

Judges back Mercury bosses

Strike back at Tory laws

The employers are scared. Workers in dispute are giving notice that they won't take any more attacks from the bosses or their government.

For years the bosses have tried to sort out the problems in their own system by destroying jobs, axing services, selling off profitable public assets to their rich friends and by lowering real wages.

By
Roger Shrivies

But trade unionists have been fighting back in recent weeks and the bosses have been turning to the law courts for help. When the Mercury consortium failed to get an injunction against the POEU for blacking the linking of Mercury into the public telecoms network, they immediately appealed to the high court, hired the most expensive QC in the country and won the appeal (See page 12).

The ruling class stuck together to try to stop trade unionists defending themselves. Other bosses have used the Tories' growing pile of anti-union legislation, and the government are introducing yet more.

The working class, organised and fighting, are the biggest threat to the reactionary plans of Thatcher and Co. And workers are not being cowed by the capitalists' threats.

Workers on strike at Shell in Stanlow defied a high court injunction brought by the employers under the 1980 Employment Act. They picketed Haydock terminal 26 miles from Stanlow which according to the bosses constituted secondary picketing. Shell took out a writ against Howard Jones, craftworkers steward and Ian Smith TGWU chairman but the company could not even find the strikers they named!

The oil company's action stiffened the resistance of the

workforce. The offer of 4½% from one of the world's richest employers was an insult. Workers at Stanlow and at Shellhaven in Essex, usually regarded as "moderate" have been made more determined than ever.

Injunctions were also used against NGA and NUJ members at the Stockport Messenger, again for secondary picketing, but the fight went on. The TUC must follow the lead of these workers.

Talking to the Tories is a waste of breath. The Tories are baying for more laws to try to bind the unions. They are acting in defence of their class and only action by the working class will make them have second thoughts about the wisdom of their policy.

Tom King the new employment secretary is steering a new Trade Union bill through Parliament calling for a secret ballot before unions authorise any strike or any "industrial action which interferes with or breaks employment contracts".

Unions will lose any immunity from legal action if they do not hold a ballot. The Tories hope to hit union finances through damages and legal action.

They want to organise secret ballots in leadership elections and to force ballots every ten years on the existence of a political fund.

The unions are far more democratic than any institutions of the ruling class and any improvements needed will be brought about by union members, not by the capitalist state. The bosses just want a compliant right wing leadership and, they hope, one with no independent working class political allegiances.

The unions must meet fire with fire. At all levels, right up to the TUC leaders, trade unions must show the determination of the workers in dispute. With a national lead all the Tories' plans to put more shackles on the power of the unions would come to nothing.



Photo: Militant

The result of ten years of Liberal/Tory rule in Liverpool was total neglect of housing, a total collapse of new building and of repairs. Liverpool's Labour council are fighting for the means to give our children a better future.

Why Liverpool will fight

The eyes of the labour movement are on Liverpool council.

On 19 November a demonstration in the city will protest at Tory threats to this democratically elected local Labour council.

The Tory "Environment" Secretary Jenkin has threatened that Liver-

Interview with Derek Hatton

pool council could be suspended and Tory puppet commissioners sent in. The reason is because Liverpool are refusing to destroy the environment Jenkin is supposed to be "safeguarding".

Liverpool council are creating jobs not destroy-

ing them, employing building workers to construct affordable houses, not selling them and generally supporting the working class and unemployed not the finance sharks who the Tories represent.

Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool council spoke to Lesley Smirke of Mossley Hill Labour Party about the work of the council since the May

elections which ended ten years of Tory/Liberal rule and how they were resisting the Tories.

"We inherited from the Liberal/Tory Council a budget which meant that it would cost £8 million simply to stand still.

"Built into their budget was £6 million of unallocated savings, which in layman's

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Tory economic 'cure' kills patient

While the Tories' wanted a wedding, the leaders of the Confederation of British Industry, more in tune with the economy, conducted their conference like a wake. Rather than celebrating, the CBI leaders have only drawn more attention to the chronic sickness of British capitalism.

The expected upswing in the British economy will lead to growth of around 2½% this year, and perhaps 2% in 1984. This will increase the strength and confidence of the trade unions, particularly in those industrial sectors, like motor cars, most effected.

But the weak, temporary recovery will hardly make a dent on the general, long-term decline of British capitalism. The Tories pretend that all the sacrifices of the last four years, including over 3 million officially unemployed, have led to a

kills patient

According to the *Quarterly Engineering Review* of London stockbroker Quilton Goodison, Britain had a trade surplus of £3.7bn. in the machinery and transport equipment sector in 1980. Yet, they estimate, by 1988—only five years from now—that will have turned into an annual deficit of £9.8bn., more than enough in this one sector alone to offset any likely surplus in oil trading.

An editorial in the *Times* (8 November 1983), complained about the CBI "whingeing on". Yet it was not a subversive trade union infiltrator, but this same editorial that referred to "an annual transfusion from the taxpayer of £3,500 million in subsidy and current grants, and capital grants of £36 million into private industry, industry."

"The Youth Training Scheme", it went on "will provide trained manpower for British Industry at a cost

Yet they all irrefutably demonstrate the complete and utter incapacity of British capitalism to answer the needs of the mass of the population now or in the future.

The leadership of the Labour Party should draw the appropriate conclusions. Acting within the framework of capitalism, it will be impossible for a future Labour government to carry out permanent reforms and improvements in the living standards of workers.

On the contrary, the very crisis of the system itself would force a Labour Government restrained within such a framework, to introduce counter-reforms and to cut back. There has never been a time, in the whole history of the Labour Party, when Clause IV part 4 of its aims and objects has been more relevant to the needs of workers.

By campaigning and explaining the purpose and the value of nationalisation, of a takeover of the top 200 industrial monopolies, of the state ownership of the top finance companies, of the introduction of a democratic plan of production within industry, the Labour leadership could convince the mass of workers of the great benefits of a socialist economy.

Capitalism offers nothing to the British people but an economic abyss. Labour must explain that on the basis of a planned economy, involving the full use of under-utilised industrial capacity as well as the manpower and resources now lying idle, it would be easily possible to reduce the working week to 35 hours, without loss of pay, as a first step to a further reduction in the working week, to guarantee a national minimum wage of £100 a week and to provide full employment. Socialists cannot gloat over economic hardships, but the mess of British Capitalism must be explained to all workers and it must be used as a crushing and incontrovertible argument for the socialist transformation of society.



Billingham-Outrage at nuclear dumping plan

NO! NO! NO! is the answer from the workers of Billingham to Nirex's plans to dump nuclear waste under the town. Anger is too weak a word to describe their feelings towards the issue. It's now impossible to walk around Billingham without being approached to sign a petition against the plan.

As one local women worker said, "It's not just our future, but our children's children's." Her fears are best summed-up by the joke that's going around Billingham, "Our children won't need to eat Ready Brek any more, because they'll have their own built-in glow".

County Cleveland, under the Tories, has become an unemployment wasteland. The pursuit of profit has singled the area out to

become a nuclear dump. The fact the people have nowhere else to go has increased their determination to fight.

They have instinctively turned towards their trade union movement. The NUR, TGWU, and the NUS have pledged complete support. Factory gate meetings have already been organised outside ICI, who own the mines earmarked for dumping. The Joint Shop Stewards' Combine are in complete opposition to the proposal.

Billingham LPYS have also been involved in the fight, through their own public meetings and leafletting.

By Paul Thompson

Militant Editorial

new dawn for the British economy.

In fact, the opposite is the case. Every important economic indicator shows a worse position now, compared to 1979. Campbell Fraser, the CBI president, made a speech at this bosses' conference, in which he referred to the enormous levels of unemployment.

"But", he continued "there is not even yet a rise in Britain's share of the world markets as a result of the pain. Twenty years ago, Britain had 16 per cent of the world trade in manufactures. Today she has 8 per cent. ... Britain's share in the service industries has fallen by almost the same amount."

These comments are underpinned by the most recent figures published by the Department of Trade and Industry, showing that in the key non-oil sector of trade, upon which the British economy must depend in the long term, there has been a massive collapse in the balance of payments.

In 1981 there was a net deficit of £104 million, and in 1982 of £2,486 million. Yet in the first three quarters of this year, the non-oil deficit has plunged to more than £6,000 million.

Stop new witch-hunt

THE SPECIAL conference of the POEU last week passed a resolution, moved by the Swansea branch, calling for its sponsored MPs—an indirect reference to right winger, John Golding, in particular—to stop supporting moves to expel socialists from the Labour Party.

This resolution must be welcomed, especially in the view of the fact that right wingers in some areas, such as those reported here in Blackburn and Gillingham, are trying to pursue a witch-hunt against *Militant* sup-

porters on the basis of the groundwork already done by last year's NEC.

As was said at the Labour Party conference recently, the Labour Party can have unity or a witch-hunt, but it cannot have both. Labour Party members across the whole country, therefore, must protest against the activities of these local McCarthyites who seem to want to turn the Labour Party into a battlefield again, just at a time when the Tories are on the defensive.

None of these statistics have been invented by Marxists—they all come from Big Business sources, from the "horses mouth".

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Manchester CLP still suspended

ON FRIDAY November 4, Labour Party National Agent David Hughes came to Wythenshawe in an attempt to re-establish our six-month suspended constituency.

All along we have maintained that the suspension was unjust, following a complaint about 'irregularities' from a right wing National Officer of USDAW.

On Friday, the right wing of the party flooded the CLP with delegates but many of these were challenged. It was established that one

UCATT delegate was not even a member of the Labour party and when asked by the National Agent, said he "was prepared to join".

One COHSE branch sent a delegation though it was not even affiliated to Wythenshawe CLP or the Manchester City Labour Party.

After 2½ hours of delegation checks, challenges and counter-challenges, the National Agent was faced with a vote of no confidence if he did not carry out a party card check. Incredibly, access to the meeting was on the basis of filling in a yellow slip supplied by post by David Hughes.

Eventually, Hughes ad-

mitted that he could not proceed with the meeting because he could not clarify all the delegates' credentials. Many comrades found it incredible that after six months the National Agent had not established these facts.

The meeting was adjourned to report-back to the NEC. This represents a moral victory for the left wing and the *Militant* supporters in Wythenshawe, even though our CLP remains suspended.

Despite David Hughes ordering *Militant* sellers outside the meeting, 30 copies were sold and fighting fund collected. When sellers protested that our CLP had not banned the sale of *Mili-*

tant, Hughes had arrogantly retorted: "I am the constituency party!"

The future of our CLP remains in some doubt but the local right wing will have learnt from Friday that they will never be successful in bureaucratically dragging our party back to their bankrupt position. Wythenshawe CLP will remain in the hands of the party rank and file and if the new Labour leadership is serious about establishing unity they should re-open Wythenshawe immediately.

By Michael Lee
(Wythenshawe LPYS,
personal capacity)

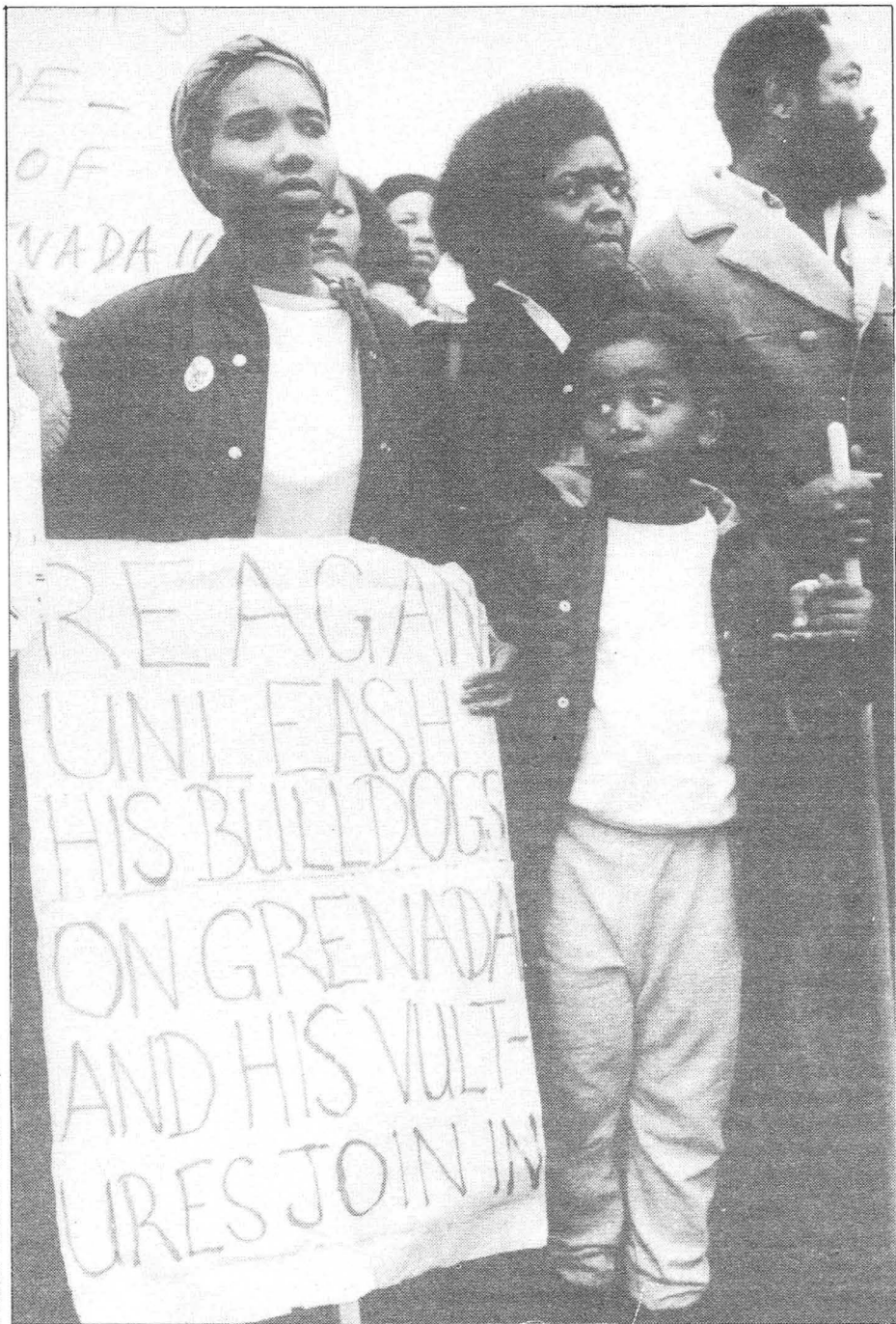


Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

FIVE THOUSAND people, one-third black and overwhelmingly young, marched at short notice behind the New Jewel Movement's slogan: "Those who labour shall hold the reins", in last Saturday's demonstration in London against the American invasion of Grenada. "Murderer Reagan, Murderer Thatcher" were frequent chants on a march, bitterly angry at the chaos and vandalism caused by the invasion forces.

At the rally, the former Grenadian High Commissioner to Britain, who in listing some of the concrete reforms introduced by the Bishop government, touched on the raw nerve which caused US imperialism to strike. Tony Benn, in his speech, drew parallels between Reagan's policy in the Caribbean and Thatcher's "war" on the working class in Britain. "We must fight for socialism in the Caribbean, and socialism in Britain" he said, to enthusiastic applause. Up to 100 copies of *Militant* were sold on the march.

Right wing start local witch hunts

ON MONDAY November 7, Blackburn CLP Executive Committee took the first steps towards disciplining and expelling local Militant supporters.

By a Militant Reporter

An indication of how things were likely to develop at the EC was the large turnout of members who are rarely seen at such meetings, all of whom are known opponents of *Militant*.

Ten people, two of whom are not even members of the Labour Party, are to be written to by the Constituency secretary, explaining that on Sunday December 4, they have the choice of either submitting a written report to the EC to defend themselves against allegations made in the so-called "Gregory Report" or appearing before the EC on that day to put their case verbally and answer questions.

Token hearings

Considering that there has been ten months, during which the "Gregory Report" of about forty pages length has been officially circulated to all GMC delegates and quoted in the national and local press and on TV, it is outrageous that these people will not be able to submit any reply to the GMC who take the final decision on what action is to be taken.

Gregory himself will not be able to be questioned by those accused and in fact one right-wing EC member made a proposal that those named could only have a maximum of one hundred written words to put their case.

There was a proposal put

to the EC that the whole issue should be dropped as most party members were sick and tired of the bad publicity the Labour Party will inevitably get and it was also argued that all the Labour Party effort should be in uniting around the new party leader and defending the livelihood of working class people by coming together and concentrating their attacks on the Tories.

Unfortunately, these arguments were brushed aside, as was the legal information supplied, which suggested that Gregory's Report is absolutely worthless and would be thrown out in a court of law.

It seems quite apparent that the majority of the EC have already made up their minds which people they want expelled and the proceedings now taking place are nothing more than a token gesture at some form of 'hearing'.

However, at the Blackburn Labour Women's Council on Sunday, a resolution was passed explaining that it would be an act of great irresponsibility for the GMC to be disciplining and expelling hard-working party members, especially the local *Militant* supporters, who have been in the forefront in the battle for improving women's rights and conditions. A reflection of the support was the re-election of a *Militant* supporter to the post of women's council secretary.

Legitimate right

The task of replying to Gregory's report will cut across vital Labour work, with a big public meeting planned by the Labour Women's council in December on the health service and the Labour Party Young Socialists working towards December 10 Young Workers' conference.

Militant supporters intend to leave no stone unturned in defending their legitimate right to be Labour Party members and put an end to the McCarthyite witch-hunting action of the right wing.

Gillingham

I HAVE been suspended for my political views, after 30 years of continuous Labour Party membership, beginning with the "Labour League of Youth", forerunner of the LPYS in 1953, and having held many offices including chairman and secretary of a CLP.

When the recent NEC circular, referring to the sale of *Militant* at Labour Party meetings, was considered by our Constituency Labour Party Executive Committee, of which I am a member, a right wing local councillor moved a resolution supporting the NEC recommendation and this was subsequently passed. My crime was to sell *Militant* after the meeting, as I had done for the past eight years.

At an earlier, September, EC meeting, a recommendation had been passed in my absence, stating that I would be expelled unless I gave an undertaking not to sell the paper again on the premises. This had been referred back at the next GMC and the following EC broke up in disorder.

The October GMC passed two resolutions, seeming to contradict one another, but

the party officers have now interpreted them to mean an immediate three months suspension, which means my activity at GMC level will be curtailed next year. The only other *Militant* supporter on the GMC has been removed by his branch for alleged "misdemeanour".

In my thirty years in the party, I have represented Kent on the Southern Regional Executive, and have been a Rochester City Councillor. My trade union activities over a long period include branch secretary of the Association of Scientific Workers, a founder section of ASTMS, and West London Trades Council delegate.

I think my suspension for selling a political paper after Labour Party meetings is an insult and an attack on the rights of party members. The right are trying to set a precedent, as this is the first recorded action of this type.

Help me to fight this unfair suspension. Please send resolutions and letters in my support to the secretary, Gillingham CLP, 122a Twyndall Lane, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 6JU with a copy to me via *Militant*.

By Bob Hurley
(Gillingham CLP)

LIVERPOOL FIGHTS

FROM PAGE ONE

language means cuts and also 1,200 redundancies. We were not prepared to make either of these.

"The policies on which we were elected were the creation of 1,000 extra jobs, the building of 1,000 houses, reduction of rents by £2, and wholesale reorganisation of secondary education.

"When you add that up you're talking about another £22 million, making £30 million in all. Add any government penalties and you're talking about £70 or £80 million by the end of the year.

"We weren't surprised when Patrick Jenkin's local henchman, Malcolm Thornton decided to make threats about closing Liverpool down. It would appear that the Government has a number of options about what it does in terms of taking on Liverpool. It doesn't matter to us when he decides to take on Liverpool, we're starting to mobilise the support within Merseyside now"

"Already there has been a meeting of all shop stewards and work-site reps in the local authority and trade unions to inform them of the position. There is a news bulletin going out to every single house in the city, informing them of what's going on and advertising the demonstration on the 19th.

"We are also confident that the wider trade union movement will be there in support. We are confident it will be a mass demonstration

"This will be seen not only by people locally but by the Government nationally, that Liverpool have had enough. They're not prepared to go on taking further redundancies and not prepared to see the City Council Service and jobs cut back even further.

"It's crucial that Liverpool is not seen in isolation. The struggle that Liverpool is facing today is exactly the same struggle other local authorities will face tomorrow.

"If Liverpool is successful, it will be a major psychological boost to every other local authority who will be involved in the same campaign, in the not too distant future.

"We're now going round the country speaking to different Labour groups, Trades Councils, and local authority trade unions, and there is developing support in many, many areas of the country."

"November 19th is a springboard, it's not the end of a campaign. We believe that from there, lobbies of Parliament, further demonstrations, and campaigning will go on till not only Liverpool wins the fight, over services and jobs but until local authorities get the confidence to take on the government over this issue."

Liverpool unions pledge campaign

ABOUT 150 trade union activists from factories, depots and offices throughout Merseyside met on 4 November to build a campaign of action in support of Liverpool council.

The chairman, Eddie Loyden, MP for Liverpool Garston, outlined the relentless closures of factories, large and small, in the past decade. The local election results in May and Liverpool's swing to Labour in June showed a determination to end this nightmare.

Tony Mulhearn, of Liverpool District Labour Party, spoke of the loss of 9,000 jobs between 1971 and 1981, involving a quarter of all the city's jobs and 40% of all manufacturing industry. The loss of thousands of jobs under the Liberal/Tory regime was being reversed by the Labour council with new posts being created. Consequently, the Tories, who had used the courts against the GLC fares plan, were planning to use Parliament against Liverpool.

But local people support the council. If the courage of the tiny Clay Cross council inspired the whole labour movement, Liverpool could

really get a massive response.

Council leader John Hamilton outlined the neglect of housing and the attacks on services by the Liberals and compared it with Labour's policy of ending privatisation and creating jobs. But Liverpool faced a budget based on the destructive policies of the Liberals on top of £125 million in rate support grants being taken away.

Deputy leader, Derek Hatton, pointed out that the council needed £8 million just to stand still, but the council were determined to carry out their mandate and were mobilising support through meetings such as the one with 700 shop stewards in the local authorities. The Liberals had attacked as "political" their posting of *Liverpool City News* through every door, but Derek compared the cost of that to the cost of houses, jobs and services being destroyed.

The council had also sent a document to every council leader in the country. It is not just Liverpool's fight, Derek explained, but every Labour authority's.

The meeting agreed to

organise support for the November 19 demonstration, along with a feeder march from Wirral. Meetings are to be organised at factory gates and unemployed centres. There is to be door-to-door canvassing. There are to be 5,000 posters across the city while a local photographic firm are producing free videos.

The enthusiasm could be measured by the generous donations totalling £750 raised by Terry Fields' financial

appeal. They came from stewards at factories such as Schwepes and branches and stewards from TGWU, GMBATU, ASTMS, POEU, FBU, NALGO, trades councils and Labour Party wards. The Tory attacks must not succeed!

By Graham Casey
(TGWU 6/612 branch, personal capacity)



Labour Party Young Socialists and members of the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign lobby in support of the November 2 delegation

Young workers prepare for Assembly

YOUTH IN Tory Britain are being hammered on the dole, on the Youth Training Swindle and—if they can find it—at work.

Thatcher and the bosses are determined to make young people pay for the crisis in their system. That is the crude purpose of YTS, to drag down youth wages and thus the wages and living standards of all workers.

The Labour Party should make the plight of youth one of its most urgent priorities. The price paid for virtually ignoring youth at the last general election was the 40% of young people who abstained, which went a long way towards Labour's defeat.

The LPYS are already organising the fightback against the Tories. We are building support for the Young Workers Assembly organised by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign, to be held in Manchester on December 10.

The assembly will take up the issues of privatisation, YTS and the conditions of young workers. We will be launching a Young Workers' Charter and a fighting programme of action to defeat the Tories at the earliest possible opportunity.

In the Northern Region we are circulating all labour movement bodies, asking them to sponsor the event and encourage young members to attend. Already, through LPYS members on the Youth Advisory Committee, CPSA at Longbenton DHSS have agreed to sponsor a group of young union members.

By John Hird
(LPYS National Committee, Northern Region)

Parents protest at YTS toll

LAST WEEK on Wednesday November 2, the majestic sound of military fanfares for the Mountbatten memorial service resounded through the Whitehall in London. The Royal Family arrived in shining limousines, to the pale cheers of small crowds of pensioners and coach loads of Women's Institute members. Neatly pressed soldiers snapped to attention as the Royal entourage and ageing Generals wobbled by.

By Bob Wade

of the LPYS who took part, said, "We went in and eight of them were all lined up with Morrison in the middle. We sat facing them. We put forward the statistics showing the level of accidents, demanded that the YTS

trainees be given the status of employees, and asked what steps the MSC were taking to get proper control over factories that used YTS.

"We didn't get a straight answer. The parents themselves were sickened."

Afterwards Dave Nellist MP told the lobby, "We have just spent one and a half hours listening to a well intentioned but at the same time, a meaningless dialogue."

All the delegation were clearly bitter at the Tories' attitude. Dawn and Derek Lewis from Ebbw Vale, whose 16 year old son was killed on a scheme only six weeks after leaving school, were near to tears.

David Johnson, 16, who joined the delegation as proof of the dangers facing youth trainees, said, "It was a load of rubbish. They were not prepared to give anything." David left his

'Training for Life' scheme after it was discovered they were working with asbestos. "I'd rather be alive on the dole than be poisoned by asbestos."

While nothing concrete came from this meeting, there was a slight shift in the Tories' position. When YTURC lobbied Tebbit (then in charge of the schemes) in 1982, he would not budge on the issue. At the meeting last week however, Morrison said the government were 'considering' making YTS trainees covered by Section 2 of the Health and Safety Act, which would give them 'employees status' (although they would not have full rights at work).

But this is far from adequate. This campaign must continue. As one of the bereaved parents, Mr Richard Cain from Sheffield, said, "They failed to make a commitment on any real issues. All we got was tea and sympathy. We have got to put more pressure on."

A MISTAKE appeared in last week's article on POEU youth by Steve Jones. It accredited the Young Workers' Assembly as being organised by the LPYS. The Assembly is in fact being organised by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign. We apologise to YTURC and to Steve Jones for this error.

A grim statistic

IN THE past three years there have been over 3,000 reported injuries and 17 fatalities on the Youth Opportunities Programme. Added to this are the deaths of two trainees on the Youth Training Schemes, which have only been in operation for two months.

The Manpower Services Commission claim in its recent memo to the Youth Training Board that:

"YOP was significantly safer than ordinary employment. Employees generally were about three times more likely to have an

accident than YOP trainees."

The calculations that the MSC has used to demonstrate that YOP is safer than ordinary employment are entirely misleading. Their figures show that in 1982/83 there were 7.1 accidents per thousand YOP trainees compared with 20 accidents per thousand employees in 1981.

But YOP lasted only six months whereas the employee accident rate was taken over a year; and some YOP trainees were at college rather than on work experience.

Taking this into account, there were actually the equivalent of 16.3 accidents per year for every thousand YOP trainees in 1982/83.

When you look at serious accidents, a far worse picture emerges. In 1982/83 there were the equivalent of 124 fatal or major injuries annually per 100,000 YOP trainees—compared with only 60 for the total ordinary workforce. So by this measure YOP was twice as dangerous as ordinary employment.

Under the 1974 Health and Safety Act, people who are not employees do not enjoy full protection: firms are obliged to look after health and safety while on the premises, but not to instruct or train them or issue a written policy statement on safety matters. This also applies to the majority of YTS trainees.

By Willie Griffin
(LPYS National Chairman)

ACCIDENT RATES ON YOP AND IN THE WORKFORCE		
Rate per 100,000 employees/trainees per year at work.	YOP (1982/83)	TOTAL WORKFORCE (1981)
Accidents	1634	2000
Fatal or major	16.34	60
Fatal	2.9	2.2

Sources: MSC; Health and Safety 1981
—Figures are those most recently available.

Only a street away from this fantasy world, a bitter and angry meeting was taking place. Labour MPs and parents of youth killed on government training schemes met Tory minister Peter Morrison in his plush offices at the Department of Employment in Bothill Street, SW1.

The parents and MPs, joined by members of the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign, were calling for youth on the Youth Training Schemes to be given adequate protection under the Health and Safety Act and the same rights as other workers in industry. At least this would go some way to battle the alarming rate of industrial accidents on YTS.

Outside, Young Socialists stood in the grey London drizzle displaying their support for the delegation.

Mark French, of Hampstead LPYS, gave vent to the anger of youth drafted onto these schemes;

"I was on a YOP scheme in Westminster. We were housed in a derelict building that was once a delousing centre! It was meant to train us in horticulture, but the first task we had was to build a green house.

"Most of the time we sat in a room 8 ft by 10 ft with only a few flowerpots. I was unemployed afterwards, although now I'm on a Community Project scheme, building a Sea Cadets HQ in Islington."

Inside, the meeting began with the minister. Willie Griffin, National Chairman

MILITANT STUDENT RALLY

Open to all students
at university, polytechnic or FE College

On Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November at
Liverpool University Student Union

Sat 2pm: Fighting the Cuts
Speakers:
Pauline Dunlop, Kath McDonnell
7pm: Film: *The Battle of Chile: The Coup d'etat*

Sun 10 am: Seminars on:
"A socialist programme for FE Students"
"Building a mass NOLS"
"NOLS and the workers' struggle in Eastern Europe"
2pm: Debate on:
"Which way forward for Labour?"
Speakers:
P. Taaffe and Geoff Hodgson (LCC)

Tickets:
(cost £4 each or £2 for FE students)
and leaflets now available from: "Militant student rally", 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.
Cheques payable to "Militant Student Publications."

Press freedom a sick joke at the Times

By Lynn Walsh

HAROLD EVANS has given his account of his stint on *The Times*. Although he previously edited the *Sunday Times* his story was serialised in the rival *Observer*.

This is because Evans spilt the beans about Rupert Murdoch's ruthless role as *The Times*' new proprietor.

Evans leaves no doubt that, contrary to Murdoch's assurances that he would respect the paper's 'editorial independence', the new owner lost little time in asserting political control over the traditional mouthpiece of Britain's ruling class.

At first, Evans found that Murdoch supported his editorial decisions. However, "I had been six months on *The Times* when there were signs that my honeymoon with Murdoch was ending. He sent for me, and when I came into his office, he was gouging his ball-point pen through a report on page two by Lucy Hodges.

"Why do you use these Commies?" he said. It was a half-column, summarising evidence to the Scarman riot enquiry from the Brixton Residents' Group. Their lawyer argued that the high crime rate in Brixton before the riots could have been caused by the big increase in the number of policemen on the streets. I replied that it was a good story and Hodges was a good reporter; in any event it was absurd to call her a Communist."

This incident proved to be just an early symptom.

Murdoch's main grievance was Evans' failure to give Thatcher the fulsome support the owner of *The Sun* thought she deserved. In the period before the Falklands War, the Tories were trailing behind Labour in the opinion polls, with ratings lower than any previous post-war government.

The pressure on Evans came initially through Gerald Long, Murdoch's new managing director on *The Times*. "He wrote me a 'private and personal' two-page memorandum protesting that *The Times* should not give prominence to reports unhelpful to the government."

This was provoked by a factual article by the economics editor, David Blake. Under the headline "Recession goes on with fifth drop in output", Blake's article conspicuously failed to detect the desired signs of the Tories' long promised "recovery".

Murdoch himself exploded when *The Times* carried comments from a Harvard professor who, despite being awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics, failed to see the positive side of Thatcher's monetarist policies.

"Why d'ya run that stuff?" Murdoch confronted Evans; "...It's wrong! Wrong! What does he know anyway? ... Intellectual



Harold Evans, ex-editor, *The Times*.

Sacked for not backing Thatcher - Enough

bullshit!"

This gives the flavour of the discussions between the proprietor and the editor.

Murdoch also complained about Ray Buckton being given space to reply to attacks on ASLEF during the traindrivers' strike.

Murdoch then started to tighten the financial reins demanding weekly editorial budgets and attempting to impose a system of written authorisation, from Murdoch or his managing director, for any expenditure over £1,000.

"Why do you use these Commies?"

Murdoch, owner, to Evans, editor, about a *Times* journalist.

Evans resisted. Such financial control "would have meant that the Murdoch management was effectively editing *The Times*."

As editor of the *Sunday Times*, Evans had got used to the idea, under Thompson ownership, that the proprietors trusted his political judgement and allowed him to edit the paper. Now he was learning the hard way that for Murdoch there was no difference in principle between *The Sun* and *The Times*. "Quality" paper or not, he who pays the piper...

Very revealing, too, is Evans' recollection of a dinner party in Autumn, 1981, at which Murdoch discussed his business methods with like-minded tycoons. The dinner was at the St. Johns

Wood home of Woodrow Wyatt, himself a newspaper boss and one-time Labour MP; and it was Arnold Weinstock, boss of General Electric, who was expanding on how to keep tabs on the profits.

Also present was "Frank Chapple of the Electricians Union..."

On Budget Day, 1982, Murdoch demanded Evans' resignation, but he refused to go. The boss, however, had discarded 13 editors in 15 years on the *Australian*, and was not deterred.

The pressure on the editor was stepped up through his creatures, "the courtiers", as Evans puts it, "apprehensive on his arrival, hoping for a boyish grin, fearing the scowl, demeaning and coarsening themselves."

Evans soon found that some of the journalists who claimed to despise Murdoch sold out the moment they were offered advancement. Charles Douglas-Hume, the deputy editor, couldn't wait to get behind the big desk. Offered the editorship, he manoeuvred behind Evans' back. Confronted with this he blurted out: "I would do anything to edit *The Times*! Wouldn't you?"

Clearly the man for Murdoch!

Weighing up whether to fight back, the campaigning editor asked himself "Why should I yield to Murdoch when I had resisted years of intimidation and more than once seen off a better class of bully boy?" But he envisaged, with good reason, that he "would be subjected to a thousand humiliations, challenged on every paperclip."

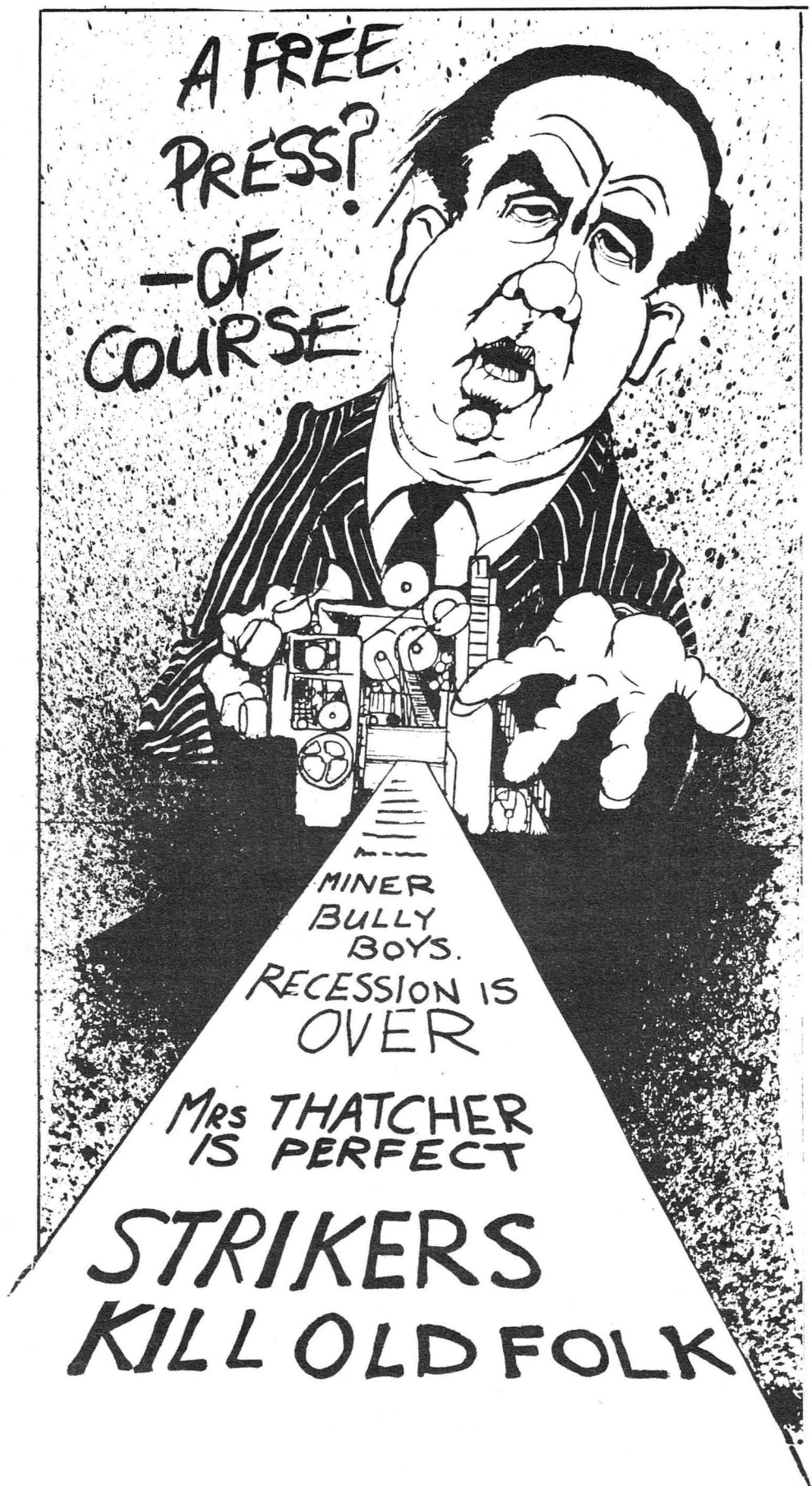
The national directors, four noble Lords appointed by the government to guard the editorial independence of *The Times* opposed Evans being ousted, but could not save him. Ultimately, the only real discussion was over the terms of Evans' compensation.

Now Evans is getting his own back. Coolly relating the angry confrontations, he exposes with acid effectiveness the character behind the devious schemes and brutal methods. The Murdoch revealed is not especially capable or astute, or even a very strong character. His politics are crude, to say the least.

But Murdoch has money, he has drive to acquire newspapers, and when he takes them over he has no scruples about wielding the powers of ownership.

His success is based on the ruthless pursuit of two brutally simple aims: to make capitalist propaganda and to make capitalist profits.

Do the Tories really believe it when they assert that there is really "freedom of the press"? If anyone else is suffering from such an illusion, Harold Evans' editorial memoirs will surely shatter it.



Editors' crash course

LAUNCHING *Good Times, Bad Times* at a press conference (27 October), Harold Evans underlined several serious allegations against Murdoch made in his book but not included in *The Observer's* excerpts.

He claims that Biffen accepted misleading figures from Murdoch to avoid referring the takeover to the Monopolies Commission. Evans says the *Sunday Times* was made to appear unprofitable, on the basis of a single year's figures, and with £4 million revenue and £700,000 profits missing from the accounts. In reality the paper was a "going concern" and should have been referred to the Commission.

The ineffectiveness of the anti-monopoly legislation is emphasised by the fact that ownership of Times newspapers gave Murdoch, who already owned the *Sun* and the *News of the World*, 41% of British daily readership

and 45% of the Sunday readership.

Evans also alleges that minutes of a Times' board meeting were falsified.

During a dispute in February 1982, when the new management was threatening 600 jobs, journalists asked whether the ownership of the papers' titles, which under the agreement approved by Parliament were to remain with Times Newspapers, had been transferred to Murdoch's own parent company, News International.

Evans claims that it was only then that he received minutes of a December board meeting, to which he and the *Sunday Times*' editor had not been invited. "They revealed that the minutes, which had not been presented for approval or signed, had been falsified. They recorded transactions that had not taken place, resolutions that had not been passed."

The national directors, Lords Dacre, Green, Robens, Roll and Sir Edward Pickering, were not

consulted about transferring the titles, and, as watchdogs appointed by Parliament to guard the public interest, proved completely useless. At first Evans was taken in by Murdoch. Evans himself had supported the Tories in 1979, and saw no big problems with a proprietor who had given Parliament such firm guarantees about editorial independence:

Without knowing it, Evans had begun a crash course in the real meaning of "press freedom" under capitalism. During his battle to impose his line on *The Times*, Murdoch told one senior journalist: "I give instructions to my editors all round world, why shouldn't I in London."

Reminded of his promises to Biffen when he acquired *The Times*, Murdoch is alleged to have said: "They're not worth the paper they're written on."

At least Murdoch is frank about it.

IN THIS second and concluding article on the German revolution of 1923, JULIAN SILVERMAN outlines the enormous, historic opportunity for the working class to take power in Germany which was tragically mishandled and lost.

The first part, republished last week, outlined the crisis which developed in Germany following the defeat in the First World War; the first revolutionary wave; its ebb and defeat as a result of the betrayal of the Social Democratic leaders; the further revolutionary onslaughts as German capitalism disintegrated.

THE WORKING class and middle class were pauperised overnight. By the summer of 1923 the workers were fighting back with huge strikes and demonstrations. The middle class looked to the workers for a solution and in particular, the Communist Party was increasingly looked upon as saviour for the mass of the population.

Combat "Hundreds" were being formed in every area, with the Communists in the lead, preparing workers' shock troops for the battle which seemed imminent. The scene was set for revolution.

By October the devastation had reached unbelievable proportions. Scarcely a facet of "normal" civilised life remained.

The middle class had been wiped out and now joined the eight million unemployed workers (more than half the entire workforce), the old, the sick, in searching through rich men's rubbish bins for something to eat.

Only the multi-millionaire spivs and their cronies, the aristocratic landowners, and some of the better-off farmers knew where their next meal was coming from, or that they would still have a roof over their head by nightfall.

As for the overwhelming majority of the population, no longer did they have any illusions that they had anything to gain by the continuance of capitalism. Marches, demonstrations, strikes—these were no longer enough.

Local workers' leaders, union militants and vast "submerged masses" of the population, hitherto untouched by union organisation, were waiting, hourly, for the call for insurrection. Nothing less could even begin to solve any of their problems, could even ensure their physical survival.

They naturally looked to the Communist Party for a decisive political lead. Tens and hundreds of thousands of workers came to the party through the factory councils and from the unemployed (the "official" SPD unions sent them back their membership cards the moment they lost their jobs!).

No real power

On October 12th, the three CP "Landtag" deputies in the Saxon Parliament joined the Left Social Democrats to form a government. (Similar tactics were being prepared in neighbouring Thuringia). It was well understood from the start, that this action in itself gave no real power, so long as the economic machine and the military and state forces belonged to the tycoons. The central government was not, in any case, going to allow these left regimes to continue in existence for more than a week or two if it could help it.

The CP policy would only make sense as part of a concerted strategy preparing for the seizure of power, otherwise the CP would only be assuming public responsibility for the administration of an unworkable system. Not a single reform could be implemented; not a meal provided.

The German revolution 1923

Part II



However, what they could do was to speak over the heads of the ministers to the millions gathering outside; to demand the immediate requisition of food and arrangements for factory councils and elected working class bodies and to see to its distribution; to call for the emergency nationalisation under workers' management, of the key sectors of the economy, to produce "for need, and not for profit"; for the disbanding of both the private assassination brigades and the enormous official ones: the police and the army—the arms to be distributed to the workers to protect their new property and their new role in society.

Time was scarce

Of course, it would not be enough merely to demand these things; time was scarce—they should have used their authority to draw the organised housewives and women workers, dispossessed peasants, "workers in uniform", employed and unemployed into vast proletarian organisations, politically and militarily prepared for the life and death struggles that were due to take place; and especially to call for similar measures to be carried out in support of their action, throughout the country, leading to a general strike, in preparation for insurrection.

This was, indeed, the CP policy, but, as the hour for action approached they began to find a thousand reasons why "the time was not right", "one can't set a date for the revolution in advance", "one must not provoke the enemy" etc. At the same time they had broken away from the reactionary official unions and were in danger of splitting the revolutionary workers away from the broad masses, unless an immediate decisive lead were given—a call to arms.

As it turned out, not one of these steps had been taken when, nine days later, on October 21st, Reichscommander General Von Seeckt marched into Dresden, sacked the government, arrested the leaders, and declared a "State of Emergency" and martial law throughout Germany.

The reaction of the workers was immediate. Without waiting for instructions from union officials or party leaders, they brought whole cities practically to a standstill. "If a general strike did not break out" wrote a participant, later, "it was for the sole reason that the Communist Party, waiting for the decisive battles which were due to be engaged throughout Germany when the Central Committee gave the word, did not call upon the masses to down tools".

A routine conference of delegates from factory councils, SPD's and CP's was due to take place at the end of the month in Chemnitz. Upon the CP's insistence, this was brought forward a week, to the 21st, and a resolution calling for a general strike as preparation for an uprising was to be placed on the agenda. Workers everywhere looked to this conference for the call to action.

The Hamburg and North German Shipyard workers, for example, were meeting at the same time. They sent couriers to the Chemnitz conference to obtain information and give them the word to move. In Hamburg itself, tens of thousands were involved in pitched battles with the police, for the right to gather in the streets.

Many rank and file policemen, "did not hide their sympathy for the starving people"; their bosses, however, put the force on day and night duty, so-called "red alert"—expecting a mass uprising at any time. A Hamburg worker described the scene on Monday 22nd. A fellow worker, "standing in front of a butcher's shop, looking at the meat, caught me by the hand and said, "if the Communists don't do something and do it at once, their party will fall apart".

That evening there was a women's meeting in the district. On the agenda: hunger. The hall was packed. Some of those present were extremely wrought up, having spent the day vainly looking for something to eat...

There was only one slogan: TO BATTLE!...The main streets were crowded. The police used their guns again...People were whispering to each other "Is it beginning? When? Tonight? Tomorrow?" Nobody knew anything for certain...

The local CP arranged a meeting that night to discuss the call to arms awaited hourly from the Chemnitz conference.

But the conference was in no way representative of the sudden shock-wave that had shot through the entire working class during the last days (which had ejected, sometimes forcibly, bureaucrats and renegades from office). The SPD delegates threatened to walk out if the general strike resolution was so much as discussed. By a small majority the conference rejected the call, when it was finally made, and a compromise formula was arrived at: to call a local general strike in one area, and await its success or failure to determine whether to go ahead with a national move.

Of course, in principle, the policy of testing out the feeling in this manner is not incorrect. On the contrary, it is necessary to avoid the kind of desperate putschism of 1921, for example. Trotsky had advocated just this kind of action months before, as an answer to the argument "Can one set the date of a revolution in advance?"

But the timing and the area chosen could not have been better calculated to produce a fiasco, if they had been planned deliberately by "agents provocateur".

Mutinous sailors

Kiel was decided upon. A representative was sent there with the order to move. On his own initiative he visited the Hamburg CP and informed them of the plan. They told him of the local situation.

In 1918 Kiel had been the base for hundreds of thousands of war-weary and mutinous sailors, but today it was the base only for a small number of Reichswehr counter-revolutionary volunteers. It was unlikely that combat hundreds even existed there.

But failure to act would have meant the crushing of the Saxon and Thuringian left governments, a body blow to the Communist Party and the postponement for perhaps a generation, of the hopes for an end to the vicious system that was destroying millions of

people.

In Hamburg an insurrection was bound to break out in any case; without a clear political programme, it would be drowned in blood. It was decided to call for an organised uprising the next day, according to contingency plans that had been drawn up previously.

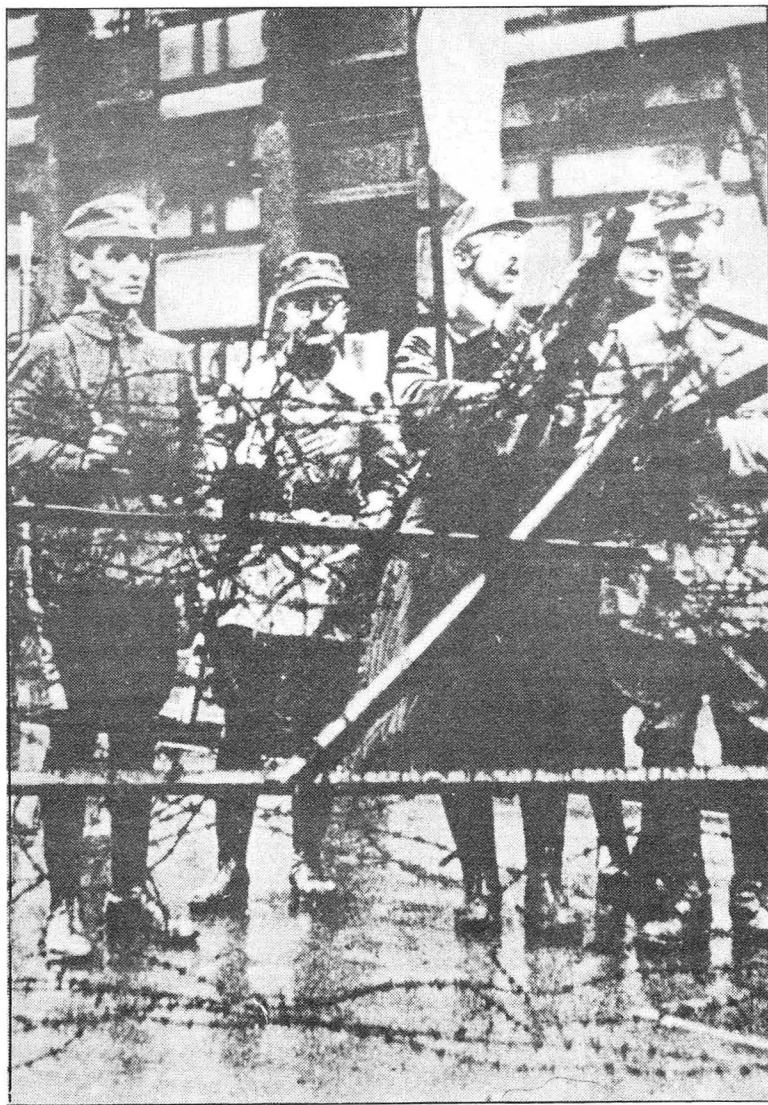
But the Hamburg leaders had left the party totally unprepared. The "hundreds" had consisted of some 750 men. Not all of these could now be informed in time. The leader in Barmbeck, for example, the area which was to bear the main brunt of the fighting, had attempted some months before to give his men rifle practice. For this action, he had been dismissed by the local CP leadership "on account of this provocative conduct which might have led to the banning of the hundreds."

The result was that the party itself dissolved the hundreds! And by October 22, no new ones had been formed. This Barmbeck leader (a 25 year old student) was literally dragged out of bed that night, appointed military commander, and told to commence hostilities at 5.00 am next morning!

He did not now know the men. The few weapons they had, had not been kept oiled and cleaned and were largely unusable. Many areas had not been informed that there was to be an insurrection. In the event, next morning, when they saw the pitiful array of unarmed enthusiasts, two thirds of the men went home.

Through courage, split-second synchronisation, and scrupulously detailed prior surveillance, they succeeded in surprising the police who had at last been allowed to sleep, after three days and nights of "red alert" and—amazingly—250 to 300 men had captured and disarmed 17 police stations by 5.30 am! Of course, all this would have meant absolutely nothing if they did not have the support of virtually the entire working class population.

Those without weapons, at 5.30 were sent to the railway stations and factory gates to inform the workers on their way to work. By 7.00 am, a general strike had been declared, which was absolutely solid. The cry went up "Give us arms!" In the black maze of streets



that made up the working class quarters, the women went about urging each other to bring out their last chair or cupboard to use in the barricades.

In the outlying areas many isolated cottages found themselves outnumbered and surrounded by the police and their fascist "helpers".

But in the tunnel under the river, behind the walls, among the gadgetry of dockland, in the miles of back alleys surrounded by tall tenement blocks, the working class was in control. Every chimney was a turret, every doorway a field-hospital.

The police found themselves attacked from unseen balconies and unknown side streets in enemy territory. They were not let into the secret. They wasted pound after pound of ammunition on barricades that had been evacuated without their being able to notice. By afternoon they had become completely demoralised. By 6.30 pm they decided that it was useless to continue without further reinforcements, and the order was given to cease fire for that day.

On the next morning the entire police-force in the dockland area had to be replaced by fascist volunteers, such as the demoralisation among the police. In addition, two torpedo boats arrived in port, carrying 500 extra police. Reichswehr aeroplanes flew overhead as "reconnaissance".

They also brought in a cruiser full of marines, the "Hamburg". But the men, members of this volunteer counter-revolutionary force—refused to obey orders, and mutinied.

Nevertheless, with all the forces

that were available, reinforcements, fascists and aeroplanes, they prepared for a grand dawn attack on Barmbek: a tremendous onslaught...

But there was no battle. The insurgents had simply stopped fighting!

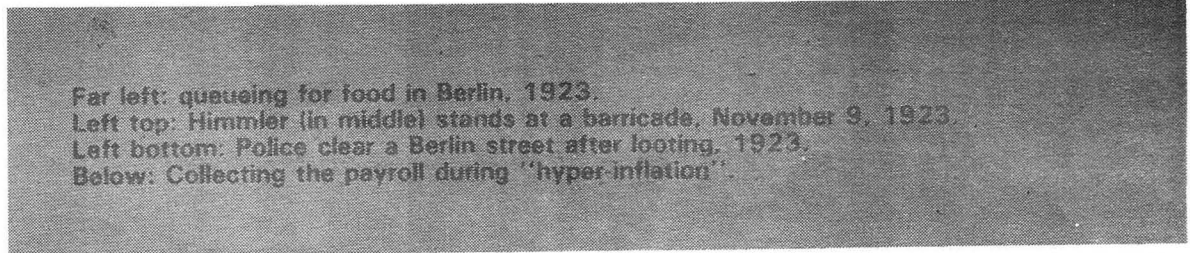
The Hamburg Prefect of Police in a special report, admitted to his superiors that he had "not succeeded in breaking the insurgents' resistance" that the latter "had not been crushed but had voluntarily left the battlefield, bearing their arms."

He lamented that the police were "powerless to counter an insurrection which employed the most modern methods of active defence, made large-scale use of barricades, rooftops, balconies and windows, and ENJOYED THE SUPPORT OF THE POPULATION". (Our emphasis.)

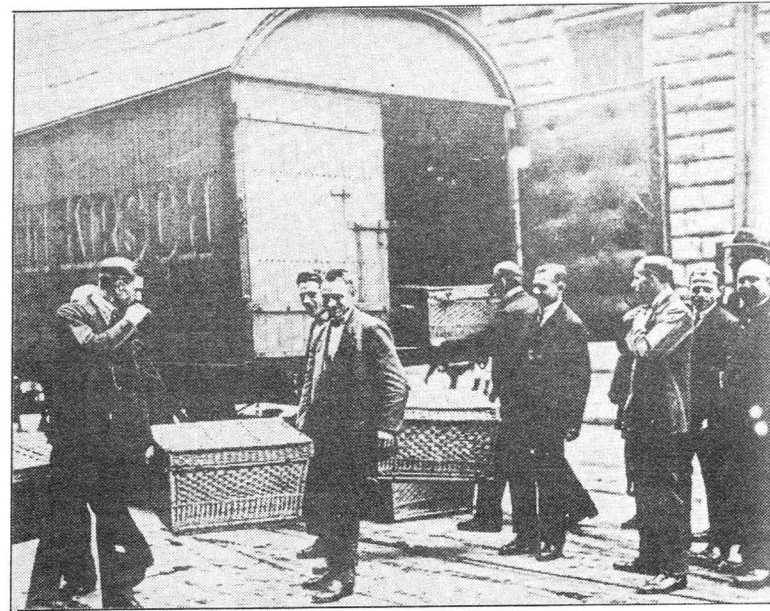
Within a matter of hours, the effective control of the town had passed to the workers. There can be no doubt, that in a short time these events would have recurred throughout Germany with similar success. In all the key industrial areas the working class was burning to move. It was the merest accident that it should have been Hamburg, rather than Berlin or the Ruhr, that unleashed their pent-up energies.

The effect on the workers of France, Italy, Great Britain would have been tremendous. Lloyd George was right! Revolution would have spread like wild-fire. What happened? Why was there no fight?

One thing is certain: everything depended on the Communist Party leadership. The German workers



Far left: queuing for food in Berlin, 1923.
Left top: Himmler (in middle) stands at a barricade, November 9, 1923.
Left bottom: Police clear a Berlin street after looting, 1923.
Below: Collecting the payroll during "hyper-inflation".



had had enough of heroic martyrdom. They wanted victory. They understood from bitter experience that this required organisation and determined leadership.

In the event, what happened was as follows:

There are conflicting reports as to the details, but it seems that Karl Radek, the representative of the Third International, had brought fresh instructions from Moscow, to the German CP Executive Committee: the plans for insurrection were to be cancelled!

This was on the 22nd, ie the day before the Hamburg events. A courier was sent post-haste to Kiel, where the uprising had been intended to start. Of course, nobody there knew anything about an uprising.

The next morning the Central Committee were "startled by the news that an insurrection had broken out in Hamburg". The whole thing was a "ghastly mistake"! New couriers were sent to call it off! The insurgents did not believe their ears when they heard the new instructions. On the contrary, rumours had been flying about that Russia was sending aid (a shipload of arms etc), that a general strike had already broken out in Central Germany etc.

Fighting alone

Eventually, during the night of 23/4 October, they were finally persuaded by one of the local party leaders that they were indeed fighting alone, there was no insurrection, they had better go home.

In some areas, they had either not been informed that it was all over, or they refused to believe that such a thing was possible. Soviets had been formed, in the thick of the struggle, and fighting continued during the next day. The result was unimaginable desperation. All the struggles of the preceding generation went for nothing. As one wrote, "One does not play with insurrection", wrote Marx. Certain leaders...did play with insurrection".

Thousands were jailed and brutally tortured. Thousands more left their homes, carried all their belongings in one small case, and went anonymously to look for work in distant towns. Having used their last furniture for barricades, still more thousands sat in their dark empty rooms, tight-lipped for fear of informers and midnight police raids. A few shreds of fly-posters, torn by police bayonets, were all that remained on the surface to show that anything had happened at all.

A month later, Hitler staged his farcical "beer-hall putsch". With the aid of a few cranky junior officers he attempted to inveigle

veteran ex-General Ludendorf into a Nazi plot to capture Munich and march on Berlin. In the event he and his tiny handful of followers ran away at the first shots from the police. This was something they had not expected!

But the attitude of the authorities was in effect, "All right, thank you. You helped put down the revolution but now your services are not longer required for the present". Hitler retired to a comfortable four month jail sentence and wrote *Mein Kampf* (My Battle).

Capitalists, the world over, breathed a sigh of relief and prepared to bring out their "more acceptable" faces: "moderate", "liberal", (and in Britain even Labour) governments were elected during 1924.

The effect on the Communist International was devastating. The Soviet bureaucrats, the NEP men—private capitalists upon which the shaky workers' state had to depend—the former Czarist officials and all the other vultures who were in a position to pick out gross privileges for themselves from the body of starving Russia, began to be openly contemptuous of international revolution. The German catastrophe helped to consolidate their position in Russian society. If the workers in the advanced countries were not going to help Russia out of its backwardness, then the Russian people had better not pay homage to them!

Consciously or unconsciously Zinoviev, Stalin and others were playing their game. Lenin was on his death-bed. It was in these months that Stalin invented the "theory" of "Socialism in one country" for the first time. A "theory" which paved the way for the defeat of the 1925-7 Chinese revolution, the betrayal of the Spanish revolution, the Purge Trials, the Stalin-Hitler pact and the dissolution of the Third International twenty years—and millions of lives—later.

At the fifth world congress, which took place in March 1924, the International, under the influence of Stalin and co., sought to make scapegoats out of the German leaders. As a result, some were removed from their positions, others expelled from the party. Having thus unburdened themselves from blame, Zinoviev and the others contented themselves with smug assurances that "nothing has changed" that "the struggle would go on", Germany was "approaching a new civil war".

Only five years later was Stalin's personal role in the debacle revealed. In a letter to Zinoviev and Bukharin he had written: "Should the Communists strive to seize power without the Social Democrats, are they mature enough for that? If today in Ger-

many, the power, so to speak, falls, and the Communists seize hold of it, they will fall with a crash...the bourgeoisie plus the Right Social Democrats will...exterminate them. Of course the fascists are not asleep, but it is to our interest that they attack first...In my opinion, the Germans must be curbed, and not spurred on".

By some uncharacteristic accident, an issue of Pravda (May 1924) gave the lie to this kind of talk. "If, in May 1924, when the mark was comparatively stabilised...after the middle class...went over to the National-Socialists, after a deep crisis in the Party, and a heavy defeat of the proletariat, if after all this, the Communists were able to rally 3,700,000 votes, then it is clear that in October 1923, during the unprecedented economic crisis, during the complete disintegration of the middle classes, during a frightful confusion in the ranks of the social democracy...and an unprecedented militant mood...in the industrial centres, the Communist Party had the majority of the population on its side: it could and should have fought and had all the chances of success."

As it was it took seven years and another cataclysm before the party reached the same strength, and then Hitler was allowed to come to power "without so much as a window-pane being smashed".

Leaders' vacillations

Part of the reason why the Soviet leaders did not wish to pursue this line of thought was because the vacillations of the German leaders in 1923, only reflected their own vacillations in Russia in 1917. As Trotsky pointed out in a book he wrote under the impact of the German events: *The Lessons of October* (it was during the controversy over this book that the process of his persecution began).

"The party which does not keep step with the historical tasks of its own class becomes, or runs the risk of becoming, the indirect tool of other classes...The most abrupt turn of all is the turn of the proletarian party from the work of preparation and propaganda, of organisation and agitation, to the immediate struggle for power, to an armed insurrection against the bourgeoisie.

"Whatever remains in the party that is irresolute, sceptical, conciliatory...all this rises to the surface in opposition...To miss the moment of the turn is to incur the greatest defeat that a party can possibly suffer..."

"To seize power is to change the course of history. Is it really true that such an historic event can hinge upon an interval of 24 hours? Yes it can. When things have reached (this) point, events are to be measured by the short yard of war. To lose several weeks, several days and sometimes even a single day is tantamount, under certain conditions to surrender of the revolution, to capitulation."

With that capitulation, in Germany in October 1923, the world slipped a step backwards into the abyss. Now fifty years later, new prospects are once again opening up. Despair, the monolithic grip of Stalinism the monstrous victories of Fascism are no longer the fetters round the necks of the working class that they became in the epoch following 1923. If the new enthusiasm and energy of the workers is not to crash again within an inch of victory, then it is necessary now, whether in Germany Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Poland or in this country, to learn the lessons from such events as these.

Rally boosts fund

£4,157 came in cash this week. A magnificent collection at the Sellers' Rally provided us with £2,699 in cash, and £1,399 in IOUs. Rush us those IOUs as soon as possible for we need over £5,000 every week if we are to reach our target of £100,000 by January.

Although it is only a drop in the ocean compared to Lady Beaverbrook who recently paid £8,000 to buy the entire business section of a plane just so her dog could sit on her lap!! It must be for her that Harrods advertise their latest mink jacket for sale at £995. In comparison it would take someone on YTS over a year to buy one saving every penny of their 'salary'.

No wonder the poor get poorer with such a scandalous waste of resources. It is even more scandalous when there is so much want around.

Only our donations will help us fight this continuing waste of resources and help us campaign against the Tories. And all the donations received this week will be a tremendous help in that fight back.

Thanks to everyone who sent us donations this week: Jim Curtis (Withington Labour Party Young

Socialists) £8, Gray Allan (Falkirk Central Region Councillor) £6, P Lunn (EETPU, Tyneside) £5, R Robson (Tyneside) £5, Tony Oddv (NUR, Manchester) £1, Pete Davies (Grange-town, Cardiff) £1, Jim McGregor (Withington LPYS) £1, Ben Walsh (Brentwood) who donates £1 for his paper each week, J Ellis (Kingsgrove IRSF branch secretary) £1 for his paper and further donations from workers at British Gas £4.30 and Withington LPYS £5.50.

Areas are undoubtedly showing initiative when it comes to fund raising activities; Poole supporters raised over £15 from a car boot sale!

Any other initiatives should be sent to us immediately so we can 'advertise' them in the column and encourage other areas to follow suit. So, please drop us a line with any ideas you may have for fund raising events.

This year's 'Winter Draw' tickets are now in circulation so now is your opportunity to make money for our Fighting Fund. Far more is being offered in prizes this time—an incentive for every one of our readers to buy some tickets. Whatever you have organised send us your cash NOW—every penny counts!

By Kath White



Photo: Militant

Outside the recent Black and Asian Youth Rally.

Using the paper

RECENTLY, THERE have been some excellent examples of how our paper can be used to help workers in struggle as well as boost our circulation. In the Lothian area our sellers have been collecting groceries for the Monktonhall strikers and have received such a good response that several households have now also become readers of our paper. At a recent *Militant* meeting in Tranent in Lothian there were 65 people

present of whom over two thirds were miners and £70 was collected for the fighting fund.

Our sellers in South East Lancs have produced a local 'What Militant stands for' leaflet and such has been the response that a large part of the discussion at a Readers meeting in Bury was taken up by members of the audience emphasising the need for a *Daily Militant*.

By Dave Farrar

Bosses' beano

DAVE NELLIST MP recently turned down an invitation to a dinner held by the Coventry 'Pickup' consortium (involving Coventry City Council, the University of Warwick and the Department of Education). Main speaker at the dinner will be the arch Tory monetarist Sir Keith Joseph.

Dave Nellist sent the following reply to the head of the consortium:

Dear Mr Aitken,

I must respectfully decline your invitation to be a member of the platform party to receive Sir Keith Joseph, the Secretary of State for Education.

Firstly, I have grave doubts about the wisdom, or the benefit, of a lunch with Sir Keith Joseph, particularly at a time when his govern-

ment is responsible for savage reductions in public services, for example in health, housing and education.

In fact it surprises me that the City Council should jointly sponsor such a lunch at the time of cut-backs, which are being threatened at the Polytechnic.

Secondly, I think it is highly questionable whether we should be developing education on the basis of the priorities determined by the needs of private businesses.

For me, education is all about access by all working people to facilities to develop themselves in their own chosen direction. If businesses wish to develop training schemes they should do so at their own expense—not by beginning a process which, in my view, is designed to streamline hard-pressed educational facilities into a direction that suits private profit.

Yours sincerely
Dave Nellist MP

Propaganda barrage

Dear Comrades,

The anti-privatisation fight within British Telecom is starting to have such an effect that the management now bombards us almost daily with propaganda exhorting us not to take industrial action.

The latest broadsheet, from our general manager, is attached to an assortment of press editorials with a leader from *The Sun* on top and one from *The Guardian* at the bottom—just to show 'balance' I suppose.

Recently Sir George Jefferson made a royal visit to our main exchange. New

carpeting was installed, smoked salmon was on the menu, no expense was spared and clerical staff were asked to double up as extra waitresses and cloakroom attendants. Some were even requested to wear low-cut dresses!

The cost of this junket was close to £500 which contrasts strangely with the cost-cutting philosophy running through every level of the organisation. The fact that management has to resort to such crude tactics is evidence of the nervousness they must feel about trying to bulldoze 'piratisation' through.

Yours fraternally
Stuart Miller
CPSA member
Coventry

ads

CLASSIFIED: 10p per word, minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

MILITANT MEETINGS

BRADFORD: Marxist discussion group fortnightly. Details from: Bradford 669840.

FOLKESTONE: "Latin America". Speaker Eric Segal. Thursday, November 17, 8.00 pm, Harvey Hotel, Dover Road, Folkestone.

CLASSIFIED

ISLINGTON North and South LPYS meeting on "The Police Bill". On Tuesday 15 November, 7.30pm at Essex Road Library.

CARDIFF WEST Militant Supporters 200 Draw. Result. 1st ticket 191. 2nd ticket 2. Claims to promoter.

FOR SALE (proceeds to Fighting Fund). My precious file of *Militant* from Issue No 2 onwards (Some issues missing but reasonably complete). Offers to Box No 78 (East London).

SHOULD socialists join the Labour Party? Public debate between Paul Derrick (Labour Party) and Stephen Coleman, (Socialist Party of Great Britain), 8 pm, Thursday 17 November at Prince Albert, Whafdale Road, off York Way, Kings Cross, London N1.

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LEEDS: "British Telecom and Privatisation" Speakers: Keith Hardacre (Secretary Leeds MT branch POEU) Kevin Pattison (Secretary POEU West Yorkshire political committee). Chair: M England (Asst Secretary POEU Leeds Internal Committee) (All personal capacity) at 7.30 pm, Monday 14 November, Central Station Pub, Leeds.

DEBATE: "Northern Ireland—Which way forward?". Debate between Richard Venton (on behalf of *Militant*) and Rob Clay (MP, Sunderland North). Sunday, 13 November 7.00 pm—at the Sheltered Deck, Kings Road, Southwick, Sunderland. For further details contact: Ray Physick, Sunderland 653994.

Letters

VIEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES? CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO

MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Poverty in France

Dear Comrades,

I have recently been on a school holiday in Paris. The tour companies paint Paris as the romantic city of Europe, and spotless city.

It is true that there are many beautiful parts of Paris but there is also another side to the story—beggars on the streets, and poverty.

One shabbily-dressed woman approached us while we were travelling on the Metro and held out a card which said "I am a foreigner. I have three children to feed. Please help." Begging on the streets of Paris is certainly more common than in London, and it is usually disabled or foreigners that take to the streets with their begging bowls.

Mitterand's Socialist government has done nothing to end the horrors and misery that the capitalist system forces on the working people of France. Surely this is yet another example of the overwhelming necessity of implementing socialist policies to rid not only this country but the world of the decaying capitalist system.

Yours fraternally
Runjar Rahlett
Newham NW LPYS

Workers too greedy?— or double standards

Dear Comrades,

The Tories say that the workers of Britain are too greedy. It is odd how there are different standards for them and us.

How many times have you heard of older workers pushed out of a job because of poor health, with only a gold-plated watch for thanks? If they complain then they are told that it is the way things are.

But what about the other side? How about the same treatment as Mr Shove, 63, who was sacked while off work due to an operation. In a court case he won £84,000 compensation following his "abrupt" dismissal after 40 years work.

The judge commented that the company had been unconcerned by the need as a matter of ordinary humanity to treat an ill man with sympathy and tolerance. We all agree! Let us look forward to the day when sympathy is for all, not just today's rich.

Yours fraternally
Bill Hopwood
Teesside

free to use the more reliable, more humane, non-animal methods of experimentation.

Yours fraternally
Dale Benett
Liverpool 15

Political education for kids

Dear Comrades, I have been thinking lately about the political education of our children. They are often called upon to explain our policies at school etc, and it was during the last election my eight-year old daughter came in for some criticism because she openly supported the Labour Party and canvassed the whole class as to what they would vote if they could do so.

It is important that they understand the arguments as well as we do. I know that in most socialist households discussion goes on at mealtimes, and that children assimilate ideas gradually, but it would be helpful to give them material to read. My daughter does read *Socialist Youth* but obviously some of the language and ideas need a lot of explaining.

Also at crèches, I think there should be some element of education for those past the crayons and sand stage. Not indoctrination, but it would not harm children to read or hear stories about socialists. (after all they get plenty of kings and saints at school), or learn socialist songs.

Has anyone got any suggestions for reading or comments?

Yours fraternally
Ann O'Connor
Portsmouth

Brazil, Nigeria

Brazils 'miracle' - poverty and disease

IN THE sixties and seventies Brazil was acclaimed the "economic jewel" of the Third World, an "economic miracle".

The economy appeared to be expanding almost without limit. Now the "miracle" has become a nightmare, and the "jewel" has turned to paste.

Three quarters of the 130 million population exist in extreme poverty. Most live in disease-infested hovels in shanty towns around the large cities. Five million children roam the city streets, abandoned by parents who can no longer afford to feed them. In some areas 25% of babies die before their first birthday.

For those in work, fares alone can take up to a third of the wages. For government members and state officials, life is very different—no fares for them! They use private jets and limousines provided for them. No hovels for their families, but large official residences.

Recently the government has set up emergency work schemes in order to try to off-set the effects of their economic policies. The road building scheme involves long hours of toil in burning heat. At the end of a month the workers will earn less than the cost of one bottle of champagne for their political masters.

Plundered by armed forces

In the past few months workers have seen their mortgage repayments rise by a massive 130%. Life for the majority becomes more intolerable day by day. Inflation now stands at 160%, so to save face the government omit from the figure "exceptional" price rises, including increases due to the drought or flood. Unemployment stands at 21% and is rising. Those in work have seen their standard of living fast decreasing.

Underlying all these problems is a massive foreign debt; of \$90 billion; Brazil is unable to pay even the interest. For the majority of Brazilians the economic situation can only get worse. To pay the interest due, Brazil has to raise new loans from the IMF and persuade them to re-schedule payments of old loans. The price to be paid is agreement on an "austerity programme", so the working class pay yet again.

The IMF insistence that wage claims be restricted by government to 80% of the inflation rate is likely to be accepted by Congress this month. They want inflation reduced in a year from 160% to 55%, so public expenditure is to be strictly controlled, mainly by anti-working class measures. The wheat subsidy is to end and electricity and other service charges are to rise.

But even this austerity provides no answer to the problems of Brazil's capitalists. The \$15 billion import ceiling has them worried particularly in the retail industry. The president of largest retail store chain in Latin America has warned that much of Brazilian industry would not survive.

The IMF package pleases most the large number of multi-national companies based in the country, as restrictions on foreign remittances, dividends and royalties are to be lifted. This is seen as heralding a return to the "good old days", when international capitalism

By Norma Craven

could transfer profits made from the low wages of the Brazilian workers and set-off losses made in Europe; a return to 1981, when Brazil was top of the profitability league for international banks.

The official reasons for the economic situation are world recession—the rise in oil prices, the fall in the price of Brazil's main exports, and the massive repayments on foreign loans.

Another factor is the incompetence and corruption of the ruling class. Brazil has been effectively plundered by its own armed forces for 20 years.

Since the coup in 1964 both private and public enterprises in Brazil have been run and controlled by representatives of the military government, for the benefit of the directors and not to provide services. Directorships in private industry are offered to officers in return for assistance in gaining government contracts.

But the corruption in the private sector pales into insignificance when compared with the public sector.

In one case, a dam was built at enormous public cost which produces no electricity. The city it was supposed to serve (Sao Paulo) already has an excess of electrical power. Hydro-power will produce enough energy to take Brazil into the 21st Century, but billions of dollars are being spent on a nuclear power programme.

The Brazilian ruling class have made themselves rich at the expense of the working class. By the government's own very conservative estimates, a sum equivalent to 25% of the national debt is stowed away in private bank accounts throughout the world.

Rioting harbinger of upheavals

At the same time, 30 million people in the North-East live in dire poverty, most of them starving and the young and old dying, dependent for life on rain. Periodically the whole area is hit by a drought. A fraction of the cost of nuclear power programme could solve the problems. Yet, in 83 years, investment in the North-East by the state has been no more than one-tenth of the cost of that one useless dam!

Land and rivers suffer constantly massive industrial pollution. Crime has reached appalling levels, often committed by the police or with their help. Cases which eventually get to court depend on the accused's ability to bribe the judge.

Countless other examples of corruption exist. Meat is doctored with chemicals to make it look attractive. One drug company sold "antibiotics" which were capsules filled with flour! The company was closed down but no one was brought to trial.

In the face of this, the working class has not been silent. Riots in Sao Paulo in April and May were followed by a series of strikes, mainly in the public sector. Unemployed workers have taken to raiding supermarkets to feed themselves and their families. Two



Poverty in the North East of Brazil.

weeks ago 500 women raided a food co-operative in the drought-ridden North-East.

These events sent a shiver down the spines of the military government. They can only wonder what will happen when the IMF austerity package really begins to bite.

The National Congress offers no answer. Many members are sucked into the corrupt system they serve. It is seen as impotent in the face of the corruption and inefficiency of the military government.

The main opposition party, the Partido do Movimento Democratico Brasileiro, (PMDB) offers no answer either, demanding democracy while remaining clearly wedded to the ideas of private enterprise. The main class opposition comes from the Workers' Party, led by the trade union leader Lula.

The Brazilian working class carried on fighting even in the seventies when strikes were illegal. As the austerity programme starts to bite, workers will begin to look for political solutions to their problems.

The Workers' Party must offer the lead. There is no answer in Popular Fronts such as the PMDB or in meaningless electoral pacts but in mobilising the workers and peasants to overthrow the military government and establish a socialist Brazil.



The rich face of Brazil. Skyscrapers and rockets produced for export. Little of this wealth reaches the working class or the rural poor.

Letter from Nigeria

THE CAPITALIST crisis has devastated the third world countries of Africa, Asia and South America. The local capitalist elites, tied to the interests of the multinationals, usually hang on to power by dictatorial methods.

Even those countries which have developed a limited form of democracy are regularly scourged by corruption and ballot rigging.

The letter below from a Nigerian socialist gives examples of recent scandals in state elections.

"Recent elections in Nigeria were rigged by the Tories of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The rigging was high during the gubernatorial (state governor) elections of 13 August.

"This even led to killings and the destructions of houses, burning of cars and other valuable property for party supporters in some states in the country. The States with the

most violence were Ondo and Oyo where 76 people were killed. Ten houses in Ondo and 8 in Oyo were also burnt down.

"The clash occurred between supporters of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and supporters of NPN. This happened when the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) announced some fake results declaring that Governors on the NPN platform had won the elections. Ondo and Oyo have been UPN home bases since the beginning of politics in Nigeria.

"Another rigging malpractice was in the Anambra State of Nigeria which is a Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) home base where an NPN candidate was also declared the winner.

"Now, when the gubernatorial losers went to challenge this declaration as false in the Law Courts, Election Petition Panels were set up to discover the truth of how the elections were conducted.

"Reports reaching us from the Panel's benches from various

witnesses confirmed that the NPN which is a conservative party actually rigged the elections by inflating the votes in favour of them with the collaboration of the FEDECO officials especially the Returning officers who they allegedly bought by bribes.

"Already, the Petition Panels of Anambra and Ondo States have declared Chief Jim Nwabodo and Chief Michael Ajasin of the NPP and UPN as authentic winners and not the NPN candidates as falsely announced by the FEDECO.

"So, you can see that here in Nigeria, Tories want to rule the country through rigging and not by being popularly elected through the ballot paper. This is how the capitalists in Nigeria work to protect their wealth which they acquired dishonestly.

"That is why the Young Socialists should rise to fight capitalism because this system is evil. Long live the Militant newspaper! The struggle continues."

Mobilise engineers' power!

The Engineering Employers Federation is attempting to humiliate the engineering trade unions.

It is reported that at their meeting on Friday they will decide to reject the national pay claim unless the unions agree to changed work patterns including seven-day working, and to drop the demand for a shorter working week.

For the full claim ...

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) has submitted its national wage claim to the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF). JOHN EDWARDS of Stoke Newington AUEW explains the claim and poses a few questions.

The claim calls for:
1) A substantial increase in National Minimum Rates (NMR)

for skilled engineering workers and the restoration of the unskilled NMR to 80% of the skilled NMR;

2) A reduction of the working week without loss of pay to 35 hours, with a reduction in the working week for shift workers, and that all future reductions in the working week should apply to shift workers;

3) An increase in annual

holidays to six weeks with pay; 4) The adult rate to be paid for adult work at 18 years of age; 5) A reduction in permitted overtime hours from 24 to 10 in any four week period.

6) There should be a common implementation date.

A substantial increase is undoubtedly essential, but what is a substantial increase? Last year's "substantial" claim yielded

a pitiful increase. For the NMR to mean anything and for the union to mobilise its members to fight for it, it would need to be at least £120.

This year's claim for a 35-hr week is particularly important. As AUEW President Terry Duffy has said, it is a part of the claim "which our members are adamant we achieve!"

In 1979 following the historic break-through to a 39-hr week the leadership signed away the fight for a 35-hr week even though thousands of our members were already on the dole. With increased unemployment a 35-hr week is now more important than ever before.

In presenting our claim to the EEF, Terry Duffy has stated "In West Germany, the Metal Workers Union is committed to obtaining the 35-hr week and will strike if necessary, to

achieve this". Is Terry Duffy prepared to propose the same action for our union here?

Terry Duffy has marshalled some excellent arguments for each point of the claim. He is absolutely right to point out that anything less than the adult rate for adult work is unjust, and cheap labour.

The equivalent to 112,000 jobs being worked as overtime hours when 170,000 engineers have lost their jobs in the last year is a bad position to be in.

However, unless the leadership of our union is prepared to lead a fight for a serious minimum rate the calls for less overtime will continue to fall on deaf ears.

Arguments for our claim are fine, but many of our members realise that however well presented, the employers are not going to accept it or agree to

anything like it without a fight.

Yet what has the leadership done in order to publicise the claim? Next to nothing.

District Committees, Shop Stewards Quarterlies should have been discussing the claim and passing on the arguments to the members. If national action is to take place then the membership must be fully aware of what is going on.

Also, once a "final" offer is given by the employers, no deal should be settled over the heads of our members as in 1979. The "final" offer should be discussed in mass meetings up and down the country and the Shop Stewards Quarterlies called to register the members' response and discuss any necessary action.

If the members register a rejection of the offer then an emergency National Committee should be called to draw up a plan of action.

- ★ For the full claim!
- ★ £120 for a 35-hr week!
- ★ National action to win the national claim!

Make amalgamation work

THE PRESENT state of the engineering industry makes the issue of union amalgamation vital.

The establishment of one union for engineering workers would destroy the Engineering Employers Federation's ability to play one union off against another.

Over the last twenty years amalgamation has strengthened the trade union movement and brought closer the achievement of industrial unions.

"The organisation of all workers qualified for membership, the development of the most cordial relations with other unions in the industry with a view to the bringing into existence of one union for the foundry, engineering, shipbuilding, and kindred trades, and the obtaining and maintaining of just and proper hours of work, rates of pay, wages and conditions of labour."

This section from the old AEU rule book sums up the desire of engineering workers for unity and the strength that comes with it.

Under the Broad Left leadership in the 1970s the first major step towards amalgamation was taken when 1½ million workers in engineering, foundry, construction and staff sections came together to form the AUEW.

Serious blow

For the first time a major staff union joined with a blue collar union. This was a serious blow to the employers, who have always tried to divide staff and shopfloor workers.

This loose federation was intended to be swiftly followed by full amalgamation, with one national committee and rule book, industrial branches, (where all workers from one factory would be members).

Activists argued for the building of joint shop stewards committees at factory level in order to make amalgamation more than just a high level committee between general secretaries, which was momentarily con-



Ken Gill of AUEW-TASS

venient. Only by the rank and file being involved and seeing the benefit would the future of amalgamation be guaranteed.

Under the impact of the Heath government and the Industrial Relations Act some joint committees were established. The fight against the Tories' anti-union laws saw the AUEW in its best light.

However, the leadership of the engineering section did not acquit itself well in the conduct of the 1972 pay claim. By refusing to lead national action they allowed Manchester District to be isolated in "guerrilla action".

Such tactics had long been practiced by the TASS leadership, who had nonetheless managed to achieve national agreements in 1965 and 1970.

But this was done in the boom years, with no thought for the future, of the need to build a fighting organisation or even raise the level of contributions to allow a national dispute to be fought. (Subs as a percentage of wages are a fraction of their 1938 level.) Right and left alike thought that plant bargaining would do. TASS even completely dropped the national wage claim. They had no perspective of the approaching capitalist crisis or the struggle it would pose.

Moved slowly

The Broad Left moved very slowly on amalgamation, not seeing its urgency.

In 1975 the right wing made its first attempt to break the amalgamation and only lost by seven votes. They were able to begin a come-back out of

By Jane Hartley
(AUEW-TASS)

the members' disappointment at the 1972 claim. The role played by Scanlon in the trade unions' acceptance of the social contract, which resulted in cutting living standards, strengthened their hand.

The right were more concerned about TASS being on the left politically than the advantages to the members of amalgamation. If there had been a full amalgamation, the left in TASS and the engineering section would have been able to defeat the right.

One of the major sticking points, however, has been the refusal of the TASS leadership to agree to regular election of full-time officials.

Hypocritically, the right wing latched onto this weakness to drive a wedge into the amalgamation. TASS claimed that they supported the principle of election of full-time officials, but only for new officers. Yet they con-

Failure to invest

The consistent failure to invest and modernise by British bosses in the engineering industry has totally undermined its ability to compete internationally.

A recent report predicts a £9.8 billion trade deficit in engineering products by 1988. A deficit was recorded in the first half of this year for the first time ever and is expected to reach £2.4bn by the end of the year.

This is despite the sacrifices of engineering workers who have seen a fall in employment in engineering (excluding shipbuilding) by over 21% during 1980-82.

tinued to appoint new full-time officers whilst opposing every attempt within the union to establish elections.

Ironically, the AUEW engineering section president, Terry Duffy, suggested a compromise; that TASS hold elections for all current officials after five years. Acceptance of that would have cut the ground from beneath the right wing.

Financial crisis

If the interests of TASS officials had been set aside for the interests of the members, then the questions now posed

over amalgamation would have been avoided.

The right wing now want full amalgamation, in an attempt to overcome the financial crisis and massive haemorrhage of membership caused by their failure to lead a determined fight against redundancies.

A recent meeting of the amalgamation committee voted on a proposal to ballot all members on the question of full amalgamation, including one national executive, one national conference, one rules revisions conference, one FAC.

TASS are continuing to oppose the merger, with their

two members on the committee voting against the proposal.

Events are now moving in the direction of a full amalgamation of the AUEW engineering, construction and foundry sections, excluding TASS which would remain in a loose federation.

At the same time TASS are beginning a separate process of amalgamation, already involving NUSMC H&DE and NUGSAT.

Right wing block

It looks as though TASS are attempting to set up their own blue-collar section. At the same time there is speculation that the AUEW may be looking towards some kind of amalgamation with APEX in order to establish a right wing bloc against the TGWU.

The task of activists in the engineering industry must be to mobilise the rank and file in all our unions to cut across the bureaucratic wheeling and dealing. For one union for engineering workers. Unity against the bosses' offensive!

Hell without a union

By Brian Lewis

ANDREW WORKS for an engineering components factory in West Wales.

His day usually begins at 4 am. He arrives in the factory at 5.30 - 5.45 am. At 6 am he starts cleaning the machines down after the previous night's work, oiling them and setting them to go.

This has to be done six times over as he has to clean, set, and operate six machines.

At the moment I get £1.00 an hour, which means that on average I take home £36.50 a week—would you believe it, for a two-shift system from 6 - 2.30 pm and 2 - 10.30 pm (lunch break not paid by the company), with 86p every week taken out of our pay packets to cover for our clean overalls.

In a year's time when I reach 19 my pay should go up to £1.20 an hour; after tax and deductions I'll be taking home £39 a week. A year ago I got 79½p an hour, taking home £31 a week.

I pay £13.50 for board and lodgings, £5 bus fares, which leaves me with £18 a week. It's only a bare existence really.

Mind you, there is no guarantee that our jobs will be

here next week. The managers are always spreading rumours about low orders and lay-offs. The last eight months have been a bit quiet, but recently it has started to pick up, so I suppose the managers will be cracking the whip again.

There are three managers who look after the factory and all three of them don't give a damn what happens in the factory, so long as the work is done and the profits go into their pockets.

Accidents are a constant threat, with many machines having no guards around them. A mate of mine was working near the machine the other day and the end of the bar was loose and shaking. In a split second the load came off and caught my mate's arm, causing a nasty gash. The manager rushed him down to hospital to have it fixed and patched up.

The worst thing about it was that he gave my mate a quid to find his own way back to the factory—it would have cost more than a quid to get back by bus.

Mind, it's not as bad now as it used to be. Before we had an increase in orders, the factory was being run by a skeleton

workforce—me and another bloke on the opposite shift. I was left on my own throughout the day to run the factory: using the forklift to unload the metal bars, cleaning the machines out, oiling them and setting them up.

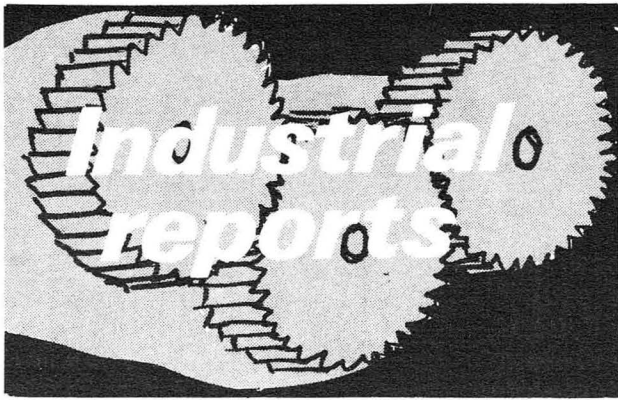
They just gave me the keys and told me to get on with it. They did not give two hoots if I had an accident on the machines. I could have died on the job so far as they were concerned. The only thing I had off them was £5 for my generosity (a one-off thing, not a £5 raise). This got my goat up because the manager had only just bought a new car.

We have tried to set up a union but it's very difficult. If management got to hear about it they would sack anyone involved. The men feel that if a union was set up the managers would rather close the factory, sacking all the fifteen who work there. It's sheer hell working in a place like this. What can you do. The management have got us by the short and curlies whatever we do.

Cases like Andrew's, show what it's like for young



Militant Engineer journal of Militant supporters in the engineering industry now available. Only 30p incl p&p from World Socialist Books, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



Monktonhall go back —but NCB be warned

MONKTONHALL miners have voted to return to work. There is no doubt that the eight weeks of struggle were an inspiration to the rest of the British coalfield.

Rank and file members and branch officials from the joint unions addressed meetings at pit-heads, addressed delegate conferences and area executives throughout the British coalfield. The response was tremendous. Area after area pledged support.

The Doncaster panel (delegate conference) voted to take industrial action as soon as the Scottish area took action in support of Monktonhall. In the traditionally right-wing North Western area pits pledged support. There can be no doubt a national strike was looming over Monktonhall.

This magnificent show of solidarity answers the arguments of the sceptics who said the miners would never be willing to take united action again. Both our dispute and the recent strike of 13,000 men in Barnsley show the simmering mood in the pits.

The Monktonhall dispute represents a victory in a sense for our union. The campaign achieved tremendous levels of support and gives a clear indication as to what would be possible if the national and area leadership adopted this approach.

The unity and solidarity achieved by our campaign would be nothing to the success that would come from consistent tours of the coalfields by NEC members speaking at individual pits.

The return to work followed the Scottish executives of the NUM and SCEBTA recommending the acceptance of an offer by the NCB; it was stated the NCB had climbed down and had conceded a return to the laid down consultative and conciliation procedures.

A representative of the Scottish NCB, however, appeared on TV and stated there was no change in the position. This both angered and confused many members. Many were demanding that guarantees should be obtained before they returned to work.

Similarly, the picket that lobbied the delegate conference, exploded when they learnt that the executive's recommendation to return to work was raised without discussion or vote being allowed. It became quite clear that escalation of our dispute within the Scottish area was out of the question and that we had no alternative but to accept the offer and immediately return to work.

However, the SCEBTA branch voted to remain on strike by a 2-1 majority and the NUM branch narrowly voted to go back. The craftsmen then had no alternative but to recall their meeting a few days later and accept a return to work, emphasising that as far as they are concerned this does not mean the end of the dispute but a change of tactics.

By Chris Heriott
(Monktonhall NUM,
personal capacity)

West London hospitals occupied

WORKERS AT two hospitals in West London have gone into occupation against proposed closure. Hayes Cottage hospital and Northwood & Pinner district hospital are still fully operational "under new management."

A meeting in Ealing last Tuesday drew 300 people in support of the occupation, including many NHS workers. Help has also come from workers throughout the borough, from Kodak workers in Ruislip to EMI workers in Hayes, and the occupation has been made official by NUPE and COHSE.

Messages of support, donations, and help on the picket contact: Occupation Committee, Hayes Cottage, Hayes, Middlesex.

Jane McTaggart
(NUPE, St. Bernards Hospital)
and Steve Field
(Uxbridge LPYS)

CPSA Broad Left

THE NATIONAL CPSA Broad Left conference last weekend had its highest attendance ever. It confirmed a number of recent policy advances, including election of assistant secretaries, opposition to introduction of YTS into the civil service, and adopted important demands such as the call for an elected

editorial board of the union's journal and support for the South African Labour Education Project.

Militant supporter Kevin Roddy was re-elected Broad Left chairman and candidate for the presidency.

Bill Boyle

...and Bradford

THE OCCUPATION of Thornton View Hospital in Bradford is now in its thirteenth week but the mood is determined. The picket line is maintained by nurses, unemployed, students, even a dog and a baby. We will occupy until the next election if necessary.

Denis Wright
(Bradford North CLP)

Militant miners meet

SIXTY-FIVE people attended a Militant meeting in Tranent, East Lothian on the fight to save Monktonhall pit and defeat Tory attacks on the mining industry. "Tam has said it all for us," was the response when the chairman asked for questions or comments after the three speakers had finished.

Tam Dury (Monktonhall SCEBTA), Chris Heriott (NUM) and Peter Jarvis (for Militant) spoke.

Eddie Donachie

Angry mood at Michelin

A THOUSAND production workers at the Stoke-on-Trent Michelin plant attended a stormy mass meeting to discuss management's proposals to introduce a five set shift system.

Already this summer there was a four-week strike when management tried to introduce a four-set shift pattern.

These shifts would have meant working compulsory weekends. Workers claim that if a married couple were working on the four set shift, they might not see each other at weekends for three months.

Since the first strike, at fur-

ther meetings, the workforce have narrowly accepted a pay deal. But they rejected the principle of compulsory weekend working.

The most scandalous aspect of management's new proposals is their threat to shut the factory if the new working patterns are not agreed within the week. This would put 3,000 on the dole, at the company's main UK plant.

It may have been the threat of closure that led the full-time TGWU official and convenor to argue for the acceptance of the new deal, in effect merely

a modified version of the company's original demand. This led to a division between the stewards and the production workers. No member at the meeting was prepared to speak in support of the full time official and the convenor.

The anger shown at the meeting must be channelled to ensure the union takes a firm stand against management.

By Dave Campbell (North Staffs Trades Council EC, Personal Capacity) and Sue Wilkie (Stoke Central LPYS)



4,000 London Transport workers followed their unions' stong recommendation to take a few hours off last Tuesday morning. They lobbied the LT Board which was discussing the closure of the Aldenham works, and gathered at Central Hall, Westminster later.

No fun at Lefray toys

"WE'LL BE here until the end and we'll keep on fighting". This was the message from the strikers at a mass picket last Saturday of "Lefray Toys" in Aberbeeg, Gwent.

They have been on strike for over eleven weeks, after being locked out and sacked for taking part in a token one-day strike

in protest at management's refusal to meet their claim on wages and for union recognition.

CAROL HOWELLS, TGWU steward spoke to LINDA REID. "We were earning more five years ago than we're earning now. When we do get a rise, it's never on time, and never

backdated. Some of us were getting a bonus of £1 a day, but you have to make 2,000 toys a day to get it.

"We also have to put up with conditions such as a First Aid box containing just a few plasters and aspirins. Toys are piled so high in the gangways that if there was a fire we would have to climb over them. The wages and conditions are so bad that we all joined the T&GWU.

"Management have used the massive level of unemployment in the area to bring in scabs. The Job Centre has been used to force workers on the dole to take the strikers' jobs. Even so, some have been persuaded not to cross the picket line. The workers on strike are determined to maintain a picket line outside the factory until they win."

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: 'Lefrays Strike', TGWU Office, Transport House, Cardiff Road, Newport, Gwent.

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(Clydebank LPYS)

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Barnet NALGO member.

On strike after 20 years

THREE THOUSAND workers at the Rolls Royce factory in Crewe have been on strike for over two weeks after rejecting a 4% pay offer. These men, mainly AUEW members have not been renowned for their militancy—in fact they have not been on strike for over twenty years.

To add insult to injury, management recently held a reception costing £20,000 for its managers at a top London

hotel.

The unions, mainly AUEW, haven't as yet put their full weight behind the workers. At the time of writing, the strike had not been made official.

So far, management have only conceded a few points, ie consolidation of some bonuses, taking the workers off the clock and other minor concessions costing no money.

Dave Campbell

UCW strike at EDO

ON THURSDAY 3 November postmen higher grade (PHG) members of the UCW at EDO No 3 branch Whitechapel, East London, walked out after management had threatened to suspend anyone for, as they put it, "not working normally".

Management had taken an inflexible attitude towards PHGs' concessionary breaks. These are the breaks they get when there is no work on the office floor. They wanted to divert PHGs to work which is not theirs. This would have been a dangerous precedent for offices up and down the country. The men were determined and by Wednesday management appeared to have backed down. It was agreed to return to work, but with every intention of taking further action if management's attitude has not changed.

A UCW EDO worker

Ford claim

THE FORD unions' national joint negotiating committee have submitted their annual wage claim. Details of the claim have not been announced but it is reported that it makes the point clear that the real value of Ford workers' wages have dropped 10% since 1978.

An increase well over CBI guidelines is essential. 16-87%

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of workers' pay (depending on grade) is accounted for by bonuses etc, over and above basic pay. Women at Ford earn 56% of comparable male earnings.

Management are arguing that despite the big increase in production—80,000 units up on 1982—Ford UK profits should be used to bolster the Ford International operation.

Workers will no doubt note this argument did not stop directors taking massive pay increases recently.

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When the workers found out on Monday morning, management said that it was a mistake,

No looting!

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Alison Hill (Gosport CLP)

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WORKERS AT the Thorn Ericsson factory in Scunthorpe went back to work on 28 October after twenty days on strike. They won an increased wage rise—from £3 on the basic to £6. For most of these mainly women workers it was their first taste of industrial action. They showed tremendous courage and determination.

P Pearson (NUPE, Scunthorpe)

Redundancies at John Brown

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"We knew when we started we weren't going to get any sympathy from the man with the rug on his head", said one delegate at the Post Office engineers' conference as news came in of the High Court decision against the POEU.

Wayne Jones, Militant industrial correspondent, reports from the POEU conference in Blackpool

Tens of thousands of British Telecom jobs are at stake. But the court decision to uphold Mercury's appeal against the POEU's blacking action is also a threat to the whole trade union movement.

The decision, under the 1982 Employment Act, came after enormous pressure from the Tories and big business. They saw their promised privatisation bonanza slipping away.

The Institute of Directors' response was immediate: "We are pleased there will be no hold up in the government privatisation programme."

Mercury is a private enterprise consortium attempting to interconnect with BT's public network in order to cream off lucrative BT business and undermine the power of the union.

The appeal was a last desperate effort by Mercury to salvage their scab operation. It has been rapidly falling apart under pressure of the POEU action.

It's reckoned to have cost them £9 million so far. One of the three partners, Barclays, have recently announced their intention to pull out. BT themselves are reported to be getting cold feet.

The response to the court decision of the conference delegates from London and other areas where action is taking place has been virtually unanimous. They are arguing for no retreat—not to allow the Tory courts to smash their industry, jobs and future.

The biggest branch in the country, London City, tabled an emergency motion following the announcement of the appeal calling on conference to "instruct the EC that the current policy of non-interconnection be pursued with all vigour."

Another emergency motion from N London Internal "instruct(s) the NEC to immediately approach all TUC-affiliated unions for support." Already the UCW and GMBATU have offered interest-free loans to back the action.

Defiance of the law could mean confiscation of funds and assets of the

POEU - fight must go on



Photo: Militant

Workers on anti-privatisation demonstration last year. If the leadership of the movement matches the determination shown by the rank and file of the POEU then the battle will be won.

The Post Office engineers' have voted by a majority of three to one to call off blacking of the pirate Project Mercury network after the High Court's decision that the action was 'illegal'. Conference was unprepared to go into all-out confrontation without the leadership that such a fight would require. Supporters of *Militant* on the NEC led the fight to stand by union policy. Pressure must now be stepped up to stop the backsliding at the top of the POEU and in the TUC. The battle against privatisation must go on. The ranks of the union must ensure that any further legal threat is met by intransigent opposition.

union and imprisonment of its leaders.

But retreat from industrial action threatens the very future of the union. Union activists will be particularly disappointed that left NEC members Tony Young, Doug Rafferty, Charlie Love and Mick Caddie voted with the right wing to retreat from union policy. Tony Young proposed the NEC motion to conference.

Despite the NEC's vacillation, the task now must be to unite the members and the entire labour movement for a determined struggle.

It should be remembered that Master of the Rolls, Judge John Donaldson, who handed down this judgement, was once appointed by a Tory government to preside over the National Industrial Relations Court. The Industrial Relations Act was also designed to shackle the trade unions. Donaldson's court jail-

ed five dockers in 1972 for standing by their right to strike. The response of the rank and file was immediate.

There was an explosion of national and local strike action involving hundreds of thousands of workers. The TUC was forced to respond with the call for a 24-hour general strike.

The Tories backed down. Their anti-union laws were destroyed by the power of the labour movement. The dockers were released and the Heath government's days numbered.

The POEU leadership must recoup the ground it has lost by this decision. Members on picket lines and back in the branches want a firm assurance that the union will not abandon the fight.

If a serious campaign is mounted and the issues clearly explained then the membership and labour movement will rally in support.

THE EDITORS would like to apologise for the fact that, due to technical difficulties, this week's issue has had to be reduced to 12 pages. The normal 16-page paper will appear next week.

Also, it has come to our notice that due to industrial action at the local sorting office, (see page 11), some sellers and subscribers did not receive their order of *Militant* last week.

STOP PRESS

AT THE MILITANT Sellers' Rally £4,098 was raised for Militant's Fighting Fund. Additional promises of donations to the Building Fund came to £15,450!

Many thanks for all the magnificent sums contributed. The Grand Total for the Building Fund to date is £81,240. Keep those pledges and the cash coming in. Forward to a more frequent Militant and an end to capitalist rule!

Militant

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