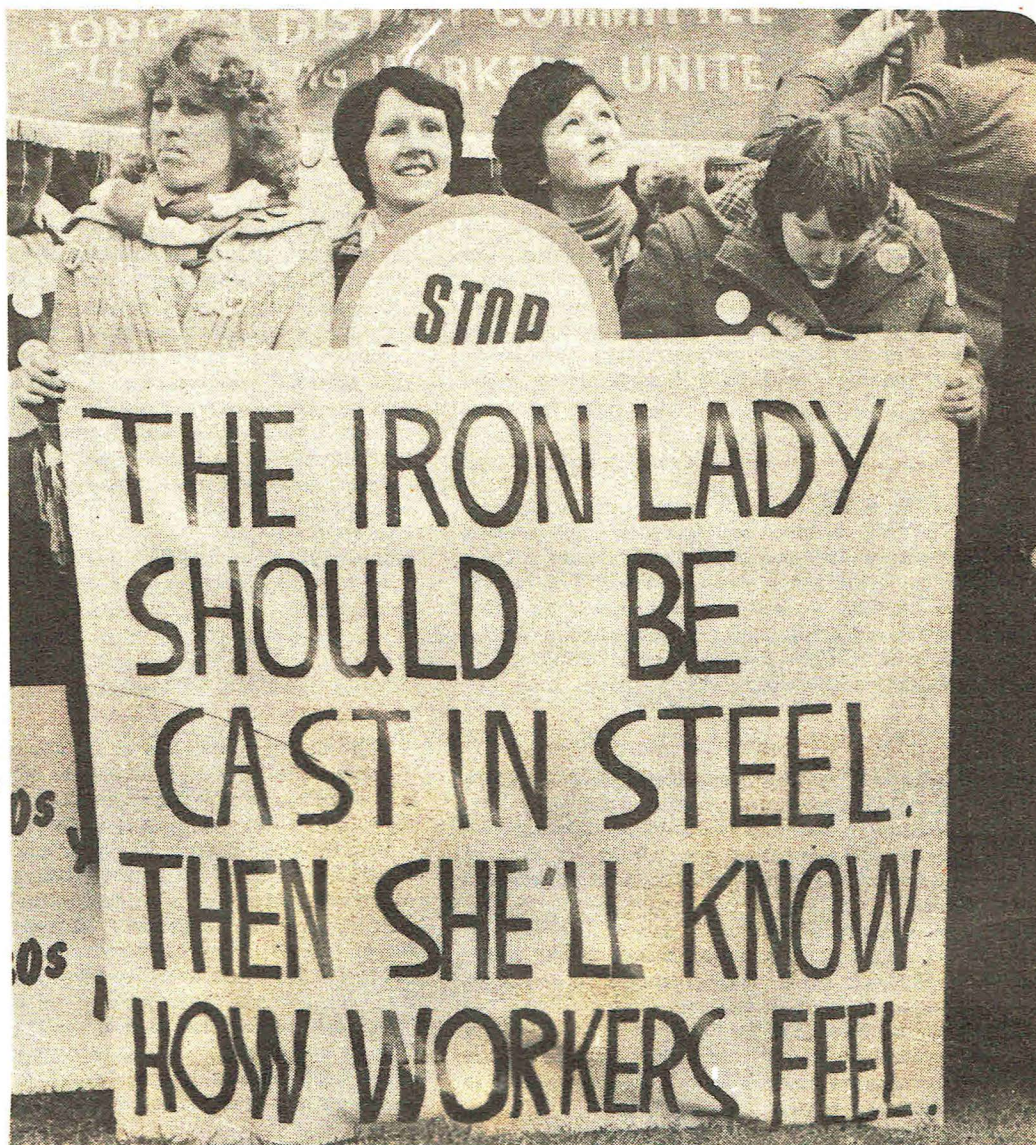
A strike committee was immediately formed. Bill Mullins (BL senior shop steward from Birmingham) and Bryan Beckingham ('Militant' supporter from Bristol) addressed a mass meeting, offering support and advice to the strike committee.

Meetings, discussions and planning continue, as the workers quickly gain experience and strength. As one member of the strike committee told me: "We're united and prepared to see this through. We're not going back to work and they're not getting this factory back until they meet our demands."

"We're fed up of being pushed around; it's just a pity we didn't do this years ago." The Swindon Labour Party

Young Socialists are closely involved with the strike, offering both moral and physical support. We urge all trade union and Labour Party branches particularly in the Derby, Gloucester, Newport, Witney and Scottish areas where the other Compton factories are situated, to send donations and letters of support to: **Comptons Strike Committee, c/o Labour Party Rooms, 5 Farnsby Street, Swindon, Wilts.**

Photo: MILITANT



ALAN SMITH

Stop this victimisation

By Ian Carrington
 (AUEW shop steward, Alan Smith Group)

After a one-day return to work, AUEW members at the Alan Smith Group, Nottingham, are out on strike again against the sacking of their convenor.

The workers on strike against victimisation of their shop stewards, reluctantly agreed to return to work on Monday 17th, on the instructions of the AUEW executive. Negotiations were to resume later in the week and management had agreed that the status quo would apply until then.

On Monday, management immediately proceeded to flout various agreements. They attempted to move convenor Roy Bennet to other work, and refused to go through the laid-down flexibility procedure, in spite of protests. The following morning they announced that the convenor was sacked. Workers immediately dow-

ned tools and came out on strike for Roy's reinstatement.

This is a blatant attack on trade unionism. The Engineering Employers' Federation, taking their cue from the dismissal of BL convenor Derek Robinson, appear to be launching an attack on shop stewards' organisation through-

out the engineering industry.

We are appealing to every AUEW member to move resolutions urgently, calling on the Executive to meet this onslaught with firm action.

Money and support are urgently needed as we go into round two of the battle. We

are determined to win this fight and defend trade union rights, but we need the whole-hearted support of the labour movement behind us.

Rush donations and messages to: **Alan Smith Strike Committee, c/o 95 Brownlow Drive, Rise Park, Nottingham**

MASSEY FERGUSON

No jobs are safe

By Jim McGinley
 (Ormskirk Labour Party)

Massey Ferguson workers, occupying their Merseyside plant in a fight for jobs, were among 50 people at a meeting called by Kirkby Labour Party Young Socialists in support of the sit-in. Dave Kirkby, from Massey's, outlined the workers'

struggle. No jobs are safe in the hands of the big multinational companies, he said. Already 15,000 have been axed at Massey's Kilmarnock plant. "Today its Knowsley—tomorrow it could be anywhere."

He welcomed a suggestion by one LPYS member that international links should be established between all workers in the combine.

Frank Yates, convenor at the Knowsley factory, said the workers' nail-marks would be left in the concrete if management attempted to drag them

off the premises. "We're prepared to face legal threats and go to jail rather than sell jobs" he declared.

After a lively discussion, £26 was collected for the occupation fund and a resolution of support was passed. Plans are being drawn up to send flying pickets to Massey Ferguson factories around the country to appeal for support.

See also report on Stone Platt occupation—page 14

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