

# Militant

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## RICH GROW FAT... WORKERS SUFFER

The Tories and their press have reached new depths with the abuse they have hurled at the local authority workers

By Steve Amor  
(Stevenage LPYS)

The reports in this issue of 'Militant' show the burning resentment of these workers—kept in the most grinding and degrading poverty—at the treatment meted out to them by the Fleet Street barons, the radio and TV. No condemnation has been too strong for these workers for 'daring' to demand £60 a week.

For instance the 'Sunday Mirror' on February 4th—a 'Labour Paper' [?] said: "The disgusting behaviour of Merseyside crematorium workers and gravediggers must be one of the worst blots on Britain's good name in this century. And the agony piled on by the hospital workers comes a close second."

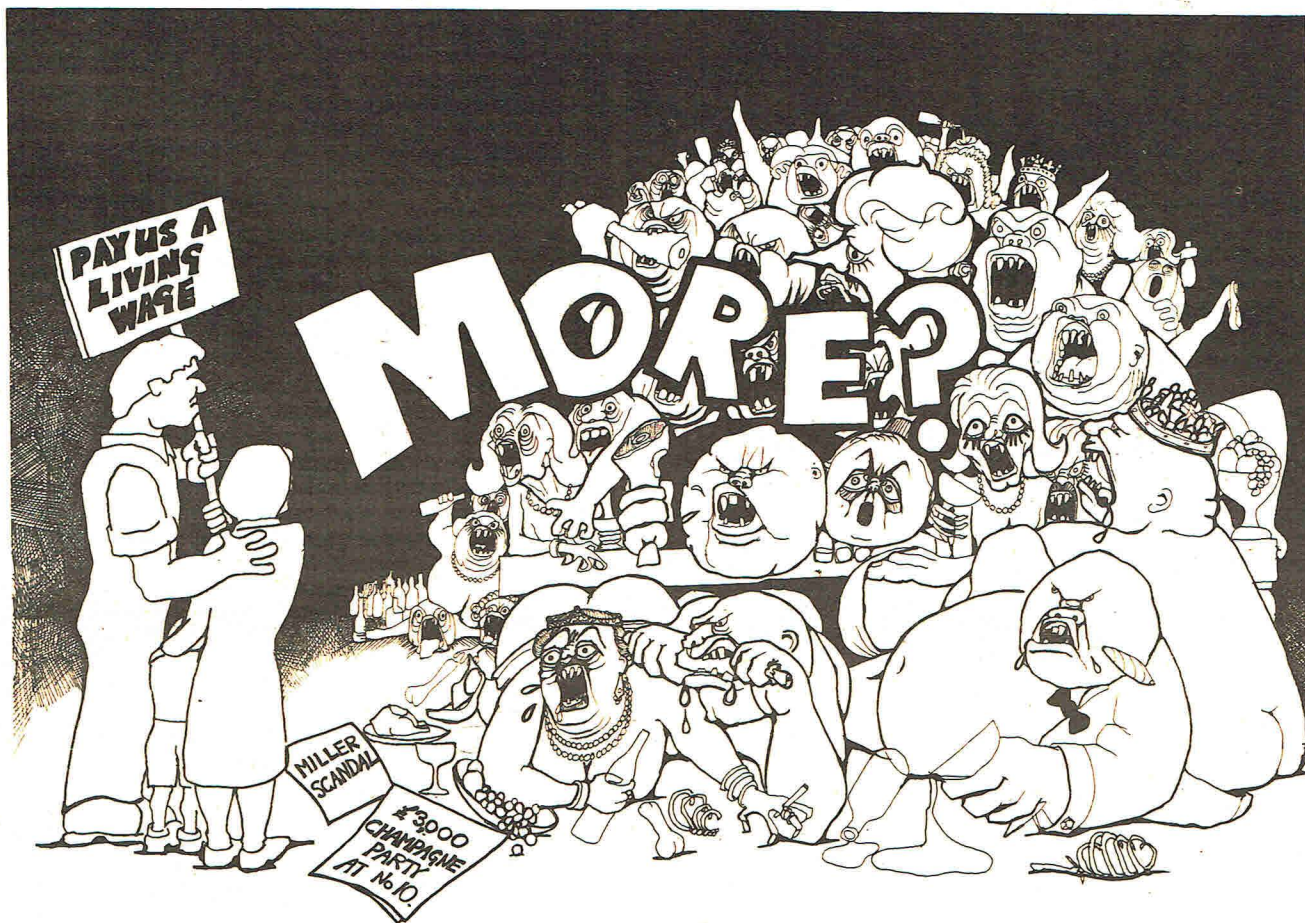
The politically vile Woodrow Wyatt—the Mirror's 'influential' columnist—wrote: "We see a lot of people on TV claiming that their earnings are £42 a week. Fascinating figures...show there are not many."

Wyatt's aim is to show that the low paid are a "myth".

Yet a few pages later the letter of an angry worker is quoted: "if I was on the dole I'd be better off."

Moreover one Tyneside council worker showed one

Continued on back page



## UNEMPLOYMENT KILLS

By Bob Edwards  
(Harlow Labour Party)

A staggering 54,622 deaths in Britain between 1972 and 1976 were directly accountable to unemployment.

This fact was revealed on the ITV programme 'World in Action' on Monday 5th February. From a study of death rates, types of death, and unemployment rates, an American professor, Harvey Brenner, has produced one of the biggest damnations of unemployment ever.

His researches revealed that every 1% increase in unemployment produces a 2% increase in death rate.

The Professor originally started his researches in America amongst enormous hostility, but irrefutable statistical evidence led to the conclusion that stress deaths

rise alarmingly with every increase in unemployment.

The three deaths he particularly studied were heart attacks, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide. In every case increases in these deaths corresponded to rises in unemployment.

The Professor said he had anticipated that in Britain with the health service and the welfare state, the results would be softened, but in fact it was as sharp as in America.

The team looked both at

the unemployment 'black spot' of Liverpool and the relatively cushioned area of Nottingham among others, but in both areas reached the same staggering conclusions. From 1972 to 1977, 1,078 deaths in Liverpool and 303 deaths in Nottingham were directly as a result of increased unemployment.

These facts should be used by the labour movement to step up the campaign for a 35-hour week and the elimination of unemployment.

## Council Picket Arrested

On February 5th, police arrested two GMWU members picketing the council refuse tip at Factory Lane, Croydon, keeping Andy Darby, the senior GMWU shop steward, in custody overnight.

By Clare Doyle  
(Lambeth GMWU)

Mr Darby, who is 34 years old, has six fractures in his back and a silver plate in his leg as a result of prior industrial accidents. He was charged with assaulting the

police, obstructing the public highway and behaviour likely

to cause a breach of the peace.

Police alleged in court on Tuesday morning that Mr Darby had made threats of violence to the police and the public both before and after his arrest and requested that he be bound over.

On behalf of Mr Darby and Mr Skinner, their lawyer told the court that the offences were denied as were the alleged threats and maintained that the police officer had dragged Mr Darby away

while he was talking to a driver requesting him not to cross the line.

He said the officer had then thrown him into a chain link fence which Mr Darby had bounced off, accidentally bumping into the officer.

His lawyer added that Darby was not a "secondary" picket and was acting lawfully. The application to bind over was refused and Mr Darby was granted unconditional bail.

On Tuesday February 6th, six busloads of police turned up at the picket. All police leave was cancelled. Only 20 pickets were present.

In the pages of 'Militant' in the past few weeks council workers, lorry drivers and bakers have all shown their anger at the lies which Fleet Street has disseminated about them.

They have also expressed their appreciation of the role which 'Militant' has played in telling the truth, in putting the workers' case and in countering the distortions, lies and half-truths of the capitalist press.

This appreciation was shown on the magnificent 22nd January demonstration and lobby of Parliament when over 2,000 copies of 'Militant' were sold.

But the influence of 'Militant' will not be extended by appreciation alone or by occasional sales on big demonstrations. The best antidote to press poison is to spread the influence of 'Militant' to all corners of the labour movement and to as many workers as we can reach.

We therefore appeal to all 'Militant' sellers to massively extend the sales of our paper. We particularly appeal to all council workers, lorry drivers, bakers: support the paper which supports you!

Take out a regular subscription to 'Militant'. Get your union branch to take out a regular bulk order. Send us a regular donation to the fighting fund. Only in this way will we be able to plan for a more regular paper with a mass influence among working class people.

Don't delay. Act now to build 'Militant'.

Janice Dale  
(Circulation Manager)

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Ban night work! page 6



# Militant

## JOINT ACTION NEEDED

The public sector manual workers have forced the government to retreat once again from its rigid 5% pay policy. First 8.8% was offered, and

now the Prime Minister has said that the government will fund increases up to 10% and that it will not oppose increases beyond this figure if they are financed out of the rates.

Millionaire Woodrow Wyatt, writing in the so-called "Labour" paper, the 'Sunday Mirror', sank below his usual level of filth and hypocrisy with his comment that "the NHS unions are not interested in the

sick. They batten on the NHS and suck out its life-blood."

And Robert Taylor of the reputedly "moderate" and "quality" paper, 'The Observer', wrote: "Last week Fisher and his staff had two bomb warnings at their Blackheath headquarters, a measure of the high emotions raised by the present actions. But the union leaders only have themselves to blame for hostile public reactions."

The frenzy of the media arises from their shock and horror at seeing low-paid workers standing up and fighting for an end to the exploitation of their dedication.

A speedy victory is now possible. To ensure this, the unions nationally should give clear directions to workers in key sections—such as water and refuse collection—to become fully involved in the action.

This must be backed up

by joint shop stewards' committees in every local authority, university, area health authority and water authority planning, and co-ordinating activity. Liaison is also essential across these four public sector industries.

In this way the public sector workers can make a massive stride forward which will lift the pay aspirations of all low-paid workers.

# low paid workers... "WE CAN WIN AND WE ARE WINNING"

"We can win and we are winning." That's the confident mood of health service workers in Hull and North Humberside.

Having formed ourselves into a District Joint Shop Stewards' Committee (NUPE and COHSE) only days before the January 22nd Day of Action, our strike committee now virtually controls the running of the Health Service in our district.

A dispensation committee, now strike committee, of twelve has been recognised by Hull District management on full pay. They meet all day, every day, discussing dispensation requests and co-ordinating industrial action.

Administrators humble themselves with requests for this and that. Nothing moves unless the strike committee OKs it.

A levy of 50p a week has been collected from all members to finance the strikers and the strike committee.

Support from the local labour movement is now coming. The dockers will black any firms breaking the picket lines.

The Trades Council Disputes Committee has offered advice and assistance. The University Students' Union collected £20 after hearing a steward speak to them, and the Labour Club donated £5.

The LPYS has loaned the Strike Committee their typewriter and duplicator for printing strike bulletins for their members and circulating the local movement.

Alistair Tice [NUPE shop steward Hull Royal Infirmary]

## TORBAY HOSPITAL

As an in-patient at Torbay hospital on January 22nd, I had a slightly unusual view of the action. Frankly the running of the hospital appeared to be little affected but with help from the media feelings among the patients were still aroused, anti of course.

I took every opportunity to put across a few relevant facts

and figures which always aroused surprise and often started unusual trains of thought, e.g. there might be something in it when they say they are low paid!

"It's a backward area for trade union activity but this time the action has one hundred per cent support from the men," one of the NUPE stewards told me.

## SALFORD

"Conditions are terrible—stinking dust gets everywhere and you get covered in filth all the time."

This is the disgusting environment that the men at the Wallness refuse disposal plant on Frederick Road, Salford, work under. A plant which dominates the area billowing out smoke onto the surrounding housing.

"Maintenance work at weekends is worst—one of the lads got burnt bad and was laid off for a few weeks." Even so, Greater Manchester Council can only pay £39.70 plus £5 supplement for a basic forty-hour week and have offered 5%—"You can't keep a wife and kids on that."

"One bloke last week worked seventy-six hours for £87 including shift allowance and it is normal for men to work seven days a week just to make ends meet—you hardly get any family life at all."

Steve Wood [Salford LPYS] interviewed Harry Hampston—shop steward of Wallness incinerator, 166 Salford Branch of the G&MWU after the first week of the strike.

## CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge is not renowned for being a militant trade union stronghold, but the pickets are out in force this week—all council depots are being picketed. Talking to union members, picketing at the city's refuse tip, the mood was friendly and optimistic, although slightly critical of the local unions' handling of the strike.

Firstly they asked what I was selling. When told it was 'Militant', their spokesman said, "We appreciate your lot, they're behind us and what your paper says is true." He then talked of the biased reporting of the national press and television (which we all know about).

Maybe Cambridge will now realise that university town or not, the working class—even here—are not prepared to accept low wages any longer and will fight for a living wage.

Carol Butcher [Cambridge CLP]

## HARLOW

"What shows how well society views the long-term service ambulancemen, the backbone of the service, is after five years you get the grand sum of 66p a week extra. Really showing their gratitude for the life-saving role we play!" stated Bob Warman of NUPE.

"One of our perks is a sick scheme, full pay if you are out due to illness, but then you pick up sore throats and viruses all the time from having to handle a constant stream of sick people." "It's only if we take decisive action will we win our claim and give us something approaching a living wage which is a must to maintain the morale of such an essential service."

Ambulance drivers spoke to Bob Edwards, Harlow Labour Party.

## COVENTRY

Bob Marriott, NUPE steward Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital spoke to Dave Nellist.

What will be the situation regarding provision of "emergency cover"?

Bob Marriott: "We're refusing to allow the introduction of any "volunteer labour" during this dispute, emergency cover will be maintained but only under the control of the shop stewards after negotiation with management."

Those working to provide this minimum cover will be members at present without strike pay, thus sharing out

the money we have to continue the dispute.

What is the general situation in your own hospital, the 'Coventry and Warwick'?

BM: The local paper, the 'Evening Telegraph' summed it up recently: "The hospital is understaffed, morale is low and nurses work under such pressure that they go on sick leave."

I think a lot of this is the result of public spending cuts and over the last few years I know of cases when untrained nurses have been left in charge of wards, so that over-stretched nursing staff can take a 15-minute break.

Finally, what is your attitude to the Labour govern-

ment?

BM: To put it mildly, I'm disappointed. They seem to be taking an almost incomprehensible attitude to low pay and the problems of the health service. They're supposed to be the alternative of the working people, yet they're doing the work of the Tories, better than ever the Tory party could get away with.

Don't get me wrong—I'd never support that lunatic Thatcher, but if the Labour government don't realise the plight of the low-paid workers, they'll get swept out of office this time round.

By Bridget Shaw

## WIRRAL

The offer to water workers is an insult. The Tory press say the average wage will become £80 and that it's a 14% rise. As one Wirral worker said: "The coverage in the press is probably sent out by management. It's rubbish. It doesn't mention all the strings, especially the attendance allowance."

In fact the rise offered is only 7.68% on basic earnings. For a Grade 2 operator that would mean £2.60 after tax. That's nothing considering he's on £42.68 gross basic at

## STRINGS ATTACHED TO WATER AUTHORITIES' OFFER

present. The rest of the offer consists of a £5 efficiency supplement which is "self-financing". This would involve clocking on—a questioning of a man's honesty, which has been opposed by the workers in the past.

Also, if a worker is on holiday, or off sick during the week the £5 is not payable. For prolonged sickness you have to be off for at least four weeks before any of the £5 is payable. Also, this attendance supplement is not

enhancable, i.e. it's not calculated into overtime or bonus pay.

A key part of the claim, which the press is deliberately ignoring, is the 35-hour week and four weeks' holiday across the board. The latest offer means you have to be there ten years before getting 21 days' holiday—a net gain of three days.

Richard Venton [Birkenhead Labour Party] spoke to Wirral water authority workers

## WALES

### Management sabotage

Ambulancemen in West Glamorgan were locked out for covering emergency services only. Ambulancemen got blamed for endangering lives, but it is the management who are refusing them the right to work. In Neath management have even chained up the gates to the ambulance station.

In East Wales, water workers have been subject to torrents of abuse on TV. In one case an irate woman accosted a NUPE official (it "just so happened") that cameras were on the spot at the time!), blaming him for the flooding of her home.

It turned out that, hearing about a strike, she turned on all her taps to fill up baths, sinks etc., then the water was cut off. She went out shopping without turning the taps off, the water supply was reinstated...It's people like that who cause water shortages!

Kevin Ramage [LPYS National Committee]

## DUNDEE 'DIABOLICAL' PRESS COVERAGE

The public service workers' dispute was launched in Dundee with a march through the town to a rally in City Square. Organised at very short notice by the T&GWU after trains to London for the lobby had had to be cancelled, it attracted 200 workers, who heard speeches from leaders of the four unions involved and Ernie Ross, Labour candidate for Dundee West.

Afterwards, Jim Mudie,

Secretary of the Dundee Hospitals Branch of NUPE, told Pat Craven and Bruce Wallace that 100 per cent of NUPE members were out, except those on emergencies.

An overtime ban was imposed on all grades and a work to rule. Selective industrial action would be taken by small numbers of workers who will cause the maximum disruption.

The union's membership

have fully endorsed these policies and are confident that they will win within two or three weeks. They know that they won't get any good publicity—"It's diabolical and damnable some of the stuff they've published." Pickets outside the Dundee Royal Infirmary singled out 'The Sun' for its "fairy story" about "Nasty NUPE".



# QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITALS ... HACKNEY

On Monday 29th January, David Ennals, Secretary for Health, saw fit to pay a visit to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital for Children, in Hackney, where ancillary workers are in dispute for a living wage.

On the following Friday, these workers came out on a day's protest stoppage over this and told us their feelings both about Ennals' visit and their working conditions.

Rose Wiltshire, Laundry worker, NUPE member:

We're not a militant lot you know. The TV have aggravated things here. The 'Daily Mirror' said that the children were having to go to bed in their day clothes—that's a damned lie.

When the COHSE stewards told us yesterday that we didn't have to come out today with the others we nearly killed them. All those lies in the press made us mad.

We work bloody hard for our money and what do we get? I take home £31 or £32 a week for 40 hours' work. You know they've offered me a rise of 20p! What an insult. By the way, COHSE and NUPE get on fine here.

John Cerisola, Shop Steward, COHSE, Domestic Manager:

What comes out in the daily papers is utter rubbish. Ennals came here and was photographed like he was an American president, kissing babies. You would have thought that he could have thought of something better wouldn't you?

I don't think he realises the sort of conditions we have to work under. They didn't say on TV that the baby puked up all over him.

Alfred Marshall, driver, and chairman of Queen Elizabeth Hospital COHSE branch:

"It was a manoeuvre to bring Ennals down here. We had a meeting with him and walked out but the press ignored that.

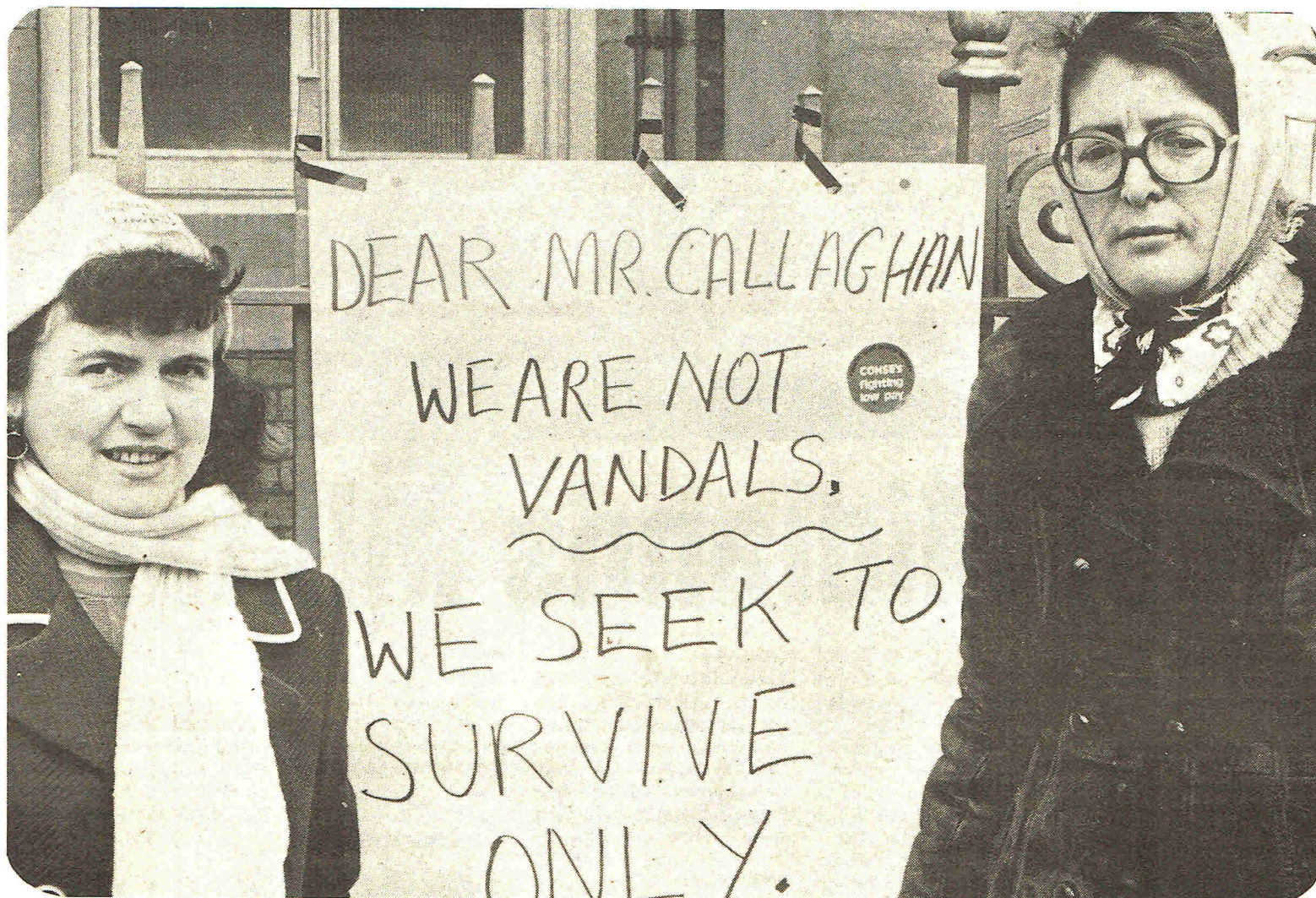
We're just normal working men and women striving to earn a living. I don't want any suffering and I challenge anybody to go into that hospital and find a child suffering because we're out today.

All the ancillary staff are out today except those covering for emergencies. We've got no restrictions on anything going in or out. Because the cameras are here the administration have decided to clean everything in the hospital.

When Ennals came the press said our people had cleaned the hospital up especially for him. That's an insult to us and a bloody lie.

What's happening today is really a protest at the way things have been going for years. Years ago ancillary workers agreed to service the new laboratory annexe [the Hayward Building] with existing staff. This was before the unions had developed here.

Then at the end of last year, after seven years of planning without consulting us, management finished building another annexe—the Donald Winnicott Centre for handicapped children, a day assessment centre.



Ancillary workers are not prepared to accept derisory offers

## PRESS LIES INFLAME WORKERS



John Cerisola

Report and photos by J McKittrick

Management once again tried to get us to service this with no extra manpower. This time we dug our heels in. I've got three kids of my own and I don't want any children to suffer—but we've got to look after getting on for 500 people here altogether but we don't even have a trained plumber on the premises!

So earlier this year during the really cold spell the pipes burst and we got flooded out at the hospital. We made do without a skilled plumber—and why?

Because the management won't pay decent wages. Including me, there are four drivers working here but over £7,000 was spent on mini cabs between here and Great Ormond Street Hospital alone two years ago, and that's a

fact. Then the management say they haven't got any money to take on more drivers. I tell you it's amazing the work that goes to outside contractors here.

They're a two-faced bunch—we've got a porter who did 36 hours on the trot, working on the switchboard when there was no one to cover, and this is before the dispute blew up.

The porters double as telephonists at night. They don't mind provided they can work reasonable hours. This lot prattle on about us endangering lives but if those sort of hours aren't dangerous, what is? How can a bloke handle an emergency call properly when he's half asleep?

## ...BIRMINGHAM CANCER HOSPITAL

"Pickets blockading Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital," "Scores of cancer patients sent home," "a four-letter word, NUPE." This is just part of the press barrage thrown at us for daring to take industrial action for decent pay.

The Birmingham 'Evening Mail', never noted for its sympathy towards the unions, hit a new low about the "Cancer ward". We are not going to allow any patient to die as the 'Mail' implies, but we are fighting for a wage on which we can live.

The real truth about the

Queen Elizabeth is that we co-operated throughout in providing emergency cover where requested. Out of 60 porters we left six working, and then increased it to 12 precisely for emergencies.

The media made great play of statements issued by Mr William Bond, the Director of the Radiotherapy Department at the QE about cancer patients being sent home, and their lives put at risk due to us.

He did exactly the same to us during the 1973 dispute.

Again the real story was not the "65 out of 70 seriously ill

cancer patients" that the 'Mail' reported, but just five who went home, from radiotherapy.

They were exactly those who would not be put at risk by treatment being interrupted. Anyway the hospital administration had more than enough notice of our action, to prepare for just dealing with emergency cases.

Of course what never appeared in the Tory press was the statement signed by the Area Medical Officer for the Birmingham Area Health Authority and by NUPE and COHSE, refuting what Mr Bond had said.

"Certain statements attributed to Mr Bond may reflect his personal view but do not represent the view of the AHA:

"Patients sent home from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital including those from Radiotherapy are those whose treatment could most safely, though not ideally, be suspended in the short term."

At the QE even without anyone on strike, with just a work to rule, we will still enforce emergency-only bed levels. We can still impose a large amount of control.

This is what really enrages the administration. That we, the ancillaries, the porters and drivers and the rest have taken control of our own jobs. The press, of course, say we are telling qualified medical staff how to treat their patients.

That's just rubbish. We work with them on the cases they declare to be emergencies. But now we are saying what we will or won't do. Our battle to end low pay is teaching hospital workers a lot about trade unionism.



Alfred Marshall

By Dick Hackett [NUPE Central Birmingham Health District Secretary]





Photos: John Woulfe

# West Midlands Militant Rally

The West Midlands 'Militant' Rally was held on the 27th January and over 120 people attended—a number of them coming to their first meeting ever. This was held because all comrades in the West Midlands recognised the enormous steps forward the paper has made during the last year.

The meeting was chaired by Jeremy Birch, who introduced the first speaker, Sam Maddox the General Secretary of the Bakers Union. Sam mentioned how ashamed he felt that a Labour Prime Minister had stated that picket lines should be crossed because of the state the country was in.

He then went on to say that during the strike of the Bakers Union against the 5% to achieve better wages and conditions, they had to fight the National Association for Freedom,

the police, the press and everything the capitalists could throw at them. As Sam put it, of course we want a Labour government, but it must be a government prepared to carry out an equal distribution of wealth, unlike the present government carrying out Tory policies. "We want to work to live and live to work", he ended.

### Class solidarity

Dennis Mills, Chairman of the T&GWU Lorry drivers branch spoke next about the enormous solidarity shown by the lorry drivers when coming out on strike, with all the problems they had to face, and how they were determined to win. He also mentioned the need for secondary picketing, and how more and more workers were being forced into struggle. He finished by explaining the need to educate, agitate and organise.

The next speaker was Ted Grant from the Mil-

itant Editorial Board, who began by explaining how the capitalists had promised ten to twenty years ago that all the workers problems were solved, and that we were living in a classless society. How false this was is really being shown up now, not just in Britain but on an international scale.

The need for a Labour government to carry out Clause 4 part IV of the Labour Party constitution was clear.

Dick Hackett, NUPE Secretary of Central Bir-

mingham Health District spoke last about the campaign of lies the press were especially running against the striking health workers.

### Discussion

There followed a very lively discussion, with numerous comrades making contributions. Some gave their own experiences of recent pay claims, and put forward the programme of Militant, showing that it is the only way

forward for workers.

An appeal was made for the Militant Fighting Fund before the discussion, which raised a magnificent £125 from the comrades present.

Following the Rally, it was noted in the local Tory rag that although they mentioned the Rally, they forgot to say who was holding it.

**R Hargreaves**

(Handsworth LPYS and ASTMS)

**Ted Grant finished the meeting on the note that we must look forward with confidence to the future—a socialist future.**



## More backing for National Youth Officer

The December meeting of Ipswich GMC passed the following resolution.

"This GMC believes that the Labour Party Young Socialists will play a vital role in any forthcoming Parliamentary election in securing the youth vote for a Labour victory and therefore asks the

NEC to ensure that the Youth Department remains open during the election campaign, so that the National Youth Officer can co-ordinate the youth campaign.

We further believe he should be given the same facilities as was planned for the student organiser during

the expected October election. We call upon the NEC to launch a campaign to win the youth vote and young people to the Labour Party and LPYS."

**Roger MacKay**

**NOLS conference shows need for Regions**

The North West Region NOLS Conference last Saturday reflected on a successful year of campaigns and activity.

The Regional Committee had organised a campaign on housing, two 'Day Schools' and met regularly during the year. This was reflected in the growth of activity in a number of Labour Clubs in the region and the formation of one new Labour Club.

Committee members had been active in supporting the Fords and Bakers' strikes; and in the student field, campaigning against fee increases at Trafford College, and in Nursery campaigns in Manchester and Liverpool. This activity had been co-ordinated by the publication of a Regional Bulletin, the 'North West Organiser'.

### Elections

Conference passed resolutions on Women, Further Education, Iran and Northern Ireland. All these provide a basis for campaigns in the coming year.

'Militant' supporters were unanimously elected to the new Regional Committee, with Sue Horne (Liverpool University Labour Club) being the new National Committee member.

The Conference endorsed the Regional Committee's action in opposing the NOLS proposals to abolish the regions of NOLS. NOLS North West Region's experience shows that the regions can make a valuable contribution to NOLS' work.

Every Labour Club should be campaigning now to save the regions. Send resolutions to the NEC and Joan Maynard MP (Chairman of the NEC Youth sub-committee)

FOR FASCISTS • NO PLATFORM

NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS • NO PLATFORM

## FASCISTS DON'T CLOUD THE ISSUE

As part of a meeting on 'Racialism—and how to fight it', Rother Valley LPYS screened the anti-National Front broadcast by Joe Ashton MP. Half-way through, a smoke bomb was rolled in through the doorway.

Whilst we cannot prove it [yet], the National Front would have a vested interest in such an attack. As the speaker put it, half his contribution had been made.

The incident rammed home to the audience the lengths to which these thugs will go to disrupt meetings of the labour movement. It also exposed the liberal-moral position of those who advocate democratic rights for fascists. After all, would you let a known arsonist into your house and give the materials to set it alight? A concrete example as I am sure you would agree!

**Leon Kaplan** (Rother Valley LPYS)

FOR FASCISTS • NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS



# TOWN HALL SCANDAL

Carol Turner, a Southwark Councillor, has been expelled from the ruling Labour group because she demanded that time should be allowed for consultation before a decision was taken on building a new Town Hall which could cost £100 million.

**Councillor Turner spoke to Pete Dickenson [Peckham Labour Party]**

PD: Can you tell me the background to the decision to build the Town Hall?

CT: In July 1978 the Council's Planning Committee gave outline planning permission. The leader of the Labour Council, O'Grady, said that this decision was in no way binding and full consultation would take place before any decision was made.

In November 1978 the Councillors were given details of the new Town Hall proposals. These details constituted a file six inches thick.

At the next Labour Group meeting the first item on the agenda was a decision on

whether to build the Town Hall.

An amendment was proposed by Cllr. Greening that this should be deferred for three months to allow for consultation. The first vote on the amendment was tied, the second came down by the narrowest margin against consultation.

This was despite the fact that Peckham and Dulwich CLPs had written to the Labour Group beforehand asking for more consultation.

The Council workers' unions, who were given only five days to make up their minds, came down solid against the proposals. NALGO and

## Labour ranks in revolt

★ Southwark, an inner city London borough is one of the poorest in the country. Wages are stated to be £1,000 per year below the national average.

★ Industries in the area, particularly the docks, have declined or vanished.

★ The problems are shown by the fact that Southwark has the highest rate of infant deaths per thousand live births in London.

NUPE support the demand for a public inquiry by the Environment Secretary.

At the November Council meeting, a Labour councillor,

Bob Smythe moved a motion to defer a decision on the Town Hall for six months. This motion was defeated, although 19 Labour council-

lors defied a three line whip to abstain or vote against.

On the 2nd January the Labour Group voted to discipline these councillors. They were given 48 hours to sign a 'naughty note', eleven refused to do this and have since been expelled from the Labour Group for six months.

Peckham CLP, Dulwich CLP and the Southwark local government committee have all voted to oppose the building of the Town Hall.

The local government committee has given its full backing to the dissident councillors, and Peckham CLP has voted to recommend that those councillors who opposed consultation should not be re-elected to serve after the next election. All the expelled councillors have appealed to the NEC.

PD: How will the Town Hall be paid for?

CT: All the finance must come locally. That means that the vast majority will be raised from loans in the City

of London. Cllr. Greening put the final cost of the Town Hall as high as £100 million although the official figure is considerably lower. Either way the interest re-payments will be astronomical.

There is a desperate need in Southwark for improved nurseries, and social and recreation facilities. £100 million could make an enormous contribution to meeting these needs.

What will happen is that services in Southwark, which is one of the poorest London Boroughs, will be cut even more to meet the interest payments on the Town Hall. It is a scandal that a Labour Council should be doing this.

PD: What do you think will be the political consequences if the Town Hall goes ahead?

CT: There is a case for looking at the question of local parties mandating councillors to make sure that this sort of thing can't happen again.



Sir Eric Miller

Sir Harold Wilson

## Liverpool LPYS Low Pay Meeting

# Co-ordinated action is needed

A well attended joint meeting between the LPYS and the public sector workers was held in Liverpool on Thursday 25th January.

Marie Harrison, a COHSE shop steward, and a sister in the intensive care unit at the Royal Liverpool Hospital, led off first and gave an account of conditions in the hospital where, she said, most of the services didn't work and hadn't worked since the hospital was opened last year. She also spoke of wages of £30 to £40 and asked how anyone could live on those wages nowadays.

Although the nurses couldn't strike, they were fed up with the way they'd been treated and were determined to fight for higher pay. The only way to do this, she said, was to go to the docks, miners, factory workers etc. and put the nurses' case to them and enlist their help.

She went on to detail the drain on resources of the NHS by drugs firms making massive profits and the use of agency nurses and showed how profits had increased

during the present period of wage restraint.

The only answer was to nationalise the top monopolies under workers' control so that the wealth from industry could be used to restore the cuts in the NHS and pay living wages.

The next speaker was Paul Kelly, a NUPE branch secretary, and Paul explained that he was not a local authority worker but a gravedigger employed by the Catholic Church. They fully supported the local authority gravediggers who were on strike because their wages were linked to the wages of the local authority workers.

He said that a few years ago the wages of gravediggers were only £7 below the national average but now they were over £30 below. This was why the current action was being taken.

Paul ended by calling for joint shop stewards' committees and liaison committees to be set up to ensure close co-operation between the different unions so that the claim could be won.

Contributions from the floor criticised the press

campaign against the strikers and emphasised the only way to get a true account of the situation was to read the 'Militant'.

All public service workers present were urged to join the Labour Party and help the LPYS and 'Militant' supporters in the fight against the 5% pay limit and also the cash limits which the local authority employers are hiding behind.

In his summing up Paul called for more democracy in NUPE and for all officials of his union to be elected annually, and paid the wage of the average worker in the union.

At the end of the meeting all of the public sector workers there must have been sure that, despite the anti-working class utterances of Callaghan, Healey and Ennals, the LPYS and 'Militant' supporters in the Labour Party were 100% behind them in their campaign for a living wage and a shorter working week.

A collection was held on behalf of the LPYS and over £21 was raised.

## CORRUPTION AT THE TOP

In the hallowed halls of Westminster, MPs, Labour as well as Tory, have foamed at the mouth at the audacity of the public employers' fighting for £60 per week.

Their hypocritical attacks on 'greed' are put in perspective by the findings of a Department of Trade probe which has exposed who the real specialists in greed are.

Investigating Peachey Properties and Sir Eric Miller, their chairman and managing director who died in 1977; they showed quite clearly the corruption common in capitalism.

Sir Eric (the knighthood was given by Harold Wilson) had a reputation as a public benefactor, regaling business associates with gifts, and holding parties for his favourite causes. Not, though, out of his own wealth, but out of the funds of his company.

He managed to part with £310,975 in the ten years up to 1976 in gifts and gratuities. Not plastic bios with the firm's name on either. One Bond Street jeweller found

himself more than £250,000 better off due to Miller's spending sprees. A silver chess set valued at £2,750 was his present to the wife of the then Tory Home Secretary Reginald Maudling.

Tories of course revel in such foul diseased waters, but the report shows that Harold Wilson, shortly before he resigned as Prime Minister had also been feted by Miller.

He was given a surprise 'farewell' party at 10 Downing Street by Miller, at which no less than £3,304 was spent on champagne for Wilson, and friends. This was at a period of savage wage restraint for workers whose votes had hauled Wilson back into office two years before.

Even if the public service employees get their full £60 minimum, a years wages would be more than gobbled up by this. How come a Labour Prime Minister had friends of that nature anyway?

Certainly any Labour leader worth his salt would be more likely to get acid than champagne from a property

speculator.

A number of other shady deals were not fully investigated by the DTI. All the illegal ways of reducing his debts to his company were quoted, but the role of certain financiers was, in the words of the 'Guardian' "a stone the inspectors did not feel like overturning."

The major difference between this case and 'normal business practice' in the property world, in particular, seems to be that Miller, (who was a Justice of the Peace!) was found out, and that he shot himself.

The press splashed the story for one day as is traditional with exposés of capitalist malpractice, which are then forgotten. Few outraged editorials here.

Picketing in support of a living wage is a danger to 'society', i.e. capitalism. Such scandals as the Peachey case are acceptable (if embarrassing) as part of 'normal' business arrangements.

## WHO ARE THE REAL RICH?

Aneurin Bevan called the British capitalist press the most prostituted in the world. Their ravings in the last few weeks have been enough to give prostitution a bad name.

The latest sordid ploy has been headline stories in the gutter press about a council electrician in Camden, whose pay packet reached £738 in one week.

But before readers start queueing for local authority electricians jobs, they had better check the facts.

Mr Lester Decordova, the electrician, explained that he "had to keep going till he dropped". His wage packet represented an accumulation of five weeks' back pay and entitlements plus money for thirteen days on call, 24-hours a day, over Christmas and New Year. He worked 20

hours on several days, and the cold weather doubled the usual number of emergency calls.

A normal week's wage would not reach £100. The average wage of building workers in Camden is £51.50 a week.

But what of those who consistently, week after week, exceed this sum? And for precious little work.

To take a comparatively 'moderately' paid director, Sir Richard Cave, of Thorn Electrical Industries, who has the arduous responsibility of throwing workers on the dole. He gets by on £55,263 a year or somewhat over £1,000 weekly.

37 firms are less stingy with their pay to directors. Shell Transport give chairman Mr Pocock £103,000 per year,

just under £2,000 a week.

The Director of ATV, Lord Grade, tops the lot at £210,428 or £4,000 a week. His take-home pay may, perhaps, include a 'dirty money' bonus for all the filthy lies the TV companies tell.

Of course the press don't mention them; the aim of their attack on Mr Decordova is to besmirch the claim of the public service workers, and lessen the support from the public.

Average wages for public sector workers is about £43 a week.

How do the wages of Fleet Street editors compare with that?

The unions must ensure that the lies of the press are answered by a clear campaign in the movement itself.



# NIGHT WORK- A Threat to your health

## BOSSES PUT PROFITS FIRST

Modern technology does not of itself guarantee any change in our basic work patterns.

Like all previous improvements in technology, there will be new skills involved, but history has shown no tendency for working hours to fall.

Indeed it is more profitable to employ workers for as many hours as possible—so long as fatigue doesn't reduce efficiency too much—and reduce the number of workers employed. This is the established and recognised pattern under the capitalist system.

Pressures of competition and profit require that capital equipment is utilised to the full, its operators working round the clock to realise the full productive capacity of the equipment. This means that workers are increasingly expected to work shifts, including night shifts.

The number of workers involved in night work has doubled over the last twenty years. It is estimated that between 15 and 25% of all workers are on shift work, and between 8 and 15% of all workers involved in night work.

The demand for a 35-hour week without loss of pay has been put forward primarily as a means of sharing out work, creating jobs, reducing unemployment. But there are other important arguments for reducing hours.

Each year, ten million workers are injured at work seriously enough to require first aid, and two thousand killed or dying from injuries received at work.

Many of these accidents are due to adverse health con-

ditions caused by excessive hours or unnatural times of working. Mental stress and depression, for example, accounted for 38.5 million working days' lost production in 1971.

Disorders now recognised as arising from shift work include: gastric and intestinal disorders; gastric and duodenal ulcers, mental stress and depression, nervous and sleep disorders.

Studies have shown that nervous disorders are suffered 2½ times more by rotating shift workers than by day workers, and by 45% of workers on regular night shifts. Sleep disorders are extremely frequent in night workers, and have been found in 65% of rotating shift workers.

**Night workers do not live in complete isolation. They have a family and community geared to normal cycles of activity.**

**In a study of a continuously operating refinery on rotating shifts, 89% of workers had sleep disorders, 50% had nervous disorders, and 47% had digestive disorders.**

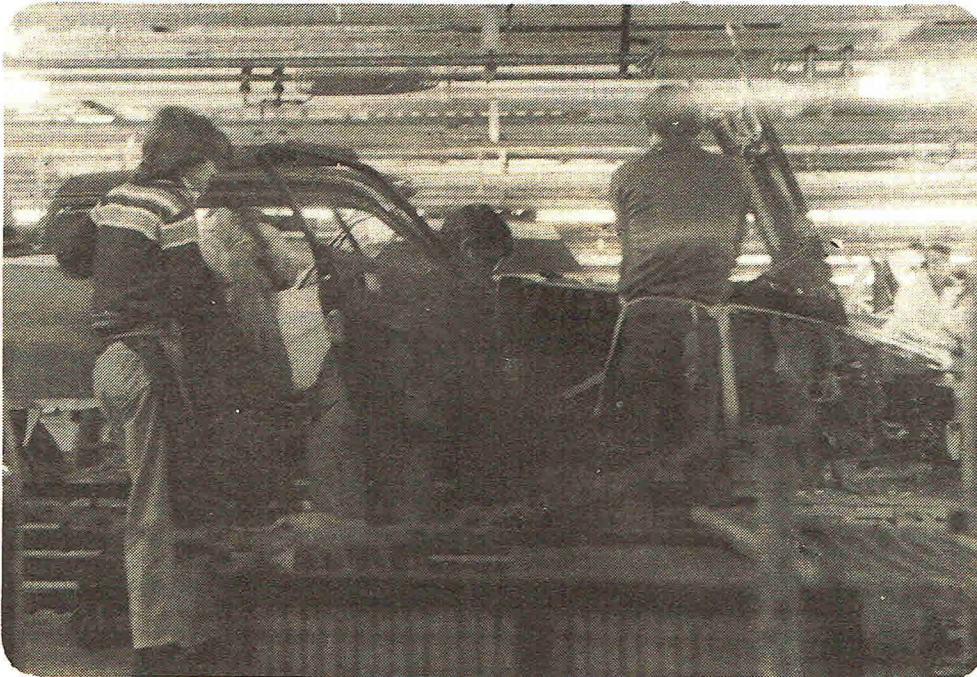
Some might argue that since humans are the most adaptable species, capable of altering their own environment, working at any periods

**By Ian Burge**  
(ASTMS London Hospital)

of the day or night should be possible without ill effect. But society is almost entirely oriented to a cycle of activity involving work during daylight hours, relaxation and leisure pursuits during the evening, and a close down of most activities during the night. This cycle conforms to

After functioning for a time, they must be given a chance to revitalise, to replenish stores of energy.

The body undergoes an alternation of exertion and rest. A 24-hour body cycle of wakefulness and sleep is a phenomenon common to all higher animals and to man.



Shift work in car factories—endangering health to boost profits

the biological rhythms of the human body.

Those organs involved in work: muscles, sensory organs, central nervous system, are all subject to fatigue.

Circadian (24-hour) rhythms govern a number of biological processes in the human body—temperature, pulse, blood pressure, brain activity, breathing and intake of oxygen, blood composition, and so on. With humans these facilitate maximum activation by day and minimum activation by night. Prevailing opinion today is that those rhythms are hereditary and form part of our genetic heritage.

### Disruption

Studies and experiments have shown that with a prolonged and consistent alteration in work/sleep cycles, a certain amount of adaptation of body rhythms does take place. Night workers, generally speaking, do not however live in complete isolation. They have a family and community geared to normal cycles of activity.

Even those adjustments actually achieved by permanent night workers have been found to be destroyed by a single day's reversion on a 'rest day', when for social and other reasons, activities revert to those of 'normal' people.

The night-worker has to work whilst in a state of nocturnal de-activation, involving extra exertion for the same workload. Furthermore, he has to sleep whilst in a state of daytime re-activation, also subject to interruption from daytime activities of others, especially children, road-menders, etc. Sleep during the day is shorter and more fragmented.

He is likely to start work already in a state of fatigue, a condition leading quickly to

over-fatigue.

Over a period of time such fatigue produces digestive ulcers and mental stress leading to depression, exhaustion, decline in work performance and even collapse.

The effects will worsen with length of service or age. For health reasons, night work has to be abandoned by the age of 40 to 50.

In addition, there are obvious disruptions to family and social life, sexual life, leisure activities, involvement

night workers.

In essential round-the-clock industries, and public services, where night work is unavoidable, it should be voluntary, and shift systems should be arranged with every consideration to the health and welfare of the workers.

Sufficient staff must be provided so that the numbers of working hours at night can be reduced to a few, with less dependence on individuals. Given adequate numbers, staff will be able to check each others' work and ensure they are not a danger to themselves or others.

Facilities must be provided to reduce to the minimum possible the strain and effort, the health risks, the discomfort and inconvenience of essential night work.

Whilst we must continue to expose unhealthy working

**We must fight to end all unnecessary night work, with no loss of jobs or earnings.**

conditions, and to fight for the abolition of night work, the demands of competition and profit make it unlikely that this will be fully achieved under capitalism.

Only under a planned socialist society will all factors be taken into consideration. Only when we produce for need, not profit, only when society is managed by the working class, will it be possible to achieve the healthiest and safest working



Coming off shift after a night down the pit

Understandably, staff at a number of computer installations have been refusing point blank to accept night shifts.

Unfortunately though, many workers are forced to accept shift working either because of pressures of unemployment, or in order to get shift allowances to make up a living wage.

**We should seek to end all unnecessary night work, with no loss of jobs or earnings. We should aim for a maximum of 20 hours per week for**

conditions, and to reduce unsociable working hours to an absolute minimum.

**A number of facts and figures used in this article have been taken from the book 'Night Work' [1977] by J Carpenter and P Cazamian, published by International Labour Office, Geneva, available from International Labour Office, 87/91 New Bond Street, London W1Y 9LA**

## HOUSE OF LORDS -

# Creatures from another world

While millions of workers attempted to cope with an assortment of miseries—low pay, snowstorms and the foaming-at-the-mouth hysteria of the Tory press—the House of Lords was debating the enemy from without.

The great neo-Gothic chamber echoed with the solemn rhetoric and grand phraseology of these heirs to the robber barons. The subject of debate—the threat to civilised society posed by the reported increase in sighting of the mysterious phenomena known as UFPs [Unidentified Flying Pickets].

Only 60 of the venerable Lords and Ladies bothered to turn up, but the speakers performed as if the Queen herself had been sighted in the public gallery wearing a "£70 for 35 Hours Now!" T-shirt. One distressed cleric wondered whether belief in UFPs would replace organised religion.

Another gentle soul expressed sympathy for alien creatures who have to spend long hours on freezing picket lines after a hazardous journey across the trackless wastes—then went back to sleep.

There were worrying reports of support for the UFPs from a group of earthlings known as "trade unionists". Alarmed Lords quivered in their plush ermine gowns and spoke of the potential dangers of UFPs—how they gave off crippling rays and blinding lights and

interfered with the sacred right of the capitalist class to extract profit from the work of others. They must be brought to heel, with the full force of the law if necessary!

Several speakers felt that the public were not being kept adequately informed of the activities of the UFPs. [The UFP-hysteria being whipped up by the press barons seems to have escaped their notice.]

Others claimed that the Kremlin was responsible for the menace and quoted reports from "usually reliable sources" that a number of UFPs had been spotted driving second-hand Moskvich cars with snow on the tyres.

One speaker claimed to have had several close encounters with UFPs, although it was difficult to tell as they camouflaged themselves by looking and speaking like the rough and unmannerly denizens of the lower classes. He raised an arm to demonstrate how a UFP exerts telekinetic control over road vehicles such as lorries.

Several of the peers used their ear trumpets as spy glasses and peered intently at the speaker who concluded by saying that if UFPs ever decided to make mass landings, there could be panic.

There could indeed.

**By George MacDonald**

(Hall Green LPYS)



# LEFT & RIGHT

## PICKET A PENGUIN

The man who instigated the action against the pickets in the Ackner case, Sir Hector Laing, is one of Thatcher's favourite millionaires and chairman of United Biscuits. This firm is the biggest manufacturer of biscuits in Europe and second biggest in the world, having swallowed up biscuit companies like children eat their products [McVities, McFarlane Lang and Crawfords, for example]. He regularly flies a ten-seater plane [biscuit coloured, of course] around Europe. All in all, he is not badly off.

But the court action wasn't to safeguard this wealth. Oh no! Sir Hector's wife, Lady Laing, suggested it out of concern for the workers at his factories, who were innocent parties laid off by the dispute. The fact that it was the bosses of UB who laid them off was, of course, irrelevant.

According to the 'Evening Standard', a roach Powell, despite his admiration for millionaires, once heckled a political speech by Sir Hector, telling him to "stick to biscuits". If this is the best excuse he can make for his act, perhaps for once we can agree with Powell.

## A MISSING FACTOR

The French capitalist press have been gloating over the difficulties of their British cousins. And according to 'Evening Standard' columnist Sam White, they have realised that there is "one advantage they have over Britain which is never listed though privately acknowledged, and that is the great good fortune the French have in having a powerful Communist Party."

According to White this is because the CP—with its connections with the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe and Russia etc.—has been used to frighten the French workers and middle class away from the ideas of socialism. Moreover: "They [CP] rendered an enormous service to France in the immediate post-liberation period by galvanising the French working class into making almost epic industrial efforts...Then they did it again in May, 1968, when they played an essential role in bringing the student provoked chaos to an end."

What White calls "student provoked chaos" was in fact the general strike and occupation of the factories by 10 million French workers. French workers were groping in the direction of changing society. The CP leaders bent all their efforts in channelling the movement in favour of wage increases.

But White's comments show that the French capitalists quite consciously and cynically understand that the CP leaders don't want to seriously challenge them or their system.

White cynically concludes: "One almost wishes at this point that the Communist Party of Great Britain was something more than a political sect."

## "IT'S A MAN'S LIFE!"

Beware of false promises from the Armed Forces. A trooper, Jeff Ridley, has received compensation from the Army for injuries received on duty in 1977. He had wanted to join the Catering Corps, but as there were no vacancies there he was asked to temporarily join a tank regiment from which he could transfer to a catering unit.

He received severe head injuries in training, but was discharged only five days later and sent on active service—in Belfast! A year later he collapsed blind and semi-conscious. A doctor treating him said his injury had been compounded by his 'awful' experiences in Northern Ireland, and expressed concern about the lack of medical treatment.

It seems that as far as the Army bosses are concerned, even those unfortunate recruits whose military ambitions go no further than baking steak and kidney pies must be used on dangerous missions, hardened and brutalised.

## BRITISH TRANSPORT HOTELS...

# ONLY SINGLE PEOPLE NEED APPLY?

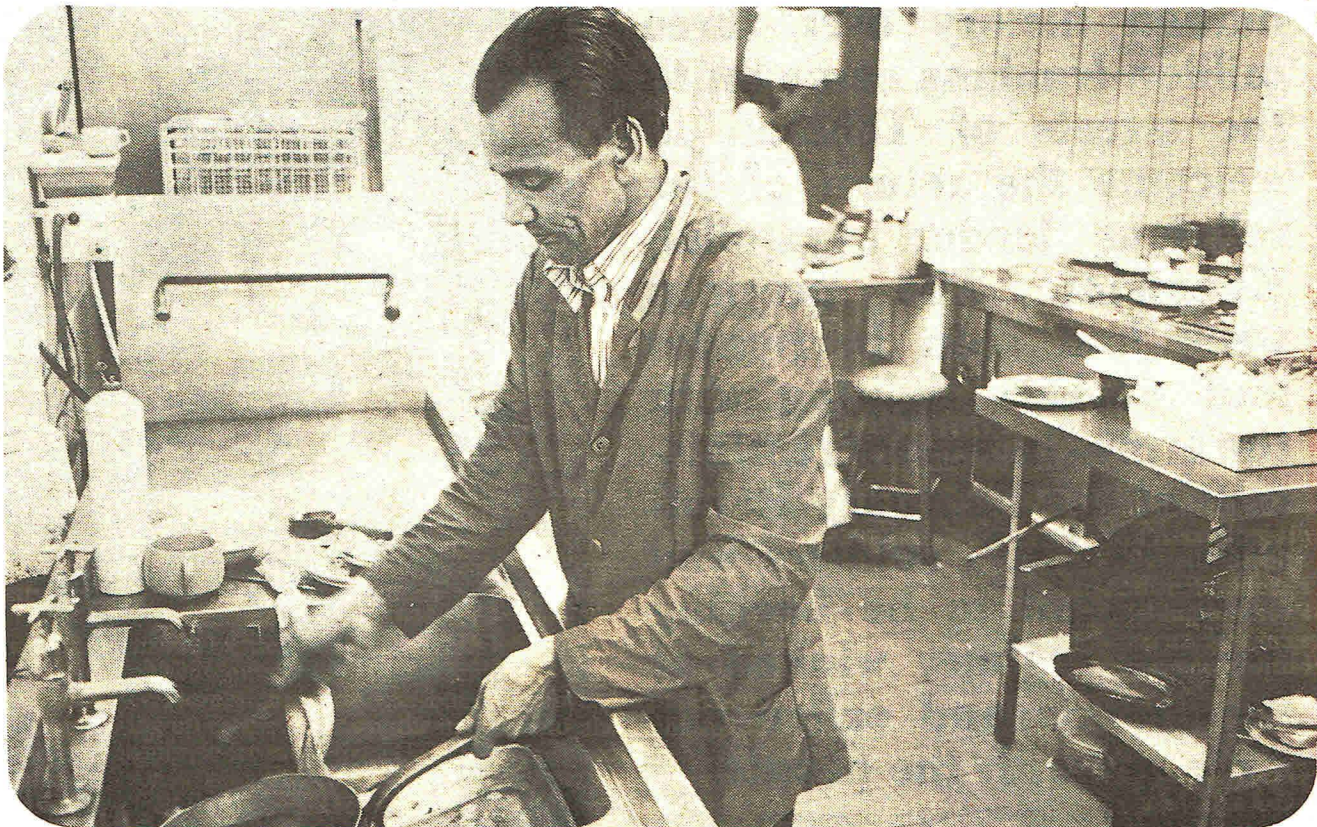


Photo: Derek Spiers (IFL)

If the average worker in Britain is known as the 'coolie' of the Western world what adjectives could describe the ancillary or non service worker in a British Transport Hotel whose conditions and wages are nothing short of scandalous.

From my own experience when I worked for BTH, I can outline the contempt shown by the management towards people who are forced to work in these hotels because of the lack of alternative.

The basic wage of an ancillary worker in BTH just one year ago was £30.62 plus a supplementary allowance of £2.50 per week. An employee is then considered fortunate if his or her take home pay is about £25 per week.

It is not surprising that a vast majority of the work force are single. I defy anyone to say they could marry and raise a family with that sort of take-home pay.

I consider myself of average intelligence, and as I was unemployed in 1977 I thought I would apply for a position in British Rail.

I was given an interview by a Personnel Officer who admitted that he could have done with my services and those of about a thousand others if only his hands were not tied by BR policy which called for an embargo on recruitment.

### Temporary

He then told me of a back door entrance into British Rail. That was to apply for a position in the BTH sector where the recruitment embargo did not exist. When the probationary three months elapsed, I could apply for transfer to a job in the BR proper.

It only took a few days of work in BTH to realise why there was no embargo on recruitment. Conditions were deplorable. Workers were regarded as sub-normal by the majority of management and treated as such.

The only excuse I can offer

for tolerating these conditions was that my probationary period would not be long in passing and I would be able to improve my position considerably.

### Waiting for management

This was an illusion soon to be shattered. After waiting three months, I applied for a position of railwayman in a major rail station adjacent to the hotel where I worked.

Before long, I heard through my Personnel Manager that I had been accepted for the job. As was the procedure, I asked him to write back and confirm my acceptance, and could the BR Personnel write back and inform me when I would start.

I then waited and waited.

After a few weeks I approached my assistant manager asking why the delay. I was told that as he had passed on my request the matter was now out of his hands. I asked if he would give me reference numbers of his correspondence. He said there weren't any.

Realising that this was a ridiculous statement, and that he was simply trying to be evasive I went on to use my union (NUR) as a threat to unearth this correspondence.

My approach was met by outright lack of interest by my shop steward. This was not really surprising as she had held the job unopposed for the past six years and had more in common with the management than the workers.

I found out that my assistant manager had not sent the letter. He had decided that I could not be serious about wishing to leave our wonderful hotel.

My experience is only one of many suffered by my fellow workers. For example, a basement porter was sent home sick one hour before his shift was due to finish and was not paid for any of the shift because a member of the management decided that he

should not have come in to work feeling ill in the first place!

A woman colleague came in on her day off during the Christmas holiday period as a special favour due to a shortage of staff.

A few days later she was disciplined for leaving the building ten minutes before time. This was on her day off! She was not paid any extra for the shift as she was given a day off later on to compensate.

But, what, you might ask, about the union. The NUR branch claimed that the constant flow of personnel in BTH made it impossible to organise.

### Union

This is a weak and hapless attempt to cover up their inefficiency, and in some cases, collaboration with management.

In my own hotel there was a 'House Committee', supposed to meet once a month to discuss various problems which may arise.

It was totally useless; in reality a Departmental appreciation society consisting of management, shop stewards and heads of departments. I will quote one example from the minutes of a meeting.

"The rate of absenteeism is increasing to intolerable levels and stricter disciplinary measures should be taken to combat this."

This motion was proposed by the shop steward. No wonder management's contemptuous attitude towards the workers increased daily.

NUR members who read 'Militant' should look into the plight of BTH workers and do their utmost to involve workers there in the work of the union.

By Phil McPhee

## Sacrifice Alley

The following letter in the 'Evening Standard' [23 January] shows the contrasting attitude adopted towards increases for the high paid and the low paid:

"I've never been on strike. I never ever had to negotiate for a rise. The reason? I've never needed to."

I've always had a desk job and since I left the civil service I've always been well paid. I've just had my six-monthly salary review and been given a rise from £120 to £128 per week (more than 5 per cent, of course).

So when I hear people in my position or better complaining about strikes it makes my blood boil.

Workers usually strike for better pay. The lorry drivers only want £65 per week without overtime—not a lot by our standards.

Mr Marsh also talks about sacrifices made over the past year. Well, the only time I have to make sacrifices, if you can use such a strong word, is when there is a strike. Recently I've made the following adjustments to my way of life:

1. Used the car less because of difficulty getting petrol.
2. Listened to the radio instead of TV.
3. Bought a different newspaper.
4. Bought a different brand of margarine.
5. Having to go to two shops for my weekly groceries.
6. Having to wait a long time for my double-glazing to be delivered.

But if I had to live on the wages of some of the strikers I would have to sacrifice either the car or the double-glazing or the TV and I'd always have to shop around for groceries.

—Name and address supplied."



# THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Last week in one of the biggest demonstrations in human history over three million Iranians came on to the streets of Teheran to welcome the return of the religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini. The previous week had seen barricades and workers fighting with the army. In scenes reminiscent of the February Revolution of 1917, soldiers who were meant to be backing the old regime, winked at the crowds and called out "We are with the people."



Iran is a country in the throes of revolution. The forces which are locked in combat are on the one side those of the autocratic monarchy, supported by the capitalist and landlord classes, backed up by the military and police. Facing them is the working class and the middle class who look to the Muslim clergy, particularly the Ayatollah (Holy Man) Khomeini in exile in Paris.

The analysis which follows endeavours to show the real situation which exists in Iran and the main paths which the revolution can follow. The revolution really began a year ago with the demonstrations against the Shah and his hated secret police Savak.

A totalitarian system can only maintain itself by means of terror and a system of informers while the masses are inert. But once the masses move into action against the regime it is the beginning of the end. The monstrous secret police are shown to be impotent in the face of the movement of the masses.

The pressure from below produces a split at the top amongst the ruling class. Fearing that they will be overthrown they try and introduce reforms from the top in order to prevent revolution from below. Hence the death bed 'repentance' of the Shah and his belated announcement of reforms, particularly the setting up of a 'Parliament' which was still nevertheless subordinate to the monarchy.

However these 'reforms' opened the way for the overthrow of the Shah's rule. They prepared the way for the direct intervention on the stage of history of the working class with the different layers of the middle class.

The Pahlavi monarch was forced into his inglorious flight from Iran. This took place in spite of the resistance of imperialism, particularly American imperialism. Owen and Callaghan shamefully besmirched the labour movement by coming out in support of the Shah. Their

frantic attempts to prop up the tottering Iranian monarchy have failed.

Oil of course has been the key to the policies of British and American imperialism which have enormous investments in Iran. Iran is the second biggest exporter of oil in the world, only exceeded by Saudi Arabia. This oil is vital to Western capitalist states, and is one of the factors deciding the policies of British and American imperialism in relation to Iran.

It is the world's fourth largest producer of oil. In 1976; Iran produced 295 million tonnes (10% of world production), the Soviet Union produced 515 million tonnes (17.6%), the USA produced over 404 million tonnes (13.8%) and Saudi Arabia produced nearly 422 million tonnes.

## The masses in Iran are only now beginning to take their revenge for the decades of SAVAK repression.

The Shah's rule after 1953 resulted in Iran becoming a country in transition. It has become a semi-colonial country, half-industrialised and half colonial. While remaining under the domination of American-Anglo imperialism she has attempted to strike out on an imperialist path herself. For example, in the Persian Gulf, following the retreat of British imperialism in this area of the world, Iran seized a couple of islands and attempted to play the role of policeman in the Gulf States.

The Shah maintained his regime by perfecting an instrument of terror and repression in the form of SAVAK, the Secret Police. It could best be compared to the Gestapo in its devilish tor-

tures, assassinations, executions and in the horrors which it imposed on the Iranian people.

At the same time, in an endeavour to make Iran one of the great powers of the world, the Shah undertook the industrialisation of Iran at break-neck speed. This was especially so after 1973 when the price of oil quadrupled. This gave enormous billions to the Shah for the purposes of investment.

The Shah was attempting to play the role of absolute monarch in the old sense of the Iranian regime. At the same time he was trying to modernise the economy of the country. In order to gain a basis he introduced 'land

reforms'. These 'land reforms' enriched the nobility, the absentee landowners who dominated Iran. They received enormous riches in compensation which they could then invest in industry. The idea was to transform the nobility into a capitalist class, a ruling class on the model of the West.

The real motive behind the land reform was to push the peasants off the land to provide labour for the factories. As the 'Economist' commented: "In place of Iran's village families he (the Shah) allowed his previous Prime Minister Mr Hovieda, to put divisive farm camps, undermining the whole spirit of land reform."

The massive industrialization begun under the Shah

completely bemused those who claim to, or aspire to, leading the Iranian workers. This is particularly true of the Communist party (called the Tudeh party). During the whole of the Shah's reign it has acted as if it was dead. It has put forward no independent policies whatsoever. This is to be explained by the foreign policy of the Russian bureaucracy. The Tudeh Party in Iran is largely a party dominated by the Russian bureaucracy.

The Russian bureaucracy wanted no conflict with American imperialism in Iran because of Iran's enormous importance as an oil producer. Long ago the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union gave up any thought of revolutionary developments which would threaten directly the vital interests of imperialism, especially of the major power of American imperialism because of the inevitable worsening of relations between Russia and America which would occur under these circumstances.

The yellow press in Britain was wrong to state that these events are due to the intervention and subversion of the Russian bureaucracy, of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party.

On the contrary, the Russian bureaucracy tried to prop up the Shah. They engaged in lucrative trade with the Shah, arranged for enormous quantities of natural gas to be exported from Iran to the Soviet Union and generally endeavoured to maintain friendly relations with the Shah. They looked askance at revolutionary developments in a neighbouring country, particularly one with a large working class which showed its revolutionary character during the course of these events.

The changed relationship of forces on a world scale, has resulted in immense power

being accumulated by the Soviet bureaucracy, whilst American imperialism has been weakened. Although not prepared to take any action itself, the Soviet bureaucracy warned against any intervention on the part of American imperialism directly in the affairs of Iran. This, they pointed out, would provoke an immediate counter-response by the Soviet Union, who would then send troops into Iran.

This warning on the part of the Soviet bureaucracy was heeded by the diplomats of the USA. The maniacs of the Pentagon had suggested that aircraft carriers and ships carrying Marines should be sent into the Persian Gulf for the purpose of intervening against the Iranian revolution. This was negated by the State Department, who understood the repercussions this would have on a world scale in the colonial world, and of course the repercussions in Iran and on the Soviet Union.

This shows the waning power of imperialism. American imperialism did not hesitate to intervene in Vietnam, nor in Lebanon, or in Dominica. Now because of domestic and international factors, the American imperialists have been impotent to intervene directly in the affairs of Iran.

In this situation the main preoccupation of the CP has been to climb behind religious reaction and the Ayatollah in demanding the setting up of some sort of 'democratic Muslim republic'.

But it is not only the Iranian Communist Party which has shown a feeble reaction in Iran during the course of recent events. The ultra-left sects have also played, as usual, a negative role. Some of them have given sympathy and support to the 'revolutionary' students in Iran.

## this is the beginning



Shah on the rocks

But revolutionary students in Iran were not directed either towards the working class, or to formulate a programme for working class action, but on the contrary were told by the sects to turn to the impotent methods of individual terror. As always with the sects they regarded the working class as impotent, ignorant, illiterate and utterly powerless to change the relationship of forces which existed in Iran. Their conceptions were reinforced by the fact that the working class was completely unorganised before the present development of events.

The argument of the sects and those who turned towards individual terror was that the

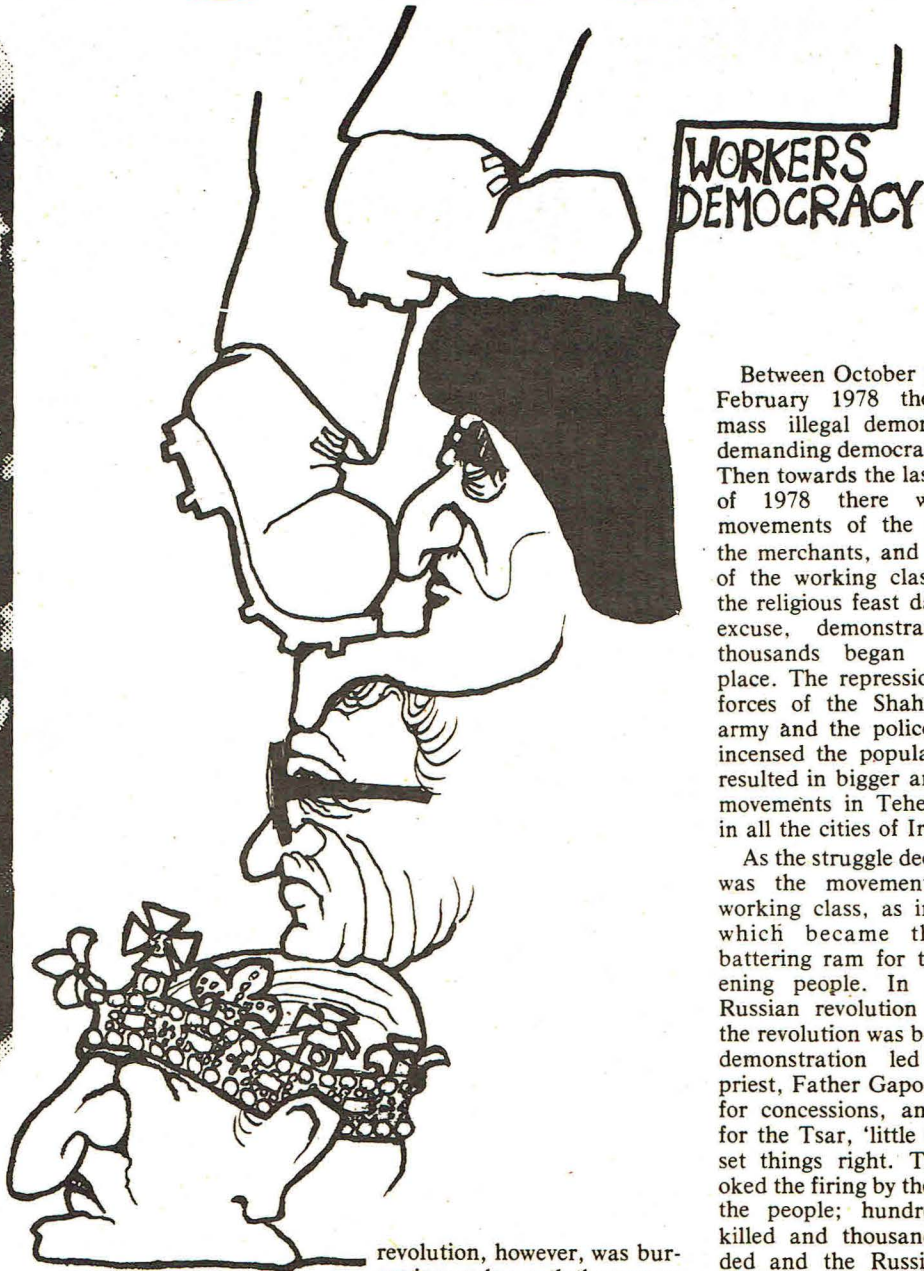
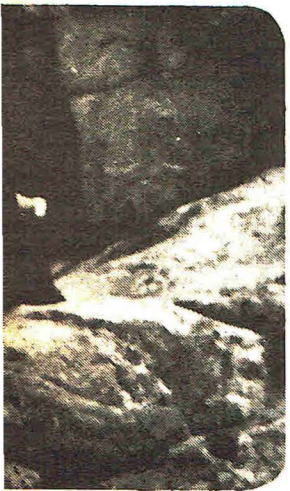


# EVOLUTION

This week in the first of a two-part article, Ted Grant analyses the course of the Iranian revolution to date.



just  
beginning



years!

The real tragedy of Iran is the fact that there was no section of Marxists, either in the ranks of the working class or the students to prepare for these great events, as Lenin and the Bolsheviks had prepared in Russia.

The short sighted sects could only see gloom and doom in the enormous development of industry. 'Militant' on the other hand, declared that the development of industry also increased enormously the power of the working class, a power which has been demonstrated in the recent period in Britain, in Spain, in the United States, in Japan, and in West Germany.

The mass strikes are an eloquent testimony to the awakening and the power of the workers.

The indescribable tortures, the lack of rights and freedom, the humiliations suffered by the masses and specifically the working class of Iran have provoked an implacable movement of the masses. On the surface, the Shah had been riding high, and this was the only thing that could be seen, unfortunately, by the radicals in Iran.

After all it is only about six to eight months ago, when the Shah was giving advice to Britain, on how to deal with strikes, and the 'permanent instability' of the 'democratic institutions in Britain'!

The old mole of the

revolution, however, was burrowing underneath the apparent totalitarian calm which existed in Iran. The CIA and imperialism were caught napping, as were the organisations of the working class.

Nevertheless, in the last few years, there have been many symptoms of the crisis of the regime. Because of the prohibition of all organisations in opposition to the 'party' of the Shah, the opposition tended to gather in the mosques. This is particularly so for the peasant, the middle class, and even for the merchant class opposition to the regime of the Shah.

Because of the failures of the Communist party, and radicals even to attempt to organise opposition within the ranks of the working class, discontent surfaced at the mosques. Radical sermons were preached, which though cloudy and nebulous, were interpreted by the masses in their own fashion.

The Shah dispossessed the Church of its lands. This did not benefit the peasants but only the nobility. That meant that the Ayatollahs, or holy men, the chief representatives of the muslim clergy in Iran were forced into opposition to the regime.

The masses interpreted the sermons of the mullahs as really standing for a struggle against the totalitarian and authoritarian regime of the Shah. The mullahs put forward the demand for the re-introduction of the constitution of 1906.

It must be remembered that nearly two-thirds of the population in Iran are still illiterate. This is a consequence of the inheritance from the rottenness of the old regime of the landlords and the nobility.

Between October 1977 and February 1978 there were mass illegal demonstrations demanding democratic rights. Then towards the last months of 1978 there were big movements of the students, the merchants, and now also of the working class. Using the religious feast days as an excuse, demonstrations of thousands began to take place. The repression by the forces of the Shah, by the army and the police, merely incensed the population and resulted in bigger and bigger movements in Teheran, and in all the cities of Iran.

As the struggle deepened, it was the movement of the working class, as in Russia, which became the main battering ram for the awakening people. In the first Russian revolution of 1905, the revolution was begun by a demonstration led by the priest, Father Gapon, calling for concessions, and calling for the Tsar, 'little father' to set things right. This provoked the firing by the army on the people; hundreds were killed and thousands wounded and the Russian revolution of 1905 had begun. So in the same way, we had the beginning of the revolution in Iran.

However there are important differences between Russia in 1905 and the present movement in Iran.

## There are important differences between Russia in 1905 and the present movement in Iran. The Iranian revolution has begun with a far higher consciousness on the part of the masses.

The Iranian revolution has begun with a far higher consciousness on the part of the masses. The mass of the people did not petition 'their father' the Shah, but on the contrary demanded the end of the monarchy. Their slogans were 'Down with the Shah' and 'Death to the Shah'.

The working class in Iran is a far bigger proportion of the population than was the Russian working class before the revolution of 1917.

There are two million Iranian workers in manufacturing alone, and another three-quarters of a million in transport, and other industries. In addition to that there are wide circles close to the working class in the clerical trades, in the civil service, and in catering, and in small businesses of that character.

Most of manufacturing

industry in Iran is small, but nevertheless there are certain giant monopolies which dominate the scene. Some employ, hundreds, thousands and even tens of thousands of workers. In Russia, the working class was only four million out of a population of 150 million. In Iran the working class is at least three to four million strong, out of a population of thirty-five millions.

In other words, the relationship of forces in the working class as far as its numerical strength is concerned is even more favourable in Iran than it was in Russia in 1905 or in 1917.

But, on the other hand, in Russia there were the Bolshevik cadres and party, and a certain socialist consciousness at least in the advanced layers of the working class.

The role of the working class in production means inevitably that it develops a collective consciousness, both in the process of work, and in the process of the struggle against their oppressors. This is the reason why it is only the working class which can change society.

Above all, the movement of the oil workers, the so-called privileged section of the working class in Iran has actually decisively undermined the regime. Over the last two months there has been intermittently a general strike in the oil fields. Despite army repression, arrests of leaders and shootings, the oil workers have stood firm and have refused to work for the purpose of producing oil for the hated regime until the Shah left. Again and again the masses, including the middle class have demonstrated.

The civil service and bank workers have played, as in Portugal, a key part in bringing the absolute monarchy to its knees. Their strike resulted in the finances of the country being paralysed. The strike particularly of the Central Bank in Iran was very effective. This followed the burning down of 400 banks by the enraged masses.

The bank clerks, when they went on strike, revealed that in the last three months, £1,000 million has been spirited abroad by 178 members of the ruling elite, including the Shah's relations. Now, in preparation for exile, after having sent his family abroad, the Shah has transferred £1,000 million to banks in America. This in addition to the £1,000 million or so which is held in banks in

Bonn, Switzerland and in other parts of the world. The Iranian Treasury has been plundered by the autocracy.

The revolution has involved most sections of the nation apart from the handful of capitalists, the landlords, the supporters of the monarch and the bulk of the army officers. The merchants and the small shopkeepers have been ruined by the development of modern capitalism in Iran. This has fuelled their hatred of the absolute ruler who they see as the source of their woes.

Thousands have been killed as a result of the repression of the forces of the state, the police, the SAVAK, and army. Every city in Iran has seen demonstrations, has seen these demonstrations being fired on, and has seen the attempt to organise reaction against the working class and against the people.

In many of the smaller towns, there have been fascist attacks, by the army and the police with picked thugs, like the Black Hundreds in Russia before the revolution. They have been used for the purpose of beatings and rapes, in order to terrorise the villagers and the working class in the small cities in Iran. Undoubtedly, if they could have got away with it, similar methods would have been used in the big cities.

The Shah, in order to leave a kindly reputation and memory gave the miserable sum (for him) of £25 million to a foundation for charity. But of course, used to the splendours of the regime in Iran, the Shah in going into what would be tantamount to exile, didn't of course want to be a pauper, he took away some small change—£1,000 million.

The tendency has been in all modern revolutions for the mass to come, in millions, onto the streets. Thus the demonstrations in Portugal of more than a million after the fall of the Caetano regime. In Iran, millions have demonstrated. According to the biased reports of the capitalist press at least one to two million have demonstrated in the streets of Teheran for the purpose of bringing down the Shah. Hundreds of thousands have demonstrated in all the cities with a measurable population in Iran. Tens of thousands in the smaller towns of Iran. This is a movement of the poor, of the dispossessed, of the exploited, involving the workers, the middle class, the white collar workers, the merchants, and even swept into the movement for their own purposes and their own ends a section of the capitalists. They wish to climb up on the backs of the workers and the middle class.

In next week's article Ted Grant deals with what future course the Iranian Revolution could take. The article will examine the stability or otherwise of Khomeini's Islamic Republic, whether the military could stage a reaction, and how workers could move towards taking power.





## General Strike in Peru

This year has seen the third general strike to hit the Peruvian military within the last 18 months. This period has also seen massive strikes by miners, railwaymen, teachers and bank employees. Unrest amongst the peasantry forced the government to temporarily close down its own peasant organisation, the CNA.

Workers and peasants have been forced to move into action to fight against attacks on their living standards. Last year saw price rises of between 50% and 60% for basic foods and public transport. In December the Morales regime announced increases of 18% for sugar, 33% for bread and 35% for milk. 30,000 were also to be sacked from the public services.

These vicious attacks on the workers have ripped apart any illusions about Peru's unique "road of revolution". The "Revolutionary" generals who came to power in 1968 tried to implement a programme of national capitalism. Their failure led to a \$2 billion debt and last year they had to beg the IMF for a loan.

The IMF agreed at a price. The price was to be paid by the Peruvian workers. When the first measures were announced last May the response of the workers in all the main towns was swift and unanimous.

A general strike was called on 22nd and 23rd May. The two leading union organisations, the Communist-controlled CGTP

### Our Latin American Correspondent

(General Workers' Union of Peru) and the Christian Democrat CNT, together with the government's peasant organisation, were forced by the rank and file to mobilise. By the end of the first week the strike was almost 100% successful.

The military regime of General Morales responded with repression. A state of emergency was declared, leading figures in the labour movement were arrested or deported to Argentina. The press was heavily censored and a night curfew enforced.

But the action of the Peruvian people forced the military to make concessions. Elections for a constituent assembly to pave the way for a return to civilian rule went ahead as planned on June 20th. Despite vicious attacks by some extreme right-wing generals who did not want the elections and despite the repression of the workers, the left parties won 34 of the 100 seats. This was achieved in a climate of severe restrictions on left-wing newspapers, political campaigns and the detention of workers' leaders.

After the election many of the

leaders were released to take up their seats in the assembly. The assembly was meant to provide a safety-valve for the rising discontent in the country. So it had no powers over the military and very limited functions.

Since its opening this toothless body has been the scene of almost farcical outbursts and open brawls between the so-called 'Marxist' element of the assembly led by Hugo Blanco's FOCEP (Workers', Peasants' and Students' Popular Front) and the majority party APRA (Alliance for a Popular Revolution in America); APRA, despite its impressive title, long ago abandoned any socialist objectives and decided to work closely with US imperialism.

In short the elections were nothing more than a bad joke as far as the majority of workers were concerned. Their new representatives had no power and, in many instances, no intention of doing anything to lessen the misery which the worsening economic situation was inflicting on them.

The hopes of the "moderates" amongst the military was that the Constituent Assembly would deflect the struggle being waged by the workers. Such hopes proved to be in vain.

When in August last year the IMF demanded another pound of flesh in the form of cutting food subsidies and sacking workers in the public services there was a massive response. So

some of the military helped form assassination squads — the "Peruvian Anti-Communist Alliance" (AAP).

This proved unable to break the workers' organisations and the last months of 1978 saw strikes by miners, metalworkers, public employees and bank employees. Pressure was building up on the leaders of the main union federation, the CGTP, for a new general strike.

But the CGTP and the Communist Party leaders did not want to lead such a struggle. At first they and General Morales appealed to the good sense and patriotism of Peruvian workers and asked them not to forget the danger of a Chile-type right-wing military coup. But they seemed to forget that one of the horrific lessons for workers from the Chilean nightmare is to have no faith in military leaders.

### Temporary set-back

The Peruvian workers rejected their "leaders'" advice and the CGTP had no alternative but to call a strike. They deliberately sabotaged it, however, by giving three weeks' notice, officially claiming that this would enable the regime to negotiate their demands.

The main demands were for the cancellation of the latest price rises, a substantial wage increase, the reinstatement of sacked workers, and an end to sackings in both private and

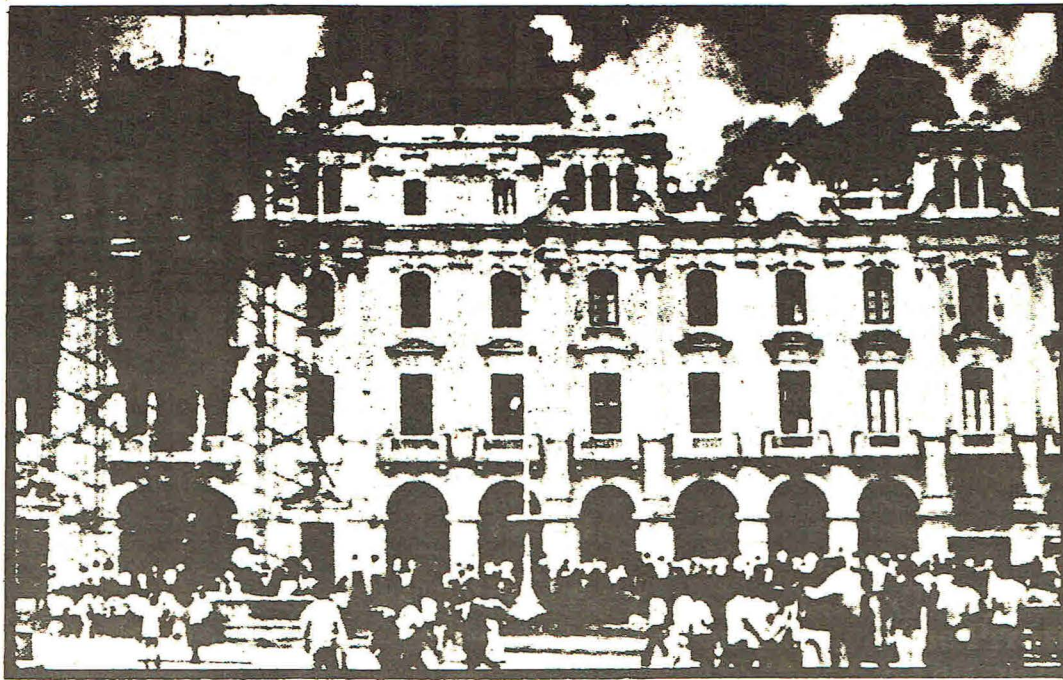
public sectors.

But giving the military three weeks' notice was as good as personally handing over the leading militants to the Peruvian jailers and the army lost no time in rounding up known activists. Over 1,000 were arrested as a state of emergency was declared, subversive publications 'banned' and the right to free assembly suspended.

By these means the Peruvian military were able this time to defeat the strike. This setback will only be temporary but it has caused some confusion and loss of morale among some sections of workers and peasants.

Unfortunately the workers were let down badly by FOCEP and its allies in the assembly. They were busy proclaiming victory before the battle had hardly begun and ignored the educational and organisation work which should have been carried out to ensure the long-term gains from the strike and develop a clear and disciplined leadership.

There is no doubt the Peruvian industrial working class, small though it is, is developing a growing militancy. They wish to see the removal of Morales and the military regime. Their struggle will intensify despite recent passing setbacks, as Peru's severe economic problems continue. The last eighteen months have only been a foretaste of the major class battles which are to come.



Opposition in Lima to the military

## International Notes

### ITALY

Italy's 37th government in the last 34 years fell last week. The Communist Party withdrew their support for the Italian Tory [Christian-Democratic] government, when the latter introduced a new three year austerity plan [see 'Militant' 2nd February 1979].

But the Communist leaders have not mounted a campaign for a socialist alternative. Their main grievance is that they were not actually in government, in coalition with the Christian-Democrats. Their spokesman last week stated: "We are not running away...rather we are appealing for politics of unity and solidarity based on full col-

laboration and operational ties with the Christian-Democrats and other parties."

The capitalists however will only accept the Communist Party into government when they have to use them to dampen down the Italian workers' movement. Coalition will bring nothing but danger for the Italian labour movement.

### FRANCE

"Uncontrollable and insurrectional" is how French steelworkers' leaders describe their members' reaction to the sacking of 30,000 workers in the Lorraine region thereby making some places virtually ghost towns. Since Lorraine returned to France sixty years ago it has been systematically

exploited by the big French steel families. It has the worst unemployment rate in the country—last year it rose by 18%.

These latest dismissals were the last straw for many workers. Towns have been barricaded. Longwy, a town with three steel mills, was cut off for several days by demonstrators blocking through traffic. Last week 15,000 children marched through the town carrying balloons marked 'SOS jobs'. From a 'Children's Crusade' to strikes, action is spreading. The government is worried that the militancy will spread to Lille and other steel towns. Next week there will be a national one-day strike, and the chairman of the workers co-ordinating committee stated: "From here on, anything might happen."

### PORTUGAL

As reaction gathers its forces in Portugal the divisions within the Socialist Party intensify. 18 right-wing members of the party last week issued a statement calling for 'a radical change in the internal and external image of the Socialist Party.' They criticise the Party leadership for even flirting with the Communist Party, particularly in its opposition to the eviction of agricultural workers from co-operatives in the Alentejo. The right-wing in the party have also echoed the capitalist parties demand for a revision of the Constitution.

With the Party Conference only weeks away this division is likely to be repeated from the left. As workers face

attacks from the most right-wing government since the 1974 revolution it is vital for Portuguese Socialists to map out a new path [see 'Militant' 2/2/79]. The counter-revolution is gathering force, but it is not too late for united socialist action by the workers' parties.

### U.S.A.

As the American economy moves towards recession and workers threaten to make 1979 'the year of the picket-line', Carter has hit out at the social wage. In his recent Budget proposals, Carter has called for a \$600 million cut in social security payments and a \$1,500 million cut in health care. Government spending is to be cut over the next two years except in one

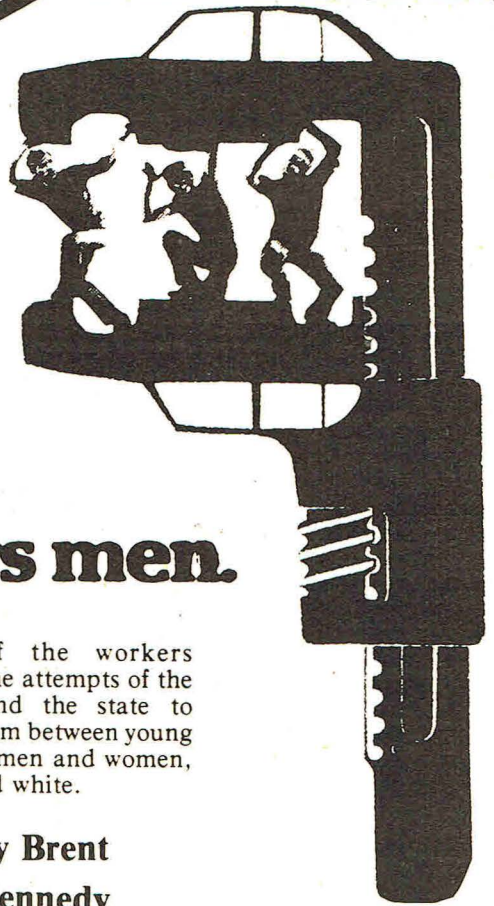
area—defence. Here there will be a 3% real increase in expenditure to \$114,000,000,000.

Carter's policy has created division within the ruling Democratic Party. At their recent National Conference some 'liberals' reflected the disquiet felt over the public expenditure cuts, especially in welfare. But the days of Keynesianism are over. Last year the economy was planned to grow by 4¼%. This year it is only expected to grow by just over 2% as America tries to cope with rising inflation, a massive trade deficit and a declining dollar. Carter's cuts have been welcomed by American business with the reminder that as the recession moves closer, more attacks on workers' living standards will be needed.



# BLUE COLLAR

Film Review



The company builds cars and destroys men.

Most of the products churned out by Hollywood instil into us a picture of America being either a glossy, sophisticated, affluent society or a larger-than-life, tough, 'action-packed' place. 'Blue Collar' shows the other side to the 'American dream'—workers sweating in a Detroit car plant, staggering exhausted into a bar after a gruelling shift on the track.

Frustrated and worried by the constant pressure of bills, HP payments and medical fees, they are forced to take second jobs at night in order to maintain their standards set by a steady barrage from the advertising industry. "So we've got a house, a car, a fridge, a washing machine, and what have we really got? Just so much crap."

The real worries about keeping the household going and making ends meet shows the basic similarity of life for American and British working class people.

## Crime

After the escapism of sniffing cocaine and cheating on their wives which leaves them "more depressed than ever", the three central characters from the car plant turn in desperation to a quick way of getting hold of some money. One of the three, a black worker, is forced to turn this way when a tax inspector presents him with a hefty tax bill from undisclosed income on a second job—despite his hilarious attempt to claim allowance for three extra children he invented, one named 'Stevie Wonder'!

But only after the shock of seeing his teenage daughter make her gums bleed by fixing on a homemade brace because the family couldn't afford dental charges does his white workmate join in the plan to rob a safe.

The twist is, the weakly-guarded safe belongs to the carworkers' union, a parody of the United Auto Workers. Disappointment at finding only a few hundred dollars petty cash in the safe turns to disbelief when the union bureaucrat appears on the TV news to announce that

the police that the corruption is so great that "you'll have to cover it up."

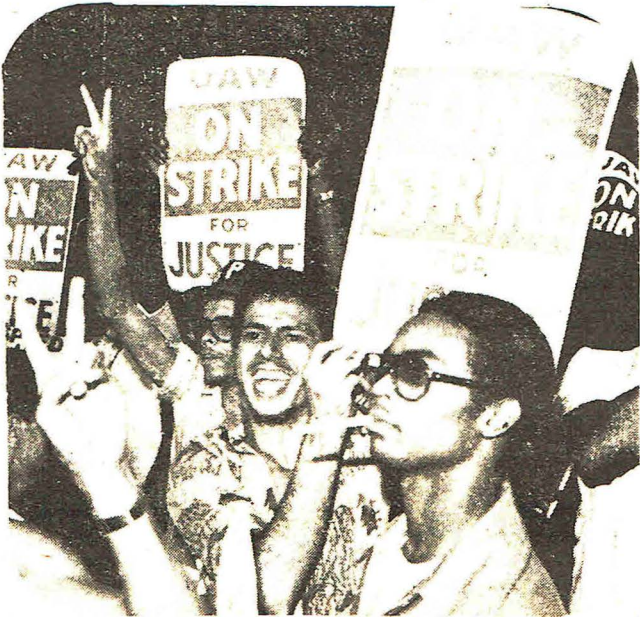
## Bribery

When the union gangsters find out who the blackmailers are they have one murdered in the plant shop, which the management kindly explain away

the similarity of life faced by American workers and the rest of us, the audience must come away realising that car workers across the Atlantic are not qualitatively better off than over here and can become just as class conscious. The film itself points no way out of the mess. But it does show the need for class

unity of the workers against the attempts of the bosses and the state to divide them between young and old, men and women, black and white.

By Brent Kennedy



United Auto workers in dispute

over \$10,000 has been stolen!

Checking an accounts book found in the safe, the car men unearth a racket operated by the full-time officials and are immediately faced with a dilemma: to reveal the corruption at a meeting of their Local, sweep out the bureaucrats and transform the union into a democratic body fighting to raise the living standards of its members, or simply to blackmail the officials in return for the evidence?

Despite having stolen from the officials ("It's like stealing what belongs to us") the men have a basic loyalty to their union, to the extent that it is a union of their workmates. Earlier in the film they defend the union from accusations made by a 'student': "We were out on the picket line for weeks, I'm still paying off the debts I ran up, but we stuck out and we won!" And when one recognises him as an FBI agent they nearly run him out of the bar.

## Corruption

But the pressures of life are just too great. They go for blackmail. Everything is pitched against them: the company, the gangsters who run the union and the state. A crook who grasses on the three tells

as an industrial accident caused by his own negligence. Next comes the oldest trick in the book: the union secretary offers one of the men the job of full-time shop steward on a salary of \$17,000. Should he take it? Can he use the position to change the union with a one-man crusade or will he be drawn into the corrupt bureaucracy himself? I'll leave you to see the film to find out.

## Alternative?

'Blue Collar' is certainly different from other American films. But is it a genuine attempt to portray the real world through the eyes of workers, to allow them to make their call for a better deal, or are the film studios simply using an unusual backcloth for another money-making adventure movie?

At first sight it does seem to be about "real" people who booze, talk about sex all the time, live in tiny apartments, have lousy jobs and swear. But once the film has established its point it doesn't take things much further, and it's a bit irritating to see that film writers think that workers can't manage to speak more than one sentence without using at least two four-letter words.

Still, if even this production leaves you aware of

## SCOTLAND: YS Conference and Rally

For years the Scottish LPYS conference has been growing in size and importance—this will be our biggest and best ever. There are 49 resolutions, plus numerous amendments on the agenda; last year there were only 32 resolutions debated.

This shows the growth of the LPYS (six new branches formed since our last conference). The agenda of the Scottish Conference of the Party has only 136 resolutions on it, therefore in comparison our agenda is a massive one.

Such is the demand of branches for political debate that the Scottish Regional Committee of the LPYS is having to propose a composing system for next year's conference

Over 60 delegates will attend the conference while this number will be easily outstripped by the scores of visitors who will travel from all over Scotland to hear the highest level of debate in the labour movement.

This year sees an innovation: an all-Scotland LPYS Rally. On the Friday night before conference—to set the tone as it were—a large audience will hear Jimmy Reid, AUEW and Labour candidate for Dundee East plus the National Youth Officer, Andy Bevan speak on the 'Charter for Young Workers'.

8,000 leaflets, advertising the Rally and Conference, have been distributed throughout the labour movement. NUPE have circulated all their Scottish branches with the leaflet and have made it clear it is union policy for their young members to attend the conference

and join the LPYS.

The resolutions before conference cover practically every major issue facing the workers of Scotland and Britain, on school student rights, nationalism, devolution, the economy, unemployment, labour movement democracy and others too numerous to mention.

By Jim Newlands (LPYS National Committee)

The debate on nationalism and devolution—with the forthcoming referendum—will be of crucial importance. At a recent press conference the Scottish 'Young' Tories stated that no young people supported the setting up of an assembly in Scotland. This is a lie! The entire youth of the labour movement, the LPYS and the Scottish TUC Youth Advisory Committee, have called for a 'Yes' vote in the referendum.

Our conference will affirm our resolve to fight for an

assembly with radical economic powers, which could act—if there was a socialist majority in the assembly—as a beacon to British workers.

All in all this conference will be exceptional. Just look at what we have over the weekend: the pre-conference rally; Andy Bevan to address the conference; the biggest agenda ever; a good social on the Saturday night. All this adds up to a great prospect. With the heightening class struggle, the referendum campaign and the certainty of a general election it's time to clear the decks for action.

- ★ 'Yes' to a Scottish Assembly!
- ★ Rout the Tories—Smash the SNP—return Labour to power on a socialist programme!
- ★ Build a mass socialist youth movement!

17th Annual Scottish Conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists, 10th & 11th February, City Halls Candle rigs, Glasgow.

## Conference greetings

Glasgow Technical College Labour Club £20 a week for all 16-18 year old students

Stirling, Falkirk and Grangemouth LPYS greet Conference  
Keep out the Tories! Join the LPYS!

Stirling University Labour Club  
Yes to the assembly! For a socialist Britain!

East Kilbride LPYS

No to 5%—Yes to socialist policies!

Denny LPYS  
A 35-hour week and a £70 minimum wage now

West Stirlingshire LPYS

Support the public sector workers  
End low pay!



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

## LETTERS

## Organise today's unemployed

Dear Comrade

While having a drink in the pub the other lunchtime I overheard a conversation between young members of a job creation scheme.

These young people had been engaged on a building project for the local council (Teesdale) and were discussing their rates of pay compared to what they received on the dole or what was paid to their counterparts in regular employment.

They obviously felt pretty sick with the whole setup since they were discussing joining a union in an effort to protect their interests. However, the most vociferous member of the group pointed out there wasn't much point in actually increasing the wages because as soon as the money allotted to the scheme ran out they would be back on the dole anyway.

Although these youngsters were pretty confused and fed-up, this incident merely goes to show that when the going gets tough the working class instinctively turns towards its traditional champion—the trade union for support and a positive lead.

What a pity therefore, that at the present time the TUC and its member unions do not seem to have any co-ordinated campaign to draw these sections of poorly-paid labour into their ranks.

So, comrades, go out and win new supporters to the movement. The youngsters on job experience are today's unemployed—far better organised by the working class than let them fall victim to the employers as scab labour—undoubtedly one weapon that will be tried in future struggles.

PS Unfortunately I was unable to give any assistance to the young people I mentioned as my own employer was breathing down my neck at the time!

Fraternally  
Kevin Gent  
ASTMS 873 branch

## The dilemma of the small businessman

Dear Comrades

I noted with interest the letters from Comrades Rutt, (issue 437) and Jones (issue 438) on the subject of small businesses.

Whilst I disagreed with a lot of what Comrade Rutt said I felt the letter from Comrade Jones did not fully deal with the dilemma of the small business man. I don't feel it is enough for a Marxist to say that small businesses are going to the wall and leave them to their fate, i.e. to the clutches of the National Federation of Self Employed, National Farmers' Union and the Tories in general.

With the present economic situation the small farmer, shopkeeper and small businessman are throttled by the bankers, landlords, and the monopolies. They are not directly thrown into the working class but due to the jobs situation, into the lumpen proletariat.

So what is the answer? Not the piecemeal handouts of the present government, nor the splitting-up of the supermarket chains proposed by the Italian Communist Party. Trotsky put forward the answer: "The alliance proposed by the proletariat—not to the middle classes in

general but to the exploited layers of the urban and rural petty bourgeois, against all exploiters, including some of the middle classes—can be based not on compulsion but only on free consent, which should be consolidated in a special 'contract'." ('Transitional Programme')

This contract could include cheap credit, agricultural machines, favourable conditions of transport, committees on prices made up of delegates from factories, trade unions, co-operatives, farmers' committees, small businessmen and housewives.

As Trotsky says: "The official struggle of the government with high prices is only a deception of the masses. But the farmers, artisans, merchants, in their capacity as consumers, can step into the politics of price fixing shoulder to shoulder with the workers."

I hope this letter will stimulate some discussion as to how to win over the small proprietor to the side of the working class, especially in the Tory areas with a large middle class.

Yours fraternally  
Dave Farrar  
Secretary, Salford LPYS

## Knowing where your interests lie

Dear Militant

During the past few weeks there has been an attempt by a few small traders and housewives to rouse anti-union feelings throughout the country.

It has been aided in no small way by the press and television, with non-stop slogans, red-herrings and gross misrepresentation aiming to generate hostile reactions among isolated members of the community. Possibly to incite some criminal elements to engage in a little pick-axe-handle diplomacy.

We don't need bionic eyeballs to see through this facade but it works well enough on those who are not in contact with industrial conditions and can't or won't see where their best interests lie.

The ruling class will use any device they can lay hands on if they think it will turn events to their advantage. They'll even set husband and wife against each other.

For my part, I am a small proprietor and employer.

Naturally you might expect me to align with the strike breakers.

Not on your life. I support these workers whole-heartedly in their claim and their methods.

Wage restraint has had a devastating effect on the lives of workers, while the greedy industrialists have had to put up with higher profits. Any benefits to the economy such as they might be, are completely lost on the worker, especially when he sees them realised as cuts in health and education.

It is time to reverse these cuts and to restore living standards. An attack must be made on unemployment by reducing working hours.

These moves must be made now, and if it requires every worker to strike to get the message through then it must happen.

I doubt if I am alone in these thoughts.

Yours  
VR Dale  
Isle of Wight

## Cowley correction

Dear Comrades

In the excellent report of the meeting of the WEA (Industrial branch) where I spoke on the early struggles of the motor and Press Steel workers in Oxford ('Militant' 439) there was one small mistake of fact.

The article stated that at the time of the great trade union recognition strike at Press Steel, Cowley, Abe Lazarus was a T&GWU organiser.

This is not so. He was an ordinary rank and file member. His energy and speaking ability made him a leading spokesman for the Cowley workers in the 1930s.

I would describe him as an old-style Communist Party member, a very able agitator and propagandist.

Yours fraternally  
Dudley Edwards

## THANKS FROM BAKERY WORKERS

Dear Sir

May I on behalf of the branch take this opportunity of thanking you for the wonderful support your paper gave us during our recent National Strike, with a special vote of thanks to your representatives, Miss Margaret Crear and Gerry Lerner, whose assistance was invaluable.

Unfortunately, we didn't attain everything we set out for, suffered many casualties and desertions, but nevertheless I feel the experience and lessons learned have been invaluable and we hope next time to march to total victory.

Yours fraternally  
A Derbyshire  
Almonds Branch 454  
Manchester District Strike Committee  
Bakers', Food and Allied Workers' Union

Dear Comrades

What has the labour and trade union movement learned from recent strikes? It is a realisation that we, the working classes, are the masters. That this England is our country, and not Mrs Thatcher's.

The millions of socialist and Labour voters, together with the brilliant thinkers in our movement, have at once realised that our power is centred in the Trades Union Congress, its organisation of committees drawn from the leaders of the unions representing every sphere of working class activity.

The strength of the TUC is enhanced by the dedication to the true socialist policies of the Labour Party, by men such as Jack Jones, Len Murray, Moss Evans, Mr Gormley and many more, not

to mention the next prime minister—Tony Benn.

For Mrs Thatcher and her party of stock exchange-watchers, the writing is on the wall. Fred Laker now offers cheap flights to that golden haven—America, the last resort and natural home of those afflicted with the disease of greed and avarice.

Unfortunately the Labour Cabinet has been infiltrated by men who were asked to stand up and be counted by Reg Prentice; men who prefer to call themselves 'moderates' thus playing the Conservative game in opposition to the grass-root Labour and socialist Party.

Fraternally  
Owen Guy  
Dorset

## SOLDIERS ASK 'WHY?'

## ARMY STRIKE-BREAKING

Dear Comrades

There are many in the labour movement who, discussing the possibilities of a socialist transformation in society, always point to the power of the armed forces as an insurmountable barrier.

The rank and file, particularly in the army and navy, are from working class backgrounds, particularly areas of high unemployment. In the final analysis these workers in uniform will see which side of the class barrier their interests lie, particularly if the labour movement advances demands such as trade union rights, and the democratic election of officers from the ranks.

In recent years we have seen the Tories, and scan-

dulously, a Labour government, using troops to blackleg on strikes e.g. the firemen. During the firemen's strike, soldiers compared pay slips with pickets and found they were earning considerably less, and then began to question which side of the picket line they should be on.

Last week on a train I was talking to a young soldier just on leave from Northern Ireland, where he had been driving tankers. A few sentences show what thousands of working class youth in the army must be thinking.

"We were on the tankers from 4 in the morning 'till 10 at night. There's no 10-hour maximum day or log books in the army!"

"You just take the tanker

out and drive it as you are told. The lorry drivers will deserve every penny they get as well.

"There are a lot in the army like me—just on a work ticket. There's one thing though, they'll never get us down the pits—we wouldn't go. I'd refuse to soldier".

A by-product of troops being forced to scab is that more and more will ask why. Many will have fathers, brothers, sisters on the other side of the picket.

No comrades! We do not need to be pessimistic, if the labour movement takes up boldly the issue of trade union rights in the army.

Kevin Ramage  
Swansea LPYS

Dear Comrades

In a front page article the 'Daily Telegraph' [January 22nd] stated that troops would cover emergency services by driving army ambulances.

These soldiers of 'mercy' in real life play a different game. They are trained and used by NATO and the UN for peace-keeping duties anywhere in the world. Today they have taken on a role more fitting to the historical role that was played in Britain back in the 1926 General Strike, that of strike breaking.

In the past few years we have seen the troops used in many strikes. Back in 1970 they were used in the Westminster Council dust-

men's strike. I was one of them, which I now regret.

They have been used in the strike by firemen last year, and now we have seen them used once again in the health service strike action.

We all know who controls the armed forces under our present system. So what does this mean for the future struggles of the working class?

The use of troops is a weapon in the hands of the ruling classes. As the industrial struggles move onto a higher level we'll see more and more troops being used to undermine the rights of workers; their right to strike, won over years of fighting struggles.

The ruling classes who own

the factories where we the workers produce the profits that gives them their very existence, would like to smash the organisations of the workers because they see them as a threat to their way of life. If they had their way they would smash them without batting an eyelid.

These are the questions that need asking of those within the Labour cabinet who backed the call for the use of troops against workers on picket lines.

Andy Corfield  
T&GWU shop steward  
3/47 Branch



# ANSWER THE LIES!

## Build Militant...

TARGET FOR 1979 £80,000

THIS WEEK'S TOTAL  
£919.78

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 12 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	1,175		94
Hants & IOW	3,100	775		75
Humberside	2,000	500		43
London North	9,500	2,375		296
London South	3,900	975		234
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	1,125		257
Merseyside	5,000	1,250		154
Midlands East	3,300	825		142
Midlands West	9,000	2,250		403
Northern	5,500	1,375		318
Scotland East	2,900	725		21
Scotland West	4,500	1,125		90
South East	4,500	1,125		217
South West	3,100	775		107
Wales East	2,600	650		32
Wales West	3,400	850		145
Yorkshire	7,000	1,750		218
Others	6,500	1,625		28
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>21,250</b>		<b>2,874</b>

Progress towards year's target  Towards April 7th target  
**TARGET FOR APRIL 7th 21,250**

'Militant's' Fighting Fund is beginning to regain its strength. This week's total of £919.78 is about double last week's. A doubling again for next week would show that 'Militant' supporters are beginning to match the growing combativity of the low paid by building their paper's fighting capacity.

The following letter came from Leicester last week:

"Please find enclosed £11.05 raised at a 'Militant' meeting on low pay. It was agreed to give half the collection [less expenses] to the public sector unions locally, struggling to end the low pay of their members. The other half goes to 'Militant', because of the important role it plays in the movement, reporting disputes accurately and answering the lies and slanders of the 'popular' press. It shows the way forward for all oppressed sections of society, linking the struggle to end poverty with the fight for socialism."

Another note of appreciation was accompanied by a £10 donation from J Lee of Pontefract: "My belated Christmas contribution. As a provincial journalist, I was on strike for seven weeks, and therefore had to delay the cheque. As with every other strike, the 'Militant' gave full and sympathetic coverage of the journalists' action."

Two new year's 'tenners' reached us from Birmingham, three 'student tenners' came from Bradford, one from Exeter, £24 from a London student (tax rebate), £13.96 from a Wavertree LP member, and another £10 from P A Cartledge of Oxford.

£20 this week was just one of the promised 'day's pay' (and expenses) for January 22nd...where are all the rest? £3.18 was collected by Nottingham readers on the 22nd Demo. ...where are all the other 'extras' on sales that day? J Forest (S London Bowaters) paid £1 for his new,

improved 'Militant' last week...has every other regular buyer been asked to do the same?

Has every regular reader got a copy of the 'Need Not Profit' Hardman cartoon book, selling at £1 each? If so there should be a lot more money on its way! If not, why not? Last week someone was charged 20p for just having a look at one. Someone else gave £1.50 for his copy!

Is every regular reader 'guaranteeing' a certain amount to the fighting fund every week? J Turner (London) and Mr and Mrs Wobey (also N London) give £2 without fail. J Short (GMWU S London) promises 50p and pays up even after missing a week or two. Where are all the other 'guarantors'?

Low-paid NUPE member L Hughes can send us £7.50 by saving up 5ps in a jar.

Bradford supporters collected £8.25 in a tin. If they can do it...there's no excuse!

Another NUPE member—C Mullins of Birmingham—donated £1.54 and other individual donations included:

£4.10 from P Dinsdale (Yateley), £4 from G Fife (Sefton) and P Chipperfield (Chester-le-Street), £3 from I Hughes (Bridgend) and K Birch (Birmingham US-DAW).

£2 came from A Littlefair (Chester-le-Street), A McAllister (Stockport), M Johnson (Grimsby LPYS) and D Willett (Grimsby LP). £1s came from N Walshe (Birmingham), D Welch (Poole), C Upham (Stevenage SCPS), J Nelson (St Helens LPYS), P Skennett (Coventry AUEW) and someone in Stevenage who sold a ruler for the 'Militant'!

'Fivers' came from R

Hodds and P Nelson of Hull EETPU, a S Wales miner, W Ong (AUEW steward at James Neills) and a supporter in Charlton who sold a leather jacket for the fighting fund! Just as important were the 50ps from R Andrews and I Buxton of Knowsley, M and M Merrill (E Notts LPYS) and K Bessant (Cheltenham LPYS), among many others.

Many thanks to every contributor including those who put into various collections: the bumper one at the Birmingham 'Militant' Rally (£133 including door money), the collection at Southern Regional LPYS Conference (£29), one at a Manchester meeting (£47.12), Liverpool ULC meetings (£12.10), LPYS/AUEW Youth Committee (£3.08) and even at Hendon South Labour Party's EEC Selection meeting (£1).

£16.05 reached us from a

raffle in Swansea and £3.50 from a 'jacket potato feast'. Over £15 was collected as drinks for the 'Militant' up and down the country—not only beer but tea and coffee in Devon and Gloucester! Haircuts in Hull brought us £4...!

Never miss an opportunity to raise cash for the 'Militant'! If we don't build a more powerful workers' paper, very many opportunities for advancing towards socialism will be lost. Send us your donation today. Try and guarantee something every week and ask everyone you know to do the same—be it 10p or £10! We need every penny and every £ to double this week's total to £1,800 next week. See what you can do!

By Clare Doyle



The labour movement must defend all steelworkers' jobs

## CORBY STEELWORKS: NOT ONE REDUNDANCY!

The labour movement must resist with all its strength, any attempt to run down or close Corby steelworks. "We'll not accept one redundancy". That was the rallying call from a meeting attended by over 350 people to discuss proposals that the steel works may have to close.

And who can blame them in a town, built entirely around the steel works, with an unemployment rate which qualifies

Corby for recognition as an assisted area?

Already a campaign organised by the unions involved has received full support from the town's Labour group. This is more than can be said for the Tory controlled council who refused to rent out the Civic Theatre where the meeting was held free of charge.

The meeting pledged full support to all steelworks in Bilston, Shotton and Consett facing a

similar battle. They are determined not to be divided in a common struggle. The British Steel Corporation were called on to make their plans public.

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee and all the trade union leaders have an enormous responsibility on their shoulders. They must launch a determined and sustained campaign in the trade unions and Labour Parties to fight the closures.

If the leadership of the

campaign show the confidence that the battle can be won then the whole town could be mobilised to defend all jobs at the steel works.

- ★ Not one redundancy!
- ★ For a 35-hour week with no loss of pay!
- ★ Open the books to trade unionists!
- ★ Plan industry in the interests of the labour movement!

By Heather Rawling

### 'Militant' Public Meeting 'The Future of the Power Engineering Industry and Stafford'

Speakers:  
**John Byrne** (AUEW) GEC, High Voltage Switchgear, Manchester  
**Dave Rothwell** (AUEW) Senior shop steward, Castle Works, Stafford  
Chair:  
**Dave Mole** (ASTMS) GEC High Voltage Switchgear, Stafford  
7.00 pm, Friday 23rd February  
Venue to be arranged  
All welcome to put their views

### LONDON 'MILITANT' PUBLIC MEETING

'The Iranian Revolution' Hear: Ted Grant [Militant Editorial Board] and a speaker from 'Campaign Against Repression in Iran. Friday 23 February 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 [near Holborn Tube]. Iranian students and workers especially welcome.

## 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

CHESTER-LE-STREET Marxist Discussion Group Mondays, starting at 8 pm. Feb. 5th: 'The Labour Movement in the Coming Year'; Feb. 12th: 'Industrial Democracy—What is it?'; Feb. 19th: 'Accountability and Democracy in the Labour Party'; Feb. 26th: 'Parliamentary Democracy, its uses and limitations'. For further details, contact Eddie Lowerson, Chester-le-Street 888146

SUNDERLAND Marxist Discussion Group. Wednesdays, starting at 8pm. Feb 14—'The Cuban Revolution'; Feb 28—'The crisis in shipbuilding'; March 14—'The Transitional Programme'; March 28—'Micro processors and Unemployment'. For further details, contact Diane English, Sunderland 44365.

MORRISTON Marxist Discussion Group. Meetings: 15 February—'Do wage rises cause inflation?'; 8 March—'Keep Thatcher Out!'; 22 March—'Is Russia Socialist?'. Venue Morriston Public Library, Treherne Rd, Morriston. Meetings start 7.30 prompt. Contact Swansea 33542 for further details.

### BIRMINGHAM LPYS PUBLIC MEETING

'Low Pay Workers Fight Back' Speakers: Tom Griffiths, President NUPE, Dick Hackett, NUPE, Central Birmingham Health District Secretary. Monday 12th February 7.30 pm. Dr. Johnson House, Bull St, Birmingham.

### YOUTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT Demonstration and Rally

Saturday 24th February Assembly: 12.30, Platt Fields. Rally: 2.30 pm, Hulme Labour Club. Speakers: Rodney Bickerstaffe (NUPE, National Officer Local Authority Workers); Phil Frampton (National Committee LPYS); Joe Marino (EC, Bakers Union); Malcolm Clark (Moss Side LPYS)

LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS PNP [Jamaica] UK YOUTH SECTION present The 'Unified Force' Band plus disco. Saturday 10 February 1979. South Bank Poly Students' Union, Rotary St, S.E.1. (Elephant & Castle Tube), 8.00 pm. £1.

NEW MILITANT INDEX. Comprehensive—covers issues 300-436. 20p per copy plus 10p p&p. Cheques payable to 'Militant'. Order from Simon Heather, 30 Mayfield Rd, Mosely, Birmingham B13 9HJ.

Socialist Scotland—Marxist journal supporting Scottish Workers' Republic. Special issue on Ireland, 45p inc. p&p. Subscription £2.20 for 6 issues. Alba Soisialach, 45 Niddry Street, Edinburgh.

Spartacist League Public Meeting—'Workers must rule in Iran'. 7.30 Friday, 16th February, Australia Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham. (For any further information ring 021-472 7726).



## LORRY DRIVERS LIVERPOOL SENSE VICTORY

Despite the hardship suffered by the strikers, there was a holiday mood amongst the transport workers of the 6/541 Merseyside branch.

At a mass meeting, punctuated by applause, cheers and laughter, they knew they had won! Their settlement is the best in the country: £65 for 40 hours, £8.25 subsistence, double time after the first 6 hours on Saturday and 4 weeks' holiday after 2 years service.

All better agreements made prior to this settlement would be honoured! About 20 firms had already signed letters of intent.

The 35-hour week was not won, nor was the meal allowance, but both are on the top of the list of demands for next year.

Although the bosses' press and media have carried out a campaign of lies and distortions against the drivers, dispensations for essential goods averaged 200 a day.

### No problems

Chairman Jimmy Gouldborne commented "I feel that drivers around the country have been getting knocked. We didn't have any problems at all. In fact we had a fair liaison with people."

"We spoke regularly with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, to anybody who wanted to put a case. In no way did we duck out of answering any questions."

"We feel that the dispute could have ended two weeks ago, had the RHA allowed their members to get around the table."

**By Terry  
Harrison**

## Uneasy agreement reached with National Freight Corporation

Last Tuesday a mass meeting of National Freight Corporation (NFC) lorry drivers voted to accept the recommendation of their Region 1 strike committee to return to normal working on Wednesday. This follows an agreement worked out with Jack Ashwell, national officer of the T&GWU by the strike committee.

The agreement was that following a settlement of the Road Haulage Association dispute a comparability claim will be made by the NFC group of companies for immediate settlement. If a satisfactory response was not forthcoming from the NFC, an assurance had been given by Albert Booth the Employment Secretary, that the NFC group of companies would be dealt with on the same basis as the BBC settlement of December 1978. This would ensure that a decision would be forthcoming within 24 hours of the application.

The men in the Brighton and District area have remained solid for nearly three weeks and are not happy about returning to work without a concrete offer. They may well walk out again if

there is any undue delay in awarding the parity claim, which must at the moment match the award of the Bristol tribunal of £64 for 40 hours.

We are angry that the strike was not made official, as it turned out the unofficial action remained confined to Region 1. There was a conspiracy of silence about our strike, and other regions were deliberately kept in the dark. The national officials didn't appear to want to know about the NFC section, or call a combined national stoppage.

### Union democracy

Our members will now be taking up the demand highlighted by 'Militant'. For all officials to be elected and subject to recall with a wage equivalent to that of a skilled worker. I am asked to thank the local Trades Council and Labour Party, where in future we intend to play a full part in getting the correct policies, and representatives prepared to carry them out.

**By Alec Ingram**

(shop steward British Road Services)



Photo: MILITANT

## ASLEF

# LONDON UNDERGROUND VOTE FOR STRIKE

A mass meeting of all ASLEF members employed on the London Underground was held on Monday 29th January at Warren Street station.

The meeting discussed the latest pay offer to Underground staff and also heard a call for solidarity action with ASLEF members currently in dispute with British Rail.

First Ted Miles (EC ASLEF) explained the latest pay offer to Underground staff. It was 5% plus a productivity deal worth £2 to £3 a week extra.

The three most controversial items on the productivity deal were: firstly the introduction of one-man operated trains on the Hammersmith and City line; secondly, the train preparation being taken

away from the train crews to be given to the Chief Mechanical Engineers department and finally the board offered to form a new grade of relief trainmen, which would mean under certain circumstances a driver could be called upon to revert back to a guard.

### Cutbacks

All this would result in cutbacks in staff. This was totally and overwhelmingly rejected. As one worker stated at the meeting; "The proposals would mean selling our fellow workers for cash payments. It's just not on."

A resolution was passed instructing the ASLEF leadership to pursue a claim for at least a 20% increase in basic rate of pay, and not to enter into any talks on productivity deals.

Then Bill Eames of ASLEF Sectional Council (British Rail South Region) explained the up to date position regarding ASLEF's just claim for an increase in pay in recompense of increased productivity and responsibility. He informed the meeting that the case had been referred back to Lord McCarthy (Railway Staff National Tribunal).

The lads on the Southern Region had stated if McCarthy didn't come up with an offer that was fair to all footplate staff then on 21st February a one-day strike would be called. The meeting voted in favour of strike action on 21st February by all ASLEF members on the London Underground.

**By Stan Goodwin**  
(ASLEF, Morden)

# MANAGEMENT TRY DIVIDE & RULE

## — to cut £30 off the pay —

The cable industry faces a crisis: Six years ago, 25,000 workers were in the industry. Now it is down to 19,000. The cable bosses have made their enormous profits out of the sweated labour of workers, as in our own factory.

I work for the Reliance Cord and Cable Company in East London which is part of the massive monopoly BICC. There are over 900 workers in this factory and I have been active in the trade union since I started work there a few years ago.

At first the majority of the workers used to work for at least £60 hours a week, for £60! At present they get £90 for 60 hours. 11 workers were compelled to work at least 60 hours by the management. Before starting at the firm management make it clear that you have to work at least 60 hours or you wouldn't be taken on.

Management were able to get away with these conditions, because 75% of the workers are immigrants who are more open to intimidation by the management. The work is

hard and very heavy. Every few months a couple of workers have accidents.

After a long struggle, we've managed to reduce the working week to 37½ hours. But now the management have answered this by threatening to cut our wages back to £60 per week. In other words, every worker in this factory is being asked to take a £30 cut in wages!

They have tried the usual tactic of divide and rule. They first of all approached the supervisors in the factory, who numbered 27 in total. In the first stages of negotiation between the management and the supervisors, the bosses said their wages would be cut by £40. They then told the supervisors that they would only get a 5% increase in the next wage round. The supervisors were naturally hopping mad, and refused to accept this. They came to the shop stewards' committee, who represented the other workers.

In the past, the supervisors have stood aside from the shop stewards' committee. They now realise that if they are to defend

their past gains and defeat this vicious attack of the management they have to stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the workers in the factory.

The workers as a whole in the factory are determined not to accept this vicious cut in living standards. Negotiations are continuing at the present time.

As a concession, the management now say that they will reduce wages not to £60 as threatened previously, but to £61! The shop stewards, of course, rejected this offer. We organised a mass meeting, and the workers unanimously rejected the offer of the company.

We've called in our union representative from the General and Municipal Workers' Union, which represents all the workers in the factory. In the past, whenever a union official was called in, instead of visiting the stewards first, he went to see the management. In 1974, we went on a work to rule for 4½ months. The official recommended that we go back to normal working, and we would get an

increase. We didn't get the increase.

When the union official tried to explain this at a mass meeting, he was shouted down. After that, whenever the official tried his usual game of going to see management and then coming to the shop stewards, we refused to meet him.

The official was compelled to change his tune. Now, whenever he goes to see management, he always takes a couple of shop stewards with him.

If the management stick to their present position on wage cuts, there is every possibility we'll be out on strike in the next period. The only way that workers in the industry will get a decent wage and decent conditions is for the ownership of this industry to be taken out of the bosses' hands and put in the hands of the workers.

**By a cable worker**  
(G&MWU)



# VICKERS : WORKERS UNITE TO FIGHT CLOSURES

The various works of Vickers, including Elswick, Scotswood, Crabtree and Mitchell Bearings on Tyneside, have formed a campaign committee to fight the closure of the Scotswood works announced a few weeks ago. At a recent meeting organised by the committee, Vickers shop stewards explained their case:

"Vickers wants a 30% return on investment and that is almost impossible in the capital engineering business. Nevertheless, the management have continually over the years been cutting down production on the civilian products like tractors and machine tools while the military production of tanks and so on has been maintained. At present about one-third of Vickers investment is in property (including warehouses already established on the Scotswood Road) and a lot of money is going into the lucrative business machine and printing side of the company.

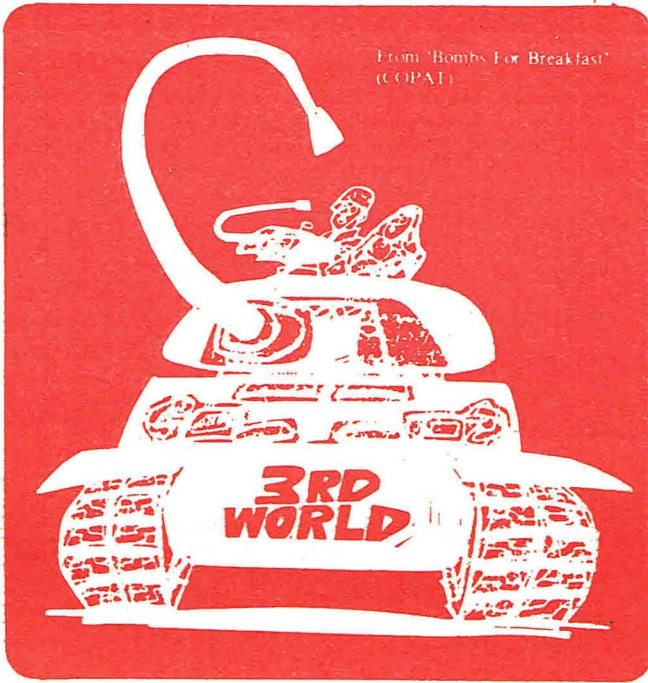
Skilled workers with a tradition of organisation are things they don't want—bricks and mortar don't argue back, and that's why they want to be landlords and not manufacturers!

Even from a capitalist standpoint the case for closure is a nonsense. The Scotswood is being closed

## John Pickard

on the basis of two years' figures—after decade upon decade of profitable production on the Tyne. The money involved is only half as much again as the figure Brian Clough was prepared to pay for Trevor Francis—£1½m. We are going to call all-out industrial action in all the Vickers plants if this matter is not resolved. We will tell the management of Vickers that even by their own figures "it will cost you more to close Scotswood down than to keep it open!"

There is a supposed £3,000m market opening up in China. Scotswood needs only £10m—and there are already contracts with China at the moment. We have documentary evi-



The alternative plan would save jobs

dence that the management are turning away orders of the value of £15m or more. In announcing the closure of Scotswood we think the management have made the wrong decision at the wrong time and for the wrong reasons. We cannot let Scotswood close. We would be next at Elswick, then Crabtree and so on. The management, we have heard, even turned down offers of cash assistance from the NEB—clearly they don't want factories, they want ware-

houses and property."

## Jobs Rally

Friday 2nd: A massive demonstration took place in Newcastle. 4,000 Vickers' workers marched 3 miles to a rally in the City Hall. "Gannin' along the Scotswood Road"—not to see the races, but this time to save jobs!

# CAMPAIGN FOR NATIONALISATION

Supporters of 'Militant' in Vickers plants throughout the country and in the Labour Party in the Tyneside area should give their maximum support to the fight to keep open the Scotswood works.

The campaign committee have stated that they are prepared to consider negotiations in any context provided that the jobs are kept. This has got to be the starting point of the campaign in the labour movement.

The facts surrounding the planned closure stand out a mile: the Vickers management are no longer interested in the manufacturing of capital goods. As the campaign committee have pointed out, they want to be landlords. The management have shown by their whole approach that they have forfeited the right to

run the company.

The workers at Vickers are naturally rather sceptical of the idea of nationalisation because past experience [e.g. locally with BSC and NCB] has shown that it is followed by rationalisation.

Nevertheless, nationalisation must become the goal if the industry is to survive. Other private managements will behave in the future like Vickers have in the past. Nationalisation could be fought for—but not on the basis of bureaucracy and closures.

On the contrary, the Vickers Combine 'Alternative Plan' provides the concrete basis for nationalisation on a democratic basis, with a programme of keeping all the jobs and of producing socially useful products.

# NUJ: HISTORIC STRIKE NOW REINSTATE THE 28

They said we would never go on strike. We did. They said we wouldn't last more than a couple of weeks. We did.

Eight thousand of us proved them wrong and put on a display of trade union solidarity which astonished even ourselves. And we won. We trebled their original five per cent offer.

But for many of us it was more than a strike about pay. It was a howl of protest from a body of people that had been sat on for far too long.

And in those seven weeks we grew up as trade unionists. We learnt how to organise ourselves, learnt the meaning of solidarity, learnt to identify ourselves with the struggles of other unions. It was an education to stand on a picket line, not least because it opened our eyes to the true role of the boys in blue as strike-breakers.

Our strike, then, was memorable. Not so our victory. For we went back to work without 28 of our colleagues at Nottingham, sacked for obeying a union instruction. Our leadership had failed to make it clear to the majority of our members that a "no victimisation" formula agreed with the employers left those 28 out in the cold.

Now, with the troops withdrawn, our NEC has launched a campaign to win back those jobs. It won't stand a chance unless the rank and file are directly

involved. There must be regular mass pickets, public meetings, involvement of every trade union—because we are facing an employer every bit as formidable as George Ward.

The Nottingham company of T Bailey Foreman are the pioneers of new technology in the newspaper industry. They introduced that technology in 1973 on their terms after a six-week strike by printers and journalists ended in defeat.

Today the unions at the 'Nottingham Evening Post' exist in name only. They have little or no say about pay or conditions. The Newspaper Society like to kid everyone that Nottingham is a rogue elephant. Not so. What has happened there will be repeated throughout the provinces—unless we act now.

This is an issue vital not only to the NUI but the whole of the trade union movement. Our task is not only to restore those 28 jobs, but restore trade unionism to that building.

The alternative is another Grunwick. And we all know that one Grunwick was one too many.

Messages of support and cash to Carl Piggins, 14 Jenned Road, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 8FT. Cheques payable to "Nottingham NUI Dispute Fund".

Ron Booth (FOC 'East Anglian Daily Times', personal capacity)

more vital than ever that this is linked to a call for the AUEW to pledge itself to fight for a clear socialist alternative from the Labour government.

The day-to-day needs of all workers cannot be separated from the need to carry out the

socialist transformation of society.

Peter Brimmer AUEW shop steward, Rolls Royce, East Kilbride (personal capacity) and Bob Wylie, East Kilbride Labour Party

# AUEW: ROLLS ROYCE SHOW NEED FOR CHANGE

Engineering workers at the Barnoldswick Rolls Royce plant, Lancashire, recently suffered a taste of what the policies of the right wing of the AUEW mean in practice.

The 'sane and responsible' policies Boyd and Duffy represent have meant a rise in basic pay of 90p a week for skilled workers, and 60p a week for unskilled. This is an increase of 1.8% in basic rates, which is coupled to a productivity scheme supposedly worth between 10 and 15%.

The right-wing leadership of the AUEW executive council ordered the workers at Barnoldswick to accept this deal, at the same time withdrawing strike pay which brought their nine-week strike to an end. Twenty-nine thousand Rolls Royce workers in other plants, who were operating an overtime ban in sympathy with Barnoldswick were simultaneously instructed by the executive to suspend their action.

In accepting the management's offer on behalf of Barnoldswick without any reference to the membership, the executive council breached rule 15 clause 16 of the



Duffy's law

Photo: MILITANT

AUEW rule book. This states that the executive council cannot complete agreements with employers without first submitting details to the district committee or committees affected.

So much for Duffy's election manifesto of decisions by the rule book!

This experience has immediate lessons for workers in Rolls Royce plants throughout Britain. They will have to be prepared to fight extremely hard to secure decent settlements in this pay round because of the position adopted by the leaders of the AUEW.

In East Kilbride, for example, the claim submitted was for 15% across the board, consolidated supplements, a shorter working week and better holidays and was entirely realistic. Management refused to meet that claim—they are determined to 'hold the line'. Determined action will be necessary to shift them.

However in the longer term the overall strategy of pay bargaining needs further consideration. The present system of plant-bargaining allows isolation of workers in action.

It is essential that the

combine shop stewards' committee consider a common annual pay claim for all plants. This would present difficulties in organisational details but the membership would achieve great benefits in strength by uniting around a common claim.

The performance of the executive council at Barnoldswick smacks of a return to Carron's law. But it is important to remember that militant shop floor action by all Ford workers, only two months ago, completely smashed the attempt of Boyd and Duffy to hold the 'social contract' line.

The booming economy of the 1950s which allowed Carron to keep his position though delivering increased living standards is now replaced by the dire crisis affecting the British economy. Right wing policies of restricting gains in living standards will not be tolerated for any great length of time.

The left wing in the AUEW must recognise this and take up the offensive. For too long the 'Broad Left' has satisfied itself with vote mustering. Now more than ever a political lead is needed.

Certainly they should raise a campaign against any form of wage restraint, but it is



# LEYLAND... STRIKE ACTION THREATENED!

The first ever total company-wide strike in the history of British Leyland has been called following the refusal of the Leyland management to honour an agreement to introduce parity throughout Leyland and pay increased premiums for shift and night work.

This money was to be paid this month, back-dated to November, 1978, but only meagre increases of 5% on basic rates have been implemented.

At Longbridge, effectively £8.50 has been taken out of the pay packet of every day worker, with £8 more from the pay packet of every night shift worker! Some workers were expecting to receive over £300 in back pay.

Rover, Solihull is one of the higher paid plants and has least to gain from parity, but even here some indirect workers and inspectors stand to lose about £8 a week!

What a contrast between the way Edwardes treats the shop-floor workers of Leyland and the way he treats management and Leyland distributors.

oeuvre if any re-jigging of the accounts were needed in order to facilitate payment of the full agreement.

The union negotiators took the company at its word, but in the pages of 'Militant' we warned against this approach, saying that the management were being given a blank cheque. After this experience all talk of productivity payments and incentive schemes should be flatly opposed!

Leyland have said that if the workforce produces 6.1 cars per man this month and next, then the payments could be back-dated to February

The targets can only be met by massive redundancies. This has led some stewards to the conclusion that the strike was a deliberate provocation in preparation for closures or massive redundancies in Leyland. Unity can achieve a victory on pay and then, if necessary, repel any attacks on jobs.

If Leyland workers hold back on parity and premium payments this will not stop management from attacks on jobs. On the contrary, their werewolf appetite will be whet and they will think the workforce is easy meat.

Almost certainly every mass meeting will support the strike call. If the management do not back down we should all go out together in a massive show of solidarity. We should stay out until management pay the agreement in full.

All offers from management should be put to mass meetings. Moreover, in order to combat the propaganda of the management and media—which has already started to flow—weekly mass meetings will be vital together with bulk supplies of leaflets, etc., explaining the double-dealing of management.

Picketing will be essential so long as any strike lasts, to prevent supplies entering Leyland plants and to stop the delivery of finished cars. This is a battle we cannot afford to lose.

By Bob Ashworth senior shop steward  
and Bill Mullins shop steward,  
Rover Solihull  
(personal capacities)

Only last week Edwardes was complaining that Leyland management were so highly taxed [read highly paid!] that he would not blame them for emigrating to a tax haven! Leyland distributors made increases in their profits last year of up to 128%!

The parity and increased premium payments were to be financed from productivity. As part of the package 7,000 jobs have vanished from Leyland in the past few months.

There were no specific targets for productivity as management convinced union negotiators that this would lessen the room for man-

1st. Output at 6.4 cars would mean payment from January 1st.

But even on the company's own figures, the 6.4 target was only attained in 6 of the 12 months in 1977, and it was never reached in 1978, when even the 6.1 target was only met in three months!

With uncompetitive plant operating in a shrinking market, these unilaterally imposed productivity targets are a nonsense, particularly as it is generally on the volume cars that output per man hour is higher, and this is the area of production that the management is drastically pruning.

## WORKERS SUFFER

continued from front page of our reporters a pay slip for £39.20 for a week's work. This worker, married with children, receives £36.70 while on strike (social security etc.). If he was on the dole he would get £49.15 a week.

It is the Mirror, and Wyatt, who have engaged in "disgusting behaviour". They have the gall to whip up hysteria against these workers in a week which has given us just a glimpse of the "disgusting" luxury in which the rich live.

## Thatcher has urged the use of scab "voluntary" labour

How many council workers have been invited to a "surprise party" with £3,304 of Dom Perignon champagne—three bottles for every person at the "do"—on offer? But this was Harold Wilson's "little surprise" from property tycoon Eric Miller in 1974.

Tory ex-Minister Maudling received over £22,500 improvements to his house from the same source while a £2,500 silver chess set was bestowed on his wife!

What stinking hypocrisy! These scandals give just a glimpse of the rottenness of capitalist society. The rich, live in opulence while millions

eke out a bare existence and are slammed for demanding a modest increase in standards.

£60 is the demand of the council workers which is merely two-thirds of the average industrial earnings in Britain. 'Militant' believes that a wage of £70 is the bare minimum which any worker should be asked to live on. But council workers are determined to get at least £60.

For this they, and the working class as a whole, are threatened with vicious anti-working class and anti-union legislation by the Tories. In some cases the press and the Tories have issued what amounts to an incitement to violence against strikers.

Tory Lord, Hailsham, has urged the institution of 'criminal proceedings under the 100 year old Conspiracy Act' against council worker pickets.

He has also suggested that the names of pickets should be published. His 'leader' Thatcher has urged the use of scab "voluntary" labour.

And these hypocrites have the temerity to accuse council workers of "inhumanity".

But the hysteria of the Tory leadership and the press is not at all accidental. It reflects the enormous collapse of British capitalism. The capitalists no longer can afford lasting reforms—i.e. improvements in living standards. On the contrary

they want to take back what they have been forced to give in the past.

It is this which explains the ferocious campaign against strikers and the unions in particular. Every dirty trick is used to show that the unions are "unpopular".

This is perhaps the reason why 350,000 workers in Britain joined unions last year putting the combined strength of the unions at over 12 million!

## Every dirty trick is used to show that the unions are "unpopular"

But the campaign of the Tories and their media could be completely turned against them if the labour movement fought back with a campaign of explanation and a programme to meet the present crisis.

But the Labour leadership have attempted to out-Tory the Tories when it comes to "union-bashing". Thus Jim Callaghan enormously angered council workers when he referred to "free collective vandalism". Salt was rubbed in the wound by the action and speeches of other Ministers like Rodgers who demanded a wage freeze to the delight of the Tory press.

The Labour Party and trade union rank and file should demand a halt to the present disastrous

course of the Labour government. It is playing into the hands of Tories and preparing the ground for the nightmare of a Thatcher government.

The government should give a £60 minimum wage to the council workers. And this must be the starting point for a socialist plan of production involving the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need under workers control and management.

If drawn up and implemented by committees involving the trade unions, shop stewards committees, housewives and small businessmen it would create the resources not only to completely abolish low pay and poverty but to dramatically improve living standards while cutting the working week to even less than the 35 hours which the labour movement demands.

## DESPERATION

The Tory Nottinghamshire County Council are offering school students £1 an hour to do the work of caretakers and cleaners on strike.

In the same area a NUPE full-timer John McGuigan has been charged with threatening behaviour to a Chief Inspector, who was trying to get a fuel tanker into a school.

A fuller report of these acts will appear in a later issue.

# Militant

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