

# Militant

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## SOCIALIST POLICIES TO DEFEAT TORIES

**It will be a catastrophe for the working class if the Tories win the general election.**

**By Roger Shrikes**  
(Deptford Labour Party)

Mrs Thatcher and her cronies have given us ample warning of the punishment to be meted out. Wages, jobs and vital social services would all be sacrificed on the altar of big business profit.

The big firms which dominate our lives have already poured millions into the Tory Party's coffers. They are determined to have a government of their own kind.

Backed by the right-wing press, the Tories are fighting a naked class campaign. Their trade-union bashing, hysterical calls for "law and order", and diversionary, racist attacks on immigrants, are proof enough.

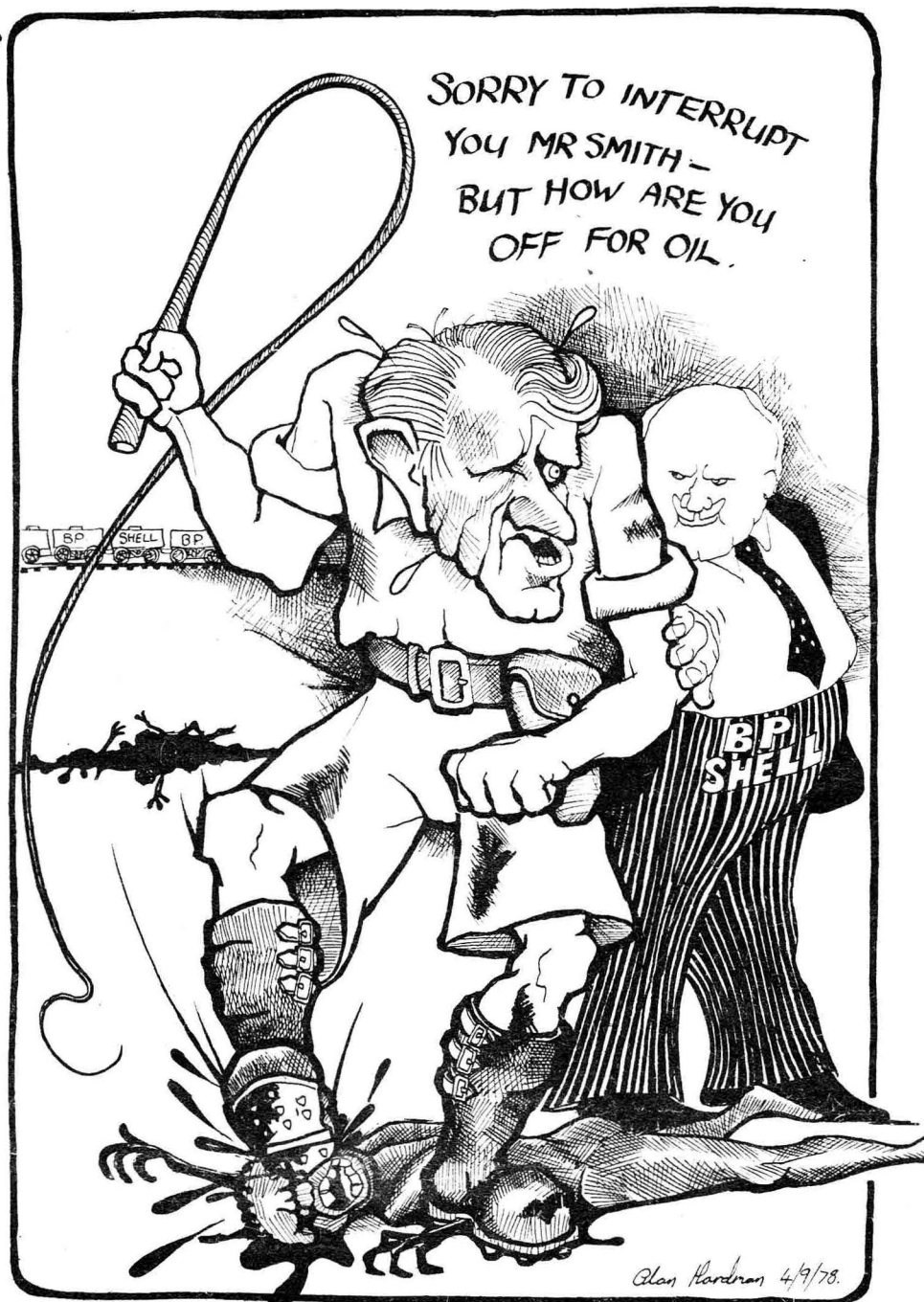
**This can only be effectively answered by bold socialist policies.**

The present government's record and the personality of Jim Callaghan will not be enough to win a Labour majority. If recent opinion polls have tended to favour Labour, it is because of dread of a Thatcher government, not enthusiasm for policies which include pay restraint and allow mass unemployment.

The Tories' hypocritical campaign on unemployment, to take one example, must be countered by putting the blame where it really belongs: on the shoulders of the "private enterprise", profit system which the Tories stand for.

To convince millions of sceptical workers, Labour must include in its election campaign the de-

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## DOUBLE OUR MONEY

**We need £20,000 for our Fighting Fund in September. Last week's total has been doubled. Now double next week's! Double the week after! Double the week after that—and we're there. All out for our fighting paper, the best in the Labour movement. Fighting Fund column, page 13.**

## TUC- ACTION DEMANDED ON 35 HOUR WEEK

**By Brian Ingham**  
(Industrial correspondent  
in Brighton)



The campaign for a composite, 35-hour week, already set in motion by the Post Office Engineers' and General Workers' Union, once now be intensified. That has been a repeated theme of this year's Trade Union Congress meeting in Brighton.

Congress passed a resolution instructing the General Council to launch "a general campaign with the specific aim of making the reduction of the working week to 35 hours, without loss of pay, top priority in subsequent negotiations."

Rank and file trade unionists throughout the country will now be waiting to see these words translated into real action.

In moving the 35-hour

general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, once again emphasised that this measure would create an additional 750,000 jobs.

Delegates were aghast when Jim Callaghan, in his speech to Congress, warned that the 35-hour week would mean accepting a wage norm of less than 5%. Moss Evans spoke for the whole movement when he replied that no nationally determined wage targets could be allowed to stand in the way of a shorter working week.

On the issue of pay policy and collective bar-

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# BRITISH OIL GIANTS FUELLED SMITH'S MURDEROUS REGIME

**Without oil, Rhodesia's white minority regime would have collapsed long ago.**

Recent revelations of sanction-busting, therefore, make it clear that it is above all the big oil companies, especially the two British giants BP and Shell, which bear the main responsibility for Smith's survival.

They are responsible for the long, bloody struggle which has claimed the lives of thousands of African freedom fighters.

In their determination to sustain Rhodesia's own brand of Apartheid, Shell and BP have for twelve years cynically disregarded international law and shown utter contempt for elected Labour governments in Britain. And the company mainly responsible is Shell Mozambique, a British-registered firm 50% owned by BP—itsself 51% owned by the British government!

Even before Smith declared UDI and sanctions were imposed, Shell—according to one authoritative account—assured Smith that they would continue supplying the Rhodesian market "whatever happened". Shell disputes this version.

But the oil certainly continued to flow. The naval blockade, which cost British taxpayers £250 million, was worthless.

For finding its way round sanctions, Shell Mozambique was rewarded with an increase of its pre-UDI share of the Rhodesian market, and took over 51% of supplies.

Needless to say, Shell Mozambique's profits have also risen sharply during the sanction-busting period. What do laws and governments count for when profits are at stake?

When, under the Tory government, trade unionists took strike action to defend basic trade union rights they were continually vilified in the right-wing press and persecuted by the courts for undermining "law and order". When a hungry pensioner or unemployed worker

is driven to steal a piece of cheese in a supermarket, he invariably feels the full weight of the law. In a society dominated by big business here is only class "justice".

Two giant oil companies have deliberately and systematically broken oil sanctions for twelve years—and yet to date there has not been the merest threat of prosecution.

continued to Rhodesia] and accepted it as "a purely cosmetic change".

It is also hard to believe that the government's two nominees on BP's board of directors did not know what the company was doing in Rhodesia.

BP has also said that the Labour government's Commonwealth Secretary, then George, now Lord, Thompson was kept fully informed of their Rhodesian operation. The 'Sunday Times', the paper which has published the fullest account of the sanction-busting, claims that in 1968 Thompson's ministry considered prosecuting the oil companies—but decided ag-

getting through?

If Wilson did know—and this remains to be seen—it would be a disgrace for a Labour prime minister who continually affirmed his intention of bringing Smith down to have suppressed the facts.

If he did not know, however, it is hardly less of a scandal. Ignorance of the activities of the big oil companies, including one half-owned by the government, and ignorance of the actions of the tops of the civil service and perhaps some of his own cabinet ministers, if confirmed, cannot but underline the complete impotence of the Labour government when faced with the power of big business and the state machine.

If it cannot even find out about sanction-busting, what chance has a Labour government of implementing fundamental changes in society?

Now the Bingham enquiry, set up by David Owen last year under pressure from leaders of the African "front-line" states angered by reports of British oil shipments, has led to some of the facts coming out—through leaks to the press. These belated revelations, however, owe more to the recent success of the liberation movement in Zimbabwe and American pressure on the Smith regime than to any investigating zeal on the part of Bingham or the serious capitalist press.

Neither Bingham, nor an official tribunal, nor the courts if there are eventually prosecutions, are capable of cutting through the web of secrecy that has been spun around the oil companies' massive sanction-busting conspiracy.

Only the labour movement, which has clean hands and stands unreservedly behind the liberation movement in Southern Africa, is capable of revealing the whole truth. Only a tribunal composed of representatives of the workers' organisations, calling on witnesses in Britain and from Africa, could root out all the facts.

The labour movement must immediately institute its own completely independent enquiry to carry out a thorough check on its elected representatives in government.

## THE LABOUR MOVEMENT MUST SET UP ITS OWN ENQUIRY

Indeed, BP has recently brazenly revealed the details of its illegal operation in a long memorandum to the Bingham inquiry. "Well, the government knew about it all the time," is their cynical excuse.

Did the government know? Sir Harold Wilson now says that he, at least, did not know what was going on when he was prime minister. According to him, the government was "ho-dwinked".

One thing, however, is certain: a number of senior servants certainly did know what was going on.

In its memo, in fact, BP now claims that in 1968 a senior official at the then Ministry of Power was informed of their "swap arrangement" [by which oil supplies were indirectly con-

against it, thus tacitly accepting the sanction-busting.

Thompson has confirmed this to the press, and on a television programme recently stated that the decisions on this question were "a matter of high collective government policy."

It was this statement of Thompson's which prompted Wilson's claim that he was hoodwinked. The whole truth has certainly yet to be told. But for the labour movement, there are a number of vital questions to be answered.

Did Labour ministers not report what they knew about sanction-busting to the cabinet, or to Wilson's special Rhodesia committee? Why did Wilson not take steps to find out exactly how the oil that was so obviously still reaching Rhodesia was really

including sanctions, and to any form of restrictive incomes policy."

All the same, the spectre of future General Council efforts to restrain the independent struggle of union members still lurked in the composite. Contradicting other points, it talked of "responsible collective bargaining based on the containment of unit labour costs". What can this imply if not restraint and productivity deals?

Despite the sombre economic climate, this has perhaps been one of the quietest Congresses for years. Very

rarely have the anxieties of the rank and file, and the frustrations felt throughout the country with the lack of fighting leadership at the top, found expression on the platform or from the rostrum.

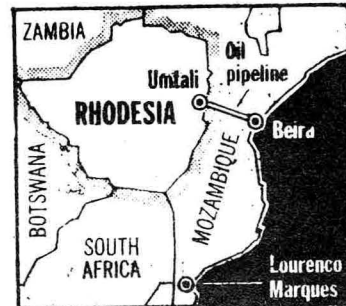
The main reason for this year's subdued mood was undoubtedly the General Council's efforts to transform the Congress into something of a pre-election rally for the Labour government.

Delegates unequivocally supported the pledge by David Basnett, TUC chairman and General and Municipal Workers' leader, to fight

as never before for a Labour victory. Nevertheless, delegates could not but reflect the gathering discontent among the rank and file, and many warned the government quite clearly that they would not accept the continuation of the past four years' policies.

Even Len Murray, always a staunch defender of government policies in the past, felt obliged to say that "the moderation we called for on wages has not produced the reduction of unemployment we would have liked. The stark fact is that unemploy-

## How the oil got through



EVEN before the Labour government banned British oil trade with Rhodesia in December 1965, BP and Shell were preparing alternative plans for their shipments. In the first period oil was diverted through devious channels via South Africa. By December 1966, however, direct supplies through Shell Mozambique via Mozambique were resumed. Beira was blockaded by the British navy, but tankers were simply sent to Lourenco Marques further south. If from no other source, the government soon learned of this from Lonrho which had shut down its pipeline across Mozambique and was aggrieved by BP and Shell's 'cheating'.

At the beginning of 1968 BP, which claimed to have only just 'discovered' its subsidiary's direct sales to Rhodesia, informed the Commonwealth Office. Thompson and his department is then alleged to have accepted the replacement of illegal direct shipments by a "swap arrangement". Under this, the French company Total supplied oil direct to Rhodesia and BP/Shell supplied an equivalent amount of oil to Total for sale in South Africa. Whether this was legal or not, Rhodesia still got its oil.

From 1969 until 1975 BP claims there was a long silence about Rhodesia between the government and the companies. Not surprisingly, Heath's government asked no questions. In 1973 BP/Shell began to review the "swap" arrangement, fearful that

they would lose their Rhodesian market share to foreign rivals. Early in 1974 BP/Shell resumed direct shipments, with their joint British-registered subsidiary, Shell Mozambique, now selling the oil to Freight Services, a South African-registered company, which re-sold to the Rhodesian government's purchasing agency. Shell Mozambique's Rhodesian market-share increased to 51%. Later in 1974 top Shell management reviewed the Rhodesian arrangements, and tightened secrecy to avoid exposure and possible repercussions.

In 1976 a book in the United States and articles in Britain began to reveal some aspects of sanction-busting, angering some leaders of black South African states. In July Shell directors were thanked by the government for assurances that they were not sanction-busting. However, information from the new government of Mozambique, and a change of policy in Washington (which had realised that Smith's regime was incompatible with US imperialism's long-term interests, led to more pressure for an investigation of Salisbury's oil supplies.

Late in 1977 David Owen appointed a barrister, Thom Blame for sanction-busting as Bingham, to investigate sanction-busting. BP submitted a long memorandum confessing to illegal oil shipments. In July, with a growing crisis for Smith's regime, Shell and BP ended all their shipments, direct or indirect, to South Africa—something which they had long claimed was impossible on the grounds that it would provoke expropriation of their SA assets and disastrous sanctions against them by the South African government.

If the Labour government wants to straighten the record, let it open up the records of BP, the civil service bureaucracy, and its own ministers to the labour movement. Only big business and their state functionaries can benefit from secrecy. We have nothing to fear from the truth.

Finally, even at this stage, the lessons of the sordid sanction-busting saga in rela-

tion to the oil companies is clear. While they remain in private hands, or even half in private hands, they will be a law unto themselves. Profit is their ultimate guide.

Full nationalisation, with minimum compensation, under workers' control and management, is the only way their world-wide power will be brought under democratic control.

## TUC

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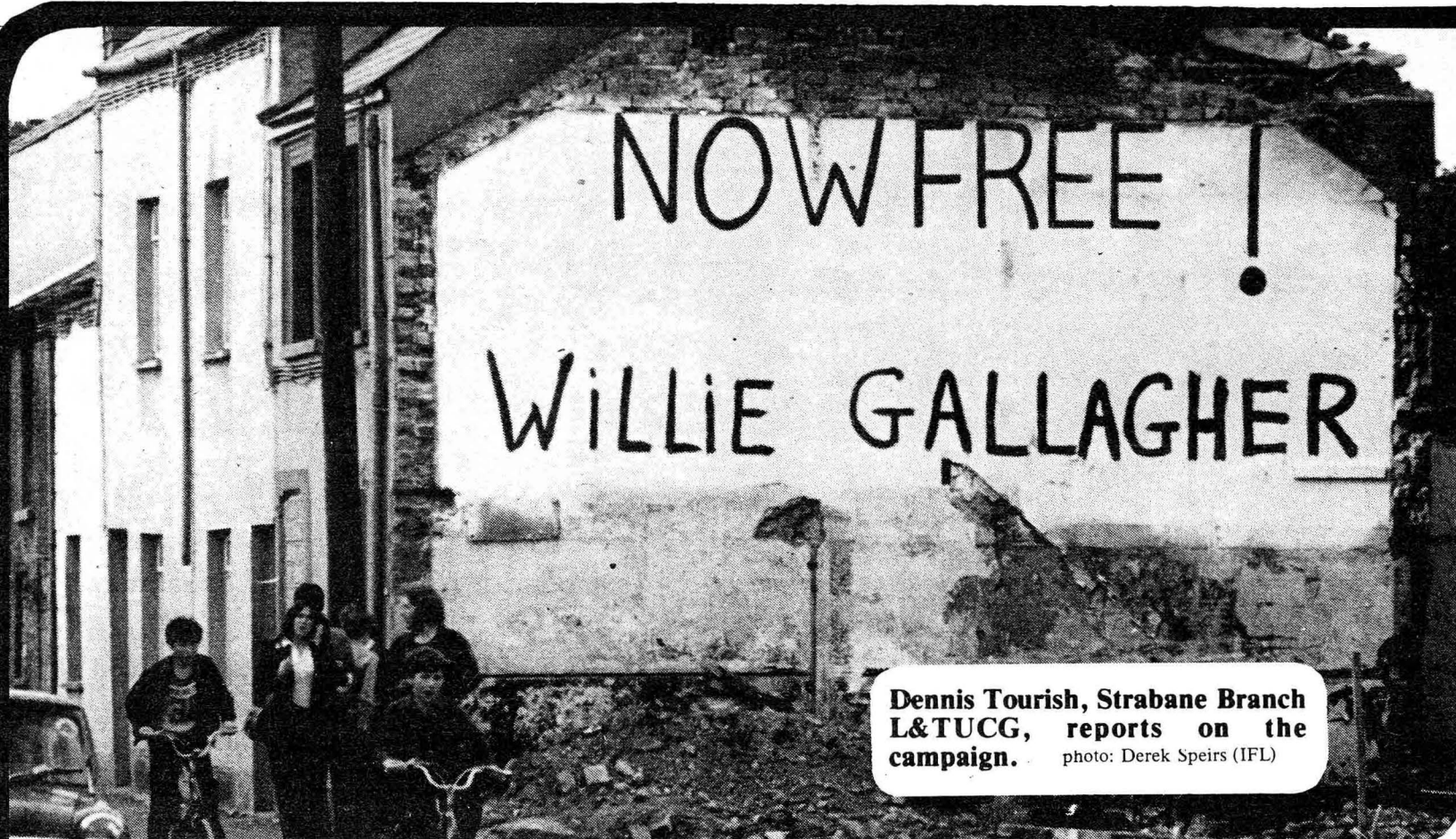
gaining itself, the general tenor of the debate was that no further restrictive deals could be tolerated.

Congress passed an omnibus resolution which encompassed all the motions opposed to an incomes policy. The essence of composite 12 was "opposition to government policies of intervention and restraint in wage bargaining,

Labour government. Certainly, the Labour leaders can rely on the burning hatred of the Tories among active trade unionists.

But the union tops have still to grasp the need for a fighting campaign, based on socialist policies, to bring out a big majority of workers and ensure a devastating defeat for the Tories. It is such a campaign that union activists, in the short time left, must now push for throughout the country.

There even seemed to be a certain air of complacency about the return of the



Dennis Tourish, Strabane Branch L&TUCG, reports on the campaign. photo: Derek Speirs (IFL)

Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions came out publicly and offered its full support.

On the evening of the stoppage, the L&TUCG held a public meeting to discuss the next step. Those present were agreed that the struggle had just begun.

Peter Hadden, secretary of the L&TUCG, said that the other branches of the Group would go back and take up this case in all the trades councils and union branches where it had members. He explained that the case of Willie Gallagher was not unique, and it was the responsibility of the trade union movement to take it up.

The issue of Willie Gallagher has now become an important test case. Should the RUC get away with such an obvious case of successful conviction without evidence they will attempt the same on trade unionists in the future. The campaign to free him must therefore be extended throughout the labour movement.

In Strabane, the trades

## LABOUR AND TRADE UNION CO-ORDINATING GROUP CALLS FOR WIDER SUPPORT

**The case of Willie Gallagher is not unique...If the RUC get away with such an obvious case of successful conviction without evidence they will attempt the same on trade unionists in the future.**

On Friday, 1 September, Strabane trades council launched a petition in Strabane demanding the release of Willie Gallagher.

Last week's 'Militant' carried detailed information about his case, exposing the way he was framed by the RUC and sentenced—even against the evidence of crown

witnesses—to 12 years for a bombing offence he did not commit. The Labour and Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (L&TUCG) has been leading the campaign to secure action by the trade union movement to force his release.

The Trades Council had called a work stoppage at 11 am so that all the issues could be explained and a petition signed. In many areas this was completely successful. At Hardman's Sion Mills, which employs Protestant and Catholic workers, work ceased and hundreds of people held a mass meeting to discuss the case.

Many local building sites also followed suit. The local lock factory stopped and held a meeting.

Unfortunately, however, the stoppage was not fully organised. In some areas right-wing officers of the Trades Council failed to distribute the petition and caused considerable confusion.

A total response was achieved where members of the Co-ordinating Group themselves intervened. We had argued for a two-hour stoppage and a massive public meeting as the most effective form of protest.

As reported last week, this

won massive local support. The Trades Council decided against this by only one vote. The L&TUCG then produced leaflets urging the extension of the proposed petition-signing into meetings on an open-air basis where possible.

But even this limited action taken by the Trades Council was a major step forward in the struggle to free Willie Gallagher and force the union leaders to take up the whole question of repression.

The position of Strabane Trades Council is the clearest yet adopted by any section of the trade union movement on repression. Two days before the stoppage, the Northern

council's petition must be brought to every work-place and housing estate. The trades council must develop its campaign and reconsider the ideas of a full work stoppage.

The Strabane branch of the Co-ordinating Group will be sending material on this question throughout the labour movement in Britain. LPYS branches, LP branches and trades councils should invite speakers from Strabane Trades Council.

The Co-ordinating Group, Brendan Gallagher (Willie's father) and Strabane Trades Council can be contacted with messages of support and requests for speakers, c/o F Diver, Delaney Crescent, Strabane.

## LOW PAY SCANDAL

**The low-paid are worse off. The unemployed are worse off. There are 6.3 million people living at or below the official poverty line. Another 8.5 million are on incomes up to only 40% above the official poverty line.**

At a time when delegates to the TUC are once again debating pay policy, the Low Pay Unit has produced up-to-date figures which reveal the unmistakable effect of wage restraint in pushing down the earnings of the lower paid workers—the very

section that the Labour leaders have always claimed would benefit from their wage policies.

The report, 'The Rising Tide of Poverty' written by Frank Field, and based entirely on official statistics shows that in the three years since 1974 there has been an increase of 123% in the numbers of workers normally in full-time work earning less than the supplementary benefit poverty line. If their dependants are included, the numbers living on an income from work which is below the official poverty line has risen by 147%.

In absolute numbers, the number of people normally in full-time work who earn less than they could get on the dole has risen since 1974 from 130,000 to 290,000. If we include dependants, the total is 890,000.

The Low Pay Unit's latest figures are no less relevant to the debate on unemployment. Analysis of the government's statistics shows that there has been a massive increase in the number of unemployed forced to eke out an existence on an income below the minimum approved by Parliament.

In the years since 1974 the numbers of unemployed liv-

ing below the poverty line have increased by 150%. Over the same period, there has been an 89% increase in the number of unemployed and their dependants surviving on less than the officially approved minimum income level.

The report also details the

## £70 MINIMUM FOR ALL NOW!

total numbers now living below the official minimum level. In 1974 there were 1,410,000 persons living in households below the state poverty line. By 1976 their numbers had risen to 2,280,000.

"We hear a great deal about the numbers who opt for unemployment because it is to their financial advantage to do so," the report notes. "These figures give the lie to the great scrounger myth of the 1970s. While the media

have chased those claimants who are supposed to have opted for a life of inaction on the dole...they have missed a much more important story. One could not have a more vivid demonstration of the power of the work ethic in our society than the fact that, on the last count, 290,000 wage

earners put in a full week's work and earned an income which brought their household finances to below what they would be entitled to from the Supplementary Benefit Commission if they were not working."

"The Rising Tide of Poverty" also shows that the official statistics cited in the report probably underestimate the total numbers of poor. Even so, the government's own data shows that in 1976 there were 6.3 million people

living at or below the official poverty line. In addition to this, there were another 8.5 million on incomes up to only 40% above the official poverty line.

"Although this total may underestimate the numbers on low incomes," the report concludes, "it represents more than a quarter of the entire population."

These are really horrendous figures. They make a bitter mockery of glib official generalisations based on the current official figure for average male earnings, currently £79.85 a week.

The Low Pay Unit has sent its findings to the three main political parties asking for a response in their election manifestoes. The answers from the Tories and Liberals will not be worth waiting for.

But the response of the labour movement must be urgent preparations for a mass campaign to eliminate low pay. This, as the past record of Labour governments all too clearly shows, will only be achieved through mass action by the trade unions themselves.

The demand for a minimum living wage for all workers, which must now be at least £70 a week, must be boldly written into the movement's programme—alongside the call for a 35-hour week without loss of pay—and be decisively translated into action now.

## PICKET TORY HOUSING COMMITTEE

At the recent "Housing in Chaos" public meeting, called by the "Protect Our People" campaign and Hillingdon Tenants Federation in the hope that the Borough's housing chairman would come to explain the Tories' policies, it was decided—in the absence of the Tory spokesman—to picket the next meeting of the London Borough of Hillingdon's Housing Committee. The issues were explained in 'Militant' 421 (1 September): we will have another report soon.

The picket will assemble at 6.45pm on Thursday, 14 September, outside Uxbridge Civic Centre, ready for the council meeting which starts at 7.30.

All local LPYS, LP, and trade union branches should turn out. Bring your banners. For further details contact Martin Craxton: 756 2963.

The importance of the activity of the Labour Party Young Socialists in the coming General Election cannot be underestimated. It could well prove decisive to a Labour victory.

Many of our members were not involved in politics during the last election, four years ago. Many perhaps cannot even remember what it was like to live under the last Tory government, which ruled and helped to ruin Britain for 3½ years between June 1970 and February 1974. They were 3½ years of vicious and unrelenting attacks on the trade unions and on the living standards of ordinary working people.

Nevertheless the members of the LPYS are fully aware of the threat which a Tory victory poses—they will be as determined as Labour's youth were in 1974 to do all they can to ensure a crushing defeat of the Tories in the coming election.

### Mass Canvasses

The plan, the enthusiasm and the sheer numbers of young people working for Labour under the lead of the LPYS was one of the crucial factors in enabling Labour victories in the two elections in 1974. Besides consistent work in their own constituencies, many Young Socialists travelled throughout the country to mass youth canvasses in key marginal constituencies.

In February a mass national weekend of canvassing organised in Tony Benn's constituency—Bristol S.E.—saw over 500 young people converging on Bristol from all over the country. They covered 70% of the canvassing for the constituency in a weekend!!

Similar youth canvasses were organised in 22 marginal constituencies throughout Britain in the October 1974 election, with each Regional Committee responsible for concentrating our fire on the Tories' two weakest election spots. This was decisive in giving Labour an overall majority in Parliament.

# YOUTH FOR A LABOUR VICTORY



An LPYS canvassing team which took part in the mass youth canvass in the Lambeth By-election, April this year, listen to Labour candidate John Tilley. After his victory, John Tilley told 'Militant': "When they came in, particularly on the mass canvass on Sunday, it really lifted the campaign fantastically because their youth and enthusiasm actually rubbed off on a lot of other people as well."

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

In the process of this work new LPYS branches mushroomed up throughout the country and established branches were reinvigorated with an influx of new members attracted by our uncompromising socialist programme. That work of 1974 must be built upon and extended in the crucial election which is now imminent.

### Enthusiastic

In an organisation circular on key areas of election work sent from Transport House to Constituency Labour Parties in July, Labour's National Agent Reg Underhill points out that "members of the LPYS are particularly suited

for evening and weekend work; a team of enthusiastic young campaign workers can help to enliven a campaign." Many of the points in the letter were the result of consultation with the LPYS National Committee, and no doubt these have either been acted on already or are being discussed at the September GMC meetings to finalise election plans.

The youth must be at the fore of the election work, setting the tone! The youth vote itself is obviously one area where the LPYS work will be indispensable.

Labour's youth has a special responsibility to help maximise the vote of young people, the overwhelming

majority of whom are undoubtedly anti-Tory. The extent to which Labour can appeal to young voters to come out and vote could well decide the outcome of the battle. LPYS branches therefore have a duty to ask their CLPs: "Give us the resources and we'll work for the youth vote".

### Youth leaflet

In Reg Underhill's letter he says that selective leafletting with a youth leaflet to be followed up with a special canvass is especially important work for the LPYS to do. Using the "Y" voters on the register, visiting student hostels, council estates, leaflet-

ting on a Saturday in the town centre, market or shopping precinct, night schools, Further Education colleges, youth clubs, sports centres, coffee bars and discos—all these places where young people go should be leafletted by the LPYS.

Reg Underhill also suggests that at every public election meeting an LPYS speaker should be on the platform. This is something that should be organised and decided on now.

But the work of the LPYS in the General Election should not just be on youth. The mass of the organised trade union movement are Labour voters. Approaches should be made to union

branch officers, convenors, shop stewards and local full-time officials to see what help can be given. Transport House calls for trade union liaison committees, where practicable, to be set up for the election campaign.

The letter also calls for "Distribution of literature at factories and other workplaces by the appropriate trade union organisation. Arranging for the candidate to meet workers at factories etc. Assistance with factory gate meetings. Providing canvassers and other workers. This can be done by arranging visits where possible to union branches and Trades Councils."

### Socialist appeal

The last General Election was fought by the Labour Party on the most left-wing programme it had since 1945—it showed the strides forward that had been taken by the Labour Party and trade union members in the direction of real socialist policies. But since coming into office the Labour leaders have said many times that they cannot 'rush ahead' with socialist measures in the interests of working people so long as Labour is in a minority. That is why it is vital that Labour has the biggest possible majority in the election.

Young people should all turn out and vote Labour to keep out the Tories, the bosses' party which is financed by big business. But young workers, apprentices and students should do more than that. They should make sure that their voice is added to the voice of the Labour Party Young Socialists in fighting in the Labour Party for the implementation of a real socialist programme that could reverse the fall in living standards, end unemployment and keep out the Tories forever by sweeping away the profit system that they represent.

- ★ As a first step— vote Labour!
- ★ Join us in the Labour Party Young Socialists!
- ★ Join us in the fight for Socialism!
- ★ Keep out the Tories with a socialist programme!

Glenys Ingham

(Deptford LPYS)

## 150 HEAR JIMMY REID

150 people at a Labour Party public meeting? Unusual these days, especially for a meeting organised by one ward Labour Party on one council housing scheme.

But that was the turn-out my ward got when we organised a public meeting for our newly adopted prospective parliamentary candidate, Jimmy Reid.

Undoubtedly, a few came out of curiosity to see a well known television performer, but the warm response to comrade Reid's speech indicated that most of the audience was there because of his reputation as a class fighter.

There were no questions—which one might have expected from strategically placed SNP or Tory Party members—about his Communist past

(especially as the local SNP have been playing this up for a! it is worth) and the meeting was overwhelmingly friendly and enthusiastic to comrade Reid's message.

In a speech vividly illustrated with stories and examples, comrade Reid gave a good analysis of the ills of our present society and where the blame lies. The best response came to a story about a do-gooding lady who visited Govan during the Depression to give a lecture on how to make soup out of a cod's head. When she had finished a woman's voice spoke up from the back of the hall: "But what happened to the rest of the fish?"

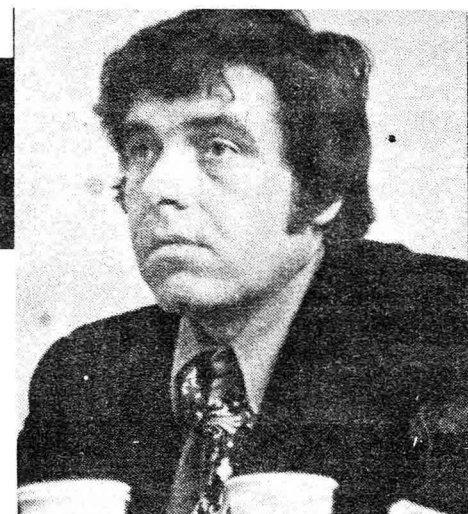
He urged his audience to read the journals the ruling class produce for themselves which the ordinary punters

are not supposed to see; giving an example of a recent discussion on the investment of oil profits in "Lloyd's List". That is where you find out what is happening to the rest of the economic fish.

### Alternative

Although comrade Reid's analysis of our economic problems was good and he really got stuck into the Tories and their tartan equivalents, he put forward no policies to solve those problems. He differentiated himself from the Labour government on unemployment but put forward no alternative, and this was the real weakness of his case.

Comrade Reid's reputation as a man who fights for working people will undoubt-



Jimmy Reid

edly appeal to thousands of workers who voted for the SNP at the last election because they could see no difference between the Tories and the Labour Party. This gives Labour an excellent chance of winning Dundee East back from the SNP.

But think what response the Labour Party would get nationally if it was seen as a real fighting party, if all its spokesmen told the workers

who is really to blame for the economic crisis, and if it put forward a socialist alternative.

Meetings of 150 would be considered failures, and we would not have to bother about the prospect of a Tory government ever again.

Bob Rice

(Finty Branch, Dundee East Labour Party)

### OUT NOW!

### Militant Students' Charter

- ★ Grants
  - ★ Housing
  - ★ Cuts
  - ★ Socialist Education Programme
  - ★ Tech Students
- 10p each. Over 20—8p. Add 20% for postage  
Order from Militant Student, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

# LEFT & RIGHT

## THE SHOE TRADE

Labour Prices Minister Roy Hattersley has recently demanded shoe retailers should cut their profit margins. What effect is this likely to have on prices? The answer appears to be 'very little'.

For a start the order will only apply to footwear chains which do not subscribe to the voluntary agreement worked out by the industry itself. Since all the firms intend to implement this agreement, Hattersley's order is not exactly going to revolutionise things.

Over the last 10 years imported shoe sales have rocketed from 26% to 46% of the market, and over 50% of the shoes sold by the British Shoe Corporation [BSC], the largest retailer and second largest manufacturer, come from abroad. BSC [which owns, among others, Dolcis, Lilley and Skinner, and Freeman Hardy and Willis] effectively sets the retail price of shoes, and many other chains have shut down their manufacturing plants to concentrate on the more profitable area of imported shoes. Out of 100,000 jobs in British shoe manufacturing between 5 and 6 thousand are dependant on hand-outs in the form of the Temporary Employment Subsidy.

To those who argue that import controls would be the solution a BSC spokesman had this to say: "We can't reduce imports because imports are what the customers want to buy." Anyone who has faced the difficult decision of whether to spend £25 on a pair of British shoes or £8 on a pair of Polish ones will have noticed this.

## ...WHILE ROME BURNS

Ever been tempted to escape from the daily grind for a while by drowning your sorrows in a pint, or going to see a good western? Likely as not the price put you off. For the poor old British capitalists, bowed down by all the weighty problems of an ailing economy, it requires slightly more to take the mind of their lot:

### ● CONCORDE'S BOTTOM

Can be seen daily from the 3,000 square feet of roof terrace at the PENTHOUSE AT RIVER GARDENS, SW6. Park the 2 Rollers in the underground garage, then after your SAUNA & SWIM with your PET OF THE MONTH, take her upstairs to this amazing apartment with 3011 x 2711 reception room and 4 bedrooms to choose from: 2 LUXURY BATHROOMS and a spectacular kitchen, gas C.H. If you're fed up with the traffic you can always sail to work in your yacht as the property has PANORAMIC views of the THAMES. Enter a different world. £210,000. 995 year lease.

● VENDORS OUR FEES IN SW6 25%  
● NO FOAL NO FEE

This 'Sunday Times' advert reveals the depths to which the idle rich have sunk in their desperate search for new ways to squander their ill-gotten gains. Around them their system rots leaving empty factories, growing dole queues and poverty in its wake. And their political representatives ask us to foot the bill.

## WASTE AND DISORDER

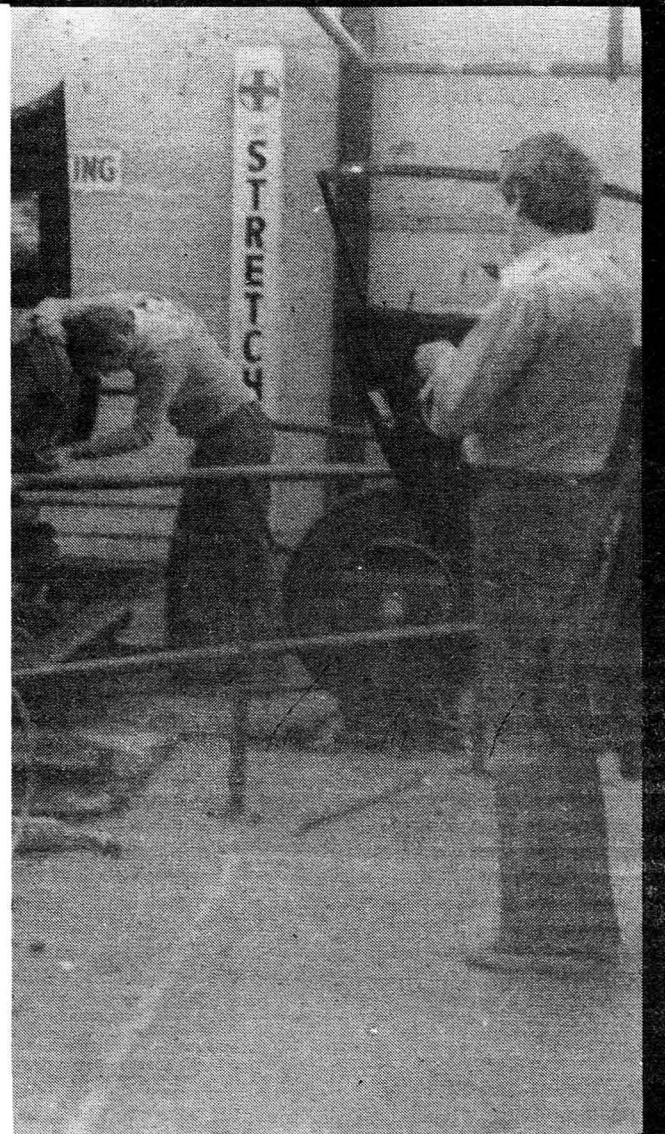
The nationalisation of the means of production is an enormous step forward. But we have always explained that unless it is accompanied by workers' democracy at every level, inevitably, the economy will have great problems. At the Canton tractor factory in China, production of the Hungwei-40 tractor began in 1968. Not one had been produced which was up to standard. Reports said that there had been 'serious waste', and 'disorderly management'. Only 24 tractors, less than 10% of the quota, had been produced in the first quarter of this year.

But with closures and lay-offs being announced almost every day in the car industry, there is no case for a return to capitalism. Only workers' democracy can run industry successfully—avoiding the waste of capitalist economies, and Stalinist ones.

Leyland car workers says:

# LET US PLAN THE JOB

Bob Geaghan, a track worker and T&GWU member at Leyland's Long-bridge works, Birmingham, talks to 'Militant' about his job.



My job consists of fixing nuts and washers to a part called the clutch hose, fixing the speedometer cable to the bulkhead of the car and then connecting the petrol pipe to the petrol pump itself.

### 2½ minutes

You have to climb up to the track for each car, bend into the bonnet, which doesn't do your back any good, finish your job and then climb back off the track. The same thing is repeated over and over again, 24½ cars per hour, 2½ minutes per car.

Some of the jobs are really hard. One chap has to lift a gun which weighs 10 or 12 lbs on to the track, do his job and lift it off again. This is one of the jobs given to the younger men, a bloke of 50 or 60

couldn't possibly manage it.

When I first started I had to get heat treatment for my back for about a month. I thought I'd have to come off the job, but I got used to it in the end. Now it's not so much the physical exertion as the boredom that gets you down. Your break time consists of 28 minutes in the first half of the shift and the same in the second half. It's possible, on nights for instance, to have one break from 9.30 until 10.00, then have to carry on working straight through from 10 o'clock until 2 o'clock.

If you thought about what you were doing you'd probably go barmy after about a week. You become like a machine yourself, you have to switch your mind off and not think

about the job.

Facilities in our shop are non-existent. There's no rest room so when you take your break you have to sit somewhere in the shop. The only facilities are provided by the blokes themselves, such as darts or dominoes. All we get is a hot water tap.

There is a huge turnover of labour in the section I work in—14 new faces out of 20 in the space of two years. This is not exceptional: an average would be about 25% turnover a year.

### Wouldn't run

On the job the blokes have to follow what is written on their lay-out, but I'd say every bloke on our line does a bit extra. If we did just what we were told there's no way the track would run.

We can work out for ourselves the system that suits us best and ensure

that the track flows. Sometimes if it wasn't for management interference we'd get the track running a lot better.

### We know

There's a famous story which proves this. One export model was completely mis-planned by the engineers. It wouldn't come down the track. The operator on the job suggested to them the best way of completing the job. They ignored him and the job went up the track incomplete.

They came back a week later and decided that they'd worked out the best method of doing the particular job. It turned out to be exactly as the operator had told them but he got no credit for it.

If you just left the blokes to plan out the way to do the job themselves things would definitely run smoother.



Photos [top and bottom]: On the track at Leyland, Speke.

IN PART 2: HOW LEYLAND COULD WORK

# THIS IS BRITAIN

**"The Tories and the bosses' press continually try to impress on us that we live in an equal and just society. They try to tell us that there is no poverty or suffering in Britain, that the workers have got plenty but want to ruin the country through their greed!"**

**"Well I don't know where these people live but I do know that they don't live up our street," writes Judy Kenny [Stafford and Stone LPYS]. She went to visit the workers in Stafford and hear their side of the story.**

GEC Stafford

Photos by Julian McKittrick/Militant



**No real life, as things are**

Join Stafford Labour Party Young Socialists in the fight for socialism!  
See ads column, page 13.



Paul and Linda

## LONG HOURS, LOW PAY

Paul works for British Rail and Linda is out of work. I called round to see them in their council flat. Paul has to work at least a six day week to get a living wage.

His take home pay is £32 for a forty hour week.

For a 25 year old married man this is absolutely impossible. He has only been married for a year and they are desperately trying to make a comfortable home for themselves and perhaps have some kids later.

I broke down his commitments over a week and this is how it goes:—

Rent (going up soon)...	£8.28
food .....	£12
gas & electric.....	£4
milk .....	£1
bread .....	£0.75
H.P. (furniture) .....	£4
bus fares .....	£2
TOTAL .....	£32.03

Quite clearly, Paul and Linda derive no "luxuries" (cigarettes etc) from a basic weeks pay. This is why Paul is forced to work overtime on Sundays, when he has to be at work for 5am which means getting up at 4 o'clock on Saturday night and walking two miles, as he has no

**They are stuck in a trap. If Paul doesn't work overtime they have to borrow money to live. If he does, they have no time together and he is too tired to enjoy the extra he has earned.**

transport.

They are stuck in a trap. If Paul doesn't work overtime they have to borrow money to live. If he does, they have no time together and he is too tired to enjoy the extra he has earned.

Linda desperately wants to find work. At the moment she is driven to boredom on her own all day in a flat, with not much prospect of any kind of job, while employers can pick and choose from the enormous dole queues. Both agreed that the working week should be shortened, with no loss of pay, so that people could actually spend some of their time enjoying life rather than a constant round of working and sleeping.

Tom and Margaret Matthews have been married eight years and live in a council house with their two daughters and son. Tom works for a local factory but is on strike at the moment for a decent pay increase. He says he can't afford to strike, but after four years of wage restraint he has no alternative and now it is time for the workers to reap their rewards.

Tom's wages are well below the town's average. While the workers have stuck to the guidelines, the company's profits doubled in the first year of wage restraint and figures show that they will double again at the end of this financial year. Although overtime would help out financially Tom blankly refuses to do it. He believes it should be stopped and workers should be taken on from the dole queues.

He always voted Conservative until the Grunwick dispute. When a Tory MP actually rode into Grunwick on the scab's bus he realised the truth. The Tories are the

**Marg would love to go to work, but has found it impossible to find a job with hours to suit. She spends most of her evenings in the house as it is difficult to find baby-sitters, and seems to be completely trapped in her surroundings.**

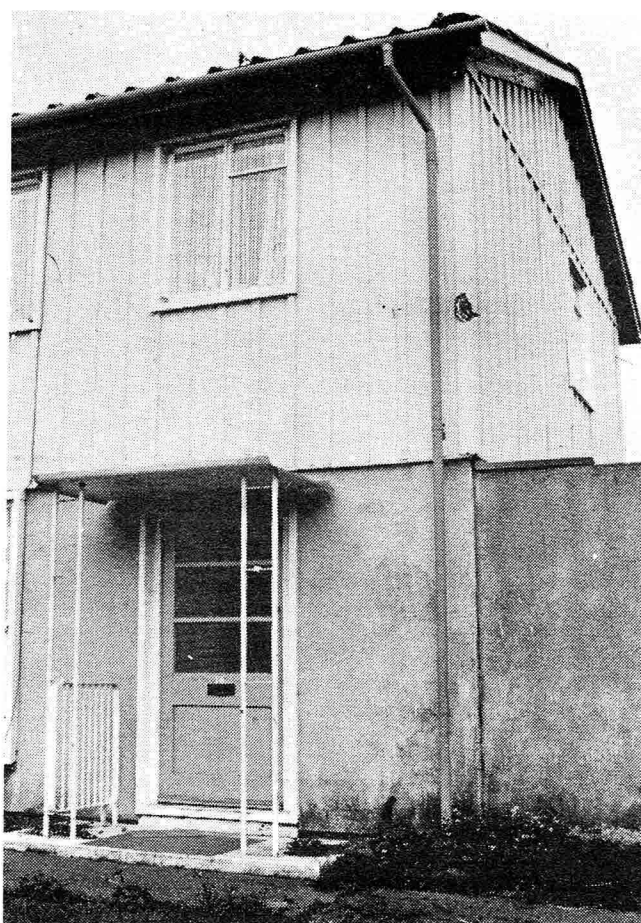
party which represent big business and its interests. They could never stand for the interests of the working class.

He was extremely angered by the leadership of the trade union and labour movement when they refused to take up the struggle and finally crush George Ward and his financiers.

Margaret described how it has become more and more difficult trying to make ends meet on a day to day basis. They would be a lot worse off if her mother didn't come continually to the rescue with financial assistance. The food bills are cut enormously by the vegetables grown on Tom's allotment, which stemmed from a hobby but has now become a necessity.

Marg would love to go to work, but has found it impossible to find a job with hours to suit, so that she could be at home when the children leave school. She spends most of her evenings in the house as it is difficult to find baby-sitters, and seems to be completely trapped in her surroundings with no way out for the future, at least until her children grow up.

Both Marg and Tom feel that they should have more time to devote to the family, to enjoy life and teach their children through experience eg boating and swimming etc. As it is they have to scrimp and save all the year round to allow themselves just two weeks break from the monotony, while the bosses laze around all year spending the profits earned by the hard toil of the workers.



A typical 'tin house'

## Because black

Doris came to England thirteen years ago to join her father, at the age of five. Most of her childhood was spent in local authority children's homes, due to a family crisis.

She told me about the enormous problems she faced when she finally left school and tried to get a job. Eventually she ended up as a waitress at one of the famous chain restaurants, slaving in this sweatshop for six months at 49p per hour.

She could finally stand it no longer. After two months on the dole the children's home managed to find her a job at Wedgewoods in the Potteries. It was a long day, getting up at 6.30am and rarely arriving home before 6.30 in the evening.

During this time she was desperately looking for a flat, as she was leaving the home.

It was finally a friend who found her a room. The rent was extortionate for a small box room that was cold and damp. The house was very old and it cost pounds to keep warm in the winter months. She was very old and it cost pounds to keep warm in the winter months. She soon found that she couldn't cope with her wages and eventually returned to the restaurant to work in the evenings, after hard day at the factory.

She told me about the ex-landlady who took £10

**Doris said that Mrs Thatcher was not talking about immigration. She was using the coloured immigrants as the scapegoat for bad housing and social conditions instead of pointing out the real reasons.**

1978

STAFFORD  
TODAY

## Socialism alone offers us a future

Margaret Jordan was born in Belfast. Her mother died at the age of 29, and her father was forced to leave as a "political agitator". He was a member of the Shipwrights' union and obviously disliked by the bosses.

Margaret married an Englishman and settled in Stafford. She has worked non-stop since the age of fourteen, only stopping work for a matter of days when she was having one of her four children.

Although Marg was clever at school she never really expected a great deal out of life. Her main ambition was

**"The Labour Party has a great potential. Somehow we must force the government to implement socialist policies because it's our party and it ought to be our government as well."**



Margaret Jordan

to be an infant teacher. It was impossible at that time to afford to train at college and now she is a part-time cleaner at a secondary school.

Marg has been a fighter in the Labour Movement for many years. She despises the careerists who continue to bleat that "workers have never had it so good".

She is well known for helping kids in trouble at school, hard-up housewives, the sick and disabled, youth in trouble with the law etc. She could talk for hours about the kids at school who only have one pair of shoes, and when they get wet on the way to school have to sit for hours all day with soaking shoes.

When I asked her about the Labour Party she said "The L.P. has a great potential with the correct leadership." She said that somehow we had to force the government to implement socialist policies because it's our party and it ought to be our government as well.

She is no better off than she was thirty years ago and what she really hates is the thought that her son might have to "drill and bore" in the local factory for the rest of his life. The most important thing to Margaret is a struggle for a better society.

and so.....

This is Britain 1978! Whatever happened to capitalism's so-called "affluent society" in which, according to the Tories, we never had it so good?

The world-wide economic growth that followed the second world war helped disguise the disease of British capitalism. Then the spokesmen of big business dismissed Marxism as "outdated" and "irrelevant".

But now, with international crisis and a desperate economic situation in Britain, it is clear that capitalism cannot deliver the goods. Its deep-rooted sickness is apparent in all the day-to-day issues affecting workers.

Nor have successive Labour governments been able—as the right-wing leaders of the Party claimed in the past—to manage capitalism in order to assure continuous growth and to eliminate inequality and to implement steady and lasting improvements in housing, education, health, social services, and conditions of employment.

The truth is that capitalism is now too decayed to be restored to a healthy state. Only by wiping out the diseased system and building a new one will the workers be able to secure a better future.

A planned economy, owned and controlled by the working class through the labour movement, could guarantee a living wage for all, and a much shorter working week.

Released from the fetters of big business, the enormous accumulated wealth of the country and the skills of the workforce—together with new technology—could easily be used to meet all our basic needs.

Then, freed from the exploitation and oppression of the profit system, people could really begin to enjoy their lives to the full



Doris

from her as a damages deposit and refused to return it when she moved out, even though she had done no damage. Although this was clearly theft, the so called unbiased laws did absolutely nothing to make the landlady pay that money back. At the same time hard up housewives were forced to the courts and treated like filth simply for taking a loaf of bread worth 20p from a store.

Ladbroke's interviewed her for a job and told her that if she didn't get it was because she was black. She was told that some of the customers might not like it and trade could drop. I asked her what she thought about Margaret Thatcher's remarks on immigration. She said that Mrs Thatcher was not talking about immigration. She was using the coloured immigrants as the scapegoat for bad housing and social conditions instead of pointing out the real reasons for these conditions.

She tries to imply that the fault is that of the coloured immigrants. Thatcher failed to point out that the coloured immigrants are the ones who suffer most from bad housing, unemployment etc.

Doris is working at GEC at the moment and is also working behind the bar in a local pub in the evenings. She wants to do a nursing course but needs more 'O' levels. It will cost her £94 to do the course and she is saving like mad to try and raise £15 for the deposit. And we are told education is free!

## End discrimination against FE students

Thousands of students will, in the next month or so, be registering at Further Education and Technical colleges, many for the first time. For many, this will be their only chance of getting educational qualifications.

The conditions they face, however, will often be very poor. In one University, for example, £4 million is to be spent on a new computer, while many FE and Technical colleges have introduced severe restrictions on borrowing books from college libraries because of the cuts in expenditure.

A special government Committee after spending months examining the question of Further education, decided that a Committee was needed to watch over the tertiary sector. But there have been numerous 'White Papers', Committees and Reports on FE in the past. What is really needed is an emergency building programme to get

rid of slum colleges, the 'pre-fab' buildings that many classrooms consist of; the proliferation of annexes and outbuildings and an expansion in college facilities to end the use of ancient equipment in the colleges.

Further Education and Technical colleges cater blatantly for the needs of big business. The Scottish Chairman of the CBI said recently that if "we are to survive as a manufacturing nation," then all education should provide is "an ability to read, write and add up, with exams to measure ability, rigorous higher educational standards, with the weight of public opinion favouring technical education". What he really wants is the weeding out of courses that are not directly useful to industry and big business.

The rank and file of the labour movement has always been committed to a decent education system, to give workers and their children a chance to develop their tal-

ents to the full. At present, only 5% of the population get degrees, whilst 57% have no educational qualifications at all. 'Militant' supporters will be campaigning in the labour and student movements for:

★ A massive expansion of facilities in FE and Technical colleges!

★ An emergency building programme—no more slum colleges!

★ An end to academic discrimination—all types of college should have the highest standards!

For the bosses of Britain, education is a luxury to be cut in times of crisis. Every reform which has been given in education has been through the pressure of the labour movement. We must resist any further attempts to cut education, and fight for an expansion of expenditure, particularly on the deprived FE sector.

By Jean McKerlie  
(Paisley College Labour Club)

## A Demand Living Grant

For students who receive a full grant, if they live carefully, take holiday jobs and so on, it is just possible to survive. But for thousands of FE and Technical college students, a full grant would seem to provide a life of luxury compared to their present conditions.

Only 2.8% of the students get a grant, and the average is less than £3 per week. Often, part of the grant is "meal tickets", leaving students with little choice but to eat in the college canteen. The value of the meal ticket often only covers a plate of chips and a cup of tea.

The reason these students are often forced to take weekend or evening jobs is the

insidious "discretionary awards" system. This means that it is up to the local authority whether or not they give the student a grant.

By Peter Lush

Students doing a degree cannot get grants automatically. Obviously, in times of cuts in public expenditure, in many areas these grants have been almost completely stopped. In Bristol recently, an LPYS member who had been unemployed for some time, and was registered disabled, was refused a discretionary award. This was despite the Disablement Resettlement Officer saying there were no jobs available for him.

A recent announcement

from the government said that discretionary awards would be abolished next year, and grants of £10 per week introduced for these students. While this would obviously be a step forward, Labour Students must campaign for the FE students to be given full grants, now.

Thousands of FE students will be forced to drop out of courses for purely economic reasons in the coming year. There have been too many 'reports', 'Committees' and speeches about FE. Action is needed now!

★ For a mandatory grant for all full time students!

★ For a sliding scale between 16 and 18!

★ £1,800 per year now!

## Campaign through your Labour Club

Last year saw many Further Education students fighting for better conditions in the FE colleges. At Stafford FE College, for example, Labour Party Young Socialist members were involved in a campaign by the Students Union to win decent Common room facilities. At Southwark College, the Student Union organised an occupation against the closure of the canteen at one site.

It is very important that Labour Students intervene in these colleges to try to set up new Labour Clubs. There is a new mood of militancy. There are now many LPYS members

at FE colleges, and they should be approached to help with this work. Bookstalls should be organised at the start of term, as well as sales of 'Militant' and 'Left', the LPYS monthly paper. A big meeting should also be organised if possible with a well-known speaker.

Young workers

Labour Clubs must actively take up the problems that students face. Attempts should be made to involve not just full-time students, but block and day release students as well. Although they are not, at present, allowed to join NOLS, they can make a

great contribution to the life of a Labour Club.

At present, NOLS is based mainly in the Universities and Polytechnics. But if it is to become a mass socialist student organisation, NOLS must bring into its ranks new layers of students, particularly from the FE colleges, which have a predominance of working class students.

Last year, a number of new Labour Clubs were set up in FE and Technical colleges by NOLS and LPYS members. We must ensure that this work is well organised this year.

By Mark Morton  
(National Committee, National Organisation of Labour Students)

# THE SICKNESS OF GREEK CAPITALISM

PART  
ONE

By Bob Labi  
(London Labour  
Party Executive)

**The British press presents Greece as a pleasant holiday resort with ruins, hundreds of islands and a few millionaire ship owners marrying and divorcing each other. But behind this facade there is a situation developing which could easily threaten the very existence of Greek capitalism.**

In the middle of June the Greek government was forced to suspend Parliament for its summer recess 20 days early. In spite of its 52 seat majority in Parliament the capitalist Karamanlis government was so unsure of getting a majority in the Parliamentary Committees that it sent MPs home early to avoid the risk of defeats.

Practically every day there are more rumours of splits in the ruling New Democracy party and more government reshuffles as both the government and its MPs rack their brains about how to deal with Greece's economic crisis and the Greek workers' growing strength.

Although the situation is becoming more acute, it is not new. Greece has been gripped by continuing crises since before the downfall of the Colonels' Junta in July 1974. Since then there have been periodic waves of mass struggle, which have laid bare the weakness of the Greek ruling class.

Faced with a rising tide of opposition, expressed in strikes and the Athens Polytechnic uprising in November 1973, and the collapse of its Cyprus adventure, the Junta and its ministers simply fled to escape the wrath of the population. The ruling class moved quickly to fill this void by flying in Karamanlis from Paris, installing him as Prime Minister once again. The old reactionary had lived in exile since opposition to his authoritarian rule had forced him to resign as Premier in 1962.

The absence of any alternative policy from the leadership of the Communist Party (Interior) (which was at that time the major Greek workers' party) allowed the ruling class to carry out this manoeuvre and let Karamanlis win the subsequent snap election with his slogan of "It's me or the Tanks" (see 'Militant' nos. 366 & 367). But despite this initial success there has been a continuing radicalisation and polarisation in Greek society since then.

The Greek capitalists themselves have lost real confidence in their future. There has been a steady decline in the rate of increase in production: in 1977 industrial production rose by only 1.5% compared with 10.6% in the previous year.

While the total rate of investment

did slightly rise from 7.1% in 1976 to 8% in 1977, there was an actual fall in industrial investment, most of the increase was in property. The papers have spoken of an 'investment boycott' by the Greek bosses. This is not only the result of doubts about the profitability of investing but also, as 'The Times' reported, because "above all Greek businessmen resent the prevailing anti-profits climate which forces them to prove at all times that they are not crooks, exploiters or tax dodgers, they prefer to lie low and let the storm wear out," one economist explained." [28.4.78].

Last May the government announced new incentives to try to bribe the bosses to invest, but even while giving the details Karamanlis was forced to say that "incentives are not enough. We also, need economic and social stability, and this stability is being undermined by unreasonable and untimely claims. Above all it is undermined by strikes that are often politically motivated."

The Bulletin of the Congress of Greek Industrialists (SEB) added on June 15th that on the "question of both industrial production and industrial investment low demand is a major factor put forward by industrialists." The Bulletin went on to explain that this low demand was the result of the fact that the "increase in real incomes was lower in 1977 than in 1976...for industrial workers the real increase was 4.5% compared with 11.1% in 1976...in the first five months of 1978 the general price index rose by 5.8%, but food prices went up by 10.9%." When it is remembered that the Bulletin's figures are the official ones, which underestimate the situation facing the working class, one begins to understand the plight of Greek workers.

At the beginning of this year the government attempted to "expand the economy" by increasing its own spending by 20%. This immediately resulted in an upsurge in imports which worsened the January-May trade deficit to \$1,768 million compared with \$1,531 million in the same period last year. In addition to the jump in imports Greek exports are falling, a process which moves like the recent Common Market

restrictions on the import of Greek textiles will only worsen.

This effort to boost the economy by printing more money also led to an increase in inflation from 12.8% to 15% according to the official figures. In reality the figure is much higher as the official Post Office interest rate of 10.5% indicates. Inflation is also being fuelled by an annual average fall of 14% in the drachma's value on the world currency markets.

## Pessimism

This situation forced the government five months later to completely reverse its January policies by cutting spending in each sector by between 15% to 20% and reducing public investment. But military spending, which consumes a massive 23.8% of the government spending, was left untouched.

The government's 'stop-go' policies are now making their own impact as the capitalists are unsure of the future government policy and even less willing than before to risk their money in production and investment. The government's policies mean that workers are faced both with an acceleration in inflation and the probability of unemployment rising still further.

Already the unemployment rate is 10%, and the situation has been made worse by the closing off of the opportunities to find work outside Greece as other capitalist countries have also been hit by mass unemployment. This all adds to the powder keg, preparing the way for an inevitable political explosion by the working class.

The June edition of the economic review, 'Epilogi', summed up the situation as follows: "The government's targets on all major economic fronts are not being met and it seems that the more pessimistic projections are coming true. All the facts and figures for the first four months of 1978 show a positive deterioration in both internal and external stability."

Greek capitalism itself has a very weak base. In many senses Greece, like Portugal, is only a semi-developed country. Only 20% of Greece's Gross National Product comes from manufacturing, less than Turkey!

The industrial base of Greek capitalism is very narrow. Much of the ruling class's wealth comes from shipping, finance and tourism. Over 60% of the Greek workforce are either self-employed or unpaid family workers in retailing, tiny workshops or on the land.

84.4% of Greek firms have less

than four workers, and 9.2% employ between five and nine workers, which illustrates both the backwardness of Greek capitalism and also the enormous weight of the few large firms in the economy. The fact that the public utilities, such as the telephone company, railways and Olympic airways, are the biggest employers of labour also shows the important political and industrial role of these workers.

It is because of this weak industrial base that Greece permanently has a large trade deficit, which in the past has been partly covered by money coming to Greece from workers abroad, tourism and shipping, which have all been affected in the recent period by the ups and downs of the world economy.

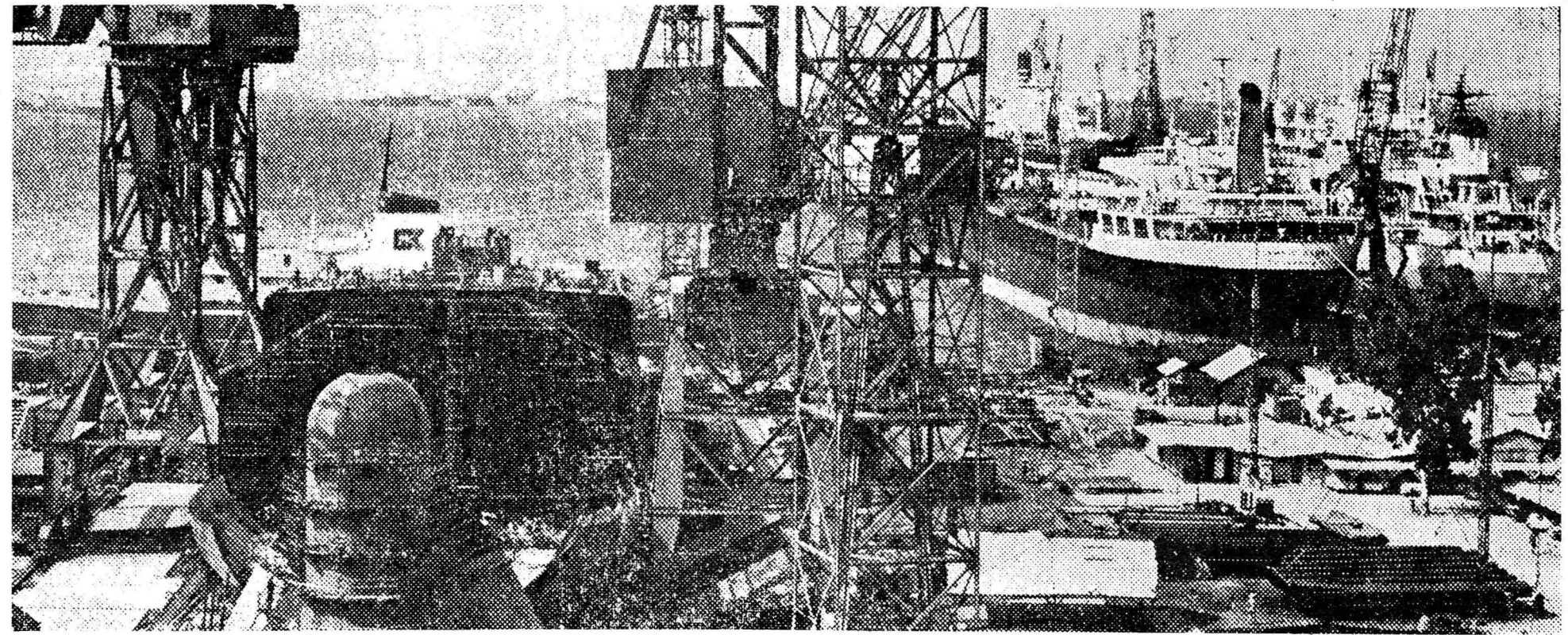
The government itself is even less sure than its capitalist counterparts what is happening in the economy. Its estimates of the proportion of the population involved in agriculture, for example, range from 20% to 35%!

But in spite of the weakness of its statistics the government and the ruling class in general have no doubts whatsoever about their need to hold down workers' living standards in order to both make Greek industry more competitive and to limit the demand for foreign



Members of the Athens trolleybus workers' union vote to strike in March this year





Though shipping is one of Greece's main industries the Hellenic shipyards are the only ones still building vessels of any size.

goods. The problem for them is how to do it.

The barrier standing between the Greek bosses and their objectives is the strength of the Greek working class. Since the Junta's fall Greece has seen wave upon wave of struggle as workers have increased their efforts both for improved conditions and against the capitalist government and its anti-working class laws. In 1976 1,250,000 days were 'lost' in strikes, but in the first four months of this year already over 1,600,000 were 'lost'.

In the face of a mounting working class offensive the government last year decided to hold the general elections a year early, before the developing swing to the left undermined both its majority and squeezed out the other capitalist party, EDIK, the Centre Democratic Union. But the results still showed the massive shift to the left in Greece since 1974.

The vote of PASOK, the Socialist party, nearly doubled to over 25% and the number of its MPs jumped from 15 to 91. The pro-Moscow Communist Party, the KKE, won a further 9% of the vote and 11 MPs, while the alliance of small parties led by the "Eurocommunist" Communist Party (Exterior) got 2.7% and two seats. In all the workers' parties won over 36% of the vote.

At the same time Karamanlis's New Democracy lost 41 seats and its share of the vote went down from 55% to 42%. In this polarisation EDIK was crushed, its vote falling from 20% to 12%, leaving it with only 15 MPs, compared with 57 before, who immediately began to fight amongst themselves.

## Strike wave

In the three major cities of Greece (Athens/Piraeus, Salonika and Volos) the workers' parties won 44% of the vote, while in solid working class areas like Piraeus they won a total of 51%. This giant step forward for the left gave a massive boost of confidence to the working class which resulted in a terrific intensification of the class struggle. Strike after strike developed as workers pushed forward to win their demands.

Generally these demands centred around calls for a 30% wage increase; a sliding scale of wages linked to a price index drawn up by the trade unions; pensions to be 80% of the minimum wage; a 5-day, 40-hour week with no loss in pay; retirement after 35 years working with a pension; workers' control of pension schemes; abolition of all anti-working class laws; admission of all trade unions to the Trades Councils and GSEE (Greek TUC); democratic elections and abolition of the Junta constitutions in the trade union Federations, Trades Councils and

GSEE. This wave of struggle culminated in the 600,000 strong March 1st General Strike which involved wide layers of workers, although the struggles have continued since then in many areas.

Parliament was sent on holiday 20 days early because many New Democracy MPs were either failing to appear or abstaining on votes and thus putting the government in a minority. In the days just before the adjournment there were public rows between New Democratic MPs and Ministers and one MP was expelled the day before he planned to announce his resignation!

mentation. The June edition of 'Epilogi' stated that: "In preparation for lowering the demands for wage and salary increases in the coming year the political parties and trade union organisations must give a decisive contribution by changing their attitude to facing the national economic problems."

## Leaders

In effect 'Epilogi' is calling for a Greek version of the British Social Contract or Spanish Moncloa Pact, an agreement between the workers' leaders and bosses for "restraint".

of organisation is the mistrust which many workers feel towards the government supporters who bureaucratically run most of the older established unions.

The Greek TUC, the GSEE, most of the Trades Councils and some of the Federations and unions are under the control of these government supporters. Greece has never had a trade union movement independent from the state. When the Colonels, on seizing power in 1967, closed down over a hundred unions and arrested their leaders, the GSEE's then chief sent them a telegram of congratulations!

had failed to notify him of their plans!

The government and the ruling class has attempted to make use of the present lull in the class struggle both to pass new repressive laws, such as the Anti-Terrorist Law and a law banning the sale of newspapers on the streets, and to continue the sacking of thousands of militants. 'Rizopastis', the KKE daily, reported that in 1975 1,277 workers were sacked for union activities, of whom 87 were members of union Executive Committees. In 1976 1,816 were fired including 239 EC members; in 1977, 2,462, including 210 EC members, and in the first three months of 1978 1,125 workers were sacked including 100 EC members.

## Challenge

As a result of the organisational weakness of the Greek trade unions and the rottenness of many of their formal leaders a large role industrially is played by PASOK and the KKE. Both parties have industrial wings which aim to organise their members and supporters in most workplaces and unions.

The PASOK's industrial organisation is the PASKE and the KKE's is the ESAK. At the present time ESAK is far bigger and better organised than PASKE, in spite of the fact that the majority of workers support PASOK. This is a result of the PASOK leaders' fear of really active, large PASOK or PASKE branches which could provide the basis for a rank and file challenge to their leadership later.

But in spite of PASOK's current weakness both play an important role in strikes and in fighting to win control of the trade unions, Trades Councils and ultimately the GSEE.

Most of the active workers look to PASOK or the KKE to provide a direction to their struggles, whether industrial or political. Thus the moving forces behind the March 1st strike were the unofficial co-ordinating committees of trade unions and Federations led by PASOK ('Committee of Public Employees' Organisations') and KKK ('Committee of 70 Factories' in Athens). But since the March 1st strike both PASOK and the KKE have held back from developing the struggle, thus allowing a certain lull to develop and giving the ruling class an opportunity for a limited counter-attack.

In part two of this article, next week, Bob Labi examines the policies of the Greek workers' parties and the turmoil in their ranks, pointing to the danger of a move to a Popular Front alliance with a section of the capitalist politicians.



Striking workers outside their union headquarters

Obviously many New Democratic MPs are fearful of their future careers, let alone the major question of how Greek capitalism can solve its problems. Although the government is trying to take advantage of the current limited lull in the class struggle to attack the working class, it is clear that the ruling class are not confident of their ability to contain the labour movement at the present time.

The Greek bosses dare not at present attempt to use the armed forces again to cover the working class. The memory of the Junta terror is still too fresh in workers' minds and a new coup attempt now would lead to an uprising and general strike.

The 1967 coup proved ultimately to have been a miscalculation on behalf of the Colonels, CIA and sections of the ruling class. The end result of the Junta's rule in 1974 was that the bosses were faced with an even stronger and more militant working class than before April 1967.

Therefore at the present time the more far-sighted sections of the Greek bosses see that the only way in the short term that they can put into effect their policies is by securing the agreement of the workers' leaders to their imple-

In recent months the leaders of PASOK and the KKE have attempted to restrain the working class. They have not organised a real struggle against the government. Yet despite this the Greek workers have shown a magnificent ability to fight back. Tremendous periods of struggle have unfolded despite the organisational weakness of the Greek working class.

The Greek labour movement is divided into over 3,500 small unions, many of which are just factory unions, although there also exist unions which attempt to cover an entire industry or craft in a local area or nationally. There are Federations in existence which try to link unions in individual industries or firms together, but they vary enormously in strength.

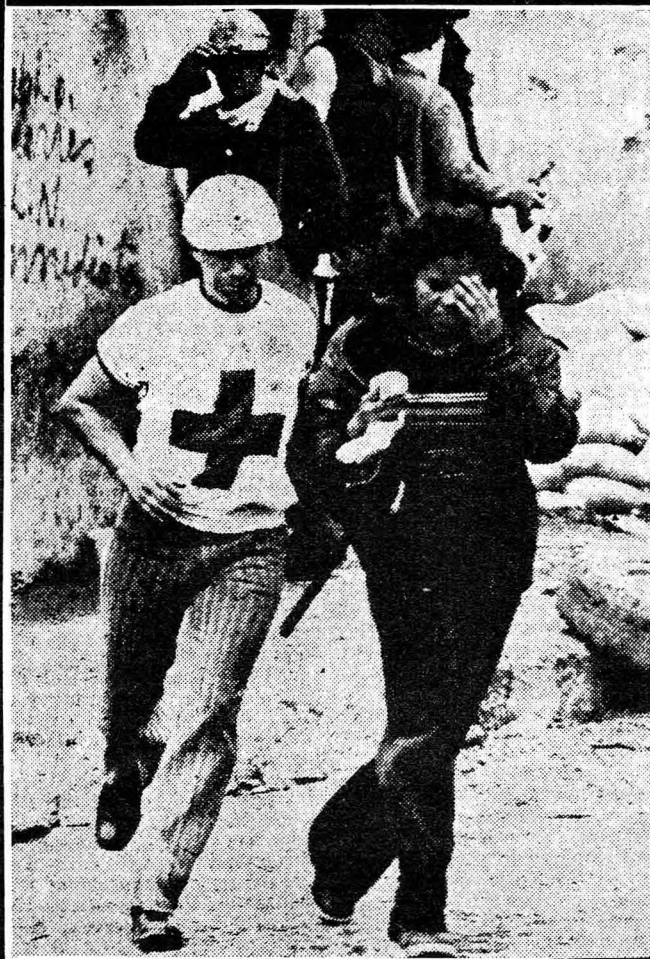
## Bureaucracy

Many of these small factory unions have only been formed in the past four years. This movement to become organised represents a great step forward for previously unorganised workers, while at the same time having big weaknesses because it is based on factory unions. One of the reasons for this particular kind

The present GSEE leadership was appointed by Karamanlis after the Junta's collapse and only later sought to have its position legitimised through elections. Since then it has maintained its position by regularly expelling unions which are taken over by the left from the GSEE, at the same time as by the left at the same time as admitting stodge bosses' unions which are given inflated membership figures and votes. The 'Financial Times' commented recently that for years the GSEE leadership "has depended more on the good will of the government and the labour section of the security police than on workers' support."

The government attempts to keep a grip on the trade unions through various anti-working class laws. For instance it is illegal for unions to have strike funds or to amalgamate with other unions. Each registered GSEE union gets a subsidy from the Ministry of Labour. Demands for the repeal of these, and many other, anti-working class laws and for a democratic labour movement are some of the most important being made at the present time. It was only two years ago that a court ruled that a boss was justified in dismissing 20 workers who had tried to form a factory union because they

## SRI LANKA / NICARAGUA



The Red Cross helps a woman injured in the fighting in Matagalpa

## Somoza's days are numbered

It is only a matter of time: Nicaragua's dictator, General Somoza, is doomed.

Despite news that the national guard has retaken Matagalpa, few believe that Somoza can save his regime.

Matagalpa, the country's third city, was devastated by an earthquake in 1972—a natural disaster which revealed the country's depths of rottenness. Last month, the city was seized by armed opponents of the regime, many of them teenagers. All reports testify that the insurgent youth have the overwhelming support of the population. Since the national guard took over, tens of thousands have fled the city.

Meanwhile, the general strike which has gripped the capital, Managua, since last week continues to grow in strength. Eighty per cent of commerce and at least half of industry has been shut down. Farmers in the surrounding areas have also joined the strike movement.

More surprising, is the fact that a majority of businessmen are also supporting the strike, many of them paying their workers half-pay during the stoppage. Even they find Somoza's regime intolerable.

Somoza's regime has become a by-word for repression and corruption. Installed by US imperialism and propped up with American arms, Somoza has run the country like a family business for the last 45 years.

The general's personal wealth is put at \$500 million. He is thought to have a controlling share in the country's 20 largest firms, and to own nearly a quarter of the arable land.

While most of the country's workers and peasants live in extreme poverty, the general's friends have flourished on favours and corruption. Previously, even the most liberal opponents, if they failed to flee the country, were thrown into jail or simply assassinated.

The mass opposition movement was given new impetus, in fact, by the assassination last January of Pedro Chamorro, editor of the liberal opposition paper, 'La Prensa'. The Sandista guerrillas—named after an early opponent of Somoza, General Sandino, assassinated in 1933—launched a renewed onslaught.

'El Frente', the guerrilla front, uses Marxist language, but includes many supporters from Nicaragua's disenchanted middle and upper classes. Last month they revealed the weakness of Somoza for all to see. Taking the National Palace by storm, they demanded the release of 80 political prisoners and a huge ransom in exchange for hostages: and Somoza was obliged to give in.

The crisis in Nicaragua has provoked a panic in Washington. Without US backing, Somoza would have fallen long ago. But how to ease him out now without provoking a revolutionary upheaval?

US imperialism has left it too late to switch smoothly to liberal capitalist representatives who could be relied on to preserve US interests in Central America. They may well have no alternative but to try; but the youth who are now drawn into the struggle against Somoza's dictatorship will undoubtedly demand more fundamental change.

Article 157 is as follows:

[1] Any person who advocates, attempts, abets, instigates, participates or engages in any conspiracy for the amendment, whether by way of alteration or addition or repeal or replacement of the Constitution or any provision thereof otherwise than in accordance with the provision of Chapter XII, shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction by a High Court after trial without a jury, be liable to imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten years or a fine or both and shall also forfeit all his property.

[2] Where any such offence is committed by a body of persons, whether corporate or unincorporate, the President, Secretary, Director and every principal officer of such body shall be deemed to be guilty of that offence unless he proves that the offence was committed without his consent or connivance and that he

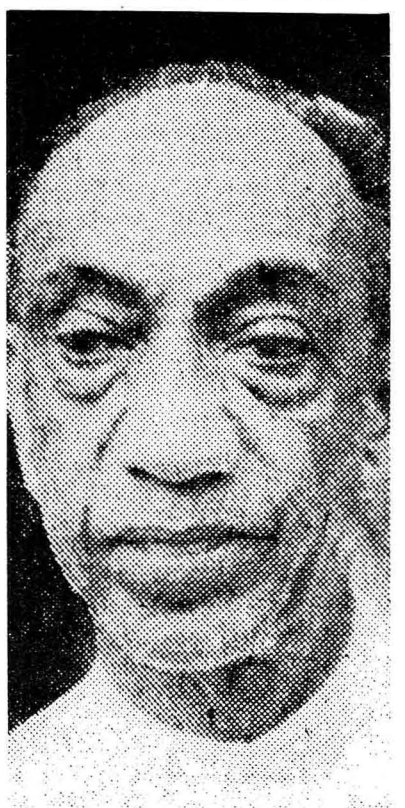
exercised all such diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

[3] Where such offence is committed by a recognised political party or any candidate the nomination papers submitted by such party or the nomination of such candidate, as the case may be, shall be null and void for all purposes whatsoever.

Where such offence is committed by a member of Parliament he shall cease to be a member and it shall be competent to the Supreme Court upon a petition filed in such court alleging that such member had committed such offence to declare that such member has ceased to be a member of Parliament.

[5] The preceding provisions of this Article shall not apply to proceedings in Parliament unless such proceedings are taken contrary to the determination of the Supreme Court in the exercise of its Constitutional jurisdiction.

# SRI LANKA'S BONAPARTE



J R Jayawardena

BY KUMAR DAVID

[Lanka Sama Samaja Party]

Relying on its massive parliamentary majority Sri Lanka's United National Party government of J R Jayawardena has just passed a Constitution aimed at setting up a Constitutional-Bonapartist state structure.

The new constitution, introduced on August 17th, seeks to set up a semi-dictatorship.

There is to be a massive concentration of power, incomparably more than France or the USA, in the hands of the President. A true analogy can be found only in certain African states.

A mass movement of protest, spearheaded by the working class, and galvanising wide sections of democratic, liberal and minority forces, is developing to defy and oppose these moves. Only a general strike and mass Hartal movement can really defeat this constitution, overthrow the UNP government and protect democratic rights.

The opposition to the draft constitution built up so rapidly that within days of presentation of the draft in parliament the government retreated in fear and withdrew the draconian section 157 (see above). Although the government was compelled to withdraw this section the very fact that it dared to even propose such draconian measures is the clearest and best indication of the real intentions of Dictator Jayawardena and his UNP government.

Section 158 of the Constitution allows the government to enter into contracts with foreign firms (multinational monopolies) and such contracts are protected constitutionally. This means that any future government will need a two-thirds majority and a constitutional amendment bill if it wishes to annul these agreements or nationalise the investments.

President. The President becomes a Bonaparte.

For example, henceforth there will be no by-elections. If an MP dies or resigns, the place is filled by an appointee of the Secretary General of the party that the outgoing MP belonged to.

However, what is really unbelievable is that if an MP opposes the policy of the party he belongs to he can be expelled from the parliamentary party and this automatically results in the loss of his parliamentary seat. The vacancy so created is not filled by a by-election but by an appointment to be made by the Secretary General of

The present government has become an agent of imperialism and functions entirely under the control

## The essence of the new constitutional structure is the devaluing of parliament and the electorate and the concentration of power in the hands of the President. The President becomes a Bonaparte.

of the IMF, the Tripartite Commission, the Aid Group and such overlords. Their whole policy package is derived from these imperialist power centres. Hence devaluation, social welfare cuts, 'open door' policy in trade, foreign investment...and now on the political side, the new constitution!

The essence of the new constitutional structure is the devaluing of parliament and the electorate and the concentration of power in the hands of the

the party.

So, in theory, Jayawardena can through his Secretary General announce that all 140 MPs have violated the party mandate, sack the lot and appoint 140 new stooges to fill the legislature. (The UNP holds 140 of the 165 seats in parliament.) Government party MPs have by this threat been transformed from elected representatives to obedient slaves on the Bonaparte's leash.

A system of proportional

representation on party lists comes into being in place of the old system of individual parliamentary constituencies (the British system) at the general elections to be held once in six years. At the last election (1977), which was considered a never-can-be-repeated landslide, the UNP won 80% of the seats in parliament although it polled only 51% of the votes.

### Hartal

It is obvious that under a proportional representation system no one party will ever again be able to obtain the two-thirds majority needed to amend or repeal the new constitution. Hence Jayawardena feels assured that the system of Constitutional-Bonapartism that he has installed can never be annulled by legal means.

The truth of the matter is that constitutions are pieces of paper that the masses can tear up when they decide to move. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party therefore proposes and works towards two inter-linked objectives:

(a) A united front of all left and democratic forces for a common struggle against JR and the UNP government. The party eschews sectarianism and makes the greatest efforts to unite the widest possible forces for concrete action.

(b) The party proposes a general strike, a mass Hartal, and a series of transitional struggles and agitations leading up to these as the only real way of defeating the constitution, the cuts in welfare and the repressive measures that the UNP has taken against the left and workers' organisations.

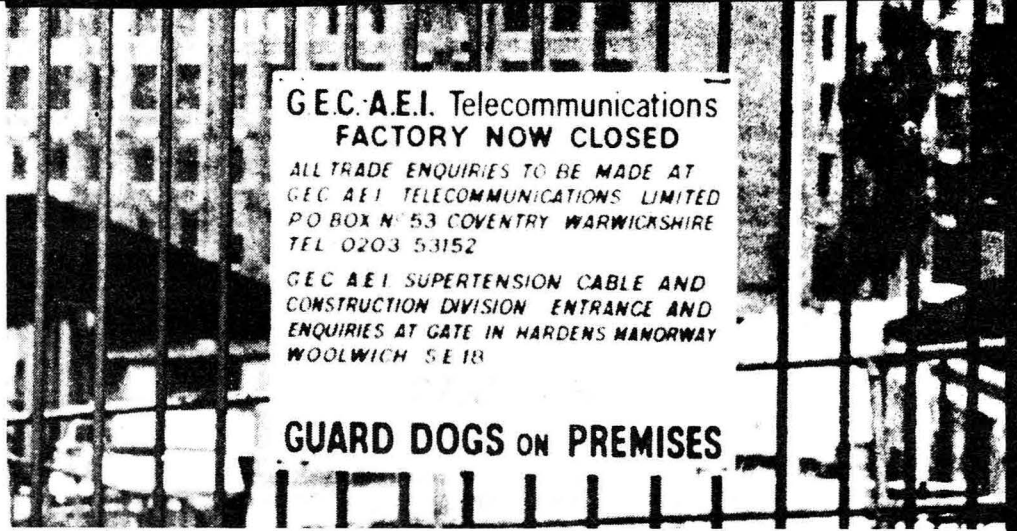
★ A United Front of all working class and left organisations!

★ Throw out the UNP and its dictatorship by Constitution!

★ Forward to a mass Hartal and a General Strike!

# NEW TELECOMMS TECHNOLOGY:

## Who will benefit?



**The telecommunications industry is in crisis. New technology threatens jobs and British firms' share of the world market is declining.**

Throughout the period of the world boom the UK telecomms industry has been dominated by the big three: Plessey, GEC and STC.

Up to 1969 the Post Office kept apparent control over these suppliers. However, recently the Monopolies Commission forced them to repay £9m to the PO for price fixing.

The ring reaped tremendous profits. For GEC this meant that "stable PO orders and good contract prices have allowed excellent profit making." (POEU Bulletin 1976.)

During the '50s and '60s the big three were content to exploit the expanding domestic market feather-bedded by the PO. The sweeping changes in technology in Europe were apparently ignored. Today that failure to invest means that the industry can no longer compete.

This is demonstrated by the UK decline in the share of world trade for telecomms equipment. From accounting for a full 25% in 1963 this collapsed to only 10.5% by 1970 and a mere 5.9% in 1975.

### LOST ORDERS

France, Australia and Saudi Arabia have all placed contracts worth millions with overseas competitors. An American consortium is presently negotiating a contract with Egypt worth \$20bn, according to the 'Financial Times', the largest order ever placed.

The UK is not even mentioned. Dr Willets says that of the 18 manufacturers in Europe only ten will remain by 1988. The very survival of the industry is at stake.

### CUTS

The cuts in PO orders in 1974 and dwindling exports due to the failure to develop a stored programme control system (SPC) meant a massive throwout of labour. Between 1973 and 1976 20,000 jobs have been lost in UK telecomms.

### NEW TECHNOLOGY

The PO is the third largest purchaser of equipment in the world and is committed to £3m a day investment to reorganise by the 1980s. This represents 20% of total manufacturing investment in the UK.

During the '50s and '60s the PO concentrated on electro-mechanical telephone

By Tom Smith  
(Chairman, Leyland Special Products Combine Committee)  
and Paul Waters  
(Coventry LPYS)

exchange equipment of the Strowger and Crossbar type. Having fallen behind without an SPC system the UK now seeks to leapfrog into the lead with System X which incorporates SPC and a digital switching system.

Before this can be installed the semi-electronic TXE4 system must be put in. This the PO is doing now. Both these systems will make a great impact on labour and costs. Mr K G Corfield, Managing Director of STC and president of the Telecommunications Manufacturers' Association, put forward the table below to highlight the effects on employment:

Strowger & Crossbar—100 people required; TXE4 (semi-electronic)—40 people required; System X—4 people required.

### PROSPECTS

Competitors are already working on their own versions of System X. They have the advantage of experience of SPC already which the UK has not.

One expert in the 'Sunday Times' (7.5.78) estimates that System X will not be ready until the end of the 1980s. All the job losses due over TXE4 could well be in vain if the System X is slow in maturing. The world markets necessary for its viability may be lost before it is ready.

Success is doubtful due to the anarchy of the profit system as a 1976 NEDC report explains that: "An important obstacle to the development of our export strategy for System X is the fact that suppliers will later be competing with each other in exporting the equipment which they are now collaboratively developing."

For example STC, a subsidiary of ITT who have developed a rival system 12, is also developing System X with Plessey and GEC.

## Only socialist planning can utilise new technology in the interests of the workers.

### THREAT OF IMPORTS

The change to the digital, all electronic, System X could be a catastrophe for the UK balance of payments. If constructed today to existing specifications, 70% of all the components would have to be imported.

### THE BLAME

This crisis can fairly and squarely be laid at the door of big business. Consider GEC as an example: Since the merger with AEI 67,000 jobs and 40 factories have disappeared. The Coventry Workshop Bulletin estimates that over 5,000 jobs have been lost in Coventry alone between April 1969 and January 1977.

On the other hand earnings per share have risen from 3.91p to 18.07p in 1976. Cash in hand rose from £231m in March 1976 to a colossal £617m in March 1978.

The workers have made the sacrifice: value of sales per employee rose 50%, trading profit per employee by 95% while wages increased by an average 47% only.

One labourer has by sweat and endeavour managed to increase his wage—Mr Weinstein himself. In 1975/76 alone his income was £130,-

859 (£40,000 salary and £90,000 from dividends). In short, a weekly income of £2,516!

### MULTINATIONAL

GEC has invested abroad, for instance, in S Africa, where naturally a suitable profit can be made. Between 1973 and 1977, 70% of GEC's increased turnover has been generated abroad.

Like the Tories they claim that overseas investment allows expansion in the UK. The baffled worker will ask—why is that domestic expansion always a negative figure? The Labour government must also accept responsibility. In the era of wage restraint they allowed GEC to dish out £178m to shareholders at the time of so-called dividend restraint.

### JOBS

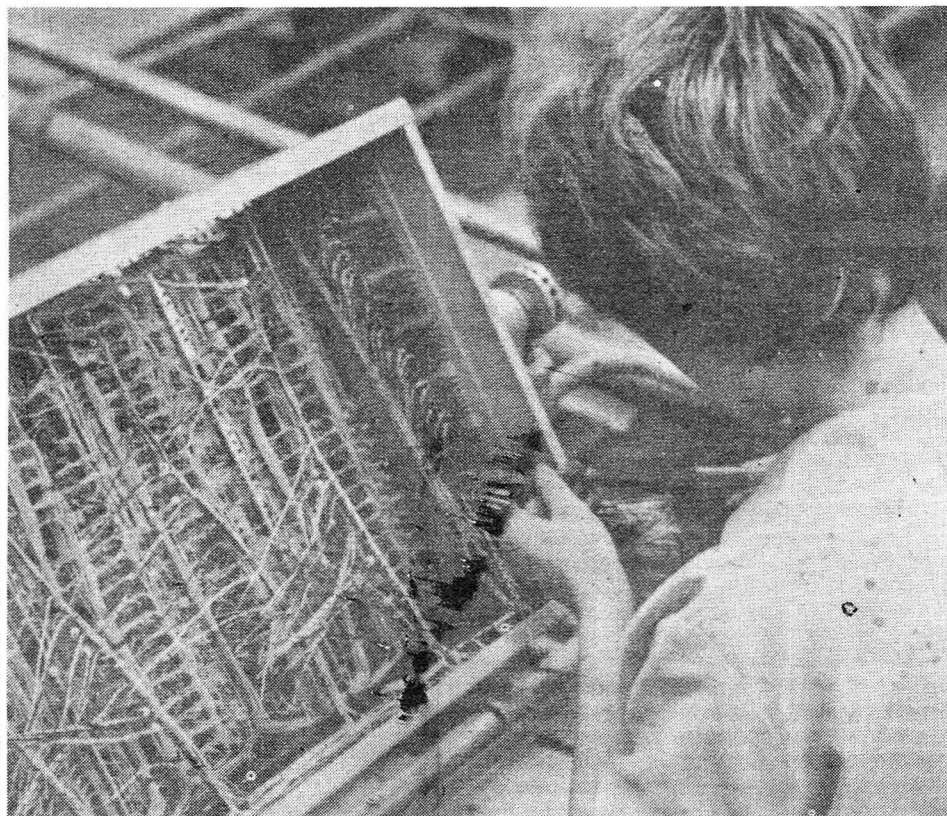
No worker would oppose technology which advances society. The tremendous advantages of System X should go to society in general, not as a means of further enriching Weinstein and his cronies with further redundancies.

The labour movement must demand the nationalisation of the entire telecomms section under democratic workers' control and management. It would thus be possible to introduce a shorter working week and a guarantee of no voluntary or compulsory redundancies. Excess capacity can be explored by the labour movement to produce socially useful products as the Lucas shop stewards did.

Workers of the industry are aware of a general crisis throughout the manufacturing sector—in shipbuilding, steel, electronics, power stations, textiles and cars... the list seems endless. The call to nationalise the telecomms industry must be seen as a step to a socialist planned economy. We must not allow capitalism to squander the skills of working people by a throwout onto the dole. The labour movement must fight back with a socialist programme of:

- ★ Work sharing with no loss of pay.
- ★ Shorter working week.
- ★ For the nationalisation under workers' control and management of the telecomms sector and the commanding heights of the economy as the basis of a socialist planned economy.

These demands need to become the programme of the unions and Labour Party to take the working people of this country forward and avert an otherwise gloomy perspective of dole queues and poverty.



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## LETTERS

## All tenants must organise

Dear Comrades

The article by Ealla Gamwell in 'Militant' 416 holds equal interest for tenants in the private rental sector.

The terraced house where my parents have lived all their married life was sold with others throughout the town, several times between 1969 and 1973, eventually landing with a London company. Many of the tenants, being pensioners, feared that improvements would be forced upon them without consent, while other tenants naturally wanted improvements.

Due to the determined action of one Labour councillor, the council set up a meeting of the Company and tenants. At this meeting the presiding officer stated that if any councillor or press reporter was present he would not allow the meeting to start.

This was very favourable to the Company of course, but because only one tenant was represented by a solicitor who said nothing, this went unchallenged, thus leaving the path clear for blatant manoeuvring. One tenant, for example, who complained that he had spent out £500 on work that was the landlord's responsibility, was told that it was too bad, but he couldn't be compensated.

Several years have passed and the houses are now owned by separate landlords. However, those with tenants wanting improvements have not been touched as yet because 6-month improvement orders deferred by the council three times (to allow the landlord more time) have still to be implemented.

One housing committee meeting that I attended where the order was up for discussion, caused quite a buzz from officials as soon as I sat down. They wanted to know who I was and why I was there, and eventually a stooge fetched a leading officer, who asking me outside the room, explained the council was on the tenants' side. Foolishly I accepted that and left, not before noticing that the official opened the door of the committee room and nodded to his colleagues (a nod of relief?).

Many older workers have trust in officialdom built in over the years, and often accept grudgingly what they are told. However, officials are increasingly coming up against young people who have no respect for officials, and are prepared to challenge what they consider to be clap-trap.

However, only when officials are elected and controlled by the working class or by their representatives will such manoeuvres, and in some areas corruption, be eradicated. But until we achieve that control over bureaucrats (or replace them altogether), it is essential that comrades take up the plight of such tenants and help them organise into a real power that can face authority—the labour movement.

Yours fraternally  
Ian Warrick  
Reading LPYS

## Thatcher's menace

Dear Fellow Workers

A clear indication of what we have in store for us if the Tories win the forthcoming general election was given by Willie Whitelaw (Conservative deputy leader) in the *Director*, the magazine of the Institute of Directors.

"The Chancellor's latest increases in planned public expenditure are highly dangerous; a Conservative government will steadily reduce spending except on the defence of the realm and the protection of our citizens from lawlessness and help for the genuinely needy." The Tories are clearly afraid that increased expenditure on social services such as health and education would lead to the emergence of a stronger and more politically aware working class, which would be more active in voicing its views on the evils of capitalism in our society.

It is for the same reason, to further the cause of class oppression, that spending on the police and armed services would be increased under a Thatcher government; both have in the past shown their effectiveness as means of breaking strikes and generally making sure that public discontent does not manifest itself in 'dangerous' forms.

Furthermore, the phrase 'genuinely needy' infers that the Conservatives would not tolerate "scroungers" on the Welfare State, such as the many people thrown onto the dole queues by the vicious profit-motivated capitalist system.

Yours fraternally  
David Rutt  
Treasurer, Ruislip-Northwood LPYS

## Spot the difference

Dear Comrades

I recently took part in a deputation from Huddersfield Trades Council to see the Tory Mayor of Kirklees.

Two years ago the National Front held a meeting in Dewsbury Town Hall where one of the speakers was a member of the notorious Ku Klux Klan. A few months ago Kirklees NUPE "blacked" a National Front meeting on council property in Batley, and supported a picket outside, only to find that a council official literally broke into the hall to allow the meeting to take place! Trade unionists in Kirklees have had just about enough of this, and the deputation was intended to pressurise the council to ban the National Front from council property.

We were ushered into an anti-chamber and plied with tea and biscuits while waiting for the Mayor to arrive. Several of the comrades had had to take time off work to attend and some weren't sure they'd get paid.

The Mayor came in on the dot of four and sat down. He looked across at the Trades Council secretary and said,

"well, how is trade then?" Our secretary looked a bit puzzled, and muttered something about attendance at Trades Council meetings.

A few minutes later the Mayor again said, "You are to do with trade, aren't you?" Our secretary's jaw dropped and he said, "No we're not. We're to do with trade unions!" Embarrassed silence, with no one looking more pained than the Mayor's secretary and his Chief Executive!

Our illustrious Tory Mayor evidently thought we were from the Chamber of Commerce. No wonder he looked surprised to hear us arguing against the National Front. Needless to say, he went on to tell us that he didn't agree with anything we'd said, but that he'd "pass our views on to the appropriate sub-committee."

I wonder whether we'd have got the tea and biscuits if he'd realised who the Trades Council were?

Yours fraternally  
Paul Gerrard  
Huddersfield West CLP  
and NUT.

## Down with capitalism

Dear Comrades

I am at present working for a local bakery during my summer vacation, before going to start an engineering apprenticeship at British Aerospace in September, and I am appalled by the childish behaviour of the bakery management.

Instead of carrying on the day-to-day business of making more profits to fill their fat bank accounts, they persist in trying to bully a small minority of staff (hygiene staff) out of having their tea breaks in the changing rooms. We wouldn't mind so much if everybody was banned from the locker rooms, but it is just the hygiene staff and we're the ones who clean it out anyway!

If this was a socialist society none of this silly behaviour would happen.

Down with capitalism! Up with socialism!  
Yours faithfully  
Patrick Hawthorne  
About to join  
Bristol South LPYS

## Tory Bolsheviks

Dear Comrades

"The Scotsman", self-styled "Scotland's National Newspaper", recently reported that the ruling Tory group on Edinburgh District Council are to recommend that the workers' May Day holiday be celebrated...in October!

A gesture to the Russian Revolution, perhaps?

Yours fraternally  
Lewis Matheson  
Edinburgh West LPYS

## Czech workers challenged bureaucracy

Dear Comrades

I was most interested to read the letter from Comrade Vince Smith of the New Communist Party which you published last week.

At the time of the Russian intervention, I was a member of the Communist Party and I supported the intervention for the same sort of reasons as Comrade Smith. I continued to hold this position for a period of time, especially in the debate which raged in the Party on this issue.

Now I am a supporter of the 'Militant'. One of the main factors which changed me was a realisation of the anti-Marxist lies and distortions of both the pro- and anti-intervention factions. Unfortunately it appears that Comrade Smith and his group have learnt nothing from the past ten years.

The Russians justified the intervention on the grounds of counter-revolutionary nationalist and capitalist elements at work both inside and outside the Czech CP, and of the threat of intervention by NATO forces. But nowhere can these people find any evidence.

Who were these nationalist and capitalist forces? Where

were the demands for a return to capitalism? What organisations were involved? The Russians 'discovered' arms dumps; arms in fact left over from the Second World War.

But in particular they cannot explain the mass movement of Czech workers, students and intellectuals, because to do so would destroy their whole argument. Such a movement, embracing the majority of the population, cannot be explained by plots and subversion.

This movement was in no way a move back towards capitalism. Rather the demands and programme raised instinctively by the masses were in the direction of genuine workers' democracy and management of industry and society.

Comrade Smith is even forced to half admit this in his last paragraph, but explains it away by a ludicrous reference to Lenin. Lenin could hardly have been a leader of the Russian revolution itself, if he had dismissed every demand for democratic control and reforms as 'counter-revolutionary'. No one reading Lenin's explanation of the importance of workers' control and demo-

cracy in a planned economy and the threat posed by bureaucratisation, can doubt where he would have stood on the '68 movements in Czechoslovakia.

Again Comrade Smith makes no attempt to explain how, after twenty years of socialism, the CP and the working class became counter-revolutionary. He is only left with his plots and subversion, which smacks somewhat of the Labour Party right wing he mentions in his first paragraph.

I would presume that Comrade Smith supports the Novotny regime which preceded the '68 events. How did this regime, which faithfully followed Moscow, allow this situation to develop?

But the lie to Comrade Smith's arguments comes after the Russian intervention. Many Russian troops had to be withdrawn when they realised they had been sent in against Czech workers and not against fascists or imperialists as they had been told. Demonstrations of support for the Czech workers occurred in East Germany, Yugoslavia, Poland and in Russia itself.

Practically every section of

the Czech working class came out in demonstrations against the Russian intervention. Some sections of the print-workers even produced leaflets for the Russian troops which contained a class appeal.

But the Russians themselves gave the game away in the treaty they concluded with the Czech leaders in October 1968. For this treaty gave the protection of Czechoslovakia's borders against imperialism to the Czech army. What then was the role of the thousands of Russian troops and tanks? This number would hardly have been necessary to deal with secretly-organised groups of nationalists and counter-revolutionaries.

The only satisfactory answer is the one which has been consistently and thoroughly explained in the pages of the 'Militant': that the mass movement of the Czech workers and students was against Stalinist bureaucracy and in favour of real workers' democracy and socialism.

Fraternally  
Nick Brookes  
Southampton Labour Party

## The real causes

Dear Comrades

To claim, as Vince Smith does, in a recent letter to 'Militant', that 20 years after "Czechoslovakia became a socialist state" reactionary nationalists and CIA stooges could gain control of the Communist Party, seems to me a mockery of the idea of socialism. Any thinking worker, as many at the time did, would judge that such 'socialism' had been tested and failed.

Comrade Smith sees the necessity of defending the advance of the nationalised economies against capitalism, as 'Militant' does, but allows that to distort everything else. He very practically recognises the 'problems' of socialist

construction. But it must be said that Marxism rejects the idea of 'magic wands' or miraculous transformations to socialism of the kind he believes took place in Czechoslovakia.

1948 heralded a transitional stage between capitalism and socialism. The potential of Czechoslovakia was enormous because it was the most industrialised country in Eastern Europe. The reasons why that economy and those of the entire Soviet bloc, failed to develop the material basis of socialism, abolishing scarcity, have to be explained, not just dismissed with an airy gesture—"human error".

The blind scramble of each Stalinist state to separately

develop heavy industry and the failure to develop modern, capital intensive methods, has a social basis in the parasitical rule of the nationalist bureaucracies. It is not an accident.

Failure to take the economy forward produced pressures from below which threw Dubcek forward as a 'reformer' and split the bureaucracy; in its turn igniting the simmering discontent of all sections of Czech society.

The comrade is right about one thing: 'Dubcek did not see'. The need to find some way forward for the stagnating economy forced a section of the bureaucracy to edge away from their Russian mentors, only to be caught in

the vice of an awakened working class and the terror of their old friends at the threat this movement posed to them.

Marxism is based on the interests and experience of the working class. We have a duty to analyse scrupulously the bitter experience of the Czech workers.

'Conspiracy', 'mistakes' and distortion of opponents' views (as in accusing 'Militant' of siding with the Labour 'right wing') are no part of the Marxist method. They will not aid the movement to understand the driving forces of history.

Yours fraternally  
Ian Ilett  
Dulwich Labour Party

# OVER £300 FROM CAMP COLLECTION

We are now into the first week of the 'September Special Appeal' and already supporters up and down the country have responded by making special efforts to raise the £20,000 we are aiming for.

This week's total of £1,314.38 is again double the previous week's, and if it continues to double week by week we will have no trouble in finding the money we so urgently need.

Reports are coming in about special fund-raising events taking place in different areas including sponsored 'somethings', socials/discos, jumble sales etc. Special readers' meetings are also planned in some areas to discuss the history of the 'Militant' and the way it should go forward. Hopefully the collections at these meetings will help push the black lines further along the chart.

The total from **Eastern Region** this week was £63.78. A barbecue in Peterborough raised £3.10, the sale of second hand Militants (also Peterborough) made £6.20, R Walsh (Stevenage) donated £3.50, 'saving on holiday expenses' £10.31, P Flatman (Ipswich) £1.50, R Maddox (also Ipswich) £1 and the sale of homemade drinks in Southend £2.

£130.91 came in from **Hants & IOW** and was made up of: 'food and drink' (IOW) £2, Southampton tax rebates and special appeal £72.92 and a beer festival £13.80, plus tax rebates from Dorset £8. The rest of the money was for paper donations, small donations etc.

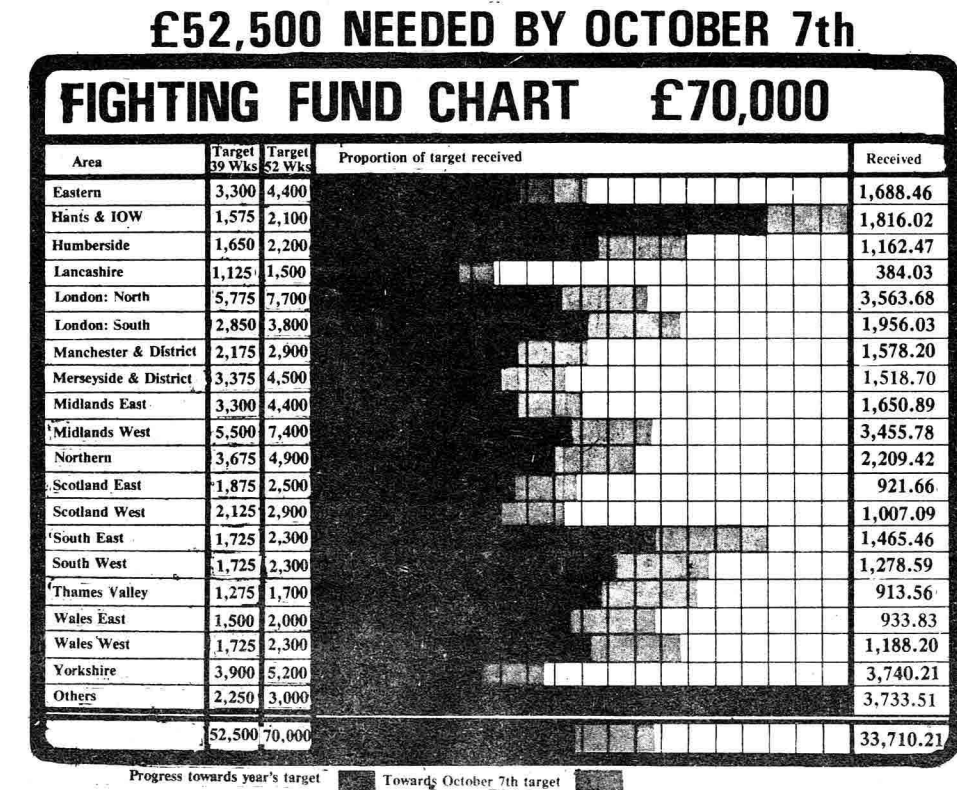
Only £1.07 came in from

**Humberside**, however, and this was from an anonymous reader in Scarborough.

From **North London** we received £121.28. The Wobeys of Hackney sent their usual £2 plus an extra £5 for the special appeal. North Kensington Militant readers sent £2, S Wright (Southgate) donated £1, sale of sandwiches and drinks at the London Regional sports day raised £4.40, a discussion group in Walthamstow made £2.62, 'premises appeal' in Southgate raised £24.28 (including £2.37 from Southgate LPYS). J Turner (St Pancras) sent £1, and 'anon' (West London) donated his tax rebate of £20.

**South London** sent in a total of £82.28, including a collection at Croydon discussion group £5.50, 'special appeal' (Croydon) £5 and 'raised at the Thamesmead Fair' £56.70.

From **Manchester and District** we received £32.75 which came in as 'miscellaneous'. **Merseyside** sent in a total of £59.50 including P Holt (POEU Liverpool) £2, R Davies (Sefton) £1 and J Bradshaw (Crosby LPYS) £1. A collection held at the end of a meeting of Bootle LPYS raised £2.75, supporters in Warrington sent in £8.95 towards the special appeal



## that's how to build the Militant

and special appeal to Birkenhead, Wallasey and Wirral LP members raised a total of £43.80.

The sum total from **East Midlands** this week was £23.74. J McGuigan (Notts NUPE) donated £1.30, S Ryder (Notts NUM) sent £3, M Bradbury (Mansfield) donated £5, and 'speakers travelling expenses' Nottingham £2.45. From the **West Midlands** we received £83.31 including three Rover Solihull supporters £2, selling German cigarettes for English tea bags (!) £1.20 and 'misc' from Birmingham of £20.94.

**Northern Region** sent in £80.39. This includes special and premises appeal in Blyth £7, J Brown (Chester-le-Street CLP) £1, C Marshall (Wallsend LPYS) £1, E Bennet (Wallsend LP) £1, Wallsend LPYS £2.52, a Marxist discussion group in Hartlepool £1.70 and 'selling tickets' at the Reading festival (Teeside) £11.

**Scotland East** sent in a total of £50.88. J McCallion (Dundee) donated £1.76, P Lockhart (Dunfermline) £1, a Militant folk night in Edinburgh raised £25 and premises appeal in Stirlingshire £17.25. A total of £55.45 came in from **Scotland West** and was all for the special appeal.

**South East** sent in a total of £26.80 of which £25 came in from **four unemployed supporters** and the rest from the sale of Militant 'Unity' badges. From **South West** we received £56, made up as follows: R Hartill £5, and M Starr £2 (both from Bristol South LPYS), a Marxist discussion group in Bristol £2, a collection at two Marxist discussion groups in Gloucester £2.02, K Bessant (Cheltenham) £1 and F Bailey (Bideford) £1.

**Thames Valley** sent in £2.27 which was a collection of pennies and half-pennies from Reading and **East Wales** sent in a total of £28.75. This all came from Caerphilly and included a social evening (£14), a local raffle (£12.04) and 'selling scrap' £2.

£338.96 came in from **West Wales** this week. This included the money from the Militant readers' meeting at the South Wales Summer Camp which raised £334.06 with a promise of a further £112 to come in from IOUs, and Port Talbot supporters £2.

Last but not least is **Yorkshire** which this week raised £69.56. A barbecue in Barnsley made £10, the 'sale of stone slabs' in Huddersfield raised £5, '50' Club in Wakefield £12.60, a clothing

club in Leeds £2, L Simpson (ASTMS Sheffield) donated £10.40 and other individual donations from Sheffield included A Rymell (G&MWU) £1 and W Ong (AUEW) £1. We also received £4 for the premises appeal from Hillsborough LP members.

The **Others** total went up by £6.70, made up of extras on subscription to the paper.

Many thanks to all those comrades who donated this week and who helped to organise fund-raising events. We know that there is still money to come in from the Swansea Summer Camp and money will be coming in from the Militant readers' meeting at the TUC Conference. So there is no reason why this week's total should not be doubled again next week.

No area should be left behind: if others can do it, you can too! Match the best efforts this week, explain to every one that good ideas are nothing without the resources to back them up.

**The reward will be a bigger and better Militant, arming the labour movement with a fighting socialist programme.**

By Alison Rudd

# INTERNATIONAL DEBATE AT SUMMER CAMP

## Amid glorious sunshine 'Militant's' August summer camp was held in Horton, Gower.

The camp was given an international character by the attendance of comrades from Spain and Sri Lanka.

The main political lectures centred around the history of Bolshevism.

In the first lecture, Alan Woods gave a vivid account of

the rise of Marxism in Russia and the development of the Bolshevik Party, leading up to the 1905 Revolution.

The second, on Saturday night, was led off by Ted Grant on the Bolsheviks' preparing for power and the February and

October Revolutions. Excellent

discussions followed both.

After the discussions, a disco was held in the marquee. Our resident chef prepared a superb chicken curry which everyone enjoyed.

On Sunday morning Comrade Vasu from Sri Lanka was met with a very warm reception when he spoke on the repression against members of the LSSP.

Vasu outlined the support the LSSP has amongst the railway workers union and the civil servants. More and more workers are being won over to the banner of Marxism.

This lecture was followed, in the evening by Peter Taaffe,

Editor of the Militant, speaking on Bolshevism in power from 1917-1924, the rise of Stalinism and the struggle of the Left Opposition.

He dealt with the isolation of the revolution and the failure of the working class in Western Europe to come to power due to the bankruptcy of social democratic leaders.

After the lectures, on the social side, a children's fancy dress was held, followed by the final of the 'Master Marxist' quiz, compered by Comrade Dave Stevenson who came fully prepared in his frogman's outfit!

The prize was a custard pie

in the face.

Numerous competitions were held. Comrades from different areas sang traditional socialist songs with everyone joining in.

On Monday morning Ted Grant summed up the lectures on the question of Marxism in Britain—what it is and how to build it.

The whole of the camp was summed up by the appeal by Peter Taaffe for the Militant fighting fund—which raised a huge £441.06 (including IOUs), an enormous achievement by the 150 comrades who attended the camp.

# ADS

RATES

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

## NOTICES

DEBATE

'Which way for the workers and peasants of India?' Roger Silverman (Militant International Correspondent, Author of 'The Coming Revolution in India') and Gurpal S Johal (Indian Youth Association). 7.30pm Wednesday 13th September at the People's Hall, Heathcoat Street, Nottingham.

**DERBY Militant Public Meeting.** 'The Coming Revolution in India'. Hear Roger Silverman at the Cambridge Hotel, Dairy House Road, Derby. 7.30 pm. Thursday 14th September.

**HARTLEPOOL Marxist Discussion Meetings.** September 17th—'Is the Soviet Union socialist?' October 1st—'Fascism: what it is and how to fight it'. October 15th—'Liberation Struggles in Africa'. The meetings start at 7.30pm on Sunday at 18 Catherine's Street, Headlands, Hartlepool.

**STOCKTON Trade Union Discussion Group Meetings.** September 18th—'Is the Soviet Union socialist?' October 2nd—'Fascism: what it is and how to fight it'. October 16th—'Liberation Struggles in Africa'. The meetings start at 7.30pm on Monday night, upstairs in the Spread Eagle, Dovecote Street, Stockton.

**WALLSEND Marxist Discussion Group.** 'Do Wages Cause Inflation?' Speaker: Dave Cotterill. 20th September, 8pm. Stanley Arms, North Shields.

## Classified

**STAFFORD Labour Party Young Socialists** is an active body of young workers, school students and unemployed youth. We urge you to join us in our fight against this rotten system and take up the local campaign against racialism. Our meetings are every two weeks at the Castle Tavern, 7.30 pm, or you can ring us at Stafford 53050. 22 Amblefield Way, Parkside.

**BOTHWELL Labour Party Young Socialists Public Meeting.** 'Unemployment and the fight for the 35 hour week'. Speakers: Adam Livingston (POEU), Jim McDonald (T&G WU SHOP STEWARD), Duncan Livingston (AUEW Caterpillar). Tuesday 12th September, 7.30pm at Tammochside Labour Party rooms, Old Edinburgh Rd, Viewpark (beside Caterpillar).

**SOUTHEND LPYS Demonstration against racism and fascism.** Assemble 2pm, Labour Hall, Cambridge Rd, Southend. Saturday 16th September. After demo, public meeting with Phil Frampton, LPYS National Chairman speaking.

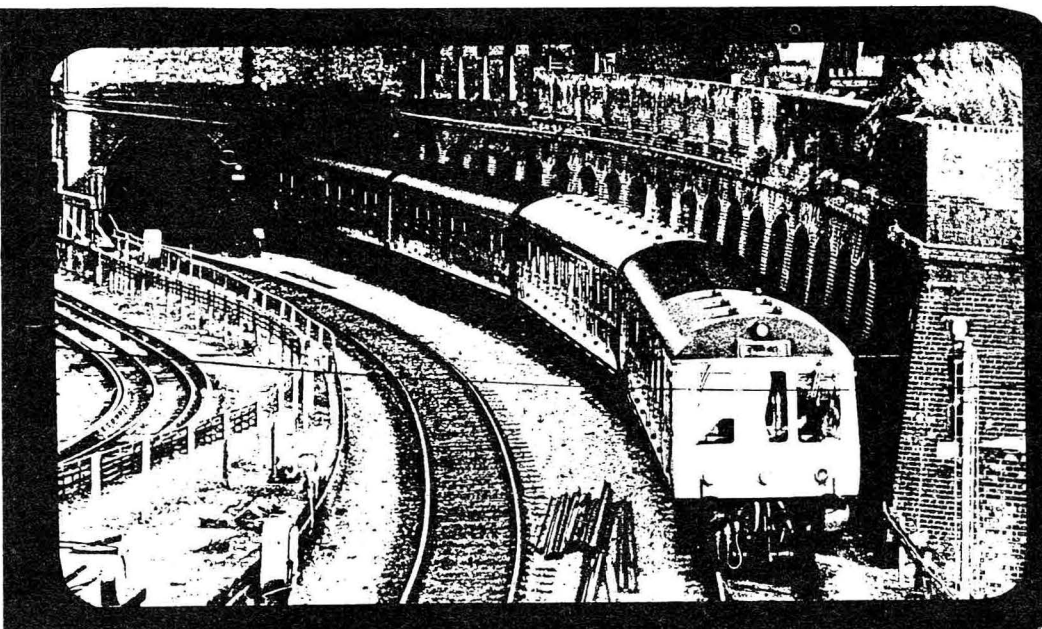
**HORNSEY Labour Party and London LPYS Regional Committee** present 'Fountain' and Disco. Saturday 16th September, 8pm. West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road, N.15. (200 yards from Turnpike Lane tube) 40 pence entry.

**SWAPO rally to commemorate Namibia Day.** Speakers from the Liberation Movements, Bob Wright (AUEW), Jim Layzell (Co-op Political Committee), new film on Namibia. 2.30pm Saturday 9th September. Co-op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Rd N7 (free). Followed by **Social Evening** (same place) 8pm. Namibian music, dancing/disco food, etc. Admission £1 (proceeds to Kassinga emergency appeal). All welcome!

A group photo of the camp is available from R Sewell, 99 Penderry Road, Penlan, Swansea. Size 6½ ins × 4½ ins at 50p each (inc postage).

By Brian Lewis (Swansea LPYS)

# TRANSPORT WORKERS BEAT OFF TORY ATTACKS



**The Tory Greater London Council have been defeated again, this time by the determination and solidarity of the Underground station staff.**

Their plans to slash the bus services have already been set back by the resistance of the bus men. Their stated aim was to cut the London Transport budget by £8 million this year. Together with the London Transport management, they decided to take on station staff first in the hope of a quick victory.

Without any consultation with the NUR, all overtime and rest-day working, which these low paid staff depend on, was cut out. The GLC claimed this was to save £400,000.

This attack caused chaos on London Transport. At two mass meetings called by the NUR, station staff agreed by

an overwhelming majority to ban all overtime and rest-day working completely and refuse to undertake higher grade duties, and planned token one-day strikes to start from 7th September.

This industrial action showed up LTE management's cynical running of the job on the cheap. They depend on the minimum of staff, who have been forced to work vast amounts of overtime to make up their pay.

Because of the industrial action many stations, sometimes over a stretch of ten

By Martin Elvin (Stratford ASLEF)

miles, had to be closed down in the late evening, or didn't open in the morning, so leaving passengers stranded or unable to get to work. Quite correctly, staff pointed the finger of blame for this disruption at the Tory GLC.

After three weeks of this action, with the workers as determined as ever, the Tories have now been forced to back down. One young ticket-collector at Tufnell Park commented: "Obviously I am glad that the strike is called off. It has proved that management can't just walk

over us—we know that now."

This battle has been won, but the war is still on. The GLC will definitely try again. Once again they must be clearly warned that any attempt to cut the transport services will meet the solid resistance of the transport unions.

The sort of unity that was shown in the ranks of the NUR and by sections of of London busmen in their fight, needs to be linked together firmly in a united campaign throughout LTE. We must demand:

- ★ Rail and bus workers' unity in action.
- ★ No cuts in services; no to any redundancies.
- ★ A £70 minimum wage for lowest paid, with proportional increases throughout the industry.
- ★ Reduce working week to 35 hours, with no loss of pay.
- ★ Filling of all vacancies.
- ★ A massive programme of spending to renew the decrepit London bus services.
- ★ Honour the Labour GLC pledge of a free transport service.

## SEAL HOUSE PRESS— Where is the NEB cash going?

Eric Smith, Chairman, Seal House Press joint union action committee, Liverpool, spoke to Richard Knights, for 'Militant', about the threatened closure of another NEB-backed firm.

**Richard Knights: What is the position with the threatened closure?**

**Eric Smith:** Out of a workforce of 95, there will be 92 redundancies, should the firm go to the wall. The firm have countered with a claim that they would only make 36 redundancies, if an offer of alternative work is taken up, either at Leemans in Neston, or still in Seal House Press—in a Litho machine room on double day shifts with only 18 people.

The others would all be moving to Neston again on double day shifts, but the terms offered would incorporate a drop in the basic rate

of £6 per week. With working the double day shift we would get a shift premium that would leave us better off by about £1: that's with working all the unsocial hours.

**RK: What happened to the money given to the firm by the NEB?**

**ES:** Originally there was a loan application of £600,000 made to purchase Leemans, which was in the hands of the liquidator at the time. The plan submitted had to come in line with Peter Shore's plan for the development of the Inner City Areas. The plan was accepted by the Department of Industry, on the basis of purchasing Leemans and their subsidiary firm in Wallasey, and creating with those two firms about 30-35 new jobs in Seal House Press.

£400,000 was advanced last February. They purchased Leemans from the Liquidator and some work started in Seal House Press to accommodate these new positions, moving over from Neston and Wallasey.

However, they have com-

pletely reversed the policy. They have got the money, purchased Leemans and now they are planning to shut down Seal House Press, move out of the Inner City Area.

**RK: What is the mood of the membership in the plant?**

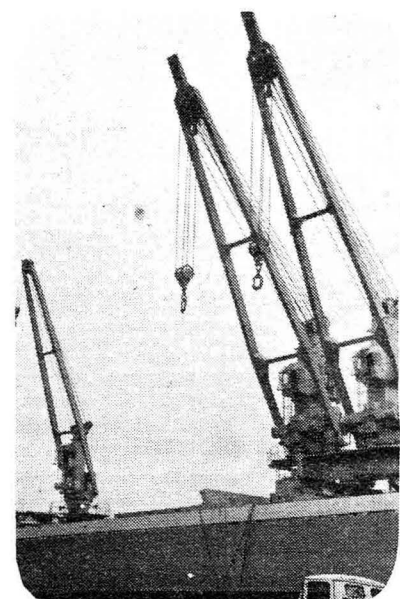
**ES:** Every week we make a point of having a meeting, usually on a Friday morning to involve the night staff. Everything is moving very quickly at the moment, so it is important to bring them up to date and answer any queries.

We have a very good discussion, we always end up with a vote of confidence in the way things are going. The vote at last week's meeting was overwhelming. They are right behind the union officials and the Action Committee.

**RK: What support have you had from other members?**

**ES:** We would like to thank the various printing firms throughout the country, who have assisted us in the national blacking of jobs which are recognised as being our jobs.

## SOUTHAMPTON DOCKS— SAFETY VICTORY



A victorious eight-day strike over management's attitude to safety procedures has been staged by 1,900 registered dock workers in Southampton.

Two dockers refused to operate the overworked giant straddle carriers at the container terminal, because the ladders were greasy, and the machine was not in good mechanical order. Shop stewards and safety reps suggested the machine should be put to one side, for a viewing committee.

Management refused this request, then made a unilateral decision on what is safe, and how the Health and Safety at Work Act

should be interpreted and applied. In their greed for more profit, they wanted to talk about increasing productivity only.

British Transport Docks Board, the employers, tried to discipline the men. This resulted in a protest strike by 150 other drivers. By the weekend all the dockers were out in support, bringing cargo operations to a complete standstill. Although the strike was going to be made official, union officers were slow to take action.

Management realised there would be no retreat by the rank and file, they acquiesced, retracted their previous statements, and

issued a signed document. They intend to recognise the H&SWA which becomes law in October, and will honour the local joint policy statement on Health and Safety.

The working class must be vigilant, until they are in complete control, and be prepared to take industrial action against employers, including those in charge of nationalised industries, who try to claw back all the gains secured by the working people in past battles.

By H C Williams  
(Registered Dock Worker, Southampton)

BY ALLAN HUNTER [West Leeds Labour Party]

## working in the union

I am a member of the Yorkshire Society of Textile Craftsmen. In 1977 I stood for the

national committee and the candidates were not allowed to address the meeting prior to voting. Thus the elected members were the

ones who were preferred by the hierarchy. I was defeated.

At present the society has an annual conference. Unfortunately this is not a delegate conference but just a joint meeting of the various branch committees. The rank and file don't even have a report back from this conference at our twice-yearly meetings.

This year I again stood for the committee. After several members had shown their discontent, the powers that be had to let the candidates speak to the meeting, although we were restricted to keep the speeches 'non political'.

I stood on the following programme—£60 minimum wage; 35-hour week with no loss of pay; retirement at 60; modern technology to be used to benefit the working

class; for one textile union; for a democratic annual conference to discuss policy and to endorse or reject the wage negotiations. I again was defeated but took great heart in that I doubled my vote from the previous year.

There are too many small unions in the textile industry—my own union has only 971 members, 262 of these being retired members. A small union is not equipped with muscle to resist short time working, falling living standards, redundancies etc. The workforce has shrunk from 201,000 in 1955 to its present 59,000 production workers.

What is needed is one union of all textile workers, a democratic body with a fighting leadership that is subject to recall.

# WESTERNS

## -TUC must back nationalisation

**We have to join the Labour Party—you've got to fight from within the movement.**

—Westerns Action Committee members tell 'Militant'

**Question: What's the mood of the men now?**

**Kevin Scully:** The mood is good at the moment. It has definitely improved since we went down to London. The lobby of the TUC was such a success it bucked everyone up a bit. Every day there are about 30 men on the picket line, and new people are turning up.

**Des Billington:** The lobby of the Laird Group was good, there was a good response from the people in London. Some of the workers in the Laird Group Headquarters bought our badges, workers refused to enter the Laird Group building to do work.

**What is your attitude towards nationalisation?**

**KS:** There are several options open in this yard. We don't have to just stick to shiprepairing, we could move into the oil rig business, making pipelines etc. These projects could be developed—they'll be drilling for oil soon in the Irish Sea.

**What role did Solartex play in your closure?**

**KS:** They receive telexes from shipping companies, for quotes on repairs for various ships. They give the quotes for the different companies which they happen to own. They shut us down in the end because they said "our" quotes were too high. But all along it was them giving out the quotes. We believe that the trade unions should be planning the work.

**What will your next step be?**

**DB:** All we can do now is to keep leafletting the factories, to get support and donations. The main thing we are building up to is the TUC next week. We'll be spending two days down there; we've got quite a few meetings arranged, one with Dave Basnett.

The response locally from the full time officials hasn't been very good. The Confed are supporting us unofficially but they have got to have a meeting to confirm this. As far as we are concerned, this picket line should be official. We hope more factories will be responding to our appeal.

**KS:** The response so far has been quite good. From the LPYS we've had a few bob, and letters of support from all round the country and the same from factories. The Labour Parties locally have been very good. We have also been asking the men to join the Labour Party.

**Why have you called for this?**

**KS:** Well you can't fight outside the movement, you have got to fight from within. I think most of the lads realise this. Before the dispute broke out we were only active within the yard.

**What lessons would you draw from the dispute?**

**DB:** It opens your eyes to see once you are involved in a dispute...sometimes you don't get the backing you deserve.

**KS:** We have found that you

must stick together, and get the support of all the trade union movement. However, many of the full-time officials seem a law unto themselves, as we are seeing now with the position at Leylands. They seem to have moved away from the shopfloor.

**DB:** With all the closures we have seen on Merseyside it does call into question the role of the full-time officials. We would say it is a question of fighting in the branches. It is no good just joining a union and saying 'that's it': you must attend your branch meetings.

That way you can put pressure on the officials to do their job. Officials should be on the pay of the members they represent. However, the G&MWU have been very good in paying for us to go to Eastbourne and London. If every union had done the same we would be in a better position.

**What do you think of the 'Militant'?**

**KS:** I think it's good reading. Perhaps there is too much sometimes on racialism. But with the threat that the NF represent it has got to be there.

**DB:** The coverage on Westerns has been very good. The people involved in it have been very good help to us. The lads on the line have said they are pleased at the help that has been given.



Pickets outside Westerns demand full support from their MP, Edmund Dell

## A battle for jobs

Over 80 workers attended the latest public meeting called by the Western Shiprepair Action Committee.

They heard Des Billington, Action Committee Chairman, report on the lobby of the TUC General Council. He called for official support from the Confed—a question which must be taken up urgently in the Confed Unions.

Des reported that various cowboy private firms had shown an interest in the yard. But he pointed out that firstly a private buyer would not re-employ 650 workers, and secondly there was no guarantee that a private owner would not in the future do the same as the Laird group have done. Des demanded nationalisation, not another private owner.

Kevin Scully read out messages of support from

**By Alan Runwick**  
(Wallasey LPYS)

shipyards, trade unions, Labour Parties and LPYS branches. These have really lifted the men, and every 'Militant' reader should press for letters of support and especially financial donations from their organisations.

### Labour Party

Tony Mulhearn from Liverpool District Labour Party, said his constituency party had submitted an emergency resolution demanding nationalisation of Westerns to the Labour Party Conference. This too must be taken up by other Parties to force the government to act. Tony explained the reasons for the government policies, and

urged the trade union activists present to join the Party and fight for change.

The final speaker was Richard Venton from Birkenhead LPYS, who said the commitment to defend the 80 apprenticeships in the yard was vital, with 3,536 young people out of work in the Wirral area.

Winding up the meeting, chairman Arthur Parker of the Action Committee thanked the LPYS for their support throughout the dispute. As Des had said earlier, "People say they're agitators, they lead you on. But the only way they've led us is the right way."

This fight for jobs can be won. Every trade unionist must give full backing to the Westerns men, who are struggling not just for themselves but the whole working class on Merseyside.

## Scottish teachers fight cuts

Some Scottish schoolchildren, returning after the summer holidays, were sent home almost immediately as a result of teachers' action over composite class sizes.

These teachers were following the advice of the largest Scottish teachers' union, the EIS, to refuse to teach composite classes of over 25 children following the EIS AGM which had voted overwhelmingly in favour of a motion along these lines.

Composite classes contain children of more than one age group. They have been common practice in small country schools for many years but have been introduced in urban schools in the last couple of years, a direct step to economise as a result of the cuts in public expenditure.

### Jobless

There were between 2,000 and 3,000 such classes in Scotland last session meaning a loss of 300 to 400 teaching

jobs and saving £1 per year. The teachers' contract in Scotland stipulates that classes must not be greater than 33 pupils, but no reference is made to age groups within those classes. Attempts to have the 25 maximum for composite classes written into the contract have to date been ignored by management.

This summer, 1,800 new teachers qualified at Scottish Colleges of Education. Few of them found a teaching job. This latest move by Scottish teachers is a reflection of their anger at this situation.

### Suspensions

Teachers, mainly in the Strathclyde region, have been suspended without pay by the local authorities for following union advice. The EIS National Executive must now put into effect the threat of strike action in support of these

teachers. Unfortunately, because of the original advice, many teachers have found themselves in an isolated position. All-out strike action in regions where teachers have been suspended must now be taken to show the authorities that we mean business.

Already Parents' Associations have pledged their support for the action of the EIS. The educational value of mixed age and ability grouping is not at question in this dispute. We are concerned with the issue of unemployment and the severe strain on teachers and pupils at a time when class sizes, in general, could be reduced to 25 and remedial education could be provided for the thousands of children who require it.

Composite classes are being used to save money. Instead of cutting educational expenditure in order to prop up an economic system in crisis, the government should seize the golden opportunity of the falling birth rate and surplus teachers to provide the kind of education system we, as socialists, have been fighting for, for years.

**Jane McVeigh**  
(EIS Renfrewshire Committee of Management, personal capacity)

## Enfield Mills

### WORKERS OFFERED 2.6%

You may not think much of the 5% wage norm. The workers at Enfield Rolling Mills (part of the Delta group) in Birmingham aren't too impressed with it either. But what would you say to a 2.6% wage increase?

That's what they have been offered for their annual rise. It's certainly a far cry from the £15 across the board claim that stewards submitted on behalf of the 200 production workers—all members of the T&GWU. A claim that, taking into account the fall in living standards while wage restraint has operated, is hardly excessive.

Management gave the usual reply—they couldn't afford, and anyway they were bound by the government's 5% guideline. But then came the bombshell—from the 5% would have to be deducted the cost of the new night premiums and overtime rates agreed nationally under the Minimum Earnings Level (MEL). This amounted to a 2.4% increase, so all that was

left was the measly 2.6%.

Just one in four of the workers do nights and would stand to gain anything from the deal, and then only £6 or £7. The other workers who now only earn between £43 and £56, would get increases ranging from £1.11 to £1.53, and that's before stoppages.

Needless to say, that offer was completely unacceptable. The stewards immediately reported back to a mass meeting which unanimously threw out the offer and by a two thirds majority voted to walk out there and then. That was August 22nd. Since then the strikers have had no approach from management at all: they refuse to talk till the workers come back in.

This is the first major strike ever at the factory, but the workers were so incensed at the management's offer—"an insult to our intelligence" they called it—that they had no alternative but to take to the picket lines.

### Trade Union Pamphlet MILITANT TEACHER

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## NUM OFFICIALS- MATCH MEMBERS' PAY NOT MANAGEMENTS'

By  
Meirion  
Evans  
NUM



Mick McGahey and Lawrence Daly at the TUC Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

The reaction of miners at pit level to the NUM National Executive's decision last Wednesday to give the union's full time officials wage increases over the next three years to bring them in line with senior management of the National Coal Board, was one of anger and disgust.

Our members have only just had reported to them the decision of the National

Annual Conference—that contributions to the national union would increase from

0.5p per £ to 0.75p. Having also been told that the union has had to sell off £¼m worth of shares to cover cash-flow problems, many were prepared to accept such an increase but at the same time were very critical of rules which allowed next year's conference to be held in Jersey!

Only weeks after pleading poverty, how on earth can the NEC justify full-time officials' wages being brought in line with NCB management?

Full-time officials are

representatives of the members, not of the NCB. Arguments used "that we must be on a par with the people we negotiate with" do not hold water. Lodge officials negotiate every day with local management, that is their job. But what would the rank and file say if the Lodge chairman insisted he be paid the same as the colliery manager? He'd be out straight away.

### Remote

"An increase in wages! They're on too much now, what with all the perks they get. It's about time we

brought them down to earth."

"If we think Gormley and the right wing are bad now, God help us when they are getting over £250 a week."

These are the reactions of two surface workers, the lowest paid men in the industry.

"The wage increases were agreed in private after a long argument about the need to get away from the annual embarrassment about how much miners' leaders should pay themselves." [The Times, 31 August].

Yes, the 260,000 miners would agree that there is a need to save them from that

embarrassment. Pay them the same as us.

Too many of our full-time officials are already far removed from the rank and file. Once they're elected they're in for life, and once there, when they're getting twice as much per week as the men they represent, never mind how sincere they are, they tend to become independent of us, remote from our day to day problems.

With the system of expenses of up to £32 a day for some officials, is it any wonder that in negotiations with the NCB they tend to forget the necessity and urgency of our demands?

Miners throughout the lodges must send letters of protest to their area executive committees and must prepare a campaign now for:

★ Election of all full-time officials subject to the right of recall.

★ For at least three-yearly elections for all union positions.

★ No officials to receive more than the NPLA rate.

★ For only legitimate expenses to be paid.

★ All fees paid to full-time officials for TV interviews, etc. to be put into union funds.

★ No part-time jobs for full-time officials.

★ A change in rule, so that National Annual Conference decides its next venue.

## BRITISH LEYLAND BATHGATE

### Back threatened workers

At the British Leyland truck and tractor plant at Bathgate, West Lothian, 1,500 AUEW members are on strike, and 2,500 other workers have been laid off for almost a month. A dispute over the rate to be paid to workers on 200 new machines has developed into a crucial trade union struggle.

The machine men have been negotiating since early 1977 for new rates for the new machines. When the unions signed a new productivity agreement in July 1978 they assured the workers that this would in no way affect their original claim.

The management however, immediately insisted that the productivity agreement gave them the right to impose new times on the 200 machines. They sent in a work-study man to time one of the workers, but the worker refused to sign that he accepted the time. He was suspended and all 1,500 AUEW members walked out.

Then the company turned this dispute into a much wider one, by laying off a further 2,500 men and insisted on exercising their right, under the productivity agreement, to certain guarantees before they would re-open the factory.

The guarantees that the

### By Roddy Donnelly

(AUEW Convenor, Munro and Miller, Broxburn, West Lothian.)

company are demanding are the right to re-study jobs once the operators have found short cuts and to speed up lines after, for example, a ten minute break, to make up lost time. This can only lead to more accidents, more working men being physically and mentally maimed.

Now, in a further escalation of the dispute, at a meeting on 4th September, the management have put the following points to the shop stewards' committee, to be complied with before they would allow a return to work: (a) Acceptance of wage restraint or guidelines laid down by the government. (b) Re-negotiation of all factory agreements.

### Union stand

They want the men to accept wage restraint before their own union or even the TUC. To re-negotiate all factory agreements while locked out is out of the question for any section of the trade union movement.

The AUEW will surely have to take a stand against this blackmail. Up to now, however, the union officials have

given no support whatsoever to their members, instead backing management's interpretation of the productivity agreement and ordering the men back to work.

Every appeal by the officials, however, has been overwhelmingly rejected. The men have remained 100 per cent solid despite the attacks of the company, their own union leaders and the press. It is a marvellous example of working class solidarity.

Equally encouraging is the support from the men laid off. The other workers obviously realise that if the machine men are defeated, management won't be long in speeding up other parts of the factory.

The real problem at Bathgate is bad management, the failure to get the right components to the right place at the right time. For example, the new truck that went on show in Amsterdam had to be adjusted manually after it came off the line.

The only way to sort out the problems of British Leyland is through workers' control and management. There is also an urgent need for the right of recall of all union officials. Only when these points are achieved will the workers of British Leyland be able to look ahead to the future with confidence.

## DEFEAT TORIES

continued from Page 1  
mand for an immediate 35 hour week without loss of pay. This measure, which would immediately create ¾ million jobs, would win massive support.

The labour movement has the power to eradicate unemployment immediately. But to do this it must be armed with a socialist programme to end capitalism and establish a sane, planned economy.

A step in this direction would be the nationalisation of the clearing banks and insurance companies, giant financial concerns which have a parasitic grip on the whole economy. This demand was enthusiastically accepted (6 to 1) by Labour Party Conference, and it is vital that it is included in the Manifesto.

Faced with the Tory threat, the majority of trade unionists have rallied to the Labour Party, the movement's political arm. Like the shop stewards of Western Ship Repairers (see interview, page 15) more and more active trade union members are joining their local Labour Party—to fight the Tories and to fight for socialist policies.

It is essential that the TUC leaders' proposed trade union committee for a Labour victory be given real muscle. Trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, and trades councils must be drawn into the election campaign. If the activists are mobilised, they will organise

mass support and convince millions of other workers of the need to vote Labour.

But the vital ingredient of a successful mass campaign is still a concrete programme which answers the workers' problems: A £70 minimum wage for all workers! A crash programme of public building to create jobs and provide much-needed houses, schools and hospitals!

The experience of the last four years has demonstrated that lasting improvements for working people are not possible within a diseased and decaying system. Only by

taking over the handful of monopolies which control industry—with minimum compensation on the basis of need—can the scourges of unemployment, poverty, and rotten conditions be eradicated.

A milk-and-water manifesto and a 'presidential' style campaign could open the door to a Tory government. Labour has always done best when it has fought on a radical programme, as in 1945 and the last election. A fighting socialist campaign can generate mass enthusiasm and guarantee victory.

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