

Militant

The
Big Tax
Raid—
a William Press
employee reports
—page 16

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

ISSUE 396
10 MARCH 1978

12p

HOW MANY JOBS TO GO?

ANGRY YOUTH DEMAND



Fight every closure—end the growing dole queues

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

Ebbw Vale Steelworks, East Moors (Cardiff), Briton Ferry (Swansea), Landore foundry (Swansea). All doomed to closure.

BSC Port Talbot, Du Port (Llanelli)—how many jobs to go?

By Kevin
Ramage

(Swansea LPYS)

The crisis in the steel industry, private as well as nationalised, is just one indication of the catastrophic levels to which unemployment is going to rise. Other industries are facing

a similar future. This is what capitalism has to offer us!

In Wales there are 93,112 unemployed—8.7%—and only 6,188 vacancies (the pay and conditions need only be guessed at). That's one job for every 15 unemployed.

The careers offices, covering school leavers still out of work, or those who were working but are now unemployed, have over

9,000 on their books with 341 jobs on offer. Yet even these depressing figures hide the real depths of the problem.

Black-spot

Tenby suffers 28% male unemployment. In many of the valleys unemployment

is now over 10%. In Ferndale (Rhondda) there are three vacancies for the 503 out of work. Port Talbot careers office can offer just one vacancy for the 187 young people on the books.

What chance is there? What future is there for young people faced with this kind of situation?

The particular problems in Wales have been caused by the run-down of the traditional heavy industries, steel and coal (50,000 jobs have been lost in mining in the last 15 years), in addition to the general decline of capitalism. Attempts to bribe firms to South Wales have failed. Despite huge concessions and grants in 1976, 53 government built 'advance factories' were lying idle. Today the figure is higher.

Profits

When firms can't use the capacity they've already got, why bother investing, argue the bosses. Even Ford have only been lured to Bridgend by huge capital grants and the prospects of bumper profits based on cheap labour. That is no answer for the labour movement.

The programme of the

Labour Party Young Socialists and the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment have the answer. It's the bosses' crisis—make them pay for it.

Demand

Labour's youth demand:

- ★ A 35-hour week now, with no loss of earnings, to provide jobs.
- ★ A massive scheme of useful public works to mop up unemployment.
- ★ No redundancies in the factories. If work is short it should be shared out with no loss of earnings.
- ★ If the bosses say they can't afford this then let them open the books and prove it.

If they are bankrupt then they should be nationalised to put them out of their misery. At the end of the day the only real guarantee of avoiding a return to the conditions of the 1930s, will be when the running of society is taken out of the hands of the profiteers, by nationalising the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management.

Only then will production and planning be in the interests of working people.

NUCLEAR POWER CAUSED THEIR ENERGY CRISIS



A THREAT TO US AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. In his report of the Windscale inquiry published last week, Mr Justice Parker recommends that British Nuclear Fuels should be allowed to build their proposed £600 million oxide fuel reprocessing plant in West Cumbria—intended to treat radio-active plutonium waste from

Britain and other countries. We have already pointed to the horrifying health and ecological hazards which cannot possibly be ruled out in a capitalist environment ('Militant' 348/383) and we will shortly be carrying an analysis of the Parker report and its implications.

Next
Week



"Short, sharp, shock punishment":
a young victim tells his story

CRISIS IN INDIA: first of two
major articles/AMERICAN MIN-
ERS FIGHT ON: report from US

This Week

TUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

YOUNG OFFENDERS: new series:
page 6/ETHIOPIA & SOMALIA
Part II—the national question: pages
8 & 9/FRENCH ELECTIONS
APPROACH: page 10

The Plight of
Homeworkers



Militant

MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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ILFORD - A WARNING

The loss of Ilford North, although a less devastating defeat than many feared, is nevertheless another serious blow to Labour. In parliament the Labour government now has to survive with an overall minority of sixteen. More important, is the fact that the result recorded the negative verdict of thousands of working class voters on the economic policies of the government, which have cut into living standards on a scale unprecedented since the 1930's.

Although the Tories, who increased their vote by only 2,705 over the 1974 general election, compared to a Labour loss of 3,570, did not win the sweeping victory of which Mrs Thatcher prematurely boasted, the swing in Ilford North, if repeated through the country in a general election, would mean the return of a Tory government based on the vicious right-wing policies of which Mrs Thatcher's intervention in Ilford has given us a nasty foretaste.

Ilford North was also seen as a test of the strength of the National Front. The fascists got 2,126 votes too many, and the Labour campaign did not sufficiently answer their lies on immigration or pose a bold socialist alternative to the workers suffering from unemployment, poverty and bad housing. Nevertheless following all the publicity that this tiny fascist grouplet has received in the national press, its vote [4.7% of the poll, compared to 8.2% in Stechford and 5.7% in Ladywood] was derisory. Even before the election it was clear that, without the police ban on all demonstrations, the NF would not have been able to appear on the streets of Ilford. Throughout the country every time the NF has tried to hold a rally or meeting they have been overwhelmed by a much greater number of counter-demonstrators from the labour movement.

The bye-election also resulted in a hammering for the Liberals, whose vote fell from 8,000 [16.6%] in the last general election to 2,248 [5.0%] last week. This confirms that the Liberals gained support mainly on the basis of disaffected Tory voters under the last Conservative government, and these are now returning to the Tory fold. The real colour of the Liberals' politics was revealed last Saturday when Steel launched an attack on Tony Benn who, during the Ilford campaign, had echoed the Labour rank and file's demand for socialist policies on which to fight the Tories.

Labour Ministers who spoke in Ilford rightly denounced the Tory leadership for stepping into the gutter by taking up the vile, racist propaganda of the NF. By trying to blame immigrant workers for all Britain's social ills, Thatcher, Joseph and company are clearly trying not only to divert attention away from the real cause, the diseased state of the system they stand for, but to hide the bankruptcy of their own economic policies and cover up the cracks in the Tory leadership.

But the result gave little indication that the Tories had any real success in winning workers away from Labour with their racist demagoguery. In fact, some of the serious commentators of

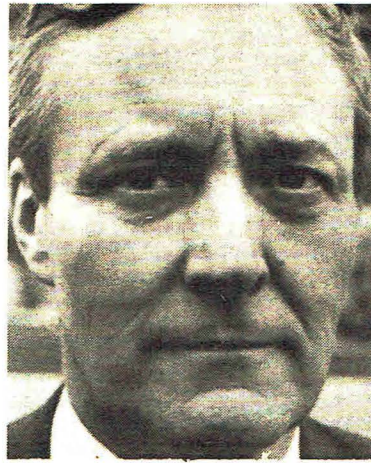
big business have struck a note of alarm. Are Tories tactics turning out angry Labour voters who might otherwise have abstained? "The Times" noted that the Labour vote recovered by 7,291 over the serious defeat of last year's GLC elections in the same Ilford constituency, whereas the Tories managed to pull out only an additional 3,083. "Judging by the great increase in the Labour vote after last year, in spite of the heavy rain, it is possible that the immigration clamour actually got more Labour voters out in protest rather than those who deserted to the Conservatives." ["The Times", 4 March]

This is an indication of the enormous response from workers that Labour would get if it continues to answer the racism of both the NF and the Tories on the class lines of Labour's broadcast in December and of some of the election speeches in Ilford. But propaganda is not enough. To defeat the Tories and completely smash the fascists, Labour must fight on socialist economic policies that will root out the problems of which racism breeds—and convince the confused and despairing sections influenced by racist agitation that Labour is really prepared boldly to implement solutions.

The Ilford result, it seems [if press reports are to be believed], has confirmed Jim Callaghan in his intention to hold out for an autumn election. Callaghan and Denis Healey are presumably working on the assumption that the improvement in Britain's financial situation, together with some tax hand-outs in an "Election Budget", will give the Labour Government a good chance of being returned later in the year.

Yet Healey himself has already warned that the room for tax concessions will be limited. Reports that the big oil companies will pay very little tax on their enormous profits, most of which will go abroad, confirm our warning that North Sea Oil will not be a panacea for Labour, especially when world oil prices are falling. And in the last week, Healey and other ministers have warned that even the limited "recovery" now being experienced could be completely undermined by a new world recession, now predicted by capitalist economists throughout the world. Even if world recession does not come until after October, there is no likelihood of unemployment being significantly reduced, of the public spending cuts being reversed, or of working class living standards being raised enough to ensure a mass turn-out for Labour.

In the light of this, the lesson of Ilford is clear. The Tories will use everything they can, including racist tactics, to inflict defeat on Labour. The active sections of the working class will loyally vote Labour, but the present policies of the Labour government will not win the less committed workers. The only guarantee of a Labour majority in a general election, whenever it is called, will be the mobilisation of working class support on socialist policies.



BENN WELCOMES DEBATE

I am very glad to hear that the Editorial Board has decided to extend its political coverage and analysis by inviting articles from those who—like myself—are not supporters of the Militant tendency.

The debate about the future of socialism within the Labour Party must necessarily be open to those who follow the teachings of a widely divergent group of socialists in the democratic tradition.

There are many Labour Party members—and I am one of them—who differ from the 'Militant' position but who welcome the contribution made to this debate by your paper and the work done within the movement by those who read it.

Our party was built up over the centuries by hundreds of thousands of working people who learned their socialism through their own struggles against injustice and poverty as they experienced it in their own lives.

Democratic socialism which aims at the peaceful transformation of society here and world wide is a philosophy distilled out of those experiences.

British labour history has taught each new generation that democracy and socialism are inextricably bound up together. We believe that an extension of democracy must inevitably lead people on towards socialism and that socialism without democracy and human rights and civil liberties is no socialism at all.

The present slump must necessarily mean a testing time for the people of this country and I am sure that a wide circulation of all socialist papers, writing within a framework of mutual respect and tolerance, will help to build the majority support that Labour needs if it is to realise its historic mission.

TONY BENN MP

WEST INDIAN YOUTH

Dear Comrade Editor

Greetings from the Jamaican People's National Party Youth Movement [UK].

The new enlarged 'Militant' marks a decisive step forward for the labour movement in Britain and the rest of the world. Throughout the years, the 'Militant' has become an indispensable weapon in the arsenal of the working class. No other paper in Britain offers such a clear Marxist analysis and interpretation of world events.

For socialists everywhere, the 'Mili-

tant' represents living Marxism; the paper itself has become an integral part of the struggle for world socialism.

The 'Militant', comrade Editor, shall continue to go from strength to strength. The PNP salutes all your supporters for their tremendous zeal and energy in advancing the socialist cause.

Forward to future successes! Workers of the world, unite!

BOB LEE

National Secretary, PNP Youth [UK]

IRISH SUPPORT

Every supporter of Militant Irish Monthly in Northern Ireland will join with me in sending fraternal greetings to the 16 page weekly Militant.

From the inception of the Civil Rights Campaign in 1968 the Militant (a small black and white 4 page monthly at that time) advanced a programme of clear class demands around which the unity of Catholic and Protestant workers could be welded together.

The month after the troops were sent in to Derry and Belfast the headline in the paper read "Withdraw the Troops! For a Trade Union Defence Force! For Workers' Unity!"

The developments of the last two years in the trade unions; the launching of the Better Life for All Campaign; the driving of sectarianism to the sidelines, and last but not least; the growth in support for the Labour and Trade Union Co-ordinating Group, demonstrates the correctness of the ideas of Militant.

Bill Webster
Secretary Derry Labour and Trade Union Party.

Derry Trades Council Executive Member.
Chairman 238 Branch GMWU Derry

THE FACTS

I have been a regular reader and supporter of Militant for three years and in that time it has doubled in size, growing from an eight page into the new sixteen page paper.

That is a tremendous leap forward, especially as it has happened during the time when the Labour Party has been unpopular with the working class, to say the least! The reason for its growth can only be that the working class see that Marxist policies are the only policies and a socialist transformation of society the only answer.

We, the workers, have helped to make it grow because without the effort made by all to the Fighting Fund it would and could not have happened. Militant is the paper of the working class and provides the facts which are otherwise hidden by the Capitalist owned press. Forward with the 16-pager! Forward with Militant!

Teresa Mackay
Vice-Chairman Ipswich
Womens' Council

REDBRIDGE, ILFORD NORTH results [main parties]: Con: 33,545 [50.4%]; Lab: 17,051 [38.0%]; Lib: 2,248 [5.0%]; NF: 2,126 [4.7%]; poll 68.2%; Con. maj. 5,497. OCTOBER 1974 GENERAL ELECTION: Lab: 20,621 [42.5%]; Con: 19,843 [40.9%]; Lib: 8,080 [16.6%].

Militant

Militant goes 16 pages
THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH 12p

Over the past few years 'Militant' has been of great value and information not only to me but also to my union branch. Our branch would not have heard of the dispute at Greenwich steelworks through the mass media or even through our own official union publication "Man and Metal".

As a result of the coverage by 'Militant' our branch passed a resolution supporting our brothers in dispute and calling upon our union's EC to support them.

I am sure other workers can give more examples of the excellent coverage given to industrial disputes by Militant. So I say forward to a 16-page paper and forward to socialism.

Andy Harrison
Chairman
CSM Staff
Shotton Steelworks
ISTC

FRANK ALLAUN MP

'Militant' will do a most valuable job if it helps to build a mass socialist youth movement.

FRANK ALLAUN
Labour MP for Salford East

By Phil
Frampton

(LPYS National
Committee)

Over Easter, Llandudno will echo with a full attack on the Tories' latest threat. At the Labour Party Young Socialists' Conference (25-27 March) the LPYS National Committee will present its document on the fight against racialism and fascism.

Madam Thatcher is putting forward ideas to split and divide the country on racialist lines, and that means a splitting of the working class. The LPYS will fight the racialists not only through our own organisation, but through arguing for and taking part in mobilisations of the Labour Party and trade unions to show the total opposition of Labour to any attempts to sidetrack working people.

Our fight is to defend living standards, jobs and conditions; for that we need a united organised labour movement. Conference will link the battle against racialism with the building of a fighting socialist movement, which can wipe out the sores of poverty and misery that breeds racialism and fascism.

The response to the LPYS and PNP Youth March in Birmingham against the National Front shows what an echo we can get amongst young people. There are thousands of young workers

COME TO LPYS CONFERENCE



'Militant' meeting at last year's conference

and school students outside of the LPYS who will leap at the chance of attending the conference of Britain's socialist youth.

Go out and tell them about our conference—the capitalist press won't do it for us—let's go into the schools, factories and dole offices, youth clubs

and football grounds. Build for the conference and a mass socialist youth organisation.

Accommodation and transport should be booked by now. Make sure you have raised enough money from trade union and Labour Party donations, socials and other fund-raising to send

every unemployed youth or school student.

If you want to attend conference, book through local LPYS members or contact Andy Bevan, National Youth Officer, Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3IA.

HELP BOOST OUR SALES

SOLD OUT

Last Friday morning five sellers of the 'Militant' covered all the entrances to the GEC Stoke plant in Coventry and were met with an enthusiastic response from the workers clocking on. The article on the factory sit-in really reflected the anger and frustration of the workers after years of exploitation by the company.

Both outside and inside the factory 65 copies of the paper were sold. So well received was it that the writer of the article, A Johnson, had to duplicate copies as he had run out of papers!

BY DARRELL COZENS
Coventry SE Labour Party

The response of readers to the new 16-page Militant has been tremendous! Regular readers have sent us congratulations for our 'new look' paper and have rushed out to give new readers the benefit of a workers' paper.

Readers in Liverpool stood outside a building site in Central Liverpool and sold 20 copies there for the first time. They now intend to make that a regular sale.

In Bristol the weekly sale at the Rolls Royce works doubled in one day. North London readers visiting factories and workplaces to encourage young workers to attend the Labour Party Young Socialists' conference used the opportunity to introduce the paper to shop stewards. New regular orders and subscriptions have been made as a result.

Its the same all over the country—the impact in the Labour Party and trade union movement has shown the growing support for Marxist policies and the need that activists feel for news about workers in other areas, the life and work of people in other industries.

Boost the sales in your area now! Make use of the special offer we are giving in our subscription form for the next few weeks. Get Labour Parties, union branches and shop stewards' committees to take out a regular order. Ask your newsagent to stock the Militant. Above all, never go anywhere without a Militant—you never know who you might be able to sell one to.

QUADRUPLED!

Comrades

Last month there was one seller in Torquay who was selling ten copies of 'Militant' a week. At the end of January he visited a council estate and the local technical college with the paper.

Then he got the LPYS members to help him sell in a local school and on another estate. A lad in a nearby town visited the LPYS and also agreed to sell papers.

Now the original seller is responsible for 40 papers sold each week. Clearly the workers and youth are crying out for our paper. With a few simple steps, we can ensure they get it.

PHIL FRAMPTON
LPYS National Committee

Take an
order now

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RALLIES AND MEETINGS

GLOUCESTER—
14th March

Hear: John Ewers (Gloucester Labour Party), Gloucester Labour Party Hall, 115 Barton Street, Gloucester, 8.00 pm.

POOLE—15th March

Hear: Nick Brookes (Southampton Labour Party), Portestone Labour Club, Committee Room, Ashley Road, Parkestone, Poole, 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.

NEWPORT, 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 Sauniois (National Vice-Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists), Large Hall, International Community Centre, 61 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, 2.30 pm. Entrance 25p.

PORTSMOUTH—
20th March

Hear: Keith Dickinson (Militant Editorial Board), Betty Bell (Leigh Park Councillor), The Labour Rooms, 84 Kingston Crescent, Portsmouth, 8.00 pm.

TUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE MUST ACT ORGANISE HOMEWORKERS



Who would work for up to 50 hours a week paying for the electricity to run the machine, looking after kids while on production...all for as little as 10p an hour? The answer—over a quarter of a million homeworkers.

In response to the increasing use of sweated labour in the home the TUC has just produced a pamphlet outlining homeworkers' basic conditions and pay and how homeworking affects, and therefore must be the concern of all other workers.

In the forward Len Murray states "the problem of homeworking has been present in the UK for over a century but little has been done to remedy it". A damning statement, and one that must raise questions in the minds of every rank and file trade union and Labour Party activist.

Questions on rates of pay, health and safety, working conditions and employment must be asked in an area of ruthless exploitation by unscrupulous employers, particularly when the homework-

ers generally take up the work due to their being house-bound. This may be because they have young children, are disabled, or are immigrants with language difficulties.

Desperate

The main driving force, of course is domestic economics. Every worker knows the personal sacrifices and hardship now being imposed by wage restraint, rising prices, cuts in public expenditure and unemployment.

These very cuts in living standards give employers the

By Ella Gamwell
(Manchester Ardwick Labour Party)

weapons to exploit and intimidate what must be the most disorganised body of workers, who are in the main women. In terms of wages a Low Pay Unit survey revealed pay rates as low as 10p per hour and hours up to and over 50 per week. Often it is only with the help of other members of the family that near-reasonable incomes have been earned with piecework.

Only economic desperation could force women to accept the monotonous, soul-destroying tasks of sewing on endless thousands of buttons, doing millions of stitches etc.

Profits could only be made from such a low-productivity industry as this, through super-exploitation.

This is a throwback to the archaic and notorious 'Domestic System' which was replaced in Britain by the Industrial Revolution. It is a condemnation of capitalism that it relies on such remnants of the 18th century rather than sweep them away.

The employment status of the homeworker is important. Many employers put the homeworker in the self-employed bracket for the purpose of income tax, national insurance and holiday pay avoidance. This practice also allows the employer to avoid redundancy payments, compulsory liability insurance and to contravene the Health and Safety at Work Act. **Very convenient!**

The Health and Safety at

Work Act 1974, while appearing to embody more protection to the homeworker by recognising dangers and risks from materials, processes and equipment, places the main responsibility on the worker themselves, as in industry, to protect themselves, their families and neighbours.

Stress

The stress encountered by the homeworkers and other inhabitants caused by noisy machinery, bad lighting, monotony, concern for young children in the work area and others in the surrounding area is almost untouched upon in the statement. It also points out that there are no adequate provisions for inspection by either the local authority or factory inspectorate, worsened by the fact that **the legal obligation to register their homeworkers twice yearly is on the whole ignored by employers.**

On the basis of an inadequate survey in 1968/9 an estimation shows that there were at least 250,000 homeworkers plus 130,000 child-minders. It can safely be said that ten years later, with a decline in the economy and living standards, the true numbers are now very much higher.

This large workforce, oppressed and intimidated by the profit sharks, stands out as a symbol of slave labour in this country. The homeworkers do not have the protection of mass trade union and labour organisation due to isolation and the government does not put forward the necessity for organisation with unity between the homeworkers themselves and alongside their factory or office worker colleagues.

It is hardly surprising under the profit system and a state bureaucracy which favours the bosses that legislation on the statute book, eg Contracts of Employment Act 1972, Employment Protection Act 1975, Social Security Act 1975 and Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, are shown to be inadequate in terms of application and benefit to the working class as a whole, much less the struggling homeworker.

In its statement the TUC calls for measures such as employment status to be as an employee, recruitment into the trade unions, and participation in collective bargaining regarding wages and conditions alongside workers in industry, particularly in the same trades. It also calls for the enforcement of the Health and Safety at Work Act and

other legislation regarding the registration of homeworkers, materials and machines supplied plus any overheads, eg electricity, to be paid by the employer.

The statement brings to the fore the pitiful plight of the homeworker and the necessity for a socialist programme to cure the evils of capitalism which are particularly rampant in this area of production.

Unfortunately, while posing the problems the statement does not go to the real roots. It gives the reasons why homeworkers exist as that of domestic economic difficulties but **does not mention why the difficulties exist.** In a socialist society the hardships brought about by capitalism, which is only interested in profit, not people, would be eradicated.

The TUC statement on homeworking is being distributed throughout the trade union movement with the specific purpose of promoting discussion and action on this serious social problem. The traditions of the trade union and labour movement must be upheld in the struggles to improve the living standards and working conditions for all workers.

Workplace

The elimination of middlemen, the provision of nursery places, a minimum wage, guaranteed jobs and good working conditions under union control would enable those who now sweat at home to do regular work alongside others in proper workplaces and allow their homes to be used as places to live.

The labour movement has a duty to wipe out this social evil by demanding socialist policies. Resolutions should be put to union branches, Labour Parties, Trades Councils, the LPYS and Women's Sections, including the following demands:

- *Full revision of all employment acts to the benefit of homeworkers and their families.
- *A minimum wage of £60.
- *Pension and social security benefits to be raised to realistic levels geared to the cost of living and reviewed six monthly.
- *Improvement and extension of childminding and nursery facilities.
- *Control of production and safety inspection by the trade unions.
- *Taking over of the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management.



Homeworkers and union organisers meet Jack Ashley MP at the House of Commons

Laurence Sparham (IFL)

16 PAGE GREETINGS

Cathy Wilson IOW Labour Prospective Parliamentary candidate and IOW 'Militant' readers & supporters Socialist Greetings and congratulations to all those comrades who produce, write for and sell the 'Militant' Keep up the fight—for workers' unity and Socialism

BRIGHTON LPYS

welcomes the 16 page 'Militant' as a great step forward to socialism and an end to the capitalist system! All power to the working class! Forward to a socialist world!

GREETINGS TO THE 16-PAGE MILITANT
ALEC THRIVES
BRANCH PRESIDENT
SWANSEA No 6
AUEW BRANCH
(Personal capacity)

BIRMINGHAM LABOUR PARTY YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

welcomes the 16 page Militant, and thanks all comrades who attended the magnificent LPYS demonstration against the NF in Birmingham.

May Trodd,
Branch Secretary CPSA
Swansea & District DHSS
(personal capacity)

Fraternal greetings to all readers of the bigger, better 'Militant'

Fraternal greetings to the 16-page Militant From CPSA members in Swansea and Morriston

Paul Davies, Youth Rep,
St John's Lodge,
South Wales NUM
(Personal capacity)
For a fighting 'Militant' and a fighting NUM!

Southampton Labour Party
Coxton Ward
Congratulate Militant on going to 16 pages

CHURCH WARD WAVERTREE CLP sends fraternal greetings. For a socialist Labour Party through the pages of the Militant

Lanchester Polytechnic Labour Club Greetings, Comrades, to the new paper! For a socialist transformation of society!

MURIEL BROWNING
IGWU Shop Steward,
British Leyland, Llanelli
(Personal capacity)
Now for a daily 'Militant'!

Readers of 'Militant' in Brynlliw Lodge NUM congratulate the paper on its advance to a sixteen page weekly
★ For Miners' Unity, ★ For workers' unity ★ Workers of the world unite

Maggie Cummins and Martin Harbour,

now exiled in Manchester, welcome the 16-page 'Militant' and invite all comrades and friends to celebrate their wedding in Stevenage.

Details from 45 Walden End, Stevenage, Herts.

From Wavertree CLP

Congratulations to 'Militant' on a great step forward for Labour's Marxist paper

Bristol South LPYS Revolutionary greetings to the new 'Militant'. Agitate, educate, organise—"Raise the scarlet standard high". Forward to a daily paper!

Bristol S E LPYS Forward to the daily Militant Forward to Socialism

Liverpool Wavertree Constituency Labour Party
Childwall Branch send greetings Forward with socialism

Fraternal Greetings from P Brodie, D Connor, J Ledger, M Ledger—members of Droylsden Branches, Ashton-u-Lyne CLP

Left & Right

POPULATION CUTS

Retired workers can get grants of up to 90 per cent towards insulating their homes. But in the three years up to March 1977, they have been paid out only ten times! Nobody bothered to tell them they could claim!

On one London estate, it costs £100-£200 in the winter months for the minimum heating needed for health. Families with young children heat only one room; old people abandon heating and leave open the oven door for warmth. And the reason for the prohibitive bills? Poor insulation!

Nearly one third of pensioners sleep in absolutely unheated rooms: the death rate soars by an extra 60,000 in winter as they freeze in mortal fear of the bill for switching on a fire.

In our 'advanced' society, with a Labour government and a state-run electricity and gas industry, are resources being used to give people the basic right to a warm house without fear? "No-one is now deprived of a supply-until a lengthy procedure has been worked out." What a comfort! We won't cut you off—at least until we've harassed you for a few months.

Is this the new way of getting rid of 'unnecessary' population? If so it's very effective

KNOW THE ODDS

Gambling is not a very safe bet at the best of times. But even in the world of flutterers, it seems that the rich come off best.

The Consumers' Association has examined the odds on the various ways of gambling. And the best return is on...blackjack. £99.20 is paid out for every £100 staked. Even at craps and roulette, the return is £98 or more, if, of course, you can afford the stakes.

On premium bonds, the return is only £80. But on the pools, the nearest most workers ever get to a casino, £72 out of every £100 goes into the company's pocket.

The best bet is to avoid lining the bookies' pocket altogether, except when you're on to a certainty, like whether their profits help to finance the Tory Party.

FREEDOM

There was a report in one of the Sunday papers of a special seminar on the advantages of free enterprise conducted by Sir Keith Joseph. The reporter (obviously a bit of a Bolshie) went along with two questions. If free enterprise was the only way of ensuring that consumers got what they wanted, why had his favourite variety of biscuit been discontinued because of 'lack of demand', and why was jam from Poland far and away better than the products of capitalist free enterprise? Unfortunately he wasn't able to put his questions!

CANTEEN COCKTAIL

Our bosses live a life of luxury and tell us they have 'earned' it by all their effort, thinking up new ways of making bigger profits for less pay. But in Easter Europe, it seems, the academics and bureaucrats are so out of touch with workers' lives that they imagine everyone lives like them.

The labour director of the Institute for Labour Hygiene and Occupational Diseases in Russia, talking about illnesses which affect working women, said: "Since it is not always possible for recommendations...to be implemented rapidly, we attach great importance to general measures for improving the health of working women...special cocktails that saturate the organism with oxygen are very useful."

With price rises putting 'luxuries' like coffee in the dream bracket, while Russian workers queue for hours to buy basics like fresh fruit, they are probably thinking of serving up some much more explosive recipes to the bureaucratic elite, that will shake them from their pampered life-styles.

Book Reviews

GRUNWICK

'Grunwick' by Joe Rogaly, reviewed by Ann Gerrard [Huddersfield West CLP]

It would have seemed incredible to the Grunwick strikers in the summer of 1976 that a book would ever be written on the dispute.

This is especially true of George Ward, managing director of the firm, whose position is made clear by the statement on p 199: "If...the company is forced out of business it will accept its fate, in the hope that such a fate will arouse public opinion to demand better protection from the authorities for those who legally go about their business."

Background

It was just as important for the National Association for Freedom to show its strength once it had taken up Ward's fight and for the labour movement to prove that the power of the trade unions, once fully mobilised, could overcome the most reactionary management and bring unorganised workers under the wing of the TUC.

The author of 'Grunwick' deals with all these factors one by one. He provides background on the Asian immigrants who comprise the Grunwick workforce, on APEX, on the way in which the local labour movement (through Brent Trades Council) took up the issue, and on the intervention of the National Association For Freedom. He then goes on to describe the events of the summer of 1977—the clashes with the police, the handling of these scenes by the media, and the pussy-footing approach of the Labour government and the TUC (the 'new



Establishment').

Finally, he looks at the legal questions raised by the picketing and by the important side-issue of postal blacking that developed through the dispute. A very detailed chronology of events from August 1976 to August 1977 is given at the end of the book and the conclusions of the Scarman Report and Grunwick management's reply are quoted in full.

Clash

Joe Rogaly himself is assistant editor of the 'Financial Times'. Readers of the 'Militant' are hardly likely to agree

with his conclusions on the law relating to industrial disputes.

He is quite explicit about his own position at one point (in the section on the NAFF where he defines his own beliefs in relation to the aims of the organisation) and he also fully accepts the existence of classes and of class conflict, which ought to be more useful to the Marxist reader than a woolly liberal attitude. Yet he appears to believe that all problems would be solved by a "clearly stated code of laws setting out both the rights and responsibilities of trade unions"—as if unaware of the fundamental

clash between ruling class law and working class democracy.

From the point of view of information, though, the book does bring together all the main questions raised by the Grunwick dispute and provides background material that otherwise could not be found so conveniently in one place.

'Grunwick' by Joe Rogaly
Published by Penguin at 80p
Order from World Books



Students face a maze of red tape

Despite the propaganda of the gutter press and the Tories about spongers, parasites and idle layabouts, all living off state handouts, any ordinary person who has tried to claim any benefit at all knows how far removed from reality this is.

Millions of pounds worth of Social Security Supplementary Benefits etc. go unclaimed every year. Red tape, inefficiency, tight-fistedness and downright intimidation on the part of the DHSS are some of the obstacles claimants face.

Students' Rights Guide -

Available from: Child Poverty Action Group, 1 Macklin Street, London W.C.2.
50p (+ 10p postage)

Far from being worthless or lazy, those who actually reach the end of this obstacle course successfully prove they deserve at the least a decent job and wage, not to mention a medal besides!

The CPAG Students' Rights Guide is aimed at helping one particular group fight back. Its aim is "to steer students through the maze of Welfare State benefits to which they are entitled and which they need to compensate for their inadequate grants." It is a valuable handbook for any student, giving detailed explanations of students' rights to Social Security, Supplementary Benefit, FIS, Welfare Benefits, Housing Benefits and Tax.

Students, like workers, have faced enormous cuts in living standards over the past period as grants fall further and further behind inflation. Recent reports about students at the London School of Economics show that significant numbers of students (often faced with crippling fees to pay) find it impossible to feed themselves adequately enough to stay healthy.

One said he had had a cold

for six months as a result of his diet and living conditions. Many students are quoted as spending under £3 a week on food. Three quarters of London's students and about a third of students nationally end each term with an overdraft of at least £20.

Squeezed

Some students are particularly vulnerable—those on discretionary awards (increasingly squeezed out and pared down by public expenditure cuts) and those hit by the parental means test. As things now stand, students whose parents refuse or are unable (as many are) to pay their contribution to the grant can do nothing about it. The NUS has estimated that there are thousands of students who are suffering serious hardship, if they continue their courses at all, as a result of this system.

Most students are now debarred from claiming unemployment benefit during the Christmas or Easter vacations and are faced with the increasingly difficult job of trying to find holiday work

to live. This and part-time jobs in pubs etc. during term-time can obviously have a very bad effect on studies.

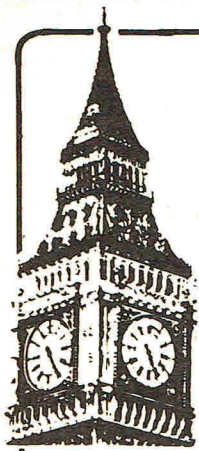
Most students are forced into the private housing sector, paying astronomical rents for small flats or bedsits and with very little security. The Guide devotes two sections to dealing with housing rights, providing some useful information. At present students are entitled to rent rebates and allowances but a recent proposal by the Advisory Committee on Rent Rebates and Allowances suggests that students should be excluded from these schemes.

Campaign

This only confirms the point which the CPAG Guide states in its introduction—that even if all the benefits were claimed and paid out, only a national campaign for decent grants for all students could eradicate inequalities and hardship.

By Cathy Sandler

(UCL Labour Club)



Question Time

British manufacturing industry has a lower productivity and is therefore less competitive than its rivals, because of lack of investment in new plant and machinery. It was in order to direct capital into manufacturing industry that the government drastically cut spending in the public services—with disastrous consequences for education, the NHS and services provided by local government.

Increased investment is also the aim of the huge subsidies of £20m given every day to capitalists from the taxpayers. But perhaps the biggest assistance given to big business has been the holding down of workers' wages to give the captains of British industry some of the lowest labour costs in Western Europe. As a result of all these efforts by the Labour government profits have soared up.

But the outcome of all this was revealed in the Commons recently—in 1976 our "entrepreneurs" invested back into industry less capital than in any year since 1948!

[Hansard Vol 943, No 56]

To those seeking refuge from Rachmanite landlords in private, rented accommodation or from rising council rents, a written reply to a question in Parliament last Wednesday brings bad news. The cost of a mortgage has risen by 50% in the last four years.

Mr Armstrong, Environmental Under Secretary, reported that during that time the average mortgage rose from £6,450 to £9,589.

In terms of monthly payments, in 1974 a typical mortgagor repaid at a rate of £46.12 a month. Now he has to fork out £55.06 a month.

FUMING

The House of Lords became the setting for a debate on the politics of cigar smoking last week (and who is more qualified to express an opinion on that subject?)

In response to the Conservative Lord Campbell of Croy's question of whether the sight of Ministers smoking on TV did not damage the effect of health warnings (sponsored by public money) the Labour peer Lord Wells Pestell rose to reply.

"Some of us who don't

smoke cigarettes and pipes and who prefer an occasional cigar do so because we want to advertise how good life is under the present government," he announced.

Viscount Barrington [Lib] said the pipe was a symbol of peace. If Sir Harold Wilson stopped appearing with his pipe it might be taken as a declaration of class war.

Lord Mackie [Lib] said Ministers had habits far more dangerous than smoking.



Work for some—another empty office block?

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Young offenders: Who needs 'Treatment'?

By Hilary Long
(Chester LPYS)

6,000 children in England and Wales will have spent some time in prison before they reach their 17th birthday.

This national crime against young people is rather ironic at a time when the Tories are screaming hysterically about increases in the incidence of juvenile delinquency. Many of these youngsters have been hauled in by the police often on flimsy evidence only to be proved innocent after a period of three months inside. Yes, that's the time period that elapses in London between remanding a young person and bringing them to court.

The number of children in prison custody has increased dramatically from 2,947 in 1971 to 5,410 in 1975. All the indications are that this figure will continue to rise.

The Children and Young Persons Act 1969 was a new piece of legislation designed too keep children under 17 out of prison. It was intended to 'treat' offenders rather than to punish them. It was seen as a radical departure from all previous Acts.

Its main tenet was to establish 'community homes' to replace the old style Borstals and Remand Homes, with a number of 'secure' places for the most difficult and disturbed cases. As a result of the cuts in public expenditure such centres were not forthcoming. In any case the facilities and the staff that they need was considered too costly. So these 'innocent' victims of capitalism wind up in some of Britain's most appalling institutions.

Criminals?

A boy comes before the court charged with a quite trivial offence, for example, joy riding in cars, which is a popular one. The young 'offender' is unlikely to be represented so there is no-one to speak on his behalf. Often the parents are not in court.

Local community homes, where they exist, are full to

bursting and he's rejected sometimes not on grounds of overcrowding, but because he's considered to be too disruptive. No-one has the time to bother too much anyway about what happens to him. Inevitably he's remanded while a case is prepared on him.

So off he goes to what the Home Office describes as a remand centre for young persons. They are in fact prisons and many of the prisoners are school children. One in 25 is a girl.

Apparently these kids are a danger to society and therefore cannot be let out. However, nearly half of the boys and three quarters of the girls remanded are eventually found to be not guilty or given a non-custodial sentence.

Thorp Arch is one such children's prison. It is a barrack-like institution encircled by a 17-foot high chain link fence, on the edge of Boston Spa. In 1965 it was built to hold 84 boys. Today it has twice that number of inmates sharing 11-foot by 8-foot cells.

Young offenders can expect to arrive in handcuffs, be dumped in a cell and then watched through a peephole



Criminal or victim?

in the cell door. All privacy and dignity is lost; they spend all their time in the sight of prison officers. Letters incoming and outgoing are opened and read, and security is so daunting that escape is rare.

Daily routine starts at seven with the emptying of chamber pots and the folding of blankets. The cell is scantily furnished with a wooden cupboard, a chair, pinboard and double bunk. After breakfast all the kids of

school age go to classes, while those who are over 16 can earn 7p a day assembling plastic toys or gilt chandeliers.

Exercise is taken at 11 am for half an hour walking round a yard closely guarded by uniformed prison officers.

After lunch all the prisoners are confined to their cells while the staff have a meal. More exercises begin the afternoon, followed by classes or work, and then back to the hell-hole for another hour.

After two hours' recreation in the early evening, everyone is in bed by 8.00. At weekends bed time is 5.00 which means that they are cooped up like animals for 14 hours at a stretch.

Bugs Bunny

This is a prison regime whatever the Home Office, the Governor and the staff may say. The inmates are often confirmed in their criminality. Why not after all take pride in having done 'bird' before you are 17?

At the Latchmere House Annexe of Ashford Remand Centre this humiliating and demoralising routine characterises the lives of 114 out of the 153 inmates who are under 17.

Disneyland posters with instructions for new arrivals deck the walls. Bugs Bunny says: "This is how you set out your cell daily" in a veiled attempt to make it feel like home. Tatty back copies of popular magazines lie around instead of newspapers and provide the only source of

entertainment. A small patch of grass is the only greenery in the place.

What is being done about this national scandal? The answer is quite simply *nothing*. Robert Kilroy Silk, Labour MP for Ormskirk has raised the matter in the House of Commons: "In this so-called compassionate society," he said, "we are sending innocent kids to prison and keeping them there for an inordinate time."

Few parents can afford a lawyer, so applications for bail are few and far between. Legal aid is available to children who want to apply for bail at their next court appearance, but their chances are not good. Approximately 50 applications a month went in from Thorp Arch in 1975 and only 7 were successful in the whole year.

While the Tories and the bosses' press scream about the numbers of hooligans, scroungers and layabouts in our society and call for the "glasshouses" and "short, sharp shock" treatment for young offenders, the very system that they support commits more and more workers to a life of poverty and misery on the dole, to an existence that makes it impossible for parents to provide for their kids. Youngsters steal in order to survive.

Unemployment, poor housing, rising prices and lowering standards of health care and education are the real crimes of a system that cares more for profits than providing workers and their families with a decent standard of life.

The labour and trade union movement must take up the plight of these youngsters who languish in prison before even being taken to trial, who are the real victims of the capitalist system.

This brutal and dehumanising regime is supposed to "transform" these youngsters. Instead research has proved that after this prison experience these children are more likely to continue a life of crime.

To my mind it's not the kids that need to be transformed but, through the labour and trade union movement, the very system itself that bears the responsibility for the social evils that give rise to vandalism, juvenile delinquency and petty crime.



Willie Whitelaw demands "military punishments"

Let us build!

No group of workers has suffered more from the economic recession than those in the construction industry. Charlie Kelly, from Aberdeen, has recently been elected to the executive of UCATT; in the following interview with Pat Craven he gives his views on the present situation in the industry.

'Militant' would welcome more comments from readers in the building industry on the important issues raised here.

Pat Craven: What are the main problems facing UCATT at present?

Charlie Kelly: Obviously unemployment is the major problem as far as I am concerned, and the availability of finance. Not enough

is being ploughed into industry. Nearly a quarter of the unemployment statistics are building workers; it's a diabolical situation.

We must get industry going again with finance from the government. Each successive government has used the construction industry as an economic regulator. Every local authority has cut spending and made workers unemployed.

PC: What action is the union taking?

CK: We are putting pressure on the government, we have had meetings with the Prime Minister. To a limited degree this has been a success, but nothing like enough to improve radically the unemployment situation.

PC: What action should they be taking?

CK: We can only continue to exert pressure, with an

orchestrated campaign. Unless industry gets moving again, no problems can be solved, such as decasualisation and the registration of companies. We are considering the Labour Party NEC's document as far as the building industry is concerned and continuing pressure on the government to revitalise the economy. Cutting back of finance obviously affects housebuilding, school

building and hospital building, so we really are in a dreadful state.

PC: Do you agree that what is needed is not just the reversal of the cuts, but a crash programme of public works?

CK: That's right. It's ludicrous that we are nearly a quarter of the unemployed, yet homeless people still need houses. We are looking for the expansion of Direct Labour departments throughout the country. They have been allowed to run down and become inefficient. They must be revamped and expanded.

PC: Do you support the demand for a 35-hour week?

CK: Indeed; it's important to reduce the week and bring retirement down to 60. We will come up against concerted opposition from the employers—it will be the most difficult demand to win, but it is very important.

PC: Do you agree that there should be a guaranteed minimum wage of, say, £60?

CK: I think there is a case for a minimum wage for manual workers, below which no employer should be allowed to pay. It is applied in other countries. We want the government to set up a national register of companies and workers in the industry.

Then we can begin to decasualise the industry—the casual nature of the job is a real problem. Then we can protect earnings during periods of unemployment.

It is the most difficult industry to organise and therefore we have less pressure. There is a need for a strong trade union and I believe that UCATT is the best union to do it, with its base in the industry.

PC: Do you think there will be any solution to the industry's problems, when most of the companies are privately owned and run for profit?

CK: The construction industry is one which suffers most from government policies. There is no job security unless the economy picks up. I favour a considerable expansion of the public sector of industry, an extension of public ownership, an end to the export of capital and a reduction of the working week—basically a radical extension of socialist policies.

Capital is flowing out of the country when industry is being starved of investment. There should also be certain import controls where there is capacity in Britain to do the job.

CAMBRIDGE

CITY OF STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM—

CAMBRIDGE—what visions does that name conjure up? The boat race, punts on the river, strawberries and cream on the lawns, historic colleges, the best British traditions.

All these are true if you happen to be a student with a rich daddy, or a well-paid academic, but things are a bit different for ordinary workers who live in the town.

The university is the main employer here, and pays infamously low wages. The ASTMS branch at the university, for instance, is still negotiating to be paid the nationally agreed wage.

Or take the case of the "bedders". These are the ladies who are employed at ridiculously low wages to make the beds and tidy the rooms of the students. Can't they make their own beds, you might ask, but the truth of the matter is that if a lot of women didn't take a job like this they wouldn't get anything else.

Expensive

By being the main employer the university also sets the rates for other employers. So at Pye you can earn more as a temp on 90p an hour than do people who work there full-time.

Only in the hospital, where rates are fixed by national scales, are the rates any good. That is if you consider £38 for a 40-hour week as a porter to be good!

If you believe the propaganda in the capitalist press about high wages causing high prices, you may be tempted to believe conversely that low wages mean low prices. Of course, precisely the opposite is the case.

By Pete Lee
(Cambridge Labour Party)

Goods in the shops are expensive, and are kept that way by academics and tourists. The lines in the stores tend to be of the more exclusive kind, and because of opposition from the university the cheaper department stores such as Littlewoods and British Home Stores have not been allowed into the city.

Accommodation is expensive and scarce. Landladies charge £17 board to students and often even more than that to foreign language students. A small room in a shared house can cost you anything from £10 upwards. Bus travel is also expensive, the fare from our estate to the city centre is 20p for a mere couple of miles.

I have said that the university has blocked the development of the shopping facilities, it has also done the same for recreational facilities. There is very little entertainment for young people in Cambridge except for the students' discos.

The university has blocked a dance hall being opened, while the Tory council's contribution to entertainment since it came to power has been to take away the late-night licence from one club because of noise and ban skateboarding in the parks. Presumably they would like us to stay at home and improve our minds.



High life—at daddy's expense

FOR SOME!

On the council estate where we live there are two pubs, one tiny youth centre at the back of the local school, and one so-called community centre. I say so-called because the cost to hire the hall is prohibitive.

The council have been building new housing around us, and yet they have not built any shops nearby, so the nearest ones are about 20 minutes' walk away—try doing that with bags full of shopping. The bus service linking our estate to the centre of the town only runs once an hour in the evenings.

Stranded

This means that large numbers of young people are virtually stranded on the estate with little else to do but hang around the streets. Hardly surprising then that the walls are chalked with slogans.

What is needed is a massive extension of recreational and shopping facilities in Cambridge. New cheap stores, cheap clubs and theatres where young people can go,

free and more frequent public transport, and most of all a massive increase in wage rates.

In order to achieve our demand of £60 a week most workers here would have to have their wages doubled. Yet the attitude of the Tory city council can be seen in their actions on education. On the one hand they are proposing to close two city centre primary schools, which will mean children walking long distances to the next schools, while on the other hand they are spending thousands of pounds fighting the government's instructions to stop paying grants to the elite Perse private school. Clearly nothing can be expected from these gentlemen.

Cambridge is a city of strawberries and cream all right, that is unless you have the misfortune to work here for a living. Low wages, poor facilities, a high cost of living—come to sunny Cambridge this summer and stroll around amid the good old British tradition.

Workers' Notebook

The tremendous class battles of 1970-74 brought an increase in "real personal disposable incomes" of 23% in 1974 as against 1970. This is the best measure of rising living standards at that time, due to successful struggles. But by autumn of last year real personal disposable income had fallen by 16% over 1970. So a third of the material gains made by workers through struggle have been filched back from them through the incomes policies of the last three years.

Economic Trends, No 291, Jan 1978, page 10

...Hardship is increasing in Britain: more and more people need help from the state just to survive. Between 1966 and 1976 the number of beneficiaries receiving weekly payment of supplementary benefits rose from just under 2½ million to almost 3 million—an increase of one fifth.* And there has certainly been a deterioration in 1977...

Annual Abstract of Statistics 1977
Table 3.26

...While Britain's bosses bemoan the number of days lost in strikes, what about those who are missing from work for ever? 646 workers were killed in industrial accidents during 1976—that works out at between 12 and 13 every week. It looks like that money they haven't been investing hasn't been going on safety precautions either...

Annual Abstract of Statistics 1977
Table 3.53

Take a moment off from swigging champagne to celebrate inflation coming down to single figures [just!]. The general index of Retail Prices, which is if anything an underestimate of prices, was by last October more than 250% higher than it had been in 1970... Or put it another way: a 1970 pound would have been worth just 39 pence last October...

Economic Trends No 291
Jan 1978, page 42

ETHIOPIA, ERITREA, SOMALIA

Only International Peasants can resolve National

There is turmoil in Ethiopia, with the regime of the Dergue fighting a bitter war on two fronts. Last week's article explained the momentous events in Ethiopia since the fall of Haile Selassie in 1974. Analysing the social character of the new regime, it explained that, on the one hand, the land reform and nationalisation of industry carried out under the pressure of the masses—abolishing landlordism and capitalism—represent an enormous step forward; while, on the other hand, the dictatorial direction of the changes from above by the military leaders of the Dergue has given the Ethiopian revolution a distorted, bonapartist character from the very beginning. This week, Lynn Walsh deals with the national question: the struggle in Eritrea and the war with Somalia over Ogaden.



The attempt of the Dergue's regime to retain control over Eritrea and Ogaden have nothing in common with genuine Marxism.

When the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia in 1917 they immediately conceded the right of self-determination to the oppressed nationalities which had been shackled up in the old Russian empire's "prison-house of nations." By proclaiming the right to independence, the Soviet government was able to gain the confidence of the exploited classes within the subject nations, and convince them of the enormous advantages of opting for a voluntary socialist federation with full autonomy.

Under Stalin, however, the bureaucracy which usurped the political control of the soviets returned to a narrow, nationalist policy. The greater-Russian chauvinism of Stalinism fanned all the smouldering embers of nationalism, giving new life to national aspirations which would have soon been satisfied and outgrown in a democratic federation of soviet republics. Today, throughout Russia and Eastern Europe, national sentiments amplify all the grievances of workers in the subject states and nationalities and, in turn, provide a means of expressing opposition to the totalitarian dictatorship which rules over the planned economy.

On this vital issue, as on others, the Dergue has followed the example, not of the Bolsheviks, but of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is not simply a question of mistaken choice of policy: it reflects the narrow social interests of the petit-bourgeois military caste on which the Dergue is based. Its lack of internationalism and hostility to national aspirations

are the counterpart of its determination to direct all social change from above and at all costs to retain power in its own hands.

Far from defusing the explosive national antagonisms which built up under Haile Selassie's empire, the Dergue, by attempting to crush the hopes aroused by the Emperor's fall, actually triggered a critical reaction which has come near to blowing Ethiopia apart.

STRUGGLE IN ERITREA

The armed struggle of the Eritrean liberation movement against the regime in Addis Ababa is now 17 years old. During the war to free Ethiopia from Italian rule in 1941, when the British army backed Haile Selassie's forces, Eritrea, formerly an Italian colony, was promised independence. After the war, however, the United Nations recommended its federation with Ethiopia under the Emperor's throne.

In 1962, the party which dominated the Eritrean Assembly and which reflected proper-tied interests, decided to take Eritrea into union with Ethiopia. Moves in this direction had already given rise to the Eritrean Liberation Front, founded in Cairo in 1958, which had initiated the armed struggle in 1961.

By 1971, the ELF had established a strong position for itself, and its operations forced Haile Selassie to declare martial law in Eritrea. But in 1972 the ELF split, provoking bloody conflict between the two wings of the movement. The ELF, backed by Sudan and a number of Arab states, claims to be "socialist" but characterises the present struggle as "the stage on national democratic revolution", postponing socialist aims to a later "stage".

The split-away EPLF (Eritrean Popular Liberation Front), however, claims to be "Marxist-Leninist" and appears to have much wider support among the exploited masses and petit-bourgeois in Eritrea. Ironically the EPLA counts among its heroes the same Fidel Castro who is now supplying its mortal enemies with military advisers. Such are the tragic contradictions.

Both the ELF and the EPLF seized on the collapse of the old regime in 1974 to launch a new offensive struggle for independence. After two years of intense fighting, the liberation force took most of the province out of the Dergue's control, occupying most of Eritrea's towns, and cutting off Ethiopia's route to the vital Red Sea ports of Massawa and Assab.

Only the divisions within the Eritrean liberation movement

and its lack of a viable political strategy saved the Dergue from complete defeat in Eritrea. The extent of mass support for the independence struggle is indicated by the fact that, in May 1976, the combined guerrilla forces of the ELF and the EPLF were estimated at 30,000 to 40,000. When the Dergue offered limited autonomy to Eritrea, it was rejected outright by both wings of the liberation movement.

Faced with this, the Dergue began in May 1976 to recruit a peasant force to march in Eritrea against the liberation movement. Drawing on the peasant associations formed when land reforms were carried through, the Dergue assembled a peasant army of 30,000 to 40,000.

Thousands of peasants would undoubtedly have been prepared to mobilise to defend—as the Dergue claimed—the gains that had accrued to them under the new regime. But the Dergue also attempted to whip up support on the most reactionary basis, concentrating recruitment in the predominantly Christian provinces, and waging an hysterical propaganda campaign against the Eritreans, accusing them of "selling Ethiopian territory to the Arabs." In such an approach, there is not an iota of Marxism.

The Dergue's ill-prepared and poorly-equipped peasant army disintegrated when it came up against the Eritrean forces. Most of Eritrea still remains outside the Dergue's control. Although the fighting continues, the Dergue appears to be concentrating its military efforts in the south, against the Somali-backed forces in Ogaden.



Haile Selassie

With the military and economic aid it is now receiving from Russian, and the training of its army by over 6,000 Cuban advisers, it is possible that the Dergue will be able to retake Eritrea. But the reconquest of Eritrea could be achieved by the Dergue only with an enormous toll of death and destruction, which would confirm with blood of tens of thousands the nationalistic, repressive character of the new regime, in spite of the progressive social changes from which it draws its strength.

Had the new regime offered full independence to Eritrea, while offering autonomous participation in a socialist federation, who can doubt that the land reform measures and nationalisation would have an enormous attraction for the workers and peasants of Eritrea? As it is, the Dergue appears to be as despotic as Haile Selassie's regime, if not more so.

To national opposition, is added repulsion at the savage, dictatorial methods of the Dergue. The intensified struggle of the Eritrean liberation movement, moreover, has also had the effect of stimulating renewed separatist demands within Ethiopia, notably among the peoples of Tigre and Afar, who are kicking back at the tyranny imposed on them by the Dergue.

THE WAR IN OGA DEN AND THE CHARACTER OF THE SOMALI REGIME

In the last few weeks, Ethiopia has launched a massive counter-offensive against the Somali-backed forces in Ogaden—backed by Russia (with Cuba as its military agent), Moscow having abandoned its former support for Somalia. In all probability, Ethiopia will retake Ogaden. Whatever the outcome, however, this war in one of the world's poorest regions unmistakably demonstrates the complete lack of internationalism of the Russian bureaucracy, and the narrow nationalist outlook of its replicas in the underdeveloped world.

Ethiopia and Somalia are at war: but the regime in Somalia has the same essential social characteristics as the regime in Ethiopia (analysed in last week's article). While Ethiopia was being convulsed by dramatic and bloody events which attracted the attention of the whole world, Somalia was experiencing similar changes, carried through with little upheaval and almost unnoticed internationally.

In 1975, the military government of Siyad Barre, which had seized power in 1969, completed a radical land reform which eradicated landlordism and satisfied the peasants' demand for land. What little industry there is in Somalia was completely nationalised, and an



Ethiopian troops at a rally in Addis Ababa economic development plan inaugurated.

Proclaiming itself to be a state based on "scientific socialism", Somalia was rapidly adopted as a client by the Russian bureaucracy, which had already given aid and was now eager to assure its access to the naval facilities at Berberer on the Gulf of Aden. The Somali forces began to receive enormous military aid from Russia.

Somalia has long laid claim to Ogaden, a former British "protectorate" handed to Ethiopia by Britain in 1955, but which has a population of about two million (mainly nomadic) Somalis. Ever since its formation as an independent republic in 1960 (unifying British and Italian Somaliland), Somalia has demanded the inclusion of other areas with a predominantly Somali population; north-eastern Kenya (with about half a million) and Djibuti (formerly French Somaliland).

While Haile Selassie ruled Ethiopia, Moscow was quite prepared to approve Somalia's claims to Ogaden—though, ironically, it was Stalin who had vetoed a British proposal at the United Nations after 1945 to hand Ogaden to Somalia!

RUSSIA CHANGES SIDES

But the events of 1974 changed the situation. Somalia saw the turmoil in Ethiopia as a golden opportunity to step up the struggle for Ogaden by increasing its supply of regular troops and equipment to the

SOMALIA, AND OGA DEN:

perspectives Antagonisms

By Lynn
Walsh



opened by supporting Somalia's claim to Ogaden, which implies a general claim for "ethnic frontiers" embracing all Somalis.

"The United States cannot send arms to Somalia," explains 'The Financial Times' (19.1.78) "because, whatever one thinks of Somalia's moral case and the authenticity of the WSLF, virtually every other African state takes the view that Somalia is the aggressor and that its action threatens the principle that borders inherited from colonial times are inviolable. Somalia's contention that the people of Ogaden are liberating themselves from Ethiopian colonialism are not widely accepted."

RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Given this situation, Ethiopia will probably retake Ogaden, though it is unlikely to cross the border into Somalia. But could there be a greater condemnation of the grotesque, nationalistic foreign policy of the Russian bureaucracy? Only, perhaps, the war between the regimes of the deformed workers' states in Vietnam and Cambodia after the long, heroic struggle of their peoples against landlordism and imperialism.

The Marxism of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky stands unequivocally for the right of nations to self-determination. Sensitivity to the aspirations of oppressed nationalities goes hand in hand with genuine internationalism.

Marxists must support the right of the Eritrean people to independence.

Although the Somali regime has undoubtedly supported the 'West Somali' liberation movement for reasons of its own power and prestige, **Marxists cannot but support the demand of the Somalis in Ogaden to decide their own future.**

Similarly, the other national minorities within Ethiopia should be granted autonomy, and the right to independence if they decide to separate.

But while the satisfaction of national aspirations is a precondition for the resolution of the conflicts now raging throughout the Horn of Africa, the formation of a number of small new independent states, even with the abolition of landlordism and capitalism, would in itself by no means provide a solution to the terrible problems facing the impoverished and exploited masses of the region.

Full recognition of national rights must be linked by Marxists to the call for a socialist federation of Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and if they decide on independence, other small states in the region.

Even this, however, must be

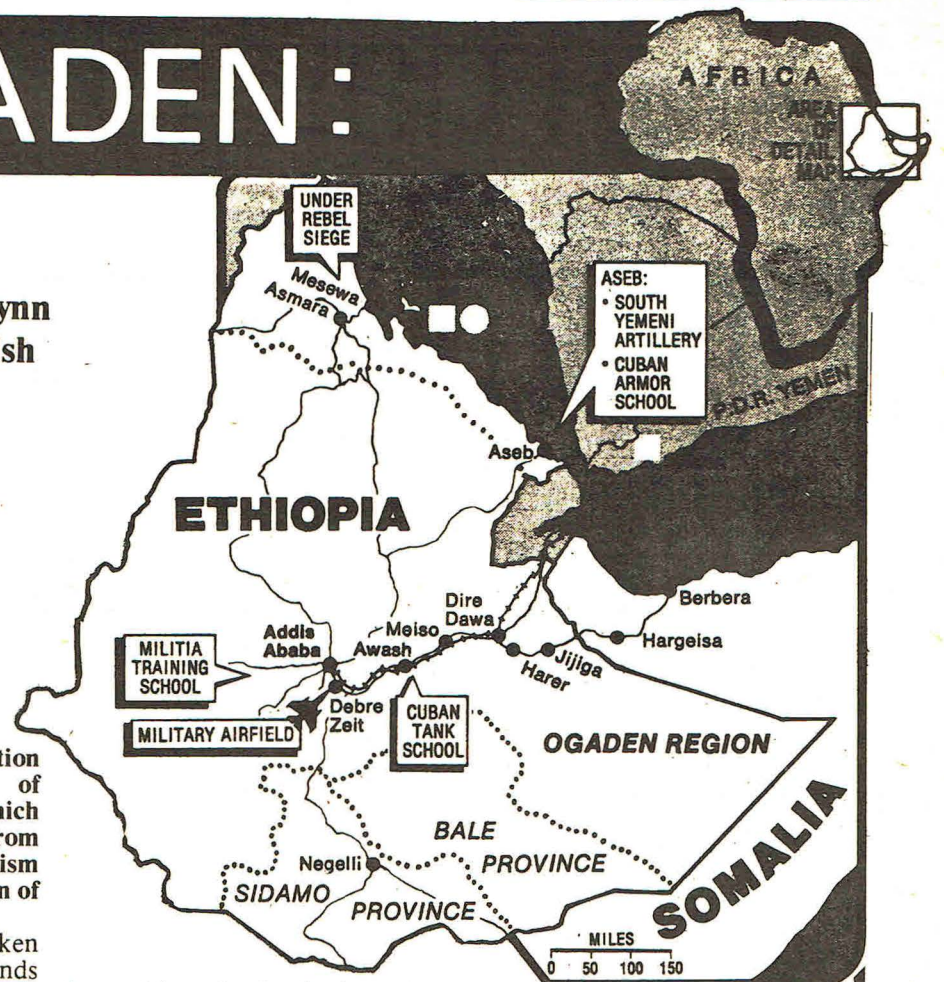
viewed as a step in the direction of a socialist federation of Africa, the only means by which the continent will escape from the stifling legacy of colonialism and the continued domination of imperialism.

These demands must be taken in conjunction with the demands for workers' democracy, explained in last week's article in relation to Ethiopia and which also apply to Somalia.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ARE THE KEY

In the case of Ethiopia and Somalia, both the dictatorial character of the regimes and their complete lack of internationalism arise from the confinement within narrow national boundaries of the fundamental social changes over which they have presided. On the basis of the extreme backwardness that still prevails, with the survival of feudal conditions and only a very limited development of modern industry, it is impossible to establish genuine socialist relations. Socialism, as Marx explained, requires a level of technique and culture high enough to abolish scarcity and want.

The attempt, under exceptional conditions, of petit-bourgeois military leaders to tackle social tasks which are objectively those of the socialist revolution—thus giving rise to **deformed workers' states**—can be explained only from the point of



incapable of developing the ex-colonial, under-developed areas of the world. The postponement of the socialist revolution in the west, where the industrial working class is concentrated, produced intolerable contradictions in the backward countries.

When crisis erupted, triggering the complete collapse of the old ruling class and, especially in Ethiopia, provoking the sweeping movement of the workers and peasants, the military leaders at the head of the movement were not only forced to clear away the remnants of the old ruling class, but were impelled to break with private property relations in order to find a way out.

Under Mengistu in Ethiopia and Barre in Somalia, bonapartist leaderships, which in a past era would probably have taken certain limited measures against landlordism and foreign big business in order to foster the growth of their native capitalism, have been pushed by events to carry through the abolition of landlordism and capitalism. They could establish a firm basis for their power in no other way. They have been able to take

wards the much more powerful deformed workers' states in Russia and Eastern Europe (and in some cases China) which constitute a heavy counterweight to imperialism. The bureaucracy of the Stalinist states not only provides economic and military aid—as they did formerly to Somalia and now to Ethiopia—to allow them to survive in a hostile capitalist world, but provide these new regimes with a ready-made prototype on which to model their own state apparatus. Inevitably, there is a tendency for these relatively weak regimes to become clients of the Russian bureaucracy.

NEW WORLD SITUATION

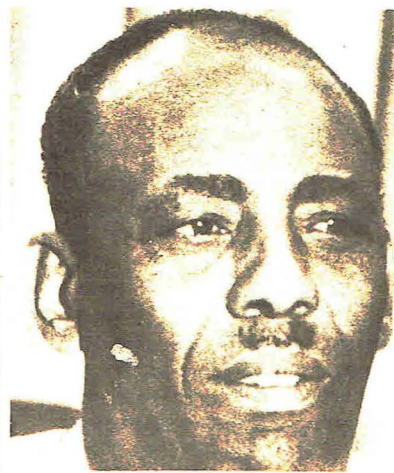
In the case of Somalia, which received enormous military aid, the national interests of the ruling caste have come into conflict with the Russian bureaucracy's wider foreign policy interests in the Horn of Africa. Rooted in the isolation of the Russian revolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy is incapable of surmounting the national antagonisms created by capitalism and imperialism.

But the class dead-lock of the post-war period which has produced the distorted transitional regimes of Ethiopia and Somalia is breaking down. The world economic crisis has already provoked enormous movements of the workers in Portugal, Spain and Italy. Tomorrow, there will be similar movements in France, Britain and other advanced countries, including the United States. The socialist revolution has been placed on the agenda in the metropolitan heart lands of capital. Events in Russian and Eastern Europe have also brought much nearer the political revolution in the Stalinist states.

The establishment of workers' democracy and planned production in the advanced countries would transform the world situation. Then the progressive changes now being carried out under such distorted conditions would become the basis for the rapid transformation of these desperately poor countries on the basis of international working class collaboration. The material and cultural standards of the toiling masses would be immeasurably raised and in a manner that fully satisfied national aspirations and the desire to democratically decide for themselves.



Lt. Col. Mengistu



Pres. Siad Barre

view of the international balance of class forces.

The revolutionary developments in Ethiopia and Somalia, as in other countries like Cuba (Militant nos. 390-392) are as much the product of the world situation as of the class struggle within these countries. The regimes which have emerged are the result of the international dead-lock in the class struggle which has prevailed in the post-war period.

While capitalism experienced a long, unprecedented boom in the advanced countries of the west and Japan, it proved

measures which, historically, belong to the proletariat, because of the extreme weakness of the working class in these countries and because the powerful working class of the advanced countries, the key to the socialist revolution internationally, has not yet moved decisively to carry out the socialist transformation of society.

Given the world balance of forces, these bonapartist regimes which have begun proletarian tasks in their own distorted manner, have inevitably turned for support to

FRANCE

French Workers on the Offensive

By Bob Labi

The ruling classes of Europe look with foreboding towards this Sunday's voting in the French elections. This election, held in two rounds on March 12th and 19th, could mark a turning point in France and possible for the whole of Europe. The capitalists are alarmed that whichever way the election goes it will be the signal for enormous class struggles in France.

Already the French capitalists are rushing for the gold 'Napoleon' coins. Gold is either being hoarded or smuggled out of France. The Franc has fallen in the world currency market as confidence over French capitalism's future prospects declines. More than half the French firms are delaying investment decisions until after the Elections.

General Strike

The Patronat (French CBI) reported in January that 57% of its members expected that a victory for the ruling Gaullist-Republican coalition would lead quickly to a general strike and almost as many expected frequent factory occupations. While hoping for 'calmer' industrial relations if the Left win, they expect a Left government to make severe inroads into their power. Either way is strewn with difficulties for them.



Communist Party leader Marchais



Election poster: "We place our confidence in the French Communist Party—for the People's Union and the victory of the Common Programme."

Why are the French ruling class so worried?

On the one hand, the economic situation is bad. Production is falling, in the last quarter of 1977 at an annual rate of 6%. Unemployment is over a million and inflation is at least 10%. As in all other capitalist countries, the French government has attempted to solve this crisis by an austerity programme, but has met with the workers' resistance.

Austerity

French workers are in no mood to accept the austerity measures Barre, the Premier, is trying to implement. Last year, three one-day general strikes were held against the government's measures. One of these strikes, that on May 24th, brought out ten million workers (half of whom were not unionised) in the biggest movement since the May-June general strike of 1968.

The increasing militancy of French workers led to a growing number of strikes towards the end of 1977. Electricity, airline and railway workers were all involved in action during December. When some Renault workers were refused payment for periods when they were laid off they held captive the managing director!

This growing discontent is the motive force behind the 'Union of the Left's' increasing support.

Already disagreement on how to handle this has split the government coalition. President Giscard d'Estaing's Republican Party and the Gaullist 'Rassemblement pour la République' (Rally for the Republic), led by Chirac, will now be running candidates against each other in the first round.

But the split which has made the headlines is between the partners of the 'Union of the Left'. The Union was formed in June 1972 on the basis of a 'Common Programme' between the Communist Party (PCF), Socialist Party (PSF) and the tiny capitalist 'Left Radical Movement'. This Programme was far to the left of the policy of the 1936 Popular Front. It called for wide-ranging social reforms and the nationalisation of nine big industrial companies and the private banking and credit institutions.

A La Callaghan

Last summer a split opened up in the Union when the PCF launched a campaign for updating the 1972 Common Programme and accusing the PSF of moving rightwards. Typical of the PCF's approach was a speech last September by Marchais, its leader, saying that a Left government "must not be allowed to betray the hopes of the working class by slipping into social democracy à la Callaghan, à la Schmidt and à la

Soares."

At the same time, the PCF demanded that the Programme should call for the taking over of the 1,450 subsidiaries of the nine firms already earmarked for nationalisation, along with the Peugeot-Citroën car group and the CFP-Total oil company.

This PCF campaign began suddenly after a whole period when the PCF had been attempting to 'moderate' its image and distance itself from the East European regimes. At the PCF's 22nd Congress in February 1976, it was nearly unanimously agreed to drop the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' from the Party's rules. This followed the adoption of a new policy, entitled 'Socialism in the colours of France', at its Extraordinary 21st Congress in October 1974. These policy changes were part of an effort by the PCF leaders to prove conclusively to the French ruling class that it was no longer a revolutionary section of an international movement.

Mitterand, the PSF leader, commented that with the new PCF policy the split at Tours was no longer justified. It was at the Tours Congress in 1920 that the supporters of Lenin and Trotsky won a majority in the old Socialist Party, renaming it the PCF, and the defeated right wing left to rebuild a reformist party. The main issue then was whether or not to support the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' and the Communist International.

"This PCF drift to the right was also seen in its abrupt about-turn over nuclear weapons. In 1972, the PCF demanded that the Common Programme should call for the destruction of all H-Bombs stored in France. Suddenly last year the PCF leaders called for the retention and modernisation of the French nuclear force 'de frappe'. Echoing De Gaulle's words they said that a nuclear deterrent pointing 'tous azimuts' (in all directions) was necessary to preserve French independence.

But this attempt to gain support by 'moderating' its demands did not stop the PCF's decline in support which the opinion polls were indicating. At the same time, the PSF was gaining rapidly.

The re-emergence of the Socialist Party as a mass force has been one of the most rapid political developments

seen in France since the war. In 1969 Gaston Deferre, the Socialist candidate, won only 5% of the vote in the presidential elections. Yet following the re-organisation of the Socialist Party in 1971 its support has rocketed. In the 1973 elections it won 17.7% of the vote and now the polls give it over 25%.

The press has tried to give the impression that this is the result of one man's work—Mitterand's. But in reality this growth has come from the radicalisation, produced by the crisis of French capitalism and the revolutionary traditions of the French working class. Since the 1968 events, there has been a growing demand among workers for a revolutionary transformation of society. This has been reflected in the growth of the left-wing CFDT union federation and the PSF, as mainly younger workers were repelled by the more 'moderate' policies and Stalinist heritage of the CGT and PCE. It is still true today that the CFDT is more radical than the PCF-controlled CGT, in spite of the 'leftwards' move of the PCE.

Young Socialists

It is the prospect that the PSF will overtake it which has led to the PCF's recent efforts to attack the PSF from the 'left'. The position of the PCF leaders has nothing to do with a principled programme, as the about-face on nuclear weapons showed. It is motivated by the fear of being outflanked as the biggest workers' party by the PSF. At the same time, Mitterand's manoeuvres from left to right, and his attacks on the left-wing Ceres group inside the PSF and the Young Socialists, have given substance to the PCF's attacks.

While attacking the PSF leaders for being 'soft' on capitalism, moreover, the PCF withdrew two of its candidates to clear the way for the election of two members of the so-called 'left' Gaullists, the 'union des Gaullistes de Progres', led by former Gaullist minister Jean Charbonnel!

This 'left' turn by the PCF leaders was executed in order to rebuild their support by showing workers that they were the ones most determined to take measures against capitalism, that they are not like the Social Democrats in other countries, merely propping up the system.



Chirac in the election campaign

This has undoubtedly resulted in an increase in the PCF's support. The opinion polls, which provide a rough guide to the country's mood, show that the PCF has built up its support from 18.9% last July to 21% now. All reports also indicate the great enthusiasm this left turn has produced among their supporters. A small sign of how a bold lead can get a response!

FRANCE / SOUTH AFRICA

But notwithstanding this split (and the biased media campaign against them), it is still likely that the Left will win a majority of votes. Their policies are very popular. For instance, the Left's pledge to increase the minimum wage immediately to 2,400 Francs a month will mean a wage rise for nearly half the French workers.

But this does not necessarily mean that the Left will win a majority of seats. Leaving aside the fiddling of overseas postal votes, the constituency boundaries are rigged in the Right's favour. For example, in the conservative Hautes Alpes region, 30,000 votes elect a deputy, yet in radical Paris 180,000 votes are needed!

The election of a Left government would produce an immediate crisis. 'The Times' commented that a Left government, "with or without communist participation, would be under irresistible pressure to

carry out, at least in part, its electoral promises. This must... spell a sharp drop in confidence, a revival of inflationary pressure, a rise in unemployment, a balance of payments deficit and a flight from the Franc... France would become a sort of Portugal."



Giscard d'Estaing

The Common Programme, while calling for many progressive measures, does not, however, propose to do away with the root cause of the crisis in France, the

diseased capitalist system. Like the Allende government in Chile, the Common Programme measures which will anger the ruling class, but cannot satisfy the working class. In spite of the inroads a Left government promises to make into capitalism, the French ruling class would still be able to use economic pressure and outright sabotage to undermine the government.

Popular Front

The promised massive increase of the minimum wage from 1,700 to 2,400 Francs a month would be soon eaten up by inflation, as were the wage increases granted by the 1936 Popular Front, unless the capitalist system was overthrown and replaced by a socialist plan of production. The piecemeal approach of the Common Programme allows the capitalists time to sabotage the government,



The recent postmen's strike

undermine its support and then bring it down.

Currently, one of the best selling novels in France is M Mitterand's '180 Days', which describes the course of a short-lived Left government which is brought down, amid economic chaos, by the President dissolving the Assembly and ordering new elections.

The Left Union already has a Trojan Horse in the shape of the so-called Left Radicals. This small party with only 13 seats out of 490 (mostly won because the PSF and PCF stood down in their favour) is the defender of capitalism within the Union.

'The Times' reported that French businessmen court the Left Radical leader Fabre "as the likely champion of free enterprise within a left-wing government." Fabre, in an interview with 'Le Point', said that he would not sign an updated Common Programme "unless there is to be the guarantee of a large private sector in the Programme."

Postal Strike

On the President's undemocratic powers to override the Assembly, the press has commented that the only point that Mitterand and Marchais agree on is that Giscard d'Estaing can stay as President if the Left come to power.

This refusal to challenge the President's undemocratic powers and the inclusion of the capitalist Left Radicals in the Left Union opens the way for the bringing down of a Left government. What is needed is a PCF-PSF government committed to carrying out the socialist transformation of society, not one attempting to make piecemeal inroads into capitalism.

If the Left is defeated, then it is certain that the Patronat's gloomy predictions of massive industrial struggles will be borne out. An example of French

workers' militant mood was when, a few weeks ago, postmen all over Paris spontaneously walked out when they heard that police had evicted workers occupying the Creteil sorting office in protest at the sacking of a part-time postman.

A new capitalist government would be faced with industrial battles which could lead to a new general strike on the scale of May-June 1968, only this time on a higher plane. Such a movement could lead to the formation of a Left government which would be under enormous pressure to take decisive action against the bosses.

The election now of a Left government would be seen as the green light for workers to push forward their demands possibly resulting in a wave of industrial action, like the factory occupations after the victory of the 1936 Popular Front.

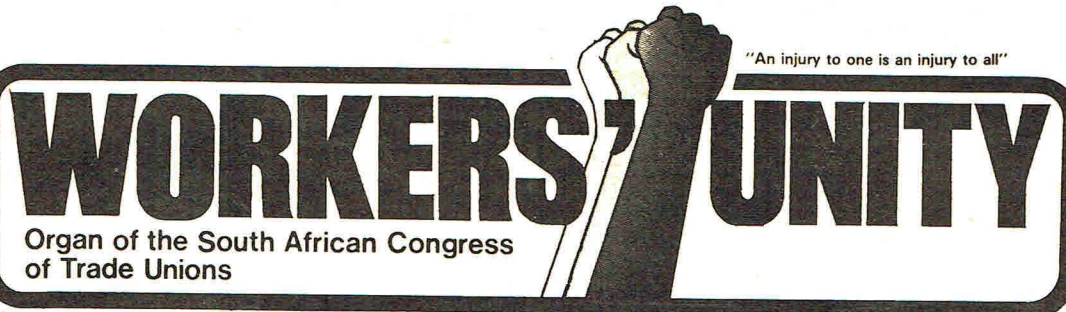
Maire, the CFDT leader, has already warned that "social mobilisation" may be necessary to keep a Left government to its promises. Looking to the French workers' revolutionary traditions 'The Times' felt that it was a possibility that a Left victory would be "followed by a spontaneous explosion of strikes...[as] many French men and women look back to 1936 with nostalgia as a decisive moment in the emancipation of the working class."

Front Runner

No matter what final result the elections bring, it is certain that France is entering a new stage of struggle. Until now the centre of the European revolution has been in Spain, Italy and Portugal. Now the stresses and strains building up inside France, and the French workers' combative traditions, mean that France will join the front runners in the struggle for a socialist transformation of society.



Socialist leader Francois Mitterand with CFDT leader Edmond Maire



SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS

European-based multinational companies continue to block the development of African trade unions in South Africa, victimising workers' leaders and refusing to recognise the unions of the workers' choice.

★ Smith & Nephew still refuse to recognise the National Union of Textile Workers, an unregistered union to which the majority of black workers at Smith & Nephew belong. The management are now trying to enforce a "works council" for in-factory bargaining, which workers have boycotted. The NUTW claims that management at Smith & Nephew have used pressure to get workers to accept the council, and when faced with the refusal of workers to put forward candidates for the council, they placed the names on the ballot papers themselves.

When members of the council wanted to resign in the face of the workers' overwhelming rejection of the council, Smith & Nephew told them they would "just have to stay and represent the minority."

Meanwhile workers in Britain have taken up the call of the black workers at Smith & Nephew in Pinetown. The General and Municipal Workers' Union, the Association of Technical, Managerial and Supervisory Staff and the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, have formed a committee to co-ordinate action on the issue. The International Textile Workers' Federation and the ICFTU also support the struggle of Smith & Nephew workers.

★ United Transport Holdings, subsidiary of the British-based British Electric Traction, is refusing to recognise the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, which has members at a number of UTH companies. At African Bus Services, for example, 75% of the African workers are members of the TAWU. The works committee there has called on management to recognise the union, and has been ignored.

Two years ago recognition was refused at UTH's Vaal Transport Company. In October last year, the General Secretary of the TAWU was summoned to see management, and while there, the Security Police arrived, interrogated him and confiscated his membership lists.

(According to information released by the British government, in December 1976, 55 juveniles and 116 trainees employed at UTH companies were paid below the "Poverty Datum Line". This is based on information supplied by the company itself.)

★ The Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union alleges that Unilever is victimising its members. Last year, a union shop steward, who was also a member of the liaison committee, was dismissed after a union request for access to company premises to enroll members had been turned down. Unilever claims the man was dismissed for bad time-keeping and attendance!

Reprinted courtesy of 'Workers' Unity' paper of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Order your copy from 'Workers' Unity', 49 Rathbone Street, London, W1

Polaroid workers in America have won a long and hard-fought struggle: they have forced the Polaroid employers to discontinue supplying cameras, film, sunglasses, etc., to South America.

In 1971 Polaroid workers in the USA got management to agree that no Polaroid equipment would be supplied to the government in South Africa. Previously, Polaroid filming equipment was being used for reference book (pass book) photographs. Frank & Hirsch (Polaroid's distributor in South Africa) agreed to keep to this commitment.

But in fact they continued to supply the Bantu Affairs Department and the South African Defence Force, using special invoices and delivery vans and a phoney address. But they slipped up, and an employee of Frank & Hirsch photocopied an invoice showing beyond all doubt that the agreement made with the Polaroid workers was being ignored.

This information was sent to the USA. It was subsequently discovered that at least 17 other sales of equipment to government departments had taken place between 1975 and 1977.

Polaroid, whose sales in South Africa were worth R3.4 million each year, is the first American company to withdraw from South Africa under pressure from workers demanding an end to apartheid.

LETTERS

Justice?

Dear Comrades

Recently I was involved as a witness in a court case involving careless driving. As I was cited by the Procurator Fiscal my attendance was mandatory but I received full compensation for loss of earnings etc.

As it turned out I waited three hours only to be told to come back after lunch. During my visit I had a discussion with the bar-maid of my favourite pub who was attending as a defence witness at another trial.

She explained that this was her third consecutive Thursday as a witness and further explained something that amazed me.

If you act as a defence witness, the defence lawyer must cite you and your attendance is not mandatory. You receive no compensation except from the accused.

The implications of this were clear in that waiting room. The accused had lodged a defence of alibi (he was accused of an offence on an evening when he was in the pub) and had called about ten people, staff and customers, as witnesses.

None of these people need have attended or could have forced a day's wages for their attendance, a sum well in excess of £100 per day.

The money cannot be claimed back by the accused if proven innocent and clearly this shows the hypocrisy of British justice.

It would have been easier to plead guilty and receive a fine but as this would have meant a smear on his character this had decided to fight.

Without the help of friends he could have paid dearly to clear his name.

James Newlands
Stirling, Falkirk and
Grangemouth LPYS

Dear Comrades

Driving back from London myself and another comrade picked up a lad who was hitch-hiking back North. Being unemployed he'd been trying his luck in London; needless to say he didn't find the pavements paved with gold. After failing with several jobs, as a last resort he tried a photographic agency.

The advert in that 'top peoples' paper 'The Times' had read—"Models— attractive people wanted for photographic modelling, part-time or full-time, male or female, no experience necessary; £12 per hour if accepted." Of course what the advert failed to mention, was the charge for trial photographs—£30 and another £36 for a 'blow-up'. The agency also told the lad that it would take 15% of earnings.

In contrast to this I'm sure that the editor of the paper in which the advert appeared, doesn't have the same kind of problems. William Rees-Mogg, well known advocate of belt-tightening and mass youth unemployment, recently sold his house in the Mendip Hills for £200,000.

The house has five reception rooms, eight bedrooms, six bathrooms and a self-contained two-bedroomed flat. In restoring the house William Rees-Mogg had been granted a grant of £15,000 from the government.

Maybe this small item shows once again what is meant by freedom of the press, freedom to put misleading adverts in a paper, and the right to call for tightening of belts whilst lining your own pocket.

Richard Knights

Bob Marley

Dear Editor

As a resident of Handsworth in the past, I became aware of the many problems which black youth face. I was therefore, interested to read a recent interview in the music paper 'Melody Maker' where Bob Marley commented on such problems.

His anger at the way the system has treated his race showed, as it does in his brilliant music. He said, for example, "We come into the West as slaves and after we done slavery them say, take the chain offa them but don't give them enough money." In reference to the National Front he said, "Some prejudiced people who no want black man here. Let me ask you somet'ing—who encour-

RETIREMENT— ANOTHER BATTLE

Dear Comrades

My parents retire in April. Both have worked all their lives. My father considered himself lucky as he was always in work, low paid though it was.

My mother was lucky too: while her family were below school age she did homework. Slave labour is a better description.

From April onwards they will live on £28 a week. Their car, a ten year old Ford, has got to go.

They have got to be careful, not a new experience to them. After a lifetime of struggling to make ends meet, now retirement, another struggle to get through.

They are not alone, just another working class couple who have helped produce the wealth for the capitalists, who have been exploited by them and now are cast aside, no longer needed.

Although the working class has made some gains, some increase in their living standards, basically their position remains the same. The rich still get richer and the poor poorer, the workers still constantly deceived by politicians and the capitalist press.

That's why I read the Militant and why more and more working people are buying it. Only in its pages is the truth printed, the social and economic injustices brought to the fore.

This is why I welcome the 16-page Militant and wish it well in its pursuit of a socialist society.

Yours Fraternally
Carol Spooner
Bistall Branch LP
Leicester

age this t'ing?" And further on, "There's not'ing happenin' out there that somebody don't encourage."

At no point in this lengthy interview did Bob identify the real oppressors of his countrymen, the capitalists and their press who propagate racialism, or put forward a plausible solution despite his astute observations. Merely worshipping Haile Selassie and returning to Africa will solve the problems of black youth, according to him.

How much more effective would his propaganda be if he advocated a clear socialist programme instead of leading black youth into the dead end of the Rasta cult?

Black youth must fight in the PNP youth and LPYS for a socialist system where everyone will be free of oppression by capitalism in the name of profit.

Yours fraternally
Jacky Hargreaves
Sec, Dundee University
Labour Club

Firemen and Police

Dear Comrades

I would like to point out that the arrival of the Fire Service at the NF meeting on 17.2.78 was not to assist the police with water cannons etc. but to attend a call. This was checked out by me. All calls must be attended. This was a false alarm on this occasion but nevertheless it could have been a fire.

I inform the comrades of this because I was confronted by an angry group because I was wearing my Fire Brigades badge.

They informed me and my

union official who was present that they had supported the firemen during our dispute and that they thought this was a disgraceful way to repay them.

I pointed out to the group that the Fire Service had in my opinion attended a call but promised it would be checked out; it was. I would also like to point out that the West Midlands Fire Service is a closed shop and in no way will FBU members assist the police to curtail any demonstrations whatsoever.

Yours fraternally
C Foster
West Midlands FBU

"A Party of Second-rate Brewers"

Dear Comrades

A short letter from Comrade Gallagher of Doncaster has caught my eye—I think it merits further comment.

The big breweries intend to increase the price of a pint [of beer] by 2p—on an average cost to the consumer in the range 25-30p. The price of beer at the brewery is now in the range 15-20p a pint [that is of course buying in bulk]. So what might appear to be a relatively modest increase of 2p on 25-30, is in fact a very steep increase; 2p on the breweries' cost of about 7-12p a pint.

There may be slight inaccuracy in my figures, but the point is still the same. The cost of producing beer is only a fraction of the price paid in the pubs [which includes tax and the publican's cut] hence the 2p brewer's increase is very large indeed.

During the First World War, drunkenness among munitions workers caused concern. As an attempt to control drinking, most of the pubs in the Carlisle area were

Dear Comrades

I would like to complement the LPYS for their consistent efforts in campaigning against racist influences both inside and outside the labour movement today.

However, your efforts are being undermined by such people as Dennis Mason, Chairman, Ludlow Constituency Labour Party, who in a recent letter to 'The Guardian' exposed himself openly as a racist.

He warns in his letter that Labour will lose the next election because of its failure to "do something quite drastic about limiting immigration." Not satisfied with advocating Tory racist policies, he goes on to say: "We have 58 million people in these islands which is ten million too many and no-one has yet asked the British people whether or not they wish a multi-racial society, bringing with it a natural alteration to our culture."

It is important that the LPYS point out to this racist that firstly it is present Labour Party policy to repeal all immigration laws, and secondly that the supposed 'culture' he wishes to create, not preserve, is the same 'culture' as advocated by Hitler, Himmler, Tyndal and Webster.

I wonder how 'comrade' Mason intends to decrease the population by ten million? Perhaps he could repatriate the two million black people in this country, followed by a few million Irish and then make up the required quota by placing those unemployed workers without blue eyes and blonde hair in concentration camps.

I think 'comrade' Dennis needs a few basic lessons in socialism and I think lesson number one should be a practical one showing socialists in action—I would urge

NF Morale

all members of the LPYS and members of the labour movement in the Ludlow area to assist in ousting this racist from office.

Colin O'Callaghan
POEU

Oust Racialists

Dear Comrades

After reading the excellent report of the Birmingham Anti-NF demonstration, I must just add a postscript. This was an experience that three Young Socialists and myself had on our return journey to Harlow.

We were in a small van and stopped at the Watford Gap Motorway Café for a warm up cuppa. Suddenly a coach-load of about 25, mainly youngish people, arrived. They looked a bit downcast, and lined up for tea in a rather morose manner.

I was near the door at the time and overheard one of them mention the Birmingham demonstration. He was obviously a leading figure, an older bloke. "That's just the type of publicity we want," he stated, trying vainly to boost morale. "A howling red mob outside while we meet peacefully inside."

I only wanted to note that his companions weren't over-impressed by the argument. Luckily, my comrades had clued in who had arrived, and as the café was empty other than ourselves, recognised discretion was the better part of valour.

Actually we were followed back to the car by some of the NF supporters, who couldn't decide whether we were reds or not. Luckily for us we were not wearing badges or displaying papers.

Next time when we go on such a demonstration we will take a coach-load, then we will see who beats the retreat.

Fraternal greetings
R Edwards
Harlow CLP

nationalised, so that opening hours, strength of beer etc could be controlled. The Carlisle "State Management Scheme" although only an experiment, in fact lasted until 1972.

As a sop to the big breweries, who had given generous financial support to the Tories [and still do], the Heath government denationalised the State Management Scheme. It is worth noting that the scheme was always profitable, and by 1972 beer in Carlisle pubs was significantly cheaper than pubs anywhere else in Britain. But then, of course, the Tories aren't very keen on nationalised industries which operate well.

What is the solution? We must advocate nationalisation of at least the six major brewers [who control about 75% of the trade]. In the past the Tories have said that this will lead to a stereotyped "Benn bitter" being the only beer available in Britain. This is hypocritical nonsense; every year breweries close and beers

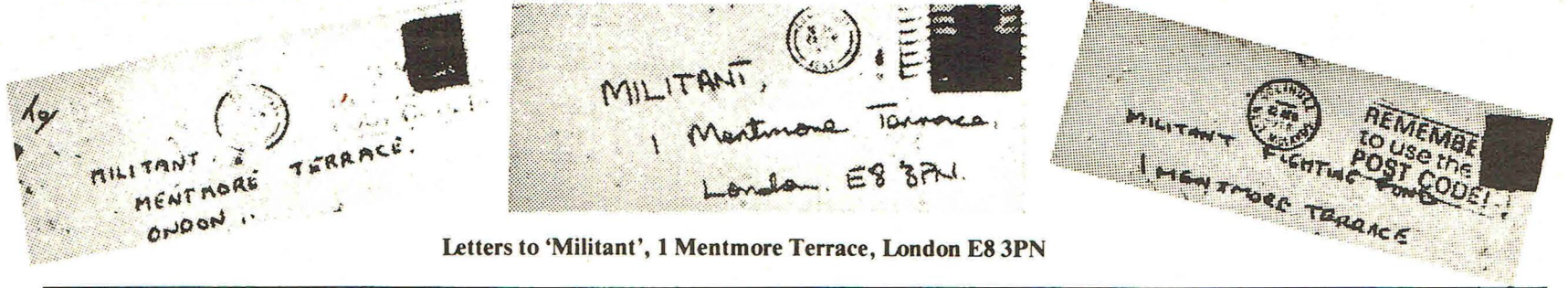
cease to be brewed due to the takeover policies of the big brewers.

The elimination of beers and breweries can be prevented if the brewing industry is controlled by workers and drinkers. There is a need to have many different beers available, as each beer tends to be popular in certain areas with certain people [e.g. Marston's Pedigree with Darrell Cozens].

Hopefully my response to Comrade Gallagher's letter will provide ammunition for further discussion and ammunition to disgruntled drinkers. Personally I would be willing to speak to YS branches etc. on the brewing industry. Finally, a man not often quoted in 'Militant' [from his Liberal Party days]: Winston Churchill: "The Conservatives are a party of second rate brewers standing in the road of progress."

All power to the drinking classes!

Fraternally
Colin Ramage
Barking



Letters to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

16 PAGES

£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		243.33
Hants & IOW	600	2,100		175.22
Humberside	630	2,200		206.97
Lancashire	430	1,500		67.27
London: North	2,200	7,700		577.73
London: South	1,080	3,800		290.24
Manchester & District	830	2,900		144.36
Merseyside & District	1,280	4,500		349.33
Midlands East	1,260	4,400		164.33
Midlands West	2,120	7,400		447.22
Northern	1,400	4,900		297.67
Scotland East	710	2,500		217.70
Scotland West	830	2,900		174.06
South East	660	2,300		306.37
South West	660	2,300		306.95
Thames Valley	480	1,700		160.15
Wales East	570	2,000		175.92
Wales West	660	2,300		173.21
Yorkshire	1,480	5,200		470.21
Others	860	3,000		40.52
£	20,000	70,000		4,987.76

Progress Towards year's target Towards April 1st target

-celebrate with a donation

This week's total amounted to £732.26 and this increase [it is the highest weekly total achieved so far this year] is due to the fact that every area sent money in. However small or large, every amount helps. Keep it up comrades.

We are now only 4 weeks away from April 1st and we still have £15,000 to raise. It can be done, but it needs that extra push from all of you.

The new 16-page paper is excellent and should be sold with renewed enthusiasm; money should be collected with the same amount of enthusiasm to make it even better. Through your efforts every week we have come this far. Let's not slow down now.

Is there anyone who you sell the paper to who hasn't been approached about making a donation? How about asking them for a special amount to celebrate going 16 page? Or perhaps they might like to start giving regular amounts each week. Its worth asking.

Supporters who have given this week are: J.Goodby (Hull) £10; M.Cornell (Stevenage) £7 and B.Traum (reader in New York) \$20. D.Bagge (Stevenage FBU) gave £5 as a thank you for the help given during the firemen's strike and other £5 contributions came from S. Wavley (Southampton), M. Weddeburn (Tower Hamlets), P.Crook (Withington LPYS) and M.McCulloch (Bootle).

Others include C O'Callaghan (Paddington) £1.50, D.Hill (Caerphilly) £2.50, J.Fowler (Stevenage) £1.30, and three comrades from Bristol: D.Bowdler, C.Webber and K.Mahoney gave £2.78, £1.28 and £1.20 respectively. 'Anon' from Southampton gave £6 and Cammell Lairds supporters donated £1.17.

£2 donations this week came from W.Jeffries and



K.Marell (both from Southampton), N.Prendiville (Paddington), R.Redford (Bristol) and a MATSU shop steward from Caerphilly.

We received many £1 donations this week which include: Mrs Simmonds (Southampton), G.Fisher, S.Cunningham, R.Cammish and an Italian hotel worker (all from Hull), A.Durr and G.Hemstead (both from Brighton), A.Robinson (Taunton), R.Barker (Bradford), B.Wyllie (Cornwall), M.Radcliffe and P.Tebbath (both from Falmouth) and R.Barr, C.Burgess and D.Evans (all from Bristol). Many thanks to these and all other comrades who couldn't be mentioned.

A collection at Moray and Nairn CLP meeting raised £5.50 and three Militant Readers' Meetings held in Blackpool, Irvine and Slough raised £16, £9.50 and £4.50 respectively.

A lot of money raised this week came through fund raising of one sort or another. A jumble sale in Brighton raised £45.60 and a sponsored slim in Southampton has so far collected £24.80. A 'Militant' social in Wakefield

raised £14.25 while one in Cambridge raised £5.00. A readers' meeting in the Eastern Region raised £14 and together with rattling tins, extras on the paper and small individual contributions this amount was made up to £21.

A 'pint for the Militant' collection in Port Talbot made £2.20 while a coffee evening in Cambridge raised £1. 'Board and lodgings' in the Isle of Wight amounted to £13.20 and a curry evening in Southampton raised £12.00. The sale of a crash helmet in the Salford area made £5 and a raffle at the Homepride Bakeries in Hull raised £2.10.

We also received £12 from Rochdale and £25 from Scunthorpe but there were no details of how the money was raised. This is always useful for us, comrades, because by printing ideas in this column on how to raise money it helps to give other people ideas.

Once again many thanks to all supporters. Let's see if we can keep every black line moving along the chart every week and make that target by April 1st.

Alison Rudd

MILITANT NOTICES

Militant Meetings

South West Labour Party Annual Conference 1978: 'Militant' Public Meeting 'Socialist Policies Now!'
Time: 12.45 to 1.45 pm
Place: The Sedgemoor 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 NE LP)
Chairman: Pete Hammond (Candidate for Avon REC, Delegate, Bristol SE LP)

ACCRINGTON Militant Readers' Meeting 'Socialist Policies for Labour'
Speakers:
Margaret Creear (Hayward and Royton CLP)
Bill Connor (President, Skelmersdale Trades Council)
8.00 pm, Thursday 16th March
Labour Party Rooms, Accrington Rd, Accrington

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)

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

SOUTH WALES Militant Summer Camp
Horton, Gower Coast, Near 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 Union.

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reach this office by SATURDAY.
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Putney LPYS folk and instrumental concert. Alton Youth Centre. Saturday 18th March, 8.00 pm. In aid of LPYS Conference 1978. Refreshments available. Admission 30p.

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.**

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).

WALTHAM FOREST Militant Readers' Meeting
'Is There a Cure For Unemployment?'
Speaker: Tom Jenkins (Newham NE Labour Party)
Wood St Library, E.17 (corner of Forest Road)
Thursday 16th March, 8.00 pm

Coventry Militant supporters are holding a sponsored marathon for the fighting fund. Beginning at 9.00 am on Saturday 18th March, about a dozen athletic Marxists will attempt to run 26 miles around the Memorial Park, Kenilworth Road, Coventry.
Help raise money by signing sponsorship forms, available from any local seller!
Come along for the start of the race, and bring the family—refreshments available!
Further details—D Cozens, 26 Coundon Road, Coventry CV1 4AW

MANCHESTER Militant Readers' Meeting
'The Workers Struggle in Ireland'
CANCELLED

Other MILITANT publications available from World Books
Bureaucratism or Workers' Power?—Roger Silverman and Ted Grant.....30p
Marxism Opposes Individual Terrorism—Leon Trotsky and Peter Taaffe.....15s
Spanish Revolution 1931-37—Ted Grant.....30p
General Strike 1926—Leon Trotsky, Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe.....30p
Lenin and Trotsky: what they really stood for—Alan Woods and Ted Grant.....£1.50

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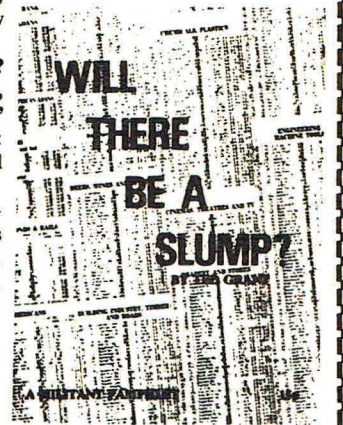
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What did you do in World War II, Comrade? Read 'Resistance and Revolution in Europe in World War II' by Lesley Thompson. Published by Brighton 'Militant' Supporters, price 20p + 7p postage; ten copies or over, post free. From J Walsh, 252 Freshfield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

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.

Publications



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

TROTSKY



A MILITANT PAMPHLET 20p

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

NEW POSTER!
New posters now available for advertising new 16-page paper, one with a blank space for meetings and slogans, plus advertising broadsheet out soon. Send for details to Militant.

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

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.

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

Unity needed to win pay claim

ONE UNION FOR RAILMEN

"We should be demanding an £80 basic rate of pay and double time on Sundays—then I would be out like a shot." "With ASLEF ideas and NUR money we could do anything." These are typical of the remarks of the blokes I work with, as a result of the recent dispute on British Rail.

The dispute, which almost led to a 24-hour strike by ASLEF members on March 1st, needs some explanation.

It is the British Rail management who are to blame for what has taken place. They have made an offer of bonus payments to the "pay train" guards, thereby breaking an earlier pay agreement with the unions. Furthermore, the offer was made to an individual section of workers, and behind the backs of the other unions.

However, although the arguments of the ASLEF Executive Committee are technically correct, many locomen feel that the issue would appear as an inter-union dispute when maximum unity is vital.

Some extra payment for the guards' additional duties is only fair. But here again the

BR management are to blame. It is only because of their incessant drive to cut staff, and therefore the cutting out of booking office staff and ticket collectors at many stations, which has led to guards issuing tickets: they should not have to do it all.

Divide and Rule

The immediate possibility of industrial action has subsided. But several lessons have come to light as a result of the dispute.

Why have the management, having refused to pay the guards any extra money for several years, suddenly reversed that decision? It is obviously a calculated attempt to set railwaymen against one another just six weeks before our annual pay rise is due, and shows how far management will go to be divisive.

Martin Elvin

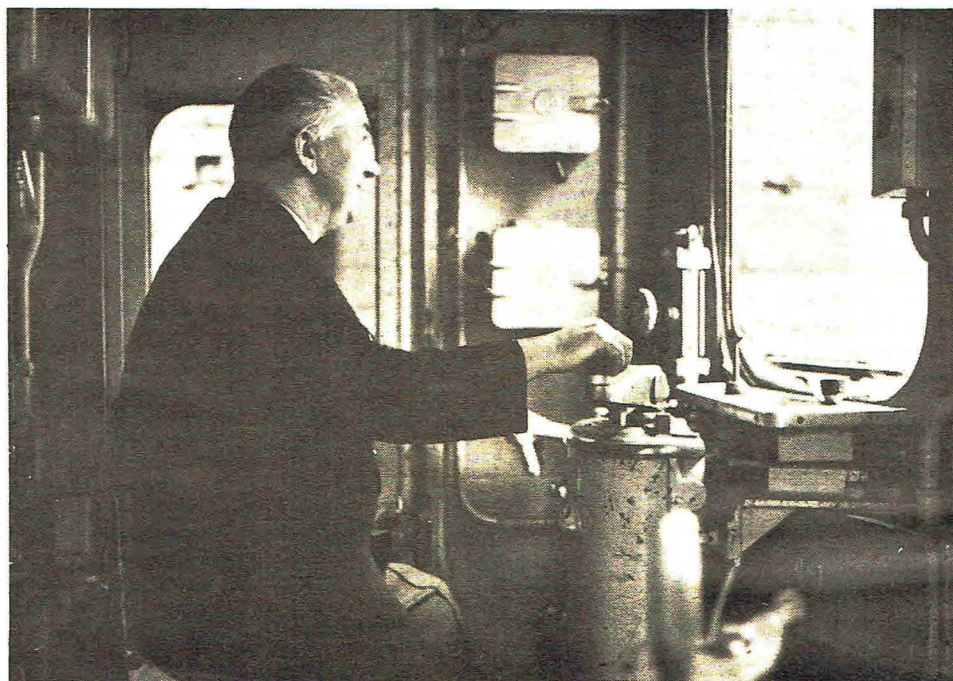
(Stratford Branch Committee, ASLEF)

The capitalist media were very quick in their attempts to pressurise the ASLEF leadership into calling off the dispute. The usual attacks and slanders against railway workers were repeated once again. The bosses' press was very keen to portray the issue as an inter-union dispute.

The leadership of both NUR and ASLEF, however, must be criticised for allowing this to continue. Both sides attacked one another publicly in a way which could only aggravate matters.

There have been many positive points, however. Whatever bad feeling may exist between the union leaderships does not exist among the membership, who see the strength of unity against the management.

The idea of industrial action has increased the growing feeling of discontent among all railwaymen at the poor pay and conditions. There is no doubt that despite the rights



and wrongs of the issue, the strike would have been 100% out of loyalty to the EC and as a reflection of increasing militancy.

Unity is Strength

The tremendous potential power of rail workers has once again been proven by the hysterical press campaign against us and by the panicky attempts of labour and trade union leaders to settle the dispute before it started.

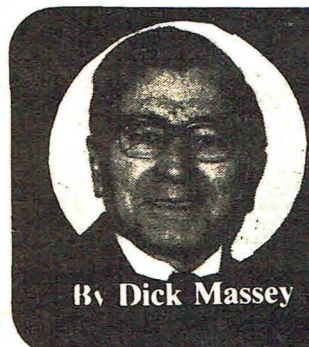
We face a tough battle ahead if we are to gain a decent pay rise this year.

Railway workers must be on their guard against divisive tactics by management. Attempts to introduce bonus productivity schemes and the like, which divide workers, open the door to cuts in manning levels and give no stability of earnings, must be rejected!

A fighting campaign among all railway workers now would get a real response. With the great power of the three rail unions, railway pay could be pulled up from the present appalling levels. This in turn would be seen as a victory for all workers in a fight against

wage restraint and for a decent living wage for all.

- ★ Consolidation of all Social Contract supplements.
- ★ A substantial pay rise to restore earnings to pre-Social Contract values.
- ★ A living wage for all railway workers.
- ★ Double time for Sundays
- ★ Reject all bonus productivity schemes.
- ★ End all wage restraint
- ★ Industrial action if necessary to achieve these demands
- ★ ONE democratic, fighting trade union for ALL railway workers.



By Dick Massey

working in the union

I have worked only once in a 'closed shop'. During the war I took out the tools and started in ship repair work at the London docks. At last, I thought, here the workers will stand no nonsense.

I was elected a shop steward and enjoyed the advantages that a closed shop brings: no 'nons', regular card inspections, quick and decisive action upon any attempted encroachment of hard won trade union rights and privileges. But I found a great weakness among my fellow trade union members.

It was in the terrible days of the blitz and the new 'fire-watching order' was introduced. Being a branch secretary I had been furnished with a copy of the order and made myself familiar with its contents. One Friday night a shop meeting was called when the foreman introduced the firewatching order and a rota of firewatching, to cover the shop and office.

I noticed his name and the name of a senior clerk was missing. He briefly explained the requirements of the order

and his proposals to meet them. According to him, we were all required to stay on the premises, on our turn, in order to deal with any potential fires as a result of enemy action, two men per night, covering seven nights per week. My name was down for the first Saturday night, 6pm to 6am.

After his explanation he invited questions and I asked him why his name and that of the clerks were not on the roster. To my amazement he stated that as he was able to draw up a rota sufficient to cover the seven nights of the week there was no need for their names to go forward!

What he had omitted to explain was that only persons who normally worked on the premises were compelled to do the necessary firewatching. Now all but he, the clerk and one other, were classified as journeymen, and there was no compulsion on journeymen, who normally worked on ships, to watch the premises. I pointed this out to the meeting and told the foreman to cross my name off his rota and to do his own firewatch-

ing. To my surprise not one more man took up my challenge, my name was the only one to be erased from the roster. The following week I received my cards. No one was prepared to stand by me, although I proved my case to be 100% right.

I feel sure the answer lay in the fact that no-one on that job was prepared to challenge the foremen as the casual nature of the work made it so that you were dependent on foremen to obtain a job. In my opinion a closed shop in this particular instance proved a farce.

Every worker should join a trade union and be committed to it. The closed shop is a necessary step forward for the trade union movement as it protects the workers' strength through unity. But this one experience shows that we must never become complacent—the job of educating and involving the workers, of reminding them of the need for union organisation, must still go on.

Series continues next week

Glasgow workers occupy Scotfisco

120 workers at the Scotfisco food factory in Glasgow have been made redundant. Their response was to immediately occupy the factory. Convenor Marie Roy spoke to W Griffin [Bothwell LPYS].

Militant: Why have the workers decided to sit in?

Marie Roy: The workers were told by management on Thursday 23rd February that the company was bankrupt and that the 120 workers were redundant. The workers decided to occupy the factory when they were told they would not be getting any redundancy money. We feel that we should be getting 90 days' pay as redundancy money.

Militant: Are all the workers accepting the redundancies?

Marie Roy: Yes, but we want our 90 days money. The workers are fed up with the whole situation of working in poor conditions and job insecurity.

Militant: What are conditions like in the factory?

Marie Roy: Very bad. A

few months ago the roof started leaking and all the management did was to tape up plastic sheets on the roof. The factory is very cold, with temperatures often going below freezing point during the last few months.

The machinery is unsafe. There was one woman who had to be treated for frostbite through working at a freezer that was faulty. That woman lost the tips of two of her fingers.

We feel the management is to blame for the redundancies. Many of the people in top positions know very little about the trade. Management claim to have used £800,000 over the last 8 months. We want to know what has happened to this money, to see if the company can afford to pay us redundancy money.

BAKERY WORKERS' VICTORY

A dispute at Manor Bakeries, Manchester, was won last week after only a few days.

It began last Tuesday when management decided to change the method in the production of Swiss rolls which amounted to speeding up the line.

Following an unproductive meeting with management, the workforce demanded a return to the old method and an overtime ban was imposed. Already angry over management breaking previous

agreements, a mass meeting voted for strike action until management agreed to the demand and to consult the union before introducing any new system.

The bakery workers were supported by other unions while out. Mill workers blacked flour to the factory. Another group of trade unionists sent along a brazier for the pickets. When the management saw this they phoned the fire brigade who replied that they'd not remove

the brazier as they had sent it!

On Friday the owners gave in and the workers returned. However, because of the excellent work of the union activists in involving the members, the canteen women refused to serve people who had crossed the picket line. Eventually it was agreed that these be disciplined by the union.

Paul Kennedy
(BFAWU Manor Bakeries)

SELL MILITANT TO YOUR WORKMATES

For details contact: Circulation Department, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Speke closure - DISASTER FOR MERSEYSIDE

The Liverpool labour movement last week pledged itself to campaign for the preservation of the Standard Triumph No 2 factory in Speke and the 3,000 jobs that go with it.

At a meeting called jointly by the Liverpool Trades Council and the Liverpool District Labour Party, delegates recognised the closure of Standard to be the thin end of the wedge for Merseyside industry. The workers now had to mobilise to prevent Speke being used as a scapegoat for yet another failure of management.

All the Merseyside MPs were invited, but due to a three-line whip only Eddie Loyden turned up. Apologies and support were received from Eric Heffer and Robert Kilroy-Silk but only apologies from Eric Ogden, Jim Dunn and Eric Varley.

Eddie Loyden—whose support was solid—reported on a meeting that had taken place

with the Prime Minister. Callaghan informed him that as yet the plans had not been submitted to the National Enterprise Board by the Leyland management and it was up to the NEB to recommend to the Cabinet.

Callaghan also announced that he appointed Edwardes to the post in Leyland, and it would be 'incorrect' of him to over-rule Edwardes' first major decision.

"He was appointed to do a job, and he is doing it."

What a wasteful contradiction—while the government proudly pronounces millions of pounds investment to areas like Merseyside in Job Creation Schemes and inner-city projects it condemns more to the dole by

By Derek Hatton

(Liverpool District Labour Party Executive)

allowing the sabotage of productive industry. These sops can never compensate for the loss of 3,000 permanent jobs—with the near-certain forecast of up to 12,000. Let's not kid ourselves, it's the No 2 plant this year, next year No 1 is for the chop.

Evidence has already shown us that for every job lost in the car manufacturing industry, one more is lost in the servicing arm of the industry. A loss of 12,000 jobs to Merseyside in 'normal' times would be a catastrophe. With unemployment running at its present rate it is nothing short of a planned disaster.

It must be remembered why Leyland first came to Speke. Very low wage rates, large and cheap loans, substantial government grants. From the start, there was never any desire on the part of management to come to Speke other than to grab these incentives, and they certainly had no intention of staying.

The TR7 has also been a failure from the beginning. The only possible ray of hope was the US market. Even here the changes in the exchange rate made the car a less inviting import.

The TR7 was a management failure. They keep blaming production figures, but they have still failed to produce evidence. The problem was marketing and design—not the fault of Speke workers, but of Ley-



land management.

After a 17 week strike, there are still unsold TR7s sprawled all over Speke. This doesn't exactly show a poor production rate.

Leyland are citing the workers and production figures as the main cause of the trouble. Management has used the media and the Tories in the House of Commons to pick out Speke as the epitome of that problem. No mention of the millions going in subsidies to prop up bankrupt private industry every day!

The government ducked the issue with Leyland when they nationalised it by leaving it in the hands of a management with a capitalist mentality. Socialist nationalisation of the whole motor industry and rational planning through workers' control and management is now the only way forward for the industry.

Management have proved to us that they are incapable of running Leyland efficiently and for the benefit of the employees and the public. Now it's time the workers had control to show how it can be done!

TRADES COUNCIL PLEDGES SUPPORT

At its last meeting the Liverpool Trades Council pledged full support to the Speke Leyland workers. The following resolution was passed:

"This Trades Council condemns and declares its total opposition to the planned cut of 3,000 jobs as a result of the proposed closure of the Standard Triumph plant. We believe that the closure would mean severe hardship to Merseyside, in particular Speke and the surrounding area, where unemployment is already twice the national average. This Trades Council agrees to:

- i) Appeal to all workers at British Leyland plants, especially the Canley Plant in Coventry, to refuse to handle any work transferred from Speke as a first stage in fighting to keep jobs on Merseyside.
- ii) Call for all Labour MPs and Councillors etc. to campaign by all means at their disposal against the closure.
- iii) A committee of enquiry set

up by the trade union and labour movement to investigate the ineptitude and lack of foresight of British Leyland management which as a result will mean mass redundancies in the whole combine.

iv) Immediate preparation to be made for an emergency conference of the labour movement on Merseyside to launch a campaign against the closure of the Standard factory and against the sabotage of jobs and industry in the Merseyside area.

v) A statement to be issued to the press giving our programme and declaration."

A second resolution which was carried pointed out that "The only lasting solution is the fight for socialist policies to replace the present Tory policies. We call for nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control, representation by election from the workforce, TUC and a socialist Labour government."

THEM & US

"Workers and management are all part of one team. It is in their interests to work together and be united with a sense of loyalty to their firm in competition against rivals."

This is the sort of argument used to tame the workforce by embroiling workers' representatives in toothless 'worker participation' schemes. But the power of 'participation' bodies, and the extent of management loyalty to their 'colleagues' on the shop floor, has been thoroughly exposed by Edwardes' plan to close Speke.

Not only did the workers themselves have no say in the matter, but before the plan

was announced publicly senior staff at the 'rival' Ford factory in Halewood and the Vauxhall factory in Ellesmere Port were privately informed! Edwardes had the gall to explain this away as "a matter of courtesy."

Obviously the bosses of this world feel they have more in common with their own kind in 'rival' firms than with their 'own' wage slaves. That's why the workers in every Leyland plant and every other company must be firmly united in defending their interests. It makes no difference which company sign appears over the factory gate, we're all exploited by the same class.



LIVERPOOL BUSMEN RESIST CUTS

By Mick Lewis
[TGWU] and
Brian Johnson
[GMWU]

On Tuesday February 28th we pulled the buses from the Green Lane bus depot, Liverpool off the road for a meeting over cuts. At that meeting the men decided on a two thirds majority for an all out stoppage at the depot on Monday April 3rd.

The reason for the stoppage is the amount of cuts that management are after, plus

possible loss of jobs concerning conductors and the standard rate driver. We've had no guarantees from management for those two sets of workers.

We have said to management that we are prepared to give a certain amount of cuts. Management have replied that they will not budge from the cuts they want, come what may. So we find ourselves with no alternative but to take strike action.

We've already had two lots of cuts at Green Lane Depot. They were only small cuts, this is the biggest. We know

for a fact they are coming back to us next year for more cuts, so we've got to take a stand now, and get the cuts reduced if nothing else.

We believe that the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive are going to apply again for another fare increase in October. More fare increases mean less passengers. The mood in our depot is for action. At the meeting the resolution for a strike came from the floor and it was passed with a two thirds majority that they would fight the cuts.

Garners' workers determined

By Cathy Sandler

(Marylebone LPYS)

The strike of workers at Garners' Steakhouses in London for the right to be represented by a trade union is still going strong. The workers have shown their determination to fight super-exploitation and slave labour by joining the TGWU.

Habib Rahman, a leading member of the strike committee, describes the strikers' mood as "even more militant and determined to win than when we started our struggle."

Only five out of 16 Garners branches are still effectively open and these are being picketed with increasing effect as more and more customers are turned away. Support from trade union branches is steadily coming in; ten or fifteen letters and scores of phone calls come in daily.

But more is needed! The strike committee has asked all LPYS members to raise the strike in the Labour Parties, trade unions, workplaces etc. Collections for much-needed funds should be held and the

money rushed to the strike committee. Help is specially wanted on the picket lines—peak times are 12.00 to 3 pm and 6 pm to 9 pm daily at 339 Oxford Street, 40/41 Haymarket and other branches. For more details contact the

strike committee. Messages of support, enquiries, etc., to: Garners Steakhouses Strike Committee, c/o TGWU, Room 84, 12/13 Henrietta Street, London W.C.2.

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Militant

Dundee

Workers Fight Unemployment

SAVE OUR CITY!

That is to be the main slogan in a campaign by the Dundee labour and trade union movement against the intolerable level of unemployment in the city.

On the morning of 15th March every major factory, the shipyard, the docks, the buses, the direct labour department and building sites will come to a halt.

In what is virtually a local general strike, the workers in all these places will down tools, and from three different assembly points will converge in their thousands on the city square for a protest rally.

11% Unemployed

A meeting of over 300 shop stewards decided that 11% unemployment was totally unacceptable in Scotland's second industrial city. Unless drastic action is taken, Dun-

dee could be completely de-industrialised. The stewards therefore adopted a plan to provide a job for every Dundonian—not a vague cry for jobs, but a very specific and detailed list of demands which show how jobs could be provided.

Public Works

The plan was proposed by Jackie Johnson of UCATT, who has been fighting for 32 years for this idea, which comprises: A new harbour, with roll-on, roll-off ferry terminal and deep channels; A new ship-repairing yard and a rebuilt shipyard to replace the antiquated yard of Robb Caledon;

A new dock complex in the harbour; A new railway station, with both passenger and freight links with the new ferry terminal, and passenger

Alex Allen

(Finishing Trades Convenor, Robb Caledon Shipyard, Dundee)

interchange with the bus service;

A new petro-chemical complex at Barry-Buddon, a site at present used as a firing range for the Territorial Army; A wide range of industries using the by-products of the petro-chemical complex, such as plastics and dyes.

If these measures were carried through, Dundee could once again become a major industrial centre, as it was in the Victorian era, when it thrived on industries such as jute, now in steep and irreversible decline. The problem now is that so much of Dundee's industry and its transport facilities are still Victorian.

But these are not just Dundee's problems: they are problems of capitalism, and capitalism cannot provide the developments listed in the plan for jobs. Only on a social-

ist basis could such ambitious schemes be realised.

If the shop stewards, who attended the meeting take back the message to the factories and mobilise a full turn-out, the demonstration on 15th March could be a historic turning point in the struggle of the Dundee labour movement, and a shining example to workers in every other part of Britain!

BIRDSEYE

The management of Birdseye, Liverpool, have shut down the factory following the rejection of their ultimatum by the workers. Birdseye have sacked all 1,200 workers, including 39 T&G members not directly involved in the dispute, a move which, if successful, will allow the bosses to avoid paying out redundancy payments. Full report next week.

BIG TAX RAID

We arrived at work on Monday morning to find that the firm's offices had been taken over by the Inland Revenue and Fraud Squad detectives.

At five in the morning the nightwatchmen and security guards at Press's offices throughout the country had been surprised by tax officers and policemen pounding on the doors waving search warrants authorising them to break in if necessary. Friday's waste paper baskets were the first things they searched.

Staff arriving later were stopped and had to identify themselves. Going out, bags and car boots were searched.

Inside, desks and cabinets were turned out and everything from bulky computer printouts to employee time-sheets were seized and bundled away.

Rumours

"It'll all turn out to be a big mistake," asserted management and junior executives. "No smoke without fire!" muttered clerical staff, worrying about their bonuses.

In some offices, temp staff cleared out, worried that they wouldn't be paid.

In the last few weeks some clerical staff had already gained the impression that something was going on. There were rumours about the accounting methods, and although it is normal commercial practice to keep business records for at least three years, some records going back only to 1975 were being thrown out.

Last year, Press made pre-tax profits of £8,894,000 on a turnover of £158 millions.

Like Murphy's, the London pipeline contracting firm which recently hit the headlines when two of its directors were jailed for tax fraud, Press have built their little empire on the basis of short-term contract and subcontracted labour: "the lump".

A few years ago when the go-ahead was given to the Gas Board to abolish town gas and pipe natural gas to homes

By a
William Press
Employee

throughout Britain, it was Press's that they turned to to get their conversions done. Scores of workers were taken off the dole or out of other work, crammed through rough-and-ready training courses, and kept on for as long as it took to connect a few million gas cookers throughout the land. Then they were back onto the stones again.

Attempts to unionise Press workers have so far met with failure. The G&MWU has a few members, probably men who worked for and had their training from the Gas Board, and some craftsman mechanics might belong to the AUEW.

Investigation

An attempt by clerical and depot staff to organise themselves at Tottenham was met by management inviting them individually to come inside the personnel manager's office and discuss their personal grievances, which were met—for the time being—on condition that they took their names off the union list! No-one knew what the others would say, and no-one dared leave themselves out on a limb for nothing, so one by one everyone gave in.

We will be awaiting the outcome of the Inland Revenue's and Fraud Squad's investigations with great interest.

CPSA Right Defeated

Last week's National Executive Committee meeting of the Civil and Public Services Association confirmed a great victory for the left in the union, and especially for Terry Adams whose full-time union position had been threatened by the right wing on the grounds [among other things] that he had been "too enthusiastic" in supporting the Gibraltar CPSA strike last year.

The Executive unanimously passed a resolution, moved by two leading right wingers, endorsing the general secretary's recommendation and confirming that "the NEC are

now satisfied that he [Terry Adams] can fulfil the duties required of the Assistant Secretary Grade."

This move represented not so much a change of heart on the part of the leaders of the right-wing campaign against Terry, but a forced recognition of the overwhelming support and respect within the union for Terry Adams and his right to maintain his own Marxist ideas.

Full report on the success of the Terry Adams Defence Committee campaign and the situation in the CPSA next week.



Photo: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

London Rally to celebrate the 16-page 'Militant', held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, last Tuesday. Over 150 heard Peter Taaffe, the Editor, together with Nick Bradley [YS representative on the Labour Party National Executive] and trade union

speakers: Tom Doyle [NUR], Mick Gilbey [Fire Brigades Union]. With Jim Brookshaw [AUEW] in the chair, an enthusiastic audience contributed over £150 to the collection.