

Thatcher's hollow EEC 'victory'

TORIES INFLATE YOUR FOOD BILL

The new inflation figures out this Friday are expected to show prices rising at an annual rate of 23% or 24%.

Thatcher's claim that she is "fighting inflation" is a cynical con-trick! The Tories have given one twist after another to the ever-rising spiral of inflation.

One after another, the Tories have pushed prices up—VAT, gas and electricity, bus and train fares, school meals and the cost of health, dental and other social services.

The latest blow to working class living standards is the Tories' agreement on the EEC Budget, which will soon lead to a disastrous leap in the price of food in the shops.

Thatcher is boasting about her "great EEC victory" in Brussels. But in return for a budget settlement which will still leave Britain [the third poorest EEC country] making the second highest net contribution [see page 6], Thatcher has agreed to a 5% increase in EEC food prices.

This price rise—which the Tories previously said they would never accept—will bolster up the EEC's crazy Common Agricultural Policy. It means high subsidies to EEC farmers, the exclusion of cheaper foodstuffs from outside the EEC—and higher food bills for working-class families.

This latest increase will immediately add 1p or 2p in the £1 to British food prices. A typical family

with three young children, for example, spending £20 a week on food last year, would now have to spend about £32 to buy the same amount.

But, as everybody knows, people are now buying less meat, less fresh fruit and vegetables—and the health of workers and their children will inevitably suffer.

Workers will now have to pay even more for basic foodstuffs, especially cheese, butter, bread and bacon. Not only that, but the rise in internal EEC prices automatically means higher EEC customs duty on products like North American maize which is used in breakfast cereals and snacks like crisps—so they will be going up as well.

Before the last general election, the Tory Party's Manifesto said: "We will insist on a freeze on CAP prices for products in structural surplus. This should be maintained until the surpluses are

By Lynn Walsh



Giscard—"Before Helmut slaps on the incredible face-saving potion perhaps Madam would care to settle her bill."

Thatcher—"No, just hand it to the British working class."

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Bakers say — Kick out the Tories

An important trade union conference has made a call for a TUC-led campaign to kick out the Tories.

The Bakers' Union, at their recent conference passed the following resolution which is to be sent to this year's TUC Conference.

"This conference recognises the vicious attempts of the Tory government to make the

By Brian Ingham

workers pay for the crisis of capitalism and agrees that the TUC should give the lead to all affiliated unions and their members by mounting a campaign jointly with the Labour Party against the

cuts in social spending and the anti-union legislation.

"This campaign should clearly aim to bring down the Tory government and bring to office a Labour government pledged to the socialist policies contained in Clause IV part 4 of the Labour Party constitution."

For full report, see page 6.

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Militant

1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Labour movement and repression in Northern Ireland

The Labour movement has a fundamental duty to fight repression and torture in Northern Ireland, and "Militant" calls upon trade unions, Labour Parties and Labour Party Young Socialists branches to give full support to the newly formed Labour Committee on Prisons in Northern Ireland.

It is high time that the movement in Britain,

which has campaigned against repression and the torture of political prisoners in Chile and elsewhere internationally, took action against systematic repression and the inhuman treatment of prisoners on its own "doorstep" in the six counties.

The statement and demands of the Committee are published on page 8 of this edition, and this follows Militant's full exposure [23rd May] of Northern Ireland's atrocious prison conditions.

An important step in

the campaign on this issue came last Monday, when the Home Policy Committee of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee—on the initiative of the LPYS representative, Tony Saunois—passed the following resolution:

"This NEC deplors the appalling conditions which exist in the prisons of Northern Ireland. We note with concern a newspaper report that women prisoners in Armagh gaol had been beaten up by male warders and locked up for 23 hours a day and denied proper sanitary and medical facilities. In Long Kesh H-Block, male prisoners because they refused to wear prison uniforms or do prison work, are locked up for 24 hours a day, wearing only a blanket in a cell with only a damp mattress, are denied reading and writing materials, and are subject to body-searches including the probing of the anus.

"The National Executive Committee is implacably opposed to the programme and methods of terrorism. Equally, however, we are opposed to oppression and torturing the prisoners of

Northern Ireland. Such repression, under certain circumstances, could be perfected for possible use against the labour movement in Britain in the future.

"The National Executive Committee therefore calls for consideration by the Northern Ireland Study Group and Human Rights Study Group for the following:

1. The right of all prisoners to wear their own clothes;
2. Prisoners to be allowed full access to newspapers, television, books and writing materials, with no restriction on letters;
3. Prisoners to be allowed the minimum of two unsupervised visits and two food parcels per week;
4. Prisoners to have the right to negotiate the choice of work, training and educational facilities;
5. Prisoners to be paid the trade-union rate of pay and to have the right to trade union membership;
6. Prisoners to be allowed to elect their own representatives to negotiate on their behalf;
7. The possible scrapping of the non-jury 'Diplock' courts and the closure of the special police interrogation

centres. "The National Executive Committee opposes all forms of repression in Northern Ireland and calls for the repeal of repressive legislation.

"The National Executive Committee asks the Northern Ireland Study Group to look at the question of repression in prison conditions and include a section on it in its final report."

The resolution was passed "nem con" and will now go to the Labour Party's special Northern Ireland study groups [which will shortly be visiting Northern Ireland] and also to the Party's human rights working party.

Strong support at the Labour Party Special Conference for a number of delegates who called for an end to the Parliamentary Labour Party's "bi-partisan" policy on Northern Ireland and for an independent Labour initiative, indicated growing support within the labour movement for a socialist stand on the problems of Northern Ireland.

Already a number of Labour MPs, prominent labour movement activists

and organisations have pledged their support for the Labour Committee on Prison Conditions. These include Tony Saunois, Jo Richardson, Sam McClusky [NUS], Stuart Holland, Ron Brown [MP Leith], Eric Heffer, Les Huckfield, Dennis Skinner, Joan Lester, Reg Race, and the London Labour Party Regional Executive.

We hope that Labour Parties, LPYS branches, and trade union branches will discuss fully the issues raised by the Labour Committee's statement and send resolutions to the NEC supporting the motion passed by the Home Policy Committee.

Passing resolutions highlighting the situation and putting forward clear demands is a beginning. But this must be followed up with action. Numerous reports and resolutions have been produced by parliamentarians, academics and human rights groups. But only the power of the labour movement, mobilised to exert overwhelming pressure on the Tory government, is capable of bringing an end to repression and the inhuman treatment of prisoners in Northern Ireland.

MOBILISE FOR PARTY DEMOCRACY

'Militant', as reported last week, is supporting the Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy, an ad-hoc committee launched at the Special Party conference in Wembley, to campaign in defence of conference decisions on party democracy.

In a letter requesting 'Militant's' support (25 May), the Committee outlined its main proposals:

1. The decision of the 1979 conference on mandatory reselection of MPs should be upheld.
2. The present structure of the NEC should be defended.
3. Support for constitutional amendments

implementing the 1979 conference decisions, if these are not implemented by the NEC. 4. Campaigning on the principle that Labour's leader and deputy leader should be elected by the party as a whole: at the 1980 conference the committee, with some dissension, will be supporting the CLPD call for an 'electoral college'. 5. Reform of the Parliamentary Labour Party, committing it to implementing party policy, democratising its operations and making it accountable with debate and voting made public.

'Militant' welcomed this initiative and despite some reservations about the committee's policies, indicated it



Safeguard the democratic advances of 1979 Labour Party conference would give its support.

Replying to the committee (30 May) we said:

" 'Militant' endorses the demands put forward in your letter and is prepared to sponsor a campaign for their implementation. This we can do with the proviso that 'Militant' is given representation on the Steering Committee and fully involved in

the planning and conducting of any activity by the campaign.

"Further, 'Militant' reserves the right to publish an independent view if agreement cannot be reached on any issue.

"Providing these points are accepted, 'Militant' is prepared to participate in a joint campaign around the de-

mands in your letter, and look forward to hearing from you."

The Committee is now organising meetings throughout the country in preparation for the 1980 Labour Party conference, with 'Militant' speakers attending.

Photo: MILITANT

NALGO: READY TO FIGHT

Already this year's NALGO conference has expressed firm opposition to the Tory government's policies.

At the time of writing the major policy resolutions have not yet been reached, but there have been several important debates.

The attitude of NALGO's rank and file is continuing to change with the sweet smell of success in the recent comparability dispute still in the air. Delegates in the health group expressed solidarity with the nurses' pay claim, and went on to resolve to fight for it in full.

They are quite clearly prepared to back it up with solid industrial action. This decision will undoubtedly have effects on the other union pay claims.

The members are prepared to fight and the mood of conference is one of dogged determination.

Other resolutions on rules changes moved by Irene Buxton from Knowsley branch showed a further hardening on the union's policy on 'blacked posts'. There is an air of expectation in the conference and in regard to the coming debates on government policy and strategy for opposing the cuts.

Support for a full discussion on the question of a ballot to decide for or against affiliation to the Labour Party was reflected at a fringe meeting of the Labour Party Affiliation campaign. Over 120 attended the CNALP meeting and fully debated the issues and tactics.

Undoubtedly the discussion in the next few days will pale unless a firm political step forward is taken in the affiliation debate.

By David Churchley (Strachlyde branch delegation) personal capacity)

BARBICAN: the truth

The Barbican complex in London is well known for its luxury flats and such amenities as a theatre, concert hall, cinema, and so on.

There's much more. It's all very impressive, but at a cost that puts it well out of reach of ordinary working people. The Barbican has also been known for the lengthy strike during the mid-1960s. But what are conditions like today for workers there? I asked some electricians on the Drake and Skull shop committee.

"Well, we have about 280 sparks working at the moment. We are working a 47½ hour week, but the management want us to work extra time (Saturdays): we're refusing on grounds of health.

"Most of the job is underground, there's no daylight, lack of fresh air, it's damp in some places and dusty in others. We have much absenteeism through illness, plus the low wage rate in EETPU contracting—£2 an

hour for an electrician, £2.18 for approved electricians (less London weighting). There's also the instability in this line of work. It doesn't last that long, and has always meant you have to move around and live away. A lot of the lads on this job are from the North and Scotland because there's no work in those places.

"If you go sick, this is a JIB (Joint Industrial Board) Contracting job—there's £10 a week sick pay and if that's not bad enough, it takes about 6 weeks to actually get. Many of the men who've had time out have suffered financial hardships. We had shop collections for them.

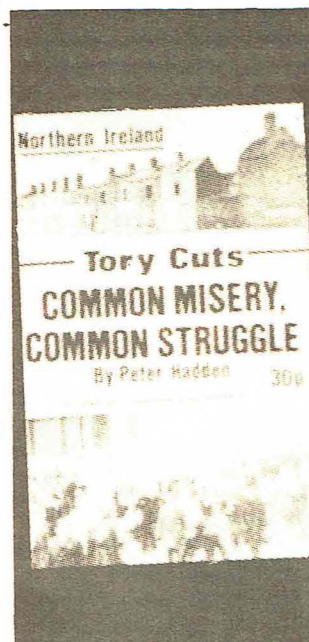
"On safety, we have a rigorous attitude to this, which has kept down hazards on the job."

Have you got much more work left?

"There was a TV programme recently which said 6 months. This is a joke! There's a year to 18 months at least, before it's completed."

'COMMON MISERY, COMMON STRUGGLE'

By Peter Hadden



Price 30p + 10p P&P [postage free with orders of more than 20]. Order from: LTUG, 18 Donegall Street, Belfast

The Labour Party
March and Rally
**NUCLEAR ARMS NO
PEACE YES**
Assemble 12 noon Belvedere Road, South Bank
Rally 3p.m. Hyde Park
Sunday 22 June

Labour Party Young Socialists

THE SUMMER CAMP IS COMING



Photo: MILITANT

The 1978 LPYS Summer Camp. This year's promises to be the biggest and best yet.

What are you and your friends doing from July 26-August 2? Join 800 other members of the Labour Party Young Socialists at the LPYS Summer Camp! The week is packed full of excellent political discussions and debates.

Tony Benn MP, and Tony Saunois (LPYS Rep on LP NEC) will be speaking on "Fight against the Tories", Frank Allaun MP and Nick Toms (LPYS Vice-Chairman) on "Socialism and World Peace". There will also be speakers from Chile, Northern Ireland and Eire.

Every day will also have several smaller seminars, so

everyone will have an opportunity to participate in the

By Kevin Ramage

[LPYS National Chairman]

discussions. Over 100 members of socialist youth organisations in other countries will be at the camp, so everyone will have the opportunity of learning about the struggle for socialism in other countries first hand.

Along with the political discussions, it's a holiday as well! Every afternoon is free for sports, horseriding, canoeing, walking in the Forest of Dean, or simply soaking up the sun (which we are told there is going to be plenty more of this summer!). Then there is a disco or club night on every night, with a bar.

Have you got a family? Bring them with you! A crèche with full-time helpers is organised every day. The kids have the best holiday of all!

London Region YS have already booked two coaches.

Other areas have booked minibuses or group tickets on trains. Don't miss out! Make sure your area books its transport now!

The cost—£35 all-in for the week (all you need is a tent)—with reduced rates for children is the cheapest holiday out. But the three Hackney YS branches are leaving nothing to chance. They've organised a sponsored walk with a target of raising £100 each to help finance members who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford to go. The camp will strengthen everyone for the fight against the Tories and for a clear socialist alternative.

Book now! Send your booking fee of £5 to Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London S.E.17.

Make every week a week of action

'YS Blitz on Schools' was the front-page headline in Chester's local paper as the Labour Party Young Socialists went into their Week of Action. It was almost as if the Tories were being warned of an enemy invasion.

Not surprising on Merseyside where the feelings of school students are overwhelmingly anti-Tory. According to the 'Liverpool Echo' only 20-30 jobs are available for this year's 8,000 school leavers.

Even the TV can no longer hide the misery facing the working class youth of Merseyside. An ITV programme last week claimed 40% of unskilled workers in the area are unemployed and likely to stay there as the government training programmes are being slashed by the Tories.

Idle factories, men tramping ten miles a day, others leaving their families 1,000 miles behind for the chance of just three weeks' work in the shipyards of Germany.

Faced with this sorry future school students are increasingly looking to the socialist alternative.

When Kirkdale LPYS members leafletted a school on Merseyside they were referred by the younger school students to one of their 11-year-old classmates. "I'm a Marxist," he said, "I'm anti-capitalist," and he applied to join the LPYS.

In East Kilbride, three school students were met on the Day of Action. Not only did they join, they immediately began to help the YS members sell papers, leaflet and distribute 'East Kilbride

Against the Tories' stickers!

The bleak future facing Scottish youth was summed up by a young worker at Newbattle LPYS's unemployment conference. A newcomer to the LPYS, he said he had been unemployed for two months and when he applied for a labourer's job with the council he was asked to give three references and state his qualifications.

To depict this situation, Scottish LPYS branches took a float on youth unemployment to the Scottish Miners' Gala. Almost 100 LPYS members were present and signed up another 25 during the day.

The LPYS meeting in Kilmarnock was a great success with ten new members attending, while in the week-long build-up to their meeting Provan YS sold 200 copies of 'Militant' and 'Socialist Youth'.

However, success was not just restricted to Scotland. Just over the border in Newcastle, a day of action recruited 15 new members for the Labour Party and the YS and such was the response, that there were queues of people to sign a petition against the Tory cuts.

The same day Birmingham recorded 220 papers sold, Ellesmere Port recruited 30 more members and Erdington YS, 20. Meanwhile, at the Wales Miners Gala, the LPYS collected £21 for the YS campaign on Chile.

As one LPYS member summing up the week of action said, "This is what we should be doing every week."

HUNG UP THATCHER

Bermondsey LPYS leafletted Southwark Park on Wednesday evening 4 June. As well as leafletting and selling Socialist Youth we took an effigy of Thatcher hung from a set of gallows.

This immediately attracted the attention of the local black and white youth. The sheer hatred expressed by young people and even 5-year-olds when they recognised Thatcher had to be seen to be believed.

Not satisfied with her being hanged they decided to finish the job off. Blows were hurled at the effigy from all sides as were numerous verbal insults. This hatred especially from 5 to 10 year olds shows the real crisis facing working people.

Heated discussions must be occurring in their houses and on their estates whenever Thatcher is seen or heard.

A number of older people, many unemployed, were just as angry and most of their comments were unprintable. Suffice it to say Thatcher would be well advised to keep out of this area.

A number of names were collected on the anti-Tory anti-cuts petition and several said they would join the YS. One young couple weren't interested until they were asked what type of education system would be available for their son in four years' time.

After a few minutes' thought they signed the petition, bought a copy of 'Socialist Youth' and said they would join the YS.

We are planning more activity in the Park to build the YS. Other branches should consider making effigies of Thatcher and a mini-

gallows for use on days of action, leafletting and paper selling. This will help to draw a crowd, and increase recruitment into the YS.

The hatred against the Tories is a class hatred and it is our job to channel that feeling by building a mass YS.

Campaigns on unemployment, taking up the question of the 35-hour week and a national minimum wage will win the youth to our banner.

By Theo Simon
[Bermondsey LPYS]

RE-ARMING THE MOVEMENT

Photo: MILITANT

Going back to school may seem a strange way to spend a sunny Saturday afternoon, but at the trade union day school held in London last weekend, no-one showed signs of regret.

"I've never heard discussion like it," commented an ASTMS and Communist Party member from South London.

A hundred trade unionists and Labour Party members gathered in the assembly hall at an East London school for a day of detailed discussion and debate, focusing on the Tory Employment Bill and the key issues facing trade unionists after a year of Thatcher's rule.

In the morning session on the "Un-Employment" Bill and the Tories' economic strategy, the sober conclusion

was that the labour movement faces the first phase of a prolonged battle, with the rights and living standards of the working class at stake.

Examining the history of trade union struggles provided numerous examples to substantiate the conclusion drawn by Militant's editor Peter Taaffe, that "what is gained by the working class in struggles cannot be written out by a stroke of the legislative pen, even in the Mother of Parliaments itself."

"A blacklegs' charter," was how Ron Brown MP, a former AUEW convenor, described the Tories' proposals. It is an attack on trade union funds, the rights of working women and picketing and solidarity action: "a recipe for out-and-out exploitation."

A G&MWU member,



Bob Wright

speaking from the floor, expressed the need—understood by growing numbers of trade unionists—to link industrial and political action. "In the work-place we must explain the specific aspects and overall consequences of the Bill—but a political attack can only be answered by a political counter-attack."

This was a constant theme.

"We have to arm and re-arm the movement," said Peter Taaffe. "to fight not only this government but the system it sprang from." Workers were growing impatient with eloquent attacks on Thatcher's government; they wanted explanations for the Tories' onslaught and a concrete programme of action.

Bob Wright, Broad Left candidate for the AUEW presidency, who opened the session, called on the trade union movement to confront the Bill as they had Heath's Industrial Relations Act. The AUEW played a major role in that fight, before the present right-wing leaders came to power.

Political stagnation and right-wing leadership were the inevitable consequences of

trying to separate the political and industrial movement, Bro Wright warned.

The main themes of the discussion were developed in smaller seminars in the afternoon. The school re-assembled to hear reports and conclude the discussion, after a day of 'education' more relevant and useful, and every bit as demanding, as most of our former class-room years.

Militant pamphlet

"The 35-hour week and the fight against unemployment"
By Brian Ingham

Price 20p

[plus 10p p&p]

from World Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

DON'T GET ILL AT NIGHT

Health conditions in North Westminster and Kilburn are amongst the worst in the country.

According to the Area Health Authority, nearly one in ten of the population have suffered TB—four times the national average.

Yet the AHA is proposing to cut back and eventually close the local hospital, St Mary's, Harrow Road.

A critical stage has been reached in the struggle to keep the hospital open. It is a large general hospital with nearly 400 beds. Over 80,000 patients, 70% from the local community, used the hospital in 1978.

Because of the cuts in spending on the health service by both Labour and Conservative governments, the AHA proposed in 1978 to cut services in the hospital and eventually to close it in 1986. During the past two years a run down on the hospital has taken place with some ward closures.

On Wednesday July 18th the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster AHA will take a final decision to close 127 'acute' beds in October. Between 90 and 100 jobs will go. The accident and emergency department will close down each night at 8.00 pm on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday. Workers can now only have accidents on a weekday between 8.00 am and 8.00pm!

But the hospital workers are fighting back, and have forced many delays in the AHA's decision.

A hospital defence committee has been set up, drawing in Paddington Labour Party, the LPYS and tenants' groups. They are now organising for a lobby of the AHA on July 18th—it is important that this is supported by the local labour movement.

A year ago a mass meeting of workers at the hospital adopted a programme to stop the cuts: (1) Refusal to co-operate in the transfer of patients, equipment or staff from threatened hospitals or wards; (2) No cover for non-replaced staff or reduced overtime.

Full support has been given at the sister hospitals, St Mary's (Praed Street) and St Charles.

However, given the possibility that the AHA will decide to go ahead with the closures, the campaign must base itself on a clear programme, and flesh be put on the ideas previously adopted.

By Ian Pollock (NUPE shop steward, St Marys) and Dave Reid (Paddington LPYS)

COMMUNIST PARTY PRESENTS ITS ALTERNATIVE

The trade unions have serious weaknesses to overcome. That was the message that Derek Robinson, former convenor of British Leyland gave 130 Edinburgh workers recently.

By Tam Burke

(Edinburgh CLP)

Addressing the first large local Communist Party meeting for several years, he spoke of how during the 1950s the unions had grown strong, daring to challenge the bosses' right to hire and fire. The unions would fight hard to defend the improvements made.

But weaknesses were apparent. Redundancy payments had meant that 'workers were prepared to sell jobs.' Derek Robinson declared "we neglect the application of theory to practice."

What then did the Communist Party propose at this meeting? In this situation it is

vital that a clear socialist alternative, rooted in Marxist theory and practice, is explained.

Derek Robinson proposed that the campaign be built around three main agitational demands:

1. The right to work.
2. Save British industry.
3. Hands off our social services.

This was linked to the Communist Party call "to build the democratic institutions of society" and "to utilise working class struggles for the return of a left socialist government committed to socialism."

Each attack on the Tories, right-wing trade union lead-

ers, and calls for socialism were greeted with enthusiasm by the audience. But serious doubts remained over the way to achieve socialism.

In the 15 minutes allotted for discussion, I asked if the CP would support the calls made by some USA car workers and their bosses for import controls. If implemented this would cause further unemployment in the European and Japanese car industry, and lead to divisions amongst workers.

I argued that nationalisation under workers' control of firms threatening lay-offs was the way to workers' unity.

Derek Robinson replied that import controls were needed to have a manufacturing basis for the economy. Even a socialist economy would not allow outside capitalists to control it.

Selective, limited import controls were needed to give us an opportunity to grow. Arguments about international solidarity don't have



Derek Robinson

Photo: Report (II)

anything to do with it.

He further evaded a question on workers' control by saying that there were many "different ideas" of what was meant by it. He accepted that "very little has been gained from participation" in BL and yet an "understanding" of the techniques of management has been gained.

The workers had been able to "project an alternative". This alternative was not explained. The meeting

closed after only 80 minutes to allow the social club bar to open.

Neither Derek Robinson nor Jock Ashton, prominent member of the CP in Scotland who also spoke, spelt out how the Communist Party programme could link the day-to-day struggles with the battle for socialism. Unfortunately we were presented with vague phrases and rousing slogans which is no real alternative.

LPYS Round-Up

Throughout the country the LPYS have engaged in a variety of ways, ranging from TV appearances, picketing Thatcher, and canvassing the estates to get across the socialist alternative to the Tories.

Swansea recruited six new members in preparation for a debate with the Young Tories. Many new names were collected by Merseyside YS members who concen-

trated on six major areas, collecting signatures for a petition calling on the council to establish day centres for the unemployed and to open up the schools and colleges during the holidays for recreational use. Hackney YS have a similar campaign, and in canvassing two estates sold almost 50 papers.

In the Northern region a Tyne-Tees TV programme was arranged where six YS members debated with

equal numbers of young Tories and young Liberals. Runcorn, in contrast, was mobilised to protest against Mrs Thatcher when she visited the town.

New branches will be aided by the new YS 'Thatcher—Not Wanted' poster which proved very popular at the Special Labour Party Conference—the LPYS National Chairman sold 200 of them. He commented that the LPYS will organise a drive for

orders from the trade union movement.

Reports are coming in of shop stewards' committees, union branches and regional unions who are taking out orders of 'Socialist Youth' for their young members and spreading the Socialist word. A T&GWU branch at Fords have asked for a regular order of 25. Both Kent and Scottish NUM have asked for bulk orders as have a T&GWU branch of busmen in Rotherham

and ASTMS shipping workers in Liverpool.

Has your union ordered copies? If not, see your local YS or write to Linda Reid, LPYS, LP Headquarters, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17, for further details.

NOLS need part-time students

At a recent meeting Newcastle North CLP unanimously passed the following motion on getting part-time students involved within the labour movement by recruiting them in the first place to the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS). The motion stated:

"This CLP condemns the blatant measures of the NOLS National Committee in setting up a 'Membership Review Group' to consider the question of part-time students.

We believe that the deci-

sion of NOLS conference 1979 was quite clear on the question. We therefore call on the NOLS NC to campaign for the following categories of students to be allowed to NOLS membership by 1 September 1980:

1. University or polytechnic research students.
2. Students on identical placement.
3. Students on day release.
4. Students on block release."

By David Maples

(Secretary, Newcastle University Labour Club)

600 AT LPYS DISCO FRIGHTENS TORIES

Hillingdon Labour Party Young Socialists, comprising of YS branches in Hayes, Ruislip and Uxbridge, are, at present, fighting a vicious attack from Hillingdon's Tory council on our basic right to organise public activities using education letting facilities [school halls, etc.] following a decision to ban us from future lettings.

This ban, based on a highly questionable claim for damages by the Tory council, disputed by the LPYS, and at present being re-examined by council officers, follows the recent series of successful

'gig and disco' evenings organised by the LPYS in this area, attended by more than 600 young people, as a part of our borough-wide 'Youth Campaign for Leisure Facilities' (see report in 'Militant' No 497, 'LPYS Round Up').

This campaign, launched at the end of last year to highlight the Tory attacks on leisure facilities, alongside health, education and social services, has become an important part of our general anti-cuts campaign which has reached several thousands of young people in the area.

Clearly that fact has not escaped the notice of the local Tories who have, in effect, banned us from public activities using council venues!

So much for their hypocritical concern for 'freedom of speech'. It would seem to

be a 'freedom' that does not extend to those who threaten their big business system. Indeed the ban on the LPYS came in the same week that two leading local Labour councillors were voted off all council committees by the Tories in a blatant attack on the whole of the Hillingdon labour movement.

We are now campaigning to reverse these arrogant and reactionary decisions. We are demanding:

- ★ Free entrance to council-run leisure facilities!
- ★ Expansion and improvement of existing facilities—no closures or run downs!
- ★ More opening of schools in evenings and holidays for the whole community to utilise.
- ★ Night-life for youth at prices young workers and students can afford!

But we recognise that these demands must be linked up with the need to fight for a socialist future to end the anarchy of the whole capitalist system.

By Mike Lee

(Uxbridge LPYS)

'Militant' Pamphlet

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

SHOULD NURSES GO ON STRIKE?

Militant NHS pamphlet, 3p Obtainable from 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

Send regular reports of your Labour Club's meetings and activities to Militant. Any Labour Club wanting a speaker from Militant, please write to: Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

LEFT and RIGHT

■ Derby Day last week was the hottest on record. For some it was also the most profitable. Not for the punters of course. Even if you backed the winner, the most you would have got was a few quid. But the bookies did all right with a new record £30 million taken in bets.

The owner of the winning horse got £166,820 prize money and can look forward to about £7 million in stud fees. The horse cost £12,000 two years ago [a 'basement price,' said the owner].

Five thousand bottles of champagne [yes, bottles not glasses] were swigged down at £23.60 a go, helping to wash down 1,500 lbs of fresh salmon.

However real life did intrude even in this idyllic picture. Tote workers were forced to protest at the sacking of one of their colleagues, who was later reinstated. You think you can avoid the class struggle?

■ The South African Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Hennie Smit, recently defended his government's decision to exclude blacks from direct involvement in plans for a new constitution.

The reason, claimed Smit, was that black people had "slower thought processes." After complaints from blacks and demands that he should resign, Mr Smit said that he had not meant to be insulting. He replaced his remarks about "slower thought processes" by "those whose assimilation of constitutional processes was slower than most of us here!"

It's difficult to see how anybody's thought processes could be slower than those of Smit and the dinosaurs in power in South Africa. Perhaps, though, one day even these apartheid gangsters will realise that the black working class and youth are "assimilating" a hell of a lot about conditions in South Africa. See page 11.

■ Whilst the Palestinians remain in their refugee camps or have their mayors facing assassination or deportation, all is not lost in their cause. King Hussein of Jordan, whose country borders Israel, came to London last week. Not to plead their cause however. He would find that a bit difficult after his repression of Palestinians in 1970. No, Hussein had not come to argue for justice. He had come for a royal nosh-up. To celebrate the 40th birthday of ex-King Constantine of Greece. He was joined in this act of majestic solidarity by King Juan Carlos of Spain and seventy guests, including Constantine's financial backer, Greek shipping magnate Leonidas Coulandris. Assembling at Harry's Bar the entourage fought their way through pasta, veal, Italian wines etc, etc. The parasites are the same throughout the world. And the sooner all the monarchies are replaced by socialist republics the better it will be for the rest of us.

■ In one of those sickening, hypocritical stunts that the Tories love so much, Mrs Thatcher was last week seen, splashed across the Tory press, playing with handicapped children at a school in Cheshire. As she posed for the cameras 'playing' with the children in a sand pit, she said, "It's a long time since I've done this." Yes, it probably is. Some people who have to look after handicapped children day after day are the nurses. As the 'Daily Mirror' [June 9] pointed out in a front page article, student nurses are so badly paid now that some are literally "suffering from malnutrition." Yet the Tories will not budge over the nurses' pay—and as part of the Tory cuts nurses must suffer even more. And hospitals and schools throughout the country are being cut back or closed down thanks to the Tories' big business policies.

FILM REVIEWS • FILM REVIEWS • FILM REVIEWS

'Norma Rae'

The campaign to unionise the American 'Deep South' is still going on.

The often violent events characteristic of the northern states in the 1930s, where organisation is now widespread, have become a feature of the south in the 1970s and '80s.

Union organisers and activists risk having their houses fire-bombed; pickets are frequently armed in self-defence; and violent intimidation is a fact of life.

North Carolina bosses boast that only 5% of workers in the state are in unions. Only seventeen out of the 135 JP Stevens cotton mills throughout Alabama, Georgia and North and South Carolina are organised—and it has taken 17 years.

Employers fear (rightly) that if JP Stevens are unionised, it will be impossible to stop the organisation of every other plant throughout the south, and end the sweatshop conditions that have survived so long.

The film, *Norma Rae* is set against this background. Norma Rae, her parents and almost everyone else in the "small, southern baptist town" work in the OP Henley cotton mill that dominates the lives of the whole community.

The unbearable noise of the clanking machinery, bringing early deafness to the workers, and the clouds of cotton dust that cause byssinosis (the textile workers' equivalent of miners' pneumoconiosis) are vividly portrayed. The characters, too, look like real workers, not glamorous movie stars.

Norma Rae herself has to be convinced by her own experiences—her father dies through company negligence—of the need to join a union. She also learns the hard way that promotion to forewoman is not the way to improve her living standards: it only loses the friendship and respect of other workers, and threatens their solidarity.

The prejudices, especially in the south, that must be overcome are all shown. The deep-rooted suspicion of trade unions is overcome by the

patient, persevering work of leafletting and discussion, despite harassment, by Reuben, the union organiser from New York.

The poison of racial prejudice is spread by the managers at the slightest excuse. Religious prejudice is still significant, but more easily overcome.

Attempts—supported by frightened union bureaucrats—to split the workers by making Norma Rae out to be a "fallen woman" because her second child is "illegitimate", also backfire.

More difficult to overcome is the attitude of Norma Rae's husband, married during the course of the film, that it is not his job to do the housework and put the children to bed while she is busy with union work.

It is unusual for the leading character in a film to be a strong working-class woman. It is equally unusual for a film to show a friendship between the two main characters, Reuben and Norma Rae, that is based on shared work, comradeship and ideas about many things, including

poetry, but not on sex.

It is definitely a film worth seeing for its many good points; but it also has many faults. It is not so much about the union struggle as the life of Norma Rae. The actual battles that took place are glossed over—how the victories were won is not explained.

The harassment of Reuben and Norma Rae in the film is nothing to what really happens. Finally, the film fails to do justice to the vital role played by the black workers in the successful organisation of the mill.

The real life "Norma Rae" in fact refused to endorse Martin Ritt's film as it was too personalised. She wanted Barbara Kopple (director of 'Harlan County, USA') to make it, and I think she was right.

Reviewed by
Vivien Seal

'Chilean September'

On 15 May the Labour Party Young Socialists branches in Cardiff organised a showing of the film 'Chilean September' to launch the LPYS 'Chilean Socialists' Defence Campaign' in Cardiff.

The film was shot only a few weeks after the coup in September 1973 and brilliantly portrays not only the brutality of Pinochet's Junta, but also the heroic resistance which the Chilean workers were capable of, even in the midst of such a regime.

At the funeral of a youth murdered by the Junta the procession becomes a demonstration against the generals.

Groups of relatives collect outside prisons and become a mass demonstration against arrests and torture.

The film shows interviews with relatives who have lost

their husbands, brothers, sons and daughters.

One youth describes how his brother was pulled out of bed, beaten and shot, then thrown in the river by a group of fascist thugs in the employ of the Junta.

Others describe the terrible ordeal of not knowing whether their relatives were alive or dead.

So vivid were the scenes of torture and violence that one Chilean comrade at the film had to leave for a few minutes because she was too upset.

Thousands of political prisoners are seen in the national stadium in Santiago. Descriptions of torture and beatings are denied by the guards, while pitiful groups of prisoners fight for a handful of cigarettes thrown by the journalists.

Allende's final speech to

the people, broadcast on the radio, is also included in the film.

As Allende thanked the people for their loyalty and support, they were simultaneously watching, helpless, as the tanks moved in.

Examples are shown of the resistance put up by workers and students. But left leaderless and unorganised to confront the military uprising of Pinochet they had no chance.

All LPYS branches should organise a meeting on Chile, using the film 'Chilean September', as it graphically portrays the events which took place.

The film is available from: 'The Other Cinema', 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7JJ.

Reviewed by Chris Burns
(LPYS NC)



Allende as the coup began

A HERO ON THE GIBBET

In issue 504, the address of William Scott to the mine owners of England in 1831 was outlined, during a review of 'Labour Disputes in the Mines', a collection of contemporary leaflets and pamphlets from the bitter struggles of the mine workers of the mid-nineteenth century.

Another pamphlet in the collection is called 'A Report of the Trials of the Pitmen'. The pamphlet graphically portrays the trial at Durham Assizes of Thomas Jobling, from Hetton Colliery, who was accused and found guilty of the murder of a magistrate, Mr Fairles of South Shields, in 1832.

Fairles was not a local man; he had been drafted into the area like the latter-day SPG, to ensure that the harshest punishment was meted out, and that 'justice' was done.

Fairles had been cornered by two miners who protested against his harshness in the courts, and they handled him somewhat roughly. Fairles had shouted that, when they

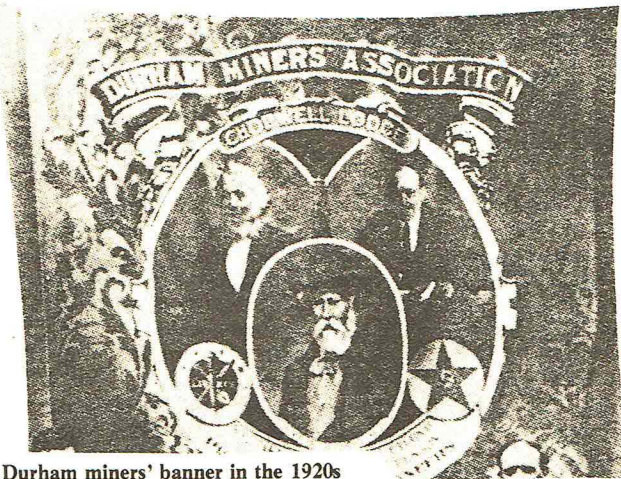
freed him, he would see that they hung for this, and the enraged miners proceeded to club him to death.

However, in his summing up, the judge made it clear that Jobling's crime was not murder. He was being sentenced to death for his part in the formation of "a combination amongst workmen", and the judge ordered that his body should be gibbeted after his hanging, so that "the sight of that will have some affect upon those who are your companions in guilt."

Nevertheless, on the day of his death Jobling is reported as having distributed leaflets, protesting his innocence and advocating the union, amongst the crowd that had gathered to watch his death.

And his body lay in the gibbet for only a short while; people were coming from miles around to see the new martyr of the miners, and the authorities were forced to remove Jobling's body.

The miners of Northumberland and Durham, fired by the deep conviction that no man should be a slave to



Durham miners' banner in the 1920s

another went on to establish their massive unions, which have remained some of the most militant in history.

The miners of the 1830s set about freeing themselves from the poverty and poor conditions of pit life, and in building their union provided a shining example to all the world of the strength brought from unity.

Meetings of some 20,000 miners were not uncommon during the great strikes of the

nineteenth century, providing the basis of democracy and strength that survives today.

Every reader of 'Militant' would benefit from reading this book, as it serves as a reminder that our movement was not granted to us from on high, but was fought for, tooth and nail, and as such must be defended with similar tenacity.

By P Etherington
(Sedgefield LPYS)

Bakers Union say - TORIES MUST BE DRIVEN OUT

Report by
Brian Ingham



Pickets at Spillers in Newcastle during the 1978 strike. The BFAWU is now known as a union which fights for its members.

A call for a united trade union and Labour Party campaign against Tory government attacks has been made by the Annual Conference of the Bakers', Food and Allied Workers' Union.

The following resolution was passed and is to be sent to the Trade Union Congress meeting this September.

"This Conference recognises the vicious attempts of the Tory government to make the workers pay for the crisis of capitalism and agrees that the TUC should give the lead to all affiliated unions and their members by mounting a campaign jointly with the Labour Party against the cuts in social spending and the anti-union legislation.

"This campaign should clearly aim to bring down the Tory government and bring to office a Labour government pledged to the socialist policies contained in Clause IV part 4 of the Labour Party constitution."

Delegates speaking after the debate were adamant that the resolution must not get lost in the compositing procedures of the TUC.

Keith Albison, 'Militant' supporter from the Manchester District, moved this motion as an amendment to an executive council resolution which had attacked the idea of "politics for politics sake."

Keith explained that the unions must be political, a view that was echoed by the delegates from Manchester, Northampton and many other areas.

The success of this resolution signifies the growing political maturity of the BFAWU which only a matter of six years ago was looked upon as a notorious company union. It is now seen as a union that strives to defend its members.

This is not easy, especially in the baking industry where the employers are ruthless. Frank Booth, ex-secretary of the Almonds factory in Manchester, recently closed by Ranks, told conference. "These employers are nothing

but gangsters. While these employers are alive Al Capone is not dead."

Terry O'Neil, the union's president, also spoke scathingly of the employers. He attacked the damaging cumulative effect which chemical additives in bread have upon bread consumers and especially on bakery workers who have to work 12-hour shifts inhaling the chemicals often when their bodies are at a very low ebb.

Terry called for an enquiry into this scandal. Indeed, this is an issue the trade union movement itself should thoroughly investigate and then lay down absolutely rigid safety guidelines.

Terry O'Neil also attacked the use of blacklisting by the baking employers. A heated debate took place on this issue with Val Dunne, women's EC representative, using the example of her own victimisation to appeal for full and active support against the blacklists and in favour of any bakery worker singled out for victimisation.

The big two had turned the screw viciously after the last strike. Mobility of labour was applied in a way that would make Michael Edwardes jealous. Delegates laid down a programme to fight this and to improve beyond recognition the National Working Agreement with the Federation and agreements with

other employers.

Conference also committed the union to a campaign to end Sunday working without loss of pay by January 1981.

But a campaign to end the super-exploitation of women workers was probably seen as the most important immediate issue. Joe Marino, the new General Secretary of the union, urged the delegates to go back and organise the members to fight for equal pay.

He said a line could be drawn in bakeries at grade D. Almost all above were men, and all below women. Half the union's members are women. This campaign for equal pay is therefore vital.

Delegate after delegate agreed it would show the union cared for the really low paid and therefore bring further members back into the union.

The union wants a simple three grade structure: skilled,

"Neither old-fashioned employers nor reactionary governments will deflect us from our aims"

semi-skilled and unskilled. They also want to abolish juvenile rates and establish completely equal pay for equal work.

Another battle facing the union is against the National Association of Master Bakers who are trying to get the government to repeal the 1954 Hours of Work Act which gives some protection to men working nights in bakeries.

Joe Marino explained how the union has achieved backing from other unions and the TUC. His call for intransigent opposition to the idea of repeal was given full support. Joe explained that the Act needed strengthening to include women, not weakening.

In this, his first conference as General Secretary, Joe expressed his confidence in the future of the union. Membership had fallen dramatically and funds contracted following the strike. Now the union was getting back into a healthy financial position and membership was almost back to pre-strike levels.

He told conference: "Sam Maddox led this union back to respectability. The employers tried to take that away from us and failed...neither old fashioned employers nor reactionary governments will deflect us from our aims."

GMWU - Translate words into action

An economy now blatantly in decline and a year of Tory rule have forced the General and Municipal Workers' Union leadership to begin to take a fighting stance on behalf of its membership.

Even the flare-up at the Isle of Grain has the recession in industry as the major factor behind it. Provoking strikes and splits in the trade union movement is the oldest trick in the book for any management bent on closure through lack of demand for its product.

The G&MWU has to stand by its members both high and low paid.

The victory at Chix for basic trade union rights as a result of resolute action by the women concerned was rapturously applauded by Congress (£685 had been collected the day before). But even there, redundancies have been put through.

Demands for prompt and more effective action against unemployment were voiced by delegates from the glass industry, chemicals, sugar

Report by Clare Doyle (GMWU)

and local authorities, amongst others. Talk of 'moderating' the effects of cut-backs are not adequate.

Whole factories like Meccano face closure and 400,000 jobs are at risk through public spending cuts. Immediate action and unity with other unions and sections of the labour movement is essential.

This was stressed by Ian Lowes, Secretary of the Merseyside Local Authority workers and an active campaigner in joint trade union and Labour Party cuts committees in his own area.

Speaking on cuts and the policy for the next Labour government, he pointed to the failings of the National Enterprise Board and of subsidies to big business to create the necessary expansion in industry and services.

£4 million of tax payers' money given to Meccano had not forced them to invest or prevented closure. Interest charges wiped out every penny in council rents and every penny of 'profit' in the nationalised industries.

Composite number 8 which Ian was speaking to, explained that: "A capitalist system cannot and will not provide services and jobs which will benefit working people and not profiteers." It called on "the next (our emphasis) Labour government" to "take into public ownership, under democratic control, the means of production, distribution, and exchange."

The Executive could not recommend opposition to this, but had exerted considerable pressure for the original Liverpool resolution to be withdrawn in favour of their Special Motion against the Tories. It should therefore have been discussed in the 'Big debate'. It was the only resolution offering an alternative to the present Tory policies and to Labour's previous policies, which, as other delegates also pointed out, had led to defeat last May.

The composite was, however, taken just after the 'Big debate' when many delegates and all the press were leaving

the conference hall! The obvious intention was for it to go through quickly without anyone understanding the full implications of it. Congress passed composite number 8 unanimously and carried on as if nothing had happened!

What this decision should mean is an immediate campaign by the Union to explain it, to mobilise support for it and to link it to mass action to defeat the Tories. It should mean that the GMWU immediately contacts the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party with its demands for all-out public ownership to be the basis of Labour's next manifesto and to be implemented by the next Labour government.

It should also mean that the GMWU delegation at the next Labour Party Conference will back any resolutions along these lines. But will it?

It is up to the members to insist that this radical alternative to the Tories and to Labour's previous policies is acted on. They should get their branch or shop stewards' committee to express their support to the Executive.

They should contact their own Executive members to ensure this and other important Congress decisions are

followed up.

Concerted action for the 35-hour week, £75 minimum wage, re-nationalisation without compensation etc, on the part of the third largest union

in Britain, would see us well on the road to achieving the quality of life for all our members envisaged by the founders of our movement.

For a fuller 'Militant' report of this year's conference send SAE to C Doyle, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

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EEC - A PATCHED UP INVALID

Last week's EEC deal has been trumpeted as a major triumph for Thatcher. It is nothing of the sort. On both Britain's contribution to the EEC budget and Common Market food policy, the Tories have backed down from previous promises.

On the budget Britain has only gone down from first to second largest contributor although it is the third poorest country. It is little more than was offered last month. And for that the Tories had to make concessions.

On farm prices there has been no reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. And contrary to past pledges, the Tories have agreed to a trade-off with France, so that food prices will go up.

The two main protagonists last week were Britain and France. Thatcher wanted a reduction in the budget, Giscard d'Estaing, a deal on farm prices, lamb and fish.

So there was a slight improvement offered to Britain on the budget, compared to that offered in Luxembourg the month before. The rebate 1980-1, went slightly up from

By Jim
Chrystie

£1.52 bn to £1.57 bn and the total payments down from £875.7m to £816.5m.

In return Britain agreed to a 5% increase in farm prices. This will put 1p in the £ on food prices, with cheese and beef going up 3p a lb, and bacon up 2p a lb.

France was also offered assistance on lamb, and New Zealand lamb will now be subject to some limit on its shipments to Britain. According to the 'Financial Times', 31 May, this is "opening the way for a future lamb mountain." Finally the battle over fishing rights around Britain's coast has been postponed.

If this patched up deal had not been agreed the alternative opening up was each government financing its own agriculture—which would have led to the disintegration of the Common Agricultural Policy and even the EEC itself.

The EEC Commissioner for Agriculture, Gundelach, commented: "If we did not reach this compromise on the British budget contribution and the farm price agreement, within two or three

weeks the barriers would have gone up and we would have had no more European Community."

The French government was already preparing to go its own way if no agreement was worked out.

Last week exposed again how futile and utopian are those who expect European unity to come through the capitalist EEC. In reality the Common Market is a collection of nationalist capitalist governments haggling over how to share out a common loot. It is a fairweather organisation, which was formed in the period of economic upswing.

Now as recession bites, the thieves fall out. Whilst they do not want to end the gang itself, they are each concerned to get a bigger share.

This agreement will only last three years. The structural problems remain and will stay, as long as this collection of capitalist states remain.

The Common Market cannot take the people of Europe forward towards a new society. It is condemned to nationalist haggles as it stumbles from one crisis to another. A socialist united Europe can only come from the working-people themselves not from this collection of capitalist states which make up the EEC.

NEW TOWNS, OLD PROBLEMS

In the early sixties, Andover in Hampshire was designated an overspill town. Under the supervision of the Greater London Council, five housing estates were built in the town.

Not long after people moved in, many of the houses were found to be defective; leaking was the main fault.

A repair programme was started, but because of cut-backs in housing expenditure, this programme has been slowed down so that it now seems that it will be going at the end of the century.

Andover also has a housing waiting list of nearly 2,000. Thanks to the cuts, all council house building will come to an end by 1981. In fact homeless people off the waiting list are already having to share council housing.

Older council housing in the Andover area is also affected by the cuts as modernisation schemes are deferred.

By Andy
Holloway

(Andover Labour
Party)

Just before this package of cuts, council tenants, including those in defective housing, were presented with steep rent increases.

These housing problems have a disastrous effect on the town. Young people move away, and industry is affected. Delays on the repair work will mean higher costs when it is finally done. In the meantime, more houses will become uninhabitable—in the end, some will end up beyond repair.

Within the last couple of weeks, the housing situation in Andover has taken a turn for the worse. Houses on a council estate less than five years old have been found to have serious defects. On some houses it is doubtful whether the outer walls will stand up

to high winds.

At the last Housing Services Committee of the Tory-controlled Test Valley council, which covers Andover, a Labour councillor attempted to get the report outlining the faults on this estate debated publicly. He was unsuccessful.

Unfortunately for the council, a copy of the report fell into the hands of the local press, who duly published the meat of it.

Labour councils must fight to keep and extend their direct labour schemes, and the Labour Party must commit itself to nationalising the construction industry. Visions of inefficiency conjured up by those who currently control the building industry do not hold water.

It was 'private enterprise' that built the estates in Andover. Tenants must be given a say in the design of council housing. In Andover it was the tenants who first spotted the defects and correctly diagnosed the reasons for them.

In housing, as in every other field, the need for socialism is becoming clearer every day.



Cuts in council services have already caused large anti-cuts demonstrations in Liverpool

Photo: MILITANT

Liberal image wears thin

300 employees of Liverpool's minor works department demonstrated outside the special meeting of Liverpool City Council on Friday 30th May. Their worst expectations were confirmed when the parties of big business, the Tories and Liberals voted that up to 600 jobs should go.

3,000 jobs went under the last Liberal administration, and their leader reported that more were to come after these drastic measures. At the meeting a decision to freeze job recruitment in all departments was taken.

An indication of future teacher redundancies was signalled by a decision to 'rationalise' schools. Not reached was an intention to transfer all maintenance and

By Terry Harrison
(Liverpool City
Councillor)

direct works to private enterprise.

With typical electoral opportunism, the Liberals kept silent on their proposals to cut services and jobs when the budget discussions took place. The main thrust of their election campaign was to criticise Labour's decisions to raise rates by 50%.

When it came to voting on the issue they demonstrated their dislike for these proposals, by only abstaining rather than voting against. Now they hide their big business links by blaming the Westminster Tories for the cuts.

Here is a Party that built its name on the basis of campaigning for getting cracked pavements fixed, bins emptied and roads swept, whilst hiding their reactionary policies nationally.

With the cuts they have made, their 'community politics' will begin to wear thin.

Labour must pose a socialist alternative, and reveal to the working class the Liberal's consistent support for the Tories' economic policies in Parliament.

The Liverpool District Labour Party, in a statement issued to demonstrators urged all local authority unions to affiliate to the recently formed joint shop stewards' committee. Urging a policy of solidarity action, to prevent management taking workers on section by section, they saw it as a base on which to build a response from all the organised labour movement.

At a JSSC meeting, the following day, the unions began to lay the foundations for such solidarity action. The Labour Party has invited any trade union to meet with them to discuss policies, tactics, and receive briefings on any crucial issues. The fightback has begun.

LOSS UPON LOSS

It's not just jobs the bosses destroy when they swing the redundancy axe, as a Corby worker told Stanton NUB convenor, Jim Killeavy.

In happier days, he bought his house for £12,500. On hearing of the plans to close the works, he put it up for sale. Soon the rest of the houses on his street were for sale too. His price has been forced down to £3,500, and still no takers!

His redundancy pay is £7,000, so if he does manage to sell, his net loss will be at least £2,000. If workers like him move around to look for

work, where can they live?

Already, if you walk around some Corby estates you get an eerie feeling. Whole blocks of houses are boarded up. Graffiti covers the walls.

Every now and then a remaining front door shows a single inhabited home. It's like the old terrace waiting for demolition in the cities—except these are the sort of houses families in clearance areas would be moving to.

Perhaps that's what the Tourist Board has in mind when it suggests Corby could attract tourism—High Noon

in Corby ghost town! Not really a very attractive prospect, and how many jobs would you get?

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NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS

FIGHT REPRESSION AND TORTURE

At the present time the worst conditions in any prison in any advanced capitalist industrial country exist in Northern Ireland.

In Armagh women's prison, it has been reported, women prisoners have been beaten up by male warders, and locked up 23 hours a day and are denied proper sanitary and medical facilities. They have also been forced to use their cells as

toilets.

In H-Block in Long Kesh prison, male prisoners, because they refused to wear prison uniforms and do prison work are locked up 24 hours a day wearing only a blanket, in a cell with

only a damp mattress.

They are denied reading and writing materials and are subject to body searches including probing of the anus. On top of this up to 300 prisoners live in cells surrounded by their own excreta.

One cleric after a visit compared the conditions to living in the sewers of Calcutta. No prisoners should be forced to endure such conditions.

We are implacably opposed to the programme and methods of terrorism. But the labour movement is equally opposed to the techniques of repression and torture

in the prisons in Northern Ireland.

These may well be perfected and possibly used against the labour and trade union movement in Britain and Ireland in the future. It is a fundamental responsibility of the labour movement to oppose this oppression and fight for decent conditions for these and all prisoners.

The Labour Committee on Prison Conditions in Northern Ireland demands the following and pledges itself to fight in the labour movement to achieve these demands:

★ For the right of all

'Militant' [23 May] pointed out the horrifying conditions in the H Blocks and in other prisons in Northern Ireland.

As we stressed, the labour movement in Britain and Ireland can not ignore the use of repressive measures in Northern Ireland; measures which could be used at a later stage against the labour movement itself.

The demands in this resolution have been formulated by the Labour Committee on Prison Conditions in Northern Ireland. They have the support of a number of Labour MPs. The demands should be taken up in all sections of the labour movement.

Prisoners exercised in Long Kesh



prisoners to wear their own clothes.

★ For full access to newspapers, TV, books and writing materials and no restrictions on letters.

★ For a minimum of two unsupervised visits and two food parcels per week

★ For the right to negotiate choice of work, training and educational facilities.

★ For the trade union rates of pay and right to trade union membership.

★ For the right of all prisoners to elect their own representatives to negotiate on their behalf.

In addition we stand

for the labour movement to oppose all forms of repression in Northern Ireland, specifically to campaign for the repeal of all repressive legislation, the scrapping of the non-jury Diplock courts and the closure of the special police interrogation centres.

As part of its campaign the Labour Committee on Prison Conditions in Northern Ireland intends to visit Northern Ireland and seek admission to H-Blocks, Armagh and other prisons and direct access to the prisoners.

Visit to Long Kesh

For the wives and children, the mothers, fathers, relatives and girlfriends of prisoners held in Long Kesh prison camp visiting day on Easter Sunday begins at an early hour.

This is particularly true if they have to travel from as far away as Derry.

In order to be at the main picking-up points for the bus which will take them on the 90-mile journey—the 'Kesh' is situated nine miles outside of Belfast in the pleasant countryside of Co. Down—most of

the relatives will be up and about from 6 am.

Getting the children and babies ready takes up most of the time for the young mothers whose husbands have asked for 'young Damien' or 'Maria' to be brought in for a visit.

After a breakfast, eaten without any real appetite on a

day like this, last minute checks will be made to make sure that the visitor has ID (identification), the pass that gets you in; the food parcel (if you have a relative who is allowed to receive it); the letter; and a supply of cigarettes.

From 7.20 am onwards doors bang shut behind the relatives in Shantallow as they make their way to the shops from where the bus leaves. There, those making the visit exchange greetings with one another. Young mothers make sure the children have enough chocolate and sweets for the trip. Morning papers are bought.

The bus arrives at 7.35 am. The man from the provisional Sinn Fein collects the tickets, £2.50 return, as the relatives board the bus. At precisely 7.45 am the bus leaves Shantallow. It winds its way through Derry to the Creggan

Estate. Those travelling to Crumlin Road and Armagh are transferred to another bus.

After last-minute checks, the bus for the Kesh leaves Creggan for Blandywell, where a few more relatives are picked up. From the Blandywell the bus goes direct to the Kesh via the M2 motorway.

The journey is uneventful on this occasion. There have been many instances when the army or the RUC have held up buses at road checks, subjecting the relatives to questioning and consequently considerable delay. As the bus gradually draws near to the Kesh the tone of conversation between the passengers becomes distinctly tense. The worry and anticipation about the condition of a prisoner shows on the faces of his relatives.

We arrive at the car park outside the prison at 10.30

am. The ordeal and the humiliation for the relatives begins here. The relatives queue up outside of a turn-stile, on the other side stands a prison warden. The turn-stile is controlled by an electronic button which he operates. A few feet from him stands another warden with an Alsatian dog. No! The scene is not reminiscent of Anfield or White Hart Lane of a Saturday. This place is an institution of a capitalist state whose intent is to brutalise and demoralise the inmates.

Behind the wire

As we stood in the queue with the sun warming our backs, I glanced around at the 'scenery'. The turn-stiles were built into expensively made steel fences forty foot high. Large floodlights and

barbed wire were positioned all along the fence. Cameras were fitted at strategic points. To escape from this place would have meant serious problems for Houdini.

After waiting for over 40 minutes, the only consolation being the warm sunshine, we were eventually allowed through. A few feet from the turn-stile is the main reception area. As you enter you queue up alongside of an opening behind which sit three wardens.

The person to whom the pass is made out hands it over. The names on the pass are checked and proof of identity has to be shown. A woman in front of me—the sister of a prisoner—did not have any identity with her. She told the warden that she had been visiting the Kesh for three years and had never been asked to produce it. "Well you are today, Missis," said the warden. As a result she was not allowed to visit her brother!

I produced my ID, as did the person with me, whose brother we were visiting. From the reception opening you take a seat—women on one side and men on the other—and wait for your name to be called.



Aerial view of Long Kesh Prison

As we sat waiting for the next stage of the process I glanced around at the other visitors and at the surroundings. Most of the men and women were talking about the young woman who had been denied a visit to her brother. Everybody whispered, there was a general air of uneasiness.

Those who smoked did so at an alarming rate. Nerves were at stretching point for most people. The wardens stood around the room talking amongst themselves, but carefully watching us all.

On the wall was pinned a large notice: "Easter: all conforming prisoners will be allowed an extra parcel containing 50 cigarettes or 2½ oz of tobacco; 2½ lbs of chocolate (five ½lb bars—for those who can't add up). Signed, the Governor."

A woman's name was called and she disappeared through an opening into a small room to be searched. My name was called and I found myself in a room with two wardens. "Do you have any objection to being searched?" What a stupid question: to say "Yes" means no visit! "No," I replied. "Turn out your pockets!" rapped the warden. My ID, comb, biro, bits of paper, etc., plus an extra packet of cigarettes and a box of matches were all deposited into an envelope. I was allowed to take one opened packet of cigarettes—and my money!—inside with me.

Searches

After being searched you then pass into another room. From here names are called out from the passes which have been given to the wardens. You leave the room and then board a van. You are now on the inside of the Kesh. The side windows of the van are frosted glass, so all you can see is what lies ahead through the driver's window.

The van proceeds down a wide road, navigating the "ramps" which are placed every 15 yards. So they have

Letter from an H-Block prisoner

[Excerpt from letter first printed in 'Militant', 23 May]

I'm sorry I haven't written to you sooner, but it is only recently that I have been able to get a pen smuggled in. Due to the 'mirror search' and 'strip searches', it is very difficult to even smuggle a letter of this size out. (This letter, 420 words, was written on a piece of toilet paper measuring 4½ inches by 2½ ins.)

I am sure you have heard of the infamous mirror search! The only reason for this type of search is to humiliate and degrade the men to such a degree as to break their morale. Along with the mirror search comes the beatings. This is also a policy which is carried out by the wardens to break our morale. The beatings

usually take place during a wing move, going and coming from visits, and also going and coming from Mass.

We are locked up 24 hours a day, and receive no exercise whatsoever.

As for the food, it is usually cold and uneatable. Also the wardens make sure you get only what you need to keep you alive. The food we don't eat is thrown into the corner of the cell to rot, eventually it becomes infected with death-white maggots and other insects.

The floor is our dining table and toilet. Also the walls and cells are covered with human excreta. Our

only possessions are three torn rags as blankets and a three-inch-thick piece of foam as a mattress. During a cell-search [which are quite frequent] the wardens throw the urine from the pots around the bedding and tear the blankets.

As you can see, the conditions are very bad. Cardinal O'Fiach once compared them to the sewer dwellings of Calcutta. Where else in the world would you find men between 18-21 years of age going bald, having heart attacks and suffering from nervous disorders which they will probably have for the rest of their lives?

Their conclusion was that, on their understanding and knowledge, a socialist planned economy was far superior to that of the anarchy of capitalism.

One thing is clear from this. These prisoners have maintained their morale and sanity—in terrible conditions—by organising themselves in a whole number of ways. It is a clear example of the triumph of human spirit over adverse surroundings. Without the aid of socialist material, the prisoners are not only educating themselves but are also examining the policies and programme of their own organisation in the light of the struggle to date.

They are adamant that their present form of protest will continue. But over 90% of them are prepared to engage in a hunger strike if they feel that these demands are not realisable in the near future.

Labour movement and prisoners

Before I left this young prisoner I outlined to him—in response to his questioning—the role of the 'Militant' and the 'Militant Irish Monthly'. I informed him of our policies and the work we had done in the labour and trade union movement in Britain and Ireland on the question of repression and the plight of prisoners. I informed him that we will continue to speak out in a clear way against the treatment to these prisoners, and that we are stepping up our efforts inside the movement to get the trade union leaders to act on the question. He said the prisoners would be heartened to know all this.

The visit I made into the Kesh left a deep impression on me. I came away convinced that the Marxists in Britain and Ireland have to speak out with increasing energy about the situation that exists at present in the Kesh and in Armagh.

contemplated an attempt at a breakout! All that I can see is—apart from the road—on the left hand side a wall of concrete about 50 foot high. From the outside it looks like a huge battery-farm building. The van stops at an opening; words are exchanged and the driver moves forward.

We climb out of the van and are marshalled into another room. At no time do the relatives see any part of the infamous H-Blocks 3, 4 and 5 where the 'blanket' protesters are 'housed'. We are in this room only a short time. Nobody talks except to ask for a light. The cigarettes have to be kept going—you get no matches from the wardens. Myself and my mate have concealed some loose matches so we are able to keep the cigs alight. You have to do this, not only for your reasons but in order to make sure that the prisoner you are visiting can have a smoke, and that's the main thing.

My mate's name is called and the two of us are directed to "an open booth". "He'll be up shortly," says the warden. The open booth is in a room containing similar booths. It consists of a table with a partition underneath, thus preventing any attempt at an intimate holding of hands between man and wife, mother and son, but also to prevent the passing of a note or a piece of chocolate. The wardens in the room have a clear view of all the prisoners

and their relatives.

The visit for a "non-conforming" prisoner, i.e. those on the "no wash" blanket protest, lasts a miserable half-an-hour. It's now 11.30 am, no sign yet of my mate's brother. At last, at 11.45 am, a tall bearded man appears. Actually, he's only 21 years old—but he looks twice that age. He greets his brother with a two-handed grasp and speaks in his native tongue.

He shakes my hand and smiles. "How are you?" he says. I'm reticent at first. Where do you begin? "How's life treating you, Comrade?" It all sounds so inappropriate. His hands were very cold. He is a tall man, six foot and more. His beard is very long, so too is his hair, down past his shoulders. Whilst he's talking to his brother I try to take in his appearance. He wears glasses, and one of the frames is held together with sticky plaster. His face is very gaunt, his eyes deep-set but very alert.

This young man was sentenced to four years for 'membership' of the Provos and for possession of arms. He was just 18 years old at the time. He has been on the blanket protest for over three years. Like the other 380, mostly Republican prisoners, he is confined to his cell for nearly 24 hours a day. They are deprived of any aids to mental stimulation such as reading material, news-

papers, books, television, radio, games, hobbies and writing material.

He turns to me—he puffs with some effort on his cigarette—and jokes about the uniform he's wearing, a grey jacket, striped shirt and trousers. He explains, rather apologetically, that they only wear this once a month in order to get their visit.

And what a price they pay for this! He explains that on the morning of the visit they are taken from their cell, forcibly scrubbed in cold water and generally cleaned up—lice removed from their hair etc. They are then subjected to the barbaric "mirror search". As the prisoners refuse to co-operate in this foul and disgusting practice, they are beaten by the wardens who open their legs and examine their anal passage for hidden notes, etc. Many a prisoner is suspended upside down whilst this search is conducted.

Political discussions

Despite this treatment, prisoners still manage to smuggle letters out, written on tiny pieces of toilet paper! After a visit they are again subjected to this treatment. He then describes in answer to my question—the 'life' inside.

There are fifty men on his wing—two to a cell. The person in the cell with him is doing life for murder. "He didn't do it, and that's a fact!" Another example he tells me is the case of a suspect being convicted in a non-jury court solely on the basis of "police evidence".

I asked him how they passed their time. In the initial stages of the blanket protest, most of the prisoners took part in physical exercises walking up and down the cell, doing press-ups etc. As the food quality began to deteriorate, they did not have the energy to maintain these exercises. Their main priority then was to preserve their sanity.

He and his cell mate discuss a lot—from politics to poetry. All the prisoners take part in political debates, "talent competitions"—delivering orations, reciting poetry, singing Irish songs, etc. How do they communicate with the other prisoners? They tap on heating pipes and shout from cell to cell.

In answer to my questions about the type of political debates they have, he informed me during that very week they had a debate on 'Marxism v capitalism'. One prisoner led off the debate by positioning himself by the cell door; the other prisoners do likewise when speaking. The debate lasted over three nights, three hours each night!

OIL CRISIS

Last week John Pickard recounted how imperialism and the oil companies had dominated the Middle East. In this week's concluding article, he first shows how that position has weakened vis-à-vis the oil-producing countries in recent years and argues what policies socialists in Britain and internationally should advocate to resolve the energy crisis.

Events are now catching up with the oil companies. OPEC was itself set up by the main producing states as a counterweight to the Seven Sisters. Beginning with the nationalisations in Iraq and Algeria in 1971 (including 'participation' or partial nationalisation) the big companies have begun to lose their grip on production.

That is not to say that the Seven Sisters have been broken. Far from it—they still control refining, transportation, distribution and so on, especially in the advanced capitalist countries. They still have immense power. But their loss of direct control means that they can no longer dictate the levels of production or the prices of crude as they did in the past.

Today the big seven control only about 30% of the capitalist world's oil product-

ion and even less of OPEC production. The companies job as 'middleman' is even being whittled away. Nationalisation and direct government to government sales have cut down the companies intermediary role to around 55% of all sales.

Some of the producing countries, moreover, are planning their own state controlled refining and petrochemical ventures in the future. The increasing power of the oil-producing states in relation to the Seven Sisters is the parallel to the weakening of imperialism in its diplomatic and military position, especially as far as the OPEC states are concerned.

But what policies should socialists advance in regard to the oil issue? What means are there available to tackle the enormous oil companies?

How, in Britain, can the oil become a benefit to the workers?

North Sea Oil was advanced as a panacea for almost all Britain's economic ills throughout the 1970s. Today, the real picture is somewhat different. While Britain has reached the equivalent of oil-self sufficiency, the economy is in a worse state than ever. The tax benefits to the state from production are small (below 13% of total revenue) even before grants and gifts are given to the companies for research and investment.

The vast bulk of North Sea Oil profits are repatriated abroad. Even the boost given to the balance of payments has been wiped out by the decline of manufactured exports and the increased imports. Ironically, the high value of the pound—due to the oil—has itself contributed significantly to industrial decay in the last two or three years.

It is clear that socialist policies cannot tinker with the oil companies. Their political power cannot be overestimated.

Each of the big companies (as well as most of the smaller so-called 'independents') boasts an army of account-

ants, lawyers, planners and propagandists and lobbyists, whose job it is to hide their dealings away from the prying eyes of workers, civil servants and governments. The companies house their headquarters in the most luxurious skyscrapers, complete with giant computers, world-wide radio link-ups and so on.

They control huge fleets of tankers and know where each one is at any one time, its cargo, its origin and destination. When the Arab oil states tried to carry out an embargo on oil for Holland and the USA in 1973, the oil companies merely arranged a few cargo swaps, a few tankers would alter course... and the embargo had no effect at all.

Similarly, the oil companies have conspired to keep oil flowing to South Africa and Rhodesia, despite sanctions.

To imagine that these companies would enter into voluntary "planning agreements" that even in the slightest way threatened their interests is absurd. It is equally nonsensical to pretend that parliamentary controls could make a decisive impact. Pitting a few civil servants against the power of the oil companies is like sending a flea to fight a herd of elephants.

Workers' Control

Complete public control and planning can only be achieved by means of a state take-over of all the oil companies' assets, and it is clear that this could only be possible if it were done with the active support of the workers in the oil industry, both blue and white collar workers.

Workers' control and management is not simply a slogan—it is the only basis on which a workers' government could take over the big monopolies like the oil companies. During the Portuguese revolution in 1974, it was the bank workers inspecting the books and vetting all transactions who discovered that money was being misappropriated and used by reactionary elements, and they successfully demanded the nationalisation of the banks.

In Iran, the workers in the banks were the main force

behind the nationalisations of their own companies, and the oil workers used their power to stop the production and bring down the government of the Shah.

Mobilising the power of the workers in the oil and related industries would be the means whereby a socialist government could break the power of the companies.

But if the issue of state ownership raises the question of workers' control and management, it must also raise the issue of workers' internationalism with equal force. The common interests of the labour movement in the different countries is nowhere more clearly shown than in the case of the large multinational oil companies. Links between the trade unions of various countries where there are oil industries, leading to solidarity actions are an indispensable weapon in the struggle for socialist policies in the energy industry.

A proper method of planning energy production would be possible on the basis of socialism. Integration and harmonisation of all the various energy industries would be possible if these were all brought into public ownership and run democratically. The so-called energy crisis would be a minor problem if resources and research were planned rationally, that is, for social use rather than for profit.

The exact extent of recoverable oil reserves in the world are not clearly known—partly because of the secrecy shrouding the oil companies own test and exploratory drillings—but taking fossil fuels altogether, there are the equivalent of hundreds of years of energy supplies available.

The world's proven reserves at the moment amount to about 700bn barrels—enough to guarantee oil to the end of the century. Some estimates put the likely reserves (ie. including what has yet to be discovered) at up to 2,000 or even 11,000bn barrels. Shale oil reserves contain an estimated 350bn barrels of oil; tar sands an estimated 400bn barrels.

Then again, the rate of oil extraction (that is the proportion of oil extracted compared to what is left in the ground and unrecoverable) could be improved in most extraction plants by the installation of

better equipment. The oil companies have not concerned themselves in the past over any likely oil shortages so that they have generally installed only the cheapest equipment for the quickest profit.

Alternative Energy

For the same reason, many oil production wells simply burn off the natural gas that is always associated with oil, simply because they have not installed the necessary plant to liquefy and store the gas.

All these sources of fossil fuels are available, but it is highly unlikely that they will be tapped as long as the energy industry wallows in its present chaos. Higher oil prices have made previously 'uneconomic' (ie. unprofitable) extraction processes more 'economic', but the investment required to exploit shales and tar sands is astronomical, and way above what the capitalist countries would even consider.

For every 100,000 barrels a day extracted from tar sands, for example, it would need about \$4,000 in investment—and then again, there would be massive pollution problems.

But environmental and other factors will inevitably mean a search for renewable energy, from solar, geothermal, tidal, wind and so on. At the present time these potential sources are at a relatively primitive stage of development, but that is only because of the scarcity of research and development funds available. The same is true with nuclear fusion, possibly a safer and potentially more efficient energy source than nuclear fission which is the basis of all present (plutonium-producing fast breeder) nuclear programmes.

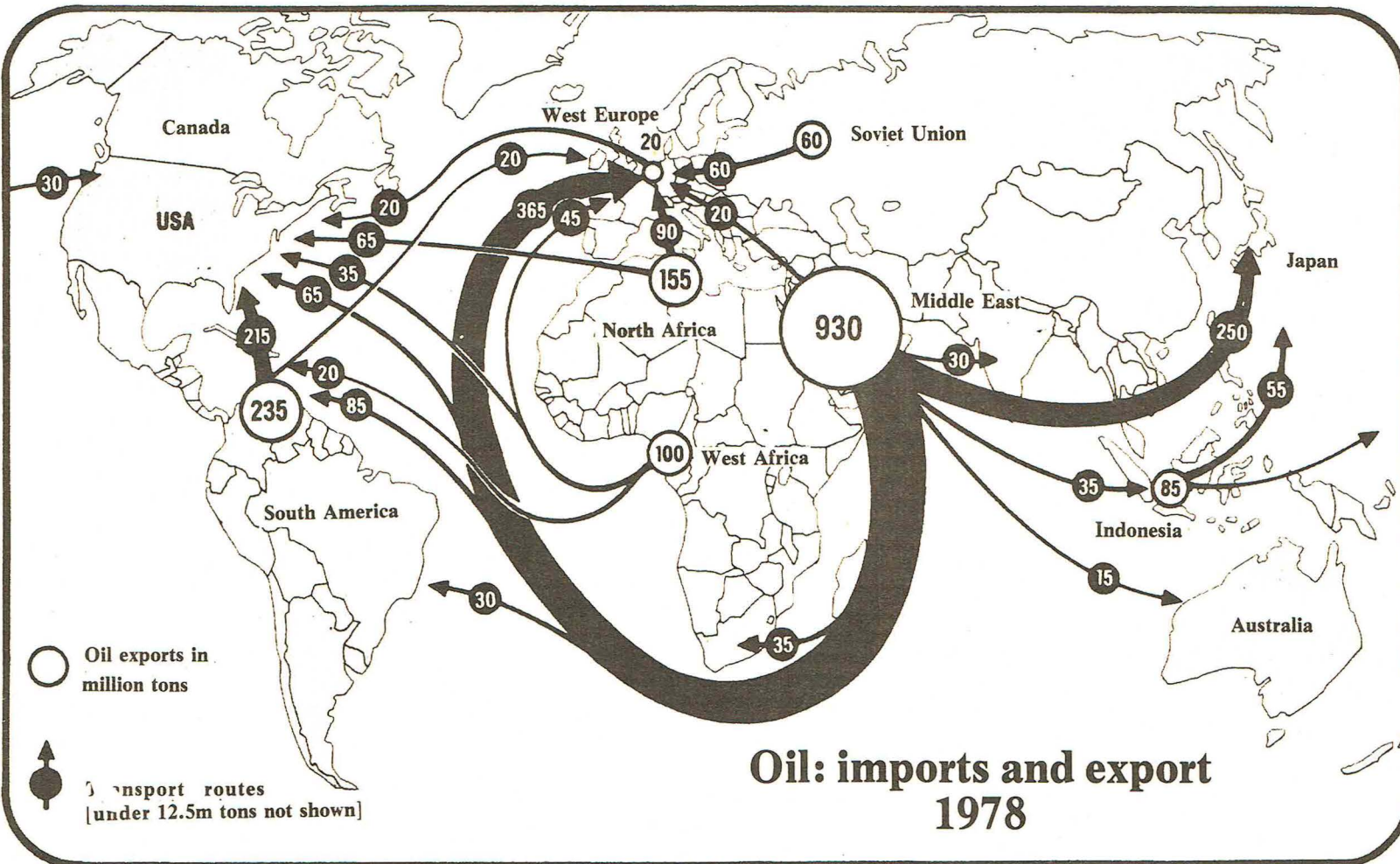
Then again, enormous savings could be made in the improved construction of power stations and their inter-linking with industry and domestic users—at present, coal and oil-fired power station turn only about 25% of their energy into electricity while the rest is simply wasted.

When one considers the really vast sums of money that are involved in the oil industry, including the huge expenditure on exploration and development, the vast profits and so on, then all the research and development on these possible alternatives looks like a drop in the bucket.

Chaos or Planning

A socialist society in which energy research, production and consumption were planned and organised rationally would very easily overcome the problems that today seem unsurmountable: indeed, for capitalism they are unsurmountable.

As in relation to many other things, capitalism will only mean chaos: oil and energy shortages and further upheavals. The historical justification for socialism lies in the fact that it is the only form of society that can advance science, technology and industry, and through these, advance mankind.



Oil: imports and export 1978

THEY ALL GANGED UP AGAINST NEW YORK WORKERS

The strike by New York transport workers in April exposed the links between government, the courts, big business and the leadership of the trade unions. In this look back at the strike, Betty Traun, shows how these links operate.

On the eighth day of the strike of the Transport Workers' Union in New York City in April, a New York State Supreme Court Justice levied fines of one million dollars against the union, and threatened harsher fines on a daily basis if John Lawe, President of Local (branch) 100 did not order the workers back to work. Branch 100 is composed of all underground and bus workers of New York City.

This decision rested on the Taylor Law, a punitive New York State law which forbids strikes by public sector employees, and empowers the authorities not only to levy heavy fines against the union, but also to deduct two days' pay for every day that a public sector worker strikes.

In the face of 18% inflation, 33,600 transit workers were seeking a 30% wage increase for a new 21-month contract, to recover wages lost due to inflation. Management, however, had refused to budge from its scant wage offer of 6% increase a year.

Four years previously, the transit workers had gone without a pay increase in order to help the city through its financial crisis. Now the city had to face its responsibility to these workers and their families by coming up with a decent contract. Instead, Mayor Koch, racist and anti-union, made explosive headlines with an anti-union blitz against the transit workers.

They were depicted as greedy people who did not care about their fellow citizens who would be unable to get to work because of their strike, and who would be the direct cause of the inevitable hike in fares if wages were increased.

The demands of the transit strikers were considered particularly significant because the eventual contract would set a standard for more than 235,000 other New York municipal workers whose contracts expire June 30th.

Mayor Koch was therefore refusing to consider any increase at all for the transit workers, stating that the city had no money to give.

The main beneficiaries of the transit system in this great city are big business, the banks, and real estate interests. Buses and subways (underground) bring in 85% of the people who work in the central business district of Manhattan from 60th Street down to the southern tip of Manhattan, including Wall Street, an area where at least half of New York City's jobs are located.

But the main beneficiaries get off the hook when it comes to paying for these vital services which enrich them. It is the taxpayers who are burdened to ensure their maximum corporate profits. State and local taxes per person in New York City last year were 54% higher than the national average. The corporate share of federal taxes in 1957 was 45%; in 1977 this had declined to 34%.

In 1934, real estate taxes provided 84.2% of the city's general revenues; in 1969 it was only 29%. The corporate owners the skyscraper buildings pay very low rates for

their buildings and this is fine with Mayor Koch as an inducement to them to stay in New York City.

Landlords' taxes forgotten

The lawyers of the Landlords' Association have advised its members to pay only the interest on their defaulted taxes, asserting that the city would eventually "forgive" these taxes rather than have abandoned buildings. The city does not press for these taxes in arrears. And this leaves the taxpayer to pay ever higher fares for the transit system, as it does in England.

As the transit system shut down tight, Mayor Koch sought to drive a wedge between the citizenry and the striking workers. He made it his business to come out early in the morning to stand at the Brooklyn end of the Brooklyn Bridge across which thousands of Brooklynites streamed on foot and on bicycles to get to work on the Manhattan side, and delivered his harangue against the strikers.

The media, as usual, called for the strict application of the Taylor Law as a means of

bringing the strikers to heel by fining them two days' pay for every day they struck. David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank interjected himself into the dispute, advising the city not to accede to the workers' demands.

Supporting Rockefeller, the Economic Development Council of New York, a big business outfit including Exxon Oil, American Tel. and Tel., Mobil Oil, Citibank, Chemical Bank, Con Edison Electrical, General Electric, and International Business Machines, echoed his sentiments. Thus the transit workers were able to clearly see the tie-up of government and big business.

Threat to fine workers

With the threat of more drastic fines to be levied on the union and the workers, through the courts, the strike was suddenly ended, illegally, by the union's President Lawe, after 11 days. He had declared a secret vote of the executive committee, which resulted in a tie vote of 22-22 as ending the strike, in violation of the union's constitution, and the militant rank and file hauled him to court. The judge promptly dismissed the case, and the workers received an excellent lesson on the fairness of the capitalist judiciary system towards workers.

This will be the last term of office for President Lawe. On May 7th, the 'New York Times' let the cat out of the bag, exposing the collusion between Lawe and management which began even before the strike took place.

A pre-strike plan had been worked out with Mr Ravitch, head of management, that a 6% raise would be offered which was sure to be rejected, and then a 7% final settlement would be made. Management and union bargainers then agreed to hide the fact that they had worked out a final settlement beforehand.

Instead, the proposals were to be presented to the workers as "fact-finders' recommendations" so that it would appear to the union's executive board and union members that the proposal came from neutral mediators. Even the information package mailed to union members voting on the settlement referred to the pact as "the recommendations of the fact-finding board."



Enthusiasm of transport workers when strike was declared

AUSTRIA towards a new Sweden?

Austria is normally regarded as one of the 'strong' economies of Europe, but even there this crisis in the bosses' system is beginning to have an effect.

Just as in Sweden, the other proclaimed 'Social-Democratic model', class tensions could grow.

Growth for the Gross National Product this year is estimated to be about 2%—substantially down on recent years. Unemployment is likely to rise to 2.4%, ending the dream of many Socialist Party leaders of "permanent full employment".

The figure is only kept this low by expelling foreign "guest workers". In the future this safety valve will not be available.

Until now the trade unions and employers have met with the employers and government to agree on economic guidelines. But now the employers are saying there can be no rises in real wages.

The developing crisis in the capitalist system will undoubtedly force the trade unions to take in independent stance in the next few years. Likewise in the Socialist Party (SPÖ), which has a clear majority in parliament, discontent will undoubtedly grow with the "consensus" politics of the leadership.

When Austrian workers begin to move into action, they will quickly look, as the Socialist Party Youth (SJÖ) have done towards the traditions of the Austrian labour movement—of the struggle against fascism in the 1930s, and especially towards its origins in Marxism.

The task before the left in Austria—and especially the SJÖ—will be to draw up a clear socialist programme, based on the nationalisation of all the big industrial monopolies under workers' control and management. A programme which falls short of this will not be capable of establishing a socialist plan of production, and will therefore leave the working class at the mercy of the crisis in the capitalist system.

By Kevin Ramage
(LPYS National
Committee Chairman)

S. African school students demand equality

In last week's 'Militant', Linda Berger gave an account of the struggle Coloured, African and Indian school students are waging against apartheid education. In the article below she explains the background to the current battle for decent education and a fair society.

The struggle of the youth is explained by the conditions that they face. In 1970, 2.2 million black youth (39%) could not attend school at all; only 179,000 (5.2%) could stay for more than eight years. Even these lucky one face miserable conditions. As one parent stated "Windows remain broken, there is no electricity and children are maltreated by the teachers."

When one high school in a coloured township in Johannesburg was opened there was

no writing equipment and the principal had to "borrow" teachers from the other schools!

These are some of the demands that youth have raised in the struggle:

—Equal government spending per child regardless of race. (Government spending on education per white child is ten times higher than per African child and three times higher than per coloured child.)

—Shortage of teachers to be made up. (The pupil-teacher ratio in African schools is 50:1, in coloured schools 30:1 and in white schools 20:1.)

—Equal pay for teachers regardless of race. (An African teacher is paid 57% of the salary of a white teacher, and a coloured teacher 75%.)

—Shortage of textbooks to be made up. (Unlike white pupils who get books free, black pupils are expected to pay "voluntarily" but as one pupil says "If you don't pay they force you to leave".)

—No police in the schools. (Many principals call in the police to solve "disciplinary

problems".)

—No dismissal of teachers who support pupils' grievances. (Many teachers who sympathised with the youth were dismissed or transferred to rural towns.)

—The right to form students' representative councils. (This demand was conceded.)

—A complete ban on corporal punishment.

—No victimisation of dissatisfied pupils.

—A universal education system. (Under the present racist system, only 2.2% of African teachers are qualified and 3.7% of coloured teachers, compared with 95% of white teachers. No need to ask why the number of examination failures in coloured high schools is on the increase!)

But apartheid education does not exist because of some individual's whim. It arises from capitalism's strategy of dividing the working-class and giving the vast majority, the minimum necessary education for future employment. The struggle for decent education thus confronts the whole strategy of capitalist

apartheid.

And the battle is thus against the state itself. If these struggles are to be victorious the black workers and students of South Africa will require a Marxist party, to draw the individual struggles together, and fight for a new society, free from all oppression.

Militant International pamphlet 'India: the gathering storm'

By Roger Silverman
Price 60p
(plus 15p p&p)
from World Books
1 Mentmore Terrace
London E8 3PN



**VIEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:**

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Steelworkers 'Chucked out like dogs'

Dear Sir

I am a single man aged 52 years, who commenced employment as a steelworker at Port Talbot in 1952. The first two years were spent in the labour pool, which meant that my services were allocated to whichever department were short in manpower.

During this period I was temporarily employed in the electrical stores and owing to my aptitude for the work and my record as a regular worker, I became fully employed in the stores department. Myself and three colleagues in my department hold invalidity cards; I have poor eyesight, the other three for injuries caused at work.

We have been told our services are no longer required, or as we put it, "chucked out like dogs"—what chance of employment do we have? I feel bitter because the work that I am

engaged in will eventually be taken on by contractual labour, in the form of industrial cleaners.

I have given 28 years' service to the steel industry, and yet I shall not be eligible for pension rights because I am three years too young. Personnel with far less service than I will qualify because they will be leaving aged 55 years or more—where is the justice in that?

To date I have not been notified of what my severance pay will amount to, but whatever the sum is, how long will it last with my only source of income coming from the dole?

Yours sincerely
Sid Morgan
Blosse Street
Nantyffyllon

Poor old bankers

Dear Comrades

The other day a bank spokesman was lamenting on Radio 4 that there was little profit to be made from low paid weekly wage earners.

Apparently few of them are using the facilities of the big banks, and our hero felt that they should be encouraged to have their money paid fortnightly or monthly through the banks (a method which is in use in other European countries, where a worker is seldom paid in cash each week).

What a pity we had no spokesman there to point out that many of those European workers enjoy higher wages than we do (e.g. £100 minimum wage in Munich)—and that the miserable wages paid to our workers could well be the reason that they are unable to use banking facilities.

One thing we do have in common with European workers, is that we have no control over how the banks spend their profits. If the banks were nationalised, and profits used for the benefit of workers, living standards would rise to the extent that there would be no need for bankers to worry that workers could not afford to use them!

Forward to the planned economy and an end to trying to find a way to make profits out of the poorest sections of society!

Fraternally
A comrade from
Huntingdon, Cambs

What 40-hour week?

Dear Comrades

As a member of the TGWU and a Labour Party 'Militant' supporter, I would like to stress the conditions I, and I am sure many other people, experience at work.

After working in a supermarket where the conditions, especially the wages, are abysmal, I appeared to have found something better when I was engaged as a weighbridge clerk at a sand and gravel quarry. Alas! How wrong I was proved to be.

The hours that I and the men on the plant endure (theirs are longer!) are anti-social—we work from

Tin god dictators

Dear Comrades

To quote Tony Benn, "Bankers, landowners and multinational companies can control government—and their whole philosophy, and those of the civil service, is in line with the monetarist ideal which is in power."

"We live in a society dominated by the idea that what is profitable is good and what is unprofitable is bad."

At a leading brand name factory in my town I heard of two cases of social injustice; a girl who walked out on her autocratic and ignorant employer, was unable to take her case to an Industrial Tribunal, because she had not completed the statutory 12 months' employment.

There was also an employee who was made a manager, but the firm said this was not promotion, rather 'job re-designation.' The employee has since resigned.

The case of the secretary and the manager are just two of several pieces of mismanagement I have come across within this system of profit, more profit and greater 'market share.'

In the philosophy of the monetarist, multinational capitalist system, where profit is the only objective in the minds of management, industrial relations mean next to nothing; employees are seen as no more than pawns on a chess board.

Social injustices must be wiped out. Who are the tin gods behind these injustices—those who act with Victorian autocracy and live in the belief that they are doing their employees a favour by employing them?

Class divisions—one set of conditions for them and one set for the rest of us.

We must demand socialist policies: a 35-hour week, £80 minimum wage, a job for all and a right to work. We must unite in this our goal and make it our number one objective. Jobs and security, not sell-outs, must be our aim. Who wouldn't rather be a mole than a rat!

'Mole' Biles
Brentwood, Essex

seven in the morning till six at night with just half an hour lunch break, as well as Saturday morning.

We are understaffed, but rather than employ some more people, the management would rather the men work an extra hour on Friday night and come in on Sunday, which would make it seven days at work with no time off in lieu.

At the next union meeting our shop steward intends to propose a shorter working week, although some workers are afraid that this would mean a loss of wages.

No doubt there are other readers suffering similar conditions at their workplace.

Fraternally
Lyndon Barnes
Horsbury CLP

Students must fight

Dear Comrades

I write here for all students trying to pursue an education under the ruthless Tory government.

For the past two years I have been a full-time student at a college in Nottinghamshire.

Because I chose a course not available in my home area, for my first year I spent about four hours a day travelling on buses—something which of course hampered my studies.

This year I have been 'lucky' and got a discretionary award to get lodgings near to college.

My grant works out at just over £20 a week from which I must pay a rent of £13.50 a week, buy food, clothes, and (because of the cuts) buy paper, books and

equipment for college.

Today with so few jobs available to school leavers, they see further education as a way off the dole queue, and the means to get better qualifications, which will, so they are promised by the Tories, get them a better job.

Nottinghamshire has a 'wonderful' County Council with 'great' education priorities! This band of misguided Tories have cut everything in sight. Their latest 'innovation' has been to decide to discontinue 'O' and 'A' Levels in Colleges of Further Education as from September this year.

Now, only sixth form colleges and schools' sixth forms, of which there are only about five or six in Nottinghamshire, can run 'O' and 'A' Level courses.

The capability of those establishments to provide an education with necessary equipment and facilities can certainly be questioned.

Croydon, who are anxious to introduce sixth-form colleges, looked at a college in Nottinghamshire and, as reported in the 'Nottingham News', found "all around was ample evidence of how the quality of education can suffer if reorganisation is done on the cheap."

According to the college principal £100,000 is needed to 'bring us up to date...' Well of course the money won't be provided, not by the Tories anyway.

All students and prospective students must not give up! I know we're supposed to starve on our grants, sit in draughty buildings with text books fifteen years out of date, and see all our lecturers being sacked one by one.

We must fight—fight the cuts, press for socialism and the end of capitalist oppressors. It must be the only way forward for a better education and future.

Fraternally
Tracy Matsell
Beeston CLP

Bring home the truth

Dear Sir

Having read the recent trash in our press criticising the TUC's Day of Action on May 14th, it really does made me wonder how much of the 'news' spread about by these papers is true.

Of course, the papers have a right to express their opinions; that is the whole point of having a free press in a 'democracy.'

But when the vast majority of the public read distorted stories wangled in the favour of the Tories, I can't help but feel that they are being 'indoctrinated'. This gives the government a somewhat distinct advantage.

It's up to your paper and others like it to lead the way and bring the truth home.

We're faced with a downright evil bunch who are hell-bent on inflicting various nasty measures on the working class and our coloured community. They have got to be stopped before too much damage is done.

Yours faithfully
Stuart Corvie
Cheshire

NOLS— Glasgow investigation

Dear Comrades

Following the allegations of forged membership cards at Glasgow University to increase the delegation to last year's NOLS Conference, as reported in 'Militant' (see letter, issue 494) the Labour Club were presented with the report of the Club Committee investigating this on 16 May.

The committee, including the officers alleged to have forged membership cards, failed to consider the report of the two officers making the original allegations, even though this had been referred to them. The report was so inadequate that the Club Chairman was compelled to move its rejection.

The meeting was further informed that prospective members were given free membership which was confirmed by one member present at this meeting. Members of the Liberal and Communist Parties were encouraged to join to artificially increase membership.

The attempted whitewash by the Club Committee on these serious allegations raises doubts about whether the ruling 'Clause 4' leadership in the Club, and NOLS, are capable of conducting a thorough investigation. We believe that the Labour Party's NEC sub-committee must investigate the running of the Club as soon as possible to ensure that the next NOLS Conference gives a true picture of NOLS.

If 'Clause 4' are guilty of forgery and artificially increasing the membership of the Club, how can we be confident that other clubs have not similarly inflated their memberships to ensure a 'Clause 4' majority on NOLS?

These events appear to be the logical outcome of the numerous constitutional amendments proposed by the 'Clause 4' group over the past five years. It is very difficult for new clubs to affiliate, particularly in FE and Tech Colleges, but very easy and profitable to build a paper membership in large universities, thereby increasing the size of delegations to Conference whilst giving a false impression of the actual active membership.

Fraternally
Lewis Matheson and
Dougie Miller
Glasgow ULC

Air for sale

Dear Comrades

I'm told Jack London once said that if the capitalists could put air in cans and sell it, they'd make a profit out of that.

I've recently started driving a car and when my tyres needed some air, I naively assumed that any garage I went to would have an air pump. So far as I remember, they used to.

But I had to visit several before I could find one.

I wonder if Jack London will soon be proved right and we will have to pay for air, since more and more garage owners won't shell out for this piece of equipment unless they can make money out of it.

Fraternally
Tony Cross
Nottingham

Build **M**ilitant

Area	Received	Percentage of half-year's target achieved	Target half-year	Target for year
Eastern	1,630		2,250	5,000
East Midlands	1,387		1,710	3,800
Hants & IOW	1,225		1,755	3,900
Humberside	579		1,125	2,500
London East	2,387		2,790	6,200
London West	1,600		2,115	4,700
London South	2,330		1,800	4,000
Manchester & Lancs	1,058		2,295	5,100
Merseyside	1,948		2,700	6,000
Northern	2,036		3,285	7,300
Scotland East	900		1,440	3,200
Scotland West	1,471		2,250	5,000
Southern	1,840		2,655	5,900
South West	927		1,440	3,200
Wales East	469		1,260	2,800
Wales West	609		1,395	3,100
West Midlands	3,037		4,050	9,000
Yorkshire	1,819		3,285	7,300
Others	6,194		5,400	12,000
Total received	33,446		45,000	100,000

TARGET FOR JULY 12th £45,000 TARGET FOR YEAR-£100,000

CASH AGAINST THATCHER

Under the title 'How Mrs Thatcher could win the unions' support', the General Secretary of APEX made clear in last week's Sunday Times how he sees the future. "Britain requires a consensus in industry of the type that our major competitors abroad enjoy" [like where, exactly? The US? Europe? Korea?].

Further on he declared, "The CBI and the TUC have a number of similar policy aims at present which should be identified and pursued in the national interest..."

He called for lower interest rates, selective import controls, restrictions on foreign investment in Britain, lower VAT, and the government to pay for apprentices to train. He seems to suppose these would be in the long-term interests of APEX members and workers generally, and that he could more justifiably oppose 'high wage settlements' if these ideas were taken up jointly by the TUC and CBI.

But the whole argument

By Steve Cawley

depends on Thatcher and Co. being merely incompetent rather than caught in a dilemma. If interest rates were lowered and foreign investment restricted there would be a 1972/73 style boom with investment in property, art, etc. instead of manufacturing and an increase in cheap imports.

But import controls themselves would lead to a tariff war. The employers also want money from North Sea oil to go 'into industry' and not into either a reduction in taxes or to financing more government expenditure.

'Militant', however, does need money from our readers, not only to explain and develop these arguments, but also to point out the socialist alternative—work sharing without loss of pay in the case of a fall in output, and demands for the nationalisation under workers' control and management of the major firms (which would entail a state monopoly of foreign trade).

As we're not putting forward appeals to the CBI, we need to have supporters in the unions and the Labour Party who enable us to take advantage of the freedom of the press. Donations from delegates to NUPE, Bakers' and Metal Mechanics' conferences came to nearly £90 this week, together with even more 'day's pay for May 14th', including Anon (Sef-ton) on maternity leave!

£24 TV fees (split with their Labour Parties) came

THIS WEEK:

£1,232



Wolverhampton printworkers [and others] take an interest in one recent issue. Photo: Militant

from two London comrades, while £20.30 came from Redruth, and £3.20 from Banff. In between, geographically speaking, we've had £5 from a Militant well-wisher in Bognor Regis, £12 from a meeting in Gosport, nearly £70 from Oxford, including £10 from members of COHSE 643 Branch, £1 each from Mrs P Kennedy and P Purdy (W London).

Keith and Liza Hollins' shillings per week saved over a month (any comrade in your area making a commitment which mounts up like this?) and £2.30 came in from M Prendiville (Stechford LP) and £1 from C Brooks, Wigan.

Continuing up the East Coast, Humberside supporters gave a big push to their line on our chart, with over

£90, including a donation from D Martin (T&GWU steward, Hull). And there's more on the way! From the North East came £40 after expenses from the Militant meeting at Regional LP conference, and individual amounts like that from T Bartle (USDAW).

Scotland is finishing strongly—with a tanner from an NUM member (Bilston Glen), £20.45 pon-toon cards (Edinburgh), and help from Glasgow readers D McLean, T and M McEwan, and H Meiklejohn. A Paisley reader collected £12.10 on his Militant collector's card last week! Any advance on that from north or south of the border?

If you want Marxism to win the unions' support, copy these examples!

Classified

ACCOMMODATION Any comrade in London area going away on holiday 21-28 June and wishing to raise money for fighting fund by letting their house/flat please contact John Dunn (Clay Cross) 0246 863688

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1-19 55p each;
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RANK AND FILE MOBILISING COMMITTEE Pamphlet 'Mobilise for Labour Democracy'. 20p per copy. Order from: John Lansman, 10 Park Drive, London N.W.11.

Now available on cassette! Speeches from the 1980 LPYS Conference Rallies. Peter Taaffe, 'Workers of the World Unite' £2.00 (inc. p&p), Ted Grant, 'The Crisis of Capitalism and the Socialist Revolution' £2.00 (inc. p&p). Every LPYS branch should have these useful aids in the political education of comrades! Cheques etc. with orders to World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

MILITANT MARXIST WEEKEND SCHOOL

June 27th-29th

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Introduction to Marxism Speakers: John Pickard and Brian Beekingham.

Marxism and the Trade Unions Speakers: Brian Ingham and Bob Faulkes.

The Life of Trotsky Speaker: Ted Grant

China: History and Perspectives Speakers: Peter Taaffe and Lynn Walsh.

Marxist Economics Speakers: Brian Beekingham and Rob Jones.

PLUS:

Debate: The Lessons of Chile 1970-73. Speakers: Lynn Walsh (Militant) Mike Gatehouse (Communist Party).

FILM: The Battle for Chile

At: Goldsmith's College Students Union, Lewisham Way, London SE14.

Cost: £3.00 whole weekend, £1.50 Saturday or Sunday only, £1.00 Friday evening only. Half price School Students and Unemployed. (Cheques payable to 'Militant').

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Essential to all CLPs and union organisations in the debate on Labour Party democracy. Price only 2p



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ads

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

Fightback for Women's Rights: second conference. To decide policy and plans for action against the Tory attacks on women's rights. Delegates from all labour and women's movement bodies and campaigns, and individuals welcome. Saturday June 21st, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham, 11 am to 5. creche, pooled fare. Details from 41 Ellington Street, London N7. Tel. 01-607-9052.

Roger and Ann Bannister of Boole Labour Party are proud to announce the birth of Natalie Rosa a Fazackerley Hospital, Liverpool on 3rd June. Our thanks to the staff. Full support to the nurses. Smash Thatcher's 14%.

TRADE UNION CONFERENCES

FTAT

The furniture industry is in its worst crisis ever.

Over the past year thousands of redundancies have been announced, with many small and some large firms going to the wall. 50% of the industry is already on some form of short-time working: in one factory as little as one day a week, with most of the others on 3 or 4 days.

It is against this background that the fifth biennial conference of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union assembles this week.

The present crisis in the industry has been worsened by the disastrous policies of the Tory government. Higher interest rates have resulted in a slump in sales of lounge furniture, kitchen units and bedroom furniture, mostly bought on hire purchase agreements or by bank loans.

Coupled with this is the government's criminal cut-back in house building, a crime in itself when 1 million

families are homeless.

The result is that firms making roofing beams, floor boards, window frames and doors have had to make up to 50% of their work-force, redundant, leaving the rest on short-time working.

Resolutions before conference include calls for a crash house-building programme [185], 'an end to public spending cuts in favour of a programme of useful public works' (180), as well as one in ten resolutions calling for a 35-hour week.

After two years of battles with the employers over pay negotiations it is no surprise to see the number of resolutions covering wages and pay.

Amongst the call for shorter hours, longer holidays and earlier retirement are three resolutions asking for greater participation by the general membership. This has been a cause of resentment and unrest in the past, when union negotiators have accepted unfavourable offers.

By Gary Wareing
(FTAT and delegate
to conference)

Other resolutions of interest are 196 (Glasgow), calling for the "return of a Labour government dedicated to socialist policies," resolution 199, from Grangemouth, asking the TUC to look into ways of setting up a national daily newspaper for the labour movement.

However, a number of branches have sided with the bosses in blaming the workers of other countries for the present troubles by moving resolutions demanding curbs on imports. Some firms have even given their employees a day off with pay and transport to marches and demonstrations against foreign imports.

These branches have totally ignored the real reason for the crisis. The failure of the bosses to re-invest in industry is now taking effect. Superprofits made in the industry have never been put back; now the bosses are taking what they've got and running out.

COHSE

Over 200 hospitals closing or being cut back, kidney units being shut down, wards undermanned.

That is the extent of the crisis facing the health service after just over one year of Tory government.

Cut-backs in the NHS not only mean death and suffering on longer waiting lists, but massive redundancies for our members. 50,000 jobs have been lost in the health service over the last 3-4 years. 20,000 jobs are expected to go in London alone over the next five years.

This year's annual conference of COHSE must be committed to fighting these cuts.

We have seen the heroic struggles by workers, occupying hospitals only to have them smashed up by the police. This is the only answer to union action for a government committed to destroying the NHS.

National action must be taken to stop the rot in the NHS. We have a duty not just to ourselves but to the rest of the community.

As one of the lowest paid sections of workers, hospital staff are burdened with a sense of 'moral duty'. Care of patients is our primary thought before industrial action is taken. This concern is totally lacking within the

government.

Thatcher, along with her capitalist bloodsuckers, has only one moral: profit.

Unemployment is another burning issue. An estimated 15,000 nurses are on the dole. Doctors are now even on unemployment benefit.

This was unheard of a few years ago. Whole new layers of jobs, traditionally regarded as safe, are being affected by the mad monetarist policies of Thatcher and Joseph.

And we must support the fight for democracy and socialist policies in the Labour Party too—it must not be forgotten cuts went ahead under the Callaghan government.

This conference must finish with one demand on the lips of delegates: health before money, jobs before profit.

COHSE has not had a history of militancy but in the coming months and years we must of necessity take more determined action.

Only by democratic control of the union and fighting socialist policies can health service workers survive.

- ★ Reverse the cuts.
- ★ 35-hour week without loss of pay.
- ★ £80 minimum wage.

By John Nicholson
(Margate COHSE
branch secretary)



COHSE members have been at the forefront in defence of the NHS against Tory cut-backs

Photo: IFL

S.WALES NUM

By Anthony Tynan
(South Wales NUM)

At a specially convened conference of the South Wales miners last week, Lodge delegates voted unanimously not to participate in any future review meetings with the National Coal Board unless the threat to close the Lewis Merthyr/Tymawr Combine (see Militant 505) is withdrawn.

Delegates also agreed to mount a mass campaign against colliery closures, and members of the South Wales Area NUM Executive Council will visit every colliery in South Wales to explain the issue.

This action is because of the February decision of the rank and file, when they opposed the Executive Council's recommendation to take industrial action on the question of import controls and steel closures.

Mr Emlyn Williams, President of the South Wales Miners, said, "In February we were talking about the

unknown; this time we shall present every miner with the authentic facts about the planned pit closures, and the job losses."

Mr Williams added that since the February decision he had toured the South Wales coalfield and "the response has been magnificent, and what we want from the mass membership is a mandate to say we have an army, for this time we're going to do it properly."

The issue will be taken up at the National NUM Conference at Eastbourne in July, through the National President of the NUM.

Mr Joe Gormley, after meeting the South Wales leaders the day before the special conference, said, "I am not allowing any pit to be closed in Britain just because the coal board say they cannot sell coking coal to the steel industry."

Mr Emlyn Williams said if we accept Mr Gormley's

words, "We can expect 100% support from the union nationally." He emphasised the need to get the full backing of the South Wales miners.

"We shall get the troops behind us, and go to the National Coal Board with a full mandate...If we have not a mass following of the men in relation to the closure, then going to the conference will be a waste of time."

Mr Idris Jones, Secretary of Tymawr Lodge, said, "This is basically what Tymawr/Lewis Merthyr were looking for. As far as our pit is concerned, I'm sure we can win our fight."

"We are after all, the lowest loser. But it's no victory for us if we win at the expense of five other pits. If we stand united, we can win the fight for the coalfield."

By a 'Militant'
Reporter

UCATT

In spite of the efforts of the full-time paid officials who make up UCATT's executive, last week's conference in Bournemouth voted for a 50% pay rise and for reform of the Labour Party along democratic lines.

The UCATT executive, clearly out of touch with the grass roots of the union, attempted to keep power in its own hands. Jim Callaghan, visiting the conference, told right-wing chairman Danny Crawford, a former Labour NEC member, "If I had 28 more like you on the NEC, I could sleep at night."

In the wages debate they attempted to throw out all the resolutions on technical grounds, thus leaving itself with no mandate. Conference saw through this, however, and voted overwhelmingly in favour of a dramatic improvement in wages and con-

ditions, against the advice of general secretary Les Wood.

From the floor, particularly from the London and Yorkshire regions, came demands for more say in the union decisions, and for a fighting stance against the employers.

London in particular was ready to take on the big contractors.

The building workers are hammered from all sides: slashed public spending reduces workload while backward employers still operate a "hire and fire" system. Then there is the cowboy labour which does a bad job, and the lumpers, paid cash in hand with no thought to safety or a fair deal for the worker.

But the message which emerged from the conference, albeit a subdued one, was that the fight with the employers is up to the regions and site stewards. General

Secretary Les Wood saw his task as merely "persuading employers" to do the "right thing".

On the Labour Party, UCATT members voted for reform of the way the Party is run.

Behind the scenes, however, the UCATT executive is still saying that the voting decisions of UCATT, with 200,000 votes, will be up to the delegation to LP conference.

UCATT delegates were definite in their approach, demanding a 35-hour week, a 50% pay rise, a pensions scheme and guaranteed sick pay scheme. But they should have no faith in the executive and should demand a more democratic voice in the running of their own union.

EIS

In Glasgow at the weekend, the AGM of the EIS took steps forward in building a stronger teachers' union in Scotland.

Against the background of a continuing fight for a decent wage increase, conference was faced with the problem of fighting the Tories' attacks, low wages and bad conditions and trade union organisation.

During our dispute, teachers have begun to go for the very first time to involve themselves in leafletting, petitions, lobbies, pickets and of means to strengthening our fight—only recently have teachers taken to forming picket lines outside schools.

And at the AGM, the debate on picketing was one of the most heated. One of the lessons of our selective strike is that only a minority of teachers have been involved in activity, and consequently only a few have seen, let alone

experienced, picket lines.

During the debate the old right wing guard was reduced to arguing: "Do you expect us to stop going into school when the local milkman sets up a picket line at the gate?"

The issue of a closed shop was also discussed, and the idea only defeated by 50 votes in a conference of about 500 delegates.

Conference agreed to join any STUC campaign against the Tories' Employment Bill, a decision that will mean many EIS members joining in activity with many other sections of the movement.

While many sections of the membership have recently been moving into activity, the leadership has recoiled at the ability of the members not only to win support for their action, but also to use unofficial action to pressure the leadership.

As a result of this, the

TROUBLE AT MILL

The BBC studios at Pebble Mill in Birmingham is an unlikely place to see a picket line. However, the action of the BBC in sacking one-third of its musicians has forced Musician's Union members to take industrial action.

The BBC is planning to axe 5 orchestras, one of which is the Midland Radio Orchestra. This will mean even less live music and more records and tapes.

Members of the MU from all over Birmingham have

been turning up to show their solidarity with BBC staff, helping on the picket line.

The response from delivery drivers has been magnificent—BBC management will be having to go out for fish and chips at this rate.

Even the gin and tonic lorry was turned round. The GPO workers have stopped delivering mail until the dispute is over.

ABS members are refusing to do any recording work, but unfortunately although most

of them are sympathetic they are still crossing the picket line.

The intransigent attitude of BBC management inevitably means the action will have to be stepped up. Other broadcasting unions must give practical help to the MU.

The MU Strike Communique ends on an optimistic note "If we can stop all music at the BBC the strike could end in weeks. On the other hand, if we can stop all beer going into all BBC clubs unconditional surrender would undoubtedly follow within 24 hours."

Simon Heather and
Liz Stanger [Selly Oak LP]
talked to MU pickets

CPSA - DEFEND UNION RIGHTS

Three members of the Civil and Public Services Association are being dismissed by management. Their 'crime'? They are left-wing activists and management, in the coming onslaught of cut-backs, no doubt want to demoralise the union by victimising its local leaders.

Philip Cordell has been singled out after taking part in three separate incidents.

He joined a lobby of the union National Executive Committee during the 1979 pay campaign. He allowed his name to be placed in an Anti-Nazi League advert, which appeared in a local paper. Finally, he took part in a demonstration against the Corrie Bill.

All of these things were done with the full consent of members of his local union

branch, the Brixton Department of Employment branch.

Now, months later, he has been suspended and told he is to be dismissed on 13 June.

He is to be closely followed by the other two. Recently Phil attended our branch executive meeting to explain his case. We plan to give him the fullest possible support.

CPSA has called for a national day of action on 13 June and his case will be taken to an industrial tribunal.

We have no great confidence in this tribunal as we know the Department of Employment are not forced to abide by its decision.

However, we realise that given the facts and proper leadership, members will support the union and defend the rights of trade unionists against management's attacks.

By Colin Eley
(CPSA DHSS Newcastle Central Office)

SUPPORT THE BUSMEN

On Saturday 7 June, Rotherham busmen were forced into strike action.

This followed a string of broken promises dating back to last October, concerning a 50-yard stretch of road!

This road is full of potholes and therefore unsafe for passengers. Already buses have been involved in many accidents on this stretch, but luckily no serious harm has come to passengers—yet.

The T&GWU branch have been demanding resurfacing of the road since last October, repeatedly appealing to management and the council, but the Authority have continually put back the date for resurfacing.

The management then came up with the ludicrous suggestion that the buses travel this stretch of road at a walking pace! The union branch came up with a more sensible idea of a 50-yard diversion.

But last Friday (the day before the diversion was to go into operation) management

informed shop stewards that no diversion was acceptable—any driver who used it would be clocked off. On the Saturday, at 5.30 am, a chief inspector waited at the diversion point, and when the first three drivers took the diversion, they were clocked off. A mass meeting was immediately called and indefinite industrial action was agreed.

The members were at first confused by management's stubbornness over the diversion—they lost nothing by it. But the feeling is that they are trying to weaken the union in preparation for the coming wage negotiations.

But the drivers are solidly behind the stewards and support has come from Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster busmen, who are refusing to go into the Rotherham area.

Gary Hawes spoke to two T&G members on Rotherham buses

TANDY'S

As Tandy's warehouse strike enters its third week, the picket line is large and confident.

At a mass meeting last week a strike committee was elected and the young 'Militants' were thanked for their help!

American style management at Tandy's has defeated other attempts to unionise over the past five years—workers have been instantly sacked for sitting in a boss's chair and for being on sick leave.

The police have been playing their usual role; a lorry driver who supported the strikers was forced to cross the picket line by a policewoman. And the SPG have also put in an appearance to provoke the pickets.

Now the strikers and their union, the T&G, have successfully stopped all deliveries so that 12 full containers are stored at a depot costing Tandy's £2,000 a day.

Tandy's already have stocks for two to three months and deliveries are still getting to the shops. The strikers are now planning to picket Tandy shops and to raise money with collections at local factories and in the labour movement.

Black all Tandy's goods. Send offers of support and donations to J A Jones, District Organiser ACTSS-TGWU, 33 Berry Street, Willenhall, nr Wolverhampton.

By Alison McGarry
(Handsworth LP)

MFI - LIVING IN THE 1800's

The dispute at MFI Stratford in London's East End continues into its fourth week with picket lines intact and morale good.

Potential buyers to the store continue to be turned away and the ban on supplies from the Bedford depot stays firm. Management are worried and have started talks, but the mood has hardened and reinstatement of eleven sacked trade unionists is being demanded.

On the picket lines, the full story of working for MFI has been emerging—for instance how would you like to be followed round all day by closed circuit TV?—Stop moving and you are called in for a ticking off.

Promotion at MFI depends on you doing the higher job for six months on the same pay, says Kevin Baker, one of the sacked warehousemen. Even the warehouse forman was just told he was the foreman, but paid no more.

The salesmen's only inter-

est, it appears is to make sales. Complaints, of which there seems to be a fair number, are left to the responsibility of the warehousemen, who actually handle the goods.

Not that the managers like complains, even though there are so many of them—they commonly use the warehousemen as go-betweens between them and the customer in the event of a complaint.

Particularly infuriating is the company's policy that workers should stay at their posts while a single customer remains in the shop—often till well past 8pm on certain days of the week, yet if the employee is a minute late the next day he gets a telling off—"there is always a manager with nothing better to do."

"I was once threatened with the sack for turning up at 9.20am having worked till 6.25 the previous night" said Kevin Baker.

On the picket line, reinforced by Labour Party and



On the picket line at MFI, Stratford

LPYS members, morale is high, despite management harassment. On the day the dispute started, for instance, when the ten warehousemen voted to come out and support Gary Cook, who had been dismissed for joining the union, the management asked the police to arrest someone who left in the only clothes he had—the MFI overalls—they tried to claim he was stealing them. The

policeman laughed.

This sums up the attitude of the MFI management from the bottom up. They are anti-union and interested only in their profits—as the placards say outside the Stratford store say, "MFI are living in the 19th century."

Picket MFI stores and support the picket line, black MFI goods. Send support to F Higgs, TGWU, 43 West Ham Lane, Stratford E15 or picket line.

Shand Kydd

The fight for jobs at Shand Kydd goes on.

This week workers at the wallpaper factory held a public meeting in Christchurch attended by 40 people, with representatives of the local AUEW, NUPE, NGA and NAAAW unions present.

The meeting was held after a campaign organised by some workers at Shand Kydd, with Dorset LPYS branches. Thousands of signatures for a petition have been collected during the campaign.

Wives of Shand Kydd workers, friends and local people realise the devastation that will be caused by 450 jobs being chopped. And this by a company that is part of the multinational 'Reed' Group which announced enormous

profits last year.

The meeting was opened by Andy Rosser of Poole LPYS who told workers there that he was not there to preach, but to offer advice and help in the fight to save Shand Kydd.

He pointed out very forcefully that lost jobs now meant no jobs in the future. The youth would have fewer and fewer jobs to scramble after and would be condemned to a life of misery and frustration on the dole.

David Lovett, member of the NGA in Shand Kydd, said if the firm was making a loss it was not due to the workforce: there had never been any industrial action.

"The only conclusions we can draw is that the factory

has had a chronic lack of investment and has been totally mismanaged."

Workers have drawn up alternative schemes for the factory. But the management's aim is to make Reed International more profitable through streamlining its wallpaper group.

Peter Jarvis, of the NGA, spoke clearly on the overall policy of the Tories and their capitalist backers. Explaining the failure of their monetarist policies, he said the only way to overcome mismanagement was to have nationalisation along with workers' control and management.

The mood of the meeting was one of disgust at management: but the response to this was many suggestions for

running the factory, putting evidence that workers could run it ten times more efficiently.

£30 was raised for Shand Kydd's fighting fund which will be put to leafletting and organising more meetings.

By Robin Phillips
(NAAAW and Poole LPYS)

Double talk at Knight's?

Management at Knight's Printers, Birmingham, must be challenging BBC's 'Not the 9 O'clock News' for double talk. They sacked 14 NGA members, sent them their P45s, and then sent them a letter stating that they would be made redundant, when they returned to work!

The workers came out as part of the national NGA wage claim battle, and were promptly locked out. As they approach their seventh week they are still locked out.

Significantly, the chairman of this firm, Clifford Laurence, is treasurer of the British Printing Industries Federation [BPIF]. As one NGA member commented, Knight's was founded in 1860 and management's attitude has not changed since.

And at the beginning of the dispute, if appeared the chairman must be a fast typist because after refusing to talk and slamming the door in the chapel members' faces, he came straight down the stairs and gave them their dismissal letters.

The management have pleaded poverty, yet six of them drive around in £41,000's worth of cars which would give the 25 production workers on the site a £1,500 a year rise.

NGA members at Knight's spoke to Brian Debus [Erdington LP] and Alun Evans [Selly Oak LP]

Meccano, the fight goes on

It is now six months since the Meccano management gave its workforce just 30 minutes' notice and announced that the factory was to close.

But the workers were not prepared to stand for the closure and the loss of another 940 jobs on Merseyside. They immediately occupied the factory for three months before legalised bully boys, supported by the

police, evicted them.

But this was not the end and they have been manning a picket line outside the factory for the last three months.

Despite the picket and due to the lack of official backing, scab labour has been able to gain access to the factory. These scabs are protected by the police, who will do anything possible to aid these lower than low

animals.

The Meccano workers appeal for support and will be grateful if anyone can strengthen the picket line or give financial support.

Messages of support and donations to: the Meccano Fighting Fund, GMWU Office, Edge Lane, Liverpool 7.

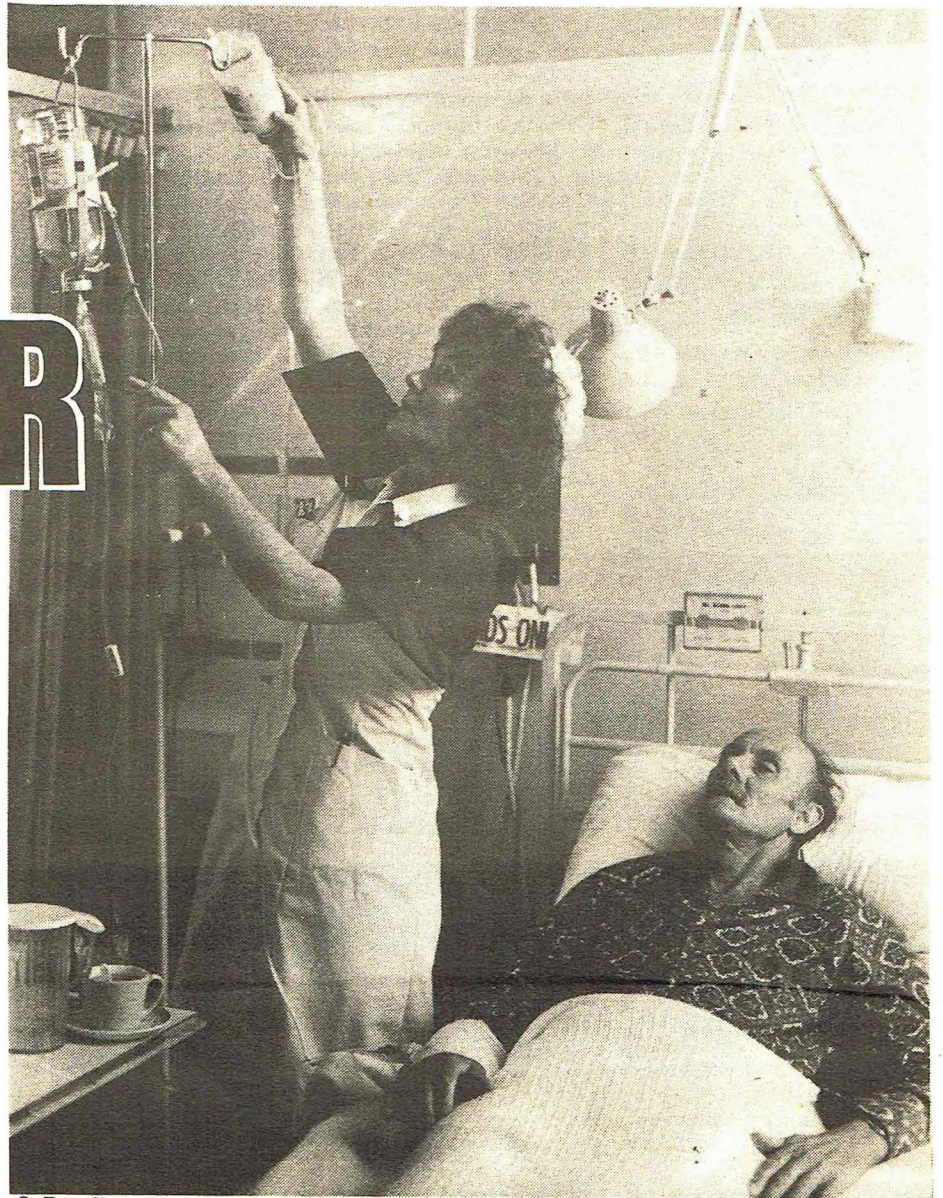
By John Price
(Bootle LPYS)

Scabs move in at Meccano



St Benedict's Tooting DON'T LET THEM MURDER THE NHS

By a
 'Militant'
 reporter



St Benedict's Hospital

Photo: MILITANT

For once, Area Health Authority dignitaries have been forced to listen, at least briefly, to what local workers think of their plans to axe yet another hospital.

When Merton, Wandsworth and Sutton Area Health Authority met on 4 June to finalise their plans to close St Benedict's hospital, fifty hospital workers, patients, relatives and local supporters went all the way to the Henderson hospital in Surrey to picket and protest.

Mrs Munro, AHA chairperson, 'kindly' gave the pickets a chance to air their views to the dignitaries at the meeting. The public were given ten minutes to have their say!

Mrs Munro had underestimated the anger provoked

by the closure, however. Speaker after speaker demanded the right to be heard and that the questions put by Arthur Hautot, COHSE branch secretary and convening steward at St Benedict's, should be answered.

"Can you give us a guarantee that there will be no more hospital closures in the area, when the recent increase in doctors' salaries will undoubtedly eat into next year's budget? Which hospital will be next on the list for the chop—for how long are you prepared to cut services and beds giving pseudo-medical explanations for what is merely the implementation of the government cut-back in public expenditure?" Arthur demanded.

Putting the so-called 'health' authority members on the spot, he pointed out that some of the long-stay patients at St Benedict's have been at the hospital for 20-30 years and see it as their home. What effect would moving them have on their chances of living, he asked.

Mrs Munro refused to answer any of the questions. Eventually, after rather timid threats that if individuals didn't 'desist', they would be asked to leave, she closed the meeting and the AHA officials were forced to leave with their tails between their legs.

St Benedict's, in South London, has been under occupation since closure was first threatened, well before Christmas.

Picketing has been maintained by workers at the hospital, backed by a local support group. Local opposition to the closure is well established: local workers and staff from other hospitals have turned out regularly for the 'open days', exhibitions and tours of the hospital and even a 'bed-push' to Downing Street, organised by the Occupation Committee.

Double doors were slammed and locked as the officials moved into an up-

stairs room. Only press reporters were allowed in as the meeting reconvened.

Inside the official death warrant on St Benedict's was signed, by a vote of 18-3. Mrs Munro told the meeting the closure was vital in the effort to cut £6 million from health spending in the area.

Meanwhile the protesters held their own meeting and workers at the Henderson hospital showed solidarity by providing tea.

Arthur Hautot summed up the workers' message to Mrs Munro and her stooges:

"The struggle to keep St Benedict's open continues. Support on the picket line is

now of fundamental importance.

"The Area Health Authority and indeed the Tory government, might think that they can murder our health service, but we will continue to resist them. They are involved in a political attack on workers and the community as a whole and on sick, old people specifically in relation to St Benedict's. Our resist-

ance at St Benedict's is just part of the political fight to get rid of them."

All support on the picket line will be welcomed. Help maintain vigilance: ensure that management don't repeat the boot-boy tactics used at Etwell and Margate hospitals. St Benedict's hospital is in Church Lane, near Tooting Bec tube station, South London.

FOOD PRICES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

eliminated."

Yet one of the first moves of the Tory government last June was to agree to a 1½% general price increase for CAP products. In addition, they devalued the so-called "Green pound", an EEC device which has had the effect of pushing up food prices in Britain even faster than EEC food prices generally.

Now the Tories have agreed to another 5% increase in CAP prices. Have the "structural surpluses" disappeared? No!

Last year, the EEC butter mountain reached nearly half a million tonnes, the wheat mountain 1.7 million tonnes, and the rye mountain also half a million tonnes. In 1978 it cost £2,700

million to buy up this surplus food, and another £800 million to store it. With higher prices, the mountains will grow still further.

No wonder that even the Ministry of Agriculture admits British consumers are paying at least £400 million a year for higher EEC prices. The independent Institute for Fiscal Studies, however, estimates that it costs at least £1,000 million.

The bosses and the Tories once claimed the EEC was the answer to Britain's economic problems. It has turned out to be yet another millstone around the neck of decaying British capitalism. Nowhere is the "free-market" madness of the bosses' Euro-club more evident than in agriculture. Enormous subsidies encourage farmers to produce more food than they can sell, at

prices beyond the reach of more and more consumers.

Yet in the last few days, a number of prominent right-wing Labour MPs [like Dr David Owen, William Rodgers and former MP Shirley Williams] have been demanding that the Labour Party remains committed to EEC membership. These same people continue to support the idea of an incomes policy, and refuse to pledge the next Labour government to reversing all the Tories' cuts in social spending.

The overwhelming majority of Labour Party members and trade unionists will completely reject the pro-Common Market, pro-big business policy of Labour's right wing!

But just calling for withdrawal from the EEC is not sufficient to answer the Tories and Labour's

right wing. In or out of the Common Market, British capitalism faces a catastrophic future, with dire consequences for the working class.

Labour must counterpose socialist policies for Britain, with the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy and a socialist plan of production—to ensure that resources are developed in the interests of working people.

At the same time, our answer to the bosses' EEC—which is now suffering from increasing stresses and strains, with clear signs that it will begin to crack up as the crisis intensifies—must be to link with the working class of the EEC countries and campaign for a Socialist United States of Europe—to plan the industry and agriculture of Europe for the benefit of the working class.



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