

Militant

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ANSWER

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SHUT DOWN THATCHER & CO

Scottish shop stewards lead the fight

By Bob Wylie

Wednesday, 11 March was a big day for the workers of the West of Scotland.

Preparations for a mighty industrial battle to save jobs were made by shop stewards at a meeting called by the Talbot shop stewards.

At the Hoover factory, in Cambuslang, 2,000 workers rejected plans for 500 sackings.

Hughie Wyper, the Scottish regional secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, set the tone of the Talbot meeting, when they declared: "We cannot run away any longer. There is nowhere to go. What is in store today for the Linwood workers, is in store for many others tomorrow."

He went on: "The facts are clear, if you don't rock the boat now you will go down the road! When the Linwood workers act, they should be backed by a massive industrial campaign to show quite clearly—enough is enough!"

Even as brother Wyper was speaking, more redundancies have been declared. Another 350 will be sacked at Rolls Royce, East Kilbride, if management has its way. However, the indications of the Talbot meeting are that a potentially massive support for strike action to beat redundancies exists.

Speaking at the Talbot meeting, Davey Cooper, of Govan Shipbuilders, stressed: "The closure of Talbot is the murder of Linwood and we are not having it."

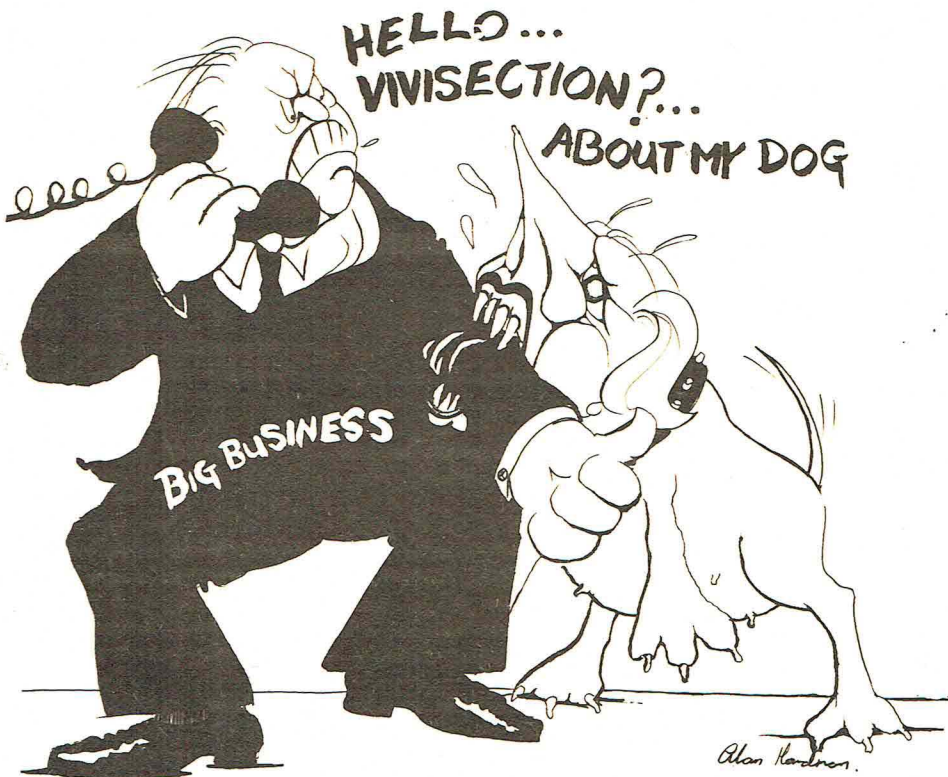
Sammy Barr of the Boilermakers in handing a cheque of £1,000 from the former Upper Clyde Shipbuilding Fighting Fund, emphasised to the Linwood workers: "If you take it up there will be a victory. We want you to go into battle."

This message came from more than the shipyard workers, however. Pledges of support were made from all sections of the labour



Workers at Stanley, Co. Durham, next door to Consett protest at Keith Joseph's visit

Photo: D Doran



movement—from ASLE&F, NUR, the Scottish District Council of NALGO, SOGAT, the National Transport and General Workers Union Dockers Committee and shop stewards representing Rolls Royce workers.

Babcock Power and UID. Unanimous support of the 500 stewards assembled for a fight to save Talbot must have embraced factories and unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers in the West of

Scotland. Helen Monaghan, the convenor of the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock, under occupation to prevent clos-

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Wonder Woman... Plunder Woman... Blunder Woman..



Photo: Militant

Once upon a time—and not so long ago—Mrs Thatcher could do no wrong.

Fleet Street hacks built her up as some kind of political goddess who would overcome every problem.

Bankers, financiers, and big business tycoons could not heap enough praise on her monetarist spells which were going to magically abolish the slump.

But Maggie's latest budget has brought them down to earth with a bump.

For millions of workers, the budget has been "the last straw". But Howe's deflationary package has done virtually nothing to please the Tories' big business bac-

kers either.

The prime minister's office described last Saturday's emergency meeting between Thatcher and the Confederation of British Industry as "friendly and businesslike". Sir Raymond Pennock, the CBI president, commented: "I would rather just say businesslike."

"This budget is something we neither hoped for or expected. It will penalise business, and increase prices, bankruptcies and unemployment."

But this was polite compared to the comments of the capitalist

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Tory splits deepen

The ranks of the labour movement will enthusiastically welcome Michael Foot's challenge to Mrs Thatcher to call a general election.

As a result of the budget alone, as Michael Foot said, the average family would have to pay out £99 more a year.

A million more workers will have to pay tax, and the burden will be heaviest on those with the smallest income.

But the budget is not only another vicious attack on workers' jobs and living standards. By intensifying the Tories' deflationary policies [taking £3½ billion out of the economy immediately and up to £5 or £6 billion when the failure to index tax allowances is taken into account], the Thatcherites are prolonging the "L-shaped" slump of British capitalism. Big business, particularly manufacturing industry, has not been given any of the economic relief which it was demanding from the Tories before the budget.

The budget has provoked a crisis for the Tories, and marks a turning point for the Thatcher government.

"The Conservative Party," commented 'The Observer', "now seems embarked on a battle for its own soul that is as fundamental as the one splitting Labour. But, being Conservatives, they conduct the debate in a recondite way [i.e. behind the scenes]."

Yet a number of Thatcher's Cabinet have expressed more or less open opposition to her policies. The CBI has criticised her economic strategy. At least one Tory so far has defected to the Social Democrats.

Different Conservatism

How things have changed since the early days of Thatcher's government! Then, big business, the press and television could not heap enough praise on Mrs Thatcher.

Then, she was hailed as restoring the "true values" of Conservatism. Now, as one commentator puts it, "If this is conservatism, the

word must mean something very different from what one has always assumed."

"She forges ahead" [writes Peregrine Worsthorpe in the 'Sunday Telegraph'] "with economic policies at home which divide the nation, cripple industry...., provoke the working class and run the risk of putting a Marxist-dominated Labour Party...back into power at the next election."

Lull before storm

This is the nub of the problem for the ruling class. Not only has Thatcher failed to satisfy big business, but her policies are preparing the way for an enormous explosion of working class anger.

They know that the relative industrial calm of the past few months is most probably the lull before an enormous storm. While claiming that the Labour Party is in "chaos" and a "shambles", in reality they fear there will be the return of a Labour government which, under enormous pressure of the working class, will pose a threat to the wealth and power of the capitalist class.

The signs are already there that the Tories will now be making moves to dump Mrs Thatcher. This is unlikely to happen immediately. But when the govern-

ment has weathered the immediate row, moves will undoubtedly be made.

More and more of the leading Tories and the spokesmen of big business in the City are drawing the conclusion that Thatcher, far from being the great asset they formerly thought, has now become a real liability.

At the same time, big business [as our article on this page shows] is already channelling funds in the direction of the Social Democrats. With the help of the mass media, they will be helping to build them up as a "safety-net" to catch disenchanted Tories—in an effort to block the return of a Labour government.

The defection of Mr Brocklebank-Fowler only confirms our prediction that the main appeal of the Social Democrats will be to disillusioned Tory and Liberal voters.

But Thatcher's Tory opponents have no real alternative. This is admitted by the serious capitalist press, even as they are discussing whether Thatcher should be dumped or not.

'Wets' no alternative

"It is none too clear," writes Fred Emery in 'The Times' [14 March], "whether ministers themselves [i.e. the 'Wets' opposed to Thatcher] are sure what other choices they should be offering. They abhor the word 'reflation', yet the budget adds up to 2% more on the retail price index. Now they hate the word 'deflation'."

In other words, the spokesmen of capitalism are beginning to realise that drastic 'deflation'—or in the

modern jargon 'monetarism'—offers no way out of the crisis. Yet 'reflation', with an increase in government spending, would only fuel the fires of inflation which has only slowed down under Thatcher because of the high pound and the stagnation of the British economy.

What the CBI is calling for is a reflation of £1,500 million a year for the next four years. They want "a more generous approach" to public investment in the railways, telephones, drainage and roads. But this would be a very minor reflation, and would not begin the rescue of British industry.

No alliance with CBI

At the same time, they want further cuts in current expenditure [i.e. on jobs, and vital services], and further cuts in public sector pay and salary rises.

Such a policy would neither end the slump nor benefit working people.

It is an entirely false policy on the part of the TUC leaders to imply that, in opposing the Thatcher government, the labour movement can find common ground with the CBI. Such a policy could only blunt the struggle against the Tories and the bosses.

"The economics and politics of this budget," said 'The Observer' [15 March], "albeit clothed in modern intellectual dress [i.e. the monetarism championed by professor Milton Friedman and taken up by Thatcher, Joseph and Co.] are a reversion to the 'Thirties.'"

But the crisis—and the deflationary crisis-policies—are, like the crisis of the

1930s, the product of capitalist slump. Thatcherite policies have intensified all the symptoms; but the crisis is nevertheless rooted in the rottenness of British capitalism, and the world-wide malaise of the system.

While big business and the profit motive continue to dominate the economy, there will be no solutions for the working class.

The fight against the Tories—and to bring down the Thatcher government and return a Labour government—must be waged on the basis of bold socialist policies.

The fight for jobs, for a £80 minimum living wage for all workers, for a 35-hour week, and for the restoration of spending cuts, must be linked to the need for a socialist plan of production. This could be implemented only on the basis of the nationalisation with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, of the 200 big monopolies and banks, under democratic workers' control and management.

Force Tories out

This must be the programme for the next Labour government.

The miners showed the way. Their threat of determined national action forced the Tories to retreat.

Now the workers in the West of Scotland [as our article on page 1 shows] are preparing for a massive campaign of industrial action against the Tories, who are laying Scotland's industrial heartland to waste.

These sections have begun to show the way. Now the whole of the labour movement must be mobilised by the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Business queues up to fund Social Democrats



The Social Democrats' previous organisation, Campaign for Labour Victory, collecting funds, appropriately enough, in a champagne bucket, at last year's Labour Party Conference

"If it's just a slower form of creeping socialism then I'm not interested. But if it's true Christian Democracy then I'm for them and my board might well back me."

This promise to finance the social democrats by the chairman of a company which funds the Tories, was just one of the dozens which the 'Financial Times' (10 March) reported in an article "Wide industry support for Social Democrats possible."

The bosses want to build up the social democrats as a safe "reserve XI", which the capitalists can rely upon, when workers and the middle class can no longer stand the Tory first team.

Previously the social democrats acted as the spokesmen for capitalist policies within the labour movement. It has been the failure of those policies which resulted in the growing radicalisation of the Labour Party and the vomiting out of these apologies for the bosses.

Whilst in the Labour Party the social democrats used to cover up their reactionary policies with the occasional socialist rhetoric. As long as they are now re-assured by the social democrats that this was all a fraud, the bosses are prepared to pour in substantial funds to get the new Party off the ground.

Roy Jenkins recently smoothed their brows when

By Jim Chrystie

he told 'The Observer' that he had not used the word 'socialism' for ages. And the capitalists have fond memories of seeing the social democrats in action. The 'Financial Times' reported that "many industrialists have favourable recollections of Mrs Shirley Williams as Prices Secretary and identify with her on many issues."

All the indications show that the social democrats will get substantial backing from companies, which will also continue to fund the Tories. "It does us no good to be constantly pulled between Keith Joseph and Tony Benn. We are tired of the big pendulum swings and if a middle of the road party will help to stop that, then I'm for it," was what the chairman of one major manufacturing company told the 'Financial Times'.

Such is the desperate position of British capitalism that previously loyal backers of the Tories are looking desperately for an alternative to halt the growing class polarisation within society.

The 'Financial Times' estimated that over £1m would be required to launch the new party. Last year industrialists gave over £2m to the Tories. Despite their claims not to be dependent on either the bosses or workers, where else except from

the industrialists and financiers, will the social democrats get their money from?

They will get none from within the labour movement. Even past allies such as Frank Chapple of the electricians' union, has been forced to draw away from backing the breakaway. He now supports the majority of right-wingers who have remained within the Party.

The vast majority of social democrat support comes from disillusioned Tories and Liberals. ITV's 'World in Action' poll (2 February) showed that 31% of their electoral support would come from Tories and 43% from Liberals.

The social democrats will not receive much finance from individuals. So far they have only obtained £60,000 from 25,000 individuals, hardly an adequate launching pad for a new party.

In the past Liberal MP Cyril Smith reminded industrialists that there were two 'free-enterprise parties' in Britain, and asked them to back both. Some, such as Marks and Spencers do that; £20,000 to Tories last year, £5,000 to Liberals 1976-77.

Far greater sums will probably now be poured into the social democrats' coffers. British companies overseas have practiced this funding of two or more parties for years. In Canada they fund both the Liberals and the Tories, in Australia both the Liberals and the Country party.

The bosses will feel quite at home when they discuss finances with the social

democrats. Treasurer-elect is Clive Lindley, whose motorway service stations last week put up petrol prices to what the AA described as "the highest in Europe—and possibly the world."

Also helping to organise the money from the new party are David Sainsbury (from the grocery chain), Sir Leslie Murphy (ex-chairman National Enterprise Board, now a director of Schroeders), David Astor (ex-editor 'Observer'), Edmund Dell (ex-Labour Cabinet Minister, now chairman of the Guinness Peat merchant bank) and Lord Diamond.

To help cement links Roy Jenkins this week was the guest of the City of London 'branch' of the Committee for Electoral Reform, whose members include Robert Clark of Hill Samuels bank and Robert Leigh Pemberton from National Westminster.

With this kind of backing capitalists hope to prevent a left-wing Labour government ever coming to power. They believe that they can do this by introducing proportional representation. But these tactics by the bosses cannot put an end to the sharpening class divisions within society.

They can offer no solution to the problems of unemployment, inflation, rent, rate rises, poverty and racial discrimination.

Their coffers may be full, but their policies are bankrupt. They have already been tried and found to result in attacks on workers' living standards.

GET UNION BACKING

Are you interested in fighting for a better deal for youth? Keen to help bring down the Tories? Then the place to be this Easter is in Bridlington.

The Labour Party Young Socialists' annual conference in Bridlington, Yorkshire, is a mass meeting of working class youth in Britain. You'd better book soon, because over two thousand will be going, and the conference will be full to overflowing.

The Welsh region are sending double last year's numbers, to take part in the vital debates on ending youth exploitation and the struggle for socialism. Then there are discos, theatre and a band for entertainment.

Leading trade union militants Arthur Scargill and Eric Clarke, from the NUM, will be addressing the conference. Quite fitting for what is the biggest conference of young trade unionists in Britain!

Every Labour Party Young Socialist branch should be following the example of the Northern Region, working till the last minute to get young workers sponsored by their trade unions to Bridlington.

So far, Northumberland NUM are sponsoring two members; Wallsend shipyards shop stewards are sending four apprentices, two of the Swan Hunters shipyard's shop stewards, and another two from

By Margaret Reavey
(LPYS National Committee)

Churchills Engineering will be at the conference.

The NUR are sending an LPYS member and another visitor is being sent by brewery shop stewards. The Northern region have already booked 170 places, nearly double the 90 who went last year. Another ten trade unions have promised to send any members who wish to go.

If you can't get financial help from your union, try your Labour Party or the Co-op. Join the LPYS in fundraising for the conference.

Gateshead East have raised £200 so far, with a disco raising £57 and socialist sticker sales bringing in £75.

Don't miss out; contact your local LPYS branch or write to Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Make sure your LPYS members come to the 'Militant' public meeting at the Conference Centre in Bridlington on the evening of Saturday, April 18th. Hear Militant's political Editor, Ted Grant, Kevin Roddy, Broad Left Candidate for President of the CPSA and other speakers.

— to go to LPYS Conference 17-20 April



Photo: Militant

Arthur Scargill will be one of the guest speakers addressing LPYS Conference

"We are sending double the number who went last year. Only financial hardship will stand in the way of Staffordshire sending 50 people to LPYS national conference at Easter," says Nigel Shaw of Stafford and Stone LPYS. "But," says Nigel, a 22 year old member of the TGWU and one of Britain's 300,000 unemployed building workers, "many of our LPYS in Stafford are poorly

paid, are unemployed or school students who will find it hard to raise the money.

"Lately we have been helping out at the day centre for the unemployed, of which I am vice-chairman. The LPYS campaigned for this in the trade unions.

"Now our unemployed will have to get round the factories and union branches campaigning to raise

money for the conference. Already we've received £50 from the unions during our week of action and we now have £90 in the bank to help finance people to go to Bridlington.

"Fortunately we have built the branch and with twenty to thirty attending meetings, all of them should be contributing to the struggle for funds."

Tory Trade Union Organisation Collapses

It must be a pretty tough and isolated existence being a Tory trade unionist at present. How do you explain to fellow workers why they are losing their jobs, or having attacks on basic trade union rights, or facing pay restraint.

But at least, up till last week, you could fall back on the excuses produced by the Conservative Trade Unionist (CTU) organisation at Party headquarters. Not any longer though.

Last week after a heated meeting Tory civil servants in Preston phoned up Tory Central Office to find out why the government was being so vicious against them. They were unable to get a reply.

The devastation that Thatcher has wreaked on the economy has now stretched to include her own Party organisation. Forty Party workers at headquarters have been sacked, and many of these worked for the CTU. From a staff of over 30, the CTU is reduced to just three.

The Preston workers discovered that Central Office had appropriately enough sacked the National Organiser of the Civil Service workers. And the regional organiser who used to be responsible for the North-West now has to cover London as well.

BOSSES WON'T END RACISM

Whitelaw's decision to ban all demonstrations in Leicester this month on the grounds that there would be violence during a Fascist march cannot be seen as a victory. As one unemployed Asian youth in Leicester commented: "bans are no good; the police have never defended us in the past, it is up to us to mobilise to fight the fascists."

The bosses have whipped up racial hatred when it suited their interests. Before the election Thatcher talked about Britain being "swamped by immigrants."

New, however, they are worried about a widespread angry reaction of black and Asian people, and increasingly the labour movement, against Fascist thugs taking to the streets. The racist card is for the moment to put nearer the bottom of the pack, to be played at a more

opportune time.

It is the responsibility of the labour movement to defend both black and white workers. The fascists use racialism to divide workers and hinder their fight against the real enemy, the Tories and the bosses.

Leicester Labour Party Young Socialists have been actively campaigning in black and Asian areas where we have had a tremendous response from the youth. A hastily organised rally last Saturday at Belgrave attracted 30 YS members despite the rain.

We marched on the streets shouting slogans, even though the local police advised us not to.

Leicester LPYS will continue to campaign for mass action to fight racists and for socialist policies to end unemployment, bad housing etc, which provide the breeding ground for racialism.

The National Front have also announced they will be marching in Portsmouth at 2.30pm, 4 April. According to reports, they have told their members to "bring wives and girl-friends"(!)

and not to wear swastikas or give nazi salutes (after all, that would give the game away). They will be marching through working-class areas.

Details of an anti-fascists mobilisation will follow.

No to Nationality Bill
London LPYS/PNP Youth
Picket Home Office,
Queen Anne's Gate SW1
[Tube St James' Park]
Wed 25 March, 12-2 pm

Who's heading Deptford Fire Inquiry?

Thirteen black teenagers died in a horrifying fire in New Cross on 18 January. This is an area with a history of fire attacks on homes, shops and clubs used by blacks and Asians.

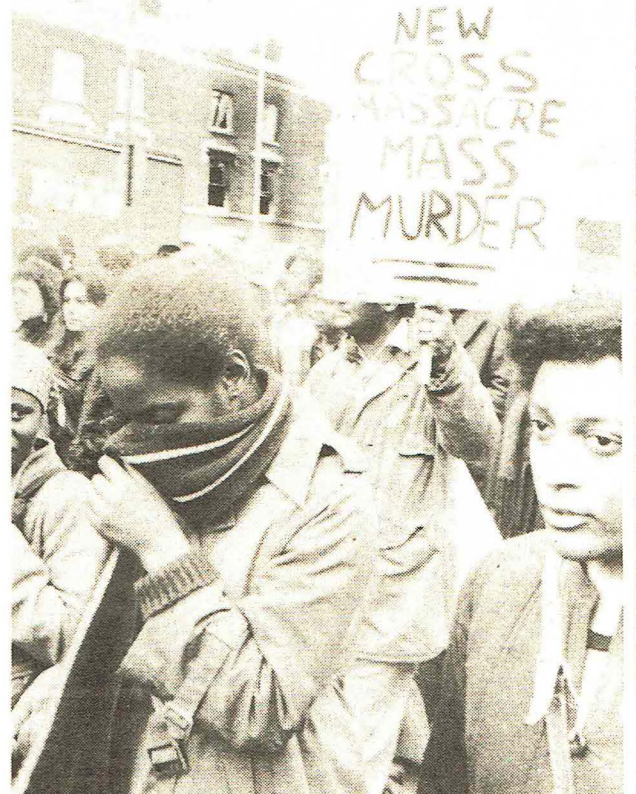
The police, however, are keeping what they describe as an 'open mind' about the fire. The same zeal shown in

harrassment of whole communities during searches for black 'suspects' has evidently not been directed against known fascists and racist organisations in this area.

The suspicions of black and workers' organisations of a cover-up will be reinforced by Labour MP Christopher Price's revelation that the officer in charge of the police enquiry, Commander Graham Stockwell, was one of the policemen involved with the Maxwell Confait murder case in 1972.

Three youths were arrested after the Confait murder in Catford. Stockwell was the officer who recorded their 'confessions'. Last year the weight of evidence forced even a Tory Attorney General to completely exonerate the three boys convicted. Since then Christopher Price and other local people have been demanding an inquiry into how the 'confessions' were obtained.

Already the treatment of black youth by the police has led to accusations of mis-treatment and denial of rights to those being questioned. Scotland Yard say



Demonstration earlier this month against police inaction over Deptford fire.

Photo: Militant

they are satisfied they "have every confidence in the man heading the enquiry and the way it is conducted."

Local people are not satisfied. It is becoming

ever more clear that only the united fight by black and labour movement organisations can put a stop to racist violence in Britain.

LABOUR PARTY REPORTS

WOLS

The annual conference of the Welsh Organisation of Labour Students [WOLS] could not have come at a more crucial time, the political climate being one in which WOLS could grow—especially in the Further Education sector.

However, the attitude of the 'Clause 4' group who dominate WOLS (by virtue of their control of Aberystwyth Labour Club was soon made clear. As we arrived for an 11.30am start, we were told that there had been a 'mistake'; conference wouldn't start till 1pm!

Apparently a vital regional committee meeting had to be held, the outcome of which was that we were told Swansea Labour Club would be dropped from the conference due to 'non-payment of debts'. However, the assistant regional organiser produced documentary evidence that Swansea had paid.

With conference eventually beginning, delegates were treated to a completely new agenda. And besides 45 minutes being taken out of conference time for 'workshops' there was not only to be a fraternal address from the Regional Youth Committee (which is customary), but also from NOLS, SOLS, the Labour Party Student Organiser and Helen Connor, the NOLS candidate for NUS President.

With so much time lost to conference for debate, movers of resolutions were only allowed about 2 minutes and speakers from the floor, one minute!

By Steve Davies
(Regional Committee)
& Yvonne Vennard
(Vice-chairperson,
Regional Committee)
both in personal capacity

There were three resolutions on the agenda—South Africa, further education, and unemployment. Of the South African resolution, Vic Golightly of Swansea ULC said in the debate, "I've seen more hard hitting resolutions from the World Council of Churches."

However, the 'Clause 4' supporters seemed oblivious to the magnificent struggles of the black working class against the regime, adding that we Marxists ignored the role of the peasantry. (Joe Stalin's bankrupt 'theories' live on it seems!). Yet in SA, the black working class forms the majority of society!

But it was the debate on FE's that the 'Clause 4' really showed their colours. All sorts of elitist rubbish came out eg Labour Clubs couldn't be built in FE colleges because FE students didn't possess the same cultural and organisational level as university students.

If we produced a leaflet based on our resolution, we were told, FE students would laugh at us. The 'laughable' demands were for £25 a week grant, for 16-18 year olds, cheap accommodation and a maximum of seven hours a day at college.

The unemployment resolution was kept until after the elections and reports, the 'Clause 4' no doubt knowing the political pating they would receive.

On the contributions from the fraternal delegates, Helen Connor looked decidedly uncomfortable when she was asked to explain her rapid shuffle from the NOLS slate to the Left

Alliance (made up of Liberals, 'independents' and the CP) and then back again, in the NUS elections.

Motions were taken from WOLS to the Labour Party Wales conference without any prior notice that this would be on the agenda—to the complete amazement of most people! In elections for the delegate to this conference, someone was elected who not only wasn't a delegate to WOLS but was not even present! This may have been done to the letter of the constitution, but hardly in the spirit.

However, emergency resolutions pledging support to the Dupont workers and one to produce propaganda against the Social Democrat renegades were passed unanimously (if you discount one character from Aberystwyth who was so right wing that he thought any campaign against the SDs was a 'Militant' attack on those who disagreed with us!).

In the annual report it was revealed that the 'Clause 4' controlled regional committee had failed to build one new Labour Club—in fact three has collapsed! However, 'Militant' supporters had built a new club at the Welsh college of Music and Drama, and the Cardiff delegates said there was a possibility of a further two being set up in the Cardiff area.

But the last word on this year's WOLS conference should be left to Moria Thomas, the chairperson of the only new club: "I'd been told to be prepared for a shock, but I never realised they would be quite this bad. A lot of people who weren't 100% with the Militant before now realise that we're the only ones who can build WOLS. We'll be back next year—with a vengeance!"

Yorkshire

A clear commitment to organise the unemployed was a feature of the Yorkshire Regional Labour Party conference last week.

This was to be organised within the orbit of the trade union movement, with a call for a national campaign of recruitment amongst the unemployed, school leavers and within industry.

The anger of the waste and destruction of Tory Britain, and its effects upon the working class was demonstrated by delegate after delegate.

Arthur Scargill, speaking with the experience of the miners' successful action against the Tories, stated that "if eloquence and logic cannot persuade this government then our industrial muscle must."

Yet a strategy of regional

By Rob Jones
(Sheffield Heeley CLP)

and national co-ordination of the industrial and political wings of the movement to resist redundancies and closures, including an effective 24-hour general strike, moved by Sheffield Heeley, was successfully opposed by the Executive.

A composite resolution, moved by Leeds NE and Shipley CLPs, provided the basis for a thorough-going socialist programme. It was successfully opposed by the executive, claiming the question of a minimum wage was exclusively a matter for the trade unions!

However, Steve Davison, on behalf of the Bradford AUEW District Committee successfully moved a resolution calling for an effective fight against redundancies, linked to nationalisation and workers' management.

Support for this resolution was unfortunately coupled with support for the false and diversionary 'alternative' of import controls, despite a strong speech by Terry Wilson of Leeds NE CLP opposing its dangers and fallacies.

The mood in Yorkshire has changed—conference was clearly angered with Denis Healey MP, fraternal delegate from the NEC. He made a vicious attack on the Wembley Conference decisions, attacking the 'unrepresentative cliques' (presumably meaning the grass roots of the movement).

He stated the need to provide an 'alternative' to the British people, rather than "Thatcherism and the Militant Tendency"!

The best answer to this came in the form of a very successful Militant Rally at conference, where Peter Taaffe got an enthusiastic response in outlining a future socialist perspective for the Party, with £200 being raised for the fighting fund.

West Midlands

The labour and trade union movement in the West Midlands face a daunting task, in drawing up the kind of policies which can show a way forward for workers in this region.

How can the avalanche of redundancies be stopped? How can the manufacturing base of industry be saved from destruction? How can the social services be protected and expanded? What should be the policy of Labour local councils in the face of Thatcher's attacks?

These questions will provide the background to the discussions and debates at the Regional Labour Party conference over the weekend

of 21/22 March.

As well as hammering out a programme of action to fight the Tories and kick them out of County Hall in the elections in May, the conference must begin to build a leadership capable of heading these and future battles.

Vote for 'Militant' supporters in the Regional Executive Committee elections; Dave Griffiths [Stafford and Stone CLP], Pete McNally [Ladywood CLP] and Dave Nellist [Coventry SE CLP]

By a 'Militant' reporter

LABOUR PARTY MEETING ADS

All London Labour Party Conference "Fight back against racist immigration and nationality laws" For further details ring: Charlotte Atkins 675 3874. Sunday 5 April 2.00pm. Brabant Road Community Centre, Station Road, Wood Green. Speakers: John Tilly MP; JCWI; National CARL.

WALTHAM FOREST Festival Against Unemployment. Eric Deakins MP; Alf Lomas MEP; Tony Saunio (NEC); Anne Beales, plus local band "The Hawks" 2.00pm Sat. 21 March. Selbourne Park, Walthamstow E17. (Near Walthamstow Central station).

HAMPSTEAD LPYS Public Debate "How can Ireland be united?" Hear: Tony Saunio (Labour Party NEC) v Geoff Bell (Troops Out Movement). 8.00pm. Monday 30 March 37a Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6.

BRISTOL Labour Party Young Socialists Benefit Creature Beat Out of Order The Beleeshas Robert Lawrence React Trinity Hall, Saturday 28 March. £1 on door

LPYS ROUND-UP

Scotland

"So this is Lord Underhill's army," began Dennis Skinner MP when addressing over 250 delegates and visitors at the Scottish LPYS annual conference.

He attacked the 'Campaign for Social Diseases' and called for them to get out of the Labour Party; "The quicker the better."

Conference gave warm applause to Caroline McDaid, speaking on behalf of 240 VF Jeans workers who are occupying their factory to save their jobs.

The YS have helped by distributing appeal sheets for the workers throughout the labour movement. Conference collected £100 for these workers.

One problem the occupation faces is the boredom of sitting around doing nothing—the YS to the rescue again, by helping to organise a disco in the factory!

One highlight of the conference was the first ever Militant meeting attended by over 80 delegates which raised £140 for the fighting fund.

Support for 'Militant' was re-affirmed in the elections to the LPYS National Committee. The 'Militant' can-



Scottish Young Socialists the February 21st Glasgow march

By Willie Griffin
(LPYS NC Scotland)

didate gained 28 votes, against 12 for 'Tribune' and only one for 'Socialist Organiser'.

Now the priority is to raise cash for the LPYS National

Conference this Easter to get every young socialist to what will be the biggest and best National Conference ever.

Public Debate Young Tories v Young Socialists, Thursday March 19, McLellan Galleries, Glasgow, Time, 7.30pm. All Welcome.

Birmingham

The demoralisation that has been recently felt by many West Midlands workers wasn't present at last weekend's Youth Campaign Against Unemployment march in Birmingham.

The changing mood of some workers was indicated by the speaker from the Ansell's strike committee who told the 300 present that theirs was "a struggle that the whole Midlands needed to win."

The LPYS can be proud that it was the first organisation in Birmingham to organise a demonstration against unemployment, but

we are not "resting on our laurels". This demonstration has been an excellent start in our campaign against unemployment.

With the scores of names we have collected outside the dole queue and schools in the run up to the demonstration, we are confident that we can go from strength to strength. As Tony Saunio told the rally: "The LPYS has to transform the demoralisation of many young people on the dole into a fight back against the bosses' system."

Northwest

The 1981 north west regional conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists held in Blackpool recently was a tremendous success.

Over one hundred young people from dole queues, factories, schools and colleges, came together to discuss a programme to kick the Tories out and fight for the return of a Labour government committed to taking on big business.

In the 'economy' debate, resolutions on the implications of new technology, the Employment Act and un-

By Simon Swinnerton
(LPYS)

employment were discussed. The need for demands such as a 35 hour week, an £80 minimum wage and a guaranteed job for all were put across both in contributions of a theoretical basis and comrades relating to their own experiences.

Saturday afternoon hustings for the National Committee took place. Malcolm Clark (Manchester Ard-

wick) won the nomination standing on the programme of the 'Militant' and Simon Swinnerton (Chester) standing on the same programme as a reserve came second. All the Regional Committee positions also went to 'Militant' supporters.

It was clear at the end of the conference that the LPYS North West region, the largest YS region with 62 branches, could only go forward on the programme adopted over the next year.



Those who maintain that a second [unelected] House in Parliament is necessary for the 'preservation of democracy', will no doubt be delighted to hear that the Lords have been working overtime lately involved in heated debates lasting well into the night. The Bill which has caused such controversy—more Lords' amendments have been made to it than on any other measure for the last 20 years—is not as one might have expected the new Nationality Bill, or even measures to cut public spending further. No, it is the 'Wildlife and Countryside Bill'. It seems that their Lordships care more about the fate of the Bustard and the common snipe than they do about the fate of millions of working class people.

Eighty-four new flats on the Smiths Farm estate, Northolt, which have been kept empty for two years so they can be sold off, are being centrally heated at the Tory Greater London Council's expense. Mrs Yvonne Sieve [member and prospective Labour GLC candidate for Southall] claims that over £100,000 in ratepayers' money has been spent in keeping these flats empty. Now the central heating is running to keep them aired!

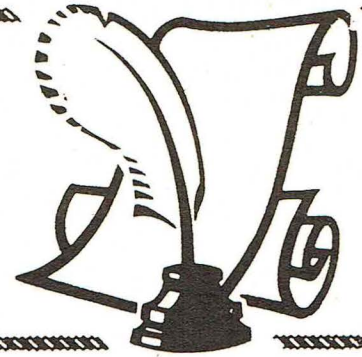
This is the cost of Tory dogmatism. At the same time, the council housing waiting list in Ealing borough stands at over 10,000 and landlords in the private sector are getting away with charging £38 a week for a bed-sit.

Think you'll be kicking your heels this summer? Fancy a trip across the Bay of Biscay? Well what's to stop you following the example of one enterprising young lady who's booked a short spin in Concorde with a group of friends. It will only cost £17,500, with champagne thrown in and the special attraction of twenty minutes at supersonic speed across the sea. So far, there don't seem to be many redundant car-workers booked for the trip—can't think why.

The capitalist state now appears to be clamping down on the fascists as they fear the outrage—which could rebound on the capitalists themselves—the fascists can provoke. But the law courts still save their venom for the labour movement. The cases of an Anti-Nazi demonstrator and a New National Front fascist after a recent Birmingham march are a good example. Anti-Nazi Paul Vernon pleaded guilty to using threatening words and behaviour at the demo. He was fined £400 with £30 costs. NNF member Martin Oddy pleaded guilty to using threatening words and behaviour and possessing an offensive weapon. His punishment? A fine of £175 with £25 costs and bound over for a year.

Remember the whining and sour grapes that littered the Tory press when Stephen Haseler and his renegades in the Social Democratic Alliance were given their marching orders from the Labour Party, after they said they would stand their own candidates against Labour Party left-wingers in an election? The SDA are now suckling up to the dirty dozen of the Social Democrats in the CSD. But Haseler himself is involved with another political grouping, exposed in this month's edition of 'Searchlight,' the anti-fascist magazine. Haseler is a member of the editorial board of 'Foundation' a magazine which can only be described as an ultra-conservative Reaganite think tank in the United States. It has been described in the 'Washington Post', as, along with other bastions of American society, the 'Republican government in waiting.' His other board members have included 'Daily Telegraph' journalist John O'Sullivan, and for a short time one Roger Pearson, President of the North American chapter of the neo-fascist World Anti-Communist League. Contributors to 'Foundation' include Tory MPs Winston Churchill and Julian Amery and the man himself, Milton Friedman. No doubt Haseler will now feel well at home with the lords and ladies of the Council for Social Democracy. But he is a good example of the kind of creatures who crept into the Labour Party at the expense of the working class.

COURT CIRCULAR



Whaaaat! Only 12 per cent. What the hell is Mrs Thatcher playing at!

Inflation going bananas and she expects a family to make do with only a 12 per cent rise.

And I'm not talking about any old family—we're not talking about some scrummy Coronation Street dwellers, who can go starve for all I care. But the Royal family—the foundation stone of our glorious empire and our spiritual leaders in the Church of England.

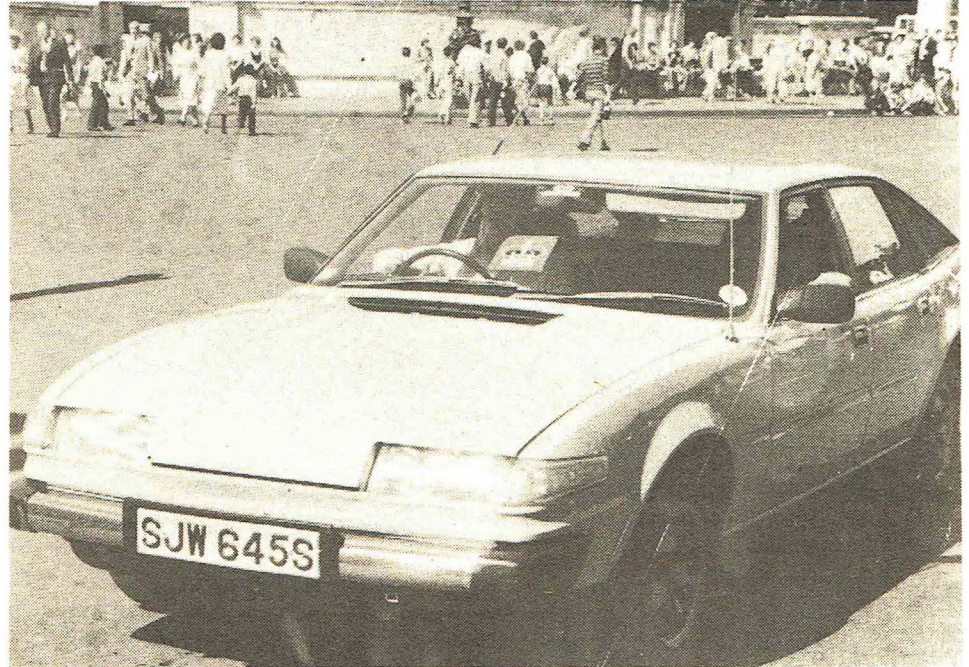
Alright, so when you work out what the Royals really got in the budget, it's more like a 19% rise.

But that's only because that drip of a Chancellor works it out by comparison with what was spent last year, and the Royals overspent. Mind you, only by a piddling £200,000—that wouldn't cover a decent beano! Still, at least this year's rise has been back-dated to January 1st.

Our gracious Queen herself only gets a rise of £359,700, to £3,260,200 a year. But I don't care what you Reds say, she works hard for it: all that walking around smiling at people, lots of waving and all those massive banquets that have to be eaten. It's not easy, you know.

And she's quite a business-woman too, with shares in Barclays, Plessey, Tube Investments, Unilever, BP, EMI, Lloyds, Reed International, Boots, National Westminster (she likes banks) Hawker Siddeley, S. Pearson and the Prudential to name but a few. And I mean a few.

And what about the poor old Queen Mother? She only netted a mere rise of £32,100, to £286,000 a year. But then pensioners do have a hard time these days.



In fact, it's a pretty sorry story for the rest of the Royals. The Duke of Edinburgh now gets only £160,000 (up £18,000), Princess Anne only £100,000, Princess Margaret only £98,000 (up £10,250), Duke of Gloucester £78,000 (up £7,500), Princess Alexandra only £101,000 (up £11,200), and the poor old Duke of Kent a mere £106,000 (up £11,500).

Mind you, Prince Andrew gets some decent pocket money at last, not like the £90 a week he had to try and survive on last year. He'll now get £210 a week. But then it's expensive to be a youngster these days; you know, having to buy those playthings of youth, like the latest fashions, records, Ferrari sports cars; little things like that.

But what about the Chosen One? Charlie announces he's getting married and what's the reward? Nothing—not a

Prince Andrew, the poor chap, pictured in his car last year trying to survive on £90 a week. However his latest 133% wage increase should now help him stomach the misery of Royal life.

sausage. Still, he's heir to the throne and when he and his wife take over—to become the 'King and Di' (sorry about that)—a few goodies should come their way.

So for now, the two little lovebirds will have to make do with the £145,000 a year he gets from his Duchy in Cornwall—but they might even have to dip into the £3 million nest egg he managed to accumulate by 1976, if things get tough.

So you peasants out there, I really think you ought to give more for your betters. You only give £4 million a year in tax to the Royals; and worth every penny I say. Why, it would otherwise only be frittered away on things like kidney machines or school milk or some other waste of money.

Of course, the Royals themselves are exempt from income tax, capital gains tax

or death duties. Not that we at the top pay much tax either, if my old chum Lord Vestey is anything to go by.

I suppose Mrs Thatcher thought if she gave the Royals what they really deserve instead of only 19%, all the minions would start whining and beefing, and start having silly ideas about such things as a 'republic' (ugh! Perish the thought).

Personally, I couldn't give a hoot what the rabble think. If I had my way I'd pack any bolshie trade union trouble makers off to the Tower and then....what's that? The Beef-eaters at the Tower are out on strike? They're all in the Civil Service union! What is this country coming to?

By
Beatrice Windsor
(no relation)

TELEVISION REVIEWS

By Derek MacMillan
& Humphrey Shields

'THE UNION'

The BBC hardly has a reputation for producing programmes sympathetic to the trade union movement.

Not surprisingly, the 'Play for Today' production 'The Union', dealing with the origins of the anti-Communist witch-hunt in the ETU in the 1950s did not depart from the pattern.

The programme, recently broadcast, was based on facts—highly selected facts. Tonny Perrin attempted something I would have thought impossible to paint the witch-finder general Cannon in a sympathetic light.

To do so, the play quite dishonestly stopped short before the hounding of Communists and socialists in the ETU began, and concentrated on Cannon's previous role in the movement and the allegations of ballot-rigging.

Nevertheless, the play could not conceal some of the less publicised facts.

The witch-hunters never engaged in any struggle within the union on basic trade union or political issues—they made use of the capitalist press, the TV and the bosses' courts.

The witch-hunt was financed by the sinister 'Catholic Action' organisation and Woodrow Wyatt, that Labour renegade MP turned vitriolic press hack.

Nowhere in the play was any mention made of the fact that this fight for 'union democracy' led to members of the Communist Party being banned from standing for office in the union.

The EETPU is now so 'democratic' that the leader of a union affiliated to the Labour Party can give his support to the Council for Social Democracy—an organisation which openly opposes Clause 4 of the party constitution.

The play was well-written and well-presented, but as a piece of objective reporting about the trade union movement it gets the usual BBC score—nought out of ten.

'TV EYE'

After seeing the 'TV Eye' documentary on El Salvador last week (Thursday 12th March) it was plain to see how dreadful life was in that country.

It showed the terror and carnage inflicted upon the workers and peasants by the ruling military junta backed up by American imperialism.

But the next day I read an article showing that tranquility could be found there but only if you were one of the privileged elite. You could, said the article, send

your children to the 'Academica Britannica Cusorteca', the country's most exclusive private school.

Privileges included being escorted to the school in a bullet proof car, and parties on a luxurious beach (especially arranged after the 7pm curfew). The only disruption it seemed would be if one of the school cleaners or gardeners suddenly didn't appear one morning, having been either murdered by the military/right wing death squads, or forced to flee his home.

Last year alone 13,000 people were murdered in El Salvador—and the workers and peasants face miserable living conditions and diseases. Yet alongside this horrendous existence we see the likes of the 'Academica Britannica.'

The workers and peasants of El Salvador must be given every help by the international working class in their struggle to overthrow this evil regime.



Oil pollution from tankers is only the most visible and immediate sign of the contamination of the environment

Does the Esso tiger make you forget pollution?

Over the last couple of years we have been faced by full page newspaper adverts and well produced TV commercials from major chemical and oil companies, prancing tigers and all, telling us how much they care for "our world".

However, the latest bulletin of the International "Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers Union, Geneva" gives detailed reasons why the chemical multinationals have undertaken this new campaign. They are scared of growing public concern over their products.

In an article aptly titled "Whitewash to cover the dirt—Employers worry over Image", the ICEF explains how "the chemical industry employers as a backlash against anti-pollution and pro-safety union action, have initiated a multi-million dollar world wide whitewash campaign."

One chemical industry source was worried about the vast amount of negative publicity they have suffered over carcinogens (cancer-producing substances) in the environment and general pollution. All the campaigns are basically 'industry' or 'corporate' orientated. And the World Chemical Information Bureau is now considering whether to co-ordinate them globally.

The present campaign aims to promote the industry in general, rather than a specific branch or product. They promote the image of a specific corporation rather than a specific product.

By Gordon McKinley

(General & Municipal Workers Union)

ICEF report how the 'Safer Living' campaign by the Association of Chemical Companies aimed to bring about "trust and sympathy for the chemical industry" by using "emotional pictures" such as a mother with twin babies.

In the USA, some chemical corporations have been forced to link their advertising to a product, because of objections to the blatant special pleading and partisan nature of some campaigns. Television networks turned down adverts from Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical, which wanted to attack "government interference in free enterprise".

All the current campaigns basically began in 1979, when the profits of the chemical multinationals soared. Bayer's profits were up 43%, ICI 38%, BASF 46%, Norsk Hydro 100%, Sumitomo Chemical 188.6%; ICI had some experience in this type of campaign. ICEF report that it had previously organised a three year campaign entitled "Popular Profits" which, according to a management journal, was designed to erode the popular conception "that profits from major industrial concerns like ICI found their way into the pockets of directors by one means or another."

Another common element in all the national programmes is that they have been combined with political lobbying. Most major companies give large donations to 'con-

servative' parties. In the USA, the 22 chemical companies give vast amounts to the Republicans, and a lesser amount to the Democratic 2nd XI.

For chemical multinationals political lobbying has become more and more necessary. This is partly because of health and safety/anti-pollution action by the 107 unions in 60 countries affiliated to ICEF. And also because of some limited success by the environmental movement (particularly in the USA and Japan) which has resulted in national legislatures passing environmental legislation.

Socialist must however explain the limitations of these 'non party political' movements. Multinationals, seek out and create suitable climates for their hazardous exports. The ICEF reports how the Phillipines welcomed the appearance of a Japanese blast furnace, which had been fiercely opposed in Japan, on the grounds that it was to go to an area of the Phillipines which was an "under polluted southern island".

Clearly opposition in itself, is not enough. Environmental pressure groups etc. must work with the labour and trade union movement for the socialist planning of industry.

The taking of science and technology out of the hands of the ruling class internationally, would mean that production would be out of the arena of market anarchy, where the primary concern and guiding force is profit. That is the only guarantee for the health and safety of workers inside and outside the chemical industries.

TORIES DISCARD THE DISABLED

By Michael Higgins

(Bromsgrove & Redditch Labour Party Young Socialists)

With the creation of a cheap pool of able bodied labour, the bosses have no need of severely handicapped and unskilled workers. So many otherwise perfectly normal people are considered unemployable because of physical disability and are not included in the dole figures.

Amongst the remaining disabled workers, whom the capitalists concede are employable, the unemployment rate is over twice the national average. The government's Manpower Services Commission, is recommending to the Tories that they abolish the token law that states that at least 3% of the work force of any firm employing over 20 people, should be on the list of registered disabled people. The Tories are also discussing whether to close all the twenty-seven, (badly-funded) disabled rehabilitation centres.

Many disabled people are entirely dependent on state benefits. The people are entirely dependent on state benefits. The process for claiming benefits (most of which lag several years behind the inflation rate) is long, complicated and usually very humiliating. Thus, many disabled people live below the poverty line.

The means tested benefits depend more on when and how you became disabled

rather than how incapacitating your disability is. Many anomalies arise from this: someone who is paralysed at birth, is likely to get less assistance for equipment and economic help than someone claiming compensation from an employer for a relatively minor injury at work.

This government has deliberately cut the link which previously existed between the rate of inflation and these benefits. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, was forced upon the bosses several years ago. Within this Act were contained provisions to improve access to all public buildings for disabled people. This Act has gone the same way as the Disabled Employment Act, i.e. it is not enforced.

For many disabled people getting out of the house to visit the shops or a friend can be a major problem or even impossible. The disabled trikes, used as personal transport by some disabled people with limb deficiencies, are now being phased out by the Tories and no replacement form of car is being researched.

A disabled person has to pay the exorbitant cost of an adapted car, try to obtain a second hand trike and risk

not being able to get replacement parts or, more commonly, do without either. Even when the disabled are lucky enough to obtain some form of personal transport, they are often faced with an acute shortage of car parking facilities with easy access to shops, cinema, pubs etc.

The mobility allowance granted to disabled people in place of the trike is both set at a ridiculous level and almost impossible to obtain; if a disabled person is able to walk over 100 meters, even if this does them serious damage, it can easily disqualify them from obtaining any benefit.

By 1982 conditions for working class disabled people will have deteriorated even further—fewer jobs, lower benefits, poorer housing and worse social integration. Education will still be discriminatory and will remain so until a socialist Labour government adopts a programme of fair treatment for the disabled.

Under socialism disability could be practically eradicated with facilities for prevention and cure and equipment which would really help disabled people. And those still disabled could be completely integrated into society.

For whilst a society based on class difference is perpetuated, it will be in the interests of the ruling class, who own and control the economy, to sub-divide the working class into as many groups as possible. They want to prevent workers from uniting together to end their system once and for all.

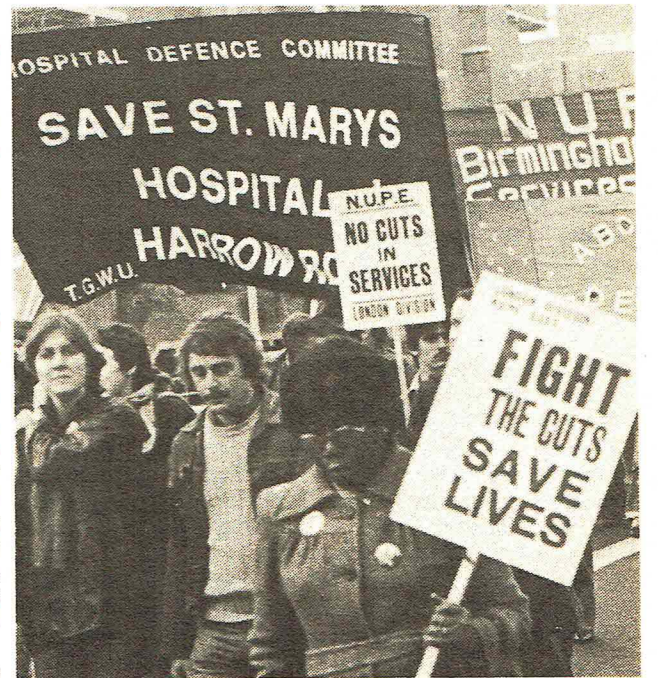
Fighting cuts with one hand tied

Four Labour councillors are threatened with expulsion from Bradford Labour Group, because they opposed cuts suggested by the local council. Labour won an overall majority last year. Now they are carrying out the Tories' orders.

They are going to cut education by £3.7 million, resulting in 150 fewer teachers and the closure of four schools. Rents will go up £3.25 and despite having 20,000 unemployed in the area, with a further 8,000 on the council house waiting list, there is a freeze on council house building.

Eight Labour councillors opposed these proposals at the last Labour group meeting and four abstained at the full council meeting. Councillor Gary Armitage, who was selected for his ward because he stated he would oppose any cuts of the working class living standards, explained his position.

"These cuts are part of a planned attack by the Tory government on the living standards of people in this area. I have called for Labour to convene a conference of the local labour movement to build trade union and work-



ing class unity against the cuts.

"Such a united front, linked with other councils would be an irresistible force against the Tories. We cannot do their dirty work for them. We should refuse to bring the cuts in. No cuts can be acceptable, however tarted up.

"I voted against the proposals and abstained at the full council meeting in order not to walk through the lobby with the Tories. Now I and others have been threatened with being expelled from the

Labour group. If this occurs, I will appeal to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

"I am confident that I have support from the trades' council, trade unions and Labour parties in the area and that together we can overcome all barriers and stop these cuts."

Pete Watson of Bradford West Labour Party, interviewed Bradford Councillor Gary Armitage

SW Labour Party Conference

Unemployment will cast a grim shadow over this weekend's annual conference of the South West Regional Labour Party. Light industry, formerly the saviour of the South West, is collapsing as grants and government subsidies disappear.

Whole communities dependent on one or two factories are being driven to the wall. Workers living in towns such as Falmouth where unemployment is almost 25% can no longer find work by emigrating to the prosperous South East or West Midlands despite Thatcher's callous advice to move.

At the conference Resolution 7 from Kingswood CLP, as amended by the GMWU, will call for the creation of Unemployed Centres and urge the trade union movement to open its membership to the unemployed. It draws on the lesson of the last Labour government which, despite its radical programme, essentially carried out the wishes of big business.

The resolution points out that the profit system can only be ended by a Labour government which is committed to "nationalise without compensation any existing nationalised industry which is wholly or partly sold off and to take into public ownership under democratic control the means of production, distribution and exchange."

Such a bold policy would be necessary for an incoming Labour government; it is no longer possible to obtain lasting reforms within the framework of the existing system.

Several resolutions this year call for campaigns and marches to be organised locally. The incoming Executive should act on these instructions. The Executive must give its full support to the Labour Party demonstration in Cardiff on 27 June.

Over the last period there has been an encouraging growth in the size and influence of the regional LPYS, with the recent conference attracting over 100 visitors and delegates. The NUPE divisional council should be supported in its resolution 30. This calls on the Executive to convene a meeting within two months between the YS Regional Youth Committee and the trade unions, to plan a campaign around the YS "Charter for Young Workers", with a joint TUC/LPYS day school in the autumn.

Support 'Militant' supporter for the Regional Executive: Devon Constituency Party section—Bridget Shaw [Tor-bay CLP]

By Robin Clapp
(Regional Executive from 1977)

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)

How they tried to con the pensioners

Having been defeated by the miners, the Tory government have lined up their next target, old age pensioners.

They are saying that the old and the disabled must take their share of the sacrifices necessary to preserve British capitalism.

By Peter Redfern

(East Lewisham Labour Party)

The Tories are increasing state pensions by less than the inflation rate, trying to end index-linking of public sector pensions and hitting disability allowances. In the budget the pensions increase was only 9%, although the government forecast is for an inflation rate of 10%. The government miserably try and claim this is because the pensioners got 1% extra last year.

This is a lie. The January 1981 issue of the government's own Employment Gazette shows how inflation has really hit the items pensioners need.

In the first place the Tories postponed last year's increase for two weeks which meant 0.5% of the increase was wiped out. And Table 6.2 of the Gazette gives a breakdown of price increases.

While durable household goods went up 7.6%, housing went up 29.4% and fuel and light by 27.4%. As older people tend to suffer more from the cold, these items are the most important.

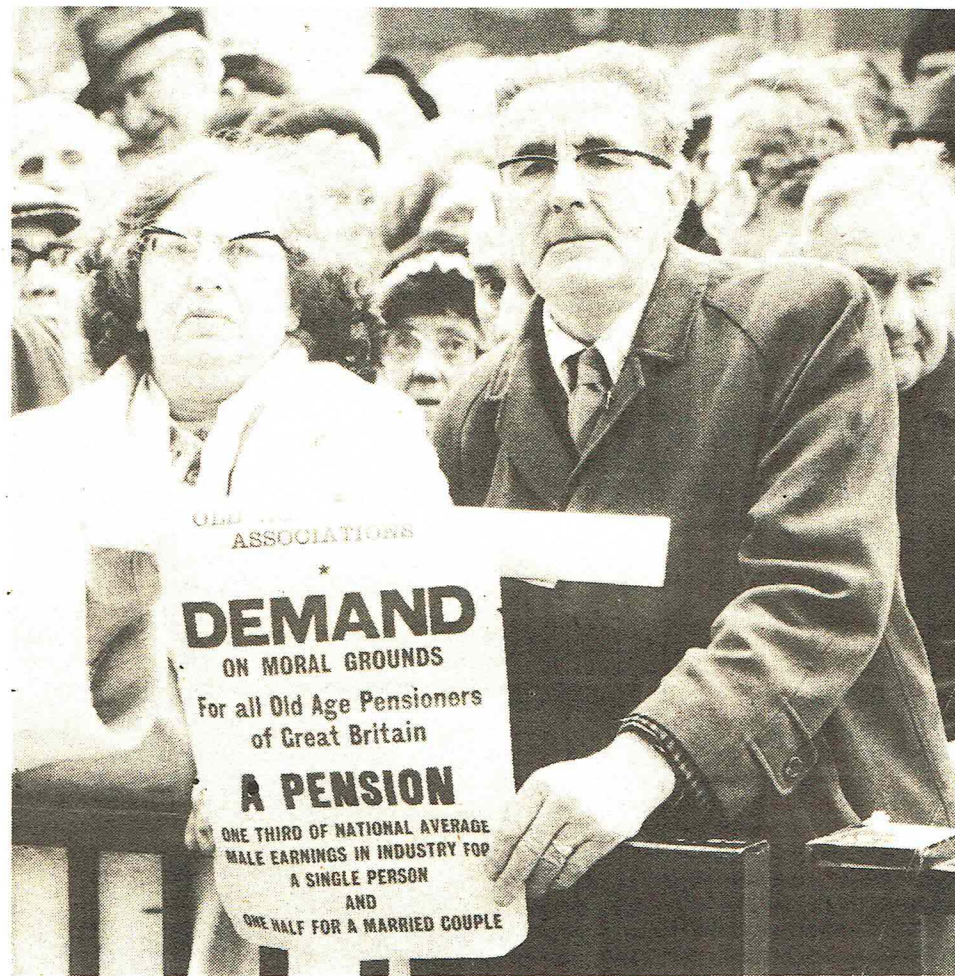
The Department of Employment also publishes indices for pensioner households which exclude more than they reveal because they

do not include housing. These show a 16% rise for one-person pensioner households, and 14.3% for 2-person households. Unravelling these official figures suggests that 16½% would be a reasonable estimate for the average cost of living for a pensioner, but for many it will be considerably more.

A thrifty person should, if the figures are to be believed, camp out on the pavement with his video recorder, eat (raw) lard, coffee and potatoes (the only items to go down in price) and wear women's clothing. (Women's underwear went up only 5% while men's went up by 13%.)

More seriously, a report on inquests has shown a reluctance by coroners to reveal causes of death which may be blamed on capitalist society, such as hypothermia and malnutrition.

The Tory government are deliberately increasing the cost of housing and fuel, by forcing councils to increase rents and the Gas Council to push up prices despite their large profits. With the recession forcing retailers to mark down the price of comparative luxuries, the retail price index



Pensioners lobbied Parliament earlier this month for a rise [above]. Instead they got a cut.

Photo: Militant

will become more and more unrepresentative of the real cost of living for pensioners.

The index linking of private pension schemes of public sector workers have also come under concerted attack from the Tory press. Those pensions affect a great many people, not only civil servants but workers in nationalised industries etc.

Pensioners' needs are as great, if not greater than those at work. The demand for a £44 minimum made at the 5 March national demonstration was a very moderate demand. Pensions should be linked to the real cost of living drawn up by trade unions and pensioners organisations.

Trade unions should take a greater interest in their re-

tired members, who in turn should be encouraged to take an active part in the union. Today's trade unionists are tomorrow pensioners.

Why should pensioners put up with a lower standard of living because they are no longer producing a profit for the boss?

STOP SCHOOL CLOSURES!

Redundancy and closure are nothing new to the people of Merseyside. Now Liverpool school children are learning for themselves what closure means. Paddington Comprehensive is housed in the best buildings in the inner city. It is a school which caters for children of many races, and has consciously developed a multi-racial curriculum.

The Liberal City Council, in cahoots with Tory councillors, has decided to close Paddington Comprehensive and use the buildings to house a selective girls' grammar school. This strengthens selective education at the price of working class children's education.

Croxteth Comprehensive school is also threatened with closure. This School is situated in the area of highest youth unemployment in Western Europe, on an estate where



Liberals and Tories are trying to close this multi-racial, inner-city school Photo: Militant

virtually every other public building including even the Post Office has been closed.

The closures are part of a reorganisation initially designed to complete the comprehensive system. Instead the Liberals and Tories have

turned it into an ugly and crude attack on working class children. No school can be "comprehensive" whilst selective schools exist. Up to a million pounds is being spent to defend one grammar school, the Boys Institute.

Primary school are up for closure too. Notice has been served on Harrington, Harrison Jones, Pleasant St, Toxteth County and Saint Francis Xavier. These are all schools from working class districts. The plan for this reorgani-

sation were drawn up in a totally undemocratic manner, with no trade union representation or representation of elected councillors.

Section 12 notices have been served on Paddington, Croxteth and Lambeth Comprehensives already, which means that objections to the closures must go immediately, signed by twelve electors, to the Secretary of State for Education via the Liverpool Education Committee, 14 Sir Thomas St, Liverpool 1.

The District Labour Party's protest meeting of 450 people must be seen as just the start. Parents of Paddington and Croxteth children have conducted excellent campaigns. The National Union of Teachers has helped organise protests. But the different organisations have not yet united. A full campaign uniting parents, teachers and the labour movement is the only way to defeat these ugly plans.

By Felicity Dowling

(Liverpool National Union of Teachers)

IMPORT CONTROLS ARE NOT THE ANSWERS

Faced with a horrifying avalanche of factory closures and redundancies, many workers have in desperation grasped at the ideas of import controls as a possible solution to the crisis.

Import controls are now a prominent feature of the 'alternative economic strategies' put forward by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party as a programme to be implemented by the next Labour government.

Import controls, it is often argued, would be an essential means of 'planning foreign trade' while other socialist economic policies were introduced. Of course, socialists must recognise that, with a socialist plan of production based on the nationalisation of the 'commanding heights' of the economy, a state monopoly and the planning of foreign trade would be essential.

This would be part and parcel of an international socialist perspective. But import controls, or, to give this policy its more general name, protectionism within the framework of capitalism, with private ownership of the big monopolies and the narrow limits of the national state, is quite another matter.

Our fight to end the horrors of capitalism must be an international one. So how is it, then, that an economic policy which even its supporters admit is not an internationalist one—and which in the past has been the main plank of one of the most reactionary wings of the Tory Party—has been accepted by many sections of the labour movement?

Firstly, import controls have been adopted by some sections of the trade union movement as a weapon that they hope will save jobs in industries where they work which are declining and have been declining for decades. In industries like steel, coal, shipbuilding, and textiles, workers have suffered severe job losses, and import controls to protect the remaining

By Bob McKee

sales for these industries appear to be an attractive solution.

Even workers in industries like motor vehicles and electrical goods, which have been ravaged by foreign competition in recent years, have turned to import controls as a way out.

Linked to the call of some unions for barriers against imports has been the arguments of some economists outside the labour movement, strongly echoed by many on the left of the party like the 'Tribune' group and Tony Benn, that a policy of controlling imports is essential to provide a 'breathing-space.' According to them, protection would be to insulate British industries from overseas competition while other policies of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy,' such as public spending and investment planning, were applied to revive British companies so that they could face up to the opposition abroad.

The arguments used to promote import controls as part of a socialist policy for the labour movement, however, are based on false assumptions—as this article aims to show.

High imports—the legacy of backwardness

Import controls will not work. Equally important, they will damage the living standards and job prospects of working people. At the same time, because they imply a national solution, import controls are essentially anti-working class and anti-socialist.

The truth is that controls on imports, either by quota or by tariffs, to protect certain industries have not succeeded in saving jobs—at least in the experience of the UK economy.

Take the textile industry. Temporary controls were introduced in the as early as the reigns of Queen Anne and George I to protect Lanca-

shire cotton textiles from 'cheap' Indian competition. But employment has continued to fall in the last one hundred years.

The loss of jobs has not been caused by cheap imports, but by the rapacious efforts of the textile employers to cut costs, raise productivity and introduce labour-saving equipment.

The evidence of the last decade confirms this view of the textile industry. In the last four years textile imports increased by 35% in volume: but the increase from low-cost Asian and African suppliers was only 19%, while imports from industrially developed countries with similar and even higher labour costs was 58%.

A recent government working paper (January 1979) showed that between 1970 and 1975 Britain's textile and clothing industry suffered a loss of 100,000 jobs, of which 85,000 were due to competition from abroad. But of that 85,000, 57,000 could be attributed to imports from the advanced nations—not the cheap-wage, poorer countries.

Relatively high tariffs already

So, much of the loss in jobs was due to British employers shaking out labour and to the fierce competition from more efficient textile nations in the advanced world—not from cheap Asian or Latin American imports, as the employers would have us believe.

This is an irony that makes even more unpleasant the sight of textile union leaders tagging along behind the Yorkshire and Lancashire textile barons to meetings with the government to demand more import barriers, rather than leading a campaign against inefficient bosses who are really responsible for the daily redundancies in the industry.

The reason British industry has failed to compete on world markets (and therefore preserve jobs) in its most important industries is not because it has not protected those industries as well as other nations through tariffs and quotas. The truth is that Britain has had the highest rate of tariffs on import in all Europe throughout the post-war period [the TABLE shows an international comparison of tariffs on manufactures, 1960-77].

It may well be that high tariffs in Britain have actually contributed to the lack of the incentive to invest exhibited by British capitalists in the crucial period 1945-60, when British industry lost ground rapidly to German, Japanese and French capitalism.

In the latter part of the 1970s tariffs began to increase throughout Europe. According to a recent survey by the

National Institute of Economic and Social Research, the proportion of British trade that is subject to some form of control, excluding tariffs, was 45% in 1979, which is an increase from 38% in 1974. Yet during this same period unemployment dramatically rose, under both Labour and Tory governments.

The danger of sharp retaliation against Britain if it resorts to quotas and tariffs against foreign imports in certain industries cannot be dismissed, as it often has been by the supporters of import controls. Two recent examples of retaliation in response to British action against imports shows that controls on foreign goods, rather than saving jobs, could actually produce more redundancies.

When the EEC, on the British government's insistence, stopped the import of £10 million worth of Indonesian shirts and trousers, the Indonesian government immediately stopped orders of British airplanes, process plant, and scientific instruments worth £150 million, and threatened action against further business worth £500 million.

The British government was soon forced to back down and reach a compromise with the Indonesians which allowed the import of their textile goods. If action against a small relatively insignificant trading nation like Indonesia can produce such disastrous results, you do not need to think very hard to imagine what could happen if Britain acted against goods from the USA or West Germany.

Already, such clouds have appeared on the horizon. Britain has imposed quotas against the imports of synthetic fibre products from the USA. But the Americans have said that if the UK persists, they will take action against British woollen goods sales to the USA. So the effort of one section of British textile capitalists to protect their home markets is leading to a situation where another section could lose their largest export market, with far greater damage to employment.



Well-heeled bosses lead workers demonstration against hosiery and textile imports, Leicester, 14 November 1980

All this evidence shows that selective controls against foreign imports does not stop redundancies; they do little to get at the real causes of the decline in trade and employment in these industries; and that can provoke counter action from foreign countries they can provoke counter damaging to employment.

The only real protection for jobs is increased production and sales achieved by better efficiency and lower costs of production. That depends on enough investment in plant and machinery and proper organisation of the labour force. British capitalism and British management have miserably failed to do that.

But the strongest advocates of import controls do not rest their arguments on the need for selective controls on imports in certain industries suffering severe redundancies. These proponents of controls believe that protection should be applied 'across-the-board' in all the major sectors of industry, so that

British industry can have a 'breathing space' from foreign competition while the government, presumably a Labour government, provides public money to boost investment and production in the economy.

What can be said about this strategy?

Firstly, import controls whatever they do to 'protect industry', mean higher prices for the British working class. Higher tariffs on foreign goods automatically raise their prices. If quotas are applied, foreign firms can raise prices accordingly, so that they have just enough demand for the amount of goods that they are allowed to sell in British markets.

Above all, controls mean that British companies, without the threat of competition from abroad, can maintain their relatively higher prices and even consider raising them further.

Trade restrictions would rebound

Nobody should doubt that this would happen. A survey in the USA by the Federal Trade Commission estimated that trade restrictions on just five products—radios, colour TVs, textiles, shoes and sugar—had cost the American workers in higher prices £800 million a year. And the Consumer Association in this country have pointed out that controls have particularly hit the poorer working class families who can only afford the cheaper ranges of clothing.

For working class families import controls have the same effect as devaluation of the currency. That led to higher import prices and therefore to a higher cost of living, as

Tariffs on manufactures [weighted averages] as % of import value

	1960	1967	1972	1977
Austria	18.0	13.6	8.3	1.1
Finland	6.9	3.5	2.0	0.5
Norway	4.1	1.9	1.2	0.3
Sweden	6.6	3.9	2.4	0.7
Switzerland	4.5	3.7	2.2	0.6
Denmark	5.4	2.9	1.9	0.7
United Kingdom	14.8	11.4	7.0	3.1
Germany	6.1	4.5	2.6	1.3
France	12.6	4.9	1.9	1.0
Italy	13.8	5.6	2.2	1.2
Benelux	7.4	4.0	2.0	1.1

European Free Trade Association
Bulletin August 1980

OLS WER



Photo by Julian McKittrick

Harold Wilson learnt to his cost when he had to eat his words about "the pound in your pocket" being worth just the same after Labour's devaluation in 1967.

that they may need in order to expand production. There would be no particular pressure on capitalists to improve productivity and make their businesses more efficient once

invest in expensive machinery requiring a big turn-over for profitability.

Even if there was no retaliation, exports would be hit. Foreign competitors who



'We were plundered long ago mate'

Ian Harkness

NEITHER FREE TRADE NOR PROTECTIONISM CAN PROVIDE A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS FOR WORKERS: WE MUST FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST NATIONALISATION AND A DEMOCRATIC PLAN OF PRODUCTION

It is no coincidence that the advocates of devaluation then, the progressive economists and the 'Tribune' group in the Labour Party, are the main supporters of import controls in the 1980s. They see import controls as an alternative to devaluation when in reality it is more of the same kind of medicine.

It is worth adding that there has been no system of price controls yet invented which could check the inevitable rise in prices that would follow across-the-board import controls, as the record of the ill-fated Prices Board under the Tory Edward Heath or Labour's Prices Commission demonstrated. Anyway, if prices were held down it would, in fact, defeat the purpose of the exercise by not providing the gains in sales revenue that British capitalists, must reap in order to be cajoled into investing back into the industries they own and control.

But there are serious disadvantages for the capitalists, too, from controls on imports. Companies must pay more for imported machinery and semi-manufactured goods

their markets were protected from more efficient rivals from abroad.

Such a strategy of across-the-board increases would involve very large increases in tariffs and therefore costs in order to be effective in driving out foreign competition. A group of Oxford economists in a study for the Trade Policy Research Centre recently estimated that import controls which were applied to give industry a 'breathing space' for the rest of the 1980s would require a rise in tariffs of about 50% by 1985 and 100% by 1990.

Such increases would have to be applied, not just against Japanese or American products, but against the EEC as well. It would make retaliation by the rest of the world's trading nations inevitable.

Any saving of jobs and raising of production in industry through the protection of home markets would be outweighed by the loss of sales and jobs in the export sectors of the economy. With the loss of export markets, the total sales prospects would be smaller and so reduce the incentive of capitalists to

could no longer sell in British markets would have to intensify their efforts in other markets, ie. the markets of British exports. And undoubtedly they would have as much success as they have had in the British market.

Exports would fall and with them jobs would be lost.

Exporting unemployment

The advocates of import controls counter these arguments by saying that the advantages of protected British industry expanding have been ignored. But what guarantee is there that British capitalists will take the hint and alter their policy of the last thirty years or more?

There can be no guarantee of industrial expansion while the power to make the decisions about investment and production are out of the hands of a Labour government and the working class organisations. A protected market and more public spending hand-outs to British

industry are a recipe for inflation, not expansion.

Seen in that light import controls not only will not work, they are an obstacle in the way of looking at the real causes of the failure of British industry to survive and can be used as a deliberate diversion from working out socialist policies for production and employment.

Socialists have always stood in the past behind the slogan 'neither free trade nor protection' as a strategy for the labour movement. Both are the policies of capitalism, as and when it suits big business, not the policies of socialism. As the Cambridge economists who propose import controls have admitted: "Whilst it is true that import controls have formed the basis of Tony Benn's alternative strategy there is no inherent reason why it should be unacceptable to the Conservative Party." ('Marketing Week,' November 1980).

That import controls set back international working class unity has been drastically indicated by the coal and steel industries.

Every major steel coal-producing nation has suffered severe cutbacks in production and employment in the wake of the world recession of 1979-80. So when British trade union leaders demand controls on the import of steel and coal they make it doubly difficult to link up with European unions in fighting for jobs through joint campaigns against the policies of the EEC and its member governments.

Import controls mean: we protect our jobs by putting you across the water out of work. That is not a socialist policy.

Instead the labour movement should be fighting on common policies that can

unite the working class organisations internationally. The fight for jobs, more investment and higher production can only be based on a programme of real control and planning of industry and trade by the working class organisations. Control and planning is only really possible when the labour movement has ownership of the decisive sectors of industry in all the major trading nations.

The real alternative

It must be part of any programme by a Labour government that it will plan production through public ownership of industry and commerce, under the democratic control of the trade unions. From that flows the demand for state monopoly of

foreign trade so that imports and exports can be checked and regulated as an integral part of any plan of production drawn up and implemented by the working class.

Such a policy is a thousand light years away from the 'regulated trade' that the supporters of import controls talk about. For them, whether workers control and run industry is not directly relevant to the success of their policy of controls on imports.

Import controls can never be part of an alternative socialist economic strategy: in reality, they are really measures which are an alternative to socialist policies. As such they can only confuse and divert the labour movement from making a real fight against the waste of production and misery of unemployment caused by the capitalist system.

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USSR: The 'vodka tradition'

"We can't turn on the television set because the propaganda is too awful. We can't open a newspaper because they're worse."

"Can't get good books because they are even more precious and harder to find than good food. So we drink. In recognition that this emptiness is our life."

Alcoholism is a growing problem in capitalist countries. In Britain it has been recently estimated that there are about 750,000 adults who have a drink problem to one degree or another.

Cirrhosis of the liver has doubled here in the last thirty years and about 20% of accidents at work now are due to drinking.

But in the USSR the problem of alcohol abuse is far worse even than here and is considered the most serious of all social problems.

The youth quoted above has expressed in a nutshell the hopelessness facing millions of Russian workers.

Stifled by bureaucracy

It has been estimated that alcoholic drinks account for about one third of the value of all goods being sold in food shops! One of the most serious aspects of the epidemic is the fact that it is spreading rapidly to young people.

According to government figures, in 1925 11 per cent of Russian workers were drunkards, whereas today about 37 per cent of male workers abuse alcohol. In 1925 only about 16 per cent of under-18s drank alcohol, while the figure today is 93 per cent.

One Russian paper recently published details of an unnamed Russian city where alcohol consumption for each working adult was equivalent to one bottle of vodka per day!

A Russian economist examining the issue of accidents at work commented, "In the Russian Federal Republic, more than half all fatal accidents in just one year involved people in a state of inebriation."

"Drunkards cause a quarter of all industrial accidents. The number of accidents and injuries on days off and holidays and the days following them increases and on pay day doubles."

Alcohol abuse has become a major cause of premature death, so that mortality statistics are no longer issued.

The Komsomolskaya Pravda, the Party Youth paper published figures last year showing that 96 per cent of people convicted for hooliganism were intoxicated, as were 68 per cent of those convicted of murder and 67 per cent of convicted rapists.

Despite the Russian 'vodka tradition', the scourge of drink in the USSR, 64 years after the revolution is an indictment of the political system itself.

Just as in capitalist countries, Marxists would look for social causes for alcoholism—the insecurity of workers' lives, the hopelessness and so on—we would also have to look for social causes in Eastern Europe.

The planned economy of Russia offers immense possibilities for raising the levels of production and with that, for raising the standard of life for the workers. Over the last two decades the Russian workers have increased their standards: they are now better fed, better housed, better educated and better paid than their fathers and mothers.

Yet despite all this, the totalitarian bureaucracy acts like an enormous dead weight on the minds of the workers and the youth.

Free political expression is not permitted and because it would always tend to shift onto the political plain, free expression is also blocked in other spheres of life: in economic matters, in the social sciences, in trade union questions, in art and literature and so on.

When problems do arise in front of workers they have nowhere to go. Faced with a speed-up in the factory, faced with shortages of consumer goods, faced with the frustration of waiting on a long list to get better living accommodation, faced with the problems of everyday life, the worker has no means of even trying to rectify them.

Facing the Russian bureaucracy is like looking at a high stone wall. The bureaucracy chokes and stifles the initiative and the ability in each worker.

So, in hopeless frustration the worker turns to drink. The effects on the management of society, on production and on daily life are now assuming such huge proportions that the government itself is trying to launch a campaign against the abuse of alcohol.

It will be doomed to failure unless the social causes themselves can be overcome. Yet the bureaucracy will not be prepared to remove itself!

It has been the Polish workers who have pointed the way out of the impasse: the alcoholism of that country is as bad or worse than in the USSR, yet during the magnificent strikes in the late summer of last year, alcohol was successfully banned by the strike committees.

The lesson is clear—when workers begin to feel that they have a real role in running their lives, their factory and their state (which was undoubtedly the aspiration of Polish workers) then they have no longer any need of the bottle.

By John Pickard

SOUTH AFRICA -



Fighting the apartheid state

PHOTO: Crossroads township—horrific living conditions for black workers

The Anti-Apartheid Movement [AAM] are holding a conference on Saturday 21 March.

Coventry South East Labour Party which has a long record of involvement with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa have produced a document for

'Anti Apartheid News' [March 1981] comments that it is a "telling comment on the scale and resilience of British links with apartheid that, after more than 20 years of campaigning the key issue which led to the AAM's foundation—sanctions—has yet to become a major political issue in Britain."

On what political basis can this be achieved? Can the campaign for sanctions become a major political issue by gathering together indiscriminately all those who piously proclaim their opposition to apartheid?

Surely not. After all, these days almost everyone claims to be against apartheid (even, on occasion, Botha himself!).

The scale of British links with apartheid stems from the huge investments by the monopolies and banks which command the heights of the British economy.

For some years many of their owners have been claiming to be against apartheid—and that their investment in South Africa serves to erode this "moral evil".

But, in factory after factory under foreign ownership in South Africa, the workers' struggle exposes this tissue of lies. The workers' struggle reveals that it is only in struggle against these same bosses (and the apartheid state that protects them) that wages can be increased, trade unions strengthened, and the apartheid system attacked.

The huge struggles of workers and youth in South

the conference.

Among other demands it points out the need to link the fight in South Africa with the fight for socialism in Britain.

We reproduce part of the document for the information of 'Militant' readers.

Excerpts from pamphlet by Coventry South East Labour Party

Africa over the last decade have revealed clearly that removal of apartheid is a class question. The apartheid system is rooted in the need of the capitalist class to maintain a system of cheap labour.

In practice, the struggle against apartheid cannot be separated from the struggle against the banks, the monopolies, and those who support their interests politically.

Against these forces, the only power that can prevail is the organised power of the workers' movement, fighting for socialism.

Power of working class—

In South Africa, the working masses are building the trade unions and the African National Congress, as the rallying point for all the oppressed, to carry this struggle to its conclusion. Coventry (SE) CLP will do all in its power to strengthen the independent South African trade unions, SACTU, and the ANC, in the fulfilment of these tasks.

The lessons from the struggle for sanctions in Britain were drawn by John Gaetsewe, General Secretary of SACTU, at the Anti-Apartheid trade union conference in 1976:

"Those who have financial interests in South Africa or indeed in the capitalist system world-wide, will naturally part company with us as this struggle develops.

"Already, as the question of foreign investment in the apartheid system is brought to the fore, we are seeing the increasing discomfort of so many who have merely paid lip-service to the struggle against apartheid."

No support for sanctions can be expected from the Tory government, the most vicious anti-working class British government for decades.

Nor can the campaign for sanctions rely on the easy road of United Nations resolutions. The imperialists will block effective resolutions as long as possible.

The experience of Zimbabwe, and even of the arms embargo, is that even mandatory sanctions remain toothless so long as the banks and the monopolies can evade them. This evasion is connived in by the same governments which vote for sanctions in the first place: in Britain both Tory and, unfortunately, Labour.

In Britain, as in South Africa, the real struggle against the apartheid regime can be based only in the power of the labour movement.

The cheap labour system in South Africa, maintained by the denial of industrial and political rights, is a threat to workers around the world.

Against the monopolies and the banks, the working class, as the producing class, has the power to exercise its control over the production and flow of goods. To a campaign for sanctions rooted in the labour movement all genuine opponents of the apartheid regime can rally.

In many areas of the country, fighting solidarity actions have been undertaken by the organised labour movement. Now the potential shown in all these efforts must be developed, through working out an effective national campaign to mobilise the power of the labour movement for sanctions.

We propose:
1) that the AAM, in co-operation with shop stewards' committees, etc., or-

ganise workplace meetings, with speakers from SACTU or the ANC, especially in companies investing in SA, and in the public sector, to discuss what action can be taken to sever economic and other links with South Africa.

2) that the AAM, and its affiliated trade unions, calling on the support of the TUC, organise a national delegate conference, representing in particular the workforce at all companies investing in SA and the public sector, to decide on a national programme for blacking trade and imposing sanctions against SA.

3) that, to strengthen SA workers in the struggle for independent unions and the rights to strike, the AAM assist in developing fraternal links between SA and British workers.

Factory-to-factory links, especially between workers employed by the same company, can be encouraged.

Links can be strengthened between British trade unions and their independent fellow unions in SA. Promoting exchange visits and the formation of international combine committees would assist this.

4) that the AAM, co-operating with labour movement organs, call a national demonstration and rally to bring together all the workers involved in these activities, and all who support them, to publicise the struggle for sanctions against the regime and solidarity with SACTU and the ANC.

The campaign for sanctions need not wait on the end of the Tory government. April 25th, called as a national day of boycott by the AAM, can be the beginning; the week of trade union action called for October 24-31 can strengthen it greatly.

The pathetic retreat of the Tories in the face of the first renewed stirrings of the power of the miners indicates what can be achieved through the full mobilisation of the labour movement.



SRI LANKA: HELP THE SOCIALIST FIGHT

By a recent visitor to Sri Lanka

Faced with astronomical rises in the cost of living and increasingly repressive, anti-working class actions by the right-wing United National Party [UNP] government, organised workers moved into action to bring pressure on the government.

The government responded by victimising local trade union leaders. They brutally crushed agitational campaigns by assaulting peaceful pickets.

Faced with this attack, nearly 100,000 workers came out on strike in July 1980, with demands for reinstatement of the victimised workers, for Rupees 300 (£7.50) wage increase per month, and increase per month, and Rupees 5 (15 pence) for every point increase in the cost of living index.

The government then declared all services essential, thereby prohibit meetings and publication of news relating to the strike. Hundreds of trade union leaders and workers were jailed all over Sri Lanka, bringing about the collapse of the strike.

The UNP government was gloating over the fact that it had crushed the general strike and the organised working class; the only force in the country capable of opposing the UNP's repressive actions.

However, even the government was shocked by the hundreds of protests raised against its actions by organisations all over the world, particularly those in Britain. This overwhelming international class solidarity gave renewed strength to Sri Lankan workers and helped to check the government's arbitrary actions.

The arrested trade union leaders were released from jails and in mid-September 1980, the government declared that strikers would be taken back if they applied for their jobs, which most did. To date their declaration has not been honoured.

However, about 6,000 railway workers were allowed to resume work even before the strike was finally crushed, enabling the government to bring back the railways to some degree of efficiency.

The total strikers taken back though, from various services does not exceed ten thousand. Meanwhile the government has taken in

some new recruits to man some of the services.

The strikers are scattered today—most have no income as unlike in Britain there are no social security or strike payments for sacked workers.

Most strikers have gone to their villages where they and their families depend on the charity of relatives and friends. Many workers had to withdraw their children from school.

Unable to cope with the hardships imposed on their families, a few sacked workers have taken their lives. As a trade unionist said "In Sri Lanka, depriving a worker of his income amounts to murdering his whole family."

There are enormous problems in conducting agitational campaigns against the government, when sacked workers are preoccupied with the problems of physical survival of their families. They cannot travel to meet colleagues and participate in campaigns especially with increased transport costs.

Immediately after the strike, solidarity committees formed in provincial towns where strikers and sympathisers met, who conducted various campaigns to win the jobs back. However it was not possible to proceed with these campaigns owing to the dire financial situation of the strikers.

Numerous requests that strikers' representatives be summoned for a conference to formulate a programme of action have made little impact on the revisionist LSSP and Communist Party trade union leaders.

The trade unions affiliated to the Nava (new) Sama Samaja Party convened a conference of delegates of strikers and solidarity committee members for 1st November 1980. 1,035 delegates were present representing 52 solidarity committees.

A national committee was selected and the conference decided to 1) carry out all possible agitational campaigns to win back the jobs. 2) to float an economic plan

to assist those in dire financial situations.

The national committee gave priority to a relief plan to provide strikers with basic financial relief to sustain themselves, so that they could participate in the campaigns.

As part of the relief plan, workers' trades centres were set up following the example of the solidarity committee in the provincial town of Negombo where groups of workers traded goods door to door.

This scheme is very successful—each participant nets almost Rupees 20 (50 pence) a day. Daily allowance was limited to Rupees 20 and any balance of profits is channelled to buy more goods, and assist more strikers.

Whenever agitational campaigns are conducted the Negombo sector actively takes part in them, mainly due to the fact that they can now sustain themselves to some degree. Up to now about 18 workers' centres have been set up following Negombo's example.

These trade centres are also becoming focal points for political discussions and activity for strikers and sympathisers. The strengths of future agitational campaigns will depend on the extent to which these workers' trade centres can be developed into focal points for political activity in the local areas.

This exercise in setting up workers' centres has still only scratched the surface; according to latest estimates more than 60,000 workers have been victimised.

The need for funds to expand this programme is far beyond the reach of the National Committee, the trade unions or the sacked workers who have sold or pawned all their goods to survive.

The National Committee of strikers and the solidarity committee delegates is now making urgent appeals to working class organisations all over the world for funds.

Contributions are urgently required to support this programme to keep sacked workers in Sri Lanka both physically and politically active to fight for their jobs and also to fight the repressive anti-working class policies of the UNP government.

Your messages and contributions can be sent to:

Linus Jayatilake, Co-ordinating secretary, National Committee of the Strikers and Solidarity Committee Delegates, 5th Floor, GCSU buildings, 90, Sir Chittampalam Gardiner Road, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka. or to c/o Nava Sama Samaja Party, 19 Hawthorne Avenue, Palmers Green, London N18.

Though thy sins be as scarlet
They shall be as white as snow *Isaiah 1:18*



Alan Hardman

Blessed by the Church hated by the Workers

"Chile's President Pinochet will be sworn into an eight year term of office. Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez will give the Roman Catholic Church's seal of approval by holding a Te Deum mass before the President kisses a crucifix and holds the Bible while he takes the oath of office."

'Guardian', 11.3.81

La Moneda Palace, where Allende was killed in 1973 has now been restored to completely hide signs of the Armed Forces' attack. Eight years after his planes and tanks totally destroyed it, Pinochet will now move back into the Palace.

The Chilean junta murdered tens of thousands when they first seized power, and many more have disappeared since. Amnesty International reckon that 2,000 were arrested last year, and most of them were tortured.

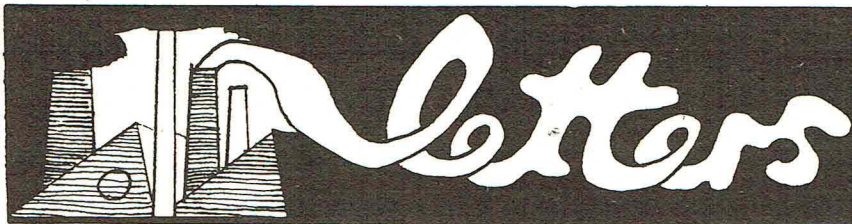
The new constitution foisted on Chile's

population last autumn hardly means the end of brutal dictatorship. Members of left parties are not only arrested, they are also constitutionally barred from participating in elections. In any case the junta plan no elections for some while. They plan to 'select' the next President in 1989, allow a congress by 1990 and 'free' elections by 1997!

The healing of the scars caused by Pinochet's coup means the junta are unlikely to see the next decade. The ruling class are split on how to face the future, between the military faction, the 'duros', and the liberal 'blandos'.

True, inflation has gone down dramatically but after savage deflation for eight years with mass bankruptcies, slashed living standards and no support at all for the unemployed, this could only be expected. Years of monetarism and military dictatorship has fuelled huge brooding hatred.

The election of Thatcher and now Reagan has given Pinochet new friends. The Chilean Navy participated in joint exercises with the US fleet this year, for instance. All the military friends in the world will not save him for long, when the working class moves into action.



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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Miners and imported coal

—'Putting our own house in order'

Sir

I am a regular reader of 'Militant' and find its approach refreshingly realistic; in the main, that is.

However, having just read your reply to Mr Griffins' letter in support of import controls, I feel depressed by what appears to be the influence of outdated socialist idealism asserting itself in your attitude. Surely we must take the ordering of our own house as the priority.

You are in favour of subsidising our coal production on two counts. Firstly, to protect our industry from erosion by international competition; you thereby join the game played by the insidious international capitalists, and putting cheap British coal on the market will only threaten the jobs of brothers in America or wherever...just as their efforts are being manipulated by subsidies to threaten us now.

Secondly, you point out subsidies will bring down the price of electricity etc. Of course it would, but if WE'RE paying ourselves a subsidy on power then WE'RE digging into our pocket on something else... taxes usually.

Unless you envisage the British monopolists making some sort of gratis subsidy out of the goodness of their hearts; although those rats have to be part of history before much more coal comes up the shaft, and certainly before we can implement any sort of rational economic policy.

Surely you recognise that one about us having to import and export or die as one of the oldest props for the outrageous structure of capitalist doctrine in this country...and others.

I'm not proposing a total ban on trade but we could certainly feed ourselves if we tried, we could house, clothe, educate and medicate ourselves. Think of the resources, especially land and goodwill, going to waste behind locked gates and historically fettered attitudes.

Better to demonstrate what can be done here first, one thing at a time, and others will follow. That's when we can link up with brothers and sisters in other lands.

'Militant' has helped me to form political beliefs. It represents the only socialist movement capable of sustaining its growth. But your reply to Mr Griffins' letter seems to denote a hardening in your attitude against the so-called seige economy which, incidentally, Sir Keith has rightly pointed out is the only alternative, at present (my qualification), to the wheeling and stealing system he tries so hard to stimulate.

He rejects it out of hand, of course, as it demands the kind of economic and social restructuring guaranteed to break the stranglehold his employers have on our people.

Yours fraternally
John Auckland
T&GWU
Sheffield

—good for us, bad for the French?

Dear Comrades

A miner told me that John Pickard's article against import controls had explained the whole issue. "Every miner should read it," he said.

The arguments were born out in a tiny piece in 'The Times' [2/3/81]. Apparently French miners, worried about their jobs, have mounted a campaign of "harassment and sabotage" against coal imports from the USA, West Germany, Poland, Morocco... and Britain!

The French Communist Party has made French versus foreign coal an issue in the presidential elections. What position can the Communist Party of Great Britain take on this [and the other supporters of this demand in South Wales, Scotland and the other coalfields]?

To be consistent they should surely support the French miners' demand for import controls—which could lead to unemployment for British miners. Or are import controls good for British miners but bad for the French? What a hopeless mess the bankrupt policy of import controls can lead to!

The only answer to the desperate jobs situation facing all workers is united action for a socialist programme. International solidarity is not 'idealism' or 'theory' but vital to save jobs.

Demanding import controls diverts the NUM and the French miners' union from co-operating in such joint action.

Yours fraternally
John Dale
Bolsover CLP

No union, no hope

Dear Comrades

My mother told me a very interesting story the other day concerning the so-called 'good old days'.

My grandfather worked in a hot sweaty bakery in Caerphilly; his average working week usually lasted eighty hours, for which he was paid no overtime and received the magnificent sum of £2 a week. With that he had to feed and clothe a family of ten!

He died at the age of forty.

Why did this situation exist? The answer is simple: his workplace was a non-union shop!

Comrades, the recent miners' strike has proved that hard won rights will be defended until the end.

Yours fraternally
Huw Morgan
Brighton LPYS

Educating for the dole queue

Dear Comrades

As a second-year social science student at Sheffield University, I recently attended a careers lecture. The main point made was the need to apply early for jobs and teacher training courses.

The bloke from the Careers Advisory Service was asked about the prospects of getting a school teaching job. He stated that every year 8,000 trained teachers entered the job market, where only 2,000 vacancies existed.

A royal raspberry

Dear Comrades

According to the 'Daily Express' (27/2/81), you too can have an engagement ring like the future Queen—providing you can afford £28,000.

A ring similar to Lady Diana Spencer's, a large oval sapphire surrounded by 14 diamonds set in white gold, is shown in the catalogue of the royal jeweller Garrards.

According to the 'Express', "Just like any other

Dorset: wine and roses running out

Comrades

It is easy to criticise this government and their policies but I believe they have succeeded in one aspect where past governments have failed.

Until recently, those of us living in the south of England have been relatively fortunate as far as unemployment levels are concerned, in comparison with the Midlands and the North. But since the Tories came to power they have managed, against the odds, to make unemployment a national, not regional problem. How's that for success!

The deprivation league

Dear Comrades

Our YS has been active in recent months, trying to get support for the Youth Campaign against Unemployment petition.

In Nottingham, we are calling on the city council to set up day centres for the unemployed, to allow them free transport on city buses, and to open up council leisure facilities to them free of charge.

I recently attended a Labour Party management committee meeting where several people signed the

Tories freeze out pensioners

Sir

The intention of the government is to allow gas and electricity prices to rise still further. Pensioners are angered by the bland admission of the energy secretary, Mr Howell, that government has increased the price of gas faster than the Gas Council wanted.

The increase in electricity following hard on the monumental error made by the

Unfortunately he drew the wrong conclusions, proceeding to point out how the falling birth rate in the late 1960s and 1970s had reduced the number of school students. Thus he felt we didn't need so many teachers.

I personally think he would have been better advised to point out that at present a golden opportunity to increase the staff-pupil ratio is being ruined, due to the lunacy of the profit system under which we all suffer.

I asked how many university students would not get jobs. The situation was not

perhaps as bad as it might be, he replied: unemployment amongst social scientists graduating in 1980 had only risen by 2% over the previous year. Then he informed us that the figure for 1980 was a staggering 21.2%.

He finished on a cheerful note: by 1982, when I graduate, the Tories will hopefully have begun to reflate the economy, so they can win the next election by creating more jobs.

As far as I can see the task facing students is not early applications. Instead we must unite with the organised labour movement

to kick out the Tories, and replace them with a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

This is the only solution to such scandals as unemployed teachers and an understaffed education system, which can only produce under-educated kids in the long run.

Yours fraternally
Simon Duerden
Sheffield University
Labour Club
& Park LPYS

'Entrepreneur' at work

Comrades

I work as a waiter in a posh restaurant and have a glimpse into the private habits of bosses, out of sight of their workers.

Most bosses who come in at dinner-time stay for one and a half to three hours and spend 'only' £10 to £15 each. But recently we had a character in (a 'regular', by the way) who started off with drinks for everyone followed by the most expensive meal, downing with it five bottles of wine (between a handful of them).

To while away the remaining few hours of the dinner hour (they had only spent a couple of hours gorging themselves so far) this 'businessman' and his colleagues amused themselves by playing 'odds and evens' with ten-pound notes.

He screwed each £10 note into the palm of his hand and his colleague guessed whether the number was odd or even. If he got it right he got the note.

By the time he had lost £60 this character was tired of the game, so he got out a cheque for £3,500 he'd recently been given and crumpled it into a ball. However, his colleague felt that it was £2,000 too much for him.

This businessman then informed us he needed to make over £2,000 a week to break even on his personal expenses. No wonder—this Monday dinner-hour must have cost him nearly £200 altogether and could have cost him much more.

Forward to socialism!—where bosses are a thing of the past and workers in restaurants do not have to crawl and grovel for tips to people like that to make up a decent wage.

Yours fraternally
Dave Wilkinson
Brighouse LPYS

couple contemplating marriage, Prince Charles and his fiancée studied the catalogue. Then they summoned a jeweller to Buckingham Palace to inform him of their choice.

Now that you know who has got himself engaged, it is interesting to observe the grovelling of the lackeys who are busily ensuring their own positions on future Honours Lists.

True to Tory form, undertaker Deric Scott, chairman of Dorset County Council, wasted no time in creeping round the royal

rump. Before you could say 'rigor moris' Scott despatched a telegram in the direction of Buck House, on behalf of the people of Dorset.

When the worthy chairman of Dorset County Council smugly announced this at the Council meeting at County Hall, Dorchester, his declaration was followed by a king-sized raspberry from the public gallery!

Yours in solidarity
T.G. Evans
Dorchester

Our local county council have been eager to follow their 'messiah of monetarism'. Recently, at a meeting to decide on the budget for the next financial year, the Tory cronies voted en masse against a proposal to reintroduce the school meals service for primary schoolchildren in Dorset.

Just a few hours earlier, a demonstration had taken place in the county town of Dorchester, including a march through the town by an estimated 300 people, already sickened by the ruthless cuts imposed on those least able to fight.

However, it wasn't all wine (cheese?) and roses for the Tory councillors, be-

cause when the vote went in favour of the 'axemen', an uproar broke out and the local constabulary had to 'remove' fifty people from the chambers.

It has come as a real shock to some Tories to realise the depth of resentment growing in this area. But their biggest shock has yet to come.

That will be when the next council elections take place, and people are given a chance to show once and for all that they are not going to get another chance to inflict their 'treatment' on us.

Yours
Robert Trent
Dorchester LPYS

petition, expressing their support for our demands. I then approached our M.P., William Whitlock, expecting him to sign it with no further ado.

How wrong I was! He proceeded to inform me that the unemployed are not amongst the most deprived sections of the community; that they are doing quite well in relation to old age pensioners and the disabled, and that he would certainly not sign the petition.

Of course we would not deny that many elderly and handicapped people are struggling to make ends meet on the meagre benefits

the state gives them. But Mr. Whitlock should come along to our YS and talk to one of our unemployed members, who is struggling to keep himself, his wife and two children on about £46 a week.

Only by sweeping away this rotten system and replacing it with a socialist one, can sections of the community enjoy a decent standard of living, making the debate as to who is more deprived, the elderly or the unemployed, irrelevant.

Fraternally yours
Jean Thorpe
North Nottingham LPYS.

Electricity Council in overcharging consumers by £140 million, makes nonsense of the Minister's statement that these moves are towards economic pricing. The government will cream off the excess profits generated by the increased price rises.

Such reports confirm that such increases are made out of political expediency rather than economic necessity, resulting in disastrous consequences for the pensioners. Many are receiving bills

beyond their means.

Such unbridled greed for profit will result in an increasing number of disconnections and of elderly people succumbing to hypothermia.

Why are pensioners prone to hypothermia? Why are so many afflicted by arthritis and rheumatism? Why are their homes cold and why do they sit huddled in coats before fires which emit the minimum of heat?

The answer is simple: the

pension is not enough. Heat allowances are anomalous and divisive. The National Federation of Old Age Pensioners Associations will fight hard to see that pensioners have the right to a warm and well-lit home.

J Sloan
Airdrie
Lanarkshire

ads

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

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.

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.

BRAINTREE Militant Readers Meeting 'The role of Militant in the Labour Party'. Wednesday 25 March 8.00pm. Speaker: Bob Edwards (Harlow Labour Party and leading 'Militant' supporter). Meeting hall behind Swan public house, opposite Boots.

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).

Build Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 April	Target for year
Eastern	612		1775	7100
East Midlands	604		1375	5500
Hants & Dorset	636		1300	5200
Humberside	328		875	3500
London East	1006		1900	7600
London West	712		1200	4800
London South	560		1375	5500
Manchester & Lancs	670		1450	5800
Merseyside	587		1650	6600
Northern	804		2150	8600
Scotland East	398		1100	4400
Scotland West	501		1875	7500
Southern	885		1775	7100
South West	453		875	3500
Wales East	281		650	2600
Wales West	418		1150	4600
West Midlands	655		2150	8600
Yorkshire	1055		2250	9000
Others	202		3125	12500
Total received	11367		30000	120,000

Target for 11 April £30,000

Target for year £120,000

THE REAL ESSENTIAL

THIS WEEK £1,717

The old, the very young, the low paid and the unemployed see daily the urgency of getting rid of the Tories and building a real alternative.

Militant's socialist policies for the labour movement, are their only hope! And they are determined to build our resources.

Des Heemskerk of Leeds recently had a letter in the Guardian outlining Militant's policies on poverty amongst old age pensioners. One OAP in Blackpool responded with a dearly needed 'fiver' saying 'Good luck to both of us; we need it with this government!' Another pensioner, G Brittain from Northolt sent £1.05.

P Mahon of Cumberland AUEW, has been thrown onto the dole and sends £17 from redundancy money. He wants to see Militant fight back with as much strength as it can muster on behalf of him, his mates and the millions of other unemployed workers. We even received £6.20

from a 'Burroughs Redundancy Party'!

But it is workers in work who will have to step up the Funds with regular donations from their wages. Look at the examples being set!

At Willson's, Leicester, 'Printworkers against Thatcher' have pledged themselves to give 10ps, 15ps and 20ps to the Militant every pay day. Car workers in TGWU 5/909 Branch (Birmingham) are giving £20 a month by Bankers Order. Sheffield, Tinsley NUR members contributed to a collection of £4 last week and promise to make it a regular thing.

Militant supporters in the South Yorkshire coalfield have made an appeal to all NUM Lodges in the area and donations are still flowing in. This week it was the turn of Edlington (Main Colliery), Doncaster, to sent £10. It was accompanied by a £20 donation from Doncaster COSA member, P Kendal. Many thanks indeed!

By Clare Doyle

Other trade union contributions included £9 collected from the TGWU delegation to the Yorkshire Regional LP Conference, £12 from Liverpool Firemen, £4.50 from Merseyside SOGAT Broad Left members, trade unionists' 'expenses' of £43.51 from a Leicester supporter and £7.50 each from two Hull ASTMS members.

Labour Party donations included £2.25 from Hull City, £2.50 collected on the West Stirling CLPs bus to the Glasgow Demonstration and expenses of £5 for LP work in Reading. Over £200 was reportedly raised at the Yorkshire Regional Conference by Militant supporters.

Young Socialists from Gosforth also raised money from a Glasgow coach—£25 to help Militant fight unemployment. Tower Hamlets LPYS gave us £2 and a raffle at the Welsh YS Conference social brought us £10.60. Hundreds more YS branches subscribe to the Marxist ideas of the Militant so why not send regular financial support.

Many thanks to all contributors but especially P Giblet (W London) for his £45, a Gosport Reader's £27

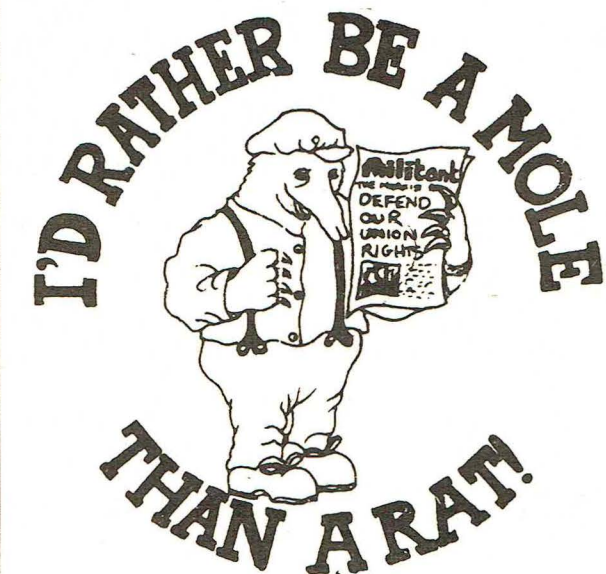
tax rebate, J Mailler (Ers kine) £20 M Holmes (Billericay, CPSA) £15, M&J McMurde (Huddersfield) £11 and S Roach (Wood Green LPYS) £10.55.

Other contributors included:—J Richards (Hull) £10, R Crowe (Poole) also £10, R Dawson (Newcastle) £7.70, G McDonald, Birmingham £3.20, B Shepherd Tranent LPYS, L Pitt of Leicester and R Wilson of Edinburgh TGWU (all £3), R McDermott, Birmingham £4 and K Johnson Enfield YS (£2.65).

£5s came from: R Smith Neath, G Jenkins Cardiff N CLP, R Worth Newton Abbott, T Willis Tower Hamlets YS among many others.

£1s came from: D Copeland Leyton CLP, R Wade Huddersfield AUEW, L&S McAvoy Wood Green, J Ong, D Lee, both Leeds CPSA, D Phillips Stratford ASLEF, Evesham subscriber, cde. De la Bertouche, R Howell Briston and R Lawrence Secretary, Celynen S NUM Lodge.

With petrol, beer, tobacco and everything else going up, why not put up your contribution to the greatest essential—the Militant?



Summer T-shirts. Colours—white, yellow, sky blue, dark gree, navy and black. All with red motif. Round neck and short sleeves.

Sizes—children's: 24, 26, 28, 28 and 30 inch chest. £2.80 each. Adults': small—32-34; medium—34-36; large—38-40; extra large (no dark green)—42-44. £3.25 each. Both costs include postage and packing. Please indicate colour, and size preferred. ALL PROCEEDS TO THE FIGHTING FUND:

Cheques and postal orders made out to R Harris. Send orders with payment to: R Harris, 35 Westminster Court, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1UR.

LYN AND GARY ARMITAGE are pleased to announce the birth of a daughter Sally, 7½lbs, black hair, blue eyes, for those interested in the draw result! Winner is Christine McDonagh.

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'.



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.

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.

WANDSWORTH 'Militant' public meeting 'How to fight the Tories'. Hear Arthur Hautot, sec. St. Benedicts hospital occupation committee. Dennis English, Wandsworth local authority manual workers' shop steward. 7.30pm. Thursday 19 March. Battersea Labour Party rooms, 177 Lavender Hill, SW11.

OXFORD Militant supporters tote result. Week 13 no. 92. Richard Tomlinson, Witney. Week 14 no. 95 Peggy Dyer, Witney. Week 15 no. 33 Gordon Dacey, 32 Warwick St. Week 16 no. 74 Ray Anchors, 116 Hurst St. Week 17 no. 22 unsold. Week 18 no. 78 John Hicks Ifley Rd.

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'.

BRADFORD Militant readers meeting "Socialism or Social Democracy" Textile Hall, 7.30pm Wednesday 1 April.

LEEDS 50 club winner M Doherty No. 41.

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.

LEWISHAM Readers Meeting. 'What is happening in the Labour Party?' Speaker Peter Jarvis (NGA and Hackney South Labour Party). Wednesday 8 April 7.45pm, Deptford Town Hall, New Cross Road, New Cross SE14.

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

Industrial

in brief

Fight the lock-out

Union leaders for the water workers have accepted the 12% pay offer. However, rank and file water workers are very bitter over the failure of union leaders to call an all out strike at the outset of the dispute, and there could be a continuation of unofficial strikes in many areas. Terry Cannon, branch secretary of London sewerage workers said "Our members do disgusting work for disgusting wages. We want a wage to reflect our work and we shall get it next year. We have already lost the value of the improved offer by virtue of the 2% cut caused by the budget."

London NUPE have attacked the Tory council in Merton after the Tories plan to make a £3 million cut in services, which amount to over a 10% cut in the education budget. Besides meaning redundancies, the cuts will come in foreign language help, music teaching, school libraries, school meals [conversion to convenience foods] and Adult Education.

Croydon Trades Council has attacked the cuts in London Transport. Secretary Peter Spalding said, "Instead of recognising that transport in a major city of 7 million people, covering an area of more than 600 square miles, should be operated as an absolutely essential public service, they [the Tory GLC] have tried to apply the principles of the market place."

Plans are now well under way for the 'Peoples march for jobs'. This march aims to show the anger of the unemployed against the Tory government, and also to unite the unemployed and employed throughout the country through local marches en route.

The march leaves Liverpool on May 1st, arriving in London on May 29 with a rally held at QPR football ground. Trade unions can sponsor a marcher for £100. All registration can be obtained from Colin Barnett 222 Stanford Street, Ashton-Under-Lyme, Lancs. Donations also accepted.

AT a mass meeting last week, workers at Courtauld's voted not to fight against the factory's closure in Liverpool, an area already decimated by redundancies. The decision was reached partly because the leadership of the AUEW and EETPU recommended that they negotiated for redundancy money rather than occupy. Many stewards at the plant itself wanted to take action to save the works.

The mood of anger at Newsham hospital is still alive! Last week porters at the Merseyside hospital staged a 24 hour sit-in over management's refusal to come to any agreement on pay.

The port of Southampton is at a standstill following a lock-out by the employers.

The dispute has been given official backing by the T&GWU and all diverted trade from Southampton will be blacked by the other ports in the UK.

The dockers' basic wage today of £94 per week in no way reflects these technological changes in the docks, with production rising 300% over the last 5-6 years. On the other hand there are some who have done very nicely, for example, the Trio Container Line made a

Richie Pearce (Docks Stewards Com. Chairman) spoke to Sue Atkins (Southampton LP)

profit of £300 million last year.

With no major stoppage for 4 years now, Southampton dockers have fallen down the wages league. They have put in a claim for £26 per week—they are not prepared to argue over percentages.

A mass meeting in February decided to give man-

agement a month to respond to their claim. When this was up—having made no progress—they embarked on a series of 24 hour lightning strikes, including two last week.

The immediate response of the Dock Board was to issue a letter to each docker demanding, "Work normally—or not at all!" Now the dockers have in effect been locked-out, and the ball is now back in the Dock Board's court.

The checkers and foremen are in sympathy with the dockers' case and 100% support has been promised from the rest of the ports in the country.

Richie Pearce, Chairman of the docks shop stewards committee, sees this lock-out as part of the National Port Employers' attack against dockers as a whole,

pointing to the battle at Liverpool docks last year.

Up and down the country the employers want to shed what they call 'surplus' labour. In Southampton, as Ritchie says, "for all that dock workers have done to help build up the trade in the port, if there is over-manning we want to see the work being shared out with no loss of pay. The main fight is over jobs—not money."

National shop stewards' meeting

A meeting this week of the national Port Shop Stewards Committee has been called to decide the course of action to be

followed if this threat is implemented, and it is likely that an all-out strike will be recommended.

Already telegrams and messages of solidarity and support have come from as far away as Argentina and Australia, as well as Spain and the rest of Europe—so that it is possible that the dockers' movement internationally will move forward together to prevent further disastrous cutbacks in the numbers employed in the docks.

Canning Town Glass

Maintenance engineers at Canning Town Glass, Mexborough, are in an official AUEW dispute over the sacking of their senior steward.

Brother Newbound, the sacked steward, has a good record as a union representative. The Canning Town Glass management, now part of the non-union Bells Whiskey Group, has obviously realised this.

Brother Newbound was sacked after allegedly drinking at a local pub during work hours. No evidence was given for this, and pickets described the claim as "nonsense".

Although the engineers are out on official strike, this solidarity has not extended to production workers organised in the T&GWU and also, pickets told 'Militant', staff who are themselves members of the AUEW, who are doing the jobs of the men in dispute.

Even more disturbing is the allegation, made by pickets to 'Militant', that the T&GWU stewards are playing an active role in directing trucks into the plant, across an official picket line, and even taking union subscriptions from non-union truck drivers. As one picket said, "Union recruitment and scabbing don't go together."

This deserves to be thoroughly investigated, and the T&G members involved reminded of the ABCs of trade unionism. A unified struggle by all union members is a necessity.

By Gary Bottomly and Rob Jones

'THE CASE FOR THE 35-HOUR WEEK'

A Militant pamphlet Available from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Price 30p (inc. Post)



LT BUILDERS

At a mass meeting held last week the building trade workers employed by London Transport angrily and emphatically rejected LT's proposed redundancy plans.

As one workman after another came to the rostrum, they declared their

intentions of fighting the policy adopted by the LT executive; a policy that would mean immediate enforced redundancies for 80 men, a reorganised Department, and the placing of contracts with private contractors, worth more than £2 million.

The meeting voted for immediate industrial action. Starting with a complete ban on all overtime, a plan

The first picket on Tuesday at Loughton tube station was a success. Workers for the contract builders brought in by LT, saw the pickets were determined to save their jobs, and returned home. One contract worker already on site willingly agreed to leave.

of picketing is to be formulated, and contractors who are presently working on LT properties will be stopped.

And this militancy is from a group of workers which has no history of industrial action.

London Transport owes it to the London ratepayers to keep a viable Building Department.

Building work must be

kept out of the hands of contractors on site after site, on the board's properties; these contractors are not interested in the quality of their work, or the welfare of their workforce, but only in their profit.

London Transport's Building Department workers will not allow it.

By John Janman (Secretary, Joint Convenors' Committee)

ANSELLS BITTER - MEN

One of the latest company tricks has been an attempted ballot of the workforce to accept closure and an 'ex-gratia' payment.

Bill Bostock, shop steward and strike committee member commented: "It does not matter whether they ask us openly, individually or by means of the secret ballot, our answer would be exactly the same—we will continue with the dispute until we get the

Brewery open.

"I am not surprised that management have opted out of publishing the results. They will say that there was intimidation by shop stewards, yet at no time were the members influenced where they should put a cross on the ballot papers."

Bill says the union has proof that some of the beer being delivered by Ansell's is over 7 months old (normal life is two months in ideal

conditions); "It is beer due for disposal. Anybody who goes out to his pub to enjoy a pint might be drinking beer not fit for human consumption."

Comments by Ansell's pickets show their determination. One told me "12 months ago I didn't believe in secondary picketing. Now I'm doing it myself."

And they are angry at the scabs employed by the director of Ansell's, Robin

Thompson, who have threatened violence against the strikers. "Thompson accuses us of being thugs, yet he is employing thugs. One of these scabs threatened to break a picket's neck. Management are the lowest of the low."

By Brian Debus (T&GWU)

Reports

Photo: MILITANT

DETERMINED TO WIN

By Dave San (branch chairman, Liverpool Customs & Excise), Billy Lynn (NIPSA), Tony Church (CPSA), an SCPS member, Ted Evans (IRSF), Phillip Bishop (LPYS)

A policy of 'slaughter of the innocents' has been adopted by management in Liverpool. They have been testing the water under instructions from the Tory government, to test the resolve of civil servants.

Last week three officers in a key area of customs were pulled out by the union as part of the industrial action, with all Irish freight blacked.

A number of clerical assistants were instructed to do this work and refused.

Management threatened them with suspension—customs workers immediately held a meeting of three thousand civil servants, which unanimously decided to strike! Altogether, seven thousand joined the strike on Thursday. On Friday there were a further nine suspensions, but by the afternoon, 10,000 civil servants walked out!

The union have negotia-

ted a seven-point charter of demands, leading to a successful return to work; including no victimisation. This is a great victory which shows what can be achieved using the combined strength of the unions.

Northern Ireland

Last week's one day strike by civil servants was a success in Northern Ireland.

Well over 70% of the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) members joined the action, which is the largest civil service union here. It was rumoured that management was so afraid of the use of pickets, that they obtained large numbers of the RUC to police the picket lines. At the Civil Service's head office, the RUC did not even

allow the pickets the right to peacefully persuade non-strikers not to go to work.

The picket was followed by a march and a rally in the afternoon, where over 160 Militants were sold. The march was even joined by some unemployed youths, that do not always see themselves as the best friend of civil servants!

But they wanted to join in the chants of "Maggie out! Maggie out!" coming from the marchers.

At the rally, the loudest applause was for 'Militant' supporter Billy Lynn who demanded an immediate closed shop throughout the Civil Service, as the only effective way to deal with scabs. He added there should be no secret dealing, and that any offers should be put to the members themselves before acceptance by the Council of Civil Service Unions.

Another speaker, Alan Morrow, also a 'Militant' supporter, stated that the 'pay research unit' was dead and the union should be fighting not for the return of pay comparability but instead for wage claims, for the real needs of the membership.

Leicester

On the one day strike, all Inland Revenue and Social

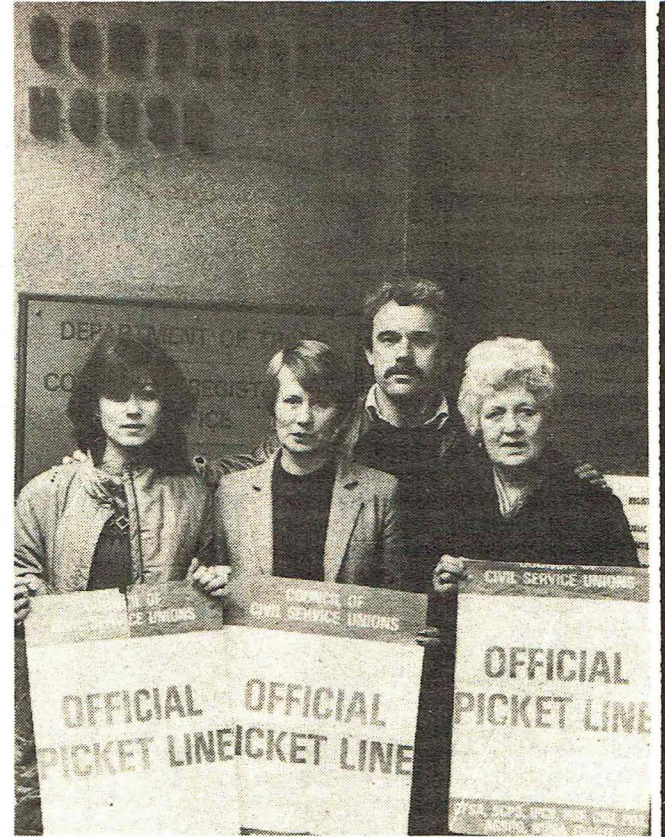
Security offices were shut in Leicester. Despite appalling weather conditions, a march of 300 civil servants was held. At the following meeting, 'Militant' supporter Tony Church received loud applause when he said the campaign was not just a union matter—the Tories were making a political attack on civil servants, two thirds of whom are officially amongst the lowest paid.

Cardiff

At Cardiff, like areas throughout the country, civil service union members held protest meetings following the suspensions in Liverpool (see above report). Mass walkouts took place, with only a handful of non-union members working. As a SCPS rep told 'Militant' at a DHSS office in Cardiff, "Lots of members didn't want to come out at all, but now with the government's tactics, they're really militant and ready for all out action."

North East

In the North East, 98% of Inland Revenue Staff Federation members joined the one day strike. Half of the offices in the Northumbria Collection Branch were on total strike. Selective action is being taken already, and



Civil service pickets outside Companies House in London, where a sectional strike has stopped the financial wheeling and dealing of the finance houses, banks and big business in the City.

although IRSF members have not yet been affected, general supportive action is being taken.

This will be increased once their colleagues at the Cumbernauld computer centres are called out, which will stop an estimated £600 million tax per week being collected. The chancellor's budget estimates on the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement will be worthless unless they settle the dispute quickly.

Bath

Last week's one day strike saw support from 6,000 local civil servants, with all of Bath's many government

buildings picketed—including the Ministry of Defence! A union member who works for the MOD said, "The pay offer amounts to only 2-3% in real terms; that's something you don't hear about in the press."

"I'm on strike because of the government's tactics—they refused to negotiate right from the start, and refused union officials access to the Pay research unit figures on pay comparability. We reckon we're 13-30% behind industry. Last year the government said they would negotiate at the next round of pay talks—now they've refused."

Royal Pride

A strike at Royal Pride furniture manufacturers, Salford, is just one of many which has taken place in the recent period.

In spite of the brand name, it is a small sweat shop mainly employing women, who are now on strike for trade union recognition for FTAT.

The strike began when they were offered a 5% wage rise. The same as they have accepted for the last two years, but starting from April instead of January.

This was well below the national agreement, as are the working conditions which are under investigation by a factory inspector.

At a meeting in the canteen to discuss the offer and the possibility of a strike, the boss walked through and threatened to make them redundant if they went on strike. They decided to join a union, despite a previous attempt which ended with sackings.

A big majority were for strike action; the boss returned issuing threats of redundancy. He added that women were unreliable; to which came the reply "we

are reliable enough for you to have made plenty of money out of us."

He then explained the 'serious financial position' of the company, so the workers explained theirs. Shortly afterwards, the boss agreed to all the demands except union recognition.

But from the past experience, the workers felt that without a union their gains were likely to be very temporary. In fact he went back on two of his concessions just a few days later, resulting in a strike.

A letter was sent out saying the workers had broken their contracts, and therefore they had dismissed themselves, and he wouldn't pay redundancy money!

The factory is being picketed every day, with the workers determined to get their jobs and to win union recognition.

Messages to support and donations should be sent to: FTAT, 7 Amson Road, Victoria Park, Manchester.

By Margaret Creear

Morganite

Engineering tradesmen at Morganite Ceramic Fibres, are on strike to save three jobs. The company, part of the giant Morgan group announced three redundancies on the production side.

The trade unions called for work sharing and part

time working—this was "sympathetically considered by the management."

Hopes rose only to be shattered by the company's total refusal to restore the redundancies. A 24 hour stoppage forced management back to the negotiating table, where the engineering director claimed to sympathise with the workers, but

said that work sharing is not company policy.

An all out stoppage was the only alternative left to the 21 engineers. They are picketing round the clock.

18 trade unionists striking to save their brothers' jobs deserves maximum support. The strike is official, and pickets have received tremendous support from trade

union branches, local trades councils, Labour Parties and the LPYS.

Support should be stepped up. Supporting messages and donations to: MCF strike fund, c/o AUEW District Office, 37 Old Chester Road, Bebbington, Wirral.

By Richard Venton

Co-op

The CWS [Co-op] printers in Reading has announced it is to close in June with a job loss of over 100. This comes a week after two other closures in Reading, resulting in 200 jobs lost.

The CWS in Reading prints CRS reports and

accounts, CWS labels etc and general work for Labour Party and trade unions.

It seems the intention is to spread the CWS work across the other three print works [Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester] and drop the other work, meaning that those areas of work will have to go to private builders.

The workforce have dec-

lared opposition to closure, believing it not to be necessary, and some think that the main reason is that the Co-op wish to sell the site [which is owned by Co-op Estates]. Oxon and Berks NGA branch have established a committee to take the fight into the movement generally.

Messages of support from

CLP, trade union and Co-op branches, should be sent to: Co-op committee, Oxon & Berks NGA, 1 Horseshoe Road, Pangbourne, Reading.

By Ian Warrick (NGA Reading Co-op Committee, personal capacity)

JR of the NHS

Management in Oxford is attempting to reduce the number of hours worked by cleaning staff in nurses' and doctors' homes by about 50%.

They hoped to begin at the large, new John Radcliffe Hospital so that when they later moved on to other hospitals they could point to their 'success' here and undermine any staff opposition.

There is as yet no suggestion of compulsory redun-

dancies: cleaners have been offered work within the hospital to compensate for loss of work in the homes. But they have refused to allow management's scheme to go through.

These women do not want to move from their accustomed place of work into the hospital: indeed, some of them would find it distressing to work among sick people. They also know that less overtime would be available.

Management first tried to

had already been agreed by the union, when nothing could have been further from the truth.

Then one of the cleaners (who is upset by working on wards) was told by a supervisor that either she went across to work in the hospital, or to the management office to explain herself.

The cleaners were refused permission by another supervisor to fetch or telephone for a steward. This supervisor personally insulted one of the cleaners by calling her 'untrustworthy'.

We have since received a written apology and assurances about the future from management. But of course our real gain from the stupidity and heavy-handedness of management is that the cleaners are far more solid in their determination to defeat the scheme to reduce hours worked in the homes than ever they were at the beginning!

By Steve McDonnell (NUPE shop steward, personal capacity)

NOT A PENNY ON THE RENTS!

Blunder Woman

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE ONE

press.
 "Divided they stand," moaned 'The Times', referring to their once favoured government. "Only a minority [of Thatcher's cabinet] are convinced monetarists," confessed its editorial.

Writing in the high-Tory 'Sunday Telegraph' that arch-conservative, Peregrine Worsthorne went even further: "The cabinet [is] publicly divided, as if belonging to opposing parties."

Some right-wing Tory back-benchers, lamented another S. Telegraph correspondent, "who were once most fervent in espousing monetarism in the general election, have now lapsed into silence, and others who gave it the benefit of the doubt have been overtaken by misgivings."

Evidently, the lady has gone too far, even for Tory backwoodsmen, even for right-wing Fleet Street hacks, and even for some of her own ministers.

"Tories, cabinet ministers now, as well as outsiders," admitted 'The Times', "have begun to talk about the unthinkable. It is that their only hope for preventing further economic disaster, and electoral defeat, may be the removal of Mrs Thatcher."

Millions of workers, too, want Mrs Thatcher out.

But not to be replaced by Tory "wets", and not to be replaced by another government that will just try to cook up policies more acceptable to the CBI and City of London.

No! We want the Tories out altogether—and replaced by a Labour government committed to bold socialist policies!

Editorial, page 2.

Tenants' protest in Easington last autumn. This spring will see many more.

Photo: D Doran

A united fight against the rent increases! That was the clear demand of over 400 Basingstoke tenants last Saturday [14 March] as they marched through the town centre.

Council house tenants in the town face rent increases of 66½%. This means rent rises of up to £7.30 a week. But this incredible attack on working class living standards is being resisted.

By Andy Holloway

setting about him.

Unfortunately, there was no political lead from the meeting. One Labour councillor thought the budget was a "separate issue" from the rent rises.

In reality, the budget measures make it impossible to afford even small increases in rents. Nobody mentioned the massive and crippling interest repayments to the banks—or raised the call for their nationalisation as a vital part of the next Labour government's programme.

The campaign by the Labour Party and tenants against the rent rises is a great initiative. The struggle must not be fought in isolation. It must be taken into the trade unions, with workers being urged to use their industrial strength against the rises.

What is needed most is a national lead from the National Executive of the Labour Party and the TUC. Tenants have shown they are willing to fight. They must not be left to fight alone.



Basingstoke Labour Party are leading a campaign. They have already organised two big lobbies of council meetings and large public meetings on local estates.

The growing pressure has brought about the resignation of the Tory leader of the council, while another councillor has resigned the Tory whip.

The Labour Party have also canvassed support for withholding the rent increases which has got the support of the vast majority of tenants. Estate committees have been set up to co-ordinate the strike.

The mood in the rally following the march was one of real anger against the Tories. A heckler at the meeting was lucky to get away unharmed, with tenants having to be held back from

Thatcher & Co

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

ure, defiantly asserted to great applause: "Our management are determined to put us on the scrap heap and we are determined they will not succeed!"

It was reported later that mass meetings of the yards in lower and upper Clyde had voted unanimously for a weekly 50p levy of all members of the Greenock women. This magnificent gesture will give the workers at Lee Jeans a much needed £1,500 to £2,000 a week!

At a press conference held after the shop stewards' meeting, the convenors of Talbots presented a document which showed that Talbot have cooked the books to show a loss at their

Linwood plant as an excuse to close it.

Instead of making a £20 million plus loss as claimed by the company, the Linwood men showed that so-called doomed factory had an operating profit of at least £9.3 million last year.

Meanwhile, in another part of town, more bold pledges to fight the sackings were made by 2,200 workers at a mass meeting of Hoover, Cambuslang. Only a handful declined to vote for a fight on the company's "survival plan" which would mean 480 sackings.

The workers have refused to accept lay-off proposals and will all turn up for work. "If the gates are shut

we will take them off the hinges. No obstacles will stop us," said Eddie Macavoy, the shop stewards' convenor.

He continued graphically: "We cannot believe their promises any more. The Hoover directors are more like undertakers and if they plan to make us corpses, we'll make history by being the first corpses to bury the undertaker and secure our own future."

Obviously the mood of the workers in the West of Scotland is reaching boiling point. The leaders of the Talbot workers must realise that they should cash in on this now, by putting a call for strike action before their own members as soon as possible.

The case for a fight has already been well explained and the degree of support will mean that the Linwood

ranks will not be found wanting.

It is clear that there is a basis for a united fight against all sackings.

The next meeting called by the Talbot stewards should become a fitting-out shop for plans to unite all workers in struggle against the bosses landslide of sackings.

The Scottish Trades Union Council has, at last, called an all Scotland meeting of shop stewards for 21 March to discuss plans to beat unemployment.

Those stewards attending should ensure that a half-day general strike against unemployment and the Tories is called as a starting point in the fight to remove them from office.

Hughie Wyper summed it up at the Talbot conference: "Enough is enough. This far and no further."

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