

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 480
23 November 1979

15p

**OPPOSE
IMMIGRATION
LAWS**
Page 6

STOP TORY CUTS

NO RETURN TO THE 30s

Unless they are stopped in their tracks by a massive fightback, the Tory government's ruthless spending cuts threaten to plunge millions of workers, their children and their old folks back into the miserable conditions of the 1930s—if not the 19th century!

The additional £3,500 million spending cuts will cost millions more jobs. They will deprive us of vital life-support services. They will cost lives!

One place facing the Tory axe is St Benedict's, Tooting. This is a hospital for old people, a geriatric hospital. Closure would be a tragedy for its long-stay patients.

But the workers of St Benedict's are determined that it will not be closed. They are particularly enraged at the suggestion that it should be handed over to "private enterprise", to BUPA or another private health

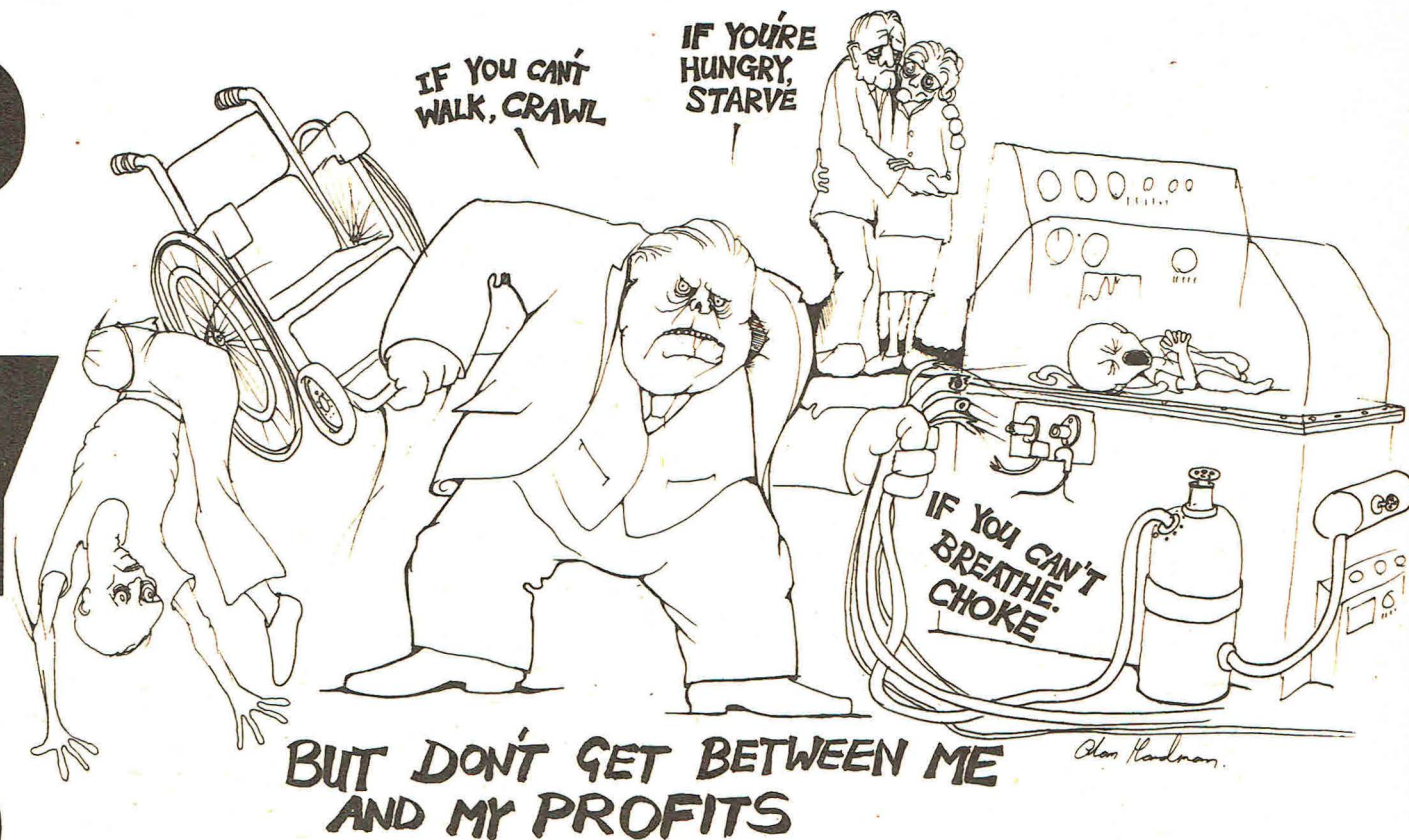
By
Julian McKittrick
(Tower Hamlets LPYS)

set-up.

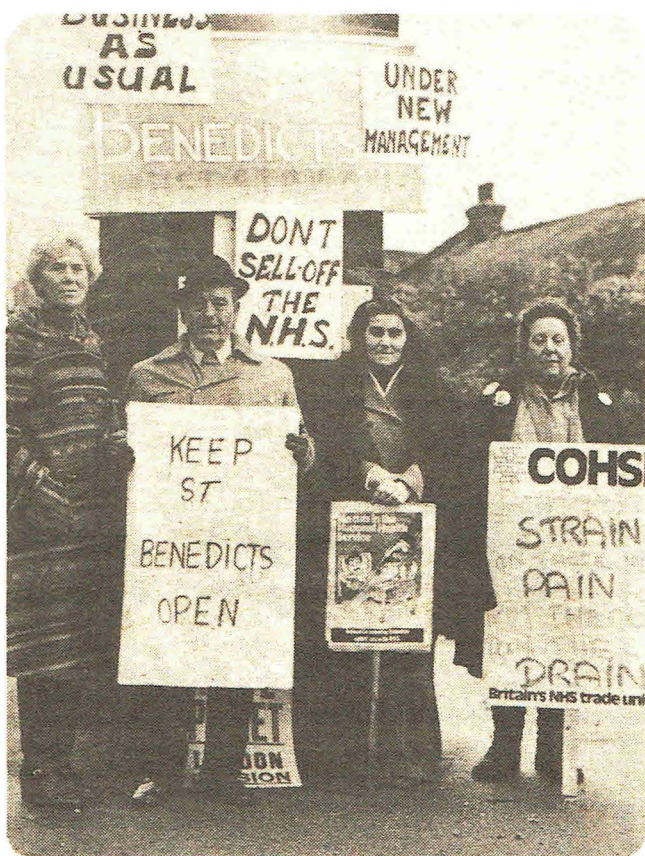
So to ensure "business as usual" St Benedict's has been placed under new management—a committee representing all the hospital's trade unions. They have ceased to recognise the Area Health Authority and the District Management.

They know only too well that it is only the hospital workers who will really stand up for the interests of the patients and the community.

Annie Reaves is 83
CONTINUED ON
PAGE TWO



"We Tories have been unnecessarily inhibited from pointing out the social value of profits" Keith Joseph, 15 January 1975



On the picket line at St Benedict's Photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

INSIDE

HOUSING: THE GRIM REALITY Pages 8-9

- ★ Fighting the cutsPages 2,7
- ★ Japan Page 10
- ★ Steel Page 15
- ★ Leyland..... Page 16

HOUSING CRISIS

BREAK GRIP OF MONEY LENDERS

Housing under capitalism spells chaos. The Labour Housing conference on Saturday meets at a time when the housing situation for workers is reaching crisis level. Thousands are homeless, and millions living in slums.

By
Dave Nellist
(Coventry South East
Labour Party)

In London alone last year 14,000 homeless families were provided with accommodation by the London boroughs; at any one time about 2,700 were trying to make do in bed and breakfast hostels or hotels.

Yet with this dire need for housing, building workers by the thousands have been dumped on the dole, while the bosses and the moneylenders make record profits from speculating in useless empty office blocks, or burdening councils with crippling interest charges.

When it comes to housing, the profit system as in employment, industry, transport, has proved itself totally incapable of running so-

ciety. No doubt the main discussion at the conference will be on opposing the sale of councils houses—any Labour activist is obviously opposed to selling off an ever decreasing number of council houses when the waiting lists grow and grow.

And the Tory lie that it is good for the council's budget is nonsense, when every local authority has the burden of debt charges to pay off. And now with the Tories' 'credit squeeze' which will send interest charges soaring,

CONTINUED ON
PAGE TWO

ORGANISE MASS FIGHT BACK WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES!

Militant

FIGHT CUTS WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES

The mass Lobby of Parliament on 28 November, which is supported by the Labour Party and most trade unions, will undoubtedly be the biggest mobilisation of the labour movement since the massive demonstration against the Heath government's anti-trade union Industrial Relations Act in February 1971.

Already, public meetings and demonstrations called to fight the Tory cuts have met with the biggest response for decades.

But this lobby, and demonstrations up and down the country, is only the beginning of the fight back!

All the resources of the movement must be deployed to explain the disastrous effects of the cuts and to organise a mass campaign to stop them being carried through.

Throughout the country, Labour councillors, the elected public representatives of the labour movement, must give a lead in resisting Tory policies.

Backed by the organised strength of the labour movement, they must declare a firm policy of:

- ★ No cuts!
- ★ No rate increases!
- ★ No rent increases!

Labour groups should not concede defeat in advance by arguing that the way must be prepared for massive rate increases to avoid making cuts. Big rate increases in the cities would themselves mean a further cut in workers' living standards.

The Thatcher government's cuts in the rate support grants for local authorities must be fought, not by passing it on through the rates, but by mobilising overwhelming mass pressure against the cuts being imposed.

A crucial part of the campaign must be to highlight the enormous share of councils' budgets devoured by the parasitic banks and finance houses through ever-growing interest and debt charges.

They are the real scroungers, not working people who have a right to decent housing, education, and social services.

Nor will the trade unions be taken in for a moment by the Tory blackmail on pay. Accept increases less than inflation [i.e. take a pay cut], say the Tories, or more jobs will go.

Workers will not tolerate poverty wages. And what guarantee is there—under the Tories—that jobs will be preserved even if low wages are accepted?

Public-sector trade unions, backed by the Labour councils must step up the fight for:

- ★ £70 a week minimum wage for all!
- ★ 35-hour week with no loss of pay!
- ★ No redundancies!

Only on these policies will it be possible successfully to build up a mass movement capable of defeating the Tory government.

It is vital, moreover, that these immediate demands should be linked to socialist economic policies. The idea that the cuts can be fought on a 'non-political' basis is a completely mistaken one.

The Thatcher government is undoubtedly the most short-sighted, vicious, anti-working class government since the 1930s. But their programme is dictated by the catastrophic crisis position of British capitalism.

In spite of the fabulous tax concessions to the rich and super-rich, and the cuts in the 'social' wage, big business is in no way convinced that its profit-prospects are good enough to justify investment. The Treasury, the Bank of England, and other economic forecasters are all predicting a further decline in production, a rise in unemployment to a monstrous two million or more, and even higher levels of inflation.

Any government that tries to work within this rotten system, as the last Labour government proved, is inexorably forced to try to boost the profitability of big business through more and more drastic cuts in workers' living standards.

Only a bold socialist programme can provide a viable alternative to the continued decay of Britain, and the poverty and suffering this will entail for millions of workers.

The fight against the cuts and for a living wage for all workers must therefore be linked to fundamental socialist demands.

★ For the nationalisation of the 200 major monopolies, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.

★ For workers' control and management of industry!

★ For a democratic socialist plan of production to develop the economy in the interests of working people!



CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Anne Reaves, a patient who has been on the St Benedict's picket talks to a member of the staff

years old. She has been a patient at the hospital for the last 32 years, a casualty of wartime air raids.

"It would be terribly upsetting to me and all the patients here if they closed the hospital. This place is home to me, you see. The staff here are wonderful. They treat us really well."

Annie Reaves has no relatives. All her friends are at the hospital. Now she has joined the staff on their picket line to save St Benedict's.

Mrs Sutton, a COHSE member and supervisor for the domestics, is also on the picket line.

Photo: Militant.

"The Area Health Authority promised that, whatever happens to the hospital itself, the Bell Unit will be used. But I can't see all those rich patients sunning themselves on the lawn and looking down over the handicapped—if the hospital is sold off to BUPA."

Chris Rice is retired and secretary of 'Tooting Action for Pensioners'. He was Transport & General Workers' union shop steward for over 35 years, and he's still not retired from the struggles of the labour movement.

"This isn't progress. We're going back to the days of Oliver Twist. The old people built this country, and now

Some of the patients here can't talk properly. The nurses have spent years learning to understand them. If they are moved to another hospital they will be turned into human vegetables.

"The hospital was designed for disabled people, with wide corridors for the wheelchairs. Last year, they built the Bell Unit at the bottom of the hospital grounds here, specially for the mentally and physically handicapped. It has never been opened.

"We were crucified during out Low-Pay Campaign last January: But now we're on our feet again and we're fighting back.

"BUPA aren't going to get their hands on this hospital. It's not for sale."

'Militant' sellers rally

"Militant" is at the threshold of a massive increase in its sales and influence.

This was the confident conclusion of last weekend's 'Militant' Sellers' Rally at Bridlington, Yorkshire, where over 500 invited sellers met to assess the paper's progress—and to chart its prospects in the next period of titanic class battles against big business and its Tory representatives.

New readers and supporters were reported from every area, and from every section of the labour movement—the Labour Party, the Labour

Party Young Socialists and the trade unions.

'Militant', regular sellers told the rally, had gained enormously in authority as a result of its support for workers involved in the trade union battles of the last year or so, from the firemen and Ford's workers last year to the engineering workers last month.

Above all, the Labour Party Annual Conference in October confirmed the solid and enthusiastic support for the paper among Labour's rank and file.

Both the advances made, particularly on re-selection,

and the sharp repudiation of right-wing attacks on 'Militant', vindicated the consistent fight for Marxist policies and Party democracy conducted since the paper's first publication in 1964.

Once again, the outstanding success of our Fighting Fund—and particularly the magnificent, self-sacrificing donations of regular readers—has enabled the paper to enhance its resources.

The step up to 16 pages, the improved quality of printing, photography, and presentation [especially the return of the red] were all magnificent gains of the last

look at what the government is trying to do to us.

"They're trying to push us around. All trade unionists and pensioners must unite and support these people here."

The Tories and their henchmen in SW Thames Regional Health Authority are running down St Benedict's with the aim of closing it by July, 1980. But the occupation committee is determined that the closure will not take place. Representatives from five unions, NUPE, COHSE, RCN, AU EW and EETPU were elected at a mass meeting, attended by nurses, porters, domestics, catering staff, fitters, as well as local GPs and consultants.

St Benedict's has 220 beds, but only 160 are currently in use. Wards have already been closed.

Arthur Hautot, Secretary of the Occupation Committee, explained: "The fight is on two fronts. We have to prevent patients being moved from here [except on medical grounds], or any more closures taking place.

"At the same time, we are working with unions in other hospitals to prevent patients being admitted there. For example Lanesborough Ward at St George's Hospital was blacked by NUPE as soon as they heard that it had been earmarked for admission from here.

"Unfortunately, some of the GPs are trying to thwart our plans by discharging patients [as fit] and then readmitting them from home to other hospitals.

"But there is massive solidarity with our action. Wandsworth and Battersea Trades Council have pledged us their full support.

"For our part, we've been fighting to prevent cuts in other services. We had a delegation on the big march in Lambeth last week.

"We were crucified during out Low-Pay Campaign last January: But now we're on our feet again and we're fighting back.

"BUPA aren't going to get their hands on this hospital. It's not for sale."

HOUSING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

meaning higher mortgages, there is even less chance of working people buying their own homes.

But the crux of the issue lies in the appalling lack of decent housing—not just going on the defensive over council homes. The bosses and the sharks who have bled the building industry dry, with working people suffering in direct consequence must be

exposed as the culprits.

Labour must go on to the attack with firm socialist policies that will secure workers' control over the building industry and end the scandal of land lying waste, builders on the dole, bricks and building materials stockpiling up till the bosses decide the price is right, and on top of all this, millions of homes needing to be built.

Have you got the winning ticket yet?
SEE YOUR 'MILITANT' SELLER
THIS WEEK

MILITANT NEW YEAR DRAW

Grand Top Prize — A VIDEO RECORDER
Runners-up: Micro Cassette Recorder, Mini Camera,
Pocket Radio, "Thermo" /Calendar, Bottle of Whisky
and A Note-pad and Pencil.

TO BE DRAWN SATURDAY, 5th JANUARY, 1980
This ticket is a receipt for TWENTY PENCE to the funds of the above.
IN AID OF MILITANT FIGHTING FUND
Promoter: D. SMITH, 73 Armond Road, Witham, Essex

to conform to Part 11 of the Lotteries and Amusements Act, 1976 and regulations made thereunder and registered by the Promoter

McKay's Printing Service (T.U.)
72-74 Camberwell Road, London, SE5 0EQ
Telephone: 703 5825/6

No 3000

THE BLUNT AFFAIR

WHO RUNS THE STATE?

Who controls the 'security' forces and the forces of the capitalist state? Not Parliament or the government judging by the revelations that ex-Sir Anthony Blunt was found out in 1964 to be the '4th' man in the Burgess-McLean spy saga.

Neither the Tory Prime Minister or the Home Secretary at the time were informed, according to their statements, Blunt's pardon was handled by the head of MI5 who only informed the Attorney-General.

By Jim Chrystie

If that is the way the secret police operate under a Tory government, then it needs no imagination to consider how they keep control when Labour is in office.

The capitalist state machine operates and will always operate in the interests of big business. The intelligence network is drawn up with the personnel of the ruling class. Occasionally one of them, such as Blunt, will betray his class origins, but he is handled lightly on the old-boy network.

But let anyone try to expose what is happening and the capitalist state moves against them. What a contrast there was in the harassment handed

out to journalists Aubrey, Berry and Campbell who tried to tell the British people something of how the intelligence apparatus worked and the soft-glove approach to Blunt.

The security forces are more concerned to prevent any democratic control over their activities, than they are about leaks of particular information to the Russian bureaucracy.

And they are still trying to close to journalists the very limited access to information, which the labour movement has won.

Official Secrets Act

The Tories had planned to introduce a 'Protection of Information Act'. Under pressure they have been forced to withdraw this new restrictive law. But they can still use Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act and no doubt intend to introduce further legislation when the recent furore dies down.

On 5th October this year, 'Militant' revealed how someone connected with the Defence Ministry opened the

mail of one reader—stupidly they took one book and left another, from the Ministry of Defence library! Under the Tories' 'Protection of Information Act, to reveal this would have become illegal.

Political files are apparently kept on millions of people. The labour movement's demand for access to this information is always refused by the capitalist authorities.

Blunt's name only came out because of a book written by Andrew Boyle on the Burgess-Maclean-Philby affair. Boyle got Blunt's name from documents released by the CIA under the American Freedom of Information Act.

The British secrecy laws are amongst the most restrictive in the capitalist world. Andrew Boyle has remarked that if the Tories' legislation had been in force now "I couldn't have revealed what I have done this time."

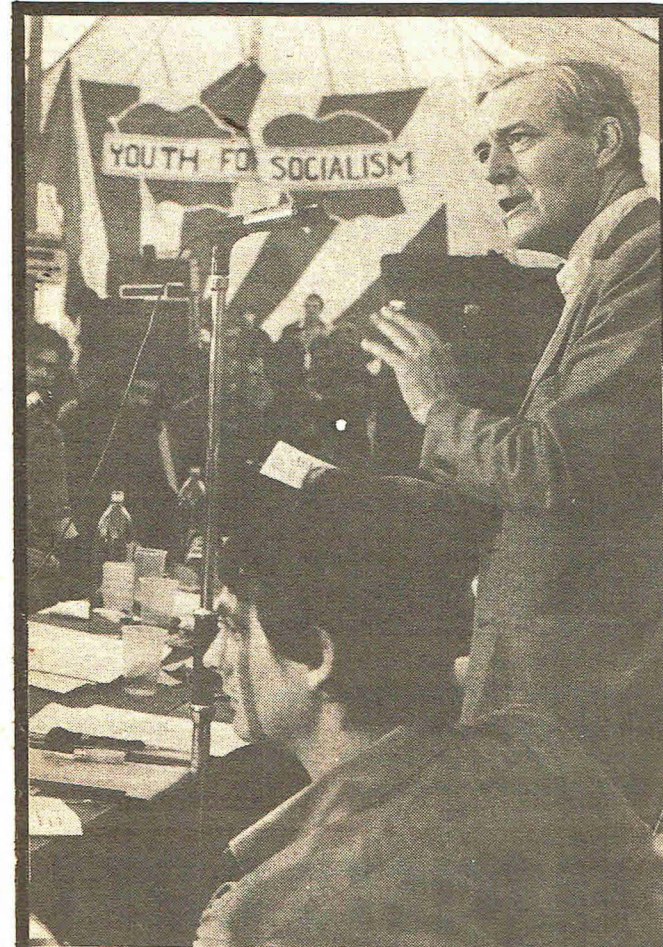
So there we have it. The capitalist state and the secret police will continue to operate without any democratic control. Class interests must be preserved.

Whatever attempts are now made to provide a

Blunt, 'traitor' to his class origins, is still handled lightly on the old-boy network

'democratic' cover for the secret police, they will continue to operate in the capitalists' interests as long as this system remains. The Blunt affair lifts a tiny part of the carpet of suppression on how the intelligence forces work.

It is vital that the labour movement mounts a campaign to expose and counteract the operations of the secret police and end them and their system by building a new society on socialist foundations.



Tony Benn will be one of the main speakers at the Rally. Above at the LPYS Conference this year with Tony Saunois, also a speaker at the Rally.

LPYS

National Rally Against Tories

FEBRUARY 2nd.

Assemble 12.00 am, Porden Road [near Brixton Tube] London S.W.2. Send-off rally with speakers from local labour movement, including Ted Knight [Leader Labour Group, Lambeth Council], and John Bulaitis [LPYS NC member, London].

March through Brixton and Lambeth to rally at Central Hall Westminster, 2.30 pm-5.00 pm.

Speakers: Tony Benn MP
Eric Heffer MP Dennis Skinner MP
Tony Saunois [LPYS rep on Labour's NEC]
Andy Bevan [Labour Party National Youth Officer] and others

DEFEND MILITANT

Step up campaign against Libel Action

It is a scandal that a Labour MP should take a difference with a socialist newspaper to the courts, and that his union's executive should be giving financial backing to legal moves that could land 'Militant' with potentially crippling damages.

Yet that is what John Golding, Post Office Engineering Union sponsored MP, and the POEU Executive have done. Golding has taken out a high court writ for libel damages over 'Militant's' report of the January meeting of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee.

The overwhelming opinion of Labour Party and trade union members is that such disputes should be settled within the labour movement and not through the courts.

No-one can gain from such expensive litigation, least of all John Golding. Militant's report has been confirmed by six NEC members present.

From the beginning of the dispute Militant has offered John Golding space in its columns to put his version, but he has made no attempt to take this up.

Throughout the labour movement and especially within the POEU itself, there has been opposition to Golding's use of the courts to settle a difference within the ranks of the movement. At

the recent POEU conference 211 members from 85 branches (mainly branch chairmen and secretaries) signed a petition condemning John Golding's action.

Over 50 Constituency Labour Parties have written to the National Executive Committee and General Secretary of the Labour Party.

Numerous trade union branches have sent in donations and messages of support.

Many have expressed the view that at a time when big business is mounting its biggest attack for decades on the living standards and rights of working people, it is vital for the labour movement to be united in a socialist fight-back.

Many journalists have found it odd that John Golding should appear as a sponsor of the Campaign for Press Freedom, whose aims include the creation of news-

papers sympathetic to the labour movement and "a reduction in legal restrictions on freedom of publication."

Yet his high court writ has meant that Militant has already incurred considerable legal costs in consultations with lawyers and in preparing its defence, a statement of which has been filed with the High Court.

The Militant Defence Campaign has spent substantial sums in circulating bulletins and letters explaining the case and appealing for support.

Militant will vigorously defend the libel case and lawyers consider they have an excellent case. But the only sure defence is the active support of the labour movement. Financial donations and expressions of support are vital.

Amongst the money this week was £50 from AUEW

(TASS) members at Chloride's in Swinton, near Manchester. £10 came in from Skelmersdale and Holland branch of the Labour Party.

Sheffield District Labour Party passed a unanimous resolution condemning John Golding's recourse to the courts and calling upon him to withdraw his action.

It stated that 'whilst not agreeing with all the contents of editorials of 'Militant' we believe it serves a very useful role within the affairs of the movement.'

That recognition has been the source of Militant's strength. From Robert Friel (Strathclyde NALGO) came a welcome £20 this week.

Readers in Newcastle donated £11.75 and £12.60 came in from students at Sussex University and at a readers' meeting held on the campus.

From pensioner Fred Bailey, President of North Devon Labour Party, came an especially appreciated £1.

To all the above and others who for reasons of space we cannot mention here, many thanks.

But it is vital that the campaign is stepped up and extended to guarantee the future of our paper.

Send resolutions and donations to Militant Defence Fund, 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church Street, London S.W.8.

Now they're deporting 7 year olds

By Ian Sugarman

(Mid Oxon CLP)

Rojob, whom she regards as her mother. In July this year Aeyesha came with her 'mother' and brother to join her adoptive father Mr Rojob, in Oxford.

There is no one in Bangladesh who can look after her as Aeyesha's father is an itinerant priest, and she has not lived with him for five years. To separate Aeyesha from her 'mother' is bound to cause

immense distress to both of them.

Timothy Raison, the Minister of State at the Home Office has the power to allow Aeyesha to stay with her 'mother'. It was only through a massive campaign in Oxford that nine year Akram Dogar was finally saved from deportation.

Nevertheless, Aeyesha is the fifth Oxford citizen to be faced with deportation. The Asian community in Oxford is learning in a terrible way the brutal facts about this Tory government.

Lanchester Poly - Occupation success

On Thursday 8 November Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry was occupied by the students. This occupation was staged as part of the national campaign by NUS to draw attention to the massive increase in overseas students' fees by the Thatcher government.

A motion for this occupation was passed earlier on the same afternoon at the students' union AGM. This was despite a smear campaign and vicious rumours by the Poly authorities that the planned 24-hour occupation would affect engineering exams and was just a stunt by 'childish lefties'.

Because of this a large number of students from the faculty of engineering turned up at the meeting to oppose the occupation.

However after a long and thorough debate many of these opponents supported it. This came about after learning the facts about education cuts and after appeals from overseas students, many of them engineering students themselves.

They told about the conditions many would have to face

with 33% fee increases. Many, who already worked at 2 or 3 part-time jobs just to keep up present fee payments would have to curtail their studies. When the final vote of nearly 2 to 1 voted for occupation.

At 3.30 p.m. the students moved over to the admin block to occupy only to find all the doors barred. The poly authorities had decided to take a hard line in an attempt to break the credibility of the union, expecting only a handful of 'activists'.

Chairman arrested

In the event a large detachment of over 200 students surrounded the admin block. This grew to 300 after one student, the chairman of the Labour Club was arrested by the police who had been called in by the frustrated authorities. Their attempts to break the students were to no avail and the students managed to gain entry by 6 p.m.

Lanchester Poly joined the other 46 polys and universities carrying out the 24-hour

By Mark Picksley
(Lanchester Polytechnic Labour Club)

occupation as part of the NUS 'week of action'.

This was despite the feeble lead given at national level and shows, in some ways, the feeling and support there is at a grass-roots level against the cuts in general and against the overseas students' fee increases in particular. However what has been widely absent from this campaign by the NUS leadership is their willingness or indeed ability to approach other unions in the education and public service sectors.

NUS must start with joint union meetings, nationally, regionally and above all, locally. An occupation or lobbies of parliament are not, in and of themselves sufficient to stem the tide of Thatcherism.

The united power of the labour and trade union movement armed with socialist policies is the only force that can. Student occupations can form part of an overall campaign against the cuts. Linking up with the labour and trade union movement students can play their part in the struggle for a decent education system open to all.

LPYS ON THE MARCH



In Birmingham, over 150 LPYS and PNP youth marched to show their opposition to apartheid in

South Africa. The march was called by the Handsworth LPYS as part of the Southern Africa Cam-

paign, and was followed by a conference, which included a speaker from ZANU.



The LPYS had the largest contingent—over 300—on the recent 7,000-strong anti-cuts march in New-

castle. The LPYS marched through the working class areas before the main demonstration, attracting

many youth to join in and show their anger at the Tories.

LONDON Trotsky centenary rally

I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and, consequently, an irreconcilable atheist. My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today than it was in the days of my youth... Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence and enjoy it to the full.



Hear Ted Grant plus leading international speakers

Friday 30 November, 7.00 pm

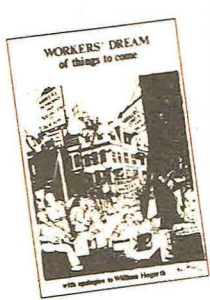
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London W.C.1.

Admission 30p

CARDS CALENDAR CARTOON BOOK

FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

From 'MILITANT' and Cambridge Heath Press



For the Roast Beef of Old England was the nostalgic theme of one of William Hogarth's great pictures. But if the 18th century satirist were still painting today he wouldn't have to look far in Tory Britain to find new versions of 'The Beggar's Opera', 'The Rake's Progress', would he? So, with apologies to Hogarth, Steve Amor has depicted the new degeneracy down Thatcher's Road, and to cheer us up, draws a picture of better things to come. Card plus envelope 20p

The 1980 Calendar celebrates the life and revolutionary work of Leon Trotsky. The hundredth anniversary of his birth fell on 7 November (26 October old style) 1979, and August 1980 will be the fortieth anniversary of his death at the hand of Stalin's hired assassin. £1 each



Trade rates for bulk orders available on request. Prices for single copies do not include postage. Order from: 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN (telephone: 01-986 3828).



'MORE'—Another outstanding book with thirty of Alan Hardman's cartoons for 'Militant' to follow last year's highly acclaimed 'Need Not Profit' collection. £1 each

FASCISTS OUT!

Next Sunday, Labour Party Young Socialist branches in the London Borough of Southwark are organising a demonstration in the area against the activities of the fascist National Front.

Southwark is one of the most deprived areas of London, if not in Britain. Jobs are scarce following the disappearance of the docks which were formerly the lifeblood of the area.

Following the Tories £5m cut of the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Area Health Authority budget, hospitals like St Olaves in Rotherhithe face closure. Major cuts in local services are in the pipeline, together with rate increases of 50% and a 20% rise in rents.

All these result from Tory government and a capitalist system in crisis. But of course the fascists in the National Front blame the crisis on the black population, who are amongst the main sufferers.

The National Front were smashed at the elections this

year and their support is evaporating so they are turning even more to thuggery and violence.

This demonstration has the support of many sections of the local labour and trade union movement. The LPYS branches in the area are asking for a big turnout from the labour movement.

It is important that we get a large demonstration to show that the labour movement will not tolerate attempts to intimidate black people and split the working class. Come to the East Street demonstration before the big rally against the proposed Nationality Act (see page 6).

The demonstration starts at Camberwell Green at 9.30 a.m. marching to East Street market in the Walworth Road.

LEFT and RIGHT

JUSTICE?

In South Africa last month, a black maid was shot dead by her white mistress. In the ensuing trial the white woman was found guilty of 'culpable homicide'. Her sentence? A three year suspended prison sentence.

But what justice can be expected from a system that rests on the horrific enforcement of apartheid, and its history stained with the blood of black workers whose oppression has been ensured by the ruling class in their defence of profits.

CRUMBY BOSSES

Workers at United Biscuits were dismayed when their boss, Sir Hector Laing, cancelled the inter-factory football tournament and the "Miss United Biscuits" competition. He told them the company couldn't afford it, and if they wanted the events to go ahead they would have to pay for it themselves. What he didn't tell them was that the day before he announced the events were off, the bosses at United Biscuits paid £4,800 to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, for four seats in the stalls for every Tuesday performance until July, for executives only of course. [Daily Mirror Nov 14].

No doubt, with continuing doom and gloom for the profit system many other major companies will be axeing factory social facilities to save money, although by-passing the perks enjoyed by the bosses. But then, as every worker knows, the upper crust, like the bosses at United Biscuits, are just a load of crumbs.

ZOOM!

Now that British Rail bosses are admitting that documents do exist outlining plans for closures, their spokesmen are doing the best to try and break the news as gently as possible—with some mind boggling results. One BR spokesman told the Guardian [Nov 8] that talks were taking place about the 'possibility' of "replacing some lightly used railway services by guaranteed bus services running to railway timetables." Well, either British Rail are going to introduce souped-up Omnibuses, complete with V-8 engines, which will roar around Britain's winding country lanes, or no-one has told these office-bound bureaucrats that trains tend to travel faster than the average double decker, which is why trains are generally more popular with people wishing to travel from A to B in the shortest time possible.

The quicker the running and planning of industry, especially the transport system, is put into the capable hands of the workers, and taken away from the muddle-minded bosses—who can only see as far as the greatest profit margin—the better!

'China Syndrome': SO NEAR TO THE TRUTH

THE CHINA SYNDROME [A], James Bridges, USA 1979

Reviewed by Vivien Seal

'The China Syndrome' is Jane Fonda's latest "political movie" and the best so far.

It is more explicitly political than her earlier films, like 'Coming Home' or 'Julia', which have political backgrounds rather than making political points.

'The China Syndrome' is also a better film at the level of pure entertainment.

A political theme doesn't necessarily make a good film.

But 'The China Syndrome' is a very well-constructed thriller. The fact that the plot contains a clear political message (the "goodies" and "baddies" are the right way round for a change) adds to the dramatic impact.

The film was released in the USA with uncanny timing, just a few days before the near disaster at Three Mile Island took place. The knowledge that events portrayed in the film did happen in almost exactly the same way in reality, adds to the drama and tension of the film.

Jane Fonda plays Kimberley Wells, ambitious to succeed as a serious TV reporter but frustrated by being continually fobbed off with trivial TV features because her boss hired her as a glamorous boost to the ratings.

Michael Douglas is the cameraman and "political activist", Richard Adams.

Jack Lemmon is Jack Godell, the nuclear energy and shift supervisor at the



California Gas and Electric Company's nuclear power plant, who is at first totally involved in his work.

Richard and Kimberley go to the plant to film part of a general TV series about energy. While they are in the control room, they witness the 'China Syndrome'. There is a malfunction and the core almost becomes uncovered. California was nearly not there.

If a reactor core is uncovered, it would cause a "melt-down"—and theoretically would pass right through the centre of the earth to China—hence the "China Syndrome".

Richard covertly films the whole event, but instead of the film being greeted by the TV company as a news scoop, the station manager, in

collusion with the power company, tries to arrange a cover-up.

The role of big business is made clear. "Overlook nothing," says the company chairman, referring to the inspection of the plant after the near accident, "...as long as we're back on line this week. Loss of revenue runs at 500,000 dollars a day."

When Godell confronts the company that built the reactor with faking the safety tests, the company immediately threatens his life and sets their thugs onto him. If that seems over-melodramatic to us over here, any American worker will know that that is exactly the sort of reaction they can expect when on strike, for example, and on a picket line.

As the plot unfolds, events

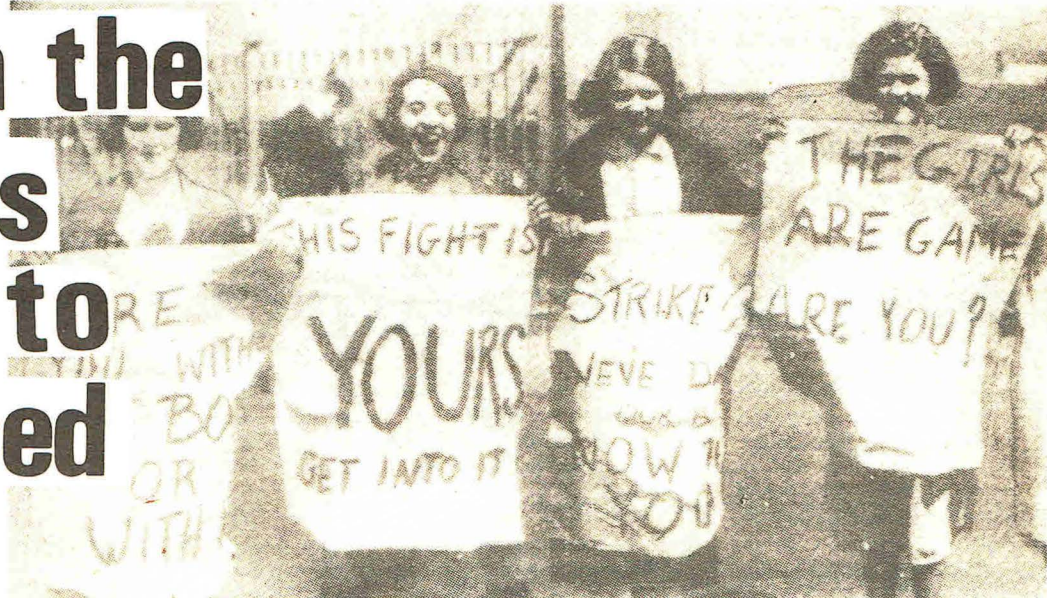
move swiftly and the characters develop and change in response to one another and to their realisation of the vested interests at work.

Kimberley, for example, begins to question her support for the "establishment" in pursuit of a successful career, when she realises she is up against the boss's involvement with big business interests, not merely his prejudice against women.

Jack Godell realises that his image of the paternalistic company, of which he was a respected and vital part, is entirely false, and that it is going to put profits before the possibility that the safety of the entire population is threatened.

At the end...well, to find out how it all ends you will have to go to the cinema.

When the unions came to Pressed Steel



Wives, sisters, mothers and girlfriends joined the strikers on the picket lines

"With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed."

This analysis by Marx sets the scene for Dudley Edward's new pamphlet, '1934—how trade unionism came to Press Steel'.

Dudley, now aged 72, a supporter of 'Militant', and a former District Committee member of the AEU at Pressed Steel in the '40s, describes how the Cowley motor and Pressed Steel plants were unionised in the 1930s.

Oxford during the twenties was a town of 'dreaming spires' steeped in its university traditions, and as such

had a 'sleepy' and small labour movement. But with the Morris motor company empire setting up a massive car assembly and steel plant in the nearby village of Cowley this was transformed.

In 1933 with the horrors of the capitalist slump, many workers were forced to leave their home-towns to look for work—many of those who came to Cowley were ex-miners and brought with them the traditions of trade unionism.

Conditions at Cowley were horrendous—pitiful wages, no canteen or other facilities, intolerable noise levels at work, and to cap all this, shoddy housing conditions.

These factors forced 180 workers in the press shop to

walk out in July 1934. It was spontaneous—as yet they had no union, and no demands.

The pamphlet describes how the strike gained momentum throughout the plant, and the role that activist Abe Lazarus played in building the strike—Abe worked under the name of Bill Firestone (he was on the run from the police in London after mass picketing scenes at the Firestone Tyre factory).

Dudley takes up many aspects of the strike—the role of the Communist Party, the solidarity of the working class in Oxford and throughout the country, and how students, who only eight years earlier had scabbed in the General Strike, saw their interests lay with the labour movement.

The pamphlet is an excellent handbook for all activists.

The lessons of the thirties are becoming more and more relevant today as the capitalist system falls deeper into crisis.

As Dudley comments at the close of the pamphlet, "We must go forward to a planned economy and a socialist society or we shall be dragged back to the same terrible conditions which the Pressed Steel workers fought against in 1934."

'How trade unionism came to Pressed Steel'—price 35p plus 10p P&P, from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8-3PN.

Tories propose a new Nationality Act ... A FURTHER THREAT TO IMMIGRANT WORKERS

"The ethnic minorities have already made a valuable contribution to the life of our nation". So said the Tory Manifesto for the general election.

As a 'reward' for this contribution, the Tories propose to bring in more racist immigration controls and a new Nationality Act. The proposals will mean more misery for black immigrants.

The Tories want a new Nationality Act to "remove some of the possible sources of future immigration." They want a register of wives and children under 16, eligible for entry to the UK from the Indian sub-continent. If these dependants were not registered within a year, their entitlement to enter would end.

The one-year limit on registration would mean that in the future no Asian would be able to marry or have children in the Indian sub-continent, and bring them here. Once the register was compiled, a quota system would be introduced, to prolong the waiting time.

Parents, grandparents and children over 18 would be allowed entry only if they were

living alone and have no other relatives to turn to. 'Non-patrial' husbands and fiancés of women born or settled here, would only be granted entry "if an exceptional degree of hardship would result from the woman having to live outside the UK!"

"The abode of a husband in a marriage should normally be viewed as the natural place of residence of the family," thinks the Tory Home Secretary William Whitelaw.

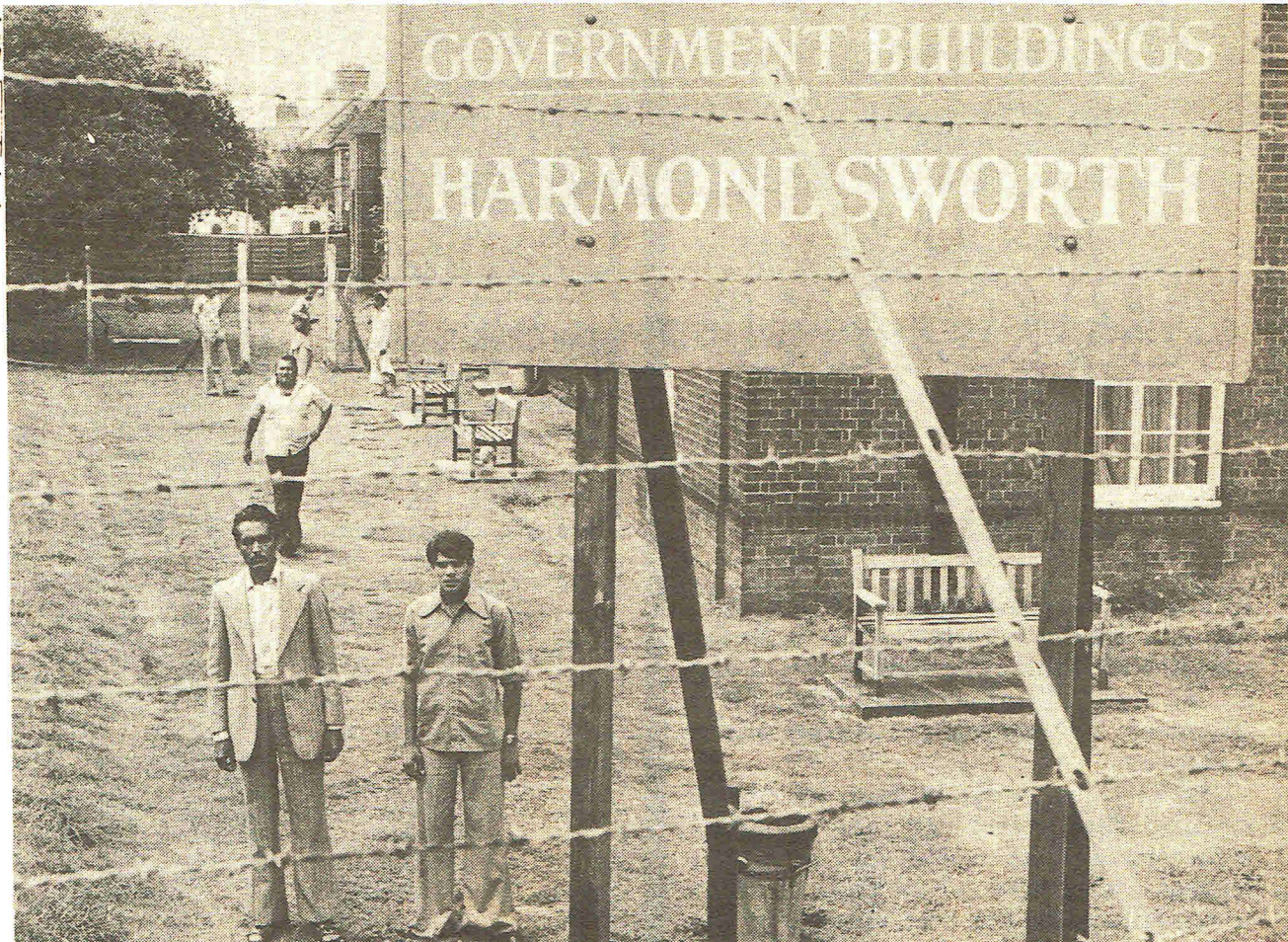
The Tories want to restrict the issue of work permits. At the moment work permit holders who have been in "approved employment" for four years may be allowed to stay permanently. That will be stopped.

They want to intensify police action and "internal control" of immigrants. To work efficiently, this would mean the introduction of identity cards!

The police assault on the anti-National Front demonstrators in Southall on 23 April, and the actions of the

By Kevin Fernandes
(PNP Youth UK and Hackney North LPYS)

Photo: MILITANT



Immigrant workers under already existing legislation can be indefinitely detained as at this detention centre near London Airport, on suspicion of illegal immigration

courts in convicting those arrested, shows that more 'internal control' will mean increased harassment of blacks and Asians.

Why have immigrants come to Britain, and what is the reason for the racist controls?

End immigration controls

In the post-war period serious labour shortages began to occur in key sectors of the British economy, and so Britain turned to the old Empire for a solution. The Tory government of the mid-fifties actively encouraged private companies and public corporations like London Transport and the NHS to recruit labour from the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent.

But soon the boom began to slow down, and Britain was on the slippery slope of industrial and economic decline. An influx of labour was no longer needed, or desired, and a series of Immigration Acts have been introduced since.

The first of the recent Acts

designed to restrict black immigration, was the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which eliminated the right of Commonwealth citizens to come to Britain and set up a system of work vouchers, A, B, and C. The 'C' voucher, for unskilled workers, was discontinued in 1965.

The period of the middle and late 60s was one of instability, with falling living standards, and a Labour government backsliding on all its promises. With this background, the way was open for demagogues such as Enoch Powell to use blacks as a scapegoat for all the problems.

The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act was rushed through Parliament in three days to prevent the entry of East African Asians. The Act removed the right of British and Commonwealth citizens to enter and settle here—instead a quota system was introduced for 'passport holders'. It restricted free right of entry to 'patrials', i.e. holders of UK passports who were born or registered in the

UK, or who have parents or grandparents born here.

The 1971 Immigration Act went further—a work permit is required for entry, and entry gives no right to settlement. The 'patriality' clause is racist—designed to exclude black immigrants—as most 'patrials' are white and 'non-patrials' black.

Under the Act, more people were eligible for entering Britain than before (from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Rhodesia)—the difference being that fewer blacks were eligible.

Very few black immigrants are now allowed into the country. These are mainly dependents of workers here, who wait months or years before even being considered for entry. In the home country all members of the family over 8 years old are interviewed separately and are asked details of their home and village. Any discrepancy in their answers may cause the immigration official to turn down their application.

Families stay apart for years. The 1971 Act gives the police wide powers to arrest people without trial for an indefinite period, if they are suspected of being 'illegal immigrants'.

The 1976 Labour Party Conference passed a resolution calling for the repeal of the Act. However, since 1974, the Labour government had used the racist Act as a basis for government policy.

We don't expect any favours from a Tory government, but a Labour government should act in favour of all working people.

Socialists must stand firmly against all forms of immigration control—for the free movement of peoples from country to country. Capitalism and imperialism are responsible for the transportation of peoples from their home country—travelling across the globe in search of decent living standards and an end to poverty—so why should immigrants have to take the blame, and pay in human suffering and degra-

ation?

But the Tory government is not worried about human suffering—all their policies are geared to increase the suffering of working people in the interests of big business. Immigration has not caused unemployment, the cuts, or bad housing.

Along with 'trade union militants' and 'secondary pickets', the Tories hope to use blacks as a scapegoat. They hope to use the 'immigration problem' as a mask to hide behind, while they implement policies to lower our living standards.

Thatcher's talk of "swamping" is blatant nonsense as well as patently racist. The number of immigrants entering Britain had fallen by 1977 to 163,000, the lowest for well over a decade. In that year 209,000 migrants left the UK. As for many years, emigration far exceeded immigration.

The labour movement must stand up to the Tories and oppose them on every issue—immigration laws, cuts, trade union rights etc.

The labour movement must organise meetings rallies and marches in every town and city, in every factory, and every housing estate, to build opposition to the Tories, and fight to oppose the Tory immigration proposals, end all immigration controls, and stop police harassment.

Most importantly, black and Asian workers must become active in their trade unions, to pressurise them into taking a stand on this issue.

Immigration is not the problem—the real problem is capitalism. It is capitalism which has caused misery for millions of working people.

Black and Asian workers must become active in the political wing of the movement, the Labour Party and Labour Party Young Socialists, to fight for the return of a Labour government, this time committed to ending immigration controls, and implementing a socialist programme.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

British capitalists bemoan the dramatic long-term decline of profitability. But some of them are not doing so badly. Esso petroleum has just announced a 600% increase in profits over last year.

Pre-tax profits for the first half of 1979 were £183.7 million compared to only £26.7 million in the first half of 1978. Net profits this year for the first half of this year, after tax and other items were deducted, is £92.5 million.

Despite Esso's bonanza from increased North Sea oil production and higher OPEC prices, however, Dr Austin Pearce, Esso's chairman, described the result as a "mediocre" 11% return on a high risk business!

Contributing to Esso's handsome profits was £23.5 million "deferred corporation tax", ie tax to which big companies were theoretically liable but which the government has written off for good.

Shell, Esso's North Sea partner, is expected to report a handsome £168 million gross profit for the first half of this year.

Workers whose industries suffer from poor union organisation, and whose collective bargaining procedures are considered insufficiently developed are often covered by Wage Councils, which are supposed to fix minimum wages and conditions.

The industries covered are agriculture, retail distribution, clothing, catering, hair-dressing, etc. The latest figures produced by the Department of Employment show that these industries are still areas of very low wages. The average earnings of male workers covered by these boards this April was £72.50 for a 45-hour week. For women manual workers this average was £47.70 for a 39-hour week.

Over half of all male manual workers under

Wages Councils earned less than £70. Nearly half [48% of manual and 45% of non-manual] of all women workers earned less than £45 per week!

The Wage Councils may avoid the very worst abuses of low paid workers, but clearly they are no substitute for trade union organisations, and a campaign to eradicate low pay.

The Labour Research Department have revealed that since 1972, the main employers' association in the construction industry, the National Federation of Building Trades Employers have operated "with Home Office support" a body called the Construction Security Advisory Service [CON SEC]. Officially CON SEC deals with all aspects of security—from "general site security and tool and plant protection to internal fraud and industrial espionage." What is more, the construc-

tion industry is the only industry to be connected to the Police National Computer, ostensibly for tracing stolen plant and mobile equipment. But as Labour Research point out, the Police National Computer has the capacity to hold up to 40 million records and contains such information as political affiliations and activities.

1972 was the year of the building workers' national strike, which saw numerous clashes between police and strikers, including the incidents leading to the 'Shrewsbury pickets' trial. The building industry is subject to a great deal of blacklisting of union activists. The possibility of direct police involvement in the harassment of building workers should be a matter of concern for all trade unionists.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST IMMIGRATION LAWS
Demonstration against new Tory proposals
Sunday November 25th, Assemble 12.00 noon
at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park [Tube Marble Arch]

FIGHTING THE TORY AXEMEN

NO TO THE CUTS NO TO RATE AND RENT INCREASES

Labour councils are in the front line of the Tory blitz on the welfare state. In the next weeks Labour councillors will have to decide how to organise the fight back.

In Southwark in South London, a Labour stronghold, the next meeting of the Labour group will be faced with a proposal to increase rents by 20% and heating charges by 25%. Also the leader of the council has predicted rate increases of 50% next year.

If these increases go through it will mean misery and hardship for thousands in the borough, which is already one of the poorest in the country.

The local constituency parties must demand that their councillors refuse to increase rents, rates or heating charges. The rent for a two bedroom flat in a tower block, including heating, will be around £20 per week if the increases go through. Thousands in Southwark take home less than £50 per week.

The leadership of the Labour Group are considering these increases in rent and rates in addition to a 5% cut in social services. It must be said that the leadership doesn't have a good record in fighting for the interests of the workers in Southwark.

Recently they have advocated spending more than £50 million on a new town hall

By Pete Dickenson
(Peckham Labour Party)

and have supported the building of offices and hotels rather than badly needed homes in the Blackfriars area.

The local Labour Parties must make it clear that the cuts must be fought along the line and that the increases in rents and rates are completely unacceptable.

The cuts can be fought, by mounting a campaign with all the Labour boroughs in London and linking with the trade unions who have the power to kick the Tories out.

The meeting of the Southwark Labour Group on December 3rd will be decisive. Five local union branches are going to picket this meeting.

Either the fightback starts on December 3rd or the Labour Group will surrender to the Tories.

If the Labour Group surrenders it will condemn thousands to poverty and deprivation. If it decides to fight, in the way outlined above, it will be a major step forward in the battle against the Tory axeman.



A section of the 600-strong meeting called by Hackney Council to discuss the cuts. The chairman of the council workers joint shop stewards' committee said they would back the council if it fought the cuts

WIGAN

Around 100 trade unionists and Labour Party members lobbied Wigan Labour Party Councillors attending a Labour Group meeting on November 5th. The lobby was organised by Wigan Anti-Cuts Committee to remind Councillors of Wigan Labour Party's policy on non-implementation of the Tory cuts.

The Anti-Cuts Committee was formed as a result of a resolution from Wigan LPYS calling on the controlling Labour Group on Wigan Metro Council to refuse to

implement the cuts, which was passed unanimously by both Wigan Constituency and District Labour Parties.

It is supported by many local trade unionists, acting as delegates from their respective branches or as individuals, and also other groups such as OAPs who are also affected by the cuts.

Future activities of the campaign include a lobby of the full council on November 21st, and a petition is now being compiled to present to the council.

The Tories have claimed that public spending in Britain is excessive and that other countries "cosset" their population less. Treasury figures show that, in fact, the proportion of GNP spent in Britain on all central and local government expenditure amounts to 44.2%.

This is lower than West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Ireland, Sweden, Norway and Austria. In Sweden public spending reached 60.5% of GNP. Taxation and social security contributions are also amongst the lowest in Europe. Only Italy has a lower rate relative to Gross National Product.

Tories swing their axe from nursery education upwards the working class youth will never reach the standards set.

By Simon Swinnerton
(Chester LPYS)

HOVE

The Tory government has given the green light to their friends in Tory councils up and down the country, to cut, cut and cut again. True-blue Hove Council have accepted this offer gladly.

At its last full meeting, the council were discussing ways of reducing expenditure in the borough. They discussed two options. One involved going for a standstill budget (i.e. spending the same amount of money as last year) and putting the rates up by 7p in the £. This was rejected.

The alternative was taken up. This meant increasing the rate by 3p in the £. But this entailed a staggering cut in spending of 20%! Whatever happened to those 3%, 5% and 7% options? Not heavy enough obviously.

However the Tories have run up against a slight problem over their plan.

Council services have been slashed so much that the entire cost of services financed from rates hardly raises the £600,000 they want to erase from expenditure.

So what will be left? practically nothing. If it didn't affect so many people so deeply, it would be laughable.

In fact, the overwhelming majority of the Rate Fund Account goes not on services but on loan repayments over which the councils have no control.

In both rock solid Tory area like Hove and in Labour strongholds, Labour's next local election campaign must take up this burning issue—to expose the stranglehold financial institutions have over council spending and to lead a campaign for their nationalisation under workers' control and management.

New 'Militant' Pamphlet

'Defend the NHS'

Price 40p [plus 10p P&P] from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Living a nightmare

When the Tories glibly say that "cuts won't hurt", have they any conception of the anguish they are causing? Looking for details of the effects of the cuts in Hackney, I went down to the local Advice Bureau.

One of the workers there described what a nightmare life is for many people now, even before the latest round of cuts has been felt, or before the council is forced to take action. ['Cuts or higher rates? —It's your choice', they say, though how we are supposed to be able to pay a projected £2.3 rent increase, £3 fuel increase and rates as well, they haven't told us!]

The Bureau is one of two in Hackney, dealing with an immense variety of problems, mainly concerning housing, jobs, finance, legal, social security and consumer fields.

The workers there have noticed a big increase in enquiries related to the effects of cuts and money problems. Many are already in arrears and just cannot cope with astronomical fuel and rent bills, especially in Hackney's all-electric council flats.

Tenants' worries have been increased even more by leaflets from the council correctly pointing out the dangers of paraffin and calor gas heaters. The problem has been aggravated by the stopping of the DHSS "exceptional needs" payments.

After the last severe winter, the LEB is tightening up on payment procedure and now

The electricity discount scheme has over the past years provided some slight relief from the problems of high fuel bills. How many people will suffer when it goes? Only about 350,000 people are expected to benefit this year, as opposed to 4 million last.

Figures given by the Scottish Fuel Poverty Action Group show what it could mean. Fuel bills in Scotland are on average 22% higher than in the rest of Britain, as more houses are all electric, and the number of people in Scotland who got their fuel bills deducted from DHSS payments has been rising.

only allows a total of one month's grace—after two weeks, the final demand arrives, two weeks after that you're cut off! The "code of practice" allowing for "special circumstances" is rarely applied—and then only if the victim has personally approached the Board first.

For those who don't know about the "code", it's too bad! There have even been cases where homes have been broken into, the meter cut off and a new lock fitted to the door.

Of course when the tenants arrive home, they cannot understand why they can't get in their own front door! You can imagine the panic that ensues.

The Gas Board are also speeding up action, and gas disconnections take place daily. Already, before winter's here, what will it be like then?

There has also been a marked increase in the number of people unable to find a dentist willing to do NHS work. Some patients have been amazed (if that's the word!) at being handed a bill and told, at the end of their treatment, that the dentist only does private work now!

The closure of Advice Centres is yet another turn of the screw for workers. While our problems increase, the Tories are taking away the few places where we can get help in sorting things out.

By Lynne Faulkes

(Hackney Central CLP)

The average debt for which electricity was cut off, though, was a mere £84 in 1978/79! The South of Scotland Electricity Board in that year disconnected 4,593 consumers for under 5 days, 2,232 for six days to a month, 4,542 for one to six months, 1,562 for six months to a year, and worst of all a staggering 2,032 for over a year.

This, don't forget, is in one electricity board area, and for an average sum of £84! How many more people throughout Britain will suffer the privation of cold, lightless houses, now that three and a half million people fall outside the realm of the discount scheme?

GREEN LIGHT FOR TORY COUNCILS

CHESHIRE

Cheshire County Council has embarked on some of the most vicious cuts in the country. Education is first on the chopping block.

School transport for Malpas High School with a catchment area of 250 square miles could soon be ended. Plans have been submitted to axe transport or put a minimum charge of 30p a child per day in force.

Once students get to school, one way or another they are faced with a miserable lack of educational facilities. The cuts will mean fewer and older books with students working towards exams in the 1980s with text books from the 1940s.

830 teachers' jobs are to be axed in an education system which already has overcrowded classes and few teachers.

Nationally it is proposed to cut the amount of students entitled to school meals from 1,200,000 to 600,000, a disastrous proposal. Even before this, it was almost impossible to obtain free school meals.

For those who can sup-

posedly afford school meals the price is to go up to 60p a day, £3 a week. Additional ideas have been submitted such as charging 10p for a glass of water and charging those who eat their sandwiches on the school premises. On the other hand they can abolish school meals and nearly 4,000 school meals staff jobs at the same time.

Nursery education is also to be drastically axed, with the loss of teaching and ancillary staff. Many working mothers will be forced to give their jobs up to look after their kids.

In the face of all these cuts one section of education is to have an increase in expenditure nationally of £55 million. This is of course selective education.

Cheshire Education Authority already subsidise public schools in the area by £2,500,000. From this action the class politics of the Tories stand out a mile.

The bosses' kids, those who are supposedly the future leaders, are to have a grade A education whereas the working class gets a third rate education.

The Tories have said that the brightest of the working class youth will be able to take a means test to enter a public school. The fact is that if the

HOUSING: THE GRIM

While the bosses rake in the profits, thousands are homeless and millions live in slums

The magnitude of the housing crisis in the country as a whole has reached a catastrophic stage;

★ 700,000 homes are officially unfit for human habitation.

★ 70% of privately rented dwellings were built before 1919.

★ 950,000 houses lack at least one basic amenity—such as a bath, inside toilet or hot water supply.

★ A further million houses need at least £1,000's worth of basic repairs.

These are the facts of life in the housing situation, at a time when the Tories are carrying out further cutbacks in council housing maintenance and building programmes, and the ailing building firms continue to direct their resources towards constructing more office blocks in their bid for greater profits.

With house prices rocketing to ridiculous levels (they shot up by 53% in London alone last year!) working class families will turn to council housing—but less council houses are being built than private homes.

Tory councils have a diabolical record when it comes to building council homes. In the Tory strong-hold of Brentwood, in the South East, with a council waiting list of 400 they built the grand total of two council houses last year. And of course they want to sell off as many council houses as possible. But also Labour councils with good records on housing programmes are now finding themselves hamstrung by public spending cuts, and astronomical interest charges.

Although a large slice of councils' housing cash comes from the government, local authorities still have to borrow money from the banks and finance houses to pay for building programmes, which of course have to be paid back at a greater interest. In figures given in the House of Commons earlier this year the true enormity of the rake off the money-lenders make out of local authorities was indicated:

average cost of newly-built council house—£13,500;
annual revenue costs for the house—£190 p.a.;
supervision, repairs, etc—£190 p.a.;
interest and debt redemption—£1,410 p.a.

Councils pay off these loans over 60 years in general, so a house which cost £13,500 to build, becomes a total cost to the council of £84,600!

In London for example, the boroughs collected £173m net in rents, but had to pay out £316m in interest payments. And the situation is the same throughout the country, with councils paying spiralling debt charges and interest rates every year. When 'money spent on building' is talked of, they really mean money given to the banks, finance houses and other parasites.

People who are fortunate enough to buy their own homes are little better off—a person taking out a £10,000 mortgage to buy a home (a cheap one at that!) would pay back over 20 years the total of £26,360! That's over £16,000 going to the money-lenders just for the privilege of being in a position to buy your own home.

Nationally about £4,200 million per year is paid in interest—enough to build 290,000 council homes, at 1979 prices. With this situation,

owner occupiers have a common problem, and a common cause to fight along with council tenants.

And while money is being hived off the building programmes, the building industry itself is in chaos, although of course the top building monopolies are making record profits.

The building industry has the highest rate of unemployment. The construction that does take place is often of even more office blocks—to be left empty for years by property speculators. And many houses they do build just add to the 200,000 houses which lie empty most of the year round, to be used as second, third, or even fourth homes by the rich.

So far as the housing situation goes, when it comes to the capitalist system it will only result in anarchy—the anarchy of the finance houses milking off vast sums of money from local authorities which could be spent on building more homes for the homeless; having hundreds of thousands of

building workers going to waste on the dole when the housing situation is in crisis; not to mention the many hospitals, schools and community buildings that are needed.

As Joan Maynard explained when replying for the NEC at the Labour Party conference in the discussion on housing, the key lies in nationalising the banks and finance houses alongside the building industry—to take control of the resources and get them out of the hands of the bosses.



Houses are left to crumble away while the skyline is dominated by office blocks, many of which are left empty for years by property speculators.

LONDON

“Any young person who has ever tried to find accommodation of some sort or another will know that it is not easy—in fact it is virtually impossible.”

Most people feel the need to move away from their parents when perhaps they've left school and (if they're

lucky) got a job, or go into some kind of further education whether or not they can find somewhere to live will often decide their future.

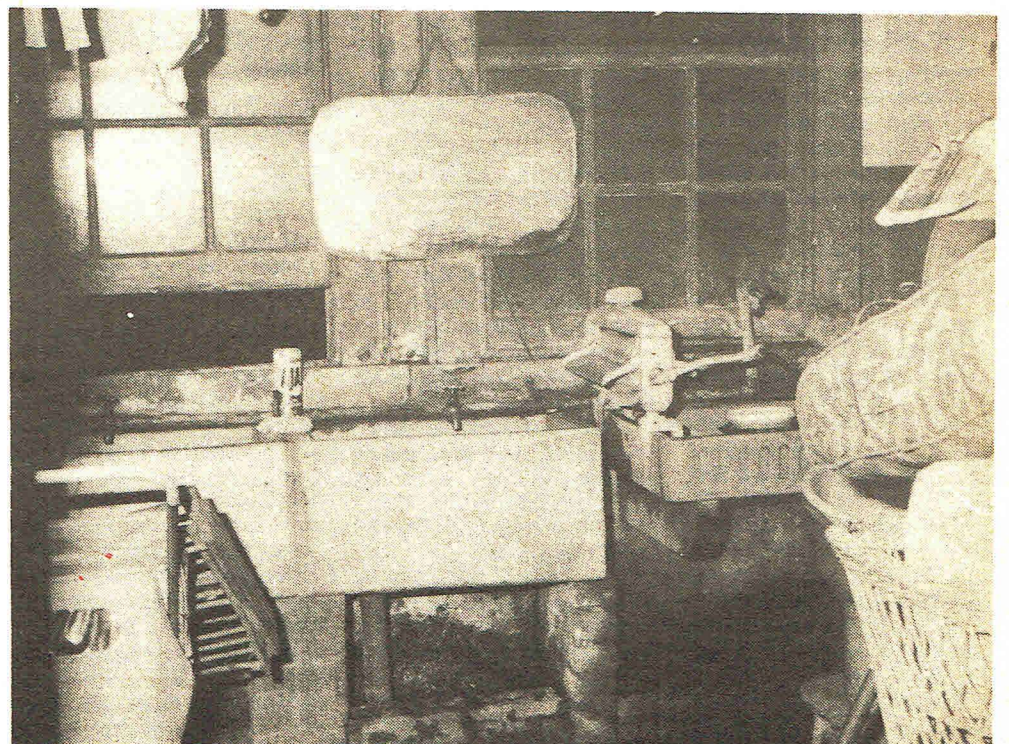
I moved up to London 3 months ago—and because I came from a rural area, I was not able to sort out somewhere permanent to live previously, because of the tremendous expense involved in travelling to London.

I was lucky enough to be

able to rely on a friend who kindly offered me a room whilst I tried to find somewhere—many young people don't have that kind of 'safety net' to fall onto.

But the place I stay at now is a hostel—specifically for homeless single people—catering for 7 homeless young people between the ages of 17 and 25, just a few of the millions of people desperate for a roof over their heads. It

A kitchen in a flat in Bethnal Green—a typical scene in London's bed-sit land



REALITY

Reports compiled by Bob Wade
London interview—Vicky Matthews



Photo: REPORT

ted with an ever-increasing number of office property speculators.

is delapidated and cold, with no effective heating, the curtains are nailed to the windows to retain the little heat given off by an old gas fire.

Bedsit land

As soon as I started work, I also started the nightmare of scouring the papers daily to find a flat or bedsit. After a fruitless search for 3 weeks, I met another girl, who was also relying on the charity of friends to survive. We decided that as neither of us were for having any luck in finding a single bedsit, we'd combine forces to find either an unfurnished place, a double bedsit or a flat. We weren't really choosy—anywhere would be good enough.

So, again we searched the papers—avidly looking at any type of accommodation within our limited maximum of £15 to £16 a week each. I would make anything between 6 and 10 phone calls a day—phoning all the numbers advertised in all the local papers.

Most numbers were continually engaged—the landlords were inundated by callers similar to myself—young and homeless. We went to visit a small flat in Forest Gate, in East London, and as it was the first place we looked at, we decided we would be early.

But to our disappointment, when we arrived, there were 8 other couples, all looking at the same tiny flat. The landlord had been showing other couples around all day and the previous evening!

Since then for the past two months, I've visited ten other flats and made an average of six phone calls a day! It's hopeless."

BELFAST



The chronic shortage and condition of houses in Northern Ireland results in overcrowding—this family have another room, but it is so damp they cannot sleep there

In Belfast the low wages and high unemployment levels, alongside the slum housing, have produced perhaps the worst poverty stricken area in the country.

Over 30,000 houses, a quarter of the stock in Belfast, are unfit for human habitation. Over half of all the houses in the area need essential repairs and improvement.

But no answer can be offered under the capitalist system which has already condemned 40% of households in Belfast to weekly incomes of £25 or less.

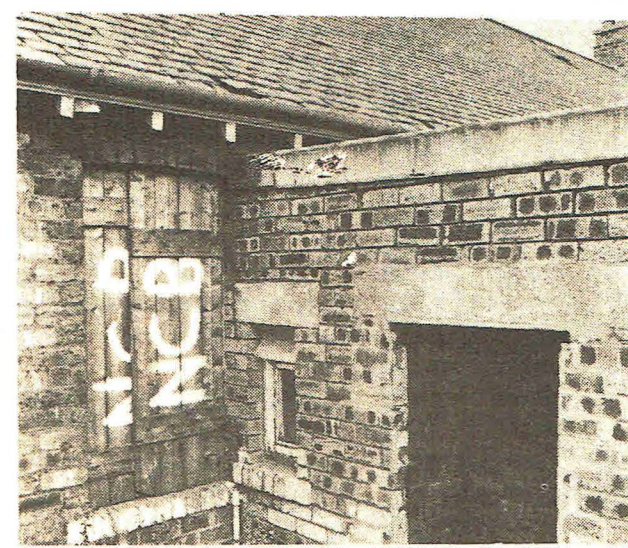
NEWTONGRANGE

Some of the worst housing conditions in Scotland, surpassed only by Glasgow, can be found in the small mining town of Newtongrange.

Here the whole community has been left to rot, as a direct result of National Coal Board policy (see 'Militant' 473). But now the local community are fighting back, under the leadership of the Newbattle Socialist Housing Action Committee, set up by Newbattle LPYS. They have campaigned on a clear socialist alternative, and are winning a great deal of support from the local people. Bryden Pottinger, of Newbattle LPYS, describes one of their recent meetings.

"The Newbattle Socialist Housing Action Committee, after spending the last three to four weeks actively canvassing many of the NCB-owned houses in Newtongrange have joined together these efforts by organising a public meeting which was held in October.

SHAC were re-affirmed as the active fighting body for these local residents—there were nearly 200 local citizens listening to Jim Green, a local community councillor, Ma-



Newtongrange—house after house boarded up by the NCB

gone Bain from Shelter, Pat Craven from the 'Militant', and Jim Muirhead from Newbattle LPYS. These speakers covered everything from the history of the housing struggle, to fighting the Tory cuts.

United action

The atmosphere at this meeting was fantastic, more names were added to the SHAC petition. The contributions from the tenants were excellent and more names were taken for street organisers after a large show of hands.

Then after the meeting, even more copies of Militant (issue 473) were sold. This issue, due to its terrific centre page article, has become known as the 'Newtongrange copy' by locals.

The villagers, now newly transformed into an even more united action group, can only go forward in their fight for better housing conditions.

This fight must be related to the struggles of other workers against the Tory government. We all have in common the need to end capitalism so we can solve the immense problems of our society.

LEEDS

Thousands of people in North Leeds are forced to live in conditions of utter squalor.

The condition of housing in some parts of the Harehills-Chapelton area is a public scandal. In the Harehills area alone, almost 1,000 households lack at least one basic amenity.

The local Labour Party has documented many cases where families occupy houses in which water drips through the ceiling, cockroaches and slugs infest the rooms and the wallpaper peels off through dampness.

Many are living in single rooms, crammed into delapidated properties. Many still have outside toilets and no

hot running water of their own.

In a neighbouring area, Burley, almost 1 in 20 households has no access at all to a bath or shower. But, for the 'privilege' of enduring such deprivation it is common to be charged crippling rents and to have no security of tenure.

Even those who are lucky enough to own a reasonable house of their own are being squeezed like lemons by spiralling mortgage costs. Council houses are rapidly becoming no alternative, because of the massive cuts in the building programme and huge waiting lists—all made worse by the deliberate Conservative policy of selling off council houses.

LIVERPOOL

The council estates of Liverpool are examples of how economy budgeting for housing breaks down whole communities and brings misery to the inhabitants.

Built in the late 50's and early 60's these high rise blocks were to replace the old slums—but the 'get as many dwellings per acre' mentality of the architects means they had just been replaced with modern slums.

As with many economy built tower blocks of this period, despite the fact they are impersonal and a danger to families with children, the building quality was sub-standard.

'Militant' 470 described

one of the estates in a feature on Liverpool:

"The Netherley estate in the Childwall Valley (is) more popularly known as 'Valium Valley'—because most of the women have the drug prescribed for them by their doctors to try to alleviate the strain of living in the area.

"On this estate residents have to walk up four or five flights of stairs to get to their own landing; having got there, they then have to go down a flight to reach their front door.

'Having opened the door they then have to climb another flight to reach their living room. The Architect responsible received a design award for his pains!"

NEWCASTLE

Staggering unemployment levels, alongside the housing crisis, has inflicted horrendous problems on the lives of workers in the north-east. Bob Wade spoke to community worker Katrina McCormick, and Sandy Donnachie, a civil service worker, about some of the problems which face Newcastle.

"It was reported in the press that at the end of the Easter Term in the Northumberland area there was only 42 jobs available for the 2,000 youngsters leaving school. The youth are increasingly getting a raw deal.

A few estates have been built all around the city centre, but there are no amenities for the youth on these, so a worrying new development is gangs of fed-up youths, most of them unemployed coming into the city centre looking for something to do. They can't afford to go into the clubs or cinema, so it's into a pub, or just hanging around a street. The next thing you know you've got gang fights between the

kids from the different estates. I reckon if there was full employment and decent wages as well as better planned housing estates you could cut out street violence of this kind at a stroke."

"The houses on the Scotswood estate, most of them being council owned, are in a bad state too. About 78% of them are affected by damp. It takes ages to get repairs done, and the situation has only worsened with the cut-backs in the Direct Labour Organisation, the council organisation which carried out repairs.

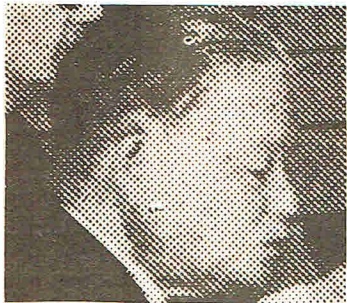
"Many desperate families have been forced to 'moonlight'—they just pack their bags and take off. This has become very common, and scrap merchants have cottoned on to this, and move in very rapidly and strip the home of anything worth having. The council's only solution has been to board up the empty houses as soon as they can, but of course with a limited DLO they aren't quick enough.

"There are boarded-up houses all over the estate—it's a criminal waste of houses!"



JAPAN - FACING INSTABILITY

As Recession grips, the miracle fades



For Japan's Prime Minister Ohira, and his cronies in the ruling [and mis-named] Liberal Democratic Party, this autumn seemed the ideal time for a general election.

The Japanese economy, geared to investing for 'high-speed growth', suffered a bigger decline in production than any other major capitalist country in the 1974-75 recession. Rapid inflation, the end of the 'economic miracle' and a particularly damaging scandal cost the LDP the absolute majority in the Diet [Parliament] in 1976, though they have had few problems subsequently in getting the support of the minor parties.

Since then an intensive export drive, together with Keynesian policies of expansion by the government, have generated a modest upswing with growth at 5-6% a year; inflation has eased from more than 20% to around 3%.

What made this October especially suitable was that the relatively favourable economic situation will not last. The recent fall in the value of the Yen, together with oil price increases, have recently pushed wholesale prices up to a rate of 10% a year; this will soon show up in faster price rises in the shops.

Faced with a government deficit which has been running at about 4-5% of GNP, the big capitalists have declared a virtual 'financing strike', demanding that the deficit be cut to make way for financing their own investment. Ohira himself favoured the introduction of a consumption tax which would raise prices, and cut workers' spending power by 3%.

The budget has been pruned to prevent real increases in spending. Monetary policy has been tightened with interest rates pushed up by the Bank of Japan. The prospects for export have deteriorated with the slow-down, and possible fall, in

world trade.

All this adds up to the prospect of a renewed bout of stagnation in the Japanese economy; no wonder Ohira decided to strike while the iron was hot.

In view of these relatively favourable circumstances, the fact that the LDP actually lost a seat was labelled as a 'catastrophe' by the press. In fact overconfidence, and factional rivalry led to the LDP standing more candidates in the multi-member constituencies, so splitting the vote.

But even their 20% recovery in their share of the poll is less impressive than it looks as much of it was gained at the expense of the 'independents', who are mainly loyal LDP hacks who have been disgraced in some scandal and who are tactfully left off the LDP ticket.

The press has blamed the failure of the LDP to improve their position on Ohira's gaffe early in the campaign when he more or less admitted he would introduce the consumption tax. But in reality such a tax would merely underline the fact that the recovery in the economy has been at the expense of the working class.

Productivity has increased very sharply since 1975—by 27% between 1975 and 1978 in manufacturing industry as a whole; by 61% in electrical engineering for example. This increase in productivity has not been the result mainly of investment in new technology.

Capital accumulated is in fact only running at half the rate of the boom years of the late sixties. Rather the Japanese capitalists, especially in the major export industries and firms, have carried out a savage process of rationalisation.

Between 1974 and 1978 Mitsubishi Heavy Industries cut employment by nearly 12,000 (15%), Hitachi by 10,000 (12%), Toyota by 7,000 (20%), Toyo Spinning by 7,000 (30%). Taking all the manufacturing firms employing more than 1,000 workers, the average cut in employment was 10% between 1974 and 1977.

Older workers have been especially hard hit because they cost more—in the big firms workers aged 50-55 are paid double the wages of 20-25 year olds. Unemployment amongst the older age

groups has doubled since 1973; young workers, because of their cheapness can more easily get a job—for a time. More and more workers are taken on a temporary rather than 'regular' basis. They are paid as little as a third of the regular rate.

Women workers, typically paid two-thirds of the male rate, have been taken on in huge numbers. More and more male workers have been forced to attempt to scratch a living by becoming self-employed, particularly in the service industries, or by getting a worse paid job in the small scale firms.

Japanese workers work long hours—an average of four hours a week more than German workers (taking account of fewer holidays); less than a quarter of them work a five day week. Their real wages have risen by only 2-3% a year in the last few years, far slower than productivity.

A recent comparison of the purchasing power of wages in Japan put them at about half those of the USA and under two-thirds of the rate in Germany. Japanese workers are famous for their high savings—the average workers'



Tanaka, still the power in the ruling party

family saves around one-fifth of their income.

These have been savagely eroded by inflation. They are forced to save so much for old age (pensions are around £8 a week), for education (a family with one child in primary school and another in secondary school will be paying at least £300 a year), for medical expenses (most beds in the big university attached hospitals require steep extra charges not covered by insurance and these can mount up to several hundred pounds) and most importantly to try and buy a house.

Against this background the real question has to be, not why the LDP did a bit



Japanese workers' demonstration

better or a bit worse at this or that election, but, how have they maintained their unbroken reign of more than 30 years? The rural social basis of the LDP has been eroded by the massive wave of industrialisation and urbanisation.

Between 1955 and 1975 the proportion of the population living in rural areas fell from 40% to 12%, whilst the LDP's share of the vote declined from nearly 60% to less than 45%. The LDP keeps this rural vote loyal by generous support to rice farmers, leaving the industrial workers to buy rice at way over the market rate.

Moreover, the leverage of the rice subsidy is much greater than it appears for many industrial workers commute from the countryside whilst one member of the family tills the land; others leave the country intending to return to the land at some later stage. Very few farming families have sold their plots.

The election boundaries based on 1940s' population figures, also hugely favour the LDP which gets many more seats than their share of the votes justifies. In 1976 an LDP candidate was elected with 37,000 votes in a rural area whilst a Communist was defeated with 147,000 votes in an urban seat.

Bribing of the electorate is also carried out in quite blatant ways. Although campaign spending is legally restricted to £30,000 a candidate, nobody pays attention to the rules. The Japan 'Times' (August 11) reported

that "an estimate currently circulating in LDP quarters is that a Diet seat might cost as much as 200 million Yen (£400,000).

"A candidate with £100,000 to spend won't stand a chance." As well as being used for free meals and other benefits for supporters, outright bribery is common. The 'Financial Times' reported that "It is an open secret that in one Tokyo suburban constituency votes are 'worth' about 5,000 Yen (£10) apiece."

Many constituencies are handed down from father to son like 'rotten boroughs' in Britain at the beginning of the last century. At this election more than 100 LDP candidates were sons, nephews etc of former Diet members.

The politicians get the money from big business of course. The methodical drafters of the election law have even imposed a means test for the capitalist—there is a sliding scale of maximum permitted donations increasing with the size of the firm and with a maximum for the biggest firms of 150 million Yen (around £300,000!)

But as one LDP official told the 'Japan Times' "we can even solicit campaign funds from companies affiliated with the big corporations as well as personal contributions from the business bosses."

Sometimes, of course, the payments require very specific services to be rendered by the politicians concerned. Summarising the case of former Prime Minister Tanaka, charged with taking a million

pound bribe to make sure that All Nippon Airways bought the Lockheed Tri-Star the 'Japan Times' said: "there seems to be little dispute about the transfer of cash—prepared by Lockheed's Japan office, transported in a Marubeni car the trading firm acting as go-between), transferred to the trunk of a car driven by Tanaka's chauffeur (who committed suicide after giving details to the prosecution), received by Tanaka's secretary and placed in Tanaka's mansion". (August 11).

One Marubeni executive described how his boss came out of the meeting with Tanaka and simply showed him the five fingers of his hand, saying 'this is it!'

The 'Japan Times' reported "Recent revelations concerning the Defence Agency's purchase of the F-4E fighter have suggested that 500 million Yen was standard figure as a bribe for fixing a deal of this kind. It was the same amount that Nissho-Awai (another trading company) had given Raizo Matsuno, a former Minister for Defence, for presumably facilitating the government purchases of the US-made military aircraft."

'Centre' Parties

Tanaka but not Matsuno was a successful candidate in the election. Neither stood as official LDP candidates, but as "Independents" who, of course, co-operate 100% with the LDP. Tanaka, in fact, is still the boss of one of the strongest LDP factions, and the power behind Ohira.

Another argument for an October election was that further revelations in the Tanaka trial might be even more embarrassing.

The ruling class also makes use of the 'centre parties' to maintain the LDP in power.

OCTOBER ELECTION RESULTS

Parties	% of vote	Change since '76	Seats	Change since '76
Liberal Democrats	44.6	+2.8%	248	-1
Socialists	19.7	-1.0%	107	-16
Komeito	9.8	-1.1%	57	+2
Communists	10.4	Nil	39	+22
Democratic Socialists	6.8	+0.5%	35	+6
Independents and others	8.7	-1.2%	25	-13
Total	100		511	

SOUTH AFRICA

Strike action shows determination of African workers

The recent six month long strike at Fattis and Monis in Cape Town is one of the most important strikes since 1976, and is testimony to the growing strength, unity and determination of the workers in South Africa.

The whole structure of apartheid in South Africa is designed to keep the workers down and the profit levels of the bosses rising. Racism, sectionalism and brute violence are all techniques used by the ruling class to maintain their power and increase their wealth.

Yet in spite of all the attempts of the ruling class to divide the workers on the basis of race, successive major struggles in South Africa have shown the growing unity of the working class and brought to the fore what lies at the root of apartheid—capitalist exploitation.

The 78 strikers at Fattis and Monis were mainly African contract workers, and they took action on 25 April this year in support of ten of their Coloured fellow workers who were dismissed for trade union activities.

Three major issues lie at the root of this struggle: recognition of the Food and Canning Workers' Union which organises in the factory, with whom the management has refused to negotiate; a demand for a R40 (approximately £25) minimum wage; and a 40-hour week.

At the moment, few of the workers at Fattis and Monnis (a major pasta producer) earn above subsistence level.

The ruling class has done all in its power to divide African and Coloured workers in the Cape area, and to foster fear and suspicion

By
Gillian
Moodie

between them. Coloured workers are given job preference over African workers in the Cape, and employers are legally prohibited from employing African workers unless they can prove that no Coloured workers are available.

This means that African workers have the lowest paid

and most menial jobs.

Coloured workers have long had the right to organise legally recognised trade unions; a right which has been withheld from African workers. African and Coloured workers are housed separately in segregated residential areas.

Yet, despite all this, Afri-

can and Coloured workers have joined in an increasing number of united struggles over the past few years. In 1974, an overtime ban by 2,000 Coloured and African dockers forced management to capitulate to their demands.

In 1976, hundreds of thousands of African and

Coloured workers stayed away from work in support of their children during the nationwide struggles following the Soweto uprising. The strike at Fattis and Monnis is a further demonstration of this growing unity.

As contract workers, the African strikers face the risk of being endorsed out of Cape Town and sent back to starvation in the reserves. Once there, they know there is little chance of employment, as black unemployment in South Africa now stands at 25 per cent.

But in spite of the horror of expulsion from Cape Town, and the overhanging pressure of unemployment, the African workers have stood firm for the full six months of the strike.

decisive action, other layers of society are drawn towards them as the only force to change society.

The Fattis and Monis strikers have been supported by school and university students, black and white, by sports and church organisations, as well as by black traders' associations.

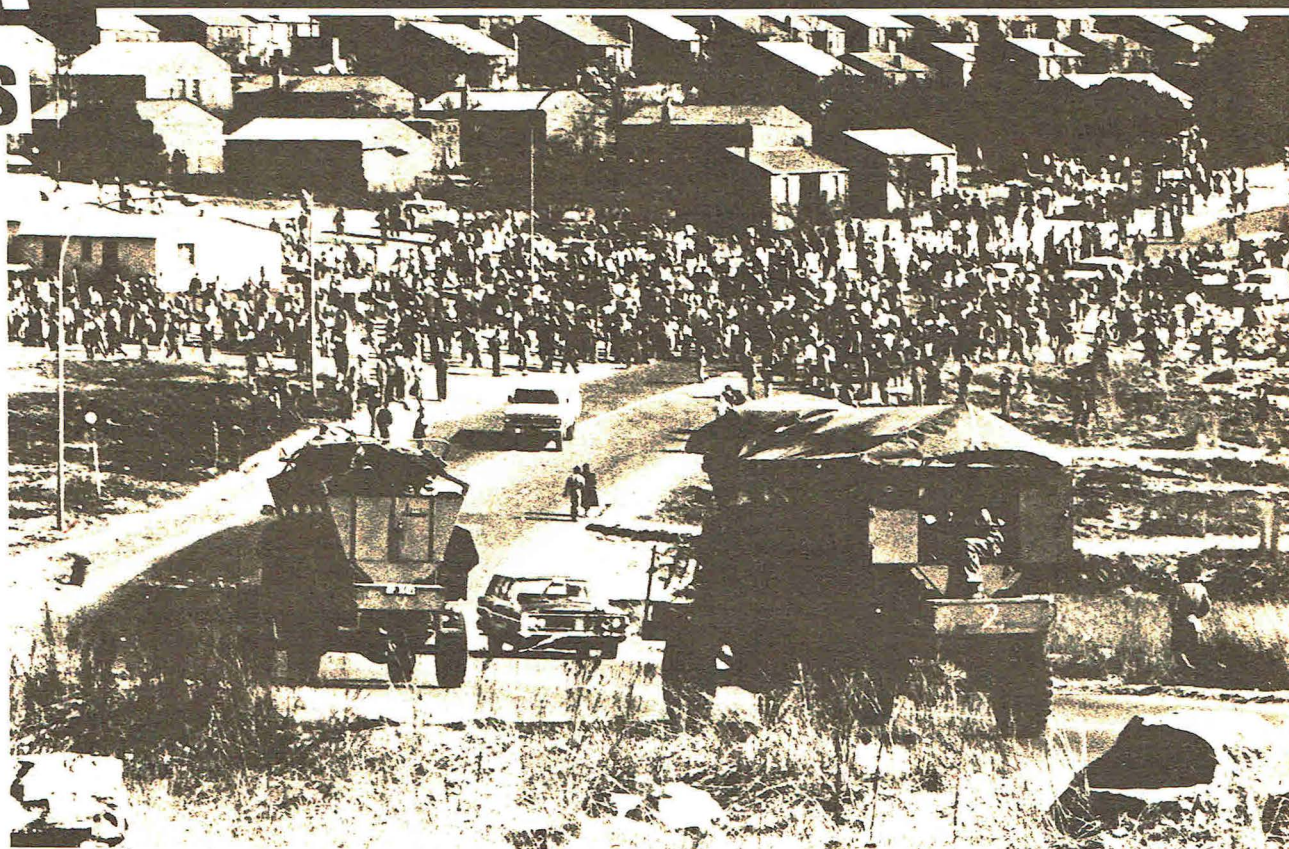
A publication in support of the strike from a white university campus put it this way: "Racism and apartheid facilitate exploitation. By striking, the workers have challenged the basis of our system. If we support fundamental change, we must support the workers and their action. By so doing we link the student movement to the real forces for change in South Africa."

The strikers are facing great hardship. They receive no social security or unemployment benefits, and they and their families depend on the R15 (about £9) a week they get from the union. Each day they meet together in a cinema in Cape Town to discuss the strike where the union provides them with a basic meal.

The victory of the Fattis and Monis strikers would be a victory for the whole working class in South Africa.

Workers in Britain should support their struggle, by sending messages of support as well as money to the union [the Food and Canning Workers' Union, P.O. Box 2678, Cape Town].

Soweto 1976



Every strike in S Africa brings in the forces of the state



"Racism and apartheid facilitate exploitation. By striking, the workers have challenged the basis of the system..."

Just as every major struggle in South Africa brings out into the open the conflict between the capitalists and the workers, so too every time the working class moves into

Nearly half the voters live in the three major urban areas around Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. There the LDP gets less than a third of the vote. While the right-wing candidates swept the board in the April elections, this was the result of the LDP supporting 'moderate' candidates which were also backed by the right-wing Democratic Socialists and the Komeito (the Buddhist 'clean government' party supported by a section of the petty bourgeois and most oppressed layers of the population).

These parties have seen that, with the workers' parties floundering, their best chance of sharing in the spoils of office is to act as the urban prop of the LDP.

The leadership of the unions helps the ruling class

Next week Andrew Glyn explains the character of the trade unions, the position of the workers' parties, and looks at the prospects for the working class in Japan.

immeasurably in its task of ensuring the burdens of the economic crisis fall on the workers.

Large scale industry is quite extensively unionised. Two-thirds of workers in firms employing more than 500 workers are in unions while one-third of all employed are unionised. These unions operate on an 'enter-

prise' basis, covering just one firm and excluding the miserably-paid temporary employees because they are not 'regular employees'.

But many really are company unions, in the sense of tools of the management. In Nissan (Datsun) for example, the industrial relations department and the trade union, together, form one well-trodden promotion system. A worker will be promoted from full-time trade union work into the industrial relations department.

This is not unknown in Britain, of course, but in Japan he may well move back to the union on a further promotion.

By Andrew Glyn
(recently in Japan)



Western leaders meeting in Tokyo this year could find no answer to the recession

LETTERS

Send your views and comments on the issues that affect you to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Royal carpets or our bonus?

Dear Comrades

I just thought you might be interested to learn that Prince Charles visited the Prudential chief office in Holborn on Friday 9th November.

This, in itself, may not be of much interest except that to prepare for this royal visit an expanse of perfectly good carpet covering a ground floor corridor was ripped up and replaced by a new one.

OK! Perhaps you may say the Prudential can spend the money it has produced how it wishes. But when you consider that a productivity bonus scheme exists then it does seem to affect the workers.

A lot of young married employees depend on their annual productivity bonus to buy such luxuries as washing machines to make life easier if you've got young kids in the house. It seems a shame for young workers to watch their bonus being frivolously, frittered away by a crawling management.

I don't suppose our future king (its fun living in a democracy) even noticed it was a new carpet.

Yours fraternally

The Man from the Pru

Abortion—not only an issue for women

Dear Comrades

We went down from Dorset on Sunday 28 October to the TUC/NAC rally and were really much encouraged to see the great attendance from all over the country.

However, we were very disappointed by the childish behaviour of the selfish feminists who wanted to lead the march. Their insistence that women were the only people concerned with the matter of abortion rights was totally petty and untrue.

They also shouted hysterically about how this was not a political event. Well, we'd just like to point out that if it hadn't been for men and political organisations the demonstration would have been minute and totally unsuccessful.

These feminists must be persuaded how important it is for working class men and women to unite against the capitalist system.

The reports by the media of a mere '17,000' people on Sunday's march (TUC reported 40,000) shows the bosses are worried by the mass support given by the working class to the rights of various sections of the community.

Let's show again our unity at the national demonstrations taking place in February. After all, as the saying goes 'The workers united will never be defeated!'

Yours fraternally

Stephanie Peckham

Pooler YS

Tina Richards

Dorchester YS

VILLAGES LOSE MEANS OF OUTSIDE CONTACT

Dear Comrades

After reading an article in a monthly paper called 'Yours' I was appalled to discover that Norwich Telecommunications Manager has informed Breckland District Council, that the village of Stacksford is to lose its only telephone kiosk, unless it pays its way.

The last takings amounted to £81.65 and the council has been told to make it up to £100. This is the yearly economical intake the Post Office claims. Failure to pay the £100 will result in removal of the kiosk within weeks.

Local villagers have said that they do not use it very frequently, but as there are invalids and pensioners residing there, they feel it is a must—because of the possibility of an emergency. A spokesman at the Post Office headquarters in London said that public telephone boxes make an overall financial loss.

While it was a social duty under the Post Office Act to provide telephones, the number of telephone boxes that there should be in a rural area was a matter for local discretion.

Where is this discretion they refer to?

W Clegg

Bakery worker

Shaw, Oldham.

SOCIALISM AT THE SCHOOL GATES

Dear Comrades

In Bournemouth LPYS we have decided to leaflet all senior schools at least once per term.

We leafleted a boys' secondary school one dull November morning.

Before long a master came up and asked us to move on. We asked him 'Why don't you want us to leaflet the school?' to which he replied 'Because I don't'.

Prefects of about 15-16 years of age were put on the school gates to persuade the kids coming to school not to take the leaflet. This didn't have much success.

The prefects then walked up the road to give everybody advance warning of what we were doing. But again this only achieved partial success, especially when other teachers coming to school asked us for a leaflet.

We were then approached by two large, broad gentlemen whom I recognised from previous experience elsewhere

were from the 'Special Branch'! 'The headmaster called us in' said one as they took our names and dates of birth. After reading the leaflet they departed.

One teacher twice shouted out 'some of us have work to do'. Fortunately, one of our YS members who sent off 500 job applications without success saw the funny side of this.

Four copies of 'Left' were sold and hopefully from this new YS members will come.

Nobody criticised the content of the leaflet which states that the Tory-controlled Dorset County Council has cut education expenditure four successive years. At this rate there would be no senior schools in Dorset in 10 years' time. Perhaps this is all part of a Tory plan to eliminate socialism at the school gates.

Yours fraternally

Andrew Dinkenor

Bournemouth West LPYS

Cannabis—We condemn the hawkers —not the victims

Dear Comrade

The discussion in 'Militant' on cannabis is important because it highlights the distinction between Marxism and petty-bourgeois 'radicalism'.

For a Marxist, it is not a question of abstract 'morality'. Even if tobacco and alcohol are more poisonous; even if there is no direct link between cannabis and the use of killer drugs like heroin, that is irrelevant.

What does morality mean for a Marxist? Lenin answered simply: that is moral which brings the socialist revolution nearer, immoral which delays it. We are not concerned with mystical debates about whether cannabis clouds or 'sharpens' our 'perception'.

As Marx said: the point is not to 'interpret' the world, but to change it! Cannabis is 'immoral' because it paralyses the will to action.

It is not only the effects of the drug—much exaggerated by its supporters—but even more the mystical cult surrounding its use; a cult which accentuates its tendency to encourage passivity, euphoria and a lack of will.

The labour movement has a long tradition of opposition to the befuddling of workers with artificial routes to euphoria. The temperance movement, and even Methodism, played a big part in the development of Labour (even if overestimated by enemies of Marxism). What may surprise those who see cannabis as a 'drug of protest', is that the Black Panthers in the USA banned cannabis in its constitution.

Cannabis and similar escapist poisons are the religion of the petty-bourgeoisie; doomed, pessimistic, without a future. It is a class which must either link itself with the optimistic future of the proletariat, or hide in a refuge of

illusions.

Some young workers may have been seduced by cannabis. At a time of social upheaval, the working class draws behind its banner the petty-bourgeois. But at a time of social quiescence, such as the mild lull in the class struggle between 1974 and 1978, some working class youth were superficially attracted towards petty-bourgeois totems.

But these effects are very short-lived and the coming hurricane of struggle will blast away the haze of dream-cult drugs.

Are we then in favour of police powers to stop and search without a warrant, to harass youth on the streets? In no way. But the supporters of legislation also have to answer: do they want the creation of a mass-production cannabis industry, rivalling the giant breweries and tobacco monopolies, with mass advertising? This is what legislation means.

It is not without significance that cannabis is a form of 'protest' quite acceptable to the Young Tories.

We understand the pressures leading to drug abuse among youth, just as with alcoholism, vandalism, football hooliganism, and other symptoms of social decay. We condemn the hawkers, not their victims.

We oppose the present police persecution of youth dabbling in cannabis consumption. But we would clamp down on the shady entrepreneurs who get rich by peddling poisons, and befogging the minds of the generation which is going to fight and win the struggle for a socialist society.

Fraternally

Roger Silverman

MILITANT and democracy in the Labour Party

Dear Comrade

It is unfortunate that 'Militant' seems to be competing with the bourgeois press in misrepresenting what happened at the Labour Party conference. Its coverage of the re-selection debate [5.10.79] gives the impression that it was the resolution moved by Comrade Pat Wall which was responsible for the inclusion of mandatory re-selection into the Labour Party constitution.

Like the bourgeois press, 'Militant' passes over in silence that it was largely the positive response of the constituencies to the efforts of the CLPD which secured the decisive victory on the constitutional issue of the year.

What did happen? The compositing session on re-selection agreed on two composites. One [no. 33] drawn up along the lines suggested by the CLPD, demanded that conference be allowed to vote on the identical constitutional amendments submitted this year by 20 CLPs. The adoption by conference of this constitutional amendment [based on a CLPD model resolution] has meant that mandatory re-selection is now written into the constitution.

'Militant' does not mention this. Its coverage is limited to the speeches made by the two 'Militant' supporters

who moved and seconded the other composite [No 32]. In fact, had this composite been put to vote and carried, the constitutional decision on re-selection would have been postponed by at least another year and inevitably have been wide open to re-interpretation by the proposed enquiry.

In the circumstances it is perhaps hardly surprising that 'Militant' does not go into the disputes about tactics which preceded the re-selection debate. This does mean that 'Militant' readers are denied the opportunity to draw an important lesson.

These disputes arose because shortly after the compositing session, it became apparent that some delegations mandated to support 'mandatory re-selection' might nevertheless do a 'Scanlon', viz refrain from voting for the vital resolution [no. 33, and instead support an innocuous one

It seemed essential therefore that these disguised opponents of re-selection should not be offered a soft option. The withdrawal of Composite 32 was obviously the simplest way of preventing this. But although its mover and seconder were repeatedly asked to withdraw it, they refused. In fact, when moving Composite 32 they did not even urge delegates to support Composite 33. Their refusal seriously reduced the chances of victory.

Had the forces for and against re-selection been more evenly balanced—and victory was never a foregone conclusion—the party may once again have been deprived of the reform it had long wanted to see adopted. Pat Wall's admittedly excellent speech would have been insufficient compensation for this.

But there are signs of progress. Ted Grant has stated that "the decision on mandatory re-selection marked... a change as important in its way as the 1918 conference that adopted Clause IV". This is an indirect admission that the importance of the provisions under the old paragraph [b], until recently extolled by supporters of the 'Militant' tendency, had been artificially inflated by them.

Perhaps the Militant comrades will also re-examine other aspects of their tactics, to ensure that in future there is unity in the face of the anti-democratic opposition. No democratic socialism would minimise the wish of the Militant comrades to march separately. In the battle however we should stand together. Minor tactical advantages, real or imaginary, should not be allowed to jeopardise the chances of achieving common objectives.

Yours fraternally

Vladimir Derer

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

THE EDITOR REPLIES: Leading members of the CLPD seem to think they have a monopoly of the issue of Party democracy, that their tactics alone are effective, and therefore anyone who does not fall into line with them is, by definition, jeopardising victory.

CLPD Bulletins have frequently been full of attacks on the 'Militant', and although we have published long letters from CLPD, 'Militant's' answers have never been printed in their material.

To claim 'Militant' is competing with the bourgeois press in misrepresenting what happened at Conference is a shameful accusation.

Comrade Derer's criticisms are based—at best—on a complete misunderstanding of what happened at Conference. Far from adopting brilliant tactics, moreover, the CLPD has, as we will show in a moment, once again made a gigantic blunder.

Comrade Derer refers to disputes which "arose shortly AFTER the compositing session." Yet in the compositing CLPD supporters opposed the drafting of a single Composite on re-selection, even though 'Militant' supporters had dropped the retention of the old paragraph [b] to make this possible. Then, having insisted on two composites, they argued that Composite 32 should be withdrawn!

But their argument that Composite 32 was a "soft option" which would prejudice composite 33 was completely false. Prior to Conference the National Executive had decided that No. 33 [the constitutional amendments] would be

voted on BEFORE No. 32, and that No. 32 would be voted on only if No. 33 fell [i.e. it would be a fall-back].

So how could No. 32 prejudice No. 33?

Comrade Derer claims there was a danger of some delegations wriggling out of their mandates by voting for No. 32 but not No. 33. But 'Militant' supporters, unlike the misguided CLPD supporters urging them to withdraw No. 32, had done their homework and calculated—accurately as it turned out—that there would be a majority of about a million votes for both resolutions.

The procedural motion allowing Composite 33 to be taken was passed by just under a million votes, and the composite itself by over two million votes!

However, while needlessly accusing 'Militant' supporters of prejudicing the immediate passing of constitutional amendments on re-selection, the CLPD DID IN FACT contribute to postponing amendments on the Manifesto.

The NEC itself tabled a constitutional amendment to give the NEC the final say on election Manifestoes, but the resolution calling for constitutional amendments to be brought forward at the 1980 conference, which the CLPD supporters refused to withdraw, gave a majority of NEC members the chance to vote for the withdrawal of the amendments.

On this issue, a victory won on principle this year could have been written into the constitution immediately—instead of which it will have to

be fought again next year.

Perhaps we should have mentioned all this in our conference report? We preferred to report the positive role played by 'Militant' supporters, particularly the outstanding speeches of Pat Wall and Derek Hatton—the outcome of a long and consistent campaign for Party democracy by 'Militant'.

Finally, however, it has emerged that the CLPD made a disastrous blunder in drafting their constitutional amendments on re-selection.

The amendments they proposed failed properly to delete the previous procedures [as amended by the Mikardo proposals], and so the party unfortunately faces the possibility that Constituencies can neither use the old procedure nor the new—because of the strong probability of right-wing MPs threatened with re-selection challenging the new rules in the courts!

Would it not have been just as well if the general declaration of support for mandatory re-selection [composite 32] had been passed after all? Had paragraph [b] been retained in both the Mikardo amendments, and this year's amendments, moreover, that at least would have remained as a fall-back procedure, which is why 'Militant' has always argued for its retention!

So who is it that has been foolishly manoeuvring and pushing their own sectional interests at the expense of an effective campaign for Party democracy?

WHO ARE THE REAL ENEMIES OF DEMOCRACY?

The fact that Thatcher's publicity squad decided to feature ex-Labour renegade, Reg Prentice, on the Tory Party national broadcast screened on 7 November has once again reminded millions of Labour supporters—even those who at first had doubts—of the vital necessity of the hard-fought struggle conducted by Newham NE Labour Party to de-select Prentice as official Labour candidate in 1977.

Given Prentice's unabashed advocacy of the Thatcherite cause, it will come as no surprise to readers of 'Militant' that 'The Free Nation', journal of the Freedom Association (formerly NAFF), recently gave space to Julian Lewis, second fiddle in the Oxford legal-eagle duo who moved in on Newham to orchestrate Prentice's 'fight back against the left', for a review of Paul McCormick's book, 'Enemies of Democracy'.

McCormick liked to think of himself as first fiddle and 'the brains' behind Lewis, the faithful servant. In Lewis' review, the beans were spilled about the financial backers of their dozens of court cases.

Lewis, it appears, finally admitted the facts as a means of attracting a little publicity to his own efforts, to counter-balance the publicity showered on the first-time author, McCormick.

"...In February, 1977", says Lewis, "we knew that without financial assistance we would have to abandon the campaign... Thus it was that at a crucial moment Mr John Gouriet arranged for the underwriting of our cases." In an Editor's note, 'The Free Nation' hurriedly adds: "The management committee of the then NAFF did not

associate themselves with the private action of Mr Gouriet, who at that time was an officer of the Association, since it did not accord with the policies of the Association."

Seeing as somebody had to pick up the tab for over £40,000 as a result of the defeat of Lewis and McCormick in the court case in October 1977, when they sought the imprisonment of seven Newham Labour Party members on contempt of court charges, NAFF's disclaimer was financially prudent!

Rumours that more review copies of McCormick's book have circulated on Fleet Street than have been sold in the shops are not contradicted by the fact that Tory Central Office has one of the few bookshops which actually stocks this political blockbuster!

As the focal point of McCormick's attack, 'Militant' has an interest in reviewing even the product of McCormick's obviously hurried labours, if only because every review so far published in the Tory press has pointedly omitted any reference to his hare-brained schemes for 'safeguarding' democracy in the Labour Party.

McCormick's proposals

Allen Brown reviews McCormick's book 'Enemies of Democracy'

actually constitute an assault on the freedom to organise, independently from state control, of the labour movement.

After 200 pages of school-boy journalism, political 'analysis' on the level of Oxford Junior Common Room bar chat, scurrilous innuendo and amalgams, what conclusions does McCormick reach?

He calls for wholesale re-structuring of the Labour Party's internal workings. Given his view of Party conference, ("There is no need to abolish these Annual Conferences; they are good fun and make for good TV—but there is a need to take away their powers) he accepts that these changes cannot be done by constitutional amendments at conference. So, in keeping with his taste for legalism, he declares; "Above all, legislation is required to re-structure the whole system... It would be ironical if it fell to an incoming Tory government to democratise the Labour Party."

He spells out his scheme in detail:

"All parties which fielded more than ten parliamentary candidates would be required by law to register. This would be enforced by fines, the provision to make court orders directing registration backed up by committal for contempt and sequestration of assets—and the disqualification of candidates whose election literature or entry on the ballot form indicated that they were standing for an unregistered party."

How would this system of state registration of political parties work in McCormick's cloud-cuckoo land?

"In each constituency, a Constituency Parties Officer would be appointed with an

officer and a small staff... He would keep a register of each Party's members and this would be the official register of membership. He would be empowered to admit people to the Party... Elections (for Party officerships) would be held annually by postal ballot. At the annual election, party members would vote for their local officers and Executive Committee and for the national officers and NEC."

Such ballots would be conducted by the state official already referred to. McCormick even covers the financial side. "Who would bear the cost?... The state should pay for it as it will be the state which benefits from it."

He continues: "This leaves the question of interpretation of rules. This should be taken out of the hands of partisans within each Party and entrusted to a Constituency Parties Tribunal... The Chairman should be a qualified lawyer."

The absurdity of McCormick's blinkered, one-track thinking is shown by the naive suggestion that: "If you have followed the arguments so far you can now see that the Marxists would not get anywhere in such a system." (!)

Mad, reactionary schemes

In order to suppress Marxism, McCormick advocates corporate state registration, supervision and control of political parties!

In so doing, he advocates the complete suppression of workers' right to independent political organisation, i.e. the suppression of workers' democratic rights.

He calls for a scheme of registration akin to the bonapartist transitional constitution introduced in Spain after the death of Franco and before the implementation of the 'democratic constitution'.

In Spain, this short-lived transitional regime marked a move from one-party fascist tyranny towards a so-called 'plural-democracy'. McCormick seriously proposes to run the same film backwards!

His mad schemes are too reactionary even to win significant support in the present Tory Cabinet, for McCormick leaves one significant factor out of account—the organised strength of a labour and trade union movement which would never bow down to the

reactionary plans he puts forward.

No wonder the Tory press reviews skipped over these lunatic proposals in embarrassed silence.

Just how reactionary is this man? He offers us this thought on Chile:

"Once again, whenever we find military dictatorships, we find the Marxists. They have usually been instrumental in bringing about the military coup. I blame the Marxists for their major contribution in bringing General Pinochet to power in Chile. Without them, his regime would have no *raison d'être* and Chile would still be a democracy."

A word should be said on other aspects of this book, in particular on the cheap innuendo and allegations of intimidation against 'the left'. Time and time again, allegations are completely unsubstantiated and no details are given.

"In Newham North West one person, whom I do not wish to identify for fear of causing him further suffering..." is a typical case in point. "One Moderate Labour MP under attack from the Marxists" was sent a "poison cartoon". McCormick doesn't even claim that this 'MP' had anything to do with Newham—but he achieves his aim by inference.

McCormick complains of anonymous phone calls and aggressive photography being used against 'moderates'. 'Militant' supporters would completely repudiate such vicious actions—particularly because they were most often on the receiving end, along with other left-wingers—but never accused fellow Party members of being the people responsible.

The shallowness of McCormick's research and the lack of scrupulousness in his analysis is shown by his lumping together of Stalinism and Trotskyism with the statement, "The Marxist must justify—if he can—Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin."

Sometimes his naivete is almost funny. Referring to 'Militant', he says:

"This is how the secret army trains its agents. I have received reliable information from three sources that these secret training sessions have been held, lasting between three and seven days, and that they are increasing in frequency. Often they are

held in Wales."

Could this be a reference to the good old 'Militant' summer camp, loudly advertised in these pages every year? His nonsense about "foreign money" and "20 Communist MPs" in the Tribune Group is not worth the time of day.

Even McCormick can't help himself, and has to admit grudging respect for the 'Militant' and the Labour Party Young Socialists. How about just a couple of quotes?

"Bevan was in a strong position, because the Young Socialist section had become a leading force in the constituency—the 'spearhead' for Marxist advance, just as it was supposed to be in 'Militant's' scheme of things. By the autumn of 1975 it had risen to 16 members. Just look at their influence. Of the 16 members no less than 10 were on the GMC. Of these, three were on the EC and three held ward offices of secretary or assistant secretary. No other unit of the Party had anything like that amount of influence. Not bad progress for a body which had not existed nine months earlier!"

Elsewhere, he comments: "Once these Trotskyists get in they beaver away and, like Queens on the chess board, they are worth nine of everybody else."

Above all, McCormick's book confirms that the firm stand against legal intimidation advocated by 'Militant' supporters and in particular the refusal of Newham NE Labour Party on 28 September 1977 to disband their meeting despite High Court writs, forced his hand and, by bringing the trial over contempt of court into open court with a massive campaign of opposition to legal interference in labour movement affairs building up, brought matters to a head in circumstances where the court decided to back down and acquit the 'Newham Seven' on technicalities.

No Labour Party member should have any illusions about the reactionary character of the campaign of Lewis and McCormick.

McCormick's book shows clearly that a fundamental attack on the rights of Marxists in the Labour Party leads in the direction of suppression of Party democracy itself.

ads

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

MILITANT MEETINGS

LONDON Militant Public Meeting 'The Struggle for a Socialist United Ireland'. Hear: John Throne (Administrative Council, Irish Labour Party); Peter Hadden (Sec. N Ireland Labour & Trade Union Group). 7.30 pm, Wednesday 12 December, Waterloo Action Centre, Baylis Road, Waterloo

BIRMINGHAM MILITANT Trotsky centenary rally

Agenda: 11.00 am: Introduction—film, 'October 1917'. 2.15 pm: meeting—'Leon Trotsky, what he really stood for'. Speaker: Ted Grant, Militant Editorial Board. Stalls, refreshments and creche available. Saturday 1 December, at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham.

8.00 pm: social at Sheldon Centre, Sheldon Heath Road, Birmingham. Tickets: 70p. Tel: (021) 459 7903

SALFORD Militant discussion meetings. Next meeting: 'Marxist Economics'. 7.30 pm, Sunday 2nd December. For more details tel. 793-5808

PORTSMOUTH Militant Meeting '100th Anniversary of Leon Trotsky'. Speaker: Ray Apps (Brighton Labour Party & 'Militant' Editorial Board) Friday 30 November, 8.00 pm, a Labour Rooms, 84 Kingston Crescent, North End, Portsmouth

TEESIDE Militant Readers' Meeting 'How to fight the cuts'. Speaker: Jeff Price. At Stockton YMCA, Thursday 6th December, 7.30 pm

TEESIDE Marxist Discussion Group every fortnight. 22nd November—'Crisis of the British Economy'. (For details phone Middlesborough 211364)

CLASSIFIED

MILITANT SUPPORTERS in Bath area were saddened to hear of the death of Les Dickens of NUPE. Les spent many years in the Communist Party and as an active Trades Council member in Bath. His efforts as a tireless socialist will be remembered by all who came into contact with him inside the labour movement.

SALFORD Youth Against the Tories public meeting. 'Stop the Cuts!' Speakers: Frank Allaun MP, Matthew Wrack (Salford LPYS); a Trades Council speaker. 8.00 pm, Friday 30 November, Ashfield Labour Club, Seedley Terrace, Salford

YORKSHIRE REGION Labour Party Young Socialists Young Workers' Conference. 'Youth must organise against unemployment—fight back against the Tories!' Speakers: Pat Wall (President, Bradford Trades Council); Bob Cryer (Labour MP for Keighley); Joan Maynard (MP & Labour's National Executive); Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer). Saturday 8 December; morning session 10.30 am, afternoon 1.15 pm. Leeds Town Hall, Chapeltown Road.

Disco/social 8.00 pm at the Adelphi.

Sponsored by major trade unions in the region.

MORNING STAR Christmas Bazaar Saturday 1st December, Pavilion Theatre, New Road, Brighton. 11.30 am-5 pm. Lucky entrance ticket 10p

VIC AND KIM GRAVES—a girl, Keely Ann—born on 8th November. Forward to socialism

GET YOUR OWN BANNER! FOR TRADE UNION; LABOUR PARTY OR LPYS BRANCH.

From £50
Contact: Stevenage Bannermakers.
Telephone:
0438 60313 or 0438 725135

NO HEADQUARTERS FOR THE FASCIST NATIONAL FRONT

Hackney Trades Council calls upon all anti-racists and anti-fascists to join its demonstration and march, on the eve of the Department of Environment Enquiry into the NF premises in Great Eastern Street. We are marching under the slogan 'No Headquarters for the Fascist National Front'

ASSEMBLE MONDAY DECEMBER 3rd 7pm at SHOREDITCH CHURCH [in Calvert Avenue], SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET [Nearest station—Liverpool Street]

March off 7.45 pm via Great Eastern Street to Hackney Town Hall.
Organised by Hackney Trades Council



BLACK CHIX!

The strike over union recognition at the Chix sweet factory in Slough has entered its fifth week, with the Asian workers more determined than ever.

Management have tried every trick in the book to try and break the strikers' morale. This has included the hiring of a van to take employment agency scabs through the picket line, as well as paying up to £2 per hour to the scabs (about double the normal rate).

The police have also tried to intimidate the strikers, especially on the mass pickets. On the first mass picket one Asian woman was arrested for supposedly assaulting a policeman. The second time, a shop steward from Fords (Langley) was arrested for kicking water from a puddle at a scab!

During a scuffle as the van went into the factory another picket was pushed into the compound. Before he knew what was happening he had handcuffs slapped on him and was bundled into a police van. The third picket to be arrested was supposed to have kicked the scab van.

Even though the driver of the van accelerated into the pickets a number of times, he was not even cautioned!

Only the power of organised labour can effectively combat intimidation and win this dispute. All sugar supplies to the factory have been blacked and production is only proceeding at a snail's pace.

More pressure is still needed. Recently a cargo of jelly sweets from Rotterdam was unloaded from a juggernaut—probably via Southampton docks.

The next mass picket is on Tuesday 20th November. Help is needed from 6.30 am onwards. The factory is on the Farnham Road, Slough, on the outskirts of the trading estate.

Messages of support and donations to the strike fund should be sent to: Mr Anwar, 271 Goodman Park, Slough.

By Nicholas John
(Slough LPYS)

POEU ON ROAD TO TRANSFORMATION

Wayne Jones reports on the POEU rules' revision conference

ABOVE: Angry POEU members demand support from union leaders, in a lobby of the union's headquarters in London during last year's battle for 35-hour week

Photo: MILITANT

Post Office engineers are resolved to ensure that their union has the leadership it needs. This was the main thread running through the 1979 POEU rules revision conference in Blackpool.

The serious mood of delegates reflected the sombre background: a vicious Tory government intent on using new technology to undermine jobs and conditions, and on splitting the Post Office as a prelude to hiving off the profitable parts of the telecomms industry.

Important new changes were incorporated in the rules. Attempts by some right-wing dominated branches to alter rules in a way which would weaken trade union organisation were defeated.

Candidates for national office in the union can now

submit an election address prior to the annual conference. A record of how branches voted in all elections for national office and delegations at conference will be published. Delegates were determined to strengthen the mandatory procedure to give the membership more control over decision-making.

Attempts to further undermine the key position of branches within the union were rejected. As delegates pointed out, at branch meetings members, after thorough discussion and debate, can make an informed decision. Resolutions proposing the introduction of postal ballots and undermining efforts to establish a closed shop were decisively thrown out.

Other important democratic reforms were accepted. New policy will now only be introduced by propositions fully debated and passed by conference, rather than through the NEC's annual report.

Nevertheless, the resolution from Westminster calling on the union "to actively campaign for the complete abolition of capitalism in pursuance of a socialist society", was defeated. Amazingly, the NEC moved opposition to this on the basis that, although a long term desire, it would be "alien to free-thinking" and "divisive"!

As one speaker pointed out, the adoption of this resolution would bring the union in line with most other major trade unions, by including in the rule book an expression of the basic aspirations of the working class to control the wealth produced by them and manage industry in the interest of the majority.

At a time when the POEU is facing its greatest challenge since its formation—new technology controlled by big business, interested only in profit—this can no longer be dismissed as 'alien' or 'long-term'. It will now be left to the Broad Left to mount a

campaign at all levels of the union to show that socialism is an urgent necessity, to safeguard and extend the rights and conditions of PO engineers.

A day was put aside to discuss the second stage of the 1979 pay claim. It was decided to seek a negotiated settlement, without any commitment to 'restructuring', using industrial action and/or arbitration if there is no satisfactory outcome by the end of January 1980.

Many delegates, particularly Broad Left supporters, felt that on the basis of past experience, this left a way open for the NEC to go to arbitration and agree to a comparability exercise, which would be taken as a demonstration of weakness by the hard-faced PO management, backed by the Tories' strict cash limits. Broad Left delegates, using facts, figures and arguments to back up their case, showed how public sector workers had fallen

behind in pay from 1975-8, with PO engineers bottom of the league! All public sector workers had taken big reductions in living standards; thus any comparisons would be with workers who have already suffered real wage cuts.

The decisions on pay and the constitution were keenly debated. It was clear, as was evident at the annual conference in June, that the POEU is undergoing rapid change.

The leadership is under scrutiny from the ranks. The members have made it clear that they will not allow conference to become a rubber stamp for decisions made by the union leaders.

POEU members are crucial to modern industry. New to industrial militancy, it has now embarked on the road of rapid transformation. The development of a left wing around the Broad Left, campaigning on clear socialist policies, can play a decisive role in shaping the future of the POEU.

Support grows for Crown House EETPU strike

The Nat/West EETPU building in Broad Street will be the tallest office block in Europe. This may add prestige to the National Westminster Bank when it is finished, but there is little prestige for the Crown House sparks who have now been out for over four weeks.

They are fighting management's attempts to break their shop floor structure with arbitrary and unjustifiable redundancies of 50 electricians. Now another 30 are threatened with the sack by the end of the month. But the men are determined.

The major obstacle is still the lack of official backing. Every day the battle over the lorries goes on—the pickets approach the drivers to get them to turn round, while Mowlem's (the main site contractors) foreman waves the company's letter stating that the convenor is in agree-

ment with their crossing the line, that the rest of the workforce are working normally and that the strike is unofficial. A good proportion turn away, but not all.

Nearly all the lads I spoke to are determined to win this one, but the money is getting tight and Christmas is looming up.

Support has started to flood in, particularly from the Littlebrook power station site. The shop stewards (representing all unions) raised £23 and collections will be raised among all the men on site.

The Press branch of the EETPU has raised a magnificent £85 at the branch meeting and pledged the full support of the Fleet Street men. Resolutions calling on the EETPU to make the strike official have come from Southend Branch, London Central, NE London and

By Bob Faulkes
(EETPU & Hackney Labour Party)

Dagenham Auto, who have also collected £50. Many other sites including Mobil and Shell Refineries have been visited; the Rashleigh Phipps' Whitbread site sparks have raised a collection.

The Crown House electricians "call on all our brothers to attend their branches to attempt to reverse the decision of the Executive Council" and give this strike official backing. (EETPU Strike Committee).

Donations to G Noble, 12 Balstonia Drive, Stanford-Le-Hope, Essex. For more information telephone: K Burrough, Stanford-Le-Hope [037 56] 77635, or K Groom, Basildon [0268] 280546.

Working in the Union

BY LES KURIATA
(EETPU)

"We'll back you all the way"; "We'll all fight together". That was the reaction when I told the other apprentices that I was threatened with the sack if I did not withdraw my union application form.

Being the first apprentice ever to try and join the Iron & Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) at our works, I was not surprised when the management told me that either I withdraw my application or my contract would be considered broken and therefore my apprenticeship could be terminated. Although the 'law' says that every employee is entitled to join a trade union it seems there is a different law for the bosses.

Sure enough I had to chicken out. I could have taken the matter further and maybe won, but how long would it be before I could be

sacked for bad timekeeping or the rare unauthorised day off, normally considered trivial offences? A year or two ago a leading union official who had a reputation for winning his battles, was sacked and later re-instated after a walk-out, for taking half a toilet roll to wipe the ice off his car windscreen.

Union freedom?

So who are the Tories kidding when they talk about reforming the unions? There are hundreds of thousands, even perhaps millions of workers up and down the country who are bullied and threatened as I was, to ensure that they can't join a union. Why is it we never read about this aspect of the unions in the press?

At the present moment the trade union movement is lying in wait for the Tory attacks like a 'Jack in the box', with Thatcher walking around the box thinking of ways to strangle 'Jack.' Although she may get away with prodding and touching the box, just as soon as she tries to open the lid she is in for a big surprise.

So the next time the Tories bleat about the power of the unions, spare a thought for the many workers who haven't even got a union to turn to. My experience has made me that much more determined to fight for a socialist Britain and world. It also showed my apprentice workmates that when the Tories scream about freedom, they mean freedom for the bosses to exploit and not the workers to demand a decent existence.

STEEL IN CRISIS

NATIONAL STRIKE

CALL TO HALT CLOSURES

A national steel strike is now firmly placed on the agenda.

The National Union of Blastfurnacemen, representing craft workers in the industry, are recommending national strike action in support of members fighting closure and redundancy.

After discussion at lodge meetings, the executive will accept the majority decision of the members on calling a national strike until there is agreement that all steel works go back into production.

At the Shotton steel works, T&GWU members have voted overwhelmingly for action against the closure. At a mass meeting the workers agreed to support any action proposed by their shop stewards to save Shotton.

Links between all unions in the works are to be strengthened in preparation for the battles ahead. "It is important that we present a united front and form the strongest fighting body possible," Derek Driscoll, T&GWU

Reports from Andy Harrison [ISTC Shotton] and Peter Rowlands [ISTC Port Talbot] compiled by Eileen Short

chairman, pointed out.

The stewards will report on progress at their weekly branch meetings.

The stage has been set. Other Shotton workers were looking to the T&GWU to make the first stand against accepting redundancy. Of the 900 workers at the meeting, only a handful—estimated at four—voted for acceptance of redundancy money.

Before the meeting, only three days after the British Steel Corporation announced their 'final' verdict on Shotton—a phased shut-down of steel-making from the end of December, workers warned: "If it closes, we'll probably never get another job."

Closure would mean disaster for Deeside. At a local job centre, a TV reporter found 200 jobs on offer, mainly for butchers and audio-typists. Not much good for 6,000 out of work steel makers.

The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, the biggest union in BSC, has proposed a plan of campaign against the closures, including a national overtime ban and one-day strike and rally. This could

act as the rallying point for a co-ordinated national fight.

At the TUC's steel committee on 15 November, however, this was not endorsed by the other steel union leaders. Despite the ISTC's powerful position on the committee, with a third of the votes and Bill Sirs, ISTC general secretary, in the chair, they failed to carry their proposals.

The other unions, including the T&GWU, which has the second largest membership in the steel industry, are now reporting back to their executives.

National fight

United action is vital. T&GWU members at Shotton have declared their readiness to fight. At BSC Scunthorpe, the joint ISTC branches have voted to support their executive's proposals, withdrawing from all joint consultative meetings and productivity negotiations with management.

"The Scunthorpe delegates are normally moderate," an ISTC official told us, "but they are looking over their shoulders: if Corby and Shotton go, we are next in line." Even if Shotton, Corby and Cleveland are allowed to



Shotton workers lobbied Parliament in 1975 in the fight against closure—but BSC have abandoned their promises to keep the works open until 1982: the fight goes on Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report) II

close, this would not cut capacity by the drastic amount BSC is demanding. Scunthorpe workers fear that one of the 'big five' steel plants would follow, and that they are the most likely candidate.

"We are dependent on the other unions' support," the official went on, "but if it comes to the crunch, the ISTC will have to lead."

It is essential that the unions cut across management's attempts to play off one works against another. Peter Rowlands, an ISTC member at BSC Port Talbot, reports (in a personal capacity):

"In the past they have attempted to pit Shotton against Port Talbot. With the lack of a clear national lead from the unions, this has meant a certain amount of disillusion at Port Talbot. But the suggestion of a ban on overtime and a 24-hour strike to save Shotton and Corby has had a sympathetic response from the majority—in all probability it would receive support from this plant.

"We have to meet the threatened closures head-on. If BSC gets away with this, none of our jobs will be safe. With half the T&GWU jobs gone in the last four years and 900 staff jobs to be cut, it would be naive for us to think that Port Talbot could not come under the same threat.

"We should give our maximum support to this fight, or who will we turn to when our time comes?"

No jobs safe

The pressure is on. After years of uncertainty and closures, steel workers are ready to do battle to save their jobs and the industry. This must be brought home to the union leaders.

If BSC are allowed to pursue their present policies to their merciless conclusion, no works, no job is safe. The survival of whole towns, of manufacturing industry and of millions of workers is at stake.

The trade unions must hammer out the socialist

alternative: take over the private steel sharks, integrate them into a publicly-owned industry, democratically run under workers' control and management, to serve the real needs of industry and society with socialist planning.

End the stranglehold of big business, who have milked the state sector dry, and now, rocked by the crisis of their anarchic system, are preparing to abandon it.

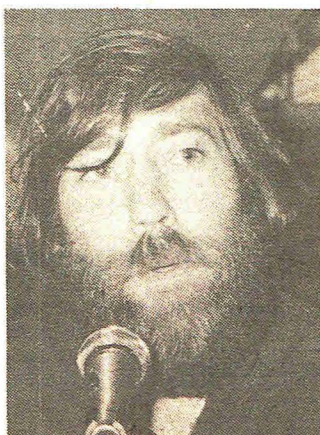
Steel workers are in the firing line. Full pressure must be put on the union leaders to use their authority to head a national fight against closures.

It is only the workers themselves who can convert words into action. Shop stewards and branch officials of all unions must establish effective united organisation at plant level, and link together all the plants and areas, drawing in workers in private steel, to put the maximum weight behind a national fight. As a united, fighting force we can challenge the Tory onslaught.

NEW BAKERS' LEADER

Joe Marino has been elected as the new general secretary of the Bakers', Food and Allied Workers' Union in a national ballot of bakery workers. The election was made necessary by the tragic death of Sam Maddox.

A union Executive member for the Manchester area, Joe supports the policies of 'Militant'. A full interview on how he sees the future of the union will follow shortly.



Foster Wheeler provoke confrontation

Since the last dispute involving Foster Wheeler workers [see Militant 464] no satisfactory agreements have been made on the Lindsey Oil Refinery site, South Humber-side.

The dissatisfaction of the work force has found vent in a whole series of one-day, half-day, and week long shut-downs.

Recently one of the 'bonus-stewards' discovered that the company weren't adhering to the site bonus agreement. Using their own formula, they were effectively docking one-third of each man's bonus entitlement.

Then, to add fuel to the fire, the management were found attempting to divide the work force. They were giving lower cabin rates to those unable to work in

Neil Hammond

(Clethorpes & Immingham LPYS) talked to a site shop steward

exposed positions in rain, while those working under cover continued to earn a full wage.

These provocative practices led to a spontaneous demonstration by 200 site workers. The demonstrators marched on the management offices and peacefully occupied them, cutting communications and paralysing the office between 10.30am and 2.30pm.

Certain documents came to light during the day. One of particular interest was titled, 'Management Review Meeting': the minutes of an inter-management meeting.

NEW 'MILITANT' PAMPHLET

'Stop the cuts—defend the NHS'

Price 40p

10p for post & packing. Order from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

These revealed that the main contractors, Lindsey Oil Refinery, are keen to see a hasty completion of the work. Even they are dissatisfied with Foster Wheeler's disruptive management.

In spite of this, following the demonstration, a shop steward was sacked, provoking a strike on the site. This brought management to their senses, and the steward was reinstated by the end of the week.

The recent struggles have had an effect throughout the site. There is a distinct change in the mood and confidence of the shop stewards' committees and the workforce: they are prepared to use their own proven strength to meet any future challenges.

NUM reject 20 per cent MINERS FIGHT FOR CONFERENCE DEMANDS

Ian Ferguson has been Yorkshire Main NUM branch secretary for 12 years. He was transferred from Scotland in the early 1960s because of pit closures. He talked to Laurence Major [Doncaster Labour Party Executive] about the miners' wage claim and youth representation in the National Union of Mineworkers.

"If the nuclear programme is developed there is a danger the mining industry will be starved of the necessary capital to make it viable.

Economic pits can easily be made uneconomic by starving them of capital. If capital isn't provided to develop Park Gate, for example, and we continue mining the present seams, this pit will close in 15 years.

The key question facing the miners is to ensure we don't go back to the 1960s when pits were closed on the grounds they were 'uneconomic'.

It is vital while we are in a strong bargaining position to fight to expand industry and

to improve and protect the living standards of people in the industry. The present wage claim is therefore valid: in fact we may have undervalued ourselves.

The claim is quite reasonable—for a minimum basic rate of £80 for surface workers and £140 for face-men. The National Executive Committee have no right to ignore or devalue the decision of conference.

If the claim isn't met, the NEC should abide by conference decision and consult the membership by a ballot with a view to taking industrial action.

The main issue is an acceptable basic rate. Pro-

ductivity agreements or incentive schemes are based on the assumption that workers have no right to demand an increase in basic wages if the cost of living or the bosses' profits soar.

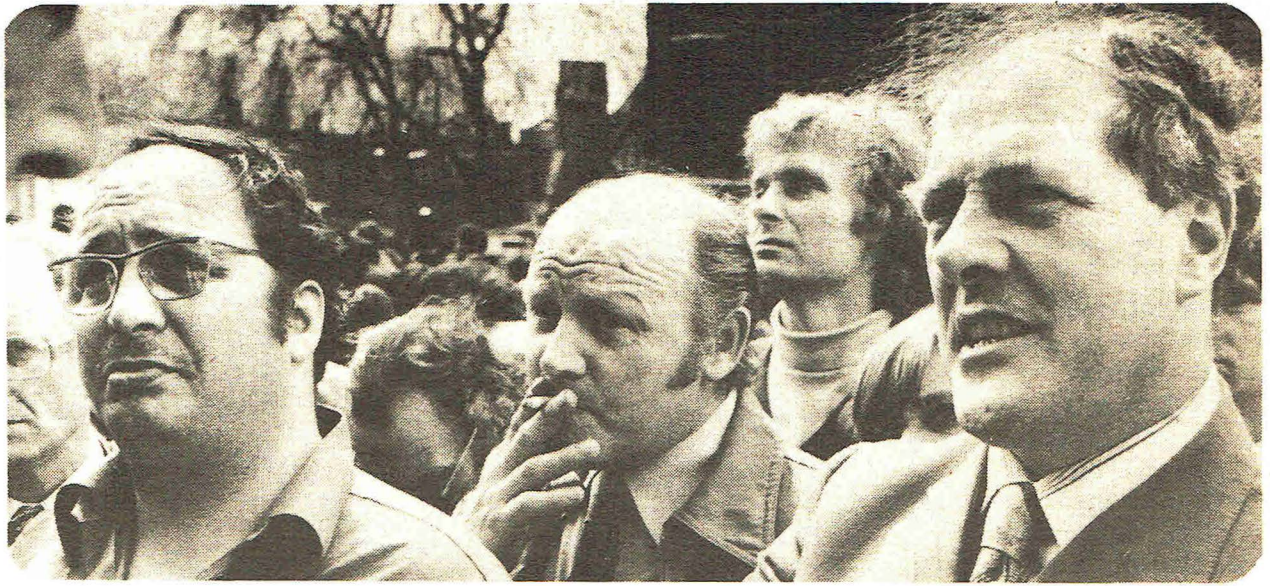
What they mean is that workers should pay for their own wage increases from their own productivity. It is important therefore that miners conduct a vigorous campaign for basic rates in their industry in line with the decision of annual conference.

There should be a place for a youth representative on all NUM branch committees to encourage young people to participate in branch activities. In Scotland, Lawrence Daly and Mick McGahey were products of the Scottish youth committee.

We should examine setting up a youth committee in the Yorkshire area and other coalfields. At our colliery we have a place on the consultative committee for a youth representative to encourage young people to attend branch meetings.

Ian Ferguson speaks in a personal capacity

LEYLAND NATIONAL ACTION TO DEFEND SHOP FLOOR RIGHTS



destroy the effective shop-floor trade union organisation.

"If they succeed in smashing the combine committee and imposing their current pay offer, every element of trade union control over shop floor conditions built up through years of struggle would be wiped out.

"But the stewards understand, and the shop floor, instinctively understand this—and there will be a massive fight back against their vicious attack."

News of Derek Robinson's sacking provoked spontaneous walk-outs from BL plants. As we go to press, there are over 50,000 BL workers out.

The Longbridge, Canley, Castle Bromwich, and Bordsley Green plants are out on an indefinite basis.

A mass meeting at Rover, Solihull, voted overwhelmingly for a half-day strike on Wednesday, and supported a call for further action if Derek Robinson is not reinstated.

A meeting of plant convenors on Tuesday called for official union backing for national action to reverse the disciplinary action.

Derek Robinson [right] victimised Longbridge convenor, with other Leyland shop stewards

Photo: MILITANT

A proposal for all-out national strike from the 26 November, moved by Longbridge convenors, was not passed, however. The meeting left it to individual convenors to call for whatever action they felt would be supported in their own plants.

But a call did go out from Birmingham stewards, rallying mass labour and trade union support for a Day of Action on Monday, 26 November.

This call must be overwhelmingly supported. The attack on BL shop-floor leaders, which is undoubtedly sanctioned by the Tory ministers, would, if successful, be a prelude to similar attacks on shop-floor organisation throughout industry.

Edwardes, with the Tory government egging him on, has clearly been emboldened by management's success in the recent ballot.

Far from reflecting a vote of confidence in BL manage-

ment, however, the ballot demonstrated a profound lack of confidence in the bosses' ability to maintain BL as a viable entity.

It is significant that the workers who walked out first in response to the attack on Robinson, were in the main at the plants threatened with the biggest redundancies, including Canley and Castle Bromwich. Already the ballot result is being contradicted.

But the acceptance of a plan based on massive redundancies unfortunately resulted from a lack, over a prolonged period, of a clear and bold lead from BL stewards nationally.

Further weakness and hesitation now would be fatal. The bosses are out to smash effective trade union organisation in BL and take back past concessions won by the workers.

If the convenors and shop stewards explained the full implication of Edwardes' latest attack and combined a determined defence of trade union rights with resolute action on the current pay claim, they could arouse a tremendous response from BL workers.

But the ruthless determination of Leyland management to trample on trade union rights, shed 25,000 [and possibly more] jobs, and grind down pay and conditions, points to the need to fight for the removal of the big business stooges now running BL.

The Edwardes' management must be replaced with workers' control and management in this publicly-financed industry.

Their latest attacks underline the key importance of the demand, consistently advocated by 'Militant', for workers' control and management, with a management board made up of "a third, a third and a third"—one third representing the BL trade unions, one third appointed by the TUC, and a third appointed by the government.

At the same time, in order to ensure the basis for a viable car industry in this country, BL unions and the whole labour movement must demand the nationalisation of the entire car industry, bring BL, Ford, Vauxhall, Chrysler, and other producers into a single, socialist planned industry.

"Give them an inch, and they try to take a mile!"

This was the angry comment of Bill Mullins, senior steward at Rover, Solihull, on BL management's action against Longbridge convenor, Derek Robinson, and two other leaders of the BL Cars combine committee.

"Edwardes and Co. believe their own propaganda," Bill Mullins told 'Militant'.

By Militant Industrial correspondents

"They think that because there was a 7 to 1 vote in favour of the Edwardes redundancy plan, despite the opposition of the shop stewards, they can now smash the stewards and do what they like.

"Perhaps they think they can now work through management-dominated company committees. They are out to

RALLY BEHIND COMBINE COMMITTEE

"If they can sack Robinson, they can sack me!" That will be the immediate reaction of BL workers. That is why there has already been a massive wave of protest action in key BL plants.

If BL bosses could get away with this, no BL steward could so much as criticise Edwardes' plans without risking the sack. That would mean the end of effective trade union organisation in the company.

But the power of the trade union organisation built up in BL, including the power and authority of the combine committee, will not be relinquished lightly.

There can be no doubt that Sir Keith Joseph, the Tory minister responsible for the NEB and BL, is behind the attack on the BL combine leaders.

Such a provocative move would be inconceivable without his consent. 'The Times', moreover, let it slip that Derek Robinson's dismissal had been greeted "by disbelief from managements and unions."

Some BL stewards have good reason to believe that

the dismissal of the combine chairman and disciplinary action against at least three other combine officers are part of a carefully planned purge aimed at the shop-floor leaders instigated jointly by Joseph and Edwardes.

Derek Robinson (convenor, Longbridge) has been sacked and Jack Adams (chairman, Longbridge shop stewards) and Mick Clarke (deputy convenor, Rover, Solihull) warned for putting their names to a booklet, 'A Trade Union Response to the Edwardes Plan'.

The gutter press has resorted to every dirty trick to whip up a personal campaign against Derek Robinson.

But Joseph, Edwardes, and the press themselves are well aware that the convenors signed the booklet as national officers of the combine committee.

The call to fight against the massive redundancies demanded by the Edwardes Plan is backed officially by the Transport and General Workers' Union, by the 400 convenors and senior stewards of the combine committee, and by over 16,000 BL workers who voted against the Edwardes' Plan.

Indicating the real target of their assault, BL management's statement referred to

"a body calling itself the Leyland combined trade unions committee," as if nobody had ever heard of this strange organisation!

"The combined committee," it went on, "is in fact an unofficial body. It is recognised neither by the company nor by the trade unions, whose interests it claims to represent."

The truth is, the combine committee is the real trade union leadership of BL's workforce. It was created out of the experience of shop-floor struggle over a period of years.

The TUC has itself called for the establishment of combine committees in big combines and multinationals.

The BL cars combine committee has already proven its effectiveness: it was the body that drew up the current pay claim, subsequently endorsed by the official Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee.

As part of the fight against this attack, the shop stewards must campaign for the official recognition of the combine committee by all the unions involved, as a matter of urgency!

The attack on the combine leadership makes it clear that the Edwardes plan means more than the loss of 25,000

jobs, disastrous enough in itself.

This is a harsh object lesson for many, including Communist Party stewards, who originally welcomed Edwardes as BL's "saviour" and advocated support for the idea of "participation", making Edwardes' scheme possible.

It is now clear to all that Edwardes exploited participation until he had extracted every possible concession from the trade union side, and then discarded it like a squeezed lemon.

The bitter experience of the recent months completely vindicates the policy put forward by 'Militant' and fought for all along by the stewards of Rover, Solihull: that participation should be rejected as a snare, and that the independence of the shop stewards' organisation must be upheld at all costs.

There are already signs that this onslaught is stiffening shop floor determination to fight for the full combine/LCJNC claim, and resist management's attempts to impose the derisory 5% wage settlement with vicious strings attached.



GET
Militant

<p>BRITAIN 13 Issues...£3.00</p> <p>EUROPE [Airspeeded] 26 Issues...£6.60 52 Issues...£13.20</p>	<p>26 Issues...£5.90 52 Issues...£11.80</p> <p>REST OF WORLD [Airspeeded] 26 Issues...£9.10 52 Issues...£18.20</p>
--	---

Name

Address

.....

Make cheques payable to MILITANT and return to the Circulation Dept, MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN, Bulk orders available, sale or return.