

# TORIES MAKE CHILDREN SUFFER

“Make cuts in candy floss items so that more money can be spent on the police,” says Tory councillor Ronald Wootton, Chairman of the West Midlands Police Committee.

Asked last week what he meant by “candy floss”, he replied: “I think that large economic inroads can be made into education and social services.”

This hard-nosed Tory will undoubtedly be applauding Thatcher's latest round of cuts, which will have a brutal effect on the education and the welfare of children.

Even some backbench Tory MPs are in revolt against the cuts that would be possible under the Tories' Education Bill. They don't mind ruthless cuts that will hit mainly at workers in the cities, but they are up in arms about cuts that will have a devastating effect on people in rural—usually Tory—areas. Their own votes are at stake.

School meal charges would be increased to

## CUTS COULD COST ANOTHER £10 A WEEK

Photo: MILITANT



By Bob Wade

about 55p a day, i.e. £5.50 a week for a family with two children, previously receiving free school meals.

The Child Poverty Action Group estimates that half-a-million children who usually get free school meals will now

have to pay unless local authorities use their discretionary favours to allow free school meals for needy children whose parents are not entitled to supplementary benefits or family income supplement.

But even this last group, at present entitled to free school meals, will not be legally protected under the new Act. The government merely states

its 'intention' that they will get free meals.

There has already been a drop over the last two years in the number of children getting free school meals, as the means-test has made more and more families ineligible. For many children, school meals [for all their inadequacies!] are a vital part of their nourishment, and the

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Photo: MILITANT

Workers on the TUC demonstration on March 9th  
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## Don't miss YS Conference

Last weekend's TUC march showed one thing for certain. The working class won't put up with the Thatcher government.

In February, thousands of young workers marched through South London on an anti-Tory demonstration called by the Labour Party Young Socialists.

They were not only showing their anger, but their determination to fight to get rid of the Tories and to work for a Labour government committed to a socialist programme.

This Easter [April 4th to 7th] the LPYS are holding their annual conference in Llandudno. Three days of debates on the policies needed to fight back against the Tories.

Three days of discus-

sions on the socialist policies that the LPYS will be fighting for. Three days of social activities, discos etc too.

Pete Skerret, a member of Coventry AUEW and Junior Workers' Committee, told Militant:

“Our committee supported the YS national march and I, at least, will be going to the conference.”

“Any young trade unionist should get involved in the LPYS in the fight for socialism. If we're going to get a better deal, we'll only do it when we get the gaffers off our backs once and for all.”

If you come to LPYS Conference, we're sure you'll agree with Pete Skerret. Don't waste your Easter! Come to Llandudno.

See page 4 for details.

# Militant

## STEP UP ACTION TO BRING DOWN THE TORIES!

140,000 workers marched through London last Sunday in a mighty demonstration of protest against the Tory government's anti-union laws and its economic policies. Just ten months of Thatcher rule has provoked the biggest union demonstration since the anti-Industrial Relations Act march in 1971.

For more than four hours the demonstrators filed out of Hyde Park. Many contingents had a high proportion of young workers probably never before involved in a demonstration.

A large contingent behind the LPYS banner were applauded as they entered Trafalgar Square singing the 'Internationale'. The mood of the demonstration was one of anger, but also of determination that the 12-million strong trade union movement would defeat the Tories.

At the end of the demonstration, though, many workers were asking: "Where do we go from here?" The strength of feeling of the union members was not matched by the leaderships. Some unions, like the steelworkers and the TGWU, had impressive turnouts, but others like the EETPU, had very few banners present. Practically every union, however, took part. Some, which only a few years ago were dormant, semi-company unions, had mobilised hundreds of their members.

The TUC and the affiliated unions called a demonstration, and often with the minimum of effort, had mobilised 140,000 workers. What could have been done if the unions had pulled out all the stops and organised mass meetings to explain the significance of the protest?

This question of a clear national lead will be vital if a real labour movement campaign against the Tories is to be built.

After the demonstration only a handful of demonstrators stayed in Trafalgar Square to listen to the speeches of the trade union leaders. No clear lead was forthcoming.

Speakers pointed out the effect that the Tories were having on the working class: the devastation of the steel areas, the spiralling cost of living, the vicious attacks on union rights, which made the present government the most reactionary this cen-

ture. Len Murray, the TUC general secretary, was quite correct when he pointed out that the TUC represented the voice of the majority of Britain's population. The Tories were determined, in the interests of big business, to encourage unemployment as a means of weakening the unions' ability to defend jobs and living standards.

But the meeting listened in vain for any real explanation as to why the Tories were carrying through cuts and seeking to nobble the trade unions.

The speakers from the right to those left members of the General Council, variously described Thatcher and Joseph as "wicked", "evil", "stupid", etc.

All can agree with this characterisation of Thatcher and Co. But this is not the reason why the Tory cabinet are seeking to carry through ruthless cuts in living standards.

**FULL REPORT ON TUC DEMO SEE FACING PAGE**

It arises from the terrible crisis of British capitalism which the organ of big business, 'The Times', described as being one of 'irreversible decline'.

The capitalists have concluded that the only way to rescue their system is by slashing living standards and boosting profits.

To defend present standards, never mind improving them, is linked to the need to end the decayed system of British capitalism.

But the trade union leadership fail to pose the issue in this way. They lull workers to sleep with the fairy tale that talks with the Tory cabinet could somehow persuade the hard-nosed Tory government to change course.

Len Murray's speech was one of conciliation towards this rich man's government. He said: "We have offered Mr Prior—and I repeat this offer today—our willingness to sit down with the government and put any problems on the table." This idea, which aroused

great hostility from the audience, is a recipe for disaster.

The gulf between the classes, resulting from Tory policies, means that any attempt at agreement between the TUC and Thatcher is very unlikely, if not completely ruled out.

There was similar impatience by workers at the lack of any clear programme for "action"—which was demanded by chanting demonstrators during the speeches—to defeat the Tory government.

There was no clear call to make 14 May a total one-day general strike.

Len Murray rightly stressed the need for unity amongst the labour movement, but that unity must be based on bold socialist policies to fight the Tories.

The unions can defeat the Tory plans. The fighting spirit of the steelworkers should be the example. Tories like Rhodes Boyson have claimed that they are not impressed by mass pickets and demonstrations, only by reasoned parliamentary debate.

This is nonsense! The only time the Tories are "impressed" is when the workers move into action. It is action, particularly by the steelworkers the Tories thought they would easily defeat, which has brought the splits in Thatcher's government.

The Day of Action on 14 May is now crucial in the fight against the Tories. The TUC must organise to ensure that it is not just a token day of opposition. It must be turned into an effective one-day general strike with millions of trade unionists actively involved through mass meetings and demonstrations to explain the Tory threat and put forward an alternative.

Such a campaign would have a tremendous effect on the working class. It could act as a launching pad for a mass campaign to force the Tories to resign and call a general election.

The prospect of a Labour government has little appeal, at least to the active workers, if it merely repeats the policies of the 1974-'79 government. After all, it was only just over a year ago that large sections of the trade union movement had to fight the Labour government for a living wage.

The demonstration on Sunday showed the depth of feeling amongst working people. A clear lead from the top, both in action against the Tories and to re-arm the movement with socialist policies, are essential to harness the power and enthusiasm of millions and millions of workers.



### Sheffield Labour Party Young Socialists and ZANU [PF] Joint Public Meeting

'WHICH WAY FOR THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REVOLUTION?'  
Hear: Jim Chrystie [Hackney Labour Party]; A member of ZANU [PF] UK Section. Tuesday 18 March, 7.30pm. Clubs and Societies room, 1st Floor, Union Building, Sheffield Polytechnic, Pond Street.  
See also article on Page 10 "What future for Zimbabwe?"

## Mersey conference against cuts

By Derek Hatton  
[Liverpool Labour Councillor]

More and more Labour Parties, Labour groups, and local authority unions are realising that the destruction of local government is now becoming a reality. Housing, social services, education and all other services are threatened with decimation under the direction of this Tory government.

In Liverpool on the 22nd of this month Labour Parties

and trade union from many areas will be assembling in Liverpool for an national anti-cuts conference organised by the Merseyside anti-cuts committee.

There must be a move to increase the pressure on the national leadership of the trade unions and Labour Party to guarantee that the Labour Party calls a special conference to give a lead against the cuts in public expenditure.

The Merseyside conference will attempt to co-ordinate the different actions around the country and link them to a political commitment to the return of a Labour government with a bold socialist programme to ensure a massive increase in public spending.

## Brighton-Oppose fascists

By Rod Fitch  
[Convenor, Brighton Committee Against Racism]



In a vain attempt to boost their flagging support, the NF, in the form of the Sussex Front, are planning a march in Brighton on Saturday 29 March. They intend to end their march with a rally on the Brighton Level. This is a

traditional rallying point for the labour movement, and the encroachment of fascists cannot be tolerated.

We call on all labour organisations and anti-fascist groups in the South of England to join a counter-demonstration, starting at the Brighton Level, Lewes Road, at 10.15 am on Saturday 29 March. More details will be published next week.

Workers give their verdict . . .

# THATCHER OUT-SOCIALISM IN

Photo: MILITANT



Ten months of Tory rule has fuelled the anger of trade unionists throughout the country

**"I'm going to 10 Downing Street. I'm going to punch Mrs Thatcher on the nose for closing down the steel works!"**

This simple expression of anger from the five-year-old daughter of Corby steelworkers' leader Mick Skelton well

summed up the mood of the tens of thousands of trade unionists who took to the streets on Sunday to demonstrate against the Tories.

There have been many TUC demonstrations in recent years, yet this must have been one of the most expressive

anti-Tory marches in recent times.

The many home-made placards summed up the mood—one beneath a picture of Thatcher proclaimed 'Hitler fooled us all: he's had a sex change,' and another—'Thatcher's got one, Joseph is

one.'

The demonstration was massive—the TGWU or the GMWU contingents were demonstrations in themselves. A huge turnout by the ISTC was well received by the crowd—their anger and determination was well voiced throughout the day.

There was well over the official TUC figure of 140,000 on the march—as one Young Socialist commented on arriving at Hyde Park to a forest of union banners—"blimey, and they haven't passed the bill yet!"

The Tory press immediately tried to play down the massive turnout, claiming only 30,000 turned out. Even the 'The Times', usually noted for its accuracy, said there were only 30,000, but then went on to say: "When the rally finished at 4.30 pm contingents were still filing into Trafalgar Square." If there were only 30,000, they must have been walking very slowly!

The marchers were angry—and for the many trade unionists who came down from the depressed areas of the North, and South Wales, parading through the exclusive area of the West End was an angry experience. As they passed the Hilton there were cries of 'Have you had your cuts yet?'

Outside the Dorchester, a well-dressed young executive, complete in knee length seal skin coat, hurriedly retreated back into the exclusive hotel, when he was met by a chorus of wolf whistles.

What will worry the bosses is that the demo was not simply 'anti-Tory'—large sections, especially from the GMWU were chanting 'Thatcher out—socialism in'. The mood well summed up by a Brentwood AUEW member: "The whole system's crazy—they can put a man on the moon, but they don't give a monkeys about us down here."

"It's no good just getting Labour back in though, and leave it at that—Callaghan's lot were just a watered down version of the Tories. We need a strong labour movement with a good left wing leadership, who'll actually carry out socialist policies."

As Stan Sheridan of the South Yorkshire ISTC strike committee told Militant during the demo, "I think the demonstration is good, but we want some action from the leaders. Up and down the country whenever we meet workers, we get offers of support. But the leaders of the ISTC have got to push for the unions to support the strike fully. The members of the TGWU and NUM would help if they were asked."

Pickets from the occupation at Stone Platt, in Oldham, said, "It's our fourth week of occupation. The AUEW should be making it official this week."

"Our management are diabolical. They told us they couldn't afford to keep us, but they've got money—£4 million to invest in a factory in South Korea. They've got no trade union rights there—the Tories and multinationals like Stone Platt would like it like that here."

As usual, the police carried out an extensive surveillance operation. The now usual helicopter observation was greeted with cries of 'why don't you cut that' and, when it hovered over the ISTC contingent, one steelworker cried, 'It's a bird, it's a plane—no it's Villiers. Run for your lives before he crashes that as well!'

As the 200 strong group behind the Labour Party Young Socialists' banner, leading the large Labour Party contingent, marched into Trafalgar Square, a small remote control police camera perched on an office block whirred around to study them—it received derisive cheers and shouts of 'hello big brother'.

The massive demonstration was a great success and must be backed by further trade union action—working people are not prepared to sit back and let the Tories get away with it.

As a student nurse from Suffolk said, "It's great to see so many people prepared to get out onto the street and show their anger at the Tories—working people must get off their backsides and show Thatcher she can't get away with it."

## Fighting the closures . . .

### MECCANO-THIEVES IN THE NIGHT

Well it finally happened at Meccano's this morning, the 102nd day of the occupation of the factory. Like "thieves in the night", at 5.30 am this morning the bailiffs finally forced their way in.

This was after a previous attempt the day before to gain entrance. They arrived at the door, and

By John Price

(LPYS and EETPU, personal capacity)

knocked saying that they were from the Sheriff's office.

One of the occupying force said 'wait a minute' and sounded the alarm. But the bailiffs did not

wait and immediately attacked the door. With axes, sledge hammers and metal bars they forced their way in.

It was a horrific sight, as 40 bailiffs from all over Lancashire, wearing red arm bands, rushed into the factory like a mob of hooligans, followed by 100 policemen.

We were then manhandled out of the factory by the 40 bailiffs, who looked and acted as a well

trained commando unit. As soon as the workers from Meccano got outside, the word was passed and within ten minutes trade unionists and Labour Party members started to arrive to set up a picket line outside the factory.

Our struggle will continue, though, not inside as before, but outside with the support of trade unionists everywhere.

### MASSEY FERGUSON - MORALE HIGH

The mood of bitter opposition to Thatcher's government and the capitalist class they represent is shown by the occupations currently taking place, particularly in North West England.

Meccano workers have been brutally evicted by the bailiffs where the 'impartial' legal system immediately ran to the aid of private property—when workers acted to protect their jobs and living standards.

Other occupations are continuing. Stone Platt workers are now in the fourth week of occupation (see above) and workers at Massey Ferguson are carrying on their struggle. Frank Yates [AUEW convenor], Ron Barry [AUEW deputy convenor] and Richie Wilkinson [T&GWU shop

steward], talked to Jim McGinley [Ormskirk Labour Party].

"Discipline, morale and cleanliness are very high in the factory, the food is better than when Massey Ferguson was in charge and we will remain in occupation while the paint-sprayers are preparing the food."

"Local factories and suppliers have been giving us

food at cost price. Fuel has been donated free. Local shopkeepers have been helping in giving out leaflets and the Labour Party Young Socialists have also been active in our support.

"The Duke of Edinburgh came to Liverpool last Friday. Workers went there—with a banner saying "We pulled our fingers out—and had them cut off."

### SWINDON OCCUPATION

Another factory was occupied by its workforce today [Tuesday]. Workers at Compton Sons & Webb, a tailoring firm in Swindon, took this action when 250 people were threatened with redundancy. The firm made £2 million profit last year—but they are not even offering redundancy payments. If they have been working there for 20 years they may be 'offered' £1,000! But the workers are fighting all redundancies.

### SEND YOUR SUPPORT

★ Meccano. Messages of support and financial aid to: Mike Egan, GMWU officer, 99 Edge Lane, Liverpool.

★ Massey Ferguson. Messages of support to Hayden Burns, 46 Kempton Park Road, Aintree, Liverpool 10. Financial aid to William Naylor, 1 Lyndhurst, Maghull L31 6DY. Cheques payable to Massey Ferguson Combined Union Appeal.

★ Stone Platt. Messages of support and financial aid c/o Eddie Holland, 70 Lord Street, Oldham, Lancs.

### SCOTTISH TUC DEMO

There were hundreds of brightly-coloured banners, twelve pipe bands and all the attendant regalia and over 10,000 demonstrators—trade unionists and their families, and hundreds of Labour Party members.

They made the Scottish TUC's march through Glasgow last Saturday into a magnificent display of opposition to the Tory government.

On marches in the past, particularly under Labour governments, where only often hardened activists turned out, the mood was often downcast. Today the mood of the workers was confident, gained by the feeling that they

represented the almost universal opposition to the Tories in Scotland.

The feeling of confidence was reinforced by the extremely sympathetic response from the thousands lining the streets. Looking down Renfield Street, the crowds could be seen to almost merge with the marchers.

The slogans were against public expenditure cuts, particularly in the health service; against closures in steel and elsewhere; against unemployment, demanding a 35-hour week.

Reflecting the growth in support for 'Militant' in Scotland, we had more sellers out than any other journal. Hundreds of copies were sold.

The publicity generously afforded to the 'Militant' by the media has not been without effect. "There's the one they're always talking about," I heard one marcher say, pointing to the paper.

# WE'RE GOING TO YS CONFERENCE....

**There are just four weeks to go to the most important conference in the Labour Party Young Socialists' history.**

The prospect of mass unemployment and impoverishment which is offered by the employing class, will throw millions of youth into the struggle against the Tories. They need a political voice which expresses their needs and aspirations.

This conference must gear the LPYS up to the fight of strengthening the branches so that the LPYS can lead the youth against the Tories and their system.

Every LPYS member must be at the conference to hear the debates, participate in the discussions and swap experiences. Young and old trade unionists should be brought along to help spread

the ideas of the LPYS. So get round to see the rest of the LPYS members now.

It's not too late. Nor is it too late to visit the local trade union branches and shop stewards' committees in the workplaces. Ask them to send and to finance visitors from their factories—or help a young unemployed or school student visitor to attend.

But ask now! No member of the LPYS should be stopped from going just because he or she can't afford it! Make sure your LPYS branch raises money through collections, discos etc. to help out.

Build the Labour Party Young Socialists! Come to our conference!



Photo: MILITANT

- ★ Have you asked your trade union branch for sponsorship or a donation?
- ★ Have you asked your shop stewards' committee to arrange a meeting of all young workers to speak to them about the LPYS and the conference?
- ★ Have you asked your workmates to go?
- ★ Have you had a collection in your local party or in the Labour Club?

More and more sections of the movement are recognising the value of the LPYS conference. The Bakers' Union are sending three members from Manchester. The AUEW TASS are sending two visitors as are the NUPE branch of St Mary's Hospital, West London.

The shopworkers' union, USDAW, are sending a member from the North West and St Helens Trades Council are sending three. Bendix Westinghouse TGWU branch 3/7228 are also sponsoring a young worker.

## ... ARE YOU?



Anne Beales is a 22-year-old residential worker in a children's home:

"I joined the LPYS after the 1979 conference. I was so impressed with the answers I found there that I decided, obviously, the YS is where I should be.

"My friend at work was in the LPYS and we had just been through a strike for better wages and hours. I learnt a lot from that. The authorities tried to use the

local church to break the strike.

"They sent nuns and monks to cross our picket lines. Of course we didn't want the kids to suffer but the nuns' lack of experience in dealing with severely handicapped kids would have made things worse.

"We won the monks over and the monastery has now blacked the nuns who scabbed! Because of our action two monks who work with us have since joined the Labour Party.

"The mood has changed amongst working people. The response when we canvass is absolutely tremendous. I'm certainly going to the conference this year."



Helen Cajarda Singh, 18-year-old school student:

"I think the LPYS is a vital movement in Britain. Young people need to get organised and the LPYS has the best ideas. If you want socialism you have to get involved where it counts."



Leigh Riley, 22 years old, St Pancras North YS:

"I thought the London LPYS conference was tremendous so the national conference should be even better.



An 18-year-old typist and Hendon South YS member:

"They call this a democratic society with free speech but when my boss saw me on TV selling the 'Militant', I was told not to be seen on there again because it was bad for the company's image. The company employs 350,000 people."

I've only just joined the LPYS but it's clear to me that they have the ideas to start a real fight back against the Tories and the bosses' system."

John McShea, an 18-year-old apprentice printer:

"You hear all the arguments. I joined the LPYS because I thought that I should get involved and not just talk about politics."



Jaap Johnson, 18 years old, Hammersmith North YS member:

"I wanted to go to university but the grant isn't enough to live on. I joined the YS because I wanted to get involved in the working class struggle against the Tories and Thatcher's cuts.

"I have recently been in hospital and I had three operations for a bone marrow transplant on my right leg. Every day the porters came into the wards looking for spare beds.

"The hospital was so short of space that I got moved from ward to ward to make room for more urgent cases. In the end I was kicked out because even though I was in a pretty bad condition, and in the orthopaedics unit, the burns unit was full and some badly burned firemen had to have beds.

"Three firemen burned and the hospital was full. Even someone in traction with broken fingers, arms, etc. was kicked out.

"It makes you realise what they mean when they say 'Cuts can kill'."

**Come to Llandudno**

**Come to the 1980 Labour Party Young Socialists' conference. Three days of debates, discussions, discos and social activities. Don't waste your Easter—come to Llandudno from April 4th to 7th. Contact Andy Bevan, National Youth Officer, Labour Party, 144-152 Walworth Road, S.E.17, or your local LPYS branch.**

# STUDENT FIGHT NEEDS SOCIALIST POLICIES

**Around 10,000 students marched in pouring rain last Friday to protest against the Tory education cuts and fee increases. The demonstration, called by NUS, also demanded a 36% increase in grants.**

The NUS are also calling for the scrapping of the notorious "means test" system, which expects parents to subsidise students' grants to the full level.

Often, they can't afford to do this, causing enormous

By Peter Lush

financial hardship. Over 70% of students don't get the full amount due. The leadership of NUS should fight for their full claim and not draw up compromises with the Tory axemen.

Trevor Phillips, NUS President, said at the Rally before the march that thousands of parents had protested against the present grants system. Further education students faced a 'tragic' situation—usually getting grants of £3

per week or less, many receiving no grant at all.

He said that students were not prepared to accept the overseas student fee increases of up to 500%. If implemented, they would mean course closures. He emphasised that students shouldn't just fight for themselves, but to defend all who rely on public expenditure.

He called on all students' unions to support the TUC Day of Action on May 14th, and close down every college in solidarity with the trade unions to protest against the government's policies.

Every Labour Club should

mobilise student unions to support the May 14th stoppage. But there must also be a continuing campaign against the cuts, linking the student and labour movements. Local action must be organised to back up national mobilisations.

But the NUS leaders have failed to explain how their demands can be won. The demands now are not fundamentally different from what NUS were calling for in 1972/3—for a 'fair' grant, abolition of the means test, etc.

NUS must advocate socialist policies as the only way

that gains won by the working class in education can be guaranteed.

NUS should fight for:

- ★ A living grant of £2,000 a year for all students.
- ★ A grant of £20 per week for 16-18 year olds in higher education.
- ★ Stop all cuts.
- ★ Abolish all tuition fees!
- ★ A massive programme of public works—more schools, colleges, hospitals and homes.
- ★ Nationalise the banks, finance houses and major monopolies.

The support of NUS for the May 14th Day of Action is to be welcomed. But the voice of

the student movement should be heard in the labour movement.

Clive Jenkins, at the rally, on behalf of the TUC, pledged support for students in their fight for better grants. The labour movement has a long record of fighting for a decent education system.

The interests of students lie with the working class. NUS should fight for affiliation to the TUC and the Labour Party, as the only way forward in the turbulent years ahead.

# LEFT and RIGHT

## Democracy?

ZANU'S landslide victory brought a predictable response from Tories like Julian Amery, right-wing MP for Brighton Pavilion. Mugabe's triumph meant, he said, a "handover to a Marxist, pro-Soviet regime." The result was a "sad chapter" in the annals of democracy. But Amery's idea of supporting democracy is strange. In January 1969 he shared a platform in Brighton with Georgio Almirante, leader of Italy's neo-fascist party, the MSI—responsible for the murder of labour activists and bombing outrages which claimed scores of dead and injured. But extreme anti-democratic views appear to be part of the Amery heritage. His father, Leo Amery, was notorious for his enthusiastic support for Japan's intervention in China and Hitler's seizure of power in 1933. This didn't prevent Churchill appointing him Secretary of State for India and Burma [1940-45]. Leo's other son, John, worked for the Nazis during the war and was subsequently executed as a traitor. The Blunt affair, however, brought a new tirade about traitors from Julian. There were at least a dozen treacherous MPs, he told Robin Day in a radio interview, "who more or less follow the Communist Party line and are in regular contact with the Soviet Embassy." Needless to say, he declined to name names.

## Healthy respect

ONE of 'The Times' windy sermons was recently punctured by a Fleet Street rival. Writing in the Tory 'Sunday Telegraph' recently, Peregrine Worsthorne commented on Rees-Mogg's "long editorial advocating changes in industrial relations along West German lines, with a view to reducing trade union bargaining power to the German level." He goes on: "What it forgot to mention, however, was that its worst defeat at the hands of trade unionism took place in Germany when plans for publishing an overseas edition [during the lockout in Britain—ed] were scuppered by naked terrorism [i.e. solidarity ac-

tion by German print workers—ed] in spite of the pro-managerial state of industrial law in that country." There is no doubt of Worsthorne's deep class hostility to the labour movement. But unlike the more blinkered Tories, he at least has a healthy respect for the strength of organised workers.

## SAVAK torture admitted

DESPITE massive cover-up efforts, the truth about the CIA's dirty role in Iran is coming out. "Of course we were aware of SAVAK torture. It was common knowledge..." Yet another ex-CIA agent has blown the whistle on the gangster organisation which used to employ him. "Being based in Washington," revealed Jesse Leaf in a recent article in the American magazine 'Nation', "I constantly heard stories from returning CIA agents about SAVAK torture." Official confirmation comes from a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, still designated "Secret" but quoted on CBS television, which described how the CIA helped finance and train the Shah's Gestapo-style secret police and trained SAVAK agents, many of them, including its chief, in Washington. "At one point I was going to write a report on SAVAK torture but I was told not to," Leaf said. "The head of the CIA at the time was Richard Helms. Did he know about it? Well you'd have to be blind, deaf and dumb, or a Presidential candidate, not to know there was torture going on in Iran...I saw from various sources descriptions of SAVAK torture rooms in Tehran. We knew what was happening and we did nothing about it. And I was told not to do anything about it." Of course, the plight of the American hostages in Tehran is a useful diversion for the media. But throughout the world—including Britain where the Agency has for years worked at the penetration of the labour movement—workers are becoming more and more conscious of the murderous, counter-revolutionary role of the CIA.

## Final Day of a Sun investigation into the Labour Party

By DAVID MERTENS  
and JOHN LISNERS

A DANGEROUS ultra-Left movement is eating its way into the heart of the Labour Party.

Militant Tendency — the name given to supporters of a Marxist newspaper called Militant — make no secret of their long-term ambition. They want to take over the Party.

They have:

● TWO THOUSAND workers controlled by 66 full-time paid organisers.

● A POWERFUL influence in 50 constituencies.

● THEIR own weekly newspaper.

● LARGE sums of money coming from secret sources.

● A SPECIAL campaign to influence schoolchildren and students.

● A SUCCESSFUL take-over of the Labour Party's Young Socialist movement.

**Spy**

And a top Labour Party official has received solid evidence that Militant Tendency has ordered its members to spy and report on Labour politicians to oust them from their seats.

The evidence comes from distressed parents of several young members who were ordered to undertake these cloak-and-dagger activities.

The parents gave the information on the understanding that their identities would not be

## The five who lead the way



BEVAN: fierce row BRADLEY: NEC member

OFFICIALLY, the Militant Tendency has no leaders. But five men have a great say in formulating policy.

TED GRANT, a South African connected with many ultra-Left movements over the past 20 years. Once belonged to the Revolutionary Communist Party. Now political editor of Militant.

ANDY BEVAN, 37, Labour's National Youth Officer on the Party's National Executive. Appointed after a fierce row in the

constitution.

Labour Party. His wife, Carol, a Trotskyite, helped unseat Reg Prentice in Newham North East.

NICK BRADLEY, 25, formerly leader of the Young Socialists, with an NEC seat.

PETER TAAPPE, 37, from Liverpool. Editor of Militant and director of Cambridge Health Ltd, which owns the newspaper.

TONY SAUNOIS, 23, the Young Socialist representative on the NEC. He lives in Nottingham.

body modelled on a guerrilla army.

# THE DANGER THAT LURKS IN THE LEFT

INVESTIGATORS from The Sun attended a Militant meeting held at Labour Party headquarters in Portsmouth last week.

There, Clare Doyle, who is on Militant's editorial board, expounded the group's ideas.

Both Sun reporters were closely questioned about their political beliefs, membership of trade unions and asked for their names and addresses.

Every person in the room had to identify themselves, and party officials were aware of the political stand of those attending, even though it was a public meeting.

When two people walked out only 10 minutes after the meeting began, Ms Doyle was told they were members of the Socialist Workers' Party, an opposition group.

**Fierce**

## How they get at the kids

their ends by properly organised meetings and the right kind of propaganda.

Later a shop steward said: "We try to get school children to talk about Militant in schools, and have distributed leaflets outside the school gates."

# SUNLIES

The 'Sun' has never been noted for its objective reporting, but last week's "investigation" into the 'Militant's' activities just about capped the lot!

By Clare Doyle

Two 'Sun' reporters recently attended a 'Militant' public meeting incognito, and later interviewed one of our editors. But the 'Sun's' "investigators" then proceeded to distort—or completely ignore—everything that had been said to them.

They printed Shirley Williams' innuendoes about 'Militant's' 'secret funds', rather than the clear statement published in a copy of 'Militant' that was given to them. They made allegations about school children sent to 'spy' on Labour politicians and claimed to be in touch with unidentified and 'terrified' parents.

They themselves "spied" on a Portsmouth Readers' meeting in the guise of "planners" from London working locally!

It is of course, quite normal to pass round an address list for those who are interested in receiving notices of further meetings. To give a sinister impression, however, it was reported as "Every person in the room having to identify themselves".

They described a friendly chat in the pub afterwards as being "closely questioned on their political beliefs, membership of trade unions etc".

They apparently found it sensational that the chairman of the meeting (a 'Party' (?) official) actually recognised two local members of the Socialist Workers' Party (who attended for 10 minutes of the meeting).

They 'report' Clare Doyle making a long speech but implied that it was all about 'How they get at the kids' (the 'dramatic' heading given

to this section of the page). In fact it was the 'Sun' 'planners', acting like 'agents provocateurs', who kept suggesting that Militant should 'get into the schools'.

In reply to their insistence on this, they were told that there certainly was great interest aroused amongst school students and young workers in the fight against the Tories, the cuts, unemployment, as shown on the march against the cuts in Lambeth and the huge youth demo on February 2nd.

Labour Party Young Socialist speakers had been invited into schools and it was hoped that this would happen more often, in spite of some teachers still being opposed to this.

These comments were unscrupulously transformed into a 'warning' from 'Ms Doyle' that 'Headmasters and teachers were not sympathetic to Militant supporters openly canvassing at schools' and 'members (of the LPYS?) having to be careful'!

Another Militant supporter—obviously further pressed in this issue—referred to LPYS leafletting of schools etc and a meeting of 70 young people where Andy Bevan had spoken in Portsmouth the previous week. His comments were given the same sensational and distorted treatment about "getting to young minds before they are associated with other points of view" etc!

These 'spies' were particularly keen on the idea of 'entryism' and asked in the meeting what we thought of it as a tactic. In summing up, I referred to a left Labour MP's comment on the problems of 'exitism'—not, as they 'reported', of 'Labour MPs after

they are elected'—but of members leaving local parties where right-wing MPs engender no enthusiasm for building up the Party.

This was contrasted with examples of growth in Labour Party membership in areas where Militant supporters had drawn in bakers, lorry drivers, and other workers as the result of active support given during their struggles for a better deal. The idea of 'parachuting' into a constituency was shown to be ridiculous and contemptuous of Labour Party rank and file. Yet the 'Sun' continues to peddle this fairy tale.

The two 'investigators' at the Portsmouth meeting weren't even concerned with accurate reporting in the first place. They didn't take full notes or use a tape recorder. Really, they had no need to! They went to the meeting with the answers to their questions pre-ordained. The 'Sun's' role of attacking the labour movement as a whole, and the left in particular, dictated what they had to say.

For example, they asked

## NATO subsidy to Labour right-wingers confirmed

It was confirmed in parliament last week that over £30,000 has been given by NATO to a right-wing group within the Labour Party over the last five years.

In a written reply to Lord Brockway, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, gave figures showing that NATO had provided the so-called "Labour and Trades Union Press Service" with between £6,000 and £7,000 a year since 1976, a total of £32,335.

This represented most of the £48,000 grants NATO paid to "political and publicity organisations" in Britain. This year the L&TUPS is to get a £7,150 grant.

Prominent sponsors of the "Labor Committee for Transatlantic Understanding", which runs the press service, are Roy Mason, Roy Hattersley, David Owen, and Wil-

how many more Prentices and Sandelsons there were in the Party. When someone in the meeting said she had heard somewhere of 80 MPs who would like to cross the floor of the House, that was good enough for the 'Sun'! This became a 'plot' to oust 80 MPs!

In the other articles on the same page, nearly every line is a gross distortion. How anyone who attended a Militant Public Meeting on 'What we stand for' can give out Militant's programme as one of 'very high import controls' or 'abolishing religion' and 'controlling the movement of people' is difficult to believe.

But of course, these hacks daily prostitute whatever talent they may have in the service of the millionaires of Fleet Street. One consolation was that at least £1 of the 'Sun's' money went into 'Militant's' funds during the collection: without contributing, these 'under-cover' agents would have stuck out like a sore thumb!

At was stressed at the meeting, 'Militant' must step up its propaganda to counter the lies and distortions of the gutter press.

Get the paper that tells the truth and accurately reports what workers say.

Help build our resources! Forget the Sun: Get Militant!

liam Rogers. Among trade union sponsors are Frank Chapple of the EETPU and Terry Duffy of the AUEW.

"I regard it as reprehensible," commented Lord Brockway, "that NATO should be funding a section within a political party, a section which has been campaigning against its national executive and the left-wing."

This is surely putting it mildly!

NATO is a military alliance of capitalist states, a pro-big business organisation fundamentally opposed to Labour's socialist aspirations.

When the colonels seized power in Greece in 1967, they put into effect a pre-determined NATO plan for a military takeover. Unsuccessful attempts at a coup d'état were made by neo-fascist generals in Italy, again making use of NATO contingency plans.



# NO PLOT- JUST THE RANK AND FILE

**"Miners out to get moderate Mason" howled the Tory press last week, after the Barnsley Labour Party AGM elected a new chairman, secretary and treasurer and the Yorkshire miners strengthened their position.**

The Tory press, full of the usual talk of 'plots' and 'conspiracies' which they were accusing 'Militant' supporters of only weeks earlier, have tried to present the whole issue as merely a 'power struggle' between 'militant miners' leader, Arthur Scargill and moderate MP Roy Mason.'

**By Stuart  
Lowe**  
(Barnsley CLP  
Youth Officer)

In reality the meeting reflects the best aspects of the democratic traditions of the labour movement. But it also reveals the contempt of the right wing in the Labour party for these traditions when they are on the losing end.

It has been openly suggested by them that if



Roy Mason [right] and Arthur Scargill—in the usual manner, the Tory press has tried to present the events in the Barnsley Labour Party as merely a power struggle between these two.

Mason is asked to go through a re-selection procedure and does not receive the nomination he will stand as an Independent against the Labour Party and even compel an immediate by-election.

But even the 'Sunday Times' reluctantly admits that there was nothing wrong with the basis for the elections at the Barnsley AGM. Of the 180 delegates entitled to attend the meeting, 62 are from the NUM, 41 from other trade unions, 71 from members' branches and 6 from other organisations.

Therefore the miners do

not have a majority of the delegates and on their own, although a powerful bloc, do not command complete control. It is not surprising that many other trade union and branch delegates voted against the right-wing and Roy Mason; after all, according to him, it was the unions who were responsible for Labour's defeat in the 1979 general election!

And before then, his virulent pro-Common Market stance had been at complete variance with the party, ever since his refusal to vote against Heath's original proposal to take Britain into the EEC in

1971.

In 1975 he campaigned for a 'yes' vote in the referendum over continued membership—again, contrary to the declared policy of Barnsley Labour Party and Mason's sponsoring union, the NUM.

Roy Mason is quite familiar with ignoring the political position of his own party and union. Now that he is being called to account for this it seems that it is not Mason who is undemocratic but Barnsley Labour Party and the Yorkshire NUM!

If he ever came to stand as an Independent against the Labour Party it is not

out of the question that initially he would win the seat because of the loyalty of ordinary voters to a long-standing MP and the confusion over the issue because of propaganda campaigns by the Tory press.

But there is absolutely no doubt that in the long run Mason would go the way of Eddie Griffiths, Dick Tavener, Christopher Mayhew and other right-wing renegades from the Labour Party...into the dustbins of history.

## Yorkshire Conference SAY NO TO TORY LAWS

**"The best ambassador for Labour Party recruitment" was how Mary Kershaw, a member of COHSE described Sir Keith Joseph.**

Conference was full square behind the fight of the steelworkers for pay and jobs—a resolution condemning BSC's policy of running down steel was unanimously passed.

A collection raised £150, but it was felt too small and another collection was made.

While anti-Tory feeling ran high at the conference, differences were expressed as to how to take them on. This especially came out in the cuts debate, where a general resolution calling for united action was carried out, a resolution laying out a specific programme of action and calling for the nationalisation of major sections of industry and the banks was defeated 247,000 to 462,000 on a card vote.

The contentious issue was undoubtedly the demand for no rate or rent increases. The delegate from Sheffield AUEW DC called it "irresponsible" and ending in isolation for councils.

But Colin Piper [COHSE] in dealing with the legal

**By Pete Watson**

question said, "If the Tories pass a law preventing secondary picketing, do we ask the steelworkers to go back to work?"

The Tories came under fire from delegates over the decline in basic industry in the area, particularly in textiles. While a resolution was overwhelmingly passed calling for the next Labour government to give "consideration to nationalising the industry," it, and a general resolution from the NUM, called for import controls as a short-term stop gap to protect jobs.

But even in the short term these cannot work. To challenge the USA carpet exports was like a "flea challenging an elephant" as Terry Wilson said, and that to buy British is too expensive. Jane Hartley [Hull CLP] said that "If import controls were used to prop up uncompetitive British firms, 'a wall round chaos' is all that would be created."

International action for jobs and living standards and socialist policies were put as the alternative. It is certainly true that the International Metalworkers' Federation will be unhappy with the NUM

resolution being passed after their help to the British steelworkers in their struggle.

Tony Benn in his speech to conference referred to the 1945 general election, where a clear programme got a huge majority and undoubtedly the conference made firm commitments for Labour to implement after the next general election.

The 'Militant' Readers' Meeting was the best ever and the biggest fringe meeting at the conference with a doubling in the attendance to over 60 with many left outside unable to get in the packed room.

Glyn Robinson [Asst. Reg. Organiser, COHSE] pointed to the politicisation of public sector workers after the "winter of discontent" which was now developing in the steel industry.

Pat Wall [Shipley CLP] in dealing with the attacks on the 'Militant' newspaper said that the real reason for them was the crisis that faced working class families. No one, not even most managers, now could say that they had job security. And it was that very crisis that had meant the end of the credibility of right-wing policies and the movement to the left.

## THE TORIES ANSWER TO RATE INCREASES

**The decision of Labour controlled Lothian Regional Council to go ahead with an increase of 41.5% on the rates to compensate for a 'No cuts, No redundancy' policy has prompted a swift reaction from Scottish Secretary of State Mr George Younger.**

Anxious to take advantage of an opportunity to 'save' the ratepayers from the consequences of the huge increase in the rates, he has imposed sanctions on the Council.

He is withdrawing the

'block consent' system whereby the Secretary of State can approve projects on capital spending on schools, nurseries, old people's homes, etc.

On top of this, and as a warning to any would-be rebel councils, he has singled out Lothian for a likely further cut in the Rate Support Grant for 1981-82.

The significant factor in this issue is that Strathclyde with a 39% rise in the rates, Borders with 37% rise and Fife with 37½% rise have not been approached by Younger because these regions, as well as increasing the rates, also cut services.

The reason for this is that the Tories will almost certainly bring about legislation which will force regions like Lothian to cut services hoping that George Younger will appear as the 'knight in shining armour' to the hard pressed ratepayers.

The lessons to Labour-controlled local authorities are clear. There must be no compliance with Tory poli-

cies. There must be no half measures as the Tories will take advantage as in Lothian of any situation which could split the Labour support because of the burden on the working class caused by huge rates rises.

The fight to save our services from further cuts must be started now so that when the councillors sit down to work on the 1981 budget the battle lines will have been drawn up.

All Labour controlled local authorities must unite alongside the trade union movement in a campaign aimed at gaining maximum support for a blanket policy for the working class of no cuts, no rate rises.

Only a stand based on full measures against this vicious Tory government can hope to achieve a full and lasting victory and pave the way for a socialist Labour Party.

**By Dick Vivien**

(Midlothian and East Lothian Trades Council)

## Not the time for secrecy

Is it in the interests of the labour movement for Labour councils to discuss selling off Council property and to decide not to tell the labour movement about it?

At a recent North Nottingham Labour Party meeting, one councillor reported that Nottingham City Labour Group is doing just this—and another member of the Labour Group attacked him for breaking a decision to keep

the discussion confidential!

Some months ago the Labour Council was approached about selling off the giant Balloon Woods complex of flats by the 'North British Housing Association'.

The Association is said to have expressed interest nationally in acquiring large blocks of flats and to be involved in about eighteen such deals. Balloon Woods, along with other large flat complexes, have been a bit of

an embarrassment to the council for some years.

The flats are now officially "hard to let" after successive complaints from tenants over heating and design problems.

The majority of the Labour Group seem to want nothing more than to get shot of the "problem". But why is a Housing Association, with a board of lawyers, estate agents etc., better equipped to deal with it than a Labour council?



## LPYS- around the country

'Force a general election to kick out the Tories.'

This was the message of Tony Saunois, LPYS rep. on the NEC of the Labour Party, to almost 300 trade union and Labour Party activists who came to hear Tony Benn MP and Tony Saunois at the LPYS rally during the Welsh LPYS conference.

At the conference itself the major debates were on the issue of the steel and pit closures and the cuts in public expenditure in Wales.

One delegate from Llanelli related the experience of his family since the beginning of 1980 where every single one of them had either been made redundant, laid off or forced to come out on strike, all at the same time.

With the Tories' axe about to swing heavily hardly anyone can be sure about the security of their job.

The conference unanimously passed a statement condemning the proposed steel closures, and expressed solidarity with the striking steel men.

The conference went on to discuss the cuts, nuclear energy, Northern Ireland, racism and the Labour Party enquiry.

But the highlight of the weekend was the Rally addressed by Tony Benn MP and Tony Saunois. This attracted almost 300 people; the biggest political meeting held in Cardiff for some time.

One of the best debates at the recent Eastern Region LPYS conference was on housing. Colin Grennell [Brentwood LPYS] described the hopeless situation facing many young people today, with little council accommodation available and mortgages out of the question.

Rob Walsh [Stevenage LPYS] spoke of the vast sums of money paid by councils to the money lenders in the form of interest charges which prevented decent homes being built. This year's conference marked the end of a year of sustained growth for this region's LPYS—26 branches attended the conference, eight more than last year. And support for the 'Militant' was reflected in the conference elections, and in the highly successful Readers' Meeting, with nearly £70 raised for the fighting fund.

In Newcastle, eight Young Socialists raised £80 for the Consett Steel Hardship Fund—the money was raised by a sponsored walk and will go to aid striking steelmen.

And in Dagenham, one of the largest public meetings of the labour movement for many years was held with over 100 people attending a LPYS public meeting to hear Orville Faulkes EET-PU shop steward, Fords, Andy Bevan [LP National Youth Officer] and Jo Richardson MP, speak out against the Tory attacks.

# MILITANT V. THE RIGHT

Members of the Hayes Labour Party were given a rare opportunity to debate policy with their MP, Neville Sandelson, at a recent meeting of the Labour Club at Brunel University in Uxbridge.

The right-wing MP was debating on 'Which way forward for Labour' with Lynn Walsh, assistant editor of 'Militant'.

The Hayes CLP members were greeted with a surprised Neville Sandelson. The MP, who has attended only one GMC since he was re-elected last May, began by asking why Hayes Party members seemed to make up the majority of the audience.

"It's the only way we can get to see you," he was told.

The MP's response brought forth a roar of protest from

By Mike Lee  
(Uxbridge LPYS)

Labour Party members, when he "explained" this by referring to what he called the "traitorous actions" of the GMC, in voting not to adopt him as parliamentary candidate at the last election.

Lynn Walsh pointed out that Sandelson's response was typical of many Labour MPs predominantly from the professional middle class, who joined the Party simply to pursue a parliamentary career. Those careers were now

under threat from the rank and file of the labour movement itself, fighting for policies which could make real the Party's fundamental socialist aspirations (the 'career assassins' according to Sandelson).

Lynn made it clear that the claim made by Neville Sandelson and Labour's right wing in general, that socialist policies would lose elections and members, was entirely false. It was their policies of 'moderation'—a 5% incomes policy, cuts in public expenditure, etc.—which had paved the way for the election of Thatcher and the decline in Labour Party membership.

"Our party exists to replace capitalism—as outlined in Clause IV part 4 of the constitution—not to tinker with it. And a mass membership, firmly based amongst working people, is essential if that objective is to be achieved."

There have been various other meetings with speakers from the 'Militant' and right-wing opponents throughout the country, many of them being called by Labour Parties.

In Nottingham, at a meeting organised by the North Notts LPYS and the Forest Branch Labour Party, many members were horrified by the uncomradely—almost hooligan—approach taken by right-wing members of the Campaign for Labour Victory.

Cllr Frank Higgins, East Midlands organiser for the CLV, spoke alongside Tony Cross, an East Notts CLP 'Militant' supporter, on the question of Labour and the

cuts.

Frank argued that no one could demand Labour councils break the law as the Tories had a mandate and could force the councils to cut. But as soon as Frank sat down the disruptions began with a beer-break being demanded between speakers—although this proposal was lost, a number of members took one anyway!

Although Frank had received polite attention, this was not extended to Tony—glass chinking, and much to-ing and fro-ing disrupted his speech and when he had finished, the right wing hysterically attacked Tony, much of it on a personal basis. There were also such

remarks as "I am against ideas like those which almost caused me to join the Communist Party in my youth" (!). Anything but the programme of the 'Militant' was discussed.

As this carried on, with right-wing councillors questioning figures put by 'Militant' supporters, one left-wing councillor gave figures on debt charges which differed from his right-wing colleagues; he was shouted down, although the right wing then decided to leave, including the speaker!

Those who remained were able to continue the discussion—by no means all 'Militant' supporters. In summing up, Tony explained

The fact that many of those opposing democratisation also stand opposed to Clause IV part 4 of the Party's constitution and oppose, as Lynn Walsh put it, "any policy that could actually be called socialist," was forcibly demonstrated by Neville Sandelson himself.

The MP replied that he rejected the "antique junk" (!) of socialism, and what he called the "dogma" of Clause IV part 4, and indeed, he found in the Tories' Employment Bill—a bill intended for further onslaughts on workers' rights—much he could agree with! This was greeted by a storm of protest from every trade unionist in the hall.

It was pointed out that Neville Sandelson was an ally of Reg Prentice—now feeling much at home in the Tory Party.

Sandelson's response to the question of his support for

Prentice was, "If you want to drum me out of the party for that you will need to drum out two-thirds of the Cabinet and two-thirds of the Parliamentary Labour Party, who also supported him." That possibility was greeted with cheering and applause from virtually every Party member in the meeting!

In summing up the meeting Lynn Walsh pointed out that "the careerists are out of step with the majority of the members of the Labour Party, and should be called to account." The struggle for party democracy was a struggle for policies and leadership of its rank and file. He made it clear that we need to build a fighting, campaigning mass Labour Party if society itself is to be taken forward.

A party of working people, rooted in industry and the trade unions, capable of achieving the socialist goals of the party itself.

## South West Conference - socialist answers wanted

The 1980 Conference of the South West Regional Labour Party meets at a time when the effects of the Tory government's economic, social and industrial relations policies are being savagely felt by the working class.

Since Christmas the steel strike has overshadowed most other issues but the campaigns against public expenditure cuts have continued to gather momentum and support, and even in traditional Tory areas like Dorset, massive and militant mobilisations have taken place.

The main debate at the Conference will be on the question of how the labour movement can win the battle against public expenditure cuts. The resolution from South Gloucestershire CLP clearly shows the strategy that must be adopted by all Labour councillors.

Calling upon the REC to organise public meetings and a rally in conjunction with the Regional TUC, the resolution exposes the dilemma facing Labour councillors.

If Labour-controlled councils refuse (as the labour movement expects and demands) to implement

By Robin Clapp  
(SW Regional Executive Committee)

cuts, a possible alternative, raised by many in the movement, is to increase rates, but such an act inevitably results in the lowering of workers' living standards.

As the resolution states, Labour councillors must refuse to increase rents or rates and must instead point to the massive interest payments made by local authorities to the banks and finance houses.

As the councillors in Clay Cross showed, such an approach linked to the demand for the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses can gain

In the elections to the Regional Executive, South West Region 'Militant' supporters urge support for the following:  
Robin Clapp [Young Socialists Section]  
Harriet Stevens [Young Socialists section]  
Peter Hammond [Avon Constituency Section]  
Brigitte Shaw [Devon Constituency Section]

Delegates at the recent London Labour annual conference—like all regional Labour conferences, there was a determined mood to fight the Tories.



Photo: Chris Davies

Youth Committee, and can provide a beacon to hundreds of demoralised young people.

The whole question of campaigning against the Tories is linked to the need to build the Labour Party into a mass workers' organisation, both defending the workers in their day-to-day struggles and fighting for a real socialist alternative.

The resolution submitted to conference from Bristol SE CLP on the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry points the way

forward to the fulfillment of this urgent task.

Starting from the premise that the Labour Party is the political wing of the labour movement, the resolution calls for the establishment of factory branches with the right to send delegates and affiliate to all CLPs where it has members; the rebuilding of Trades and Labour Councils; a regional membership drive and in particular, an increase in the resources available to the LPYS.

# SOUTH WALES

## Second homes for the rich -yet thousands homeless

Recent burnings, apparently by some Welsh nationalists, has again focussed attention on the problem of 'second homes' in Wales. The arsonists' tally has risen to twenty in the last fortnight.

The fact that the police to date have been unable to discover who is responsible suggests a degree of sympathy for the aims of the arsonists—if not their methods, which are certainly not condoned by the labour movement—among the local population.

There is certainly great resentment at the continuing take-over of houses by well-off, if not rich, outsiders in a region suffering from enormous problems of depopulation, unemployment, and homelessness.

Shelter estimates there are about 20,000 second homes in Wales, although the 'Guardian' (11 February) reports that a 1972 survey showed that 15.9% or 24,150 of Britain's second homes are in Wales. They suggested the number has probably edged up to between 25,000 and 30,000 today.

There is no doubt, anyway, that Wales has one of the highest concentrations of second homes in the country. Gwynedd has an estimated 7,500—and it also has 4,269 households on its council house waiting list. Shelter reported that in 1979 Gwyn-

By Steve Davies

(Cardiff North LPYS)

edd and Clwyd were among the counties where fewest starts were made on new houses.

Dafydd Wigley, the Plaid Cymru MP for Caernarvon, said on Radio 4 (29 February) that overall in Wales there are 60,000 families on council house waiting lists and 107,000 houses unfit for human habitation.

This is when council house building is at a post-war record low.

### False arguments

With housing bearing the brunt of the savage Tory public expenditure cuts (spending is now down by more than a quarter in real terms compared with 1975) the trend seems set to get even worse.

In Wales, the nationalists have tried to latch on to the issue of second homes, attempting to blame homelessness on 'the English'. Most Welsh workers will treat this sort of argument with the contempt it deserves.

The 'Economist' (29 February) protested that critics of second homes ignored the benefits from injections of new money and people into moribund local economies. They also implied that second homes had no effect on the decline in the Welsh language.

This argument is completely false because, by their very

nature, second homes tend to be used as holiday retreats. The money brought in is minimal as the owners are only there for a fraction of the year.

And whilst it is true that the profusion of second homes is not solely responsible for the decline of the Welsh language, it is undeniable that they exacerbate the situation and contribute to the depopulation of the rural Welsh-speaking areas.

Two-thirds of first-time house buyers are under 30 years old, and half have incomes below average male earnings. It is inevitable, then, that young Welsh-speaking couples are forced to move to either England or the industrial towns of English-speaking South East Wales to look for houses and jobs. Not only does this leave an ageing community fit only for tourism but also hastens the demise of the Welsh language.

The Tories are forever prattling on about having a "mandate from the nation" to carry out their policies. But what did they say in their election manifesto? "The prospect of very high mortgage rates deters some people from buying their homes and the reality can cause acute difficulties to those who have done so. Mortgage rates have risen steeply because of the government's financial mismanagement. Our plans for cutting government spending

and borrowing will lower them." (p 23)

The reality has been exactly the reverse. Thanks to the party that believes in "a property-owning democracy," mortgage rates have shot through the roof.

The average house cost £21,800 in the final quarter of 1979, up 28% over twelve months ('Economist' 15 February)—the biggest increase since the 1972-73 boom.

The firing of empty second homes is not the answer—it is a gesture of despair. But socialists should have an answer.

### Programme

As an immediate measure, Labour councils should refuse to implement the cuts and place a ban on the sale of council houses. Instead, they should embark on a policy of municipalisation of private rented property, with a freeze on rents.

Labour councils should expand direct works departments and use them to build more houses, take over all empty property, and renovate all accommodation that is sub-standard.

Nationally, Labour should draw up a national building plan to utilise the millions of bricks which are stockpiled and the 250,000 building workers registered unemployed—to build a million houses in a year and begin to put an end to the age-old scandal of homelessness and slum conditions.

## The Lessons of Rosedale

The 250 AUEW members who formerly worked at Rosedale's plastics plant in Bedwas, South Wales were sacked for joining the national engineering strike last September.

The plant was closed by the parent company, Lin Pac Containers, amid angry scenes on the picket line with as many as 200 police on hand on several occasions.

There is still a great deal of bitterness towards the AUEW leadership. Terry Duffy faced a stormy meeting in Pontypridd and the Pontypridd District Committee pushed through a motion calling for the removal of the union's entire national executive, including Duffy himself.

In an interview, the convener of the factory, Ivor Sibley, said: "We feel very badly let down." Although the union agreed to pay the costs of the industrial tribunal action for compensation and made pledges of support, the workers feel that they had very little help in their fight.

This is one of a growing number of incidents which are beginning to raise doubts in the minds of AUEW activists about the calibre of their leadership.

By a  
'Militant'  
reporter

The Tory press heap praise on Sir John Boyd, general secretary, and president Terry Duffy, as 'responsible' men.

Statements from the dynamic duo, on anything from the Russian invasion of Afghanistan to the need for Britain to pull together, are gobbled up like manna from heaven by the press, hungry for a sign of "moderation" among the present union leaders.

However, a growing number of the AUEW membership do not share this enthusiasm.

The cavalier attitude of the union leadership towards the Derek Robinson fiasco generated great anger among activists. The Labour Party's National Executive was told to mind its own business when it called for Robinson's reinstatement.

Resolutions were submitted from 460 districts and branches criticising the Executive's conduct of the affair,

after they had called off the action at its height, by setting up a sham committee of inquiry. When that committee finished its work (months later, accompanied by an hysterical press campaign) the Executive recommended strike action only at Longbridge, then undermined the call even further by suggesting a compromise by which Derek Robinson would have a job but no union position.

Recently the AUEW Executive has dismissed two members of its research department for doing work in their own time for Bob Wright, who stood as the left-wing candidate against Terry Duffy in the last election.

Sir John Boyd has also taken to attempting to decide the speaking engagements of Labour MPs.

Last October when Jeff Rooker accepted an invitation to speak at a meeting of Roy Fraser's unofficial craft committee, Boyd wrote to him attacking his participation in the meeting and even had the cheek to ask him for his "early observation and comments."

Right-wing union bureaucrats have often castigated shop stewards in company or national combines for operat-

ing outside their 'legitimate' areas of interest. But this is an altogether more novel approach. Since when has Sir John had a right of veto over MPs who are neither members of the AUEW nor sponsored by them?

At a time when the trade union movement is facing an onslaught by the most vicious Tory government in living memory, the AUEW leadership appear to prefer ingratiating themselves with the press rather than defending jobs and living standards.

This is not going unnoticed, however. Any union leader ignores the members' wishes at their peril.

Let's leave the last word to Ivor Sibley. In the interview referred to earlier, he drew out the lessons of the Rosedale dispute:

"...I have arrived at the conclusion that the majority of our present leaders in the trade union movement are only in it for self-glorification.

"Originally, I was very bitter. But, during the course of our struggle, I've met people, not necessarily members of our union, who have re-established my faith in the fact that trade unionists at shop-floor level can still win the day."



As Thatcher's cuts begin to bite, Labour councils all over the country are faced with a tremendous fight to maintain the standards of services. The rate support grant is being cut to most authorities, especially in the deprived areas of the inner cities. To raise the rates to compensate would hit hard at workers' living standards. With Labour in a minority in Parliament, local authorities could be pushed to the front of the battle against the Tories.

With the perspectives of struggles to come, it is fascinating to read about the epic battle of Poplar Council during the 1920s. Their main battle was to gain a reduction in the poor rates when over thirty councillors were jailed but they also battled for adequate scales of relief and a decent minimum wage for council workers.

Poplar has always been a poor area. In the 1920s over a quarter of the men were employed in 'transport', mostly casual dockworkers. Many others depended on the port for their work in some way. Yet the docks were vulnerable to any trade depression so unemployment and associated poverty could rise very high. Even in 1928 a survey found 24% living 'in poverty' with an equally large proportion very poor.

Edgar Lansbury once said of Poplar that "people who can afford to live out of it wouldn't be seen dead in it," for the employers and managers of local industry lived elsewhere. Yet despite their small number, the local employers organised into the Poplar Municipal Alliance, dominated local politics until 1919.

In that year the socialists, who had been a small but vocal opposition, won 39 out of 42 seats to take control of Poplar Council, as well as consolidating their hold on the Board of Guardians which administered poor relief.

The new councillors were not middle-class, armchair socialists. They included seven dock workers, seven railwaymen and four labourers. A number had been actively involved in building

the Poplar trade union movement. Many were in their forties or fifties when elected and George Lansbury himself was sixty.

With Labour councils a novelty the press had a fine time sneering at them as "unfit to govern". However, their first year of office led to impressive achievements. House building was inaugurated, the electricity supply was developed, the library service was expanded, free milk was provided for expectant mothers and babies, and measures were taken to reduce the threat from tuberculosis. It paid a £4 minimum wage to all employees and implemented equal pay for women—well in advance of introduction elsewhere!

However, in 1920 the post-first world war boom was coming rapidly to an end. The effects were most severe in Poplar and the other dockland boroughs. In Poplar, the Council put forward various schemes for useful works to reduce unemployment but these received rebuffs from the government.

### Unequal rates

Frustrated by this treatment the Council looked for ways of bringing immediate relief to the poor of the borough. They looked at the rates paid in the Borough—with surprising consequences.

Poplar levied rates on behalf of the London County Council (LCC), the Metropolitan Police, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and the Water Board. It also levied its own rates including part for the Poplar Board of Guardians. Since the Board of Guardians was responsible for all poor relief in the Borough it was having to pay out far more, due to the high unemployment that the Borough was suffering.

A further rise in the poor rate was expected in 1921. Yet wealthy boroughs like Westminster with few unemployed were not faced with this problem. In effect the poorest boroughs were having to pay far more than their share in looking after the poor of London.

After the failure of central government and the LCC in dealing with unemployment the Poplar councillors wanted to make a protest which 'would force the central authorities to pay attention.' George Lansbury put to the local Labour Party the proposal that Poplar Borough Council should levy only the rate for its own purposes and the Board of Guardians.



# POPLAR 1921



## When the Council Defied the Courts and Won



### Poplar councillors marching to court with mass support

This photograph and the two above showing the victory celebration at Victoria Park, Hackney, are from the Tower Hamlets local history collection and are reproduced by courtesy of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Amenities Committee

### A NALGO member reviews 'Poplarism' By Noreen Branson [Lawrence & Wishart £7.50]

Collecting rates for the outside precepts, such as the LCC, would cease. Throughout the Borough the councillors explained their case to well-attended meetings.

At the Borough Council meeting on 31 March 1921 the rate was fixed at 4s 4d in the £—compared to 6s 10d which would otherwise have been levied. Charles Sumner pointed out that they had tried to deal with the matter constitutionally but had been met by 'hypocrisy and criminal indifference' from central government. Since most working class families paid rates together with the rent the response was an immediate and substantial reduction in the rent.

The LCC lost most revenue by this act of the Council. After discussing various legal remedies it decided that it could not confiscate Poplar

property for fear of a violent reaction! Eventually it decided to apply for a writ of "mandamus"—an order issued in exceptional circumstances directing some person or body to do some particular thing relating to its office or duty.

#### Contempt

Poplar proceeded to use every kind of legal subterfuge to delay the writ, although the councillors knew that they had no chance of a court victory. During court battles a council by-election considerably increased the Labour vote—a sure sign of backing for the Council. Writs were sent to councillors—who ignored them. The LCC then took proceedings for contempt of court against them.

On Friday 29 July the Council assembled outside

Poplar Town Hall to march to the High Court where they were to appear. Over 2,000 marched with them, led by the mace bearer carrying a sardine tin on a pole. All the councillors were prepared for a jail sentence, but as George Lansbury put it: "If we have to choose between contempt of the poor and contempt of court—it will be contempt of court."

Following further legal efforts at the Court of Appeal the councillors were arrested one by one and taken to Holloway and Brixton prisons.

What of the Labour Party attitude during all this? Locally the Council had tremendous support, and other councils, such as Stepney, Bethnal Green and Battersea were preparing to follow their example. Yet the Labour Party leadership

totally disagreed with Poplar's tactics. Chief among their critics was Herbert Morrison, then secretary of the London Labour Party.

Morrison was dedicated to winning Labour control of local authorities and held that the best way of doing this was for Labour to prove itself more "efficient" than their opponents. This meant acting responsibly, and of course, lawfully.

#### Morrison opposes

The councillors had ready answers to calls for them to act 'constitutionally'. Sam March, the Mayor, stated simply that "The master class has made the laws" while George Lansbury pointed out that all reforms "came from those who are prepared to break bad laws."

But to Morrison this was

anathema. He regarded the Poplar action as an embarrassment and an obstacle to further Labour gains. Eventually a joint meeting of the London Labour Party Executive and London Labour Mayors sent out a private circular advising councils not to follow Poplar's lead—a long way short of the condemnation that Morrison wanted.

In prison the councillors soon made their voices heard. On arriving at Brixton George Lansbury asked to see the warders' union card—but their treatment was no laughing matter. All lost weight and prison affected the health of several of them. Constant complaints improved the quality of the food.

The councillors also won the right to hold council meetings in the Boardroom, with the women councillors brought over from Holloway. (Joe Banks' minutes of these unique meetings can still be seen in Tower Hamlets Central Library local history collection.) Support came from the labour movement all over London. Large numbers of Poplar unemployed walked over to Brixton each evening to demonstrate their solidarity with the prisoners inside.

#### Wooing Lloyd George

The authorities hoped that Poplar would compromise. However, Stepney and Bethnal Green made moves to follow Poplar. In Stepney the proposal was made by that well known moderate Clem Attlee! Plans were made for a 'no rent' strike in Poplar to back the council. The TUC, encouraged by two councillors still at liberty, supported the Council and work schemes for the unemployed.

Morrison's ploy was to lead a delegation of Labour mayors to see Lloyd George and take attention away from the imprisoned councillors. They eventually tracked Lloyd George through the Highlands to Gair Loch, where he was resting from his philanthropies.

However, Morrison's attempts to gain some relief for the poorer boroughs had no effect, though the prime minister said that he had no objection to the subject being discussed with Sir Alfred Mond (Liberal Minister of Health in the coalition government and a leading industrialist).

On returning to London, Morrison and the Labour Mayors held a meeting at Brixton with the imprisoned councillors and attempted to

get them to take part in a conference called by Mond to discuss the rates question. However, the councillors refused, unless they were unconditionally freed first!

Legal wrangles followed on what steps could be taken to release the councillors, as they were still in contempt of court. However, a formula was eventually accepted—that the councillors could apologise for the contempt of court without agreeing to levy the rates. The effect was that the councillors had won an unconditional victory after six weeks' imprisonment—highly embarrassing for Morrison!

A meeting of 2,000 celebrated their release at Bow Baths on Roman Road—while 2,000 more cheered outside.

#### Victory

The ensuing conference called by Mond accepted nearly all the Poplar demands—despite warnings from 'The Times' about the dangers of equalisation of wealth. The Local Authorities (Financial Provisions) Act of 1921 pooled the costs of outdoor relief across London. It was estimated that Poplar had gained over a million pounds as a result and secured a better reduction than has ever been achieved by a council!

A rather ironical touch came in the 1922 local government elections. Labour stayed comfortably in control in Poplar—but in neighbouring Hackney, the Labour councillors, including Morrison, were swept off the Council!

The book points out that many of the reforms for which the councillors fought have now been accepted generally—though it makes it clear that the legal penalties introduced after the Poplar affair still remain. The Clay Cross councillors were surcharged and disqualified from office for their refusal to raise rents.

It is also made clear that the Poplar councillors were under no illusions that what they were fighting for was a simple reform. They saw the ultimate solution for the ending of unemployment in a socialist society.

Despite one or two limitations—it rather fails to point out to what extent George Lansbury was himself limited by 'constitutional considerations'—this well-researched book is well worth reading. It's worth recommending to Labour councillors as well!

It is rather expensive, so make sure the local library gets a copy, and hope that a paperback comes out soon.



Signing Lancaster House agreement. Seated (left to right): Carrington, Gilmour, Nkomo, Mugabe

Photo: MILITANT

# WHAT FUTURE FOR ZIMBABWE?

The election of Mugabe's ZANU [PF] last week was a setback for imperialism's plans. But how is it that such a result emerged from the Lancaster House Conference and what does the future hold for Zimbabwean working people?

Mugabe's victory was not planned by imperialism. International capital funded ZANU [PF]'s opponents. Lonrho aided Nkomo's ZAPU and vast sums of money were given to Bishop Muzorewa.

The 'Daily Mail' [5 March] estimated that multi-nationals, businessmen and governments funded Muzorewa to the tune of £15m. At a cost of £5m each, his three seats must be the most expensive ever.

"He (Muzorewa) was given 200 cars, trucks and vans, seven helicopters and thousands of pounds worth of food and drink. At one rally he supplied free food and beer for four days to a crowd which ranged from 10,000 to 70,000. Troops were used to hand out pamphlets and military aircraft deployed to bombard remote tribal villages with anti-Mugabe literature."

"The South African government's contribution was said to have been the largest.

By Jim Chrystie

"Their attitude was if money can do it, we have got it," said one (Muzorewa) party official." (Daily Mail, 5 March).

But money couldn't do it. All the harassment from the British government, security forces and auxiliaries, and all the help given ZANU (PF) opponents proved to be of no avail.

A Mugabe government did not seem to be the likely outcome a few months ago. When Thatcher came to power last May, she had wanted to recognise the Muzorewa regime.

But Carrington and advisers persuaded her that this would be disastrous for British capitalism in Africa. It would have resulted in actions taken against British business in black Africa, an escalation of the war inside Rhodesia and possible explosions or threat to international capitalism's hold in Zambia, Tanzania and even Nigeria.

Thatcher drew back and with the assistance of the 'front-line' African states,



tried to work out a compromise settlement at Lancaster House. These states, especially Mozambique, pressurised the Zimbabwean nationalist leaders to make concessions.

The leaders of Mozambique, Angola, Zambia and Botswana were worried that if the war continued, South African backed raids into their countries would intensify. Their economies were being disrupted by the war and they feared escalation.

This pressure on the Patriotic Front leaders was exerted throughout the Lancaster House Conference. Right to the last when Mugabe threatened to quit over the terms of the cease-fire, President Machel of Mozambique quickly spoke to him, the last hurdle was cleared, and Mugabe signed.

The Lancaster House Conference did not settle the fundamental questions of state power, jobs and land. But it did recognise that the war had not been fought to a conclusion.

Neither the Rhodesian state machine nor the guerrillas had been decisively defeated. Undoubtedly if the war had continued over many years, the guerrilla armies would have won.

Imperialism could see developments slipping out of their control. The war was taking its political and economic toll.

It was costing the Rhodesian economy £675,000 a day. The war took 15% of the GDP and 40% of the budget. Affected by international recession, the war, limited access to world financial and trading markets, real Rhodesian GDP fell by 13%, 1975-79.

International capitalism wanted the war to end. They had seen that as the armed mass struggle had developed from 1972, it had begun to have its effect upon the African nationalist movements.

These movements, both ZANU and ZAPU were headed by African middle-class leaders.

In the 1950s their predecessors had tried to rest upon the mass unrest and opposition to white minority rule from African workers to try to wrest concessions from the ruling elite. When the Rhodesian ruling class rejected their advances, they turned to British imperialism or the UN

for support.

They never saw the need for independent organisations of African workers and peasantry to combat local and international capitalism. Instead of a conscious socialist leadership, the African nationalists believed in pressurising for change. Even when UDI was declared in 1965, Nkomo appealed for British military intervention.

The inauguration of mass armed struggle from 1972 onwards was not a decisive strategic break with this approach. It was still part of the leadership's strategy to force negotiations. But the launching of large-scale guerrilla warfare did mean that the social demands for land and jobs became more prominent.

This was reflected by the internal divisions within the main nationalist movement, ZANU. Its old leader, Sithole, was replaced by Mugabe and it proclaimed itself to be a 'Marxist-Leninist' party.

But its socialist demands, which arose from the mass pressure below, for the take-over of the land and industry were pushed into the indefinite future.

Although socialist rhetoric was used, the immediate demands were limited to those of a capitalist-democratic revolution. No attempt was made to build a fighting socialist movement, based upon the working class.

So despite the rhetoric the possibilities for the African nationalist leadership working within a capitalist framework were always there, if the old capitalist state machine remained unbroken.

That essentially is what has happened in Zimbabwe. Imperialism has been scared by Mugabe's election, because of the social expectations aroused. But they are hoping that the land reform will prove sufficient to prevent the take-over of the economic levers of power.

"Mr Mugabe has had a resounding success. The country should now prosper," was how Lonrho director, Paul Spicer, described the prospects. And a spokesman for the British-American Tobacco company stated: "We take a positive view of the election. We're hoping it will provide a stable government to get it back to normal there."

After Mugabe's promise

not to take-over industry "cautious optimism" was expressed by B Grubb, the President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Rhodesia.

All these representatives probably recognise that major land reform will now occur. In the next period a Mugabe government will probably buy up the 60% of small white farms, which depend on state subsidies for their continuance. The funding for this would come from foreign capitalist governments in an attempt to financially tie the hands of a black Zimbabwe government.

This coupled with the acquisition of vacant 'white' land (about a third) would enable him to redistribute land to refugees and Africans crowded on to the Tribal Trusts Land.

Probably in the immediate period ahead, little move will be made against the 20% of white land held by major farms, many owned by multi-nationals, which produce 80% of Rhodesia's food for sale.

That might be the music of the future when the pressure from below intensifies. And such farms could well be run on a co-operative basis.

## Capitalism cannot provide

The euphoria at the ending of 90 years of racist domination will undoubtedly give the Mugabe government a breathing-space in the immediate period ahead.

It will be able to use the threat of a white backlash, of South African intervention as a reason for going slowly. Discontent will grow, but this will not threaten the existence of a Mugabe government, if there is an absence of independent class organisations.

Yet it will prove impossible to develop the country and provide a decent living for all Zimbabweans on the basis of capitalism. Unemployment, especially amongst youth, cannot be solved if 'free enterprise' remains.

Every year 100,000 people come on to the labour market. Capitalism cannot provide them with jobs.

Even in the Rhodesian mini-boom of 1969-75 black employment only grew by 200,000 so that every year

37,000 Africans were unable to find work. In the last four years the African workforce has declined from 1 million to 800,000. The absence of jobs means that almost every day about 400 Africans arrive in Salisbury looking for work.

Mugabe has said that his government will not interfere with the system that creates this situation. "You've got a good thing going here," he told John Hills, the President of Industry.

But as in some African countries, a Mugabe government may well take over sections of industry whilst preserving the essential capitalist nature of the economy.

With this will grow a strengthening of the state machine, an integration of the guerrilla armies with the Rhodesian armed forces, and the merger of ZANU (PF) and ZAPU into a one-party state. Such a capitalist bonapartist regime (i.e. military-police dictatorship), whilst giving concessions to workers and not allow independent workers' organisations legally to exist.

A lengthy period of capitalist democracy is ruled out as Mugabe tries to balance between the conflicting pressures of international and local capitalism and the demands of the Zimbabwean working people.

It will be a stormy period ahead both in Zimbabwe and throughout Southern Africa. ZANU (PF)'s election victory has opened up a new chapter in the Southern African revolution.

Both in Namibia and South Africa, African workers will be enthused by recent developments. And whatever the short-term holds for Zimbabwe, the South African ruling-class and imperialism trembles for the future.

In the last five years they have seen capitalism and landlordism overthrown in Mozambique and Angola. Now they see their hope for Rhodesia defeated. They can see the writing on the wall.

And they know that in South Africa the revolution will be led by the black working-class, who if armed with a socialist leadership and programme, threaten not only to end capitalism in South Africa but bring to fruition the developing revolution in the rest of the sub-continent and establish a socialist federation of Southern Africa.

## Whatever the short term holds for Zimbabwe, the South African ruling class and imperialism tremble for the future

Patriotic Front speakers in Trafalgar Square last November



## INDIA

## EAST GERMANY

## SRI LANKA

# AFTER EIGHT MONTHS OF STRUGGLE ON ESTATES ONLY WORKERS OWN STRENGTH CAN ENSURE VICTORY

What changed for Indian workers when the government of Indira Gandhi fell and was replaced by Janata? And what are the prospects for Indian workers now with Gandhi back in power?

Three years ago 'Militant' published an interview with P Jaganatha, a trade union militant arrested during Gandhi's last Emergency.

By Roger Silverman

A revealing illustration of the resolve and tenacity of the Indian working class, including its most down-trodden sections, is provided by the development of the struggle led by Jaganatha in the three years since our last report.

Sriakslar Roerich is the son of an émigré from the Russian Revolution, a painter who moved to India in search of new cheap labour to feed off, and bought up land, including an estate producing the scent lanolea, which is sold to Lever Brothers and used in the manufacture of soap perfumes etc.

He and his wife, the celebrated actress Devikarami, are paying their employees Tsarist wages—3 Rupees a day for men and 2 rupees 10 paise for women (16 and 11 pence!).

Under the demagogic "20

point programme" trumpeted by Mrs Gandhi, the legal minimum wage for estate workers was proclaimed to be 7 Rupees plus all the rights and benefits of industrial workers. However, the owners had no difficulty in persuading their friend Devaraj Vrs, the former Chief Minister of Karnataka, to introduce special legislation exempting lanolea from definition as estate production!

However, they have got it both ways—they have also managed to evade the legal ceiling of 56 acres for ownership of dry land, by classifying the land for these purposes, as "estate land"!

Even simple agricultural labourers are supposed to enjoy a minimum wage of 5 Rupees 60 paise. But when the workers formed a union in 1976, during the emergency, to enforce Mrs Gandhi's own programme, Jaganatha and three other leaders were promptly jailed, and 11 other workers sacked.

The harassment of these workers under the "demo-

cratic" Janata government that took over after the collapse of the Emergency shows how small were the difficulties for the mass of the toiling population.

First, blackmail was used to induce the workers to renounce their union—pressure which they unanimously rejected. Then in August 1978, when seven women were sacked for taking maternity leave, the workers staged a sit-down outside Devaraj Vrs' house.

Through intermediaries it was agreed the seven would be reinstated, and that the other issues—paid holidays, maternity benefit, classification under the Plantation Act, minimum wages backdated to 1975, reinstatement of the victimised 11—would be settled within a week. No negotiations have ever taken place since then!

After protracted appeals to Labour Commissioners, etc, on 24th July 1979 the workers came out on strike 68 workers were arrested and cases are still pending against them.

All the workers were immediately sacked and black-legs hired to replace them. Roerich and Derikarami have denied all knowledge of these workers—although not only they, but their parents and grandparents have been working there since the estate was founded in 1907!

The 120 families involved fought blacklegs on the picket lines for five months—guarded by hundreds of police. By December they decided it was



Nothing has altered for Indian workers under successive governments

useless to sit unseen in a remote forest, so they marched on the state capital, Bangalore, which they found already paralysed by a bandh, a one-day general strike, in support of the MICO workers who were on strike for nationalisation of their company!

Since 5th December they have all been sitting in the centre of Bangalore, opposite the Legislative Assembly building. They have been sustained throughout by the support of trade unionists, workers, peasant committees, and dalit organisations (most of the workers are dalis or 'untouchables').

There is an all-trade union solidarity committee and mass rallies are being planned. The workers would prefer to go to prison, rather than go back to their village defeated.

One place they will get no support from is Moscow. A celebrated guest of the estate owners was Alexei Kosygin, Prime Minister of the USSR, who crossed the picket-line to visit the estate after the strike had begun!

After all, Roerich is a "Hero of the Soviet Union" and a credit to Russian artistic prestige! Also, both the CPI and CPI(M) were urging workers to vote for Devaraj Urs' "progressive" party in the recent elections!

Cultural and artistic circles generally are not well disposed towards the strikers. Devikarami graciously opened the recent International Film Festival in Bangalore. Many people were arrested for hoisting black flags in protest.

Even after their prolonged struggle, the workers are defiant and determined to

win. They are preparing now to widen the struggle and seek practical solidarity action by rail and transport workers, workers processing the lanolea in Bombay and Calcutta, dockers, and others who can stop supplies to the estate or black its products.

They are appealing also for financial and moral support from workers internationally. British trade unionists—especially workers at Unilever, the parent company of those profiting from black-leg labour in India, and also JV and IWA branches—should send money and messages immediately to:—

P. Jagaratha, Secretary, Bangalor South Estate and Farm Workers' Union, Talaghattapura Post, Kamakapura Road, Bangalor 560061 India.

## BASIC FOOD PRICES DOUBLED IN SRI LANKA

The government of Sri Lanka staggers from one crisis to another. Last month it removed nearly all food subsidies, virtually doubling the price of bread and flour.

For several weeks now the finance minister has been stressing that we have to make a choice between development and consumption and that world inflation has upset all their estimates and that they are facing serious difficulties in getting more aid.

Apparently international agencies have ordered 40% cuts in public expenditure. Recently the Finance Minister went off to try to raise \$400 million from several western countries and Iraq.

The President has made several remarks on the subject especially emphasising that the trade unions cannot overthrow the government

By our Sri Lanka correspondent

that there can be only one government and that come what may the government will stay in office till 1983. His remarks were obviously aimed at the delegates conference of all Trade Unions to be held in March.

There has been no serious reaction yet to the price increases, but the situation in the work places is fairly tense and from the countryside there are many reports of firecrackers being thrown at houses of leading people of the government party.

The price rises are certainly going to cause a lot of hardship and on the plantations a situation of semi starvation is bound to occur. It is probable that the TU Conference will call for strike action.

## Which 'tradition' for East German workers?

Leon Trotsky once wrote a book called the 'Stalin school of falsification'. The bureaucrats in East Germany seem to be keeping up the tradition.

By Dave Farrar

At present the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party (Communist Party) are extolling the virtues of 'their' Prussian heritage, with the leader Honecker stating that we can learn from the positive traditions of the past.

There has been a series of programmes on General Scharnhorst, who led the Prussians against Napoleon and who ushered in a period

of dark reaction which was not broken until 1848. A biography written about Frederick the Great sold out within a few days.

Marx and Engels drew other conclusions from the history of Prussia, with Marx once stating that the history of Germany was one of a 'continuous state of wretchedness'. They strove might and main to inoculate the workers movement against

the military and bureaucratic traditions which so weighed down German society.

The workers will learn different lessons from history, for as one SUP member said in the Times 'the way our country is run is nothing to do with Communism, it is the old Prussian belief in Law and Order'.

The workers of Germany have a rich tradition of revolutionary struggle, and although the bureaucrats may have 'Imperial' traditions, it will be the lessons of Marxism, not 'Old Fritz and the Junkers' that will settle the

score as far as the future of Germany is concerned.

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# LETTERS

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

## Darwin's theory supported by evidence—unlike the Bible

Dear Comrades

There is no basis for saying that Christianity and socialism have much in common, as James Heath (M. 492) argues.

All the major religions grew up in times of ignorance of the workings of our environment. In very primitive times people even believed that the sun should be worshipped to make it shine every day!

More recently, scientists such as Newton were persecuted by the church for putting forward ideas which contradicted Christian teaching.

As scientific understanding has grown, so blind belief in gods has declined. Church attendance in Britain has fallen from 50% to 2½% in 50 years. Religion in this country is virtually dead, whether comrade Heath likes it or not, and the parts of the world where religion still has a hold tend to be the more primitive parts.

The masses are also coming to realise that the way to end poverty and suffering is not through praying but through the rational planning of production.

Why do 'Militant' supporters accept Darwin's ideas? There is plenty of evidence for them, unlike the Biblical explanation.

For example, if the rock layers in, say, the Grand Canyon in the USA are examined, the fossilised living things in the rocks get simpler as the rocks get older. Evolution has clearly taken place.

How do we explain man's complex powers of reasoning etc? Well, the evolution of living things has had plenty of time to develop complexity—thousands of years in fact! Christianity is a comparatively recent phenomenon.

I believe that comrade Heath's interest in religion will decline as he becomes more committed to practical and rational socialist ideas.

Yours fraternally  
John Creswick  
Youth Officer, Chester CLP

## BSC—rusty maths and dirty tricks

Dear Comrades

The steel strike continues, and so do management's dirty tricks.

At Stanton steelworks in Derbyshire, management claimed to have issued 111 ballot papers to the strikers there to vote for a return to work. Of the 51 returns they claim to have received, 48 voted in favour they say.

The Blastfurnacemen's strike committee talked to the 85 strikers in person, and only 2 voted in favour (the other 83 tore off the code number of these supposedly 'secret' ballots and gave the enclosed stamp to the strike fund!). So that only leaves a total of 28 who could have voted in favour—even if all those not asked voted 'yes'.

Is BSC management getting rusty at its sums? No, they're just trying to demoralise the strikers again.

They're not succeeding! Jim Killeavy, Senior Convenor at Stanton, affirmed that the mood of the strikers is as determined as ever.

Active support from the entire trade union movement and Labour party is vital for a decisive victory for the steel workers, and, in the final analysis, for the working class as a whole.

Fraternally  
Kevin Slattery  
West Nottingham LPYS

## DRIVING US TO CRIME

Dear Comrades

If the Tories cut social security to strikers' families, those workers will be left without a right granted even to the families of convicted murderers. One striker in Nottingham had an answer: "Right, Thatcher, I'll be round to slaughter you. At least that way my wife and kids will be looked after."

The anger isn't really surprising: of the 36 workers involved in the strike at the Alan Smith Group, only three of their families are receiving any social security benefits.

Yours fraternally  
Tony Cross  
East Nottingham Labour Party

## LINK THE FIGHT TO SOCIALISM

Photo: MILITANT



Derek Robinson

Dear Comrade

The Tory press were in a joyous mood after the 'rank-and-file revolt' over 'Red Robbo' and the South Wales miners' votes. If they really believe that this 'victory' for 'common-sense' is a harbinger for future victories then their joy will be proved very hollow.

The fundamental reason for the 'revolt' was, once again, a lack of clear leadership. If the union leaders of BL had clearly explained the consequences of Robinson's sacking and linked this to the fight for jobs, calling for workers' control and management of BL, the support for any strike would have been solid.

The steel strike has shown for the umpteenth time that workers are not only loyal to their organisations but are prepared to fight bitter class struggles to achieve immediate aims. Alas, the union leaders, with enormous influence, try to keep the dispute within the bounds of capitalism.

If they spelled out a clear programme for socialism, arming workers with facts, figures and other necessary weapons, showing the futility of capitalism, workers would absorb the ideas and put into

practice the necessary measures for the overthrow of this bankrupt system.

The present leadership, unless it proves itself capable of delivering the goods, will be put to the test by the rank and file. The workers will see that it is plain common sense to have leaders who will carry out policies to ensure them a job and a decent wage, to develop and heighten all social gains won over the past hundred years.

Such leaders, and hence the mass of the workers too, will be armed with a socialist programme that will cause the biggest revolt in history, a revolt against capitalism!

Yours fraternally  
Ray Physick  
Durham CLP

## "I WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT"

Dear Mr Grant

I am writing this letter mainly to thank you for placing that memorial to my mother, Mrs Holt, in 'Militant' 481 (30 November 1979).

The memorial was a great thing and sort of set my mother up alongside the other great fighters for socialism. In this way it helped to relieve a lot of the sadness of her death.

It would be a pity if I, her son, would not continue that fight.

I am a socialist and have been for years. Naturally I am not as enlightened as my mother or father but I do intend to read some of the

works of Lenin, Karl Marx, Trotsky, etc. I will continue the fight for socialism.

With this letter I have included a cheque for one hundred pounds, which is to be placed in the Militant fighting fund. The cheque is a token of the help and donations you can expect from me in future years.

I may never become an active member of the socialist party but in any political argument I will put forward the ideas of socialism. You can rely on my help. The cause of socialism and workers' democracy must go on.

Yours faithfully  
A.M. Holt  
Sydney, Australia

## Tory 'wets' fear a bloody nose

Dear Comrades

Every day the split in the Tory Party becomes deeper and more public as Tory MPs and ministers rebel against the insane policies of the Thatcher-Joseph mafia.

In a vain attempt to gag her critics, Thatcher has reminded them of 'collective responsibility'—which in her terms means that, once she has decided on a course of action, the rest of the cabinet has to follow suit.

Backbencher Julian Critchley has publicly described her as "didactic, tart and obstinate". He admitted that a tremendous argument was raging in the Tory Party over 'Thatcherism' (a term increasingly used to describe her perverted brand of monetarism).

Anticipating Thatcher's usual jibe that her opponents are simply 'wet', he really let the cat out of the bag by saying: "There is nothing wet about us. We just want to box a bit more cleverly."

So, here is the real root of the controversy—when best to put the boot into the working class! There is no fundamental division in the Tory Party over the need to make workers pay the full price of British capitalism's decline. But the more astute Tories, remembering Ted Heath's bloody nose, realise, with alarm that Thatcher's 'charge of the Right Brigade', could lead them into a full-scale class war.

With horror, they also see the move to the left in the Labour Party—a defeated Tory government would be replaced by a Labour government which would come under enormous pressure to carry out a bold socialist programme.

Now, more than ever, it is vital to put forward the policies of 'Militant' in the labour and trade union movement, so that when the inevitable rejection of the Tories comes about, we have a Labour Party equipped and determined to grasp the nettle and carry out a genuine socialist programme.

Fraternally,  
Clive Gravell  
COHSE Kidderminster

## Madness fans

Dear Comrades

An exchange between two elderly Tories on a train to London:

First Tory: I'm very fond of this Two-Tone music. As I was saying to Sir Keith only the other day: 'Have you heard of Madness?' 'Heard of it?' he said, 'it's the basis of our economic policy!'

Second Tory: Yes, well poor old Callaghan's got his hands full with these 'Militant' people hasn't he? Nasty business. I remember asking the PM whether she had any problem with moles.

'Moles?' she said 'No. But I get these terrible blackheads!' Yours fraternally  
Peter Wells-Thorpe  
Brighton

## De-wigging the law-lords

Dear Comrades

On Monday 3rd March I visited a picket line outside Ede and Ravenscroft Ltd, in Chancery Lane, London. This firm, which has been established since 1689, makes robes and wigs for judges, students and the like.

Thirty-two of a possible 45 members have joined the ASTMS to "seek proper contracts of employment and procedures whereby the directors discuss with us proposals for change, prior to implementation." However, the management have failed to recognise the trade union and won't speak with the shop steward.

This campaign for recognition has been going on for 10 months and has so far culminated in this one-day strike.

The workers at Ede and Ravenscroft are by no means "left-wing" but they now realise the necessity for trade union recognition. One shop steward described the action of management as "absolutely diabolical."

As yet there are no concrete plans for further strike action, but despite a present lack of hope, the workers intend to cause a lot of problems, moneywise, to their management during the summer.

In this period, graduates from university may find themselves without robes, and the judges presiding over the anti-working class legal system may find that they can no longer hide behind their precious wigs.

Fraternally  
Dave Webb  
Hackney South & Shore-ditch LPYS

## Labour students: investigate forged membership claims

Dear Comrade

The National Organisation of Labour Students has a long record of wrangles and disputes. Over the past five years the 'Clause 4' leadership have continually changed the constitution and rules of NOLS to make it more difficult for clubs to affiliate. They have 'rigidly' enforced the rules to ensure themselves a majority at NOLS Conference.

However, events at the AGM of Glasgow University Labour Club cast doubts on the standing of NOLS. The 'Clause 4' group who have

dominated the Club split, with one group, including the retiring chairman and vice-chairman, accusing other Club officers of serious malpractice.

The accusations included the forging of membership cards to build up the Club's delegation to NOLS Conference. Apparently, the Club officers justified this, claiming that because of 'Militant's' growing influence within NOLS, the Club should sent a larger delegation.

When these points were made in the meeting, one of

the implicated Club officers moved that the question be referred back to the Club Committee—effectively stopping any discussion. Given that many of the Club Committee may also have been involved in the affair, this looks like a cover up!

We understand that following this meeting, up to ten people have resigned from the Club in disgust.

The Labour Party's National Executive should organise an enquiry into Glasgow University Labour Club, as these allegations undermine

the results of NOLS Conference.

The NOLS NC must come clean and put their house in order. We wait with interest to see whether they will carry out an enquiry into this Labour Club with the same unbridled enthusiasm they have shown into investigating Labour Club's supporting 'Militant' in the past.

Yours fraternally  
Lewis Matherson  
Doug Miller  
Glasgow ULC

# IT'S SO LOGICAL!

The pay-off from the settlement in Zimbabwe will be very interesting for the holders of—or recent dealers in—Southern Rhodesia government loan bonds.

They will have seen the price jump during the last year from £43 to £130 for the "2½% 1965/70 issue" and from £81 to £145 for "6% 1978/81 issue" government bonds. A very healthy profit indeed, and very logical from the capitalists' point of view!

Our pay-off, on the other hand, comes from our readers drawing the conclusion from our political ideas that we need to be assisted. However, we're not going to ask the money market to invest in the 'Militant'. (Not that we would lack a logical, optimistic prospectus!)

This week you've raised £1,745 which is almost the exact amount we need each week now, for the next five, to achieve £20,000 by 12 April.

The meetings held at regional Labour conferences and up and down the country on 'What Militant Stands For' benefitted us by hundreds of pounds! Meetings at Eastern LPYS conference, Sheffield, Southampton, London Labour Party, South West LPYS, Northern LPYS, Thanet, Harlow, and Yorkshire Labour conference were only some of the sources.

Although East London are still in the lead, comrades in the lagging regions are making a valiant effort. For example, supporters in Ardwick, Manchester, have sent us £34 made-up of smaller

**By Steve Cawley**

amounts collected on a regular basis from readers with the use of our collectors' cards. If every supporter in these areas emulates Ardwick, they'd be up with the leaders!

An Oxford comrade donated a hefty proportion of a windfall (not S Rhodesia bonds) and Scottish LPYS members collected £41 at a social.

Other comrades who have been clearly enjoying themselves are Merseyside readers who have sent us £120 from a party and a bazaar.

Although we've had cash from our 'regulars' like CPSA members in Longbenton, Militant is reaching new territory all the time. £12 has come from Dunfermline—can you get more remote from London than that?

A Dorset comrade writes: 'Steelworkers picketing Poole Docks were invited to a skittles evening. They held a raffle between them and raised £3.23 for the Militant.' We also had £20 in from the skittles, from other comrades, with the letter.

A Militant jumper from Tyneside raised £7, apparently more woollen than acrobatic. £22 came courtesy of ATV's 'Left, Right and Centre', paid to a Handsworth CLP supporter in appearance money, and the

# Build Militant

Area	received	Proportion of first quarter's target	Target 1st Qtr	Target for year
Eastern	717		1,000	5,000
East Midlands	612		760	3,800
Hants & IOW	430		780	3,900
Humberside	175		500	2,500
London East	1,131		1,240	6,200
London West	820		940	4,700
London South	525		800	4,000
Manchester & Lancs	326		1,020	5,100
Merseyside	832		1,200	6,000
Northern	852		1,460	7,300
Scotland East	358		640	3,200
Scotland West	613		1,000	5,000
Southern	648		1,180	5,900
South West	276		640	3,200
Wales East	226		560	2,800
Wales West	179		620	3,100
West Midlands	1,239		1,800	9,000
Yorkshire	762		1,460	7,300
Others	676		2,400	12,000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>11,400</b>		<b>20,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>

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

continued popularity of Alan Hardman's Cartoon Books and the Militant Trotsky calendars have boosted our finances.

Birmingham readers used our 'Build Militant' appeal sheets to good advantage, and 'one week's maternity allowance' (Preston) and 'guessing the date of arrival of baby' (Sheffield) were also happy events for us, to the tune of £33.15.

Finally, one of our Bridlington sellers writes: 'Laura Booth has promised £1 a week to the fighting fund. She has just come across the 'Militant' and the ideas of Marxism. She says 'It's all so logical—

## THIS WEEK

# £1,745

here's the first two week's money. Logically, shouldn't you support us with cash?



Posters and leaflets now available for Militant sales drive. Write to Circulation Dept. 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

## 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 MILITANT STANDS FOR' PUBLIC MEETING**

**PETERBOROUGH**  
Speaker: Steve Glennon (Stevenage Labour Party & NSMM) 7.30 pm. Thursday 27 March, Transport & General Workers' Union office, Cowgate, Peterborough.

**LEICESTER Militant Public Meeting.** 'Fight the Tories—for a 24-hour general strike.' Speakers: Bill Mullins, Jim McDonald (Corby ISTC). 7.30 pm, Tuesday 18 March, Richard III pub, Highcross Street.

**BIRMINGHAM Militant Public Meeting.** 'The general strike 1926-1980? What it means for British workers'. Speaker: Bill Mullins (T&GWU senior steward, Rover SDI). 7.30 pm. 20 March. Top Foyer, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Cars Lane.

**ABERAVON LPYS public meeting** Speakers: Andy Bevan (Labour's national youth officer), Chris Burns. Glanafan School Hall, Station Road, Port Talbot. 7.30 pm, March 20

**SOUTH WEST REGIONAL LABOUR PARTY MILITANT READERS MEETING:** 'A Socialist Programme for Labour'. Dressing Room, St Georges Hall, Market Street, Exeter. Saturday March 15th 1 pm. Speakers: Councillor Pete Hammond, Robin Clapp.

**NORTH-WEST Labour Party Conference 'Militant' public meeting.** Speakers: Margaret Creear (delegate, Royton and Heywood CLP); Josie Aitman (LPYS National Committee). Chairman: Derek Hatton (Liverpool Labour councillor) 6.15 pm, Saturday 15 March, Opera House, Foyer Annexe, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. All welcome—plenty of time for discussion

**NEW 'MILITANT' BADGE:** 'No to anti-union laws—Socialist policies for Labour' Red and black. 20p each; 5-50, 20p each; over 50, 13p each. Order from 77 Atherley Road, Shirley, Southampton

'Stuff Thatcher' badges: 2 for 45p; 5 for £1; 10 for £1.75; 50 for £7.60. Order from D Kemp (Dept D), 114 Ladybarn Rd, Fallowfield, Manchester 14

**CLASSIFIED**

**STRATHCLYDE** Militant supporters draw results. 1 March. 1st Prize 25+32. 2nd Prize 7 with 9 or 17 or 29. 8 March. 1st Prize 4 and 19 2nd Prize. 30 with one of 3, 7, 12, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 33, 40, 44.

**CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY Public Meeting.** Speakers: David Allenby, Richard Balfe MEP, Dave Wetzel. Chairperson: Anne Shenow. 1.00pm, Sunday 23 March, Winter Gardens, Margate.

**ERITH & CRAYFORD LPYS Disco.** At Thames Polytechnic, Thomas Street, Woolwich SE 18. Saturday 15 March 8.00 pm. Real ale and good music!

# SELL THE PAPER AT WORK

The role the 'Militant' plays in the labour movement is becoming increasingly recognised among the activists both in the Labour Party and in the trade unions, and this is reflecting itself in the sales of the paper.

Over 100 were sold at the Yorkshire regional conference of the Labour Party, 200 were sold on the National Union of Students demonstration in London, and thousands were sold on the TUC demonstration last Sunday.

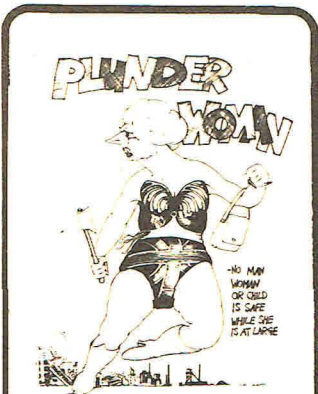
Workers see the 'Militant' as a weapon in the struggle against the Tories and the bosses, providing them with the facts, figures and analysis to build a socialist movement to end this profit system and replace it with workers' democracy.

The EETPU members at Crown House [National Westminster site] have got the message, they buy 25 papers every



**By Dave Farrar**

week. Have your work-mates got the paper that tells the truth?



Limited run red and black "Plunder Woman" Posters 50p each [Post Free]. Order NOW from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Bulk Orders: ½ price with order [other half to the Fighting Fund].

# NUM MUST FIGHT CLOSURES

By Ian Isaac

The especially convened National Delegate Conference of the NUM meets this week at a time of growing uncertainty about the future of mining in South Wales and other parts of Britain.

The same time that the NCB talk of the record output (109 million tons, the best for many years) with the same breath they are considering the loss of between 7,000 and 15,000 jobs in South Wales

with others to follow in other areas, due to the steel crisis. The plan to double output by the year 2000 looks like ending up in the waste paper basket.

Following the vote of the South Wales miners (grossly interfered with by the press and the NCB) this conference takes on a major significance for national action in defence of miners' jobs.

The Conference should give a clear undertaking that in the event of the NCB announcing the colliery clos-

ures for reasons other than proven exhaustion and safety, that a commitment begins to consult the membership or use national industrial action to stop closures and to defend jobs. Any ballot arranged should be preceded with the NEC touring the areas in conjunction with the area leadership campaigning for industrial action explaining the issue of colliery closure, areas like South Wales will end up as industrial deserts only way to answer the distortions of the press and the NCB.

At the same time the conference should call for adequate financing of the NCB in order to sell coal at world market prices to achieve the aims of the plan for coal, and secure through democratic management and control of all the industry for the future of mining in Britain.

This is the only means, against the background of world subsidisation of coal price fixing (in order to undersell competitors) that the British mining industry and the traditions of the NUM as a union can be defended.

Without a national lead on the issue of colliery closures areas like South Wales will end up as industrial deserts with only 4 or 5 'super-pits' remaining. Many of the NUM believe that this has been the NCB's long term policy anyway, and that they are now using the steel crisis in order to achieve the rationalisation that remains.

★ For national action in defence of miners' jobs.

★ For adequate financing of the industry.

★ For democratic management and control of mining, in order to achieve a plan for the coal industry.

## Reject the bosses' deal

Trade union leaders in the shipbuilding industry have just signed a wage agreement with British shipbuilders. They propose to put the agreement to a national delegate conference later this month, to endorse what will be presented as a fait accompli.

Shipyards workers throughout Britain are angry at the way this deal has been rushed through. It is an absolute scandal that it should have been signed at this stage.

At the Hall Russel yard in Aberdeen, no meetings or discussions have been held, according to George Gamble, EETPU shop steward, "but the general impression is that we don't want it; it's rubbish."

The Robb Caledon yards in Dundee and Leith are both fighting the agreement; at Dundee a full mass meeting overwhelmingly backed their stewards' rejection of British Shipbuilders' original 13 February offer.

This was for a 10% increase on basic rates from 1 April, plus a further 5% from 1 November. There is also to be a lump-sum payment ranging from £100 to £150.

But to pay for these increases, 4,000 more redundancies were to be accepted, together with reduction in overtime, increased productivity and more flexibility. Worst of all, there was a 'no strike' clause and the proviso that if the whole deal was not accepted by the end of

March, the offer would be withdrawn.

The deal sells jobs for a wage increase that doesn't even match current price increases.

Shipyards workers must follow the example of the steelworkers, with a concerted campaign to throw out this deal and fight for 20%.

By Pat Craven

(Dundee Labour Party)

## SUPPORT COUNTRY MAID STRUGGLE

Bakery workers are on strike at the Country Maid bakery at Saltney, near Chester.

They went out on Tuesday 4th after four active Bakers' union branch members, including a leading shop steward, were victimised. The strike was immediately made official.

Managers from Allied bakeries throughout the country have been drafted in to bake bread. "These scab bosses are being paid their ordinary wage plus about £20 a day, with expenses on top", one striker told us. "Then they crib about not being able to pay us better wages". The bakers are still on about £1.49 an hour.

A scab manager driving an articulated lorry was so keen

on his new job that he charged the entrance, smashed into a car and knocked over a young picket who now has a broken ankle, crushed foot and body bruising. What would the press say if a picket did that?

The police have been out in force, in some cases preventing pickets speaking to drivers. Two pickets have been arrested.

Some vans and lorries, including flour and oil deliveries, have been turned away. Post Office engineers have refused to cross the picket. Bakers from Scotts of Liverpool came down to provide support and identified some of their own management who were scabbing. These scabs were then withdrawn.

The maintenance workers in the bakery garage have voted to come out but Country Maid drivers, URTU members, are still crossing the picket.

Some of the drivers have gone home in solidarity and four of the firm's articulated wagon drivers refused to cross the picket. Management suspended them, but the URTU has so far done nothing to support them. Now management and staff are driving vans.

URTU must immediately call out its members at Country Maid. If Allied Bakeries get away with this

victimisation, the drivers could be next.

The union should instruct members not to deliver flour to the bakery. URTU members must put pressure on their leaders to ensure that this is done.

Union branches at Allied Bakeries should investigate the absence of any managers and report this to the BF&AWU general secretary and the Country Maid shop stewards. Send information and enquiries to Peter Martin [BF&AWU branch sec.] Tel Chester 672983.

By Richard Venton  
(Birkenhead Labour Party)



Bakers' Union pickets halt a lorry during the '78 dispute—similarly the workers at 'Country Maid' need support from the labour movement

## INCO - A victory - but strings attached

Last week the INCO strikers at Clydach, Swansea, returned to work after a 20 week strike.

The agreement reached with management was for a 31% across the board pay rise, which means increases between £20-£30 a week. They also achieved an improved pension scheme, an extra day's holiday and £50 lump sum payment.

Linked to the pay deal, however, are certain conditions which the strike committee rejected but which were accepted by the full-time officers of the AUEW and T&GWU.

These are wide scale flexibility and mobility, use of sub-contractors, no victimisation on either side, introduction of some automatic equipment and 80 job losses, total freeze on recruitment, and for the agreement to run from

signing and not from last October.

At the mass meeting Tal Hoyd and Norri Davies of the AUEW and Tony Duckhouse of the T&G were present. Tal Hoyd recommended acceptance and after a lengthy meeting it was accepted by 470 to 190.

Despite the attached conditions the strike is a great victory for the workers.

The full-time AUEW officer involved has promised to sort out some of the conditions once the men are back at work. Whether or not this was just a meaningless, worthless promise will be seen in the near future.

In the future it is vital that INCO workers build on the solidarity achieved throughout the dispute: continue the good links between production and craft workers, joint negotiations by craft and

production workers, the blacking of scab transport firms, rely on their own rank and file union officials, support other trade unionists

in future disputes.

Tom Jenkins [Neath CLP] interviewed Lyn Davies [T&GWU shop steward]

# STEEL STRIKE WEEK 11:

## AROUND THE COUNTRY

### CORBY

Do you believe that the bosses are prepared to plunder Britain's industry and manufacturing base to such an extent that tourism will become the major employer? That situation is not as fantastic as you might think.

While I was visiting the steel strike headquarters in Corby the other day, there was a phone call from Radio Leicester.

'What's your reaction to

the proposals by the British Tourist Board to develop Corby as a tourist town?' They were met with hoots of derisions, although Mick Skelton of the ISTC did point out that there would be a ready-made museum at the steelworks, due to lack of investment over the years.

The 5,000 steelworkers who may have no job to go to after the strike need not worry after all. They can all dress up as beefeaters and show the tourists the delights of Corby!

Many lessons can be drawn from any dispute, some less obvious than others. The Corby strike committee has been buying food wholesale and selling it at cost price.

Just look at the prices: 30 eggs for 60p; 2lbs apples for 20p; sausages, 30p per lb; big steak pies, 17p each.

They reckon that it would take £10,000 to feed Corby at these prices. It just shows what profits the big supermarkets must be making. What was that about the greedy workers?

By Heather Rawling

### PORT TALBOT

Richard Morgan, apprentice electrician, BSC Port Talbot, talked to Rob Sewell.

"The unions in the past could guarantee a job for every apprentice who had served his time. At the moment at Port Talbot there is no hope at all.

"This cutting back by half of apprentices is from next summer. The boys who are passing out their time this summer could just be starting their jobs and then the cut-backs would be on top of them in August.

"The last ones in will be the first ones out. Out of 400 electricians' jobs in the plant, they will be getting rid of 300. The ones they keep on will be the more elderly, more experienced electricians. Younger boys coming through won't have much hope of a job."

What are the prospects of a job in the area if you are made redundant after your time?

"I can't see any hope at all at the moment. Many people

are moving away from the area.

"The Tories got into power, and they are looking for ways of keeping up their system. They want to keep up their profits, and the only way they can do that is to make working people weak.

"They thought that the steelworkers would be an easy fight. But it is not just the steelworkers, it is all workers from other industries, such as the dockers and miners. They all should join together and stick together.

"I joined the Labour Party Young Socialists instead of sitting idly by and letting other people fight for me. You have got to fight for yourself and to help fight for other people as well."

What do you think is the way forward for young people in Port Talbot?

"Not to just sit idly by and let things take their course. You are not going to let these redundancies take place without letting people know of your say."

### LONDON

Between stopping lorries outside H E Samson steel stockholders, near Staines, Middlesex, the pickets from Llanwern and Ebbw Vale turn to stories about BSC management inefficiency and waste, or of past working class struggles in the valleys.

The role of BSC management (Steel Industry Management Association) during the

strike, has caused particular resentment. While hundreds of men have been going into Llanwern without any pay to keep the blast furnaces and cooling equipment in working order, and safe, some 570 management personnel have been crossing picket-lines each day and getting paid for doing nothing.

"These people" explained one picket, "are given management jobs for between

# ISTC MUST STAND FIRM TO WIN THE BATTLE

The thirteen steel unions are now jointly negotiating with the British Steel Corporation.

If they show as much determination as rank-and-file pickets have demonstrated in the last twelve weeks, then victory would be certain.

The British Steel Corporation, who are hoping to achieve some compromise over the heads of steel workers, would then find no weak link at the top. They would be forced to concede the full demands of the steelworkers.

Despite the tissue of lies from BSC to show the opposite, it is clear that the strike is now having a crippling effect on wide sections of industry. Many of the firms still producing, only have stocks left for one or two more weeks.

The dice is therefore loaded firmly in favour of steel workers, especially since the Transport and General Workers Union last week strengthened the earlier request to lorry drivers not to cross picket lines, with firm instructions not to cross.

This directive has not only helped tighten control on the movement of steel, but lifted the morale of steelworkers, though they feel the call should have been a lot earlier.

The willingness to fight on has not been denied by BSC's sham 'ballot about a ballot'. In fact, the opposite is the case.

Management's ballot was assisted by massive TV and press propaganda. Non-striking members of the management union SIMA were sent ballot papers, and collection points were organised for

those who claimed they did not receive their papers through the post.

Yet the votes cast still amounted to less than 44% of the total number of steel workers. Many steelworkers who voted 'yes' in this ballot, moreover, still vote 'no' in any subsequent ballot.

Many voted for a ballot because they want to be consulted about the progress of the strike. 'Militant' has argued throughout for regular rallies and mass meetings to keep all steelworkers abreast of developments, to answer the distortions of the media, to break down the isolation of individual workers not fully involved in the action, and as a means of increasing participation in the picketing.

If a systematic drive had

been organised from the top to explain the case against the ballot to all steelworkers, the voting figures would have been far lower than 44%. Should the steel management refuse the demands of the steelworkers then such a drive would have to be launched to rally workers for the next stage of the battle.

There is a widespread alarm at the indications that the leaders of the steel unions seem willing to go some way towards meeting the demands of BSC management for changes in work-practices and redundancies. ISTC negotiations traditionally take place in front of an elected rank-and-file committee, who could soon make their feelings known if their leaders were unnecessary and unac-

ceptable concessions.

It seems now, however, that such negotiations may only be a formality—after the real negotiations between the full-time officials and BSC have been concluded. ISTC members must demand that, while they want unity, the right of the elected negotiating committee to observe negotiations must be restored.

Steelworkers can win if they remain firm. A victory for steelworkers will lift the fighting spirits of the entire working class in the struggles against the Tory attacks. The entire labour movement must therefore do all it can to ensure a speedy and a full victory for steelworkers.

## PUTTING ON THE FRIGHTENERS

Last week, three of us hired a car, using proceeds from a collection at Stafford TUC to roam Staffordshire factories, pits, and workplaces to raise money for the steel strikers.

One of our stops was Rugeley A and B power stations. We walked into a workshop at 'B' and asked to see the senior steward.

"Who are you?"

"We're steelworkers." We were told to wait. Groups of heads peered at us through different office windows above the shop. Beginning to feel uneasy we lit up.

Then a foreman arrived. "You need management's permission to see any union reps, lads." We were about to explain that we'd been to the gatehouse and administration when a beefy and obviously worried manager rushed over.

"You've no right here... what do you want...?" "We want..." "Who are you?" "We're..." "You've no right here. If you don't move off we've people who'll 'escort' you off; go on!"

We tried to explain that we hadn't come to shut the power station, merely to raise cash, but he couldn't hear us above his own noise. The foreman agreed to send the steward to the gatehouse, so we beat it. We pulled up at the gatehouse.

"Stay there!" they said, "we'll search your car." Perhaps we'd nicked a gener-

ator or a cooling tower, or kidnapped a manager, even a shop steward. Anyway, they found nothing.

"Right, you can't stay here, move outside the gate." A whole ten yards! We moved outside, then the big SS man came over again.

"The good news is the steward's coming. The bad is... get off this road, onto the main road (another whole 20 yards).

Feigning a charge at the gates, we did as asked, singing 'you don't get me I'm part of the union...'

We waited ten minutes wondering whether the CEGB was really publicly-owned, chatting about nationalisation, about workers' control and about Tory (and worse) management—not to mention the need for getaway cars and putting names in our black books.

Eventually a bloke in a suit came huffing and puffing out of the gates. "He's a smart shop steward isn't he?"

"Hello, I'm the warden" (top management it turns out). "Now what did you want?" This time we made sure we got our oar in.

"Look pal, we don't want a strike or owt, just a collection, now what's all the fuss and nazi tactics?"

"Oh, yes, yes, I'm very sorry about all this, er...you've caused confusion you see..."

"We have?"

"That manager just doesn't

know how to deal with people, he's a bit ignorant..."

"I'll say! Why do you employ him then?"

"Well...and the security man is new so he's a bit zealous, but the manager was wrong to throw you out. I'd said to give you a cup of tea in my office then I'd come to see you."

Our eyes lit up. "Any chance of that cuppa now?" He ignored this and after more apologetic chatter, left.

It was obvious we'd set off one hell of a hornets' nest, but perhaps management were decent after all, with their apologies and intended cups of tea?

Not so. When the steward arrived he explained that phones had been screaming all over the plant and that management had called out the police! All they had in reserve was the army and the RAF it seemed.

The stewards had said that if the police came on site then they'd be out regardless of what we wanted. That alone explains the apology.

Altogether we'd spent an hour there, and we'd seen more security men and managers than workers—and only narrowly missed the police. It's clear that somewhere along the line our struggles have at least taught management to fear the power of the organised workers.

By John Sanderson [Corby AUEW], Keith Hall [Rotherham NCCC], Dave Griffiths [Stafford Trades Council]

questions put to him afterwards but perhaps his most enlightening remark concerned the proposed 'Employment' Bill. The purpose of making unions pay strike pay, he said, was to bring a quick end to disputes.

This is his way of saying the Tories are out to bankrupt the unions and starve the men back to work. But drastic measures such as these will be fully resisted not just by the steelworkers but by the whole trade union movement.

By Neil Thomson (Scunthorpe LPYS)

ment.

One picket told us how his father, over seventy years of age, joined in the bitter reception given to Keith Joseph at Briton Ferry. The picket also told us about a photograph of an older relative with a bayonet at his throat, when Churchill sent in the troops.

This is the bitter tradition of class struggle in South Wales. The steelworkers are prepared to keep up that tradition.



'Here comes 'Hissing Sid' was how pickets at GKN in Cardiff greeted a familiar scab. They were attempting to stop management crossing the picket line—special treatment was saved for one scab who was a former ISTC branch official!

## CONSETT

The flying pickets from Consett heard that workers at Spartan Steels in Gateshead were going back to work, so we went to try to dissuade them.

At first the ISTC members there refused to cross the picket line. But talking to them, it became clear that they were under great pressure: "We've been told that if we don't go back by the 10th we needn't go back at all—we're sacked."

Despite our efforts to persuade the Gateshead workers to resist their bosses' intimidation, they went in. It was a bit of a sickener,

especially as some of our pickets were from Raines, another local private company who have given us one hundred per cent support.

On the same site there was a steel stockholder, Monkhouse and Brown. We managed to turn away lorries, including one from Sheffield, which were trying to tip steel. But inside there were five lorries trying to get out.

The manager opened a gate that hadn't been opened for years. "That's all right, we'll send pickets round there," we said, and we did.

The mood of the pickets was very determined. After the setback at Spartan Steels, there was no way we were going to let that convoy of lorries out. The drivers would have had to run us over, which, to their credit, they

refused to do. Police reinforcements were called but we wouldn't budge. In the end management vented their spleen on the drivers themselves.

The lads were unfortunately not in a union and the boss gave them an ultimatum. They still refused to run through us. They were sacked on the spot.

We feel bad about men losing their jobs by giving their support to us. We know that the rotten managers who throw away workers' livelihoods just like that won't be lambasted in the press like we are.

All the same, it shows that workers need a union, to stand up to the bosses.

By Arthur Carter (ISTC Consett, personal capacity)

## SHEFFIELD

In Sheffield City Hall last Tuesday, 1,500 BSC workers shouted an emphatic "No!" to BSC. They rejected having anything to do with the ballot engineered by Bob Scholey from BSC; a ballot on whether to have a ballot.

The rally was addressed by members of the Rotherham strike committee. Keith Jones, strike co-ordinator of the No. 3 division, summed up our feelings:

"BSC never had a ballot on whether we wanted Shelton, Bilston, Corby, Shotton and so on to close," he said, "or asking us whether we had any confidence in the current BSC board—so do not give this ballot the time of day".

We were instructed to destroy the ballot papers. The suggestion that we all

vote "No" was thrown out, because any vote, even a big "No" vote, would give credibility to this unasked for and unwanted propaganda exercise.

The latest "offer", was also explained and the consensus was that no straight cash was involved at all; we were being offered 10% blood money only if we allowed 52,000 jobs to "disappear".

Finally, increased co-operation was announced between the ISTC and the 12 craft unions. Even after ten weeks on strike, all the unions have never met on a national level, and only the ISTC and the NUB have been involved in the pay negotiations. National Craftsmen's Co-ordinating Committee convenor Bernard Connelly, deemed increased

co-operation crucial.

At the end of the rally, the 1500 strikers marched exuberantly through the city streets to the site of some BSC officers and temporarily occupied the building: the air was a sea of torn-up ballot papers.

By a Sheffield steelworker

'A SOCIALIST STRATEGY FOR STEELWORKERS' A Militant Pamphlet

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## SCUNTHORPE

Scunthorpe steel workers hammered home their message to local Tory MP Michael Brown, at an open forum on Saturday 8th.

Within minutes of opening his speech he was booed and jeered when he said that it was not the intention of the Tory government to "pick off a trade union". After several other controversial statements, the chairman had to appeal to the steelworkers for

order as they reacted to his provocation.

The other speaker, ISTC divisional organiser Joe Pickles, called for all mineral wealth to be mined for the bettering of mankind and exposed the management blunders which have cost BSC vast amounts of money. He was given a standing ovation by the 800-strong crowd.

Michael Brown was constantly unable to answer the

£8,000 and £12,000 per year, are supplied with brand new Rover cars and know nothing about the steel industry. It's pathetic."

Even supervisory jobs are rarely offered to steelworkers. Ex-policemen have been chosen in preference!

The waste is shocking. Brand new plant is left lying around unused.

Coating oils, at £2.30 per gallon, are allowed to go hard on the floor and are then

thrown away. The workers have pointed out that if a catchment tank was built, the oil could be saved and used again.

What about the £3m per year paid by BSC on a contract for limestone which has never been delivered and which they now don't want, but go on paying for?

These stories are only the tip of the ice-berg, but they amply make the case for workers' control and manage-

# CONSETT - DON'T LET TORIES TURN THE CLOCK BACK

By Chris Edwards  
 [Newcastle Central LPYS]

**“The Consett estate is situated in the County of Durham, about 14 miles south-west of Newcastle.**

“Previous to the year 1840 a solitary farmhouse was all that stood on this property, while at the present time it is occupied by a population upwards of 20,000.” That is the introduction to an 1860 history of the Consett Iron Works.

The production of iron and steel on the Durham coalfield helped lay the basis for the North-East's heavy manufacturing industry. But 120 years later, Keith Joseph and the puppet-show running BSC have decided to turn history backwards, reducing a steel town to nothing.

There won't be a return to green pastures and a solitary farmhouse though, just the dole queue, depression, closed shops, offices, and second hand furniture at knock-down prices—in short, social and economic devastation.

But if Villiers' mentality belongs in the 1860s, when employers were only just beginning to be challenged, then the Consett workforce are right up to date in realising that the fight against closure is a fight for survival.

Newcastle Central Labour Party Young Socialists organised a sponsored walk in aid of the Consett ISTC hardship fund and in under a week raised £105 for the Consett struggle and £60 for LPYS funds to prepare for future battles.

After a 9 am. Sunday start in Newcastle the 8 marchers, a banner and a football made steady progress, but limbs were tiring for the last 3-mile stretch. Then we were met by a group of the workers who gave us a fantastic reception for such a small effort.

### Support Consett workers' fight

They made us realise that a 15-mile walk is nothing compared to the struggle that must be waged by the whole labour and trade union movement to win every battle over pay and closures.

Almost everyone I approached with the rattling coffee jar on the last three miles worked in the steel works or had family there. But when we got to Consett we found the jar had £25 in it—there

was no shortage of determination.

John Lee, ISTC branch secretary, told me how men like himself, who used to consider themselves 'moderate' in their political views, had realised that under the present Tory onslaught attitudes must change.

The fact that Consett had been given a reprieve on condition the plant broke even and that profitability had been achieved in the last period meant that when the closure plan was announced, hastily followed by the miserable 2% offer, the workers realised which side their bread was buttered on.

Many of the men had spent the week at Sheerness and had bruises to prove it. Friendliness to the police and press—the twin prongs of Tory picket-bashing—have gone forever in Consett. Steel won't disappear so easily.

To the sound of 'The Red Flag', '20% and no strings!' and 'Save Consett Steel!' we entered Consett knowing that, eight weeks into the strike, the battle has still a long way to go. The rest of the organised working class must link up with all workers whose living standards are threatened.

Newcastle Central LPYS will be in there helping. Will your Labour Party or trade union branch? Messages of support and donations to John Lee, 24 Stockerley Rd, Delves Lane, Consett, Co. Durham.

Above: Consett workers face the same struggle as workers in Corby for the lifeblood of their town



## CHILDREN SUFFER

FROM PAGE ONE

health of working-class children is bound to suffer as more and more families can't afford to pay for dinners.

Another vicious aspect of the Tory Education Bill is that it will allow local authorities to charge for school transport, now free outside a 2 or 3-mile radius from school. Bus fares to school could then cost in excess of 20p per head each day, £2 a week or more for two children.

Children in rural areas will suffer most. The National Union of Agricultural Workers, has calculated that the average rural family will be £9 per week worse off, simply as a result of the Education Bill if it becomes law.

Not everybody who lives in the country is a rich Tory! Farm workers' average wages are £66.95 per week, and they already live in areas lacking many of the facilities available in Labour-controlled cities.

Besides this, many families (depending on the area) will be faced with extra costs for school equipment, special lessons (like swimming), and drastic cuts in school uniform and clothing grants.

In a pre-election broadcast last year, Thatcher said the Tories would protect "schools which gave children from modest backgrounds, like my own, the chance to get on in life as far as they are able."

Which schools was she talking about?

The wealthy few who can afford fees of £3,000 a year to send their sons to Eton are actually better off as a result of the Tories' massive tax handouts to the rich. But for ordinary working-class families, the Tories have dealt the educational opportunities of

their children a devastating blow.

The Tories are fond of preaching about the importance of "the family". But inflation will reduce the real value of the present £8.00 child benefits by at least £2.00 by next October. Reports suggest, however, that the government will increase benefits by only 70p or 75p.

On top of these cuts, which will especially slash the living standards of working families with children, millions of households are currently receiving notices of massive rent and rate increases.

Most council house rents will increase this year by between £1.50 and £2.50 a week. Apart from the enormous and ever growing burden of interest debts on local authorities, these increases, and rate increases of between 40% and 60% have been adopted by many Labour councils in a mistaken attempt to compensate for the cuts in central government's rate support grant to local authorities.

The labour movement must be mobilised to stop these disastrous cuts now:

- ★ No rent increases!
- ★ No rate increases!
- ★ Restore all the cuts!
- ★ Nationalise the banks and finance houses!



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