

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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Photo: MILITANT

The Labour Party Young Socialists held a very successful demonstration against the Tories last week [see page 3]. The whole movement must be mobilised against the Tory wreckers

DEFEND WAGES JOBS RIGHTS

One more Tory lie has been exposed. Time and again, the Tories' economic axe-man, Sir Keith Joseph, has said there was no question of more cash for BSC to save jobs.

But on Monday it was revealed that Joseph had in fact secretly promised more cash and the possible cancellation of BSC's massive interest burden—but only on condition that BSC slashed 52,000 jobs.

Granada TV's 'World in Action' showed evidence of a ruthless determination by the Tories and BSC bosses to cut jobs regardless of the consequences for workers and their communities.

The programme also highlighted monstrous mismanagement by BSC bosses. The Corporation it was revealed, has written off at least £353 million as "abortive expenditure" through abandoning its ten-year modernisation programme begun in 1973.

The documentary clearly refuted the slander that BSC's problems are the result of "lazy" British workers. Neither Villiers nor Joseph could explain why Japanese, German and other steel industries overseas have far superior plant and equipment.

The Tories also admit-

By Eileen Short

ted last week that they had turned down £70 million from the EEC Commission offered to help tide BSC over this present recession. Employment Secretary John Grant said the aid proposals included "measures for work sharing" which are unacceptable to the Tories!

Clearly, one of the banners carried on South Wales' magnificent day of action on 28 January was no exaggeration. "For sale," it read, "the South Wales coalfield. Apply agents: BSC."

This eloquently summed up the devastating effect of steel redundancies and pit closures.

The working people of Wales, like those of other heavy industrial areas, face a horrifying spectre of unemployment if the Tories are allowed to carry out their brutal policies.

SDA WILL STAND AGAINST LEFT MP's

Labour Right Plan Split

The so-called "moderates"—in reality the right-wing extremists—of the Social Democratic Alliance have come out openly for a split in the Labour Party.

They have announced their intention of standing their own "social-democratic" candidates against left Labour candidates in the next general election.

In the middle of the steel workers' magnificent battle to protect living standards and jobs, the SDA has issued a 'Statement of Aims' which, among other things, denounces "abuses by... trade unions"!

From their statement, it is hard to see how the SDA would disagree with

the Tories' proposed anti-trade union law!

The SDA's pretext for treacherously stabbing the Labour Party in the back, according to Neville Sandelson MP, is that "The NEC's decision to make the Labour Party an 'open house' to extremist left-wing elements hostile to our democratic tradition will inevitably produce resistance and

revolt within our ranks."



Peter Stephenson—where does SDA's money come from?

But Sandelson and his friends are deliberately ignoring the fact that last year's Labour Party Conference overwhelmingly rejected the policies of the right wing and voted decisively for the democratisation of the Party.

The "resistance and revolt" is against the right, against them, not the left.

"The NEC," the SDA claims, "is a gift from the gods to the Tories, and they are leading us to electoral disaster."

Have they already forgotten that it was the last Labour government, following the kind of right-wing policies they support, that led the Labour Party to electoral disaster?

A Fabian study of the last Labour government was published this week ['Labour and Equality 1974-79' by Nick Bosanquet and Peter Townsend] which shows the disastrous consequences for workers of the last government's policies.

The study shows that, far

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SDA

from fulfilling its promise to "eliminate poverty wherever it exists in Britain", within months of taking office the government had adopted economic policies which led to average cuts in the standard of living of 7% between 1974 and 1977.

Cuts for families over that period were even greater, with the drop in disposable income of families with four children amounting to "a chilling 20%."

It is the complete disillusionment with right-wing policy of attempting to manage a diseased capitalism that has led to the swing to the left in the labour movement, not any manoeuvres or conspiracies by the left.

While hysterically denouncing "left-wing extremists", the SDA have announced their intention of standing candidates against a dozen or so left-wing MPs. Their list includes Frank Allaun, Norman Atkinson, Eric Heffer, Neil Kinnock, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Joan Lester, Judith Hart, Renee Short, Joan Maynard and Jo Richardson.

The SDA can have only one motive in standing candidates against these left MPs: to inflict the maximum possible damage on the Labour Party and increase the chances of the Tory government being returned in the next election.

SDA members have been prominent in recent attempts to unearth alleged "Trotskyist plots", "extremist conspiracies", etc. However, even 'The Guardian' [1 February] which is no friend of Labour's left, commented on the sinister character of this extreme right-wing organisation: "The SDA is a body of mysterious provenance, whose first chairman, Mr Peter Stephenson" [himself formerly editor of the now defunct right-wing journal 'Socialist Commentary', which also had massive and unexplained funds at its disposal—ed.] "found it necessary to resign, both because official SDA publications were issued behind his back, and because—he was unable to discover where it was getting its money."

From what hostile, anti-working class sources does the SDA get its obviously ample funds?

These people clearly have no place in the Labour Party. They neither support the fundamental socialist aims of the Labour Party, nor do they accept the traditional democracy of the labour movement.

Stephen Haseler [Kensington], Douglas Eden [Hornsey], and Roger Fox [Kensington] have already been expelled from their local Labour Parties, and the NEC will be ruling soon on their appeals against expulsion.

Eric Heffer, chairman of the NEC organisation committee, said: "I didn't want to throw them out, but once they fight against the Party, they are effectively putting themselves out of the Party."

The overwhelming majority of Labour Party members will strongly endorse Eric Heffer's statement at the LPYS Rally on Saturday, when he said that people who felt that they could not accept Labour's socialist principles, aims and objectives should get out. "Such people, who have no real sympathy for Labour's basic views, should not act as a fifth column in Labour's ranks."



NEW HEART FOR CAPITALISM!

Alan Handman

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

ALL MILITANT'S CASH COMES FROM SUPPORTERS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Throughout the campaign of the capitalist press and the television to whip up a witch-hunt against the 'Militant' and its supporters in the Labour Party, the media has repeatedly implied, by one means and another, that 'Militant' relies on sinister sources of finance.

This is in spite of the fact that 'Militant' has repeatedly stated that it has no sources of income whatsoever apart from the

contributions of supporters in the labour movement. However, in spite of their deliberate innuendoes—and the fact that newspapers like 'The Sunday Times' and television programmes like 'Newsnight' have assigned numerous reporters to investigate the 'Militant'—they have found no evidence at all of any other forms of finance.

Indeed, it is clearly absurd to imply that the 'Militant' would be backed in any way by big business or by capitalist governments. It is equally absurd to imply, as a number of Tory newspapers have

done, that 'Militant' may be financed by Russia or through its secret police, the KGB. Anybody with the slightest political understanding knows that the Russian bureaucracy hates the supporters of Leon Trotsky's ideas even more violently than they hate the capitalists.

'Militant' has also drawn attention to the fact that, while the capitalist media has been eager to probe 'Militant's' finances, they have shown a marked reluctance to investigate the finances of right-wing groupings in the Labour Party. Yet as we have shown recently (and in the past) there is ample evidence of CIA funding for right-wing journals, groupings, and leading personalities within the Labour Party.

While the capitalist media has been eager to probe 'Militant's' finances, they have shown a marked reluctance to investigate the finances of right-wing groupings in the Labour Party.

Nevertheless, the allegations in the press, particularly the references to loans of £148,500 made to 'Militant', have given rise to genuine enquiries on the part of Labour Parties and rank-and-file members of the movement who would like to be able to answer right-wing smears.

In view of this, the 'Militant' wants to make its financial position absolutely clear.

The sole source of 'Militant's' finances, as we have repeatedly stated, is our readers and supporters in the labour movement. The 'Militant' receives no money whatsoever from any sinister sources, either in Britain or abroad.

Unlike the capitalist press, 'Militant' has no revenue from commercial advertising and cannot rely on commercial wholesalers for its distribution. We rely entirely on activists within the labour movement to build up the paper's resources and full-time staff, including journalists and distributors throughout the country.

Money comes to 'Militant' in three ways.

Firstly, 'Militant' receives cash from the sales of the paper, the 'Militant International Review', and 'Militant' pamphlets. This obvious "commercial" source of cash seems to have been completely "overlooked" by the capitalist press.

Secondly, 'Militant' receives cash from contributions made to the Militant Fighting Fund. These come from individual readers, supporters, and well-wishers, together with organisations of the labour movement which from time to time make donations to the paper.

Money also comes to the Fighting Fund from the fundraising activities of our supporters. Full details of our Fighting Fund income are published weekly in the paper. Last year, we raised over £80,000. Previously, we raised £66,000 in 1978, £47,000 in 1977, etc.

Thirdly, 'Militant' has benefited from a series of loans amounting to £148,500 over three years from WIR Publications Ltd. to the Cambridge Heath Press Ltd., the paper's publisher and printer.

The two separate companies, Cambridge Heath Press Ltd and WIR Publications Ltd., were set up on

advice from lawyers and accountants. This arrangement was considered to be in the best interests of the thousands of workers who contribute the pennies and pounds from their hard-earned wages to further the cause of socialism.

WIR Publications Ltd., as its memorandum of association states, exists "to aid and further the interests of the international working class..." and its income is derived solely from the donations of active members of the Labour Party and the trade unions who, in addition to occasional donations to the Militant Fighting Fund, are prepared to make regular contributions to develop the support for Marxist policies within the labour movement.

The company acts as a "collecting box". There is nothing at all sinister or mysterious about these financial arrangements. There are people who have been digging in Companies House, where WIR Publications' accounts are properly deposited, who are unscrupulously trying to discredit 'Militant' for political reasons. Having failed to find anything in the least discreditable, they have been scurrilously attempting to sow confusion and doubt in the minds of members of the labour movement.

They will not succeed! The overwhelming backing for 'Militant' against the witch-hunting attempts of the capitalist press and Labour's right wing, together with the increasing financial support for the paper, testify to the growing support for the ideas and policies of 'Militant' within the labour movement.

The overwhelming backing for 'Militant' against the witch-hunting attempts of the capitalist press and the right wing testify to the growing support for the ideas and policies of 'Militant'.

FIGHT THE TORY ATTACKS!

YOUNG SOCIALISTS ON THE MARCH

By
Bob Wade
Photos:
Julian McKittrick

To the chants of 'Thatcher out—socialism in' thousands of young workers marched through London on Saturday in the best ever event organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Striking steel workers, nurses from Wales and a large contingent of young workers from Scotland were among the 5,000 who joined the Young Socialists' demonstration through South London.

As the demonstration wound its way through Brixton and Lambeth towards Westminster for the rally, the Young Socialists were greeted with a good response from shoppers and youth—Militants and Lefts were eagerly snapped up, especially by black youth, some of whom joined the march behind the LPYS/People's National Party-UK section banner.

Youngsters joined in and proudly waved red flags—the march was a colourful cavalcade of Young Socialist and Labour Party banners, including Trades Council and union banners, such as the Corby steelmen's banner. Even the rain stopped and the sun came out!

The only issue that marred the march was the excessive police coverage—there were well over one-and-a-half thousand police assigned to the march, including a helicopter buzzing about overhead! As one Young Socialist commented: "It's all very nice for the Police Federation to send along a delegation today, but it just shows what hypocrites



National chairman Kevin Ramage leads the singing of the 'Internationale'

the Tories are—crying crocodile tears saying there's not enough funds for schools and hospitals, but then spending so much on totally unnecessary police operations like this."

At the rally itself, the Central Hall, Westminster was packed to capacity.

The singing of the Internationale and the national chairman Kevin Ramage shouting 'Maggie, Maggie, Maggie—out, out, out!', the main chant of the march, set the mood.

The first speaker, Stan Sheridan of the ISTC, received heartfelt applause when he outlined the present struggle of the steelworkers against the Tories.

He started off by congratulating the Young Socialists for the support they have given to the striking steelworkers—helping out on the picket line and arranging accommodation for flying pickets.

Commenting on the legal attempts to stop effective action he said, "Our philosophy on 2nd January was to stop all steel—with the help of the transport workers, the miners, the National Union of Railwaymen, the dockers through the length and breadth of Europe, we have succeeded," which brought thunderous applause from the audience.

He explained the change of mood in the rank and file of the union, describing how it has been transformed from the passive body it was to a fighting trade union. "After the strike, our union will never be the same again," although he added to warm laughter, there were still a few "technical difficulties at the top."

He went on, "This union will now rise to the fore in the trade union movement and the Labour Party—this government will never take us on again."

Stan finished by saying members of the ISTC, the trade union movement, along with the Labour Party and the Young Socialists must now take on the Tories. Through united action, he said, "we will win, we must win, and will continue to win."

The next speaker, Andy Bevan, Labour Party National Youth Officer, pointed out how the Tories were reducing the standards of living for the



Top: LPYS members on the march

Left: The banner of the TGWU—one of many union contingents

than any other group within the labour movement, would be introducing a new generation of workers to the ideas of socialism.

The final speaker, Tony Saunio, LPYS representative on the Party's National Executive Committee received tumultuous applause when he called for a 24-hour general strike as a response to the Tory onslaught of the lowering of workers' living standards, through mass unemployment, public service cutbacks and the run-down of industry.

He went on to explain that the Tories were not introducing these 'years of austerity' just because they were 'nasty', but the fact that the capitalist system is plunging deeper into crisis and the Tories are playing their traditional role of forcing the burden onto the shoulders of the working class. The only way to break this is to break the power of capital and take over the economy with a socialist plan of production.

The enthusiastic standing ovation Tony received at the end of his speech is an indicator of the growing enthusiasm for the bold socialist policies of the LPYS among young workers throughout the country.

The excellent turnout for the march, which has snubbed any suggestion by the Tory press and those in the labour movement that the LPYS were merely 'boring Marxists' who can't attract young workers towards them, and the rally and the clear-sighted socialist ideas put forward by the Young Socialists has set the pace for future LPYS activities.

February 2nd has marked the turning point for the Young Socialists, and with the coming battles against the Tories we must now go forward to build a mass membership among working class youth, striving for a socialist society, and an end to the misery of capitalism.



workers through the cutbacks and inflicting mass unemployment. As socialists we will not only defend every gain of the labour movement, he said, but go forward to put an end to the capitalist system and build a new socialist society—a higher level of society.

He clearly outlined the anarchy of the profit system—the erosion of the industrial base, the cutbacks and mass unemployment—and what could be achieved with a socialist plan of production.

At this point, national committee member Nick Toms lead the collection, explaining to cries of 'shame', that the budget for the Young Socialists was being reduced. However, an excellent £1,200 was raised, including a donation of £50 from National Executive members of the Civil and Public Services Association.

Eric Heffer MP took up the attacks on the left by the Tory press: "What the Tories are afraid of, and what the entire establishment is afraid of, is that Labour will sooner or later throw up an elected government that will not bow the knee to a distant socialist god, whilst carrying out some good and useful reforms, but

will actually act as the instrument of fundamental change, carry through Labour's programme with determination, and actually abolish class power and privilege that is an essential part of our capitalist system.

"That is the real reason why we are now hearing about a possible new centre party." And he slammed members of the right wing who, with the help of the Tory press, were conducting a smear campaign against the left—"such people who have no real sympathy for Labour's basic views should not act as a fifth column in Labour's ranks."

Tony Benn followed, saying that socialist principles were a fundamental part of Labour's ideology, pointing to the early days of the labour movement at the turn of the century, and the ideas on which the Labour Party is founded.

He said the immediate task for the party today was to give 100% support to "those engaged in industrial action in defence of their jobs, their living standards and their industries—in steel, in coal, and in engineering."

He added that the Labour Party Young Socialists were the inheritors of tomorrow's Labour Party, and they, more

The rally at Westminster Central Hall—filled to capacity



MILITANT READERS MEETING ROUND-UP

'PLAIN COMMON SENSE'

"From what I've heard here tonight, Militant isn't an organisation of extremists out to ruin the economy, but the voice of plain common sense."

By 'Militant' Reporters

That was how one retired steelworker described the Marxist policies of Militant during a readers meeting on the steel strike in Ilkeston, Nottinghamshire, last month.

The speakers were Brendon Killeavy, senior convenor National Union of Blastfurnacemen, Stanton, and Wayne Jones, Militant Industrial Correspondent, who both explained how the Tories thought the steelmen would be a 'soft touch' to take on, but have been rocked by the trade union solidarity they have provoked.

Wayne went on to explain that nationalisation under its present form was unsatisfactory—it has been used by the bosses to provide cheap resources for capitalist industries and was still subject to the failures of the profit system. Under socialism, the commanding heights of the economy would be nationalised—the 'white swans' as well as the 'lame ducks'—and put under workers' control; managed by democratically elected boards made up of a third of workers involved in that industry, a third from the trade union movement, and a third of government representatives.

One of the best Militant Readers' Meetings recently was in Birmingham, where one hundred and fifty people gave an enthusiastic reception to Ted Grant, political editor of Militant, when he spoke on 'What Militant stands for' in the city's Central Hall last Wednesday.

Ted Grant's remarks ref-

lected the anger and indignation felt by many on the left of the labour movement at the attempt by Labour right wingers to make up for their failure to win the political argument on the future direction of the Labour Party by staging a witch-hunt against the Marxists.

Headed by Lord Underhill, described by Ted as a veteran witch-hunter—having been involved in similar measures against Stafford Cripps and Nye Bevan—the right have tried to discredit Militant and the left in general with allegations of secret conspiracies and sinister backers. These allegations had been eagerly exploited by the Tory yellow press.

This fear of the ideas of Militant, said Ted, represented nothing more than the fear of the capitalists and their agents within the labour movement, of the Tories being swept from office and being replaced with a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

In contrast to the smears, and under the gaze of a BBC television crew and reporters from radio, commercial television and several local newspapers, Ted Grant's lead off and the contributions from the floor openly and proudly outlined the programme of Militant which has won it growing support in the labour movement.

The meeting raised a magnificent £320 for the Fighting Fund and clearly demonstrated to the gentlemen of the press that the 'sinister' source of Militant's finance is the self-sacrifice of its supporters in the labour movement.

Many other Militant Rea-



Young workers on the February 2nd demonstration selling 'Militant'

Photo: MILITANT

ders' Meetings have been held up and down the country, with good attendances because of the attempt by the Tory press to whip up a witch hunt, which has only succeeded in arousing workers' interest in the Marxist policies put forward by Militant.

At the national conference of the Union of Post Office Workers in Bournemouth over 25 delegates attended.

The first Militant Readers meeting was held in High Wycombe, and a number of people attended to hear Tony Saunois, LPYS representative on the Labour Party NEC speaking on the way forward for the Labour Party.

And, after being featured on News at Ten during the red moles nonsense, Southampton Militant supporters held a meeting titled, 'What

the Militant stands for'. It was the best meeting the area has had, with over 40 people attending to hear Kevin Ramage, LPYS National Chairman, and Jill Hayes, Southampton Labour Party, explain Militant's policies. After the meeting, over £60 was raised for the fighting fund.

Join NUPE demo on February 9th

ESSEX UNIONS FIGHT THE CUTS

By Bob Edwards (Harlow CLP)

against the Tories by the way the school meals service has been hit by the cuts.

The latest announcement by the Essex County Council is that from this spring there will be a thousand redundancies among dinner staff and cut-backs in hours. The women have yet to really take in what it is going to mean.

Experienced school meals ladies, some who have worked for twelve years or more, have seen a dramatic decline in the quality of the meals. Nowadays 'frozen veg' has replaced 'fresh', convenience meats pre-cooked instead of fresh meats, 'instant mash' replaced spuds, menus now decided by County rather than 'cook's choice'.

One of the effects is that an average 20lbs a day is wasted as pigs swill. Noses are turned up at 'Egg and Cheese' paste

or 'instant mash'.

For a majority of women the job isn't a convenient way to make money while the kids are at school, but a social service, serving the community of children. The catering qualifications of the head cook and her deputy would make them eligible for a top job in a posh restaurant.

Such is the pride they have in the work that when the food is laid out awaiting the 'hungry hordes' you'd think it was the Savoy, sliced fancy gateaus and piped potatoes and all. But the decline in the hours allowed, the numbers employed, the quality of the food sent, means the battle to defend living standards is a desperate one.

This Monday (4 February), the meal charge is going up to 35p a day, and the Tories are talking of pushing it to 60p in stages over the next year. What revolt there would be in many works' canteens, if workers had to pay full costs

Mops are wrung out with great venom at St Marks School, Harlow, by the dinner ladies. They call them their 'Margaret Thatcher's'.

The anger of the women has been further stoked up

STOP THE CORRIE BILL

The Corrie Bill further restricting a woman's right to choose whether to have an abortion, comes to the House of Commons for its final reading on February 8th.

If passed it will mean a widespread return to dangerous back-street abortion. During its Committee stage, the Bill has been made even more reactionary.

Its main provisions are:

- 1] No abortions allowed after 20 weeks, except where a woman's health is seriously at risk.
- 2] Government can lower [not raise] this time period without consulting Parliament.
- 3] More restrictions on reasons for an abortion, with a woman needing to prove a 'substantial' risk of 'serious' injury.
- 4] Doctors and nurses can refuse to help on an abortion for any reason.
- 5] No contact to be allowed between abortion advice centres, doctors and clinics.

These savage restrictions on a basic right to women to control their own fertility and whether or not to have children must be challenged by all in the labour movement.

Even if this Bill is passed, the campaign for free abortion on demand and a decent health service must be stepped up.

for a less nutritious meal. Many big companies are forced to subsidise workers' lunches, such is the power of organised workers.

Now some of that power must be used to stop our children being made the scapegoat for the system. NUPE is fighting back. A demonstration backed by other public service workers' unions is called for 9th February in Chelmsford, Essex County Town. It starts at 2.30 pm from the AUEW Hall.

It will give an indication of the feelings against the cuts.. Butcher fresh meat, not the school meal service!

National Society of Metal Mechanics Youth Conference

Young Socialists show the way forward

A packed hall at the Queens Hotel, Blackpool, was the venue for the best ever Metal Mechanics' Youth Conference.

Eighty-six delegates from thirty-three branches looked at the problems facing working class youth.

After the fraternal delegate from the TUC we looked back over the past 12 months of youth activities. As in the past conferences, the LPYS members took a lead. Glyn James, who was the youth delegate to last year's TUC Congress, pointed out that the TUC has to put more importance on its involvement with youth.

He said "In the TUC report, only seven lines were used to report on the youth conference"! He went on "and that's being generous, as there is only one word on the seventh line"!

By Steve Glennon

(Vice-President, Stevenage NSMM, personal capacity)

Glyn continued "The campaign, in which the NSMM has lead the field of developing trade union youth, should be continued and developed."

In his contribution, Rob Cadwgan (LPYS National Committee member), described how he had been attacked by NF thugs. He was greeted with enthusiastic applause when he said that all fascists had to be rooted out of the trade unions!

Flo Waldle, a 'Militant'

supporter from Small Heath, related to the conference the experiences gained from 11 weeks on strike last year to defend trade union rights. She pointed out the role in which youth played and the support of the LPYS. Bert Heitzmann, London District Organiser asked "Who are we trying to fight?" He said "he had heard whispers about 'Trots' and 'Moles' the previous night, but said that the real enemy for the labour movement were Tories in the Labour Party like Prentice. He said, "We may have some Moles" pointing in the direction of the LPYS and Militant supporters, and was interrupted by warm laughter from the conference.

However, Bert continued, "But these are the people that build our movement, who work the hardest! We need

more of them!"

I used my time at the rostrum to show the change of mood which has come about generally since the election of this now hated Tory government. It was now the youth that were in the forefront in the defence of living standards.

Simon Smith followed this up by calling for joint LPYS/NSMM meetings as a part of union education in the need for socialism.

At lunch, as in other spare time we sold Militants and a Militant pamphlet written for the conference, to well over 50% of the brothers and sisters at the conference, as well as encouraging them to come on the LPYS Demonstration on February 2nd.

The afternoon session was opened by Simon Smith making an appeal for the

Steel Workers—a collection of £85 (raised to £100) was made and sent to the steelmen with a message of support.

Militant wins support

We then elected the delegates to the TUC Youth Conference, and to TUC Congress; 3 LPYS supporters along with one other were elected to the Youth Conference, and a 'Militant' supporter lost by only 2 votes to the full TUC, with the Socialist Workers Party supporters voting for the right winger!

Even with this minor setback, we lead the way on how to develop the youth within the movement. I put forward a number of proposals and rule amendments

that we would like the union branches to adopt, and put before Rules Revision Conference in May.

These included, a National Youth Committee and a campaign against youth unemployment, by allowing into membership unemployed, and fighting for them to become employed.

This discussion gave an extra element to the conference than over previous years, and hopefully will lead to the best trade union youth section in Britain and in doing so help other trade union youth take steps forward.

NSMM Youth pamphlet available from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LEFT and RIGHT

Red\$

A new film is being made about John Reed, the author of the classic 'Ten Days That Shook the World', and apparently mainly covers the events in the Russian Revolution in 1917. Like most offerings from the multi-million dollar film industry, its interpretation of historic events of the labour movement will probably leave all socialists wincing in their cinema seats. This latest effort from the world of entertainment will probably fare little better—it is already provisionally being titled 'Reds', which doesn't sound too optimistic. But then, it is produced by Warren Beatty, who has a personal fortune of £15 million. After all, multi-millionaires and socialism don't usually mix.

Labour Weekly?

Barbara Castle is the latest in a long line of prominent leaders who have sold their memoirs to the 'Sunday Times'. The 'Times', who just lately seem to spend the best part of their time moaning about the excellent donations workers give to the 'Militant', paid Barbara Castle £30,000. Richard Crossman was paid [although he died before he could benefit from it] over £17,000. But the top whack went to Harold Wilson, who received an incredible £250,000! This just shows the vast sums in the coffers of the Times newspapers.

But no doubt the Labour Party treasurer will soon be receiving two healthy donations from Mrs Castle and Mr Wilson towards Party funds. After all, surely these two Labour Party members weren't thinking of keeping all the money for themselves?

Hope they choked...

Not a day goes by without some Tory or their friends in Fleet Street screaming about cutting 'red tape' or cutting 'wasteful' [i.e. schools, hospitals] local authority spending. So, in this atmosphere, prominent Tory council leaders, and shamefully a few Labour ones, met to discuss spending cuts last month at a meeting organised by the Institute of Local Government Studies. The venue? The plush Café Royal in Regent Street, where all the guests were treated to a slap-up meal costing £50 a head. And who paid the bill? You guessed it—the money came out of the rates!

Tories open hospital?

What's this? The Tories have saved a hospital from closure! Yes it's true—in Netley the Tory-controlled Hampshire County Council paid out £890,000 for the Royal Victoria Hospital which came up for sale. But the snag is the Tories have no intention of revitalising the National Health Service in the area. They are in fact converting it—into a specialist training centre for the police! The wards which once cared for the sick will be used to accommodate young coppers on courses there, and in the hospital grounds, in which the sick used to convalesce, policemen will be blasting away at targets as part of their weapons training.

BEHIND THE SILVER SCREEN

Hollywood has always been equated with the blatant displays and extravagances of its very wealthy residents; the products of the glamorous world of cinema.

But a current ITV series about the growth of Hollywood and the legends surrounding it, pinpoint some interesting details concerning its less glamorous aspects.

In the years immediately after the First World War, Hollywood was an embryo of its now legendary 'glory'; it was the centre of the emerging film industry in America and the world.

The climate of California was a perfect setting for the unreal world of films. Therefore from its outset Hollywood developed a distorted, insular sub-culture inside the local community.

Under the emergence of the puritan movement in the United States, whose moralistic attitudes gradually permeated the USA, Hollywood became a focal point of mass opinion. People were not enamoured by the tales of Bacchanalian lifestyles among Hollywood people.

Prohibition of alcohol was sweeping America, but the rumours said that Hollywood was immune to law.

In the programme many old film studio personnel told of life in Hollywood in the '20s. One old cameraman spoke about the 'coke-sniffing' and 'booze' parties held in the privacy of the studios, mainly a result of the personal restrictions put on the film actors by the studio bosses.

With the aid of the press, a candidate for the governor of California elections in 1920 brought Hollywood to the fore by exposing the alleged facts surrounding a rape and murder case of a 'young innocent actress' by a famous silent movie actor, 'Fatty' Arbuckle. He was to be used as the scapegoat for the introduction of prohibition

and moral legislature in the state. Arbuckle was found innocent of the charge, but such had been the publicity staged around it in a most disreputable and vulgar way, that the public was in no doubt about his 'guilt' after the press campaign.

He was cast out of the film industry and died in abject poverty two years later. The studios soon found new 'stars'.

But the Hollywood image built up was hard to kill in the face of moralistic attitudes so a new policy on the film industry had to be found.

One side effect of the 'clean-up' was the introduction of film censorship. It arrived on a scale that was way out of proportion. One old time film journalist has suggested that more film censors worked for the state censor board than people in the film industry itself!

Film goers were suddenly not exposed to sex, drink or drugs or violence on the screen. A kiss between the lead male and female actors could only last three seconds; no women were allowed to be seen drinking on screen (they had to turn their backs); and one state outlawed the word 'abortion' from all films on penalty of a law suit.

Hayes, the executive then in charge of censorship, was forced eventually to curtail the excesses of the censors by formally declaring Hollywood to be a 'respectable community' once more—propa-

By Steve Amor

(Stevenage CLP)



Pouring away alcohol during prohibition in the '30s. It was in this puritan atmosphere that censorship reached ridiculous levels.

ganda films showing the 'stars at home' cleaning, playing with jig-saw puzzles or relaxing with their children were screened in addition to cinema bills, only hid the truth.

The extent to which the film bosses lusted for profits showed in the many suicides etc. which occurred because of the pressure.

Wallace Reed, a male heart-throb actor and one-time athlete, had a bad accident before the completion of a major film. Instead of being put into hospital the studio bosses insisted he finished the film. Doctors pumped him with morphine for days. He finished the film in a complete state of numbness.

He died a year later in a sanatorium, a hopeless morphine addict.

In the same era Cecil B De Mille made 'The Ten Commandments', a moralising 'epic' on how America should be transformed, which outlines the hypocrisy of the film tycoons.

But perhaps the worst aspect of Hollywood was the masses of unemployed young people attracted to the 'mecca' in search for work. Small town beauty queens, young ex-college boys or army de-mobs all flocked to California and the studio gates to join the 'casual work' queues.

Eventually the film bosses formed an employment agency for 'extras'—in the first year alone six thousand young women went through the agency, but most of them only secured a few days work a year. For the majority of them it meant finding other ways of surviving. Prostitution or drug addiction was for many the only way out.

At this time the fruit pickers of California were engaged in violent battles with the authorities, for trade union rights. The wealth making of Hollywood movie moguls and magnates continued right through the depression, creating a mythical wonderland in Hollywood at the expense of the ordinary American workers. No movies reflected the growing trade union battles of the period, only the sycophantic love stories of the stars on the silver screen, complete with rich settings: but even the stars who became wealthy and lived their pampered lives in comparative luxury, did not accumulate the vast fortunes of the anonymous faces of the movie owners.

Capitalism made sure that the need for American workers to escape the horrors of their real lives was paid for out of their meagre wages, and was exploited to the full.

Northern
Ireland:

DARWIN WAS WRONG!

The Ballymena Borough Council have made yet another contribution in the field of contemporary thought.

They have decided that Darwin was wrong. At its November meeting a motion, calling for Darwin's theory of evolution to be removed from religious education lessons, was passed with 13 votes for, none against and 3 abstentions.

"Because of this decision we may well be branded as narrow-minded bigots," the Mayor confessed, "but we must go ahead anyway."

The proposer of the motion, Cllr Alexander (DUP) (who incidentally is sometimes seen on the streets of

Ballymena wearing a sandwich board and handing out religious tracts) had no such reservations.

He claimed that the theory was "anti-Christian and against the wishes of the vast majority of the public, especially leading Church bodies. It denies the Biblical

account of creation by suggesting that man was descended from apes."

He added, "If children were taught that they were evolved from animals it was no wonder that today's teenagers behaved like animals." What a slur on the youth of today!

The thought that man could possibly be in a state of evolution was too much for some of the other councillors as well. Alderman McAuley (DUP) said that he was grateful to have been taught that you must be born again and stated that it only served to confuse children if they were taught Darwin's theory. He came to the conclusion that Darwin must go.

Although the main sup-

porters of the motion were the DUP and the Official Unionist Party, the Alliance Party were not to be left out. Mrs Muriel Lamont (Alliance) revealed that she fully supported the motion as it stood, but conceded that the theory of evolution could be a "useful background to earth sciences."

However, Cllr W H Simpson asked for more information about this theory of evolution which he confessed he had never heard of. He wanted to know whether it was "religious, scientific or biological."

In passing this motion the Ballymena Council are attempting to reverse scientific progress and return education to the dark ages.

By Benny Adams

(Ballymena
Labour and
Trade Union Group)

TUC International Department IS THIS WORKERS' INTERNATIONALISM?

Capitalism has long operated on a worldwide basis, reaching out to grab profits wherever it can, across the globe.

Ever since capitalism moved beyond the confines of the nation-state, workers have recognised the need to organise internationally to counter the power of big business.

From the First International in the last century, to London dockers blocking war goods against Soviet Russia in 1919, to the International Brigade in Spain in the 1930s, international solidarity has been part of the labour movement.

More recently we have seen Dunlop and Pirelli workers in Britain and Italy take joint action against a multinational. Last year saw the first Europe-wide action against unemployment in Italy, Greece, Spain, Belgium and France.

Already this year Swedish dockers have blacked shipments of steel to Britain, and French and German steelworkers have joined British picket-lines.

In a world where 1,000 multi-nationals account for 50% of world trade, international labour solidarity is vital.

By Jim
Chrystie

It is therefore essential that the labour movement organises on a class basis to resist international capital, that it does not co-operate with big business or capitalist governments in forming its policy, and that its own policy is democratically carried out with its representatives accountable to the membership.

Unfortunately, the past and current international work of the Trades Union Congress raises questions on all these issues.

The TUC's International Department has a close working relationship with the Foreign Office (FO). It receives £180,000 from the FO. It has apparently held joint meetings with the Confederation of British Industry, and has been linked with operations funded by the American Central Intelligence Agency in Latin America, notably the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile.

Have these activities helped develop a fighting class approach to the international workers' struggle or has it led to the subordination of workers' interests to those of the ruling class?

The TUC—Foreign Office relationship goes back to 1949 when EA Bell of the International Department worked with Denis Healey of the Labour Party's International Department and Foreign Office officials to split the World Federation of Trade Unions and set up the International Confederation

of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

The Foreign Office worked closely with American trade union leaders, notably Irving Brown, who was then and still is the European representative of the American Federation of Labour. The American government were busy in Europe trying to create non-Communist unions.

In Marseilles they used the Mafia to terrorise dockworkers. According to TW Braden, a former European director of the CIA (1950-54): "Irving Brown needed it (cash) to pay off strong arm guards in the Mediterranean ports so that American supplies could be unloaded."

"When they ran out of funds they appealed to the CIA, thus began the secret funding of trade unions." This above statement came from an article in 'Saturday Evening Post' (20 May 1967) written by Braden, "I'm glad the CIA is immoral."

The TUC's International Department has a close working relationship with the Foreign Office, from whom it received £180,000. It also has held talks with the CBI to discuss matters of "joint interest".

The TUC's link with the Foreign Office and American-funded operations did not end with the formation of the ICFTU. In 1956, a Foreign Office official, Alan Hargreaves, joined the TUC's International Department after six years in the FO's economic intelligence department. Four years later he

became head of the International Department, a post he held until his death last year.

During his tenure, the links with the Foreign Office were strengthened and Foreign Office funding of TUC international programmes began.

Not all these developments were made known in reports to the TUC annual conference. For example, in 1977 Michael Walsh (of the International Department) was seconded to the government's Overseas Labour Advisory Office. The 1977 report states he has been seconded, but not to where.

In 1979 he came back to the TUC and was replaced at the Foreign Office by Tom Jenkins, also from the TUC's International Department. Jenkins' secondment was not even mentioned in the 1979 report, although he is still there working under the Tory government.

Last month Walsh became the new head of the TUC's

International Department. On 16 November last year 'Time Out' reported that the Foreign Office were arranging for a senior diplomat to take up a position in the TUC's International Department.

It seems that it had been agreed that a diplomat, capable of running a junior Embassy would assist the

TUC's work. But at the General Council in November there was opposition to this arrangement, and the decision on it was postponed.

Other links with the Foreign Office would continue. A Foreign Office-funded training scheme for élite trade unionists from the 'Third World' is now in its third year of being administered by the TUC.

All of these trade unionists have to be approved by the government of their country, which often run the trade union movement.

Training takes place in Britain. Sometimes it has been found that not all the students are even trade unionists—one was revealed to be a manufacturer of crocodile handbags!

The Foreign Office's motives seem obvious. They wish to cultivate an élite group of trade union leaders who will be sympathetic to Western interests (ie. capitalism) and who will try to confine the struggles within a capitalist framework.

But what are the TUC's aims? It claims that it's international work is "non-political". So keen is it to follow this line that it will not allow a Labour Party observer at its International Committee (although on Home Policy Committees there is such an arrangement).

But how can the fight against unemployment, against the multi-nationals and class and national exploitation in the neo-colonial underdeveloped world be non-political? Any action has political dimensions.

The TUC's international work cannot be seen as somehow being neutral in the class struggle. How it makes its links and uses them is crucial.

The connection with the Foreign Office and America is strong. The TUC has been involved with a shadowy body known as 'The British Labour Committee for Trans-Atlantic Understanding.' The officers of this organisation are prominent right-wing Labour figures.

Its president is ex-Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, its chairman Tom Bradley MP and its treasurer Frank Chapple. It has its own press service, and operates from an office in Whitehall with a full-time staff.

One of its leading members was right-wing ex-Labour MP Alan Lee Williams who has described it as: "a voluntary organisation which works under the umbrella of the British Atlantic Committee."

"Its objects include maintaining friendly relations with member countries of the Atlantic Alliance and, of course, supplying information and facts about the labour movements within the Alliance."

On the British Atlantic Committee together with politicians, ex-military officers and diplomats was Alan Hargreaves of the TUC. Exactly with whom the ex-

change of information about the labour movement took place, and for whose benefit remains, like the finances of this body, obscure.

But the links with business and government are not restricted to the British Atlantic Committee.

According to Don Thomson, a researcher on international trade unionism, there were irregular meetings between TUC and CBI staff under the chairmanship of the Foreign Office to discuss matters of 'joint interest'. Amongst the items discussed has been South Africa.

This might help to explain the report of an interview with an (unnamed) top TUC official, which appeared in the South African 'Financial Mail' on the 21st December 1973.

The 'top official' was quoted as saying that: "The TUC has decided that the only way to achieve its aims is to encourage people to work hard in South Africa, within the political framework, to promote Black trade unions."

This implies working within, and not challenging, the basic oppressive apartheid structure. How can maintaining the ruthless class and national exploitation of black workers be described as "non-political"?

Yet worse follows, for the TUC official gives implicit support for the South African government's Act, which prohibits foreign funds from going to anti-apartheid organisations within South Africa.

The TUC representative stated: "We are assuming that this act is not directed against bona fide organisations such as ours, but at people who are taking a direct and uncompromising line on organisations which prejudice the security of South Africa. Trade unions tend to be stabilising influences. So we don't believe we fall into this category."

Since 1973, the TUC Conference has expressed its support for the South African Congress of Trade Unions, but little has been done by the TUC leadership to translate this resolution into effective solidarity action.

The experience on South Africa can be repeated on other international issues. It illustrates that much of the information on the TUC's international work has been kept from ordinary trade unionists. Even when policy is passed at Annual Conference, moreover, it is not necessarily implemented.

Democratic accountability is a vital part of the struggle to transform the organisations of the labour movement to resist the attacks of international capital.

If the British trade union movement is to help build an effective fighting international labour movement it must have no co-operation with British or international big business, or its governments.

A clear class approach is required, and on that basis the international solidarity shown during the current steel strike can be an omen for the future.

In a subsequent issue the question of whether the TUC funds unwittingly helped in the overthrow of Allende is discussed.



Black workers in the South African goldfields. How does the TUC's international work help them? See article Page 11.

WHEN THE STEEL BOSSES SABOTAGED THE LAW

Lord Denning's blatant class ruling against the steel workers has provoked an explosion of anger among trade unionists.

The Tories — echoed, unfortunately, by labour and trade union leaders — are again preaching sermons about the “sanctity of the law”, the “impartiality of the judiciary”, and so on.

But the judiciary is a bastion of the capitalist class, and the law an instrument of its rule. If the law should threaten the interests of big business, they have no hesitation at all in sweeping it aside.

One good example was during the 1945-1951 Labour government when the Tories and the steel bosses openly launched a campaign to overthrow the Iron and Steel Nationalisation Act. Given all the pious exhortations now to obey the law it is worth recalling what happened.

Big business had willingly accepted the nationalisation by Labour of the railways, coal, gas, water, etc, the “cripples” of British industry which made little profit. They preferred to have them run at the country's expense, especially given the generous compensation to the former owners.

Although this showed private owners could be dispensed with, it was not socialist nationalisation giving the workers control over the economy.

The Labour government's list of firms to be nationalised was “most moderately short,” gloated ‘The Economist’ (November 1945): “An avowedly socialist government with a clear parliamentary majority might well have been expected to go a few steps further.”

Most Labour Party members certainly thought so! But when the government attempted to “go a step further” and nationalise steel, all hell was let loose. Although over-ripe for nationalisation from the point of view of efficiency, iron and steel was nevertheless a highly profitable bastion of monopoly capital.

Many industrialists favoured nationalisation because they needed a plentiful supply of cheap steel, but big business nevertheless feared that it would become the spring-board for further take-overs. “There is no point after this,” complained the ‘Guardian’ (30 October 1948) “at which the advance towards

the extinction of private capital in British industry could be halted.”

The Tories now tell us that the decisions of the elected government must be unconditionally accepted. But that was not their attitude in 1949. In spite of Labour's landslide victory in 1945, they unceasingly claimed that the government had “no mandate” to nationalise steel.

The capitalist press devoted all its energies to proving that it was a sinister plot. “The introduction of the steel bill is the clearest example this side of the iron curtain of the way in which a minority can achieve its aims,” claimed the ‘Economist’ (6 November 1948)—though steel nationalisation had been Labour Party policy since 1931 and had appeared in every election manifesto.

“This is not a Bill, it is a plot, a burglar's jemmy to crack the capitalist crib,” ranted Winston Churchill, trying to imply it was not legal.

But describing it as “burglary” was absurd when the shareholders were getting £1.50 for every £1 preference share, £2.30 for every £1 ordinary share, altogether £243 million compensation for only £134 million paid-up capital.

They certainly weren't losing anything!

Tories like Selwyn Lloyd also raised the bogey of bureaucracy and totalitarianism, although the Tories knew very well, from the statement of George Strauss, Labour Minister of Supply, that it was intended “to keep intact the identity of the individual concerns. Their personnel and internal organisation will be unaffected... The morning after vesting day the only difference for them will be the ownership of the securities will have changed hands. The companies will continue as before.”

Unfortunately, the Labour leaders had no intention of introducing workers' control.

The Labour leaders refused to adopt a policy of socialist nationalisation, involving taking over all the key monop-

Attlee and Shinwell at the ceremony at the nationalisation of coal. The capitalist class made little complaint about this. Profitable steel was different.

lies, a plan of production, and workers' control. Such policies would have created enormous enthusiasm for a new society capable of fulfilling the hopes aroused in 1945.

But given the limitation of the programme it adopted, the government was inevitably forced to retreat under the ruthless assault of big business.

In November 1949 the Iron and Steel Nationalisation Act became law. But the Tories and the steel bosses were far from meekly accepting the law as they now preach we should.

Forcing the government, through obstruction in the House of Lords, to postpone the actual take-over of the industry until February 1951, they adopted an organised policy of non-implementation.

George Strauss told Parliament how, when he invited the steel owners to submit the names of “experienced men who would be acceptable to their fellow industrialists” to sit on the new controlling body, the Executive of the Iron and Steel Federation refused on the grounds that “in their opinion the government had no mandate to carry out the Iron and Steel Act.”

Apparently they, and not the electorate, decided whether Labour had a mandate!

“They warned me,” Strauss said, “that the Corporation, deprived of such people, would be unable successfully to plan the steel industry. I was informed that every effort would be made to dissuade any important man I might approach from serving... In short, these people decided to threaten, and indeed did carry out a political strike.”

As Strauss correctly, but weakly, pointed out, there was “concerted action by a number of people for the specific purpose of sabotaging an Act of Parliament” (Hansard v. 478 cols. 1834-5).

“The rich rule the law”! If only the Labour leaders defended working class interests with the same ruthless determination the Tories and their allies always employ in defence of the wealth and power of the capitalist class. They forget that had workers not defied “manifestly bad law” in the past the Labour Party, the trade unions and such democratic freedoms as we now enjoy would not exist.

It is not the law which

guarantees democracy, but the organised labour movement.

The contempt that big business has for the law when it no longer serves the purpose of maintaining and screening their “freedom” to exploit, was clearly revealed by their opposition to the Steel Act. They were undoubtedly prepared to go even further if necessary.

Speaking in New York at the time, a British businessman, Mr J Gibson Jarvie, Chairman of the United Dominion Trust Ltd, said: “I believe the time will come if the socialists continue in power and continue their present line when the country

will rise up against them. I believe in constitutional methods, but also I believe—and I make this statement quite deliberately—that, when the government of the country is in the hands of reckless and incompetent megalomaniacs, there may come a time when the only possible course is to rebel if the country is to be saved” (‘New York Times’ 15 October 1948).

In other words, the capitalist class (‘the country’) reserves the right, if the constitutional forms of government are turned against them, to throw aside legalities and organise a revolt (a coup d'état?) to defend its ‘free-

dom’ to exploit the working class.

Obeving Tory laws in the interests of capital is no guarantee whatsoever that big business in turn will obey Labour's laws in the interests of the workers.

This episode is further proof that the only way for Labour to defend the workers' interests is to fight for socialist aims, using the methods tested by the movement, relying only on the organised strength of the workers themselves.

Photo: MILITANT
The far from impartial law sees picketing as a threat



CASH AND SUPPORT STILL NEEDED

“This CLP notes with concern John Golding's high court action for damages against the ‘Militant’ newspaper. We consider it deplorable that a Labour MP and member of the NEC should take legal action against a socialist newspaper. Political battles should be fought according to the democratic tradition of the the labour movement, not through the courts.

We believe also that the minutes of the Labour Party NEC meetings should be published and circulated to CLPs and affiliated organisations, in an attempt to help to prevent disputes over different recollections of NEC meetings and in the inter-

ests of greater democracy and accountability in the Labour Party.”

This resolution was passed at the last General Committee meeting of Manchester Central Labour Party. It reflects the continuing anger of rank-and-file members at the use of the law courts by John Golding MP against a paper which has proved itself to be fighting in the interests of working people.

‘Militant’ has consistently supported workers in their battles. Now workers in the Labour Party and the trade unions are coming to our aid.

This has been reflected in the very generous donation of £25 from the Fire Brigades Union nationally. This union was hounded by the press, and a disgusting campaign whipped up against the striking firemen in 1977.

They have not forgotten the coverage ‘Militant’ gave to the firemen's case! Many thanks to the FBU.

As well as their resolution, Manchester Central also sent a generous collection of £12. Another Manchester Labour Party, Moss Side, sent an excellent £20; and a collection at Sheffield Attercliffe raised £2.

A reader in Norwich gave £10, and large sums came from supporters in Newcastle and Canterbury.

Make sure that our paper survives. Send all resolutions and donations to: “Militant Defence Fund”, 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church Street, London S.E.8.

Enquiry into party structure - HOW TO BUILD A MASS SOCIALIST LABOUR PARTY



**By Tony
Saunois**

(Labour Party
Young Socialists'
representative
on LP NEC)

In the 1980s the labour and trade union movement will face its greatest test since the pre-second world war era of economic slump and political crisis.

The long boom of world capitalism since 1945 has clearly come to an end, and even 'The Times' has admitted that British capitalism is now moving into an "irreversible decline".

Since May last year, moreover, the workers of Britain have faced the most viciously reactionary Tory government for many decades.

All the gains, in living standards, education, health, and services; and democratic rights, won through past struggles of the labour movement, are now threatened.

In a diseased capitalist society, the 1980s have little to offer working people and their families.

This is the stark background to the enquiry that has now commenced into the Labour Party's structure and organisation, undoubtedly the most extensive since 1918.

Clearly, then, the Enquiry cannot be seen as having purely organisational tasks. The right have demanded an enquiry for political reasons: they want to maintain the Labour Party mainly as an election machine for the PLP. Rank and file members must also see its political context.

As the political arm of the trade union movement, the Party must be to the forefront of the struggle against the Tories and their big business backers. The Enquiry must therefore be seen as a unique opportunity to develop the mass basis of the Party, and to strengthen and democratise its organisations.

There has already been a battle over the Enquiry's composition. Since last year's Annual Conference, the right wing of the Parliamentary

Labour Party (PLP) have seen this as a crucial issue.

The Conference's decisions on Party democracy, which were a great step forward, and the overwhelming support for socialist policies, were seen as a serious blow to the right-wing leaders and their supporters in the PLP.

Delegates, including key trade union delegations, completely rejected any return to the disastrous pro-capitalist policies of past Labour governments. To ensure that future Labour governments stand on socialist policies adopted by the Party, and not anti-working class measures foisted onto them by big-business pressure, the Conference voted decisively for mandatory re-selection, to make MPs accountable to their constituency parties, and for the NEC to have the final say on election manifestos.

Many Labour MPs, however, see these decisions as a direct challenge to their position. Many of them, predominantly from the professional middle class, joined the Party simply to pursue a parliamentary career. In practice they are opposed to Clause IV, part iv, of the Party's constitution, and have no intention of fighting for policies which would give reality to the Party's fundamental socialist aspirations.

They have lost the argument over programme and policies in the Party. Their right-wing ideas of reforms within a 'mixed' (ie. capitalist) economy have been completely discredited by the disastrous experience of rec-

ent Labour governments.

Yet having lost a majority of support in the Party and among the active members of the trade unions, they are attempting to bolster up their position through resisting the moves towards the democratisation of the Party.

The right-wingers of the PLP see the Enquiry as a means of achieving this. They are calling, in particular, for changes in the structure of the NEC—in the name of Party democracy. To try to ensure the outcome they want, the right, with the vigorous support of the capitalist media, have been demanding a reduction of the NEC's representation on the Enquiry, together with direct representation from the PLP.

This is in spite of the fact that the Enquiry already included the leader and deputy leader of the Party, both elected by the PLP alone. It is ironic, moreover, that the PLP should be demanding a "more democratic" enquiry when the PLP itself has no real democratic structure of its own. Meeting weekly during parliament, it is usually attended by less than half the Labour MPs, it keeps no minutes, takes few votes, and discusses few issues of real importance—especially when there is a Labour government in office.

In any case, no less than eight members of the Enquiry are MPs. The real complaint of the right is not that there are too few MPs, but that most of the MPs concerned are NEC members—ie. they are MPs who have majority support within the Party as a whole.

The Enquiry must come forward with concrete proposals to provide the framework for building a mass, democratically controlled, and socialist Labour Party, capable of meeting the socialist aspirations of its members and supporters.

The Enquiry therefore needs in its report to reiterate

that the Labour Party's objective is the building of a socialist society as outlined in Clause IV, part iv of the Party's constitution, adopted in 1918. It needs to re-emphasise that the Labour Party was established by the trade unions in 1900 to represent workers and their families.

The lessons of past Labour governments must be learnt. If the reforms demanded by all sections of the labour movement are to be won and kept, then a Labour government must be prepared to break the power of the major monopolies through a socialist plan of production.

The Party exists to replace capitalism, not to tinker with it. That must be the political basis of organisational changes recommended by the Enquiry.

A mass membership, firmly based amongst working people, is essential if that objective is to be achieved and a Labour government returned to power on such a programme.

The claim by Labour's right wing that socialist policies will lose elections and members is entirely false. It is their policies of 'moderation'—a 5% incomes policy, cuts in public expenditure etc—which have dominated the Party and paved the way for the election of Thatcher and also the decline in Party membership over past years. The biggest drop in membership was between 1964-70—830,116 to 680,191—when the

right wing had a majority both in government and on the NEC. Their denunciation of the left for driving members away, rings somewhat hollow.

In spite of all the press attacks on the leftward swing of the Party, 10,000 new recruits have joined since October, 4,000 of them from the Tory heartland of the South East.

Rallies, demonstrations, street meetings and broadcasts must all take up the theme of Labour standing for socialist policies in opposition to the Tories. To ensure the vital links between industry and the Party are strengthened, workplace branches must be established, together with joint Labour Party and Trades Councils.

A party of working people, rooted in industry and the trade unions, with a socialist programme. That must be the outcome of this Enquiry.

As with membership, this is the key to raising more finances for full-timers and facilities.

If the Party showed at local and national level that it was fighting for working people and their families, then thousands of pounds could be collected from offices, factories and estates.

To assist still further, those elected to Parliament, both in Britain and Europe, could make much more of a contribution. MPs receive £9,400 plus a secretarial allowance of £4,000 (£20,000 for Euro

MPs). £165,000 is paid to the leader of the Party while in opposition. The combined income of MPs and their secretarial allowance is approximately £4½ million.

At present MPs are requested to donate £25 to Transport House. Many refuse to do even that. A minimum levy of £1,000 or 10% of MPs' salaries together with pooling the secretarial allowances and resources would go a long way to solving the financial problems facing the Party, as well as helping to ensure that Labour's parliamentary representatives are kept on the same standard of living as those they represent.

Payments for TV appearances, royalties from memoirs, etc, should be paid over to Party funds. Those who speak and write for the Party should not be making personal gain from it!

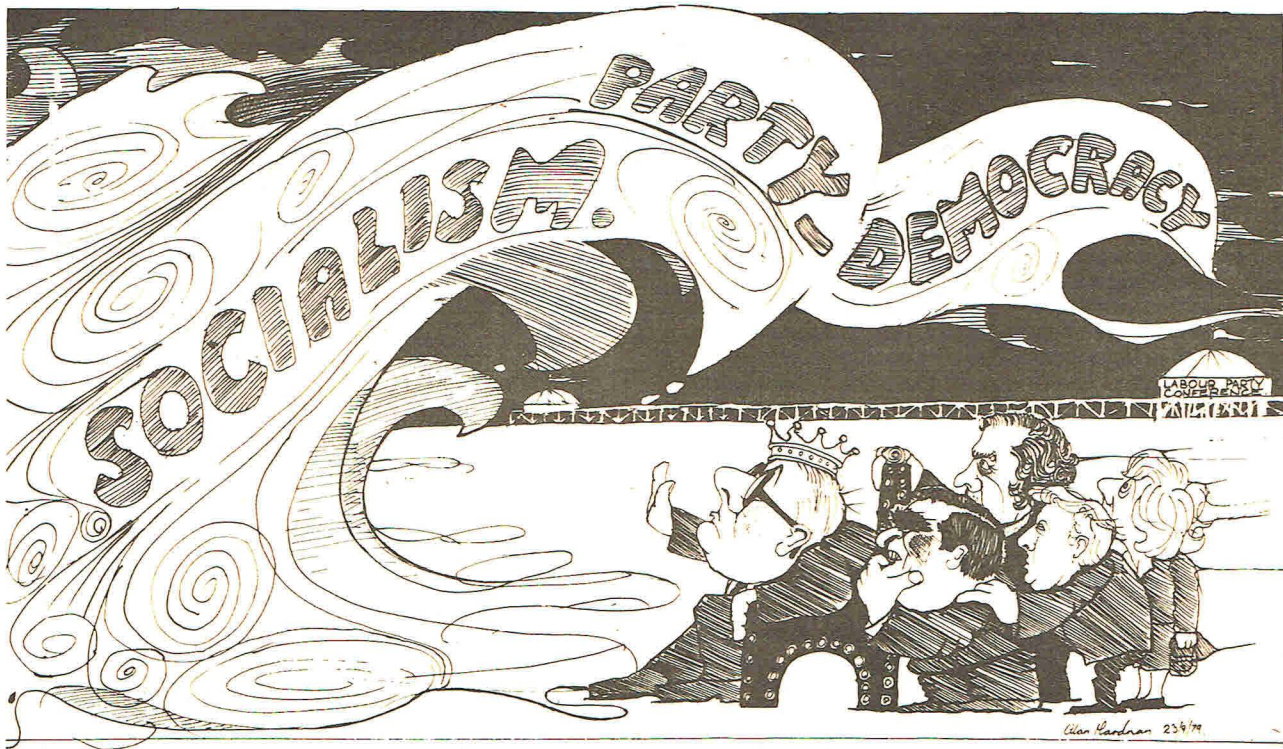
Undoubtedly, the questions of Labour Party democracy will be a major feature in the final report of the Commission. The most crucial of these will be the re-selection of MPs. Conference has already declared that in future all those elected to Parliament should have to face re-selection conferences within thirty-six months of their election, and after 18 months if it is their first term as an MP. This has produced an explosion of anger and opposition from right-wingers within the PLP and their followers in the Party.

They have denounced it as

The policies of the supporters of the 'mixed economy' have failed, and membership and finance have suffered. If Labour campaigns on a socialist programme, problems of membership and finance would be solved.

The struggle for party democracy is a struggle for policies and leadership to reflect the aspirations of the rank and file.

[Cartoon from 'Militant', 28 September 1979]



Make sure your organisation submits its proposals to the Commission of Enquiry for the building of a mass, democratically controlled socialist Labour Party:

- [1] **Mandatory re-selection of MPs by the General Councils.**
- [2] **The election of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet/Shadow Cabinet by Conference.**
- [3] **The NEC to have the final say over the contents of all election manifestos; No change in the composition of the NEC.**
- [4] **Party conference decisions to be binding on the PLP.**
- [5] **The establishment of work-place branches with full rights of affiliation.**
- [6] **Joint Labour Parties and Trades Councils to be established.**
- [7] **Regional TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committees.**



Delegates were jubilant at the passing of the resolution on Labour Party democracy at last year's conference

Photo: MILITANT

'a threat to democracy', accusing those constituency parties which support it of having been taken over by 'small unrepresentative cliques.'

But the reality is somewhat different. Now attacking GMCs for demanding the right to re-select their MP as candidate, those same MPs were more than happy to be selected by them. Many made 'left-wing' speeches when being selected and having arrived in Parliament, rapidly moved to the right wing.

While the Tory press fears that re-selection will result in the adoption of more socialist candidates, the MPs are mainly concerned about losing their own parliamentary positions.

An MP fighting for working people would surely prefer

The Commission of Enquiry is composed as follows:

Five from the National Executive Committee: Tony Benn MP, Eric Heffer MP, Jo Richardson MP, Joan Lester MP, and Frank Allaun MP.

Five trade union general secretaries: Moss Evans, Transport and General; David Basnett, General and Municipal; Bill Keys, the print union SOGAT; Clive Jenkins, ASTMS; and John Boyd, AUEW.

Jim Callaghan MP, leader, and Michael Foot MP, deputy leader, are also included, together with Party Treasurer Norman Atkinson MP.

Alex Kitson, T&G WU, was originally included as Party vice-chairman, but has now withdrawn.

to be sure he has the support of the local party which got him elected. Those opposing re-selection under the pretext of democracy apparently do not.

Neville Sandelson has spoken of 'career assassins'. Shirley Williams argued that, "Nor will General Committee members have the same personal interest in holding the seat as the MP has, for his future career depends upon it and theirs do not." ('Guardian' 9 September 1979) Since when has the safeguarding of career determined what is in the interests of the labour movement?

The hypocrisy of those right-wingers' arguments become clear when membership in the seats of past leading right-wingers is considered. They have in fact presided over some of the smallest cliques in the Labour Party.

Brian Walden, ex-MP for Birmingham Ladywood, retired to work for ITV's 'Weekend World' and left a CLP membership of 70—and an election agent who turned out to be a member of the National Front! Bill Rodgers, MP for Stockton since 1962 and a member of the misnamed Campaign for Labour Victory, had a reported membership in June 1977 of a mere 176.

Dennis Howell of APEX who is MP for Birmingham Smallheath, has been prominent in the attacks on the left, even denouncing the 'Militant' at last year's conference. Yet his CLP couldn't even afford to send a delegate to conference!

They have shown little concern over the state of Party membership in the past. Only when many are being called to account do they belatedly concern themselves with the state of the Party.

Their proposals for 'primaries' or ballots of all Party members in the selection of candidates mirror their policies: trying to reduce the Labour Party to little more than a radical-liberal party, akin to the capitalist Democratic Party in the United States. Parties would be wide open to packing and corruption—and the Tory press and

media would be given a major voice in the selection of candidates.

Those who spend time building the Party and deciding policy will have their position undermined and weakened.

The GMCs, with delegates from all sections of the labour movement, are without question the most democratic bodies to select parliamentary candidates.

The GMCs represent the activists of the movement, the people who discuss the issues, are involved in the battles going on, and who reflect the ideas and feelings of the broader layers of the movement.

If they fail to defeat the proposed changes on democracy or to get their demands for a changed NEC structure, then some right wingers will clearly desert the labour movement.

Opposing the call for an immediate right-wing split from Labour, Bryan Magee explained in the Tory 'Sunday Telegraph' (16 December 1979): "The Left cannot be allowed to take over the Labour Party without a fight, and only if that fight is lost does the creation of a new party become an option to be considered." In other words, if the rank and file reject the programme of the right-wing and demand a socialist alternative and parliamentary representatives to fight for it, then the right wing will split, after 'that fight is lost.'

So much for democracy! What the right wing fail to understand is that the demand for re-selection and increased democracy didn't just drop from the sky.

The struggle for Party democracy is a struggle for leadership and representation prepared to reflect the demands and aspirations of the rank and file and to lead the struggle for socialism.

The remote atmosphere of parliament, with conditions and pressures which are completely alien to the ranks of the movement and to ordinary workers, makes it essential that individual MPs and the PLP as a whole are accountable to the CLPs, the

Conference, and the NEC.

Mandatory re-selection and procedures to ensure that all conference decisions are binding on the PLP and its leadership would help ensure that Labour MPs don't become detached from the movement they are sent to represent.

Similarly, the election for the Party leader and shadow cabinet, if they are to be representative and accountable, must be widened from the present undemocratic procedure. Only MPs can vote in the election of the leader and deputy leader of the entire Labour Party.

When in opposition, a section of the parliamentary committee is elected. When in government, the entire cabinet is appointed by the leader of the Party. The British Labour Party stands as one of only three out of the twenty leading socialist parties which limits the election of its leader to the MPs. Even the SPD in Germany, admired so much by the right wing for its 'moderation,' decides who shall be its candidate for Chancellor from a 36-strong Executive Committee which has to ratify its choice before Congress.

Conference must decide Party policy, and it should also elect the leader and deputy leader. Conference must be responsible for the election of the whole shadow cabinet and, when Labour is in office, for the election of the members of the Labour cabinet.

It is also vital that any proposals coming from the Enquiry recognise the paramount importance of the trade union influence in the Party. The Labour Party arose from the decision of the trade unions in 1900 to organise a political wing, and the unions will always have a decisive say in the Party.

Some, in the Party have raised objections to the continuation of the trade union block vote, and others have questioned the whole structure of the Annual Conference itself.

Sidney Weighell of the National Union of Railwaymen argued in 'The Times'

(28 December 1979): "It is ludicrous that annual conferences should be required to take an ill-considered view on 30 major policy statements and find that none can be implemented. It is far more sensible that it should examine three policy areas in detail, with the confidence that they are going to be carried out by a Labour government."

He then praised the German SPD for breaking conference down into study groups on the main issues and reporting back to a plenary session, which could be in full session for two days. He also called for submissions on eleven subjects, one from each of the Regional Party conferences.

In effect, these proposals would mean using the regional conferences as a filter for the debates at national conference, and reduce the voice of the rank and file in determining policy.

The block vote has ensured that the trade unions, the mass basis of the Party, have a dominant voice. As with right-wing demands to change the structure of the NEC, the current right-wing denunciations of the block vote are somewhat hypocritical.

When the right had a majority on the NEC and the block vote was their bastion, they were quite content, and raised no objections to it. Only now, when they are unable to apply 'Carron's Law', due to greater participation by the rank and file and a swing to the left in the trade unions, do they decry the present procedure as being 'undemocratic'.

Trade union block votes should be cast in accordance with union policy. Where there is no clear policy or a new issue arises, the union's conference delegation should democratically decide how the union's votes are to be cast. No general secretary or president should be allowed to have the right of veto. Greater participation and involvement by the membership is the way to ensure that the block vote is used democratically and must be defended on that basis.

One issue accepted by last

year's conference is that the NEC should have the final say, after consultation with the PLP, on the contents of Labour's election manifesto. To imagine that this demand was merely dreamt up by a 'clique' and foisted onto the Party membership, as the right wing are trying to claim, is to bury one's head in the sand.

Failure of the parliamentary leaders to include any major policy agreed by Party conference between 1974-79 in the 1979 election manifesto, was the reason for this demand and receiving support from the Party membership as a whole. The present procedure, whereby a joint meeting between the NEC and cabinet/shadow cabinet takes place, is a mockery of the movement's democratic traditions.

The leader of the Party has a total power of veto over what will and will not be included in a manifesto. No votes are ever allowed on any issue.

The NEC, on the other hand, is accountable to conference; it forms the leadership of the entire Party. It must now be given power to finalise manifestos, updating them after each conference, to provide the basis of a campaign document throughout the year, as well as during an election campaign.

The 1980s will be a decisive decade for the entire labour movement. It will provide the possibilities of achieving the socialist goals of the Labour Party, as the only solution to the problems facing working class families.

The building of a mass, democratically controlled and socialist Labour Party is essential in achieving this.

The Commission of Enquiry has the opportunity to provide the framework for creating such a party. This is what CLPs, trade unions and socialist societies must campaign for the Enquiry to adopt, if its report is to be effective in taking the Labour Party forward into the 1980s as a viable socialist alternative to the Tories and their wealthy backers.



DECISIVE ACTION NEEDED

to carry through Iranian revolution

With over 70% of the vote Bani Sadr has won the Iranian Presidential election. Although using Islamic phrases it was his radical rhetoric which attracted support and enabled him to defeat his more conservative opponents.

Bani Sadr becomes the President of an Iran still deep in crisis.

Unemployment is over two million, [i.e. 20% of the work force]. At the beginning of the year the Tehran paper 'Ettalaat' reported that production has declined considerably in many industries and, in some cases, has stopped completely. The housing shortage is still severe and prices are continuing to rise.

Alongside the continuing clashes and struggles in the minorities' areas, especially among the Kurds and Azerbaijabis, there have been movements by workers to secure their demands. A few weeks ago an article in the pro-Khomeini daily 'Islamic Republic' reported on the developments in Saveh, a town near Tehran.

It said industries there have suffered since the February insurrection from strikes, go-slows, financial problems, shortages of raw materials and "interference in management" by revolutionary councils. The most important problem, it said, is uncertainty which has resulted in the drying up of investment.

A few days before the Presidential election Foreign Minister Qotbzadeh complained that "there is a growing trend towards an uncontrolled communist society. Should we continue in this direction...we shall end up with a regime much worse than the former regime. The present trend is not really Islamic. We are moving towards unrestrained communism."

Qotbzadeh was not talking about any clear, conscious party leading the Iranian masses towards the overthrow of capitalism and the installation of a workers' democracy, because there is no such

party existing in Iran today. Rather he was referring to the continuing struggles of the working class which are preventing any capitalist stabilisation in Iran and have forced Khomeini in the past year to take far-reaching anti-capitalist measures.

When Khomeini refused to let Massoud Rajavi, the leader of the Islamic Mojaheddin guerrilla group, stand in the election Bani-Sadr became the most radical candidate left standing. Bani-Sadr, a radical nationalist, was well known for his advocacy of widespread nationalisations and won support against Admiral Ahmed Madani, the middle class's favourite candidate and seen by many as a future Iranian Napoleon, and the other right wing candidates.

Upon being elected Bani-Sadr stated that he would exert his authority saying that Iran cannot have "two governments." Yet he will find it difficult to remove the control workers now have in individual factories.

And unless he moves towards federation and the right of self-determination for nationalities in Iran, he will pave the way for increased conflict and possible reaction.

Since the insurrection over February 9-11 last year which finally smashed the Shah's regime there has been no central power in Iran. In many areas of Iran the national minorities, have seized effective or semi-control of their areas, which Khomeini, through a series of concessions, has been forced to recognise.

Mass Struggles

At the same time the Iranian masses saw the Shah's exit as the key to opening the door to a new life. Since last February Iran has been gripped by mass struggles

Unemployed workers marching through Tehran demanding jobs. Carrying pictures of Khomeini, their banners proclaimed: "No more talk, we are hungry".

By
Bob Labi

which forced Khomeini's Central Islamic Revolutionary Council to take or sanction many radical measures, like nationalisation of the banks, insurance and much of basic industry.

The occupation of the American Embassy by students has been used by Khomeini to try to divert attention away from Iran's pressing social problems and defuse opposition to the new constitution. The widespread hatred of what the torturer Shah and his American imperialist backers inflicted upon the Iranian people for decades lay behind the occupation. Yet it has been a tactical mistake, allowing American imperialism to whip up right-wing hysteria and threaten military intervention.

The problems facing the Iranian workers are clear. Decisive action will have to be taken if the threat of reaction is to be broken.

Self-determination for the nationalities, who comprise 50% of Iran's population. That is the way to build a genuine Federation and undermine the danger of separation and the break-up of Iran.

Socialist Programme

A state monopoly of foreign trade, the taking over of foreign and Iranian monopolies so that the economy can be planned for the benefits of workers and peasants. The building of genuine democratic structures for the working people to control society. All these are needed to construct a healthy workers' state, which could roll back the threat of imperialist intervention and extend a fraternal help to revolutionary movements in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Obviously the imperialists are not at all happy with the present situation. If imperialism is not able to safeguard capitalism's continuation in Iran it would aim, as a second best, for an Iran independent of the Russian bureaucracy.

The model would be to encourage a Yugoslav development in Iran, a society where capitalism had been overthrown but led by a bureaucratic caste independent of the Kremlin leadership.



'The Times' editorial on Bani-Sadr's election summed this up in saying that "for the West, it will be extremely important to show tact... There is little doubt that many of the things Mr Bani-Sadr...might like to do...nationalisation of foreign owned companies...are not to its interest...But at the same time he is firmly anti-communist and shows every sign of being fully aware of the threat to Iran from the Soviet Union. The way to respond, therefore, is not by sanctions, but by working to achieve a modus vivendi."

Deformed Workers State

Of course given the way in which the Iranian revolution has unfolded it is doubtful that a deformed workers' state in Iran would dress itself in Marxist phrases, like the regimes in Russia, China, Cuba, etc...Rather the language of an Iranian bureaucratic elite would be that of Islam, in the same way as the Burmese bureaucracy talks of 'Burmese Buddhist Socialism.'

Already Bani-Sadr has a microfilmed filing system

which links all aspects of economic life to the appropriate verses of the Koran, it will be very easy to justify every policy in terms of a Koran quotation!

It is still not certain what direction Iran will take, as there is no conscious leadership for the revolution.

A counter-revolutionary coup attempt led by reactionary pro-capitalist elements like Madani, possibly in collusion with imperialism, to save capitalism cannot be excluded. But given the strength of the masses' drive for change, reflected in this election, it is more possible that capitalism will be overthrown and a planned nationalised economy installed in its place. Already, before Christmas, Bani-Sadr called for a state monopoly of foreign trade.

Such a development would be an enormous step forward for Iran, freeing it from the immediate grip of imperialism. But without the conscious participation and control of the working class in the running of all aspects of the economy and society even this step forward will not open the way to a socialist Iran.

Without workers' democracy, control of society would be in the hands of the senior clergy and, increasingly, the

bureaucratic elite at the top of the economy, state machine and armed forces. Iran would be similar to the other Stalinist, deformed workers' states, despite the use of Islamic phrases.

This would pose before the Iranian working class the task of carrying out another revolution, a political revolution against the new bureaucratic elite, before there could be a workers' democracy in Iran.

The tremendous development of the Iranian revolution has clearly demonstrated the working masses enormous capacity and willingness to struggle in a movement which has swept all before it. But also it has shown the necessity for every revolutionary movement to possess a clear leadership if the revolution is not to be distorted and deformed.

The Iranian revolution has already achieved much. If there had been in existence a mass workers' party, armed with a Marxist programme, then there can be no doubt that already Iran would be a workers' democracy and exercising a revolutionary appeal to all around the world. That is one lesson which all socialists must draw from Iran.

PHILIPPINES

The leader of one of the few militant and independent trade unions in the Philippines has been in Dublin seeking workers' solidarity and support to prevent the suppression of trade union rights.

In 1972 all strikes were outlawed and meetings were banned. Labour organisers were jailed, tortured and even killed. There are 60,000 political prisoners detained without trial.

On his visit to Dublin, Edgar Saguinsin, the leader and founder member of the 35,000 strong National Federation of Sugar Workers met a number of trade unionists.

He gave the following interview to Pat Duggan, AUEW TASS, from 'Militant Irish Monthly'.

Q: What is the trade union situation in the Philippines?

A: Many trade unions are dominated by the Marcos

dictatorship and are merely company stooges in the grip of the government. The workers have no confidence in these leaders who are only labour dealers selling cheap labour.

The plantation owners employ their own security guards, they also employ the services of the local and national police. Sometimes they are used to beat us up.

Last July I was among 126 workers who were jailed when the military surrounded and arrested us half-way through a meeting between a landowner and the workers on a sugar plantation. Tate and Lyle workers in Britain and the AFL-CIO in the United States sent protests to Marcos.

The American dockers refused to unload the sugar from the Philippines. This shows the solidarity that exists with trade unionists

and workers internationally concerning human rights in the Philippines.

The legal minimum wage is 85p per day, which is not enough to buy rice for the whole family. A minimum wage is decreed by the government but plantation owners regard it as a maximum and pay sub-minimum wages.

Q: What happens to workers when they join an independent trade union?

A: They are locked out, discriminated against, put in prison on trumped up charges to bust the union.

Q: What other forces are operating in the Philippines?

A: In the Philippines there are CIA agents everywhere. They are working to undermine the unions and keep them docile and to keep the country inside the US sphere of influence as they once worked in Vietnam and Iran.

JAMAICA

Rising prices, widespread shortages of materials and basic foodstuffs, a continuing decline of domestic output, coupled with diminishing reserves of foreign exchange, was the background against which nearly three thousand delegates and observers assembled to discuss the 'State of the Economy' at a specially convened conference of the Peoples National Party of Jamaica.

For the overwhelming majority of the delegates, the conference could not have come at a more crucial hour. Jamaica had just failed "yet another" one of the stringent "tests" imposed on the island by the International Monetary Fund, in an agreement drawn up with the government in the middle of 1978.

Under the terms of the three-year agreement, the government has been obliged to adopt what it describes as an "inflation model of adjustment designed to redistribute income from labour to capital..." In other words, the government, in exchange for a loan under the Extended Fund Facility, were ordered to attempt to salvage the ailing capitalist economy at the expense of the working class, the unemployed and the peasantry.

Faithfully adhering to the dictates of the IMF throughout 1978 and 1979, the government imposed severe restrictions on wage settlements, while simultaneously increasing the costs of basic goods and services through indirect taxation.

The government frankly admitted that its new measures sought to "cut real wages and compress total consumption" in order to facilitate "higher profits for the productive (i.e. the capitalist) sector, guaranteeing a 20% return on capital before interest and 15% after interest."

These stern economic measures, which included a 46.8% devaluation of the Jamaican dollar (Basic Rate), has had a devastating impact on the living standards of the working class. In less than twelve months after the signing of the agreement real wages had been cut by 35%.

Black workers win partial victory

'There's a Ford in your future' is an advertising slogan which is haunting South African employers as black workers step up their industrial and political action.

Ford which has made faltering attempts to desegregate facilities to counter anti-apartheid demands for disinvestment, shows what is

Inflation soared to 49.4% and unemployment climbed to a staggering quarter of a million (out of a total population of 2 million). Thus, the working class has experienced the biggest single assault on their living standards since the great slump of 1929.

But the crisis facing capitalism in Jamaica is such that, far from arresting the economic decline, the so-called "corrective" measures imposed by the IMF has had the effect of plunging the economy into even further decay, rendering the island more dependent than ever on imperialism.

Gross Domestic Product has plummeted for the fourth successive year. The government itself has pointed to the fact that "even with the 'assistance' of the IMF there has been 'a widening of the trade gap and the balance of payments deficit...the persistence of materials shortages and bottlenecks and a sluggish response of the economy to the corrective measures.'"

One of the key sectors of the economy to show a marked improvement has been agriculture. Yet, a combination of factors, such as the deliberate hoarding of food by big land owners and disastrous flood rains, meant that throughout most of 1979 there were intermittent shortages of many basic foodstuffs, including rice, meat, bread, butter, milk, cheese, flour and eggs.

Thus the painful sacrifices made by Jamaican workers over the last two and a half years has so far completely failed to bring about any significant improvement in the economy. Not even a "guaranteed 20% return on capital" has attracted invest-

ment from either the local or external capitalist classes. Instead, the forces of reaction continue to sabotage the economy by diverting valuable foreign exchange away from the island.

Inevitably, opposition to the government's continued use of "capitalist solutions" began to develop within the PNP. And, as a result of sustained pressure from the rank and file, the Party decided to convene a special conference on the economy with a mandate requiring the government to explain its economic policies.

He stated that, among other things, the government were proposing to consolidate its various land projects into a single "land reform programme", that greater emphasis was to be placed on agricultural production (for

which the Prime Minister himself had assumed personal responsibility following a Cabinet reshuffle in December 1979), and that special programmes were to be introduced aimed at reducing unemployment, especially among youth.

The Minister also indicated that plans were on hand to further develop the tourist industry which is currently going through a boom.

While the entire conference welcomed the proposed measures, it was clear that many delegates felt that they did not go far enough.

A sizeable body of delegates held the view that the IMF as the main financial agency of imperialism, had deliberately contrived to bring the economy to a state of near bankruptcy in order to discredit the government and, in so doing, lay the basis for a possible victory by the right-wing Jamaican Labour Party at the forthcoming election.

Delegates pointed to the fact that the IMF knew long in advance that Jamaica would fail the December 1979 foreign exchange test, as a result of circumstances beyond the government's control, such as unexpected increases in the price of oil and natural disasters.

Yet, despite the appeals of the government—which had adhered to the terms of the letter—the Board of the IMF flatly refused to even consider a "waiver" until 5th Feb-

FACING THE IMF ONSLAUGHT

Bob Lee reports from the People's National Party Conference held in Jamaica 12th-13th January

ment from either the local or external capitalist classes. Instead, the forces of reaction continue to sabotage the economy by diverting valuable foreign exchange away from the island.

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Differences of opinion

The deliberations of the conference, as expected, revealed a difference of opinion between a substantial number of delegates and the government over what kind of economic policies should be adopted.

Responding to the Party mandate, the Minister of Finance, Eric Bell, outlined the government's programme for tackling the economic crisis.

He stated that, among other things, the government were proposing to consolidate its various land projects into a single "land reform programme", that greater emphasis was to be placed on agricultural production (for

earned by workers involved in protracted strikes, eventually capitulated on 11 January. In a move which gave a partial victory to the workers, it agreed to reinstate all strikers.

This victory, sustained in the face of long queues of unemployed outside the factory, confirms the growing power of the black working class and will inspire other groups of workers to similar action. Faced with this forward movement of the workers the state hesitated to act before a settlement was reached.

But now Botha, the strike leader, and other militants have been arrested. Calls by the workers for a general strike to demand the release of the detainees were defused by the local black civic association.

Despite this the Ford strike has marked a definite advance in the consciousness and organisation of black workers which threatens the employers and the state.

It also raises questions about the character of the

black 'non-political' trade unions which an UAW organiser conceded are seen by the workers as a "puppet organisation controlled by management and government." From the beginning the UAW refused to support the strike to reinstate Botha because it was political.

Political questions are increasingly being linked to industrial organisation by the rank and file in a way which demands a transformation of reformist trade unionism as well as the politics of black nationalism. The growing assertiveness of the black workers also challenges the reactionary white trade unions which are based on class collaboration.

White workers are now being faced with the pillars of their protection being removed by capitalists in search of greater exploitation and cheaper labour. Their unions which are dominated by a racist petty bourgeoisie are unable to lead white workers into the ranks of a united working class. But this leadership is likely to come under

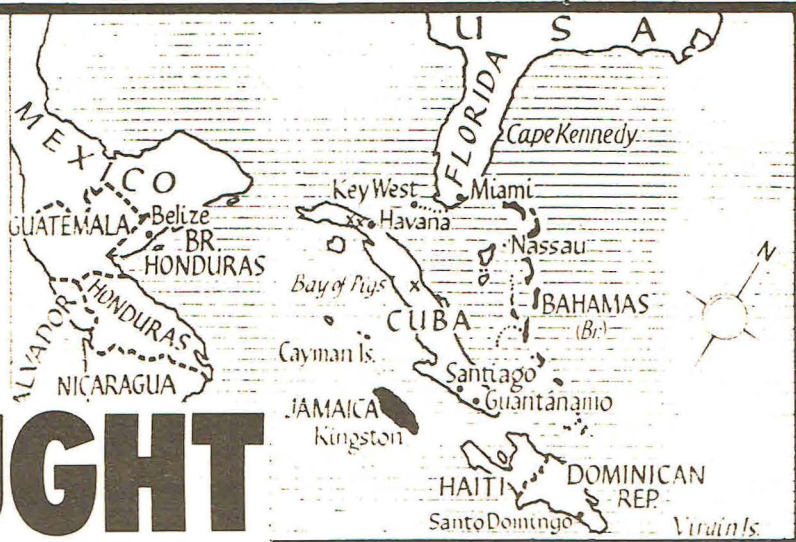
increasing attack from their members for their bureaucratic class collaboration.

Despite the bitter criticism of FOSATU leadership by the most advanced workers, the greater activity of activity among black workers is likely to bring an enormous expansion in the black trade unions. The struggle for trade union policies which will lead the workers into revolutionary action will become ever more intense.

One fact has now been made clear: the 'parallel union' strategy favoured by the registered trade unions and employer organisations is bound to fail under the hammer blows of rising political and industrial action by black workers.

By our South African Correspondent

SOUTH AFRICA



Michael Manley, leader of the People's National Party

February, thus leaving the island virtually penniless for the whole of January.

The massive opposition of the delegates to the IMF was revealed at the Region 3 Workshop (comprising of delegates from the Parishes of Portland and St Thomas) where a resolution opposing the IMF and calling upon the government to present alternative economic policies was carried by 90 votes to 4. A resolution in similar terms was subsequently carried by the whole conference.

The mood of the delegates which was clearly manifested over the two days was reflected by the leadership. In his winding-up speech, the party President, Michael Manley, brought the delegates to their feet when he told them to "prepare the

party" for some important decisions.

He said that he had thought "long and hard" about the various issues, and that immediately after the conference there would be a cabinet meeting to consider the decisions of the conference. He concluded with a call to the entire party membership to be on the alert, for he may need to call an urgent mass meeting to make an "important announcement".

Although the conference itself did not totally resolve the problems facing Jamaican working people it did reflect the hostility against the IMF diktat and the need for bold socialist policies as the only way out of the impasse facing Jamaican society.

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By our South African Correspondent

LETTERS

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

Will Tories send us to the workhouse?

Dear Comrades

Margaret Thatcher and her side-kicks must be a very selfish and blind load if they cannot see that their views on unemployment must change and change fast.

Her persecution of the unemployed must stop. With all the new technology that is being introduced into industry there are going to be more and more people on the dole. Have they all forgotten what new technology is for? Is it for a better standard of living, with reduced working hours and more leisure for all, or is it just for them and nobody else—are they going to be the only ones to benefit by bigger profits?

In a matter of only a few years there are going to be thousands, even millions, more people out of work, because there will be no work for them to do. Will they all be called scroungers and second-class citizens? Will Thatcher and her friends then reintroduce the workhouse; will we have to grovel to the rich for the scraps off their tables?

Yes, we bloody well will if we don't get the power away from Thatcher and people like her, and learn how to harness the powers of progress for the benefit of everyone.

Yours fraternally
Richard Bartram
Ipswich

Scare campaign in the Tory press—what our readers think

Publicity boosts sales—and it's all free

Dear Comrades

For the past five months I have taken the 'Militant' to work every week. And, for the past five months every week, sure enough, the 'Militant' has ended up in the dustbin.

However, after your national coverage on TV, radio

and the newspapers [courtesy of Lord Underhill—not Saatchi and Saatchi]—guess what? This week, all newspapers went in the dustbin except the 'Militant'.

E Williams
GMWU Morecambe

Subsidies and surpluses while we pay through the nose

Dear Comrade

We often speak about the chaos of private enterprise, and sometimes people ask what we mean by that. The capitalists' club, the EEC, once again supplies us with an answer.

Subsidies amounting in 1979 to nearly £2.9 billion meant that, for example, 20% more milk was produced than the people in the EEC could buy. As a result, 35% of the total EEC budget was used to buy up "surplus" produce to maintain the prices for dairy farmers (benefitting the biggest farmers)—prices which are four times as high as elsewhere.

The storage of "surplus" butter cost 16% of the EEC budget. Of all the skimmed milk that is produced, 60% is sold back to the farmers at half discount price, to feed animals. Sugar is now another chronic "surplus" product.

If that isn't chaos, I don't know what is!

Best wishes
Theresa Kellegher
Leeds

Tories' 'essential spending'

Dear Comrades

A thousand million pounds! Quite a lot of money don't you think?

Comrades (and perhaps others) might well be forgiven in wondering where all this money will come from, and why it is needed. We are told that it's to buy American atomic missiles.

Now with the background of cuts in social services and hospitals, with the attendant deaths of thousands of the old and the sick, it makes you wonder is this vast expenditure of this supposedly unattainable money right? Of course we know it is not, we all know this Tory government has got its priorities wrong.

With 80% of the capital held in private hands, we also know you cannot plan anything you don't own, so now it makes it more imperative that we all work towards a true socialist society by implementing clause IV of the Labour Party constitution.

This is a fundamental socialist policy, and it seems to me that it will only be carried out when we have a strong Marxist leadership of the Party.

Yours fraternally
B Cranmer
Newham North East CLP

Afghanistan: what are the West defending?

Dear Comrades

With all the press and TV hysteria lately about the Russian bureaucracy's invasion of Afghanistan, in the great tradition of British imperialism and the USA, of caring for people's rights, ITN news on Sunday night (27 January) had a piece about the Afghanistan mountain tribesmen defending their homes and territory from the Soviet troops.

The only thing was that their homes were in squalid conditions with no roofs etc. It could not get much worse.

I'd sooner live in a boring 'Soviet-type' council estate than that.

Fraternally
Lee Waker
Dagenham LPYS

PRIVATE STEEL VULTURES

Dear Editor

As an ex-steelworker who worked for a private company, I could not agree more with Michael Unwin's article ('Militant' No 487) about the way private steel producers and rollers are "hovering like vultures over the BSC."

As an employee at London Works Steel, who re-roll steel billets, I had the rare experience of working for a company which was re-investing large sums of money in the updating and expansion of its plant. It seems that

unlike the vast majority of private concerns outside the steel industry, private steel companies cannot invest their money quickly enough.

This is just another example of how a nationalised industry functions on behalf of private enterprise. How dare the private steel employers turn round and say that the BSC dispute has nothing to do with them?

Yours comradely
Les Kuriata
Selly Oak LPYS,
Birmingham

SMOKED SALMON AND SOCIALISM

Dear Friend

Your journal has been in the news quite a lot recently and reading about some of your views in the 'New Statesman'—if what they write about you is true—I doubt whether there would be much on which we would see eye to eye. But then I am in my seventieth year and with a lifetime in the labour movement—over 55 years in the trade union movement, the last 32 years a member of the London Catering branch of the GMWU whose meetings I still attend—I have become convinced that the policies of the Soviet Union are those which are most in the interest of the international working class.

However, there is one view that I hold which appears to be yours also, and that it that the labour movement must rid itself of its capitalist fellow travellers. There are far too many of them in the labour movement to be good for that movement.

Towards the end of 1977 I was with the TU/Pensioners' Movement at the House of Commons—at the same time as the firemen were there—to lobby MPs. I called my MP out and was immediately subjected to rhetoric which included the claim that the economy was on the upward trend and that all sections would now be putting forward their claims for increased standards of living but that we had to be sensible and take our turn.

I told him that I had worked in the West End of London's luxury industry for forty years, the last twenty-five of those as a wine butler at the Dorchester Hotel. During those years there had been crisis after crisis but these never affected those who spent their time in the luxury hotels and clubs.

He answered, "But they are all Conservatives." I replied by saying that if that be so there would be all the more reason for the Labour government doing something about a small section of wealthy people accumulating even more wealth when the majority are going through a crisis. He could only shrug his

shoulders and discover suddenly that he was very busy.

I do not suppose that he was aware that when he lost his seat in the 1970 election I served him a few months later at a banquet at the Dorchester. For this he had time to spare but most of his electors never saw him again until he stood after the fall of Heath. And this seems to be the pattern of his political life after he once again lost his seat, turning his 10,000 majority into a 5,000 defeat.

I hasten to assure you that our family has always voted for him and would do so again if the Labour Party selected him to stand here again. There is simply no other choice.

Looking through some old papers I found three different menu cards of some years ago. On one of these menus you will find the names of 'Labour' ministers and MPs.

To expect people who sit down one evening to caviar, smoked salmon, sole, roast beef, peaches and ice with petit fours and coffee, washed down with Vodka, Chablis, a Mouton Rothschild, Dom Perignon, Cockburn vintage port and liqueur brandy and then the following evening mount the rostrum at a party meeting to preach austerity to the masses; to expect that they can possibly be interested in changing a system which suits them so well, is expecting rather a lot. These people could not possibly want a shift in the nation's wealth away from them to the poor of the nation—and the menu quoted above is by no means the most ostentatious.

With those gentlemen these type of stag-party are not limited to annual get-togethers. This high living by some British people is going on today, paid for by the sweat of the miner, the steel-worker, engineer and not least the low-paid catering worker.

When we have rid our society of these parasites I am sure that workers who think as you do and those who think as I do will soon iron out the differences that exist between them.

Yours fraternally
John Walter

Hackney workers put on warpaint

Letters to the Editor
Hackney Gazette

Dear Sir

So Madeleine Mono 'pioneers' a brand of cosmetics and this changes completely the lives of Mono workers and their families—perhaps hundreds of Hackney people.

A report on the declining rag trade in 'The Sunday Times' [27.1.80] says that "Miss Selfridge believes that customers who cannot afford or do not want, new clothes will splash out on cosmetics, and they are directing much effort to promoting that side of their business. One old established coat company, Mono, shares this view. It has recently abandoned its clothes business completely to concentrate on cosmetics pioneered by the founder's daughter, Madeleine Mono. Perhaps warpaint is the best investment for today."

I think the 'Sunday Times' may be right. It is time we all of us put on warpaint to fight for the great wealth that the people in this country produce to be returned to us intact. The 'taxpayer'—so often referred to by the Mad Monk and Britain's answer to Dame Edna Everage—would very quickly discover that there was in fact more than enough to provide houses, schools, hospitals, jobs, and a decent living wage for all.

Mono is a small but vital example, together with Lesneys and the closing shoe firms, of how the needs of communities are put aside in the interest of private profit. Under a socialist society the resources of the whole nation would be there for us to decide whether there were enough brands of lipstick in the shops and whether we needed another one, over and above our need for coats and shoes.

Yours truly
Mrs Myrna Shaw

Burning the wrong witch

Dear Editor

The campaign against 'Militant' has been ably answered in your pages, but this 'crusade' is not without its unconscious humour, which also underlines its real motives.

Leading this attack is a Lord who warns the labour movement about infiltration in the Labour Party. This 'caped crusader' claims to be in a privileged position in respect of information about the extent of "Trotskyist infiltration". His lordship appears to overlook his own privileged position, which he obtained against the expressed view of the Labour Party.

Another example was the 'Nationwide' programme of 15th January which included a feature on 'Militant'. Just before this attack there was the latest instalment in "Myths and Legends of Britain"—about "Witches, Witchcraft and Witch-hunts"!

The presenter pointed out that many women who were tortured as witches were not in fact witches. They were unfortunate victims of the political climate of that time...!

The attack on 'Militant' and claims of "Trotskyist infiltration" are clearly an attempt to take the Labour Party back to the days when witch-hunts and expulsions of lefts was the order of the day. However, the wheel of history has moved on since then; and the rank and file will not allow it to be thrown into reverse.

Yours comradely
John Merrell
Leicester West CLP

TROUBLE THE TORIES

£1,450 in a week for Militant's Fighting Fund brings the total raised towards the first quarter's target to just over £3,500.

This is in addition to numerous promises for 1979's fund being redeemed. But a still bigger effort will be needed to obtain the £1,800 per week to reach £20,000 by April 12th.

**By Steve
Cawley**

The serious attitude that many of our readers have to our finances [hit this week by, amongst other things, increased postage rates] can be shown by the collections and donations of quite large amounts.

In Brighton, for example, over £200 was collected at a Militant Meeting on 'What We Stand For'. £50 has been donated by an Ipswich reader following the sale of his house £50 in postal orders came from a 'West Yorkshire Supporter' who wishes to remain anonymous, and another £50—from D Cartwright (N London)—was a late Christmas bonus!

A S London Militant meeting raised over £50 after expenses, £100 came from Tyneside's meeting and £66 from Stevenage.

Militant continues to receive help from work-place collections. Even 'Extras' on

sales of the paper at GEC Stychfields gate in Stafford netted £1.85 for Militant this week. Trade union expenses donated included some from London, Durham, and Newcastle (about £30). £35 net was collected during Militant's meeting at last week's UPW Conference.

£60 this week has come in the form of radio and TV fees from supporters defending our point of view. When you consider some of the programmes dealing with the Labour Party and the role of Militant have consisted of nearly 20 minutes of ill-informed rumour and gossip with about 2 minutes (if we're lucky) for one of our supporters to try to answer, it makes you wonder what fees are going to our detractors!

Labour Party Young Socialist branches determined to defend Militant and see it grow included Coventry, Bristol, Feltham and Heston, Chester and East Kilbride (sending over £13). Does your local LPYS Branch support Militant's programme? Do the members say it with cash? Many thanks to all the

Build

Militant

Area	received	Proportion of first quarter's target	Target 1st Qtr	Target for year
Eastern	333		1,000	5,000
Hants & IOW	120		760	3,800
East Midlands	201		780	3,900
Humberside	34		500	2,500
London East	348		1,240	6,200
London West	269		940	4,700
London South	188		800	4,000
Manchester & Lancs	27		1,020	5,100
Merseyside	201		1,200	6,000
Northern	403		1,460	7,300
Scotland East	14		640	3,200
Scotland West	106		1,000	5,000
Southern	369		1,180	5,900
South West	66		640	3,200
Wales East	30		560	2,800
Wales West	81		620	3,100
West Midlands	286		1,800	9,000
Yorkshire	168		1,460	7,300
Others	323		2,400	12,000
Total received	3,567		20,000	100,000

TARGET FOR APRIL 12th - £20,000 TARGET FOR YEAR - £100,000

workers who have contributed the pounds, fivers, tenners and so on, which are the mainstay of our fighting fund effort.

Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to mention all of the ever increasing number of donations in this column. The best we can do, is give examples.

This makes it imperative that Militant supporters methodically use the collectors' cards. Then every contributor can see the donations properly noted, accounted for and promptly despatched for the purpose they are intended for—the expansion of the best paper in the labour movement. Even the 'odds and ends' for Militant funds should be noted on these cards. And there are many of them, showing that Militant supporters have money on their minds all the time.

This week's examples include:— 'taxi fares', poker

**THIS WEEK
£1,449**

card proceeds, badge sales, pints for the Militant, Tote Commission (who says Militant supporters don't do their bit for the Labour Party?) "tea and biscuits", local raffle, garage rent, Xmas gifts and bookmarks. Money from sales of cartoon books and calendars continue to assist our fund-raising as well.

As Peregrine Worsthorne

put it in the Sunday Telegraph, "Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet, which includes almost as many aristocrats, property owners and millionaires as Disraeli's, is a marvellous testimony to the success of the Conservative Party during this last century in using democracy to safeguard privilege.

"To begin with, of course,

the task was relatively easy, since the workers were too weak economically, and too ill-organised, to cause much trouble...."

Other front page stories last Sunday, apart of course from the attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists and Militant, included the 'scandal of young patients who ate pigswill' not in a hospital in Kampuchea or any of those far-away places where starvation is ever present—but in a prosperous Carshalton, South London hospital.

Cause as much trouble as you can to Peregrine Worsthorne, the Tories and the ruling class. Cause trouble in the form of hard cash for the workers' paper, Militant! Send to Militant Fighting Fund, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

A VITAL WEAPON

The media has spent millions of pounds, hours of air time, and yards of print in trying to frighten workers away from the ideas of Marxism.

Their programmes and articles are usually rubbish. A case of 'what 'Militant' doesn't stand for'. Nonetheless, the vital role that 'Militant' plays in the Labour movement is being understood by more and more activists.

Here are just two responses that the Militant has had during the Steel dispute. "Dear Comrade,

"When on strike money is short, but pickets here see the 15p for Militant as money well spent. Over 40 papers were sold to pickets last week.

The support for the paper was clearly shown in the 'Navigation' pub after a morning's picketing at Readman's. Some workers at the next table saw the Militant and started repeating the media's dis-

tortions and attacks.

All the pickets defended the paper and the help Militant had given them. At the end they all chipped in to buy papers for the arguers. While selling at Decisional Office one of the strike committee came out and gave me a cup of tea. [Bill Hopwood. Midlandsborough]

"When this strike is over I'd like to thank the 'Militant' for their sterling work and the assistance they've given us. They've spent a lot of time and effort on our behalf." [Cyril Wheat, Branch Secretary, Teeside Staff no. 2 Branch]

'Militant' is a vital weapon in every workers' armoury, Militant sellers should make sure that they get it.

**By
Dave Farrar**

ads

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

WHAT WE STAND FOR MEETINGS

NEWHAM
Speaker: Ted Grant. Venue: Newham North East Labour Party rooms, 241e High Street North, London E.6. (Nearest tube East Ham). Thursday February 14th, 8.00 pm

PRESTON
Speaker: Margaret Creear (Heywood and Royton Labour Party). 7.45 pm, Wednesday 13 February, Windsor Castle, Egan Street (opposite bus station)

BRIXTON
12th Feb, 7.30 pm, Brixton Town Hall. Speaker: Cllr Terry Pearce

BASILDON
Speaker: Keith Dickenson (Hammersmith North Labour Party) Prominent Militant Supporter, Plough and Tractor, off Great Knightleys, Basildon 8.00 pm 14th February.

MILITANT MEETINGS

MERSEYSIDE public debate
Terry Harrison for MILITANT versus Dave Mitchell for the CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR VICTORY. 7.30 pm, Monday 11 February, AUEW Hall, 48 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 3. Organised by Labour Party Young Socialists

LIVERPOOL trade union discussion group 'Tory anti-union laws'. 12 noon, Monday 11 February, Why Not Pub, Harrington Street, off North John Street

MANCHESTER Militant public meeting 'What future for Zimbabwe?' Speaker: Phil Frampton (past national chairman of the Labour Party Young Socialists). 8.00 pm, Thursday 14 February, Star and Garter, Fairfield Street, Manchester

THANET Marxist discussion group. 'Dialectical materialism' 7.30 pm, Tuesday 12 February, 30 Chichester Road, Newington, Ramsgate.

STRATHCLYDE Militant supporters' draw results. 3rd February. 1st prize: 22&39; 2nd prize: 15&43

CLASSIFIED

THURROCK Labour Party Young Socialists public meeting 'The socialist alternative to public spending cuts'. Speakers: Oonagh McDonald MP and Kevin Ramage, LPYS national chairman. 8.00 pm, Friday 15 February, Grays Park Adult Centre, Bridge Road, Grays, Essex

'Avoid contamination by working class' Edinburgh Industrial branch WEA, Marxist study group at Riddle's Court, Lawnmarket. From 12th February, 7.30 pm

A BOOK SERVICE for the labour movement. For the latest listing of all the literature available from World Books write to WORLD BOOKS, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

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

SOCIALIST SONGBOOK
(New printing). Only 40p, single copies post paid 50p. Bulk orders for 30p each plus postage. From Bryan Beekingham, 62 Haverstock Road, Bristol.

AVAILABLE NOW! CIA and the labour movement by Hirsch and Fletcher. Special bargain price to Militant readers. Only 50p (originally 95p) from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Bulk orders available.

Workers' Action public meeting 'Afghanistan: don't join the imperialist outcry' Speaker: John O'Mahony. 8.00 pm, Friday 15 February, Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square

CPSA PREPARES FOR PAY FIGHT

By Brian Ingham
(Industrial Correspondent)

At its civil service executive meeting on 17th January, the CPSA re-affirmed its determination to defend members' conditions and pay.

Figures produced by the pay research unit, showing the rates of pay and conditions of similar workers in private industry, indicate that CPSA members are due pay increases of at least 18-20% from 1 April. However, there have already been 'leaked' reports in the press indicating that the government may try to deny CPSA members the money to which they are entitled.

In response to this threat, Kevin Roddy moved a motion, agreed by the Executive, which stated the union's intention to fight for the full claim and oppose government attempts to finance any part of a settlement by staff cuts. The motion committed the union to "resist any attempt to force down our pay increase by the imposition of extra charges on our pension scheme as well as any attempt to impose staging."

The main sub-committee of the executive was charged with drawing up contingency plans for industrial action should it prove necessary, without precluding in advance any area of the membership. Over 80 membership meetings have been held jointly with the SCPS (the second-largest civil service union) to launch the campaign up and down

the country.

The CPSA Executive also discussed a proposition incorporating substantial and far-reaching changes in the make-up and operation of the 'National Staff Side'—the union side of the Joint 'Whitley Council', management being the 'official' side.

The new national staff side will be called the 'Council of Civil Service Unions'. The enlarged 63-man Council will comprise the unions in proportion to their numerical strength, with much more involvement of elected officials.

If all the unions agree to the proposals, particularly if these include the additional democratising amendments from CPSA, it will represent the most radical change in the joint negotiating machinery since the creation of 'Whitleyism'.

These proposals have one major deficiency, however. Apart from the body representing all the civil service unions, which is to meet every two weeks, a second negotiating committee, with representation only from the three major unions, is to meet weekly. Other unions would be invited only if their members were directly affected by the matters under discussion.

This is an unnecessary obstacle to building unity and mutual confidence amongst civil service trade unionists.

As an attempt to bureaucratically force smaller unions to accept mergers, by excluding their leaders from the committee, it could backfire badly.

Overall, these proposals represent a substantial step toward even more effective trade unionism. While welcoming their general direction, however, the fight for further democracy will go on—we do not want to see the smaller 'inner council' confined to the three major unions, nor simply to full-time union officials. Already pressure is growing for elected representatives to have a place.

The Executive also discussed a miserable offer from the Civil Service Department on annual leave, which maintained a leave system based firmly on existing grades, with the more senior grades eligible for more annual leave. This fell far short of what the Executive could accept; the union's policy is for 6 weeks' leave for all grades. The offer was rejected.

A motion from Pat Byrne called on the National Staff Side to urgently submit a claim for a reduction in working hours to 35 a week (net). This was agreed, although there were five abstentions.

INJUNCTIONS SERVED ON INCO LEADERS

The INCO strike at Clydach, near Swansea, has now entered its fifteenth week, with the strikers determined to achieve their 40% wage claim.

Management have further aggravated the dispute by serving injunctions on each member of the strike committee, preventing them from

'trespassing' on company property. They claim that pickets had physically assaulted the ASTMS members who have been scabbing and also threatened some of their families. This has been strongly denied by the strike committee and by ASTMS officials themselves.

Prior to the injunctions being served a meeting had in fact decided to end the mass picketing in order to allow the strike committee time to formulate new plans and to visit local factories to appeal for moral and financial support. A 24-hour token

picket is continuing and the strike committee has ensured that should the company attempt to move any nickel out of the plant, hundreds of pickets could be at the gates within minutes.

Messages of support and financial donations should be sent to:—Neville Rees, 221 Cwmamman Road, Garnant, Ammanford, Dyfed.

Clive Hanham [AUEW shop steward] and Tony Williams [EETPU shop steward] spoke to Rob Sewell

convenor is removed—he isn't 'acceptable' to them. Since then, the members have five times given a vote of confidence in and support for their shop stewards and convenor. As the strike committee's circular states, the 40 workers on strike are "united in their determination to defend our trade union organisation and their right to elect represent-

atives of their own choice."

An appeal sheet is being circulated to trade unionists; copies can be obtained to be used at your meeting. Donations and messages of support "will be welcome and appreciated": rush them to **Bro R Bennett, 95 Brownlow Drive, Rise Park, Nottingham.**

CHIX MASS PICKETS

The strike over union recognition at the Chix sweet factory in Slough has entered its fourth month, with the strikers more determined than ever to win.

The boss has been forced to raise wages to recruit scabs: the hourly rate has gone up from 95p to £1.48.

On Friday 14th January Mr Rhoads agreed to meet union officials, but his terms for settling the dispute left a lot to be desired—20 strikers to be taken back, no night shift and no union. Given his previous absolute refusal to negotiate, this nevertheless

marks a major shift in his position.

Continued vigilance in blacking and support on the picket line is now essential to force recognition of the union. Local mass pickets will be held every Wednesday starting at 6.30 am, with national mobilisations to be announced.

Financial support is also needed as strike pay (only recently given) amounts to only £10.50 a week. **Messages of support and donations should be sent to Mr Anwar, 271 Goodman Park, Slough, Berks.**

SOLAR TUBES

The strike of 14 T&GWU members at Solar Tubes, Doncaster (see 'Militant' 487) has been made official.

The strikers are appealing for help in blacking a crucial component, the GTE Sylvania cathode ray gun. They believe it may be imported by Air India via one of the London airports. Information, moral and financial support should be sent to **Mr Arthur Boughey, 5 Lebelia Crescent, Kirk Sandall, Doncaster, South Yorks.**

By Lawrence Major

STEEL STRIKE WEEK 6:

AROUND THE COUNTRY

STANTON

"This is News at Ten outside 10 Downing Street. Margaret Thatcher has just announced inflation is 29%, policemen's pay is £500 per week..." In fact, it's a picket outside BSC's Stanton works.

You can't help but notice the attentions of the police—there are usually at least two of them to every picket plus another 50 reliefs in the

works' canteen. "Rates up 500% next year" to pay all the overtime, they reckon. Rumour has it there's been a spate of daylight bank robberies in nearby Ilkeston.

NUB convenor Jim Kill-eavy's walking with a limp. All those upholders of the law didn't seem to notice when a senior works official "saved his life" by pushing him over

during the picketing, with the result that he sprained his ankle.

Unfortunately, Stanton drivers have been told by the regional T&GWU official to "work normally". Seeing this, other drivers cross the line too. T&GWU members are being asked to take this up.

The pickets are looking to the stronger areas for help in stopping their plant working. Consistent mass picketing is vital.

By Tony Cross
(Nottingham LP)

CORBRY

Steel workers from Corby who had travelled to picket Kings Lynn docks, spoke to Tim Webb (T&GWU 10/28a branch) and Heather Rawlings.

They were full of enthusiasm for the support and solidarity they have received from the trade union movement in Kings Lynn: "It has been marvellous; the T&GWU, NUR, ASLEF, dockers and drivers have all given us support. We went into a local pub and the dockers wouldn't let us buy a round", Eddie Anderson, chairman of the Corby local ISTC branch, told us.

"If we had the same support everywhere we'd win this strike in no time. We've made some good contacts in other unions; these links should be kept up."

Monty, another picket from the Mills ISTC branch, added: "My wife's backing this strike. She said to me the other day that immediately the Tories abolished the Price Commission, bread went up—and eggs—and VAT's gone up. The tax cuts have not made any difference, yet the steelworkers were only offered 2%. Where's the justice in that?"

"I'm prepared to sit here for three months if it will bring Thatcher down" John Jappy continued. "I have been put out of work by the Tories and their system. I can just see it: in three months time some ignorant Tory will stand up in the House of Commons and complain about Social Security scroungers, when they put us on social security in the first place.

"We've had a lot of bad publicity; the capitalist press will always let us down. But we know if we say something to 'Militant' it will be faithfully reported."

TEESSIDE

In spite of Denning, picketing of stockholders in the area carried on without interruption. Probably the only effect was to increase the turn-out of Blastfurnacemen and Joint Craft members.

On several days there have been mass pickets on BSC gates to turn back managers, which were at least 95% effective. The only trouble was when one policeman punched a picket—the policeman was removed by the police.

Between the stopping of the lorries there is time to talk. The favourite subjects are Denning's state of mind, what fate awaits Thatcher, and the big question: is it on or off?

This is not about the strike—there is no question that is on. It is about the local 'heroes', or so the press see them, the handful who are attempting to set up an anti-strike movement.

Originally they were meeting in a pub, then the brewers said no. The next venue was a community centre but the Labour Council put a stop to

that. Now they've had to abandon their attempts to hold a meeting.

The strike and politics are hotly debated round the braziers. There is a determination to tighten up on BSC management when work restarts. "We've let them get away with too much." "The only way to deal with that lot is force, we've got to stand up to them."

The Tories are seen as the enemy—the 'Militant's' 'Tories Out' badges are very popular. The change in the ISTC will also find its way into the Labour Party; there is also discussion about joining the political fight against the Tories.

By Bill Hopwood
(Teesside Thornaby Labour Party)

'MILITANT' STEEL MEETING
'Victory to Steelworkers—Defeat the Tories'
The Cleveland Pub, High St, Coatham, Redcar, 7.30 pm, Sunday February 10th

BLACKBURN

Lorry drivers from Walker's steel stockholders in Blackburn are still refusing to recognise the ISTC and NUB picket line, claiming that as they are not members of those unions, the strike does not affect them.

Though an agreement was made that they would not cross the line from Sunday midnight, a convoy of 20-30 lorries broke through the picket line after most of the 300 pickets had left at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Rumours suggest that the drivers are being well paid for crossing the picket line; that each were given a coat and a

chicken for Christmas and have been promised a 22% wage increase above whatever BSC offers.

On Friday 25th January, Colin Herd, ISTC convenor at the Warrington steel plant, spoke to a public meeting organised by the Blackburn Labour Party Young Socialists where £11 was raised for the strike fund.

By Rossina and Peter Harris
(Blackburn Labour Party)

UNITY IS STRENGTH

South Yorkshire steel workers are increasingly concerned that the national leaderships of the steel unions are in danger of buckling under pressure on the claim and the strategy to gain it.

Craftsmen are particularly concerned by the implications of the separate negotiations with the BSC management pursued by the National Craftmen's Co-ordinating Committee (NCCC) leadership.

On Friday 25th January, the EETPU Executive called an advisory conference of delegates representing members in BSC, chaired by Tom Breakel, National President of the union, with Eddie Linton, Chairman of the NCCC also on the platform.

From South Yorkshire, we moved a resolution affirming the demand for 20 per cent with no strings. Another motion merely called upon the NCCC to "negotiate the best deal possible". The EC opposed the first and supported the second!

The EC's argument was that we were too "inflexible" and "unrealistic". During the debate Eddie Linton said that "there is money on the table" and that as "BSC is broke" we were "living in cloud-cuckoo land" by demanding

At their last meeting members of Sheffield Trades Council heard that Harold Plaits, a retired AUEW member who used to work at Firth Brown, a private steel works, had been asked to stand down from the Social Security appeals tribunals, on which the Trades Council has a handful of representatives. Steel workers might be involved in the appeals and he couldn't be considered 'impartial' enough. After refusing, he heard that he would be 'blacked' from tribunals for

20% without strings.

Despite the platform's attitude, our motion was passed by 37-22 while the other motion was lost 24-36. But the attitude of the leadership was clear. In addition, a South Wales motion which "calls upon our union to support and organise industrial action of all EETPU members throughout the country, with other unions, to halt and reverse this massive decline of our industries" was ruled out of order. When even a full-time official tried to get this motion debated, he was brusquely told to sit down by the chair.

Now the NCCC is negotiating separately with BSC, saying that they will try to take out as many strings as possible, whilst the ISTC, by contrast, is currently refusing to negotiate until money is on the table. These are the seeds of a damaging split, unless maximum pressure is put on by members combined with the fear that the ISTC might get a better offer, causing the NCCC to lose its remaining credibility.

The type of 'strings' the BSC bosses want is typified by the following extract from their proposals to the NCCC: "Where after consultation job activity can be abolished then the number of employees should be reduced accord-

the duration...How many employers have been told they are too prejudiced to hear a steelworkers' case?

The EETPU London Press branch collected £100 for the strike funds after an appeal by a South Yorks steelworker. The branch also agreed to a levy of £1 a week from all members on Fleet Street to aid the strike, as a practical demonstration of their full support.

ingly." They are still hungry for more and yet more redundancies.

So when Linton says "the money is on the table", he means that it is if we are willing to sell our members' jobs, demarcation lines etc. It's our money on the table—not BSC's. What are we to do next year and the following year when there is nothing left to sell?

For our part in South Yorkshire, the craftsmen will stick by the rest of the steelworkers. We have had unity from the start in South Yorkshire. We have a central strike committee, with rep-

resentatives from different unions. One important lesson is the need for one all-encompassing steel union as an ultimate aim.

We are approaching the moment of truth. Our leaders have to stand firm to win not only the battle for wages, but on closures, redundancies and victimisation. The alternative is surrender on all these issues to the BSC bosses. It is to be hoped that our leaders take confidence from the solidarity of their membership, and live up to our expectations and hopes.

By Charlie Simmons (deputy EETPU convenor, Rotherham)

In this atmosphere of confusion it is necessary to spell out again what the famous 8% plus 4% offer really implies. The original 2% merely consolidates an existing pay supplement, giving nothing for those who work Mondays to Fridays with no overtime. The further 6% available is conditional on selling a further 12,000 jobs in addition to the 52,000. In fact it gives us nothing extra but transfers from our redundant brothers' wage packets to us.

The other 4%, the so-called value added bonus, is a sheer utopia. They want us to sign an agreement by the 31st

March, involving all 14 unions, at all grades, including substantial concessions on flexibility, demarcation etc.

Even if we were willing to give such concessions, it would not be practically possible in that time span. It would take years to sort out. In addition, so many of the things it includes are totally outside our control. It is based on profitability criteria, taking into account the movement of prices of such items as gas, electricity, scrap. With present government policies, we could sell jobs and still be outstripped by prices, and so would be

no better off.

Readers in Birmingham overheard a telephone call of a factory manager at a private steelworks in Wednesday, Patent Shaft Steelworks. The manager, on a crossed line, was discussing the ISTC executive's decision to postpone the action in the private sector until their appeal.

The shop steward told him that his workers were prepared to return provided they were paid for the previous week, when they had been laid off. The manager had refused and, he told his anonymous friend (and us) "twenty minutes later he rang back to say the thirty employees would be on picket duty the following day."

"What is the position regarding my firm and the injunction?"

"Only the sixteen companies who took out the injunction are covered by Denning's ruling", he was told.

Eric: "Oh Christ...I thought Denning's judgement was concise—clear..."

LONDON

Although London has been largely by-passed during the strike, at Pudding Mill Lane, Stratford E15, ISTC pickets are doing their bit.

They are posted outside a warehouse of the BSC tubes division which employs 37—"sorry! 38. They've just employed a new manager, he comes out of our 2% offer". There is one lone picket, backed up by a number of 'roving pickets', manning the brazier, and the hut.

"Denning? We didn't expect any different. If Sirs goes inside we'll go back to '71—the miners will be out and all the rest".

The only thing that worried the pickets was the steel that had been moved out through Dagenham dock: "This needs to be sealed off, we've informed ISTC head office about this".

Spirits were high although financial pressures are a growing problem.

By Bob Faulkes
(Hackney Labour Party)

New 'Militant' pamphlet
'A Socialist Strategy
for Steelworkers'

20 pence plus 10p postage
From World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

ONE VOICE AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

Never before has there been such unity of action among steelworkers. But the unity between the different steel unions in the strike committees and on the picket lines must be matched by unity at the negotiating table.

The membership of all the steel unions should demand an end to separate negotiations with the British Steel Corporation. Instead there should be united negotiations based on an agreed joint claim.

There has been frustration and anger among rank and file workers of all steel unions at the way in which different negotiations with BSC have proceeded during the strike. The craft unions [EETPU, AUEW, etc] have entered into negotiations apart from the production unions [Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and National Union of Boilermakers] and even the leaders of the production unions have had separate talks with BSC.

Experience has shown that all the unions end up with broadly the same deal. BSC management, however, always tries to play one union off against another, and thereby drag down the final settlement for all the unions.

Facing a common employer, intent on inflicting the maximum damage, it is vital that we speak with one voice and act as one, powerful, force.

All the steel unions come together on the Trades Union Congress Steel Committee. However, this body negotiates on all issues—except wages, and is made up exclusively of full-time officials.

Steel workers should build on the progressive features of ISTC's procedures, where negotiations are conducted in front of specially elected lay officials representing produc-

tion workers, staff, and managerial members.

ISTC is now trying to bring together all its sections for pay talks. This must be taken further. The separate talks at present underway should be ended. BSC should be faced with one common trade union voice demanding the cancellation of all closures and a 20% increase in pay.

In future, lay conferences should take place where democratically-elected representatives from all steel unions in all plants could come together to draw up a common claim on jobs, pay and conditions. The steel unions should decide on a rate for each job and then stand together in order to achieve their common objective.

The unity of the miners around one common claim paved the way for their famous victories in 1972 and 1974. Similarly, the Ford workers' negotiations are conducted by elected lay officials who submit a claim agreed by an advisory conference of stewards in the British section of the Ford motor company.

A united joint negotiating body for all BSC workers would be a great step forward. But the present battle has clearly shown the interlocking interests of BSC and private steel, and the need for combined action in both areas.

The only conclusion that can be drawn is that steel workers throughout the entire industry, state-owned and private, should be brought together under a joint negotiating body with a common claim.

This would cement the basis—after victory in this strike—of united action of all steel workers against any future attempts to drive down wages or destroy jobs.

WALES

In West Wales the mood is clearly hardening. We are determined to win!

In the private sector, support is 100 per cent. At present more than 1,200 steelworkers at Dupont in Llanelli are out.

But the wage dispute is overshadowed by the threat of steel closures. Thousands will demonstrate their bitterness towards BSC's proposals at a rally on Thursday 7th in Port Talbot. The message must go out loud and clear: we will not tolerate one job loss!

A recent document has pointed out that if the Margam works closes, West Glamorgan County Council will lose £4.4 million in rate revenue and Afan Council would lose £1.2 million. With the snowballing effect of redundancies, it would cost £70 in lost insurance and tax and payment of unemployment benefit.

This would be an absolute disaster for the area.

The document foresees 16,000 out of work in the Port Talbot area alone, if the

cut-backs go through—one in five of the working population. In West Glamorgan it would result in 30,200 redundancies and 15 per cent unemployment.

Everything—amenities, local services, shops, hopes—would be slashed.

Our task is to prevent this at all costs. Our struggle is not only for steel workers, but for the future of our community and our youth.

By Pete Rowlands
(ISTC Port Talbot, personal capacity)

SCOTLAND

Three ISTC members, including Pat Shevlin, chairman of the Scottish strike committee of the ISTC, addressed a meeting of the local government workers' union in Lanarkshire.

The speakers described the growing strength of the strike, "an increasing number of pickets every day," and its increasing effectiveness. As Pat Shevlin stated, "Outside one firm, pickets even stopped a lorry carrying bottles of Irn Bru (a soft drink popular

in Scotland)—after all, as the adverts say, "It's made from girders."

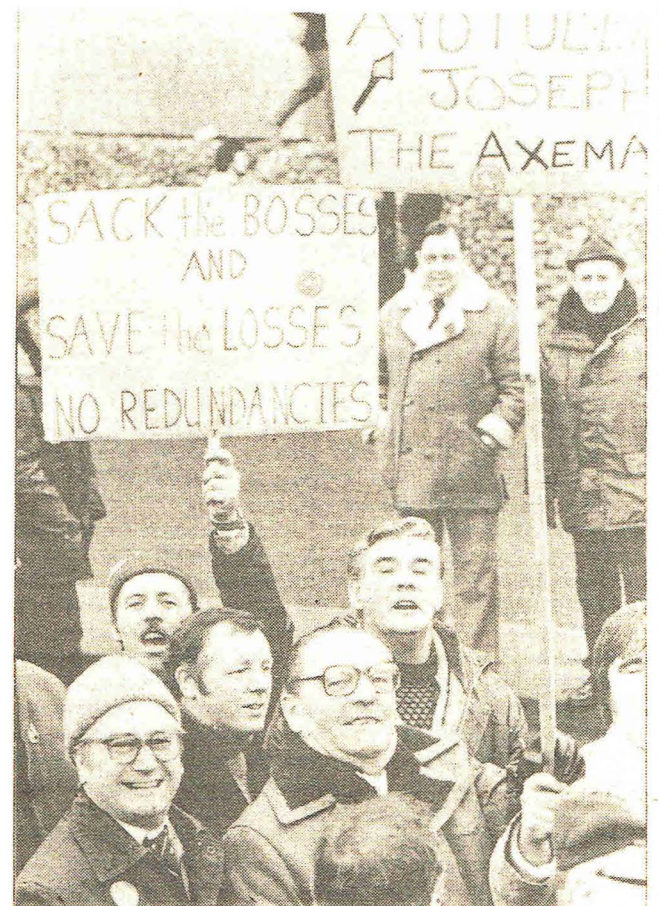
One of the speakers pointed out that BSC had to pay over £180 million in interest on loans last year: if these payments had not been made to the parasitic moneylenders, BSC would have in fact made a profit of £4 million.

NALGO members too know of the effect exorbitant interest rates have. While cuts are decimating the social services in order "to save

money", vast amounts are paid by councils in interest.

After the discussion, members came to the conclusion that the strike was better organised than BSC. Even the media have had to acknowledge the high level of organisation of the first steel strike since 1926—surely a further argument for workers' control.

By Keith McIntyre
(NALGO)



Steelworkers march through Cardiff during the one-day general strike in Wales on 28th January—they know where the rot really starts!

Photo: MILITANT

LEYLAND - FIGHT FOR FULL CLAIM



Leyland workers march against redundancies last autumn. The mood of workers is changing.

Photo: MILITANT

This week workers throughout BL Cars are voting by ballot on the wage offer of 5 per cent plus a "pie in the sky" bonus scheme.

'Jackanory, Jackanory' was the refrain that greeted the managing director of Land Rover Ltd as he tried to convince workers that they could earn big bonuses on the company's proposed wages and conditions offer.

Last year British Leyland workers were one of the few groups in the country who had a 5 per cent wage limit imposed on them. This year the mood is completely different, particularly against the

By Bill Mullins
 (Senior Steward SD1 Rover, Solihull)

background of the steel workers' magnificent struggle.

Not only would the 5% offer mean an actual wage cut, with inflation currently at

around 20%. The company are also insisting on the introduction of a 95-page working conditions document that will take away every element of workers' control in the plants. It demands full mobility of labour and unfettered use of time-study, including the use of cine-cameras and other slave-driving techniques, without any mutuality or control by the shop stewards.

A massive propaganda campaign has been conducted by BL. Walls are plastered with notices threatening dire consequences if workers don't accept the offer.

Company leaflets are posted to every worker with the same message and, unprecedented in BL, mass meetings conducted by the man-

agement—which like the one at Land Rover, have boomeranged on the company.

When the senior stewards in Rover demanded to hold mass meetings to reply to the Company's propaganda, we were met by a point-blank refusal, accompanied by the threat that if any shop steward addressed 'unofficial mass meetings' he would be subject to 'severe discipline'—i.e. the sack.

This threat of victimisation led to 'spontaneous' walk-outs by the workers. The Company then asked us to get them back to work by 'addressing the unofficial mass meeting'.

We said we would only on condition that the victimisation threat was lifted and that we were free to put the

trade union point of view about the wages and conditions offer.

This was agreed, so we went ahead. Over the past few years there have been a number of defeats for Leyland workers on wages, jobs, and other issues, mainly as many articles in 'Militant' have pointed out, because of the lack of clear leadership from the national trade union officials and in particular from the combine shop stewards committee. This led to a position where Edwardes and his management, in their arrogance, thought they could not lose.

At the same time a feeling grew on the shop floor that we could not win over issues like redundancies. Now, as I have said, the mood is changing.

A battle on wages is

looming for the whole of British Leyland. Undoubtedly in the course of this struggle, just as with the steel workers, other issues, like jobs and the reinstatement of Derek Robinson, will be taken up.

The battle-cry of the steel workers: 'Enough is enough', is now being echoed by BL workers.

★ **Reject the Company's offer—all out for the full trade union claim of £24 across the board, linked to the cost of living, and a 35-hour week.**

★ **No to victimisation—reinstate Robinson.**

★ **Fight all redundancies and plant closures.**

★ **Sack Edwardes—full workers' control and management of British Leyland.**

FROM FRONT PAGE

ACTION NOW

BSC plans to shed 11,300 at Llanwern and Port Talbot. The Welsh TUC estimates this will cost a total loss of jobs of at least 50,000, and it could possibly lead to a catastrophic 100,000 jobs disappearing!

This would turn South Wales into an industrial wasteland, with the return of mass unemployment and poverty on a horrifying scale.

Burning anger at the Tory measures, led the Welsh TUC to call for an all-out general strike on 10 March. The strike of a quarter of a million steel men, miners, and transport workers on 28th January, indicates the massive support there will be for this further call for action in defence of jobs, living standards, and trade union rights.

This call from the Welsh TUC underlines the urgent need for the TUC to prepare for national protest action against the Tory government.

Immediate preparations should be begun by the TUC in conjunction with all affiliated unions, for a 24-hour general strike against the Tory government, on the issues of jobs, wages, and trade union rights.

The Tories have made it clear that their new anti-trade union law will give legal force to Lord Denning's ban—now overturned by the Lords on "secondary" [i.e. effective] picketing.

Their so-called "Employment Bill" will remove many of the reforms contained in Labour's Employment Protection Act, as well as abolish vital trade union rights established through generations of

struggle.

Breaking the power of the organisations which defend living standards and rights is part and parcel of the Tories' plan to boost big business's profits at the expense of working people.

Thatcher and Co. claim to be curing a chronically sick British capitalism through ruthless control of the money supply, brutal cuts in public expenditure, and by letting 'free market' forces rip. In reality, however, they are speeding up the 'de-industrialisation' of Britain.

None of British capitalism's rivals is carrying out such a suicidal policy. Even the EEC Commission, reported the 'Guardian' [29 January], has expressed surprise that "the proposed cut-backs in steel-making capacity goes further than is justified by the steel outlook."

The Commission expressed concern about the severe social consequences of the speed at which BSC is pursuing its closure plan.

"One suspicion is that the British government may not want to indicate what money is available in Brussels in order not to weaken the stand taken by BSC on the pay claim." In other words, the Tories are hell-bent on cutting back steel, regardless of the consequences for workers.

They are even blind to the long-term interests of British big business!

In the case of coking coal, for instance, the government is backing BSC's decision to import more and more of the coking coal it needs, on the grounds that imported coal is

cheaper.

They ignore the fact that while coking coal in Britain is subsidised by only £1 a tonne, it is subsidised by £24 a tonne in Belgium, £14 in France and £11 in Germany.

No wonder imported coal is cheaper!

No wonder, with big business politicians like this, Britain is "face to face with economic disaster," as the Tory Secretary of State for Wales, Nicholas Edwards, told Pembroke Tories last week.

There is growing support for action against Tory attacks on living standards

Edwards also revealed the appalling fact the British government is now paying nearly £10,000 million a year in debt interest on government expenditure. This is more than the total budget for health and social services, education or defence.

It is estimated, moreover, that the recent increase in interest charges will add a further £500 million to these debt charges this year.

This astronomical debt is a crippling burden on Britain's economy. Yet of course the financiers, the banks, the speculators, the private owners of government gilt-edged securities, are all raking in a fortune in interest payments from these vast debts.

Compared to that vast sum, the £1 million paid out so far in social security to the wives and children of striking steel

workers is chicken feed. But this has not prevented the Tories, notably Labour renegade Reg Prentice, now Tory minister for social security, from launching a vicious attack on 'parasitic' steel strikers.

What they don't broadcast is that about six out of seven striking steel workers have received no cash at all from social security ['The Times', 31 January].

Not only are the bosses out to undermine the right to strike with new anti-trade union laws, but they are pressing for the Tories to deny social security to the wives and children of strikers—to try to starve strikers back to work.

But the determined, united action of steel workers, with magnificent solidarity from miners, dockers, lorry drivers and other workers, has given the Tories their answer.

Thatcher and Co miscalculated. They thought that because the steelworkers previously accepted big job losses, they would not fight a derisory 2% pay offer.

But tens of thousands of steelworkers—some of whom were perhaps only half-hearted at the beginning—are now absolutely determined to win.

Already they have turned down 8% and there is an overwhelming demand for a 20% increase without strings.

In the private sector, the big majority of steelworkers have come out in enthusiastic support of strike action, especially after Lord Denning's short-lived attempt to stop them.

The determined, united action of steel workers, now reinforced by the withdrawal of safety cover in many plants, is a symptom of the

burning anger felt by workers generally at the vicious anti-working class measures of Thatcher's government.

There is a growing, mass mood of support for action to halt the Tories' attacks on living standards, jobs, education and welfare services, and trade union rights. That is why the TUC must now give a lead in calling a 24-hour

general strike.

We must also step up the fight for the labour movement to organise mass campaigns based on socialist policies capable of solving the problems facing workers, and preparing the way for the return of a Labour government committed to a fundamental socialist change in society.



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