

Militant

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ELECTION
May 3rd

BOLD SOCIALIST POLICIES TO DEFEAT TORIES

The Scottish Nationalists (the Tartan Tories), the Liberals (the capitalists reserve team), and the Northern Ireland Tory Unionists have all ganged up with Thatcher to bring down the Labour government.

The capitalists and their press are anticipating a Tory victory in the forthcoming general election. Hence the celebrations on the stock exchange and the popping of champagne bottles in the boardrooms.

But the working class cannot view the prospect of a Tory government with anything but horror. A Thatcher government would be a nightmare for working people. Like a mad barber she has

By Tony Saunois
Labour Party National
Executive Committee
(personal capacity)

promised to slash spending on social services, housing, education etc. Cut, cut, cut—everything but the profits of the monopolies is her motto.

She has singled out the trade unions in particular for attack. Listen to what her henchman Joseph said recently about the unions: "Government must provide a framework that encourages mature behaviour, not

childish irresponsibility". The cure of the unions alleged "childishness" is not a mere slap on the wrist.

The 'Economist', ruthless organ of big business, has proposed: "Make social security payments to strikers into a loan recoverable from the trade union". In other words a Tory government would attempt to apply the same game as the Heath government; hamstringing the trade unions by attacking their funds.

But Thatcher has not threatened the unions as an "election gimmick" as Moss Evans has suggested. On the contrary it arises from the desperate crisis of British capitalism.

The monopolies wish to increase their profits by further attacking the living standards of the working class. The unions stand as a mighty obstacle to achieving this. Hence the proposal to shackle the unions by restrictions on picketing etc.

The capitalists tolerated
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A group of Tories is working on the details of tough new measures against strikers and pickets...

—reported in 'The Guardian', 24 March



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

FRENCH WORKERS MARCH AGAINST STEEL CLOSURES

Steel workers head giant 23 March demo against mass sackings

"The air was positively electric at 3 o'clock when we were due to start off. But with the numbers coming in from all over France, however, the start was delayed.

"From every side street there seemed to be people trying to get into the main avenue off the Place de la Republique. It was well past six when we arrived at our destination.

"There were old workers, retired workers, families, all participating in the march, sometimes forty deep across the

By Terry Fields

road. The streets were lined with people applauding, shouting, chanting..."

This was Terry Field's impression of the massive March 23rd trade union demonstration in Paris organised in protest

against catastrophic redundancies in the French steel industry which would devastate towns like Longwy in the Lorraine. Over 100,000 people marched on the demo.

Terry, a member of the Fire Brigades Union Executive, was in Paris as a fraternal delegate to the Triennial Conference of the public sector unions of the CGT [the CP-led general confederation of labour].

"We had been there all

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Militant

WHAT A TORY GOVERNMENT WOULD MEAN

A Tory government would mean ruthless attacks on workers' living standards, and trade union rights. In her Solihull speech last weekend, Mrs Thatcher left no doubt about it.

★ Back in office, the Tories would immediately cut at least another £700 million off public expenditure. Housing, education, health, and other vital services—already devastated by the present government's cuts—would suffer even more.

★ Reductions in company tax and top rates of income tax for the rich and the super-rich would have to be paid for by working-class consumers through higher VAT and revenue rates, in other words, through higher prices.

★ Cuts in government hand-outs to industry, particularly state industry, together with other 'monetarist' policies—which would result in more decrepit capitalist firms going to the wall—would inevitably mean a dramatic increase in unemployment.

★ To try to break the workers' ability to resist attacks by big business, the Tories would introduce draconian new laws to fetter the trade unions in general and to prevent effective picketing in particular.

The vicious use of the police in some areas against pickets in the public service workers' strike and against NUJ pickets at the Nottingham Evening Post are a foretaste of the anti-union offensive that can be expected from a Tory government.

The bosses and their kept press have been aroused to fury in recent months by the

enormous power and confidence of the working class which was revealed in the strike committees and the effective mass picketing during the lorry drivers' strike and the low-paid workers' campaign.

In addition to eroding the basic trade union rights built up over a hundred years or more, the Tories now clearly intend to frame laws against picketing which will provide a blacklegs' charter and give a free hand to the police.

Right-wing Tory MP Ronald Bell has proclaimed: "Strike-breaking must become the most honourable profession of all." Tories and businessmen are again discussing plans for "volunteer" organisations to be used against striking workers on a big scale.

As the chances of the Labour government's downfall increased last week, share prices soared on the Stock Exchange, clearly reflecting the bosses' enthusiasm for the return of a

Tory government—which they are now confident would be the outcome of a general election.

Last year, the City financiers were still toying with the advantages of another minority Labour government. At that time, they were still prepared to sit back complacently and watch a Labour government doing its dirty work for them.

Its minority position ruled out, as far as they were concerned, any of the radical policies included in Labour's manifesto. On the contrary, the Labour government implemented massive cuts and held down wages.

In the first period, these right-wing policies did not produce the industrial upheavals they would have provoked had they come from a Tory government—because the Labour ministers, backed by the trade union leadership, could exploit an enormous reserve of credit and loyalty within the ranks of the labour movement.

Since then, however, the Ford strike, the lorry drivers' strike, the public sector workers' action, and action by other sections of workers, have made it clear that the

Labour government can no longer hold the line against mass demands for the restoration of eroded living standards.

A survey of the heads of some of the biggest industrial firms and finance houses in the City carried out recently by the 'Financial Weekly' showed that big business now overwhelmingly favours the return of a Thatcher government with a majority of 50 seats.

Although fearful of the enormous power of the organised working class, British capitalism has been driven to the conclusion that it can no longer postpone indefinitely a confrontation with the labour movement.

The threats of tough action against the unions is not just an election gimmick for the Tories—anti-trade union measures are a necessity for big business if it is to clear the way to higher levels of profitability at the workers' expense.

In the face of this threat—the most serious since the 1930s—all the resources of the labour movement must be mobilised to keep out the Tories and ensure the return of a Labour government.

The vital question, however, is the programme on

which Labour will fight the coming election. It would be absolutely fatal to advocate the continuation of the policies of the last five years.

The right-wing Manifesto Group, for instance, has proclaimed that "the Labour Party must be the party of permanent incomes policy." But it is precisely the policy of trying to prop up a diseased British capitalism at the expense of workers' living standards which has disastrously undermined Labour's support in the recent period.

Only a return to the radical reforms promised in Labour's 1974 Manifesto—linked to a policy of socialist nationalisation which would give a Labour government the real means of putting them into effect—can guarantee a Labour victory.

Labour must be armed with a socialist Manifesto, and must ensure the maximum mobilisation of the Labour Parties and trade unions in every area to win the support of millions of workers and ensure that they turn out on election day.

This is the way to answer the Tory threat.

BOLD SOCIALIST POLICIES

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the Labour government so long as it was able and prepared to do its bidding. Jim Callaghan was hailed by the capitalist press as a "Moses" while wages were held down and prices increased.

But the victory of the Ford workers, the successes of the lorry drivers and the magnificent strike of the local authority workers changed all that.

Now, hypocritically, the Labour cabinet is condemned as "shabby" in allegedly "desperately clinging to power."

The capitalists have decided that they want their own direct political representatives, the Tories, in power.

The Labour cabinet is therefore tossed aside like a squeezed lemon.

Big business cracked the whip and the SNP, Liberals, and the rest fell into line. This is the explanation for the vote in the House of Commons.

The measures of the Labour government over the last four years—and particularly in the last three months—have enormously assisted the Tories. Massive increases in unemployment, savage cuts in government expenditure, the denial of a living wage to the low-paid, and the nauseating spectacle of Labour ministers crossing picket lines and even calling for the use of volunteers to break the hospital workers' strike—all of this

has been grist to Thatcher's mill.

However, Thatcher's dream of taking power could be completely shattered if Labour fights the election on what Callaghan called a "bold socialist challenge." Millions of working people must have been encouraged to have heard him threaten to campaign on such a programme during the censure debate.

But a bold socialist programme should be spelled out. It means the immediate implementation of a 35-hour week and a useful programme of public works to eliminate unemployment; a minimum wage of £70 a week and a massive programme for extending the social services, together with a decent pension for the elderly and disabled.

50% increase in pensions and other benefits	£3,500 million [1975 prices]
Minimum earnings of £70 per week [men and women]	£5,000 million
Doubling of housebuilding	£4,000 million
Increase of 25% in government expenditure on health and education	£3,000 million
10% increase in workers' living standards	£4,000 million

Unemployment alone means that an estimated £20,000 million [in 1975 prices] worth of goods and services which could be produced are not.

And as we show in the 'Militant' pamphlet 'Capitalist Crisis' by Andrew Glyn, this could provide for a number of vital reforms:

This in turn would only be possible on the basis of the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies, with minimum

compensation on the basis of proven need, and the implementation of a socialist plan of production under workers' control and management.

If Labour adopted such a programme it would be invincible in the election. Labour has an enormous reservoir of support.

Already the unions have moved into action. The Trade Union Campaign For A Labour Victory is urging shop stewards and trade unionists

to work for the defeat of the Tories and a Labour victory. Labour's youth organisation will also, as in previous elections, be to the fore in fighting for a Labour government on a socialist programme.

But this potential support could be completely undermined if, as has been hinted at, Callaghan fights a "statesmanlike" or "presidential" campaign with his "image" pitted against a "strident" Thatcher. It will be the issues of jobs, housing, education, etc. which will decide the outcome of the election, not the personalities of the leaders alone.

Mobilise!

And as in 1931 the election campaign could lead to a class polarisation, with the shop stewards and union activists roused to fury by Thatcher's attacks. This could lead to the mobilisation of the mass of the working class against the Tories.

If, on the other hand, a Tory government comes to power, it will usher in a period of enormous collisions between the classes which will put in the shade even the mighty events of 1970-74. Such is the explosive social situation in Britain that, in the event of a Tory victory, a massive clash with the working class could result in a general strike.

Even the strategists of capital, such as the 'Economist' [3 February] recognise this: "So major a trade union reform [i.e. massive attacks on the unions—Ed.] could bring a general strike." So desperate are they, however, that they see no alternative but to "take on" the unions.

But the Tories must be denied the opportunity of carrying out such a programme. The whole labour movement must be roused to defeat the Tories and bring to power a Labour government on a socialist programme.

THE HEAVY HAND OF THE LAW

I have never been involved with the police before, but in the last two weeks they seem to have stepped into my life in a number of ways.

In South East London the National Front have been turning up at a market in East Street, off the Walworth Road, on Sunday mornings, selling their papers and giving out leaflets in this area with a high black population.

The local Labour party Young Socialist branches along with the Southwark Campaign Against Racialism and Fascism (SCARF) have turned up too.

When there are a lot of anti-fascists there, the NF are cautious. But when the turnout is not so good they are more brazen.

The police, of course, have been there too. As more LPYS members have been turning up and outnumbering the NF the police have stepped in and imposed



Police arrest an anti-fascist after he had been attacked by NF thugs at Brick Lane

certain "rules".

First of all, they said that the NF and all anti-NF supporters must limit their paper sellers to two—regardless of which political group they were from.

When we protested, one policeman said: "We've told you once, and I am not telling you again, I'm ordering you. If you don't limit your paper sellers to two, then some of

you will be spending the afternoon down the local police station."

The police "rules" have no legal authority—but if we went ahead we would have undoubtedly been arrested for "obstructing the police in their course of duty."

Then we had the dubious privilege of being photographed by one of the NFers. This, understandably, fright-

ened and intimidated some of the newer members of the LPYS, and indeed older ones too. When one LPYS member put his hand up in front of the camera so as to hide his face, a policeman immediately jumped on him and said if there was any more intimidation of that sort, he'd be arresting some of us! Not one word in reply to our protests that it was the NF who were intimidating us.

One policeman came up to me as I was handing out leaflets about the demonstration against the 'sus' laws, stood in front of me and took a leaflet—he read every word then carefully folded it up and put it in his pocket, all of the time standing in front of me. These examples show how important it is to have a mass turnout every Sunday so that every week the NF will think twice before showing their faces.

The latest incident involving the police and me was when I was driving home after a YS meeting. A van driving behind me started to flash its lights: it turned out to be the police. When I stopped at some traffic lights a policeman knocked on my window and told me to pull over. I got out of the car and he asked me if the car was mine. When I said it was, he asked for my name Janet Scott, and then told me my address! He said he had stopped me because I had an unusual number-plate for London. As he took down the particulars of my car the other policeman came over and said they had stopped me because I was taking an unusual route home. They could at least get their stories to match!

These examples—and many more which could be given by comrades—just go to show how much more the police are involving themselves with people's lives and the amount of information which is available to them.

So much for living in a free country!

By Janet Scott
(Deptford LPYS)

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ARRESTED ON 'SUS'

By Michael
(PNP Youth)

"I was standing on the platform at Picadilly Tube station waiting for a train when four heavies came up and stood by me. They started shouting at me. I was scared stiff.

They looked like NF-ers, all well-built with dirty jeans, long-hair etc and all in their late 20s. The fattest of them lurched forward and said, "What you got in the bag, son?"

I said, "What business is it of yours?" You know how you get tensed up.

"Just answer the question, sonny boy." The platform was packed and so to attract attention I started a row.

That's when they showed their police ID Cards. So they searched my bag and after they'd removed all my PNP and LPYS leaflets they found at the bottom a pair of rice-flails which we use in karate-training. "So we've got you for that for a start," they said.

So they took me upstairs to a small room for interrogation. After 20 minutes of their abuse, 6 uniformed policemen came and marched me off to a van. It was as if I was some big criminal. I had two on each arm and one pushing me at the back.

They charged me with SUS and possession. They always do this to make one charge stick. They said I was seen trying to dip into a woman's bag.

Four times I've been done in 6 months. I was done for sitting on a train after I'd been to a job centre. Again they said I was dipping. No evidence, no witnesses. They just go round picking up black youth and getting their quota of arrests.

They handcuffed me and we stood waiting while three trains passed. They picked a youth at random. Toyed with the idea of which train he would get on. Then—grab. He was with me on the way down to the cells.

My friends say I may be getting the treatment because I'm politically active. Well I joined the LPYS and PNP to fight against the fascists. The NF had beaten me up. So this harassment won't stop me.

It only convinces me of the need for black and white workers to stand together, and defend ourselves against the attacks and bullying of the fascists and the police."

These experiences of Michael are those of thousands of black youths in London. Indiscriminate arrests and searches have become the norm for the areas with high black populations.

Despite the fact that in no London borough do blacks account for more than 20% of the population they have suffered a massive, disproportionate use of SUS.

The law against 'suspected persons loitering with intent to commit a crime' allows the racists in the police force to vent their aggression on blacks. In 1977 60% of those arrested in Hackney on SUS were black, in Lambeth 73% and in Handsworth 61%.

Even a Tory, David Lane, the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality has said that, "some police officers appear to be abusing the law."

But David Lane's words are of little comfort to the black community. The LPYS say this law is made for abuse and giving the police a free hand to harass working people. That is why we are demanding labour movement action to abolish the SUS laws now.

We appeal to the workers and youth of London to join us in our demonstration on April 7th to show that the labour movement is not prepared to allow the harassment of its members, or of any minority in Britain.

Only one more week to go! One more week to intensify our campaign to mobilise black and white youth to march through South London in a mass protest demonstration against the vicious harassment and intimidation dished out to us daily by the police.

Over the last ten days, LPYS and PNP members have distributed thousands of leaflets and posters throughout London, but now is the time to bring the campaign to a real climax. Every youth club, school, estate, etc. must be visited and re-visited in the next few days.

The response so far has been really tremendous. In virtually every area of London, LPYS and PNP members have taken to the streets with leaflets and petitions to hammer our message home: "Kick 'SUS' out! Police harassment must stop now!" In the crucial few days that remain, we must galvanise our branches into activity with public meetings, days of action, and mass street leafletting to really ensure a big turn-out on April 7th.

campaign should be broadened. Their slogans attacked Fianna Fail and the bosses' government and linked the question of taxation to the questions of wage restraint, low pay, rising prices and pointed to the alternative of a socialist programme for Labour.

Their slogans for the nationalisation of the banks and industry, the 35-hour week and the minimum wage were taken up by workers on either side of the Labour Youth contingent. All in all it was a proud day for the working class and for Labour's youth.

By Moira Cooke (Mid County Labour Party Youth Section)



Anti-Fascist speaking in Brick Lane last Sunday Photo: MILITANT

FASCIST THUGS RETURN TO BRICK LANE

'KICK SUS OUT' march to Brixton. Saturday April 7th. Assemble 1pm at Camberwell Grove [Green end] SE5

Last Sunday saw the largest turn-out by the fascists in Brick Lane since they began their racist attacks in the area. And they were helped by the police, who refused to allow anti-fascists from selling their papers at the top of Brick Lane. When the anti-fascists marched to the police station, the police allowed 50 fascists to shadow the march.

It is vital that the local labour movement renews its activity in the area, so that together with the Bengali community it can drive the fascist thugs off the East End streets.

All labour movement organisations in the East London area should come to Brick Lane on Sunday mornings to support the anti-fascist demonstration.

The general strikes and huge demonstrations which took place throughout the country on 20th March are still being discussed vigorously among the ranks of the labour and trade union movement. The huge show of workers' power has heightened the morale of all class-conscious workers, and trade union activists in particular.

The immensity of the demonstrations reflected the build-up of real frustration among active workers over the past nine years. In that period, the hands of the trade union activists have been tied by the national wage agreements, worked out between the bosses and the trade union leaders.

The right to draw up wage claims in accordance with their members' needs was virtually removed from the shop stewards and the trade union committees. Every move the workers made to flex their muscles was hindered by mountains of rules and regulations. Many workers saw no point in coming to branch meetings and attendance fell off.

The fact that the Labour Party was in coalition with Fine Gael—the smaller of the two Irish Tory parties—for four and a half years during that period, effectively

VITAL CONFERENCE FOR ALL YOUTH

It's only two weeks to go to Easter [April 13-16] when the Labour Party Young Socialists' Annual Conference takes place in Blackpool.

This isn't long, but there's still time to make sure two or three more young trade unionists from every branch come along.

LPYS Conference is the political highspot of the year: three days when almost 2,000 young workers come together, to discuss the programme and way ahead for Labour's Youth. With a general election imminent, it is vital that every branch is represented with a delegate and as many visitors as possible.

Delegates will be able to discuss the LPYS's strategy in the general election.

Resolutions are on the agenda calling for special election youth leaflets and for youth speakers to be on public platforms. There will be 3¼ million new young voters at the next election. Youth are overwhelmingly anti-Tory, and the LPYS must be given the resources and means to win these decisive votes.

The conference will be Andy Bevan's third as National Youth Officer, but it will be his first general election in that post. Several LPYS branches are demanding that Andy be released from Transport House, and put onto youth work. Branches are asking for Andy to speak at youth rallies and public meetings in the election. Undoubtedly, these are calls that will get louder in the coming period.

Most important, conference must draw up a balance sheet of the last five years. We must analyse the reasons for by-election defeats in safe Labour seats and hammer out the policies needed to win back disillusioned Labour voters.

A fighting socialist programme, such as the LPYS has been campaigning on, would be capable of carrying

Labour to a massive election victory over the Thatcher menace.

On the Friday evening, Peter Taaffe will be speaking on 'Workers of the World Unite'. Saturday night will be the 'Militant' readers' meeting with Ted Grant on the 'Socialist Way Ahead for Labour'. At the 'Left' meeting on Sunday night, Tony Benn MP will be speaking along with Steve Glennon (who moved the resolution on Youth and the Trade Unions at last year's TUC conference).

During the weekend there are also special meetings organised to draw together the visitors from all over the country who are members of the same trade union, to discuss their common problems and experiences. With the new 'Charter for Young Workers' being discussed, these meetings will be especially important.

There is still time to book for the conference. It's never too late. Branches should aim to use this last two weeks to chase up last-minute trade union sponsorships. Every LPYS member, everybody who has attended a LPYS meeting in the last year, should be visited now.

This year's LPYS conference will be one of the most important in the history of the LPYS, mapping out a programme to meet the desperate plight of unemployed youth, young apprentices, and the homeless.

Armed with a socialist programme, the LPYS can—as in 1974—play a key role in winning marginal seats for Labour, organising regional drives, and undertaking mass canvasses.

From the basis the LPYS now has it can move towards becoming a mass force in the fight for the socialist transformation of society.

By Kevin Ramage (LPYS National Committee)

IRELAND—NOW WORKERS HAVE SHOWN THEIR POWER

Before the march Dublin was like a ghost town, with almost all shops, offices and services closed down. By 1pm the city was alive with trade union contingents from all the city's industries carrying banners and placards. As I moved through the crowds, selling 'Militant Irish Monthly' it was obvious that the mood of the workers on the demonstration was one of anger and determination. What impressed me most about the march was the enormous power of the labour movement.

The delegations from the various Labour Party youth sections throughout the city showed how the tax cam-

pan meant that the political road to struggle appeared closed. Everywhere the workers looked, their generals, both industrial and political, were in hiding or retreat. By this year, with Fianna Fail, the open representatives of big business, in power, the pent up anger was unstoppable.

With even the most timid lead from the top and despite the opposition of the leadership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, we saw the most awesome display of organised labour so far in the history of the state. A turn-out of similar proportions in London would see two million workers on the streets of the capital!

Yet discipline was absolute; not an incident, not a hitch. Even if all of the 10,000 strong national police force had turned out, they would have been dwarfed by the demonstration in Dublin alone. The way is now clear for the campaign to be broadened to take up the issues that have fuelled the workers' anger; unemployment, inflation and falling living standards, and to answer these with a socialist programme for organised labour.

By Joe Higgins (Vice Chairman, Dublin Regional Council of the Labour Party, in a personal capacity)

DERRY UNEMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE

WORKERS CALL FOR URGENT ACTION

"We must look to our own organisations, the trade union movement, for the alternative to mass unemployment. Only socialist solutions contain the answer to the economic and political problems that confront working class people in Northern Ireland today."

With these opening remarks, Bill Webster presented the Derry Trades Council document 'Mass Unemployment or the Right to Work' to a conference made up of nearly sixty trade unionists, unemployed workers, and trade union members from community and tenants' associations in Derry on Saturday 10th March.

The conference was the first of its kind organised by a trades council in Northern Ireland for nearly three years. The attendance on the day illustrated the concern of trade unionists and community workers from Derry and outside with the need to fight against mass unemployment.

The Belfast and District Trades Council sent the newly-elected Vice-president, Bro. Des Bromley, and EC member, Bro. Dermot Reid, as their official delegates. Coleraine, Craigavon and



Unemployed young workers in Strabane. Victims of 'private enterprise'

Omagh Trades Councils were also represented.

Workers involved in disputes at Balantynes knitwear factory, Coleraine, Lec Refrigeration, and the Riversdale Sports Complex, sent representatives from their shop stewards' or strike committees. From the Derry and Strabane area delegates came from the ATGWU, ITGWU, GMWU, EETPU, NUPE, PSA, AUEW (eng. section), AUT and UPW.

On the day the trades council approved the draft document—the Northern Ireland office also issued a document on economics and social policies in Northern Ireland.

The government document, said Bill Webster, was an absolute indictment of the right-wing policies of the Labour cabinet in attempting to deal with the problems of unemployment, poverty and slum housing on the basis of

capitalism. After claims that things were beginning to improve, the government now admits that "the beneficial impact of various initiatives on the jobs front had not radically altered the serious unemployment problem."

Bill called for a campaign led by the leaders of the trade union movement, to mobilise the 250,000 trade unionists, the youth and the unemployed. The trade union movement must link the day

Photo: Derek Spiers (IFL)

to day issues to the political task of transforming society along socialist lines.

John Coulthard, NUPE's senior official in the North, congratulated the trades council on the document and stated that private enterprise had failed miserably to solve the unemployment question.

The main oppositional voice came from Mr Paul Grace, National Executive member of the UPW. He argued during discussion

from the floor that trade unionists had to work within the confines of the capitalist system. Connolly and Larkin had tried to change the system and had failed.

Numerous delegates took up these points. As Belfast Trades Council Executive member Mrs Reid pointed out, his speech could have been welcomed at a conference of the CBI.

An unemployed worker from Strabane summed up the majority opinion within the conference when he said, 'Nobody who criticised the document has offered any clear alternative to the socialist ideas it contains.'

Numerous speakers supported members of the Labour and Trade Union Group who from the floor raised the need for a mass Labour Party in Northern Ireland.

The initiative taken by Derry Trades Council, it was stressed, should be repeated by other trades councils and the whole of the trade union movement throughout the North.

The official speaker from the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU, Bro G Hunter [ITGWU] was left in no doubt that the conference demanded urgent action from the trade union leaders on unemployment.

Eileen Cullen
(Chairperson, 719 branch, PSA, personal capacity)



Julie Taylor: Build the LPYS

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

HOW TO WIN AN ELECTION?

At our last ward meeting, while discussing the agenda for the March GMC, the ward noted the following motion: "This GMC unites behind the Labour government and is determined to win the forthcoming general election."

It was agreed to amend the motion to read: "This GMC unites behind the NEC of the Labour Party and urges that the NEC include policies as decided by annual conference in the Manifesto, and is determined to win the forthcoming general election."

If the motion is passed unamended, it would condone the weak and "bury our heads in the sand" policies of the present Labour government.

The point of our amendment is that it is ordinary Party members who select their Prospective Parliamentary Candidates. I believe that those candidates should fight their election campaign on policies and motions that the Labour Party Conference decides each year. I believe that the Annual Conference is far more in touch with the views and needs of the working class than the

present Labour government.

Of course, the Labour Party should be united in its aims. We too are determined to see a Labour victory in the election, but that doesn't mean that we give carte blanche to the Cabinet to impose policies such as the 5% incomes policy at the expense of the working class. Policies like that can only bring disaster for a Labour government.

An election Manifesto, which promised to get rid of the capitalist system altogether and run society along socialist lines would be able to secure the return of a Labour government with a majority in the House of Commons.

More important than that, the return of a Labour government which could honour its commitment to the working class of providing a decent home, jobs and a living wage for all. In general, an improvement in the living standards of working people in Britain.

By Chris Kelly

(Secretary, Millbrook Ward, Southampton Labour Party, personal capacity)

North West Labour Party Conference ROCKING THE BOAT?

Unemployment and pay were the dominant issues at the recent North West Labour Party Conference. Yet while there was anger and indignation at the threat to living standards there was also a mood of not 'rocking the boat' by criticising the Labour government so close to the election.

The most graphic illustration of this latter mood was the ousting from the Trade Union section of the Executive Committee of Colin Barnett, the regional organiser for NUPE. Barnett had been highly critical of some Labour MPs for their lack of support for the low-paid, and had tentatively suggested that the low-paid should return this lack of support for the MPs at the general election by abstaining.

Even though this suggestion was mistaken, the right wing used this as a reason for turning down resolutions on low pay calling for a national minimum wage and a 35-hour week.

At the same time, though, a resolution was passed stressing "that only a socialist society can guarantee new technology benefiting the whole of mankind not just the profits of the employing classes."

Conference gave overwhelming support to this solution in the face of threatening redundancy aris-

ing out of micro-electronics.

Likewise in a resolution concerned with the problem of young offenders, speaker after speaker pointed to the causes: of large-scale unemployment, bad housing, lack of amenities for youth.

Julie Taylor, Liverpool Toxteth, explained the need to build the LPYS and channel the energies of youth into the labour movement, "turn rebels into revolutionaries to change society into socialism."

Also a motion calling for a 35-hour week and to support the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment was accepted by the conference.

An emergency resolution highlighted the problems of the area. It opposed the threatened closure of Dunlop's Speke factory. Stan Pemberton, worker at Dunlop's and EC of the T&GWU, pointed to the 95,000 jobs lost in Merseyside in the last ten years.

Richard Knights, Liverpool Wavertree, spoke of the importance of the international links already established among the rubber workers and the possibilities of a real fight against the Dunlop-Pirelli multinational.

The mood of anger showed that the steps back in the EC elections, and over the low pay motions, would be short-lived.

A growing number of delegates realised that the appeals for a spurious unity

on the basis of Tory policies would not keep the real Tories out. This could only be done on the basis of decisions of the last national conference—reject wage restraint and fight for socialist policies.

By Roy Farrar
(Walton LP)

Civil Servants

The following resolution was passed, without opposition, at a meeting of Bristol South East CLP on 9th March:

"This GMC fully supports the present industrial action being taken by civil servants to restore wage levels relative to private industry. Other public sector workers can have no faith in comparability studies when the government will only accept these studies 'subject to incomes policy'."

"We call upon the Labour government to honour its agreements with its own employees, and implement immediately the recommendations of the independent Pay Research Unit in full."

Now, more than ever, there is a need for the CPSA to reaffiliate to the Labour Party to give us a say in the actions and policies of the party.

Wayne Coombes
CPSA Bristol

LEFT & RIGHT

SLAVE WAGES + CHIPS

Micro-chips are good news—at least for some. The American electronics firm Inmos, with its “bankable” designers and target of 3,000 per cent returns on investment, have made a deal with the government National Enterprise Board.

The deal gives them £50 million credit to set up a company in Britain. “Why a factory in England?” ‘New Scientist’ asked Tony Barron, one of Inmos’ star directors, who replied: “What country can you think of that has massive unemployment and pays slave wages across the board...?”

IT'S A HARD LIFE

At last we know why the bosses think £70 a week is not on for workers. ‘The Observer’ interviewed “three wealthy men”, and proved beyond doubt that being rich is really quite a hard life. Justin Hayward, a well-known, and well-off singer, is “just an ordinary guy” with ordinary tastes like accumulating recording equipment and diamonds for his wife. Although they have two thoroughbred horses and a custom designed house in Cornwall, as well as their large London house, “tax pressures take nearly all the pleasure out of earning vast amounts.” Nearly.

LORDLY ANGUISH

But the plight of Lord Alec Douglas-Home, ex-Tory prime minister, with his 1,300 acres on the Scottish border and another 17,000 a little farther off, a private 4-mile stretch of the salmon-rich River Tweed, and a 50-room ‘house’, all acquired by the back-breaking effort of being born his father’s son [he disclaimed his peerage, but not his inheritance] will move readers to tears.

The servant crisis means that he and his guests were reduced to queuing up with their plates for their lunchtime kedgeriee. “It is very difficult to make ends meet nowadays...”. He’s even been reduced to catching his own fish. It’s a hard morning’s work but four salmon should help keep the wolf from the door.

Problems like whether or not you can afford fish fingers are so much simpler.

SWEET CHAMPAGNE

Tate and Lyle have cut their hand-outs to shareholders. In consolation they dished out £9-a-bottle champagne at the investors’ annual get-together. All, presumably, paid for out of their workers’ sweat. Did you know that Britain is the world’s second biggest champagne importer?

A HARD DAY'S DRIVE

It is very difficult to write of a “typical” day. When you’re away from home, one day seems to run into another and you measure time by the length of the period “up the road”.

As with any industry, you get good days, you get bad days; good runs and bad; good loads and bad loads. But without any shadow of doubt a long-distance driver gets more than the going rate in niggles and aggravation.

I last worked as a “hire and reward” driver almost five years ago. But I remember well the kind of life it was and how little it has changed.

A late start in haulage is after 6.00 am. At 5.30 am I’m shivering from the frost as I check the motor which I park on a local lay-by.

I try to be quiet and not set off any dogs in sleeping houses, although in the peace and stillness of a frosty winter morning the engine sounds like an avalanche.

A neighbour asked me once why I couldn’t leave the vehicle at the yard and travel to it in my car which would save me rousing the streets of a morning. I explained that the gaffer stipulated when I started the job that the motor “goes home” in order to “help” me get an early start.

In reality, of course, it means he doesn’t have to worry about providing someone to open the yard at all times of the night to let wagons out. The vehicle and load become your responsibility.

The frost on the ropes and sheets makes them stiff with moisture and difficult to tighten (ropes tend to slacken overnight with moisture changes) and it makes the mirrors redundant for a while—an unpleasant prospect when you can’t see what your back axle is doing forty-odd feet behind you!

No tyres down overnight



Pickets try to persuade a driver not to cross picket lines at Tilbury Depot during the lorry drivers’ strike in January

and wheelnuts nipped up because you did them two days ago and you haven’t been far since. Coupling OK.

The cab is cold and stinks of oil and the wheel sticks to my hands. The engine canopy is at elbow-height—I have carpet remnants and old blankets swathed over it to deaden the roar and rattle. The bit of heat it throws out is welcome in winter but a curse in summer.

The heater, such as it is, burns my left foot to a cinder while I get frost bite on the other. My warm breath acts as a demister and is ably assisted by the cloth.

When you drive a Scammell Handyman you try not to think of “modern” aids such as power steering or seats with built-in shock absorbers. You do have a good engine that will pull and last, which is what makes the vehicle attractive to the gaffer—he can’t afford to think of the driver’s comfort...he says!

Hauliers are second only to farmers when it comes to pleading poverty.

My gaffer has ensured me that by loading last night I can do a whole day on the road. The work is 18 one- or two-ton deliveries around Manchester.

That’s what I like about his sense of humour: extending the boundaries of the city of Manchester to include Crewe, Garston (Liverpool) and Oswaldwhistle.

When I’ve tipped I have to ring the gaffer to see if he’s found me a load home or whether I have to find one—preferably a cap (capacity) load for which the rates for 20 tons will be paid.

I stop for breakfast at 8.30 and then fill out my log sheet, wondering if I should pinch half an hour and say I started at 6.15 instead of 5.45.

Legally your log sheet should be filled in before you move a wheel, but ministry men carrying out silent checks—they hide in lay-bys and such like taking the numbers of commercial vehicles and then checking against what you have stated in your log sheet—are in-

famous for their lack of enthusiasm about leaving their beds in the morning (especially when winter’s about us).

They tend to be thick on the ground at night when drivers are taking “dodgies”—running over their hours to get home.

Owner-drivers are the worst culprits at this game, breaking every rule in the book to make a living from the crumbs from the big hauliers just so they can say they “work for themselves”. They are often anti-union and frequently scabs and strike-breakers as well as picket-line busters, for the simple reason that if they don’t deliver the goods they don’t work and that doesn’t pay the interest on the loans they take out to “work for themselves” in the first place.

[More next week...]

By Bob Stothard

(Sunderland North
Labour Party
and T&GWU 8/162)

ONE LAW FOR THE RICH, ANOTHER FOR THE POOR

“It’s no excuse for stealing, but my mum has had a hard life. She has a mortgage to pay and only social security to live on.

“My dad has had three heart attacks; my brother who lives at home has been out of work for over a year and is receiving treatment for severe depression.

“She gave the sweets to our kids, she feels guilty because she can’t give them much. I told her they understand.”

The mum in question was appearing at Brighton Magistrates’ Court charged with stealing £2.79 worth of groceries.

When asked if she had anything to say in answer to the charge she could only manage to say in a barely audible whisper, “I’m sorry, Sir.”

Her married son was speaking on her behalf. You could

feel the air potent with suppressed anger, as if everyone wanted to cry out, “Let her go.”

The G&MWU shop steward sitting next to me exclaimed, “How on earth has anyone the right to sit in judgement on that woman.”

There were about 50 dustmen and roadsweepers in the public gallery to support three of their mates, who were next on the list charged with offences arising from their activities on the picket line.

They were fined a total of £100 for fighting to end low pay. One young dustman summed up how most of us felt:

“That could have been any one of our wives or mums. We have got to do something about this bloody lousy world.”

By Ray Apps

Last Friday Jim Slater, the big financier and former boss of Slater Walker Securities, was found guilty of 15 offences under the Companies Act.

As the result of an appeal by the Department of Trade, the Court of Appeal ordered the Guildhall Magistrates to reverse their previous decision to acquit and told them to convict Mr Slater.

As the charges involve the illegal purchase of shares worth £4 million, you would think Mr Slater was back in very serious trouble. But he hardly seemed concerned.

“I’m rather disappointed about the result of the hearing,” he said afterwards, “but I certainly won’t lose any sleep over it.”

But surely when the misuse of £4 million was involved...?

Well, Mr Slater thought “the actual court case was to establish a point of law more than anything else.”

So offences under the Companies Act are not that serious, then, even if £4 million is involved?

Under new legislation now going through parliament, each of the 15 offences would carry a sentence of up to two years’ jail. At the moment, however, they carry a maximum fine of £100. So at worst, for wrongly using £4 million—and failing another Appeal—Mr Slater will have to fork out a mere £1,500 in fines.

No wonder he won’t be losing any sleep!

By Tim Moody

In last week's 'Militant', Peter Taaffe analysed the role of Islam in the Iranian revolution. In the second article he looks at developments within the Catholic Church in Latin America over the past two decades.

The 'Economist' recently pointed out that "Since 1964, 9 out of 19 Latin American countries have been taken over by their armies. Seven more already had authoritarian regimes."

"With the politicians driven underground, the church has become the only legal independent body with a mass audience which can speak out against the inhuman way some soldiers treat some of their enemies. Soldiers cannot gun down priests they dislike with quite as little fuss as they gun down their lay opponents."

The explosive social situation throughout Latin America has inevitably been reflected within the church. In fact, the church has been riven with the same bitter class contradictions as Latin American society as a whole. The conservative hierarchy—the bishops, cardinals, etc.—have in the main remained as pliable tools of the landlords and capitalists.

Such is the mood of their flock, however, that some of the church hierarchy, for example, Archbishop Helder Camara of Brazil, have openly denounced capitalism and have flirted with some of the ideas of Marxism in an attempt to "marry them with Christ's teachings." Rank and file priests close to the workers and peasants, feeling the hatred of the Latin American regimes, have not hesitated to denounce, sometimes in the most violent terms, these monstrous regimes.

One famous Colombian priest, Camilo Torres, was killed in 1966 while participating in a guerrilla war against a regime in which aristocratic members of his own family served. Many of Latin America's radical priests have been inspired by his example, if not completely by his methods: "I took off my cassock to be more truly a priest. The duty of every

Catholic is to be a revolutionary. The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution. The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin."

In Argentina, too, the revolutionary mood which engulfed the country in the period which preceded and followed the return of Peron in 1973 had a profound effect on the priesthood. It was estimated that fully one third of the priests in Argentina belonged to a revolutionary Catholic movement "priests of the third world"

Hierarchy

Throughout its 2,000 year history, the church has learned to bend with the wind. This movement from below thus compelled the Catholic hierarchy at the Medellin (Colombia) conference in 1968 to condemn the more abhorrent features of Latin American landlordism and capitalism. This in turn provoked a determined counter-attack by the conservative bishops.

The Pope, on his recent visit, echoed some of their fears and doubts about the "direction" in which the Catholic church in Latin America was going. In a veiled attack on the radicals at the Pueblo conference in January, the Pope declared:

"Some people claim to show Jesus as politically committed, as one who fought against Roman oppression and the authorities, and also as one involved in the class struggle. The idea of Christ as a political figure, a revolutionary, as the subversive man from Nazareth, does not tally with the Church's catechism."

But the Pope's strictures against the radicals is not borne out by proven historical fact. Karl Kautsky in his great work, 'The Foundations of Christianity', shows that the early Jewish communities

THE CHURCH AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

THE SECOND OF THREE ARTICLES



Almost half of the world's Catholics live in Latin America. But the Pope's preachings were not universally accepted

from which Christianity arose were originally made up of exclusively plebeian elements; they were organisations of the poor, often engaged in an active struggle against Roman rule.

He also shows that the Jewish sect, the Essenes, was organised on the basis of primitive communism. Christianity borrowed the ceremonies and the idea of a Messiah from earlier organisations such as the Essenes and other sects in Palestine and throughout the Roman and Greek world.

Kautsky's analysis was subsequently confirmed by the

'Dead Sea Scrolls'. He pointed out that in relation to the early Christians, "the first thing we encounter is a fierce class hatred against the rich." In the gospel according to St Luke there is the famous denunciation of the rich: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

Denunciation

In the sermon on the mount, we read: "Blessed be

ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God; Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled; Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh; but woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation; woe unto ye that are full, for ye shall hunger; woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep."

This passionate denunciation of the rich was subsequently watered down by later Christian forgers.

From a religion of the poor and oppressed, Christianity gradually was adopted by the ruling class. Consequently, every effort was made to purge the basic tenets of Christianity of all their revolutionary features.

But as Kautsky points out,

prepared to reconcile themselves to these monstrous regimes. In Mexico, the preachings of the Pope to the effect that the masses should reconcile themselves to their lot in life was greeted by booing at one particular religious gathering!

The attempt to apply the brake to the social involvement of rank-and-file priests in the struggles of the Latin American workers and peasants could undoubtedly result in a split within the church.

The 'Economist' pointed out: "The radicals feel more than ever that their legitimacy comes from the masses and not from the hierarchy. Some priests may now feel disheartened enough to renounce their vows, or even think of setting up a people's church."

As is well known, in the underground struggle against the Franco regime, the ordinary priests in many cases played a significant and even heroic role. Churches were used for meetings of the workers' parties and trade unions. Some priests, moreover, on the basis of their experience during the Franco regime, subsequently passed through the priesthood and Catholicism, and groped in the direction of Marxism. One group of ex-priests is now the leadership of a Spanish Maoist sect, the Revolutionary Workers' Organisation.

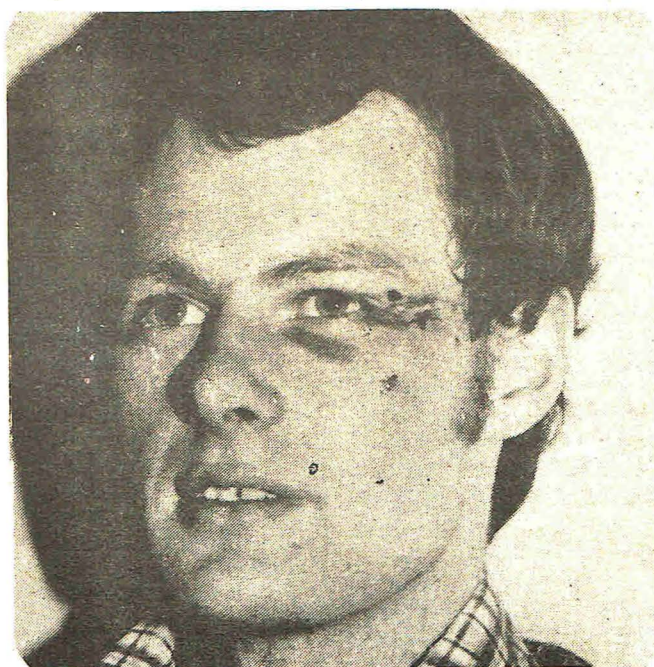
The involvement of the Latin American church, or sections of the church, in the struggles of the workers and peasants throughout the continent undoubtedly represents a big step forward. Notwithstanding the profound philosophical differences with religion, the Latin American Marxists will link up with those sincere Christians and others who are prepared to struggle to liberate the continent from the grip of landlordism, capitalism and imperialism.

It will not, however, be the church as an institution which will accomplish this mighty task—but the Latin American working class organised on a Marxist programme.

'The foundations of Christianity' by Karl Kautsky

The classic Marxist analysis of Christianity

Price £4.70 plus 30p P&P. From World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



As reported in 'Militant' [2 March], members of the TGWU (including LPYS member Alistair Wood) in Bristol were attacked by fascists [above]. Branches of TGWU and NUR have now sent resolutions to Bristol Trades Council calling for the labour movement to lead the campaign against the National Front and fascism.

UNEMPLOYED, BUT UNREGISTERED

At least 80,000 jobless youth don't bother to register because they get so fed up with red tape that they don't sign on or claim benefits to which they are entitled.

The problem is worse for black youth.

A spokesman for Brixton employment exchange says: "a significant number of young black unemployed fail to register...with the result that the proportion of them unemployed is officially underestimated by 25%."

"Unemployment among women has been politically underestimated because married and co-habiting (to use the DHSS's discredited term) women are not normally able to claim benefits in their own right—and so many do not register." The report adds that some female unemployment is hidden because it remains socially acceptable for women to stay in the home for apparently domestic reasons.

"Cultural taboos about women working exist in some sections of the Asian community, with the result that "it is clear that non-registration among black women may be particularly high."

The report gives four main reasons why many unemployed do not register, all of which explode the myth of 'Scroungers on the Dole':

- ★ The stigma involved in being unemployed and claiming benefit—a stigma which is deliberately fostered by the Tories and their kept press and media.
- ★ Complicated red tape
- ★ Ignorance of rights and sources of help.

The report says: "Careers teaching in schools is rarely geared to teaching young people about their rights during periods of unemployment." On top of this, we

already know that several times more benefit is left unclaimed every year, compared to the amount claimed fraudulently.

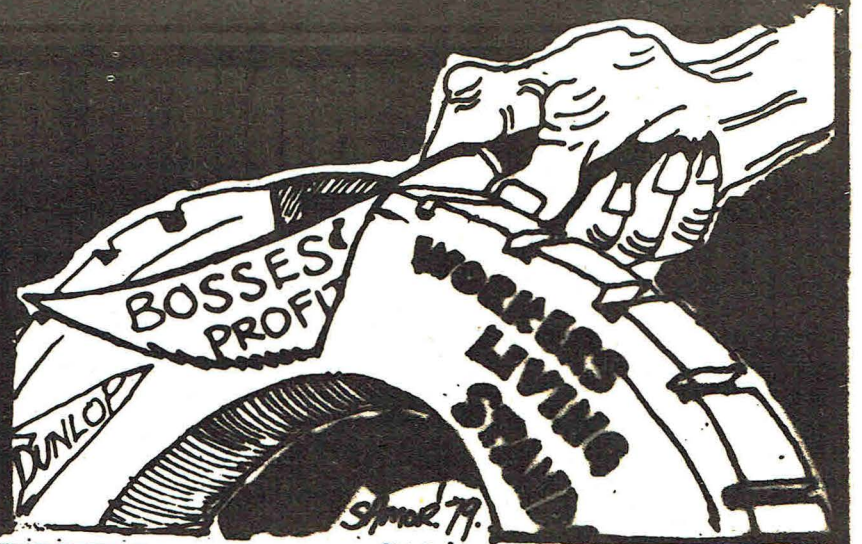
★ Direct and indirect discrimination in employment—particularly against black and women workers, despite all the recent government legislation.

This report not only nails the Tory lies about 'Spongers off the State', but also shows that the government's cosmetic job creation programme is only scratching the surface.

Above all, it shows the hopelessness of the dole queue, a hopelessness which can be summed up by the unregistered unemployed who are so demoralised they do not even bother to claim what they are entitled to.

By Alistair Tice

TYRE INDUSTRY PROFITS VERSUS JOBS



The British disease—that is the wasting away of whole industries under the very noses of those supposed to be responsible for them—is fast becoming an epidemic.

It shows all the usual tragic symptoms; overcapacity, under-investment, natural wastage and now closures and redundancies.

Dunlop is the largest rubber company in Europe, employing 48,000 workers in Britain; more than all the other major companies put together. 11,000 of them used to produce tyres.

Used to, because Dunlop intends to put 3,000 tyre

workers onto the dole. This includes closing down its Speke plant. Dunlop holds the lion's share of the British market, but, in common with most of industry, that market has still not reached its 1973 level.

31.5 million tyres were

By Jeremy Birch

produced before the economy came down with the slump virus. Last year's estimate was 30.5 million tyres.

35-hour week

But what should really concern trade unionists within the industry is that despite the pitifully slow rehabilitation of production, 10,000 fewer workers are now responsible for it than in 1973. That's before Dunlop has even started on the recent batch of redundancies.

The GMWU research de-

partment has calculated that the 8.6% cut in employment in the entire rubber industry, and the extra productivity that has come in its wake, could pay for a reduction in the working week of 3.2 hours. That reduction could then allow for the 1973 jobs level to return.

On this basis a 35-hour week in rubber manufacturing could not only prevent the closure of Dunlop Speke and halt the redundancies at Fort Dunlop and elsewhere, it would even allow the industry to recruit extra labour.

Some measure of the increased productivity of tyre workers, and therefore their extra effort, is that in 1973, 670 tyres were produced per employee; in 1977 this had gone up to 805.

The tyre industry has been hit badly by the general malaise of industry. Not only has car production fallen with the economic crisis, but its major home customers themselves are being left behind by their fitter rivals.

So uncompetitive have the motor manufacturers allowed their industry to become that over half the British car market is taken by imports. Foreign cars clearly run on foreign tyres.

The British tyre industry has its own foreign problems. Dunlop's bosses have shed crocodile tears over cheap imports taking their workers' jobs. The original equipment market—new tyres on new cars—is almost completely dominated by the British tyre firms, but a third of the replacement tyre market is imported.

Where do these tyres come from? Almost half come from the very same British firms but from the plants they have set up abroad.

Multinational

In fact Dunlop is the most multinational of them all. Alone of the major tyre companies it makes more profits, employs more workers and lays out more investment outside of Britain. In 1978 only a third of Dunlop's total investment was in Britain.

Now it has even transferred its financial headquarters to

Switzerland. The GMWU commented that this move was "to bypass UK exchange and industrial policy constraints," and that it "is to be recognised that they are dealing with 'multinationals whose only ultimate consideration is maximising profits.'"

The interests of profit obviously count more to the tyre bosses than the livelihood of their workers or the future of entire areas like Speke. The bosses' answer to the "British disease" is major surgery; to cut out thousands of workers from the body of their industry.

A "necessary" measure from the bosses' viewpoint, but hardly a cure for those losing their jobs.

Ninety per cent of the British tyre market is dominated by just six companies including the tyres they import themselves. A Labour government would not have to waste many words listing these firms, if it drew up a bill to nationalise the tyre industry.

Public ownership and trade union control of investment and planning is a guaranteed remedy to capitalist chaos. Socialist answers are the direction in which tyre workers should be looking.

NO FUN IN THE PARK

Following your report on the Brighton dustmen's dispute with the Tory council ('Militant' 2 March), you may be interested to hear how Brighton council runs its Parks Department especially in the main Preston Park.

The hours are from 8 to 5 with an hour for lunch. In the morning, a twenty minute tea break is allowed, but there is no break in the afternoon. The morning break, however, must be taken on the job.

No one is allowed back to the mess room, exception being made only in the recent freezing weather. Normal cold weather or rain generally doesn't count.

On one occasion when I and another employee were questioned by the supervisor as to why we had taken so long over our break, we were told that we weren't even meant to use the mess room to wash our hands during the break.

In reality, the supervisor claimed, the break was only for liquid refreshment and not for eating, so therefore we didn't need to wash our hands.

Also, he said, the official break was only ten minutes, which was agreed by the union—thirty years ago.

Another incident happened during the annual bowls tournament held in the park. Park employees have to score for the players during this tournament and are expected to do so no matter what the weather. I was scoring for two players who kept on playing through an incredibly hard rain storm. After half an hour I was completely soaked through my protective clothing (which I had to supply myself).

So I walked off mid-game in disgust and told them I was off home. After this incident the council Sports Officer was



Park workers in Nottingham

Photo: MILITANT

heard to say, "If they were in the army they'd have to work in the rain."

Matters came to a head when an employee whose job was solely to clean the toilets and changing rooms in the park retired through ill health.

The management in trying to cut down on jobs refused to replace him. I and two other employees were expected to carry out the duties as well as our normal gardening work, as we were on the lowest grade.

Fortunately we had recently joined NUPE and took the case up with the union (something unheard of in the

Parks Department), and refused to clean the toilets, which had to be closed.

The management were terrified of our action through fear of a precedent being established, and fought to save on one man's wages for two months.

Eventually they lost and employed someone and the workers were shown that the union was their only hope. Since that day, most of the workers have joined.

An ex-employee, Brighton Parks

Unemployed STARTING TO ORGANISE

By Jeff Price

(Chairman, Tyneside branch, Unemployed Workers' Union)

Over a year ago Newcastle Trades Council set up a centre for the unemployed. Despite early set backs the centre is now playing an important role in the fight against unemployment and redundancies on Tyneside.

One of the developments has been the setting up of an unemployed workers' union, which held its first meeting recently. Despite appalling weather conditions, and despite the fact that no buses were running in Newcastle, 15 people turned up.

The main demand in the charter that was drawn up at the meeting was work for the unemployed at decent rates of pay. But if a job could not be supplied then a decent level of benefit should be paid.

Members pointed out that the union should answer the lies of the bosses' press. The unemployed are not scroungers. The demand for the introduction of the 35-hour week was also included in the charter, and an end to excessive overtime.

It was also recognised that many workers had to work

overtime to make up their wages to a decent level, therefore the union supported the demand for a national minimum wage of £65 per week.

A campaign is now being started in Newcastle to have free bus passes for the unemployed and also free use of the sports facilities at the new Eldon Square sports complex in the city centre. We are aware of the weakness of an unemployed workers' union, which has no industrial muscle, where we are scattered and lack support at a national level. At the moment we are trying to get a large General Union to take us in as a section.

Trade unions

We also encourage members who have still retained their union cards to continue to attend their other union meetings as well. We are also working closely with workers who are threatened with redundancies, for example we have arranged a joint meeting with the workers at the

Vickers Scotswood plant, on the proposed closure of the factory.

Enquiries have been coming in from all over the country, and it looks as if many other trades councils will take up this idea of setting up a centre for the unemployed, with a view to the unemployed being organised.

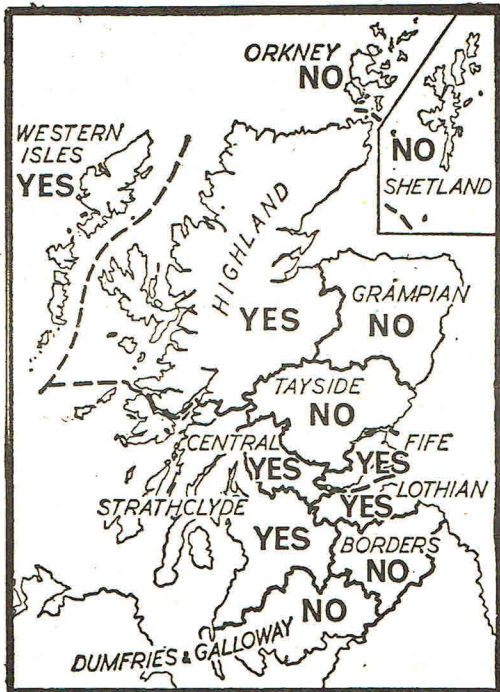
As one of the many leaflets that were handed out at the dole queues pointed out: "One fact of life the trade unions learned at an early age was that if you wanted to get better wages and conditions etc. then you had to organise."

"If the unemployed want a job and a decent level of pay, we have to organise too. On our own we can achieve little, together with the trade unions behind us we can get things done."

Regular weekly meetings have been arranged at the Unemployed Centre, 5 Queens Street, Newcastle on Thursdays at 2.30 pm. The unemployed have been without a voice for too long. Now things are changing.

SCOTLAND The Lessons of the Referendum

By Pat Craven
(Dundee
Labour Party)



Despite the resurgence of national aspirations in Scotland in recent years, the long-awaited referendum produced only a narrow majority for the Assembly proposed in the Labour government's Scotland Act.

With a relatively low turn-out of 62.9%, the 51.6% actually voting Yes made up only 32.5% of the registered electorate—in other words, fell short of the 40% quota written into the Act by Members of Parliament out to block devolution.

The clearest feature of the result was the polarisation on class lines. The highest Yes vote was in the Labour strongholds.

Clearly, outside the industrial areas, many who have voted for the Nationalists in the past returned to the Tory fold in the referendum. Six of the eleven SNP MPs actually represent constituencies in regions which voted No.

The referendum result clearly marks a swing back against nationalism. When it came to the issue, partly as a consequence of the media and the programme of the CBI

and the Tories many Scottish voters who had previously been influenced by nationalist sentiments saw the Assembly as a step towards a separate state with all its disastrous economic consequences, with falls in living standards and a further burden of bureaucracy.

This recoil from the disaster of a separate and independent Wales, Scotland and England was to a large extent a healthy reaction.

While some Labour voters may have abstained as a protest against the government's stance on low pay, many hundreds of thousands in the solid working class areas hardly affected by nationalism in the past, must have voted solidly for the Assembly because of loyalty to Labour. This was the policy which Labour was advocating and therefore they supported it.

The middle class, on the other hand, is by its nature, volatile, swinging between the two powerful, opposing poles: the working class and its organisations, on the one side, and the power of big

business on the other. It was the failure of the labour movement to provide a socialist alternative which led the traditionally conservative, but despairing and frustrated, Scottish middle-class voters to swing to the nationalists. Behind them they drew sections of the more politically backward workers.

But having been warned of the consequences, they have recoiled back to their old loyalties, the Scottish Tories.

The poll was low, but it should be pointed out that hardly a single MP at Westminster has been elected by 40% of the registered electorate in their constituency. It was with the idea of sabotaging the suggested Assembly that this provision was tacked on to the Act by Labour opponents, supported by the Conservatives.

The main propaganda of the No campaigners was to create the impression that all the unpopular features of Labour's record in office would be inherited by the Scottish Assembly. Their scare stories about higher taxes and more bureaucracy were carefully tailored to appeal to middle-class fears.

Although there is a certain grain of truth in them, the reorganisation of local government by the Tories had the same effect. It provided more luscious fields of 'jobs for the boys'. This is inevitable in any capitalist structure.

There was a marked contrast between this demagogic talk about the costs and irrelevance of the Assembly from the political wing of the capitalists in the Tory Party (and their echoes in the "Labour Vote No" campaign), and the arguments put forward by the direct representatives of big business, which betrayed one of the main reasons for the massive campaign waged against devolution by the ruling class.

For them, the great fear was that the Assembly could be controlled by a leftward-

moving Labour Party at a time when, nationally, a Tory government would be carrying out austerity measures to cut workers' living standards. It could then become a weapon to spearhead opposition to the government, not just in Scotland but throughout Britain.

Alternatively, if Labour should fail to seize the opportunity which the Assembly would provide, they feared a new upsurge of nationalism might lead to an SNP majority and the possible break-up of the United Kingdom in the future. This is the well-known "slippery slope" argument.

They were recently assisted in this argument by the role of the SNP in the Yes campaign who quite blatantly made it clear that they did indeed only support the Assembly as a stepping stone to their idea of an 'independent' capitalist Scotland.

Their total lack of any political programme to give an indication of just what kind of Scotland they envisage must have created suspicion among many workers that by voting Yes they might be assisting these unprincipled political careerists. In reality, they could not have produced such a programme because of the fundamental divergence between the businessmen and lower middle-class and politically backward working class people to whom they are mainly trying to appeal.

The Yes campaign was further weakened by the scandalous role played by the Communist Party, who deliberately set out to obscure the Tory nature of the Nationalists by forming an unprincipled alliance with them and even condemning the Labour Party for "sectarianism" because they quite rightly refused to identify themselves in any way with the SNP throughout the campaign.

Another important reason for the low Yes vote was the

kind of campaign waged by the Labour leaders in the referendum campaign itself. The Assembly was presented simply as a means of "bringing decision-making nearer the people" and "giving Scots more say over their own affairs."

It is true that the Assembly would have represented a step forward democratically, and as such demanded the support of the labour movement. But that should not have been the main plank of Labour's appeal—what workers wanted to know was what Labour was going to achieve through the Assembly, what practical measures was it going to take to solve Scotland's deep-seated problems of unemployment, bad housing and low standards of living, and to improve the lives of working people.

It was undoubtedly the silence on these questions that enabled the more radical wing of the "Labour Vote No" campaign to gain some credibility for their argument that



The SNP's campaign was totally u

The Labour leaders were of course tied hand and foot by the limitations which they themselves imposed on the powers of the Assembly. They could not make any clear promises as to what they would have used the Assembly to achieve, because it would have still been financially dependent on the Westminster government and would have had very few powers over the crucial areas of the economy and industry.

One of the No arguments was that it was precisely the lack of these powers which would have led to the

The Rise and Fall of Nationalist Support in Scotland

	1959	1964	1966	1970	Feb 1974	Oct 1974	Oct 1975	Jan 1976*	Jan 1977*	Oct 1978*	Early '79	F '79
SNP	0.8	2.4	5.0	11.4	21.9	30.4	26	36	30	19	20	11
CON	47.2	40.6	37.7	38.0	32.9	24.7	30	27	28	27	31	3
LAB	46.7	48.7	49.9	44.5	36.6	36.3	39	33**	33**	48**	45**	4
LIB	4.1	7.6	6.8	5.5	8.0	8.3	4	3	6	1	2	4

* System Three Scotland Voting Intention Poll
** Excluding Scottish Labour Party

the Assembly was "irrelevant" to the struggle for socialism. In a sense this argument is correct but it does not take into account the question of nationalism. While opposing narrow nationalistic ideas, socialists have always recognised democratic national aspirations and championed the rights of nations to self-determination.

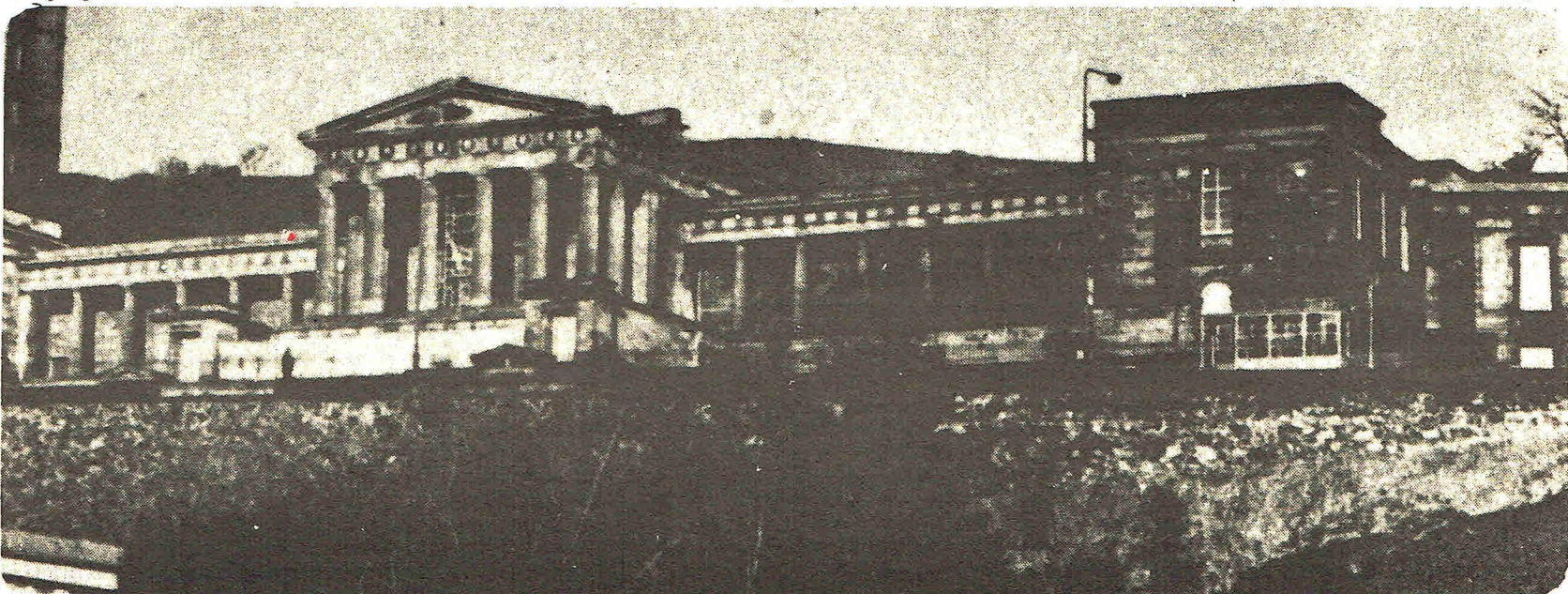
It was only the Labour Party Young Socialists who attempted to show how the Assembly could be made relevant to the struggle for socialism by putting forward a programme of measures such as a 35-hour week and a guaranteed minimum wage.

frustration of the expectations which were being placed on the Assembly by the workers, and to an inevitable move to extend its powers into these fields.

For the moguls of big business, the one thing they dreaded was that a Labour Assembly should have the power to "interfere" with "their" industry. One leading industrialist in a TV debate actually blurted out what they no doubt all thought in private—that they didn't want politicians meddling with the men in industry who are running the country! They are not simply anti-devolution, but anti-democratic through and through.

An Assembly need not be a diversion from the struggles being waged on jobs, wages and prices, but could be an important part of those struggles, an additional forum in which to carry on the fight to transform society. Posed in this way by the Labour leaders, it would have spelt death to both the SNP who could not possibly put forward any viable alternative to a socialist programme for Scotland, and the defeatists of the "Labour Vote No" campaign.

If, however, Parliament now ditches the Scotland Act, on the basis of the iniquitous argument that the Yes vote didn't reach 40 per cent, or that the majority was too small, then nationalism will have been given a powerful boost.



The planned meeting place for the Scottish Assembly. Will it be unused?

IRAN

KHOMEINI TRIES TO HINDER REVOLUTION, AS PRESSURE FROM WORKERS GROWS

With the downfall of the Shah, Iranian society has been shaken to its foundations. All the social and political contradictions repressed under the old order have now come to the surface. The repression of women, the denial of national rights to the Kurds, Baluchis and other nationalities who comprise 50% of the old Empire.

It is less than six weeks since the workers rose to defeat the attempted counter-revolution of the Imperial Guard. The army remains, but is only a skeleton of its former self. Bazargan is desperately trying to recreate a stable capitalist state machine. But effective power rests with the Revolutionary Islamic Committees, who are under enormous pressure from the working class. Khomeini attempts to perform a balancing act between this pressure and his creation, the Bazargan government.

In this, the first of a series of articles, our correspondent, recently in Tehran, reports on the new power in Iran, the Revolutionary Committees, and the workers' movement.

Bazargan's government has, at this stage, no real forces of its own. It has no way in which it can enforce its decisions. Bazargan is clearly striving to preserve capitalism and to rebuild the capitalist state machine in Iran, but is finding this exceptionally difficult. The real power is in the hands of Khomeini's committee and the militia which it controls.

The main work of Bazargan has been directed towards trying to rebuild the armed forces and police, with little success. Many soldiers are refusing to return to their barracks, and many of those who have reported back are only being asked to sign on once a day.

The armed forces are in complete turmoil. There has been enormous opposition to the appointment of senior officers from the Shah's regime to leading commands in what is now the Iranian National Islamic Army.

In the first two weeks of Bazargan's government, there were four different Air Force commanders and two heads of the Gendarmerie appointed. In addition, there has been a struggle put up by serving conscripts that they should only have to serve one

year in the armed forces, as will be the case with all new conscripts.

This has meant that in spite of the hostility between them, Bazargan, who was appointed by Khomeini to be prime minister, has been forced to rely on Khomeini in order to carry out any measures whatsoever. This has been most clearly seen in the question of cabinet decisions and the re-opening of police stations.

All cabinet decisions are being sent to Khomeini's Central Revolutionary Islamic Committee for final approval before being enacted. In the same way, the cabinet has no real choice but to rubber stamp any decisions of Khomeini's committee, like its ban on the importation of frozen meat and the appointment of a new Public Prosecutor—"on the orders of the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini" (Iranian News Agency 4 March).

Islamic Militia

Over the past few weeks, steady progress has been made in the re-opening of the police stations burnt and closed down during the insurrection. But even where the police stations have been re-opened and new police commanders appointed, the



A member of the Fedayeen guerrilla movement addressing an anti-Bazargan mass rally held recently at Tehran University

police are still generally unarmed and only operate in conjunction with the local Revolutionary Islamic Committees and their militias.

Whenever the police go out on a call, they are always with armed members of Khomeini's militia, which is now being re-organised by both the government and Khomeini into a Revolutionary Islamic Guard designed to back up the police.

The Revolutionary Islamic Committees are entirely unelected bodies, generally consisting of a number of mullahs (priests) based in a local mosque who enforce their decisions with the local Islamic militia. Because of the absence of any conscious working class leadership, political power has in many senses passed to the Muslim clergy.

In many districts, especially the more outlying ones, the clergy have been able to establish complete control. For instance, in Knorramshahr it was the local leading priest, Ayatollah Shobeir Khagani, who personally appointed the new chief of the Police Department. In the outlying districts, too, the clergy have started trying to impose the old Muslim punishments of amputations for stealing and whippings for drinking, gambling and adultery.

Khomeini's Central Revolutionary Islamic Committee keeps a strong grip on the local committees by appointing, and where necessary dismissing, members and their chairmen. The main rôle of the local committees is keeping 'law and order' and where 'propaganda against the Islamic revolution' is observed in the form of tapes, periodicals and so forth by individuals or groups, the committees are 'obliged to take action after full consultation with the local clergy.' Already, Muslim fanatics

have begun harassing the liberal Tehran papers, some small leftist groups have had their publications seized or premises attacked and the new TV and radio director, Sadeq Qotbazadeh, is enforcing censorship against the left.

The TV, for instance, did not report the March 10 march against enforced wearing of the veil until Sunday, because "showing the film on Saturday would only have led to more confusion and chaos over the veil issue."

Qotbazadeh has generously said that leftist political parties will be given four minutes each to introduce themselves on TV, as a sop to those protesting against the new censorship of those opposed to or critical of Bazargan or Khomeini.

speeches were seen as the only calls for freedom, equality and the overthrow of the dictatorship, unlike those of the National Front leaders who all along were prepared to compromise with the Shah in return for a "constitutional monarchy". At the same time, however, this support was not for the reactionary ideas of the priests. Increasingly, the mullahs are facing opposition to their efforts to turn back the clock to the Middle Ages.

Khomeini himself, despite the enormous popularity which he currently enjoys, has been under continual pressure since he returned from Paris. In spite of his rigid position during the last year that the Shah would have to go, Khomeini has on other issues often been forced to

Speaking on 17th February this year, Khomeini said that the main task of Bazargan's Provisional government "was to hold elections for a Constituent Assembly which would organise a referendum on Iran's political future."

But on 24th February the government, with Khomeini's backing, announced that the referendum would be held as soon as possible and before the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Five days later, it was announced that the only question on the ballot paper would be approval of the creation of an Islamic Republic. Two days before this announcement, the Information Minister Naser Minachi said that the draft Constitutional Law of the Islamic republic had already been written—though up to the present it has not been published—and "handed over to the Ayatollah Khomeini."

The reason behind these frantic moves has been Khomeini's fear of losing his position. The election of a Constituent Assembly would hasten the development of political parties and struggles, especially as the working class has thrust forward with its own demands. Already aware of the growth of class conflicts in industry and unrest in the countryside that is undermining his support, Khomeini, backed by Bazargan, has converted the constitutional referendum into a coincidence vote and ratification of his policies.

Confident of winning an enormous majority in the referendum, Khomeini hopes that this will strengthen his position against the growing working class movement.

Already, both Khomeini and the government have been campaigning, under the banner of Islamic nationalism, against the spread of socialism among the working class. In Abadan, an estimated 40% of oil field production and maintenance work-



'The revolution moves on'—from a West German newspaper

The strength of the clergy in the major centres does not entirely rest on the grip which religion still has over large numbers of Iranians. It is also because during the struggle against the Shah the priests'

retreat. Throughout last year Khomeini called for the election of a Constituent Assembly to decide upon Iran's new form of government after the overthrow of the Shah.

ers support socialist ideas.

On leaving Tehran for the religious centre of Qom, Khomeini urged workers to ignore people who enter their factories with "attractive slogans...Those people who

SRI LANKA

go among our workers...are mercenaries of those who used to serve the deposed king. Therefore it is the duty of our workers to bar such elements from their own circles."

This attack on the left was 'balanced' with a call on the government to cancel the past six months' water and power bills for "low-income people". Khomeini has been quite consistent in opposing the left. On hearing that some workers wanted to continue the general strike until their political demands had been met Khomeini said these "people are traitors. We should smash them in the mouth."

In spite of Khomeini's influence, however, the past weeks have seen a growing development of the workers' movement in Iran. In many factories workers' committees or trade unions are being formed, and the workers are drawing up a list of demands. These demands generally include back pay for the period of the general strike; payment of the Iranian New Year bonus (due on 20th March); reinstatement of sacked workers; replacement of the old management.

The attempts of Khomeini supporters to hinder these developments have already led to clashes such as one at the Iran National car assembly plant between those supporting the old bosses and workers wanting to elect new managers. The plant was closed down for two weeks and the local Revolutionary Islamic Committee arrested a number of workers who the bosses said were 'trouble-makers'.

Assistant Prime Minister Amir Entezam complained at the end of February that "none of the country's factories were functioning at

present because workers were holding continual political meetings. The 'back to work' orders issued by Ayatollah Khomeini and Premier Bazargan were not being obeyed by left-wing workers who were demanding to elect their own managers and refusing to accept government appointments."

Absence of mass workers' party

It has been in this situation of a developing working class movement that Bazargan, despite the capitalists' alarm at some of the mullahs' utopian ideas, has been forced to lean on Khomeini's Central Revolutionary Islamic Committee for support as the government has no forces of its own. This is the reason why, in spite of the attacks by Bazargan and other cabinet ministers on the unrestricted power of the Revolutionary Islamic Committees, the government works with Khomeini and seeks to integrate his forces into the state machine.

Bazargan and company obviously hope that in this way they can also seek to control Khomeini and his militia. But in reality, if there was any clash between the two in the near future, Bazargan would have no forces whatsoever to rely upon.

Bazargan's government, like Khomeini, has been forced time and time again to alter its policies under pressure from the working class. At first it said that no Now Ruz (new year) bonus would be paid; then it was forced to reverse its policies. Similarly, the government has been forced to do an about-turn over whether serving conscripts should complete two years in the armed forces.

It is this growing pressure



Bazargan in office, but power lies elsewhere

of the working class which is the key to the future development of the Iranian revolution. At the present time, while many workers are organising in the factories, refineries and other workplaces and beginning to challenge the bosses' right to manage, there has not yet been the emergence of the working class acting with its own conscious political aims on the political arena.

The pressure of the working class is felt everywhere. It affects every move of Kho-

meini and Bazargan, but the absence, at present, of an independent, mass workers' party and mass trade unions means that no clear alternative is posed to either Bazargan's attempts to save capitalism and rebuild the capitalist state, or to Khomeini's mixture of utopian and reactionary policies.

The key question facing the Iranian revolution is now the creation of a mass workers' party with a socialist programme which will be independent of both Bazargan

and Khomeini. The largest left forces in Iran at the moment, the 'Communist' Tudeh Party, the 'Marxist' Fedayeen Khalq guerrillas, and the Islamic Mojahedin guerrillas, do not pursue an independent policy. They all seek to link themselves up with Khomeini, in spite of the clergy's attempts to hold back the development of an independent workers' movement.

Iran is in a profound crisis. Over a quarter of the working population, it is estimated, 3 to 3.5 million, is unemployed. Many of the factories recently developed to assemble or package imports from outside (ranging from cars, TVs, to butter) have shut down, both because of shortages of supplies and because Khomeini is demanding an end to such assembly industries and the development of independent Iranian-based production.

In spite of statements like those of the new Central Bank governor, Mohammad Ali Mowlavi, that there will be no nationalisation of the banks and that "free competition" would be encouraged as a means of strengthening the private sector, no capitalist will make new investments in Iran until the situation is under the control of a stable capitalist government.

Many of the Iranian capitalists have either left the country or are planning to run away when they are allowed to leave.

Only through the working class consciously taking over the running of the country and carrying out the nationalisation, under democratic control and management, of the major companies can Iran's resources be used in the interests of the Iranian masses. But the implementation of such a policy requires the building of an Iranian working class movement with

a clear socialist programme.

This is the task which has to be begun today around a programme of both political and social demands: A programme which counterposes democratically elected workers' committees to the unelected Revolutionary Islamic Committees and to Bazargan's attempts to rebuild the capitalist state machine; a policy which takes up the questions of a five-day, 40-hour week, a minimum wage, the rights of women, and of a socialist plan of production.

Such a movement would pose the alternative of a socialist Iran to the cloudy Islamic ideas of Khomeini and the capitalist schemes of Bazargan.

National Question

The recent clashes in Kurdistan, moreover, have emphasised again that the national question is a vital issue in Iran. Only half the population of Iran is actually Iranian, and for the working class movement a correct national policy is essential if it is to avoid the division of the working class on national lines.

The right of the different nationalities to self-determination has to be supported, while at the same time fighting for a united struggle for a socialist Iran which would grant full democratic rights of autonomy to all the different nationalities within its borders.

Only the emergence of a strong working class movement capable of taking power can stop Iran sliding into chaos, firmly win the democratic rights for which the masses struggled against the Shah, and prevent the victory of counter-revolution in the future.

WORKERS ATTACKED AS RAILWAY UNION SUPPORTS

Just over a year ago the main working class party in Sri Lanka, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party [LSSP], elected a Marxist leadership. They rejected the old leadership's policy of participation in the former coalition government headed by the SLFP, a capitalist party. This had led to the loss of every one of the 19 seats of the LSSP and 6 of the Communist Party in the election.

This disaster resulted in the development of the majority of the LSSP moving over to the Marxist opposition.

The new LSSP leadership called for the working class to mobilise against the vicious attacks of the Jayawardene big business government.

The old leadership of the LSSP had the support of many workers but had proved incapable of mounting such a counter-attack. The old guard did not accept the verdict of the mass of the rank

and file of the LSSP and expelled 80% of the membership. Some of their supporters have also resorted to thuggery.

'Militant' has received the following report from Sri Lanka on what happened when the Railway Workers' Union Conference supported the new leadership of the LSSP.

"On the 26th of February the Conference of the Railway Workers Union was disrupted by 25 intruders supporting the old leadership of the LSSP.

These intruders had been picketing outside the conference hall, with placards made

MARXIST PARTY



Bank employees in strike action last year in Sri Lanka

of iron bars. When they heard that the Conference had voted to support the new leadership of the LSSP, they broke into the hall and started attacking delegates. They were defeated and the Conference continued in a different hall, until the police came and abruptly closed the meeting.

But the cost of the disruption had been severe: one dead, one critically injured and five badly injured. Four of the seven were railway leaders who had been in

favour of the revolutionary resolution of support for the new LSSP leadership. They included Comrade VE Perera, one of the leaders of the railway strike which had brought down the semi-Bonapartist regime of Sirima Bandaranaike.

However the most tragic aspect of this ignominious act concerns the death of the harbour worker, Piyadasa. He died of a knife injury received in the course of the battle. Piyadasa was a dedi-

Vickramabahu,
General Secretary
of the

Lanka Sama
Samaja Party
in Sri Lanka

cated member of the LSSP, who remained faithful to the old leadership and was prepared to sacrifice his life for what he thought was the cause of revolution!

He was secretary of the Kirilapana branch [a working class area] of the LSSP [old leadership]. He was not a corrupt element who got personal benefits during the Coalition government.

Perhaps the only benefit he got from the party was the hut in which he lived with his family. He was one of the squatters who forcibly built huts in state land some time back. It was the LSSP which defended them and thwarted all attempts to eject them.

He remained loyal to the 'party' not understanding the meaning of the subsequent split and by that give his life for the sake of opportunist leaders who were trying to keep control of unions which have rejected their leaders and policies.

The plight of the other intruder who got injured is no better. He was an ex-hospital worker, and a loyal supporter of the old leadership. Again not a careerist

who benefitted from coalition politics.

This episode revealed two things: Firstly it shows the extent of the degeneration of the ex-Trotskyist leadership of the LSSP. At this moment when Jayawardene is preparing to muzzle the trade union movement, these leaders in their own way are taking steps which would destroy trade unions going out of their control. In this way they have become the left-wing prop of the Bonapartist regime. Secondly this shows very clearly that there is still an appreciable section of the working class loyal to the old leadership of the LSSP. Not only backward inert sections but also militant self-sacrificing elements. This indicates how the class will turn towards its established leadership over and over again before it finally abandons them for a new radical leadership.

In spite of this and all the howling of sectarians, what lies ahead in Sri Lanka is the need for a period of patient united front activity of all workers' organisations directed at the class enemy.

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

LETTERS

Should we stop student casuals?

Dear Comrades

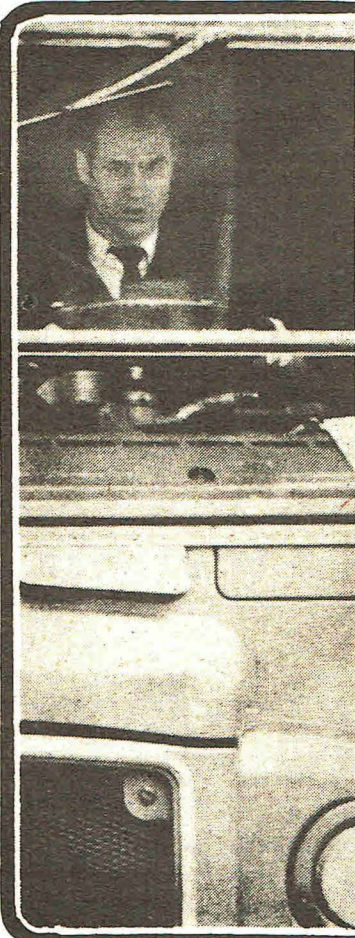
At a ward meeting of the Labour Party a new member raised a difficult question. I said I'd write to 'Militant' to see if discussion in the paper would shed light.

The comrade is a union branch secretary in a factory which regularly takes on casual workers during the summer.

Traditionally a great many of these workers are students but there has been a move by the union to bar students and insist that all employees come from the registered unemployed. However, this will discriminate against working class students who have to work during the summer.

Which policy would other readers of the paper consider correct?

Yours fraternally
Felicity Dowling



Waiting for the bus that never comes

Dear Comrades

London bus services are getting worse and worse. I went from Catford to Penge to see the new year in, and on New Year's Day waited three hours for a bus, before giving up. In fact, I would have had to wait about three weeks for the next 75!

Firstly, it was said that anti-freeze was not put in the buses. London Transport played this down, but a bus worker confirmed that a divisional engineer had ordered the anti-anti-freeze policy as a penny-pinching exercise, and that no action had been taken against him.

My suspicions were aroused when my workmates who used another bus told me that that route was out of service also.

Both are one-man operated.

From radio reports and busworkers I have concluded that the routes with the worst breakdown records are those with the newest buses. I am told that the new

"metropolitan" buses are the worst of all.

The main composite on transport at the London Labour Party conference called for an inquiry and an integrated transport system controlled by the users of public transport, those who work in the industry, and by local authorities. If such a programme was carried out, it would reverse the cuts and blunders. Are London bus drivers content to drive buses which are unserviceable?

If British Leyland itself was brought under workers' control, this would encourage the building of buses that were fit for the job, and factory closures like that at Southall would end. The Tory GLC and Labour government encourage slashing and penny-pinching, but not a reliable public transport system.

Fraternally
Peter Redfarn
East Lewisham Labour Party

SIR HAROLD ON THE PICKET LINE

Dear Comrade

It seems there's no end to the line of ex-members of our movement queuing up to condemn trade unionists who are fighting for a living wage.

One such is Sir Harold Wilson, whose recent remarks buried deep inside 'Financial Weekly', will anger any trade unionist.

"Secondary picketing has been assiduously developed to the point where it has changed the potentiality for aggression as much as the torpedo changed naval warfare.

"Mrs Thatcher, for her part, I have to admit, has

scored, however much I regard some of the policies she advocates as **misdirected**. (My emphasis)

"My experience suggests that only strong trade union leadership—not enforceable legislation—is the way to control the situation, though the police have the right, and the duty, to intervene more than they seem to have been doing."

This from the leader who, in 1964, spoke of wanting "a Britain whose motivation is not private profit...a responsible Britain based on public service, not a commercialised society where everything has

its price." Two months of struggle has taught the public sector workers what price the ruling class put on them.

Any trade unionist knows that solidarity action such as flying picketing has been a tradition of struggle for over sixty years. Now, amid the hysteria of the press, the bosses want to take those traditions away and comments like Sir Harold's can only help them.

But perhaps the real lesson comes from the comment that "the invocation of trade union power has passed from the leaders to shop stewards and shop-floor power." Echoing

the bosses, Sir Harold seems to see 'control' of the working class slipping from the hands of the right wing trade union leaders.

This trend can only be for the good: the shop stewards' movement reflects democratically the real anger of the

rank and file at today's falling living standards. Maybe Sir Harold got his Knighthood just in time!

Yours fraternally
Jim Hooker
Handsworth (Birmingham)
Labour Party

McMillan broadcast—comedy or lies?

Dear Comrades

Did you see the ten minute comedian show on behalf of the capitalist party, the Tories? There were all the old fogies, including McMillan.

He was saying how it was a great loss to the UK to 'lose' the Cape Horn. He also talked about Tory fair play—does he mean exploiting and killing slave labour for the advantage of the capitalists in Britain and other countries?

Or that we were helping them by "sending in one or two battalions in Africa" for so-called defence? Defence of what? The working class or the British imperialists?

It is obvious who, just by looking where the profits went. It did not go to the starving mass of that time, but to the bosses, i.e. the Tories.

McMillan also said that in the thirteen years of Tory government inflation was steady at 2½%. What he never said was that before the Tories were rejected by the working class in 1974 and a Labour government put into office the inflation rate was 26%.

Wonder why he did not put this in his speech? Did he forget?

Yours fraternally
David Partington
Deptford LPYS

Tories take over Labour Club

Dear Comrades

The Annual General Meeting of the Aston University Labour Club was held on the evening of Tuesday 13th March 1979. The Conservative Society organised a sizeable number of its members to join the Labour Club at the meeting (this in itself is entirely legitimate since the Students' Union constitution allows any student to join any student society), sufficient to outnumber the Labour students present.

They then proceeded to

oust the Labour students from office, elect Tory students in their place, and to disaffiliate the club from the National Organisation of Labour Students.

We consider this calculated attempt to destroy the Labour Club to be childish, corrupt, and an abominable attack upon political and democratic freedom worthy of the worst excesses of Nazism. Moreover it is a vicious insult to the great majority of Conservatives who believe in a democratic society.

Alan Watson [NOLS National Committee] comments:

It is absolutely scandalous that a Labour Club should be sabotaged by the Tories or other right-wing organisations. 'Militant' supporters will certainly condemn this take-over at Aston and, if possible, help in restoring control of the Club to students committed to the Labour Party.

'Militant' supporters in NOLS have always campaigned for a constitution and rules that would guarantee the maximum internal democracy—and at the same time protect Clubs from coups organised by the enemies of the labour movement.

Unfortunately, this is in contrast to the approach of the 'Clause 4' group which now controls NOLS. Since gaining a majority, they have step by step amended the rules to cut down on internal democracy and assure themselves a built-in majority.

While arbitrarily disaffiliating Clubs or disallowing delegates whom they thought to be opposed to 'Clause 4', they have—where it suited them—always encouraged the practice of students being allowed to join a Club and being immediately eligible to vote in important elections.

In the past, 'Clause 4' supporters have regrettably been all too

ready to rely on Liberals, Tories, Rugby Clubbers, Communist Party members, Epicureans, or whoever they could gang up with to 'pack' Labour Club meetings and secure themselves a majority and vote down the opposition.

We have always opposed this. Labour Clubs should reflect their active membership and democratic safeguards are vital to prevent 'packing' and take-overs.

We hope that control of Aston ULC will return to genuine NOLS supporters. After this experience, Aston ULC's officers should call on the NOLS leadership to end the practice of packing meetings.

Dear Comrades

Christopher Pole-Carew, managing director of the 'Nottingham Evening Post', is about to be confirmed as the new High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire.

The High Sheriff, constitutionally, is the chief officer of the crown, in a county or shire, charged with the keeping of the peace, administering of justice under the direction of the courts, executing writs by deputy, and so on.

Mr Pole-Carew is the mouthpiece of T Bailey Forman Ltd, proprietors of the 'Nottingham Evening Post', who recently sacked 28 NUJ members for obeying the NUJ national strike call.

He was quoted in 'The Guardian' and in a TV programme as saying: "When I sack someone they stay sacked," and as insisting "grimly" that "the police will do their duty" at the weekly mass picket outside the 'NEP' offices. (There have been at least 14 arrests so far—including one 'Militant' supporter.) Police have outnumbered pickets by about 400 to

100 at these demonstrations.

Anyone who has been on the 'NEP' picket line, and seen the heavy over-reaction of the police with the watchful approval of Mr Pole-Carew (salary £17,000 plus extras—'The Guardian') and his paymasters, will wonder whether Mr Pole-Carew is in fact the ideal choice for the position of chief officer of the crown, charged with keeping the peace, administering justice under the direction of the courts...etc.

The posts of High Sheriff, Lord Lieutenant of the County, and so on, are often dismissed as mere sinecures. Don't be so sure!

Remember the Governor-General of Australia, dismissed by unthinking liberals until he dismissed the legitimately elected Labour government! And by the way, the office of High Sheriff, constitutionally, is held to be responsible for the maintenance of law and order in times of civil unrest...

Yours fraternally
Chris Knight

THE HIGH SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM RIDES AGAIN

GIVE US A GOLDEN HANDSHAKE

Some people have been going 'a bit too far' lately in their efforts to get a bigger slice of the cake. For once, the press are not referring to workers taking industrial action but to certain 'top people' letting the side down—in South Africa with the Muldergate scandal. Now one of the top men in "Europe"—Hans Nord—is overstepping the mark.

He's looking for a golden handshake for making the sacrifice of leaving his £50,000 job as Secretary General of the European Parliament to get into the same body as an MP at £15,000 a year [plus a few expenses!] After such a cut in income he must be having nightmares about being forced to go to the meat and butter mountains to beg for food and the wine lakes to quench his thirst!

Even with the extra £150,000 it is rumoured he will get he says, "I will be no richer than I am now!" ("Very nice if you can get it!" says the 'Observer'.)

It would take a hospital worker or council manual worker 60 years to earn that kind of money, even after their recent heroic struggles for a bigger slice of the cake! To get Nord's 'normal' salary, it would take 20 years and even to get an MP's 'basic', nearly 8 years!

That's the sort of thing that made NUPE Branch Secretary Dick Hackett (Bir-

THIS WEEK'S TOTAL: £1,346.67

tingham) determined to make a donation to the 'Militant', because it campaigns so vigorously against the scandal of low pay. That, and the fact that 'Militant's' fighting fund isn't going to get as much as Nord's present salary in a year, at the present rate, let alone the full £85,000 it is aiming for and urgently needs.

He seems to have gone to drastic lengths in actually selling his house to get £100 extra to give to the 'Militant'!

What can you do to make up that missing £11,000 in two weeks? Follow his example? Or some of these others in this week's mail: i.e. printworkers in Strathclyde giving £20, Liverpool NGA 'Militant' supporters £10, POEU members in the same city—an excellent £85!

Readers at a discussion group in Wakefield—in appreciation of a Marxist explanation of inflation—gave

Build Militant

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 13 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	1,175		459
Hants & IOW	3,100	775		296
Humberside	2,000	500		217
London North	9,500	2,375		876
London South	3,900	975		627
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	1,125		666
Merseyside	5,000	1,250		623
Midlands East	3,300	825		912
Midlands West	9,000	2,250		1,269
Northern	5,500	1,375		684
Scotland East	2,900	725		182
Scotland West	4,500	1,125		237
South East	4,500	1,125		619
South West	3,100	775		469
Wales East	2,600	650		150
Wales West	3,400	850		301
Yorkshire	6,800	1,700		920
Others	6,700	1,675		264
Total	85,000	21,250		9,771

Progress towards year's target Towards April 7th target

TARGET FOR THE YEAR £85,000 - TARGET FOR APRIL 7th £21,250.

£10.20. Those at a similar meeting in Bracknell—£16.10.

Labour Party members at the North West Regional Annual Conference contributed over £78 including a 'tenner' and a 'fiver' or two. The 'Militant' meeting at the SW Regional LP conference attracted £15.43 to our funds, and a public meeting in the East Midlands meant £24.11 this week (and £10 in IOUs to follow).

The big donations that have reached us include £40 from R Hinde of Wakefield and another £40 from T Warby (Derby), £13 from a reader in Exeter and £16.80 from W Coombes of Bristol SE LP Young Socialists.

The small donations like 30p from S Kaplan of Rother Valley LPYS and the 70p from P Goff (Wandsworth LA workers' strike committee treasurer) are just as welcome. Look how small amounts add up! Pennies collected in a Cardiff jar this year have already made up £9.50 and B Faulkes (Hackney) has collected £7.10 in his rattling tin. A 'Militant' seller at Cammell Lairds shipyard

sent £1.05 'extras' last week and 68p was last week's 'takings' (for the 'Militant') at Landers Bakery, Nottingham.

Anyone who promises to pay £1 a week knows how much that mounts up! S Brown of the Hackney Branch of the PNP gave us 4 weeks' worth last week and M Hindley had to part with £10 to cover the first 10 weeks of the 1979 fund drive...very willingly, of course! Two Ipswich supporters gave similar amounts (one £10, one £11) and a member of the GMWU in Liverpool also gave £10.

'Fiver' donors included G Hensby (Sec, Paddington No 1 NUR branch), E Hill (Rotherham NALGO), and R Hartill (Bristol S LPYS). P Cammack of Oxford gave £5.75.

Some of those who gave £1 were: J Fyles of Dewsbury LP, D Partington (Deptford YS), S Stone (Brum), L Gauntlett (Ruislip YS), M Renwick (Liverpool), O Guy (Dorset), D and L Clark (Gosport LP), N Bond (Ditto) and A Glossop (Sheffield AUEW).

P Chipperfield of Chester-le-Street LPYS added 10p to

the £1, A Littlefair of the same LPYS gave £1.67, 'Nick and Mary' of Coventry £1.86, G Cowley (Rotherham NUT) £1.55 and S Marchini (London, EETPU) £1.75.

M Rogers (Convenor, Bowaters, S London) stretched to £2.02 for the 'Militant', A Griffiths of Liverpool gave £2 as did Mr and Mrs Wobey—as regularly as clockwork, every week! That's the way to build the 'Militant'!

Supporters in Bracknell found another way—holding a 'Golden Oldie' party which raised £36 (more details, please!). Oxford supporters held a jumble sale to raise £44 and Wakefield supporters ran a '50 Club' (draw) which made £24.80.

£7 was raised at a social for the S Wales Regional LPYS Conference delegates and visitors, £10.80 on the recent Manchester YCAU march, £2 was collected at Aberystwyth LPYS £1.22 at Gosport YS, and an excellent £14 among members of Gloucester LP Youth.

Another YS member—M Starr of Bristol, gave £3. A similar amount came from J Adefowera (Tooting) and C

Butcher of Cambridge (along with smaller donations from C Widdows and S Watts).

Many thanks to every contributor! If we don't mention all of them it is simply for lack of space, not "secrecy"! There were hundreds this week totalling £1,346.67—every one of them 'open and above board' and the life-blood of a workers' paper.

Only by you the readers helping step up the fight against capitalism and bureaucracy can you help eradicate the scandals and corruption that go with them. You must go as far as you possibly can this coming week to get cash for the 'Militant'. The closing date for the first quarter's donations and pledges is April 7th—the weekend before Easter.

Get your grey line as far as you possibly can towards the end of the chart by an all-out effort now! £21,250 by April 7th—nice, if you can get it!

Clare Doyle

ads

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

GREETINGS IN MILITANT Welcome LPYS National Conference 1979

Closing date for copy:
Tuesday 3rd April
May Day: Greet the
international labour movement
Closing date for copy:
Tuesday 17th April

Rates: Semi-display: 6 column centimetres (25 words maximum)—£4; 3 column centimetres (15 words maximum)—£2. Display: one-sixteenth page—£7; one-eighth page—£14

MILITANT Northern Camp
May 25-28 (Bank Holiday)
Programme of discussion:
Marxist Economics; Historical
Materialism; Marxism and the
trade unions; Perspectives for
Britain; an international topic.
Cost: £7, cheques payable to
'Militant Northern Camp'. For
further details contact: Richard
Knights, 3 Olive Mount Villas,
Liverpool 15. Tel: 051-722 0928

BASILDON Militant Public Meeting 'Low Pay Scandal'
Speakers: Dave Smith (NUPE Divisional Officer, West Essex) Bob Edwards (Harlow Labour Party) 8.00 pm, Wednesday 4th April at the Plough and Tractor, Great Knightleys, off Laindon Link, Basildon

LEICESTER Militant Industrial Forum 'New Technology—do workers benefit?' Speaker: Gary Freeman (Nottingham LPYS) at the Globe Inn, off High Street, Leicester. 7.30 pm, Friday 6th April

BRISTOL Public Meeting
'What the 'Militant' stands for'.
Speaker: Bill Mullins (T&GWU senior steward, Rover, Solihull) At the Jolly Sailor, Hanham, Friday 30 March 7.30 pm

GLASGOW Militant Readers Meeting: 'Which Way for Public Sector Workers?' Hear: Ronnie Stevenson (Convenor of shop stewards' committee, social work department) and Bob Wylie (NALGO shop steward). Room 4, City Halls, Candleriggs. Monday 2nd April 7.30 pm.

ROTHERHAM Militant Bakers' Forum: 'Lessons of the Bakers' Strike'. Speaker: Joe Marino (Bakers' Union EC). Chairman: George Beasley (BFAWU Branch sec, Mother's Pride, Rotherham), both in personal capacity. Saturday April 7th, 1.30 pm, 'The Junction Inn', Greasborough Road, Rotherham

MORRISTON Marxist Discussion Group meetings. Contact Swansea 33542 for further details

CHESTER-LE-STREET Marxist Discussion Group. Mondays starting at 8 pm. For further details contact: Eddie Lower-son, Chester-Le-Street 88146

WALLSEND Marxist Discussion Group. The first Wednesday of every month. Contact Wallsend 687678 for details.

NEWCASTLE Marxist Discussion Group for students and unemployed. Friday afternoons in Newcastle University. For further details contact Roy Goodspeed, tel. 748001

Alan Hardman Print Limited Edition

One of Alan Hardman's most popular cartoons [Thatcher and the tiger] produced in five colours 15ins by 9ins. Buy one for home, Labour Club, trade union or shop stewards' room.

Prints £1 plus 50p P&P. Fully mounted, aluminium-framed £10 plus £1 P&P. Send money to A Hardman Cartoon, 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

BLACKWOOD Militant Discussion Group 'Fight the Engineering Employers' attack' Speaker: Tony Burns AUEW Convenor, S Wales Switchgear (personal capacity). Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre, Thursday 5th April, 7.30 pm

CLASSIFIED

HILLINGDON LPYS MEETING
'Youth for Socialism'
Hear: Andy Bevan
Labour's National Youth Officer
Townfield Community Centre, Townfield Road, Hayes (Between Church Road and Central Avenue)
7.30 pm, Tuesday 3rd April

RAPE: Facts and fantasies, politics and experience—a major theme. Plus: Agee—Spies in Italy; Geoff Hodgson—Alternative Economic Strategy; Ten Years of Squatting; Men against Sexism; Crass; Le Carre; ANL's future and lots more in the new 'Leveller'. 40p single copy, £6 annual subscription from 57 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

Ireland Socialist Review Number 4. This issue focuses on democratic rights; articles on computerised surveillance; the labour movement and democracy; plus Carl Gardner on TV silences. 30p + 10p post or from bookshops. ISR, 60 Loughborough Road, London S.W.9.

WORLD BOOKS

35-hour Week by Brian Ingham..... 20p
Iranian Revolution: Militant Reprint 10p
History of the Labour Party: Militant Reprints 30p
Capitalist Crisis: 'Tribune's' "Alternative Strategy" or Socialist Plan, by Andrew Glyn 60p
Transitional Programme by Leon Trotsky, with new introduction 25p
Add 10p postage for each pamphlet. Send for free comprehensive booklet to: World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN
PLUS: Apply to World Books for bulk orders of 'Should Nurses go on strike?' Price 3p each.

APEX Conference Militant Readers Meeting
Sunday April 1st 1979, 7.30 pm
At Kings Arms, Talbot Road, Blackpool (opposite railway station), 2 mins from conference
Speaker: Jane James [Delegate, Stevenage APEX]

MASS LOCKOUT ENGINEERING BOSSES MUST BE STOPPED

With the Labour government under threat, and the smell of the possibility of Thatcher's election, the Engineering Employers' Federation have prepared an offensive against the trade unions.

A circular has been sent out by the EEF to member firms, telling them to get tough with the unions; lay off workers involved in work to rule, go-slows and similar action, and extend this to other workers not directly involved.

Federation members are asked not to employ laid-off workers or take the work of other firms hamstrung by such action, nor to put pressure on them to make settlements. The circular also suggests reducing the power of the shop stewards and vetoing "undesirable stewards".

This circular has had a quick effect in the South Wales area. In the past two weeks, there have been two major lock-outs, at Henley Forklifts, Pontillanfraith and Hymac, Rhymney.

The workforce at South Wales Switchgear, Blackwood have been suspended for half a day, and a number of wage claims in the area have been

rejected. Henley Forklift convenor Ken Fairfax and Robert Goodchild, stewards' committee secretary told 'Militant': "Management rejected our claim and it went through the Engineering Industry procedure at a speed almost unknown in the industry."

"We then gave fourteen days' notice of our intention to take action in support of our claim for a substantial wage increase, about £10, consolidation of all the extras (5% etc) and five service days (one for each year of service up to a maximum of five days). The question of the 35-hour week we left on the table as it is part of the national claim."

"Management offered £5.20 on the basic, no consolidation and four service days (one for every five years' service)."

"We started our action by restricting overtime. Management stopped all overtime. We withdrew from the bonus system and stopped work for up to four hours in each normal working day. After seven days, management issued a statement that we had terminated our contracts and unless we returned to normal working there would be a lock-out."

"They locked the work-

shops last Thursday. The dispute has been made official by the AUEW District Committee.

"The employers have closed ranks and are clubbing together to take on not just the workers here but the trade unions in the industry."

At South Wales Switchgear, the annual claim has been rejected and is now in procedure. Events took a further twist last Friday when a dispute involving the maintenance department resulted in the suspension of the whole workforce.

Switchgear returned to work on Monday, but this is a further indication of the employers' intentions. The Hymac plant workers have been locked out under similar circumstances to Henley's for the last two weeks.

Action must be taken by the trade unions in the area to demonstrate that these Victorian measures will not be tolerated. Solidarity action must be organised now—not only to defend the locked-out members but also to defeat organised attacks on the trade unions.

Terry Burns
spoke to engineering workers



Union members marching in support of Garner strikers; London 24th March Photo: MILITANT

GARNERS Unions must end this scandal

By Martin Elvin
(Ruislip-Northwood LPYS)

ask the trade union movement to give us all possible help", strike committee members explained.

"This strike is not just for us", another striker explained, "It is for all catering workers. If it was just for us we could have gone and got another job."

"But it's not just Garners; some restaurants are even worse. We are sick of relying on tips to get our money. We want a decent wage now!"

This strike has been allowed to drag on for too long. Why has a small chain of restaurants been able to defy the biggest trade union in the

country?

Other catering bosses, who see trade unions as a threat to their super profits and super exploitation, have obviously been aiding Garners' bosses.

However, the real problem has been the T&GWU leadership's failure to match the spirit of these strikers and mobilise the enormous power of the union to cut off the Garners steak houses. Force these reactionary bosses to concede the justified claim!

The Strike Committee is appealing for all possible picketing and financial help from the labour and trade union movement. Contact them at T&GWU Room 84, 12/13 Henrietta Street, London WC2. Tel: 01-240 1056

Since 27th January 1978, picket lines have been a regular feature outside the Garners chain of steak houses in the fashionable West End of London.

The workers at these steak houses have been on strike since then for reinstatement, and recognition of their union, the T&GWU, as the only means to fight back against the appalling wages and shocking conditions.

Last Saturday over 600 people took part in a march through the West End, organised jointly by the T&GWU Region No 1, and the Garners Strike Committee.

"This demonstration is to show to the management and those still working that the strike is still on. It is also to

BRITISH LEYLAND END SHAM PARTICIPATION

By Bill Mullins (Senior Steward SDI, Rover, Solihull)

After four years, the trade unions in Leyland have formally withdrawn from the participation structure set up under the original Ryder proposals.

In reality, the participation structure has been smashed by events over the last 18 months, in particular since the closure of the Speke plant.

All management's major decision have been made without the car council—the top participation committee—being informed until after the event.

This experience completely vindicates the position of 'Militant' and its supporters in Leyland who have from the start consistently fought to expose participation as a sham.

We at Rover have refused from the very beginning in 1975 to be involved in participation. The Rover shop stewards produced a leaflet, followed by a mass meeting at which we argued that participation was an attempt by management to disarm us by making shop stewards responsible for what would, in reality, be management de-

ment is vital. The history of nationalised industries in the crisis of British capitalism has been one of almost continuous sackings and plant closures. That is why we have consistently called for Leyland to be nationalised under workers' control and management.

The only alternative to sham participation in nationalised industries is a board of management made up of equal numbers of representatives from the unions in the industry, the trade unions as a whole through the TUC, and the government, to run the industry in the interests of the working class and society as a whole, rather than as poor relations of the big private monopolies.

It is clear that—even if he publicly continues to pay lip service to the idea—Edwardes in particular thinks that there is nothing else to be gained from participation and is not too sorry to see it go.

Many on the left have been confused by participation schemes, thinking that they were a way to control management and defend trade unionists' interests. Our convenors' meeting which decided to withdraw from participation demanded that Leyland alter the structure to give the trade unions full veto rights over management decisions. This, of course, is completely utopian: real veto powers can only be by the use of shop-floor power, ultimately through the withdrawal of our labour. In other words, the full independence of the trade unions and shop stewards from manage-

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TEACHERS' PAY BATTLE

Thousands of members of the EIS, [Educational Institute of Scotland] the largest Scottish teachers' union, walked out of schools today [22nd March] in response to the management's derisory pay offer of 8% plus a comparability study. Both sides have agreed that teachers need a 42% increase to restore salaries to the level of the Houghton Award of 1974. At a rally in Edinburgh, teachers made it clear to

the NEC members present that wholehearted, united action was required to ensure a successful campaign. Speakers demanded all-out strike action, the rejection of any further 'comparability exercise', joint action with other public sector unions, and full restoration of Houghton pay levels. By Kenny Campbell (EIS, personal capacity)

HEALTH SERVICE WORKERS Still out in the cold

By Bill Hopwood (Thornaby Labour Party)

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BICC KIRKBY THREAT

The bosses have declared war on Merseyside. British Leyland, Westerns, Dunlop, Rank Hovis McDougal—they are just a few of the firms closing up and throwing workers on the stones. Now BICC are threatening to close their Kirkby factory, slashing 650 jobs, as part of a plan to transfer all work to their other plants. A mass meeting is being held this week to decide what action the unions will take to defend jobs. By Jim McGinley (Ormskirk LP and Knowlsey Trades Council)

The government has offered civil servants a 7% pay increase from 1st April. The balance of the pay research comparability findings will not be paid before April 1980.

This insulting offer in no way meets the needs of members or the findings of the pay research report, based on comparison with similar workers in outside industry, which found that civil servants were entitled to catching-up increases of between 20% and 40%.

The offer is a slap in the face to the civil service unions who sat idly by watching the CPSA and SCPS take industrial action for the implementation of the pay research findings in full from 1st April 1979.

It is also a major blow to the strategy of the CPSA National Executive Committee's right-wing majority. Despite repeated warnings from 'Militant' supporters on the NEC (see last week's report) the right wing believe that simply hitting the government's pocket and disrupting some services is sufficient to force the Labour leaders to take the unions seriously and implement the pay research findings as promised.

The statements, even before industrial action began, that they would not call out members in the DHSS and Employment sections has weakened our fight. The selective programme, as far as our employers are concerned, is tolerable.

With a hard-line approach, using suspensions and emergency legislation, and playing on the possibility of an early general election, and "traditional public hostility" to civil servants, the government obviously hopes to force the unions into a deal.

When Hattersley met the nine unions on the civil service national staff side recently, he allegedly came away with the view that they were a push-over. What he

failed to consider was the power of civil service workers.

If no leadership is given from the top, the membership will take that power into their own hands. This is already happening as unofficial strike action spreads.

The NEC right-wing majority has been forced to call a one-day national strike on 2nd April. This is likely to be followed by a stepping-up of the selective strike action along present lines.

The right wing, supported by most of the union's officials, still even now steadfastly refuse to call out members in DHSS and Employment sections. They refuse to ask the union's 40,000 members in the Post Office, whose own pay negotiations will be very much affected by any settlement reached in the civil service, to join the one-day strike.

The NEC right wing majority has now shown itself incapable of giving the leadership necessary to win the dispute. No wonder the bosses' press assisted in their election and the sacking of the left-wing majority NEC on the eve of this important pay battle.

The CPSA must now strive for combined industrial action by all civil service trade unions. Immediate political pressure must be put on the government to honour the comparability exercise. The hypocrisy of offering comparability exercises to other public service workers with the guarantee of implementation, while refusing to honour comparability findings for its own employees must be rammed home.

Members in the DHSS and Employment sections must be called out now. Intense co-ordinated action at ports and airports must be introduced quickly.

Already thousands of DHSS members have taken part in unofficial action in support of their suspended colleagues in Scotland and against this insulting offer. Demands for official action

CIVIL SERVICE PAY... NO TO 7%— DECISIVE ACTION DEMANDED

are growing every day. The SCPS are now ready to call out the key DHSS computer areas at Livingstone, Newcastle and Reading.

The CPSA can no longer hold back these key areas of the membership. Involvement of DHSS and DE members will be a decisive weapon in this dispute.

'Militant' supporters are aware of the suffering of the poor, the unemployed and the pensioners under capitalism. We have the means, however, through the unions, to protect these workers, while DHSS and DE members play a full part in the pay battle.

CPSA branches must avalanche the NEC with demands to mobilise the key sections of the membership for victory. The government has been defeated before on the pay front; it can be defeated again.

With a leadership prepared to fight and with a militant programme of industrial action, this dispute can be won.

By Pat Byrne (CPSA DHSS Central Sussex, personal capacity)



Photo: MILITANT
Outside Central Hall, London on 21st, after deciding to walk out (see report)

AROUND THE COUNTRY

LONDON

A joint CPSA/SCPS London rally called at Central Hall, Westminster on 21st to discuss the suspensions, was attended by approximately 1,500 people, even though the CPSA leaders had given it very little publicity.

Alan Shute, SCPS, spelt out the reasons for the suspensions. He proposed members walk out for the afternoon and walk to Downing Street to present a letter to the Prime Minister (a march is illegal), after the meeting; then to the Scottish Office, and the various picket lines in London.

Margaret Witham, CPSA NEC member seconded the motion, but pointed out that she had been instructed by the 'moderate' right wing majority on the NEC that they would not give official support to a walk-out or any other action agreed to by the meeting.

The meeting overwhelmingly passed the motion.

WEST MIDLANDS

In the West Midlands most DHSS offices came out on strike on Wednesday in support of the Scottish 39. About half the Department of Employment offices also came out, as well as officers in other departments, including CAA members at Birmingham Airport.

Many of the offices which did not come out on strike voted to donate half a day's pay instead. A few offices have stayed out on Thursday and Friday, but following a meeting on Thursday afternoon, it was decided that if the suspensions are not lifted,

the whole region will come on strike on Tuesday 27 March.

This action has shown the membership's frustration at the lack of progress on pay, their anger at attempted intimidation, and their willingness to take action to support their comrades. CPSA and SCPS; especially in DHSS, were absolutely united in their action.

Over 200,000 in support of just 39 is an expression of solidarity that workers in every industry will take note of.

Reports from CPSA and SCPS members in the areas

MANCHESTER

In the Manchester area, approximately 10,000 CPSA and SCPS members walked out in protest at the suspension of their Scottish Office colleagues.

The action hit Job Centres,

Customs and Excise, and Manchester airport, and every DHSS office was closed. Enraged members in Wigan and Middleton are staying out until Monday.

GLASGOW

In virtually every civil service establishment throughout Glasgow the staff were on strike, and despite a blizzard 1,500 people attended an open-air rally in the city centre.

At a mass meeting of the Savings Bank CPSA Branch the previous day, of the 2,500 people present, barely 40 hands were raised against the executive's motion to strike.

Can there be any doubt that the CPSA National Committee as originally elected before the right-wing's cynical manoeuvring would have given the membership a clearer and stronger lead in the fight?

The message from Edinburgh is clear: unity, solidarity, and full implementation of PRU in 1979!

By Janis Campbell (CAA Edinburgh Branch, personal capacity)

Selective action "all wrong"

CPSA members from the Accounts Department in the Civil Aviation Authority have been called out in support of our 1979 pay research claim. A total of 14 workers are out. These are people who cannot afford to accept 5% and who are willing to fight for what they are entitled to.

They are sick to the back teeth of incomes policy. They can't afford to keep within incomes policy because of rises in food, rates and mortgages. I think this shows that an incomes policy does not stop inflation.

The reason why the CAA members were called out was that we collect revenue for Air Navigation Services which can be from £5,000,000 upwards a week. This hits out at CAA management and in turn the Department of Trade.

Many of our members who have not been called out and

are still attending work want to come out and join us on the picket line. This selective strategy is all wrong. Bring out all our members in CAA, which includes the ATCAs, and the Customs and Excise—and we could bring the airports to a standstill. Bring out DHSS and DE.

Our fight could then be over in a couple of weeks instead of prolonging this dispute over months. Give the few members who are bearing this heavy burden, a break.

This selective action also leaves members who have not been called out at the mercy of the management who threaten suspension if they don't cover the strikers' workload.

Marion Bond (CAA Edinburgh Branch Chairperson) talked to 'Militant' in a personal capacity



CPSA pickets at Downing Street, after handing in petition on 21st

Photo: MILITANT

Suspensions spread action

In a massive demonstration of support for the Scottish Office members suspended for refusing to strike-break, thousands of SCPS and CPSA members in Edinburgh walked out on Wednesday 21 March and attended a mass rally at the Usher Hall.

Management initially tried to persuade three non-union members to strike-break. As a result, the three joined the union and have remained adamant in their refusal to undermine the action of striking members. The result

of the employers' action is that large numbers of civil service members in Edinburgh who did not join the action on 23rd February are now solidly behind their unions in demanding full implementation of PRU in 1979.

Initially, many CPSA and SCPS members, influenced by the media campaign against the trade union movement, were dubious about taking strike action, but this has rapidly changed.

As members see their colleagues engaged in selec-

tive strike action, the demand is growing that they be allowed to join in. Throughout Scotland the members in the selected areas have maintained their action through some of the worst weather of this winter, and as a result the demand has increased from other members to be allowed to support them with strike action.

With more Scottish Office suspensions threatened, it is clearly time for the National Committees to lead the membership into the kind of mass action they are demand-

Militant

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DUNLOP SPEKE

COMBINE ACTION NEEDED TO FIGHT SACKINGS

PROFITS v JOBS
 the crisis in the
 tyre industry, page 7

Photo: MILITANT



Mass meeting at Dunlop, Speke, votes for action against closure

The closure date [19 April] looms closer for Dunlop workers in Speke.

Dunlop's management, despite enormous pressure from the labour and trade union movement, have refused to reconsider the closure of the plant, citing the alleged 'unprofitability' of the Speke operation.

Not only Dunlop is under threat on Merseyside. Over the last year, thousands of workers here have been made redundant. In the last two weeks, closure of a Mother's Pride bakery has been announced, threatening 350 jobs; and BICC in Kirkby have added to the toll.

The men at Dunlop Speke are refusing to give up without a struggle. Already they have organised a mass

march through Liverpool of about 5,000 workers. Regular mass meetings are being held to inform the workers of the action committees' plans and decisions.

A programme of mass civil disobedience has been organised to ensure that the plight of the Dunlop workers is brought home. Three mass sit-downs have been organised, bringing traffic to a standstill. A visit to the threatened BICC plant was organised, as part of the attempt to forge an alliance of all Merseyside workers facing closure or redundancies.

Nationally, the Dunlop

shop stewards have been active in organising Combine meetings of Dunlop stewards throughout the UK, and internationally from Italy, France and Germany.

They have called for national trade union blacking of Dunlop goods, particularly those produced by the Speke plant. Already eleven T&G-WU branches on Merseyside have written to the Company telling them that if Speke closes, no Dunlop products will be allowed into their factories.

Support has also come from the Labour Party. Eddie Loyden and Eric Heffer have put down a motion in Parliament demanding that the closure be halted. At the recent North West Labour Party Conference, an emergency resolution was passed calling on the government to nationalise Dunlop Speke.

But despite this support from the rank and file of the Labour Party and the local MPs, the Labour government has taken no action, given no hint of support. The shop stewards, after writing a letter

to James Callaghan, received a letter from Industry under-secretary Alan Williams, thrusting aside any attempt to aid the Dunlop workers. This provoked a storm of protest from the Dunlop stewards.

The Labour government must take over the plant and investigate schemes of alternative work to save it.

Maximum pressure must be put on the government to save this plant, with its tremendous record for trade union organisation.

If closure is not averted, however, further action will be needed. The only plant to be saved from closure on Merseyside so far is KME, or ITD as it was originally known. The main reason was that the workers occupied the factory and forced the hand of the employers and government. In the final analysis, we believe, a mass occupation will be necessary if the plant is to be saved.

Meanwhile, the Dunlop workers' fight will continue. Every trade unionist and Labour Party member should fully support their struggle.

By Richard Knights

By Brian Debus

BSC BILSTON workers say...

CLOSURE AN ABSOLUTE DISASTER

"Disgusting! Closing the works when men want work...I've already got the chop"—worker in Bilston shopping centre.

"Anyone who loses a job will be in a terrible situation. Bilston will go down the nick. It's awful. What's Bilston without its steelworks, tell me that?—DHSS worker.

"Closure of the BSC works would be an absolute disaster. The place is dead enough already. It'll be completely dead when it's finished"—shopper in Bilston.

"It's all these Conservatives in management. They'll put us all on the

dole"—BSC workers.

These were some of the comments we got when we went last Saturday to sell the 'Militant' with its front-page article on the crisis in British steel and the threat to Bilston.

Apart from the odd 'Go back to Russia!' the paper was very well received, and we soon sold over a hundred copies. The hot cake seller was thinking of changing his product!

John Booth, senior steward, T&GWU Bilston, gave his views on the closure notice: "We have placed responsibility on the steel committee. The workforce at Bilston are not going to let them off the hook. The policy of the T&GWU is: no enforced redundancies and no closures, except on a voluntary basis. We stand by that policy. Our national officer cannot negotiate closure unless the policy of the Bilston T&G branch changes.

"We need to get the people in the area involved, not just the workforce. They are dominated by BSC. There used to be 15,000 jobs up the Millfield Road that Bilston depends on. We would be

lucky to have 2,000 jobs now.

"Once an area becomes depressed, it is difficult to regenerate. There is no cash, no-one will come in to invest. BSC say they will bring in jobs in the guise of private enterprise. This will just be factory units employing dozens."

The fight to maintain jobs at Bilston is an absolute necessity! David Hamilton, secretary of the national joint trade union liaison committee said that the whole idea of the committee was "to liaise between steel workers in Britain and Europe to achieve an efficient industry without the pain of redundancies and all the rest that follows."

FRENCH RIOTS

Continued from front page

week and we certainly expected the demonstration to be the highlight of our visit.

"The most ominous sign for us, returning to Paris on Thursday, the evening before the demonstration, were the units of riot police heading towards the city on the main roads.

"By the early hours of Friday, there were literally tens of thousands of people assembling. Children with their parents had come to see the sights. There were banners and posters everywhere. The atmosphere was lighthearted, festive, throughout.

"Along the route there was no trouble. The largest contingents were from the CGT, and were well marshalled.

"Later on in the evening, around seven, there

was rioting and the police were involved. You could see the police up the side streets, standing pretty close to the march. The marchers were chanting: "No! No! No! to provocation!"

"Riot police concentrated so close was a definite provocation.

"When we spoke to leading members of the CGT public sector workers that evening, they had evidence of police involvement in the demo as agent provocateurs. In one case, they had details of a man armed with a revolver who was most probably a police agent.

"The press have reported the gangs of youths with balaclavas on their heads and welding iron bars or chains. But the CGT was so well marshalled that I don't believe that anyone from the CGT could have been involved in such a totally useless form of activity which is used by the media to try to discredit the demonstration."

CPSA Day of Action

The government's derisory offer to civil servants has united the civil service trade unions as never before.

All the unions will now most probably be involved in some way with the one-day strike for 2nd April by the CPSA Executive. This strike call is likely to meet with an unprecedented response.

Unfortunately, at its meeting on Tuesday, 27th March, the CPSA Executive turned down a levy of members to finance the

dispute, and also confirmed its present limited strategy with only minor extensions, mainly involving those sections already taking action.

Mass rallies are, however, to be held in every part of the country. Members will no doubt both be demonstrating their contempt for the government's offer, and also be pressing the NEC for a decisive extension of the action to achieve a speedy and successful conclusion.

CPSA claim: reports and comment, page 15.



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