

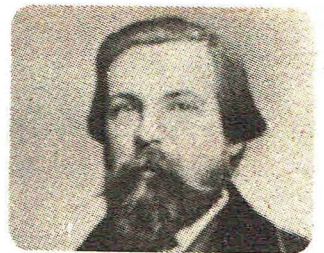
Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH ISSUE 483 14 December 1979

15p

INSIDE

ENGELS:
Two model
town councils
page 8



- ★ Labour students conference... page 6
- ★ Anti-union legislation... page 2
- ★ Zimbabwe-Rhodesia... page 2



- ★ Schoolkids lead the fight page 3

NOTE-NEXT ISSUE 4 JANUARY

SOUTH YORKSHIRE UNIONS-

Call for regional strike against cuts

A call for further bold, mass action against the Tory cuts was greeted with enthusiasm last weekend by representatives of the South Yorkshire labour movement.

This was crystallised by a call for a 24-hour regional general strike [except for emergency services] on 18 February to defeat the cuts and stiffen the resolve of Labour councils to fight.

The call came from the South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils liaison committee meeting [8 December], attended by leaders of District Labour Parties, County Labour Parties, trade union officers, trades council and dis-

trict Labour Party leaders and convenors.

The demand came from grass roots delegates. Although the resolution was ruled "out of order", it will be discussed at a special meeting of the South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils on 5 January.

Delegates were dissatisfied with a general call for support for TUC policy and another Day of Action in February. They felt more concrete action was required.

Delegate after delegate wanted to know what policies we would be pursuing, especially after

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

STEEL MEN IN FRONT LINE

ANGRY WORKERS REJECT TORIES' DERISORY OFFER

Not content with ripping the guts out of the steel industry with devastating closures and mass sackings, the Tory government and BSC bosses have now offered the steelworkers an insulting 2½% wage increase.



Photo: MILITANT

The price of a job in steel, as far as Thatcher and Co are concerned, is acceptance of poverty-level wages.

The Executive of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation has

called a national steel strike for 2 January. This was the only possible response to BSC's derisory offer to consolidate the Phase II supplement into the basic rates and allow

Continued on back page

SHUT DOWN WHOLE INDUSTRY WITH UNITED ACTION

Say it with cash!

Earl Fitzwilliam can leave £11½ million to his wife. But what can one person do with that kind of money?

'Militant' could produce a daily paper with £11½ million in its funds, but we would still be looking to you, the reader, to sell it and write for it.

The fighting programme

needed by the labour movement can achieve nothing on its own. But, as the industrial and political battles sharpen, you, the worker reader, will be demanding more and more material—facts, figures and arguments to arm yourself, your work-mates, and the labour movement against the attacks of the bosses and the Tories.

'Militant' can provide them. But you must give 'Militant' your backing.

We don't have any rich benefactors, and £85,000 in one year will be an enormous achievement.

Yet this is the minimum we need to bring our productive capacity in line with the demands of the coming year.

'Money talks', they say! The best greeting for the new and stormy year ahead would certainly be in terms of cash.

Give us a donation, ask others to do the same, take raffle tickets, calendars, cards and appeal sheets with you wherever you go and help us raise our full target.

We need every penny by 5 January, Cheques, POs, vouchers and stamps should all be rushed to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN, marked 'Fighting Fund'.

See page 13 for how far we have still to go!



HOLY GHOST? CODSWALLOP!!
THAT'S AN OBVIOUS CASE OF CO-HABITATION
AND IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN
THREE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AS WELL

Alan Hudson

Militant

TUC MUST RESIST TORY ATTACKS

"Smash the trade unions, the obstacle that stands in the way of redundancies, closures, mass unemployment and low wages so that we can keep our wealth and power."

This was big business' mandate to the Tory government, which last Friday published its misnamed "Employment Bill".

The "moderate" Jim Prior predictably made pious statements about the "needs of the nation", "restoring prosperity", etc. But trade unionists will recognise the Bill for what it is—an attempt to cripple the trade unions by use of the law and the courts so that the working class is left defenceless against the vicious attack on their living standards and basic democratic rights.

This was spelt out in November at the conference of the CBI, the bosses' union, when to loud applause, Mr Colin Tick of Nicholson Investments denounced the closed shop because it stood in the way of "over-manning of industry" [i.e. sacking people] and "bringing down the level of wage increases."

The Tories aim to undermine or destroy the closed shop, limit picketing, encourage secret ballots, prevent "coercive" [i.e. effective] trade union recruitment and remove safeguards against unfair dismissal and provision for 'fair wages', at present enshrined in the Employment Protection Act.

These measures will meet a tidal wave of mass opposition.

The gains of the trade union movement over the past 200 years won by struggle and sacrifice will not be overturned by the deliberations of upper class Tory lawyers and rich ministers totally remote from the lives of ordinary workers and their families.

On the very day the Bill was published, the ISTC called a national steel strike, the first since 1926, with the "moderate" Bill Sirs declaring that there would be effective picketing "regardless of Jim Prior". The Welsh miners' leaders immediately pledged support, with sympathy strikes if necessary!

Thatcher will receive her come-uppance at the hands of the working class as Ted Heath did in 1970-74. Instead of Heath's frontal attack using a specially created, separate court, the new measures will leave it to individual employers to use the existing courts of law.

But the intention is the

same—and the result will be the same! Workers will not tolerate the undermining of the strength and unity on the shopfloor by scabs and management stooges.

The limit on picketing would make a mockery of the right to strike. It would be illegal for striking lorry drivers to appeal to the dockers for solidarity action. Prior himself admitted in August that "if people are hell-bent on obstructing the law of the country, then there is no option but to put them in jail."

The law courts will be used to intimidate trade unionists and inflict crippling financial damages on trade unions.

The legal profession, moreover, is rubbing its hands with glee. At a recent 'Financial Times' conference, Lord Wedderburn, Professor of Commercial Law at the London School of Economics, remarked, "My colleagues, and solicitors too, are quivering with anticipatory pleasure at the prospect of fees to come."

The proposed financial assistance for secret ballots is aimed at undermining collective trade union democracy and decision-making by opening their election to the influence of the millionaire press.

Previous attempts to smash the unions have ended in abject failure and led to the downfall of the governments.

What compels the bosses to take on the trade unions once again is the catastrophic economic position of British capitalism. Big business can hope to restore the profitability of their system by cutting the share of the wealth going to the working class. The fly in the ointment is the mighty, 12-million strong trade union movement.

Trade union leaders have angrily condemned the Tory plans. But verbal condemnation is not enough. The TUC must pick up the gauntlet and lead a mass, united national struggle against the Tories.

The resolution passed unanimously at the 1979 TUC congress to "resist vigorously fundamental attacks on trade union rights by a campaign mobilising the resources and membership of the entire trade union movement" must now be put resolutely into action.

Such a campaign should draw together all the separate, sectional campaigns into one huge movement. Local demonstrations and rallies, mass meetings in all the factories and on the estates, culminating in a 24-hour strike would paralyse this reactionary Thatcherite government, and pave the way for the return of a Labour government on a socialist programme.

DEFENCE CAMPAIGN: DON'T FORGET MILITANT THIS XMAS

"This Constituency Labour Party views with concern the decision by John Golding MP to pursue a libel action backed by POEU funds against the grass roots trade union and labour movement newspaper 'Militant'."

This resolution from Glasgow Central Constituency Labour Party went on to say that John Golding should be stopped as his court action will cause "great expence to the labour movement generally and the 'Militant' in part-

icular."

This is certainly true—where as Golding is going to rely on his union funds, the Militant is relying on donations from the labour movement, and these along with messages of support are steadily flowing in.

One of the most gratefully recieved individual donations this week was £10 from Mary Thomas, in memory of her late husband Harry Thomas. Harry was a member of the SWP and the NUT, and had great respect for the 'Militant' and the role it plays in the Labour Party. Over the years Harry made a number of well versed and constructive contributions to the Militant's letters page, and was always prepared to pay 50p an issue to help funds. Harry's death is a sad loss to the struggle for socialism but his contribution

to the movement will help ensure the fight goes on.

Other donations included £20 from Witney branch Labour Party. A Nottingham UCATT branch gave £2, and so did Leeds Labour councillor, RH Sedler.

With the coming battles against the Tories there will be plenty of opportunities to raise the question of the court action and raise money for the Defence Fund. One Newcastle Central LPYS member did just this and collected £8.60 on a coach returning from the anti-Corrie Bill demonstration in London recently.

Many local Labour Parties, like Glasgow Central, have passed resolutions condemning Golding in his action. One of the recent examples was Edingburgh East CLP who sent copies of their

resolution to the Labour Party NEC, POEU and Golding's own constituency, along with East Salford CLP.

But if our supporters fail to get a resolution passed at their GMC, they should not be deterred. Members of Woolwich Labour Party held a collection for the Defence Fund after their resolution was lost, and collected £10.95!

This week, many workers will be celebrating the festive season—all our supporters must approach all sections of the Labour movement to ask for a Christmas present for the Militant—either a donation, a resolution condemning Golding's action, or simply a message of support to: Militant Defence Fund, 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church St, London SE8.

RHODESIA-BASIC QUESTIONS UNRESOLVED

The announcement last week of a Rhodesian settlement does not mean that the situation has been decided. The major political and military questions have been postponed, not resolved.

The class nature of the future Zimbabwe state is left unresolved—the questions of jobs, land and peace itself are postponed.

This has been most graphically seen in the last week on the question of the ceasefire.

The rival armies will remain—the armies of the liberation movement and that of the Rhodesian regime, because they reflect the class polarisation of the Zimbabwean struggle.

The armies of the liberation movements (of ZANU and ZAPU) have reflected the demands of the Zimbabwe masses. The struggle has moved beyond that of replacing white rulers with black, and raised the social questions of jobs and land. Large-scale unemployment amongst African youth and the occupation of 50% of land by large corporations and white farmers whilst Africans are herded into 'Tribal Trust Lands', is an explosive mixture.

The different social basis of the rival armies has been the basic reason why it has been impossible to create one single armed force—they reflect different class forces.

Yet neither side has been decisively defeated. So the ceasefire arrangement is to postpone this confrontation, whilst British imperialism tries to give extra help to the Rhodesian regime.

The proposal to have the Patriotic Front forces assembled in 15 places would have made them sitting-ducks for the South African armed Rhodesian Air Force.

Concessions in the British plan are virtually inevitable, as ZANU spokesman Edison Zvogbo explained: "We could not deliver this ceasefire even if we genuinely desired to

betray the revolution—we would be defied and a new leadership would emerge."

But how then has an agreement come out of Lancaster House? Unlike the 1973 Paris Conference on Vietnam (where the Americans conceded defeat) there has been no outright victor.

The stalemate at Lancaster House reflects the military stalemate in Rhodesia.

In the last year the liberation movements have made further gains but the Muzorewa-Smith regime has not been facing collapse.

With massive aid and military backing from South Africa (paying 50% of the war costs) they have not only prevented collapse, but inflicted considerable damage on the neighbouring front-line states; these front-line states have put pressure on for an end to conflict.

The refusal of the middle-class leaders of the Patriotic Front to unreservedly mobilise and organise the urban workers and rural population in a mass struggle to overthrow the regime meant that they fell back exclusively on guerrilla warfare.

This led them to a reliance on the neighbouring front-line states and the recognition that if only the military road was to be followed, at some time this would need escalation into conventional warfare. So in addition to the front-line states, the Patriotic Front needed the assistance of the bureaucracies of Eastern Europe, Cuba and China.

Neither the front-line



The proposal to assemble the PF forces in pre-destined points would make them sitting ducks for the Rhodesian Army.

states, nor the Stalinist bureaucracies were willing to support this escalation.

Capitalism cannot answer the social demands generated in the liberation struggle. Any black leader who tried to would quickly find opposition. As Mugabe admitted he "dare not" make concessions on land.

But if any future African government tried to end capitalism and landlordism they would arouse military opposition from the Rhodesian army.

Whichever way one looks there are stormclouds. Lancaster House marks but a staging-post in the Zimbabwean revolution.

It's incredible to think that the Zimbabwe conference has lasted over three months. But the prices at the delegates' hotel, the Carlton, Knightsbridge, are even more incredible!

How about £4.75 for three teas! Or £2.30 for brandy? If you're hungry, you can pay £50 for a "light snack" consisting of a sandwich, a minute steak, two lagers and four bloody Marys.

No wonder the delegates have a daily meal allowance of £25!

This price information appeared in the 'Daily Tele-

graph' on 20 September prompted by Ian Smith's complaining that £8.95 was too expensive for a rib of beef. Apparently, that would only cost about £2.30 in Salisbury. (Still a bit much?)

Single rooms cost between £56 and £72 a night, excluding meals, for the 54 delegates from the Muzorewa government. The Bishop himself who claims to represent the Zimbabwean people, has a suite costing £200 a day!

The British government is paying for 20 members in each delegation.

Maybe 'Militant' will give a Christmas prize to the first reader to accurately calculate the cost of the conference expenses to the British government!

Amazing how some 'Quangos' escape the cuts!

MILITANT ALL DAY 'DO'
Saturday 5th JANUARY 1980

Coffee, cakes, chat, decorating, sandwich-making etc in the morning, 11a.m. onwards. [All free of charge!] Children's Party...games, food entertainment-for the children and by the children-in the afternoon, 3-7sh. [Parental contributions of at least 50p welcome!] Social...beers, wines, food and frolics from 8 p.m.-Midnight. [50p at the door and more inside-for refreshments, competitions etc!]

The Militant New Year Raffle will be drawn here too.
AN EVENT NOT TO BE MISSED
Venue: Hammersmith North Labour Hall,
446 Uxbridge Road, W12

SCHOOLKIDS LEAD THE FIGHT

Over 500 trade unionists, college and school students supported a local anti-cuts rally outside County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire on 28 November.

Even though the rally was due to take place during the lunchtime, supporters were arriving long before them.

The first group to arrive was a large delegation of schoolkids, waving placards and shouting slogans against the Tory cuts. They were followed by college students and then trade unionists from hospitals, schools and colleges, bringing with them further placards as well as Labour Party and trade union banners.

Unfortunately, despite the presence of youth at the rally the organisers would not allow the LPYS a speaker. The platform speakers were local Labour MPs and trade union officials who gave many examples of the Tory cuts and their effects on working people, but little in the way of a clearly worked out perspective of stopping the cuts.

Worst of all, Labour MP



Young schoolkids—they made up a large delegation in the Leicester demo against the Tories

Greville Janner, criticised the schoolkids for 'playing truant'. He did not seem to realise that the Tory cuts would have a far greater effect on their education and future job prospects than their act of 'truancy'.

Their participation in the rally clearly indicated their readiness to fight the cuts, which should be supported by the labour movement. Not surprisingly, Janner's criticisms were greeted with boos and jeers, and his remarks

were naturally supported by the local Tory press and radio.

The desire for a socialist lead was shown in the sales of over 50 copies of 'Militant' after, and was carried over to the following evening at the

'Militant' meeting addressed by Steve Marquis (NUT Divisional Council) and Clare Doyle (Militant Editorial Board).

Steve pointed out how the con-trick of substituting snacks for school-meals, at

his school, had been seen by the teachers and students alike. Now the local Tories were preparing for teacher redundancies because of 'over-manning' in schools!

"The introduction of cuts, cuts and yet more cuts", Steve said, "has brought about a level of enthusiasm amongst the Tories unequalled since the introduction of fox-hunting!"

Clare outlined the enormity of the crisis of British capitalism and explained how this was the real instigator of the attacks on the working class.

It was not enough for the Labour leaders just to point out the tragedies of Tory policies, it was absolutely necessary to also put forward a socialist solution to stop them and replace the system which demands them.

Support for this perspective was expressed in the excellent collection of £68.90 from an attendance of 25, and also in the debate that followed.

After the meeting, an older comrade, Ada Procter, who has been a Labour Party activist since the 1920s and 30s said "Before the meeting I was down in the dumps, but now I'm keen and lively".

By J Merrell

**NO HAPPY
NEW YEAR
FOR THE
TORIES!**

LPYS NATIONAL RALLY AGAINST THE TORIES

FEBRUARY 2nd.

Assemble 12.00 am, Porden Road [near Brixton Tube] London S.W.2. Send-off rally with speakers from local labour movement, including Ted Knight [Leader Labour Group, Lambeth Council], and John Bulaitis [LPYS NC member, London].

March through Brixton and Lambeth to rally at Central Hall Westminster, 2.30 pm-5.00 pm.

Speakers: Tony Benn MP
Eric Heffer MP Dennis Skinner MP
Tony Saunois [LPYS rep on Labour's NEC]
Andy Bevan [Labour Party National Youth Officer]
and others

Start the new decade with a bang! If you are fishing around for a New Year's resolution, how about pledging to make the LPYS march on 2 February a huge success? It should be the safest bet of the decade.

The Labour Party Young Socialists will be marching against the most hated British government since the 1920s. One small indication: Labour took Brislington ward in Bristol from the Tories last week with a swing of 28%!

A recent opinion poll showed half the youth are now pro-Labour and only a third for the Tories.

The LPYS aim to give a lead to working class youth in the battles against government spending cuts, redundancies, tough detention centres, and all the other reactionary proposals of the Tory Bourbons.

Coventry South-East (see article) have shown how the LPYS can build

with socialist ideas and the ideas of the 'Militant'. Swansea, Stockton and Nottingham all report an excellent response to our activities.

Swansea are selling 50 papers every Saturday on the streets. Nottingham sold over 80 in a Day of Action, and in Stockton paper sales are going so well that comrades have to be persuaded to do the other tasks of leafletting, etc.

Just to confirm this trend, this month there wasn't a region in the country where new YS branches were not being set up. Bristol held

their biggest ever Young Workers' conference, with 80 attending; 100 attended a similar event in Manchester; and 130 went to the Leeds conference.

All the conferences and marches have laid the basis for the February march.

In Bristol they used their conference to sell coach tickets and have thus almost filled one coach.

In Leeds, seven miners' pits were representing at their conference, and if these are followed up we should have an NUM contingent on the demonstration.

extra-long break to visit the trade unions and to make sure all the colleges are plastered with posters about the demonstration.

Give someone a happy New Year. Let them know about the LPYS and the fight for socialism where it counts!

FASCIST ATTACK

The danger still posed by fascist thugs was brought home again last Saturday. At a social held after the Yorkshire LPYS's very successful Young Workers' Conference, YS members were attacked in a pub by NF thugs. Paul Green, the regional chairman, had to be treated in hospital and had six stitches.

It seems likely that there was a secret NF meeting in Leeds that day. This incident shows the need for vigilance at all public meetings, social functions, etc, and for the mass labour movement to crush the fascists once and for all.

Time to prepare

Starting the 80s with Thatcher in power will dampen the festive spirit of many workers. So brighten up their Christmas—pay them a visit at work or at home. Only socialism can make the 80s a decade to look forward to. So get them to pledge support to the LPYS march, make a donation and send their brothers and sisters on 2 February!

Some YS branches are planning to make special appeals at their Christmas socials for the march, others will be using the break to make up floats and banners. No-one should be sitting back. Use the time to prepare!

Immediately after the break, school and college students should use their

Build the LPYS - Coventry SW show the way

Coventry South West are about to join Berwick and East Lothian at the top of the membership league in the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Kevin Parslow, a member of the branch, reports that they had almost 100 members signed up at the beginning of December. Berwick are well over the ton, and thereby have the right to send their own delegate to the National Labour Party Conference.

"Day by day the Tories are showing why young workers should become active in the Labour Party. Now we are building a real socialist force to take on the bosses and their system.

"A hundred members will be a landmark in the development of this branch. But we can't stop there: we want every young worker to know about the LPYS and socialism," says Kevin.

How have they achieved their growth? "By showing working-class youth that we are prepared to get out

By Yasmin Barry

(LPYS National
Committee)

on the streets and fight for socialist ideas. We link the young people's daily struggles to the need to change society.

"Every month we have a Day of Action in the city centre shopping precinct. We have a stall, leaflets, and paper sellers, and hold a soap-box meeting which attracts scores of people.

"Now we are so well known, for example, that when a member walked into a grocer's shop and the assistant saw the YS badge, he asked to join. We have systematically followed up all applications as a first step. Now we are drawing up plans to get new members fully involved.

"We have laid plans for an LPYS school-students section following Bristol's example. The aim will be to encourage the school students to discuss their special problems, to lead the fight against the cuts in the schools, and to develop the LPYS basis.

"The national demonstration should help us build in the trade union youth so we are approaching all the local factories. The rest of Coventry should look out! In Coventry so far, two coaches are booked for the 2 February and we aim to fill them."

WORLD BOOKS

CAPITALIST CRISIS—'TRIBUNE'S'
ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY OR
SOCIALIST PLAN, by Andrew Glyn
70p + 10p postage, from World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Brook House - BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA

Until the last minute intervention of the borough Health Officer, seventy residents at a housing complex in Hillingdon faced the prospect of the "season of good cheer" on the streets. Steve Clare and Hilary McIlroy of Uxbridge LPYS report.

Hillingdon Council is notorious for having one of the worst housing policies in Britain. The Commission for Racial Equality has instigated an investigation of the housing department, while the council itself is challenging the Homeless Persons Act through the courts.

What happens if you're caught between this council and a Rachman-type landlord? Well, 70 people at Brook House in West Drayton have found out.

On 21 November one man was getting ready for work when a pick-axe smashed through his door, narrowly missing him! Others came home in the evening to find their rooms totally wrecked—doors gone and the surround doorjamb torn from the wall.

Two rooms even had the roof removed and the dividing

wall reduced to rubble! A notice was stuck to the debris informing the newly homeless that their property had been taken for storage to the Town Hall. Not surprisingly the remaining residents were living in fear and confusion.

This appalling situation was brought to the attention of Uxbridge Labour Party Young Socialists during our day of action the following Saturday. A totally demoralised resident asked if we could help—he didn't know who else to turn to!

After we contacted a Labour councillor, Peter Fagan, we met some of the residents in the Brook House complex, a property which is owned by Roy Cutler, the brother of Horace Cutler, the Tory leader of the GLC.

The Brook House complex comprises one large building and a number of tiny chalets set in the grounds. The chalets were built without planning permission and the rooms are tiny—some only 60 square feet in area.

In the past the residents have been plagued with mice and cockroaches. For a chalet (actually a bedsit plus kitchen and bathroom) rents range up to £20 per week.



Home for this young couple—the wife is pregnant

Some rooms in the main house are even worse—one couple, who are expecting a baby in late January, live in a room which only just accommodates a single bed—it is in fact a converted bathroom!

Yet as one resident said, "Conditions here are awful but a single bloke can get by. Before I came here I shared a room in Shepherds Bush with two other people—we paid £17 per week each."

"But this place is no good for married couples. There's even a three-month old baby here. In this area though you just can't get anywhere else to live—work is easily available but that's no good if you're homeless. The council won't help either!"

This tragic situation dates back to 1974 when the council placed a demolition order on the property. The people who then lived in Brook House are legally covered—the council has to house them. But Cutler has allowed people to move in since without telling them about the council order. In doing so he is in breach of the law!

The couple who are expecting a baby have lived there for two years—and like everybody else have never been given a rent book.

They told us, "The first we knew about the demolition was when we heard lorries

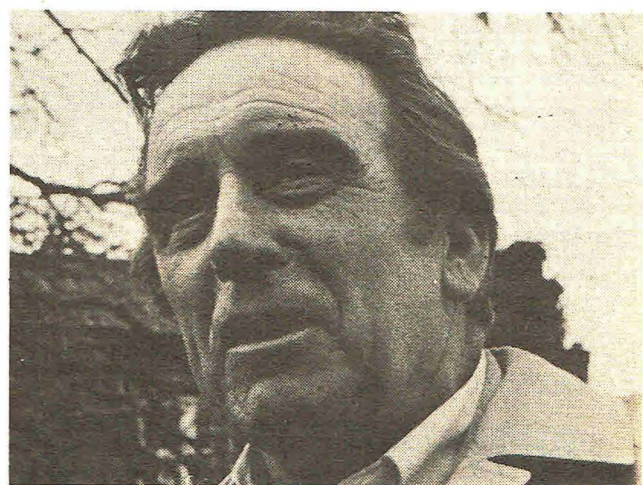
revving outside. We looked out of the window and saw workmen smashing in the doors of some of the chalets. Nobody had been given any warning."

As the husband said, "The baby is due in late January. But if a pick-axe comes through the door when my wife is alone, it'll arrive tomorrow!" They can live with his parents in Gloucestershire—but that will mean leaving the job he's just started.

Efforts to get a council house have been totally unsuccessful—yet Hillingdon borough has over 400 empty properties, many of them brand new. The Tories won't let them, however—they're for sale!

Hillingdon's Tories are quite willing to leave people on the streets. One resident had lived in a council house for 32 years, always paying rent in advance. His wife was an alcoholic, however, and for this they were evicted. He had been sleeping in fields until he came to Brook House.

What could be done? Well no physical resistance could be put up because the workmen were accompanied by a police escort. We tried to get the relevant trade unions to stop work—but the workmen may be employed by private contractors and not be



The owner of Brook House complex, Roy Cutler—brother of Horace, the Tory GLC leader

unionised.

Although demolition has been held up at least until January, the campaign against the landlords and the council must go on.

The fight back has begun. A public meeting on housing has been arranged by a

Labour Party ward branch, and the LPYS have been distributing leaflets and 'Militant' on a local council estate.

This fight will only achieve its full aims when housing is taken out of the domain of profit, and the corrupt capitalist system is finished.

TORY HUMBUG

The great anti-cuts demonstration through London, the biggest for years, was summed up in two words by Tory Minister Michael Heseltine—Humbug Day.

Following the official Tory line and that of the crazed propagandists of Fleet Street, he called the demonstrators liars and said that cuts were not hurting as much as the labour movement said.

That very day, we saw in Wirral how cuts have killed and will probably kill again.

The first example concerned a four-year-old Birkenhead child, Paul Brown, who died in 1976 of neglect while in the 'care' of his foster parents, Stanley and Sarah Brown. Paul's elder brother, Liam, survived, but according to witnesses, he was often tied to a kennel like a dog.

The Browns were subsequently gaoled, but there

By a
Birkenhead
LPYS member

were allegations that the Wirral Social Services department knew the Browns were dangerous and a memo saying as much was destroyed. But what was clear was that the social workers simply could not cover each individual case in depth.

The Director of Social Services on Wirral, Mr Doug Jones, went on television last week to say the situation was impossible for his staff and more social workers were needed to avert another Paul Brown tragedy.

Wirral's Tory council said how tragic Paul Brown's death was. The Social Services Committee showed its grief by proposing a cut of £450,000 in Social Services spending, which included the suspension of six social worker posts. (It was to have been twelve, but the committee decided to soften the blow by

charging the sick and elderly £1 a week for home-help visitors.)

The committee chairman, Councillor Bill Leigh, answered Labour outrage by saying, "If we are going to reduce public spending, we must reduce public expectations. We are not a welfare committee."

If Paul Brown was alive and old enough to understand I'm sure he would agree.

"Situation was unsatisfactory"

The second example involved a 58-year-old Wallasey woman, Mrs Leadbetter. She went into hospital, for a routine gall bladder operation. During the operation a vital tube supplying oxygen came off, and her brain was starved of oxygen. She suffered massive brain damage and died two weeks ago.

At the inquest last week, Dr Whitford, consultant anaesthetist at the hospital, said the connector on the end of the tube which came from a ventilator, was of a different

size to the outlet on an anaesthetic machine. Someone had wound tape around the join, instead of getting another machine.

But what was crucial was the time the tube was off. If it had been seconds, the damage to Mrs Leadbetter may have been less, but it was probably off for minutes. Why wasn't the loose tube noticed?

Dr Whitford said only one theatre technician was present. Another attendant and a trainee were absent, and one nurse was left to look after two theatres when at least two were necessary.

"This situation was very unsatisfactory, but common practice in this hospital and other Wirral hospitals because of staffing difficulties."

Mr Rex Taylor, the coroner, in summing up said: "There is no evidence to justify a verdict with criminal implications and my verdict must therefore be misadventure."

Yes, Mr Taylor, no individual killed Mrs Leadbetter; it was a lack of individuals and surely that is a crime.

BIRMINGHAM WORKERS HONOUR TROTSKY

"The memorial to Leon Trotsky will not be the statues that will undoubtedly be erected in London, Tokyo and New York once socialism is achieved, but will be for us to re-dedicate ourselves to the fight for a socialist Britain and a socialist world."

These were the closing remarks of Ted Grant speaking to a 'Trotsky Centenary Rally' held in Birmingham on 1 December. Ted explained that it was not as the organiser of the October insurrection nor as the leader of the Red Army in the bitter civil war, that Trotsky made his greatest contribution to the struggle for a new society and to Marxism.

Either would be sufficient to place him in the hall of memory of the working class, but Trotsky's most outstanding contribution came not in his period of victory but rather in defeat.

His explanation of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and of the development of Stalinism, re-analysed and sharpened at every stage, has stood the test of time as an enrichment of

the fundamental theory of Marxism. And in the struggle for socialism, theory is an indispensable guide to action.

Speakers from the floor detailed the terrible personal sacrifice that Trotsky and his followers made in the battle against Stalinism. Trotsky lost innumerable friends and supporters, his children and finally his own life at the hands of Stalin's agents.

But as Ted pointed out, the socialist movement always honours its martyrs, once it comes to appreciate the role they have played.

This discussion not only helped to clarify the political understanding of all present, but also to continue the work in the labour and trade union organisations with renewed vigour. The sacrifice of the 100 people attending was the collection of £140.

The Rally also included the 1927 Eisenstein film 'October' and a number of stalls which apart from raising a further £44 added to the general enjoyment.

These added items of interest and a well arranged crêche, meant that several families were able to come along. This is the way politically and socially to build support for 'Militant'.

LEFT and RIGHT

Once in Royal Dorchester hotel...

The old story has it that Jesus was born in a stable. Many students will find themselves living in similar conditions this Christmas—with the exception of one student who is studying acting in London, Eric Douglas, son of the film star Kirk. No mouldy walled flea-pit of a bed-sit for him—instead the exclusive Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane. As he told the 'Express' [December 5], "Where else can one get clean sheets every day for £60 a week?" Well when one is trying to survive on one's grant of about £25 a week one has more crucial issues for one to worry about.

Bosses upset Tories

While the Meccano workers get over their Christmas present from the bosses and prepare to struggle to maintain their jobs, they will probably be amazed to know that Thatcher may take action against the Meccano bosses. What! Is she going to nationalise the company and put it under workers' control? Or at least join the workers in their occupation of the factory? No way—she's just going to give the bosses a ticking off for not giving the workers 90 days' notice of the redundancies! Of course, the Tories don't like firms to shut down overnight; it doesn't give them time to carry out a campaign of propaganda through the media so they can attempt to demoralise and split the workforce.

Humbug!

To celebrate the time of peace and goodwill a dozen people in Dallas, Texas, will carry out their annual chore of singing carols in the city centre while the Salvation Army collects the odd coppers from passing workers for various charities. The Dallas workers should tell the Sally Ann to rattle their tins under the noses of the dozen carol singers—they are all Texas millionaires! ['Daily Mail' December 5]

God & Son Ltd

As Christmas draws nearer, no doubt the Pope will repeat his plea for "a turn away from crude materialism." The bosses have been pleading with workers for years to adopt this attitude whenever workers fight to improve their living conditions. But when it comes to themselves this plea falls on stony ground. The owners of Limerick racecourse—one of the venues used by the Pope during his tour of Ireland—have presented the Catholic church with a £12,000 repair bill. A spokesman put their case: "The shareholders were delighted to help the Pope—but they want compensation." Their slogan seems to be, "Put your faith in the Lord, but keep your wallets full."

It was Christmas Day on the picket line....



Getting into the festive spirit. The inspector can be seen leading the carol singing.

About this time last year millions of workers like myself decided not to go to work over the Christmas and new year period but instead to go without pay and stand outside our places of work in the freezing snow.

The bosses called it the 'winter of discontent', and how right they were—the public sector workers were discontent with their grossly overpaid wages, not to mention the journalists, bakery workers, railwaymen, Ford workers and many others.

Picketing is a joyous pastime—the main aim is to politely ask 'scabs' not to go to work but to join you in the fight for a decent wage. A 'scab' is a strange breed of person—they ignore these commie-inspired strikes and take the whole weight of the British economy on their shoulders to get the country back on its feet again, while the strikers have a great time whooping it up on the £8 a week given to their families by Social Security. And then when the strike is over and a wage rise has hopefully been won, the scabs accept it graciously, no doubt as a token to commemorate their stand against the trade union trouble-makers.

1978 was a very cold winter and the snow was falling thick and fast. There we stood clad in numerous coats, scarves and woolly hats, huddled around a blazing brazier next to a make-shift shack. Just like a Christmas card nativity scene I pondered, as a scab truck raced by splashing us in freezing slush. We called our Christmas greetings to the retiring van.

Picket duty at Christmas time is never a lonely task—there's so many people who take an interest in you: the police, the bosses, the scabs—even the local fascists took time off just to pop round and see us with the usual joyous tidings of Christmas.

First call of the day was from our jolly boys in blue. After a cosy chat beside the fire, the Inspector would

always leave behind a few of his lads just to look after us and see we didn't have any problems—why, only the other day they dragged one of the pickets out of the path of a scab truck, obviously to save him from being run over (even if the truck was stationary).

And then they put him up at the local police station all night—with a room to himself I might add—rather than having him stand outside in the cold. Mind you in the morning he was taken to court and made to pay £75—we all agreed this was rather steep for one day's bed and breakfast.

I'm only doing my job

As shop steward, it was my envious task to spend a few moments each morning chatting to the Inspector. He was an admirable character—such a busy man, yet he could always find time to talk to me.

"Right you know the score—my job is to keep the road clear. It is a public highway and every citizen has a legal right to pass along it. To obstruct the path of any person or vehicle is an offence and will be treated as such. Get it."

Why, of course, I replied, noticing a cheerful glint in his eye I had seen so many times before (was it at the policemen's ball or Grunwick's?).

Counting up on his fingers he calculated that there were ten pickets on duty, so he left behind 20 of his gallant lads to keep us company.

Looking down the road I could see our first visitor for the day was our dear old friend and workmate Hogwart, early for work as usual. Hogwart was an active outdoor type—often as we finished work for the day he could be seen lacing up his hobnail boots, putting on his multi-coloured combat jacket and flattening down his closely cropped hair, getting ready for one of 'his meetings'—he belonged to the NF or something; must be a ram-

bling association we thought. Anyway, he was a bag of laughs with the black workers.

As he barged past us, screwing up our leaflets we called out our fond nicknames for him, "Bosses' man, Scab bastard, Nazi scum."

When he reached the safe vicinity of the factory he turned and screamed, "You stinking commies. It's the likes of you who are ruining this country."

Pointing an accusing finger at two of our black brothers waving their strike placards, "Your time's coming. When we get to power you'll catch it—it was us whites who brought civilisation to your jungles and when the NF march to power you'll see who the better race is!"

Just then a window at the top of the factory opened and Brown the foreman poked his head out, "Hogwart, get in here—you're two minutes late already!" he shouted, and then giving a friendly two-fingered gesture in our direction, he disappeared back into the building.

Hogwart scuttled off mumbling, "Yes, Mr Brown, won't happen again, Mr Brown, very sorry, Mr Brown..."

The only other scab at the factory was soon to follow. Mr Turncoat was a strange type—a working class Tory. He stopped to talk to us.

"I'm sorry," he said, "I can't join you—I'm all for the wage limit and I think Mr Callaghan's doing a marvellous job and I back him all the way."

"But you're in the Tory Party," we pointed out.

"Well, what does that prove?" he asked. Quite a lot, we added. I made a mental note of remembering to get along to my next Labour Party ward meeting.

Suddenly the shout went up, "Take cover!" In the distance a lone Rolls Royce was bearing down on the picket line.

It was the boss—we instinctively jumped behind any available protection. Since the strike had begun the boss

had taken great delight in using pickets as target practice—our strike was causing him a lot of hardship, such as having to come into work instead of playing golf all day.

Boss gets deflated

But what's this? He slows down, sticks his head out of the window, and wrinkles his nose in our direction, which we translate as a sign beckoning us over for a discussion.

Oh yes, of course. Last night a couple of our glorious Labour leaders were crossing as many picket lines as they could find. The boss feels strengthened by knowing he's not on his own any more.

"So you haven't changed your minds then? No? Well, it's not that I don't want to give you more than 5 per cent, it's just that the government won't let me. And it's all for the good of the country, of course. After all, wage rises cause inflation."

But didn't he receive a far greater rise than we were asking for himself?

"Well yes," he beamed. Well then, we pointed out, you're causing more inflation than we are! With a few gurgling noises the boss sped off.

And then the news came—the strike's over; we've won a small concession from the bosses. Not a great victory but better than a kick in the teeth. So we all shake hands and utter our farewells, "See you again some time—like this time next year."

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Both Alan
Hardman's cartoon
books ['Need Not
Profit' and 'More?']
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London E8 3PN

Labour Students Conference 1979

FIGHT TORY ATTACK - WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES

National Committee member Alan Watson outlines the issues facing this year's NOLS conference

The cuts, fee increases and the most vicious Tory government for years: these are the glaring issues facing NOLS conference this year. The potential for building the National Organisation of Labour Students into a massive, powerful force has never been better — but whether this happens will be decided by conference.

Every section of students is threatened by the cuts in social spending. £55m to be axed this year, to be followed by another £500m next year, will hit the Polys and FE colleges especially hard.

Fee increases could result in closure of courses and departments. Whole colleges are threatened.

This horrific situation is the Tories' solution to the crisis of British capitalism. As outlined in the minority document on 'micro-technology', the decline of British capitalism is extremely deep, after years of profiteering and under-investment.

Hundreds of jobs are threatened by works' closures. No student can be guaranteed a secure future after leaving college: the prospect of redundancies among teachers is ample illustration of why students should fight for socialist policies.

The resolutions to be debated at conference on the economy offer a campaigning alternative!

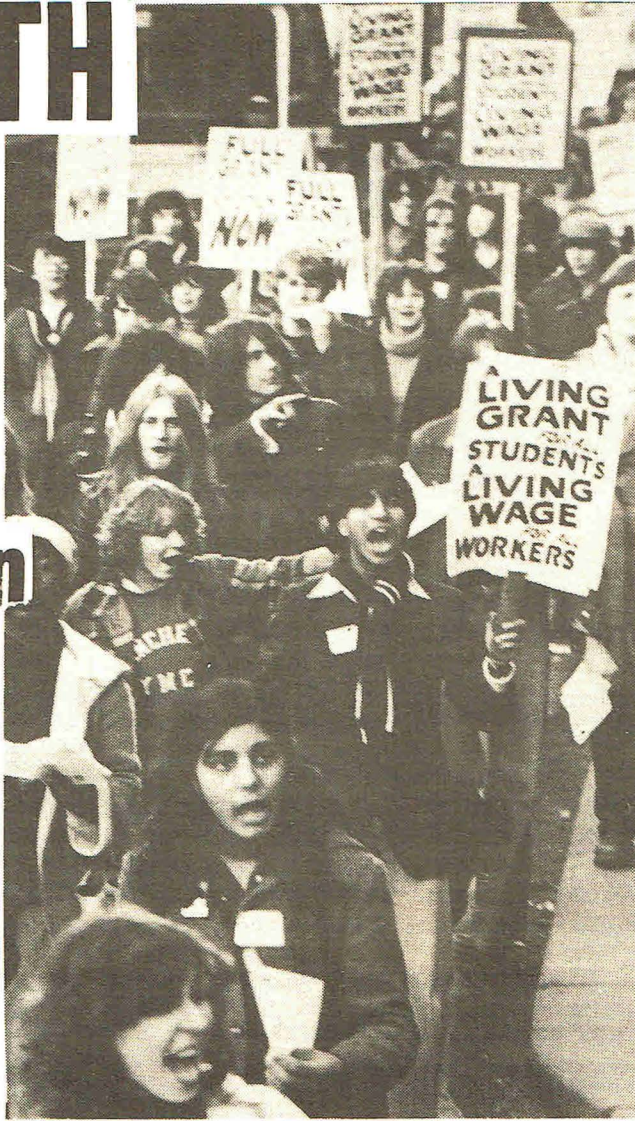
The Trent Poly Labour Club call for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, and a £70 minimum wage, linked to the cost of living. Sussex and Newcastle University LCs call for the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, banks

and insurance companies, as the only solution that can permanently guarantee the finance and resources necessary to offer a decent future for education and the working class.

Newcastle University call for "a campaign against the Tories...linked to the fight for socialist policies."

With education in the firing-line, how we fight the cuts will be another vital area of debate. University College London LC calls on Labour councils to refuse to implement the cuts or increase the rates. They comment, "The Tories will only be made to retreat from their plans if faced with a mass movement."

NOLS must play its part in that battle. The resolution from Kent University 'Clause 4' majority supporters, however, says that there has been a widespread acceptance of the cuts and a "general shift to the right in public opinion." So convinced are they by the NOLS leaders' pessimism that they cannot see the struggle developing beneath their noses. The resolution calls for "broad-based" campaigns against the cuts. The 12 million of the TUC, one million NUS members and tens of thousands of Labour Party activists should be "broad" enough! They seem to ignore the thousands of



There is no 'widespread acceptance' of the Tory cuts

campaigns and demonstrating around "widespread acceptance"!

The fee increases for overseas students are opposed by a number of resolutions. Leeds Poly Labour Club call for a reversal of the fee increases, and abolition of all college fees. They also demand an end to all education cuts—as they make clear, these increases cannot be seen in isolation from the general assault on education.

Education is an important debate for a Labour Students' conference. Nottingham University and Queen Mary's College Labour Clubs call for a socialist education programme, as the only alternative to an education system dominated by big business. They call for higher education open to all, with a living grant of £2,000 a year, and a massive increase in college buildings and facilities.

Micro-chip debate

Resolutions from Thames Poly LC and Bradford College highlight the problems facing FE students, and call for a grant of £20 a week for all 16-18 year olds in full-time education. NOLS should fight for these policies in the FE colleges, to build Labour Clubs based on working class students.

Micro-technology will be one of the main conference debates. The 'majority' document looks at micro-technology within the context of a capitalist society, without outlining any programme for the labour movement to take up.

The document concludes: "If Britain is to accept the micro-electronics revolution whole-heartedly and in a way

which ensures the maximum social benefit and prosperity, then all sections of society—government, management, trade unions and educationists must be involved." Will co-operation with Tories and management really bring "maximum benefit" to the majority of workers?

The minority document approaches the question from a working class and trade union standpoint. It comments: "We must stand for the most systematic development of the means of production, to raise the material conditions of mankind to the highest level. But the crucial question is: who owns and controls the means of production? In whose interests are they to be developed?"

The NOLS constitution will also be a contentious debate. To democratise and rebuild NOLS, conference should support changes to allow part-time students to join NOLS, restore the NOLS regions, and change the basis for delegations to NOLS conference, to end the present situation where delegates can be elected on the basis of a huge paper membership.

NOLS stands at a crossroads. The past four years have seen numerous opportunities to build our numbers and influence.

Do we want an organisation orientated towards the universities and NUS, or a fighting socialist organisation, recognised as the voice of the labour movement within the student field, and based on working class students? That is the perspective which 'Militant' supporters offer for the future of NOLS.

The opportunities are there to build; we must have a leadership capable of taking them.

A FIGHTING PROGRAMME TO BUILD NOLS

By Geoff Stout
(NOLS NC and Bradford
UCL delegate)

"The Labour government has a proud record over the past five years." "Labour's NEC and the cabinet have pointed the way to a better future for Britain with a bold and radical election manifesto."

These two comments, from the election edition of 'Labour Student' show the political confusion of the leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students. The document they are presenting to the NOLS conference, on 'Students and Socialism', continues in the same way: apparently Labour lost the election because of "the degree of popular support that reaction received."

"The left lost the battle of ideas to an aggressive ideological and reactionary campaign."

No mention of Labour's watered-down manifesto, or the last government's record—surely the main reasons for the demoralisation and abstentions of Labour's working-class supporters.

This debate, on 'Student Perspectives', is important as a guide and direction for building NOLS. The present leadership have been in office for the past four years. Their ideas must be judged in this context, against the present state of the Labour Students' organisation, and for what they propose to do about it.

The majority document reflects a vague, woolly, student-based approach. Despite a few "token" comments on the role of the Labour Party and the trade unions, which in practice they have done very little about, the bulk of the document is concerned solely with student politics.

The NOLS leaders were enmeshed in the 'Broad Left' for the past eight years. This alliance collapsed last May, and was replaced with the 'Left Alliance'—in order to include Liberals!—moving away from an alliance based on political parties.

Why according to the NOLS did the 'Broad Left' collapse? The document comments that disagreements developed between NOLS and the Communist Party; its 'support in general underwent a continuing and accelerating decline' and many of its organisers stopped being students.

They conclude: "As a result of these factors, and a dramatic and unexplained change in direction by the national leadership (our emphasis), the Broad Left lost its mass base and became a coalition of NUS conference-

goers." No political explanation is offered.

The main aim of the NOLS leaders is still power in NUS. "How then is this leadership position achieved?" they ask. "It is not primarily through finding the 'correct programme'."

But maybe the most telling comment is on a political programme: "The politics of youth, sex, culture and personal relations are as important as economics."

Conference should reject the majority document. It offers no clear programme or perspectives for the building of a mass NOLS committed to socialist policies.

This debate highlights the central question: how can NOLS break out of its present impasse?

Every NOLS activist must ask: why has NOLS support in the working class FE and technical colleges dwindled to virtually zero? Why are the NC majority determined to keep part-time students out of NOLS? Why does NOLS have the most complicated, bureaucratic procedures of any section of the Labour Party?

Why has NOLS nationally failed to intervene significantly in the campaign this autumn on overseas students' fees and the cuts?

Why has NOLS never held a national demonstration or a national rally?

Labour students are due for some answers! The work done by some Labour Clubs shows the potential, but there has been no lead nationally.

The abolition of the Regional Committees has taken away the only other area of representation that Clubs had, as well as breaking links with the Labour Party.

No wonder many Clubs feel alienated by the leadership. It is a "political problem"—a question of decisively abandoning the present sterile approach in favour of a leadership committed to building a mass NOLS, fighting for socialist policies—a clear Marxist leadership.

The National Committee have stifled this debate, refusing to allow a minority document. No reason has been given for this.

The minority members on the NC have therefore circulated a document to Labour Clubs.

The document outlines a socialist programme that, if fought for by the labour and student movements, could achieve a decent standard of living for students and workers.

This document offers a perspective for building NOLS, based in and indissolubly linked to the working class movement and committed to fighting for socialist policies which will swell our ranks and offer a real answer to the needs of Labour Students.

PHOTOQUIZ

ANSWERS: see page 16

Photos: Julian McKittrick [MILITANT]



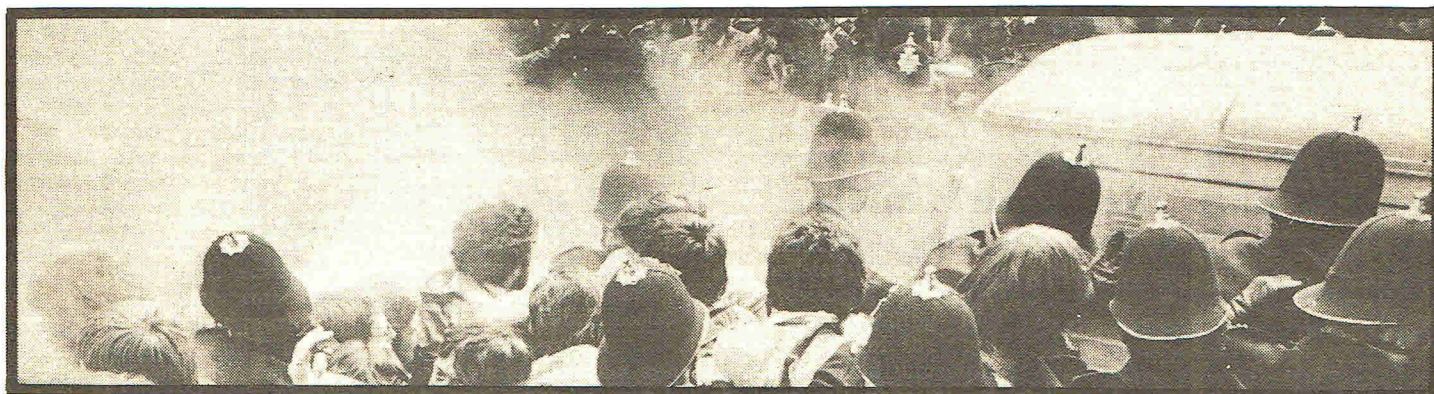
[1] Why did this bloke [left] have so much time on his hands in 1979?



[2] Who are these demonstrators [above] and what were they protesting against?



[3] An ecclesiastical occasion, or what?



[4] What new fan [left] of Mrs Thatcher also visited Marx's grave? [5] One of the stormiest picket-line battles of the year [above], where?



[6] What had these two [above left] got to smile about? [7] Recognise these heavies [above right], where?

AN EVERYDAY STORY OF TITLED FOLK

As the Year of the Child stumbles to an end, the press recently publicised a heart-rending plea for the welfare of a small boy in distress.

Who was this child? One of the starving millions in Kampuchea? A sick youngster unable to get hospital treatment because of NHS cuts? A kid whose parents have been thrown onto the dole queue?

No. It was two-year-old Peter Phillips, son of Mark Phillips and Princess Anne. Patrick Montague-Smith is the editor of Debrett's, the famed guide to British aristocrats. He is losing sleep at the moment because young Peter hasn't got a peerage!

Well, most two-year-olds

haven't, you might say. But as Mr Montague-Smith points out, Peter's cousin Frederick, son of Prince and Princess Michael of Kent is already a lord. If he doesn't keep up with Freddie, Peter may develop an inferiority complex.

"A title for the Queen's grandson, who at present is fifth in succession to the throne would give great pleasure to the Queen's subjects", Mr Montague-Smith said.

Royalty have many problems. For example, What title should Prince Edward and Prince Andrew take? One possibility, the Duke of Clarence, is considered unlucky as a previous Duke of the same name, Edward IV's brother, dro-

wned in a butt of malmsey wine after being found guilty of high treason.

Peers' problems are no less pressing. Lord Lucan, for example. Debrett's are unable to list his address! [Scotland Yard have a similar problem].

Even information is hard to come by, as two major sources of news, The Times and the London Gazette have had very non aristocratic problems-with strikes.

With all the difficulties they face, it is a surprise that our peers don't go on strike themselves. Anybody wishing to peep at the daily trials and tribulations of our aristocracy can buy Debrett's for a mere £45.

MILITANT NEW YEAR DRAW

It's clear that 1980 is going to be an eventful year for the labour movement! Every 'Militant' supporter will want to be equipped with an even better paper, more pamphlets and leaflets. To do this, the staff at the 'Militant' will need to be better equipped, to produce the goods.

So what better way to raise cash to buy equipment than sell as many tickets as possible in the MILITANT NEW YEAR

DRAW?

And the prizes will have you better equipped to collect reports for the paper—top prize is a video recorder, so you can still see all those programmes and news reports you missed when you were at a meeting.

For the runners-up there's a cassette recorder [to do interviews with!]; a camera [to get plenty of pictures to go with the reports]; a pocket radio [so you

know what's going on]; a calender [so you can plan ahead]; a bottle of whisky [for the picket line?], and even a notepad and pencil [to write down all those reports, names and addresses].

Send for your books of tickets now—20p a ticket, five in a book. All cash and counterfoils to be sent to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Please mark envelopes 'Militant New Year Draw'.

FREDERICK ENGELS

Labour councils must refuse to implement the cuts. This is the demand from the rank and file of the labour movement in the face of a Tory government determined to dictate Draconic reductions in essential spending. Labour councils, elected to defend working class interests, must become platforms from which to mobilise the whole labour movement and wider public against the Tories' reactionary measures. In this situation, the article written by Frederick Engels for the "Labour Standard" in 1881 takes on a new relevance. Engels wanted to draw the attention of British workers to the bold class stand of two small town councils in France. This was in the early days of the French labour movement, before the growth of powerful mass organisations.

Today in Britain the trade unions have over twelve million members and the working class has built up enormous power and self confidence. Nothing should stand in the way of the determined emulation of the fighting use of their elected positions by the pioneer representatives of the French labour movement.

We have promised our readers to keep them informed of the working men's movements abroad as well as at home. We have now and then been enabled to give some news from America, and today we are in a position to communicate some facts from France—facts of such importance that they well deserve being discussed in our leading columns.

In France they do not know the numerous systems of public voting which are still in use in this country. Instead of having one kind of suffrage and mode of voting for Parliamentary elections, another for municipal, a third for vestry elections and so forth, plain Universal Suffrage and vote by ballot are the rule everywhere.

When the Socialist Working Men's Party was formed in France, it was resolved to nominate working men's candidates not only for Parliament, but also for all municipal elections; and, indeed, at the last renewal of Town Councils for France, which took place on January 8 last, the young party was

victorious in a great number of manufacturing towns and rural, especially mining, communes.

They not only carried individual candidates, they managed in some places to obtain the majority in the council, and one council, at least, as we shall see, was composed of none but working men.

The strong moral support given to the strike by the official representation of the township was of the greatest value to the workmen.

Shortly before the establishment of the 'Labour Standard', there was a strike of factory operatives in the town of Roubaix, close on the Belgian frontier. The government at once sent troops to occupy the town, and thereby, under the pretext of maintaining order (which was never menaced) tried to provoke the people on strike to such acts as might serve as a pretext for the interference of the troops.

But the people remained quiet, and one of the principal causes which made them resist all provocations was the



TWO MODEL TOWN COUNCILS

action of the Town Council. This was composed in its majority, of working men. The subject of the strike was brought before it, and amply discussed. The result was that the Council not only declared the men on strike to be in the right, but also actually voted the sum of 50,000 francs or £2,000, in support of the strikers.

That subsidy could not be paid, as according to the French law the prefect of the department has the right to annul any resolutions of Town Councils which he may consider as exceeding their powers. But nevertheless the strong moral support thus given to the strike by the official representation of the township was of the greatest value to the workmen.

On June 8 the Mining Company of Commentry, in the centre of France (Department Allier), discharged 152 men who refused to submit to new and more unfavourable terms. This being part of a system employed for some time for the gradual introduction of worse terms of work, the whole of the miners, about 1,600 struck.

The government at once sent the usual troops to overawe or provoke the strikers. But the Town Council here, too, at once took up the cause of the men. In their meeting of June 12 (a Sunday to boot) they passed resolutions to the following effect:

"[1] Whereas it is the duty of society to ensure the existence of those who, by their work,

permit the existence of all; and whereas if the State refuses to fulfil this duty the communes are bound to fulfil it, which Council resolves to take up a loan of 25,000 francs [£1,000] with the consent of the highest rated inhabitants, which sum is to be devoted for the benefit of the miners whom the unjustifiable discharge of 152 of their body has compelled to strike work."

Carried unanimously, against the veto of the Mayor alone.

"[2] Whereas the State, in selling the valuable national property of the mines of Commentry to a joint-stock company, has thereby handed over the workmen there employed to the tender mercies of the said company; and whereas, consequently, the State is bound to see that the oppression exercised by the company upon the miners is not carried to a degree threatening their very existence; whereas, however, the State, by placing troops at the disposal of the company during the present strike, has not even preserved its neutrality, but taken sides with the company,

"This Council, in the name of the working-class interests which it is its duty to protect, calls upon the sub-prefect of the district—

1. To recall at once the troops whose presence, entirely uncalled for, is a mere provocation; and

2. To intervene with the manager of the company and induce him to revoke the measure which has caused the

Frederick Engels (1820-1895) was the life-long friend of Karl Marx, and the two collaborated with founders of scientific socialism were inseparable in both their revolutionary activity and theoretical work. Engels played an active part in the German revolution of 1848, but, when reaction set in, moved with Marx to England. From London, they later worked to build the International Working Men's Association, the First International. For many years Engels supported the Marx family from his family's Manchester cotton factory, which he was obliged

to run until he could afford to retire. At the same time, Engels collaborated with Marx on work for 'Capital' and himself wrote many important articles and books expounding the ideas of scientific socialism. After Marx's death in 1883, Engels continued to assist in the development of workers' organisations in Britain and internationally. In the summer of 1881, he wrote a series of articles for 'The Labour Standard', edited by a member of the London Trades Council, in the hope of reaching a wider working-class audience.

strike."

Carried unanimously.

"This council, in the name of the working-class interests which it is its duty to protect...."

In a third resolution, also carried unanimously, the Council, fearing that the poverty of the commune will frustrate the loan voted above, opens a public subscription in aid of the strikers, and appeals to all the other municipal councils of France to send subsidies for the same object.

Here, then, we have a striking proof of the presence of working men, not only in Parliament, but also in municipal and all other local bodies. How differently would many a strike in England terminate if the men had the Town Council of the locality to back them!

The English Town Councils and Local Boards, elected to a great extent by working men, consist at present almost exclusively of employers, their direct and indirect agents (lawyers, etc.), and at the best, of shopkeepers.

We hope that the action of the two French Town Councils will open the eyes of many.

No sooner does a strike or lock-out occur than all the moral and material power of the local authorities is employed in favour of the masters and against the men; even the police paid out of the pockets of the men are employed exactly as in France the troops are used, to provoke them into illegal acts and hunt them down.

The Poor Law authorities in most cases refuse relief to men who, in their opinion, might work if they liked. And naturally so. In the eyes of this class of men, whom the

working people suffer to form the local authorities, a strike is an open rebellion against social order, an outrage against the sacred rights of property.

And therefore, in every strike or lock-out all the enormous moral and physical weight of the local authorities is placed in the masters' scale so long as the working class consent to elect masters and master' representatives to local elective bodies.

We hope that the action of the two French Town Councils will open the eyes of many. Shall it be for ever said, and of the English working men too, that "they manage these things better in France"?

The English working class, with its old and powerful organisation, its immemorial political liberties, its long experience of political action, has immense advantages over those of any continental country. Yet the Germans could carry twelve working-class representatives for Parliament, and they as well as the French have the majority in numerous Town Councils.

True, the suffrage in England is restricted; but even now the working class has a majority in all large towns and manufacturing districts. They have only to will it, and that potential majority becomes at once an effective one, a power in the state, a power in all localities where working people are concentrated.

And if you once have working men in Parliament, in the Town Councils and Local Boards of Guardians, etc, how long will it be ere you will have also working men magistrates, capable of putting a spoke in the wheels of those Dogberries who now so often ride roughshod over the people?

From
'The Labour Standard'
25 June, 1881

PRIVATE STEEL

PARASITIC PROFIT-MAKERS ALSO FACE CRISIS

As the men of Shotton and Corby struggle against redundancies and closures, it becomes more and more obvious that the problems of the steel industry do not end at the boundary fence of BSC. The private sector, too, is in grave trouble.

In Sheffield alone 3,000 jobs were lost in 1978, and the 1979 figures already hover around the same level. This in the city that gave birth to the steel industry.

Over the past few years we've seen the trickle of redundancies and closures in the private sector of the special steels industry turn into the first rumblings of a flood. Not only the small firms are suffering, many of the large concerns, too, are incapable of swimming clear of the effects of the crisis.

During the course of the last twenty months redundancies and section closures have been announced at Hadfield's, the special steel-makers; at Doncaster's, the forgemasters; at Edgar Allen Balfour's and at Neepsend,

NATIONALISE PRIVATE STEELMAKERS AND STOCKHOLDERS

the special steel and engineering group, all central names in the industry for many years.

So what are the reasons for the blight that is steadily poisoning the special steels industry in Sheffield?

The employers fumble blindly seeing only the symptoms and not the cause. They blame the industries that they supply for failing to expand, as if that failure was just a temporary hiccup, a bit of bad luck. They blame the rising cost of raw materials, as if that alone offers a sufficient explanation of a world crisis in which massive overcapacity is the norm.

Yet, as always, they fail to see what is directly under their noses.

To those of us who struggle every working day to produce a 20th century product from Victorian plant, in conditions of heat, filth and danger as unacceptable now as they were in the 19th century, the reasons for the sickness in our

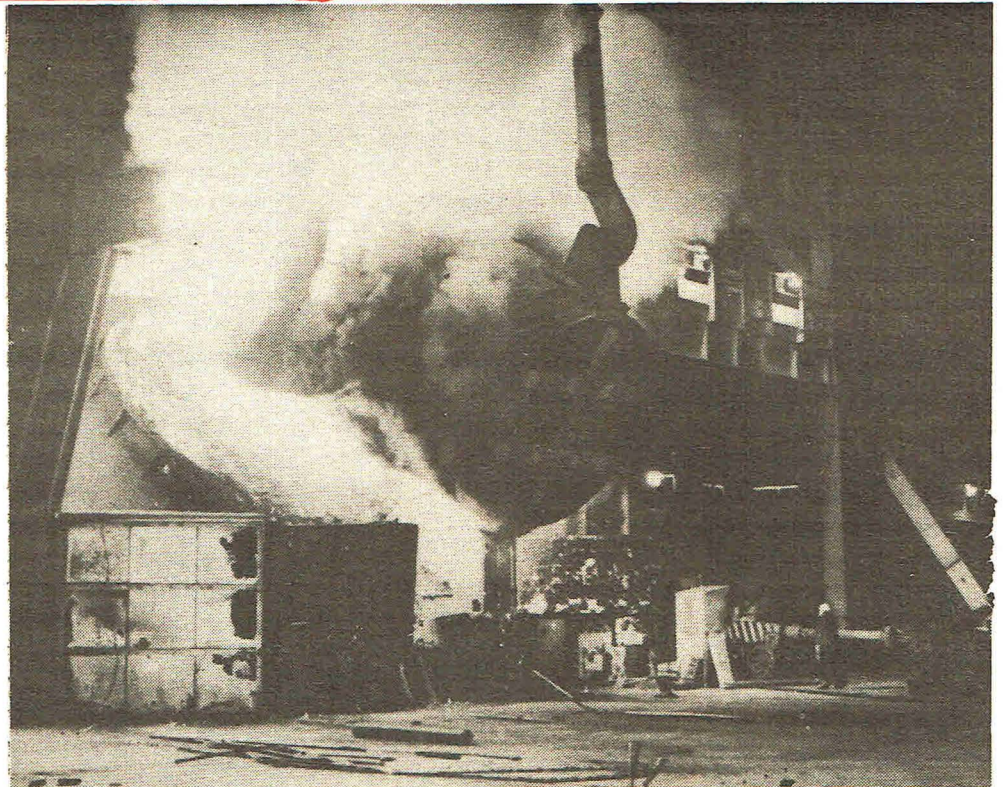
By a private-sector steel worker

industry are abundantly clear. For a whole epoch the capitalists, preferring to cream off their profits, have failed to invest.

Much of the machinery and equipment in the steel industry is seriously outdated, and so, under the impact of the international crisis of capital-

To those of us who struggle every working day to produce a 20th century product from Victorian plant, in conditions of heat, filth and danger, the reasons for the sickness in our industry are abundantly clear. For years the capitalists, preferring to cream off their profits, have failed to invest.

ism, the industry begins to crumble. In the cut-throat



struggle for contracting markets the price is being paid, as always, in the currency of the dole.

What future?

What of the future? Under capitalism, prospects are bleak. Even the president of Sheffield Chamber of Commerce is quite clear about this. He has been reported as saying, "the old pattern of 'ups and downs' has undergone a major change...the present depressed conditions are a new norm" ('Sheffield Morning Telegraph' 10 April).

As far as the supposed panacea of import controls is concerned—the shaky basis of which have been discussed more than once in the pages of 'Militant'—this particular spokesman of capital gives the idea short shrift: "We

PLAN STEEL PRODUCTION UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

cannot close the door on imports and expect to export just the same; that is not the way of the world."

Capitalism can offer no way out for the steel industry, it cannot solve the problems that its own internal structure has created!

For the workers of both the private and public sectors, for the workers of Shotton and Corby who are being insulted by the pipe-dream suggestion

that if their works are sold off to private enterprise, then their futures may be secure, there is only one way forward: full nationalisation (with minimum compensation on the basis of need) under workers' control and management of all steel producers and stockholders, working to a plan of production locked into a socialist planned economy.

FITT RESIGNS

SDLP HAS NEVER RESEMBLED A SOCIALIST PARTY

"The SDLP has become a middle class, nationalist party"

In this way Gerry Fitt, MP for West Belfast and the leader of the SDLP since 1970, has explained his decision to resign both from his position as leader and from the party.

Fitt has said that his conscience as a 'socialist' will no longer permit him to remain in a sectarian, nationalist party. He implies that the character of the SDLP has changed in recent months, and that it

By Peter Hadden (NI Labour & TU Group)

has been taken over by green Tories.

It is quite true that the leadership and the conference of the SDLP has become more openly dominated by right-wing nationalists. But it is completely untrue to infer that this represents some fundamental change in the character and appeal of this party.

From its inception, the

SDLP has been a sectarian party of the catholic middle class. Not for a moment has it resembled a socialist party. Formed in 1970, it brought together politicians from various backgrounds who enjoyed support among the catholic community.

Fitt came from his own Republican Labour Party. Paddy Devlin joined from the Northern Ireland Labour Party. Aside from these two, with their quasi-Labour backgrounds, most of the other SDLP leaders came from a background of nationalist politics.

From the very moment of its birth the appeal of the SDLP has been purely sectarian. Under the proportional representation electoral system it decided the number of its candidates from each constituency on the basis of the number of catholics living there. In the last General Election, its chief argument to persuade catholics to vote was that if the people of the 'anti-unionist' (ie catholic) areas, who had abstained in

previous elections, were to vote, more 'anti-unionist' (ie SDLP) candidates would be returned.

Despite its title the SDLP has never borne the slightest resemblance to a Labour Party. It was and is a catholic party, sectarian in outlook, composition and appeal, which added the words 'Labour Party' to its title only in order to hold the support of the catholic working class and to prevent them from moving in the direction of class unity and socialist policies.

Never has the need for a mass party of Labour been more evident.

The presence in the SDLP of individuals like Paddy Devlin, and to a certain extent, Gerry Fitt, with their past Labour associations, allowed that party to parade among members of the British and Irish Labour Parties as a Labour Party in Northern Ireland. The resignation of Paddy Devlin a little over a year ago severely damaged this pretence.

Fitt's departure must end it once and for all. Many Labour Party members in Britain confused his acceptance of the Labour Whip at Westminster with an indica-

tion of the class allegiance of his party. Fitt himself has cleared up this confusion.

Fitt has announced that he now prefers the title 'Gerry Fitt, Socialist, West Belfast'. But his ten years in the SDLP and his past positions have coloured him as a catholic representative, not as a socialist, in the eyes of most workers.

Fitt will not build a united party of the working class. But his resignation confirms beyond all argument that no such party now exists. Yet the need for a Labour Party could not be more evident.

A report just issued by the Supplementary Benefits Commission has revealed in statistical form what workers in Northern Ireland have long known from their experience, that N.I. is the most poverty ridden area of Western Europe.

Add to these facts the miseries inflicted by sectarianism and by military repression and the terrible plight of working class families can be appreciated.

Fitt chose the non-participation of the SDLP in the latest government 'initiative', the conference called by the secretary of state, Atkins, as the immediate reason for his resignation from the SDLP. Yet the workers of Northern Ireland stand to benefit in no way from the policies and

'initiatives' of the Tories. This government's solution to the N.I. problem is one of cuts in public spending, falling living standards and rising unemployment, all spiced with repression from the army.

What is required, and this is simply underlined by Fitt's resignation and exposure of the SDLP, is not an 'initiative' from the Tories, but an initiative from the labour movement.

Only the workers organisations can show a way forward in N.I. Instead of a conference of discredited, bigoted, middle-class political parties, there should be a rank-and-file conference of the labour movement to work out a socialist solution.

Such a conference could set about the creation of a genuine Labour Party in N.I. This alone could resolve the political deadlock and overcome sectarianism by bonding catholic and protestant workers in political unity.

In particular, those in the British Labour Party and also in the Irish Labour Party who were taken in by the SDLP's past 'Labour' masquerade must work now for such a workers' initiative and a socialist solution.



NEW GHOSTS HAUNT THE BADLANDS

Songs and stories of the US West glamorise the towns of Death Valley, Dodge City, Dead Man's Gulch and the Badlands—all ghost towns where people once lived and worked until the mines petered out. Today we are in an age when new ghosts are haunting us—the ghosts of shop, plants and industries which leave working people just as high and dry, just as miserable and heartbroken.

Instead of a Dodge City we have a Dodge Main in Detroit.

We don't have a Death Valley but we do have a dying Makoming Valley in Ohio because Youngstown Sheet and Tube closed its gates and moved on.

We don't have a Dead Man's Gulch but we do have ghost-plants at Republic Steel in Cleveland and the Pullman plant in Chicago.

We don't have the Badlands but we do have the South Bronx in New York City—miles of rubble, garbage, burned out houses—a huge ghost town in the middle of the financial empire of the United States and of the world—New York City.

By
Betty Traun

These ghosts stand as monstrous monuments to the greed and irresponsibility of US monopoly capital.

There is terrible job insecurity among US workers these days. Every worker is haunted by the fear that he or she will be the next victim in a plant that is scheduled to become another ghost.

When these tragedies hit towns in the old days people simply picked up and moved west. Where can workers go today? There are no more Western frontiers.

When the rich stockbrokers and executives of Youngstown Sheet and Tube and Chrysler's Main Dodge decided to close their plants they talked of land values, the plants, the machinery, the raw materials, the nuts and bolts and the profits.

But one thing never entered their minds—what was going to happen to the 50,000 beings involved in these two plants. That never came up in their plans and in their discussions.

The plants that close are run-away plants producing a decline in the North East of the United States as they move lock, stock and barrel to the Sunbelt or to foreign lands. They not only leave behind thousands of unemployed, but they burden the



Workers from Makoming, the new Death Valley, where 5,000 steel workers are losing their jobs. In this protest in Washington the steelworkers brought with them a petition signed by 100,000 people.

state and local governments with decimated tax bases.

They go to the great-to-work (non-union) states and to cheap labour in foreign lands where unionisation is non-existent. The big conglomerates and internationals have no roots; no allegiances to areas and the workers who created them. They callously shop around for tax abatements, free buildings, other concessions, and they get them.

Industrial wage levels in the Sunbelt average are at least \$50 per week less than in the North. North Carolina is 7.5% unionised compared to over 20% nationwide. Recently when Brockway Glass wanted to open a plant in North Carolina they were told, "You're welcome, but leave the union contract up North."

The "biggies" are the real culprits. In its 'Southern Strategy', General Motors uses its Northern plants as back-ups. Then when re-

cession hits, the Northern plants are the first to close. J P Stevens of notorious anti-union fame invented this idea.

For each one per cent of unemployment caused by run aways, plant closings, and ensuing unemployment there is a \$24 billion loss to the US Treasury and a \$65 billion loss to the total economy. Twenty years ago, corporate taxes made up one-fourth of the Federal income; today they are one-tenth of the Federal income.

Recently 150 of our largest US companies paid \$20 billion in foreign taxes for their plants abroad, and only \$10 billion in US taxes.

New Bill Reflects unease

But labour is fighting back and sees a solution to the problem: make it more costly for a company to move to another state or to shift

production abroad.

A new bill, HR 5040, co-sponsored by 46 members of the House of Representatives is the latest effort to enact federal legislation to impose restrictions on plant closures. As presently written, key provisions would require two years' advance notice to the workers; the right of transfer to another location of the company at the same wages plus re-location costs; retraining if necessary.

If suitable jobs are not available, workers are to get 52 weeks' pay, including unemployment compensation, to equal 85% of their income prior to the lay-off and one year's pension and health insurance payments.

Employees over the age of 50 would have the right to retire on reduced benefits.

If all else fails in negotiations to keep the plant open and the company insists on moving, the company must make a one-time payment to the community equal to 85%

of one year's tax revenues that would be lost due to the company's action.

If production is shifted overseas, the bill mandates a payment to the federal government of three times the tax of a year's tax payments.

HR 5040 establishes a National Employment Priorities Administration (NEPA) to administer the law, as well as an Advisory Council of 15 members—including four representatives of the "general public" and three from labour organisations.

This bill, if passed, would certainly clip some of the worst excesses of the capitalists. Its proposals reflect the growing discontent felt by many American workers and unemployed over the ghost towns. But the only effective way to control these companies would be to take them over and plan the economy for ordinary people's benefit.

NUCLEAR ACCIDENT COVERED UP

With the Thatcher government proposing to develop even more nuclear power stations the debate about the uses of atomic energy has taken an increased political turn. Scientists like Fred Hoyle have denounced the anti-nuclear movement as being 'soviet inspired'.

Yet it is not just in the capitalist countries that attempts are made to obscure the dangers of nuclear power. Soviet vice-premier Vladimir Kirillin stated that since the commissioning of the first atomic power station in 1954, there has not been a single emission of radio-activity ['Soviet Weekly', 1 December 1979].

Soviet nuclear power is represented as being 'safe', and always planned with respect for the environment. However, a book by Zhores Medvedev published recently

Richard Brooks reviews
'Nuclear Accident
in the Urals'
by Zhores Medvedev

has described a horrific nuclear accident in the Urals, which has been covered up both by Soviet authorities and the CIA!

When Medvedev first described the accident in a 'New Scientist' article in 1977, the chairman of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, Sir John Hill, described his assertions as 'pure science fiction'. Yet from the careful documentation provided by Medvedev it looks as if the scale of the accident was only matched by the efforts taken to conceal it.

It seems that during the 1957-1958 period a major nuclear accident took place near Sverdlovsk in the Ural mountains. Hundreds of square miles were devastated and hundreds, possibly thousands, were killed, in what was a densely populated

region.

Hospitals around were filled with sufferers from radiation sickness. Eyewitnesses who visited the area described the area as being rendered useless and unproductive.

Medvedev hypothesises about the cause of the accident by comparison with a near accident in the USA. Rather than reactor failure, he blames the disaster on the poor storage of plutonium wastes and their inadequate cooling.

He points out that the CIA almost certainly knew of the explosion soon after it happened. Reconnaissance by U2 and other aircraft was common over the Urals, since it was a principal site for Soviet atomic developments. Interviews with defectors, etc., enabled a fuller picture to be built up.

Yet nothing was released until after Medvedev made his initial assertions in 1976. Using the American Freedom of Information Act, a fuller picture has since been pieced

together, though much material is still unobtainable.

Why such secrecy? It would have been ideal for the USA to point to Soviet 'carelessness' and 'incompetence'.

But as Medvedev points out at about the same time the Windscale reactor leaked material into the atmosphere, and the Enrico Fermi reactor near Detroit came close to exploding. Sensational coverage of the Soviet disaster would have interfered with US [and UK] plans to increase the use of atomic energy. Nuclear cover up became a matter of common interest!

Zhores Medvedev makes no statement for or against nuclear power, nor does he draw any political conclusions in the book. However, it is difficult not to draw the conclusion that if nuclear power can ever be developed safely it must be under the democratic management of workers, and not entrusted to the secrecy of a ruling clique.

'Reporting the Russian Revolution'

Lies and distortion are part and parcel of the capitalist press. Just look at how they reported the recent Charing Cross hospital dispute or the struggle of the low-paid last winter.

It's always been the same. Sixty-two years ago 'Times' readers were given Christmas fairy-stories with a vengeance as the Russian Revolution unfolded.

The day after the Revolution there was a short editorial which managed not to mention Lenin or the Bolsheviks but expressed the pious hope that the honour of Russia will regain its proper influence.

Then silence. For over two weeks the editor was in such a state of shock that he couldn't put pen to paper on the subject. When he was finally resuscitated on 23 November it was to write in the following vein:

"They [the Russian people] know that the Maximalists [Bolsheviks] are a band of

anarchists and fanatics...that Lenin and several of his confederates are adventurers of German-Jewish blood and in Germany pay, whose sole object is to exploit the ignorant masses in the interest of their own employers in Berlin...

"Within the last few days our Petrograd telegrams have described the reign of blood, terror, rapine and famine which this faction has suffered to set up...they have begun a career in despotism, lawlessness and sedition..." etc. etc.

Here, then, was the sober, objective voice of 'The Times' when the chips were down and capitalism faced its biggest catastrophe.

In the past, present and future we can see the consistency of the capitalist press as they try to save their system.

By Pete Dickenson

(Peckham CLP)

MOROCCO

Royal dictatorship totters

By Joni Bako-Onipa

"King Hassan will lose control of events, probably within a year, and eventually his throne."

That was the recent warning by the CIA. Nevertheless in an attempt to preserve the monarchy and a pro-western regime in NW Africa, Carter has put before the American Congress new proposals to arm Morocco.

1979 has been a bad year for the monarchial dictatorship of King Hassan. Strikes and protests have rocked the regime. When the Shah stopped off there on his journey of exile, there were large student demonstrations which linked the fate of the two autocratic rulers.

Recently Civil Servants and industrial workers have staged a near national strike, which was only broken by brutal suppression and the arrest of trade union militants.

In the last year phosphate miners, postmen, bank employees, railway workers, teachers and health workers have taken industrial action. And this in a country where according to the king 'to strike is treason'.

For Hassan his main priority has been his attempt to hold on to his colony in Western Sahara.



Polisario held its 4th Congress [above] in W Sahara

This territory was part of the Spanish Empire until, in the dying days of Franco, it was carved up between Morocco and Mauritania in 1975.

The 75,000 people living there were denied the right of self-determination. So under the leadership of the Polisario Front, and supported (for their own ends) by Algeria and Libya, they have waged a liberation struggle against their occupiers.

They have already brought down the shaky Mauritanian regime and negotiated a ceasefire and 'withdrawal' with the new rulers.

Morocco had used the regime in Mauritania as a cover for its own imperial ends. After the fall of the Mauritanian regime, Has-

san announced the annexation of all of Western Sahara.

His main economic concern in this has been to gain control of the phosphate mines in the area. He has proclaimed "Morocco will never give up its Sahara—never." But it is proving increasingly costly for him to maintain control.

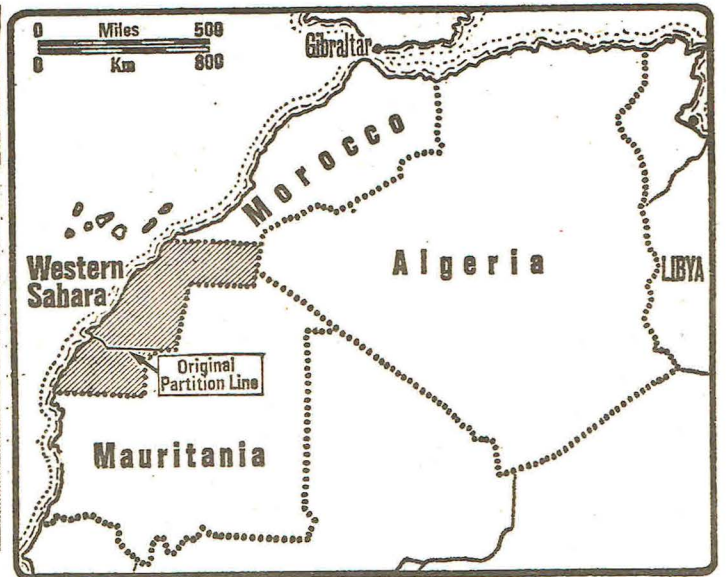
The war is costing an estimated \$1million every day. The Polisario Front have prevented much phosphate mining (phosphate exports declined by 25% in the early part of this year—no later figures available). The guerillas cut off the electricity supply and conveyor belt linking the mining centre with the port of El Aiun.

The Moroccan military

operations have also been unsuccessful. The Moroccan commander in the Sahara is allowed no autonomy but must refer every military decision to the Defence chief and Chief of Staff—the King himself.

The main reason for this is that Hassan is scared of allowing the army to become an alternative power base. In 1971 and 1972 there were attempted military coups against Hassan, and since then there have been few promotions and no officers in the rank of general.

The result has been an estimated 50-100 Moroccan soldiers killed each month. In October one of the main Moroccan bases in the Sahara, Smara, was attacked. According to 'Le



Monde', morale was low amongst the 6,000 defenders and the attack soon became a rout.

In a desperate attempt to save the situation, Hassan has created "Peoples Militia" groups and armed the civilian population in frontier areas "to assist the army in the defence of the Kingdom."

This is a double-edged sword. Recent Polisario attacks into Morocco proper have indicated that the guerillas have been winning sympathy from parts of the local population. Like his friend the Shah, Hassan could soon have a civil war on his hands.

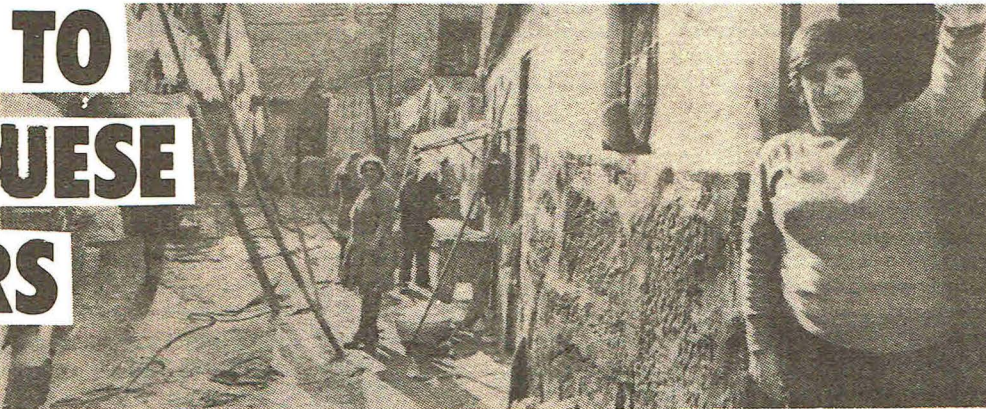
To try to stem this, Carter asked Congress to give Hassan Cobra helicopters and OV-10 planes, suitable for anti-guerilla

warfare. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have rushed Hassan substantial financial aid.

The aim is clear—to prevent another Iran erupting at the opposite end of the Middle East.

American imperialism hopes to give Morocco enough military hardware to stave off a military defeat and allow time for a diplomatic settlement. But the attempt by proxy to use neo-colonial regimes in West Africa last week as 'middlemen' collapsed. All the indications are that the nationalist guerillas of Polisario will be triumphant and another major blow be dealt to Western Imperialism and their client states in Africa and the Middle East.

DANGER TO PORTUGUESE WORKERS GROWS



The right-wing will meet resistance if it attacks the gains made since 1974

Last week's elections mean that for the first time since the fall of Spínola, Portugal will have an openly right-wing government.

The right-wing Democratic Alliance [AD] led by Sá Carneiro won most seats, although with 45% their votes were less than those obtained by the workers parties.

The AD gained from the disenchantment felt by many middle-class Portuguese at the economic problems facing the country. There was no clear alternative posed by the main workers party, the Socialist Party (PS).

Rather than work out a common socialist programme with the Communist Party (PCP), the leaders of the PS ran an insipid, low-level campaign.

In the week before the election, Mário Soares made a great show of dining with the country's military President, Eanes, trying to show what a 'responsible' party he led. The PS campaign seemed modelled on that of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE).

It had the same results only worse.

Whilst the PSOE vote remained static, the PS vote actually fell by 7.7% from the 1976 elections. As the 'Financial Times' (5 December) commented:

"The Portuguese Socialists ran a campaign of surprising moderation similar to the one conducted by their Spanish Colleagues. In both instances their failure to establish a clear identity as a party of the left appears to have recoiled against them."

Against this must be seen the nearly 5% rise in the PCP vote who now have 47 seats compared to the 73 of the PS. Undoubtedly many workers

voted for the PCP because they saw it as a clearer left-wing party.

In the coming period it is vital that the two workers' parties formulate a fighting socialist programme which can sweep away the throttling control capitalism has over Portugal and build upon the gains made since the 1974 revolution.

Ever since the downfall of Caetano, the counter-revolution has been biding its time. Scared by the power of the working class they have been waiting for an opportune moment to strike back. The new government will tentatively test the response of workers to their proposals.

They face an economy in serious difficulties. With 13% of the active population unemployed and with inflation running at 15%, what is the programme of the Sá Carneiro government?

It aims to encourage the forces of the market economy. One of its proposals is to

increase the compensation paid to the owners of industries which have been nationalised. The idea is that this money will be ploughed back into new industries.

Yet many capitalist commentators are not very confident of the final results.

"The release of funds so generated are liable to be inflationary and there is no guarantee that the receipts will invest their money" (Financial Times, 5 December).

With little hope of realistically launching Portugal on a path of capitalist expansion the AD have put their hopes on entry into the EEC. This will hardly help ailing Portuguese industry, but is being clung to as a way of attracting multi-national capital to Portugal's cheap labour market.

The AD is also committed to trying to roll back the agrarian reforms gained since 1974. In the Alentejo region, agricultural workers seized the large estates from their

(often absentee) landlords and established co-operatives.

Attempts in the last few years by successive governments to return these estates to the old parasites have been vigorously resisted. This year, the National Guard murdered two agricultural workers.

The response was a demonstration of over 100,000 in protest. If the AD government tries to implement its policies it will meet a similar response.

The Democratic Alliance comprises three main parties ranging from liberals to the far right; some of its local leaders have been associated with right-wing terrorist and assassin gangs.

The electoral setback and coming into office of such a grouping is a danger to

Portuguese workers. The AD will be in office for nine months, until the next election (this election was held as an emergency).

In the last five years Portugal has witnessed an attempted military coup by Spínola, and eleven governments.

This election result will not bring about stability. But unless the workers parties mobilise to get rid of capitalism, the forces of reaction will grow. Last week's results should stand as a warning of what will come unless the system is replaced.

By Colin Barber

THE POLL THEY HAVEN'T PUBLISHED

Amidst all the reporting of the anti-Iranian and anti Arab xenophobia which has been generated in America with the seizure of the hostages, one poll has been overlooked. That was one conducted by the New York Times and CBS News before the hostages were taken.

It was on the oil crisis. The poll reported that 54% were convinced that the 'energy shortage' was phony and 23% thought that nationalising the

oil companies was the best solution. Nationalisation was especially popular amongst blacks [42% in favour] and those with income less than \$10,000 a year [31% in favour].

Now opinion polls are notoriously unreliable. But this poll may well reflect the growing unpopularity of the major oil companies and their record-breaking profits.

LETTERS

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

500th anniversary—prepare now

Dear Comrades,
"Capitalism, which once played a necessary and progressive role in developing society has now become a monstrous incubus to it and must be replaced if the world is to go forward."

Thus proclaimed the first issue of 'Militant' in October 1964.

Then the paper called for the nationalisation of the top 400 monopolies. Today, because of the falling rate of profit and contracting world markets, the top 220 monopolies control about 85% of the economy. Capitalism is even more of a fetter on society than ever before!

The editorial in that first issue proclaimed that there was a "need to provide a conscious socialist lead for the labour movement". Fifteen years and nearly 500 issues later, the size, standard, and influence of the paper has reached such a level that its programme is feared by the right-wing of the Labour Party, and by the capitalist class. That is something to celebrate!

Sellers should draw up plans now to celebrate the 500th issue which will appear two weeks after LPYS conference next Easter. It is an ideal time to further the influence of the paper by holding public meetings, asking trade unions and Labour Party branches to invite 'Militant' supporters to speak at their meetings; and to increase sales of the paper and raise finance for it.

It may be nearly five months away, but unless plans are made now the chance may be lost as demonstration upon demonstration, and strike upon strike take place against the reactionary Tory government.

The first issue was a black and white, eight-page monthly. It is now a sixteen-page weekly. If we make the most of the chances coming our way in the near future we can look forward to the first issue of the 'Daily Militant'!

Fraternally,
Andy Zapple
Nottingham East LPYS.

FIREMEN ASK—WHO ARE THESE UNNAMED 'MODERATES'?

Dear Comrades,

In the Fire Brigades Union, the right wing have launched a vicious attack on one of the candidates in the national election for president, Bro. W Deal.

A letter has been sent to all branches who nominated Bro. Deal, currently vice-president of the Fire Brigades Union. This letter, which I enclose, is typical of the underhand

tactics that one can expect from the right wing. I challenge "the voice of moderation" who sent this disgraceful letter, to make themselves known and not to hide behind a pseudonym.

Branches on Merseyside believe that Bro. Deal is the right man to lead the union into the 80's. We do not need an 'unknown' to tell us how to vote. I suggest that they stop

wasting their time trying to discredit a member of our union and concentrate their efforts on defending firemen's jobs which are now under attack.

M. Lawson
FBU Sec. Merseyside

Colleagues,

Your branch has nominated W. Deal for the presidency. We must point out to you that you are being misled or ill informed.

The election of the new president is not only a selection of an individual but is a decision as to the future course our union will take. You have a choice of either a militant and uncompromising leadership or an alternative based on compromise and moderation which has served this union well for the whole of its 60-year history.

The trade union and labour movement is under heavy political attack from within, by militant individuals who feel that the ways of the past are wrong. We must deal with them the same way as we hope Jim Callaghan and his colleagues will deal with the left wing of the Labour Party.

Some members on the National Executive Committee are constantly attempting to direct our union on a path of confrontation with the employers; W. Deal is one of them. We are convinced that the majority of firemen do

not want to tread this path....

The recent election of the Conservative government has proved that the country does not want militant leaders running unions. Although no trade unionist should support the Tories, we must reflect that principle to maintain our position and status for the future.

As a first step towards these ideals we must exercise our right by voting and ensuring that W. Deal is defeated.

Yours fraternally
'The voice of moderation'

From exploitation to the dole

Dear Comrades,

It is not only workers in big factories who face the nightmare of redundancy. Many hairdressers are now facing the bleak prospect of having to claim for unemployment benefit.

Hairdressing is a very low paid profession. Even though you have to complete a three year apprenticeship on poverty wages, the average wage in the North East is still less than £40 per week (including commission).

Just recently hairdressers have been awarded a well deserved 25% pay increase. Employers are using this as an excuse to make people redundant as they say they are now unable to maintain present staffing levels, and if they did they would have to put up

prices. I can tell you comrades, prices will go up whether they make people redundant or not.

A couple of weeks ago I was made redundant. I was told at 1 o'clock on the Saturday (we finish at 1.30) that I was to be finished and I was given one week's extra wages. This meant I had just two weeks to find an alternative job, and in an area like Blyth Valley, which has the second highest unemployment rate in the country, that is not easy.

However, despite crocodile tears and cries of economic hardship, the owners of hairdressing shops can still afford to have winter holidays abroad, buy cars for their grown up kids, and massive houses in "socially select" areas. Some employers who

have made people redundant, are even buying more shops.

It is clear that hairdressing is an area of vast exploitation: shops charge extravagant prices yet pay their staff pitiful wages.

Hairdressing does not need lecherous owners and managers, it is the workers who produce the wealth, therefore it is the workers who should own and control that industry.

Only under socialism can workers expect a fair and egalitarian society where they are treated with the respect they deserve and without the threat of redundancy.

Yours fraternally,
Karryn Cox
Cramlington LPYS

Cannabis effects—we can't afford them

Dear Comrades,

The peasants in Tsarist Russia used vodka and the priesthood to make their wretched existence more bearable. Vodka eased the pains of hunger, cold, illness and poverty. The priests promised them salvation for their problems in heaven, provided they could wait until they died.

Nowadays with a far better educated population, few people still believe that they were born to live in squalor and must wait until death before reward, whilst a privileged minority all too obviously enjoy life. However, it is a sign of the crisis in the countries of Eastern Europe that both alcoholism and religious feelings are on the increase.

Similarly in the west,

alcoholism and drug taking are increasing. There is no fundamental difference between smoking cannabis, getting blind drunk or praying for salvation in heaven. They are all attempts to escape the harsh reality of class society.

Even if there were no health risk, socialists would still oppose drug-taking, as weakening the will of workers to fight for a change in society. But Richard Parry (Letters, issue 479) is wrong when he says there are no harmful effects from smoking cannabis.

It is estimated that one in every six deaths on the road in the USA is caused by cannabis—without its use being really widespread throughout society.

Whilst it is true that occasional use may not cause

serious ill health, daily use for one year has been shown to make the user more passive and inward looking, with "a lower capacity and motivation to carry out complex long-term plans." The labour movement cannot afford its members to become like this.

Finally, Richard claims drug taking has revolutionary potential and leads to new levels of understanding. The standard medical textbook on drugs describes the effect of cannabis as follows:

"The most common reaction is the development of a dreamy state of altered consciousness in which ideas seem disconnected, uncontrollable and freely flowing..."

"Perception is disturbed, minutes seem to be hours, and seconds seem to be minutes; space may be broadened and near objects may appear far distant."

"When larger doses are used, extremely vivid hallucinations may be experienced. There are often marked alterations of mood; most characteristically there is a feeling of extreme well-being, exultation, excitement and inner joyousness". (The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics' by Goodman and Gilman)

'Dreamy state', 'a feeling of extreme well being', 'inner joyousness', is the state of mind our employers would like us to be in all the time, while they build their bank balances at our expense.

Yours fraternally,
John Dale
Mansfield LPYS

How do these kids 'pursue excellence'?

Dear Comrades,

I have just read the Militant Teacher Pamphlet 'Cuts Hurt Kids' and what really interested me was the analysis of the real goal of education under capitalism: to produce unthinking 'dole-fodder'.

It doesn't need a highly conscious Marxist to reach this analysis, a hell of a lot of kids realise it too. I am a care-worker in a local authority kids home. My job is to be parent to up to 12 school-age kids. Consequently I get to see a few schools and the education system at work.

One day I really worked hard to get a 12 year old laddie to go to his comprehensive for what would be his first day in over two weeks. He'd truanted so much and for so long that he knew he would be the butt of some pretty nasty comments when he went back. As a result he was very nervous.

Anyway we were sitting in the school reception, waiting for his form teacher to arrive so we could set the record straight when one of the teachers, scanning the staff notice board, shouted out, "How the f*****g hell does he expect me to do my job." It seems that all her rostered free periods had been taken up with covering for sickness, holidays and shortages. Consequently, the work she had prepared for her kids would suffer.

The atmosphere in that waiting area was thick.

The main activity seemed not to be trained professionals going about their job with the keenness that the "nurturing of youth" requires, but of several angry people marching off to see the Deputy Head, feeling that no-one gave a damn about their desire to do a job properly. This is what cut-backs do to teachers.

Alan just turned to me and said "You see what I mean", referring to the stress he finds at school, passed on from his teachers. He took a lot of convincing to stay but in the end he only had 2 lessons, walked out, and is now in an assessment centre, labelled an educational reject, (though not by the caring staff in those establishments).

Tories who bleat about the 'pursuit of excellence' and 'choice in schooling' should consider trying to pick up the training for adulthood in those circumstances.

There is a bright point for the future however. If one hundredth of the anger and frustration shown by those teachers was channelled into political and trade union activity, around the ideas in the Teacher Pamphlet, then we would be on the way to a society which recognises youth rightly, as the world's greatest natural resource.

Yours comradely
A local authority
care worker

International union links and the multinational greenfly

Dear Comrade,

Last week we had "unusual weather conditions" in Kent, but instead of the normal swarms of greenfly we had swarms of television programmes coming over from Europe.

I had a chance to watch Dutch television and was interested to see the number of adverts which were identical to the ones we all enjoy watching here on ITV. These included adverts for Toyota, Vick Nasal Spray, Henry Cooper running after a girl wearing Sunilk and somebody sliding down a mountain on a briefcase.

They were a good reminder of how inter-linked the whole European economy is. Apart from having an international campaign against ridiculous TV adverts, it is surely also high time that the trade unions at local level started to organise much closer international links.

If we can establish international shop stewards' committees in the multi-national corporations and industries, then it would be far more difficult for these corporations to pick off workers in one country at a time, or to transfer production to low wage or weakly-organised factories. I am enclosing £71 for the Fighting Fund, which was part of my back-pay from last years pay rise.

If there are any readers of the 'Militant' abroad who work in the docks industry who are interested in exchanging information, they can write to me at 1 East Terrace, Gravesend, Kent.

Yours fraternally
Roger Gow
TGWU [ACTSS]
Tilbury Docks

MEET THE DEADLINE!

There's only one more issue of the 'Militant' before its 1979 fighting fund deadline is up! £85,000 by 5 January still means gigantic efforts in most areas.

What does it mean in yours?

This is the position as of Sunday, 9 December:

Eastern supporters have £1,300 to raise, but if every reader in the area gives Militant a Christmas donation, the target can easily be achieved! Thanks especially this week to: P&G Sammels (Harlow) for £25, M Therrien (Norwich) £5, and AUEW steward D Stannard (Beccles, Suffolk) £1.

Hants & IOW have an easier task: £291 and we confidently expect the comrades to 'go well over' as in previous years. A Special social in Southampton at the beginning of December left us £112.40 better off! That's the way to do it!

Only £8.20 in from Humberside, though. The comrades will need to step up the action to clear the £470 shortfall of the target of £2,000.

London North was boosted by the £165 raised at the first London Bazaar. Another £56 came from East London readers, £111 was donated in West London, and a number of other regular donations came in. Special thanks to Romford bakery workers (£2) and J Keenan (Feltham/Heston LPYS) £1. £1,868 is now needed to reach the £9,500 target.

London South supporters are just behind the 'League leaders' so far. They are only £84 short of the £3,900 target but have set their sights still higher! The bazaar contributed £115, and special thanks to Len Jozunas (COHSE, Epsom) for his £5, and a Peckham LPYS reader for a £1 donation.

By Steve Cawley

Manchester & Lancs still have all of £1,483 to get but the £260 in this week shows the determination necessary. A magnificent £107.60 came from AUEW-TASS members at Chloride Technical, a £45 rebate from Oldham and £10 from J O'Connor (S Fylde LPYS) amongst many other.

Merseyside have just £30 less than Manchester to raise, £1,453 to be exact. £25 'interview expenses' topped many other donations of £1 to £5. Special thanks to: B Harper, S Ion, S Voses, A Sylvester, R Clarke, M Highdale, B Costello, J Marsden, R Schofield, B Allen, D Ward, for their contributions.

Midlands East need another £652, and we received only £44 this week—with the promise of more from Leicester supporters. Special thanks to the Alan Smith AUEW members, H Minnitt (Nottingham) and A Hubbard (Blidworth) among other contributors.

Midlands West have a much larger job on their hands: £2,103 to raise. This week's £200 will have to be doubled for each week from now until January 5th in order to win the day. The Trotsky Centenary Rally in Birmingham raised £114.50 after expenses. Special thanks to M Kelly (Handsworth LPYS), K Norton (Birmingham), Anon (Birmingham) for a £20 tax rebate and I Barrett and G Hill (both from Coventry).

Northern supporters are £1,510 behind their target. The £60 this week was mainly made up by sale of clothes, domino cards, and donations (including a £10 rebate), but there's more on the way, we're sure! Special thanks to K MacKay for re-donating a £2 raffle prize.

Scotland East readers are slowly attacking their short-

Build **MILITANT**

Area	Received
Eastern	4,700
Hants & IOW	3,100
Humberside	2,000
London North	9,500
London South	3,900
Manchester & Dist	4,500
Merseyside	5,000
Midlands East	3,300
Midlands West	9,000
Northern	5,500
Scotland East	2,900
Scotland West	4,500
South East	4,500
South West	3,100
Wales East	2,600
Wales West	3,400
Yorkshire	6,800
Others	6,700
Total	85,000

TARGET FOR THE YEAR - £85,000

THIS WEEK
£2,076

fall, now standing at £1,357. But, at the rate of £19 per week it would take them until 1981 so some hard work will have to be done before Hogmanay! Special thanks to R Duncan of Banff and to Edinburgh readers: A Balfour, J Bradshaw, C Griffiths, F McKechnie, B Murray and J Greer, for their donations.

Scotland West's line this week moved up by £72, but with a massive £2,055 to go to the target, the seasonal spirit needs taking full advantage of! A lot more donations to build a fighting paper must be 'demanded' of those who support Militant's ideas. Some examples to follow are those who attended a 'Print-workers TU Forum' in E Kilbride and contributed £12.80; workers at the National Savings Bank office who gave £17.50, 'staff & customers at the Doctor's Bar' £14.38, and E Eton and M McGibbon who gave individual donations. A jumble and a disco in Paisley have been forecast to raise £70+; many more plans must be implemented so as not to let Militant down!

South East supporters by

contrast, have their target sewn up! Only £66 more to achieve the £4,500 set at the start of the year. £258 this week included £60 from Medway supporters, £140 at Brighton's Christmas Bazaar, and individual contributions from Brighton supporters A Kirkup (£5), V North (£11), A Jones (£10) and C Goldy (£10). Out of concern to see Militant forge ahead, however comrades in the South won't stop when they reach the target!

South West's line is £757 short. About £190 per week is now needed. But there's a

chance of reaching the target yet with support like that of the lads at Clarks in Bath—especially Sean Sweeney (NUFLAT), Steve Gray and Chico—who contributed an excellent £60! Thanks also to students S Smith (Bridgewater) and S Anderton (Bristol) and to the organisers of a Trotsky Birthday Party in Bristol which raised £18.50.

Wales East still needs another £1,137—that's over one hundred times the £11 received this week! Raffle tickets round the Christmas parties and socials could make a dent but the usual

bumper donations must also reach us by the 5th January 1980 at the latest!

Wales West supporters are in a similar position to their comrades in the East! £1,155 needed and only £11 in this week! That can't be a true reflection of the potential support for the Militant in Wales!

Yorkshire supporters sent £100 this week, most of it from Leeds: thanks particularly to the two readers there who donated £30 and those who somehow made a 'surplus on home brew'. N Pepper and M Wadkin (AUEW) from South Yorkshire helped as well but so much more is needed. At the time of writing (Dec 9) Yorkshire's line is £2,576 behind target!

Finally, if a 'Festive Fiver' can reach us from Scandinavia [L Nilsson of Sweden], there should be a post-bag full every day from 'well-wishers' in Britain.

It's no good looking at the details given here and hoping that Militant reaches its target. Only a 'go out and get 'em' approach with see Militant with the cash it needs for the eventful year ahead.

ads

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

MILITANT MEETINGS

CARDIFF Militant readers' Meeting 'Prospects for socialism in the 1980s'. Speaker: Peter Taaffe (Editor, 'Militant') Empire Pool, Cardiff, Monday December 17th, 7.30pm

SOUTH WALES Militant industrial discussions: 'Crisis in Steel—stop the Tory wreckers' Speakers from ISTC, AUEW, other steelworkers, 'Militant' supporters. Llanelli—7.30pm, Thursday 10 January, YMCA, Llanelli.
Swansea—Monday 14 January Venue to be arranged.
Port Talbot—15 January Venue to be arranged.

WIGAN Militant Discussion Group December 20th "Is Russia Socialist?" For further details ring Wigan 35890

TOWER HAMLETS Marxist discussion group: 'Lenin and Trotsky—What they really stood for' speaker: Peter Jarvis (Hackney South LP & NGA) At: Oxford House, Derbyshire Street E2 7.30pm Monday 10th December

TEESIDE Marxist Discussion Group "Which way forward for Labour?" 7.30pm Thursday 20 December Ring (0642) 211364 for details

CLASSIFIED

MILITANT Christmas social An evening with Peggy Seeger & Ewan MacColl plus additional music, beer and food
Friday, December 14th
7pm-12pm, Colombo Sports & Community Centre, Colombo Street, SE1
Tickets £2 from 'Militant sellers or B Faulkes, 375 Cambridge Heath Road E2
Cheques to NE London Militant supporters

MERSEYSIDE Militant Supporters' Christmas Social Chaucer's Tavern, 12 Hardman Street, hursday December 20th, 8.00pm-1.00am. Tickets contact 051-263 1084

STRATHCLYDE Weekly Draw winning numbers: 1st prize—39&45. 2nd prize—12&11, 12&16, 12&17

NORTH WEST LONDON Militant supporters Bazaar. Hammersmith CLP rooms, 446 Uxbridge Road, London. 10.30 am, 15th December 1979

MILITANT Supporters' Association Trotsky Draw results: 1st—I Taylor, ticket 75, Nottingham. 2nd—D Behan, ticket 163, Redditch

WESTMINSTER South LPYS Christmas Social 8.30pm Fri. 21 December at 2 Denbigh Place, SW1. Tickets 50p Music and food—bring a bottle.

1980 Fightback Calendar Fight Health Cuts, Fight Every Cut Measures 12in×16in. Price £1 plus 17p postage. From: Fightback, 30 Camden road, London NW1

WEST LONDON TRIBUNE GROUP Meetings are moving in the new year to Hounslow Labour Club, 20 Heath Road, Hounslow, Middlesex. Meetings on First Thursday in each month: first meeting 8.00pm 3rd January.

ESPERANTO Course begins Friday 4 January 6.15pm London Esperanto Club, 153 Drummond St NW1 (Euston). Or send sae for free correspondence course: Dave Wetzel, TUCEG, 28 Penderel Road, Hounslow, Middlesex.

Merseyside Anti-Cuts Committee
[organised by Liverpool Trades Council and District Labour Party]
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
AGAINST THE CUTS
Delegates from all trade union, Labour Party and labour movement organisations welcome
Saturday March 22nd, 11.00 am-4.00 pm
St Georges Hall, Liverpool
Credentials from joint secs. T Harrison/A Dodswell
70 Victoria Street, Liverpool 1
Tel: 051-236 2015 or 051-236 1778
Delegation fee 50p
Speakers from labour and trade union movement to be announced

MILITANT INTERNATIONAL PAMPHLETS

'The Coming revolution in India' by Roger Silverman..... 10p
'China' by Peter Taaffe..... 10p
'Cuba: Analysis of a Revolution' by Peter Taaffe..... 10p
'The Iranian Revolution—reprints from Militant'..... 10p
All available [plus 10p Post and packing] from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

CARTOON BOOK CARDS CALENDAR

Trade rates for bulk orders available on request. Prices for single copies do not include postage. Order from: 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN [telephone: 01-986 3828].

BSC FOLLOW BL ATTACK -

Sheffield ISTC members victimised

The sacking of left-wing activists in BSC Sheffield gives more credence to the feeling that there is a witch-hunt taking place in the nationalised industries against opponents of closures and contractions.

The two men involved are Joe Herbertson, who is branch secretary of ISTC at the BSC's Hoyle Street Research Lab, and Brian Molyneux, branch secretary of the ISTC at BSC Stocksbridge.

In September 1978 the BSC announced its plans to close Hoyle Street and the research laboratory. A long and very bitter campaign was mounted by the joint union working group which included ISTC, ASTMS, AUEW etc., and Joe Herbertson was chairman of the joint union working group.

The battle to keep Hoyle Street open as a research lab was lost, but important concessions were won, most importantly that there would be no enforced redundancies and any people whose jobs were lost would be guaranteed alternative jobs in the Sheffield/Rotherham area with the same grade salary.

Joe, however, was put in a situation where his job at

By a BSC worker

Hoyle Street disappeared and he was offered a job at another lab with a reduced grade. Joe was the only middle manager to be offered a reduced grade. He refused to accept this, and went to the union. It was while the union was in correspondence with head office that he was sacked.

Brian Molyneux, who is secretary of the liaison committee for industrial reform, called for changes within the ISTC, including proportional representation and the election and accountability of executive council members. He put forward these ideas in a pamphlet called 'Steel Works and Reform'. Since the pamphlet came out, Brian has been in trouble with his employers and false accusations of misdemeanours, i.e. that he claimed he attended in work time meetings which he did not attend, and three-month old discrepancies on his clock card.

These things have been

dredged up, petty details for which BSC have now sacked Brian.

Immediately this happened on Thursday 6 December, number 2 smelting shop at Stocksbridge walked out, and mass strike action looked imminent in Sheffield.

The sacking of the two men coincided, and can be compared to the sacking of Derek Robinson at British Leyland. It is near Christmas, and the BSC are no doubt hoping that the support for the two men will not be forthcoming from the workers.

It appears that a directive has been sent out from the Tory government to weed out political activists opposed to the closures in BSC and other industries, and these sackings would be cancelling out potentially influential and successful fighters against the winding up of heavy industry in Britain.

It is vital that messages and resolutions of support should flood in from all organisations of the labour movement, particularly in the Yorkshire area.

Send all messages, resolutions, donations, to Stocksbridge Strike Committee, c/o Mr R Crafts, 17 Overdale Avenue, Worsborough, Barnsley, S Yorkshire.

For any further information contact Peter Greatrex, tel. 0742 46135.

OWEN COYLE BOSSES RENEGE

The dispute at Owen Coyle (reported last week), involving an all-Asian workforce, seemed to have been won. The workforce had apparently won their first major victory on a claim for improved wages, after winning a long and hard struggle for unionisation and recognition of the shop stewards.

Since our report, however, management have shamelessly reneged on the original agreement, and the planned return to work for Wednesday the 5th did not take place.

Still claiming that "there's not enough work", management have gone back on the work-sharing arrangement they agreed on with the union, and are in practice refusing to reinstate the 17 workers sacked in the first place. It is clear that they are still out to smash effective

shop-floor union organisation.

There was no return to work, and the picket lines were drawn up again on Thursday. It should finally have been made official on Tuesday (11th), though there is a certain degree of confusion and isolation within the workforce, due to the conflicting advice that they'd been given as well as a lack of information from other sections of the T&G in the area, and from the district office.

The LPYS has played a valuable part in setting up a meeting with T&G reps in the area, most significantly the T&G from EMI (Owen Coyle rents the lease from EMI). The YS has been raising the issues involved within the local labour movement.

Ivor Anthony, chairman of the 1/690 branch of the T&G

at EMI has called for an immediate inspection of the factory since the conditions, he says, are "shocking". There are no canteen facilities, very few safety precautions, and people are sitting between vats of acid to eat their lunch. "It's the working conditions of the 1920s," says Ivor Anthony, "no decent person would allow it."

Cash and resolutions should be sent to Prem Singh Gill, 12 Hercies Road, Hillingdon, Middlesex.

By Mike Lee
Uxbridge LPYS

STOP PRESS: A new agreement has been reached and workers are returning to work on 12/12/79. The agreement involves 'temporary' rotating lay-offs, with all workers reinstated.

NALGO members prepare to fight

The fight against the cuts took a step forward locally at the AGM of the **Hammersmith and Fulham Branch of NALGO** (National And Local Government Officers' Association).

A motion was passed to levy the members in order to set up a local fund to improve and defend members' interests, particularly against cuts in council jobs and services. Importantly, the motion re-

cognised the need to support action taken jointly with other local trade unions.

Members have seen this need, particularly because of the cuts already imposed by our Tory minority council, with Liberal support, and which are a prelude to more massive cuts next year. Also, the motion was passed because of our union's failure nationally to support actions taken locally by branches in

the recent period due to lack of money in our strike fund.

This raises the need for the building of an effective national strike fund and a fighting campaign jointly with other trade unions against the cuts and the Tory government on a national scale.

By Trefor Lewis
[Hammersmith & Fulham
nalgo]

NUM BALLOT-MINERS NEED CAMPAIGNING

LEAD

By Merion Evans

Brynlliw Lodge
NUM, South Wales

By a small majority, miners have rejected the recommendation of the NUM's National Executive in response to the wages offer of the National Coal Board.

Under the deal faceworkers will get £8.50 from 1 January 1980, a further £8.50 from 1 March, and consolidation of the £6 supplement into their basic wage.

This deal would run until 31 December 1980, and a new agreement could be reached to run to October 1981. There will be pro-rata increases for other grades.

This would take faceworkers, by March 1980, to £101.95, and surface workers to £73.65.

There will also be the setting up of two working parties, one to look into the protection of earnings for those men who suffer a loss due to ill health, and another to look into implementing a shorter working week.

Only three of the twenty-two areas managed to achieve the necessary 55% majority required to take national industrial action. Even South

Wales could only muster a vote in support of the executive's proposal of 54%.

Undoubtedly, the results in Yorkshire (73%), Scotland (64%), and Scottish craftsmen (56%), prove the importance of campaigning. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of any serious campaign being undertaken elsewhere, other than at area conferences. This must be seen as one of the reasons for the ballot result.

Largest offer

There are other lessons, too. The offer itself is no small amount (in numerical terms only—£17). Although far short of the £140 annual conference demand, it is the largest offer ever made in our history, with or without a struggle.

Also, statements made by

the President, Joe Gormley, and General Secretary Lawrence Daly, that we would settle for 25% even if we took action once again raised doubts in the minds of many miners as to whether it was worth losing wages over another £2 or £3. Of course, this was not on.

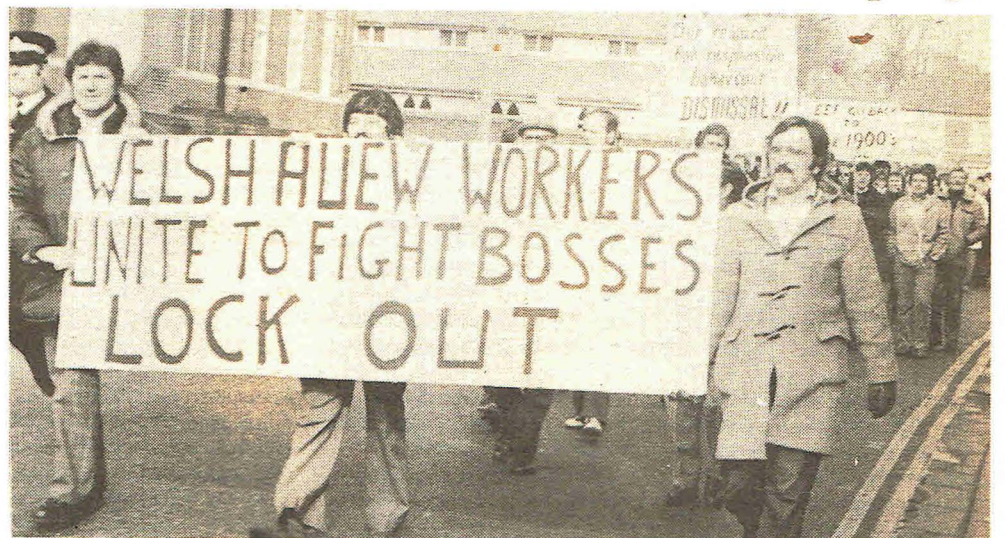
One encouraging fact, though, is that even without a national campaign, 48.75% of the membership were prepared to take action, despite all that has been said about the disunity between miners in the different areas because of the re-introduction of the productivity schemes.

The result shows that these divisions can be overcome providing that a campaign is consistently carried out by a leadership that is confident and prepared to take miners forward.

Great battles loom ahead in the coal industry. It is essential, therefore, that we begin now to build a leadership at lodge, area and national level capable of taking the NUM forward.

Miners need a leadership prepared to uphold conference decisions and committed to bettering in no small way the lives and condition of the members of the NUM.

'One job on offer-on half the pay'



Welsh AUEW members protest against the lock-out of Henley Forklift and Hymac workers in April 1979 — a prelude to the Confed struggle over pay and shorter hours

Photo: MILITANT

A spate of redundancy announcements have hit South West Wales over the past month.

On top of the discovery that 3,000 steel jobs are to go by March in the giant Port Talbot steelworks, numerous "smaller" redundancies have also been announced.

Five hundred jobs at the Neath-based Metal Box factory are to go in the next twelve months along with another 40 jobs at nearby Cam Gears in Resolven.

In Swansea, the American multi-national company ALCOA plan to shed 185 jobs, despite the £10 million of taxpayers' money they used to help build a new RCS mill last year. This, according to the company, was going to provide more jobs not less.

Almost every week the local papers report new redundancies which further aggravate the already high unemployment figures in West Wales.

The reaction among the various unions involved has been mixed, but the prospect of being thrown on to the dole

with little possibility of getting other work has forced many workers to make a stand.

Unskilled workers can look forward to years of unemployment. The prospect for skilled workers is almost as bleak. One ALCOA electrician who made inquiries about work in the area found that there was just one job on offer with approximately half the wages he was now earning.

"With the likelihood of hundreds of craftsmen looking for new jobs over the next couple of months, what chance have we got?" This was the sentiment expressed at a meeting of the ALCOA craftsmen who voted overwhelmingly to fight the redundancies, against the recommendation of their leadership.

Both the union leadership of BSC Port Talbot and at ALCOA were reported to have been "shocked" and "staggered" when these redundancies were announced, but the message must be made clear to other workers that the Tories, by defending the profit system they represent, have to sacrifice hun-

dreds of thousands of jobs in order to maintain the income of the idle rich.

Workers in West Wales have just experienced the tip of the Tory iceberg. As many more jobs will be threatened over the coming period.

From the industrial struggles that lie ahead political conclusions will be drawn by many workers, and the demands put forward by the Marxists in the Labour Party will gain ever increasing support as the only long-term solution to unemployment:

- ★ £70 minimum wage for all workers!
- ★ 35-hour week without loss of pay!
- ★ Nationalise the 200 big monopolies, with minimum compensation on the basis of need, under workers' control and management!
- ★ Nationalise the banks and insurance companies!

By Alec Thraves

AUEW Swansea

HOSIERY WORKERS - NO COMPROMISE ON THE CLAIM

The claim filed by the NUHKW (National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers) is probably the most crucial since the war.

It is for a 25% increase, a shorter working week, holiday concessions and better rates for overtime and unsocial hours. The 25% increase is justified because of pay rises in the past where the living standards of members have suffered and because according to economic reports inflation will reach 25% next year.

The shorter working week is justified because of the number of people in the industry who are being made redundant through the sheer uncompetitiveness of the British textile trade compared to its foreign rivals.

4,000 jobs were lost in British hosiery and knitwear in 1978, and further lay-offs are taking place at the moment.

Redundancies announced by Courtaulds in the UK this year include a staggering 1,650 at Spennymoor, 700 in Lancashire with the closure of three mills, 650 jobs in Northern Ireland, 330 jobs lost at two warp knitting plants in Derby and Wolverhampton, and 600 jobs in a men's jacket factory in Liverpool.

Now it's being proposed

By Gerry Palty

NUHKW Nottingham District
(In a personal capacity)

that the production of viscose filament yarn at Red Star works in Preston be stopped with the loss of 2,600 jobs.

But Courtaulds announced in November that pre-tax interim profits up to 30 September showed a 10% increase on the previous six months. Their only guiding principle is to create profits not jobs!

The employers' response has been not to concede a shorter working week within these negotiations. Their response on wages has been derisory—not worth the paper it is written on.

The employers say they are prepared to offer a wage increase of 10%, with effect from 31 December 1979, with a further increase of 3% from 30 June 1980.

With regard to the unsocial hours premium, it was proposed that this be increased from 40p an hour to 44p and that the overtime premium be increased from 21p an hour to 23p, and from 31½p per hour to 35p per hour. But this increase is subject to the union's acceptance of three ridiculous clauses: (a) where desired by management, the

increase would be immediately consolidated into piece rates (i.e. without shop-floor negotiation or discussion); (b) where the increase creates financial hardship for an employer this should be resolved at factory level between the employer, employees and appropriate district official of the union; and (c) that the minimum daily rates for holiday pay in clause 12g of the National Joint Industrial Council agreement should be increased (however, this could automatically increase the forfeiture of holiday pay for absences before and after holiday periods).

The employers' reaction is clear from clause (b) where they are saying that you may as well not have a claim—by pleading poverty they can refuse to give any increase at all.

The response of the members is one of disgust, anger and fury. In a union which doesn't have a record of militancy there is now a possibility of industrial action.

All members must back this claim to the hilt and make sure there is no attempt by the leaders of the union to compromise on a claim that represents the very least increase in pay necessary to maintain living standards and measures to halt the loss of jobs.

DHSS escapes major cuts - this time

From a possible 3,500 Civil and Public Services Association members who work at Newcastle Central office, over half were present at a mass meeting on Friday 7 December, despite rain and mist. They heard to their obvious relief, that savage cuts in DHSS were not imminent.

Barry Fuge, branch secretary, made the point that the government have not yet taken on DHSS directly because of the strong support for the National Executive's policy of banning overtime.

This ban has been 95% successful and a confrontation with Child Benefit Centre at Washington (in September) over overtime saw the Tories back down at Cabinet level and order management at Washington to withdraw the offer of overtime.

It is interesting to note that a management tannoy broadcast at Longbenton today said that an increase of jobs in the future would be likely, as the banning of overtime had allowed part of the cash limit to remain unspent.

Roy Alderson, National Executive Committee member, and Barry Fuge, both highlighted that the cuts, as announced on 6 December, of 40,000 more jobs, though serious, were merely a cos-

By Sandy Donnachie

CPSA
(In a personal capacity)

metic exercise.

The real fight was still to come when the government made legislative changes to incorporate several of the suggestions already made by government ministers.

Some of these suggestions include the cutting of such services and benefits as Earnings Related Supplement, abolition of Maternity and Death Grants from April 1980, raising pension age for women from April 1983, increases in benefits to be related to prices rather than wages.

Not Safe Yet

These are the types of benefits that the government have made clear they wish to cut. Undoubtedly, they will try to axe them in the future.

The job losses depend, however, on legislative change, which takes time. DHSS is not out of the woods yet.

Lord Soames, minister re-

sponsible for the civil service, stated on television on Thursday night "more cuts are being contemplated. There can be no guarantee of no redundancies. Where redundancies take place, we will endeavour to be as humane as possible."

Where is the humanity in redundancies?

Obviously, DHSS, CPSA, and society in general still have a vicious fight on their hands. Further cuts are to come, and our union must prepare for them.

Sandy Donnachie spoke from the floor on the effects of technological innovations and their effect on future jobs in DHSS. Particularly in pensions branches, direct computer-link systems from local and central offices would effectively cut out the middle jobs.

On our site of 8,000 members, 6,500 are data-processors, typists and general clerical staff. These are the 'middle-men', who will be by-passed.

Our union must therefore look towards a reduction in the working week with no loss of pay and a guarantee of no redundancies. Otherwise the dole queues will grow even larger, swollen by CPSA members.

All speakers were applauded by the membership,

CROWN HOUSE MASS PICKET



Crown House electricians on the Nat West site in Central London organised another mass picket on 6/12/79, at which over 60 members turned out to show their determination to withstand management pressure and intimidation, and defeat the arbitrary, anti-union sackings. Their determination must be matched by official EETPU backing for the dispute—all EETPU branches should add their weight to the demand that the strike is made official.

Photo: MILITANT

SHOP WORKERS' BREAKTHROUGH ON SHORTER HOURS

By a large majority, 100,000 shopworkers in Britain's major high street supermarkets have voted to accept the largest pay settlement on offer for many years.

USDAW members in Tesco's, International Stores, Sainsbury's and Woolworths will now be awarded wage increases ranging from 15%-25%, and a re-

duction in the working week to 39 hours.

This reduction in the working week represents an important psychological breakthrough for this previously weak and badly organised section of trade unionists. A few weeks ago, the AUEW was waging a major national campaign of industrial action to achieve a similar settlement.

The reason for the USDAW settlement lies entirely in the fact that at the moment the retail trade is making record profits, and can afford concessions. Shopworkers, moreover, are among the lowest paid trade unionists in the TUC, and 25% of their previous wages only brings them up in most cases to just over £55 a week. This is not a living wage.

showing their feeling on the cuts and that the warning of future legislative and technological changes was well-heeded.

CPSA will be well prepared for these attacks on the services of the welfare state. Through the awareness of the unions, the TUC and the Labour Party we must fight against expenditure cuts in our services and benefits.

We must fight to protect and improve the living and working conditions of the working class. CPSA, along with other public sector trade unions, is now in the forefront of that fight.

The USDAW broad left reflects the membership's aspirations to a large extent. Next year, it will be demanding £70 for a 35-hour week, again not an outrageous figure, but it must be an absolute minimum for USDAW members in the coming year with inflation at around the 20% level.

The only effective answer to the present situation lies in a concerted pay campaign. What is needed is a bold lead to be given to the membership using the weapon of industrial action if necessary to win a £70 minimum wage, and an absolute maximum of 35 hours a week to be implemented now!

A 39-hour week is certainly welcome, but is no substitute for the official policy of the union for 35 hours.

Only mobilising the membership at all levels in a pay campaign to win this demand, can it have any realistic chance of succeeding.

Such a campaign would not only ensure a decent living wage, but would also act as a pole of attraction to the many thousands of shopworkers not presently in USDAW, and would lead to a strengthening of union organisation in areas which are at present relatively weak.

By George Williamson
[USDAW & Hackney Central LPYS]

USDAW members will undoubtedly be demanding big improvements on the present situation at the 1980 Annual Delegate Meeting next April.

Militant

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SUPPORT MECCANO WORKERS' OCCUPATION

Liverpool City Councillor, Derek Hatton, who has spoken to mass meetings of Meccano workers explains the latest situation at the factory.

At a mass meeting of over 600 Meccano workers there was virtually unanimous support for the continuation of the occupation of the factory in Binns Road, Liverpool.

There was full support for the idea which will be going to the Liverpool City council this Wednesday, for them to take over the factory as a municipal enterprise.

The occupation started a week last Friday, when

the management gave 900 workers 40 minutes' notice. Some of them had worked there for 30 or 40 years. If you had a job in Meccano, it used to be thought you had a safe job.

But over the past three or four years, things have begun to change, and the threat of redundancies has been in the air—though no-one expected the scandalous action taken by management last Friday.

Meccano is one part of the Airfix group, and it is by far the best organised factory in terms of the trade unions. The majority of factories within the Airfix combine, in



Mood of determination remains

WORKERS DEMAND MUNICIPALISATION

fact, are totally unorganised and depend entirely on non union labour.

The mood since last Friday was a combination of sadness, because of losing their jobs, but also of anger and determination to do something about it.

That mood still exists. The stewards' committee have given a very good leadership, particularly ensuring that mass meetings are called regularly, that clear proposals are made.

The Liverpool District Labour Party passed a resolution which will be going to the City Council next Wednesday, calling for support for the idea of discussions with management in an attempt to get them to change their minds.

But they were also realistic enough to understand that it is highly likely that management will succeed, and even if they did change their minds (with subsidies as a bribe) within 12 months, as sure as night follows day, they would opt out again.

The Labour resolution called for support for a workers' co-operative, given that there is now a feeling that a co-operative could be viable.

Once again, however, a realistic approach was taken on this: within the sea of capitalism there's no way that a small co-operative island can exist for very long. The perfect example of this, of course, is KME in Kirkby. The most important part of the resolution is the recognition that if there were still a Labour government we'd be calling for the nationalisation under workers' control and management of the whole of the British section of the Airfix group, as the only real answer to firms' threatening redundancy.

Under this reactionary Tory government we're putting forward the proposal that the local authority take over the Meccano plant as a municipal enterprise, in a similar way that local authorities take on direct building work etc.

There are certainly going to

be problems in Liverpool City Council on Wednesday, in that the Liberals and Tories still hold the balance of power. There's also going to be problems with certain full time officers and solicitors' departments who are probably going to say that its not within the legal power of the local authority, and there will certainly be arguments from the district auditor, who would argue that in the financial and legal sense municipalisation can't be done.

But I think the city council have got to take this issue on board, and through the movement to take on the battle.

They've got to start uniting the entire Labour and trade union movement on Merseyside in an attempt, along with Meccano stewards, to ensure that the necessary money is pumped into Meccano to enable the workers to take it on, to manage it and to control it along with the trade unions concerned.

CUTS

Continued from page 1

Roy Thwaites, leader of the South Yorkshire County Council stated that we must mobilise mass support prior to the large rate demand to be sent out in April.

The movement was not mobilised, one delegate said, simply to fight Tory cuts by accepting massive rate increases or as an electoral gimmick for the Labour Party. It would be disastrous to mobilise support, apparently for industrial action, just to march them up to the top of the hill and to march them down again.

Delegates were disturbed that the platform would not allow discussion on the policy of rate increases being proposed by Labour groups.

Heseltine's latest move is designed to enforce strict limits on council spending, and rate increases will not be a way out anyway. Labour councils, backed by the movement, have a clear responsibility to resist the Tory measures.

The resolution calling for the 24-hour general strike, however, fired the imagination of those present. Activists from South Yorkshire led the way in opposition to Tory cuts by taking the initiative that led to the mass demonstration and lobby of Parliament.

But it is now urgent for there to be a full discussion to formulate a clear socialist alternative policy. The momentum of the campaign can only be sustained when given a leadership, and organised on clear socialist policies.

Apart from the resolution asking affiliated bodies to call on the TUC for a mass Day of Action for late February, the meeting also agreed to organise a mass rally and demonstration in Sheffield, on Saturday 9 February.

STEEL STRIKE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

local deals up to 10%. There was an explosion of anger when the Central Negotiating Committees saw that BSC had no intention of moving towards the claim, a modest one which would only have allowed steel workers to stay abreast of the cost of living in any case.

The ISTC Executive was left with no alternative but to say no to this offer, worth about 2½%.

Now the fight is on. There has not been a steel strike in this country since the 1926 General Strike.

The economy depends overwhelmingly on steel as its raw material. It will not directly be the customer in the shops who is hit, but the industrial buyer, the big firms in engineering, construction and volume production.

Years of moderate settlements by the ISTC, many of them politically inspired by support of the Labour government, have not brought gratitude from Villiers, Scholey and the Grosvenor Place bosses.

They have reduced British steelworkers to the cheapest in the EEC—and now they offer 2½%!

If holding back on wages

could help BSC, it would be making a profit by now. Instead it is losing business, it has had its investment chopped back, it is retreating on all fronts.

The time has come to teach them a lesson. With firm leadership BSC will certainly be beaten. But it will not be

Private Steel in crisis, page 9
Two Sheffield ISTC branch secretaries victimised, page 14

an easy dispute to win. Right from the start a clear strategy must be spelled out by the steelworkers' leaders.

★ Unity of all unions in BSC around the claim: The Blastfurnacemen and the craftsmen received the same

impossible offer, yet they are considering it! But this could be the moment to wipe out the old divisions in the industry.

For unity on a common claim! Craftsmen and Blastfurnacemen won't be able to work with ISTC out. Far better for all to come out in one struggle.

★ Shut down the whole of BSC:

No works to open. Pickets are vital in the early days after New Year's Day when there may be waverers.

★ Mass meetings should be held in all plants:

This is vital to explain the issues so that workers are not faced with instructions from on high.

★ A mass campaign: Draw attention to the claim with a national march on London. Call rallies and meetings in all steel areas. Involve every member in the strike. Literature explaining the dispute and what is being done to BSC must flood the country.

★ Shut the stockholders: These leeches are bleeding the industry dry. In their yards they may have four months supplies. Let them keep it! Shut the gates with squads of pickets. Steelworkers must at once follow the example of the miners in 1972. Stop the movement of steel.

★ Appeal to other unions: Railwaymen must be asked not to transport steel in

transit. The same call must go to the road hauliers. Dockers must not allow steel off the docks, a step the Newport dockers have already shown willingness to take. It is not just to help the steelworkers. Their defeat will mean the loss of thousands of jobs on the quayside and in the pits.

★ Call a joint delegate conference of stewards now: Stewards throughout the industry must discuss the inseparable issues of closures and pay. The situation is at crisis point and a detailed plan of action is urgent.

PHOTOQUIZ

- [1] Because he is Rees-Mogg, editor of 'The Times'.
- [2] Actors, members of EOU ITV protesting in July against VAT on theatre tickets.
- [3] No. Bishop Mazouza, prime-minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, in London for the constitutional talks.
- [4] China's Chairman Hua Guofeng who visited Britain and praised Mrs Thatcher's Churchillian resistance to the Moscow 'warmongers'.
- [5] One of the mass picket-line battles at the Nottingham Evening Post.
- [6] Nothing—Ian Wrightlesworth and Shirley Williams at Labour Party conference after the right-wings defeat.
- [7] Things of the British Movement at Hyde Park Corner during the November march against Tory immigration laws.

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