

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

TORY NUCLEAR MADNESS...

BILLIONS ON ARMS

MILLIONS ON THE DOLE



The struggle for peace is the struggle for socialism—see centre pages

Armaments are the only growth industry in Thatcher's Britain. Since 1979 over 1½ million industrial jobs have been destroyed in the Tories' monetarist blitz.

Yet they are currently squandering over £14,000 million a year for military purposes. They are going to spend £7,500 million on Trident to up-date Britain's so-called "independent nuclear deterrent".

Almost as much is spent on running and arming Britain's bloated

military machine as on educating our children or on caring for the sick in the NHS.

And this at a time when Britain is suffering the worst unemployment since the '30s, with hundreds of thousands of school leavers going straight on to the scrap-heap of the dole.

Public spending on staff, goods, Continued on back page

Explosion of anger at NF fascists

By Militant Reporters

OVER a thousand local people, mainly black youth, battled in Tottenham, London last Tuesday (3 May) to stop a fascist election meeting.

More than four hundred police were employed to force a passage through the protesting crowd for twenty to thirty National Front supporters.

Even before they arrived skirmishes took place, with police clearly looking to make arrests. Remarks such as 'Watch that Jewish bastard', and the threatened arrest of a local resident standing in his garden as the fascists arrived showed the mood of police.

Their actions further enraged the crowd and provoked furious resistance. By the end of the evening there were thirty-five arrests.

A young black boy of no more than thirteen was arrested and thrown into a police van as he left his home to go to the local shop. When his parents came out to look for him they were threatened with arrest unless

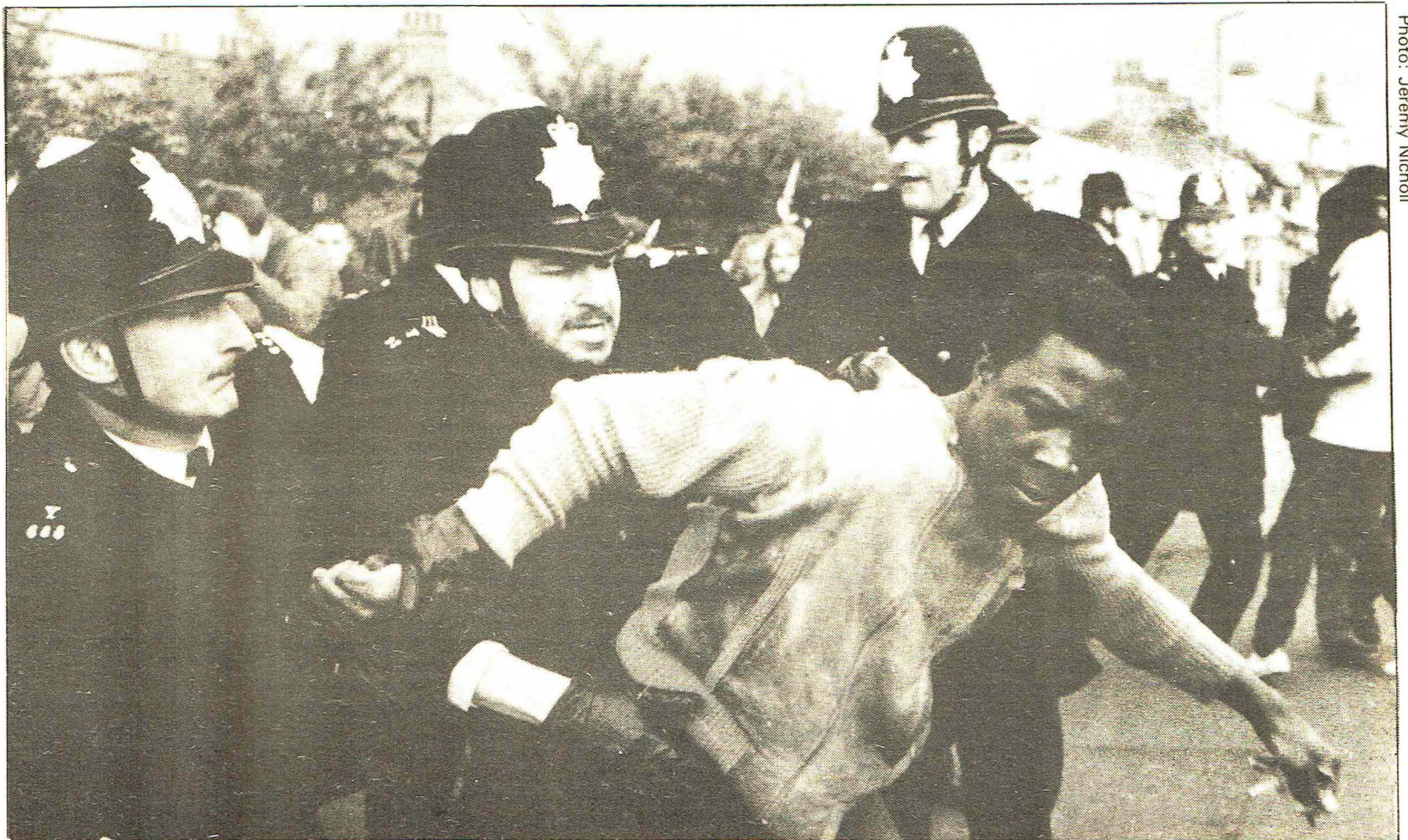


Photo: Jeremy Nicholl

Continued on back page

Police arrest a youth during the battle outside the NF meeting on Tuesday night.

Militant

GENERAL ELECTION

Labour CAN win!

THE LABOUR PARTY can win the general election that everyone is expecting next month. If the party were to fight on clear socialist policies, there is no doubt that the Tories could be swept from office, lifting at a stroke an enormous burden off the shoulders of working people.

The Tories have been dithering over when to call the election. They are afraid of the possibility that a general election would produce an enormous class polarisation. All the accumulated anger and bitterness of four years of Tory cuts in living standards would come to the surface.

Margaret Thatcher must realise that the apparent Tory lead in the opinion polls is completely illusory. How else would it be possible to explain the Tories' miserable showing at the by-elections in the last few years, when they have lost more deposits than any other party?

The Tories are running scared of the issue of unilateralism, with Tory Minister of Defence, Michael Heseltine, sounding more like a Minister of Propaganda, in his attempts to counteract the growing support for CND. The pressure put on Bruce Kent, general secretary of CND, by Tory MPs is another indication of their fear that unilateralism will become a major election issue.

But as difficult as this situation is now for the Tories, it would be much worse if they left the election until October. Unemployment is expected to rise by a quarter of a million by autumn. Inflation will reach its lowest point—around 4%—in May but even the most optimistic forecasts show that inflation will rise to at least 6% by the year's end. Wholesale prices are

already rising by 7.4%. An October election, therefore, will present the Tories' false economic recovery in a completely different light.

The Labour Party should be poised to strike out at the Tory record, on the economy, on unemployment, on their massive defence expenditure, and on their social and welfare policies.

A certain amount of scepticism, however, still exists among workers about the policies that would be followed by a Labour government. The Labour Party is still associated in the minds of many workers with the policies of the 1974 to 1979 Labour government, dominated by the right wing of the Labour Party, carrying out cuts in public expenditure, provoking strikes by the low paid, and enforcing an incomes policy in the guise of the Social Contract. This scepticism reveals itself in the fact that between 30% and 40% of the electorate, depending on the polls taken, have yet to make up their mind which way to vote.

Campaign on Policy

Unfortunately, the Labour Party election slogan will not dispel that scepticism. "Think positive—vote Labour" is a slogan dreamed up by ad-men with the ad-man's contempt for workers' needs. It seems more designed to paint over policies than to propagate them.

If the Labour Party is to cut through the fog of doubt around many workers, if it is to mobilise the one-third of the electorate who have yet to make up their minds, it must present itself as the party of change. The Labour Party must fight boldly and clearly on the issues brought to the fore by successive Labour Party conferences.

There must be an unequivocal commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. "Jobs before bombs"

would inspire millions of young voters far more than the insipid slogan "bought" by the Labour Party from its professional publicity men.

Workers are deeply concerned about unemployment. Cheap labour schemes dreamed up by Norman Tebbit cannot disguise the fact that an absolute majority of school leavers have no regular job. The position is not expected to improve in the foreseeable future.

The Labour Party should inscribe the demand for a 35-hour week, without loss of pay, high on its election banner.

Millions of workers are concerned about low pay. One in three of the adult workforce earn wages below the officially defined poverty level. The 10% poorest paid male manual workers still receive the same percentage of the average male wage as was the case in 1886.

The Labour Party could create an enormous groundswell of support if it championed the interests of these low paid. A statutory national minimum wage of £100 per week should be a demand central to Labour's election strategy.

These demands would be easily realisable, the Labour Party would explain, if society and industry was reconstructed on socialist lines. The Labour Party must explain that there is no future for workers on a capitalist basis.

Forecasts made by the EEC Commission in Brussels show that unemployment, even by the official figures which disguise the true level of joblessness, will rise to around 3.7 million by 1988. The National Economic Development Council also issued a report recently in which they forecast that there would be zero job growth throughout the whole of the 1980s.

In other words, by the admission of the capitalist economists themselves, on the basis of present developments, workers would have to wait at least seven years before there was even a prospect of a decrease in

unemployment.

The Guardian last week, commenting on the record of the Tories, stated "There is little in our economic record since 1979, or in the prospects which now face our weakened industrial base, to suggest that this government is well suited to the task of reconstruction." That must rank as the understatement of the year.

We might add that the party of *The Guardian*, the SDP, have even less to offer workers going into the election. The SDP pretend to be the party which will "break the mould" of British politics. But they are the mould of British politics, steeped in the discredited ideas and policies of former right-wing Labour governments.

It is not only a matter, however, of changing the government. There is little to suggest that this system "is well suited to the task of reconstruction."

Labour must be the party of promise, of reform, the party of change. It must offer a way out of the jungle of social and economic problems faced by workers day in and day out. But it is necessary in order to do this for the Labour Party to explain the meaning of real socialist change.

Labour must campaign for the public ownership of the major banks, finance houses and the 200 or so industrial companies that dominate the economy. Compensation should be paid on the basis of proven need. The modest shareholdings, insurance policies and bank accounts of ordinary workers would be guaranteed by a socialist government.

A socialist plan of production based upon the most democratic form of workers' control and management would then put a Labour government in the position whereby for the first time ever resources, wealth, manpower and skills of the country could be planned for the benefit of the whole population.

On this basis—and only on this basis—a start could be made in tackling all the rotten features of capitalist society, low pay, unemployment, homelessness and so on.

The whole political situation at the present time—the large number of undecided voters, the swings in the opinion polls, the unpredictability of by-elections—speaks of an unprecedented degree of volatility. After almost ten years of continuous recession and rising unemployment, and with no other prospect in sight, the majority of the population would eagerly grasp any other alternative to the present that they thought viable.

Only the Labour Party can offer such an alternative to the present system. They must use the election campaign to fight for it.



Kevin Roddy, President of the CPSA.

Photo: Militant.

A year of achievement

KEVIN RODDY spoke to a *Militant* reporter about his first year as President of the Civil and Public Services Association.

"I think it's made a great difference to have a left Executive Committee for the union. Protecting jobs and fighting low pay have been to the forefront of the minds of the Executive.

"On the pay campaign, we held the special pay conference in December concentrating on the question of low pay, that gave us the mandate for the £12 flat rate claim. Local branches were asked their opinions and the lead from the Executive resulted in this claim.

"Members knew from the very start what we were fighting for. We were also able to use that conference decision to convince other civil service trade unions of the need for the claim. Right-wing CPSA leaderships have been against pay conferences in the past and would not call them unless there was a very specific conference decision. And there would have been no lead.

"On jobs, every time sections of the membership have been in dispute this year they have got the support of the Executive Committee. The CPSA Headquarters has

never instructed members to go back to work or failed to support them in the dispute.

"In the Birmingham/Oxford dispute, I went up as National President two days after the dispute started and guaranteed members EC backing. They would not be sent back, their votes would decide, even when on occasions I disagreed on tactics with the members.

"For the future, the first priority is to organise a massive civil service vote against the Tories. It looks as though members have voted to accept the pay offer due to lack of confidence that they could win a struggle alone against this government.

"We did our best to build up the confidence and we gave the choice, the chance to take up low pay. The momentary lack of confidence won't discourage us.

"Many civil servants think that in a few months' time we can get rid of the Tories. Our members do increasingly realise the need for political involvement but that has not been helped by the witch-hunt which makes CPSA members think the Labour Party's in a mess.

"But the same problems face us on jobs and pay and I am confident that our members will want to fight again in the near future."

Southall picket

A picket of Southall police station was mounted on 30 April by 50 supporters of the David Avondale Campaign.

David Avondale was convicted of armed robbery and sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment mainly on the basis of identification by two policemen. The campaign argues that there was no other reliable identification or forensic evidence and that

he should be freed immediately.

A picket will be held of the Appeal Court (Strand, WC2) on Thursday 12 May at 9 am. Further information can be obtained from David Avondale Campaign, Southall Rights, Uxbridge Road, Southall.

By John Gibbs



Enthusiasm at Labour Party conference last year for socialist policies.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report).



Thatcher comes to Sheffield—and the police aren't holding back the workers because they think they are going to shower Thatcher with good wishes! This is the greeting Thatcher got when she came to the Labour stronghold of Sheffield—see how the Prime Minister got on in the Tory stronghold of Esher, page 5.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Fleet Street want witch-hunt continued

AFTER the debacle at Bermondsey, the by-election lost the day after Labour's NEC voted to expel the five members of the *Militant* Editorial Board, it seems that the NEC are at last convinced that witch-hunts and expulsions are an electoral disaster.

On the day before the following by-election, in Darlington, the same NEC agreed to put off a resolution calling for further action against *Militant*, and, with a general election apparently coming in June, the resolution has been put off again, in April. Geoffrey Smith, regular columnist of *The Times*, recently pointed out that this might mean that at the election there will be Labour candidates who support the political ideas of *Militant*.

"...an opportunity has been lost," he laments, "to send a message to the country that Labour is no longer prepared to tolerate such extremism. Getting rid of *Militant* would not by itself purge the party. But the act would be symbolic. Not doing it may also be regarded as symbolic." (*The Times*, May 3 1983).

Perhaps in this article there is also a veiled threat to the labour movement. It is possible, in the run up to the general election, that the capitalist press may try to "send a message to the country", along the same lines as the local press in Liverpool—attempting to use the issue of *Militant* as part of a "Zinoviev"-style campaign, like in the 1925 general election, when Fleet Street used a forged letter allegedly from the leader of the Communist International to run a red-scare campaign against the Labour Party.

In the ranks of the Labour Party, however, even despite the imminence of the election, many branches are still discussing the expulsions and the overwhelming majority are against. **Streatham CLP**, for example, last week passed two motions, both of which opposed the expulsions.

The first called on the NEC to reverse its decision on the expulsions and noted especially the work done by Clare Doyle in the Lambeth Labour Party. The other similar resolution passed gave notice "that we unconditionally support the CLPs who refuse to carry out these expulsions."

Before the boundary re-organisations, it should be noted, the old Streatham CLP supported Denis Healey in the contest for the deputy leadership, so the passage of these resolutions marks a significant shift to the left.

By a
Militant reporter

NORTHERN IRELAND NEEDS PARTY OF LABOUR

THE LABOUR movement conference on 9 April, organised under the theme 'Stop the Tories', was an important step forward in the fight to establish a party of labour in Northern Ireland (See *Militant* issue 646). Manus Maguire, of Derry Labour and Trade Union Party, here assesses the results of that conference:

The working class of Northern Ireland needs a political voice to represent its interests. This is the key message which comes out of the conference which represented a broad section of opinion amongst trade union activists in Northern Ireland.

Nevertheless, two days later, on Monday 11 April, the chairman of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC/ICTU), ruled out of order a motion from Derry Trades Council calling for trade union candidates to stand at the general election. The leaders of the NIC/ICTU refused even to discuss the issue.

Whilst this undemocratic ruling may be a temporary setback in the campaign for the establishment of a Labour Party in Northern Ireland, it is far from a defeat. An increasing section of the trade union movement is now taking up, discussing and favouring a movement

by the trade unions to represent working class people politically, as well as industrially.

The 9 April conference is only the beginning. This campaign must now be taken to the all-Ireland conference of the ICTU, and beyond, if necessary.

The working class cannot wait for ever, for the setting up of a trade union-based Labour Party, fighting for socialist policies. Since the Tories came to power, in 1979, unemployment has more than doubled in official terms. But taking those on short-time working and on the government's slave labour schemes, real unemployment in Northern Ireland stands at 180,000.

Five more years of Tory rule would be a disaster

For hundreds of thousands of working people in this province, Toryism means nothing but unemployment, poverty and despair. Another five years of Tory rule would mean absolute disaster. The area would be transformed into a virtual industrial wasteland. This calamity can be avoided, but only by the organised working class.

The organisers of the "Stop the Tories" con-

ference played the invaluable role of opening up a wide discussion within the trade union movement on the question of the struggle against the Tories, but also for raising the need for a conference of the labour movement to set up a genuine trade union-based Labour Party, in time to stand in the Westminster elections.

The conference agreed to establish a "Stop the Tories" campaign, to maintain the pressure on the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU and to work to ensure that genuine trade union based candidates contest the next election.

The perspective now must be for the further broadening of this important discussion within the trade union movement. In the months running up to the conference over 1,000 circulars stating the objectives of the campaign were sent to the various trade union and other labour movement organisations. These organisations will again be circulated giving a full report of the conference and asking for affiliations to the "Stop the Tories" campaign.

The activists in the movement must see to it that these proposals are raised in every trade union branch, trades council, shop stewards committee, etc and that they are asked to affiliate.

In the event of an early general election, and the



Members of Belfast Young Socialists and the Labour and Trade Union Group.

failure of the ICTU conference in July to decide for action, the hands of the new executive of the "Stop the Tories" campaign must be free, to convene a further conference to discuss the possibility of the "Stop the Tories" campaign itself selecting and fielding candidates.

Already, both the British and the Irish Labour Parties have come out in favour of a conference to discuss the setting up of a Labour Party in N Ireland. The National Union of Mineworkers, the Civil and Public Service Association and other unions, trade union branches and trades councils have supported this position. Trade Union or Labour candidates in Northern Ireland could get the support from these organisations.

The question of the establishment of a trade union-based Labour Party is now a burning issue in the movement in NI. Despite attempts now by the leadership

to ban the discussion on a Labour Party, in the long run this obstruction will be futile. Nothing can stop the will of the working class to fight industrially nor politically.

The 9 April conference is only the tip of the iceberg. Tory attacks have forced working class people to look for a way to fightback. A Labour Party in Northern Ireland will immediately give voice politically to those workers who over the last 4-5 years have fought the Tories on the picket lines.

Drawing behind it trade unionists, unemployed, working class women and youth, a Labour Party fighting on a radical socialist programme will become invincible. The unity of the working class, both Protestant and Catholic, in the struggle for socialist change will sound the death-knell for the Tories and the bigots in Northern Ireland.

BRADFORD PENSIONERS RALLY

"THERE'S something sick about a society which condemns pensioners to a minimal wage and sometimes death while £14,000 million are spent on weapons and destruction."

With these words Arthur Scargill summed up the position facing pensioners today. He was speaking at a 1,000 strong pensioners rally in Bradford, organised jointly

by the Bradford British Pensioners Trade Union Action Association and the Yorkshire TUC.

To massive applause, another speaker, Jack Jones called for a £75 pension per week for a couple and a £50 pension for a single person. "If they can get massive backdated pay rises for MPs they can do for the pensioners" he said.

Other demands were for free transport as already exists in Ireland and Scandinavia, free telephones and TV licenses, an abolition of fuel standing charges and a massive increase in the death grant.

Much play was made by the local media of a self-declared "Royalist" who shouted out that Arthur Scargill should not be allow-

ed into Bradford. The idea that pensioners are in some way "moderate" was completely crushed by the reaction of the audience to this. Uproar erupted in the hall and some pensioners had to be restrained from having a go at the heckler! Sellers sold out of *Militants*.

The rally showed not only a massive hatred of the Tories but the desire that

By Pete Watson
(Bradford West
Labour Party)

Labour must take up the pensioners' demands and carry them out when in office. Socialist change provides the real hope for a dignified existence for retired workers.

TARGET—£50,000 BY JULY 9.

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 9 July
Eastern	160		2700
East Midlands	207		2600
Humberside	73		1300
London East	282		3300
London West	258		1650
London South	661		2500
Manchester & Lancs	334		3000
Merseyside	202		3400
Northern	104		3550
Scotland East	57		2100
Scotland West	246		3000
Southern	241		3150
South West	76		2000
Wales East	54		1500
Wales West	76		2100
West Midlands	103		3100
Yorkshire	142		3400
Others	142		5000
Total received	3,421		50000

Photo: Militant

FUND US!

AFTER A week when pre-election fever gripped the popular press, Young Socialists from the East Midlands, North West, North and Scotland sent donations to *Militant's* funds:

**THIS WEEK
£1,645**

£130 alone came from Scottish comrades (thanks particularly to Patrick LPYS supporters), with other sizeable sums from Wilmslow, Chester, Nottingham, Huntingdon, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Coventry. These sums are in addition to the many individual donations made by LPYS members regularly to our funds.

By Kath White

Not everyone will be able to match the £100 given by S Rheade (Salford LPYS) or the £10 or £11 given by T Smith (Hendon N LPYS) and Aryn (Portsmouth S LPYS) respectively. But J Mercer (Liverpool), H McCann (Springburn), J Ryan (Dagenham), M Barnett (Brent East LPYS), G Nicholls (Wimbledon LPYS) J O'Connor (Gorton) and E Havie (Motherwell) all gave us sums ranging from 50p to £5 as an indication of the support *Militant* has given the LPYS.

Organised workers too see the value of having a more frequent *Militant*. As well as the cash from delegates and visitors to union conferences such as USDAW (an excellent £330—see last week's issue for report) we've had donations from Tredegar and Brynlliw Miners lodges in South Wales (the latter was £1, but every £1 is vital to a Marxist paper), CPSA readers in Longbenton sent in 'extras', in London members of POEU and NALGO sent us cash, whilst in Coventry and Chester expenses were donated and bakery workers in the North West have sponsored a swim.

Thanks also to our readers who supported us with donations at meetings in Rayleigh (over £40), Leicester (over £20), Ryde, Portsmouth, and in Lancashire and to Labour Party members in West Derby and Minlgavie (Clydeside), also Merseyside students who contributed.

Amongst the many readers to send in con-

tributions this week were L Smith (London UCW member), I Cuthbert (Ayrshire), M Riley (Chesterfield), L Arnell and L Scott (both Marden (Kent) LP), Sue's dad (Barnsley), I MacDonald and H Leys (Orkneys TC & LP), W London readers I Lloyd and R Saunders (UCATT), Cllrs Parmar (Leicester) and Hughes (Chester), pensioners F Armstrong (Southend) and J Duffy (Motherwell) and J&M Mayfield (Derby).

To all these and the scores we've had to leave out—please get all your mates to read *Militant* and support us too! We need £50,000 by July 9th to assure our plans for a more frequent *Militant*, and of course during any election campaign *Militant* needs to be able to reach those places it hasn't reached before.

How about selling a few (or many!) copies of *Militant* in your Labour Party, and making a regular donation to our funds? Send to MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN for details. All cheques and postal orders should be made payable to MILITANT, and crossed. (Receipts will be sent on request.)

A single parent in Leicester last week paid £2 for her paper: if every reader did that once a month, we would go storming over our target, and *Militant's* expansion would take place even faster! What about it? Can you afford not to?



Sell *Militant*—and collect for our fighting fund!

**LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS
2-DAY RALLY ON
BLACK
YOUTH
IN BRITAIN
1983**

SATURDAY
&
SUNDAY
2nd & 3rd JULY
1983

BRIXTON
TOWN HALL
ACRE LANE
LONDON SW2

Starts 10 am
on both days

★ SMASH THE TORIES!
★ WORKERS UNITY AND SOCIALISM!

These leaflets are now available free of charge from A Bevan, LP Youth Officer, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Nava Sama Samaja Party (UK) presents
SPRING DISCO
at the Haringay Community Trades Hall
2a Brabant Road, Wood Green, N.22
(nearest tube station Wood Green)
on Saturday 14 May 1983, 7.30pm to midnight
Tickets: £1.50
Bar: refreshments on sale
★ All proceeds in aid of our struggle in Sri Lanka
★ Please come and support us:
★ For tickets, contact:
Wesley (882 3423) Paul (650 6451)
Ranjith (803 1631) Ujitha (594 6120)

ads

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MILITANT MEETINGS

THE MAIDSTONE Militant Marxist Discussion Group 'War and Peace', Thursday 12 May, in Perry Street, Maidstone, has been postponed.

HALIFAX Marxist Discussion Group. Fortnightly Wednesdays, beginning 6 April at 7.30 pm at AEU Club, St James Street, Halifax (near bus station). For more information: phone Phil Crossley, Halifax 822814.

MAIDSTONE MILITANT SUPPORTERS: Maidstone Marxist Economics Day School. Speakers Mick Brooks and John Edwards, at Wheelers Arms, Perry St, on Sunday May 8th, 10.30am to 5.00pm.

NORTH EAST Marxist Discussion Groups:
Benton: Details Ged Grebby, 0632 662374.
Wallsend: Contact Ed Waugh, 0632 341284.
North Shields and Whitley Bay: Contact Robin Jamieson, 0632 523441.

WOOLWICH Militant May Day Meeting
Speakers: Roger Silverman and Hashida Davé (Editorial Board, *Hartal*). Tuesday 3 May 7.30 pm. Woolwich Town Hall, London SE18.

HULL MILITANT PUBLIC MEETING
"Can Labour's Policies Win the General Election." Speaker Mike Forster (Louth CLP) on Thursday May 12 7.30 pm at Trades and Labour Club, Beverley Road, Hull.

BLACKWOOD Marxist Discussion Group. Telephone Blackwood 220051.

POPLAR Militant Discussion Group. Ring 01-515 1718 for details ALL WELCOME!

CARLISLE: Marxist Discussion Group held fortnightly. For further information contact: Ian Campbell on Carlisle 21068.

CLASSIFIED

Left Book Club books. Over 80 available. Offers to Box No 69, Militant. Proceeds to Fighting Fund.

NEW MILITANT LEAFLET
Out now! It's an election year special. Advertise your local readers' meeting with this new leaflet. Free, from 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

MILITANT PAMPHLETS
'Capitalist Crisis or Socialist Plan', by Andrew Glyn, £1.20
'Marxist View of History', articles by Lenin, Marx, Trotsky, 50p
'General Strike', articles by Trotsky, Taaffe, Grant, £1.20
All prices include p&p. Orders to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

STICK WITH MILITANT
Yellow advertising stickers
1,000 for £11; 500 for £5.60; 200 for £2.30.
Send cash with order, cheques payable to Militant. From Militant Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

On the centenary of Marx's death, 14 March 1983, Peter Taaffe spoke in Swansea on the relevance of Marxism today, and of Militant in the labour movement. Tape cassette available £2.25. Orders to D L Davies, 10 Page Street, Swansea. Profit to Militant Fighting Fund.

WRITE OFF THE TORIES WITH US
Militant biros with slogan: "Read Militant, Tories out, Labour to power on a socialist programme." Normal price 20p (plus 20p p&p). Bulk orders: 10 at £1.30 (post free).

NEW POSTER
Historic 'Murmansk poster' featuring Bolsheviks' appeal to British troops who invaded Russia after the revolution. 25p each (+ 15p p&p) or 20 for £3 (including p&p). Available from E Phillips, 66 Sprindale Road, Broadstone, Poole.

SNOWDONIA: Bed and Breakfast in comfortable cottage. £4.50 nightly, £28 weekly. Telephone Llanberis 870062.

Militant Steelworkers' national meeting
'The attacks on the steel industry and the fight back'
Main Hall, Centre Against Unemployment, Bridge Street, Sheffield (behind Bridge St bus stand)
Saturday 7 May, 11 am-5 pm

Speakers:
Mike Sutton (AUEW Shop Steward, Allied Steel and Wire, Cardiff, personal capacity)
Chris Weldon (ISTC Tinsley Park No 2, personal capacity)
Martin Elvin (Militant Industrial Correspondent)
Plus other speakers from the steel industry

THE MARCH wound its way into Halifax, receiving a warm reception from people along the road. Shouts of "giz a job" and "Maggie out!" echoed down the streets.

The mood was anti-Tory. It came as a bit of a surprise, then, to see the Liberal Lord Mayor as a main speaker at the rally! The Liberals have a terrible record in Halifax. They and their ugly twins—the Tory group—have managed to lose many jobs in Halifax, due to their cut-backs. They even voted with the Tories to prevent the marchers from using Queens Road Community Centre, for the overnight stop!

Passing through Huddersfield the march then came over to Bradford. A detour was taken so a mass picket could be held at Hindles factory. These workers have been sacked for going on strike, after being offered a zero pay increase (see *Militant*, issue 647). This is after having received only an 8½% rise in pay over the previous four years!

At the rally in Bradford, Max Madden, the Prospective Parliamentary candidate for Bradford West, spelled out the horrifying consequences of monetarism for the Bradford area.

Pat Wall, PPC for Bradford North, went on to recount the story of a woman who had been made redundant after 36 years of work for her firm. She was understandably shocked after working so long for the same place.

"What did the personnel manager say?"... "Well, we bloody well paid you, didn't we?" showing the contempt that the bosses have for working people. He went on to point to the strength and the power of the labour movement and called on its leaders to use that power to build a democratic socialist society.

This march can and must be used as a powerful

Message from the Peoples March



The People's March for Jobs '83 enters Leeds at the weekend

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

weapon to spread the ideas of socialism. One marcher who spoke on the rostrum at Bradford had no doubt about it. "We're marching down to London", he said, "to attempt to get rid of the government!"

By Pete Watson
(Bradford West Labour Party)

YS Workplace meetings

FOR THOSE of us who work at County Hall, London, a Tory victory at the next general election could have dire consequences, because they would almost certainly attempt to abolish the Greater London Council (GLC). This would mean redundancies for many County Hall staff, with the prospect for some of long term unemployment.

To organise the fightback, LPYS members at County Hall organised the first meeting of a workplace branch of the LPYS on a Monday lunchtime recently,

with guest speakers Ken Livingstone (Leader of the GLC), and Nick Toms (LPYS NC). About 40 people attended this very successful meeting.

Ken Livingstone said he considered it a compliment from Thatcher that he and the GLC are such an irritant to her to be worth abolishing. It wasn't true, he said, that there was no alternative to Thatcherism; Britain is not a poor country, but the wealth was being squandered.

We need to take the wealth out of the hands of the squanderers. What we need, he went on, is to build

a Labour Party base in every work place.

Nick Toms described how the Tories had hammered youth into the ground and warned that a Tory victory would spell even greater disaster for youth. The LPYS will campaign to maximum effect for a Labour victory and, he continued, with a programme of bold socialist policies Labour can win the youth vote.

The discussion also covered Trade Union activity in County Hall and Sally Wilkins from the Executive Committee of NALGO, and also an LPYS member, spoke of NALGO's cam-

paign to stop the abolition of the GLC. It was an excellent discussion which could have lasted much longer than the lunch break, with many people contributing to the debate.

At the end of the meeting seventeen applied to join the Labour Party and there was a wave of enthusiasm for more meetings and the establishment of an active workplace branch.

By Janet Toms
(Bermondsey LPYS and GLC NALGO)



**Bash the Tories
Not the socialists
DORMERS WELLS BRANCH
of Ealing/Southall CLP**

**SOUTH NORMANTON
LPYS
Keep the red flag flying
The workers united will
never be defeated**

**First of many
May Day greetings
from
EAST BERKS LPYS**

**May Day greetings from
TUNBRIDGE WELLS LPYS
Kick out the Tories
Labour to power on a socialist programme**

'Tory heartland' greets Thatcher

ON A sunny day you can see for miles across London from Richmond Hill. However, this particular April sunny day 300 of us gathered more concerned with giving Mrs Thatcher a reception befitting the labour movement.

Three days before, it had leaked out that Thatcher was to have a nosh-up with local Tories and assorted rich parasites so the turn-up of 300 purely by word-of-mouth was magnificent.

Thatcher arrived in the back of a brand new car grinning inanely, as Labour Party members, skins and punks yelled "Maggie Out". Keith Vaz, the local Labour Prospective Parliamentary candidate, attempted to give her a wreath for the 4 million on the dole, but, needless to



Photo: Militant

Is there anywhere left where Thatcher can get a warm reception?

say, she showed her customary contempt for the working class by ignoring him.

For the next hour we kept up our siege of the hotel she

dined in and greeted her with more "advice" when she re-emerged. To make up for our disappointment that she did not come to speak to us (we were anxious to ask her

a few questions), we burned her effigy instead.

This area does not have as much unemployment as other parts of the country, but we still have bored youth standing on corners kicking walls, needing a way out of this rotten system. In fact, easily half the people at this demo were under 21, and 40 youth were contacted for the local LPYS. Furthermore, we sold 16 copies of *Militant*.

The lesson is that it is not only in the industrial north where Thatcher is afraid to set foot but also in the rich Tory heartland where youth and the labour movement can mobilise to show the distrust that people feel for the Tories.

By Dermot Carney
(Esher CLP)



Tory flight from reality

It will be, promised the *Sunday Express* "a demonstration with a difference. Supporters will come from all over the country" to attend the rally organised by 'Women and Families for Defence', the Tory-backed anti-CND campaign. However, when the rally took place last Sunday, the speakers almost outnumbered the audience. The police estimated only 150 were in Trafalgar Square, and that included the press and passing tourists. The *Guardian's* count was "88 and a dog". This did not stop Lady Olga Maitland from insisting 1,000 people were there and that in her cardboard box, were 13,000 signatures backing her campaign.

But then reality is not a strong point for her and her elite band of supporters. Actress Dora Bryan told the assembled eighty-eight, that having seen horrible documentaries on nuclear war: "I don't like to think too much about it. Let's go on singing Land of Hope and Glory. It does not seem to matter as much."

Breaking the hardship rules

The Tories talk about protecting the family, but do the opposite. A survey out this week shows that thousands of families have had their gas cut off, even though they should have been protected by official rules preventing hardship. According to the survey conducted by the Child Poverty Action Group and the National Right to Fuel Campaign, 94,000 out of 95,000 disconnections carried out in the first nine months of 1982 broke the hardship rules.

But one-third of the Boards had not even been told about the rules, so unconcerned is the government. One board was demanding that a family pay off a debt at a rate of £30 a week, although their total income is only £68 a week. With a record 7 million people now existing on supplementary benefit, this latest report shows how Thatcher's dream of a Victorian Britain is fast becoming our nightmare.

Gone Mouldy

Having failed to destroy the Labour Party, businessmen have been reluctant to give vast sums to the SDP. So now, with an election approaching, the party is in a financial crisis. This year, less than 13,000 people have renewed their membership. This is despite the heart-rending cry from *The Social Democrat* newspaper that "this is a time to renew our commitment to the principles that prompted the founders of the SDP to risk their careers."

Not convinced? Then it's time for inspiration from that Asquithian throw-back Roy Jenkins. In a front-page article in the current *Social Democrat*, he thunders: "Throughout our history commentators have been writing us off" (i.e. for all of two years). And just to round off the inspiration he tells us that "1982 (sic) will almost certainly be election year." It seems that the SDP's policies are so locked into a bygone age that their leaders can't even tell what year they are living in.

Fifty years ago

As the People's March for Jobs comes south, you can bet that right wing groups will be busy identifying people who want a job as "extremist". Such groups are always looking for conspiracies to explain why ordinary people demand change. We have recently had the Thatcher government "expose" CND as a Russian plot, which stops them having to justify the lunacy of their "defence" policy.

And in the 1930s there were plenty of right wing groups offering their services to individual capitalists, having trouble with their workforce. The 1933 Annual Report of the London and District Economic League stated: "The League has an efficient intelligence service, which is at the disposal of all members who might receive, from time to time, undue attention from subversive groups...the recent hunger marches, the so-called 'unemployment riots' in London, Birkenhead, Belfast, Bristol, Glasgow and elsewhere, indicate the need for counter-subversive propaganda."

Labour backs nuclear test inquiry

AT ITS Meeting last week, Labour's National Executive Committee called for "a full independent public inquiry" into British H-bomb tests carried out in the South Pacific in the late 1950s.

No suitable protective clothing or equipment was given to the majority of soldiers, sailors or civilians present at those tests. Subsequently, many of the servicemen present have suffered from cancer, leukaemia and other diseases caused by high levels of radiation, in numbers far greater than any statistical average. Several have already died.

In different parts of the country, ex-servicemen have got together to fight for their rights. A key role has been played by Sussex Nuclear Veterans Group, whose secretary, Colin Avey, is himself receiving treatment for leukaemia after being present at nuclear testing at Christmas Island in 1958.

Since the Sussex group was founded in January, they have been in contact with over 600 people who served at the various test sites and believe they suffer from after-effects. Preliminary tests by Dr Steward of Birmingham University on 330 cases find that the number of deaths from cancer-related illnesses is 80-100 times above the national average.

But the government has claimed that there is no evidence that anyone's

Photo: Militant



From left to right, nuclear veterans Colin Avey and John Tungay with PPC for Brighton Kemp-town, Rod Fitch, on their way to meet John Silkin, Labour's Shadow Defence spokesman

health suffered by radiation from the tests. That is typical Tory unconcern and contempt for those who were ordered to help them create their weapons of mass destruction.

The labour movement in Brighton has backed the Sussex veterans' campaign. Rod Fitch, Labour's prospective Parliamentary candidate for Brighton Kemp-town, is Honorary Vice-president of the group, and helped the campaign arrange a discussion with John Silkin, Labour Shadow Minister of Defence. Such

pressure also resulted in getting last week's decision by Labour's National Executive to support a resolution from LPYS representative, Laurence Coates. The Labour Party now backs the veterans' demands for:

- ★ a full independent inquiry into the tests
- ★ all medical records to be made available
- ★ if negligence found, proper compensation for all ex-servicemen suffering from fall-out effects.

Later this month, on Tuesday 10 May (5.15 pm), in the House of Commons

Room 10, it is planned to bring together the different groups of veterans around the country to form a national body, to be known as the British Nuclear Veterans' Association. This campaign must be given the full support of the labour movement. Further details and information are available from Colin Avey, Secretary, Sussex Nuclear Veterans Group, 156 Swanborough Place, Brighton.

By Jim Chrystie

When soldiers cut down the Union Jack

AS AN ex-soldier I would like to add my wholehearted support for the views expressed by Comrade Bob Law in *Militant*, issues 646 and 647.

Young people join the army for various reasons, a trade, a job or just to get away from places like Dagenham. From the moment you join the army, every right the capitalists have been forced to concede to civilian workers is withdrawn.

No political rights. No trade union rights. No freedom of association. Even things we take for granted like the right to marry who you like. The

freedom of travel or the right to speak your mind are controlled by military law and discipline.

On the day of the second general election in 1974 our barrack room was decorated with signs saying "Vote Labour".

That night we celebrated the expected Labour victory whilst the officers in their mess consoled one another with memories of the Raj and "the good old days". To finish off our celebrations the workshop's flagpole was cut down and the Union Flag set on fire.

But what a difference nine years makes. Over the next two years of 'socialist' rule our wages were cut by raising tax and accommodation

charges; in Germany we further lost out as the exchange rate of the pound went down compared to the Mark.

In 1976, I bought myself out of the army along with 90 others from the regiment; there were only about 700 people in the regiment. Many more would have liked to go but with young families and an uncertain future they could not risk it. Given no alternative they were forced to 'soldier on'.

The year after I left, my mates left in the army were forced by the Labour government to strike break during the firemen's strike. After these and other day-to-day experiences of class aggression by the officer class, sanctioned by the Labour

government, can you blame soldiers if they did not vote Labour in 1979.

While Labour sits on the fence it will never win back the support of these workers. But if Labour committed itself to a bold socialist programme that gave union rights to soldiers, political rights and the right to elect their officers (workers control and democracy) these workers in uniform would move firmly behind the banner of the labour movement and would be in the front rank in the class fight for socialism.

By Steve Feely
(Newham NW CLP)

Reviews ● Reviews ● Reviews ● Reviews ● Reviews

TU Directory

Roger Shrives reviews *The Trade Union Directory* (published by Pluto Press) from World Socialist Books, £8.70 (including p&rp).

From the Transport and General Workers Union and the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers which number their members in million, to the Cloth Pressers Society, whose 18 members are almost all based in Huddersfield, the Trade Union Directory gives a large amount of useful information about all unions affiliated to the TUC.

You get details of membership, a potted history, for example how the United Cut Nail makers of Great Britain Protection Society became part of the TGWU, or the origins of the AUEW rule books. Present policies and political stance and a short resumé of current problems are also included, apart from names and addresses of headquarters and officers. Even where at times the political judgement becomes dubious, this will be an invaluable reference book for active trade unionists.

Cuts Machine

Heather Rawling reviews *The Cuts Machine, the politics of expenditure* ('Arguments for Socialism series', Pluto Press). £2.80 from World Socialist Books (including p&rp)

This is an extremely useful book for new activists in the labour movement. It explains how the sums of public spending are loaded to show any expenditure as "wasteful"—"Public spending costs money, private spending doesn't".

For example, the 1980

White Paper decided that council rents should be increased by £2.10 per week and that school meals should cost more to save £200 million per year. But the cost of providing school meals and housing has stayed the same. It's just that the burden of cost has shifted from the taxpayers and financiers to tenants and parents of school children.

The book doesn't provide any alternative policies but it does reveal how biased government figures really are.

LEAD-The most widespread poison

THE recent Royal Commission report about the damaging effects of lead heralds a major advance in the struggle to eliminate one of the most toxic substances from our environment.

The definitive report, the product of a year long study, makes twenty-nine recommendations for the immediate removal of lead from petrol and the phased reduction of lead from paints, water, food and drink:

"The average blood lead concentration in the population is about a quarter of that at which symptoms of frank chronic lead poisoning may occasionally occur. We find this disturbing! We do not know of any other toxic substance which is so widely distributed in human and animal populations and present at concentrations greater than one fifth at which frank symptoms may occur".

Apart from condemning lead the report also dismisses as being of dubious value, the concept of threshold levels;—these are widely used by industry as a measure of how much toxic substance someone can be exposed to, without harmful effects. The report also calls for the replacement of all lead plumbing and suggests mass publicity of hazards associated with paint stripping!

Predictably, many industries, more noticeably the motor manufacturers, have attempted to discredit the major findings. Some have retaliated by questioning the evidence of harmful effects and also asserting that the costs of lead removal from petrol would be prohibitively high. The motor industry

By Ronnie Sookhdeo
(Islington South CLP)

has even claimed that an investment of £2,000 million would be required for new machinery.

What is the present situation regarding lead in petrol? In Britain, over 50,000 tons of lead are discharged into the atmosphere each year—10,000 tons in London alone! The effects of the colossal damage of urban lead poisoning are well documented but those who profit from its continued use in petrol are loathe to meet its replacement.

Don't rely on government 'good intentions'

In 1980, after a series of legal battles, public concern and trade union pressure forced the government to mount an enquiry. They subsequently agreed to implement a new limit of 0.15g of lead per litre by the end of 1985, compared with the old limit of 0.4 grammes. The Tory government at that time claimed: "Time was needed for industry to make adjustments to machinery and to keep in line with Europe". Not surprisingly industry did not feel threatened by those proposals!

Now the government grudgingly says it "accepts" the findings of the latest Royal Commission report. But it is vital that the labour movement does not rely on Tory 'promises of intent', and bases its approach on a clear analysis of the dangers lead poses, the alternatives,



and the vested interests arguing against change.

Firstly what are the dangers? A great deal of evidence exists associating lead with hyper-activity, impaired learning and behavioural changes in both animals and man. An early study of children living near a lead smelter in El Paso found that many had low IQs, poor eye sight, sluggish behaviour and difficulty in reasoning.

A later survey of the same children found that a staggering 19 out of 20 were educationally sub normal. More recent studies of the shed milk teeth of urban children in Britain and the US have conclusively established the link with lead in the air.

These findings have startling implications. Recent random analysis of the teeth of school children in Birmingham have shown a very high lead content. It has been estimated that as many as 95% of the two million children in Birmingham are affected!

Russia has outlawed lead in petrol since 1959, and Japan, USA, W Germany and Sweden have either followed suit or begun to move in that direction.

Why is lead added to petrol? It was discovered in 1921 that tetra ethyl lead (TEL) could be used for increasing the octane rating of petrol to make it more suitable for use with high-compression car engines and also prevent 'knocking'. The

The only safe way to travel?

higher the octane rating, the easier the combustion and less the 'knocking'.

It is also convenient and cheaper to the oil companies because it can be used to adjust the octane rating to produce various grades of petrol which requires less refining.

Over the years several non-toxic substitutes for lead were found—the most satisfactory being methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE). MTBE has been described as the perfect alternative to lead. It is cheap to manufacture, non poisonous, causes no engine damage and promotes more complete combustion of fuel, and importantly, does not produce any

harmful products.

But within months of its manufacture, the oil companies and car manufacturers launched a virulent campaign, firstly to persuade the government against its use, and secondly to disseminate misleading information to the population as a whole. The oil companies have also asserted that to produce lead-free petrol would require maximum investment in new refinery techniques which would increase the consumption of oil and the price of petrol.

These claims are absolute nonsense. The oil companies have made colossal profits as a result of the wave of oil price rises. Yet a fraction of these profits could produce petrol free from lead.

Moreover, because of the recession all their refining plants have been running at below 50% capacity. A recent conference of scientists has suggested that only slight modification of existing equipment could produce the required higher octane petrol, free of lead.

Where the health of workers and their families are concerned, there is no safe lead level at all. The labour and trade union movement must take up the issue and fight against lead additives in petrol.

- Labour must demand:
- ★ Regular monitoring of lead in air and regular examination of all children for lead poisoning.
 - ★ Abolition of all lead additives in fuels.
 - ★ Outlawing of dumping of lead and other heavy metals by industry.
 - ★ Grants for lead piping to be removed from all homes.
 - ★ Legislation to forbid the presence of any concentration of lead in food and drink.
 - ★ Abolition of threshold levels and the recognition that all doses of lead are harmful.

The housing 'boom' that's a slump

By Angela Anderson
(Southend East CLP)

Tenants from Castlemilk, Glasgow, who are campaigning to be re-housed after a fire in their block, meet in the Council Housing Office and discuss their next moves (see *Militant* 647)
Photo: Militant



ONCE upon a time, in the heady days when living standards were rising, workers had jobs and capitalism looked a lot healthier than it does now, a boom meant that things were on the up and up.

But, in the real world of 1983, when we all know frogs don't turn into princes and capitalism is really a plague only loved by a wicked old witch and her big business friends, it's a bit different.

Now, it seems a "boom" is nothing more than a return to the conditions of 1980—by the end of the decade!

The trade magazine *Professional Builder and House Remodeller* (Feb 1983), contained an article entitled "Home improvements boom forecast". It showed that, in real terms, they expect total expenditure on housing repairs, maintenance and improvements (public and private sectors) to be 0.1% higher in 1984 than in 1980.

When you add in non-housing repairs and maintenance, however, the prediction is that spending in

1984 will be 5% lower than in 1980, allowing for inflation.

The figures for total building and construction work are even worse. Here they predict that, even after spending 3.5% more this year than in 1982 and 2% more next year than this, it will still be 7% less in 1984 than in 1980.

At the same time, they say that there will be 30,000 less council homes completed next year than in 1980, itself a bad year by post-war standards.

Spending on building council homes is expected to be a massive 39% less than in 1980!

So, this is one "boom" that offers no future for building workers on the dole, or for families at the tail-end of a council waiting list, or even for most people needing house repairs, because in 1980, the "base" year for these figures, the building industry was already flat on its face.

The second "boom" is going to be in machine tools, apparently. According to the *Financial Times* (13 April 1983), quoting a report by

New York analysts Frost and Sullivan, 1990 is going to be a marvellous year for selling lathes, etc. in western Europe.

But, when you study the figures, what they show is that if the average annual rate of inflation between 1980 and 1990 keeps to only 4%, then sales of metal cutting machine tools will be

3.5% less, in real terms, in 1990 than in 1980!

In Britain that same 4% inflation—an impossibility—would produce the same level of sales in 1980, compared to a predicted 56% (not adjusted for inflation) this year.

Let's be clear what this means. 1980 was a disaster for British capitalism, at the

end of a decade in which investment in manufacturing plant and machinery had fallen dramatically, to never more than 93% of the 1970 level.

So, not much hope for unemployed engineering workers, it seems, particularly in the practically non-existent British machine tool industry.

Yes, it's funny what constitutes a "boom" these days. Perhaps it's only by living in such a fantasy world that the capitalists save themselves from jumping in the river. It's good for morale, you know, to keep hearing how wonderful tomorrow will be, even when the evidence shows otherwise.

The struggle for peace

The British government recently carried out an underground nuclear test in Nevada.

The press reported that it had been a "small explosion", equivalent to less than 20,000 tons of TNT, about the size of the bomb that obliterated Hiroshima in 1945. But this bomb was probably just a "trigger" for a much more powerful H-bomb.

This enormous increase in the destructive potential of weapons underlines the grotesque power of the world's nuclear arsenals.

There are now about 50,000 nuclear weapons. On average they are twenty times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. In the course of the second world war three million tons of TNT were expended. This contributed to the death of between forty and fifty million people. Yet present nuclear arsenals have an explosive power equivalent to about 16,000 million tons of TNT.

The difference is, however, that this weaponry would not only wipe out humanity but would permanently contaminate the planet.

It is not surprising, then, that in spite of official propaganda on the need for nuclear defence, the development and stock-piling of these weapons has provoked horror among millions of people, and especially among young people who are overwhelmingly opposed to the bomb. Mass demonstrations in Britain, throughout Europe, and in the United States in the last couple of years show that millions of people feel nuclear weapons cast a black shadow across the future of humanity.

The contrast between the development of new and ever more sophisticated weapons, on the one hand, and the decline and stagnation of industrial production, on the other, is becoming even starker. *World defence expenditure has now gone over \$600,000 million a year. This works out at more than a million dollars a*

minute.

In the US, it is estimated that defence department budgets will total \$1,600 billion between 1981 and 1986, if Reagan's present plans are implemented. This will nearly reach the total US defence expenditure between 1946 and 1980, which was \$2,000 billion. Yet even in the US one in seven of the population live below the official poverty line.

Internationally the contrast between arms expenditure and poverty is even more grotesque. About a 100,000 million of the world's population live in extreme poverty. *There are estimated to be about 600 million unemployed.*

World military expenditure averages \$19,300 per

Globally, there are 600 million unemployed—yet arms expenditure amounts to a million dollars spent a minute.

soldier, while spending on public education averages \$380 per school age child.

Globally there are 556 soldiers per hundred thousand people, but only eighty-five doctors. In the US and the EEC countries \$45 per person is spent on military research while only \$11 goes on health research.

If the half a million scientists and engineers involved in arms research and production were employed in tackling the problems facing ordinary working people the conditions of millions could be rapidly improved.

Not only the enormous waste but the new twist in American policy under Reagan have sharpened the opposition to nuclear weapons. This is particularly the case with US plans to base Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Britain. The nuclear strategists in the State Department and the Pentagon clearly regard Britain as an unsinkable aircraft carrier for their forward nuclear defences. They see Britain and Europe as the "theatre" of a "limited" nuclear war, which some of the strategists are mad enough to believe that the

US could "win".

Thatcher's claims that weapons based in Britain could not be used without the agreement of the British government can hardly be taken seriously. Indeed, former US military chiefs have spelled it out that the US alone would decide. Even Britain's own so-called "independent nuclear deterrent" is in reality dependent on US technology and supplies. Without US approval, no British government could continue to maintain such an "independent" capability.

The adoption of unilateral nuclear disarmament by the Labour Party is therefore a big step forward. A commitment to stop the basing of Cruise and Pershing II in Britain and to begin moves towards complete nuclear disarmament has been included in Labour's recent policy statement. This is the result of a long battle by Labour's rank and file to commit the party to such a

policy.

It is particularly a step forward in the light of the right wing Labour leader's previous support for nuclear weapons and their servile acceptance of US military policy.

During the 1945 Labour government Attlee agreed to build British nuclear weapons without even informing parliament, let alone consulting the Labour Party. Under the last Labour government, moreover, a secret committee which included Callaghan and Healey decided on a multi-million pound modernisation of Polaris without even informing the rest of the Cabinet.

To ensure that unilateral nuclear disarmament is carried out, however, it is necessary first to ensure the return of a Labour government, and secondly to exert pressure on the Labour leadership to implement party policy. Although

unilateralism has been included in Labour's policy, it is clear that the commitment of right wingers like Healey is less than enthusiastic.

The commitment to end Britain's nuclear forces is hedged with qualifications about "negotiations with our allies" and working out "timetables". Without continuous pressure from the labour movement there is the real danger that a right wing leadership will backslide on this policy.

This makes it clear that unilateralism is unavoidably a political issue. CND and the peace movement generally undoubtedly constitute a very broad movement which has drawn in many thousands of people on the basis of opposition to nuclear weapons. It expresses a positive rejection of the militaristic policies and moral values of a system committed to the build-up of nuclear weapons.

However, the problem of abolishing nuclear weapons cannot be separated from the problem of transforming the system which produces the arms race. If the peace movement is to avoid a repetition of the rise and fall that CND experienced in the 1950s and early '60s without achieving its aims, it must link itself to the struggle of the labour movement for a programme capable of achieving a fundamental change in society.

Even if a Labour government implemented a unilateralist policy, there is still the fundamental question of whether unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain would in itself guarantee the rest of the world from a nuclear war.

The leaders of CND argue that unilateral action by a British government would serve as a "moral example", but admit that the question of reducing the superpowers' arsenals would have to be left to negotiations between the US government and the Soviet leadership. But the lesson of history is that neither the US rulers nor the Kremlin bureaucracy will respond to peace negotiations, moral appeals, or the pressure of mass peace

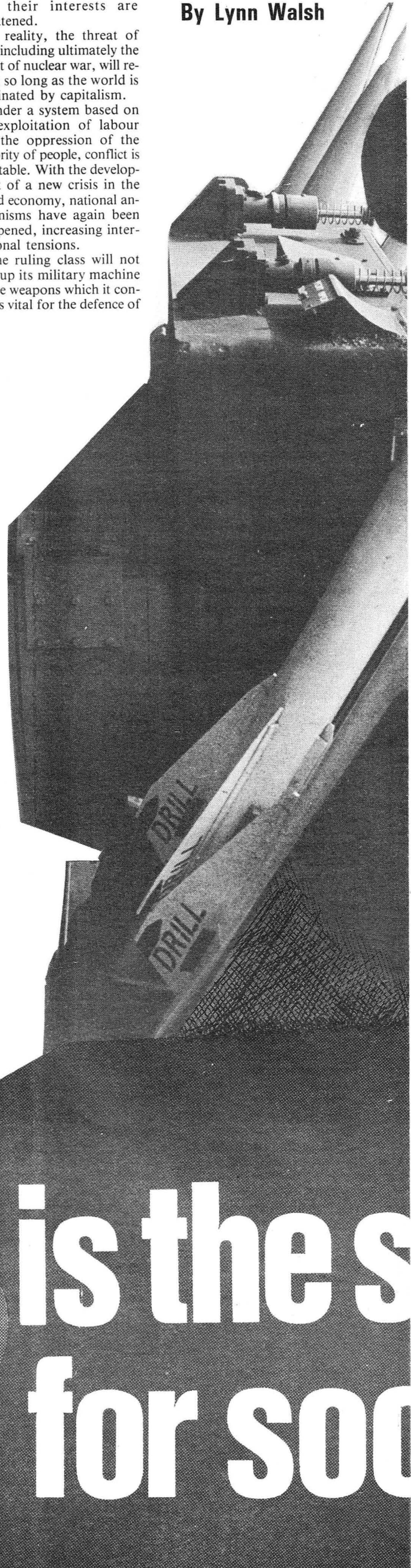
movements if they consider that their interests are threatened.

In reality, the threat of war, including ultimately the threat of nuclear war, will remain so long as the world is dominated by capitalism.

Under a system based on the exploitation of labour and the oppression of the majority of people, conflict is inevitable. With the development of a new crisis in the world economy, national antagonisms have again been sharpened, increasing international tensions.

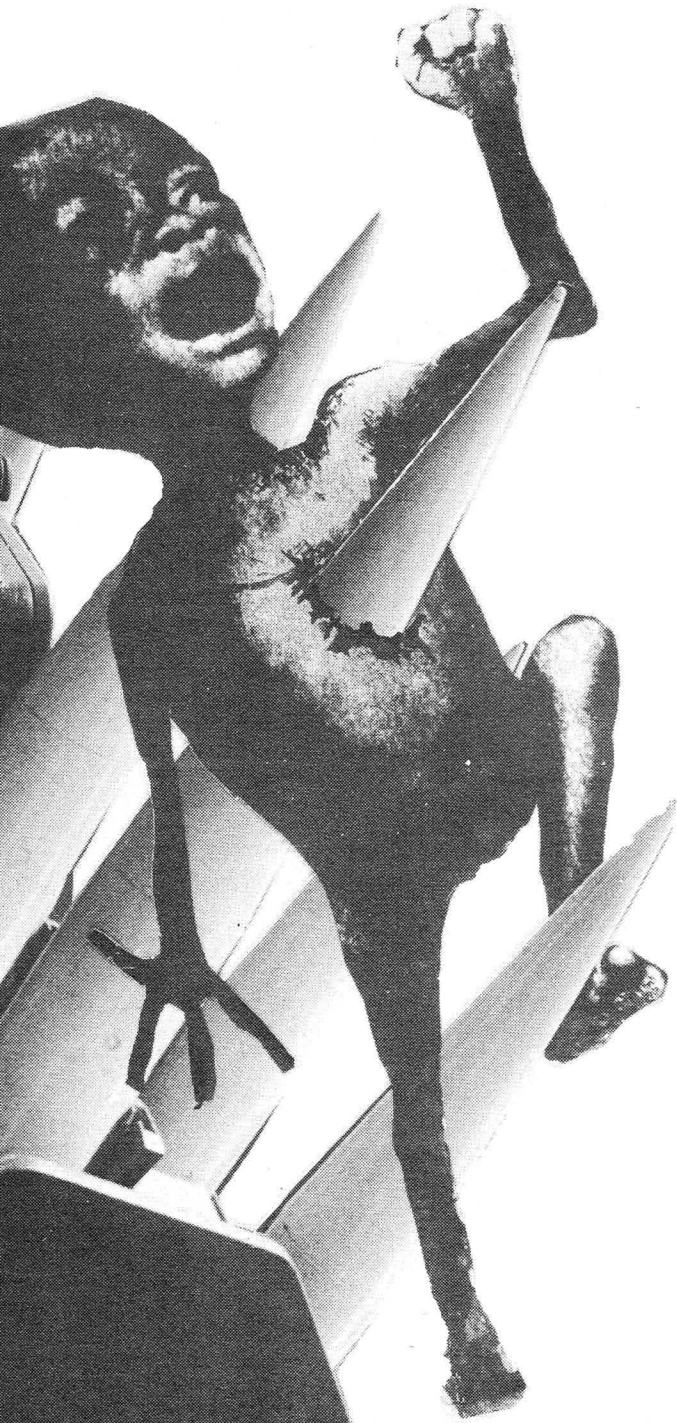
The ruling class will not give up its military machine or the weapons which it considers vital for the defence of

By Lynn Walsh



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its wealth and power. This is especially true of the US super power and it is an illusion to believe that if Britain abandons nuclear arms the US will follow the example.

The declaration of a nuclear-free Britain would not, any more than the present nuclear-free Norway, remove the conflict between the super powers, US imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy. This conflict is based on a fundamental antagonism between rival social systems, with the ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union inevitably arming in response to the continuous build-up of US armaments.

While this fundamental antagonism exists, both camps will prepare for the ultimate possibility of war. Their strategies will inevitably be based on the most sophisticated and destructive technology available.

If it came to a world war, which would mean nuclear war, no country would be immune from the holocaust. The idea that there can be limited nuclear war is a fiction. Confronted with the use of nuclear weapons, any protagonist would resort to more powerful weapons, inevitably escalating the conflict.

Moreover, the scrapping of Britain's present nuclear weapons by a Labour government would not even rule out the future use of nuclear weapons by Britain in the future. While the science and technique to produce weapons exists any future capitalist government could re-arm itself. For instance, West Germany and Japan are non-nuclear powers, *but both undoubtedly have the capacity to rapidly produce nuclear weapons.*

The resurgence of the peace movement in Britain and Europe has been in no small measure a response to the accelerated arms programme of the US. Reagan is widely seen as opening up a new phase of the "cold war". However, this in itself demonstrates that nuclear weapons cannot be divorced from political developments.

Reagan's policies are a response to the changed position of US imperialism. He claims that new weapons, particularly the basing of intermediate range missiles like Cruise and Pershing II in Europe, are necessary in order to restore the nuclear balance in relation to the Soviet Union. In reality, US claims that the Soviet Union has established any kind of military superiority over the US are completely false.

For instance, the Soviet SS-20 missiles, which Reagan claims threaten the strategic balance in Europe have been deployed by the Soviet Union since the early 1970s. The US withdrew its own, older intermediate range missiles because it had an overwhelming superiority of strategic nuclear weapons based either in the US or on its submarine force.

At most, the Soviet bureaucracy marginally reduced the US superiority during the early 1970s. In reality, the spokesmen of US imperialism are using completely one-sided, exaggerated claims of increased Soviet power to justify a new phase of arms build-up in order to give the US an even bigger strategic superiority.

In reality, the reason for the new American arms build-up is not a strengthening of Russia's nuclear weaponry, but the erosion of US imperialism's world-wide power through the international upheavals and revolutionary movements of the last decade.

The US's enforced evacuation of Vietnam in 1973 drastically undermined its ability to police the world in the interests of capitalism. Then came the overthrow of puppet regimes such as the Shah in Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua. Other countries which experienced revolutionary upheavals, like Angola and Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, were taken out of the influence of international capitalism by social changes which abolished landlordism and capitalism.

These developments, which are a symptom of the bankruptcy of capitalism internationally, all meant an undermining of the US's world power. It is in a desperate attempt to re-establish its power and prestige on the world arena that US imperialism has launched a new phase of the arms race.

Clearly, the Soviet bureaucracy cannot accept Reagan's "Zero Option", which would involve the Soviet Union withdrawing most of its intermediate missiles from European Russia while allowing the US an increased strategic superiority. In practice, the Soviet bureaucracy will feel compelled to increase its own armaments in an effort to limit US superiority, imposing an even bigger burden on the Soviet economy.

Who would deny, in the light of these developments that there is the need for an entirely new international

order, which would eliminate conflict and the horrendous waste of arms spending, and provide the framework for harmonious and peaceful development? However, such a new order could only be achieved through the socialist transformation of society in the United States and all the main capitalist countries. It would also require the carrying through of the political revolution in the Stalinist states of Russia and Eastern Europe, overthrowing the ruling bureaucracy and placing democratic control in the hands of the working class.

This is the only way of eliminating the conflict between, on the one side, the interests of capitalist property, and, on the other, the non-capitalist, centrally planned economies, at present dominated by a privileged ruling caste.

With the removal of this conflict the world's resources, productive capacity and technology could be planned on an international basis and used to improve the lives of the whole of the world's population.

If the peace movement is to avoid a repetition of the rise and fall that CND experienced in the 1950s and '60s without achieving its aims, it must link itself to the struggle of the labour movement.

Some sections of the peace movement, however, argue that because of what they regard as an imminent threat of nuclear war, the struggle for world peace must take precedence over the struggle for a socialist society. This view implies that war, and especially nuclear war, is simply a misguided policy or an unfortunate excess on the part of the capitalist class. The task of a mass peace movement, according to this view, should be to persuade the capitalist class to take a more rational view of its defence. If they did so, they would agree to put aside weapons of total destruction, it is argued. Then, with the danger of a nuclear holocaust averted, we could all return to the fight for a change in society.

This approach is based on the fundamental mistake that it is possible to eliminate the danger of war without eliminating the class roots of the social conflicts which produce war. It also assumes that the build-up of arms will in itself lead inexorably to world war, without seeing

that military policy and the question of war is decided according to the interests of the ruling class.

Under the existing balance of international forces world war is not about to break out, despite the present acceleration of the arms race.

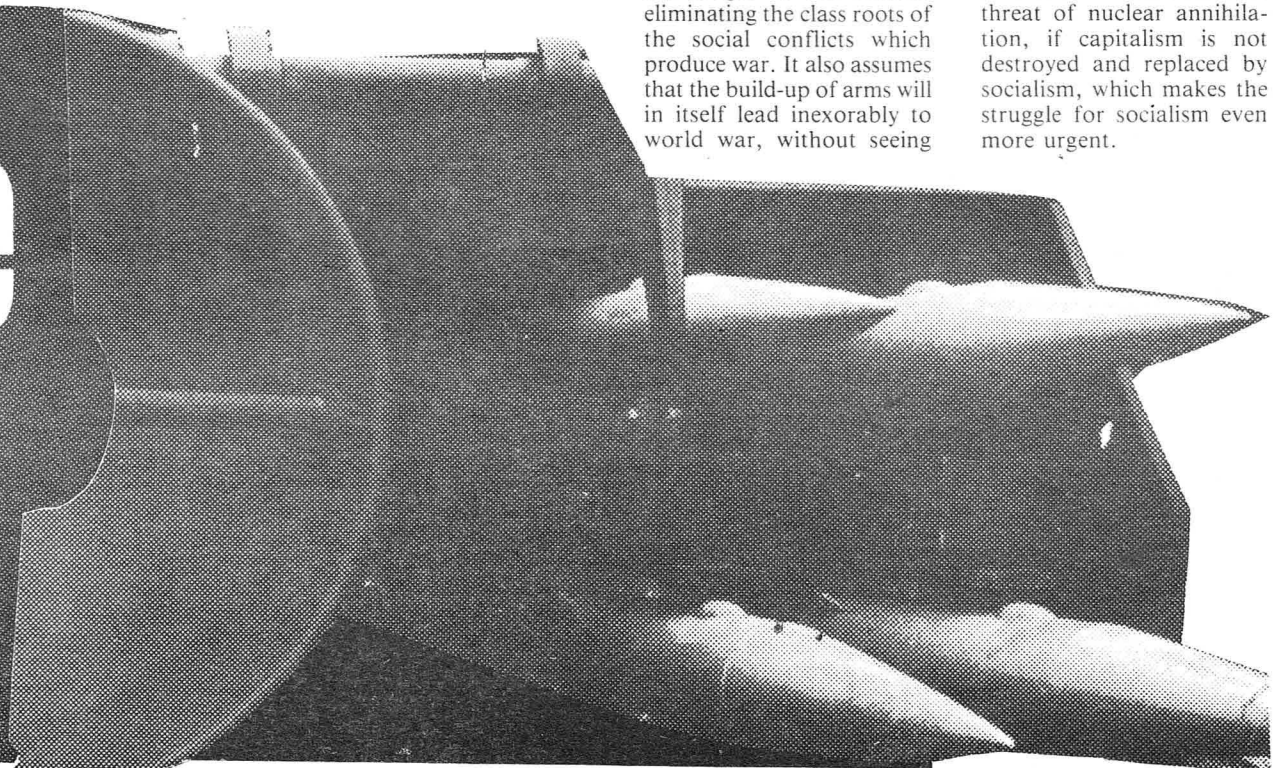
Nuclear war would not only mean the genocidal destruction of the majority, but also class suicide on the part of the ruling minority. Apart from the threat of nuclear retaliation from the Soviet Union, the enormous power of the working class, which has its organisations and democratic rights intact in the US and all the main capitalist countries, acts as a powerful check on the capitalist class.

Even when the US had a monopoly of nuclear weapons in the immediate post-war years, the serious strategists of US imperialism could not contemplate a nuclear strike against the Chinese revolution or North Korea. Later, US imperialism could not seriously consider the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam, even though it eventually suffered defeat by the Vietnamese revolution backed by the non-nuclear forces of North Vietnam.

Only the emergence of fascist-type military dictatorships, freed from the normal restraints on the ruling class and unbalanced by the crisis in their system could contemplate nuclear war. Such regimes could emerge only after a series of terrible defeats of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries. However, if capitalism is not overthrown and replaced by socialism, there would ultimately be the danger of such authoritarian regimes arising—with the inevitability sooner or later of nuclear annihilation.

Nuclear weapons—and also the horrifying build-up of conventional armaments throughout the world—are a symptom of the rottenness of the existing system. Undoubtedly the labour movement should actively campaign to expose the horrifying waste of defence spending, which is aggravating economic crisis throughout the west. It should campaign to ensure that unilateral nuclear disarmament is implemented by a Labour government, and for a drastic cut in defence spending.

But as the question of war and peace is inseparable from the contradictions of capitalist society, it would be a mistake to think that a campaign for peace should be given priority, while the struggle for socialism is left until later. It is the ultimate threat of nuclear annihilation, if capitalism is not destroyed and replaced by socialism, which makes the struggle for socialism even more urgent.



NORTH SOUTH CRISIS..

Common Crisis North-South: Co-operation for World Recovery. The Brandt Commission. Pan £1.95. Available from: World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Add 15p for postage and packing.

By Jeremy Birch

Every two seconds in 1983 a child in the third world will perish from lack of food or disease.

Yet in the poorest countries the population is still growing at 3% a year or more which means a doubling before the end of the century.

But still last year \$650 billion was squandered throughout the world on arms.

These are some of the gloomy facts contained within the second report of the Brandt Commission which has recently been published by Pan.

Brandt 2 reaffirms the proposals of the earlier reports for international reflation based on more aid, more loans through the IMF and World Bank as well as a turn to expansion within the developed countries of the North. All this, it is argued will enhance the ability of the South to import manufactures, thereby increasing demand and employment in the North and lifting the world out of recession. So both rich and poor nations have a common interest in what the first reports called a Programme for Survival. At least that was the theory.

Brandt 2, is forced to admit, however, that the international summit convened to debate the first report, "did not even come close to launching the idea of a world economic recovery...Most industrialised countries, facing deteriorating economic conditions at home, adopted self-centred measures."

In other words with permanent world economic instability, it is every country for itself, protecting its own industries and own exchange rates whatever the repercussions for the other countries, including the underdeveloped.

Caught in a trap

But what makes Brandt believe that the North's response now will be any more favourable? The world economy is in a more parlous state than when he first reported three years ago. There have now been four consecutive years of international stagnation and unemployment in the North, within the OECD, could reach 35 million by 1984.

Brandt is worried that in the Third World capitalism itself will be in jeopardy unless a "collective response" is launched for this "common crisis"—"further decline is likely to cause disintegration of societies and create conditions of anarchy in many parts of the world".

So let no-one think that the commission is motivated just by altruism. But Brandt 2 does provide a vivid picture of the devastating crisis gripping the third world.

The prices of commodities—raw materials, food etc—

the main export earners of most Third World countries, are at a thirty year low. Non-fuel commodity prices fell 13% in 1981. While in the two years from June 1982 sugar fell 78%, rubber 35%.

Declining trade has an immediate impact within many Third World countries which finance what education, health or nutrition programmes they do organise, from import-export taxes. But globally, falling exports earnings means that "without adequate finance, imports cannot be paid for; without essential imports, production and exports decline; and without adequate exports, countries are not sufficiently credit worthy to borrow and cannot service their debts". The developing countries are caught in a trap, but they cannot avoid falling further in.

Servicing these debts accounts on average for 20% of their export earnings. But with declining exports and their foreign exchange reserves becoming depleted, they cannot but borrow more to repay old loans. Brandt estimates total Third World and East European debts by the end of 1981 at \$630 billion (by now \$700 billion), and the interest due on it last year was \$56 billion, twice the level of even 1979. Debts especially to private banks grew 20% per year from 1976-81, and now, the banks, having over exposed themselves, are much more wary about extending more credit.

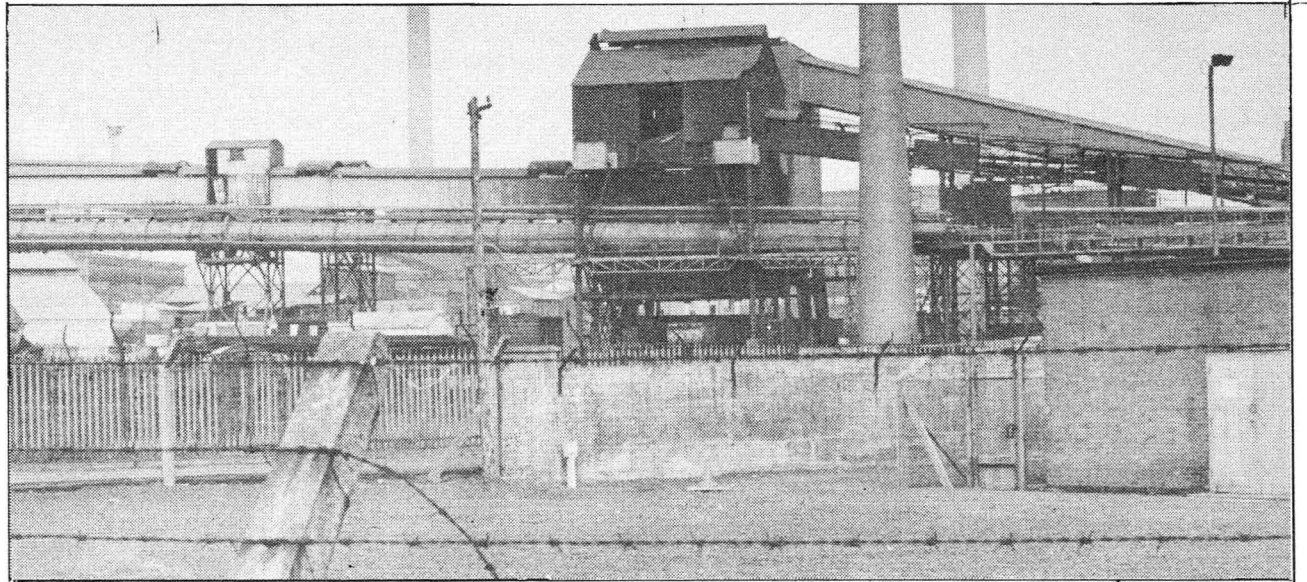
The heaviest borrowers are in Latin America. By the end of 1981 Mexico owed, just to the banks, \$56.9 billion, Brazil \$52.7 and Argentina \$24.8.

But all this is not just impersonal economics. In sub Sahara Africa one of the poverty belts, the consequent decline in the capacity to import has "threatened starvation for tens of millions," maintains Brandt.

The Commission correctly recognises the integration of the international economy and that a crisis in one sector automatically affects another. In the USA 5% of all jobs and one industrial job in six depends on exports to the Third World. One third of EEC exports go to the Third World.

Brandt's error is to believe that international capitalism, based on the various nation states with their own ruling classes and the government machines and their national vested interests, are capable of co-ordinating their policies towards international trade and finance to the third world, however, much may appear logically to be to their common benefit. That is why "the great majority of the world's countries, North and South, are deliberately restraining economic activity and are trying to limit imports and expand exports".

When all the main capitalist countries are fearful of the inflationary consequences at home of inducing economic expansion, Brandt 2 considers that Japan, West Germany and the USA should accept immediately, "growth induced deficits", and should fix an appropriate pace of expansion, and draw the other countries



..international solution needed



The contradiction of capitalism. Steel plants like Corby in Britain close, while "Third World" countries like Sri Lanka use primitive technology and most areas suffer from lack of equipment for a safe water supply. But these problems can not be solved by an ailing capitalism.

Photos: Militant

in behind them. But in America where the first signs of a new upturn are emerging, this theory has been specifically ruled out for already the budget deficit is at an all time high.

Brandt 2 urges a doubling of IMF quotas. The IMF was established to assist countries with serious balance of payments difficulties which is now the majority of the Third World and is the main international institution that can respond rapidly when a country faces imminent bankruptcy.

The Commission attacks the stringent conditions attached to IMF loans. The deflationary policies it recommends for each country it assists and its idea of an exports led strategy, "might be carried out successfully by any one country; but not by all," for by restricting each country's

markets who is to buy all these exports? But Brandt's most severe warning to the IMF is that "it is pointless to press corrective action to the point where political upheaval will result."

Perhaps the most glaring inadequacy of the Brandt approach concerns the desperate problem of food. The Brandt Report accepts that starvation is not due to lack of resources or over population, but rather that "the principal condition for an end to hunger is that those who do not eat enough should have the incomes to buy adequate food or the means to produce it".

But even to maintain the present inadequate levels of consumption; cereal imports to the developing countries would have to rise from 36.4 million tons to 132 million by the year 2000 and that "would be far in excess of



...but not Brandt

their capacity to pay". So despite Brandt's call for more food aid from the North he has to accept that still "an end to hunger may be a long way off." The pious pleas of Brandt 2 for "a new spirit of solidarity" will again fall on deaf ears. Individual capitalists or individual capitalist politicians like Brandt's Commission members Edward Heath, or the Indonesian Vice-President Adam Malik may be conscience stricken, but a system for private profit cannot give Northern workers or Southern peasants the means to purchase all the commodities the world economy produces. Under international capitalism the millions in the Third World can expect no relief from the daily indignity and misery of poverty and malnutrition, least of all in an era of economic crisis. **Capitalism**

is incapable of planning the most efficient use of the world's resources.

Only the struggle to liberate the productive forces of the globe from the straight jacket of capitalism could allow genuine co-operation between the different countries of the world and real co-ordination of their economic policies to satisfy the basic needs of the millions on the planet.

Willy Brandt—Chairman of the German SPD and Olaf Palme Socialist Prime Minister of Sweden would be better employed forgetting about the Commission and leading the struggle to overthrow capitalism in their own countries and assisting struggles of workers and peasants in the Third World as the first steps towards a world socialist federation and a proper civilisation.



Members of the youth section of the SPO. The fall of the majority government will open up debates on the way forward within the party's ranks. Photo: Militant

The end of the 'Austrian model'?

THE FALL of the majority Socialist government in Austria has dented the myth that the country is 'immune' from the international crisis of capitalism.

Right wing leaders of the international labour movement, including Denis Healey, have held up the 'Austrian model' as proof that the 'mixed economy' can work.

Now Austria, following former social democratic models Sweden and West Germany, has succumbed.

Austria does not suffer the depth of crisis of Britain or even West Germany. It has maintained a level of state intervention long abandoned by social democratic governments elsewhere.

It still has the highest economic growth rate in the world. But two-thirds of the economy is based on imports, and in a mild form of monetarism the Austrian Schilling has been linked to the German Deutschmark. This has a knock-on effect on the Austrian economy.

In April's general election the Austrian Socialist Party (SPO) lost 3% of the vote and with it their parliamentary majority.

SPÖ leadership offered "the same as before"

While the majority of the working class remained solidly behind the SPO, the middle class drifted towards the two main opposition parties, the conservative Peoples Party (PP) and the liberal Freedom Party (FP).

Disillusionment has set in, particularly amongst the youth. There was a 'protest vote' of 4%—mostly going to the two Austrian 'Green' parties.

The SPO leadership were quick to blame the 'Greens' for their defeat (although the Greens achieved no represen-

tation in parliament) and passed the buck to the workers for the low turnout on polling day.

But it was the SPO leadership's failure to inspire workers—offering the same tired and unpopular policies of the past—that is really to blame.

The SPO leadership, led by Bruno Kreisky, who has now resigned as leader, continued to push the policies of 'social participation', a version of the social contract.

This was rightly seen by workers and youth as wage restraint at a time when living standards are being eroded.

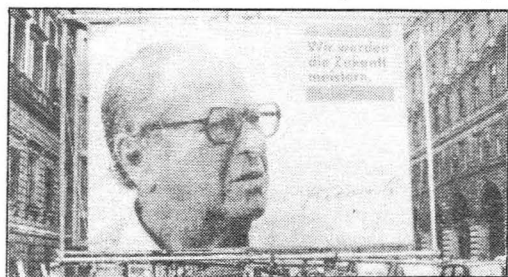
There have been heavy

middle class especially, saying the debts will have to be settled sooner or later—which has an element of truth in it.

In the election the SPO was left with 90 seats (from 95), the PP 81 (from 77) and the FP 12 (from 11). Despite pledges they would not go for a coalition during the election, the SPO leadership are now courting the FP.

But they will be presented with the problem that greets every coalition. As the *Financial Times* put it, "The socialists will have to pay the price not only in portfolios but by modifying their interventionist economic policies..."

An SPÖ election poster featuring Bruno Kreisky



redundancies in the state owned steel industry. In the election itself the SPO leadership talked of taxing Christmas bonuses. They did promise an extra week's holiday, but when pressurised on the issue, admitted this would have to be postponed for 12 months and then introduced two days at a time, until 1987!

The SPO's credibility was also damaged by the stand the government had taken on nuclear power—wanting to build a nuclear power station in the country in the late seventies—decisively rejected by a national referendum.

Unemployment was a major election issue—it has risen to 4.5%, about 150,000. The conservative Peoples Party hypocritically played on this during the election campaign, at the same time condemning the SPO government's accumulation of debt.

Kreisky replied to this saying "more debt is better than unemployment" but the PP came back, frightening the

This impending crisis for the SPO will open up debate within the ranks of the party, which are well to the left of the leadership, on the socialist policies that can solve the questions facing Austrian society.

Ironically, Kreisky boasted to the *Times* (March 25) before the election that Marxism had been forced out of the Austrian labour movement. He said "...the development in Britain (of the labour movement) was different and that's something the Labour Party now has to catch up with. We have it behind us."

When it comes to 'catching up' Kreisky will find history has a few surprises in store. Far from being 'behind them' Marxism will again come to the fore as the ranks of the SPO examine the lessons of thirteen years of uninterrupted 'socialist' government.

By Bob Wade

PORTUGAL

Left majority; but no left union

NINE YEARS to the day after the revolution which overthrew the vicious dictatorship of Caetano, the Portuguese elections on 25 April produced a 55% vote for left parties.

The Socialist Party received 36.3% of the vote capturing 28 more seats while the Communist Party got 18.2% and gained three seats. Together these two parties would hold 143 out of the 250 seat parliament, a clear majority.

Governments of left parties have taken office now in France, Spain and Greece, and with another governmental crisis in Italy, it shows workers are searching for a way out of the increasing difficulties. The Portuguese elections are part of the same process.

Soares looks to Social Democrats

But the Socialist Party leader Mario Soares has seemingly rejected the possibility of a French-style "union of the left" government and is looking for a coalition with the capitalist Social Democrats who retained a degree of support in the rural North and Centre. The more right-wing Christian Democrats lost heavily and are refusing to enter coalition as only the Communist Party, powerful in the unions, would be left in opposition.

The previous government, a centre coalition, collapsed after both centre parties' leaders resigned and a feeble attempt to keep the coalition going failed. Underlying the instability lies a deepening economic crisis and the enormous power built up by the working class since the 1974 revolution.

The dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano from 1926 to 1974 ended ignominiously with economically and politically crippling

wars to keep an empire in Africa while living standards were the lowest in Western Europe. Over a quarter of the population were illiterate.

When a military coup overthrew Caetano, workers flocked into the trade unions, factory committees were formed, and political parties grew rapidly. Following attempts by the bosses to turn back this process, a revolutionary wave forced the nationalisation of 60% of the economy. Wage rises and land reforms led to new confidence for the Portuguese masses.

The capitalist class, though, held on to power. They have cut down the nationalised sector to below 50% and the policies of previous governments including those of Soares have complied with the dictates of the IMF and savagely cut living standards. But attempts to eradicate all the gains of 1974-75 have been rebuffed by the strength of the workers despite the weakness



Mario Soares leader of the Socialist Party.

of the movement's leadership.

But Portugal, says Rocha de Matos, president of the Association of Portuguese Industry, "needs shock therapy" if it (i.e. Portuguese capitalism) is to recover, with more ferocious

monetary policies, clamps on social security benefits, the elimination of subsidies and more denationalisation. The capitalist class hope to use a Soares-led coalition to achieve this, with the added advantage of the Red Flag draped over their backsides to absorb the kicks.

Wages, already by far the lowest in Western Europe, have been falling since 1976, even in periods of growth. Now a growth rate of 0.5% is predicted for this year, living standards will be under attack even more heavily. Other problems include unemployment and under-employment of about 25%, inflation of about 20%, a trade deficit of \$2.3 billion this year (over 10% of gross national product).

This is not the economic climate for political stability. How long would a coalition retain support from the Socialist Party rank and file? How long before the bosses demanded stronger action?

The Communist Party is far stronger in the organised working class and seems likely to be out of coalition. The "social pact" offered by the Socialist Party as a method of avoiding unrest when austerity measures start to have an impact will be under attack from both sides. The stage is set for further conflict.

The working class has had numerous opportunities to take power but as *Militant* has pointed out in the past, the leadership's failure to consolidate the gains of the 1974-75 revolution has allowed capitalism to recover. The demand will grow in the workers' parties for a leadership which will meet the needs and match the strength of the working class.

By Roger Shives

May Day marches on

WORKERS' demonstrations around the world highlighted the socialist and internationalist traditions of May Day.

In Warsaw, 10,000 Solidarity supporters gathered in narrow streets near the cathedral, shouting 'down with the Junta!' Demonstrations took place in many other towns.

There were running battles with the police as tear gas was used to disperse the crowds, and at least one man has since died.

Perhaps General Jaruzelski's problems were also weighing heavily on the mind of Mr Andropov in Moscow.

Beneath a forced smile he looked decidedly anxious as he watched the massive, and entirely stage managed procession pass by the Kremlin.

The Soviet bureaucracy was obviously taking no chances. Moscow city centre was ringed with army lorries,

and troops armed with automatic rifles. Security men and police virtually outnumbered marchers as they filed into Red Square.

Despite this mockery of the cause of international socialism, magnificent demonstrations did take place elsewhere in Europe.

The most spectacular demonstration was in Athens, where the combined ranks of PASOK and Communist-led unions swelled the numbers to over 100,000. The tone of the demonstration was critical of the government, high lighting its failure to carry out socialist policies.

30,000 marched in Paris, again with Socialist and Communist forces combined. In Madrid the Communist-led union organised a separate rally.

Meanwhile the traditional labour movement celebrations took place in cities throughout Britain.

At the other end c

political spectrum, in Trafalgar Sq, the 'Women and Families for Defence' group managed 150 demonstrators in the cause of maintaining a nuclear 'deterrent for peace'.

This motley band of Tories gathered to hear Sir John Roxborough, ex-head of NATO and the Polaris fleets.

Sir John attempted to smear the ideas of Lenin by citing his call for 'communist world control' and equating it with today's monstrous régime in the Soviet Union.

Present day USSR does not represent Lenin's policies but its opposite: Lenin stood for workers' democracy and socialist internationalism.

This was the message of Lenin and of May Day. It's as true today for Poland and Britain. The 1980s will see that message emerge stronger than ever.

By Ben Eastop
(Peckham CLP)

Letters

IEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO

MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Right-wing applauded by Thatcher

Dear Comrades,
Probably not too many Labour Party and trade union members were enthused, or surprised by Terry Duffy's onslaught on Labour Party policy at the AUEW Conference. Almost all the main planks of Party policy are out of favour with Mr. Duffy; withdrawal from the EEC, no incomes policy and unilateral nuclear disarmament—all were given a hammering possibly less than two months before a General Election. He even claimed that "It was our failure to talk on wages that lost us the last

election." Funny, I thought it was the blatant disregard of conference policy decisions and the attacks on workers living standards that brought about the Tory victory in 1979.

However, Mr Duffy didn't go without support when he aired his view that Labour's unilateralist stance could cost us victory in the coming General Election.

The next day in the House of Commons one Tory MP asked his leader for her view of Terry's "robust declaration". Surprise, surprise. Thatcher could hardly contain her delight with Mr. Duffy's "most excellent remarks"! Nice to have friends isn't it?

Fraternally,
Dave Backwith,
Poole CLP.

When the rent can't be paid...

Dear Comrades,
Working as a clerical officer in a county court I come into contact with many people who have incurred—often through no direct fault of their own sizeable debts. It is pitiful when defendants come into the court office and explain that they just cannot afford to pay off their debts. Often they suffer the humiliation of a visit by our court bailiffs, who are instructed to possess any goods of value owned by the defendant which are later sold at a public auction. If however the defendant has no goods of value, those owed the

'satisfaction' of having the defendant committed to prison.

It is particularly harrowing when young parents are evicted from their homes because their greedy landlords impose ridiculous rents on the tenants, who are left with the choice of rent for the landlord, or food and clothes for the children? Is this what Thatcher means by 'Victorian virtues'?

Yours fraternally,
John Armstrong,
CPSA Office rep, personal capacity
Farnborough,
Hants

Stop YTS exploitation

Dear Comrades,
Nearly every day we hear the Tories telling us how they are such freedom lovers. But when it comes to the Youth Training Schemes the Tories give youth practically no choice at all. If a school leaver decides not to take a job on the YTS he or she could face a cut in their dole.

I am just fifteen and do not want the capitalists lining their pockets at the expense of my labour.
Yours fraternally,
George Grant,
Bradford.

Expulsions condemned

Dear Comrades,
Reading General branch of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union passed the following resolution shortly after the Bermondsey bye-election:
"This Union branch believes that the return of a Conservative government for a further term of office would be a disaster for its members, and is horrified that this is a possibility due to the divided image of the Labour Party.
"We therefore call on the NEC of the Labour Party to end squabbles and witch-hunts, re-instate the five members recently expelled and unite around the policies agreed at 1982 Labour Party Conference."
Yours fraternally,
Ben Rayner,
GMC delegate from Reading Gen. GMBATU



Many working class youth join the army thinking they lead a life of adventure and get a trade—above, the reality. Standing guard in some Belfast back street Photo: Militant

From a soldier...

Dear Comrades,
I read with interest the article in *Militant* (April 13) 'The army made me a socialist'. I think it is about time that some coverage was done on this subject and so I was pleased to read the article.
I joined the Army when I was politically ignorant, although I didn't think so at the time. Now that I have developed my outlook I am already committed to the Army until January 1985, because of my trade.
I have applied to leave prematurely but this was rejected even though it was for conscientious reasons. The point I am trying to make is that not all squaddies are right wing thugs or class

traitors. They are in the majority of cases recruited quite young like I was. They are usually quite ignorant of politics at that age and are therefore easy prey for indoctrination.
I think that if more work is done, to try to get through to members of the forces then it would, at the very least, increase their resistance to Army propaganda. This would be a lot more constructive than just writing them off as brain washed—after all the average squaddie thinks he is defending "freedom and democracy". The roots are there—lets work on them.
Yours fraternally,
A British Soldier.

From a sailor...

Dear Comrades,
Recently while working on a vessel for the government lighthouse organisation, Trinity House, I was outraged at the waste of taxpayers money spent on the vessel, just because royalty and top knobs may use it now and then. It had: £7,000's worth of carpets in its state rooms, a brass lighthouse ornament worth £300, Burma teak deck and handrails costing £1,000 per cubic metre, and gold plated taps, shower heads and drains in the state bedrooms!
Is this where tax money goes? The total cost of the ship—£10 million—could have been put to better use than for a flag ship for royalty, who will hardly use the ship at all. £10 million could easily help create work in the deprived area of Leith, where the ship was built.
Yours fraternally,
A member of Edinburgh LPYS

Reality replaces razzamataz

Dear Comrades,
Various described as a cattle show, beauty contest and talent night, the four yearly scrap to represent the Democratic Party in the American Presidential elections has begun.
Significantly though, almost a quarter of the delegates, including "nearly all" (*Sunday Times* 17/4/83) the trade union delegates participating in a straw poll in Massachusetts to select the Democratic candidate, voted not for any of the candidates but for "jobs".
Despite the razzamataz and money which goes into bending delegates' ears,

Surviving in the 'soft South'

Dear Comrades,
What led my wife and I into the arms of socialism and the *Militant* was partly our own experience of the housing shortage.
After a year's degrading experience of shuttling with three children between council provided bed-and-breakfast and short-lets, we were able to secure a two roomed winter—only let for £45 per week, of which the DHSS only contributed £23 in sickness benefit. But because we were 'housed' even though it was just for the winter, we couldn't go on the council waiting list!

Queuing for homes in London



A guard for ICI?

Dear Comrades,
Last Saturday (23 April) about 150 animal rights demonstrators marched to ICI's research laboratories at Alderly Edge in Cheshire, to protest about the atrocities carried out on animals in the name of profit.
On arrival many of us occupied the roof of the tallest building for over an hour as a protest. The press, no doubt complying with ICI's wishes gave us no coverage at all. To avoid any mention ICI have not pressed charges against anyone.

But a couple of hours later whilst driving past near to the complex with my wife, we noticed something very strange and worrying—a soldier on foot armed with a machine gun. This raises the question of what he was guarding (assuming he wasn't there on account of our non-violent actions!).
The only conclusion we came up with in view of the fact that there are no military installations or armament producers in the area, was that he was guarding the test site for some form of chemical or germ weaponry. Has anyone any other ideas?

Yours fraternally,
Steve Addison,
Macclesfield.

During the nine months we were there we were weighed down with anxiety about where we would go when the landlord turfed us out, to let in the summer's holiday makers at £150 per week. In the nick of time we found a two bedroom flat and in spite of having to make our bed up in the living room we are reasonably happy.

The 'good' news is that we are now on the housing list and might one day get a house—in about 10 years time when the children will have grown up and it won't be so necessary!

Yours fraternally
R Harris,
Bournemouth.

Enough to drive you mad

Dear Comrades,
Yet another example of the Tories turning the clock back 100 years appeared in the *Financial Times* (12/4/83).

A businessman deprived of his driving licence by the courts, overcame the problems this presented him by employing a YOPster. He recommends this to fellow businessmen saying, "a suitable school leaver at today's labour prices must pay for itself in productivity terms alone, without considering the benefit to health that the removal of the strain of driving can bring (to businessmen)".

'It'—the YOPster—meanwhile only gets paid a pittance from the Manpower Services Commission.

What therefore does the new Youth Training Scheme hold for unemployed youth? 'Valuable training' as butlers or maids to the rich perhaps?
Yours fraternally,
Keith McIntyre,
Strathclyde.

Get political!

Dear Comrades,
I have just returned from the annual Conference of my union, BIFU, the bank workers union. It is the first conference I have been to and I have in fact only been to one branch meeting.
One of the reasons for my lack of attendance is that there is little encouragement given to new members, and in the case of young people it is discouraging that activists tend to be at least two or three grades senior.
Another is because of this union's non-party political ideals which some members believe is the policy attracting its new members. However, young people today are politically aware due to the fact that they are one of the hardest hit sections of society under this Tory Government.

As a result they expect BIFU to be involved in the whole labour and trade union movement. If being non-political encouraged membership in the past, this is certainly not the case now!
The positive ideas put forward by the Finance Workers Broad Left and *Militant* supporters encouraged me to take part in my union branch and to go to the conference. When other workers do likewise it will be a great step forward for our union.
Yours fraternally,
A bank worker,
Midlothian.

POST OFFICE / TELECOMMS

Unity is strength

IN THE FACE of Tory attacks, workers want to strengthen their union organisation and make their leadership more accountable. This is certainly so in the communications unions in the Post Office, Giro and British Telecom.

There is a growing feeling that the split of the Post Office into three separate organisations was detrimental to workers' interests and even undermined joint union opposition to privatisation legislation.

The left in POEU have always argued for one industrial union. The right wing on the NEC traditionally oppose, using craft prejudice as a weapon to defeat moves to trade union unity. However, since the split, minority grades have felt isolated and especially vulnerable; in the POEU this means Motor Transport and Power; in the UCW, the telephonists.

Strong rank and file union

All assurances from the POEU NEC prior to the split have been progressively abandoned. Now to make up lost members each union hopes to take in the others' minority grades and also amalgamate with the respective management union.

Unfortunately for the union leaders, UCW conference came out for a rank and file union and rejected amalgamation with the small management union, the Communication Managers Association (CMA) while POEU conference rejected the management union Society of Post Office Engineers (SPOE) and called for unity with the UCW.

After amending a proposed constitution for amalgamation with CPSA, we saw this all thrown out, because the right-wing POEU leaders' organisation of the agenda forced the

Broad Left to vote against, in order that the concept of a rank and file union could be discussed.

Events since confirm the correctness of the Broad Left position. The rank and file of the POEU, CPSA and UCW have shown they wish to fight in unison while management unions and their ranks have been the most hesitant.

Because of rank-and-file suspicion that union leaderships want to join with management unions to strengthen the "tops", to avoid cross industry representation and rank and file unity, this has worked against amalgamation with management unions.

The right wing's manoeuvres have backfired to the detriment of SPOE and possibly CMA, but the Broad Left does not exclude amalgamation with SPOE and CMA for all time. When a strong rank and file union is built across the three industries, with strong democratic control of the leadership, approaches could then be made to the much smaller management unions and a full industrial union will be on the cards.

In the meantime the right wing continue to manoeuvre. The democratic constitutional amendments for a new union passed at 1981 Special POEU conference have been omitted or distorted in the new proposals for amalgamation with the CPSA.

The right say any new amendments to the proposed constitution would scupper unity with the CPSA. We believe this is not the case. For instance CPSA nationally, and its P&T Group, circulate executive minutes. This is not in the new proposed constitution although agreed at 1981 POEU Conference.

The right are manoeuvring to get the most undemocratic amalgamation they can, and risk alienating the ranks and a no-amalgamation vote.

The left will once again try to further democratise the proposed constitution for amalgamation. However, failure to do so should not necessarily debar amalgamation with CPSA P&T. At the

next rules revision conference the ranks of both sections can decide directly what democratic measures need to be carried out.

The next major issue must be to clear all obstacles to unity with UCW. Both UCW and POEU leaders are in fact hoping to avoid amalgamation. The UCW say as their conference rejected unity with a management union and POEU's NEC hope to merge with SPOE, this is holding up the two rank and file unions merging.

Conference must decide

The UCW right wing hope to force their conference to agree a merger with CMA! Merger with the POEU will be just a desirable long term aim which they hope to ensure will never be achieved.

However, there are now more POEU branches against a merger with SPOE than in 1981, after that union's lack of support for the strike on 20 October. It is virtually certain that SPOE will not be accepted at June's conference.

The left must call on UCW and POEU leaders to state categorically what they believe are obstacles to amalgamation, present them to the ranks of both unions who can best then decide how these difficulties can be overcome.

The full united power of communication workers is vital. Lay member amalgamation committees in the areas should be set up to iron out any so-called 'problems' and prepare for a conference of both UCW and POEU delegates to find a common approach and organisation.

We must demand these measures be put in motion now, to put before the UCW and POEU conferences for endorsement in May and June respectively.

By Phil Holt

(Liverpool Internal POEU, personal capacity)

The article on Welsh Telecomms workers in *Militant* 648 was by Phil Lloyd, secretary of Swansea POEU, personal capacity, not Roy Davies.



POEU, UCW, and CPSA branches united against privatisation on 20 October demonstration.

THE THREATENED de-nationalisation of British Telecom will dominate discussions when delegates gather for the Annual conference of the CPSA Post and Telecommunications Group.

The 24-hour general strike on 20 October was a triumph and needs to be built upon. Recognising the dangers of de-nationalisation London North GNO "instructs the Group Executive Committee (GEC) to take whatever action is necessary including industrial action to oppose privatisation and protect the jobs of our members." (Motion 107)

Whilst the Executive Committee are expected to support this proposal it is a disgrace that with a reported 100,000 potential job losses through Tory policies the GEC have since then largely allowed "the privatisation issue to fade into the background". (Leicester GNO, Motion 112)

The GEC is instructed by Liverpool GNO, "to initiate a programme of events designed to ensure full participation and motivation of the membership, without whom we cannot win our battle against privatisation." (Motion 113)

On pay the GEC have rejected a 4¼% pay offer from British Telecom and have agreed to use industrial action to secure a just pay claim. This is commendable but it is also essential "to secure an across the board pay rise" as delegates from Bootle DPE (motion 6) will be arguing.

Carrying proposals which demand the abolition of age-related pay scales (motions 13 to 20) will mean equal pay for equal work, regardless of age and will go some way towards undermining the exploitation of youth.

On redundancy, motion 195 (Manchester Central GNO), censures the GEC for recommending acceptance of a voluntary redundancy agreement, "the co-operation in change" despite 1982 Conference policy. This agreement provides, "boundless scope for management's exploitation" and the motion clearly deserves full conference support.

By Steve Higham
(Liverpool GNO)

Engineering construction - What the agreement means

THE NATIONAL Engineering Construction Agreement is over a year old.

Launched by the big construction employers' organisations and the Unions in the industry, it is claimed that it guarantees big improvements for workers in the industry. Nothing could be further from the case.

It has been a year in which the rank and file of the unions concerned will have had their basic trade union rights denied.

In the past, with big con-

struction sites as pacemakers, stewards had the right to directly negotiate with management for the best pay and conditions possible on our contract. Due to the shortlived nature of contracts, our negotiations need to be quick and decisive, with freedom to hit hard if necessary to get top rates and conditions.

This method always kept our wages at the very top of the scale so we could nearly always put a bit aside for the day we would be slung out of work, usually at a minutes notice. John Baldwin, General Secretary of the AUEW Construction Section refers to this as "the

years of the gold rush", and assures us that the world is not like that any more. He is the main union signatory to an agreement that has delivered us padlocked to management.

We face great problems in our industry. In 1976 over 36,000 people worked in the power, steel, chemical, oil, and gas construction sectors. This year there will be less than 14,000. What does John Baldwin say should be done to reverse that?

"We simply have to convince industrialists in this country and throughout the world that Britain is the right place for investment...The reputation of British in-

dustrial relations must therefore be improved." (The Construction Worker Oct 1982). In this Baldwin is merely echoing Thatcher and Tebbit and acting accordingly.

These days, under the National Agreement, our basic rates and even bonuses are signed and sealed by the National Joint Council, a panel comprising right wing union leaders and the top bosses, with an "independent" chairman. The membership are not consulted in any decisions which they are expected to adhere to.

The procedure works through 4 stages. All stewards can do is register

"failure to agree" and then the whole issue is taken out of their hands. With delays and a great back log at national level, the procedure could easily take 3 months, in which time, given the nature of the industry, we could be off the job anyway.

In practice, despite what is said in the agreement book, management can and do delay calling meetings. At National Joint Council level, agreement is binding on all parties. We have known nothing good come out of this procedure, which smacks of the infamous old York Memorandum in general engineering.

Its fruits have been an

abysmal 5% of wage increase and the loss of rank and file control with no consultation, over all aspects of negotiations. Significantly, the sites involved in the National Agreement are the big oil terminals and power station sites which in the past had real muscle. The aim of the Agreement, with the collaboration of Union leaderships, is to take that power away.

This is the first of two articles by a Drax B Power Station construction shop steward.

Industrial Reports

CPSA

FOR JOBS, WORKERS' UNITY AND DEMOCRACY

SINCE last conference Tory attacks on members' jobs and living standards have continued unabated.

Civil servants have faced a whole battery of attacks on jobs by means of cash limits, efficiency reviews, hiving off and privatisation. Already, the Tories have begun plans for further massive cuts in jobs in 1984-88 if they are returned to power.

They have also continued their attacks on pay. The 1983 pay offer, currently being balloted, will mean a drastic cut in living standards. The union's public service members have been at the receiving end of the Tory hatred of the public sector. The proposed denationalisation of British Telecomms is indicative of these attacks.

On the Civil Service Agenda the most important issue is pay. On that score though, events will have passed conference by. Already the ballot seems to be moving towards a settlement on the basis of the government's 5% offer. Figures already in, indicate an early 5 to 1 majority in favour of acceptance.

To explain such a development is not difficult, the membership is simply not confident at this stage they can win. The failure of our 1981 pay campaign is still too fresh in members' minds. This could have evaporated had any major group in the public sector beaten the government in struggle.

But the health workers' dispute, allowed to peter out by the TUC, the ASLEF strike where the TUC forced a settlement on government terms and more recently the miners' vote have all added to the mood of caution.

Unfortunately, this was added to by CPSA's General Secretary who couldn't have done much more to confuse the membership. Firstly to have publicly recommended the offer before the NEC had even met, then to issue an "all-members" circular with definite pay scales only served to make members think the deal was signed, sealed and delivered.

To issue this circular while the NEC were meeting and to deny NEC members the right to comment on its content, raises serious questions as to who runs this union. Also in the latest issue of the union's newspaper, the NEC's viewpoint is reflected on the front page, but the General Secretary's column is devoted to justifying a vote for the offer.

But the mood of our members will change sharply as the government turns the screw even tighter. **Members will move to fight for decent pay and for a leadership, both lay and full time that fights to defend the interests of the membership.**

Conference will now move onto discussing pay offers for 1984 and beyond. Motion 7 from Customs Liverpool, proposes a special pay conference to be held later in the year to determine the



Staff at Hackney Unemployment Benefit Office vote for action on suspension of workers following a dispute over conditions at a new dole office. Just one of a number of disputes since last year's CPSA Conference.
Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

shape of any campaign. Correctly this motion is to be supported by the executive.

Motion 15 from the NEC is a holding motion that will enable us to discuss the progress of negotiations on the Megaw report at the special pay conference. There are other important issues on the conference agenda. Motions on reducing long incremental scales, the need for a 35-hour week campaign as top priority this year, and for a determined effort to break from the unjust grade and service-related holiday allowances.

Interview with Kevin Roddy see page 2

As ever, *Militant* supporters have been in the forefront of arguing for these significant gains. But advances are difficult in a period, as now, of serious and sustained attacks on our jobs. We wholeheartedly support the fight against Tory cuts, Rayner reviews, staff inspections, and the equally serious privatisation proposals.

The Tories, if re-elected, are drawing up plans for more butchery, in particular, priming new technology as another weapon in their armoury to reduce staff numbers. We have made a start in the last year in our policy of "no job loss", and a major propaganda campaign will be starting in June to explain our position to all Civil Servants.

The last four years has taught us very graphically that we require a political solution to these attacks. **The days of political neutrality are numbered.** Appropriately, the union's National Conference starts off with constitutional amendment 649, to allow for

a ballot for a political fund and re-affiliation to the Labour Party, agreed in principle at last Conference.

The need for political change is matched by the need for internal union democracy. Constitutional amendment 672 from P&T, Brighton GMO proposes changes to the rules to allow for election of assistant secretaries. (National Officers) This important change would build on the election of the union's senior officers, established last year. The pay of officials is also raised at the conference.

The demand for these internal reforms are not distractions from members' problems. Far from it, as recent events have proved, if members problems are to be solved, we must have an accountable leadership in tune with members' aspirations. Conference will have

before it a document on the merger of CPSA and SCPS. Motion 72 authorises further discussions with a view to final recommendations for a merger to 1984 conference. *Militant* supporters stand for workers unity and in favour of one union for Posts and Telecommunication workers and one civil service union. A CPSA/SCPS merger would be a step forward.

Our experience has shown that the strengthening of relations and joint action with the SCPS is vital on jobs, pay and conditions. This can best be achieved inside one union, with separate branches for higher grades to deal with the possible apprehensions of intimidation of the junior grades. However, above local level a fully integrated union should be posed as quickly as possible.

Major debates will also

take place on the lessons of the Birmingham/Oxford DHSS strike (motion 333), where the executive should accept the motion's criticism that mistakes were made by the executive during the strike. We should learn its lessons.

Finally speculation is rife as to the possible election results for Presidency and NEC with suggestions of a swing back to the right. If this is so it will be a bitter blow for our members at a time of increasing attacks. When members are prepared once more to counter these attacks they will find themselves impeded by their own leadership.

But precisely for this reason, such an outcome could only be temporary. That the right have nothing to offer will become clearer and clearer. Our union is only at the very first stages of

it development as a real union fighting for its members.

Members will be drawn into active involvement in our union in their thousands. They will become schooled in battle and swell the ranks of the left. And they will ensure the left stays in power fighting resolutely and consistently for conference policies.

By Pat Byrne
(DHSS and NEC member in personal capacity)

"CPSA National Conference delegates oppose motion 150"
John Ship (Secretary)
Paul Cooper (Chairman)
Sue Roberts (Organiser)
(all in personal capacity)
CPSA MOD
Central London Branch

Merseyside fights cuts

ON 28 APRIL Merseyside Regional Office of the DHSS announced new clerical staffing levels along with the Annual complement review.

When given the figures the trade union side in each local benefit office all had the same reaction, of total disbelief and amazement. Every single office was to be forced to lose posts at a time of unprecedented unemployment. The union found the decision completely beyond belief.

Two offices, Belle Vale and Toxteth, called staff meetings the day the cuts were announced and decided not to work on the Friday as a protest. These were the two hardest hit offices. Belle Vale is to lose 28 staff and Toxteth 24. Both offices

have areas of particularly high unemployment.

By Friday, the news reached other offices about the malicious cuts to be imposed throughout the region, and the feeling in the local offices was that some form of industrial action should be taken. Pay meetings were in progress at several offices including Garston, who voted to go out.

Meetings were quickly called at offices who were not having pay meetings and at Huyton and Kirkby office strike calls came from the floor. Local office representatives did not call the strike, it came from the membership who had begun to realise that the government, who had kicked us in the teeth over pay, were now going for the stomach with staff cuts.

In total, the Merseyside Region is to lose 441 jobs.

Staff cuts in the DHSS have very serious implications for both staff and clients. For some time now staff have been working under increasing pressure, due to increasing numbers of claimants and new items of legislation.

Already, the code we work by has over 10,000 paragraphs and over 100 circulars and numerous memos. New schemes have been introduced, supposedly to save time and money, but they often only confuse the general public and frustrate staff who have to work them.

On 4 April the Unified Housing Benefit scheme was introduced to transfer responsibility for housing costs from supplementary benefit office to the Council who calculate a rebate. The client never actually sees the rent money. That week the switchboard was drowned

with calls from people who didn't understand what was going on, such as old age pensioners who have never missed a week's rent in their lives and were almost in tears with confusion.

Staff in local offices are beginning to realise that the government's attitude towards its staff and the people they serve is exactly the same—one of complete contempt. The Tories are not prepared to provide a decent service to cater for the masses of unemployed they have created.

There is a special meeting this week of sub-branch representatives in order to plan a campaign of action against these vicious cuts.

By Liverpool DHSS CPSA members



Industrial Reports

Unit Superheaters

FACTORY OCCUPIED

Liverpool Liberals retreat

AUEW MEMBERS at the Unit Superheater and Pipe Company, a subsidiary of BSC, have occupied their plant in Swansea to fight proposed redundancies and management attempts to smash our union.

We have had the threat of fifty redundancies hanging over our heads for the past month or so when management gave notice of 11 job losses, 4 voluntary and 7 forced to take effect from last Friday. For one of the seven forced redundancies, management selected the works convenor who is also the only burner left in the plant.

Management argued that the job was redundant but they couldn't answer us when we asked who would do the burning in the future. If they think they can impose a switching of trades or 'flexibility' as they call it then it's not on.

The selection of the convenor is a clear case of victimisation in order to try and finish the union organisation we've built up over the years. As one member said at our meeting "I'm not just fighting for my job, I'm voting to go out because they are attacking our convenor."

Although the vote for strike action was close, once the majority decision was



Unit Superheaters workers picket their factory.

Photo: Peter Wales

taken we moved quickly into action. We've never been on strike before but we recognised the need to undermine management's propaganda and decided to occupy the plant the same evening.

The gates were chained up and the entrances blocked with fork-lifts and cranes. By eight o'clock the next morning there were thirty of us occupying the place and

more on the way.

Already we have got the support of the Wales TUC conference, Swansea Trades Council, numerous shop stewards committees, trade union branches and sections of the local labour movement.

One of the reasons for this, apart from the sympathy for any group of workers fighting for jobs is that Unit Superheaters have

a long tradition of supporting trade unionists in struggle and we are confident that we will be repaid tenfold by the trade union movement in this area.

Thatcher may want to return us to Victorian values but there is no way our members will accept the dictatorial attitude of management.

We are in to stay until the redundancy notices are

withdrawn.

Messages of support and financial donations should be sent to Fred Evans, 8 Bishopston Way, Bishopston, Swansea. Tel. Bishopston 83894.

By Peter Thomas
(AUEW Convenor Unit Superheaters, Swansea.)

TGWU Agricultural Workers' Conference

THE ANNUAL wage claim for agricultural workers will be fought out in the next few months with the feelings of delegates to the Agricultural Trade Group conference of the TGWU ringing in union representatives' ears.

According to the government's Annual Review of Agriculture, farmers' net incomes have nearly doubled in the last two years, by 24% in 1981 and 45% in 1982! How did they reward their workers? They gave 7.1% bringing the basic minimum wage to £75.40!

Farm workers are often told of the "perks" in their jobs such as rent-free accommodation, potatoes, milk but the farmers never tell us of their perks the Annual Review allowed for, of £118.7 million to cover owning, running, etc of cars, electricity, telephone, fuel, house repairs (their own, not the workers' tied cottages!), decorating, water charges and so on. Slightly different from the workers' "perks".

This industry allows 11,000 families to claim FIS in order to survive, with an estimated further 20,000 in agriculture who should claim but don't. 40% of all full time workers in agriculture earn less than £90.

The employers backed by "independent" members of the Agricultural Wages

Board decided not to give 16-17 year olds a rise this year, because they could always get a YOPster if youngsters already in agriculture did not like it!

The trade group has decided to give the new Youth Training Scheme a year's trial, and act as "watchdogs" against any malpractices. Schemes will be monitored and the union will have the power to have employers suspended from participation, forever if necessary, if they abuse the scheme.

Overtime rates will be paid if they work more than eight hours per day (including training activities) with an assurance that more than 40% of those taken on the scheme will be given a permanent job at the end of it. These are welcome but the trade group, and union as a whole must go further and demand all trainees be given a permanent job after a scheme, the trade union rate for the job and that they join the union for their protection.

Then farmers as well as other employers will cease to abuse young trainees in horticulture, forestry and poultry.

By Teresa MacKay
(Branch Secretary, Tuddenham Branch, Suffolk)

TSSA CONFERENCE

Together, unions can stop the cuts

REGIONAL and Divisional reorganisations, early retirements and voluntary redundancies have lost the Transport and Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) 10,000 members in the last two years.

Further restructuring and computerisation, along with the threat of the Serpell Report being implemented mean more job losses in the pipeline. A BRB spokesman has talked recently about 8000 more clerical jobs needing to go saying that if voluntary redundancies were not accepted then there would be forced compulsory redundancies.

Resolution 96 on the agenda of TSSA conference demands that the Executive Committee uses any means at its disposal to stop all types of redundancy. While many important resolutions are found on pay and conditions there are also resolutions about our future job prospects and the direction TSSA should take.

Resolution 197 and amendments ask for a full discussion on the Serpell Report and a rejection of its proposals for reducing the rail network and the resulting job losses. Resolutions from Horwich oppose closure of any BREL workshops and ask conference to reaffirm its position on this, while a number of other resolutions condemn management for consistent breaches of the 1956 negotiation machinery. All these need a campaigning union and a fighting leadership.

The York P & T branch in their resolution show how the struggle for these can be taken forward. They highlight the coming need for TSSA to unite with other rail unions, ASLEF and NUR, to form a federation of the rail unions which can fight closures. With unity and through building the Triple Alliance we can stop the BRBs vicious attacks.

By Steve Nally
(TSSA Waterloo)

KRAFT BLACKED

THE SHOP workers' union, USDAW, is calling on its members to black all Kraft products to force the company to reverse its decision to transfer production from Kirkby on Merseyside to Namur in Belgium, causing a loss of 930 jobs on Merseyside (see *Militant* issue 646 or 647).

An emergency resolution at USDAW's Annual Delegate Meeting moved by delegates from Kirkby branch, calling for the blacking and for co-operation from other trade unionists in refusing to handle Kraft imports as from 20 June unless the company reverses its decision, was passed unanimously and received a standing ovation.

The resolution calls on the executive council also to seek the assistance of the European trade union movement, in resisting this "callous transfer of workers' jobs and livelihoods", which ignores the company's "social responsibility to workers' communities and countries".

The workers at Kraft have been given fresh heart and determination by this development and by the many messages of support coming in from trade union branches up and down the country. The indications are that the company has been taken by surprise by the union's action and are seriously worried at the prospect of losing their UK market.

Unemployment in Kirkby is already amongst the highest in Europe. Kraft workers must be supported by the whole labour movement in their resistance to the multinational's attempt at social devastation. Messages of support to: Dick Capon, convenor Kraft Foods Ltd, Moorgate Road, Kirkby, Merseyside.

Report by Jim McGinley
(Chairman, Knowsley North CLP, personal capacity)



NUCLEAR MADNESS

By Lynn Walsh

Continued from front page

services, new buildings has been ruthlessly cut. Military spending goes up and up.

When Thatcher became Prime Minister, defence spending took 5.3% of Gross Domestic Product. By December 1981 it was 6.1%. It's still rising.

The lion's share of research, scientific skills and investment goes on developing new weapons, starving the rest of British industry and speeding up its collapse.

Why should so-called private "enterprise" compete with rivals on the open market when they have a ready-made £5,000m customer at the Ministry of Defence—with guaranteed bumper profits into the bargain?

Average net profit on MoD arms contracts is 3.7%, compared to 1.2% for private industry generally. After a recent investigation, the MoD admitted that there had been excessive profits on 360 contracts—costing the taxpayer £75 million this year.

Of course, the merchants of death, like Rolls Royce, Racal, Plessey, still sell abroad where ever possible.

Four days before fighting started in the South Atlantic, British firms were shipping arms supplies to the Argentinian Junta.

French Exocet missiles, which destroyed HMS Sheffield and Atlantic Conveyor contained key parts made by British Aerospace and Phillips UK. The arms manufacturers never lose a war.

For decades, the big arms manufacturers have been featherbedded by military orders, at the expense of working people.

The shipbuilders coasted along on navy orders. They failed to modernise and invest, now they have been outstripped by Japanese and German shipbuilders.

MoD orders and lavish assistance have not prevented the electronic or aerospace firms being outstripped by their interna-

tional competitors.

British capitalism, because of the sickness of big business, has been reduced to a second or even third-rate power. But the Tories still have grandiose illusions about Britain's "world role".

They are spending more on arms than any other major power, apart from the United States. Instead of increasing their power and prestige, however, this merely pushes the country faster towards ruin.

How many times have the Tories and the bosses blamed "greedy workers" for Britain's decline? Yet it has been calculated that overseas defence costs accounted for two-thirds of Britain's cumulative balance of payment deficit between 1958 and 1981.

Working people have no interest in this "defence". It's the defence of big-business profits and the world-wide power and prestige of the capitalist class. It's the defence of 3½ million unemployed and poverty conditions.

The squandered resources should be used to improve living standards and enrich society. This inevitably involves challenging the wealth and power of big business.

It means campaigning for the return of a Labour government which will fight for working-class interests and implement socialist policies. It means Labour's ranks ensuring that Labour carries out unilateral nuclear disarmament and drastically cuts spending on "conventional" arms, as well.

The arms manufacturing firms must be taken out of the hands of big business profiteers and nationalised under workers' control and management. The jobs of defence industry workers should be guaranteed by planned conversion to socially useful production.

Science and technology is there. It should be used for construction, not for fashioning means of destruction.

NEW THREAT TO RAIL INDUSTRY

Railway workers and travelling public alike were outraged by the Serpell Report.

This committee, supposedly reporting on finances, proposed decimation of the rail industry with the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, wholesale slaughter of railway towns, a rail network smaller than that of Bolivia and for many areas, almost total isolation.

The British Rail Board claimed to be committed to a modern railway and expressed disappointment at Serpell, but now an internal BRB document presented to the Railway Executive last October entitled "Infrastructure Reduction" has revealed railway management's real intentions.

Far from opposing Serpell, it would appear that in some parts the BRB influenced it, particularly in relation to Permanent Way and signals and telecommunications.

Most of the document

By Martin Elvin

deals with cutting back expenditure through closing large sections of freight-only lines and rationalisation of others through singling of track.

The document states, "The paper presented...in February 1982 identified some 1200 miles of track which it was considered feasible to abandon over the following years". The later document proposes an increase of 1900 miles, including 626 miles to be completely closed and a further 1309 to be rationalised.

Closure of a further 450 miles of sidings is also proposed, leading inevitably to a further drop in freight traffic, already lowest of any major rail system in Europe.

For signalling the document states, "Serious consideration must also be given to the use of secondhand material and sensible adjustments to the standards which would apply in whol-

ly new signalling schemes, as has been done recently on Eastern Region."

These statements are not unlike those of Serpell which suggest safety standards could be lowered to save money.

The board doesn't intend to stop there. "It could be wrong...to exclude closures of some passenger lines which are heavy loss makers".

On one fact alone we would agree with the board when they state that "Proposals of this scale will meet political problems".

That must be the message to every rail worker. The national NUR demonstration on Wednesday 11 May in London is a step forward, and it must mark the start of the fightback against government and management plans to wreck the rail industry and the livelihoods of the workforce.

The strategy of previous NUR leaderships for a joint approach with management has failed. While the BRB talked publicly of a future for the industry, documents such as this reveal their real intentions. They will go to any lengths to keep within Tory cash limits, attacking the conditions of rail

workers in the process.

A real "joint approach" forging unity in action between all the unions in the rail industry is needed. Joint action around a clear fighting programme and with a strategy which recognises that only by mobilising the enormous combined power of the unions will it be possible to force the government to make money available for investment in the industry.

- ★ Defend the existing rail network.
- ★ Oppose all further "rationalisation" and contraction of the rail industry. No closure of any BREL workshop.
- ★ For a massive programme of investment in electrification, new locomotives, rolling stock and Permanent Way. Such a programme would bring urgently needed modernisation of the rail industry and provide large scale work in BREL workshops.
- ★ No to job losses.
- ★ Industrial action if necessary to save jobs and services.
- ★ Bring down the Tories, Labour to power on a socialist programme!

Photo: Jeremy Nicholl



Police reinforcements, some in full riot gear, march into Tottenham on Tuesday night to protect the NF.

Continued from page 1

they cleared off.

Harney Labour-controlled Council hired out a hall in the High Cross Lower School to the National Front for a GLC by-election meeting. The school has nearly 50% black pupils.

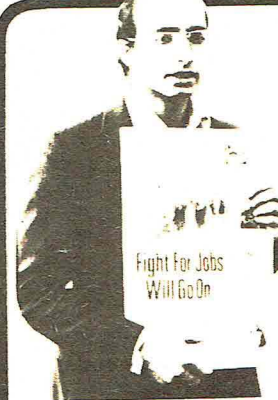
Moves to stop the meeting by left Labour councillors, council unions and in particular the NUPE caretakers were met with a hail of writs from the NF. The hall had to be opened by a senior Council official after the caretakers refused to cooperate.

The NF, mainly from out-

side the area, took a hammer for entering Tottenham. An onlooker said "They looked pale and terrified. They had wounds on their heads and blood was running down their faces."

The local mood is bitter against them and the police. The behaviour of the police and the whole issue of police accountability must be taken up by the local labour movement.

The most important lesson is that the Labour Council could have prevented the whole event by standing against the NF's legal bullying and leading an active campaign to stop the fascists entering Tottenham.



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