

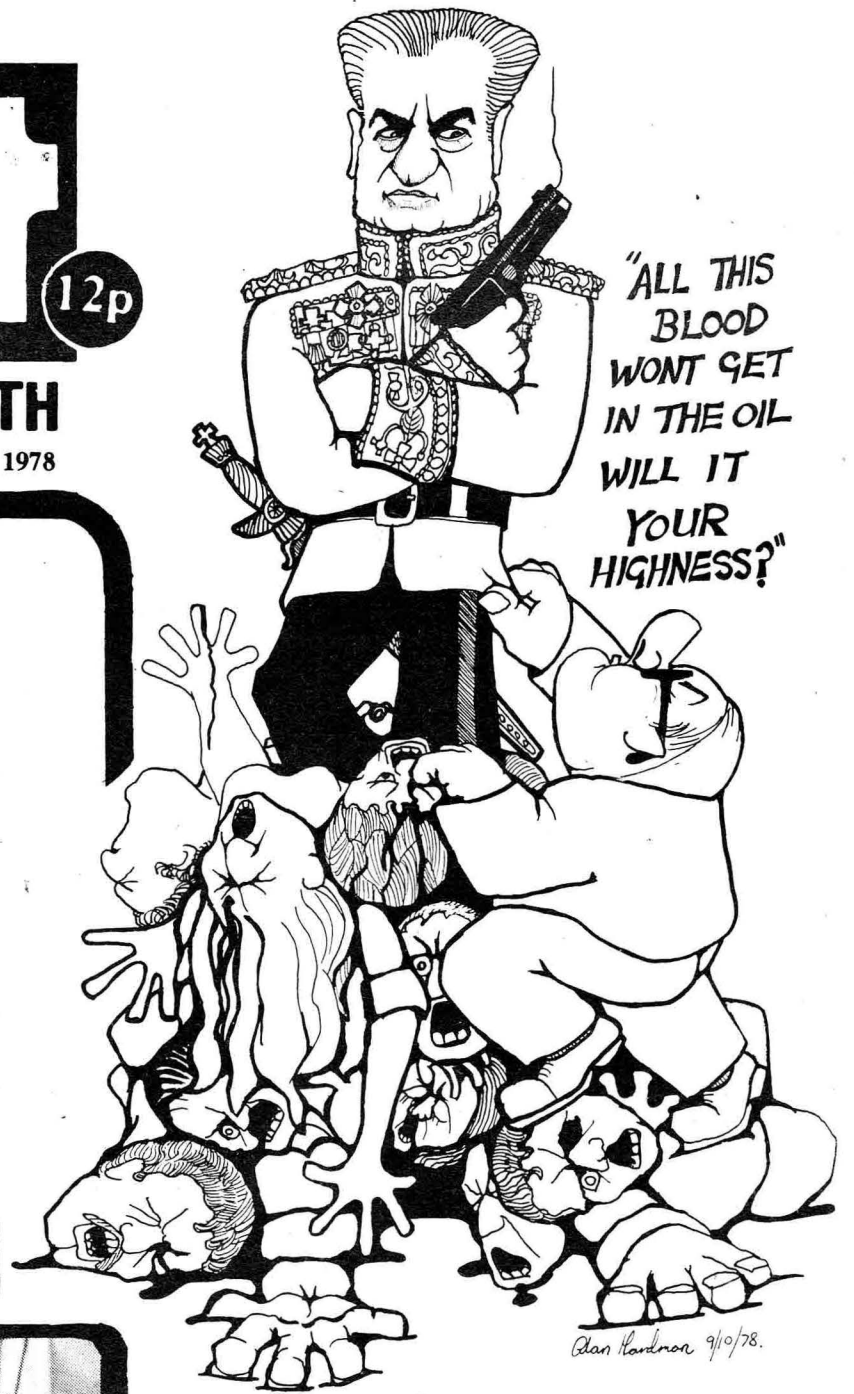
Militant

12p

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

ISSUE 427 13 OCTOBER 1978

FORD WORKERS SMASH 5%



"The prime minister, Mr Callaghan, yesterday sent a message to the Shah of Iran expressing the government's sympathy over the recent violence, and its hopes that Iran's progress towards democracy would not be interrupted." 'The Observer' [17th, September]

IRAN-RIPE FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

See pages 10 and 11

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE: Reports from Blackpool

See pages 2 & 3 and 8 & 9



Wednesday [11 October]: Thousands of Ford workers march from Tower Hill to Central Hall, Westminster

A success for Ford and BOC workers will be a victory for all workers fighting to restore fallen living standards.

If the Labour government is unsure about implementing the Labour Party Conference policy on

By Brent Kennedy

wages, the Ford workers are not!

This week the Ford workers and workers at British Oxygen have forced their employers to come out of hiding behind the government's skirts and negotiate justified wage rises over 5%. Phase Four is dead!

In pursuing free collective bargaining and busting the 5% guidelines, the T&G-WU, AUEW and other unions are

carrying out official Labour Party and TUC policy, as democratically decided by overwhelming majority votes at both conferences.

A victory for these workers will be a victory for all workers fighting to restore living standards, which over the last four years have

Continued on back page

A GREAT EFFORT

Just 9% short of the October target! That was the result of the special drive for £20,000 to take the next step in building the 'Militant'.

However the percentage of the three-quarter-year targets reached by supporters in different parts of the country varies enormously!

How did YOUR area do? Was it one of the four [all in the South] which went over their target? Was it one of the four [three in the South and one in the North] that came within 10%? Or was it one of the four which barely made two-thirds of their October target?

See the Fighting Fund chart on page 13 and then see what YOU can do this week to find the "missing" £5,000.

The efforts of the last few weeks have shown what can be done. It should be entirely possible to raise the next £23,000 before the year is out.

Rush cash to the 'Militant' offices NOW!

FIGHT LOW PAY WITH £60 MINIMUM

Alan Fisher of NUPE speaks to Militant



MILITANT MEETING

Above: Ray Apps, Tony Saunois and Ted Grant on the platform
Below: Fenner Brockway speaks at 'Militant' meeting
Conference photos: Julian McKittrick/Militant

Last week's report of the Militant Readers' Meeting held at Labour Party Conference was necessarily brief. Here Iain Forbes of Croydon Central CLP reports the discussion in more detail.

"This Conference has been a watershed in the struggle for socialist policies in the British labour movement" said chairman Tony Saunois (Labour Party NEC) in opening the meeting. This theme was to be repeatedly emphasised by speakers from both platform and floor during the course of the meeting.

Ray Apps (Brighton Kemptown CLP) in the first speech from the platform described the results of the previous day's economic debate as a complete surprise to the right-wing leaders of the labour movement, who had been expecting a "tame and placid" conference. However, Monday's events had also been a shock to the pessimists on the left of the movement who had seen the recent AUEW elections as the start of a swing to the right and a



return to the right wing, Conference, said Ray, was the received throughout the domination of the Ford workers movement.
The key to the mood of the action of the Ford workers and the support they had Ted Grant (Militant Edit-

orial Board) developed Ray's arguments in a closely-argued speech. Illustrating the change in the labour movement, he pointed out that while in previous economic slumps the trade unions had lost membership, the present crisis had on the contrary seen a massive expansion in trade unionism. The labour movement possessed enormous power, said Ted, yet it was only just starting to flex its muscles.

In a devastating indictment of British capitalism, Ted demonstrated that British industry would produce less steel per head of population in 1978 than in 1929—far behind the production of France and Italy. Even British pre-eminence in science was now lost.

Lack of investment

The right-wing Labour leaders, said Ted, believed that by holding down wages, cutting state expenditure, and doling out "National Assistance" to the capitalists, they could be persuaded to re-invest. Yet despite £8,000 million of cuts, a £10 a week drop in living standards, and £4,000 million a year in state handouts, capitalism had refused to invest in productive industry—the real source of wealth.

In concluding, Ted returned to the theme of power. With a leadership willing to exercise the power of the movement, capitalism in Britain couldn't last six weeks. It

was the task of Marxists in the movement to build that leadership.

In the discussion from the floor, Martin Elvin, from the ASLEF delegation, described the growth of consciousness in the railway industry. "There is dispute after dispute. As soon as one signal box gets regraded, the next box down the line goes on strike."

Cathy Wilson (Isle of Wight LP) referred to her personal experience of bringing up a family on the pittance paid out as unemployment benefit, and the necessity to defend unemployed workers. Potentially their grievances could be used to divide the working class, as they had been in the past.

This point, and the need to educate the mass of the movement, was reinforced by Don McGregor of the Southern Region Labour Party, who said: "Unless the movement understands the issues when we start to move towards socialism, the band will play in Britain as it did in Germany under the Weimar Republic."

Pat Wall (Shipley CLP) illustrated the contradictions in the policies of the right-wing leadership. On the one hand, they advocated wage restraint, yet Denis Healey had attributed the swing back to Labour to the recent slight rise in living standards.

Ideas of Marxism

Phil Rees (Banbury CLP) said how, as a District Councillor, he found it impossible to defend the Labour government against Tory criticism that Labour refuses to provide the cash to build enough council houses.

The meeting gave a warm reception to the contribution of 90-year-old veteran campaigner Fenner Brockway. "The present Labour government," he said, "has managed capitalism better than the Tories could do. The Young Socialists have the opportunity of making socialism a dynamic issue today, and the opportunity to start building workers' control from the shop floor. If we do that I hope still to live to see the incoming of socialism in this country."

Replying to the discussion, Ted Grant re-emphasised that the working class was stronger and the ruling class weaker than at any time in history. "We can look to the future with good heart, but on one condition—that we understand the fountainhead of our ideas—the fundamentals of Marxism."

Delegates oppose wage restraint



ALAN FISHER OF NUPE SPEAKS TO MILITANT



Q: What are your impressions of the Labour Party Conference?

A: I was very pleased on Monday that the conference almost unanimously—not completely unanimously—adopted the resolution on low pay, and that we've now got at least in the Party a realisation of the need to do something about low-paid workers. Over the years we've talked about low-paid workers, people have acknowledged the problems that low-paid workers have got, but we've had difficulty...

We've put up resolutions for a statutory minimum wage which have been rejected by the Labour Party. We put a resolution up last year for the TUC on a £50 minimum which again was rejected.

This year we've been successful in getting through what I regard as a meaningful resolution which demands that in the manifesto for the next election there should be a reference to low pay and it should say how the government intends to do something about low paid workers and to eliminate low pay. That means we've got a firm

seen. One should never overestimate the support that one gets from the TUC. I've always thought that the TUC's support is most effective in the power that the TUC has with the government. The TUC is the parliament, as it were, of the trade union movement. It is able to speak on common issues with a single voice for the movement in this country, and its influence with government is therefore enormously important.

But the TUC is not in a position to tell individual unions what they should do, and the question of support will be very much a matter for particular unions themselves to decide what they are prepared to do. The TUC can't call on trade unionists to do this and do that, or "instruct", in fact. The TUC is only as powerful as the unions are prepared to allow it to be.

We shall get TUC support in discussions with government which is very important for NUPE because many of our members are employed either directly or indirectly by the government. But our members shouldn't look on the TUC as the body that will get other unions supporting them.

Q: You agree that the campaign for a decent wage for low-paid workers is not only an industrial fight but a political fight?

A: Very much so. That's exactly right. That's why we had the resolution down at the Labour Party conference and not just at the TUC. Clearly government has a very great role to play. If the government really wants to do something about low pay, they can; but it would require a political decision.

I believe that in the end it may well require fixing in this country—which many other

countries have already done—a statutory minimum wage enforceable at law. But that's not something that the whole trade union movement supports at the present time.

We therefore spell it out that there must be discussion between the government, the unions, and that the objective which has been set out—the two-thirds of average earnings, which will be an on-going figure: £60 today, next year it might be £65 or £70—would give lower-paid workers the assurance that they would not, as they have in the past, continually fall behind other groups of workers. But the role of government is significant. That's why it's a political issue.

That's why we have made it a political issue at Conference this week, and I hope by what I said on Monday we've at least raised the level of the debate and the level of interest in low pay to the point where the government is conscious that they have got to do something about it and that the party itself will expect the government to do something about it, or they will want to know why.

Q: Finally, do you have any other message to the readers of 'Militant'?

A: We know from the views that 'Militant' has expressed that they have supported us in the low pay campaign; they've supported my own union in the battle we had during the last two years over the question of cuts in public expenditure. To the readers of 'Militant' my message is to carry on with the work they are doing in those areas which have been most helpful to my own union in the battles that we've been fighting, and that we shall go on fighting in the weeks and months that lie ahead.

"Why we are fighting for £60 minimum"

Brent Kennedy: Why is NUPE campaigning for a £60 minimum wage?

Alan Fisher: The reason we're campaigning for a £60 minimum wage, and that we've picked that particular figure is that it corresponds to the TUC formula—adopted

at the TUC Congress a month ago and now, fortunately, adopted by the Labour Party Conference on Monday. It represents two-thirds of average earnings. Our estimate is that average earnings at the moment—certainly by November—will have reached £90

for workers in this country. Obviously two-thirds of £90 is £60. That's the mathematical way we've reached that figure. The TUC policy is now to back that kind of formula and that figure, and it's now the LP conference decision as well.

commitment this week...In that sense it's been a very successful conference as far as my own union is concerned.

Q: What support do you expect from the TUC and other unions for NUPE's campaign?

A: Well that remains to be

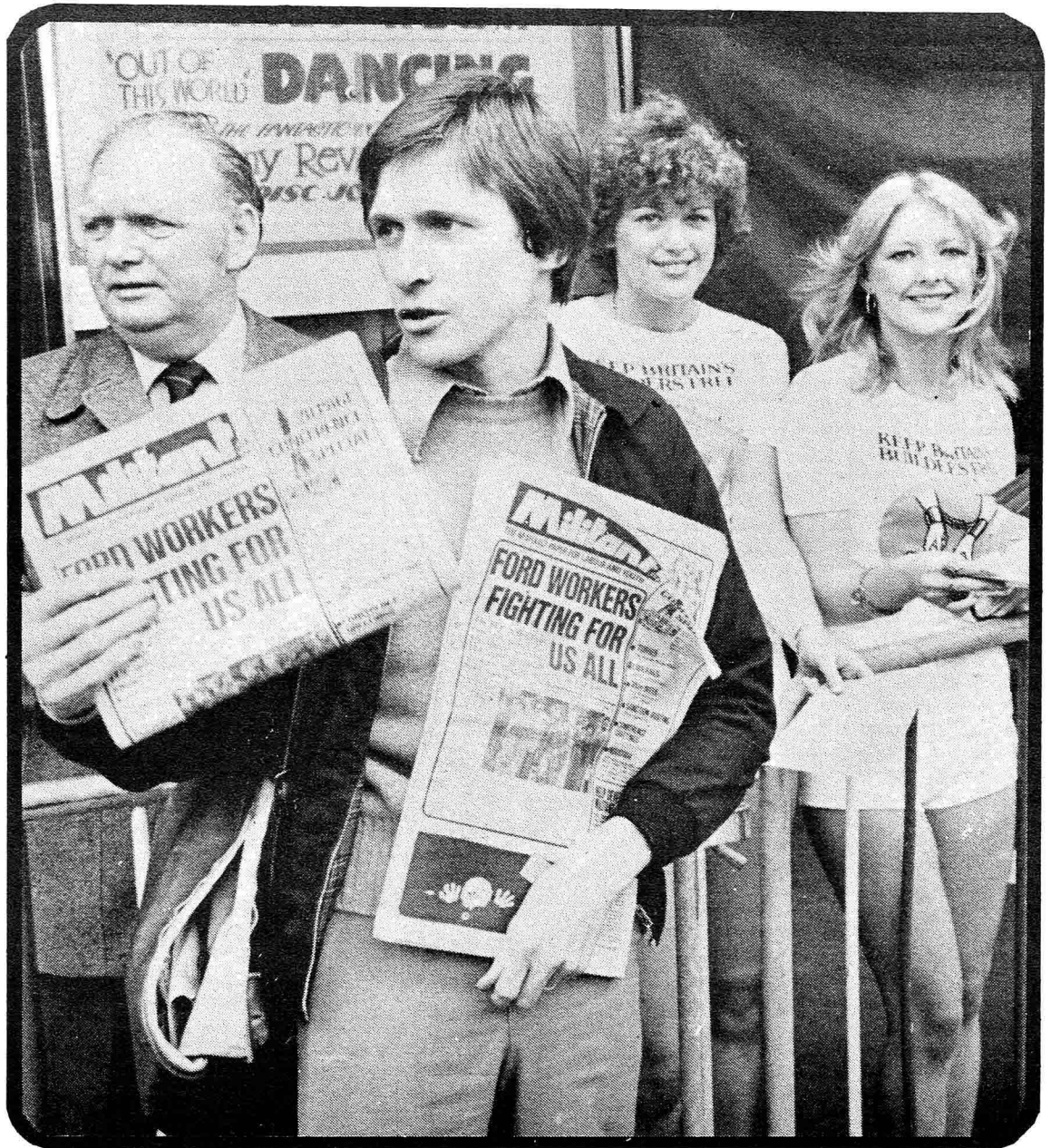
MILITANT AT BLACKPOOL

Photos: Julian McKittrick/Militant



Pat Wall and Gary Freeman, 'Militant' supporters prominent in Conference

One of the numerous voluntary 'Militant' sellers at Blackpool. Behind are models hired by capitalist builders' campaign CABIN



FIREMEN STILL FIGHTING

Interview with Jim Cuddihee, Brentwood and Ongar CLP delegate, Youth Officer Brentwood & Ongar YS, Chairman of FBU branch at East Ham Fire station and vice-chairman for that area.

Brent Kennedy: What was your impression of the conference this year?

Jim Cuddihee: I got the distinct impression in the first couple of days of a tremendous outgoing attitude as regards the young member. There seemed to be a hell of a lot of YS as delegates from their different parties. They spoke with deep feeling and actually got the message across against all sorts of pressures. They weren't prepared to remit the motion on the 5%—the vote was carried and I think that was a fantastic step forward.

I think it went home to the NEC and the Prime Minister that youngsters are actively

taking part in the LP again. While there was a downward trend of youngsters in the party, the YS have reversed that. Militant ideas are getting across and people are sitting up and taking notice at long last.

Q: What response do you think there will be at your fire station when you report back?

A: I shan't report back for a fortnight: I've got my own conference straight after this one, I think they will be very interested in the rejection of 5%. We came out on strike for more than the 10% last year and the same conditions appeared to rule. When we had the TUC general council vote we were only a couple of votes away from a general strike. We were concerned to see what would happen here and there has been a massive answer 'NO' to the government's 5% guide-line, and

we'll see where we'll go from here.

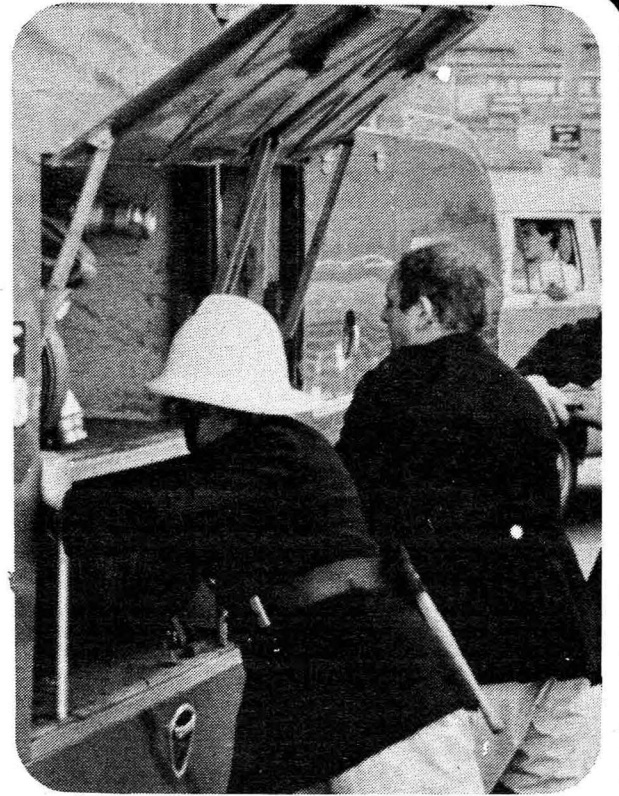
Q: In the fireman's strike a lot of firemen were understandably put off the Labour Party because they thought the LP and the Labour government were the same thing. Do you think this will change their attitude to the party?

A: Yes. I think it was rammed home to them, certainly with my particular branch, which has 108 members. Yes, the Labour Party got dragged through the mud, was called all sorts of names; various people said they would never vote Labour again. But we have made them aware—and thanks to Militant, the Young Socialists, Andy Bevan, and Newham North East, where we're stationed they realise that there are two Labour Parties, and that's your Parliamentary Labour Party and the grass

roots. The grass roots have said that in no way are they involved in the PLP's actions, we're for you, and that message got across.

Q: What's the way forward for the firemen now?

A: The first step is get our reduced working week, the 42 hours agreed last year. We don't want an "average 42-hour week", we want a working 42 hour week, and we think we're going to get it. We also go onto the first stage of the "upper quartile" money in November, and the second stage in November 1979. It could be a good deal, nobody knows. It's a hypothetical figure at the moment. We won't know what it is until we get it in our wage packets at the end of November, or possibly at the end of December.



Long hours, low pay and high danger—the fireman's lot



Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

LABOUR CLUBS IN ACTION

The start of term has seen 'Militant' supporters in NOLS active up and down the country in organising Labour Club activity.

In **Scotland** over 40 people heard Dennis Canavan MP and Frank White, LPYS Regional Committee, speak on "Which way forward for Labour?"

In the **Northern Region**, the Labour Clubs at Newcastle University, Newcastle Poly and Sunderland Poly have all had successful "Freshers" campaigns with over 50 people being recruited to the Club in one day at Newcastle University. All these clubs anticipate an increase in membership from last year.

In **Yorkshire**, Bradford University Labour Club are continuing their tradition of strong links with the labour movement; with the speakers at their first meeting being Pat Wall (President, Bradford Trades Council) and Bill Keys (General Secretary of SOG AT), who will speak on the fight against racialism.

In **Wales**, over 30 attended Cardiff University Labour Club's first meeting. Terry Burns ('Militant') and Bedwelly Labour Party) was the speaker. At Swansea University, 36 students heard Mark

Morton (NOLS NC) and Alec Thraves (Swansea AUEW) speak. The Club's recruitment has been the best ever.

In the **West Midlands**, over 30 students joined Lanchester Poly Labour Club on Freshers' Day, an increase on last year. The Club's programme included Audrey Wise MP speaking on 'Unemployment', a debate with the Tories, a speaker from the Indian Workers' Association, and a speaker from Birmingham Trades Council on 'Why the National Front must be crushed'. They are also planning a 'Red Disco' and Labour Club pubcrawl.

At Birmingham Poly Labour Club, Peter Lush ('Militant') spoke at the Club's first meeting. Already they have a bigger membership than last year.

In **London**, at Nilessex Poly Labour Club, Bryan Davies MP and Ed Bober (Greater London Labour Party EC) have been invited to the Club's first meeting.

By Peter Lush

Send regular reports of your Club or Students' Union activities to:

Militant
1 Mentmore Terrace
London E8 3PN

35 - hours realistic demand **YCAU**

Capitalism claims that it cannot afford a 35-hour week. They say, "Be satisfied, we have a few temporary problems, at least you're better off than your grandparents." But are we?

Tom Mann, a socialist pioneer, wrote: "Six hours a day, 5 days a week is quite enough for such work as we have to do. We must not rest until there is not a single man out of work."

89 years ago Tom Mann called for a 30-hour week. Today capitalism says it can't afford 35! We can judge the system for ourselves!

But, the bosses argue, production hasn't risen much since then, and a high level of production is necessary to raise living standards. Well, what opportunities have they had to raise production?

Bankruptcy

Over three quarters of the world's scientists have lived and worked since 1900. Major breakthroughs in human knowledge and technology have been made, including radio, television, air flight, splitting the atom, plastics, radar, space travel, the transistor, computers—and now silicon chips.

What better proof of the bankruptcy of modern capit-

alism? With all this, capitalism offers us not Tom Mann's 30-hour week, not a 35-hour week, not even a 40-hour week! We are faced with an average working week of 44-hours and mass unemployment.

With all the labour-saving techniques, production could be so raised that the working week could be reduced to a

few hours a day. Higher living standards, retirement at 50 on full pay, decent hospitals and schools would be entirely possible.

30-hours was a realistic demand in 1889. With modern technology under workers' control and management, and a socialist plan of production, the vital demands of the Youth Campaign

Against Unemployment, which the bosses call utopian, could be guaranteed for every worker.

- ★ For a 35-hour week, without loss of pay, now!
- ★ £70 minimum wage—end the need for overtime!
- ★ A guaranteed job for every school and college leaver!

Brighton Meeting

By Alan Huyton
(Brighton LPYS)

19 people attended a Brighton LPYS meeting to hear Ian Nicholls and Bill Harman (POEU assistant secretaries) speak on the case for the 35-hour week.

Ian led-off, giving a brief history of the POEU's struggle which started back in 1969, when the workers were involved in a parity claim for 37-hours. At the 1972 conference a 35-hour, 4 day week was proposed but no action was taken. In 1976 a resolution was accepted that members would refuse to carry out tests on new equipment if the PO didn't agree to the 35-hour week.

The following year a one-day stoppage was planned but continually postponed, and finally replaced with a special conference in January 1978, at which the PO proposals, ACAS and productivity deals were rejected. No industrial action was taken until following the acceptance of NEC recommendations at the June conference. Even then this was soon called off by the leadership in favour of another conference, at which the 37½-hour compromise was

accepted.

Ian made the point that, although this was a small step forward, the members would not stop now.

In the discussion, a resolution was proposed to set up a YCAU Committee for the 35-hour week, with the initial aim of preparing for days of action around the issue and organising for the November conference.

Already we have the support of a local BRS steward and both POEU comrades enthusiastically welcomed the idea. The message is clear... the fight for the 35-hour week is on and the LPYS are in the forefront of the struggle.

NO MORE LOW WAGES

Low paid workers in the East Midlands are not prepared to put up with poverty wages any longer. That was the message from a rally attended by over 200 trade unionists in Nottingham.

"5% to most of you means £2.12 before stoppages," said NUPE National Organiser, Rodney Bickerstiffe. Yet the chairman of nationalised industries got a rise of £47.50. "If you want more than 5% you'll have to fight for it," he said, to

loud applause.

USDAW official Peter Davies described a Leicester factory where 17 Asian women were earning under £17 for a 40-hour week. He summed up the mood of the meeting when he said, "What's going to be done about it?" "The Ford workers have already shown what's going to be done about it... They're fighting for all of us."

A collection was held at the door for the Ford workers.

Both Ray Coward, speaking for Nottingham Trades Council, and Arthur Palmer, Labour candidate for Carlton and an NUM member, stressed that the Labour government was way out of line with the views of the rank and file of the Labour Party. (This was confirmed next day at Conference.)

This point was taken up by several speakers from the floor, who urged those present to get active in their Labour Parties. "We need socialist policies and

socialist leaders," said David Jones, an ASTMS member. This view seemed to be shared by most of those present.

Angry and fed up, low paid workers are getting organised. The government will find them following the example of the Ford workers if it doesn't act now to introduce a minimum living wage.

By John Dale
(Mansfield LPYS)

Left & Right

SPANISH POLICE

A group of extreme right wingers in Spain, called the 'Committee of Patriotic Justice' have said that they intend to execute the Spanish Prime Minister and other political figures like Felipe Gonzales, the Socialist leader, and Communist Party leader Santiago Carrillo. They are all accused of being enemies of the fatherland.

Although the group is small, many members of the para-military police forces are known to be sympathetic to the extreme right wing. Not surprisingly the CP leader Carrillo has declined the kind offer of police protection from the Spanish government. Workers in Spain might ask whether Senor Carrillo's personal danger will alter his policy of calling for a 'government of national concentration' including even the Popular Alliance which still pays tribute to Franco.

Such blind faith in the democratic intentions of the capitalists and their police leaves the door open for groups like the 'Committee of Patriotic Justice' to threaten the entire working class.

FREE GLAZING FOR POOR

Gatscombe Park, the £1m residence of Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips is a big place. It has four reception rooms and at least ten bedrooms. Now that Captain Phillips is a student, though admittedly not surviving just on a student grant, he may find the cost of keeping the cold out of his house prohibitive.

To help out, he has been competing in an equestrian event in Middlesex where the prize of £1,000 is supplemented by an offer from the sponsors to double-glaze the winner's home.

Watch out though, if Mark doesn't win, or if the glazing firm goes bankrupt, the Royal shop steward may be slipping in a pay claim well above the 5% limit tolerated for us commoners.

RATS

The rich do have problems. 26-year-old Earl Grosvenor, starting out life with a mere £500m and worried about the cost of his forthcoming wedding, has another worry. One of his lordship's fourteen trout ponds on the River Tern in Staffordshire has been attacked by rats, who have frightened to death 10,000 of his fish.

The Earl will undoubtedly be able to restock his ponds and combat his rat problem in no time. The more serious rat problems caused by bad housing in cities like London and Glasgow will have to await "better times" and new housebuilding plans before human health can be safeguarded. After all, we've all got to make sacrifices...haven't we?

AWAY FROM IT ALL?

Any worker taken in by Irish Tourist Board material, and thinking of buying a farm in peaceful rural Ireland will be unlucky. The depressed areas in the West have suffered widespread emigration in the past through lack of opportunity.

Now even the prosperous areas where profitable agriculture has become again the mainstay of the Irish economy offer little joy for small farmers or farm workers. Small farms are uneconomic, but expansion is more than ever beyond their reach, as land prices have been rocketing as they have in Britain.

'The Irish Times' shows that much land has been snatched up by individuals or companies wanting stud farms for the horse racing market. Some has gone for housing and development speculation, and much of the rest brought as a temporary investment outlet, with no intentions of putting the land to any use.

Agricultural land is being lost; only the wealthiest farmers can afford the spiralling land price and land dwellers are being dispossessed. Under capitalism, there is no place for ordinary people to get away from it all. Rent, interest and profit invade everywhere and only the working class have the power to stop them.

5 days week 48 weeks a year....

Packing it in

Warehouse jobs can be the most boring and worst paid jobs in industry, as LPYS member Steve Chinn shows:

It's now stock-taking week. Or at least it would be if there was any stock to take. As it is you can hardly ever find anything you want here, and when you do it's thick with dust and rats' muck.

This is an autoparts firm, and over in the factory they make petrol, oil and air filters. They send boxes of them to us; we put them in nice neat piles, then into bigger boxes for delivery. If we run out of a popular filter, we get some from another firm.

The VIPs

But the management make sure we don't send both types in the same order because the ones that we don't make—usually from Japan—are better than ours.

The manager comes running up and says: "The directors are looking round today, so don't make any mistakes. Keep your overall clean, don't swear and look busy. If you've got nothing to do sweep the floor...Oh—and do try to look as if you're enjoying the job."

"Oh yes, sure thing," I murmur as he walks off to his nice carpeted office in his Saville Row suit with matching waistcoat and tie. It's June, so it's hot. One thing that doesn't help is that the heating is on in the warehouse. In December it was off.

If you try to tell the manager that you need heat-

ing on when the weather's cold, and off when it's hot, he says something about "economy measures during the winter months." So presumably it's "economical" to freeze for half of the year and sweat like pigs the rest.

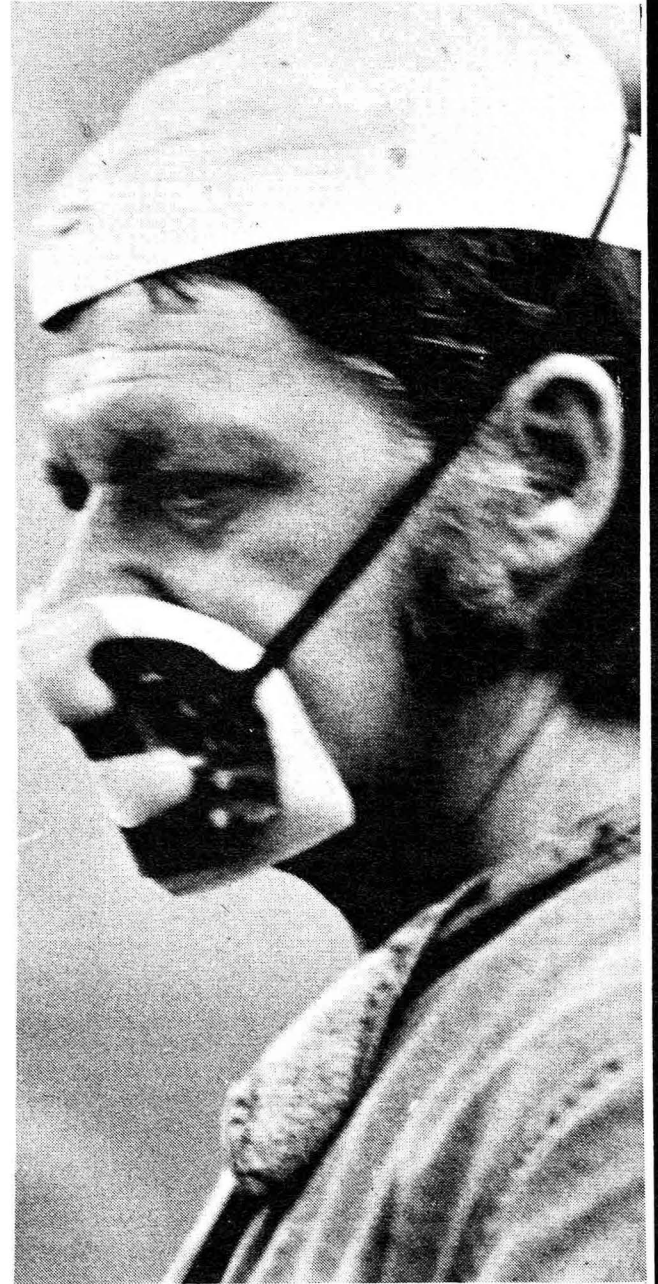
A cloud of dust rises from boxes which have fallen. I can't help breathing it in, so I sneeze. And the mucus is a horrible colour—I wonder what it's doing to my lungs.

A few months ago the manager gave me a "dust protection mask". This consisted of a bit of cotton wool stuck to some strapping, held in place by a few pieces of elastic. The only trouble with the mask was that it not only stopped the dust, it seemed to stop the air as well. And the elastic snapped.

I find that the boxes don't stack properly because they're not the right size for the filters that are in them. I'm just about to go and complain when the directors walk by. They don't say "hello", or recognise my presence. One of them looks at me as if I'm an impertinent little school-boy who needs a smack on the backside. I think to myself that if I got hold of him I'd give him more than that!

By the dinner-break we've got just under 200 orders in the loading bay, ready to go out. When the lorry arrives at 3 o'clock we'll load them in, then get started on the next batch of orders.

It's the same, five days a week, 48 weeks a year. Tomorrow there'll be a pain-



No protection from dustful bruise on my head from falling boxes and my lungs will be a little bit the worse for wear, the film of dust will be a

Photo: Christopher Davies little bit thicker.

All this for £31.85 take home a week! Think I'll get a union branch going here...

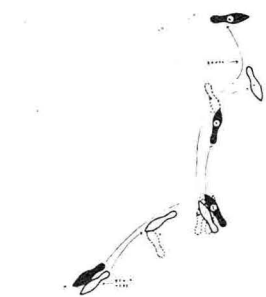
TORIES: PROFIT IN THE DRIVING SEAT: A review

For the lowdown on the Tory Party's policies and leadership this is a useful short pamphlet. Tory policies on jobs, public services, and other issues are detailed—and shown to be linked to the need for increased profits by big business.

Tory thinking on curbing the unions and the closed shop, and attacks on trade union affiliations to the Labour Party are interspersed with information on Tory leaders' own business concerns, and donations to the Tories by large private companies.

Sections on racialism and law and order are rather

Tories—new turn to the right



Labour Research Department 25p

Tories—New Turn to the Right. Labour Research Dept., 25p

weaker and better covered by other publications. Although the pamphlet contains much interesting material for socialists, surely spicier quotes and statements could have been dug up, given the range of material LRD must have. This mini-reference book should be supplemented by regular reading of 'Militant' for information—and answers.

Tory press stay silent over tax avoidance

While the capitalist press bemoans the "inflationary" actions of workers rebelling against the 5% wage limit, another, more 'up-market' rebellion is being organised at the Café Royal in London.

A quote from Lord McNaughton in the Court of Appeal sets the tone in the publicity handout for a conference on 'keeping the tax man at bay'. The judge said: "No one is bound to leave his property at the mercy of the revenue authorities if he can legally escape their grasp."

And this month, this conference is being held to give up-to-date information on avoiding tax following the 1978 Finance Act. The plan-

ning of partnerships, and minimising the burdens of tax on a company and a family are discussed, with a mouth-watering list of tax-avoidance methods for the businessman to mull over.

A good return

A ticket for this one-day conference costs £59.40 including a meal. Even though the menu is likely to be more extravagant than fish paste sandwiches, the cost of this jamboree shows that the returns are likely to be very substantial. Can you hear the Tory press condemning this minority for their inflationary greed? No, neither can we.

THE BUILDING TRADE JUNGLE

how the money is poured away

Work on a NATO contract at four US air bases is paralysed by a dispute originally involving AUEW and Boilermakers' members' employed by Carter Horsley. This sub-contractor threatened to slash piece-rates and reduce wages by 50%, pleading financial difficulties. Their parent company, Northern Industries, made £10 million profit in the last six months.

The dispute escalated rapidly when pressure was put on other contractors to fly in scab labour from Italy. This has provoked the anger of trade unionists throughout Britain. Italian workers have also held a protest strike [see Militant 423].

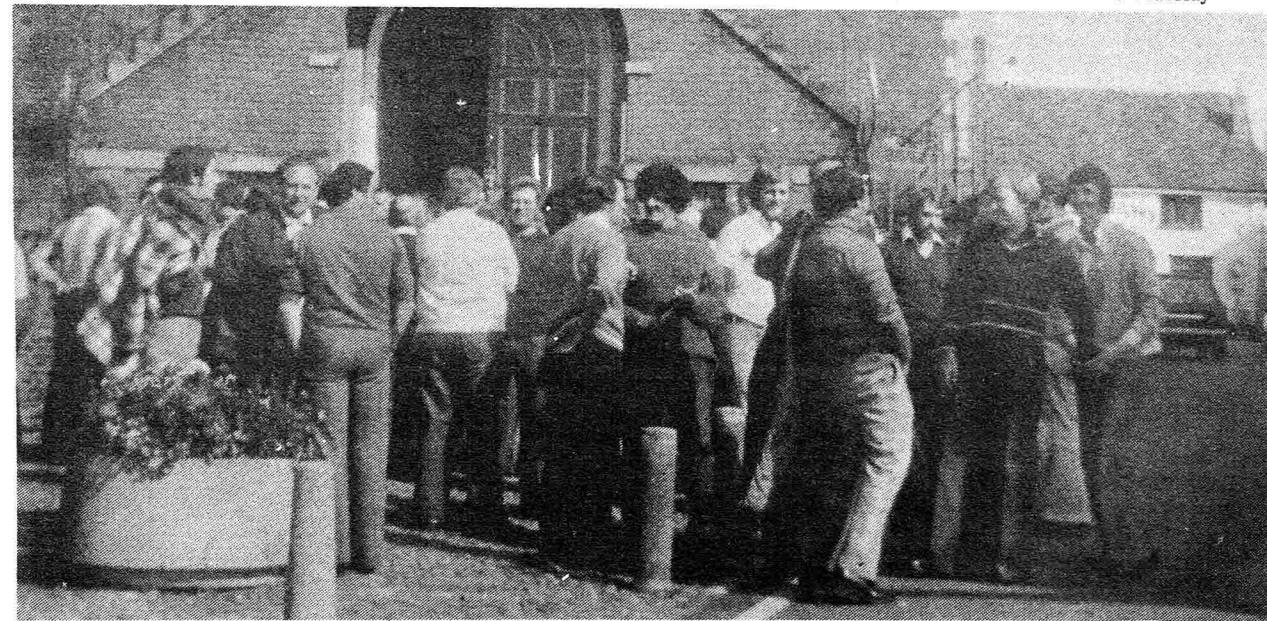
The employers' manoeuvring and mismanagement, with workers' welfare their last concern, and the use of scab labour from overseas have made this a battle of international significance.

Last week, Cimolai, PSA and Costain agreed to withdraw Italian Labour. The construction workers will continue with token picketing, and still need all the moral and financial support they can get.

TM: When did you first think of setting up a workers' co-operative?

DE: This was in April of this year when we heard that Cimolai were trying to bring in Italian labour for the second phase of shelters, as Carter Horsley's quote had been high and other firms' tenders had been too low.

We decided that we would look into the possibility of doing it all ourselves. We knew Carter Horsley had only invested £2,000 initially as all the material was supplied by Cimolai and the plant and tools were hired. We then approached Cimolai asking if we could work direct but they said no, there had to be a sub-contractor. Henry Friedman, lecturer at Essex University and ex-convenor at Ford's Dagenham, found out that we could set up a workers' co-operative for £75. Each worker would be a



Carter Horsley AUEW Construction workers outside Woodbridge magistrates court, where a picket was being charged

Dave Etheridge, AUEW shop steward on the US air bases NATO project, talked to Teresa Mackay for 'Militant', about the gross mismanagement and cut-throat racketeering which forced the workers to consider taking the job over themselves.

shareholder. Everybody on all the bases was very keen. As we'd been working on piece-work we knew exactly how much the job would cost in wages and plant-hire, in fact we knew more about the job than management. Bentwaters alone, had 7 supervisors in 14 months. There was the problem of the Security Bond, as a bank would have to put up the money if we couldn't fulfill the contract. We approached the NEB and Co-operative Bank. We found we hadn't got the contract before

we heard from the NEB.

TM: How did Cimolai react to your idea of setting up a workers' co-operative?

DE: They said that workers' co-operatives were quite common in certain parts of Italy and they had worked with them.

TM: Why do you think you didn't get the contract?

DE: Maybe they were using us to find a true quote as we would be working on a minimum profit margin (1½% for overheads). Carter Horsley's quote was £25,000

or £28,000 per shelter for 33 shelters whereas ours was £19,000 per shelter.

TM: Why a workers' co-operative?

DE: Because management were absolutely pathetic. They were only there as a formality to liaise between workers and client. There were 3 or 4 on each of the four bases—dead money. We only needed one administrator to tie up admin. We put up with their incompetence for 16 months. Whenever we wanted to talk to them about anything

constructive they didn't want to know, they just said: "You're on piecework, we'll leave it up to you." We used to arrange the job to suit ourselves. But when they did step in, they always mucked it up and this was where all the money was lost.

This was how it was right from the very beginning. They were always contradicting themselves. One minute they were saying we were having too many tea-breaks, non-cooperation, demarcation lines, etc., and then they were

saying we earned too much money. It was only because we were giving maximum production. They, in fact wanted us to cut down production!

TM: What was the name of the firm who got the contract for phase two?

DE: Micro Automatic. We investigated this firm when we heard and found that they only had £1,000 share capital in January of this year but in July a further £49,000 had been ploughed in almost overnight. They needed this money to comply with the PSA. They wouldn't have got the government contract if they hadn't come up to standard. We then found out that two of the directors had been in prison for embezzlement, fraud and conspiracy in former companies. They had been made bankrupt several times. When they first started on the sites they were given a mobilisation fee of £50,000 (to be subtracted at the end of the contract) for plant-hire, tools, etc. Unfortunately for everyone, these two directors fled the country with the £50,000. The workers were never given a full week's wages in the two weeks they were on the site, though they did get two £50 subs. They were sacked on the Monday morning we came out on strike. Having travelled down from Newcastle and the Midlands, paid for their digs one week in advance, they had no money for the train fare back home. The men on strike had a whip round so they at least had their fare home. Six of the workers threatened to take Micro Automatic to court so they got paid but I don't know if the rest of the lads got their money. It was the same week the directors fled the country.

TM: Finally, what do you think of 'Militant'?

DE: I think it's great. Unlike some of the other left papers, it's a workers' paper. So many of the others concentrate too much on sport, which I can read in the 'Mirror', or it's all foreign. I know we've got to be international, but I do like to read what's happening in in this country as well.



By Jeremy Birch
First of a series of articles
on poverty today

In those affluent days when Tory leaders like MacMillan prided themselves that "you've never had it so good," poverty was officially considered to have disappeared with the war. There are probably more than a few Tory backwoodsmen (and women!) who think the same today.

But poverty did not miraculously disappear during those '13 years of Tory misrule' in the 1950s and '60s. In fact, in 90 years the relative pay of the poorest tenth has risen just 2%. And over the last few years, as the health of the economy has deteriorated, so has the plight of the worst off.

Kellogg's, whose interest in poverty extends only as far as the level of food consumption, have calculated that 500,000 children go off in the morning with no breakfast. Apparently, half of us tucked into a hearty cooked breakfast 20

years ago. Last year the figure was just a fifth.

Presumably those who still refuse to recognise poverty as a reality believe that thousands of schoolkids have been suddenly converted to some harsh, ascetic religion requiring them to fast from tea time right round to school dinner the next day. And with the price having risen, only 61.7% of pupils now eat a school meal, a drop of nearly 8% on last year.

No wonder London University researchers found that 1 youngster in 3 has an unsatisfactory diet.

But when you turn to the statistics and reports, the evidence of increasing poverty is absolutely conclusive. Enough to indict capitalism for gross negligence towards the poor.

Last year 4 million workers received less than £50 per week before stoppages. As everyone knows, Family Income Supplement has been introduced precisely to help those workers whose employers don't give them enough

to live on. The government has announced that 77,000 families are now dependent on FIS. And for the first time since it was introduced, more two-parent families than the especially poverty-prone one-parent households are claiming it.

In ten years the numbers of workers suffering the indignity of working 40 hours and still being paid less than the Supplementary Benefit level increased from 125,000 to 290,000. Include their dependents and it mounts up to 890,000 people.

How many?

So just how many poor people are there? Using the newly-released government Family Expenditure Survey figures, in 1976 2,280,000 people lived in households which had less than the official supplementary benefit level coming in. And that includes 100,000 unemployed workers with their 70,000 dependents, and 870,000

pensioners. Their reward for a lifetime's labour—to exist below the supplementary benefit line.

On top of this are the 4,090,000 who have to claim supplementary benefit. 6,370,000 are surviving, somehow, on or below the official state poverty line.

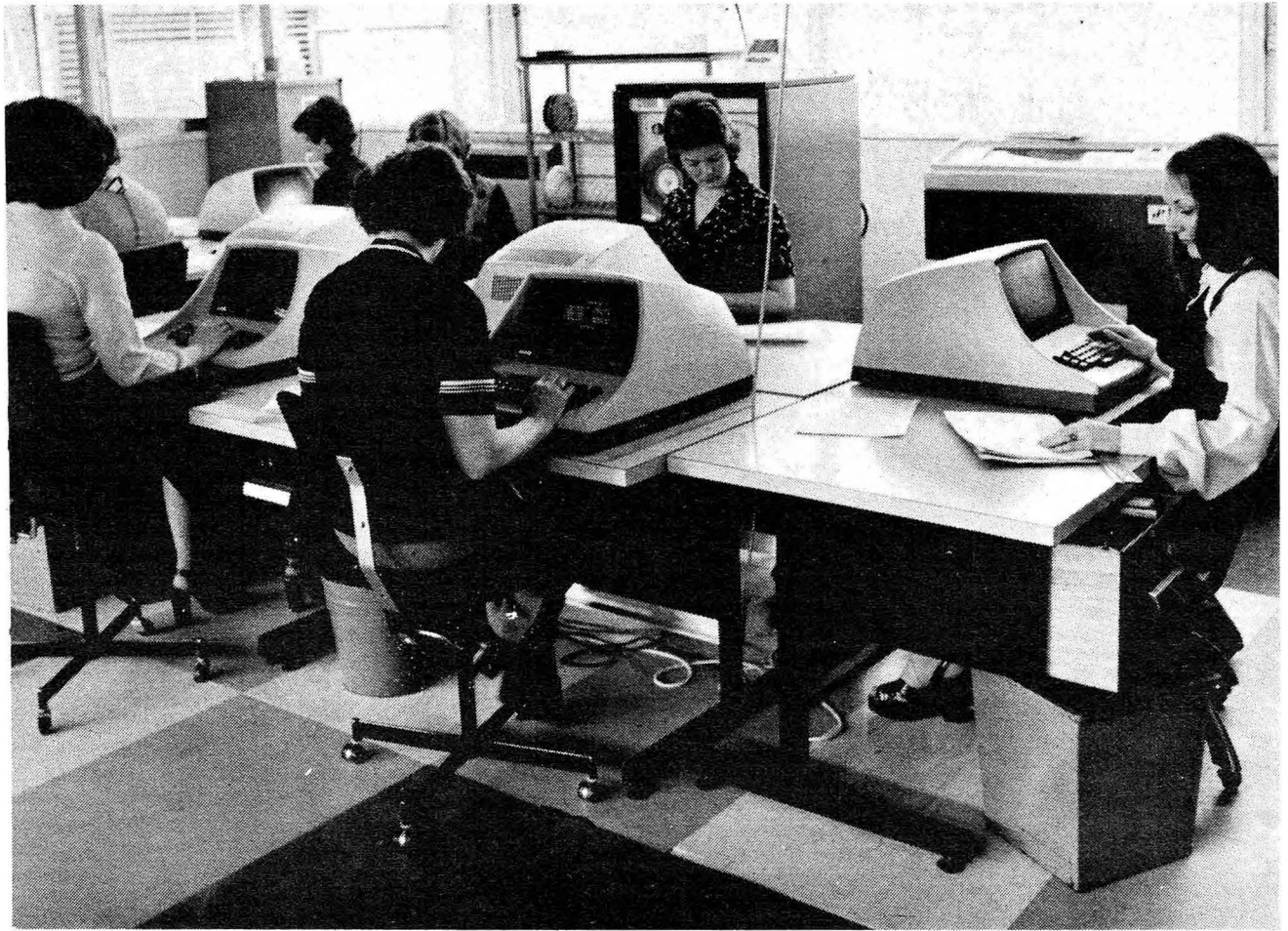
However, that is a serious underestimate of the number of poor. After all, supplementary benefit allows nothing but the barest living standard. The Supplementary Benefits Commission even reported last year that "most supplementary benefits claimants have to live on incomes that are too low."

The Low Pay Unit includes those earning up to 40% above this level for their calculation. 14,870,000 people, they estimate, live in downright poverty, or at the very most not far removed from it. This is one quarter of the entire population.

"You've never had it so good"—was that what he said?

Industrial robots, automated factories, office computers.

THREAT TO JOBS - OR A BENEFIT TO SOCIETY



Enormous strides have been made in computer technology recently. "It is only a slight exaggeration to say that computing power which five years ago would have cost many thousands of pounds and filled a large room is now within the purchasing ability of a child and smaller than a transistor radio," explained 'New Scientist', as long ago as November 1976.

It was not until the 1960s that techniques were developed for replacing numerous transistors assembled on a wafer, by a tiny silicon 'chip', containing thousands of transistors and connecting circuits, and since then the number of circuits etched on a single 'chip' has approximately doubled every year.

It is now possible to produce circuits with up to 100,000 transistors etched onto a single slice of silicon less than the size of a postage stamp. By the middle of the 1980s, it is expected that 5m to 10m components will be etched on a single chip.

What does this mean in practical terms? International Computers' latest design can handle more than 100 million calculations in a second. We now have the technological capabilities of producing what those with a taste for the sinister call 'artificial intelligence' i.e. robots.

In Japan, plans for a complete machine tool factory run entirely by robots and computers are already well

advanced. The only humans involved would be in supervising jobs, because even routine maintenance would be carried out by machines. Such factories would eliminate the jobs not only of manual workers but of the complete spectrum of skilled operators.

In Southern Italy a computer system has been developed to run a refrigerated warehouse. Only two operators are needed to work a system which can handle 100 pallets an hour for 15 hours a day and is capable of rotating the stock completely automatically.

Telephone system

Such examples abound. In Japan it is estimated that some 70,000 industrial robots are currently in service, about a third of them in the motor car industry. They undertake quite complicated tasks like welding, machining and increasingly the assembly of mechanical parts.

The effects on employment can be enormous. The British telephone exchange system is switching from an electro-mechanical to an electronic system. One of the main London areas is envisaging staff cuts of 71% over a 7-year period.

A look at the apprenticeship recruitment figures reveals the same gloomy picture—in 1971/72 the London Telecommunications Region recruited 1,150 technical apprentices; for '78/79 the proposed recruitment is 290. This is despite exchange connections rising from 9 to 14 million over the same period (total UK figures).

TUC CONCERN AT THE 'NEW TECHNOLOGY'

The TUC this year passed a resolution on new technology, moved by the POEU. The following demands were included, and are now TUC policy:

This Congress calls upon the General Council to formulate policy on the social and industrial consequences of the growth of automation and computerisation; to support actively the development of trade union initiatives in the UK and the EEC designed to combat the social problems arising from such developments and to ensure that the benefits of technological advance are shared throughout society in a just and equitable way...

Congress notes that the development of micro-electronics poses both a challenge and a threat to trade unionists by the impact of the new technology on existing employment opportunities in both the office and the factory and the consequences of resultant unemployment.

Congress therefore demands that the General Council press the government to take the following urgent steps:

... Establish and develop a viable and soundly financed British research development and substantial manufacturing capacity in the field of micro-electronics and allied computer systems...

★ Develop forward plans at both national and local levels to ensure the maintenance and, if possible, the expansion of job opportunities in those areas adversely affected...

★ Declare publicly their concern at the prospects of the resulting unemployment and support the move towards a shorter working week, month, year or lifetime with no deterioration in living standards...

To these ends, Congress calls on the General Council to prepare a draft policy statement in consultation with the affiliated unions for a conference on this subject and to report to the 1979 Congress.

Furthermore it has been suggested that the equipment used for the new System X can be manufactured by a mere 4% of those employed on production of the old equipment.

Some important qualifica-

tions should be made at this point. None of the present unemployment, particularly in Britain but internationally as well, can be attributed to developments in electronics—the industry is still in its infancy. To build a totally

Above: computer terminals in British Steel offices. Leading to mass redundancies—or more leisure?

automated factory is an extremely expensive business and with capitalism facing a world recession and investment chronically low the world over, few capitalists are going to be looking to expand their capacity at huge initial costs, so developments are likely to be quite slow.

Some argue that advances in electronics do not equal a second industrial revolution at all, but are merely part of a trend that has been going on for decades—substituting machines for men. It is true that if you look at the period 1860-1960, while the working population doubled, the capital stock (machines etc.) roughly quadrupled, sending the productivity of each worker soaring.

Office workers

But there was no unemployment because the economy, taking the period as a whole, was continually expanding—new factories were being built, people were moving into offices, the service industries etc. The logic of the new 'robotics' is that production could be increased with virtually no job creation, while the eradication of existing jobs continues. Further, for the first time, automatic typewriters, electronic communicators and large computer filing systems are likely to reduce the number of office workers.

In Germany, which has the largest office population in Europe, a study by Siemens estimates that by 1990 about 40% of present office work could be carried out automatically.

So even if international capitalism was able to create and sustain a boom, which is extremely unlikely, the working class would see little from it in terms of jobs. What should a socialist's attitude be then to this advance in technology?

We recognise as a colossal stride man's ability to control his environment rather than being a slave to it. It opens up the possibility of eradicating

most of the repetitive, soul-destroying jobs that so many workers are chained to.

The capacity of computers now would make the planning of the economy and the full use of resources a relatively simple matter. But what are the realities under capitalism?

Automated production would make it possible to continually reduce the hours of the working week, but to the capitalist reducing the working week, i.e. reducing the exploitation of his workforce for their benefit, would never make sense. Instead the working week would stay at 40 hours while the mountain of unemployed built up causing a deeper depression and further unemployment.

Only the power of workers, organised through the trade unions, can wrest from the capitalist what he is unwilling to give. The rallying call that is echoing through the movement for the 35-hour week with no loss of pay and an end to overtime will have to be fought for. The work must be shared.

Capitalist anarchy

In no way is it being futuristic to suggest that society will possess the technological know-how within the working life of any LPYS member to reorganise production to allow us all just to work a few hours a week, leaving the rest of the time to participate in the management of society, to work in the community and for cultural and sporting pursuits.

The hitch is that we do not organise society, the profit motive does. To achieve our aims, industry and production must be organised to give the maximum benefit to society as a whole. There is only one way to do that: by taking over the giant multinational monopolies and ending the anarchy of capitalism.

By Chris Hill

(Chairman, London Region LPYS)

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DELEGATES CALL FOR DEFENCE OF HEALTH SERVICE

With the National Health Service under attack and weakened by cuts in funds during its 30th anniversary year, conference made the health debate a priority on Monday morning.

Seconding the successful resolution moved by COHSE, **Danny Purton of Harlow CLP** contrasted the way the NHS was greeted with enthusiasm on its introduction as a free health service, with the vicious slashing of funds and services today under the pressure of City bankers. What sort of policies had forced the workers of Hackney and Tower Hamlets to hold a one-day general strike to save Bethnal Green Hospital from closure by a Labour Minister of Health?

Thirty per cent fewer nurses are being trained, many of them **afraid of passing their exams** in case they joined fully qualified colleagues in the dole queue!

The delegate from Richmond CLP deplored the fact that BUPA could claim an increase in private medicine of a third, with 90 of the top 100 companies contributing. He demanded the restoration of cuts already made plus a 3% growth for the NHS to meet the real needs of the working class. "As for funds, you need look no further than the large profits made by private industry. Let them pay!"

As a member of the Community Health Council **Tina Yates** from Lancaster had made a survey of staffing and conditions in five local hospitals. "In the first ward we found only one sister and one untrained nurse in charge of 23 acutely ill patients. As the sister was responsible for five other wards, the untrained nurse often had to be left in charge."

Yet this was no exception, the delegate reported "wards of 80 mentally ill patients staffed by one nurse 12 hours a night". Following the survey the CHC had refused to reveal this information to the public because they would be "panic-stricken and would refuse to go to hospital!"

Bernard Dix of NUPE demanded the speedy removal of private practice from NHS hospitals, but "under the 1976 Act that will take 10 years!" He called for common waiting lists for private and NHS patients needing operations, "then no-one will go private, because they won't be able to jump the

queue."

"It is to the shame of the Labour government that after four years in power we have to ask for the NHS to be revitalised" declared **John Baker** from Blaydon CLP. "Workers didn't accept cuts in living standards to see a Labour government dismantle the health service. Those who have implemented the cuts have blood on their hands".



Roy Farrar

Roy Farrar from Walton CLP gave one example of the class nature of health from the infant mortality rates. In one poor area in Nottingham 1 in 20 died soon after birth, whereas with 1 in 200 the residents of middle class areas had ten times more chance of survival. "In this class society we can't even say we have equality of birth."

Roy called for a reversal of cuts and for Labour to show our supporters that we can provide them with decent health protection. The money could come in by nationalising the parasitic drug companies which make millions out of the NHS through price fiddles. A socialist health service could then become a reality, with democratic workers' control in place of the present bureaucratic administration.

Arthur Palmer also agreed that "the resources are there. Look at the money we spend on Harrier Jets when we can't afford kidney machines. The money is there, we just have our priorities wrong."

But the real iniquities and double standards in health were highlighted by COHSE member **Stuart Russell**, representing Gloucester CLP. "Some people have to wait five years for an operation because the waiting list has risen from 1/2 million people to 3/4 million. Many will die before they reach the top of the list. But if you have the money there's no problem."

"The news media has

accused us of putting patient's lives at risk whenever we've taken industrial action, but thanks to health cuts they're already at risk!" Instead of simply separating private and public health schemes, **Stuart** demanded the removal of all profit from ill health by the complete abolition of private practice.

"When we wrest the economy from big business, then we'll build a socialist health service run for human need, not profit!"

Replying for the NEC, **Barbara Castle** described profiteering out of sickness as an immoral monstrosity, but she asked the movers of composite resolution 41 to remit it to the NEC because it opposed all hospital closures, including the Elizabeth Garret Anderson. However, when the movers refused to remit, conference overturned the platform's recommendation and carried the resolution overwhelmingly.

Reports of debates by Brent Kennedy

Pictures by Julian McKittrick



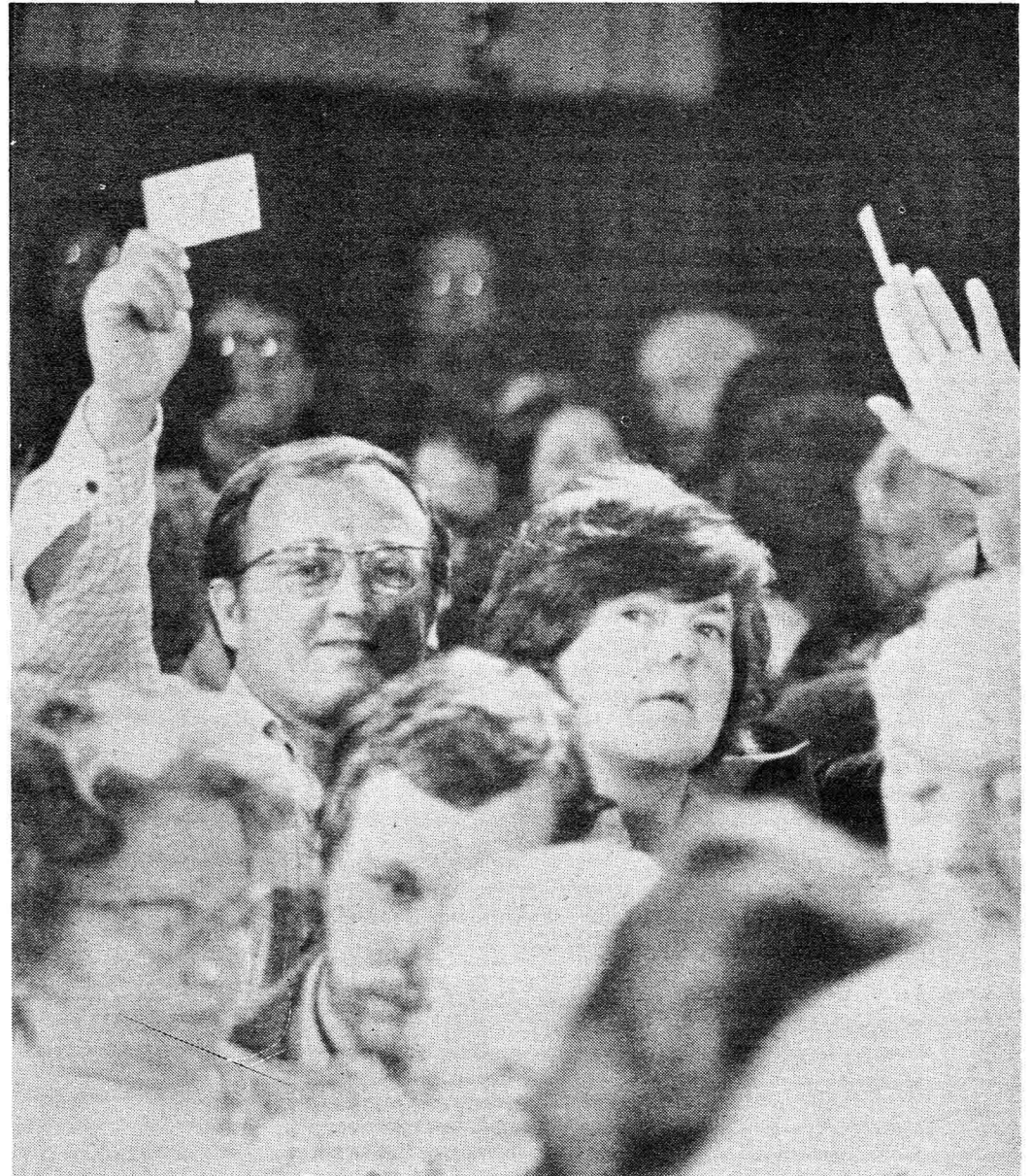
No 8 signals Scanlon's mistake

Re-selection:

A huge gulf separates the attitudes of Labour MPs and the party rank and file. That became quite apparent from the heated debate on Re-selection of MPs.

Next to the rejection of wage restraint, this was the most important debate of conference. The background to this burning issue is the continued failure of Labour governments to reflect the feelings of party workers and implement Labour Party

1978 LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE



AUEW SINKS MAN

policy.

Time and time again, the NEC, largely elected by the same conferences which decide party policy, has had to come into conflict with the cabinet and Parliamentary Labour Party in reminding them of the democratically elected policies they are supposed to be fighting for.

The open contempt with which former Cabinet Minister **Reg Prentice** treated the unpaid volunteers who had him elected was the last straw for the members of Newham North East Labour Party, and they decided to select a new representative who reflected their views.

But that, they found, was no easy matter. A long, drawn-out procedure weighted on the side of the MP and the intervention of right wing infiltrators backed by big business money who dragged the party down into legal entanglements meant that the job took several years.

During that time the full weight of the Prime Minister, several Cabinet Ministers, MPs and the millionaire press came down heavily to crush the local party. Over 100 MPs had mobilised support for this 'champion of the working class', this great 'respector of democracy', but were left high and dry when **Prentice** showed his true colours and

joined the Tory Party. Since that day, of course, no one has dared to subject the Newham Party members to the vicious abuse they received earlier. Yet those MPs remain in the House of Commons and hold the same political views.

This, then, is why the need to make MPs accountable to their party members came to the fore at this conference.

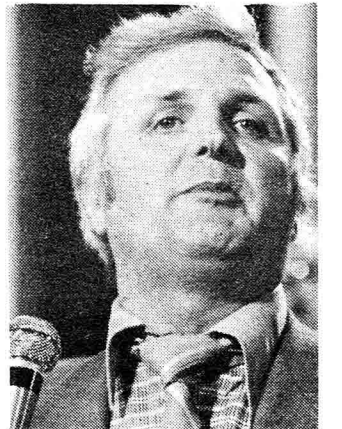
During the last year, an NEC working party had looked into possible rule changes, having given last year's conference a guarantee that automatic, mandatory reselection procedures would be introduced.

Bryan Stanley moved the NEC's Majority Report, arguing for a two-stage procedure that would not make re-selection of a parliamentary candidate mandatory. This method, he argued, would not put a union which had sponsored the sitting MP at a disadvantage and would enable them to sponsor a new candidate.

Moving **Composite 31** in support of the Minority Report of **Jo Richardson**, **Ray Apps** and **Bernard Kissen**, **Croydon Central** delegate **Iain Forbes** argued for the rejection of the two-stage procedure. It would invite interference from the Tory press if the constituency party decid-

ed to move to a selection meeting.

A sitting MP could lengthen that time period, giving elements like **Lewis** and **McCormick** (as in Newham NE) time to intervene. It could split a union branch which wanted to remove its sponsored MP. "It's cumbersome, open to abuse and it doesn't provide for automatic re-selection," **Iain** said.



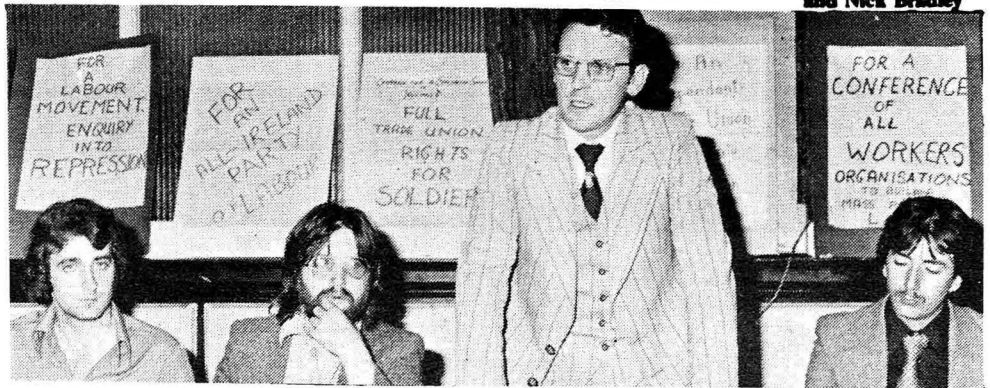
Joe Ashton-Jeered

"This is certainly not a theoretical or academic issue in Newham NE," declared **Alan Haworth**, delegate from that party, seconding the resolution. "It took us three years to select a new candidate, and now we know that the money for the court cases came from that right-wing organisation, NAFF."

ABOUT CONFERENCE

FOR A SOCIALIST SOLUTION

Denis Tourish,
Eddie McParland,
Brendan Gallagher
and Nick Bradley



IN IRELAND

Although the life-and-death issue of the events in Northern Ireland were once again kept off the agenda at this year's Conference, a forum for discussing the events was provided by the Campaign for a Socialist Solution in Ireland.

Brendan Gallagher came over to Blackpool to explain the mockery of justice which led to his son, Willie, being wrongfully imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. Such an 'accident', of course, can happen anywhere; but the detailed account of intimidation, arbitrary arrests and beatings which Brendan gave left no doubt in delegates' minds that Willie Gallagher was a victim of political repression by the state forces.

Lawyers had told Willie that if he recognised the court and pleaded guilty he would get 8 years; if he did not recognise the court he'd get 10 years; and if he pleaded not guilty he'd get 12 years! A constituency delegate who is a member of the legal profession was astounded by the farcical trial which he had seen on television and offered his legal services afterwards.

As Brendan explained, that television play itself was subjected to political censorship and had only appeared at all after a public campaign had forced the withdrawal of a government instruction not to show the programme. During the year in waiting for the trial Willie had been beaten up 15 times in Long Kesh.

Brendan saw many similarities with Ireland developing in Britain with police used against workers in strikes such as Grunwicks, with riot shields and the SPG being introduced. He ended with a warning that what he had described about his son today could be your son tomorrow.

Denis Tourish of the Labour and Trade Union Coordinating Group, also from Strabane, pointed out that the horrific fate of Willie Gallagher was that of many working class youths in Northern Ireland. Giving a brief and vivid account of the events of the last ten years, when 1,800 have been killed, he showed how it was the working class which had borne the brunt of repression, killing, torture and imprison-

ment. As the case of Willie Gallagher showed, the role of the army was not a 'peace-keeping' one of 'keeping two warring factions apart'.

Yet even after ten years of violence by sectarian bigots, the working class was still united in the factories by the trade unions. Opportunities to use that basic class unity to drive out the sectarians and rid Northern Ireland of the problems of low pay, slums and unemployment which give rise to sectarianism had been missed by a lack of political leadership from both the Northern Ireland Labour Party and the Social Democratic Labour Party.

Denis therefore called for the creation of a genuine all-Ireland Labour Party based on the trade unions which, once armed with a socialist programme, would lead the working class to implementing its solution.

Nick Bradley, who as the LPYS rep. on the Party's National Executive Committee has campaigned for four years to raise the issues affecting Irish workers, pointed to the repressive role of the British army, whose tactics of divide and rule had forced Greek and Turkish workers into conflict in Cyprus, Hindus and Moslems in India, and Protestant and Catholic in Ireland.

He had seen this colonialist attitude on his official visit as a member of the NEC study group on NI. One chief constable, confronted with the high figures of injuries sustained by those held in police stations—including people "falling" from third storey windows—claimed that every single one was self-inflicted in order to discredit the police! A senior army officer referred to the people of NI as "wogs".

In the lively discussion that followed, Labour MP Tom Litterick called for the immediate withdrawal of troops. John Baker, delegate from Blaydon CLP, and Peter Taaffe, Editor of 'Militant', pointed out that when troops were sent in in 1969 'Militant' had been almost alone in opposing this, and argued today that the only way the danger of a bloody civil war could be avoided with the withdrawal of the army was through the formation of a trade union defence force to protect workers from the sectarian murder gangs. Along with the formation of a Labour Party, and a united working class campaign for a socialist solution could lead to a socialist Ireland and a socialist Britain.

By Cathy
Wilson



ATORY RE-SELECTION

"Clause 78 of the constitution [the clause used to remove Prentice] is not enough by itself, we know that from our experience, but it is essential that it is kept in the constitution as a safeguard, and that is why Newham NE urges support for the Minority Report."

"What has an MP to be worried about if he does his work and carries out party policy?" asked Tottenham CLP delegate Sheila Peacock in support of the 67 resolutions for automatic re-selection deferred from last year. "Re-selection is about accountability, and MPs are elected by us to represent our policies in parliament."

NUM delegate Eric Clarke squashed the myth about unions being worried about losing sponsored MPs. "Individual union members should get active in their local Labour Parties if they want one of them selected. Constituency Party members, who are the salt of the earth, are held in suspicion by the unions, but that's because many trade unionists have become divorced from the Party. The people behind Composite 31 are more in line with a more progressive, democratic Labour Party."

But the big difference to these views came in a speech from right-wing MP Joe

Ashton, which angered delegates and drew jeers from the audience. "I've got just four minutes to save 300 jobs," he declared, showing his greater attachment to his career than the Party workers who gave him the 'job'.

To loud shouts of "aaah", he painted a grim picture of MPs working long hours in their "non-union" sweatshop with no shop stewards, no pensions and no job security, having to keep their wives, families and mortgages. If automatic re-selection went through there would follow a "purge", a "night of the long knives", etc. But he ended with a threat—MPs who had been replaced would stand in opposition to official Labour candidates, he warned.

But this speech showed nothing but contempt for the rank and file, and became the subject of ridicule at evening meetings for the rest of the week. It was immediately answered by 'Militant' support Bill Burns from Hartlepool CLP who reminded delegates that "MPs aren't somebody special."

"They should be proud to be able to do a job for the working class, without having big salaries and privileges. The AUEW elects its officials, and if they are not re-elected they can go back to their old jobs. We should



Hugh Scanlon, casting the AUEW's vote—this time against pay restraint

have the right of recall over all our representatives and officials and pay them the average industrial wage plus necessary expenses vetted by the movement. After all, after a hard day's work in the factory we do hours of political work in our evenings and weekends without expecting to be paid."

The argument for automatic re-selection had been won! But union officials don't need to stand for re-election

when the time comes for them to retire. And it was the retiring President of the AUEW who became the second figure to emerge from that debate as the subject of questions and arguments for the rest of the conference.

For when the vote on automatic re-selection was announced, it transpired that Hugh Scanlon had "accidentally" forgotten to cast his union's 900,000 votes, thus allowing victory for the rank

and file to slip between his experienced fingers. But such "accidents" cannot hold back the tide of history, and as the fundamental reasons behind the demand for accountability remain, this issue will again come to the fore next year.

What was revealed in this crucial debate will simply strengthen the resolve of the rank and file—both in the Labour Party and the trade unions—for greater control over their representatives.

IRAN

Ripe for Socialist Revolution

The recent demonstration of 250,000 in Jaleh Square, Teheran, in defiance of martial law, leading to the massacre of anything up to 3,000 people, is a measure of the biggest wave of opposition since the Shah was brought back to power in 1953 with the backing of the CIA.

Since hundreds were shot dead last January in a demonstration in the holy city of Qom, despite severe repression, general strikes and demonstrations have spread to all the major cities including Teheran, Isfahan, Shiraz and the shrine city of Mashad.

The Shah's policy of concessions to the religious leaders contrasts sharply with the brutal suppression of workers' strikes which is failing to intimidate the young Iranian working class.

The ruling class in Iran and internationally try to portray these events as a fight between a "progressive" Shah committed to liberalisation and industrialisation, and a reactionary clergy. It is widely believed that the recent horrific cinema fire in Abadan, in which 400 people died, for which religious fanatics were blamed, was caused by agents of the dreaded secret police, SAVAK, in a vain attempt to justify this view.

People are asking why the cinema's doors and windows were apparently locked from the outside, and why, despite the fact that the nearest fire station was three minutes away, the fire was allowed to rage for four hours. Whether or not these suspicions are justified, they are testimony to the general hatred for SAVAK and the Shah.

In reality, the Church is

playing only a secondary role in mass resistance to the Shah's tyranny. Banned literature is distributed in the mosques during prayers. As in Latin America today or the last year's of Franco's Spain, the Church as the only semi-autonomous institution in society cannot help but articulate in a muted and distorted way the fury of the masses. But the working class and the youth are not prepared to be restrained by the religious hierarchy.

It is the social demands of the masses not religious rantings which have shaken the Shah

An article in the American journal 'Newsweek' commented: "The crowd, led by teenagers and veiled women, swarmed through Jaleh Square...Angered over the imposition of martial law several hours before, they shouted down Ayatullah Noori (the religious leader) who urged them to disperse, and then they began pelting soldiers with rocks and bricks. Slowly choking back tear-gas fumes, the mob edged closer to the ranks of the troops. Finally the troops raised their sub-machine guns, firing bursts into the air. They lowered their sights and when the crowd kept coming, sprayed the demonstrators with round after round."

by Dave Todd

Demonstrators have carried placards demanding vengeance against "the brutal Shah and his American imperialist friends" and called for "a Socialist republic based on Islam" ('Newsweek' 18 September). Although these are confused slogans, they show that it is the social demands and not religious rantings that trouble the ruling class. No wonder the Shah was "visibly shaken" ('Newsweek') at the demonstrations.

The rapid expansion of the Iranian economy, based mainly on oil, has greatly increased the strength of the working class. In 1947 Iran had only 175 large enterprises employing a total of 100,000 workers. By 1972 these figures were 6,000 and 1,800,000 respectively. The 'Financial Times' (12 September) estimates the present size of the working class at three million.

Between 1972 and 1975, oil revenue jumped from \$1.50 a barrel to \$10.20. This led to a boom in which Gross National Product rose by 34% (1973-4) and 42% (1974-5). Inflation also rose sharply to 60% and 34% respectively.

The Western monopolies, attracted to Iran by cheap labour and repression of trade union rights, faced a fresh young working class streng-

thened by labour shortages and provoked into heroic strikes by intolerable conditions and rising prices. Due to mass pressure and the decay of feudalism, a nominal land reform and literacy programme was announced by the Shah. The workers won a national minimum wage (also largely only nominal) which kept pace with inflation.

Wages and conditions are nevertheless atrocious. In some areas workers are paid only 79 pence for a working day lasting from 5 am to 8 pm! Many workers earn only £40 a year, while rents are now two-thirds of rents in Paris! In reality 73% of workers earn less than the official "minimum wage"!

In Hamadam, 50% of workers are unemployed and the employers have been able to arbitrarily cut wages and lengthen the working day to 18 hours! In Mashhad, two-thirds of carpet workers are children between 6 and 10 years old, although it is officially "illegal" to employ children below 12. Even the capital city, Teheran, has no sewage system. Tuberculosis and rickets are widespread, and working women suffer such destructive conditions that in Kashan and Aaran most women give Caesarian births.

The peasantry have benefited from the Shah's measures of "progress" no more than the workers. 1,200,000 have had their land taken away from them, and 500,000 have been pushed off the land completely. This has led to food shortages and starvation.

The Shah is probably the richest man in the world. In Iran the top 10% spend 40% of the money

Meanwhile, the ruling class has done very well. The top 10% of the population spend 40% of the money. The Shah is said to be the richest man in the world. The 'Financial Times' (28 July) expresses the position very simply: "UK business can only become interested in the opportunities for investment in Iran where profits can be made and workers are not allowed to strike."

By 1976 the boom was over. It led to a shortage of skilled labour, wastage, corruption, and an oil surplus. The balance of payments surplus is falling, despite oil, from \$5,084 million in 1976-7, to \$3,553m in 1977-8, to a projected 600 million in 1978-9. Trade barriers have limited expansion abroad and EEC textile restrictions above all have hit Iran hard. Among the home market of 34 million there is no money to finance a consumer boom.

The result is that industry works at a fraction of capacity, businessmen are pulling out and investment is low. The recent 'Financial Times' supplement on Iran abounds with headlines like "Economy Slows Down", "Industrial Aims Set Too High", "Agricultural Depression", "Oil Dependence Still Too High", "Acute Shortage of Manpower", "Petrochemicals Failing to Meet Targets" and "Untapped Wealth in Minerals".

More and more, the resources of wealth and manpower are being invested in means of repressing the working class, the only force that can take Iranian society forward. The army is 190,000 strong, the navy and air force are another 12,000 and the SAVAK has 65,000 agents and millions of pounds' worth of arms. It uses such fiendish and sophisticated techniques of repression that even Pinochet's torturers were sent to school in Iran.

These forces reflect the Shah's justified fear of the working class, especially now that he plans to introduce a new "bonus" system to cut wages by 20%. In Aryameh steel mill along, there are 50 SAVAK agents working in a labour force of 3,000.

Since 1972 the working class has mounted a series of heroic strikes, starting with the Azmayesh factory where the Minister of Labour faced hostile demonstrations when he personally came to appeal for a return to work.

But among the middle class too the Shah is losing any support he had—among the peasants, the intelligentsia, the students, the youth, the priests and—most ominously of all—the army.

Once again we can quote the American capitalist journal 'Newsweek'.

"Howling 'Death to the Shah!' an angry mob of 1,500 mourners descended on a lone armoured car at the gates of Teheran's Besheste-Zahra cemetery last week. The armoured car held its ground, and the young major in command grabbed a bull-horn. 'We have no intention of killing you,' he shouted. 'You are our brothers.' Unholstering his pistol, he offered it to the crowd. 'Here, take my gun and kill me if you wish,' he shouted. The mourners cheered and began pelting the major and his men with flowers."

The army is "unreliable"...all the objective conditions for a revolutionary change exist

Several conscripts shot their officers or committed suicide on being ordered to open fire on demonstrators, and many deserters and

mutineers have been executed in recent weeks.

A US army officer interviewed in 'Newsweek' (25 September) said of the Iranian army: "I would not put a lot of faith in their reliability. We don't know where the breaking point would be." An Iranian official was also quoted: "The longer the Shah keeps his army on the streets, the greater the danger of contamination."

Tanks were stationed outside the Palace for the first time in 25 years. The Shah himself told 'Newsweek': "We were, I think, in a very grave situation last Thursday and it was very close. People were not abiding by the law. They were not paying the slightest attention to the government's warning. As a matter of fact, they could have occupied everything they wanted."

All the objective factors for a revolutionary change in society existed.

The working class was not prepared any longer to tolerate the old order; it was prepared to suffer death by the hundreds and thousands rather than submit. The millions of non-proletarian masses in town and country were sympathetic to the workers and hostile to the regime.

The ruling class itself was split between policies of concession or coercion, with open hostilities between the monarchy, the church, the army and big business, and a rapid succession of governments.

The crucial factor which remains to be created is a revolutionary party which could harness the masses' energies and give conscious expression in action to their common hatred for the existing order.

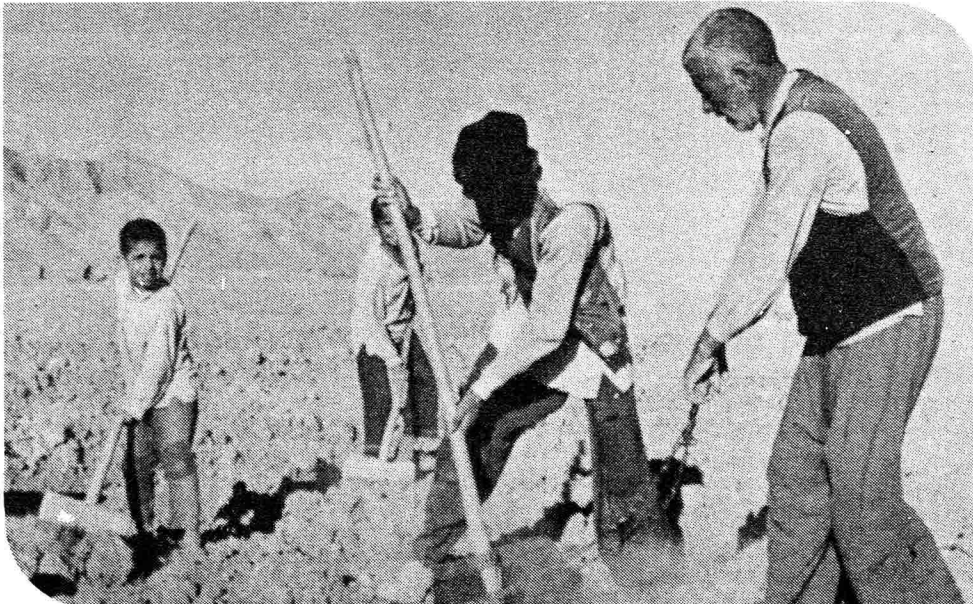
Iran's Communist Party, the Tudeh, has clearly failed the test of these events

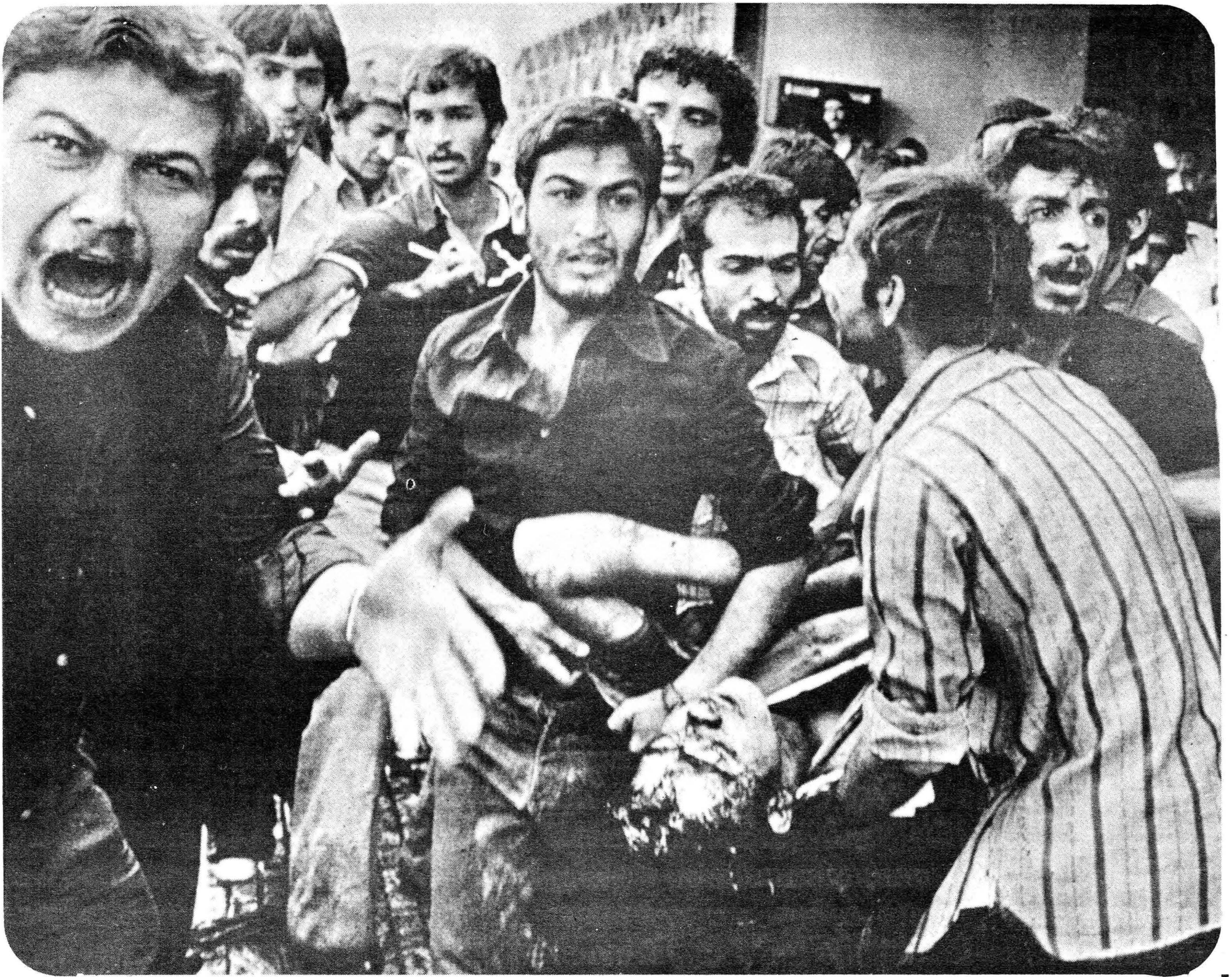
The savage irony of the situation is that neither wing of the so-called "Communist" movement was prepared to struggle against the Shah's clique—neither the Moscow bureaucracy which cynically financed and propped up its Southern neighbour the Shah over the last twenty years, or the equally cynical Chinese bureaucracy which sent Hua on a friendship mission to the Shah right in the middle of the massacre of workers in Teheran.

In particular, the main workers' party, the Tudeh (Communist Party), has failed the test of these events. Formed in 1941, it gained tremendous support after the Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan in Northern Iran (while Britain occupied the South). This gave a great spur to the Iranian working class hoping for social liberation from the North.

In 1946 Tudeh militants led massive strikes, including that of 50,000 oil workers around Khuristan (South West Iran) demanding oil nationalisation. This forced the capitalists to bring the Tudeh into the cabinet, to compromise and discredit it and then throw it out again.

During the revolutionary events of 1951, the Tudeh regained massive support on a programme of oil nationalisation, and political liberties. Street battles took place between unemployed textile workers and police in Isfahan, and the Oil Company had to raise wages by 35%. Mass pressure brought the bourgeois nationalist Mossadeq to power, and the present Shah had to flee into exile.





Above: Iranian workers show anger at brutality of the regime Below: Subsistence expected from Shah's subjects

Such was the extent of the social crisis that the Parliament voted unanimously (with one sole abstention) to nationalise oil! The Mossadeq government ushered in big reforms and balanced between the classes.

If the opportunity had been grasped then to organise committees of soldiers to undermine the Generals, to arm the workers against the threat of reaction, to give the land to the peasants and industry to the working class organised in councils, then the counter-revolution of 1953 when the Shah was brought back, would have been impossible.

It has taken 25 years for a new generation to grow up unaffected by the disappointment and hopelessness of their parents.

The Tudeh, however, has continued to dream only of the return of another Mossadeq. It arbitrarily limited its goal to abstract schema of "bourgeois democracy", proclaiming as early as 1947 its models as "the UK, the USA and Sweden"!

Iranian society can only go forward on a socialist basis

But Iranian society can only develop further on a socialist basis. Even the recent years of feverish growth have only further intensified the social and economic contradictions of Iranian society. In the context of world economic capitalist stagnation, the only relief from unending misery and bloody repression in Iran is



the expropriation of the landlords, multinational corporations and Iranian capital, and the development of a planned economy.

Such is the intensity of the social crisis and the pressure on the army that an officers' coup cannot be ruled out in the pattern of Syria and other countries. Such a military government would then impose such a solution on society from above, establishing a quasi-Stalinist bonapartist system resting on state ownership of the economy, but with a privileged bureaucratic elite in control from the start.

But Iran is not a Syria, Ethiopia or Afghanistan! With a working class of at least three million—nearly 10% of the population—Iran

could take the path of Russia in 1917, provided only that a conscious revolutionary party is created.

The lessons of recent events must be the subject of countless discussions in the factories and the workers' suburbs today. The lessons of 1947 and 1951-3 too must be in the minds of a layer of militants. There are uncanny parallels to the period before the Russian Revolution.

As with Tsarist Russia, the Shah's Iran has had an influx of foreign capital over the last two or three decades, which has created a powerful working class and broken up for all time the traditions of feudalism. The best elements within the opposition are turning away from romantic dreams of overthrowing the Shah by

terrorist or guerrilla methods and have focussed their attention on the working class.

A new working class, fresh to the realities of capitalist exploitation, tied by family links to the countryside, disciplined on the mass-production conveyor belts, and untainted by liberal or reformist illusions, has exploded on the scene in a burst of heroic struggle. The militants in the factories must be reflecting on the role of those so-called "Socialists" and "Marxists" who wait in vain for a liberal saviour.

The role of British and US imperialism has been to prop up the Shah in order to protect their interests in Iran. British imperialism exports £325 million of goods to Iran,

and has substantial investments.

The British labour movement must end arms supplies to Iran and put a stop to SAVAK activities in Britain, as well as giving full support in all forms to the struggle of the workers in Iran for political liberties, above all the right to organise and strike.

The struggle against the Shah must also be a struggle against capitalism and for the nationalisation of Iran's resources under workers' control and management

But the Iranian ruling class survives only by ruthless super-exploitation of the workers, and will not provide basic democratic rights except as a short-term trick to disarm the workers when it has its back to the wall, as in 1947 and 1951. The struggle against the Shah must be also a struggle against capitalism and for the nationalisation of Iran's resources under workers' control and management.

A socialist plan of production would develop Iran's industrial, mineral and agricultural potential to heights undreamed of today. The workers organised under a clear socialist leadership could effectively appeal to the troops, so that their selfless and courageous acts of sympathy with the people would not merely lead to martyrdom, as today, but would be linked to a force offering a real and tangible hope of establishing a new society, cleansing Iran of the rottenness and filth of the present regime.

A call for support to the workers and peasants of neighbouring countries for a workers' democracy in Iran would break the grip of imperialism in the Middle East, and undermine the diseased bureaucracy in the deformed workers' states of Russia and Eastern Europe. It would be a giant stride forward towards a Socialist Middle East which would guarantee full rights for all nationalities (including Kurds, Palestinians, Jews, etc.) and towards a Socialist World Federation.

LETTERS TO: The Editor, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LETTERS

"Provocative"

Dear Comrades

The Young Socialist branches in Southend and South East Essex have held a successful demonstration against the National Front. In what is traditionally a conservative area, 80 supporters of the Young Socialists and Anti-Nazi League demonstrated their hatred for the racist politics of the National Front.

The march was the culmination

of a vigorous campaign by the LPYS that brought home to the youth on the dole queues and those still at school the need to fight the NF with a programme that explains that racialism is a direct result of the capitalist system and can only be defeated by socialist policies.

Now, though, one of the first tasks of the YS will be to get an explanation from the police of their refusal to allow marchers to carry 'Militant' anti-NF posters. Before the start of the march the police superintendent refused to allow the use of a poster on our banners and declined to give any reason for his refusal, only saying that these posters were "provocative".

Fraternally
Ollie Mingard
Southend LPYS

Seeing off the Nazis

Dear Comrades

On September 16th, Southampton had its first taste of an NF paper sale. Within a short time of the Nazis' arrival, ANL and Labour Party opponents outnumbered them.

The police were there in force and attempted to move us on, but they soon realised we would not be deterred and started to move on the 12 Nazis. One NF member, peeved to be moved, grabbed some ANL leaflets and threw them in the air. He was arrested for littering.

What was so good was that we expected to have to oppose these scum by ourselves, with leaflets, slogans and a street meeting. But shoppers, some with children, helped us, and black teenagers joined in, swelling our numbers from about 20 to 150-200.

Within minutes the NF were marched off by the police. If they come back next week, they will again see what we feel about them. It is very easy to get socialist and anti-fascist ideas across when people see fascism as a real threat.

Fraternally
Pat Blatch
Southampton Labour Party

Supplies—no demand

Dear Comrades

I am a teacher and graduated in May. Since then I have applied for 68 jobs, over 30 of which were teaching posts and the others shop jobs, cleaning etc.

I have had seven interviews for teaching jobs and three for others and have not yet been offered anything except a counter job in a bookshop, which I turned down as the gross pay was less than £30 a week. After paying tax and my husband losing his tax relief on me—I am not entitled to benefit in my own right as I am a woman—this would amount to less than £10 net.

This job had over 100 applicants and I was on a short list with five other graduates. God help the unemployed school leaver.

Each teaching job for which I have been interviewed has had a similar number of applicants and I have been told I am "overqualified" for the other types of work.

Today I went to a Job Centre where I explained my situation and was told to go to another Job Centre (but not the reason why). This I did, and explained my situation again.

I asked about jobs in the

Civil Service and was told that there are 'no vacancies' in this area. I know from people who work for the Civil Service that this is not true. I said I had clerical experience and was told that there are no temporary clerical jobs available. This is not true either.

I tried to become a supply teacher but although they are desperately short of supplies in this area they will not take probationers (although they are happy to use unqualified student teachers as unpaid supplies).

It is not the fault of the workers at the Job Centre that there are so few jobs and so many unemployed—I am one uncounted statistic as I cannot sign on—but that of the system, as has been explained many times in the 'Militant'.

But if that is the kind of help and advice which is being offered to unemployed people the large sums of money involved in running the Centres would be better spent elsewhere, perhaps employing teachers to raise the standards of literacy which those who make the cuts are so fond of shouting about, or raising the levels of unemployment benefits until the system responsible for creating unemployment is ended.

Yours fraternally
Liz Walsh
Brighton LPYS

Coincidental profits

Dear Comrades

An article in the 'Sunday Times Business News' (24 September 1978) shows how a fast buck can still be made, especially if you've got access to the right information!

One ambitious entrepreneur

managed to use one of the bastions of capitalism in the country, the Stock Exchange, to make a right few bob. And all through a "fortunate coincidence" or so he says!

David Llewellyn, chief executive of the 'English Property Corporation' described in the article how this firm has been able to develop a 3-acre site in the centre of the French town, Nice. Since 1970 this firm has been waiting for the right moment to conclude their "delicate negotiations" concerning this apparently "viable project". A project which Llewellyn states could "make millions of pounds".

Not satisfied with this, Llewellyn has been able to further his own financial situation without concern for the 5% limits. Several days prior to the ECP's latest talks on the project, Llewellyn bought 300,000 of the firm's shares at 30p each.

After some "city talk" the shares moved up in value to 43p each, a level they have since maintained. When questioned about this transaction, Llewellyn called it "the first fortunate coincidence I have ever had in my very substantial buying." Yes Mr Llewellyn, but a profitable coincidence totalling to a sum of £39,000.

Surely, you ask, this is not right, something should be done! Well Mr Llewellyn has been shrewd, he has taken out a court injunction preventing the capitalist press from investigating it any further.

As if that would be of any use to the workers in Britain and in France. We say "open the books—let the workers decide" and not some biased law court judge.

Yours fraternally
David Churchley
Cathcart CLP

Unco-operative

Dear Comrades

One wing of the labour movement is the co-operative movement and we are often exhorted to support the 'Co-op' rather than capitalist multiples. The milk delivery service here gives an example of the fact that competing in a capitalist environment, the Co-op just has to act like the capitalists.

I got my milk from the Co-op because, unlike United Dairies, it had the very sensible system of one person delivering the milk each day and another collector coming round once a week to get money, take orders etc. In other words the poor milkman didn't have to do his own collecting, sell bread etc. etc. Recently the collector was taken away and the milkman now has to do what the other firms' milkmen do. This was in the name of 'increasing efficiency'. All it means to me is that on Thursdays milk comes two or three hours late as the milkman tries to make his collection!

To add insult to injury, about a month ago we received a grovelling letter from the dairy manager explaining that "Due to staff holidays and sickness we are extremely short of staff at the moment...our Round Salesmen might have to leave two days' supply, and then miss you for one day." How about employing some more milkmen?

That is what happens to an island of socialism in a sea of capitalism!

Yours
Geoff Jones
Brighton Labour Party

CONTROVERSY: Wage restraint — for whose benefit?

Dear Fellow Workers

I hope to persuade the readers of this paper to accept the view of the government concerning wage restraint. Being a regular reader of 'Militant' myself I am usually in full sympathy with the views it expresses. However, on this point I fear I must disagree.

The cabinet have received very poor reward for their efforts to put Britain's economy back upon its feet. Faced with inflation running at almost 30% the government have followed the only practical alternative open to them. Admittedly, the steep rise in oil prices at the time aggravated the situation, but few economists will disagree that the main cause of the high inflation rate was the immense increase in the wages bill of the nation following the relaxation of wage restraint when Labour won the election.

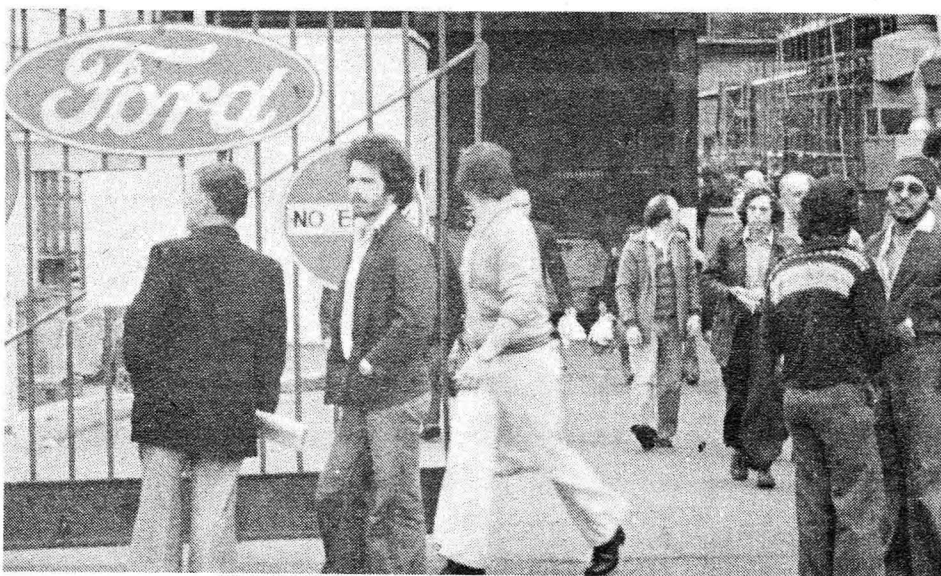
At that time, very few workers benefitted from the situation, as the rise in prices soon accounted for any increases in pay. Some of the working class did make gains

in real income, but they were in the minority, and consisted of those whose industrial muscle could force the largest concessions from employers.

The fact is, wage increases amounting to more than 5% or 10% must come from somewhere. How many 'Militant' readers really think the capitalists will accept cuts in their profits? They will simply use the higher production costs as an excuse for putting up their prices even more.

Aren't the plans of Callaghan and his colleagues preferable to the sort of treatment we can expect under a Thatcher government? With the memory of the 1971 Industrial Relations Act still fresh in my mind, I appeal to members of the labour movement to give full co-operation to our leaders in the cabinet.

However, any wage restraint must apply to all members of our community. We must firmly oppose huge pay rises such as those experienced by Lew Grade and the heads of the nationalised industries earlier this year. The working class



should not be the only ones to make sacrifices for the good of Britain.

But Callaghan must be warned: any agreement by the working class to the government's proposals must be accompanied by a firm commitment by Labour ministers to embark on an unprecedented programme of social reform if re-elected with a workable majority. Support Callaghan! and ensure a Labour victory at the next election.

Yours fraternally
David Rutt
Treasurer,
Ruislip-Northwood LPYS

Dear Comrades

What is being offered to the low paid workers of this country? I believe it is a straight choice—5% or Margaret Thatcher. Some democracy, free enterprise, just the right to exploit people that are less fortunate than oneself.

5% of a low paid worker's pay is a joke and unfair. 5% of a good wage is a rise in pay. I thought the Labour Party was supposed to even up society not widen the gap.

Our Labour leaders should advocate socialist policies now and capture the imagination of the working classes. The truth is the politicians are more concerned with their high paid jobs.

If they go all out to help us the Tory newspapers would make life intolerable for them. Some democracy we live in. 5% or Thatcher, a Tory government or an investment strike. No wonder our Labour governments go out of office each time the elections come about.

Fraternally
J Hearn
Shop Steward, NUPE

Dear Comrades

In view of the current interest in Ford's wage negotiations it may be useful for the readers of the 'Militant' to be acquainted with the following facts which come from Ford's Annual Report for 1976/77.

The annual report indicates that wages and salaries in this period went up from £372m to £447m in 1977. That is an increase of 20%. However, the "average number of employees" increased in this time from 68,000 to 71,000, so the average employee's pay rose by 15.2% in the year.

This figure of course breaks the 10% guideline but this was accepted as fact this time last year. However, the Annual Report has more facts of interest. It also shows that between 1976 and 1977 Ford directors' pay went up from £175,000 to £261,000. This is an increase of 49%! And of course the chairman's salary went up from £30,457 to £54,843 which is an increase of 80%!!

In the same time that these jokers at the top awarded themselves wage increases of 49% or over, they saw company profits rise by over 100% from £121m in 1976 to £246m in 1977. And these gentlemen have the audacity to suggest this year to the workers of Ford that they should be "socially responsible" and accept 5%. They must be joking!!

Fraternally
Bob Wylie
East Kilbride Labour Party

great effort raises £3443 but - DON'T STOP NOW

What a marvellous week for the 'Militant'! Giant steps forward were made at the Labour Party Conference. 'Militant' supporters were in the thick of the battle for policies in the real interests of workers everywhere.

They sold over 1,100 copies of "the best paper in the labour movement", the Gloucester delegate, for example, selling 70! Militant supporters were also responsible for an excellent collection of over £500 at the Conference Militant Meeting and a further £318 from delegates and visitors, Trade Union leaders, MPs, and Prospective Parliamentary candidates.

We would like to say a special thank-you to all those who contributed in Blackpool—be it the £20s or the 20ps. They are far too numerous to mention but helped push this week's total for the Fighting Fund even higher than last week's—to an excellent £3,343.78.

It wasn't enough to get us to the 3/4 year target of £52,500, but over £15,000 raised in the six weeks of our September drive is a marvellous achievement: a real credit to all those who make the sacrifices to see their paper grow.

But we must say to every fighter in the labour movement, with our Fighting Fund as with the Labour Party Conference, the latest successes do not mean the end of the battle. They will only have been worth the effort if they are eventually followed up.

These are many of the sources of this week's grand total: the larger individual donations included A Campbell (UCATT) £50; two Chester LP members £50; two Coventry students £46; Anon (Coventry) £40; D English (GMWU) £34; D Mole (Stafford) £30; Nottingham reader £20, and J Wilson (Chester-le-Street) £15. £10 donations included: K Halliday (Stafford LPYS), a Preston student, Pargan Singh (Pres., Derby IYA) and Walsall readers.

Fivers this week came from: S Cunningham (Sec. Hull Trades Council); J Martyn (Hull NUT); J Wilner (Withington CLP); L Evans (Wavertree CLP); H Smith (Wavertree CLP); B Currey (Garston CLP); V Clark (Stafford NALGO); V Infantino (Coventry TGWU); T

Begley (Liverpool student); W Cunningham (Merseyside CPSA); Rotherham teacher; three Blyth LPYS members.

£2 donations from: J Turner (London); J Kowalik (Vice-chairman Coventry SW CLP); J Parry (Merseyside); B Wilkinson (Hull NUR); G Dyson (Sec. Rotherham USDAW); J Lygo and B Shaw (Torbay LP); A Blake (Ipswich).



Money from the appeal at Labour Party Conference 'Militant' meeting

£1 donations included: R Walsh (Merseyside); B Webster (Hull TGWU); T Beddis (Coventry); R Lee (Bridlington LPYS); P Galvin (London EETPU); J McNamara (Merseyside NGA); T Roll, P Mahony, N Witherage (Newcastle DHSS Office); J Cleve (Kingsgrove LPYS); G Batley (Wolstanton NUM); J Goodman (Coventry); S Cannon and M Mullen (Chester-le-Street LPYS); N Crocket and M McCormack (Stafford LP); K Round (Rotherham USDAW); M Cadbury and J Divers (Glasgow University Labour Club); D Moss (Torbay LPYS); T Harmen (Plymouth Sutton LPYS).

Other individual contributors include: J Lancaster £8 and Cllr D Barnes £6 (both Leyton); P Wiles (Flamboro LP) £7; J Tree (Hull) £3.50; and G Derlen (Liverpool) £3.38. Ranjit Tajeda (Leicester) raised £6 and M Krokos and M Kreizle, two Cardiff

school students, gave £1.50 and £1.70 respectively. S Norton (London) £1.48, B Brum (London) £1.88, B Hollingsworth (Birmingham) £1.63, Oliver Wright (London) 40p and P Mears (Cardiff) and M Miller (Plymouth) both 50p.

Donations and collections received include Merseyside CPSA Broad Left members £18; Hull Joint LPYSes £13.50; Walton LPYS £6; Gosport LPYS £5 donation and £3.77 collection; Pirie Labour Club £3.28; Balliston Garowhill LP £6.50; Chester LPYS and Bridlington LP £2 each and Southgate LPYS's raffle £1.35. Collection sheets forwarded from Birmingham (£59.91) included sums from F Wardle (NSMM), H Pulford (FBU) and M Hyde (AUEW).

A sheet from Coventry raised £14.87, including sums from M Kennard, R Casey, R Cole, J Renshaw (all AUEW

Rolls Royce). The Blyth collection raised £3.80 including J McHale, R Cozelby, Mrs Middleton, A Serridge and M Gilfillan and F Robson.

Jumble sales helped us in Oxford £85, Leicester West LPYS £30, Caerphilly £31, and Huddersfield £21.50. Socials were popular: total £381 includes: Oxford (various events) £160, Harlow £25, Bradford students £60, Southampton barbeque £32.05, and a party held by G Hill, Coventry, £15.

We also received bulk donations from readers in: Birmingham £123; Luton £15; Leeds £63; Preston £50; Bristol £90; Gwent £35; Stoke £25; Thanet £15; and Chesterfield £20 among others.

Readers also raised £50 from happenings such as clerical assistance, sponsored walks, sponsored football, taxis, books, badges, sold and fruit sold. Have you a useful

hobby that will help us?

Our thanks to every contributor in this crucial week. We are still behind target, but it is obvious from the examples above that the 'missing' £5,000 could be recouped in the month of October—it will have to be!

As readers know, big business and the banks won't give us any credit. So it's up to you. We are still aiming to take the expensive step to bring back the red to the 'Militant' and to give us an enormously improved capacity all round.

DON'T EASE UP: THE BATTLE HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN!!!

Clare Doyle

£52,500 NEEDED BY OCTOBER 7th

FIGHTING FUND CHART		£70,000	
Area	Target 39 Wks	Target 52 Wks	Received
Eastern	3,300	4,400	2,389.29
Hants & IOW	1,575	2,100	2,295.36
Humberside	1,650	2,200	1,563.15
Lancashire	1,125	1,500	637.70
London: North	5,775	7,700	5,118.40
London: South	2,850	3,800	2,682.21
Manchester & District	2,175	2,900	1,635.00
Merseyside & District	3,375	4,500	2,364.70
Midlands East	3,300	4,400	2,259.25
Midlands West	5,500	7,400	4,900.82
Northern	3,675	4,900	2,909.81
Scotland East	1,875	2,500	1,378.03
Scotland West	2,125	2,900	1,332.12
South East	1,725	2,300	1,857.87
South West	1,725	2,300	1,807.36
Thames Valley	1,275	1,700	1,281.71
Wales East	1,500	2,000	1,455.20
Wales West	1,725	2,300	1,667.98
Yorkshire	3,900	5,200	2,491.57
Others	2,250	3,000	5,506.96
	52,500	70,000	47,534.49

Progress towards year's target ■ Towards October 7th target

ADS

RATES
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MILITANT MEETINGS

OXFORD Militant Public Meeting. Peter Taaffe (Editor, Militant) 'The way forward for Labour' East Oxford Community Centre, Princes St, Cowley Road. Friday October 20th, 8pm.

ASHTON Militant Readers Meeting Tuesday 17 October 8pm. AUEW Rooms Margaret Street, Ashton. The fight against the National Front. Speaker: Margaret Manning (Moss Side CLP)

OLDHAM Militant Readers Meeting. Sunday 15th October 8pm. St. Andrews Parish Hall, Middleton Road. 'Which way forward for Labour?' Speaker: John Byrne (Ardwick CLP)

BLAYDON Militant Readers Meeting. After Blaepool conference, which way for Labour? Speaker: John Baker (Delegate Blaydon CLP). Tuesday October 17th 7pm Ridley Hall, Blaydon Branch Library.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

RHONDDA Trade Union Discussion Group. Every Tuesday. Star Pub, Ystrad, Rhondda (Back bar) 7.30pm.

SUNDERLAND Marxist Discussion Group. Wednesday October 25th. 'The 1926 General Strike'. For further details ring Diane English. Sunderland 44365.

BLYTH Marxist Discussion Group 'The Russian Revolution'. Chappington Community Centre. 7.30 pm. Wednesday 25th October

HARTLEPOOL Marxist Discussion Meetings. October 15th—'Liberation Struggles in Africa'. The meetings start at 7.30 pm on Sunday at 18 Catherine's Street, Headlands, Hartlepool.

STOCKTON Trade Union Discussion Group Meetings. October 16th—'Liberation Struggles in Africa'. The meetings start at 7.30 pm on Monday night, upstairs in the Spread Eagle, Dovecote Street, Stockton.

CLASSIFIED

COMING SOON! Janet Scott's Hallowe'en birthday party (watch this space)

DEMONSTRATE against repression in Iran. Organised by CARI. Saturday 14th October, 1.30. Speakers Corner, Hyde Park. March to Iranian Embassy. End martial law! No arms for the Shah! Free political prisoners!



Reports from:
Southampton,
Dagenham,
Langley, Swansea.



Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

FIGHT FOR THE FULL CLAIM

Catching up what's been lost

What price health?

Interviews with Dagenham workers by **Bob Faulkes**, (Hackney Central LP)

"We've had a continuous fight on the use of solder. The stuff we use has an arsenic, acid and lead compound. It rots your clothes, gets on your hands when you're eating.

"The company never tell us the results of blood tests. We never get a test when we start. So we can't check, and they only inform us if we have over the danger limit in our blood, then move you off the job.

"We had one bloke who had a high lead count just before we came out. They put him on another job until his lead count goes down.

"We get treated by these agency nurses and they're not equipped to do it. One bloke came back with enormous bruising on his arm after an injection. Some blokes are refusing to be treated. The company just want to get you back on your job.

"One of the side effects of the solder is it makes you very tired. A foreman on our section said when he goes home he falls asleep straight away—he says he can't stop sleeping.

"We have a turnover of labour with new blokes starting every year. When we go back we'll see how far we can go with it. Some older blokes are not interested but others are prepared to stop if necessary.

"Ford's attitude to health? As long as the line keeps going that's all he's worried about."

Ray Green, T&GWU shop steward, solder section.

"In our section, the work is terrible for the line workers, boring and repetitive like all that work. I'm a door setter on the line.

"The older blokes get what they call tennis elbow, it strains all the muscles from continuous use of the hammer.

"One bloke called Harry has been there since before the war. He has to keep doing the same job—he'd seize up if they took him off. He won't come off the line—he can't do anything else."

John Ickey (T&GWU, 2 years in Dagenham Body Plant)

LPYS support Langley

On Tuesday 3 October Uxbridge and Hayes LPYS branches held a special open meeting about the Ford dispute. About 35 people including many Ford workers from Langley, came along.

Vic Barnes, AUEW convenor at Ford, Langley told us of the events running up to the dispute and of the immediate reaction of the men to strike at once.

He explained how the past years of wage restraint have seen lower standards of living, rising inflation and high unemployment, but this wage restraint never seems to affect the managers, generals and bastions of big business.

A CPSA member told us

that his union had expressed support for Ford workers—CPSA branches were now in the process of preparing leaflets to tell the strikers of their rights to benefits.

On Wednesday night Uxbridge Labour Party General Committee agreed to circulate all branches and affiliated organisations and unions with information about the dispute and a financial appeal on behalf of the Ford workers, also asking them to invite speakers from Ford's to their meetings to explain the case for their claim.

Jeanette Thomas
(Secretary, Uxbridge LPYS)

Swansea

"I've always voted Labour as I'm a working man but at the next election I might not bother. I realise this is a terrible thing to say as working men have spilt blood fighting for the right to vote, but I have no choice."

Those were the bitter words of a Ford worker speaking at Swansea Labour Party Young Socialists' public meeting held to discuss the dispute. After a speech by Kevin Ramage (LPYS NC) outlining why the dispute is important to the whole labour movement the brothers from Fords completely exploded the myth that they were big wage earners. One told how he took home £45 plus £18 for shifts, and went on to say how shifts affected his life.

Shifts

"I never see my kids when I work on afternoons. Working nights I am physically sick as it completely upsets my metabolism and on mornings, the good shift, I'm so dog tired that when I get home I just sleep." That's the life of a Ford's track worker week in, week out.

Warm applause greeted comrade Mark Morton when he put forward the LPYS demands of absolute right of recall for all representatives of the working class, be they MPs or trade unionists and that they should only get an average industrial wage. He was followed by another Ford worker who pointed out that the only way to get these things was to join the Labour

See that place? [a massive building opposite the body plant]. That's stacked full of panels. Ford has requested heating from the AUEW District Committee to stop them going rusty.

We've turned them down. Unless they're prepared to talk about our claim, no way are they going to get heat.

The spares have dried up. I reckon the whole of Ford's European operations will be seriously curtailed. All the dealers will be hit by the lack of spares etc.

I think the next few weeks will be vital. The company will have to equate the losses it's making in comparison to a

Eddie Chapman

(AUEW Joint Works Committee member, 17 years at Fords Dagenham)

quick settlement. I think they're losing about £10m a week.

So far we've had a steady trickle of resignations (pickets told me of 11 that morning). **If we lose, no way will Ford be able to recruit labour—it's a Catch-22 situation.** Ford should look at it in the long term.

Listen, in 1974 Ford tore the agreements up. The press shop men were out for 6 weeks. Ford had to pay from £10 to £12 in rises. They were

desperate for labour—they paid me an extra £11.20.

I see it like this. If they continually restrict workers' wages, the workers will break through eventually to catch up on what they've lost—it's inevitable.

The staff who are still working will have their own consciences to live with. The only advantage to us is the one section that's still working, ACTSS [T&G white collar section] make up the pay slips and benefits etc.

The mood of the lads is determined. The only way we can lose is if the men are forced back by their financial situation, if it gets really bad.

Unions and Labour back claim

As the strike moved into its second week, support for the attempt to break the 5% was evident from all sides. A vast number of motorists who pass the picket line toot their horns and give the pickets the thumbs up sign.

One ex-Ford worker who now works as a coal man stopped his lorry and gave the pickets a bag of coal for the brazier. Even a firm of contractors, who it was agreed could remove their compressors and other plant from inside the factory, used their scaffolding and tarpaulin to erect a shelter for the pickets. Southampton Trades

Council and Labour Party have already passed motions in support of the strike. Southampton LPYS, after hearing the Convenor address them, immediately sent a letter to the party EC asking them to hold a public meeting in support of the Ford workers.

Eastleigh LPYS heard a speaker from Fords and agreed to send a resolution to their management committee in support of the strike. Part of the motion said "We believe that wage restraint is not the answer to the economic crisis, and that only a bold socialist programme

will bring about a continual rise in the living standards of working people".

After reading last week's paper, several of the pickets could not understand the attitude of the pickets from Gate 25 (Dagenham Body Plant) in wanting the staff not to go into the factory. As far as we can see the staff are not doing any real work, apart from preparing our wage slips for the tax rebates, but they are costing the company approx. one million pound a week in wages.

By John Kelly
(Southampton Ford worker)

Docks-blacking

In Southampton, dock shop stewards agreed to block the movement of all Ford goods and their decision was endorsed by their branch meeting on Thursday. The result of this was effective immediately, with one ship coming to pick up 80 transit vans for Southern Ireland, being rerouted to Rotterdam. The 80 Transits are now left on the quayside and will remain there until after the dispute. The blacking is also preventing Ford bringing up to 2,000 Fiestas a week into Britain, worth approximately £6 million at showroom prices. Several thousand pounds worth of Ford parts are tied up inside the docks.



Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

Ford workers lobby Labour Party conference. The strike was one of the main reasons conference supported the resolution, moved by 'Militant' supporters, against the 5%.

We've shown our strength - now for a fighting lead



The Post Office Engineering Union has come of age as a major trade union. Throughout the industrial action in pursuit of the 35-hour week, the membership showed tremendous fighting spirit in the face of a vicious campaign of victimisation on behalf of the Post Office management.

No-one can now doubt the capacity of our members to fight when our interests are at stake!

Such was the effect on the wider trade union movement that our struggle was singled out for special praise and attention time and again at both the TUC and the Labour Party conference. Our members have helped lead the way in the struggle for a shorter

working week.

We only achieved half of our demand, and this was on the basis of "nil costs", which still leaves the threat of redundancies for our members as the modernisation programme gathers further momentum. Local branches have been left to sort out the confused detail of the final claim. As with the miners' productivity deals, the possibility of local disputes cannot be ruled out as management in certain areas attempt to foist a draconian interpretation of the deal onto union branches. Vigilance will be vital!

Most members of the union will not have been fully aware that there were potential strings to the deal. They saw the 37½-hours as a partial victory. They will not allow

management to destroy the gains they have achieved. The attitude of the membership is that now this partial step forward is under their belts, the union can consolidate its position in order to win the full 35-hour week with no strings in the very near future.

By Kevin Patterson
(Secretary, Leeds Internal Branch POEU)
personal capacity

The members also believe that the thrust of the union should now centre on wages. The union is clearly opposed to wage restraint. A 20% wage increase from this August was decided at the National Conference.

The branches of the union must make sure that there is prompt and decisive action to

achieve that demand.

We have the power to defend and improve our living standards and working conditions. The potential industrial muscle of our union has been shown!

Already, after only one limited mobilisation of our membership nationally, our union has proved that it is a force to be reckoned with. The action of the London branches in particular spread utter panic amongst the business fraternity of the City of London.

The membership are now reflecting on the experience of the last few months. A campaign within the ranks of the union at this time for greater democracy and for fighting socialist policies would meet with an enthusiastic response!

Union challenge to contractors TORIES THREATEN JOBS AND WAGES

Over the last few months rubbish has been piling up in Bristol. Collections have been spasmodic or none at all. The local press as always totally distorted the reasons behind the crisis. Jimmy Wall, the dustmen's shop steward, explains the real reasons and the issues at stake.

Basically it's a struggle by the directly employed labour force against the use by the county of contractors. Its been going on for some years now.

Several contractors have been used by the local authority, rather than employing direct labour. They like to use them so that they haven't got any direct responsibility for the job.

The first problem arose because the county of Avon (Tory controlled) when they took over responsibility for the tips in Bristol, allowed all sorts of contractors to fill up the tips.

Because the county were so intransigent that they wouldn't agree to a decent money payment at the only incinerator, the lads quite rightly

Jimmy Wall spoke to Brian Beckingham

refused to co-operate in a third shift. So the incinerator can't take all the rubbish that is produced in Bristol in a week.

We had a mass demonstration outside Avon house in which we blocked all the traffic in the morning. This was a spontaneous demonstration by the lads who just drove all the ash carts to Avon house, and we felt it was very effective.

It is T&GWU policy not to take part in any work that's going to put money in private contractors' pockets.

The County Tories would be saving themselves thousands of pounds a week if they paid the incinerator men a decent rate to work a night

shift.

But the problem is that manning these systems and working the new equipment that's being installed is going to hinge on whether they come to some agreement with the lads about a third shift and a whole range of issues. There is going to be no progress until someone at Avon house sits down and talks about hard cash to the

lads down there.

The whole issue is really over the county trying to bring in private contractors. The fact is that the Avon County is run by a group of bureaucrats who don't want any direct labour at all. We were very pleased as union stewards that the lads spontaneously took it up and did something about it.



AEC—Fight Redundancies

A bombshell has hit West London and the British Leyland combine. Last Wednesday night AEC convenor Mick Martin told Ealing Trades Council that management proposed to close their Southall plant.

West London was at one time a full-employment boom area of post-war British capitalism. Now, the whole area is steadily being reduced to a wasteland of warehouses. Six tally clerks and two fork-lift drivers have a job where a thousand men might have worked before.

Already Westland helicopters, Rockware glass and many others have gone from the area, and the workers are really starting to feel the pinch.

Ealing Trades Council has already committed itself to full support for the fight. Local Labour Parties are starting to take up the issue. The fight for jobs is really starting here!

By Tony Loftus

(Ealing Trades Council)

Wasteland

This factory employs 4,500 people making components for British Leyland. 250 workers are to be "released" at the end of this year or the beginning of next. By 1980 the bosses envisage that all 4,500 jobs will have disappeared.

AEC already lost 600 jobs a couple of years ago through "voluntary redundancy". This time, Mick Martin declared, they are determined to fight.

They have no alternative.

Mackays forced to recognise union

For the past two weeks workers at Mackays drapery factory in Paisley have been on strike, in a dispute over union recognition for the T&GWU and the reinstatement of two workers.

One of the workers sacked was 17-year-old Tommy Irvine, a union member, who was given his books for laughing. Jimmy Fadian, a shop steward, was phoning the union full-timer about the sacking when he was cut off and given a week's notice.

The firm has a long history of anti-trade union activity. They employ mainly school leavers and married women, paying slave wages, much of which comes from the Temporary Employment Subsidy. Workers are sacked for going to the toilet and similar 'misdemeanours'.

Overtime is virtually compulsory and financially

necessary to bring wages up from abysmal to poor. Doing a Sunday and two nights, someone on the top rate (reached at 21) will earn the princely take-home pay of £38.11.

The factory is a Victorian sweatshop. It is only the power and determination of the workers that will drag it into the 20th century.

The workers have now agreed to end the dispute, pending the result of an industrial tribunal. Management have been forced to agree to reinstate the two sacked men if the tribunal backs their case. They have also agreed to recognise the union. What will happen if the tribunal is unsuccessful is not yet clear.

John Adams (Paisley LP YS) spoke to shop stewards **Jimmy Fadian** and **Mary Ann Kelly**

GREENWICH BUILDERS FIGHT THE LUMP

Building workers on the Greenwich Borough Council Direct Works Department have evidence that their earnings are being undermined by "lump" labour on council building contracts.

Brother Tweedie, the convenor, said that the Direct Labour scheme has to tender for all capital works jobs in competition with private firms and that up to about three or four years ago they were able to pick and choose their work because the big contractors did not want this housing work. They were quite happy building hotels and office blocks.

Since the squeeze in the building industry many more

firms have been tendering for council work. Firms like Laing, Costain and Wimpey are putting in uneconomically low tenders in order just to keep their machine ticking over. They are waiting for the building industry to pick up again and they will depart.

He said: "In answer to allegations, MPs for Woolwich and Greenwich and the Borough Council have said that the lump is not 'rampant', they have not denied its existence. We can offer proof that there is lump labour on the council contract works."

According to Brother Waterhouse, the Capital Sites convenor, this situation has led to the direct loss of his

members earning a good and fair bonus. "We feel it is us who are bearing the brunt of these cuts."

Bros. Tweedie and Waterhouse spoke to Jim Brookshaw
(AUEW)

There are skilled carpenters on sites taking home £45 per week. Men supposed to be on a productivity bonus are earning no bonus at all. The workers are claiming a guaranteed fall back bonus so that they don't have to pay for the cut backs.

About 1,100 men are employed in the Direct Lab-

our scheme, on maintenance, capital works and conversions and all have now joined the strike even though many don't stand to benefit directly from a successful outcome of the dispute.

As Bro. Waterhouse says, "The men are so militant now. Now that they're all united under one banner it's time to tell the council that no longer will they stand by and watch management inflict low earnings on the lads on sites."

Messages of support, offers of help and donations to Bro Waterhouse at any site or to London Borough of Greenwich Building Department, Westhorpe Avenue, London S.E.9.

Militant

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LP CONFERENCE SAYS-

By Mick Hogan (Liverpool Garston LPYS)

NATIONALISE WESTERNS

The Labour Party is now committed to nationalising Western shiprepairers.

This conference has passed an emergency resolution calling for public ownership and democratic workers' control and management.

Photos: Julian McKittrick/Militant



Eddie Loyden MP contributes to Western workers' Conference collection

After constant lobbying of delegates by the workers of Westerns, a petition and a series of visits to standing orders committee by delegations from Merseyside



Delegates vote for the nationalisation proposals

and trade union delegates, an emergency resolution was put on the agenda for Friday morning.

'Militant' supporter TERRY DUFFY from Liverpool, Wavertree, moving, pointed out the devastating number of closures on Merseyside;

British Leyland, Plessey, etc. He went on to say that with nationalisation, the yard could be used for equipment for the oil industry. Both PAT WALL [Shipleigh CLP] and EDDIE LOYDEN MP pointed to the national implications for unemployment if West-

erns closed.

Eddie Loyden went on to say that shipbuilding on Merseyside had shrunk from 20,000 to 3,000 since 1960. But the battle is not over. Every trade unionist and Labour Party member must still support the LPYS part in it. fight, using the victory as a

weapon.

About 15 workers from Westerns attended this vital debate and part of the rest of the conference. They were very pleased with the success of the resolution and with the LPYS part in it.

THREAT TO LAW CENTRE

In response to the imminent closure of the Hillingdon Council's Law Centre, a round-the-clock work-in has been announced.

The council—law centre workers believe—intends to close the centre, in Station Road, Hayes, dismiss the staff and management committee and then set it up again with a new management and staff. Redundancy notices served on the staff by a reluctant management committee expire at the end of the month.

A public meeting has been called by the "Friends of Hillingdon Law Centre" for 8pm, Thursday, October 19th, in the Library Basement, Brunel University, Uxbridge.

All Labour movement and "Protect our People" affiliated organisations are urged to attend and discuss the fight back against this "political" attack by the Tories on Hillingdon's working families.

SMASH 5%

Continued from page 1

suffered the biggest single fall this century.

And the bosses can certainly afford to pay up. Last year Ford's rich shareholders reaped a bumper £246m profit from these workers. They expect to increase that to £300m this year.

Meanwhile the gases division of British Oxygen pushed up their profits by £4m to £27.8m. The idle owners have had their slice of the cake, now the workers who actually baked the cake want theirs.

The policy of wage restraint has failed to solve the problems of Britain's ailing economy. One-and-a-half million still face the misery of enforced idleness on the dole. Factories are shut down, industry limps along using only 80% of its capacity, and investment is little higher than the 1970 level.

But what is the alternative? The Tories meet in

Brighton this week to prepare what they hope will be an election victory. They are planning to unleash a direct attack on jobs, public industries, welfare services and trade union rights.

Back in 1973 it was Tory Chancellor Anthony Barber who fuelled the fires of inflation by printing more and more worthless paper money. Now arch right-winger Sir Keith Joseph dreams of increasing unemployment by sacking workers in the public sector and putting a deflationary squeeze on workers' pockets.

Neither of these methods offers a solution to the sickness of British capitalism. Both courses would mean misery and suffering for the working class. So long as the economy is left in private hands, dominated by big business, prey to blind market forces, the twin evils of inflation and unemployment are all any

government can offer.

The alternative to this misery and chaos was firmly spelled out at last week's Labour Party conference—a socialist plan of production run under the democratic control and management of the workers.

The bitter experience of the last four years of the "Social Contract", now clearly rejected on the shop floor and by the trade unions, points to the necessity of such a socialist alternative.

By opening up the empty factories, utilising unused capacity and putting the whole workforce on a 35-hour week, a planned nationalised economy could produce the extra wealth not only to end wage restraint but to bring about a dramatic increase in workers' real incomes.

By showing the tremendous potential of a socialist Britain the Labour Party could sweep the board at the next election and remove the threat of rule by the open party of big business for good.

Militant

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