

# Militant

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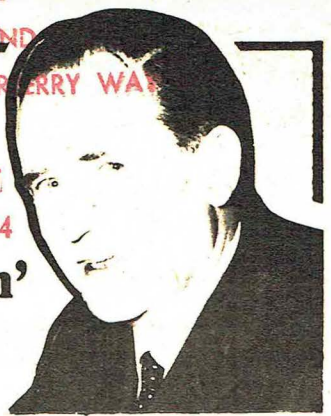
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## TORY VANDALS SLASH RAIL NETWORK

Photo: MILITANT

By Martin Elvin  
(ASLE&F)

When starving Parisians appealed to Marie Antoinette for bread, she contemptuously replied: "Give them cake!"

When the unemployed of Britain demanded work from the Tories, Mrs Thatcher contemptuously replied: "Let them move!"

But for most workers in Britain, in work or out of work, it is becoming increasingly difficult to travel.

British Rail fares went up 19% last week, an overall 40% increase in the last year. Now the rail network is threatened with massive cuts.

Norman Fowler, the Tory Transport Minister, is about to preside over the biggest cut-back in public transport since Lord Beeching axed large sections of British Rail in the 1960s.

The mounting cuts, imposed by the Tories' ruthless 'cash limits,' are accelerating with the speed of a high-speed train. Meanwhile, more and more trains are running slow because of the serious back-log of track maintenance.

### Lack of investment

Not enough has been invested in the railways over recent years to keep them in good running order, let alone modernise and improve the services. BR now claims it can't even afford its running costs, hence the cuts.

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## A MAGNIFICENT DEMONSTRATION

Editorial  
Comment

**SOCIALIST  
POLICIES  
FOR  
LABOUR**

Labour's national rally against the scandal of mass unemployment last Saturday was a magnificent demonstration of working-class anger against the Tories.

Enthusiasm and good humour prevailed amongst the tens of thousands who thronged through the streets of Liverpool in a lively and colourful procession.

But the underlying mood of anger and bitterness which has built up over eighteen months of Thatcher's vicious class politics repeatedly burst through in the slogans and comments shouted by the marchers.

Unable to ignore this great demonstration—one of the biggest ever held outside London since the war—the capitalist press

and the media deliberately publicised the completely misleading police estimate of only 55,000 marchers.

Over 150,000 was more like the real number, and there were thousands more who lined the streets and joined the shouting as the demonstration wound its way to the Pier Head.

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# AS 30's RETURN

## 'This time we're going to win'

**A Liverpool pensioner surveyed the massed ranks of the labour movement swell into the Pier Head for the rally, with tens of thousands of trade unionists and Labour Party members still filing in. A gleam shone in his eyes.**

"I've seen some big rallies in my time, even the massive unemployment ones of the 'thirties, but I've never seen anything like this. This time I think we're going to win."

It was huge. Trade unionists and Labour Party members poured into Sefton Park, the starting point of the march, in their tens of thousands. Despite the good humour, the anger and the bitterness that has built up against the Tories' attempts to turn back the clock could not be hidden.

All agreed it was about time the labour movement held a national demonstration in a working-class area. "We've spent too much time wandering about the West End of London, giving the tourists something to write home about," said one marcher.

As the massive column snaked through the modern-day slums of a run-down council estate, families stood on balconies and waved and joined in the chants of the marchers. In the windows of one tower block which dominated the area, large yellow letters proclaimed: "Join the march, Nov. 29".

In another block, tenants opened their windows, despite the bitter cold, and hung out their stereo speakers to provide music for the marchers.

But the people of Liverpool turned out, too. They either joined in the march or crowded the city centre and cheered on the marchers and applauded the demonstration.

The mood of anger at mass unemployment dominated the march. One demonstrator said it all. Dressed up as Father Christmas, his placard read: "Will

Reports by  
**Bob Wade,  
Roger Shrives  
and Jim Chrystie**

Santa Claus have a job in 1981?"

Some demonstrators couldn't believe their ears when the grating tones of Thatcher's voice came drifting over. But when they saw it was a Liverpool Labour Party member, Lesley Holt, complete with blue dress and blond wig, their anger turned to scornful laughter.

"Don't kick her [Thatcher] out tomorrow. Kick her out today!" said one unemployed, middle-aged black worker as the demo passed.

"Everybody likes this demonstration. The sooner the Labour Party comes back the better. I've been unemployed for seven months, and even before that I was only earning £50 a week, with a family of seven to support."

Artfully imitating Thatcher, Lesley wailed, "You want a shorter working week, well I've given you one. Most workers are only working two-day or one-day weeks, and two million aren't working at all! Oh, you want no loss of pay? Well, you'd better join the Young Socialists then."

At the outset of the march, demonstrators were angered at the size of the police presence around Sefton Park. Many carried "night sticks", and there was even a column of mounted police in riot gear! They must have been reading reports in the Tory press which for days had been

whining that "violence was expected" (though they conveniently forgot to mention the source of this alarmist prediction).

Yet at the end of the day, with over 150,000 people taking to the streets, there had not been one arrest! This shows the disciplined nature of the labour movement, and proves it is quite capable of its own organisation and control.

November 29th will indeed go down in history. It unmistakably demonstrated the mass opposition to this Tory government. It is a clear warning to Thatcher and Co. that the labour movement is not prepared to allow society to be dragged back to the sombre days of the nineteen-thirties.

### Great turn-out by Labour's youth

The Labour Party Young Socialists had a fine show of strength on the march. Nearly 8,000 LPYS members formed one of the liveliest contingents, even though many other YS members were marching with their trade unions or Labour Parties. Some simply couldn't find the YS contingent, such was the size of the demo!

The LPYS branches turned up by the coachload. One of the largest came from Edinburgh. Gordon McKinley from the Edinburgh LPYS explains some of the donations they received.

"We had an excellent response from trade unions to our appeal to pay for young unemployed to come today. We had £60 from the railwaymen (NUR), £50 from the Seamen, £36 from Post Office workers (UCW) and £12 from the electricians (EETPU). We even got a donation from a UCW branch in Brighton!"

This alongside £110 collected at a rally, helped the Edinburgh contingent bring two coach loads to the demo—with 48 paid-for seats taken up by unemployed



Part of the 150,000 who marched to turn Thatcher—turn her out!

youth.

The Stafford area LPYS branches had similar successes, filling a double decker and another coach. Forty came down from Newcastle, but as a YS member pointed out: "It would have been more, but unemployment has taken its toll and some people just couldn't afford the £2 subsidised cost for unemployed and students, which shows you how bad it's

J Markey of Ebbw Vale Labour Party: "There's nearly 17% unemployment in Ebbw Vale since the steelworks closed. It's creeping up to 5,000, and over 1,000 of them are youth. I was at the steelworks, but I'm not officially unemployed—I'm on invalidity benefit. There are many 'hidden unemployed' like me."

getting there. Plus we had really bad weather and some people just couldn't get through."

Besides the LPYS banners, there were many from other organisations which shows the respect and support the Young Socialists are building in the movement. The Batley Youth Movement, formed by young Asians during their recent struggle against the fascists, were there. So was a contingent from the

Derby Indian Workers Association.

The recently formed Northern Ireland Young Socialists were present, with banners from Belfast and even Ballymena, Paisley's constituency.

The size of the LPYS contingent shows the growing strength of Labour's youth. At the beginning of the year, at the Young Socialists' national demonstration in February, the YS got 5,000 young workers onto the streets. On the 29th, the YS increased its own contingent by well over a half.

In this light, it is crucial that the National Executive of the Labour Party does not back-peddle on its decision to increase funds and resources for the party's youth section.

The LPYS has proved it has the energy and ability to recruit working class youth into the party in droves—the Labour Party must back this action by giving the Young Socialists the resources it vitally needs to ensure the development of Labour's mass youth section.

Among local delegations were workers from Lucas Girling, Bromborough, Wirral, who face 900 redundancies. Most of the firm's 42 apprentices were there. "This demonstration is good. It's about time something was done."

### Editorial

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PAGE ONE

Far better than a demo through the smart shopping streets and luxury club-land of London's West End, this demonstration carried the enthusiasm and determination of Labour's ranks to legions of Merseyside workers, themselves hit by Tory cuts and devastating unemployment.

At the Pier Head rally, the loudest applause was unmistakably for the speakers who made the boldest call for action to bring down the Tories, and especially for those who called for the implementation of radical socialist policies.

Some of the speakers were themselves obviously lifted by the militant mood. Carefully prepared press statements, quoted in the early editions of the evening papers, were in some cases jettisoned in favour of more forceful calls to action.

Let no one say that the workers in Britain are not prepared to mobilise and fight. The scepticism of Labour's right-wingers, who predicted a "flop" or "perhaps" 30,000 was completely confounded.

### Socialist policies needed

There was a magnificent turn-out from all areas of the country. But, of course, from the areas where there had been active preparations and organisation, there were significant contingents of shop stewards and trade unionists, many being drawn into political activity for the first time.

The Labour Party Young Socialists, as our reports show, played an active role in the preparations for the rally. The LPYS's own contingent was over 8,000 strong, and many more Young Socialists were scattered throughout the march.

But the lessons of the rally, clear from the marchers' determined and militant mood, is unmistakable:

★ The ranks of the Labour Party and the trade unions, including fresh layers of workers being drawn into activity, want no return to the disastrous right-wing policies of the last Labour government.

★ There can be no solution within the rotten framework of a capitalist system in an advanced state of decay. A determination to end the nightmare of suffering created by mass unemployment and slashed living standards was clearly there behind the urgent demands for action. It is not just the Tories who must be fought, but the bosses' system which they uphold.

★ The mighty forces of the labour movement must be mobilised on bold socialist policies—to put into effect Clause IV, part 4 of the Labour Party's constitution, which pledges Labour to the socialist nationalisation and democratic planning of the "commanding heights" of the economy.

**"This demonstration must be the first shot across the bows of this government. The movement must use its industrial strength to force the Tories out."**

The rally took place at the Pier Head, dominated by a large electronic scoreboard which displayed the very latest unemployment figures. Every thirty seconds on average another worker is made redundant, so twice a minute one more was added to the number on the scoreboard.

Eric Heffer summed up the mood of the marchers as the first contingents arrived at the Pier Head: "This has been the greatest demonstration in the history of the area, the greatest for years. It has become a people's demonstration."

"We have known unemployment for years, but this is the worst since the 1930s. The jobless here are a sad example of Thatcher's havoc. Public expenditure has gone up because the dole queues have swollen. But Joseph and Co. still want to cut public spending, so their next attack will probably be on benefits."

"We must get the Tories out as soon as possible with a campaign inside and outside parliament. The next Labour government, though, must stick to socialist principles, not muck about trying to run capitalism better than the capitalists."

"Unemployment is not just the responsibility of the Tories. As long as capitalism exists, we shall have unemployment."

Michael Foot said: "This demonstration will become one of the most famous days in our history. In the '30s there was something like despair in Liverpool."

"There was no despair in today's demonstration, but

determination to bring about the end of this Tory government. We must prepare for battle towards the ballot box, the only way to bring down the government."

"We need both first aid measures against unemployment and a long-term plan by Labour to rebuild the nation's industrial base with real socialist policies."

The Labour Party's general secretary, Ron Hayward, said: "This is a disastrous government for

Steve Wilkinson, vice-chairman of Shipley Labour Party, and Tony Miller, Assistant convenor, International Harvesters, both came with three coach-loads from Shipley, where there is strong support for 'Militant' [the three neighbouring Bradford Labour Parties, dominated by right-wing "moderates", couldn't manage to organise any coaches]. They have a meeting to follow up next Friday with Ron Brown, MP for Leith, speaking.

prices, cuts and above all jobs. The Tories blamed the unions for destroying Britain, but it was the Tories bringing us to our knees. We have to support the trade unions, who can force the Tories to resign and get real socialist government carrying out TUC and Labour Party policies. Labour must not just be 'pink Tories'."

"This great demo," proclaimed Tony Saunois, Young Socialists' representative on Labour's National Executive, "must be the first shot across the bows of the government; the first step in an all-out struggle against mass unemployment. The youth in particular will not stand for the unemployment levels of the

'20s and '30s.

"This Tory government acts for the rich. The 12-million strong trade union movement must use its industrial strength to force a general election. The next Labour government must act for our class, as Thatcher acts for hers. Unemployment is a product of the capitalist system—it is capitalism which must be abolished."

"Labour is the party of the trade unions. We must reclaim our party for the working class. Join the Labour Party and LPYS."

Whereas Denis Healey was greeted by boos, there was tumultuous applause when Tony Benn was announced as the next speaker.

"Tell the truth!" Benn challenged the media. "Tell them that 150,000 all supported the firemen. Tell them about the victory at Gardner's—and about Ransome Hoffman and Pollard in Consett."

"Thatcher's policies are designed to break the spirit of the working class. We won't accept it. They are trying to divert attention through a bogus Russian threat, but we won't be fooled."

Thatcher's home town of Grantham, Lincolnshire, sent a contingent of 30-35. LPYS members told 'Militant': "We've just seen 270 redundancies in this town. Unemployment is beginning to hit us and we're beginning to see opinions changing. They want the Tories out."

"We must rebuild the labour movement. It's not just a fight against the Green Goddess Thatcher, but against the system that worships profit before jobs and peace. We need a



Only months after Bowaters, another large firm in the Wirral area, Lucas Girling threatens 900 redundancies

campaign for a socialist Labour government."

Public sector workers' leader, Alan Fisher (NUPE) said: "The real unemployment figures are over 3 million. We need demonstrations like this all over the country, in areas like Glasgow, Newcastle. The next Labour government must not spend money on artificial jobs, but spend on housing, schools, hospitals and roads."

Drawing the rally to a close, Alex Kitson, this year's LP chairman, said, "It has been a peaceful demonstration, and we want demonstrations to carry on peacefully. But if the Tories carry on in power with these policies, they will have to take the consequence from the class which produces the wealth of society."

Five old women, blue with cold, stayed for three hours to clap all the marchers as they left the park. When the firemen went past, they shouted, "Stick up for your rights!" They told 'Militant':

"We saw all this years ago. It's about time the Labour Party did this. They should have done it before now, but it's really great. We were persecuted in the '30s, now we're going back to that."

"In the '30s we didn't have a holiday, you were lucky if you went to New Brighton. In the 1950s and '60s we went on foreign holidays but now they're trying to put the working class back in the old position."

"In some ways, it's worse than the '30s. Prices weren't going up fast then. It's a deliberate policy to attack workers. It's a hell of a mess. To think we fought two world wars for this."

"My sister's husband was

a skilled tool-fitter for Dunlop's. He worked hard but now he's lost his job. Where's he to find another, he's in his 'fifties?"

"It's a waste of time, it won't change a thing. The government is doing absolutely the right thing."

That was what Tory councillor Hobday thought of the march. When 'Militant' asked him what the unemployed should do, he replied: "They should vote Tory and support the government."

But perhaps they did last time. What should a fifty-year-old toolfitter made redundant at Dunlop's do? His only reply to that was, "I don't know what he should do."

The reply was the same for youth. "The government's measures are harsh, but inevitable because of past follies. We must wait for the world economic climate to change."

**The Labour Party Young Socialists formed one of the liveliest and best-received contingents on the march**



Over 600 firemen participated in the demo, with contingents from Merseyside, Cheshire, Manchester, Bedford, London, Hereford, Derbyshire, Avon, W Midlands, Leicestershire, Strathclyde, Dunfermline, Hampshire and Bucks. A big cheer went up as they left the park. Earlier a T&GWU section had given way to allow them to go up in front.

From West Wales, there had come a number of coaches. The train had been cancelled because of poor organisation by the Labour Party and trade union officials. The Steel Union (ISTC) had not notified its branches until last Wednesday. Coaches had to be arranged at the last minute. The LPYS coach had

support from the Trades Council, two £10 donations from ISTC branches, £10 from an NUR branch, £20 from the Labour Party and Trades Council, £10 from the Women's Council and promises of support from NALGO.

One ISTC branch secretary came on the LPYS coach, because the LPYS seemed to have the right way to go about organising.

Members of the Indian Workers Association told 'Militant': "There's a coachful from Leicestershire and a train from Coventry with IWA members on it. Unemployment affects all workers, but immigrant workers more than most, for example in the hosiery industry. We need to start something to get rid of Thatcher."

# H-BLOCKS

## United class action vital

**Some of the seven hunger strikers in the H-Blocks in Northern Ireland could die any time after the first week of December, according to the government's own estimates.**

This, with the decision of three women prisoners in Armagh gaol to join the hunger strike, has heightened sectarian tensions in Northern Ireland.

**By a member of the Northern Ireland Labour and Trade Union Group**

Sympathy for the hunger strikers has given rise to huge demonstrations, with two marches of almost 20,000 in Belfast. In Derry, a strike call closed some factories and led to a rally of about 10,000.

Marches of this size have not been seen in Northern Ireland for years. They indicate genuine sympathy for the hunger strikers and anger at the Tory government's stubborn attitude.

It is not because the marchers wish to express solidarity with the Provos that

these marches have been supported. The reverse is true—it is despite their sectarian nature that thousands of people are prepared to turn out.

From the platform at these rallies, members of the National Smash H-Block Committees have appealed to the "unity" of the nationalist population. Even ex-socialist, Bernadette McAliskey (formerly Devlin) has called on people to say their rosary every day with the prisoners. Speeches like this could not

be better designed to provoke sectarianism.

From the loyalist sectarian organisations there has been worse. The Ulster Defence Association has declared that the hunger strike has created a 'war situation'. A UDA commander warned that it might become necessary for the UDA to go out into the Catholic areas to get the H-Block leaders and "eliminate them".

Because of the way this issue has so far been presented, it has been difficult to raise within the NI labour movement. Workers fear that taking a position on H-Block may result in the dividing of unions along sectarian lines.

If the issue were to be raised in the manner of the National H-Block Committees, it is true, the unions would be divided. In Derry, the call for a stoppage was made over the heads of the trade unions, without discussion in any branches or on the shop floor. Where there were walk-outs, it was along sectarian lines.

This, however, makes it all the more essential that the labour organisations act on this issue. Silence is the worst position of all—and would leave the field clear for bigots from both sides.



**National H-Block campaign march, 27 October: many sympathise with hunger strikers while rejecting Provos' methods**

Photo: Eamon O'Dwyer (IFL)

But in taking up the issue, the labour movement in Britain and in both North and South of Ireland must do so in its own class terms. No support should be given to the sectarian "National Smash H-Block Committees," seen by workers as the Provisionals' front.

The labour movement must oppose torture and repression. Condemnation of the inhuman conditions inflicted on the prisoners in H-Block and Armagh does not involve support to groups, like the Provisionals, who have adopted the tactics of individual terrorism.

These prisoners have a right to decent conditions, as do all prisoners.

The labour movement must oppose punitive and degrading measures, like the 24-hour lock up, strip searches,

the probing of the anus, the denial of reading and writing materials, the denial of medical treatment, and the removal of clothing.

If the basic demands of the resolution recently passed by the British Labour Party's National Executive were now implemented, the issue central to this hunger could be resolved. It called for:—

- ★ The right for prisoners to wear their own clothes;
  - ★ Two visits and two food parcels a week;
  - ★ Access to newspapers, TV and to an unrestricted number of letters;
  - ★ The right to trade union membership and rates of pay, and the right to elect representatives to negotiate with the prison authorities.
- These demands, as opposed to the Provo's call for "political status" for all

republican prisoners, should now be taken up by the unions and Labour Parties in Britain and throughout Ireland.

Unity of the workers' organisations in Northern Ireland is the key. Fifteen per cent are unemployed. It is essential that the unions are united as never before against Tory policies.

This is not merely a question of unity on economic issues. One of the H-Block hunger strikers, at the beginning of the strike, appealed to the trade unions as the only organisations capable of defending the prisoners' interests.

Experience has proved that only the labour movement has the power to oppose repression, including the repression of prisoners.

## Another stab in the back

**The day before Labour's national rally against unemployment, Shirley Williams gave the Labour Party another well-publicised stab in the back.**

**By Steve Glennon**  
(Stevenage Labour Party)

By announcing to the constituency management committee that "I cannot put myself forward as a prospective candidate," she all but announced a split from the party—which is certainly what most people took it to mean.

The television cameras and newspaper reporters waiting outside the meeting were obviously expecting her statement, and it was deliberately blown up in the Tory media over the weekend in an effort to divert attention away from the magnificent march in Liverpool.

Shirley Williams may still enjoy a majority on Stevenage GMC—though this is mainly based on the older members—but she herself says that she cannot stand again because of the policies adopted by the Party's last annual conference.

But the socialist policies adopted in Blackpool, and especially the democratic re-

forms in the Party structure, undoubtedly have the overwhelming support of Labour Party members. Her threats to leave the Party are a clear admission that she, the 'gang of three', and the rest of the right wing in the parliamentary party have lost the argument on policy within the Party.

Shirley Williams told the meeting that there was not another party at the moment she would join. When she was asked would she join a new party, no answer was forthcoming.

She was also asked what her policies were for the ending of unemployment and other problems. Instead of answering these points, she launched into a venomous attack on the left of the party, starting with the National Executive and then turning to the LPYS.

Youth, she claimed, were right wing and if they joined the LPYS they were "hounded-out"—using the example of that haven of working class youth, i.e. Cambridge University, where Mrs Williams said, the Fabian Society have four times the membership for the Labour Club.

Then on the left-wing constituencies: in Glasgow, she claimed, people were "scared to attend meetings". One woman had written to her, she said, but declined to name the constituency.

Mrs Williams then moved on to Brighton, claiming that the meetings of the General Management Committee went on to 1 o'clock in the morning so that people could not attend and the left wing could push their resolutions through.

In her summing up, Shirley Williams launched into a new attack on the 'Militant', in particular, using once again the bogey of the paper's funds. This way she avoided the critical questions put to her, although she did have to admit that Stevenage constituency was not like the others she had criticised.

This admission may seem surprising, as we have two LPYS branches in the constituency and many 'Militant' supporters hold important positions in the Party.

Shirley Williams was also asked whether she would be on the demonstration in Liverpool. Unfortunately, she said, she had to attend a Fabian meeting in London.

The Party had agreed to organise a coach to Liverpool, but this had been cancelled by the agent, who considered that it would not be filled. The Young Socialists then organised their own coach and successfully took a coachload of supporters to the rally.

## 'NO WITCH HUNT OF MILITANT' Says NEC Sub-Committee

Action to expel members of the 'Social Democratic Alliance' has been proposed to Labour's National Executive by the NEC's organisational sub-committee. However, a resolution moved by the right at last Tuesday's meeting, aimed at initiating an official witch-hunt against the 'Militant', was rejected by the committee.

The move against the SDA has come because of its declared policy of standing its own candidates against left-wing members of the NEC in the next general election. Not only this, but the SDA has fielded candidates against Labour candidates in Humberside local elections, and in the European election publicly called on Labour supporters to vote against Labour's Merseyside candidate, Terry Harrison.

The SDA is a tiny clique, but clearly has an organisation and considerable funds—although it has refused to give any account of these to the NEC.

Repeatedly cooking up absurd 'McCarthyite' allegations that the NEC is dominated by 'crypto-Communists' directed from the Kremlin, the SDA is much publicised by the capitalist press. Its vicious attacks and smears are often quoted in right-wing



**Shirley Williams failed to turn up to NEC organisational sub-committee**

Photo: MILITANT

Tory papers like the 'Telegraph' and 'Daily Express.'

The tactic of right-wingers on the NEC, however, was to equate the SDA with the 'Militant'. Countering the sub-committee's proposals to expel the SDA, the right put down a resolution calling for the expulsion of both the SDA and the 'Militant'.

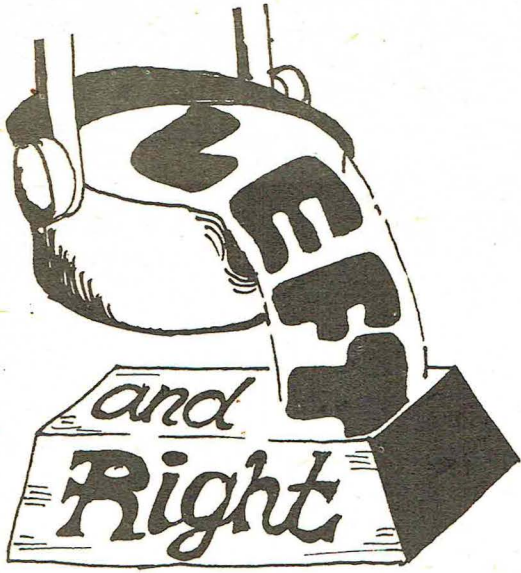
However, Mrs Shirley Williams—the great 'scourge of the left,' much beloved of the capitalist press—failed to turn up to the meeting. At the committee, John Golding failed to get a seconder for his proposal.

The sub-committee rightly rejected the attempt to draw a parallel between the SDA and the 'Militant'. Eric Heffer MP said afterwards that the committee was "perfectly sat-

isfied," on the basis of 'Militant's' replies to the NEC's questionnaire to groups within the party, that 'Militant' worked within the rules of the Labour Party.

Despite 'Militant's' full statement about its finances submitted to the NEC (details of which have been published in the paper), Shirley Williams has continued to imply that there is some kind of 'sinister source' for our finances.

As our reply makes perfectly clear, however, the finances of the 'Militant' come entirely from our many supporters throughout the labour movement—which is why 'Militant' has achieved the success it has over recent years.



Every cloud has a silver lining—at least for those in the right business. Despite generally waning economic fortunes, and in marked contrast to the decline in most of the printing industry, the security printing of bank notes is booming in Britain. The two big companies who dominate this market, De La Rue and Bradbury Wilkinson, have enormously increased their turnover and profits in recent years. They could hardly lose. Inflation, while hitting other people, obviously increases the demand for bank notes. Tight monetary policies tend to increase the speed of circulation—and notes wear out quicker. Even political instability in African and Middle Eastern countries, where these firms do much of their business, can be to their advantage—political changes mean new portraits on the notes.

One of Britain's difficulties, pontificated Prince Charles on his thirty-second birthday the other day, was its inability to change from the outlook of an Empire to one of "a really rather minor state in the 1980s." We have not adapted to new change quickly enough, he said. But one would have thought, wouldn't one, that an obvious way of adapting to the loss of the Empire would be to dump the most obvious symbol of the Empire—the monarchy. Ugly economics, said the Prince, are here to stay. But in his hard-hitting appraisal of our economic problems, the Prince omitted to mention the £16 million a year the monarchy costs the taxpayer, or his own net private income of over £250,000 a year. But in case you think that the Prince is not earning his bread, "I can tell you that writing speeches is a major sweat, and actually sitting down and thinking is a sweat, and worrying whether you are going to say the right thing is another problem..." Quite!

After the October revolution in 1917, Lenin laid down certain safeguards against bureaucracy. Officials should be elected and subject to recall, and subject to a strict limitation on their incomes. How far the Soviet Union has moved away from this under its present bureaucratic rulers is shown by the recent case of Vyacheslav Voronkov, the young mayor of the Black Sea town of Sochi. Always very busy, the mayor spent most of his time entertaining important officials in a luxurious sauna, wining and dining them and trying to persuade them to appoint one or other of his cronies as the director of this or that important factory. In a few years he acquired an immense hoard of gold, jewellery, and thousands of rubles illegally acquired from bribes—in return for providing his "clients" with cushy jobs, good flats, motor cars, theatre tickets, and other luxuries. This scandal did not originate in the capitalist press, but was recently reported in the official Soviet journal, 'Literaturnaya Gazeta', when Voronkov was tried and sentenced to 13 years' gaol. The Gazeta admits, moreover, that the mayor was corrupted from the very beginning—because bribery is regarded as "normal practice" by many of the officials and managers. But the surprising official publication of this story indicates the bureaucracy's alarm at the events in Poland. Clearly, they are attempting to curb the bureaucrats' excessive privileges and corruption to placate the enormous anger of Soviet workers. What they do not explain, however, is how such corruption could arise in a country which claims to have reached an advanced stage of socialism. The leaders can rail against bureaucratic "excesses", but they can never admit the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy as such.



## SATURN'S SECRETS REVEALED

By Lynn Walsh

Voyager I's brilliant close-up photographs of Saturn and its magnificent rings created excitement when they appeared on television in mid-November, and even scientists were astounded at what they revealed.

Not since Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon over ten years ago has such attention been focused on the positive achievements of science.

Voyager I was launched on 5 September 1977, paradoxically two weeks after Voyager II, which will pass near Saturn next August. On its way Voyager I ingeniously utilised the gravitation pull of the inner planets to achieve a "sling-shot" trajectory into the outer solar system.

This mission is undoubtedly a dramatic advance in the space exploration programme of America's National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA).

Earth-based radio astronomy—the analysis of radio waves emitted from galaxies millions of light years away—has opened up vast tracts of the universe to human observation. Such exploration provides vital information about the nature of the physical world and the structure of the universe.

But it will never have the dramatic impact of close visual observation of the

planets within our own solar system. This is especially true of Saturn, one of the system's spectacular giants.

The sixth planet out, Saturn is 9½ times further away from the sun than the earth. It has 95 times the mass of the earth, but it is only an eighth of the earth's density. It is rather like a tank of frozen water orbiting the sun.

Saturn's outstanding feature is clearly its rings. They were first seen by Galileo, but (because their appearance from earth changes considerably with the two planets' orbits) were only identified as rings by Huygens later in the 17th century. They have fascinated astronomers ever since.

The outer ring has a radius of more than three times that of the planet itself. Forming very thin bands, the rings are assumed to be made up of small, ice-covered particles of some kind.

It was the new and surprising details of the rings which have generated much of the excitement among scientists as Voyager I approached.

There were originally considered to be six rings

designated by letters A-F) but there now seem to be hundreds, with many rings within rings. This much was seen from NASA's less sophisticated Pioneer II which approached Saturn last year. But Voyager I has sent back much more information.

Even the "gaps" between the rings are now seen to be rings made up of a different type of particles. Some of the rings have now been revealed as highly eccentric, with a wierd "braiding" (with the appearance of a twisted rope) in the so-called F-ring. Within the B-ring, there are now seen to be "spoke-like" structures.

The character of the rings, and the reason for their strange configurations, will certainly become much clearer as all the data from Voyager I are analysed.

The rings, while providing great fascination, have for long obscured the planet itself. Saturn, moreover, reflects much less light than Jupiter, which it has always been assumed to resemble.

Voyager I's observations of Saturn's seething atmosphere and the obscure planetary mass below will therefore provide a wealth of new information about the planet.

The other great surprise produced by Voyager I was the discovery of new moons. There were always assumed to

be ten Saturnian moons, but there are now clearly 15—three revealed by Voyager in the last few weeks alone.

These new moons, previously obscured within the rings, may well explain the wierd trajectory of F-ring, for instance. On 12 November, Voyager I passed very close to Titan, Saturn's largest moon and the only moon in the solar system with an atmosphere.

Previously, it had been thought that the atmosphere was predominantly methane, which gave rise to speculation about some kind of life on Titan. But Voyager has shown that methane is only a very small part of the atmosphere: it is predominantly composed of nitrogen in its various forms (molecular, atomic and ionised).

Months and even years will be needed to analyse fully the mass of detailed information collected by Voyager I.

Voyager I will now be heading out into space, while Voyager II, after passing Saturn, will approach Uranus in 1986.

The Voyager mission undoubtedly represents one of the highest achievements of science in present society. But—incredibly, in view of technological potentialities displayed by Voyager—this may be capitalism's last major journey into space.

More next week.

## Promoting an epidemic

There is a certain toxic substance, the use of which (according to the Royal College of Physicians) "is now as important a cause of death as were the great epidemic diseases, such as typhoid, cholera and TB that affected previous generations in this country."

Use of this toxic substance (according to the government's chief medical officer) is responsible for at least 100,000 people dying prematurely in Britain every year (more than all the civilian casualties in Britain during the second world war).

There is no doubt that consumption of this substance is a prime cause of cancer, heart diseases, bronchitis, and for greatly increased levels of illness generally.

Not only is this noxious substance freely available, but a handful of big firms spend (according to the most

By Tim Moodie

recently available figures) over £1 million a week persuading people that they should use it.

The government and a number of other organisations spend about a fiftieth of this amount warning people of the consequences of its use.

The substance, of course, is tobacco—and we have to report that Britain's big tobacco firms have just heaved a great sigh of relief.

After threatening a complete ban of cigarette advertising earlier this year, the Tory government has now accepted a new voluntary agreement with the tobacco firms which completely lets them off the hook.

The agreement (announced on 21 November) will have little effect. Health warnings will be displayed slightly more

prominently on cigarette packets and in adverts, and will be put in slightly stronger language.

Cigarette advertising on racing cars will be stopped, and cinema adverts will be X-rated.

The main effect will be on poster advertising, but this will be cut by only about £6 million out of £20 million spent on posters, which is not the main form of cigarette advertising anyway.

Publicity about the serious effects of smoking can undoubtedly have an effect. There was a sharp fall when the Royal College of Physicians' "Smoking and Health Now" was publicised in 1971. But the effect soon wore off.

High-pressure advertising certainly sells cigarettes. Although there has been a slight decline in smoking, smoking is rising in certain of the younger age groups, particularly among women.

The big companies are predictably highly secretive about their advertising expenditure. The £1 million a week estimate is from 1976. The figure is certainly much higher now.

With the growing awareness of the ill effects of smoking, not only on smokers but on people around them, both the TUC and the Labour Party conference have rightly banned smoking.

But while demanding alternative employment for Britain's 36,000 tobacco workers, the labour movement must take up the opposition to the tobacco giants' high-pressure advertising of their lethal product.

A quick glance at health statistics shows that it is workers, particularly manual workers, already suffering from the worst health conditions, who suffer most from the effects of cigarette smoking.

# NUS Conference THE REAL PRIORITY

The Tory government has been a catastrophe for education and for students' living standards. The urgent task of this NUS Conference is to add our weight to the mighty power of the trade union movement, in a concerted campaign against the Tories.

The 14% increase in grants earlier this year meant a real fall in living standards yet again. The number of students starting higher education courses has fallen every year for the past five years. The percentage of students applying to university whose parents are unskilled workers has fallen from 1.4% in 1977 to 1.2% in 1979.

Further education students are bearing the brunt of the cuts. In Kirklees, for example, all discretionary grants have been cut by 20%. At least 18 other education authorities are taking similar action.

Courses are going as well: in Sefton, all courses "that do not make a direct contribution to the economy of the nation" are being cut.

Employment prospects for students have never been worse. Last summer there were 9% more graduates looking for jobs, but only 4% more jobs! In computer manufacturing, for example, graduate jobs were cut by 15%. In mechanical engineering, some firms have abandoned graduate recruitment altogether.

In a time of economic crisis, no student is assured of a future. NUS must adopt fighting socialist policies, linking up with the organised labour movement, to combat unemployment.

The Tory attacks on student union financing must be vigorously opposed. A concerted campaign must be organised, seeking the support of the trade unions, whose right to organise is also under attack. NUS must appeal for their support, as in the early 1970s, when the trade unions supported NUS in fighting the Tory attacks on student unions.

One demonstration, and then appealing to the government to think again is not enough! We must force the Tories to abandon these proposals!

The right wing majority of the Federation of Conservative Students have come out in favour of a 'loans' system to replace the present grants. Education Minister Rhodes Boyson also favours this. Such proposals would be another blow to working class education, restricting full time higher education to the rich and privileged.

If higher education is to be

By Alan  
Watson

(National Committee,  
National Organisation  
of Labour Students)

a right for all, NUS must fight for a living grant, of £2,400 a year, for all students. But students have no economic power—to win better conditions we must seek the backing of the organised working class.

In isolation, will our fight succeed whilst thousands of workers exist on starvation wages? The campaign for a living grant must be linked to the fight for a national minimum wage of £80 a week.

NUS must turn towards the 13 million-strong trade union movement—our natural allies against the Tories. Full support must be given to workers involved in action against the government or fighting for better wages and conditions.

Student union facilities should be made available to workers involved in strikes or factory occupations. Every student union should be represented on the local trades council. Liaison should be built up with the campus trade unions, through the organisation of joint union committees, which already operate in many colleges such as North East London Poly, where a joint union campaign against the cuts has been organised.



Student unions must more than ever fight alongside workers in the unions, and the Labour Party

Trade union support can be vital. In 1977, at Bristol University, 28 students were threatened with expulsion because of their involvement in an occupation as part of the overseas students fees campaign. Leading local trade unionists, Labour MPs and councillors gave their support to the successful campaign to win their reinstatement.

NUS should campaign for affiliation to the TUC and the Labour Party, setting up a

political fund. In this way, both locally and nationally, the student movement could be fully involved in the labour movement.

The overwhelming majority of students are opposed to the Tories. But we must earn the right to affiliate, and show we are a serious force in the struggle to change society.

The working class movement has always fought for an education system open to all. Many gains won in the past, such as school meals, are now

under attack. NUS must organise to defend its members living standards, but also in the wider fight to defend education and working class living standards.

There has been much debate within NUS on what "priorities" the Union should have for its campaign. In the present situation, there can only be one priority: the defeat of this Tory government!

## NEW STANDARDS FOR JOURNALISM

One evening, Mr Harry Slater found himself pilloried in banner headlines on the front page of London's 'New Standard' [18 November].

What was his 'crime'? What had he done to deserve this 'Shock, Horror, Probe' story?

His 'offence' was that he "gets more than £14,000 a year." At least, that's what the Tories on Haringey council, which employs Harry Slater as a school caretaker in Tottenham, allege.

What a scandal! A school caretaker getting £14,000!

Readers who recovered from their front-page shock and got to page 6 of that same paper would have found another shocking story. This one was printed in sober, matter-of-fact terms.

Any newspaper really concerned about excessive earnings, or to be more exact, grotesque money-making by Board-room tycoons, would have put this story on its front page.

"James Mitchell", they reported, "will go to bed tonight nearly £1 million richer."

Oozing with admiration for this great business-world hero, the paper's hack

By Bill  
Doggett

'diarist' went on to explain that Mitchell had just sold his share of the publishing company Mitchell Beazley to the US credit-card firm American Express.

It also revealed that this hero has recently made 50 of his 250 staff at the Shaftesbury Avenue office of MB redundant. James, however, coyly declined to discuss the financial details: "This is a private company and we are keeping that side confidential."

Caretaker Harry Slater was not allowed such modesty. Details of his alleged earnings, apparently obtained from council records, were plastered all over the front page.

Harry's comment on his alleged £14,000 earnings was: "I wish I was...I don't earn that amount of money."

Later in the article, it indicates the figures include "overtime and perks." Right at the end of the article (where it continues over on page 2) readers could glean Harry Slater's side of the story.

"I get up at 5 in the morning to open the school," he said. "Sometimes when there are lettings I

don't finish until after 11 pm. There are regular lettings at this school (also used as a community centre) for four nights a week from Monday to Thursday."

"I don't want to tell you how much I'm earning and I don't see why I should."

Now Haringey council officials are expressing "concern" about the "excessive" overtime worked by school caretakers. It would be interesting to know when Haringey Tories ever proposed taking on extra caretakers to cover lettings and extra work.

### Boardroom whizz-kids

The hypocrisy of the Tory press in trying to pillory a council worker is clear from just one edition of the 'New Standard', owned incidentally, by the multi-million Trafalgar House Group of Thatcher-fan Victor Matthews.

No doubt this is part of a smear campaign to soften up readers in case the public-sector workers move into action against the Tories' 6% pay limit.

What Mr Slater is paid, even if this sensationalised story were completely correct, is chicken-feed compared to the salaries and

perks collected by City financiers and Board-room whizz-kids.

The day before this tory appeared in the 'New Standard,' for instance, there was a small item in 'The Times' about a certain Professor Roland Smith who is a professor of marketing at Manchester University's business school.

But he is an academic who believes in getting involved in industry.

As deputy non-executive chairman of Harrods Stores he is paid £50,000 a year. This is for "two days' work a week." At Kitchen Queen, for similar "work", he gets £5,000 a year. This entails one board meeting a month.

"Even if the remainder of his commitments failed to yield as much, a conservative estimate puts his combined salaries at about £150,000, without the profits of his own private company," comments 'The Times.'

"Don't forget," Professor Smith moans, "the Inland Revenue takes quite a bit. Anyway, I don't think money is that important."

"I don't know how much I earn. It would be easier for the Inland Revenue to make me a pocket-money allowance."

No doubt, the 'business pages of 'The Times' were wet with tears that day.

## Join the Labour Club! Join the LPYS!

"An absolutely tremendous meeting." That's how Tony Benn described a rally against unemployment organised by Nottingham University Labour Club.

Eight hundred people, a bigger attendance than at union general meetings, crammed into the ballroom at Nottingham University to hear Tony Benn MP and Tony Cross, Youth Officer of Nottingham East Labour Party, speaking on the socialist solution to unemployment.

There was an electric atmosphere, with enthusiastic applause for Tony Cross, who accused the Tories of shedding crocodile tears over the unemployment figures, pointing to their callous attitude to the unemployed.

Students should join the Labour Club and the Labour Party Young Socialists, he said, and join our fight for socialist policies to end unemployment: a 35-hour week and a guaranteed job or training for all school and college leavers. He went on to spell out that unemployment was a symptom of the capitalist system itself and only by taking over the commanding heights of the economy and introducing a socialist plan of production would an end to unemployment be guaranteed.

Tony Benn called for a greater commitment to Clause IV, the socialist element of the Labour Party constitution, as the only guarantee of jobs and peace.

He predicted that unemployment would reach 3 million by next year; but even this was not a true picture, as many do not register as unemployed. Unemployment was being used as a deliberate policy instrument by the Tories.

More and more people are thinking about and discussing politics and turning towards a socialist alternative, he said, which was why meetings such as this attracted a large turn-out.

The collection raised £140 to send unemployed youth to the Labour Party demonstration against unemployment in Liverpool on 29 November. Many copies of 'Militant' were sold and people signed up to go to the demonstration.

By Rob Hughes  
and Alan Stripp  
(Nottingham University  
Labour Club)

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# A battle is lost but -



## Baico, Hendon

The dispute at Baico's engineering, Hendon, is over. The workforce took a decision on Friday 24 October to wind up the dispute even though it meant accepting that they would find other jobs.

The dispute began when management tried to sack workers at Baico, the only unionised company in the Ryland group, for organising stoppages for wage increases and parity.

"We decided we could no longer carry on fighting," Alf Wheelan [Shop Steward] told Ed Bober, "given the slack attitude of the union district leadership towards the dispute."

After the 20 weeks lock-out a tribunal was held on 23rd October, but it took just ten minutes to decide that, under a technicality, there was "no case to be heard." What a blatant example of the built in bias of ACAS and the industrial laws! If there was really no case, why had there been an industrial dispute for 20 weeks?

Alf and the other members of the strike committee are extremely grateful for the support they got from those sections of the movement whose ranks contributed regular financial and moral support.

But they are rightly bitter about the role played by the AUEW's official leadership.

At an early stage in the dispute, the union promised to send an official to advise them about how to receive social security, no official ever came.

"It took the union executive eleven weeks to make the dispute official, and this was only a result of us putting pressure on them by picketing the union HQ."

They are critical of the district officials. "There seemed to be very little communication between the officers in the district; none of them seemed to know what was going on, despite repeated messages and phone calls from us asking for help."

"The two main points in the shops stewards manual about the role of a shop steward are to get the best wages and to get the best working conditions as possible. These were the two things we were fighting for and we were let down."

There is general agreement among the strike committee that the AUEW badly needs a more fighting leadership, a leadership prepared to match up and support the fighting capacity of the membership but "the majority of us" on the dispute never got any ballot papers for the AUEW elections. What was the reason? We wanted Duffy out.

"In the course of the factory visiting we did, we learned that every active shop steward we spoke to wanted Duffy out. We have learned a huge amount in this fight. Wherever we go now, we'll take what we've learned."

# THE WAR GOES ON

In the absence of a nationally co-ordinated campaign of opposition to attacks by the bosses and Tories on jobs, services and real wages, many groups of workers have been forced to take action in one workplace to safeguard their livelihood.

Some, like Gardner's, have been successful struggles. Others

have unfortunately, despite heroic fights, ultimately failed.

Here two workers closely involved with recent disputes in London recount the lessons of their fight. They ask: how can we ensure that future battles—and the war against Tory attacks—are won?

Police remove protestors and banners from St Benedict's Hospital in September after private ambulance firms had started to remove patients

## St Benedict's Hospital

By Arthur Hautot

(Secretary of St Benedict's Occupation Committee and former COHSE Branch Secretary)

When the private ambulances and police moved in to break the trade union picket outside St Benedict's, we knew that the year-long fight to save our long-term geriatric hospital [in Tooting, South London] from closure was lost.

But the fight to save other hospitals from a similar fate will go on. So what lessons on how to win in the future can be drawn from our defeat?

What I have learnt is to prepare for battle well in advance, prepare the trade unionists in the hospital for the arguments and action of management; and build up outside support, from other hospital workers and the trade union movement as a whole.

It was our failure to get support and action from other hospitals which lost us this battle.

Why didn't we get support? After all, from the very first days when the Area Health Authority first threatened closure (September, 1979), local union officials got together to form the South West London Hospitals De-

fence Committee.

This defence committee had representatives and branch officials from nearly all the hospitals and all the health service unions. It first proposed that the idea of occupation should be put to the members at St Benedict's.

But after those initial steps, the committee faded into the background and collapsed. It could have co-ordinated all the hospital workers in South West London. It could have issued leaflets and organised meetings at the other hospitals, explaining what was happening at St Benedict's and what other workers could do about it.

### Management undermine morale

But it failed to do this. This was partly because its importance was not realised by some of the branch officials, who were already overworked in organising their own hospitals; it was partly because the committee received no help or support from the full-time officials of the hospital unions.

Problems also arose after the 300 or so staff at St Benedict's decide to occupy

the hospital. They elected an occupation committee representing all departments, and all the unions.

Initially, there were about eleven on the committee, which functioned well in the beginning. But then came a major problem, which I think was crucial to the success of the occupation.

Management were paying the wages, and nobody was to be made redundant, merely transferred after the closure to other hospitals. So when staff took time off for the picket or to organise the occupation, management, still in the hospital, were able to threaten to stop their pay. This effectively stopped many staff from carrying on jobs for the occupation and attending the committee.

In fact, without getting management out of the hospital, it could not be a real occupation controlled by the staff at all.

Management continually tried to undermine the determination and morale of the staff. For example, they offered alternative employment and organised interviews for other jobs. They frequently talked to staff about the danger of their losing their wages and problems this might cause for their

families.

In this way management were able to stop the active involvement of most of the staff in the 'occupation'. Increasingly, the picket and the support work had to be organised by trade unionists outside, while staff went on working 'normally' inside.

### Little lead from union officials

By the time the Health Authority decided to act, the number of patients had been reduced from 161 to about 100. Management had stopped admissions and reduced staff. They persuaded staff to accept the merger of wards.

Throughout this long drawn-out process, moreover, we had little or no lead from the full-time union officials in opposing management's manoeuvres. If Alan Fisher or Albert Spanswick had come to the hospital and taken the step of kicking the management off the premises, things would have changed. With-really organise the occupation.

I had only been in the hospital a short time, and came onto the occupation

# BEHIND THE FACCA

## ... The Secret Constitu

**“At a meeting of the Economic Strategy Committee held on 25 October 1979 chaired by Margaret Thatcher, reveals ‘The Secret Constitution,’ “It was suggested that a crash nuclear power programme could best succeed if the public were told as little as possible.”**

“As the Cabinet paper put it: ‘a nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity production from the danger of disruption by industrial action by coal miners or transport workers [but]... opposition to nuclear power might well provide a focus for pressure groups over the next decade and the government might make more rapid progress towards its objectives by a low profile.” (p.135)

This is just one of the many examples given by Brian Sedgemore to support his contention that effective power in Britain does not reside in Parliament and that there is little which is democratic about the actual exercise of power.

The example given is of course about the present Conservative government. But many others detail the experience of the last Labour government in its dealings with civil servants, leading men in the City, captains of industry, the press barons and others who dominate the power structure of our society.

The book gives an insight into the secret world of decision-making at the top, and the pressures that are brought to bear by those who wield power. While limited in his political conclusions, Brian Sedgemore provides a wealth of valuable material with which activists in the labour movement should be armed.

The highly secretive nature of much of government decision-making is outlined. Labour MPs were often unaware of the existence of secret cabinet committees which took crucial decisions

under the last Labour government.

Late in 1977—to give one important example—a secret meeting was held by the Prime Minister (James Callaghan), the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Denis Healey), the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Harold Lever), the head of the Treasury (Sir Alec Douglas Wass), and the governor of the Bank of England (Gordon Richardson). This group decided on an economic “U-turn” by adopting monetarist policies. Yet not even the then Secretary of State for Industry, Tony Benn, knew the meeting had taken place.

Sedgemore discusses the centralisation of power in Britain and refers to the dominant role of the major manufacturing and commercial companies in the economic life of the country. He sees civil servants as part of this centralisation, and discusses the traditional liberal view of the civil service as being “politically neutral.” This view he debunks with a number of examples.

### Capitalism... the only possible system

Writing in ‘The Times’ (15 November 1976) Lord Armstrong, then Sir William Armstrong, head of the civil service, confessed: “Obviously, I had a great deal of influence. The biggest and most pervasive influence is in setting the framework within which questions of policy are raised. We, while I was in the Treasury, had a framework of the economy which was basically neo-Keynesian.”

Clearly, leading civil servants work on the assumption that capitalism is the only possible system by which economic and social life can be organised. Top civil servants share the same elite social and educational back-

ground of others that rule our society.

But the links are more extensive than this. Sir William Armstrong himself left the civil service in 1974 to join the Midland Bank at a salary of £34,000 a year, and many other leading civil servants are offered jobs in industry and commerce when they retire.

The top civil servants are linked to the ruling class in a thousand and one ways, through public school training, “Oxbridge” background and personal financial interests. They are part and parcel of the capitalist state machine whose interests they serve.

Another feature of this growing centralisation of power is what Sedgemore calls the moves to “a corporatist state.”

By this, Sedgemore means the tendency of big and powerful institutions, like the CBI and the TUC, to become more and more embroiled with the government—and end up not expressing the interests of their members, but policing their members to keep them in line with government policy.

With the employers this is an inevitable tendency. While there may, as at present, be sharp differences between the capitalists and even their own government on economic policy, private so-called ‘enterprise’ could not survive without the protection of the state and the financial crutch it provides.

The trade unions, on the other hand, were created to defend the interests of the working class, and fundamentally these cannot be reconciled with those of the capitalists and their state. However, obliged to recognise the enormous power of the working class in modern society, the capitalist class has attempted to check this power by embroiling the trade union leadership in the institutions of the state. Bodies like the National Economic Development Council clearly show this danger.

Under the Labour government, moreover, trade union leaders like Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones accepted the disastrous pay policy—provided that they were consulted about the implementation of the so-called ‘social contract’ between the government and the unions. The capitalist class was only too pleased to rely on a Labour government to do its dirty work, and in turn the Labour government leaned on the trade union leadership to police the ranks of the working class.

With the return of the Thatcher government, Len Murray and the TUC leaders have again been calling for negotiations with the government. Behind such calls is the dangerous implication that if only the Tories would consult

the union leaders, and involve them in decisions on economic policy, it would be possible (in this period of capitalist crisis!) to arrive at policies acceptable to both the Tories and the labour movement. Clearly such pressure of the ruling class on the labour leaders must be counteracted by rank and file pressure from below.

We must demand that the union leadership responds to the demands of the membership through the decisions of democratic conferences, and that the leaders themselves are elected and subject to the right of recall. Union officials have one job: to represent their members and provide leadership, and this should be done on the average wages of workers in those industries.

Trade union officials should not be allowed to become remote by becoming used to a much more affluent and comfortable lifestyle than their members. Part-time “quango” appointments should be controlled by the labour movement, and “outside” earnings (from appointments, publications, television appearances, etc) should be donated back to the workers’ organisations.

Only such controls can prevent the deliberate mellowing and diverting of trade union leaders that now goes on under the guise of “meaningful and fruitful exchange of opinions.”

### The tendency of the trade union tops to be drawn into the state machine must be countered by rank and file democracy

When a Labour government comes into office, all the machinery of the state is immediately thrown into action to blunt Labour policies and mould Labour ministers to shape. There was a storm of protest from the Tory press and top civil servants when Labour first introduced “political advisers” to assist ministers. This was presented as an undermining of the constitution and an attack on parliamentary democracy.

In reality, it was a very small step in the direction of allowing ministers to implement the policies decided by the Labour Party, rather than by civil service committees or big business. However, the civil service soon moved to absorb these political advisers, drawing them into their

Roy Bentley of Banb reviews

‘The Secret Constitu by Brian Sedgemore

## A law unto the

Even the Tories are complaining that ministers have little or no control over civil servants.

“All government ministers,” reports the ‘Financial Times’ [15 November], in every administration since the Second World War have been totally without control over civil servants, Mr Michael Heseltine, Environment Secretary, said yesterday.

“Ministers were not involved in day-to-day man-

agement of their departments and so had no idea who was doing what, where they were doing it, what it was costing or why it was being done. It was virtually impossible for them to find out even if they wanted to know, he said.”

According to Heseltine, the main way detailed information surfaced is through MPs putting down parliamentary question. But the average cost of answering these, according to civil

own hierarchy and rendering them “harmless.”

Former Labour ministers like Richard Crossman and Barbara Castle have revealed in their published diaries all the devious means used by top civil servants to isolate ministers, circumvent their decisions, and completely change their policies. Unfortunately, these revelations have usually come long after the demise of the government concerned, instead of being broadcast at a time when blunt revelations would have angered workers and had a real effect on the situation.

Too often, Labour ministers have lacked real commitment to conference decisions, and have become bogged down in all the paraphernalia of office. This process, however, is clearly linked to the strategy adopted by Labour governments of attempting to take on the management of capitalism. Inevitably, the interests of private capital dictate policy to any government that follows this path.

Clearly, it is impossible for the labour movement to take hold of the existing state machine, which has been developed to serve the interests of the capitalist class, and use it in the interests of the working class. For the socialist transformation of society, it must be entirely replaced.

This, however, does not rule out attempts by the labour movement to democratise the existing state. We

must press, for example, for political advisers, drawn from the ranks of the labour movement and accountable to the movement, to assist ministers and provide a check that conference policies are actually being implemented in government.

The position of the Prime Minister is perhaps a good example of the lack of “democracy” in our system of government. The premier personally appoints every member of the cabinet to office and also junior ministers. He or she is also responsible for the appointment of all the heads of government departments (the permanent secretaries), as well as having a major say (with ultimate power of veto) in the appointment of chairmen of nationalised industries.

### The premier has enormous powers of patronage

The Prime Minister appoints, or is consulted about, the appointment of ambassadors; chiefs of staff and the heads of the MI5 and MI6, as well as influence over the names put forward for the 31 public boards in existence and the 252 fringe bodies which themselves employ 184,000 people.

The Prime Minister also has a role to play in the



# MADE

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service accounting, is £50 a time.

The Tories' Golden Wonder Boy has tried to start a new system of assessing all projects in his Department, giving them a priority rating between 1 and 10.

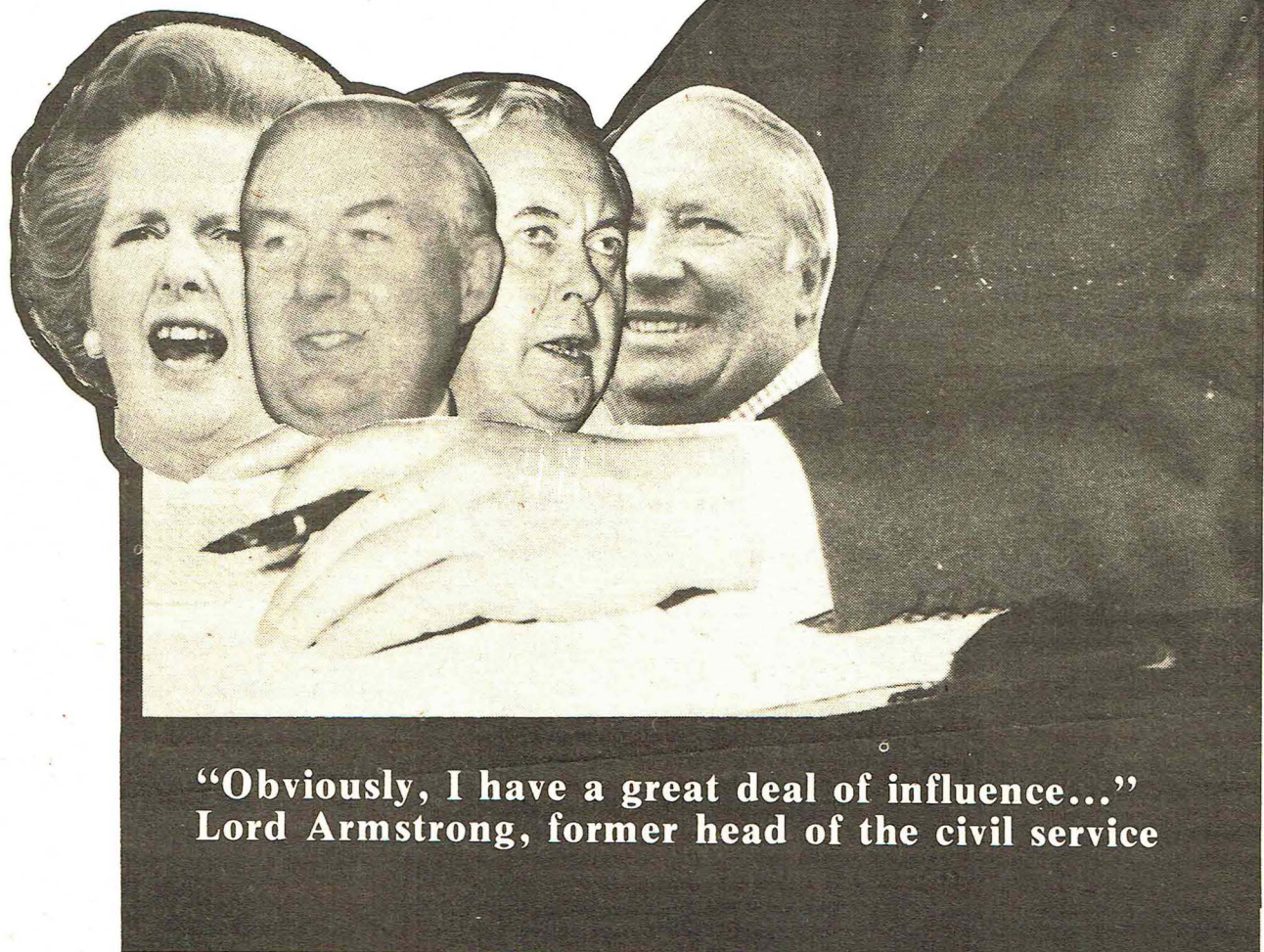
### No control

"I started this operation because I had no way of getting the information I

needed to manage this Department. I had no way of exercising control over the executive because I was without the weapon of information," he said.

Heseltine's operation, however, cost this cuts-conscious minister £100,000.

What a condemnation of the lack of democratic accountability in the state machine—and from a Tory zealot, too!



"Obviously, I have a great deal of influence..."  
Lord Armstrong, former head of the civil service

poniment of judges and Bishops of the Church of England.

The Prime Minister has, then, considerable patronage, and inevitably comes under great pressure while in office from the powerful groups in society.

Harold Wilson recounts in his analysis of the Labour government 1969-70 how the Governor of the Bank of England explained that a democratically elected government had to return to Tory policies after its election because of the pressures of capital, and particularly by the IMF.

Marx and Engels described the modern state as "the executive committee" of the capitalist class. Labour government which attempt to work within the capitalist framework are inevitably bound to serve the purposes of the ruling class. The prime minister becomes the chairman or "managing director" of the committee, and his or her enormous power of patronage is essentially a part of his role.

That is why the decision at the last Labour Party conference to implement a wider franchise for electing the party leader—potentially Labour prime minister—arouses such a storm of protest from the Tory press. It is vital that this reform is carried through, with the trade unions and the constituency parties being given a decisive

share of the electoral college through which the leader will be elected.

But we should go further, and insist that other ministers, junior ministers, and their political advisers are also elected by the labour movement and are made

**Labour must fight for democratic reforms... but this cannot be separated from the need for a socialist programme. Without a viable programme and strategy, no Labour government will succeed in carrying through the socialist transformation of society.**

responsible to the rank and file. This is why the only way in which the blunting effect of patronage can be counteracted.

Such reforms, however, cannot be separated from the need for a socialist programme. Without a viable programme and strategy, no Labour government will suc-

ceed in carrying through the socialist transformation of society.

Two chapters of "The Secret Constitution" detail power struggles at the Department of Industry between Tony Benn and his ministers and "the Establishment" (the vague, non-class term used to describe the ruling class).

A number of startling statements are made. For example the 1974-79 Labour government was committed to an industrial strategy of strengthening the manufacturing base in Britain, which included loans and grants to various worker co-operatives. Yet Harold Wilson, then Prime Minister, (according to Sedgemore) "systematically worked for its (the 1975 Industry Act's) destruction."

Two ministers were so opposed to the policy that they were discussing the formation of a new political party, and almost unbelievably, one of them had the proofs for an editorial for a national newspaper attacking the "industrial strategy" on his desk for *correction the day before they were printed.*

The evidence that is presented on the role of parliament shows that the most important decisions are taken elsewhere. Back-bench MPs have little chance of changing government policy, and on a whole host of issues questions cannot even be asked in parliament.

Did you know that ques-

tions cannot be asked in parliament on agricultural workers' wages, forecasts of changes in food prices, forecasts of future levels of unemployment and about another 80 areas.

Most of the important decisions in our society, especially those relating to the economy, are taken outside of parliament by the multinationals and major corporations. Decisions on defence and foreign policy are often taken by the government without reference to Parliament.

Parliamentary traditions, high salaries, material and social advantages of Westminster are all used to separate Labour MPs from the movement and from the working class and initiate them into a cosy club atmosphere where their taste for criticism and opposition is rubbed off. Most MPs live in a world apart, and as a result, many Labour MPs have more in common with their Tory and Liberal "opponents" than with the workers they are supposed to represent.

But what conclusions should be drawn from this?

While clearly recognising and revealing the limitations of parliament, the labour movement must use it as a platform for socialist ideas, and a lever in the struggle to mobilise mass support for a change in society.

Labour MPs acting as tribunes for their working-

class constituents should use the Commons not as a debating chamber to score points against the Tories, but as a platform for revealing the truth about class society to workers, explaining the need for socialist policies. All the limitations of parliament, the manoeuvres of top civil servants, and the sabotage of big business—previously revealed only long after the event in ministers' memoirs—should be laid bare at the time. The battle in Parliament should be a lever for the struggle to mobilise the mass forces of the working class.

The next Labour government should cut through all the delaying procedures of parliamentary procedures and traditions by passing an Enabling Act, allowing Labour to implement the socialist policies adopted by successive conferences. Backed up by a mass movement throughout the country, Labour could then initiate fundamental socialist changes.

Confined to parliament, and accepting the existing structure of the economy and the state, future Labour

governments will inevitably suffer the same defeats as in the past, if not worse.

The book's last chapter details the circumstances surrounding Sedgemore's dismissal as Tony Benn's Parliamentary Private Secretary by James Callaghan. Sedgemore had obtained "confidential" Treasury papers and confronted Denis Healey in a general sub-committee of the Commons Expenditure Committee on the proposed European Monetary System.

Other examples show how secretive the business of government really is.

The sub-title of the book, "an analysis of the political establishment," provides a good guide to the contents, and much useful information is contained within the covers.

Socialism means a planned economy with government being the business of the whole people, with free and democratic discussion at the lowest and highest levels. The "Secret constitution" shows just how far away from this aim Labour governments have been.

**'The Secret Constitution':  
An analysis of the political establishment. By Brian Sedgemore  
Published by Hodder & Stoughton  
Price £7.95**



USA

# Danger and Opportunity Ahead for American Labour

**Certain things about the 1980 Presidential election are quite clear.**

As far as the Presidential candidates of the Republican and Democratic parties were concerned this election was a repudiation—an election “against” rather than “for”.

**By Betty Traun in New York**

The victor was elected by a minority of those who were eligible to vote even though he had a majority over his opponent Carter. In 1968 60% of eligible voters came out to vote. In 1976 it was 54%. In 1980 it had dropped to 52%, a clear indication of disaffection with the two party system.

Of the 52% of the voting public, slightly more than half of them, 51%, voted for Reagan, and so we find that Reagan actually was the choice of 26.52% or just over one-quarter of the eligible voters in the US.

Cynicism, indifference, disgust, the feeling of a lack of choice in this two party system produced not only the large proportion of voters against Carter, but also an “undecided” electorate larger in this than in any post-war election. Until two weeks before the election, the “undecided” accounted for 25% of the voting public. Then,

whipped up to fear of Reagan's extreme conservatism and belligerence, one half of them fell into line for Carter at the last moment.

It also produced an “independent” vote which was probably larger than in former years. The Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party Presidential candidates received more votes than ever before, but the third principle contender, John Anderson, who had sparked interest as an “independent” initially, lost ground when it became clearer during the campaign that he offered no fundamental alternative to Carter or Reagan.

Reagan and the capitalist media are trumpeting his victory as the outcome of a “conservative tide” sweeping the country which will now shape the politics of the nation for the years ahead. It is being called a revolution on the part of the people, a repudiation of the liberalism of Roosevelt's New Deal dating back to the Great

Depression of the '30s. Reagan also calls it a “mandate” given to him by the majority of the American people to carry out the Republican Party platform of extreme conservatism.

He is completely wrong. He misreads the attitudes of the mass of angry working people, distrustful of big business and government, more dissatisfied with two party choices than before. Their simple message in the Reagan sweep was “throw the bum out!” in a repudiation of the record of Carter and the do nothing Democratic Congress, especially the wringer of inflation and unemployment that working people have been put through.

Only one Reagan voter out of ten said the Republican conservative views were the key to their voting for him.

This much is certain: the reason 43 million people voted for Reagan is not because they are ready to go to war against Iran, Nicaragua, the Soviet Union or anybody else.

The blacks voted six to one against Reagan. What they could see on social issues was that Reagan was the darling of the Ku Klux Klan, the extreme right-wing ‘Moral Majority’, the anti-abortion and anti-Equal Rights Amendment bigots, and other extreme right wingers. Still their votes for Carter were less (83%) than in 1976 when they gave him 94% of their votes and sent him over the top to his victory. This time around,

there was no enthusiasm in their vote, which was strictly a “lesser evil” vote.

Reagan got significantly fewer votes among women than among men, apparently reflecting opposition to his anti-women's rights stand and his belligerent foreign policy statements. He began his campaign as a war-maker and switched in midstream to change his image to that of peace-maker.

Union officials spent millions of dollars trying to get out the vote for Carter, warning that Reagan was hostile to the interests of working people. It was all very true. But blue collar workers had had four years' experience with Carter's anti-labour actions and went overwhelmingly for Reagan's promise to “put America back to work.”

## Reagan can't deliver

This was the most significant disaffection from Carter's 1976 bloc among trade unionists. Some voted for Reagan, deceived by his promises; others stayed home expecting nothing from Carter or Reagan.

The media is saying that Reagan's promise to put America back to work, to squeeze out inflation, and to balance the Federal budget by some mysterious means will come to haunt him from now on, for the nation will look for payment on his promissory notes. But Reagan won't be able to deliver on his myth of bringing back “the good old days” to unfettered corporations and other right-wingers dreaming of past glory.

That was when the United States could control the world with the carrot and the big stick. People have the illusion that their Presidents and their government run the country. Actually there is little discretion they can exercise in the United States. Control is held by the corporations, especially the oil corporations, and Reagan in office will do exactly what Carter did before him.

He won't be able to stop inflation, as Carter couldn't. Two days after the election the great Chase-Manhattan Bank (Rockefeller's) raised its interest rate for prime customers who make loans a full percentage point from 14¼% to 15½%. Other banks will follow suit.

Nor will Reagan be able to keep his promises of putting people back to work. He expects to do so with tax cuts, but the capitalist system doesn't operate the way he wants it to. Higher bank interest and increased billions fed to the military monster spells higher inflation and recession.

Reagan also wants to tamper with the Minimum

Wage Act by creating a two tier minimum wage level. For young people from ages 16-19 he wants the minimum wage reduced to 70%. Instead of a minimum \$3 per hour, they will receive \$2 (less than £1). The result will be a mass sacking of older workers, earning the minimum \$3 per hour, in favour of the young.

He doesn't see the stiff resistance he will stir up with this cut. Militancy will increase by leaps and bounds. He also wants to do away with safety on the job, and this is where his troubles will begin, as he is pressed by the very workers who voted for him, and who do not wish to die in or out of their workplaces.

The shift in the Senate to a Republican majority is a severe blow to capitalist liberalism. Powerful democratic chairman of important Congressional Committees are out and that includes Ted Kennedy. When the right wing insists it has its mandate by pointing to the fact that not only was Carter repudiated but the Democrats in Congress were repudiated as well, they have a point.

A huge sum of millions of dollars was spent to target the leading Senators of the country like George McGovern, cleverly using single issue groups, like the anti-abortionists as the means of attack. There no doubt is a swing to the right for some but the shift of the majority is towards the left, and it will not take long after Reagan is inaugurated to reveal itself.

Polarisation will develop. A high level of militancy is already developing among blacks. It will come to the fore in the New York City Mayoral election of 1981, against racist Mayor Koch who is also anti-labour. He states he will be the candidate of all parties in New York, including the extreme right wing, because he is running scared.

Republican conservatives now have what they have not had for a very long time: the responsibility of power in Washington. The President will be one of their own far more than Nixon and certainly far more than Eisenhower was. They will control the Senate, and have a grip on the House of Representatives through coalition with conservative Democratic Congressmen.

But with it will come danger when the American people will once again be disappointed in their expectations and once again take out their frustration in the political arena. This year the turnout sank to a miserable 52%, but by the next time the disaffected could have their choice, a mass working class alternative, a Labour Party.

For the past four or five years, as the capitalist crisis intensified, the question of a labour party has been under intense discussion in labour and left-wing circles. How-



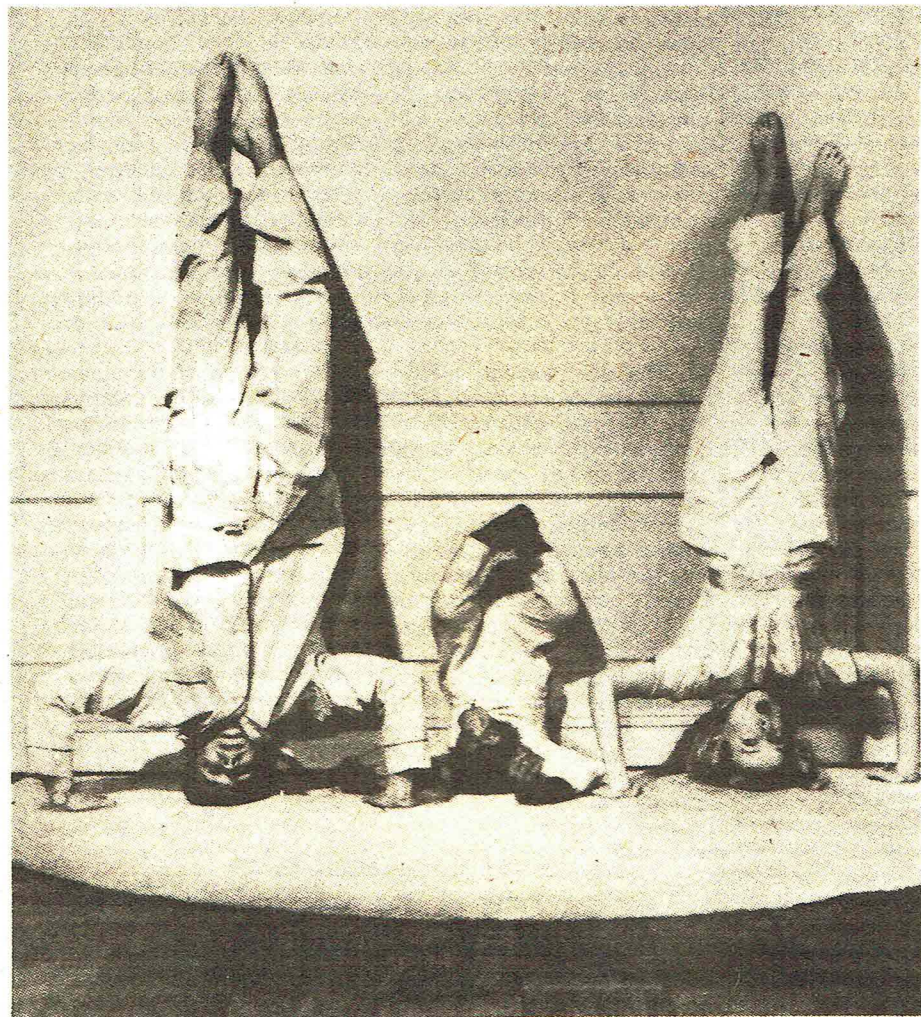
Reagan won because of the ABC vote—‘Anyone but Carter’

ever, concrete action was not taken at the large meeting called by the leader of the United Auto Workers at Detroit, Michigan, in 1978.

The two party syndrome still had its grip in the country and the meeting ended in a split, with half of the delegates from 108 national organisations determined to give the Democratic Party another chance. Reagan's stunning victory and the dismay and anxiety engendered in liberal and labour circles may now give the needed impetus for finally getting the necessary coalition movement off the ground in a drive for a labour party.

On 6 November, union representatives meeting in Washington DC stated that a powerful progressive coalition of labour and its allies was essential to fight the right wing gains in Congress and the policies of Ronald Reagan. One union leader stated that Carter had split the liberal forces in the country, enabling reaction to win. With Carter swept from office, “there is no basis for that. People are going to have to unite with each other. This is a time of danger and opportunity,” he said.

The hammer-blows of the capitalist crisis will force those labour leaders who appeared to head the discussion for a political alternative, but who fell in line behind Carter and the Democrats, to finally come to the forefront for a labour party. But the real impetus for struggle, for change, for a new political course, will come from labour's ranks. And the forgotten 48% of those who refused to vote for the two party system and its candidates and sat on their hands in this election, will finally find their political home in a new party which will put people before profits.



American capitalists would be happy to have a monkey as President as long as they continued to control the government. Above, Reagan in one of his earlier acting roles, ‘Bed-time for Bonzo’. The new President is the one on the left.



# Dictatorship Threat in India?

**Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her populist Congress Party has failed to keep any of their election promises or solve any of the problems facing the country.**

Coupled with rising discontent this is fast setting up the stage for a new drama in the country—the call for strong government and a discussion by capitalists of the possible need for a military-police dictatorship.

In the January election the walls in the Indian capital were painted with the slogan—'Vote for those who can govern.' In fact the managers and campaigners for Gandhi's Congress mainly based their election strategy on the worsening law and order situation. But within a few months of Gandhi's election the ruling class has demanded 'Where is the government which governs?'

Law and order has deteriorated even further. There are rising prices, riots and worsening industrial relations. Some of the ruling class now question the effectiveness of parliamentary democracy to keep things moving.

## Fascist RSS group

One of the splinters from the former ruling Janata party, the Bharatiya Janata Party has openly espoused the demand for strong measures. This group is based upon the semi-secret, semi-fascist Hindu revivalist organisation, the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (the national volunteer corps).

## By our Indian Correspondent

The RSS claims to be a social service institution and says that it has nothing to do with the BJP nor with its parliamentary predecessor the Jan Sangh. Just like the Jan Sangh the BJP is registered as a political party but in effect it is really the parliamentary front of the RSS which takes all the major decisions for it.

But what is this RSS and is its ideological thrust? Formed before the Second World War its founder Dr Hedgwar learnt his political education in Nazi Germany.

Though the first adherents were drawn from the holiest of the high caste Hindu Brahmins (who even today continue to be the top policy making core), the RSS spent its early formative years in drills and exercises. Significantly enough it totally kept itself aloof from the nationalist movement launched in India to throw out British imperialism.

The organisational pattern of the RSS, is based upon organisers appointed from the top. Its main demand is for 'one leader, one religion and one language.'

It first made its presence felt during the 1947 partition and Hindu-Moslem communal killings. Many RSS rank and file talk nostalgically of the crimes committed against the minorities.

During partition one of their members assassinated Mahatma Gandhi. Signifi-

cantly enough former Prime Minister Desai withdrew an earlier allegation that the Gandhi assassin was an RSS member when he had to depend on 91 Jan Sangh MPs' votes.

In the early fifties the RSS leaders created a political and parliamentary front; the immediate cause was the death of a Hindu leader in Kashmir prison. They flooded into and captured Jan Sangh, then in its infancy.

In the initial stage the JS openly stood by Hindu revivalism, but in the sixties, with ruling Congress popularity declining, they had to join the state coalitions and began talking about the need of the minorities merging into the mainstream.

## Hindu nationalism

But the RSS remained a Hindu organisation. In their million strong ranks there are not even a dozen non-Hindus. The RSS doors are not closed for non-Hindus, as they claim, simply the pathways are out of bounds.

Historically as a religion Hinduism has little scope for collective worship and even when millions gather for a ceremony on the river banks of the Ganges they perform individually. Giving Hindu revival a group or collective sense, can be attributed to the RSS organisers' infatuation with the ideology and methods of nazism, which flourished in the name of Aryan supremacy.

The RSS founders cling to the idea of reviving the lost glory of Hinduism and land in the struggles for regional supremacy by Rana Pratap and Shiraji, two historical Hindu heroes who fought Moslem rule in India. The RSS leaders say that their first task after gaining power will be to "Wipe out the traces of twelve hundred years



The workers' movement is too strong at present for the dictatorial ambitions of Mrs Gandhi or the fascist RSS threat

of foreign domination." Yet this goes back far beyond the days of the Muslim Mogul Empire in India.

They also demand that the minorities should 'merge into the mainstream'—meaning thereby that the Muslims and Christians adopt, if not Hindu religion, then definitely the Hindu way of life. During the Janata regime, a 'freedom of religion act' was brought in as a 'private members bill', in which restrictions were sought on religious conversions.

Can Hindu revivalism provide a base for a possible fascist take-over of India—the largest capitalist democracy in the world? Recently the efforts of some sections of the ruling class have failed to create a communal frenzy.

So far, the toiling masses and the middle classes, who form the bulk of the population have refused to fall into this trap. So far, the wave of Hindu revivalism is limited to a microscopic section of the population.

But the deepening crisis of the Indian economy and the failure of the ruling classes to bail themselves out coupled with their inability to solve any of the problems affecting the people puts India into danger. Continued efforts are bound to be made to divert the people from the basic need of ending the exploitative system and in this task the RSS is and can be a tool.

In the past the RSS bosses have shown some flexibility and manoeuvring ability. In 1977 they pretended to dis-

band Jan Sangh and merged into Janata, to give themselves respectability.

Since then they have had a secret honeymoon with the ruling Congress youth wing. This is not yet over and they are in search of a leader who could give them a respectable image; before his death they had started looking towards Sanjay Gandhi.

They are clearly conscious of their role to bail out the collapsing capitalist system in India. Although the working class is on the march and has exhibited its new mood in many industrial centres and has every chance of victory there is need for a constant watch on the danger from the RSS and its allies.

## International Notes

### Inflation

Which country has the highest rate of inflation in the world? And which government has looked for much of its economic advice from the wisdom of Milton Friedman? The answer to both questions is Israel.

Currently suffering an annual inflation rate of 138%, it seems things are going to get worse for Israeli

workers. It is expected that in the last quarter of this year, the rate will rise to 200%.

Last month the Begin government only just survived a censure vote in the Parliament. US imperialism can be expected to try and bail out its client state in the Middle East. But none of the capitalist gurus have much idea of how to cure the disease that grips their system.

### Italy

The devastation caused by last week's earthquake in Italy has also exposed the incompetence of the Italian capitalist state machinery. With estimates of the homeless ranging up to 250,000 only 6,620 tents were sent out. Some migrant workers travelling back from Germany and Switzerland arrived in some of the devastated areas before the emergency services.

One Mayor who contacted the Interior Ministry for tents and blankets,

received no reply to his request. The country's President Pertini visited the earthquake area and found: "I was surrounded by inhabitants who showed me their despair and pain, but also their rage. After 48 hours, the needed aid had not yet arrived."

And the Minister of Posts commented that "the machinery of the state has been shown up as inadequate and slow." People who could have been saved died in this disaster. A real indictment of the red tape bureaucracy of the state machine of the Italian capitalists.

### E Europe

Throughout Eastern Europe the ruling bureaucracies are worried that the battle for workers' rights in Poland will spill over the border. In the last week, President Husak of Czechoslovakia rushed to the important mining area of Ostrave to try to quell dissent.

Ostrave contains a large Polish minority, and official trade union representatives had warned of growing dissatisfaction about working conditions and so-called 'voluntary' overtime. Workers in Ostrave can receive Polish TV and clearly have been encouraged by the

strike wave of Polish workers.

The bureaucracies want to isolate the Polish explosion and refuse to report what is happening there, except to make the ridiculous claim that Polish workers are just tools of "imperialist reactionary circles." The East German bureaucrats have been so concerned that the Polish contagion might spread that they have turned back trains from Poland, just because Polish railwaymen had daubed socialist slogans on them. The East German regime has now suspended train services to several Polish cities and tried to prevent almost all private travel between the two countries.



VIEWERS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?  
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## Stealing food

Dear Comrades

I was in my local green-grocers today and heard something that really stopped me in my tracks.

There have been a lot of break-ins lately in our area and one woman in the shop said she was burgled and all that was stolen was food from her fridge, nothing else but food.

What a terrible situation for someone to have found themselves in, to be driven to taking food from someone else's house.

All I can say is that this Tory government really have an awful lot to answer for and we just can't sit back and wait till we all find ourselves having to steal food to feed our families.

The labour movement must not rest until we get rid of this nightmare of a government and replace it with a Labour Party that will carry out its duty of transforming this society to a socialist one, where working class people won't have to live in fear of poverty—a society that's based on people's needs and not on profit.

Yours comradely  
Damhnait Darkin  
Bristol NE Labour Party

## Volunteers?

Dear Comrades

We visited Corby today, to show a new member of our YS what the closure of the steel works means to the people of that town. He viewed with disgust the boarded-up council houses, of which there are many since BSC saw fit to close the Corby works. If they didn't have to pay the moneylenders millions of pounds in interest charges, this would never have happened.

The young lad asked us how many jobs there were available in Corby. We didn't know, so we went to visit the Job Centre: there were only six, one asking youth to join the army, two in a town nine miles away.

We went to the Careers Office to ask how many young people are on the dole in the town. We were quite surprised when the lady refused to say, but we prised out of her how many jobs were around in the town. She said only one: the army.

So much for a volunteer army: it's hardly a voluntary army for the youth of Corby; it's the only job they can get.

Yours fraternally  
Mark Prendergast  
Leicester South LPYS

## Crisis

Dear 'Militant'

I want to thank you for your excellent paper which is really speaking a clear language. We have to fight for a better, socialist future, and that everybody who is conscious of the present crisis, should join the fight.

The cuts Britain is suffering from are threatening Germany too, especially in the education and science sector, where I should work. But after completing my doctor's degree in literature, I was unable to find a qualified job.

So I had to work in a private language school un-

## Putting the record straight?

Dear Editor

After reading the recent articles and letter from Alan Watson (7 November), I would like to put the record straight once and for all.

The actions I took as Student Organiser to revive an apparently inactive Stirling University Labour Club were at the request of the June meeting of the NOLS Officers. This was part of the normal requirements of any genuine democratic organisation.

NOLS had received no communication from the old officers of the club in reply to our enquiries until after the start of term. Up to that there was no evidence of any activity taking place or planned.

Secondly, unspecified accusations and smears are made about my role in NOLS some five years ago.

There were disputes at the 1975 and 1976 conferences. But in both cases the National Executive Committee of the Party supported the actions of the then National Youth Officer

in ensuring that the constitution and rules were properly carried out. I supported this view and sought to ensure that the conference proceeded immediately on a constitutional basis.

At the 1977 conference, clubs at Cardiff and Newcastle were found to have forged membership and inflated numbers in order to get extra delegates. The clubs in question were given the right to put their case to the conference. The credentials report was accepted by Conference and the NEC of the Party also supported my actions.

In 1978 and 1979 such irregularities were not repeated. It is generally accepted that the 1979 conference, my last as Student Organiser, was the best ever. All NOLS members deserve credit for this.

I hope that this responsible attitude will continue. I also hope that 'Militant' will give my successor as Student Organiser every support. I hope that NOLS will continue to play a major role in the fight against the threats to student and working class interests from

this reactionary Tory government.

Mike Gapes  
Former National Student  
Organiser of the  
Labour Party

### ALAN WATSON REPLIES:

Comrade Gapes demanded that his letter be printed "in full or not at all." 'Militant' always allows the right of reply but the editors have had to cut his lengthy letter for reasons of space. As for his points, Mike protests too much.

The real argument between him and 'Militant' supporters is over policy. Throughout his NOLS career, Mike [a] upheld [until the BL's recent collapse] the 'Clause 4' group's policy of submerging NOLS in the increasingly moribund 'Broad Left' of the National Union of Students, which prevented NOLS from winning student support for a clear socialist Labour Platform;

[b] supported a "studentist"

approach, which has kept NOLS isolated from the working class movement and has inevitably failed to build on the potential support that exists among students, especially in Polys and FE where there are more students from a working-class background.

The disputes about organisation have arisen from these differences. Mike, whether he likes it or not, will be remembered as the chief architect of NOLS' amazing paraphernalia of rules and procedures which have been a barrier to the building of new clubs and the recruitment of a bigger membership.

Mike, of course, maintains this is in the interests of democracy. But they have never been applied in an even-handed, democratic manner—which we would accept, despite the unprecedented nature of many of these rules for the labour movement.

The reason there have been so many disputes is that the rules have been used to bolster the position of 'Clause 4' supporters and to exclude opponents, or possible opponents. We certainly hope that NOLS will be much more democratic in the future and will play the role it should in mobilising students against the Tories.

## Keynesian monetarist?

Dear Comrade,

I am writing to you about the developing split in the party.

On Monday (17th November) our MP, Roy Hattersley, addressed a meeting about unemployment. The keynote of his speech was "back to Keynes" and "there is nothing wrong with deficit financing."

Contrast these statements to those of Callaghan at Labour Party Conference; "Keynesianism is dead." No wonder, with this split in the programme of the shadow cabinet, Jim had to make way.

But who did Roy Hattersley vote for in the leadership election? None other than Comrade Healey, the monetarist.

Fraternally,  
Richard Evans  
Sparkbrook LPYS

## Amazing response

Dear Comrades,

Last weekend in Blyth showed the clear thirst for an alternative from the Labour Party now being expressed throughout the country.

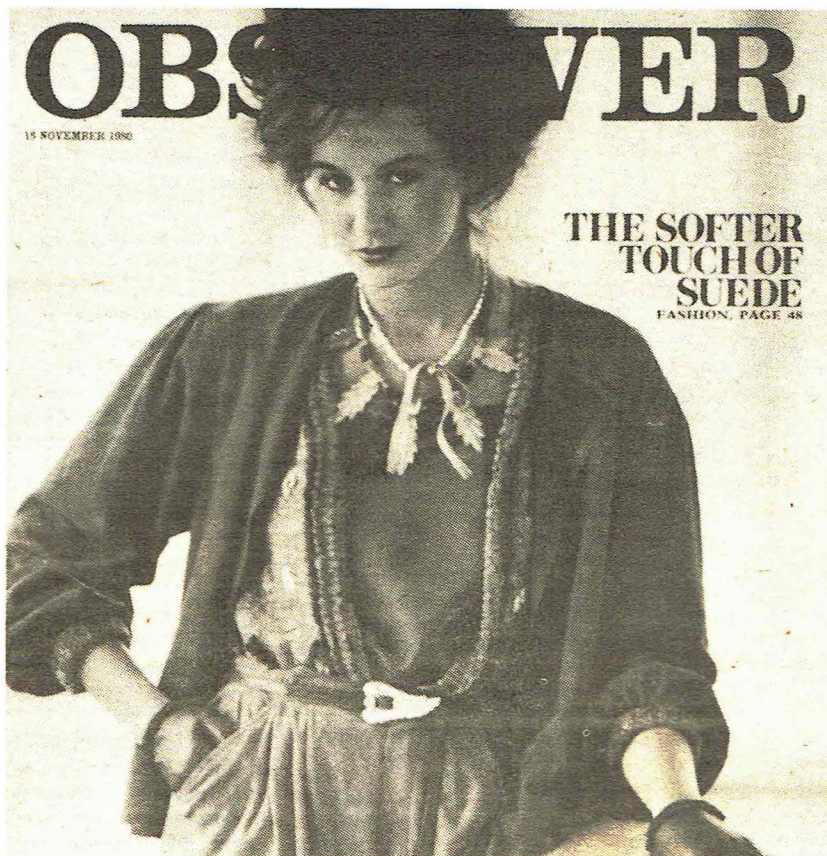
Blyth LPYS, with the assistance of comrades from Newcastle, set up a stall in Blyth market place on Saturday morning. We began with piles of leaflets, 'Militant' and 'Socialist Youth' and proceeded to show the people of Blyth what the YS is about.

The response was amazing; we only came across two Tories all morning and one of them was a councillor. All in all we sold 54 copies of 'Militant', a number of 'Socialist Youth' and gained five new members for the party.

Many young people showed interest in the YS; not surprising since unemployment in Blyth is now 16%, a large section of which are under 25.

There was no doubt that the people of Blyth are sick of Thatcher's policies and look in ever increasing numbers to the Labour Party. It is up to the Labour Party and the LPYS in particular to provide the necessary socialist alternative through which the demands of working people can be met.

Yours fraternally,  
Peter D. Marsden  
Blyth.



A hundred pages of advertising in the colour supplements every week

Or perhaps it's a combination of a society that not only burdens women through the role they play in the family, burdens them as a

section of the working class, but also burdens them through the crass exploitation of their role in society by characters such as advertis-

ing executives.  
Yours fraternally  
Larry Flanagan  
Rutherglen LPYS

## Freedom of speech

Dear Comrades,

Judy Blackwood's arguments (Militant 527) on freedom of speech are very useful because they highlight two very common errors which have some currency in the labour movement.

Firstly, she talks about freedom of speech as if it were an end in itself rather than a means to an end. The workers' movement fights for freedom of speech as a weapon in the struggle for

socialism, not as some abstract notion.

Absolute freedom of speech does not exist in any society, nor can it. The demagogue who incites race hatred and violence is just as guilty as the thug who actually throws the brick or petrol bomb. Dr Goebbels did not personally lift a finger against any Jew in Germany. Would Judy therefore argue that he was innocent of the crimes of the Third Reich?

Secondly, she seems to be arguing that it is possible to be unbiased. This is not the case. Life forces us to take

sides.

When a fascist is hurling vile abuse and threats at black people, a socialist cannot stand on the sidelines saying, "Well, you're entitled to your point of view, old chap, but you must allow me to differ." Such an approach only lends respectability to their views.

The struggle against fascism does not take place in the cosy atmosphere of academic debate. It takes place amid the harsh realities of the streets. We either defend the freedom of the black community or we

defend the freedom of the National Front. We can't do both.

Adolf Hitler, who was something of an expert on fascism, once said, "Either we will trample on the corpses of our enemies or they will trample on our corpses." There can be no compromise with such an attitude—a fact which the German Social Democrats found out the hard way.

Yours fraternally,  
Derek McMillan  
Sussex

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"Policies to fight the Tories"

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## NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS IN 'MILITANT'

Send greetings to the labour movement in the New Year's edition of 'Militant'

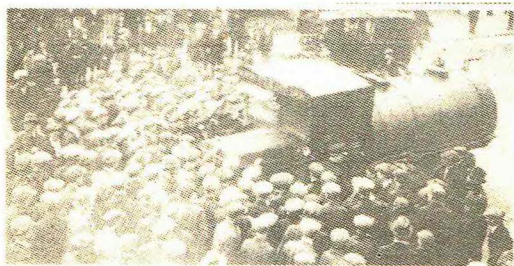
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# Build

# MILITANT

| Area                  | Received     | % of target achieved | Target for year |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Eastern               | 3818         |                      | 5,000           |
| East Midlands         | 3491         |                      | 3,800           |
| Hants & IOW           | 4212         |                      | 4,600           |
| Humberside            | 1602         |                      | 2,500           |
| London East           | 5470         |                      | 6,200           |
| London West           | 3090         |                      | 4,700           |
| London South          | 4743         |                      | 4,700           |
| Manchester & Lancs    | 2869         |                      | 5,100           |
| Merseyside            | 3860         |                      | 6,000           |
| Northern              | 4457         |                      | 7,300           |
| Scotland East         | 2263         |                      | 3,200           |
| Scotland West         | 4080         |                      | 5,000           |
| Southern              | 4672         |                      | 5,900           |
| South West            | 2191         |                      | 3,200           |
| Wales East            | 1595         |                      | 2,800           |
| Wales West            | 2967         |                      | 3,100           |
| West Midlands         | 6600         |                      | 9,000           |
| Yorkshire             | 4496         |                      | 7,300           |
| Others                | 10297        |                      | 10,600          |
| <b>Total received</b> | <b>76773</b> |                      | <b>100,000</b>  |

## TARGET FOR YEAR-£100,000

# STRIKE WHILE THE IRON'S HOT

The biggest demonstration that the Labour Party has ever organised shows that not just the industrial working class but other sections of society, are ready to act against the Tories.

The size of the contingents—from all over Britain [a comrade counted 108 special coaches parked in line at the end!—indicates the scope for our paper.

Unfortunately our resources don't yet match up to the challenge of getting our paper to every worker in the country. We must reach our target of £100,000 this year in order to be confident about our plans for expanding circulation and coverage in 1981.

We appeal to all our supporters—strike while the iron's hot! Explain to all new readers of 'Militant' that we don't sell our political ideas to the highest-paying advertiser. So, we rely more than any other paper on our readership.

But the £1,182 received this week means that we still are short by over £23,000 of our final figure. If every reader, on average, managed to collect together £1 for us over the next five weeks (20p every week) we would be there.

Just a few of the examples this week that we would like to see copied are the methods that Yorkshire comrades have used—a social, TU expenses, lifts,

50s Club, back-pay, bed & breakfast, paper 'extras', and donations at meetings and discussion groups. Thanks for individual contributions to E McAteer (Hull) and S Callan (York). At some meetings we get the larger amounts: the first £50 came in from Brighton, but there's still £120 in IOUs to come in! NGA Merseyside supporters regular collection was £17 this week, C Burford, a nurse in London, gave us £25, and a Coventry NUPE member, P Phillips £15.

£22 'overtime' and another £7 from other members of Canvey Island Labour Party, added to £10 from A Kidwai (Stockton CLP) and from an Oxford student ("...but then I can't really afford capitalism either...") show that the message of this page is getting through! Two members of Handsworth LPYS, M Kelly and R Hargreaves, raised a total of £12.25 by giving lifts and typing. Fivers from Mousfield readers S Houchin, C Deveney and G Naylor help to explain why the East

Midland line is almost all the way across the chart!

South London have reached their target—well done, but don't stop now—think of those areas that require some help! TU expenses of £60 were included in the S London figure this week. Thanks, brother! Unfortunately, we haven't room for all the other smaller contributions—but don't let that stop you helping us.

Just make sure your 'Militant' seller marks off your contribution in his or her collector's card. To represent many more, thank you to A Blair (Bracknell), K Brewer (Poole), P Lucas (UCW), and F Coyle (Cumbernauld).

Although our target can only really be met by most of our readers giving us 'Christmas presents', other sources of funds included this week: £50 before expenses came from a meeting on civil servants' pay, £7 from a Reading discussion group, nearly £44 from Swansea supporters from pontoon cards, 'extras' and other fund-raisers, £6.67 collected at NOLS Student Council



Photo: MILITANT

Read 'Militant'! Sell 'Militant'! Support our fighting fund!

and nearly £15 sent in by Ipswich supporters, including raffle money.

All our readers and supporters could help us to have a trouble-free Christmas by sending in Christmas fivers and tenners now, so we don't have to postpone plans for a better 'Militant'. You need a better 'Militant' now, but we need your help first!

## MILITANT WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

Win a winter holiday abroad for two worth £500—can be taken any time mid-January to mid-April!

Second prize: a weekend for two in Paris! Eight other prizes include record tokens and a portable TV.

Tickets only 10p from your 'Militant' seller. All proceeds to the 'Militant' fighting fund.

# Industrial

## Civil Service fightback

# The first shots

**More than 6,000 civil servants held a half-day strike last week, to attend protest meetings in London.**

Many thousands more attended mass meetings in regional centres during the week to demonstrate their anger at the Tories' breaking their pay agreement.

The Civil Service is no longer prepared to acquiesce over public spending,

**By an IRSF member**

manpower and pay cuts.

Bill Kendall, Secretary General of the Council of Civil Service Unions addressed 3,500 at Central Hall,

Westminster. He said cuts in public spending were unjustified since the public sector was a large wealth producer.

"The 6% makes no sense, the dam will burst. These meetings are the first shots in a campaign. We must give full support and maximum co-operation to other public sector unions who are in the front line.

"We have the rightness of our case...We have our industrial strength and political clout which we must begin to organise.

"We must totally ignore the 6% limit and decide on a claim and an industrial

campaign early in the New Year. We must mobilise for political action. The government has smashed the pay agreement and put us back into the political arena. There is no way that we can dodge that."

Bill McCall, IPCS, said, "This government is frighteningly insular, ignorant and more dishonourable than any other Civil Service employer in recent times."

He called on the more than half a million civil servants to mobilise with their families, industrial civil servants and the rest of the public sector.

The meeting showed its fighting mood by applauding the more militant statements calling for action. Speakers from the floor stressed the need for solidarity with the firemen and other groups of workers under attack. They were

angry that a government, which slates workers for breaking agreements, had so shamelessly broken them itself.

Mike Hales of Kent Taxes IRSF spoke from the floor and urged members to get the support of their colleagues in the offices. He said, "Our failure would ensure a permanent reduction in the living standards of our members. Go back and convince your workmates that action is right and worthwhile."

The meeting unanimously passed a motion condemning the government's arbitrary action in suspending the pay agreement. This was recognised as part of a continuing campaign against the Civil Service and to deliberately reduce their standard of living. It resolved to take action necessary to combat this.



Civil servants join Saturday's march in Liverpool against the Tories

## Scottish TUC

# Rely on workers, not Tories!

The trade union leadership in Scotland, the STUC General Council, have come up with a strange method to combat the damage done by the bosses and their representatives the Tories.

They have—and wait for it—invited them to attend the coming convention called by the STUC on unemployment!

Despite the fact that the bosses with their henchmen the Tories have reduced once famous industrial centres such as Clydebank, Dundee or Motherwell to shells; despite a quarter of a million on the dole in Scotland, 30 Tory delegates will attend the convention on December 8th. not to

**By Dick Vivien**

mention a contingent from the CBI!

And trailing on their coat tails will come the Liberals, the SNP and the churches. Rumour has it that the trade unions, Labour and Communist Parties will be allowed to attend as well.

Needless to say, the executive are frantically attempting to find a common programme that the workers and their enemies can unite around

This has meant a drastic watering down of the left 'Alternative strategy', agreed at this year's STUC conference.

But they have left intact the original demand for selective import controls which would be put to the convention, presumably to

unite both employers and unions in a nationalistic campaign for the "Benefit of Britain" i.e. British capitalism.

By inviting these 'interested parties' along, (some of the very people incidentally who are calling for jail sentences against strikers), the STUC are, as Lenin put it, asking a tiger to become a vegetarian!

The Scottish people have voted overwhelmingly for Labour at General and District elections and have consistently expressed their contempt and anger against the Tories.

Instead of offering watered down programmes, the STUC leadership should campaign along the lines of a bold socialist programme, and do their job of representing their class—the workers.

socialist policies.

However, the resolution from the NUM calling for import controls should be opposed. The reason imports have such a large share of the British market is because British goods are more expensive or of a poorer quality.

This is because of the mismanagement and failure to invest by the bosses in Britain. We should be clear the cause of unemployment is the bosses and their system.

The call for import controls pits worker against

worker and lets the bosses off the hook. What is needed to fight unemployment is a policy of; nationalisation under workers' control and management of firms threatening redundancies, a 35-hour week without loss of pay, nationalisation of the biggest 200 companies—for a socialist plan of production.

Delegates should support the LPYS campaign for a stronger shop stewards' movement. Only a united response by the labour movement can stem the tide of redundancies.

## Southampton

The most surprising thing about the meeting of the Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU) in Southampton was the numbers attending.

At previous pay protest meetings in Southampton never more than 500 have attended; but this time it was a staggering 2,500! Civil Servants along with everybody else are hopping mad about what's happening.

## Birmingham

As part of the campaign against the 6% limit and the scrapping of pay research, 1,200 civil servants marched through Birmingham.

Hundreds more crowded into a packed Digbeth Hall to hear speakers and a debate on which way forward for the pay campaign.

Bill McCall (IPCS) attacked the distorted picture of a "bloated and inefficient" civil service which had

been painted by the Tory government and he called for the government to "open the books."

## Nottingham

Over 1,300 civil servants attended the Nottingham CCSU rally to protest at the 6% limit on public sector pay, and the attacks on conditions of civil servants.

Assistant General Secretary of the Society of Civil and Public Servants, Leslie Christie, made the point that the Tories had managed to unite all eight civil service unions, a job others in the trade union movement had failed to achieve over years!

They had achieved this by successive attacks on the jobs of civil servants and now the provocation of 6% on pay.

## JR Bramah

Since the end of October 365 workers at JR Bramah Ltd in Halfway, near Sheffield, have been out on strike in an attempt to get management to implement a bonus scheme.

The dispute follows many months of discussion in which management proved completely unwilling to consider any scheme unless it means less pay for more work.

In a time of general recession, Bramah's have full order books. They supply aircraft parts to Rolls Royce and heavy plant to IBM, yet have refused the workers any share in this success, achieved by the workers' own skill.

The issue has been discussed at several negotiating conferences, all ending in a failure to agree. The workers were forced on strike after the company still refused to sensibly discuss a scheme.

With redundancies and short-time working now the norm in industry, the Bramah workers, members of AUEW and the sheet metal workers union, are giving a bold lead.

Previous struggles have

prepared them well for this dispute, and they are ready for a long battle.

Local people are supplying food, no lorries have crossed the picket, and there is close liaison with the ASTMS members and Boilermakers who have been allowed to continue work, while giving their full support to the dispute.

Dave Dallman, AUEW convenor, has also visited other factories in the Bramah group to ensure work is not diverted, although the reputation of the Halfway workers has headed off any management attempt to get work done elsewhere.

The dispute is likely to last some weeks and urgent help is required as no strike pay has yet been received.

Messages of support and donations to A Witham [Treasurer], 2 Sothill Close, Brighton, Sheffield.

**Dave Dallman**  
[AUEW Convenor]  
spoke to Alan Anderton  
[T&GWU]

## in brief

The strike committee at Adwest, Reading, are appealing for funds. Although the 60 workers who were sacked have been unable to achieve their demands, they need money to pay bills ran up during the campaign, and to help defend 26 people arrested in a mass picket on July 14. Send donations to D. Broderick, 46 Berkeley Avenue, Reading, Berks.

The general secretary of UCATT, Les Wood, has congratulated the Labour controlled Darlington council for their efforts to force construction contractors to employ union members only for council work. Mr Wood pointed out that if all Labour councils followed Darlington's lead, it would put enormous pressure on the reactionary building industry employers, who have a strong anti-union history.

Sid Weighell, general secretary of the NUR, will meet Arthur Scargill of Yorkshire NUM to discuss, besides gaining knowledge of the coal industry, the proposals by the ISTC for a 'triumvirate' of the three unions in defence of their industries, which are all closely linked. Coal, together with steel, represents 70 per cent of rail freight traffic.

An LPYS member has been fined £50 and ordered to pay £126 damages, after being arrested on the picket line in the recent Catercups dispute in Liverpool. Police claimed Mick Hogan scratched the letter 'S' on a scab lorry windscreen. Two witnesses stated that Mick had not committed the offence, but had merely put his hand up to prevent himself being run over as the scab lorry accelerated towards the picket line. An appeal is being considered.

COHSE are making a special study of the low earnings among their members, especially women working part-time. General secretary of the union, Albert Spanswick, said, "Married women's earnings make a vital contribution to family income. With rising unemployment among men, women's work is increasingly the only source of paid income a family has in many parts of the country." There are 135,000 part time ancillary workers in the health service, most of them women.

The Trade Union Joint Negotiating Committee, representing all unions employed by the GLC passed a resolution, "deploring the employers breach of the 1978 Firemen's pay agreement and fully supporting the FBU." All members will be instructed not to cross picket lines or hinder the FBU in their cause.

# Reports

## Why did the miners accept?

The miners voted for acceptance of the Coal Board's 13% pay and productivity offer by a relatively narrow majority of five to four. Thatcher has no doubt heaved a big sigh of relief.

But the detailed ballot figures [published 2 December] show that in four of the biggest, key areas a majority voted against acceptance: Derbyshire 57.3% against, Scotland 73% against, South Wales 67.3% against, and Yorkshire 64.6% against.

This shows that faced with a flood of pit closures there is a more militant mood in South Wales than last year when only 54% backed giving the Executive authority to call strike action.

The NEC's decision to accept was carried by the combined votes of bigger areas, Durham, Midlands and Nottinghamshire, where there was no lead from the left, and all the smaller fields apart from Kent, which voted 59.3% against acceptance.

With no clear lead from the National Executive and with other key industrial workers holding their fire against the government, most miners are not ready to take on the Coal Board and the Tories at this stage.

Meirion Evans, Brynlliw Lodge, South Wales NUM, comments on the ballot result.

The anger and frustration could be felt in the pits as soon as these results were announced, particularly in areas where a majority or close to a majority voted for non-acceptance.

The Coal Board's miserable offer of £10 wage increase for face workers

Meirion Evans of South Wales NUM, pictured outside the Brynlliw colliery

and £7.20 for the surface workers will soon be whittled away by increased council rents, prescription charges, and inflation generally.

Even though the left areas campaigned for a no vote, it was generally felt there would be no action taken if the Board could come up with an improved offer somewhere in the region of £15 across the board (for surface and underground workers). Indeed, even the Board's own research officers are reportedly of the opinion that the Board would have offered more money if they had been pushed.

This does not mean that £15 would adequately in any way compensate for the last year's increase in productivity.

We would still stand behind last June's conference decision: £100 for surface workers and pro-rata for other workers—a target that could have inspired a solid campaign, and could have been achieved with a fight.

What has changed since conference unanimously accepted the target? What happened to the other items on the priority list, the reduction in the working week, and an improved retirement scheme? All these have gone by the board.

For a number of years, miners have received their wage in retrospective agreements. This year, however, after only three meetings,

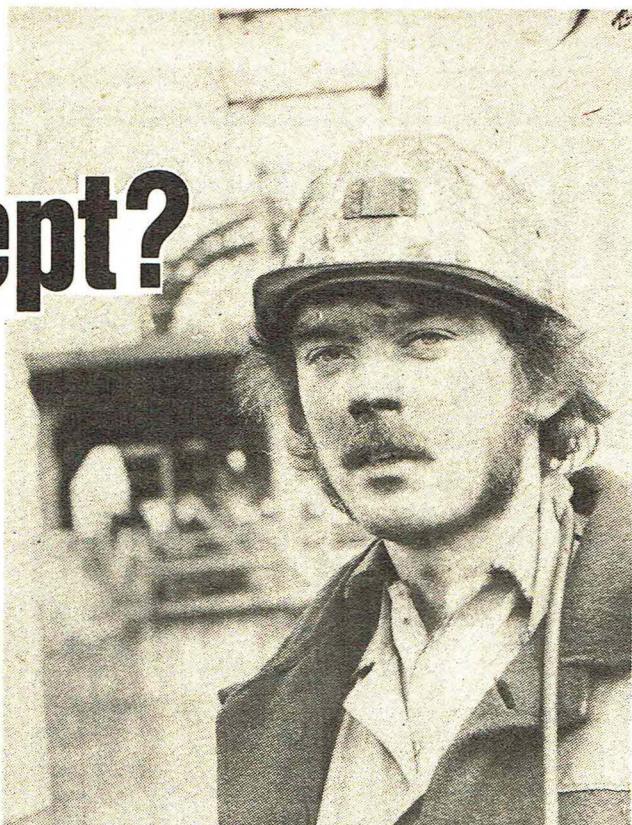


Photo: MILITANT

Joe Gormley and the NEC majority accepted the offer with a full seven weeks to go. Why?

A major factor for many miners was obviously the fear that higher settlement would result in more pits closing, but when did acceptance of reduced living standards ever stop pit closures? Pits closed in the 1960s irrespective of the wage increases we accepted.

The NUM is committed to oppose any closure on grounds of "unviability." But on the basis of recent experience, reinforced by the NEC's recommendation of the Board's offer, the union's executive is failing completely to provide the bold and resolute leadership necessary to defend living standards and defend jobs.

In South Wales, the issues were clearly explained during the summer at pit-head meetings and general meetings. The South Wales miners gave their area leadership a mandate to call strike action to shut down the whole coalfield if

any of our members are served with redundancy notices.

There are probably hundreds, possibly thousands, of miners in areas like North Wales, Durham, Nottingham who may feel isolated and frustrated at the moment because of the lack of a clear lead from our executive.

The left in the NUM to learn the lessons of the recent period, must open its doors to the rank and file, not just to secure the election of the left's candidate, Arthur Scargill to the Presidency, important as it is, but to ensure a genuine Broad Left.

This must be built up with fighting policies to defend miners interests and ensure the return of a fully democratic national leadership committed to conference decisions. The Executive and all officials must be accountable to the membership through regular elections. All miners must be involved in the struggle to control their destiny.

## 'We want a share of the profits'

Thatcher says that she does not have a wages policy, but workers can only receive increases if 'they are productive'.

As we have seen in the Ford Motor Company's negotiations, this piece of Tory propaganda has been shown to be a complete and utter lie.

The workers' claim was well researched by Ruskin College and was based on the company ability to pay. The claim is a rise in line with inflation; consolidation of the supplementary payment into the basic rate, and an index linked threshold agreement.

A shorter working week starting with 39 hours in 1981, plus an hour reduction each year culminating in a 35 hour week by 1985, plus improved holidays, and early retirement are also called for.

This claim was well presented and is by no means an extravagant or unrealistic claim. But Fords who made £285 million profit last year and over the last five years made £1,000 million, replied with the



Ford workers demonstrate against the 5% pay limit in 1978. Again this week they have rejected attempts to drive down their wages.

pathetic offer of a basic rise of 9%, plus an increase in the supplementary or an attendance allowance. All the other points on the claim have been totally rejected with the excuse that they cannot afford to pay.

On wages, they replied that with the present state of the car market, they cannot afford to give their hourly paid workers anymore. With inflation at 16%, they are actually proposing a 7% cut in wages.

On a shorter working week, they replied earlier in the year that they would offer a double day shift, which, with the dubious pleasure of starting at five in the morning, we could have five 'personal vacation days'. These PVDs had more strings attached than a marionette and this offer was totally rejected by the shop floor.

At mass meetings held this week, this derisory offer was totally rejected. As it is obvious from Ford's pathetic offer, they support the Tories in their aim to bring wage rises down to single figures, irrespective of whether companies are profitable and productive, or not.

The Ford workers have shown this week that they demand a share in the massive profits Fords have made. The workers will not be used to carry out the policies and aims of this vicious Tory government and their big business backers.

By Willie Harper and Steve Pimlett [T&G, Fords, Halewood]

## CHURCHILL'S

By Mike Lee [Uxbridge LPYS]

Workers in dispute at Churchills engineering factory in Uxbridge, West London, have recently returned to work after a long and bitter strike for trade union recognition.

Since returning, they have faced a barrage of attacks from management of this American-owned company.

The workers finally agreed to return to work after a magnificent and determined struggle in the fight for recognition of the AUEW. They agreed after management pledged to carry on discussions through ACAS.

But once the workers had agreed to return, management refused to go to ACAS and completely ratted on the agreement made with AUEW officials. Many of the workers were sent home on the basis of management claiming a phased return to work.

At the same time, 15% redundancies on the production line were announced—even blacklegs lost their jobs!

Redundancies have been negotiated with individuals, rather than the union. When it was found that insufficient had been accepted voluntarily, five workers were then sacked: everyone

of them shop stewards! In fact the whole of the former strike committee has now been removed by management.

But despite these vicious attacks on the workforce, trade union membership has been maintained, and in fact have increased, since the return.

Many of the workers and apprentices who worked during the dispute have since joined the union.

There have been increases in the wages and bonuses of the workforce. There have been important gains in this struggle, since for many of the mainly Asian workforce it was their first fight. It has acted as a tremendous stimulus to non-union factories throughout the Uxbridge industrial estate, and AUEW recruitment has increased in the last few weeks as a result of the action at Churchills.

As one Churchill's worker told me, they were starved back to work, but their struggle was not defeated. It is the beginning of the battle in defence of the right to organise.

## HEATHROW

By Dave Bayle [AUEW shop steward, BA, Heathrow]

Heathrow's British Airways management recently reached hitherto unattainable heights of incompetence in its handling of the 1981 wage claim.

The Engineering and Maintenance (E&M) workers' National Sectional Panel (NSP) submitted a wage claim to take effect from 1 January 1981.

This modest claim included a 20% increase on basic rates, including supplementary payments and allowances; a phased reduction in the working week to 35 hours; incremental scales increased; and retirement pay to be based on the 'best year of the last five years' service'. Also, holiday supplement to be increased to equate to four weeks' pay, and the annual holiday to be increased to 25 days after one year's service.

This was taken away by the employer for study, with a promise to give an answer at an early date.

The very next day, however, BA made an "across the board" offer to all staff—the first that many workers heard of this once in a lifetime offer was in a news item on radio and TV that evening.

The employers had surpassed their previous arrogant worst, and treated the NSP with complete and utter contempt and disrespect by trying to appeal over

the heads of the trade union negotiators directly to the workers.

They first propose to bypass the 1 July 1981 update for shift pay and to resume any updating on 1 July 1982, thereby missing out one year!

Other parts of the claim were similarly proposed to be put back and the shorter working week issue was totally discarded. Finally we were asked to increase our BA pension scheme contributions by about 15% per week.

With inflation running at 16%, with huge rises in the cost of living generally, these latest BA proposals offer no solution, and reflect a complete disregard for the 55,000 employees.

As a result, thousands of E&M workers at Heathrow voted overwhelmingly to reject management's offer as being totally unrealistic.

After the meeting, a mood of anger against BA's blatant anti-working class proposals flowed throughout Heathrow's engineering workers. Our original claim must now be taken seriously by BA and if necessary action must be called by our unions to achieve our modest but vital 1981 claim.

## A C DELCO

A.C. Delco in Kirkby, Merseyside, a subsidiary of General Motors, are to shed 371 jobs.

With most departments on short-time working, this is a further blow to Kirkby, which this month already has 794 more men and 210 more women unemployed than this time last year.

Management are saying

the company is unviable, expecting a loss of £24 million. This is despite an increase in producing instruments for OPEL, from 25% in 1975, to 50%.

The crunch will come this week, if not enough volunteers come forward, as the shop stewards have come out against compulsory redundancy.

## FIREMEN - BIG CLIMB DOWN BY EMPLOYERS



Photo: MILITANT

**In a sharp about-turn, the local authority employers have offered the 34,000 firemen the original 18.8% due to them under the 1977 agreement which concluded the national firemen's strike.**

The offer is in two stages: 13% back-dated to 7 November—and the rest in April. This is a climb-down on the part of the employers and a capitulation by the government in the face of the determined stand and swift action by the firemen.

The employers have also been cautioned by all the indications of support for the firemen from the labour and trade union movement.

When the Tories realised they had failed to frighten the firemen into accepting 6%, they began to panic at the prospect of another battle. This time, unlike 1977 when the TUC failed to support

**By Wayne Jones**

them, the firemen would not be isolated.

A strike with widespread solidarity action, including the fire officers, and with the possibility of action involving the whole of the public sector, would not only have destroyed the 6% but would have quickly turned into a massive challenge to the government.

This has been averted for the time being.

Other public sector workers, however, will see this settlement as a pace-setter. Already, NUPE have warned that the ambulance drivers will seek a pay rise this winter of at least 18.8%.

The Executive of the FBU voted narrowly in favour of the offer. Some felt that rejection of the offer and a stepping up of the action would have achieved a total victory.

The employers' offer will now be recommended to FBU members at a recall conference in Blackpool on 11 December. Undoubtedly, the reservations of some EC members and their feeling that the full 1977 agreement could have been achieved, will be reflected at conference.

Until the conference's decision, the work-to-rule will be maintained and strike action is merely "suspended".

### Threatened cuts will be fought

However, in view of the employers' climb-down on pay, it is likely that delegates will accept the Executive's recommendation, though firemen will want to make immediate plans to resist the imposition of the "strings" threatened by the Tories.

The Tories are desperately trying to cover up their defeat by the firemen, presenting this as a "unique" settlement and a "special case". White-law has warned that the money will have to come through more cuts in the service. But this "statement of intent" from the employers was immediately given short shrift by Ken Cameron, FBU general secretary. He replied that the pay settlement is "completely unconditional" and that the threat of job losses was "totally rejected".

The employers' statement is a repeat of the proposals for cutting the service and jobs—endangering more lives—outlined in the recent Green Paper.

The FBU have rebutted these proposals point by point in their own "statement of intent", which gives notice to the employers that a properly staffed and efficiently maintained fire service will be defended by whatever action is necessary.

Jobs and conditions are now a vital issue for the recall Conference. A clear call will need to be made that no cuts in the service, and that no redundancies will be tolerated. Any such threats must be met with united, national industrial action.

## RAIL CUTS Continued from page one



The capitalist slump has hit the railways with a vengeance, drastically reducing both freight traffic and passengers.

Instead of cushioning this vital service from the recession, the Tories are making things worse by imposing impossible 'financial targets'.

The Paris underground receives a bigger government subsidy than the whole of BR. Passenger fares on BR meet 71% of costs, compared to 61% in West Germany and only 55% in France.

Good transport is not a 'luxury'.

Without public transport, the bosses would find their work-force thin on the factory floor.

Astronomical rail fares—50% increase in short-journey commuter fares this year—are eating into workers' wages, let alone ruling out travel for the jobless. Not only the railways are going to wrack and ruin, moreover. The National Bus Company has also announced massive cuts in services.

Many big Transport Executives like the West Midlands and West Yorkshire, are cutting suburban bus services and sacking staff.

When transport is run by big-business, Tory methods there is a vicious spiral: higher fares mean fewer passengers, which mean more

cuts. BR's family rail-cards and special fares (now bringing in a third of BR's ticket income) show there could be a big demand for services.

But they have been priced out of the reach of most working people. A train journey to visit friends or relatives or go on holiday has become an impossible luxury for millions.

According to the adverts, "It's the Age of the Train." But under the Tories and their crisis-ridden system, we are going back to the conditions of less civilised times when most people rarely travelled beyond their own town or village.

The Tory cutters are the vandals in a new era of capitalist decline.

The railways and most of the bus companies are publicly owned. They should be planned and run in the interests of the public.

They should be taken out of the hands of bosses who think they can run them like "private enterprise" for profit and be placed under workers' control and management.

If the Tories and big business object that "the country" can't afford it, the system must be changed.

It is so-called "private enterprise" which has gone off the rails.

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