

Militant

12p

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

END THIS SCANDAL

In Gateshead one particular hospital porter worked Christmas week, including Christmas Day and Boxing Day, and took home the "princely" sum of £53.15.

This is a scandal! Even with 16 "enhanced hours" (i.e. "holidays" carrying extra payment) and 3 hours overtime, together with bonus and allowances, this worker's basic £47.64 was only brought up to £53.15 after deductions. This is indeed a scandal!

By John Pickard

And this was a "good" week. Sometimes this porter, one of the thousands of ancillary workers who keep the hospitals going, takes home only £39.

On this disgusting wage, Nigel Thurgood has to keep a wife and three children. And he is by no means the worst-paid worker in the hospital.

As it happens, Nigel is secretary of the Gateshead Hospitals Branch of

the National Union of Public Employees. The other day they met to discuss the management's offer of 5 per cent.

It came as no surprise to us when Nigel told 'Militant' that over 200 NUPE members at this well-attended branch meeting unanimously voted to reject this derisory offer.

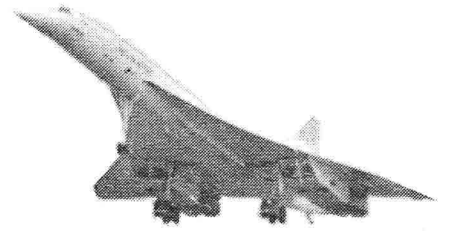
They also unanimously

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SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE!

In our issue No. 439 next week the bold red, temporarily lost when we expanded to 16 pages, will return to the 'Militant' masthead.

While the bosses panic and call for a State of

Emergency, 'Militant' takes another step forward in expanding its fighting capacity. Next week's issue will be produced on a press capable of providing a daily paper of the labour movement—an essential weapon for the coming battles.

At this stage, the main benefits to readers and sellers will be a more striking appearance of the paper with the eye-catching red masthead, and having all 16 pages inserted and ready to sell.

Only by achieving the new 1979 target of £85,000 for 'Militant's' fighting fund, will the full potential of the press begin to be realised, with further advances in technique and staffing as far as the preparation of material for printing is concerned.

It's up to YOU, as always, to ensure the rapid growth of 'Militant's' influence and resources.

1978's target of £70,000 was not quite reached [see report page 13] but what better way for readers to celebrate the 'new arrival' than sending a special donation, getting the 1979 fund off to a flying start?

LORRY DRIVERS-NATION WIDE STRIKE FOR DECENT WAGE

Area by area lorry drivers, who are sick and tired of low pay and long hours, have joined the strike action in support of their claim.

The drivers' claim—£65 for 35 hours basic and improved allowances—was drawn up at the road haulage drivers' annual conference last July.

At that meeting there was a determination to take effective nation-wide action, and with no acceptable offer from the employers, this has now come to fruition—bringing the movement of goods and

Dennis Mills
Chairman, T&GWU
5/35 spoke to Militant

supplies to a complete halt.

The aim for most areas was to implement the claim by January 1st. For the first time, united action was called for.

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EDITORIAL

NO SOLUTIONS
IN GUADELOUPE

There were no solutions awaiting Callaghan, Carter, Giscard d'Estaing, and Schmidt at the mini-summit in Guadeloupe. All four leaders have a host of problems at home and face only a sea of troubles internationally.

Commenting on the summit's exotic setting, 'The Financial Times' ironically described them as "surrounded by a mass of brilliant tropical flowers, with the balmy Caribbean sea practically lapping their feet—like four King Canutes trying to keep the world at bay."

There was little emphasis on economic problems at this meeting. The leaders could not pretend to have any effective remedies for stagnant production and trade, and continually rising unemployment throughout the world.

At the same time in Geneva, moreover, the GATT [General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade] failed to produce any new measures really capable of halting the remorseless drift towards more protection among the world's main trading states.

In a period of dwindling world trade, with the prospect of another recession just around the corner, this failure will have serious consequences for world capitalism.

The one apparent triumph at Guadeloupe was an agreement between the four powers to open up trade with China, this new development being kicked off by the others' consent to Britain selling China Harrier military aircraft.

But trade with China, even on a bigger scale than before, will not make a decisive difference as far as the capitalists' global exports are concerned. Increased capitalist trade with Russia in the past few years, especially on the part of West Germany, did little to stave off recession.

Jim Callaghan, on behalf of all four leaders, was at pains to stress that friendlier diplomatic relations and trade with China would in no way cut across their governments' relations with Russia.

But it is hard to see how this development can fail to some extent to cloud relations with Moscow, especially now that both the Chinese and Russian bureaucracies are embroiled in the Cambodian conflict—on opposite sides.

Carter in particular is obviously determined that nothing should upset 'Detente'—the diplomatic agreement between US imperialism and the Russian bureaucracy to try to stabilise the international status quo—whilst, secondary conflicts apart, is vital to both sides.

Carter was clearly pleased with the other three leaders' approval for his latest SALT proposals. This will provide him with extra ammunition to use against sections of the US Congress who feel that the latest SALT deal is too favourable to the Russian forces militarily.

But the workers of the world can draw no consolation from any SALT deal. The so-called Strategic Arms Limitation Talks are no more than diplomacy aimed at assisting both sides to 'match up' their nuclear weaponry with the minimum 'waste'. SALT has had no significant effect at all in curbing the grotesque expenditure of all the main super powers and many smaller states on the most barbarous means of destruction.

Finally, it seems clear that the four leaders came to the conclusion that they must now dump the Shah. This is another sharp blow to the US and world imperialism.

Last year, imperialism's puppet dictators in Zaire and Nicaragua, to take two examples, were shaken. Now in Iran they have lost a regime which they installed and propped up for several decades as a bastion of US economic and strategic interests in this crucial area of west Asia.

While recognising that the Shah could not be saved, however, they obviously have no real alternative. Privately they will continue their desperate search for new leaders in Iran through whom they can try to continue to dominate Iran's political and economic life.

For all their show of friendship and mutual agreement, the four leaders really have little to show for their sunny weekend in Guadeloupe.

In the 1950s and '60s meetings between the heads of the main capitalist powers were rare compared to today's regular economic summits and mini-summits. But then, in spite of national rivalries and international blunders, things in general went their way.

Now, in spite of all the meetings and all the agreements, the problems facing the western powers are in no way diminished.

The balance of forces has tipped against world capitalism. Throughout the world the economic power of big business is crumbling. And the working class internationally has never been stronger or more confident of its power.

That is why, one of the most authoritative papers of big business—perhaps in a frivolous mood, but nevertheless quite rightly—could describe the big four as "King Canutes trying to keep the world at bay."

THATCHER PEDDLES OLD
MYTH ABOUT STRIKERS

On 'Weekend World' last Sunday Mrs Thatcher once again made it clear just what vicious anti-trade union measures a Tory government would attempt to carry through.

Forgetting her brief attempt last year to woo the unions with promises of "co-operation"—obviously completely out of character for these right-wing representatives of big business—Mrs Thatcher repeated the old Tory threat of imposing state-sponsored secret ballots on the unions before they are permitted to take strike action.

She also threatened that the right to strike would be taken away from workers in key utilities, like gas, water and electricity. The local government manual workers now campaigning for a living wage and shorter hours would be denied the right to fight against their appallingly low wages, if Mrs Thatcher were to get her way.

'Feather-bedding'

In making these anti-union threats, Thatcher has again voiced the hoary old myth about strikers being financed by the state.

If unions did not agree to secret ballots, a Tory government would cut off social security payments to strikers' families.

In any case, the Tories would tax any social security benefits—as if the tax burden is not heavy enough for workers now!—and "encourage" the bosses not to pay out tax rebates until months later.

The Tories' policy, in other words, will be to try to force anyone exercising the right to strike, back to work by



starving their children! This is the brutal policy we can expect should the labour movement allow the return of the Tories.

We can be sure that the press and television will take their cue from Thatcher and revive with renewed energy the old refrain about strikers living off the state.

But it is just blatant propaganda, and like all the Fleet Street propaganda it is based on lies.

What are the real facts?

In the first nine months of 1977, for instance, strikers (who in most cases are not themselves eligible for social security payments) received a grand total of £5,200. Their families received a total of £1,612,000.

Leaving aside the point that workers who cannot work because their bosses have locked them out, or are refusing to negotiate, or refusing to pay a living wage, should be perfectly entitled to state benefits, the actual sums paid out in recent years are absolutely trifling.

Much more cash could be saved, if Mrs Thatcher is really concerned with economy, by a few directors

cutting down on their expense account lunches and drinks.

Last year, moreover, 'The Guardian'—hardly famous for championing workers' causes—reported the conclusions of a thorough study which completely refutes the Thatcherite myths about strikers' funds.

In his book 'Financing Strikers' (Macmillan £8.95) John Gennard of the London School of Economics investigated how strikers and their families managed financially in the case of two strikes: the 1971 Post Office workers' strike; and the 1973 Chrysler electricians stoppage.

'A fiction'

'The Guardian' summarised the main conclusions of this detailed study:

"The strikes were financed largely from savings, deferred mortgage and hire purchase payments and from the earnings of wives.

"In the case of the electricians, their union, which is comfortably off and was dealing with a limited number of strikers) met 22% of the cost. The state paid next to

nothing.

"The postmen were involved in a national stoppage and hardly had a strike fund. They collected a mere 1.6% of their family income from the union. Supplementary benefit made good that omission. But the state still provided less than 15% of the family income. It is hard to argue that welfare funds were exploited or that, without them, the postal strike would have ended much sooner.

The Supplementary Benefits Commission played a humanitarian—and strictly limited—role. It was not the state, and not the unions which financed those strikes. It was the strikers and their families."

'The Guardian' pointed out that in all cases it is only a minority of strikers who actually claim benefits to which they are entitled; and it noted that "most of Western Europe and parts of the USA treat strikers—or their dependents—more generously than we do" (not very difficult, of course!).

Their conclusion: the feather-bedding of strikers is a "fiction".

Mrs Thatcher would do well to study this book. No doubt Tory Central Office could afford to provide her with a copy.

But she is not likely to be very interested in Mr Gennard's inconvenient facts. The Tories are out to bash the unions—the organisations which stand in the way of the bosses' plans for more ruthless profit-making—and they will use any distortions to throw dust in the eyes of the middle class and the less class-conscious workers.

Lynn Walsh

IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR SOME

While the government is still trying to impose wage restraint on the majority of workers, salary increases of up to more than £6,000 a year are to be paid in April to chairmen of nationalised industries and to other top public servants. These increases will add an incredible 25% to some salaries.

The pay of chairmen of nationalised industries such as railways, coal, gas and shipbuilding will go up from £27,170 a year to £33,585 and there will be corresponding increases for other chairmen and nationalised board members.

The Government paved the way for the rises to be paid last July when its White Paper on the 5% pay guidelines allowed exceptional treatment for certain groups including firemen, university teachers and doctors and dentists as well as top public servants.

There will also be increases for senior judges, armed forces officers and civil ser-

vants. The head of the home Civil Service will receive a £2,752 increase on his £22,550 salary while the salary for a permanent secretary will go up from £20,900 to £23,450.

There's one rule for the already grossly overpaid, it seems, and another for ordinary workers trying to make ends meet on an average, or below average, wage.

In the case of the nationalised industries, the inflated salaries paid to the management underlines the need for workers' control and management in what are supposed, after all, to be public industries.

Elected representatives on the boards would then be paid the average wage of workers in the industry—to make sure they did not become completely remote from the workers they represented.

Workers in Northern Ireland suffer from some of the lowest wages in Britain. Unemployment is generally higher than in any

other region. Workers made redundant in the recent period, however, would have been only too pleased had they got the sort of compensation just agreed for Mr Ivor Hoppe—which, of course, they certainly didn't.

A former managing director of the Harland and Wolff shipyard, Mr Ivor Hoppe, is to receive £200,000 in settlement of an action he brought against the government and the company for alleged breach of contract.

Mr Hoppe (aged 57) joined Harland and Wolff in 1971 and served three years of a ten year contract before the Northern Ireland Office withdrew its approval of his appointment as a director and he resigned.

The Northern Ireland Office said there had been a disagreement over policy when the shipyard came into full public ownership.

Mr Hoppe's salary on leaving was put at £75,000! He sought compensation in

the region of £1 million. The amount of the out-of-court settlement is within the limits of a trust fund which he had asked to be established to compensate him, in the event of certain circumstances.

The Northern Ireland Office and the company have settled **without any admission that his contract was broken.** Mr Hoppe is now living in his native Denmark.

How on earth can such exorbitant compensation be justified? Surely Mr Hoppe could have put a little aside from his fat £75,000 a year salary?

WEST MIDLANDS 'Militant' Rally. Saturday January 27th, 1-5 pm. Dr Johnson House, Bull Street, Birmingham.

SPEAKERS: Ted Grant [Militant Editorial Board]; Sam Maddox [Gen. Sec. Bakers' Union]

*** plus stalls, entertainment and crèche.**

Tickets 50p from: J Birch, 109 Northfield Road, B 30

THE COLD AND THE CUTS

The icy spell which paralysed many parts of Britain over the New Year can hardly in itself be blamed on the crisis in capitalism. [In one news programme, however, a weatherman darkly informed viewers that the weather gripping the country in a freak freeze "originated somewhere over Moscow".]

But the snowy blizzards coincided with strike action by many local authority workers fighting against low pay: the emergency brought it home just how essential these workers are to the normal functioning of society.

Above all, the cold spell highlighted the disastrous

effects of the cuts. "Economies" of staff and fuel led to serious damage which would not have occurred but for the drastic cuts, and which will end up costing millions of unnecessary pounds.

Because of the running down of the workforce in many local authorities there are just not enough workers to put things right quickly, which means more inconvenience and suffering for working class families.

To give an indication of the effects of the cold spell, we give reports from three different areas, Scotland, Manchester and Devon.



The snow meant a jolly shooting expedition for Prince Andrew—but for most people it meant havoc.

TORBAY-DEVON

The Torbay area was completely cut off by heavy snow and ice for several days. Hardly any roads were cleared: it was appalling, much worse than it should have been. We had to wait for the thaw before we could move.

In this area there is a high proportion of old people, because many come here to retire. In my ward (Brixham) about 60% of the electoral register are over 65, and of course they suffered especially from the cold.

Torbay hospital had to be closed for normal cases and attend to old people suffering from hypothermia and falls.

We're blacking the local papers (owned by the Mirror and Express groups) where NUJ members are on strike, so unfortunately we are not getting much news at the moment.

Even worse than the effects of the snow, however, has been the damage to sea defences by unusually large tides. This is much more serious in the long run.

There has been terrible damage in some spots (also affecting the railway which runs along the coast, in places).

The sea walls will be repaired in the main tourist spots, but elsewhere there are already arguments between local authorities about who will pay for the repairs. In this area, it's live for the tourists, pay for the residents, as far as the councils and local business interests are concerned.

From
Bridget Shaw

STRATHCLYDE

The snow and ice, or rather the consequences of the snow and ice, have had a devastating effect in this area.

Over Hogmanay, all the buses were cancelled. The impression may have been given on the television that the ice was just an excuse for the crews to take an extra holiday.

In fact, road conditions were lethal, and crews refused to go out after an accident in which a bus skidded into a bus shelter killing one woman and injuring several others.

The worst damage has been caused by burst water pipes. The freeze revealed just how old and rotten many of the tenements are.

In the first five days of January there were over 3,000 burst pipes in the Strathclyde area. At the end of the week, only about 150 had been repaired, and hundreds are not expected to be repaired for weeks.

Over 90 families in the Glasgow area have been made homeless by flooding.

In the Bridgeton area, which is notorious for its old tenements, dozens of families are having to carry water from neighbouring buildings.

The schools have also been hard hit, and over 400 remain closed. The burst pipes were mainly the result of reduced heating levels over the holiday (even when bad weather was

predicted).

Then the shortage of caretaker staff meant that many bursts went unrepaired for some time, doing the maximum damage. On top of that, there is an acute shortage of maintenance staff, so there will be long delays in repairing the damage. In spite of the thaw, many schools are not expected to re-open until about the 16 January.

The government and the local authorities don't control weather: but the extent and seriousness of the damage is a direct result of all the spending cuts.

From
Bob Wylie

MANCHESTER

When the snow hit Manchester, the gritters were in the middle of a strike over their pay claim and so not even the main roads were cleared. The local television put out propaganda that these low-paid workers were taking home £80 a week, a claim they were later obliged to retract with apologies.

In any case, there would not have been enough gritters to do all the main roads. As it was, the main road links with Yorkshire remained blocked until the thaw.

Even before the lorry drivers' action began to have any effect, there were shortages of fresh meat and other foods because the communications, especially with Scotland, were so poor.

As in other areas, dozens of schools are closed, either because of burst pipes or because there is no fuel for heating.

On one estate in Rochdale, Turf Hill, virtually all the houses have had to be evacuated because of burst pipes. The freeze showed up the gerry-building, particularly the lack of lagging, etc.—with disastrous consequences for the families living in these houses.

Some families say they have been told by council officials that it will be "months" before all the repairs can be done because of the shortage of staff. With so many schools closed, the problems for families are that much worse.

The cold spell meant a

'state of siege' for Greater Manchester, but the thaw is unlikely to see it lifted. With so many sections of workers—local authority workers, lorry drivers, tanker drivers, social workers—fighting against low pay and wage restraint, things are hardly back to 'normal'.

One thing that doesn't seem to have been reported nationally is that Manchester postmen are refusing to cross social workers' pickets at the town hall, NALGO members will only post mail at the town hall, and so the city and metropolitan councils' mail is paralysed.

From
Magaret Crear

BETHNAL GREEN HOSPITAL - STAFF ACCEPT CONVERSION UNDER PROTEST

For the first time in their history the City and East London Area Health Authority suspended standing orders at its November 1978 meeting to allow the Secretary of the Tower Hamlets District Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Ian Burge, to address them from the Public Gallery.

The AHA had not been able to resolve the problem of Bethnal Green Hospital—where for over a year the staff had resisted conversion to an all-geriatric unit. This runs against modern medical practice and would also be the first step to a 360-bed loss in Tower Hamlets.

The feeling at the AHA meeting was clear—work out a compromise solution with

the staff through their union representatives, and do it quickly. If the Area Team of Officers would not do it, the new District Administrator must get down to the task and with a wider remit.

The DJSSC met the District Administrator—at first with hopes of a compromise and then a second and third time with increasing disillusionment. These were not negotiations, these were the same old arguments: 'no money available', if we worked out the finance; 'no professional staff available', if we suggested ways of staffing.

The District Administrator produced a Paper outlining his own compromise solution which embodied three new milk-and-water proposals which he did not amplify. We produced our own Paper outlining the ways we thought

the hospital could be run on a mixed basis of geriatrics, medicine and surgery. We could not agree on a combined Paper.

We attended the December AHA meeting expecting an eruption of anger when it was realised that no real attempt had been made to reach the compromise demanded. We sat through the first item on the Agenda which took an hour and a half and dealt with the nursing situation in City and East London. We listened with a mixture of anger, fear and amazement to what amounted to a horror story.

Next came the Bethnal Green Hospital and we settled back for another long session—or so we thought.

The Rev. Bourne read a prepared statement. BGH must go all-geriatric. The money was not available for a

safe mixed service. Even if the money was available, the professional staff was not. They were not being 'bloody-minded', these were the facts. He stopped speaking and there was complete silence broken only when the Chairman said that BGH would be closed in 4-5 years when a new Geriatric Unit was built at Mile End Hospital.

We could stay as we were with 100 beds until then or accept conversion to an all-Geriatric 220 bedded unit. Either way we would close. He too stopped speaking and again there was complete silence. For me at least the sweet smell of a 'fixed' meeting arose in the air!

The Chairman then announced unanimous agreement. The Trades Council delegate pointed out that as yet no one had voted, but in

effect this was to register the fact that he and one other wished to abstain. The decision to close the hospital had taken less than ten minutes, with no Papers presented and no voice raised in protest—a reversal of their expressed feelings at the November meeting.

We reported to the staff. They felt we had reached the end of the road. We had held on for 15 months with support from other rank-and-file health workers and trade unionists in local industries, but with no help from our own National Union Officers.

The hospital was fully staffed but running at half-patient strength. Ancillary workers had a real fear of job losses and no faith in their union leadership at top level. They saw no practical alternative but to agree to the

conversion and to make the best they could out of management's three proposals for additional facilities made to the DJSSC, proposals, they noted, which had been made only because of the stand taken over the past 15 months.

A careful review is now needed of the way local campaigns can be best organised, but it is clear that a tougher campaign led by local Labour Party and trade unions with full and active backing of all affiliated organisations should show the hospital staff that there is a real campaign to change the policies.

By Myrna Shaw
(NALGO shop steward
BGH JSSC)

Though technically 'comprehensive', Liverpool's schools are in fact a mish-mash of comprehensive, selective and secondary modern. More than one third of pupils go to Catholic Secondary schools, due to go comprehensive only in 1981 in a proposed scheme beset with problems.

Even in the state sector, selective schools have "co-existed" with the comprehensives—and some comprehensives, being small ex-grammar schools with a city-wide intake, have maintained de facto selection. Small single-sex secondary modern schools have been kept in the inner areas. And added to this mess, there is a 40% drop in the school population, especially in the inner-city areas.

This has been stirred into an evil brew by the Liberal/Tory coalition on the city council. The massive cuts in public expenditure which the Labour government has allowed, and the 'Great Debate' attack on educational achievements and particularly the Comprehensive schools, have been used by the Tories and Liberals to further their cause—an attack on the Comprehensive system.

The Tory/Liberal plan is to close two inner-city comprehensives—Paddington and Arundel, to deprive nearly all the city's comprehensives of the sixth form and to maintain the "prestigious" Institute as an academic 6th form college.

The small secondary moderns (too small to provide an adequate comprehensive curriculum without a uniquely good pupil-teacher ratio) are to remain open. The council suggest that the Paddington building (about the best in the city) should be transferred to Further Education.

Half-day strike

Further Education regarded it as unsuitable. Meanwhile students and lecturers at Mabel Fletcher Further Education College have been fighting for decent buildings.

The Director of Education has threatened to close the

LIVERPOOL TEACHERS

Protest at tory plans



Teachers and students protest at Tory council's actions. Now similar movement growing in Liverpool

Photo: John Smith/IFL

courses if the students and lecturers refuse alternative accommodation — however unsuitable.

These plans have met determined opposition from parents, teachers, pupils, students and the labour movement.

Secondary teachers in the NUT are due to take half-day strike action on Wednesday, January 17th, to underline

their protest and the NUT has balloted all its members with a view to introducing a 'no cover' work to rule.

Many other unions have offered financial assistance and moral assistance to the teachers and taken an active part in formal protest to the DES.

SOCS ('Save our Comprehensive Schools'),—a campaign set up by the Labour

Party, has co-ordinated discussion between teachers, parents' associations, anti-racist groups, Labour councillors, and interested trade unions.

The DES has yet to pronounce a verdict on the scheme. It is hoped that the DES will take note of the massive parents' protest meetings, the teachers' objections and campaign in the labour

movement.

But even if the scheme is rejected the battle is not over. An alternative scheme has to be found and a Labour council installed to implement it.

During the Liberal/Tory coalition, there have been massive attacks on education and housing and a prolonged social workers strike. This is a foretaste of what a national

Tory government would produce. The distinction between Tories and Liberals has become quickly blurred.

The NUT Action Committee, the District Labour Party, and SOCS have all produced basic re-organisation principles:

A fully Comprehensive System; comprehensives for 11-18 year olds (ie. all schools to maintain 6th forms); neighbourhood schools; positive discrimination to raise the level of educational provision in all schools to that of the best in the city; ending the policy of city-wide intake to schools; co-education.

Save education

However, the city council might not wait for a reply. Already they are attempting to move Mabel Fletcher Further Education college courses into Arundel school, which is to be picketed by NUT members. Forms to be issued to parents of 11-year olds could also be used to deprive Arundel and Paddington of a first year intake next year (1979/80).

The labour movement must take up the fight to save education whole-heartedly. All cuts in public expenditure should be made good. A building programme for education is needed in Liverpool drawn up by pupils, staff, and building workers, and all the opportunities and responsibilities uncovered by falling numbers in schools must be taken up.

Felicity Dowling
(Liverpool NUT, personal capacity)

CAPTION COMPETITION

We received fewer entries for this competition than we expected, and many readers will be kicking themselves for not entering, but our thanks to those who did submit their ideas.

Some of the better entries were: for photo 1 (Jim Callaghan): "OK, I give up. What is the difference between socialism and capitalism?" and "OK, I surrender. No 5%."

For photo 2 (the rugby scrum): "I think the 5% has gone down the drain."

For photo 3 (the demonstration): "Oh no, not another flying picket."

In the view of the editors, the best captions were sent in by Anthony Tynan of Rhondda, Mid Glamorgan, who receives the £2 voucher for books from World Books.

Coventry NUT Militant supporters

for affiliation to the Labour Party; a socialist education programme; a socialist Britain and a socialist world

Trotsky Quiz

The winner of our 'Trotsky Centenary Quiz' competition ('Militant' 15 December) is Michael Lee of Oxford, who submitted the only completely correct entry (and who will be sent a copy of Trotsky's 'My Life' or a book with the same price).

The answers are as follows: 1. 26 October 1879; 2. October revolution 1917; 3. One of Trotsky's jailers; 4. Chairman of the St Petersburg Soviet; 5. Results and Prospects; 6. Natalia Sedova; 7. In Canada by the British authorities; 8. Inter-borough organisation (Mezhraiont-sky); 9. Leo Borisovich Kamenev; 10. Military Revolutionary Committee; 11. Markin; 12. Brest Litovsk; 13. The armed train; 14. Bulletin of the Opposition; 15. Buguk Adu, Prinkipo; 16. Trygvie Lie (Norway's Minister of Justice); 17. Dewey Commission; 18. Diego Rivera; 19. David Siqueiros; 20. 21 August 1940

NEW YEAR DRAW

Congratulations to the winners of the Draw. Could they all send us their address and enclose their ticket.

- 1st Prize [Holiday in New York] No 5281 L Parrott, Barking Essex.
 - 2nd [Alarm Clock Radio] 45425 N Ferguson, Chester-le-Street.
 - 3rd [Carriage clock] 05147 B Fletcher, Newton Abbot.
 - 4th [Picture Clock] 04424 P Moore, Rochdale
 - 5th [Digital Clock] 32111 Loftus
 - 6th [Travel Clock] 60884 D Bostock, Harlow.
 - 7th [Kitchen Clock] 22467 D Hudson, Stowmarket.
 - 8th [Wrist Watch] 62950 J Bradley
 - 9th [Pendant/Pocket Watch] 316181 JM Lee, Room 5, Euston House.
 - 10th [Kitchen Timer] 26502 D Bliss, Hull.
 - 11th [Egg Timer] 06441 J Sharpe, Bristol]
- To the thousands of unlucky non-winners, thanks for your support and better luck next time!

LENIN DRAW WINNER [North East London Militant Supporters]

The winner of a set of the Collected Works of Lenin [44 volumes in English] was J Edwards of Hackney. The draw took place in front of hundreds of revellers at the 'Big Night Out' Disco in London on January 6th.

Now Available

"Capitalist Crisis: Tribune's 'Alternative Strategy' or Socialist Plan" by Andrew Glyn

Price 60p + 10p p&p)
From Militant,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN



Nancy's impression of 'Rasputin' [appropriately reclining in the picture], one of the brilliant performances by the children at "Militant's" Children's Christmas Party in London, now well established as an enjoyable annual treat.

Enlivened by several dozen children [no one knows quite how many], with conjurers, lots of games, impersonations, and dancing acts, a great time was had by all [including the parents who drank all the lemonade up on the balcony]. Thanks go to Clare Doyle for bringing it all about.

LEFT & RIGHT

Against materialism?

Many readers probably grew up with the music of the Beatles in their ears. Any Beatle addicts may like to know that a new book by George Harrison has been published. Personally autographed and leather bound, these books have facsimiles of the original notes for songs George wrote. A perfect keepsake for those who have bought his records.

But before you rush out to the nearest bookshop to get your copy, it should be pointed out there are only 2,000 being produced, which is hardly surprising when they cost £116 each.

The punch line to this is to be found in a quote on the advertising leaflet which makes the point that 'during the sixties young people revolted against the OBSESSIVE MATERIALISM of society by turning to pop music and the Beatles.'

A good decision it seems, as far those that produce those material needs are concerned.

Sweet and sour

According to the German newspaper, Bild-Zeitung, an American restaurant-owner, John Grisanti from Memphis paid a trip to London recently. He bought a bottle of French burgandy—114 years old—for approximately £10,000, at an auction.

He then invited guests at about £800 per head to a charity event to drink the 3 litre bottle with him [though they did get a dinner of venison, pheasant etc. thrown in].

After taking the first sip, Grisanti said "The wine is like velvet. I was worried in case it tasted like vinegar." Any workers in bitter disputes for a living wage will be interested to hear of people able to pay £10,000 for what could be a very expensive way of flavouring fish and chips.

"Saviour of the nation"

Britain's racist and fascist groups are not really very funny. However, every so often another would-be Führer decides that he alone will create the party that will save Britain from all evil.

Take one of the latest such groups to emerge from the sewer manholes—the National Reorganisation Party. This one is led by Ian Robert Millard [22] "who spends most of his time in unpaid work building the party that will one day save the nation." He has lived in Rhodesia [where else?] and "has varied leisure interests, including the occult" [!] and listening to music, "particularly Wagner, Bruckner, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Rachmaninov." [Note the patriotic choice of composers!]

The Party will impose a British social order which "will be non-democratic but rooted deeply in the people", "united under the steel will of the Party" [what else?] and of course "prosperous without Jewish-style money-grasping."

This Party was formed in May 1978 by "a mere handful" of members and sympathisers. Anyone who fancies being one of the chosen few need only send £5 to Mr Millard. With the competition from other would-be Hitlers we can only assume that he has been less than overwhelmed by the rush of applicants.

The Party wants "genetic improvements to be striven for by the scientists of the nation." Doubtless our readers will be able to suggest a few individuals who might need a little genetic improvement—particularly after reading of the fantasies of the NRP.

Peacock sanctuary

When most of the victims of the Iranian regime leave the country, they usually have to live in fairly ordinary accommodation. The Shah himself is different. Seeing the probability of overthrow, he hopes to continue in the manner to which he has become accustomed.

Most of Europe is now considered unsuitable for the Light of the Aryans to bolt to. Britain is out; taxes are too high. Switzerland is OK for taxes but the government can't guarantee his safety. Portugal, a traditional home for deposed monarchs has been less popular since 1974.

The Shah's advisors have now bought a property in film star land, Beverley Hills, and also properties in New York, together with land in Colorado and Mexico. Plenty of room there for the occupier of the Peacock Throne to spread his wings.

Now King Khaled of Saudi Arabia has bought a mansion in Highgate for £8 million. Is it as he claims just for his sister, or is he expecting trouble too?

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

of an aerospace worker

When you watch the television, the advertisements for breakfast cereals always show the family waking up brightly, all full of energy.

I often wonder what jobs these people are supposed to do. And what country are they supposed to live in? I wake up in absolute darkness for three quarters of the year—and during the summer when it's light, it's often raining.

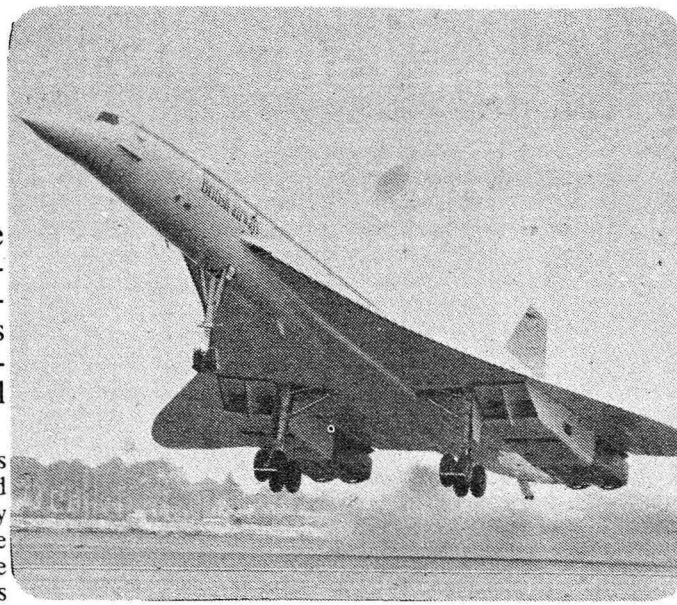
I'm certainly no bundle of energy, crispy-flakes or no crispy-flakes!

My alarm clock goes off at 6.30 am and I start work at 7.30. I'm a fitter and tied to a bench throughout the day.

My job is to deburr components, and if they are damaged to try and blend the damage out without scraping the job. It can be very boring work.

When you have a batch of components which often consist of 100 or more, the job can become very monotonous. I try to think of something to occupy my mind and break the boredom.

It is easy to become mentally tired, and at the end of a shift I often feel as



Concorde. No money to spend on workers

though I've spent eight hours on a building site.

Because of this boredom, I try to get away from the bench whenever possible to have a chat with my workmates.

The work can be very dusty at times, but only one bench has a dust extractor. The firm tells us the dust level is below 'danger level', but other firms have, of course, said the same thing about asbestos in the past.

Recently, we complained about the lack of ventilators on the section. During the summer the firm provides us all with orange squash, obviously thinking this would solve the problem.

Another thing that amazes me is that during the summer the tap water is boiling while

in winter it is freezing cold.

And management spend a great deal of time putting up little stickers telling us to save energy!

We can always tell when VIPs are about to visit the factory.

A week or two before they're due to arrive the painters are out in force painting the door panels, beams and anything they can get their brushes on. Gangways are kept clear of work and the work is placed neatly in bays. The gangways are even polished with a varnish.

The foremen go around the factory telling us to look busy. I wish the VIPs would come more often; then the place might be painted and cleaned a bit more.

About a year ago the old washrooms were done away with and a new one was built. Management also installed a shower for the benefit of the workers who are employed on the acid tanks.

We all welcome the shower as a long-overdue safety measure. But typically the shower is at one end of the factory and the acid tanks at the other! So if a worker is splashed with acid, he is expected to travel the length of the shop-floor.

Unfortunately, acid doesn't waste a moment in burning your skin. When the poor bloke actually reaches the shower there's a notice on the door telling him where to get the key.

If it wasn't for the fact that a worker can get seriously burned it would be amusing. Why couldn't the management have the shower built where the workers on the acid tanks work?

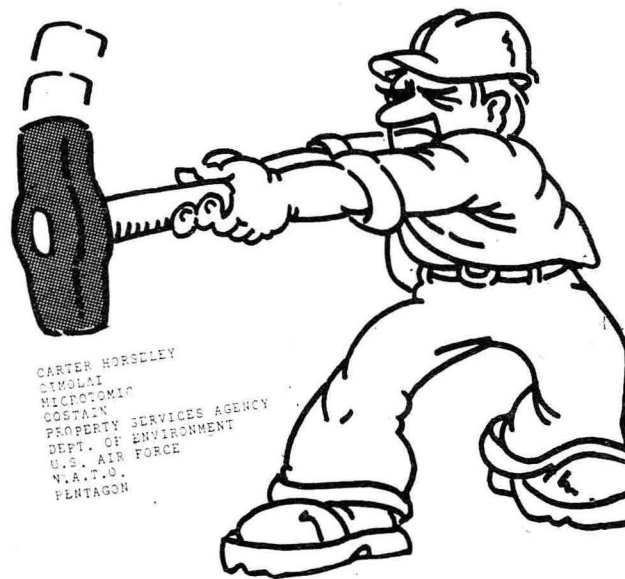
This example illustrates the need for workers to have overall control of the workplace environment. The labour and trade union movement must launch a serious campaign around this demand. I work for a state-owned company, but as things are that in itself means nothing.

Such a campaign is an essential part of the struggle for a socialist society in which production would be planned to take account of the health and safety of working people.

Dave Robbins

(AUEW Bristol)

AIRBASE WORKERS VICTORY



THE U.S.A.F. AIRBASE WORKERS DISPUTE

This brief pamphlet provides a clear and concise account of an important dispute at United States air force bases in East Anglia, reported in 'Militant' between 15th September and 3rd November 1978 (issues 423-430).

A group of determined and well organised trade unionists employed building massive new aircraft hangars for the US air force, went into battle in complex and difficult terrain.

85 workers picketed 4 sites trying to stop scabs imported from Italy escorted by English police, who were able to get into work at any number of points on airfield perimeters stretching literally miles. Negotiations were against the background of a shifting web of contractors and sub-contractors, British and foreign, typical of the building industry jungle, and overshadowed by questions of 'NATO security'.

The general lessons of their campaign are invaluable to all trade unionists. They got to grips with the details of who and what they were up against; explained and organised, ensuring solidarity in their own ranks and mobilising it elsewhere.

Support was won from workers in their own unions, mainly AUEW Construction, throughout the country, for-

cing official recognition for the strike. Workers on sites around the country at one point threatened to bring the 'Costains' empire to a halt. In Italy, Cimolai workers, with the backing of their unions, staged a solidarity strike.

They won—and how! Work guaranteed on the new contract, the attack on their wages defeated and £1,400 back-pay for the 14 weeks of the dispute (tax free).

The key to victory, as in any battle, lies with the workers themselves. Out of their own activity and determination they were able to turn the massive wheels of the trade union movement—a task that has sometimes daunted less well-organised or clear-sighted workers.

Above all, a victory against these odds shows the potential of every working class struggle given a clear understanding of the tasks and the means to achieve its objectives.

**Review by
Ian Ilett**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all at 'Militant' and Teresa MacKay [Ipswich Labour Party] for the tremendous support and help you gave us during the 14-week dispute at the East Anglian Air Bases, on behalf of the entire workforce.

Please find enclosed a pamphlet, which we hope may help others in their struggle.

Yours fraternally, D Etheridge
'The USAF Airbase Workers' Dispute', printed and published on behalf of the Workers' strike committee, November 1978. Price 10p.

Write to D Etheridge, 70 Peterhouse Close, Ipswich, Suffolk.

CHECKING OUT THE PROFITS

Report by Brent Kennedy. Photos by Julian McKittrick

"Checkout at Tesco—price cuts that help keep the cost of Christmas in check."

Well, that's what they said, though there aren't many working-class families whose pockets haven't felt the pinch after the Christmas shopping.

It's now 18 months since Tesco launched its 'Checkout' campaign to win the hearts and minds—and money—of Britain's shoppers into their supermarkets.

Amid a multi-million pound fanfare of publicity Tesco scrapped the old Green Shield stamps and reduced its prices, supposedly for the sole benefit of the housewife whose weekly budget had been hit by inflation.

It's a fact

Last year the average wage for a Tesco worker was £2,504. [This includes overtime, bonuses and the salaries of higher-paid personnel]. The amount of profit the company made out of each worker averaged £926.

In other words, every week a Tesco worker got a £48.15 wage packet, a further £17.80 was creamed off his or her work for some rich shareholder.

But after a year-and-a-half of the ruthless, cut-throat price-war between the big food retail chains it's clear that in the long run the only people who benefit are the shareholders of the supermarket giants.

When Tesco declared a price war in June 1977 its aim was to gobble up the largest share of the market by undercutting its competitors and driving the weakest out of business.

A recent report by a firm of city stockbrokers reveals that "with a 5% reduction in gross profit margins they increased market share from 7.9% in May 1977 to 12.4% in August/September 1978."

Their prediction for business activities next year speaks volumes about the future of capitalist firms at a time of stagnant living standards: "...we expect no further significant growth in the real level of household expenditure on food in the foreseeable future. For this reason growth in market share for one company can only be achieved at the expense of others."

Of course, in this shark-eats-shark game, only those with the biggest teeth win out. Tesco has only been able to carve out a bigger slice by allocating £2 million to reduce the price of the top 200 lines in its stores.

The impression is conveyed that Tesco is a cheaper place to shop generally, whereas only 200 of its 4,000 lines are

actually reduced under "Checkout". The choice of lines is cleverly changed at various times—last month turkeys, Christmas puddings and drinks featured prominently in double-page adverts in the national press.

Advertising also gives big business a head start over smaller traders. To launch "Checkout", Tesco spent a staggering £6 million.

The effect of this price war will simply be to drive more smaller firms out of business, resulting in redundancies for workers and fewer retail outlets for shoppers. "There is evidence that several multiples [food chainstores] are unable to trade profitably at the current level of price competition... Similarly the independent side of the trade has lost market share to the multiples," says the report.

The current year will have seen 16 new, large Tesco stores being opened but 68 smaller ones being closed as management bank on higher productivity from the workers.

In fact it is on the backs of the low-paid warehouse and shop workers that the Tesco shareholders have grown fatter this year.

Following "Operation Checkout" grocery volume increased by 50% in the distribution system: "during this period the number of staff employed in central warehousing increased from 750 to 850. The indication is that while throughput increased by 28% staff numbers were only up by 14%."

The same is true for the workers filling the shelves and on the cash registers, as Tesco's 1977-78 Annual

Report shows. Whereas the total value of goods sold increased last year by 36% (from £701.3 million to £953 million) the total wages bill rose by only 18% (from £65.05m to £77.23m).

What do the customers think about 'Operation Checkout'? 'Militant' asked Christmas shoppers coming out of one London supermarket for their verdict on Tesco's prices.

"Prices are very bad everywhere," said Mrs Kelly of Church Street. "The offers are not as good as they're made out to be. I've just spent £18 on one basket of shopping. It's ridiculous."

"Some prices are lower, but others are just normal," another housewife told us. "I don't think there's much in it."

Mrs Southgate, of Lisson Grove, felt that Tesco's prices were "Not too bad. They're not as bad as the other supermarkets. Mind you, while they've reduce the price of a few goods they've just put the extra on others."

Mrs C E Ghisil, of Edgware Road, agreed. "On Monday I paid £1.40 for a tin of biscuits and today I bought a box of the same biscuits, only this time they charged £1.59," she claimed, showing us the price mark. "It's beyond a joke."

"There's a few things cheaper here, but if you go down the road to Sainsbury's you can find different items that are cheaper than Tesco's," said Mrs French from Maida Vale.

"In the end they're all the same. Tesco's make more noise about their prices but I



Christmas shopping at Tesco

wouldn't go out of my way to shop here. The only way you could really save would be by

shopping around all the supermarkets for the cheapest things in each one."

The only thing the store manager was prepared to say was: "Trade is up."

Recognising that working class shoppers have little extra to spend, Tesco's have been trying to boost their profits by carving themselves out a bigger share of the market. Tesco's profits are expected to be 30% up this year.

It's a fact

"Wages to sales ratio—this has improved from 9.2% in 1976/77 to 8.1% in 1977/1978. Much of this improvement can be attributed to the increase in trading volume."—a stockbroker's report on Tesco.

Increased work for the workers, smaller wages burden for the bosses!

Who benefits?

What that means for the average Tesco worker is this: last year he or she increased

the value of goods sold by 25% from £24,682 to £30,900. By way of thanks for the extra effort, the management paid him or her a measly £215 extra, average earnings going up by 9% from £2,289 to a princely £2,504.

So who benefits from the notoriously low wages of the overworked staff and increased takings from the customers? Take a look at the owners' profits and find out.

Last year, after-tax profits rose by 13% from £15 million to £17 million.

And there's more to come. All the estimates are that Tesco's will see bigger profits rolling for several years to come—beginning with a massive expected increase of about 31% in 1978/79.

"Overall, we think that our 1978/79 projections—sales of £1,153m (up 21%) and pre-tax profits of £37.5m (up 31%)—may now be somewhat conservative and sales, in particular, might be closer to £1,175m," admits one group of stockbrokers. Another reckons that profits will climb to about £36.9m; £43.85m; £51.3m and £59.1m over the next four years.

So the moral of the story? Big business corporation carves up the market and drives weaker competitors out of business, closing down shops, laying off workers and making consumers travel further to shop. Meanwhile, more work is squeezed out of the shopworkers for relatively less money.

And when prices start to rise generally again, Tesco can use its greater monopoly position to make customers pay more—while still keeping an edge over its rivals.

The socialist answer must be to the advantage of shopworkers and shoppers alike: give the workers a living wage and a 35-hour week immediately—and keep prices down.

How? By getting the useless shareholders off our backs! If all the food and retail chains were nationalised and run under workers' control and management, prices could be standardised, the wasteful aspects of competition eliminated, the cost of multi-million pound advertising cut and retailing rationally planned for the benefit of workers and consumers.

"Retail shopworkers will no longer tolerate low wage packets whilst major retailers engage in price cutting in an effort to claw from one another a larger slice of consumer spending."

"Many retailers enjoy vast profits, throw themselves into the cut-price war in our High Streets, yet whenever rates of pay for shop staffs are negotiated, these same retailers show a brazen hostility against a living wage."

—John Dilks, Executive member of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

NEXT WEEK: A shopworker tells what it's like to work in Tesco's. Plus: a member of USDAW, the shopworkers' union, reports on low wages and the recent pay settlement.



Shopworkers at Tesco. Little benefit from the huge profits

FEWER AND BIGGER

ANDREW GLYN SHOWS THE INCREASING CONTROL OF THE BRITISH ECONOMY BY A FEW LARGE FIRMS

Two articles published in the government magazine 'Trade and Industry' (17 November 1978) present much new information on the extent to which the British economy is dominated by the monopolies.

One entitled 'How Many and How Big' should really be subtitled 'Few and Huge'. From an analysis of company accounts it shows that in 1975 the biggest 20 companies controlled 33%;

the biggest 50 controlled 48%;

the biggest 100 controlled 62%; and the biggest 250 controlled 79% of the assets of the biggest 1,500 UK companies.

Another table shows how these companies dominate the various sectors of the economy. (see below)

These figures do leave out the 15% or so of the assets of companies which are held by companies smaller than the top 1,500 and in this way slightly exaggerates the dominance of the top 1,500. These smaller companies are especially important in such sectors as engineering, construction and distribution, but it is impossible to adjust the

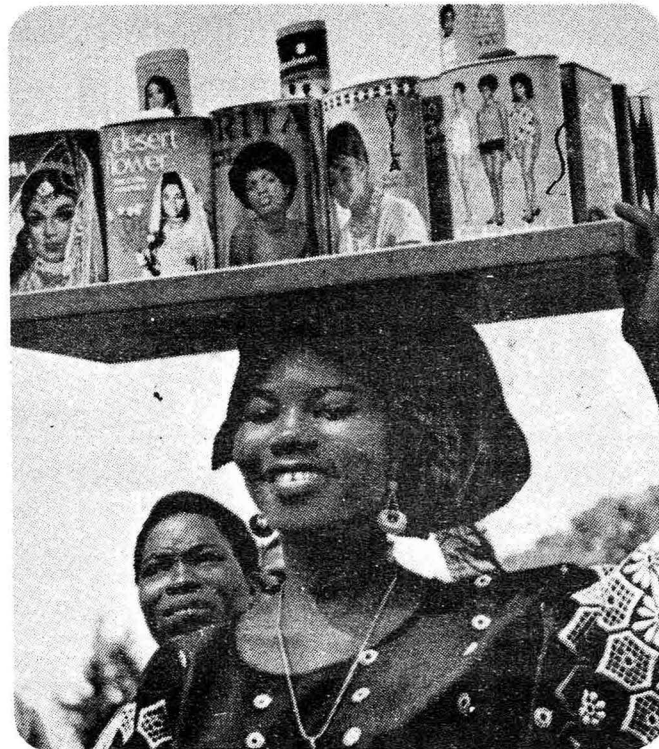
figures to take proper account of this.

Another point is that many of the giants have very extensive overseas assets. Forty-two of the top 250 are said to operate "wholly or mainly overseas" which means they have at least half their assets abroad. These include huge oil, mining and plantation companies, as well as a few manufacturing companies whose overseas subsidiaries are now more important than their home operations.

In fact, of the top 250 only 63 are estimated by the Department to have less than 10% of their assets overseas. The article does not provide detailed estimates, but it can be deduced from their figures that around 30% of the total assets of the top 1,500 companies registered in Britain are held overseas.

As far as the top 20 are concerned, however, the figure could be as high as one half—a staggering indication of the extent to which big capital in the UK has expanded overseas.

Whilst many of the operations overseas of UK companies do directly affect the functioning of the UK econ-



Not just in Britain. Metal Box make containers in Nigeria

omy (through supplying fuel and raw materials or assembling components made in the UK), it is also useful to have an indication of how far the major monopolies actually dominate the control of assets inside the UK.

Indirect control

Based on the information in the articles we can make the following rough estimates for 1975: the biggest 20 companies controlled about 21%; the top 50 controlled

33%; the biggest 100 about 44%; and the top 250 firms about 59% of the total UK assets of all companies operating in the UK.

Even these figures enormously understate the influence these companies really have since they take no account of their indirect control over the host of smaller companies which rely on them as buyers of their output or as suppliers of their basic inputs of materials, machinery etc.

In terms of research and development, too, the top 106

manufacturing companies account for 72% of research on all manufacturing products, and half of manufactured exports ('Economic Trends', August 1976).

Concentration

A second article, called 'How Much by How Few', looks at another aspect of the centralisation and concentration of capital—the extent to which the supply of individual products is dominated by a few suppliers. It reports on the findings of a highly detailed study of 4,000 products, ranging from margarine to aircraft.

It found that the top 5 producers supplied at least 90% of the market in the case of 602 products:

80-90% in the case of 470 products
60-80% in the case of 613
less than 60% in the case of 396.

In comparing these results for 1975 with 1963 the Department found that there was a rise of 7% in the proportion of product groups in which 80-90% was supplied by the biggest 5 firms, and a corresponding fall in the proportion where less than 60% was supplied by the biggest 5.

But their detailed results only cover slightly over one half of the nearly 4,000 commodities surveyed. In the other cases information could not be published because "fewer than 5 enterprises contribute to the heading, or there exists the possibility of disclosing data about one or more of the enterprises producing the product concerned".

What a farce! The capitalists will only supply information to the government about sales figures for particular commodities on the

understanding that they will not be published if they give too much away! What is more, there is no information published on the names of the big 5 firms in each market, which would show just how many products each monopoly is involved in.

The labour movement should demand that all this information be published so that it would be possible to construct an accurate picture of precisely how the tentacles of the major monopolies range over all the different products and industries.

Open the books

Such a complete opening of the books will require the action of all the trade union branches and shop stewards committees in the giant firms, including of course the white collar workers whose everyday work involves collecting the facts and figures. Such information on the detailed activities of the monopolies will be indispensable for the construction and implementation of a real socialist plan of production.

One thing which comes out clearly even from the inadequate data in these articles is that they have been misnamed. They should have been called 'How Few by How Many'—how few firms need to be taken over by the millions strong labour movement as a basis for eliminating the chaos of monopoly capitalism.

Andrew Glyn's pamphlet 'Capitalist Crisis' now available. See advert page 4.

	Share of the assets by sector of the top 1,500 controlled by the top 250 companies	Number of companies in top 250
Food, drink and tobacco	89%	28
Chemicals	81%	19
Metal manufacture	73%	10
Engineering	70%	53
Textiles, leather, clothing	60%	5
Total manufacturing	76%	142
Mining	98%	4
Construction	39%	6
Transport and communication	77%	13
Distribution	72%	36
Property	80%	23
Services	58%	8
Oil and gas	99%	8

A Weapon against cowboy firms?

My job is driving a 32-ton sugar tanker and I should like to make some fraternal criticisms of Alex Ingram's opposition to lorry drivers accepting the tachograph. [Militant 24th November].

I am sure that in a socialist society the question of lorries being fitted with 'tachos' would not even arise, but of course we do not live in a socialist society and therefore the problems that we, as lorry drivers, face, are of an entirely different nature to those we would face during the socialist transformation of society.

The road haulage industry and general haulage in particular tends to be a jungle and a rat race in which any group of workers who negotiate reasonable working conditions are under continual threat from cowboy firms and drivers who cut the rates by breaking the law and working day and night.

It seems to me that driving

juggernauts attracts workers who are capable of almost total dedication to the job. Even when we have finished a day's work and book into a transport digs, groups of drivers often do more verbal miles over cups of tea and pints of beer than even the worst cowboy driver could do in a day. Unscrupulous employers can and do use this to get drivers to work night and day and achieve the high productivity levels that Alex Ingram refers to.

I think it is very significant that employers are opposed to the tacho. Although the tacho can and would be 'fiddled' its installation in all HGVs would ensure a much more widespread adherence to the hours and speed regulation etc.

The effect of lorry drivers having to strictly observe such laws as the 40 mph speed limit on non-motorways would have a disastrous effect on productivity as far as employers are concerned. In a capitalist society such a fall in productivity should become the bosses' problem, as long

Following Alex Ingram's article 'A spy in the cab' in 'Militant', 24 November, another lorry driver takes issue with some of the points raised.

as we can prove (with the aid of the tacho card) that we are doing our job.

I for one would be quite happy to sit back and let the employers worry about it. They might even be forced to resolve the problem by taking on more labour in the haulage industry, which would of course be highly desirable.

After driving for ten years with a clean licence, recently I was twice caught within the space of a month for exceeding the 40 mph limit. This means that I now have two

endorsements on my licence and that if I get a third I could lose the only means I know of earning a living.

When I think the matter over I am quite certain that I was benefitting my employer far more by breaking the law than I was benefitting myself. The effect, for instance, of gaining half an hour on a journey and thereby making a deadline for delivery on that day is of far more benefit to the boss than it is to the driver.

Unfortunately, because of

the widespread disregard for the law amongst some sections of the haulage industry, it is almost impossible to do our job without breaking the law. When we do break the law we are of course putting ourselves and our livelihoods at risk.

I see the tacho as being the best means we have at the present time of improving our working conditions without being under the constant threat of losing our jobs because some cowboy has carved the job up and undercut the rates.

Two years ago a local trade union branch fined a driver for driving 25 hours in a stretch. At the last general haulage firm I worked for, a driver delivered a load to the Middle East; ten hours after arriving back in England he was back on the ferry with a loaded trailer for Italy. These two examples are extreme but unfortunately not as uncommon in the haulage industry as might be thought.

The installation of the tacho will not of itself stop this sort of thing happening, but combined with trade

union organisation, could enable us as drivers to more effectively fight the cowboy firms who for too long have been a threat to our jobs and our working conditions.

In expressing the above views I am aware that the majority of lorry drivers would disagree with me and that I am in opposition to the official position of the Transport and General Workers Union. Because of this I would of course be bound to accept any democratic decision within the Union to take industrial action against the use of tachographs in HGVs.

The only way that a democratic decision can be made is when the haulage industry is nationalised and under workers control. In the meantime I welcome the opportunity for lorry drivers to discuss this issue in the columns of 'Militant'.

**Tim Webb
T&GWU
Kings Lynn**

THE SPARTACIST

Sixty years ago, January 1919 saw the formation of the first Government of People's Commissars, appointed by the Executive Committee of the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. Following his article on the German events of 1918 ['Militant' November 3], Roger Silverman here describes the heroic Spartacist rising, drawing out its lessons for today. In a future issue, he will deal with the revolutionary events of 1923.

In November 1918, the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) were seized by the scruff of their necks by the revolutionary workers, soldiers and sailors, and hoisted kicking and screaming into power, still protesting passionately that they "hated the social revolution like sin" and were "seized with deathly fear."

The German workers demonstrated the historic law that, in a period of revolutionary turmoil, the mass of the working class, when aroused to political activity, will always turn towards its traditional organisations, no matter how unworthy of trust might be their leaders.

In spite of the betrayal of 1914 when they abandoned the workers to the horrors of the world war, these same class collaborators and fifth-columnists for capitalism were entrusted with responsibility for the fate of the revolution.

This was so despite the fact that the most courageous elements within the SPD, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, had already formed the Spartacist League to fight against the war, and despite the mass split that created the Independent Social-Democratic Party (USPD) which sprang up to overshadow the SPD in the period just prior to the revolution. The millions of untutored, previously inert, masses, aroused for the first time to politics by the revolution, rallied around the SPD, despite the fact that many famous elders of the SPD, such as Kautsky and Bernstein as well as the Spartacists, were now to be found in the USPD.

Nevertheless, the first "Government of People's Commissars" appointed by a Central Executive Committee of the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, consisted of three SPD members and—in a secondary role—three Independents. The political structure was consciously modelled on Soviet power in Russia.

The Independents could have quickly won the masses away from the SPD, when great events put them to the test—except that it was a party spontaneously generated by the changing mood of the masses

Die rote Fahne

Mitteilungsblatt des Stuttgarter Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates
Zentralorgan sämtlicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte Württembergs.
Nr. 1 Stuttgart, 5. November 1918. 1. Jahrg.

- ### Die Forderungen des Arbeiter- und Soldatenrats.
1. Sofortiger Waffenstillstand und Abschluss des Friedens durch den Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat.
 2. Abanken aller Dynastien, einschließlich Wilhelm I. von Württemberg.
 3. Auflösung des Landtags und des Reichstags. Die Regierung übernehmen sofort zu wählende Delegierte der Arbeiter, Soldaten, Kleinbauern und der Handwerker.
 4. Sofortige und vollständige Aufhebung des Belagerungszustandes; Aufhebung jeder Zensur, volle Pressefreiheit; Aufhebung des Hilfsdienstgesetzes.
 5. Sofortige Freilassung aller politisch Inhaftierten und aller Militärs gefangenen ohne Ausnahme in Württemberg und im Reich.
 6. Banken und Industrien sind zugunsten des Proletariats zu enteignen.
 7. Zentralisierung der Reichsfinanzverwaltung von 100 Mark anwärts.
 8. 7tägige Arbeitszeit; Festsetzung von Mindestlöhnen durch die Arbeiterausschüsse. Gleiche Löhne für männliche und weibliche Arbeiter.
 9. Streiktage sind voll zu bezahlen.
 10. Durchgreifende Umgestaltung des Heeres zu:
 - a) Beibehaltung des Berufs- und Ergänzungsdienstes an 20 Soldaten in dienstlichen und außerdienstlichen Angelegenheiten;
 - b) Aufhebung des Dienstverhältnisses der Beteiligten; die Disziplin wird durch Soldatendelegierten ersetzt erhalten;
 - c) Abschaffung der Uniform;
 - d) Entfernung von Offizieren auf Privatgrundbesitz der Soldaten.
 12. Abschaffung der Todesstrafe und der Nichtverurteilung von politischen und militärischen Vergehen.

The Spartacist League paper 'Red Flag'

and their revulsion at the miseries of the war; it was not led by a conscious Marxist cadre with a scientific perspective.

Hence, it was merely a distorted reflection of the old SPD: it embraced in a single party Bernstein on the right wing, Kautsky of the centre, and Liebknecht on the revolutionary left! Kautsky described the inglorious predicament of a centrist party caught unawares by revolution: "Our Party presented a grotesque appearance. Its right wing was in the government, and its left wing worked for the downfall of that very government!"

To their horror, the SPD leaders found their power rested on the soviets. In fostering the counter-revolution, the were sawing off the branch on which they were sitting.

The SPD leaders' first concern was to dissolve the workers' and soldiers' councils and restore "order". But their power rested, to their horror, on those same revolutionary soviets! They were sawing away at the very branch they were sitting on. Ebert, Scheidemann and especially Noske, conspired with the dispossessed officials to restore power to the capitalists. The army had fallen to pieces. Under the banner of "law and order", the SPD leaders mobilised, financed and armed the sinister Freikorps (volunteers)—gangs of mercenaries mod-

elled on the crack "storm troops" of the Kaiser, sporting jackboots and adopting emblems such as the skull-and-crossbones or the swastika.

Many of the drunken, swaggering, declassed mercenaries of the Freikorps later became the hard core SA and SS, around which the mass of frenzied, petty-bourgeois rallied, swelling the ranks of the Nazi movement, which was later to crush underfoot the Noskes and Eberts, along with the German working class.

Noske, Minister of Defence, slavishly worshipped the Prussian officer caste and harboured a touching sympathy for the fate of the 270,000 officers uprooted by the revolution, stripped of their medals and insignia, lusting with "rage, alcohol and thirst for blood."

Noske willingly volunteered to crush the revolution. "Someone must become the bloodhound. I won't shirk the responsibility!" he promised. Later, he described with repulsive satisfaction how he "sought out, one by one, the former officers and former officials, beaten and spat upon as they were, and it is with their help that I averted the worst."

Socialism, the goal of the pioneers of the SPD, was "averted"; with the Freikorps' "help" an armed counter-revolution was launched. As a direct consequence came the Hitler nightmare. But never mind, "the worst was averted!"

Within two months of the bloodless overthrow of the Kaiser

Time and Time again, the workers surging to propel the leaders egging on the counter-revolution, vacillating, at one moment too timid, to harness the workers' power. It was to take fifteen years before the balance of forces began to tip in favour of the workers.

and the initial disintegration of the German capitalist state, the counter-offensive began. In January 1919 a bloodcurdling hate campaign was launched against Liebknecht and Luxemburg. "Rosa Luxemburg, whose nobility of mind and deep humanity were no less outstanding than her brilliant intellectual gifts, was pictured as a wild blood-thirsty beast, and her comrades as a band of unscrupulous ruffians who specialised in murder, rape and arson." (From 'Hammer or Anvil'.)

Huge posters appeared screaming: "Workers, Citizens! The Fatherland is approaching ruin. Save it! It is not threatened from without, but from within: by the Spartacus Group. Kill their leaders! Kill Liebknecht! Then you will have peace, work and bread!—The Front Soldiers."

In the following 18 months, there were more than 350 political assassinations, of socialists like Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Eisner and Jogiches, and even of liberals like Erzberger and Rathenau. The capitalist state, with the SPD

leaders officiating, openly colluded with this terror campaign.

To look at the role of the judiciary alone: for 354 political murders by the Right, 24 people were sentenced to an average of four months in jail or two marks' fine! But for 22 political murders by the Left, 38 people were sentenced: ten to death and 28 to an average of 15 years' jail.

The murderers of Liebknecht and Luxemburg were mostly acquitted, but those convicted were fined or jailed for a few months. Marloh, a trigger-happy Freikorps officer who had shot down 28 unarmed sailors in cold blood, was sentenced to three months' "honourable confinement"!

This particularly shocking atrocity had prompted the Independents to leave the government in December 1918. Noske's hands were free now to deal with the "anarchy".

A provocative decree was issued sacking the popular Independent Socialist Eichhorn from his post as head of the Berlin police. He had taken charge to purge its ranks and curb its anti-working class activities.



T UPRISING 1919

...the tragic cycle unwound: the revolution forward; the SPD counter-revolution; the left parties too adventuristic, at another too almost inexhaustible energies.

...before the mighty German... Many heroic battles lay ahead... to shift decisively against the

This single act enraged the Berlin workers. It symbolised the restoration of power to their class enemies. The fate of the revolution itself was at stake.

A revolutionary Committee was hastily scrambled together to fight back. It was an unwieldy and indecisive instrument, composed of left Independents (some of whom were straining for a compromise solution from the very outset); the Revolutionary Obleute (Shop Stewards), a syndicalist current; and the Spartacists, now renamed the Communist Party, which had split away from the Independents in December, and which now had only two delegates out of 71 on the Committee.

The Revolutionary Committee impulsively decided to call for an uprising to overthrow the government.

The Revolutionary Committee impulsively decided to call for an uprising to overthrow the government. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl



to a secret hideaway in the country to install a counter-revolutionary headquarters.

The counter-attack began on 10th January, and by the 12th the streets of Berlin were already like a ravaged battlefield.

In the black aftermath of the workers' defeat, a terrible revenge was wrought by the Freikorps. Within three days, among the countless victims, Luxemburg and Liebknecht were murdered. The revolution was decapitated.

The whole operation was a cynical calculated provocation by the SPD leaders. General Gröner and Freikorps officer Maercker both test-

Berlin was probably the greatest proletarian manifestation in history... They had brought along their weapons, they had their red flags. They were ready to do anything, to give everything, even their lives. There was an army of 200,000 such as Ludendorff had never seen.

"Then the inconceivable happened. The masses were standing from nine in the morning in the cold and fog. Somewhere their leaders were sitting and conferring.

"The fog lifted and the masses were still standing. Their leaders conferred. Noon came and, in addition to the cold, hunger came. And the leaders conferred.

Time and time again, the same tragic cycle unwound: the workers surging to propel the revolution forward; the SPD leaders egging on the counter-revolution; the left parties vacillating, at one moment too adventuristic, at another, too timid, to harness effectively the workers' almost inexhaustible energies.

After the defeat of the revolutionary workers, the Freikorps unleashed an atrocious orgy of reaction.

In February, the Freikorps captured Bremen, then they went on to Bremerhaven and Cuxhaven, then they swept through Central Germany. In ensuing months, one city after another was to fall victim to their atrocities.

But the workers recovered with amazing resilience each time. Already by March, the shock of January had healed and a new General Strike gripped Berlin. Noske responded with his notorious "shoot to kill" order (Schiessebefehl). 1,200 workers were killed in one single expedition alone.

Violent clashes broke out in the Ruhr and in Brunswick. Then, in May 1919, came a defeat which dealt a body-blow to the revolution. Bavaria was transformed overnight from a fortress of the revolution into a lasting bastion of reaction, a military dictatorship, an early haven for Hitler and innumerable other beerhall rabble-rousers, and a base from which to launch counter-revolutionary sorties into the rest of Germany.

On 7th November, 1918, a Bavarian republic had been proclaimed under the leadership of the popular Independent orator Kurt Eisner. Workers and peasants had formed Soviets.

Then, in February 1919 Eisner was assassinated. In the resulting turmoil, a bizarre and flamboyant clique of poets and artists came to power, which under the impact of the establishment of a Soviet Republic in Hungary, proclaimed Munich, too, a Soviet Republic, issuing fantastic and utopian decrees.

Predictably, it collapsed within a week. The Spartacists (Communist Party) then proclaimed a second Soviet Republic, which was brought down within two weeks and then replaced by a third Soviet Republic, which lasted only a few days.

On May Day, a ferocious army of Freikorps marched into Munich. At least 1,000 workers died defending it, and hundreds more were executed.

The savage beast of the counter-revolution, blood dripping from every fang, raged through Germany. Again and again the workers rallied to corner and subdue it.

A year later, when the capitalists dared to attempt to impose a military dictatorship over Germany, by staging the Kapp putsch in Berlin, all the resources of the working class were mobilised, and reaction was beaten back for years to come.

Books:

"The Kings Depart: The German Revolution and the Treaty of Versailles 1918-19" by Richard Watt (Penguin).

"Hammer or Anvil: The Story of the German Working-Class Movement" by Evelyn Anderson (Oriole Editions reprint).



Demonstration in Berlin November 1918

ified later that Ebert had instructed Noske in December to crush the Spartacists by force.

Undoubtedly they had also exploited the immaturity of the Revolutionary Committee to deepen the divisions within the working class. For instance, it was later proved that the occupation of the editorial offices of 'Vorwärts', the SPD newspaper, was instigated by a paid agent provocateur.

The heroic supporters of the Spartacist offensive remained isolated and lacked decisive leadership.

The heroic Spartacist rising was crushed because key sections of the workers and soldiers, even in Berlin, and including even the revolutionary sailors, remained neutral. They were alarmed at the policies of the SPD leaders, but they were not yet convinced that they were impervious to pressure, and were instinctively reluctant to countenance a physical confrontation between (as they saw it) two wings of the labour movement.

Moreover, there was no decisive leadership which could sharply pose the issues and convince them that there was a clear alternative. On the contrary, the leadership did not even know what to do with the people they had on their side. It is worth quoting at length the poignant description given in the Spartacist paper 'Die Rote Fahne' (Red Flag):

"What was seen on Monday in

"The masses were feverish with excitement. They wanted one deed, even one word, to calm their excitement. But nobody knew what to say, because the leaders were conferring.

"The fog came again and with it the dusk. The masses went home sad. They wanted great things, but they had done nothing.

"Because their leaders conferred... They sat the entire evening and the entire night and conferred. They sat during the next morning. When dawn came, they either were still conferring or were conferring again."

Given a Marxist leadership, a massive demonstration in Berlin could have given tremendous momentum to the revolution, like the events of April and June 1917 in Russia. As it was, the uprising led to a confused deadlock and emboldened the counter-revolution.

The Freikorps, which already numbered 400,000, systematically assassinated workers' leaders, and mowed down in the streets thousands of workers in one city after another. Workers' leaders were arrested and summarily executed. Citizens were compelled on pain of death to denounce friends, neighbours and relatives. Workers who defended their conquests were shot down mercilessly.

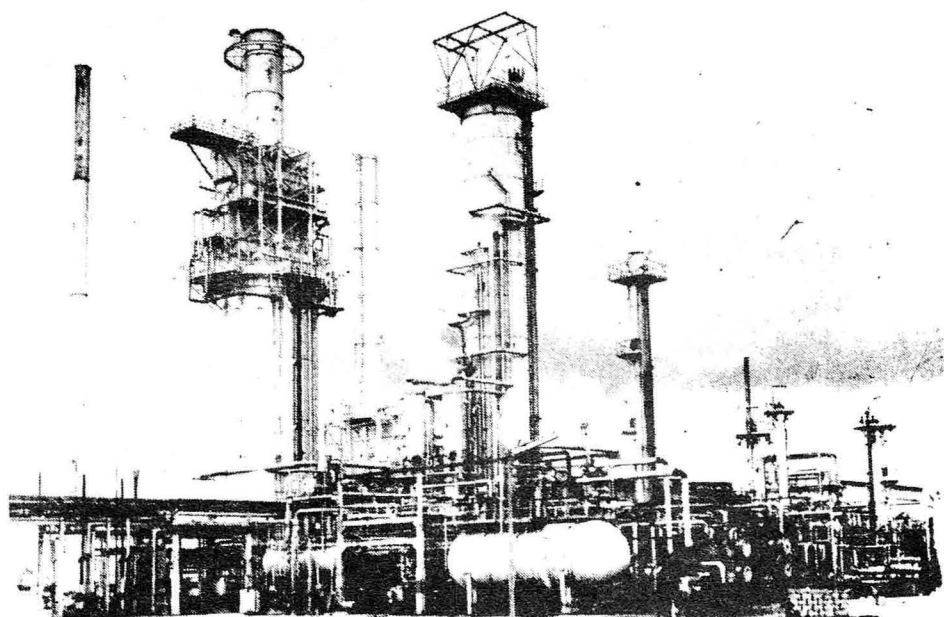
It was to take fifteen years before the might German proletariat could be crushed. Many heroic battles lay ahead before the balance of forces began to shift decisively against the workers.



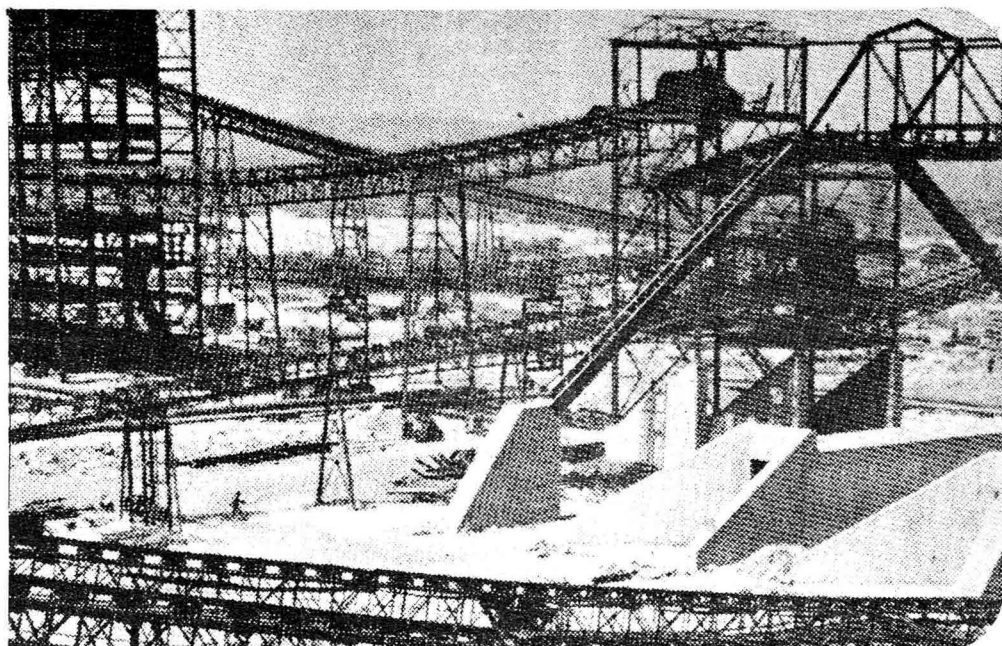
AFRICA

AFRICA - Which way for British Business ?

By Lynn Walsh



Nigeria



South Africa

A Choice between Black or White Africa ?

For centuries British capitalism has augmented its wealth by the wanton pillage of Africa's raw materials and the super-exploitation of her peoples.

Britain's ruling class has always had a highly profitable stake in South Africa's Apartheid state. And since British imperialism relinquished direct control, it has continued the exploitation of the former colonies through indirect economic domination.

But British capitalism is now on the horns of a dilemma as far as its interests in Africa are concerned.

If it maintains its financial stake in South Africa and continues to co-operate with the Apartheid regime, it stands to lose a significant part of its trade with black African states, which is now greater.

Markets

But if it supports economic sanctions against South Africa, of course, it would risk losing its huge financial assets there.

British companies' earnings from direct investment in South Africa are still larger than those from all the other African companies combined. City stock exchange African investment is almost entirely with SA, and the Apartheid state still supplies many vital minerals to British industry.

As far as trade is concerned, however, Black Africa now buys about £1,900 million worth of British exports. Nigeria alone bought nearly twice as many British goods as SA last year, and it is now Britain's 9th largest export market (accounting for about 4% of UK machinery and chemical exports).

In the field of direct investments, moreover, new British investment (net) has been growing almost twice as fast as than in SA.

When British capitalism is steadily sinking in the world economic league tables, major set-backs in vital areas like Nigeria would be a disaster.

Nine countries account for over 80% of all British exports to non-Arab Africa. South Africa and Nigeria are the most important.

Investment

South Africa: UK institutions, companies, and residents own an estimated £5,000 million worth of SA assets, over 60% of all foreign investment there. Part is in SA securities, part in local assets of UK companies.

While UK trade to SA is limited (less than 2½% of Britain's export of machinery and transport equipment), the UK remains SA's primary export market (taking 24% of SA exports).

Over two-thirds of British imports from SA are minerals: SA (leaving aside USSR) holds most of the world's known reserves of a number of precious and vital minerals (eg chrome, vanadium, manganese and gold).

Nigeria: Since Nigeria began to export oil on a big scale (now the world's seventh largest petrol producer), the country has taken more and more British exports. UK sales to Nigeria now exceed British imports from there (mainly oil and cocoa) by about five times. But economic problems in Nigeria have led to a slow-down in the growth of trade with Britain, especially their imports of consumer goods (about half the trade).

The other key African countries so far as British trade is concerned are Ghana, Zaire, Zambia, Kenya and

Tanzania. **The UK companies with most to lose:**

A hundred British companies had total African profits between them of over £250 million in 1977. Such are the fears of upheavals in Africa, especially in South Africa, that the department of Trade recently conducted a special study of the effect of a trade embargo on British companies in South Africa.

At the end of last year, the 'Investors Chronicle' (3 November) produced some interesting figures of British companies' stake in Africa (despite the marked lack of information in company reports).

The tables show the enormous stake some big companies have in Africa. "Their African business is highly profitable," points out the 'Investors Chronicle'; some profit margins are more than double the group norm. For Low and Bonar the African profit margin was almost 16%, against less than 6% overall.

Banking

Among companies omitted from our lists for want of adequate data are the oil giants and banks. The former's involvement in southern Africa has taxed the investigative powers of a government inquiry (Bingham)

"The most informative banking figures available are those issued by the Bank of England for liabilities and claims: at the end of June the UK banking system's claims on banks and other borrowers in South Africa exceeded their local liabilities by £1.22 billion, while the figure for other African countries south of the Sahara was £406 million."

However: "Some UK companies have already severed

some or all of their African links. Those which have sold South African assets this year include GEC, UDT, Racal, BL, Reed International, Guardian Royal Exchange, Tate and Lyle and Revertex, in most cases they have said the sales were made for

business rather than political reasons—if one can separate the two."

Revolution

Big business and throughout the developed capitalist world —is terrified that it will lose its lucrative trade and profit making assets in Africa.

between its relations with South Africa's white ruling class and the black nationalist rulers in the rest of Africa, big business now clearly feels threatened by the movement towards revolutionary change which is gathering throughout the continent.

British investment in Africa

1. Companies earning a large part of total profit in Africa

Company	% of total profit	Amount £m	Remarks
Lonrho	96	66.1	£30.6m East and Central; £20.4m West; £15.1m Southern
Eastern Produce	89	3.47	Kenya, Malawi, Zambia
Mitchell Cotts	88	12.1	"Southern Africa" £9.4m; "East & Central Africa" £2.7m
Osborn (Samuel)	88	2.02	South Africa
Paterson Zochonis	71	10.5	West Africa
Marshall's Universal	69	2.84	East Africa
Finlay (James)	67	8.82	Kenya
Low & Bonar	51	3.63	Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, S. Africa
Blackwood Hodge	45	11.7	S. Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, etc.
Stocklake Hldgs	44	1.15	British Rhodesian Steel: results not consolidated
Warren Plantns	44	4.82	Kenya £4.73m; Nigeria £0.09m
Berec Group	43	10.5	Nigeria, S. Africa
Bridon	39	4.57	S. Africa
Brit. Commonwealth Shpg	37	5.86	After tax; equity interest in Salfmarine etc.
Assd. Brit. Foods	36	28.0	"South Africa" (52% hldg in Premier Milling, etc)
Haden Carrier	31	0.44	Nigeria, S. Africa
Bestobell	29	1.8	"South and Central Africa"
Hall Engineering	26	1.16	South Africa
Delta Metal	24	8.63	S. Africa, Kenya
Coates Bros.	24	2.27	S. Africa, E. Africa, Zambia
Brit. Elec. Trac.	22	15.0	S. Africa, Kenya, Rhodesia
Reckitt & Colman	18	10.4	S. Africa, Zambia
Blue Circle Inds.	17	10.3	South, West, East Africa
BOC International	16	16.7	S. Africa etc.
Chloride	16	4.72	S. Africa etc.
Smith & Nephew	16	3.28	Africa & Middle East: S. Africa
Chubb	14	1.20	S. Africa

2. Companies earning big money in Africa

Company	Amount £m	% of total profit	Remarks
Lonrho	66.1	96	See Table 1
Unilever	59	11	For Anglo/Dutch group
Assd. British Foods	28.0	36	See Table 1
BAT Industries	21	4	Various
Rio Tinto Zinc	18.8	7	S. Africa
BOC International	16.7	16	See Table 1
Brit. Elec. Traction	15.0	22	"
Mitchell Cotts	12.1	88	"
Blackwood Hodge	11.7	45	"
Berec Group	10.5	43	"
Paterson Zochonis	10.5	71	"
Reckitt & Colman	10.4	18	"

3. Companies ranked by turnover in Africa

Company	% of total turnover	Amount £m	Remarks
Cohen (A)	41	18.1	S. Africa, Rhodesia
Metal Box	18	142.8	S. Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, etc.
Williamson Tea	22	5.94	Kenya, Tanzania
Amal. Power Engng	19	10.4	S. Africa
Fenner (J. H.)	16	11.6	"
Ascd Engineering	13	38.6	"
Babcock & Wilcox	12	80.0	"
Anderson Strathclyde	12	5.53	"
BTR	10%	281.1m	Shareholders' funds: total and in Africa

Where the British money went* and what we got from Africa†

	1972 £m	1976 £m	% change		1972 £m	1976 £m	% change
South Africa	74	201	172	South Africa	63	266	202
Other Africa	59	135	129	Other Africa	63	193	133
of which				of which			
Kenya	2	11	450	Nigeria	10	21	110
Nigeria	22	99	350	Rhodesia	11	13	63
Rhodesia	9	16	77	Zambia	8	21	162
Zambia	8	15	87	W. Europe	£19	532	170
W. Europe	289	662	135	N. America	214	459	129
N. America	161	567	252				

* Net direct investment overseas by UK companies other than oil companies.
† Net earnings (including unremitted profits of UK companies other than oil companies).

KAMPUCHEA/VIETNAM

The National road to conflict

In an extraordinary and almost unique way a non-capitalist state has been overthrown by forces from a similar regime.

Four years after the liberation of Phnom Penh, the capital of Kampuchea has fallen again.

In 1975 it was the American puppet regime of Lon Nol that was overthrown. Capitalism and landlordism were abolished by the Khmer Rouge, who introduced a bureaucratic repressive regime. They aimed to develop Kampuchea on strictly nationalist lines by developing the countryside through a ruthless direction of labour. Now that regime has gone, to be replaced by a government favourable to neighbouring Vietnam.

The military conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea illustrates how far either side is from Marxist internationalism.

Both of these states were distorted at birth by their bureaucratic and nationalist orientation. The first fighting between them occurred on May Day 1975, one day after the liberation of Saigon.

Western commentators have explained the conflict by talk of long-standing enmity between the Vietnamese and the Kampuchians, of the old Khmer Empire etc. For socialists this evades the point. Of course there are national antagonisms, suspicions, historical differences, but a Marxist approach is to recognise these difficulties and work to overcome them on an internationalist basis.

Unfortunately, the nation-



alist degeneration of the USSR has helped to move the international 'Communist' movement in the opposite direction. It has encouraged 'national paths to socialism'. The experience of the Indo-Chinese Communist movement is a tragic illustration of where this leads.

Founded in 1930, the Indo-Chinese Communist

Party at first talked of a Federation of Indo-China, liberated from French colonialism. In 1941 this had been modified, and separate organisations for Vietnam, Cambodia (Kampuchea) and Laos were created. 1951 saw these organisations become fully independent of each other. During the 1950s the Cambodian party split,

one wing favouring Vietnam and the USSR (Khmer Vietnam) and the other favouring China and a strong independent Cambodia (Khmer Rouge).

Most of the fighting against the old Cambodian regime was done by the Khmer Rouge, and it was primarily their cadres who came to power in April 1975.

The subsequent four years witnessed an escalating conflict between Vietnam and the new Kampuchea. April 1977 saw an attempted coup in Phnom Penh and in December of that year diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken off. A year ago a major border war broke out and by April Vietnam was broadcasting appeals to Cambodian troops to overthrow their government.

Summer last year saw the announcement of the National Union Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea. This consists of cadres expelled from the Khmer Rouge and members of the Khmer Vietnam. It has been strongly supported by Vietnam, USSR and a number of 'Communist' Parties (including the British). It was

Vietnamese tanks and planes which brought down the Khmer Rouge regime this week.

This will not be the end of the story. It is likely that the Khmer Rouge, supported by China, will now undertake a guerrilla war against the new regime.

Sabre-rattling by the Chinese government on its border with Vietnam will be repeated by the USSR on its border with China. Whilst this is unlikely to escalate into a USSR-Chinese war, both powers will continue to keep the conflict alive for their own narrow interests. This chauvinist rivalry is light years away from Marxism.

It is a tragedy for the peoples of Indo-China that having successfully defeated French, Japanese and American imperialism, they are now being set at each other's throats by rival nationalist leaders.

Jim
Chrystie

GERMANY: A Giant awakes

STEELWORKERS STRUGGLE FOR 35 HR WEEK

The German steel workers have been on strike for the first time in over 50 years. Their struggle shows the new fighting mood of the German working class. And this is paralleled elsewhere in Europe among steelworkers, as cutbacks are announced in every country.

In Britain massive redundancies have been declared. In France the bosses had a special Christmas present for their workforce. They proclaimed that 21,000 workers would be sacked by 1980. This has triggered off a fighting response from French steelworkers.

But clearly there is a need for united action by all European steelworkers. In Germany the workers have moved into action.

The following article by a German steelworker looks at the struggle so far, explains the effect on the German labour movement and points the way to a common struggle by all European steelworkers in Europe.

“A brutal wave of job elimination is sweeping through the German steel industry. Every month 1,000 jobs are lost. The bosses plan to destroy 50,000 jobs out of the present 200,000 by 1981. In this situation we are forced to fight for the sharing out of all available work without loss of pay. We want a contract

Heinrich Huber
(works councillor,
Mannesman, IG
Metall and SPD)
interviewed by
Kurt Pfeifle
(Remscheid Jusos)

that guarantees the 35-hour week within three years and a 5% wage increase.

European struggle

The bosses claim the 35-hour week would weaken the ability of the German steel industry to compete, because in other countries there is still the 40-hour week. This is an attempt to split the working class internationally. The bosses want to play off German workers against British, French, Italian etc.

There is only one answer to it: the international struggle for the 35-hour week. We appeal to all British workers to support our fight as we will



Demonstrators in the Ruhr during the six-week strike

support theirs, within the EEC the European Steel Cartel is being formed to lay off 140,000 workers all over Europe by 1981. That is why steelworkers have to take up a joint and common struggle.

One problem we have had to face is our 'union leadership'. They did not use the full power of the union in the beginning. 36,000 were called out on strike at the end of November. The bosses reacted by brutally locking out a further 44,000. They tried to use scab labour in the non-strike affected steel mills. For weeks the strike was not effective.

Our shop stewards' committee demanded the extension of the strike to the whole

of the steel industry. After a lot of rank and file pressure 20,000 more workers were called out on the 3rd of January. So half the membership is now in struggle, but this is still not enough.

Now the leadership is trying to sell us a cheap compromise, offered by Farthmann, a regional Labour Minister, who is acting as mediator. This compromise only offers us a 39½-hour week until 1981 and a 3% wage increase. This is not what we want. It is just not enough. This will not save one single job. It seems we do not only have to fight against our class enemy; sometimes we have to fight on two fronts to prevent the union leader-

ship from giving in.

Union democracy

After the end of the strike the struggle within the IG Metall Union will really begin. I think some of the leaders must be replaced. We must have more democracy within the union. We want the right to replace people.

The union rule must end, which states that you need a 75% majority to start a strike, but only a 25% minority to end it. We want a democratic and militant IG Metall. We do not want to split the union. But some heads will fall in the near future or we will lose a lot of members.

Even if we get the worst sort of compromise, from the political viewpoint the strike has been a marvellous success. Every one of us has learned a lot of lessons. This is the first strike in the German steel industry since 1928. We had to learn again how to fight, how to organise a strike and we learn it better every day.

The strike goes on. We will have many more strikes in the future. A process has started, a process of every steelworker becoming more politically conscious. This process cannot be stopped...

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

LETTERS

'Mutiny' postscript

Dear Comrades

A postscript is needed to Peter Lush's review of Alf Killick's 'Mutiny!' in 'Militant' of 15 December 1978, issue 436.

Alf, who led the mutiny of British soldiers in the Calais area when the expected demobilisation of the army failed to materialise after the 1918 armistice, died recently at the age of 84.

At the time of his death Alf was president of Southend Borough Labour Party and an active participant in Party meetings. An ardent socialist to the end, knowing that the struggle for socialism involved educating the comrades in the principles of socialism and the application of these principles in local and national administration, he made provision for the establishment on his death of an educational trust open to members of the Borough Labour Party and affiliated organisations.

As an appropriate epitaph the 'Internationale' was played at the funeral.

Yours fraternally
Barry Buitekant
Southend-on-Sea
Borough Labour Party

THE GREAT PROFIT ROBBERS

Dear Comrades

Thinking we'd like a Christmas treat, my wife and I decided to go to the cinema for an evening out. The films we fancied seeing were 'Death on the Nile' and 'The First Great Train Robbery'.

Perhaps stupidly, we decided to go to the West End to see them, since it would probably be several weeks before the films reached our part of London.

First call was at the ABC Shaftesbury Avenue. The cheapest seats for 'Death on the Nile' were £1.70. That seemed rather excessive so we walked on to Leicester Square. At the Warner all seats for 'Death on the Nile' were £2.00. Needless to say, that 'died the death' with us too, so we looked at prices at a cinema opposite where the cheapest seats for 'The First Great Train Robbery' were £1.80.

Feeling rather annoyed, we showed our disapproval of the prices in the only way we could—by voting with our feet and going home.

With prices like these is it any wonder that people don't go to the cinema any more? Such 'treats' are likely to be the first to be cut out when working class households feel the pinch.

Just for interest—the cheapest seats at Covent Garden Opera House are £1.50 and at the London Coliseum for English National Opera £1.10. You would also see productions reckoned to be amongst the best in the world.

Of course, the film corporations' profit sharks haven't got their hands on them yet. Draw your own conclusions!

Yours fraternally
A NALGO Member

NO USE STANDING ON THE SIDELINES

Dear Comrades

The letter from N Roberts raises a number of interesting questions. Indeed it is a long time since I saw so many misconceptions packed into so small a space.

Perhaps the first thing to clear up is that 'Militant' supporters are not responsible for the behaviour of the Communist Party, or any of the obscure ruins which litter the political landscape.

Secondly, it is all very well for comrade Roberts to stand on the sidelines and sneer at the millions of workers who continue to vote Labour. I hardly think that hurling abuse at them is going to convince them of the need for socialism. Socialism is not going to be built out of the wise heads of the SPGB but out of the mass movement of the working class.

Many workers vote Labour despite, rather than because of, the policies of the Labour leaders. They are voting for a party which their fathers and grandfathers built to defend the interests of the working class—they regard people who tell them to abstain in the same light as people who tell them to cross a picket line.

The slogan "Labour to power on a socialist programme" may be too subtle for comrade Roberts to understand, but it is a very important bridge between the way workers think now and the need to change society in order to defend and extend the living standards and conditions of the working class.

These are not new ideas

dreamed up by 'Militant' supporters. Marx wrote: "The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties...They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement...The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat." ('Communist Manifesto' p61)

Of course only a fool would apply every dot and comma of Marx's writings to the present situation, but I ask comrade Roberts—is his exclusive 'pure' socialism closer to the basic ideas of Marxism than the policy of involvement in the mass movement advocated by 'Militant'?

His comments on state capitalism and nationalisation would require a volume or two in reply and I don't intend to write them just now. However I have one question: if the Tories proposed to hive off profitable sections of the nationalised industries to private owners, would comrade Roberts support such a move or oppose it? If he would oppose it, while continuing to advocate workers' control and management of a planned economy, would it not be logical for him to defend the nationalised and planned economies of Russia and China as well?

Yours fraternally
Derek McMillan

A RIGHT TO MANAGE?

Dear Comrades

During a day of management studies at my school recently, we were subjected to films of excessive simplicity and a strong prejudice on the side of the bosses.

The bosses might make mistakes, but they could be set on the right path eventually. The workers, however, were consistently portrayed as naive, gormless, unintelligent, without conscience—quite obviously inferior.

In the group discussions following, I suggested that management (as a job rather than a class) should treat the producers as equals, as friends, as colleagues. I was told this would lead to a breakdown of efficiency (fri-

ends, to the capitalists, seem to be those one can take advantage of).

I suggested that the friendship produced would make the producers work harder, as most friends do for each other. I was politely informed that such 'tricks' would not work more than once.

Does this mean there must be a definite alienation between workers and management? To the capitalist, yes—just another reason why those 'nationalised industries' which maintain the old management structures are unlikely to promote true workers' democracy.

Yours fraternally
Owen Tudor
Kingston-upon-Thames
LPYS

'WE NEED ANDY BEVAN'

Dear Comrades

At a well-attended meeting of Cardiganshire Labour Party General Committee on 15th December the following resolution from Aberystwyth LPYS was passed unanimously.

"This Labour Party urges the NEC of the Labour Party to allow Andy Bevan, the National Youth Officer, to be put on field work in the coming election campaign. We believe that Andy could play a tremendous role in mobilising the youth vote behind Labour, particularly in marginal seats like our own where the votes of young people will be crucial."

Delegates to the meeting, which was held to consider nominations for Labour can-

didates in the European elections, said that it was ridiculous for someone of Andy's talents to remain 'cooped up' in Transport House during the next election, when he could be put to far more effective use campaigning in marginal seats like our own.

At present Cardiganshire is on loan to the Liberals but it's marginal. We intend to win it back for Labour and to do this we need the youth vote. The meeting was unanimous—we need Andy out in the field to help us win those votes.

Fraternally
Dave Subbacchi
Assistant Secretary
Aberystwyth Labour Party

'Freedom'—at a price

Dear Brothers and Sisters

We all know about the crisis in our education system, and of examples in which parents have to sponsor activities, or pay towards the cost of essential materials, but today I heard something which takes the biscuit.

School girls at the local girls' grammar school, as part of the festival activities, on their last day of term were allowed to wear their own choice of clothing.

For their freedom of choice,

however, they had to pay 5p.

What a system, when for the sake of preserving their dominance, schools have to resort to pre-Victorian methods such as these.

After all, even the worst capitalist does not fine his board of directors for not wearing pin stripe suits and flashy ties!

Yours fraternally
Peter Whittaker
Chairman, Bradford No 1
Branch, NUPE.

'Our task is not to prop up this rotten, bankrupt system'

Dear Comrades

David Rutt (Militant 5/1/79) raised several issues of fundamental importance to the labour movement and the programme of 'Militant'.

He agrees that capitalism is bankrupt but until socialism is achieved "we should look for ways of reforming the present system, hopefully with the same success as the post-war Atlee government."

The Atlee government did indeed introduce many major reforms. Today these reforms are in tatters! If reformism works, how do we explain the 1½ million unemployed, homelessness, the destruction of the NHS and the growing impoverishment of the working class?

Of course 'Militant' supporters, like all socialists fight tooth and nail at all times to ameliorate the conditions of

the working class, no matter how small the gain. But the reforms of the post-war years were granted only under pressure from the working class at a time when capitalism was booming. Capitalism is now in crisis and the workers are being made to pay.

Reforms become counter-reforms. Experience has confirmed what the Marxists have argued: guaranteed, meaningful reforms are no longer possible under capitalism.

Any limitations imposed on the power and wealth of the capitalist class will be circumvented so long as they control production, distribution and exchange. The demand for the take-over of the top 200 monopolies, banks and insurance companies under workers' control and management

on the basis of a planned economy is a central demand which strikes at the very heart of the matter—the domination of the economy (the top 200 control 83% of production) by a handful of unelected businessmen.

There may have been one or two exceptions but overall the Price Commission has been ineffective, as highlighted by 'Labour Weekly' recently. The large scale tax-avoidance by big business is further evidence of the impossibility of controlling private industry by legislation, no matter how stringent it might seem.

We welcome all progressive legislation and reforms but only constant vigilance by the labour movement and trade union strength turn such paper promises into reality.

David says small firms

usually pay low wages and cannot afford decent ones. This is usually the case, often accompanied by poor working conditions and less benefits.

Yes, small firms are going to the wall, not because of greedy workers but because they can't compete with the monopolies.

A fundamental law of the development of capitalism is the increasing concentration of capital and thus monopolisation. Small concerns are as much a check against the power of the monopolies as tin tacks to stop a tank!

In the face of mass unemployment the small firms employment subsidy is like trying to bale out the ocean with a spoon—5,000 jobs may have been saved but how many more have been lost? If capitalism, big or small, can't provide £70 as

a minimum living wage then it is not fit to continue and must be replaced by a system that can.

Our task is not to prop up and repair the rotten, bankrupt capitalist system but to explain the crisis, point who's responsibility it is and put forward an alternative.

If the Labour government conducted a campaign on these lines, using the facts, figures and arguments put forward in the 'Militant' every week, the impact would be enormous. Capitalism would be exposed. The mighty labour and trade union movement united and mobilised behind a clear socialist programme would be invincible.

If the LPYS and 'Militant' with its present meagre resources and small circulation can campaign on the

£70 minimum wage and 35-hour week and win as David says "widespread support for its programme" just think what the Labour government could achieve rallying behind it over 10 million trade unionists. It would be possible to "refute the misrepresentations of the Tory press" and turn "public opinion" against the capitalists once the truth became known. Ideas would become a material force, as Marx put it.

The 'Militant' will continue to play its part in the fight for a socialist programme and a leadership with the will to implement it.

Yours fraternally
Wayne Jones
Bristol South CLP

£66,196

MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENT

FIGHTING FUND - TARGET		
Area	Target	Proportion of target received
Eastern	4,400	3,272.11
Hants & IOW	2,100	2,608.88
Humber-side	2,200	1,956.02
Lancashire	1,500	748.93
London: North	7,700	7,554.06
London: South	3,800	4,166.26
Manchester & Dist	2,900	2,104.31
Merseyside & Dist	4,500	3,324.72
Midlands East	4,400	3,112.96
Midlands West	7,400	7,719.06
Northern	4,900	4,227.36
Scotland East	2,500	1,853.88
Scotland West	2,900	2,095.63
South East	2,300	2,748.28
South West	2,300	2,533.49
Thames Valley	1,700	1,657.14
Wales East	2,000	2,133.88
Wales West	2,300	2,600.20
Yorkshire	5,200	3,856.88
Others	3,000	5,922.88
Total	70,000	66,196.93



Drawing the New Year raffle. See page 4 for results.

The final Fighting Fund total for 1978, a magnificent £66,196.63 represents an enormous achievement for readers and supporters of 'Militant' in putting Marxism on the map in Britain and internationally. Full steam ahead for an even better year in 1979!

A last minute boost of £4,439.45 was made up as follows:

Yorkshire, with a final spurt of £405, made it to £3,856.88. Contributions ranged from the pennies collected in a jar in Leeds to the £101 'back tax' donated by a Rotherham supporter.

£35 was given by a trade unionist in Wakefield, £10 by S Bedford, £20 by a Bradford reader and £5 for a 'rendition of a 'Militant' song'! £39 was raised through socials, £66.85 from the national raffle and £14 collected with an excellent Christmas Appeal sheet.

West Wales lost out on the raffle but sent another £29.50 anyway to get £300 'over the

top'. Well done!

East Wales followed suit with £55.40 in donations including a 'Christmas fiver' from R and A Stein) taking them £134 'over the £2,000 target.

Thames Valley supporters should have sent a messenger up on the last day of the fighting fund as they did once before in order to reach their target figure! If they'd matched their draw money of £45.15 with the same amount in donations from the area, they would have made it... But they didn't!

South West supporters capped their success story by raising over £100 with New Year Draw tickets and sending another £62 (including £5 from LPYS member R Hartill and another £7 from NUF-LAT workers at Clarks, Bath).

South East readers pulled up sharp once they got £400 over the line, no 'doubt raring to go for the 1979 target! Just £2.50 got through from Littlehampton and £46.50 was added by draw

Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant proceeds.

Scotland was undoubtedly worst hit by snow storms but some valiant supporters still battled their way to the post box with Christmas (rather than Hogmanay!) 'fivers' (from V Wilce, P Gray, J Cameron and others) and to a Militant party in E Kilbride that made £30 for our funds. Proceeds from the raffle added up to £43 for **West Scotland** making a final total of £2,095 (over £800 from the winning line!).

£19.10 from the draw and £48.45 'phoned in' from Dundee (including £1 from LPYS member J Hannan, £1.26 from A Laird and £2 from G Hendry at the 'Clep') left **East Scotland** still in the back of the field with £1,853.88 raised in the year. Let's hope the thaw will mean a flood of contributions from North of the border to get both these areas off to a good start for 1979.

Supporters in the frozen North of England were also hampered by weather conditions from making the

fighting finish they had planned with parties and socials to get the £673 they still needed when the books closed. £72.50 came from national raffle sales, £30 from a party that did take place and £20 from a "Greek Evening". Wallsend LPYS branch has promised £10, Blyth YS sent another £5 and a number of individual donations included three £20s, two £10s (M Dodds ASB shop steward and R Tindle, Blyth LP member), £5 from B Hodge, £3.50 from S McConnell (CPSA), £2 from V Coils and £1 from P Chipperfield.

West Midlands supporters gave us the best run for the money, raising £1,364 in one week! One supporter's contribution of £500 and the £122.32 from the raffle got them nearly up to the £7,000 mark before they knew it! Every reader in the area seems to have realised the urgency of cash for the 'Militant'.

Donations included one of £100, £75 from K Birch, £5s from J Taylor, S Stones, P Wilson (POEU), S Strophair and P Dunne (Bakers Union), £4.20 from A Anderson, £2 from S Bryn-Jones and £1s from H Pulsford, Mrs Davis, B Clay (GMWU) and from 'Villa ticket, Boxing Day'! Socials, sponsored non-smoking and other fund-raising pushed the final total nearly £320 over the £7,400 target. Marvellous!

East Midlands struggled to get us another £116.50 in contributions and £37.90 for the raffle but still stayed in the rear of the field for 1978. A good example for 1979 is the amount paid for a copy of the 'Militant' by A Walsh of the UPW—50p! What better way to start the year than every reader paying 50p or even £1 for the first copy of the 'Militant' to have red in it again! (See announcement, front page).

It has been slow-going for **Merseyside** who have just begun to make up ground, with £234.34 this week plus £48.89 on the draw. £68 was donated by one reader and Garston MP Eddie Loyden donated a 'Festive Fiver'. So did B Curry and H Smith. M Smith gave £2.57, D Power £1.16 and R Walsh £1.20. A £25 draw win was handed straight over. Workers on the Liverpool Teaching Hospital site put in £6.30 and NGA members £7.56. If this form can be kept up, Merseyside won't be trailing nearly £1,200 behind target at the end of 1979!

Manchester have ended up £700 short, with just under £100 coming in, including two £20s, 'fivers' from bakers H

Hargreaves and K Albeson, and C Butcher, plus proceeds of selling a rifle(?). Better luck this year!

N London finished with less than £150 to go all told—national raffle money, first proceeds of London "Do", 'Lenin Draw', Southgate LPYS raffles, supper party, numerous donations (including those of R Allen, G Halle, J Whyte, A Senny, P Kenny (GMWU), C Cawley), and the emptying of L Taaffe's 'pennies jar'. £465 in a week is another standard to keep up!

South London have gone £366 past the flag. One reader gave £100 and another £44 of this week's £408. £95.60 was raised from the NY Draw.

Lancashire was just pennies short of half way in the end! R and A Bannister donated a £10 'prize' and another £38.70 came in. This amount each week would see them past the post in 1979.

Humber-side didn't pick up in time to get the last £244 but the donations from B Fleetwood, J Young, S Cunningham, M Moore, G Lewes and P Spooner were as welcome as ever. The total of £48.90 included £14.60 from NY Draw.

There was no stopping **Hampshire and Isle of Wight** supporters. After reaching their target of £2,100 in September, they've gone on to raise an extra £1,509—£73.46 of it last week, including £22.36 Draw, £10 + £1 from Havant LPYS, £5 from 'Paddy' ('New Year Gift'), £5 from B Morris (working Christmas Day for 'Militant') plus £1s from B James (Bournemouth E LP) and a 'Dorchester Reader'. Very many thanks for setting such an example!

NY Raffle sales helped **Eastern** along by £72.55 and other £162.71 came from jumble sales, socials, 'Christmas Dinner', book sales and numerous donations including £5 from D Bagge (FBU), but nearly £1,400 in a week to make the target was beyond their powers at this stage of the race against time.

For 1979, a good start, energy and stamina will see every area over their proportion of the £85,000 before the year's out!

Many thanks to everyone who has helped build the finances of the 'Militant' in 1979—especially those who have given such a boost this week. They even included a reader in Australia who sent £7.

Follow the example of her target 'area' ('Others') and get **double** next year's target for a better 'Militant' and a stronger weapon in the fight for socialism!

ADS

BIRMINGHAM Marxist Discussion Group. Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at F3, 33 South Road, Hockley. 7.30 pm. For more information contact S Singh 021-581 1902

Liverpool LPYS Schools Meeting
Save our Comprehensives!
7.30pm Wednesday 17 January
AUEW Hall, 48 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 3.
Speaker: Mike Jewell NUSS

ST. HELENS LPYS Public Meeting. 'Fight Low Pay'. Speakers: Steve Higham (NW Regional Committee LPYS) and Colin Barnett (NUPE). St. Helens Town Hall, St. Helens, Merseyside. Tuesday January 16th 8pm. All Welcome. Plenty of time for discussion.

Liverpool Dock Discussion Group
Tony Saunois (LPYS rep. Labour Party NEC). The fight against racism. Thursday 18th January 12.00—1.00 pm. PSNC Berth, Time Keeper's Office, East Sandon Dock Gate.

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PRINT WORKERS BACK NUJ

BRISTOL MANAGEMENT ATTACK NGA SUPPORT

Last Friday over 70 NGA members were sacked by the management of the Bristol 'Evening Post'.

NGA and NUJ chapel officers and pickets spoke to Wayne Jones [Bristol South Labour Party] and Christine Battey [Bristol South LPYS]



Striking NUJ members in Preston, with copies of the paper they are producing during the strike

The Post's NGA chapel have been blacking copy written by IOJ and non-union scabs for the duration of the NUI strike. The Evening Post bosses threatened to sack the composing room members unless they returned to normal working.

They were not prepared to lift their action and once again pledged their support for the NUJ. They were duly locked out at 12 noon on the 5th January.

As the men filed out to join the pickets huddled around the brazier, they were met with cheers. As the NGA Father of Chapel said, it was a question of basic trade unionism as far as they were concerned.

This action will add tremendously to the unity, already cemented in this dispute by the various unions working on the Evening Post. Such unity is vital in the winning of any strike. The Post has not appeared since

the New Year, and these latest developments seem to be the action of a panic-stricken management. The strike remains solid and the pickets are determined to battle on until they win their claim. As their placard says, 'Journalists' pay is bad news.'

On Friday night, in icy weather, NUJ strikers organised a mass picket outside the Bristol United Press building to prevent the weekend edition of the 'Western Daily Press' being distributed. They were supported by NGA members and a contingent of six LPYS members.

Police

Our object was to prevent newspaper vans from entering the building to collect emergency issues of the paper. The Father of Chapel tried to turn away van drivers, while pickets formed a line in front

of the gate.

Even while these discussions were going on, the police attempted to clear the gateway by pushing pickets aside and forcibly ejecting anyone who tried to stand their ground.

By 2.30 am there were as many police as pickets—far too many to be ensuring 'law and order'. One picket remarked that he'd never believed 'all this stuff about the left and the right' until tonight.

Not one newspaper van got through, and when management realised that it was impossible to issue the paper, they sent the print workers home in a 'goodwill' gesture. This meant a double victory, against both police and management.

STOP PRESS: At a further mass picket on Sunday night, four NUJ members were arrested.

BIRMINGHAM STRIKERS STAND FIRM

By Jeremy Birch

The NUJ strikers at the 'Birmingham Post and Mail' are determined that the Newspaper Society will have to make a worthwhile offer before they return to work.

This year, as last, management hid behind the wage restraint policy—"We'd like to give more but the government won't let us." But when Ford's had well and truly broken the 5%, and then parliament voted out sanctions, the Newspaper Society still didn't offer any more.

Yet they have now offered the anti-strike IOJ 13%, and the Scottish Newspaper Society conceded 15% without anyone having to come out. Certainly none of the strikers would go back for any less than that.

Originally only 13 members of the Post and Mail chapel voted to strike, and there were just 19 first-day strikers. But now over 70 are out. Unfortunately 80 NUJ members are still crossing the picket line, and with the additional help of IOJ members and non-unionists the two papers are still coming out. There are only 250 NUJ scabs up and down the country, but half of them are from just two firms, in Birmingham and Southampton.

What is particularly unpleasant is the sight of two of the five Post and Mail chapel committee members, including the FOC, crossing the picket line daily, along with the NEC member for the Midlands area.

The strikers are adamant that disciplinary measures must be taken against those who have defied the union and sided with management. The NEC member has since resigned, but the Birmingham branch of the NUJ had already called a special meeting where it was overwhelmingly agreed to rescind his nomination for re-election this year. The branch then nominated one of those on strike at the Post to replace

him. With no possibility of preventing publication in Birmingham, a token picket has been maintained, but the strikers have given assistance at other picket lines. Last

week in Leamington 70 NUJ members persuaded the printers not to cross during the whole of what was the printing day for three weekly papers as well as one evening paper.

Whatever the result of the first national journalists' dispute, the members have certainly learnt a lot about trade unionism. The NUJ will undoubtedly begin to change, with a more militant approach locally and nationally, after this dispute.

BLACK COOPLAND'S BAKERY

Nine delivery drivers at Cooplands' Bakery, Scarborough have spent nine weeks on the picket line, braving snow storms and freezing conditions.

When the bakers' strike began, Coopland's, as usual, remained at work. The firm decided once again to jump on the bandwagon and ordered increased bread production. No matter how much was produced and delivered the ambitious management never seemed to be satisfied.

The delivery drivers have been trying to win recognition of the T&GWU for a year. Realising that they were being used as strike-breakers and not wanting to undermine the bakers' struggle, they refused to take out more than normal daily deliveries.

In the past Coopland would only recognise the Master Bakers' Association. But rather than recognise the T&GWU they permitted the bakers' union, the BF&AWU, to organise, and declared this

an 'inter-union dispute'.

When the drivers' shop steward approached management, he and two others were sacked. Six others came out in protest, and they are still out in the cold. Bakery workers are crossing the picket line, but local trade union branches have held collections, mostly arranged by 'Militant' supporters, showing recognition of this shining example of trade unionism.

Outside help is urgently needed. Black all Danish and Irish bacon and fresh meat arriving for Cooplands, Scarborough, in containers at the docks. Black all flour; stop all deliveries.

Pickets needed daily, 5.30 am until 8.00 pm. Send messages of support and donations to Walt Hardaker, 2 Elmville Avenue, Scarborough.

Pickets talked to Bob Young and Mike Cavers [Scarborough Labour Party]

working
in the
union

BY BILL
CHARD
[T&GWU]

Bill Chard, T&GWU and Morley and Batley Labour Party, continues his account of his early trade union experiences, with a description of the fight for effective union organisation in a haulage company.

If you want to take up any of the points he raises, or discuss the issues facing you in your union, write to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

I have been involved in many other skirmishes over the past few years, including a day's strike at a building site over the sacking of a militant who had a particularly nasty dispute with an equally nasty foreman.

The situation was resolved, with my friend starting work the next day with no loss of pay. We simply stated that if our fellow worker was to be sacked, then so should the foreman. There was no organised union on the site but we stuck together and our man was taken

back.

The action which tested my resolve came about when I worked at a haulage company as a loader. After about three months at this firm, the shop steward left the position vacant.

Under his leadership, the union had been non-effective. Union meetings were held in the works' canteen—when the manager decided to implement something new. He

would call the steward to his office, inform him of the changes to be made and dispatch him to talk the men into accepting it.

If the men put up any opposition the manager would enter the meeting and single out would-be dissenters. Without the backing of the steward the opposition would usually crumble.

Against this background I stood for the steward's position. Nobody knew what their hourly rates of pay were and there were all sorts of questions to be answered; the conditions of employment were extremely vague—everything referred to the 'master document'. I determined to obtain a copy of this, and after the first of many explosive arguments with the manager, I eventually received it.

The main issue of discontent was the hours: officially 8.00 am-6.30 pm. The shop floor was under the impression that they had a 'job and finish' agreement which allowed them to go home when all the wagons were unloaded. Apparently, this had been the case, but at the last pay review the shop steward had signed this right away. Also we discovered that there was no hourly rate as such, just a weekly one, and a flat rate was paid for overtime. The men were completely in the dark about all this.

I brought in a union officer and we had a meeting with management. But I was advised

that as all the agreements had been signed by the steward and the men informed (untrue), we could change nothing officially until the next pay rounds.

We held regular meetings off the premises, supplemented by internal ones if we needed speedy decisions. We progressed, changing minor irregularities.

One day we were ordered to unload a wagon that had gone out for a second load. We had worked fast to clear the depot and were on the point of leaving when this van returned, driven by a particularly pro-management driver.

I told the foreman that we had fulfilled our part of the bargain and emptied all the wagons—this one would have to wait till tomorrow. I was suspended.

The next day the whole workforce came out on strike (with the exception of about four scabs). We picketed outside and by late afternoon I was called in and asked whether, if I was suspended on full pay until negotiations could take place, the men would return to work.

I was off for a fortnight and returned with a warning, but it was seen as a victory by the men. They knew that in the past, anyone daring to challenge management in this way would have been sacked. All I received was a fortnight's holiday with pay.

BACK THE LORRY DRIVERS

CLAIM

OTHER WORKERS WILL BENEFIT

A top class, grade 1 driver has a basic rate of £53.35 per week. Forced to work 10 hours compulsory overtime per week, the average married man with two children, takes home about £60 per week.

Jimmy Gouldborne, Chairman of the Merseyside 6/541 Commercial Services branch, explained to Terry Harrison his members' determination to see their dispute through to a victorious conclusion.

He outlined the claim, explaining that Merseyside negotiates with the local hauliers, but the actual claim was decided by a national delegate conference. It was based on what the national delegates went for in 1977. "Because of the government guidelines, which we honoured, reluctantly I must say, last year, we made the same application this year.

"The national decision was taken at what the hierarchy of the union would term an 'unofficial' meeting, which was held in Liverpool on 16th December. All delegates from the 11 regions in the UK attended the meeting.

"There was no way anyone would look at a watering down of the application. We decided to take industrial action.

"Three days after that there was an 'official' conference, again attended by delegates and chaired by Bro Jack Ashwell, the national secretary. Once again we made it quite clear that the application would stand."

The conference decided to put the claim to the membership in every region. Jimmy expressed his confidence that the strike would be made official. "Our members are 100% in their backing of the dispute. St Helens and Widnes, who are part of the

Merseyside strike committee, are also 100% behind us.

"There are two unions in Manchester, the URTU and the T&GWU. The T&GWU membership are out. The URTU—some are out, some aren't." The strike committee have been in constant touch with the dock stewards, and also Ford and Standard Triumph, whose plants will be affected by the dispute.

"We unanimously decided we would supply all essential services such as hospitals, schools and OAPs etc. Hazardous goods, that are a danger to the public, we will move. The question of perishable food supplies is one that we view, dependent on what the urgency of the situation is."

Pickets had been established in some areas. Their main purpose is to show the flag—to establish they are on strike.

"We've felt, as an industry, that we've been looked at as the backwood boys. We're well behind what the normal factory worker gets for the basic working week—it has been quoted to me, some £20 behind.

"If we are successful, and no doubt we will be, it can do nothing but good for the local authority workers."

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- ★ Improvements in holidays and insurance cover
- ★ A review of the sickness and industrial injury scheme



Photo: Julian McKittrick/Militant

TILBURY DOCKS

No private haulage lorries are entering Tilbury docks. Drivers are manning a 24-hour picket on both gates, in support of their claim.

Dockers are supporting the action by refusing to load non-union lorries. In what pickets described as the first national action in 47 years, morale, they said, was very good. Newspaper reports are "propaganda to put the

public against us".

As far as shop stewards and local officials are concerned, the strike is official, even though national official backing had not been declared. The men are prepared to stay out "as long as necessary" to get a satisfactory offer and settlement.

J Potts [T&GWU] at No 2 gate spoke to Roger Gow [T&GWU]

ENDING COWBOY CONDITIONS

This strike reflects a feeling throughout the industry that our pay is low and our working conditions are bad and that we will not improve either unless we do it ourselves by taking nation-wide action.

It is quite usual for lorry drivers to have to start work at such anti-social times as 2 and 3am and then to work a 12½-hour 'spreadover'. If we have to spend nights away from home, as many drivers have to four or five nights a week, we only receive the totally inadequate sum of £6.50 per night with which to get a bed and buy meals.

As well as driving vehicles of 32 tons which are up to 49ft long and over 8 feet wide and of course being responsible for the security of loads on flat trailers, many driving jobs still involve 'handballing' 20 ton loads.

One lesson that we lorry drivers have to learn is that to be effective any industrial action that we take must be nation-wide. It is quite usual for a driver to be in charge of a lorry and trailer that is worth upward of £30,000 without the load.

Because this capital equipment obviously moves about to where the work is, any local industrial action that we take tends to be ineffective. With some areas working and others on strike, it is inevitable that drivers from outside will do the work of strikers, quite often without realising what is happening.

Another lesson that we must learn is that drivers who work for firms with reasonable working conditions and wages have a vested interest in ensuring that firms with inferior wages and conditions are levelled up to.

Because of the nature of our industry, except where specialised tanks and loading equipment are used, any firm can do another firm's work. So there is an obvious tendency for the firms with the lowest wages to get the best contracts and the most

work. Any group of drivers who negotiate good wages with one firm are under constant threat of redundancy from firms undercutting the job.

Cowboy firms who break the law, especially with regard to maximum permitted hours of work, are a threat to other drivers. Anyone in the haulage industry knows of firms whose drivers work as many as 20 hours a day. Although such firms are the exception there is always pressure from an employer to work an extra hour or so each day so that a vehicle and driver can do say, five instead of four loads in a week.

A year ago I was working for a firm in Stoke-on-Trent, who had a system where a driver started his working week on Thursday midnight. Their traffic office tried to get you hundreds of miles from home when you had almost used up your maximum permitted weekly working hours, so drivers used to drive home over the hours (60 then, now reduced to 57½).

They would then refuse to pay us for the hours that we could not book, so we used to do several hours of 'free' work for them in order to get home for our rest day.

Although this strike has only just begun, it is already apparent that we lorry drivers as organised trade unionists have more power than either we or people outside the industry ever imagined. If we did realise the potential power that we have, we did not think it possible to organise on this scale.

Whatever happens as a result of this strike one lesson is already clear: as organised workers within our trade unions we can achieve the wages and working conditions that we think adequate and not have to be content with what the employers care to 'give' us.

Tim Webb

(10/28A branch, T&GWU North West Norfolk CLP)

THE TANKER DRIVERS FIGHT

As a tanker driver delivering oils and spirits the reasonable weather has reinforced my and my brother workers' resolve to achieve a decent settlement from the negotiating rounds going on at the moment with the mighty oil companies.

Snow and ice when you're perched at the business end of 6,000 gallons of petrol contained in a road tanker makes you think very hard about your job, pay and conditions.

£58 flat is not a lot for what we do. The various supplements we have received over the years of union and government "social contract"

brings us up to £75 per week. All overtime and shift premiums are calculated on the £58 of course.

The first company offer—rejected out of hand—sought to "consolidate" the supplements, giving us a basic wage of £75 plus a £3 per week supplement with an increase in subsistence (night out allowance) and meal allowances. However, this was subject to an increase in productivity of 6%—i.e. 25-30 minutes per day, reduction in the number of works' committee members, the rescinding of various local agreements and an increase in depot duties at present undertaken by outside contractors, such as office cleaning,

vehicle cleaning etc.

The new offer, promptly made when an overtime ban was put into effect, withdrew the more cynical demands of the bosses including the increase in productivity and increased the wage offer to £78 flat per week.

My branch at Sunderland decisively rejected this although we do not know at the time of writing the results of talks being held today (Thursday) and whether other depots will or will not accept.

The original claim was for £90 and a 35-hour week. This is the claim that has been going in for the past four years and Sunderland men feel it is time action was taken to achieve our demands.

It appears, unfortunately, that the shorter working week was given up almost before talks were seriously underway. The figure of £130 bandied about in the press and TV comes about when men are involved in shift work and regular overtime working.

There is no doubt that a considerable number of jobs could be found if a reduction in the working week and a curtailment of regular overtime working were seriously fought for by the national negotiating committee. Nowhere would this be more appreciated than Sunderland, where unemployment matches that of the North of Ireland.

Tachographs—a weapon against cowboy firms? Article, page 7

Although the national negotiating committee have recommended an acceptance of the latest deal, they will no doubt recognise the groundswell of unrest amongst the rank and file in this closed shop industry. Strike action cannot be ruled out even though there has never been a serious strike in the oil industry and the men are aware that the troops would be brought in to "maintain essential supplies" as they did in the North of Ireland a short time ago.

The fund of credit the working class has extended to the Labour government is drying up. Like thousands of other workers we are taking defensive steps caused by the

misguided "moderates" in the Labour government who are trying to bail out the bosses' system, at our expense.

It seems that the Cabinet and the PM are hell-bent on returning Thatcher to power. If they want to avoid that dreadful prospect the government must begin to reverse the measures they have carried out at the bosses' behest and institute the socialist ideas as put forward by the 'Militant'.

Bob Stothard
(Petrofine UK)

Sunderland Installation
T&GWU 8/162

Militant

16 MILITANT 12 December 1979

RAIL STRIKE- WIPE OUT LOW PAY



Photo: Chris Davies/Report

Rail workers have had enough after years of low pay, long hours and falling living standards. They are preparing for change!

"Change," declared Sir Peter Parker, the Chairman of the British Rail Board, in a recent interview, is what is demanded for 1979.

After almost a year of talks, British Rail still refuse to meet the ASLEF claim for an increase in the basic pay of all locomen in recognition of increased productivity, stress and strain.

During further talks this week all British Rail management have offered is a miserable 6 or 7% in the form of a bonus payment, linked to higher productivity.

We want payment for what we have already given, not what they want us to give. The higher productivity would mean an even further cut in numbers of Driver's Assistants, an increase in single-

By Martin Elvin
(Stratford ASLEF)

manned turns, and an attack on previous hard-won agreements.

Already Southern Region members have brought the region to a virtual standstill through 24-hour strikes. The ASLEF Executive Committee know very well that no section of members will accept the latest vicious management proposals. A national dispute is a virtual certainty in the next few days.

Our claim is a just one. But there is also massive unrest among railway workers in NUR and TSSA at the present shocking low pay—railmen are on a £38.70 basic.

The last few years of wage restraint have eroded all

rail workers' pay and conditions. While the ASLEF Executive Committee have stated that our claim should be dealt with in isolation, the NUR leadership have already publicly condemned the stand we have made.

Such a situation can only lead to division among railway workers. Many NUR members have expressed their support for locomen. As one railman at Waterloo said, "these men are driving trains of up to 800 people in all weathers; they deserve more than the present £62 basic pay." A woman ticket collector added "It isn't right, the drivers going it alone. All railway workers should be involved in this fight."

The NUR leadership have stated that any rise for locomen must apply to all grades. Fair enough. Now they must mobilise the undoubted support that they have among the mass ranks of low paid workers in a joint fight. That is the only real way to deal with the arrogant hard-line attitude of BR management.

There has been no definite statement from the ASLEF Executive Committee on the form of action planned. In the past all sorts of guerrilla action has been tried.

Many members now ques-

tion the effectiveness of work-to-rules. Regional stoppages have failed to fully involve the members or give a real indication of trade union strength.

One-day national stoppages are very disruptive, for as long as they last. But there is a danger that they will undermine a determined campaign by confusing and wearing out the members, simply allowing us to 'let off steam'.

Railways are today a key sector in a modern economy. Much of the traffic moved by rail is heavy bulk goods, tailored for rail haulage.

The key to winning a strike now is its effect on the rest of the economy. Bulk supplies for steel, mining, power generation, the car factories and much of the rest of British industry depend on rail.

All-out national action would soon make its effect felt. Our hand can only be strengthened by the lorry drivers' strike. We need to follow their example.

It is essential that the ASLEF Executive give a clear direction to the members, making every effort to win the support of all rail workers. Ensure that this campaign marks the beginning of a co-ordinated fight to abolish low pay on the railways.

DRIVERS STRIKE

Continued from page 1

the employers offered a mere 5%.

The Road Haulage drivers called a meeting in Liverpool in December. Attended by delegates from every region, the meeting pledged support for action.

The T&GWU called for an official conference to be held in London in December. Again, delegates from all over the country explained the situation. The Scottish drivers announced that they had already decided on strike action, and would go it alone if the rest of the country didn't support them.

This was to be unnecessary. Support from other areas was spontaneous.

The following resolution was formulated: "This conference, following detailed discussion, advises that unless the employers are prepared to implement the conference policy decision from the appropriate date, this conference recommends that mass meetings of the membership covered by the appropriate negotiating committees, be held on or before 2nd January 1979 and recommend any industrial action be held from 3rd January 1979."

In Birmingham, however, some T&GWU officials tried to postpone meeting until 5th January. Dennis Mills convened a meeting of the 32-strong 5/35 Co-ordinating committee for New Year's Eve, and they decided to recommend to the members that conference decisions be acted upon.

Shop stewards in the area met on 3rd January. Many felt that action should be taken by that date, and in a large number of container bases work ceased immediately.

On the 3rd the members at a mass meeting supported the committee's recommendation. The response to the strike call was overwhelming. The only drivers not on strike were those who worked for firms who had agreed to the wage claim and a small number of scabs.

The effect on industry in Birmingham is devastating. Fort Dunlop is strongly picketed and some British Leyland factories are coming to a stop because of lack of parts. Coal and food supplies are also affected.

Dennis Mills is confident that the strike would get a settlement. As a demonstration of the fact that the drivers are not the heartless, greedy and selfish beasts that the mass media paints them as, they have given special dispensation to hospitals, old peoples' and childrens' homes for supplies of food and coal.

In the country as a whole, the strike has been outstandingly successful. In Southampton not a single container has moved for 48 hours (7 January). The country could still be at a standstill in a matter of days.

Dennis said that in his many years of experience as a trade unionist, this was the biggest show of solidarity amongst lorry drivers ever.

END THIS SCANDAL

Continued from page 1

agreed to take action in support of the union's claim for a **£60 minimum wage for a 35-hour week.**

"For most workers the offer would only be worth about £2.06—which after tax, superannuation, etc. would mean only about £1.20 in the hand.

"Then in April the stamp is going up, and rents are going up by 60p

a week, so even that much would disappear straight away.

"For part-time workers, say those working about 20 hours, the 5 per cent offer would mean only half that amount—about 60p a week!

"We have already started preparing for the action. We will take out the most important sectors, using the least number of strikers that is necessary to make it effective. Our shop stewards have been having meetings to discuss which departments are most appropriate.

"There is bound to be

a lot of bitterness and we expect the press to be against us—they are already having a go on the TV and in the press."

The worst off in the health service at the moment are those with families, like Nigel. There is a hairdresser in the hospital in his 50s. Almost incredibly, he takes home £32 a week, only £1 a week more than his 17-year-old daughter!

Porters, telephonists and others have to work regular overtime to make ends meet. Many regularly work a 7-day week.

Even then, the wages are not big. A telephon-

ist, for example, can work 7 days, and with all extras—shift allowance, rota allowance, bonus and long service supplement—still only takes home £59—and have to keep a family on it!

These facts are a burning scandal.

The hospital ancillary workers, and the thousands of low-paid workers throughout the public sector, deserve the full support of every trade unionist and every Labour Party member in their entirely justified and long overdue struggle for a living wage and a shorter working week.

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