

Militant

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TORIES SHARPEN BUTCHERS AXE

"Adequate competition, unequal rewards, and profitability." This is the cure for the chronic sickness of the British economy offered by Sir Keith Joseph, the monetarist guru of the Tory Party.

Already, in four short weeks of Tory government, we have begun to see what it means in practice: higher prices, more unemployment, even more drastic education and health service cuts, and measures designed to make the rich even richer.

Unions must fight

In an unprecedented move, the Tories are to cut 22,000 Civil Service jobs. They have announced a three-month freeze on civil service recruitment. Coming at a time when thousands will be leaving schools and colleges, and looking for their first jobs, this move will mean youth unemployment of staggering levels.

The effect on services provided by the civil service could also be devastating. Ken Thomas, General Secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association, commented that it was a "crude wielding of the butcher's axe, when we could have expected the surgeon's scalpel. I believe it's a political gimmick that will rebound on them.

"The figures just don't add up. My union is going to fight them." A united fight by the civil service unions against this freeze on recruitment is vital, as part of the action that must be organised by the trade union movement to protect jobs and services.

By Peter Lush



Delegates demand fighting policies at recent CPSA Conference

Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

22,000 CIVIL SERVICE JOBS- 133,000 LOCAL AUTHORITY JOBS THREATENED WITH THE CHOP

The Tories have also gone on the offensive against local authority expenditure. In the debate on the Queen's Speech, Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe revealed that the government intends to make substantial cuts in local authority subsidies. All local authorities, he said, should stop recruiting new staff.

"Natural wastage"

Michael Heseltine, Secretary for the Environment, commented that local authorities, through "natural wastage" should plan for a 5% cut in jobs every year. In other words, a loss of 133,000 jobs.

Services the Tories are aiming to cut first of all include education, bus services, social services and housing. Prime targets, too, are direct labour, and planners for the Community Land

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OIL GIANTS PROFIT FROM CRISIS

For the first time, petrol was being sold at £1 a gallon in some garages last week.

This followed pump-price increases of between 4p and 5½p and the restriction of

supplies by most of the big petrol companies.

By Eileen Short

This not only hits motorists, of course, but because of higher transport costs will soon work its way through to the price of goods and services generally.

The immediate reasons for the shortages are not yet entirely clear. Despite the reduced

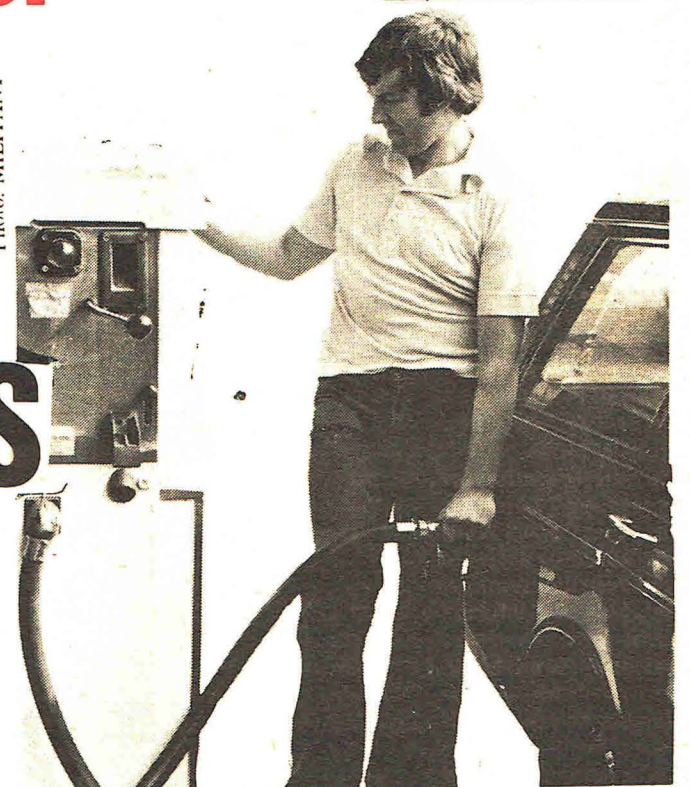


Photo: MILITANT

supply from Iran, world supplies are reported to be running at a slightly higher level than last year. But the British and other governments are thought to be insisting on strategic petrol stocks being maintained, or even built up—a clear indication of fears of

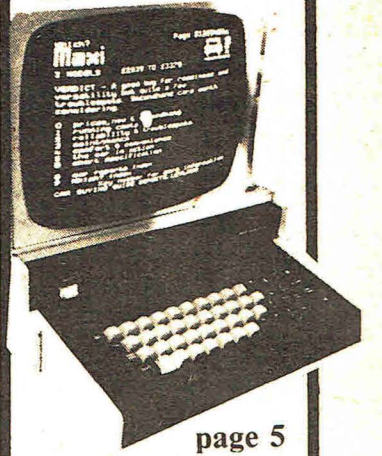
another international petrol crisis as bad or even worse than the OPEC embargo which followed the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

A few of the relatively small oil producers, like Algeria, have been putting up their prices. Key

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Militant

The capitalist news media have given great prominence to Jim Callaghan's statement at last week's meeting of Labour's National Executive, that "neither he nor the Party would be prepared to support a trade union which took action for purely political reasons."

But in taking this position, Jim Callaghan does not speak for the Party.

Just as Labour's rank and file have already rejected the right-wing's attempt to continue with the policies that led the last Labour government to defeat, so they will repudiate any attempt to build an artificial wall between trade union and political action.

Jim has forgotten, it seems, that the Labour Party itself was built, not just through parliamentary campaigns, but through years of strike action and mass mobilisation.

"We live in a democracy", Callaghan is reported to have said—as if trade union action on vital issues was undemocratic!

Last week it was undoubtedly the threat by NUPE to boycott private beds in the NHS from January 1st which was foremost in Callaghan's mind. But NUPE is rightly threatening action against Tory measures which gave the rich the right to buy privileged treatment and workers the "right" to die in a depleted NHS. Are such measures democratic?

A glance at history, moreover, will show that every major democratic right—the right to a free press, to assembly, to form trade unions and go on strike, and even the right to vote itself—was won not primarily through parliamentary debate but through mass action.

If the trade union movement had followed Jim's advice under the 1970-74 Heath government, the Tories' reactionary Industrial Relations Act would have been successfully used to fetter the trade unions and fine and imprison rank and file activists. The way would have been cleared for attacks on living standards far more savage than those Heath managed to implement.

"Responsible", parliamentary opposition played little part in curbing the effects of the Act. It was mass action by millions of trade unionists, including one-day political strikes and the threat of a 24-hour general strike, which stopped the Tories in their tracks.

Was that action "undemocratic" as the Tory press—and now Jim himself—would have us believe? On the contrary! Mass, extra-parliamentary action by the labour movement was vital to the defence of genuine democracy.

In every case where the trade unions have been smashed, whether in Hitler's Germany or Pinochet's Chile, this has been followed by the elimination of every

other democratic right, and the grinding down of workers' living standards to barbaric poverty levels.

The present Tory government, like the last one, has an economic programme which, fundamentally, aims to increase the profits of big business and enhance the wealth of the rich minority—at the expense of the working class [and sections of the middle class as well]. To achieve their aims, they have to undermine and eventually break the resistance of the organised labour movement. No one should be taken in by the present diplomacy of Thatcher and especially Prior towards the trade union leaders.

"The Tories have got a majority" said Callaghan, arguing that the Party had a duty to behave as a responsible parliamentary Opposition.

But what was the attitude of the Tories to the last Labour government? With only 28% of the electorate behind Labour, they claimed, the government had "no mandate" to implement the radical policies in Labour's 1974 Manifesto. Yet with an only slightly larger share of the total electorate now—just over a third—the Tories claim they have a "clear mandate" for savage attacks on the working class.

As for the allegedly "undemocratic" character of extra-parliamentary opposition, the Tories are completely hypocritical. Throughout the Labour government, the national and local press, overwhelmingly owned by big business, kept up a daily campaign to discredit and weaken both the government and the Labour Party.

Not only that, but big business, which controls 80% of production, most of the service sector, and 100% of finance, felt no compunction in using a strike of capital and other economic sanctions to block or sabotage Labour measures which were not to its liking.

And where is the democratic control over big business? They are owned and controlled by a tiny handful, less than 2% of the population, and are answerable to no one but themselves. The power of the trade unions is, in reality, the only democratic check on the economic power of the big monopolies.

The whole history of the labour movement demonstrates that industrial and political action can never be separated. The Labour Party was created because the trade unions learned through experience that they needed a political arm.

And so long as we live in a capitalist society, it will remain vital for the Party to support battles on the industrial front—and attempt to give them political aims.

A programme for the socialist transformation of society is the key to uniting the working class—to abolish the never-ending capitalist cycle of wage-rise and inflation, reform and counter-reform, and establish a planned economy and a democratic state in which the material and cultural needs of all the people will be amply catered for.

HEALTH SERVICE CUTS THREATEN LIVES

The already battered health services in East London are to receive even further blows from new 'economy' measures.

The City and East London Area Health Authority will almost certainly be underfunded to the tune of some £15m.

Management have found in recent years that no sooner have they drawn up one set of plans, than they have to ditch some schemes to pay for others. With the sort of cuts needed to balance the books now, the whole idea of planning is made a mockery.

Shop stewards were never convinced by arguments, put forward to justify the run-down and change of use at Bethnal Green Hospital. The complete change of plans now contemplated means that this hospital could after all have remained a thriving general hospital.

A new round of economy measures will mean:

- ★ Dramatic reduction in patient services, especially 'acute' services.

- ★ Losses of hundreds of jobs through extensive non-replacement of staff.

- ★ Standstill or even a reduction in Community Services (despite current policy to expand).

- ★ Statutory Health and Safety measures not implemented.

- ★ Dramatic increase in the waiting lists.

- ★ Speed-up of hospital closures.

- ★ Fewer casualty units.

- ★ Hundreds of beds will be lost.

Is there any need to spell out what impact these measures will have? Past "economies" have more than "taken up the slack", as one senior administrator put it three years ago.



Protest at closure of Bethnal Green Hospital last year

Photo: Julian McKerrick (Militant)

Our £15m estimated underfunding is made up as follows:

- ★ To maintain existing services in the Area would require approximately £2m.

- ★ Essential maintenance expenditure; additional nursing requirements due to General Nursing Council and EEC directives; and legal requirements on fire and health and safety would require in total about £10m.

- ★ Pay settlements and inflation above that allowed for in the cash limits could require an additional £3m.

Staff account for 75% of the District running costs. Further reductions of staff and their wages must be uppermost in the minds of management.

Already, in one of the three Health Districts, Tower Hamlets, they plan by non-replacement of staff (£250,000), cutting of 'super-numerary' posts (£50,000) and by economies through bonus schemes and overtime (£226,000) to save £526,000.

In another of the Districts, City and Hackney, extensive revision of plans has been made, bringing forward some of the closure plans by ten years!

Cuts can kill! Cutting back on the levels of staff and increasing workloads will have a disastrous effect on vital services.

Other, more tragic cuts are

now contemplated.

Every week there are four pacemaker and four heart-valve operations performed at the London Hospital. Here, management have proposed to cut back £100,000. That represent at least a year's worth of those sort of operations.

Any campaign against the cuts, as was shown through the experiences over Bethnal Green Hospital, must be on a District or Area basis rather than just over individual hospitals.

Trades councils and Labour Parties should give the lead by bringing all sections of the labour movement together in a campaign against the cuts and for a socialist health service. The trades councils and trade union movement in South Wales have shown that such campaigns can be successful in preventing closures.

Already, District Management Teams are proposing the formation of 'joint' committees involving representatives from the union to discuss the "priorities" in the District. By sitting on such a committee, however, in the guise of participation, the stewards would merely be deciding what was to be cut. It would be like a condemned man building his own scaffold for the hangman!

But that such an offer is being made, demonstrates the

extreme difficulties management are facing. For the moment, confusion reigns supreme. The trades councils must seriously begin to mobilise now. Every section of the movement must be brought into this struggle. The LPYS particularly has a full part to play in such a campaign.

Many representatives of the labour movement have over the years become completely remote from the membership. Some councillors even adopt an arrogant attitude to the Party and members they are supposed to represent.

Many of these so-called representatives of the working class serve on the Health Authorities, rubber-stamping the closure plans and not considering themselves accountable to anyone. It is time to sweep these attitudes away.

But to achieve this, the campaign must ensure massive involvement of the ranks of hospital workers and the general population in all the organisations of the working class, to regenerate these organisations into bodies capable of reversing the decline in our great NHS, and taking us forward to socialism.

Dave Hollis

(Secretary, North East London medical branch, ASTMS)

LABOUR CANDIDATE SHOT AT

Terry Harrison, the Labour candidate for Liverpool in the European elections, was shot at while campaigning in Garston last week.

Terry was touring the Lea Park estate in a car with a loudspeaker. When the car stopped and he started speaking, the rear side window was shattered, and a hole appeared in the middle of the election poster.

Terry dialled 999 from a nearby house. The police had not appeared on the spot even 45 minutes later, and Terry and the driver decided to call at the nearest police station only a quarter of a mile away.

The desk sergeant claimed he had heard nothing of the shooting. Ten minutes later the police arrived at the flats where the shooting took place. The police calmly told them that people were shot at from the tower blocks "quite regularly".

The shooting may have

been political, or just the work of a nutcase. But the casual approach of the police and the silence of the press at an attack on a Labour candidate is in marked contrast

to the uproar there would have been if some Tory notable had been at the end of a potentially lethal pot-shot on a Liverpool housing estate.

DON'T FORGET

This weekend, June 2nd-3rd, support Terry Harrison in the LPYS mass canvass, demonstration and rally in Liverpool.

Details of the action and of travel arrangements from your LPYS National Committee member or Josie Atiman (051-220 4602) in Liverpool.

SPANISH SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS REAFFIRM MARXIST HERITAGE

The resignation of Felipe Gonzales as leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party [PSOE], the major party of the Spanish working class, is the most important event in Spain since Franco's death.

The workers have struck and demonstrated in their millions, but on the political arena their voice has been stifled by the policies of their leaders, Gonzales and Carrillo [the 'Eurocommunist'].

These leaders threw the full weight of their authority behind the "democratic" King Juan Carlos, his "liberal" Prime Minister Suarez, and his bonapartist constitution.

Last week's PSOE Congress marks the end of the protracted first stage of the revolution, and heralds a new stage in which the workers' pent-up militancy will burst asunder the gentlemanly accord between the leaders of the political parties.

PSOE has reaffirmed its Marxist heritage, and defying the threats of Gonzales, who

By Roger Silverman

retains personal popularity among the more inert masses of Party supporters.

In the long years of clandestine struggle, the hard-core Party militants suffered victimisation, jail, torture and death to rebuild the Party afresh out of its Marxist traditions. If Franco's butchers could not destroy their convictions, Gonzales never can.

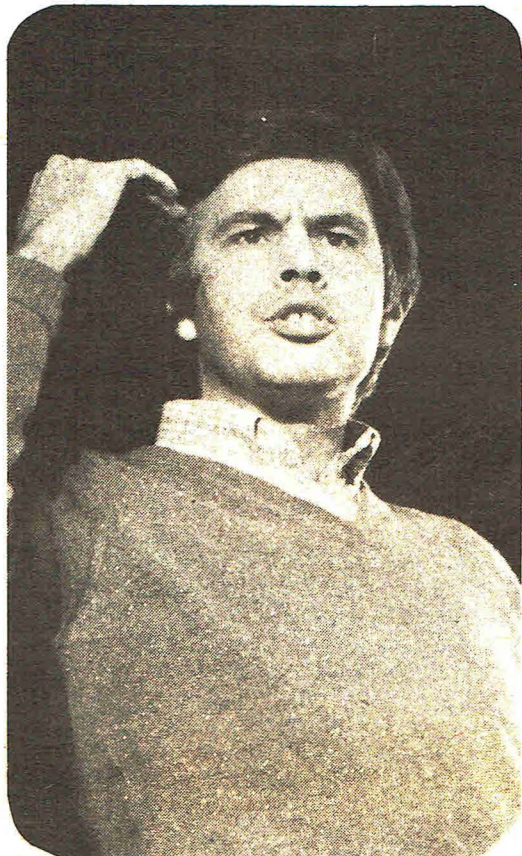
As early as 1972, the militants from the interior vomited out the fossilised emigre leadership of Llopi and elected Pablo Castellano leader. Then in 1974, inspired by the Portuguese revolution, they took a further step to the left and replaced him with the supposed Marxist "enfant terrible" Felipe Gonzales.

It is ironic that Gonzales today has placed himself far to the right not only of his predecessor Castellano but even of Professor Tierno Galvan who only recently rejoined PSOE after leading a right-wing breakaway party, the PSP.

Gonzales' right-wing policies since 1975 have imposed intolerable strains on the Party. They led to brazen



Above: Working class in action in Barcelona 1976. Now they demand political solutions to their problems.
Below: Gonzales and PSOE leadership moving to the right, are unable to provide the answer.



repression of internal debate, a frenzied witch-hunt, the expulsion of thousands of Party veterans, the disaffiliation of entire federations.

Thronging with jubilant youth only three years ago, the Party branches rotted into mere handfuls of stalwarts. Gonzales' henchmen even justified this by praising the advantages of a "cadre" over a mass Party.

The PSOE, like the British Labour Party, has learned that where the vanguard are disillusioned, the masses cannot be enthused into electoral support. In the recent elections, in which PSOE put forward a programme hardly distinguishable from the liberal UDC government, it obtained only 29.2% of the votes and 122 seats, compared to a combined PSOE/PSP vote of 33.6% and 124 seats in 1976.

At a time of widespread cynicism about the pretensions of the UDC, this result was a cruel disappointment.

It was the proletarian delegations—from the Basque Country, Madrid, and also Gonzales' former base Andalusia, and above all the Asturias with its rich traditions—which led resistance.

Marxism for Gonzales—like Clause Four for Gait-skell—was never more than words. But Asturian miners died in their tens of thousands for it.

Congress carried by a two-to-one majority, the Asturian resolution, reasserting that PSOE is a "mass class Party based on Marxism, democracy and federalism".

It was the relentless pressure of the Socialist International led by the German SPD—and lurking behind them the CIA—which impelled Gonzales into this hopeless suicide mission. One right-wing PSOE leader was in contact with the US

International.

All the capitalist Press, including Fraga's ultra-right "ABC" and the Fascists "El Imparcial" are idolising Gonzales. Support from such dubious sources will not exactly smooth his path back.

More seasoned and wily bureaucrats from the Socialist International were sadly shaking their heads.

An SPD representative urged some compromise, and Portuguese SP leader Soares (representing the SI) declared that he couldn't understand what all the fuss was about: In the Portuguese SP there was room for all currents, including "Marxists like himself"!

If the left wing had been organised and prepared, a new EC would have been elected reflecting the Party's Marxist outlook.

Congress accepted this proposal, made by a delegate from Alava who had won an ovation for his rebuttal of Gonzales' arguments.

But owing to the thorough purge of Marxists, the leadership of the left fell into the hands of people like Llorente and even Galvan, who readily responded to pressure in the corridors to accept the election of an interim five-man steering committee to prepare an Extraordinary Congress within six months.

Already once before Gonzales had proposed dropping PSOE's commitment to Marxism but immediately retreated on testing rank-and-file reaction. This time, he waited until a week before the Congress, presumably hoping to push it through quickly without alerting the ranks.

In vain! Within days, resolutions flooded in, fed-

the cutting off of funds from the Socialist International!

The delegates were stunned by the resignation and gave Gonzales a standing ovation despite rejecting his policies. This is due to the confusion and timidity of the centrist leadership which placed itself at their head.

The return of Gonzales after some ambiguous formula has been concocted cannot be excluded. Nevertheless his authority within the Party is badly tarnished.

If on the other hand the Right is defeated again, it could well split away and thus help PSOE transform itself into a genuine Marxist party. In any case the Congress has already injected new life into the Party.

Sections of the UGT (the Socialist trade union federation) have begun to mobilise their members into the Party. The witch-hunt of Marxists cannot be tolerated any longer after Congress' decision. If it means anything, then all those Marxists unconstitutionally expelled ought to be reinstated.

Gonzales himself recently admitted that it was only the pressure of the Marxist tendency around "Nuevo Claridad" that had stayed his hand in entering Suarez' Cabinet.

The "New Statesman" reported that "Nuevo Claridad" summed up the unhappiness of the Party rank and file in a pre-Congress issue that gave a far clearer idea of what was in store than the Party's official paper "El Socialista". In reality, the Marxist tendency far more accurately reflects the aspirations of PSOE workers than does the Gonzales clique.

And this is not surprising. Suarez' savage deflationary policies have aggravated the slump in textiles, steel and construction, and pushed unemployment up to 1½ million (some 10%).

Inflation is raging at nearly 15%. Gonzales' support for "austerity" stands in sharp contrast to the vital needs of the workers. PSOE workers understand that Marxism is more relevant today than ever before.

All the democratic gains grudgingly wrested out of the capitalists' hands by heroic struggle will be undermined if capitalism remains. Gonzales' utopian reformist delusions can never win a base in the conditions of a sick capitalist society. Any leader who stands in the way of the workers' struggle for a new society will inevitably be swept aside.

PSOE workers realise that Marxism is now more relevant than ever.

Embassy during the Congress!

They understand that the Suarez government cannot withstand intact the coming social storms and are looking ahead to PSOE's entry into a coalition. What better opportunity to water down its programme than now, when Party morale was apparently at its lowest ebb?

Gonzales staked his prestige in a desperate gamble, hoping to cow the delegates. Once his bluff was called, he was shattered.

His impulsive resignation has alarmed both the Spanish ruling class and the Socialist

erations recalled and replaced their delegates, or imposed binding mandates against Gonzales' proposal. The Congress convened in angry mood.

A leading right-winger was defeated in elections both for Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The EC report—normally a formality—was approved by only 58% of the votes. 12% voted against it despite a warning that this meant "a vote for insurrection"!

Galvan bewailed the resignation, predicting every kind of horror including the tanks back on the streets and even

BOOK NOW FOR THE MILITANT
MARXIST WEEKEND SCHOOL

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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Clash on Future of Labour Party

The clash between left and right within the Labour Party deepened at last week's meeting of the National Executive Committee [NEC].

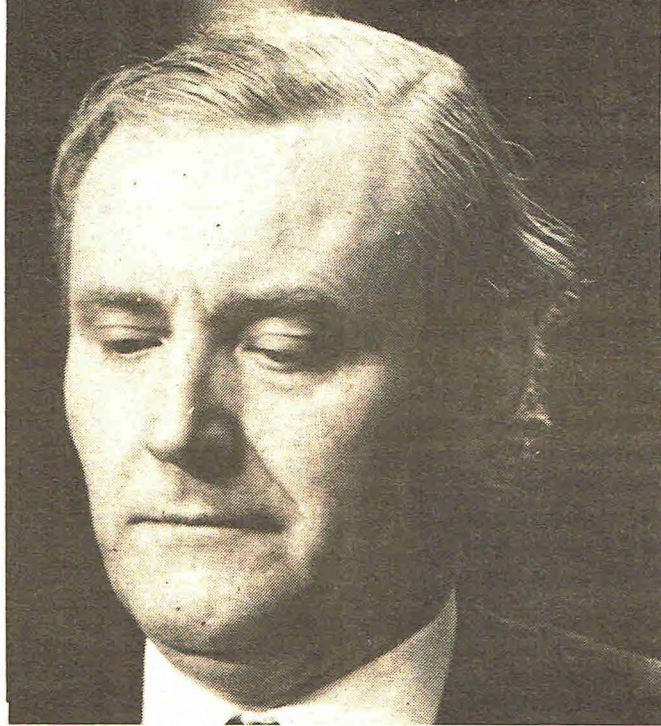
The main discussion was on the election defeat and it brought all the arguments for more socialist policies and control over party leaders to the fore and provided a glimpse of the discussion which will take place at party conference later this year.

The meeting reportedly concentrated on the lessons of the last five years and the future direction the Party needs to take in order to fight the Tories and ensure that a Labour government is returned to power.

"...study the past and learn the lessons of what people did to the Labour government," was how Tony Benn opened his contribution to the meeting.

Warning of the power of big business, Tony Benn spoke of "the tremendous economic pressures to which a Labour government is subjected, and which effectively turn them into instruments to enact the harsh realities of capitalism."

Joan Maynard pointed out that "the crisis of capitalism is developing



Tony Benn and Jim Callaghan had sharp differences on the EEC

rapidly in Britain, which no longer has an empire to fall back on. It will mean a disaster for the working people unless socialist policies are adopted."

Speaking on why Labour had lost the election she thought that the Labour Party had "lost its crusading spirit and appeal to youth. We have allowed public ownership to become a dirty word and tried to compete with the Tories rather than challenge them." This was made worse by "leaders in the Cabinet attacking our own people."

The discussion, however, didn't simply dwell on the election defeat, but

on the way forward for the Labour Party.

"Four tasks now face the NEC.

"To build a mass party firmly based on the factories, to reaffirm the party's commitment to socialism as outlined in clause four, part four, and ensuring that the rank and file have full control over the parliamentary leadership through re-selection and election of the party leader at national conference, and leading a fight against the anti-working class programme of this Tory government," was how LPYS representative Tony Saunois spelt out the lessons for the Labour Party.



Referring to previous contributions he said that the "crisis of capitalism could only be overcome in the interests of workers through the carrying out of clause IV, part 4. It must be fought for by the party explaining that this was the only way to solve the day-to-day problems facing workers and their families.

It is the key to the creation of a Socialist Democracy and this is the lesson of the past five years. The party must learn it."

Most contributions criticised the government for "failing to listen to the rank and file during the past five years."

Neil Kinnock demanded that the party should declare that a future Labour government would re-nationalise any industry or part of one which was hived off by the Tories and without compensation.

The need for party policy to be campaigned for in future was undoubtedly what most of those who spoke at the meeting were demanding.

Labour's right wing, subdued in mood after their defeat, offered no explanation for the defeat, other than to blame the trade unions, for it, and that "the Tories got 3 million more votes!"

Shirley Williams was reported as saying that last

By Roger Shrivs

winter's strikes "were fermented by people who were no friends of Labour."

Whilst some left wingers spoke of the labour movement having to prepare itself for the attacks of the Tories, Tony Saunois pointed out that Jim Callaghan was effectively "asking workers to be left defenceless against the Tories and employers" when Callaghan said they "must be fought in Parliament and only in Parliament."

The second major item for discussion was on the EEC campaign, during which a sharp exchange between Jim Callaghan and Tony Benn developed.

The NEC having drawn up the manifesto was threatened with having the campaign taken out of its hands and being dictated to by the leader of the party, who tried to prevent Tony Benn appearing at the press conference to launch the manifesto.

Last week's NEC ushered in the key questions now facing the LP—the need for a socialist programme, control over parliamentary leaders and the need for a mass membership. Activists must now demand that the NEC campaign for these to ensure the defeat of the Tories. Resolutions will undoubtedly be flooding in to demand that this action is now taken by the NEC.

CANVASSING

I rang the bell, and when the woman came to the door, with my "abominable" American accent I said to her, "I am from the Labour Party. Can we rely on your vote?"

She replied, "I've always voted Labour, but I'm not voting for the Labour Party this time. Mind you, I'll not vote for Maggie Thatcher, I hate her guts, so I'll not vote at all."

I asked, "Would you mind telling me why not?" Her answer was, "There's no difference between the parties. They make promises and never keep them."

"Everything's going down the drain. There's just no leadership in England, so I won't vote. I've thought it through well."

"You're a working-class woman," I said to her, "and there's no one who is going to hand you something on a silver platter."

"We're going through a crisis in this capitalist system, and the whole burden of it is falling on your back and the backs of all the workers. You feel defeated because you're standing by yourself."

"What you have said is true. I am with you 100 per cent. There is no real leadership from the political parties."

"Maggie Thatcher's party

is the enemy of your class, but you need a party of the working class to represent your interests, and the only one you've got is the Labour Party.

"If it is not operating the way it should be you've got to enter that party, and together with others who are trying to push the leadership into action, you've got to make it live up to the promises."

"Because you've no place else to go, and you just don't lie down and die, you've got to put up a fight, because you're a worker."

Her answer: "You've convinced me, luv, I'll come out to vote." "And join the party!" was my last word to her.

Free enterprise

At another door, where I canvassed with Pauline Dunlop (candidate for the council of that area) a young man home from his college opened the door and spotted the 'Militant' under my arm.

"Oh I know that paper," he said, "It's sold at my school and I even bought a copy."

"Well then, will you vote Labour?" "To tell the truth," he replied, "I'm in favour of the free enterprise system."

"Since you mention that,"

I said, "I'd like to make a few comments on that system."

"Unless you're a Lord in England, or a coupon-clipper in Wall Street in America from where I come, a man has to earn his living and provide for his family by way of a job."

"But to get that job he must depend on a second man, who has the money bags, to invest his money in business and thus create the jobs."

"What if he doesn't want to? What if he feels he would make big enough profits and decide to just sit on his money bags?"

"Under your free enterprise system he can't be forced to invest. Is it fair that the man with the money should have so much power over the man who desperately needs a job to survive?"

"Right here in Liverpool the Dunlop company has just closed up and fired 2,000 men because it felt there was not enough profit in the business."

"One of the sacked men went home, put a rope around his neck, and committed suicide."

American Socialist Style

"Is it fair that the very life of a man should depend upon the will of another man or group of men formed as a company? That's why I am for a socialist system where every man has a job."

"I'll buy that paper," he said. "And come to the meeting at the school next Tuesday," said Pauline, handing him the leaflet on the meeting. "I'll come," he said.

Listening

As the canvassing of the area progressed, and I looked at the returns I said to Pauline, "You're in, my girl." "Don't be so optimistic," was her answer. "At least one-third of them won't come out to vote. They told you 'yes' because they were trying to get rid of you and were merely being polite."

It makes me very happy to say that she was wrong. They did come out to vote, and today Pauline Dunlop is a councillor of that district in Liverpool.

What I learned from that experience in Liverpool is that

time must be given during the period of canvassing to just listen to people.

If you show the potential voter that you are genuinely interested in him/her and their problems, he/she will respond. One woman asked me to come into her house where she showed me the leaking, mouldy toilet in the back of the house that she had to live with.

By Betty Traun

Canvassing also discloses desperate cases that need immediate help.

In the Crosby area, a desperate woman, aged beyond her years, talked of a husband out of work for eight years, four small children sleeping in one bed in a cubbyhole of a bedroom in her council flat for which the Tory council was raising her rent over one and a half pounds to £11.50 a week.

I helped to set the wheels in motion by summoning Tony Mulhearn, candidate for Crosby, who immediately took action in the Labour Office to get her into a decent flat.

The point is: attention must be paid.

HISTORY OF THE LABOUR PARTY

Articles reprinted from 'Militant' on:

- Predecessors: the role of the Social Democratic Federation
- Formation of the Labour Party
- Taff Vale case
- How Clause IV became the aim of the Party
- First Labour government
- 1945 Labour government

Price 40p (inc p&p) from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LEFT & RIGHT

"Tell him to stop!"

The 'Spectator' is a strongly pro-Tory weekly. But even they can't think of anything good to say about Sir Keith Joseph, the mad monetarist at the Department of Industry. In a Profile entitled "A deeply impractical man" [19th May], they say: "Among people who know him well...there is a broad agreement that he sometimes displays a sort of unworldly callousness. This is ascribed to his apparent lack of knowledge about the concerns of people less rich or exalted than himself."

Joseph was born rich: his family owned the big building firm, Bovis. So rich, it seems, that he tends to become embarrassed when crude money matters—like the pay of Conservative Policy Centre staff—are raised with him. "He would prefer that someone else sort out these matters. This sits ill on the famed advocate of the price mechanism."

Even some Tory ministers—at least in private—are fearful of what Mrs Thatcher's Guru will do if given his head. Adam Butler, says the 'Spectator', was put in as Joseph's second-in-command to "find out what Keith is up to and tell him to stop!" But when workers move to stop Joseph policies which threaten millions of jobs, these hypocrites will be mouthing the same laissez-faire ideas and sanctimoniously denouncing workers fighting to protect their livelihood.

Richer, and more successful

One "worker" facing redundancy will have no worries for his future. Peter Jay, ditched by Mrs Thatcher as Britain's ambassador in Washington, will receive at least £50,000 for a book about the British and American economies. But this carries on the tradition for ambassadors to Washington, who are usually said to be rich or successful before they go and richer and more successful when they leave.

Other past ambassadors spared from queueing at the dole office include Lord Harlech, who became Chairman of Harlech Television, John Freeman, Chairman of London Weekend Television, and Lord Cromer, former Governor of the Bank of England, back in 1974 to tax exile in a £232,000 luxury home in Jersey.

Thatcher's working class victims will, we fear, not be so well protected.

The Epilogue

Worried about what to do if nuclear war breaks out? In America, the US Civil Defence Department have paid Leonard Reiffel £25,000 to make a TV programme about what to do in case of a nuclear war. Reiffel said: "We didn't have to use any slick production techniques because if the show ever has to be used seriously, we won't have to worry about getting the viewer's attention."

The film would regrettably be no use in the event of a surprise attack. Reiffel would then lose his chance to be the star of the last TV show on earth.

MICRO-PROCESSORS:

A threat or a promise?

1978 was the year of the 'chip'. Politicians and press waxed eloquent. Yesterday's science fiction had become today's reality.

Micro-processors, by condensing the power of an old-fashioned computer into a small, cheaply-produced silicon chip, are capable of revolutionising production and communication.

In industry, old machines can be operated more efficiently with robots—electronically controlled 'arms' and 'hands'—and new plant and processes built for use with micro-processors have undreamed-of potential.

But will this potential be realised? Who will benefit? What will be the consequences?

The government and the bosses have assured us that the British economy will now soar phoenix-like from the ashes of recession. We are promised a glorious, work-free, trouble-free future. The new technology has been promoted as both inevitable and beneficial.

These rosy claims are challenged by Counter Information Services. In their latest, well-researched report, 'The New Technology', they examine the effects of micro-processors in the real world; dominated by capitalist recession.

Development of electronics is largely controlled by giant multinational corporations who are out to exploit chips, like any other product, for profit.

CIS examines the arguments put forward by Whitehall and finds they are nonsense. While millions of pounds are spent promoting new technology, the prospect of possibly 4 million unemployed by 1985 is being completely ignored.

The report looks at what's been happening in offices and typing pools up and down the country, and finds that the threat to women's jobs is very real and growing daily.

Between January 1976 and September 1978, while the number of unemployed men rose 2%, the number of unemployed women rose by 67%. Companies are being encouraged by government subsidy and massive advertising to introduce word-processors and cut their office staff.

The Social Security budget will without doubt be slashed in public spending cuts causing concern to many, especially pensioners. The Tories' only worry, though, is how to get away with it.

In a revealing article in the 'Guardian' (18.5.79) Malcolm Dean callously and candidly discusses the options open to Jenkin.

The article points out that under the Act of 1974 the Conservatives are obliged to index pensions to the rise in earnings, though they fought against this when the Bill was being passed.

Had pensions been linked to prices instead of earnings



Post Office workers threatened by capitalist control of new technology

Inside the Post Office, the effects of new technology are equally worrying to the workforce.

Counter-Information Services details the modernisation plans using System X, and reveals controversial Post Office figures projecting staffing levels in the new electronic exchanges. Just how many jobs will be lost?

Lucrative market

One section of the report looks at the development of international computer links. Through electronic exchanges using chips, computers could be used to control production processes on a world-wide basis, and facilitate instantaneous, paper-free communications.

The "global village" is in sight, the possibilities of world-wide economic planning are tremendous. But under the present order of things, the parish council

remains firmly in the hands of the big multinationals, motivated by power and profit.

Even in the computer industry jobs are declining. Growth rates would have to be unprecedented before the growth in new jobs will compensate for the massive growth in unemployment.

Yet the market for the new technology is booming and giant electronics companies are jockeying for position. The report reveals the strategies of the British and European companies as they attempt to fight off American and Japanese global giants like IBM and Nippon.

The European electronics market is the most lucrative prize for years. Yet while the NEB pours money into a 'British Industry', big monopolies like GEC, by linking up with US multinationals, are paving the way for American domination.

CIS rightly argues that working people have to control the way the technology is used in the workplace. The benefits, the report says, must

be reflected in a shorter working week, better conditions and increased safety—not in redundancies and increased profits.

New technology is a major threat to the jobs and working conditions of people in this country. It is being introduced in a period of economic recession when the only hope for employers to increase profits resides in their capacity to reduce labour costs.

It is vital that the labour movement is fully aware of developments in this field. We must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and alternatives to fight the use of the new technology by the bosses to intensify exploitation and increase profits.

Trade unionists could do no better than start by reading this excellent pamphlet.

'The New Technology' is available from World Books, 42 Kentmore Terrace, London E8 3JG, price 75p plus 20p postage.

THE KINDEST CUT!

The Social Security budget will without doubt be slashed in public spending cuts causing concern to many, especially pensioners. The Tories' only worry, though, is how to get away with it.

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Had pensions been linked to prices instead of earnings

since 1973 (earnings rose faster than prices, according to the government's version of statistics) "the present married couples' rate of £31.20 would have only been £26.20 today," the article points out—a saving of £1,500 million on the Social Security budget. If the pension "had only been price-protected since 1948 it would be worth only £11.40."

What huge savings we could be making! Never mind the hardship and suffering, never mind the deaths through hypothermia because pensioners can't afford to keep the heating on!

But, says the 'Guardian'.

"Imagine the ammunition this would provide at the next election...The Conservatives...have, in Whitehall jargon, a presentational problem."

So they go on to discuss the "obfuscatory options" open to the government and enumerates three "hidden cuts".

"The first, and most talked about, is to ignore the shortfall—the amount by which the last pension increase, based on a projected earnings increase, fell short of the real increase. (It was 1.8% which meant a 35p loss for single pensioners and a 55p loss for married couples.)"

Secondly, "the shortfall

provides an opportunity for a...much more serious hidden cut. If the next pension increase is based on the existing pension...last year's shortfall can be carried on into perpetuity."

The third hidden cut could be made by basing pension increases on the actual earnings increase during the previous year instead of on the projected increase for the year ahead, which the Tories calculate will be higher.

The labour movement must be vigilant in exposing and actively opposing such deceptive cuts at the expense of pensioners.

I D Williams (GMWI)

ANOTHER STAB IN THE BACK

How many Prentices are there still in the Parliamentary Labour Party? Quite a few, if the post-election comments of one former right-wing Labour MP are anything to go by. Back once more in the comfort of a secure academic job, David Marquand [‘The Listener’ 10 May] is quite frank in laying the blame for defeat on the right-wing leadership.

“The Callaghan government was about the most conservative which this country has seen since the war, and it stood on the most conservative election platform since Baldwin’s notorious ‘Safety First’ campaign in 1929.”

Mrs Thatcher may have offered the wrong changes, he says, but when the Labour leaders were defending a “status quo [which] is a disaster,” it was no wonder the Tories undermined Labour support.

So Labour should have campaigned on socialist policies?

No! Marquand’s conclusion is that Labour lost because the leadership is obliged to pay lip-service to socialistic ideas, and is constrained from putting forward real solutions.

“The last 15 years have shown that the Labour Party...confronts the British crisis with one hand tied behind its back. Though most Labour

MPs are social democrats who accept the mixed economy [i.e. capitalism] most of the rank and file are socialists, who still believe in wholesale public ownership as an end in itself [i.e. understand that only a fundamental social change can solve the problems of working people].

“For most of the time the social democrats are in control of the party. But they can stay in control only by cossetting the trade-union establishment, whose power is the greatest single impediment to the regeneration of British industry [i.e. stands in the way of increasing big business profits at the workers’ expense] and by paying endless quantities of moral Danegeld to the socialists [i.e. paying worthless verbal tribute to the basic aim of the Labour Party outlined in Clause IV part 4].

“And although the Danegeld rarely amounts to much in terms of policy, it makes an enormous difference to the party’s style and posture.”

So, for Marquand, there is no fundamental difference between Labour—his Labour of the parliamentary right—and the Tories.

Marquand’s admission of this is breathtaking in its frankness.

“Though the social democrats know that the gulf between themselves and the socialists is, in fact, the deepest in British politics, they have to pretend that they are really on the same side of a much deeper gulf: that despite occasional differences

of emphasis with the socialists, they are all part of the same ‘labour movement’, ranged in fundamental conflict with the bosses and exploiters on the opposite side of the House of Commons: that, so far from belonging to an alien species, they are merely more circumspect members of the same species.

“It is humbug, of course. But it is dangerous, corrupting humbug. It means that the party leaders can never talk honestly to their followers or to each other, and it means that the party as a whole can never talk honestly to the country.

“Since the socialist wing of the party is still hostile to private enterprise as such, it also means that the party can never adopt a strategy openly and explicitly designed to make private enterprise more profitable. Since the British crisis cannot be overcome without making private enterprise more profitable this means that it cannot adopt a strategy openly and explicitly designed to overcome the crisis.”

Could there be a more devastating confession of bankruptcy? In setting out to restore the diseased British capitalism to health at the expense of the working class, Labour’s right differ from the official party of big business only in “style” and “posture”.

But such views should be no surprise to anyone following Marquand’s political career.

Typical of the academics,

lawyers, and other professionals who saw the Labour Party as a vehicle for advancing their own careers, Marquand entered parliament in 1966.

Careerists

When Roy Jenkins abandoned the Parliamentary Labour Party to head the EEC Commission in 1977, Marquand soon joined him, taking up a top job in Brussels. In the resulting by-election, Labour lost the “safe” mining seat of Ashfield to the Tories.

Now Marquand is back as a well-paid professor of politics. Like other careerists who have climbed to the top through the Labour Party, he is now quite prepared to stab Labour in the back.

Lord George Brown, Sir Alfred Robens, Richard Marsh—they all came out for the Tories in the general election. Marquand, too, is eager to attack and damage the Labour Party.

Tories like this—many still hiding in the PLP—have been tolerated within the Labour ranks for long enough! They do not believe in socialism. They are not prepared to defend working-class interests. They should be booted out!

By Tim Moody



Tories in the Labour Party: some like Richard Marsh [above] have left. How many remain?

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

The Tory proposals on education in the Queen’s Speech are an attempt to turn the clock back to the nineteenth century.

They are proposing to allow Tory councils who have not introduced comprehensive education to keep their grammar schools. They plan to allow local authorities once again to pay for school students to go to “independent” schools.

Their whole policy is aimed at restoring an elitist education system.

As part of their overall drive to slash public expenditure they plan to cut back still further on badly-needed education spending. At the same time, they promise to increase the money spent by local authorities on sending a few “brighter” children to fee-paying schools.

For a tiny handful of carefully-vetted pupils they will provide the smaller classes and better facilities denied to the vast majority.

The labour movement has fought a long battle for comprehensive education—to

end the antiquated, arbitrary “testing” of a child’s ability at the age of 11.

Over 80% of children in secondary education now attend Britain’s 3,077 comprehensive schools. There are only 312 grammar schools left.

But the Tories are committed to repealing the 1976 Education Act, which banned selection. This is a green light for the Conservative-controlled Education Authorities. Many are now planning to scrap their plans for going comprehensive.

Grammar schools

The Essex Tories, for example, are to keep the two grammar schools in Colchester, taking about 5% of the children in the area, while the rest will go to 17 comprehensives (‘Observer’ 13.5.79). Kent are also very likely to scrap their comprehensive plans.

Tory-controlled Bolton council have decided by one vote to scrap the comprehensive scheme, which means that nearly 3,000 children will be forced to take the 11-plus exam this term. Three-quarters of them will end up in the town’s 13 secondary modern schools.



What kind of education will these children get after Tory attacks?

Other Tory councils who have partially implemented a comprehensive scheme, will now try to retain some of their “famous” grammar schools.

For working class children, education standards have been measurably improved by the introduction of comprehensives. This can be seen by the increased numbers of children leaving school with some examination passes. In 1967, nearly half the country’s children left school without a single examination pass; only 16% do so now.

This period also saw the raising of the school leaving age to 16 and the introduction of CSE exams. Combined

with comprehensive education, this has undoubtedly had an effect.

However, it would be entirely false to conclude that the introduction of comprehensives in itself has fundamentally changed the lot of working class youth.

The report of the Conference of University Administrators, commenting on the fall in the percentage of university students from working class backgrounds, said that this was as much affected by housing, health and social services as by education policies. Whilst there is still slum housing, low wages and unemployment,

there can never be a truly ‘comprehensive’ and equitable education system.

The inequality and conflicts of capitalism are mirrored in every classroom. The education system is a reflection of society, not something set apart from it.

The Tories’ proposals must be fought by the labour and trade union movement. They must not be allowed to dismantle the gains which the labour movement has fought for.

The unions involved in education, with the other public sector unions, must take the initiative with a campaign to defend our

education system, and for a fully comprehensive system. This must be linked to a socialist education programme, with a massive increase in education expenditure, and socialist economic policies to guarantee these improvements.

There are stormy waters ahead for our education system. The labour movement must be prepared to defend every gain won in the past, by fighting the Tory axe-men on a bold programme of socialist measures.

By Peter Lush



Police attack at Notting Hill Carnival

Photo: Phil McCowen

POLICE TRY OUT NEW WEAPONRY

The Metropolitan Police bosses are now calling for new and more modern methods of control over violent demonstrations, following the violence in Southall and Lewisham not so long ago.

The high command of the police have shown great interest in the anti-riot weapons used on the streets of Northern Ireland.

Already the riot-shield and police baton are an everyday sight. But two new weapons being considered are fearsome.

The notorious rubber bullet and the CS gas grenade both came into use as riot-control weapons in the early 1970s in the running street battles with the British army in Belfast and Londonderry.

By Andy Corfield
(TGWU and ex-soldier in N Ireland)

These two weapons have had nearly ten years of testing under the most violent conditions of civil disorder the British authorities have faced in the last 15 years. They have proved deadly when used by marksmen in felling victims that the police might not otherwise catch.

The CS Gas grenade was introduced as a front-line dispersant, used to break up rioting crowds before the troops went in, to make their arrest or just crack a few skulls in the process.

In close confines it causes severe pain in the victim's eyes, constant watering and a period of temporary blindness. The only way to clear this is by using a solution that dissolves any harmful traces in the eye-ducts.

The rubber bullet is in

many ways even worse. Introduced in Ireland officially for the purpose of 'riot control', it has frequently been used to inflict severe damage in a crowd. It has claimed many victims, several still bearing the marks of the notorious bullet on their bodies, during its short history of use in Northern Ireland.

It is supposed to be fired at the legs to bring the victim to the ground, so that they are arrested and taken away for 'questioning'. It has, however, in many cases been fired at the stomach and often higher on the body.

SPG

So these are the new and more modern weapons that the police chiefs want in their armoury. What are the implications for workers in Britain?

This can only mean a future threat to labour in this country. As more and more workers are forced into struggle to maintain and better their conditions, as they start strike action on any mass scale, then these weapons will be just around the next corner in the hands of the notorious 'Special Patrol Group'—who already carry guns—and any other sections the police might dream up.

As an ex-soldier from the streets I can say that the rubber bullet and CS Gas grenades can cause havoc amongst demonstrators, within the close confines of a back street when there's nowhere to run, and when used to intimidate potential victims.

But will it end there? Will the police then demand the same powers as the RUC and the army on the streets of

Northern Ireland: unlimited powers of arrest, arrests without charge, the power to legally harass active trade unionists and Labour Party members going about the activities of their organisations?

Is this what's meant by 'new and more modern methods of control'?

We have to strengthen our organisations by explaining to our members what these powers would mean. **Today it may be Northern Ireland workers and anti-fascist demonstrators who bear the brunt, but what about the anti-Industrial Relations Act and Grunwick battles of tomorrow?**

For as millions of workers turn to the labour movement to defend them, the bosses will not hesitate to use all their force against the gravest threat to their system—the organised working class.

Curb unions

Thatcher's reactionary Tory government have pledged that they will 'curb' the trade unions either by using the courts or through legislation from parliament. Twelve million trade unionists will not stand idly by, however. As Heath learnt, this is a recipe for confrontation.

This is the future that's being prepared by the forces of reaction, to attack every gain that's been made in the past by the trade unions.

The only way to stop them is by taking the running of society into our own hands, to remove the parasitic capitalists and their system, which can offer only dole queues, poverty and conflict.

**THE MENACE OF FASCISM:
WHAT IT IS
AND HOW TO FIGHT IT**
by Ted Grant
Price 50p (inc p&p)

Available from World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

THE RIGHT TO ABORTION ON DEMAND

The Southampton Regional Health Authority is proposing to set up an abortion day care clinic at our General hospital. If set up it will perform about 750 operations per year.

This aroused opposition, as our local press put it from: "a group of angry women, who had a petition and several placards with slogans like "Hitler built charnel houses—are we to condone his methods in Southampton", and "Suffer little children, Southampton wants your blood."

Slogans likely to invite more derision and laughter than support.

These women tried to cover up the real issue by saying that they were not only protesting about abortion itself, but questioning the need for such a clinic to be set up. As if the need isn't blatantly obvious.

They object to "the taxpayers' money" being spent on "unnecessary destruction of human life"; they say we need the money for more important things, like kidney machines.

These women claim that they have heard nothing about after-care facilities, and that it would be dangerous for a woman to have an abortion without staying in hospital overnight. These arguments are simply poor camouflage.

If it was considered dangerous for a woman attending this clinic to have a termination operation without staying in hospital overnight, or longer, then that would be made clear to the patient and acted upon. If the facilities are not sufficient, then our job is to make sure enough money is available to improve them, not to risk more lives by closing the clinic!

Only for rich

I was one of the women on the counter-picket. I feel that an unwanted pregnancy and birth can do untold long-term harm to both mother and baby.

Why should we have to choose between averting these dangers and providing kidney machines? Would we accept that we couldn't have houses because the money was needed for schools?

While welcoming the decision of the RHA, I feel that there is a deep-felt need for more money to be spent on research into abortion, and to make abortion on demand a reality under the NHS.

When it comes down to it, for a working class woman to obtain an abortion under the NHS is nearly impossible unless it is for purely medical reasons. On the other hand, if

she can pay the private fees, the operation can be done without delay. Or she can go to a back-street abortionist, pay her money and risk her life.

I personally know of cases where women have requested termination of pregnancy operations and been put off by GPs saying thing like "come back next month for a pregnancy test, you might not be pregnant," or "come back when you have thought about the operation properly." As if a woman doesn't think seriously about things like this.

This delay often means that it is medically too late to have an abortion.

These women told me that I should be grateful if I were pregnant, as there were hundreds if not thousands of childless couples who could not have babies of their own. They ignore the fact that through pregnancy and birth and afterwards to have the baby adopted can be far more traumatic than a termination of pregnancy.

Right to choose

They also conveniently forget the many older children in care who are unwanted for adoption.

Under capitalism, these are the only choices available to working class women. Abortion is an essential right, to prevent such suffering for mother and child.

The anti-abortion picket wasn't very successful, and the petition only collected about forty signatures. Many of the doctors and passers-by approached refused to sign it.

Why should a woman have to pay exorbitant fees, or resort to back-street methods of abortion? Why should a woman be condemned to have an unwanted baby because she is healthy and of normal reproductive age and sound mind?

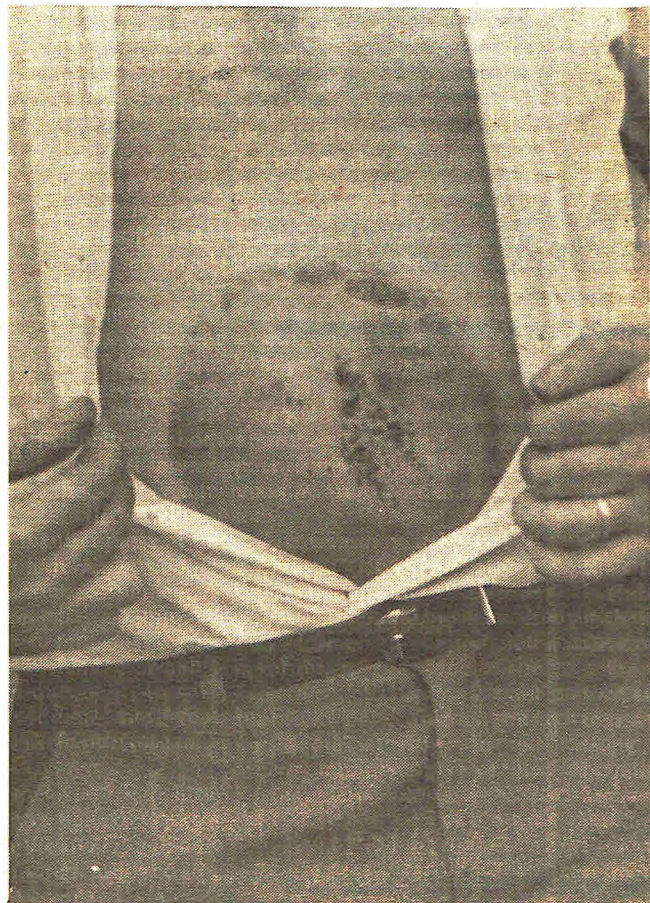
Only under a socialist society will women be able to choose for themselves. Of course we should respect the wishes of those women who do not believe in abortion, but they should not try to impose their views on other people.

After the election and the Tory victory, there will be an increasing demand from all sections of the labour movement for socialist policies.

The right to abortion on demand should be one of them. After all, the working class makes the wealth, and we should have a bigger say in what is done with it, and how it affects our health.

By Chris Kelly

(Southampton Labour Party)



Effects of rubber bullet fired at point-blank range

We reprint below part of an article first written in March 1975 as an introduction to a 'Militant' pamphlet 'Common Market—no, Socialist Europe—Yes'.

Since this article was written, the position of British capitalism in the world market has deteriorated yet further and British manufacturing industry finds itself increas-

ingly defeated even on the home market [see articles by Ted Grant in issues 444 and 453].

The optimistic beliefs of the ruling class, that the new markets of Europe would give fresh impetus to British capitalism, have vanished. This analysis by Peter Taaffe has lost none of its validity over the past four years.

In the years since it entered the Common Market the sickness of British capitalism has been enormously aggravated. The sunny optimism of even the Confederation of British Industries, the spokesman of the monopolies—which had the most to gain from entry—has completely evaporated.

The chronic weakness of the British capitalist economy has been shown in every department. They have been completely outstripped and beaten by their rivals in the EEC.

The former 'workshop of the world' now imports over 50% of its manufactured and semi-manufactured goods! An indication of the devastating weakness of British capitalism was recently shown by the 'Economist' when it revealed that a total of £12 billion manufactured goods were imported into Britain in 1974. British capitalism is beaten in its own backyard!

Britain's EEC rivals—in particular Germany and France—have been prepared to grant concessions only because they fear the departure of British capitalism would be a body blow to the EEC which would eventually lead to its complete break up.

Even at the time of Britain's entry, national rivalries had undermined the dream of a capitalist 'United Europe'. But in the last two years any lingering hopes which the capitalists still had have been completely shattered.

Thus the 'Economist', a zealous advocate of British capitalism's entry into the EEC and 'European Union' mocks its own past position in its January 14th issue: "The grand design of Europe is dead and long may it remain so..."

"The aspirations in Germany and Benelux for a united Europe of the future, although still passionately held by some, are now very shop worn...this summit of the nine (which had just taken place in Paris) put the stamp on the idea that Europe will remain a loose confederation of nation states."

The 'Economist' confirms in its own stark and cynical way the consistent position of Marxism that it is impossible to unify Europe on a capitalist basis.

Only a handful of naive pro-Marketeers and their counterparts in the anti-Market camp still imagine that Britain could be swallowed up in a 'United

Europe'. The capitalists have long since abandoned these dreams.

'The Times', their most authoritative organ, showed this in its comments on the Dublin summit: "The plans for economic and monetary union remain only an aspiration for the future, not a blueprint."

In other words there is not the remotest possibility of "economic and monetary union." How could 'The Times' write otherwise when each of the EEC countries has blatantly ignored every one of their solemn undertakings not to break the Community rules whenever they have felt that their vital 'national interests' were at stake?

European markets

The dominant section of finance capital in Britain wish to remain in the Market not because they are planning to set up some fiendish 'supra-European' state as some of the anti-Marketeers imagine.

They are bound with economic hoops to the European markets. 35% of British exports go to the other EEC countries. Even more than in 1972 British capitalism's trade and influence with her former Empire—'The Commonwealth'—has drastically declined.

This has recently been underlined by the statements of the Prime Ministers of Australia, Canada and New Zealand all of whom delivered lectures on the advantages of Britain remaining in the Common Market.

The Australian Prime Minister visited Brussels first before coming to London which shows the diminishing influence of British capitalism in her former colonies!

The prospects for British capitalism within the EEC are indeed gloomy. They entered too late, at a time when the outline of the future break up of the EEC was already beginning to take shape and the 'European Economic Miracle' was beginning to grind to a halt.

Now even the Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Wilhelm Haferkamp, has informed the European Parliament: "The days of vast increases in prosperity are gone forever. The growth rate of private consumption (i.e.

ONLY WORKERS

the standards of the working class—PT) is in the future bound to lag behind the national product as a whole." ('Times' 20.2.75)

But for British capitalism to be outside the Common Market would be an even worse disaster for the British monopolies! They would be forced to enter into a 'free

trade agreement' with the EEC.

This could mean that key prices for steel and other products would be fixed by the EEC, as with Norway and Sweden, without the British capitalists having a say.

This is why the British capitalists have treated with scorn the arguments of Powell

and the Tribune left of the Parliamentary Labour Party that EEC membership infringes 'Britain's sovereignty'. On a capitalist basis outside the EEC, Britain—by which the bosses mean themselves—will enjoy less sovereignty. On a capitalist basis there is no alternative at this stage to continued membership of the

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

EEC.

The right wing pro-Marketeers in the Parliamentary Party reflect with tender concern the desire of the dominant sections of finance capital to remain within the EEC.

But there is not an atom of socialism or of a class approach in the position of 'Tribune' and their allies, the 'Communist' party leadership, on this issue. They have highlighted the issue of 'sovereignty'. This is to completely mis-educate the advanced workers in the Labour Party and trade unions in particular.

'Two nations'

Disraeli's 'two nations' still exist—the nation of the rich and that of the poor. It is the 'Britain' of the poor—the working class and lower layers of the middle class—which is the concern of the labour movement.

In or out of the Common Market their future is bleak unless society is transformed along socialist lines. Nowhere does the 'Tribune' say this clearly. Nor does it link opposition to the EEC to a clear class and socialist alternative.

In its issue of 7th March (1975) 'Tribune' printed a long article by Michael Barratt Brown which it claimed represented a 'socialist alternative' to the Common Market.

It was anything but, as the following quotes will show: "The system of political organisation of the EEC has just one political end: to prevent any one of the member states breaking away from the capitalist embrace... all the economic institutions, rules and regulations of the EEC are designed to achieve one economic end: that the allocation of resources in capital, land and labour of goods and services is determined in the market by the return in profit of private capital." This is of course true.

But wouldn't this also be the case if Britain was outside the Common Market and still remained on a capitalist basis? Barratt Brown goes on to say that: "The freedom of national governments to intervene in their economies is firmly circumscribed."

But how would the position be any different if the Labour government came out of the Common Market but still remained in a capitalist framework?

The powers of the Labour government between 1964-70 were "firmly circumscribed" not by the Common Market but by 'strikes of capital', economic pressure and the blackmail of the capitalists which the Labour leaders capitulated to.

As a result Labour's minimum reform programme was jettisoned. It is the remorseless pressure of the British



The Europe of the workers—French workers protest against bosses closing steelworks

The slogan of a 'Socialist Britain and a Socialist United States of Europe' is not a programme for the dim and distant future. It is the only way that the workers of Britain and Europe can avoid the miseries which a continuation of capitalism will mean.

WE CAN UNITE EUROPE

monopolies and not the EEC Commission which has resulted in the Labour government granting enormous concessions to the capitalists in the last budget with the promise of more favours to come in the next one.

Even those mild measures like the National Enterprise Board and the Capital Transfer Tax have been watered down to suit the capitalists. But it is not the Rome treaty—a scrap of paper—or foreign devils which has forced the Labour government to retreat on these measures but the living reality of the pressure of the British capitalists.

There is no way of escaping that pressure in or out of the Common Market, unless the Labour government breaks this power by nationalising the 300 monopolies under workers' control and management.

Science, technique and the organisation of labour—the productive forces—are rebelling against private ownership on the one side and the nation state on the other. The market of 55 million people in Britain is too small for the giant monopolies who have the potential and are geared



The Europe of the capitalists—the EEC Council of Ministers

to the European and the world market.

It is reactionary to say that it is possible to cut Britain off

from the world market. Through the international division of labour which has been enormously extended, in

the last twenty-five years—the world is bound into one inter-dependent whole.

It is impossible for any

country—least of all Britain which relies for most of its raw materials and food from abroad—to build a self-sufficient socialist utopia.

The beginning of socialism would mean a level of technique and production higher than the highest level yet reached by capitalism. This is not possible if the productive forces are strangled by capitalist ownership and the nation state.

The unsuccessful attempts of the capitalists to unify Europe expresses the contradiction between the need to organise production on at least a European scale and the barriers to this in the form of the vested interests of capitalism.

Only the working class can free the mighty forces of production for the benefit of the peoples of the continent through a Socialist United States of Europe.

In Europe the grandiose events in Portugal and Greece and the coming revolution in Spain are an anticipation of an era of social revolution which will leave no part of the 'Old Continent' untouched.

The slogan of a 'Socialist Britain and a Socialist United States of Europe' is not a programme for the dim and distant future. It is the only way that the workers of Britain and Europe can avoid the miseries which a continuation of capitalism will mean.

'MILITANT' PAMPHLET

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YOUTH FIGHT BACK

Unemployment among young people on Merseyside is an absolute scandal! Thousands cannot find work.

The same is true in the Common Market. Two million young people are unemployed in the Common Market. In many EEC countries up to half the jobless are under 25.

For thousands of school- and college-leavers throughout Western Europe, adulthood means being thrown on the scrapheap of unemployment. Young people—not surprisingly—have been to the forefront in campaigning against the lack of work.

The Labour Party Young Socialists have been consistently fighting for a guaranteed job or training for every school leaver with a living wage. Most of the jobs offered to young people pay less than the government's own official poverty line.

The Labour candidate, Terry Harrison, was a founding member of the Labour Party Young Socialists. He was also secretary of the Merseyside Strike Committee during the 1960 Engineering and Shipbuilding apprentices' strike.

The Labour Party Young Socialists believe that the unemployed should be organised by the trade unions to fight alongside

employed workers for jobs with decent wages, conditions and opportunities.

The trade unions should run a youth employment service to ensure that management take on young people. Local councils should make day centres available and open all their facilities free to the unemployed.

YOUNG WOMEN

Despite the Equal Opportunities Act, young women are still denied the right to good jobs and training by many employers. The Labour and trade union movement, must fight to ensure that enough training and apprenticeships are open to young women.

Young couples are often faced with the agonising choice of keeping their incomes or having a child and losing one wage. That is why we call for the introduction of the right to a year's paid maternity leave and the provision of free day-care and nursery facilities for all.

EDUCATION

How many young people have to leave school or college because they cannot afford to stay on and complete their education?

We say that all students must receive a living grant.

The grant should not be means-tested, but should be available to all and at least equal to the minimum Youth Opportunities Programme wage of £20.50 a week.

Under the Tories, the education of young people is threatened. They have promised cut-backs in education spending. Yet already schools are being closed in Liverpool, and the number of teachers is totally inadequate, resulting in overcrowded classes. Yet in the last two years 26,000 newly qualified teachers could not find teaching jobs.

What is needed for better education standards is not more cuts but a massive increase in spending to employ thousands of unemployed teachers, bring class sizes down to 25, and to allow for the provision of decent schools.

There are few facilities for us on our housing estates. What facilities exist are often too expensive. We want social and sports centres in all housing estates and residential areas, with free meeting halls and facilities, well-equipped youth clubs, and cheap cinemas, discos and concerts.

FIGHT RACISM

It is out of unemployment and poverty that the

fascists and racists have grown. Parties like the National Front feed on the disenchantment of people. They try to set white against black, and split the working class by attempting to make immigrants the scapegoat for the problems caused by the profit system.

Immigrants are not the cause of factory closures on Merseyside. The bosses closed the factories because they were not making enough profit for themselves.

If we are to fight to protect jobs against the Tories' and bosses' threats we need the maximum unity between all workers.

We campaign for an end to job discrimination, defense of all immigrant communities under attack from racists, and the repeal of the 'Sus' laws (the 1824 Vagrancy Act).

WHO ARE THE TORIES?

It is quite clear that the Tory government, made up of Lords and company directors (only two of whom didn't go to 'public schools'), will not work in the interests of ordinary people.

Quite the contrary! The Tories will work to benefit their paymasters, the big companies and the rich. Young people will gain nothing from the

Terry Harrison is standing as Labour candidate for Liverpool in the European election on a socialist programme. This section of his manifesto on youth shows a real alternative to the capitalist EEC.

Tories. We will have to fight against the Thatcher government.

In this election to the European Assembly we have the chance of showing the Tories that Merseyside will fight their plans by electing Terry Harrison, the Labour candidate.

We must not let the Tories win this seat and then claim that Merseyside supports Thatcher.

But the fight against the Tories will not end on 7th June. In fact, it will only just be beginning.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS

The Labour Party Young Socialists, the youth section of the Labour Party, will as always, be playing a leading role against the Tories and the bosses. While fighting the Thatcher government, we will be campaigning for the Labour Party to adopt the socialist policies which Terry Harrison is fighting for in this election.

Throughout Britain and Europe huge resources are lying either idle or under-used. Six and a half million are unemployed in the Common Market, and the European Commission expects this to increase to 15 million by 1985. Millions more have to try to live on low incomes.

The Common Market's agricultural policy keeps

food prices high, while farmers are paid to destroy their produce.

The Labour Party Young Socialists stand against the anarchy of the capitalist system. Production should be organised to meet people's needs, not simply to enrich the owners of industry.

We stand for the reorganisation of society on sane lines, on the basis of socialist policies which match the basic aims of the Party and which have been repeatedly demanded at successive Labour Party Conferences.

We demand that the next Labour government implements socialist policies to end once and for all the chaos and misery of capitalism.

We also work with young socialists in Europe against all the European Tories and bosses—and for a workers' Europe, a Europe organised in the interests of the working people, not big business.

The young workers of Merseyside, of Britain and Europe, face common problems and a common enemy, the bosses' system. Only a united struggle can give us the kind of future we want.

Don't just vote Labour on June 7th! Join us in the fight for socialism!

CONSPIRACY IN THE CARIBBEAN

A story involving the Mafia, South Africa, oil refineries, foreign mercenaries and Caribbean invasion plots sounds like the by-line for the latest spy thriller.

That it was truly the basis of a scheme to overthrow the government of Barbados and create a free haven for big business, crime and South Africa was revealed in the BBC programme 'Panorama' on 21st May.

According to 'Panorama', the plot was as follows:

South Africa wanted a secure place for oil refineries to withstand an oil boycott from Arab and Iranian producers.

Dominica, in the West Indies, fitted part of the bill nicely. It was ideal for it was poor, with a one-crop economy (bananas), 40% unemployment and ruled over by a corrupt dictator, Patrick John.

Dominica could act as a middle man. It would purchase the oil from the Middle East, refine it and then sell it

to South Africa. The South African oil organisation, SASOL, fixed the details, and a contract for an oil refinery was signed on 6th February, 1979.

To secure the oil refinery, part of Dominica would have to be set aside as a Free Port Authority, with its own customs, rules and taxes (i.e. none).

Such an authority was agreed by the Dominican regime with the Pearson company also on 6th February this year. This company had had a similar free port area in neighbouring Haiti, where they set up gambling casinos operated by the Mafia.

The negotiations with the South Africans and the Pearson Company were conducted on behalf of the Dominican regime by the Dominican Development Fund.

This fund was run by the Dominican Prime Minister, Foreign Minister (Leo Austin) and a Sidney Alleyne. These three already secretly owned a number of firms in Dominica and the Fund was ostensibly



formed to encourage foreign investment.

In reality it was formed to line the pockets of the three organisers, help big business

firms, assist South Africa, and also act as a channel for funds to overthrow the government of Barbados.

South Africa wanted to

gain control of and expand the oil refinery on Barbados. Sidney Alleyne (one of the Fund's three organisers) wanted to become the leader of Barbados.

He had been expelled from the country in 1976, because he organised secret funds for rich Portuguese who had been thrown out of Angola and Mozambique.

In 1978, using as a cover a fake job as a 'broker' for a British bank, he met up with mercenary recruiter John Banks. Banks had sent the mercenaries to Angola in 1976, and he got a team of thugs together again.

Unfortunately for the conspirators the plot leaked out to the press and had to be called off in December last year. But Alleyne could well try again. He has already spent one year in prison in Martinique in 1977 for attempting to launch an earlier attack on Barbados.

The threat remains, as do the plans for a free port area and an oil refinery in Dominica.

The above account cannot be dismissed as a bizarre

fantasy. In 1978 foreign mercenaries invaded and overthrew the government of the Comoro Islands, off East Africa.

Third World

The Dominica story is a graphic illustration of how countries in the misnamed 'Third World' are at the mercy of big business and their hired hoodlums.

In reality there is no 'Third World' at all. The countries are not separated from the economic power of imperialism.

Whilst they cannot all be overthrown by the whim of this or that firm or would-be Napoleon, they are all dominated by the power of international capital. Only when that power is broken will people in the Caribbean, South Africa and throughout the world be able to face the future securely.

By Jim Chrystie

MASS WORKERS PROTEST AGAINST PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT

May Day this year saw the largest demonstrations since the 1974 revolution.

Hundreds of thousands marched in Lisbon, over a 100,000 in Oporto, and tens of thousands in towns and cities throughout the country.

In every demonstration the main slogan was the same: "The struggle continues, the Mota Pinto government must go."

Workers were furious at the attempts by this reactionary government to destroy the main gains of the revolution: the nationalised industries, the elements of workers' control, agrarian reform and even the freedom of information won in 1974.

The demonstrators demanded that the workers' parties should unite to act against this minority big business government and form a majority left-wing government.

But the leaders of the workers' parties are refusing to mount a really vigorous attack on this government.

Whilst hundreds of thousands marched behind the CGTP (trade union) banners, the leaders of the unions refused to make any criticism of Eanes, the President of Portugal.

Like the Communist Party leaders, the tops of the trade unions see the Presidency as a classless institution necessary

for democracy. Yet they know that Eanes voiced his support for the policies of the Mota Pinto government as recently as April 25th.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party had spelt out its viewpoint the day before:

"The Communist Party has neither participated in the attacks, nor in the defence of President Eanes. The Party refuses to participate in such destabilising operations as it considers the Presidency of the Republic to be a supreme institution necessary for democracy."

This professed 'neutrality' towards a defender of big business is full of dangers for Portuguese workers. It is also not an entirely accurate reflection of their views.

When sections of the May Day demonstrators called for 'No to the Eanes/Mota Pinto government', they were arbitrarily suppressed by CGTP officials. This illustrated both the lack of political understanding of the CGTP bureaucrats and the lack of democracy within parts of the trade union movement.

The workers' struggle has also been partially hampered by the attempt of social democrats within the Socialist Party, and outside it, to split the trade union movement and form their own organisation, the UGT.

So far they have had little success. Over 85% of workers remain in the CGTP and only a few hundred followed the UGT on May Day.

But the leaders of the UGT

used the vacillation of the CGTP to make demagogic attacks on Eanes and the Mota Pinto government. Although empty of any real attempt to combat capitalism, this rhetoric could attract some workers to the UGT.

It is vital for all workers that the present policy of the leaders of the labour movement is ended.

Socialist workers within the CGTP should fight for it to become an active, fighting, democratic trade union organisation. They should reject the divisive policies of some leaders of the Socialist Party and try to build a united trade union movement.

That is the way forward for the Portuguese workers.

On the May Day demonstrations, many workers wore T-shirts proclaiming "I'm a worker, I'm with the Socialist Party."

United action should be the approach now. The workers parties must build upon the mass May Day demonstrations.

The Communist Party and Socialist Party should organise to end this disastrous government of big business. If they formed a united left government and fought the 1980 elections upon a bold socialist programme they would undoubtedly win the overwhelming support of the Portuguese people.

By JPM Frier,
JC da Silva
and F Figueira



Workers' opposition car at austerity plans again

Italian General Election

This weekend's Italian General Election follows the collapse in February of the Andreotti government and the failure, despite months of bargaining, to rig together a replacement.

Andreotti's Christian Democratic government, Italy's 40th since 1943, resigned in the face of workers' opposition to the austerity plan put forward by Treasury minister Pandolfi. This movement forced the Communist Party, PCI, to stop supporting the government resulting in its immediate collapse.

Since the beginning of the year the momentum of workers' struggles has gathered pace. This year ten million workers (including engineering, building, chemical, textile, printing and agricultural workers) are due to negotiate their three-year contracts.

Hardly a week goes by without strikes and demonstrations taking place.

On 8th May five million workers took part in a four-hour strike in support of their demands for wage increases and a shorter working week. A week later two million public service workers held a 24-hour strike in support of their claim.

At the end of April the FLM, metalworkers' union, told its members to blockade

all factory gates for 48 hours. In southern Italy workers have attempted to take control of the running of their plants.

The Confindustria, the Italian bosses' group, has firmly come out against the workers and called for activity. But with unemployment at 1,600,000 and inflation at 14.3% and both still rising, the Italian workers are pressing ahead with their claims.

Yet the workers' parties, the PCI and the Socialist Party, PSI, are not providing any real direction to the current struggles.

The PCI leaders, who until the beginning of the year supported the capitalist Christian Democrat government, are still demanding a place in a government of national unity of all 'democratic' parties.

There can be no doubt that, at present, the majority of workers have great expectations that the entry of the PCI into the government would mark a dramatic change in their situation.

But it is likely that for the first time since the 1950s, the PCI would lose votes in this election. Their role in supporting the various capitalist governments since the 1976 elections has disillusioned many people.

Craxi, the leader of the PSI, has fought the election

on the need to build the PSI as the 'third force' between the Tory Christian Democrats and the PCI, without putting forward any real programme. Fanfani, the right-wing Christian Democrat leader, has hinted, in return, that they might be prepared to let a PSI member be Prime Minister in an attempt to revive the old 'centre-left' governments of the 1960s and the early 1970s.

No one in Italy expects these elections to resolve any of the issues facing the country.

None of the party leaders are seriously discussing the actual policies. All are concentrating on the various possible combinations for the new government.

But the development of events will not be shaped by parliamentary manoeuvres. Every government which has tried to introduce austerity measures has fallen in the face of workers' opposition.

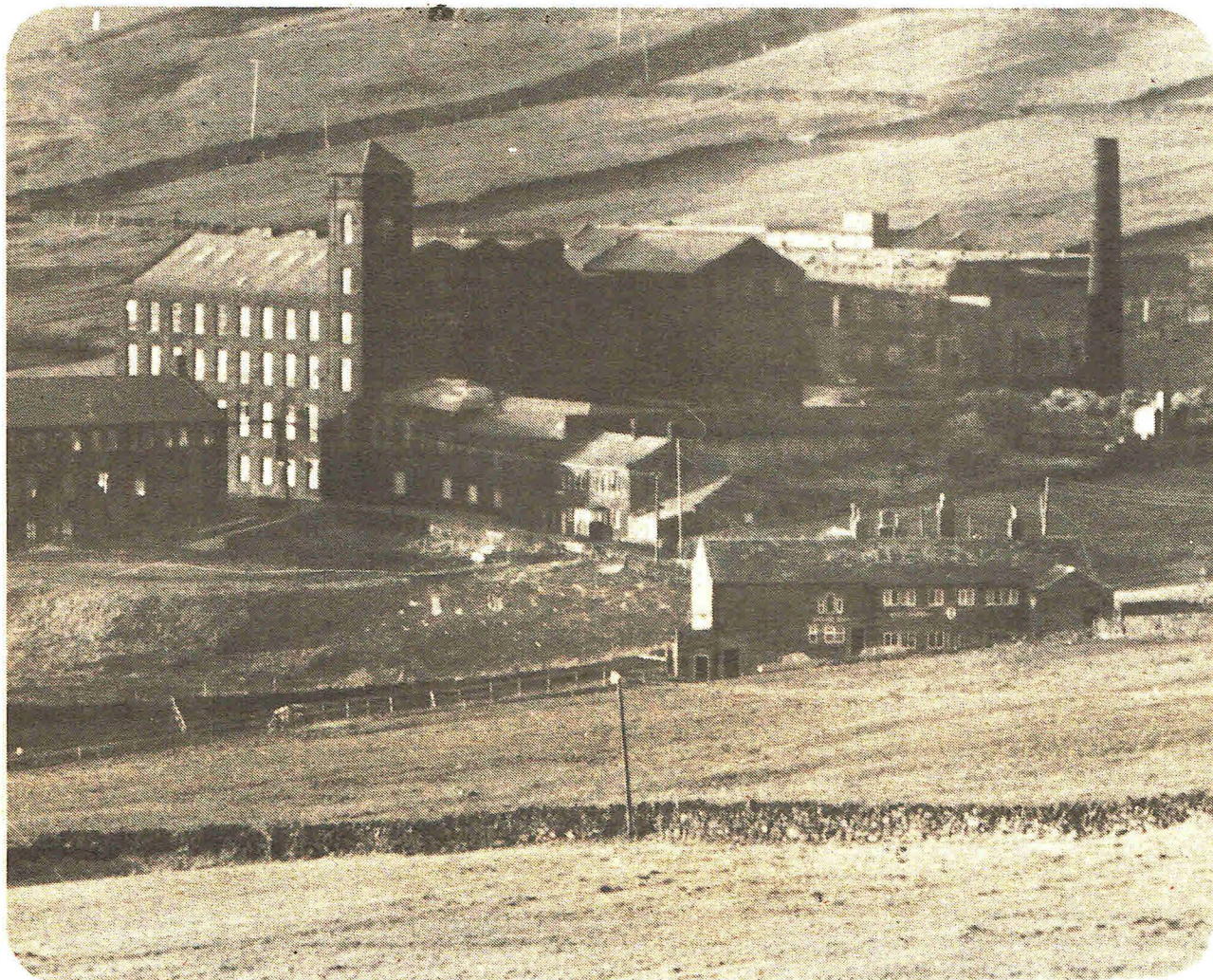
Any decline in the votes of the workers' parties will not hold back the class struggle for long and in this situation the leaders of the PCI and PSE will be put to the test as workers draw the conclusion from their experiences and demand socialist action.

By Bob Labi

ASBESTOS

83 KILLED IN ONE MILL

Eighty-three died from asbestosis and a further 192 people contracted the disease whilst working at this Yorkshire mill.



Acre Mill

A report on the mill, Acre Mill [near Hebdon Bridge] was given in a recent BBC programme 'A Week in the Old Town'.

The report illustrated the complete disregard of the bosses for the safety of the workers.

As the TV commentator stated: "Acre Mill stands as a blackened monument to those killed and

maimed by asbestosis."

by a TBA worker

Two women in a family where the mother and five children had contracted asbestosis, told how they had to clean machines and sweep floors covered in asbestos dust. Such was the disregard of the bosses for the safety of the workers.

The mill was closed in 1970

and has remained empty ever since. But it is still feared by local inhabitants. Even though it has been vacuumed twice since closure, local people fear that demolition will release a cloud of asbestos dust over the area.

But 21,000 workers are still employed in firms using asbestos. There have been 235 prosecutions under the present regulations.

In spite of technological improvements which could make the industry safe, the bosses are still complaining about the stringency of the asbestos regulations.

In Rochdale, TBA Industrial Products Ltd (part of the

Turner and Newall Group) who employ over 3,000 workers recently hit the headlines by saying that if the government report on asbestos recommended lower dust levels than 1,500 workers could be laid off.

The Simpson Committee who are compiling the report on asbestos safety have been told by Turner and Newall that a reduction in dust levels could put an end to asbestos regulations.

Mr Norman Rhodes, a director of TBA and general manager of the industrial textiles division stated in the 'Rochdale Observer' on 28th March that "If the asbestos

and they call these 'safety regulations'

The present asbestos regulations came into effect on 14th May 1970 after consultations between the TUC, the Department of Employment and Productivity, the asbestos industry employers, the medical profession and the users of asbestos products.

They replaced the regulations that had been in force since 1931. The 1931 regulations said that no dust should be produced during asbestos operations, yet they made no attempt to lay down an upper dust level, or to make dust checks compulsory.

The view of the bosses is clear.

For example in the 1950s the TBA factory in Rochdale introduced their own checks. These involved the primitive method of suspending a blob of Vaseline on a tin tray at various points throughout the factory, then left for seven days.

The Vaseline would then be examined with a thermal precipitator to establish the amount of asbestos fibres in the air.

In 1969, the new regulations came into force following fears about the dangers of 'blue' asbestos

(crocidolite).

Crocidolite was not banned, but the maximum dust level was fixed at 0.2 fibres per millimetre. Crocidolite asbestos is no longer processed at TBA.

Its use was stopped in 1969 when its link with the cancerous disease mesothelioma became obvious.

The 1969 asbestos regulations called for:

Employers to provide machines with extractors to remove dust created or apply other means, such as damping, which helps to prevent dust being given off.

If there is a dust problem then protective respirators must be provided and properly maintained.

Changing booths with washing facilities, with two lockers for each employee—one for outdoor clothing, the other for overalls etc.

Overalls to be worn at all times in working areas and no overalls to leave the premises.

Loose asbestos has to be kept in dust-proof containers and any asbestos waste must be stored in a way that will not release dust.

industry is given no time to comply with new hygiene standards, 1,500 workers at TBA could go home. It is as serious as this."

The Simpson Committee is due to publish its findings within the next few months. In an interim report a maximum dust level of two fibres per milliliter was recommended. This compares to the TUC's call for a 0.2 fibre maximum.

Mr Rhodes went on to say: "If the committee does recommend a 0.2 dust level the crucial factor will be how long industry will be given to come down to this level and if the industry is prepared to finance the tremendous cost. It has taken almost thirty years to come down to the two fibre level and nobody can predict how long it would take to come down to a 0.2 fibre level."

This is a real indictment of

TBA and so-called private enterprise who consider the health of their workers not to be worth the cost of installing new machinery.

They are offering workers the alternative of working with levels of asbestos which are a danger to health or unemployment.

Yet TBA is considered to be one of the better employers in the asbestos industry.

If the industry is not prepared to finance the tremendous cost (as Mr Norman Rhodes puts it) then they are not fit to run the industry.

The asbestos industry should be nationalised (with compensation only on proven need) under workers' control and management so that we can ensure that production can continue without the threat to the health of workers and families who live in the areas near asbestos factories.

PLAN TO SABOTAGE NHS

In her article "NHS Prime Target for Tory Axeman" ['Militant' 18.5.79] Jackie Turner mentioned a private plan threatening mass resignations by family doctors [General Practitioners] from the National Health Service.

This is the Rugby Plan, drawn up by a working party of the General Medical Services Committee detailing the operation of a patient-financed service should the doctors ever feel the need for a mass withdrawal from the NHS—in support of a pay claim for example.

Detailed proposals which

are anticipated as being introduced at the time of a crisis were published in the 'General Practitioner' [April 20th]. They cover how the family doctor collects his fees based on known financial returns.

Allowance has been made for such factors as "the slow up-take of the scheme" because it is admitted: "For many practices dependent on NHS arrangements the changeover may be difficult and there will be problems too for some patients."

Here are some of the problems the patients will

face—they can "choose" between three categories:

[a] Item of service fees: surgery consultation £6, home visit £12, out-of-hours visit £18.

By Myrna Shaw
(JSSC, Bethnal Green Hospital)

[b] Annual payment: a yearly fee paid by the patient of £16-£20, children under 16 and OAPs £12 [who pays the OAP's fee?].

[c] Weekly contributions: adults 35p, children and

OAPs 20p, plus attendance fees of 55p for a surgery consultation, £1 for a home visit and £2 for an out-of-hours visit.

There are of course additional fees if you live more than two miles away from the doctor's main surgery—£1 is suggested for every extra mile.

The fee schedule is based on an average list of 2,300 patients in the expectation that 1,500 of them [750 children and OAPs and 750 adults] would contribute. No mention is made of what would happen to the rest.

This would give the family doctor a net income of £14,000 after his own arrangements for superannuation and sickness insurance provision [carefully detailed in the plan together with methods of organising himself for the changeover and collecting bad debts].

After putting forward proposals that would cripple the NHS, the Plan blithely states that maternity and contraceptive services are excluded "as it is anticipated that current NHS arrangements for these will continue."

Prescriptions too should be issued in the normal way as "it is reasonable to assume that chemists and dispensing doctors will dispense as at present since the government is unlikely to set aside its duty

to provide necessary drugs and appliances."

Can they really believe what they are saying? Surely these proposals if accepted would mean the complete destruction of the NHS and an attack upon our standard of living that must never be allowed to get off the ground.

The Plan has been put to Local Medical Committees to be considered by them at their Conference in June.

An immediate protest by the organised labour and trade union movement must be set in motion publicising the proposals and raising an immediate opposition. It must be hammered across to all trade unionists that their defence of their living standards includes the defence of the National Health Service.

Send your views and comments on the issues that affect you
to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LETTERS

Golden handshake... copper handshake

Dear Comrades

A news item in the 'Liverpool Echo' (May 14th) shows what sort of society we live in.

"A warning of more possible job losses at the Liverpool-based shipping line of Ocean Transport and Trading came today, after another 37 people were made redundant in its ocean marine division. Eighty jobs have been lost at the company in recent months.

"A spokesman for the line said: 'The world liner trade recession is still severe and there could be some further redundancies. They are very regrettable and unfortunate, but the numbers are not significant in a national context.'

"At the group's annual general meeting this afternoon, shareholders were be-

ing asked to agree to an ex-gratia payment of £59,970 to former director Mr Julian Taylor, who left the company earlier this year following a management reorganisation."

When workers are made redundant they get a paltry redundancy payment and the condolences of the company for these 'regrettable and unfortunate' events. When Mr. Taylor and his like are shown the door, its with £59,970 in their pockets.

Roll on the day when not only Mr. Taylor, but the rest of his class are shown the door—by the working class, not with a golden handshake, but with a well-directed kick.

Yours fraternally,

Kevin Bean
(Wallasey Labour Party)

GRAB THE TORIES BY THE NECK!

Dear Comrades

A few years' change has become
Painful for most, not some.
Many laws the Tories will pass,
All aimed at subduing the working class.

Tax cuts both poor and rich will see,
But the poor lose out on VAT.
Public spending also chopped—
Equal opportunity abruptly stopped.

Many cannot see their fate,
The cross is made a little late.
I could only pray the unions' force
Can return Labour and change the course.

We must all strike and check,
Grab the Tories by the neck.
Five years is far to great,
To be the victims of Maggie's policies of hate.

Chris Wilkins, Filey Labour Party

Fight the capitalist system

Dear Comrades

The next few years will be decisive, now that the fear of a Thatcher-headed government has been realised, with her newly formed anti-union cabinet.

Steps must be taken to build an organised working class movement which would form the base for a radical programme of socialist policies.

The social and economic climate such as we have today is fertile ground for mass unemployment, crippling wage restraint and a savage cut-back on public spending.

Parliamentary opposition must be linked to a campaign to awaken the rank and file of the labour and trade union movement to a socialist alternative, and to arm itself with Marxist perspectives.

Now is the time to mobilise the 12 million trade unionists, who together with the numbers of their families, would draw in overwhelming support in the campaign to change society, and to overcome the pitfalls of the 1930s.

I'm on my way to being an emancipated 20-year-old wife and mother, who has become politically aware for nine short weeks, and I challenge anyone to question the bold measures called for to smash the capitalist system, which keeps its stranglehold on the rehabilitation of our families.

Yes, I give my support to the 'Militant' and thought it might not be much, here's my £1 for the cause anyway.

Yours fraternally
Clare Harding
Isle of Wight

All the news not fit to print

Dear Sir or Madam

A survey was recently carried out in our neighbourhood, commissioned by the 'Nottingham Evening Post'.

The interviewer asked me if I read the 'Post'. I replied that I used to but since the recent sacking of 28 journalists, I no longer did and would remain a non-reader until such time as the journalists are reinstated.

I noticed he was writing something on his clip-board so I questioned whether he had reported what I had said.

He answered that he was not allowed to report anything relevant to what I had told him! Some survey!
Yours fraternally
Brian Lawton
Mansfield LPYS

Lagging behind inflation

Dear 'Militant'

I feel that Phil Waker's article (issue 456) may well give the impression that UPW workers have been offered increases of 12%-13%.

I would like to emphasise that the offer was only 8% on the basic rates of pay. The rest of the cost consisted of a reduction in the incremental scale (only affecting those who have been working for the Post Office for a short time) and limited consolidation of previous pay supplements (making a difference only in overtime payments).

My branch meeting was also very well attended and voted unanimously against the deal.

It should also be remembered that the UPW's original 'full claim' was only for an 8% increase on basic rates, the rest of the claim consisting of demands for a shorter working week and longer holidays, hardy perennials rapidly discarded at the negotiating table.

The situation now is that we have an offer of 9%, which it is recommended that we

accept having secured a re-opener clause for further negotiations should the other unions involved secure significantly higher increases. It would seem, however, that the very fact that the UPW would appear to have accepted a mere 9% increase would be detrimental to the negotiations of the other unions and, therefore, not likely to produce any improvement of our situation.

The efficiency agreements which the Executive Council is now pleased to term merely 'window dressing', have been set aside.

It is also proposed that the operative date for our pay settlements should be moved from 1st January to 1st July, for which we are offered 'compensation' of 4½% from 1st July.

This would effectively mean accepting a pay settlement for over a year hence of only 9% when inflation, under the new Tory government, is already back into double figures.

Yours fraternally
Nigel Smith
UPW

Dear 'Militant'

I am writing to you about an article you had a few weeks ago: 'Organised occupation stops fascists in Plymouth' ('Militant' 454). It was quite clear that you think something should be done about the NF.

I would call myself a socialist, but I disagree with these tactics. I do not agree with the Front and Fascism, but I believe that to encourage a government to ban a party is to give them the power to ban others. There is

no evidence that trying to ban an idea will stop it growing.

But being in support of the NF or any other organisation having their say does not imply any support for their ideas.

Racism is dangerous, and should not be supported by any member of the working class. Those who support "smashing" racism ignore that it arises out of a capitalist society.

The workers are under the burden of poverty, illness and insecurity. All it takes is a

crisis of some sort, to highlight these problems, and for them to react in an illogical way.

Immigrants do not cause these problems. Take Glasgow—there are relatively few coloured immigrants but it has some of the worst slums and social problems, such as crime, in the country.

But if we lose free speech we've lost everything.

Dean Cooper
Lancashire

Running with intent

Dear Comrades

On my way home at 11.30 pm one Saturday, it seems I behaved in a very suspicious manner.

I ran across the parking area and up the stairs into the flats where I live. By the time I had found my keys and begun to unlock the door I had been followed by a policeman, who wanted to know why I was running. Then he took my name and address, my date and place of birth, and asked for identification—all on my own doorstep!

I've never been in trouble with the police before, and have always been told that it is best to co-operate with them.

However, when I asked why he wanted this information, he replied that if there had been any robberies in the area to which I fitted a description I might be contacted again. I wasn't visibly carrying anything that I might have robbed, and the policeman did tell me not to worry.

Ever heard the one about George Davis...?

Fraternally
D Hughes
Bermondsey LPYS

More tact, Mrs T!

Dear Comrades

A short while ago Mrs Thatcher held a meeting with West German Social Democratic leader, Helmut Schmidt. Questions put to them by the press provoked an interesting episode which should give us all food for thought.

Press: Mrs Thatcher, you being a Conservative Prime Minister, and Mr Schmidt a member of the Socialist International, will this have any effect on the relations between you?

Mrs T: Oh no! After all, if you look at the policies Mr Schmidt is putting forward in Germany, you will find they are not all that different...

Schmidt (interjecting): Don't go too far!

Mrs T: ...to the ones we Conservatives are putting forward in Britain.

Schmidt: Don't go too far, Mrs Thatcher, you will make me unpopular with my Party!

I wonder how Schmidt would have reacted were it not for the presence of the press and TV cameras? No doubt he will have to brief Thatcher as to what kind of things can be said in public and what should be kept for saying behind closed doors.

Fraternally
Greg Oxley
Bothwell CLP

Make May Day the workers' day

Dear Comrades

On May 1st I attended the great May Day demonstration at Gothenburg in Sweden. It was 30,000 strong, mostly workers.

It was a scene of extraordinary colour and filled the whole wide boulevard that leads up to the City Hall. A great river of red flags and banners with five very accomplished bands playing the 'Internationale'.

They really made it into a splendid marching song; the sound of this inspiring music resounding throughout the whole city, stirred the emotions.

This combination of hundreds of waving red flags, some made of silk, singing and marching music, brought out the whole population to watch the spectacle. All the symbols of solidarity and

socialism were there, although the long speech of the Secretary of the Swedish Social Democratic Party did not once mention the word socialism.

However the potential strength of the organised Swedish workers was truly reflected in the vigour and the swinging step of these thousands of workers.

Is it not time that our movement paid as much attention to organising a May Day show of strength as the Swedish workers do? We won the May Day holiday, but now it's become just another Bank Holiday, apparently not necessarily on May Day itself.

We should press for it to be fixed on May 1st every year and really make it Labour's day.

Yours fraternally
Dudley Edwards

NO DEPRESSION AT 'MILITANT'

Petrol prices shooting up; 15p for a humble pint of milk, yet another jump in bread prices. Times are hard for working people.

And the financial press think it will get worse. They talk of a 'shadow of depression' in the '80s. Despite the difficulties our readers in making ends meet, we are delighted at the way you ensure that this 'shadow of depression' doesn't reach the **Militant Fighting Fund.**

Our readers know that if our living standards and public services aren't to be bled dry by Thatcher's Vampire Loyalist government, 'Militant' has to budget for growth, not the downward spiral of depression. Although we still aren't getting in regularly the amount we need we can only be heartened by the really generous donations of some supporters.

For example, a worker at National Carriers sent us his £50 back pay, with the comment "[it] would not have been achieved without the success of the lorry drivers' strike, which owed a lot to 'Militant'."

Another supporter from Teeside also sent us £50, which was a bonus payment. It's also a bonus for us when we get donations of this size, because usually individual readers can't afford that amount.

We do get useful sums regularly from Labour Party Young Socialists' branches, trade union discussion groups and so on. St Pancras North LPYS came top of the YS League this week with a collection of £15.66½, closely followed by Liverpool Toxteth and Birmingham Handsworth (£10 each), and Blackpool (£6). Has the Labour Party Young Socialists' branch in your area discussed making a similar donation?

This week over £195 has come in from 'Militant' Readers' meetings in Southampton, Eastbourne, Brighton, Basildon, Teeside, Nottingham, Ipswich, Scarborough, Huddersfield, Slough,

By Steve Cawley

Coventry and two in London. Our thanks particularly to delegates to the TSSA and USDAW conferences, whose contributions are included in this figure.

Brothers from Newcastle and Hartlepool sent us their union expenses of £21, and workers at Landers Bakery made up 'extras' of £1.36 on the sale price of 'Militant'. A Bristol weekend school left us £10 better off, and an election day whip-round in the Oak Tree Labour Party, Mansfield and from Newark and Bassetlaw came to the best part of a fiver. Aberystwyth LPYS donated £1.50 and Newbattle LPYS another £1.30.

As well as the two £50s, we had £40 from someone who wishes to remain anonymous, Ph: MILITANT

Build **Militant**

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 26 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	2,350		1,153
Hants & IOW	3,100	1,550		887
Humber-side	2,000	1,000		624
London North	9,500	4,750		2,046
London South	3,900	1,950		1,218
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	2,250		1,158
Merseyside	5,000	2,500		1,031
Midlands East	3,300	1,650		1,371
Midlands West	9,000	4,500		2,422
Northern	5,500	2,750		1,451
Scotland East	2,900	1,450		443
Scotland West	4,500	2,250		857
South East	4,500	2,250		1,465
South West	3,100	1,550		1,097
Wales East	2,600	1,300		584
Wales West	3,400	1,700		562
Yorkshire	6,800	3,500		1,670
Others	6,700	3,250		2,818
Total	85,000	42,500		22,857

Progress towards year's target ■■■■■ Progress towards July 7th target ■■■■■
TARGET FOR THE YEAR £85,000 - TARGET FOR JULY 7th £42,500



Readers' meetings are an excellent way of raising cash—as well as a political education

**THIS WEEK
£1,081**

are just one very easy way of getting the least from a large number of people. Where else can you get a holiday in Rome for the price of a small bar of chocolate? And our prices won't go up.

A Tyneside reader sent us cigarette vouchers and asked if postage stamps would be any use to us. Foreign or commemorative issues certainly would if in good condition, as would trading stamps.

Nearly £150 came in this week from small (in most cases) fund-raising efforts. Amongst the most successful were the May Day Party (Ipswich, £21.20), hair cut (Bristol, £11.10), traditional Sunday dinner (London, £14) and 'car rides' (W London £15).

Other smaller contributions were from cartoon books, the Ware quiz, coffee and food for canvassers, Bracknell badges and cheap beer from Sunderland. Finally, £56 came in through 'extras' in readers donating their change when buying 'Militant'.

We want to be able to bring you an even better quality paper in the future, and to assist us in speeding up the production of your 'Militant' (which means more up-to-date news) it's essential we get the new plate-making equipment mentioned previously. If you want an even better 'Militant', help us budget for growth!

and £30 'unused LPYS Conference money' from a London supporter. (Still more of the latter around, comrades?) A Merseyside SOGAT member sent us part of his tax rebate (£10) and this was also matched by I Stiff (Ipswich). C O'Brien from Ruislip headed the West London list with £6, and we had seven individual fivers this week, including two from Scotland, and two from students A Huyton and S Johnson. Others were from Helen (N London) and P

Petterson (Hull). Sums between £2 and £5 came from F and B Kidd, J and H Wobey, M Perkins (Brighton), H Smith (Liverpool) and D Caddick (Ipswich). Many of these supporters give us these sums regularly because they see the need for expanding the content and scope of the paper. Our thanks also to E Castle (Hayes) £1.65, J Sleightholme (Lewisham) £1.40, and J Lloyd (Huntingdon) £1.20. £1s included those from G Tarrant (bus fitter), J Coulson

(TGWU, Ford's, Southampton), B Harris, A Stevens, R Bright and S Field (all London), S Downie (Edinburgh), S Aguilar (Milan), R Thomas (Bristol), J Muncie (Birmingham), L McCluskey (Mersey Docks ACCTS) and P Medhurst (Regional Officer NUAAW Ipswich). The weekly sum of under £3,300 which we need to reach the half-year target will be reached if every reader of the 'Militant' is approached for a donation. The Eurodraw tickets priced at only 10p each

ads

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

BIRMINGHAM Militant Public Meeting. 'Socialism and the EEC'. Speaker: Albert Bore (Labour's EEC candidate, South Birmingham); Jeremy Birch (Selly Oak Labour Party) Friday 8th June, 7.30 pm, Dr Johnson's House, Colmore Circus, City Centre

BRACKNELL Militant Readers' Meeting 'Which way forward for Labour?' Speaker: Lynn Walsh ('Militant' Editorial Board). 8 pm, Thursday June 14th, at Griffin House (Opposite Red Lion pub), Bracknell. Admission free.

BRISTOL Militant Readers' Meeting Sunday 10th June, 7.30 pm. 'Trade Unions under the Tories'. Speaker: Andy Price (Cardiff SE Labour Party and Cardiff Trades Council). Crown Tavern, Lamb Street, near Old Market, Bristol.

Militant Weekend School

Friday June 29th to Sunday July 1st
 At: Goldsmith's College Students' Union,
 Lewisham Way, London S.E.14.

Courses on:

- ★ Marxist Economics
- ★ Marxist Philosophy
- ★ Marxism and the Trade Unions
- ★ Ireland: History and Perspectives
- ★ Russian Revolution
- ★ The Labour Party

Friday evening: film 'Harlan County'
 Plus: Debate. 'A Socialist Programme for Labour'
 Speakers from 'Militant' and 'Tribune'

Registration: £2.50—whole weekend, £1.50 for Saturday or Sunday only, 75p for Friday evening only.
 To register, or for further information, write to: Militant Marxist Weekend School, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

MILITANT RAFFLE

£500 WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE WON
 IN 'MILITANT'S' FORTHCOMING
 "EURODRAW"!!!

Date of Draw—July 7th 1979.
 Tickets 10p each in books of 10
 Order, if you can, from your local 'Militant' distributor
 otherwise order from 'Militant Eurodraw'
 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

CLASSIFIED

MILITANT'S programme.
 Four-page broadsheet from issue 453. Under 40 copies: 2p each. 40 or more 1p each. Postage: under 40 copies, add 20p; 40 or more, add 50p. Cheques to 'Militant'. Order from 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Revolutionary greetings from Harry, son to Alan and Stephanie (Brighton). Born 2.33 am, 15th May.

CPGB Brighton Branch, Stan-ford Arms, Thursday May 31st, 8.00 pm. 'The EEC—what's the point?' Speaker Gerry Pocock, all welcome

BFAWU The Lessons of the Bakers Strike

Last winter's strike has brought home the realities of class struggle more effectively to workers in the bakery industry than a thousand articles could do.

The concerted campaign by employers, press, and police will not be lost on the conference of the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union.

The policy of the BFAWU calling for nationalisation of the industry is more than just a pious resolution; it is the only way forward in our fight for an end to low pay and bad conditions.

By Gerry Lerner

In a circular produced during the strike, Sam Maddox graphically showed the full forces of the state arrayed against workers struggling for the

dignity of decent wages and conditions; yet he finished the circular by showing that despite all this force at the employers disposal they would not last one minute against the united power of an organised working class.

Union transformed

When debating the lessons of the strike, Conference must develop policies that can harness the full power of its members in this fight, and can create effective unity with other workers to carry forward the common struggle.

Over the recent years the Bakers' union has been transformed from a quasi-company union into an organisation that has begun to challenge the employers on a whole number of questions.

This process itself has done a lot to bridge the gap between the officials and lay members, and the resolution calling for the periodic elect-

ion (ie every five years) of all full time officers will carry the process even further.

All officials should be elected and subject to instant recall by those who elect them. This would ensure that the officers reflect the aims of the members they represent. Certainly, no official worth his salt has anything to fear from such an extension of basic trade union democracy.

There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of members thought that last year's claim for a £10 rise was justified. In spite of this the union entered the battle unprepared for the vicious counter attack of the employers, and as a result many sections weakened and capitulated.

The lack of an effective campaign to prepare for the struggle has unfortunately taken its toll in the loss of the closed shop in many areas.

In the 13 resolutions dealing with the national strike there is a serious attempt to get to grips with this lesson.

The issue of advance preparation for struggle is raised in those resolutions calling for full ballots before and to settle all national disputes. If this were combined with mass meetings to discuss the strategy and tactics of the fight it would play a vital role.

One resolution talks of a master plan to include strike committees, picket organisers, fund raisers and so on. Although any secret master plan would be self defeating as the key to an effective campaign is the full involvement of the mass of the members, nevertheless the resolution does reflect the need for a greater degree of preparation at all levels.

In many areas during the strike, strike committees were not functioning and members were fed on the distortions in the bosses' press and management letters.



The aftermath of the strike has left deep scars and a bitterness that is shown in the resolution calling for any members who fail to support official union action to be barred from holding any office.

On the other side, the basic strength of trade unionism are shown by the increasing numbers, who dropped out of the union, reapplying for membership as they realise how they were duped by management lies and as they experience working in the industry without the protection of a trade union.

Before his tragic death, Sam Maddox had made it clear to all that he saw the struggle for decent conditions in the industry as an essentially political struggle.

The Tory election victory has really high-lighted the truth of that assertion. The

policy of the Federation to smash up picket lines and destroy the closed shop is now the policy of the government.

The policy of tax handouts to the rich while slashing spending on essential services for working people, the old, young and sick shows the Tories to be a bosses' government.

Yet Labour lost the election because it had failed to stand by its own supporters: the trade union and working class movement. The struggle to ensure that the Labour Party and the TUC fight as effectively for workers' rights and socialism as the Tories will fight for privilege and profit is opening up anew.

The recent experiences of the Bakery, Food and Allied Workers Union should ensure that they take a proud part in that struggle.



Bakery workers picketing factory in Newcastle last winter

P&T dispute: STEP UP THE ACTION

The so-called 'good image' which the Post Office tries desperately hard to maintain has been ripped away.

Four weeks of CPSA action has revealed the real, provocative and intimidatory face of Post Office management.

The current action, over our pay claim of 13.8% to 28.5% has so far, alongside SCPS action over pay, resulted in a £250m-£300m loss for the PO in the form of unpaid telephone bills.

The Post Office made a pathetic offer on 2nd May of 9% on present rates, 2 1/4% if we agreed to forward the operative date from 1st April to 1st July and a cheeky 3 1/2% if their scandalous proposals on 'downgrading' were acceptable!

The 'offer' was of course rejected. Since then meetings with top PO management have revealed just how stupid these people are. On 8th May, we were told that the PO was

ernment's incomes policy, although a new government had been elected!

On Monday 21st, they told us to call off selective action otherwise the 'offer' would be withdrawn and a reduced 'offer' would be put to us!

And as if that wasn't enough, on Wednesday 23rd May, they again put the same 'offer' to us with 20 clauses, calling for increased efficiency and productivity, work study etc!

Workers have helped rake in £400m for the Corporation this year. Actually, if PO accounting was based similarly to that of private companies, profits would be well over £1,000m this year. And still they offer 9%! What a nerve!

In many areas, the PO has suspended members for refusing to perform the work of members on strike. Eighteen members per hour were being suspended in London City branch for this reason, for example.

In my own branch three members have been suspended. However, the response of the membership has been

For example, 5,000 members in the North West have staged a mass walkout over the Liverpool suspensions. At this time several hundred members nationally are on strike.

Due to the insulting attitude of management and their derisory 'offer', delegates at our Group Conference (where incidentally 'Militant' supporter Dave Bell was elected onto the Group Executive Committee) told the GEC firmly to step up the action.

This, however, is an area of doubt. They have not done so as yet (a week after Conference) and they tend to waver over the question of strike action.

This was particularly demonstrated at the beginning of the fight, when the GEC only started action at the end of April about ten weeks after the submission of the claim to the PO.

Now they have no excuse. Escalate the action for full implementation of the claim!

By Steve Higham
(CPSA P&T group,
Liverpool,

AUEW Constructional Section: UNION MUST GIVE A LEAD

By Mick Cavers
(Branch Secretary, AUEW
Constructional Section,
Scarborough)

The 18th biennial conference of the AUEW Constructional Section will be one of the most important conferences in its history, for the election of a Tory government committed to cuts in public spending will have a disastrous effect on our industry.

Even under a Labour government, with massive subsidies to the clients and the construction companies, one third of our members were on the dole.

The crisis facing British capitalism is more intense in the construction industry, with 40% capacity unused. In international terms, we come off even worse. The construction industry grew by

62% per year in money terms to the OPEC countries from 1970 to 1975. Britain's share of that market fell from 21% to 9%. Such is the state of the mechanical construction industry.

With this in mind, many resolutions call for a reduction to a 35 hour week with extra holidays. On the wages front, Resolution 89 from North East division calls for conference to reaffirm its total opposition to any form of wage restraint and for all trade unions to support TUC and Labour Party conference decisions to these ends.

One of the major debating points of the Conference will be amalgamation. Conference must give a lead by pursuing full amalgamation, protecting the democratic rights of our members.

The election of Terry Duffy does not mean that the

AUEW is a right-wing union. The Broad Left failed to mobilise the membership around a national claim year after year. This paved the way for the right wing to return.

The bosses who, because of the crisis of the system, will be looking for further reductions workers living standards will ensure that members put a left wing leadership into control again.

If conference recommends to come out of the amalgam, it must be on the basis of a full discussion by all the membership and then an explanation of why we amalgamated with the AUEW in the first place.

After the conference the activists in our union must fight for the return of a Labour government committed to carrying out socialist policies. One of these policies must be the nationalisation of the construction industry under democratic workers control and management thereby putting an end to the present anarchy in our industry.

Times are changing

The Union of Post Office Workers' annual conference in Bournemouth reflected, perhaps in a muted form, the frustrations, anger, and new determination of the membership.

An amendment calling on General Officers of the union to come up for election every five years, instead of being elected for life, was only narrowly defeated. This modest increase in accountability seems certain to come up again at the Rules Revision Conference in October and must stand a good chance of being carried.

A lively debate on Post Office disciplinary procedures showed the increasing militancy of a growing number of

branches. The Conference and the three sectional conferences spent much useful time discussing our policy on working conditions and Post Office services.

But the conference was dominated by the debates on the 1979 pay claim and the Executive handling of it.

A number of amendments expressed 'No Confidence' in the Executive. These were defeated after powerful speeches by Tom Jackson in which he made it clear that he would resign as General Secretary if they were carried.

However, an amendment was easily passed which "censured the Executive Council for bringing the UPW into disrepute during the 1979 negotiations on pay, which culminated in the recommendation for acceptance in the national ballot."

After discussion on a number of detailed amend-

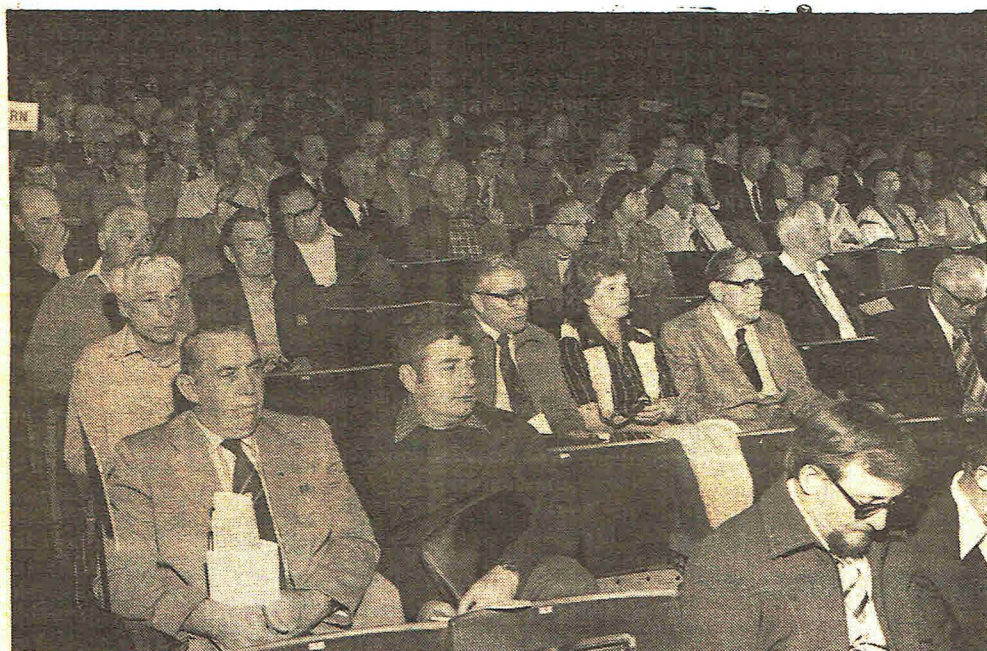
ments on the report on pay which had finally been put to the conference, most of the Executive's proposals were carried with only slight alterations. Conference accepted an interim pay deal.

However, if the autumn does not produce a much improved final pay deal and consolidation of pay settlements, the membership of the union will undoubtedly raise their voices once again. Industrial action of some kind is not ruled out, even by the Executive.

In replying to one of the debates, Tom Jackson said he believed that our union is changing. Never were truer words spoken.

Eddie Newman

(Manchester Amalgamated branch UPW delegate, personal capacity)



GMWU Conference in session

NO ROOM FOR CONSULTATION

Report of the GMWU Congress by Clare Doyle

"If confrontation it must be, then so be it," was the opening remark of the Chairman of the General and Municipal Workers' Union at the recent Congress.

It grew in significance through the week as more and more Tory election 'promises' were put into practice, especially the government's decision to declare a drastic freeze on Local Authority recruitment while the major public sector unions were in session!

The Union leaders were angered at the complete lack of 'consultation'. But, as the Tories have clearly shown—there is no room for consultation. "It's war!" Does the third largest union in the country possess the arms—the programme—with which

to fight back?

Wandsworth's resolution pledging full support to members fighting cuts in public spending was passed unanimously. A resolution calling for a £65 minimum wage made history the following day by being passed against the wishes of the Executive.

The tide is turning in the GMWU. The General Secretary stressed the need for "a new radical programme" in his report and in his speeches. Yet in the major economic debate, he rounded on the only Motion that explained honestly the reasons for the defeat of the Labour government and the urgency of adopting socialist measures, including nationalising the 200 monopolies.

"This union is against it, the Labour Party is against it and the TUC is against it!" he declared. "This conference cannot agree to a resolution that attacks the Labour government."

John Cope (Perivale) and Alan Moir (Manchester) had

already explained that policies of wage restraint had done nothing for the low paid and served only to please the "bingo players of Threadneedle Street." Investment had fallen, profits had soared and the total paid in Corporation tax had plummeted.

In attempting to answer the accusations with facts, the mover, Brian Roberts (Liverpool) was cut short by the Chairman for "introducing new material into the debate!"

Debate after debate—particularly on technology, pensions and unemployment—brought out the urgency for planning the use of society's resources. How else can we avoid 10 million on the dole by the turn of the century?

The Executive motion on unemployment asked only for more public spending and "serious moves to reduce the working year."

Where is the "radical new thinking" in this or the NEC's emergency motion which in effect warns the Tories not to be Tories? The desperate



A CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT THE CUTS

"Thatcher took away school children's milk: She must not be allowed to take the food from their mouths." This delegate to the National Union of Public Employees Conference speaking on a resolution calling for free school meals for all children typified the mood of delegates faced with the Tory axe.

The return of a Tory Government gave an extra urgency not just to the debates on the Health Service and local authorities but possibly even more to the discussion on political affiliation.

NUPE is still affiliated to the Labour Party. By an overwhelming majority, the delegates voted to fight within the Labour Party to make the Parliamentary Party more responsive to the wishes of conference.

Delegate after delegate went to the rostrum to criticise the failure of the Labour Government to eliminate low pay and for its introduction of public expenditure cuts, but the same delegates—even those favouring disaffiliation as a form of "pressure" on the Labour leaders—saw the possibility of changing the policies of the Labour Party.

Conference in the end adopted a motion calling for the union to "mount a campaign in the labour movement for the Labour Party Conference to institute the mandatory re-selection of MPs".... "to propose at the next conference that attendance and voting records at the meetings of the PLP be made public" and to "withdraw sponsorship from any NUPE-sponsored MP who votes against NUPE policies".

The resolutions, drafted before the general election were made more vital by the return of a Tory government.

The resolution from Edinburgh No. 1 called for nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry, abolition

of British capitalism and so on to account did not reach the floor of Congress for debate. Others failed because of mandates being made at regional level, in many cases on the Executive's say-so and before the arguments could be heard.

This happened with two resolutions calling for action on South Africa, for example, in spite of the unprecedented intervention of Dan Gallan of the Foodworkers' International in his fraternal address, criticising the Union for inactivity on this issue!

Next year is Rules Revision year and much still needs doing to democratise the GMWU fully. Proposals will be presented by the NEC on Industrial conferences for example and members must be alert to what can be done to involve more members in the decision-making processes.

Some suggestions for Rules Revision are summarised in

of all NHS charges, the ending of closures, democratic control of the NHS, involving NHS unions, and increased health expenditure.

The incoming Executive Council is committed to organise a major national campaign in furtherance of these demands. Overwhelmingly again, the conference voted to oppose any further cuts in public expenditure and it was against the recommendation of the EC that the delegates voted to support occupations in hospitals, schools, clinics and other public sector units threatened with closure.

In addition conference voted [once more against EC advice] to withdraw all services to private patients from January 1st next year unless a date has been agreed for removal of pay-beds from NHS hospitals.

Besides public expenditure cuts and the election, the other main debate was on wages. Unfortunately, this session was completely diverted by an addendum calling for the resignation of Alan Fisher and Ron Keating [general secretary and assistant GS].

But for that addendum many delegates would have felt a lot less inhibited about drawing out lessons of the recent strike. All strengths and weaknesses of the union could have been brought out and no doubt many hard-hitting criticisms would have been made of the union leadership and the negotiators.

But in the event, the debate revolved completely around

those in favour of Alan Fisher's resignation [about a dozen] and those not prepared to take part in a personal attack [the rest].

There was no real discussion on the merits and demerits of selective action, on union amalgamation, on increasing lay representation on negotiating committees, and there was even a failure to agree on a definite figure for the wage target for this year.

Nevertheless, the resolutions passed showed an unmistakable determination to continue the battle against low pay. It was agreed to fight for a statutory minimum wage equivalent to two thirds of the national average earnings, with adjustments every quarter.

The same sessions agreed a motion calling for a common settlement for all public sector workers, including NHS, local authority, University and Water authorities, in order to strengthen the union overall.

The experiences of the Labour Government, the strike and the new Tory government are uppermost in the minds of active members of NUPE, judging by the conference. Although delegates failed to agree policies clearly pointing a socialist way forward for the economy as a whole, the union membership will move in that direction in the coming months and years.

In the EC elections seven retiring members were deposited—including the President and chairman of three important sub-committees. Altogether, out of a lay EC of 25 members, there will now be 12 new faces. Even without knowing the political views of the new EC members, these changes are an indication of growing participation of the membership in their union.

Despite the fact that many delegates present were regular readers of MILITANT in their own locality, nevertheless a total of 97 papers were sold, another indication of the political direction that the union is moving along.

John Pickard

the new 'Militant' GMWU Review (price 5p) which should be ordered for sale in work-places and branches and form the basis for discussion in the immediate period. Some proposals were discussed at the 'Militant' meeting on the first night of Congress.

All aspects of the Rule Book and Union Policy will have to be taken up in debate and discussion throughout the union. That's what the General Secretary has asked for.

Real socialist content must be put into what is advocated by the leadership. If, on behalf of big business, the Tories are forcing us into confrontation, we cannot fight back unarmed on behalf of the membership. A way must be found of re-equipping the GMWU with the fighting programme of its founders!

POEU PREPARES TO FIGHT TORY CARVE UP

This year's POEU annual conference, which is to be held in Blackpool this week, takes place just one month after the election of a Tory Government pledged to ruthlessly support private enterprise.

POSTAL CHARGES UP - THREAT TO HIVE OFF TELECOMS

This poses a considerable threat to the livelihood of POEU members. Leading Tory spokesmen have made it abundantly clear that they wish to break the Post Office 'monopoly' by allowing private companies to sell, install and maintain telephone equipment in subscribers' premises.

Some Tory spokesmen have even suggested selling off profitable sectors of the Post Office. The importance of the present monopoly grows when the effects of the modernisation programme are taken into account. This programme will mean huge profits for private

enterprise if these new services were to be hived off.

It will be the task of this conference to give notice to the Government that this union will defend the monopoly by all means possible.

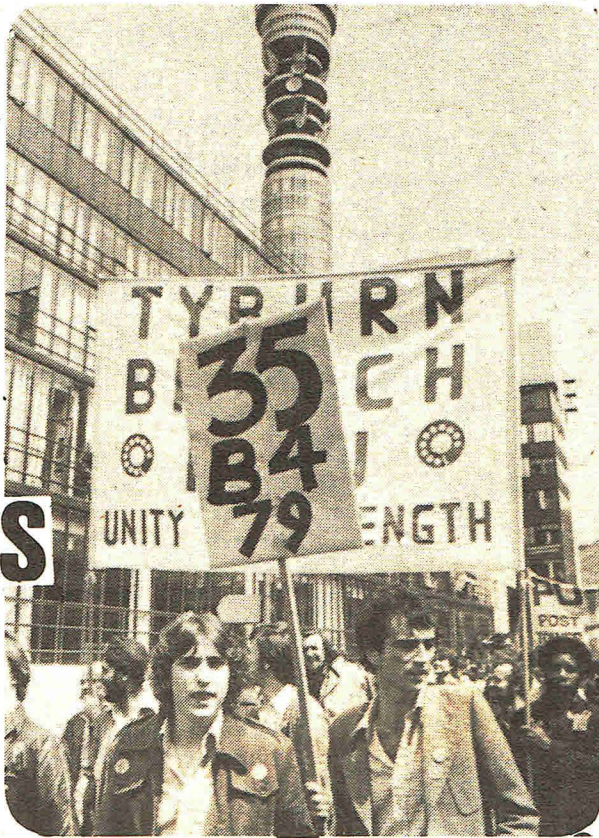
This conference should also urge the Labour Party to formulate a policy that all de-nationalised sections of state controlled industries will be re-nationalised without compensation when a Labour Government is returned.

By Kevin Pattison

(Leeds Internal branch sec, personal capacity)

Annual conference this year, as well as debating the progress of the 20% pay claim, will have the important task of formulating a policy

Photo: John Sturrock (Report) (11)



POEU members march in London during strike action for 35-hour week

on modernisation, especially on staffing levels. Tremendous pressure will be put upon the union to allow reductions in manning levels through natural wastage; however this will be opposed by the recently formed Broad Left.

As an alternative to this proposal the Broad Left will put forward the policy of reducing hours and maintaining the present manning

levels. This conference will be a real testing ground for the policies of the Broad Left with the first edition of the Broad Left's own magazine 'Spark' on sale.

The policies decided upon at this conference will effect the union for many years to come, and therefore it is essential that a leadership is elected which is able to meet the difficult tasks facing Post Office engineers in the future.

TORIES SHARPEN AXE Continued from page 1

Act. "Age Concern", the pressure group for old age pensioners, warned that the cuts would inevitably hit pensioners and other low-income groups.

The decision by the Tories to make social service departments immediately repay debts to the government could also have disastrous consequences for local authority plans.

In Sheffield, for example, it has meant the whole year's social services capital allocation—

£500,000—has been wiped out. The council now have to curtail projects including a sheltered housing scheme, a home for the mentally infirm, fire precautions, and a day-centre for the elderly.

This is the harsh reality of the Tory cuts—attacking those who can't organise to defend themselves.

At the same time, the Tories are planning to increase the vast sums squandered on defence. Already, they have given a massive pay increase to the armed forces.

At NATO discussions last week, they pledged increased spending on the navy, and immediate steps to increase overall defence expenditure by 3% a year in real terms.

The ever-increasing spiral of rising prices goes on. The increases announced this week—oil and postage—will have a wide effect, as they will affect costs of virtually every other product.

The horrifying chaos of the Tories' "free market" monetarism is only just beginning to be felt!

Joseph claims that free enterprise is "the greatest engine of material advance ever known". Millions of workers suffering from cut living standards and mass unemployment—the responsibility of big business whatever the government in power—will find this hard to believe.

In any case, the bosses of backward industries are themselves forced to confess that "private enterprise" can no longer sustain production and modernise plant and equipment.

Industrial chiefs are appealing to the Tories not to cut back on aid to industry, as this could "harm industry at the present low levels of profitability" ['Financial Times', 26 May]. This is the dilemma facing the Tories—massive cuts in public expenditure will directly hit their friends in the CBI who build for, and supply, the public sector.

Sir Keith Joseph also announced plans to sell off the Kirkby Workers' Co-operative at a public auction.

This is a purely vin-

dictive move. Now the operation has been put on its feet with government money and above all by the efforts of the workers, the Tories are going to hand it over to big business.

Every reform introduced by the Labour government is under attack.

The Tories have stopped all but minor land purchases by local authorities as a first step towards repealing the Community Land Act.

Programmes that were introduced through the Manpower Services Commission to provide jobs and training for young people are also being cut. £48 million has been lopped off the Youth Opportunities Programme and the Special Temporary Employment Programme.

In one month, the Tories have shown what lies ahead. They have started the attacks on working people from every angle.

The whole strength of the labour movement must be mobilised to resist these attacks and to win support for socialist policies capable of providing real solutions to the problems of working people.

Militant

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OIL CRISIS

From page 1

suppliers, like Saudi Arabia, however, are attempting to restrain price increases—fearing the repercussions of another world recession like 1974/75.

But the big oil companies—dominated by the Seven Ugly Sisters—are certainly putting up the prices. World distribution is almost entirely in the hands of these big multinationals, and their role is now provoking howls of protest from the rest of big business who are having to pay through the nose for vital fuel supplies.

"The companies stand to make truly staggering profits from the price rises," comments 'The Observer' [27 May]. The profiteering of the oil giants, however, is but one symptom of the chaos of the capitalist market.

For decades, the main capitalist economies plundered the oil reserves of the world. Much of the oil they import has always been squandered in extremely wasteful forms of heating, production, and transport.

The abject admission by James Schlesinger, the US Energy Secretary, that his government was unable to impose even a 5% saving in oil consumption, indicates just

how unrealistic it is to expect any genuine economies in the use of energy in a capitalist system.

Rivalry between the oil moguls and inevitable attempts by oil producing states to take a share of higher pump prices can only exacerbate the crisis. Things can only get worse in the next period.

In London, the growing threat of a new world oil crisis has already dampened the Stock Exchange's jubilation at the Tory election victory:

"Just as it seemed that the technical weakness of the equity [share] market ... was beginning to work its way out, the fundamentals have turned nasty," said the 'Financial Times' [26 May].

"Higher oil prices are one thing, but oil prices that look to be moving out of control are quite another, and growing fears of accelerating inflation an depressed world trade have coincided with some lack lustre profit figures."

All the Tories' economic plans will be undermined by a new oil crisis and world recession. "Free enterprise" policies are no answer: it is the anarchy of the market which has produced the crisis.

Only socialised production and world-wide planning can provide a way out.



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MARGATE Militant Readers' Meeting (Bakers' Conference)

Tuesday June 5th, 7.30 pm
 Britannia Pub (opposite Winter Gardens Conference Hall)

Speakers:
 Joe Marino (Bakers' Union EC)
 Brian Ingham (Industrial Editor, 'Militant')