

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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15p

Merseyside LPYS Public Meeting
'SAVE MECCANO JOBS'

Speakers:

Frank Bloor [Convenor, GMWU, Meccano]
Eddie Loyden [ex-MP, Garston]
Josie Aitman [LPYS National Committee]
Terry Harrison [Liverpool District Labour Party]
Barry Williams [Liverpool Trades Council]
Monday December 10th, 7.30 pm
AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool
All Meccano workers, trade unionists
and Labour Party members welcome

TORY BLITZ ON JOBS

national strike action to stop steel sackings

Nearly half the workforce sacked. A two per cent pay 'rise'. That's what the British Steel Corporation is holding out for steel workers. A national steel strike, the first ever, is being seriously discussed.

The response of steel workers to last Friday's BSC announcement of further drastic redundancies was one of shock and disbelief.

By Miles Todd
(BSC Scunthorpe)

Talk of absolute disaster, catastrophe and ultimate decimation of the entire steel making centres aroused unheard of bitterness and anger, as mass unemployment faces the workers of Scunthorpe, Llanwerne and Port Talbot.

The plan to axe a threatened 80,000 jobs within eighteen months would mean the 'moth-balling' — closure — of Llanwerne, the wiping out of strip-steel production at Port Talbot, and restricting production at Scunthorpe to just one blast furnace, which means the closure of Normandy Park works and 4,000 jobs, and the impending complete destruction of all remaining plant in the following months.

Scunthorpe would be left with just one 'Queen' furnace producing approximately 700,000 tonnes a year. At the beginning of 1979 there were ten blast furnaces and an iron capacity of 5.3 million tonnes a year; a steel capacity of 6 million tonnes.

This is what the Tories are demanding—the destruction of the industrial

base of this country, with the prospect of millions thrown on the dole.

The further cut in production being forced through will ensure that the British steel industry will be totally outclassed by its rivals, with the state-owned British Steel Corporation producing just 12 million tonnes a year during the 1980s.

Costs will rise, making British steel less competitive on the home market. The axe will then cut still deeper at the Ravenscraig and Redcar works.

BSC stated their intentions to the TUC steel committee at the beginning of November.

A draft document produced by the steel committee, entitled 'Statement of the present crisis in BSC' reveals [paragraph 17] that BSC would "bring in new equipment including Ravenscraig and Redcar as quickly as possible, in order to get, as they see it, the high-quality and low-cost iron and steel they need; concentrate all production on these installations and other

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Photo: J McKittrick (Militant)

Steelworkers lobbied TUC conference in September for action to avert catastrophe in their industry

MECCANO

By
Jim
Hollingshead
(Toxteth LPYS)

Fight for jobs— fight for Merseyside

Over the years, Merseyside has suffered attack after attack, as plant by plant, factory by factory, industry in the area has been destroyed.

Now workers at Meccano Ltd in Liverpool are saying 'Enough! We're not taking any more unemployment.'

Workers have been occupying the factory and refusing to let management in since last Friday November 30th, when they were callously given 20 minutes notice that the factory was to close.

Three weeks previously workers had been told by the directors of the parent company, Airfix, that they were considering the future of Meccano.

When the news came,
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FIGHT BACK WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES

Militant

"BL - THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER"

British Leyland workers marching against Edwardes' plans earlier this year



Photo: MILITANT

Michael Edwardes has thrown down the gauntlet to the entire British trade union movement. If his methods of management are seen to succeed then other capitalists will try to act in the same way. A defeat for Edwardes will therefore have repercussions for the entire capitalist class.

The decision to sack Derek Robinson, convenor of the Longbridge stewards and chairman of the Leyland stewards' combine committee, is the opening shot of a campaign to destroy the stewards' organisations throughout Leyland as a prelude to smashing all the rights and traditional working conditions of Leyland workers.

Edwardes has laid bare his full intentions in a "Proposed Draft Agreement", which answers a £24 across the board claim of the workforce with a derisory 5% offer that is tied to management being given the sole prerogative over manning levels, mobility of labour and truck speeds.

A Longbridge stewards' meeting and mass meetings at Canley, Cowley and Solihull have already turned down this "offer". This is why Derek Robinson was sacked. Edwardes' idea was, to deal a blow against the workforce before any general opposition could gather momentum, and then unilaterally enforce his terms and conditions.

Keith Joseph, the Tory industry minister, undoubtedly played a major part in this move.

The Tories hoped that a defeat for Leyland workers would help demoralise workers generally, facilitating the attacks on living standards, jobs and the social services. Leyland was selected because no capitalists' profits are directly at stake in a nationalised company. The same cynical calculations led to Rolls Royce being the bosses' pace-maker during the engineers' dispute.

Derek Robinson put his name to a Leyland stewards' policy document. In using this as the pretext for the sacking, Edwardes and Joseph have helped expose

to countless workers the hypocrisy of capitalism and above all, the capitalist press, when it comes to "freedom of speech".

But, despite the smoke-screen of lies, abuse and downright hysterical personal attacks from the media and management, Leyland workers understood that a fundamental trade union principle was at stake, and they responded magnificently. The biggest ever wave of industrial action in the history of British Leyland unfolded spontaneously.

If the leadership had matched the fighting mood of the rank and file workers then Leyland management would have been forced to back down. Such a victory would then have considerably boosted the battle for jobs and a living wage inside Leyland.

But the AUEW leaders were utterly incapable of giving any effective fighting leadership.

Under threats from Edwardes that the company would collapse if the Robinson sacking was not upheld, they capitulated.

This was a clear cut example of the inadequacies of a reformist trade union leadership. The leaders look in vain for economic solutions solely within the framework of capitalism. But rather than this outlook leading to reforms, it leaves open the door to demands from the bosses for vicious counter-reforms; particularly when industry under capitalism is floundering. The struggle in Leyland demands a socialist perspective.

The fight against the onslaught of Leyland management should be tied to the fight for democratic workers' control and management throughout Leyland, along the lines of the plan originally put forward

by "Militant" and accepted as Leyland combine policy: for the board of management to be made up, one third elected by the workers in the company through the unions, one third elected through the TUC, to represent the working class as a whole, and one third appointed by the government.

Michael Edwardes was actually appointed by Eric Varley, Minister for Industry in the last Labour government. The use of ex-capitalists to run nationalised industries should be repudiated by the Labour Party at all levels, and a campaign launched to ensure that the next Labour government is committed to a policy of workers' control and management of all nationalised industries as part of a general socialist plan of production based upon the nationalisation of the top 200 industrial and financial monopolies.

Devoid of any confidence for the future of Leyland, and having been further frightened by Edwardes' lurid tales of woe, the AUEW leaders have tried to abandon the battle against the victimisation of Derek Robinson precisely when management were beginning to panic and when the workers throughout Leyland were merely waiting for official backing, before moving to crush Edwardes.

But this battle is far from over. It will be difficult for the proposed enquiry to produce a convincing justification for the sacking, particularly as Duffy has repeatedly said it is completely unjust! Duffy has promised an all-out strike in the event of the enquiry finding in Robinson's favour.

No doubt, now that they have destroyed the momentum of the strike, there will be those among the AUEW leaders who will expect a negative response to any new strike call, should they be forced to issue one, especially if the call is made just before Christmas.

But if mass meetings are held in every factory, linking the sacking to the questions of wages and productivity, then Leyland workers will again demonstrate their readiness to fight on this issue.

The need for mass meetings on all major questions facing the workers is one of the major lessons to emerge from events in Leyland.

Unfortunately, even at Longbridge, in this latest strike, no mass meetings were held for the entire work force, allowing the press and TV to play up the fact that a small minority of workers crossed the picket lines. A full mass meeting would have demonstrated the isolation of these workers.

In the past the majority of the leading stewards have also neglected the demand for recognition of the Combine Stewards' Committee. "Militant" is proud of the fact that it is the only paper to have fought consistently within Leyland for combine unity on wages and jobs, led by the combine stewards.

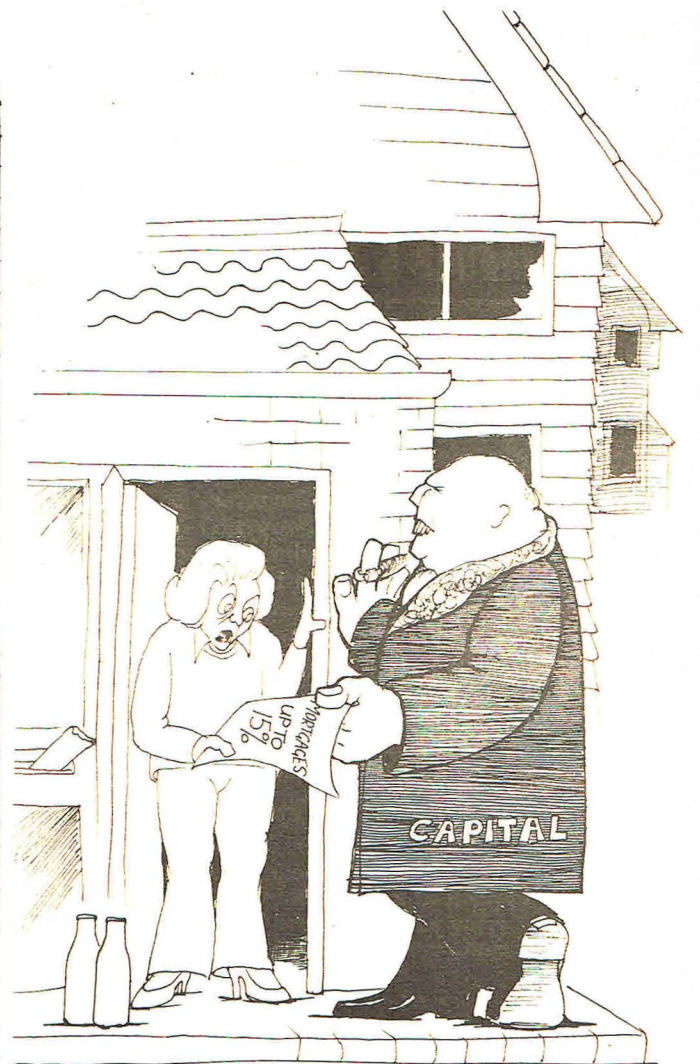
The demand should be taken up for the immediate recognition of the stewards' combine committee by the unions as a step to forcing recognition.

Some Leyland stewards, particularly at Longbridge, are talking of throwing in their stewards' credentials and leaving Leyland, in disgust at the actions of the AUEW leaders. But, at worst, this will only be a passing mood. Edwardes is preparing all the ingredients for an explosion. New younger shop stewards who have not experienced at first hand the set-backs in Leyland over the last few years will quickly fill any vacuum that older stewards may leave.

A war of attrition has been placed on the agenda which, sooner or later, will develop into an all-out battle against the rapacious policies of Michael Edwardes.

Above all, this battle has brought home sharply to thousands upon thousands of engineering workers how much the AUEW leadership are out of touch with the aspirations of the AUEW membership. Even former AUEW right wing supporters have been staggered by the blatant refusal to defend a basic trade union principle: defence of a victimised shop steward.

A specially re-convened meeting of the newly formed engineering industry shop stewards' committee should take place as soon as possible to prepare for next year's AUEW presidential election. Detailed plans should be outlined for a bold campaign to ensure the election of the broad left candidate, Bob Wright, on a fighting socialist programme.



GOOD DAY MADAM
NICE LITTLE PLACE
WE'VE GOT HERE!

DEFEND YOUR PAPER

"This branch deplores the use of POEU funds, by John Golding MP, for a libel action against the grass roots Trade Union/Labour Movement paper 'Militant', and calls upon the POEU NEC to withdraw support for John Golding.

"Any political disagreement should be fought according to the democratic traditions of the Labour Movement not through the courts. The paper 'Militant' have said they will give John Golding the right of reply in the paper."

That was how Luton branch of the Post Office Engineering Union, reacted when they heard of John Golding's court action against "Militant".

The tradition of resolving differences within the labour movement has deep roots. Labour Party members in Cardiganshire sent letters to the NEC of the POEU urging John Golding to abandon his action.

It appears that many GMC delegates there also expressed shock that John Golding should sponsor a campaign for press freedom when he is taking a socialist newspaper to court.

The Scottish Graphical Division (West Branch) of SOGAT decided to affiliate to the Campaign for Press Freedom, but expressed their deep concern that John Golding was a sponsor. They decided to write to the editor of the SOGAT Journal to

make their views known.

Bradford North Labour Party called upon the Party and POEU Executive to disassociate themselves from John Golding's action. After expressing their support for "Militant's" consistent fight for the introduction of the 35-hour week without loss of pay, Bradford North CLP pointed out that it was about time the NEC kept proper records of the way NEC members voted.

The issues of Party democracy and press freedom have also been raised in the student movement. Thames Polytechnic Labour Club unanimously passed a motion of support, pointing out that "Militant" was willing to print an article by John Golding putting his case.

Again we cannot mention all the donations. But outstanding this week were the contributions from carworkers, themselves in the front line of the class battle. From TGWU 5/908 branch came £10, from TGWU 2/251 [Southampton Fords] came £25 and from TGWU 5/909 [Rover Solihull] came a magnificent £50.

A POEU sponsored student gave us £5 and Labour Party members in Cardigan £20. Members of Luton POEU donated £5.80 and £14 came from students at Liverpool Polytechnic Labour Club.

To all this and others many thanks. At a time when the working class is under attack it is vital that "Militant" continues as a workers' paper able to repel the lies of the capitalist media. If you want to make sure the paper can continue, step up the donations and messages of support to: **Militant Defence Campaign, 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church Street, London S.E.8.**

MARCHING AGAINST THE BOSSES GOVERNMENT

Not one Labour Council should carry through the demands for vicious cutbacks from the government executioners.

This call from Tony Saunois, LPYS representative on the Labour Party's National Executive, brought a thunderous applause from thousands of trade unionists as they got ready to set off for Westminster from Hyde Park in one of London's biggest ever demonstrations against a Tory government.

An estimated 60,000 workers took part in the demonstration, called by the Labour Party, against the policies of this reactionary Tory government.

Almost every section of the organised working class was represented on the march—special trains brought miners from every coalfield in the country. The public sector workers, directly in the firing line for Thatcher's cutbacks, were out in force. Over 7,000 students representing 60 colleges joined the ranks of the labour movement. And in the evening, thousands of London workers added their numbers to the march.

Vicious Tory cutbacks

The demonstration was massive—such is the workers anger and hatred of this horrendous bosses government. Even the 'popular' press had to comment on the high number of workers on the march: "It (the march) also contained an unusually high proportion of working-class people from many parts of Britain." (Guardian 29th November)

Before the march set off, many labour movement speakers addressed the massive crowd, and explained the issues at stake, and described the viciousness of the Tory cutbacks.

But attacking the Tories is not enough. As Tony Saunois said, "We don't want a return of a Labour government like the last one," which received great applause.

Tony added, that the labour movement must "reclaim their Party" and urged all workers to join the Labour Party and the Young Socialists and fight for the adoption of socialist policies.

In contrast, at the meeting in Westminster Central Hall

By Bob Wade

(Brentwood & Ongar LPYS)

after the march, Callaghan and other members of the last Labour Government got an angry response when they spoke about combatting the Tories.

Roy Hattersley provoked many bitter comments from the floor when he told the meeting that it was necessary to 're-establish Labour as the



Firemen on the march—this section of the public services will be badly hit by the Tory axemen

party of public expenditure.' Many workers were angered that these Labour leaders who themselves implemented public spending cuts, as well as introducing wage restraint, were now telling them how terrible it was that the Tories were in power.

It was left-wingers of the

Party who received the best response from the audience. Eric Heffer MP said the demonstration was 'absolutely magnificent' and was the 'beginning of a gigantic campaign to bring down the government.' It is certainly true that the ruthless attitude of the Tories will provoke massive reaction

from the working class to get them out.

Neil Kinnock MP touched on the crux of the issue when he said the cuts were an attack on the working class which 'stemmed from the nature of the capitalist system.'

The Tories are a bosses' government—the cuts they

are carrying out are dictated to them by the very nature of a diseased capitalist system.

The Tories must go—and with them must go their profit system, which demands attacks on the living standards of the workers in desperate attempts to try to boost the profits of big business.

Now get ready for February 2nd

Back to the Thirties!—That might as well be Thatcher's slogan.

Over the next five years the number of young people under the age of 19 who are out of work will rise to half a million according to the latest predictions. This will be worse than in the bleakest years of the inter-war depression.

It means that if the Tories are successful, thousands of youth in Glasgow, Corby, Merseyside, Tyneside, Teesside and elsewhere will face a lifetime on the dole.

The employing class are wrecking British industry. A 'Guardian' report recently showed that if factory closures continue at the same rate as in the seventies, there will be no industry at all in Britain by 1990.

If we are to stop this vicious helter-skelter, we must win young workers into the LPYS and build a mass campaign—

especially of young workers.

We are hoping that they will be circulated in the next week. An indication of the possible response has been given in a report from an LPYS member in Ebbw Vale who is bringing twelve young nurses in uniform from his local hospital. We hope we can get a similar response from nurses, firemen and ambulancemen in other areas.

While LPYS members can get their friends and work-mates on the demonstration, their are still thousands of factories where there are no LPYS members.

By Glenys Ingham

(Deptford LPYS)

LPYS Regional Committee reports on activity in South East London: "We are drawing up a plan of all the factories in the area, detailing people to go to see the shop stewards during the working hours. One thing about the strength of the trade unions is that you can walk into most factories and just ask to see the shop steward or convenor.

We explain our campaign, ask for their support, or at least a chance to speak to the shop stewards committee. Will they circulate our material in the factory? Send a delegation and advise all the young workers and apprentices to go. Can they make a donation or hold a collection? Some friendly shop stewards even hold collections on their own sections.

"We're also going to write to and visit as many trade union branches as possible, and ask for their addresses

from the district officers."

Throughout the Autumn the LPYS have been preparing the ground for the national march with demonstrations in Newcastle, Birmingham, Southwark, Hammersmith, Glasgow Provan and Colchester.

There has also been young workers conferences in Bristol, Manchester and Leeds.

Now the National Chairman reports a very confident and enthusiastic response from some areas. Hounslow, a new area for the LPYS, even say they will try and send three coaches. But if each branch responds like Brentwood YS and books their own coach, Central Hall will be filled five times over.

Do you want a speaker at your trade union branch? Contact your local LPYS or K. Ramage c/o LPYS, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1

CHARING CROSS - TORY PRESS PEDDLE LIES

The height of sickening hypocrisy has been reached by the rantings of the bosses and their press over the strike at Charing Cross Hospital.

The workers at this London hospital were striking after two workers were sacked for working to rule. This week, the workers were bludgeoned back to work by a tirade of lies, abuse and hypocritical smears orchestrated by the Tory press. And when it came to explaining what the dispute was about, there was a wall of silence.

Before Thatcher had piously said the Charing Cross workers "show a callous disregard for common humanity", the local Tories had ordered the area health authority to implement cuts

By Tim Higgins

(AUEW)

for next year of a staggering £3.6 million!

It is in this background of cuts that engineers at the hospital were carrying out a work-to-rule to highlight the chronic staff shortages in the health service. The management then provoked the situation by sacking the workers' convenor and another worker for refusing to do work usually done by labourers and not by skilled engineers.

All the press tried to make out the pickets were cutting essential supplies, like the 'Daily Express' which stated, "the strikers refused patients' pleas to let in fuel."

This is a lie. The pickets had never stopped any oil, oxygen and medical supplies during the previous weeks. Only lorries carrying non-essential goods such as timber had been asked not to cross

the picket line.

The striking engineers were in fact monitoring oil and oxygen levels on a regular basis and not allowing these to go below 7 to 10 days' supply. The management decision to close the accident and emergency wards and to cut heating was totally unnecessary.

The London Observer and LBC Radio reported that 19 tankers were needed immediately for the hospital to continue normal service. A lie. There is not enough storage capacity at the hospital for this amount of oil! In fact three out of the four boilers (the remaining one was being maintained) were operating at normal pressure after four weeks of the strike—so where was the chronic shortage?

Nationwide BBC showed empty wards in their report with management telling us this was because of the pickets. A lie. These wards closed down before the strike, due to the maintenance rota. And why don't we get whole

television items that are broadcast to millions about the many wards that have to be closed because of cutbacks and staff shortages?

Both the television and press have taken great delight in informing its audience that the strike was unofficial. The strike was made official in its early stages by the AUEW (Engineering section). The executive of the EETPU had refused to make the strike official.

But this is all that can be expected from the Tory press

—any worker who has been on strike knows the smears and distortions that are heaped upon them.

The Tories and their friends in Fleet Street will be deathly quiet when the cutbacks demanded by their profit system shut down whole hospitals—at the very most they cry crocodile tears. But when the labour movement moves to defend its gains, the Tories will whip up an hysterical frenzy blaming workers for everything short of the weather.

Coventry District Labour Party has organised a lobby and rally to coincide with a national meeting of Labour councillors (called by Coventry City Council and Transport House) being held in the City on 8 December to discuss the cuts.

The District Labour Party, which has the support of local unions, notably NUPE and UCATT, will be pressing the representatives of Labour Groups to organise a co-ordinated national stand

against implementing the Tory government's spending cuts.

The march to lobby the councillors will assemble at 9.30 am at Pool Meadow Coach/Car Park.

Speakers at the Rally will include Alan Fisher [NUPE], Bob Wright [AUEW], and Tony Saunois [LPYS rep on Labour Party NEC].

Make sure the feeling of the rank and file is made clear to Labour Groups!

CORBYSOCIALIST ANSWER NEEDED

"The eyes of the British working class look to Corby for a lead." This was how Lawrence Coates [LPYS NC member for East Midlands] described the steelworkers' struggle to an LPYS day school on the subject of 'Fight the Steel Closures'.

Don Finlay [Regional Executive Committee] then described the effects the closure would have. Corby would be reduced to a ghost town with over 5,000-6,000 workers on the dole and no prospects of alternative employment.

By
Huw Morgan
(Blaby LPYS)

He outlined the extent of the crisis in the steel industry, which was part of an inter-

national crisis. For example, the French industry is planning to axe 21,000 jobs and the German steel industry is losing 1,000 jobs a month.

A socialist programme was needed to save jobs in the steel industry, linked around the following demands: No redundancies, work sharing with no loss of pay; opening the books of BSC; fight to keep Corby plant open, support through a national steel strike.

"Britain is becoming an agricultural nation with a few tourists," was how George Mctart, member of ROSAC (Retention of Steelmaking at Corby) described the erosion

of the manufacturing basis of British industry.

Comrade Mctart further pointed out that it was BSC's firm proposal to axe 14,000 jobs by 1980. Within British industry, there are no longer any safe jobs, as a result of the Tory government's rampaging cuts!

He stressed the firm resolve of the working class of Corby in resisting the closure of the plant.

During the discussion that followed a message of support was brought from the workers at the Scunthorpe steel plant, and this stressed the national campaign which is beginning to be waged within the steel industry.

The best monument to Trotsky

An enthusiastic audience gathered in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London last Friday to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Leon Trotsky.

"One of the greatest figures in the history of the world working class movement" was the way the chairman, Roger Silverman, described Trotsky.

Ted Grant addressed the meeting along with Vasudeva Nanayakkara who is a prominent figure in the only mass Trotskyist party in existence in the world today, the New Sama Samaja Party of Sri Lanka.

Armed with the ideas of Trotskyism, as Ted explained, the working class would be invincible in the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

Perhaps the most outstanding contribution that Trotsky made to the ideas of Marxism was his prediction of the Stalinist

bureaucratic degeneration of the workers' democracy in the Soviet Union.

This followed the failure of the socialist revolution in the west and the weak hold of the ideas of Marxism in the workers' parties of the west.

But it was not just his realisation of the development of this process that he is to be remembered for, but it is also for his courage and conviction that he showed in fighting against it, a fight that eventually cost him his life at the hands of the murderer Stalin.

The determination of the speakers, from the platform and the floor, was reflected in the collection of over £300 for the 'Militant' fighting fund. The fight to build the ideas of Marxism, the best monument to Trotsky, has never been stronger.

By Suri
Krishnama



A letter from a Russian worker [See p.11] is read out at a Trotsky centenary rally in Birmingham Photo: Militant

Scottish TUC Youth - TURN OUT AND CAMPAIGN

Saturday 8th December sees the opening of the STUC Youth Advisory Committee's 40th annual Conference.

A conference faced with the prospect of two million unemployed, massive cuts in education, social services, housing, hospitals etc. an all out attack on the rights of the Labour and Trade Union movement.

All these and more are threatened by the present Tory Government before next year's conference.

Therefore it is not surprising that more than half of the resolutions on the conference agenda deal with the questions of unemployment and the cuts alone.

The delegates have the opportunity to decide the policies and programme of the YAC for the coming year.

A programme that should offer the working class and youth in particular an alternative to the present Tory government, similar to the two resolutions on the agenda from East Kilbride Trades Council.

Armed with a bold fighting socialist alternative to the Tories, the YAC should turn out, become a campaigning body organising meetings, supporting and participating in campaigns organised by other sections of the Labour and Trade Union movement.

If it is to become a campaigning body it must build strong links with the Labour Party Young Socialists. Only if the YAC takes up these policies will it be able to build a strong Trade Union youth section, offering an alternative to the Tories and gaining respect and authority in the labour movement.

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THE WRITING ON THE WALL

While fly-posting one night for a Young Socialists' march against the National Front, two LPYS members were arrested for painting anti-fascist slogans on a metal fence in South East London.

This of course is a serious crime against property! But unlike the bosses who create the living conditions that breed racism, we cannot afford huge advertising hoardings when we want to publicise our ideas.

At the police station, which is built like a fortress, our persons, car and possessions were carefully searched, recorded and confiscated. While we were in custody the police had free access to our letters, diaries, keys, address books etc.

We asked one of them if we would be allowed home that night. "That depends on whether you upset me or not," he said.

They told us we had the right to make sure that someone knew we had been arrested, but said that we would be released as soon as they had checked that we lived where we said we lived, so we didn't bother. Meanwhile, the order was given to "send us down".

Solitary confinement

We were each alone in an almost windowless, foul smelling cell about ten feet by ten feet. One metal bench attached to the wall to sit on, and a light which could not be switched off.

There was an open sewer called a toilet—but there was no proper flush. There was writing on the walls, the exact crime we were arrested for—but in human excrement.

After two hours in what amounted to solitary confinement, we were taken out and re-questioned—all kinds of details for their files, who we lived with, earnings, financial commitments, schooling, work experience and so on.

Then we were locked up again, while being told that we would soon be released, they were still checking up on our addresses.

We later discovered that they were lying. They had made no attempt to contact our flatmates who had been in all evening.

But for one of us—company at last. The cell door opened and a young girl was thrown in—a sister in crime!! She asked me what I was in for so I told her—writing on a wall.

She told me she was in for "grievous bodily harm". It

was her seventh "GBH" conviction and she expected to be sent down for four years. She then asked what I'd been writing. Anti-fascist slogans, I told her.

She pulled a long face and said she always got to share a cell with an "anti-NF'er"—she belonged to the British Movement!! She was well known for her activities in Brixton, and she then started to show me scars she'd got from various demonstrations and fights.

The police knew her, and they knew what I'd written on the wall. Was it deliberate that they put us in the same cell together?

State violence

If she had tried to beat me up would they have come to my assistance?

At court next day, an officer read the charge against us, and got several facts completely wrong—one of us suddenly found she was living with her parents, the other that he was unemployed—and this after all their detailed questioning!

He was evidently embarrassed when it transpired that Lambeth Council, who owned the fence, had not complained, or even been contacted about the alleged crime. Then he read out our slogans, "NF divide workers!" "Smash the racist scum!" "LPYS says drive out the NF!"

The magistrates said that they agreed with our sentiments, but in their opinion we would only provoke violence by making them public! Listening to those smug do-gooders, it was hard not to laugh.

We had provoked violence all right—state violence, which does more to defend metal fences against our slogans than it does to protect the lives, property and freedom of coloured workers against racist attacks.

We got a conditional discharge, which means that our case can be re-opened any time in the next year. This serves their interests more than a fine would have done because it effectively limits our political activity for the next twelve months.

Compared with what some 'Militant' readers will have suffered at the hands of the police, our experiences are not too bad. But the point is that the mental and physical stress of this "normal procedure" meant that psychologically we were in no state to stand up for ourselves.

The prospect for working class youth, and black youth in particular, of being arrested on "sus" at any time and facing hours of deprivation has horrifying implications.

PROVAN LPYS DEMONSTRATION AGAINST CUTS

Hear
Hugh Brown MP
Jim Newlands LPYS
John Jackson

On Saturday 8th December
Assemble at 12.00
At Easterhouse Shopping Centre
Rally & concert at Easterhouse Proj.

●

Mid Scotland Labour Party
Young Socialists
YOUTH AGAINST THE TORIES RALLY

Speakers:
Ron Brown, MP for Leith
Bill Snedden, Central Fed of Trades Councils
Jim Newlands, LPYS National Committee
Tuesday 11th December 1979
Conely Park School, Falkirk
For more information contact
Frank White, c/o 18 Wilson Ave, Falkirk

LEFT and RIGHT

Tory plums

If you come across five gentlemen in Cardiff struggling with the plums in their mouths, you've qualified in the 'Spot a South Wales Tory' competition.

The five councillors [true-blue at heart] have been packed off on elocution courses, to sort out their grammar and 'chronic Cardiff accents', as 'The Times' puts it. The bill, for £100, was picked up by Conservative Central Office—a token of their regard for the Welsh language?

The more difficult job is breaking Welsh workers of that infuriating habit which even Mrs T, the queen of the plums herself, hasn't cured: hitting the roof at what Tories say, without waiting to be impressed by how they say it.

Blunt speaking?

"I could easily imagine myself being tempted into a treasonable disposition under a Labour government dominated by the Marxist Left. So shocking might be its process of collectivisation, expropriation and enforced egalitarianism that it became quite natural to start looking to the United States for succour, particularly if extreme socialist domestic policies were combined with unilateral disarmament which made Britain increasingly vulnerable to Soviet military strength.

"Suppose in these circumstances, one were approached by an official of the CIA who sought to enlist one's help in a project designed to 'destabilise' this far Left government. Would it necessarily be right to refuse co-operation?"

This is a quote from well known super-patriot Peregrine Worsthorne. A sure indication that when profits are threatened, the capitalists' concern for "their country" rapidly becomes irrelevant.

Something borrowed

Leningrad 'Communist' Party chief Grigori Romanov apparently wanted to hold his daughter's wedding celebrations in the City's Hermitage museum. When he was refused, the story goes, he instead 'borrowed' a priceless porcelain dinner service which belonged to Tsarina Catherine II.

One plate was broken accidentally; after that others were smashed to wish the couple 'happiness'.

The revolutionary Russian workers curbed their justifiable anger and hatred for the Tsar and his trappings, and obeyed the instructions of the Bolshevik leaders under Lenin and Trotsky not to destroy any of the architectural and artistic heritage of Russia.

The bureaucrats who rule Russia today, in their efforts to mimic the aristocratic life of the degenerate rich, closely resemble the parasites that Russian workers thought they had finally put paid to over 60 years ago.

STOP THE CUTS - DEFEND THE NHS

A review by NUPE member Chris Edwards of the new Militant pamphlet on the Health Service.

The NHS, one of the greatest breakthroughs won by the working class is in crisis.

Articles in the Militant over the last few weeks have highlighted hospital and ward closures, the general run-down in services, exposing the Tory attitude to matters which are literally life and death to the great majority of British people.

The savage cuts being shoved down our throats by the Thatcher government, in response to the critical condition of British capitalism, amount to a systematic, callous attack on the living standards of working people.

Wide sections of the labour and trade union movement have been involved in demonstrations and anti-cuts campaigns in recent weeks. The national demonstration and lobby of Parliament of November 28th was a further explosive expression of the determination of organised workers to resist the Tory cuts.

Crisis in the public services

But an important part in the battle against the cuts, in conjunction with mass demonstrations, is an understanding of the crisis facing the public services, which must be regarded as a fundamental part of the living standards of every worker and family.

It is in this light that the new 'Militant' pamphlet 'Stop the cuts—defend the NHS' must be welcomed.

This pamphlet pulls together information and statistics on the state of the NHS today and goes on to map out the future for the service if the Tory butchers get their way. Redundancies, the refusal to fund either wage rises, the 15% VAT rate, or new hospitals already built but requiring higher maintenance costs, health and safety, staff shortages and the cancer of the growing private health sector are dealt with in detail.

The question of occupations to save hospitals is discussed at length and there is an excellent chapter drawing out the experiences and lessons of the fight to save Bethnal Green Hospital in East London.

One of the best features is undoubtedly the chapter drawing out clearly the less-

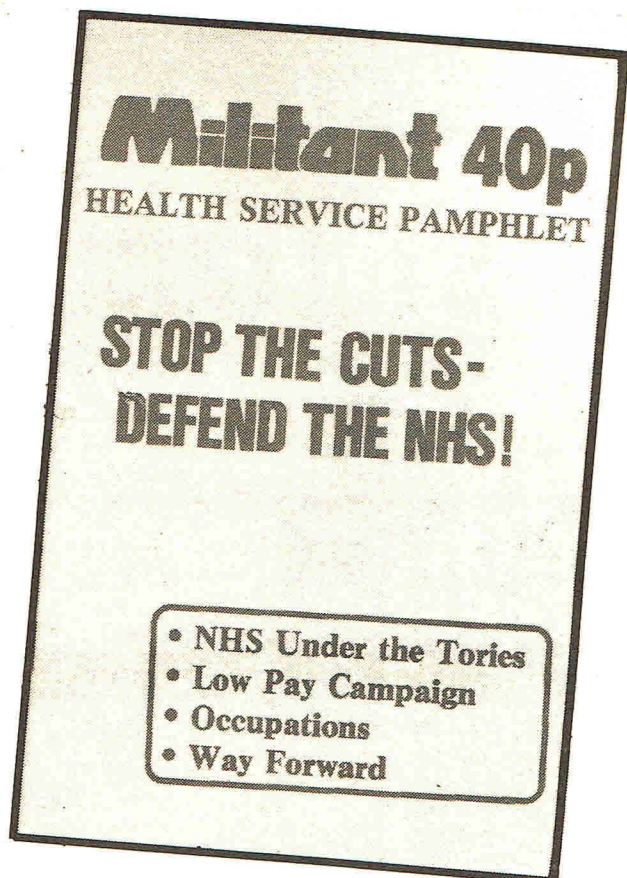
ons of the low pay campaign. The part played by the media and the organisation of the hospital workers (Joint Shop Stewards' Committees etc.) are central to this analysis, and for that alone, this new pamphlet is vital to COHSE and NUPE shop stewards looking for a direction in future battles.

These features make the pamphlet a vital handbook for all trade unionists and active members of the labour

movement.

The threatened run-down of the NHS is in fact a wage cut for every member of the working class. Its defence in a political fight, and the movement must be united alongside the health service workers. We cannot win the great battles ahead alone.

This pamphlet is packed with information and a programme for the fight, to assist trade unionists in defence of their living standards.



- NHS Under the Tories
- Low Pay Campaign
- Occupations
- Way Forward

NEW 'MILITANT' PAMPHLET

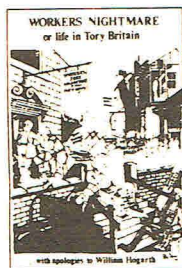
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CARDS CALENDAR CARTOON BOOK

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FOR
CHRISTMAS
AND THE
NEW YEAR



'O 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



'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

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STUDENTS MUST TURN TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

This weekend's NUS National Conference meets after a term of militancy amongst students.

The labour movement has taken a stand against the newly-elected Tory government, both in industry, in the engineers' dispute, and in local areas in fights against the cuts, culminating in last week's huge demonstration called by the TUC and the Labour Party.

This has also been reflected in the student movement mobilising against the Tories. Opposition to the education cuts of £55 million has grown this term, particularly colleges directly affected by individual cuts.

In Nottingham for example the anti-cuts lobbies of the County Council offices attracted much more support amongst technical and FE College Unions rather than the Poly and university Students.

But when Rhodes Boyson says that "some universities and Polytechnics have no right to continue", he means it.

The 6% cut demanded in university places is only the start. All sections of students will be drawn into the anti-Tory fight, alongside the Labour Movement.

The major campaign this term has been against the fee increases of 33% for overseas students. 50,000 students in 46 universities and Polys participated in 24-hour occupations and other action as part of the NUS campaign.

The 'Guardian' described this as "one of the most

By Mike Levene
(delegate,
Trent Polytechnic)

successful NUS campaigns for many years....which has surprised the NUS officials."

Surely it is not the job of the NUS leadership to be 'surprised' at the determination and enthusiasm of our membership, but to harness that success into a concentrated campaign, intensifying activity and seeking the backing of the Labour Movement.

However, the dissolving of the old "Broad Left" election machine leadership of NUS, and its replacement by the "Left Alliance" cobbled together with the Liberals, has meant the continued lack of any real fighting lead from the present leadership.

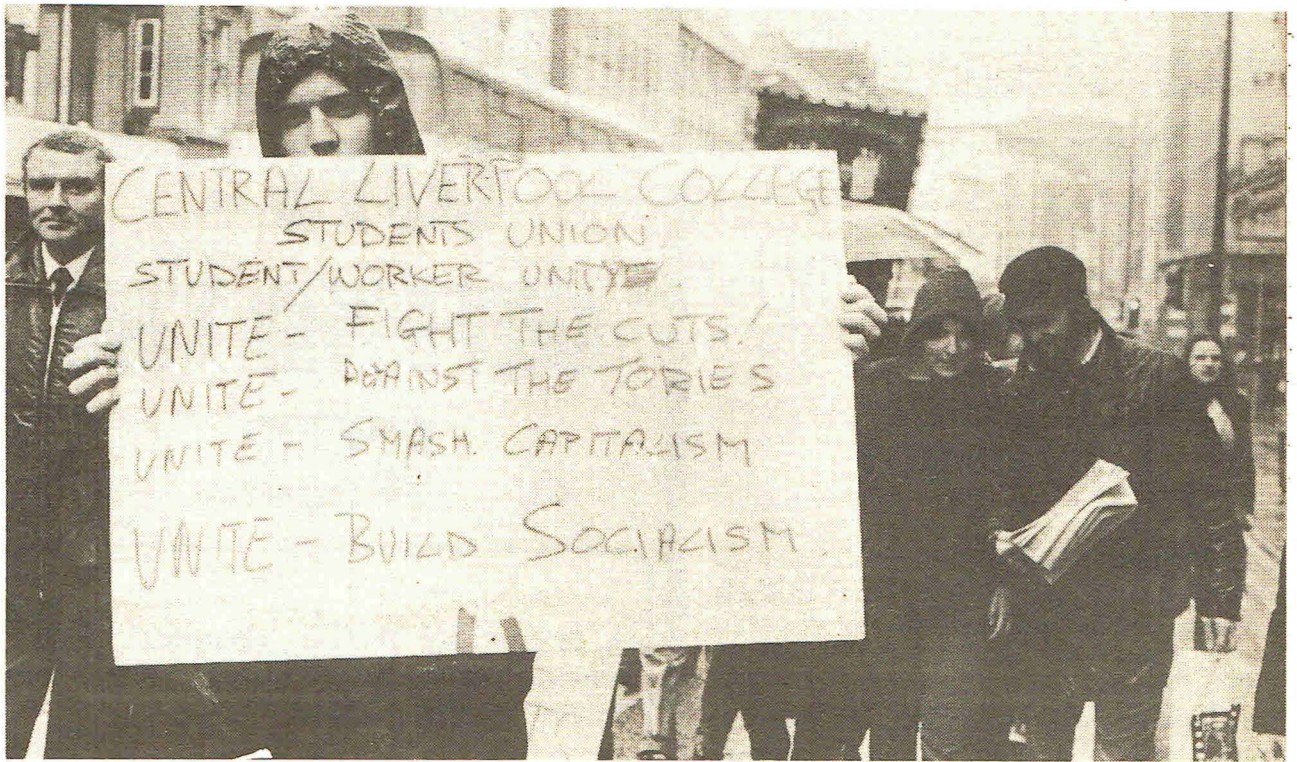
No to the "Left Alliance"

On many issues they stand hand-in-hand with Liberal and Conservative Students, organisations which support the continuation of the capitalist system.

Labour Students must not tolerate this new "Left Alliance" and further compromises with the right wing; instead they should campaign independently on socialist policies.

The conference agenda shows that the individual colleges are beginning to take up the day-to-day issues facing students. The four policy debates will be Grants and Cuts, Overseas Students,

Photo: MILITANT



The attacks by Thatcher's government have pushed students into renewed militancy. Here on Liverpool anti-cuts demo.

Abortion and Housing.

Unfortunately however, debates will as usual be crowded out by hours of "Executive Reports" interrupted by 'points of order', allowing no opportunities for genuine speeches from the floor of conference.

The growth of support for 'Militant' amongst students is reflected in the Agenda. On housing, amendment one from Newcastle University, Sussex University and Brighton Poly puts forward a

socialist programme based on the nationalisation of banking and building under workers control, to provide the necessary resources to solve the housing crisis facing both students and the working class. Lanchester Poly also calls for nationalisation of the building industry (amendment 2)

The major policy debate will be on Grants and Cuts. The amendment from Newcastle University puts forward a clear fighting programme

for a living grant of £2,000 for all students, and a socialist strategy, struggling alongside the Labour Movement against the Education cuts. This is supported by a later amendment from Trent Polytechnic.

Once again, Government Economic policy is not prioritised for discussion—for the 6th successive conference in 3 years! "Militant" supporters in NOLS and NUS see this as the key issue, backing amendment 3 from Portsmouth Poly as containing 'Militant's'

economic programme.

NUS campaigns cannot be successfully fought in isolation from the struggle of the Labour Movement to change society; that has been the experience since 1974.

Let us join the Labour Movement, affiliate to the TUC and Labour Party on a local and national basis, to successfully defeat the most reactionary Tory Government this century, and return Labour to power on a socialist programme.

NOLS - TAKE UP FIGHTING POLICIES

Over the past few months, students have been pitched headlong into battles of real political importance, such as the fight against the cuts and the attacks on overseas students fees.

Unfortunately, little of this was reflected in the recent meeting of the National Committee of the National Organisation of Labour Students. Most of the meeting was taken up with procedural and constitutional issues. Only the three 'Militant' supporters on the NC made any political contributions.

However, the meeting did take some constructive decisions. A resolution from the 'Militant' supporters calling for support for the LPYS demonstration 'Youth Against the Tories' on February 2nd was passed.

This should mean that every Labour Club now starts

By Geoff Stout
NOLS NC,
Yorkshire region

mobilising for the demonstration. Coaches should be booked through student unions; and Labour Club members and students committed to come on the march.

The National Committee also passed a resolution calling for support for the Militant Defence Campaign. Every Labour Club should hold a collection for this fund now!

A resolution was also passed opposing the sacking of Derek Robinson by British Leyland. However, the part of the resolutions, proposed by Sue Horne (North-West Region) calling for nationalisation of the car industry under democratic workers' control and management, was deleted by the majority!

How can NOLS support a campaign based on a 'non-political' programme? The rally they organised in Liverpool, had a very poor turn-out. There were few NOLS banners present, showing that Labour students have little enthusiasm for this campaign.

Once again, the question of whether part-time students should be able to join NOLS was raised by 'Militant' supporters. A resolution supporting this had come from Sussex University Labour Club.

The NC opposed this proposal on the grounds that part-time students would be used as a 'political football' to gain delegates to NOLS conference. Are the NC afraid that their woolly, student-

based political ideas would have no attraction for working class part-time students on day release apprenticeship courses?

Undoubtedly this issue will be raised at this year's NOLS conference, and will continue to be until it is accepted into the NOLS constitution.

NOLS conference this year will decide whether Labour's student organisation continues on its present path, as an organisation based mainly in the universities; or whether it will take up fighting socialist policies, and turn towards working class students in the FE and Technical colleges.

NOLS must be armed with Marxist policies if it is to become a significant political force and not a talking shop for 'professional' students.

SHIPBUILDING - 1800 UNEMPLOYED CHASE SEVEN JOBS

Many workers in the shipbuilding industry have taken voluntary redundancy in the past under the illusion that they could quickly find another job in the same industry or area.

Recent figures produced by the government have shown the near impossibility of getting back into the industry. With the slow-down of shipyard recruitment and the high level of unemployment, the ratio of unemployed to vacancies for the industry

is now 115 to 1 in the Northern Region!

Nearly 3,200 workers, both skilled and unskilled are competing at the moment for only 26 jobs. Taking Tyneside alone, over 1,800 unemployed shipyard workers are chasing seven jobs! The picture on Teesside and Wearside is little better.

Jobs are especially rare in certain trades. There are, for example, 250 platers on the dole and not a single vacancy. In the

past, the shipyards contained a very high concentration of skills compared to other industries and many young people relied on the yards for jobs after school.

These official figures are a stark reminder of what deindustrialisation means. The Tory plans for the shipyards and other industries are fast turning the North into an industrial desert.

Fight against unemployment

The fight against unemployment was discussed. The 'Militant' supporters proposed that NOLS withdraw from the 'Campaign Against Youth Unemployment' (CAYU). CAYU is a 'broad based' campaign, including the Liberals and the SNP.

Their programme is a 'lowest common denominator' one, i.e. no mention of socialist policies to fight unemployment. Sue Horne gave an account of the scandalous role Liberal councillors in Liverpool have played, in supporting the cuts; precisely the policies that breed unemployment.

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BOSSSES DRAW UP STRIKE-BREAKING PLANS

By Steve Glennon

(Stevenage NSMM, personal capacity)

No sooner does 'The Times' [The Thunderer] come back on the streets, than it starts to issue its advice to big business, and the Tories. Learning from its own dispute, no doubt, they are looking for some way to combat the massive power of organised labour.

They are concerned with the problem of maintaining essential supplies and services during strikes, firstly in a series of articles about the 'Civil Contingencies Unit' and its powers, then in a leader on what the government should do.

They tried at times to hide their real purpose, to cover their naked class intent by using the fig leaf of natural disasters and war. But in keeping with the season, the leaf kept falling.

It became clear that they are calling on the government to strengthen their powers and social backing by removing the shroud of secrecy which covers the strike-breaking force of the Civil Contingencies Unit.

They argue that by making it public it will lose its strike-breaking character! "The fear of the government's being smeared as a 'strikebreaker' is largely a mirage. The platform rhetoric of trade union leaders would, no doubt, make swift and exaggerated reference to it if the government did go public on the matter.

"But in private they accept that the government has a duty to be ready...and are genuinely relieved...it is." ('Times' 26.11.79)

They claim public opinion is in favour of such a move by using dubious figures; and they presume that there will not be a sustained campaign on the matter by a union leadership 'genuinely relieved' by such a move.

Powerful unions

This is not a campaign for open government by 'The Times', but a tactic. Its detailed survey pointed out that the government, i.e. the state, would not be capable of defeating the trade unions without the support of supervisory staff, which they are not sure of getting, because of the present strikebreaking stigma.

To overcome this, it must be 'open' and 'independent', according to 'The Times'.

In this way, services such as water supply, which as they put it, would cripple any government and create a revolutionary situation, could be controlled if 'the supervisory unions would work with the troops and not see it as scabbing. This would, at the moment, be extremely unlikely.

The Civil Contingencies Unit, currently under the supervision of William Whitelaw, is a standing cabinet committee of ministers and civil servants. Its actions are kept out of the public eye, but it is known that at a time of national strikes, it often meets several times a day.

It was set up in the spring of 1972 after the miners' strike and the successful use of mass pickets at Saltley depot. They listed vital services [about 16 at the moment headed by electricity] to be maintained. According to 'The Times' they are also briefed by MI5 as to whether the strikes are "straight pay and conditions affairs" or are manipulated by 'extremists'! Even 'The Times' has to admit all the evidence points to strikes being genuine.

Despite the use of this machinery, the forces and a sophisticated local apparatus, strikes continue, and remain very effective. No wonder 'The Times' had such an air of pessimism about the possibility of defeating the working class.

Even given this co-operation, though, at the moment only London would be able to be serviced with present forces available.

Learning from history, 'The Times' is trying to prepare the ruling class for the coming battles. They explained that no longer did they have the students and middle class behind them as in 1926 for use as strike-breakers.

Back in the '20s the government was prepared for the general strike with the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies. In fact the government was far more prepared than the TU leaders were for the strike. Leaders like Thomas, of the NUR, were, without doubt, 'genuinely relieved' by the state's 'scab army'.

Today, there is massive trade union membership in even the higher grades of worker, clerical, lower managerial and all! The recent history of students speaks for itself, for strategists on both sides of the class battle.

Armed forces insufficient

The bosses' need for a civil backing for their state machinery becomes even more obvious when you look how much more complex society is today.

The armed forces would not be able to cope alone, as shown in the example quoted in 'The Times'. When about a quarter of a million lorry drivers were on strike last year the army only had 20,000 men with Heavy Goods Vehicle licences, a mere fraction. Also the resources of the engineers' regiment would not be able to cope for long within a wide-spread dispute.

The conclusion is that Mrs Thatcher should act now. Above all, she should consider re-constituting the Civil Defence Corps as a national insurance policy against "disasters of all kinds, both acts of God and acts of man." ('Times' 26.11.79)

This is the calm, collected approach in which the bosses want to strengthen their state.

We need to have the same approach but from the opposite side. How can we strengthen our 'armies'?

We will get the hysterical screamings of the small groups on the fringes of the

labour movement, imagining that a 'police state' and 'fascism' are just around the corner.

But we must see that the state is the means of control of the ruling class. It is in no way independent and therefore will use its powers to protect the bosses' wealth and privileges with every weapon open to it.

Nevertheless, the fact that the bosses contemplate such drastic measures only shows the power that the labour movement has. How that power is used is another question.

In the articles, the nearest the author got to emotiveness was over the Saltley picket and its consequences. The

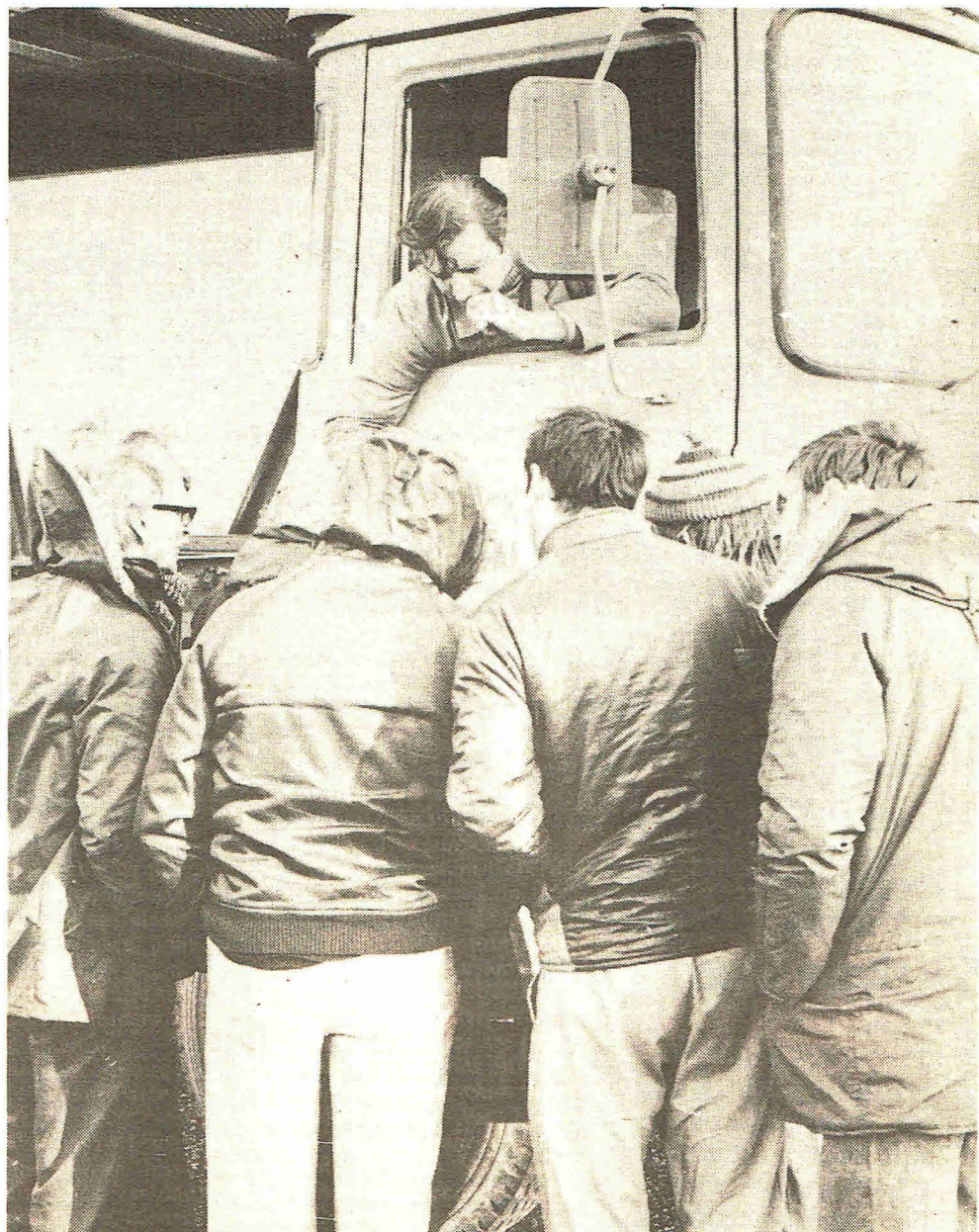


Photo: MILITANT

Last winter's lorry drivers' dispute showed the inadequacy for the bosses of the armed forces

capitalist 'brains' realise that all the above measures would come to nothing against the movement if organised on a fighting programme.

'The Times' constantly refers to the leadership of the labour movement as the "saving grace" of capital, and reassure themselves that all this power is in the hands of

"gentlemen". The leaders, they earnestly hope, will be 'genuinely relieved' to know that the government is planning the massacre of their movement!

But like us they know that it won't always be the case. The rallying call of the Thunderer to the ruling class must also be an added

stimulus to Marxists to fight harder for our policies inside the working class.

A clear socialist alternative to the chaos of capitalism would ensure that the bosses' strike-breaking plans would fail.

WHERE THE GROWING'S GOOD?

"Come to Corby where the growing's good," says the advert in that well known workers' paper, the 'Financial Times'. Another advertisement in the top paper is seeking a Director of Industry for Corby New Town at a minimum salary of £15,000 per year.

A Martian landing on earth and reading these adverts might think that Corby was a new thriving area jam packed with jobs for all. It is of course no such thing. Thousands of workers face the dole queue if BSC get their way. The closure of steel would be the death of Corby.

The blurb for the Director of Industry job claims that following the steelworks closure the town will be starting a major programme of attracting other industry to the area.

But there have been numerous attempts to diversify the employment prospects of Corby—to little avail. There are now fewer non-steel jobs in Corby than in 1967. How many will come to Corby as a result of this scheme? The only new job so far is one very lucrative post as Director of Industry—at somewhat over the usual steelworker's wages.

By a savage irony the same week 'Medical News' carried an article on the medical

By Roger Shrives

effects of the threat of unemployment in Corby. An American professor, Harvey Brenner, has recently been touring Britain lecturing on the effects of unemployment.

Last winter he made the startling calculation that over 54,000 deaths in Britain between 1972 and 1976 were directly caused by unemployment, and that every 1% rise in the dole queues adds 2% to the death rate.

Stress leads directly to increased risks of heart attacks, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide. Since Corby first had the sword of unemployment raised over its head, there has been a dramatic rise in medical problems.

Already doctors had been concerned at the high rate of infant mortality in the town, which is 50% above the level in the rest of the country. The statistics for children in care of the local authority, and for drug overdose, are already well above the national average.

Now there are signs of further deterioration. Over 400 people from Corby were admitted to a local mental hospital in the first nine months of 1979.

Twelve cases of child battering in a two month

Come to Corby where the growing's good

If you're looking for a place to re-locate or expand your business, the New Town of Corby has got so much going for you.

Corby is situated in the junction of the motorway the east, allowing access to London and Birmingham. The East Coast ports can be reached by major roads. What's more, Corby is young enough to be vigorous and exciting—with modern facilities ready for you to occupy at highly competitive rents. (Or our design and build service will help you plan your own specification.) But Corby is mature enough, too, to offer well-established housing, schools, shops, public services, leisure activities. And skilled and unskilled labour is readily available.

Many companies have already put down roots in Corby—with success. Why not join them? Our experienced help and advice is at your service.



period this year compared to two last year.

A local doctor said, "We have got all the problems of a new town that has been artificially created causing instability and rootlessness. Now Corby is faced with the kind of deprivation normally associated with the most run-down of inner cities."

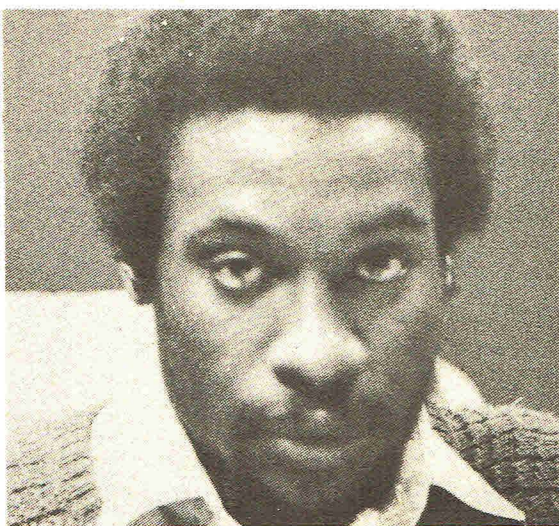
This, it should be remembered, is before the axe actually falls. What effect would mass unemployment

have on Corby? Even the ability to get treatment will be more difficult. The health centre is not accessible by bus, and at present people tend to go by taxi. Dole money does not usually allow such "luxuries", and there is no hospital in the town.

With these terrifying prospects for the health of a whole town, what better reason could there be for resisting the plans to close down the steelworks at Corby?

WHAT WILL THE MICROCHIP MEAN FOR FORD WORKERS?

Micro-processors are already in use in the British car industry. What will the new technology mean for car workers? What should be the policy of the trade unions? Orville Faulkes, an EETPU shop steward at Fords, Dagenham, takes up these urgent questions.



The technological break-through based on microprocessors will have a dramatic effect on our way of life. The question is: should we welcome the change?

The short answer is 'yes'. No one can deny that the silicon chip, fully developed, will mean more leisure time, earlier retirement, and a whole host of other social benefits, some we may never have thought possible in the past.

But what of its effect on employment, or rather on unemployment? There can be no doubt that, under a socialist planned economy, the quality of life of the working class would be elevated. But the past performance of Labour governments makes a socialist planned economy seem like a utopian concept.

Now we have a reactionary Tory government hell-bent on attacking workers' living standards and trade union rights. With the rapid introduction of micro-processors under these conditions, the future does not look very bright!

We have already seen the effect of new technology in the field of telecommunications and computer manufacture. Thousands of jobs have disappeared. This is just the beginning. White-collar workers will be seriously affected by office computers, word processors, etc.

Many skilled jobs in engineering will go to the wall. One industry in which we have seen its full effect in operation is the car industry in some of our neighbouring European countries.

In some respects it is a marvellous sight. There can be no doubt that the micro-processor is an outstanding achievement. But on the other side of the coin, there is a noticeable absence of production workers and mainten-

ance personnel in very large areas as a result. The warning should be loud and clear.

In this country, there has always been a wide belief among many trade unionists that, while Britain remains a low wage economy, there will be little need for such advanced techniques. If British capitalism is to remain competitive, however, it has no choice but to follow suit. One big company which is doing just that, is the multinational Fords, whose computerised administration is already the most efficient among the car manufacturers in Britain today. They also have a five-year plan to update the British section to European standards.

We in Fords are having minor doses of the silicon chip at the moment. This will be rapidly increased in the next two to three years. It is difficult to see how they can maintain the labour force at its present size with the full impact of micro-technology. While we have no solid evidence that there will be mass redundancies, many jobs could easily be lost through 'natural wastage', due to the constant turnover of labour in the unskilled and semi-skilled areas.

IF THE MODIFICATIONS NOW TAKING PLACE AT FORDS ARE ANYTHING TO GO BY, THEN IN FIVE YEARS' TIME WE WILL SEE A TOTAL TRANSFORMATION TO SOLID STATE CONTROLS.

The situation in skilled areas is not quite the same (e.g. E grade personnel). The turnover is not as great. It would be unwise, however, to draw the conclusion that this is due to our fantastic salary. Indeed, the company cannot get enough toolmakers. After a five-month advertising campaign at a cost of £40,000, there was a net increase of 12 toolmakers.

While the shortage of electricians is not as great, the

rate of rejection is extremely high. Again, this situation could give the impression that all the electricians that are employed by the Ford Motor Company also work for the government 'think-tank'. When a new electrician is employed, he is often faced with very specialised pieces of equipment. He is then placed in what is known as a crib, with another electrician. It is then up to him to learn what he can whenever the opportunity arises.

For the majority of skilled men coming into the car industry now, it is almost like starting a new apprenticeship all over again.

We have no system for training new intakes on how to maintain these specialised pieces of equipment. The working conditions are appalling. You are expected to do shift work which could be anything from two to four shifts. And the pay is lousy. Both skilled and unskilled are leaving at a much faster rate than they are being recruited.

So chronic has this situation become that the company has now started to interview people as soon as they hand their notices in to look into the reasons why they are leaving. Naturally, the company has expressed concern about the difficulty in employing skilled men. But I view such concern with some scepticism, because the company is well aware by now of the reasons why skilled men are reluctant to enter the plant.

Three years of wage restraint has had a tremendous impact in eroding incentives for skilled workers. The question of differentials is an ongoing issue in our department. It is an issue which provokes much debate.

Many skilled operative feel the differential between the skilled and the unskilled is not great enough. When one sees the line worker standing upright at 6 a.m. pulling a spot welding gun backwards and forwards after 8 hours on the night shift, it seems almost immoral to say we should increase the differentials. But this is more an emotional observation, rather than a realistic one. It is not the view of the majority of skilled workers.

Many skilled workers with-

in the Ford combine have become disillusioned with the way their salaries have been lagging behind other industries. It is no secret that Fords are falling further and further behind on the question of awards for skilled men. Many firms are offering similar salaries with the added incentive of not having to work nights.

THE SILICON CHIP, FULLY DEVELOPED, COULD MEAN MORE LEISURE TIME, EARLIER RETIREMENT, AND A WHOLE HOST OF OTHER SOCIAL BENEFITS. SOME WE MAY NEVER HAVE THOUGHT POSSIBLE IN THE PAST.

On top of this is the new challenge from micro-electronics. The arguments for awards for skilled men will almost certainly become more prominent in the future. The role of the maintenance electrician will change dramatically in Fords over the next five years.

If the modifications that are taking place at present are anything to go by, then in five years' time there will be no trace of clattering relays latching and unlatching. We will see a total transformation to solid-state controls. For the simplest of operations electricians will need to learn new skills to be able to maintain all this new equipment.

We have had the situation in the past where new equipment has been installed in the plant without anyone being trained to maintain it. While we have not completely eradicated this negative approach to training, we have certainly made big improvements. One thing which has become apparent is that our future existence as a maintenance department depends on our approach to training.

Our number one priority is re-training for all skilled men and uplifting of the standard of apprenticeship in the electrical departments. We have always been critical of the facilities that are provided for electrical apprentices, and have protested in the strongest terms. However, it would be fair to say improvements are being made all the time. The company have doubled their intake of apprentices and have allocated a much bigger area for the purpose of a trade school and other training facilities.

After an apprentice completes two years at a trade school he then enters the plant at 18 years old. He has to join the EETPU on entering the plant. He meets the ETU steward and a company representative. These meetings are repeated once every eight weeks. Each apprentice gets an opportunity to voice any grievance he may have. We have found these meetings tremendously successful in improving the training of apprentices.

From these exchanges we are able to forward certain recommendations on how the training at the trade school could be improved. Unfortunately, we have little control over what happens at the trade school and it would be difficult to say just how much of an influence we have been in bringing about any of these changes outside the plant. However, in a recent presentation on new technology at the Fords National Joint Negotiating Committee (FN JNC) the company made the point that no cost would be spared on training.

Many trade unionists hold the view that Fords have never been too concerned about the aspirations of the trade unions and that any advancement can only be brought about by stand-up battles. But my personal belief is that while the company is still as ruthless as they have ever been, their strategy has changed.

The company has invested more into encompassing the trade union organisation. They seem to avoid taking on the unions on minor issues. There is now more emphasis being put on talking to shop stewards around the conference table. There has been an upsurge in the number of electricians who have been able to secure day-release for college, and time off for night school.

WHEN HAS ANY TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION UNDER THE CONTROL OF CAPITALISM EVER BENEFITTED THE WORKING CLASS?

What concerns me is the apathy among electricians. Many still cannot see the dangers that lie ahead. The

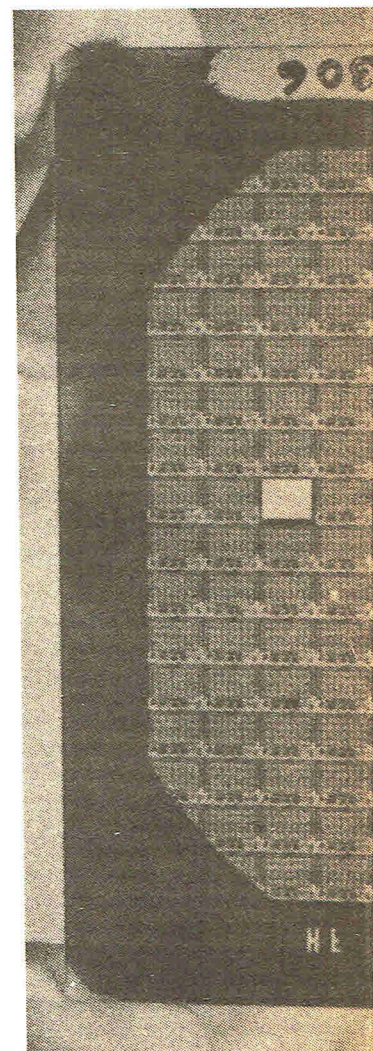
first, as is being said by many experts, is that over the next few years the level of technology will reach an advanced stage, such that the traditional functions of E grade personnel (eg. electricians, toolmakers) as we know them today will be obsolete. Maintenance could be carried out from a central computer control manned by a group of highly skilled experts.

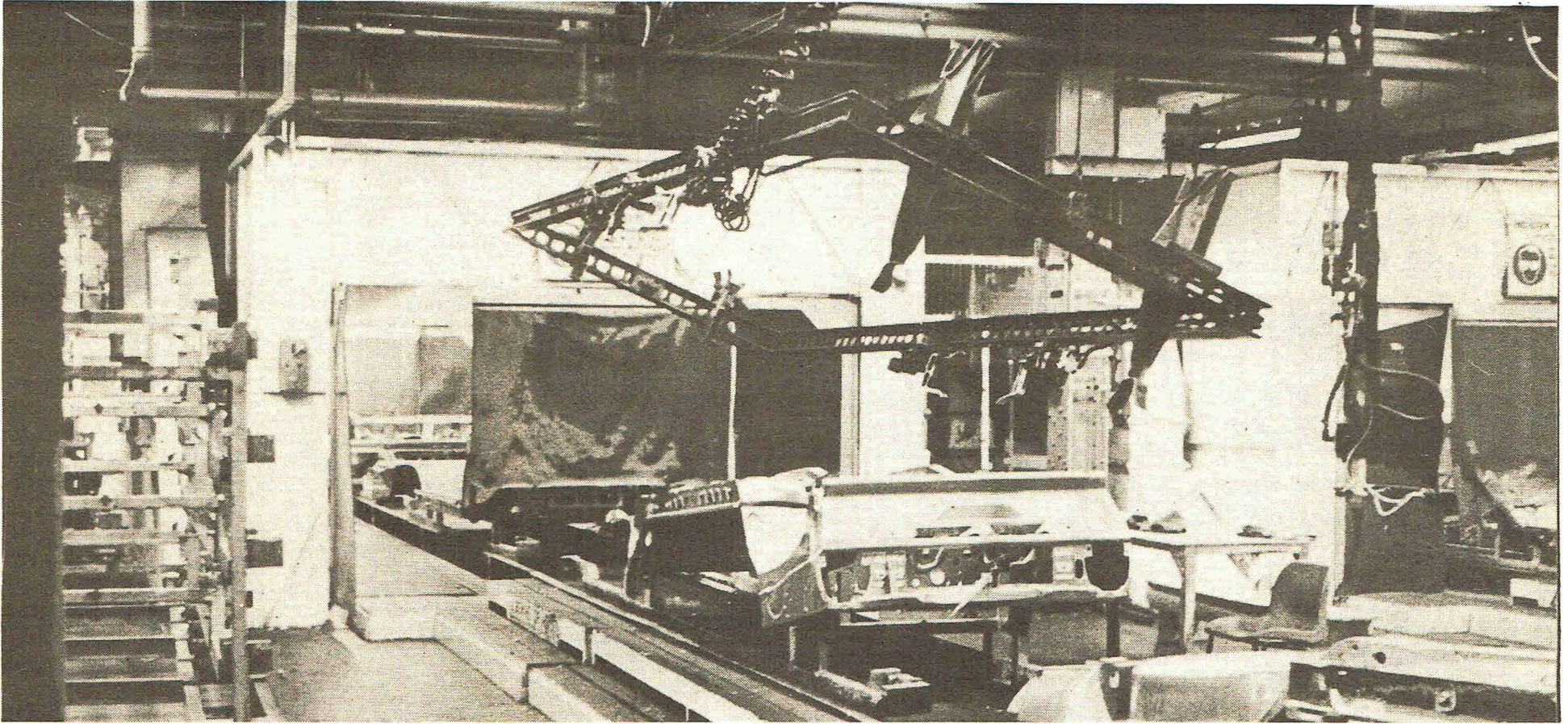
The company have already shown a desire to favour tiny elite groups. While this would not necessarily mean immediate redundancy for the remainder of the workforce, it does show where the tendency lies.

WE MUST NOT ALLOW THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY TO BE USED SOLELY TO MAXIMISE PROFITS, TO REPLACE THE LINE WORKER WITH THE ROBOT, TO THROW WORKERS ON THE SCRAP HEAP.

The first move in this direction would be divisive from a trade union point of view and thereafter destroy the shop-floor organisation. One cannot rule out the possibility of de-skilling. We can no longer afford a lethargic approach. Our prime objectives must be to maintain our present man-

A mask for manufacture of silicon chip





What future for workers? The scrap heap—or leisure and plenty.

The trade unions must work out a bold strategy to ensure that it is the workers who reap the benefits of new technology.

ing levels and create new jobs.

There is no escaping one simple fact; the silicon chips are extremely reliable and are seen as a good investment for Fords. Old machinery can now be controlled and monitored by the micro-processor and will require less maintenance. Readers may recall a very detailed and lengthy article in the 'Sunday Times' over two years ago, which compared the door line in Dagenham to the door line in Genk. Dagenham came under heavy criticism on its 'restrict-

tive practices' and the general incompetence of the maintenance dept. Since that article was written, the door line is now controlled by the micro-processor.

Electrical breakdowns on presses that are now controlled by micro-processors have been reduced.

Initially, the installation of the micro-processor gives the impression that they will in fact create more work. This could not be more misleading and certainly the consequences of trade unionists accepting this would be disastrous.

The company have said that it is their intention to break away from labour-intensive plants and move to capital-intensive. They have recently put on an impressive show at a presentation to the trade unions on some of the equipment which is still being developed. We are told that many of our small welding machines known as multi-welders will be replaced by UTD (Universal Transfer Devices). It is not yet clear how many men these devices will replace.

Trade union representatives were shown the very latest in robotic car spraying techniques.

Certainly, we cannot say we were not told.

While I do not believe the company has told us everything, I do believe enough has been revealed to show future trends.

Now we must ask ourselves as trade unionists: where do we go from here? Not only as an electrical department but as employees of the Ford Motor Company.

★ Do we have the resources at our disposal to channel the benefits of micro-technology to our members?

★ More important, do we have the leadership to challenge this giant multi-national on how best to introduce this new technology?

★ Do we as shop stewards know enough about future effects of micro-technology to be able to secure the best deals for our members?

These are just some of the questions we must ask ourselves as we move into this new era.

Certainly, if we look at the present system in Norway, where they have technology stewards who are involved in this field alone, one could draw the conclusion that we are a long way behind. Although few of us would want to exchange the way our

trade unions are organised for the system operated by the Scandinavian countries, there have to be some lessons learnt here on the way they have responded to the challenge of new technology.

On the question of leadership, I can only comment on my own union. At the 1979 Bi-ennial Conference of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union, a composite motion was carried on new technology. In that motion was the promise of a further conference to deal with new technology which would encompass shop stewards up and down the country.

Shop stewards in industries like the car industry would certainly welcome such a conference. It was clear from the coverage this subject received at the conference, that many delegates felt a firm and positive stand in this field was necessary if we are to reap any benefits from all this innovation. Many say: when has any technological innovation under the control of capitalism ever benefitted the working class?

When I think of benefits for Ford workers, I cannot help but cast my mind back to the 1978 wage claim. In political terms, one cannot deny that the Ford workers' struggle was a significant one. But what did it achieve for the Ford workers?

The truth is, after nine weeks of hard struggle, very little. By mid-1979, it was quite clear that our settlement was a very modest one. The lesson that came out of that struggle was that a giant multi-national like the Ford combine is no easy push-over.

Over the years this company has grown from strength to strength and is now the most prosperous car manufacturer in the UK, with a profit of £745m before the tax profit accumulated over a seven-year run. The company

have shown over these years that they have got the ability to maximise this profit-making machinery.

But can the trade unions continue to match this sophistication? Were the Luddites as crazy as many people thought them to be? We all agree at Fords that the only way to survive is to adapt to a capital-intensive industry. But one should not rebuke those who do not greet this new technology with open arms.

The Times Newspapers dispute has shown that the number of jobs which would have gone to the wall with the introduction of new technology was simply not acceptable to the unions, and quite rightly so. The selling of jobs is very much a short-term 'solution', and for the working class as a whole, no solution at all.

It is very unfortunate that so many union leaders see this method as the only way out. I would say to union leaders up and down the country that there are millions of trade unionists waiting for you to put forward an alternative strategy on how to go forwards into the 1980s.

We must not allow the introduction of new technology to be used solely to maximise profits, to replace the line worker with the robot, to throw workers on the scrap heap. So how can we cushion the impact?

First, I believe we must begin with some very fundamental changes. I say fundamental because it is my belief that we will need a complete transformation of society. The emphasis on all future wage claims must be on the quality of life, eg. longer holidays, shorter working week, sabbatical leave, and, most important, earlier retirement.

So it comes as no surprise that in presenting the Ford wage claim for 1979, Ruskin

College went to great lengths in their research on the question of shorter working-time. A 33-page document was devoted to this subject alone.

While no-one would argue that this document is not an impressive piece of work and justifies the argument for a reduction in the working week, we should not be surprised if we do not see a campaign like the POEU's to achieve this reduction at Fords.

My reason for saying this is because we have not carried out an in-plant campaign vigorously enough, justifying the claim. So many workers see any reduction as just another means of securing more overtime.

Very few Ford workers are ever likely to secure the real document. Indeed many shop stewards I have spoken to still have not read it.

I believe the time has come for the movement to put much emphasis on the quality of life when formulating any wage claim. The printing of a research document is only part of it. We must take it to the shop floor.

Finally, I ask myself this question: are the Ford workers or any other workers tied to the line, who have no control over their destiny, ever likely to secure the real benefits of this new technology?

The short answer is 'no'. Only by transforming society can the working class ever benefit. While the criteria remains profits and more profits for the benefit of a few share-holders, we are all condemned to pushing the boulder to the top of the hill—only to find ourselves repeating this process all over again.



AMERICA CZECHOSLOVAKIA CHILE

INTERVIEW WITH AN AMERICAN STEELWORKERS LEADER

With 1.3 million members, the United Steelworkers of America [USWA] is a powerful force in one of American capitalism's most important industries. In the post-war boom period, the union's leadership, I W Abel and his official 'family'—like the leadership of many British unions—became increasingly isolated from the rank and file workers in the steel mills.

The tendency was to ratify contracts with America's steel bosses without consultation with the rank and file steelworkers. Many of these contracts ruled out the right to strike.

Inevitably as the '70s brought increasing pressure on their living standards and job losses began to mount, the rank and file began the fight back. A movement of opposition to the old right wing leadership began in the Union's District 31 which has 130,000 members in the Chicago and Gary (Indiana) areas and some of the heaviest concentrations of steel mills in the United States.

Led by Ed Sadlowski, a former steelworker himself, a movement 'Steelworkers Fight Back' demanded that the Union members should have the right to vote on the contracts affecting them and in general a union responsive to the rank and file.

Sadlowski was elected with overwhelming support in 1975 as Director of District 31 despite the frantic efforts of the leadership to stop him in favour of their outgoing appointee. An indication of the nature of the old District leadership was seen in that when Sadlowski assumed office he found all the files relating to the District had been removed and the till was empty.

Sadlowski, backed by rank



Joe Higgins of 'Militant Irish Monthly' interviews Ed Sadlowski [above]

and file supporters, contested the presidency of the USWA at the Convention of 1976 against the 'heir apparent' to Abel who was himself retiring. Although failing to win, the support he received showed how widespread was the desire for change within the steelworkers' ranks.

A few weeks ago I interviewed Ed Sadlowski on behalf of 'Militant'.

Militant: What are the main issues confronting the American working class at the present time?

Ed Sadlowski: The lack of purchasing power. There has been a steady erosion in the value of money. Wages are not keeping pace with the cost of living except maybe for those dealing in gold!

Inflation is about 12-14%. Even though there is a cost of living clause in most con-

tracts, this is not sufficient. Necessities that the ordinary working person buys rise higher than the official inflation figure. The cost of food alone is astronomical.

M: Is there an unemployment problem among steelworkers?

E.S.: Many smaller factories and mills are closing down. The small shops are not able to make it. The big shops find it more profitable to relocate in areas where there is no union. Steel is becoming a highly specialised industry.

More profit is the concern, not the product or jobs. We are up against big conglomerates here, like US Steel for example.

M: Is there much participation by rank and file members in the union?

E.S.: Right now it is mainly the more aware members who come regularly to meetings

or those who are having problems. But, sure, we try for more physical participation by the members in the union. If we can hone in on what concerns the members, the issues they face every day, the union will be more relevant to them.

M: In the United States, the labour movement has traditionally supported the Democratic Party, which is really a Party of big business. Do you think the trade unions should have an independent Party of Labour?

E.S.: I think maybe it is time we were the head of the dog rather than the tail. The labour movement should have an identifying political movement like a Party. But to be honest, I can't see where it will come from. Since its inception the CIO (United States TUC) has been a social and economic but not a political movement.

What if the CIO went out of its way to change this and began an emotional gearing of the working class for change? The more political members of my union are saying this but I can't see any of the labour leaders doing anything about it.

M: Would you see any move towards a Labour Party in the future?

E.S.: I can't say I see any immediate change here. A few months back a resolution was passed in the District of my union calling for the creation of a political party. Many unions have this on their books but resolutions

are no use unless something is done about them.

Despite Ed Sadlowski's pessimism there can be little doubt that the question of an independent Labour Party will grow in importance in the coming period. Battling against corrupt or inefficient union leadership, many militants have limited their horizons to industrial activity. But there are indications of a new political mood growing in the American working class.

In California the Executive Council of the Federation of Labour voted unanimously to "give serious consideration" to the idea of a Labour Party and organising 'study groups' to investigate it further.

Last year the carworkers' leader, Arnold Fraser, sponsored a conference with black and feminist leaders to enquire about the possibility of a new party. Despite Fraser's turn-around to support Kennedy the question of a workers' party, based on the trade unions will not go away. And if Kennedy won the Presidency the disillusion with his big business policies would be even greater.

All the indications are that the heroic traditions of the American working-class will be rekindled as the USA heads into recession. Already activists such as Sadlowski have battled to change their union. In the next few years new possibilities will be created—the formation of a Labour Party to change society.

CHILE: Workers begin the fightback

The Chilean military-police regime of General Pinochet is continuing its policy of fierce repression. But now it is beginning to face the first signs of organised workers struggle for a decent living. In the last month some strikes have broken out in Chile.

At one copper mine, the miners have voted to go on strike. 4,000 steelworkers at the Hua-chupte plant went out on strike for 7 days. 4,000 textile workers

By Phil Frampton

came out at the Sumar works before an agreement was made.

Skilled workers at the Goodyear tyre factory are still out on strike.

No one should mistake the first signs of spring, for the heat of mid-summer, but now workers are beginning to meet together and plan activity and negotiating tactics.

The reaction of the junta has been one of repression, mixed with meagre concessions. Over the past few months several worker militants have been killed and the secret police have murdered Daniel Acuna, one of the founders of the Socialist Party.

In an attempt to control the growing workers movement Pinochet earlier this year introduced new trade union legislation. This attempted to register trade unions and bring their activities within the control of the state.

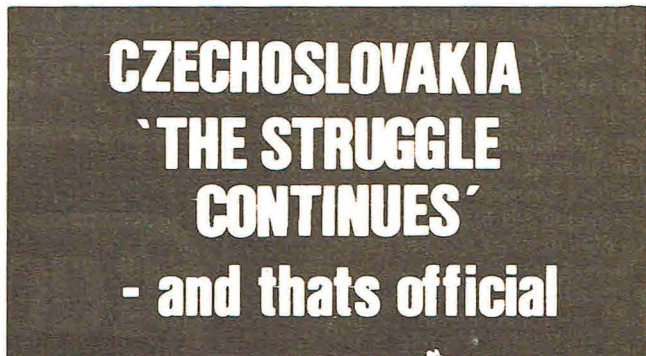
Penalties for non-registration were severe. A few workers were allowed the

right to strike, but if the strike lasted for more than 30 days, they were sacked. Yet despite these handicaps, sections of Chilean workers have managed to conduct struggle.

They face enormous difficulties. In the last six years repression has wreaked terrible havoc on the workers. And they face a desperate economic situation.

Inflation stands at 40% and unemployment comprises 20% of the population. With a new world recession looming, the future is dire for the Chilean economy and working class.

Yet now we see the beginnings of a new future for Chilean workers. Six years after the junta murdered 60,000 workers, tortured thousands and imprisoned tens of thousands, the workers are regaining their confidence and starting to take up the battle against capitalist repression.



Front Page 'Rude Pravo' August 21st. Contentious headline is on the right next to the date

Such is the insecurity and fragile base of the Czech bureaucratic dictatorship, that this summer the secret police raided the printing works of the Communist Party's newspaper 'Rude Pravo'.

The reason for the raid was the front page of the August 21st edition, 11th anniversary of the Russian invasion [see above]. On the left was an innocuous editorial on the invasion. But it was the other article on the harvest which brought the police to interrogate the printers.

For somehow the headline for this article put prominently next to the date was "The Struggle Continues".

It does indeed. And will do until Czech workers and their counterparts in Eastern Europe achieve a political revolution to build a workers' democracy which on the basis of a nationalised economy would be able to plan society for the benefit of the majority, and not just privileges for the few.

MILITANT INTERNATIONAL PAMPHLETS

- 'The Coming revolution in India' by Roger Silverman..... 10p
 - 'China' by Peter Taaffe..... 10p
 - 'Cuba: Analysis of a Revolution' by Peter Taaffe..... 10p
 - 'The Iranian Revolution—reprints from Militant'..... 10p
- All available [plus 10p Post and packing] from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

FACTORIES OCCUPIED AS S.AFRICAN WORKERS

"Among the most organised and biggest gestures of solidarity in South Africa's industrial history." That was how the South African capitalist press described the factory occupations and demonstrations during the recent bus boycott.

The boycott was about far more than the drastic fare increase. That was just the spark which ignited the protest.

The reasons for the demonstration were rooted in the vicious discrimination and exploitation facing black workers. And the workers' determination that whenever and wherever they can they will resist.

The bus boycott began in Ladysmith, Natal on September 9th and spread rapidly to other widely separated industrial areas in this province of South Africa. It ended temporarily with a partial retreat by the bus companies who withdrew the fare increase and have promised to set up a commission to enquire into transport.

The protest, which involved nearly 10,000 black workers in Ladysmith and similar numbers in other areas had been set off by the imposition of fare increases up to 75 cents a week ordered by the Kwazulu Bantustan-owned public transport companies.

Fed up with continual increases in living costs, workers initially occupied factories overnight to use as dormitories, rather than have to walk distances of 25-50km to their homes and back again. At one factory, police were called in to evict 1,000 workers engaged in a sit-in work stoppage in protest at fare increases.

Having evicted them, police told the workers they would

By
Richard Morgan

be fired if they did not return to work. In response the workers tried to storm the factory and were driven back with tear-gas.

Having called in the police to prevent the workers from sleeping in the factories the scared bosses launched a propaganda campaign in the major industrial centre of Durban to 'explain the necessity' for fare increases. But workers were not intimidated.

In Port Shepstone, on the Natal south coast, armed police in camouflage gear lined the bus routes while workers walking to work jeered the empty buses going past, and waved clenched fists and knobkerries (sticks).

In some areas the bus companies were compelled by this united and militant action to climb down on the fare increases. But the bosses, and the members of the black collaborationist 'community councils' with whom the bosses entered into negotiations to bring the situation under control, were surprised when this did not halt the boycott.

For workers were expressing discontent, not only at the fare increases, but over the whole low wage system

RESIST FARE INCREASES



Expensive, unreliable and overcrowded. That is the reality of the daily transportation of black workers from run-down townships to the daily exploitation at work. The above picture, taken at 6a.m., shows workers queuing for buses to take them into Johannesburg.

condemning them to poverty, and over the migrant labour structures of apartheid forcing them to live at such huge distances from their work.

Figures published during the boycott underline the hardships faced by the workers. The fare increases meant that some workers would be forced to pay up to half their weekly wages of R7.50 in bus fares alone: they would have just enough left to buy a loaf of bread and a litre of milk a day.

The bus fare increases are only the tip of the iceberg of the grave conditions under which black workers in South Africa live. While some 25% or more of black workers are

unemployed (over 2 million), average prices are rising by 14% per annum, and food prices by more.

A staple like maize has risen by over 22% in the past year, for example, and flour is about to increase in price by 28%. In these shocking conditions, the overall consumption of food has fallen by 5.7% per head in South Africa over the last three years, though the population has risen by 3% a year. One in every three African babies dies before the age of five.

The resistance of the workers has forced the employers to make promises to establish a commission of enquiry into the transport system, just as

the growth of trade unions among African workers forced the establishment of the Wiehahn Commission.

But these commissions, though they represent a partial retreat by the ruling class, can solve none of the problems of the workers. As the bus boycott itself shows, the mood of the black workers at present is such that any small spark can rapidly ignite new explosions of mass struggle on the scale of Soweto. In the last week major unrest occurred in the Fords plant at Port Elizabeth. Black workers walked out at the sacking of a fellow-worker. They also demanded equal pay for equal work.

Fords responded by dismissing 1,500 workers. At the time of writing it is unclear what the result of this dispute will be. But it is a further indication of the growing wave of black working class activity.

The task of Marxists in South Africa is to fight for independent working class policies which can take these mass struggles forward to the overthrow of the apartheid regime and the monopolies, and to secure majority rule by establishing a democratic workers state.

A VICTIM OF STALIN'S CAMPS RECALLS TROTSKY



The following message was sent to the 'Militant' Trotsky centenary rally held on 30th November by a Russian worker who was arrested in the 1930s on a charge of "Trotskyism" and subsequently spent 17 years in a Stalinist labour camp.

DEAR COMRADES!

On the day of the centenary of the birth of Leon Trotsky, the courageous revolutionary and outstanding figure in the labour movement who devoted his whole life to the cause of the struggle for the happiness of the working masses, I together with you, bow before his bright memory.

Trotsky was not only an honourable and courageous revolutionary, whose amazing military talent in the years of the civil war and whose other versatile and brilliant abilities saved the Russian revolution from certain destruction. He was also a highly gifted man of unusual moral purity and intellectual conscience, incapable of even

the pettiest intrigues or deceptions.

In the days of the October revolution in Russia, in the years of raging revolutionary passions, when there was savage civil war throughout the country, and also in the first years of the consolidation of Soviet power, among the broad masses of revolutionary workers, peasants, Red Army soldiers and sailors, there were not two more harmonious names than "Lenin and Trotsky".

'Lenin and
Trotsky'

Never was there such an occasion when at a work-

ers' assembly or Red Army meeting only one of those two names was heard separately. Orators would always proclaim: "Lenin and Trotsky!"

It would not be true to say that Trotsky was Lenin's right hand, any more than that Lenin was Trotsky's right hand. The two worked hand in hand.

Stalinist
repression

There can be no doubt that Lenin and Trotsky were comrades and close friends. They would at times argue about the course of the revolution, not as enemies but as friends.

The assertion that it was allegedly Trotsky and not Stalin who was an enemy of Lenin is an obvious lie. Even from the little that we discovered after the 20th Congress, we can state with absolute certainty that if Lenin had survived up to the 1930s, Stalin would have dealt with him just as mercilessly and

brutally as he did with Trotsky.

The name of Leon Trotsky is written with golden letters in the history of the Russian revolution, and none of today's Stalinists will succeed in striking it out. Those who try to soil and blacken it, only thereby expose themselves as accomplices in his villainous murder.

I call upon all those participating in this meeting to stand and honour the memory of this great revolutionary and all his comrades who died a martyr's death in the Stalinist camps. Shame and damnation to the Stalinist butchers!

For a report of the anniversary meeting in London last week see page 4

LETTERS

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

Private health cancer

Dear Comrades

I am writing to stress the importance of fighting the Tories' proposed cuts in the health service budget. It is vital that every section of the labour movement becomes involved in a campaign to prevent this damaging attack on our welfare state.

By far the most important aspect of fighting these cuts is preventing the growth of private health care, which the Tories openly support. The advance of a private health service will eventually lead to two classes of health care, one for the rich and one for the poor.

As a nurse working in the NHS I sometimes have the job of patching up the mistakes of the private hospitals. After surgery at a small private hospital, the patient returns home; life is rosy until a complication occurs such as a haemorrhage.

Who do they turn to? Is it the private hospitals? No—they phone for an NHS ambulance to take them to an NHS hospital where they get emergency treatment, usually

at the expense of NHS patients who may have waited up to 18 months for their operation.

This injustice has got to stop! Even more intolerable is the situation where a complication occurs when the patient is still in the private hospital—they are immediately transferred to the intensive care unit at the nearest NHS hospital!

There are two types of people who seek private health care. The first is the queue jumper or the business executive who likes his "little comforts".

The second is the old age pensioner who spends his life savings on a hip replacement to enable him to walk. Without this he would either become bedridden or wait three years for free treatment.

We in the labour movement must fight to make it impossible for the first type to get private health care and unnecessary for the second type.

Yours
Anne Spiller
NUPE Bath

Tories put babies last

Comrades

In the 'Daily Mirror' on 24 November there was a very small article about the rate of maternity grants. It read: "A Commons move to raise maternity grants from £25 to £85 failed for lack of support. Tory MP John Farr said the extra money could encourage young girls to become pregnant".

I feel disappointed to hear that this bill should have failed as many married women would have felt.

Anyone will tell you that £25 is not enough to get the necessary equipment for the first baby—to get the cot, pram, blankets etc, even second-hand, let alone new.

About all you can get for that amount of money is a dozen nappies and one babygro, if that now, with VAT and inflation going up.

John Farr said young girls are getting more independent to get themselves pregnant now, and I am sure just like every other parent they would never do that for a mere £85.

It makes me feel that the baby comes second, and the money comes first and means more. There was one big thing that John Farr did get very wrong—young girls do not even get the grant.

We should fight for the right of every woman to get the grant and for the husband to have time off work with pay to help his wife and child to settle in at home, and to get to know his child.

I am sure that the husband would understand his wife's feelings much more and get much closer to, and join in, the family life.

Yours fraternally
RM North
Thanet East LPYS

School kids robbed by partners in crime

Dear Comrades

As part of the Tory cuts in education spending, Hampshire County Council is cutting out puddings in the school meal service, and offering various cold substitutes such as cheese and biscuits or fruit to primary school children. And for secondary school children, cafeteria-style snacks will be introduced as an alternative.

A recent survey was carried out by the 'Southern Evening Echo', into the reactions of students at a school in Southampton, to test these proposals. According to the 'Echo' the reaction to these proposals was "thumbs down".

Only one of the six children quoted was in favour of the new system. Some reactions were as follows: "I think you should have a full school meal, not just a snack. A snack wouldn't fill anyone up, people pay for school dinners so they should be worth it."

"I had to pack in school dinners because they were getting too expensive...I wouldn't come back for a snack." "I think it's stupid, now you get a warm dinner and the best part about it is the pudding. I'd rather go home than have a snack."

These proposed cut backs are just one in many that the council will introduce. An apple or cheese and biscuits, although containing important protein and vitamins, will not be sufficient to last a growing child through the afternoon and could lead to children being forced to supplement their meal out of their own pocket.

Just one example of the Tories' attitude towards working people, to enable their partners in crime to continue to make vast profits at the expense of working people.

Fraternally
Simon Dennison
Secretary, IOW LPYS

Abortion—is it a back-door cut?

Dear Comrades

I read with interest Maureen Boyd's article concerning the high infant mortality rate we have in this country ('Militant' 479).

I fully agree with her when she so rightly states that not enough is being done for those women that fall into the 'high risk' category, and being myself a mother of three young children, I know only too well what it is to wait many hours at an ante-natal clinic. The staff are very over-worked and most likely understaffed.

Now I must disagree with Maureen Boyd when she

states that those people supporting the Corrie Bill do nothing about this dreadful situation. How wrong she is!

As a supporter of the Corrie Bill and a member of a women's rights group I would like to point out that in 1979 we circulated to many people throughout the country the leaflet 'A better deal for pregnant mums', urging people to support MP Kevin McNamara's Bill.

This Bill hopes to help women who fall through the welfare net and cannot claim maternity benefits. The Bill also proposes to raise the maternity grant for women to

£75 instead of the present appalling £25.

Where may I ask is the support for this Bill from pro-abortion women's groups?

Many of us women have campaigned vigorously against the 1976 maternity cuts and other health service cuts. The government and the DHSS openly admit that it is cheaper to abort than support our women and their families.

Most women who have abortions do so not because the baby is likely to be handicapped but because they are unmarried, poor, cannot face giving up work,

intend to save our jobs now.

The other day tickets for a video show were handed out down 'waste' and be more to the people that work in our efficient yard.

In the question time that followed it became obvious looked at home on Kenny that they couldn't find the Everett's programme. It consisted of very 'sincere' looking bosses telling us how sorry seem to think there was any they were about the state of the industry and of how we're in the same boat, etc.

They had graphs and drawings to illustrate the reasons for the decline of British shipbuilding. No mention was made of where the profits made by the old companies went or how they

It's obvious that if these 'gentlemen' think we're in the same boat they want to travel first class while we pull the oars.
Fraternally
J Shepherd
GMWU Cammell Lairds

We need the NHS

Dear Comrades

A couple of incidents recently showed me the rotten nature of the world we live in.

The 'Evening Standard' recently had a savage attack on the AUEW pickets at Charring Cross Hospital, playing on all the worst anti trade union prejudices; never mentioning the role the management had played—or that staff cuts were the reason behind the strike.

On page 10, the same paper had a story that in the past year, 3,000 hospital beds had been cut in London. But the Tory press prefer to attack the unions, not the system that causes such cuts.

The next night, on TV, the consequences of not having a Health Service were shown by a programme on the only public hospital in Chicago, which is threatened with closure.

The hospital continually takes patients turned away from private hospitals in the city, because they can't afford health insurance.

As one doctor said: "If this hospital closes, thousands of people in this city will quietly die". The struggle to save the hospital is still going on.

And this is the 'private enterprise system' that the Tories defend!

Fraternally
Peter Lush
Vauxhall LPYS

Winners in the Tory free-for-all

Dear Sir

The chairman of Glaxo, Mr A E Bide, writes in the company's annual report, "The relaxation of wage and salary restraint presents us with both opportunity and danger."

"There is danger if the change is seen by those believing they have the 'strongest muscles' as the signal for a 'free for all' from which they would seek to gain at the expense of others."

The relaxation certainly presented Mr Bide with an opportunity. He increased his salary by £28,628 [£550 a week] to £73,180!

Mr Bide later states that "Glaxo people have shown in the past a rare degree of good sense in these matters [wage negotiations]"—The average salary of a Glaxo employee at the same time was just under £4,220!

The £25,000 that Glaxo gave to the Tories last year may have benefitted the chairman with his massive tax cut, but it will have done nothing for the employees.

Yours fraternally
Richard Pearson
Haltemprice LPYS

Milk and honey

Dear Comrades

She loathes kitchens! She has never cooked!! She likes the way Mrs Thatcher speaks!!! She hopes Mrs Thatcher will "fix" the trade unions!!!!

Just a few remarks, comrades, from an interview in last week's 'Sunday Telegraph' magazine with the Duchess of Argyll. This is a member of the class who run our society.

The remarks above display a lifestyle which is totally detached from that of the working class. The Duchess has had to put one whole room aside to accommodate all her dresses (most women are lucky to have a few dresses in their wardrobe!) when we know that people have to live in one room.

To many people one room is their "home". This just goes to show the lunacy of a society of "milk and honey" for the "few" resulting in misery and struggle for the rest. The sooner we achieve a classless society the better life will be for all of us.

Yours fraternally
Janet Homer
Yardley LPYS
Birmingham

Defend Derek Robinson

Comrades

Early last week, I heard about the sacking of Derek Robinson from British Leyland and decided to send a letter of support to him, with some signatures from my colleagues at work attached.

I work at Shand Kydd's in Christchurch. I was hoping that all the unions would back the AUEW and call out their members for the Day of Action this Monday, but our union the NGA, like the rest did not, so the message of support was the least we could do. We had no transport, or some of us would have gone to Birmingham for the protest march.

I prepared the letter and took it to work on the Wednesday morning, so that some of my workmates could sign it, though as you can imagine in this Tory part of the world, the sympathy was not overwhelming.

The management soon got to hear about it, and I was called into the office just before lunch. They asked me if I had been round with a petition, and I did not tell them any lies, but told them it was none of their business.

Various threats were made and they tried the usual trick of making out that some other worker had complained, but of course could not come up with any names. In the end they had no case.

At the time of writing we have about 60 signatures, and I hope to get a lot more during LPYS activities. This is another example of how organisation among workers brings hysterics from the employers.

I hope that by the time this letter is printed Derek Robinson will have been re-instated unconditionally and the sooner workers' control and management arrive, the better.

Yours fraternally
Dave Lovett
NGA, Bournemouth

BRING US GOOD TIDINGS

"Christmas comes but once a year, And when it comes it brings good cheer!"

Like news of hospitals and nurseries closing. Old Peoples' homes and childrens' homes being run down, steel workers and car workers thrown onto the dole and, most serious of all, a famous toy factory with 900 workers going out of business at a moment's notice!

If you haven't invested in a gilt edged security or two, Christmas is going to be pretty bleak! It's "traditional" to think of the old, the handicapped, and the very young at Christmas.

The Tories, though, want to throw the whole burden of caring for them all year round onto the shoulders of working men and women without any extra cash to help (let alone the specialised training and the time necessary to do the job properly!).

Christmas brings home the stark facts of life in Tory Britain but 'Militant' still has the answer for every worker in the labour movement.

Get into your trade union and Labour Party meetings, and demand a real fight on your behalf. Get the leaders of the movement to mobilise against the cuts, against redundancies and closures and for a socialist Labour government.

Get 'Militant' and put the Tory scroungers out of office for life! The best Christmas present you can give your family is a vote of confidence in the 'Militant' and that means sacrificing a tenner or a fiver to the needy fighting fund before the target deadline.

This week's total of over £2,000 again shows the cash is there for the asking. Over £300 was collected at the

By Clare
Doyle
and Steve
Cawley

London rally in memory of Trotsky's untiring fight for socialism.

£300 was paid in from the sales of popular historical pamphlets produced by supporters in West London. An ACTSS member in Gravesend, Roger Gow, donated the strange but grand sum of £71.

A SOGAT worker gave £10 to 'Militant'—his expenses for going to the mass lobby against the cuts. The contingent of Nottingham miners donated pences amounting to £1.09, meticulously collected by a 'Militant' seller on the train to London. (It will be £5 after their rise!)

And perhaps the most significant of all this week, the Crown House EETPU strikers (out for over seven weeks now) donated £5 to the paper for its help in their dispute.

Many thanks to all of this week's contributors.

Amongst many who donated as much as £20 were a Pilkington worker with back pay, a TGWU member in Chester and a West London supporter. One Sheffield reader gave £25, and others in the area made this up to £35. The many 'tenners' donated included one from F and B Kidd (S London), one from C Baugh (Blackpool LPYS), another from a supporter in Hull and one from Wakefield NALGO members.

Thanks also to those who gave "Fighting Fivers", including J Porter (Oxford POEU), C Potter (Leicester), T Roddy (Eastleigh), M Wilton (S London) and E Williams (GMWU, Morecambe). Other individual donations of between £1 and £3 came from F Lapping (London), M MacNeil (NUPE Teesside), V Patterson and E

CARDIFF Militant Readers' Meeting 'Prospects for socialism in the 1980s'. Speaker: Peter Taaffe (Editor, 'Militant') Empire Pool, Cardiff, Monday December 17th, 7.30 pm

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

BLACKPOOL Militant Discussion Meeting. 'Communist Manifesto', Monday 10 December, 7.30 pm. Contact K Taylor Blackpool 52279.

CLASSIFIED

OLDHAM/ROCHDALE raffle 1st prize—F Chester, ticket 174; 2nd prize—C Martin, ticket 688; 3rd prize—S Woodhead, ticket 232

Build **Militant**

Area	Received
Eastern	4,700
Hants & IOW	3,100
Humberside	2,000
London North	9,500
London South	3,900
Manchester & Dist	4,500
Merseyside	5,000
Midlands East	3,300
Midlands West	9,000
Northern	5,500
Scotland East	2,900
Scotland West	4,500
South East	4,500
South West	3,100
Wales East	2,600
Wales West	3,400
Yorkshire	6,800
Others	6,700
Total	85,000

TARGET FOR THE YEAR - £85,000

THIS WEEK £2,093

Seath (Stirling LPYS) and T Fyles (Yorkshire).

In numerous parts of the country, 'Militant' readers and supporters have clubbed their donations together to send in lump sums, either at meetings or via Fighting Fund collectors. Thanks particularly to comrades in Gwent for £58.75 (they didn't mention any names), others living in the Brent and Barnet areas of London for a total of £51.65, and in West London, J Kilcline, P Fagan, J McGhee, S Field, E Evans, P and M McDonald and D Cheesmond for contributing over £19.

In Hull the tenner mentioned was topped up to £15.30 with donations from T Taylor, B Owen, T O'Brien and F Holmes. £2.50 arrived from T Bartle, S Gannon and M Crackett in Chester-le-Street, Devonians L Smith W Fitzgerald, D Moss and A Lesley put together £2.85, S Baird, P Lavery and M McGibbon of Glasgow gave £3.50...the list is endless of valuable donations large and small.

Gravesend hospital worker R Francis gave 95p, and a very large number of readers have sent us £1, including K Cox and H Bannister (Cramlington), T and C Spooner (Leicester), B Dainton (Northampton CLP), A Howard (London), P Thompson (Stockton LPYS), I Morris

(ASTMS, Canterbury), C Chater (Dartford NUPE), P Smith (UPW, Wanstead LPYS) and F Curtis (Ealing N Labour Party).

In Leicester over £70 (including some IOUs) was collected at a Militant Readers' Meeting against the cuts, other Militant meetings—in Gosport, Wakefield, Chester-le-Street and Lancaster—raised £56.49 between them.

Supporters in Stirling are "banking" on a bumper collection towards the East Scotland target at a meeting to be held shortly. A bold appeal gets the best results. 'Militant's' programme and ideas provide its supporters with the confidence to ask for support. Show your confidence by going all out to raise cash.

A local raffle raised £60 in Oldham and Rochdale. The Xmas Bazaar in Manchester gave us good cheer to the tune

of another £80 towards the target.

A social at Birkenhead Labour Club helped us by another £73, one in Bradford by £46, Rotherham £12, Sheffield £15 and Wakefield £15.50.

Some fund-raising is a bit more strenuous, however. Witness the £28 sent in from a sponsored 200-mile cycle ride (non-stop Southend to Leeds) by D Heemskerck, the £3.30 from another Southend supporter, raised by not smoking, and the £12.55 sent in by South Leeds comrades after a 3-Peaks walk in pouring rain.

The £22 raised by a meal for 'Militant' in S London may also support the theory that 'Militant' supporters lead a hard life (they don't get fed at home!) but £10 from a Birmingham drinks levy at 10p a pint certainly looks as if some money is spent on luxuries!

The regular 'Militant' 50s Club in Wakefield brought in another £22.40, "Glasgow Craigton Labour Youth Goon Squad Day Outing" £10 a jumble sale in Liverpool £33.70 and from badge sales a total of £116, mostly from London and Hampshire.

Those 'extras' from change donated by buyers of 'Militant' are also an important source of funds. Don't forget to collect them! Just 5p from each of 10,000 sales is £500, three weeks' worth is £1,500. But remember too that £5 from just 2,000 'Militant' readers is £10,000 and £10 from just 1,000 supporters is £10,000. There's £21,500 to be collected straight away!

Then the proceeds of all the seasonal fund-raising efforts plus the Grand Militant Draw, the Militant Calendar, Cartoon Book, sales etc. will all be a mighty bonus!

For the eventful year of 1980 the labour movement needs all the muscle it can muster. 'Militant' will do its bit if you do your bit for the 'Militant'.

LONDON Militant Bazaar St Matthews Meeting Place, Brixton Hill, London S.W.2. (opposite Lambeth Town Hall). Tube: Brixton. Saturday December 8th, 2.00 pm. Helpers there by 9.00 am

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

YSTRAD MYNACH Militant Readers' Meeting 'Fight the Tory cuts'. Speakers: Jeremy Birch (Selly Oak LP), Ron Davies (Rhymney Valley councillor). Penallta Miners Institute, Monday December 10th, 7.30 pm

WEST MIDLANDS Militant supporters' Christmas 500 Club draw winners: 1. £200—BTR Rover SD1 (ticket 66); 2. £20—K Halliday, Stafford (259); 3. £10—T Crowe, Stoke (269); 4. £5 each—A McLean, Harborne (229); A Stewart, Uxbridge (492); Alf Smith, Longbridge (201); Colin Mundy, Leominster (288).

STRATHCLYDE Militant supporters' draw results 1st December: 1st prize 20&22; 2nd prize 12&23

LIVERPOOL Militant Supporters Xmas Bazaar. Saturday December 8th, 2-5 pm, Lodge Lane Community Centre, Fern Grove, off Lodge Lane. Entrance 5p.

MERSEYSIDE Militant Supporters' Christmas Social Chaucer's Tavern, 12 Hardman Street, Thursday December 20th, 8.00 pm-1.00 am. Tickets contact 051-263 1084

MILITANT Christmas social An evening with Peggy Seeger & Ewan MacColl plus additional music, beer and food
Friday, December 14th.

7 pm-12 pm, Colombo Sports & Community Centre, Colombo Street, S.E.1. Tickets £2 from 'Militant' sellers or B Faulkes, 375 Cambridge Heath Road E2 Cheques to NE London Militant supporters

1980 Fightback Calendar Fight Health Cuts, Fight Every Cut Measures 12in x 16in. Price £1 plus 17p postage. From: Fightback, 30 Camden Road, London N.W.1.

Workers' Action public meeting 'The national left wing movement in the 1920s. Lessons for today'. Speaker: Mike Bley. Friday December 14th, 8.00 pm General Picton, Wharfedale Rd, Caledonian Rd, N.1. Tube: Kings Cross

Merseyside Anti-Cuts Committee [organised by Liverpool Trades Council and District Labour Party] NATIONAL CONFERENCE AGAINST THE CUTS

Delegates from all trade union, Labour Party and labour movement organisations welcome
Saturday March 22nd, 11.00 am-4.00 pm
St Georges Hall, Liverpool
Credentials from joint secs. T Harrison/A Dodswell
70 Victoria Street, Liverpool 1
Tel: 051-236 2015 or 051-236 1778
Delegation fee 50p
Speakers from labour and trade union movement to be announced

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 MP; Joan Maynard (MP & Labour's NEC); Andy Bevan (National Youth Officer). Saturday 8 December; morning session 10:30am, afternoon 1:15pm. Leeds town Hall, Chapelton road.

Disco/social 8.00pm at the Adelphi.
Sponsored by major trade unions in the region.

Longbridge - union rights under fire

WE MUST LEARN LESSONS FOR FUTURE STRUGGLES

A wave of rage and disbelief hit Longbridge pickets as news that AUEW President Terry Duffy had refused to make our dispute official reached the gates. Throughout this tempestuous dispute, many workers stressed that if we lost this fight it would not be worth returning to work. One or two of my own workmates are already looking for other jobs.

The shattering news created a double blow in view of the fact that in that morning's strike committee report-back, sacked convenor Derek Robinson, after being in contact personally with Duffy, told pickets that he was confident the strike would be made official by his union the AUEW. Duffy's action can only be described as blatant sabotage.

It appears he is more willing to meet management at secret meetings than to represent the interests of his own members. It is quite clear that by setting up the three-man enquiry into the sacking of Robinson, and

By Les Kuriata
(EETPU, BL Longbridge)

meanwhile ordering the workers back through the gates, he is simply trying to defuse the strike.

If the enquiry finds that Robinson was unfairly dismissed, will the workforce walk out through the gates again when the enquiry's verdict is due? In return for sabotaging the strike, all Edwardes has had to give up is £90 a week to pay Robinson for staying at home until the verdict.

Tory onslaught

The AUEW's decision was due on what was a critical day in the development of the dispute. Management and the local press had done a good job in attracting scabs to cross the picket lines. Some workers were telephoned at home and told that all their workmates were working. The local press reported that almost half the day shift, 4,000 people, had gone into work.



Derek Robinson [left] at the head of the mass demonstration by BL workers in Birmingham on 26.11.79, demanding his reinstatement—will the AUEW leaders be allowed to sabotage this fight?

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

In fact, after all the lies and dirty tricks played by management and the press only about 800 scabs went in, all of these stressing that they would not cross an official picket line. Therefore, it was vital that the AUEW made the strike official.

Several AUEW members I talked to, after hearing Duffy's position, were discussing transferring their union membership to the T&GWU. Although this is clear indication of their disgust, these workers will have their chance to vote Duffy out in next year's elections. They will be far better off trying to change the composition of the leadership rather than leaving the right wing with no opposition.

During the dispute many pickets realised that the battle they were fighting did not just involve Longbridge and BL but the whole future of the trade union movement in Britain. It was clear that the initiative to sack Robinson came from above Edwardes' head in the form of Sir Keith Joseph and Tory ministers.

The bosses know that if they get away with sacking Robinson at Longbridge, the way is then paved to do the same to union officials up and down the country. Rather than risk the profits of a private concern, where better

to attack the unions than on nationalised soil at the taxpayers' expense?

The employers and Tories have obviously thought long and hard on the question of which convenor to sack first. With Robinson's union being dominated by right-wing officials and with the fact that he is a Communist Party member, which is ammunition for the gutter press, they decided he would serve as the first test.

However, in sacking Robinson on a trumped-up charge of putting his name to an alternative plan to the Edwardes one, the employers have shown their real attitude to democracy and free speech. In a debate in the House of Commons in which the Tories were attacking the lack of freedom of the press and speech in the Soviet Union, James Lamond, Labour MP for Oldham East, pointedly asked: "Has there been any evidence of disident workers who publish pamphlets attacking their own management or the government's policy being dismissed for it?" This clearly highlights that the restriction in the freedom of speech is not just common to the Stalinist bloc, but is practised in the western world as well, when capitalism feels threatened.

When Edwardes balloted the workforce on the question

of his streamlining plan involving 25,000 jobs, the more conscious BL workers warned workmates about the consequences of giving Edwardes a 'yes' vote and therefore a mandate to attack wages and conditions. This warning was soon borne out when management issued 85 pages of proposals to initiate a "management of change" in return for a 5% wage rise.

Probably typical of the response of many AUEW members to Duffy's decision was the convenor at a GEC subsidiary in London. A number of his stewards were considering resigning their positions because they felt that any actions they took would leave them defenceless. The District Committee would back them, but the national leadership would stab them in the back. After a meeting, the shop stewards' committee agreed to send a resolution to AUEW headquarters, attacking, among other things, the cowardice and inexperience of Duffy, and demanding his resignation.

The changes proposed would wipe out every gain won by the unions within BL in its history, and reduce it to no more than a labour camp. Now with the latest attack on Robinson, many employees

have lost any remnants of confidence they had in Edwardes to make BL viable. If the ballot was held today, there is little doubt that the result would be reversed.

Unfortunately, BL workers have had to learn their lesson the hard way.

Management will probably try to implement the "management of change" through the back door, despite what happens to the wage claim. They will likely try to isolate pockets of workers within Longbridge as they seek their 'radical' changes. This in turn will lead to many sectional walk-outs and disputes, and therefore to interrupted production.

Many shop stewards have already said on going back to work that they have no choice but to give up their positions in fear of discrimination by management. But it is vitally important that workers are not left undefended.

It would be foolish to suggest that if Robinson is not re-instated we have not suffered a great set-back. But a battle is not a war, and the lessons learned in this dispute will help the workers fight the next one.

It is with this thought that Longbridge workers will regroup themselves for the struggles to come in the stormy future.

Landor - fighting 'tricky dicky'

Members of the National Graphical Association are on official strike at Landor Cartons Ltd., a large carton-printing plant in Birmingham.

The strike is essentially about a house rate for the operation of four colour presses. There is a long history of management provocation. For instance some weeks ago management gave everybody in the place a 37½-hour week—except the NGA, when only the NGA had put in a claim!

The managing director is a Mr Richardson, "Tricky Dickie" as he is known to the blokes. He is on the Industrial Relations Committee of the British Printing Industries Federation, the employers' organisation.

Support for the strike has been excellent in Birmingham with chapels organising collections and visits to the picket line. My own chapel have organised a picket rota

and a weekly levy for the strike fund.

The main problem at the moment is that a number of NGA overseers (foremen) are crossing the picket line, having accepted financial inducements from the management.

"These aren't management whizz kids, these are blokes we've worked with on the floor and have been made up—that's what makes it worse," says Tony.

This is something which the branch committee will have to deal with in the next few days.

Donations and messages of support to: A Jordan, Branch Secretary, Birmingham Typographical Society, NGA, 9 William Street North, Birmingham B19 3QH.

By Chris Newis
(FOC Birmingham Printers, Co-op Press Ltd, NGA Birmingham branch committee)

CROWN HOUSE - MAKE STRIKE OFFICIAL NOW!

A major boost in favour of the Crown House strike has been the calling out of the Express lift workers from the site. You can imagine the effect on the work once the lifts on this, the tallest office block in Europe, break down.

But after only a few days out, the pressures are on them to go back. This has apparently gone to the extent of phone calls from Express directors (Express Lifts is a subsidiary of GEC) to Tory Minister Jim Prior, which shows not only the solidarity between big business and their Tory agents, but that only the solidarity of the union side can beat them.

The fact that sparks from Rashleigh Phipps and others are still working on the site, puts pressure on the Express engineers to keep working.

Another factor is the role of

the site convenor, who stooped to the level of walking in on the morning of 28 November when a mass picket was held, wearing dark glasses. He and the site committee have allowed their names to be used on a printed letter issued by Mowlems to get lorry drivers to break the picket line. They now even condone the use of non-trade union drivers. The scab lorries are now openly being unloaded on the site, something that apparently was never allowed before this strike.

A meeting between members of the strike committee and T&GWU and UCATT full timers at Tooley Street HQ gave no positive lead to this problem apart from a donation of £30.

The foreman and EETPU members who have been

openly walking in since the strike started are being branched (see earlier reports). One of the strike committee told me that they will have their case heard at Hayes Court HQ instead of their own branches, with a panel made up of Executive Committee members, and only those bringing the charges allowed there. This is because the full-time officials argue that they will not get a fair hearing at their own branches.

If justice is foremost in the minds of the EC, however, the Crown House sparks have an open and shut case for their strike to be made official!

The men have received some outstanding donations. For example, Littlebrook Power Station workers gave £314.60; GEC workers at the same site £178; members of

the EETPU and heating engineers' unions at the Kellogs Mobil site £58—and many more.

But finance is still urgently needed. Most of the men are based out of London and costs to get into the city are exorbitant.

The greatest need, however, is to get the NEC to change their position and make the strike official. Resolutions must be sent to the NEC to this effect.

Messages of support and donations to: G Noble, 12 Balstonia Drive, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex; K Burrough, Stanford-le-Hope (037 56) 77635; K Groom, Basildon (0268) 280546.

By Bob Faulkes
(EETPU and Hackney Central CLP)

BBC technicians force management retreat



As the BBC lock-out of technical staff entered the third week a speedy peace formula was sprung upon the union.

Management, it seems, were ready to take on the Association of Broadcasting Staff if they could cut the union 'down to size'. But three weeks of worsening staff relations as determination hardened, empty studios and the prospect of a protracted battle just before Christmas, made them think again.

Our members are convinced that the BBC wanted a complete lockout of the union membership, to force them to accept any grading and pay deal on offer.

The management strategy was outlined in a union branch letter. The BBC's action, unilaterally withdrawing from grading negotiations, "is obviously a none too

subtle attempt to offset the cost of the BBC's losses on the grading front against the next pay settlement."

Uppermost in management's mind must have been the level of next year's pay settlement after its negotiations with the government over the increase in the licence fee. The home secretary spelt out the Tory government's threat in a speech to the House of Commons on 23 November: "I shall expect the BBC to live within the cash figures set. This means that particular attention will have to be paid to containing increases in costs, especially labour costs, if there is to be no diminution in BBC services."

This explains why the BBC got itself into this dispute. It was carrying out the government's dirty work. It expected to win, demoralising and

weakening the union in preparation for future battles, but in the end lost about £1¼ million.

The ABS on its part faced the most serious crisis in its history. As the general secretary of the union put it, "This crisis has been brought to a head by deliberate and unjustifiable acts of management. I have no doubt either that a number of senior members of BBC management deliberately have chosen this issue to break the union's strength in the BBC."

The union has not come out of this dispute totally unscathed but then neither has the BBC management. Both sides will now be looking to see what the new year will bring in the continuing grading and pay struggle.

By a member of the Association of Broadcasting Staff

Owen Coyle - UNION BASHING BOSSES DEFEATED

From the largest corporations—such as BL—to the smallest firms, basic trade union rights are under attack.

This is the message made clear by the struggle of 50 workers at Owen Coyle Anodising in Hayes, Middlesex, where strike action has forced management to back down in their assault on trade union rights.

As one picket put it at the start of the strike: "Management want to crush us. They want to smash the union in the plant."

Strike action was called following the sacking of seventeen workers, all members of the TGWU, after an agreement was reached with management on a recent claim to improve wages and conditions. This agreement, which meant 15% improvement in take-home pay of £43 for a 40-hour week, four weeks' annual holiday, and a new night premium payment, represented the first major victory in the plant for the all-Asian workforce, who re-

cently won the long hard struggle for full unionisation and recognition of the shop stewards' system.

Formal recognition of the union was won in 1975, but it is only this year that union membership has really grown and the shop steward system developed.

Before the agreement could be signed, however, management issued seventeen redundancy notices. They also threatened 40 more to follow. In other words, the whole workforce was to be sacked. Seven of the workers in one section were accused of 'sabotage' and management refused to sign an agreement without redundancies being accepted.

Shop stewards gave a clear answer: No redundancies, no loss of work. When the management refused to reinstate the seventeen, a strike committee was elected and picket lines drawn up.

This determined and organised approach no doubt came as a shock to management. They were forced to eat their words, reinstate all 17 sacked workers and withdraw all threats of further redundancies.

Management's attack on individual workers through the weapon of redundancy represented an attempt to smash effective shop-floor organisation in the plant. Management were prepared, if necessary, to sack the whole workforce and re-employ non union labour. For the bosses it is their 'right' to pay poverty wages which was at stake.

The 100% response of the workers in all-out strike action was the only way to halt management in their tracks.

The Labour Party Young Socialists in Hillingdon provided support to the pickets lines and raised the issues involved with the labour movement in the area, including TGWU reps who had received no notification of the dispute from the district office.

This was a particularly important victory for the Asian community in the area. These workers, many involved in an industrial struggle for the first time, have led the way for millions of others. They have proved that effective trade union organisation can defeat these hard-faced, arrogant bosses.

Prem Singh Gill and other workers talked to Mike Lee & Con O'Brien (LPYS)

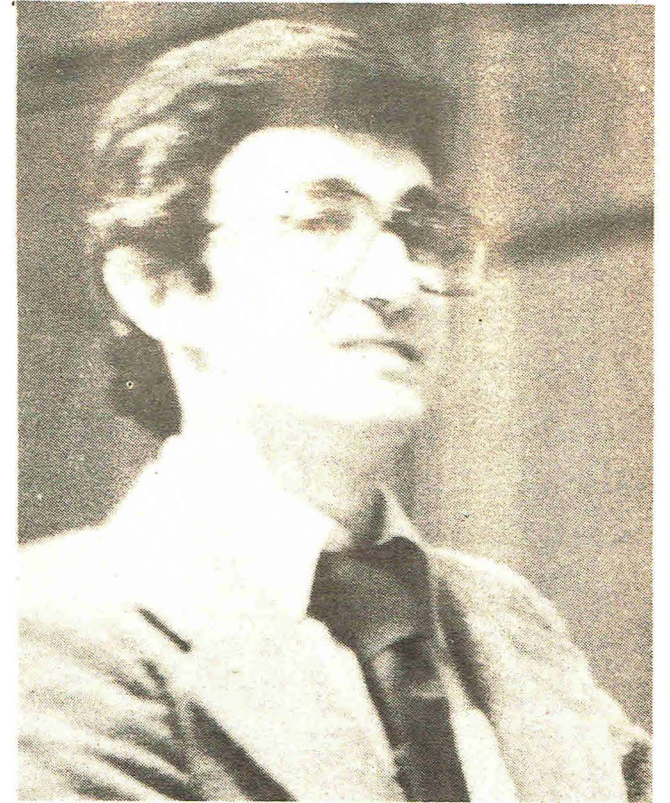
CPSA - NATIONAL SAVINGS BANK RETURN TO WORK 'Prepare for the cuts fight'

A mass meeting (22 November) of CPSA members at the National Savings Bank, Glasgow, where over 500 members had been suspended for blacking work done in overtime, was presented with a joint statement from CPSA and DNS management, and asked to vote on its acceptance.

The main points of the statement were: that suspended members should return to work on Monday 26 October; that blacking should cease from that date; that there would be a "cooling-off" period of five days during which no overtime would be offered by management; and there would be discussions on future overtime, recruitment and temporary redeployment of staff.

Terry Adams, the full-time CPSA official with responsibility for DNS, outlined the case for accepting these proposals. He stated that the only alternative to an orderly return to work was an all-out strike by members at the Bank.

Terry stressed that the CPSA should not allow itself to be provoked into a premature, all-out battle over the suspensions. Management would like nothing better than to drain the financial resources and energy of the



Terry Adams

Photo: MILITANT

union before the massive cuts which are imminent. The real fight will be against the cuts.

During discussion on the motion, there was an attempt by the right wing to gain political capital from the situation by moving a motion of no confidence in the branch committee. This was treated with the contempt it

deserved by members.

After a lively discussion the members overwhelmingly accepted the proposals for an orderly return to work, and equally overwhelmingly defeated the motion of no confidence.

By George McAleer (CPSA, personal capacity)

MORRISA - Not just low pay - no pay

Seventy workers at Morrissa Originals clothing factory in Rhondda are staging an around the clock blockade. Why? Because they have not been paid for three weeks.

The dispute started on 16 November. Morris Roberts, managing director, informed workers he hadn't enough money to pay them. He offered them cheques, and said he would give them cash on Tuesday after he had sold one of his two cars.

When he eventually returned on Thursday he called the shop steward in and said he still had no money. Next day, Roberts told the shop stewards he had sold the factory to a Gerald Harvey, who owned a cigarette business and who would be bringing in £3,500 in cash to pay for the previous two weeks' wages.

The manager, who it is believed has himself not been paid for eight or nine weeks, asked workers to return to work, which they did.

After a visit by a Tailor and Garment Workers' Union official, workers' reps were informed there was still no money to pay wages because the new owner would only pay when everything had been signed over—which would not be until the next Monday.

The next Monday (26th), workers decided not to work till they were paid two weeks' money. Clearly, Mr Roberts had no intention of paying up. The Secretary of Treorchy branch of the Tailors' Union was contacted by the managing director of another firm, Strads, asking that some linings be removed from the

By Anthony Tynan

(South Wales NUM and Rhondda LPYS)

factory, and agreeing to pay a cheque to the Tailors' Union if Roberts would give the OK for their removal.

Workers were not really happy about anything leaving the factory, but at least they would get something back.

Nothing moves!

Workers have now parked cars outside the gateway so nothing can enter or leave, including £2,000 worth of suede clothes, and sewing machines. The Roberts are sleeping at the factory hoping to get cars and stocks out.

The average wage is £42 for a 40-hour week, plus a

number of young people on Youth Opportunities Programme being paid £20 a week.

On 28 November, Roberts proposed that he would borrow money to pay the wages if workers agreed to accept redundancies. The manager would draw up a list of people to go. The workers agreed in order to get the money now and fight later.

This list of 35 redundancies has already caused a few upsets. They managed, though, to get £16 on Friday and a promise of the rest on Monday.

Messages of support and donations to: Mrs A Uren, Shop steward, Tailor and Garment Workers' Union, c/o Morrissa Originals Ltd, Gelli Industrial Estate, Rhondda, Mid-Glamorgan.

INCO PENSION FIGHT

A mass meeting of 600 strikers from the West Wales INCO Plant (see issue 476) decided unanimously on 22 November to continue their fight for a 35% wage increase and an improved pension scheme.

Recent discussions with management have resulted in a minor improvement in their original offer for the pension

scheme. But with millions of pounds lying idle in the pension fund while some members are receiving as little as £12 a month, the strikers are determined to get a decent pension scheme implemented.

Messages of support and donations to: J R Lewis, Pensford Grange, School Rd, Abercrave, Nr Swansea.

Labour Right Wingers Threaten To Split Party

Accompanied by a fanfare of praise from the Tory press the right wing in the Labour Party escalated their attack on the democratic decisions of Labour Party Conference.

Only a week after Roy Jenkins' call for a new Centre Party, William Rodgers, prominent leader of the right-wing Campaign for Labour Victory, publicly threatened to split the party.

And in Cornwall the Executive of the Falmouth and Camborne Party voted to disaffiliate from the national party.

Rodgers spelt out what scared him and the other supporters of capitalism who remain in the Labour Party. After admitting that if Labour adopted left-wing policies it could win a general election he confirmed that the result would be to place the continuation of capitalism in peril. It would "impose a heavy burden on our Parliamentary system and our mixed economy."

In the past when the right wing ruled, there was no

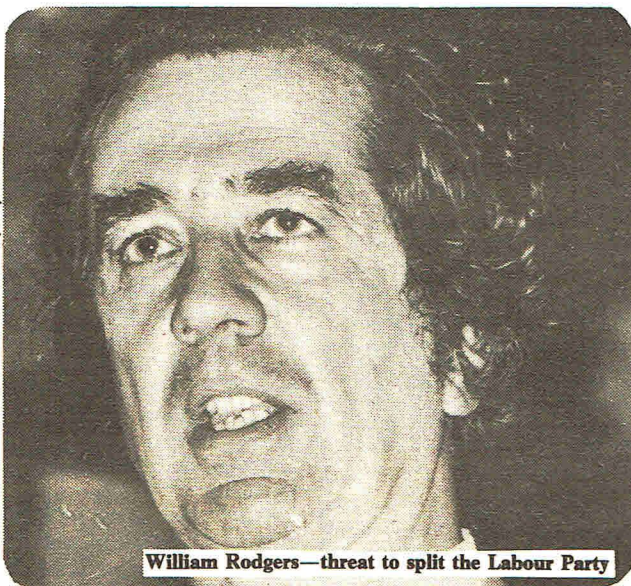
question of a split—it was a 'safe' Labour Party—a safe 2nd eleven for the bosses to fall back on if their system and the Tory first eleven had some difficulties.

Now when British capitalism stares into the future all it sees is disaster unless the democratic organisations of the working class, the Labour Party and the trade unions, can be curbed. To do this they want to purge the Labour Party of all socialists.

Rodgers last week echoed this tune. With the 'Daily Telegraph' calling on him to "move fast", Rodgers demanded that the Party be returned to right-wing hands "within a year."

But there will be no long-term future for Labour's right wing. They and their policies have been tried and found wanting. It was their policies which led to the attacks on workers' living standards in 1974-79 and which lost Labour the election.

They paved the way for this vicious Thatcher government, who are continuing the cuts of



William Rodgers—threat to split the Labour Party

the last Labour government in a more savage way.

The attempts by Labour's pro-capitalist wing to administer the bosses' system "more humanely" are not the way to solve the problems facing working people as capitalism enters the '80s in recession.

And it will attract little support within the labour movement. It now seems likely that Falmouth and Camborne will not disaffiliate from the national party.

On Saturday the Cornish Labour Party expressed its support for the National Executive, and at its next meeting it is probable that the General Management Committee will reject the suggestion of disaffiliation.

The process of the transformation of the Labour Party

has begun. While many local parties in the past have continued with low membership due to the disenchantment with right-wing policies (Rodgers' party has only 176 members) this will be changed in the course of the next few years.

To meet the crisis that engulfs them working people will transform the Labour Party in order to build a fighting mass socialist party capable of creating a new socialist society.

In that process the capitalists, their press and their allies in the labour movement will try to put up obstacles on the road to social advance. But if Labour is armed with a socialist programme of action to change society then all their schemes and plots will be to no avail.

This issue, as far as the workers are concerned, can only be settled through unity and solidarity at local and national level. Sentiments like those expressed on Friday 30th by the National Union of Blastfurnacemen's Scunthorpe district secretary—who said, "We don't want to be fighting for Corby; we ought to be fighting for Scunthorpe"—have left union leaders echoing the mandarins in Grosvenor House, helping to divide worker from worker, plant by plant.

The fight has been left to the action committees, such as ROSAC at Corby and the Scunthorpe Steel Action Committee, who have seen the need to defend all steel jobs, not just sectional interests.

The need for national co-ordination of the action committees and for a thorough-going socialist programme as an alternative to BSC's hatchet-plans are vital if we are to win this battle.

★ The immediate aim must be to co-ordinate and organise for an all-out national steel strike, to shut down the blast-furnaces until there is an

undertaking that all will reopen.

★ No more redundancies in the steel industry—no selling of jobs.

★ For workers' control and management of the steel industry, with a management board made up of one third from workers in the industry, one third from the TUC and one third from the government.

We need to take the whole economy out of the hands of the bosses and place it under the control of the trade unions and labour movement, so that we can plan production for need and not profit.

By determined action, Robb Caledon shipyard workers in Dundee thwarted the Tory plans for closure of their yard. Such a fightback, organised in the steel industry could lead to resistance to Tory closures in other areas of manufacturing industry and increasing pressure from the rank and file of the labour movement to evict the Tories and replace them with a Labour government firmly committed and held to socialist policies.

NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE, 483 [14 December] will be the last until the new year. Issue 484 will appear on 4 January 1980.

SAVE MECCANO JOBS

Continued from page 1

some workers collapsed and fainted. There were long queues for the phone. One man had to tell his wife he would be coming home without a job. He had worked there for 29 years.

This was totally unacceptable. Immediately a volunteer occupation force was set up, numbering about 40 men and women to occupy over the weekend. At a meeting on Monday morning a resolution to continue the occupation was unanimously carried, and the possibility of a work-in was considered.

The aim of Airfix is to remove the factory lock, stock and government-subsidised barrel out of Liverpool. The feeble excuse is a cash flow problem, Meccano having "lost" £5m since 1971/72.

Airfix failed to mention the incompetent management. [Workers quoted one case of toys coming off the line at one end, the same toys being melted down in another area and then the metal being put back through the same process.]

They also failed to mention the inflated production target to which the workers came incredibly close. The management claim the workers are underproducing, but if this is so why were the piece workers consistently on bonuses?

The workers at Meccano hope to be able to run the factory, to fill existing orders and look for more orders and a buyer for the plant. Significantly the management have chained up the room

with the order book for the first time in twenty years at Meccano.

The callousness of the Airfix and Meccano management is incredible. New workers were being taken on right up to the Monday before the closure.

Some machinery in Meccano was used to make Hornby toys 70 years ago, though significantly a tremendous amount of new machinery has only recently been put in. The management intend to skip off with the new machinery, cut the workforce and the union at the new plant.

The workers at Meccano learnt the lessons of Dunlop and Western's and other groups of workers on Merseyside; they occupied the plant immediately. They hope to run the plant under their own democratic control and management, and they will be applying the lessons of KME.

The brave struggle of the Meccano workers marks a potential turning point in the fight against unemployment. It deserves the widest support from the organisations of the working class.

All trade unions, Labour Parties and LPYS branches must support the fight of the Meccano workers. Only by gaining the active support of the labour movement can Meccano be saved.

No redundancies at Meccano!

Cut hours not jobs—a 35-hour week now!

Open the books—let us see where the profits have gone!

As Airfix have refused to save the jobs we must fight for Meccano's nationalisation under workers' democratic control and management. Messages and resolutions of support, and above all donations to the Meccano fighting fund should be sent to John Lynch, Meccano Ltd., Binns Road, Liverpool 15.

TORY BLITZ

Continued from page 1

low-cost works; cut costs, including labour costs at these works...withdraw from unprofitable export markets, import coal more cheaply than the NCB can supply it and presumably also import any other material equipment it needs as it thinks fit; close the older and, again according to BSC, higher-cost works...with the industry based on a few low-cost, high-quality works, mount an attack to recapture that share of the home market which in recent years it has lost."

A recipe for mass unemployment; a capitalist pipe-dream. Such a plan will ensure that what trifling amounts of steel are turned out will be the most expensively produced in the world, and the least competitive.

Only a fight for the retention of full capacity can secure employment. As long as the capitalist system exists, no job is safe. Already one and a half million jobs have been stripped away in manufacturing industry in the last 15 years. The prospect is of millions more disappearing if

the Tories get away with their plan.

There can be no solution for the steel industry in a society that puts profits for the few before the needs of society as a whole. The need for steel in industry, for schools, hospitals, homes, cars and railways is there. But the bosses won't invest in manufacturing industry or steel—it is more profitable to speculate in property markets and gather interest from bank deposits.

Last month the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, the largest union in the BSC, drew up a national plan of action to fight steel closures. Now words must be converted into action, if the industry is to be rescued from the slippery slope to disaster. Union leaders must match and channel the determination of their members—steel must be saved.



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