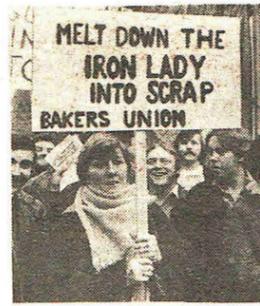


# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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15p



**FIGHT ANTI UNION LAWS**  
See centre pages

# BRING DOWN THE TORIES

The March 9 national demonstration must be the starting point of an all-out, mass campaign to bring down the Tory government.

Thatcher's government is the most viciously anti-working class in Britain since the period of crisis and depression before the second world war.

The new anti-trade union measures embodied in the 'Employment' Bill are designed to undermine the ability of the workers' organisations to resist further savage attacks on their living standards, their 'social wage,' and long-established democratic rights.

Writing recently to the 'top peoples' paper, the Old Etonian former Tory MP Victor Montagu [and formerly Earl of Sandwich until disclaiming his title in 1964] spelled out the vicious philosophy of Thatcherism.

"After 60 years of relative international decline," he told 'The Times' [26 February], "some new governing ethic must be found to save our state. We need a touch of the whip to set us off at a spanking pace..."

But why has there been sixty years of decline? Not simply because of wrong 'ethics', or misguided economic policies.

The degeneration of British industry is the result of the short-sighted, selfish drive for profit by the capitalists, the 1% of the population who own 25% of the wealth. They are responsible!

Yet now they want to use the whip against the working class. The whip means over two million

By  
**Lynn Walsh**

unemployed in the next twelve months. The whip means six million adult workers [34% of the labour force] earning a poverty wage of less than £60 a week.

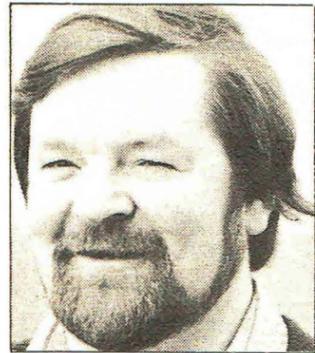
The Tory press claims that the labour movement has 'no mandate' to bring down the Tory government. But even they have to admit [not prominently, of course] that a recent Gallup Poll

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## MOBILISE FOR 24hr GENERAL STRIKE- 14th MAY

"A 24-hour general strike would serve notice on the Tories, by mobilising the whole labour movement. It's utopian to think, as some Labour leaders do, that the fight against the Tories can only take place in Parliament. The Tories are not going to back up, particularly when they have got such a heavy majority in Parliament. The Tories have always backed off, and when they have, it's been on the basis of the labour movement mobilising in action rather

**Bill Mullins**  
[BL Senior Steward, SD1, Rover, Solihull]



than any fine words in Parliament. The whole period of the Heath government demonstrates quite clearly that it's only when the labour movement has mobilised that the Tories have started to do U-turns.

"What the miners' decision in South Wales clearly shows, is that the workers don't go into action lightly, that they want to know that they've got a chance of succeeding. With regional stri-

kes, there will always be a feeling of isolation, unless they are linked to a national struggle.

This can only be demonstrated to workers by a national 24-hour general strike."

**inside**

**PLUNDER YOMV**

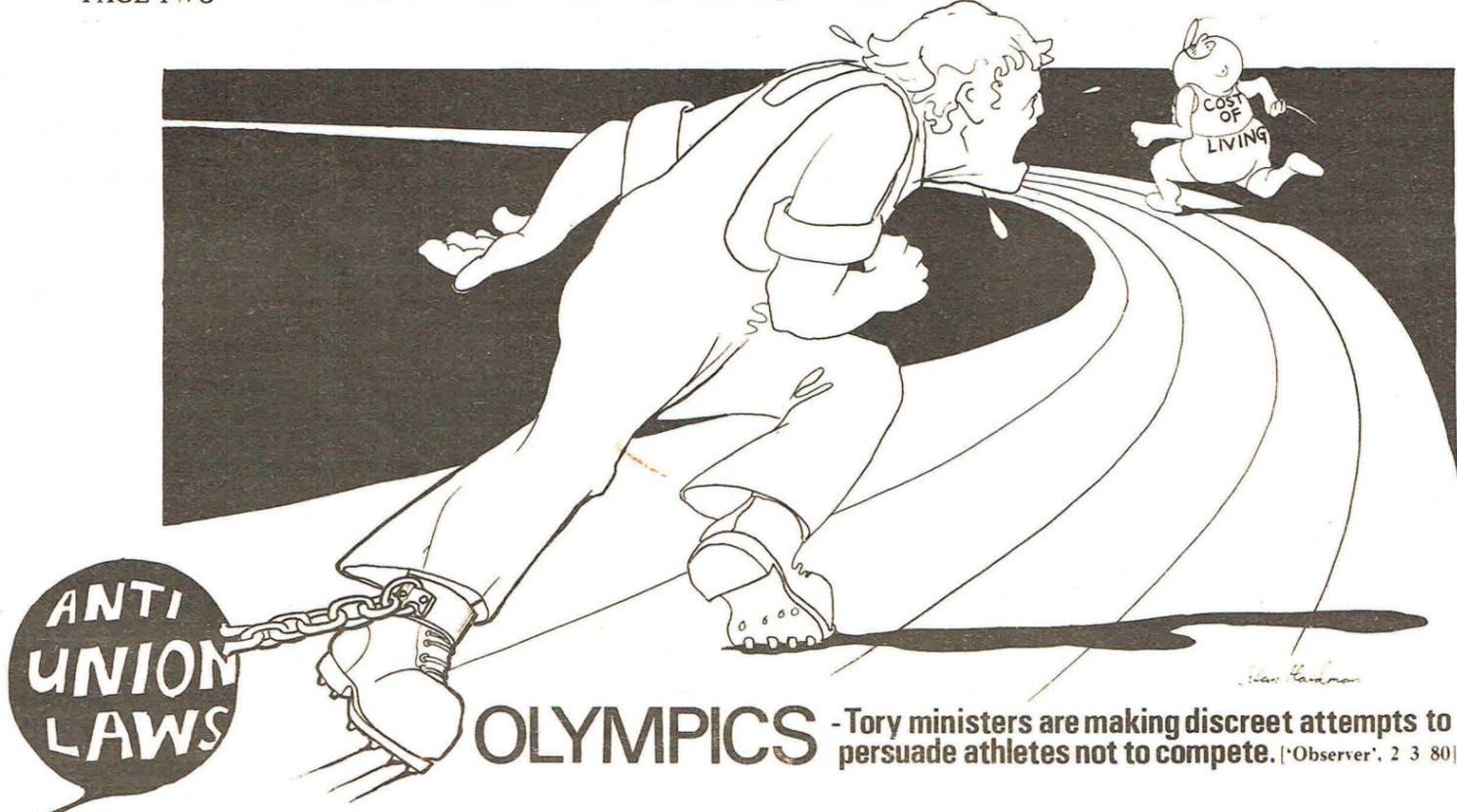
NO MAN WOMAN OR CHILD IS SAFE WHILE SHE IS AT LARGE

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**OLYMPICS** - Tory ministers are making discreet attempts to persuade athletes not to compete. ['Observer', 2 3 80]

# Militant

## LABOUR TO POWER ON A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

The Day of Action called by the TUC General Council for 14 May must be made into a national 24-hour general strike against the Tory government.

The whole labour movement, with mass meetings in work-places and through local rallies and demonstrations, must organise massive support for a stoppage to halt the Tories in their tracks. It is vital to arouse the support of millions of workers to bring down the Tory government and replace it with a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

In only nine months of office the Thatcher government has inflicted devastating cuts in workers' living standards. In spite of all the enforced sacrifices imposed on workers, there is no prospect of things improving if the Tories continue. On the contrary, the working class faces absolute catastrophe, not just because of Tory policies, but because of the continued decline of the diseased British capitalism.

Four important reports on the British economy have recently been published, from the Confederation of British Industries, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, the OECD in Paris, and the London Business School. All paint a completely black picture of the British economy.

On present trends, we face a fall of 2% in gross domestic product, with a considerably sharper 4% fall in manufacturing output. Unemployment will almost certainly rise to above two million and inflation will remain high, probably in the 18% to 20% region throughout 1980 and 1981.

The National Institute, as well as the OECD, also predicts an 8% fall in manufacturing investment this year. As new investment is the key to modernisation, this in itself rules out any real recovery of British industry.

The CBI estimates that, leaving aside the oil companies, the real rate of return to companies [after inflation] will fall to around 2% in 1980, the worst rate of profit ever recorded. This abysmal level of profitability—in spite of the massive Tory handouts to big busi-

ness and the individual capitalists—reflects the organic disease of the system.

But unless they can make what they consider a worthwhile profit, the capitalists will not invest. Whatever people's needs, production will decline, unemployment will rise, and living standards will tumble.

Not even the London Business School, which is the most sympathetic of the four to Thatcherite policies, can find any optimistic signs for the future—in fact, their projections are the most pessimistic of all.

With economic prospects like these, it would be completely utopian to expect any improvement for workers in the next period.

This is why the half-hearted and seemingly reluctant call by the TUC for a Day of Action must be translated into bold, national strike action. Nothing less than this will be effective.

After last week's meeting of the General Council, the general secretary, Len Murray, said: "We are marching to Trafalgar Square on 9 March, but we are also ready to meet the government in the corridors of Whitehall."

But what possible purpose can be served by

further talks with Thatcher's government? What "positive dialogue" can the trade unions have with a government which has provoked the steel workers into strike action, backed Edwardes' attempt to break trade-union organisation in British Leyland, and is now trying to carry through vicious anti-trade union laws?

The Tories will not respond to reasonable appeals. Action is the only language they understand.

Speaking on the TUC's 'Economic Review', Len Murray concentrated his attack on the Tories' monetarist policies. While it is true, however, that monetarism expresses the policies of capitalist crisis in their most brutal form—and will never solve the basic problems—it would be a mistake to think that the 'Doves' or 'Wets' in the Tory leadership have any real alternative. Those like Prior and Gilmour, who have criticised Thatcher and Joseph and warned of the explosive social and political consequences of their policies, have just the same aims. They are simply in favour of employing slightly less brutal, more diplomatic means.

The split between the 'Hards' and the 'Wets' is not simply the outcome of political debate within the cabinet. It has been brought about by the mass pressure of the labour movement, and particularly by the magnificent action of the steelworkers.

In the last few months, there has been a tremendous build-up of anger against the Tories. The 'Evening

Standard' recently reported an opinion poll which revealed that two million who voted Tory last May are now opposed to the Tory government. If this is the mood of former Tory voters, it is clear that there is an even more angry and hostile mood amongst Labour workers.

The attempt by some of the TUC leaders to play down the action on 14 May—notably Len Murray's claim that those who say the strike is political are "politically illiterate"—is completely mistaken.

Because of the dire economic situation now facing the working class, because of the discrediting of the Tory government, and because of the overwhelming mood for action amongst the mass of workers, it is vitally necessary to organise bold, mass action. The Day of Action on 14 May cannot but be political.

A mere token protest against Tory policies is not enough. The 9 March national demonstration, and the Day of Action itself, must be the starting points of an all-out national campaign to bring down the Tory government.

But the labour movement must also put forward a real alternative. Some of the immediate demands in the TUC's 'Economic Review', like an increase in taxation on the rich, tax cuts for workers, and an immediate increase of child and unemployment benefits, and pensions, will be supported by all workers.

But the document contains no socialist economic measures which would pro-

vide an effective alternative to Tory policies. The idea proposed of "an intensive programme to modernise industry, led by the nationalised industries, but with the co-operation of the financial institutions," is entirely utopian.

Clearly, the Tories, as the direct representatives of big business, would never accept such a policy. But the lesson of past Labour governments is that it is also impossible for Labour to pressurise big business to invest and accept major reforms when they consider it to be against their class interests. Experience has proved that when 80% of industry is in private hands, it is big business that dictates to governments, not the other way round.

The helter-skelter decline of British industry will only be reversed by socialist policies based on the nationalisation of the 200 major monopolies, banks and insurance companies, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need. Run under democratic workers' control and management, the nationalised 'commanding heights' would provide the basis of a socialist plan of production, so that all the country's industrial and human resources could be developed and used in the interests of the working people.

This is the only programme which can insure the working class against the mass unemployment and poverty of a decaying capitalist system. It is the only means by which the socialist aspirations of the labour movement can be achieved.

## THE GREAT BANK ROBBERY

The Tories' monetarist policies—high interest rates in particular—have produced a bonanza for the banks and their shareholders.

Lloyds and National Westminster, the two which have announced their 1979 profits so far, are both trying to play down the size of their mountainous profits, emphasising the effects of inflation.

But Lloyds reported a massive 49% rise in its pre-tax profits, from £185.3m to £276.6m. Not only do the banks gain from higher interest rates, but they also gained from increased volume of deposits attracted by the higher rates.

The banks' shareholders, moreover, will reap rich benefits, particularly because of the ending of dividend restraint. Lloyds has increased its dividends by 39%. Even after inflation, which 'reduced' profits to £169.6m, the dividend increase was 28%. How many workers have had a real pay increase (after allowing for price increases) of 28%?

Nat West followed Lloyds with a 44% rise in profits from £305m to £441.5m before tax, with a 30% dividend increase. Again, even the inflation-adjusted profits were 17% up at a 'mere' £285m.

Even some of the Tories—those not converted to the gospel of free-market monet-

arism as preached by Professor Milton Friedman—are embarrassed by these mountainous profits.

Eldon Griffiths, Tory MP for Bury St Edmunds, has called for a 'windfall' tax on excess profits, realising the anger that will be aroused by this bonanza when most people are suffering from a sharp cut in their living standards.

Griffiths' suggestion was brusquely rejected by Mrs Thatcher, who said that people had to accept that high bank profits were an inevitable consequence of the high interest rates and the fact that other businesses are in difficulty. In other words, it is the brutal logic of the profit-motivated capitalist system.

Last week, the 'Sunday Mirror' also attacked these grotesque profits. They suggested that the 'excess' profit be handed over to the Health Service to prevent the closure of hospitals and other cuts.

The cash would certainly be put to better use in this way. But the Tory government clearly has no intention of doing any such thing, and big business would regard it as an attack on their fundamental 'right' to make a profit.

## TORIES OUT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

showed that 65% of the voters now believe that the Tory economic policies are unfair.

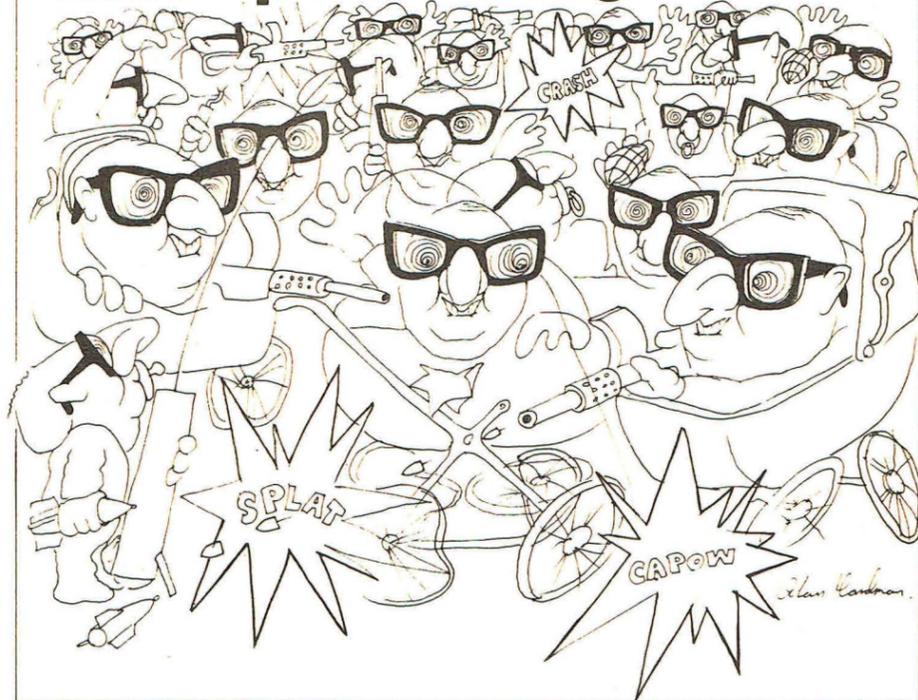
Ten months of this government is enough. That is why the TUC, all the trade unions, and the Labour Party must come together to organise a mass campaign to bring down Thatcher's government.

The next step must be the energetic organisation of a national 24-hour general strike on 14 May.

The campaign must be waged on the basis of bold socialist policies [see editorial, above]. To the forefront must be policies to solve the burning problems now facing millions of workers:

- ★ 35-hour week without loss of pay!
- ★ £80 minimum wage for all workers!
- ★ Restore all spending cuts!
- ★ Stop the Tories' anti-union laws!

## Nobel Sperm Bank Nightmare



Dr Kissinger, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1973 stakes his claim to immortality...

## DOLE QUEUES GROWING

The Tory government's Valentine's Day message to workers was that unemployment had increased by more than 18,000 since January, reaching a grim 1,488,923.

All the serious forecasts, moreover, predict two million unemployed by 1981.

Concealed within the total figure is a steady rise in long-term unemployment.

Last week's figures show that one in four people on the dole has been unemployed for at least a year.

The total of long-term unemployed now stands at 353,281, a figure approaching the 1930s peak of 480,000. In fact, the proportion of long term unemployed is now at its highest for fifty years.

Exposing the Tory myths about the unemployed, the

Child Poverty Action Group recently showed that "The numbers of people in families with incomes below the poverty line because of unemployment more than trebled between 1974 and 1977, from 90,000 to 280,000." They also showed that the amount of supplementary benefit that families received, including an allowance for rent, has fallen sharply as a proportion

of average net earnings of all men.

In view of these facts, the Tories' propaganda campaign against 'scroungers', can only be seen as a cynical and vicious attempt to distract attention away from the horrifying growth of unemployment.

# THATCHER OUT!

The trade union leaders have called on workers to protest against the Tories on May 14—the call must now be for a 24-hour general strike on this day, with the TUC giving decisive leadership, spelling out clearly why the Tories must be confronted and linking it to a political struggle. Many labour activists support this view:



Terry Fields  
[FBU National Executive]

"The situation as far as our executive is concerned is that we have taken a decision that on 14 May the firemen nationally will be on a work to rule, answering emergency calls only, although the decision has not yet been finalised. I think it's crucial that the firemen should be included in it, and that we are seen to be participating.

definite need for a national strategy could be laid down—hopefully the conference called by the Liverpool Trades Council and the Labour Party, to co-ordinate activity will get a good response nationally, and put pressure on the national leadership to really take this thing on board fully. We've got to get it well orchestrated because there's no way that you can just push the problems around and then forget all about it."

"A 24-hour general strike call is certainly not premature. Some people are accusing us of being extremists, and over-reacting to the situation, but if you see my home area of Merseyside, for example, you'd understand that people are fed up with the way a whole area has been ravaged by the Tories. I think it's long overdue, but it's got to be co-ordinated properly. The leadership up there say get involved locally in your local cuts committee etc., but a

"A general strike would strengthen the Parliamentary opposition to the Tories. Working people can't afford to wait five years for a general election

"It's essential that the TUC be seen to unite the forces of the workers, to give concrete expression to the growing opposition which has developed to the attacks upon workers' living standards by the Tory government. The strength of the working class would be dissipated if various sections of the labour movement are left to attempt to struggle in isolation. The TUC has the responsibility as the leadership of the movement to call workers into action so that the frustrations of workers can be expressed in an organised way, by the TUC.

"Clearly, if the fight is restricted to Parliament, then of course there's no possibility of defeating the Tories, it's a question of mobilising the working



Tony Mulhearn  
[NGA and Vice-president, Liverpool District Labour Party]

class, to raise the level of consciousness of the workers, as to the political character of the attacks and to underline the fact that the Tories are acting directly in the interests of big business. "This has been admitted by ministers—one Tory minister is actually quoted as saying, "What can you expect when we clobber everybody except the rich"! Therefore the question of mobilising the workers outside of Parliament, to stop the Tories in their tracks, is absolutely essential."

general strike is paramount to prepare the labour movement for the coming struggles."



Emlyn Williams  
[President, South Wales NUM]

"I don't think a token one-day action will stop the Tory plans for the unions, which is the idea being waffled about by the trade union leaders at the moment. I think the TUC must give a far more positive lead. That's the only way you are going to defeat the Tories' plans, through positive action—marching up and down London alone will not defeat it.

"For example, the run-down of the steel industry would be catastrophic—it will affect engineers, council workers and everyone. And if the steel industry should go and we accept the options of the British Steel Corporation, it would mean mass unemployment throughout South Wales—a return to the 'thirties. And that's

something we cannot face. The miners understand the seriousness of the situation. It's not a question of wages, it is a question of survival, a question of jobs for young people and their families.

"A 24-hour general strike would be a more positive step in this direction, rather than so many 'teach-ins' and 'meetings'—these mean nothing.

"If the Tories get away with this bill to 'reform' the unions, the legislation will be devastating—it will restrict the unions completely. It is all right saying the unions will challenge the law—many will perhaps—but many won't or won't have the power to, and these are the ones the Tories are depending on."

## THE REAL SCROUNGERS

The hypocrisy of the Tories' attack on public expenditure was exposed by the civil service union, the SCPS, last week.

To save an estimated £50m, Reg Prentice is to employ an extra 1,000 investigators to spy on people claiming social security.

But the SCPS have shown how the government could save eight times that amount for the same cost.

The chairman of the Inland Revenue, Sir William Pile, has estimated that the total amount of income escaping the taxman is around £11,000 million. By employing 1,000 extra staff the SCPS believe that up to £400m of the £750m avoided in VAT could be raised.

The SCPS National Officer, Judy McKnight, commented that "if the government can increase the number of officers to crack down on social security fraud, yet continue to cut the number of VAT officers then they are guilty of either economic lunacy or political discrimination."

And while the Tories harass people for claiming social security, another government minister, Geoffrey Finsberg, announced that up to one million people, mainly in the private rented sector, do not take up rent allowances and rate rebates.

When the Tories took office in May last year the front page of the 'Militant' said, "Of the rich, for the rich, by the rich"—an apt description of this reactionary, big business government.

## Keep this centre open

Newcastle Trades Council centre for the unemployed was set up two years ago to fight back against unemployment. The centre, along with the Unemployed Workers' Union has attempted to organise the unemployed, uniting them with the powerful trade union movement. But now the Tories are threatening the centre with closure! The Department of the Environment has announced that there will be no more money for the centre project from March, as part of the

cutbacks—the Tories' excuse is that it is 'overtly political'.

At last year's Labour Party Conference, a resolution was passed [Composite 39] calling for support and assistance to the development of such centres for the unemployed—now, more than ever, the hopes and words of our conference must be turned into action. Rush donations to the Treasurer, Newcastle Trades Council Centre for the Unemployed, 5 Queen Street, Quayside, Newcastle.

## NF KEPT OUT OF EAST STREET

For weeks prior to March 2nd, the National Front proudly boasted they were going to march down Walworth Road in South London—the site of the headquarters of the London Labour Party, the Confederation of Shipbuilding & Engineering Union, and the new national Labour Party building.

Instead, faced with three thousand anti-fascists, they marched in the opposite direction through inconspicuous side streets ending with a 'rally' outside a derelict building, two miles away.

In the morning, the anti-fascists, including a contingent of 200 Young Socialists, blocked off the junction of Camberwell and Albany Road, where the NF intended to march.

There were also anti-fascists at the Elephant and Castle (the 'Piccadilly Circus' of South London) with another hundred Young Socialists, where the fascists had intended to end their march.

Given the heavy opposition, the police ordered the NF to march in the opposite direction, through small residential side streets—even then the 700 or so rabble of racist thugs needed massive police protection, with the nazi column guarded by nearly a hundred mounted police. As the 'Guardian' commented the next day, "A trail of dung marked the passing of the National Front."

Altogether 3,000 police protected the fascists, and mobile squads, directed by a helicopter hovering above, quickly hindered any attempts by the anti-fascists to confront the NF. This was particularly true at the Ele-



These advocates of law and order prepare to set off on the NF march on Sunday Photo: MILITANT

phant and Castle where the YS contingent had quite a cat and mouse game with these 'flying squads' when they tried to join their comrades at Albany Road through the many side roads and subways!

When it became clear that the NF had marched in the opposite direction, the anti-fascists linked arms, and fifteen abreast marched down Walworth Road towards East Street, where over the past

few months the NF had been peddling their racist filth, laying claim to this spot as their own—but the events on March 2nd made it clear to the fascists who controlled the streets in South London!

# Labour Party Scottish Conference - FIGHTING PROGRAMME NEEDED

**"Scotland is in the throes of an economic crisis more menacing perhaps than even the 'hungry thirties'."**

So begins a statement by the Labour Party's Scottish Executive Committee to be presented to this weekend's Scottish Party Conference in Perth.

The outlook for Scottish workers has not been so grim for decades. Unemployment has now reached 203,828—9% of the workforce, the highest level since the thirties. In Strathclyde, the biggest and most industrialised region, the percentage is nearly eleven.

The conference is faced with the overriding task of formulating a programme for fighting the Tory attacks and ensuring a fundamental change of direction from the next Labour Government. "Our policies" states the Executive statement "will have to be clear, realistic and socialist." But although its programme calls for some fundamental changes, it also calls for "planning agreements" with

**By  
Davy Dick**

(Pollock CLP delegate  
& SEC candidate)

the major monopolies, and import controls.

It is likely that this programme will be endorsed by a big majority of delegates, and undoubtedly many of its demands, if implemented by the next Labour government, and campaigned for now, would be extremely popular amongst Labour voters.

But will this programme, taken as a whole, make it possible for the next Labour administration to break out of the economic stranglehold of the big monopolies and the banks which forced the last one to move from reforms to counter-reforms in the form of public expenditure cuts and wage restraint?

Labour will face exactly the same demands from big business, to do the exact

reverse of what they promised. The vague and limited measures of the SEC statement would not be sufficient to break free from the economic blackmail which these people can still use against a Labour government.

This is because the executive clearly envisage the continued existence of a basically capitalist market economy, in which "major conglomerates" still hold sway. It is wishful thinking to imagine that these bodies can be made to reach "mandatory planning agreements" or to control the international flow of their capital.

Profit, not government policy, is what determines the policy of big business and they would be able to ignore any "agreements" and sabotage all the radical reforms which are contained elsewhere in the SEC statement.

As for import controls, this demand, in the context of a capitalist society is not even a reform, but a Tory policy to protect and cushion British companies at the expense of British workers, who would have to pay higher prices; and fellow workers overseas, who would lose jobs.

Rival capitalists in other

countries would protect themselves by retaliatory controls. This could provoke a fierce trade war which would plunge the capitalist world into a profound slump.

For these reasons, Conference should support instead the resolution from Pollock CLP which is more precise in spelling out the measures it demands, and also calls for a campaign to be organised by the SEC and makes it quite clear that "if unemployment is to be totally eradicated, then industry must be planned on a socialist basis. The next Labour government must take into public ownership the commanding heights of the economy as embodied in Clause four part 4 of our party's constitution."

On the question of cuts, the conference must adopt the policy of the Lothian Regional Labour Party for "no cuts; no increased charges; no redundancies; no natural wastage; no rent or rate increases."

If that policy were adopted by every Labour-controlled council in Scotland, and backed up by a mobilisation of the trade union movement, the Government would have to back down. It is no answer to try to avoid cuts by massive

rates increases. That merely puts a burden on working class people who are already suffering from rises in the cost of living.

There is no way Labour councils can fulfill their election pledges without a whole confrontation with the Tories. The Labour party should

**In the election in the Constituency section of the Scottish Executive Committee, Scottish 'Militant' supporters urge support for David Churchley [Cathcart CLP], Davy Dick [Pollock CLP] and Eddie Phillips [Provan CLP]**

**MILITANT PUBLIC MEETING AT CONFERENCE: 'Fight the Tories; Socialist Policies for Labour'. Main Speaker—Tony Saunois [LP NEC]. Plus trade union speakers, 6 pm Saturday 8th March 1980, Co-operative Lesser Hall, Canal St, Perth.**

## You're not wanted here Taylor

Voters in Glasgow Cathcart showed Tory Teddy Taylor what they thought of him last May—they kicked him out!

Now this leading Tory right-winger has made the long trek south to try his luck in the Southend East by-election on March 13th.

He could well be in for a shock. The voters of Southend East, in the main ordinary working class people, are learning about Tory policies the hard way.

In the last few months the toll of lost jobs in south-east Essex has been steadily mounting. Lesney's, the makers of 'Matchbox' toys are sacking hundreds of workers at their Rochford and Rayleigh factories, including many women, in an area where factory jobs for women are already scarce.

A local electrical firm has also laid off women workers.

At Ford's Basildon tractor plant over 1,000 workers are on short-time. In the last two weeks Thames Board Mills at Purfleet have announced 800 jobs to go. Yardley's the cosmetics firm have cut 80 jobs from their Basildon factory and a local building firm has cut 200 jobs, to add to the growing and vast queue of unemployed building workers.

Small firms are also hit: 26 jobs gone from a small engineering firm last October, 20 jobs gone from a long established small building firm.

The public sector is no exception. Dozens of jobs have gone from the Customs and Excise VAT headquarters in Southend.

In Basildon over 40 jobs are to go from HMSO by April 1981. All over Essex School meals workers are being sacked, as parents struggle to feed their kids, in the face of massive rises in school meals charges. Essex Fire Brigade plan to cut rescue units from local fire stations and also plan to halve the crews on escape ladder vehicles.

At the same time, Southend's Tory controlled Council intent to sell off house building land to private developers, meaning an end to all council house building within a year or two, in spite of well over 2,000 families on the every growing waiting list.

As a final insult, in a town where over 3,000 workers are civil servants, Tory MP for Southend West is Paul Channon, Minister of State for the Civil Service. It will be of little consequence that in the coming year 40,000 more workers will sign on the dole as a result of civil service cuts.

The message must be clearly understood. Working class people must support the Labour candidate, Colin George. Only the Labour Party, the traditional mass party of the working class, can provide the way forward. At the same time there is an urgent need to build the Labour Party and its youth section, the LPYS, so that in the struggles to come the leadership will, under the influence of the rank and file, adopt the clear socialist policies needed to transform Britain in the interests of the working class.

**The Scots don't want Taylor. Nor do we in Southend. It is essential that all working class people in Southend East vote Labour on March 13th!**

## Southern LPYS - THE BEST BROAD-BASED MOVEMENT YOU CAN GET!

**"No cuts, no rent or rate increases, no redundancies."**

**That was the majority position on public expenditure during the debate at Southern Region LPYS conference, with 43 branches represented.**

During the debate, the tactic of forming "broad

**By Dave Carr**  
(Gosport LPYS)

based" anti-cuts committees involving Liberals and community associations and so on, was rejected in favour of pursuing anti-cuts committees based on the labour and trade union movement. As

**It is no exaggeration to say that last year's LPYS National Conference was the most informative and educational political event I have ever attended.**

It was held alongside the annual summer camp because of the general election, under canvass and with the occasional downpour—and despite the unfavourable conditions I was still enthused by the high level of debate and political content of the weekend, and particularly by the ideas of 'Militant'.

As comrades from all over the country related the misery caused to working people by the bosses' system it became more and more apparent to me that the answers to these problems lay not in trying to make the best of capitalism, with a few hard won (and easily reversible!) reforms, but only by challenging the power of the bosses themselves.



Tony Benn speaks at last year's LPYS national conference

The debates covered a wide range of topics including youth unemployment, racism, women, and Northern Ireland.

In addition to this, the atmosphere of fraternity and comradeship made it an enjoyable weekend as well as a politically informative one.

I shall certainly be attending this year's conference and would encourage every

one delegate pointed out, what could be more "broad based" than the 13 million strong TUC and the 6 million strong Labour Party!

### Lunatic Tories

The penultimate session was on economic policy. Addressing the meeting, Stuart Holland, MP for Vauxhall, explained what 'Friedmanism' would mean for working people, and the lunacy of Thatcher and Co in pursuing these monetarist policies.

Summing up for the regional committee, Ian Walker (Oxford) took Stuart Holland to task for arguing that although there are reasonable grounds for thinking that the Tory Cabinet are insane, there is method in their madness. If all that was required to solve the problems of capitalism was to 'prime

the pump' as Stuart Holland implied, then wouldn't the capitalists attempt this solution themselves? Rather, the Tories' policies were dictated by the catastrophic decline in the profitability of capital.

This analysis provoked Stuart Holland into challenging the 'Militant' supporters in the YS to a debate—the challenge was willingly taken up by the meeting!

Supporters of the 'Militant' swept the board in all the elections, with the region's representative on the YS national committee, John Cantwell, being easily elected with only two votes against.

There were other sessions on trade union rights and Northern Ireland.

A readers' meeting was held on Saturday night when Peter Taaffe spoke on 'What Militant stands for'. Over £230 was raised from a large and attentive audience of about 90 people.

Young Socialist and trade unionist to do so as well. LPYS Conference was an event that had great political impact on me and increased my determination to fight for the ideas of Marxism in the labour movement.

And this year's conference has the advantage of being held on firmer ground, at a theatre hall in Llandudno, North Wales, from April

4th-7th. Along with the political debates are many social events such as the film FIST and a production by the 7.84 theatre group.

The conference is not to be missed—make sure your LPYS branch has a good turnout at our national conference.

**By Fiona Winders**

# LEFT and RIGHT Costa Capitalism

Steel workers in Corby battling to save their jobs will no doubt be bemused by some bright spark on the East Midlands Tourist Board who has found the solution—no, not to keep the steel works open, but tourism! The Leicester Sunday Extra [February 24] says, "Corby is an undiscovered part of England..."—it has certainly gone unnoticed by the capitalists who have failed to invest money into the steel-works to make it competitive! Mr Wilsher of the Board goes on: "Corby is an ideal base for tourists." Besides the fact that Corby is also an ideal spot for a steel-works which was why it was built there in the first place however, the Tourist board may have a point—if the bosses have their way, the derelict steel-works and the dole queue of thousands of skilled workers would certainly be an ideal monument to British capitalism.

## The real thugs

The decaying industrial regions of the north have not impressed the well-heeled Tories. In a Tory Political Centre publication, Philip Virgo, chairman of the Tory Computer Forum, says that government grants are of little use to attract new industries to the area because the skilled workers "on whom it depends won't move to the area because they are likely to be mugged, their wives assaulted and their children grow up illiterate." This gives a good insight to the Tories' feelings towards the working people—but in a way it's quite true; workers everywhere are being mugged by high prices; working class women trying to run a home, bring up a family and taking a part time job in an effort to make ends meet are certainly being assaulted by the conditions inflicted upon them; and our children will certainly grow up illiterate if the Tories have their way with the massive cutbacks in education.

## Close your eyes and think of England

Workers will be overjoyed to hear that in the event of a threatened nuclear holocaust, they will be simply asked to stay at home. According to the Daily Express [February 28] plans for mass evacuations were dropped ten years ago! Even people living in tower blocks will have to stay at home and wait for the big white flash. But not to worry, the government have prepared a booklet describing how to survive. First, "build a refuge [in your home] with furniture and cases in a secure part of the house." People living in tower blocks might as well not bother—as Ronan Point showed, these council paradises can't even withstand a gas explosion never mind an H-bomb. And secondly "stock food that will keep for 14 days"—better make sure you get to the supermarket before Thatcher!

But the government is confident—with these precautions says the Express, the number of survivors would be "a figure which would cover around half of the population." Terrific. Workers can make a far better preparation—fight for the socialist system that ends war!

# THE HEIGHT OF HYPOCRISY

By Jim Chrystie

From all the pages of the capitalist press, and especially from the gutter press of the 'Sun', 'Mail' and 'Express' has come the demand to boycott the Moscow Olympics.

The Daily Mail on January 16: "As we cherish our freedoms, we must do all that honest persuasion and reason can do to stop our athletes from making a triumph for the most menacing and expansionist tyranny since the Third Reich."

This pious remark just about defeats all rivals for a masterpiece of hypocrisy. For what was the Daily Mail's view in the 1930s of fascism and the 1936 Berlin Olympics?

In that decade the Daily Mail supported almost every fascist or military tyranny. Its editorials and articles supported Hitler's taking power in Germany (June 15, 1934), Chiang-Kia Shek's dictatorship (14 May, 1934), Japanese military occupation of Manchuria (3 October, 1932) and fascists rule in Austria (30 April, 1934).

Its sister paper, the Sunday Pictorial, carried articles by Mussolini and supported the Italian dictator's contention that the 20th century would "prove to be a century of universal fascism." (28 October, 1932).

In Britain the Daily Mail acted as a recruitment agency for Mosley's fascists, publishing articles (not adverts) entitled "Where To Join the Blackshirts".

It takes no great imagination then to see how the Mail publicity machine worked overtime during the 1936 Olympics to give Hitler's Nazi tyranny a 'human face'.

For example this is how the Daily Mail described the opening ceremony on 3 August 1936:

"A 100,000 Germans leaping from their seats and wildly cheering a party of Frenchmen who had raised their arms towards Herr Hitler in what exactly resembled the Nazi salute.

"The French salute and the thunderous German response were an unexpected moment of intense emotion in one of the finest public ceremonies ever held."

But at the same time as the Olympics were being held, the

Spanish civil war began with Franco attempting to overthrow the Republican government. The Daily Mail did not hesitate to take sides on this aggression against the Spanish people. It supported Franco's fascists and called for the British government to link up with Hitler and Mussolini against the Spanish people.

The Mail described the heroic stand taken by the workers of Spain against the military might of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini as:

"This anti-Christ government has further covered itself in shame by handing over arms to the dregs of Madrid and Barcelona." (14 August, 1936)

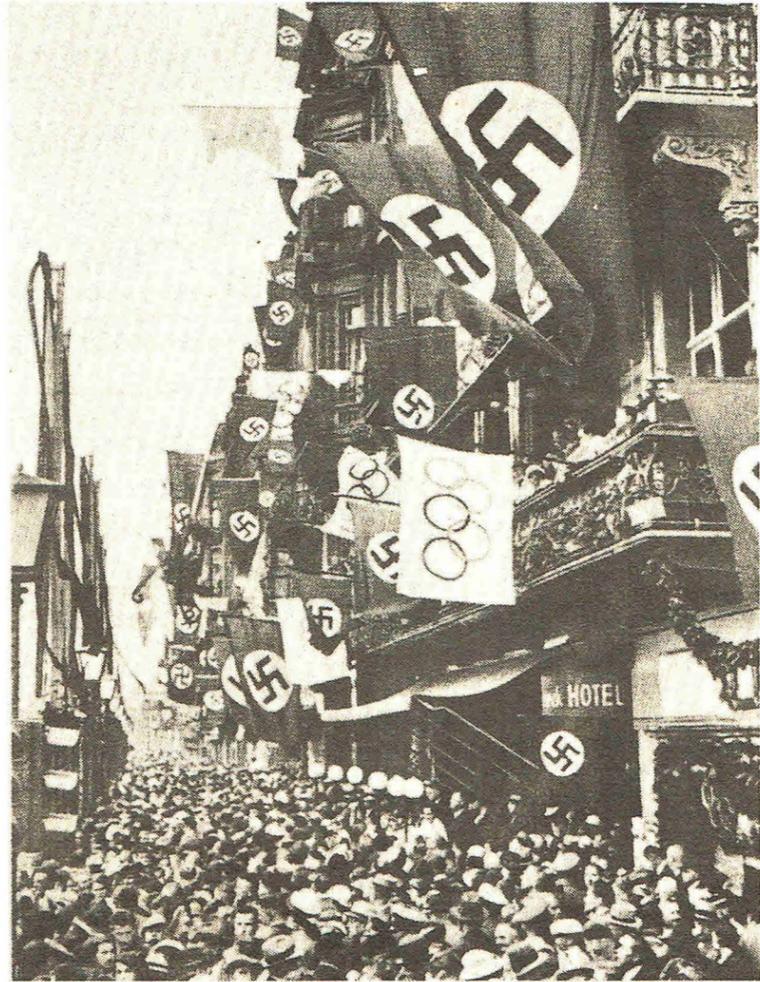
And at the same time its editorials were saying:

"No-one expects Germany and Italy to tolerate another Communist state in Europe and decent British feeling would favour the idea of joining hands with them to save the Spanish people from their utter destruction." (6 August 1936)

Ribbentrop, Hitler's new envoy to Britain was "a welcome Ambassador" (12 August 1936).

On 24 August, 1936, its editorial stated, "The governments of Germany and Italy simply will not allow the reds in Spain to win. If necessary they will go to war to prevent it. They would be using the sword as a surgeon uses the knife, inflicting a temporary wound to cure a deadlier disease."

And that was how the



The bosses' press saluted Hitler's Olympics—yet now they call for a boycott of Moscow.

"Hurrah for the Blackshirts...Italy and Germany were beyond doubt the best governed nations in Europe today."—The Daily Mail [8 January, 1934].

capitalists saw the fascists. As a weapon to protect the rule of big business when it is seriously threatened by a growing socialist movement.

But support by capitalists for fascists is only undertaken as a weapon of last resort. Obviously, handing over the government to such a bunch of gangsters has its price.

Today, if the Daily Mail is more restrained in its views, it is not basically because it has changed its spots, but because the class war has not yet reached the boiling point it had in the thirties. It is a question of tactics for the bosses and their kept press.

So it was in this light that Viscount Rothermere wrote in the Daily Mail (2 May 1934) the following words:

"The only contemporary politician who is aiming at a dictatorship is that rather ludicrous figure, Sir Stafford Cripps. It is from this danger of a Socialist dictatorship that the country is beginning to see in Sir Oswald Mosley its only chance of salvation."

# 'SOUTHALL IS INNOCENT'

'Southall is innocent—the guilty ones must be brought to justice.'

This concludes a report by 'Southall Rights' on the events of April 1979, when the NF was allowed to hold a meeting in Southall Town Hall, with massive police protection.

The report stresses that the NF meeting, approved by the Tory Council in Ealing was a provocation to the local Asian community. It was allowed to go ahead on the pretext that it was a public election meeting.

In fact NF supporters were brought in, with police assistance, and only five selected members of the public were allowed in.

By  
Barbara Humphries  
(Acton LP)

A truly public meeting in Southall would, as happened in Plymouth the next day, have been filled to capacity with anti-NF members of the public.

Before the meeting, the town-centre was cleared by mounted police. Numerous eye-witness accounts of police brutality are given in the report.

"First, a mounted policeman kicked me and then another kicked me right in my guts. In a flash the police officers picked me up and threw me over a five foot wall like a sack of coal."

There was scarcely a family in Southall which was not affected by the events of 23rd April. 1,000 people were taken to hospital. 700 people were arrested, 342 were charged, 90% of them from the Southall area.

Until 1st November convictions were running at 85% (the usual average is 52%). After press publicity and a campaign this was reduced to 76%.

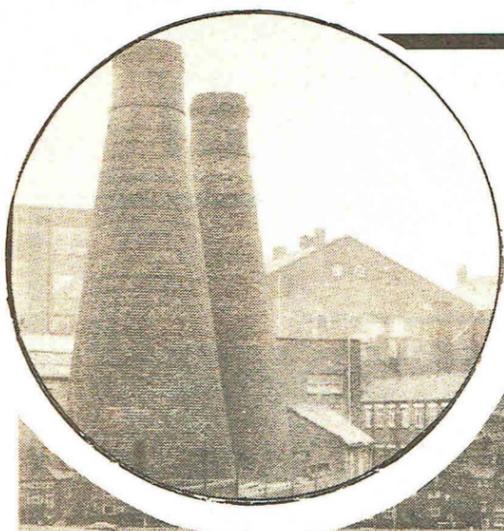
A police superintendent is quoted as saying that it "was about time the community was taught some discipline"—an admission of deliberate attempts to intimidate the Asian community.

The local LPYS was involved in the counter-demonstration, when the main

battles took place in the afternoon of 23rd April—as we pointed out then it is essential that the anti-fascists be well organised and disciplined, to avoid both 'pacifism' and futile spontaneous battles with the police.

These are the lessons which must be learnt from the Southall demonstration, to prevent the fascists from staging provocations in the future.

The report is available from Southall Rights, 54 High Street, Southall, Midds.



# THE POTTERIES



## WHAT FUTURE?

**Terry Crowe, a Staffordshire county councillor, explains how the Tory cuts are biting:**

Before reorganisation, Stoke-on-Trent was one of the front-runners in education and social services. Since then it has been enveloped in the Tory-controlled Staffordshire County Council and its services are being eaten away.

Thirty-three schools are being closed throughout the County. Official figures show that the birth rate is now rising, so these closures and the increased class sizes can only result in a reduction in education standards.

The increases in school meals charges provide another stick to hit working families with. In some cases, rises of 100% will occur—slightly more than inflation!

I estimate there will be a drop of about 40% in the number of children taking school meals: if the Conservatives have their way, this will be passed on in redundancies. What future is there for society if today's children cannot get a decent education?

The elderly are increasingly exposed. At the moment, in Stoke-on-Trent, the waiting list for old peoples' homes accommodation is over 400 and rising every day. Reduc-

**Terry Crowe spoke to John Pickett [Stoke Labour Party]**

tion in old peoples' homes have to be compensated for by increasing personal supervision at the individual's home, yet, to affect a 'saving' the Tories are cutting this supervision.

All this is thoroughly in line with their philosophy of 'money before people in need.'

At nearby Leek, the opening of a training centre for severely handicapped youths and adults is to be delayed between twelve and eighteen months.

If money can be found to strengthen the police and the army, then how is it that such a basic facility as the fire service is being cut to the bone?

The Tories and their system can only offer 'worse to come'. We desperately need the return of a Labour government and, more importantly, a Labour government committed to implementing socialist policies.

**Martin Inskip, a young CATU member describes conditions in the industry:**

**I work at Wedgwood's at Barlaston, which is the most modern 'potbank' in**

Stoke. It is a new factory employing 2,400 outside the city, with room to expand. Even so, production is still labour-intensive.

Even though we are better off than many, there is still some short-time working.

**For most school-leavers in Stoke-on-Trent the choice is quite simple. You can apply for jobs in the pits or the potteries; if you are female you might try the shops as well.**

Unemployment and short time working are beginning to cast a shadow over the city.

**By Dave Cambell  
AUEW (TASS)  
North Staffs 1**

The potteries set the pace

## Tories confront a new militancy

**My job is in a craft trade, I'm an engraver. There is not much future for that. It's a slow job when done by hand, and things need to be done faster to save money and compete. The employers have found that they cannot live on cheap labour forever.**

For a major industry, conditions are primitive.

Instead of putting in a conveyer belt, a man carries four or five pieces on a plank upstairs, downstairs, round corners, to the kiln.

They've made a lot of money out of us, and put some back, but there's been no major re-investment.

**Paul Jackson, CATU member at Wedgwood, Turnstall.**

**mum wage of £56.**

**In my shop, you can earn anywhere between £60 and £100. Each item has a different price and the foreman can favour some, giving them the easier jobs.**

**It would be a good idea to**

for the area. The number of potbanks has declined dramatically since the war from above 700 to about seventy.

Domestic pottery is dominated by the two giant companies, Doulton and (Josiah) Wedgwood, while four companies control 80% of all sanitary-ware output. With the decline in housebuilding and the world recession, most factories have been running at only about three-quarters of capacity over the past couple of years.

From being one of the areas least affected by unemployment, North Staffordshire is now climbing the league table of jobless.

This goes together with low pay, traditionally associated with the pottery industry. A recent survey reported that Stoke-on-Trent secretaries are the lowest paid in the country—a reflection of the low pay in other local industries.

The cuts in public expenditure, the spectre of unemployment and falling living standards are hardening attitudes in what was considered a 'moderate' area.

The loss of nearly 1,500 jobs at Shelton Bar steelworks has not lessened the resolve of the remaining steelworkers to win the pay battle. Pickets see this as a fight in defence of the industry itself. As one ISTC member put it: "Britain is being so de-industrialised that, when the great day comes, we'll be using water pistols!"

This determination is reflected on the North Staffs Trades Council, which is now committed to fight for a 35-hour week without any loss of pay, to reduce the level of

**get all wages to the same level, so that no-one loses, and there would be a much better basis for shop floor unity.**

unemployment, and a minimum wage of two-thirds the national average.

Stoke and its immediate neighbour, Newcastle-under-Lyme, have always been Labour strongholds. Labour controls 57 of the 60 seats on the city council and has 31 out of the 56 places on Newcastle Council.

The Labour groups on both councils have no excuse for not opposing the Tory cuts by refusing to implement them. Some local councillors have already held public meetings against the cuts, with a huge response.

There can be no substitute for a mass campaign against the cuts, based on healthy, active unions and a mass socialist Labour Party. Without this the majority on the council, which is a credit to the rank and file Party members who canvassed and worked for a Labour victory, will be powerless to defend the working people of North Staffs from the Tory attacks.

A campaign by the Labour Parties, based on a refusal to implement the cuts or increase the rates, would have an enormous response, increasing membership and votes.

The youth, in particular, are crucial. The Labour Party Young Socialists must be built and complemented by more branches in new areas.

Fine words from Labour will not shelter workers from the ravages of Thatcherism: we must build a mass Labour Party, capable of carrying out our socialist commitment, spelled out in Clause 4, part 4. Only then, with the potteries nationalised and, together with the steel and coal industries, placed under workers' control and management as part of a national planned economy, will working people in North Staffs be assured of a decent and secure future.

## POTTERY WORKERS FACE FIGHT ON PAY AND JOBS

1980 could prove a turning point for the Ceramic and Allied Trades Union.

The pottery industry continued to make big profits from exports throughout the seventies. Now it is in slump, with the rising value of the pound helping to push prices above those of its competitors.

Up to a quarter of the union's 46,000 members are now on a three- or four-day week. Through closures and take-overs, three thousand jobs were lost last year. The prospects look grim.

The union has no tradition

**By Steve Martin  
(Stoke South LPYS  
and CATU members)**

of militancy: its last strike was in the 1830s. If it is to maintain jobs and wages, that will have change.

Negotiations for a substantial wage rise are going on. Last year it was 10% plus 2½% productivity. One lodge actually voted against it, but everyone else accepted.

This year, details of the claim have been published before negotiations started. For the first time, the union's executive will be under pressure not to sell their membership short.

The claim is broadly for:

£15 wage-rise across the board; 37½-hour week with no loss of pay; 1 extra day's holiday plus consolidation of the extra day already won and of productivity bonus; maternity benefits and improved overtime rates, redundancy and severance pay written into the national agreement. The last clause is mainly a safeguard measure.

Management's attitude is that anything more than 5% will be 'self-financing': either through productivity, or jobs. As one Labour Party member commented: "They won't get that without a strike!"

The pottery industry has failed to plough back its profits or take advantage of

government and EEC grants as its competitors have. Primitive conditions abound.

At the Biscuit Warehouse, plates are sorted into flats, slight-humps, bad-humps, or dips, by girls using lumps of wood to check flatness. This is a piece-rate job: one day's quota is over 7,000 5-inch plates.

It is hard work for the labourer who just carries around plates all day—these are unglazed, and rub away the skin.

Conditions have improved, though. Ten or fifteen years ago, you could tell a pottery worker by the ingrained dust on his face. Dust is still a problem; pneumoconiosis is

not confined to miners.

The last Labour government's Equal Pay Act had little effect for many women workers in CATU, as there was often no comparable 'male' job.

Piece work also brings down bargaining power. It is one more means for management to divide and rule. It must be abolished and replaced by a full hourly rate without loss of pay.

The union is becoming more militant. Members are finding that if they stand up to management and stand together, they can win.

Pottery workers will have to fight if they are to win a reasonable wage rise which at

least matches the inflation rate, and save jobs in a threatened industry. But there is only one way to avoid fighting the same battle again and again.

By nationalising the major groups that control the pottery industry, under workers' control and management, it could be run efficiently and safely for our needs and not the bosses' profits.

**Public Meeting  
'What Militant stands For'**

**Speakers: Terry Crowe, and a Militant supporter**

**Thursday 13th March  
7.30 at Burslem Leisure Centre.**

# LABOUR PARTY -

## National Executive must fight for conference decisions

Since last year's Labour Party Conference, in local Labour Parties and in the trade unions, support for radical socialist policies and democracy in the Labour Party has been increasing.

Yet unfortunately, this groundswell of opinion within the Labour movement has not been matched by some NEC members, elected as leftwingers.

By  
Bob Wade

At last week's NEC, the left scored a major victory against those attempting to initiate a witch-hunt against 'Militant'. A motion from the Organisational Committee (moved by Neil Kinnock) called for the setting up of a sub-committee to look at "documents which have come into the possession of Lord Underhill..."

This was amended by LPYS rep Tony Saunois to add the call for an investigation into "all tendencies and groups in the Labour Party including links between sections of the Labour Party, bankers, industrialists, the CIA and other enemies of the Labour movement."

Judging by the reaction of some rightwingers, they were clearly embarrassed about their backers being identified. John Golding initially attempted to get the amendment deleted. This move was successfully challenged by Tony Saunois and other leftwingers including Tony Benn, Joan Maynard and Dennis Skinner.

Tony Benn then moved reference back of the entire resolution, thereby defeating the attempts of Labour's right to start a purge in the party.

Rather than have their source of support identified, the right-wing had no alternative but to accept the reference back of the entire resolution.

Unfortunately, the right were able to secure a victory over the composition of the commission of enquiry. On four occasions the right wing have now brought this issue to the NEC. They wish to use it as a means of reversing all the advances at last year's party conference.

The composition of the enquiry is of key importance to safeguard those gains and build upon them. Until last Wednesday the majority of the NEC had stood firm and rejected the demand for increased representation from the PLP for this reason.

Last Wednesday by 15 votes to 9 a motion, moved by John Golding that the seat vacated by the resignation of Alex Kitson should not be filled was carried. The right-wing have already started to pack the Commission's panels with their supporters.

The PLP has put two of its members on each of them, in the main leading rightwingers like Denis Healey and Philip Whitehead. The LPYS, one



The Labour Party NEC was elected to safeguard decisions of the annual conference

Photo: MILITANT

of the party's most active sections to date has no representation on any, despite having submitted evidence to improve its own structure.

In their desperate attempts to reverse last year's successes, the right-wing will take every inch of concession offered and demand a mile. By not filling Alex Kitson's vacancy, those on the left who supported Golding, (Norman Atkinson, Doug Hoyle, Renee Short, Judith Hart and Neil Kinnock) have weakened the struggle to defeat the right on these crucial issues of party democracy.

There was an item which will infuriate and anger many in the Labour Party. That was over the issue of cuts in education, when a motion from the Home Policy Committee was discussed, pledging a future Labour government to restore cuts in school meals, milk and transport to their previous levels.

This is a demand which will strengthen the fight against the cuts being waged throughout the country. This struggle will, however, be weakened, if Labour's front bench spokesmen persist, as Neil Kinnock did, in moving reference back of such resolutions.

Members were elected to

the NEC to fight for Conference policy, one of which is for restoration of cuts in public expenditure. All NEC members should remember that and abide by it.

This NEC shows the need for party members to maintain and increase the struggle for socialist policies and party democracy, ensuring that pressure is put on all NEC

members to stand firm, if the Labour Party is to be built into a mass, democratic socialist alternative to the Tories.

## POVERTY IN BRITAIN

Roy Bentley [Banbury Labour Party] reviews  
'Poverty in the United Kingdom' by  
Peter Townsend [Pelican, £7.95]

Sir Keith Joseph's claim that "there is very little poverty in Britain" is shown to be nonsense by Peter Townsend's recently published book on 'Poverty in the UK'. The book contains a mass of data and analysis, as well as some very detailed case studies of individual families.

Even if the government's own figures are used, then 9% of families or 5 million people were below the poverty line in 1968/69. This figure alone is an indictment of the capitalist system yet if a more realistic poverty line is adopted then 26% of the population or 14 million people could be said to be deprived.

Unlike the mass media's picture of those on state benefits or income slightly above this level living a life of luxury Townsend shows that the 14 million people he judges to be in poverty cannot participate in normal life.

The indicators that are used to judge poverty include children not having a birthday party, not having had a holiday away from home in the previous year. Hardly exceptional demands for ordinary people to make, yet many are unable to achieve this standard of living.

Since the research has taken place, the extent of poverty has almost certainly increased, partially because of the rise in unemployment, so the figures which are all based on evidence from ten years ago are likely to be underestimates.

But the book is not just figures and graphs. There are a number of case histories to illustrate the meaning of

poverty for those involved. One couple in their early thirties live with their three sons in a four-roomed council flat. They have one fire which is taken from room to room and there are no carpets, no washing machine or refrigerator.

The family have no social life and have not had a holiday away. The family rarely eats fresh meat and on Tuesdays they do not eat a cooked meal because they have no money left. They go to bed early to save fuel and buy clothes from jumble sales. Both parents are in ill health and rely on state benefits.

### No programme

Other case studies present a similarly depressing picture and not just for those relying on state benefits. Many of the families living in poverty have one parent in full time work but paid a poverty wage.

The following chapter provides a telling contrast as it examines the rich in the 6,000 sample on which the book is based. The wealthiest of the rich depend on income from ownership of property and therefore the sample mirrors the real world.

One couple live with their five children in a big farmhouse in 200 acres. He is a company director owning a string of shops. The family have extensive assets and educate their children at private school. He says it was "impossible to live in poverty today. You are given enough for food and rent. What makes people poor is buying fags and booze. It's their own doing. There's no

such thing as poverty."

If this individual bought the book—and at the price of £7.95 its probably only the likes of him that can afford a copy—he might be persuaded by Townsend's evidence.

This is the strongest feature of the book. The remedies that are proposed to deal with poverty are in comparison weak and ineffectual.

The suggestions include the abolition of unemployment by imposing a legally enforceable right to work, reducing top salaries and introducing maximum limits for earnings and wealth. Townsend also suggests abolishing personal income tax and social security payments and replacing them with an agreed system of tax-free incomes according to skill and need.

While he argues for greater public ownership he also suggests an incomes policy. The solutions he proposes are a mixture of reforms, some of which should be supported despite their limitations, and backward steps which the labour movement has rejected.

Townsend admits that even his modest reforms will be rejected by the "citadels of wealth and privilege which are deeply entrenched." If this is the case, then there is all the more reason to attack the heart of inequality and hence poverty in society—the capitalist system itself and not by a series of creeping reforms but by a programme to end the basis of power, privilege and wealth of the ruling class.

Townsend's book shows the necessity of doing this but provides no perspective or programme to achieve such an end.



Labour must restore all the cuts in education

# FORCE THE TO

## Stop the Cuts!

By Roger Shrivess

Never have the contrasts in British society been more obvious.

Since the Tories came to power they have given millions to the rich. One man alone, GKN chairman, Sir Bernie Heath, got an extra £40 per week from last year's tax cuts as the top rate went down from 83p to 60p in the pound.

But for the working class the Tories have only increased the misery. With a recent book [see page 7] revealing that five million people live below the poverty line and a further eleven million only just above, the Tories have cut into social welfare. Not one aspect of the Welfare State has escaped.

The main aim of the attacks is to re-direct even more of the wealth of the country away from the workers and into the hands of the capitalist class.

Every gain made by the working class in education, the health services, social security, had to be fought for. Nothing was given out of the generosity of the capitalists' hearts. The NHS was created in the teeth of bitter opposition from the Tories, big business and the vested interests of the tops of the medical profession.

During the post-war economic boom Tory administrations were prepared to see a certain proportion of state expenditure go on essential public services.

But the present crisis of capitalism, particularly in Britain, means that the capitalist class are looking round desperately for ways to cut spending.

Now the bosses are like dogs defending a bone—and the Tories have been put in power to ensure that the working class get bitten.

Tory proposals already announced cut £4½ million off public spending. Further and probably worse cuts are expected from the budget in March.

The only exception to the cuts have been increases in spending on 'law and order', [more police on the picket line] and defence. Already Britain devotes less to social spending than most European countries. But still the axe falls.

Education is vital for the future of any society, yet huge

cuts have been made. Spending on schools is to be halved, but how many children already sit in Victorian-built schools, sharing text books and having to buy their own equipment?

School meals were 25p until last September—by April they will cost 35p. Some authorities like Essex and Warwickshire propose a 60p dinner charge. Others like Leicestershire have inaugurated canteen facilities—meals at 67p in some schools—with a charge of a penny for a cup of water!

This is already hitting hard at the poorest children. Between 1978 and 1979 school dinners dropped by 2% because past cuts, shamefully under a Labour government, made it harder to get free meals. New plans for the virtual abolition of free meals could affect half a million children.

The health service used to be quoted as proof that capitalism could care for the well-being of ordinary people. But there have been some devastating attacks on the service.

£200 million at least is being cut. This would mean the closing of 100 middle size hospitals with the loss of 40,000 jobs and affecting 200,000 patients.

The private sharks are already drooling at the thought of extra custom. 2,000 new private beds are planned but only the rich will really be able to afford them.

In contrast, with national hospital waiting lists of 750,000, 2,815 beds have disappeared from the NHS in London alone!

Heseltine's list of cuts in housing is equally horrifying. Nearly half a million homes lack either a bath, an inside toilet or a hot water supply. Thousands of people are homeless. Seven homeless people die on the streets of

one town, Cardiff, last year.

But the Tories decree that cuts must come.

Local authorities face crippling cuts in allocations. Camden in North London may lose 40% of its government support.

Many councils will find it nearly impossible to build if the Tories are allowed to get away with these measures. Hounslow's Labour council have said they can build no houses next year as they got only half the sum they requested from the government.

The Tories have not shrunk from action to ensure that government directed cuts are implemented. Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Area Health Authority were sacked for refusing to carry out £5 million cuts.

They intend similar action for any rebel authority in local government. They have set an arbitrary figure of 119p in the £ for local rates, and they intend to punish those authorities which go above this figure [at present this would include 20 London boroughs and even a number of Tory authorities].

The government has declared war on the welfare state. The organisations of the working class who fought long for these advances will not stand by while Thatcher and Co chop merrily away.

The steelworkers have given the Tory government a major shock with their steadfast defiance of government and BSC plans to slash living standards and jobs. Their determination should show the way forward for all workers.

A clear lead is needed from the TUC and the Labour Party to show that they will lead resistance to every attack—to every threatened job and service, by preparing to organise industrial action.

At local level, Labour councils must take the lead by a refusal to implement any cuts on local services. What is the point of having a Labour council if it only obeys Tory instructions?

These councils, together with the trade unions and Labour Parties must prepare now for battle by a campaign of meetings and rallies in local areas, factories and sites to explain and gain support for a policy of no cuts and no indirect attacks through rate or rent increases. The government must be forced to provide finance for these services.

This must be linked to preparation for industrial action. Then if the Tories tried to take action against the rebel councillors, government plans could be effectively defeated.

The Tories must be driven out and a general election held. Mass opposition led by the TUC would ensure that this could happen. The election of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies is the only way to prevent the most terrible attacks on living standards.

## Defeat Anti-

The Thatcher government is hell-bent on destroying all the hard-won rights of the British working class, secured in over 100 years of struggle.

If the anti-trade union 'Employment' Bill now before Parliament ever becomes law, the traditional picketing rights recognised in statute since the 1906 Trades Disputes Act will be stripped away.

Existing closed shop agreements will also be severely jeopardised. A legal minefield will be placed in the path of new closed shop agreements and Tory high court judges will be given wide scope to interfere with union rules, particularly on admission to, or exclusion from, trade union membership.

In effect, the Tory judges will be given the powers to recruit blacklegs to the trade unions.

Punitive measures will also be taken under this Bill to deprive workers of existing rights on unfair dismissal and maternity leave.

By repealing the Road Haulage Act 1938 and Schedule 11 of the Employment Protection Act 1975, the Tories will be giving cowboy firms the go-ahead to pay wages well below nationally agreed rates.

At present, claims can be made for the 'recognised' terms and conditions, or for the 'general level' prevalent in the district or industry. Such claims will no longer be possible if the Employment Bill becomes law.

Since the steel strike started, a further clause has been drafted aimed at crippling the ability of trade unions involved in disputes to organise wider solidarity action.

These attacks on fundamental rights are central to the whole political and economic crusade which the Thatcher government has launched against the working class of Britain.

The Tory party is the direct political arm of the British ruling class. It is the servant of the top 200 monopolies, which between them own and control over 85% of the

By Brian Ingham

economy. These monopolies greased the Tory election machine lavishly, now they want their reward.

It is therefore not only the blind anti-trade union prejudices of the Tory leadership that have given rise to these attacks. The Tories have been driven to try and undermine the power of the trade unions, above all, because of the desperate plight of once mighty British capitalism.

Intense international competition between the capitalists is now on the order of the day. This harsh economic reality is looked upon by the bosses in Britain with nothing but deep foreboding and despair.

During the post-war boom of the last thirty years the wealth created by British workers was squandered. British bosses invested at a snail's pace when compared to their major rivals. As a result they are now forced to attempt to compete with these rivals on the basis of backwardness.

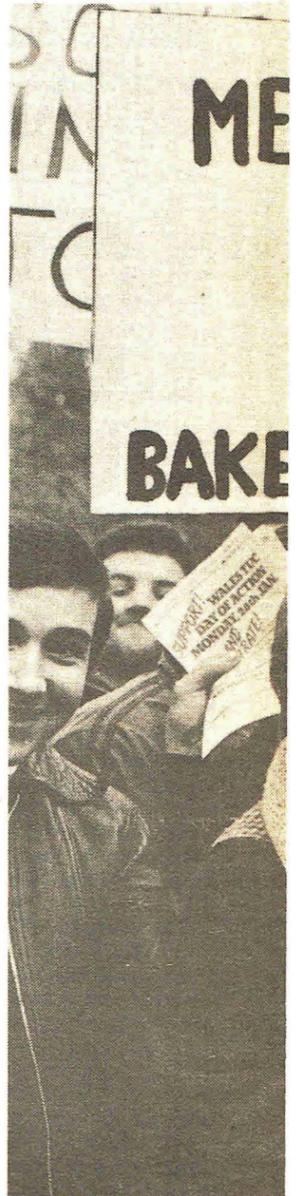
This is the cause of the merciless savaging which British capitalism is experiencing both on the home market and abroad.

It is in a vain effort to arrest this decline and save their disintegrating fortunes and that of the ruling elite that the Tories are waging war against the British ruling class.

A cloud of dark uncertainty hangs over every working-class family. The one real hope that exists for the working class in the face of the Tory onslaught is to organise and fight back against each and every attack.

Trade unions are the most basic weapon of working class organisation and struggle. That is why the Tories have introduced their 'Employment' Bill. They hope to severely limit the effectiveness of the trade unions and thus clear the way for their attacks on jobs, living standards and the welfare state.

Where the bosses already have an advantage over their workforce, such as in small and badly organised workplaces, the 'Employment'



LABOUR

Bill seeks to load the dice even more in the bosses' favour.

The main thrust of this Bill, however, is to weaken the ability of the trade unions to pursue industrial action by imposing severe limitations on picketing rights and on the rights of trade unions to organise solidarity action.

Since 1906 the right has existed to peacefully picket any place of work in order to persuade others to join a strike, or simply to communicate information.

This narrow legal right has been continually threatened, especially by the arrests of pickets under criminal laws, such as the all-embracing laws on 'obstruction'.

The Tories' new Bill decrees that picketing will in future only be legal if it is conducted at a person's own place of work. Trade union officials are exempt from this rigid 'work place only' rule if they are accompanying pick-

# RIES OUT

**MAKE MAY 14th  
A ONE DAY  
GENERAL STRIKE**

## -Union Laws!

Welsh workers on the January 28th day of action showed the way forward—mass working-class mobilisation can bring down the Tories.



## R TO POWER ON A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME!

ets who are their members and who are picketing their own place of work.

This new law will almost certainly be strengthened still further against the unions by the Code of Practice which is at present being drawn up by the Department of Employment.

Any infringement of the law once it is enacted would leave union officials or ordinary rank-and-file pickets liable to be sued for damages by firms whose premises are made the focus of picketing.

Not even Edward Heath, with his ill-fated Industrial Relations Act, dared attempt such flagrant attacks on picketing rights.

If this law had already been in operation then the picketing of the power stations in 1972 and '74 by the miners would not have been legal.

Solidarity action on picket lines by trades council, Lab-

our Party, and other union members would also be illegal, as would the kind of massive support which the labour movement generated in support of the Grunwick workers.

And the only places that lorry drivers would be free to picket would be the depots from which they work!

The new clause against so-called 'secondary' industrial action is meant to supplement and strengthen the attack on picketing.

At present unions have legal immunity to organise any action wider than an original dispute if it can be shown that the action is in furtherance of that dispute.

If the Bill is passed, unions will have to prove that any solidarity action is (a) objectively capable of furthering a dispute (and 'objective' Tory judges will decide this); (b) derives from proper motives,

and; (c) was near enough to the main dispute—involving no other than first customers or first suppliers.

The anti-trade union ravings of Lord Denning are thus to become law. Failure to obey the law will again open up union officials or members to civil action for breaking commercial contracts.

The old Tory ploy of the carrot and the stick is contained in the Bill. In order to weaken opposition, the Tories have offered bribes in the form of state finance for union ballots.

No union should touch one penny of this contaminated money.

Shamefully, the right-wing leaders of the AUEW and the EETPU refused to vote on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress in favour of outright trade union opposition to the use of these funds.

The issue is clear. If trade

unions accept any of this money they will be lending a cloak of respectability to the Bill as a whole, and thereby also to the entire anti-working class policies of the Tory cabinet.

Moreover, once the principle of state money for union ballots was accepted, the Tories would then demand the right to dictate the way the ballot was conducted and the kind of questions that would be permissible on the ballot paper.

That money is the thin end of a dangerous wedge. The TUC must maintain total opposition to the entire Bill. Any union not complying with such a policy should face expulsion from the TUC.

The Labour Party must also come out unequivocally and declare support for the fight to kill this Bill. Attacks on picketing by right-wing Labour leaders helped pave the way for this Tory Bill.

Those attacks—such as Owen's boast that he would cross a picket line—must be repudiated.

Also, a binding commitment should be given that if the Bill does become law it will be repealed in total by the next Labour government.

The TUC Day of Action on 9th March marks the beginning of the fight to defeat this Bill. It is a fight the ruling class have started, but it is a fight for which they have no stomach.

From their own class standpoint they see the need to weaken trade union power, but they are deathly afraid of their attack backfiring with the power of the working class actually intensifying in the process.

That was their experience during the attempts to foist the Industrial Relations Act on the trade unions.

This dilemma of the ruling class has brought about

unprecedented scenes of public rancour between different strategists of the capitalist class, including even cabinet ministers.

Thatcher herself has been pulled back from her efforts to launch an even speedier attack. Prior and the cabinet 'wets' (as they are contemptuously referred to by other cabinet members!) have advised a more cautious approach.

Prior is afraid of a law entering the statute books that would be immediately mauled to pieces by the trade union movement.

The police chiefs have echoed this fear. They have also let it be known that they have no intention of acting as agents, collecting names, addresses, and other information for use later in civil proceedings against pickets. Like the Law Lords, they are keen to try and shield their real purpose as weapons in the arsenal of the ruling class.

Where Thatcher and her immediate circle were baying and howling for the courts to be able to snatch union funds, Prior told them the class realities of life. He remembers the spontaneous Engineers' strike-wave that erupted around the Industrial Relations Court, when, in its last dying gasp, it seized the funds of the AUEW.

He has stuck to civil law where the police are saved from being pushed into implementing blanket criminal laws against effective picketing. The first time the police failed, their entire credibility as a strike-breaking weapon would be severely dented.

And Prior has also made sure that his department drags out its wider review on trade union immunities.

Nevertheless, this Bill as it stands, still poses considerable dangers to the trade union movement. Prior has held it back till next winter in the hope that it can be enacted quietly.

A one-day strike of the entire labour movement on 14 May should now be thoroughly prepared as a warning to the Tories of the opposition they can expect unless they abandon this and every other attack on the working class.

The trade union movement must also give a firm guarantee that should this Bill become law, then full active support will be mobilised the first time any trade unionist is victimised.

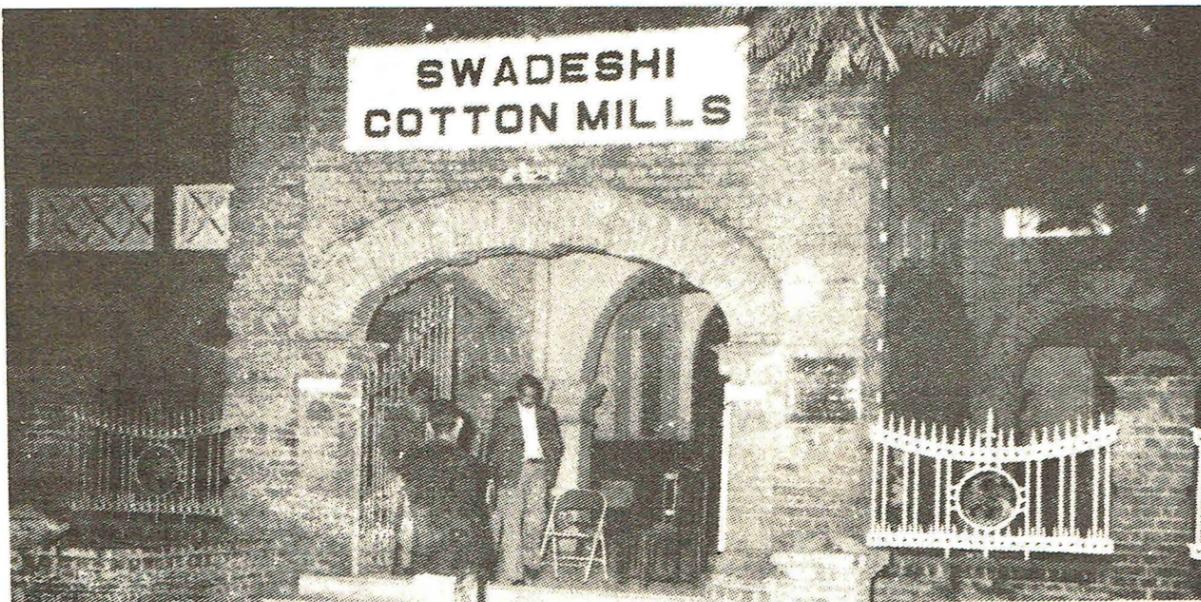
Above all, however, the trade union movement must now link the battle against the onslaught of the Tories to the overall political fight to force a general election in order that the Tories can be thrown out of office to be replaced with a Labour government committed to socialist policies.



# Indian worker tells of: 'A Lifetime struggle for socialism'

'Militant' Interview with Ram Shiromani  
Secretary, Swadeshi Mill Workers Front

Swadeshi Cotton Mill shortly after the 1977 massacre



The struggle of workers in India for a decent life has been a bitter one. In the last four years alone they have had to face Indira Gandhi's repression, its replacement by Janata capitalists and now a return to Gandhi.

But it need not be a succession of capitalists ruling. If the Communist Parties would stand on a clear class basis they could build a socialist alternative.

It would be created out of the struggle of all the oppressed sections of Indian society, the workers, the peasants, the dalits [untouchables] etc. Basically it would rest upon the working class.

In the following account, an Indian textile worker shows how through class struggle that alternative can be built.

From 1944 to 1963 I worked as a weaver in Swadeshi Cotton Mills, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, until I was sacked for trade union activities. When the untied Cotton Mills Workers' Committee was founded in 1954, I was a member of the executive. I have spent a total of ten years in prison for trade union and political activities.

In 1948 I was jailed for active participation in a strike demanding payment of bonus; in 1955 for organising a major strike in protest at rationalisation plans, which lasted for 80 days.

In 1966 for playing a leading part in organising the great one-day bandh (general strike) which involved as many as ten million workers and small proprietors throughout the whole state of Uttar Pradesh, in a political protest against Congress corruption and inflation. When Indira Gandhi proclaimed the emergency in 1975, I was clapped in jail within a week, and I was only released 21 months later after the new Government came to power.

I was District Secretary of the Communist Party (Marxist) in Kanpur, but in 1967 when the CP(M) leaders came

out of hiding from the repression of the mid-1960s, I was falsely accused of supporting the Naxalites (Maoist guerrilla groups) and expelled from the party. The middle-class Party leaders considered me too militant, and they didn't want a worker to hold an influential position in the party.

The police massacre in December 1977 at Swadeshi Cotton Mills (reported in Militant, 17th February 1978) took place soon after the Janata Government came to power. The corrupt Jaipuria brothers who owned the mills never paid up wages in arrears—the workers were always short of four or five fortnights' worth of wages.

Eventually, in October 1977 they conducted a gherao (mass picket) putting the management under siege. As a result, the government granted the bosses a loan and appointed a receiver, and the wages were paid. After that, no more wages were paid!

The bosses said it was now up to the government to pay the wages; the Government on the other hand accepted responsibility only for the loan already granted for October's wage arrears.

The bloody events of 6th December 1977 were a premeditated plot to clamp down on "lawlessness" and "anarchy". The workers again besieged the factory demanding payment, and the police marched in and ordered them to disperse.

The workers replied that they would leave as soon as they had received their due wages. At this moment a stone hit the Senior superintendent of Police. Who threw it is still unknown, and the firing promptly started.

For more than two hours the police were shooting into the crowd, at passers-by, at local washerwomen working at the river-bank, and in the streets of the workers' neighbourhoods, far away from the mills. They were afraid of being themselves surrounded by workers hearing the shots, and deliberately terrorised the whole area.

Before the firing started, certain elements unknown to us—presumably provocateurs—had abducted two factory officers and held them captive. Two police inspectors were with them. The press gave out the story that the hostages had been murdered and that was why the police had to open fire.

Their mutilated bodies were found later. We instituted an independent inquiry into the events soon afterwards, conducted by an MP, a journalist and a professor, and they established that the hostages were still alive when the shooting began. We suspect that the police themselves killed the officers to provide themselves with an alibi for the massacre.

The workers' actions had been organised by an ad-hoc committee comprising activists of all the trade unions.

None of the existing Party-affiliated unions had been capable of doing anything to secure the workers their due.

The CPI union had been compromised by its support of the hated Emergency, and the CPI(M) was now an alliance with the new Janata Government. In fact, even after the massacre a CPI(M) MP denounced the gherao as a "CPI provocation", made to discredit the Janata Party in the run-up to the coming state elections!

At a meeting of trade union leaders held to condemn the shooting, the CP(M) union even rejected a proposal to censure the Home Minister Charan Singh. There was a unanimous feeling that the official union leaders should be ejected and the workers themselves plan their struggle.

On December 20th, the Workers' Front was formed, to organise relief for the widows and orphans, and the families of 250 more workers who had been arrested, and to agitate for the reopening of the mill, and its take over by the government.

Following the inspiring example of the Swadeshi Workers' Front, the workers of another textile mill, JK Manufactures Ltd., which had been closed for more than a year, formed their own committee to agitate for similar demands. Our Workers' Front is now a registered union, with a paid up membership of 4,000 out of

the total of 8,000 workers employed at Swadeshi. In other factories, only 10-20% of workers are organised in any union.

At Swadeshi we have the whole-hearted support of all but a handful of the workers. The official party unions have tried to condemn the Front, smear it as "anti-union", sabotage its meetings, etc., but in every case the workers have turned their backs on them.

When they tried to organise a rival memorial meeting on the first anniversary of the shooting, only thirteen people turned up, as against thousands at that of the Workers' Front. At the second anniversary, we all came together to unveil a memorial to the dead—including the two murdered officers whom we also regard as martyrs to our cause.

We have now established a Cotton Mill Workers' United Front embracing all the textile workers of Kanpur, and in August 1979 held a successful one-day strike involving 35,000 workers, against the oppression of all the official unions.

The workers of Swadeshi and all Kanpur have gained a clearer consciousness of their own power. They have learned that the division of workers into unions along Party lines is harmful to all of us. When trade-union bureaucrats try to address factory-gate meetings, the workers jeer them.

They have taken control of

their own affairs. Politically, they have moved to the left. In the last elections, they refused to vote for Charan Singh's capitalist Lok Dal party, despite the fact that both CPs urged them to do so.

They remember his responsibility for the death of their comrades, and his statement before the massacre that he "would not tolerate gheraos even in favour of just demands". At the same time, they were repelled by the Janata, which is dominated by the communal racists, the fascist RSS.

Hence, despite the memory of the emergency, many of them voted for Indira Gandhi's Congress(I). It is criminal that the left parties gave them no alternative candidate for whom they could vote against the capitalist parties.

If the two Communist Parties came together, it would consolidate the left and raise the workers' morale. But because of their bureaucratic attitude, they have thrown away precious opportunities and failed to build any base within the vast Hindu speaking belt of Northern India.

Their continual support for capitalist parties is their worst possible mistake. They have never stood independently and tested their support or campaigned to build it.

The two CPs have never even called a national conference of workers in a single industry to discuss their problems. We are planning to convene an all-India conference of textile workers.

The return to power of Indira Gandhi is a danger signal to the working class. It is the left parties which are responsible for her return. The working class was never presented with any alternative, except in West Bengal and Kerala where they trounced her.

Of course, democracy and dictatorship are not decided by the whim of an individual. Indira Gandhi will not be able to move immediately against the working class.

We still have just a year or two to prepare for the big battles that are coming. If we lose that opportunity yet again, what can save the workers from being eventually crushed underfoot? ♪

## ROBINSON'S BARLEY WATER CURES CHOLERA?

"Freedom for Afghanistan" cry the capitalists. "Freedom for you," would be a suitable reply. For their interpretation of freedom means the liberty to lie, mislead and exploit the 'Third World'.

No better example of this can be seen than in their use of advertising techniques to sell their products. A few years ago the charity "War on

By  
Nick Toms  
(LPYS  
National Committee)

Want' revealed how the manufacturers of skimmed milk attacked the breastfeeding of babies in the 'Third World' as being archaic and

less nutritious.

The manufacturers ignored the beneficial ingredients of breast milk and all the hygienic problems of bottle-feeding in many Third World countries. All they were interested in was profits.

And a recent article in the 'New Scientist' (25 January) shows that these advertising practices continue. "Robinson's Barley Water—for cholera victims" proclaimed one

campaign. "Marmite helps you think clearly" was another.

'New Scientist' described these activities as "perversity, if not downright dishonesty... These practices cannot be dismissed or excused as exceptional to some better general rule."

In parts of Asia cinema advertisements show a mother with a sick child having Horlicks prescribed by a

doctor.

Clearly the most obvious needs of many people in the 'Third World' is food. How do the big multi-nationals help? This is what 'New Scientist' says:

"Almost inevitably, however, the products promoted make little food sense. In India Coca-Cola, promoted with special offers, was found replacing cheaper (and more nutritious) fruit drinks in

schools. In Kenya heavily promoted breakfast cereals emphasise the point. For the same price, twenty or more times the food value can be obtained from staple foods."

That then is what big business means when it talks of freedom. Freedom to dictate its will and gather its profits from the mouths of starving millions.

## OFFICIAL REPORT WARNS OF MORE 'SOWETOS'

According to the official South African regime's inquiry into the Soweto revolt of 1976-7 published last week, the explosion could happen again at any time.

Not only is the hostility towards apartheid as strong, but now blacks in South Africa have seen the ending of the Smith regime in Rhodesia. Finding that over 70% of Africans in the industrial area of Witwatersrand are angry, the report warns that this is "extremely dangerous, particularly in a climate of rising expectations created by developments in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia."

In what must be a nightmare for the South African ruling class, the report finds the Soweto protest, originally by school-students, was well organised and planned without any knowledge by the police.

When the police responded by violence, adult African workers quickly moved into action. Two general strikes by black workers on the Witwatersrand aroused enormous support.

Within days the movement spread throughout the country and the report comments on the single underlying theme "solidarity with the Soweto students."

Yet as the report itself shows, the issue of education only provided the catalyst for revolt. In the Cape Province, Coloureds [mixed race] staged mass protest marches.

The report comments on how Coloureds had been rejected by the white government and that "the Coloureds then turned anti-white and examined facets of the black man's struggle. He joined the black community to remove his grievances and gain rights through joint struggle."

Forlornly the report calls for channels of "communication" to be set up between whites and blacks. "This is no guarantee that discontent and rebellion will not occur but if these channels are not used it will be virtually impossible to avoid revolt."

Government "communication channels" are irrelevant. Revolt is inevitable as black working people struggle for an end to discrimination. Indeed 'The Times' [1 March] warned the South African government that it must face up to the demand for "one man one vote."

But what worries the spokesmen for international capital is that in the mass armed struggle for democracy black workers in South Africa will inevitably move towards getting rid of the capitalist exploitation upon which apartheid discrimination rests. For if 'Soweto '76' is the music of the future, it threatens to be the funeral dirge of their system.

# CAN GUERRILLA-ISM DEFEAT COLOMBIAN RULING CLASS?

The seizure of diplomats by the Colombian guerrillas last week has focussed attention on the corrupt oligarchy that rules the country. But guerrillaism offers no way forward.

Ostensibly a parliamentary democracy, Colombia is ruled by a landed and industrial elite, who run the country with an iron sword. 70% of the electorate do not bother to vote, for they know it will make no difference. Since 1958 the Liberals and Conservatives have arranged that they will take turns in office.

In 1974 when a populist general seemed to have won the election, the Liberal President gave his verdict to his Conservative opponent.

In the last decade the economy has boomed but the benefits have only gone to a few. Peasants have been thrown out of rural areas and drifted into the towns so that now 60% of Colombia's 26

By Brian  
Beckingham

(Bristol SE CLP)

million population live in the urban areas. 40% of the population are under 15 and over half the population live at or below subsistence level.

Such is the corruption of the ruling elite that probably the country's largest export earner is the illegal trading of marijuana.

According to official agricultural census the top 4.8% of landowners own 67% of



land whilst the bottom 73% only own 7% of land, mostly in plots of less than 25 acres. Over half of these pieces of land were considered insufficient to even support a family.

With widespread urban and rural poverty the workers have taken industrial action. The labour movement has taken time to recover from the civil war violence between the Liberals and Conservatives from 1946 to 1958 in which a quarter of a million people

lost their lives.

Yet three years ago in September 1977 a general strike paralysed the country as the four major trade unions protested against the rising cost of living. Severe repression followed with 37 deaths and over 1,000 arrests.

On coming into office one year later the current President Turbay Ayala issued a new vicious security statute. But the labour movement has fought back.

In this class battle unfortunately what is lacking is a clear Marxist leadership with a socialist programme.

The capitalists and landlords are bound together and unable to bring about democracy. They cannot even perform the tasks that capitalists did in Western countries, of land distribution, creating national unity and developing the economy.

Only the working class, allied to the peasantry can solve these problems. But to do that they must fight not just for democracy, but to end the rule of the capitalists and

landlords and create a socialist future.

Yet if the workers and peasants are to bring about workers' democracy, this would have to be on the basis of mass action, not by looking to guerrilla groups to save them.

The guerrillas who took the diplomats hostage this week objectively hold back the development of this mass action by telling workers to sit back and await liberation. In the past this same guerrilla group held a former minister of agriculture hostage until a company he owned, a large oil plantation gave its workers a generous wage increase.

That is no way forward for mass workers' action to defeat the ruling elite.

The situation in Colombia will not last. The capitalist class cannot provide stability. And if the Colombian workers in the coming period adopt a clear Marxist approach, a new future could be built, one of workers' democracy ending the poverty which blights society to-day.

## 'Who will fight in Esso's war?'

Muscle flexing is very popular in the United States these days. No excuse is missed for whipping up patriotic hysteria, even including last week's victory over Russia at ice hockey.

And in the first flush of jingoism, Carter and the militarists have swept along large sections of the people. Higher defence spending, the dispatching of an American task force to the Indian Ocean have all been welcomed.

Carter basking in this nationalistic fervour stands imperially aside from the Presidential campaign and watches the votes pile up for him in New Hampshire.

But muscle flexing can be a dangerous exercise. Already there is opposition from the youth on his draft proposals and from capitalist politicians worried about the inflationary effect on the economy of increased defence expenditure.

The American economy already faces severe difficulties. The US Conference of Mayors on January 30th, warned Carter that another 1.5 million workers would lose their jobs in a major recession "as a result of the tight budget and restrictive economic policies pursued by the administration."

John Gunther, the executive director of the conference, stated that the administration was forcing the nation's crisis-wracked cities to absorb the economic and social sacrifices in order to pump added billions of dollars into military spending.

According to a recent New



Facing mounting casualties in Vietnam, it was mass protest in the USA which forced the American withdrawal

York Times/CBS News Poll, while the public approved both the President's overall handling of his job, and the way he has dealt with foreign affairs, they rejected his economic performance by more than 2 to 1.

What's helping Carter's political fortunes is that whereas in June only 3% of Americans polled listed foreign affairs as central, now that has risen to 42%.

But their approval of his war hysteria will not last. It is too soon after the Vietnam war and many Americans are opposed to the return of the militarists.

Throughout the country, anti-war groups have begun to mobilise. And their hostility has been reflected in Congress. Ronal Dellums, a

leader of the Black Congressional Caucus, told the House of Representatives that the draft was a stronghold of "discrimination in favour of the rich, the privileged, the educated and the caucasian at the expense of the poor, the powerless, the undereducated and all the social minorities in this country".

By Betty Traun

He urged the youth to "mobilize, energize, organize. You can help America regain its sanity, despite the insanity of those who would seek to lead you into criminal foreign adventurism".

Well the young are not ready to die for the oil barons. At a recent national protest banners proclaimed "I won't die for oil or peanuts" and echoing the anti-Vietnam protests "Hell no, we won't go."

The women's groups, both liberal and conservative are up in arms over Carter's proposal to draft women. The conservative groups feel that the place of women is in the home. But the radical groups have linked opposition to the female draft to the overall question of registration.

Bella Abzug, one of the leaders of the anti-Vietnam war movement, recently stated: "We must speak out now against efforts to get us into another war. The question is not whether women register

for the draft, but whether anyone should register for the draft".

"They say we are getting equality with men in the draft, said Helen Michaelsouski, "I don't call the chance to kill people any kind of opportunity."

Carter's Democratic Party opponents Kennedy and Brown, have tried to use opposition to the draft to help their campaign. They recognise that opposition is growing.

Already anti-draft demonstrations have been held in many major cities. And this muscle flexing by workers, by the poor, by women and blacks, will cause more trouble for the bosses in the times ahead.

# LETTERS

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

## AFGHANISTAN— SOVIET ELITE DEFENDING ITSELF

Comrades,

Russell Emeny's letter on Afghanistan (Militant 29/2/80) raises a number of questions of fact and analysis regarding this complicated issue.

In claiming that Militant's articles "fail to discuss American involvement", Russell obviously overlooked Ted Grant's comment that "undoubtedly, the US through the CIA also supplied money and arms to the rebels" (M 486). There can be no doubt that the imperialists are supplying the rebels, though possibly they are trying to hide this by giving them Soviet weapons captured in earlier conflicts.

The only reason the Russian bureaucracy intervened in Afghanistan last December was because the Amin regime was in danger of collapsing. Russell quite rightly points out that the Russian leadership will point to the threat of counter-revolution in Afghanistan as a means of tightening the screws on the Soviet working class.

This is why the Russian press has reported—briefly—on the activities of counter-revolutionaries in Afghanistan. But this is only a by-product of the invasion, not the cause.

The Soviet Union is not a capitalist country. The problems of the Soviet economy are not due to over-production;

they are the result of the stranglehold of the bureaucratic caste over society. There is no question that the Soviet leadership invaded Afghanistan to secure new markets as the imperialists have invaded countless other countries in the past.

The Soviet leadership could not allow the overthrow of the deformed workers' state in Afghanistan. The Soviet leadership's world position would have been undermined if it was shown that they could not even defend allies on their doorstep.

Secondly, contrary to Russell's assertion, the Soviet leadership would have something to fear if there was a movement of the 50 million Moslems (20% of the population) in the USSR, against their rule. While obviously not a majority of the population, any struggle started by the Moslems would have an enormous effect on the rest of the USSR. It could ultimately lay the basis for a political revolution against the Russian bureaucracy.

Militant takes all these factors into account because Marxists understand that, to use Russell's words, events, like "individuals and minority groups... cannot be analysed outside the context of the society in which they exist."

Fraternally,  
Bob Labi,  
Hampstead Labour Party.

## Drugs save lives—if you can afford them

Dear Comrades,

In the letter from Alison Rhodes (Militant 22/2/80), she makes the point that to the NHS some medicines cost more than gold.

The price of gold does not mean very much to me personally, since I could never afford it at the old price, so my piggy bank is in no danger of a smash and grab now. However due to a recent illness I have to take tablets which my doctor informs me cost the NHS £107 per hundred—£1.07 for each pill.

Since these are 500mg tablets I estimate that this stuff is costing the NHS (ie the working class tax-payer) £60 per ounce. Not quite the price of gold I admit, but then gold does not save many lives. The private drug companies have got us by the throat. Is it any wonder then that they greet with such hysterical outrage any suggestion of nationalising their ill-gotten gains, so that we may obtain those treatments for the few pence they cost to produce?

Yours fraternally,  
Roy Clarke  
Southampton Labour Party

## COULD YOU TEACH EIGHTY CHILDREN?

Dear Militant,

Is forty and eighty children in a class too many?

Answer—yes.

Eileen Crosby was suspended from a school in Arnold because she couldn't look after forty and eighty pupils under five years of age. Because of that all of our teachers have gone on strike. My mother agrees with

them. My father is a very difficult man to come by but he is agreeing with them.

There are some classes still in school but there are still a lot of teachers on strike and over 300 children are off school because of this dispute.

From  
Karna Bennett  
at Rise Park School

## FARMERS REAP THE PROFITS

Dear Comrades,

Sitting down to another uninteresting meal like millions of others, this time (lucky me) three scraggy lamb chops costing over £1, reminded me of those elderly faces outside butchers, wondering how to stretch the money.

Last summer in West Sussex I met a typical 'gentleman farmer'. Over a pint he told me that farmers today expect a reasonable return; that before anything else people have got to eat and that the days of cheap food are over for good.

He was farming 900 acres with three men as against his father who had nine men and 400 acres. He recently purchased 500 acres for £500 an acre. They are now worth £2,000 an acre (on paper).

His accountant has consistently advised him to reduce his tax-load by buying new plant, which he has done—he pointed through the window to a BMW in the car park. His cash crop, wheat, is on contract to a big local miller, who gives farmers cheap credit.

At closing time he let the cat out of the bag. If the chips

were down, he said, the bank could have him for £200,000.

While working families gather their mince—80 per cent fat for 90 pence a pound, or a leg of lamb (mostly fat and bone) enough for one weekend meal for two, farm-workers eek out an existence on the land with long hours and low wages and the big farmers reap the profits. Meat, eggs and fish disappear from our dining table through the price mechanism while big millers, landowners and parasitic bankers rip us all off.

All capitalism offers is hell and empty tums. Yet visit any agricultural show and you will see techniques of science and tools which, under a plan of production, with workers' control and cheap credit for small farmers, could revolutionise agriculture and land use, based on production for need rather than profit.

A balanced protein diet and an end to the slavery of agricultural workers—forward to socialism and a new society.

Yours fraternally,  
Mike Singleton,  
Brighton AUEW.

## 'Centre Party' of political has-beens

Dear Militant,

The BBC have gone to great pains over the last few months to project Edward Heath, Roy Jenkins and David Steel as a political trilogy representing a new centre party.

This dreary trio of rejected political styles would obviously be put to use to create yet another 'reformation' of a broad capitalist church—in the event of a Tory disaster—in the not too distant future. The final result of such a brand-mix of regurgitated capitalist thinking would no doubt be a few extra seats in parliament for these boring creatures of the political wilderness.

Let us hope that the general public do not taste this bet-hedging political pie, under a future 'proportional representation' voting system, without considering the after-effects.

Yours sincerely,  
John Martin  
Hamilton, Lanarkshire.

## ISTC members deflate profiteers

Dear Comrades,

Some ISTC pickets from Rotherham were in Birmingham on flying picket duty. One of them told a story that went like this:

Pickets arrive in Birmingham and some go to a city centre store in search of some necessities. They need sleeping bags, air-beds etc.

The salesman shows them two kinds of air bed, one priced at £1.50, the other at around £4. After due thought and consideration it is agreed to purchase the more expensive and have these delivered to the UCATT office which is being used as a dormitory.

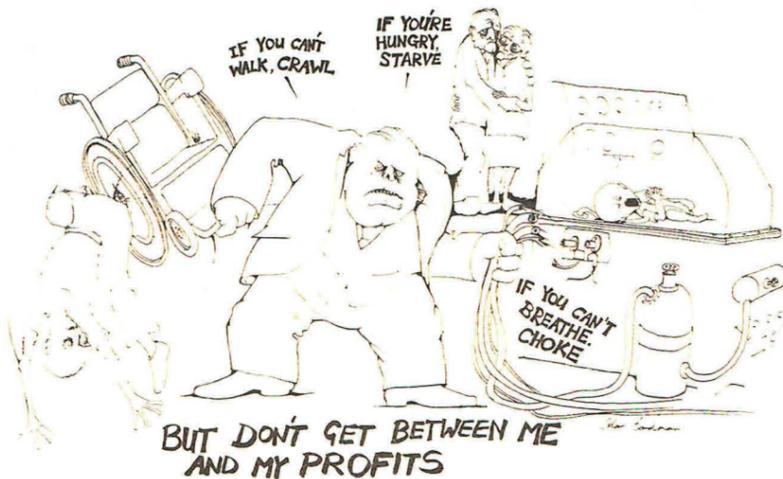
Fine, so far. The air-beds arrive, and the cheaper sort have been provided despite the more expensive having been paid for. This is greeted with something less than amusement by the pickets.

A delegation is sent to the store to seek an explanation, and arrange for a full refund of their money on the basis that the responsible person will call to collect the unwanted air-beds.

Needless to say the 40 or so pickets at the UCATT office are hoping to have a frank and meaningful discussion with this particular representative of the risk-taking capitalist class. Unofficially we can confidently predict a satisfactory outcome for the pickets.

Who says profit isn't a dirty word?

Yours fraternally,  
Pete McNally,  
Ladywood LPYS



Dear Comrades,

Further evidence of the drastic effects of Tory cuts in public expenditure was provided by an article in the 'Sunday Sun'.

A new unit at Hexham General Hospital, which has the only special unit in the north, cannot be opened because the Northern Regional Health Authority is short of the £52,000 needed to run the unit. As a result, patients with broken backs will have to travel over 100 miles to

Sheffield or Wakefield for treatment.

Needless to say, this will be detrimental to the patients' condition, and means that relatives will be unable to afford the cost of a 200-mile round trip to visit them!

However, £52,000 is only a fraction of the super-profits made by the monopolies, or the amount squandered on arms expenditure. On the basis of capitalism, it is inevitable that such hardships

will be forced on the working class in a desperate bid by the Tories and big business to restore profitability.

The unions and Labour Party must fight back by campaigning for the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies and a socialist plan of production. This is the only way forward.

Yours fraternally,  
Kevin Allan,  
Ashington Tech. College  
Labour Club.

## Reducing lead intake "would cost too much"

Dear Comrades,

"If you want to keep your jobs you'll have to be sterilised." That's the choice the American multi-national Cyanamid gave some of its women workers, according to a report on the BBC programme 'Open Secret'.

Medical evidence suggests there is a risk that women working in lead industries may give birth to deformed babies if the level of lead in their blood is above a certain level. The effects have been compared to Thalidomide.

Cyanamid, with genuine concern for these women, some still in their twenties, decided the best thing they could do was not to have any kids, rather than improve their working conditions or offer them alternative work on the same rate of pay. In an area where "there is little alternative work and what there is is poorly paid", some women had to take this agonising decision.

The programme also pointed out that some medical experts believe lead can damage a man's sperm and this in turn could affect his children. Medical opinion seems divided on this but the comments of a spokesman for the British lead industries were revealing.

In this country it has been argued that men can take twice as much lead in their blood as women. Asked why it shouldn't be the same level for both, this gentleman explained the cost would mean most firms would have to close! On both sides of the Atlantic it seems the health and safety of workers comes a poor second to the pursuit of profit.

Yours fraternally,  
Chris Ridge,  
USDAW, Nottingham.

# DEFEND WORKERS FREEDOM OF SPEECH

"People have no rights: they have no right to work, and no right to a particular standard of living...these have to be earned" was how a leading industrialist, Sir Hector Laing, put the political assumptions behind the 'free market' cry of the Tories.

Not only is it a bit difficult to see how you can 'earn' yourself a job when you're unemployed, but the whole idea of 'earning' means that someone somewhere has a lot of money and machinery, because otherwise he wouldn't be able to employ you, and you wouldn't 'earn' anything. So why do these people have rights denied to the vast majority of us?

It's obviously in the interests of capital that workers have no rights. One of the rights that workers don't effectively have is a right to print their views, given that the advertisers and press barons have the monopoly of newspapers.

There's only one thing to do: support papers that open their columns to trade unionists. Support Militant! You have a right to voice on behalf of the Labour rank-and-file.

As usual we have had a large number of donations, but the £1,250 achieved is not enough to get us to £100,000 by the end of the year, or even £20,000 by mid-April. We

By Steve Cawley

now need nearly £1,800 each week to get to the April figure. But with the resourcefulness and enthusiasm indicated in these examples, we will get there (provided, that is, you, our readers, follow the examples!).

The largest individual donation this week was £100 from an Australian reader with the message, "you can rely on my help. The cause of socialism and workers' democracy must go on." Supporters in South London £43.60 and a member of Newham NE CLP £20.

Perth readers collected £13, M Chesney £12, and tenners came from R Edwards, A Najmi (with subscription) and E Street (Cardiff). A London prison officer £5 and also £5 from I Harper (UPW Baker Street) from 'sale of washing machine.'

Members of Strathclyde NALGO gave us over £21 including three fivers. Three dockworkers, this time in Liverpool, made up £3.

# Build Militant

Area	received	Proportion of first quarter's target	Target 1st Qtr	Target for year
Eastern	594		1,000	5,000
East Midlands	503		760	3,800
Hants & IOW	331		780	3,900
Humberside	148		500	2,500
London East	1,085		1,240	6,200
London West	743		940	4,700
London South	483		800	4,000
Manchester & Lancs	235		1,020	5,100
Merseyside	642		1,200	6,000
Northern	760		1,460	7,300
Scotland East	311		640	3,200
Scotland West	538		1,000	5,000
Southern	556		1,180	5,900
South West	133		640	3,200
Wales East	183		560	2,800
Wales West	155		620	3,100
West Midlands	999		1,800	9,000
Yorkshire	585		1,460	7,300
Others	670		2,400	12,000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>9,654</b>		<b>20,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>

**TARGET FOR APRIL 12th - £20,000 TARGET FOR YEAR - £100,000**

**THIS WEEK £1,251**

We've again had far too many donations to list them all, but thanks, amongst others, to J&J Baugh, B Hughes, G Smith (York), F Parr and two Cambridge supporters.

£45.95 has been donated by trade union members in expenses re-imbursed, including £38 from Tyneside.

Regional Labour Party conferences have been the occasion for Militant meetings. In London just over £60 was collected and in Leicester over £40 (including £21 from the LPYS conference).

A meeting in Portsmouth on 'What we stand for' was

attended by two 'Sun' reporters posing as 'planners' (or plotters?). In order not to arouse suspicion they gave generously (from expenses no doubt) towards the £24 raised

there! Many thanks, Murdoch! This is the first ever contribution from a capitalist concern, and that for dubious purposes. Paper extras amounted to

almost £75 this week and this should rise at least in proportion to our continued rise in circulation. Car lifts raised £22, pontoon cards £30, 'Disco management' £30, and badges were also popular fund-raisers.

Blackpool readers donated £10 'proceeds from photography', and the old Leicester coffee jar came up with £2.50. West of Scotland are catching up on their deficit with £80 proceeds from their regional draw, and Falkirk 'mail order surplus' was nearly £9!

Support our right to be heard: support the paper that gives you a voice. But do it effectively, with cash!

## ads

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

**GLASGOW**  
Militant public meeting  
'Public sector cuts—the socialist answer'

Hear:  
George Anderson (NUPE Asst. Divisional Officer)  
Bill Boyle (CPSA)  
Bob Wylie (NALGO)  
7.30 pm, 12th March  
At City Halls, Lesser Hall

### MAY DAY GREETINGS IN MILITANT'S 500th ISSUE

May Day 1980 is a special occasion for Militant. It marks our 500th edition. For over fifteen years Militant has campaigned for socialist policies and supported workers in struggle.

Get your trade union branch, Labour Party and YS to back Militant. Send your greetings to the workers of the world this May Day.

Rates: semi-display 3 column cm (up to 15 words)...£2  
6 column cm (up to 25 words)...£4  
display one-sixteenth page.....£7  
one-eighth page.....£14

Closing date for copy, 15th April. Cheques payable to Militant. Send to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

### MILITANT PUBLIC MEETINGS

'What Militant Stands For'

**STAFFORDSHIRE** Militant public meeting 'What Militant stands for'. Speaker: Terry Crowe (Staffordshire county councillor). 7.30 pm, Thursday 13 March, Burslen Leisure Centre, Burslen. Organised by LPYS and trade union educational group.

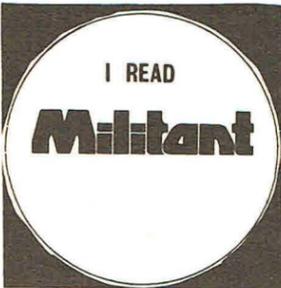
### Militant Meetings

**MANCHESTER** Militant public meeting 'Tory attacks—a fighting programme for the unions'. Speaker: Tony Mulhearn (NGA). 8 pm, Thursday 13th March, 'Star and Garter', Fairfield Street

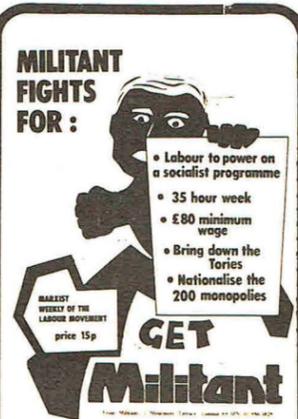
**SOUTH WALES** Militant Summer Camp. August Bank Holiday, 22nd-25th August. Courses on: 1. What is Marxism? 2. The general strike—theory and practice. 3. Stalinism. 4. The threat of world war. 5. Marxism and the Labour Party. At Horton, Gower, near Swansea. Further details will be announced soon.

**NORTH-WEST** Labour Party Conference 'Militant' public meeting. Speakers: Margaret Crear (delegate, Royton and Heywood CLP); Josie Aitman (LPYS National Committee). Chairman: Derek Hatton (Liverpool Labour councillor) 6.15 pm, Saturday 15 March, Opera House, Foyer Annexe, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. All welcome—plenty of time for discussion

### CLASSIFIED



Red on white badge. 1 1/2 inch diameter. 20p. Up to five add 12p postage. 20 badges £2.20 + 50p p&p. From Val Pearce, 16 Wagbullock Rise, Bracknell, Berks.



Posters and leaflets now available for Militant sales drive. Write to Circulation Dept. 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

**DARTFORD** Militant Party. Free food, drinks available. Saturday 8 March, 6 Byron Road, Dartford, Kent. Entrance 50p. All welcome.

**NEW 'MILITANT' BADGE:** 'No to anti-union laws—Socialist policies for Labour' Red and black. 20p each; 5-50, 20p each; over 50, 13p each. Order from 77 Atherley Road, Shirley, Southampton

'Stuff Thatcher' badges: 2 for 45p; 5 for £1; 10 for £1.75; 50 for £7.60. Order from D Kemp (Dept D), 114 Ladybarn Rd, Fallowfield, Manchester 14

**SOUTH WEST REGIONAL LABOUR PARTY MILITANT READERS MEETING:** 'A Socialist Programme for Labour'. Dressing Room, St Georges Hall, Market Street, Exeter. Saturday March 15th 1 pm. Speakers: Councillor Pete Hammond, Robin Clapp.

**Afghanistan:** Hail Red Army! Articles from 'Workers Vanguard' and 'Spartacist Britain'. 30p from Spartacist publishers, Dept E, Box 185, London WC1

# PUSHING UP THE SALES

Last week some 'Militant' supporters in Hackney decided to boost their sales by taking part in the sales drive.

To kick off we leafleted a council estate. The results were spectacular. When we went back everyone had seen the leaflet and in the first block one in four doors I knocked on bought a paper off me.

In fact a few people had left the money for a paper with their kids just in case we called when they were out! Twenty-five papers were sold in all—and many people expressed an interest in getting it every week.

Not content with that success we had a real push with our weekly sale at a local station. For the last two years we have sold there, normally selling about ten.

This week no-one got past without being asked. We perfected the knock—big grin on your face and be polite, and you can get away with

murder. One young comrade sold fifteen—many to people who had seen him every week and never bought before. "Come on, you walk past me every Friday, why not have a read of the paper that tells the truth."

Normally we stay there an hour but one girl said she would read the leaflet and if she agreed with it, buy one on the way back. "Oh, they all say that!" But she had an honest face and twenty minutes later she did come back, and bought a copy.

If it is this easy with all the publicity we've got now, wait till we're a daily paper!

By Paschal Egan  
(Hackney Central LPYS)

# ASSAY OFFICE WORKERS SEND FLYING PICKETS

Flying pickets touring the country; levying the membership; appealing to the trade union movement for financial support; trouble with the police—it's the stuff strikes are made of. But to the National Union of Gold, Silver and Allied Trades, locked in battle to save sixty threatened jobs at the Birmingham Assay Office, it's all new.

The workers who staff this hallmarked centre for the local jewellery trade are still waiting for management to even agree to discuss the union's alternative of work-sharing.

The two-week sit-in at the office was tactically called off on 29 February after the nine members inside had occupied the telephone room, cutting all communications to the office. Management presumably went out to a call box to dial 999 and the police soon arrived to deal with the 'emergency'!

"Either get them out or you will all be taken in," the convenor was menacingly told. "We don't need any extra powers to deal with people like you."

The strike, however, is still being extended. 'Flying squads' are being sent to the

non-union Sheffield Assay Office, where work transferred from Birmingham is being done.

Pickets handed out union application forms as they explained their case—after all, Sheffield is also suffering from the recession in the trade, and their jobs could be next. Management have already got them decorating the office for want of other work.

Unfortunately, in a secret ballot (constitutionally compulsory before a strike) Birmingham members voted not to come out in support. Many firms are already on three days and all too many of them are only semi-unionised. NUGSAT members fear that non-unionists would do their work in a strike.

But it is precisely because of the recession in the trade that we have to make sure that the Assay Office strike is won.

Every year at about this time work is slack. Now, with gold at 600 dollars an ounce, the bosses think it's too

valuable to be made into anything! As usual, they want the workers to pay for problems not of our making.

With 170 members and a closed shop, the Assay Office has the second largest union membership in the district. If management can get away with these redundancies, they can and will try to do the same elsewhere.

Birmingham members are being levied to support the strike. We must give these workers all backing possible. Victory at the Assay Office is vital to save the jobs of sixty members; it's also necessary to build the strength and authority of the union.

By Ross Taylor (NUGSAT) and Jeremy Birch (Selly Oak LP)

# STEEL STRIKE WEEK 10:

## AROUND THE COUNTRY

### SCUNTHORPE

"I've not seen such depths of solidarity since the miners' strike of '74." This was how Arthur Scargill summed up the mood of the mass rally and demonstration of striking steelmen in Scunthorpe last Saturday.

Marching behind Scottish pipers the demonstration of over 3,000 wound its way through the streets. Crying 'Maggie out', demonstrators got warm support for onlooking shoppers, some of whom joined the march.

Although good-humoured, the determination and unity of this momentous strike was reflected in the rally afterwards. Every speaker was given a standing ovation.

To sustained foot-stomping cheers, Scargill pointed out

that the dispute could be ended in 24 hours if the TUC said 'we've had enough.' Cheers again echoed round the packed hall as Tony Benn attacked the irresponsible speculators and called for a "planned socialist economy."

As one steelworker commented, speakers such as this would have been lucky to even get a hearing from the ISTC six months ago. That has clearly changed!

The resolve and morale of the strikers has not lessened since day one. As the Clydebridge delegation sang all the way back to Scotland: "We're on our way to victory—we shall not be moved."

By Mike Foster

### KINGS LYNN

Dockers at Kings Lynn have voted to continue blacking the movement of steel from the port. They are standing firm in their trade union solidarity.

The dockers were coming under increasing pressure as steel which they normally handle was diverted to Mistley quay and to Dagenham, Tilbury and other docks, from where it was being distributed.

Since the T&GWU reiterated their instructions to all members not to move steel, these loads are no longer being released. So the Kings Lynn dockers are standing firm.

Solidarity action, far from crumbling, is in fact being stepped up.

Tim Webb (10/28a branch Kings Lynn)

### TEESSIDE

On South Teesside, supposedly a 'moderate' area, safety cover was almost totally withdrawn for twenty-four hours.

The need to step up the action has been discussed for several weeks. On 24 February, at a mass picket of the Redcar works, there was such a good turn-out from all the unions that pickets decided to ask workers with safety dispensations not to work for the day.

The morning shift responded to the call almost totally; on the 'two till ten' and night shifts well over half the workers, including a majority of the craftsmen, stayed out.

The Tories and the press are desperately trying to spread confusion and demoralisation, claiming that union leaders are out of touch and that many trade unionists in fact support the government's policies. The management of BSC are making the same claim and 'skulking Black Bob' Scholey hopes to substantiate it in their ballot.

The response of Teesside pickets was an attempt to pressurise union leaders to step up action and take a new initiative.

Union full-time officials have condemned the move. There is no question of a 24-hour safety ban doing any lasting damage, however.

This was a demonstration of the pickets' determination to step up the action and ensure victory, in the absence of any new lead from the unions at national level.

That BSC is losing the publicity war is undoubted—even SIMA (Steel Industry Management Association) have passed a vote of no confidence in senior management.

By Bill Hopwood (Thornaby Labour Party)

**CONSETT demonstration Stop closure of the steelworks! Friday 14 March Assemble 11.30 am Sports Centre, Consett**

# Alan Smith strike - 'AN ATTEMPT TO SMASH THE UNION'

By Andy Zapple (Secretary, East Nottingham LPYS)

Early morning in Nottingham. The picket outside the Alan Smith factory is stationed in a makeshift tent.

"If they put the council rents up much more, one morning we'll find we've got squatters in here!" jokes one.

Management drive through the picket, but for once they've not asked for police 'protection'. There goes 'bull-head', the gaffer; followed by 'the gnome', works foreman; and lastly the production manager.

"Who runs the factory?" chant the workers. "Roy Bennett!" comes their answer.

Roy, the works' convenor, is running a strike committee meeting to sort out the picket rota and sending strikers off to AUEW district offices up and down the country. He

summarises the strike: "It's a deliberate attempt by management to smash the union. We've been out for seven weeks and the blokes have been tremendous. Management must be really surprised that we've stayed out for so long. Both sides have shown their strength, now the battle will really start."

The management chose a slack time to force the strike. Workers were encouraged to finish all orders before the Christmas break.

After the break management issued verbal and then written warnings to the two shop stewards for taking part in the demonstration in support of Derek Robinson last year. Their attitude is that the strikers will be allowed back if they rip up

their union cards first!

The workers are confident, however. The AUEW Executive has at last made the strike official at national level. Now the Engineering Employers' Federation has contacted the AUEW district office for talks.

The proposed agenda which included the removal of Roy Bennett from the convenor's job, was rejected. 'Informal, exploratory' talks are planned however—at a posh Nottingham hotel.

Roy concluded; "The blacking's hitting; the strike's known about all over the country and the customers aren't phoning in with orders. The EEF are facing total defeat—the blokes are prepared to stay out for as long as it takes."

# Hospital workers beat cuts threat

Trade unionists at the Princess Alexandra hospital, Harlow, have forced management to back down on cuts.

When Area Health Authority plans to cut domestic services were discovered, NUPE members took prompt action, banning overtime and relief cover and refusing to cover for unfilled staff vacancies. Within four hours management accepted defeat.

NUPE had discovered Area

Health Authority plans to cut £75,000 off the domestic and housekeeping services in the Harlow District. This would mean reduction in cleaning and using nursing staff to do the work of ancillary helpers.

Dave Smith, NUPE's area organiser explained: "The Area Health Authority is deliberately planning to make hospitals dirtier in West Essex and to get nurses to do ancillary work instead of

nursing patients. Both these moves will lead to a real reduction in standards of care."

Management in Harlow attempted to use natural wastage to impose cuts but the union members were quick off the mark. Their prompt action produced immediate results.

Staffing levels are to be maintained pending proper negotiations. Reliefs will cov-

er for staff sickness and holidays and domestics being retired early will have their service extended.

A union spokesman added: "Our members decisively beat management because they took firm action early and stuck together. Health service workers can beat the cuts but only if they organise and stand firm."

By Bob Edwards Harlow Labour Party

# MECCANO FIGHT ON

"If we've got to go down then we'll go down fighting. Let the police drag us out if they have to, but I'm willing to carry on."

With these words G&MWU official Mike Egan closed what Airfix bosses hoped would be the last mass meeting in the Meccano plant. Instead over 300 workers voted to continue the occupation.

Airfix have now paid out over £1.5 million in redundancy money to Meccano workers. Workers are still waiting for their full entitlement.

Have jobs been sold? For the 300-400 workers prepared to continue the fight, the answer is—no! Shop stewards recommended taking the money in order to continue their fight.

Private buyers are still

hovering, but Airtix are reluctant to sell. The price seems to be rising: the 'Age of Enlightenment' were quoted £4m; the latest buyers £5.6m.

Every Meccano worker realises that another private buyer will not provide a lasting solution. By continuing the occupation they hope to keep jobs on Merseyside with trade union wages and conditions.

A future Labour government must be committed to nationalising cowboy companies like Airfix which throw workers onto the dole.

Send messages and donations c/o 99 Edge Lane, Liverpool or phone 051-228 1088/4388/2171.

By Richard Knights (Wavertree Labour Party)

# Britannia Lead, Northfleet

Production at Britannia Lead, Northfleet, near Gravesend, Kent, is virtually at a standstill, as a strike of AUEW fitters and mates enters its third week.

The strike was called after an AUEW member was suspended indefinitely for failing to obey a management order, as part of a union ban on overtime and withdrawal of co-operation. The whole maintenance crew are on strike in protest.

So far the AUEW pickets have had a good response from drivers, who have refused to deliver to the works.

Management are trying to scare the men back to work by threatening lay-off for the 460

employees still at work. But the pickets are unanimous, and will not bend.

Mole Chater (SOGAT FOC Gravesend)

# INCO

The five-month strike at the INCO refinery, Clydach, near Swansea, is over.

Workers voted to accept a 31% pay increase, plus other benefits. In spite of the strings attached, they see this as a tremendous victory and a tribute to trade union solidarity.

By Tom Jenkins

# STAND FIRM— MAKE BLACKING BITE

After ten weeks on the picket line, the steelworkers' determination is unshaken. When the ISTC president, speaking at a Scunthorpe rally, called for "an honourable settlement" he was met with a spontaneous chorus of "20% and no strings".

Every union member realises that victory is essential in this life and death struggle for the industry.

BSC management and the Tories are desperately trying to conjure up cracks in the magnificent solidarity of the strike. They are trying to hide their own weakness behind a

barrage of anti-union propaganda.

In truth, the BSC workers have already made enormous advances. Who, three months ago, would have predicted the massive displays of workers' unity, the splendid organisation, the fund of ingenuity and resolution from workers who in many cases have never been involved in a national strike before?

BSC are losing the propaganda battle. Heavy-handed police intimidation has failed. The Tories are riven with splits and divisions. If unity and confidence are main-

tained, if the strikers stand firm, victory can and will be theirs.

BSC have attempted to spread confusion with their 'ballot about ballots'. They have spent thousands of pounds sending out ballot papers [or in some cases empty envelopes!] to employees, some of whom are not even involved in the current dispute.

By trying to build support for a ballot on the latest pay offer they hope to undermine the authority of the union and in particular of the union activists who are conducting

the picketing, meetings and running of the strike. This is part of the Tory strategy for 'secret' ballots, in which they hope that their puppet press would have decisive influence.

The ISTC have called for a boycott of the ballot. This must be total and national. That is the only way to show management that steelworkers will not be bamboozled by red herrings in the midst of their struggle. They will not tolerate interference in the independent decision-making machinery of the union.

If BSC are so concerned with democracy, why have there been no ballots on run-down and closures? ISTC lay delegates are present at all pay negotiations; management are in reality trying to find ways round this 'nuisance' of union democracy.

But it is not enough for union leaders to issue instructions and leave it at that. Strikers not actively involved in the dispute are most vulnerable to Tory and management propaganda, and there are fears that they may not clearly understand what is involved.

This must be countered by a national campaign of meetings, rallies and demonstrations to involve every member, answering fears and spelling out what is at stake.

At local level, every effort must be made to involve the majority of members in discussions, picket duty and

manning of offices. The imagination already shown must be put to work to strengthen the strike.

At this stage, with financial hardship beginning to tell, an initiative from the union leaders is vital to boost morale and weld the workers together.

The undoubted reservoir of support throughout the trade union movement must be rallied, publicly calling on the TUC to organise mass demonstrations and practical assistance; co-ordinating national blacking of all steel, halting steel imports, raising money for strike funds. This would be the surest way to show BSC that they cannot defeat the strike.

Steelworkers are looking for a lead from the top in stepping up and tightening the action.

The 24-hour removal of safety cover on South Teesside was a clear indication of the pickets' mood. With no initiative being taken nationally, they felt it was necessary to act at local level to make the strike bite.

This anger and frustration is completely understandable. Union leaders must respond by taking a campaign out to every works, every picket line, every city and town.

For while the Teesside action was a measure of the workers' determination, removing genuine safety dispensations on a long-term

basis could boomerang badly. If blastfurnaces were allowed to cool and crack, it could be months and years before production could resume. Why should BSC be given a golden opportunity for closing even more plants?

Even if a national policy of removing safety cover at all BSC works was adopted, steelworkers would be giving a hostage to very uncertain fortune.

BSC management would hypocritically exploit this as an example of workers' 'destructiveness'. Management are the people really jeopardising the future of the steel industry; they should not be given any opportunity to point the finger of blame at steelworkers.

With the T&GWU stepping up effective blacking by dockers and drivers, with steel supplies running low, causing lay-offs at several major firms, the pressure on BSC and their Tory puppet-masters is beginning to bite. It is time to go on the offensive, imbuing every striker with the confidence, enthusiasm and self-sacrificing determination already shown on the picket line.

Already steelworkers have struck fear in the heart of Thatcher's cabinet. If they stand firm, they can win a victory for themselves and for the whole labour movement.

## No steel moves here!

The Consett strike committee received information that a Tyneside steel stockholder was getting supplies of imported steel.

So a car-load of flying pickets (Alex and Brian Whiteford, Willie Rutherford and Arthur Carter) was organised to try to discover the source of the imports. In two days we covered over 400 miles and checked out 14 docks at several ports.

The first day we went to Tyneside, to the docks along the river. Several calls turned up blanks but at Tyne Dock we discovered about 2,000 tonnes on the quayside.

After talks with the dockers we established that the steel had been there since the start of the strike and wouldn't be moved during the strike. Later, at Sunderland, the dockers' shop steward told us that they would not handle steel as long as the strike lasted.

Further down the coast at Seaham harbour, we thought we'd found the source. When we arrived a German ship, 'The Birget Sabaan', was unloading steel. There were flats, plates and billet slabs totalling over a thousand tonnes, for customers all over the country.

A shop steward told us that it was Danish steel loaded from Hamburg. He said it was their normal work, but

Report by ISTC  
member  
Arthur Carter

(in a personal capacity)

gave an assurance that it would not be moved from the docks.

On day two we travelled the length of the Northumberland coast. We were escorted out of the docks by security guards from one of the Blyth quays.

At the South dock in Blyth, we contacted a dockers' shop steward who said they did not normally handle steel, and weren't prepared to start now. He suggested we try the scab docks further up the coast.

When we arrived at Berwick, although we were wearing no identification badges, they asked us if we were pickets. Where they got their sixth sense from we don't know.

The docks' charge-hand said they had received inquiries from Germany asking if they were prepared to unload steel. The request had been turned down.

The two-day survey hadn't found any source of steel imports but it demonstrated that the solidarity from German and Danish workers needed to be tightened up. This was reported to a committee member of the International Metalworkers, who promised to check it out.

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH BRITISH STEEL WORKERS



International support and a message for Thatcher on a march in support of steelworkers in Cardiff

Photo: MILITANT

## BSC buying spot steel

By Ray Hill  
(National Union of  
Blastfurnacemen A/F2)

With the steel strike in its tenth week, it is time to reflect on our successes and failures.

In my view, if imports of steel had been made to await the successful outcome of negotiations, picketing would have been made easier. It would only have needed the main ports to black all imported steel, to have brought pressure on the government.

As I write, imported steel coil is being delivered from scab docks—Mistley in Ipswich—carried to the private sector by scab drivers. However the most serious incident is that BSC is now buying spot steel to keep its custo-

mers happy and thus prolong the strike in an attempt to starve the steelworkers back to work. This must not succeed.

It is therefore of paramount importance that all self-respecting trade unionists mount a mass picket at all ports where steel is being handled, with all T&GWU members obeying official instructions not to touch steel.

Pressure from the rank and file must be heard in Congress House: Stop handling steel, leave it on the high seas.

In conclusion I would like to express my thanks to all the true socialists in Ipswich for their response to our pleas for help and assistance, and again say 'stay solid—demand your just rights now'.

## SHOTTON

The mood at Shotton, Deeside, is magnificent.

Two LPYS members visited the picket line and were greeted with a warm response. We had a varying discussion; picket explained that they would have accepted 9% in the first week, but not now. It's 20% they want, and no less.

One picket remarked that they now realised they should

have fought against the 6,000 redundancies at Shotton, as well as for a pay rise.

Even though they have been sending flying pickets out every day, they told us that steel was still being transported around the country. But later that day a Leyland worker informed us that the stocks at his plant were visibly shrinking. So the flying pickets are being felt!

Before leaving we asked the strikers if we could have a speaker to outline their struggle at our LPYS meeting. Straight away they agreed. It was an excellent visit, well worth going.

By Bronwen Swinnerton  
(Chester LPYS)

## STANTON

"There'll be a big demand for them before the year's out" says Malcolm, nodding toward the braziers, "they'll be worth more than gold when there's a general strike."

You learn the meaning of solidarity on strike—as more and more workers are finding out these days. Steel and engineering workers have said to me "when we get back, I'm going to do the same for those who helped as they've done

for us." "Next time someone has a dispute, I'm chucking £2 in the collection straight away."

Keith Joseph's reception in South Wales causes a few smiles. At Alan Smith's, several of the workers have been made redundant by a previous firm who closed to move to South Wales. "They took us down there to see if we wanted to move with them. There were plenty of

factories there—but no industry in them!"

Lastly, a word on the 'Militant' from our companions in blue on the steelworkers' picket line. "You blokes are everywhere aren't you? I've seen you at Kings Lynn, Grimsby and Stanton." The police travel a lot don't they? But so does socialism.

By Tony Cross  
(East Nottingham CLP)

# ZIMBABWE SET BACK FOR IMPERIALISM

**The Zimbabwe election result is a stunning reversal for the plans of international capitalism.**

All the efforts of British and South African capitalism to get a Muzorewa or a Nkomo government failed. ZANU [PF] triumphed because the African people had seen that it was the party whose fighting had brought about the elections.

Soames, as a representative of British capitalism, had discriminated against ZANU [PF]. They were not able even to get a phone at their HQ. Their leader, Robert Mugabe, was only allowed into the country a month ago.

Whilst ZANU (PF) officials and candidates were imprisoned, Muzorewa flew round the country in his South African helicopter holding jamborees.

But those who attended his parties (often by force) said in effect: 'thanks for the drinks, but we're voting for the boys

By Jim  
 Chrystie

in the bush.

The result is clear. ZANU (PF) who did most of the fighting won 63% and the ZAPU part of the Patriotic Front, who did less fighting came second with 24%.

Expectations of radical change are now high. For the struggle had been not just to end white minority rule, but also to provide jobs, redistribute land and give a decent life for African working people. That cannot be provided by continuing with the present capitalist economic system.

A clear break with capitalism—a socialist policy—to take over the land and major industry and run them by and for working people is required.

But the leadership of ZANU is reluctant to do this. They are scared that this would involve all-out confrontation with the Rhodesian security forces backed by the

powerful South African military machine.

So in the last week Mugabe has reportedly met with the South African Foreign Minister to re-assure them that the ZANU (PF) government will not go 'too far'.

At present it seems that the new government will limit itself to land redistribution (taking over vacant land and the many unprofitable white farms), co-operating with business and integrating the guerrilla armies with the security forces.

Africanisation of the leadership of the army and Civil Service will speedily occur, to give jobs to middle-class Africans. To try to appease whites, scared of their future, it seems likely that white members of Smith's party will be invited to join the government.

Such is the support for ZANU (PF) that an African capitalist government might well have a short period of relative stability. But it would not be able to satisfy the social expectations of the masses aroused in the war.

Zimbabwe will be wracked by crisis. It will be affected by the developing struggle of black workers in South Africa.

Some sections of the international capitalist class think that this week's election result can re-establish in a new black form fresh stability for their interests. They are wrong. The Southern African revolution continues.



The expectations of radical change are now high amongst the people of Zimbabwe. The revolution in Southern Africa will continue.

# Merseyside workers fight the closures

Workers at Massey Ferguson, Kirkby, near Liverpool, have occupied their plant. Their action bottles up £7 million worth of finished tractors inside the factory.

Like an increasing number of workers, they have been forced to take this action in order to defend their jobs against the threat of closure. As with the workers at Stone Platt in Oldham and at the nearby Meccano factory in Merseyside, they realise that action is needed to prevent the North West becoming an industrial desert.

This morning [Tuesday 4th] higher management have been turned away. Tractors block all entrances and a twenty-four hour picket is being mounted.

550 jobs are at stake after the firm's North West management recommended clo-

Jim McGinley of Ormskirk Labour Party reports on the occupation at Massey Ferguson

Five months later come plans to "rationalise" the factory into oblivion! Strange multinational capitalist logic, explained by greater profits in other foreign markets.

The factory opened over a decade ago, in June 1969, and got Special Development Area assistance and a rate-free first five years. Now they have decided that the plant is uneconomic.

It is a sadly familiar story to the people of Merseyside. The 1970s ended with a crop of redundancies which added 30,000 to the dole queues in three years.

The 1980s threaten to be the same if capitalism continues but the workers at factories like Meccano and Massey Ferguson are showing that they will fight. The whole labour movement must back them.

Messages of support to Hayden Burns, 46 Kempton Park Road, Aintree, Liver-

pool 10. Financial aid to William Naylor, 1 Lyndhurst, Maghull, L31 6DY. Cheques payable to Massey Ferguson Combined Union Appeal.

**Prepared to act**

Derek Hatton, a Labour councillor in Liverpool, comments: "On Merseyside these Tory attacks are becoming a regular event. Factories are closing down and redundancies are happening.

"Workers here are now reacting against this situation —on Merseyside at the moment, we have got two occupations going on, at Meccano and Massey Ferguson, where the workers are reacting against the Tory government, and the workers are prepared to do something about it.

"The prospect of the TUC leading a 24-hour general strike would be timely to say the least. It would get an excellent response from Merseyside."



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