

Militant

12p

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

ISSUE 435
8 DECEMBER 1978

WIPE OUT LOW PAY

MILITANT FIGHTING FUND- ALARM BELLS RING

Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)



Readers donate fivers to the 'Militant' at Labour Party Conference

'The Times' and the 'Militant' are struggling for survival. Unlike the 'top people's paper', the 'Militant' hasn't suspended publication yet, but further expansion is being seriously threatened.

Lord Thomson is not prepared to part with a few of his millions to save a valued mouthpiece of big business, but expects the workers to pay. The 'Militant', too, expects workers to pay to keep the paper alive, but the difference is obvious.

We support the workers at 'The Times' and of every other industry against the attacks of the bosses. If big business won't bale out their 'own' paper, they're hardly likely to finance ours. We rely entirely on you, our readers, to get us the £14,000 we need to reach our £70,000 target. But there's only four weeks left. And at the present rate, that will bring us only another £2,000 pounds! See the full report on page 13. The alarm bells are ringing.

Photo: John Pickard



Bakers' pickets block lorry at Spillers flour mill, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

SUPPORT BAKERY WORKERS

The bakery workers' fight is our fight! That has been the attitude of trade unionists and Labour Party members up and down the country.

The strike is now in its 5th week. As it has proceeded solidarity and blacking have become more effective.

The Transport and General Workers' Union and the General and

Municipal Workers' Union have both told their members not to cross

By Roger Shrives

picket lines. The International Food Workers have also promised to help stop the grain reaching ABF and Ranks, the two baking monopolies who have been hell-bent on destroying the Bakers' Union.

Baking is an industry of super-exploited workers. But the union has gained a new leadership which is determined to fight for change. A living wage and decent working conditions for bakers is a right, not a luxury! The struggle of these

workers for a decent standard of living is just the start of a campaign by millions of low-paid workers in Britain over the next few months to improve their lot. The civil servants have set up a £1m fighting fund in case the findings of the Pay Research Unit (which are likely to show that they need a rise of about 20%) are overruled by the government rigidly sticking to the 5%.

This week the farm workers lobby the Agri- Continued on back page

THIS WEEK

Fight for a Socialist Europe!

Peter Taaffe on the EEC Elections
Andrew Glyn on the EMS
—see centre pages

German workers strike
for 35-hour week

—see page 10



Also: Bright's Nursery; NUS Conference; Iran; USA

EDITORIAL**SHAH -
MILLSTONE AROUND NECK
OF IRANIAN CAPITALISM**

The new wave of strikes and huge demonstrations now sweeping Iran once again may prove to be the knock-out blow to an already punch-drunk Shah.

The slavish support given to this ruthless autocrat by Foreign Secretary David Owen, under the blinkered advice of the Tory mandarins running the Foreign Office, has now been shown to be a reactionary blunder. For that once apparently most stable of institutions, the Peacock Throne, is now falling apart.

Whilst members of the British labour movement instinctively backed the calls for freedom of speech and assembly, the right to form free trade unions, to strike and for democratic elections, the Labour government has shamefully helped to prop up the present military dictatorship with guns, planes and tanks...in the interests of "western democracy"!

But the workers of Iran have delivered their verdict through mass action. It is little wonder that those demonstrating for democratic rights recently burned down the British Embassy—the chief supplier of the guns used to shoot them down in the streets.

This week a new general strike has brought down crucial oil production, blacked out much of Tehran and other cities and halted the flow of natural gas. Demonstrations numbering tens of thousands have defied army curfews and bans.

Hundreds have been shot down. Last week in the town of Gorgan a virtual civil war took place between workers and the army.

The methods of the workers are not those of individual terrorism but mass political and industrial action. It is the strike weapon—the withdrawal of labour—which has brought the Shah to his knees.

Our fellow workers in Iran have the right to ask: "Which are the Labour government to support, the strikers or the armed strike-breakers?"

Capitalism itself is threatened by the revolutionary situation that undoubtedly exists in Iran. All the objective conditions for revolution have matured and require only a decisive leadership for the working class to lead all of Iran's oppressed millions in a socialist transformation of this backward and contradictory society.

The ruling class has lost its nerve. It has no perspective, no strategy for the future, only a megalomaniacal instinct to hold off the advancing masses.

Many capitalists, state officials, generals and even members of the royal family have grabbed their loot and fled the country. Now a debate rages within their ranks as to how best to force the abdication of the monarch whose universal hatred

hangs like a millstone round their necks, threatening to drag them all down.

The disaffected middle classes have joined with the workers in their struggle against the Shah. Students tear down statues of the Shah. Professionals close their businesses in solidarity with strikers. Bank officials publish the secret transfers of the millionaires' wealth to foreign banks.

The industrial workers have once again come forward as the leading force for social change and democratic rights. They have proved time and again their willingness to sacrifice, their determination to fight.

The western press deliberately cloud the issues by claiming that the opposition to the Shah is led by religious fanatics who want to return Iran to the middle ages. Certainly portraits of the religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini feature prominently in the demonstrations.

But the 1905 revolution in Russia opened with a demonstration of workers and peasants carrying icons led by the priest Father Gapon. It ended with the formation of the Petrograd soviet led by Trotsky. In the absence of a conscious Marxist leadership the masses, flooding onto the stage of history for the first time and lacking years of experience of trade union and political struggle, have at this stage turned to this particular opponent of the regime as a focus for their struggle.

The western capitalist governments are not afraid of an Islamic regime as such. But they understand that such a regime would be utterly incapable of satisfying the economic needs which are the material forces relentlessly driving forward the masses, whatever the religious colouration they may give to their demands.

An Islamic government of the National Front seeking to impose the austerity measures which they intend, could not hold onto mass support but could be swiftly succeeded by another regime more suited to the revolutionary masses. Seeing no way forward for Iran under the tiny, isolated capitalist class dominated by foreign capital, such a regime could be forced by the pressure from below to break with capitalism and landlordism.

Without a doubt the establishment of a planned economy and the distribution of land to the peasants would mean a great step forward for the pestilence-ridden millions of Iran. The emergence of a mass workers' party based on a Marxist perspective, leading the important industrial working class to consciously take over the running of society would guarantee genuine workers' democracy and an internationalist appeal which could lead to a Socialist Federation of the Middle East.

ALL FORCES FOR A LABOUR VICTORY!

As yet the National Executive have made no decision on whether Andy Bevan, the Labour Party National Youth Officer, will be co-ordinating Labour's

drive on the youth vote during the next general election.

Phil Frampton National
Chairman Labour Party
Young Socialists

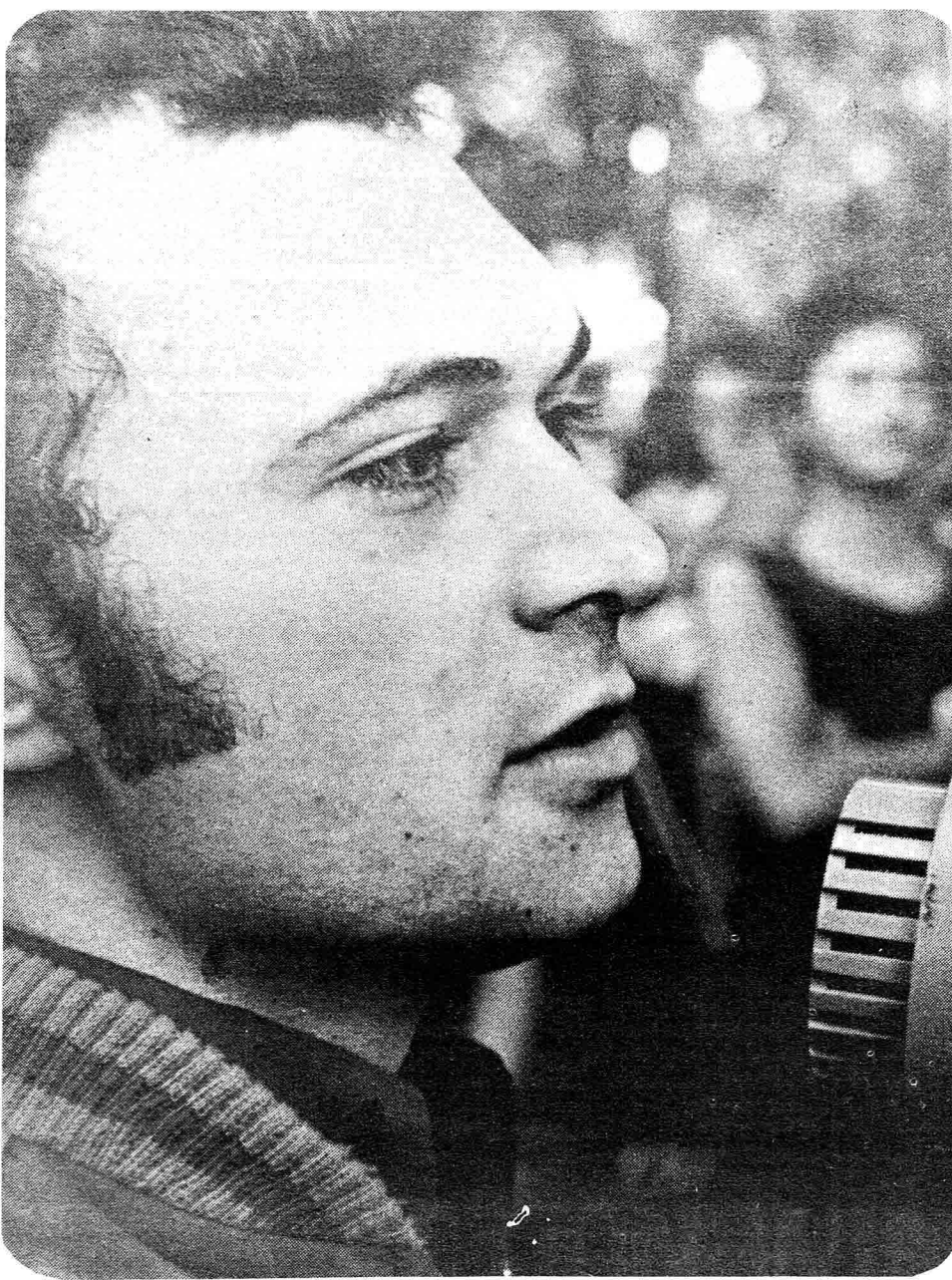
The Labour Party Young Socialists have been pressing for this over the last six months, in a battle to change the party leadership's attitude towards winning the youth. The intransigence of some officials in Transport House against allowing Andy to use his talents to do this forced the LPYS to take this issue out to the rest of the party.

Now resolutions and protests are being rushed to the NEC. The London Regional Labour Party Executive, the biggest party in the country (see page 4), have supported the Young Socialists' position.

So too have NEC members Joan Maynard, Dennis Skinner and Norman Atkinson, and also Bakers' Union leader, Sam Maddox. Eleven other MPs have put their signatures to a letter of protest which indicates that they at least will welcome Andy into their constituencies.

In addition LPYS branches have drawn up petitions which have been signed by hundreds of union and party activists.

A letter to 'Labour Weekly' (December 1st) from Reg Underhill, National Agent, argues that this matter should not have been taken to the party ranks for discussion. However, the response from the movement to the LPYS appeal indicates that it is absolutely necessary to involve all members of the party in a debate over how best to use party resources in the fight to keep the Tories out and elect a Labour government which will fight for socialist policies.



THANKS

Dear Sir

As a Ford worker and a member of the EETPU I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to yourself and your staff for the way you reported and treated us during the recent dispute.

Thanks are particularly due to reporter Bob Faulkes and photographer Julian McKittrick, because as you know our struggle became twofold, Ford's and the EETPU Executive Committee. The Ford position being virtually resolved for this year, the struggle for strike pay and a return to democracy within our union goes on, the EC at this moment having deferred a decision on our first four weeks' strike pay until the 18th December, for reasons known only to them.

I am instructed whilst writing, to add the

thanks of the EETPU Dagenham Auto Branch Committee for the help and assistance you gave to us these past nine weeks.

Once again, thank you.

Yours fraternally

A W Allan

Treasurer, EETPU Dagenham Auto Branch

PS Please accept the enclosed £5 cheque from a collection taken of Ford electricians at Dagenham.

MILITANT- CHRISTMAS BREAK

Next week's issue of 'Militant', which will appear on December 15th, will be the last issue of the paper before the Xmas holidays. The following issue will appear on January 5th.

Why not start the New Year by taking out a subscription to 'Militant' and have it delivered regularly? See back page for details.

CAMPAIGN FOR 35 HOUR WEEK MOVES FORWARD

There can be no doubt that the conferences called by the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment at the end of November were a major success with almost 2,000 delegates attending.

Despite the short time available to circularise the trade union movement, hundreds of delegates from trade union branches, shop stewards' committees and trades councils attended the events, bringing with them the representatives of hundreds of thousands of workers.

In Liverpool alone, the trade union branch representatives came as the delegates of 26,000 workers. In Scotland, 50 Labour Parties sent delegates.

What a tremendous indication of the mood in the active labour organisations for the 35-hour week to be introduced. More so that a body with the small resources at its disposal could call such a gathering of the trade union and labour movement.

It raises the whole question of what mighty forces the labour leaders could mobilise if they so wished!

At the London conference Eric Heffer MP (Labour Party NEC) called for a flood of resolutions in to the National Executive of the Labour Party demanding that a commitment to introduce a 35-hour week be placed in the Labour Party's manifesto for the next general election. Hopefully this will now be taken up in all the constituencies.

But the situation cries out for action from the labour leaders. A campaign of education of the issues surrounding the 35-hour week and the causes of unemployment, coupled with the use of the industrial muscle of the organised workers, could lead to the immediate reversal of the tone of the CBI and the introduction of a shorter working week.

This will be the message that the YCAU will be pressing home in the towns all

over Britain over the coming months, giving backing to the seven members of Labour's executive who came to address the conferences so that they will feel confident to take up the battle and give a lead from the top.

Even within a matter of days after the conference the burning relevance of the 35-hours demand was shown. Putting to shame the TUC, 37,000 German steel workers came out on strike to win the 35-hours from the steel barons, whose only alternative is continued short-time working and redundancies (see page 10).

Now in Fleet Street we witness the onset of a 'lock out' at 'The Times' where the employers are trying to introduce new machinery and throw thousands onto the dole. Only the implementation of work-sharing with no loss of pay can prevent labour-saving technology from being used as an anti-working class weapon.

In the same week the press reported that because of high unemployment, the Department of Employment, in collusion with the monopoly bakery owners, were getting a response from some people on the dole to go and scab on the bakers' strike. This is an absolute disgrace for the labour movement when a labour government allows the encouragement of scabs to break the backs of those who fought so hard to put Labour in power.

But more it is a warning to the trade union movement that action against unemployment is an urgent question when workers are driven to the desperation of acting against their brothers for such a miserable reward.

As Mick Hogan pointed out at the Liverpool conference, it is time the unions organised



Photos: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

Some of the delegates at the Liverpool Conference

the unemployed into their ranks for one struggle against the twin evils of unemployment and low wages. For areas like Merseyside with 13% unemployment this will be extremely important in the coming battles.



Bob Wright (Assistant Gen Sec, AUEW) at the Sheffield Conference

The activities of the YCAU can hopefully alert the movement to action. The Merseyside YCAU, for example, will not fail through want of trying. They are planning a series of local meetings over the winter leading up to a demonstration to demand a concrete programme of action from the local and national governments. Other areas could follow their lead, bringing together the local union activists to discuss ways of ensuring that every worker is aware of the possibilities of job creation in the 35-hour week and how by using their strength they can win it.

- ★ For a 35-hour week with no loss of pay
- ★ For a £70 national minimum wage
- ★ End wage restraint
- ★ Nationalise the top 200 monopolies under democratic workers' control and management—compensation only on the basis of proven need

Nick Bradley

(YCAU Secretary)

Two weeks ago ten industrial conferences were called by the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment to mount a

campaign for a 35-hour week to create jobs. Reports of most of these excellent conferences were carried in our

last issue. This week we report those held in Plymouth and Birmingham.

BIRMINGHAM

150 delegates from trade unions, Labour Parties and Young Socialists attended the YCAU conference in Birmingham.

They heard Tony Saunois, LPYS member of Labour's NEC, Audrey Wise MP and Sid Haraway, Ford's Dagenham AUEW Convenor, show why a 35-hour week and other measures to protect jobs and living standards were an urgent necessity.

Tony described the harsh reality of unemployment behind the horrifying statistics and the myth put about by the Tories and their kept press of the 'life of luxury' on the dole. It begins, he said, with the school leavers, faced with the

destruction of all the hopes built up by the bosses' education system—hopes for a trade and a career and a decent standard of living. It ends with the older workers thrown on the scrap heap because their abilities are no longer profitable to the ruling class.

Audrey Wise spoke about the anarchy of capitalist production and the bosses' refusal — despite massive handouts — to invest and create more jobs. "The Labour government," she said, "must start to deal with the problems facing working people if it is to stand a chance of re-election."

Sid Haraway described the developments of the recently successful Ford's strike — the

high morale of the workforce and their determination to stay out until management came up with a satisfactory offer.

During the discussion members from the floor filled in the debate with their own experiences of unemployment, with an even bleaker picture amongst the black and Asian communities, with the background of the current crisis of capitalism and with the practical details of implementing a shorter working week.

The conference called for the Labour Party to include the programme of a 35-hour week linked to a national minimum wage in its manifesto for the next election.

PLYMOUTH

"The kernel of the issue is the economic system itself. We must remove the cause of the cancer rather than apply remedial surgery," declared Danny Ryan, Plymouth TG-WU District Secretary to almost 50 delegates and visitors from Devon and Cornwall attending the Plymouth conference.

Danny congratulated the YCAU and LPYS on organising the conference saying that it was heartening to see the attendance, especially the number of young people.

Bob Labi, YCAU National Treasurer, pointed out how the demand for the 35-hour week had recently come to the fore, and the hysterical reac-

tion it had provoked from the CBI indicates the inability of capitalism to meet the needs of working people. But the rich still had money to squander, said Bob, with sales at Sotheby's and Christies' up by one-third last year at a time when 10% of the population had to depend on supplementary benefit.

Clause 4

But a future under the Tories would be even bleaker with their attempt to unleash a direct assault on the trade union movement. Even at this late stage it was necessary to call for the Labour government to show itself to be acting in the interests of working people by implementing clause four of the Party constitution and taking over big business.

The effect of unemploy-

ment was described by Tim King, Cornwall CPSA, who from his experience in working at a local Job Centre, described how one unemployed person had committed suicide in each year Tim had worked there! Other personal experiences came from young unemployed delegates at the conference pressing home the realities of life on the dole. Discussion on the job prospects of the disabled was also prompted by a contribution given by a young NUPE shop steward.

Delegates then left the conference with a commitment to take the discussion back to their own organisations to ensure that the fight for the 35-hour week was increased in the local labour movement and linked to the need for socialist policies.

NUS Needs socialist policies

This NUS Conference meets at a time of crisis for thousands of students. Earlier in the year, the hopes of many 16-18 year old students were raised—when the Government promised to give them mandatory grants—and dashed when this was postponed.

At present, only 7% of Further Education students receive grants—an average £2.80 per week. There is little doubt that thousands of 16-18 year olds are being deprived of education because they can't afford to stay at college.

The 'postponement' of these grants shows that even the smallest reform in education cannot be guaranteed under capitalism.

But students in the Universities and Polytechnics also face major problems. The draconian increases in hall fees, provoking a number of rent strikes this term, has made it difficult for students even on full grants to survive financially. For students in some London colleges the increases were as much as 20%, in no way covered by the increases in grants.

However, the NUS leadership have failed to launch any sort of fight back amongst students on these issues. The past eighteen months has been a quiet period amongst students. Yet, the cuts in student living standards have got worse.

The 'lull' in political activity reflects the complete inability of the NUS leaders to organise a fightback amongst students, and link that campaign to the labour movement. It is only through winning the support of the labour movement that students can win better grants and conditions.

The complete fiasco of 'G Day'—intended as a national day of action on grants, but concentrating on 'stunts', instead of a national demonstration—and attended by only 2,000 students, is not the way to win support for better grants for students. A campaign on socialist policies by the NU leaders, not just to win better conditions and

By Mark Morton
(NOLS National Committee)

grants for students, but also to expand education, and open higher education to the working class, could get an enormous response in the labour movement.

The rank and file members of the Labour Party and trade union movement have a proud record of fighting for a decent education system for the working class. Despite the huge expansion of higher education since the war, the percentage of students from manual working class backgrounds has not changed since the 1930s.

In the 1890s, delegates to the TUC were calling for higher education to be free, and open to the working class. In reality, this has not been fully won today.

The most important debates will be on education and youth unemployment, racialism and fascism, housing and Student Union finance.

Unemployment hangs over the head of every student at college. Thousands of graduates are unemployed, or forced to take jobs which a few years ago only needed 'O' levels. NUS should join in the fight for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, and £70 minimum wage, and back the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment (sponsored by the Labour Party Young Socialists as the only active campaign against unemployment putting forward socialist policies, and already having the widest industrial support in the trade union movement.

The stand of NUS to give 'No platform' to fascists must be kept; but this must be linked to a campaign on socialist policies to get rid of unemployment, poor housing, etc; the conditions on which



Delegates study resolutions at last year's NUS Conference

fascism breeds. NUS must fight with the labour movement against fascism.

The housing problems faced by students cannot be separated from those of millions of workers. NUS must demand the national-

isation of the huge building and building supplies companies, the banks and building societies as the precondition for a crash building programme of one million homes a year.

On-Student Union finance

NUS must defend the right of Student Unions to spend their money as decided by General Meetings. Already, the Executive have said they will not defend unions which give funds to "political causes" such as strike funds. This

seriously threatens the chance of students to support labour movement campaigns, and may lead to further attacks—on the 'closed shop' and on capitation fees.

Tyneside stewards support

A Militant Readers' Meeting was held in conjunction with Newcastle University Labour Club recently, on Iran.

Iranian workers

John Pickard (Militant) emphasised the prevailing autocratic political structure with its repression of anything like political or trade union rights for the mass of Iranian workers and peasants. John also stressed the role of the industrial powers (USA, Britain, USSR and China) in supporting the Shah's regime for his favours in the form of oil.

Repressive

He showed the economic growth based on dollar-earning production characterised by banks and casinos; the run down of indigenous agriculture hand in hand with low living standards in the new industrial centres, and the total neglect of housing, food and education. John showed how this has led to the enormous struggles of Iranian workers to overthrow the repressive regime.

From about a dozen Iranians in the meeting came some excellent contributions.



'Militant' readers demonstrate against the Shah

Photo: Julian McKinnon (Militant)

These comrades gave first hand accounts of the political and economic repression in Iran and discussed the importance of a political organisation to channel the workers struggle into definite gains.

One comrade from Iran described the Mosque and religious structure in Iran as being the only forum for dissent and that many Iranians embraced the idea of 'Islamic socialism'. However the growing unrest and the

increasing political awareness of the workers had led to a greater circulation of the ideas of Marxism and this could lead to enormous prospects of socialism in Iran.

The discussion also raised the international bonds of the working class and recent moves by the local Vickers' shop stewards committee to boycott arms sales (Chieftain tanks) to Iran. The Iranian comrades were urged to meet the Vickers shop stewards

with Labour club members to aid the struggle of their brothers in Iran.

One comrade said he was surprised when he arrived in Britain at the lies and distortions of the capitalist press. He said he thought this was a free country. It was only through the 'Militant' that he was able to get a true picture of events in Iran in the last few weeks.

A collection was made of £16.50 for the Fighting Fund, to continue this work.

FRUSTRATION AT NUR MEETING

Sid Weighell General Secretary of the NUR spoke at a mass meeting at union headquarters on 29th November on the question of overtime,

Sid Weighell claimed in his opening speech that the stopping of overtime and working of rest-days would force management into filling vacant positions on the British Railways. In fact the unfortunate truth of the matter is that people will not take up posts on the railways because the wages are so low. At present in order to get a decent wage they would have to work seven-day weeks and

twelve-hour shifts! At question time, points were put to the speaker like: what about raising the basic wage and introducing a shorter working week. The speaker tried to avoid answering the question. For example, when a colleague from Scotland asked for a £60 minimum wage to be put to the British Railway Board, he replied "Give my regards to the Glasgow Branch and I will

have to go up and see them sometime."

During the meeting the Chairman condemned the members who barracked Sid Weighell towards the end. Although behaviour like this cannot be condoned, the frustration of the people from the floor not being given answers to reasonable questions was obvious.

There is no sense in supporting a 5% wage deal when all the difference, it makes is barely a pound extra

in your pocket. Similarly there is no way out of the unemployment problem by attempting to fill vacancies in jobs where the wages are worthless unless overtime is worked. And overtime is worked because there are unfilled vacancies. It's a vicious circle at present. There is no way out but a £70 minimum wage and a 35-hour week.

Chris Oughan
(Deptford NUR)

LONDON LABOUR SEEK YOUTH VOTE

Passed at the Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party 27th November.

"This executive committee welcomes the proposal to allow the National Student Organiser to be fully involved in national campaigning work to win the student vote for Labour during the period of the next General Election, and urges the National Executive to give the same facility to the National Youth Officer.

This is particularly important because roughly three million young voters are coming on to the electoral register and it is vital that the Labour Party Young Socialists, under the guidance of the National Youth Officer, intervenes to win them to Labour's cause. The proposal to engage the National Youth Officer in the 'meetings-section', arranging engagements for the party leaders, would seriously hamper such a campaign."

LEFT & RIGHT

Wetting baby's head

Inequality starts very early. How many of our readers have celebrated the birth of their children by having a celebratory drink. The Earl of Lichfield is certainly doing that. He is holding a party in London for 500 people [upstaging Prince Charles who only managed 400 for his birthday do], to celebrate the arrival in the world of his son and heir.

Our readers may find the cost of the new mouth to feed offset slightly by a very small maternity grant and by certain family benefits [even if they are lower in real terms than in 1946]. One child who won't cause that kind of financial worry is the Hon Peregrine Cust who at the ripe old age of four has been left more than £3 million. Enough to buy quite a few silver spoons there. It's a shame that the rest of us have to put up with plastic ones.

Looking for a castle

Remember De Lorean, the firm who received £52m from the government to build sports cars near Belfast. The main benefits of this money certainly aren't at present going to the workers of Northern Ireland. According to the Irish Times, the story is going around that a woman is touring the province looking at the most expensive real estate on behalf of owner John De Lorean. She has apparently already turned up her nose at a £175,000 residence saying "Mr De Lorean wants a castle."

De Lorean is, it seems, now looking at Hillsborough Castle, the disused home of Governors of Northern Ireland. Salaries of £125,000 for the Managing Director and £35,000 for the Personnel manager are rumoured, so a few more castles or at least mansions may be under the hammer in Northern Ireland.

How about the Labour government spending £52 million on new publicly-owned industry in Northern Ireland, to create some real jobs without such parasites wasting our money.

Equal opportunities

The battle to bring the wages of women workers up to those of men has been going on for years. And despite legislation, a recent report of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research estimates that the differential between male and female workers' pay has only reduced from 55% in 1976 to 54% in 1977.

The Equal Opportunities Commission, the main body set up to eliminate discrimination and to work for equal pay are advertising for a Chief Executive. The good news is that either men or women can apply for the job and receive the same salary.

The not so good news is that this salary starts at £13,400 a year and rises to £16,000.

Not so good because such salary levels and the life styles they allow will put the Executive a million miles removed from the problems faced by women workers struggling along on the pitiful wages of, say, the catering trade. Will they be prepared to struggle tooth and nail against reactionary employers for decent wages? It's doubtful. The fight for decent conditions for women workers and the low paid as a whole is a part of the class struggle and calls for a trade union fight.

Luxuries

A planned economy makes it possible to produce the necessities of life rather than the meaningless extravagances, which under capitalism, the market, in this case the chequebooks of the rich, demands. So it is strange to see that so called 'communist' Hungary has cornered the market in France for paté de foie gras.

This food is produced by force-feeding geese until their livers expand enormously. Apart from being extremely cruel, it is extremely expensive and mainly eaten by the very rich. But worse than cornering the market in such luxuries has been the possible effect on the economy. In one town, basements, flats and cellars have been taken over for these production lines. Apart from the terrible smell created, industry could suffer as graduates in engineering, economics and medicine have given up their jobs to earn up to three times their present incomes.

The Hungarian government is taking little action against this growth industry. But if the working class, instead of the bureaucracy, were to impose their control on the planned economy, then undoubtedly, such a drain on the long term development of the economy would be halted.

THE FACELESS MEN?

Attacks on the "faceless bureaucrats" of local government by the Tory press are common, and make "good copy". The capitalist class paint a picture of clerical staff lounging around in spacious offices where the carpets are so thick they come up to your knees, dwarfed by massive and elegant office furniture. Apparently they are also underworked and overpaid.

How else can they justify the vicious cuts that have been made in local government expenditure? In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

The socialist press also criticise the impersonal way in which local government staff often deal with the problems of working class ratepayers. It is important, however, not to forget the "office sweatshop" conditions in which many of these people are forced to work, and the brutalising effect it can have on them.

I work in the Accounts section of the Housing Department. On a winter's morning, I arrive at work to find my room freezing. It's the same every Monday. They switch the heating off over the weekend, and there is so much concrete in this room it takes hours to warm up. The concrete sucks up the heat like a sponge.

Grunting a greeting to my workmates (I'm never awake before teabreak), I squeeze into my seat. I keep my gloves on. Too cold to write otherwise.

Normally my working day is spent compiling statements of account for tenants who can't really believe they are that much in arrears with their rent, and preparing computer documentation re-



Housing Department clerks: Shortage of staff is now serious

lating to tenancy changes. Boring as hell. Today it's my turn to attend to the enquiry window as well. It can be hectic.

Ring! The first tenant has arrived. Still five minutes to starting time. Let her wait while I skim through the paper. Bell ringing continuously. She's keeping her finger on it!

Arrears

The trickle of tenants slowly swells, until a queue begins to build up. It's going to be busy. Eight hundred rent reminders were sent out at the end of last week. Must be the kick-back from that. Most of the enquiries come from tenants disputing their arrears balance.

Some have had their payments posted to the wrong account, others simply do not understand why they are in arrears. Most are irate, some

using "colourful" language.

One by one, the others are forced to leave their own work and give me a hand at the window. They're not pleased. It means they'll have to work harder later to catch up.

By the time teabreak comes we've taken all the phones off the hook. We just can't cope. We take turns to grab a cuppa. If we were all to stop at the same time, we'd have a riot on our hands.

The pressure slackens off towards lunch-time, picks up again in the early afternoon, then begins to slacken off again around four o'clock. We stop at five, but some of us work overtime to clear the backlog built up during the day.

This is typical of a busy day in our office. It will come as no surprise to learn that people who work here normally have a bad sickness record, and are more likely to "take a day off".

There is a high turnover of staff and those who do stay tend to become brutalised and indifferent to tenants' problems over a period of time. Jobs like this exist throughout local government.

Next time you see an article criticising the "faceless" bureaucrats of local government, remember that while this may apply to some of the top brass, the people at the bottom of the pile are quite hard done by.

Within the context of the present economic climate there is little chance of this situation improving until local government workers are prepared to take action to force a reversal of cuts in public expenditure, and increased spending on local services. Make sure they don't fight alone!

Eric Anderson

THE DISAPPEARING CARROT

I had the frustration of a period of nearly six months on the dole. I wrote off for jobs, I phoned in for jobs and I walked round to jobs, but to no avail. I didn't have the right experience. I had the wrong qualifications, too young, too old, or others had got there first.

Towards the end of August the employment exchange called me up. They felt I hadn't tried hard enough! "Try this job," they urged. It was a clerical job at a notorious anti-union firm in town. Never mind, beggars can't be choosers. The pay was close on £50 a week, nearly a small fortune after months of £13 dole money.

Success—I got the job! Only one snag: it was only for six weeks! No, not a trial period, the firm was taking on a team of four youngsters to do 20,000 record forms. It was one of the most deadly boring jobs imaginable. Using the micro-fiche to find firms' account numbers, getting the records up to date, on dates, figures and petty details, endless bits of papers to be referred to, endless streams of noughts to be filled in, row after row.

What kept us going? We were only temps! Why bother! But the management dangled a carrot. Day after day, they told us there were full-time

jobs available if we showed our mettle. They were looking for keen, efficient young men, people not afraid of hard work.

And boy, how we worked to impress, day after day, never a minute late, not one day off. I even gave up a chance of a fortnight's holiday with my parents. And why? Because I wanted a full-time job, I was desperate, twenty and no real career or trade established. This was a chance. I had to take it. Even during the sixth week, they implied that the job might be extended.

Then...crash! Friday came, the firm had no more money for the job, here's your pay an necessities, and thanks very much. That was it. Back on the dole. The promises, the hopes, the tempting bait... and why? To make us work hard, to make us work even harder than the full-time staff.

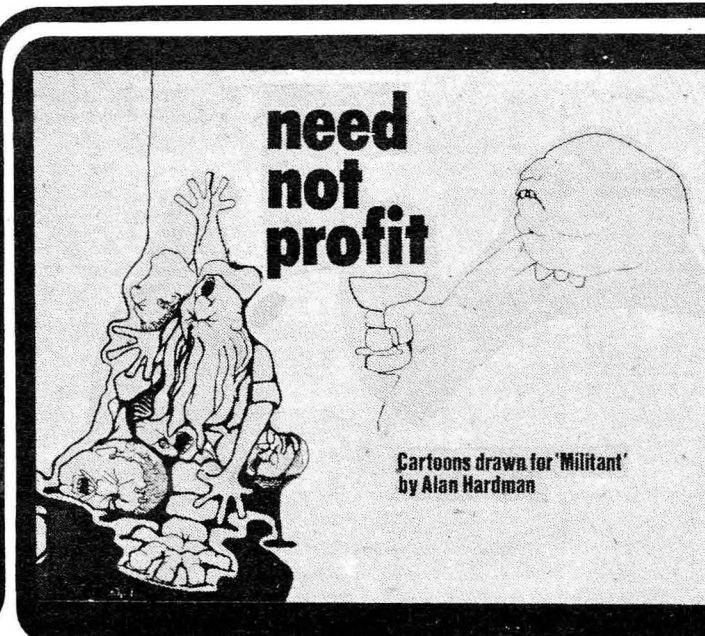
What cynical disregard for our feelings. Back at the dole, they even attempted to suspend me for six weeks for having left the job! They got my answer to that.

I am now more determined

than ever to help bring about fundamental changes in society that will give everyone a chance in life and a decent job. It's only when working class people are running the show that we will rid ourselves of the bosses' criminal disregard for the feelings of workers.

Kevin Duncan

(Harlow LPYS)



OUT NOW!

An ideal Christmas present for your friends in the labour movement. More than 40 of Alan Hardman's best and hardest-hitting cartoons.

Price £1 (+ 10p p & p)
Order from Militant,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

BRIGHTS NURSERY - A Struggle - and an education

Last August, Bright's announced that they intended to close their nursery, the only one in the Rochdale area to offer a practical nursery service to women workers.

Closure would mean many working mothers would have to give up their jobs, and especial hardship for one-parent families.

From the beginning, the Labour Party Women's section took up the campaign to save the nursery, and the decision to shut it down has since been postponed.

Sheila Woodhead, who is a member of Wardle Labour Party Women's Section, and has been involved from the beginning, explains the significance of the campaign.

Within two hours of the closure of Bright's Nursery being announced, the Labour Party Women's Section got into the organisation of the campaign. We had already established in the area the fact that we were fighting along the lines of the TUC document (demanding comprehensive child care on demand). So as soon as the women got the letter they contacted us right away.

It was vital to act quickly, to catch the mood. It was evident at the first public meeting we had that that was all it was, just a mood—a very passionate mood, but with no sense of organisation, no idea who the enemy was, who they were fighting.

They just knew they were going to be thrown out of work without redundancy pay. This is what closure of the nursery would mean for most of the women. The active Labour Party members brought into the campaign our organisational experience, our political perspectives, and within a very short time, it indicated to us how much support we have once our ideas are explained.

Right away, we were able to alter the situation. One woman has frequently said, "Without the women's sec-

tion of the Labour Party there wouldn't be a campaign. It would have fizzled out long ago, and we'd have lost the nursery."

The most important thing for us to develop was the tactics because we were working with women who have little or no experience of trade union or Labour Party activity. The women in the cotton industry are always on short time, always feeling that the next step is the dole queue.

Paternalistic

At the very first public meeting there was a strong feeling among these women: "Keep politics out of it." They were in the middle of a political argument—but they kept saying: "Keep politics out of it; we don't want to know politics."

At the end of the meeting we went over to discuss this with them, and what they meant was: "Keep the councillors out of it!" They wanted the establishment out of it.

When we discussed the tactics our main task was to show the falseness of the sort of traditional loyalties they'd got to the owners of the company, John Bright and



Sheila Woodhead lobbying delegates at this year's Labour Party Conference

photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

Brothers. They've got a sort of paternalistic reputation, so the women had been made to feel that the company was doing everything they could to help them but were facing an impossible situation.

This view of the company has traditionally been encouraged by their own union, so we thought it was going to be difficult. In fact, it was a very easy task, because the evidence there before them from their own company was enough to show the crisis in capitalism.

Profits had fallen by half in the last twelve months, so Bright's were going to kick the nursery out. But they were not prepared to reduce the dividends that they pay to their shareholders or cut the contributions that they have made to the Tory Party!

During the present struggle, the political development of the women involved has been so rapid that it has taken our breath away. In the past it has been a sense of helplessness, a feeling that there has been no point in fighting for anything, that has stopped them ever fighting for anything. In the very first public

meeting, one of the ordinary working class women who have had no time for politics or politicians shouted out: "How about getting them to open up the books—then we'll know how much they are losing!"

Very gradually, over a matter of weeks, they have come to see that it isn't just an issue of keeping one nursery open, but it is a major issue. The women see that we have got to broaden this campaign out. They have suggested that they go along to estates, and encourage women who live in these estates where there are lots of social problems to join us in the campaign.

They have all come to the view that there is only one way we are ever going to get adequate nursery provision and it's not going to come about unless there's a fundamental change in the economic structure of society.

These women have moved very easily from political backwardness—and, in one or two cases, Toryism—into putting forward socialist ideas. And this is an indication of the polarisation of society. Already, we've recrui-

ted into the Labour Party women's section.

The nursery campaign itself has pointed out to these women the futility of reformism. At one public meeting we held, there were three generations represented. There was an old lady, 70 years old, who's in the Co-operative Women's Guild, who in the 1930s, fought to take over a certain industrial nursery in Rochdale to meet the needs of working women. They won.

Then there was an ex-Labour councillor there, who was involved in the same fight in the 1950s: give us back this nursery for the working women. And they won.

And now we're at it again. This has come home very, very forcibly to the women. Nobody had to point it out to them—just the experience they are involved in has made it clear to them.

The women in the nursery campaign also came across various so-called "Marxist" organisations—and they saw the bankruptcy of the sects. These people have bleated and accused us of having "no position on women". But for all their talk in this cam-

paign, they've come up with nothing, they haven't been able to offer one single solitary idea for this campaign, whereas we have increasingly been asked to speak at meetings on nursery education.

They have put no arguments forward to counter us. So for all their talk about being the only people who have women's interests at heart, in fact that's the only place they have it.

Apart from the massive political education of the women involved in the campaign, we've gained a lot out of the experience. The first lesson we've gained is that socialists have got to act quickly. You can't sit back and wait; you've got to take opportunities as they come up.

If we hadn't been there within the first couple of hours, we might not have got in because Cyril Smith was on the border line, and if he'd got in, there wouldn't have been any room for us!

WOMEN WORKERS: Discrimination continues

Women workers are still not equal despite the passing of legislation on Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay. While an increasing number of women are working outside their homes, they are still concentrated in the same jobs in just a few industries. Women are grossly under-represented in the professions, on public bodies and in the more skilled, better-paid jobs.

The December issue of 'Labour Research' looks at

just which industries women do work in, and shows how even government departments fail to appoint women to public bodies.

"In 1978 there were just over nine million women in paid employment, compared with 13 million men, so that women constituted 41% of the labour force."

"In 1978, 58% of all working women were employed in just three service industries: 27% were employed in 'professional and scientific service' as typists, secretaries, technicians, tea-

chers and nurses; 16% were in the 'distributive trades', mainly working in shops, mail order and warehouses and 15% were in 'miscellaneous services' which includes laundries, catering, dry cleaning and hairdressing."

'Labour Research' also shows that the degree of concentration of women in these industries has been increasing, which contrasts strongly with male employment patterns, since no single industry employs as much as 10% of the male work force.

Women do not get to the

top: there are no women amongst the 288 directors on the boards of the 20 largest companies in Britain; only 27 of the 635 members of Parliament are women; only 2 of the 72 High Court Judges are women, and there are no women Lords of Appeal.

Hardly surprising! But "the situation is no better in teaching, which has a very high proportion of women: 75% of primary and 45% of secondary school teachers are women." Yet "eight out of every ten women primary school teachers can expect to

be in the lowest teaching grades, along with only four out of ten of their male colleagues." And only one out of every ten women primary school teachers is likely to become a head or deputy head, compared with almost five out of every ten of their male counterparts.

'Labour Research' does not hold out much prospect for change in the future. Opportunities in education and training could help women to break out of traditional, low-paid employment, but few women get on to training

courses, and when they do, they tend to take traditionally 'female' subjects, such as typing and other office skills.

Clearly, legislation is not enough. Only if the labour movement actively takes up the battle for equal opportunities and equal pay for women, will real advances be made.

[The December issue of 'Labour Research' costs 35p (42p by post) from LRD, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF]

GEC STAFFORD -

Redundancies threatened -

Open the books

5,000 jobs have been lost at GEC Stafford in the last decade. Now, a new threat looms. Brother Dave Rothwell [Chairman, Stafford JSSC, GEC Power Engineering, personal capacity] spoke to Dave Mole [ASTMS 866, GEC Stafford].

On Monday 20 November, trade union representatives of the workforce of GEC Power Transformers Ltd., Stafford, were called together to be told that 180 redundancies were necessary, of which 110 were on the shop-floor, and 70 from the staff.

Also, 90 days' notice was given to the Department of Employment. There would be an application made for Temporary Employment Subsidy for a further 100 employees, but if there was no indication of an improving order book by mid-1979, further redundancies would be necessary.

The question of a possible closure of the division would be raised with the loss of over 600 jobs. Further to that, the company stated that there would be an immediate implementation of a "five-day fortnight" (2½ per week—details to be discussed). If there are sufficient voluntary redundancies before Christmas 1978 the five-day fortnight would not be implemented until 4 January.

The Joint Shop Stewards negotiating committee were met and there were a considerable number of voluntary redundancies within a few hours of the announcement.

At a mass meeting of the division, however, a move was made for the withdrawal of all voluntary redundancies to enable the negotiating committee to make representation to management. This was accepted by a majority of the workforce with all five of the volunteers being withdrawn.

A march of nearly 1,500 from the shop floor on the whole site took place on 28 November, the largest ever

local demonstration to take place in Stafford. About 600 men packed the Borough Hall to hear Bro. Harold Hanlon (AUEW), Bro Frank Duffy from the Joint Shop Stewards Committee and Mike Poulter, Prospective Labour Party candidate, spell out the dangers. A serious, concerned mood prevailed over the meeting.

Bro Hanlon pointed out that the threat of redundancies lay over the whole GEC network. A reduction of 2,500 workers was threatened over the five plants at Larne, Rugby, Stafford, Trafford Park and Higher Openshaw.

Frank Duffy explained the failures of the "Industrial strategy" and called for alternative work to be found.

Mike Poulter hit the nail on the head when he said that without a guaranteed profitable market GEC had refused the amount of investment to keep pace with technological developments. The industry should therefore be taken over by the government now before it becomes permanently crippled.

The heavy electrical machinery industry equips the electricity supply industry with steam turbine generators and gas turbines for power stations, large transformers, switchgear and power transmissions for substations on the National Grid.

The industry is being outstripped by competitors in world markets and faces a crisis unprecedented in its history, similar to the shipyards. It is not that power stations are not needed, but that colonial countries, such as India, exploited by imperial powers, such as US and Britain, also face a crisis of



photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

GEC Stafford: the town's biggest employer—for how much longer?

their capitalist economies—a lack of investment. Hence the shortfall in orders.

The home market is dependent on the nationalised industries. The profits of the 1950s and '60s did not lead to sufficient development of the industry. The experience of Reyrolle-Parsons in marine turbines was not used by management to its best advantage in land steam turbine generators.

The GEC Power Engineering Group was formed by a merger of other companies in the industry. The last ten years has not been one of investment and expansion but a decade of redundancies, factory closures and rising profits for GEC (e.g. power engineering, 1975 £6.9m; 1978 26.8m).

The NEDDY Heavy Electrical Machinery Sector working party—which feeds the government's 'think tank' (Central Policy Review Staff (CPRS) Report on the Power Plant Manufacturing Industry)—favours a merger of Reyrolle-Parsons and GEC with minority support from the National Enterprise Board.

Such a merger would undoubtedly lead to further redundancies. Overheads per man would increase to an extent that management would attempt to close a

major UK site.

Larne in Northern Ireland, Tyne and Wear, Manchester and Higher Openshaw are all areas of high unemployment, with well organised, militant shop stewards' committees. GEC Rugby have a £16 million investment programme while GEC Stafford has lost over 5,000 jobs in the last decade with only token resistance. **It is therefore vital that further moves are made towards the formation of a Shop Stewards Combine Committee of the GEC Power Engineering Group.**

The redundancies in GEC Power Transformers announced 20 November (see 'Militant' 434) and the five-day fortnight have to be met by concerted action. A Site

Action Group should be formed to fight the redundancies and short-time working by looking for alternative work for the Division.

As GEC is Stafford's major employer, this Site Action Group should be represented on the Trades Councils' Campaign Committee against unemployment.

Every trade union branch should move resolutions of support to their District Committees to bring pressure to bear on the trade union leadership. The AUEW (all sections) and the TGWU are particularly important in this respect.

These bodies should undertake a campaign among the membership for the following demands:

★ An end to wage restraint—it's not our crisis, so why should we pay for it?

★ No redundancies—why spend a humiliating year on the dole?

★ Early retirement at 60 on a minimum pension of £60. End youth unemployment.

★ A 35-hour week with no loss of pay now!—articulate the mood of the membership.

★ A £70 minimum wage.

★ Open the books of the GEC Power Engineering Group to show where past profits have gone.

★ Massive scheme of public works. Power station associated steam district heating schemes for new houses, hospitals, schools and factories.

★ Workers' control and management of the industry.

★ A socialist energy policy to plan for social need and not for profit.

★ Take over the banks, insurance companies, finance houses and the top 200 monopolies with compensation only on the basis of proven need—why should 7% of the population control 84% of the wealth, to impose the rule of Rent, Interest and Profit?

★ A socialist plan of production to end the chaos of capitalism.

Through ruthless 'rationalisation' and a refusal to invest in re-equipping, GEC has accumulated massive cash reserves of over £600 million. Last week, GEC made a take-over bid for Avery Scales, attracted no doubt by the firm's big profits [doubled in the last two years to £15.4m gross in 1977]

This follows GEC's 50/50 link with the American micro-chip manufacturer, Fairchild, and its bid for the office equipment manufacturer, AB Dick. GEC is trying to carve out a profitable stake in the field of electronic-controlled equipment—and to slash even more ruthlessly its older heavy electrical interests, regardless of the fate of the workers from whom they made their profits in the past.

ONCE EVERY FIFTEEN YEARS...

Can low pay be defeated by present day legislation? Not according to all the evidence. At the moment, almost three million workers in the catering and clothing industries for example have their wages covered by wages council minimum rates. Employers within these categories are supposed to be subject to official inspection to ensure that at least the minimum rate is paid.

Wages Inspectors carried out a number of "wages

blitzes" during 1976, with some publicity given to the fact that 27% of all employers they investigated were paying below the minimum. But this shocking figure had only dropped to 24% in 1977, despite this publicity. As most of the wages council rates were around £34 per week (£10 below the recent government definition of low pay) the hardship faced by these workers is obvious.

But the errant employers rarely get punished. Out of

11,000 employers found underpaying in 1977, only 11 (0.1%) were prosecuted. The Wages Inspectorate is grossly undermanned with only 132 inspectors. First offenders are not prosecuted, just warned about their future behaviour, but as there is such a shortage of inspectors, follow up visits are a rarity, so little check is kept on the bosses.

In fact on average, the employer can expect a call once every fifteen years! And if by mischance he comes

before a court, the maximum penalty for each offence is a £100 fine, and this is interpreted by magistrates as a licence to be far less severe than this with their capitalist defendants.

Protection?

Of the seven criminal proceedings last year, two bosses were merely admonished by the court and one was fined £30. The courts with their overwhelmingly

capitalist magistrates are a very poor protection for low paid workers. The trade union and labour movement has to take up the fight for a decent living wage in the same way as NUPE has done for its own low paid members.

Roger Shrivess

Calais Mutiny
1918
by A Killick

First-hand account of workers' revolt at the end of the First World War

Price 10p (+ 5p post and packing)
Order from World Books
1 Mentmore Terrace
London E8 3PN

FIGHT FOR A SOCIAL

Common Market in dis

The prospect of direct elections, the controversy over the proposed European Monetary System, the astronomical rise in the cost of food, and the question of how much Britain will pay to the EEC budget, have all forced the Common Market back to the centre of the British political stage.

Both in 1973, at the time of entry, and in 1975, at the time of the Common Market referendum, the capitalists and their shadows within the labour movement promised enormous benefits from Common Market membership. Events, however, have worked out somewhat differently than they anticipated.

Instead of substantial gain from the EEC, Britain is now expected to be the major contributor to the EEC budget by 1980 despite being the third poorest country. Callaghan has pointed out that Britain is expected to pay in the region of £900 million a year to the EEC budget. This would mean that Britain would be forced to pay an average of £15 a head of population, while the Germans would pay £8 and the Danes would gain £65 per head!

At the same time, while food prices have more than doubled since 1973, we have seen the 'butter mountain' growing, the 'wine lake' getting larger and millions being spent by the EEC to destroy food.

It is estimated that £16 million was spent last year just to destroy fruit and vegetables. A total of £1,860 million was used to store, destroy and eliminate the food that the Common Market in general didn't need. All of these factors have fuelled the opposition in Britain to the Common Market.

In all probability, there is a much bigger percentage of the population opposed to the Common Market today than either in 1972, or in 1975. A worsening of the situation of British society, on the one side, and of the lives of ordinary working people, on the other, seems to have coincided with membership of the Common Market.

Nevertheless, it is completely false, as some on the Left argue, to blame the Common Market alone for the deterioration of British society and the conditions of working people.

On the contrary, it is the fundamental weakness and the bankruptcy of British capitalism which is responsible for the plight of Britain, which would have been as evident outside the Common Market as it is inside. The failure of the British capitalists to invest and re-tool their industries has resulted in the

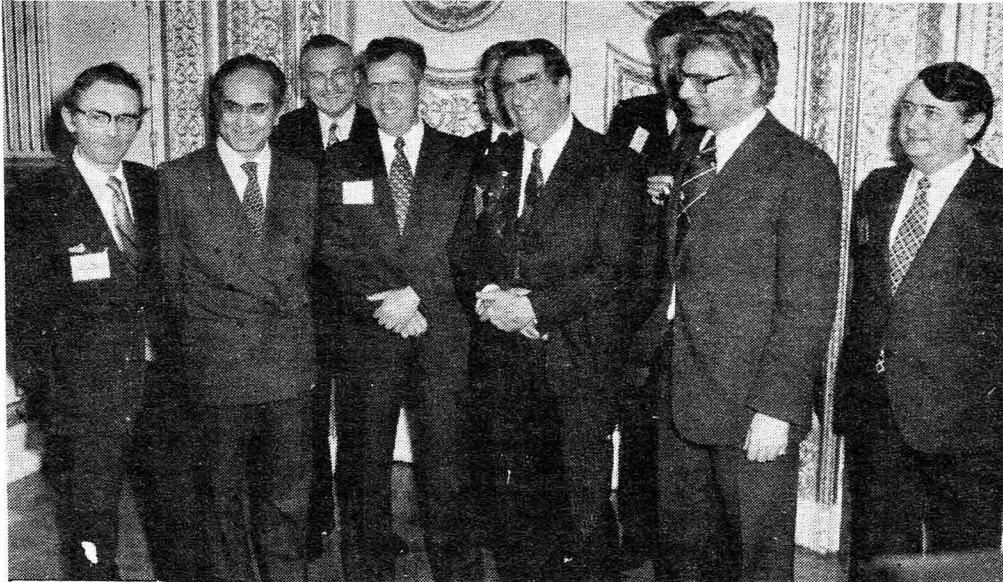
catastrophic collapse in their position, both in Europe and in world markets.

This was underlined in a recent 'Guardian' article:

"Since 1964 Britain's share of the world car market has fallen from 11% to 5%; of the shipbuilding market from 8% to 4%; of steel from 6.2% to 3%; of chemicals from 13.1% to 9.7%; of non-electrical machinery from 16.2% to 10.2%; of electrical machinery from 13.6% to 7.6%; and of transport equipment from 16.3% to 6.1%". (27 September).

Contrary to the arguments of some of the Tribune left and 'Communist' Party, there has not been a vital difference between British capitalism's performance within the EEC and its trade with the rest of the world: "looking at the present position overall, the movement in the export/import ratio of our trade with the EEC has not over the period as a whole, varied much from that of our total trade with the whole world", wrote Labour MP Michael Meacher in 'The Times' (24 November).

Echoing the arguments of the capitalists, the right wing within the labour movement advanced the idea that entry into the Common Market was a step "toward a united Europe." Some of them even identified this with the goal of a 'socialist Europe'. The Tribune Left, on the other hand, reacted towards the prospect of 'united Europe' with horror.



Finance ministers of the Nine, 1975.

Only the 'Militant' showed that it was impossible to unite Europe on a capitalist basis. We demonstrated that the very existence of the Common Market was an expression of the fact that the productive forces—science, technique and the organisation of labour—had outgrown the narrow limits of the nation state. Companies like ICI, with giant factories and enormous production runs, were organised to cater for a market of 250 or 300 million people, rather than the limited market of 55 million which existed in Britain.

The Common Market was not a mutual benefit society nor a step towards a united Europe but the coming together of a gang of national capitalists to share out the market. Possible on the basis of an upswing, once there was a fall in the market, it would be every man for himself and the devil take the hind-most.

The Common Market was not a mutual benefit society as the right wing argued, nor a step towards a united Europe, but was the coming together of a gang of national

capitalists to share out the market. This was possible on the basis of an economic upswing. But once there was a fall in the market, it would be a question of every man for himself and the devil take the hind-most.

Events have completely borne out this analysis. Whenever their fundamental interests have been at stake, the capitalists have not hesitated to break the rules of the Common Market.

This was clearly demonstrated over the issue of the "snake", which was an attempt in 1972 to tie the currencies of the Market powers together within clearly defined limits. The history of the snake is as follows:

Britain left the snake after seven weeks (June 1972) and has never returned.

France moved out (January 1974), back in (July 1975), and out again (March 1976), remaining out ever since.

Italy moved out in February 1973 and has stayed out.

Sweden (a non-EEC country which joined the snake in early days) went out in August 1977.

West Germany is the only large EEC country which now remains in the snake, and indeed the snake is now based on this one strong currency.

The only other currencies presently in it are those of the semi-satellites of German capitalism, the Netherlands, Belgium-Luxembourg, Denmark and (non-EEC) Norway.

In fact, of the four large EEC countries (Britain, West Germany, France and Italy), **no two have remained linked in the snake for more than twenty months at a time** (France and West Germany, 1972 to 1974).

The same fate awaits the proposed "European Monetary System". The pioneers of the EEC promised economic and monetary union by 1980. Nowadays, nobody, with the possible exception of EEC chief Roy Jenkins, expects this goal to be reached.

The same picture emerges in relation to tax (where there is not even a common rate for VAT), on the question of law, on transport, on fisheries and on energy.

In spite of these facts, organisations like the Common Market Safeguards

Committee, supported by a majority of Tribune MPs, see direct elections to the European Assembly as a step towards a "supra-state".

But there is no possibility of establishing a "supra-state" on the basis of capitalism. The following extract from the 'Militant' pamphlet on the Common Market makes the relationship between the institutions of the Common Market and each individual capitalist country clear:

"This [i.e. political union] was always a utopia. David Coombes, author of the recent book 'Politics and Bureaucracy in the European Community', writes sadly: 'The Commission, like the Community as a whole, has no powers in fields such as foreign affairs or defence and has no right to the use of force internally or externally. It has no power to approve Community legislation (as this rests with the Council of Ministers) as far as the EEC is concerned...the Commission has, as yet, no powers to raise revenue from an independent source of finance...On the other hand, its lack of power to make decisions on its own on all the most important question and its lack of an independent source of revenue (in theory temporary but in practice persistent) limit the sense in which the term "supranational" can be applied to the Commission.'

"He goes on to point out that: 'The main principle of the system seems to be that agreement with the governments must be obtained before any action is taken.'

"The difference can be understood if Wales, Scotland and England are regarded as different countries. They have one government, one currency, one army, and police force which are overall under national control, an economy which is completely integrated as one economic and political whole." ('Common Market—No, Socialist Europe—Yes', pp 10-11)

What applies to the EEC commission applies with even greater force to the European Assembly. It is a forum for airing ideas on the EEC and for the settlement, perhaps, of some secondary disputes.

But because of the vested interests of each national group of capitalists, it can

never assume the same control over "European affairs" that the national parliaments exert on the domestic scene.

Dutch capital, French capital, German and Italian capital, remain as separate rulers of "their" areas.

'The Times' has pointed out: "Despite this greater democratic authority [i.e. bestowed by direct elections—Ed.] the Parliament will still be without the main functions normally associated with such bodies. It will not be able to form governments nor is there any chance that member states will be prepared to grant it real legislative powers." (29 November)

The Common Market Safeguards Committee also argues that the institutions of the Common Market infringe the "sovereignty" of Britain, and particularly on the ability of a Labour government to carry through socialist policies. But the powers of the Labour government between 1964-70, and its "sovereignty" to take decisions on behalf of working people, were limited not by the Common Market, but by the "strikes of capital",

Europ Squab

Under EMS [European Monetary System] the currencies of all the EEC countries would be linked together and could only fluctuate within very narrow ranges.

A large chunk of the foreign exchange reserves of the participating countries, probably around £17 billion, would be pooled in a fund which would be lent to countries whose currencies were under pressure. Devaluations and revaluations would be possible, but only after consultation, and presumably with the agreement, of the other countries.

The German capitalists in particular are in favour of it because in the rise of the Mark against other currencies. As the 'Economist' (15 July) reported, "Mr Schmidt is worried that his country's currency will become increasingly vulnerable to speculation against the dollar [as international investors move their funds out of sinking dollars and into rising Marks—ed] and will become overvalued, which will hurt German exports [by making them more expensive on world markets—ed]."

By tying the Mark to the pound, the lira and other weaker currencies, the German capitalists hope to be able to hold their export prices down and increase their competitiveness both in European markets and the



LIST EUROPE

array

events have demonstrated, that only one force is capable of achieving this, the working class.

The past period has demonstrated the enormous power of the workers and their organisations throughout Europe. The recent Ford strike, the dockers' strike of 1972, the postmen's strike at the beginning of this decade, all bringing the tremendous support of the European working class, have all demonstrated the unity of interests of the workers of Europe which transcend national boundaries.

Common action has so far developed only on the trade union field. It now needs to be extended to the political plane.

Last year, the Socialist and Social Democratic organisations of Europe gathered together and called for a "Europe of the workers". They envisaged that this could be achieved through the institutions of the EEC.

But events have demonstrated that this is not possible. However, the very fact that such a decision was taken at the conference demonstrates the understanding of the rank and file of these organisations on the need for socialist opposition

to the capitalist Common Market.

The workers in the EEC, and in the countries outside the EEC, face a common enemy, sometimes, indeed, the same multi-national company. In its booklet, 'The EEC and Britain', the Labour Party shows that 330 monopolies account for 50% of the industrial sales in the EEC! **How simple it would be for the workers of Europe to take over these monopolies, implement a socialist plan of production throughout the continent, and establish a United Socialist States throughout the whole of Europe.**

A step towards this goal could be taken by the establishment of a socialist Britain. **It is this programme that should be fought for by Labour candidates in the forthcoming direct elections.**

There is a certain revulsion on the part of rank-and-file members of the Labour Party at the prospect of Labour candidates standing in the election, particularly as it would be to an assembly with very limited powers, and very remote from the people it allegedly represents.

This feeling is reinforced by the army of carpetbaggers and careerists who have brazenly solicited support from constituency Labour Parties, attracted, no doubt,

By Peter Taaffe

by the massive salary of £15,000 to £20,000, with expenses of an equal amount.

It would be wrong for Labour not to stand in the forthcoming direct elections. They should be used as a platform to advance the socialist and class case of the labour movement in relation to the capitalist EEC.

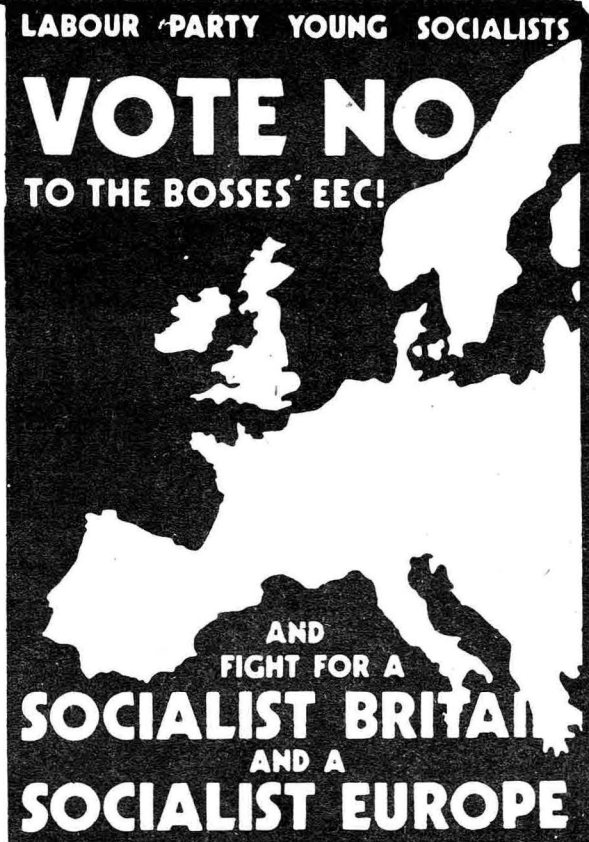
The ground can be easily cut from under the feet of the careerists. We must demand that all Labour Euro-MPs receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker together with necessary expenses vetted by the labour movement. The difference between this amount and their actual payments from the European Assembly must

come back to the labour movement.

Armed with this programme and this approach, the Labour Party would be able to engender enormous support from the workers of Britain for the idea of a socialist Europe. It would also

give a lead to the workers throughout the whole of Europe.

We will shortly be featuring an article on the EEC Common Agricultural Policy.



the economic pressure and blackmail exerted against it by the capitalists.

The solution to the problems of Britain, and particularly the working class, does not lie "outside Europe". Not even the Tribunites now argue, as they once did, that the "Commonwealth" is a viable alternative to the Common Market.

Australia now looks towards Japan, Canada looks towards its mighty neighbour, United States imperialism, while British capitalism is forced to compete with its capitalist rivals in its former colonies in Africa, in Asia and in Latin America. Half of Britain's trade, moreover, particularly in manufacturing goods, is now with the countries of the EEC.

Capitalism has erected two enormous barriers to the development of society: private ownership of the means of production and the nation state, which strangles and hems in the further development of the productive forces.

European industry and technique needs to be unified. But

ean Money

bles

By Andrew Glyn

rest of the world.

For the utopian prophets of a united capitalist Europe, the ultimate development of the EMS would be European monetary union with a single euro-currency issued by a European Central Bank.

While the proposals to back the EMS with substantial reserves from the richer economies may give the EMS more chance of success than the ill-fated snake, however, the fundamental national antagonisms rule out the development of an integrated currency. Conflicts between competing national capitalists will scotch such a process long before it could work its way to completion.

German gains

Under the floating exchange-rate system of recent years, British capitalists have to a certain extent offset their continued low productivity growth by the downward drift of the pound. Under a monetary union this would not be possible, and the twice-as-high level of productivity in German and French manufacturing could proceed smoothly to crush up UK industry.

The only attraction of EMS for the other capitalists is the hope that it will somehow make them competitive with their German rivals.

Roy Jenkins, in his October 1977 speech, reviving the idea of European Monetary Union, stated that wages in different countries must "remain in some kind of reason-

able relationship to productivity" (Lloyds Bank Review, January, 1978). 'The Economist' reported (November 4) that Irish ministers think that "EMS membership would help them to keep down wages."

As soon as Labour Party Conference voted against the 5% pay limit, 'The Times' commented that this provided a good reason for joining EMS. Even the CBI appears to have shifted from initial hostility to EMS to general support ('Financial Times', October 24). This is probably based on the desperate hope that with the pound in the EMS, they will be able to argue more convincingly to trade unionists that "excessive" wage increases (or an "unreasonable" relationship of wages to productivity, as Jenkins would put it) would cause loss of jobs through reduced international competitiveness.

Unemployment

But the likely effects of the UK joining were summarised by the National Institute as doing "not much to bring down the rate of inflation in the UK; it would weaken UK competitiveness and so lead to lower exports and higher imports, lower output and higher unemployment" ('Financial Times', November 6).

The irony is that German capital would be lending British capital vast sums in order that the exchange rate of sterling could be kept up so that German capital could

more easily penetrate British markets. A Tory government would almost certainly join in the hope of using it to batter down on wages and justify the "s" r'n monetary policy within the system" called for by the 'Economist'.

Direction

The chart shows the enormous variations in the exchange rates since the last ill-fated attempt to link the EEC currencies in the "snake". In the last three years, the inflation rate has been 10% a year higher on average in Italy than in Germany—hardly a convincing basis on which to link the currencies!

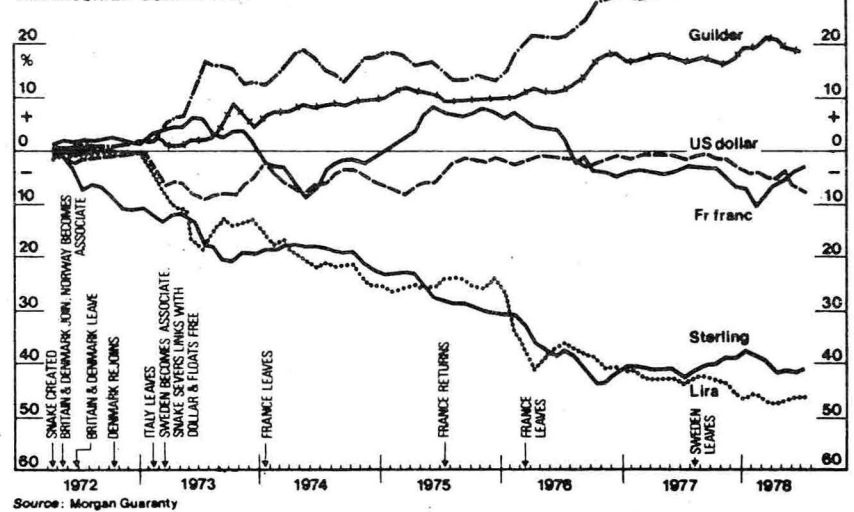
It is very likely that as soon as the spectre of a left government in France or Italy is raised, or the dollar undergoes another bout of speculation, the whole edifice would collapse.

If Britain was involved, the EMS would be that much weaker, for whereas France, Germany and Italy have all achieved a similar productivity increase in manufacturing since 1973 (14% to 19%), the increase in the UK was only 3%. There is no way in the long run in which such a divergence in productive power could be contained within EMS.

While the need to plan their operations on a continent-wide scale forces the giant European companies towards breaking down the barriers between national states, at the same time the divergent

Snaking apart

Trade-weighted exchange rates, % change from Smithsonian central rate



national patterns of development of the productive forces and class relations make this quite impossible to achieve on a capitalist basis.

Would staying out of EMS solve anything? Obviously not, unless you think that the problems of jobs and living standards are being satisfactorily sorted out now.

In fact, there is a danger that discussion of the EMS will tend to divert attention from the capitalist crisis—world-wide and in the UK—which is the real source of these problems. For example, Jack Straw ('Tribune', October 13) says of EMS that "at stake is Britain's (our emphasis) freedom to decide its own economic policies, independent of the EEC."

But Britain is not independent of the EEC, or more accurately, British capital is not independent of European capital **inside or outside** the EEC. The EMS is just one form of pressure from world capital.

The source of the pressure is the competitive nature of the capitalist system, which makes it utopian to try and opt out of it on a capitalist basis. Being outside the EMS does not preserve some ultimate "freedom" of British workers from the depredations of the capitalist class at home.

In his horror of EMS, Jack Straw seems uncritically to

accept the "expansionist strategy the government is trying to follow", as though the sovereignty of British parliament could guarantee a Labour government being able to achieve full employment if only it were not for "selfish foreigners".

Devaluation?

Is it true, in any case, that the Labour government is following an expansionist policy? By raising interest rates by 2½% as it did recently, the government drew praise from the City for at last applying the monetarist brakes more vigorously—the very opposite of an expansionist policy.

Behind the Tribunites' demand for "freedom" from EEC constraints, moreover, lurks their alternative "devaluation" strategy. As opposed to the pound being supported in the EMS, they favour the deliberate devaluation of the pound on the grounds that this would boost British exports and allow for the expansion of the economy.

Past experience under the Labour government, however, shows that devaluation offers no solution for the labour movement. Big business uses devaluation, not to increase its exports, but to push up its profits, and the fall in the pound (meaning higher import prices) inevitably pushed up prices in Britain. There

was no real increase in investment and no significant expansion of production as a result of devaluation.

In other words, it is clearly futile to oppose the EMS on the basis of "financial and currency freedom" for the British economy.

British big business will decide on whether or not to participate in the EMS by weighing up the likely profit and loss involved on either side, and unfortunately their attitude will be the decisive factor in the cabinet's calculations too.

But whether British capitalism goes to the EMS or boycotts the System will not make a fundamental difference to the working class of Britain. The labour movement should not become involved in a fruitless argument as to the pros and cons of EMS from a capitalist point of view.

It is certainly necessary to analyse and explain what EMS means, and warn of what it may mean for the workers. But our real task is to answer the desperate expedients of the European capitalists with a socialist alternative which would provide a real way of bringing together the workers of Europe in the fight for the democratic, socialist planning of Europe's productive forces.

GERMANY



37,000 German steelworkers are on strike for a 35-hour week.

The sceptics who have written off the German workers' ability to defend their class interests have been confounded by the first official steel strike in Germany since 1928.

The giant metalworkers' union IG Metall—Europe's biggest union—has pulled out 37,000 of its 200,000 members in the steel industry in support of their claim for a 35-hour week and a 5% pay

rise. The strikers will cripple the key firms which supply the car industry—the only industry currently with a booming demand for steel.

But the bosses have already responded by locking out a further 28,000 workers in what may become a bitter struggle rich in lessons about the class divide in the former 'miracle economy' of Germany. The steel barons claim that they can't afford to meet the claim and have offered a derisory 3% on wages and six weeks annual holidays, yet workers aged over 35 already get 5½ weeks off!

The demand for a 35 hour week is crucial to save jobs. "This year we have been losing

steel industry jobs at the rate of 1,000 a month. By 1984 we would lose one third of the present workforce and this is a process we want to stop" said a spokesman for IG Metall.

Strength

Thus the German workers are now facing the same threat as those in Britain. In calling for a shorter working week they are insisting on no sacrifice of the living standards they have won through their organised strength.

German steelworkers have won an average wage of about £600 a month, with skilled

foundrymen on a basic rate of £3.10 an hour and skilled rolling-mill workers on £3.51 an hour ('Telegraph' 29 November). They are not prepared to lose that either through redundancy itself or through the blackmail of redundancy being used to keep down their wage claims.

During the prolonged post-war boom when the economy expanded rapidly, many so-called 'socialists' dismissed the German workers as a force to struggle and to change society because of their relative 'prosperity'. But those gains depended on the strength of their class organisations.

Now that the bosses can no

longer readily give concessions to the workers because of the stagnation of their system, the workers are beginning to participate more in the unions in order to fight. Inevitably they will be pushed to the left as the workers draw socialist conclusions from their experience of struggle. The vote for strike action by the steelworkers was carried with a majority of 87%!

Following the awakening of the big battalions of labour in the printers' and dockers' strikes early this year and now the steelworkers, let no-one utter a word of scepticism about the German working class again!

1920 - Military coup defeated by German workers - eye witness account

'Militant' recently published an eye-witness account of the events of the 1918 German Revolution

by a member of the Social Democratic Party, now 77 years old, which was originally published by the

German Marxist paper 'Vorwärts'.

It was that revolt of the soldiers, sailors and workers against the First World War that led to peace and the overthrow of the monarchy. Had it not been for the treachery of the SPD leaders in setting up a capitalist republic, the German workers would have carried through the socialist transformation of society.

Although cheated of this opportunity, they were not broken. For when the reactionary Generals Kapp

and Lutzow launched a military putsch in 1920, it was the workers themselves who defended against counter-revolution the democratic rights their earlier struggle had gained.

While the erstwhile capitalist 'democrats' did nothing, the workers organised a general strike, formed armed units and took control of many towns out of the hands of the reactionary officers. Faced with such determination by the working class, the coup collapsed within

days.

In Remscheid, south of the important Ruhr industrial area, an important battle took place, as recounted below by this veteran comrade. Having exposed the undemocratic intentions of one section of the ruling class and the ineffectiveness of the 'liberal' section, and having mobilised to defeat the army, once more the working class could have taken over the running of society. Only an equally determined and resolute Marxist leadership was

missing. This question will be discussed in 'Militant' in January.

“Once a company of sappers came past the workers' and soldiers' council. We told them, 'Here is the workers' and soldiers' council, you can give up your weapons and return to your homes. The war is over.'”

The commander of the company hesitated, he gave the order to surround us. However, when he realised that his command was no longer being taken seriously, he gave up. We disarmed the soldiers. They didn't want to shoot any more.

Then the soldiers' councils started distributing travel documents to these soldiers so they could move freely. If they lived further afield, they could travel back for nothing, by rail on the orders of the soldiers' council. The railway had been doing this on orders from the soldiers' council since March 1919.

At the time I was not even 18 years old, and only ran errands. Messages had to be taken to the groups in the surrounding areas, and they didn't trust the postal system.

If it had to be done quickly, we youngsters simply cycled over. The councils in the whole of Westphalia had good communications with each other.

In 1920 the March putsch took place. I was still quite young but I took part as much as I was allowed.

Here in Remscheid the staff

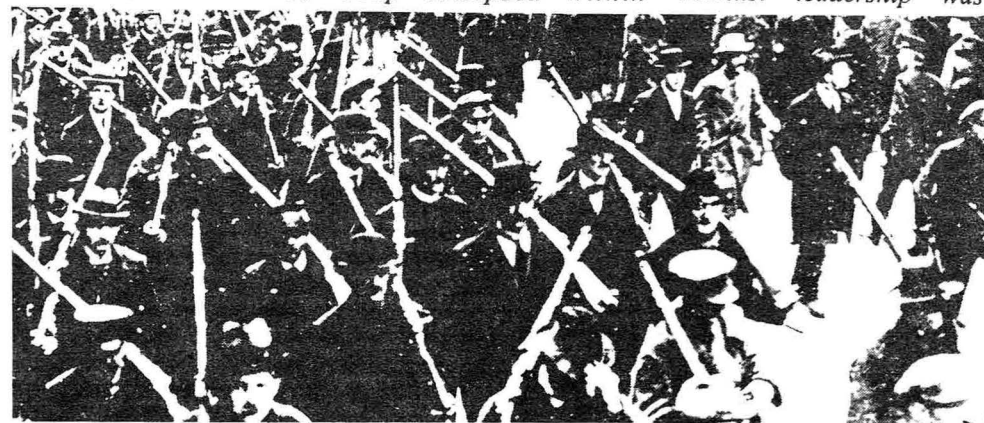
of General Lutzow was installed in the Town Hall, and we contacted the workers in Lüttringhausen, because they had set up a gun there. The people of Lutzow occupied the slaughterhouse, the cemetery in the Nordstrasse and the water tower.

Then the workers put up a resistance. In the Lennep council they immediately set up a people's assembly.

The 22 men from the army stationed there and an officer came to the market and wanted to blow up the assembly. They set up machine-guns and ordered us to disperse.

Some were very apprehensive, but you should have seen it. 'Clear out,' shouted the speaker, and then the officer gave the order to clear out. They had to withdraw to Remscheid, they could do no more in Lennep.

They must have suspected that Duisburg-Hamborn, like the whole of the coalfield, was in the hands of the workers' and soldiers' councils. And then the red workers' militia from Schwelm came along the road, emaciated, tired, harassed, hungry and unshaven.



The Workers armed—Germany 1920

I stood on the pavement with my brother and watched them. Then one of them came over to me and said, 'Damn it, such a big, strapping lad standing round. Come and fight with us!'

I said, 'OK.' I was pleased to go with them. As we approached the town, the explosions began. I myself had no weapon, but I helped with the water tanks for the machine-guns.

Those from the coalfields had brought guns, they fired over Lüttringhausen on the Town Hall, where the Imperial Army was installed. The first shot went close but nothing happened.

But the second shot hit. At that, they fled from the Town Hall, but went on the defence

again at the slaughter-house, and many of ours were killed there, too. They had to go over the wall, and there they were shot down.

I was with the troops from Hamborn when we went up the Freiheitstrasse to the slaughter-house. On a roof there was a sniper, and another at the corner, the crossfire meant we could no longer get through.

I witnessed a 15-year-old boy avenging his father. His father was standing two or three paces away from me. A shot hit my coat and went directly into his face, because he was short.

The son just gnashed his teeth. As we approached the advertising pillar, we could see where the shots were

coming from. We, of course, had to keep under cover and could not pass.

The boy took aim and watched closely. All at once he saw a steel helmet on the roof. He hit the man, who fell from the roof together with the machine gun. The machine-gun emplacement was finished off.

As we went further and arrived in the triangle between the railway embankment and the fence of the Alexander factory, with the machine-gun up front, those in the slaughter-house came under heavy fire. They gave up and cleared off.

We took several of the soldiers into captivity, and among them I suddenly recognised a former school

friend. All at once he saw me and called 'Bruno, Bruno.'

I said, 'Herbert, what are you doing here?' 'I joined up voluntarily.' He was one year older than me. I said to those from Hamborn: 'Leave the boy in peace, poor devil, they've got eleven children at home, his parents are decent people. Give him here, I'll take care of him.'

Our men chased the rest of the soldiers to Müngsten. That's where the British-occupied zone began. The English took them into captivity and gave them protection. With that the March putsch was really over for me.

The fighting still went on. Comrades from here drove by lorry to Wesel, where a terrible slaughter took place. They brought back two casualties. They were killed in the defence of a besieged factory.

Finally, however, came the armistice of Bielefeld. The mood was such that the population here were at least opposed to the surrender of weapons. Others—mainly the SPD leaders—said we would get our rights even without weapons.

In Bielefeld a conference took place about the surrender of weapons. We asked ourselves—how can the SPD leaders be so stupid?

When the weapons were surrendered, the ruling class became bold. There were arrests and I don't know what else. Then it was too late.

This Bielefeld agreement in 1920 was the biggest mistake they could make. We already had a real workers' army together, with a command and so on, but without weapons nothing could be done, then they got bold again. Then everything was over. ”

USA / IRAN



Queuing for the dole in Detroit

Up to 3,000 demonstrators are reported to have been shot dead in Iran since protests against the Shah's authoritarian rule developed this year.

'Communist' leaders join in support for shah

The best industrial workers have challenged the heavily armed dictatorship in mass political strikes demanding the release of political prisoners, exiles to be allowed to return and other democratic rights. It is upon their poverty that the tiny ruling class has built personal fortunes in their barbaric society.

Behind the Shah stands one of the world's most modernly-equipped armed forces and the dreaded secret police, SAVAK, at whose hands tens of thousands of the regime's opponents have suffered unmentionable bestial tortures. It was against the continued rule of this tyrant that two weeks ago half a million marched through the streets of one provincial city.

With so much wealth and privilege threatened by workers' revolution it was not surprising that the leader of the world's biggest capitalist power, President Carter, should provide sympathy and support for the Shah on his recent birthday:

"As I have mentioned before, we have thought about Iran very often in recent months. I know very well that the recent unrest has occupied your majesty's thoughts a great deal. But at the same time I am well aware that your majesty can be very proud and satisfied with all that you have achieved for the progress of your country during the past 37 years."

It is only to be expected that the super power which

waged war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants and which helped the overthrow of democratic rights in Chile through a bloody military coup would give moral support to this big-time gangster. But the Iranian masses must have felt a stab in the back when Chairman Hua, "revolutionary" leader of "communist" China, followed suit:

"It is a great pleasure for me to express my sincere greetings on the occasion of your majesty's 59th birthday. I hope that your imperial highness will enjoy good health and that Iran will meet with new successes in the defence of its independence and national sovereignty, and will also reach new heights in progress and development."

This disgusting crawling at the feet of the butcherous "imperial highness" was out-reached only by the new depths of grovelling before the Iranian Czar by the "Soviet" Russian leader Brezhnev:

"Your majesty Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, light of the Aryans, King of Kings of Iran: On the occasion of a day of national rejoicing for the Iranian nation—the birthday of your majesty—please accept the sincere greetings of the Executive Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and my own as well."



Carter



Brezhnev



Hua

As the workers and peasants of Iran strive to forge a political leadership in their struggle to overthrow the Shah and the capitalist system he represents, they will not look to the privileged

bureaucracies of Moscow and Peking who have long forgotten the elementary principles of workers' internationalism in favour of their own narrow nationalist interests.

Robots threaten US jobs

THE BOSSSES' DREAM: NO WAGES!

The August 17th edition of the American 'Journal of Commerce' reports that computer-controlled robots are being phased in by the auto industry.

Capable of replacing human labour, they are being "cautiously installed" because collective bargaining on a new three-year contract with the United Auto Workers is scheduled to get under way in less than a year. "Hence management is eager to avoid creating new obstacles to a peaceful settlement" writes Sidney Fisk, who authorised the article.

The UAW, he says, is insisting that automation be introduced in an orderly way, so that it won't result in the loss of many jobs, thus it must be "cemented on a base of consistent full employment."

Fisk reports that General Motors has nearly 200 robots engaged in a wide variety of work at its Lordstown, Ohio, plant, and has moved to many new applications of the computer in assembly operations.

Unimation at Danbury, Connecticut, reports rapid growth in demand for its robots with orders up fifty percent from a year ago.

Chrysler Corporation is building a Robogate auto-body framing system at its Belvidere, Illinois, plant, with programmeable robot welders. It will be used in conjunction with a robot welding system that now uses 22 Unimatic machines.

Chrysler has been licensed by Fiat to see the framing system which is a version of Fiat's Robogate assembly system. The latter is already in operation in Italy in a plant making a new car which will be introduced into the United States early next year.

Human-like

"In the Fiat assembly plant human-like robots deftly move their 'arms' to perform welding operations as the work is carried past them".

Fisk observes that "automatic assembly through the use of robots in small component plants is moving ahead of General Motors. GM's manufacturing development engineers have taken delivery of their first Programmeable Universal Manipulator for Assembly (PUMA) which will be developed to put small components together. The first PUMA device, a small robot, will be developed to assemble components weighing up to five pounds.

The device was made for GM by Unimation. Eventually it is hoped that PUMA will be used to assemble

instrument panels, electric garages, spark plugs etc."

According to General Motors sources, production versions of the PUMA robot will work side by side with human beings performing repetitive tasks rapidly and accurately. The robots will be equipped with grippers, power screw drivers and other assembly tools, and will be programmed to do a given job, in conjunction with human workers.

Jobs replaced

The arm of each robot will have five or six angles of motion and will be accurate to within .005-inch. The accuracy could be improved even further with the addition of special sensing tools, making it useful for very precise sub-assemblies.

TRW's Equipment Group in Cleveland, Ohio, plans to have a robot operated electrochemical (ECM) machining line for turbine engine blades and vanes. The company claims there is a dwindling supply of skilled craftsmen in this field of work.

TRW is a large producer for such blades for the aircraft engine industry. TRW regards this robot complex as a major step towards the automated factory.

But what will happen to the workers whose jobs are replaced by machines? In a rational society where production was to satisfy man's needs, every worker would welcome the chance to give up the burden of soul-destroying, repetitive work day in, day out.

But in a society where production is simply geared to maximise the profits of the small elite who own industry, such new technology will be used against the interests of the majority by getting rid of workers and the need to pay them wages. Thus a scientific leap forward will plunge millions back to the unemployment, poverty and charity of the past!

The labour movement in the United States and in Europe must ensure that new technology is used for the benefit of all by demanding the nationalisation under workers' control and management, of industry so that full employment and a shorter working week can be enjoyed by everyone in a planned economy.

**By Betty Traun
[New York]**

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

LETTERS

THE BABY BUSINESS

Dear Comrade

If any socialist needed reminding of the rottenness of capitalism then surely the BBC 2 programme 'Man Alive' on 21st November provided such a reminder.

The programme called 'The baby business' investigated the booming trade in buying and selling young children in America. Babies are sold at anything up to 10,000 dollars, and are often auctioned to the highest bidder. Gazumping is also a regular feature of this trade.

The business is conducted in large American cities by attorneys of law. The babies come from young, often very young, unmarried girls with unwanted pregnancies. The girls are promised accommodation for their period of confinement and all medical

expenses, plus an assurance that their child will be looked after. In return they sign adoption papers, which are in fact illegal, but as one attorney stated "the girls are often very naive and unsophisticated."

The demand for these babies comes from childless couples, who have often already been turned down by the official adoption agencies due to an unsuitability of one kind or another—usually age. They must pay up to \$10,000 dollars and put a deposit down to show good faith. Where gazumping takes place this deposit is lost.

Quite clearly, the attorney makes a vast profit, in this exploitation of both parties.

One of the points made was the pressure put on both

unmarried mothers and childless couples by society. Unmarried mothers have inadequate facilities and find it a struggle to maintain a child together with the ostracism which still continues against them. The childless couple also face problems in a society which holds that a couple without children are incomplete as a unit.

These pressures brought about by society are then exploited by the very society which creates them. This type of exploitation, the buying and selling of human beings gives the lie to the claim of capitalism being 'humane' and 'civilised'—it is nothing better than slavery.

Yours fraternally
Vanessa Hawkins
York LPYS

LOW PAY...

Dear Comrades

I want to tell you about my latest job as a mother's help. I have been forced to take low paid temporary work, since it seems that this is all that is available to me. Well, we had run up a few debts before we got married. I had no money, no job and couldn't sign on.

My husband was supposed to do it on behalf of me but couldn't because he's a student. If he had stopped being a student we would have lost our university accommodation. For two months there was no money for either myself or my daughter, and my husband had spent all his grant on bills.

So despite being five months pregnant, I had tried to get a job where I work 52 hours, looking after two children for £20 a week [fares and meals]. I thought I must be the only person in Brighton desperate enough to take it, but in the two days I have been working nine others have phoned up for the job!

What sort of society is it that lets this sort of thing happen, not just in my case but in thousands of others too? Yet there are the resources available to provide the work for everyone at good wages if only they were to be used on the basis of a socialist planned economy.

Yours fraternally
A comrade from Brighton

...CHARITY...

Dear Comrades

Recently my 4½ year old son, Joe, came home from school with a leaflet entitled South Glamorgan's School's Hospital Comfort Fund. In it, parents were asked to contribute to this fund which supplies equipment such as TVs, hairdryers and special beds for pressure sore patients. Obviously we felt obliged to send money as our son's friends were all taking money. However, we sat Joe down and explained why we weren't going to send money. We said we sent our spare money to 'Militant' because we thought people in hospital ought to have TVs etc, without us having to fork out. Joe, being a sensible child, agreed with us, however, I don't know if he said at school that his money was going to 'Militant'!

I find this a particularly insidious way of raising money. We have all in our time bought charity flags especially if we are selling

'Militant' next to these sort of people, but what I cannot stomach is the persuasion involved when using small children.

Four and five year olds are very impressionable and those not giving money immediately stand out. As socialists we 'give' as a normal part of our lives, we find it quite acceptable to give as much as we can afford to a cause, precisely because we have faith in the future.

Charities have little faith in anything because they accept things cannot change i.e. that there will always be poor people with no homes, people with no hope of help with an incurable illness. Shelter, and even the Salvation Army fill up the holes capitalism produces. Under socialism no pockets of misery will exist.

From Joe I enclose £1 for the Fighting Fund, £4 from his parents.

Yours fraternally
Barbara Street

...CAPITALISM

Comrades

A cook who gave his kidney to help save his sister's life was presented with a £700 bill by a hospital in Marseilles. Is this the 'private enterprise' the Tories rave about?

Meanwhile, at an English church choirboys went on strike, while the service was being conducted. The sermon? Pray for industrial peace! But how can we have industrial peace when we have these vultures profiteering from people's misery?

Does the church pray for equality? Yes, in heaven! Behave yourself in this life, don't rock the boat and you'll have "pie in the sky when you die."

The Church of England are

one of the biggest landowners in Britain and the Roman Catholic church are the richest organisation in the world yet there are millions of people starving all over the world! So much for their 'christian' attitude.

The church is, and by its very nature always will be, interlinked with capitalism. Ever heard of a poor bishop?

The only way to end the degradation, starvation and misery of the masses is through international socialism.

Fraternally
Ricky Stuart
G&MWU Wandsworth and Wandsworth Area shop stewards committee



photo: J McKirrick (Militant)

Brendan Gallagher calls for the release of his son at the CSSI's Labour Party Conference meeting

FREE WILLIE GALLAGHER!

Dear Comrades

The following resolution, proposed by myself and seconded by Danny Purton, was unanimously carried at

the November meeting of Harlow Labour Party's General Management Committee.

"Harlow CLP is disgusted at the continual imprison-

ment of Willie Gallagher on trumped up charges and insist on his immediate release. Further we support the demand by Strabane Trades Council and the Labour and Trade Union Coordinating Group for a trade union enquiry into the circumstances of his interrogation and trial, and the use of repressive legislation in Northern Ireland to harass activists in the labour and trade union movement."

Also 36 of the delegates present signed a petition organised by the Campaign for Socialist Solution in Ireland (CSSI) demanding Willie's immediate release and a trade union enquiry into repression in Northern Ireland.

Yours fraternally
Brian Bostock
Harlow Labour Party

WHAT A WASTE

Dear Comrade

After returning from G-Day (NUS Grants Day) I felt compelled to write a letter. It can be summed up as a—waste of time—waste of money—and a waste of energy.

I spent all day walking around London with four others in a vain attempt to find an organised activity. On arriving at ULU (University of London Union) we were seriously told by an NUS

executive member that we go round an exhibition or go and watch cartoon films within the Union.

It would have been funny if it wasn't true. How long will it take for the NUS to organise a sensible grants campaign based securely in the labour and trade union movement?

Yours fraternally
Stephen Murray
Bristol University Labour Club (personal capacity)

'LET THE PEOPLE HEAR ANDY BEVAN'

Dear Comrade

The following is the text of a letter I have written to 'Labour Weekly' on behalf of my Party, the content of which may be of some interest to you.

"It will be a shocking waste of the talent available to the Labour Party if the National Youth Officer is engaged in Transport House answering telephone calls during the election campaign, and my Party has decided to write to the NEC in support of the

letter published in 'Labour Weekly' from the Chairman of the Labour Party Young Socialists, Philip Frampton.

"The Isle of Wight CLP owes a debt of gratitude to Andy Bevan, because a public meeting he addressed for us as part of our 1978 membership campaign was the most successful certainly in my memory, bringing us an influx of new members and putting what had been a dying Branch firmly back on its feet.

But when we wrote to the NEC expressing concern about the delay there had been in giving permission to the National Youth Officer to address our meeting, we were told that "it had not been the practice for a very long period of years" to allow national officers to speak at public meetings. If that really is the case, then it is time this practice was reversed: if we have a national officer of the proven capacity of Andy Bevan, then let us make the

fullest possible use of him.

If we have a speaker capable of inspiring people, capable of bringing new blood into the Party and mobilising the Labour vote, what sense does it make to shackle him and to deprive the Party of the full range of the resources he has to offer? Let the people hear Andy Bevan: he is an officer the Labour Party can be proud of."

Robert Jones
Secretary, Isle of Wight CLP

STORMY WINTER COMING BUT £14,000 STILL NEEDED

The Prime Minister recently 'explained' to the NEC of the Labour Party that "You may be right and I may be wrong; the difference is I have to carry the responsibility". Most, if not all of our readers, will consider that on the issue of workers' living standards the Prime Minister is wrong. However, if this is the case you have the responsibility to step up the campaign for socialist policies by supporting the 'Militant' with cash!

This week's total of £593.81 is far below the weekly figure of £2,415 we now need to reach our target. Don't assume that seasonal events alone will 'make up the target'—it's essential that all readers and supporters dig really deeply and send us their fivers (tenners or twenties if they can afford them), or whatever they can, before the demands of the festive season are upon them.

Have you put your name and donation to a local appeal sheet? If you haven't seen one yet, the solution's quite simple: make your own! Ensure every reader in your area, and everyone at meetings where the 'Militant' is sold is asked to sign their name and give contributions.

The New Year raffle proceeds will be added to the fighting fund later on and should give it a tremendous boost, but every ticket must be sold! First batches of payments and counterfoils have been arriving at the office all week but have we had any from you yet?

Many thanks to all those who have contributed this week. Individual donations included: £25 from a Merseyside reader, £21 from Teeside, £20 from J Stroud (Exeter LPYS), £16 each from Swansea NUM and CPSA members, and £16.76 from NGA readers on Merseyside. A West Wales student sent £12, a group of Tyneside students gave us £13.50 and we received three tenners this week: from R Hartill (Bristol South LPYS) and from Oxford and London readers who wish to remain anonymous.

M Patterson (age 8) from Glasgow collected £8.70 for us: if just 300 of our older readers had done that we'd be well on target!

£6 came from F and B Kidd (Wandsworth) and also from a Welsh EETPU supporter. Those donating fivers includ-

FIGHTING FUND - TARGET £70,000		
Area	Target	Proportion of target received
Eastern	4,400	2,793.10
Hants & IOW	2,100	2,387.93
Humberside	2,200	1,752.55
Lancashire	1,500	665.23
London: North	7,700	6,318.83
London: South	3,800	3,312.75
Manchester & Dist	2,900	1,894.21
Merseyside & Dist	4,500	2,838.48
Midlands East	4,400	2,864.60
Midlands West	7,400	5,597.40
Northern	4,900	3,597.25
Scotland East	2,500	1,736.58
Scotland West	2,900	1,825.81
South East	2,300	2,280.68
South West	2,300	2,199.75
Thames Valley	1,700	1,503.29
Wales East	2,000	1,609.69
Wales West	2,300	2,177.27
Yorkshire	5,200	3,080.33
Others	3,000	5,666.18
Total	70,000	56,101.91

ed A Gwilt (Wandsworth NALGO), P Docherty (Chester) and a subscriber in Italy. L Cook (Leeds) sent £3, J Sullivan (Maidstone) £3.12. The £2s from Mr and Mrs Wobey (London), S Gannon

(Cardiff N LPYS), M Henderson (Chester-le-Street), L Castle (Uxbridge), C Newby (Reading), J Turner (N W London) and L Beszant (Gosport) are all very welcome.

will be the first of many!) Fireworks parties contributions to reach us this week included £2 (Gosport) and £15 (Muswell Hill), while a Stirling effort raised £8, and a Walthamstow curry £10.15. Many thanks to all cooks and bar staff.

A disco and raffle in N London helped us by £23.50 and car and taxi rides from Tyneside and the Midlands made nearly £10. £13 came from rent, bed and breakfast in London and Oxford, £1.18 from a regular raffle in Ipswich, £3.54 from Birmingham pontoon and £5 from "pool win" in Rochdale (the pub bar type, not the ¼-millionaire type—a pity!). Lastly meals and pennies collections from Leicester added another fiver.

There must be something in this wealth of examples that you could try in order to increase the wealth of the 'Militant'—and, sometimes, have a laugh at the same time! Tell us about your most successful fund-raising ventures so we can pass on the ideas. We are convinced that our readership will once again rise to the occasion and strive to reach the £70,000 target. But please take fund-raising seriously: £500 a week won't allow us to improve production of the paper in 1979 one little bit. With a stormy winter ahead we know you want more assistance from the 'Militant' in the fight for socialism. We only appeal to you to carry out your responsibility to assist the 'Militant'

**ONLY £593.81
THIS WEEK**

ter-le-Street LPYS), C Gilman and Cllrs Rea and White (all Bristol), M Hughes (Glasgow), J Pattison (Jarrow) (twice), T Hughes and T Lynn (both Tyneside), M Carr and B Roberts (Both Merseyside), N Griffiths (Ogmore LPYS), and C Mullins (Birmingham NUPE).

The sacrifice of 60p by BF&AWU pickets at Suttons, Coventry is as valuable as many of the larger donations. Our thanks also to those. Thanks also to: M Dodds (Austin & Pickersgill, Wearside) £1.68; V Sheldon (CPMA Birmingham No 1 CPSA) £1.66; and to A Auld, J Wilkin (both Tyneside), P Murphy (Keele) and S Swinerton (Chester) for £1.50s.

Thanks to the following for the £1 donations they sent this week: M Swords (Notts USDAA), J Short (S London

supporters, too numerous to mention, who donated smaller amounts.

Labour Party Young Socialist branches who had collections for us this week included Rother Valley, Southgate, Fareham, Gosport and Ogmore, while a Militant Readers' Meeting in Caerphilly left us £20.46 better off, and a Marxist Discussion Group in S London contributed £3.76.

Supporters who got together to forward us donations included those in Camden Westminster (£44), Bristol (£32), Birmingham (£19) and Wolverhampton (£5). Some councillors in SE London collected £3.52, while further instalments of money from a sponsored walk in the same area came to £4.50 and 'ambulance' money, £1. (At the rate the NHS is going, this

ADS

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

MILITANT MEETINGS

BIRMINGHAM Militant Xmas Party. Saturday December 9th, 8 pm till late, Davenports Social Club, Granvill Street, Birmingham (near Davenports Brewery)

SOUTHEND Militant Readers' Meeting. 'Support the Bakers'. Speakers: Douglas Hall (Acting Secretary, BFAWU Southend), Bob Edwards (Harlow Labour Party). Friday December 15th, 8 pm, Labour Hall, Cambridge Road, Southend.

GRAND MILITANT BAZAAR Saturday December 16th. William Morris Hall, Somers Road, Walthamstow, E 17. All helpers contact Cherrie McAskill for details.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

NEWCASTLE Marxist Discussion Group. Every Friday, 3 pm, Students' Union, Level 6, Newcastle University. Phone Newcastle 774948 for details.

University and Poly Labour Clubs! Buy our **Bibliographical introduction to the European Marxist Tradition**. Invaluable for older as well as new members. 17p each or 60p for five. Newcastle Central LPYS, 230 Clara Street, Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

CPSA LONGBENTON Marxist Discussion Group. Tuesday December 12th 6 pm, Brandling Villa, South Gosforth.

PNP Youth Movement Public Meeting. 'Crisis in the Caribbean'. 7.30 pm Wednesday December 13th, Stockwell Hall, Stockwell Park Estate (Between Brixton Rd and Stockwell Rd) London SW9. Speakers: Charlie Graham (Secretary, PNP Executive UK), Phil Frampton (Chairman LPYS), Ronnie Sookhdeo (lecturer from Guyana), Bob Lee (Secretary PNP Youth).

SUNDERLAND Marxist Discussion Group. Subject: 'Parliamentary Democracy, Reform or Revolution'. Wednesday December 20th 8pm. For full details contact Diane English, Sunderland 44365.

MILITANT publications

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

CLASSIFIED

LENIN'S Collected Works for only £1! Limited draw—only 200 tickets. Draw 6th January 1979. Don't delay: send your £1 for a ticket. £5 for a book, now.—e o Lenin Draw, 14 Howard Road, Walthamstow, London E 17. Proceeds to Militant Fighting Fund.

BLACKTHORNE RECORDS

presents
HOT BLAST
[BR 1059]
a new album of songs
PEGGY SEEGER & EWAN MacCOLL
dealing with
Racism. Wife-battering. The Nuclear Threat.
The Fight against Fascism. Apartheid.
LAW AND ORDER PROPERTY AS THEFT
£2.75 (P&P incl) from Blackthorne Records, 35 Stanley Ave., Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2PU.

IT'S TIME FOR THE NEW YEAR RAFFLE

WIN: A 12-day holiday for two in Times Square, New York.

- OTHER PRIZES:** ★ Alarm clock radio;
★ Carriage clock; ★ Picture clock;
★ Digital clock; ★ Travel alarm clock;
★ Kitchen clock; ★ Wrist watch;
★ Pendant/pocket watch; ★ Kitchen timer;
★ Egg timer

To be drawn Saturday, 6th January, 1979

Get your tickets (books of 20) from: 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or from local supporters. 10p per ticket.



The Bakery Workers



UNIONS MUST STOP SUPPLIES

Mass pickets turn back flour

The strike at Bradfords Bakery in West Bromwich is still solid. All but a dozen of the 300 Bakery workers are out.

Picketing is continued around the clock and to date five mass pickets have been organised with the help of the local Labour Party Young Socialist branches.

Two late evening mass pickets have been successful in stopping flour going in. The police have been helpless on-lookers.

On the early morning mass pickets however the police behaviour has been different. Four pickets have been arrested on trumped-up charges such as using abusive language and threatening behaviour. One picket, when arrested was beaten up and had his nose broken.

The pickets, mostly Asians, have been subjected to some of the worst vile racist insults and abuse.

The management, working hand in glove with the police, have used every trick in the book in their attempt to break the strike and weaken the union.

Last Friday morning, how-

ever, they were taken by surprise when the 80-strong picket formed a human chain three-deep and brought the traffic to a standstill, refusing to allow van drivers and management in. After a long battle, with reinforcements, the police managed to move the pickets and instructed the drivers to drive past at 25 mph.

There appears to have been a marked change in the attitude of the drivers this week. They are prepared to stop and listen to the bakers' case. Most of them were very sympathetic.

The local LPYS branches are printing leaflets for the strikers, moving resolutions and appealing for donations at trade union and Labour Party meetings.

The strikers have not been slow to show their appreciation of this help. Most of them have agreed to join the Labour Party and pledged support for the LPYS and its campaigns, especially the fight for 35-hour week, both politically and financially.

Sardul Dhesi
(Ladywood LPYS)



Strikers at Suttons Bakery, Coventry, have found out whose side the police are on. This picket has just returned after being arrested.

Management baking ended

At Scotts Bakery, Netherton, a number of bakers have been baking bread for the hospitals and Old People's Homes. BFAWU stewards found that this bread was going outside on to the open market.

Up till last week, electricians and painters were still in the factory working. But a

mass picket was called for the Friday morning, and when they found out the deceitful behaviour of the management, engineers, van drivers, painters, garage attendants and fitters all came out in support, except for 19 van drivers in the URTU.

At the mass picket, with

some painters etc on the line, these drivers broke through the picket line. Fighting broke out, the police came and arrested six pickets. Management now say they are not going to bake anymore.

Steve Higham, Bootle LPYS

Miners' support

George Breeden, BFAWU District President, told 'Militant' of a couple of incidents at Landers [RHM], Mansfield, which sum up management's attitude:

While bakery workers are freezing on the picket line, senior management have treated themselves to a turkey dinner inside the offices.

Meanwhile, APEX members in the offices have refused to do work which is not part of their usual job. Management retaliated by refusing to give them their usual bread allowance. That's how mean and petty-minded they are.

On Saturday 1st December about twenty miners from local pits turned up at Landers, and the banner of Sherwood NUM was hoisted. After the police had forced a way through for the scab vans, the miners promised they would be back, bringing a lot more with them.

Notts NUM President, Len Clarke, has said miners who wish to go on the picket will have the blessing of the Area Council. These words must be turned into action: mobilise the entire labour movement to come to the support of the bakers.

John Dale, Mansfield LPYS

"If we win, all workers win"

"This is not just a strike about money anymore. This has definitely become a political dispute" said pickets outside the old Moores Bakery [RHM] at Ossett, near Wakefield.

"The small independent bakers like Jacksons have already met our £10 claim. If they can afford it, there is no question whatsoever about the big boys in the Bakers Federation being able to.

"The Federation is out to break the Union and the government is out to try and keep their 5% barrier. They've both got no chance.

If we win—then all workers win—if we lose, well..."

What has really annoyed the bakers is the conduct of the URTU, to which most of the delivery men belong. Although they came out as well for the first week, they then went back and, with the blessing of their General Secretary have since been regularly crossing picket lines.

Bribes

"Don't they realise that our fight is their fight, that they'll not win their fight unless we win ours" said another picket.

"It was obvious before the dispute began," said a striker, "that the management had set themselves the aim of splitting off one section of the workforce from another by giving some sections differential payments. Now that the strike's on they're going round us individually at home trying to bribe us back by offering £100 a week!

"If they can afford £100 a week while the strike's on, they can afford a bloody sight more than £40 a week when it's not. They must think we're stupid."

The pickets all agreed that the key to a successful conclusion of this dispute had to be the blacking of all supplies—but especially flour and fuel oil. Bakeries can only carry a few day's supplies of each and if these supplies were cut off the Federation would soon be brought to its knees. Concerted trade union action is imperative.

When asked about the wider implications of the dispute, the replies were often scathing. "All the efforts of the media are directed at weakening the strike. But then that's hardly surprising is it, when the same sort of people who own the bakeries also run the press."

"You need a paper like 'Militant' to really get at the truth of the matter—it's been the best coverage in any paper we've seen. All power to you."

Pickets at 'Moores' Bakery, Ossett talked to P. Hopkins, Dewsbury Labour Party



Ray Apps [right] on the picket line at Acres, Brighton

Photo: Kate Packham

Brighton bakers thank supporters: "The salt of the earth"

Our thanks to 'Militant' for the excellent coverage you have given our dispute. Also readers of 'Militant' who have helped us in so many ways.

In particular to the local Trades Council, Labour Party and LPYS. There are too many individuals to mention, but we must name Ray Apps, who has slept, eaten and lived on the picket line with us and whose assistance has been invaluable.

When our dispute is over we will be taking an active part in the Labour Party and Trade Council alongside those brothers who have stood by us and an order will be taken out

for 'Militant' by Bill Wilson to sell at our bakery, Acres of Brighton.

There is no disguising the fact that the South is one of the weakest areas of the strike. However, those brothers and sisters who have remained loyal to their union, and active on the picket line are the salt of the earth, and we are proud of the way they have stood firm in such difficult circumstances.

Alex Ingram, one of your lads and a drivers shop steward has seen to it that not one Transport and General Workers Union driver from our area will cross the picket

line. They just give us a wave and off they go, including the milkman.

However we were disappointed at the lack of support from the TUC whose policy is to oppose the 5% and to fight for a minimum wage.

We are also angry and bitter at drivers from Vitbe [Tilbury] who have met management on the outskirts of town, handed over their keys and driven off in a company car, complete with a police escort, while our management drive them through our picket lines. We have their numbers and are calling on the T&GWU to deal with these

scabs who are assisting the Federation in their attempt to break our Union.

We are also calling on all your readers in the area to assist in the picketing at the flour mills at Tilbury. We ourselves have accepted the responsibility for picketing the Rank Hovis McDougall mill at Southampton, although they don't deliver to our plant. We went down there on Thursday to join our brothers and sisters from the area on a mass picket.

We will never forget the heart-warming reception we got from the Docks Shop Stewards, who gave us new heart and courage after a difficult week. In particular we will remember a docker called Henry who joined us on the picket line. He was a bundle of energy and he must be one of your lads. The stewards have given us an assurance that if our picket lines continue to be crossed by drivers from that mill they will cut off the supply of grain. At last we are beginning to get the necessary support and the pressure must be intensified.

We must cut off the flour supplies. We are ready to return to Southampton at a moments notice, to Tilbury or anywhere else we may be required. We will never give in and we will fight on till as long as it takes to win.

Dave Clapham [Secretary], Tony McKenna [Chairman], Bill Wilson, Lou Wilson [Strike Committee], Brighton Branch Bakery Workers Union

UPW CONFERENCE

START THE FIGHT

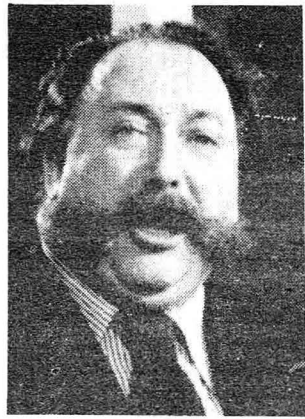
BACK

This conference comes at a critical time for the workers in Britain, especially the low paid Post Office workers. Our executive has put forward a claim for an 8% increase on both the current total basic rates (consolidated) and on allowances.

The claim also demands the full consolidation of previous supplements, three hours off the work-week, an extra two days annual leave and a reduction in incremental scales. This amounts to a 24.4% total claim, plus an escalator clause—a 1% increase in pay for every 1% rise in the retail price index above 8%.

Although this is a great step forward in terms of previous UPW pay claims, its achievement would not mean a life of luxury for UPW members.

In putting forward the 8% increase on basic pay, the executive state that falling inflation plus tax reliefs means that the 10% increase received last year has more than compensated for increased living costs. They also say that "during the currency of the 1978 pay round, prices



Tom Jackson, General Secretary

UPW CONFERENCE Militant Public Meeting. 'No to 5%—For a £70 minimum wage'. Speakers: Eddie Newman, delegate Manchester UPW (personal capacity); Bryan Beekingham, Bristol SE Labour Party. 7.00 pm, Friday 8th December, Town Hall Bournemouth.

will have risen 8%."

The executive base their figures on the retail price

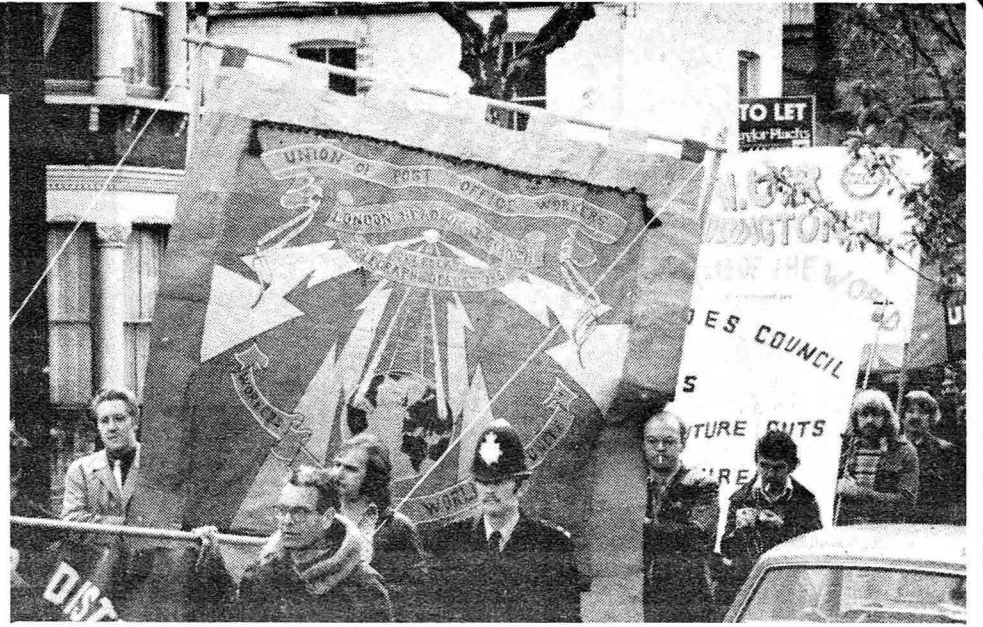
index, which is only an average of all prices, while the cost of basic necessities, the bulk of a low paid worker's spending has continued to soar.

The 8% figure and the escalator clause (based on the threshold payments of a few years ago) are designed to cancel out the losses in our members' take-home pay, but we should also be attempting to increase our standards, which have been eroded under the policies of wage restraint.

Joint Action

UPW members work an unusually large number of hours overtime each week due to low pay. Because of pay restraint most of our rises have been in the form of unconsolidated supplements. We have been in the unprecedented situation of working overtime at lower than the basic rate. It is therefore essential not only that an increase on basic pay be consolidated but also the previous supplements.

The claim for three hours off the basic working week if achieved would be a step



UPW members march in solidarity with Grunwick strikers

forward as would the additional two days annual leave and the reduction in incremental scales. Surely young workers are entitled to the same pay and annual leave for doing equal work.

In order to achieve, and improve on this claim, a determined campaign is necessary, given that the Post Office management will offer 5% to be shared at our discretion. It is crucial that the claim is linked to the struggle of other public sector workers attempting to break the government's suicidal pay policy.

The executive have approached other public sector

unions for a united approach, but it is not surprising that they have been rebuffed when the UPW nationally are identified as supporters of wage restraint. If we pursue this claim vigorously then we might find a different response to future approaches for joint action.

Living Wage

This conference should also decide on the complex issue of productivity. Clearly, the executive's sudden withdrawal of productivity proposals has caused nothing but confusion among the membership. No one is going to refuse extra pay, in a lump

sum or otherwise, but we must reject any offer which sells jobs or worsens conditions.

The high level of Post Office profits is well known. These have been created by the workforce. This conference must be the starting point for a fight back. Against erosion of our living standards, and for a vigorous campaign for a living wage, a reduced working week and continually improving working conditions.

By Eddy Newman and Peter Dodd, delegates to conference from Manchester Amalgamated UPW (in personal capacity)



photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

FIREMEN'S ACTION WINS 42-HOURS

says FBU Brigade Secretary Ray Bryant

One year after the strike of the firemen—one of the first big battles against the Social Contract—their union has now finished negotiating the final settlements.

The Fire Brigade Union recall conference held on November 27-28th, endorsed the Executive's document, which means by April 1st, 1979, every Brigade will enjoy a 42—rather than the present 48-hour week.

Ray Bryant (Secretary West Midlands Brigade FBU) explained:

The problem since the firemen returned to work has been to force the employers—the various county and metropolitan councils and the GLC—to honour the agreement, but also to implement it in the best interests of the men.

Moved

"We have moved the employers from saying we could only work the 42-hour week by 8-hour shifts, which would mean a split shift system, drastic cuts in fire cover and day manning, by which you work during the day and then are on call all

night—five days a week.

"Now they are saying working conditions and practices will be the same as they are now, but for 6 hours less. The details of how to sort out conditions for the new working week will be negotiated locally.

"In fact those Brigades that can, will be able to negotiate locally to start the 42-hour week well before April 1st.

"The West Midlands should go on to 42 hours by January 1st. We would need another 200 men, to achieve this without any reduction in fire cover, and that should be possible.

"Apart, that is, from the cuts the Tory County Council

are trying to impose. But that's a separate issue that will have to be fought. If we defeat them on these cuts, then there would be 400 new jobs.

"Nationally over the next two years the employers will pay 60% more, as a result of our deal. The guarantee that we will be placed in the upper quartile of male earnings has already given us 22% in this year.

"The shorter working week would amount to 12½%. Then there's next year's increase to come. What's clear is we wouldn't have achieved anything like this without our action."

WEST MIDLANDS

SUPPORT LOCKED-OUT WORKERS

There are no ambulances on the road in the West Midlands. Since November 17th, 600 NUPE and T&GWU ambulance drivers have been locked out.

Volunteer St John's Ambulance crews, whatever their intentions, are prolonging the dispute by providing an amateur emergency service.

The problem dates back 4½ years, to when the old local authority services were amalgamated into the new Metropolitan service. Ambulance men wanted action to remove the wage anomalies of up to £15 between the areas.

Negotiations have dragged out since then, without any satisfactory result. So at the beginning of November, sanctions were imposed.

The day after the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee decided to step up this action management threatened to suspend all the ambulance-men without pay if they did not work normally. Police were called to remove workers from ambulance stations.

This is a direct attack on these workers and their trade union organisation. Pickets were put on all stations in the Metropolitan area, and they refuse to return until they are paid for all lost time.

Last week management offered £40 for the two weeks lost, and to lift the lock-out. With the possibility of renegotiating a better deal, the men agreed.

But when they turned up

they were told that unless all sanctions were dropped, they were still locked out. Now some stations are being occupied.

Unfortunately, while the T&GWU made the strike official almost immediately, NUPE initially refused. It took five days for the decision to be reversed. Even then the Executive failed to call out the few ambulance members still working.

NUPE branches are now having to wage a campaign for the reinstatement of the Area Officer responsible for the ambulance workers, who resigned in protest at the original decision.

This strike needs determined leadership. If the Regional Health Authority get away with this intimidation, it will be a severe blow on the eve of NUPE's wages battle.

Local firemen have already given welcome support. Similar financial and moral support from other trade unionists should be organised.

Local trade unionists should also commit the Birmingham Trades' Council to mobilise all its members to back the ambulance drivers. The Health Authority Chairman is, after all, also the full-time secretary of the Trades Council.

Full support must be given to these workers.

By Dick Hackett, Secretary NUPE Central, Birmingham Health District Branch.

SUPPORT GARNERS WORKERS

By Nicholas John

The Garners steak-house workers have now been on strike for 9 1/4 months. In January, 84 were sacked for joining the T&GWU.

The take home pay had been £28.49 for a compulsory 55-hour week. When they tried to fight back they were dismissed.

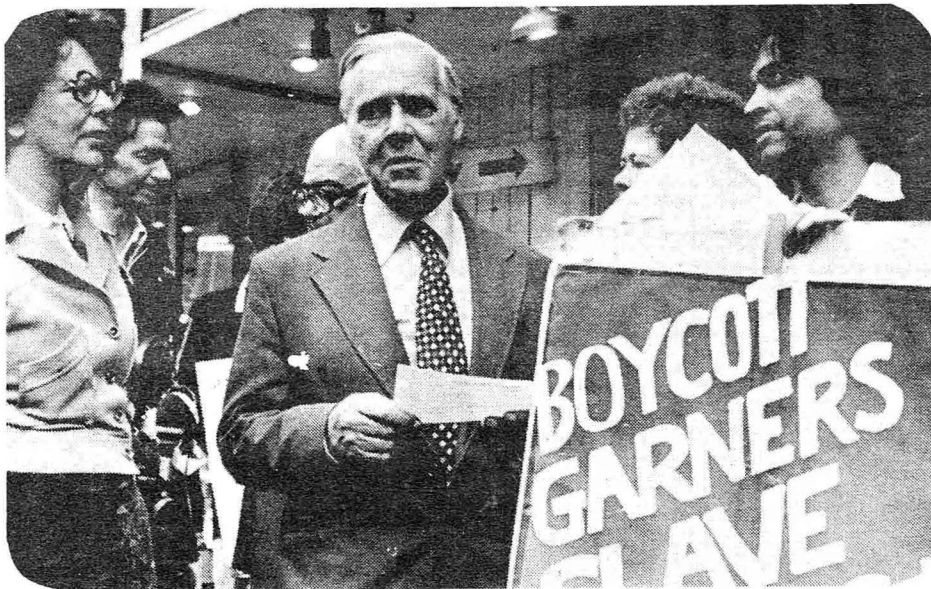
It has been and is a long hard struggle, but the management are becoming desperate: in some cases pickets have been attacked.

The pressure has still got to be kept up: the strike committee have called for a mass picket on Friday December 8th to close down all twelve of Garners Restaurants for one day.

The picket will be from 12.00 to 3pm and from 5.30pm to 11.00 pm. If you or your union branch can help then phone 01-240 1056, and one of the restaurants will be allocated to you.

They are also asking for financial support as the strike pay is only £6 per week. Donations should be rushed to 11/13 Henrietta Street, London WC2.

It is essential for the whole



Labour MPs on the picket line outside Garners

Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

trade union movement that the bosses should not win this dispute. The management have refused to co-operate with ACAS and so it is only the organised working class which can bring them to their senses.

SCOTTISH YOUTH TUC YOUTH DEMANDS JOBS

At the 1978 Scottish TUC Youth Conference on the 9th and 10th December, the main item on the agenda will be the burning issue of youth unemployment.

There are 24,600 school leavers in Scotland without a job, and many more 16 to 21 year olds are included in the Scottish total jobless of 192,800. This 39th Annual Conference must be the launching pad for a real fighting campaign on the problems of youth unemploy-

ment within the ranks of trade union youth.

An essential part of that campaign must be the demand for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay. That would create, at a stroke, thousands of jobs for young people. The unemployment situation forces many young workers to accept poor working conditions and pay, because they feel themselves "lucky" to have a job at all.

A vigorous campaign on youth unemployment waged

amongst youth and coupled with the demand of AUEW-TASS for a campaign to "stimulate affiliated trade unions to set up youth committees within their own structures" would give the STUC Youth Advisory Committee the chance to forge itself as a force around which trade union youth would gravitate.

Trade union youth, alongside Labour's youth, is an essential part of the working class movement. It is they

who hold the future in their hands in relation to the struggle to change society.

Scottish trade union youth have a head start on the rest of Britain because of the very existence of the STUC youth advisory committee. However, that position must be fully utilised to draw together rank and file working class youth in the fight for social-

ism.

Jane McVeigh

WANDSWORTH TORIES ATTACK DIRECT LABOUR

Ray Mills, Site convenor, Direct Works, Kambala Road, in Wandsworth, spoke to Clare Doyle.

The recent picket against Lawrence's private contractors was called for by the area organiser of UCATT, Lou Lewis. His latest reply from the majority Tory council in Wandsworth had confirmed that their policy was not to allow the direct labour department to tender for any more work. This means 800 jobs would be lost in the coming months.

The only way we can defend

ourselves against this policy is to stop private contractors from building within Wandsworth. Previously we had pickets on Wimpeys and Eyes. Now we have put a picket on Lawrences and have also stopped a renovating job on an estate being done by Turriff. We are going to continue these pickets and do some more in the weeks to come, until the Tories change their policy.

The men on direct works voted to stop work today until 9.30 and they have come down en masse to stop Lawrences. They also voted to put in a 50p levy every week out of their wages to finance

the pickets on these private contractors.

We are also asking for support from all over London, especially direct works in other boroughs, to support us both financially and physically.

The Tories don't like direct works because it's a non-profit making organisation and when it competes for contracts it stops the private contractors making a fat killing out of public building work. They don't build for people, they build for profit. And they are completely and utterly anti-working class.

The site we have stopped

this morning is for offices and council flats, that they intend selling off. There's no way that they were going to use these homes for the purpose the council should be allocating them for—housing the thousands of families in urgent need in Wandsworth. All they are interested in again is just making a profit and building their office blocks (with the Council bearing 70% of the costs!).

This picket stays on indefinitely until the Tories allow direct works to tender again, and push the private contractors out.

LOW PAY

Continued from front page

cultural Wages Board to demand at least a £80 wage and a 35-hour week.

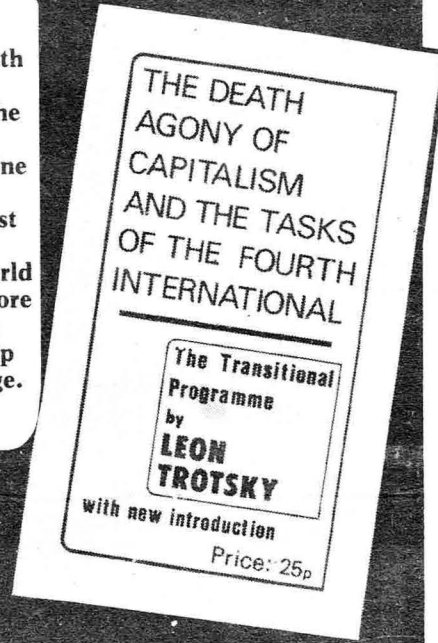
Next come manual, health, local government and water workers with their modest and entirely justified claim of £60 for 35 hours. The TGWU, the GMWU and NUPE are planning a one-day strike and a massive lobby of Parliament in the new year, to be followed by industrial

action, in their campaign to wipe out low pay.

Some bakers have returned to work. But in spite of a barrage of anti-union propaganda from the press, the overwhelming mass of bakers have stood firm.

The support and solidarity must continue. It must be made totally effective everywhere. Victory for the bakers will be a victory for every low paid worker, it will be a victory for the entire labour and trade union movement.

Trotsky's 'Transitional Programme: Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the 4th International'. One of the most important Marxist pamphlets ever. Published by World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Send 25p + 10p for postage.



EVENTS

This weekend: Grand 'Militant' Christmas bazaar, Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, London W.2. Saturday December 9th, 2.00 pm

BOOK THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY: Saturday January 6th, 1979. Grand 'Militant' Twelfth Night Disco/Club Night. Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London W.C.1. 7.00 pm till late. Details to follow.

Militant

ORDER A REGULAR COPY

BRITAIN 13 issues...£2.50 26 issues...£4.80 52 issues...£9.60

EUROPE [Airspeeded] 26 issues... £5.30 52 issues...£10.60

REST OF WORLD [Airspeeded] 26 issues... £6.30 52 issues...£12.60

Name..... Address.....

Make cheques payable to MILITANT and return to the Circulation Department, MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Bulk orders available, sale or return.

MILITANT: Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Editor: Peter Taaffe, Business Manager: Dave Galashan. Published by Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Tel: 01-986 3828. Printed by Cambridge Heath Press Ltd [TU], Mentmore Works, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.