

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p



SAVAGE ATTACK ON WORKERS



Photo: Militant

Tory measures mean : Higher prices More jobless Deeper slump

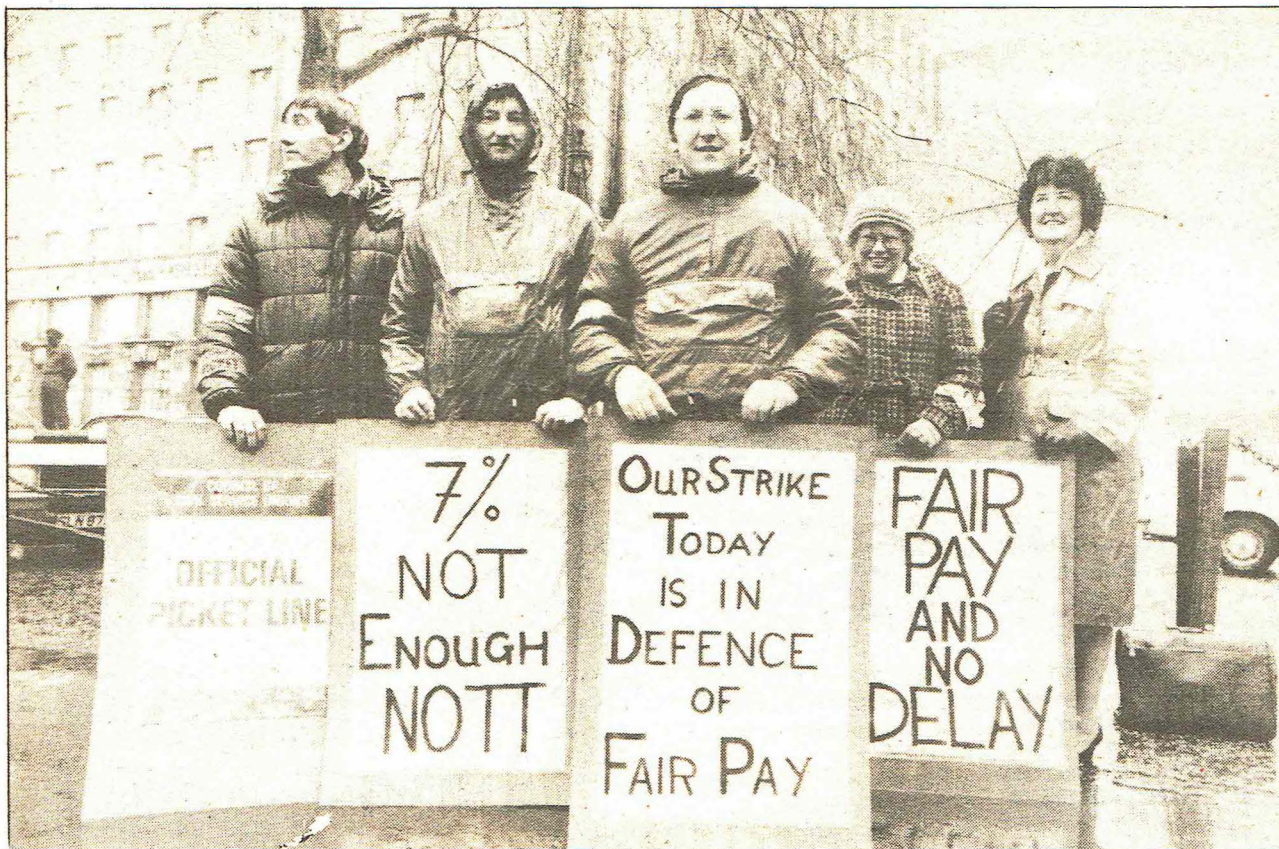


Photo: Julian McKittrick

Civil Service Action Bites

Further reports
on civil service
action—Page 15

The workers shown above defending their living standards at the Ministry of Defence are typical of the determination of the 450,000 who joined the civil service strike on Monday 9 March.

The seven per cent increase offered by the Tories seems even more ridiculous after Howe's bombshell budget. Stickers saying "7% of nothing is nothing" summed up workers' feelings. They put the lie to any idea Thatcher and co. may have had about civil service workers being an easy target.

There is also widespread anger at press coverage. Martin

Fenn, CPSA branch secretary at Nottingham main benefit office told 'Militant' reporters "the campaign has been so vitriolic with all the talk of "Whitehall Mandarins", it's encouraged many more people to join the strike."

The potential strength of the action has been shown by the successes of civil service strikers in Inland Revenue and customs and excise in delaying implementation of some of Howe's penal measures. Civil service workers are determined to show they will not accept Tory cuts in living standards.

Anger and horror is workers' reaction to Howe's savagely anti-working class budget.

By
Roger Shriver

"How on earth will we manage now?" was the question being asked in working class homes as news of the Tories' tax and other measures came through.

Afterwards, even the millionaire's own press couldn't deny it hit workers hard, while providing a hand-out to the very rich. They admitted it would do nothing to pull the economy out of the slump.

The budget will add pounds more to weekly shopping bills and unemployment will be given a further twist upwards.

Yet far from solving any of the dire economic problems of British capitalism, this budget will only help to deepen the present slump.

Howe claims that the budget aimed to correct the imbalance between "hard-hit firms" and the "good fortune" of individual consumers, ie the workers. What a cheek!

What "fortune" have we had under this government? Two and a half million workers are on the dole officially, prices and taxes continue to go up and up—while massive cuts tear the heart out of vital services like housing, education and the NHS.

The bosses' party was elected largely on magnificent promises of redu-

cing the 'tax burden'. Even before the budget however, taxes were higher than ever, with huge rises in VAT in particular hitting working people.

Now the Tories are pinching another £6,000 million from our pockets. There are huge tax increases on cigarettes, alcohol and petrol. The rise in petrol alone will cause all prices to go up, with increased transport costs affecting shopping bills.

Direct tax also goes up as tax thresholds remain unaltered, despite inflation. This is another slap in the face for the low paid. Families will now start paying tax at 39.2% of average male earnings compared to the pre-budget 41%. When the Tories came to power, the figure was 45%

It will be the low paid who lose most. The budget's rises, direct and indirect, and increases in national insurance will increase their costs by 6% at a stroke! For those on £600 a week, the rise is only 3%. The 'average' family's costs will rise by 4%

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PAGE TWO

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Budget prolongs the L-shaped slump

The Tories' budget is yet another vicious attack on working class living standards. While the very rich, not to mention the Royal family, will be personally better off, low-paid workers, retired workers, and the jobless will be particularly hard hit.

Howe claims that his harsh medicine will keep the sick patient on the road to recovery. But even the spokesmen in big business are screaming in agony after this sharply deflationary budget.

The Chancellor outlined tax measures which would take another £3,300 million out of the economy. By reducing the amount that workers have to spend, this alone is calculated to push up unemployment by a further 200,000 this year.

But if we include the covert increase in taxation which will be brought about by the failure to raise tax allowances in line with inflation, the total deflationary package comes to £5,000 or £6,000 million.

This is virtually guaranteed to push unemployment above the 3 million mark by the end of the year.

Public spending plans, already slashed by the Tories, are now being cut back even further. This time, education will be particularly hard hit.

But the main effect of the cut back in public spending will be on capital investment in the public sector.

Capital investment in roads, schools, hospitals, houses and so on is already down to a post-war low. This has had a devastating effect on manufacturing industry, particularly the construction industry.

The continuation of the 6% cash limit on spending, which Howe claims will also be rigidly applied to the nationalised industries, will mean even more job losses in the public sector and basic industries like steel-making.

Leading capitalist economists, including some who were previously enthusiastic supporters of Thatcher's policies, are now gloomily admitting that this budget will prolong, or even deepen, the "L-shaped" slump into which British capitalism has been plunged.

Gone are the days, they wail, when the economy was

hit by "V-shaped" slumps [rapid decline followed by rapid recovery], or even "W-shaped" slumps [sharp decline, false recovery, followed by later recovery].

Now, the economy has hit rock-bottom—but is staying there or even sinking further.

In the last year, we have seen Britain's biggest drop in manufacturing output. This century, even steeper than in the 1929-30 crisis. Total output of British capitalism is now about 6% lower than it was at its "peak" in the Spring of 1979.

Economic forecasters, moreover, predict a fall in living standards each year between now and 1984. Last year, investment in manufacturing industry—the key to any future recovery—fell by 15% and is expected to

ing the economy, has risen by over 18% since they took office—a record rate of increase.

The Thatcherites threatened they would drastically reduce public spending—but public spending has increased. While capital spending has been slashed, the expenditure on unemployment benefit and social security payments has inevitably escalated with the catastrophic rise in unemployment.

The total cost of unemployment, taking into account payments and lost tax revenue, is now estimated to be about £18,000 million a year.

Inflation has gone down, and is now claimed by Howe to be about 9% or 10% [though many key prices, like gas and electricity charges, have gone up by as

hours, the pound had begun to rise again on the financial market, defeating one of the main objects of a cut in interest rates as far as big business was concerned.

But what is the alternative?

The bosses' organisation, the CBI, is calling for a reflation of £1,500 million each year for the next four years. Their proposal is for the government to finance the public sector and the nationalised industries to provide orders for the private sector. They are definitely not in favour of increasing spending on housing, education, health and other vital services.

But £1,500 million a year is a derisory reflation, mere chicken-feed. While probably giving a further boost to inflation, it would do little to stimulate the stag-

restore all the cuts made under the Tories [together with cuts previously made by the last Labour government]. But leaving this aside, the question is: how would this reflationary boost to public expenditure be paid for?

If it is paid for by a return to Keynesian deficit financing it will immediately accelerate inflation. On this point, there is a grain of truth in the monetarist position.

But if such a reflation were to be paid for out of taxation, this would either hit the bosses [undermining profitability, restricting investment, and therefore defeating its object] or hit the workers [which would also cut back workers' living standards, thus undermining any benefits of increased public expenditure].

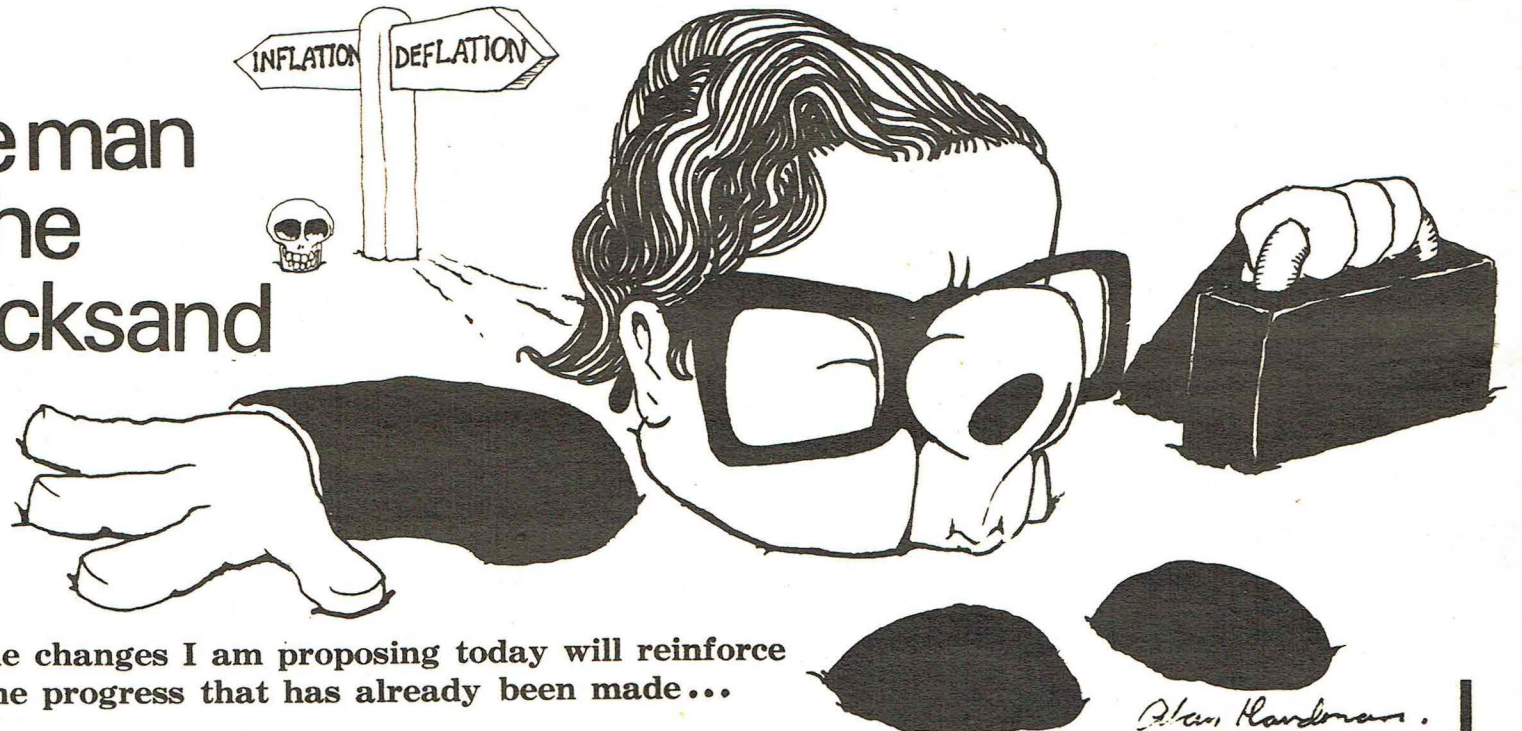
Unemployment could immediately be wiped out. Working hours could rapidly be reduced to 35 hours and less. Wages and living standards generally could be enormously improved, even on the basis of the country's present resources which are rotting because of the slump conditions.

But industry can only be planned when the big industrial monopolies, the banks and other finance institutions are owned and controlled by the working class.

Therefore, socialist economic policies must be squarely based on the nationalisation of the commanding heights, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, and the implementation of workers' control and management.

This is what Clause IV,

The man in the quicksand



fall a further 15% over the next twelve months.

These basic figures show the disastrous position of British capitalism. This is already having devastating consequences for working people.

The sickly British capitalism, which has been steadily declining since the end of the second world war, has been particularly hard hit by the world economic crisis. But the British crisis, as even many leading capitalist economists now admit, has been made even worse by the Tories' Thatcherite policies.

Even judging by their own monetarist targets, the Tories are way off course. The money supply, supposedly the key to controll-

much as 27% in the last year]. But the slowing down of inflation is mainly due to the high pound [which has undermined the competitiveness of British firms on the world market] and the stagnation induced by Thatcherite policies.

Thatcher and company also promised that there would be tax cuts to provide "incentives" to bosses and workers. In reality, the tax burden has been increased over the last Labour government, and will now be even heavier after this week's harsh budget.

It is true that Howe has now cut the interest rate by 2%. But this was much less than the financiers expected, less than industry was demanding—and within

nant economy—and would do even less to improve the position of workers.

The Tory "Wets", the economists who have now turned against Thatcherite policies, and the capitalist papers which have changed their tune on economic policies since the euphoria of Thatcher's honeymoon period, have no solution to the crisis.

The trade union leaders, through the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, have also put forward an alternative strategy. The main plank of this is a reflation of £6,000 million to boost public expenditure and bring down unemployment.

However, even a reflation on this scale would not

An increase in public expenditure, unless linked to thorough-going socialist economic policies, will not provide a solution.

The devastating character of the crisis gripping British capitalism is now recognised by nearly all sections of the labour movement. But the necessary conclusion must be drawn: there is no way out of the crisis as far as the working class is concerned within the rotten framework of capitalism.

The only way out lies through a socialist programme. A socialist plan of production would make possible the restoration of all the spending cuts—and also an improvement in health, education and social services.

part IV, of the Labour Party's constitution, which embodies the labour movement's basic socialist aims, means in practical terms under conditions of a crisis-ridden monopoly-capitalism.

This is the conclusion that must be drawn from the Tories' punishing budget—and which must now be taken through mass campaigns to millions of working people suffering from Tory mis-rule.

See also: 'CRISIS IN THE CAR INDUSTRY' Pages 8-9



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Benefits will rise this year by 9%, yet even the Chancellor's optimistic inflation forecast thinks prices will rise by 10%. Pensioners, the sick, the unemployed are hit.

The Royal Family, on the other hand, get a rise of 12%; 19% if you take into account their overspending last year! The only sacrifice they are asked to make won't hurt them—they are asked to hold back their pay increases to their staff to just 6%.

As a result of the budget,

it will be possible for the rich, by careful timing, to transfer their property, to relatives at a much lower rate of tax. It is down from 60% to 35% on £310,000 worth of property, and down from 75% to 50% on £2.01 million.

The only 'help' Howe had for the unemployed was to suggest they start their own businesses. Thanks a million! Will there now be the market for 3 million tobaccoists, while cigarette prices are spiralling?

Further cuts in govern-

ment spending hit mainly at capital expenditure and at services, particularly education.

The White Paper on expenditure estimates the loss of 18,000 teaching jobs by next January. One in six polytechnic and college lecturers could be thrown on the dole by 1984!

Will the budget 'save the economy'? Not on your life.

Sir Terence Beckett, director general of the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, certainly didn't anticipate a

great revival of industrial investment.

"He has done nothing to help business," he moaned. "The deflationary effect of the budget will offset the benefits of lower interest charges." In other words, it will just deepen the slump, with more people out of work and those in work having less money to spend on goods.

Already Tory knives are being sharpened for Howe—as a possible scapegoat for Tory failures.

For workers, no Tory can

help us. Our resolve must harden to boot out the Tories—and fight for a Labour government pledged to a socialist solution to our problems.

The enormous anger of the working class must be harnessed by the labour movement. More and more workers are turning to the trade unions and the Labour Party for a way out of their burning day-to-day problems.

Labour must give a fighting lead, based on bold socialist policies!

DECENT JOBS FOR ALL YOUTH!

Youth Opportunities Programme

"Real jobs for kids." That will be the demand from a rally of up to 10,000 working class youth being held in London on 12 April.

Initiated by youth workers and Youth Clubs in Rotherham it is now getting large scale national support, especially from youth club members and those on Youth Opportunities Programmes [YOPS].

The prospects for school leavers this summer are the blackest this century! The Manpower Services Commission estimates that 400,000 youth, two-thirds of this summer's school leavers, will go straight on to the dole queue. Over 200,000 of these will be unable to find any kind of job, and be taken for six months onto YOPS schemes.

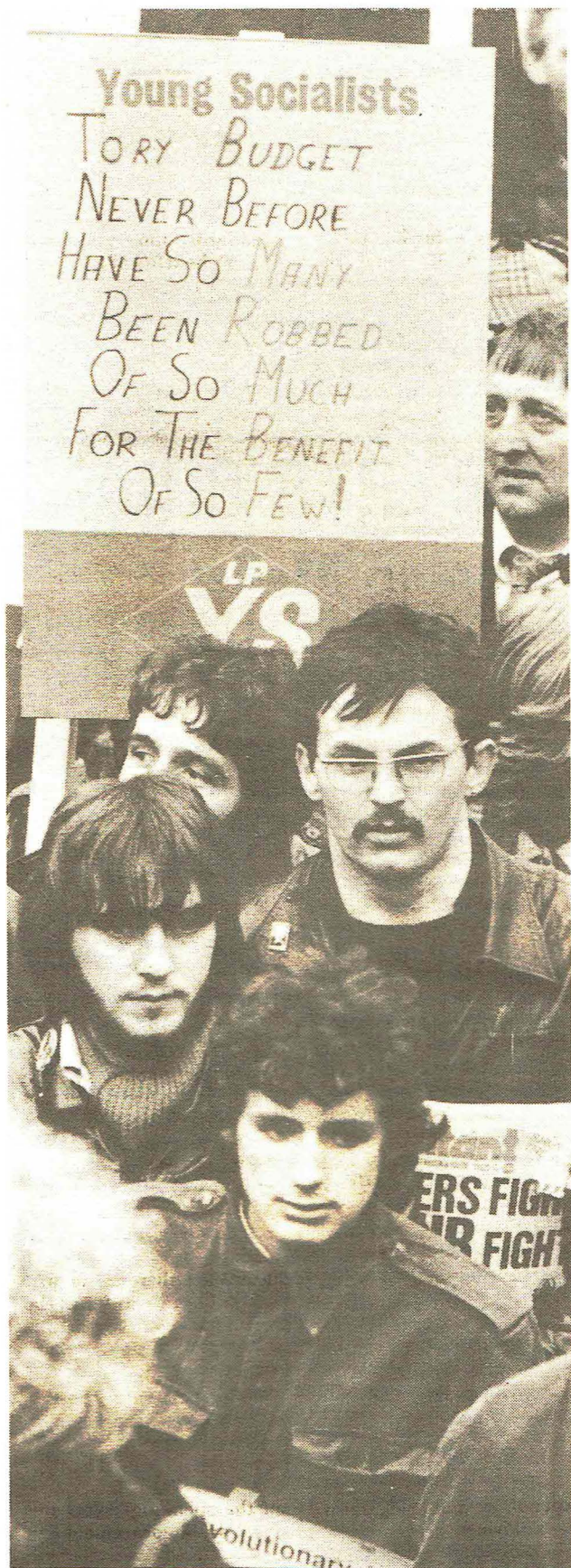
After that the majority will go straight back onto the dole. Even while they are on these schemes, they will mostly just be cheap labour, and have no real training. In what must be one of the meanest acts the Tories have frozen YOPs payments this year, at a measly £23.50.

Hundreds of employers are now taking advantage of this to just take on youth for 6 months (paid by the state) rather than take on a worker full-time and pay the rate for the job. Surveys show that more than 30% of young people working for firms under various YOP, and Work Experience programmes are being substituted for permanent jobs.

The LPYS National Committee are calling on branches, especially in London, and the south-east to mobilise for this rally (which may be accompanied by a demonstration). We are producing a special leaflet for the rally, which puts forward a clear socialist programme to end unemployment and exploitation:

Real jobs for all!
A guaranteed job for every school-leaver!
Trade union rates of pay for YOPS!
A minimum wage of £80 at 18!
Throw out the Tories and their rotten system!
Rally 'Real Jobs for Kids' April 12th 2-4pm Hyde Park

By Kevin Ramage
(National Chairman, LPYS)



Forecasting the budget on last month's Labour Party Scottish demonstration Photo: Militant

Growing support for Marxist ideas

An indication of how a further year of Tory cuts has sharpened the debate within the labour movement on how best to resist them was given at last weekend's London Labour Party Conference.

At last year's conference the debate veered between the right wing, who wanted to make the most humanitarian cuts, the left wingers who put forward rate rises to offset the cuts, and 'Militant' supporters who put forward a policy of no cuts and no rate increases.

This year was different. Those who last year argued for rate increases now seemed hesitant to argue their case. The only real alternative to cuts was put forward by the LPYS and a resolution from Greenwich and Croydon Labour Parties.

The LPYS pointed out that Lambeth, who had followed the strategy of increasing rates to offset the cuts, had been forced to propose a 37% rate increase, a £4 rent increase and 10% cuts.

The LPYS amendment called for a Labour Greater London Council to take a lead and implement a policy of no cuts and no rate increases or rent rises to compensate for cuts in the rate support grant. It went on to point out that if the district auditors were sent into boroughs to balance the books, then the Labour Party would be able to defeat the Tories by organising a mass protest, with rent strikes, rate strikes, occupations and strikes.

Labour authorities should now be mobilising the trade union and labour movement to ensure that the manifesto would be carried out. The motion from Greenwich and Croydon Labour Parties put forward the same approach. It was a measure of the change among delegates that nearly a third voted for this motion as the only realistic way of rolling back the Tories' attacks.

Other debates, noticeably on import controls, showed a similar divide. In the elections for the Regional Executive, all four 'Militant' supporters were returned.

By Anne Beales
(Chairman, London LPYS)

Turning a march into a carnival

The four-week ban on demonstrations in London, imposed to curb violence in Deptford has had repercussions for the labour movement.

The demonstration planned for 21 March by Waltham Forest Youth Campaign Against Unemployment, calling for a day centre for the unemployed, came under the ban. Months of activity had gone into the planning.

Rather than lose the benefit of all these activities, we have decided to have a rally. But instead of marching we're walking to a local park to have a mini-carnival, with a local band, The

Hawks, a local MP and other labour movement speakers.

We intend to make it an event which will attract Saturday shoppers and families; there will be stalls from the YCAU, People's National Party, LPYS, trade unions, as well as entertainment stalls.

The ban on the activities of the labour movement must be opposed. We will be circulating local MPs, councillors, unions and Labour Parties requesting support for a letter condemning the ban to be sent to the Home Office.

Reflect sales increase with May Day greetings

May 1st is the day of the international working class, when the labour movement reaffirms its opposition to the bosses and their system. It is your opportunity to show your support for the bold socialist policies of the 'Militant' by sending a May Day greeting.

Organise with the Labour Parties, unions and LPYS branches and book a half, a quarter, or an eighth of a page to fill with adverts from your area. Last May Day we had four pages of adverts, this year we are aiming for six pages. Make sure the Tories and the bosses know that the support for Marxism in the labour movement is booming in your area, so get your greetings in.

Our rocketing sales continue apace, over 2,000 being sold at the Labour

Party demo in Glasgow and hundreds of extra papers being sold during the miners' dispute. Last week was also another record with 7 new bulk orders for the Militant.

The breadth of support for Marxist ideas can be shown by the geography of the new orders; Paderborn [West Germany], Arbroath [Scotland], Shepton Mallet [Somerset], Redhill [Surrey], Hyde [Greater Manchester], Ashby-de-la-Zouch [Leicestershire] and Whitwell [Nottinghamshire].

If you wish to become a seller of Militant contact: Circulation Department, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986 3828.

By Dave Farrar

Obituary: Howard Grainger

'Militant' has the painful duty of reporting the death of Howard Grainger, a supporter of this paper and a member of the LPYS, who was viciously murdered on Wednesday 4 March.

When Howard's comrades heard of his death, there was a feeling of great shock and revulsion. Howard was, as far as we can tell at present, the victim of a senseless, unprovoked attack. While walking home at night, Howard was set upon, beaten up, and left dying only yards from his own front door.

On the day of his murder he had been attending his usual trade union day release course and at the afternoon break, together with several other trade unionists, went to the Labour Club.

It was here that Howard had a last conversation with fellow socialists, pointing out that he had just booked his holidays to coincide with the LPYS national conference. Before he left, he took an extra two copies of 'Militant' and said goodbye.

Howard was won to the ideas of Marxism during one of the periodic witch-hunts against the 'Militant' and never lost sight of those ideas in the intervening

three years. During the thirteen-week steel strike, Howard was to be found on picket lines as varied as Immingham, Boston and Ipswich.

After the strike, he was elected vice-chairman of the Appleby Frodingham heavy section mill ISTC branch. Delegates to the ISTC area committee held in Sheffield last Saturday stood in silence at the beginning of the meeting as a sign of respect. A number of speakers at the meeting expressed their condolences.

Paul Kneafsy, a trade union lecturer, said that Howard's abilities and financial resources were dedicated to the labour movement.

There does not seem to have been a directly political motive for Howard's murder. Nevertheless, this brutal killing is a symptom of the degradation and demoralisation of some youth as a result of unemployment, poverty, and the lack of prospects under this rotten system and the Tory government.

For his many friends and comrades, his death has made us even more determined to rid ourselves of a society in which oppression and violence are the norm.

COME TO LPYS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 17-20 April, Bridlington, Yorkshire

Weekend of political debates. Guest speakers include Arthur Scargill [NUM].

Full social activities: discos, theatre group etc.

LPYS branches should contact Labour Parties and trade union branches to help finance visitors.

Interested in going? Contact local LPYS branches or Andy Bevan, National Youth Officer, Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London S.E.17.

SCOTTISH LABOUR CONFERENCE



Youth on the march—LPYS members on the Labour Party demonstration against the Tories in Glasgow.

Photo: MILITANT

Lord Underhill's new friends

By Carol Bennett

(Aberystwyth Labour Club, in a personal capacity)

Hard on the heels of their colleagues at UCL Labour Club in London, 'Clause 4' supporters at Aberystwyth University have demanded circulation of the Underhill Report, an issue long since left dead and buried by the mass of Labour Party members!

Having failed to answer the policies of 'Militant' on a political basis, the 'Clause 4' supporters have adopted the red-scare tactics which are the hall mark of the Tory press and Labour right wingers, many of whom have now joined the 'gangsters' of social democracy.

Our Labour Club executive called a meeting which 14 people attended (out of an alleged membership of 200!) Ostensibly, it was to discuss the result of

the Student Guild elections. However this was never discussed and most of the meeting was turned over to a resolution from a 'Clause 4' supporter calling on the party's NEC to circulate the notorious Lord Underhill report.

Of course the 'Clause 4' character apologetically said he didn't want to start a witch-hunt but added, "Labour Party members had a right to know just whose party it is."

As the only 'Militant' supporter present I pointed out the role the right wing played in wishing to get this circulated; at the height of the witch-hunt attempts last year they received a very sympathetic response from the capitalist press, in order to drag the policies of 'Militant' and the left wing in general through the mud.

I added that the local party, Cardigan CLP, had rejected the report and sent a resolution denouncing these

witch-hunt attempts to the party NEC.

Also, with the capitalist press presently pulling out all stops to try and build up the 'social democrat' renegades, hoping to use them against the Labour Party, they would jump at a chance to resurrect Lord Underhill's fairy tales of 'Militant' conspiracies and other such nonsense.

'Clause 4' replied that the fact that Lord Underhill was a right winger had nothing to do with publishing the report! Evidently the right wing is politically impartial towards 'Militant'!

The Clause 4 supporters went on to say 'Militant' did not have anything in common with the democratic conditions of the Labour Party, one adding we are a 'bad thing' for the party!

It will be interesting to see if this wonderful step forward by the 'Clause 4' supporters will inspire the '200' members of the Labour Club into action. The club has not had more than one speaker and political subject for discussion this term, with several meetings being abandoned.

This action by the Aberystwyth 'Clause 4' supporters shows the division and confusion, not to mention political bankruptcy, this group now finds itself in.

Such a group cannot offer an effective leadership for Labour students in the fight back against the Tories.

PREPARE TO FIGHT BACK

This year's conference of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party will undeniably reflect the absolute bitterness that exists amongst working people here.

There is every reason for working people facing closures, cuts, redundancies, increased rent and rates to have a burning hatred of Thatcher and the Tories. This was illustrated by the massive turnout for the February 21st demo called by the Labour Party, in Glasgow.

Conference must give unanimous support to workers in struggle at the moment, particularly the Linwood Falbot workers and the occupation at the VF corporation factory in Greenock.

The economy debate at conference will discuss strategies of opposition to the Tories. The demand for a fighting socialist alternative is contained in resolution 58 from Pollock CLP.

Resolutions calling for the setting up of unemployed centres, a fighting programme to oppose redundancies, and rejection of an incomes policy are all clearly laid out by Central Ayrshire CLP, East Edinburgh CLP, the G&MWU, and the NUM.

There are resolutions supporting the alternative economic strategy and, in varying degrees, import controls. But imports themselves are a symptom of the crisis of British capitalism in this country, rather than its cause.

Unfortunately other resolutions call upon the Tories to merely "change course". Delegates will not need to think further than three weeks ago when the miners showed us how you actually teach the Tories a bloody lesson rather than give them a lecture on the finer points of the economy!

Defending jobs, services and fighting the cuts will be another important issue for conference. A programme to fight cuts is spelled out by Pollock CLP.

Quite clearly, councillors will not be able to successfully oppose cuts on their own. The resolution calls upon the Scottish Labour Party Executive, in conjunction with the Scottish TUC, to organise a series of demonstrations and days of actions in support of those fighting cuts, for full backing for trades unions taking action against the cuts, and to persuade all controlling Labour groups to implement a policy of no cuts, no increased charges, no red-

undancies, no rates or rent rises.

Glasgow district Labour Party call for a "legal" fight-back against council house sales. This debate will engender considerable anger, particularly when Dundee GMCs and their councillors should be getting every means of support in their struggle to defend council house stock.

But the lynch pin around which every conference decision will be based is the programme that will build a mass democratic Labour Party. Glasgow Cathcart CLP correctly calls for, not only non-affiliated trade unions to affiliate, but also the setting up of STUC/Labour Party Liaison committee and the reformation of local Labour and Trades councils.

Through building these links and giving a clear political lead to the working people, political and industrial opposition to the Tories can be brought to bear with the object of getting them out at the earliest opportunity.

Vote for Gordon McKinley, 'Militant' supporter, for the Scottish Executive Committee

LPYS ROUND-UP

Shepton Mallet

Shepton Mallet, a small town of around five thousand people some twenty miles from Bristol, now has a youth movement which is getting stronger day by day.

'Militant' is helping us get our message across. We order twenty 'Militants' to sell for the week; but by the end of the first day of selling we were running short.

I would like to thank our comrades in Bristol for all their help, and the youth of Shepton Mallet for their support.

Youth in our town who have not yet joined the LPYS must join! No one else has ever done anything for the youth of Shepton Mallet in the past.

We in the YS do not just talk about what would be

nice to happen; we act now. We know what needs to be done and we know what is needed to get it.

Join the Young Socialists now. We have a hard fight ahead but with your support we can move in a united youth movement against the old system.

By Ron Hodgetts

Clydebank

Prior to the main demonstration against the Tories in Glasgow on 21 February, Clydebank saw its first demo since the days of the UCS work-in.

Organised by the Clydebank LPYS, the participants marched through

Clydebank attracting victims of capitalist policies—the unemployed, pensioners, handicapped, school-children and children.

Clydebank is now an industrial graveyard. The Tories have set up what they euphemistically call the Scottish Development Agency to create an "enterprise zone"—meaning quick profits at the expense of the people.

The Clydebank Provost (supposedly Labour) claimed that the "image of Red Clydeside is dead." We in the YS believe that the 200 people on the demo showed what they thought about that. The Clydebank YS has now been flooded with new members, who are proud to be associated with "Red Clydeside".

By Ronnie Martin

(Clydebank LPYS)

●
LPYS Public Meeting, 'Ireland'. Speaker from Labour and Trade Union Group, N Ireland. Saturday 14 March, 12.30pm-1.45pm Labour Party Hall, Borassa Street, Perth.

●
Sheffield Hallam LPYS Public Meeting 'The Fight Against Unemployment' Hear: Margaret Reavey (LPYS NC) 7.15pm AEU House, Furnival Gate. Wednesday 18 February. All Welcome

●
LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS End Unemployment! March and Rally, Dover, 28 March, 2.00 pm. Meeting at Russell Street Car Park (next to Southern Region TV offices). Speakers include Rod Fitch (Prospective Parliamentary Candidate Brighton Kemptown).



Fifteen members of Bridlington LPYS held a sponsored 20-mile march around the town, as part of their campaign to fight unemployment. They managed to demonstrate and raise money at the same time! With this sort of initiative, it's not surprising that the YS branch has grown from ten to forty, and is still growing. If it can be done in sleepy 'Brid' says YS member Dave Brown, what are you doing?



All together now—a big “aah!” for Lady Margaret Huston and husband Tony. Poor things—stuck in a four-room flat in London. Well, I suppose it is a bit cramped with “a nurse, a nanny, a son, your wife and a new-born baby.” However, you’ll all be relieved to hear that one young couple have solved their housing problems. Daddy—the Marquis of Cholmondeley—is giving them a fifteen-room country house on the family estate.

We wonder if another titled couple will be as fortunate in getting out of their cramped London quarters. After all, one must be able to swing one’s cat—or one’s corgi.

Prince Charles visited the Scottish town of Greenock recently, to present long-service medals at the local sailing centre—it’s one of the things he’s good at. Of course it’s all in a day’s work for Charlie, completing yet another visit in his murderous schedule. He smiled, nodded, kissed [selected] babies’ heads and was as polite and charming as ever.

As the ‘Daily Mirror’ pointed out recently, it would be wrong to assume that the royal family are necessarily Tories. In fact, apart from his 250-quid shoes, his £350 Saville Row suit and £30 Turnbull and Asser shirt, you’d never know his ‘take home’ pay was £20,000 a week.

Why are Labour’s rank and file determined to extend democratic control? Where do we get the idea some MPs are out of touch? Sometimes the press answer their own questions.

When Peter Jenkins of ‘The Guardian’ had lunch with Roy Mason, Labour MP for Barnsley in Yorkshire, he sounded out Mason’s opinions on the state of the nation. Mason’s view is that we’re going through “a strange spasm.” “There are two and a half million unemployed but the people aren’t on the rampage, no parades and no mass demos...The nation wasn’t yet in the mood to say that Thatcher was no good.”

Mr Mason evidently doesn’t think 150,000 marchers in Liverpool amounts to a ‘mass’—or perhaps he didn’t know about the Labour Party’s demonstration there last November? As to views of Thatcher—all we can say is Mr Mason must have been talking to the wrong section of the ‘nation’: in the Commons bar, or his old friends in the brewery trade [he is an ex-consultant to Amalgamated Distilled Products and to Bulmers]. He certainly hasn’t been talking to the Yorkshire miners he is supposed to be representing.

In amongst the acres of Charlie and Diana ‘news’ and photos, the ‘Sunday Mirror’ carried a little advert for Thatcher’s Britain.

“Worried about redundancy?” it asked, as well it might. “Don’t be!” says this travel club. Because if you book your holiday with them, they’ll cancel and return your money if [or when] you’re thrown out of work. You’ll be left with no job and no holiday, but you won’t have to worry, will you?”

The Labour authority of Tower Hamlets in London’s East End is busily re-estimating budgets in the wake of Heseltine’s block-grant cuts. The council have turned up £4.5 million they didn’t know they had.

Last year Tower Hamlets paid £2 million into the London Rate Equalisation Fund, which was distributed to the ‘needy’ commuter belt, mainly Tory, Outer-London boroughs. This year the council, to its surprise, is actually receiving money from the fund.

The irony lies in the fund’s history. As a result of the magnificent resistance put up in Poplar [now part of Tower Hamlets] in 1921 against government attempts to curb council spending, councillors were imprisoned—only to be released by the government as a result of mass public pressure. To meet the Labour council’s demands, the government was forced to introduce—the Rate Equalisation Act.

What is the Artist’s role?

“The music moved me too, but...” Joan Baugh wrote [‘Militant’, 16 January] about her feelings of sharp contrast between the moving concert performance by Paul Tortelier and Maria de la Pau and the awareness of the acute problems now facing working people. This provoked a number of letters debating the role of the

artist in society, and to round of this stage of the discussion we are printing some of them on this page.

The main themes of the debate are clear from these letters. For readers who want to refer back to the earlier contributions, they were: Joan Baugh [page 5, 16 Jan.], Alan Huyton [Letters, 30 Jan.], Geoff Jones [Letters, 13 Feb.], and Helena Wray [Letters, 27 February].

Bob Stothard

Having followed the points made by several readers concerning the fees of Paul Tortelier from a Birkenhead concert, I found myself nodding sagely at the commonsense of Geoff Jones’ contribution.

Being newly unemployed I contrived to consider the weighty questions concerning art and socialism instead of quaffing an agreeable quantity of ale as was my wont on a Saturday night.

There happened to be handy a copy of “The Drawings of L S Lowry, Public and Private” (£12.50 net), borrowed from her place of work by my schoolteacher wife. The introduction and notes were by a Mr Mervyn Levy.

Now Lowry may be all things to all viewers of his art (the famous industrial settings complemented by “match-stick” people), but I

was jolted upright by Levy’s assertions regarding the artists’ contempt for working class people, his (Levy’s) intimation that working class culture was a ‘nonsense’ (his quotation marks), and finally his notes on a plate (127 in the book): “The artist has captured the feel of people hurrying briskly to work, full of energy. It would hardly look like this today!”

By the way, the book was first published in 1976, just in case readers may think Levy has a conscience after today’s unemployed numbers, when the lazy British worker was being pilloried in the media and by Wilson’s government.

It’s difficult to imagine the callouses on the hands of a man scouring his brain for newer adjectives on the works of artists. I mean, think of the biros he must wear out! I mean, ten men like him wouldn’t make an idiot!

Alan Huyton

Geoff Jones (letter, 13 Feb) once again fails to see the position of the artist (musician in this case) in capitalist society.

Although he denies it, comrade Jones does in fact judge the issue on moral grounds, particularly in the comparison of the artist to a company director. What we oppose and fight is not the individuals who write and perform music, but the fact that art and music are utilised for the benefit of the ruling minority.

Socialists must demand better teaching facilities, availability of tuition and instruments etc. But, of course, we realise that capitalism will not allow the majority of children the necessary education. It sees no purpose in it, and prefers not to use its profits in this way.

We are socialists because we recognise this. But, albeit in a distorted way, the system gives us a glimpse of what is possible.

Music offers us a great deal. Who could not be moved by music, whether it be the “Red Flag” or a Beethoven symphony? It is far from being an abstract art, and it reflects the processes and contradictions of capitalism.

For example, 18th century composers and performers, such as Mozart, used their abilities directly for the nobility. But later we see the development of music reflecting the 1848 revolutions and national liberation struggles, etc.

Both offer us worthwhile music, but under capitalism

access is discouraged by economic conditions and few of us have the ability to play for ourselves. Very few people are “allowed” to develop their natural abilities.

Of those who do it is only a tiny minority who “amass” rewards from it. Even those few are exploited by the record and concert companies, and the music they play is determined by “what will sell”, not the interests of music and furthering new or previously unworked work.

Historically, progressive music has been stifled. Many musicians feel this and do not have the opportunity to use their talent freely.

Comrade Jones makes a poor comparison in the artist to the company director. The artist and music, in general, are the ‘worthwhile’ products of capitalism. It is highly skilled labour which will serve a valuable purpose under socialism.

The company director is a direct part of the exploitation of the working class in the interests of profit. Such ‘talents’ (putting down the unions etc.) will serve no purpose under socialism.

We should not crudely condemn all the products of capitalism. Music is not just an ‘abstract’ or ‘bourgeois’ by-product, but offers us much pleasure and enjoyment and will be of great benefit to a socialist society.

We should also remember that the vast majority of musicians and composers are very under-paid and over-worked; their conditions will push many of them towards the realisation of the need to change society.

Geoff Jones

I agree with the vast majority of what Comrade Wray says: art by its very definition cannot merely be propaganda for one or another class. To say that an artist “has a responsibility only to the world as he perceives it,” is fine. But do you extend that freedom to the creative scientist? Oppenheimer, when asked why he wanted to build a nuclear bomb, answered: “Because it was beautiful”

The vital point is that in the final analysis, culture is always the culture of the ruling class. If one does not recognise this, one gets involved in the argument as to whether an artist “owes a duty to his art” or “a duty to his class.”

How could the struggle for socialism entail an artist destroying his or her talent? Easily, on a simply physical level, if you think of the young poets who joined the International Brigade in the ‘30s and got killed. Or, to take a more modern example, if you are an actor or musician in South Africa, who can only play to segregated audiences, do you owe a “duty to your art” to continue performing? Or do you fight for socialism, even if it means being unable to perform?

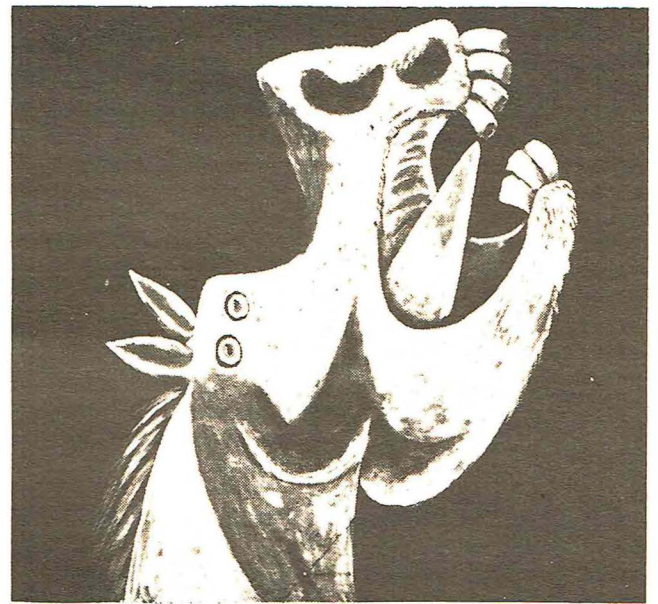
In fact, there is a much deeper sense in which a revolutionary artist has to destroy the carefully trained and nurtured skills passed down to him or her. A revolutionary era produces revolutionary movements in the arts and these can only

progress by smashing the old forms.

Take an example from painting. In his youth Picasso was a brilliant draughtsman and painted beautiful figure studies (his ‘Blue Period’). Jump a few years to consider ‘Les Femmes d’Alger’ [the startling ‘Ladies of the Avignon’ painted in 1907, which provoked the bold, geometric images of the Cubists and Picasso’s later works] one of the most revolutionary paintings of the 20th century. To paint it, Picasso had consciously to destroy all the skills in figure drawing etc. handed down to him from centuries of classical art.

The same applies to a greater or lesser extent to all revolutionary movements in the arts (and sciences). But these movements do not take place in a vacuum. They are reflections of the clash between classes. When that clash is in its early stage, we can perhaps afford the luxury of saying to people whose talents have been selected and trained in the arts, “Develop your own career, but give us what support you can spare.” In a revolutionary situation, such luxuries will have to go.

An artist or intellectual can only be of use to the revolution if he or she understands his or her role in the class struggle. Many artists understand this instinctively, but as with all instinctive understanding, they can only go so far.



Picasso: detail from Guernica

But the most important issue comrade Jones raises is that the artist, in putting his/her skills at the service of the working class may mean the destruction of these same skills.

I agree that we should encourage artists to side with the labour movement, but their skills cannot be destroyed or re-made overnight. The economic recession will force many musicians to our side, even the ‘big ones’ come the crunch, but their skills will not be destroyed.

Where possible, they will be utilised directly, for posters, songs, etc. In other cases, music will reflect the socialist revolution and encourage it. The force for revolutionary change is not the artists, but the organised working class. The support of artists will be a great boon, but not a necessity.

Under socialism, however, all artists will clearly see the

benefits, e.g. the ability to compose and perform freely, without the profit motive always dictating what the artist does. Artists will have a wider audience and the ability to use their talents for the benefits of us all.

The opportunity to develop musical and literary capabilities will be vastly extended. In this the “artists” will play an important role. To suggest that an artist may lose his or her skills in giving support to socialism will not further the end of profit rule, and will certainly not encourage a section of society, from the virtuoso to the lowly pianist, to throw their lot in with the labour movement. This would undoubtedly be a loss.

Rather, we must encourage artists of all ranks to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the movement and to support the struggle for socialism.

Welcome to the wonder of Woolworth's

When I got the job at Woolworth's, I thought it'd be a whole lot better than working in a factory strapped to a machine all day. But it isn't.

It's pretty exhausting. We've all got our own counters to fill up, and filled up they must be (to the brim), or our "standards must be maintained" manager is breathing down our necks.

It's so exciting filling up the same old shelves with the same old stock day after day, (mind you, there's not much I can't tell you about kitchen and bathware accessories). If you've got a lot of new stock to make room for on your shelves then at least you've something to think about, but if you're just filling up...well, it's so unbearably simple, you could do it half-asleep—most of us do!

At least if you're filling up you've got the freedom to move about a bit—maybe have a joke or something. But if you get put on cash desk or (horror of horrors) the delicatessen counter, it's a fate worse than death!

Every morning we come downstairs and look at the worksheets hoping that somebody else is going to get stuck on cash desk. If it's quiet and there's nothing to do then you've just got to sit there waiting for customers, feeling like a lemon and putting up with comments about having a "cushy job".

If it's busy then that's even worse. There's an endless stream of customers, queries and complaints—"can't you go any faster", "have you got this in a blue", "can I have a refund", "don't you talk to me in that tone of voice, my girl!".

We've lost several staff over the past year through people leaving and not being replaced and at times like Christmas, we really feel it. There are no spare staff on the shopfloor to check a price, go up to the stockroom or handle complaints; you've just got to manage on your own.

And, of course, there is never anyone to relieve you for your teabreak. We're always having to change our breaks or go up late. I expect management's answer to that is, not employ more people, but to scrap the teabreaks!

And when it's 5.30, you're ready to drop. Your back aches from filling up shelves, your feet don't belong to you, you've broken your last good nail, laddered your tights, your overall's filthy and dirty (especially if you've been on delicatessen).

Your mind's still buzzing from all those stropy customers and you can bet you're life somebody's had a row with somebody else. You're propped up against the cashdesk waiting for all the customers to leave so you can cash up and go home. But there's always some awkward person who won't leave till you boot 'em out!

And yes, we start to moan, and groan and get just a teensy bit annoyed...only to be told sternly that we are paid till 5.40pm and we're bloody lucky to have a job anyway!

By Helen Gasking
(USDAW and
Thanet East LPYS)

NOTTINGHAM — workers fight back



Textile workers in protest over unemployment in Leicester last year. Unity with other workers, not textile bosses, is the only way forward Photo: Militant

Textiles

"Torn to shreds." That's what happened to the hosiery industry.

One firm making a veil for the "royal wedding" won't have much effect on the expected 30% loss of jobs in the lace trade this year.

Last year, there were over 2,000 redundancies in Nottingham.

Fear for their jobs persuaded workers to accept a miserable 5% wage rise. Now only a few highly skilled workers are wanted in the trade that, a year ago, was the main source of vacancies in the town.

The unions must fight all redundancies and for work-sharing with no loss of pay.

Carrington-Viyella, who are now closing the Jersey-

**Reports by
Tony Cross
Joanna Morton
Jean Thorpe**

Kapwood factory in Netherfield, are discussing setting up in Western Europe with a North Carolina company.

The bosses should be forced to open their books to union representatives to show where the profits they made have gone.

Their failure to invest in new machinery is the cause of the industry's crisis. That's why the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers is mistaken to run a joint campaign with the employers demanding import controls. The Knitting Industries

Federation (KIF) and the union name America as an "unfair competitor", claiming its industry is subsidised by a cheap fuel policy. British miners are fighting for proper finances for their industry to provide cheap fuel. These and other workers are hosiery workers' natural allies! The miners have shown how closures can be stopped—but the KIF wouldn't sponsor the sort of action they took!

The union must demand the nationalisation of any firm declaring redundancies.

Shielded from competition by import controls, the bosses would invest even less. As long as they own the industry, it will stagger from crisis to crisis.

The answer is to nationalise it under workers' control and management and start a massive programme of planned investment.

If the big monopolies were nationalised and production



planned, every industry could have the finances to produce the goods and every worker the wages to buy them.

The TUC and Labour leaders must mobilise the whole movement and use the power the miners showed to force the Tories out and bring Labour to power on a socialist programme.

Rents

"I've waited all my life to get somewhere warm...now I wish I was back in my old house."

This despairing, angry remark came at a meeting of tenants in the Meadows estate of Nottingham. Tenants were furious that rents are rising by up to 50% whilst repairs and other council services get worse.

Pre-war houses have had their weekly rents increased from £10.48 to £18.56 and from £13.80 to £22.38 and that doesn't include rates, water and fuel charges.

At mass meetings tenants have demanded to know why the Labour council is just carrying out the Tories' orders. Rent strikes have been called for and tenants' groups established on estates which previously had none.

Local Labour Parties must support the tenants' demands, calling on them to join the party to either force councillors to fight the Tories or replace them with people who will.

But it is not enough to demand, as some have, that the cuts should be paid for by increasing the rates. Rent rises, rate rises, cuts in services, sales of council houses all amount to the same thing: making working people pay.

The council's own figures show what should be done. Out of the £46 million that the council spends in its housing revenue account, 15% goes on repairs, 7% on services and a staggering 68%—£32 million—is paid in loan charges. That is more than the £27m income from rents.

The labour movement must mount a massive campaign with the support of tenants and trade unionists against these financial parasites and refuse to carry out the Tories' cuts.

The Tories can be defeated. The leaders of the Labour Party locally and nationally should be leading such a fight, not hiding behind Thatcher.

Racism

"It's not enough to oppose racialism in words. The Tories would like a system where everyone has to carry a passport. They must face a mass mobilisation of resistance."

This attack on the Tories' racist Nationality Bill by Pabinda Singh of the Nottingham Asian Youth Movement, was made at a recent LPYS meeting against the Bill.

Black workers' organisations have held a number of meetings against the Bill and racist attacks. It is vital that the labour movement ensures that they are not left to fight alone. Recent developments in Nottingham have shown what happens when blacks are isolated.

Last year a group of white men drove into Hyson Green, an inner-city area, with a high black and Asian population and viciously attacked an

elderly West Indian man. The attack was reported to the police but nothing was done.

More recently, a Rastafarian was alleged to have raided a local Lloyds Bank branch. If the raider had been white one might have expected the normal police enquiry. But they used this excuse to subject local Rastas and their families to harassment and interrogation which most people would find intolerable.

The bitterness below the surface was seen a while back when a group of black youths tried to bomb the local police station.

Whilst understanding the frustrations that can lead to this kind of action Marxists do not support these futile individual acts of violence. It offers no way out of the problems facing black people. Instead we call for this fury to be channelled where it can be effective into building up a mass movement against racism and the racists.

The capitalists use racial-

ism to attack and divide the working class.

Black and Asian people are treated as second class citizens, in jobs, housing and education. A report, called "Half a chance" published recently by the local Community Relations Council, showed that employers discriminated against young black men in 50% of white collar jobs.

United mobilisation needed

Several national studies have shown that blacks get inferior treatment as far as council house allocation policies are concerned. A study of local housing associations indicates that with a few exceptions housing associations in no way cater for the

housing needs of black families.

At the LPYS meeting, Lawrence Coates (National Committee LPYS) pointed out that we must mobilise the Labour Party and trade unions against all racist measures and the Nationality Bill. This struggle was linked to the fight for socialist policies to rid society of the social conditions which breed racism.

Only the united power of the labour movement embracing both black and white workers has the power to bring this about. We must build such a movement to defeat the racist legislation, and force the repeal of all racist laws.

Support the Nottingham demonstration against the Bill called by local black organisations on Saturday 14 March, starting from the Forest Recreation Ground, mid-day.

Growing Police Powers Threaten Democratic Rights

Whitelaw's decision last week to ban all demonstrations in London this month shows how the bosses' law is used.

The Tories were worried that the National Front's proposed march in Deptford would provoke a riot. They therefore used the 1936 Public Order Act to ban all marches.

You cannot rely on the law to stop the fascists. It is a bosses' law and it is wielded in their interests.

The danger to the labour movement of such laws is clear. Under the declared intention of fighting crime, fascists, etc., wholesale attacks can be made against democratic rights.

And the Tories are now considering the proposals of the recent Royal Commission report on Criminal

By Norman Wilks

Procedure which would intensify these attacks.

Did you think the Tories had gone soft when they announced that they intended to scrap the 'sus' laws? Young black kids on the streets of Brixton and Handsworth will be no safer from police harassment if the new Tory proposals are made law. Under the new laws you can be arrested, without even being 'suspected' of being about to commit a crime.

The report alters the definition of what is considered 'necessary' detention, and virtually gives the

police a free hand. It widely extends existing police powers to arrest and detain without a warrant.

One test of whether it is "necessary" will be the "need" to secure evidence by questioning; another is, if a person is thought "likely" to skip court—so what is "necessary" is virtually a law unto the police.

In very "grave" cases, there should be a power to detain "temporarily" without arrest, says the report. In other words, not even suspicion that someone had committed a crime would be necessary before detaining them. This is a precedent not just for fighting crime but for carrying out wholesale arrests against ordinary workers.

If implemented, the report would not only legitimise much existing "illegal" detention which occurs in police stations. It would also remove much of the formal rights of detained suspects; rights in relation to police interviews, etc.

Whilst it talks glibly of the need for a code of

practice, to protect the rights of suspects, it is the police who will enforce this code. And the only redress is through the police's internal "disciplinary" proceedings—unless (which will be little comfort) you yourself take legal action against the police.

It is pleasant to note that the report 'condemns' the use of police evidence against a suspect or his or her family. Fine, but any evidence obtained in this illegal way would still be admissible in a trial—unless a person has been subjected to "inhuman or degrading treatment". So what can stop the police breaking the rules?

The report rejects the proposal that statements made to the police should only be admissible in evidence at trial if they were made in the presence of a solicitor. And it even suggests that people should no longer have an absolute right to see a solicitor when detained at a police station.

In addition to this, the report recommends that many existing police powers

be tightened up, e.g. the present powers to enter and search premises or stop and search people in the street would be confirmed by a Parliamentary Act. It also calls for similar legislation to stop and search motor vehicles.

It is not hard to see that these powers could be used quite indiscriminately and without redress. The present position would be confirmed, enabling the police in certain situations, e.g. dealing with "a breach of the peace", to search without a warrant and seize property on the pretext that it is "connected with" an alleged offence.

This would give the police an even freer hand for speculative searches and harassment of racial minorities and political activists.

The labour movement must recognise that these proposed powers could be used against it.

The Tory press has greeted the report as a fine "balance" between police powers and rights of suspects.

What "balance" can

there be when the report even rules out the principle of automatic tape-recording of all police interviews—which would be some safeguard against police conduct of the interview—on the grounds of cost, an estimated £6.5 million annually. Yet everyone knows of the increasing and expensive technological resources available to the police—wiretaps, listening devices, computerised records and other methods.

Few workers will have any illusions about the proposals made in the report. For the Tories to talk about "crime prevention" is sheer hypocrisy when it is precisely their policies—high unemployment, poverty, etc.—which create the breeding-ground for an increase in crime.

The proposals for new police powers would actually establish precedents that could in future be used against the labour movement, and must be firmly resisted.



Police photographer puts on file those participating in anti-Fascist demo in Brighton

Photo: Militant

T.U.C. Working Women Conference

Organise so that it's a joint struggle

"At first my union branch secretary blushed even to say 'good morning' to management. Now she can tell them to get lost better than I can."

Marissa Caseres-Reach (Transport and General Workers Union) was recounting how she had helped build up a fighting union membership amongst hotelworkers, to a recent conference on the problems of working women.

The conference, attended by 370 women from 26 unions, showed that if a special effort is made to combat the double oppression of women, there will be no lack of response.

Marissa, a shop steward in a Heathrow Hotel, explained that the majority of her hotel's workforce were Filipino. At first they were too frightened to join a union

By Glenys Ingham

because they were scared they would lose their work permits.

Marissa wrote to the Philippines Embassy and got them to give her a letter denouncing that myth—within a week they all joined and she was able to set up a branch of 400 members.

Initially branch meetings took place at 6pm, which meant that although they were the overwhelming majority in the union, most women were unable to attend. So after negotiations with management the meetings were held at 2.30pm when the shift changed.

At first she had to encourage women to take shop steward positions, on the basis that they could phone her if they had any problems. Initially, they phoned every five minutes, but after a few

weeks, they sorted out their own problems, and are now excellent class fighters.

A reflection of the generally poor attitude of trade unions to the special needs of women is shown by the extremely low proportion of women who hold official trade union positions. Journalist Anna Cooté told the conference that although women's membership of trade unions had enormously increased in recent years, they were still severely underrepresented. The two large public service unions, (NALGO and NUPE) which between them organise 820,000 women, employ 315 full time officers; only 17 of these are women.

Between the ages of 24-35 years, whereas 1 man in 2 is a member of a trade union, only 1 woman in 20 is. It's during these years that women are mostly tied to the house looking after children.

Even if a woman is working and joins a trade union she

finds she can't attend evening meetings because of the children. And the opportunity of meeting informally to chat about work grievances, pay and bonus problems, is difficult because she can't always just go down the pub for a drink and a chat; in lunch breaks at work, she's often shopping and in the evening rushing home to prepare meals.

It is essential that all discrimination against women is fought. No faith can be put on bodies such as the Equal Opportunities Board to do this.

Marie Sweeney, a delegate from Oxford Trades Council, illustrated this when she spoke about an occupation at Longworth Hospital in Oxford. The Area Health Authority there are trying to end long stay beds for geriatrics at the hospital. Chairman of the AHA, is Lady McCarthy, who also sits on the Equal Opportunities Board.



Picket of Klein Brothers

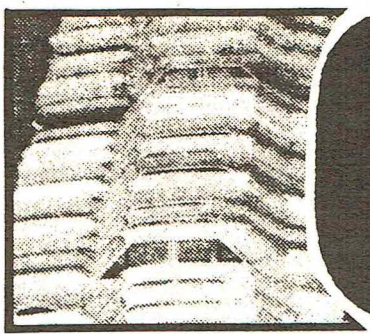
If the beds are lost it won't just be old people who suffer. Women who work in the area will lose their jobs, and with no alternative local employment, driven back into the home.

The attitude of the Lady McCarthys of this world was illustrated by the decision to send in the police to cordon off the area. Then the hospital was raided and four old women dragged out of their beds.

Only a united trade union movement has the strength to resist these attacks. But a special responsibility lies

upon the labour movement to make provisions to enable women to fully participate in discussion, decision making and action. Campaigning for proper social facilities to help free women from the drudgery and isolation of housework is essential so that we can all participate in the common struggle for a socialist future.

This excellent conference, organised by the South-Eastern Region of the TUC should be taken as an example by other areas to follow.



CARS

AN II

The 'World Car'

No matter where they switch their capital, the industrial giants face an aroused international working class.

In 1980, General Motors had to concede rises of 27% to their Mexican workers after a long strike. Fords were forced to recognise black trade unions and black shop stewards in their South African plants. They had to rely on the army in Brazil to put down a strike by workers in the biggest car plants.

Many in the labour movement consider the power of the multi-nationals unassailable. This is a mistake.

No matter where they look, for the capitalists the whole international scene is shaky. Even for the biggest monopolies, room to manoeuvre is more and more limited.

World-wide slump

The past two years have been the worst for the motor industry since before the war. The fall in the market—it slumped by 30% in 1980—meant something like 400,000 cars have been stockpiled in the UK.

Many car plants have been working short time for up to twelve months, although the level of imports has fallen slightly to 53% (Jan 1981) from 60% last year. The UK industry has had its lowest production since the 1950s. From a high of 1.9 million cars produced in 1972, production fell to 970,000 in 1980.

Yet this slump is not

peculiar to the UK. The whole capitalist world has suffered the severest car market slump since the 1930s.

The first postwar simultaneous world slump, of 1973 to 1975, shook the world car industry to its roots. On top of that, they were particularly affected by the rising costs of oil.

Most of the car manufacturers began to "rationalise" their manufacturing capacity. But no sooner had they begun the 1976/77 re-expansion, when the capitalist markets fell even more in the 1979/80 slump.

The sharpness of the fall meant most manufacturers continued to overproduce and created a world car stock of several million cars. Only in Japan has production increased; for the rest it has drastically fallen. The USA was overtaken by Japan as the world's highest car-producing nation.

	Car production		
	USA	Europe	Japan
1978	9m	11.4m	5.5m
1980	7m	10.5m	7.5m

For the first time in its history the US car giant General Motors recorded a loss: \$412m in the second quarter of 1980. For crisis-ridden Chrysler, the loss in 1980 was \$1.5 billion. By the end of 1980 Ford had laid off 39% of its USA workers. Altogether over 300,000 American car workers were sacked in 1980.

In Europe the picture was

nearly as bad. In France 54,000 car workers were on short time and Renault alone sacked 23,000, mainly immigrant workers.

In Italy, workers put up stiff resistance to the sack. Nevertheless, Fiat, whose production fell 30% in 1980, managed to get away with 15,000 redundancies.

Italy, by the way, restricts Japanese car imports to 2,300 per year; but it was no thanks to import controls that the bosses were prevented from completely offloading the crisis onto the workers' backs. The Italian car workers showed an as yet unmatched determination to defend their jobs.

Will UK firms be in the 'Big Eight'?

In the UK, this recession has been so deep as to threaten the existence of the home car industry. Most economists expect a slight upturn in the world car market by the end of 1981 into 1982. But whereas the continental manufacturers are expected to expand production, if only for a short time before the next even deeper slump, the UK producers are in such a decrepit state that no increase in production above the million mark is ever expected again.

Even for the world's biggest producer, Japan, the future is somewhat shaky, however. Already the Japanese home market is near saturation, with 30m cars for a population of 110m. The development of protectionism throughout the capitalist world would spell disaster for the Japanese car makers, because over 4 million out of 7.5 million cars produced are exported.

Import controls would herald an enormous battle for the shrinking world market. Due to the "voluntary arrange-

Bill Mullins, T&GWU shop steward at British Leyland, Rover, Solihull, outlines the prospects for the motor industry and a programme for its survival



ment" with Japanese exporters to limit their UK sales to 10% of the market in 1980, the Japanese switched their cars to Saudi Arabia where they undercut BL exports and became the biggest sellers in that area of the world.

Against this perspective more and more of the industry's forecasters, like Professor Bhaskar, are predicting that by the end of the decade, no more than eight big car manufacturers will be left world-wide, with the rest either merged into one of the big eight or disappearing altogether.

Such are the economies of scale needed to gain any competitive edge in the world car market that the biggest producers are now investing huge amounts to produce the so-called "world car", taking the world division of labour to a new limit.

The multi-national car

A multi-national such as Fords now produces for one model: engines in the UK, bodies in Spain, and assembly in France. This is known as the 'interchangeability' of components. The idea is as yet in the early stages:

General Motors are investing astronomical sums of money for its "world car", with plans involving not only Europe but South American and Asian countries who have GM plants, in producing components for one model.

Investment costs greater than Sweden's GNP

To get an idea of the enormous sums of capital involved, it costs \$2 billion to manufacture a new engine with a 1 mile per gallon edge over its competitors. Each mile per gallon improvement over that costs another \$2 billion.

Only the very biggest producers have this sort of capital available, from the huge profits of the past. The USA manufacturers, underestimating in the past few years the need to produce smaller cars with better fuel consumption, are now preparing to pour a staggering \$80 billion into small car manufacture between 1978 and 1985: more than the GNP of Sweden. This is three times as much, in real terms, as investment over the past eight years.

A social the only

The key to productivity is investment in machinery. That is why even the German manufacturers fear the competition from Japan.

British workers are used to their bosses' intimidating stories of German competition but the German workers in turn have had Japanese competition thrown at them.

The high level of investment in Japanese car production has meant that for example in Nissan, second biggest Japanese producer, productivity per worker grew twelve times between 1950 and 1975 and since then has increased by another 40%.

Already it takes two to three times as many European workers to produce a car as it does in Japan. BL on its "most modern line in Europe", the Metro at Longbridge, has a target of 23 cars per worker per year, yet Japanese manufacturers already have twice this productivity.

Investment—the Japanese secret

At one Japanese car factory investment has been so high that 80% of all operations are automated, and with 1,200 workers this factory churn out 150,000 cars per year. At Talbots Ryton, Coventry, factory, meanwhile, outdated machinery, with probably 80% of all operations manual, means that 1,100 workers manage to produce 50,000 cars per year.

The recent series in 'Militant' on Japanese car plants showed clearly that not only investment but also tam unions and sweat-shop conditions, are responsible for this super-productivity.

This has, of course, also meant super-profits for the Japanese bosses. In spite of the increased production

Car production 1978-1980 [in millions]

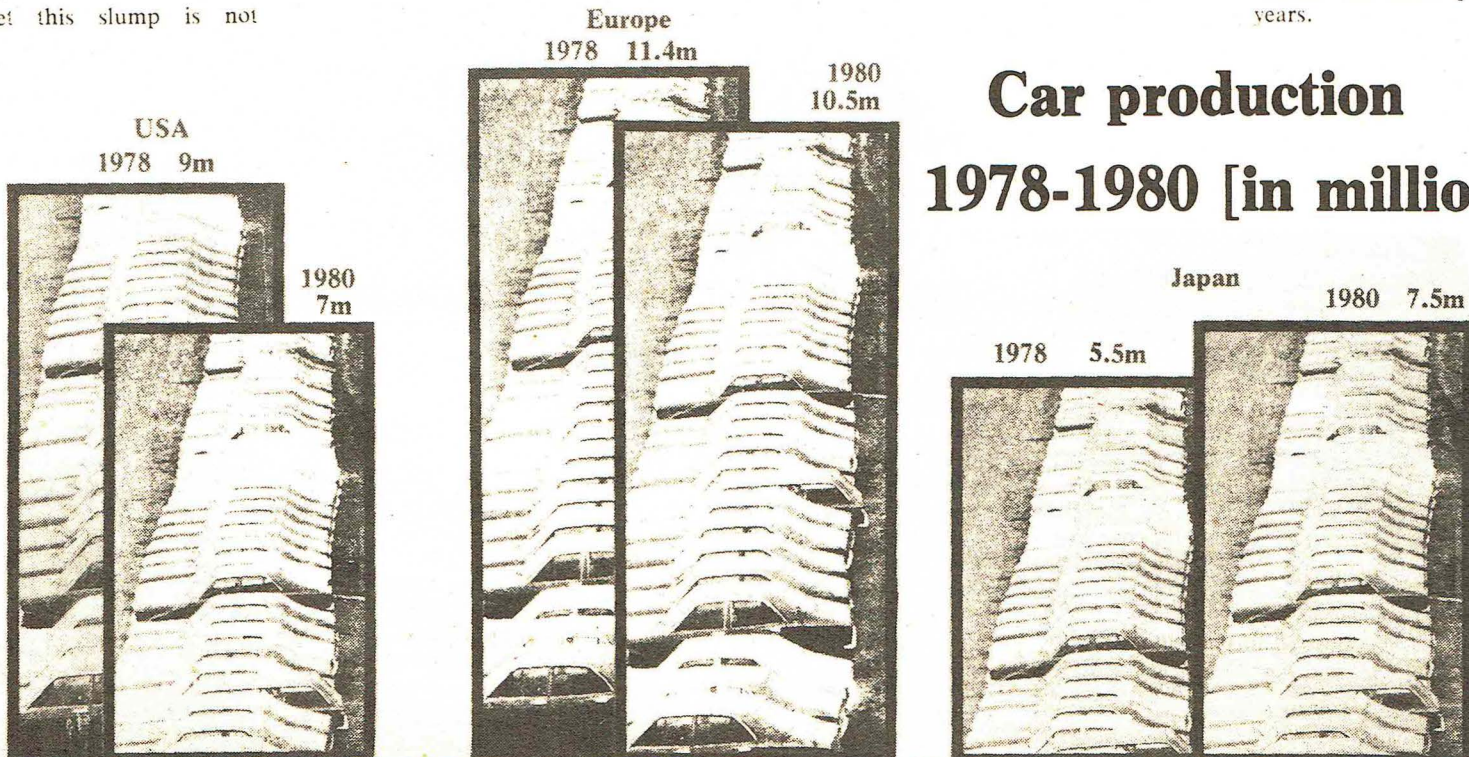


Chart design: Ian Harkness

INDUSTRY WITH A FUTURE?



Above: Linwood workers on the Labour Party demonstration against unemployment in Glasgow, 21.2.81.

Left: Workers on short time at BL Rover, Solihull, queuing for wages—even the 'top car' plants are suffering.

st plan- answer

pages in Japan are only 20% higher than UK car workers'. Toyota, producing 3.28 million cars in 1979, made \$1.2 billion profit or 27% return on its capital employed.

Toyota has seven times the capital per worker of BL. Yet BL could only return 1% on investment in 1977.

Some of the most reactionary and stupid Tory MPs are shouting that the best thing would be to shut down L.

Imports— symptom, not cause

Yet as 'The Times' pointed out in January 1980, "Eighteen months ago it would have been serious but not devastating to let BL go into receivership; now it would turn the Midlands into an industrial disaster area and push unemployment up to 3 million overnight." Other estimates show that it would push unemployment up to 4 million. Another recent report showed that closing BL would cost the economy far more than keeping it open.

Above all, the Tories and the bosses fear the political and social consequences of a closure: they have no confidence that they would be able to get away with it.

If they just had the union leadership to deal with, they would feel far more confident. BL boss Edwardes has continually used the threat of closure to frighten the trade union leaders. Unfortunately, they bent the knee to his blackmail, and as a result BL workers seem to have gone from one defeat to another. The trade union leadership lack confidence in the shop floor. They continually call on Edwardes to "act reasonably" rather than mobilising BL workers against Edwardes.

The TUC programme for the car industry, as for other industries, seems to revolve tirelessly around "import controls", overlooking the fact

that import penetration is the symptom, but not the cause, of the crisis.

The recent international conference of trade union leaders representing Ford workers internationally was seen by car workers as preparation for a new united front against Ford bosses. Instead we witnessed Bernard Passingham from the Executive of the T&GWU and Ford's Dagenham, attacking the Spanish trade unions for importing Ford cars into the UK!

The trade unions cannot allow the bosses to continue their onslaught on workers' jobs and living standards.

BL has already sacked 52,000 workers since 1977 and now they are instituting a programme of speed-up which will intensify the move towards sweat-shop conditions in its plants. Ford's are introducing a vicious disciplinary code.

In the component industry, employing some 440,000 workers, Lucas and others are planning to carry out rationalisation and plant closures over the next three years to reduce the workforce by 80,000.

The response of most trade union leaders to the crisis in the car industry, however, is to keep their heads down and hope things will pick up next year.

It is true that even a small up-turn, however temporary, would see car workers demanding their share of the benefits, as the Metro workers, with the only increasing sales car on the market, have shown. Nevertheless, the TU leaders' "head in sand" attitude is a dereliction of duty.

Who pays for decades of neglect?

What workers need is a programme, linked to a confident perspective that they can win. More than at any time since the '30s, the present turmoil reminds us that past gains can only be kept if we are prepared to struggle to defend those gains.

On a capitalist basis, the future for the whole UK car industry, even during the small booms which interrupt

the mounting crisis, is one of continual shrinkage, 'rationalisation' and mergers. The UK will become an assembler, rather than a manufacturer, of cars, with all that will mean to jobs, living standards and working conditions.

The trade unions in the industry have to organise car workers to defend their jobs through a 35-hour week without loss of pay. All jobs should be defended. No plant closures should be tolerated. Work should be shared out. We should not have to pay for the bosses' crisis, brought on by decades of neglect and under-investment.

Gains such as the 35-hour week will only be made by struggle and by decisive leadership. Car workers in their thousands have shown in the past that they are one of the most organised and militant sections of the working class.

Planning means nationalisation

Now, more than ever, it is necessary to link political and industrial demands, like the 35-hour week. To make these reforms permanent the industry must be taken out of the hands of the Edwardes, Henry Fords and the rest of the bosses' class.

With the industry run on capitalist lines, import controls would be "a wall around chaos". Nationalisation under workers' control and management would give us the opportunity to properly plan industry.

Most of us spend our time making things like Rover cars that no worker can ever afford to buy. But a properly planned car industry organised as part of a planned economy could produce things really needed, like public transport, tractors for the Third World, and other machinery.

Whilst the industry is in the hands of people like Edwardes, the only thing that it will be used for is profit. That prospect, as we are finding to our cost, offers workers no security and no real future.

Linwood - the broken promises

John Hepburn is the sub-convenor of the Transport and General Workers Union at Talbot, Linwood. The T&G represent 2,500 of the 4,500 workers in Linwood.

John has worked at Linwood since 1968. In his time he has seen workers come and go, literally in their thousands.

In 1969, 1,500 men were started when the building of the Hunter Sceptre, Sunbeam Rapier and Sunbeam Alpine was switched to Linwood. Less than a year later 1,000 were being "asked to go" by the company.

In the famous 'Chrysler crash' in 1976, there were 8,000 redundancies in Chrysler Britain, about 1,500 of them at Linwood. About a year later, production of the Avenger began at Linwood and more than 3,000 men were taken on.

By September 1978, Chrysler had gone: Peugeot-Citroën were the new bosses and they sent 3,000 workers down the road in December 1979. PSA-Citroën are attempting to guillotine jobs with a complete closure of Linwood by the end of 1981.

At various stages the shop stewards at Linwoods have argued for nationalisation of the plant and its incorporation into a national British Motor Corporation.

Chrysler bribe

John Hepburn remarked: "At the time of the 1976 crisis, Riccardo, the Chrysler president, wanted to sell the lot to the Labour government for a dollar, so he could get a tax write-off of \$100,000,000. Instead they gave him a bribe of £163 million to stay.

"We were told then that our future was secure. When Chrysler sold out in

John Hepburn
(T&GWU, Talbot
Linwood)
spoke to
Bob Wylie

1978 to Peugeot we argued again for nationalisation, but the powers-that-be said 'if BL took over Chrysler, Linwood would have to go'."

John Hepburn has plenty to say about the notion that "planning agreements" can tie down multi-national capitalism. "These giants maraud from one country to another, and the biggest thief wins. We've had planning agreements at Linwoods for years. But all they amount to is a long catalogue of broken promises."

The planning agreements with Chrysler, following the rescue in 1976, guaranteed a new car for Linwood by 1979. But it never arrived.

'The biggest thief wins'

"We felt that the rescue plan would be a rip-off, that the future investment would not come to Linwood, and we've been proved correct. Since Peugeot-Citroën took over they have not spent a penny in Linwood, not a 'sou', to use the French parlance."

Nobody knew that Chrysler were going to sell out to Peugeot, not even Roy Grantham, of APEX, who was a government-appointed director on the board at the time.

As John Hepburn says: "three days before the sell-out we had a shop stewards' meeting at which we were firmly assured 'Chrysler is here to stay.' We were called to a meeting the next day at 3 o'clock and told that PSA-Citroën were to be the new master. They could not even tell us what the full initials stood for!"

According to John, at the time of the take-over there was a general feeling that Peugeot could not be any worse than Chrysler. However, most shop stewards suspected that although it was a new team, they would be up to the same game.

"Further investigations suggested that Peugeot had only brought Chrysler for its British dealers' network. We stand by that argument now.

"Peugeot have probably been worse than Chrysler! Since 1978, there has only been one top level meeting between unions and management, and at that meeting we were told that this would be our first and last joint discussion!"

John Hepburn is angry and bitter at the way he and others have been treated over the last ten years...and you can see why!

That bitterness will be a factor in the fight-back against the Talbot closure.

The shop stewards have recently broadened their struggle with an all-West-of-Scotland shop stewards' meeting. Things are reaching a critical stage.

The Talbot workers and the whole labour movement must stand up against the latest plunderings of the "marauders". Years of struggle and 40,000 jobs in the West of Scotland are at stake.

WORLD BOOKS

How trade unionism came to Pressed Steel—the story of Cowley by Dudley Edwards 50p

CIS: Ford Anti-report £1.00

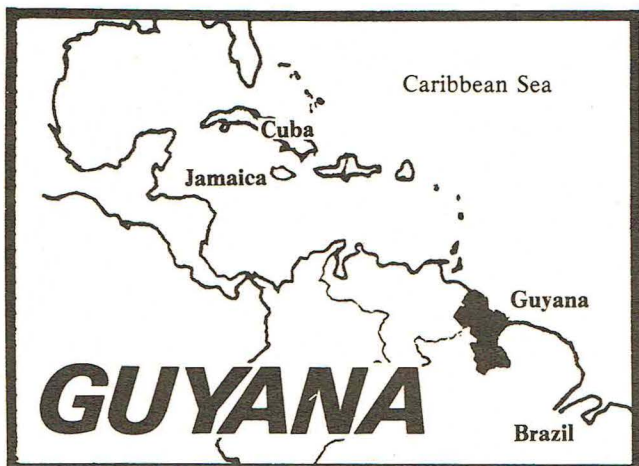
Lucas Alternative Plan 40p

Working for Ford —Huw Beynon £4.00

All prices include postage from World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

INTERNATIONAL

For a socialist caribbean



In last week's article Ronnie Sookhdeo described the economic impasse of capitalism in Guyana and the vicious nature of Forbes Burnham's regime.

This week, he looks at the policies and programme of a relatively new party, the radical Working People Alliance [WPA].

The WPA's programme is a definite advance compared not only to Burnham's ruling People's National Congress (PNC) but also the opposition People's Progressive Party (PPP) of Cheddi Jagan.

It declares: "The alliance is revolutionary and not reformist." It calls for "The nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, still under private ownership, i.e. banks, insurance companies, etc."

It demands "land for those who work it" and the "elimination by decree of all outstanding indebtedness of small and landless farmers."

Most significant it also declares that: "The alliance sees the revolution in each country as permanent."

It is clear from this that the authors of the programme have borrowed some of their ideas from Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution.

Trotsky argued that the capitalist democratic revolution in a backward country—basic questions of land reform, democratic rights, freedom from imperialism—could only be carried out through the working class coming to power in alliance with the peasantry.

Once in power it would be forced to go over to the socialist tasks i.e. nationalisation of the means of production.

But no single country, and particularly a backward country is able to advance towards socialism by itself.

The revolution would therefore be forced to spread to other countries, particularly the industrially advanced countries if it was to maintain itself. Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution was borne out by the experience of the Russian revolution.

Workers' and peasants' councils

The WPA programme calls for "a national assembly based on the following principles: direct representation of organised labour. Representatives will be elected from workers assemblies organised on the basis of the essential transformation of inherited state structure."

"They will include for example assemblies of sugar, bauxite, transport, unemployed and domestic service workers, teachers, peasants, students, youth and housewives; representation from constituencies."

"Election on a constituency basis will serve to strengthen the traditions of community responsibility and ensure accountability; the right to recall; elections to the national assembly and to all representative bodies which will be based on the right of recall."

If implemented, this would represent the establishment of workers' and

peasants' councils in Guyana as organs of rule of the masses.

The demand for "the right of recall" is a very important rule for a planned economy. Its implementation is completely incompatible with a Stalinist regime. If coupled with the demand for no official to receive more than the average wage of a skilled worker it would represent a check on the growth of bureaucracy.

At the same time the WPA leaders are not entirely clear as to the national and international perspectives for the revolution in Guyana.

Guyana is potentially immensely rich, it is true. However, it is still a backward country, when compared to the advanced capitalist countries.

The experience of the Russian revolution, and latterly of Cuba shows that a revolution in a backward country which has a low cultural level and is isolated from a revolution in an advanced industrial country, will inevitably degenerate and will see the emergence of a bureaucratic privileged caste.

This is the case in Cuba where the leaders of the revolution twenty years ago set out with entirely laudable aims of developing Cuba along modern lines.

Therefore, it is paramount that the revolution in Guyana must be seen as a link in the revolution throughout the Caribbean.

It is true that the

programme "pledges itself to work towards the emergence of a free, integrated and socialist Caribbean." However, the WPA does not clearly understand that the development of a socialist Guyana must be linked to a socialist federation of the Caribbean.

This in turn would be a bridgehead for a socialist federation of South America and eventually of North America as the precondition for the development of Guyana along the lines of a democratic workers' state.

Guyana is at the crossroads. Along the 'Burnham' road, lies further decline in the Guyanese economy together with enormous social and racial strife.

For benefit of the people

The other road leads to a socialist and democratic Guyana. This would represent a giant step forward for the workers and peasants of the country, also for the poverty stricken masses throughout the Caribbean and throughout the whole of Latin America.

It would mean that, for the first time, the rich, abundant natural resources of Guyana would be exploited for the benefits of the majority of the people of the country. It would mean undreamed of plenty and at the same time represent a giant step forward to a socialist Caribbean and a socialist Latin America.

WEST GERMANY — the tip of the iceberg



Protest at housing conditions in Berlin...



...and the riot police who faced them

Friday the thirteenth of February. Just one day in West Germany. The five main articles in the Frankfurter Rundschau show how events are beginning to accelerate.

First article. The opinion of Herbert Wehner, the leader of the parliamentary Social Democratic Party that the SPD is in danger of splitting, is not shared by the SPD executive.

Second article. After a finance scandal which forced the resignation of the SPD government in Berlin the interim Lord Mayor, flown over from Bonn declares "Berlin can be governed."

By Greg Powell
(SPD Altona Altstadt)

He shows sympathy for young people who have taken over old houses left to decay by societies and insurance companies and suggests that the violence of the youth has expressed in recent riots has its roots in the system.

Number three highlights spontaneous strikes in the North German metal industries at the start of the new wage round. Thousands of workers demonstrating at Hamburg's Howaldt docks against a paltry pay offer of 2.5%.

In Bremerhaven a hundred fishermen, innocent victims of the EEC fishing

dispute, overturn their trailers to block the route to the fish processing factory. They only ended the blockade in sympathy with the process workers—who in turn offered their support for the fishermen's protests.

Meanwhile on the River Elbe, which has been ruined by mercury poisoning from factories, fishermen have been threatened with a £12,500 fine if they sell their fish. Protesting fishermen have blocked the river with their vessels. They are told by police that they will have to pay for any damage.

They reply "we can only laugh about that. One way or the other, we're going to lose—we're ruined!"

The fishermen threaten—and no-one doubts it—that if their demands are not

met, they will sink their ships on the spot.

Suddenly it seems possible for a senator from Hamburg to speak to them. The fishermen call the senator "incompetent", demand that he should publicly announce his solidarity with them. Let's get the Elbe clean, says the spokesmen, "we've had as much as we can take!"

These five articles on one page of one paper on one day are only the tip of the iceberg. Unemployment is now shooting up towards a million and a half. 5.6%—in 1970 it was 0.7%! Short time working is rocketing, petrol, gas and electricity prices rising.

More and more the papers wail that the workers are going to have to—

guessed it!—tighten their belts. But that's one thing the workers are not prepared to do.

Thousands of dockers demonstrated recently against threatened job losses in Bremen, in Hoersch steelworks again thousands of workers protested against the policies of the steel bosses—and workers' wives even went on a hunger strike.

It is inevitable that pressures on and in the SPD will increase. The unions will be forced to do more than comment on the policies of the government.

The SPD leadership recently attacked a left wing MP (one of the few at present)—Karl-Heinz Hansen for his criticisms of government arms policies.

The 23 other 'left' MPs who, with Hansen, had proposed a minimal reduction in arms spending bowed to the admonitions of the party leaders and distanced themselves from Hansen.

Not so the rank and file, who sent him 12,000 letters and messages of support. He received 150 telegrams of solidarity from SPD wards! And by this time the leadership—bent on having him expelled from the party—let the issue drop from the limelight.

The crisis in the economy will increase the demand of SPD's rank and file for new policies.

CENTRAL AMERICA



MEXICO—Eldorado for some

The new Administration in Washington has catapulted Central America into the centre of international affairs.

Reagan sounds the war trumpets and sends in "advisers" to a small country like El Salvador. Nicaragua, with a few million population harbours the threat of "communism", say US government spokesmen.

One of the reasons for their near-paranoia has been fears for the stability of US capitalism's newly rich southern neighbours, Mexico.

Mexico City's VIP airport lounge gives a clue to the growing economic importance of the country. An almost unceasing stream of foreign diplomats arrive and numerous business delegations are welcomed.

Gloom ridden capitalism's fight to grab a share of wealth in a new 'miracle' economy. The root of the wealth is, as might be expected, oil.

This petrol driven El Dorado has over the last two years increased its GNP by 7.5% each year. Private investment is planned to increase between 11.5% and 13% and public investment 16% in 1981. This growth, phenomenal by today's feeble standards follows the exploitation of vast mineral deposits.

Mexico has twice the crude oil resources of Saudi Arabia and the sixth largest natural gas deposits. It also has large deposits of silver, lead and copper and major new hydro electric schemes.

What has this meant for the people of Mexico, though? The severe crisis of the mid 70s, made worse by devaluation, has passed but

By Dave Farrar

capitalist Mexico has found that new wealth in energy and mineral resources has only exaggerated the problems that have dogged it since its subjugation by Spanish imperialism in the 16th century.

Mexico still has 50% unemployment coupled with an inflation rate officially 25% but in reality far higher.

The capital, Mexico City is the fastest growing city in the world now having reached 13 million with a third of these living in shanty towns in the suburbs.

Exports have boomed but coupled with a frantic investment programme this has fuelled the growth of imports of Western technology and the cancerous growth of multinationals. Imports rose 56% last year according to a recent report.

Exports were up 60% but this was almost all due to foreign sales by Pemex the state oil company (oil was nationalised in 1938). Mexican capitalism, always a sickly creature stifled by its northern neighbours has been swept to one side.

Imports of foodstuffs took up 16% of export revenue contributing to a record US \$4.2 billion deficit last year. Agriculture in a country with a huge peasant population is in crisis.

Hopes that oil wealth would foster new life in Mexican agriculture have vanished. Grain imports, planned to drop by 40%

next year are unlikely to fall at all. Growth rates in agriculture of 3.4% in 1979-80 hardly keep up with the rising population particularly in the cities.

A debilitating lack of rural investment has led to monumental backwardness.

Agrarian reform has always been hailed as the lasting boon of the Mexican revolution. Under the agrarian reform law, no one is allowed to own more than 100 hectares of irrigated land. Nonetheless, rich landowners have farms which exceed the limit by 40 to 50 times.

Some land was distributed to peasants by a previous President, Echeverria, but mainly arid hilly areas of little or no use to maize and vegetable monopolists.

Now, though, the peasants are beginning to take land distribution into their own hands—recently 2,000 peasants occupied the Agrarian reform ministry!

Land is increasingly capitalised, causing new conflicts with peasant wishes to own their own land. The agricultural situation is still explosive.

As in Iran, rapid industrialisation does not always have the effects that repressive leaders or the thinkers of imperialism want. The growing reliance on America, (60% of foreign trade and 70% of investment) will be a two edged sword. Already there are five million refugees who have 'escaped' to the sweatshops of the southern states of the USA, though noticeably there is no hue and cry about 'boat people' in this case!

A working class, the gravedigger of capitalism is being born in Mexico and is already showing signs of an understanding of its future role.

At a May Day march in Mexico city (in which 1.2 million took part), the



PHOTO: Above: oil workers in Mexico. Very few people benefit from this new wealth.



leader of the CTM (Mexican TUC) demagogically announced "the workers will finish the revolution." Despite this, the CTM is officially part of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (RPI).

The widening gulf between the wealthy so-called 'revolutionary' capitalists and the workers will become more apparent as the strategic and economic importance of Mexico develops.

The revolutionary tradi-

tions of Emilian Zapata and the Mexican revolution of 1910 will become steered by a steadily growing working class as they attempt to build a socialist Mexico.

EL SALVADOR

Mass murder to 'save capitalism'

If Mexico and strategic areas like the Panama Canal are the main reasons for US capitalism to worry about Central America, it is the people of El Salvador who are likely to suffer most from their 'concern'.

Reagan and his US advisers have been vociferously denying that they are preparing to make this small country with a few million population into the Vietnam of the '80s.

Nonetheless, the American ruling class have increased the Pentagon's military budget by \$200 billion over the next half a decade amidst huge cuts in social spending. As part of the increase the State Department has increased military aid to El Salvador's junta by

\$25 million, a doubling of the present figure.

Military advisers [now called instructors to avoid comparison with Vietnam], helicopters, small arms etc. are being poured in.

At the same time they have made aid to Nicaragua where the Sandinista government is seen as "unfriendly" to US imperialism, conditional on their not supporting 'terrorism'. A quick investigation shows the hypocrisy of Reagan, for few countries can equal the state terrorism of the Salvadorean junta.

The death rate in violent attacks in the country is maintaining its 1980 figure of 40 a day. Right-wing terrorists of ORDEN patrol El Salvador's streets. They are practically indistinguishable from the Army and National Guard—not surprisingly as they are usually the same people.

The Carter administra-

tion had tried to prevent support for left guerrillas by policies of reform. They had put forward schemes for land distribution which made only minor differences to the peasantry and even less to the 65% of the population who are landless.

Minor as these reforms were they were a source of annoyance to the rich landowners who were behind the threatened coup early this month by former National Guard Major Roberto d'Abuissou.

President Duarte called for his arrest and made demagogic attacks on right-wing threats, but d'Abuissou had probably already fled the country.

In any case the regime already plan to implement much of the Army demands for an end to 'radical' experiments in land distribution, cuts in public spending, compensation for expropriated land and bank holdings—and for land to be saved for cash crop plantations rather than

peasant small-holdings.

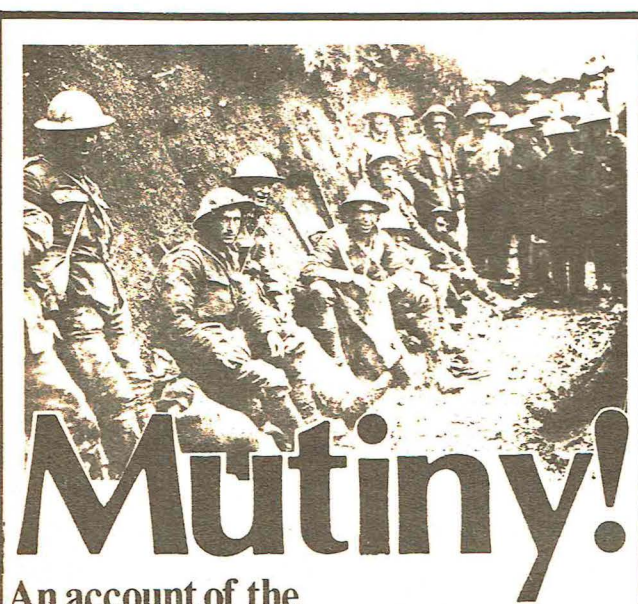
The US government are plainly hoping that a small country will yield few problems—that a well equipped armed forces, in particular, superiority in air power will quell the problems faced by imperialism.

Much more blood will be spilt to try to make El Salvador safe for capitalism.

Many capitalist strategists fear that stability will only be temporary. This has prompted other western leaders, particularly in West Germany to suggest a political solution trying to 'involve' guerrilla leaders.

All the capitalist powers fear the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism in Central America, but large differences are opening up on how to avoid it.

As even Duarte said, "It is of no use to have the greatest and best army in the world if the people are dying of hunger." The revolutionary process in Central America is only just starting.



Mutiny!

An account of the Calais Soldiers' mutiny in 1918 written by a leading participant

Alf Killick

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Militant pamphlet 20p



Letters

**VIEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:**

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Mines: adequate finance not import controls

Dear Comrade

It is perfectly understandable that miners should call for import controls as a reaction to the crisis in the mining industry. But the basic question is how far this demand can aid or hinder the development of a healthy industry.

Obviously, during a strike all imports have to be blocked. If we had a planned economy, instead of the present "private enterprise" juggle, we would need to plan all our imports and exports. That is not the situation now.

The fire of the miners' union should be directed against the way the industry is bled dry by massive interest charges—£237 million this year alone—and the totally inadequate finance and investment for the industry, which is a deliberate sabotage of its potential.

Other capitalist governments, apparently more conscious of the vital importance of their coal industries than the Tories in Britain are subsidising their coal to a much greater extent. In Britain, government finance is now only £1.62 a tonne, compared to £34 in Belgium, £18 in France and £15 in West Germany.

The demand for massive state expenditure on mining is completely justified. The former private owners let the industry go to rack and ruin, and big business was only too pleased to let the



state take responsibility for providing relatively cheap coal to the rest of industry.

The demand for adequate finance and investment in mining in no way cuts across the essential solidarity we need with miners and other workers abroad, which the demand for blanket import controls would be in danger of doing.

The main emphasis must be on fighting every threat of closure and defending every job—and campaigning for economic policies which will guarantee the future of the mining industry. We must remember that

the basic reason why the industry is being stifled, pits and jobs threatened and the targets from the 'Plan for Coal' made unrealisable, is not cheap imports in themselves, but the collapse of the home market for coal due to the capitalist economic crisis.

That is why the fight for jobs in mining must go hand in hand with the fight to kick the Tories out, and replace them with a Labour government committed to socialist policies. This means taking into public ownership the big monopolies, banks and other financial institutions and planning production on a socialist basis, in which the mining industry can find its rightful place.

That is the only basis for growth and guaranteed jobs at a decent wage. That is the essential fight against the bosses and their system.

This road demands independent class policies and unity of all workers. We must not be diverted into supporting measures such as import controls, which do not solve the basic problems and can, despite the best intentions, cause dangerous divisions among workers and divert attention from the bosses' responsibilities for the total mess they have made of the economy of this country.

Fraternally
Rob Jones
Sheffield Heely Labour Party

How the MPs voted

Dear Comrades,

This week the 'Sunday Times' published extracts from the fourth and last volume of Richard Crossman's diaries.

The selection dealt in the main with the Labour leadership election of 1963 (when Crossman was one of Wilson's campaign managers). In among the usual mindless gossip we find the following very revealing comment:

"The truth about this election is not how much happened, but how little. Or rather, how little happened of organised canvassing.

Peace for our time..

Comrades,

The return of Mag the Nag from Washington DC must have revived many memories and created many forebodings. She omitted to say, "Peace for our time" as she stepped from the 'plane after pledging our support for the Reagan war machine.

This walking parody has had the unmitigated gall to commit the people of this

"The fascination of it was that, for once, 248 politicians had to make up their minds and take a decision and were left with several weeks in which to discuss how they should vote *with each other, with their friends outside and with the press.*" (my emphasis).

How odd it is that the 'Sunday Times' should have withheld publication of this until now! The whole story as told by Crossman, and his complete omission of any mention of the Labour Party in the country, completely vindicates the arguments recently put forward by those who advocated the widening of the franchise for

the election of the leadership.

But then, as Crossman admits, because the press played a role under the old system, perhaps it is not surprising that Harold Evans and Co didn't produce this evidence when they were giving fulsome advice to the Labour Party over the last few months.

It also shows there must be no reversal of the 40-30-30 formula—we know what the PLP vote is really based on!

Yours fraternally,
Frank Riley
Skelmersdale, Lancs.

on March 14. We are holding a Peace Rally commencing with a march through the city. Meet at Carlisle Street at 10.30 am. There will be speeches, bands, folk singers, street theatre groups plus at least five thousand people who disagree entirely with the plutonium blonde.

Yours fraternally,
Bryan Bush
Burngreave Labour Party

country to a suicide pact with the only nation in the world to be unprincipled enough to use an atomic device against fellow human beings.

I wonder if she realises (or even cares) that eighteen million dollars (US type) would provide food, water, health care, and education for the world's population for one year. Yet this is the amount spent on arms every two weeks.

If you can, get to Sheffield

newspaper.

Firstly, do not despair if you don't think you are particularly young. Neither is Mr Gardiner. He's 44. If that's young, you may wonder, when to people start to get old?

Well, how does this striping shape up as a businessman, you ask. The most striking things he has done seem to be closing down four of the firm's head

offices and shutting what the 'Guardian' describes as an "extremely modern" steelworks in the West Midlands, thereby making 1,200 workers redundant.

I bet Mr Gardiner is really proud to have received this award for all his painstaking attempts to impose even more misery on working people. Surely closing a steelworks is a job well done, deserving of recogni-

Health care: 'Charity' for some

Comrades,

Last week I watched on a BBC programme an interview with the mother of a young girl suffering from cystic fibrosis, an invariably terminal disease mainly involving the lungs, which is the most common hereditary terminal disease.

The mother, I felt, had great courage, coming on television and giving a very detailed and positive definition of the disease and how she and her daughter fight its horrible effects. But what really disgusted me was the fact that the brilliant research now being done into the disease is almost completely dependent on charitable donations!

I think this gives a clear description of exactly what sort of society we live in—a society prepared to spend millions of pounds on weapons of destruction, while scientists trying to prevent terminal illnesses have to depend on donations from charities!

Another thought I had when watching the programme was how many Tories—upholders of this disgusting system—are actually members of the "charitable organisations"?

It is time that the workers of this country and the world united and brought down this rotten system, and replaced it with one capable and prepared to defend those unable to defend themselves.

Stephanie Peckham
Hackney

The real bully-boys

Dear Comrades,

I was immediately reminded of all the hoo-ha surrounding the refusal of a poultry inspector to join a union, after reading an article in this month's SOGAT (print workers') journal. This concerned a strike for union recognition, which started at Roach Bridge paper mill near Preston last November.

The newly elected Father of Chapel (shop steward) was told by a foreman that there was an urgent phone call for him from his wife. On reaching the office, he was informed that he had been dismissed and was duly presented with his wages. A foreman then appeared with his personal effects and he was ordered off the premises.

On learning of this forty SOGAT members, who had just recently joined the

—while profiteers bleed others

Dear Comrades

One of the members of the Labour Party in Hove who has spent his whole life in the labour movement, has suffered a further stroke. To ease the strain on his family, the doctor suggested that he go for a few days into a nursing home.

At the first one they found him slumped in the same chair on the second visit of the day. The accommodation was ok; just no attention.

They behaved like pigs: open your mouth and throw in a pill and shouted 'drink that water'. One day was enough. It cost his wife £110 as they demanded payment for a week.

The next nursing home was heaven, but it cost £55 per day. They couldn't do enough for him, but after five days he wanted to go home.

Due to age and ill-health, his wife had to engage agency nurses night and day at a cost, with VAT, of £60 per day, as NHS resources in the way of physio and district nurses are limited.

Other stories of friends who have been in other homes gives them the shudders. But they wonder what happens to those who can't find the few pounds they have to help out.

They told me that all nursing homes should be controlled by the NHS or closed down. No to private medicine.

The Tories are trying it on. We must make sure they don't succeed.

Yours fraternally
Mike Singleton
Hove CLP

How do we 'work for a better life'—

Dear Comrade,

I must reply to M. Barnett's letter (issue 541) in which the writer states they worked from 8.30am until 7pm and 1pm on a half day. Why did the writer work such long hours? Was it to take home a decent wage?

The ploy was to pay low wages so people would have to work extra hours for a decent wage. With so much unemployment, isn't it better to reduce the working week so more of our fellow beings can have a job?

Perhaps the writer could look at the statistics and see how many worked hard all their lives, only to die before or on reaching retirement age.

With regards to increases in pay every year, one has to have them to keep up with inflation, otherwise the pocket will soon empty and we will be back on the bread line.

I too did not vote Tory and must accept them as government for now, but we are democratically allowed to demonstrate and criticise when they are so anti-working class and leading the country down the drain. By the way, a lot of people would like to work for a better life if only they could get a job.

Please, writer, make "the 7 May, Maggie's Day"; kick the Tories out of the county halls, you will be serving your fellow workers.

Yours fraternally,
Mike Wright
Plymouth

—and where's the incentive?

Dear Comrades,

Even if M. Barnett does not vote Tory, it is obvious that the writer is strongly influenced by Tory propaganda.

Socialists do not oppose capitalism out of 'envy'—what possible reasons did Karl Marx have for being 'envious' of anyone? They oppose it because they know that, in addition to maintaining great inequalities between men, it inevitably creates crises, which rob millions of people of what little they have.

If "working hard for the country" is the answer, then surely workers would have more incentive to work hard if they knew that the country *really* belonged to them!

We are told repeatedly that private ownership is more efficient than public ownership because of the "incentives" which it offers to owners; what "incentive" are the workers supposed to have then? The big stick?

Surely M. Barnett has had enough experience to realise that working your guts out doesn't necessarily keep you off the dole! We should bear in mind that those who work for "our competitors" are urged to "work hard for the sake of the country", too. Like Ford workers in Spain!

Yours fraternally,
Jim Parkes
Walsall

Tory hero

Dear Comrades

If any of your readers are considering what they should do in life, I can now provide the answer. They should follow the example of Mr John Gardiner, recently chosen as "Young Businessman of the Year" by the 'Guardian', that well-known 'liberal' and 'independent'

tion? And he hasn't stopped yet. No way.

He says he's looking for threats to his group. "I'm on forward radar" he quips. Don't look now, Mr Gardiner, but a really big blip has appeared on the radar screen and it's called socialism.

Yours fraternally
Pete McNally
Soho Labour Party
Ladywood, Birmingham

ads

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

SCOTTISH Labour Party Conference. Militant Public Meeting 'The Fight against Redundancies'. Hear: Alan McCombes (Militant); Alex Allan (Robb Caledon shipyard worker). Friday 13 March, 6pm-8pm. Co-op Lesser Hall, Canal St, Perth

BRISTOL NORTH EAST Labour Party Militant supporters' public meeting. 'Which Way Forward for Labour?' Speakers: Richard Shepherd (Vice-chairman, Bristol NE Labour Party, personal capacity); Pete Hammond (Bristol District Cllr, personal capacity). Chairman: Brian Kelly (Secretary, Bristol NE Labour Party Young Socialists, personal capacity). 7.30 pm, Tuesday 24 March 1981. Shepherds Hall, Old Market

CHESTERFIELD Militant Readers' Meeting. 'Miners show how to beat the Tories' Speakers: Jon Ingham (Leeds AUEW, personal capacity), John Dunn (Markham NUM). Chairman Austin Fairest (Secretary, Highmoor NUM, personal capacity). Room 2 Market Hall, Chesterfield. 7.30 pm, Friday 20 March.

MANSFIELD Militant Readers' Meeting. 'The Labour Party - democracy for whom?' Chairman: Graham Naylor (Bilsthorpe NUM). Speakers: Henry Richardson (Vice-chairman, Notts Area NUM, personal capacity); Jon Ingham (Leeds AUEW, personal capacity). The Yew Tree, Woodhouse Road, Mansfield 7.30 pm Thursday 19 March.

WEST HULL Militant Public Meeting 'Democratic Socialism or Social Democracy, which way for Labour?' Hear: Mike Foster (Louth CLP). Chairman: John Atkinson. Wednesday 1 April, 7.45 pm, Costello Sports Centre, Room 3, Pickering Road.

GATESHEAD EAST Militant Readers' Meeting. Monday 30 March, 7.30 pm. Miners Welfare, Smithburn Road, Boghouse Estate. 'The Secret Service and its activities within the labour movement'.



MAY DAY GREETINGS IN MILITANT

We invite your trade union, Labour Party or LPYS branch, shop stewards' organisation or trades council to place in 'Militant' fraternal May Day greetings to the labour and trade union movement.

'Militant' is read by thousands of labour movement activists in Britain and internationally. Unlike the capitalist press we have no rich backers or big business advertisers. We rely on individual workers and workers' organisations like your own to support our newspaper.

Send your greetings of solidarity with the labour movement. Help build a paper that fights for socialism. The closing date for copy is Tuesday 21 April.

RATES FOR GREETINGS: Semi-display: 3 column centimetres (up to 15 words)—£3; 6 column centimetres (up to 25 words)—£6; Display: one-sixteenth page—£10; one-eighth page—£20; one-quarter page—£40.

NEWHAM Militant Readers' Meeting 'Lessons of the Miners' Strike'. Wednesday 18 March, 7.30 pm, Lister Room, East Ham Town Hall. Speaker: Brian Ingham, Industrial Correspondent for 'Militant'.

ANDOVER Militant Public Meeting 'A Socialist Answer to the Housing Crisis'. Hear: Nick Brooks (Militant Editorial Board). Chairman Ken Bryan (Test Valley Borough Councillor). Adelaide Tavern, Adelaide Road Andover, Thursday 19 March at 7.30 pm.

BLACKPOOL Marxist Discussion Group Wednesday 18 March, 8 pm, 'General Strike'. Details, Kevin Taylor, 52279

EDINBURGH Militant Supporters 'Northern Ireland: Common Misery, Common Struggle'. Denis Tourish (Labour & Trade Union Group). Monday 16 March, 7.30 pm, Trades Council Centre, 14 Picardy Place (opposite Playhouse). Admission 20p.

CANVEY ISLAND Militant Readers' Meeting 'Poland' Speaker: Bob Edwards (Harlow Labour Party). Labour Hall, Lionel Road. Thursday 26 March, 7.45 pm. All welcome! (Information Canvey 60187).

SOUTH WESTERN Labour Party Regional Conference Militant Meeting 12.45 pm on Saturday 21 March at Devonport, in Fore Street (50 yards along from the conference), Exeter. Speakers will include: Cllr. Pete Hammond (Member of Regional Executive); Robin Clapp (Delegate, Bristol South and Regional Executive member); Mike Sheaff (Delegate, Plymouth Devonport, shop steward COHSE)

Militant Readers Meeting, N.W. Regional Conference of the Labour Party. Speakers: Tony Mulhearn (Liverpool DLP). 12.45 pm. Saturday 14 March, Opera House Foyer Annex, Winter Gardens, Blackpool.

Starry Plough Badges 20p each, or 10p each for 20 or more.
p&p add 25p for the first 20 badges and 12½p for every extra 10 badges.
Order from V Seal, 15 Thornbury Road, London SW2 4DL.

Build Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 April	Target for year
Eastern	544		1775	7100
East Midlands	469		1375	5500
Hants & Dorset	477		1300	5200
Humberside	252		875	3500
London East	888		1900	7600
London West	498		1200	4800
London South	512		1375	5500
Manchester & Lancs	636		1450	5800
Merseyside	526		1650	6600
Northern	733		2150	8600
Scotland East	263		1100	4400
Scotland West	468		1875	7500
Southern	755		1775	7100
South West	445		875	3500
Wales East	263		650	2600
Wales West	338		1150	4600
West Midlands	506		2150	8600
Yorkshire	918		2250	9000
Others	159		3125	12500
Total received	9650		30000	120,000

Target for 11 April £30,000 Target for year £120,000

BUDGET FOR SOCIALISM

When Reagan wants a few billion more dollars to bomb Central America into "freedom" he cuts services and dips his fingers in the wallets and purses of American workers.

Similarly our own beloved Thatcher tries to ensure that it is us who pay for her government's and her class's follies and crimes.

It costs money to fight the bosses too. Civil service unions have reputedly £¼ million a week for their action. We need money to spread the ideas of Marxism and build a bigger and better paper. But this week we got just £1,575.98.

We're not asking for millions, but we do ask our readers whether they can afford more. This week, two or three hundred of our readers have made generous contributions to our funds. That still leaves many thousands who have not!

Armthorpe NUM Branch sent us £5, Knowsley NALGO supporters £22, and trade unionists R Wrack (Teesside), G Porter (Shiple), and readers in Tottenham and Lambeth passed on £135 in expenses received.

Nearly £50 was raised at Readers' meetings in Newcastle and Southampton, while Discussion Groups in Reading, Hull, Immingham and a Day School in Lancashire accounted for a further £20.

Individual donations of £50 came from a tax rebate (Sheffield) and "compulsory overtime" (Bradford). Several larger donations came from C Butterworth (SPOE) of £30, E McAteer (ASTM-S Hull) £20 (in addition to previous donations), J Cuthbert (Caerphilly CLP) £29, Neath readers £18.58, Chelmsford supporters £15, and tenners from D Edmunds (Sheffield), I Davison (Oxford), T Tattersall (Morecombe), and K Williamson (Louth CLP).

Smaller amounts add up to a lot over a period of

time, and are just as valuable: sometimes even more so, as they enable us to estimate our potential income more accurately. Thanks for donations of from £2 to £8 to, amongst others, student M Birnbaum (Hull), M Swan (CPSA, E Kilbride), M Rattray (Bristol SE LPYS), K Johnson (Wood Green LPYS), J and H Wobey (Hackney), F and B Kidd, and T O'Sullivan (S London).

Donations from supporters who help us regularly included those from T and R Beere (Isle of Wight LP), H Ross (E London), H Middleburgh (Wanstead & Woodford LPYS), while Ashford LPYS cancelled an advert but asked us to keep the payment anyway, and from Nottingham J Foster (Rufford NUM) and L Walker (Gedling) boosted the East Midlands line on our chart.

Thanks also to J Aplin (school student, Bristol), F Breen (CPSA) and D Phillips (ASLEF) both East London, K Kavenagh (Southampton YCAU) and J Collins (AUEW) and J Sutton (GMWU) from Merseyside.

If you don't find many 'mentions' from your own area in this column, it may mean that we're waiting for you to give publicity to your home town or village, with a postal order or cheque!

We need another £20,000 in the next five weeks to reach £30,000! Don't leave it all to the last minute! We appeal to everyone who reads this column to consider whether there's some form of income they could direct our way—whether it's simply a regular donation, or a hobby or craft which produces extra cash, whether it's baby-sitting, carpentry, or collecting stamps or vouchers.

Write and tell us your plans: Shipley readers are having a social and a sponsored run, Tower Hamlets supporters are to sell a pamphlet on the 60th Anniversary of the 'Poplarism' revolt of socialist Labour councillors, and

Hull's St Patrick's Day is to be enhanced by a sponsored non-smoke.

Why don't you ask your

organisation to send us a donation or hold a collection for us. Budget for a socialist future! Build 'Militant'!

THIS WEEK £1,576

SOUTHERN AREA MILITANT SCHOOL on Sunday 3 May—Bank Holiday Monday 4 May. Three speakers & social (with food). Hotel Bed and Breakfast at the Danville Hotel (on sea front), Cliftonville, Margate.

Only £7.50 (same price as last year). Please book early as capacity limited. To book write/phone K Nicholson, 25 Grotto Road, Cliftonville Margate, Kent (0843-291293)

Speakers: Ray Apps: 'What is Marxism?'; Dudley Edwards: '1926 General Strike'. Debate: 'Militant' v Communist Party, 'Perspectives for Britain'.

GRAVESEND Party for the Militant Fighting Fund, Saturday 14 March, from 8 till late. 1 East Terrace, Gravesend. Real ale and snacks.

Leeds 50 Club winner No. 13 Mr P Lazenby.

AND NOW! Plunder Woman carrier bags. Let Thatcher carry the load for a change! A great way of making money for the fighting fund. Prices: £2.00 for 12—minimum order including postage and packing. £10 for 75 etc. Money with order please. Bulk orders: prices on request. Contact: J Nicholson, 25 Grotto Road, Margate, Kent. Tel: 291293. Please allow 21 days for delivery.

CANVEY ISLAND Labour Party Meeting: Andy Bevan (National Youth Officer) speaks on 'Fighting against the economic crisis'. Wednesday 18 March, 8.00 pm, at Labour Hall, Lionel Road, Canvey Island, Essex. Ring Canvey 60187 for more details.

STIRLING Trades Council Unemployed Workers Association public meeting. Tuesday 17 March, Cowane Centre, Stirling.

PEOPLE'S PALACE —MERSEYSIDE SOCIALIST CENTRE Socialism and Democracy: turning cynicism into mass activity

A public discussion led by Audrey Wise, Hilary Wainwright, Tariq Ali Saturday 26 March 2-4.30 pm. AUEW Hall Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 1 For creche ring 051-735 1725 by 13 March

Public Debate: Young Conservatives v Labour Party Young Socialists. McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. 7.30 pm. Thursday 19 March.

The Struggle for freedom in El Salvador. Socialist Action public meeting. Wednesday 18 March, 8.00 pm, Camden Labour Rooms, 8 Camden Road, London NW1. Speakers from El Salvador Solidarity Campaign and Socialist Action. Admission 20 pence.

Industrial

in brief

Workers in Merseyside are squaring up for a possible battle with the local Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive and the Tory County Councillors who dictate their policy, over their proposals for fare increases and cutbacks. As Kenneth Peeney, a bus driver and T&G branch secretary in Liverpool, pointed out: "Fare increases cause a fall-off in passengers. Cuts in services cause a fall off in passengers. More fare increases to combat the loss of passengers cause an even bigger loss of passengers. More cuts in services cause a fall off in passengers and an even bigger loss in revenue. This is bloody stupid." He added the unions involved in Merseyside transport must unite to stop the Tory attacks.

Friday the 13th was an unlucky day for workers at Triangle Valves in Wigan when 400 of them were locked out last month. The lock-out follows an overtime ban after a derisory wage offer. Already the attitude of the workers is hardening, which was helped by manager Mr Kay jeering at pickets on the gate, "I hope your children starve." Send donations to the shop steward, Mr Keith Nelson, 63 Gathurst Road, Orrell.

Water workers of the Pennine division have voted to go back to work, calling off their unofficial strike. A mass meeting voted 80/40 to go back after the Water Board said there would be no immediate redundancies and no victimisation. However, the main factor in the decision was the feeling they could not strike alone after other depots did not join the strike. But the workers still reject the latest pay offer and are bitter over their union leadership failing to call an all-out strike in support of the full claim.

An Engineering Gazette meeting in Glasgow took up the issue of Labour Party democracy. Willie McKelvey MP said that while the likes of Joe Ashton MP spoke at conference of MPs being made redundant through reselection, they forgot that steelworkers, engineers etc. face that threat every day.

London Transport building workers are stepping up their campaign to get contractors out of the trade to protect jobs [see last week's 'Militant']. At a mass meeting of 550 workers this week, they voted to continue an overtime ban and picket sites where contractors are already working. They will accept no redundancies, including voluntary, and are preparing for management not backing down over redundancies with a 20p a week strike levy. Loudest applause came for a call for non-co-operation with management to be stepped up, using strict demarcation over the various trades involved.

'We must stay united'

A mass meeting of Tower Hamlets council workers on Monday 9th, was presented with the stark realities of a £10 million cut in the council's block grant and the tightening of the Tory vice on council spending.

The council has withdrawn its 'no redundancies' pledge to its workforce. Rates are to rise by more than a third, rents are up, cuts in services are in the pipeline.

From the platform, the joint staff sides (joint shop stewards' committee) explained the prospect of further cuts; spending would have to be halved, which could mean sacking two in every three council workers.

In the packed hall, brimming with around two thousand council workers, people came to the microphone to discuss the trade unions' response.

Their message to the Labour council was: we don't intend to accept this lying down. We will oppose the Tory cuts—and we want you to support us.

The NALGO branch, representing white collar



The packed hall at the mass meeting of Tower Hamlets council workers

Photo: MILITANT

council staff, last week passed a resolution outlining a campaign of opposition to cuts in jobs or services. This was the basis of the proposals put to the meeting by George Ryde, chairman of the joint shop stewards' committee and of the T&GWU branch.

"It's the first time manual, craft and white collar

all been united...we must stay united," appealed one speaker. Dan Jones (Trades Council secretary) got loud applause when he spelt out that no union leader, councillor or negotiator was going to save workers' jobs for them: "we need troops," he said, "and the troops are here, in this hall."

Afterwards, the special

'Fight Cuts' leaflet produced by local 'Militant' supporters was snatched up. This must be only the start of a campaign to defend

council workers and the vital services they give, to defend the programme on which the Labour council was elected.

Bob Mennear (Assistant Secretary, Tower Hamlets NALGO) spoke to Chris Hill (Tower Hamlets Labour Party) both in personal capacity

Fight for the future

"My lad's 16 years of age, he's got no job to go to, if we don't fight now there won't be any future for him."

After 300 Merseyside shop stewards heard this impassioned plea from a dock worker, many doubts were cast away and it was agreed to support a 'Day of Action' in Merseyside on Wednesday March 18.

The Dock Employers have shown they don't give up easily—after getting a bloody nose during their last battle with the dockers; they are coming back for more!

This time they are calling for 500 ancillary dock jobs to go, along with 1,000 unregistered dock workers. The bosses are now offering 'golden handshakes' of £16,000 to anyone who wants to leave the docks.

It is hoped that Tate and Lyle's workers will be on the demonstration. Tate and Lyle bosses have shown their concern for the future of Merseyside by announcing the closure of their modern chemical factory, with the loss of over 100 jobs.

GMT cuts

On Monday, March 2nd, Stockport's new £1.8m bus station was officially opened. Speeches, a brass band and celebration dinner for 65 people.

What the organisers hadn't expected though, was a Labour Party demonstration against the draconic

By Richard Knights

Courtaulds workers at Aintree are also fighting to save jobs, 1,500 could go there.

However, Merseysiders are not only suffering from the actions of the bosses, now the local Tory County Council is joining in.

Recently all the buses were off the road and 300 angry busmen lobbied the County Council. Under the draconian cuts, services after 7pm will be virtually non-existent and the Sunday service is to be slashed.

As though that wasn't bad enough the Liverpool City Council voted on Thursday to cut £4 million from the voluntary sector ie. Play Schemes, services for the elderly, Youth Clubs and (in the year of the disabled!) groups for the handicapped—so much for the Liberals' 'community politics.'

For all the above reasons, March 18 should be a mass turn out of trade unionists to demand a future for the workers of Merseyside.

cuts being planned for Greater Manchester Transport.

Carrying placards and chanting 'Save jobs—sack the Tories,' we almost drowned out County Cllr. David Silverman and the Liberal Mayor of Stockport, Cllr. Gordon Bayley, who didn't even try to justify the contradiction between these

Ansell's

Despite attempts by the bosses and their friends in the press, the striking Ansell's workers are standing firm.

They are holding a demonstration this Saturday beginning at 10.30 am at the Colmore Circus, Birmingham City Centre, which is a fine response to management's attempts at a secret ballot.

The mood of the workers can be measured by the following letter which appeared on the strike HQ notice board. Of course, the two company directors mentioned should not be confused with Ansell's chairman, Robin Thompson, or his deputy, Derrick Holden-Brown.

A message from Robbing Thompson to all employees in dispute: I feel that the time has come when I should say something to you on how Ansell's has been doing recently and what the future holds. But I can't, I'm too upset.

I suppose you think it's clever sticking together for this long. Well, maybe it is but let me inform you of some of the options we still have open to us, excluding suicide and emigration, we could um, er, well, think of something.

By Brian Debus

I sent a carrier pigeon (because as you know, we've had the phone cut off) to my fellow director, Derrick Hold'em-down yesterday. I said, Derrick, I am going to put my foot down on this one. This was not such a good idea, as the floor boards are rotten here in the board room.

I said, if the men don't come back next week or the week after, they won't be back for at least a fortnight.

The Allied board are very annoyed with you, you know, we can't understand what has got you so riled up; was it because we wanted to buy your beer tickets back?

Or maybe it's Steve Adams' new six-cylinder, two-tone, oil-cooled, electronic ignition, incorporated, power assisted, lip-smacking, ace-tasting, picket-proof Volvo had something to do with it.

I have to say this, though, that the pickets who found out my address and wrote 'Martin Borman lives here' on my front door could be prosecuted if found out.

Also some of you disputers have branded me and my board as liars. This is just not so. We said in our annual Christmas report of December 1980 that 'to-

gether we could go places in 1981.' Well I went to the Canary Islands for a week in January, and I dare say that most of you paid a visit to your local downtown social security offices. And what about that trip to London fifty of you went on last week?

Just a word on these collections you've been receiving from firms lately. I had the staff branch from Lucas write to me and ask if they could do anything to help my staff here at Ansell's.

Unfortunately, I'm afraid I had to decline. We need state aid not Lucasaid.

But may I say the gift of the new chair sent to me by Messers Ken Bradley [the local T&G official] and his committee was extremely well received and it looks a treat in the boardroom. Can't wait for the electricity to be turned on so I can try it out.

In conclusion, may I wish you all a prosperous 1981 and hope that this letter from myself and my fellow directors will help me in some way to explain why we had to cut your wages by £40, boot the union reps out, finish with overtime, double output, give less time to do it in and generally degrade you all.

Yours, Robbing Thompson

out a systematic programme of destroying the bus service, by cutting routes and imposing astronomical fares, which are now among the highest in the country.

They are now proposing to make 2,400 redundancies and take 500 buses off the road, mainly affecting working class areas. On the local railways, which are control-

led by GMT, there is also talk of some lines being cut. It is particularly disgraceful that, at the same time as they have been making these cuts, the County Council have been paying millions of pounds into a so-called 'Education Trust Fund'—actually a subsidy to private schools in the form of 'scholarships.'

Reports

Civil Service 450,000 join strike

"We only get £1.33 an hour—we have to work damn hard for that. Coal's going up, electricity's going up, and the water rates—so we want 15%."

Mrs Reach, a branch secretary for civil service cleaners at Longbenton in Newcastle, well summed up the feeling of civil servants throughout the country, while on picket duty during the one-day strike on Monday.

The strike had massive support from the members of the nine civil service unions involved. At Longbenton itself, of a workforce of 13,000, only 5% turned up for work. Similarly, at Newcastle's three major offices at Washington, only 40 people went to work out of a workforce of 2,000.

It was well-supported especially by younger union members. The dilemma they face was described by a 19-year old CPSA member picketing at Stockton unemployment office. "I studied hard for my O and A levels to get this job. Now I'm taking home £46 a week—7% would only mean a £3 rise which would be eaten away by inflation."

As the regional reports

By 'Militant' reporters

below show, the civil service unions are united in their determination to win this dispute. They have shown the Tories they mean business. They can turn the screw on the government with their proposed indefinite strike at computer centres, which hit at the government rather than the public. A levy on members will also be held to finance those on strike.

But the civil servants are clear they are in for a struggle. After the Tories' defeats at the hands of the miners, dockers etc, they now want to save face and are prepared for a showdown.

But the civil service workers with their united stand and the stepping up of industrial action will win the day, and drive yet another nail into the coffin of the Tories.

Newcastle

Picket Pauline Eccleby said, "My husband has been unemployed for three weeks. He gets £17.50 a week dole so we have to survive on my £54.21 a week."

Manchester

22,000 civil servants joined the strike with all government offices picketed. The law courts were closed, with the Prison Officers Association refusing to cross picket lines. 600 union members walked out of the Army Pay Unit, disrupting contract payments for the British Army.

Reading

The local DHSS and tax offices were closed with 80% support for the strike amongst union members. Two thirds of the staff at the Crown Court joined the strike.

Southampton

About 90% of members struck including customs at Southampton ferries, with holidaymakers crossing empty customs stands with bulging suitcases and cheerful smiles!

At the Ordnance Survey building nearly 2,000 workers joined the strike, and despite appalling weather, more than 200 civil servants joined a march against the Tories through the town.

Portsmouth

Dockyard manual workers were sent home after supervisors joined the strike. Similarly, 1,500 workers were sent home from the Fleetland helicopter repair yards. And the Admiralty must have had a shock when their Admiralty Surface

Photo: MILITANT



No 'government building' was spared picket lines on Monday's strike

Weapons department was virtually shut down with 90% of union members joining the strike!

Poole and Weymouth

Over half of the civil service office staff stayed out, with a 100% strike at the local pensions office.

Margate

Here the local dole office, Driving Test Centre and the Tax office were closed for the day. Pickets received a good response from people turning up for appointments and many people did not cross the lines (especially those for the tax office!).

Basildon

DHSS, Inland Revenue and Evaluation offices were closed for the day with pickets on each building. Mike Holmes, secretary of the SE Essex CPSA said, "We will make no attempt to catch up on the lost day's work." He said the government's decision to suspend the Pay Review Unit had determined many members joining the strike, and added, with a touch of irony; "The government seem to be trying to make an example of their servants."

Airports

Air traffic over Britain and the north Atlantic was halted when civil service union members working for the Civil Aviation Authority joined the strike. Gatwick and Heathrow were deserted, and at Manchester air traffic engineers took their first ever industrial action and joined the strike. The civil service workers formed a joint picket line on airport entrances with Dan Air engineers, who are already involved in a dispute.

And finally...

No 10 Downing street

Union members from the Foreign Office picketed No 10, so that even the prime minister herself could not escape the effects of the action. Post Office workers refused to cross the line, nor did a dry cleaning van whose driver said he would not return with the clean laundry until next week. Perhaps Mrs Thatcher will now have to do her dirty washing in public, instead of in closed cabinet sessions! But one notable did cross the picket—the ambassador for the Soviet Union!

POEU

According to a report in the 'Daily Mirror' and other papers, the POEU is alleged to have been involved with other unions in a campaign to 'save the Labour Party.'

Reports said this would be done by restoring the biggest say in the election of the future Party leader to Labour MPs.

So the POEU General secretary was keenly questioned on the accuracy of such reports, at the POEU NEC meeting recently.

During the discussion it was made clear that no one representing the POEU had attended any such meeting in an official capacity.

However, the POEU General Secretary made it absolutely clear that he had attended meetings in a personal capacity. The NEC did not challenge his right to attend such meetings—in a personal capacity. However, it should be made absolutely clear to everyone—including the press—that he was acting in a personal capacity and not necessarily representing the views of his union.

A motion to support Michael Foot in his attempts to 'unite' the Party was then rejected by the POEU NEC, as was an amendment to support the Labour Party NEC in its attempts to unite the Party around Conference decisions.

A motion to call a one-day strike on the day that the PO Telecom Bill is presented to Parliament was narrowly rejected by the POEU but a lobby of Parliament will be organised. However, since that meeting a circular has now been put out saying that the lobby (on April 1) will not be a 'mass' event, with branch representatives attending only.

The object appears to be to persuade a few MPs to whittle away the worst aspects of the Telecom Bill, rather than kill it dead.

Liverpool co-ord (representing 6 POEU branches) has protested at this, saying a mass campaign is needed, and many other branches will no doubt echo their call.

Lee Jeans

"The days of golden handshakes are over; it's time to stand up and fight," explained shop stewards at the VF Corporation's Lee Jeans factory in Greenock, speaking to 'Militant'.

Certainly, the two hundred and forty strong, mainly female workforce are showing the entire labour movement how to fight back against redundancies with an occupation of the factory.

Teams of girls have been organised to travel all over Scotland to factories, pits and labour movement meetings, raising finance and building support for their struggle.

Ellen Monaghan, the shop stewards' convenor,

By Alan McCoombes
(Craighton LP)

described the response as overwhelming. Five thousand workers at the nearby shipyards have pledged to reoccupy the factory on behalf of the women if any attempt is made by management to break the sit-in by force.

Unemployed workers and pensioners have responded to their financial appeal. Labour Party members and Labour Party Young Socialists have organised fundraising visits to factories and entertainment in the form of a disco.

However, there is one quarter from which support has been slow in coming.

The national leadership of the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers have angered the workers by their continued refusal to declare the action official.

Indeed, they have advised the workers to take the redundancy money and accept closure.

But as one shop steward told 'Militant', "They're not our jobs to sell. There are kids still at their school desks who'll never find work in Greenock."

"We're fighting not only for ourselves, but for these kids and for all the unemployed youngsters of Greenock."

Send donations and messages of support to E Monaghan, 55 Cambridge Road, Greenock, Inverclyde.

Southend dustmen

Council workers in Southend are fighting for their jobs, following the decision of the Tory-controlled council to hand over the Cleansing Department to a private contractor and, in the process sack up to 250 workers.

Recently dustmen and other council workers held a one-day strike and a march of over 500 in the town centre.

If the new contract goes ahead on 1st April as planned, it will simply be the first of many similar moves by Tory councils. It is reported that at least 16 other councils have paid £40 each for copies of the Southend contract, so that

By Angela Anderson
(Southend LP)

they can find out how to get rid of their dustmen!

Southend council officials have done their best to intimidate the workers and prevent effective action. Prior to a previous one day strike, Brian Clark, Director of Engineering and Planning Services, sent out a circular saying that the contractor had asked for references for the existing workers and that he could not "give a good reference for those who break their Contract."

The success of the demo shows this blackmail will

not intimidate the dustmen.

The back-woods Tories of Southend and in Essex have been eager to play their part in cutting services and throwing workers on the scrapheap.

If they can get away with hiving off refuse services, simply to make profits for their big business friends, it could open the door to thousands of job losses throughout the country, as well as poorer services.

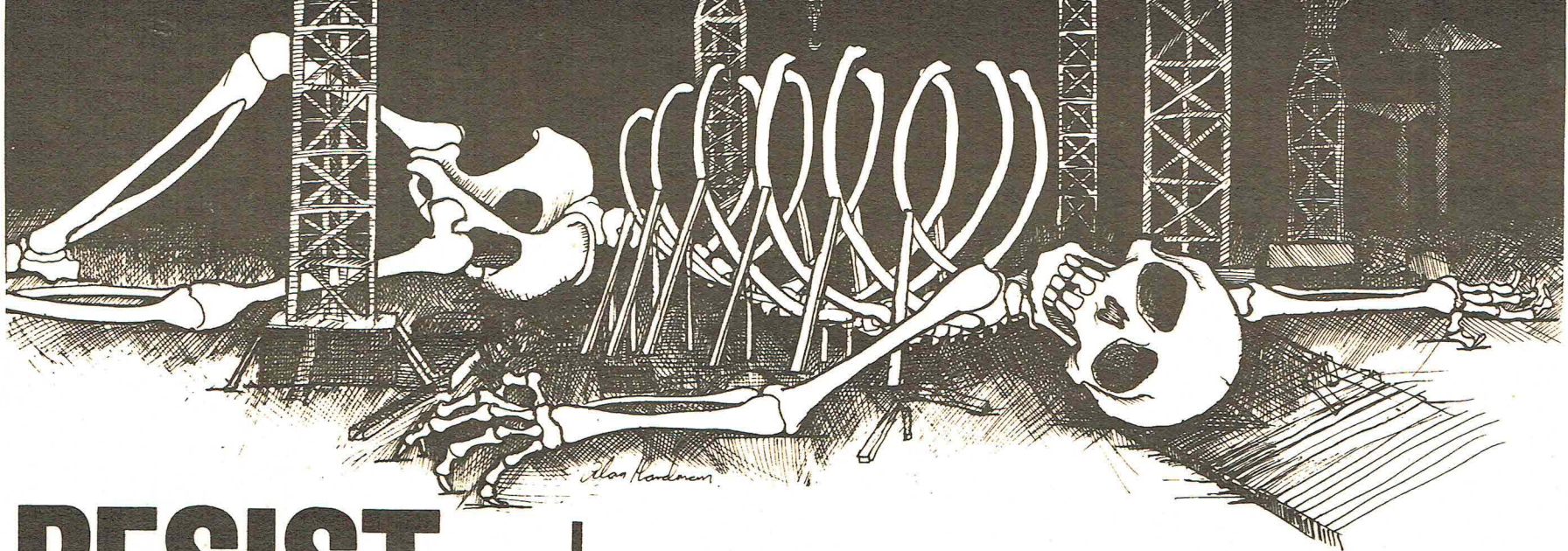
Workers everywhere must unite behind the Southend dustmen and fight for jobs.

Send messages of support to: The Cleansing Committee, c/o G&MWU, 41 Queens Road, Southend-on Sea, Essex.

Militant

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SHIPBUILDING



RESIST BOSSSES THREATS

The Tories are smarting at the bloody nose they got from the miners. Now they want to get their own back by fierce attacks on shipbuilding workers.

Workers in shipyards up and down the country will be insulted by the latest outrageous 'offer' from the shipbuilding bosses.

By Pat Mason

The miserly offer of a £5.29 a week rise was bad enough, but the bosses' demands heaped on top of this would take trade union rights in the yards back to the 19th century.

The bosses are demanding increased 'flexibility' of trade rights, in a bid to smash job protection. And they want compulsory flexibility between yards, being able to transfer one worker to another yard no matter how far away that may be.

Not only do they want an 'improved disciplinary procedure', but a 'no-strike' clause as well!

And they have said that for every 1% rise in pay, 3,000 workers will be made redundant!

They are now trying to blackmail the workers by saying if this is not accepted by April the workers will receive no pay rise at all, and if they dare to push for a higher rise, the Scott Lithgoe and Cammell Laird shipyards will close.

Reports have come in

giving an account of how the delegation reacted when they were presented with this offer in Newcastle last week. Many of them were right-wing 'moderates', but they were so flabbergasted at these outrageous demands that they were for calling an all-out strike there and then.

However, it was agreed to meet the bosses again on 23 March.

Obviously, the Tories and the bosses, after their defeat by the miners and dockers, are now attempting to make shipyard workers the whipping boys for the Tories' bankrupt monetarist policies.

All shipbuilding workers must now prepare for all-out strike if the bosses refuse to back down over their attempts to attack trade union rights and refusal to pay a decent wage.

More industrial reports pages 14 & 15

Brighton - Rallying for Socialism

At a 2,000-strong Labour rally in Brighton last Saturday, the Party's activists and supporters gave their unmistakable answer to Labour's enemies who have been furiously attacking the party's "swing to the left."

The Party leader, Michael Foot, was greeted with an ovation by the packed audience in the Dome.

Most significant, however, was the overwhelming and enthusiastic endorsement of Rod Fitch as Labour's new parliamentary candidate for the Brighton Kemptown constituency.

Rod [a well-known supporter of 'Militant'] as well as the local party itself, has come under a barrage of criticism from the capitalist press and right-wing opponents of the party since his recent selection.

The former Labour MP for Kemptown, Councillor Dennis Hobden, was greeted with tremendous applause and cheering when he said: "When I was MP, Michael Foot often came to speak at meetings for me, and when Rod Fitch is the MP, Michael Foot, I'm sure, will speak on platforms with him also."

"The press have rushed to publicise our two defectors. But they have not mentioned the number who have joined the party in the last three weeks alone."

Clive Walder, of the Labour Party Young Socialists and Regional LP Executive, also referred to the press campaign against Militant supporter Rod Fitch. To deafening applause, he said, "I for one am glad that the Labour Party has selected Rod—it is returning to its working class roots!"

Clive really caught the mood of the rally with a fighting speech urging the need for socialist policies, for the implementation of Clause IV, with the nationalisation of the big industrial and financial monopolies under democratic workers' control and management. Labour must campaign, Clive said, for a 35-hour week, an £80 minimum wage, and a job for all. There should be a programme of useful public works as part of a socialist plan of production.

The two local defectors to the 'social democrats' referred to by Councillor Dennis Hobden were Councillor Tom Forrester and his wife.

Another councillor attracted to the social democratic party which Forrester is trying to establish locally is Councillor Ray Searle. His only claim to fame in his time as a Labour councillor was that he played "good cricket" with the Tories in the council team.

But are the social democratic defectors a serious threat to Labour in Brighton? Last week's Stanmer by-election shows that we have little to worry about, provided Labour continues to campaign energetically on socialist policies.

Tom Forrester, as self-appointed leader of the local Social Democrats, issued a statement urging people to vote Liberal in the election. The Liberals took up the defectors' attacks on the alleged Trotskyist and Militant "domination" of the Labour Party.

In spite of these "red-scare" tactics, the Labour candidate won with a majority of 700 votes—more than all the other candidates put together.

The most bizarre candidate was one Ian Cameron, known in Brighton as a



Rod Fitch, Labour's prospective Parliamentary candidate for Brighton Kemptown

member of the fascist National Front, who appointed himself as representative of the "New Centre Party for Social Democracy". He got

a mere 38 votes. The official NF candidate got only 22 votes.

The Tories didn't even put up a candidate.

By Ray Apps (Brighton Kemptown CLP)

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