

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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12p

## UNITE ALL PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS...

# WIPE OUT POVERTY WAGES NOW

Unions representing one and a half million manual workers in the public services have begun an organised campaign for a £60 minimum wage and a 35-hour week.

The Executive Council of NUPE has called on all its members to support the Day of Action on 22 January and to take part in selected industrial action from that date.

We consider that this action is the only way that steps can be taken to abolish low pay in the public services.

The employers of our



By Alan Fisher  
General Secretary of NUPE

## £60 MINIMUM & 35hr WEEK

members in local government, health, water and university services have made pay offers within the government's 5% pay guidelines.

These offers are totally unacceptable to our

The government's new offer, see back page

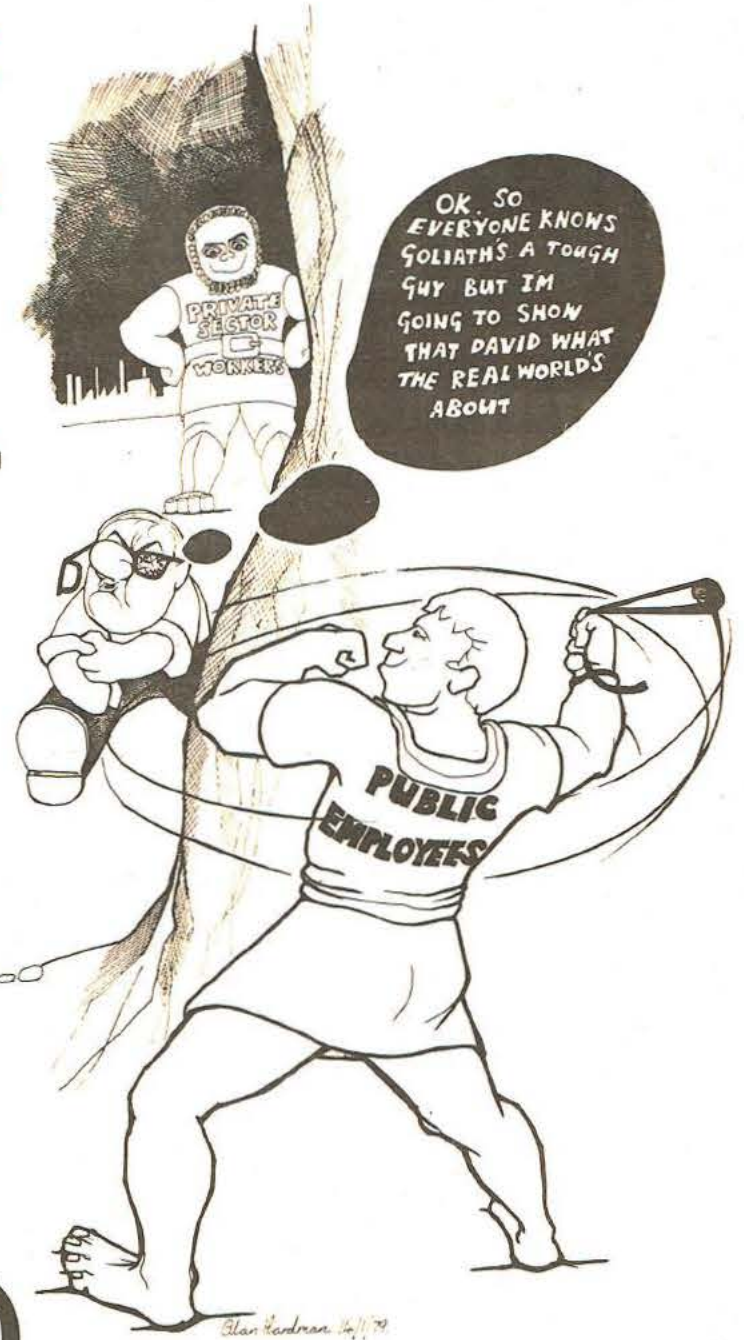
union. Most of our members are paid on a basic rate of £42.40 per week. This means that many of our members barely take home more than £30 a week.

These are poverty-line

wages which have plunged our members into a nightmare struggle to keep their heads above water.

The basic increase offered

CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 3



## inside...



Stop the ARMS WASTE: Vickers workers pose the alternative, page 8

● Food mountains & climbing prices: EEC agriculture in chaos, page 9

● West Germany: Goodbye to the Economic Miracle, page 10

● Nail the Tory lies! Workers are slandered, big business scroungers pocket millions, page 6

● Bantry Bay tanker explosion: these 'accidents' are avoidable, page 4

● Lorry drivers show the way: nation-wide reports, page 15, Editorial, page 2

● PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS MOVE INTO ACTION: Comment and reports, pages 2 & 3

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DRIVERS' STRIKE



### Lorry drivers' pickets at Tilbury Docks told us:

Well I've just read your report in 'Militant' and there's nothing more to say. That's the best report we've ever seen: it's a good paper.

The press and TV keep saying how we're starving farm animals. That's a

lie. They were down here yesterday and we showed them how we were letting through all the trucks carrying cattle feed. In fact most of the cattle feed is going out of the country at the moment.

The national papers

are plain biased, pathetic—and they have the audacity to charge the same price for just four pages.

Our working conditions are getting worse. We're just the whipping boys. If half the lads here could get another job doing something else then they would. One of

our lads has just coughed up £250 for an HGV [heavy goods vehicle] licence—if he's a professional then he should get a professional wage.

My hours, if I'm on a day run, are 14 hours from when I leave till when I come back. When

Continued on back page



## THE DRIVERS STRIKE AND THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

The lorry drivers' strike has drawn the usual abuse of the strikers from the capitalists and their kept press.

In this case, however, the sheer hysteria, the foaming at the mouth, and the baying and howling have reached new depths.

'The Telegraph' gleefully reported the comments of one employer: "these pickets are acting like highwaymen". The 'Evening Standard' [12 January], once a relatively 'liberal' journal, but now a viciously reactionary rag under its new owner Victor Matthews declared "The nation [read capitalists-Ed] demands better protection from its Government. For the present this requires readiness to use troops and if necessary volunteers to keep industry and essential services working. Later the law on picketing must be precisely defined so that the police can corral the bullies and keep factory gates open."

The 'Daily Mail' of course seeks to outdo the rest of the gutter press. The lorry drivers, the train drivers—and their leader Ray Buckton come in for the Mail's special brand of venom. Referring to them as "these scavenging rail drivers", it says [10 January] "he [Buckton] and his men can rot in the sidings until they come to their senses."

And the so-called 'quality press' also waded in against the strikers. 'The Observer' has urged the capitalists to consider the use of lock-outs to break the resistance of the working class and its organisations to wage cuts.

The pack has been led on this occasion by the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, and its political wing, the Tory Party leadership of Thatcher. They are demented and enraged at the spectacle of the immense power of the working class once it is on the move.

The magnificent solidarity of the transport workers and the support they have engendered from other workers has horrified them. The 'Evening Standard' [12 January] indignantly reported the comments of one shop steward: "We don't care if the picket lines come from Bertram Mills Circus. As long as they hold a union card we will not cross them."

This is presented as sheer 'bloody-mindedness' and as completely 'immoral'. But the working class is the only force which can take society out of its present impasse. Everything which strengthens the working class, everything which raises its level of organisation and understanding, is 'morally justified'.

Over generations, and

through many bitter experiences, the working class has understood that union organisation and solidarity is the main weapon it has in the struggle against the combined weight of the employers.

One of the most striking features of the present drivers' dispute is the sympathy and understanding of other workers. Even the TV, amidst the barrage of slanted reports and lies, has occasionally given a glimpse of this support. One example was the women in a Liverpool factory who were being laid off because of the strike—yet unanimously blamed the bosses!

The present dispute and the support which it has received indicates the accumulated bitterness within the working class at the cuts in living standards suffered over the past three years.

But fearing the working class will recoup some of the ground which it has lost in the past three years the capitalists are screeching against the trade unions and particularly against the right to picket. The air is thick with denunciations of so-called 'secondary picketing', i.e. workers refusing to cross picket lines set up by their brothers.

Yet despite the attempt of the bosses and the government to pressurise the union leaders into eliminating this 'evil' the lorry drivers clearly understand that this weapon is crucial in ensuring victory in the present strike. One driver commented to a 'Guardian' reporter [13 January]: "Two thirds of haulage company drivers are not union members: without hitting the country's vitals we'd be about as effective as the bakers' strike."

Such is the power of the lorry drivers that in all probability they will be successful in getting substantial increases. Already as we go to press the T&GWU has reported that more and more employers are settling for increases of 20% and more. The employers are prepared to accede to the demands of workers and then increase prices to compensate for this.

This shows that, as vital as it is in itself, the struggle to increase wages is not enough. On the basis of capitalism it is like the labour of Sisyphus—the character in Greek mythology who pushed a rock to the top of a hill only for it to roll down again—whereupon he had to push it back up again, and repeated the task ad infinitum.

This cannot be avoided by a new version of the 'social contract' as the Labour leadership are presently arguing. Even Michael Foot, the leading light of the Tribune group, has warned that taxes will be increased and/or state expenditure cut if wages continue to go up!

The experience of the last four years, let alone the last thirty years of 'incomes policy', shows that on the basis of capitalism there

cannot be any solution to the problems of the working class.

Such is the parlous state of British capitalism that the ruling class are threatening reprisals against the unions in the event of the return of a Tory government. Thatcher has indicated that she will introduce draconian measures against picketing and will serve to starve strikers back to work by denying their families social security benefits.

And the present Labour Cabinet is facilitating the conspiracies of the enemies of the unions and the labour movement as a whole! The right wing have clung to the fiction of the 5% despite the Ford strike, the defeat of sanctions, and now the lorry drivers' strike.

At the moment they are also preparing to reject the claims of the local government workers for a living wage.

By continuing along this road they will be digging the grave of the Labour government and providing Thatcher with the possibility of revenge against the working class. The ranks of the movement, particularly the trade unions, should exert enormous pressure to compel the government to change course in the direction of socialist policies.

The very fact that the capitalists and their Tory cohorts are threatening a clash with the trade unions on workers' rights—a mere four years after the Heath government was given a bloody nose by the working class on the same issues—is an indication of the seriousness of the crisis.

The ruling class see the trade unions as an obstacle to them and their system. In fact, the trade unions and the rights of the working class are the elements of a new society.

Thatcher, like Heath, if she comes to power, will be compelled to either step back from a head-on collision with the working class or face the prospect of a general strike.

The present hysteria of the capitalists about the unions is a warning for the future.

Unless the labour movement effects the socialist transformation of society, the desperate British ruling class will, in the long run, seek terrible revenge on the working class.

The lorry drivers, Fords and other strikes have shown the colossal potential power of the working class. Once it is armed with a socialist programme and perspective it will be invincible.

In the big battles which loom—and the lorry drivers strike is a harbinger of what will follow—the working class will embrace a fighting socialist programme which through abolishing a decayed capitalist system will also eradicate low pay and all the problems which beset the working class.

## MOBILISE ON 22nd

All 'Militant' readers, sellers and supporters in the Labour Party, trade unions and in the Labour Party Young Socialists are urged to give full and active support to the National Demonstration and Lobby of Parliament organised jointly by COHSE, G&MWU, NUPE and T&GWU as part of their fight for a £60 minimum wage and 35-hour week.

The march assembles at 11.30 am at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, and then moves off for the Lobby of Parliament which starts from 2.30 pm. There will also be a continuous meeting in

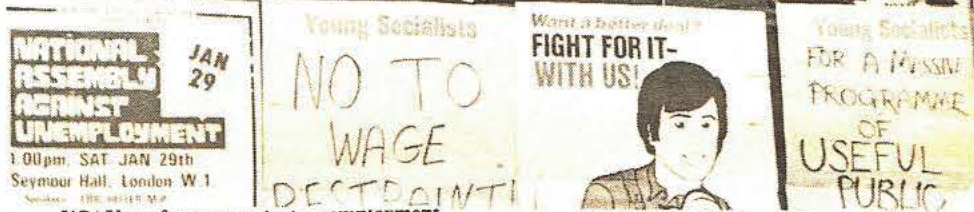
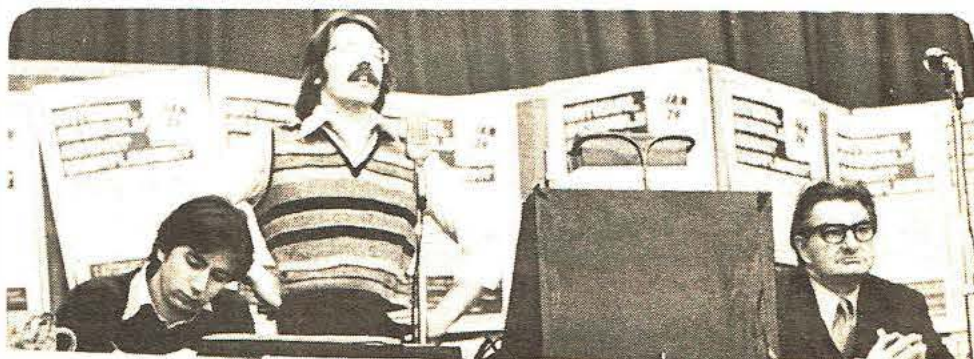
Central Hall, Westminster from 3 pm.

Next week's 'Militant' will give full coverage to this struggle. Workers involved will spell out the issues and explain the preparations they are making to ensure that the battle is victorious.

Make sure that your workmates receive copies! Order extra copies to sell locally.

Help sell during the march and lobby. There will be a distribution point at Speakers' Corner [Marble Arch Tube] where Janice Dale, 'Militant' circulation manager, will supply copies to sellers.

## SOLVE PROBLEMS WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES



YCAU conference against unemployment

Photo: Mark Rusher/IFL

In the run-up to the 22nd, the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) has been preparing to mobilise in support of the local authority workers' campaign for a £60 minimum wage and a 35-hour week.

Many LPYS activists are themselves members of the unions involved in the public-sector campaign.

Over 30 public meetings have already been planned nationally at which union members and officers will be putting their case, along with representatives of the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment.

The YCAU are also organising demonstrations in Manchester and Basingstoke calling for a national minimum wage of £70 and a 35-hour week to be implemented by the Labour government and the TUC.

Every area should follow suit, with mass leafletting, lobbies of local councils, and demands for action by the local Labour Parties to campaign for a socialist programme to wipe out unem-

ployment and low wages.

The LPYS representative on the Labour Party's National Executive, Tony Sanois, is calling for a national campaign on the question of the 35-hour week. The NEC should be pressing every Labour MP and the government itself actively to support the overwhelming decisions of last year's Conference in favour of a shorter working week and a minimum wage.

The wage demand is only barely above the government's 1977 poverty level! It is based on two-thirds of the official figure for average earnings in 1978, a statistic which doesn't take account of short-time working, lay-offs, etc.

A £70 minimum is essential for the implementation of a maximum 35-hour working week—which in the National Health Service alone could put an end to the stress of overwork and the anxiety of low pay.

Unfortunately, the government has already allowed the employers to draw up plans to pass any increased labour costs on to the working people. Under local authority plans, rents and rates would

go up and services would further suffer.

The fight against low pay and unemployment must therefore be linked to a campaign to reverse public spending cuts—and to ensure workers' involvement in the Labour Party to check on the actions of their elected representatives in parliament and on the council.

Our immediate demands must be linked to the call for the nationalisation of the banks and two hundred major monopolies. Compensation to the parasitic owners should be only on the basis of proven need. With these commanding heights under workers' control and management, we should really begin to plan production in the interests of all.

Every member of the trade unions and the Labour Party must become active in the growing movement to ensure that local authority Labour Groups and Labour MPs at Westminster fight to implement the socialist policies needed to give reality to the urgent and completely justified demands of millions of workers for a better life.

## UP TO 15p NEXT WEEK

From the next issue [26 January] the price of 'Militant' will go up to 15 pence. This has unfortunately become unavoidable because of increases in production costs. The price of newsprint, ink, rail charges have all gone up massively. Since we increased to 16 pages, moreover, we have made many improve-

ments—with our own photographs, for instance—and all this costs money.

We would point out, however, that the price of 'Militant' has gone up very slowly over the past few years, especially considering the escalation of inflation in Britain. The last price rise was in March last year, from 10p

to 12p, and the 2p increase before that was way back in November 1976.

We are sure that, even at 15p a copy, readers will still regard 'Militant' as excellent value—and any number of enthusiastic testimonies from Ford stewards, bakery workers, and, this week, lorry drivers indicate that they will



# UNITE PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS FOR ALL OUT FIGHT

On other pages: Low pay and child care—breaking out of the vicious circle/page 7/  
Gateshead Hospital—no recompense for long hours/page 7



Wandsworth Council workers picket employers

## Employers' offer: fit for the tip

"YOUR offer is fit for little more than the rubbish tip..."

An angry delegation from Wandsworth Borough manual employees went to one of London's most 'exclusive' residential areas just before Christmas to present an open letter to the Secretary of the Employers' side of the LA [Manual] NJC.

"Don't tell us the money's not there," they said, "it drips from all around Belgrave Square."

"Without our work," the letter stated, "and that of nurses, hospital, ambulance, water and sewage employees, not a wheel would turn, and no drinking water flow."

"Without our work, no one else could work. For when we stop everything else stops..."

Pointing out that a majority of council workers are women, the Wandsworth delegation condemned the blatantly discriminatory nat-

ure of the employers' 5% offer.

Family life, the Letter said, was a constant misery for the thousands on a take-home pay of £35 for 40 hours—a rate that necessitated long hours of overtime.

"At Christmas, and the whole year round, we, as parents, demand the right to say 'Yes' to our children."

"As you well know the gap between our average earnings and national average earnings has tripled since 1974 from £7 to £21..."

"We demand a 40% increase because nothing less can begin to put paid to our poverty and we serve notice on you that our patience is at an end."

"We, the low paid of the public sector, will be out after Christmas, in our hundreds of thousands to collect what's owed us."

Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant

## LEWISHAM

## LABOUR GROUP SUPPORTS CLAIM

One of the highlights of the Labour Party Conference in October was the impassioned plea on behalf of the low paid made by Alan Fisher of NUPE when moving Composite 34. He captured the overwhelming mood of the delegates and the Party at large when he graphically outlined the dire position of these workers, many of them employed in the public domain.

In passing this resolution, Conference gave implicit support to the current submission by NUPE, T&GWU, G&MWU and COHSE on behalf of public sector manual workers.

It was with this in mind that the Labour Group of Lewisham Borough Council at a special meeting unanimously adopted a resolution supporting the claim, and

further accepted proposals for gaining the support of the borough's three Labour MPs and a wider appeal to all Labour Boroughs and MPs.

This stand has been taken not only to secure the future well-being and stability of the manual workforce in Lewisham, but also to attempt to end the disgrace of low pay among people doing some of the community's most necessary and odious jobs.

With the Labour Party's Home Policy Committee's backing last week of the fight for a 35-hour working week, it is clear that, far from having an irresponsible and cavalier attitude to this matter, the Lewisham Labour Group have shown themselves to be at the very centre of current Labour Party thought.

That settlement of such a relatively modest claim would require a considerable sum of money is piteous testimony indeed to existing wage levels. The government has funda-

mental responsibility for the level of pay in the public arena, and it is unrealistic and unjust for this burden to be placed on the local rate fund.

If there is wringing of hands in higher circles over this assertion, let them look at the astronomical sums that local authorities pay to the ponces and parasites of the City of London in the shape of debt charges. Let them realise that only a small portion of these amounts would be needed to raise local government wage rates to much higher than £60 minimum.

If a decent wage is incompatible with the current economic order, then it is the government who must take action to liberate funds and materials needed to build not only for victory in the General Election, but for the foundation of the socialist society itself.

Cllr. Jim Dowd [London Borough of Lewisham]

## WEST MIDLANDS

## 5% OF A MISERLY WAGE IS A MISERLY INCREASE

NUPE members in the West Midlands are preparing for the one day strike and lobby of Parliament on January 22nd—and for further action after that. 2,400 places have been booked on special trains, and they will all be taken. Our Branch alone will bring 200 down.

No one in the hospitals is prepared to accept the employers' 5% offer. Five per cent of a miserly wage is a miserly increase. The Branch has organised mass meetings at the different sites to gear the members up.

At the General Hospital, the EC's rejection of the offer, and the tactics of selected strikes of key workers and the levying of everyone else to keep them going, was unanimously approved. We have already demanded facilities from the management at the Queen Elizabeth (the largest hospital in the district) to collect levies and pay out

strike pay.

The strong feelings of the members became clear the day we received the 'Join the Fight for the £60 Minimum Wage' stickers from headquarters. Some members were almost covered in them, from head to toe! The Administration actually ordered that no one should wear them!

Members here are looking towards the January 22nd strike as the first day of the industrial action for those workers who are to be called out. A total strike of selected members, spasmodic strikes by others, and an overtime ban and work-to-rule by everyone else are the tactics that the Union has decided on.

The full strength of NUPE is being used, with all the sections, despite the different settlement dates, coming together for the first time behind the same claim at the same time.

The campaign, of course, also involves the other unions—COHSE, T&GWU and G&MWU—which are sponsoring the Lobby of Parliament too.

We have now got to make plans to keep up the momentum after the lobby, especially as not every member will be involved in strike action. A local demonstration and a local bulletin would help to keep everybody involved.

The mood now is definitely more determined than even when we had the lobby against the Cuts in 1976.

Unfortunately, we certainly did not achieve our aims in that campaign. This time we must succeed!

By Dick Hackett [Secretary, Central Birmingham Health District NUPE]

## ALAN FISHER'S CALL FOR ACTION

Continued from page 1

to local government workers on the Grade A rate is 60p a week, and that's before any deductions!

These offers are an insult to our just claim for a £60 minimum wage.

We were particularly pleased that Labour Party Conference last year agreed to support our union's demand for a national minimum wage set at two-thirds of average earnings—currently that means £60 a week.

Our union hopes that all local Labour Parties will support our claim and impress their feelings upon their

Members of Parliament and local Councillors.

If unions in the public services are to break through the 5% pay limit we will need the maximum unity of all trade unionists. The four unions involved in this dispute—NUPE, T&GWU, GMWU and COHSE—have held regular meetings at all levels to co-ordinate our action, so that the employers are faced with united opposition from their workers.

This action can be another step towards the building of one union for the public services which has been our

union's historical aim.

Our union fully supported the return of the Labour government in 1974 and we have no desire to see a Tory government in office. The election of Margaret Thatcher and her Tory cabinet would spell disaster for the trade union movement and all working people.

However, if Labour is to remain in office and win the next election it needs to implement policies in favour of working people.

NUPE has pointed out that the government should implement the Manifesto on

which it was elected. The Manifesto pledged the government to improve and expand the public services and to redistribute wealth towards working people and their families.

Our Executive Council's policy statements have called upon the government to change their direction and to nationalise the banks and major industries.

The battle to beat the 5% guidelines and win a £60 minimum wage is part of the general struggle of the whole movement to build a socialist society

## Joint action must be made to bite

The call of Alan Fisher for a mass turn-out on the 22nd and for further industrial action and the enormous response this has received is an indication of the burning indignation of the local government workers at their appalling conditions. There is enormous pressure for action from the rank and file.

At the same time, as our reports show, there is an intense feeling for common and co-ordinated action between the unions involved.

Many trade union officials, particularly those of NUPE, have been energetically preparing for action.

There are some officials, however, who have not always matched the enthusiasm of the ranks and have been less enthusiastic in organising joint action. It is vital that the unions nationally insist on co-ordinated action at all levels. It is also vital that at local level the public sector workers organise joint committees, across the unions and across the trades.

Moreover, those sections with real muscle, such as the water workers, both 'clean' and 'dirty', must be used to effect a speedy and successful conclusion to this campaign.



# SAVE THE NOLS REGIONS

The recent NOLS Conference narrowly passed proposals to abolish the Regional Committees of NOLS. This would severely limit the chance of Labour Clubs to participate in campaigns and political discussion; and would concentrate all power in NOLS in the hands of the National Committee, elected at NOLS Conference.

The NOLS regions, particularly those run by 'Militant' supporters, have run campaigns, organised day schools, issued regional newsletters and journals etc. There is little doubt that they have played an important part in building new Labour

**Alan Watson**

(Newcastle Poly Labour Club)

Clubs. NOLS is proposing to replace the Regional Committees, based on the NUS areas. Yet well over half of these would only have two clubs or less

participating, and clearly would not be viable, or able to organise any activity.

These proposals also turn NOLS away from the Labour Party, and towards NUS. They would make it more difficult for Labour Clubs to help in general elections, as there would be no co-ordination at regional level. 'Militant' supporters have always believed that NOLS should fight for socialist policies in NUS, but primarily NOLS' role is as the student wing of the Labour Party, aiming to build support for Labour in the colleges.

These proposals will be discussed by the NEC Youth Committee on February 13th. Every Labour Club committed to a democratic NOLS should send resolutions opposing these proposals to the NEC, and Joan Maynard MP, the Chairman of the NEC Youth Committee.

However, it is also very important that Labour Clubs ensure that Constituency Labour Parties pass resolutions on this. If Labour Clubs take this question seriously over the next month, then we can save the NOLS regions.

Dear Comrades,

At our last meeting, Vauxhall LPYS passed the following resolution:

**NOLS Regions**

"This LPYS branch believes that the National Organisation of Labour Students [NOLS] has a vital role to play in winning students to the Labour Party, and in building links between Labour Clubs and the Labour Party.

"This LPYS branch opposes the proposals of NOLS to disband the regions of NOLS. We believe that these

proposals would fundamentally weaken the links that exist between NOLS and the Labour Party. Also, because there would be no official links between NOLS and the Labour Party at regional level, it would be more difficult to organise the intervention of Labour Clubs in the general election.

"We therefore call on the NEC to reject these proposals."

Yours fraternally  
Peter Lush

Secretary, Vauxhall LPYS

## £20 GRANT FOR 6th FORMERS

The financial hardships being felt by many working class school students are in danger of worsening following recent moves by the government to back down on their proposals to introduce the Educational Maintenance Allowance.

This Allowance, aimed at helping 16-18 year olds stay on at school by paying them a £9 a week grant was promised by the government several months ago. It was widely reported that these grants would be made available to all 16-18 year olds by September 1979.

It now appears that the government is dropping these proposals and will instead introduce a much more restricted scheme. This is a terrible blow to many families struggling to support their teenage children at school.

At present many children leave school because of the financial difficulties which would result from staying on. The level of assistance given by the state is extremely limited at present. Local authorities do not have to provide grants to the 16-18 year old group as the law stands at present. 1974-75 saw only 2½% of the children staying on receiving any grant and these only averaged £2.50 a week.

### Lost opportunities

Children from low income families are therefore discouraged from staying on at school, or from going on to further education. They end up in dead end jobs with no qualifications or on the dole.

In a recent report in the 'Financial Times', Shirley Williams, the Education Minister, stated that only 17% of all 16-18 year olds were at school, and that less

**George Williamson**

than 10% were at college or other forms of further education. What an enormous waste of potential among the vast majority of young people in Britain today.

The Government partly recognised this fact when it drew up its plans to introduce the Educational Maintenance Allowance. It intended to make it compulsory for all local authorities to pay a £9 a week grant to all 16-18 year olds who stayed on for further education. This limited reform would undoubtedly have helped many working class children receive a better education, and would have meant a reduction in the level of unemployment in this age group.

### Policy change

The Government then had second thoughts about the idea, in view of the cost—£110 million. The need to maintain a 'balanced budget' obviously took precedence. When one considers the fact that the Government daily gives private industry £25 million a day in grants and tax concessions, it is clear that the short term interests of Big Business come before mere schoolchildren.

The Government decided to introduce a pilot scheme whereby only some local authorities would be asked to volunteer to try out the scheme instead of all local authorities being made to introduce it. This idea is preferable to the Government, costing only £15 million to introduce. This scheme though leaves out the overwhelming majority of the young people it originally intended to help, and quite clearly should be considered unacceptable by the labour movement. The Labour Party, and the broader movement should take up this issue.

A decent grant should be made available to all 16-18 year olds throughout the country, with no means testing.

It is up to the labour movement to fight for their childrens' and their childrens' childrens' interests now by demanding that the Labour Government immediately introduces a £20 Educational Maintenance Grant for all school students over 16. This would be a first step to providing working class students with a decent living wage.

The Department of Education estimate that if the original proposals were introduced, some additional 60,000 students would stay on at further education, and that 5,000 extra teachers would be required to meet the increased demand, and of course, the benefits of the education and the skills gained cannot be measured.

It is clear that it is the interests of the capitalist class which stand in the way of even the most modest reforms, and that even when legislation is passed, reforms will never be guaranteed, while these parasites control society. The only way the labour movement will ever be assured of decent social services like education, is by removing these people and their decrepit economic system and replacing it with a socialist planned economy run in the interests of all.

## MARK MORTON

For reasons of health, Mark Morton of Swansea University Labour Club has resigned from the NOLS national committee. He should now be replaced by Bob Sulatycki of Bristol ULC, the runner-up at NOLS conference for the minority place on the NC.

'Militant' supporters active in NOLS and the National Union of Students will want to thank Mark warmly for the tremendous work he has done on the NOLS NC over the past year.

We feel sure that Mark will be returning to full activity, and that we will see him taking new positions when he is fully recovered, which we hope will be soon.

**Peter Lush**

## BANTRY BAY TANKER EXPLOSION AVOIDABLE



The wreck of the 'Betelgeuse'

Another oil tanker disaster. 50 killed in Bantry Bay, Ireland, when the tanker 'Betelgeuse' exploded last week.

This comes at the end of a long list of disasters: 17 tankers have exploded in the last four years. Last year there were four major tanker disasters in Europe. Almost all could have been avoided but for corner-cutting and penny-pinching by oil companies and tanker owners.

As 'The Guardian' put it: "God does not ignite petroleum gas...to punish people...petroleum gas ignites itself only if subjected to heat...a spark...or pressure. Nor does God inspire a ships captain to leave the Smalls lighthouse to port when he should have left it to starboard." (9/1/79)

In other words the 'Betelgeuse' "accident" was avoidable. Systems for unloading oil tankers almost completely safely could have been installed for about £300,000, but under capitalism 50 lives are a cheap risk.

Some of the other recent 'disasters' were equally avoidable:—

The 'Amoco Cadiz' split in two, polluting miles of French coastline, ruining fishing grounds, at an estimated clearing up cost of £59 million. Yet this could probably have been avoided if the tanker captain (probably under higher instructions) had not spent hours arguing with salvage tugs about their charges, before accepting a tow...too late.

Then the 'Christas Bitas', which ran aground off the West Wales coast last

**Kevin Ramage**  
(LPYS National Committee, Wales)

October, polluting beaches for miles. Was it an 'accident' that the tanker was 'cutting a corner'? Again there was a fatal delay before tugs were engaged to take the tanker in tow, away from the coast.

Clearly the oil business is too dangerous to leave in the hands of corner-cutting, penny-grabbing oil companies. The next disaster may not only blow up a tanker, but also a depot or refinery and a town. The oil companies and shipping magnates have no concern for human life.

**MUTINY 1918**

by A Killick

First hand-account of workers' revolt at the end of the First World War

Price 10p (+5p. p&)  
Order from World Books  
1 Mentmore Terrace  
London E8 3PN



# LEFT & RIGHT

## A new friend for Thatcher

The television interview of Margaret Thatcher on 'Weekend World' recently may have horrified workers watching. One person to be very favourably impressed was the interviewer. He told 'Conservative News' [also admirers of course] that "I did not like Mrs Thatcher at first, but I began to realise how wrong I had been."

The interviewer conceded that the Iron Maiden was not staggeringly brilliant [true enough!]. But he thought she had excellent qualities. She was warm, friendly, compassionate, unsnobbish, feminine, sympathetic and so on.

Readers who find it difficult to accept the vision of Thatcher "warmly, compassionately and sympathetically" starving striking workers' families into submission may find it equally hard to believe that this enraptured interviewer, Brian Walden, was not long ago Labour MP for Birmingham Ladywood.

## Privilege for bureaucrats

The existence of large-scale inequality is only to be expected in a capitalist society. However, Lenin, Trotsky and the workers who fought for the abolition of the rule of the capitalists and landlords would be horrified at the inequalities rife in the USSR 60 years after the revolution. The German paper 'Der Spiegel' has shown some of the detail of the system of privilege for the bureaucratic rulers in that country. There is an elaborate hierarchy of privilege with, at the top, members of the Central Committee and Politburo of the Communist Party and other top government people who get, for example, access to the 'Kremlin share' which allows free food for themselves and their families. Compare this to the position of a normal worker's family of four who can expect to spend half their income on food.

The leading bureaucrats also get goods and food delivered to their homes and can choose from a range of exotic foods from shops in the government buildings. Little extras such as luxurious home made sweets make life more bearable for the officials who are of course also extremely well paid. Just like the capitalist class in the West, these bureaucrats are living on borrowed time. The workers in the USSR and Eastern Europe realise how little use they are. It is only a matter of time before a political revolution removes these cancers on society and allows the full advantages of the planned economy to come to the workers themselves.

## The professional scabs

The present wave of industrial disputes has brought with it a corresponding rash of suggestions as to how the ruling class can overcome the 'problem' [for them] of union strength. One outfit hoping to do just that is 'Self Help', or as it should be known 'Rent-a-Scab'. [Chairman, the Dowager Lady Birdwood, closely associated with the National Front.]

They have recently offered in a confidential memo to some of their affiliated members to replace the entire workforce of 'The Times' and the 'Sunday Times' with non-union labour with equal skills [or so they claim] and at less cost. They say they are already able to produce an emergency daily newspaper if there was a national stoppage, but to carry out their plans for 'The Times' they need more money. They suggest making out a loan to one of their associate companies, Hopequest Ltd., in the form of purchase of debenture stock. That way there is no need to reveal the gift, as is required under the Companies Act for any political donation over £50.

All very clever and nasty, and they have already been involved in the Grunwick dispute. But if the movement remains vigilant, there would be no chance of such a motley crew of professional scabs being able to seriously take on the many millions of organised labour.

# OXFORD IN THE 30'S A CRUCIAL VICTORY

The 1930s have been described as a period of survival for the labour movement with a depleted Labour Party, the trade unions suffering from the defeat of 1926 and crippling unemployment causing dreadful hardship and a spirit of dejection.

No such pessimism could be found in the talk of Dudley Edwards to the Oxford WEA Industrial Branch on 'The 1934 Pressed Steel Recognition Strike and Oxford in the Thirties'. The strike was an important step forward in the struggle to increase trade union membership not only in Oxford but in the whole motor industry.

The growth of the Oxford motor industry attracted the unemployed from all over the country. It was not unusual for as many as 500 impoverished workers to arrive in Oxford in one week seeking employment.

The American owned Pressed Steel Company factory, producing car bodies, was notorious for the terrible

working conditions. Locals, who could, refused to work there, preferring employment at the nearby Morris Motors. It was common place for men to start at the Pressed Steel in the morning and be sacked by mid-day.

For those who retained their employment work was very hard. Workers in the Press Shop risked personal industrial injury e.g. loss of fingers and in the long-term industrial deafness.

Wages were low and lack of work meant that the men were often expected to wait for work or be shut out on no pay. In an industry with fluctuating levels of demand for its products the workforce at Pressed Steel, drawn together from areas of traditionally high unionisation but declining industries knew only too well the need for trade unionism.

Unemployment and the problems it brings, however, were equally well known to the workforce and were an ever-present threat as open trade union recruitment could

have cost its advocates their jobs.

In 1934, still not unionised, the Press Shop workers walked out in a spontaneous revolt. Demands for increased wages and, after T&GWU recruitment outside the gate, trade union recognition were both subsequently ignored by the company. As the strike gathered strength, under the leadership of Abe Lazarus, a T&G organiser, and his supporters, the company resorted to a lock-out.

During this bitter struggle local meetings of up to 3,000 took place and houses of scabs were daubed with white paint.

Attempts were even made to use the army but some soldiers refused to break the strike. Even Oxford students helped with the picketing in contrast to their strike-breaking during the General Strike.

Such solidarity guaranteed victory to the workers and after nearly three weeks the Pressed Steel Company conceded to the workers' de-

mands for more wages and trade union recognition. A crucial struggle had been won although many more issues had to be fought for.

Today capitalism still continues to threaten what has been achieved. Dudley Edwards' message in conclusion was that capitalism is in crisis, yet again, and with the threat of unemployment all workers must unite and demand we move forward to a planned economy under socialism.

Unless we do, we are in danger of being forced back to the situation in factories such as Pressed Steel prior to 1934.

Militant supporters in Oxford are planning to produce Dudley's talk as a pamphlet.

**John Fray**

(Wheatley Labour Party)

# LUXURY AND WASTE

## Realities of the class war

**David Brandon of Peterborough Labour Party adds his own comment to our earlier article ['Militant' 436] on Harrods' exotic — fabulously expensive — merchandise.**

Readers with a sweet tooth will be saddened to hear that chocolate-covered bees are no longer stocked at this emporium.

If this has caused the bottom to drop out of your world, you may get some consolation from the fact that Harrods still stock one hundred brands of whisky and 450 different cheeses.

It's good to know that in this "property-owning democracy"—or "socialist state" as Maggie Thatcher insists on calling it—there are still the class of people about who can pay £375 for a dog kennel, who will buy a Christmas stocking bulging with goodies for the family Pussy or, if their taste in cats is a bit more exotic, a lynx for the girlfriend at around £50,000.

The rest of us will probably have to make do with a Harrods goldfish priced at 30 pence.

We are always being told that Britain needs to export more, so you'll be pleased that Harrods contributed £40 million to the export drive in 1977. A Los Angeles customer too busy (or too lazy) to pop over to Harrods himself for a spot of personal shopping ordered a 35 pence handker-

chief. The air freight charge was £17.50! But after all it was a Harrods handkerchief.

So it goes on: caviar from the Caspian at £90 per pound; a dinner service to set you back a mere £15,000; in the pet department the well-bred upper-class puppies guzzle their way through four meals a day of chicken and rice, beef, meal and vitamins; enough electricity is used to supply 5,000 families for a year, etc.

It's easy to go on ridiculing this world of spendthrift luxury and scandalous waste, but Marxists have a more serious purpose. The world of Harrods is one aspect of the reality of the society we live in where "freedom of choice" is a reality for only a tiny minority of the population.

The class war is not a figment of the Marxist imagination conjured up by a few greedy and envious extremists, but is etched into the harsh reality of the everyday experience of all working people. Leon Trotsky once said that the only people who deny the existence of the inequalities in capitalist society are those who benefit most of all from the existence of those inequalities them-



Shopping for luxuries

Photo: J McKittrick/Militant

elves.

Unfortunately, this reality—unremitting struggle for the mass of the workers and their families and a life-style of extravagant frippery for the rich 5%—doesn't seem to have filtered through to many of the present leaders of the labour movement who believe, in spite of all the evidence of the last 80 years, that capitalism can be changed into socialism simply by means of reforms in parliament.

As Marxists we must base

ourselves on the living fact of the class struggle, on all the social and economic problems which workers face in their everyday lives with the need to guarantee improved living standards and a better future for all sections of working class people.

Yes, all right, I can afford a couple of Harrods goldfish, but for comrades with a few pounds to spare, I would suggest a year's subscription to 'Militant' would be far better value.



# Social security for strikers:

# NAIL THE TORY LIES

Following Mrs Thatcher's rabid attack on strikers and her threat to cut off social security benefits to their families, the press have carried on with their pernicious anti-strike propaganda.

As we pointed out last week, leaving aside the fact that workers forced into dispute are quite entitled to claim benefits to support their families, the amount paid out is anyway negligible, and the overwhelming bulk of the finance to support strikers comes from their own pockets.

Now the Minister for Social Security, Stan Orme has admitted in a Press Conference on January 11th not only that Social Security fraud is a minute problem compared with the need to protect those eligible for benefits from the effects of a witch-hunt.

He also replied to Mrs

**By Roger Shives**

Thatcher's specific remarks on strikers and her threat to tax short term social security payments, pointing out that a trade unionist in dispute can only claim for support of his or her family, and stressing the disastrous effect Thatcher's proposals would have on the families concerned.

While it is all to the good



Mrs Thatcher: Labour must answer her distortions

Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant

that a government spokesman should at least partially defend the rights of ordinary working people, a few points need to be raised.

First of all, Mr Orme's statement is the only one to be

in the slightest sympathetic to the problems of the strikers. This snippet, hidden away in 'The Guardian' and hardly mentioned at all elsewhere by the Tory press, is completely overwhelmed by the barrage

of propaganda against social security payments for strikers.

When the leaders of the Labour government go on the television and radio, all their remarks are geared against the lorry drivers and other

sections of the working class who have been pressurised into industrial action by the crisis of capitalism and the policies of wage restraint put forward to try to cure it.

Not one word is uttered by members of a government elected by the hard work and goodwill of trade unionists to combat the lies and distortions of the press or the Tories.

There can be no question of the government ministers being ignorant of the truth about benefits for strikers. They know that workers mainly have to support themselves with some help from their unions in a dispute.

They know the enormous sums lost to the exchequer through tax avoidance and frauds which put any social security losses in the shade. They also know the real levels of wages of the workers they are attracting and the problems

Trade unionists and Labour Party members should demand that they use their access to the media, and their position in the movement to point out these facts; and that they also stop implementing Tory wage restraint policies and pay the workers a decent living wage.

## Under a Labour government .....

# THE RICH GET RICHER

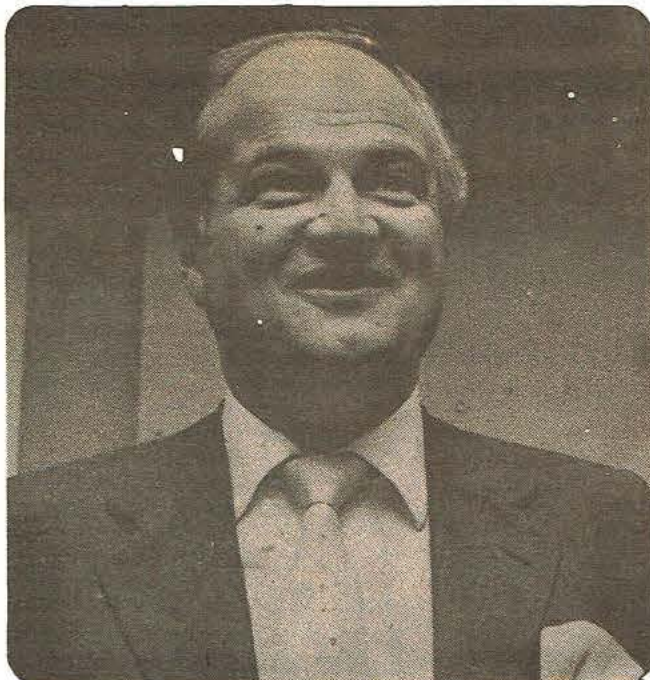
Over the years it has only been the presence of strong organisations of the working class that has obtained any real benefits for working people. They have ensured that at least some of the wealth of society has come the way of the workers who produce it.

But in Britain, the distribution of wealth (the ownership of shares, property, etc which ensure not only large sums of money, but control of the means of production) has stayed very unequal. All the evidence is that this inequality has been increasing over the last few years.

The figures include now for the first time such minor sources of wealth as houses. Despite this, the Inland Revenue statistics for 1978 show that half of the population assumed previously to own nothing are now estimated to own a mere 5.6% of the total.

Between 1971 and 1974, the decrease in the value of shares (the most important source of wealth) and the increase in the price of houses meant that the share of wealth of the top 1% went down from 30.5% to 22.5% and that of the top 10% from 65% to 57% (see table)

Doubtless few of our readers are weeping bitterly at the



Sir James Goldsmith, millionaire chairman of Cavenham Foods. No wonder he's smiling!

	1971	1974	1975	1976
Top 1 per cent	30.5	22.5	23.5	24.9
Top 2 per cent	38.7	29.6	30.5	32.5
Top 5 per cent	51.8	43.1	43.8	46.2
Top 10 per cent	65.1	57.5	58.0	60.6
Top 20 per cent	81.2	76.3	76.2	77.6
Top 25 per cent	86.5	83.6	83.3	84.0
Top 50 per cent	97.2	92.9	93.3	94.4
Bottom 50 per cent	2.8	7.1	6.7	5.6

Source: Inland Revenue estimates, published in Economic Trends, November 1978

## MANAGERS PROSPER

Inequality has not only increased in the distribution of wealth but also in wages and salaries paid over the last year. Not only has the pay of the very lowest paid workers gone up by less than the average increase, but a recent survey has shown that management salaries rose on average by 16.7% between the end of 1977 and the end of

1978. Over the same period clerical salaries went up by 14.9% and those of manual workers by only 9.1%.

The report by Reward Regional Surveys claims that the increase in management salaries was due to the "desperate need to improve rewards for increased responsibility, skill and innovation". Well, considering that

Reward Surveys have on their publishing board members of the Institute of Directors and the Institute of Personnel Management, they probably would think that.

So too would the people who could afford to fish out the £45 they charge for the survey. Workers stuck on the lowest level of wages may be more sceptical.

losses of the rich in Britain. But over the period of the Labour government, ironically this position has been reversed. Between 1974 and 1976 the richest 1% recovered their share from 22.5% to 25% and the top 10% from 57% to over 60%.

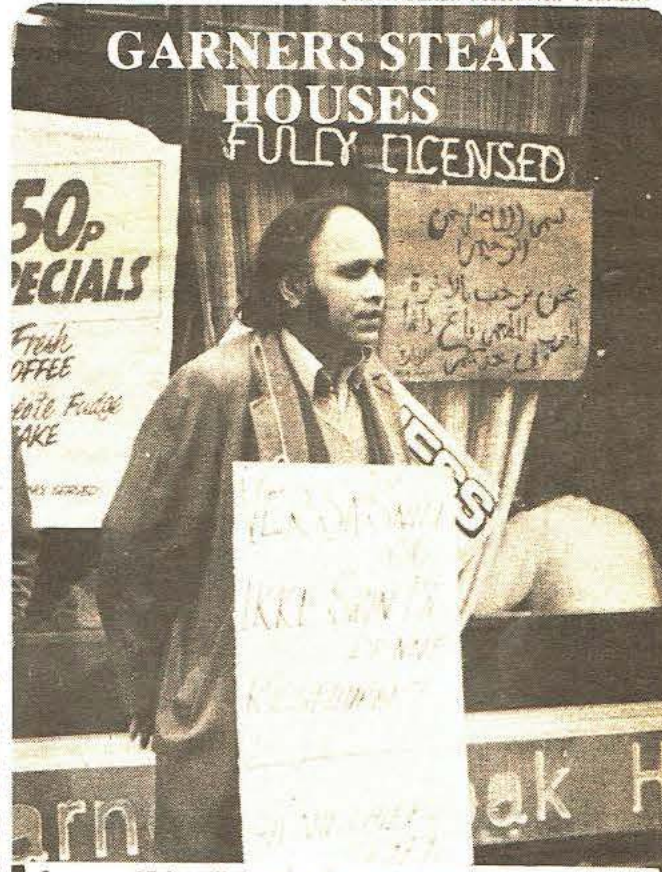
This has been caused by a rise in share prices, a drop in house prices and a low rate of interest in building society deposits which are the most common form of wealth owned by workers and the middle class.

This recovery has not been sufficient to quell the demands of the capitalist class, of course. They continue to demand that less of the wealth of the country goes in workers' wages and such luxuries as education, health and so on, and more to them. In the national interest of course.

And still is not a sufficient boost in their profits to make them invest in productive industry. The profit levels and the inequality of an earlier epoch are looked for by the bosses.

This search for higher profits and the inevitable resistance of the working class whose living standards this threatens will cause great clashes in the coming years.

Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant



January 27th will be the first anniversary of the bitter dispute at Garners Steak Houses in London. It is now a year since 84 scandalously low-paid workers were sacked for joining the Transport and General Workers Union. A picket will be held all day on 27th January at the 399 Oxford Street branch. We shall carry a longer article in next week's 'Militant'.

## CAPITALIST CRISIS

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By Andrew Glyn

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# ROCHDALE LOW PAY MEETING

## Breaking out of the vicious circle

Six million families—well over ten million people—are living in poverty in Britain today—and there are also eight million over 65, most of them poor.

This scandalous state of affairs was recently confirmed by the government's survey, 'Social Trends', which gives the latest figures [for 1976].

It reveals that 1,357,000 families live below supplementary benefit level and do not receive benefit. 2,610,000 families are on supplementary benefit and 2,040,000 families live within 20 per cent of SB level.

Because SB is based on absolutely bare essentials, the independent Low Pay Unit takes a figure 40% above SB as a more realistic base living standard. Their calculations indicate that 14,870,000 live on or very near to poverty... a quarter of the population.

This takes no account of the cut-backs that have been made in the 'social wage', in terms of health, education and other rights.

These figures—which were presented to a public meeting on low pay organised by Royton and Heywood Labour Party Women's section in December—are evidence of the fact that millions are forced to live in a vicious circle of poverty, the main cause of which is the scandalously low wages paid by too many employers.

The Women's Section took up the question of low pay because our involvement in the fight to keep Bright's Nursery open (reported earlier in 'Militant') showed quite clearly that inadequate nursery provision and low-pay conditions work on each other—in favour of the bosses.

Men's low wages force women into jobs where they're highly exploited, but which fit as nearly as possible (far from well, on the whole!) with looking after the kids.

The main issue of most nursery campaigns—and the ones picked up by the media—is that of unequal opportunity: women cannot follow further or higher education courses, or enter into long-term planning of a



Report by  
Sheila Woodhead  
(Royton and  
Heywood  
Labour Party  
Women's Section)

career, without the safe knowledge that when they choose to have children, there will be adequate back-up services.

Important though this is, it's the tip of the iceberg!

For the majority of working women, whether they work or not is not a matter of choice. They are forced out to work by economic circumstances, and inadequate child-care services are a source of anxiety and guilt.

Among workers, nursery provision isn't seen as a women's issue. Half our parents are men, who see the way women with children are doubly exploited and used to keep all wages at low levels.

### Exploited

That's why equal numbers of men and women attended our December meeting and heard Geoff Stout—of Bradford, remind us of the halcyon days of the fifties, when the Rowntree Trust studies assured us that poverty had vanished forever from the British scene.

There were many then who could give the lie to these conclusions, but now millions of low paid workers stand in direct contradiction to the optimistic claims of capitalism.

One speaker told of her experiences since her husband—a baker—came out on strike for a reasonable wage increase. She earns £47 gross as a hospital worker, and she has three children still at school. Her rent in a council house is a staggering £18.70 a week, and among life's essentials, school dinners cost £3.75p.

Believing all the myths about the sorts of benefits available to strikers, her husband went to see if he was entitled to any Social Security, since he had young children and no strike pay.

He was not entitled to a penny because his wife works.

...not even from free school meals. The prospects for Christmas that faced this family need not be spelled out. A collection taken at the meeting offered small comfort, but could do nothing to alter the basic situation.

Her husband has been combing the streets rag-gathering to try to help this woman make ends meet, but she felt she was drowning under the weight of it all. Yet, she saw how important it was that the strike succeeded, and recognised how the circumstances she was in were calculated to force men like her husband to submit and accept inadequate wages as a fact of life.

Another speaker from St. Helens told of a friend, who because of children hasn't been able to find a job. She has found employment, involves the children in the work, while she prepares meals etc., and earns about £15 per week. She realises she is being ruthlessly exploited, but that £15 keeps the wolf from the door, and that is her only choice.

Other speakers told of bar-staff who earn £1.50 to £2—depending on the area—for a full night's work that ends well after the last customer has left.

That's why there must be a minimum wage of £70, tied to a cost of living index worked out by Trade Unions and housewives, for a 35-hour week. With reasonable wages, few workers would choose to work overtime, and this would immediately cut down on unemployment. The penalties for those parasites who pay less than the minimum wage rates at present should be made to bite...and not to be mere token slaps on the wrist.

If the CBI says—as it will—that it can't afford to pay decent wages tied to a shorter working week, then the whole labour and trade union movement has a duty to insist that we can no longer



The campaign to save Bright's nursery showed up the problems of low pay photo: J McKittrick/Militant

afford capitalism.

The 'Rochdale Observer' (11 November 1978) reported that "Despite a near £2 million fall in turnover, the Rochdale-based John Bright Group has more than doubled first half profits." This against a background of lay-offs, short-time working and plans to close the nursery upon which so many mothers depend, because it's losing money.

This is surely a microcosm of the British economic scene, and has generated real anger and frustration among work-

ers. How the hell can a company that proclaims itself to be in such a bad shape and which is creating enormous hardships among its workers double its profits?? Out of our pockets, that's how! Temporary Employment Subsidy, interest relief, etc...not efficiency ... mean that Bright's shareholders continue to do very nicely thank you.

And in gratitude to the Labour government—which has made all this possible, a grant was made, as usual, to Tory Party funds.

We are paying the cost of inefficient control of industry, as well as providing for the more successful organisations to gamble abroad, and to invest for immediate profit rather than for the long-term future security of British industry.

The only real answer lies in the workers having the control and management of industry and the economy, so that all aspects can be planned, through a socialist plan of production.

# NO REWARD FOR DEDICATION

Throughout the country, hospital employees and other low paid workers find their dedication very poorly rewarded. Here is just one example. John Pickard spoke to a telephonist at Gateshead Hospital.

In the telephone room I talked to Tot, one of the telephonists. During the whole interview, the two telephonists on duty were never free, the phones were going constantly.

We have to work 4 regular shifts: 6-2, 2-10, and 10-6 with the 8-5 shift as

an extra man to cover the busiest period. Only the man on the 8-5 shift gets an hour break for lunch.

No time is allowed for a break on the other three shifts. All that is provided is a kettle; and we are supposed to make ourselves a cup of something. And that's while

we're taking an average 2,000 calls a day, often without any relief. The 8-5 shift only applies Monday to Friday; after 5pm and at weekends there is only one telephonist.

There have been cardiac arrests or even fires breaking out just when the operator has happened to go to the toilet!

The telephone is only one part of the job. We're manning the switchboard, with 216 extensions and 22 exchange lines, we have to watch the fire alarm panel, watch the signal lamps for the

operating theatre so that we can call for fresh oxygen and gas when the cylinders are empty.

### Responsibility

Then there is the blood bank alarm, the radiography alarm, and the key racks for various departments. There are 100 hospital staff with personal beepers who we have to bleep when they are needed.

On top of all this, we were asked recently if we would

watch three TV monitors on the main gates to see who is coming in and going out—as if there wasn't enough already! We need more operators as it is without having new jobs pushed onto us.

Thirty years ago we had a switchboard with only 50 extensions and three outside lines. Then, we had four operators. Now, with our 216 extensions and all the added jobs, we only have five operators. We had to fight for years to get the extra 8-5 weekday shift.

We are responsible for a town of a quarter of a million people. We work shifts around the clock, and three weekends out of five—for buttons.

I know a telephone supervisor in the area who is in charge of a 1,000-extension board with 12 operators and she only takes home £34.40 a week!



# STOP THIS WASTE

## ARMS SKILLS MUST BE SWITCHED TO USEFUL PRODUCTION

### John Pickard reviews the Vickers shop stewards plans for alternative products.

Up to 100,000 jobs in Britain are directly dependent on export contracts with Iran, the bulk of them in the armaments industry.

The Tory press and, unfortunately, even some leaders of the Labour Party have used this as justification for supporting the reactionary regime in that country, arguing that "there would be 100,000 more unemployed" without the arms contracts.

Now some of the workers concerned have produced a crushing refutation of that argument. **Vickers National Combine Committee of Shop Stewards** have produced an excellent document that outlines the case for alternative, socially useful products to replace the manufacture of tanks.

The document describes the run-down of British mechanical engineering and the decline of Vickers itself. At the Elswick works in Newcastle, there were 12,250 workers in 1939 and only 1,850 last year. "There used to be 50 pubs along the

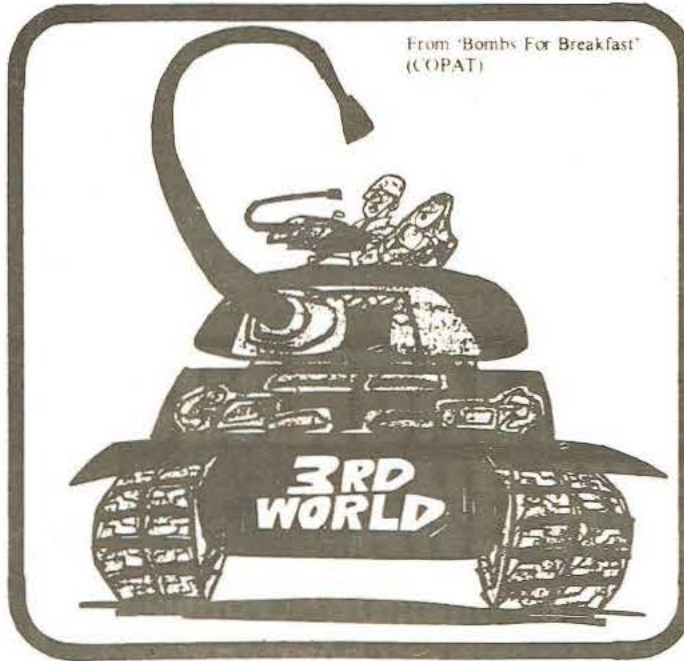
Scotswood Road with names like the 'Rifle', the 'Gun', or the 'Ordnance Arms'. Today there are only six."

The document explains that in the recent decades the expansion of Vickers and the increases in profits have been due to "financial diversification"—in other words the take-over of other industries and companies, without real development in mechanical engineering itself. "Increased profits have been achieved in the short-run through the elimination or run-down of older plants rather than through the modernisation and innovation."

#### Instability

Despite popular views to the contrary, the Vickers shop stewards show that employment in defence work is very insecure. The run-down in jobs speaks for itself. But the future is equally unsure.

Despite manufacturing the most advanced tank in the world, competition and obsolescence are looming in the future. The main direction of the arguments points to the instability and unreliability of the industry itself,



but the Vickers shop stewards are by no means blind to the nature of the regimes served by the Chieftain tank. Indeed, the two factors are related: "The repressive nature of these (Middle East) regimes is associated with political instability."

What could be clearer proof than the revolutionary developments in Iran?

Past ventures by Vickers into civilian products like tractors and earth-moving equipment have not been successful because, the shop stewards argue, the management have preferred the

cosier, easier-to-come-by defence contracts. Any struggle to diversify into new products would need management with imagination and dynamism, both of which are lacking at Vickers. Yet skill abounds in the work-force itself. British industry is de-skilled, but the arms sector is less so. "While ordnance represents a rather small proportion of the total output of the mechanical engineering industry, 60% of the design engineers and scientists working in the industry are engaged in military work." An astonish-

ing fact!

The shop stewards' document outlines the skills, the resources, and the markets available and comes up with a long list of products that could be made in the Elswick works as an alternative to tanks. The list includes machine tools, mining machinery, pumps and canal structures, barges, earth-moving equipment, agricultural equipment, refuse recycling plants, brewing equipment, and so on.

#### New jobs

The document argues that the manufacture of alternative products would depend on structural change in the management of the industry itself—to eliminate the hierarchical and stagnant management that exists at the moment. Although the document itself speaks of workers' participation, the ideas it puts forward clearly point in the direction, in fact, of nationalisation and workers' management.

Quite apart from the fact that the Vickers shop stewards have produced their document at an opportune moment, it should be welcomed as a serious step along the road to creating a socialist consciousness among the mass of workers in Britain. It is an answer to all those who think that "the workers

cannot run anything".

Even without access to all the economic and technical information available to the management, the shop stewards have shown in their document that, as a body, they would be quite capable of running the company—in the workers' interests.

Over 6% of Britain's gross national product (nearly £7,000 million) is being currently squandered on arms production, which is completely useless from the point of view of the working class. The Labour movement has repeatedly demanded that these vast sums be spent on social and welfare and socially

**This year nearly £7,000 million of Britain's gross national product will be squandered on arms production and defence. It is time to implement Labour Party policy and end this colossal waste. The jobs involved must be protected by switching skills and resources to socially-useful production and services.**

# THE TORNADO IS COMING -

ANI  
US ]

### The Tornado is coming—in this case not a whirling meteorological phenomenon but a man-made instrument of destruction.

It is the so called Multi Role Combat Aircraft recently unveiled in Britain by the RAF, and presumably equipped with its picturesque name to lend more romantic overtones to its lethal capabilities.

It is certainly a remarkable aircraft. Although quite small, it can carry twice the bomb load of a world war two Lancaster bomber. To deliver its murderous payload, it can fly at twice the speed of sound. To elude radar and missiles, it is equipped with "terrain-hugging radar" allowing supersonic low-level flight.

However, leaving aside some fundamental queries (who will use it? to bomb what? To defend whose interests?) we come to its

By Lynn Walsh

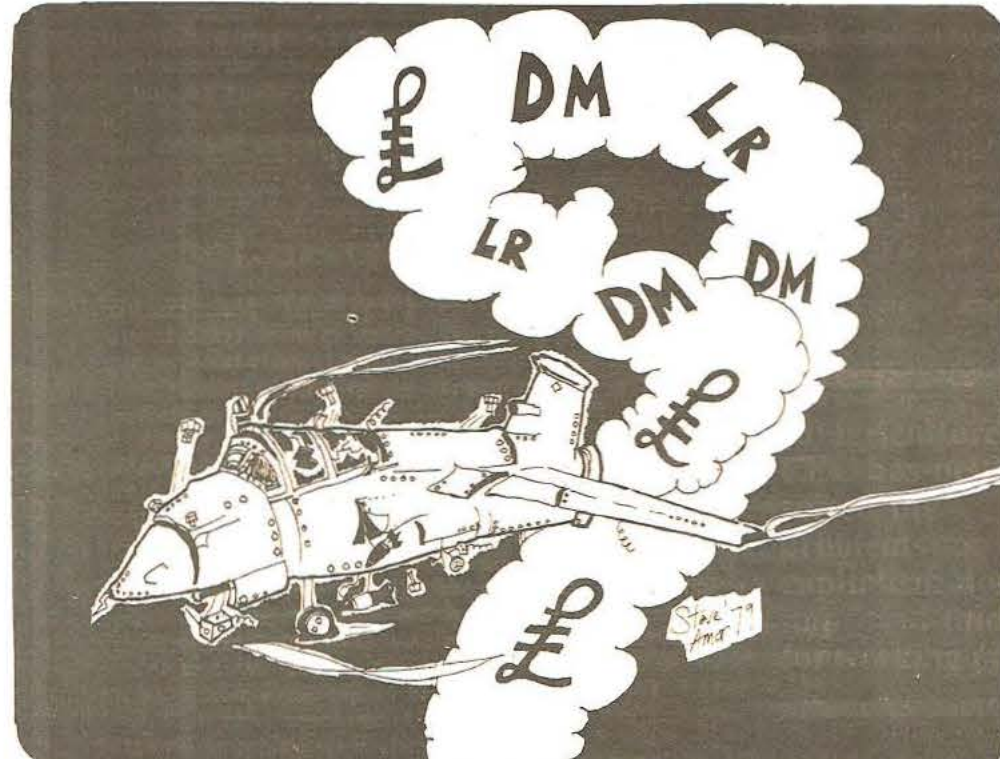
most remarkable feature—its astronomical price.

One 'ordinary' version of this airborne technological masterpiece will cost an almost unbelievable £7.8 million. And the RAF is to order 220!

#### Massive bill

But not satisfied that these will be sufficient for the ruling class's defence, the top brass at the air ministry intend to order an additional 155 of the more advanced 'air defence version' of the Tornado. These will cost a mere £9.4 million each.

Add this lot up and it



#### TSR.2 Again?

Remember the TSR-2? That military aircraft was scrapped by the Labour government in 1965 after its cost escalated from an estimated £80 million in 1959 to £750 million. It still cost another £125 million in cancellation charges.

Dennis Healey, then Minister of Defence, claimed that the TSR-2 was burdened by a super-abundance of technical ideas and was too complicated to be of any military use in practice. Well, now the history of the TSR-2 is being re-written in the Tornado.

An Anglo-German-Italian joint project, its costs have risen from a mere £1.7 million

a plane [in 1970] to £7.9 million a plane [for the ordinary version].

Amazingly, the Tornado is supposed to replace seven existing types of aircraft now in operation. One critical expert has described the Tornado as the "egg-laying, wool-producing, milk-giving sow".

Its sponsors and makers

have admitted "snags—many experts claim it will never be made operational. Yet the RAF—at our expense—will be buying 385 over the next few years—at an expected total "life-cycle" cost about nine times greater than the RAF's current budget for the procurement of aircraft and missiles.

comes to over £3,000 million—a massive bill which we will have to pay through taxation over the next few years. And we are being asked to pay for these aircraft (which for all their technological sophistication are about as useful as 'crap metal' at a time when public spending on vital services like health, education, and welfare has been ruthlessly slashed.

£9,000m

For the price of one 'ordinary' Tornado 650 patients could be provided with life-saving kidney machines!

Half a dozen Tornados will soak up as much cash as the Medical Research Council currently gets for its annual grant.

But the buying price is not half of it. It is estimated that the production costs of these airborne monsters is actually



# EEC COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

## OBJECTS

useful production.

Clearly, however, when 200,000 jobs depend directly on arms production and another 70,000 indirectly, it is essential to plan for alternative employment for the workers concerned. The Vickers shop stewards (following the example of the Lucas shop stewards) have clearly outlined how the skilled manpower and resources of the new industry could be effectively re-orientated.

Labour Party and LPYS branches should get copies of the document, and a similar one produced in relation to Vickers' shipbuilding interests at Barrow, and should raise the matter in the movement. Just as the Lucas Plan became the policy of the Labour Party by the debate at conference, so too the Vickers documents deserve political support.

The two documents are:

[1] *Building a Chieftain Tank and the Alternative* by Vickers National Combine Committee of Shop Stewards.

[2] *Alternative Employment for Naval Shipbuilding Workers: A case study of the resources devoted to the production of the ASW Cruiser, Vickers Barrow.*

## WILL COST DEARLY

only about a third of their total 'life-cycle' costs, i.e. the cost of maintaining them and keeping them operational.

In other words, the total cost of the RAF buying and running its proposed 375 Tornados will be over £9,000 millions at current prices! By a sickening coincidence, this is just about the amount that would be needed to restore all the public spending cuts made by the Labour government since 1974.

When it comes to the health, education and welfare of working people big business remorselessly demands cuts. When it concerns their vital interests—defending their property and their power—no amount is too much for Britain's ruling class—even though all their weaponry put together is like a peashooter compared to the armaments of the American and Russian super-powers.

Labour ministers claim they have made cuts in defence spending, too. Yet they have now authorised the expenditure of £9,000m on the Tornado over the next few years! It is time that the commitment of Labour's Manifesto to drastic defence cuts was implemented in reality. And the complete scrapping of the Tornado would be as good a start as any.



## SCANDALOUS SURPLUSES AND HIGH PRICES

French wine-growers protesting at CAP farm regulations which adversely affected them.

Recently, 'Militant' [8 December] analysed the disarray in the EEC and posed the need for the labour movement to fight for a Socialist United States of Europe.

This week, in the first of two articles, John Cantwell examines the chaos in European agriculture and its adverse effects on working people.

No one can be indifferent to the price of food. The average family in Britain spends 20% of its weekly income on food, and low-income working class families have to spend an even higher proportion, often over 30%, to keep themselves adequately fed.

The effect of the EEC on food prices is therefore a matter of key importance. In 1978, Britain's participation in the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is estimated to have put at least an extra 12% on food prices in the shops.

The Cambridge Economic Policy Review calculates that because of CAP Britain last year paid about £300 million more for its food than it would have paid at market prices outside the EEC.

Butter, for instance, cost £1,630 a tonne in the EEC in 1978 while even a high estimate of the world market price was £900 a tonne.

The Cambridge Review also estimates that Britain made a net contribution of £660 million of the EEC last year—that is, Britain was £660 million worse off as a result of EEC membership. One of the main reasons for Britain's disproportionately high contribution is that this country imports a significantly higher proportion of its food than other EEC countries.

As we showed in our earlier features on the EEC, higher food prices have certainly not been compensated for by other economic gains. CAP is thus one of the most negative aspects of the EEC as far as

workers are concerned.

How does CAP work? Why is it so expensive? Why is it such a bone of contention among the EEC member states? We must try to cut through the mind-boggling complexity of the system and unearth its basic features.

Before Britain joined CAP in 1973 there were, of course, farm subsidies in this country. Then, however, farmers sold their products at market prices; if these were lower than the agreed 'support' price, the government paid them the difference (a 'deficiency' payment) as a subsidy.

Under that system, for instance, the availability of large quantities of relatively cheap butter from New Zealand kept down the price at which home-produced butter was sold in the shops.

Under CAP, however, a common price is fixed by the EEC Commission for all farm products. This is nearly always above—in many cases way above—the world price, because European farming, though mostly quite efficient in terms of productivity, is relatively costly. Labour and transport costs, for instance, are generally much higher than in the non-European countries which traditionally concentrate on large-scale food production for export.

From the beginning, CAP was designed to protect European farmers from the world market, providing them with guaranteed incomes through fixed prices, and keeping out cheaper food products by high EEC external tariffs. When Britain joined the EEC the export of relatively cheap butter from



Big subsidies for EEC-produced foods mean higher prices in the shops

New Zealand and sugar from the Caribbean, for instance, had to be phased out in favour of EEC-produced products—at higher prices.

The fixed price system means that the farmers' subsidies are recouped through higher shop prices.

**In agriculture, the EEC has neither solved the problems for capitalism nor improved things for working people.**

placing a particular burden on working-class families, who are forced to spend a high proportion of their income on food. Under the old deficiency payment system, subsidies were financed through general taxation, which at least meant that low-income families bore the least burden of the subsidies.

The expensive CAP system was adopted originally for

political reasons. French big business was still hampered by the high proportion of population still working on the land, and wanted a system which would facilitate the rapid modernisation of agriculture. If the more prosperous, capitalist farmers could be feather-bedded with lucrative subsidies, the exodus of the less fortunate rural families to the towns could be accomplished without serious political repercussions.

The other EEC states had less to gain from the CAP set-up, but they were prepared to accept it as the price of their access to the markets of France and the EEC as a whole. This was especially true of West Germany, the most powerful industrial economy of the original Six.

But CAP has become increasingly more expensive, has produced more and more glaring contradictions, and has inevitably led to serious quarrels between the nine states of the enlarged EEC.

High fixed prices for various products—often determined by the strength of particular farming lobbies—give farmers a big incentive to

produce—regardless of the demand. Two-thirds of the EEC Commission's budget is absorbed by CAP—yet the Commission has little control over this expenditure, because it cannot determine what farmers will produce!

At the same time, high subsidies through fixed prices automatically mean high prices in the shops—thus depressing demand from shoppers. It is this mechanism—which eliminates any of the rational effects the market mechanism may have had in the past—which explains the EEC's huge surpluses—the butter 'mountain', the skimmed milk 'mountain', the milk 'lake', the wine 'lake', and so on.

While the food products of under-developed countries are excluded by the EEC's high tariff wall, the EEC itself is obliged to try to sell of its "mountains" and "lakes" to countries outside the Nine at prices far below those being paid by consumers inside the EEC.

Meanwhile, countless millions in the under-developed world are dying from starvation! Could anything show more vividly the irrationality, the grotesque wastefulness, of capitalist Europe?

Since the world recession of 1974/75, however, even the stronger EEC economies like West Germany have been forced to try to remove some of the more expensive absurdities of CAP. British big business, in particular, which reluctantly accepted CAP as the price of EEC entry, has resisted the systematic application of EEC agricultural policy to this country—and on one issue and another, the other eight have for their own reasons sided with Britain's spokesmen.

But the main reason for conflict over CAP between the Nine has been the growing divergence between their economies—which are now greater than when the EEC was formed.

**Next week in Part II we will examine the results of these national differences, the fiction of 'common' prices, the complexities of the so-called 'green' money—and put the socialist alternative.**



## GERMANY

# 'Now that the economic "miracle" is over'

By an 8% majority German steelworkers last week voted to end their strike. The narrow majority is an indication of the fight against the leadership that will now go on within the I G Metall steel union. As last week's article on Germany indicated, whole layers of activists have drawn fighting lessons from their recent struggle.

The strike has opened up a new period for the German labour movement, as new sections move into action.

The cracks within the unions and the SPD have developed over a period. Increasingly workers are questioning what has been gained by 12 years of SPD coalition governments.

The following article shows where the policies of class compromise have led. It is the second part of an article translated from the West German Marxist paper 'Vorán' [first part 'Militant' 5th January]. It begins with the SPD in coalition with the German Tories [CDU/CSU] and with the country making a partial economic recovery from the crisis of 1966/67.

Recovery from the 1966/67 crisis was attributed by the Party leadership to the 'dynamic' policies of the Economics Minister Karl Schiller. The illusion that through his policies the living standards of the workers could be constantly improved found expression in the Nuremberg Party Conference document 'Perspectives for the 70s', which formed the basis for the 1969 parliamentary election campaign.

In this a whole range of long overdue reforms were promised: tax reform, training and leave, workers participation, tenants' rights. The perspective was one of full employment, just distribution of income and wealth and continued economic growth. This would be coupled with currency stability, international economic balance and growing incomes: "The basis of a productive social policy is to guarantee the citizen a regular improvement in wages."

The economic/political foundation of these 'perspectives', even represented a backward step from the 1958 Godesberg Programme which had still declared as a central task 'control over the power of big business'. In the 1969 perspectives, however, there was talk only of making 'the consequences of the monopolisation process bearable' and of demanding 'economically necessary amalgamations'.

Hans-Gerd  
Öfinger  
(Editor of  
'Vorán')

In the meantime individual layers of the working class had moved into action again—having been roused by unemployment and short-time working, and a recognition that it was the employers who had profited from the crisis. In September 1969, there was a series of 'spontaneous strikes' in many sectors of industry.

At the same time the late 60s were characterised by a surge in the student movement, taking along with it many politically progressive sections of the youth, apprentices and young workers. This general radicalisation, strengthened the SPD further and gave it 42.7% of the vote in the 1969 parliamentary elections. These election results enabled the formation of an SPD/FDP coalition government—the 'social-liberal' Brandt/Scheel government.

## SPD in office

After 20 years of governing the CDU/CSU were forced into opposition. The transfer of parliamentary power into the hands of the social democratic leadership boosted the hopes and expectations of the SPD voters in radical and thoroughgoing reforms.

But the awaited 'new-beginning' never came. A whole series of welcome social reforms were certainly introduced—precautionary health check-ups, the first municipal health insurance schemes, improved pension-rights, extension of statute accident insurance, improved tenancy-protection—but many ambitious projects remained on paper.

Simultaneously prices rose, eating into the real wages of the workers. Schiller's 'Concerted Action' attempted to restrain wage rises, but opposition to price increases grew. In 1970 there were a whole series of unofficial strikes, and in 1971 the North Württemberg / Nordbaden metal workers led a determined strike demanding an 11% wage rise.

The results of the regional (state) elections between 1970 and 1972 revealed that the



Schmidt: The present and the past



Luxemburg: The past and the future

government did not enjoy the enthusiasm of the electors: the SPD could register no real electoral gains, but rather, in a number of instances, suffered defeats.

The SPD-led government went along with the CDU/CSU when the latter used the terrorist activities of the Baader-Meinhof group as a pretext for strengthening the law and organs of the state (eg. equipping the border guard for internal deployment). In January '72 Willy Brandt signed the so-called 'Decree against radicals', which has since resulted in hundreds of 'radicals', including 'difficult' social-democrats, being unable to get or keep their public service jobs. This has achieved notoriety under the name of 'Berufsverbot'.

The year 1972 saw an important change in the situation. The day after the disappointing State elections in Baden-Württemberg, the CDU/CSU, strengthened by a number of MPs who defected from the SPD and FDP, saw a chance to bring down the Brandt government by a vote of no confidence.

The workers in the industrial areas lost no time in reacting. In many places mass rallies for Willy Brandt were spontaneously organised and literally everything ground to a halt. The organised workers recognised that it was necessary to reply to the offensive of the capitalists and to defend the social-democrat led government from the CDU/CSU. After the failure of the CDU/CSU offensive there were spontaneous celebrations on the shop floor.

The disappointments were forgotten, in the face of a threatened backward step in the form of a CDU/CSU government. Enthusiasm was re-awakened. In the week of the vote of no confidence alone, the SPD gained 60,000 new members. Workers and the youth came together in order to strengthen their party and to help in its victory at the following November '72 polls.

An important reason for this victory lay in the fact that, faced with this attack by Capital in favour of the CDU/CSU, the leading SPD comrades themselves attacked the wealthy anonymous backers with radical words. The election programme decided upon in October offered extensive reforms and wide layers of the population were swept along with the wave of enthusiasm so that at a record 90% poll the SPD gained almost 46% of the votes, winning a clear majority in the constituencies.

## Reforms?

But the new mood amongst SPD supporters and the organised workers in general was not to continue for long. It soon became very clear that the party leadership had not used the wide-scale mobilisation of November to carry through a transformation in opposition to big business. All those who had seen in an SPD victory a fundamentally new and better future were, in effect, given a box on the ears.

In Willy Brandt's govern-

ment declaration of January 1973, the workers were called upon to tread carefully and told that restraint would be necessary to achieve economic growth. The conflict between the government and workers became even more apparent in August and September 1973. Workers in numerous factories spontaneously struck for cost of living bonuses—in many cases successfully. "This is not the time for higher demands", Willy Brandt said on TV and radio in an attempt to restrain the workers.

As the living standards of the workers were further eroded, the hopes of many trade unionists for a qualified form of workers' participation remained unfulfilled, and this was reflected in the regional election results from 1974 onwards. Results in Lower Saxony and Hamburg demonstrated: Only a few former SPD voters went over to the CDU, most of them didn't vote, disappointed with SPD government policies but seeing no real alternative.

When in 1974 Willy Brandt resigned and Helmut Schmidt became Chancellor, he made it quite clear in his government declaration that no new large-scale reforms could be expected. Only two years after the great election victory that was to introduce a better future, unemployment passed the million mark.

Appeals for restraint the likes of which had only clearly been heard from CDU Chancellor Erhard now came from the lips of Helmut Schmidt: Workers should renounce some of their wage rises so that the employers could

invest more and create new jobs since "the profits of today are the investment of tomorrow and the jobs of the day after tomorrow."

## Unemployment

Since then unemployment has not fallen below a million and the good old days of the 'golden 60s' are over. But from the mouth of our Party leader we have heard only a variety of appeals for restraint and excuses.

Unemployment means for the state, and in general a loss of millions annually (through unemployment benefits, lost taxes, and lost production) and in addition millions further are lost to the bosses in the form of subsidies and endless concessions. The deficit in the domestic budget for 1978 is in excess of DM30,000 million. New debts climb steadily to staggering levels. Sooner or later there will be attempts to balance the growing state deficit. Big business knows well enough that under present circumstances the SPD/FDP government doesn't constitute a threat to the rule of profit, for two reasons.

Firstly the small party of capitalism, the FDP, sits in the cabinet and determines the course of government and secondly a significant section of the capitalist class see that the present party leadership have a greater fear of a mobilised working class than of the blackmail of the bosses' organisations. Therefore many employers appear to be right in thinking that it is a good thing for the SPD to



# SOUTH AFRICA/TURKEY

## SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINES:

# "ALL THAT GLISTENS IS PROFIT"

share the government as before, since they are better assured of the organised workers being disciplined. It can only please them that the SPD is seen to be responsible for the crisis, when it is the capitalist system which is solely responsible.

### Future

More and more party members and supporters of the SPD are now asking themselves where our party stands and how it should go forward from here. The policies being pursued today and throughout the post-war period by the party leadership suggest that it is necessary only to remove the bad teeth of the capitalist system and then grant reforms on the basis of constant growth.

For how else can we explain why the policies being pursued by these leaders fail to take account of the conditions and needs of the 70s?

The living standards of the mass of the people have fallen, unemployment has become a long-term feature and the welfare state is in ruins. This is the reality of Germany today. Pragmatic tinkering within the bounds 'of the possible' has not taken us any further forward. What does 'possible' even mean? Under capitalism even the simplest of things are impossible—decent housing, work, a living wage—are for many a dream.

The Marxists and the paper 'Vorwärts' have unfortunately been proved correct when almost alone, years ago they warned of these developments. The reformist policies of social democracy are grounded in growth and full employment. Every reform in the interest of the worker, apprentice, young person or pensioner, stands and falls within the narrow limits imposed by capitalism. The capitalist system must not be a holy cow, enjoying every mad freedom and doing what it wants with us. If this cow can no longer give us decent milk but turns round and kicks us, then it's high time to slaughter it.

If the SPD leadership doesn't realise soon that its task does not lie with the cosmetics of capitalism but with its abolition and the attainment of a socialist society then a fateful future threatens the party and the entire working class. The hopes for a socialist future rest in the hands of the ranks of the workers' movement and SPD membership. Many SPD members are now gradually beginning to formulate key, political demands. Unavoidably they will lead to socialist demands, reviving once again the old traditions of Marxism in German social democracy.

The lives of black miners in South Africa come cheap. In December a mine flooded and 41 black miners perished.

They were not the first miners to die. In the last 40 years over 20,000 Africans have lost their lives in gold-accidents alone.

Profits, however, are not so cheap. In 1977 gold mines made a modest \$2 billion profit for their owners. The profits made were greater than the total wages bill—possibly a unique situation for any industry, worldwide.

The first nine months of 1978 saw foreign holders of South African gold shares obtain \$1 a share in dividend.

The African workers are not so fortunate. They have to work a mile below the surface in intense heat. For their labours they get £500 a year. The wealth they produce does not only help the parasites in South Africa and the West to live a more fruitful, indolent life. It also helps maintain the

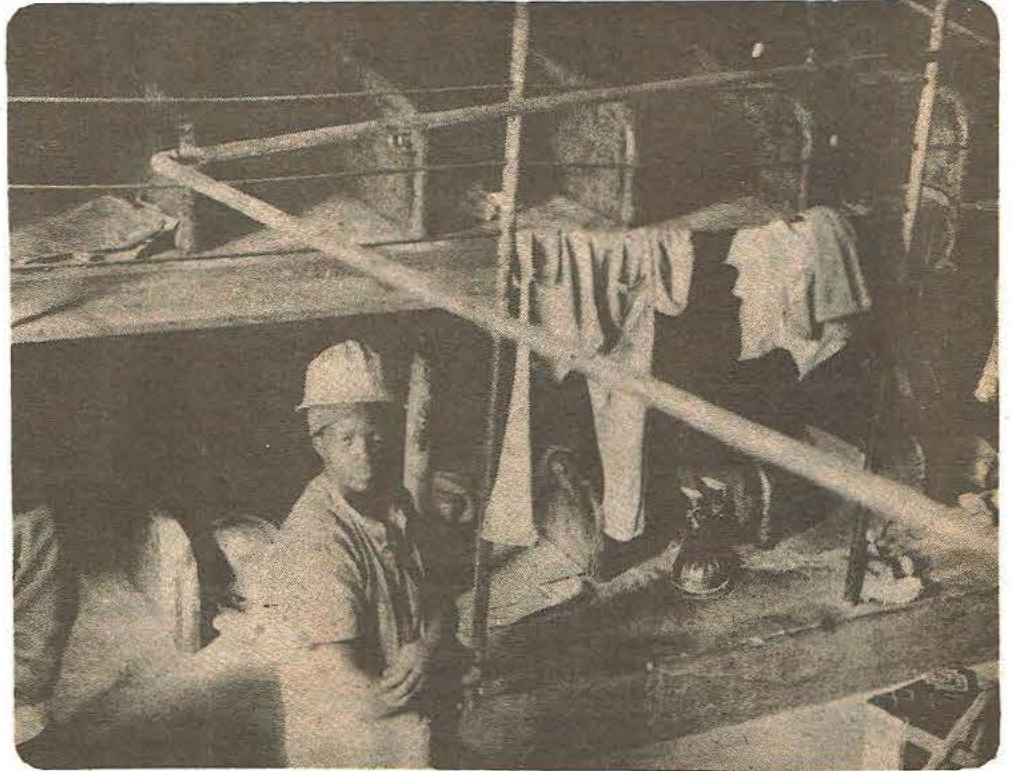
**Jim  
Christie**

very system that represses them.

In 1977 gold accounted for 45% of South Africa's exports, and 17% of its Gross National Product. Without gold, the South African trade deficit would have been \$3 billion each year for the last four years.

Apartheid also needs the profits from gold to fuel its military machine; in 1977 gold raised over \$1 billion in taxes for the South African regime.

But the future for the South African regime is not so rosy. Recent months have seen a



'One bunk, one miner...many revolts'

number of protests by black miners. Recalling the heroic nine-day miners strike of 1946, the African mineworkers have staged a number of demonstrations and stoppages of work.

These struggles have international implications for 200,

000 of the 360,000 black miners come from neighbouring African countries.

Cheap their lives may be at present. Appalling their working conditions and horrific their deaths. But from amongst them will come the forces to sweep away capitalist

oppression in the sub-continent. The black working class of Southern Africa, doubly oppressed by class and colour, is continuing the struggle that exploded 2½ years ago in Soweto.

## TURKEY:

# MARTIAL LAW DECLARED

It seems as if the West's troubles in Western Asia are never-ending. All America's allies are now in trouble. Iran has already exploded and over Christmas the simmering discontent in Turkey boiled over in violence. The pro-Western Ecevit regime now looks shaky.

On December 20th two left-wing teachers were brutally murdered. The subsequent funeral march was then attacked by members of the neo-fascist Nationalist Action Party (NAP). Over a hundred people were killed and 1,300 wounded.

The social democratic Ecevit government proclaimed martial law and sent in the army. Ostensibly to move against the neo-fascists, the army will also be used against the left. Turkish workers have bitter memories of the last period of martial law, 1971-73.

The left wing was crushed and the way laid open for the expansion of fanatical right-wing groups. The neo-fascist NAP, under their leader Alapraslan Turkes, organised



The Army move in. Today the right wing, tomorrow?

para-military training and established a reign of terror amongst workers and students. Turkes became Deputy Prime Minister from 1975 to 1977, until the accession to office of Prime Minister Ecevit in January last year.

But Ecevit's year in office has been totally unable to

solve any of the major problems facing Turkey. He has turned to help from the IMF, who have laid down their traditional demand of tight money control. Ecevit was actually in Scandinavia begging for financial aid, when the troubles occurred.

Ecevit has tried to create a

middle road between the workers' movement and total dependence on foreign capitalism. His failure has meant an increasing reliance on international big business and attacks on the working class.

He has warned the West of the dangers this poses. In a speech to his Party conference

last November, Ecevit stated: "Turkey is going through the most difficult period in the republic's history." He appealed to "some of our friends and certain international finance organisations" not to push too hard and to recognise the link between economic and social problems.

Those problems have intensified in recent months. The Turkish economy is in a desperate state. With 20% unemployment, 50% inflation and a trade deficit of \$4 billion, the workers have been forced to move into action. Paralleled with this has gone a growth in the activity of the neo-fascists. Ecevit's balancing act of "martial law with a human face" cannot continue.

The working class have no interest in the existence of martial law or the present regime. But this is not enough. Only the workers' organisations can provide a sure base for defeating the fascists and the capitalist environment in which they thrive.

**Jim  
Christie**



LETTERS TO: The Editor, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## LETTERS

## "THE FUTURE IS OURS"

Dear Comrades

I recently attended the 8th Annual Conference of the National Organisation of Labour Students. It was my first visit and I went quite uncommitted to either of the two factions I discovered there (namely 'Clause 4' and 'Militant' tendencies).

As a socialist my first reaction was one of dismay that a Labour-based organisation struggling for the transformation of society could be so clearly split within itself. However, it soon became apparent that what in fact was happening is a split between socialist 'Militant' supporters and an elitist student body, who control NOLS, a body concerned almost totally with the NUS and student rights, who have the gall to call themselves 'Clause 4'.

Throughout the conference 'Militant' supporters spoke coherently, offering many

political solutions to questions posed. 'Clause 4' offered nothing more than the pouring of contempt on all of 'Militant's' arguments.

When the debate on inclusion of part-time students into NOLS came up, 'Militant' welcomed this move to draw together people who were both workers and students. 'Clause 4', however, said that students had nothing in common with workers on social, economic, cultural or political grounds, and they would not welcome into NOLS "paper folders and flower arrangers". So much for their knowledge of part-time education for working people.

As an ex-worker and "part-time student" I considered this one of the most gross insults I have ever heard. I am ashamed to have heard it uttered at a Labour Students' conference.

It would be pointless to

continue quoting this sort of shameful nonsense. Suffice it to say that this typified "Clause 4's" superior elitist attitude throughout the conference.

In conclusion I would like to thank these "Clause 4" supporters for transforming me from a non-aligned status to a convinced 'Militant' supporter. Also for reminding me that the threat to the realisation of socialism is not always easily recognised. Sadly, it is still found, as in this case, within the organised labour movement.

'Militant' comrades, we can still look forward to a socialist future. I have every confidence that the future is most definitely ours. By very definition, it can never be "Clause 4's".

Yours fraternally  
Ms L D Bowles  
Sheffield University  
Labour Club

## A 90-HOUR WORKING WEEK!

Dear Comrades

As the LPYS fight for a 35-hour week gets off the ground, a milkman from the Co-op popped into our canteen last week. In the course of a conversation he startled everyone by saying he worked a 7-day week along with the rest of his mates on the rounds.

The last time he had a day off other than the 21 days a year holiday (working days) was in February 1964. Because of staff shortages he's working on average 90 hours a week.

If this was an isolated case, one could understand it. But a railway porter at the local station told me he worked a

12-hour day, 7 days a week, one week on earlys, another on lates. And the postman doing the first walk told me his week averaged out at 70 hours.

Anyone who has ever done such hours knows what an existence it is—work, eat and sleep. But the rub is, not one of them wouldn't prefer a shorter working week, so long as the money's there.

Forward to a 35-hour week and a £70 minimum wage for all. If the capitalists can't afford it, then let the workers take the helm.

Fraternally  
Mike Singleton  
AUEW, Brighton

## Where will Iranian workers turn?

Dear Comrade

I was disgusted to read the report ('Militant' 435) of Comrades Brezhnev and Hua adding to Carter's already know solidarity with the Shah of Iran, on the occasion of his birthday.

The utterly cynical calculations that govern the foreign policies of the so-called Communist leaders serve only to hold back the struggles of the oppressed people of the world.

Yet it seems that these same leaders, Brezhnev and Hua, offer the only hope, in the short term, to the workers of Iran until the working class

in the advanced capitalist world manages to establish democratic socialism. The privileged bureaucracies of Russia and China are certainly not models of socialism for the workers and peasants of Iran. But where will they turn for assistance when the Shah is overthrown?

Readers have questioned the claim that the workers and peasants of Iran will not look to Russia or China. Could you explain this in more detail?

Yours fraternally  
Ian Sugarman  
Mid-Oxon CLP

## FIRST UNDERSTAND

Dear Comrades

In his letter, N Roberts of Bristol (issue 437) raises many points which are of importance to conscious socialists. They are fundamental to Marxism and its future in Britain and internationally.

Jargon and polemical phraseology have become acceptable among left organisations today. But there is the danger of misusing or misunderstanding them (eg 'state capitalism etc.') arising from political differences. They could only lead to confusing the people who are most affected by them.

Cde. Roberts should look at the development of Russia and China since their respective revolutions, to see why deformities have manifested themselves. Perhaps he does not consider thorough analysis and discussion of the lessons of the past necessary,

but if this is so he will have great difficulty in understanding the position of society under capitalism.

In Russia, enormous advances have been made since 1917 in the growth and planning of its resources. But politically, the departure from Lenin and the Bolsheviks' strategy long ago by Stalin, has led to the development of a bureaucratic and totalitarian system of control in Russia, which will never allow for the fulfillment of a true workers' democracy. In China the result has been the same.

This is one reason why Cde. Roberts is correct in his doubts about nationalisation. Only through taking control of the productive forces in society through workers' control and management leading to democratic socialist planning can the full meaning of nationalisation be achieved.

It is very true that Marx advocated the end to wage slavery. But the division of labour and the wages system inherited from capitalism can only be eliminated after a period of economic and social development. First the workers must lay the basis for this by taking control of the economy and society. I would suggest Cde. Roberts reads Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky for more full explanations.

No party can achieve the ideal that it sets itself unless it develops a leadership and an understanding of society, democratically, with a thorough pursuit of the methods and lessons of the teachers of the past. But it must also move with the times, and the constant changes that society brings.

Yours fraternally  
Steve Amor  
Stevenage LPYS

## The best check on monopolies

Dear Comrades

The letter from Cde Rutt ('Militant' 437, 5.1.79) reflects widespread misunderstanding of economic matters within the labour movement.

Firstly, it is not without reason that the Price Commission has extremely "limited" powers to hold down prices, and is in any case merely a cosmetic exercise.

Under capitalism even a legal price freeze would only lead to an investment strike, which is one of the reasons 'Militant' calls for the nationalisation of the top 200 companies. Until this is carried through, the best check on the power of the monopolies is not small businessmen, but the strength of organised labour.

Unfortunately, Cde Rutt, I'm sure unintentionally, makes the bosses' case for them when he says that wage increases put up the cost of production. In fact what they do is to reduce profit margins.

Marxists understand profit to be that part of a worker's labour he is not paid for, and a wage rise therefore only alters the balance between paid and unpaid labour.

Yours fraternally  
Roy Clarke  
Southampton Labour Party

## TORY NIGHTMARES

Dear Comrade

Why vote in the next General Election—to vote tion was answered by Mrs Margaret Thatcher in an interview on ITV's 'Weekend World'.

Thatcher spelled out the Tories' policies towards the trade unions. So clear was the argument that no trade unionist watching the programme will be in any doubt as to the need to vote in the General Election—to vote La Labour and keep the Tories out.

The Tories aim to introduce free postal ballots in trade unions, hoping to take the discussion on union events out of the factory and the mass meetings and into the pages of the press which they own and control.

Strikers not using the postal ballot will not be entitled to benefits. Strikers do not receive benefits today;

the Tories are talking about cash to their families, they aim to starve strikers' families to force them back to work.

Furthering their aim to leave workers in dispute penniless, Thatcher explained that employers had no legal obligation to pay tax rebates during a dispute and, furthermore, any benefits now given out will be taxed!

Along with sending the troops in to break strikes, opening the trade unions to court fines, Thatcher also wants to end sympathetic strikes. Ted Heath found that what is written on a piece of paper in parliament is not always allowed to come into the realm of reality, if it goes against the interests of organised labour. Mrs Margaret Thatcher says she will call a referendum to end strikes, or make it illegal for workers in essential services to strike.

Brian Walden, the programme's presenter, asked what Thatcher would do if the whole trade union movement opposed this. The leader of the opposition could never believe that 11½ million men and women would oppose a Tory government. In closing the discussion Walden pointed out that the same trade unionists went against the Tories in 1971.

To fight the Tories in power is a substitute for fighting politically to return a Labour government with a programme in the interest of the working class. But if the Tories do win, then the dreams of Thatcher will become nightmares.

Fraternally  
Jon Ingham  
AUEW,  
Vice Chairman, LPYS

**WRITE TO MILITANT**  
Have you any points on, or disagreements with, letters or articles in the 'Militant'? Any experiences which make you angry? Let us know in a letter [preferably a short one]. Letters to arrive by Saturday morning to the address at the top of the page.

## FIREWORKS IN 1979

"A crank is a little thing that makes a revolution"

Dear Comrades

Please find enclosed a motto found in a cracker at the 'Militant' children's party.

Even in the festive season the ruling class pump out their propaganda. Don't I recall that a few years back, one of the capitalist dailies jibed at 'Militant' for producing socialist Christmas cards?

How about producing some Marxist crackers next year? Although I think we are more interested in producing some fireworks during '79.

Yours fraternally  
Bob Edwards  
Harlow CLP



# A FIGHTING START

It looks as if workers have started 1979 as they mean to continue—fighting to restore lost living standards and taking determined action to achieve their goal!

'Militant' supporters must match this fighting spirit by launching the 1979 Fighting Fund with a bang.

The first week's total of £787 is a good effort after the last minute rush to get £66,000 in for the 1978 target by January 6th.

But 1979's target of

£85,000 means raising an average more than double that figure each week!

So...to get us back into top gear, follow the examples below.

The 'first 50 pences' are as valuable a sign of support for the 'Militant's' ideas and programme as the 'first fivers' and the New Year 'tenners'—like

from Anil Singh of Leicester "to ensure the red comes back to the 'Militant' this week."

That's one promise we have been able to carry out this week and there are many more we want to make in terms of spreading the influence of Marxism and developing a powerful workers' paper.

But you must promise your support and take determined action to get us the cash. Send your own donation to celebrate the 'return of the red' and go about collecting and fundraising with the combativity being displayed by workers up and down the country.

Whenever you attend a meeting in the labour movement, ask for help in building the 'Militant'.

Stockton Labour Party

Young Socialists sent £38 last week and Tyneside readers had a special collection at their first Public Meeting of 1979. They put in over £50 to start the year as they mean to finish and to make up for lost standards last year!

Follow their example and ones below. Many thanks to all this week's contributors and may there be many, many, more.

The chart for showing the progress of each area towards the Fighting Fund target will be back when there's enough to show—Make that the next issue! This week's donations include:

50p: M Knight (Gloucester LPYS); Anon (Henley CLP); G Young (FTAT Nottingham); M Osborne, P Wooten (FTAT Bristol); M Mills (unemployed, Leicester

LPYS).

£1: M Pollard (Accrington); AUEW Construction steward (Rotherham); W Rowan (Dewsbury CLP); K Levinson (Blyth LPYS); J Bludgeon (Nottingham ULC); C Revill (Mansfield LPYS); ASTMS supporter (Nottingham).

£2: D Morgan (TGWU, Gloucester); J Turner NW London); T and P Wrightson (Manchester); Anon (Bracknell).

£5: Newham reader; B Gilliland (E Kilbride); Four belated Xmas Fivers (Manchester); Wimbledon supporter.

£10: J Dobbins (SOGAT, Glasgow); USDAW member (Glasgow).

Other contributions: D Walsh (Bristol social) £8.50; '50 Club' Wakefield, £44.40; Bracknell Football Draw £10; Leeds football Buster, £15.

## ADS

### RATES

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

WEST MIDLANDS Militant Rally. Saturday January 27th, 1-5 pm, Dr Johnson House, Bull Street, Birmingham.

SPEAKERS: Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board); Sam Maddox (Gen Sec, Bakers' Union); Dennis Mills (Chairman TGWU 5/35 Lorry drivers' branch); Dick Hackett (Secretary, Central Birmingham Health District, NUPE); \* plus stalls, entertainment and crèche.

Tickets 50p from: J Birch, 109 Northfield Road, Birmingham B 30.

LEICESTER 'Militant' Public Meeting. "The fight against low pay and for a shorter working week." Speakers: Brian Ingham (Industrial Editor, 'Militant') and a speaker from NUPE. Wednesday January 24th 7.30 pm, Room 5, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate.

NEWCASTLE 'Militant' Public Meeting. "The fight against low pay". Saturday January 27th at 1.30pm in the Durant Hall, Ellison Place, Newcastle. (Speakers being arranged). All welcome.

SOUTH WALES Readers Meetings: 'The Fight for a living wage. Support the local authority workers'. Speakers: Kevin Ramage (LPYS National Committee) and leading NUPE speakers.

SWANSEA: Tuesday January 23rd, Dynevor School, 7.30 pm  
LLANELLI: Wednesday January 24th, 7.30 pm. Contact Llanelli 50208 for details  
MORRISTON: Thursday January 25th, 7.30 pm, Morriston Public Library, Treharne Road, Morriston

Also meetings in Neath, January 24th. Contact Neath 56669  
Port Talbot, January 29th. Contact Cwmavon 391

### CLASSIFIED

KENT YCAU 35-hour week campaign. Social event in aid of funds. Saturday January 20th, 8pm onwards, 138 Balmoral Road, Gillingham (near British Rail station). 50p plus a bottle.

PROVAN LPYS Disco (over 18). 25th January 1979 7-11.30pm. Budhill Halls (5 minutes from Shettleston Station). £1 (buffet and bar provided).

NEWCASTLE TRIBUNE GROUP RALLY  
Friday 2nd February 1979 at 7.30pm at the Guildhall, Quay-side, Newcastle upon Tyne. Chairman: Richard Clements (Tribune Editor). Speakers include: Jimmy Reid PPC, Frank Allaun MP, Joan Maynard MP, plus another Tribune MP. Tickets 40p. Available from John Egerton, 18 Ely Way, Fellgate Est., Jarrow, Tyne-Wear. (Please enclose a SAE). A limited supply will be available on the door.

The Nationalist Road to Socialism. 60p post free. Plaid Gwerin Cymru, 32 Pwll-Even-Ddu, Coity, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan CF 35 6AY

## Labour & Trade Union Group



## Change in name Growth of influence

The "final" Annual General Meeting of the Labour & Trade Union Co-ordinating Group was held on Saturday December 2nd in Belfast.

From the AGM, the name becomes the Labour & Trade Union Group and the AGM is replaced in the future by an Annual Conference. In place of the Steering Committee, an executive committee has now been formed.

These constitutional changes reflect both a growth in influence and membership over the past year. No longer are we merely co-ordinating the work of individual socialists but we have become the major left-wing group based in the trade union movement in the North.

Our growth organisationally is reflected by our increase in branches. In addition to branches in West Belfast, South Belfast, Queens University, Derry, Strabane, Ulster Polytechnic, Ballymena and the University in Coleraine there are new branches in Newry, Larne and Magee College (Derry). The basis for branches exists in Antrim, Craigavon and East Belfast. There are small groups of supporters in other towns in the North.

The Group's political influence has spread throughout the province as a result of interventions in the struggles of workers against the government's wage restraint policy.

### Repression

The campaign organised against repression in the case of Willie Gallagher, and more recently the campaign to recruit youth to the Group have established us as the genuine representatives of socialism in the labour movement. Similarly the fielding of a candidate in another Ballymena by-election has helped highlight the need for a party of Labour to represent the working class people and

combat sectarianism.

The active involvement of the comrades in the movement over the past year resulted in lively and enthusiastic political contributions and debate from the floor. The resolutions against the 5% wages policy and the discussion on the industrial battles in general were thus particularly energetic. Comrades who played leading roles in some of the recent disputes such as Allan McLaughlin, convenor in LEC (Derry) received a generous response from the conference.

Repression was also discussed in depth following the campaign to release Willie Gallagher. All comrades agreed that although this was a controversial issue in the labour movement, trade unionists would ignore it at their peril. Tomorrow, labour and trade union activists would be threatened by the force of the army and police, as the Belfast workers have already learned.

Tony Saunio, representing the British Labour Party Young Socialists and John Throne a member of the Administrative Council of the Irish Labour Party (speaking in a personal capacity) both

spoke on how the situation outside the North was also improving for the forces of labour. From these comrades' contributions flowed the international discussion and how the struggle of workers' throughout the world was inseparably bound together. The advances being made by labour in Britain and in the South would have a dynamic impact on the campaign for a Labour Party in the North.

The optimism of the meeting was qualified by the ever-worsening economic situation. This produced a much greater response and acceptance for the Labour and Trade Union Group's central demand for a Conference of Labour to create a political voice for the trade unions in the North.

### Micky Duffy

(EC, Labour and Trade Union Group)

### NEWCASTLE POLY LABOUR CLUB

sends greetings to the labour and student movement for 1979

Fight for a living wage for all workers and a living grant for all students

## ANDY BEVAN

After a storm of protest from the Labour Party Young Socialists and Constituency Labour Parties, the next meeting of Labour's NEC will be asked to approve that a meeting between Reg Underhill, Ron Hayward, Joan Maynard, Eric Heffer, Tony Saunio, Nigel Stanley and Andy Bevan, be held to discuss the duties of the National Youth Officer during the impending election.

This was the decision of the NEC's Youth Sub-Committee during a discussion on the role of the LPYS during the General Election.

Since the election was postponed last October, the LPYS have been calling for the Youth Officer to be allowed to co-ordinate the youth work during the election campaign. This has got the support of many CLPs, the Greater London Regional Executive of the Labour Party, and over a dozen Members of Parliament.

Phil Frampton (LPYS Chairman) said: "Labour's youth have been making more preparations than ever to win the youth vote for Labour. But to be most effective it will need co-ordinating during the campaign, and the best person to do that is undoubtedly the National Youth Officer."

While many CLPs have sent resolutions supporting the LPYS, many more are still expected. The decision to discuss the role of the National Youth Officer during the election is in itself undoubtedly a success for the youth wing of the Party.

Activists, however, must now ensure the position of the Party's rank and file is made crystal clear to the leadership.

In 1974 the LPYS made a tremendous contribution to ensuring that Labour won the election. 1979 is even more important.

If the best possible impact is to be made by the LPYS, the NEC must be pressurised to allow Andy Bevan to serve the Party in the best possible way, working in the regions with CLPs and LPYS branches.

Roger Shrives



# Shop workers pay settlement : USDAW MUST LAUNCH CAMPAIGN

A hundred thousand shop-workers have just been awarded one of the poorest wage increases settled since the current government pay guidelines were announced.

The workers, employed by the big supermarket chains of Tesco, Fine Fare and Presto, will receive increases of between £5.50 and £6.55 a week, bringing their new basic rates, depending on grade, to between £44 and £53.56 a week.

This settlement, negotiated on their behalf by USDAW, the shopworkers' union, leaves these workers among the lowest paid in Britain today. Although in the region of 20% on the old rates, the increases are still within the government guidelines because rates are so low.

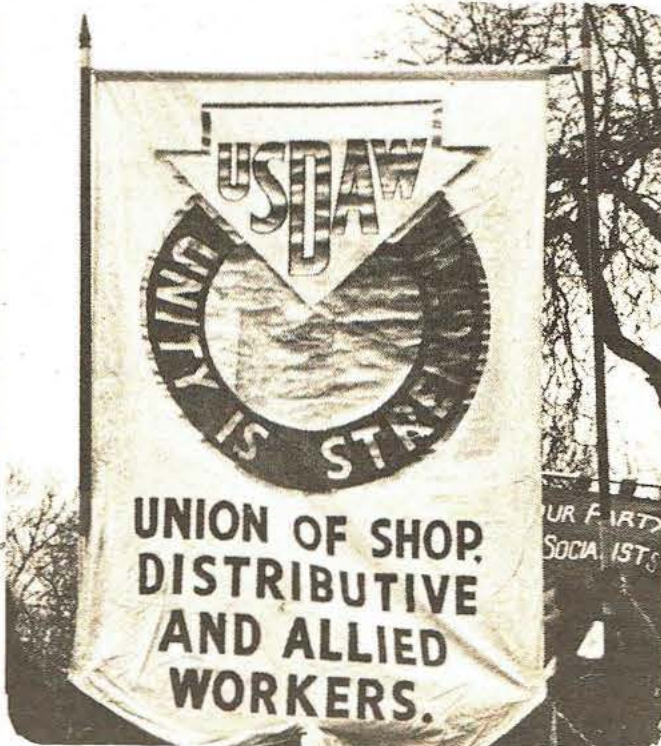
Even with the increases, many workers are below the Wage Council's minimum of £44.50, nearly all are below

the TUC minimum of around £52, and every one of them is below the USDAW policy of £55 for a 35-hour week.

Among USDAW members, a feeling of anger and frustration has been building up over the past four years of wage restraint, as they have seen their living standards, always meagre in the past, decline even further. For the ordinary supermarket worker, working for firms like Tesco who make massive profits every year (see last week's 'Militant'), the feeling of anger and disappointment at this latest pay award is provoking a number of questions:

**Why always low pay? Why such long hours? Why doesn't the union do something about it?**

USDAW has always faced problems organising in the retail trade, with a large turnover in membership due to low wages and poor



conditions. This has meant a certain weakness in dealing with the big retail firms.

There has never been a concerted campaign to rally the membership in a fight for a living wage. Since the union conference last May, when the wages policy of £55 for 35 hours was agreed, very few settlements have actually resulted in this extremely modest target being achieved.

If the real power of USDAW was used, and the full 450,000 membership involved in the fight to implement union policy, the big retail firms and other industries that USDAW covers could be brought to heel.

Increasingly, the rank and file are pushing the union towards a fight against low pay. Membership is steadily increasing, and this will add to the process of radicalisation, as more and more workers look to the unions to take up their problems.

What is needed is a bold lead from the top on a campaign for a living wage which will win more shop-workers to the union, and eradicate the turnover in membership.

This, together with the implementation of a 35-hour week, would create more jobs for unemployed people and turn USDAW into an effective fighting organisation capable of mobilising its ranks against the economic system which offers only low pay and long hours.

**By an USDAW member**

**Working at Tesco's: This feature has been held over until next week**

## BOOTHS STRIKE-CLOSED SHOP VICTORY

After nine weeks out in the cold and wet, the strike by 250 T&GWU members at Booths Gin factory in Brentford is over.

Although London weighting, the original cause of the dispute has not yet been achieved, an agreement for increased pay in April, tying their wages to those of other wages in bottling in the London 'outgoing' area, has been made.

Seven days' compensation is to be paid for time lost.

However, as Steve Fisher, senior steward, pointed out, the achievement of a T&GWU closed shop "was a more important victory than London Weighting, especially as it was the first closed shop in any DCL factory."

The mood in the factory has completely changed. The workers feel confident and are

solidly united. "We had a union on paper before, now it is respected. Management used to intimidate us, now they negotiate".

Roy Briggs (shop steward) explained, "so far, in what dealings we have had, top management have practically fallen over backwards to settle things, but we don't intend to ease up one bit because behind the smile lurks the knife ready to stab us."

"The union is the workforce, and without the workforce nothing gets done; the management have to accept that."

Steve Fisher added "the trade union could make a better job of running the factory than management. The strength of the union will mean fewer accidents and injuries, and will cut out cowboy labour."

However, the stewards have pointed out that it is difficult for a small branch to take on DCL, one of the largest companies in Britain. The fight is now on for an annual national wage agreement, like Ford's. "We can't fight the monopolies isolated."

Steve Fisher pointed to the absolute importance of workers' relying on their own strength when fighting the bosses. The strike demonstrated the "complete unity of Asian, black, Irish, English and any other workers."

He added "We would like to thank 'Militant' for the coverage and support it has given."

**Jonathan Clyne [Feltham and Heston LPYS] talked to Steve Fisher and Roy Briggs [T&GWU shop stewards, Booths, London]**

## BAKERS UNION FIGHTS BACK

Since the ending of the bakers' dispute, in the Hampshire area management have been making ferocious attempts to destroy the union.

The area management of Ranks have been to the fore in this attack. They are attempting to concentrate bread production on their most modern plant at **Toynbee Road, Eastleigh**.

But there is a fly in the ointment for them. This plant was the most militant in the dispute and displayed greatest solidarity. They are therefore trying to destroy the union and force out the active trade unionists, replacing them with scabs from another plant in Eastleigh.

Immediately on returning to work, the convenor at Toynbee Road, Eric Parker, was sacked for industrial misconduct. His offence—allegedly swearing at management—occurred during the dispute itself and outside of the firm's premises.

Eric is one of the leading trade unionists in the factory. Even if he wins an Industrial Tribunal case and gets his job back, the case will not come up for six to eight weeks—a

period which the bosses are trying to use to break the union.

Already another worker there has been suspended, awaiting the outcome of a court case arising from an incident during the dispute. Management has also threatened another workers with "the same as Eric Parker got" if they join the union or refuse to work on Bank Holidays.

They have introduced new shift systems, with even more anti-social hours. One shift ends at 2.30 in the morning, another at 4.30 in the morning. Try getting public transport home at that time of day.

Finally, management have refused to recognise two newly-elected shop stewards. Within days of the national agreement being signed, they were totally disregarding many of its clauses.

At **Wilkins in Bournemouth**, management have been trying similar tactics. On the one side, the three hard core scabs have received promotion, whereas those who supported the strike most strongly have been penalised in a whole number of ways.

The situation has been

made more difficult since many of the best militants have now left the factory. But here, in spite of all this, there is a pointer for the future.

Union membership is steadily increasing, particularly among the young workers and those who started during the strike. This is being repeated throughout our area.

The union here has suffered terrible blows. But it is not beaten. Rather, it is starting to grow again, with many harsh lessons being learnt and digested.

This rebuilt union will, in the not too distant future, be again taking up the battle against the bakery bosses.

**STOP PRESS:** At Toynbee Road, Eastleigh, management have been forced to recognise the union. Union membership has reached the 50% mark and is still increasing. The workers are fighting back in spite of all the problems.

**By Nick Brooks**  
(Southampton Labour Party)

## working in the union

**BY BILL CHARD [T&GWU]**

Continuing his account of his early trade union experiences, **Bill Chard, T&GWU and Morley and Batley Labour Party**, describes the challenges he faced as a new shop steward in a haulage company. Send your comments, on points raised here or on any other issues you face as a trade unionist, to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

When I first started as a steward, there were anomalies in the wages system which resulted, for instance, in one member receiving £10 less than others doing the same job. They weren't all as obvious as this, but were equally unfair.

Although union membership had increased from about 10% to 90% I had got nowhere, and after seven months of bringing them up with management, it was decided to give an ultimatum. If the firm didn't discuss these matters positively with us, we would take industrial action.

When we received no response, we held another meeting outside the gate and decided to stay just there until our demands were met. Before the end of the day discussions were held and satisfaction gained on five points. A vote was taken to accept, but I was also instructed to inform management that the

three scabs this time would be sent to coventry.

About a fortnight later we had refused to unload a van driven by one of the strike breakers, insisting that he unload it himself as he had done since the strike. We were ordered off the premises. No rational conversation could be had with the now hysterical manager.

A few of us went down to the union office, but were dealt with by a union official who at best I would describe as apathetic. He half-heartedly phoned the depot, but nothing was resolved.

We returned to find all the drivers, entering the building to return their vans, had been taken to one side by the manager and director and warned that if they joined us, there would be no alternative but to close down the depot.

## MANCHESTER BUSMEN STRIKE ON 22nd

The seven thousand Greater Manchester busmen are in dispute over pay and conditions.

The men have been offered 5% on the basic plus supplements, with an additional £4 on the basic for the introduction of multi-journey ticket machines and an increase of one-man operated buses to 91% of the fleet.

In a ballot of the membership, 58% voted for strike action, against the 5% deal. It is felt that the multi-journey

ticket machines are too great a burden, due to the stress and strain on the one-man bus driver under present traffic conditions.

One bus man pointed out that there will be so many fares and tickets to collect that there won't be time to drive the buses. Management have already bought the machines, but the men are refusing to work them.

The 5% deal, after deductions, means £1.73 for the one-man driver, £1.42 for the

two-man driver and £1.40 for a conductor, for a basic 40-hour week.

The bus men are asking for a decent offer on the basic rate, and are holding lightning strikes. They plan to strike on 22nd January, along with other local government workers.

**Steve Wood and Dave Farrar [Salford LPYS] interviewed Jimmy Green [Branch Secretary, 6/243 T&GWU]**



# LORRY DRIVERS SHOW THE WAY

## THINGS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

By Tim Webb  
T&GWU 10/28A

The Transport and General Workers' Union offices in Kings Lynn have become the local headquarters of the lorry drivers' strike committee. The notice on the door says 'Strike Committee—please knock. Employers' reps by appointment only'.

I think that notice indicates the changed power relationships which have emerged during this period of struggle.

All this week the strike committee have been at the offices from early morning till late at night, deciding which lorries shall have authorisation to cross the lines, where pickets are most needed and other decisions about the strike. The office is usually packed with lorry drivers just returning from, or just going to, 24-hour picket duty.

It would be foolish to pretend that everything always runs smoothly. But as this is the very first time that any lorry driver in Kings Lynn has ever been involved in a strike like this, the amazing thing is that from the very first day, we have organised one of the most significant industrial disputes for half a century.

## LIVERPOOL

In Liverpool, before a lorry is allowed to discharge cargo in any picketed dock or depot, written permission must be obtained from the strike committee. A TV newscaster commented: "It's clear that a lorry moves in Liverpool only with the permission of the strike committee."

The present lorry drivers' strike has led to a hold up of fresh fruit on Liverpool docks.

In an attempt at moral blackmail, the chairman of

There is a mood amongst drivers that things will never be the same again. Now that we have demonstrated that we have the strength and ability to fight for a decent wage, never again will we be treated as second class citizens.

This is reflected by one 64-year-old driver who, when it was suggested that because of his age he might not want to do picket duty in the very cold weather, replied that he had waited forty years for the lorry drivers to stick together and he wasn't going to stand aside now.

A driver at an 'own account' firm, who is not on strike, got up at 2.00 am after a day's work, to bring coffee, whisky and rum round to pickets on duty through the night.

This mood of solidarity is not reflected among the employers. Owners of factories and warehouses frequently phone the strike HQ saying why haven't we got pickets at such-and-such a firm, which just happen to be their trade rivals.

When the drivers at one local haulage firm informed the owner that they were on strike, he offered them free use of his car and free petrol if they would agree to picket the

sandpit where they normally load, so that his rivals wouldn't be able to do his work while his firm was on strike.

There is a lot of criticism from the rank and file about the length of time it took for this strike to be made official, and about the fragmented start to the strike, especially with regard to the position of BRS.

But now that we have achieved this solidarity, I can see no alternative but that we will get everything that we are asking for and that this strike will be brought to a speedy conclusion.

## WE CAN'T RELY ON OVERTIME

Bro. Maurice 'Jock' McCulloch is chairman of the T&GWU 2/49 branch, the lorry drivers' branch for Southampton and area. He was interviewed by Nick Brooks of Southampton Labour Party.

We are demanding a basic wage of £65. Also we have put in a claim for our night out subsistence allowance to be raised from £6.50 to £8.50.

The employers have offered us a miserable 13.2% which falls well short of our claim. On the night out subsistence, all they have offered us is a 50 pence increase.

Within two years, EEC regulations will limit us to 48 hours' work a week. In the past we have relied on overtime to boost our wages. We will not be able to rely on this in the future. That's why we must fight for a decent basic wage.

Each area has a separate agreement with the area RHA. But now we are fighting for a national claim, and no single area will return until the claim is won in every area.

Nearly all our 1,400 members are out, including most of our owner-drivers. We have been carrying out extensive picketing throughout the area, at the docks, industrial estates, large factories and works. This has been very successful: very few goods are moving in this area.

We have received excellent support from other trade unionists, especially those whose works and factories we are picketing. All round, we are pleased with the way things have gone.

Customers demand more and quicker deliveries, so they put pressure on us. 100 drivers a year are killed in accidents. Many drivers suffer from back trouble—do you don't see many drivers?

This is the real situation. We do a hard, difficult and often dangerous job. We believe that we should have pay levels that recognise this.

Finally, you've set up a drivers' registration scheme. Could you explain this?

This is a scheme we've set up in Southampton because of non-union and cowboy drivers who've benefited on the increase in recent years.

Each driver in our branch goes on a register, with his details and photograph, which is on his card. We can then check on any of our drivers who engage in anti-union activity or illegal working.



BRS pickets at Victoria Park depot, Hackney, East London

Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant

## BRS DRIVERS OUT

The British Road Services [BRS] dispute is over a similar claim to the RHA lorry drivers', lodged with the employers—the Industrial Freight Corporation.

The men came out on Friday 12th January after the deadline had passed for the management to make an offer. They are waiting until Thursday 18th for the next Negotiating Committee meeting with management. As yet the strike at all depots is unofficial.

At the Victoria Park depot the strike is 100% solid, with AUEW fitters and EETPU sparks coming out in support of the 100 or so T&G members. Conditions are bad

—there is no London weighting or sick pay for these workers, although office staff already enjoy these benefits.

The 1976 rise only came through in April of last year and they are still negotiating for their 1977 settlement—after 14 months!

They have not needed to turn drivers away—none has tried to cross the line, manned by rota from 6 am to 8 pm, the gates being locked afterwards.

Pickets at BRS  
Victoria Park  
Depot, Hackney  
spoke to  
Julian McKittrick

# SCAB TROOPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND—A WARNING

Tanker drivers in Northern Ireland voted last Saturday (13th) to accept the latest pay offer. This was despite the sending in of army strike-breakers, however, and certainly not because they have been intimidated.

The drivers, at a joint inter-company meeting, voted 2 to 1 to reverse their previous decision to stay out following the return to work in the UK. They accepted assurances that union leaders would pursue their claim for a special allowance to meet the higher cost of living in Northern Ireland.

The decision is conditional on the scrapping of all the measures introduced by the Labour government under the 'State of Emergency' declared on Thursday 11th. Union members are determined that unless the army is totally withdrawn from depots and garages, nothing will move.

The State of Emergency meant troops being used to supply fuel to certain indus-

tries and listed "essential users". The list included such vital services as 'those on consular duty'.

According to Roy Mason, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, it was necessary because the tanker drivers' action, "in defiance of a freely negotiated agreement," he claimed, "puts at risk...the elderly, the sick...and the jobs of many thousands of workers."

Not a word of criticism for the mighty oil companies who provoked the dispute by refusing to meet the fully-justified claim!

The drivers maintain that the Emergency was entirely unnecessary. They had already said they would supply petrol to workers in essential services.

In Twinbrook and Lower Shankill, where the strike hit working people hardest, with no petrol supplies or fuel for heating, the drivers made special deliveries to alleviate the chaos. Workers from Twinbrook were quoted as

saying: "We knew the drivers wouldn't let working people down."

A decision to return to work was in fact on the cards before the troops were moved in. If anything, it provoked more drivers to oppose ending the action.

When the Emergency was declared, Terry Carlin, Northern Ireland officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, said that if the drivers decided to stay out, the blame would be at the feet of Mr Mason.

But Carlin and the leadership of the T&GWU have themselves angered many union members. Echoing Mason, they launched a massive campaign to pressurise the NI tanker drivers to fall in line with the decision of the UK workers.

What use is the right to vote on a pay offer if the workers are to be castigated for turning it down? The action was unofficial only because the union leadership refused to stand by their members.

When he appeared on television, the only opposition Carlin voiced to the use of troops was that it might upset timing?

This was not a defeat. In spite of the employers' blackmail and the campaign of hysteria in the media, which the efforts of union leaders to obtain a return to work. But was it only a question of 'bad

At the time of the Ulster Workers' Strike in 1974, the 'Militant' opposed the army's intervention and warned that, despite the reactionary character of the strike, the use of troops set a dangerous precedent for the labour movement.

Some trade unionists argued that the strike leaders' strong-arm tactics and reactionary aims justified the State of Emergency. Now the use of troops against the NI tanker drivers has completely vindicated our warning.

drivers are united and un- was regrettably fueled by the Labour government itself, the

bowed.

They have returned to work with an increase in the basic rate to £78. Most of the conditions on higher productivity and extra duties have been removed, as a result of the determined action taken throughout Britain and Northern Ireland. And the drivers have by no means abandoned their supplementary claim.

## New mood

Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland the lorry drivers' strike is absolutely solid and beginning to bite hard. Other workers, including many of the more than 10,000 already laid off, are showing support for the strike.

The NUJ provincial journalists are still out. The first two issues of their own strike paper were snatched up within an hour or so.

Signalmen and conductors on the railways will be out this week in a dispute separate from the action called by the train drivers' union ASLEF.

And preparations are underway for a strike and lobby of Stormont on 22nd January by the public sector workers.

In Derry, the Arntz strike and the lock-out at LEC (see 'Militant' 429 and 432) continue, and a host of other, smaller disputes have erupted. The newly-named Labour and Trade Union Group (report page 13) have issued a leaflet as part of a campaign to organise trade union support for these strikers, particularly through the Trades Councils.

The Group is proposing a series of rallies in Belfast and other main centres around the demands: **Against wage restraint! Against low pay! For a national minimum wage! For a 35-hour week! For socialist policies!**

By our  
Northern Ireland  
Correspondent



# TRAIN DRIVERS REJECT JOBS THREAT

Locomen throughout the country have once again shown their enormous loyalty to their union in an absolutely solid, 100% strike.

Stratford depot, in East London, was completely dead as the last night men went off duty. Not a wheel turned throughout the day. The whole area was quiet; the International Freight Terminal and the Freightliner stopped—with ASLEF members and lorry drivers picketing the same gates.

It seemed that nothing could get through. If the lorry drivers didn't turn a vehicle

By Martin Elvin  
(Stratford ASLEF)

back then we did!

Every member should be aware of the serious threat to jobs and conditions which is posed. Totally ignoring our claim, British Rail management have gone on the offensive. Their vicious proposals tied to the pathetic

6-7% offer, would lead to a drastic reduction in Drivers Assistants, and for those who are left, a 'flexibility' scheme for moving them from job to job. A reduction in drivers is also hinted at, through the 'back door redundancy' method of "natural wastage".

Drivers would also be expected to go alone on some freight and suburban passenger turns. **Cut in guards jobs can be the only result of such a scheme.**

The highly divisive scheme for 'classification' of different types of work is another part of this series of attacks on jobs and conditions.

Why has it taken our own ASLEF Executive Committee so long to talk over these vicious proposals? They must be rejected outright on principle now.

We are in dispute not with the NUR, but with the BR management. One very clear indication of the mood inside the NUR was the sympathy and support expressed for our fight last Tuesday by NUR members. **The NUR leadership must mobilise their members in a common struggle against the present attacks and for a living wage.**

We want 10% on the basic rate of pay, with no strings attached, and no compromise deals.

The uproar in the press and the frenzied attempts of ministers, right up to the Prime Minister himself, to settle this dispute proves the power that we have.

This week's action is only a flexing of the muscles. Now we must use the power we have to win our just claim.

# WEST MIDLANDS DRIVERS STILL DEMANDING RECOGNITION

By Jeremy Birch

Six hundred West Midlands lorry drivers lobbied the T&GWU Regional office on January 16th to demand that their strike is mad official.

In the one region of the country where the dispute does not have official backing, 50 policemen stood guarding the union's headquarters against its own members.

The area Road Haulage Association offered to match the highest general level of RHA negotiated agreements throughout the country and to negotiate later on all outstanding matters, an offer which shamefully was at first accepted by the union's negotiators. Drivers else-

where, in other words, would strike for better conditions while West Midlands men carried on working.

"If our members go along with that, they wouldn't be able to hold their heads up anywhere," said Dennis Mills, chairman of the Birmingham drivers' 5/35 branch of the T&GWU.

This is a national strike, and angry Midlands drivers are determined to play their full part.

The Birmingham, Wolverhampton and West Bromwich drivers (8,000 out of the Region's 10,000) have overwhelmingly thrown out the deal, still the strike has not been made official. Their

opposition, however, has compelled the union side to reverse their acceptance of the RHA offer.

The committee will be

## Stay out together

**In every area the response to the call for action on the claim has been magnificent. Despite many difficulties, drivers in hundreds of small firms have come out with the big battalions.**

**The fact that management in some areas are trying to make local agreements shows that the**

meeting the employers again —meanwhile the drivers are still demanding that the union make the strike official.

bosses are crumbling.

**But to avoid any section of the drivers being isolated by settlements in other firms and to keep the maximum pressure on the employers, it is absolutely vital for all firms in every region to stay out solidly until the full claim is met nation-wide.**

# SHAH'S EXIT- THE BEGINNING OF REVOLUTION

The Shah's flight into exile does not mark the end of the Iranian revolution—it is just the beginning.

The most graphic illustration of the mood in Iran has been the fraternisation of the people with the army. In gestures reminiscent of 1974 in Portugal, soldiers placed red carnations in their rifles.

It was the recognition that the army was far from being totally reliable which prompted the US leaders to dissuade hard-line generals from staging a coup two weeks ago.

Months of mass agitation had begun to infect the troops. Mutinies broke out and in some cases officers

By Jim Chrystie

shot cadets who wished to join in the demonstrations.

With the Shah's repressive regime crumbling, a new approach was needed. Having ditched the Shah, US imperialism hoped that, at least for the time being, they could rely on Prime Minister Bakhtiar to salvage their position.

But Bakhtiar is a man in

the middle of a polarised country. He represents the liberal capitalist wing and will not be able to avoid a conflict with the workers and peasants.

The only common point of the opposition has been the ending of the Shah's rule.

Khomeini, the exiled Moslem religious leader, failed in his attempts to win control of the oil workers strike. The workers refused to resume production sufficient for Iran's needs.

The economic and social grievances and demands which underly the Iranian revolution will undermine Khomeini's hopes for a theocratic Islamic papacy. His credibility, at present high, will be destroyed as the masses continue their struggle for civilized conditions.

In this situation, the opportunities for a Marxist movement to grow are tremendous. The workers have become aware of their power: they have forced the Shah to flee! All the tanks, all the police, all the vicious torturers of the SAVAK were to no avail when masses of workers took to the streets.

Bakhtiar's government can only be a government of transition. Nor will Khomeini if he achieves direct influence through the widely proposed Islamic Revolutionary Council, be able to provide permanent stability.

Arrogant and impatient colonels are undoubtedly biding their time in the wings. This week a mysterious 'Imperial emissary' warned that unless Khomeini co-operated there would be a coup and "initially the army would have to kill two or three million people. There would be mass murder." For the moment, the colonels are hamstrung.

But if the workers movement does not organise for a socialist transformation of society there will be a real danger of reaction later, of the return of the Shah or an even worse dictatorship.

Democracy in Iran can be guaranteed only by the workers taking complete control of industry and the State.

# Militant

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## CALLAGHAN'S NEW OFFER

Faced with the anger of over a million local authority workers, Jim Callaghan has at last conceded that all workers getting under £70 must be eligible for "special treatment" under the pay policy. But the £3.50 now

offered is a derisory improvement and will be decisively rejected. The pay policy must be scrapped now, and replaced immediately by a £70 minimum for 35 hours.

## DRIVERS STRIKE

Continued from page 1

I leave all the cars are lined along the pavement and when I get home they're back there. Sometimes we're away for two or three nights and get nothing for it.

### Reports from the regions, page 15

The way things are, we have to work all hours of the day and night to get enough money to live.

If we had a decent basic then we'd work fewer hours and that would mean more jobs. Half the problem is that there are too many cowboys around without proper tax and licences.

There were eight coppers here yesterday and we told them about a bloke who crossed the line with no tax or 'O' licence—they just laugh-

ed. Yet if we get an endorsement because we're caught speeding in our own cars on holiday, for instance, then that counts on our HGV licence. It threatens our livelihood.

Five per cent...that's a joke! 5% of what? That's what they always say...It's all right for types like Callaghan on £14,000 a year tax free to talk. We've got a lad here on £34 a week.

They keep accusing us of blackmail, but Hattersley is blackmailing us when he threatens to raise the haulage rates. I don't know what the government is up to. Labour Party Conference threw out the 5% didn't they?

**It's time we did something about all this.**

Julian McKittrick of 'Militant' spoke to: Anthony Bones [T&GWU Shop Steward]; Reg Fall [T&GWU Regional Executive Committee]; Robert and John Little, and other pickets.



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