

THE WORKER



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TO HELL WITH ELECTIONS

LET'S GET ON WITH THE WAR

Why the election now?

Having completely failed to bully or cajole the miners into giving up their fight for a living wage, the Prime Minister has called for an election - much as a cuttle fish covers its retreat by spurting out clouds of dirty ink.

The purpose of the election is to shift attention away from the industrial arena where workers are unshakable in their defiance of Phase III and to focus it on the Parliamentary arena where the same tired old political clowns, all serving the same capitalist ring master, can put on the same boring act of trading empty promises for popular support.

Punch and Judy knockabout

Heath and Wilson both tried, openly or covertly, to use the mere announcement of an election to persuade the miners to call off their strike, to abandon real struggle for the sake of the Punch and Judy knock-about of the Westminster farce. When this appeal was rejected, the attempt was made to justify the election on the grounds that the miners in their just fight had created a constitutional problem of who rules Britain.

But lets get on with the war

There is no question of who rules Britain. The capitalist class does, through its elected government, whether Tory or Labour; but because of the intensity of guerrilla action by workers, it can no longer rule in the old way. Hence the first election ever held in the midst of a state of emergency. The working class will govern Britain - but only after a protracted war to smash the capitalist system. Let's get on with that war!

Why ignore the election?

The election is intended to distract the working class from real struggle. The only way the working class can concentrate on the difficult and necessary task of carrying on class conflict with least damage to itself and maximum damage to the exploiting class of employers is by refusing to have its attention diverted by this election.

Fight where you are

The election is intended to isolate the miners. The only way we fellow workers can support the miners in struggle is by attacking the common class enemy ourselves, by smashing Phase III wherever we are employed. There is no way to vote for the miners at the polls.

The election is intended to keep the working class imprisoned in the ideology of social democracy - the capitalist lie that workers can improve their lot without smashing the system that exploits them.

Don't vote

There is no way to vote in the coming election without voting for capitalism - not only in the sense that all the contending parties are capitalist parties, but also in the sense that voting in this election is voting for the continuation of the capitalist system which uses the whole parliamentary rigmarole to delude and distract the working class.

The idiocy of the "Heath Out - Wilson In" line of the pseudo-left has never been more exposed than now when the fundamental identity of the way the two parties serve capitalist interests on every major

issue is abundantly clear. Soaring prices, unemployment - the Tories merely maintained trends begun under Labour. Wage freeze, anti-trade union legislation - Labour invented them. Mismanagement of the country's resources, running down the coal mines, 'shaking out' the miners - Labour can take its full share of the 'credit' for that too. There is no more mileage for capitalism in the 'lesser of two evils' excuse for voting Labour. There is one evil - capitalism itself and it cannot be fought through the institutions it has set up to maintain its rule.

We said at the last general election, along with the most class conscious workers, and we say again now, along with an even larger, more militant and better organised section of our class:

**DON'T VOTE!
STRIKE DOWN CAPITALISM!**

What the miners say

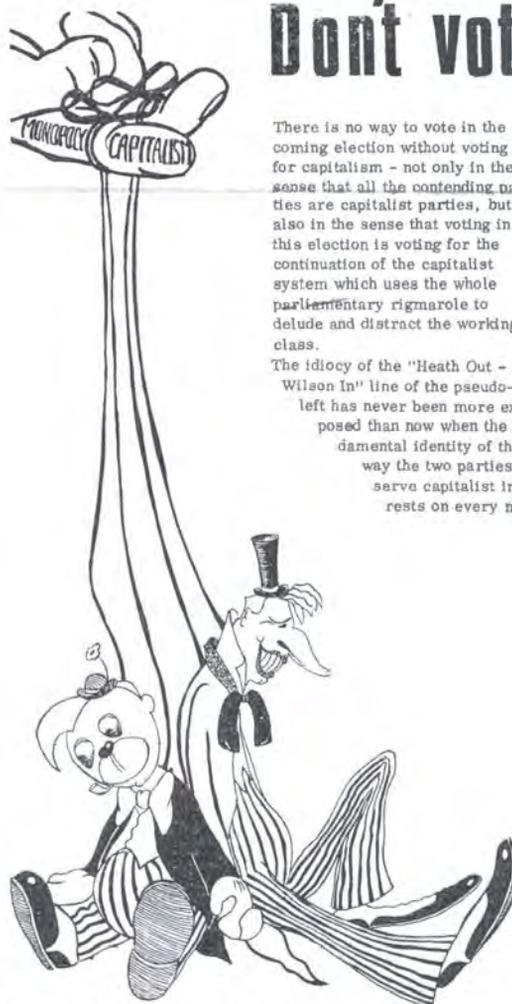
It is the class political consciousness of the rank-and-file miners that is making the running in this highly successful use of guerrilla tactics in class struggle.

It was their massive vote, 81 per cent supporting strike action, which not only prompted the NUM Executive to call a national strike but also made the Executive stick to it in spite of the open demand of Heath and the secret plea of Wilson that the strike be called off during the election period.

The miners' President stated that as a member of the Labour Party he would like to see the strike postponed. Out of some social-democratic confusion about the nature of the state, he asked: "Why strike when there is no government in charge of the situation to give the miners what they want?"

The mass of the miners were under no such confusion.

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Revolutionary ideology

Massive abstention from this election is not a negative but a positive act. It shows that the working class is breaking away from the false ideology of social democracy and firmly adopting its own revolutionary ideology.

The ruling class does not care whether Tory or Labour governs the country on their behalf; but a dramatic decline in the poll as workers continue the real struggle will frighten the wits out of them as a true portent of their eventual overthrow.

NEW SUCCESSES FOR PEOPLE'S WAR



Children in the liberated zone of Cambodia learning to shoot from a member of the People's Armed Forces

Cambodia - an expensive gift

Accurate shelling of puppet strongholds in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh has forced Lon Nol and his family and even a quarter of the hardened French community to flee the city. With the battle in the countryside won, the Cambodian People's Armed Forces, in the present dry-season offensive, have been able to concentrate their full attention on the last den of the US-backed traitors.

Shells have rained on military strongholds, on Pochentong International Airport, on Lon Nol's headquarters, on supply dumps. In the drive on Phnom Penh, troops, armoured cars and planes have been wiped out by the liberation forces. Units of the CPAF have come within one kilometre

of Lon Nol's palace.

People have been pouring from the capital and its vicinity to the liberated areas. In early January, for example, 3500 families left areas north of Phnom Penh and have now joined the PAF or are helping to transport materials to the front. Those still within Phnom Penh have held demonstrations for rice and drinking water and protested against the rampant rise in prices. The puppet soldiers have squabbled amongst themselves, refused combat duties and deserted. Many units have gone over to the people, lock, stock and barrel.

For Nixon, the situation looks bleak. In Thailand he has 300 strike aircraft, including B-52's,

and 35,000 troops ready for action despite last year's Vietnam peace agreement. He has recently pledged "maximum possible assistance" and intends to provide 350 million dollars of military aid, again despite the peace agreement. The only difficulty is getting the stuff through. The PAF have cut all five major highways connecting the capital with the outside world and control the tight 6-12 mile perimeter around the city. Moreover, US shipments have been a major source of supply for the PAF. The 105 mm howitzers used in the offensive on Phnom Penh, the heaviest and most effective shelling in the 4-year history of the war, were "gifts from President Nixon".

Palestine - "revolution until victory"

It is now three months since the Egyptian and Syrian armies took the initiative and repelled Israeli aggression. Ever since, both the United States and the Soviet Union have spared no time, tricks or blackmail to disengage the armies and return to the previous no-peace no-war situation. Or even further, to force a political settlement at the expense of the Palestinian people.

To achieve this, the Geneva conference is sponsored by the two super-powers while paying lip service to the national rights of the Palestinian people. But the national rights of the Palestinian people will never be given

away in Geneva or attained in Moscow or Washington. They can only be won by struggle. The people of Palestine know more than anyone else the value of empty promises and pompous resolutions.

Talking to the enemy is the last episode in a war of liberation, not the first. The Paris agreement of a year ago by which the US conceded defeat in Vietnam was nothing but a formality reflecting their defeat on the battlefield in a war that lasted eight years. The Geneva conference reflects not the strength or weakness of Egypt, Jordan or Israel: rather it shows their

dependence on the two super-powers.

Similarly with the so-called 'Palestinian State' on the east bank of the Jordan. The only state the Palestinians can have is one that they have liberated themselves through struggle. Otherwise it is nothing but a client state of imperialism.

Once again the Palestinian people are at the cross-roads; revolution or capitulation. The history of the Palestine people is a history of relentless struggle. Their slogan 'Revolution Until Victory' echoes throughout the world as the true reflection of Palestine. It will never be abandoned.

Malaya: fighting the puppets

There are some people who lose heart whenever a particular revolution is not in the headlines. As the media in capitalist Britain rarely mention most of the serious revolutions going on right now, concentrating only on the sensational and wrong actions such as hijackings, some might suppose that the Malayan revolution had come to a dead end. Such is far from the case. Recent news released at the time of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Malayan National Liberation Army is further proof of the correctness of the line of people's war as opposed to adventurism by self-proclaimed revolutionaries.

The MNLA was formed on February 1st, 1949 to fight British troops sent by the Labour Government to preserve a very valuable part of the empire. Through the last 25 years, fight-

ing against great difficulties and continuous repression by the imperialist puppets who now rule the country, the Malayan liberation forces, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Malaya, has overcome obstacles, and tried to strengthen its links with the people. In particular they have been successful in overcoming the communalist, divisive ideas so assiduously spread by the government, and brought Chinese, Malay and Indian together to fight the common enemy.

There were many military successes in January including an ambush against an army patrol in Pahang state in central Malaya and an attack on an army outpost in Kedah state in the north-western part of the country. 'Encirclement and suppression' of revolutionary forces is bound to fail when the correct strategy of protracted guerrilla warfare by the people is followed.

Angola-an army from a few

A packed meeting at the Bellman Bookshop heard a representative of UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) tell of the enormous advances that have been made in the war of liberation against the Portuguese since the birth of UNITA in 1966.

From small beginnings, when a handful of men crossed the border from Zambia armed with home-made weapons, the Angolans now have their own army, equipped with up-to-date NATO weapons captured from the Portuguese army.

The young men and women of the Liberation Army have liberated large areas of land in the east of the country. Approximately one quarter of the country's population of five and a half million now live free from Portuguese control in the liberated zones.

The speaker spoke of the other areas of work in which UNITA is involved. Agricultural co-operatives have been set up with

considerable success. While food is plentiful in the liberated areas there is a severe shortage of doctors and medical supplies - despite this, UNITA's clinics have produced surprising results - even performing amputations successfully. Schools have been set up to reduce the high rate of illiteracy. In addition, the political advance of the people has permitted the development of People's assemblies (each covering some fifteen to twenty villages) and it is these bodies which wield the political power in the liberated areas. Self-reliance is the watchword as the Angolans begin the long hard task of a war of liberation.

When asked how the British working class could best help the struggle in Angola, the speaker underlined the fact that we are all fighting the same enemy. A blow against capitalism in Britain is a blow against imperialist oppression in Angola.

Two moralities

While the miners, in the heat of their preparations for launching a strike vital to their interests, took the time to organise the supply of coal to hospitals and

schools, Tory MP Jill Knight, speaking for many like-minded members in the House of Commons, was demanding that miners' children must go hungry by cutting off social benefits for workers on strike.

WHAT THE MINERS SAY continued

One of their number in the Welsh pits spoke for them all when he said: "We are not interested in what government is in power.

"The workers in this country are behind us miners.

"In the wage-pocket in my pocket I have £25. Anyone who is prepared to do our job for that money, let him come and have a

go. "The Labour Party has done little for us. They shut the pits. After the war when the mines were nationalised, they did nothing to raise the status of miners." The miners know that their struggle is political as well as economic and cannot be delegated to others.

Election. When did the Labour Party ever help the railwaymen?

The British Rail Board soon felt the effects of ASLEF's new tactics - 24 hour regional strikes on top of the ban on overtime and rest-day working. And the train drivers gave an example of how, in guerrilla struggle, a localised action does not mean that the employer can relax in all other areas. When Eastern Region drivers struck on February 7th, one Southern Region and one Western Region driver, whose routes would normally have taken them into Eastern Region, refused to go. This form of action was not envisaged in the original union decision. It meant a strengthening of the sanctions by the rank-and-file of the drivers, who, when the two men were sent home without pay, walked out in ever-growing numbers, crippling Western and Southern Regions.

On top of this the Transport and Salaried Staffs Association joined ASLEF in demanding new talks on the pay restructuring deal. British Rail is still refusing to negotiate while sanctions continue. Since the past two years have shown that the Rail Board will not move significantly when it is not under pressure, ASLEF members are resolved to keep increasing the pressure. ASLEF is demanding more money for drivers, the maintenance of mileage bonuses for long as well as extra-long routes. This would increase the cost of the whole regrading package, which is subject to the Phase III limits.

ASLEF members are engaged in a struggle for their rights, a struggle against Phase III, not in a robbing Peter to pay Paul exercise within the Phase III rules. The third rail union, the NUR, is in a strange position. On the one hand, its members are taking industrial action to force the Rail Board to stop laying off NUR members when ASLEF stops the trains. On the other hand, the NUR approves the present restructuring deal, which, being a Phase III deal, leaves railwaymen as badly off as ever. The NUR assistant general secretary calls the offer a 'golden opportunity', talks of the prospects for revitalising the railways, and compares them to that other former 'declining' industry - coal mining. A very good comparison. The industries are roughly the same size, but the railwaymen are not concentrated together like the miners. Both industries have suffered (mainly at the hands of the Labour Party) from massive redundancies following nationalisation. Both are being promised a bright future - and ordered to accept a poorly-paid present. But the NUM puts its faith in industrial action, not in the 'fairness' of government arbitration. And how did the 'triumph' of railway arbitration - the Gillebaud Inquiry - come about? Not because the government of the day wanted to find out how badly railwaymen were treated, but because the inquiry and a sizeable award was the only way to stop a strike, as with the miners and Wilberforce.

Railwaymen, like other workers, are supporting the miners in their struggle. That support will be more than doubled if the railwaymen take up the same cause, the fight to smash Phase III, their own cause, and fight for it with the same determination as the miners.

Teachers - no time to wait

The NUT executive has recommended acceptance of a salary offer within Phase III. A Special Conference on Feb 16th will either reject or accept this recommendation.

The capitulation of the Executive has been accepted with shock and anger within the staffroom. But this anger has not been translated into action. To condemn the Executive is not enough. To wait for a conference is not enough. To wait for a General Election and a government that is 'more generous' is unforgivable. Teachers must

learn to 'vote with their feet'. The only genuine response is action, even if it be only the mildest sanction or a one-day strike.

It is the tide of action that will carry the Executive with us, it is the example of action that will sway a dithering delegate, it is the experience of action that will build the strength where it matters, at the base.

Don't wait for the Executive to sanctify your action. Don't wait for the whole membership to remove their last reservation. Don't wait for a 'benevolent' government. Act now!

Feeding the mouth that bites them

The deeper the crisis for capitalism, the more the so-called 'Communist' Party of Great Britain shows itself in its true colours - as a pale shadow of the Labour Party. What happens when Mick McGahey, NUM vice-president and CPGB member, talks to miners about the need to appeal to troops if they are called in to scab or break picket lines during the miners' strike? The Labour Party puts out an official statement effectively calling for a witch-hunt against communists in the trade union movement. It also talks about the miners' traditional support for the Labour Party. Miners will well remember the 'support' the Labour Party gave the miners when Labour was in power - mass reductions in the labour force and mass closures of pits. The CPGB leadership and McGahey recognise immediately that they could be accused of threatening their status

as Harold Wilson's 'Loyal Opposition'. So McGahey comes out with a statement saying that he has never suggested any other way of changing a government than by an election. Lenin, who in September 1917 said 'elections prove nothing' must be turning in his grave when such 'communist' speak. Just to make things perfectly clear, McGahey says that he would never suggest that troops should disobey a lawful command. What did all the Nazis say at Nuremberg? 'We were just obeying Hitler's lawful orders'. What is the Industrial Relations Act or Phase III but a lawful command? Just after the Labour Party's statement, a revisionist-dominated union district committee met, and hysterically shouting at Marxist - Leninist objections, voted £200 to the London Labour Party. What loyalty to social democracy! Feeding the mouth that bites them.

Fight for the right to picket

The miners begin their strike, in open rejection of the capitalist election fraud. Supported by other workers, they are picketing fuel movements. The government, learning from the experience of the last miners' strike, is planning its counter-attack with 'flying squads' of police and possibly troops to break picket lines. True to form, the law, that 'safeguard' to our 'civil liberties', is turning somersaults in obedience to the needs of the employing class, who can no longer afford to allow a working class, fighting as never before, the old freedoms.

The Emergency Regulations, renewed without a whimper of protest from the Labour Party, treat as 'sabotage' any 'interference with essential services'. The jailing of the Shrewsbury Three for conspiracy, with no bail while they appeal, serves as a threat to all 'flying pickets'. The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, famous for his white-wash of the Bloody Sunday mass-



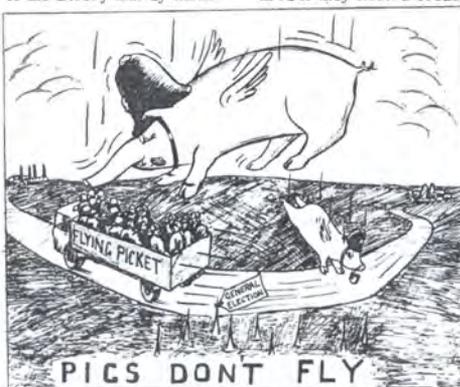
Miners' pickets stop a lorry in the 1972 strike.

acre in Derry, has now said that there is no such thing as a picket's 'rights'. The police have the right to keep pickets out of any area if they think a breach of the

peace is likely, according to Lord Widgery. And of course there is the Industrial Relations Act, with whole new opportunities to put pickets in court.

But the working class has shown how to deal with legal threats - by mass action. When engineers joined miners at the picket at the Salford coke depot, the police were forced to close the gates. When the dockers were jailed, the workers made the ruling class pull the Official Solicitor out of the hat. The engineers' action made the employers drop Goad, Langston and Con-Mech like hot potatoes.

The way to defend our right to picket is to strike and to picket, in our thousands, in our millions, using whatever force is necessary to fight for our rights.



ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

British workers are not sitting back waiting for the miners to fight their battles for them, nor are they eagerly awaiting the Second Coming of Harold Wilson to save them from class struggle. They are continuing the fight against the three-day week, against Phase III. At the same time the TUC is still seeking for deals to prop up Phase III. In an ominous series of meetings with the CBI, permanent discussions, smelling strongly of the corporate state, have been going on to find some compromise way out of the crisis. The continuing discussions show clearly that neither TUC nor CBI attaches much importance to the election or its result.

CIVIL SERVANTS

The Executive of the Civil and Public Service Association issued a statement which "condemned Ministers' threats to suspend or withdraw benefits to strikers".

COVENTRY BUSES

Coventry Transport bus crews voted on January 21st to implement a policy of non-cooperation against Coventry Corporation. The dispute is over anomalies following from New Year's Day working. The dispute is also aimed at resolving long-standing complaints about grievance procedures and vehicle maintenance. The crews are refusing to operate defective vehicles or work the Corporation's proposed new schedules.

'RED' TURNS YELLOW

"I am interested in changing this Government by the good old traditional British method of the ballot box."
- Mick McGahey

GOODBYE AND GOOD RIDDANCE

Joseph Langston, the Chrysler employee who went to the NIRC in opposition to the closed shop, has at last been sacked. Chrysler had paid him £44 a week to sit at home for the past 14 months. But now they have decided they cannot afford a three-day week and Mr Langston as well. Langston's rival for the title of superscab, Mr James Goad, gave up his fight against the AUEW some time ago. But Langston is still trotting around the courts. He has now got permission from the High Court to go back to the NIRC again. One question. Who is going to pay for this legal labyrinth?

STOCK UP NOW

In its last issue, The Economist stated that:
"If a house is expected to last for 70 years, and inflation is put at only this year's 15 per cent per annum, then a new house bought for £15,000 today will be worth a discounted £266m at the end of its life."
By the same calculations, a loaf of bread will cost £2600 in 70 years time.

WHITE COLLAR SOLIDARITY WITH NUM

APEX, the clerical union, has called out the 6000 of its members who work for the Coal Board, in solidarity with the NUM. The only exceptions will be those who are needed to pay out the last week's wages for the striking miners.

BANKS

The London Area Council of the National Union of Bank Employees voted for a resolution which called "upon the active members of this Union to initiate a campaign of guerrilla action against the employers on the wages and conditions front. The type of action will depend on the circumstances in different areas and offices and will include overtime bans and working to rule".

ROLLS ROYCE

2000 technical staff at the Bristol Engines division began a work-to-rule in protest against the suspension of the seven members of the office committee in the Test facilities drawing office. The workers also enforced a ban on overtime and travelling out of hours until the seven are reinstated without loss of pay. The office committee were suspended for refusing to meet the management outside the normal procedures. The workers chose their course of action in the knowledge that the management might be attempting to manoeuvre them into a lockout.

THE REAL ALTERNATIVE

We cannot, now or any other time, stand still. The choice is to move forward or backward; backward, dragged into the charade of parliamentary politics and illusory choices between phony alternatives; or forward, to grasp the real alternative that lies before us, the only alternative to the continued exploitation and degradation of capitalism.

The one choice is what we have now: a society where every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost is the order of the day; where 'change' or 'progress' means an increase in the swelled

coffers of the bourgeoisie, the tiny minority who plunder the wealth of this country; where each day brings new struggle for every working man and woman, struggle against falling living standards, against losing jobs, fighting for dignity in trade union recognition, only to find that when one battle is over, another, more severe, more protracted, looms; where 'democracy' is a vote every five years for a government to tinker with the system and in the end make it a more efficient means of exploiting the workers than before.



Workers at a steel smelting plant in Peking giving political education to students who are working and studying there.

The alternative is a society where democracy is the democracy of a class conscious people who have fought for the freedom of their class from all systems of oppression, who have won their dignity and their liberation, and who know the state and the society they have formed is theirs to build, develop and defend.

The alternative is an economy planned to develop and enrich the resources of the country, where technology serves the needs of the people and science serves technology. Where economic priorities are also welfare priorities, and where the decisions made in the organisation and running of the economy, are made by the working people themselves, living as full, developed individuals contributing both mental and physical energies to every process.



All Albania's railways have been built by the country's youth.

An idealist's dream?

No. In the world of today this is a reality. In two countries, one gigantic, one small, both great in stature, brilliant in courage and achievement, the state is a workers' state, the people are in command.

In China and Albania it is the working people themselves who run the factories and farms through their own committees and mass meetings. When a new five year economic plan is due, workers take part in hundreds of discussions where they work to

decide what and how much is to be produced. These ideas and suggestions are then coordinated at higher levels, and draft plans sent back to the grass roots level for further discussions. In Talian mill in China, discussion in the mill settles the rate of increase in production in 1970 at 40 per cent, but the meeting was criticised for underestimating the workers' enthusiasm in their calculations, and in the end the increase was 47.5 per cent. In Albania the young people in particular are in the forefront of such decision making, through their own youth organisations.

In neither country is there inflation. Real and money wages rise while prices have remained stable for 25 years, in many cases actually falling. Nor is there an energy crisis. Albania now exports electrical power, every village in the country is fully electrified and growth in major industries such as oil, natural gas and electric power is at a higher rate than the national average of 10.3 per cent. In China too, natural gas fields which have been known for over two thousand years have only recently been brought into production. It is only since the working people gained power in these two countries that they have realised their own potential and been able to utilise the resources of their countries.

The great progress made in China and Albania compared with the stagnation and crisis in the capitalist world shows us the real choice before us.

OUT OF THEIR OWN MOUTHS

Mr. Justice Faulks, in a divorce case, said to a man who had kicked his wife: "If you had been a miner in South Wales I might have overlooked it; but you are a cultured gentleman living in a respected part of the community".

"At the same time, President Nixon's economic advisers threw up their hands over the wage and price controls they pioneered, and conceded that they had failed to hold down inflation significantly." - Financial Times

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

PUBLIC MEETINGS AT THE BELLMAN BOOKSHOP - 7.30 pm.

FEB 22: Meeting on the Election. "Don't Vote, strike down Capitalism."
MAR 1: Meeting on Ireland.
MAR 8: "Half the Working Class." Meeting on International Women's Day.
MAR 15: Meeting on Teachers.
MAR 22: Meeting on Imperialism.
MAR 29: "Marxist Ethics."

BRISTOL

FEB 21: Public Meeting: "Don't vote - fight where you are."
Midland Inn, Midland Road, Old Market, Bristol.

'The Worker'

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35,000 STUDENTS MARCH



just a few days ago on the National Demonstration organised by the NUS. Despite bad weather and travelling conditions 35,000 marched past the Department of Education and Science to Hyde Park for a rally.

All different areas of the student movement were there, Technical Colleges, further education colleges, Polytechnics, Universities - and this showed how relevant the campaign is to all students in Britain.

At the rally we heard speakers from the National Union of Miners and the Shrewsbury 24 committee pledge their solidarity. But we failed to hear the spokesman for the Labour Party whose presence was so unpopular that jeers and boos drowned the speech. This was very significant; we remember only too well the Labour Government who allowed the level of our grant to fall just as the Tories did, and we know the Labour Councils who penalise non-degree students etc. through the discretionary award system, just as the Tories do. There were no illusions among students there - we will not be diverted by the State's White Force, our strength lies not in Parliament but in our own organisation and determination to fight.

In colleges all over the country the grants campaign is continuing and growing in its effectiveness. More and more student unions are taking up the demand for full grants for all full-time students, and

a 35% rise, in a real way, understanding that the days of petitioning, pleading are over, and that this is the day of the organised fighting student.

This was the spirit reflected