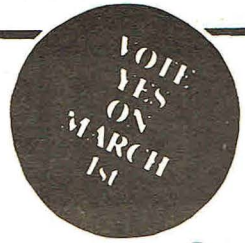


# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH ISSUE 441 2 February 1979 15p

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● NEXT WEEK: 'Militant' will feature a special article by Ted Grant on 'The Iranian Revolution'

## TORY WAR ON UNIONS

### TUC MUST DEFEND PICKETING RIGHTS...

A wave of angry protest has swept the labour movement following Justice Ackner's "temporary injunction" against a lorry driver picket.

After weeks of capitalist media-inspired hysteria against pickets, the Tory judges are attempting to intimidate and restrict workers involved in strike action.

By Eileen Short

'How dare workers demand a living wage', the bosses are squealing. They are preparing all the vicious tools of naked class warfare at their disposal, to defend their profits.

The chairman of United Biscuits, Sir Hector Laing, started the court action. He is industrial advisor to none other than Maggie Thatcher.

Tory shadow-minister Prior, a so-called 'dove' when it comes to dealing with the unions, is also on United Biscuit's board. The company has already contributed £20,000 to

Tory front-organisations.

The campaign against picketing has, unfortunately, been fuelled by Jim Callaghan's disgraceful statement in Parliament, that he would not hesitate to cross picket lines.

This green light to scabs, coming from a Labour prime minister, has provoked widespread revulsion and anger amongst trade unionists and Labour Party members. The comments of lorry drivers and other workers [see p4, 15] echo this.

Picketing is a legitimate trade union tactic, used by workers since the begin-



"THERE IS NOTHING TO STOP ANY CITIZEN CROSSING A PICKET LINE IF HE BELIEVED IT RIGHT TO DO SO, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO DO SO MYSELF" James Callaghan, House of Commons, January 23rd

ning of trade unionism in Britain. "An injury to one is an injury to all" is a proud trade union principle.

Workers in dispute have never hesitated to seek support from their fellow

trade unionists by peaceful picketing.

The lying capitalist press and TV have pictured the lorry drivers' pickets as 'violent' and 'marauders'.

Continued on back page

## IRAN WORKERS BATTLE FOR THE STREETS

Barricades on the streets of Tehran. Troops deserting, tearing off their uniforms and handing over their weapons to the youth. Workers taking over Tehran's main hospital and posting an armed guard around it.

This was Iran this week as a revolutionary explosion moved against the Bakhtiar government—the Shah's state without the Shah. Desperately the generals sent in their troops last Sunday to quell the explosion.

Hundreds were killed and wounded but when the smoke cleared it was the workers who controlled the streets.

By Jim Chrystie

Unarmed Iranian youth have risked death to face troops armed with automatic rifles and sub-machine guns. Now after the latest massacre they are calling for arms. Groups have attacked individual soldiers and

taken their weapons.

Soldiers have mutinied as they recognise the power of the masses. The generals are scared to send conscript troops on to the streets of Tehran.

The workers have already defeated the Shah—now they are struggling to overthrow his nominee. In Sunday's demonstration they marched against Western imperialism (USA), Communism (USSR), foreign interference and For an Islamic Republic. This is a search for revolutionary change.

Rightly the Iranian masses mistrust the Rus-

sian bureaucracy. Struggling to overthrow one dictatorship, they do not want to saddle themselves with another totalitarian regime, despite the advantages of a planned economy. This antagonism to "Communism" is really against Stalinism. It is on the Marxist road of the creation of a revolutionary workers' democracy that all the oppression of the Iranian people can be ended.

An Islamic Republic is full of contradictions. Bakhtiar will fall. But a Khomeini government will not end the revolution—that will continue as the Iranian workers and peasantry fight to rid their land of all exploitation.

### Dracula put in the shade!



Thatcher has been hailed by the capitalist press for her "brilliant" attacks on the unions.

Their opinion polls, which invariably get it wrong, show her ahead of Labour.

But perhaps a more accurate poll is the one taken recently of visitors—probably

mostly workers—to Madame Tussaud's waxworks.

The 'Evening Standard' (25th January) reported that the "Iron Maiden is placed third behind Adolf Hitler and Field Marshal Amin in the Hate and Fear category." She pushed Dracula into fourth place.

# Militant

## The gulf between the classes

In 1936 in his classic book 'Whither France', Leon Trotsky singled out "a quite banal routine episode" which he said "provides the key to French politics as a whole."

A young worker awaiting a serious operation had taken the liberty to read 'L'Humanité', the daily paper of the French Communist Party. The hospital delivered an ultimatum to

the worker and four others who shared his sympathies: either they must renounce receiving the undesirable publication or they would be thrown out into the street.

This incident reflected the class polarisation of French society at that time. It also demonstrated the sheer viciousness of the French capitalists when they felt threatened. The workers courageously refused to accept the ultimatum and

therefore: "Five sick men were ejected from the hospital."

In the past the British capitalists treated such incidents contemptuously as the unfortunate habits of barbaric "foreigners". But the last week has shown that they have completely adopted these same methods.

Thus the capitalist press have gloated over the actions of consultant surgeon Mr Patrick Chesterman, based at a Reading hospital. When patients turned up for treatment he demanded to know if they were trade unionists. If they answered "yes" he then stated that: "I am not seeing trade unionists today," and they were refused treatment. Non-unionists were given the benefit of his "expertise".

One who was subjected to this treatment was a Post Office worker with an artificial hip. He was refused help from this "angel of mercy" despite the considerable pain he was in. His union, the Union of Post

Office Workers, is considering legal action over the matter.

At the same time the members of COHSE who work at the same hospital as Chesterman, have indignantly demanded that the Area Health Authority transfer him to another hospital.

### Blackmailing tactics

The press, while making mild "tut tut" noises to Chesterman, have in effect equated his actions with the "heartless" strikes of health workers. There is no comparison. Firstly health workers would never have contemplated industrial action if their wages were the same as those of Chesterman. Secondly, despite the threats of some ambulance-men, these workers have provided emergency cover for all, irrespective of whether they were union

members or not.

Compare the actions of Chesterman to those of the ambulance-men who on the way to the 22nd January demonstration stopped to help out in road accidents. No health worker would consciously leave somebody in pain to their fate.

Chesterman's stand has been portrayed as an example of the protests of the indignant middle class "silent majority" who want to "hit back at all those strikers". But how many of the millions who have read his diatribes in the gutter press or heard them on the radio know that he is a former chairman of the Conservative Medical Society?

No doubt he would share the views of the Tory hierarchy who would like to see the wrecking of the National Health Service with us all paying through the nose so that the "medical professions"—not the low-paid nurses, porters, junior doctors etc.—can

continue to grow fat.

The health service unions, as has been shown, will not stand for the blackmailing tactics of the likes of Chesterman.

But the whole labour movement should recognise the significance of even seemingly trivial events like this. It is a symptom of the gulf which has developed between the classes in Britain.

The demand for a living wage is seen as treachery by the capitalists. Their system can no longer give lasting concessions in the form of increased living standards. On the contrary they want to undermine present standards. If it means that the old and infirm are hit, so be it.

Therefore while fighting for increases in wages and improved conditions these can only be maintained and improved through the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies, under workers' control and management, with compensation on the basis of proven need.

## TYNE AND WEAR- THE POWER OF THE PICKET LINE

After the first day of action involving 60,000 public service workers in the North East, the support for the campaign continues to grow.

Many Area Hospital Authorities are on 'emergencies only', with NUPE and COHSE workers exercising a ban on all non-emergency work and overtime.

On the second day of the emergency service, management at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead, blatantly ignored the scheme that they had agreed to themselves.

Many workers in the hospital were not only being asked to do non-emergency work, but were doing far more than in a normal working day.

As a result, the telephonists and the central stores came out on strike altogether and within 24 hours management were back around the negotiating table agreeing to the union's detailed scheme of emergency coverage. This could be repeated many times in other areas.

In the local authority sector the campaign is beginning to bite even harder. Every refuse incinerator plant in Tyne and Wear is now closed and the

pite the rantings and ravings of the press.

A picket approaches a lorry coming into Sunderland Civic Centre, for example: "This is an official NUPE picket line and we are requesting that you do not break it." Nine times out of ten that is enough and it's all smiles as the lorry turns around and goes away.

No argument, no hassles; the trade unions are an authority among unionised workers. During the one-day telephonists'/stores strike at the QE in Gateshead one lorry had come from London—300 miles—for one drop. There was no argument at the picket line—he turned back as soon as he saw the position.

The press and the TV are giving enormous prominence to "public" opinion but the solidarity of the picket line is the best answer to the anti-union media.

The statement of Callaghan in the House of Commons that amounted to an invitation to scabs to cross the picket lines has been a regular topic of conversation among the public authority workers.

Some workers are drawing the right conclusions, namely that it is necessary to get into the Labour Party to fight such rotten 'leadership', but unfortunately for some workers it only seems to reinforce the likelihood of abstentions in the coming General Election.

Callaghan is doing nothing to help Labour win an election with such statements—the anti-union vote will go to the Tories in any case, but the core of Labour's trade union support is being kicked in the teeth.

By John Pickard

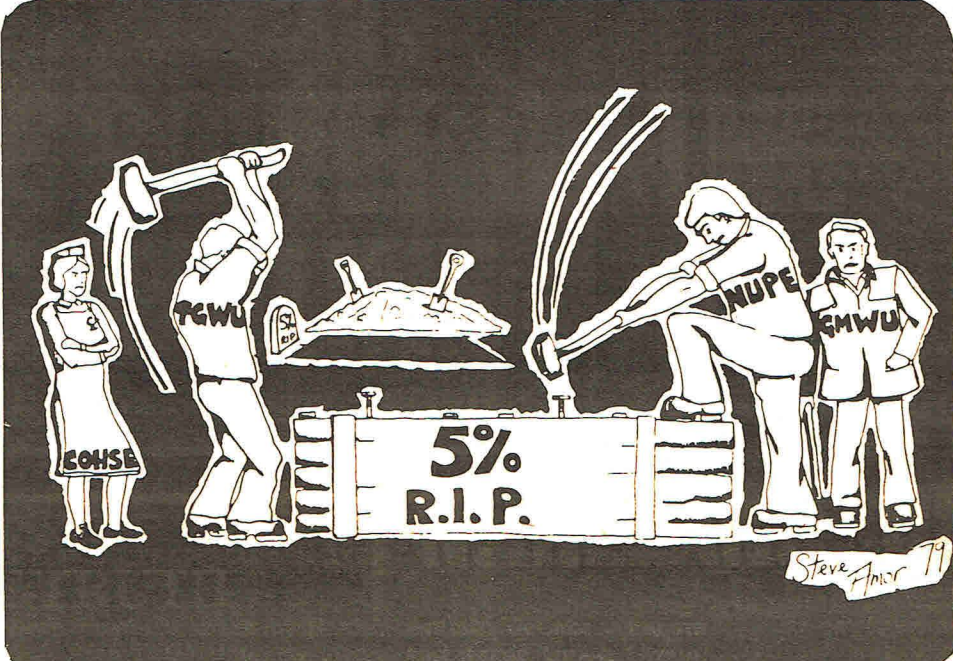
councils will be unable to collect refuse. In most areas now council workmen have been distributing polythene bags.

In many areas school caretakers are on strike so that the rest of the staff have been sent home without losing pay. Over 60 schools are closed in Sunderland, and over 90 in Newcastle.

The committee co-ordinating the work of the four main unions involved have decided to step up the campaign this week by closing down one whole district council workforce for a day. There is next to no gritting of roads at the moment.

The local press, like the national papers, are blazing away against the unions and it is only a matter of time before they are inciting physical abuse of pickets and union members.

One aspect of the strike is the enormous authority of the trade union movement des-



## 'They can't mess us about'

By Peter Doyle (NUPE)

I had a call from a shop steward today after a request from management asking us to open a path to the Middleton and Teesdale area which had been cut off by snow for two to three days. The management had claimed that a woman was seriously ill and he wanted advice on the best way to react. I told him to tell the management to ring me at the union office. When they rang back we gave emergency dispensation but only on strict conditions.

We insisted that a police

car drive behind the snow blower with its light flashing and siren blaring so that our men would know this was an emergency. They had to give us the address of the woman and agree to allow the shop steward to travel on the blower. We then insisted that the blower drive straight to her door where the steward would get out and check that it was a genuine emergency. If the union had been tricked we warned the management that the blower would travel back on the verge of the road, blowing the snow back onto the road, and all emergency cover would be lifted from then on. They are finding out that they can't mess us about.

## 'THEY'RE WELCOME TO TRY IT'

By Bob Faulkes (Hackney Central CLP)

Following on the 22nd January strike and demonstration the council workers in Hackney have stayed out on strike.

The desperate situation

not too bad, and because our standard of pay was much higher than it is now. We are becoming much more militant now, because of the wage restraint our pay has dropped far behind other workers.

Bill Simott (NUPE shop steward, Keele) spoke to Steve Martin (Keele University Labour Club)

back on a rota basis, in order to bring as much pressure as we can bear. The Labour council are behind us."

John reported all main council buildings were being picketed along with council depots etc.

At Hackney's council meeting on the 24th, all the councillors were lobbied before they entered the Town Hall asking if they were going to openly support the council workers' claim. With a few exceptions, most said they were in support.

Full backing from the labour movement must be mobilised to support the council workers' just claim.

## MUCH MORE MILITANT NOW

NUPE members at Keele university decided by 250 members against 8 to join the national one-day strike on 22nd January. The offer we received from the University, only 5%, is ridiculous. It would mean only a few pence for the majority of our

members who are part-time workers.

We picketed both gates of the University from 6.30 am until 6 pm. The Labour Club and also some AUT (Association of University Teachers) members' wives assisted us on the picket line. The

AUT have asked their members to donate a day's pay to the NUPE strike fund.

For most of us it was the first time we had taken strike action and set up picket lines. We did not back the dirty jobs day of action a few years ago, because our conditions were

# DANGER . . . . Disease, scabs, and low pay

I work at the Nottingham City Hospital. On 22nd January our branch of NUPE supported the national stoppage with 90 porters, 100 domestic staff, 25 canteen staff and cooks, ambulance crews, nurses, nursing auxiliaries and maintenance staff—all out.

This we felt was a wonderful response, the decision to give up a day's pay is a damned hard one, especially when you're earning around fifty quid a week.

One porter here, with a wife and two kids, on a flat week, takes home £36.95. A cleaner ('Domestics', as they are called) earns £40.15 for 40 hours. After tax and deductions, many of them take home the heady sum of £28.

Turning to working conditions, it has to be said that hospital workers are risking their health every day of their working lives.

All cleaners, porters, laundry workers and technicians handle enough infected material, soiled linen and human waste every day to made the average worker (or NHS bureaucrat) throw up at the thought of it.

## No compensation

We're all supposed to be vetted at the start by the Occupational Health Unit on the hospital campus, and regularly monitored by health checks. Well I'd been here six months before I was advised to have the BCG injection (anti-TB etc) because of the materials I was handling.

Hospitals are for sick people. Diseased, infected, some carrying all manner of germs. We know and accept this. But other groups of workers (quite rightly) are covered by industrial accident or hazardous procedure legislation (such as it is).

How can we go to our general practitioner and prove that we picked up germs at our place of work which caused us to have sore throats, bad chests, sickness and diarrhoea or whatever, having to have time off work and live on the pittance paid out by the DHSS, when we ought to be properly compensated?

By Chris Knight

(NUPE, North Nottingham Health Branch)

When I turned up outside our Branch Secretary's office for picket duty on Monday morning, the first thing I saw was a Panda car parked outside.

At the time, I thought it's nice to have such concern and sympathy from the boys in blue. Such regular attention, I thought, can't be bad.

It's just a pity they were nowhere in sight when a doctor, yes a doctor, ran over my colleague, a young picket with a wife and two kids, in his car at 4.30 pm in the afternoon at the City Hospital main gate.

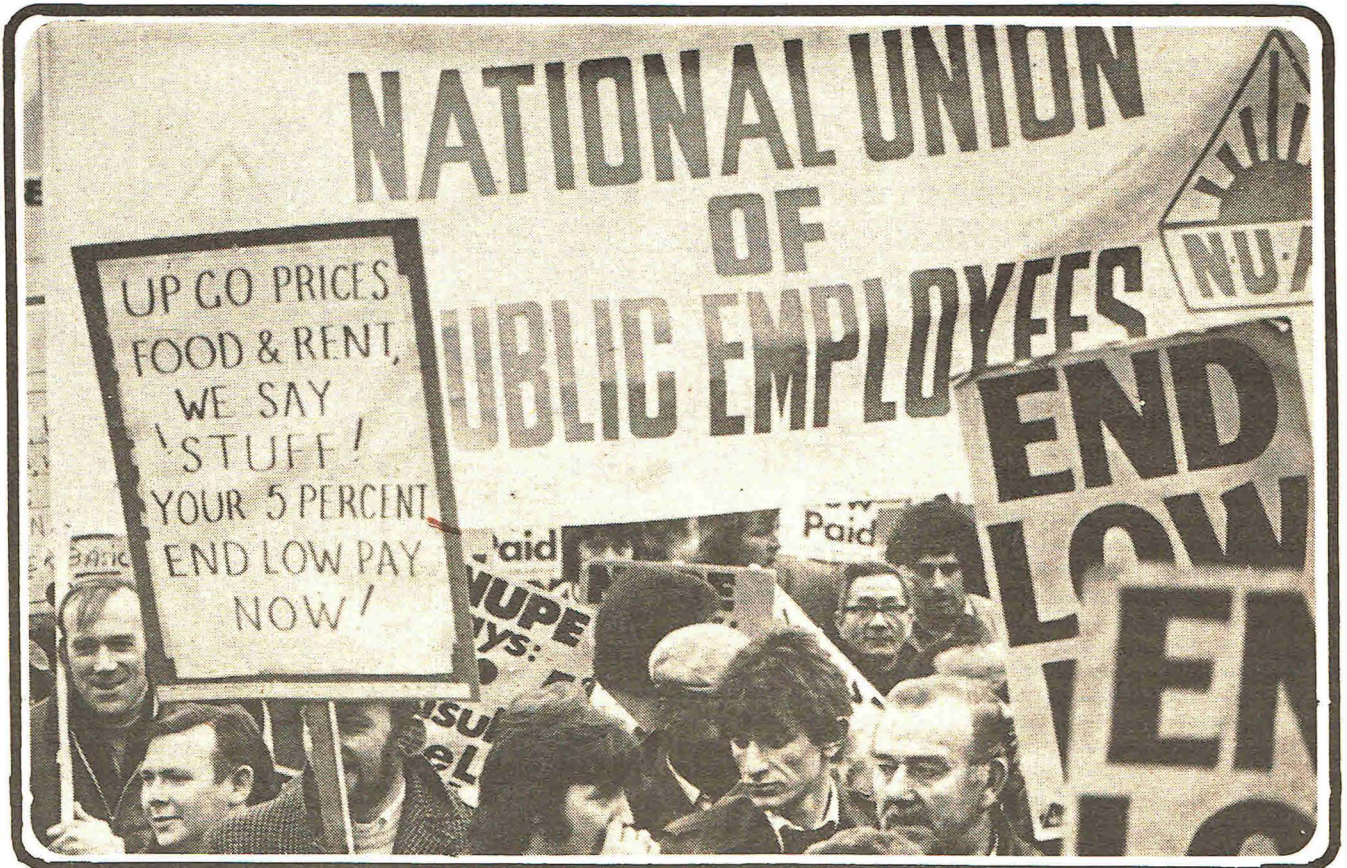
He was taken to the City's General Hospital where he was found to have a bruised leg and a fractured bone in his wrists. According to a TV report last night (I haven't seen him since) he'll be off work a fortnight.

## Abuse

The story is that the car approached the gate and the picket approached the car to do his picket's duty. The car slowed down, and the driver made like Harvey Smith, then accelerated away, carrying the picket on the bonnet for about 20 yards before braking sharply and throwing him off.

Apart from this incident, our pickets were subject to the normal abuse and invective that is expected from such ignorant and reactionary elements.

Why did we strike in the first place? Firstly, because



Angry public sector workers on the day of action

Photo: MILITANT

having submitted a reasonable pay claim, they (the DHSS, government) stick rigidly to the 5% pay policy, which has already been rejected by the NUPE Executive Council, the TUC, and the Labour Party Conference.

Secondly, the so-called

'offer' would leave basic rates of pay far below the £60 minimum wage agreed by the union's national conference.

And thirdly, because there is no progress to our fundamental demand, the introduction of a 35-hour week.

Our case isn't helped by the

statements from the local chairman of the local Community Health Council, a Labour Party member, whose attitude is, "Get back to normal working—you're rocking the boat," or by David Ennals who says "It's no good taking it out on the

sick, aged, and infirm", or indeed by J Callaghan, who says, "I would cross a picket line" (!).

These are supposed to be our friends! Save us from our friends!

## WATERWORKERS: WE DONT ACCEPT THE OFFER

Water Authority workers at Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Wakefield have decided to extend Monday's one-day strike indefinitely in support of the claim.

'Militant' spoke to Fred Ramsbottom, NUPE steward at Huddersfield's Bradley works.

Q: Who is involved so far?

A: Members of NUPE, G&M WU and T&GWU at Wakefield, Dewsbury and Huddersfield clean water and main drainage are at a standstill.

These workers handle filtration of reservoirs, mending of bursts, etc.

Q: What have you been offered?

A: 13.9%. Only £3 will be added to the basic rate in April but this will not affect bonus or overtime rates.

The strings attached include a £5 efficiency supplement which is basically for

good time-keeping and attendance. Five minutes late one day and you'd lose the lot. Overall, the offer is still within the 5% guidelines.

Q: What was the reaction of the men when they had the offer?

A: They went up the wall! They just downed tools and walked out. The Wakefield lads had a meeting on Tuesday the 23rd and unanimously decided to extend the strike.

Some of the Wakefield stewards picketed our depot and as soon as the lads heard the offer they all walked out in sympathy. Dewsbury came out too during the day.

There is no emergency cover—only for a life-or-death issue.

Q: What will be the effects of, say, a week's strike?

A: As far as the unions know, sewage is now being poured

into the River Calder at Deighton. Within a couple of days, if the filtermen don't change the filters, tap water will be dirty, though drinkable if it's boiled.

NALGO have said that if there are any bursts they will turn water off but they won't do any repairs.

Q: Is there any chance of the dispute being spread?

A: Manchester area have been out a fortnight and only went back by about five votes; as we understand it, they haven't accepted the offer but just voted to return to work.

Blackpool, Preston and Bolton, as far as we know, have all come out as of yesterday.

Q: How long do you think the dispute will last?

A: It looks like being a long, hard struggle unless the government change their minds. Even 5% of ten grand

is a lot, 5% of f.a. is nothing!

## STOP PRESS

Pickets were incensed at Callaghans invitation to scabs to cross picket lines—"He'll not get through here!" said one striker at Bradley. Many pickets felt that this would tend to inflame the dispute.

24/1/79: a meeting of all shop stewards, including craft unions not yet involved, and excluding certain of the strikers' stewards called for suspension of the strike, pending a full ballot on the offer.

In disgust at this decision, workers at Huddersfield and Wakefield decided to prolong the strike until the weekend. There may be a return to work on 29th January, but the strike could easily be resumed a week later.

## SOUTHWARK - Staying out

Southwark Council's 3,500 manual workers were not content with only a one-day strike on January 22nd.

We stayed out for the whole week. Havoc was caused on the roads, due to no gritting being done, and some main roads were closed.

There were no refuse collections, no public toilets open, no bodies buried. At a

meeting on Friday we decided that all would go back except the refuse collectors, sewage workers and gravediggers, who would stay out indefinitely.

We are imposing a levy of £5 per week on all members for the strike fund.

Richard Talbot, Southwark Council G&MWU

## LEWISHAM: We can't take any more

I am one of the 'fortunate' ones. I live and work in London and our basic wage is £43.10 a week. I am also fortunate enough to have the opportunity to earn thirty three and a third per cent bonus. With an extra one third output at the end of the week I can actually achieve £60, but most do not have this opportunity.

Many members have to get State supplements. The State has recognised a minimum on which someone can live and

these workers are below it.

The 5% offer is the final straw. We have gone along with the government's policies on wage restraint for three years, persuaded our members that the country couldn't afford to pay them any more. We've just ended up left behind in the race for a decent living wage.

We still haven't got consolidated pay rises of three or four years ago which means we're not consolidated for overtime or any bonuses or

anything like that. Which other industry has done that? We are earning less wages now in actual real terms than we were four or five years ago.

People in 'meals on wheels', home helps, people who work in residential old people's homes have this moral responsibility to the people they are looking after. In the past they have always been aware of this.

Now they are up in arms and are prepared to take industrial action regardless.

It's a luxury they cannot afford any longer. They've got moral responsibilities to their own families and themselves.

The majority of them are women, they have to work extra-long hours because of the shortages of staff:—no family life, no home life as a result of this, and quite honestly they are at the stage where they just can't take any more.

Alan Haley, T&GWU shop steward, Lewisham Council spoke to 'Militant'

# PICKETING- LABOUR MOVEMENT MUST FIGHT ACKNER JUDGEMENT

The torrent of abuse against the trade unions in general and so-called 'secondary picketing' in particular, which has spewed from the mouths of Thatcher and her crew in Parliament, from Fleet Street, the TV and radio, has resulted in the granting of a high court injunction by Justice Ackner against a lorry driver picket.

This is but the latest chapter in the century-old attempt of the capitalists to fetter and hamstring the trade unions through anti-union legislation. From the Combination Acts onwards the capitalists have used laws, jailings, transportations and intimidation to limit the power of the unions.

The trade unions, and all workers' rights—to strike, to vote, to organise, etc.—were not given by benign Tory governments. They were only gained through bitter struggles of the working class.

One of these basic rights is that of picketing. The Tories and their mouthpieces in the press have presented the lorry drivers' picketing as "unlawful". It is nothing of the kind as we shall see.

But the great majority of the laws in Britain are in defence of property and the interests of the capitalists. Anatole France, the French socialist and writer, once wrote: "The law in all its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to steal bread, to sleep under bridges and to beg food."

In class society the law reflects the interests of the ruling class. It is administered by judges who are drawn from the ranks of the ruling class. This has become as plain as daylight in the judgement of Justice Ackner. Even the 'Observer' (28th

By  
Peter Taaffe

January), which has demanded lock-outs and restrictions on the trade unions admitted that: "The 1974 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act gave the specific right to picket 'a place of work where another person works or carries on business in furtherance of a trade dispute' but Mr Justice Ackner's ruling appears to have removed that right won by the trade union movement even before the 1906 Trade Disputes Act."

In other words the judges have abrogated to themselves the right to interpret Acts of Parliament as they see fit: "He [Ackner] also held that what was in 'furtherance' of a trade dispute was not what the employees considered to be part of the dispute. The test was an objective one to be determined by the courts."

This is a clear attempt to hold the threat of legal action determined by the say-so of capitalist judges over the head of any group of workers who decide to picket. "Secondary" picketing is in fact a phrase dreamed up by the press to describe the kind of action which has been commonplace in Britain since the victory at Saltley Gate.



Reg Fall, the Tilbury picket attacked in the High Court

## COURTS WILL NOT STOP THE WORKING CLASS

Thus picketing of chemist shops who sold Grunwick goods took place during that epic battle. Sections of the labour movement were also involved in picketing the offices of the big estate agents

Prebbles a few years ago. All of these actions have now been legally outlawed by Ackner's decision.

But the plaudits which this worthy has earned from the press and the Tory leadership

shows just how removed from reality are the capitalists and their spokesmen in Britain today. Like the Bourbons they have forgotten nothing and they have learned nothing. The Heath government learned the hard way that what has been won by working class organisation and struggle cannot be eliminated by laws or by judges. Following the arrest of the five Pentonville dockers in 1972 under the Tories' Industrial Relations Act the General Council of the TUC was compelled to threaten a one-day general strike.

The main organ of big business, 'The Times', at that time mournfully compared the Act to "a disordered slot machine [which] produces a succession of unforeseen results—mostly raspberry flavoured."

Any attempt to use Ackner's judgement as a means for intimidating pickets on a wide scale would provoke a similar reaction from the working class. One thing is certain—Ackner has not succeeded in intimidating the lorry driver pickets. One Liverpool picket declared to the 'Observer' reporter: "They can't do all of us. They haven't got enough courts. And we can always switch pickets to throw them."

Labour MP Neil Kinnock correctly stated in the 'Guardian' (27th January) that: "It is legalised hysteria. No law whether made by Parliament or judges, can discipline thousands of people simultaneously. The only way to control picketing by law is to open Wembley Stadium for the reception of the arrested."

The very fact that the capitalists are calling for such laws against the unions indicates how decayed and decrepit they are. In the past their strategists had a sureness of touch in their dealing with the working class and the

labour movement. They understood the limits of legislation which aimed to dragoon the trade unions. But they now seem to have fallen prey to the disease of "parliamentary idiocy" in demanding further laws against the unions.

If put on the statute book and applied, then rather than intimidating the working class, it will only serve to inflame them.

However, the labour movement must not take the Ackner judgement lying down. Attempts must be made of course to reverse the decision through the courts and in Parliament. But it is not through the law courts that the scheming and plotting of the capitalists against the rights and conditions of the working class will be defeated.

Only by relying on their own strength and organisation will the working class cancel out reactionary legislation.

The TUC should press the government to introduce amendments into the Employment Protection Act to ensure that the rights of picketing are upheld.

No concessions must be made to the clamour of the capitalists for the trade union leaders themselves to "control" and "restrict" picketing rights. If the trade union leaders give their little finger then the capitalists will demand a hand and then an arm!

It should be made clear by the TUC that the full power of the movement will be mobilised if any worker is dragged before the courts on the basis of Ackner's judgement or any other judgement or legislation which follows it. Only decisive action like that will stop the capitalists in their tracks from proceeding along the road of further legal attacks on the unions.

## LABOUR PARTY NEC REPORT...

# COMMITMENT TO 35hr WEEK NOW

The campaign for the introduction of a 35-hour week scored two major successes at the January meeting of Labour's National Executive Committee [NEC]. Both of these moves, according to reports, were led by LPYS representative Tony Saunois.

The first success was the passing, without dissent, of a resolution supporting the fight for a 35-hour week and committing the NEC to "seek to include a clear commitment in favour of its implementation in the next election manifesto."

The second victory was

during a reportedly heated debate on the EEC and the manifesto on which the party will fight the assembly elections in June. Two letters from Cledwyn Hughes, Chairman of the PLP, were before the NEC, asking for consultation between the Parliamentary Labour Party and NEC on the EEC manifesto.

The NEC decided to stand

firm on its previous decision, that it be the NEC alone which should decide the manifesto, based on the decisions of conference. As the result of an amendment to the final draft, moved by Tony Saunois, it was agreed by 10 votes to 4 that a declaration in favour of a 35-hour week be included in the manifesto.

One of the four votes against this included John Goulding, from the Post Office Engineering Union, whose union only recently engaged in a bitter struggle on the demand for a 35-hour week. He argued that it wasn't possible to get a 35-hour week in Britain until all of the EEC countries had agreed to it!

Potentially the most heated

discussion was around an emergency resolution submitted by Judith Hart on the present industrial crisis. The resolution called for unity in the movement between the government, unions and Party, and little else.

### Youth Officer

Neil Kinnock moved an amendment pointing out that it was incomes policy which had forced workers to take industrial action and that the government should take note of conference decisions which were very relevant. After four attempts to get Kinnock to withdraw his amendment had failed, Judith Hart withdrew the resolution. The NEC was therefore prevented from taking any position on the

present crisis.

One of the most serious decisions taken by the NEC was in relation to the election work of the National Youth Officer. The Youth sub-committee at its previous meeting decided to recommend the setting up of a meeting to discuss the position.

Tony Saunois from the LPYS and Nigel Stanley from NOLS were to be included in the meeting. The minutes presented to the NEC, however, made no reference to either of these two members of the Youth sub being included. The minutes were challenged by Joan Maynard, Tony Saunois, Eric Heffer and Dennis Skinner. Les Huckfield claimed that their names were never mentioned!

A right wing move to refer back the entire minute was carried by 6 votes to 5.

Tony Saunois commented after the meeting: "This decision has undoubtedly thrown back the election preparations of the LPYS. Party members will be infuriated at the treatment Andy Bevan and the youth are getting on this question. LPYS branches and CLPs will undoubtedly be protesting about the decision and at the next meeting of the youth sub the officers of the LPYS will try to overturn the decision."

This meeting of the NEC, according to all reports, marked a step forward for the Party. But there is still a long way to go to get a really fighting socialist leadership at the top.

# LEFT & RIGHT

## A MIRACLE WORKER?

Closures in the steel industry over the past years have greatly added to the dole queues of steel areas. Yet the 'Daily Express' described the man who oversees these closures, the Eton and Oxford educated Tory who chairs British Steel, Sir Charles Villiers, as a 'miracle worker'. Why? Workers need miracles like steel closures like they need rabies. The answer is that "he has achieved this without protest stoppages, 'wildcat' or official."

He puts this down to talking to union leaders like Bill Sirs of ISTC "on first name terms. I see them socially. I have meals with them." This may unfortunately be the case at present, but some of Sir Charles' other statements would seem to show that steelworkers may not let this cosy relationship go on for much longer. He quoted a French steel official as complaining of French overmanning when 80,000 workers produced as much steel as 190,000 British steelworkers, implying that the savage cuts are by no means over.

The anger which British steelworkers feel has not so far been coordinated nationally. But it will take one hell of a miracle to prevent workers fighting against the plans up the BSC's sleeve. They will without doubt want no more cosy chats from union leaders remote from the rank and file's problems, and an end to the folly of having Tories and ex-company directors in the management of public concerns.

## HUNGRY MPs SHOCK HORROR

Hard times have reached the House of Commons. Cyril Smith, an MP renowned for eating liberal quantities of food, has complained that the MPs' dining room "charges West End prices, but we are underpaid as executive types." A Tory MP complained that prices were so high that some members brought in their own sandwiches [pheasant ones for the Tories no doubt].

Before any readers imagine that MPs are descending to the real world of money problems faced by the working class, it should be added that each meal served in the Commons canteen loses £4.22. How many ordinary workers ever eat meals costing over £4, let alone one losing that much? Perhaps a slight modification of the cuisine might prevent our MPs becoming so impoverished.

## FOISTING ON THE PUBLIC

The Royal College of Physicians have estimated that at the very least £80 million a year is currently spent on advertising and promotion by the tobacco industry. Sponsoring of sport, and the arts, and the advertising of cigars and pipe tobacco with the same name as cigarettes, all help to evade even the minor irritation of no cigarette advertising on TV.

Now one firm, Philip Morris, has been investigating the possibility of advertising cigarettes "casually" in ads for other products. So the advert for Soggy Breakfast Flakes could show members of the family "casually" lighting up a Splutters No. 1 fag while eating their cereal. The same company have issued a booklet claiming that there is no evidence of a link between smoking and illnesses like cancer. Smokers, they said, were more assertive, better time keepers and so on. People who opposed smoking though were self-appointed crusaders foisting their ideas on the general public.

Not like the tobacco barons, of course, whose £80 million advertising is in no way designed to foist a dangerous commodity on the general public.

## AVOIDING CONFUSION

The 'Guardian' recently reported that a new judge had been appointed, Miss Margaret Booth. However, she will henceforth be known as Mrs Justice Booth even though she is unmarried. It seems that calling her Miss Justice Booth or even Ms Justice Booth could be wrongly interpreted as injustice. As if it could.

# GRUNWICK- A Balance sheet

A review by Peter Lush of 'Grunwick: The Workers' Story' by Jack Dromey and Graham Taylor

Obtainable from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. £2.95 + 30p post and packing.

The Grunwick strike was one of the bitterest industrial struggles of the past decade. The workforce at Ward's sweat shop were fighting for the basic right to trade union recognition.

They were overwhelmingly immigrant workers, mostly women without experience in the labour movement, but their struggle, and the support of the mass pickets in the summer of 1977, were in the best traditions of the movement, and inspired many other groups of workers to battle for union rights.

It is appropriate that their story should be told from the viewpoint of the workers. This book gives a detailed history of the strike and answers the lies of the capitalist press, particularly about the demonstrations of solidarity shown by the mass pickets.

As this book shows, however, the resolute action of the working class was not always reflected in the leadership.

There can be little doubt that had the trade union leaders been prepared to rouse the labour movement, a rapid victory could have been won by the workers at Grunwicks.

Twice the Cricklewood postmen had the company on their knees, through postal blacking. But the leadership of the trade unions failed to finish the job.

They relied on legal procedures and held back the independent struggles of the trade union movement to wield their power on behalf of the Grunwick workers. It was particularly vital that the trade union leadership should take up this struggle, as the police were viciously attacking pickets, the Tories and their press were shrieking law and order to push for curbs on picketing and the whole trade union movement was under attack.

Despite everything that was good about Grunwicks, because of the failure of the trade union leadership, the strike ended in bitter defeat.

It is important to draw a 'balance sheet' of the strike, so that workers in the future will not have to go through the same experiences. The authors of the book played a prominent role in the battle.

### ACAS

Their analysis is thus of special importance for the active layers of the labour movement.

However, the authors fail to draw out clearly the main lessons of the strike on the use of the law, and bodies such as ACAS.

The section in the conclusion on the law starts correctly: "The partisan nature of law enforcement is nothing new to the British trade union movement."

But the authors conclude: "...while the first recourse to

the solution of any problem should always be through the process of collective bargaining and collective action, the use of the law may be the only alternative in the under-organised or unorganised workplace."

Surely the major lesson of Grunwicks must be that while it may at times be a useful lever, the law cannot be relied upon. This is especially true in recognition strikes. The only force the trade unions can rely on is their own organisation and power.

### No confidence

Generally, no confidence can be placed in ACAS or the courts to win recognition. Indeed, in many strikes, faith in these bodies has resulted in defeats, although in the final analysis, any dispute will be decided by the balance of forces on each side.



This strike was the most important recognition dispute for years. The ruling class were terrified of it being won, and used delaying tactics through the courts to sidetrack the movement.

The conclusion from this book must be that the trade union movement in Britain has enormous potential power. The failure lies with the trade union leadership.

Since the book was written, the strike wave that has swept Britain shows that union members are prepared to reject the right-wing policy of wage restraint, if a lead is given.

A leadership is necessary that will fight consistently along class lines, and is not afraid to mobilise the movement around a programme to transform society along socialist lines.

The right wing is accepted only because of the lack of an alternative, viable in the eyes

of workers, putting forward a clear programme. The performance of some union leaders, who built their reputations as fighters on the left, only to end up in capitulating to the right wing, has not helped.

### Leadership

It is the task of Marxists in the trade unions to campaign to build a fighting socialist leadership. Engels said many years ago, that "There is no power in the world which could for a day resist the British working class organised as a body."

That is even more true today—and it is the responsibility of Marxists active in the trade union movement to fight to create a society where firms such as Grunwicks, and employers such as George Ward will be banished to the dustbin of history.

# BREWERY WORKERS TREATED LIKE A ROBOT

Bryan Moore, shop steward, Davenport's, Birmingham spoke to Jeremy Birch about work in a brewery.

The main problem is the shift work. You start at 5 o'clock in a morning, which means for most people rising at 4 to get there before the sparrows have arrived.

Because there's no bus service at that time, we have over the years, got taxis laid on. When you arrive, between 4 and 5am, there are no facilities except a tea machine so we have to wait until half past six for the canteen to open, and this has only really been provided because the draymen have to be out on the road.

Then because we don't have our official break until 10 o'clock, we have to drink tea and eat while we're doing our work.

In the stacking department, at the end of the line they're trying to stack packs of two dozen cans of beer and eat a bacon sandwich at the same time. You can imagine the indigestion that some of them get.

The most arduous jobs in the brewery must surely be the bottling room. Grown men have been known to weep at the prospect of working there.

It's like being a robot, you stand at the line and thousands and thousands of bottles come charging down the line at you and you have to pick them up about half a dozen at a time and turn round and there's an empty crate beside you and you plonk them in.

They're moving all the time, so you're there hour after hour until your break

and all you are doing is twisting your stomach. After about an hour your stomach muscles begin to really ache.

They stand up all day. They have to wear wellingtons and overalls as some of the crates have been stored for months and need to be washed first. They are dripping wet and as the crates bump into each other water is sprayed everywhere.

That's the hardest job apart from stacking at the end of the line. You can imagine stacking heavy crates of beer all day, and at a good fair speed.

You have to pick them up two at a time and turn round and sling them on to a board. As one board fills, a stacker truck takes them and brings you back another board and so it goes on all day.

### Profits

They have this new bottling machine which replaced two old ones and just recently spent £300,000 on a new canning plant, due to the fierce competition in the canning trade.

When Davenports first started canning about five years ago they virtually had a free hand and they kept all the money and didn't plough any of it back. But they've had to change now.

It has been rumoured that profits per man are higher at Davenports than at Ansell's or M&B's. Although we are only a small independent brewery,

profits are about £1½ million. According to the press though, the average wage at Ansell's is £6,000 while at Davenports I would guess it is about £2,500.

Up until five years ago the union wasn't thought of at Davenports and it was only with a great struggle that the union was formed.

### Conditions

Only 10% of the factory at that time said 'Yes', but in five years that has grown to practically 100%.

Because of this, improvements have come, especially in pay, which has far outweighed any inflation. But it still does not bring us up to a decent standard of living because the average wage is still only £54.

Even anti-unionists agree that if it hadn't been for the union we would all have been even more hard up.

Over the next few months, the most important issues will be conditions and reduction of overtime hours without loss of pay. Because of the low wages most employees still have to work a great deal of overtime. We could then force the management to employ more.

There's no shortage of money for Davenports. I believe that in August they bought four new pubs which must have amounted to four or five times our wage settlement.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION:

# WHAT HAS CHANGED IN 3 YEARS?

When the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts were passed, they were welcomed by many as a recognition by the Labour government of the problems faced by working class women. Those in particular who had taken part in trade union struggles for equal pay saw it as a step in the direction of better pay and conditions, and more opportunities in a wider range of jobs.

Three years after the Equal Opportunities Commission was set up, supposedly to supervise the implementation of this legislation, women are increasingly drawing the conclusion that little has changed.

There is growing criticism of the EOC. The Commission has few direct powers; it receives a grant of £2m a year and has a staff of 170 to take up cases and carry out investigations. But it is extremely reluctant to use what resources it has.

In three years it has conducted only two investigations.

The work it has done with regard to the Tameside Education Authority, the Electrolux dispute and its recent report on nurseries ('I want to work but what about the kids?') show up its weaknesses in black and white.

Women's problems are seen as a moral, not a class, issue. In the Tameside investigation they failed to prove any discrimination against girls!

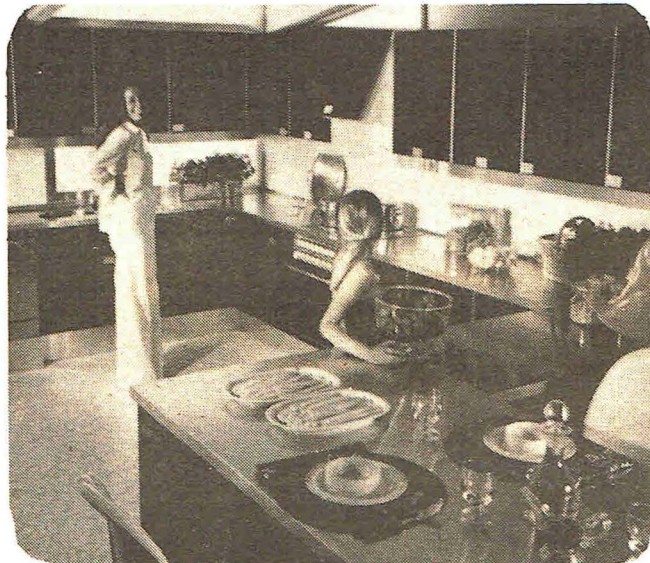
Any investigation by the labour movement from a class point of view couldn't have failed to come to the conclusion that with its fight to retain selection, its concentration of resources into schools for "the elite", its frittering away of resources on pictures of the Queen in every classroom (which it was forced to withdraw due to action by teachers), Tameside discriminates against every working class child in the area, including girls.

The EOC was set up as a

**Margaret Crear**

collection of the "best brains", interested parties and experts. The government attempted to gloss over class interests. So we have the ridiculous position where the CBI is given equal representation with the TUC, as if their members have equal interest in fighting against the exploitation of women.

The consequences of this political balancing-act were seen over the publication of the report 'I want to work,



The ad-man's vision of women's lives

but what about the kids?'

The Vice-chairman, Lady Howe, has always made it clear that her concern for women comes a long way behind her concern for her Party—the Tories—and her

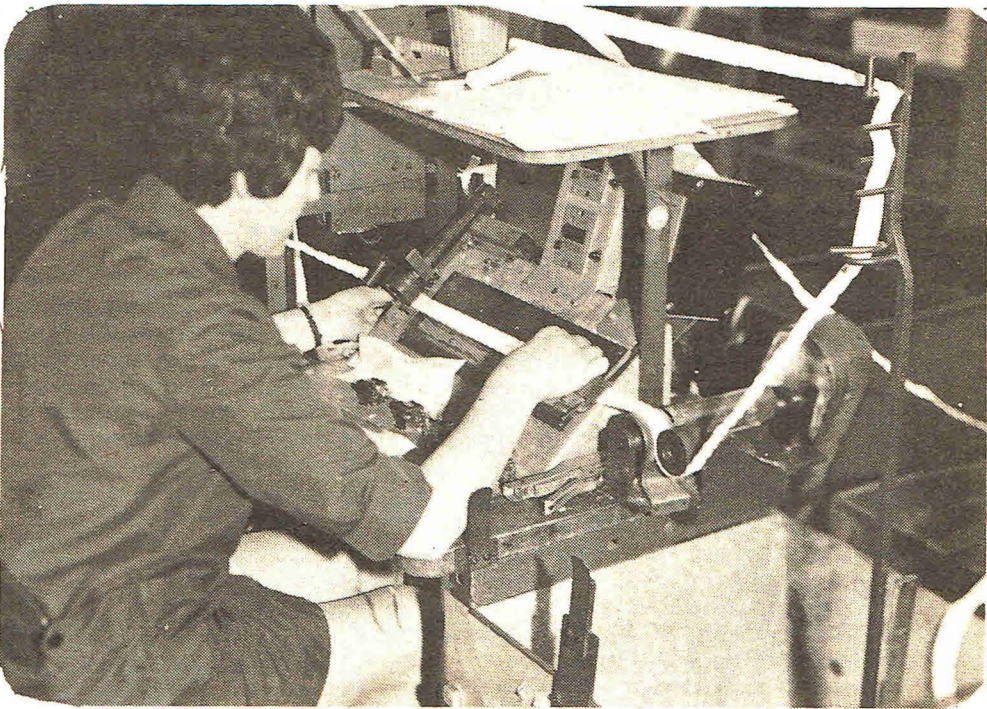
class. She told a Swedish reporter that she didn't really believe in equality. The party she represents has already said that it won't finance the EOC if it wins the next election.

In the discussions on the nursery report, she put forward the view that the parents, not the state, should pay for nursery provision. In the end the EOC didn't come down on either side.

But on September 26th, Lady Howe gave an interview in which she said: "A proportion, if not all of the cost, will have to be borne by the families themselves." This step alone would undermine legislation on maternity leave, which is useless if women can't afford to put a child in a nursery.

It also increases the problems of the low paid, who have to go to work but may be paying half or more of their wages in nursery charges.

If anything should destroy the belief that women, whatever their background, can naturally understand best the problems of other women,



Working class women, concentrated in low-paid jobs, are becoming union activists

more or less the same. On the basis of maintaining the present economic and social system, there are very few real improvements in women's position which can be tolerated.

Much more radical changes are needed. The 'New Statesman' (1st December 1978) points out that the EOC was set up 'in a hurry'. It was a response to the enormous pressure building up, particularly in the trade unions, on women's pay and conditions.

### Class approach

Throughout the 1960s and '70s women have been joining trade unions, recognising that their future is bound up with the working class as a whole. They've joined not just as paper members but in many cases as activists in the forefront of struggles such as the hospital workers' dispute and in sweat-shops such as Grunwicks.

Women are increasingly being concentrated into low-paid jobs where the only

comparison with men, if any, is with low-paid men (see 'Militant' 435). It's little wonder that many are turning towards the public service unions' campaign for a minimum wage, as the only effective way of raising their living standards.

The only sort of 'Commission' which could have been of any use in such struggles would be a campaigning organisation to co-ordinate the various campaigns, for example on under-fives provisions, to bring together and generalise the fight and to give a political lead to those struggles. This is precisely what the organisations of the Labour Party, the Women's Advisory Council and the trade unions should be doing. The lack of a clear class approach and the refusal of the Labour leaders to take on the bosses' system has meant that increasingly the EOC has become irrelevant to the struggles of women.

A letter in the 'New Statesman' came unintentionally near the mark. A

member of an equally ineffective body in the EEC argued that we were being a little impatient with the EOC:

"5% of the UK population own more than half of the property. If such inequality has not been eradicated after half a century of political commitment to genuine equality, how could we reasonably expect one quasi-governmental agency to achieve it for women in just three years?"

It's not a matter of time. The distribution of wealth has not altered over that half century because the labour movement can only remove the inequalities of wealth with a socialist programme to place under workers' control and management the 200 firms, the banks and insurance companies which control the economy.

It's only through the same commitment to the socialist transformation of society that the labour movement can provide and control the resources necessary, and use them to put an end to the oppression of women.

## GUESS WHO'S TAPPING YOUR PHONE

The Home Office has always claimed that the power to tap telephones is very rarely used. Officially every 'tap' has to be authorised by the Home Secretary. Now, almost by accident, a criminal case involving, of all people, an antique dealer in the commuter belt of Surrey, brought the whole question into the public eye again.

James Malone was charged with handling stolen goods. While awaiting trial, he had an argument over the phone with his wife. Details of this argument plus phone numbers he had rung in the same period were discovered in the notebook of a policeman. The only way this information could have been obtained was by tapping Mr Malone's phone.

The furore over the case has highlighted the increasing

use of such spying techniques. Chelsea Barracks, which the Metropolitan police use as a base for their eavesdropping activities, has raised its number of lines for listening in on conversations from 23 in the early '60s to 72 in 1977.

### 'Useful weapon'

Last year a telecommunications expert estimated that between 1,000 and 2,000 taps had been authorised in London alone! If this is true how many more have been granted nationally?

The police are making little effort to hide their use of such devices. One police spokesman boasted that they found phone tapping a "very useful weapon".

You can bet they do. But who do they use it against? And why?

Obviously they are not just gathering material on matri-

then this should do so once and for all.

It isn't a question of replacing one unsympathetic or inefficient Tory by another. Any member of the Tory Party or CBI would behave



monial disputes. The thought of a police force full of marriage guidance councillors or amateur Crossroads scriptwriters may be attrac-

tive, but it's not very realistic. The evidence of the Malone case shows that these powers are being used against hardly Al Capone-class racketeers.

The apparatus is clearly most useful against forces the capitalist class, who ultimately control the police, regard as subversive. And who are the most 'subversive' force in society, railed against by all the propaganda instruments of capital? The working class, of course, and in particular the labour movement!

### Subversive?

Not that the organised workers have many secrets. Our demands are openly expressed on the public service workers' placards and in the lorry drivers' claim: a better deal for the workers who create the wealth of society. The fact that the ruling class find this subversive, a conspiracy to maintain living standards, is merely a sign of the bankruptcy of their system.

Nonetheless, such powers cannot be left in the hands of the police, who would be quite capable of Watergate-type skulduggery to keep tabs on, and attempt to discredit the labour movement. The fear of phone tapping can no longer be dismissed as left-wing "paranoia".

It is a scandal that a Labour Home Secretary can justify methods which can be, and are, used against the labour movement. We must insist that the Labour government immediately put an end to the use of such a "useful weapon" in the hands of the police.

**Roger Shrives**

# CADMIUM POISONING Profits can Kill

By Ronnie Sookhdeo

Over 1,000 villagers in Shipham, Somerset, are said to be at risk due to abnormally high concentrations of cadmium in the soil.

This has again catapulted the controversial issue of toxic heavy metal contaminants into national prominence.

Coinciding with the announcement that the incidence of cancer has risen dramatically and is industrially related; the news has provoked a public outcry and a call for much more stringent safety monitoring techniques.

The toxic heavy metals; lead, mercury and cadmium, constitute one of the most formidable groups of environmental pollutants. The dangers from mercury and cadmium have already been tragically underlined by the poisoning of entire communities.

The most recent studies of lead, by doctors at the

University of Glasgow's medical department found that it caused mental retardation in newly born infants.

## Grotesque

A great deal of evidence already exists associating lead with poor eyesight, sluggish movement and difficulty in reasoning amongst children.

A survey of children living near a lead smelter in El Paso found that eleven out of twenty of the children were educationally subnormal.

Minamata disease, attributed to mercury poisoning,

was first observed when people were seen walking in a disorientated manner, some suffering from convulsions, and all with grotesquely dilated pupils and paralysis of the limbs.

By 1956, seventy-eight people were seriously ill, many with appalling physical deformities.

The cause was traced to an effluent from the Chisso factory containing methyl mercuric chloride which flowed into the sea and accumulated in fish eaten by the villagers.

Another disease, attributed to cadmium, occurred in northern Japan. The area is rich in cadmium and zinc, and zinc smelting is the main industry.

The disease was first described by Japanese orthopaedic surgeons: "The disease takes a long course of increasing painfulness which, beginning with simple symptoms such as lumbago, ends with total and agonised immobility as the result of skeletal collapse."

The cadmium is absorbed into the bones, leading to the eventual breakdown of the skeleton. When a Birmingham platemaker, Mr Leslie Day, died from the disease, the inquest was told that Mr Day shrank seven inches, lost his sense of smell and became disfigured.

Cadmium has the unique property of accumulating in the kidneys. Apart from causing kidney damage, it can combine with enzymes in the body to form highly toxic complexes which have cancer-inducing properties.

A good deal of evidence (from Sweden and the USA) exists linking it with heart disease and high blood pressure. In fact, exposure to the smallest concentration of cadmium can produce any one of these afflictions.

The World Health Organisation, has attempted to impose standards in food and drink. Recognising that contamination will increase in future, it has urged governments to adopt a rational policy of waste disposal.

Workers should take note of the current situation and be prepared to protest to the Minister of the Environment on behalf of the residents of Shipham. The Department of Health claim that it would take many decades of exposure to the toxic metal even at the levels reported—(100 times the level recommended by scientists)—to cause illness.

The question of pollution is of immediate concern because capitalism is only motivated by one thing—profits.

They are prepared to destroy and disfigure our environment, kill and maim whole sections of the population to achieve their objectives, as events have shown.

A planned socialist society controlling the means of production, distribution and disposal of toxic materials will ensure adequate safety precautions for the workforce and the population as a whole.



Black and white workers in unity—the only protection

Photo: MILITANT

## NATIONAL FRONT

### The real anti-union face

The fascist National Front have peddled the myth that they truly fight for workers' interests.

With their demagogic attacks on multi-nationals, and calls for the state takeover of banks they have perhaps fooled a small minority of workers into believing that they are "anti-big business".

But when the working class moves into actual struggle the mask of fascism slips. For the National Front, repression is the medicine to deal with the trade union movement. With the success of the lorry drivers' picketing apparent to all, John Tyndall screamed last week at their annual conference:

"When we take over the reins of government, as one day we shall, the moment that mobsters try by physical intimidation to prevent British workers doing their jobs, these mobsters will find themselves in police cells so quickly they won't know what hit them."

By our correspondent

The main aim of the Fascist movement is the same today as ever—smash the workers' organisations, destroy the ability of workers to struggle for their rights. Fascists want to do away with all democratic rights (including the right to vote), and they know that only the labour movement will consistently defend those rights. The racist poison they spread is their way to divide workers and prevent activity from being waged on class lines.

Their response to the tremendous struggle of the lorry drivers is nothing new. Two and a half years ago,

during the Grunwick dispute, the National Front outlined its method of dealing with a picket line:

"The most sensible course would be to equip the police with water cannons, tear gas and rubber bullets, with full authority to use those implements as the situation required. The mob could be given five minutes to disperse peacefully after which time they would only have had themselves to blame if they got a soaking or worse. The few stupid enough not to do so would present no problem for the police to round up after they had once been immobilised."

That is the fascist response to trade union struggles. Given half the chance, they will use any weapon to crush the workers' organisations.

The National Front may never become a mass movement. Its increasingly clear anti-worker stance will probably see to that. But the threat that its gangsters pose to workers in struggle cannot be ignored.

# TESCOS SUPER- MARKET SUPER- EXPLOITATION!

Malcolm McGookin (USDAW)

Winter—and the shop floor's freezing. It doesn't take long for a delegation to approach me.

As a shop steward, I've heard two or three replies to a request for a solution to heating problems, ranging from swift acquiescence to a curt "Work harder" or "Sorry, the door's warped." This time it's a cross between the two—"The checkout girls may go for hourly tea-breaks to the canteen."

Big deal! The girls have to pay five pence a time for a cup of tea and sit in a freezing canteen before returning to the freezing shop floor to shiver again for an hour before their next tea-break. No wonder they're off work so much these days!

## Scared

It doesn't seem to be much of a deal to me, so I phone up the union—bit of advice never did anybody any harm. Tried to get through for about fifteen minutes—no answer. Never mind, I'll try again later.

Bill asks my advice. (Strictly advice this time; he's too scared to join the union in case his boss finds out and sacks him, or makes life too hard for him to stick the job any longer.)

He wants to know how he can get out of doing all the overtime—forced, unpaid overtime. Either that or at least get paid the proper amount.

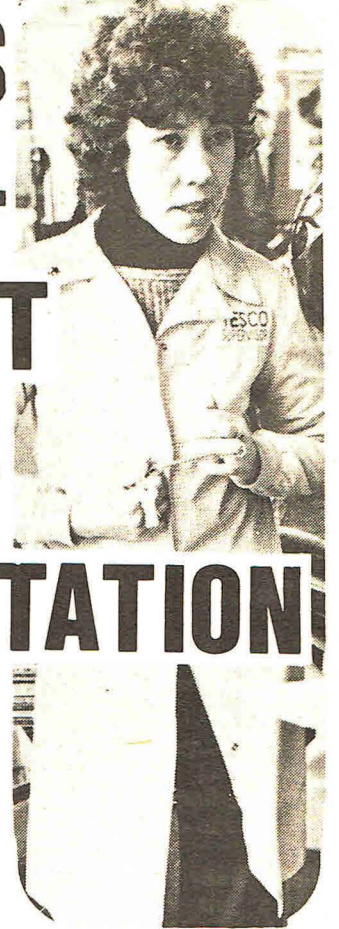
I tell him to join the union; he won't. It's a vicious circle, but I'm stuck with it.

Trouble is, he's not even getting paid the amount on his contract! Can you see the T&GWU standing for it? No, nor me.

They wouldn't stand for Bill either—while he continues to work under those conditions, there's no hope for any of us. Long live the closed shop.

I try phoning the union again—success! The receiver on the other end is picked up. "Hello? Can I speak to the area organiser? This is the shop steward at Tesco...He's out? Well can I speak to the fellow I spoke to last time, then?...He's out too? Is anybody there at all? I'll leave a message then..."

I found out today that two of the staff agreed to have themselves sacked then reinstated—Tesco's (i.e. the manager) reckon it's the only way to give them the pittance of a pay rise they wanted. Unfortunately they didn't inform the lads that in so doing they would lose all their



Tesco workers—beginning to organise Photo: MILITANT

holiday entitlements, back pay, etc.

Too late now, it's been done. Even if they'd told me sooner, I probably wouldn't have caught on. The only experience I have is what I've picked up myself—mind you, that's not a little.

## Sacked

The grocery manager returned to work not long ago after being off for about ten weeks with a broken ankle, to the news that he's been replaced. The management didn't come out and say that, of course. They just stated that he would have to work with the night crew from now on; payment for unsocial hours, overtime, etc. was refused on the grounds that it was supposed to be his job.

I found out that he had joined the union years earlier, in happier times. Learning that he had been told to leave the store awaiting the management's pleasure I phoned the union up. (From a call box—I couldn't risk barefacing it in the office.)

Eighty pence later I had established that the full-time official couldn't come to the member's home to give him help and advice: too short notice, too busy just now.

The next day, the member reported to the Ayr store to be given his last chance and then sacked. This time the union representative was present—Tesco's had told him to be.

## Shocks

There are those who say that USDAW is little more than a company union. But it's no good letting your irritation and anger with a bungled issue or a particular official blind you to the union's potential.

What Audrey Wise, the Broad Left candidate for the union presidency this year has said, is true. The leadership of our union does not reflect the needs of most of the members, or echo their militancy.

But we are not giving up. Low-paid, badly treated shop workers could give a few shocks to a few people—not least our bosses.

The public sector workers are on the move. We won't be far behind.

# PORTUGAL... ●●●

**The Pinto government installed by Eanes in December, represents another, further shift towards the right in Portugal. It is the tenth government since 1974 and is undoubtedly the most right-wing.**

It replaced the Nobra Da Costa government, which lasted a mere seventeen days. The government has clearly set out its intention to further attack all the gains and conquests of the revolution.

It promises to "boost private initiative", revise labour laws in order to allow further dismissals of workers, continue the financial austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund and set up "a para-banking private sector" to compete with the nationalised banks."

At the same time it has promised to continue to carry forward the policies of the previous government in evicting agricultural workers from the occupied land in the Alentejo.

Since November 1975, the counter-revolution headed by President Eanes has felt too weak to launch an outright onslaught against the working class and the gains of the revolution. Its policy has been to edge further and further towards the right.

Eanes successfully pressurised the Socialist Party (PSP) and Christian Democratic Party (CDS) coalition to introduce laws aimed at undermining the revolution.

It is true that 300 small and medium-sized firms have been denationalised but the state has been forced to retain ownership of about 200 big monopolies and majority shareholdings in another 300. This means that most of industry is still in the hands of the state. At the same time the part of trade and industry, which accounts for 80-90% of exports, has been retained by the capitalists while the banks remain nationalised. The capitalists are attempting to limit and hamper the nationalised section of industry while encouraging and building up the weak private sector. One of the means of achieving this has been the lavish over-compensation paid out by the state to the former owners of industry and land.

But neither piecemeal measures nor laws alone will succeed in eliminating the

gains of the revolution. This has been clearly shown in the resistance of the agricultural workers in the Alentejo to the handing back of the land to the former owners.

This resistance was so ferocious that the SP/CDS coalition was virtually incapable of implementing its own laws. This in turn provoked the resignation of the CDS from the government in July. Eanes was then presented with the opportunity to dis-

By Ed Bober

miss the Soares-led Socialist Party from office in July.

The Portuguese working class correctly recognised this as the preparation of the counter-revolution to strike further blows against them and their organisations. The power of their factory committees, over hiring and firing, line speeds etc. has also been reduced by a continual war of attrition. Nevertheless in at least 1,200 firms workers' committees have retained the right to control much of the basic day to day running of the shop floor. Even the Socialist Party, weakened by the rightward turn of the Soares leadership, warned Eanes that any attempt to undermine or threaten their democratic rights would be "met in the streets."

In its preparations for a new trial of strength with the Portuguese working class, the counter-revolution has recognised that at least a section of the working class is armed.

It has thus attempted to intimidate and round-up those workers' leaders it suspects of harbouring the weapons that could be used in the event of another attempted coup. Thus in the past few months we have seen the arrest and threats of a trial against a Socialist Party leader Edmundo Pedro, a former head of Portuguese TV, on a charge of possessing arms.

Pedro pointed out in reply to this charge that he was given thirty rifles by members of the Armed Forces Movement in November 1975. He has threatened to reveal the names of those army officers who were involved in this, and this has compelled the government to re-think its position about trying Pedro.

The reaction has been assisted by imperialism, particularly through the medium of the International Monetary Fund. The 'austerity'

programme dictated to the SP/CDS coalition was aimed at whittling away the gains of the revolution.

At the same time feeble Portuguese capitalism looked eagerly towards a massive influx of foreign capital to provide a sound base for the recuperation of their system.

But as the 'Economist' recently remarked: "unhappily for Portugal, foreign investors continue to sit on their hands, partly through lingering suspicions about the political stability of the country. They are also worried by restrictive labour legislation and sluggish world markets."

"Queries from foreigners about investing in the north (the most conservative part of the country) suggest that money may be coming soon provided the new government goes on wrenching Portugal round to face economic reality." (25th November 1978).

In other words foreign capitalists are waiting to see if the reaction can cancel out the gains of the revolution before they sink their loot back into Portugal.

The attempt of the counter-revolution to go over to the offensive, is certain to meet with ferocious opposition from the working class and

the agricultural workers and the peasantry.

In the last period, a colossal strike wave has developed as a reaction of the working class to the enormous weakening and undermining of its conditions and stan-

annual rate of 36%. In the past year, even according to government statistics, living standards dropped by 5%.

Real wages are now less than in 1973, before the revolution. Moreover, unemployment, according to offic-

**To pass laws in parliament is one thing: it is another thing entirely to implement them.**

dards. In November, 280,000 textile workers went out on strike for increases in wages.

They were followed by 200,000 metal workers, by the bakers, by miners, train drivers, guards and the longest seamen's strike in Portuguese history. In the last 12 months, 2 million man days have been lost in strikes with a labour force only 3 million strong.

The recent strikes have been in response to the attempt to impose further cuts in living standards.

Wages are restricted to less than 20% yet inflation is increasing at an average

figures, is still upwards of 15% of the labour force. The Nobra da Costa government, despite its short duration, openly used the police and the army against the workers of the Alentejo.

The Pinto government is expected to continue the same policy. However, this is bound to meet with the same stubborn resistance of the agricultural workers in the area as was displayed on previous occasions when attempts were made to evict them from the land.

2½ million acres have been expropriated and occupied throughout the Alentejo in

the course of the last four years. According to the 'Economist' (28th October) something like 225,000 acres of land has been returned to its former owners. Laws alone will not be capable of enforcing the return of the land back to the previous owners. Nor will the use of a few hundred or thousands of police be sufficient to enforce the permanent eviction of the workers from 'illegally occupied' land.

On the contrary, even those workers who were evicted in November from farms in the Alentejo returned back to re-occupy the farms once the police and the army left the area.

The open resurgence of reaction was recently displayed at the congress of the National Confederation of the Employers. The 'Financial Times' (16th January) commented that such a gathering: "would have been risky one year ago and unthinkable two years ago...more than a thousand delegates raging openly against political, economic and social disasters brought about by Portugal's 'Marxist revolution' would have at best provoked a seige and, at worst, a riot".

One businessman purred "an historic moment. It marks the beginning of a new social order". The congress was whipped up into frenzied enthusiasm by the call of Carneiro, leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD)—which vies with the CDS as the main political stalking horse of the counter-revolution—for the revision of "Portugal's Socialist Constitution".

The rapturous applause which his speech received shows that the "Parliamentary cretinism" (idiocy) which Marx spoke about, has afflicted at least a section of the Portuguese ruling class.

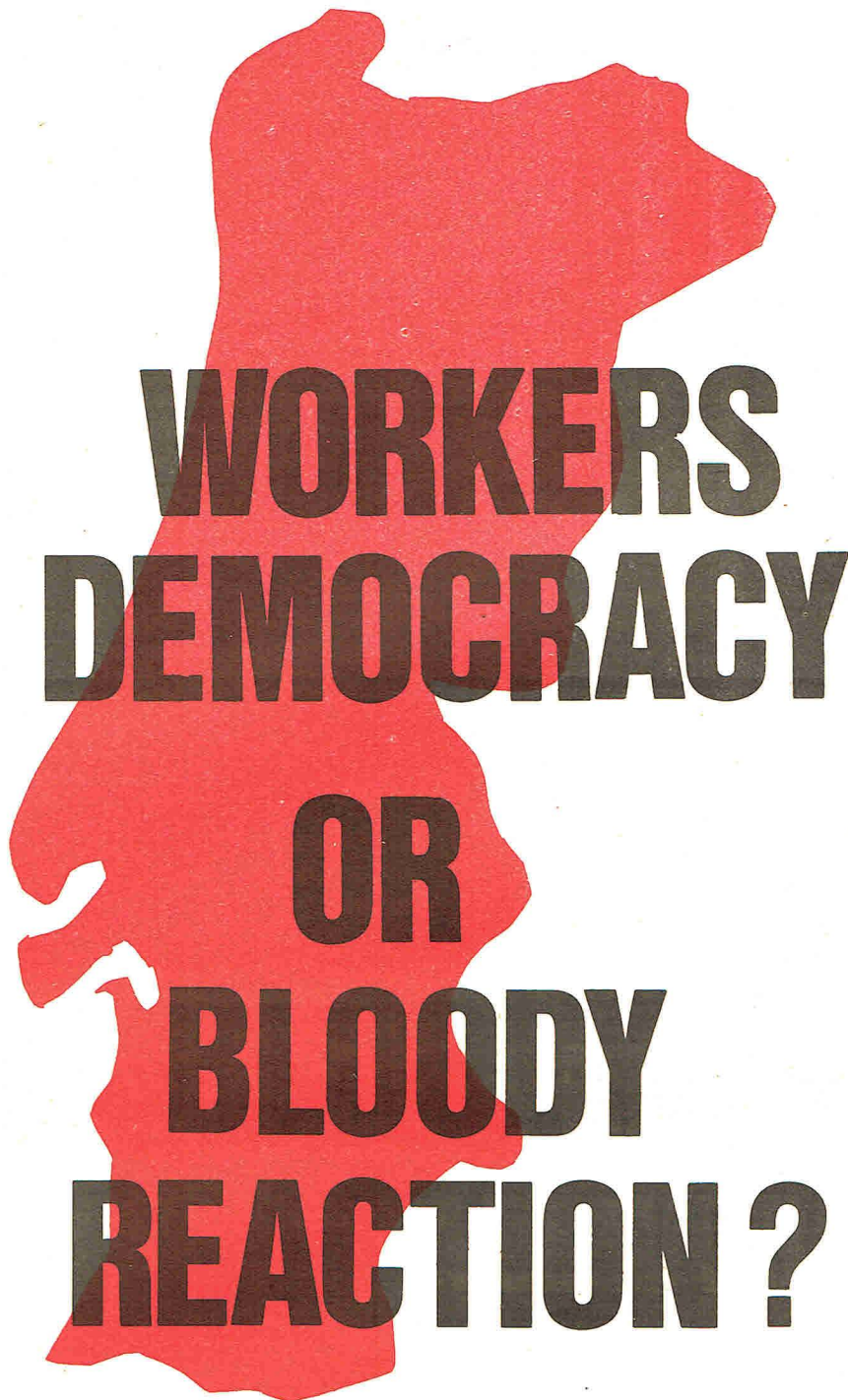
Their British cousins—in the form of Mrs Thatcher—have been infected with the same disease.

They share the delusion that what has been gained in struggle by the working class can be eliminated through a stroke of the legislative pen! The march of events in Portugal in the next period will show just how mistaken they are.

There is only one way that the counter-revolution will succeed in turning back the clock to pre-1974 and that is by the most vicious and brutal methods of civil war.

Since 1975, the counter-revolution has sought to prepare the ground for the enforcement of such measures. Ex-fascists have returned from exile in Latin America, and some of them have slipped back comfortably into jobs in industry, the civil service, police and the army. Ex-members of PIDE, the torturers and thugs of Salazar's and Caetano's secret police, have expressed a willingness to return in order to fight for a 'strong Portugal'.

But it has hesitated before launching a frontal attack on the working class and its







Workers demonstrate with banners demanding 'socialist revolution' after the fall of Caetano in 1974

organisations. The power of the Portuguese working class is shown by the fact that 82% are now organised into trade unions, a mere four and a half years after the overthrow of fascism. Moreover the workers are conscious of their gains through the revolution.

It has sought therefore to swing the pendulum further to the right in order to prepare the conditions which it hopes can guarantee victory over the working class.

The counter-revolution hesitated in Portugal for fear of the consequences of another coup. It was not confident that it would win an outright victory over the working class. The failure of another right wing coup would probably result in the complete elimination of landlordism and capitalism in Portugal.

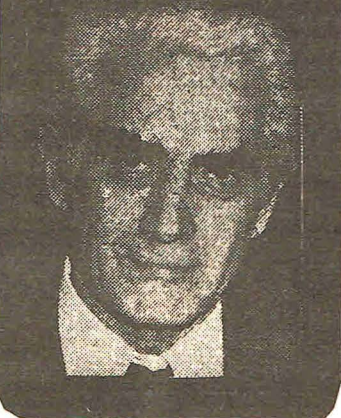
But it has not given up its scheming and plans to create the necessary conditions for a coup. The economic and social situation in Portugal is such that an extended period of capitalist democracy is ruled out.

The capitalists are conscious of this and are perfecting and sharpening their repressive instruments for future battles with the working class. The army and the police have been largely purged of left elements and have become a loyal bulwark of counter-revolution.

Moreover, Eanes, as the fountain head of reaction, is attempting in true Bonapartist (i.e. military dictatorship) style, to concentrate more and more power in his own hands and to undermine parliament.

Thus in an interview with 'The Times' he spelt out his intentions: "Portugal's constitution did not provide for a 'pure parliamentary regime' but had certain affinities with those of France. There isn't parliamentarism in Portugal as you might find in the text books of constitutional law". [18th November]

In relation to this interview, 'The Times' commented: "This suggests that he has found the present arrangement of governing through a technically defeated govern-



Top to bottom: Soares, Eanes, Cunhal [Communist Party leader]

ment outside the political parties a more congenial and effective procedure than he at first expected. An important side effect of this, whether wanted or not, is to enhance the importance of the presidency at the expense of parliament and so push the system in the French direction."

However the Pinto government will meet with the same,

## A SOCIALIST PORTUGAL WOULD BE A BEACON FOR ALL WORKERS

**It is still not too late for the complete transformation of the Socialist and Communist Parties which the adoption of such a programme would mean. Once it became a reality, and was embraced by the CP and SP rank and file, the working class in Portugal would be invincible.**

if not greater resistance, than the previous government. It will inevitably founder on the resistance of the working class.

At a certain stage the direction in which Portuguese society is to move will have to be decided in an open collision between the classes. But the development of the Portuguese Revolution will be profoundly affected by the course of the neighbouring Spanish revolution. The outcome of a trial of

strength between the working class and the reconstructed capitalist state is not certain. Such is the power of the Portuguese working class that it cannot be excluded that they will be victorious in such a struggle. But if the Communist Party and Socialist Party were completely transformed by the adoption of a Marxist programme and perspective, victory could yet be guaranteed for the Portuguese working class.

The Soares leadership of the Socialist Party allowed the reaction to hide behind its skirts in the run up to and aftermath of the November 1975 left adventure.

Soares was the foremost supporter of Eanes in the presidential elections, but loudly condemned the President when he was summarily dismissed in July. Opposition to the right wing shift in the Socialist Party has been evident in its ranks and even in the national directorate of the party itself.

The Communist Party leadership for its part also bears a direct responsibility for the present agonies of the Portuguese working class and peasantry. Between March and November 1975 it attempted to corner for itself, and its military supporters such as Goncalves, a monopoly of political power, and sought to establish a state along the lines of Eastern Europe or Cuba.

This allowed reaction to mobilise particularly the peasants in the north, and the one million refugees (retornados) from Portugal's former African colonies around a demagogic campaign in the defence of 'democracy'.

The key to resolving the present situation in Portugal

As we go to press, reports have appeared that 75,000 farmworkers in the Alentejo have staged strikes against attacks on the collective farms.

The farmworkers' union claims that 20 of the 400 collective farms set up during the revolution have been broken since the government began using police to supervise the return of farms to their former owners. 13,000 jobs have been lost as a consequence of these measures.

Three hundred thousand acres of land have been returned to their former owners since October. This is more than a third of the total agreed by the Socialists in 1977.

However, the government says that it still plans to take over the big estates totalling 750,000 acres.

lies in the hands of the rank and file of both organisations. They need to be rearmed theoretically with a Marxist programme and a perspective.

The choice which lies before Portugal is either a planned socialist economy together with workers' democracy, or the horror of a regime along the lines of Chile. The prospect of a stable capitalist democracy held out by Soares is completely illusory.

But a planned economy, together with the workers' and peasants' councils, the election of all officials and the right of recall and all the other features of workers' democracy would be like a beacon for the whole of the Iberian Peninsula, and indeed for the whole of the European continent.

It would arm the working class in Portugal to lead behind its banner all the oppressed strata of society—small peasants, the urban middle class and even the retornados. This would in turn provoke a similar movement in Spain which would reverberate throughout the whole of the European continent, East as well as West, and lead to the establishment of a Socialist United States of Europe.

## ITALY

# NEW CRISIS ROCKS ITALIAN CAPITALISM

The announcement by the Christian Democratic [Tory] government's three-year "austerity plan" has provoked a new stage in the crisis which has gripped Italy over the past ten years.

This is by no means the first austerity programme which the Christian Democrats under Andreotti have put forward. Regularly austerity plans have been proposed, but each one has been torn up in the face of working class opposition.

The new plan, drawn up by Treasury Minister Pandolfi, aims to stop any increase in real wages over the next three years and to cut back government spending. The government hopes that this will help raise investment from 38,000 billion lira last year to 62,000 billion in 1981 and in this way produce between 550,000 and 600,000 new jobs.

But these new jobs would only begin to tackle the question of providing work for the 1,700,000 officially unemployed in Italy, 78% of whom are under 29. In Naples alone 200,000 are officially unemployed out of a total population of 1,200,000, with another 200,000 under-employed. However, previous plans to provide work have made no dent in unemployment. In the summer of 1977 647,000 young people signed special government registers in the hope of getting a job; by the end of that year only 1,279 had actually got jobs!

Two years ago in October 1976 8,000,000 workers came out on strike in protest at what an austerity plan was merely rumoured to contain! The collapse of these austerity plans has always sparked off a new political crisis. The present government, Italy's 40th since the fall of Mussolini in 1943, was formed a year ago after the 39th government, also led by Andreotti, had failed to carry through its 1977 austerity plan.

Once again in the past few months the Italian working class has demonstrated its opposition to the capitalists' attempts to cut its living standards. Over the past few months section after section of workers have been involved in struggle—seamen on ferries, airline workers, railway workers, and teachers have all been on strike—even the judges. In November over 3,500,000 workers struck in

Bob Labi

protest against unemployment in the Mezzogiorno, the South of Italy.

At the same time the FLM (Metalworkers' Union) have submitted their claim for their next three-year contract of a L30,000 (£17.80) a month increase and a cut in the working week to 36 hours. The bosses and the government, as expected, are opposed to this claim. But they have been supported by the Communist Party (PCI), the largest workers' party.

The capitalists are demanding cuts in living standards in order to increase their profits. They want cuts in the taxes they pay to "encourage" them to increase investment. Guido Carli, chairman of the Confindustria (Italian CBI) has complained that the fall in investment in the past five years is because the average return on investment has fallen from 10.6% to 6.5% while the cost of financing investments has risen from 7.8% to 16.5%.

The Communist Party leaders, through their policy of attempting to achieve the 'compromesso storico' (the 'historic compromise' between themselves and the Christian Democrats) have acted as an enormous brake on the labour movement. Anxious to form a coalition with the Christian Democrats they have supported each succeeding government in the Parliament since the 1976 elections and sought to restrain the demands of the working class outside. This resulted in the PCI leaders opposing the Metalworkers' call for a 36-hour week. Thus the CP leaders are even to the right of the German Social Democratic leaders who have put the 35-hour week forward in their manifesto for the European elections!

This policy has resulted in a drop in support for the PCI. In the Trentino regional elections last November the PCI's vote dropped from 16% to 10.6%, at the same time as

the Christian Democrats lost their overall majority in the region.

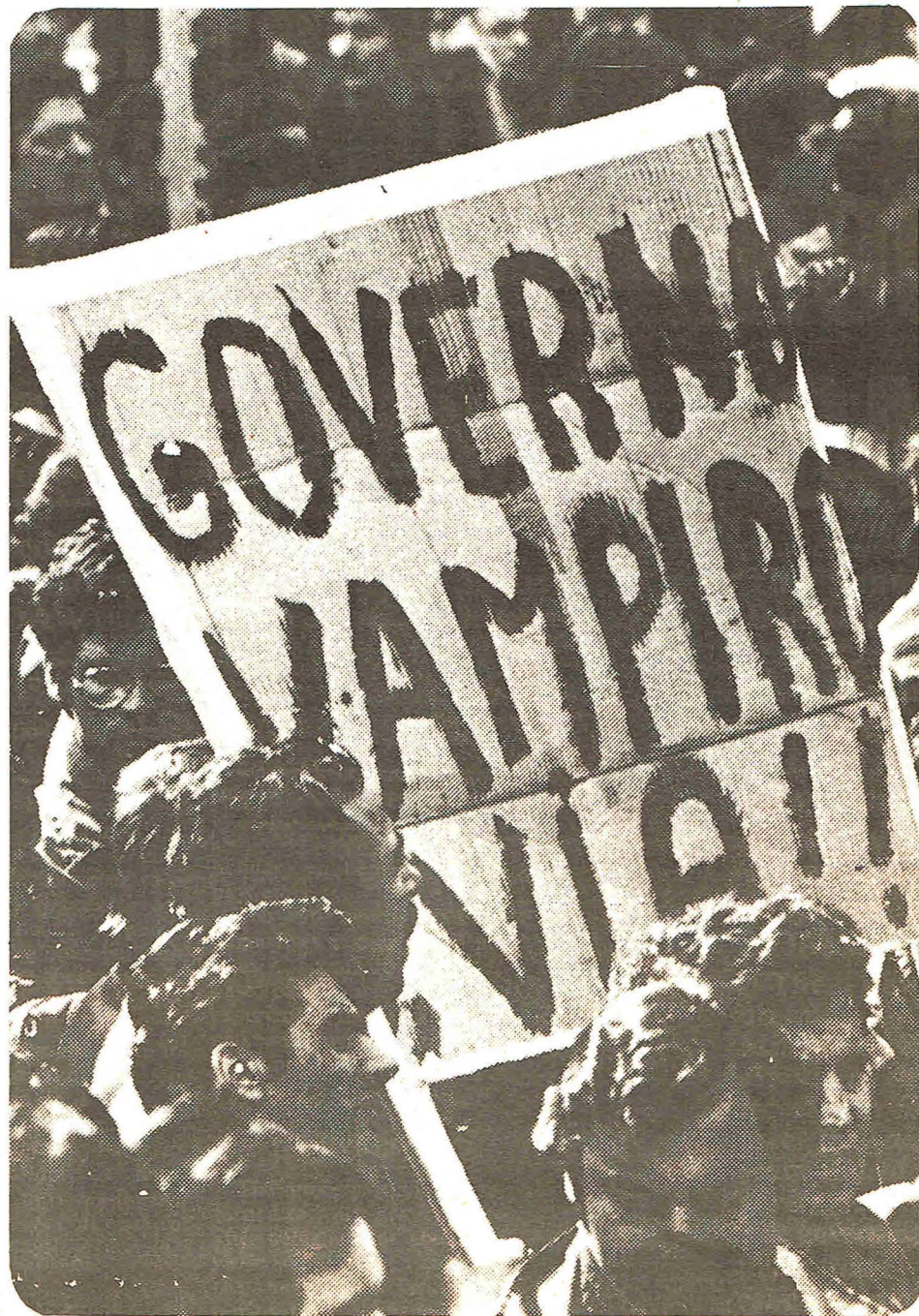
In union elections the PCI has also begun to lose ground, in the Milan Alfa Romeo factory the number of PCI members on the factory council fell from 34 to 18! In the past period the so-called 'autonomous' unions (those not linked to the three big trade union federations), have been gaining support as a result of their willingness to lead struggles. Finally in the last year, for the first time in many years, the PCI membership total fell by over 20,000.

The PCI's leaders' policy of tailending the Christian Democrats has not only led to these organisational reverses but has also resulted in growing discontent inside the Party. This opposition has been reflected in the Central Committee. In this situation the renewed movement of the working class which began last year and the mounting opposition to the government's plans compelled the PCI leaders to move into semi-opposition to the government.

Last September Berlinguer, the PCI leader, made a surprise and sudden attack on "capitalism", in complete contrast to his usual position. But this attempt at carrying out two policies has led the PCI into enormous difficulties. On October 31st the PCI supported, in a Parliamentary vote, the government's economic policy, especially in regard to the then hospital strike. But the PCI controlled trade union CGIL, along with the other unions called a strike in protest at the same government policy for November 9th!

At the present time the PCI is trying to keep its opposition to relatively minor token issues. It has voted against the government over the European Monetary System and its nominations for the heads of three big nationalised industry groups. This is because the PCI leadership is still attempting to form a coalition with the Christian Democrats, at the same time as having to take account of the unrest this policy is creating among its supporters.

This policy of compromise with the capitalist parties, far from advancing the PCI and the working class, has only served to strengthen the government, prolonging its life and disorientating the labour movement. The PCI leaders over the past two years have acted like a second version of the Christian Democratic Party. This accounts for the loss in support in recent elections. If a General Election were held now in all probability the PCI



'Vampire Government Go Away'

## Opposition grows to Communist Leaders' compromise

The renewed movement of the working class which began last year and the mounting opposition to the government's plans compelled the PCI leaders to move into semi-opposition to the government.

obstacle which they face is the power and strength of the Italian working class, which has broken earlier attempts to impose austerity plans. It is for this reason that the bosses have been prepared to use the PCI leaders as a means of holding in check the class, of doing the dirty work of selling austerity to the workers.

At the present time the Italian capitalists don't want the PCI leaders in the government. The PCI leaders are doing their dirty work without receiving the rewards of the "fruits of office".

It will only be after an enormous movement of the Italian workers which threatened the very existence of capitalism that they will be compelled to accept the PCI into a coalition.

But no coalition with the capitalist parties can aid the Italian workers, only a government of the workers' parties, the PCI and Socialists, armed with a socialist programme, can put an end to Italy's continuing crisis and act in the interests of working people.

would lose votes for the first time since the mid-1950s.

Workers and sections of the middle class who voted for the Christian Democrats in the past, and are now discontented, reluctantly cling to this party for want of an alternative. Moreover, a section of PCI voters have swung over to the Socialist Party because it has been putting forward a more radical programme than the PCI.

Over the recent months the Christian Democrats, under-

standing that they have been using the PCI leaders to restrain the working class, have shifted towards the right. But the illusion that they will be able to slash living standards was shattered by the fresh movement of the masses which has taken place and is the cause of the current government crisis.

The Italian capitalists have made it quite clear that their solution to the crisis is an attack on the working class's living standards. But the

# Scottish Referendum

## YES TO AN ASSEMBLY

### Fight for a Socialist Britain

VOTE  
YES  
ON  
MARCH  
1st

The referendum on March 1st 1979 on the Scottish Assembly could mark the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Scottish working class, and could have dramatic repercussions throughout the whole of Britain.

As the referendum draws nearer, opposition to the Assembly from sections of big business and the Tory party grows more and more stri-

By Pat Craven

(Dundee Labour Party)

dent. Yet the Tories have not always been hostile to devolution. Moreover it is only a matter of a few years—during the period of the Heath Tory government—that the capitalists and their press built up the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP). The capitalists hoped that the SNP would become a safe haven for disaffected Tory voters who otherwise may have swung over to Labour.

With the empire lost, and British capitalism the weakest in the industrial world, Scotland's position has fallen into deep decline. Its traditional industries have been starved of investment by the private owners; despite the enormous subsidies they have been handed by the state they have either collapsed or been nationalised just in time to save them from total bankruptcy. In effect Scotland has been de-industrialised.

Job opportunities have disappeared, especially for the youth. Last summer, more than 2,000 young people had

been out of work for over a year, 16% of the total. The overall figure of jobless is 170,000, well above the UK average.

Wages are only slightly below the average, but they are for a longer working week. At the bottom of the scale, 750,000 are officially recognised to be living below the poverty line. Housing in Scotland is a widely-publicised scandal, with at least 160,000 houses officially designated as falling below the government's minimum standards. Worst of all, these problems all tend to be concentrated into particular areas, especially in and around Glasgow. It is a vicious circle of high unemployment, poverty, slums, the worst schools and hospitals, hopelessness and despair.

Traditionally it was the trade unions and the Labour Party that workers looked to tackle these problems, and Scotland provided some of the strongest battalions in the British labour movement. So while the Empire welded the Scottish capitalists and middle class into a close alliance with their English counterparts, the labour movement forged a bond between the Scottish and English workers. These two developments tended to check, although never completely eliminate, a nationalistic sentiment.

The SNP have demagogically tried to use nationalist rhetoric. But their vision is of an independent capitalist

Scotland, financed by North Sea oil revenues, which would provide undreamed-of prosperity for everyone. Their latest manifesto 'Return to Nationhood' which talks of a Scotland "where income and power would be more equitably distributed, where the right to work, to have a decent home and to have reasonable living standards will be the norm and not luxuries".

Despite this rhetoric the Party's opposition to nationalising the major industries, banks, or even the oil, makes it certain that should they ever come to power, their Scotland would still be ruled by the owners of these monopolies. 'Independence' would be a sham, and Scotland's problems would be no nearer a solution.

#### Break-up

But the capitalist and their Tory mouthpieces are now afraid that the growth of nationalism could under certain circumstances threaten the break up of Britain. This feeling was intensified following the October 1974 General Election when the SNP won 30% of the votes.

The idea of 'devolution' was floated in order to head off such a development. But the proposal for some kind of 'self government' also corresponded to the feelings of the majority of Scottish people. The majority are opposed to complete separation at the moment. But they link their problems to the 'remoteness of Westminster' and therefore want a say in deciding the fate of Scotland.

The ruling class miscalculated. What began to happen, as a result of the campaign to popularise devolution, the expectations which had been aroused by the growth of nationalism were transferred to the idea of a Scottish Assembly. It appeared to offer the benefits of Scotland having its own Parliament, without a rupture with the rest of Britain. Whereas opinion polls had shown roughly 20% in favour of total independence, they showed as many as 80% in favour of at least some measure of devolution. It has become a popular demand and has been seen as a means of solving Scotland's economic problems.

Under pressure of the trade unions, the Labour leadership was forced to accept this, and in 1974 reluctantly committed the party to the Scottish Assembly.

The latest proposal on devolution, which is to be voted on on March 1st, is an improvement on previous proposals. Yet it is still far from a genuinely autonomous Parliament. It has very limited powers to intervene in the Scottish economy, and is tied hand and foot to the Westminster government through its dependence on a block

grant to finance all its activities.

A survey showed that 82% of firms were against devolution. The feelings of the ruling class could not be better summarised than in these comments from the firms:

"Any form of devolution for Scotland would inevitably lead to a separatist Scottish state eventually. This state would be neo-Marxist and could only be to the detriment of Scottish business."

"The Scottish Assembly concept is an endeavour by ambitious politically minded people who desire power and who hope to emotionally motivate votes."

These enemies of the labour movement understand better than many of our own leaders the potential platform for socialist ideas that the Assembly offers. The Assembly should have full autonomous powers. Only then could it:

[i] take over the Scottish operations of the big firms, banks and insurance companies, which dominate the economy, with compensation only on the basis of need.

[ii] carry out, through a democratically controlled Scottish Development Agency, a massive programme of re-investment to rebuild Scotland's industrial base,

[iii] place the control and management of industry in the hands of boards democratically elected by the trade union movement,

[iv] use the wealth created in industry to plan the economy in the interests of people, not profit, and provide a decent minimum wage for all workers, for a shorter working week, at least £70 for 35 hours,

[v] undertake a crash programme of public works to build new houses, schools, hospitals and other social necessities,

[vi] take over the big landed estates and provide a secure and decent living for those who work on the land.

If Labour were to ignore the popular demands for an autonomous Assembly and to fail to offer a socialist way out of Scotland's crisis, nationalism would be greatly strengthened and the prospect of a separation, which would divide the workers on either side of the border, would be brought nearer. Recognition of the democratic aspirations of nationalities, even including their right, if a majority so decide, to independence, goes hand in hand with the recognition of the basic unity which binds together the working people of all countries.

If a Labour-controlled Assembly in Edinburgh were to take the lead, far from alienating the workers in the rest of Britain, they would be giving a tremendous boost in the struggle for socialist policies in the country as a whole.



#### Zimbabwe

The Smith regime in Salisbury has just taken the rather optimistic step of publishing a five-year economic plan based on the assumption that the collaborationist coalition of white capitalists and their black stooges will stabilise their rule, end the guerrilla war and become sufficiently 'respectable' internationally to attract an influx of foreign investment.

But many of Smith's own followers are not so sure that the new regime will still be around in five years' time. Last year 'Rhodesia' suffered a record net loss of nearly 14,000 whites who decided to get out of the country before it was too late.

This net outflow meant a 5% drop in the white population to a total of only 1/4 million compared to over 6 million blacks. December alone saw the flood of emigrants swell to a net 2,771—170% more than the previous December.

Clearly the writing is on the wall for the Rhodesian ruling class and the clique of careerist black politicians who desperately placed their stake on the treacherous Internal Settlement with the enemies of the Zimbabwean workers and peasants.

#### INTERNATIONAL NOTES

##### 'Red Brigade'

On January 24th gunmen from the Italian 'Red Brigade' assassinated Guido Rossa, a Communist trade union official. It was the first time that this group had attacked a representative of an Italian workers' organisation. Rossa had identified and testified against a 'Red Brigade' member regarding

the death of former Prime Minister Moro.

The danger of this conflict spreading into the labour movement underlines why Marxists condemn such acts of individual terrorism. On hearing the news of Rossa's death the three main trade union federations called a two-hour general strike.

##### France

Faced with the disastrous prospect of losing 20,000 jobs through redundancies, the French steel workers have found inspiration for their struggles in the strike wave sweeping Britain and the steel workers' strike in Germany.

As a result, the French trade unions are to bring out the metal workers in a one-day strike in mid-February. In addition, local stoppages will take place in a number of steelworks. The plans mark a new attempt at united action by the Com-

munist CGT and the Socialist CFDT. Other unions, including the teachers', have also pledged support for the fight to save jobs.

In words reminiscent of successive British governments, the French government is trying to push through the closure of large plants in this traditional heavy industry with empty promises of providing alternative employment by opening new industries in the steel areas with high unemployment.

#### Turkey

The declaration of martial law in thirteen of Turkey's provinces [see 'Militant' 19th January] has not gone unanswered by Turkish workers. Thousands of workers have staged temporary strikes and called for the free exercise of all democratic rights. The danger to the working class of Prime Minister Ecevit's decision to declare martial law becomes ever more apparent. The right-wing neo-fascist leaders have called for the army to have a free hand against the workers.

#### Jobless

Unless European workers get a shorter working week they will face mass unemployment throughout the 1980s, according to the Swiss Prognosis Economic Institute. The Institute estimates that on the basis of existing policies within ten years there will be over 12 million unemployed in Western Europe. They predict that the highest rate of unemployment will be in Ireland [18.4%] then Holland [15.7%], UK [10.5%], Italy [10.4%], France [9.5%] and the lowest is West Germany [6.9%]. This is the dead-end future that capitalism offers to the European working class.

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

## LETTERS

AUEW  
amalgam-  
ation—  
workers  
don't see  
the benefits

Dear Comrade

I have been reading the 'Militant' for a number of weeks and also the pamphlet 'A Socialist Programme for Engineers'. (I am a member of the CEU.)

While I would agree with most of the demands in the pamphlet, the one which I feel most strongly about, and also the one which I find the most difficult for my members to accept, is full amalgamation at this particular time.

I find this to be the case from experiences encountered on various construction sites nationally.

In South Wales the CEU operate a more-or-less closed shop. Wage rates negotiated are on the whole higher than those that would be negotiated by the AUEW. I find that even though the AUEW has the muscle, their members do not receive as much as they could.

To ask members of the CEU to put with that is not on.

In principle I agree with the amalgamation, but the only way that I feel CEU members would agree to this is if they could see some immediate benefits to their own position, which unfortunately does not appear to be the case at the present time.

I would be grateful if other readers of the paper in the construction or engineering industry would give their comments on this letter.

Yours fraternally  
T Draper  
Swansea

## WORKERS CHALLENGE DEFENCE

Dear Comrades

It was pleasing to see two articles on 'defence' issues in the 'Militant' of 19th January. I should like, if I may, to make several points arising from them.

The initiatives taken by the Lucas and Vickers workers represents surely the biggest step forward for the British trade union movement since the last war. No longer is trade unionism confined to economic demands; workers are demanding that their skills be used for the good of society rather than the right wing dictatorships of the

world who receive the majority of British arms exports.

However, it is essential to link these demands with the demands for alternative economic policies to those currently being pursued.

Who is going to buy the kidney machines Lucas Aerospace workers have said they could produce? Certainly not the British Health Service, at any rate, unless the public expenditure cuts are reversed.

Right though you were to criticise the lunatic waste of the Tornado MRCA, what is even more worrying is the forthcoming decision on what

is to replace the 'outdated' Polaris fleet (incidentally, the four Polaris submarines carry a total of 192 war-heads; each war-head of 200 kilotons, equal to 10 Hiroshimas. Think of it, 1,920 Hiroshimas!)

It is vital that the labour movement decisively rejects any replacements, and unequivocally adopts unilateral nuclear disarmament policies.

The neutron bomb has not been cancelled, only postponed. It is essential that the Labour government categorically refuses to have anything to do with it. It is the nuclear

weapon designed for use on the battlefield, which is precisely why it is dangerous, lowering the threshold between conventional and nuclear war.

It is the labour movements of the western European NATO countries that can stop it.

Yours fraternally  
Stuart Masters  
Bristol University Labour Club and Bristol West CLP

Stopping  
the low-  
paid single  
handed!

Dear Comrades

I was selling 'Militant' outside Central Hall on the big low pay lobby last week. A policeman came up to me and informed me that if I didn't move I would be "obstructing" the demonstrators.

I bet there's a few bosses who wish they could obstruct several thousand strikers single-handed!

Fraternally  
Andy Beadle

## WHO KILLED LEON TROTSKY?

Dear Comrades

The death of Ramon Mercader—Leon Trotsky's assassin—in a Havana clinic recently will certainly add spice to the eternal going on's of politics.

Apparently, so Soviet communiques make out, Mercader died after contracting an obscure form of bone cancer, having undergone treatment at a Havana cancer clinic.

Facts, however, indicate that there is more to this than meets the eye. Firstly, the cancer treatment facilities in the USSR are second to none, so why bother with Cuba? Secondly, Mercader is known not to have been anywhere near Cuba for much of the time supposedly in the clinic!

So what on earth is going on? Nearly 40 years after Trotsky's death it now seems likely that Mercader was

working not for Stalin, but for the Gestapo, and it was they who were responsible for Trotsky's death after a bungled attack by Stalin's security police. (The answer as to why Mercader should oscillate between such political extremes is obscure—and I really do not wish to entangle myself with them in this letter; suffice it to say, that on release from the Mexican prison where he was jailed for the assassination he appears to have been firmly with the left.)

It seems likely now that after his release from prison he began to become disillusioned with the way the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' had evolved, and even began a tendency towards Trotskyism!

So where does that leave us?

It seems likely that Mer-

cadier is best 'dead' for both the East and West. Capitalism does not wish to be blamed for the murder of Trotsky, and certainly does not want to see Stalin relieved of it.

In Moscow, possibly acute embarrassment would follow if it transpired that Trotsky was murdered by the same people responsible for the death of 20 million Soviet Russians.

Only one possibility exists for ascertaining what really happened. Mercader is known to have written memoirs, and these, if not interfered with, will one day enlighten the world as to the intriguing question, "Who killed Leon Trotsky?"

Fraternally  
Michael Krokos  
Cardiff LPYS

The Editor replies: The circumstances surrounding Mercader's exile and recent conflicting reports of his death certainly remain very unclear. The claim that Trotsky was more likely murdered by Hitler's Gestapo than by Stalin's secret police [GPU] was recently made by Roger Boyes in the 'New Statesman' [8 December], and it may be this article which has unfortunately misled comrade Krokos.

Boyes says his story is based on new evidence from "an old Catalan emigré friend" of Caridad, the mother of Trotsky's assassin, Mercader. But he provides absolutely nothing to authenticate this new 'evidence'.

His main argument is based on the assertions that [1] the Gestapo was more efficient than the GPU and therefore more likely to have been responsible; and [2] there is no real evidence linking Mercader with the GPU.

Assertion [1] is very debatable,

and assertion [2] is just not true. Leaving aside the ample evidence at the time which linked the assassination with Stalin, the subsequent evidence of high GPU officials who either defected to the West [e.g. Orlov, Petrov] or were tried as spies in the United States in the 1950s [eg Zborowski, Sobel] provided detailed, multiple confirmation of the GPU's highly organised, systematically planned and utterly ruthless efforts to murder Leon Trotsky.

While the Gestapo certainly murdered many of Trotsky's supporters in Europe, Boyes can only offer the flimsiest of conjectures as to why the Nazis should go to so much trouble to murder Trotsky in remote Mexico. He makes no mention at all of the fact that in 1937/38 Stalin arranged a series of monstrous frame-up trials in which, along with most of the other former leaders of the Bolshevik party, Trotsky was [in absentia] con-

demned to death. For Stalin, Trotsky's murder was the execution of his dictatorial sentence.

It seems strange, to say the least, that when the French Communist Party has recently published the memoirs of the old Mexican CP leader, Valentin Campa, confirming Stalin's responsibility for Trotsky's assassination [see 'Militant' 6 October 1978], and has also for the first time [in 'The USSR and Us'] admitted the real scale of Stalin's terror [an estimated 10 million deaths resulting from the terror of the 1930s!], the 'New Statesman' should choose to publish an article which light-mindedly attempts to relieve Stalin of responsibility for the murder of the one man who tenaciously defended the genuine programme of Marxism against its Stalinist perversion.

What is the purpose of Boyes' "misinformation"?

## 'Morning Star'—a different conclusion

Dear Comrades

After reading Roger Silverman's article on the 'Spartacist Uprising of 1919' (Militant 438) I must make a comment on the article which appeared in the Morning Star (13/1/79): 'The Revolution of Autumn 1918' by Jack Cohen.

Apart from some factually correct information, dates etc, there is a total lack of Marxist explanation of why the revolution failed. It would need a full article to go into every point, but an indication

of the confusion in this article is shown in the summing up:

"The lessons are clear. The majority of the people have to be won for struggle for political advance through some form of broad alliance. The state apparatus must be transformed into an instrument serving the advance of socialism either by a national assembly or parliament or on a more direct basis—government based on Workers and Soldiers' Councils for instance.

"The form will be dictated by the circumstances and traditions of the country concerned."

You pays your money and takes your confusion. The Morning Star claims to be 'The one that's different' and when it comes to giving a clear Marxist explanation and answers it certainly is.

Fraternally  
Bob Faulkes  
Hackney Central CLP

Thatcher says this  
makes us  
strike-happy!

Dear Editor

I would like to comment on Lynn Walsh's interesting article: "Thatcher peddles old myth about strikes" ['Militant' 12th January].

Thatcher's statement that strikers live off the state is certainly a myth—doesn't she know that the person on strike gets no benefit? And you could hardly say that the striker's family "lives" off the state, on the amount that is paid to them.

When the breadwinner in our family [two adults and two children] was on strike for just over four weeks we received the "massive" sum of £29—not per week, but for the whole period. I might add that we had no other money. Is that what Thatcher calls "living" off the state?

We were lucky in that we had friends and family to help us. There are a lot of people not so fortunate.

There is not a striker that I have spoken to who wants to strike; no one wants to go without their wages. But when labour is the only thing you have got to barter with, what else can you do?

If Thatcher and Co. win the next election, we will have one hell of a battle on our hands to keep the right to strike.

Yours fraternally  
Pat Bayle  
Wokingham Constituency Labour Party

'OBSTACLES CAN  
BE DRIVEN  
THROUGH'

Dear Comrades

It now seems likely that if the Tories come to power at the next election, anti-trade union legislation is on the order of the day.

While all socialists would oppose such legislation, in actual fact what would be the result if secret ballots were forced on trade unionists before strike action was taken?

Obviously the Tory press would be used to the full before any ballot, with the object of influencing the outcome. But would it make a great deal of difference?

Before both miners' strikes of 1972 and '74, ballots took place. Prior to our ballots the press spewed out their lies and distortions; how the majority of miners were against strike action, how we

had a justified claim but should act 'responsibly'.

Well we did. And the result? Majorities in favour of strike action both times.

If Thatcher and the Tories think that working men and women are going to lie down and accept further cuts in their living standards they can't be living in the same world as me.

Only when there are a majority behind any action, can the outcome be favourable. While anti-union legislation would be an obstacle, obstacles can be driven around, over or through.

Yours fraternally  
M Evans  
S Wales NUM

# FIGHTING FUND:

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The bosses' lie machines are owned by wealthy monopolies

Only YOU, our readers can build an alternative

"Everyone is fighting everyone" is the way an 'Observer' commentator tried to portray the present situation in Britain, clouding the real issues at stake.

'Militant' gives a different analysis—not "everyone against everyone" but the two main classes forming up behind the battle lines for another major confrontation in their unending war. We point to the enormous significance of the skirmishes already taking place as an indication of the preparedness of workers to engage in combat.

'Militant' not only clarifies the picture from the standpoint of the working class but explains what is needed to win a lasting victory from the battles ahead. But our voice is small compared to the giant propaganda machine of the enemy—the Tory mass media. It is wheeled like a Trojan horse into the camp of the working class with the aim of setting worker against worker and destroying the united strength of the labour and trade union movement.

Vast numbers of copies were sold to public sector workers last Monday (22nd) and since. They explained not only what is happening up and down the country, but where the money must come from to pay the £60 for a 35-hour week demanded by the low paid worker.

The 'Militant' also explains each week where the money must come from to build the paper itself—from YOU—the reader! We have no advertising or aid from big business in the way that the Tories and their front organisations have from notorious firms like

Associated Biscuits. And the donations towards our £85,000 1979 target and still coming in very slowly.

We have heard of a £400 donation being promised. We know that the big 'Militant' rally in Birmingham raised nearly £125 in a collection, £31.65 on the door and £48 from various stalls and side-shows. We have also had news of nearly £50 collected from students in Tyneside.

A full-time worker for the G&MWU promised "a day's pay" for the 'Militant' and suggested anyone else getting paid for January 22nd should do likewise. At least one demonstrator gave £1 for his copy of 'Militant' and there must have been many others prepared to do the same. But...none of this money has reached us this week, leaving the total as low as £467.64.

It included £130—proceeds of the 'Need Not Profit' cartoon book allocated to the areas. (Much, much more should be on its way by now—there never was an easier way of raising funds

than by selling this excellent book to everyone you know and making sure the cash reaches us straight away!). It also included £20 collected amongst Tyneside CPUSA members, £5 from Merseyside NGA members, £1 from Knowsley NALGO supporters and £7 from Hillingdon Marxist Discussion Group. £5 came from SE Essex LP Young Socialists, £4.35 collected at Blackpool LPYS meeting, £9 from a Tyneside YS social and £2.80 from Jarrow LPYS members.

Among the individual donations were £7 from B&F Kidd (Wandsworth G&M WU), £5 from P Cowley (London), I Simpson (Coventry), K Allen and J&B Heathcote (Newcastle), G Fowler (Caerphilly LPYS), R Davies (Machen LP, Dist Cllr.) and 'a Dundee Councillor'. Coventry student, I Barrett gave £4, I Stiff and A Blake of Ipswich £3.65 and £3.57, P Pendle of Southend TSSA—£3, V Livesey (Liverpool) and A McNeil donated £2, W Wilson (Newcastle) £.76 and B Poole (London)

£1.14.

Some of the £1 contributors this week were:—F Stevens (Gloucester LP), R Gee (ISTC) and T Upham (SCPS)—both of Stevenage, S McAvey (Wood Green CLP), H Saunders (London), J Humphries (Ealing CLP), G White (Paisley Labour Club) and A Dutton (Youth Officer, St Helens CLP).

Many thanks to every contributor, including those who helped with things like:—'Disco' and 'Meal' in Paisley (which raised £20 between them), the Ipswich Weekly Raffle (£2.20), selling pension tickets (Stevenage £2), collecting "pints for the 'Militant'" (£3 West London, £4.35 'Belle Vue, Clapham) and 'Drinks Levy' (Gloucester £1) and taxi fares (Dundee £2-50).

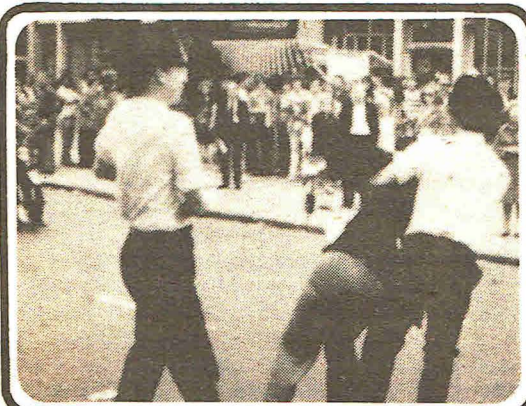
**Don't delay making your contribution. The longer you leave it the harder gets the battle. So...get on target now with the Militant's Fighting Fund!**

## ANTI-FASCISTS FINED £700 FOR BEING INNOCENT

On 22nd July last year, four members of the Tottenham Labour Party (Cherrie McAskill, Vince Gillespie, Norman and Sheila Peacock) plus a member of the Anti-Nazi League were arrested in the Tottenham High Road.

They were charged under the Public Order Acts with causing an obstruction and using insulting behaviour (see 'Militant' 28th July, 1978). The five were bailed to appear at Tottenham Magistrates Court—it was five months before the case could be heard. The hearing started in December, but because of the Christmas recess was only completed in January.

During the three-day hearing, the police gave evidence to the effect that they could see and hear shouts and gestures of abuse from the anti-National Front demonstrators but not from the National Front! The five defendants produced photographs in the court to substantiate their claims. They also called several witnesses who were present when the arrests took place. They testified to the excessive force used to arrest Sheila Peacock, and gave evidence that everyone of those arrested acted in a quiet and peaceful manner throughout the period of the leafletting and demonstration.



After forty minutes deliberation the three magistrates gave the verdict. They dismissed the case! The defence lawyer asked the Chairman of the Bench for costs (i.e. the costs of the case to be borne by the police) but the bench refused!

The five were in effect fined over £700—the total bill from the defendants' solicitor—for being innocent. 'Justice' finds a person who has no case to answer, guilty, by charging them £700 for the privilege of having the case dismissed.

Under the capitalist system the law and the courts that administer it are weighted in favour of those who can afford to pay for justice. The labour movement should take up the issues raised by this, and similar cases. Only through donations and support from the labour and trade union movement were the five defendants able to clear their names and show up the bias of the police and the law as it stands today.

The Tottenham Defence Committee, representing the five defendants, are appealing to the labour and trade union movement for money. Several CLPs and trade unions and individuals have already given donations. A collection of £35 was raised at a Greater London Region conference on 'The Police and Magistrates'. The GLRC of the Labour Party have promised further support for the Defence Fund. Any donations raised by the movement should be sent to Diane Andrews, Treasurer, Tottenham Defence Committee, Trades Hall, Bruce Grove, London N17.

**Vince Gillespie and Cherrie McAskill**

(Tottenham Constituency Labour Party)

**OLDHAM Militant Public Meeting. 'Fight Low Pay'.** Hear: Geoff Stout (NALGO, Bradford); Local NUPE speaker. 8.00 pm, Thursday 8th February, St Andrew's Parish Hall (off Middleton Road), Oldham

**SUNDERLAND Marxist Discussion Group.** 8.00 pm, Wednesdays. 14 Feb: 'The Cuban Revolution'; 28th Feb: 'The Crisis in Shipbuilding'; 14th March: Trotsky's pamphlet: 'The Transitional Programme'. 28th March: 'Micro-processors and Unemployment' For further details contact Diane English, Sunderland 44365

**CHESTER-LE-STREET Marxist Discussion Group** 8.00 pm, Mondays. 5th Feb: 'The labour movement in the coming years'; 12 Feb: 'Industrial democracy—what is it?'; 19th Feb: 'Accountability and democracy in the Labour Party'; 26th Feb: 'Parliamentary democracy; its uses and limitations'

### YOUTH CAMPAIGN

**Youth Campaign Against Unemployment Demonstration and rally** Saturday 24th February. Assemble: 12.30 pm, Platt Fields. Rally: 2.30 pm, Hulme Labour Club. Speakers: Rodney Bickerstaff (NUPE national officer, local authority workers); Phil Frampton (Labour Party Young Socialists' National Committee); Joe Marino (Executive, Bakers' Union); Malcolm Clark (Moss Side LPYS).

**MANCHESTER Youth Campaign Against Unemployment public meeting.** Speakers: Dave Saunders (NUPE area officer); Malcolm Clark (Moss Side LPYS). 8.00 pm, Wednesday 7th February, Star and Garter, Fairfield Street, Manchester

### CLASSIFIED

**Labour Party Young Socialists/PNP [UK] Youth Movement present:** Unified Force—live reggae funk plus disco. Saturday 10th February, 7.30 pm, Students' Union, South Bank Poly, Rotary Street, S.E.1. (near Elephant and Castle). Admission: £1

**SOUTHGATE LPYS present** "Soul Skank '79". Disco and Bar. Friday 2nd February, 8 pm to 1 am. Upstairs in 'The Nightingale' pub, Wood Green High Road, N22. Tickets 80p. On the door £1. Close to Wood Green Tube station.

**THE HAVANT TRADES COUNCIL** sends New Year greetings to trade unionists and their families everywhere.

## LONDON 'MILITANT' PUBLIC MEETING

'The Iranian Revolution' Hear: Ted Grant [Militant Editorial Board] and a speaker from 'Campaign Against Repression in Iran'. Friday 23 February 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 [near Holborn Tube]. Iranian students and workers especially welcome.

# TIMES LOCK-OUT

## -clear, united lead needed

By Peter Jarvis

(London NGA)

Thursday 25th January saw 1,000 print workers take to the streets to protest against the continuing closure of 'The Times', 'Sunday Times', and three supplements.

If a lorry driver stops lorries entering a factory he is a criminal. But Lord Thomson, who has closed one of the world's best-known papers, with 4,000 jobs lost, is a 'hero', "taking a stand for individual rights".

If he wins, the other press barons will follow suit, and this would mean 50,000 jobs going on national newspapers alone. This shutdown is not caused by workers, but a Canadian multinational with profits last year of over £120 million.

If the demonstration had

been a handful of well-off women protesting against trade unionists it would have made the headlines. It is in the interests of the press to play down this issue.

At present, unfortunately, so are the unions. They say the dispute is a gradual lockout, with 381 shut out in the first three weeks, 3,084 by the twelfth week.

Instead of fighting on the old workers' adage 'An injury to one is an injury to all' they hope to last out longer than the management; they are either finding members alternative jobs or paying, in some cases, £70 p.w. dispute benefit.

This tactic will lead to confusion and demoralisation. On the demonstration, many of those involved, when asked what was happening either replied that they 'did

not know' or 'nothing is happening'. Some workers who are paying £5 a week into a fund know nothing of what is going on.

**Positive action must be taken explaining the real facts and mobilising all print workers behind this battle. A united approach by the unions is a crying need in this fight.**

The demonstration was a step in the right direction. It was organised by the print unions in London, and it also saw the launching of 'The Times Challenger', a paper produced by the unions.

Along with the Challenger, journalists on the 'Sunday Times' have produced the 'Sunday Times Reporter'. This initiative proves one thing clearly: multinational owners are not necessary in the production of a newspaper.

The press barons sit snug in their offices or on yachts soaking up the sun and the profits. As long as the union leaders accept management's divine right to publish there will be no effective answer.

The unions must demand that press facilities be taken into public ownership and used to provide access for the many groups who are at present denied press freedom. If this became a major plank of the campaign, Thomson would come running to the negotiating table.

Tony Benn has called for the BBC to take over 'The Times'. After all it is a public institution. This would be a welcome step compared with the present position.

We should not forget, however, the role the BBC plays, either in the 1926 General Strike, giving out false reports, or the lies and distortions about the present waves of strikes. Only with a workers' paper like the 'Militant' can workers' true voice be heard.

The national press have for far too long been allowed to mould our thoughts by bending or deleting important aspects of the news. It is about time this capitalist monopoly was buried for good.



Print workers demonstrate against 'Times' lockout, November 1978. Photo: MILITANT

# NUJ Fight not over

The NUI strike is over, but not all journalists are back at work.

On the South Coast, management at Beckett Newspapers are trying to extract a 'no-strike' pledge from ten trainee journalists on the Eastbourne and Worthing Gazette/Herald group. The ten were sacked during the

strike and, ignoring the no-victimisation agreement for ending the strike, the bosses are insisting that they re-apply for their jobs and are subject to vetting. Both chapels are completely opposing this and are considering strike action.

At Stratford Express, London, the strike goes on.

Management have threatened to close one of the group's papers.

But the biggest battle is at the 'Nottingham Evening Post'. Here the anti-union management have completely flouted the terms of the settlement formula and assurances given by the employers' organisation, the News-

paper Society, by locking out strikers and advertising their jobs.

The 'Evening Post' NUI chapel have made the following appeal:

Twenty eight colleagues have been sacked by the 'Nottingham Evening Post' for obeying the NUI strike call. Management say they

will not be reinstated.

This is the first time in the NUI's history that a newspaper employer has attempted such a blatant attack on trade union rights.

It is not just an attack on our members at Nottingham. It is a challenge to the right to strike and a threat to the whole structure of Britain's trade unions.

### Blacking

Nottingham is the test case that the NUI cannot afford to

lose. Failure would set a dangerous precedent.

Nottingham is spear-heading an all-union blacking campaign against T Bailey Forman, publishers of the 'Evening Post'. Plans already include the launch of our own newspaper.

We need your help—cash and pickets. Address for cash: Carl Piggins, 14 Jenned Road, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 8FT. Make cheques payable please to: "Nottingham NUI Dispute Fund".

Julian McKittrick (NUI)

BY JANE JAMES [APEX]

## working in the union

This week, Jane James, APEX staff rep at British Aerospace, Stevenage, describes how the staff union conducted their pay campaign, and recruited new members in the process. If you want to comment on this, or other issues facing you in your trade union, write to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

As it neared 2.30pm on Tuesday, office workers at British Aerospace, Stevenage, cleared and locked their desks. We made our way to the clock machine. We were attending a mass meeting called by the unions, which, even though only due to last an hour, was quite a revolutionary event in the company.

For the first time that anyone can remember, all the staff unions—ASTMS, AUEW-TASS, APEX, (weekly and monthly branches) inspectors, and MATSA—have got together to formulate a joint wage claim for 1979. Even though the unions had explained to management that we wanted 20%, no reply had been given and the members were naturally annoyed. This was partly a protest and partly a communications meeting.

As a staff rep, I had been dashing around all the offices in my building telling members the meeting was on. Now they emptied into the corridors. No one knew how many would turn up but we were all surprised. About 2,000 people pouring out of the factory was quite a sight. There was still that number

again inside who weren't in the unions.

The meeting decided unanimously to continue fighting united—all the staff unions together—and to hold another meeting next week if nothing happened. 'Popular' opinion claims that such action would put workers off unions, but the opposite happened. In just one week all the unions had a flood of application forms. People who I had been trying to get in the union for ages were saying: "If I join now, can I come out with you next week?" and "Now the unions are together and doing something, I'll join". My union signed up fifty members!

The meeting on Thursday decided to escalate action each week until we get an answer from the company. When I got back to work more staff were signing up into the union.

We still have a long way to go: we need a proper joint staff committee, with funds; we need to join up with the shop floor unions, and we have to keep recruiting. But more has happened in a few weeks, in many ways, than in a few years!

## WANDSWORTH COUNCIL WORKERS

### NO FATHER CHRISTMAS ON THE CHEAP!

Following the second heavy fall of snow in London this winter 130 workers in six of Wandsworth Council's street-cleansing depots were told on January 23rd that unless they were prepared to go out 'snow clearing' they would be sent home without pay.

The job description for these workers—which only management have a copy of—includes the sentence: "they will be required to carry out winter services". This could mean anything from planting Christmas trees to wearing a red suit and white beard.

The grievance of the workers is that if they did 'snow clearing' they would get a bonus payment which would be only about half of what the highways workers get, and in turn caretakers and others asked to this work would get only about half as much as them. Moreover an agreement exists which stipulates that workers unable to carry out their normal work because of inclement weather must be

paid their normal wages.

Following the refusal to carry out management's instructions, the workers in one depot at Northcote Road were in effect locked out. When they heard of this all the cleansing workers then came out on strike.

By Dennis English (Shop steward, Wandsworth Council workers)

They put up picket lines on the main council depots.

One depot contained the refuse section and the fuel point, another the mountain of rock salt for the roads, while the largest one holds the sewers, highways and boundary supplies, mechanical workshop, street lighting and social service drivers' sections. By 9 am on the morning of the action, meetings had taken place and all workers employed in the depots agreed not to cross the picket lines.

The 250 workers now involved were allowed to report for work in the normal way. However they refused to go out of the depots to work

which would have meant crossing the picket line.

Shop stewards demanded full pay for these workers. This issue must be settled, before any agreement is entered into about the 130 involved in the snow-clearing issue. So far management have refused to concede this demand.

Mass meetings have taken place, voting unanimously in favour of continued refusal to cross the picket lines and to remain in the depots. The Tory councillors, in a meeting with shop stewards, first of all refused to pay the workers who remained in the depots. But after negotiations they have agreed to re-consider the issue.

The shop stewards have attempted over a period to unify the workers in these depots. But it has taken the attacks of the management to cement the workers together in this struggle. We must win this battle and at the same time maintain the unity that has been established.

# LORRY DRIVERS SHOW STRENGTH

## Bosses lying and bluffing

On Friday 19th January, haulage bosses in the King's Lynn area set up a meeting in an attempt to make it appear that a majority of drivers in the area wanted an immediate return to work.

Among those not invited were your local 'Militant' correspondent and any other lorry drivers whom the bosses knew would not toe their line.

It was presented as a meeting of local lorry drivers; in fact local lorry drivers were in the minority. Those who did attend included foremen and office staff of haulage firms, some fitters and several mini-bus loads of drivers from a scab firm outside the area which is still working.

I was in our local strike HQ when reports of this meeting reached us. All the drivers I spoke to fully realised that this elaborate rigmarole was a measure of the haulage owners' desperation—the meeting's vote to 'return to work' was meaningless.

The T&GWU organised a mass meeting of about 500 drivers the next day. David Kearns, organiser for No. 10 district, made a promise to the meeting that under no circumstances would he be

party to any agreement under which we went back to work for less than £65 basic; "No agreement even for £64.99," he said.

With reference to the widespread rank and file mood that all transport, including all of BRS and "Own Account" firms should be out, he said that if there

were a total transport stoppage this would not affect the haulage owners' total profits for the whole year. The same amount of goods would be transported in, for instance, ten months as would have been transported in twelve months if it were not for the strike. It is far better that the haulage owners should see

work normally done by them being done by "Own Account" firms, he claimed.

There are two things wrong with his argument. It assumes that this strike will not cause any total loss in production which I don't think is true; production of goods, especially perishable goods, will be less over the whole year and

profits will be hit harder the longer the strike continues, which is of course the only thing which will force the bosses to give in.

He also ignores the enormous pressure on the Road Haulage Association from factory-owners, their customers, to settle this dispute. Pressure on a factory through "secondary picketing" is the most powerful weapon that we have.

David Kearns asked for and received a vote of authority for the local strike committee to negotiate a return to work for firms who sign the minimum agreement. He said that when the owners of one firm see other lorries on the road this will put them under pressure to sign.

Many drivers I spoke to felt uneasy about this. The mood on the picket line in King's Lynn demands that there should be intensification of strike action.

Although we received assurances that there would be no movement of traffic until a majority of firms had signed up, there are risks in some firms going back while others are still out.

Drivers of some firms may

become isolated when the majority have signed.

The initiative for local agreements has come from the union leadership. If it fails, the membership will not readily forgive and the cause of trade union solidarity in our industry will have been put back many years.

A local haulage owner, Maurice Loades, is reported ('Guardian' 16.1.79) as saying that his drivers receive a basic wage of £106 pw. As his drivers are under the impression that they have been receiving a basic wage of £53 p.w. and this is borne out by the evidence of their pay packets, the T&GWU is now engaged in recovering the hundreds of pounds back pay that Maurice Loades owes!

The lying and bluffing that the bosses go in for in order to maintain their power is in contrast to the power that we lorry drivers have discovered when organised in our trade unions. Whatever the outcome of this strike we will never forget that our power is real and that the bosses' power is dependent on lies and deception.

By Tim Webb (T&GWU 10/28A)



## PRESS REPORTS— NOTHING LIKE THE TRUTH

At the Cadbury's factory in Birmingham, according to last week's papers, "200 women chased away the lorry drivers' pickets".

As usual, the press reports are based more on wishful thinking and distortion than on actual fact.

A small number of pickets from T&GWU 5/35 branch were outside the factory. At dinner time, a handful of women, accompanied by line managers, came out carrying ready-made placards (presumably made up in work time). The women, egged on by managers, charged the picket line, waving umbrellas and shouting abuse.

Only twelve women were

actively involved; the hundred and eighty-eight was presumably the workers out on their lunch-break, who stood watching.

The pickets were certainly taken by surprise, but by no stretch of the imagination were they 'frightened off'. They didn't leave their posts!

The next day 5/35 branch sent forty pickets to Cadbury's, to make sure the line stayed solid. A few women came out, but didn't venture to interfere. Disappointing for some: the TV cameras were there in advance to witness the 'spontaneous' demonstration.

The Cadbury's plant in Morden, Cheshire, has been

completely closed by North-West T&GWU pickets. Management in Birmingham have been muttering dire warnings about lay-offs. But their propaganda and encouragement only managed to produce this pathetic showing.

The majority of Cadbury workers were clearly not taken in by their 'blame the workers' campaign.

More and more workers have had enough of the ranting of the bosses and their newspapers. The ludicrous headlines they made out of this story only undermines any trust workers ever put in them.

A Cadbury's shop steward

Anton McCabe [Labour and Trade Union Group] spoke to Billy Bittles, chairman of the road haulage strike committee in Northern Ireland.

There are about 5,000 men out in Northern Ireland. Blacklegging is going on in some of the rural areas where there are what we call 'cowboys' operating—a lot of small owner-drivers. Organisation down there has tended to be weak.

The men are angry, determined but I'd say above all, confident. Picketing is going strong here—especially our flying pickets, what the TV has christened 'secondary picketing'.

## "No such thing as secondary picketing"

Jimmy Gouldbourne, chairman, Merseyside T&GWU 6/541 commercial services branch, spoke to Terry Harrison for 'Militant'.

From the start we have allowed delivery of goods such as hospital supplies, livestock and animal feed.

The driver of a farm vehicle, or a vehicle looking for dispensation, will report to our clearing house in Liverpool. We have people there all day long to issue dispensation notices.

After a meeting with the National Farmers' Union and the Agricultural Workers, we have an official of theirs who from this morning will sit with our vetting committee and tell us whether the application is

The employers here have real anti-working class attitudes. We feel that a small number of reactionary employers are holding up a settlement. They are still back in Victorian days, with the horse-and-cart mentality. I suspect some of them hope to embarrass a Labour government.

There have been dozens of cases of lorries running straight at pickets—especially at Larne, Belfast and Newry. They drive straight off the boats at our men at top speed.

Some of us have got anonymous threatening phone calls and letters. This is influencing the men to fight even harder.

Drivers here get from £6 to £10 less than in the rest of the UK. Our top-line basic is £53, going down to £49 for the lower-paid drivers.

We have about 14 members on the regional strike committee. They represent all the areas and come on and go off as needed—there is no 'constitution' of numbers, just what we need.

We are determined to fight for our demand here.

## NOTHING MOVES

According to a spokesman for the lorry drivers' strike committee, the drivers in the region are as militant as ever.

Over 65 companies in the Tyneside area alone have already conceded the £65. Last Monday the strike committee withdrew all concessions and dispensations, and the pickets stopped everything for the day, to show the employers that they were determined to get £65 all round.

"The longer this strike, the more militant we will become," their spokesman said. "Until there are some moves by the RHA we will continue to repeat this kind of action."

else. There is no such thing as "secondary picketing" as far as we are concerned.

Personally, I've been working on the Liverpool Docks for 35 years; if that's not my place of work, I don't know whose it is.

## SACKED FOR SOLIDARITY

On 9th January, a crane-driver Earl Spiers was sacked by Lee Bright Bars Ltd, Warrington.

He had refused to unload a lorry which had crossed the lorry drivers' picket, and was given two weeks' wages in lieu of notice for this act of basic trade union solidarity.

Immediately, the Warrington lorry drivers' T&GWU branch established a 24-hour picket on the gate. To their great credit, the T&GWU branch committee have said they'll maintain the picket, even after their own claim is settled, until Earl is re-instated. Such unity is the only way to defeat bloody-minded Victorian management.

This fight is not just about one man. It concerns every trade unionist's right to take

sympathy action without fear of victimisation.

There must be a flood of protests over this sacking. Fellow-workers at Lee Bright Bars must ensure that their shop stewards call a mass meeting to plan solidarity action. Today it's Earl Spiers, but tomorrow management will attack other trade unionists.

Amalgamated Society of Wire-drawers and Kindred Workers' members throughout Warrington and elsewhere must organise petitions, letters and resolutions to the national leadership, demanding official backing for this member. The Warrington District Committee must be bombarded with letters from members in the factories, calling on them to reverse

their decision not to officially support Earl. ASW&KW shop stewards and members must fight for members' branch meetings to discuss this matter.

Trade unionists everywhere should call on their leaders to organise blacking of Lee Bright Bars. Immediate action could ensure an early victory. Also, funds to help publicise the case and aid Earl Spiers are urgent.

Please send cash, messages of support and copies of resolutions to ASW&KW, c/o 2 Latham Avenue, Latchford, Warrington.

Members of the Wire-drawers' Union spoke to Richard Venton

## DUNLOP SPEKE-

# WORKERS PREPARE TO FIGHT SACKINGS

**"Pure speculation"! That was Dunlop management's reaction to last October's press reports, announcing the imminent closure of the Speke tyre plant. Now a further 3,000 redundancies have been announced.**

It won't be an easy passage for management. They face the total opposition of the workforce. An action committee has already been formed to fight the plans.

Arthur Todd, chairman of the joint shop stewards' committee, explained that management plan to transfer some of the work to other Dunlop factories around the country. "So you can see the importance of blacking stuff—materials or plant—going out."

Arthur pointed out that a modern plant had been built

**Arthur Todd**  
Chairman, Dunlop Speke JSSC, talks to Militant

in Washington, Co Durham, and £35 million has been invested at Fort Dunlop, Birmingham, over the last three years.

"Management has got a cheek to compare us, in terms of efficiency, with these factories, when over the past ten years we have seen investment cut back at Speke."

The other factor was said to be the parlous state of the market. The company claim-

ed there is an overcapacity in the industry.

They complained to the government about the dumping of cheap tyres, demanding controls. But as Arthur revealed, "One of their own companies, the United Tyre Company, has been marketing these tyres and selling them in opposition."

He supported the demand for the 35-hour week, as a means of saving jobs, but felt it should be a campaign waged throughout the whole of the rubber industry.

A united campaign, coming from the combine, would be the best guarantee of preventing management from splitting the ranks of the labour force. "One of the main points we've discussed is the question of getting support from the dock workers and the lorry drivers, and other trade unionists in the area."

Support is rolling in, including many local Labour Parties. The Garston Labour

Party and LPYS are organising a public meeting in the area on the issue.

Although he had not considered the question before, he did not think that the nationalisation of the industry under workers' control would offer a solution to the problem.

'Militant' believes that nationalisation, under workers' control, is crucial. Not until the commanding heights of industry are brought into public ownership can we begin to solve the problems facing working people.

The whole of the labour force, not just the stewards, must be involved in ensuring that the plant, machinery and finished products are retained. If workers sit at home, time and the media can erode their will and confidence.

These are the lessons of other redundancy fights. We feel it is important that the stewards consider them, if they are to win.

# Militant

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## TORY WAR

continued from front page  
But hardly a peep about the Aberdeen picket who was killed.

Where were the indignant headlines when lorry driver pickets in South Wales were shot at a few weeks ago? Imagine the screeching headlines if the boot had been on the opposite foot and someone had died through the lorry drivers' action.

No wonder one picket at Tilbury told a 'Financial Times' reporter [26th January] that he would not talk to him because: "the newspapers told a pack of lies."

But these lies are for a purpose. They are preparing the ground for more vicious attacks by a future Tory government on the trade unions. Thatcher has declared war on the unions as her recent TV broadcast showed.

One of her advisors, Tory MP Angus Maude, has suggested that the funds of the unions should be grabbed if members come out on strike 'unofficially'. In other words he wants another Industrial Relations Act with the unions forced to police their members on pain of state confiscation of their funds.

The press has waded in with suggestions that the employers organise anti-strike funds ['Observer'] and 'volunteers' to break strikes as in 1926 ['Evening Standard']. This, the bosses hope, would make it possible to ruthlessly slash workers' living standards.

But the Tories' plans can be scotched now if the organisations of the 12 million strong labour and trade union movement take up the fight.

The General Council of the TUC must make it clear that the full power of the movement will be brought into play, as with the 'Pentonville Five', dockers, jailed under the Tories' Industrial Relations Act, if any attempt is made to put further legal shackles on the unions.

At the same time a campaign must be waged to stop the retreat of the government in the face of the onslaught by the capitalists and their Tory henchmen.

Labour Parties should inundate the NEC with protests about Callaghan's statement on picketing.

No to any attacks on picketing rights or any trade union rights! For a socialist programme, implemented by the Labour government, to kill the anti-union campaign stone dead.

That is the way to condemn Thatcher and the Tories to oblivion!



Unity is strength: lorry drivers and train drivers picketing at the Stratford freightliner depot

Photo: MILITANT

# RAIL WORKERS IN ANGRY MOOD

The press have been frantically trying to give the impression that the trouble on the railways is over. But with the present mood of the workers on British Rail and London Transport, nothing could be further from the truth.

At a mass meeting at Liverpool Street, ASLEF General Secretary Ray Buckton attempted to justify the pause in our fight for pay increases in recognition of increased productivity and responsibility.

But speaker after speaker from the floor criticised the handling of the dispute. Why take the issue back to the

## MOOD

By Martin Elvin  
Stratford ASLEF

tribunal which last time ignored our claim? Why is no further strike action planned?

There is nothing worse for morale than calling members out on strike and then calling off the action without any guarantees.

Why was Ray Buckton making light of management's proposals to attack our manning levels and conditions, and hinting that we should at least consider them? Members are deter-

mined that history must not repeat itself in another defeat. The mood is a fighting one.

Already ASLEF members on the South Eastern are planning strike action on 21st February, while the lads on South Western are almost certain to strike again very soon, unofficially if necessary.

We want the 10% on basic pay, without strings attached, and no loss of men or conditions. We must remind the leadership of that in no

uncertain terms.

We should be prepared to take a stand in the way our Southern Region members have. They should not be left to go it alone.

The present attitude of British Rail and London Transport management means that we face tough battles to maintain what we have and to improve pay and conditions.

It is vital that we forge the closest unity, regardless of which company we work for and whether we are in NUR, TSSA or ASLEF. We must force our leadership to fight to safeguard our interests at all times.

## LORRY DRIVERS

The lorry drivers are on the way to total victory. The employers have accepted that the suggestion of £64 for 40 hours recommended by the South West arbitration tribunal should be applied nationally.

This is a complete climb down by the haulage bosses in the Road Haulage Association who declared only a matter of days ago that they would not budge from their offer of £60. The £64 represents an increase of about 21%. See page 15 for details of the magnificent lorry drivers' strike, which will serve as an example to other workers who are fighting for a living wage.

## SCHOOL-KIDS SUPPORT WORKERS

As we go to press we have received a report that a group of school children in Haringey, North London, will be lobbying the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street on February 2nd in support of the council workers.

This is a fitting answer to

the gutter press which sought to play up an earlier demonstration of disgruntled parents and children [who were not at school] as an indication of widespread opposition in the Borough to the council workers' action.

Demonstration in solidarity with Iranian Revolution. Saturday 3rd February, 1.00 pm. Trafalgar Square. Supported by the Committee Against Repression in Iran.



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