

Militant

Militant
goes
16 pages

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

ISSUE 395
3 MARCH 1978

12p

PROFITS BOOM

At our expense

Prices still rising by 10%, wages held down and profits booming. While heaven and earth are being moved to prevent workers winning back the standard of living they have lost in the last three years, with wages still not catching up with inflation, the bosses are laughing all the way to the bank.

In the last 12 months the bosses have enjoyed a free for all as their profits raced ahead unchecked by 32.6%. Compare that with your wages!

The rich and powerful are lining their pockets with these super-profits at the expense of their low paid workers and working class housewives. Look at the tea merchants. While world prices have fallen, these sharks have kept the retail price up to 27p a quarter.

Their cup runneth over. More of the money you pay over the counter goes straight into profit margins than goes to pay for production costs on the plantations!

Carved Up

Only four big monopolies have the market carved up between them. Last year Brooke Bond's profits went up by 12%. While their employees have to struggle to make ends meet, the dividends paid out to wealthy shareholders rose by 81%!

Yet even this doesn't satisfy the Tories and their rich backers. They want to unleash prices to rise even higher.

Last month, Thatcher's sidekick, Mrs Sally Oppenheimer MP, Tory spokesman

By Brent
Kennedy

on prices and consumer affairs, launched a ferocious attack on the Price Commission. She accused it of running a police-state reign of terror: "Companies are terrified to invoke the Price Commission mafia with their star-chamber powers."

Dividend Spree

About 99.9% of shoppers will find it very hard to believe this story of a Jacobin-type terror being used to intimidate the big food monopolies into keeping prices down.

Mrs Oppenheimer, however, has made no attack on dividend controls. On this, the Tories keep their mouths shut. No wonder!

"The 10% ceiling on [dividend] increases has ruled so long that it is now accepted (among City people) as a permanent, and not entirely intolerable, fact of life." ('Sunday Times', 15.1.78).

Why? Because the limit is continually breached.

Last year, dividends above the ceiling were allowed in 279 cases. Fifty-two companies were released from the controls altogether.

The 279 special cases accounted for excess payments totalling a cool £50 million. Since the restrictions were introduced in 1973, extra dividends of £137 million have been paid.

Would not that money have been better spent giving the firemen and other workers a decent living wage? But it's one law for the rich and another for the poor. While hundreds of 'special cases' are allowed for big business, the

government has ruthlessly restricted wages in a 10% straightjacket. Four million men and women still strive to live on poverty wages according to the Low Pay Unit.

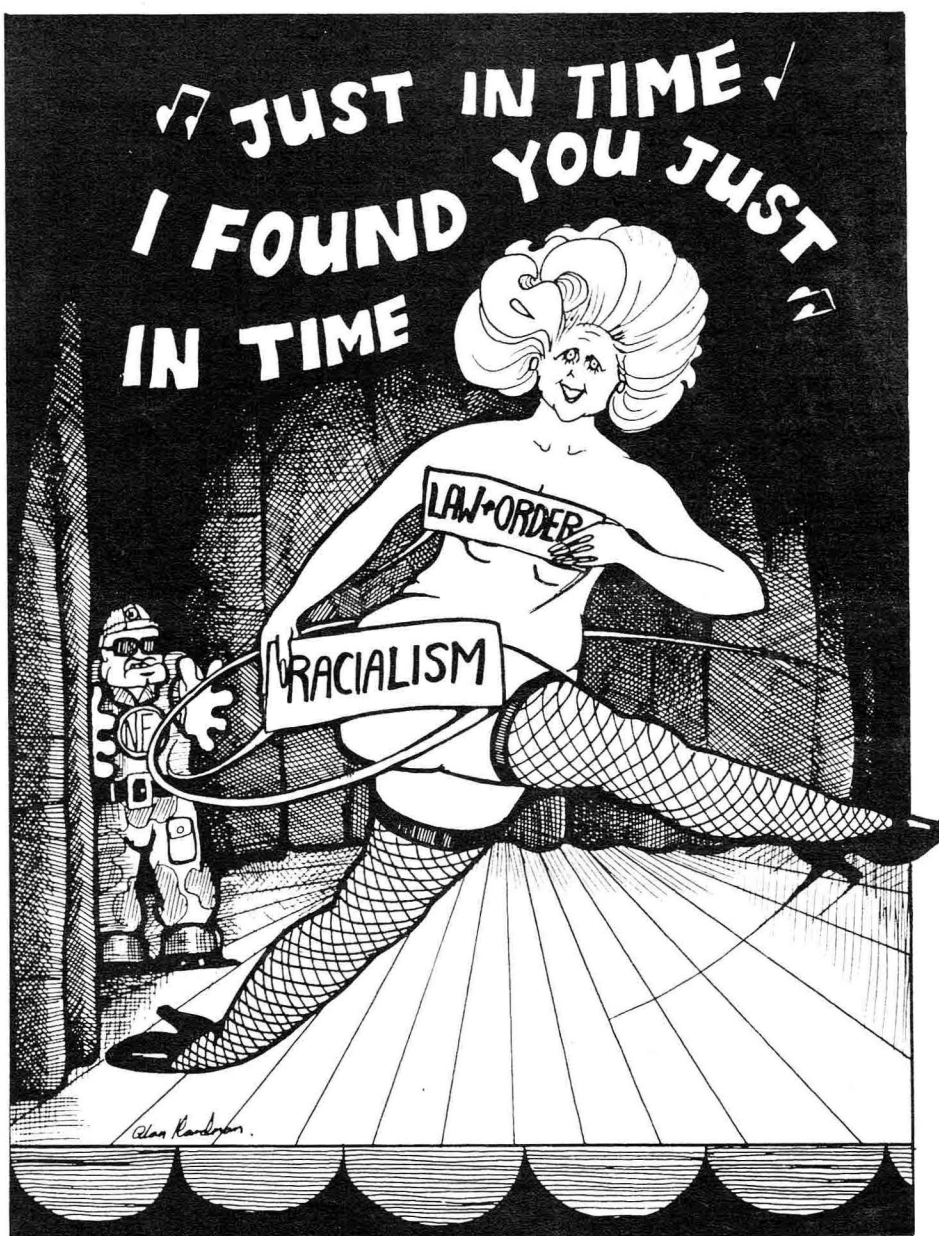
Yet what has been achieved by the sacrifices in workers' living standards? After coming down, prices are expected to rise again later this year. The economy is stagnant. Production is 7% less than in 1973, and 1,500,000 workers are left to rot on the dole.

While the financial statistics may look better, the economy didn't grow at all in 1977. Why not? Because despite the profits bonanza the bosses simply prefer to amass personal wealth rather than invest in industry and provide jobs. In 1976 they invested less, in real terms, than at any time since 1948!

Open the Books

The capitalists have proved they have nothing useful to offer society. They are like leeches on our backs. It is time the Labour Government swept them and their rotten system aside and freed industry from their parasitic grip with a socialist plan of production.

Restore living standards with a £15 rise and a £60 minimum wage tied to the cost of living! Elect committees of trade unionists, working class housewives and small shopkeepers to keep a check on prices! Open the books of the supermarkets and monopolies to expose their profiteering. Provide jobs for all in an expanding economy by nationalising the 200 top monopolies under workers' control and management!



Convenor Welcomes 16 Pages

I'm pleased to hear 'Militant' is expanding to 16 pages. It's one of the only papers in which the work-force in Britain can "find out" what the rest of the members in the country are doing. It covers political opinions right or wrong, the people are able to express their views.

You cover strikes from one end of the country to the other with the actual cause of the strike. You go to the people who are actually involved in these positions. Therefore we are reading the correct facts.

We have just returned to work from a

16-week strike, for which one of your reporters gave us good coverage in your newspaper and a tremendous amount of help on factory visits to raise financial aid for our strike up and down the country. We were so grateful that we have now sent £75 towards your funds.

Wishing you every success in your new venture and hours of interesting reading for my membership.

B J Eagles
Works Convenor,
Rolls-Royce Motors

INSIDE YOUR 16 PAGE MILITANT

LONDON LABOUR—Centre Pages

ETHIOPIA—Pages 10 & 11

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS—Pages 14 & 15

REVIEWS
—Page 6

LETTERS
—Page 12

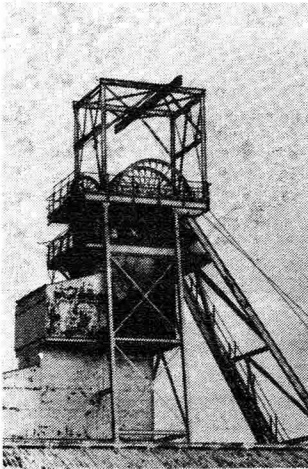
WELSH MINERS GREET

Emlyn Williams
President, South Wales
NUM, Labour Party NEC

I've been looking forward to the expansion of the Militant. I read it every week for the wealth of information it provides me with in my industrial and political work. The paper is especially lively in its reports of the Labour Party Young Socialists' activities and this must be of great help in getting young workers active in the trades union and labour movement.

In its support for all workers' struggles on the industrial front and its critical reporting of political views I particularly admire Militant's positive approach.

16 PAGE PAPER



W.H.Thomas—Vice President South Wales NUM

I would like to pledge my best wishes to the new 16 page Militant. I think it augurs well for the future. This demonstrates to me the popularity of the Militant in the labour movement.

Where publishers today are having difficulty in keeping papers going, it is a great credit to the 'Militant' that it is growing stronger.

There is one thing that has to be accepted in my opinion. Militant's policies are correct and acceptable to the rank and file.

The thinking man sees the paper not just as being critical of present-day policies but as being constructive as well.

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

A GREAT STEP FORWARD!

At last, with this issue, 'Militant' expands to 16 pages! Can anyone deny that this is a great achievement?

'Militant' has grown primarily because of the crisis in British capitalism, the swing to the left in the labour movement, and the steadily increasing support for our ideas. How things have changed!

When 'Militant' was launched in 1964, reformist ideas seemingly reigned supreme. The Labour leaders were confident that they could manage capitalism, and thereby eradicate class inequalities and secure abundant social reforms. The ideas of Marxism were blithely dismissed as the outdated product of Marx's ruminations in the

British Museum a hundred years ago.

When 'Militant' was merely a 4-page monthly, our supporters were a tiny handful. But we had the strength and confidence which comes for clear ideas and perspectives. We warned, in issue No. 1, that reforms would not be possible within the framework of a diseased British capitalism. Even the past gains and standards won by the workers would be threatened as the post-war boom came to an end.

Have not our predictions been amply borne out? More and more workers have accepted our programme because, through their own experience, they

have found it to be correct. On the other hand, the Tory commentators and their echoes in the labour movement now realise that they "buried" Marxism in an unquiet grave. So once again the paid hacks of Fleet Street are set to work to attack, distort, and vilify these dangerous ideas.

The attacks on 'Militant' reflect the fear of the ruling class that the labour movement will embrace our ideas. They have good reason. What could stand in the way of the organised working class united around a Marxist programme? In trying to exorcise the ideas of Marxism from the labour movement, the capitalists give

Launching the 16-pager RALLIES AND MEETINGS

CARDIFF—3rd March

Hear: Roger Silverman (Militant International Correspondent); Kevin Rammage (LPYS National Committee). Blind Institute, Fitzallen Place, opposite AUEW Buildings, Cardiff. 7.30 pm.

WEST MIDLANDS— 4th March

Hear: Peter Taaffe (Militant Editor); Bill Mullins (Senior Steward, Rover Solihull); Ken Cameron (NEC, Fire Brigades Union). Dr Johnson, House, Bull Street, Birmingham. 1 pm to 5 pm. Tickets available or pay at door, 50p.

TYNESIDE—4th March

Hear: Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board); Tom Sawyer (Div Officer NUPE); Tony Carty (Wearside Boilermakers Sec); Kevin Roddy (CPSA National Executive, personal capacity); Ken Skethaway (Tyne-Wear Councillor); Wilf Flynn (LPYS NC elect); Durant Hall, Newcastle, 1.45 pm. Tickets available or pay at door, 40p.

MANCHESTER—5th March

Hear: Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board). Room RD1, Renold Building, UMIST, Nr Sackville St. Manchester. 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm.

BRISTOL—5th March

Hear: Roger Silverman (Militant International Correspondent); Wayne Jones (Bristol Militant Business Manager); Mike Hulin (TGWU Shop Steward, Schwepes). Bristol South East Labour Party Rooms, 326A Church Road, St George 7.30 pm.

BRACKNELL—6th March

Hear: Ray Apps (Brighton Kemptown Labour Party, Militant Supporter). Chairman: Terry Pearce (Bracknell District Labour Party). Red Lion Pub. Bracknell. 8.00pm.

WIGAN—6th March

Hear: Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board), Bill Connors (President, Skelmersdale Trades Council) and LP Young Socialist speaker. Central Labour Club, Powell Street (off Standishgate, Wigan. 7.30 pm.

SWANSEA—6th March

Dynevor School, 7.30 pm. Speaker to be announced.

COWES, IOW—6th March

hear: Nick Brookes (Southampton Labour Party), Tony Beere (Shop Steward, Britten-Norman). Cowes Labour Club, Newport Road, Cowes. 8.00 pm

PRESTON—7th March

Hear: Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board). Preston Labour Party Rooms, 98 Deepdale Road, 7.45 pm

LONDON—7th March

Hear: Peter Taaffe (Militant Editor), Nick Bradley (Labour Party NEC), Mick Gilbey (Fire Brigades Union Divisional Sec and Plaistow Branch Sec.) Plus folk singers and other entertainers. Con-way Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn WC1. 7.30 pm. Admission 25p.

SOUTHAMPTON— 8th March

Hear: Brian Ingham (Militant Industrial Correspondent), Chairman: Cathy Wilson (prospective Parliamentary candidate, Isle of Wight) The Labour Party Rooms, 81 Bedford Place, 7.30 pm

BRIGHTON—8th March

Hear: Roger Silverman (Militant International Correspondent), Rod Fitch (Chairman, Brighton and Hove Committee Against Fascism, personal capacity), Chairman: Geoff Jones (Brighton Labour Party). Wagner Hall, West Street. 8.00pm.

MERSEYSIDE—8th March

Hear: Eddie Loyden MP; Ted Grant (Militant EB); Terry Fields (Executive Committee, Fire Brigades Union, personal capacity); Ray Williams (Liverpool NGA Branch Sec, personal capacity); Dave San (National Officer CPSA, personal capacity). Chairman: Tony Mulhearn (Vice President, Liverpool District Labour Party). AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, 7.30 pm.

ESSEX—9th March

Hear: Paul Dyson (Huntingdon Labour Party, Militant Supporter), Ian Burge (Harlow Labour Party), Danny Purton (Harlow Trades Union Council). Stavanger Room, Harlow Town Hall, Harlow, 7.45 pm.

GOSPORT—9th March

Hear: Nick Brookes (Southampton Labour Party, Militant Supporter). The Labour Club, 145 Brockhurst Road, Gosport, Hants. 7.30 pm.

EDINBURGH—15th March

Hear: Keith Dickenson (Militant Editorial Board), Ron Brown (District Councillor), Ron Curran (NUPE Scottish National Officer). Trades Council, Picardy Place, Edinburgh, 7.30 pm.

RYDE, IOW—17th March

Hear: Nick Brookes (Southampton Labour Party), Cathy Wilson (prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Isle of Wight). Calverts Hotel, Newport. 8.00 pm.

EAST MIDLANDS— 19th March

Hear: Ray Apps (Brighton Kemptown Labour Party, Militant supporter), Trevor Spooner (Chairman, GMWU Metal Box Leicester), Tony Saunois (National Vice-Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists). Large Hall, International Community Centre, 61 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, 2.30 pm. Entrance 25p.

The first thing anybody says to you about 'Militant' is: "This isn't a workers' paper in the sense that its staff talk to you like a three-year-old, it's a paper written by active workers in the unions and the labour movement."

It doesn't tell you what they like to pretend is happening, it isn't a tarted-up strike-sheet, or a chagge for some professors to drivel about issues that don't mean anything to anybody but themselves.

It gives you a fighting socialist programme, an analysis of events and issues: not like the trash in the 'Daily Smearer', 'Suppress', 'Blackmail', or 'Torygraph', be a good boy and don't fight, and when we knock your teeth in we might leave you one or two [this is called "in the national interest"].

The 16-page 'Militant' is another kick in the head for all the sneerers who like to point out we don't have everything the press millionaires have. We have built our paper up to this, and it will go a lot further.

BILL ESMOND, Loughborough UCATT

Today the 'Militant' is widely known and read by most activists within the labour movement—and that is especially so among the Labour Party Young Socialists.

The reason why is not so hard to find. Where else would you find reports like the one about the anti-NF rally in Birmingham, or the mass lobby of Parliament in November by the LPYS? That has been the hallmark of the 'Militant', to report faithfully and often exclusively the campaigns and activities of the labour movement.

The majority of the LPYS support the Marxist ideas of the 'Militant' and a similar position has to be achieved throughout the labour movement if we are to guarantee a socialist transformation of society.

DAVE COTTERILL
National Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists

I have represented the Labour Party Young Socialists on the Labour Party National Executive Committee since 1974. During that period the LPYS have been involved in a number of major campaigns including our recent lobby of Parliament against the scandal of unemployment. The 'Militant' has played a magnificent role in publicising these activities.

I would recommend the 'Militant' to every Labour Party Young Socialist who wants to know what's going on in the labour movement. The expansion of the 'Militant' to a 16-page paper is a tremendous step forward for a paper that has gone from strength to strength since its foundation.

NICK BRADLEY
LPYS representative on the Labour Party NEC

MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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fearful recognition to the truth of Marx's dictum that "ideas become a material force when they grip the minds of the masses"!

But the growth of 'Militant' has not been an easy, automatic process. Not at all! The paper has been able to flourish only through the tremendous commitment and financial self-sacrifice of its readers and supporters.

We get no advertising revenue from big business. We have no rich benefactors. We have no magic schemes for painlessly raising cash. 'Militant' has grown on the £5s, the £1s, and literally the pennies, of workers. Our fighting fund, which last year raised £43,000 represents a colossal achievement. Almost every contribution, moreover, is catalogued in our weekly fighting fund column for all to see.

The 12-page 'Militant', from January 1976, has proved an enormous success. Even more than the hostile attention of the Tory press and Labour's right wing, the glowing comments of rank-and-file leaders—a small example of which we are able to print this week and later—testify to this. Even our worst enemies are forced to acknowledge the quality of our material.

A reader recently wrote from Jamaica [Letters, 17 Feb]: "I would like to thank you for the splendid job you are doing for the working class of Britain and beyond through the pages of your very educative paper." Other letters from Sri Lanka, Australia, Spain and elsewhere also indicate 'Militant's' grow-

ing international readership. In recent months we have included magnificent first-hand reports of the workers' struggles in Spain, Sri Lanka, India, and Greece. A bigger paper will allow us to carry more and better international reports.

Another feature which has received international acclaim is the work of our political cartoonist, Alan Hardman, whose brilliant drawings have been reproduced by Marxist papers in Spain, Sweden, Germany and probably elsewhere—a great compliment to both Alan and the paper. We certainly hope to feature his cartoons regularly in the 16-page paper.

Above all, 'Militant' attempts to be, not just a paper for workers, but a workers' paper. More than any other paper, 'Militant' is written by workers. If our industrial coverage is of high quality, it is because it is mainly written by convenors, shop stewards, and active workers involved in the struggles concerned. One of the best features we have been able to develop has been our "day-in-the-life" articles, in which workers and working-class women have related in their own language their day-to-day experiences.

'Militant', however, has never underestimated the workers' demand for ideas, for theory. Strike reports and political comment, by themselves, cannot satisfy the active workers, who feel a burning need to arm themselves with analysis and theory. In the factories, far from skipping the longer theoretical articles, readers reg-

ularly comment that these are one of the best features of the paper.

Four extra pages will allow us to develop all these different aspects. Material that is now squeezed out every week because of space will go in. But we also want to improve the quality. And here, the success of the 16-page 'Militant' depends on you, the reader. You must provide the material we need!

Write for the paper! Send us reports, letters, articles. Tell us about issues and events that should be covered. Our pages should reflect all sides of the workers' lives: at work; on the estates; at home; with the children; sport and leisure; both the dark sides and the confidence and humour.

If the 16-page 'Militant' is to have the influence it should, sales must be dramatically increased, and this, too, depends on you.

We also need more cash—it hardly needs saying! To improve the 'Militant', we need more editorial staff, more reporters, photographers, more technical staff. We need these to develop the 16-page paper—and to prepare the way for a more frequent paper to keep up with the accelerating pace of events.

If you support the 'Militant' in all these ways, you will be helping to temper and sharpen a really powerful weapon to arm the working class to rid us of the miseries of capitalism through the creation of a socialist society.

"...an essential weapon in the struggle."



"I welcome the enlargement of 'militant' as it is necessary that every view within the labour movement is widely discussed."

"'Militant' plays an important role, especially among the youth. As readers will be aware, I do not agree with or accept every view of the journal, but consider that its contribution to socialist ideas and actions is one which is helping to build up the movement and organise it in a socialist direction."

ERIC HEFFER, MP for Walton

"There is urgent need for greater numbers, particularly youth, to understand what Marx meant and to see how the power of his ideas are as pertinent today to the working class as they were when he first put them forward."

"The paper will, I know, concentrate on stripping fact from fiction and presenting these ideas in an unvulgarised way."

"In this country the Labour press generally is weak. It is therefore good news to hear of your step forward...and perhaps I could contribute from time to time."

SYD BIDWELL MP [Ealing-Southall]

I have taken the 'Militant' now for over four years, because apart from the persistence of your sellers, which is to be admired, the 'Militant' has always strived to be honest and responsible in its reporting of local issues and in the docks' industry.

I wouldn't necessarily agree with every political idea printed on its pages but I consider it to be an essential weapon in the struggle for a socialist programme within the labour and trade union movement.

I would like to congratulate the supporters of 'Militant' for this significant stride forward that the paper has taken and expect even more persistence from your salesman!

WALTER CUNNINGHAM,
Chairman, Hull Docks Shop Stewards Committee

Over the past period we have had our share of redundancies, cut-backs, a run-down in the tourist trade and growing unemployment on the island and this is where the 'Militant' comes in.

Because we are somewhat isolated there is a great need for information, especially on the industrial disputes etc. It is important to know the problems suffered by workers in other parts of the country, but most important, is the political analysis, the facts and figures which any activist must have to convince others of the need for socialism.

A paper that reflects life as it is for the majority, a paper that will tell the truth, a paper that supports workers because

workers support it (financially and politically) is essential.

The great achievement of a 16-page paper comes at a time when all sections of the labour movement need seriously to debate and discuss the theory of socialism, regain the enthusiasm and commitment and go forward with confidence. Capitalism has nothing to offer the working class, it falls to us to fight for the acceptance of a socialist programme and to carry on that fight until we win.

CATHY WILSON
Prospective Labour Parliamentary Candidate, Isle of Wight

HELP BOOST OUR SALES

Celebrate the arrival of the new 16-page 'Militant' by joining our campaign to increase the sales! With our extra coverage of industrial news and our regular feature on working conditions in different trades, supporters must aim to get copies of 'Militant' read in every factory and every pit, on every dock and in the offices, shops and workplaces throughout the country.

We must take the new 16 page 'Militant' to every Labour Movement activist over the next few weeks. With its vital political analysis and new full page features, 'Militant' is a must for more and more Trade Union branches, Shop Stewards' Committees and all Labour Party meetings.

The new-look 'Militant' should act as a spur to it's regular readers to take the paper to even wider layers of workers. Have you asked the people you sell to every week to take an extra copy to sell this week?

In South Wales sellers of the paper started at the beginning of the year to boost their sales in preparation for the new paper. Now there are sellers of 'Militant' in towns where it has hardly been seen before. South Wales sellers are not unique. With the activity and plans of other sellers South Wales will have to look lively to keep their pride of place in the campaign!

Many areas have planned days of action with street sales in the morning and door to door sales on estates in the afternoon. Some have even planned a social to round off the day for the Fighting Fund. We are sure that comrades will find the new material just produced invaluable in this work. Here in our printshop we have just printed posters to make 'Militant' placards and broadsheets to publicise the paper. Use them in your sales campaign!

Reports have been flooding in of hundreds of new sales made over the past few weeks; where can you sell 'MILITANT' where it has never been sold before? What about the local factory, estate or Labour/Working Mens' Club? Ask your newsagent to take an order.

If you are a regular reader but haven't yet sold 'Militant' up to now, join us in the campaign to build the workers' paper, get your Labour Party or Trade Union branch to take a regular order for copies or ask them to take out a subscription, now, while there are special rates for March. Let's hear the slogan ring out up and down the country "Get Your 'Militant', get the facts in black and white."

Janice Dale Circulation Manager

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South West hit by snow chaos

Even the heavy snow of recent weeks shows the inefficiency of British Capitalism. While the worst winter weather in South Wales and the South West for 30 years may be put down to an "act of nature", the incapacity of the authorities to deal with the problems which arose can quite simply be put down to the inadequacy of this society.

Before leaving London to drive to Swansea, I phoned the AA motoring report. Cardiff Area: "Drive with dipped headlights"; Bristol Area gave a long list of roadworks, and Scotland Yard: "It's cold" and "The motorway is blocked at Bristol"—which it wasn't!

Stranded

In fact not one had it right! By this time South West Wales had been completely cut off for 15 hours, yet nowhere on the M4 was this indicated, nor did any of the 'authorities' seem to know this. Instead I was allowed to drive on, until the road was blocked and I, along with 170 other motorists, found myself stranded in a village.

The road ahead had by now been blocked by 18 ft drifts for 18 hours, yet there were no warnings in Cardiff (where it would have been much easier

handling stranded people) or even the last large town, Bridgend.

So there we were. Many elderly people ended up sleeping the night on the Church Hall floor and many people were stuck for 2 or 3 days in the middle of nowhere.

Church Hall

When we first arrived in the village we were directed to the Church Hall, which was a 'reception centre'—where no-one knew what was happening. So we visited the pub next door to give them time to sort things out.

On returning to the Church Hall and still seeing chaos, we asked the vicar if he knew how far up the road the local Labour Club was. He asked out loud if anyone knew: a deadly silence! Eventually someone told us it was half a mile away. (We found out later the vicar was a local Tory Councillor!).

Labour Club

In the Labour Club we received a warm reception, immediate offers of help and a drink! Such a contrast to the chaos around us made us think...what if the working class were in control of society?

Common sense would have made sure firstly that up to date information and clear

warnings were up at motoring services.

Secondly, that local authorities were equipped with modern snow ploughs capable of clearing deep drifts.

Thirdly, people already out of pocket and inconvenienced by the weather didn't have to pay out high prices for meals (Swansea 'leisure' centre run by a 'Ratepayer' council) or people unable to travel by road weren't refused rail tickets because they couldn't

afford them.

Most important is dealing with the chaos caused by the snow itself. Through the local trade unions, trades councils and Labour Party, accommodation could have been organised for all the stranded people to end the ridiculous situation where elderly people slept on cold, bare boards.

All the resources of society could have been organised—instead of having about 8 local Colonel Blimps all pre-

tending to be organisers—to provide gangs for snow clearing, moving cars, getting provisions for old people, etc.

Pull Together

I couldn't help noticing that the 'Dunkirk Spirit' of pulling together, which the press raves about, was strongest amongst the people in the Labour Club, from the local council estate. This in itself

was for me an answer to the Tory lie that "socialism won't work because workers are greedy and won't help anybody but themselves."

It seemed to me that working people were the first to offer a hand, a house, a meal, but I didn't see the local Lord about offering trout or pheasant!

By a Swansea Young Socialist

And now the floods

It has been reported in the newspapers that the two world super-powers have the technology via satellites to control the weather.

Here in the South West, we have just experienced the worst snow blizzards for over thirty years in a part of the country where it is said that spring comes first! For two days and two nights the South West experienced blizzards and snow drifts up to 30 feet high that would have been considered bad weather in Siberia!

For several days all main roads, including the motorway, were closed. Motorists had been trapped and even buried for days, in some cases miles from anywhere. Whole villages and towns were

completely cut off.

Taunton has been like a town under siege, with queues for bread and milk, gas and electricity cut off from hundreds of thousands of homes and telephones out of action. The worst affected have been the sick and the old, particularly those living in blacked-out houses in remote areas.

In one village a man was desperately ill with a perforated ulcer. The road was impassable so he had to be carried miles by stretcher through four foot snow drifts. A premature baby was rushed to a hospital incubator, but died.

Men on snow-ploughs and breakdown vehicles have worked 35 hours or more at a stretch. But they could not cope. I got a lift off a

breakdown truck which itself broke down.

There has been much concern about the damage to agriculture. Thousands of heads of cattle have died, and farmers have had to tip away milk. The worst hit will be the small farmers, unable to make good the loss. But the biggest danger has been to human life.

Now we are suffering from flooding. Already the town of Kingsbridge is afloat. Apparently it has been known for years that there was a flood risk there, but it had been ignored by the builders and developers. Now thousands of ordinary people will have to fork out cash to pay for the damage.

We are entitled to ask why were the authorities not ready

for the possibility of such a disaster? Dennis Howell, 'Minister of Snow', arrived in Taunton three days after the effects of the storms were felt and declared the South West an 'Emergency Region'—three days late! He promised us the help of the troops. When the troops are used to break strikes, like the firemen's, there is never any delay!

If we have the technology to control the weather, then we must have the means to ensure that ordinary people are protected from disasters like this.

Nigel Grimwade (Taunton Labour Party)

GREETINGS

Fareham Constituency Labour Party send congratulations to Militant on reaching 16 pages

BRISTOL JOINT LPYS sends congratulations to Labour's 16 page revolutionary paper. Socialist policies to stop the Tories now!

All youth members of the Welsh Regional Youth Committee of the Labour Party Send Best Wishes to the 16 page Militant.

Militant Supporters in Greenwich and Woolwich welcome the 16 page paper Forward to the 16-page daily!

LLANELLI AND SWANSEA LPYS Welcome another step forward for Marxism

Bootle LPYS Forward to Socialism! Forward to the 16-page Militant!

Cambridge Labour Party Youth Group greets the 16-page Militant—now let's take the bigger paper out to more workers!

Gloucester LPYS Greetings to the 16-page Militant! Forward to Socialism!

Paisley LPYS Welcomes the 16-page Militant Socialist policies for Labour!

Congratulations to all sellers and supporters on the occasion of a regular 16-page paper! Fraternal greetings from readers at British Leyland Self Changing Gears, Coventry

NUPE Central Birmingham Health District Welcome the extra pages in a progressive Marxist paper

Greetings to the 16-page 'Militant'! For a fighting, democratic, socialist CPSA!

Les Broomhead (Chairman); Jeff Prout (Secretary); Robin Clapp (Organiser); Bristol ESA Branch, CPSA (all in personal capacity).

Ian Burge and Jane Doyle, Shop Stewards, London Hospital, thank 'Militant' for their coverage of the health workers' struggles against the cuts, and look forward to even greater coverage in the 16-page paper!

EPPING FOREST LPYS Beat the profit system—forward to socialism.

CARDIFF NORTH LPYS Fraternal Greetings Best Wishes for the future

Richmond LPYS Congratulations on taking the first step towards the 16-page daily

CARDIFF SOUTH EAST LPYS sends greetings to 'Militant' Forward to Socialism!

Salford Branch AUEW [TASS]

Congratulations on a further step in the battle for socialism!
* No to Wage Restraint!
* National Claim Now!
* £65 Minimum Wage!
* A £15 across-the-board minimum increase now!

Fraternal Greetings to the 16 Page Militant From Tom Smith, Chairman, Special Products British Leyland Combine (personal capacity).

University College, Cardiff Labour Club Congratulations to the Militant on becoming 16 pages!

North West Organisation of Labour Students Greetings to the 16-page Militant —For a Socialist education policy —For a Marxist NOLS

Preston Polytechnic Labour Club For a Socialist Education Policy Success to the 16-page Militant

Ashton LPYS Revolutionary Greetings! Forward to a daily Militant!

ASTMS Liverpool Shipping and Freight Branch No 618 (meets 1st Monday in month, 'Mona', James St, 5.45 pm) welcomes the 16-page 'Militant'

NOLS LONDON REGION
★ A guaranteed job for every school leaver!
★ Drive the fascists out of schools!
★ Forward to the daily Militant!

York University Labour Club sends Greetings to the New 16 Page Militant

"THE NORTHERN REGION OF THE LPYS WELCOME THE 16 PAGE MILITANT—THE VITAL WEAPON IN OUR FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM".

Newcastle North
Newcastle Central
Blyth
Gateshead East and West
Durham
North West Durham
Sedgefield and District
Haltwhistle
Chester-le-Street
Jarrow

Bradford University Labour Club

Greets the 16 page MILITANT as a further advance in the struggle for socialism internationally and pledges full support for the ideas of MILITANT within the National Organisation of Labour Students.

Labour's youth fights back

Welsh jobs fight

Hardly a week goes by without the threat of redundancies being held over someone's head. Redundancies at UK Optical Company, Kidwelly; at Llanelli, Welsh Tinplate and Metal Company and the Cambrian Metal Company are being shut down.

They are being followed by the Pembrey Tube Factory, and redundancies have been declared at Krunchie Food Products. This will ruin the chances of a future for young people in this area.

South Wales is dominated by heavy industry—steel and coal. The past 15 years has seen pit after pit closed down and the valleys depopulated of their youth.

The expansion of the steel industry at Port Talbot was seen as the great solution. Now, with the shelving of the new £35 million investment, the future is bleak.

YCAU

But what is the labour movement doing? The Labour government—which we elected—has failed to tackle unemployment. The programme of the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment is for:

- ★ A 35-hour week
- ★ No redundancies
- ★ A £60 minimum wage
- ★ A programme of useful public works
- ★ Taking over the 200 major companies and planning production in the interests

of the majority.

This shows the real way to tackle this scourge.

Unions

We must act now! The trade unions have the strength to get this programme accepted. They have the power to change the course of the Labour government.

Our task as supporters of the YCAU is to raise these demands and get the active support of our own trade unions.

Organise now! The Area meeting of the YCAU in Neath must be the focal point of the campaign in our hard-hit region.

Are you prepared to help us raise the movement to its feet on this question? Contact the YCAU secretary, Julie Morgan.

We are appealing to all trade unionists to raise this campaign in their organisations. Get them to send a delegation to the Neath meeting. **Your children's future depends on you! Act now before it's too late.**

**SPEND
EASTER
WITH
US!**

Never before under this Labour government have so many young workers been forced into struggle.

National leaders of the trade unions have been toeing the 10% line, but in the private sections a whole new generation of young shop stewards has taken up the struggle for a decent wage.

These small-scale disputes have seen some magnificent victories (but no reporting in the press) involving the local labour movement in supporting their claim.

The LPYS have given these sections their full support, raising money, holding meetings and giving moral support on picket lines. As with the firemen we have to show that they don't stand alone but they take with them the local activists.

Such activities of the LPYS also takes up the need for these trade unionists to fight policies of wage restraint in their own trade unions and side by side with the LPYS in the Labour Party itself.



Activity of the LPYS on these issues, for instance on the burning issue of unemployment, forms a background to this year's LPYS national conference in Llandudno from March 25-27th.

At Transport House hundreds of applications are flooding in. Llandudno is expecting to be a town under siege with its hotel places being snapped up by young people from all parts of the country.

Unashamed

The biggest argument for a youth section must be to provide a pace-setter for the labour movement. The LPYS are proud to play that role. Tying our campaigning spirit to the industrial experience of trade union militants will develop both sections.

We stand unashamedly in favour of a socialist society.

Local LPYS branches should keep up support for groups of workers like the firemen and Leyland workers, with a national push for TUC and government policies in favour of working people, against wage restraint and unemployment.

The LPYS conference is a stepping stone for such work. We must go out to all socialist youth, and especially to youth in the trade unions, and get them to Llandudno.

Appeal to the trade unions, to workers you have helped in past disputes, and get them to send members along. The might of the unions, combined with the confidence and enthusiasm of youth, will ensure that we have the power to put an end to low pay and unemployment, once and for all!

John Ingham

LPYS National Committee

TWO MILLION JOBLESS

Startling confirmation of our argument that the real figure for unemployment is nearer two million has been given by an official survey carried out by the Liverpool Planning Office.

They claim that the real unemployment figure in Liverpool is 57,000 (21%) whereas the government's figures are only 39,700. In the Inner City Area they claim that 36,000 are unemployed or a staggering 33%.

The figures are based on the under-registration of unemployment, which is inherent in the official figures. A spokesman for the city planning office was quoted as saying:

"We took a census in 1971 and we discovered that the accurate number of people out of work was more than those recorded by employment exchanges.

"That gave us a factor to work on and we have used it in this calculation.

"We reckon this is a realistic estimate of the numbers out of work. The reason why there are more out of work in our figures is the fact that many people, a lot of them women, don't bother to register for a number of reasons.

"Our figures have been verified by a recent general household survey carried out by the government, who admit their recorded figures are an underestimate of the true situation.

"The implications are that national unemployment statistics must be lower than the true situation."

The manager of the Employment Services, while disputing the figures, had to admit that "our figures are not 100%." The difference between the two figures was something like 50%. On a national scale this would put the unemployment figure up to around 2½ million.

We must demand that the government publish realistic figures for unemployment, otherwise the figures are just absolutely meaningless. Successive governments have rigged the figures; this is just an attempt to hide the truth from people.

The labour and trade union movement should take this up and publish the real figures. Already in France the unions publish their own figures as to the real level of inflation; we should do the same for unemployment.

Richard Knights

NF YOUTH FLOP



Photo: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

Over a hundred socialists crowded outside the National Front's premises in Leicester on the night that the inaugural meeting of the local "Young NF" was supposed to take place.

Only a handful of fascists passed into the meeting through the police cordon and hardly more than a couple of them could be called youthful. The launching of the YNF in Leicester has been a dismal failure.

This was not the first recent defeat for them. They had hoped that the YNF would spring into action with a campaign of leafletting outside schools. So far the only schools they have leafletted have been far out in the country where the fascists did

not fear so much the reaction of enraged anti-fascists.

The only leafletting of schools in the city has been done entirely by organisations totally opposed to fascism and whose leaflets warned against the poisonous nonsense contained in YNF leaflets.

Vigilant

Eighteen months ago the National Front came within a few votes of capturing a seat for Abbey Ward in the local elections. A recent by-election in this ward provided a test case of local opinion. The LPYS campaigned vigorously. The National Front vote collapsed.

More than ever before the real nature of the NF is becoming understood. Few workers will vote for what

they increasingly see to be a pure Nazi organisation.

Despite the weakening of the local National Front, the labour movement must remain vigilant. We must oppose promptly any activities by racials and fascists to divide the labour movement.

In Leicester members of the Labour Party and LPYS will be picketing the NF paper sellers on March 4th and joining a picket by the Trades Council the following Saturday.

Let us show the ruling class who breed and protect these vermin that their actions only intensify the outrage we feel against the cancer of racialism.

Richard Norris

YOUTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

Neath Meeting, Saturday 11th March

(note change of date)

11.00 am-4.30 pm

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Emlyn Williams (President, S Wales NUM)

Nick Bradley (Secretary, YCAU)

Phil Lloyd (Regional Committee, POEU)

May Trodd (DHSS Section Executive Committee, CPSA)

At: Vaccari Restaurant, 26 Windsor Road, Neath

Further details: Julie Morgan, 31 Approach Road,

Manselton, Swansea

Rochdale Firemen Say:

THANKS...

At a branch meeting held here at Rochdale on Wednesday 25th January, the members voted unanimously to donate the sum of £10 in appreciation of your valuable support dur-

ing our recent strike.

May the LPYS have continued success in all they do.

Yours fraternally

Brian Knowles

FBU Secretary

...LPYS

This is a letter we received from the local FBU Secretary. During the strike the LPYS were often seen at the fire station, and also helped the firemen with a collection in Rochdale Market Centre that raised over £100.

A public meeting held in the local Labour Party rooms was attended by 40 people and resolutions were sent to

Rochdale CLP from the LPYS which resulted in donations being made to the firemen.

The firemen here are refusing to have any contact with officers who scabbed during the strike; Bro Knowles describes it as an "uneasy peace".

Tom Stott
Rochdale LPYS

Left & Right

WHAT PLANNING!

Two paragraphs, published side by side in 'The Times', show the anarchy of the 'market economy' where the left hand doesn't know what the right is doing:

"SKILLED LABOUR SHORTAGE IN THE HOME COUNTIES—Evidence that a shortage of skilled labour is hampering industrial output appears in the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry's latest survey."

"PRINTING GROUPS CENSURED OVER RECRUITMENT FIGURES—Britain's printing companies have been censured by the President of the Printing Industries Federation for taking on only 1,300 apprentices this year out of a full quota of 3,000."

CRIBBING

The following proposal to help continuity of administration when one party replaces another in the corridors of power comes from a civil service brief and was published in the Whitley Bulletin, December 1977:

"The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition should jointly consider the present rule that no Administration sees the papers of its predecessors of a different party, to decide whether some mutually agreed relaxation of the rule might not be advantageous to Ministers of successive governments."

How cosy for Labour and Tory Ministers to crib from each other when tackling the problems of state. How convenient for the Whitehall Mandarins—no abrupt changes in Departmental policy, no interruptions to their routine, just because a few million voters decide they want someone to change society.

No wonder the answer on the doorstep is "why vote? They're all the same!"

GOOD CAUSES

The Third Marquess of Hertford owned a large house and property in Wales which he never visited, but he had a gourmet dinner prepared for him every night, just in case. Mr Potter Palmer, the hotel tycoon, adorned his poor wife with so many diamonds that she became top-heavy and kept falling over. Mrs Astor always had to sit bolt upright because she wore jewellery all the way down her spine.

In a new book on 'The Rich Rich' we are let into the secret of what useful things the tycoons and millionaires find to do with their money. The Vanderbilts decided to stimulate the US economy by building a 'summer cottage' with eighty-two rooms and a front door weighing seventy tons.

The author of the book decided to concentrate on the way fortunes are spent; he was sure we wouldn't be interested in how the money was come by. Perhaps he's right: most workers already know all too well how the Crupps and Fords make their money—and it isn't by working on the track!

But there's one consolation. The book tells us that stinginess is rare. For some, giving away money is their 'principal relaxation'. Quote that in your next wage negotiations.

COMMUNISTS

The Italian Communist Party is most upset at the suggestion that they have only just been converted to a love of the Gaitskell-Crosland 'mixed economy' (capitalism to you and me). Recently a spokesman quoted from a speech made by Togliatti, the General Secretary of the CP in 1945:

"As for general planning of the economy, I repeat that I consider it today Utopian, which means that we must leave a vast field for private initiative both in production and in distribution and trade."

So what role is left for socialism? Just as in the Labour right wing vision, the keeping of the worst excesses of the capitalists in check while propping up the system.



Bruce Wallace [Dunfermline LPYS] reviews Victor Serge's

"Year One of the Russian Revolution"

Victor Serge, a Belgian socialist, went to Russia in 1919 in order to serve the infant workers' state which was gripped in civil war against the old ruling class, he was eventually expelled from the USSR in 1936 as an ex-member of the Left Opposition which fought against the rise of the privileged bureaucracy headed by Stalin.

Serge's best known books are 'Memoirs of a Revolutionary' and 'From Lenin to Stalin' but one of his less well read books is 'Year One of the Russian Revolution'. 'Year One' was written under extremely difficult conditions. The book was made up of articles written between 1925-28 designed for separate publication as Serge had no idea when the Stalinists would suppress his writings. 'Year One' was published in 1930 but unfortunately his 'Year Two of the Russian Revolution' was confiscated by the dreaded secret police, the GPU.

The value of this book is that it vividly shows the way that the USSR was cliffhanging between survival and bloody defeat by the Whites

during 1917-18. It answers, with passionate description of the depths which the revolution was forced down into, those socialists who argue that Stalinism arose from a one party dictatorship of the Bolsheviks. Serge's book gives myriad examples of the grinding effects of famine, plague and the bitterness of civil war. Faced with such huge material obstacles, without the European workers coming to their assistance by overthrowing capitalism internationally, the Russian working class was inevitably forced to retreat.

Savage

Describing the campaign of the Red Army in the Ural region, Serge shows just how savage the civil war was. "Blyukher's army, swept with constant machine-gun fire from the Whites, was trapped by the side of a deep river, the Ufa... They had imagined that every man among them was doomed to perish... Each soldier was to keep his last bullet for a comrade... When

the other side of the river was reached, 200 prisoners were taken; not one of them was spared."

A Red Army detachment was advancing on the town of Maikap in the Cuban which was held by the Whites. Serge continues: "General Pakrovsky was engaged in an orgy of blood-lust: hangings, sabrings, shootings to an estimated total of 4,000 dead (the town has 45,000 inhabitants). In the glades on their journey the Reds found crucified women."

Apart from his description of the bloody role of the ruling class in the civil war Serge brilliantly exposes the counter-revolutionary role of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who both claimed to be socialist parties. The SRs are shown to have actively organised armed revolts against the Bolsheviks while the Mensheviks were no better, as Serge shows by the use of breathtaking quotes.

Theodore Dan (a Menshevik): "In the first few days, we had hoped that the Bolshevik

conspiracy could be liquidated by force of arms. The attempt failed." Or the even more horrifying statement of Plekhanov, once respected as the father of Russian Marxism, "We must not only master but crush this vermin, drown it in blood." The book has to be read to see the depths to which these "socialists" sank in opposition to the Bolsheviks and in defence of capitalism.

Betrayal

The book also includes the little known story of the tragic defeat of the Finnish revolution due to the failure of leadership, at the cost of 100,000 workers killed and imprisoned. The book finally deals with the betrayal of the German revolution by the Social Democrats and the necessary implementation of War Communism in Russia due to the setback of this defeat.

Serge's book is not to be missed. It is a great pity that 'Year Two' is locked away in the Soviet archives, for 'Year One' is a work that adds immeasurably to our knowledge of the Russian revolution.

FILM REVIEW

'the harder they come'

You don't have to like reggae to enjoy 'The Harder They Come'. In fact you may go in to the cinema indifferent to the music and come out sympathetic to it.

'The Harder They Come' is the story of a man named Ivan—played by Jimmy Cliff—who leaves the Jamaican countryside to seek success as a reggae singer in Kingston.

He has to overcome many obstacles before he gets a chance to audition at the

record studios. When he does, his song, the title song of the film, is an obvious hit. But instead of the big money he had expected he is offered twenty dollars.

In disgust Ivan refuses to sell his record and tries to get it distributed independently, only to find that the record company has a stranglehold on all the radio stations and discos. Reluctantly Ivan is forced to go back to the studio and sell them his record for the pittance offered. As the studio boss observes: "It's not the people who make hits—it's us."

In need of money Ivan gets involved in the ganja (cannabis) trade, but his rebellious spirit leads him into trouble there. He refuses to pay up to the local protection racketeer, who is in cahoots with the corrupt police, and is informed on. Rather than go to jail he shoots the cop who comes after him and escapes.

He becomes a fugitive and as he shoots his way out of police ambushes and seeks revenge on the people who set him up, he becomes a hero to the inhabitants of Kingston's shanty town, who are enthused by his defiance of the hated establishment. As his popularity increases, the record company and the police,



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

A spirit of rebellion that cannot be crushed

fearing that "law and order" will be forever destroyed, conspire to crush Ivan.

The film is obviously made on a low budget, with hand-held cameras and mainly locals used instead of professional actors, but this adds rather than detracts from the film, making it more authentic.

'The Harder They Come'

exposes corruption, it is alive with the feeling of the people's desire to fight back and seek a better life. Reggae is shown as the music of the black youth's spirit of rebellion—a spirit that cannot be crushed.

By Bill Joyce

APPRENTICE to the coffin trade

A day in the life of a wood machinist

When you tell most people you've got this job, they seem to think you've landed eight draws out of ten. They're not far wrong. An apprentice wood machinist in the building trade is something to be very satisfied with.

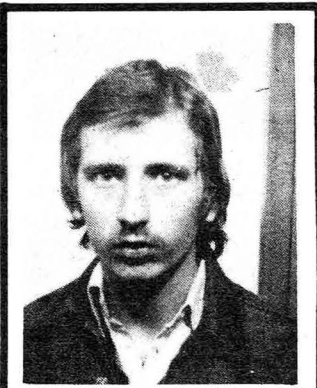
When your mates are in dead-end jobs or on the dole, you've got a job guaranteed for three years, where you're trained to be a "Skilled Man" (as in "High Wages"). And isn't woodworking better than throwing hot metal all over yourself? And doesn't anybody who reads the 'Sun' know all about building workers earning hundreds a week?

Your first visit impresses you. Either it's the machines or the products. Or it could be the incredible noise, or the dust, or the number of men walking round with fingers missing. Or the speeches.

These are the manager's job. He thinks you spent the last ten years skiving in school (when you haven't knifed the teacher or burnt the place down), cheered on by the courts, the teachers and the social workers.

He tells you how 'Things is Different Here'. His favourite saying is: "When you're apprentices, you're just slaves." You get this—half an hour of it—when you first meet him, on the day you start, on the day before you sign your indentures, on the day after, and any other time he thinks you need it.

When you sign up you get the same speech three more



Bill Esmond
(Loughborough UCATT)

times, from the employers' man, the Training Board man and the union man. All three very keen to explain to you what a serious thing you're letting yourself in for and just how much you'll be for it if you step out of line.

Brown Packet

Some of the kids look a bit frightened by all this: but you probably laugh it off. You've probably been through enough to know the sun-shines-out-my-ear type. Anyway there's a little brown packet coming your way that means an endless round of discos, pubs, clubs, football matches, bookies' counters and so on. This idea gets a jolt after deductions by the taxman and at home. But never mind: in a few years you're a skilled man on skilled man's wages and the future is as rosy as could be.

After a time the dream goes

wrong. Why are you still doing odd jobs all the time, or sweeping up or working a machine it took you five minutes to master and a week to be an expert on? Still—that's only for now. You're going to college to learn it all.

College: up at six, home around nine, bored out of your skull. All right if it means that once those certificates are in your greasy palm you're a skilled man—a king—the world at your feet—then it'll be to hell with managers and teachers who treat you like a five-year-old.

It might strike you that half the kids don't have a clue because at work they don't do any skilled work. Maybe they spend all their time cleaning out the drains, painting the toilets or making tomato boxes for the manager like you do.

You wonder if it's true that they set on "apprentices" who can do a labourer's job for half the wages. You get fed up with all the old hands who tell you to be grateful you're not on the dole, and complain: "You're not taking any interest in the job!"

After a few years, if you don't get the boot because you're so pig-sick, you stick one on one of these characters, or miss college because you can't see the point of it, or tell the manager what for. You wonder: what happens next?

For thousands of hours of boredom, your eyes, nose, throat and sometimes your brain filled with dust, you keep sane by looking forward to the pot of gold when you come out your time. But then

you ask: is it for real?

It isn't. You might get the push when you finish your time and stop being Forty Hours' Cheap Labour. The factory might close down. Round here there used to be twenty building firms with machine shops—now there's one. (This is a "prosperous" area!)

Not Machines

Look at the survivors—your mates in their twenties—tied to the machine all day, struggling to pay the bills. There aren't many much over twenty and much under forty-five. Anybody who can get out.

In a trade going down like this, split up in little shops, there isn't much chance to organise a fight-back. The young lads are ready enough, but the old blokes seem to have lost any hope except to make it to their pension books) and look back on how much harder times were when they were lads.

But you can try. Like up the road at Langley Mill, out for six months fighting bosses who know they've got you by the throat in this trade. Showing them that when they spit in our faces, we don't always thank them...for the washing facilities.

Even if we lose some fights like that, they should remember we're not a bit of machinery that behaves right with clever handling, that one day we'll do a very different kind of cleaning-up job: clearing out their rotten system for good.



Question Time

POURING MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN

The Tories and employers are forever complaining about state intervention in industry and how taxpayers' money is poured into a growing public sector. But while they cry for industry to be set free and for everyone to stand on their own two feet, these hypocrites continue to take their begging bowls to the government as the following answer to a Parliamentary question shows:

"The government paid out £678m in subsidy to privately owned industry and commerce in 1977-8 compared to £673.8m to nationalised and publicly owned industry. Much of the government

subsidy to nationalised industries, £438.5m, went to British Rail, leaving £253.5m for the other nationalised industries including those set up to revive failed private enterprise." ['Hansard', vol. 942, No. 43].

What a condemnation of "free enterprise" that it can only carry on making profits out of the workers by getting subsidies from them as taxpayers! And as the Labour government is giving away so many millions to inefficient big business every year to bail it out why doesn't it save us the cost by nationalising these firms?

IT'S A FACT

*Less than 10% of Labour MPs (28 out of 301) were manual workers before being elected.

* More than half of all Tory MPs were businessmen of some kind [137 out of 269].

* More than one third of Labour MPs were teachers or lecturers.

* About a third of the peers don't attend any sittings of the House of Lords; more than 20% don't attend more than one sitting in ten; more than 85% don't go half the time.

Marxist Economist Andrew Glyn reveals:

What the City wants

FROM NORTH SEA OIL REVENUES

With all the jubilations from Denis Healy about his 'financial miracle' and how we are about to reach the promised land of economic recovery as North Sea Oil flows in, people are beginning to ask where the oil money will actually go.

£££

The January issue of the magazine 'The Banker' reported a survey of the views of a sample of stockbrokers and bankers on the decline of sterling and what should be done with North Sea Oil revenues.

More than three quarters said that the City had suffered from the decline in sterling over the last ten years. They blamed the uncertainty which it caused and also the fact that it reduced the size of UK banks, measured by their assets, in comparison with banks in countries whose currencies had risen relative to the pound. This meant a scaling down of the City's pretensions to world financial dominance.

One third admitted that relaxing exchange controls to allow more foreign investment, a process which the Labour government has already begun and is under strong pressure to step up, would lead to a large outflow of funds.

The most interesting an-

swers, though, were in reply to the following questions:

Question 7

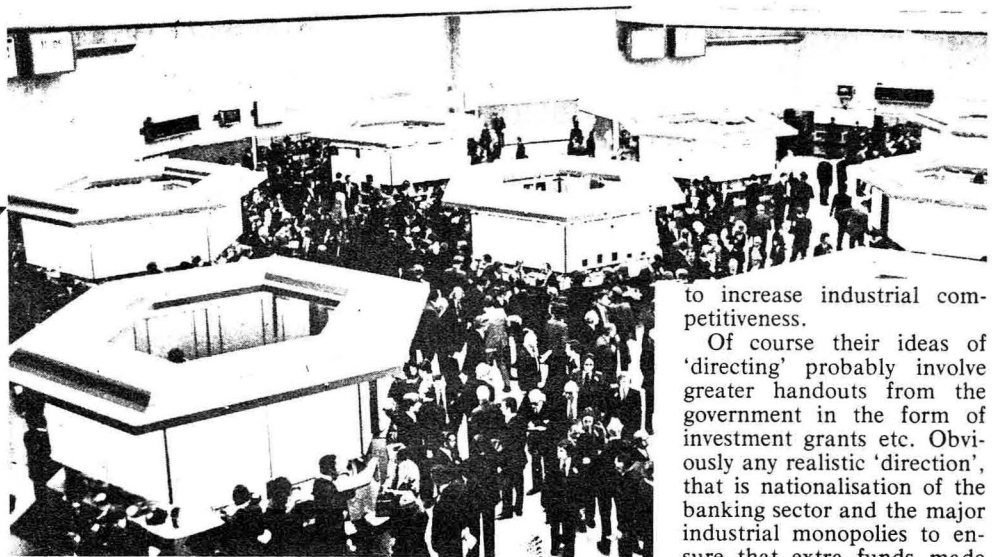
'Considering the benefits to the balance of payments to be expected from North Sea oil, do you agree that they should be used in any of the ways suggested below?'

	Average score
To repay overseas debt	2.7
To allow increased investment overseas	2.3
To allow further increase in domestic demand	1.3
To allow the pound to rise	0.5
To build up the official reserves	0.4

Question 8

'Turning to the government revenues from North Sea oil, do you agree that they should be used for any of the purposes suggested below?'

	Average score
To cut personal taxation	2.3
To reduce public sector borrowing	1.6
To cut corporate taxation	1.5
To be directed into British industry	1.3
To increase spending on welfare services	0.1



The Stock Exchange

to increase industrial competitiveness.

Of course their ideas of 'directing' probably involve greater handouts from the government in the form of investment grants etc. Obviously any realistic 'direction', that is nationalisation of the banking sector and the major industrial monopolies to ensure that extra funds made available actually were invested, is far from what these financiers have in mind!

£££

Any thought that they might be going soft in the defence of their interests is corrected by their attitude to public spending. Cutting corporation tax and reducing public sector borrowing is evidently at least fifteen times as important to them as increasing public spending on the welfare services. For these well-heeled gentlemen who send their kids to private schools and can afford the privilege of private medicine such things as free education, the NHS, council housing etc. are just a waste of money!

Repaying overseas debt and increasing overseas investment were both rated as twice as important as expanding domestic demand to reduce unemployment. This reflects the fear of the bosses that a substantial reduction in unemployment would stoke up inflation and lead to wage claims which would jeopardise the recent recovery of profits.

The City does recognise the necessity of a strong industrial base for their financial operations: 'directing' oil revenues into British industry was rated as an important priority, and a quarter of those asked also felt that the government should try to hold the pound down, presumably

London Labour must campaign

Kick out the Tories

The Tories in London have given us a glimpse of what another Tory government would mean. The working people of London have suffered one blow after another since the Tories took control of the GLC last year.

The vicious anti-working class measures being attempted by the Tories underlines the need for an all-out effort to ensure a Labour victory in the London Borough Elections—and the general election that will probably follow this year. The Annual Meeting's job is to map out a strategy for the London Labour movement to accomplish these tasks.

No Crisis

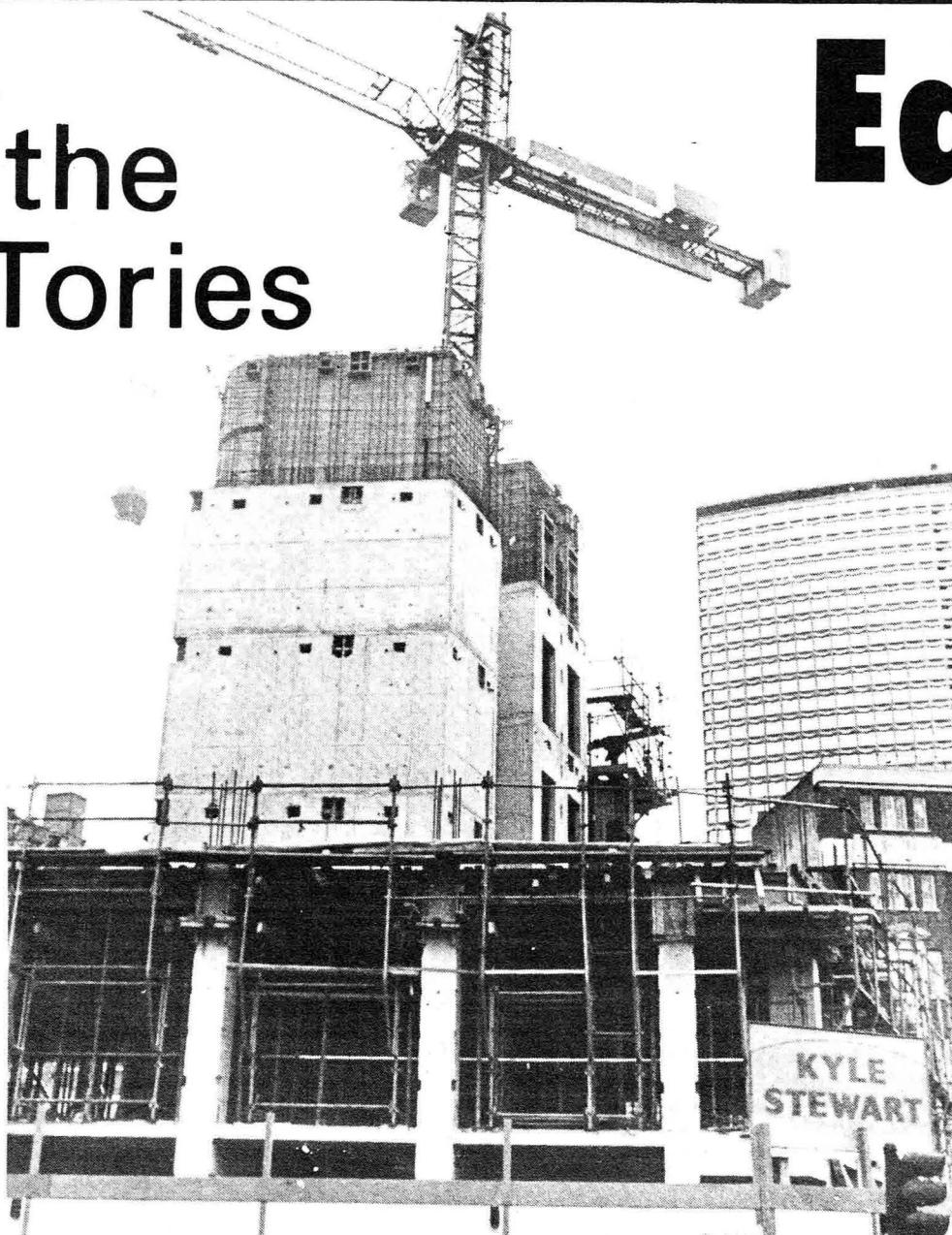
When they took over, the Tories immediately moved to slash the GLC's already small housing programme. From spending £176 million on home building in the 1977/8 financial year the Tories aim to cut this sum to £69 million by 1981/2. They claim they are shifting resources to the inner city, but the amount spent on building in inner London will fall from £90 to £60 million in the same period. Total spending on housing will fall from £254m in 1977/78 to £192m in 1980/1.

It is not surprising that the Tories are doing this. They aim to hold down the rates primarily to benefit their industrial and commercial paymasters and those who live in the 'nicer' parts of London. They don't care about ordinary people, only the rich. Indeed, the Tory Vice-Chairman of the GLC Housing Development Committee recently asserted: "There is no housing crisis in London, only a crisis of aspiration."

Gimmicks

Horace Cutler, the GLC Tory Leader, admitted to 'The Observer' last year that he didn't "really know how many" properties he owned. He got £700,000 last October when he sold 20 acres near Farnborough. David Ashby (Tory, Woolwich West) supported the sale of new council homes at Brentford Lock because, he said, they were "too good for the general housing list".

The Tories are trying to pretend that they are doing something for the thousands on the housing waiting lists by their lottery gimmicks. A magnificent 11,000 couples and families got on the draw to be given a mere 1,000 rundown homes which they



Office blocks in Oxford Street—but where are the homes? Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

would have to rehabilitate. This did not add one new home to London's housing stock. Today some of the 'lucky' winners have not yet even been allocated a house, so ill-prepared were the Tories' own plans.

While bus queues are lengthening all the time, the Tories cut £8 million off this year's London Transport budget and want to cut its staff by 2,000. But spending on roads will rise by £10 million to £30 million.

When they're not cutting back spending, the Tories are raising prices. This summer fares are going up by 10%. This will be followed in autumn by increases of up to £1.50 a week in GLC rents.

The Tories also plan to introduce admission charges at the children's zoos in Battersea Park and Crystal Palace. Prices for using GLC sports facilities are going up by 15% or 20%. Some charges for using GLC football pitches will rocket by 50% or 100%! Already, the Tories have reduced the GLC staff by 1,300 since last May. They want to get rid of another 400 by Easter, aiming to cut the GLC staff by 10,000 to 20,000 in five years.

Is this the Tory answer to London's unemployment crisis? Last summer a third of London's unemployment offices registered unemployment rates over 10% higher than the national average. In some areas the rate is well into double figures.

These Tory attacks demonstrate how vital it is that the labour movement uses its strength, both to halt this onslaught and to keep them out of London's Town Halls—and out of Westminster.

Last May, in the aftermath of the GLC defeat, the Regional Executive passed a resolution, moved by 'Militant' supporters, which sought to map out the main lines of a counter-attack against the Tories. This motion, reprinted on page 52 of the Executive Report, along with the socialist motions before the Annual Meeting, should provide the basis for the London labour movement campaign. The Annual Meeting must insist that its decisions are implemented through a bold campaign involving all sections of the movement and extending to all working class areas and workplaces.

The Annual Meeting will have before it a number of motions which put forward clear socialist policies: **Composite B on Housing** and **Composite E on unemployment** and the government's economic policy.

Composite N on racialism and **Composite P** on transport, while not putting forward fully rounded-out policies, should certainly be supported.

Banks

The first debate will be on housing and here Composite B, pointing out that "housing will be a crucial issue in the forthcoming Borough elections", explains the need to break "the stranglehold of the banks" over housing. It calls for a fightback against the Tory attacks and for a socialist housing policy, based on the nationalisation of the banks and building industry.

The Executive, after a lively discussion, agreed to recommend delegates to support

this composite.

But the Executive are not unfortunately supporting Composite E on the Economy. The right wing on the Executive (which includes founders of the 'Campaign for a Labour Victory') mobilised opposition to this composite on the basis that its first sentence says that the government's "economic policies have been a disaster for working people." With unemployment now over 1,500,000 and after suffering a drop of at least 7% in living standards since 1974 who could convincingly argue that the Labour government's present policies have been a success for the working class?

Confidence

Composite E firmly sets London's crisis within the context of the general crisis of capitalism. Calling for a fight against falling living standards and unemployment, it demands that the Executive launch a campaign on the socialist programme it outlines. "The best way to defeat the Tories," it concludes, "is on clear socialist policies." Certainly, the loss of the GLC and many other seats is no vote of confidence in the Labour government's policies.

The right wing, by pinning their opposition to the Composite on its first few lines, are trying to dodge the main political issues it raises.

The Annual Meeting, however, should pass this motion, because it is vital that we are seen to reject the government's Tory-style policies. Labour will not win support from workers on its record in defeating the firemen! That is

Education

The Tories and the Tory Press do not widely publicise the details of their "special interest" in education. But behind their phrases about concern for improvement and more efficiency lie their real plans.

They would like to see schools closed down and merged as part of a massive further cut-back on education spending. This threat hangs over the ILEA and the outer London boroughs for the immediate future unless Labour can keep its majorities in the coming council elections.

The last five or six years have been a warning to anyone working or studying in London's schools and colleges. About 75% of teacher training places have been cut

over the past decade. Two colleges of education, Furzdon and Philippa Fawcett have been closed down in "mergers". Only two or three primary schools have been started each year.

Nil-Growth

The standards of school buildings have declined. Some schools, like Thomas Carlton in Peckham, are collapsing around their occupants without the money to do anything about it. In 1971-72 under the financing of Margaret Thatcher, £8.3m was spent on repairs and new school buildings. Scandalously, by 1976-7, this had fallen to £1.5m. No increase is planned this year and none for next either. This is the result of the Labour government's spending cuts and their directives to local education authorities.

why we have to say publicly where we stand.

But the Executive unanimously endorsed **Composite P on Transport**, which demands the implementation of Clause IV (Paragraph 4) of the Party Constitution, the "nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange," moved by ASLEF and seconded by the NUR. Although right-wingers try to claim it is only the CLPs which are on the left, Composite P shows that the trade unions, too, are undergoing the same process of radicalisation.

Racialism

Racialism has become one of the most important issues in the last year, with the staging of provocative fascist marches and meetings and the high vote the NF got in some recent elections. The Annual Meeting has before it three composites on the need for a drive against the racials and fascists.

The motions differ on their approach. **Composite M** looks towards the use of the 1936 Public Order Act to limit fascist activities and condemns 'specifically racialist immigration laws.' In opposition to this, **Composite N** points out the use of laws like the 1936 Act is 'ineffective; such laws are often used instead to curtail the democratic rights of the labour movement.' How right this is can be seen from the right-wing Tories' demands for the Public Order Act to be used to stop the mass picketing of Grunwicks.

Police

Composite N argues that "only by the active mobilisation" of the labour movement can the racials and fascists be driven off the streets. We have seen how in Greater Manchester the police have actively helped the fascists by letting Webster stage his one-man march in Hyde and by arranging with them a secret route for their

march. This is why the composite is correct in not calling on reliance to be placed on the police.

Elections

Secondly, composite N opposes all immigration controls. While the composite does not put forward the socialist policies needed to expose the lie that immigration is the cause of the social problems we face (which paragraph 6 of **Composite L** hints at), it does stand out clearly against playing the 'numbers game'. Any arguments that immigration controls are needed are a concession to Thatcher's and the racials' policy of blaming immigration for capitalism's ills.

This Annual Meeting has an important job to do. It must outline the policies which are needed to rally support in the coming elections and answer the needs of working people. London Labour at this Annual Meeting has the opportunity to show the way to the rest of the Labour Movement. By passing the composites supported here, the Annual Meeting would arm the party with socialist policies and add to the mounting rank and file pressure on the Labour Government to alter its pro-big business course.

The adoption of Socialist policies by the Greater London Labour Party, and a determined campaign by the new Executive to win support for them, provides the only way forward in London. Otherwise we are in danger of facing the return of the Tories, locally and nationally, and the deepening of the miseries produced by a diseased capitalist economy.

Bob Labi

(Greater London Labour Party Executive)

Campaign on Socialist policies

Chaos

By Ed Bober

Labour won control of ILEA in 1970 on the promise of improved standards in schools. But their 'nil-growth' policy has created an accumulation of hidden problems that can only be solved by a massive injection of cash. In many schools, equipment has not been replaced. Money is urgently needed for such items as new projectors and laboratory equipment. Conditions in schools vary from area to area, but even the best equipped schools, on the present trends, can only look to the future with dread.

This is the background to the debate on education at this year's Annual Meeting. As the resolution from Hackney North and Stoke Newington points out, declining numbers of school students should be used as an opportunity to reduce class sizes, not a penny-pinching excuse to cut down on staff.

The ILEA got rid of 400 teaching jobs two years ago through "natural wastage". Now it plans to scrap a further 120 or so. The "supernumerary" staff that are being taken on for special teaching and pastoral work, should be an addition to the existing staffing levels, not instead of the teachers employed at present.

London Labour must stand in solidarity with the teaching unions and the NUSS. Class sizes should be immediately reduced to 25 at the highest. Special classes for technical subjects, art, etc. should consist of no more than ten or fifteen students a teacher.

The resolution from Orpington rightly calls for infant and nursery schooling to be extended. At present only the well-off can afford to guarantee their kids a good start in life with a good nursery school. This must be made available to everyone as a right.

This would be a means of

dealing with the problem of teacher unemployment. There are now 20,000 teachers on the dole. All in all, there are 40,000 trained teachers not making use of their teaching skills and talents. 32,000 of these are young people who have qualified over the last three years. What an indictment of the unplanned chaos of the system we live under!

The amendment from Lewisham West to resolution 48 on church schools rightly points out that at present the state pays for church schooling but has no control over it. However, it only meets the problem half way instead of getting to grips with it. Labour must fight for the complete abolition of the reactionary hold the church has over schooling.

All church schools must be immediately taken over and run by the state as part of a thorough democratisation of education.

The day-to-day running of schools should be under the control of democratically elected boards of academic and non-academic staff, students and the local trade union movement. The overall planning of education should be in the hands of the labour movement. This would end the present stifling grip of big business and its right wing allies in the church and local administration.

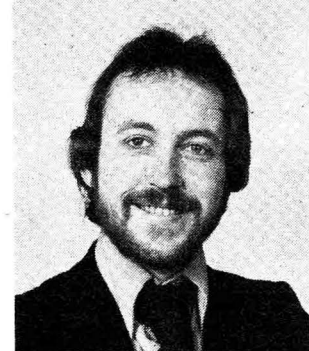
Anger and discontent is brewing among students, school students and teachers in the London area. The National Front have tried to capitalise on this with their racist campaign in schools. Fortunately, this has met with absolutely no response. But Labour must make certain that the conditions which breed discontent—overcrowding, poor facilities, and the factory-like atmosphere of big schools—are changed with socialist policies.



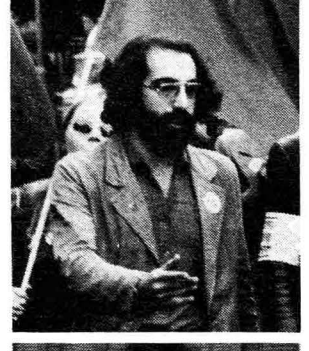
Area 1 ED BOBER, Hendon South CLP, (Vice-Chairman, National Organisation of Labour Students, member Regional Executive 1976/77)



Area 4 DAVID WHITE, Croydon Central CLP, (Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Croydon Central, GLC Councillor 1973/77, member Regional Executive 1975/6 and 1977/8)



Area 2 TOM DOYLE, Stepney and Poplar CLP (Paddington No 1 NUR; sitting member Regional Executive) BOB LABI, Hampstead CLP, (member Regional Executive 1971-78)



Socialist Societies PETER LUSH, National Organisation of Labour Students. (Hendon South CLP, Chairman London Region NOLS)

supporters are demoralised by the failure of the Labour government to carry out its promises.

SUPPORT THESE CANDIDATES!

We are standing for the Regional Executive as supporters of the 'Militant's' fight for the Labour Party to become an effective campaigning force in the interests of working people and the achievement of the socialist transformation of society.

The labour movement has to use all its strength to defend workers' living standards from attack. We are opposed to increases in rents, rates, fares and other council charges. We are against the policy of cutbacks or 'nil-growth' budgets. Britain has the resources to meet the needs of working people, to provide decent jobs, good homes, proper living standards and a secure future for all. What stands in the way of our achieving these aims is the profit system.

The labour movement must commit itself to ending the capitalist system now, not sometime in the dim and distant future. The labour movement must force the Labour government to carry out socialist policies and be prepared to replace any leaders who refuse to implement such policies.

The London labour movement has a special part to play in this struggle.

London can set an example to the rest of Britain.

London Labour councils must not increase their charges, not cut back their plans, but instead seek to use their position to popularly explain that it is big business which breeds the problems workers face.

Such a campaign, supported by the rest of the labour movement, could mobilise working people in a drive for socialist change and enormously aid the battle for the government to take socialist measures.

The Executive must actually take initiatives, lead campaigns and involve itself in leading the London labour movement. An all-out effort must be made in the fight against the Tories, both in the Boroughs and on the GLC. At the same time, we must fight for the socialist policies which

are required if we are to end the miseries of capitalism and to stop the Tories winning elections because Labour

CHAIRMAN GREETES 16-PAGE MILITANT

"I welcome all contributions to fuller and wider discussion of the basic issues to which the Labour Movement should address itself.

"Fundamental changes are needed in society. The gross inequality and imbalance in the distribution of wealth has to be remedied. Left newspapers and periodicals have a vital role to play in raising the level of political awareness.

"The expansion of 'Militant' is therefore timely and of value"

ARTHUR LATHAM
LABOUR MP FOR PADDINGTON

Councils forced to up rents, or rates

The whole labour movement campaigned against the Tory government's Housing Finance Act which attacked local authorities' autonomy over housing and imposed massive rent increases. Yet the present Labour government has resorted to very similar methods against a number of Labour-controlled authorities.

In theory, Labour's Housing Rent and Subsidies Act of 1975 repealed the reactionary aspects of the Housing Finance Act. In practice, however, local authority autonomy remains strictly limited.

Lambeth

Under the 1975 Act a new high cost subsidy (HCS) was introduced for inner-city authorities. But the Labour government has made it conditional on rent increases. This year, as in the two previous years, the eligible boroughs have been asked to raise rents by at least 60p to qualify for the HCS.

In Lambeth, for example, the HCS would be worth £2.2 million this year. A 60p rent increase would bring in only £900,000, so a rent freeze would mean a total revenue loss of £3.1 million, requiring a 10% rate increase to make up for it. The "rent condition" is therefore a powerful sanction in the hands of the government.

Nevertheless, in February the Lambeth Labour Group decided not to increase rents. Because rents had gone up in the previous two years and loan charges have fallen

because of slightly lower interest rates they felt a rent increase was not justified. But Lambeth rates will be going up 10%, largely as a result of the lost HCS.

Other London Boroughs, like Haringey and Lewisham, have also decided not to increase rents. Brent and Islington will probably follow suit.

The "rent condition" discriminates precisely against the areas with the worst housing problems, where it is most difficult for people to find decent accommodation at rents they can afford. This year, £18 million of an estimated HCS national total of £22 million, was supposed to go to a number of London Boroughs. The refusal, rightly, of most of these boroughs to raise their rents, makes nonsense of the government's policy.

Recently Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Environment, has stressed the government's policy of special aid to the inner cities to remove the problems on which racialism feeds. But the "rent condition" attached to the HCS is just another case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul", and actually adds to the problems of Labour authorities and council tenants.

The labour movement must demand an end to "rent conditions" and any other burdensome financial conditions attached to government aid to local authorities.

A London Borough
Councillor



What hope for the unemployed?

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

ETHIOPIA

What is happening in Ethiopia ?

By Lynn Walsh

In the last few weeks the Ethiopian regime has begun a massive counter-offensive against Somali-backed forces in Ogaden, the region of Ethiopia claimed by Somalia. From all accounts, vast quantities of Russian arms have been air-lifted in and the Ethiopian army has been stiffened with about 6,000 Cuban advisers.

World-wide predictions in the capitalist press that the Dergue's regime was about to collapse because of the war in Ogaden, the bloody battles in Eritrea and turmoil within Ethiopia, are being confounded.

Quite apart from the massive aid now being received from the Eastern bloc, the Ethiopian regime has acquired an enormous resilience through the land reforms and nationalisation measures which have given it a mass basis, particularly among the peasantry.

United States imperialism is incapable of intervening directly against Ethiopia in this post-Vietnam era. The capitalist powers have had to content themselves with secondary support for Ethiopia's enemies, mainly through the Arab states supporting sections of the Eritrean liberation movement and Somalia.

Yet while the Dergue has been consolidating its position and preparing for counter-offensives on two fronts, the country has certainly been convulsed by violent struggles. There has been a bloody struggle for power within the Dergue itself, while at the same time the Dergue has launched a savage repression against all its political opponents.

What, then, is going on in the Horn of Africa? The key to understanding the complex and rapid events undoubtedly lies in an analysis of the revolutionary changes which have occurred in

Ethiopia since the fall of Haile Selassie in 1974.

The Ethiopian revolution was set off in 1974 by a mutiny in the army. Profound discontent among the junior officers and in the lower ranks reflected a deep crisis in the feudal despotism of Haile Selassie. For the young officers—like the students and intellectuals who had already openly demonstrated their opposition to the regime—the Wollo famine, in which over 100,000 died early in 1974, became a symbol of all that was rotten and corrupt in Ethiopian society.

At first, the wider aims of the young officers were vague. Linked to their immediate demands for improved professional status was their desire for the thorough reform of archaic institutions to open the way to the modernisation of the country. But once they toppled the Emperor's own government, they unleashed powerful forces for change, unforeseen and beyond their control.

DERGUE SPARKS MASS UPEHAVAL

The Dergue, the provisional military administrative council, quickly took power into its own hands. Like its counterpart in Portugal, the Armed Forces Movement which brought down Caetano, the radical officers triggered off a revolutionary upheaval. Ferment among the soldiers, strikes by workers, the arousal of the cruelly exploited and oppressed peasantry, and demonstrations by the students, pushed the Dergue irresistibly to the left.

When the Dergue took over, however, they found that the levers of power had gone dead. As with the AFM in Portugal, they faced the complete crumbling away and collapse of the old regime. Far from developing the economy, capitalism and

imperialism, in so far as they had penetrated Ethiopian society, had only intensified its problems. Given the enormous pressure for change, bottled up for so long under Haile Selassie, the Dergue was forced to carry out fundamental social changes to ensure it kept its own position of power.

Each move of the counter-revolution, based primarily on the big landlord families which formed the backbone of the old ruling class, only served to push the Dergue forward. As the original, 'moderate' leadership of the Dergue hesitated and stalled they were pushed aside by the radicals, like Lt-Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, who were prepared to go the whole way. The pace of events, moreover, was accelerated by the crisis in Eritrea and Ogaden and the threat of intervention backed by the capitalist powers.

Thus, utilising the revolutionary energy provided by the mass movement of workers and peasants, the Dergue presided over rapid social changes which spelled the end of landlordism and capitalism and effected a decisive break with world imperialism.

Early in 1975 land reform

measures which ended feudal landlordism and chattel slavery were carried through. All the main industries and the banks were nationalised. Education and welfare began to be extended to much of the rural population for the first time. Peasant associations took over administration in many areas; and workers' and peasants' militias were formed "to defend the revolution."

Does all this, it must be asked, add up to a 'socialist revolution'?

THE DIRECTION OF SOCIAL CHANGE FROM ABOVE

As it implemented sweeping changes, the Dergue increasingly adopted Marxist language. It now describes itself as 'Marxist-Leninist'. In reality, however, the Dergue has nothing in common with the Marxism of Lenin and the Bolsheviks who led the Russian revolution.

The fundamental changes over which the Dergue has presided could not have happened without the intervention of the masses. But the country's barbarously low cultural level, the weakness of the working class and the absence of a genuine Marxist party, have meant the direction of the revolution from above by an officer caste drawn from the middle layers of society.

The weakness of world capitalism almost automatically ruled out the stabilisation of a new regime on a capitalist basis. Step by step, without any conscious strategy, the Dergue was pushed by the threat of counter-revolution and the pressure of the masses into taking 'socialist' measures. The language of Marxism was adopted after the event, as a rationalisation. Because the changes were directed from above, and were not determined by the democratic initiative and control of the workers and peasants, the Ethiopian revolution has from the very beginning taken a distorted form.

Compelled to break from the chain of world capitalism, the Dergue turned to the ready-made model of the deformed workers' states in Russia and

Eastern Europe. From the start, the officers adopted the bureaucratic methods and policies that came to predominate in Russia, after the isolation of the revolution and with degeneration of workers' democracy and the crystallisation of a bureaucratic ruling caste represented by Stalin.

Not only has the Dergue adopted the Stalinist model, but given the division of the world into two camps, dominated by US imperialism and the Russian bureaucracy respectively, the new Ethiopian regime inevitably gravitated towards the latter and already has become dependent on Russian aid and support. This can only mean that it will increasingly come to replicate its dominant counterpart in Russia.



Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Miriam

The abolition of landlordism and capitalism in Ethiopia is nevertheless a tremendous step forward. For the first time, millions of peasants have been lifted from the position of pack animals to play a part in the development of society. In spite of all the difficulties, the land reforms have undoubtedly given the Dergue an enormous fund of popularity among wide sections of the peasantry.

But the bureaucratic character of the regime makes it certain that the revolution will only be secured at enormous human cost. This has already been made clear in two key respects: (1) by the violent, repressive character of the



People's Militia: Armed Wonji Sugar Factory workers

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ETHIOPIA / SPAIN

NEXT WEEK: Part II

The Struggle in Eritrea
Ogaden and Somalia's Regime
and International Ramifications

internal political struggle; and (2) by the bloody national conflicts in Eritrea and Ogaden, which have turned the Horn of Africa into a new "cock-pit of the powers" (albeit by proxy as far as the US is concerned).

POLITICAL REPRESSION
AND BLOODY PURGES

In Ethiopia the revolution has been faced with fundamental tasks comparable to those of the Russian revolution of 1917:

(i) the carrying through of a fundamental land reform, historically the task of the capitalist class, but indefinitely postponed because of its extreme weakness and political incapacity; (ii) telescoped with the first task and all the changes that go with it, the nationalisation of modern industry, the key to socialist development and historically the task of the working class.

In Russia, the Bolshevik party led by Lenin and Trotsky based themselves on the small, but concentrated and well organised, working class which through its programme gained the support of the poor peasantry. The tasks of the revolution were carried out through the soviets of workers', soldiers' and sailors', and peasants' representatives, the most democratic institutions ever created. This alone guaranteed the defeat of the counter-revolution and the foreign capitalist intervention in the first period after 1917.

The Dergue, however is using the entirely different methods employed by the Stalinist dictatorship which usurped the democratic workers' control exercised through the soviets. Thus the internal political struggle in Ethiopia since the overthrow of Haile Selassie has been stained with bloody purges and horrifying repression.

DERGUE'S TERROR

In recent months the 'red terror' has reached unprecedented heights. "A figure of 80,000 to 100,000 political prisoners in all would probably fall short of the real number," writes 'Le Monde's' correspondent (16th February). Reports coming out of the country indicate that summary trials, public executions and night-time assassinations of the Dergue's opponents are the nightmarish norm.

The Dergue now brands most of its opponents as "members of the EPRP" (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party). Actively opposed to the regime before 1974, the EPRP, which was based mainly on students, welcomed the Dergue's social measures but expressed opposition to the military leaders' dictatorial methods. In Autumn 1976, the EPRP characterised the Dergue's regime as "fascist" and began to prepare a guerrilla struggle in the countryside.

It was the assassination of leading members of the Dergue by the EPRP which provided the justification for the government's bloody purge against the EPRP or suspected EPRP

militants. These mistaken tactics indicate that the EPRP is far from having a clear Marxist perspective. But because it offers virtually the only active opposition to the Dergue's dictatorship within Ethiopia, the EPRP has undoubtedly won significant support from young workers looking for a non-military, democratic road to socialist revolution.

For Marxists, the leading role of the working class, even in a country where they form a minority of the population, is of key importance. In Ethiopia, the trade unions based on the working class concentrated in the big (mainly textile) factories around the capital played a crucial part in destroying the old regime and in providing the steam to implement the Dergue's nationalisation measures.

Yet the Dergue soon showed itself hostile to the independent action of the workers. In December 1975, less than a year after it took over the 75 major companies, the Dergue decreed the abolition of the old Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions and its replacement by the state-controlled All-Ethiopian Trade Union, in which opposition to the Dergue was outlawed.



Brig. Gen. Teferi Bante—shot

Even in the countryside, where the regime is most popular, measures have been taken to curb the initiative of the masses. When the land reforms were carried out, peasant associations, or 'kebeles', were formed in many areas to supervise the reforms and take over local administration. More recently, these bodies, originally organs of popular power, have been transformed into agencies of control from above, acting as "committees of public safety" to suppress, exile, imprison, or execute all opposition elements.

Under Mengistu, the Dergue has also moved against the 'Marxist' intellectuals with whom it worked to begin with. When they first seized power, and were groping their way forward, the young officers looked to the intellectuals for support. As in other under-developed countries, the intellectuals exerted a disproportionate political influence. Intellectuals returned from exile in Europe supplied the Dergue with Marxist terminology and ideas. For a time, the Meison (All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement) a 'Marxist' party based on middle class intellectuals, acted almost as a civilian 'politbureau' to the Dergue.



Members of workers' and peasants' militia mobilised by the Dergue.

In January 1975, 40,000 students were sent to the countryside to help carry through the reforms, and played an important part in raising the political awareness of the peasantry.

Soon enough, however, the Dergue began to fear the rival influence of the intellectuals and the danger that they would channel deeper-rooted opposition. In the Summer of 1975, the Dergue recalled the rural 'Zematcha' of the students. It began to warn against the "dangers of ultra-leftism" and to identify "law and order" with the security of the revolution.

In October of last year serious fighting erupted in Addis Ababa, provoked by the execution in jail of the leaders of the Meison, which had previously been forced underground. Over 350 were killed in fighting in the capital in the space of a few days.

In November, the deputy head of state, Lt-Col, Atnafu Abate was deposed and executed. He himself had become vice-president of the Dergue the previous February, when Mengistu had replaced the former vice-president, Brigadier Teferi Bante, who had been executed. Thus, through a bloody internal struggle, Mengistu concentrated the leadership of the Dergue in his own hands.

Following this, the Dergue intensified its campaign against the EPRP. Gun battles became a nightly occurrence in Addis Ababa. Various reports suggested that over 3,000 students and workers were killed last November alone. "The purges among members of the EPRP have been much more drastic than the killings six months ago, when bodies, including those of children, were left by the roadside as a warning to the public," stated one report at the end of November.

These developments, continuing now, clearly testify to the bonapartist character of the Dergue and the complete lack of democracy in the new state organs created by the regime.

THE CHARACTER OF
ETHIOPIAN REGIME

Next week we will deal with the struggle in Eritrea; the war between Ethiopia and Somalia over Ogaden; the regime in Somalia; and the internal ramifications of the developments in the Horn of Africa.

Meanwhile, we have to ask: what attitude should socialists take to the momentous changes in Ethiopia in the last four years?

First, it is necessary to recognise the fundamentally progressive character of the social changes that have taken place under the Dergue. Landlordism and capitalism have been abolished. The fact that the Dergue was forced to carry through the land reform and the nationalisation of industry is proof of the utter inability of capitalism to develop countries like Ethiopia, and these measures provide the only means by which the country can be pulled into the modern world.

At the same time, however, it is equally necessary to adopt an implacably critical attitude towards the dictatorial, bureaucratic regime that has arisen from the revolution. Its reactionary, nationalistic position on the national question (which will we come to later) is the counterpart of its repressive role internally.

Ethiopia cannot be regarded as a socialist state, only as a deformed workers' state, in which new social relations corresponding to the interests of the working class have been established in a grotesquely distorted manner.

Some of the basic economic tasks of the socialist revolution have been taken on by military middle class leaders because such terrible social contradictions have developed that Ethiopia could no longer wait for change. Under the conditions of extreme backwardness which prevail in Ethiopia, a bonapartist leadership has been pushed into pre-empting the tasks of a genuine socialist leadership because of the weakness and isolation of the Ethiopian working class—and because of the long delay of socialist revolution in the advanced countries of western capitalism.

With its mass basis among the peasantry and aid from the Russian bureaucracy, it is very unlikely that the regime of the Dergue will fail to consolidate itself in the next period. But the revolution itself can only be taken forward through a struggle for democracy by the working class. Its demands must be:

- ★ Freedom of speech, assembly, and the press;
- ★ Democratic trade unions independent of the state;
- ★ Democratic workers' control and management of the nationalised industries;
- ★ Soviets of democratically elected workers', soldiers' and peasants' representatives;
- ★ The abolition of the army and the placing of the workers' and peasants' militias under the control of the soviets to defend the gains of the revolution;
- ★ The right of the peoples of Eritrea, Ogaden and other national minorities to self-determination;
- ★ For a Socialist Federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea and Somalia;
- ★ For a Socialist Federation of Africa.

Spain: time running out

"Time is running out for you fascists and bourgeoisie!" This was the slogan of 25,000 metal workers when they marched through the town of Gijon on the Bay of Biscay last week. They were marching for more pay, but their slogan clearly showed their opposition to the right wing government of Suarez, presently propped up by the labour leaders in parliament.

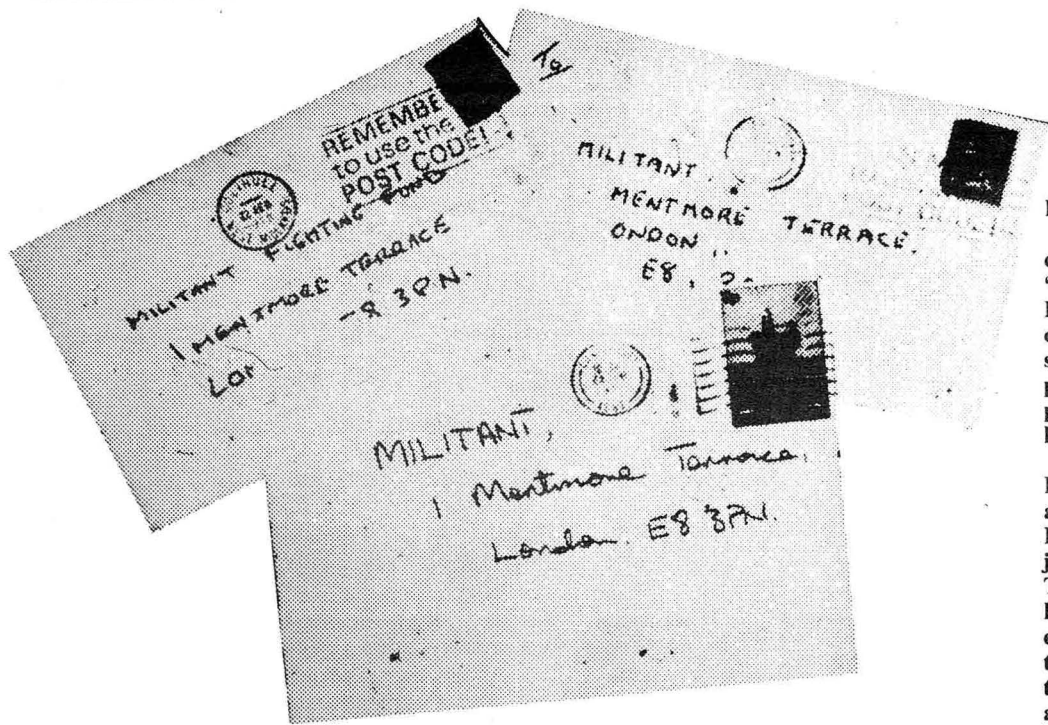
At the same time, ministers and government officials who were on the receiving end of hostile socialist slogans had to walk to work, or take taxis, as government chauffeurs joined the strike wave that involved well over 100,000 workers.

The biggest strikes were in the north, mainly in the key heavy industries. In Oviedo province, over 70,000 workers downed tools and bakers also went on strike.

In the steel-making towns of Aviles and La Felguera, steel workers demonstrated for better pay and against closures. Later, 9,000 workers at a big Bilbao steel mill also joined the strike wave.

In Pamplona, transport drivers have been on strike for over two weeks. In the Seville area in the south, it is reported that "flying pickets" of up to 300 strikers have been active in trying to get the support of other workers.

All this is the clearest possible indication of the mounting impatience and anger of the workers with the austerity measures of the Suarez government and the growing demand for the labour leaders to fight for socialist policies.



Letters

Unity - with whom?

Dear Comrades

Ian Close raised two important questions in his letter ('Militant', 3.2.78) concerning 'left unity' and whether 'Militant' was too optimistic in its perspectives for the socialist revolution in general, and the Spanish revolution in particular.

I certainly agree that it is essential to work towards maximum unity between those looking towards Marxism in the labour movement. But how is this to be done? We believe that the programme we put forward is the only one which can guarantee the unity of the working class in a common struggle to put an end to capitalism. Only a programme which is uncompromising in its defence of the interests of the working class can hope to secure its broad and united support.

I think Comrade Close underestimates the differences between ourselves and, for instance, the Communist Party. Take, for example, the CP's approach to the question of 'unity' as compared to our own. In order to build a 'broad alliance', the CP have made concessions to the right. They have taken

everything out of Marxism which they feel will offend those with whom they seek unity. They content themselves with a broad democratic alliance, behind a programme of making capitalism a little more bearable. When the battle lines between labour and capital are finally drawn, this spurious 'unity' would be torn asunder.

On the second question raised by Comrade Close, while we strive to arm our readers with a perspective of how events are likely to unfold, all perspectives are conditional on the actual course of events themselves. In the past we had wrongly forecast the tempo of the Spanish revolution. Nonetheless, we are convinced that the casting aside of the cowardly leadership of the workers' parties would mean the end of capitalism in Spain.

At best we can only estimate the actual tempo of the struggle for socialism, but in the final victory of the proletariat, in Spain as elsewhere, we have an absolutely unconquerable conviction.

Greg Oxley
Paisley CLP

Out of touch

Dear Sir

I agree with Ian Close (Letters, 3rd Feb) when he says the 'Militant' is rather optimistic with regards to the levels of political consciousness. I too am a new member of the Labour Party and I suspect that this may well have something to do with why I agree with such a statement.

There is a tendency, I believe, for those involved in politics to think that everybody is interested. This is hardly surprising since they tend to meet mostly those who are.

A degree of optimism is useful. Believing something to be can be almost as good as it actually being so. Good in as much as it enables the party to feel confident and thus able to act. However, it is very bad if not grounded in fact and shows a lack of communication between the people activists purport to be concerned about and the activists.

The result of this is the general cynicism most people express with reference to politics. They do not merely feel a sense of remoteness from the top levels of the power structure but also a sense of remoteness from

anything connected with politics.

Education of course is the answer. But how much of politics is presented in a jargon laden and rather dry manner.

Of course, politics will carry on, the Labour Party may hold power and the 'Militant' group may get its opinions accepted by the majority of the party, all without considering the large amount of indifference and frustration with politics people exhibit.

But to me that seems wrong and there is a need that too much optimism seems to be hiding. The 'Sun' may not be the most radical of newspapers but a lot of people read it and I'm sure there is something to be learned from that. It may be old hat to criticise the style of left wing publications but the devil in this case does have the best tunes, lousy words, but set out attractively.

Political indifference aids and is sought by the supporters of the status quo and so an attention to style is as necessary as the attention to the substance.

Yours fraternally
Lawrence Gray
East Sheen

NF—A Dangerous Threat

Dear Comrades

A recent incident at my school serves as an illustration of the poisonous influence of the ideas of the National Front and the publicity they receive in the national press and media.

A pupil was attacked by a gang of other pupils who had formed themselves into a 'National Front' meeting, for remarking that the NF were fascist thugs. There was no evidence of outside influence, of leaflets or NF organisers,

but the potency of the NF image is nevertheless shown.

How much more vicious would be their campaign to recruit school pupils or 'spot the red teacher'?

A Liverpool Teacher

Leyland

Jobs

Dear Comrades

After becoming rather excited over the possibility of a "revolutionary upheaval" in India after reading issue 393 of the 'Militant', I was suddenly reassured of our problems in Britain, and particularly the local ones here on Merseyside.

As you will all be aware, the Leyland bureaucracy are to axe 3,000 jobs in Speke, Liverpool. However, it's not just jobs that are being lost. This company is actually killing the livelihood [or what exists at the present time] of the workers, not only those that are employed there, but also those who will feel the repercussions of the shut-down.

Furthermore, I feel ashamed at having to work with some of the people I do, whose comments range from: "Well, what can you expect if you've been on strike for 16 weeks," and "It serves them right."

In Coventry, however, it appears to be something more concrete than just political backwardness, as this quote from the 'Liverpool Echo' indicates: "If the Liverpool workers march on our factory to stop the transfer [of work], they will be marching back with a few broken noses"—Frank Lee, production line worker.

Even though I don't work for Leyland or have any connection there I want to appeal through the pages of the 'Militant' to all our comrades who are employed by Leyland to create shop floor opposition to the cuts and their disastrous consequences.

It is here on the shop floor among the trade union rank and file that we must make an impact with our ideas as the only ones which will provide for all the true socialist alternative.

Yours fraternally
Steve Higham
Sec, Bootle LPYS

Crèches

At Work

Dear Comrades

I thought I would like to write to you about the South West NOLS pamphlet, 'Working Women and the Struggle for Socialism'.

Firstly, I want to say how welcome such a pamphlet is, especially since there is so little material on the subject which can be used throughout the labour movement. I assume that because this is a minority document it was written in reply to another document and this would explain why some of the issues, like 'wages for housewives' are dealt with which are not really, in my opinion, real issues within the working class movement.

What has prompted me to write is one demand with which I disagree. That is calling on 'employers' to provide crèches for employees. It seems to me that this particular demand is similar to that of tied cottages for agricultural workers. A woman with a crèche at the place of work could be tied to that job, and it might well hold her back from trade union struggles even where, as you suggest, the crèche is run by

the trade union. I think the demand must be for crèches run by the local authority. I'm sure you do not agree with private schools for children or private hospital beds, and to be consistent, we should not be calling for 'private crèches'.

In fact the working class has always been inventive in finding new ways to deal with their working life and my own union has, in the last year, forced our employer, the Post Office, to accept flexible working hours. This small reform has done more to ease the burdens for the thousands of working women in the industry than, for instance, the Labour government has done with all the various legislation in the present or previous Parliaments.

Thank you for producing the pamphlet. I am sure it will be helpful in moving women in particular to the ideas of socialism, and may help some of the male comrades to further understanding of the problems women face.

Ann Jones
Brighton

Chasing The Wrong Problem

Dear Comrades

One of the solutions put forward for Britain's high level of unemployment is the use of import controls. The textile industry is one of the areas it is said would benefit from such a policy. A recent report by Vincent Cable of the Overseas Development Institute shows up the false ideas of a policy of import controls.

He says: "The reaction of the producers and the government" and one could add some trade union leaders "to the imagined threat of developing country imports is quite disproportionate to its actual size or potential." The main cause for loss of jobs is not foreign imports but increased productivity. Between 1970-75, an annual increase in productivity of 3% caused a loss of 97,600 jobs in clothing, cotton textile fabrics, and textile yarns, while imports from the Third World caused a loss of 21,890 jobs.

Britain is a net exporter to developing countries of man-made and cotton yarns, synthetic fibres and high quality types of clothing. If textile machinery is included, Britain is a net exporter in the entire clothing and textile market.

The report shows up two main points. The call for import control in the textile field is clearly aimed at areas of low wages—the Third World. The only results of such a policy would be to increase unemployment in those countries or shift the marketing of goods to some other country thereby reducing Britain's market elsewhere. It would also run the risk of a trade war and adversely affect British exports both of textiles and textile machinery which instead of solving unemployment would make it worse.

The key point of the report is that it shows up one of the main causes of unemployment to be increased productivity which due to the slump in world trade can no longer be absorbed. Increased productivity means rising unemployment unless world trade continues to expand.

This point is a total condemnation of capitalism and shows that 'Tribune' and the 'Morning Star', which call for import controls are chas-

ing the wrong problem. Clearly the answer is public ownership and a shorter working week.

Bill Hopwood
Newcastle North CLP

Black- mail

Dear Editor

I was amused by this little quote from the 'Economist', February 11th 1978: "The Callaghan government has enforced its incomes policy more bravely than critics had expected. In the public sector it has made its stands tolerably near to its 10% guideline for maximum increases in earnings, while sensibly allowing a little cheating [for bogus "productivity deals" etc.] rather than face and lose too many strikes."

The rest of the article continues its snide attacks on the government's present policy and cites John Lewis stores, insurance companies and other offenders against the policy as being persecuted by Whitehall and told they should not be so naughty.

This is another case of where the government is forcing the hard-pressed public sector already hit by cuts and the hidden cuts, cash limits, to toe the incomes policy rigidly, whereas those with power and wealth can cheat!

It is also interesting to note that where a firm is black-listed for paying its employees more than 10% the union officials through the TUC and Labour Party must use financial blackmail to make sure the workers get 10% and no more unless they too can cheat! I thought unions were out to get as much for their members as possible and not to help redistribute the wealth back to the rich....

Yours fraternally
R Mitchell
East Renfrewshire LPYS

Breaching The Peace

Dear Comrades

Yesterday I travelled over to nearby Worthing to aid the local LPYS members to hand out anti-racist leaflets in the main shopping area as a part of the nation-wide campaign against the fascist National Front and their ilk.

We were soon confronted by a senior police officer and two constables, and were warned that our actions might constitute firstly, a possible incitement of a breach of the peace, secondly, obstruction of the pavement, and thirdly, action under pollution regulations because of the loud-hailer we were using.

Of course, it is to be welcomed that police chiefs are concerned to avoid breaches of the peace, obstruction, and pollution, but imagine my surprise when I got home and saw on the TV news the scenes in Birmingham, where thousands of police, at public expense, were enabling those who spread inflammatory racist propaganda to hold a rally in a city with a large immigrant population, producing the predicted anger from the people of the city and the scenes of violence [not to mention obstruction of the pavement]. Need I say more?

Yours fraternally
Dave Gartrell
Hove CLP

£20,000 NEEDED BY APRIL 1st

FIGHTING FUND CHART £70,000

Area	Target 12 wks	Target 52 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	1,260	4,400	11.75%	185.89
Hants & IOW	600	2,100	15.71%	97.10
Humberside	630	2,200	10.00%	141.97
Lancashire	430	1,500	28.67%	47.27
London: North	2,200	7,700	20.00%	485.98
London: South	1,080	3,800	25.10%	245.81
Manchester & District	830	2,900	28.62%	118.93
Merseyside & District	1,280	4,500	28.44%	317.38
Midlands East	1,260	4,400	11.75%	150.08
Midlands West	2,120	7,400	28.65%	439.22
Northern	1,400	4,900	28.57%	264.17
Scotland East	710	2,500	28.40%	199.10
Scotland West	830	2,900	28.62%	164.56
South East	660	2,300	28.70%	230.37
South West	660	2,300	28.70%	260.84
Thames Valley	480	1,700	28.24%	153.65
Wales East	570	2,000	28.50%	126.17
Wales West	660	2,300	28.70%	161.16
Yorkshire	1,480	5,200	28.46%	442.28
Others	860	3,000	28.67%	23.57
Total	£ 20,000	70,000	21.00%	4,255.50

Progress Towards year's target  Towards April 1st target 

FIGHTING FUND

DON'T JUST DREAM!

21% of first twelve weeks' target—
£15,744.50 to raise by April 1st
It can be done!

THIS WEEK'S TOTAL: £682.24

A 16 page Militant—that is a dream come true! But it has taken a long time to build up the resources to achieve.

It has been made possible only by a great deal of collecting of donations that workers have spared to build their press. Many sacrifices have been made.

Regular readers will know that we seldom get large donations; no members of the wealth capitalist 'fraternity' are very keen to support a paper that fights for the abolition of the system they thrive on! But, as that system gets deeper into crisis, more and more workers do want the facts, figures and analysis that the 'Militant' provides, to arm themselves in the fight against the bosses and for the establishment of socialism.

Every reader must ensure that more workers receive the 'Militant', that more and more sell the 'Militant' and that more and more donate the **maximum** they can afford to its fighting fund.

The situation is urgent. We are way below target for the vital £20,000 we need by April 1st. We therefore appeal to every reader to

To be exactly on target for April 1st every area should be 58% of the way. How is **your** area faring?

Eastern has just reached 15% (of its April target) with a total of £59.34 this week. P Murray of Harlow donated £10, D Chapman (Southend) £2 and £1s from H Cowdroy (also Harlow) and C Smole (London ISTC No 1). A raffle at work was R Dorham's way of contributing £2.40 to the 'Militant'.

Hants and IOW's line did not move this week and stands just 1% further on than Eastern. There is another £500 to get by April 1st!

Humberside has a similar amount to raise in the five weeks left before that date. This week's £17.65 from Hull included S Thomas' £5, J Atkinson's £1, and £9 from a curry party.

London—North and South—is still short of a quarter of the April target. Over £500 now has to come in each week compared with this week's combined total of just £160!

Particular thanks to J Franklin of Newham NE Labour Party for a 'tenner', M Wedderburn (CPSA), N Leach (POEU) and N Wumster (Hampstead) for their 'fivers', C Welsh for a £2 donation, Hackney Young Socialists for £3.50, S and D Wilken £7, C O'Callaghan (POEU) £1.90, N Prendiville (Paddington) £2 and F & B Kidd (Wandsworth GMWU) for their fortnightly £2. A collection from readers at Frigidaire amounted to £1 and "putting nine people into a mini" in Lewisham raised £1.90 for the 'Militant'!

Manchester and District supporters have a hard task ahead with over £700 to raise by April 1st. They are 14% of the way and sent only £4.32 this week!

Merseyside's line moved by £40's work of donations and is a quarter of the way to the April target. Individual donations included a 'fiver' from T Hughes of Bootle, £2 from S Harrison, £1s from A M Oven and G Morris, £1.30 from D Reid and £2 from C Jeffries.

Midlands' total increased by nearly £45, leaving over

celebrate the "new arrival" with the biggest present for the 16-page 'Militant' that they can possibly afford. Put **your** donation in the post today!

"£1-a-page" (£16) from every reader would be marvellous! If you can make it a 'tenner' for each page—even better! But if you can only manage 10p or 1p a page, we will welcome your £1.60 or 16p just as much.

Whatever you do, make sure that, now the price is 12p, every copy is sold for more than that and the extra put into the fighting fund. Ask for £1! P McEvoy of Wakefield paid that for his 'Militant' last week when it was only 12 pages! Young Socialists in Nottingham paid 50p and so did plumbers' shop steward T Bickle of South London.

Ask everyone to help the 'Militant'. Keep a note in the new Quarterly Collector's card of who gives you what each week. That's what a Harlow supporter has done for "week ending 17.2.78" and sent £2.87.

YOU try! Don't just dream! Give us the cash to make YOUR dreams come true!

£200 to get each week on average to reach the April 1st target. If two Leicester students on meagre grants can donate £10 each and an unemployed Young Socialist—J Amin—can give 50p, others can surely follow their example.

W Midlands supporters sent a welcome £125 this week, but it still takes them only to 21% of the first target. Contributions included £6.30 from a sponsored walk in Banbury, £11.25 from Rover, Solihull, £4 from a UPW member attending a weekend school, over £18 from fund-raising of all sorts in Stafford, a 'fiver' from P Hackett of Coventry, a £1 birthday present, and £10 from the Wolverhampton area.

Northern region has to raise an average of over £200 a week in the next five weeks, standing at 19% of the April target. £15 was raised in New castle through a jumble sale and £3.90 from "record sales at a disco". But the most important source of this week's £72.62 was individual contributions from, among others: G Pitcher, P Ayres, J Atkinson, H Bell, C Bell, A Bell, V Campbell, N Lillie (£5), A Mahoney, B Thompson, S Powell, R Wilson and K and R Worrel. Many thanks, comrades!

E Scotland's total went up by £26.76 to achieve 28% of the first 12 weeks' target. Readers donating included J Bull £5, OAP P Burke, 60p, K McIntyre (Aberdeen) £2, A Duff 50p and various others at a Dundee discussion group, at LPYS meetings, student gatherings, sales of the 'Militant' etc.

W Scotland's line stands at 20%—literally! It did not move this week! **South East's** is a healthier 35% but also did not move this week. No area can afford to stand still and the 'Militant' cannot afford a shortfall on its income!

South West supporters understand this and are ahead of the field with 40% of the Easter target. £8 was donated by M Dewdney, a Plymouth building worker, £1 by J Lygo and 50p by B Shaw (both Torquay readers), £1.50

from Taunton reader L Marston, £2 from S Morris and £1 from 15-year old N Coulson (both Gloucester LPYS). Taunton supporters have adopted a drink tax for the 'Militant' of 5p per drink, following Gloucester's example. Gloucester supporters have gone one further and are now imposing a tax on swearing—5p a word!

Thames Valley's line is 32% of the way with just £10 this week from "R Betteridge and others" in Bracknell. An average of more like £70 a week must come in now to reach the target for the next five weeks.

E Wales needs nearly £90 a week and only £8.45 arrived this week. £2 was from supporters in Plasnewydd Labour Party and 75p from 'a YS skittles match'. There must surely be many more sources of funds for the 'Militant' in this area.

W Wales likewise! With 24% achieved, more than £10 has to be found each week. Port Talbot sent a welcome £6 and £4 came from Swansea, but that was all.

Yorkshire's line is keeping on the move this week, reaching 30% of the target with another £53 this week—£14 from a "snow storm social" in Sheffield, £5.50 collected at a meeting in York and £9 at a social in Huddersfield. Keep it up and step it up!

Send all donations to the Militant Offices, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN, showing clearly which target area they are from. Closing date for each week's fund total is now Saturday. Make cheques and POs payable to 'Militant'. All other forms of donation gratefully received—savings and trading stamps, cigarette coupons, book tokens, gift vouchers, luncheon vouchers, foreign currencies, postage stamps etc. Watch this page for more ideas. Send us a letter about ways of raising money. Order 'Militant' collector's cards from the same address as above.

Whatever you do, don't delay!

Militant Meetings

COVENTRY

Militant Readers' Meetings are now on the second Monday of each month, beginning at 7.30pm at the 'Elastic Inn', Lower Ford Street, Coventry (opposite Theatre One).

'Do Wages Cause Inflation? Has Wage Restraint Succeeded, and How Do We Fight Back?' Monday, March 13th. Speaker: Jeremy Birch (Militant Editorial Board).

'The National Health Service—How It Was Built and How It's Being Cut.' Monday April 10th. Speaker: Ian Burge (Secretary, London Hospital JSSC).

South West Labour Party Annual Conference 1978: 'Militant' Public Meeting 'Socialist Policies Now!' Time: 12.45 to 1.45 pm

Place: The Sedgemore Room, The County Hotel, East Street, Taunton. This is a room in the same hotel as the conference itself.

Speaker: Phil Frampton (National Committee of the LPYS, Delegate, Bristol NELP)

Chairman: Pete Hammond (Candidate for Avon REC, Delegate, Bristol SE LP)

NEATH VALLEY

Militant Discussion Groups Resolven: further details: Peter Harris, 95 John Street, Resolven
Glynneath: Further details: Derek James, 21 Avon Street, Glynneath.

HARLOW

Militant Public Meeting 'Health Service Crisis—cuts are inevitable, is there an alternative?'

Speakers:

Ian Burge (Sec, London Hospital JSSC)
Dave Smith (Essex Area NUPE official)
Danny Purton (Harlow Trades Council)
Thursday 9th March, 7.45 pm
Town Hall, Harlow

SOUTH WALES

Militant Summer Camp 26th-29th May, 1978 (Spring Bank Holiday)
Horton, Gower, Nr Swansea
Political Programme:

1. The Marxist Method
2. The Class Nature of the Soviet Union.
3. What is Fascism?
4. World War—Future Prospects
5. Marxism and the Trade Unions.

Book Now!

Cost £6.50 per person (Cheques payable to R Sewell)
Further Details:
R Sewell, 99 Penderry Road, Penlan, Swansea. Tel: 33542

MANCHESTER

Militant Readers' Meeting 'The Workers Struggle in Ireland'

John Throne ('Militant Irish Monthly' Editorial Board)
Monday 13th March, 8.00 pm
Room RD1, Renold Building, UMIST, Near Sackville Street, Manchester

RATES

CLASSIFIED: 5p per word, Minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by **SATURDAY**.

Payments must be sent with advertisement. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to 'Militant'.

LPYS Conference. Islington has 10 places available in a b&b near conference hall. £3.75 with bar. Anyone interested please ring Dave Cartwright. Day: 01-353 7474, ex. 3357. Night: 01-607 8613.

Rochdale, Royton and Heywood Labour Parties joint march and rally against racialism. Saturday 11th March. Assemble 12.30. School Lane, Rochdale. Rally at Cronceyshaw Common. Speakers: Max Maddon MP, Sardul Singh and Gerry Lerner.

SHEFFIELD

Militant Readers' Meeting 'The Situation in South Africa' 7.30 pm, Monday 13th March At the Prince of Wales Pub, Division Street, Sheffield
Speaker: Leon Kaplan (Rotherham Labour Party)

Publications

Hastings Militant Supporters new Militant Index. Issues 268-372. 20p + p&p single copy. Bulk orders welcome, 20p each + 20% p&p. Available from G Clyde, 61 St Georges Road, Hastings TN34 3NH

What did you do in World War II, Comrade? Read 'Resistance and Revolution in Europe in World War II', by Lesley Thompson. Published by Brighton 'Militant' Supporters, price 20p + 7p postage; ten copies or over, post free. From J Walsh, 252 Freshfield Road, Brighton.

MILITANT PUBLICATIONS Just Out!

Leon Trotsky—Against the Stream (with an introduction by Bob McKee). Price 20p plus 5p postage.

New Reprint:

'Will There Be a Slump?' Article written in 1961 by Ted Grant. Price 15p plus 5p postage. Order now from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

TRADE UNION

DISCUSSION GROUPS
NEATH: Full Moon Pub, The Parade, Neath. Every Tuesday, 7.30 pm.
PORT TALBOT: The Progressive Club, Station Road, Port Talbot. Every Thursday, 7.30 pm.
PONTARDULAIS: Kings Public Bar. Every Tuesday, 7.30 pm.
AMMANFORD: The Welfare Club. Every Monday, 8.00 pm.

NEW PAMPHLET 'Marxist Economics'. Four articles on Marxism In Our Time: Crisis of World Capitalism; Decline of British Industry; Inflation. Produced by Blyth LPYS. Price 20p. Order from I Mearns, 8 Church Street, Cramlington Village, Northumberland.

Richmond LPYS Disco. Saturday 4th March, Derby Arms, 565 Upper Richmond Road, West, S.W.14. Admission 40p.

Classified Adverts

Youth Campaign Against Unemployment AREA MEETING 'Fight Unemployment'

Speakers:
Emlyn Williams (President, S Wales NUM)
Nick Bradley (LP NEC)
May Trodd (DHSS Section Executive Committee, CPSA, personal capacity)
Phil Lloyd (POEU Regional Committee)
Saturday 11th March
11.00 am-4.30 pm
at Vaccari's Restaurant,
26 Windsor Road, Neath
For further details contact:
Julie Morgan,
31 Approach Road,
Manselton, Swansea

A FIGHTING CHALLENGE

Ron Brown, Convenor at Parsons Peebles Ltd, and a member of Leith Labour Party, is standing in elections for the AUEW Division No 3 [East of Scotland] organiser. This is an extract from his Election Address.



Ron Brown

Brothers and Sisters:

It is no good electing someone who says he is against politics in the Union, and yet goes on to defend Government policy which attacks real wages and other hard-won rights.

Whether I have negotiated with management in the private or nationalised industries, as well as with Government ministers, I have always believed that the interests of working-class people come first.

That is why as a Labour member of the Lothian and Borders Fire Board I publicly backed fellow workers in the fire service during their fight for a living wage.

WHAT THE CRISIS MEANS

As every AUEW member knows from the declining buying power of wages, there is an economic crisis in this country—as well as in other industrial countries like America, Japan and West Germany. The so-called British 'disease' of mass unemployment, under-investment and stagnant production is now international, proving once again that 'greedy' workers are not responsible for the problems of the British economy.

Indeed, if proof is needed, then anyone in doubt should remember the Social Contract period when cuts in living standards were foisted on to the working people by a combination of TUC leaders and Government who claimed that this was necessary to cure inflation, and to protect the low paid and pensioners. Instead of helping workers, these sacrifices simply meant higher profits for big business who were not convinced that they should invest in modern plant. As for wage rates, it will come as no surprise to many members that Britain is away down the earnings league, even being beaten by countries like France and Italy.

THE ANSWER

As a Labour Party member, it is obvious to me that the real answer is along the following lines—

- against wage controls: for a £70 basic wage.
- against redundancies: for work sharing.
- for a 35 hour week.
- for wages linked to rising prices.
- for full sick and pension schemes.

These are realistic demands—particularly as the National Committee are considering some of them at the present time. But the AUEW should also be pressing for the implementation of Clause 4 in the Labour Party's constitution if a real Socialist plan of production is to tackle the slump in trade.

To win this fight we must take the commanding heights of the economy out of the hands of the monopolists and place them under workers' control.

SHOP STEWARDS

Unity is strength and I believe that the maximum team effort must be built up in every place of work where there are AUEW members, and the backbone of this effort will obviously be the Shop Stewards. Because some officials can become petty dictators I want to see an active and strong Shop Stewards' Movement in order to counterbalance any move towards the hardline regime that operated in the past.

MEMBERS AND DEMOCRACY

Members are the Union. I recognise that changes in administration—particularly Check-off—have tended to discourage members from participating at Branch and other levels of activity, and to counteract this trend I believe that the utmost must be done to attract members into playing a more active part within our organisation.

The future and the preservation of the AUEW's democratic traditions depend on the apprentices and young workers, and because of that I will encourage these members to use their energies on behalf of the AUEW.

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE

The argument for postal election was that they were more democratic. Whether you agree with that or not the fact is many members do not use their vote. Perhaps the main reason is that members do not always see the Election Addresses contained in this booklet. Whatever the reasons I hope that you will vote and, equally important, will urge your workmates to vote.

Save The Shipyards

At the People's Theatre in Newcastle on March 8th 750 delegates are expected at the biggest ever conference of shipbuilding workers.

Organised by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, it will discuss issues of vital concern to an industry which faces devastation unless a clear lead is given by the Confed. leaders.

The EEC Commissioner for Industry, Viscount Davignon, has revealed the way the employers are thinking. His plans aim for a 46 per cent reduction in the capacity of the industry in Western Europe by 1980!

To achieve that figure, between 10,000 and 15,000 jobs would have to go each year. It is in line with a plan by the Japanese to reduce the capacity of their shipbuilding industry by 50 per cent by the end of 1979.

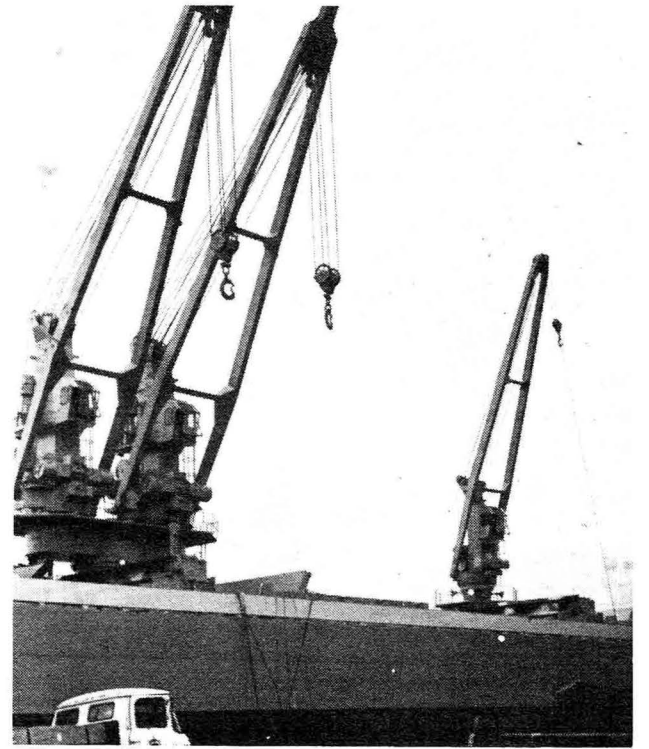
Talks are taking place between the management and the Confed Officials about a redundancy scheme, and a special Act of Parliament is being passed to implement it. So far no details have been published, but the signs are ominous.

One of the most likely proposals is a plan for early retirement. This many well appeal to many, especially if there is a big carrot in the form of redundancy payments. It is, however, a thoroughly dangerous scheme. While we are all in favour of older workers having the right to voluntary retirement, provided they suffer no financial loss, there must be no question of compulsory early retirement. Workers who have given years of work to the industry cannot simply be thrown on to the scrapheap, just to suit the convenience of management!

Redundancies

We must not allow early retirement to be used as a form of disguised redundancy. One of the main arguments in favour is that it will make jobs available to young workers on the dole, and thus protect the future of the industry. But if older workers who retire are not replaced, it will do nothing to improve the terrible plight of the unemployed youth, but will jeopardise the future viability of shipbuilding.

At the conference the



demand must be taken up for no reduction in manning levels, linked to the demand which is already Confed policy for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, longer holidays and shorter night shifts. The workers at Robb Caledon, Dundee, gave their unanimous support to a resolution opposing redundancies, and this is the stand which the leadership must be made to stick to!

Rates

No less crucial is the debate on wages. At stake is the Confed. claim for a minimum time rate of £70 for skilled men and £55 for labourers. At present these rates are £42 and £33-60 respectively; the small increases over the last three years have not been consolidated into the basic rate on which overtime, holiday pay and various bonuses are calculated. The main aim of this claim is to consolidate all these increases in the basic, as well as a straight wage rise.

This claim, which includes the points about the 35-hour week etc. provides an excellent basis for a fighting campaign to win a decent wage for shipbuilding workers and get back at least some of the wages lost in three years of wage restraint. It provides an excellent opportunity for the whole workforce to come together behind one claim for the industry, and put an end to all the anomalies that have beset wage bargaining in this

industry, between yards, between trades and even within yards as at Swan Hunter.

However, it will not be an easy battle. Management are already starting to act as if nothing had changed. Their policy of giving "autonomy" to each yard is being used as a device for the old trick of "divide and rule". Their reply to the national claim has been a derisory £52 for skilled and £40 for labourers, well below even the government's 10 per cent "guideline".

They argue that this offer will be added to in local negotiations, which will take increases up to the 10 per cent ceiling. Their aim is made brutally clear by the way they played off one yard against another when allocating the Polish order.

Unity

Now that shipbuilding is nationalised, the unions have an unprecedented chance to reject this approach, and establish a Joint Union Committee in every yard; fight for a joint national claim and a common date for settlements.

If that is achieved it will be a victory for the workers in the industry, but the leadership of the Confed must then mobilise the workers in action behind the claim, and prove that unity is the only way that the jobs and living standards of the workers can be guaranteed.

Alex Allen
(Finishing Trades
Convenor, Robb Caledon)

ATHLETICS AT GEC

As reported in last week's 'Militant', GEC obtained re-possession of the Computer room at Stoke Works on Wednesday 22nd.

The company had hoped for a return to normal working, but the computer operators also withdrew their labour. Their outstanding claims, having exhausted negotiating procedures, have received contingency support for action from the NEC of ASTMS.

Although the claims of computer operators are independent of those of 300 storemen on strike, storemen are heartened by what they see as timely support and a part of

the same dispute over low wages.

On the morning of Monday 27th most of Telephone Road main office block was occupied by resourceful storemen. However, the occupation turned into a pyrrhic victory for the company. Managers' men infiltrated and the building was retaken.

In this skirmish managers made a breach into the building by being given a leg-up and over ground floor window sills. They tried to use a ladder to scale a possible place of entry.

The storemen retreated peaceably, leaving the managers to regain their lost

dignity—and breath!

The T&GWU and AUEW have now lodged a complaint with the Department of Employment that GEC Telecommunications Ltd is not observing the Fair Wages Resolution. Eventually the Central Arbitration Court will hear evidence from the unions and the company.

Last week, Mr Trollope, Arnold Weinstock's personal troubleshooter, ventured into Stoke Works territory. It is understood that he returned disarmed and empty-handed.

Alan Johnson
(ASTMS, GEC, Stoke,
Coventry)

Convenor Sacked

"We are prepared to stay out for as long as is necessary."

This was the response of one of the stewards on the picket line to the sacking of AUEW Convenor Steve Blair.

This is the first dispute in the 40 or more years' history of Gill and Mentor, a kitchen ware manufacturer in Sutton Coldfield.

The Convenor was sacked after being suspended for a week without pay for an alleged fight.

This fight was so violent that the other person involved made no complaint, and according to one of the stewards was no more than a

finger clipping the back of another worker's head.

The real reason lies in the fact that the convenor has over the last two years been the driving force in unionising, to the chagrin of the management of this previously unorganised firm. As one of the stewards put it: "if your face fits, you know Bill the Works Manger, are his neighbour or relation, a well-paid job will be found for you at Gill and Mentor. A liking for boot polish is also helpful."

Management have made unfounded allegations that a couple of the young pickets let

a tyre down and smashed some scales. Management have also been making lists of those taking part in picket duty.

The dispute is official. Production is slowly grinding to a halt, although eight AUEW members have blacklegged. They will be blacked on a return to work.

All trade unionists should black supplies to and goods from Gill and Mentor [Probus] until reinstatement is won.

Brian Debus
(Erdington Labour Party)



WORKING IN A UNION

By Dick Massey

When I first became active in the working class movement I made the mistake that I feel sure a great many young comrades will make.

I allowed my enthusiasm to over-rule my judgement and in consequence, found I had almost divorced myself from my workmates. Youthful enthusiasm does play a tremendous part in the working class struggle, enthusiasm sells ideas, builds confidence, it is infectious and will win the victory. But to comrades who fail to learn to temper their enthusiasm it can lead to a setback in their work in the movement.

I started work in London where I first became active as a trade unionist. Not having any previous experience, my enthusiasm to win fellow members over to trade union membership was allowed to get out of hand.

Never an opportunity was missed to discuss the political situation or tell of the advantages of the closed shop. At first there was interesting discussion, this waned until I found that I was being avoided. The truth gradually dawned—I had left myself with virtually only one topic of conversation and I needed very much to re-adjust. I discussed my situation with other comrades and had to climb a long hard road.

Fortunately I was able to change my job. Determined not to repeat my mistake, I had to discipline myself and learn to mix more with my workmates, participate in their everyday conversation and interests. Some few weeks later there had been a budget, which as usual did nothing to help the workers. I found this the main topic of conversation and I was asked my opinion about it. I gave it and was pleasantly surprised when later in the day two of my mates approached me and asked me to tell them more about a socialist approach to the budget, and socialism as an alternative to the capitalist system of society.

I was able to win these comrades over to take an active part in the movement to build up trade union membership and win recognition. I had learned that football, darts, gardening, motor-cycling and the thousand and one interests of the working class are just as important to the workers in discussion as politics.

When you know your subject, whatever it may be, and have the ability to express yourself, you can soon hold an audience. Be serious in your politics and trade union business but please, *most important*, preserve your sense of humour. Remember that when your opinion is wanted, it will be asked for on any subject that workers discuss, and they do discuss politics quite a lot.

POWER WORKERS: All Out Action Needed

Steve Waterfield of Newham South CLP spoke to Steve Wicken, a craftsman at West Thurrock Power Station about the present dispute between the government and the power workers.

Q: What is the background to the present dispute?

A: A tradesman on day shift has to work Saturday and Sunday, three weekends in every four and our basic pay is only about £40 although with outer London weighting and productivity we get about £80. Overtime is paid on the basic rate of 95p per hour.

Q: What demands have you made of the government?

A: We want productivity to be included in our basic wage. We also want an increase in the basic wage itself. The offer made to us so far works out at about £7 for a man on my grade.

Q: What is the feeling of the other workers in your station?

A: Most of the workers on the shop floor are not satisfied with the offer, but don't feel that it is necessary to strike. They feel that a ban on overtime and a work to rule are enough to pressurise the government to recognise our case.

Q: What are your feelings in this respect?

A: I feel that government have shown against the firemen that they are determined to hold down wages in the public sector at all costs. *It is clear that the government won't give up without a fight. Therefore if we are determined to win our claim, we will have to take the strongest possible action.*

Q: Should strike action be necessary, the Tories and their friends in the press will be crying crocodile tears for the old age pensioners, hospital patients etc. who might suffer. With this in mind, how would you justify your action?

A: Firstly, our claim is in the future interest of the industry, because there is no incentive for workers at our station to take on extra responsibility and training because

the differentials for our grade are so low. There is a tremendous amount of waste, and power workers have been made redundant but pensioners still have to freeze in winter because they cannot afford large electricity bills.

The hypocrites in the press only remember the old and disabled when they can use their plight as a stick to beat trade unions with. They should devote some of their pages to campaigning for a decent pension and better conditions in hospitals instead of criticizing workers all the time.

We have parents and grandparents who are OAPs and our own families would suffer just as much as anyone else during power cuts. We don't want to inconvenience the public but if we allowed that to be our only consideration then we would never be able to take industrial action.

Q: Some people might accuse the power workers of trying to bring down a Labour government and say that you should be loyal to Labour. How would you answer that criticism?

A: I am an active member of the Labour Party and would like to see Labour in at all times. But, I believe that a Labour government in power should be making improvements in the living standards of ordinary workers, not attacking them. *It is the pursuance of Tory policies by a Labour government which will make working people disillusioned in it and cause its downfall, not the actions of workers trying to defend their living standards.*

Q: What do you think of 'Militant's' demand for a minimum basic wage of £60 for all and at least a £15 rise all round, tied to the cost of living?

A: I think that a minimum wage is a fundamental right that all people should have. Certainly no-one could live a decent life on less than that. It is the duty of the trade unions and Labour Party to fight immediately for this demand. The whole of the boss class would fight tooth and nail against it, so we would have to match them with all the muscle of organised labour.

TYPHOO SUBSIDIES

Typhoo Tea is to close after all. At least that's the decision of the Cadbury Schweppes Board of Directors.

The Bordesley Street, Birmingham works is to be phased out and the work transferred to the Moreton plant near Wallasey, in Cheshire.

Not that a phased closure is any consolation to the 600 Birmingham workers. Already there are 41,014 out of work in the city.

But as if losing your livelihood isn't bad enough, the real rub is that the policies of the Labour Government have actually encouraged the Cadbury's food and drinks giant to move tea production out of the Midlands.

The government is paying Cadbury's £1 million to take jobs away! They're getting Investment Grants, Temporary Employment Subsidy and other financial relief. For Moreton is a development area, where unemployment is way above the average.

Jim Kelly (AUEW Convenor) told me "we would not mind new industries moving to these areas, but what's the point in moving old industries and creating unemployment somewhere else?"

The biggest joke of all is that 600 Birmingham jobs will disappear, but less than 300 new vacancies will be created at Moreton! So the Labour Government is paying Cadbury's to rationalise its undertakings.

The scandalous misappropriation of funds, which the Typhoo events expose, must surely put paid in anyone's mind to the 'benefits' these policies of subsidising private enterprise have brought. Big business gains every way round, and is making a mockery of the faith the working class puts in its Government.

The workers of Typhoo though, have by no means given up the fight to keep their factory open. What should they do now?

Unfortunately attempts to mount a joint campaign with the Moreton stewards to retain everyone's job have as yet failed. "It's the age-old story of divide and conquer," said Jim Kelly.

Politics

The new metrication machines, which ever since metric standardisation were first discussed were earmarked for Bordesley Street are being installed at the other plant. Clearly blacking of these machines by the workers in Cheshire would stop management in their tracks.

For the Birmingham workers, if they don't move quickly it will be too late. Already the possibility of an occupation or a strike has been debated.

They must fire all the blistering ammunition about how Cadbury's is taking the government for a ride. They must rouse the labour and trade union movement in the city, against the firm. Perhaps themselves calling a local Labour Movement Conference to draw other workers actively into the campaign to 'Save Typhoo'.

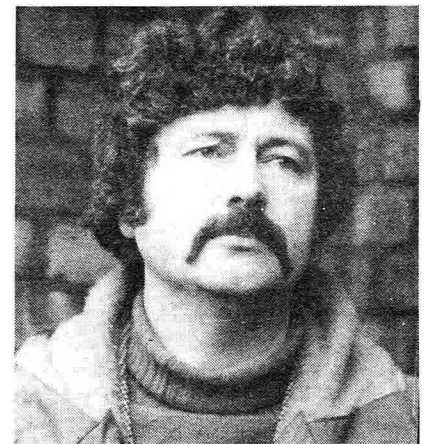
But in this campaign the political issues must also be brought to the fore. Typhoo's manipulation of Government funds is itself political. Pressure must be exerted on the Government to withdraw these monstrous subsidies. The firm's utter callousness towards the plight of those having to work for it, must be answered by the demand for the nationalisation of Cadbury's.

Jeremy Birch

(Selly Oak LP)

SPEKE DISPUTE ENDS

THE FIGHT GOES ON



Mick Everett

“Being trade unionists our responsibility lies with the people of Merseyside and not just with those people who are holding down jobs at Speke. Those jobs, as far as we are concerned, belong to everybody on Merseyside.”

The national officers have made a pointed statement to Varley, that in no way will Speke No 2 plant close. If that is going to be the continuing obsession of Edwardes, that the plant does close, then there will be a broadening of the whole issue in relation to No 2 plant, to keep the jobs alive.

Control

At this stage Varley has intimated that he was not prepared to get involved with managerial business;

that is Mr Edwardes' job and that's what he has been put in office to do. It is the business of the trade unions to go in and influence Mr Edwardes and change his mind, or put other types of work in Speke No 2.

MICK EVERETT [TGWU Convenor, Speke] spoke to TERRY HARRISON

We had a meeting with all the unions [ASTMS APEX etc. included] and they have agreed to support one another in a venture to keep the plant open—setting up of some kind of action committee with all the unions involved.

The supervisory unions also are not prepared to see

Speke close because they take the viewpoint that 600 jobs is no different from 6,000.

The other important feature is that the national officers are setting a meeting up with Mr Edwardes sometime next

week. The unions, including the Speke No 2 senior stewards, will be invited to put the Liverpool case. We are waiting for that. We hope we might get some success out of it.

Back In

This morning's meeting basically was to get the lads

back to work. Our lads have been away from the scene so long. **Once they are back, we will be expecting the membership and the stewards to use every minute and every hour that's available to have group discussion and seminars to convince people that the way they have reacted today at this mass meeting, we are hoping to change their mind.**

That's the way we view the situation.

Settlement

The settlement for the dispute was: first: manning levels to be agreed before we went into the plant. We were here until 2 am on the third day with the national officers, Grenvil Hawley and Terry Duffy, who did a sterling

job. We got agreement in practically every area.

Gain

We are not operating temporary agreements. If you take the viewpoint that the plant is closing then that's a temporary agreement anyhow. The company will recognise the PEP agreement, once we are in the plant. We are going to use the PEP as a vehicle, to honour all the difficulties arising out of manning levels.

What we won hands down on was the unity that was sown over 17 weeks of the dispute. There was a little bit of hostility this morning, but common sense prevailed. But we've still got the threat of the plant closure over us.

ONLY WORKERS CAN

DRIVE NF OUT

McNee's ban: "a double-edged sword" says NF boss Martin Webster.

Ilford North on Saturday once again illustrated the inherent dangers to the labour movement that exist in the application of the Public Order Act. With all demonstrations being banned the Front decided to hold a mass canvass.

With over 5,000 police on duty, backed up by mounted police, riot shields and helicopters etc. it gave the police chiefs yet another chance to experiment with the best methods of containing, ruthlessly if need be, the Anti-Racist demonstrators. Yet another exercise in preparation for the major industrial battles that loom ahead.

Police Cordon

At 12 o'clock the anti-racist demonstrators met outside Seven Kings Station. After a rally they dispersed to their allocated areas to distribute Anti-Nazi League leaflets. Three miles away in Barking-side the police were putting the finishing touches to their contingency plans. The school where the NF were to hold their so-called public meeting was ringed by a cordon of 2,000 policemen.

The main shopping centre in Barking-side, with shop windows boarded, was unnaturally deserted, save for police and groups of NF thugs dressed in heavy boots and commando style uniforms.

By about 3 o'clock the main bulk of anti-racist demonstrators arrived in Freemantle Road. A line of police about six deep lined the road, preventing anyone except the fascists from getting to the school on the other side of the road. Neighbouring streets such as Sydney Street were also blocked off. Here, anti-racists were not even allowed to gather but were sent back to Freemantle Road.

By about 3.30 pm most of the counter-demonstrators had been herded into Freemantle Road where the police began to block off all our exits. A picket was formed across the end in front of the police. The East London People's Front speakers began to address the pickets from a lorry while 20 yards away the Anti-Nazi League were doing the same.

This only added to the confusion and frustration. The call from one group to break through the police lines was futile and it was no surprise when the police clinically and violently removed the speakers from the lorry and drove it through the pickets to their HQ which they had set up in Redbridge Park. Simultaneously the police attacked from all sides in

By Tom Doyle

(Stepney and Poplar CLP)

an attempt to clear the road. This unprovoked confrontation led one policeman behind to remark: "This is only asking for trouble." The police, however, were well aware of their strength of numbers and began to knock people over. It was here that the majority of arrests were made. Even after they had cleared the streets, they continuously provoked by pushing the demonstrators even closer together.

Meanwhile the NF coaches arrived. According to the press there were ten coaches. The 'Observer' stated that there were over 1,000 Front supporters at the meeting. But the maximum could only have been 500.

The labour movement can place no faith in the Public Order Act or the police and the courts as a defence against fascism. Recent events have conclusively proved that the law is no protector of black workers and the democratic rights of the labour movement.

Blanket Ban

Kingsley Read's acquittal with a "good luck" from Judge McKinnon made a mockery of the Race Relations Act. The expenditure of over half a million pounds by the Manchester police was the cost of protecting the NF from the anger of the local population. Now the invoking of the Public Order Act prevents all labour movement marches in London for two months.

The Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, claims he has no responsibility for the use of the Act, that the decision belongs to Metropolitan Police Chief 'The Hammer' McNee.

But how can a Labour government sit back and condone the use of special police powers which allow the fascists to carry on their activities—under the name of 'canvassing'—but deliberately hamper anti-fascists from effectively demonstrating their opposition?

The Public Order Act was introduced in 1936 ostensibly to stop Mosley's blackshirts' uniformed marches. Yet it was immediately used to curb

LPYS MASS CANVASS

The day after the NF canvassed Ilford North, protected by 5,000 police and amid thousands of pounds worth of press and TV publicity, 100 Labour Party Young Socialists from all over London descended on Ilford to carry out a mass canvass to win support for the Labour Party.

There was no local hostility to us, we didn't need police protection and of course the press were very careful not to report the campaigning work of Labour's youth.

Opposite one of the Committee rooms there was a house with Conservative stickers in the window. As teams of LPYS canvassers assembled, armed with 'Left' and 'Militant', the occupant had a very pained look on her face, obviously worried that we would counter the Tory-biased propaganda of the media.

Although the Young Socialists were enthusiastic in the canvassing there was very little enthusiasm on the doorsteps. "You can't tell the difference, nowadays" was one comment.

An old man living in poor conditions told us "I've been a Labour voter all my life, but now I wish I was dead." Obviously the Labour government's policies have not even provided a decent pension for this chap to want to live on! Several people, including Asians and West Indians, were keen to discuss our socialist ideas and buy our papers. We asked them not only to vote Labour, but to join the Labour Party and build the fight for socialist policies.

Perhaps the strangest comment of the morning came from a well-groomed lady who said "I've been a staunch Tory all my life, but I prefer Jim!" While Jim gets such dubious support, working class voters are increasingly disillusioned. The way of ensuring a Labour victory on Thursday was to put forward **bold socialist policies.**



the labour movement!

The growth of fascism in Britain during the mass unemployment of the Thirties was not stopped by the law or the police but by the mobilisation of half a million workers in Cable Street. In these times of unemployment and falling living standards it is once again the responsibility of the labour movement

Militant



Newham left-wingers before their recent High Court Victory. Left to right: — Alan Haworth [Sec.], Phil Bradbury [President], John Rowse, Andy Bevan [Vice-President], Tom Jenkins [EC Member].

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report II)

Left Victory in Newham

Events in Newham North East Labour Party have been closely followed by labour movement activists through all the stages of the struggles to de-select former Labour Cabinet Minister, Reg Prentice, who has now openly defected to the Tories, and to defeat extreme right wingers Lewis and McCormick.

In that sense, the outcome of the Annual General Meeting of Newham North East Labour Party, held on Wednesday, February 22nd, will give new determination to party members fighting for socialist policies.

Big Majority

75 delegates attended the AGM out of a total of 94 eligible, including 44 eligible delegates from party branches and 38 from trade union branches. There had been a reduction in the size of bloated delegations from right wing union branches following the rule changes at Labour Party Conference 1977 which closed the loopholes in the party rulebook previously exploited by Lewis and his supporters.

The first vote of the evening was for Party President. Left candidate Phil Bradbury received 51 votes as against 17 votes for the leader of Newham Borough Council, Jack Hart. The two successful candidates for vice-president were Andy Bevan (53 votes)

and Michael Brown (39 votes).

Alan Haworth was elected secretary unopposed as were Rachel Charles (Assistant Secretary) and John Clark (Treasurer). Left wingers also won all six positions in the trade union section of the Executive Committee.

Broad Support

Not only were these results an emphatic victory for the left, but they bore out entirely the arguments of those Party members, including all 'Militant' supporters, who successfully argued that left candidates should challenge for all officerships and Executive positions. This may seem an obvious point, but some 'Tribune' supporters in the local party—though by no means all—argued in the weeks preceding the AGM that the way should be left open for some "anti-Lewis right wingers" on the EC to "broaden support".

On the night, however, votes of 53 and 51 showed the "breadth" of support that has been won by the left wing socialists who have effectively led the party in its battle to overcome the intrigues of the well-financed and ill-named "Campaign for Representative Democracy" of Lewis and McCormick. The big votes for 'Tribune' and 'Militant' supporters proved the correctness of our position and reflected the political

lessons learnt by many Party members in the course of the last few months.

The exhaustive ballot for Conference delegate indicated clearly the overwhelming strength of the left wing strands of opinion within the party at present. With the right wing being eliminated in the second ballot with only ten votes, it was a run-off between two left-wingers, Alan Howarth (41 votes) and Tom Jenkins (26).

The new Executive now has the responsibility of preparing for the May elections and proceeding urgently with the selection of a new parliamentary candidate. It will be a major task for the new team of officers to turn the local party out to campaign on the problems of the working people of Newham, one of London's most working class boroughs, to recruit new members on the basis of socialist policies and to conduct a drive against racialism and fascism.

We have to ensure, above all, that political debate takes pride of place on the new General Committee so that Newham North East Labour Party can most effectively give a political lead to the many Constituency Labour Parties who have supported the Newham struggle.

By Tom Jenkins

(Newham North-East CLP)

to defend the democratic rights it won through bitter struggles against the bosses' state by sweeping the NF off the streets.

Slogans such as "the National Front is a Nazi front, smash the National Front" are important but they do not explain the reasons for the growth in confidence of thugs like Tyndal and Web-

ster. The lack of leadership and direction coupled with high unemployment, bad housing and anti-working class policies sow the seed to racism. We must answer the lies and distortions of groups like the NF with the real reasons why unemployment and bad housing exist. It's the bosses to blame, not the blacks.

The Labour Party broadcast showed the potential in countering these lies. Transport House was inundated with membership applications. We must fight for the socialist policies that are capable of not only creating employment and building new houses but destroying the base on which the NF draw their misguided support.