

inside

Labour Leader

page 2

US elections

page 3

AUEW elections

page 14

Gardner's occupation continues

page 15

Import controls no solution for hosiery industry

SACK BOSSES NOT WORKERS

Like many workers in Tory Britain, workers in the hosiery industry face a desperate future.

Over 5,000 redundancies hit them between January and May this year. In January alone 68,000 hours were lost in short-time working.

In Leicester, things are very serious. The National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers [NU-HKW] have launched a campaign to defend jobs in the city, and this must be welcomed as the first of its kind. It will culminate in a demonstration on 12 November.

But to save jobs, when British industry is in dire crisis and we are saddled with a vicious Tory government, we need socialist policies.

The trade unions must

By Heather Rawling

fight for:

- ★ No more redundancies.
- ★ Share out the work with no loss of pay.
- ★ 35-hour week with no loss of pay.
- ★ £80 minimum for all workers.
- ★ Open the firms' books to trade union inspection.
- ★ Socialist economic policies to plan production for working people.

Unfortunately, the Hosiery Workers' main slogan, "Save Jobs,

CONTINUED PAGE TWO

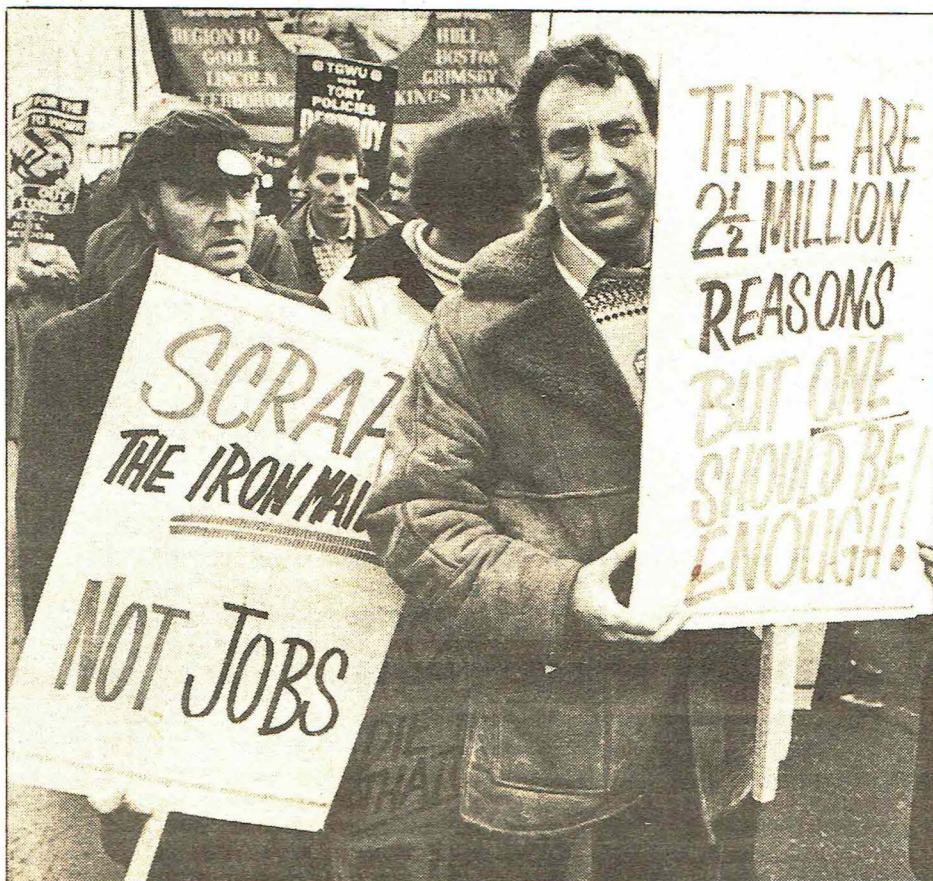


Photo: MILITANT

Workers unity against Tories

LIVERPOOL WORKERS PREPARE FOR 29th

The growing, organised trade union support for Labour's national unemployment demonstration was shown last Monday by an enthusiastic meeting of over 500 Merseyside shop stewards.

An especially encouraging report came from Irene Buxton, from the Knowsley branch of the local government white-collar union, NALGO. Although not yet affiliated to the Labour Party, NALGO will be giving full support to the demonstration.

She called for the return of a Labour government, not like the last one, but committed to reversing all the Tory cuts in public spending.

Liverpool District LP's Trade Union Liaison Officer, Terry Harrison, reported on preparations for the 29th, which include factory gate meetings, speakers at TU branches, etc.

Richard Knights of the Labour Party Young Socialists, emphasised the need to bring the youth to the demo and draw them into the movement. He also announced the joint LPYS-SOGAT Rally to be held in St George's Hall, Liverpool, on the 28th—with Alex Kitson [Transport & General, Bill Keys [print union SOGAT], and Eric Heffer MP and Tony Saunois [LPYS Rep.] from Labour's National Executive Committee.

CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE



H-BLOCKS - Labour must act

Militant Sellers Rally

A Great Success

This year's 'Militant' Sellers' Rally, held in Bridlington 1st-4th November has been a resounding success.

Attended by over 700 regular sellers and supporters the Rally collection raised £5,131 for our Fighting Fund.

Speakers reflected the burning anger among working people at the Tory government's vicious attacks on living standards and reported the growing demands for an all-out campaign by the labour movement to bring down the Tories and return a Labour government with socialist policies.

Contributions from Labour Party members, LP Young Socialists, and trade union activists—with every major union and industry, and every area of the country, represented—demonstrated the growing support for the ideas of the Marxist tendency among the working class.

New Targets for Fighting Fund and paper circulation

'Militant' supporters were confident that next year's Fighting Fund target of £120,000 would be achieved, and that the paper's circulation would be doubled from the present 20,000 to 40,000 or over.

Sellers expressed a determination to establish regular sales in every factory, trade union branch, and every big housing estate.

Labour's right wing, with the help of the millionaires' press, have vehemently denounced the 'Militant' Rally. But the hatred of right-wing Labour MPs towards the 'Militant' reflects the fact that they have been resoundingly defeated in the debates on democracy and policy in the Labour Party. 'Militant', however, clearly has massive support from Labour Party members and trade unionists.

'Militant' is an organic part of the labour and trade union movement. We will not be in the least intimidated by the attacks of the capitalist press and the Tory infiltrators in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

After this highly enthusiastic and successful Rally, the Editorial Board and papers' supporters are more confident than ever that in the coming months and years the 'Militant' will go from strength to strength.

The H-Block hunger strike—and the reactions it may provoke—have created another potentially explosive situation in Northern Ireland.

Seven Republican prisoners have so far started to refuse food. This marks a sharp escalation of the four-year long protest in the Maze.

The labour movement is implacably opposed to the Provisional IRA's methods of individual terrorism, which have played into the hands of ruling class. But it is still vital to oppose repression by the state, especially the systematic repression in Northern Ireland and the brutal inhuman treatment of prisoners.

Prisoners in the H-Block of the Maze (formerly Long Kesh) endure the worst prison conditions in Europe. Locked in cells 24 hours a day with only a blanket for covering, they are denied all access to television, newspapers, books and writing materials.

This horror has not arisen from prisoners' desire to 'abuse themselves', as the media would have us believe. Until 1976, these prisoners could wear their own clothes,

were excused work, and allowed free association.

When their rights were removed, the prisoners protested and this escalated to the present horrific situation in the H-Block and Armagh women's prison.

Eighty per cent in the H-Block were convicted solely on 'confessions' extracted in the torture chambers of the police stations. One hunger striker has been outside prison for one year since internment was introduced in 1971. One of the 'crimes' of another hunger striker now serving a sentence is for "escaping from legal custody"—i.e. from internment without trial.

The Tories' reaction has been total intransigence. Their one "concession" is an insult. The press, especially in Britain, declared that the right to wear "civilian" clothes had been conceded.

But they only mentioned in small print that these would be "civilian" clothes issued by the authorities! The terrible conditions and the Tories' hard-faced attitude have aroused real support for the prisoners among Northern Ireland's catholic population. On the eve of the hunger strike, 20,000 marched through West Belfast.

But this protest movement has unfortunately increased the sectarian tensions, with 90% of the comment going along sectarian lines. The loyalist para-military Ulster Defence Association has threatened to shoot those involved in the protest campaign. The Provisionals and right-wing republicans are appealing to the "unity of the nationalist population" against the H-Block.

Sectarian division

But the road of sectarian division is a road to disaster, for both the working class in Northern Ireland and the H-Block prisoners themselves. Only working-class unity can provide a way out.

It is in the direct interest of the labour movement, both in Britain and north and south in Ireland, to oppose the repression in H-Block and Armagh.

British prisons are now a powder keg which could explode—putting even the H-Block protests in the shade. The emergency measures against the prison officers' action and the rapid deploying of troops is a warning for the future.

In fighting for decent conditions for prisoners, the labour movement are not giving support to the Provisional IRA. On the contrary: if the labour movement does not take up the issue, the Provisionals will be left to capitalise on the situation. This would be a set-back for the workers, and a dangerous threat to the unity of the workers' movement.

The Provisionals have not been able to assist the prisoners—and will not be able to help them. The decision to mount a hunger strike was taken not by the Provisionals will be left to prisoners themselves against their opposition. As one Provisional Sinn Fein spokesman was forced to say: "We had nothing else we could offer the prisoners to stop the hunger strike."

The women prisoners in Armagh and one of the hunger strikers have recently issued appeals to the trade unions to take up their case.

It is now up to the trade union and labour movement to oppose the repression of these prisoners—independently of the various sectarian organisations and sectarian politicians who would turn H-Block into a divisive question.

The labour movement must demand decent conditions in H-Block and Armagh, as well as for prisoners generally.

Basic rights

These basic rights must be fought for:

- ★ Prisoners' right to wear their own clothes.
- ★ Two food parcels, two visits per week, unlimited letters and access to newspapers, books, TV, etc.
- ★ Right to negotiate choice of work, training and educational facilities.
- ★ Right to trade-union membership and rates of pay.
- ★ Prisoners' right to elect their own representatives to negotiate with the prison authorities on their behalf.

End repression

These rights would resolve the central problem of the H-Block and meet the main demands of the prisoners. Victory on these rights, moreover would be a step towards ending all aspects of the repression in Northern Ireland.

Labour leadership first ballot a disappointment for the right

The first ballot in the Labour leadership election is a blow to Denis Healey—and a blow to all the capitalist spokesmen who backed Healey as their own candidate.

By Lynn Walsh

The result, according to 'The Times' [5 November], "is extremely depressing for the party." What they really mean is...extremely depressing for big business, because the candidate who upholds outright, pro-capitalist policies is now facing defeat.

The first ballot result was: Denis Healey 112, Michael Foot 83, John Silkin 38, and

Peter Shore 32. Silkin and Shore now drop out.

The majority of Silkin's votes will undoubtedly swing over to Foot, and it is doubtful whether Healey could win more than half of Shore's votes, which he will need to do to be assured of victory in the second ballot.



Michael Foot's good showing in the first electoral round has disturbed the Tory press

Photo: MILITANT

"Now it looks doubtful if Mr Healey will win at all," moaned 'The Times': "So Mr Foot now looks to be the favourite."

The victory of Foot in the second ballot would undoubtedly be the best result for members of the labour movement. This is not because Michael Foot represents left-wing policies—he was a main-stay of the right-wing Labour government under Jim Callaghan—but because he accepts the decision of party conference to establish an electoral college which would involve the trade unions and the constituency parties, together with the parliamentary party, in the election of the leader.

'Militant' supports an elec-

toral college which would give 40% of conference votes to the trade unions, 30% to the constituency parties, and 30% to the Labour MPs. In a leadership election under the college system, we would support Tony Benn, the candidate of the overwhelming majority of Labour Party members.

The result of the first ballot undoubtedly reflects the enormous pressure of the Party's ranks on MPs, particularly as they are now looking over their shoulder with regard to mandatory re-selection.

In Plymouth, Devonport CLP, for instance, David Owen, of the "Gang of Three" and a prominent Healey supporter, was rebuffed by his own general

management committee when last week they voted 18 to 4 in favour of Michael Foot as leader.

In Bassetlaw, Derbyshire, Joe Ashton, who at the party conference argued forcefully against the proposals for democratisation, also found that his party overwhelmingly supported Michael Foot, while he came out for Peter Shore. In a ballot of all party members, the vote was 56 to 35 in favour of Foot, a very low poll, incidentally, in the constituency of an MP who has loudly advocated the involvement of all party members as opposed to the "elite" activists.

The results of the second PLP ballot will be out next Monday.

[Continued from page 1] SACK BOSSES

Buy British," will not solve workers' problems.

Why are textile bosses calling for import controls? Because they see it as a way of boosting their profits!

Protectionism would rebound on the workers. Prices would go up. For every job temporarily saved through import controls, many others would be lost by retaliation by countries now buying goods from Britain.

The comments of many NUHKW members show the

support there would be for a bold socialist campaign. One shop steward told me: "Many people blame cheap labour in countries like Sri Lanka, Korea and Taiwan for our problems. But labour here isn't exactly expensive! The top minimum wage in the East Midlands is £57 per week, excluding bonuses etc."

At Sunray Dye Company, most workers have dropped £20 a week in their take-home pay through short-time working. British trade unionists should actively support the workers of those cheap-labour countries in their struggles

against exploiting employers.

It's no good blaming the workers, if the bosses are to blame! "In our wage negotiations the management will say that they can't afford to pay our wage rises, and any increase in wages will lead to job losses. We should be able to see the books to see where all the money has gone."

A Labour Party Young Socialist working in the Hosiery industry had this to say: "I work on machines built before the war. that are supposed to knit modern jumpers. Import controls won't do any good because we

have to buy materials from abroad and we need to trade.

"We couldn't cope with reprisals. Prices would go up in a shot. We need money invested in industry, but the employers won't do it.

"We need to nationalise the whole industry. We can't revitalise it under the present system. We need to be able to plan industry."

The "buy British" campaign lines up workers with the bosses—the very people responsible for the crisis. No wonder Leicester hosiery employers are giving their workers time off to attend the

demonstration!

The trade unions must fight independently. We need bold socialist policies. If the bosses can't guarantee jobs, let's nationalise the firms (with minimum compensation) and run them under democratic workers' control and management.

This is the way to save jobs. A campaign with these policies would get real mass support.

We would be sure of quickly kicking out the Tories and returning a Labour government with socialist policies.

Democratic Party coalition begins to crumble

Carter lost the election, rather than Reagan winning. Carter had promised economic prosperity. But the system can no longer deliver the goods.

Unemployment now totals 8 million, and inflation is 12% and rising.

By Jim Christie

Few workers believed any longer in the Democratic Party promises. Nearly half the electorate 48% did not even bother to vote, a record number.

Of those who did vote, many, for lack of an independent party of labour, switched to Reagan as the only apparent alternative to Carter's disastrous policies.

During the campaign there have been calls from some union leaders for a labour party, reflecting pressure from members bitterly frustrated by a choice between two parties of big business. Although some trade union

leaders are peddling the idea that Kennedy would have been better, the demand for a labour party will undoubtedly grow as Reagan's "Thatcherite" policies bite further into the working class.

Traditionally, the Democratic Party relied for its majority on a coalition of support. A big business party, it has also drawn its mass vote from among workers, trade unionists, and oppressed racial groups.

But this election marked a crack in this coalition. Accord-

Beneath the surface of electoral confrontation, both of the parties share the same class interests

ding to the 'Financial Times' [5 November], "Carter's support from the working class and union members was running 15% or more below what he gained in 1976."

With a dole queue that could now stretch 3,000 miles coast to coast, and the wholesale devastation of steel towns such as Youngstown, Ohio, workers felt that enough was enough and de-

manded change.

Even blacks, who had voted for Carter before, abstained in large numbers, despite Reagan's racist sentiments, because they saw no change in their lives in the inner-city areas.

This negative 'ABC' vote ["anyone but Carter"], was how one unemployed steelworker described it] reflects an underlying volatility in American society. Landscale majorities in themselves solve nothing, as Nixon demonstrated. Reagan will preside over even bigger convulsions than Nixon and Carter, and faces the prospect of massive opposition, possibly explosive movements on the part of American workers.

Reagan has long championed ultra right-wing poli-

cies, though he tried to tone down his image in the campaign. But Reagan, like previous presidents, will be moulded and used by the ruling class—and it is the crisis measures of capitalism, not Reagan's demagoguery, which will in time provoke massive opposition.

Carter is the first elected President to be denied a second term since the recession of the 1930s.

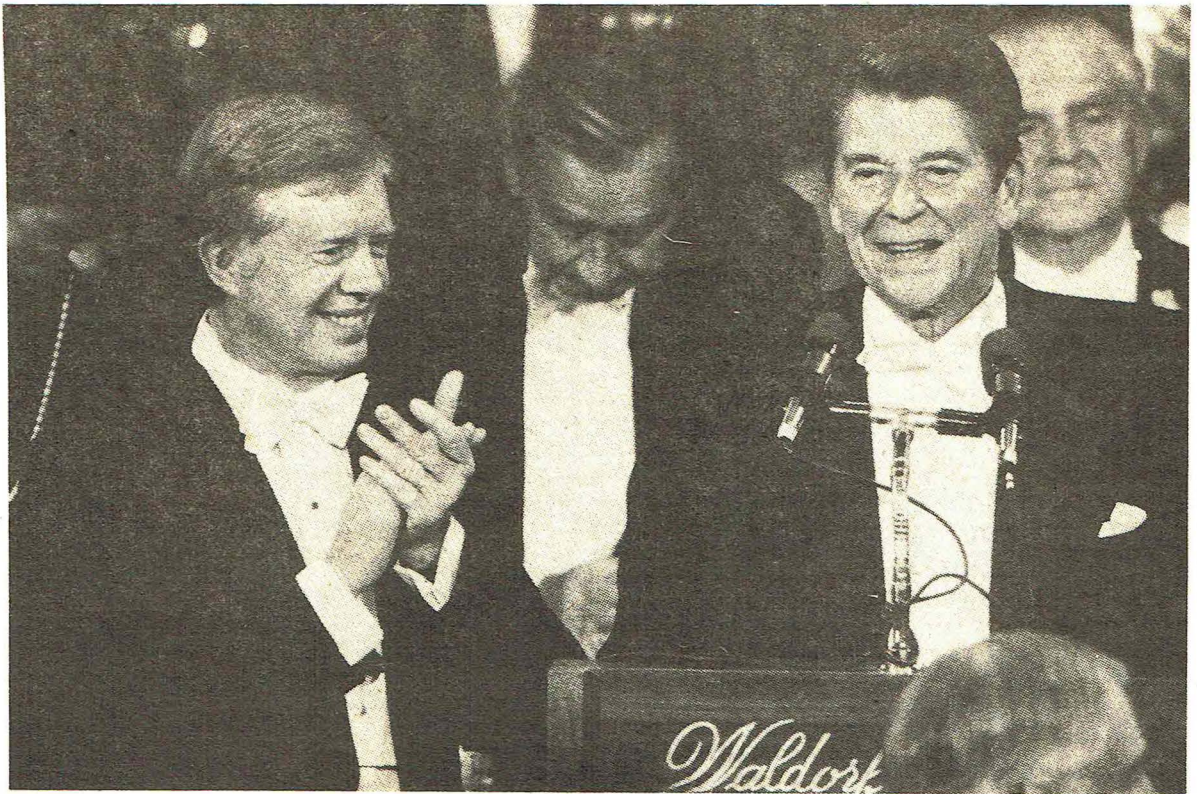
The US Presidency is tending to become a one-term office.

The diseased state of US capitalism and the erosion of its world power is reflected in the mixed fortunes of recent presidents. Carter's three predecessors either withdrew from election [Johnson], were removed from office [Nixon],

or suffered electoral defeat because of economic crisis [Ford].

Reagan, in his victory speech promised to "put America back to work." This will prove as empty as the rest of his electoral promises. The long post-war economic boom is over, and with it has gone the former political stability. The 'Tweedledum, Tweedledee' politics of Democrats and Republicans will be broken down.

A labour party, once formed, would grow by leaps and bounds, building on workers' hostility and anger against the horrific conditions of decline and decay imposed on them by a diseased American capitalism.



ONLY 3 WEEKS TO LIVERPOOL RALLY

It is vital that the Labour Party Young Socialists continue to mobilise for the November 29 Labour Party march against unemployment in Liverpool, and press the labour movement into action. Manchester LPYS have demonstrated what can be done.

In anticipation of a large response from the movement, they provisionally booked four coaches. Donations have already paid for the coach

from Gorton. In addition a technical college students' union in Wythenshawe and a youth club in Central have promised to send coaches if the YS can enough people.

The busmen, who face 1,500 redundancies, have taken leaflets to distribute round all the depots. One of the union leaders will also be speaking at the Ardwick LPYS pre-march rally on November 25th. Through the offer of a Musicians' Co-operative, Gorton LPYS have a pre-march 'Rock Against Thatcher' Concert, where the bands have agreed to play for free so that all funds raised can be used to sponsor unem-

ployed people.

Now the Labour parties must be prepared to follow the lead of the LPYS, organise Days of Action and Labour Weeks in the build up to the march. A branch of Sheffield Heeley is organising an open air public meeting. The AUEW in Leicester have organised their own public meeting. But if the Labour Party and trade union movement is to be seen as a real alternative to the Tories and youth unemployment then these actions should not be isolated examples but part of a nationwide campaign of mass activity to throw out the Tories.

'Let them play golf'

"Irvine is a very pleasant place to be unemployed," according to a leading official in the local development corporation.

But before you start packing your bags to go to this new town in Ayrshire you might wish to know why it is so wonderful. It has, the officer says, "five golf courses in the area," for the 4,000 unemployed.

With only 200 job vacancies, even the Development Corporation see the situation as hopeless. The town has been hit by the wave of redundancies in Ayrshire, which has put unemployment up to 17%. Massey Ferguson, Monsanto, SKF and Rockware, Hyster and Ayrshire Metals have had major sackings. With ICI at Ardeer closing down, unemployment will rise to 23%!

The collapse of industry has been such that in this so-called 'Development Area' Irvine's unemployment rate has risen from 3% to 16% in just seven years. Thatcher's advice to avoid the misery of unemployment is to "get mobile", as thousands of workers did when they moved to Irvine.

Now houses are left empty as families move back to Glasgow. Others are split up as the father moves to look for work. A worker who left Port Talbot in Wales to go to London to look for a job under the job transfer scheme found he couldn't sell his house.

He wrote a bitter letter to the local papers pointing out that he has had to leave his wife and four children in Wales for two months, and if he still can't sell the house he

will have to return to Wales.

Development schemes, job transfers and the like cannot solve any of the problems facing the unemployed. The cynical cry from Irvine of "Let them play golf!" demonstrates that the working class must rely on an independent programme to beat back the threat of unemployment.

End the collapse of industry—nationalise all firms threatening redundancy.

Share out the work without loss of pay—for a maximum 35-hour working week.

Kick out the Tories—Labour to power on a socialist programme.

By Willie Griffin

(LPYS National Committee)

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE MASS DEMO NOV. 29th

Outlining some of the policies adopted at Labour's conference in Blackpool, Tony Mulhearn (District LP and National Graphical Association) underlined the need to fight unemployment with socialist policies. Councillor Derek Hatton, the Labour Group's personnel spokesman, reported on efforts to get the council to support the demo and provide free transport on the day.

This was the first of three meetings for local shop stewards aimed at preparing for the 29th and discussing the issues of the campaign. A number of key points for action were adopted:

- ★ Organise factory gate meetings
- ★ Get speakers to TU branch meetings
- ★ Organise local activity, area public meetings and local marches leading to the main march on 29th
- ★ Link up Labour Party and trade union activity
- ★ Call for further Merseyside stewards' meetings after 29th
- ★ Link up with Community Groups and Tenants' Associations
- ★ Campaign for individual membership of Labour Party and TU affiliation and delegations to Constituency LPS.

SOUTHALL DEMO

The trial of five Southall Labour Party Young Socialists comes up before Ealing Magistrates Court this coming Tuesday, 11th November.

The five were arrested in June whilst giving out leaflets and conducting a recruitment drive for the Labour Party and LPYS. Without any prior warning or caution the five were taken to the police station and charged with obstruction.

This attack on basic democratic rights has not gone unchallenged. Financial and practical assistance has come in from trade union branches, Labour parties and immigrant organisations from various

parts of the country. A number of Labour MPs have raised the matter in parliament.

The LPYS is calling for this support to be continued, and for a large demonstration to be mounted on the morning of the court case in defence of democratic rights.

**Assemble 9.30 am.
Tuesday 11 November
Ealing Magistrates Court,
Green Man Lane
Ealing.
Bring banners and placards**

Anwar Ditta

The fight for Anwar Ditta's children to be brought to live with her in Britain continues. On Saturday 15th November there will be a demonstration in Rochdale de-

manding that they be allowed to live with her and against the racist immigration laws.

Assemble 12 noon, at Church Stile (off Drake St.) Rochdale for rally and march.

Further details from Anwar Ditta Defence Campaign, 127 Crawford St, Rochdale.

Defeat for fascists in Dewsbury



The fascists march through the suburban streets of Welling, many wearing swastikas and chanting 'Sieg Heil'.

Photo: MILITANT

Despite massive protests from local anti-fascists, including the Anti Nazi League and the Batley Youth Campaign Against Unemployment, the nazi 'British Movement' were given permission by the police to organise a march in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, recently.

It is clear that this bunch of fascists has no base whatsoever in Dewsbury, which is a prominent multi racial area.

By members of Batley YCAU and Deptford LP

The official reason for the march was as a protest against unemployment. But the march could take on only one reason—to whip up racial hatred and violence.

On the Saturday of the fascists' march however, the centre of Dewsbury had become one great mass of anti racist demonstrators. The message was clear—Dewsbury would not tolerate even

the appearance of the BM.

The fascists had no alternative—they had to call their march off and were escorted away in twos and threes by the police and put onto trains to go home. It was a miserable defeat for the BM.

Outside the rail station the anti-racists cheered in victory. It was decided to celebrate with a victory march to the



Town Hall. But as we set off we were soon aware of the heavy arm of the law.

Many marchers were literally picked up off their feet by the police, and others were driven away by mounted police. Even along the pavement Saturday afternoon shoppers were pushed along by foot police, horses and plain clothes policemen. I personally went to the aid of a very old lady about to be brought to the ground by a police horse.

Fortunately, and very surprisingly, given the tactics of the police, there was no bloodshed. But it was a victory—the fascists of the BM were humiliated by the people of Dewsbury.

However, on October 19, the outer London suburbs of Welling were also invaded by the fascist British Movement. A huge police mobilisation was clearly aimed at 'controlling' the very peaceful counter demonstration by anti-racists, overwhelmingly made up of local working class youth.

The fascists were stopped marching through the High Street, and their march was detoured through the quiet Sunday suburban streets.

The danger of this openly nazi group was shown by the savage attack on a black railway worker at Lewisham Station when many of the fascists were returning home.

The counter demonstrators were angered at the police chiefs keeping them penned up in this small area for over an hour—no one was allowed to leave the area.

The leaflet produced by the local Young Socialist branches went down well with a number of young asians, showing an interest in a group which gave a clear class opposition to the menace of the BM's fascist thugs.

Switching off free speech

As many people will be aware, Radio 4's 'Any Questions' programme held in Newcastle on Friday October 17th, was halted due to what the press called "left wing rowdies."

By E Waugh (Gosforth LPYS)

Obviously, the daily gutter press saw this as an opportunity to slander the ever-growing militancy of the working class by calling those involved in the fracas, "bully boys of democracy and free speech."

But what really did happen? Eleven members of Gosforth and Newcastle LPYS branches attended the programme in their capacity as legitimate ticket holders. As we entered Trinity Hall where the programme was being held, we submitted fifteen questions, two of which dealt specifically with the question of unemployment.

We thought our questions would not be answered by the board, which consisted of Jimmy Reid, David Bellamy, Jean Rook and Sir Ray Pennock of CBI fame.

This pessimism, however, turned to optimism when, upon entering the main hall, we noticed the presence of fellow comrades spread throughout the hall itself, whom we discovered had also written many questions on unemployment.

Getting 'in the mood'

As we took our places at the back of the hall, to our left were numerous 'Militant' supporters, whilst to the right there were people from the 'Right to Work Campaign.'

Prior to 8.30 pm, when the programme was to begin, David Jacobs, the chairman, attempted to get us "into the mood" for the programme, by appeasing the crowd with a practice question asking the panel what they thought of 'Citizens' Band' radio. While the panel put forward their dreary views on such a trivial matter, the clocks steadily advanced towards 8.30 pm.

At the stroke of 8.30 a red light flashed and the magic of the air waves came to light in Newcastle.

The first question to be broadcast was with regard to the US plan to sell arms to Iran. No sooner had this question been asked when the audience was greeted by a shout of "Tories Out" from the 'Right to Work' contingent. Although stunned by this outburst, our effervescent chairman continued the programme.

However, no sooner had the audience got over the initial shock of the first remark when more chants of "Tories Out" were heard from the same area of the hall.

At this, Jacobs appealed to these people to listen to the programme and not spoil it for the people at home. He then passed the question onto Sir Ray Pennock, which I might add was like brandishing a red flag in front of a bull.

'What about the unemployed?'

As he condemned the US attitude towards the sale of arms to Iran, his lip-service rhetoric was drowned out by the cries of "Hypocrite" and "What about the 2.5 million unemployed in this country?"

Despite appeals for silence, the heckling continued and the programme was forced to be taken off the air due to what the BBC deemed "technical matters".

The BBC were obviously upset by this display of free speech, with Pennock calling the hecklers the "bully boys of democracy" (to the response that he was a "bully boy to the unemployed"). Staff ' heavies' came down to throw out the protestors, with the police forming up outside the building.

The demonstration left peacefully, however, to the applause of the Young Socialists, as we supported their sentiments. However, this stunt, although reflecting the anger of unemployed youth, did not provide 'any answers'.

The BBC decided to try and record the programme again, and on hearing this one member of the audience cried "fix!" At this, a heavy came up to the YS contingent and asked us to leave. Our plea that we had remained silent throughout the incidents, save applauding the sentiments of the protestors, fell on deaf ears—we were deemed "bad elements" and had to be removed.

But this whole escapade exposed the myth of 'freedom of speech' in this capitalist society. The capitalist class own and control the media and those that dare raise their voices in protest against the system find this so-called 'freedom' quickly snatched away, in this case the transmitters being turned off and the protestors, like ourselves, being shown the door.

PLP ELECTION?

A meeting was held of Teeside-Thornaby Labour Party to discuss the question of the election of a new leader of the Labour party. Although it was called at short notice and therefore was not an official GMC, it was one of the best attended for several years.

By a 'Militant' reporter

Ian Wrigglesworth, the MP, gave a report of how he saw the situation and invited comments from party members. He argued that the PLP had to elect a new leader as without one the PLP would not be an effective opposition. He was generally pessimistic about the future, saying the Labour Party lacked worked out policies as an alternative to the Tories, there were many problems and questions about any new system of electing a leader before it could operate and generally we weren't a credible alternative government.

A lively discussion followed. Among the many points made were the need for socialist policies, that we should be optimistic about getting rid of the Tories, that people wanted to join the Labour Party. The majority of speakers favoured no election of leader until the new system as it would increase tension and division between the Labour Party and the MPs.

Among the points Ian Wrigglesworth made in reply was that he couldn't accept 'carte blanche' any new electoral system—some he said were quite unacceptable.

At most meetings people start drifting off early but apart from the night shift workers everyone stayed. As it was not an official GMC there were no resolutions. There were objections that there should have been a proper meeting. However at the end there was a consultative show of hands. 19-12 for no immediate election. If there was one then, Foot 13, Shore 11, Healey 5, Silkin 0.

What events are happening in your Labour Party or Young Socialists branch? Send in a report to 'Militant'



This week's prize for the 'world's most enlightened man' goes to Tory Edinburgh councillor Cornelius Waugh. With mass unemployment in Scotland, returning it to the days of the 'thirties, more and more council tenants are getting into debt and behind with the rent. But as far as Mr Waugh is concerned they are just 'a bunch of 'wilful malingerers' and 'anti-social tenants' and should be evicted—in fact they would benefit from it: "Many of them are getting paid by the state and that money ought to be used to pay their rent. But it isn't. It goes on booze and bingo. The physical act of eviction has beneficial effects because once we've rehoused them they won't get into debt again. It is always a pity when children are evicted but it stops them thinking it is the norm to live rent free." [*Sunday Mail*, 26 October]. The quicker the workers of Edinburgh 'evict' this reactionary old windbag from the council, the more 'beneficial' it will be.

Have you tried to scrape together enough money recently to give a party? You know—going round the shops comparing the prices of light ale and lager, or wondering whether crisps or peanuts will last longer? Well, Cartier's, the jewellers, have no such problems. They recently laid out £1 million on champagne and food for 1,000 celebrities to launch a new line in jewellery.

And how many times have you ended up kipping on someone's floor because there aren't any more buses and you can't afford a taxi? If you had been at this party—no problem. Twelve private jets and 22 Rolls Royces were laid on to take the guests home—with suites in the Paris Ritz for those who wanted to stay over.

You didn't get an invitation? Too bad—but perhaps you might get one to the two that are taking place next year in America and Japan—if you happen to be a show-business personality!

Sometimes the scribes of the bosses' press let the cat out of the bag. Well known revolutionary Peregrine Worsthorne writes in the *'Guardian'* [11 October]: "Although the haves like to think that it is the Tory Party which has protected them against the envy and greed of the have-nots, they should really give credit to the Labour Party, behind whose progressive smokescreen the forces of reaction have had time to reorganise." It seems the ruling class certainly appreciate and understand the role of the right wing of the Labour Party! But 'forces of reaction'? Hasn't front page after front page of the Tory press been constantly telling us the Labour right wingers were the forces of 'moderation'? Oh well, you can't believe what you read in the papers.

The inheritors of Stalinism in the USSR—the bureaucratic clique—are not letting the events in Poland, and for that matter the growing unrest in Russia itself, get them down. According to *'The Times'* [28 October] Soviet officials throughout the country have held a spate of office and factory parties, for managers and senior staff only of course. Any excuse is used—birthdays, births, wedding anniversaries. One enterprise even "organised a huge feast, at a cost of several thousand roubles, to mark the end of the salted cabbage season"! And all paid for by the state. Another case reported a retirement do for a director. While the bureaucrats patted her on the back they didn't mention her first act when she joined the dress making company was to exchange her flat for a larger one which was meant to be used by the firm's workers who had nowhere to live. Or, thanks to her, that the factory had fallen behind with its dress manufacture, and the workers in the region were left staring at empty shops. She was subsequently arrested by the embarrassed higher echelons of the bureaucracy, this being so blatant a case. But a more permanent solution to ending the privileged life-style of the Stalinist elite, and to the stagnation of the Soviet economy at their hands, is for the workers to struggle for a return to the ideals of Lenin and Trotsky, and fight for true workers' control of Soviet society.

Robin Hood in reverse

The Society of Civil and Public Servants has produced a pamphlet it can be proud of.

Titled 'The Advance of Decline', it is clearly written, using the language of facts to demonstrate how the Tory government are deliberately putting the squeeze on working people in the interests of big business.

These examples from the pamphlet show how the Tories are condemned out of their own mouths:

"Government ministers have openly acknowledged, since June last year, that their policies create unemployment" ('unemployment will unfortunately be one of the consequences'—James Prior, 14 July 1980).

"The Tories intend to make the unemployed worse off" ('...to widen the gap between net income from working and net income from not working'—Sir Keith Joseph, 9 July 1980). They want to cut real pay; public spending cuts will hit jobs and services ("will mean an increase in unemployment and a decrease in services"—Lord Gowrie, June 1980).

"Their budgets and cuts have increased prices" (for

example, the 1980 budget had "an immediate impact on the RPI of 1.1%"—*'Financial statement, April 1980'*).

The Tories lie about pay and unemployment, but they do not believe their own lies. The pamphlet sums up a number of quotations from impeccable Tory and big business sources with the statement: "Thus the two arguments used publicly for cutting wages—their supposed contribution to inflation and unemployment—are not believed in the Treasury and in British industry."

The pamphlet also gives details of the effects of the government's tax changes and demonstrates that whereas taxpayers in general have lost £919 million; top incomes and businesses have gained £986 million. Thatcher has been playing at Robin Hood in reverse.

It also gives details of actual and projected cuts in the real value of state benefits. These increase from £283 million in 1980/81 to a staggering £1,188 million in 1982/3.

As well as castigating the Tories, the pamphlet does not spare the blushes of Labour's "moderates"—"As government ministers have pointed



Sir Keith Joseph—the Tories intend to make the unemployed worse off.

Derek McMillan reviews 'The Advance of Decline', which is published by the Society of Civil and Public Servants, 124-130 Southward Street, London SE1 0TU

out, the key features of their approach...were all used by the previous government from 1974 to 1979."

It also goes some way towards pointing out the alternative: "What is needed is resistance by the trade union movement to this objective, and public advocacy of policies which would place full employment and the protection and improvement of living standards as the central overriding aims of economic policy."

This leaves open the question of which policies will achieve this end: a question which readers of this paper will have no difficulty in answering in their trade union branches!

Nevertheless this is a first rate analysis of the effects of Thatcherism which would make a useful weapon in the hands of any trade union activists. I got my copy through the NUT. Make sure your union branch gets one.

The best cure is prevention

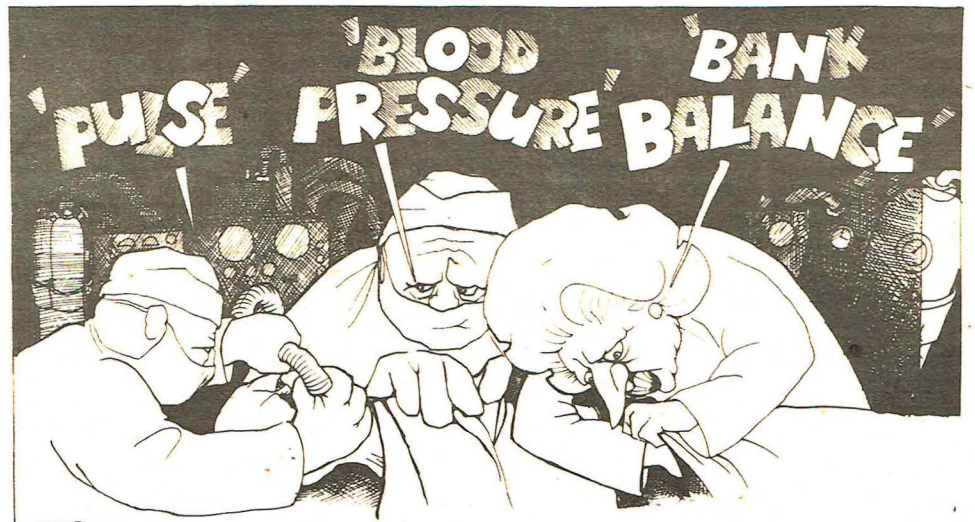
By Kevin Ramage
(LPYS NC Chairman)

One person in three will die from heart disease. The recent article in the *'Sunday Times'* colour magazine on heart swaps was undoubtedly of interest to many people (though the full-colour photos of an operation may have put them off their lunch!).

Over four hundred heart-swaps have now been carried out, with an increasing success rate. The longest has survived twelve years so far, and 56% live for more than four years. This indicates incredible advances in medical technology, which makes it possible to replace damaged or diseased parts of the body. Clearly, transplant operations can offer an alternative to years of suffering and misery. Unfortunately, however, it is only a drop in the ocean.

Every year about a quarter of a million people die in Britain alone from heart disease. While the press glamourises heart swaps (so far only about 27 have been performed in Britain) there is little or no mention of the causes of heart disease and how these can be eradicated.

Stress, worry, poor diet and chemical adulteration of food are all major causes of heart



disease. The article also pointed out that six out of the seven cases had been heavy smokers. Despite this, there were still five pages of glossy adverts in that colour magazine advertising...cigarettes!

What sickened me most of all, however, immediately following the article was (obviously by agreement) a two-page article for British United Provident Association private health scheme. This was obviously meant to set readers' minds at rest; they could overcome many of the risks of heart disease by joining BUPA.

Nothing could be further from the truth! Despite the

claims of the *'Sunday Times'*, that Dr. Yacoub's 'substantial' private work enables him to remain fairly autonomous from the 'hierarchy of the Health Service', the operations are almost entirely based on the resources of the NHS, which is the only means that working-class people have to health care.

With capitalism in crisis, there will be increasing pressure for a cutting back of the development of heart-swaps and similar surgery on grounds of cost (about £18,000 an operation including after-care). Only on the basis of a socialist planned economy will the resources

become available for a full development of surgical techniques.

Above all, only a socialist society will be able to remove the causes of disease and injury—stress and anxiety caused by a constant worrying how to manage, how to make ends meet; and injuries and diseases caused by working in unhealthy environments, lifting heavy loads, etc., nearly all of which could be done by machinery.

Capitalism only knows how to patch us up to get us back to work. What is needed is prevention of illness and disease, by cutting out the causes.

**Home Office:
900 fire
deaths
insignificant**

The statement in the headline shows the mentality of a Tory government intent only on saving money regardless of our lives.

It is part of a Green Paper that seeks to reduce standards of fire cover in the country to a level that will put every man, woman and child in danger.

The minimum standards of fire cover were set in 1958 and it was decided that provision for fire cover should be dependent on the type of area.

Area A covers large industrial and commercial cities, factories etc. Here the first attendance must be two machines within five minutes and a further one in eight minutes.

Area B covers large towns [not being class A] with dispersed industrial risk. There, one machine must arrive in five minutes and a further one in eight minutes. In Area C, all risks not falling in A or B except rural areas—one machine must arrive in eight to ten minutes.

The government are now recommending sending only one machine to A or B risk areas and extending the times that machines are allowed to take to get to a fire. This, despite the fact that 900 people die a year at present even before standards are reduced.

They also question the need for the Fire Service to spend money on special appliances and equipment [used to extract trapped people from cars etc.] because these special services are not part of the Fire Services Act.

They go on to recommend not bringing in fire prevention legislation to cover old persons' homes, hospitals, and mental institutions, despite a clear statement in their Green Paper that a large majority of the deaths are of the very young and the very old.

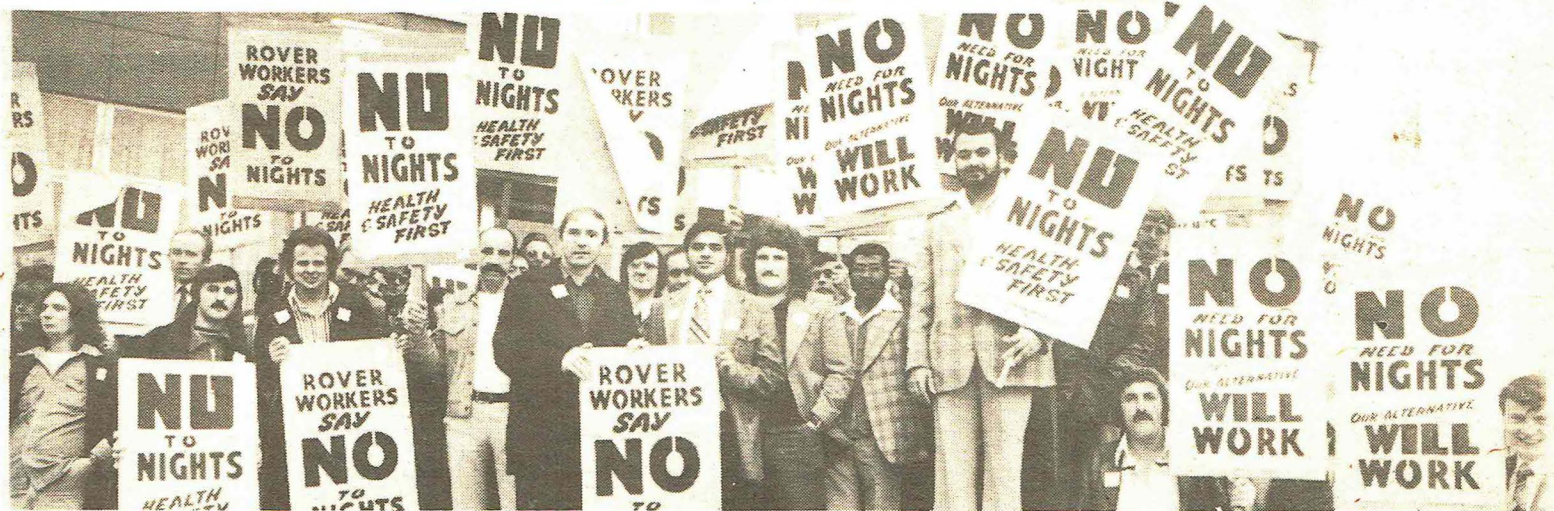
These are not the only proposals contained in this Green Paper. They place the people of this country in danger from a government which cares more about money than life.

Lobby your MP—demand an investigation into these disgraceful proposals. Unless they are stopped, you may not have a fire service to call on in the future.

If anyone requires any more information on the government proposals please contact Bob Morrison, Essex area FBU Chairman, on Harlow 32434 or any of your local Fire Brigades Union officials.

By Bob Morrison
(Chairman, Essex Area FBU)

Ban shift work



Trade unionists demonstrate against night work

Shift work has been a fact of life for many workers for years. But what about the effect on workers and their families? A 'Militant' reporter spoke to Dave and Sheila Livingstone.

"Well," said Dave, "it just upsets your whole routine, it upsets your family because you're having to get meals at funny times and then dash off to work."

"You never see your kids, never see your family. Normal day-functions like going to

the toilet are upset: you have to take the likes of Epsom Salts because you get constipated."

**By a
'Militant'
reporter**

The result, says Dave, is that "you're endangering your own health, as well as that of your workmates. You can fall asleep on the job—there have been times when I've been lying on the machine." You end up with ulcers: "you get ulcers from shift work and a lot of different illnesses—heart attacks. There's two lads at work who've had heart attacks."

Then there's the general effect on life. "Education wise, if you want to further your education you can't because you are either late in starting work, or you lose money. The likes of Labour Party meetings, you cannot get involved politically because the meetings are at night time. Really, you cannot get involved in anything unless the meetings are on the weekend."

What is it like for Sheila? "If you planned your life around working night shift, obviously you're gonna like it. But most women I know hate shifts. They hate the disruption. You can't get your housework done, you can't bring the kids in from school, or if the kids aren't at school, you've got to find somewhere to take them."

Dave: "I used to work three shifts, but I changed because

**"You never
see the kids"**

you would get up in the morning and see Kristie for an hour before she went off to school, then sit all day and maybe see her for 5 minutes."

Sheila: "Well, you were lucky if you saw her in the morning. By the time that you'd get in off that shift, it would be half ten or quarter to eleven. By the time you'd had something to eat, we'd sit and have a bit of a chat and it would be one o'clock in the morning, you're both tired the next morning."

"I'd get up and take Kristie to school, Dave would stay in bed till half past ten, and then get up and have something to eat. Then he's off to work. You're making meals at odd times—I never saw him. I hated that two till ten shift. I was still working till half past ten at night preparing something for him to come into at that time of night."

Both Sheila and Dave think that the best thing to do with shift work would be to ban it.

It pays to advertise

Some people are doing very well out of the present slump, particularly the heavy drop in car sales. "For [advertising] agencies," said the 'Financial Times' (2 October), "that own a car account, the car makers' battle for sales has helped cast a rosy glow over turnover and profits for the current year..."

Mrs Thatcher's favourite firm, for instance, Saatchi and Saatchi, will be making a fat profit from the approximately £10.5 million which British Leyland will

**By
George
Williamson**
(USDAW)

be spending with them on advertising this year.

The Adman's view, however, is not that the car manufacturers are squandering enormous sums on frantic advertising, but that "for several years...the car market was underperforming on advertising..."

Figures from Media Expenditure Analysis show that over the first seven months of 1980, car manufacturers spent an estimated £50.9 million on display advertising alone, 73% more than in the first seven months of last year, and more than £5 million up on total advertising display expenditure in this category for the whole of 1979.

Total advertising, including posters, agency commission, dealer advertising etc. could well exceed £100 million. Add on promotional discounts aimed at hooking scarce buyers, and other promotional expenditure, and the total—in motor advertising alone—"could well be in excess of £240 millions!"

Something to remember when Tory government ministers choke back the tears to tell us there's no money in the kitty for wages, jobs and social services.

A lesson in etiquette

On Thursday 23 October, Prince Charles visited the Longbridge plant with his entourage [that's French for hangers-on]. His mission was to open the new West Wing where the Metro is produced.

Of course, as everybody knows, you can't produce a car without a royal opening—and you can't have a royal opening without the management being let out for a nice skive. And you can't let management loose on Royal Highnesses without giving the uncouth lot a lesson in etiquette.

Hence the letter sent to all those 'privileged' to attend the binge giving the right form of address for different visitors. The Prince of Wales should not be addressed as 'Charlie' or 'Taffy' [he's not really Welsh you see].

He is Your Royal Highness the first time you speak to him and Sir afterwards. The Right Honourable the Earl of Aylesford [they don't have Left Honourables] is Lord Lieutenant of the County of West Midlands. He should be called "My Lord Lieutenant". Similar instructions are given for Lord Mayors, councillors and the Chief Constable of Birmingham.

So now you know. It's difficult, though, to see why they didn't invite the workers to meet these great friends of the proletariat. I'm sure workers at Longbridge would be in no doubt what to call them.

Bad news for the 'Mail'



The Birmingham YS on the march

Despite the ice-cold wind, Birmingham LPYS created a colourful display of banners and posters outside the 'Birmingham Post' and 'Mail' building—the home of the reactionary 'Birmingham Evening Mail'.

The LPYS came down with such a bang that the poor old Lord Mayor had to alter the route of his procession that day. Several trade unionists paid a visit to the picket, representing their factories.

With such a commotion on its doorstep, the 'Evening Mail' didn't have to go far to report that day's news. Of course, the 'Mail's' 'democratic' means of reporting didn't extend to commenting on the YS campaign! This is something that several thousand passers-by who saw the picket will no doubt question.

Nearly 40 papers were sold despite the emphasis being on

distributing leaflets.

Several bus drivers who have been recent 'victims' of the 'Mail' bought 'Militants' while they were waiting at the terminus point just a few yards down the road. One carefully folded his and displayed it proudly in the front window of his bus.

There can be no doubt that our campaign was a tremendous embarrassment to the millionaire gentlemen who own the 'Mail'.

The YS, however, is prepared to give a concession to these people: that is, that when society is run by workers, and 'Militant' is a mass daily paper, we have no objections to these wealthy gentlemen going out onto the streets to try to sell their evening rag!

DON'T DO THE TORIES DIRTY WORK

Rents going up by 42.5%! The council tenants of Easington District Council were told this bad news a few weeks ago.

Some of the angry tenants organised a public meeting recently and gave out 1,000 leaflets.

Before the meeting they were unsure about the turnout but were amazed when 300 attended. The meeting was in a militant mood demanding immediate action and a rent strike. They straight away organised a lobby of the council offices for Friday.

In spite of only a day's notice and a cold biting wind and rain nearly 100 turned up at the offices. A delegation met the representatives of the council. The rest stood outside shivering, singing and chanting. After half an hour we were let into the hallway out of the rain.

In the hall the tenants expressed their anger. Anger at the Tory government, anger at the Labour Council, anger at rent increases, and anger at the terrible lack of repairs.

"Why should Labour council's do the Tories' work?"

"We can't sleep in our beds at night for worry."

"My husband is on a four day week now, how can we manage?"

"Our rent is going up £4.50 and I daren't clean the windows because they might fall out, the putty is so rotten."

"I've waited 2½ years to get a window fixed."

"They're selling off council houses—it will be cheaper to buy than rent."

The delegation came out of the meeting with only more bad news. A substantial rate rise in March. Rents will go up nearly the same again next year.

The demonstration then went to Peterlee Shopping Centre and marched through it stopping at the rent office and the New Town Corporation building. All the time women who had never demonstrated before were shouting to others to join them.

"Fight the rent increases, are you yellow? Come on, join the fight."

There was strong anger against the councillors, with cries of "What do we want—the Council out" because of their policy of rent rises.

The Council's leaflet on the increases said it was a choice of rent rises or redundancies. This is an attempt to divide the very

people they should be uniting. Already they have cut the home helps. The long wait for repairs shows the need for more council workers.

It is true that Easington Council has real housing problems. It took over the stock of Peterlee New Town. These houses were built on the cheap and have massive structural faults. The coun-

cil has applied to the government for £30 million to do the repairs. This has been refused so these major repairs won't be done.

But putting up the rents and rates and reducing services is no way to fight. Some tenants said they won't vote and they'll slam the door in the councillors' faces.

Labour has an overwhel-

ming majority and should be leading the fight against the Tories' policies. The fight against the rent increases continues. The tenants, by joining the Labour Party, must ensure that they have councillors who will do their job.

By Bill Hopwood

Our clinic must stay

Over sixty people, the vast majority young mothers with babies and young children, demonstrated outside the Ruislip Manor Clinic in Hillingdon recently, to show the Area Health Authority their complete opposition to plans to close it down.

The AHA claim the clinic is under-utilised and that the new health centre opened recently in neighbouring Eastcote can replace it.

They want this clinic as a psychiatric day centre.

The statements and proposals of the AHA are however, totally unacceptable to the mothers. Mrs Eaton, one of the leaders of the fight against closure, spelt out the real situation: the clinic is in fact the most highly utilised in Hillingdon borough.

An average of nearly 82 children a week were passing through in two clinic sessions, prior to the closure of nearby Manor Farm Clinic (53 per

week), the victim of a previous round of cuts carried out by the local Tories.

The range of services offered at the clinic are enormous. They include—beside the two baby clinics—a dental service, school health clinic, an ophthalmic clinic, speech therapy classes, immunisation for rubella, mother-craft classes, mid-wifery, ante- and post-natal clinic, orthopaedic and physiotherapy services and St John's Ambulance course.

Increased workload

In the Ruislip Manor area there are a particularly large number of mothers with babies and young children, and while the number of births is declining nationally, in this area there has been a steady increase.

The Eastcote health centre is a couple of miles away. This would pose many problems for mothers with small children. As Mrs Eaton pointed out, the result will inevitably be fewer visits to the centre,

with a retrograde effect on health standards.

It will also lead to an increased work-load for local GPs, who will have to handle many of the cases currently dealt with by the clinic.

The AHA have been forced to recognise this, and are offering to provide a mobile clinic—once a month!

Turning the clinic into a psychiatric centre has also provoked opposition, with a junior school on the adjoining ground. As one of the clinic staff commented, "if they want a psychiatric centre, it could be developed at the closed Uxbridge Cottage Hospital," another victim of previous Tory cuts, "which is currently being turned into offices at a cost of £250,000."

At the couple of quieter sessions at this busy clinic, the mothers are putting forward positive suggestions—a family planning clinic and a badly needed chiropody service for old people.

In addition they propose a mother-and-toddler class, which they are prepared to pay for, and day-time keep-fit sessions, both of which would

be very popular.

The planned closure of this clinic is a further money saving exercise and a further attack on the health service. It highlights the destruction of the health service by these Tory cuts, resulting in the re-occurrence of serious child illnesses and diseases, and the additional burden placed on mothers.

These local mothers are involved in this kind of struggle for the first time, and deserve all the support available. The labour and trade union movement fought to establish the welfare state.

The Tories—here and nationally—have a notorious record for trying to destroy it. It is up to the local Labour councillors, Labour Party, trades council and trade unions to ensure that local women and children are not deprived of a vital health service—here or anywhere else.

Report by
Martin Elvin
(Chairman, London
Labour Party Young
Socialists)

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TOUGH AT THE TOP?

Top people, as might be expected, are not doing badly under the Thatcher government. Executive and managerial salaries rose by 19% in the 12 months ending in July this year.

The retail price index rose by 16.9% over the same period, leaving the average manager £20 better off a year, in real terms.

This may not seem a fortune, but compares pretty favourably with the average £10 a week cut in living standards suffered by the average industrial worker. The average earnings for male manual workers is just over £100 per week, with women workers a long way behind.

The average salary of 8,200 executives from 669 companies surveyed by Inbucon management consultants was £12,677—about £9,933 net after tax.

Not just pay, but 'perks' too

Figures show that managing directors of companies employing under 250 workers had average salaries of £17,227. Those in companies employing over 10,000 workers averaged £42,592!

Other directors averaged £12,062 in the smallest companies and £27,926 in the largest. The highest salary accorded in the survey exceeded £85,000 but, as the report says, this was "by no means the highest paid in the whole of the United Kingdom."

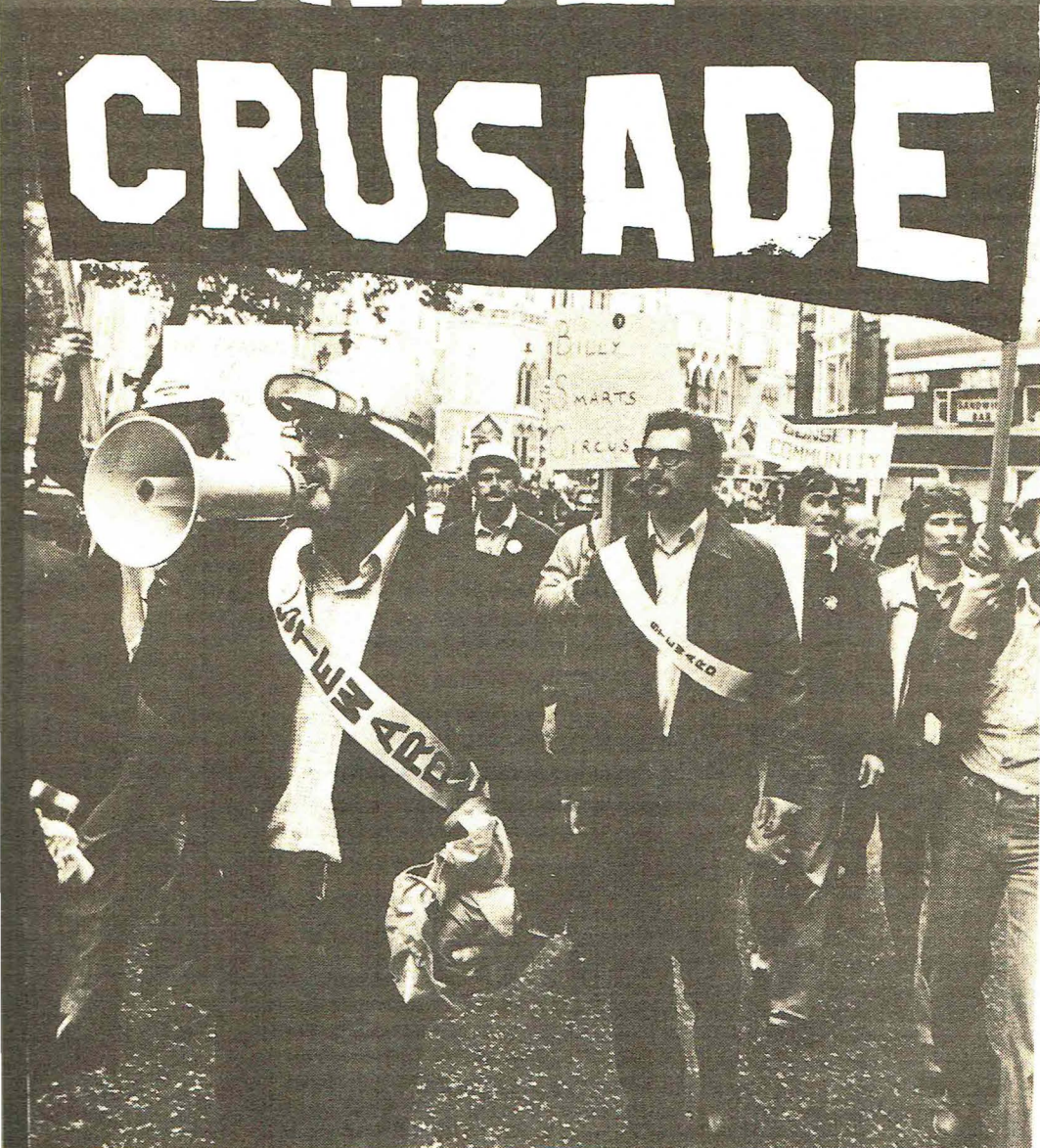
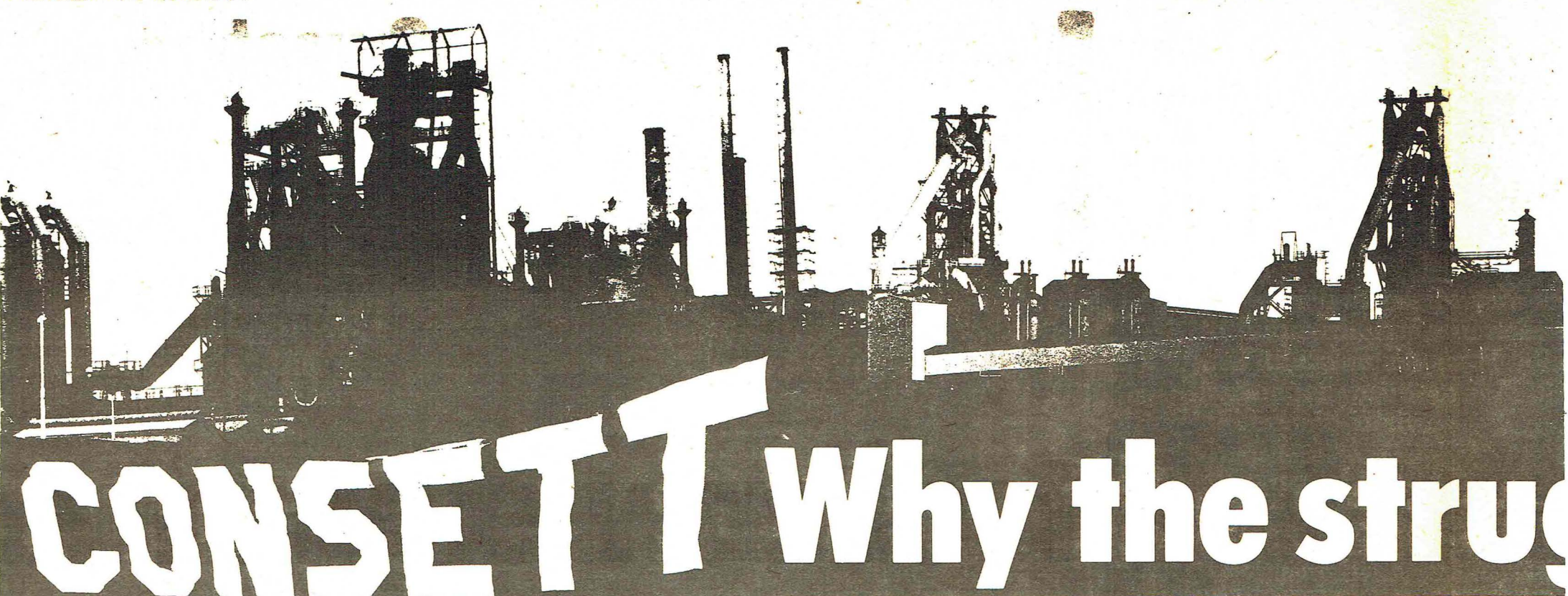
The survey also shows that executives' perks are still significant. Over 70% of managers have a company car (and a previous survey found that over two thirds of new cars sold were bought by companies for managers!) Nearly 60% are provided with private medical insurance, and nearly 40% have 5 weeks' paid holiday.

Many directors also get a bonus, though these have been shrinking slightly. The average value of the bonus is £1,509 a year.

Those who want more detailed information on managers' salaries and perks can buy Inbucon's survey—which to stop it getting into the wrong hands, has been given the executive price of £80!

Correction

In an article in 'Militant' [24 October], "Secret Mission", concerning harassment of tenants by the London Electricity Board, it was stated that "About eighty houses were suspected of illegal abstraction." This should have read eight houses. Our apologies for this error.



No one can deny the sincerity and commitment of the Consett Steelworkers to keep the plant open. But why did they fail?

Many workers in the North East and in the country at large were surprised and disappointed that, after first opposing closure, the workers at the British Steel Corporation's Consett Steelworks decided to give it all up.

By John Pickard and Arthur Clarke

(Consett ISTC)

No doubt many activists will be wondering why and how this happened. Does the Consett case show that it is impossible to fight against redundancies? Or does it show that there is perhaps another way that such a fight can be waged?

This article is a contribution to a discussion on the issues and hopefully it will be of some benefit to workers like those at Bowaters who are now 'in the same boat' as the steelworkers were a few months ago.

Undoubtedly there was support for the fight against closure. There was a mass demonstration in March during the strike; there was a mass meeting which voted overwhelmingly to fight closure on 20 June; there was a big lobby of Parliament in July; and another march in Consett the same month.

Outside the town itself, there was intense interest in the local labour movement, in trade unions, Labour parties and trades councils. During the campaign, there was not one instance of an appeal for moral or financial support that was turned down anywhere in the North East labour movement. At the peak of the campaign, the public service workers' union NUPE was talking of moving a motion on the regional council of the Trades Union Congress for a one-day regional general strike in support of the Consett workers.

The retreat in the end was not due to any lack of fight in the labour movement, either in Consett or outside—it was due to the fact that this support was not mobilised and led in a proper fight.

From the time the strike of the steelworkers ended up to the closure, there was no real attempt to mobilise mass

support except in a token sense. The demonstrations were used as evidence of support, there was never any real participation in the struggle by the mass of steelworkers.

The fight was divided between two different bodies. The steelworks itself had its own elected works committee which in turn elected a so-called "mini-committee" representing all the unions and which was recognised by the management for negotiations. The mini-committee was given facilities in the works by the local BSC management. This committee was the 'official' body that was responsible for the conduct of the campaign, its finances and so on.

In addition, there was a "co-ordinating committee" open to any steelworkers who were prepared to help—and this committee organised the 'nuts and bolts' of the marches, the publicity and so on. By the end of the campaign, the "co-ordinating committee" was far more militant in its outlook than was the mini-committee, but the permanent division of authority—with the official committee always acting as a 'brake' on the other—always weakened the campaign.

Without a doubt, the main orientation of the campaign in the early days was dictated by the mini-committee, and it was one of reasoned argument. The publicity produced by the campaign was based on proving that the workers of Consett were hard-working,

that they made good steel, that they had fought to become viable, and that there was no case for closure.

The committee produced a document called "No Case For Closure" which went into details. Economists from Durham University assisted in producing the material, which even went into the issue of the world steel market. The campaign at this stage clearly hoped that it would be possible to get the BSC and the Tories to change their mind over the closure.

Appeals were made to the new BSC chairman, the EEC commissioners, the North-East Development Corporation, and so on. Later, the mini-committee produced a detailed "social audit" showing the crippling effect of the closure on the local area, the expected rate of unemployment and other consequences.

These detailed publications are not unimportant. In the language of facts, figures and arguments, they strengthened the workers in the conviction that their fight was justified, and their case for support in the labour movement carried more weight.

But the way in which the mini-committee used this material was to direct it, not at the working class, but towards BSC management. The campaign, in effect, was seen as a debate with BSC management and Industry Department officials behind closed doors.

The mini-committee engaged the BSC in a dialogue when it should have been clear that it was a dialogue with the deaf.

The fight could not be 'non-political'

Although the co-ordinating committee opened its doors very near the end of the campaign to interested Labour Party members, before then it was explicitly "non-political". While leading steelworkers' representatives were addressing Labour Party meetings, the same speakers were simultaneously saying that the Labour Party should not get involved, the issue was not a political one! This was in spite of many activists themselves being individual Labour Party members.

'Militancy' was frowned upon by leaders of the campaign and by others like MPs and councillors who had given their support to this "reasonable" campaign.

Sweet profits



By Ian Harkness

How much sugar do you eat? In the industrialised countries of the west it is as much as 60 kilos per person per year—or 5.75 heaped tablespoons daily.

But then sugar gives you energy, doesn't it? Well, it can give the feeling of energy, but this has been scientifically proven to be only temporary.

In fact it can have several serious side-effects, including tooth decay, diabetes, appendicitis, coronary thrombosis and varicose veins etc.

In this country in 1830 cases of tooth decay amongst the population was about 3%. Yet with the massive influx of sugar into workers' diets this century—because it was profitable for the bosses—tooth decay has increased dramatically. A survey in 1957 found that out of 1014 National Health Service patients' teeth tested, 48.5% were decayed.



With their control over the media and advertising, the bosses ensure sugar is consumed on a massive scale, especially in the industrialised countries.

The sugar market is an extremely lucrative one. Those who make the profits are the refiners, traders, speculators, governments, food manufacturers and advertisers. Those who suffer the effects are the working class of the west, and more directly the workers and peasants of the sugar producing countries such as Cuba and Jamaica.

Nearly all the world crop of sugar cane (450 million tonnes) is cut by hand. In Jamaica the workers have unions and some political power, and they may earn about £25 a week during the harvest.

However, the conditions in the Philippines are similar to plantation slavery; workers earn about £2.50 a week during the harvest (some are paid in kind). Attempts at unionisation have led to imprisonment. The 'Cicadas,' or immigrant workers, get less and even lack the security of the serfs who work on a 'Hacienda' (plantation).

The small island of Cuba has 26% of the world export market. You would think that the Cuban workers would be very wealthy, but this isn't the case. Once the sugar is on board ship the Cuban government, like Jamaica, has lost control of their produce, not to mention the profits. A producer may get £229.52 per tonne from the EEC but speciality sugar can retail at £680. The difference is stolen as profits by foreign refiners, packagers, wholesalers, and retailers.

Most export trade is up for grabs—on the dealers market, with only a few long term deals such as those between

Cuba and Russia. The world sugar market has its main centre in London, although the real business is not the sugar itself but the deals and speculation.

For example, by the time a sugar consignment has travelled from India (an important producer) to its destination sales may have changed hands five times to the benefit of the speculators.

Companies such as Tate and Lyle, which made 52.5% of its profits from sugar and molasses, are prominent amongst the speculators. Jamaica's sugar crop alone, amounts to \$100 million, indicating the sums involved.

Tate and Lyle's trading profits were already £15 million between September 1979 and March 1980.

Such profit levels are dependent on a fluctuating price which encourages trading. This brings no benefits but rather a great deal of instability to the sugar producing countries.

In Britain, the main contenders for control of the market are Tate and Lyle, and the British Sugar Corporation (BSC—26% owned by the government). A Lords committee, set up to look into the extent of monopolisation of the industry by the two groups, recently came out strongly in favour of Tate and Lyle.

However, the special adviser to this Lords Commission was Mr Simon Harris of Berisfords, a large trading concern which is now, by a strange coincidence, about to acquire Tate and Lyle. The plot thickens, as they say!



In this capitalist world, to dramatically cut consumption of sugar would reign havoc on the producing countries, already shaky economies, and put many workers in Britain and in Europe on the dole.

But there are alternatives—in a socialist planned world economy it would be totally possible to utilise sugar to produce more positive benefits for society. Research has shown the possibilities of producing sugar-based 'gasohol' (distilled gas which can be used as fuel) or even plastics. And of course unlike oil, sugar will not run out.

Similarly, resources which at present are used to churn out mind-boggling advertisements urging people to eat sugar by the sack-full, could be turned to a process of educating and explaining to the mass of people the benefits of adopting a more healthy diet.

Like all other aspects of society the sugar industry has enormous possibilities which will only ever be realised when the dead hand of capitalism has been overthrown.

uggle was lost

When Roland Boyes, the left-wing European MP, raised the 'orraine option'—in other words a greater degree of militancy—he was condemned by the local MP, councillors and even some of the campaign committee.

The nearest the campaign came to militant action was in August when the co-ordinating committee (by now more militant than the 'official' mini committee and open to LP activists from outside) organised a mini-demonstration in London. About a dozen steelworkers shouted their defiance from the gallery of the House of Commons and were promptly locked up for five hours: earlier in the day they had stopped the traffic on Westminster Bridge with their banners for a total of about four minutes.

The question of occupation could have been raised

This was really a token action by some activists who were by this time frustrated at the way the campaign had gone. It was also very late on, the campaign being over four weeks later. Nevertheless, even this modest effort was condemned by some members of the mini-committee!

If the leadership of the campaign had adopted a different strategy from the very beginning, then the whole outcome could have been different. The facts and figures on production and on the social effects of closure would have been invaluable to help mobilise support in the works and in the town, but the support should have been mobilised from the very beginning to a particular aim.

The only way that the mass of workers could have been actively involved from the beginning would have been if their support had been canvassed and mobilised for an occupation, at least of the administration block, if not the main parts of the site itself.

The campaign would have involved more workers if it had also sought support from the labour movement more rigorously. For every trade union or Labour Party branch that had a Consett speaker and an appeal for support, there were scores more that did not. Factory gate and shipyard collections during the strike showed what support there was then—it would have been even greater if it had been 'tapped' over the closure.

Consett was seen as a 'test case' for the North-East, and the potential support that existed was far more than was ever realised.

Like the Upper Clyde dispute in 1971, the Consett case could have led to a regional general strike and a massive national campaign. It should have been obvious that the BSC and Keith Joseph were not open to reason—only a mass campaign could have forced the government to alter its decision.

There could be no running away from the fact that this kind of campaign would have been 'political' and inevitably would have raised broader, more fundamental issues—how the BSC bureaucracy has destroyed the industry, how the Tories are immune to working class problems like low wages and unemployment, and so on. But this kind of fight would have been the only one to face the issues as they really are.

This kind of a campaign was often alluded to, especially as the campaign wore on, but the crucial opening months of the campaign had no such orientation, "there was 'No Case for Closure,' Consett workers are reasonable, the campaign is non-political."

As has been the case in all the struggles against closures in recent years, there was always an element in the workforce which wanted to 'get its lot'—to negotiate severance and redundancy payments from the very beginning. But with the right kind of campaign, these workers—in a minority at first—would have been swamped.

One worker described how he was having great difficulty winning over workers in his own shop, they looked upon him as some kind of freak who was trying to keep open a doomed works. But after the mass lobby of Parliament—billed as the "Consett Crusade"—with a deliberate association with Jarrow—and given national publicity, the mood in the shop changed.

"I went into the shop the next day with my head held high. This time it was the other blokes, the moaners, who were hanging their heads in shame at not doing anything for the town." That comment by one of the activists speaks volumes. For the majority of workers, it was not a question of whether or not the works should be saved—they overwhelmingly thought it should be—it was a question of morale and confidence.

The orientation of the campaign was to engage in a dialogue with the deaf. Apart from two marches, one lobby and one mass meeting, the majority of workers were not engaged in the campaign in any active way. Workers are not keen for a fight unless they think they can win: unfortunately the orientation of the campaign was never for a 'fight' as such, more for a 'debate' between a small committee and BSC.

With the press and the mass media conjuring up tales of massive severance pay and with the lobbying of BSC management going on, endlessly, it seemed, the morale and the confidence of the workers ebbed away. A mass campaign that involved an occupation from the beginning would have maintained a higher morale. The mood after the 'Crusade' could have been permanent.

Massive support outside Consett—always available, but not realised, would have raised morale even higher. A campaign on these lines could have jolted the government enough to have kept Consett open.

A fight to the end

These are some general comments about the closure fight: the general moral seems to be that workers must rely upon and mobilise the strength of the working class. Campaigns based on "Moral persuasion" and "reason" have no meaning to this government.

It should also be said that whilst some of these comments are critical of the leadership given during the campaign, it is in no way a comment on the sincerity of most of the activists involved. Both on the co-ordinating committee and on the mini-committee there were steelworkers who fought to the last, some of them in a minority advocating a more militant line all along.

No-one can take away from these workers the credit for the fight that they personally put up or for the efforts that they made.

A page from U.S. labour history

By Dieter Affeln



THE WEEK SEATTLE STOPPED

With this week's electoral choice in America being one of Carter, Reagan or Anderson, the demand for an independent labour party has grown. And such a party would pick up the threads of US labour history.

It is sometimes said that the American labour movement is and always has been totally identified with capitalism.

But the whole history of the movement is studded with battles between workers and the bosses.

One of these was the city-wide general strike in

Seattle in February 1919. Potentially power was in the hands of the workers.

Even before the general strike, the mood of the workers could be gauged by their enthusiasm for the Russian revolution. When a Russian ship put into Seattle, thousands of Seattle workers greeted the boat. They came away excited by the Russian sailors' story of how they took control of the ship and elected their own representatives to run it. The local union

paper, 'Union Record', reprinted Lenin's speech on workers management of industry and society.

During World War 1, Seattle had become a leading naval shipyard. 35,000 working people out of 60,000 workers in the whole of Seattle were employed in the shipyards; the prosperity of the city depended on them.

In January 1919, the federal agency that controlled shipbuilding declared, that individual shipyard owners could no longer negotiate with their workers. Wages would be set in Washington. 35,000 Seattle shipyard workers went out on strike protesting at the wages set and the insult to their unions.

The following evening the Metal Trades Council asked Seattle Central Labour Council in sympathy with the shipyard workers. The Central Council and the different unions supported this and the General Strike Committee (GSC) was formed out of 110 different unions.

60,000 men came out on

strike. At once the workers took control of the city. The strike committee gave an exemption to the laundrymen so they could take care of wet laundry to prevent mildew.

The garbage wagon drivers removed garbage that might cause epidemics and the cooks were already working the whole of that Thursday morning to provide food for everybody. For 25 cents union members and for 35 cents the general public could eat as much as they wanted, meat and vegetables or a not inexpensive diet.

Workers management worked almost ad hoc. The strike was called, organised and carried through by the regular unions of the American Federation of Labour (AFL) acting by votes of the rank and file. Japanese, Chinese and black working men joined in, and the strike spread to the nearby town of Tacoma.

Elevator boys, gardeners, even school children struck. "I don't see why I have to go to school," one son told his striking father. "I don't see

why I can't strike too."

The father said he told the boy that you couldn't have a strike unless everybody in the school got together and voted for it. The school closed the next day.

A delegation of soldiers approached the Tacoma Central Labor Council—and said a straw vote taken at Camp Lewis ended with 38,000 soldiers voting not to act as strike-breakers. Even the regular police, when they found out Mayor Hanson was paying the special deputies \$2 per day more than they got, considered joining the action.

Seattle's Mayor first negotiated with the strike committee about strike details, but after 24 hours of the very complete and successful strike he became hostile and said publicly he was putting down an attempted Bolshevik revolution.

Unfortunately there was no clear Marxist leadership capable of taking the strike forward. The union leadership always wanted to call off the strike. And so for the want of an alternative after 5

days the men returned to work. But although they had not achieved their demands, the unions report on the strike showed how the men had seen the possibilities of a new society:

"They went back smiling, like men who had gained something worth gaining, like men who done a big job and done it well. The men went back, feeling that they had won the strike; although as yet there was no sign from Washington that (they) would relent on a single point."

Still after the strike many co-operatives and union stores carried on working. Eight months later Seattle's longshoremen refused to load guns on ships bound for the anti-Bolshevik armies in Russia.

Those five days were a great demonstration of working class solidarity and consciousness. They showed that working people were capable of controlling and managing the city themselves.

Southern African solidarity

The Annual General Meeting of the Anti-Apartheid Movement [AAM] held on 26 October reflected a growing awareness among delegates that the labour movement is the crucial area in which to build solidarity with the freedom struggle in South Africa.

Resolution after resolution called on the AAM to devote more time to campaigning in

the labour movement. At the same time, fierce divisions rose to the surface as to the policies and programme with which the AAM should set about this work.

The call to turn to the labour movement is timely. It comes at a moment when the black workers in South Africa have massively moved into action, and workers in Britain—often employed by the same companies—are struggling bitterly against redundancies.

Julie Morgan (Leyton LPYS) drew the conclusion loud and clear: genuine solidarity lies in the combined struggle of British and South

African workers to defeat the capitalist system of the bosses in Britain as well as in South Africa. Several other speakers supported this position.

Unfortunately this understanding is not yet shared by the AAM as a whole. The Executive continues to see its task as "intensifying work in the trade union and labour movement, the churches, student and other organisations." They put forward woolly policies in the attempt to 'unite' all these divergent groups together with Tories and Liberals against apartheid without raising the class question.

In particular, strong opposition to a socialist programme was expressed from supporters of the Executive. Fred Carneson (South African Communist Party and member of the AAM National Committee) went so far as to claim that the black workers of South Africa do not want socialism! Yet the Freedom Charter, the programme of the African National Congress, demanded the nation-

alisation of the mines, the banks and monopoly industry under control of the working class as far back as 1955!

The hostility to a consistent working-class approach to the Southern African struggle reached its height in an unprecedented attack by the Executive on a proposal from Coventry South East CLP. This called for Anti-Apartheid to use the pamphlet "Profiteering from Cheap Labour—Wages paid by British companies in South Africa", produced by the South African Labour Education Project (SALEP), in a campaign to expose the role of British companies in South Africa. This pamphlet has already had an excellent reception in the labour movement.

But Hugh Bayley, (an official of the National and Local Government Officers, and an Anti-Apartheid Executive member) condemned the socialist ideas of SALEP and smeared its co-ordinators as "scabs" for working inde- pendently of the official

structures of the African National Congress and the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Because of the hostility of the ANC and SACTU leadership to SALEP, Bayley said, the Anti-Apartheid movement cannot associate itself with any publication of the project.

But he did not mention that the South African Labour Education Project Co-ordinators involved had been bureaucratically prevented by the exile leadership from continuing their work in the ANC and SACTU. He also did not mention that SALEP supports the ANC and SACTU and that its crime, in the eyes of the exile leadership, consists of claiming the democratic right to express constructive criticism where necessary.

Despite opposition from one third of the Conference the Executive managed to win the vote to prevent any official mention of the SALEP publication. This 'victory' for the right wing, however, was only technical and not political. In the coming period, in the

course of campaigning in the labour movement, the issues will be clarified and resolved. The ideas and methods of all those involved in the struggle will be judged by the workers on their merits.

Through consistent work among the trade union rank and file, more working class activists can be involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement. On this basis, the views of the rank and file can be more strongly represented at the 1981 Annual Meeting, and the AAM can be committed to the task of building international working class solidarity in the struggle against the common class enemy.

'Lessons of Chile'
Analysis of Allende's government, the coup and after. Price 50p (inc. P&P). Order from:
World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN.



Bolivia: Resisting the Military Coup

The levels of repression in Bolivia since General Meza's coup in July this year have already earned the country the name of the "Chile of the 1980s."

The mass round-ups in football stadiums and the battles in the south where the miners and their wives armed with stones heroically faced the brutal attack of the armed forces with rifles, tanks, bazookas, and airplanes, have already put the slaughter at several thousands.

This latest and probably the most vicious coup comes after a long history of revolutions and counter-revolutions, coups and counter-coups, which reflect the impasse of capitalism in economically backward countries and the lack of a revolutionary party of the workers and peasants.

Examining the lessons of the 1905 Russian revolution, Trotsky explained in his theory of the 'Permanent Revolution' that the capitalist class in these countries is, from its very birth, too weak to develop the economy to the extent that their older counterparts in Europe and America have done, and thus incapable of providing the necessary conditions for the stable development of capitalism. Only the working class, coming to power with the support of the peasantry can carry out the tasks that the capitalist class carried out in Britain, France etc: uniting the country, thoroughgoing land reform, developing industry.

A brief look at the history of Bolivia over the last thirty years shows the correctness of the ideas of the Permanent Revolution. 1952 saw a massive uprising of workers and peasants which overthrew the rule of the four families which up to then, literally, owned and controlled the country. However, because of the lack of a revolutionary party, power landed at the door of the young Bolivian capitalist class.

Immediately some land reform was carried through, and due to the pressure of the workers, the mines were nationalised. But the Bolivian capitalist class had come onto the scene too late.

The country was already fully dependent on the world market, mainly through tin production, and it could not possibly compete with the highly mechanised industry of America, Europe or Japan. Bolivia became a subsidiary of

undoubtedly a committed revolutionary was prepared to sacrifice his life for the revolution. But he made a fundamental mistake when he tried to base the revolution in Bolivia on the rural areas and ignored the relatively small but extremely powerful working class.

In Cuba a guerrilla war based upon support amongst the peasantry had been able to detonate a revolution. But this was not transferable to Bolivia. Guevara found himself isolated from the workers and with no echo amongst the peasantry. The defeat of his movement, and his tragic murder stand as proof of the incorrectness of his policies.

This mistake was proved by events in 1970 when a new wave of discontent developed into a general strike that paralysed the country. A section of the armed forces, led by left-wing General Torres took power on a radical programme. As happened in Portugal four years later, this radicalised the masses, and workers and peasant committees sprang up throughout the country.

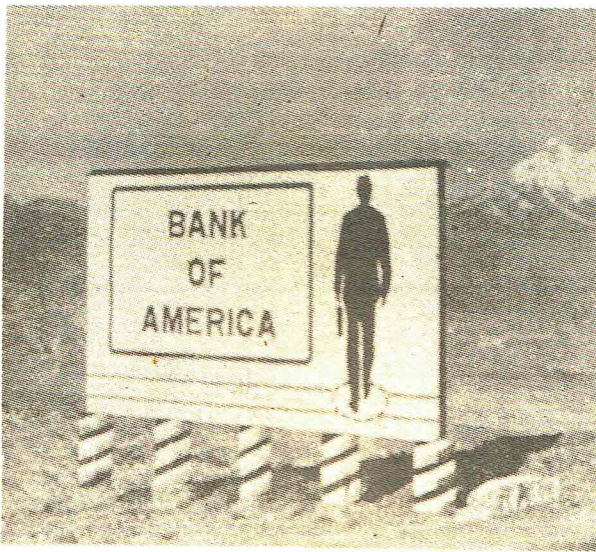
Had there been a revolutionary party that organised these committees on a national basis, the situation could have been transformed. Large sections of the army had gone over to the side of the revolution. All this was happening at a time when discontent was sweeping Latin America. Allende's Popular Unity had come to power in Chile; military rule in Argentina was losing its grip; in Peru a military coup had promised sweeping reforms.

The international implications of a seizure of power by

American imperialism.

The capitalist class acted as a second-rate manager of the interests of imperialism and could in no way provide a decent standard of living for the vast majority of the population. The workers and peasants who fought in the 1952 revolution found they received few of its benefits. The rule of the four families had been replaced by the rule of American imperialism.

A wave of unrest swept the country, but again the lack of a revolutionary party that could channel that unrest into positive action and finally seize power, created a deadlock situation where neither the ruling class nor the working class could offer a clear way out. Thus, in 1964, General Barrientos (later to become notorious for the murder of Che Guevara), leaning on a demoralised peasantry, came to power in a coup, with the aim of smashing the working class, particularly the miners.



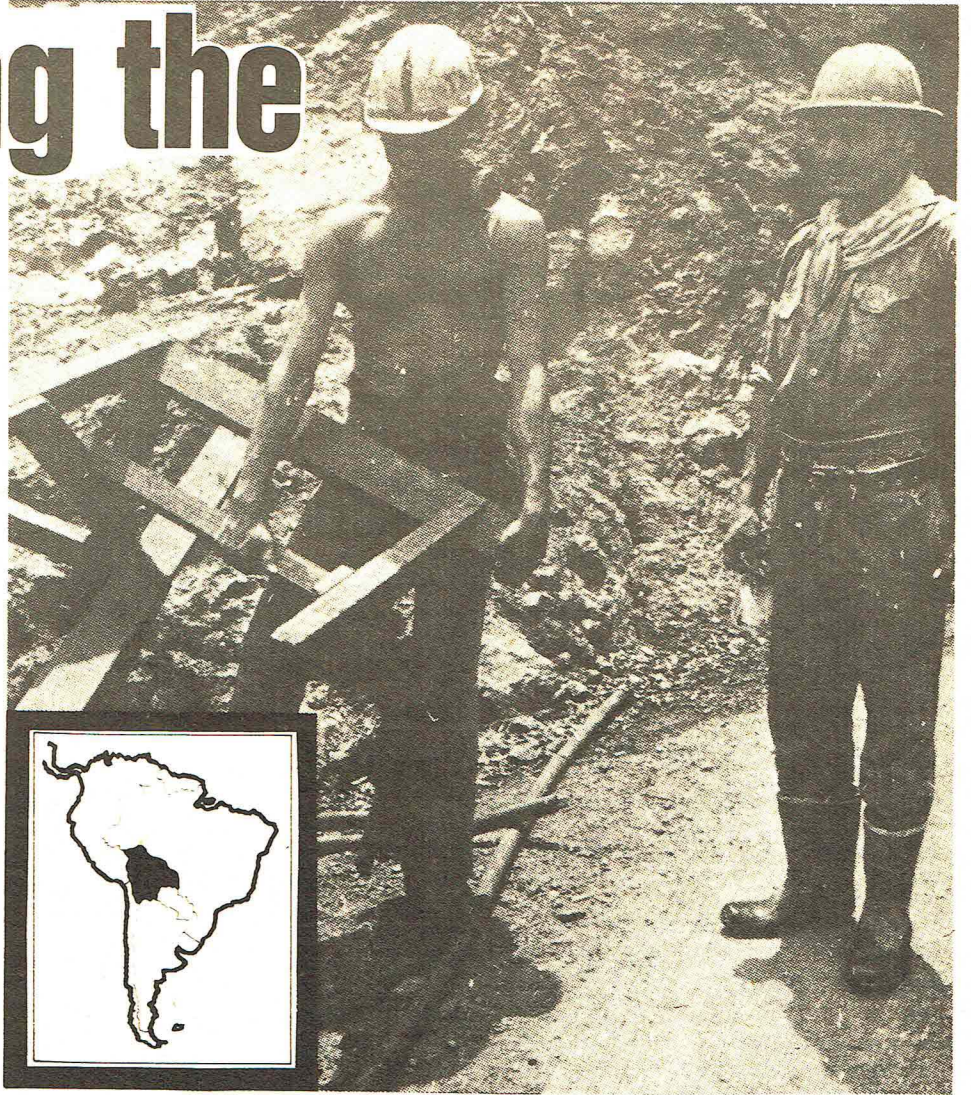
American imperialism dominates the country. Even high up in the Andes, the road signs show who rules.

The instability of the country remained and a periods of coups and counter-coups followed where the military were always caught up in the contradiction between their proclaimed nationalism ("we will save the motherland") and the rule of international finance capital which they were in effect defending.

During this period, the left adopted the tactics of rural guerrillaism. Che Guevara,

the Bolivian workers and peasants would have been enormous. But General Torres, on the basis of the liberal capitalist ideals of 1952 proved incapable of breaking the stranglehold of American imperialism on the country and large sections of the masses, particularly the peasantry, became demoralised.

The revolutionary tide ebbed, the ruling class regrouped its forces, and army discipline was re-established.



The Bolivian miners resisted the coup earlier this year and have borne the brunt of the repression

In 1971, after days of street fighting, General Banzer came to power.

He led a ruthless campaign of repression against the organised workers and succeeded, for a period, in putting down all opposition to his regime. But the root of Bolivia's problems—the inability of capitalism to provide a decent standard of living for the population—remained.

Once more, the workers grew bold and developed a fighting mood. In 1978, Banzer was forced to call an election. An extremely fragile parliamentary democracy was established where no party held a majority.

This led last year to General Natusch's attempted coup. Given the stalemate in Parliament he decided to take action. True to the traditions of Latin American militarism, this bigoted general took it upon himself to solve the crisis and with "the stability of the nation" in mind, declared himself President.

Having made no serious preparations for the coup, Natusch found himself suspended in mid-air, even lacking the support of large sections of the armed forces themselves.

The workers, led by the miners, paralysed the country with an all-out general strike. This coup failed, and the "constitutionally minded" general was unceremoniously removed.

Parliament then reached an immediate agreement fearing, more than anything the power of the working class and its determination to succeed. Lidia Gueiler—a centre-right democrat—was installed as compromise president and Natusch's defeat was hailed as a great victory which had taught the army a lesson. But Natusch's coup should have been seen as a warning.

The ruling class and the military prepared for a show-down. Just before the last election on June 29th the military threatened a new

coup. They told President Gueiler to postpone the elections. She held her ground—went ahead with the elections—and the Generals 'promised' not to intervene. All the politicians believed these 'promises'!

Even with such a clear warning and a long history of military rule, the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties and the COB (Bolivian TUC) did nothing to prepare against a coup. A month later, all three leaders died at the hands of the military. The left wing Siles Suazo had won the election, but without an absolute majority. This was the signal that General Meza and his cronies had been waiting for.

Although Siles Suazo's intentions were to manage capitalism without fundamentally changing it, he would have been pushed much further to the left than he really wanted to go by the masses. This is what some sections of the ruling class feared and this is, fundamentally what led to the coup.

Rallying to military

The fact that Meza's action was perhaps somewhat premature can be seen in the reaction of the imperialist powers who condemned the coup. A number of countries, including the USA, ended economic aid.

Nevertheless, an estimated US\$100m has been given to Meza's government to get over this initial period by the mafia that controls the cocaine trade (which has soared in Bolivia since the coup). Recently too the regime has been negotiating assistance from the International Monetary Fund.

Besides, even though some sections of the ruling class and the armed forces opposed

the coup at such an early stage, they have now closed ranks behind Meza. General Banzer, for instance, stood as a candidate in the elections and supported President Gueiler in going ahead with them against the military; he is now leading diplomatic missions for the new government.

Impasse remains

The Bolivian masses have been defeated temporarily. But all the fundamental problems that have shaped the vicious circle of Bolivian history remain and will remain as long capitalism continues to exist. And as in the past the workers and peasants will continue to fight for their rights and better conditions.

Through the bitter experience of defeat, the working class will have learnt many lessons. They will have learnt not to trust the generals as their leaders did; that the armed forces exist to defend private property and capitalism, no matter at what cost; that, therefore, they must win over the rank and file of the army, most of whom come from a working class or peasant background; that the strike committees which developed in 1970 and in the resistance against Meza can and must be organised on a national basis and turned into organs of power laying the basis for a workers' state.

Above all, the most class conscious workers will have learnt that only a planned economy and workers' democracy can break the vicious circle of Bolivian history and put an end to the poverty and the deprivation of the masses. It is these elements who shall lead the Bolivian workers and peasants in the coming struggles.

Letters

IEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES? CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Disarm the bosses

Dear Comrades

The massive CND demonstration in London on 26th October was an anti-Tory rally as much as an anti-nuclear one.

The mood of the marchers, including a number of Labour Parties and trade union branches, was not one of meek pacifism but of bitter anger against the Tories and all their works. The thousands of young workers and unemployed clearly understood that Cruise and Trident missiles are a class question.

The bomb is a bosses', not a workers' weapon. In the event of a nuclear war, Thatcher, her generals and the rich will be cosy in their shelters half a mile underground. Meanwhile the rest of us are advised to hide under the kitchen table!

Of course, the ruling class have no intention of launching a nuclear war in the immediate future: the enormous

destruction involved would put paid to their power and privileges. They calculate that creating war hysteria and using the threat of the Russian bogeyman would divert attention from their disastrous domestic policies.

This demonstration indicated how such a policy can boomerang. As one young worker on the march put it: "They've taken away our jobs, I'm b...d if I'll let them take away our lives as well!"

Serious strategists recognise that, even with Cruise and Trident, Britain's nuclear arsenal can do no more than goad the Russian bear like a child with a pop-gun. Nevertheless, we can't trust Thatcher, even with a pop-gun.

Those who wish to oppose nuclear weapons should not be diverted into supporting 'talks about talks' or other



diplomatic 'peace moves'—every war in history has been preceded by an epidemic of peace treaties. The key question in Britain is to

disarm the bosses and that means bringing down the Tories and returning Labour to power on a socialist programme.

Fraternally
Derek McMillan
East Grintstead Labour Party

NOLS: behind the controversy

Dear Comrades,

Steve Page (Letters 31 October) does his best to cover up what was clearly a politically-motivated attack on Stirling University Labour Club by the National Organisation of Labour Students leadership.

To answer some of the points he makes: the club applied for a union budget on the first day of term. He says the Club had not met since April, but at Stirling term finishes at the beginning of June, and in May there are exams. He says the Club owes money to NOLS; but twenty-one other clubs owe money to NOLS for conference accommodation or literature; why was action not taken against them?

The Stirling club had submitted two resolutions to NOLS, which were considered by the NOLS officers in June. Surely this is an indication of activity?

The actions taken by Mike Gapes and the officers of the Scottish Organisation of Labour Students were not sanctioned by the NC until after they had taken place.

When the SOLS officers found the Labour Club in action, why did they 'helpfully' organise alternative meetings in opposition to the existing club, which had not been disaffiliated from NOLS? The fact that the existing club officers were re-elected without opposition at the first meeting, with 50 people present, shows the support they have.

The letter sent by Mike Gapes, again without sanction by the NC, alleged that clubs "had some organisational problems and did not meet very frequently during the last academic year." Given past events in NOLS, it is not surprising that this was seen as a veiled threat.

In 1975, Mike Gapes was vice-chairman of NOLS. At the conference that year, when over 20 delegates supporting 'Militant' were not accepted, due to minor alleged technicalities; he proposed acceptance of the National Youth Officer's report proposing this action. The next year, when he was chairman, conference was held up for a day and a half, again over disputed delegates; 14 of which the Labour Party National Executive had recommended should be accepted. He opposed the NEC's ruling. In 1977, when he was Student Organiser, again there was a dispute over delegates.

NOLS has become a bureaucratic maze for clubs who wish to affiliate and be involved. Students must supply about twenty pieces of information and signatures before they can even join!

Given the past events in NOLS, it is not surprising that many clubs regard the NOLS leadership with mounting distrust.

Yours fraternally,
Alan Watson
NOLS NC

Empty hospitals

Dear Comrade

An article in the 'Daily Telegraph' (21.10.80) has revealed yet another effect of the Tory government's cuts in public spending. New hospitals throughout the country are remaining unopened after completion because of the health authorities' lack of money.

The new University Hospital in Nottingham, which cost £83m to build, has unused accommodation for 1,000 patients. Meanwhile £250,000 a year is spent on heating, maintenance and rates for the empty wards and theatres.

Only 230 beds will open this autumn, and the most optimistic prediction is that

the hospital will be fully operational by 1985.

In Plymouth at the new 1,700-bed Derrisford Hospital (building cost £22m) seven out of twelve fully equipped wards will remain closed, as will four of the seven operating theatres. Only 200 patients will be admitted when the hospital opens, reaching possibly 600 by 1990, but the full capacity will never be used.

Similar examples are Newcastle's Freeman Hospital (150 empty beds costing £14,000 a year maintenance) and the new 78-bed Witney Hospital in Oxfordshire which has remained closed since its completion in 1979.

Health minister Dr Vaughan is quoted as being "horrified" at this situation.

"I want to know why some of them cannot be at least partially opened" he sobbed.

He need look no further than the effective £125 million cut in NHS services brought about by the Tories not increasing NHS spending enough in 1979 to account for inflation or wage rises.

As one hospital administrator put it, "We have to adhere to strict cash limits... but in the meantime patients are kept waiting, our capital assets are wasting, and to cap it all we have to spend money maintaining the empty buildings." A very eloquent testimony to the effects of Tory policies.

NUPE shop steward
St Mary's hospital, London

Honeymoon over

Dear 'Militant',

Please find enclosed a postal order for £3.25 for 13 issues. I am sorry I have not donated to the Fighting Fund, I did buy a 'Militant' T-shirt; I believe the proceeds go to the fund.

Our living standards have really deteriorated with this government and with three children, it's getting very tight. Still, let's hope we won't have to put up with them for much longer.

Thatcher's honeymoon is now over and when people say 'you haven't given her a chance,' it makes me sick. Seventeen months is enough and we must bring them down by all means possible, before we are all on the dole; no one's job is safe.

Anyway keep up the good work.

Yours fraternally,
Mike Wright
T&GWU shop steward,

Who picks the leader?

Dear Comrades,

The moves by the right-wing to create an independent parliamentary wing of the Labour Party with its own separate leader, as reported in the press recently, must obviously be vigor-

ously opposed.

But we must also make it clear that such a move is quite logical from the point of view of big business and its embodiment in the British constitution, under which the Monarch nominally chooses the prime minister. This should be used to illustrate the danger the Monarchy can pose to a future Labour government, and that we should call for its complete abolition.

Our gracious golden scrounger is unlikely to wish to give audience to a socialist leader who has the backing of the socialist rank and file in the labour movement.

Yours faithfully
D A Milsom
Sheffield Attercliffe CLP.

Money lies

Dear Comrades,

A recent lead article in the Scottish 'Sunday Express' has really frightened my father.

It concerned the doling out of money to the Labour Party Young Socialists, a group of reds who are controlled by a mysterious group who call themselves 'Militant'. The money comes from an equally mysterious and unknown agency. i.e. the working class.

An American view

Dear Militant,

My hat is off to you for that magnificent fight you put up to democratize the British Labor Party. What a victory!

I followed the struggle every inch of the way via our own press and rejoiced when I read the results. I know you'll win the final battle in January for the electoral college too.

Right on, my comrades!
Ever yours,
Betty Traun
New York.

It then goes on to say that the NEC are supporting the LPYS to get over some of its more bizarre ideas.

After reading this my father told me this really worried him. But it was not, as the 'Express' had intended, the mysterious group that worried him—it was the reactionary lies in the reporting that worried him.

He said he had never seen such reactionary lies since reports of the Spanish Civil war.

Yours fraternally,
Peter Lockhart
Dunfermline CLP.

Keep laughing

Dear Militant,

A mate of mine got a job last week and now he's laughing. Not that it's much bottle. For a start it's only part-time.

The reason he's laughing is that if he stops he probably won't have a job anymore! The advert he applied for read "Drivers wanted for travelling joke stalls—sense of humour essential!"

When you consider he brings in £25 for a full

weekend's driving, mainly around seaside resorts [in the winter!], selling rubber wine gums and disappearing ink, you understand why a sense of humour is essential.

With jobs in the Birmingham area becoming as rare as Penny Blacks, you would understand also if the 200 other people [bosses' figure] who applied for the job didn't see the funny side of things.

Fraternally,
Dave McHale
Handsworth LP.



Modern day Nazis in the United States. Should Fascists have the right of free speech?

Fascists—exposed by freedom?

Dear Comrades

Having just read Dave McHale's article in issue 524 on the 'Evening Mail' in Birmingham there is one comment I would like to make.

Having condemned the 'Mail' for its strong Tory bias, Comrade McHale suggested that the press could be taken into public ownership and made open to all groups and parties in the area except (and this is the important part), fascists. Surely if this were to happen, we would be as guilty as the Tory newspaper barons of depriving people

of true freedom of speech.

The best way to fight the fascists is not to make them seem deprived, which may gain them sympathy, but to openly oppose their arguments and to show them up to be what they really are—mindless thugs. Only by exposing the fascists and their pathetic ideas can we educate people against them.

I do not wish to criticise what was otherwise an excellent article, but I repeat what I said earlier—to refuse the fascists the chance to destroy themselves in argument would make us as guilty as the present unacceptable Tory press.

Yours fraternally
Judy Blackwood
Winchester CLP

ads

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

Lothian Labour Party Young Socialists Public Meeting

'Why we hate the Tories.' Hear Andy Bevan [Labour Party National Youth Officer] on Thursday 13th November, 7.30pm. At Trades Council, Picardy Place, Edinburgh. All Welcome

TOWER HAMLETS Labour Party Young Socialists

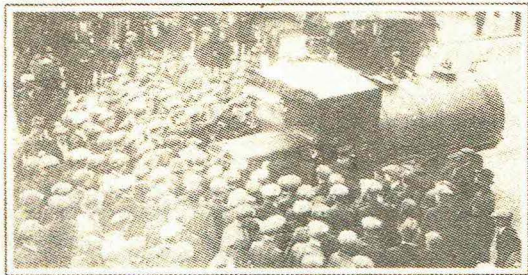
'Organise—Hit Back—Join the Young Socialists To Fight Thatcher!' Meeting—Tuesday November 18th 7.30pm. Speaker: Andy Bevan. At Bethnal Green Labour Party Rooms, 349 Cambridge Heath Rd, London E2. Be There!

DEMONSTRATE against the Tories—Port Talbot, Nov. 8. Assemble Bethnal Square car park at 12.30pm. Speakers: Andy Bevan [LPYS], Terry Fields [FBU], Joe Marino [Bakers Union] and Derek Gregory [Wales TUC].

EASTERN REGION LPYS Demonstration against unemployment. Venue: Midsummer Common, Victoria Avenue, Cambridge. Speakers: Dennis Skinner MP, Jack Boddy, Gen. Sec., NUAAW, Nick Toms, LPYS NC, plus speakers from SE TUC and East Anglia TUC. Assemble 1.30 pm, move off 2.00 pm, Saturday 8 November

To all anti-fascist forces in the South. MARCH AGAINST THE NAZIS. Join our protest march against NF intimidation. Assemble The Level, Lewes Road, Brighton, Saturday 8 November, 10.30 am. March through Brighton to Palmeria Square. Unity is Strength. Brighton and Hove Committee against Fascism and ANL.

MIKE LEVENE'S 1980 flat-warming. Saturday 22 November, 10.00 pm till late. 9 Dinant Avenue, Canvey Island (tel. 60187). Bring bottles. Meet 8 pm at the "Silver Jubilee", Link Road.



Militant Calendar 1981

New 'Militant' calendar for 1981 out now. The calendar, complete with coil binding and hook, portrays with photographs events from the history of the British labour movement. Limited edition. Send £1.20 [including postage] with order [5 or more post free] to Calendar Offer, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



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Has it ever crossed your mind to ask yourself why Mrs T talks funny?

The answer may be found on Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl's new disc

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Win a winter holiday abroad for two worth £500—can be taken any time mid-January to mid-April!

Second prize: a weekend for two in Paris! Eight other prizes include record tokens and a portable TV.

Tickets only 10p from your 'Militant' seller. All proceeds to the 'Militant' fighting fund.

Build

Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target for year
Eastern	3613		5,000
East Midlands	3192		3,800
Hants & IOW	3976		4,600
Humberside	1541		2,500
London East	5082		6,200
London West	2828		4,700
London South	4420		4,700
Manchester & Lancs	2712		5,100
Merseyside	3739		6,000
Northern	4286		7,300
Scotland East	2128		3,200
Scotland West	3824		5,000
Southern	4138		5,900
South West	2102		3,200
Wales East	1554		2,800
Wales West	2870		3,100
West Midlands	6291		9,000
Yorkshire	4183		7,300
Others	10229		10,600
Total received	72708		100,000

TARGET FOR YEAR - £100,000

This is what we want!

At the highly successful 'Militant' Sellers' Rally last weekend, a collection of £5,130.89 was taken for the fighting fund.

By Steve Cawley

This is a clear indication of the determination of our readers and supporters up and down the country to increase the coverage and build the sales of our paper as a vital part of the struggle for socialism.

The collection amazed the press representatives who snooped round the rally. The "fighting funds" of the Daily Wails of the world are from the rich and powerful who advertise in their papers and who can write off this investment against tax.

Our money comes from supporters in the labour movement, in work and out of work, and many very low paid.

It is a tribute to 'Militant' and its readers that at a time

of economic recession we can collect such sums—but when capitalism is failing to provide even jobs, what better time can there be to contribute to a fighting Marxist journal?

Our record week's total of £6,478 included approximately £1,300 sent in to us direct from readers.

'Militant' Readers' Meetings such as that in Caerphilly, £59.58, pennies' jars (£4, Leeds CPSA member), sponsored events (£13.90. Hull comrade's bike ride), garden produce and transport to meetings (£3.50 Peterborough) all indicate the political will, ingenuity and devotion of our readers in building our paper.

THIS WEEK £6,478

J Golding (Fulham LPYS) writes: "Enclosed is the sum of £18.24 raised by holding a meal for the 'Militant'. As well as being a gourmet's paradise, the evening provided an excellent opportunity for informal political discussion, and it is a fund-raising activity which involves little effort apart from a chaotic evening's cooking (for 17) and a bit of shopping. An activity soon to be repeated."

Whilst a Sheffield student was able to divert in our direction a £50 tax rebate from a holiday job, not all our supporters have the opportunity to do this. However, all our supporters have the opportunity each week, normally every day, to sell 'Militant' and collect the extras and smaller don-

ations. These should all be noted down on collectors' cards and sent to us weekly. Whether it's a day's pay from a Glasgow reader (who also enclosed £10 from his sister) or £3.26 from collectors' cards in one Welsh town, all the contributions are vital to our future.

We make a direct political appeal to all our readers, even those reading this page for the first time, to come to our aid with regular contributions.

Without your help we cannot hope to combat the torrent of confusion and propaganda from the press of the ruling class. Send off your contribution with a letter saying what you and your mates think of 'Militant', straight away!

Manchester NALGO fight cuts

By Margaret Manning

(Manchester NALGO)

The cuts in local expenditure are now beginning to bite in Manchester, but NALGO members are determined to fight back.

Disputes are bubbling throughout the authority—libraries, housing and now in social services.

The management are refusing to fill a vacancy at a day centre for ex-mentally ill patients. This means the three remaining staff will have to work with the same number of clients, have a great increase in their workload and a great reduction in the service provided for one of the most defenceless sections of society.

The Manchester NALGO

Branch see this as a test case for the union policy of not covering unfilled vacancies, and defending services.

As part of our action we are calling a one-day strike on November 14th of all members in social services, except residential at this stage, to show management we are determined they should fill this post. This coincides with a major dispute over sacking of 10 Housing Department workers. We aim to publicise the effects the cuts are having, especially on the weakest sections of society.



NALGO members on the march against Tory cuts on May 14th. More industrial news on pages 14 and 15.

Bowater closure Unions must act now

Bowaters' closure deadline for the Ellesmere Port mill is just two weeks away. Dave Power, a member of the Merseyside and District Branch of SOGAT, the main union at the plant, talked to 'Militant' in a personal capacity about the fight to stop closure.

"Management have been shown to be hell bent on closing the Mersey Mill, bearing out everything 'Militant' has said about just who is to blame for the loss of the Mill.

"Last week it was disclosed that even the Tories were prepared to put money in Bowaters' pocket to off-set losses, by way of grants and subsidies. Bowaters refused the offer."

Are you saying these grants could save the Mill and the newsprint industry?

"Far from it. The closure of Mersey Mill will mean the virtual destruction of the British newsprint industry, but Bowaters are prepared

By Richard Venton

to do this, to concentrate their interests where the largest profit lies.

"Governments can give all the subsidies they like—to subsidise profits—but no one can ensure investment, while that decision lies with private enterprise.

Labour movement campaign needed

"The workforce, at this moment, are without a planned campaign of action, involving the whole labour movement. The Mill action committee's reliance on 'joint approaches' with management and Tory MPs, rather than linking up with other Bowaters plants and

trade unionists, has completely failed.

"Unfortunately a number of unions on the Mill site are preparing for the axe and talking redundancy terms. My own union are still prepared to resist, but this will be difficult without the support of other unions.

"In my opinion, the key to the whole episode has been leadership. If this had been shown at the very start the mood at Ellesmere Port would be very different.

"Two resolutions have been put forward, with support from the Merseyside SOGAT branch, outlining a strategy for opposing the closure (reported in 'Militant' 19/9/80). But these have not been taken up by the local and national union leadership.

"The whole site needs to be involved in the struggle, with weekly mass site meetings, as jobs are threatened at the other two Bowaters plants on the Ellesmere Port site.

"The mass members' rally we called for took place five weeks after it was agreed. By that time, many were feeling disillusioned. This

was probably why the call by Bill Keys (SOGAT general secretary), for action against Bowaters, was not endorsed."

Do you believe that the Mill can be saved?

"Things look pretty bleak, unless something is done now. But even at this late stage, the closure can be averted.

"The workers were prepared to strike when the closure was first announced and that mood can be regenerated, if our local and national leadership convince workers at the Mill that support for their fight is there.

"The Merseyside and District branch of SOGAT have recently supported any action taken to save jobs at the Mill. We feel just as threatened by Bowaters' action, as those workers in the Mill.

"Our leadership must take heed of our feelings and mount a campaign of action against Bowaters now!"

Churchill bosses don't like unions...

By Martin Elvin

(Chairman, Greater London LPYS)

The strike at Churchill's engineering factory in Uxbridge, West London, is still on. The workers, fighting for recognition of the AUEW and reinstatement of a shop steward, are more bitter, but no less determined.

The American owners have apparently given permission to local managers to settle and after a meeting with the AUEW district secretary, management agreed to recognise the union, accept a disputes procedure and pay nationally-negotiated rates.

So strikers were expecting a victorious return to work when management announced that, in a ballot throughout the company, a majority had rejected the union.

This vote, organised by management, represented those manual workers who partly from fear, had not yet joined the strike, plus office staff, management and company directors—the AUEW may well not have

wanted them! The strikers—the majority of the manual workers—were the only ones not given a vote.

Action against Churchills and in support of the strikers must be stepped up. The AUEW leaders must take up their responsibility—no strike pay has yet been received. A large proportion of the factory's products are exported: they must be stopped at the airports and docks.

There can be no going back without union recognition. Management have shown what their attitude would be if they thought they had won this battle.

Send financial, moral and details of practical help (especially blacking) to the AUEW district office, 1 Woodlands Road, Southall, Middlesex.

Liverpool: Only workers can save hospitals

A threatened wage cut of £25 per week was answered by health service catering workers in a successful 24-hour stoppage in Liverpool's Walton and Fazakerly hospitals.

Management, under Area Health Authority instructions, are trying to take away bonus, cut overtime and cut staff. Similar threats have been made by the Area Health Authority all over Liverpool.

Sections of the ancillary workers in other hospitals came out, but the action was not total and the strike was only a partial success. This is not a reflection of lack of anger against the high-handed actions of management at Walton, but of confusion over the issues at stake.

Despite an official request from NUPE and the G&M WU for members to take action, regional officials did not prepare the ground. COHSE issued no clear directive, leaving action a "free choice"!

One inevitable result was summed up at Newsham hospital, under threat of closure. When domestic, catering and portering staff were told other hospitals were not coming out, the mood swung away from action despite the union action committee's warning that if Walton is left isolated, then in future Newsham may be left isolated too.

Time and motion studies in Walton "showed" that, from management's point of view, the canteen was 28 overstaffed, and that hours were too long. Why not

By Lesley Holt

introduce a 35-hour week then, with no loss in pay?

The whole exercise is to save money. This is why this issue affects every hospital worker and patient.

The threat to close Newsham is also an exercise to save money. The best way to protect patients is by forcing the AHA to back down. The action committee argued that the best way to guarantee saving Newsham Hospital is to support the Walton action.

Irene Riley, a committee member, had already been to convince workers in the Park Hospital to take action. This is what the union officials should have been doing!

The alarm bells sounded by the Newsham action committee were shown to be real the very next day, after the vote not to strike. Management have banned the committee, refused them permission to meet in the hospital, told them to take all leaflets and posters down and stop political papers being sold at the hospital. Something like 30 'Militants' are being sold in the hospital most weeks.

Management want to drive a wedge between the members and the committee. These measures will fail. But now the union officials must weld all hospital workers together.

A concerted attack must be met with a concerted counter-attack. Otherwise Liverpool's Health Service stands in jeopardy.

Spamount Mill occupied

By Pat McGlinchey

The sit-in by workers at Spamount Mill, Northern Ireland, to prevent closure (see report). One week on, despite not having the backing of their local AT&GWU full-time officer, there are even four black legs on the picket line: not strike breakers, but a big black Labrador belonging to a picket marshal Kerian Fox.

Meanwhile, in a week of feverish activity, the workers

have formed a committee calling themselves Derg Development Association and have been negotiating with community and government agencies for financial aid towards the purchase of the factory and machinery from the receiver.

These negotiations are at an advanced stage and plans have been made to start production again, of necessity on a greatly reduced level. The workers are determined, nonetheless, to keep the wheels turning rather than let the factory become just another desolate ruin in an area with no alternative employment.

The workers' committee, now operating from the directors boardroom, plan to run

the mill as a workers' co-operative. Much remains to be done before their first roll of "Tyrone Tweed" comes off the looms, but these workers of Spamount are giving a lead to workers everywhere who are faced with factory closures.

Send donations messages and donations c/o Armagh Trades Council, 34 High Street, Armagh, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

Seamen's mass meeting

Photo: Tessa Howard (IFL)



Members of the National Union of Seamen applaud speakers at a meeting at Conway Hall, London, during the 24-hour stoppage. The one-day strike, which had a hundred percent support by union members, is part of the struggle for better pay and working conditions, and an attempt to stop the shipping bosses using 'flags of convenience.'

AUEW

Terry Duffy's re-election as president of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers marks a serious setback for engineering workers, and indeed a blow to the whole labour movement.

Never has there been greater need for a bold fighting leadership to save jobs and stop the destruction and devastation of industry by big business and the Tories. But as the 'Financial Times', the 'City bosses' paper, commented, the result "is likely to be warmly welcomed by ministers."

The low 24.7% turn-out can hardly be taken as an enthusiastic endorsement of the present leadership's policies. It reflects the temporary lack of interest in the life of the union, even a mood of despair, for which the present leadership is largely responsible.

But many engineering workers also believe that the result could have been different if all AUEW members had been able to vote. From Nottingham, Bradford, and other areas, we have had widespread reports of members not receiving ballot papers.

However, all these handicaps would have been

overcome if the left had campaign effectively and taken the fight to every shop-floor engineering worker. Where shop stewards, convenors and union members supporting the policies of 'Militant' did campaign, they reported massive successes in convincingly uninterested workers of the need to elect Bob Wright.

At the same time, thousands of leaflets produced by the Broad Left—once a powerful force in the union but now virtually dead in many key areas—were never distributed outside the Broad Left machine.

The old leadership of the Broad Left, dominated by the Communist Party and the reformist left, must also take a share of the blame for Duffy's re-election. The Broad Left failed clearly to distinguish itself from the AUEW leadership under Hugh Scanlon, when it lent its then powerful support to the pay restraint policies of the Labour government, and under the Tories it has completely failed to campaign among the union's membership for an effective socialist alternative to the defeatist tactics of Boyd and Duffy.

Now the Broad Left must be re-built with fighting socialist ideas to channel and harness the militancy will inevitably spread through the ranks of the AUEW.

Gardners

"There is a massive campaign of intimidation by management to split the workforce," said Tom Macafee, works convenor at Gardner's, recently.

This campaign has included several letters being sent out to the workforce by management threatening more redundancies unless the strike, now into its sixth week, is abandoned. The workers are occupying the factory until 590 redundancy notices are withdrawn.

The 590 redundancy notices were sent out recently and a large number of shop stewards were included in the redundancies (surprise, surprise). Then, management sent out ballot forms asking if workers would like another ballot about returning to work.

These ballot papers had no numbers on them and no way of telling whether they had been completed by Gardner's workers or by Father Christmas. To prove this point the strikers produced another 1,700 identical forms which were then publicly burned in protest.

The ballot was so obviously a management ploy that even Rev. David Seber, an industrial chaplain, refused to take part in the counting of the vote.

The occupation remains solid mainly because at all levels the membership has been involved in the decisions both before and during the strike. New workers are being trained to speak at meetings and being involved in the organisation of the occupation.

As the attacks of the Tories develop, more and more workers are looking to Gardner's for a successful fight-back. Another Eccles factory, Lankro Chemicals, faces attacks on working conditions by the bosses. The TGWU at Lankro have decided to withdraw co-operation from management as a start to their fight.

If Gardner's workers succeed in defending the 590 jobs it would be a major boost to the entire labour movement. Even many local shopkeepers are supporting the occupation. Their small businesses will suffer from unemployment and they should be involved in the campaign to defend jobs.

Labour movement support continues to flood in. Speakers are visiting Scotland and even Germany (with the aid of the steelworkers). This dispute is ultimately about who benefits from new technology—the bosses or the workers—a question which is developing burning importance for all industries.

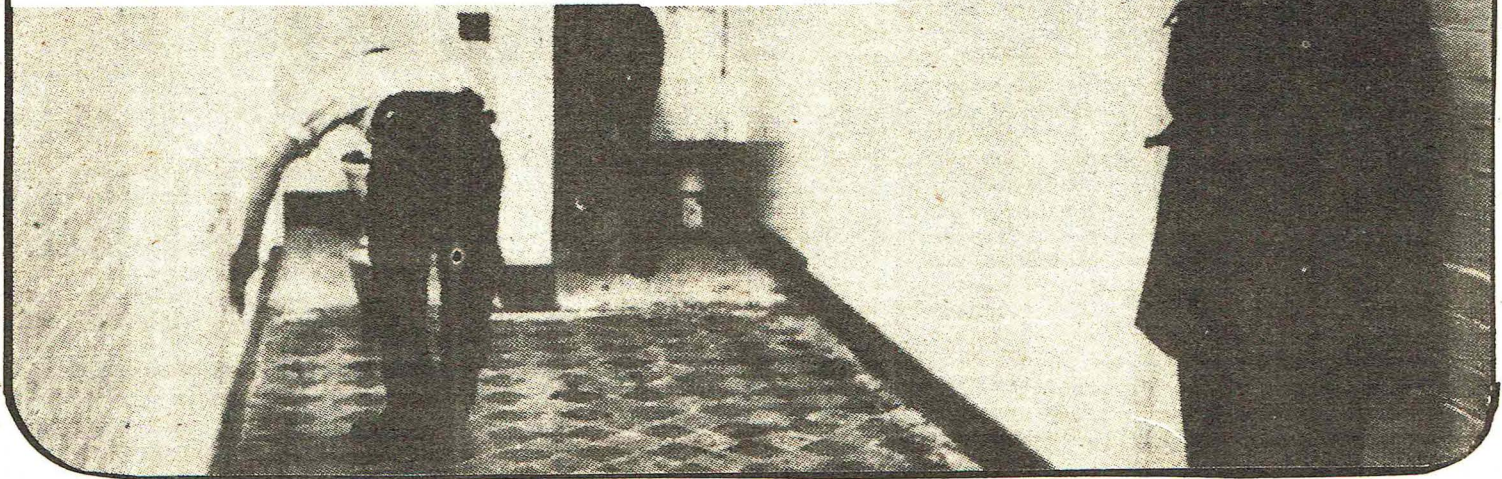
The support must be stepped up even further by every section of the labour movement. The Gardner's fight is vital for us all.

Donations and messages of support to Dave Marsden, 187 Barton Lane, Eccles, Manchester. Cheques payable to L Gardner and Sons Joint Shop Stewards Account No. 2.

By Matthew Wrack

(Farnworth LPYS)

Prisons—the real issues



The vast majority of the public has little idea of the issues involved in the Prison Officers' dispute. Instead, the Tory-owned press indulges in its favourite pastime of union bashing. An official of the Prison Officers Association told me the details the media hide from us.

At present there is 100% support for the action among the 22,000 POA members, in every British prison—including the 55% who stand to gain not a penny out of the dispute.

Nationwide, members are refusing to take in any more prisoners until the number in the establishment is down to the Certified Normal Accommodation: one man per cell. In one London prison there are often 2-300 more inmates than the CNA figure allows.

By a 'Militant' reporter

The present dispute has been simmering for almost two years. Prison officers work two shift systems and in 1979 the government's 'May Committee' recommended that one system should be paid for a meal break, with the proviso that the shift be extended for management convenience. The other shift was not to receive pay for a break, even though hours worked were virtually the same.

The POA is demanding that this should go to arbitration; usually regarded as a very moderate demand. The stubborn, pig-headed attitude of the Home Office in refusing to grant this is the cause of the dispute.

The Home Office say that the 'May Committee' itself was arbitration, and that this is their final word. How they can take this standpoint is beyond comprehen-

sion—the anomaly was created by the committee's proposals!

At the beginning the POA stated that they had no wish to adversely affect the inmates by stopping visits, restricting bathing or exercise.

Until now there has been widespread support for the POs from inmates, but the Home Office seem determined to undermine this.

A high ranking prison service official has said that the battle is no longer limited to the issue of pay—now it is "Who runs the Prison Service?"

Troops being sent in

Whitelaw has already decided to send in the troops to take over the officers' jobs, in prisons under construction and in army camps. At Liverpool's biggest police station, Bridewell, detainees are now

being kept three to a cell.

The Tories' anti-union policies are well known and if they succeed in defeating the POA, the brick wall tactics they are using at present will turn into a battering ram, aimed at the heart of the trade union movement which is the workers' only defence against the vicious big business bosses.

While morale in the POA is now high, it is likely to fall under management pressure if the dispute is long (as seems increasingly likely) and if it is isolated from the rest of the labour movement.

Very many POA members voted Tory at the last election. Their faith in the party of the bosses must be being shaken daily. It is vital for the development of this union that the labour movement reaches out to them and draw them, by defending them and fighting shoulder to shoulder with them, towards the traditions and confidence in the strength of the trade union movement.

The labour movement must support the right of prison officers to organise, and should back their legitimate trade union demands on wages and conditions.

To ensure support from the wider movement, prison officers themselves must make it clear that their action is directed against the Home Office management, and make sure their grievances are not taken out on the prisoners.

The inmates of British jails are already suffering from the worst prison conditions in Western Europe.

Men and women in prison, whatever their crimes, are being punished sufficiently by imprisonment itself without their confinement being made inhuman.

Normanby Park

The British Steel Corporation's Normanby Park works in Scunthorpe is alive with rumours of closure.

Normanby Park employs over 2,000 workers and with production reduced, orders being re-routed and short-time working stepped up, fear of closure and its devastating effects are crushing morale.

Already about one in ten are unemployed in the town. "It's a bad situation when the workforce is walking into work with their heads bowed, never mind walking out," one ISTC member said.

Trade unionists at Normanby Park point out that rumours such as this are often encouraged by management to test the workers' reaction. A mass meeting with union leaders is urgently needed to answer the workers' questions and report on any discussions with management about the future of Scunthorpe and the whole British Steel Corporation.

"The workforce have a right to know—whatever the facts are," one trade unionist pointed out. "There must be no talks, no negotiation, without local union representatives' agreement and pressure."

Fight Fleet Street closures

The merger of London's two evening newspapers, the Evening News and the Standard, is another measure of the severe crisis facing workers in the print and paper industry.

The merger has meant the closure of the News and the loss of between 1,500 and 1,750 jobs—a staggering total, even in these days when closures and short time are every-day announcements.

The Trafalgar Group, who own vast shipping and building interests as well as the old Beaverbrook empire, would thereby achieve a monopoly of the London evening paper market.

Jobs are being lost throughout the industry. Workers, enticed in some cases by sizeable redundancy payments, have effectively sold their jobs.

The News and Standard have seen their circulations fall in recent years and the number of editions decline correspondingly. The drastic fall in advertising revenue [itself a significant sign of a stagnating economy] plus the advent of local



Workers at the 'Standard'. Despite the so-called 'merger', they still face redundancies

radio, have helped in cutting the market.

Standard workers, in the main, have great sympathy for their colleagues at the News. Yet they are heaving huge sighs of relief that they seem to have escaped the chop. This understandable reaction is both short-sighted and mistaken.

On announcing the merger, which came as a total surprise to both workforces, despite numerous rumours, a Trafalgar official warned that if the "new Standard" failed to achieve a profit it would go as well.

The management have been on the offensive for some time in Fleet Street, aided unfortunately by the

lack of a planned union strategy. They feel they have the unions on the ropes and are looking to deliver the knockout punch.

At the Standard, the Natsopa Clerical Chapel are having the second instalment of an agree wage claim withheld until, as management puts it, "some more redundancies are found." Associated Newspapers [owners of the Daily Mail as well as the Evening News] are attempting to prune their whole staff by including in the redundancies workers employed by the Mail.

The Chapels [workplace union branches] are fighting this. However their main

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

concern has been to negotiate the best possible redundancy terms, thus paving the way for closure.

The arbitrary decision to sell or close Times Newspapers, and the threats muttered by management on every paper, are ramming home the message: action throughout Fleet Street will make the employers sit up and take notice.

★ No redundancies
★ Share out the work with no loss of pay
★ Democratise the press—nationalise the printing, ink and paper industries under workers' control and management.

LEYLAND - WE WON'T TAKE ANOTHER CUT

The Longbridge workers' 90% vote for strike action is a sharp kick in the teeth for all those who had written off the plant's shop floor after the defeat over the sacking of convenor Derek Robinson last year.

For the last six months, unions and workforce at Longbridge have bent over backwards to get the much-publicised Metro out on time. But the bosses' press has given all the credit to management and robots.

So after a year of ruthless attacks, the workers have reached the sticking point. They are not prepared to accept yet another pay deal which would mean a cut in living standards.

The decision of the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee to give BL management five days' notice of strike action shows that the shop floor are ready to fight back.

Strike action received an overwhelming vote at Longbridge and Cowley. At other plants (like Rover Solihull), however, where workers have been on short-time on near full pay, the strike call was narrowly rejected.

The vote in favour was higher than the capitalist media have made out. BL

By Richard Lewis (TGWU) and Les Kuriata (EETPU)

workers have made it clear that won't tolerate another insulting offer, after years of negligible rises.

The negotiating committee has demanded a £17 across-the-board increase, in itself a cut in real wages. We would actually need a £37 net increase to maintain our living standards. As one placard put it: "You can't keep a baby on 6.8%."

Longbridge workers' morale was at an all-time low this time last year when Robinson was dismissed. Now, after twelve months of attacks, the workers have bounced back in a militant mood.

In desperation, some workers had even looked to Edwardes' so-called "recovery plan". But when they found out what the plan really meant, the honeymoon was

soon over.

Such is the anger at Edwardes now, that during the recent Longbridge visit by Prince Charles workers held up protest placards—and some even threw nuts and bolts at Edwardes.

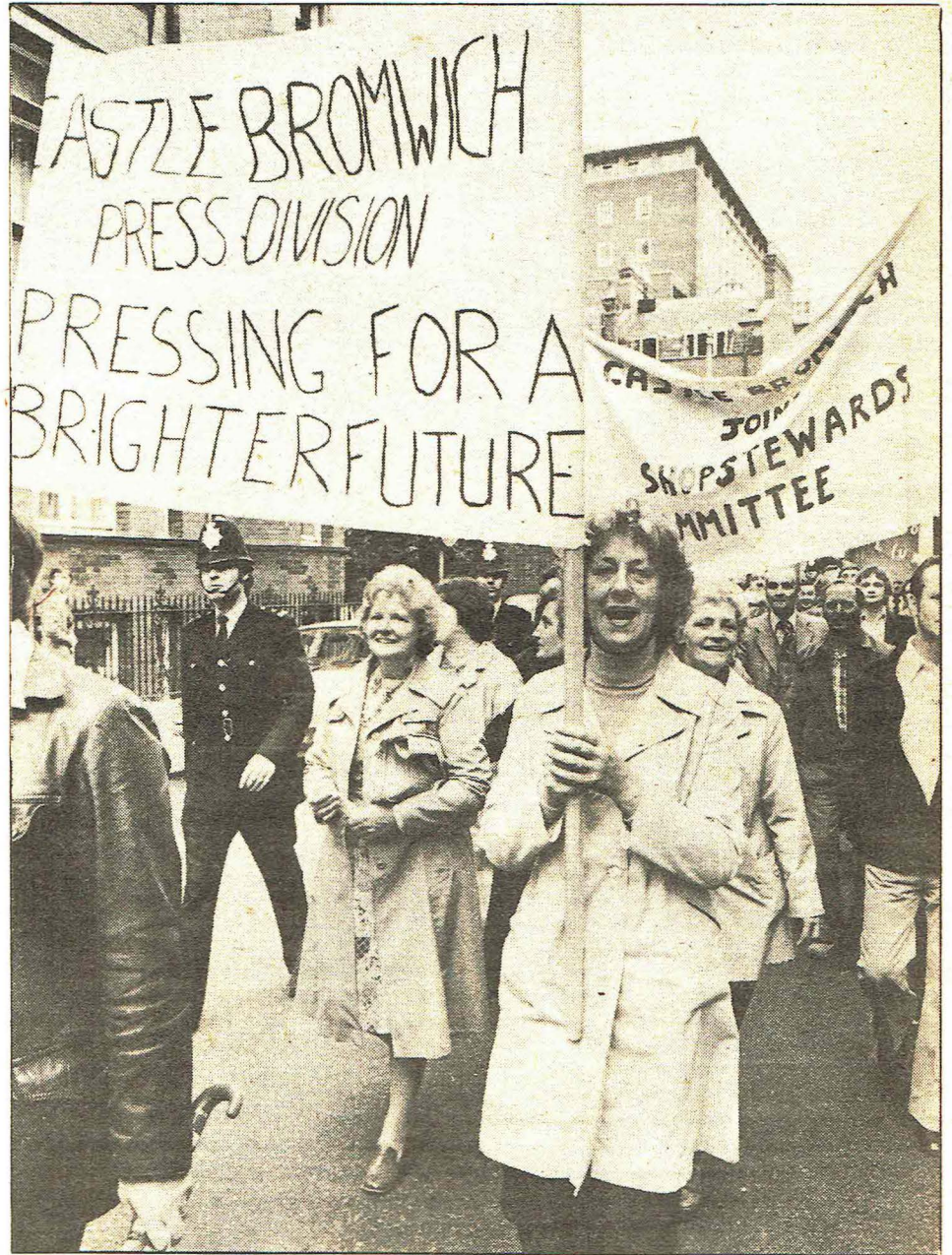
The BL management can no longer con workers into believing the rubbish put out in their letters. They offered to increase our bonus scheme maximum payment from £15 to £22 a week. It sounds reasonable, but is meaningless: Longbridge workers have been averaging 6p a week from the scheme!

Even shop stewards were surprised at the massive Cofton Park vote. The 10% against action were nearly all maintenance workers, who can still cushion themselves with overtime. The majority feel they may as well be outside the gates fighting and unable to pay their bills—as inside at work and still unable to pay the bills.

One worker told the 'Birmingham Mail' that he had voted to go out because his wife had instructed him to do so—because she couldn't pay the bills.

If the dispute develops into a strike, Longbridge or any other plant must not be isolated. This is vital for a successful conclusion. We must also demand:

- * All factories out—abide by majority decisions
- * All unions to make the strike official
- * Strike committees to run strikes and effective
- * No settlements without mass meetings.



United action by all Leyland workers will be essential if strike action is taken



NAVA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY PUBLIC MEETING

'THE SRI LANKA GENERAL STRIKE'

Speakers:

Siritunge Jayasuriya [Organising Secretary, NSSP]
 Gunasena Mahanama [General Secretary, Government Clerical Service Union]

Thursday, 20 November, 7.00 pm
 Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London W.C.1.
 Admission 30p

ROBB CALEDON - Workers Force Concessions

By taking a firm stand, workers at the Robb Caledon shipyard in Dundee have once again forced British Shipbuilders' management to back down on their threat to close the yard.

Discussions between shop stewards and management this week resulted in a temporary victory for the workers. British shipbuilders will bring forward the order for a 250-ton ferry for the mid-Tyne, worth about £250,000.

This could keep the yard busy until next March. But British Shipbuilders still want some redundancies.

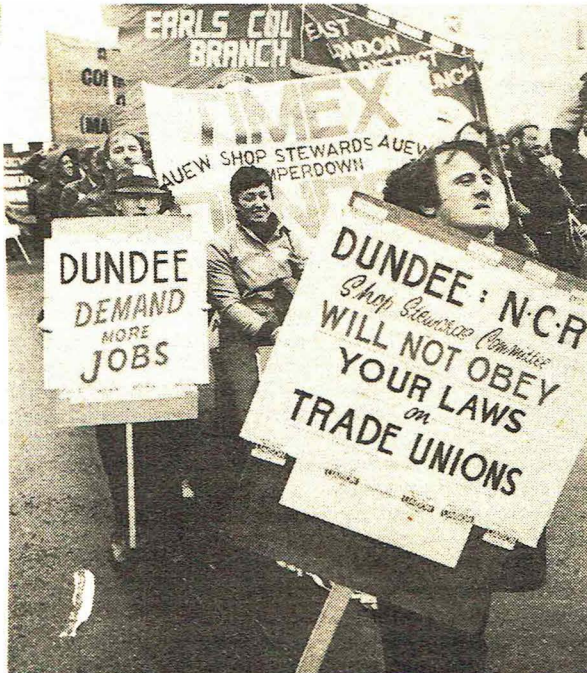
Stewards have agreed to accept voluntary redundancies. But if workers would not volunteer when there were no orders, they are unlikely to volunteer with a

ship on the stocks—and the stewards are determined to fight any threat of compulsory redundancies.

Some workers, the stewards accept, may be transferred to the British Shipbuilders Leith yard, where there are vacancies.

Robb Caledon workers are aware that there are dangers for them even in this latest concession and there is no guarantee of work after March. The fight will still be on to save the yard.

Nevertheless, the concession of a ship shows management's fear that determined action at the Dundee yard—which they would undoubtedly face if they attempted to close the yard—would spread to other shipyards.



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