



See page 10

AFGHANISTAN

DEFEND OUR UNION RIGHTS

The Tories are pressing ahead with laws to fetter the trade unions, despite splits in the government on this issue and on their disastrous economic policies.

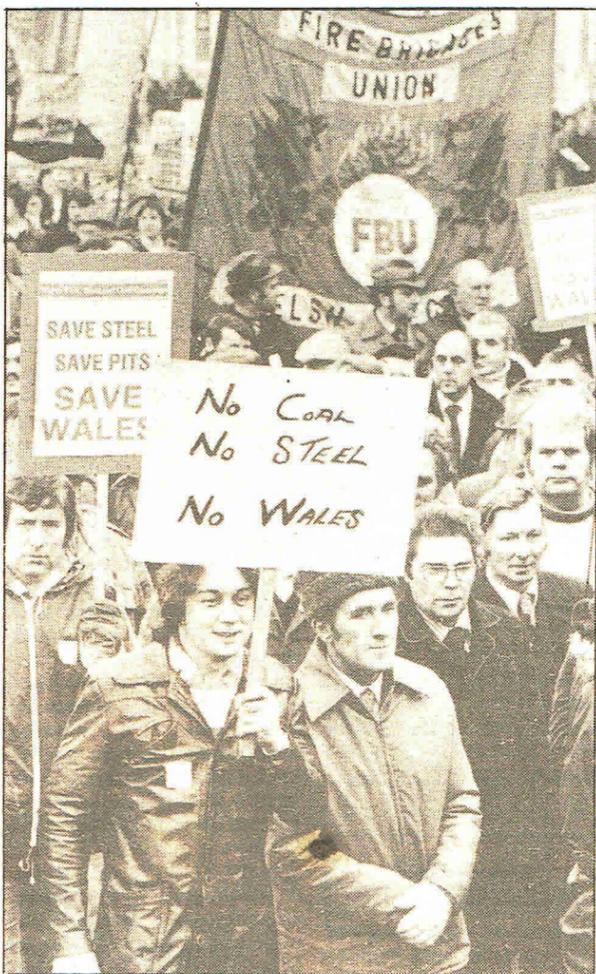
By Roger Shrivess

Whatever their differences over the approach to be adopted, however, the Tories are united in their aim.

They want to undermine the ability of working people to defend living standards, save jobs, protect vital social services, and make use of hard-won democratic rights.

The sacking of British Leyland Longbridge convenor, Derek Robinson, shows that wherever the Tories feel the workers are weakening, they will step in to try to smash the trade union organisation. If they are allowed to get away with this in BL and other major state industries, they will feel emboldened for further attacks.

Lord Denning's arbitrary decision to ban the steel workers' action in the private sector and the brutal attacks of the police on steel workers' picket lines both indicate the scant respect which the forces of 'law and order'—bolstered up by



Tories split over anti-union laws

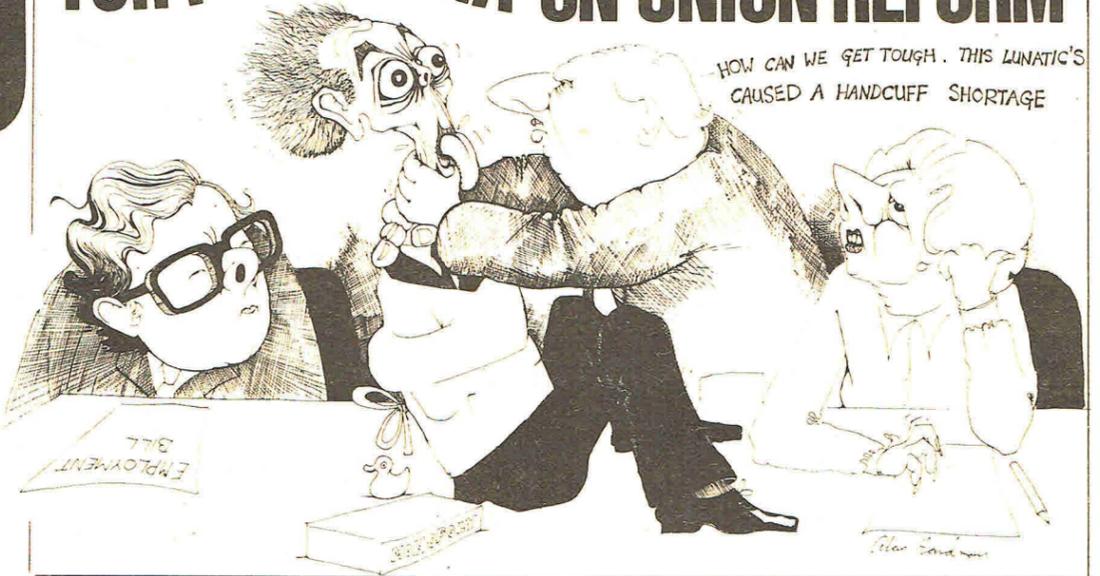
big Tory pay increases—have for trade union rights.

As under Heath, the Thatcher government wants to undermine the strength of organised

workers in order to clear the way for a driving down of workers' living standard, more severe than any time in the last hundred years.

Continued on back page

TORY DILEMMA ON UNION REFORM-



INVESTIGATE CIA INFILTRATION

Labour right-wingers and their Tory friends have reacted with horror and alarm at the decision of the Labour Party's Organisational Sub-committee to investigate infiltration into the Party by America's Central Intelligence Agency.

This decision resulted from an amendment moved by Young Socialist representative Tony Saunois to yet another move—this time partially successful—to reopen the question of the Underhill report.

The so-called "moderate" MPs, in reality extreme right-wingers, have made it quite clear that they see re-examination of Underhill's allegations as the prelude to the wholesale expulsion of 'Militant' supporters and other left-wingers from the party.

The original motion was that a sub-committee of five should be set up "to examine the Underhill documents and all "tendencies" and groups within the Labour Party.

When this was moved by Neil Kinnock, Tony Saunois moved the addendum: "including links between sections of the Labour Party and bankers, industrialists, the CIA and other enemies of the labour movement."

Party must reject new moves for witch-hunt

By Eileen Short

Left-wing members of the sub-committee were outraged that the original motion should have been moved by Neil Kinnock.

Angry Labour Party members will surely want to know why Neil Kinnock, who was elected to the NEC as a left winger, has on this issue, aligned himself with extreme right wingers like Shirley Williams and Roy Hattersley. This has nothing to do with 'open govern-

ment'.

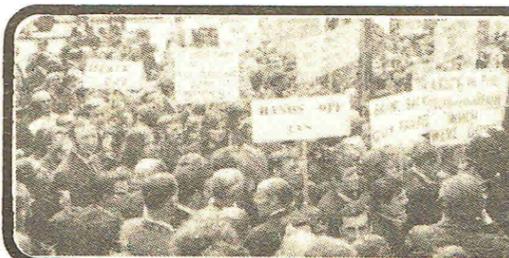
The right have said in so many words that they see an enquiry as a way of opening the door to an all-out attack on the 'Militant' and on the whole left of the party. Why, then did Kinnock take the initiative in proposing the enquiry?

At a meeting of the Home Policy sub-committee, a motion was passed pledging a future restoration of school milk, meals and travel to the level applying when Labour went out of office. This followed severe criticism of Neil Kinnock, education spokesman in Callaghan's shadow cabinet, for his refusal to give a pledge to the Parliamentary Labour Party that the next Labour government would restore all the Tories' education cuts.

When Neil Kinnock's amended resolution came to the vote the committee was split six-six and Eric Heffer, the chairman, gave his casting vote for the inclusion of Tony Saunois' amendment.

Right-wing MPs, backed up by the Tory press, are now trying to pour scorn on an enquiry into CIA connections, describing the move as "alarming", "bizarre", etc. An enquiry which they were quite happy about

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Fighting redundancies

page 6

Steel

pages 9, 15

National action against Tories

The Wales TUC's call for all-out strike action from 10 March reflects the justified anger and indignation of working people at the catastrophic effects of the Tory government's policies.

The British Steel Corporation's proposals—backed to the hilt by Sir Keith Joseph, who ludicrously claims not to be interfering—would slash 50,000 steel jobs. That would mean the closure of at least 20 pits, and the total loss of jobs in Wales could be in the region of 100,000.

This is the brutal logic of the profit system. That is why workers in Wales this week expressed such hatred for Joseph, the Tory who gives the crudest expression to this barbarous capitalist "logic".

The tremendous support for the Wales TUC's Day of Action on 28 January indicated a strong mood of support for bold action by

the labour movement in Wales. An all-out regional general strike would be a tremendous blow to the Tory government, which has already begun to split under the pressure from the working class. Such action would be a fundamental challenge to the Tories, and would pose the question of what government and what policies should be put in their place.

For this reason, and to avoid any possible isolation of the movement in Wales, action must be extended on a national basis.

The Yorkshire miners, who have a strong tradition of national solidarity, have already indicated they would support a call for national action against massive steel and pit closures. There is also a strong mood for action in many trades councils and union district committees.

It is therefore vital that

there should be a bold initiative from the national leadership of the labour movement.

Reports make it clear, however, that there has been pressure from the General Council of the TUC in London to get the proposed action in Wales called off, at or at least toned down. Instead of moves to limit the action against the Tories, the TUC should be making preparations for massive national action against the government.

The General Council's own call for a national Day of Action on Sunday 9 March will receive a tremendous response from trade unionists throughout the country. The demonstration—which in effect will be against the cuts, mass redundancies, and especially against the renewed assault on basic trade union rights—will probably exceed even the massive demon-

stration in 1971 against the Heath government's notorious Industrial Relations Act.

Nevertheless, the TUC should go much further than this. The General Council should now make preparations for a national 24-hour general strike to halt this Tory government in its tracks. Such a call would meet with an enormous response from workers throughout the country.

A 24-hour stoppage would draw together all the strands of strike action, regional protest strikes, demonstrations and rallies against the cuts, which have been taking place in various areas in recent weeks.

The call for national strike action would provide the basis for a widespread campaign to expose the policies of the Tory government and to explain an alternative to millions of workers.

But the struggle to bring down the Tory government must be based on a clear political alternative—bold socialist policies.

The Tories were able to return to office last May due to the failure of the previous Labour government to implement the socialist policies advocated by the rank and file of the movement.

The labour movement must put forward policies which would meet the immediate problems of millions of working people on the following lines:

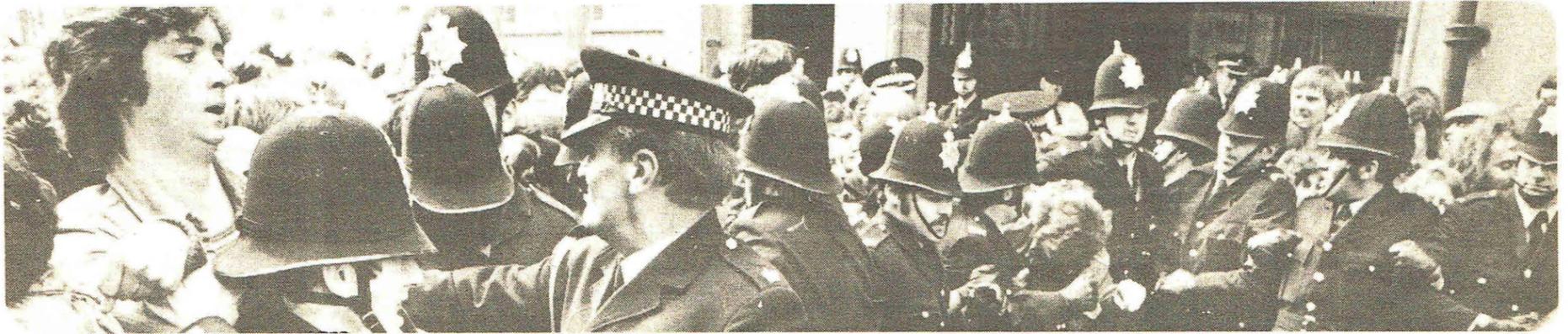
- ★ For a 35-hour week without loss of pay.
- ★ For an £80 a week minimum wage for all workers.
- ★ No redundancies—work-sharing without loss of pay.
- ★ Restore all cuts, and implement a programme of useful public works to provide new schools, hospitals, etc., and create

new jobs. These immediate demands must be linked to socialist economic policies that would enable a Labour government to run the economy in the interests of the working class. There is no future for the working class within a diseased capitalism, especially under conditions of world economic recession.

Only by the nationalisation of the major monopolies, the banks and finance houses, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, and with industry run under democratic workers' control and management, could there be democratic socialist planning of production to provide the jobs, the houses, the schools and all the other things to create a better life for all workers and their children.

This programme would provide the means not only of bringing down the Tory government, but ensuring the return of a Labour government capable of bringing about a fundamental socialist change in society.

Photo: MILITANT



DEFEAT TORY ANTI TRADE UNION LAWS

Through their attempt to drive down the living standards of steel workers, the Tory government has provoked the first national steel strike since the general strike of 1926.

Predictably, the steel workers' magnificent united action, particularly the effectiveness of the flying pickets, has aroused a new chorus of demands from the bosses and the Tories for anti-trade union legislation.

The right-wing backwoodsmen of the Tory party are demanding that the proposals presented to parliament by Prior and the Tory cabinet should be stiffened up.

The so-called 'Employment Bill', the first step towards the Tories' aim of undermining the bargaining power of Labour, already represents a serious challenge to trade union rights established over decades of struggle.

If passed, the Employment Bill would deprive individual workers of basic rights; it would reduce the legal responsibilities of the employers; and it would remove traditional trade union immunities which are an essential part of trade union rights. It would also allow the courts and the government to intervene in

By Lynn Walsh

internal trade union matters. The Bill also includes legislation aimed at undermining the strength of closed shops, and making it more difficult for unions to recruit new members.

The most serious threat, however, is its attempt to limit picketing, by removing the legal immunity of pickets except outside their own work-place, and through allowing the government to draw up a "code of practice" which could be used by the bosses, the police, and the courts severely to limit effective picketing or solidarity action.

Yet even these proposals, supported by 'the dove' Prior, don't go far enough for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Howe, who was prominent in drawing up the ill-fated Industrial Relations Act of the Heath government. Last week, nearly a hundred Tory back-bench MPs petitioned the government for stronger measures to be included in the 'Employment Bill'.

The Tories' last attempt, under the Heath government to fetter the unions ended in disaster. Under the Industrial Relations Act of 1971 the Tories tried to take on the unions directly through the Industrial Relations Court with penal sanctions.

This time they are going for a less direct attack, by removing traditional 'immunities', leaving the trade unions' pickets, shop stewards, open to civil action by the bosses for any 'unlawful' action under the new law.

Nevertheless, attempts to use even civil action to undermine effective organisation and strike action will be countered by even more determined action, as the steel strike has shown.

Lord Denning tried to implement a law against so-called 'secondary picketing', even before any such law is on the statute book. The Iron and Steel Confederation leadership called off action against the private firms pending an appeal to the House of Lords. But a large section of steel workers refused

to accept Denning's ruling, and it is clear that if the Lords had not reversed his decision, there would have been an overwhelming demand for strike action in the private sector in defiance of the law and the judges.

To pretend, as the Tories are trying, that it is possible to give legal recognition to the right to strike, while at the same time making effective picketing and industrial action unlawful is so much hypocrisy. This, at least, was once recognised by one judge. Every strike, Mr Justice Stephen wrote in his 'History of the Criminal Law', is in the nature of 'an act of war'.

Steel strike: reports pages 9&15

This is the reality in class society. Any effective, organised action to defend workers' interests inevitably brings workers into collision with the bosses and their state.

Only the powerful class organisations and fighting traditions built up over decades of struggle guarantee the trade union and other democratic rights of working people. Legal rights, where they exist, only give recognition to rights that have been established in practice by the labour movement.

The present law is far from guaranteeing an automatic

right to strike. Pickets, for instance, have a right to exercise "peaceful persuasion". But, as 'The Observer' (10 February) commented, "the police have virtually unlimited discretion either to restrict the number of pickets or even to disband them entirely, whether on grounds of obstruction or of apprehended breach of the peace."

Many steel workers have recently had first-hand experience of police thinking about the 'right to strike'. They have learned for themselves that when the police appear at factory gates, it is always to help lorries through picket lines or scabs into work. The idea that they are there to protect trade unionists' right to strike is a joke.

If the Tories' Industry Act is passed and if the bosses attempt to use it to cripple the trade unions financially or to fetter the right to effective strike action, it will provoke a massive movement by the organisations of labour.

"It is facile," claims the 'Sunday Times' (10 February) "to argue that the law is no use because if it is disobeyed you cannot put half a million trade unionists in gaol."

But that is what the Tory government and the bosses will be faced with. The movement will not watch with folded arms while a Tory government buries trade union rights.

Heath found out to his cost that it is one thing to get laws on the statute book, but quite

another to implement them. Thatcher, Joseph, Howe, and Prior will be taught exactly the same harsh lessons.

Nevertheless, the new Tory legislation represents a serious threat, and must be resisted and defeated with the whole might of the movement.

In the case of all-out national action by any major union, the new laws will be swept aside. In the long run, even the petty, irritating measures will rebound on the employers and on the government.

Many of the provisions, however, could make it more difficult for the unions to build up their membership and to establish a strong closed shop, especially in firms or industries where union organisation is weak.

Other provisions, which tip the balance towards the bosses on dismissal, union recognition, disciplinary disputes, and so on will be used both against individual workers and to victimise trade union activists in small or poorly organised workplaces.

These anti-trade union measures must not only be countered by a national campaign to stop the law, but the trade union movement must step up the campaign for unionisation throughout industry. There should be an enormous propaganda campaign to explain to even wider layers of workers the need to defeat the Tory laws and to join the trade union movement.

ABORTION- SETBACK FOR CORRIE

The campaign for the right to choose whether or not to have an abortion moved forward last week. With pressure from over 30,000 people lobbying Parliament last Tuesday and Friday, the Corrie Bill severely restricting abortions ran into difficulties.

By Lorna Oliver
(Hackney Central
Labour Party)

A prolonged debate in Parliament on Friday meant that the Bill made little progress and it is now forecast that unless it gets help from the government, the bill will fall.

It is vital that the campaign against the Corrie Bill continues. There can be little

doubt that when the issue is explained, and 'unloaded' questions put, there is widespread opposition to Corrie's proposals.

A Gallup Poll survey published in last week's 'Woman's Own' magazine showed that 65% of people aged between 25-30 felt that abortions should not be more difficult to get, while 81% of the women surveyed felt the decision should be left to the

woman in consultation with her GP—and nearly three-quarters of Catholics agreed with this.

One of the points of Corrie's Bill is to lower the time limit for an abortion from 28 to 20 weeks. Only 1% of abortions are carried out after 20 weeks anyway—and usually in cases of severe abnormality of the foetus. In the survey, a staggering 87% felt that this provision should

continue to be the case.

That any Bill restricting the Abortion Act would lead to more backstreet abortions is shown by the fact that 80% of those surveyed felt that women would find other ways of getting an abortion if legal terminations were made more difficult to obtain.

We must, therefore, ask these 'upstanding gentlemen and women' in Parliament if they want the deaths of

thousands of women on their conscience. We must campaign in the labour movement for more research into safer contraception, for more publicity to be given to the existing family planning facilities, and against any further attempt at restricting the availability of abortion as a first step, and instead have free abortion on demand.



Joe Richardson MP, addresses last Tuesday's rally in Central Hall

Photo: L Sparham (IFL)

ZIMBABWE Trying to stop Mugabe

This week Smith raised the possibility of a military coup if the radical nationalist ZANU [PF] party won the election. Describing ZANU's leader, Mugabe, as a Marxist, Smith declared: "We cannot and will not have a Marxist government."

His statement that the security forces would not stand idly by, if ZANU won, was echoed by soldiers in the audience.

The attacks on ZANU (PF) are not however confined to verbal threats. In the last week there have been two assassination attempts on Mugabe, the killing of a ZANU (PF) branch chairman, the arrest of six middle-ranking leaders and restrictions placed on ZANU's treasurer, Enols Nkala.

British Imperialism is working hand in glove with the Rhodesian and South African military to try to deny Robert Mugabe's ZANU party an election victory.

Big business fears that the social forces behind ZANU (PF) threaten their hold on

By Jim Chrystie

Rhodesia. They do not believe that Mugabe will be able to hold down the aspirations of the African people to the demands incorporated in his moderate manifesto.

So they are trying to cut ZANU (PF) down. They are following Kissinger's dictum on Chile that "a country must not be allowed to go Communist through the irresponsibility of its people."

Last week British Governor Soames banned ZANU's treasurer, Enols Nkala, from participating in the campaign. Nkala is allowed to continue as a candidate, but he is now forbidden to "convoke, organise, address or attend any meetings", or make radio or television broadcasts, canvass or attempt to influence voters in any way.

Soames has also threatened further restrictions on ZANU, including banning the party. The reports against ZANU come through the Rhodesian military and civil service, who still control the country. The old state machine remains and the British intervention is trying to give it renewed strength, for neo-colonial rule.

Occasionally a minor offic-

ial makes a mistake, which exposes what is happening for all to see. Last week such an incident occurred when a conservative ex-Prime Minister Garfield Todd was arrested for talking to a ZANU official. Soames quickly moved to release Todd, because his arrest would even have stirred conservative opinion abroad.

But how many not so famous and radical Africans are arrested or detained? Amnesty International estimates over 5,000, most of whom are probably ZANU.

And who was responsible for the two attempts on Mugabe's life?

According to the Guardian February 11th, while the first attack "was apparently the work of former auxiliaries loyal to Bishop Muzorewa, yesterday's ambush points to the work of explosive experts and thus to the Rhodesian security forces."

British imperialism's response has been to call up all white reservists into the army. And Lord Soames has "asked the police to pursue their investigation (into the attack on Mugabe) with all speed and vigour" (Telegraph 11 February)

All the signs point towards a stormy future. As 'Militant' 4th January pointed out the vital question of who would control the new Zimbabwe state was not resolved at the Lancaster House Conference. Britain is trying to ensure that it is the old forces of the Rhodesian state and not the liberation movement.

The question will not be resolved with the election result—the struggle will continue until the overthrow of the old ruling class is broken and control rests in the hands of the working people of Zimbabwe.

Occasionally a minor offic-

Rent strike threat in Fareham

"Don't worry mate, we haven't got coshes". This shout welcomed two policemen who crept into Fareham Civic Centre last week to find 300 angry council tenants lobbying the Tory council over rent rises.

The council was due to decide an increase of 33½% on rents from April with another 25% in November. This was excluding rates which would also rise.

The crowd got increasingly impatient with the ridiculously small room available for the public, and with the absurd ceremonies played out in front of them. Those who were unable to get into the chamber shouted that they had the right to know what justification there was for this attack on living standards.

The mayor stormed out complaining at the noise of the 'rabble'. Well that didn't go down too well with the tenants who pointed out that their rates paid for the civic offices. The Labour group of four spoke against the action but it was useless trying to change these Tory minds. Tenants were refused permission to speak.

After the council meeting, a meeting was arranged to discuss action including a possible rent strike. But the tenants can not and must not fight alone. This same council is threatening the jobs of NALGO and NUPE members. The fights must be linked.

The disgraceful situation where even this small authority paid £2 million interest charges on housing revenue alone shows that it is also vital to link the question with a socialist change in society.

By Alison Hill
(Fareham NALGO and
Gosport CLP)

LOTHIAN SAY NO CUTS

The Labour-controlled Lothian Regional Council could be heading for a showdown with the Tories and the Secretary of State for Scotland Mr George Younger!

The Labour Group have decided on a policy of No Cuts, No Redundancies and No Job loss. And if this wasn't bad enough news for the Tories, they have also decided on an expansion and growth of existing services, therefore ripping open government guidelines on expenditure by £40 million!

Unfortunately this will be paid for by up to 50% rate increase. But no final decision will be taken on the rates until the full Council meeting on 19 February. Younger, under pressure from the local Cham-

ber of Commerce, has summoned representatives of the Group for an explanation.

Lothian has been alone in Scotland in a policy of no cuts whatsoever but the Labour Group although they have to be congratulated and supported on this stance have an opportunity to go the full way and decide on no rate increases as well. A full blooded policy of no cuts, no rate increase, will win the active support of the labour and trade union movement and vindicate the voters confidence in the Labour councillors carrying out their election mandate.

By Dick Vivien
(Midlothian and East
Lothian Trades Council,
personal capacity)

NATIONAL ANTI-CUTS CAMPAIGN NEEDED

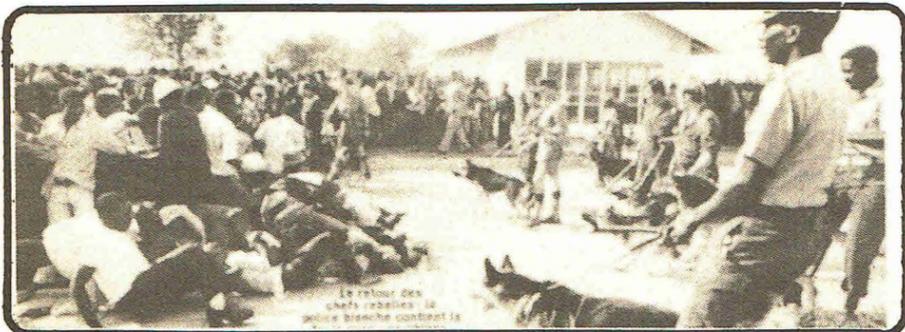
With Councils refusing to administer the Tory cuts, with health workers occupying threatened hospitals, tenants threatening rent strikes and teachers taking action, it is vital that a co-ordinated and united action is taken against the cuts.

What programme should provide the basis for such a campaign. Is a No Cuts, No Rate or Rent Increases, No redundancies campaign viable?

In order to discuss present activity and try to draw the separate strands together for an organised campaign by the labour movement, Liverpool Trades Council and District Labour Party and Merseyside Anti-Cuts Committee have organised a national Conference against the cuts. The details are given below, and delegates are welcome from all trade unions, Labour Party and labour movement organisations. (for articles on anti-cuts activity see this page and page 7).

SATURDAY MARCH 22nd
11.00am-4.00pm
St. George's Hall,
Liverpool

Credentials from joint secys. T. Harrison/A. Dodswell 70 Victoria St. Liverpool 1. Tel. 051-236 2015 or 051-236 1778 Delegation Fee 50p.



Rhodesian police attack crowd waiting for nationalist leaders at Salisbury rally

STOP THE FASCIST MARCHES!

The ever diminishing National Front are planning two marches in a bid by its leadership to rescue their ailing credibility among their own membership and supporters.

The NF have crawled out of their holes to strut around the streets at this time because this discredited Nazi organisation is riddled with crisis and splits.

The National Front intend to march through Southwark, South London, on February 24th. If they do so it will be the first time the fascists have dared to stage a march through a London working class and immigrant area since they got a battering at Lewisham in 1977.

It can be no accident also that they have chosen Southwark for the march. It is part

of a concerted campaign to get a base in the area. For over a year there have been clashes between NF and labour activists at East Street market on Sundays.

The local Labour Party Young Socialists held a march against NF activities in the East Street market area on November 25th. The NF mobilised semi-nationally but failed to stop or intimidate the march—since then the NF have not shown their faces.

Support is growing locally for an effective counter-demonstration against the NF. The Labour Party Young Socialists is calling for a maximum turn-out of all its members in London and the surrounding areas, and appealing for support from the labour and trade union movement. The London LPYS Regional Committee has cancelled the second day of its conference due for that day.

The local anti-fascist body SCARF have organised a counter-march, from the Elephant and Castle, assembling at 10 am from Gaunts Street, off Newington Causeway.

The LPYS is calling on all its supporters to join that march but then to rally along the route of the NF march.

The NF also plans to hold a demonstration in Glasgow on March 15th.

The fascists have never been strong in Scotland—there is no basis here for the virulent 'Great British' chauvinism of the NF. The SNP soaked up many of the extreme right wing fanatics of the kind which were attracted by the NF in England.

The demo nonetheless poses a very serious threat to the labour movement and to working class unity, just at a time when it is essential to unite against the reactionary Thatcher government.

The fascists' slogan is 'Smash the IRA'. They hope to play on the anti-Catholic and anti-IRA sentiment in order to spread their vicious reactionary poison amongst the youth.

They will leaflet the Rangers football fans and advertise their demonstration as an opportunity to 'have a go' at the Celtic supporters, who are

predominantly Catholic.

On the other side, the irresponsible sects of the ultra-left will no doubt attempt to whip up pro-IRA feeling amongst Celtic supporters.

The LPYS and 'Militant' supporters in Glasgow will appeal to both 'sides', explaining the real nature of the NF. The Protestant youth must not allow themselves to be duped by the fascists.

counter-demonstration on the day. Otherwise, the likelihood is that there will be a bloodbath.

All trade unionists must raise this issue in their local trade union branches.

The fascists are not welcome in Glasgow, nor anywhere else!

Of course, if it wasn't for the massive protection given to the fascists by the police—who use the opportunity to test out new 'crowd control' equipment and tactics—the NF wouldn't be able to march at all.

Such is the anger of the labour movement that the moment the NF raised its ugly head it would literally be swept off the streets.

The National Front and similar minute Nazi groups have dwindled to a minuscule group today, with their poisonous ideas being rebuffed by the working class.

But that does not mean the NF can now be ignored. As they retreat into political insignificance, so their violent attacks on labour activists, trade unionists and immig-

rant workers will intensify—like a wild animal in its death throes it will violently lash out at its tormentors.

Despite the NF's decline, these attacks have continued—many now being carried out by backward young workers, disillusioned with the NF and finding solace in the openly Nazi British Movement.

Added to this of course, is the fact that in London, these fascists want to haughtily strut around outside the headquarters of the Labour party, which is an insult to the labour and trade union movement as a whole.

But although the immediate future holds nothing but falling membership, increasing splits and wrangles within its own ranks, and complete demoralisation of its members, the fascists' very ideas pose a threat to the labour movement.

For this reason, the march of the NF—even if it be no more than a staggering shuffle—must be stopped in its tracks by the massed ranks of the labour movement.

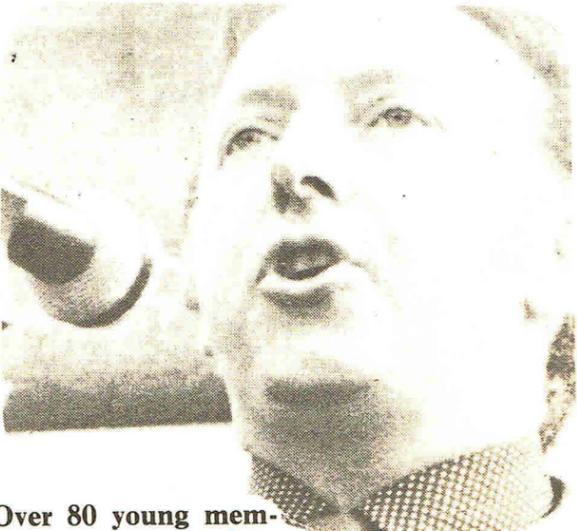
By
'Militant'
Reporters

When the NF appear on March 15th they must be taught a lesson by all young workers.

It is essential that the Glasgow Trades Councils and STUC organise a massive

LPYS NUM SCHOOL

'Our industrial and political wings are one'



Arthur Scargill—"Weld the two wings together".

Over 80 young members of the Yorkshire NUM and the LPYS gathered together to discuss the cuts and democracy in the labour movement at their first joint weekend school.

The two issues were seen to be completely linked, with speakers showing the need for resolute action to defeat the Tories; action which could only be guaranteed when MPs, councillors and trade union officials were subject to control by the membership.

The discussion on Sunday was 'Defence of Trade Union Rights Against Tory Government Attacks', in which Jimmy Reid explained how the 1960s had mass apprentice strikes in engineering. Being involved in this action, he said you did not worry about terms like 'secondary picketing'—you just went everywhere to win your case, even picketing the universities

explained how the steel men had lifted themselves in a few short weeks to a fighting union which, with the support of the whole labour movement, would defeat the BSC and their friends, the Tory government. Support for the steel workers' case was expressed at the meeting by a collection of nearly £50. Arthur Scargill was present at the school and demonstrated trade union solidarity in pledging full backing from the National Union of Mineworkers, who were ready to respond to every need of the steel workers.

In closing the school he said that the industrial and political wings of the movement are not separate and we must never let that be so. In saying that more schools will be provided by the NUM. Brother Scargill pointed to their role in welding the youth of the two wings together and in drawing young miners into the Labour Party Young Socialists.

As a comment on the 'damage' being done to the left of the Labour Party by the recent press attacks, we enclose £20 collected on Saturday night at the school to help the Militant publicise its case for socialism.

Only seven days after the joint school the numbers attending the national LPYS demo against the Tories from Yorkshire, were boosted by a coach from the region's NUM, which called at pit villages throughout Yorkshire in order to bring a contingent to the march and rally. The young miners on the coach were enthused by the demonstration and determined to bring the traditional banners of the coal fields on the next national demonstration of the LPYS.



FIGHT THE TORIES

"We've got to organise and fight back. Fight back against the Tories and their cuts and their system. If we don't, the Tories and the bosses will trample all over us."

These words of one member in the newly formed Ellesmere Port LPYS branch sums up the mood of young workers joining Labour's youth.

This new branch has been going two weeks and has had quite an effect on the local labour movement. A SOGAT chapel donated £10 to send one comrade to the February 2nd demo, and YS members have spoken at an AUEW branch meeting, and have been invited to speak at an AUEW apprentices' section, and the local Trades Council.

The Ellesmere Port LPYS are now preparing for a day of action against the Tories.

Similarly, a reconvened LPYS branch at Blackburn held a public meeting which attracted over 36 people, who came to hear Colin Herd (ISTC convenor), Jack Straw MP and Peter Harris, for the LPYS.

The meeting raised £11 for the steel strikers, and the local Indian Workers Association donated £10 to help pay for costs for the February 2nd demo.

In Hendon, as part of the build up for the national demonstration, a day of action was held by the Young Socialists—nearly 30 copies of Militant and Left were sold on a street sale.

And at a recent general meeting of the Labour Party in Chester, an ISTC shop steward, thanked the Young Socialists for the help they had given the steelworkers during their dispute.

As usual public debates with the local Tories, young and old, have proved popular with young workers. The

Brighton Labour Party Young Socialists took on the local young Tories. The comrades weren't too surprised when the Tory speaker, dodging criticism, spent most of his time mimicking in usual young Tory parrot fashion, the cries of the Tory press and Labour's right wing, saying that the LPYS and Militant supporters had no right in the Labour Party!

One of the best meetings recently was a Youth Against the Cuts public meeting in Birmingham, where Tory

councillor Neil Scrimshaw debated with Yasmin Barry, LPYS national committee member for the area. The Tory's only explanation for the cuts, and the nearby steel closures, was references to this 'wicked world'

The audience of 60 at the public meeting consisted of nearly all LPYS members and their supporters—when the absence of the Young Conservatives was pointed out, the Tory councillor's only comment was "Well, they're not up to much, really."

Boring? No Way

Indignation at the attempts by the Tory press and certain members of the Labour Party to smear the Militant has been shown by the rank and file of the labour movement.

Throughout the country 'What We Stand For' Militant Readers Meetings have been attracting many workers to come and hear the truth about the Marxists in the Labour Party, and to get a reply to the lies of the Tory press.

In Nottingham, over 30 people attended a readers meeting, to hear Roy Bennett, AUEW convenor at the Alan Smith Group, and Brian Ingham, industrial editor of the Militant. The reason why Roy described himself as a Militant supporter was because "I'm just an ordinary bloke who wants a socialist transformation of society. We all have certain principles which we've got fight for."

At the meeting, £47 was raised for the fighting fund. 'Boring and turgid'—that's how the right wing of the Labour Party like to portray Militant supporters. But a packed audience at a Brighton 'What We Stand For' meeting destroyed that slur.

The speaker, Ray Apps (Brighton & Kemptown CLP)

outlined the programme of Militant and exposed the 'red mole' nonsense for what it was—an attempt by the bosses and their 'friends' to hijack the shift to the left in the labour movement. A magnificent collection of over £211 was raised for the fighting fund.

And in Edinburgh, over 50 people attended a readers meeting. Once again, there was an excellent collection, raising £149—these three meetings alone give a clear insight into where Militant gets its funds—from the pockets of its supporters in the labour movement.

And many labour bodies have passed resolutions condemning the attempts to whip up a witch-hunt, including resolutions passed by Newport CLP, Isle of Wight CLP, and SOGAT [West branch SGD]. The Glasgow West Scotland branch of SOGAT also passed a resolution, praising the members of the Labour Party NEC who have stood firm against those who were trying to whip up a witch-hunt.

Send a report of your Readers' Meeting into Militant

LEFT and RIGHT

To name a few

Commenting on Tory MP Winston Churchill, who joined a troupe of upper class moralists last week making a much publicised half-hearted attempt to march a convoy of supplies into Kampuchea for the starving masses, the 'Daily Mail' hailed him as "the British MP whose family name was known in the fight against tyranny." If this is the case, will this remnant of the bulldog breed be holding similar stunts against the tyrannical regimes in Chile, Indonesia, Paraguay, Bolivia, the Phillipines, Thailand or Uruguay? It is unlikely, as these horrendous dictatorships have the blessing of the capitalist class internationally.

It's that man again

Marxists in the Labour Party expect nothing more from the capitalist media than horror stories about them being "subversives", "infiltrators", "conspirators", etc. So when BBC's new late night current affairs programme 'Newsnight' set off with the usual rubbish of an 'exposé' about 'Militant', supporters in the Labour movement could be excused for switching over, going to bed, having a bath or reading a book instead. But what was interesting was that one of the presenters on the programme was one John Tusa. As the 'Daily Mirror' [February 6] pointed out "from 1967 to 1968, just as the [Forum World Features] agency was getting off the ground, he was secretary." Forum World Features was an agency which sent material on 'politics and economics' to the British press. But as the 'Mirror' explained, the agency closed down in 1975 when it was revealed it was partly financed by the CIA. What a surprise!

Second nature

Tory MP Sir Ian Percival had to apologise to Parliament last week after saying that Lord Denning's judgement on the steel strike was not available to the Commons because "trade union rules prevented the shorthand writers typing their notes on a Sunday." As a Labour MP pointed out later, the shorthand writers were not even in a union! So Sir Ian said sorry. Well, it wasn't his fault, was it. After all, when you're a Tory, it becomes second nature to blame everything bar the weather on the unions.

The Professionals?

Recent army adverts have concentrated even more on attracting youngsters unable to get decent jobs. One, in the 'Sun' [Feb 4] is aimed at showing that you don't need great qualifications to join the army. Anyone who saw the television programme 'War School' will realise that you don't need much intelligence to be an officer, but surely some of the technological jobs are different? But these are the days of cut-backs in education spending. As the ad says, "We can show you blokes who had trouble with maths when they joined, who are now controlling computerised weapon aiming systems." So if you look out of the window to find a ballistic missile hurtling towards you, it's not the Russians invading. You're just a victim of the education cuts.

Has the sun set on the British Empire?

In February 1980, we have witnessed a sad and unpatriotic moment in the history of this green and pleasant land.

Yes, like some ordinary grubby little worker, the Royal family are to be hit by the cutbacks, and for this to be enforced by this pinko-Tory government must be the scandal of the hour!

But before you readers rush round to the Palace with your anti-cuts petition, or try to sign up Prince Andrew to the LPYS, let us examine the full plight of this oppressed minority.

According to the 'Sunday Telegraph' (3 February) the Tories' plans to cutback the money given to HiM and hER, will come as no shock to the chosen few, as they have been economising for some years now.

It is a well known fact—a nation's shame some would call it—that the Queen nowadays regularly wears the same dress more than once! With these dresses only £400—£1,000 each from the country's top couturiers (clothes shops to you commoners), it just shows how the Queen, like the rest of us, is feeling the pinch.

And they aren't taking any chances with the electricity bills either. As the 'Telegraph' pointed out, "If somebody (in the Palace) leaves a desk lamp on in his office he will find when he comes back from lunch that a page has switched it off." (For all you plebs unfamiliar with Middle Ages' phraseology, a page is a sort of servant.)

The truth is, Mr and Mrs Windsor and family are getting a bit thread-bare. The Queen's Flight, consisting of two helicopters and three airliners may seem very

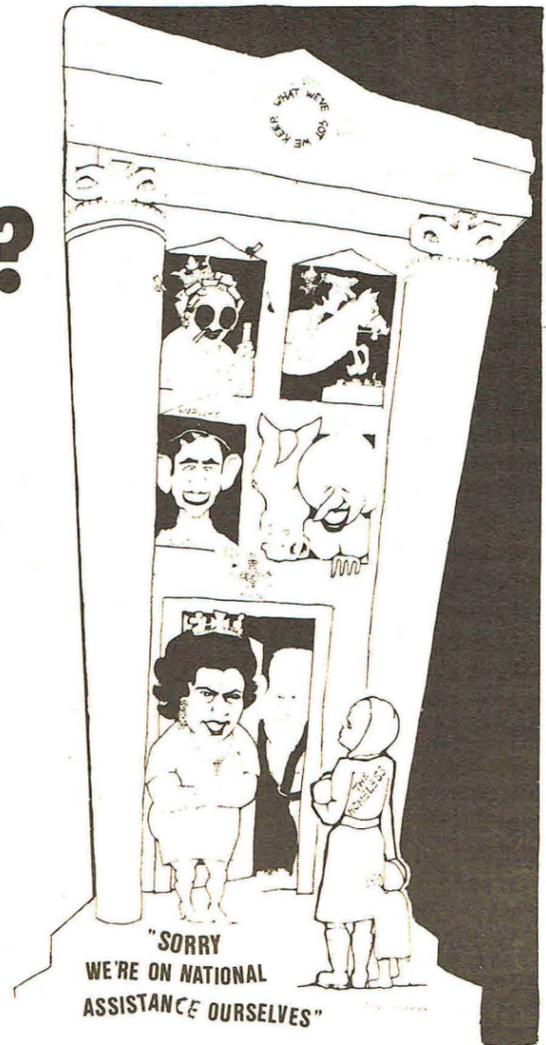
By
Beatrice Windsor
(no relation)

impressive to us mortals, but all the machines are over 15 years old! And they only cost £800,000 a year to run. But the Royal Air Force have been very good about it all, and often gives them a lift anywhere.

The Royal Yacht Britannia was built way back in 1954. Although it only cost £2½ million to build, inflation has taken its toll and running costs between 1974-79 were nearly £13 million. The dear little boat is being refitted at the moment, and although a few killjoy MPs started moaning about the £2 million it was estimated to cost, the Ministry of Defence thankfully said that figure was pure 'speculation'. How right they were—its going to cost £5 million.

So where on earth do the Tories think they are going to make these vicious cuts. Last year the monarchs only got £2,821,000 from the Civil List, and then they had to claim an extra £60,000 because all the Bolshie workers a. the palace put in for a pay rise (yes, they've even got bloody unions in Buck House!).

Of course a couple of million goes nowhere when you've got to dish it out among the family. But luckily they have got their family heir looms to fall back on. The actual wealth of the Royal family is a state secret, although a few communist inspired trouble-makers have estimated it at around £50 million.



All members of the royal family have inherited vast estates; such as Chevening House, covering £3,500 acres, which was given to Prince "isn't - he - a - funny - chap" Charles by the Queen. A sort of ruling class version of 'hand-me downs'.

And then there's all the swag looted from the colonies...whoops, sorry...the gifts and treasures from the grateful minions who benefitted so much from the glorious days of the British Empire.

For the business side of the family, these impudent suggestions at cutbacks couldn't come at a worse time. Bank of England Nominees, the Royal family's front company, only has a total of over £94 million of share holdings ('Evening Standard' 22 April, 1977). And there may be trouble

with their £14 million shareholding in BP (formerly the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) as it is not yet clear how the Shah of Iran going on holiday has affected all this.

As everyone in their Right mind knows, the Queen is an asset to the nation, and a vital part of our great democratic tradition. By acting as host to the head of another nation she can bring esteem and élan to Britain. Look at the jolly splash she put on for those great democrats the Shah of Iran in 1972, or President Geisel of Brazil in 1976.

Why, they'll be selling her to the Americans next... actually, the Royals could be classed as 'nationalised' seeing as they're propped up by public funds. So that's what the Tories are up to!

Review of 'Ten Days....'

'Ten Days That Shook the World' is an eyewitness account by John Reed, an American journalist, of the Russian Revolution of November 1917.

The intense atmosphere and the enthusiasm of the masses for the Bolshevik insurrection is evident throughout the book.

The continuous sessions of the Petrograd Soviet with workers listening intently to speakers for hours on end, cheering ecstatically with news of support from soviets and soldiers coming in from throughout Russia, the self-sacrifice of the workers and soldiers in fighting counter-revolution, and making the beginnings of a new society. Everywhere can be seen the enthusiasm for the revolution.

The contrast between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist Revolutionaries is perhaps one of the most striking lessons for today.

The Bolsheviks on taking power almost immediately passed decrees calling for an end to the war, giving land to the peasants and putting industry under workers' con-



Red guards fighting in Petrograd, 1917

trol.

On the other hand the Mensheviks and Right Socialist Revolutionaries, who claimed to be marxist and revolutionary, were so bogged down in parliamentarism that they talked about transforming Russia for over eight months, in the end playing into the hands of counter-revolution. But it took the Bolsheviks to actually carry out the socialist revolution.

This book, written before

the degeneration of the revolution into the Stalinist state it became, gives a great feeling of the atmosphere that existed in November 1917. It also shows the invaluable role of the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin and Trotsky, together with the workers, soldiers and peasants in the revolution.

In this article only two of the wider aspects of the book have been touched on. It's well worth all comrades reading this book. It gave

inspiration to me and strengthened my belief in the working class taking power to create a socialist society.

By Russell
Dawson

(Newcastle North LPYS)

FIGHTING REDUNDANCIES

The bosses' attempts to throw the weight of the capitalist crisis on to workers' shoulders by attacks on jobs have had a certain amount of success. The cold figures show that in manufacturing industry alone, over a million jobs have disappeared.

The bosses have not had it all their own way. A major setback for capitalist plans was the 'work-in' at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in 1971, which gained the support of workers throughout the world. Their struggle was one of the main reasons for the Heath government's U-turn toward increased public spending.

Without doubt, though, since then many jobs have been lost without such a struggle. The comrades from MacDonalds ask why workers seemed enthusiastic to accept redundancies.

The main reason for this attitude by some workers is that there has been a clear failure by the trade union tops to give a lead, by putting the whole strength of the unions behind the fight against redundancies. This was particularly so during the period of the social contract.

Ever since the 1972 engineering strikes, the demand for a 35-hour week, to share out the work without loss of pay, has been on the list of negotiating demands. This vital demand has rarely been fought for by the union leaderships.

Without a lead from the top, any resistance to redundancies has been localised.

Workers are practical people and if they enter a struggle they want to have some

confidence that they can win. No doubt a small minority want to leave anyway. The bulk of workers know the difficulty of getting other jobs, but can become demoralised if they think their official leadership will not support their struggle all the way.

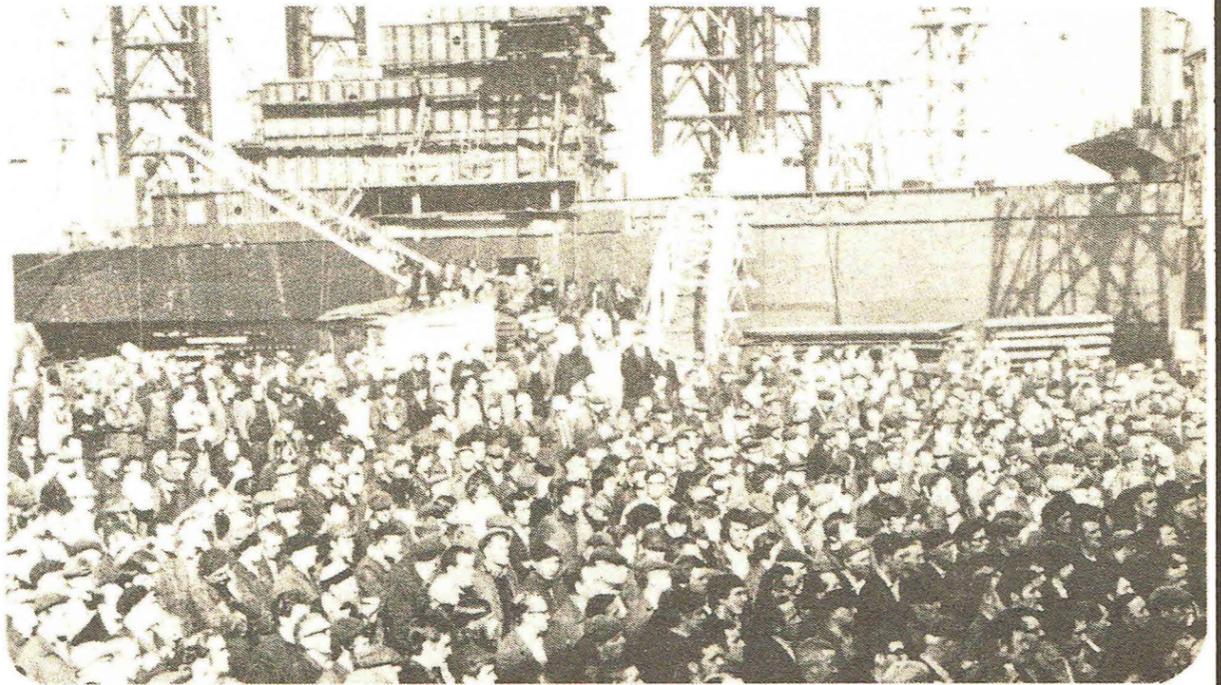
The fight for the 35-hour week has now taken on a political character, with the understanding that a successful fight-back against the sack has to be staged on a national level.

Of course, this doesn't mean we, as shop floor leaders, should take no independent action when the bosses want to sack our members. On the contrary, more than ever we have to fight the idea of selling jobs.

But we have to take it up as a political struggle as well, campaigning in the unions and Labour Party for a struggle for a 35-hour week to mobilise the whole of the working class.

At Rover we have taken the same position as the comrades in MacDonalds, i.e. opposition to all redundancies whether enforced or voluntary. In 1975, the company wanted to declare some 500 workers redundant by voluntary means.

For six months with the support of the shop floor, we refused to accept this, even though management actually closed down one departmental shift which meant we had a surplus pool of 500 workers. At our insistence, these workers were attached



UCS workers at a mass meeting in 1971. The workers' determination to safeguard jobs has been given little lead by trade union leaders.

to existing groups so that they could remain under union protection.

Enormous pressure was put on the shop stewards' committee by management (and a minority of the surplus pool) to let people volunteer for redundancies: "Old Joe, he's 64, why not let him collect his money?", and so on.

Eventually, under this pressure, the stewards voted to let some workers go. But we learnt a few valuable lessons from this experience.

In August 1979, the company called us to a meeting and announced that from 3 September, they intended to close one of our three assembly lines. These three lines were producing the Rover saloon models, the 3.5, 2.6 and 2.3—1977 European car of the year.

They proposed a 33% cut in production—and a reduction in the labour force of 42%. Not only were they getting rid of 1,445 jobs, but those who remained would have to work even harder.

We had no choice but to

call for an all-out struggle by the workforce. The shop stewards agreed almost unanimously to call a mass meeting and propose an all-out strike from the moment the company attempted to close line three, i.e. from 3 September.

Before the mass meeting we circulated a shop stewards' leaflet arguing against selling jobs, and pointing out the unemployment situation in Birmingham. The shop stewards also met with their groups to further clarify our position.

At the mass meeting, a large minority were not convinced by the arguments and just wanted to get out of Leyland. When the vote was taken it was impossible to determine if there was a majority for a fight.

Accordingly, we decided to ask for support against enforced redundancies and speed up. On this we got massive support, but, of course, the other decision meant line 3 would close and people could volunteer for

redundancy.

National trade union leaders frequently say, "We oppose enforced redundancy, but the members are queuing up for voluntary redundancy," using this as an excuse not to lead any fight back. Our position was different. It was our class duty to explain the bosses' attacks and attempt to lead a fight back.

But the preceding period, in Leyland in particular, had undermined confidence among the workers. The attitude of many workers was "let's get out before the whole company closes down."

Without a fighting alternative from the union leaders, the press campaign claiming that redundancies were essential for Leyland took its toll.

The comrades also asked if workers would fight to overthrow capitalism if they won't fight to save their jobs. Here, as with the jobs question, a lot depends on the leadership. We have seen in the last few months, though, an explosion of anger after years of

In Militant [4 January], two workers at MacDonald's Tools, East Kilbride wrote in 'Working in the Union' on the question of redundancies Bill Mullins [left] senior steward at Rover Solihull, takes up some of the points.



seeming inactivity, of closures and job losses amongst the steelworkers.

Yes, it started over wages but steelworkers know it is also about jobs. Even the timid half-call for action from the union leaders galvanised workers into action. Similar changes, after a period of almost demoralisation, are apparent at Leyland.

Britain is moving into a period of enormous class struggles. We will see temporary setbacks as well as victories. But each setback will itself contain lessons that will be quickly learnt by the working class, particularly the central questions of leadership and policies.

We will see the truth of Lenin's comment in relation to the British working class, that capitalism could not exist for six weeks if the workers moved as one under a leadership that was conscious of its role in leading the working class to overthrow capitalism.

'Tinkerbell' - no fairytale

Political activists who think that their phones are being tapped are a constant butt of jokes. They are usually suspected of being paranoid—or of having an inflated sense of their own importance.

But a recent 'New Statesman' report on the Post Office installation in London with the fairytale name of 'Tinkerbell' has caused a political storm. It shows that the use of phone tapping, not only against criminal activities, but for political purposes, has mushroomed in the

By
Roger Shrivs

past few years.

According to the report, the headquarters of the phone tapping service is in Chelsea. The department concerned is not mentioned in Post Office records or directories; and its employees work on a shift basis, day and night.

The Home Office have not denied that facilities for phone tapping exist. But the Birkett report, a government report on interception of mail and phone calls in 1957 claimed that in the whole of 1956, 159 taps had been

made.

Since then there has been a massive increase in capacity, and the 'New Statesman' estimates on the basis of plans under way in the late '60s that over 1,000 lines are now available for tapping.

There have been drawbacks to the extended use of tapping in the past. It is very time consuming to listen through hours of chatter about Granny's lumbago or the weather just to glean the few bits of information required by the police or more often now, the security services.

The phone tapping section of the Post Office (Department OPS) is now working on methods of cutting down these wasted man-hours by using the new type of telephone exchanges, System X, which record details of calls as a matter of course. Many telephone engineers believe tapping facilities can be built in to the system with little fuss.

Calls to certain numbers can be recorded, for example, and even possibly voice recognition operations introduced to record calls to and from

certain people. The new system would have the advantage (for the phone tappers) that it would escape the eyes of telephone engineers who usually dislike phone tapping. With no visible 'tap', no strange wires or lights, the operation is far more secretive.

The Home Office claim that taps are very sparingly used and each interception needs the permission of the Home Secretary. But evidence is mounting that not just criminals are bugged. More political and trade union activists—public enemy No 1 to the Special Branch—are also victims. 'New Statesman' reports that Grunwick strike headquarters were bugged in 1977.

Steel workers on strike in South Yorkshire have on several occasions been surprised by the rapid appearance of police after picketing instructions have been given over the phone.

Enterprising strikers tried to test whether phones were tapped. They set up a bogus phone call for workers to be sent to picket an ice cream

factory on a trading estate. Police were on the spot in four minutes. If you rule out telepathy, the bugging of strike headquarters' phones is the only explanation.

MPs have raised the question of these surveillance devices in Parliament. Even Tory MPs have raised doubts. But it is the labour movement

which is likely to suffer most from the use of these methods.

The commitment made by the Labour Party to investigate the role of the security services must be taken up, and the facts made known to workers in the trade unions and political organisations.

POSTAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO MILITANT

'Militant', like all newspapers, faces big increases in running costs regularly.

We try to absorb all of these as far as possible. The cover charge for 'Militant' remains at 15p per copy.

However, we regret that increased postal charges mean that we have to increase the rates for postal subscriptions to Militant. The new rates can be found on the postal subscriptions form on the back page.

We are sure that this will not diminish our readers' enthusiasm for the best paper in the labour movement.

Avon Teachers Fight Back

"A very large number of teachers have realised that if they don't stop and fight now, they will be trampled on for the next five or possibly ten years".

So commented a member of the National Union of Teachers in Bristol, summing up the mood of teachers now out on strike to save their jobs—and education in Avon.

On January 29th, nearly 7000 Avon school students were off lessons as NUT members in nine secondary schools came out on the first of a rota of weekly three day strikes. The action, which was solid, was to back up refusal to teach new timetables in three schools worst affected by the cuts.

The Tory Council in Avon has one of the worst records in the country in education. Even Michael Colvin, Tory MP for Bristol NW, has accused Avon of making spending cuts "with an axe instead of a scalpel."

The biggest blow came this January, when they started to apply "strict teacher-pupil ratios." The result was the axing of 406 full time jobs and the introduction of new timetables half way through the school year—chaotic enough in itself.

The effect on schools has been devastating—larger classes, massive redeployment of staff and enormous deskilling of teachers.

NUT members are determined to fight back. In the Autumn, as Avon made its preparations to axe jobs, teachers took their case out to parents and school students with blanket leafleting in some areas.

The change of mood amongst teachers in Avon can be summed up by the NUT member I spoke to:

"If you see large numbers of your members being made redundant or large numbers of jobs disappearing, what is the difference between a steel worker and a teacher.... More and more teachers are now willing to act like proper Trade Unionists and to do things.

"How can the cuts be defeated? First of all, as a member of the NUT you need national strike action from your union.

"Secondly, you need a link up between the whole of the public sector unions and a struggle on that basis. And thirdly you need a political struggle to bring down the Tory Government.

"What can it be replaced with? It can only be replaced by a Labour Government as such, but we need a Labour Government with much stronger policies for the public sector and for education—with a socialist policy rather than the same old Tory policy on education.

"Teachers don't actually want to go on strike, so if they are actually going on strike willingly, you need to realise that they've reached the end of their tether and that there is no other possible way they can fight."

By
Sue Beckingham

'DEMOCRACY IS INTERFERENCE'

Say Tories

"Patients first" is about the last title most people would choose for any proposals from this barbarous Tory government on the National Health Service.

But this name is cynically given to the recent Tory proposals on the restructuring of the NHS. The Tories' real attitude is of course, one of "working class patients last -first priority to the rich and to big business interests."

Fighting to prevent closures, you can't help noticing that the NHS is being run on ever more strict 'business' lines. Small cliques make the real decisions behind the scenes, and Health Authority members are treated as rubber stamps.

Some Labour members on the health authorities have criticised the cuts and some authorities, particularly when pressurised by local campaigns have delayed some of the worst closures. Ultimately

though, the accountants get their way and trade unionists in the NHS and the working class who use the services have no say.

The Tories have raised objections, though, even to the minimal hold-ups caused by pressure from AHAs and Community Health Councils.

Patrick Jenkin told 'Conservative News' that he believed one potent source of delay and waste was the huge amount of consultation required. He wants "normal day to day decisions" (such as closing wards, maybe?) to be taken by "the people actually running the show."

The Tory proposals are that the present multi-district Area Health Authorities should disappear. In their place a larger number of smaller District Health Authorities.

The proportion of councilors serving on authorities is to be reduced. Other members are to be chosen for 'personal qualities', and certainly not to be elected and accountable. These appoint-

ments are to be made by the Regional Health Authorities, themselves possibly in the future to be made up of...District Authority nominees!

The management at District level is to be enlarged, and the grading of hospital administrators is to be raised to reflect the 'maximum delegation of responsibility'.

"Savings"

The Tories claim that 'eventually' the re-structuring will lead to a saving of 10% on management costs (equivalent to about £30m). This saving will not come from top managers. The new district authorities will need even more of these. It can only be made—thus threatening thousands of jobs of clerical and ancillary staff.

One bad system is to be replaced by another. We must remember what the Tories' overall aims are for the

NHS—to make it a vehicle for exploitation by private interests, to reduce services and to teach people to make less use of the NHS (as 'The Times' succinctly put it). They want cuts implemented and they don't want anyone interfering.

Trades Councils, health union branches, and Labour Parties will now be considering the Tory proposals. The labour and trade union movement should reject them.

We should demand that health service government bodies should:

- ★ be 100% committed to defending the principles of the NHS

- ★ be elected, accountable, and subject to recall

- ★ contain a built-in majority from the trade unions

- ★ contain representatives from the service and through the health trade unions.

Participation of Labour Councillors and trade union/Trade Council nominees in any future authorities, set up on the lines of the Tory proposals, is a matter of tactics, as it is indeed with the present structure.

Their role must clearly be to oppose all cuts. They should work together, and with the local sections of the labour and trade union

By Ian Burge
(Secretary, Tower Hamlets Health District JSSC)

movement, to expose the plans and publicity campaign against the cuts.

But there can be no argument for a lone voice in the wilderness. In the absence of an organised and effective opposition, members serving on such authorities will inevitably be tacitly supporting the cuts. In these circumstances they should withdraw or be withdrawn.

- No cuts in services!
- No redundancies!
- No closures!
- For democratic workers' management and control of the NHS!

A discussion paper for trade unionists has been produced by the Tower Hamlets Health District Joint Shop Stewards Committee and copies are available from Myrna Shaw at the Postgraduate Medical Centre, Bethnal Green Hospital, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9NP [telephone 01-980 3413 ext. 025]. Price 22p for one copy [includes postage] or £1 for 9 copies [incl. postage].

OUR HOSPITALS MUST NOT CLOSE

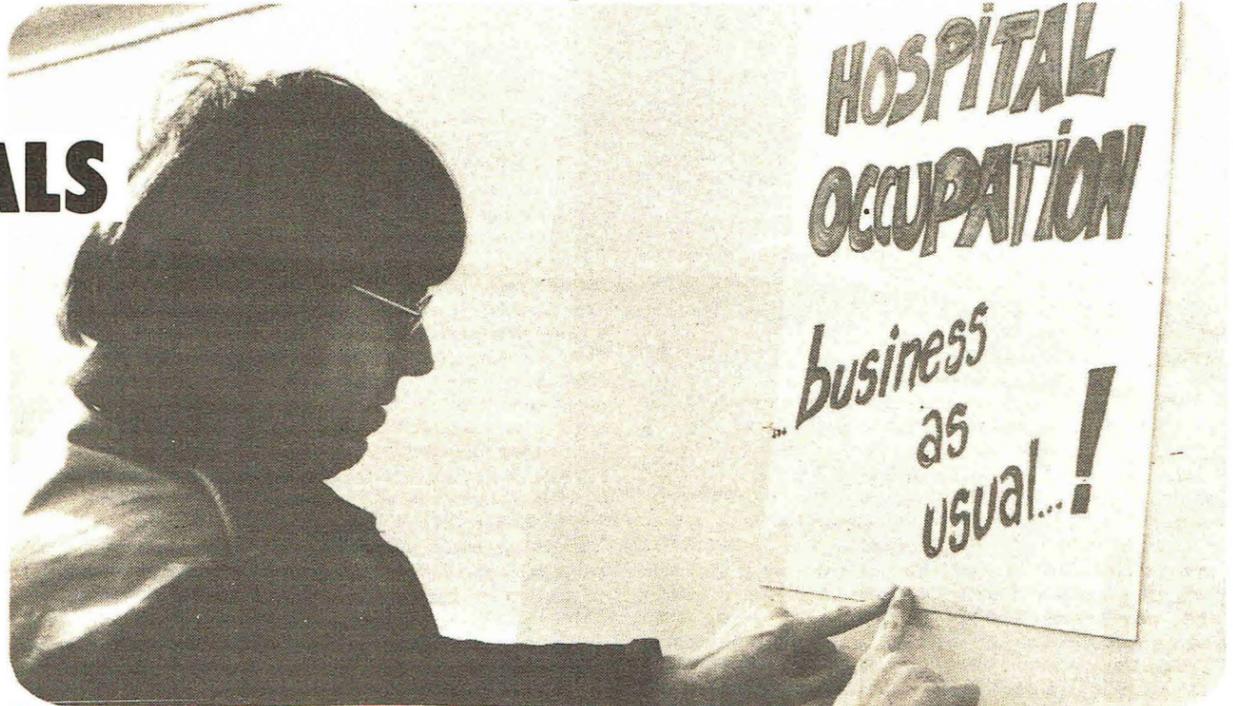
St. George's

On Thursday January 24th, the staff at St. Georges Hospital, Hyde Park Corner, London, launched an occupation to prevent its imminent closure.

The hospital had been due to close when the new St Georges hospital in Tooting opened. But the Area Health Authority [Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth] decided to cut spending by £6 million by March 1980, so the closure was brought forward.

Alternative facilities are not yet ready, especially in the cardiac department (St Georges' specialist field). Out of a total of 300 beds, 70 are for cardiac patients, but only 15 replacements are available at Tooting and 5 at Brompton. Even with the expected 45 new cardiac beds by 1981, a cutback was inevitable.

In addition, the new St Georges at Tooting will be under great pressure due to



ST GEORGE'S HOSPITAL—under occupation since January 24th.

Photo: Militant

Ian Pollock spoke to Alan Ellis [Branch Secretary, St. George's Hospital NUPE]

other closures. 200 beds are to go at St Benedicts, 180 have already gone at Putney and 80 disappeared at the Cumberland.

Further pressure would be put on the new hospitals operating theatres, as the Bolingbroke Hospital has changed from a surgical to a geriatric hospital. The old St Georges Hospital in Tooting will disappear with a loss of wards.

The occupation has support from all staff (ancillary, medical, nursing, technical and professional, engineering and maintenance). An occupation committee now runs the occupation involving all these sections of staff.

The purpose of the occupation is to gain publicity for the struggle against the closure and thus to keep it open; to re-open the casualty department closed in 1976; to stop the early transfer of facilities and equipment, and as importantly to give a lead

to other hospitals facing cuts.

The only attempt so far to move equipment was from the medical school, on the first day of the occupation, but the occupying staff prevented this.

Hospital staff are especially worried that by running the NHS down, people will be forced into paying for private treatment to get any adequate care at all. The occupation is clearly seen as an attempt to defend the NHS.

Help is urgently needed on the picket line to put the workers case to patients, visitors and the public from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm.

Money, resolutions, telegrams and messages of support are welcome, especially from other NHS workers. The should be sent to the occupation committee, c/o Alan Ellis, St Georges Hospital, London SW1

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

Princess Mary Hospital Margate

The Tory butchers of the National Health Service are lining up victims up and down the country.

Many Hospitals are now in grave danger from closure. Princess Mary Hospital in Margate in Kent has been given notice that it is due to close in six weeks time.

The Confederation of Health Service Employees, (COHSE), has now got the policy of encouraging occupations of hospitals under threat. Princess Mary's Hospital is one of these. Since January 29th the whole staff of 160 from all sections has been in occupation.

We have an occupation committee which meets every morning, with two representatives from each department.

We have had a lot of support from the local labour movement, from trades councils in Thanet and Canterbury; we have official backing from NUPE, AUEW, EET-PU, and support from constituency Labour Parties in Thanet.

By John Nicholson

Branch Secretary, COHSE, Princess Mary's Hospital

The LPYS have not only sent a resolution, but have been actively involved on the picket line.

But any one involved in an occupation should beware of the silver tongues of management. The local Community Health Council (CHC) set up an ad hoc committee on the closure which voted against shutting down the hospital.

Shortly after the meeting was suddenly reconvened to reconsider the question. They kept up their opposition but the CHC as a whole now supported the closure.

They had been nobbled by the management who had told them that the hospital would survive another two years. We knew their real plans. The CHC had been misled.

Resolutions and donations to John Nicholson, Princess Mary Hospital, Cliftonville, Margate, Kent.

A RECORD FOR THE BOSSES

"Unemployment in Northern Ireland could rise to a post-second world war record of 17% this year."

By
Bob Wade

That was the stark truth presented in the 'Financial Times', the serious paper of big business last month—a statement that in reality means misery for thousands of Northern Ireland workers.

The area's record of unemployment, alongside terrible housing conditions and poverty levels, are now the worst in western Europe—worse than even areas such as Glasgow or Milan.

As a direct result of the run-down of its manufacturing base—especially the heavy engineering industries such as ship building—Northern Ireland's unemployment figures have now reached 70,000—that's nearly 12% of the population, compared to Britain's level of 6.1%.

However, these percentages do not give an accurate picture of the levels of mass unemployment that have hit industrialised areas, like Strabane where unemployment has now reached a staggering 40%. And as with all areas of mass unemployment today, it is long-term, and the youth who are worst hit.

Life on the dole means a pointless existence, where boredom and poverty brings miserable demoralisation for the individual. In areas like Belfast the situation is only worsened. Food prices and transport fares are far higher than in England, so the desperation is only intensified.

You can't spend all day sitting in a café drinking endless cups of tea or going on a bus ride to while away the time. There are very few leisure facilities in Belfast, lost either through the various bombing campaigns or more simply, like manufacturing industry, disappeared with the de-industrialisation of the area.

Billy Gibson, from a Protestant area, has been unemployed for seven months, after working off and on as a builder. He said, "It's the boredom that gets you—you just sit around at home with nothing to do. You can't afford to go out or anything like that. You can come out



atheist, they would merely reply, "Well, are you a Protestant atheist or a Catholic atheist?"

But the capitalist system which created sectarianism to divide the workers is now producing the very symptoms which lay the basis for future working class unity.

With the deepening crisis of capitalism, mass unemployment, bad housing and poverty-level wages, Protestants and Catholics alike will unite together on common ground against the common enemy of the bosses' system, in the same way they did in the 'thirties, culminating in the general strike of 1932.

The cause of de-industrialisation is the failure of the bosses to reinvest in adequate machinery and technology for their industries, which is especially true of the shipyards.

Although 22% of industry is owned locally—and these are generally small firms dependent on the monopoly giants for raw materials and as such very susceptible to the ever contracting capitalist market—66% of industry is owned by British and American firms; the multinationals. While the small local firms may be able to claim poverty when closing down worksites, the multinationals cannot.

Courtaulds, for example, who were a major employer in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s, claiming to be champions of charity through employing thousands thrown out from the ailing textile and shipbuilding concerns, have long ago started the common spiral of closures and redundancies. Yet, in March 1978, Courtaulds made massive profits of £36,100,000 after tax!

Many of the former major employers like Courtaulds made similar profits—but in the scramble for yet more profit the money was not reinvested in new machinery which as a result made the various companies uncompetitive.

Instead the money went overseas in search of more lucrative projects, or, as is the case for many British firms, into land speculation, office blocks or art treasures—making nice fat profits for the bosses yet producing not one material gain.

The solution to this intensified de-industrialisation by

past governments has been to pump in aid to the area. A few multi-nationals, many of whom made record profit margins over the past few years, accepted these massive grants, paid for by the working class through tax.

But this is of course no solution. A notorious example of the inadequacies of the bosses is that of the American car firm, De Lorean. With the aid of a £52 million grant they are trying to develop a factory in West Belfast. The aim of the Labour government who initiated the deal was to create 2,000 jobs, mainly providing work for the Catholic area of West Belfast. But if completed, the factory will only soak up redundant skilled engineers from former industries.

But it seems De Lorean is doomed to failure anyway—the bosses, in their usual short-sighted manner which they apply to planning industry, intend to produce a car which was designed in 1975 and by today's market standard is already out of date.

As a Wall Street pundit commented in 'The Irish Times' (20 January 1979) De Lorean ought to put "their money into wine, women and song. They'll get the same return and have more fun."

But the failure of all these government-aided ventures is especially grim now that the mad axe-men of the Tory party are in command. A total of 70,000 jobs in Northern Ireland depend directly on government assistance. Sir Keith Joseph's plan to cut off government aid, and of course the cutbacks in the public sector, can only mean more dole fodder.

Some sections of the labour movement have seriously discussed import controls as a means to protect jobs. This is no answer. Besides affecting workers in other countries, it would only provoke retaliation from other capitalist classes. Given the weak position of British capitalism this could only spell disaster for British workers—industry, especially heavy industry such as ship building, needs access to international markets.

As Billy Lynn of Belfast Trades Council pointed out in the 'Militant Irish Monthly' (October '79), "Very few Northern Ireland businessmen want to buy huge oil tankers!"

Swapping British capitalists for Irish capitalists through unification of the country on a capitalist basis would provide no answer either. With unemployment now hovering around 100,000, a high figure given the size of the population, the South is only mirroring the crisis facing its capitalist counterparts in Britain and Europe.

The answer is a socialist plan of production, which is only possible when the control of the economy is in the hands of the labour movement. The first step towards this goal is the nationalisation of the multi-national monopolies which control society and run them under workers' control. Similarly, any smaller firms threatening lay-offs or closure must be nationalised with compensation paid on the basis of proven need.

Only under socialism can the wealth produced by the workers be directed in pursuit of the needs of society—full employment, a shorter working week and a minimum wage level, decent housing and services. This must be the goal of Irish and British workers alike, and is a programme for them to unite upon, against the anarchic misery of capitalism.



HEAT DUST AND DANGER -

Would you work here for 2 per cent?

Steel production is one of the most arduous and dangerous of industries. Three steelworkers here describe their jobs.

Firstly, Brian Roberts, a casting bay man and Bill Thomson, a teemer in Consett talked to John Pickard. Bill Thomson is chairman of ISTC No 1 branch at Consett.

When the steel is tapped from the furnace it is poured into a big ladle, about fifteen foot high and the same across. It weighs 50 tons empty, but full of molten steel, it is about 200 tons.

This ladle is lifted on a crane over the men on the teeming bay.

You can imagine how dangerous it is with 200 tons of molten steel hanging over the men. Sometimes some of the steel splashes over if their is a boil (gas bubbles) in the steel or if there is some dampness.

Sometimes we have to fill several moulds continuously, what we call a flier. There may be a few moulds, say ten or twenty tonners and once the ladle has been opened it sometimes sticks open. Then we have to go from one mould to the next pouring molten steel in one continuous stream. You can imagine when the steel hits the edges of the moulds, it really makes the sparks fly!

Five years ago there was an accident when a mould blew up—that man is still suffering today from deafness after the force of the explosion.

You get enormous heat as well as the dust and fumes.

Kevin Sherrington is ISTC branch secretary at Lackenby BOS Plant. He is a rigger in the Basic Oxygen Steel making plant, where molten iron from the blast furnaces is made into steel.

Everything here is on a giant scale: two ton ladles; huge cranes and machines; a vast building where the roof is lost from sight in dust and gloom.

Men are tiny figures moving in this cavern, lit only by the glow of metal and artificial light. The metal gives off enormous heat but cold winds of winter blow through the plant.

There is no other heat but the steel so you get toasted on one side and frozen on the other—like standing around a picket's brazier.

The molten iron is moved in hot metal ladles and the

There's steel at over 1600 degrees not more than a few feet away from you. Yet at the same time the job requires a great deal of skill and experience.

Then again we sometimes have to do "rimmers". That means we have to put a plate on the top of the mould—around the rim—so that the top of the steel cools from the outside.

It's no easy job, especially for, say, a 20 ton mould. Two men have to lift a plate manually and heave it onto the top of a mould of molten steel! Then we have to pour water onto the top of the plate to cool it down as soon as possible. This is dangerous—water and molten steel must never be allowed to mix.

Our job is the last in the line of steel making. When we are finished, there is no chance to make the steel any better, except by melting down and starting again.

It isn't always easy either. Sometimes you might keep it going for two or three hours with an oxygen pipe. They say that it takes a good teemer to make good steel from bad heat.

All the time this is going on there is the heat. We all have safety suits, visors and gloves, but sometimes it's been hot enough for men to be standing while their safety suits are smouldering!

It's hardly possible to describe the working conditions properly—splashes of molten metal, sparks, the heat sometimes up to 50 or 60 degrees Centigrade, the noise, the fumes. It really has to be experienced to be understood!

Even though we wear safety suits, everyone in the teeming bay has scars, burns around the wrists and the line of your belt—places where the heat gets past the suit.

scum is skimmed off. This produces tiny snowflakes of iron and impurities—kish, which rise, filling the building then float down as they cool.

It's kish with everything! It sticks to the skin. There are men continually sweeping it off the floor.

Like all steelworks there is heat and dirt and underfoot is treacherous. In some parts such as the rolling mills the modern machinery has improved conditions. The use of greater quantities of oxygen has added to the problems of pollution however.

Steel-workers suffer from lung disease to a greater extent than even miners and half have hearing damage.

As well as these conditions we suffer from the problems of shifts. Night, day, week, weekend and week-day have no meaning. The shifts carry on.



A new dole office in the Falls Road—as workers bitterly point out, unemployment is the only 'growth industry' in Belfast.

Photo: MILITANT



dangerous work—a BSC steelmaking plant, not fifty years ago but in 1978

AN INTERNATIONAL FIGHT

Dear Editor,

"Your coverage of the steel strike has been excellent. On the basis of the facts and information you have provided, we passed the following resolution. We ask you to forward it to the executive of the ISTC: "We, the young socialists' group Altona-Altstadt-Nord, wish to express our solidarity with the striking workers of British Steel. This strike is a glowing example of the struggles workers have been forced into by the reactionary policies of Thatcher's government, which politically represents the interests of shareholders as opposed to those who produce the wealth.

The resolution above was also passed unanimously by the SPD [socialist party] Altona-Altstadt branch

THE PICKET LINE - A Driver's view

If there is one thing I dread, it's the picket line.

This newspaper has described the experiences, lessons and attitudes of pickets up and down the country in myriad disputes and, quite properly, saved its venom for the scabs and anti-union elements. But my view of the picket line can often be quite different.

You have been travelling all day, since 5 am, with 20 tons for a factory in the south-east and arrive to find yourself in the middle of a dispute that has nothing, directly at least, to do with you. You phone the gaffer: "I can't get in here, there's a dispute and there's pickets on the gate."

The gaffer: "So what? Just drive in!"

Me: "Don't be bloody silly" (or words to that effect).

Gaffer: "Are you afraid like? Are you a poof or something?"

Me: "No. I only help them out when they're busy. I've

"Your fight is not simply an industrial struggle, but a political fight against the loss of jobs, against the destruction of whole regions for brutal profit interests, and against this government which is in the pay of such interests.

"Your strike is supported by the International Federation of Metalworkers and we, as international socialists, feel likewise committed to support you. The steel industry is sacrificing jobs in many western European countries, in the interests of profit. We would therefore be pleased if you would send us material concerning your strike and working conditions.

-For a victorious strike!

-For the nationalisation of ALL the British steel industry!

-For the democratic control of nationalised industry through the organisation of the labour movement and not through the representatives of big business!

-For a socialist Britain, in a socialist Europe!"

This resolution was passed unanimously by the Altona-Altstadt-Nord Jusos [German SPD Young Socialists], Hamburg.

Yours fraternally
Greg Powell
on behalf of Altona-Altstadt and Altona-Nord Jusos.

never broken a picket line in my life and I'm not starting now. You can come down and drive through if you like!"

At this point, the gaffer starts to intimidate you with innuendo about "not being happy if you bring that load home," "a lot of expense," and "I'll have to re-consider your job if you're going to go round behaving like a Bolshevik." It's no wonder there are more lorry drivers than enough to go around breaking picket lines when they are under that sort of pressure.

The attitude of some pickets is hardly likely to induce a general feeling of fraternity and solidarity either. Acting the hard-case may work with some, but is a red-rag to a person like me—I demand courtesy and to be treated with dignity as I try to treat everybody else.

I remember the summer of '79 at Armstrong Cork Co on the Team Valley at Gateshead, where the AUEW/EETPU were out for 18 weeks, that the pickets were too courteous and humanitarian. I arrived to get some flooring and was told by the pickets that I could "go in if you want, lad, but naturally we'd prefer you not to as you're a local lad."

"What do you mean 'a local lad'?" I asked.

"If lads have come from London or Liverpool we know we're dropping them in the clarts if we refuse them entry—so we let them in." I was incredulous.

I often find that inter-union action falls down. T&GWU

members get no brief from the local office as to behaviour in certain disputes—such as the present steel strike.

The T&GWU has nationally proclaimed support for the steelmen, yet at regional level it has been left to local officials, and many of them have said it is up to the "individual's conscience" whether we observe picket lines—especially "secondary picketing" of private steel plants and stockholders. That is not good enough.

Despite threats from the gaffer, a load can often be disposed of by dumping it at a local haulage contractor's yard until the dispute is settled—and I can usually make my gaffer think twice by saying that if the picket were to be crossed then our company would be forever blacked at that place and its subsidiaries.

If the AUEW or a similar industry-wide union is involved, they should take care to compile all information on strike-breaking by transport firms, black them and make it stick throughout the nation. There are enough union bureaucrats in every union to ensure this sort of effective action is undertaken sharply and easily.

For too long decent, union-minded lorry drivers have been stuck like a gissie in the middle; a little education and a lot of campaigning could soon put that right!

Bob Stothard
[T&GWU 8/33]

"Steel workers will never be the same"

Scunthorpe steelworkers have been picketing Mistley quay in Essex, to halt steel imports. All the pickets have been put up by local trade unionists; the Labour Party Young Socialists' meeting room has been set up as a strike headquarters, complete with telephone, TV, and cooker.

After a 'Militant' public meeting in Ipswich, Michael Winn and Bob Markham (ISTC Scunthorpe) spoke to Lynn Walsh:

"We arrived from Scunthorpe on the Saturday night. We got to the digs and got accepted as family straight away. We were a bit surprised really; a lot of places that we go, it takes time to get to know the people, but we were accepted immediately. They were all members of the Labour Party.

Have steel-workers' attitudes changed since the strike?

"We have been pretty moderate in the past, but now we are going to fight against anything that's going to get our backs up. I agreed to the strike call in the start, because I think that it was an insult to us to say that 2% was all they could offer, when they already owed us that from the previous year—an insult to our intelligence really!

What about members' involvement?

"There's a lot out on picket duty but there's a lot that will not turn out for any meetings.

Bob Haggerty, convenor of the Scunthorpe strike committee, writes:

"Being involved in a strike for the first time in their lives, many steelworkers from Scunthorpe have had their eyes opened. I'm talking about the flying pickets who have come down to East Anglia to try and stop the scabs from moving steel into this country.

"The people have been wonderful—or should I say

About a fifth of the people turn out. But on picket duty, our branch turns out quite well.

"The people who have been out on picket duty, are determined to fight for whatever they can get. These people that stop at home—I think they're just hanging on the backs of those who are prepared to fight.

"You get one side of the story from the press, they give their view but they won't let the unions or anyone else give their view. They print it from their side, the government's side: it's distorted, the news that you're reading.

"I am much more involved in politics now. Before I never had any political inclination at all, I just thought that no matter who was in power, they just look after themselves, don't look after the workers whatsoever. At the meeting tonight, I listened to the talk and it's certainly changed my attitude towards politics.

"I entirely agree with what the Militant says. When I get back home I'll join the Labour Party. I just wish I could have brought more people down, I wish there'd

the working class people. I cannot praise too highly both the moral and financial support.

"I feel I must mention the trade unionists and Labour Party members in Ipswich. They have made a great impression on our lads and I feel sure their example of true socialism will bear fruit on our members. The rank and file have rallied to our cause. I wish the full-time officials of the T&GWU had reacted as positively as some of their

been more ISTC members at the meeting; if the ISTC members come to one of your meetings, I think they'd get a lot of knowledge from what they hear."

What do you think of the run-down of the steel industry?

"If there's big redundancies in Scunthorpe, it's going to be a dead town, because there's only the steel industry. It's going to be a hard fight, but I hope the union wins it—puts redundancies out altogether.

Were you surprised by this strike?

"Well I was surprised, because I thought it would be called off at the eleventh hour. I thought the union would just give in. I was pleased, because 2% is no good for me nor anybody else.

"I think we should hold out for 20% and no strings. Civil servants are going to get a good rise, water workers can get a good rise, why can't steel workers?"

"The MPs get 70% and the chairman Charles Villiers got between £5,000 and £7,000; he didn't say they couldn't afford to pay him, he just took it. I think they should give him his cards, the same as they're trying to do to us. Make him redundant, he's no damn good.

What do you think will happen in the negotiations now?

"Well, the last figure I heard was 12%, and that's no good. It's 20% and no strings.

"I don't want to give up a man's wage for me to get a rise; what's the good of two men doing three men's work? The BSC's gaining there, because every time they give us productivity deals, the worker get 40% and BSC gets 60%."

branch secretaries and shop stewards, who have given us wonderful co-operation.

"The true lesson for steel workers is that never again should we allow workers to act in isolation. We must show solidarity and support each other in the struggles ahead—for make no mistake, this is just the beginning.

"This Tory government is out to destroy the workers of this country; let's show them we can meet the challenge in every aspect."

Rotherham pickets halt a lorry—drivers can be trade unionists too!

Photo: MILITANT





AFGHANISTAN

Marxists could not support the Russian bureaucracy's invasion because of its reactionary consequences internationally. But once Russian forces had gone in, it would have been wrong to call for their withdrawal.



The first of a two-part reply by Lynn Walsh explaining 'Militant's' position on Afghanistan

small country.

But developments in a single country, especially such a small under-developed country with a tiny working class, cannot be viewed in isolation. If it were a question of a healthy workers' state sending political and even military support to a revolution led by a Marxist party with overwhelming mass support, it would be an entirely different matter.

But the social transformation in Afghanistan has taken place under the direction of a bureaucratic elite. In fact, the reason that Amin's regime faced difficulties, and was in danger of being brought down by rebel and counter-revolutionary forces, was precisely because of the arbitrary, undemocratic manner in which it attempted to implement social changes.

In fact, the Russian bureaucracy intervened to try to moderate the regime, to slow down the social changes, to make a compromise with the mullahs, thereby establishing a wider basis for the regime.

A bonapartist regime such as that headed by Amin and now by Karmal, despite its socially progressive features, can have little appeal to the workers of the advanced capitalist countries, or even to the workers and peasants of the under-developed countries of the ex-colonial world.

On the other hand, it is clear that the main reason for the intervention of Russian forces was not at all socialist internationalism. The soviet bureaucracy acted to preserve its own power and bureaucratic interests. They could not allow the defeat of a proletarian bonapartist regime in a neighbouring state, which would be a severe blow to their power and prestige.

The Moscow leadership was also frightened of the effect of a protracted civil war in Afghanistan on the Soviet Union's own Moslem population.

Because of its military-bureaucratic character, the Russian invasion has provided the capitalist press and television of the world with a golden opportunity to step up propaganda against the so-called "socialism" of Russia and eastern Europe, using the monstrous bureaucracy and the criminal policies of Stalinism in an attempt to discredit the genuine ideas of socialism among workers throughout the world.

The reactionary international repercussions of invasion completely outweigh any immediate gains in Afghanistan.

When confronted with comparable events in 1939, Leon Trotsky made it absolutely clear that, while it was necessary for Marxists to defend the gains of the

planned economy in Russia, the international repercussions of Moscow's foreign policies were far more important than any secondary gains in this or that part of the world.

Trotsky accepted, for instance, that the Soviet Union's invasion of eastern Poland was progressive in that, despite the military-bureaucratic character of the occupation, it brought about the 'expropriation of the expropriators'. Landlordism and capitalism were abolished, and a nationalised planned economy introduced.

But, as Trotsky said, this was only one side of the question: "In order to gain the possibility of occupying Poland through a military alliance with Hitler, the Kremlin for a long time deceived, and continues to deceive, the masses in the USSR and in the whole world, and has thereby brought about the complete disorganisation of the ranks of its own Communist International."

"The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or any other area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in consciousness and organisation of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to world revolution..."

"The stratification of the means of production is, as we said, a progressive measure. But its progressiveness is relative; its specific weight depends on the sum total of all the other factors..."

("The USSR in War" in Leon Trotsky: 'In Defence of Marxism' [Merit 1965] page 23).

The reactionary effects of the Russian bureaucracy's invasion of Afghanistan are already clearly apparent.

In the first place, the Afghanistan crisis has provided a great diversion from internal problems for Carter, Thatcher, and other capitalist leaders. In particular, it has been used by Carter and by Thatcher to justify enormous increases in arms expenditure.

The past record of imperialism, particularly US imperialism's intervention in South East Asia and other regions, has been pushed into the background. For the advanced workers, with a knowledge of recent history, the hypocrisy of imperialism is clearly apparent. But as far as wider layers of workers are

concerned, and especially the middle class, the capitalist class has been able to use Afghanistan to whip up hysterical propaganda against the Stalinist states.

After its defeat in Vietnam, with the growth of mass working class opposition to the dirty war, and the demoralisation and disintegration of America's own armed forces, US imperialism was for a period unable to intervene against revolutionary developments in the colonial and semi-colonial world.

US imperialism was, for instance, powerless to prevent the abolition of capitalism and landlordism in Angola and Mozambique, after the collapse of Portuguese imperialism. America was also unable to intervene directly in Ethiopia, where the Derge established a proletarian bonapartist regime with backing from the Russian leadership.

But the Afghanistan crisis has erupted at a new point in international relations. The American ruling class, alarmed by events in Iran and by the threat to its oil supplies in the Middle East, have chosen to take a stand on this issue. This stand has been determined by international considerations for the US, not the position in Afghanistan. The country was economically and politically dominated by the Soviet Union long before the proletarian bonapartist regime came to power, and the Americans knew very well that the Amin regime relied on Russian aid long before the tanks rolled across the border.

There is no question, at this stage, of war between the United States and Russia over Afghanistan. But the US has chosen this incident, at this point in time, to issue a direct warning to the Russian bureaucracy, particularly to warn them against any intervention in Iran, or Pakistan, or in other areas of the Indian sub-continent or the Middle East.

The fact that this was the first time since the immediate post-war period that Russian forces have intervened directly in a country outside the Stalinist bloc—the armed support for the liberation movement in Angola came via Cuban troops—has provided the United States with the excuse it needed to take a stand. It has taken full advantage of the shock that this armed invasion caused as far as 'public opinion' is concerned.

**NEXT WEEK:
Who would gain if Russian troops pulled out? Why Marxists cannot support the chorus of calls for withdrawal of Soviet forces**

Dear Comrade,

I have just read Ted Grant's article on Afghanistan [Militant 486, 18 January]. The article provided useful material on the background to the invasion and the reasons why the Russian bureaucracy intervened. I found that I agreed with the points being made but one sentence I found rather confusing.

Ted says that the demand by the imperialist powers supported by the Communist Party and the Tribune group for the withdrawal of the

Russian troops from Afghanistan is 'utopian'. Utopian it may be in the sense that Russia is not going to withdraw the troops because of grain sanctions, calls for the boycott of the Olympics or the movement of British and American ships. However, does that mean that 'Militant' is against the withdrawal of the troops, having quite rightly condemned the invasion?

I can see that if the Russian troops were withdrawn the Afghanistan regime of Karmal would soon collapse and there would be an almost

inevitable bloodbath and return to feudal landowning and backwardness that has characterised Afghanistan until the April 1978 coup. This would justify support for the troops being there now they have invaded. Is this the position that Militant is putting forward?

This is an important question as there is considerable debate within the labour movement about the intervention of Russian troops.

Yours fraternally
Roy Bentley
Banbury CLP

From the point of view of abstract logic, this position may appear to be "inconsistent". But it is the only position that takes account of the real situation from the point of view of the international working class.

As Ted Grant's article pointed out, taken in isolation, the Russian intervention in Afghanistan was a progressive move. In spite of the bureaucratic, military character of the intervention, the soviet bureaucracy prevented the downfall of a proletarian bonapartist regime that had presided over the abolition of landlordism and capitalism, and had begun to implement radical social and economic reforms.

In itself this was another blow to world imperialism, and established the development of historically progressive social relations in this

the withdrawal of Russian forces, which would open up the risk of Afghanistan's proletarian bonapartist regime being overthrown, would be to side with the forces of the counter revolution.

Roy has indeed drawn the right conclusion from Ted's article. Marxists could not support the Russian bureaucracy's invasion of Afghanistan, especially because of its reactionary consequences internationally. Once Russian forces had occupied the country, however, it would have been entirely wrong for Marxists to call for the withdrawal of Russian troops.

Roy Bentley's letter raises valuable points of clarification, and 'Militant' welcomes letters like this.

The invasion created a new situation. To call for



SRI LANKA

GENERAL STRIKE DEMANDED TO BRING DOWN REACTIONARY GOVERNMENT

This was the second conference of the Nava Sama Samaja Party [New Socialist Party]—formerly known as the LSSP [New Leadership] following the split two years ago in the Lanka Sama Samaja Party [Ceylon Socialist Party]. Already the NSSP has been propelled to the front line in the struggles of the working class to resist the attacks of the crystalising bonapartist dictatorship of President J R Jayawardene of the United National Party.

One third of the organised working class belong to trade unions affiliated to the

Our Correspondent Reports from the recent Conference of the Nama Sama Samaja Party, Sri Lanka.

NSSP federations—the Government Clerical Service Union, United Federation of Labour and Government Federation of Labour. According to conservative estimates the Party has about 25,000 sympathisers.

Over two hundred delegates assembled at the New Town Hall for three days, hammering out the Party programme and streamlining its organisational structure.

The conference resolved to mobilise the working class and the national minorities in a hartal (general strike and mass demonstrations) to bring down the reactionary UNP government, preparing

the way with rallies and token general strikes organised through the Joint Trade Union Action Committee, in combination with the "People's Committees" which mobilise the peasants, smallholders, national minorities, etc.

In the international debate, the NSSP reaffirmed its solidarity with the Marxist tendencies struggling within the mass workers' parties of the world to win political influence and leadership—a task which the NSSP has already gone a long way to achieve.

The Conference took place against a background of growing class polarisation. In its advertisements luring foreign capital to Sri Lanka's new Free Trade Zone, the government offers investors tax exemptions, a free licence to

shift their capital in and out, and the cheapest skilled labour force in the whole world. The rights won over decades of struggle by the trade unions and the old LSSP are being savagely eroded, including free food rations and trade union freedoms.

The government employees have been issued a decree cutting their annual paid holidays from 45 to 21 days! When the trade unions responded with the most mild and passive of protests—lunch-hour picketing with placards in the doorways of their workplaces—they were brutally assaulted. Police thugs attacked Maulanna, the SLFP trade union leader, with knives, clubs and bicycle chains, and he is still gravely ill.

At the headquarters of the Government Clerical Service Union, police baton-charged pickets and broke the shoulder of the union president, Don Savanadasa. At the Central Bank, several workers have been arrested for attempting to defend themselves against UNP thugs, and the entire union executive was indicted (suspended from employment).

On 10th January, as reported already in 'Militant', after a provocateur had tossed a small smoke-bomb into the street, the police used the excuse to raid the GCSU and arrest Savanadasa and Gunasena Mahanama, the GCSU General Secretary, under the Terrorism Act. These comrades achieved a great victory in being granted bail after mass protests and the police appear to have given up the attempt to imprison them without charge or trial. Both these comrades were elected to the new Central Committee of the NSSP.

It is clear that the battle lines are being drawn for the biggest clash yet, as the



T A Nandasena, Secretary, Local Government Clerical Service Federation

government drags itself to the confrontation from which it has shrunk for so long. It cannot hope to achieve its utopian dream of turning Sri Lanka into another millionaire's paradise like Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan or South Korea, while the labour movement remains undefeated.

Thus, the president ominously and provocatively commented on the peaceful picketing as follows: "These people would like the authorities to open fire and create a bloody revolutionary situation over the lives of innocent people."

Obediently taking their cue, the police chiefs handed over to each police officer 20 rounds of ammunition and gave instructions that any demonstrations arising out of the JTUAC rally of 17th January, at which 7-8,000 workers attended, must be curbed if necessary with bullets. As it turned out, no pretext arose.

But the trigger-happy police were itching for a fight. On the very day following the NSSP Conference, they launched a pogrom with rifles and Sten-guns in the Muslim ghetto of Slave Island, the area where the NSSP has its central headquarters.

The UNP President is a master of hypocrisy, and he had tried to divert attention from these major cuts in living standards with a widely heralded distribution of free school textbooks. He professed ignorance at the identity of the instigators of the armed attack on pickets and claimed that the police guns on Slave Island had "gone off accidentally." He has promised "punishment of those found to be responsible."

But the police on Slave

Island are confined to barracks and dare not show their faces. The area is patrolled by Air Force troops in jeeps and armoured cars. Every police station in Colombo is protected by a truckload of troops!

Unlike the rich Muslim merchants, the Muslims in the slum ghettos are the poorest, the smallest minority, and hitherto the most political backward community. They are traditional UNP supporters. But when the UNP Muslim leader Kitchilan visited the area he was beaten up by angry slim-dwellers and the police were chased out of the ghetto with sticks, stones and bottles. Two police officers were killed.

The Muslims' illusions that "free enterprise" can turn them too into rich merchants are crumbling, just as are those of the Tamils in the Tamil United Liberation Front, the Tamil capitalist opposition party, of which the leader Amirthilingam hastened to state that "the government is not to blame for those price increases."

If that is the kind of resistance the new regime meets from the backward and small Muslim minority, let it see what happens when it tries to take on the trade union movement!

The slogans of the NSSP—for a workers' united front, a general strike and hartal to overthrow the government under one red banner of all left parties—are finding a louder echo every day among workers, peasants, tea plantation serfs, the Tamil and Muslim minorities, and all the oppressed people of Sri Lanka, who are currently being hawked around the world slave market as cheap labour for the multinationals.



After mass protests, two leaders of the Government Clerical Service Federation were released from jail [above]

Dutschke and the limitations of student radicalism

The experiences of Rudi Dutschke showed the limitations of student radicalism when they are isolated from the actions of the labour movement. Dutschke, a prominent figure in German student politics in the late 1960s, died recently, his politics in a blind alley.

The mainly middle-class radical student movement had split three ways: some in despair at mass action had turned to individual terrorism, others formed their own sects outside the labour movement and others drifted towards the German Social-Democratic Party [SPD].

Dutschke unfortunately never saw the necessity for painstaking work within the SPD. Although sincere

By Evelyn
Löffelad and
Manfred Moll
(SPD Jusos)

in his desire for socialism, sincerity is not enough. He continually looked for a short-cut to the socialist transformation of society.

His approach in the late '60s alienated many young workers and apprentices. In the following article two members of the SPD youth assess Dutschke's political activities.

Dutschke was a founder member of the SDS (German socialist student federation)

in 1964. For the first time since the economic upswing of the 1950s, the German economy suffered rising inflation and unemployment, resulting in growing support for the social-democratic opposition party, the SPD.

It was therefore a tremendous disappointment when in 1966 the SPD joined the Conservative CDU in a "Grand Coalition". This was the economic background whereby Dutschke came to lead opposition movements in the late 1960s, part of an international wave of discontent amongst mainly middle-class students and radical youth.

As well as demonstrating against the "Grand Coalition", the SDS campaigned on the basis of "hatred for the establishment, for a long march through the educa-

tional institutions and opposition to NATO and the Vietnam war."

Dutschke himself was shot and seriously wounded in April 1968, resulting in a wave of demonstrations in many German towns. Printing workers blacked the Springer-press ('Bild') whose articles criticised Dutschke and the student opposition.

However, whereas the student rebellions of 1968 in France and in Britain were coupled with mass opposition by the labour movement, this was far from the case in Germany. Some of the activities of Dutschke met opposition from the leadership and members of the labour movement.

Some of Dutschke's middle-class associates in 1968 turned in disillusionment to the gun and formed what

later became the Red Army Fraction terrorist groups (Baader-Meinhof group), trying to smash the German state machinery in armed battle, isolated from the masses.

In recent years Dutschke participated in discussions on the need to form a new party to the left of the SPD leadership. Nothing came of the discussions, whilst an increased militancy within the labour movement centred around questions of wages and the 35-hour week.

In 1979 Dutschke began to help the "Green Lists" (similar to, but much stronger than the Ecology Party in Britain) in their election campaigns. Undoubtedly some radical youth will turn to the "greens", as an alternative to the "more of the same" politics offered by

Helmut Schmidt's governing SPD.

The threat of a Conservative CDU/CSU victory under Strauss, however, will probably squeeze out the smaller parties in favour of the SPD, but a victory for Schmidt will be in spite of his policies, hand-in-hand with the pro-capitalist liberals (FDP) in coalition.

In a recent article, Rudi Dutschke said that despite the intimate relationship between Schmidt and capital, "no one can deny that within the SPD there remains a proletarian, anti-capitalist section."

In this election year, the German labour movement must not only stop Strauss, but also build on this "proletarian, anti-capitalist" tradition, mobilising its ranks around a Marxist programme against German Capital, returned to the socialist and Leninist traditions of the founders of our movement. ♪

LETTERS

Mrs Thatcher's sick note

Dear Comrades

What a life! It's January and everyone is spluttering germs around, as colds and sore throats do their rounds.

Few people dream of taking a day off (despite the Tory image that everyone is a potential sponger) especially those who are married. Even single people think twice.

I don't see any MPs being docked for the first three days or senior civil servants and all the other cronies at the top. It's nothing other than blatant class legislation. And now the Tories are ushering in such extreme measures as taxation of sickness and unemployment benefits and saying that prominent members of the last Labour government were contemplating similar measures. If so it's an outrage.

It's said that 85% of workers are covered today by some form of sickness scheme but these vary widely from 6 weeks to 26 weeks and are dependent on length of service. Few workers are away any length of time; it's only when there is a serious or long-term illness that workers come a cropper and discover how limited the sickness benefits are, when what limited savings they have are eaten away.

The future looks very bleak, there's no way out, no escape from the collapse of British capitalism—except by building on socialist policies in the Labour Party and turning it into a mass party to sweep the Tories and their masters into the dustbin of history.

Yours fraternally
Mike Singleton
Hove CLP

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

The weakest hit worst

Dear Sir

I would like to draw to your attention a very small matter happening in Waltham Forest.

In March the three little Development and Assessment Groups remaining in the borough will be closed. The Groups cater for under-fives who have been referred by social workers or health visitors, having been identified as needing care, help and assessment.

These toddlers do not have nursery places so they have no hope of help from here. They will be left without any guidance and their welfare will be jeopardised.

The total cost to the social services is the two part-time salaries of the nursery staff who run the Group, as the three weekly sessions are held in the free local health clinic premises, which is lit and heated anyway.

This petty cut in local government spending is directed towards an unprotected group in society, the under-fives, and an already disadvantaged group of toddlers into the bargain—defined by professional people as needing help.

Yours faithfully
I. Donnelly

Spending to destroy

Dear Comrades

The budget for the Carter administration was reviewed in the 'Financial Times' on 29th January. Carter, the global peacemaker, is to increase spending on defence in 1980/81 to a staggering \$158,700 million.

It has been estimated that the Russian government will top Carter's spending by 30%. So 1980/81 will see about \$360,000 million spent to protect the interests of American imperialism and the Russian bureaucracy.

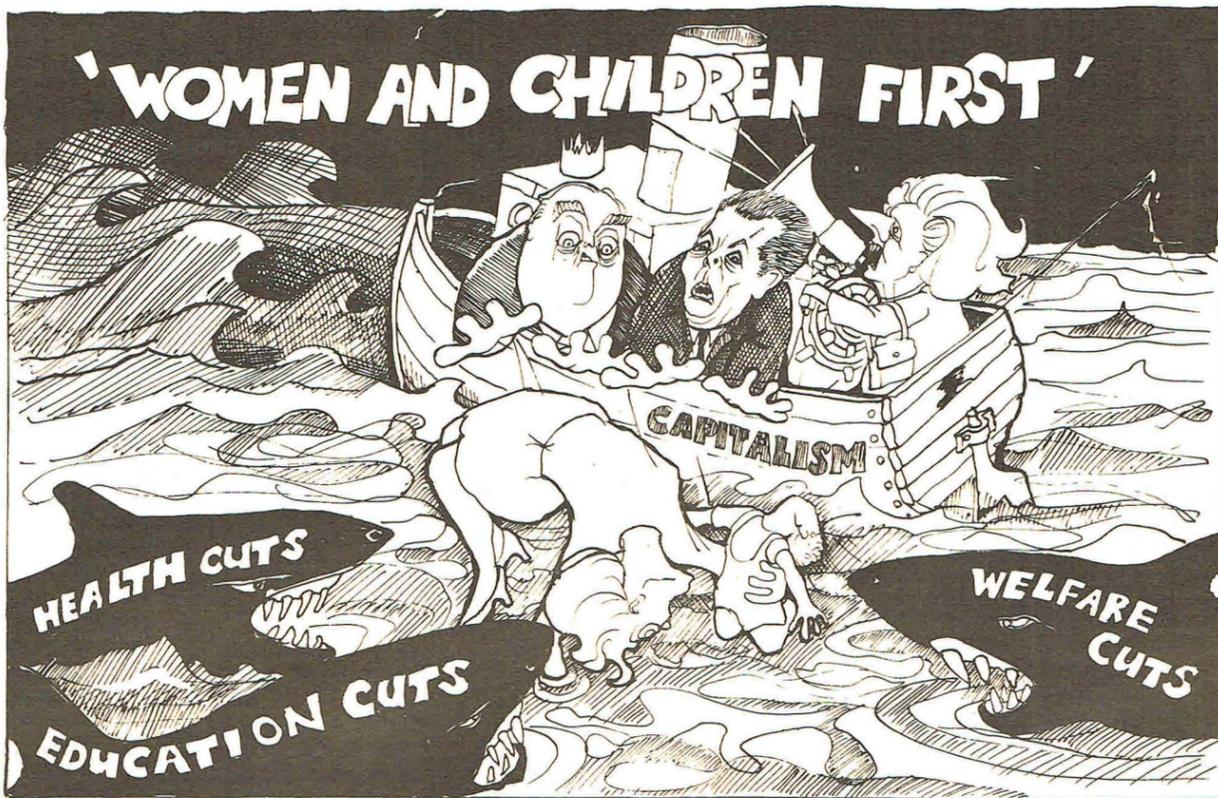
The hope for the 1980s must be that there will be significant steps taken towards creating a world economic system where sums of this magnitude will be used to eradicate want, instead of building to destroy.

Fraternally
Bob Wylie
East Kilbride LP

Dear Comrades

As a result of unforeseen circumstances, the coach planned to take a delegation of Labour youth from East Lancashire to the February 2nd 'Youth Against the Tories' rally, had to be cancelled. Feeling disappointed after all the hard work and preparation, and having a pile of extra 'Militants' on our hands, the three of us decided to venture into Blackburn for the first time and do a public paper sale.

We tried to keep each others' spirits up by saying that to sell a total of five would be satisfactory and by



Birmingham children can't win

Dear Comrades

The letter the 'Guardian' didn't print (surprise, surprise):

Sir:

As a Birmingham teacher and parent, I must comment on the reported statements from Birmingham's Education Committee chairman, Councillor Scrimshaw.

Your article (13.11.79) passed off "little more than £360,000 off capitation, £200,000 off maintenance," etc. etc. almost as a benefit! Some effects of these cuts have been: rising fives no longer admitted, delays in getting exercise books (ordered months in advance), delays of months over non-

essential repairs, sacked needlework teachers.

I do not accept that falling rolls mean that teaching places are automatically lost, even if through natural wastage. Falling intakes should be a golden opportunity for reducing class sizes.

When I joined the Authority five years ago, we were told that class sizes remained high because teachers were not available. Now that thousands of teachers are on the dole, we apparently cannot afford classrooms and equipment. Birmingham children cannot win either way!

They are at the mercy of an economic system over which they, least of all, have any

control. I write openly as a socialist who sees an economic crisis caused by businessmen who make sure that their children are not educated in the state sector.

The only reason Councillor Scrimshaw can confidently state that there is little opposition to the cuts is because the Birmingham Committee has not yet declared the details of the April 1980 cuts and is unlikely to do so before January. Using the labour and trade union movement I shall vigorously oppose present, and future, cuts and their effects.

Yours comradely
Pauline Gorman
Birmingham

SELLING THE 'MILITANT'

Get out on the streets—

Dear Comrades

Laden down with her shopping, an old lady ambled up to a 'Militant' seller. "I'll have one of those, it can't go on like this," she said, "something's got to be done."

Millions of working people are coming to the same conclusion. Redundancies, cuts, falling living standards and only "more to come" to

look forward to. More and more people are now looking for a way out.

Now more than ever 'Militant' supporters need to get out on the streets to sell the paper, to win workers to the ideas of Marxism. We have to build a mass socialist Labour Party in order to overthrow capitalism, the source of ever-increasing pov-

erty and misery for millions of workers.

On a bitterly cold Saturday morning it took an old lady, struggling with her shopping, to remind us of the tasks ahead and to put into words the mood of the whole working class.

Fraternally
J Sharpe
Bristol NE Labour Party

—you'll soon forget about the cold!

competing against each other as to who would sell the first paper or the most. Having found the best place and lifted our confidence, realising that our ideas were the best and that we had a duty to take these ideas to people, rather than slouch embarrassingly in shop doorways expecting them to approach us, we started.

We'd been prepared for arguments, but not for the one that actually did occur between ourselves about who had sold the first paper—three sold in five minutes!

From then on we completely forgot about the cold. A whole spectrum of people

bought from us: a woman who said she'd never seen the paper before but had been attracted by the headline 'Fight the Tories—Fight for Jobs', two or three local activists who commented on our coverage and slipped us an extra 20p for the fighting fund.

We sold to a couple of punks, girls from the local women's movement, a Labour councillor, even older Labour Party members who said how pleased they were to see us taking up the fight not only with the Tories but inside the labour movement as well. We even had a sale to a businessman who said his

interest in the 'Militant' had been stirred up by the 'Daily Telegraph' and 'The Times'.

Having sold 20 papers in an hour we decided to stop—because our regular customers would have been angry to be without their 'Militant'. Nearly fifty pence had been made for the fighting fund and our spirits lifted. We have now decided to up our paper order and make this sale a regular weekly date. Funny really how from a dialectical point of view, 'an ill wind can do somebody a lot of good'.

Fraternally regards
Simon Bush, Peter and Rossina Harris
Blackburn Labour Party

Denning's principles of law-making

Dear Militant

I recently came across a statement made by an American judge in 1892 in which he described a principle of American law. "Unquestionably, so long as men must earn a living for their families and themselves by labour, there must be...oppression of the working classes."

American and English law are based on the same legal principles, so I wonder if this is the principle on which Lord Denning based his recent decision against "secondary" picketing? It was an attempt to prevent workers from effectively fighting the oppression which is an inherent part of the capitalist system he represents.

Yours fraternally
Dave Archibald
Newcastle West LPYS

Thanks to Lord Underhill...

Dear Comrades

When Reg Underhill came to speak at a meeting organised by the Local Government Committee, little did we know what a boost to our paper sales it would prove to be! At a meeting of about 30 people we managed to sell seventeen copies of the paper and six 'Irish Militants', and even managed to get Reg to buy one ("Let's see what you're up to").

Hopefully the other people understood the ideas put forward in the pages of 'Militant' better than Comrade Underhill. I'm sure many other sellers, like me, would like to thank him for advertising the true ideas of socialism in such a magnificent way!

Fraternally
Soo Norris
Romford CLP

PS Unfortunately when pressed for a donation towards the paper, he declined!

SUPPORT YOUR PAPER!

This week's total of £1,666 is the weekly amount needed to reach our 12 April target.

Individual donations have made up part of this, such as £40 and £10 respectively from London students, P Mumford and G Reilly. Another London student, M Page, sent us £20 with the note that wished us success, although he does not necessarily agree with all our ideas.

Supporters in East London have been speeding ahead this week (see chart): by way of example: £60 from G Macdonald, £1.50 from housewife Joan Barratt, £5 from student D Hinds and £16 from sale of badges, and nearly £6 from S Feely, Dagenham LPYS.

West London supporters didn't do so well, but £1 came from a Northolt pensioner who lost a bet that the 2 February demo meeting wouldn't fill Central Hall.

"Please find enclosed cheques for £96.42—raised at a Militant meeting in Leices-

By Steve Cawley

ter," writes Heather Rawling, "the IOUs will be forwarded as soon as possible. The meeting was on 'What Militant Stands For' and Ted Grant spoke. It was the best attended meeting held in Leicester and clearly indicates not only growing support for our ideas but also where our money really comes from!"

Tyneside readers' contributions included tenners from Newcastle North LPYS, M Howard and D Walkden, and proceeds from a pie and pea supper together with £32.80 from supporters at DHSS Central Office, mostly this week from M Coulson, P Mahoney and M Holmes.

From the North West, P Wrightson (£5), Stockport banner-makers (£15), three Mersey tobacco workers (£1 each) and Cllr P Lloyd and P Holt (POEU) made up nearly £40, and of course we had the

Build Militant

Area	received	Proportion of first quarter's target	Target 1st Qtr	Target for year
Eastern	392		1,000	5,000
Hants & IOW	211		760	3,800
East Midlands	232		780	3,900
Humberside	62		500	2,500
London East	800		1,240	6,200
London West	354		940	4,700
London South	265		800	4,000
Manchester & Lancs	102		1,020	5,100
Merseyside	353		1,200	6,000
Northern	534		1,460	7,300
Scotland East	15		640	3,200
Scotland West	116		1,000	5,000
Southern	504		1,180	5,900
South West	82		640	3,200
Wales East	71		560	2,800
Wales West	87		620	3,100
West Midlands	371		1,800	9,000
Yorkshire	270		1,460	7,300
Others	403		2,400	12,000
Total received	5224		20,000	100,000

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

usual trade unionists' donations on top.

ISTC members who contributed this week included pickets stationed in Birmingham (£9 from Teesside members), also £1.50 from Cardiff LPYS member Andy Gill.

"How long will the Tories last?" the subject of a meeting in Sunderland leaving us with a collection averaging out at over £1 a head! Other money came from meetings from Wakefield (Trotsky rally), Southend, and the first Militant meeting in Swindon—a total of £80!

Incidentally, a school student, J Paul, contributed £5 to the Southend total!

Thanks to I Ronald (Hemel Hempstead), G Duntsbourne (Cheltenham AUEW), the compilers of 'Militant Index' (Birmingham), sellers of

THIS WEEK £1,666

'Penguin Marx' (Glasgow), organisers of a social, and cartoon book sellers (Hampshire) and collecting tin carriers all over, complete our 'mysterious' sources of finance.

Let us know what extra plans are under way—Brad-

ford have a housewarming social and jumble sale soon, for instance, and there's more money coming too from Manchester.

Of course, it will need determination to first keep to the £1.666 weekly figure till April, and then to up it

slightly so as to reach the full £100,000: the sort of determination now evidently felt by steel workers on strike, such as Bro. Cowell from Port Talbot, whose family get £20 social security and £8 tax rebate. He told the 'Sunday Mirror' last week, "I'd stay out indefinitely." He obviously feels there's no alternative at present.

If you want to see Militant expand its coverage and circulation, there's no alternative for you but to send us a donation on a regular basis. It's obvious from reports that the mood against the Tories is hardening daily.

Militant is needed as never before.

Read 'Militant'...

"I've seen the Militant outside the strike HQ in Scunthorpe, and there are articles pinned up in the strike headquarters here. A lot of the articles I read I hadn't known before—it gives an insight into the way the country is run.

"You get one side of the story from the press, they give their view but they won't let the unions or anyone else give their view. They print it from their side, the government's side: it's distorted, the news that you're reading."

Michael Winn
ISTC Scunthorpe



... sell 'Militant'

"In Southampton over the past few weeks the Militant sellers decided to start a paper round on a local estate.

"We produced a leaflet to accompany back copies of the papers on the press attacks and a 'What We Stand For' leaflet, explaining the need for a revolutionary newspaper and stating we would be back in a few days to answer questions and discuss our politics.

"We tentatively distributed 40 papers and a few days later

called back. We were pleasantly surprised by the response.

"12 papers were sold with a distinct possibility of these becoming regular sales. At most of the houses we called to we received a positive response. We found that the occupants were willing to chat and find more about the paper.

"Also we produced a leaflet for regular buyers asking for regular donations for the fighting fund. We got prom-

ises of extras of 35p and 20p per week.

"We have also decided to start a regular street sale in one of the main shopping centres in Southampton. As yet sales have been slow, but this is understandable. The paper and ourselves have to be seen in the precinct for a while before people get used to the idea."

By Pat Blatch
(Southampton Labour Party)

ads

CLASSIFIED: 5p per word, minimum ten words

SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.

All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY

WHAT WE STAND FOR MEETINGS

BASILDON

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

NEWHAM

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

MILITANT MEETINGS

CPSA P&T Special Conference Militant Readers Meeting. 'What Militant Stands For' Speakers: Steve Higham (CPSA P&T group Liverpool) Gerry Lerner, Paul Crane (Blackpool LPYS) Chairman: Dave Bell (CPSA P&T group executive) Saturday February 16th, Labour Rooms, Blackpool.

BLACKPOOL Militant Marxist Discussion Meeting. 'Muslim World in Turmoil' Monday February 25th 7.30 pm Contact Ken Taylor Blackpool 52279 for details.

CLASSIFIED

STRATHCLYDE Militant Supporters' draw results: 10th February 1st Prize: 23+30, 2nd prize 17+21

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

SOCIALIST SONGBOOK

(New printing). Only 40p, single copies post paid 50p. Bulk orders for 30p each plus p+s age. From Bryan Beckingham, 62 Haverstock Road, Bris 4.

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



LEYLAND - A FIGHT ON TWO FRONTS

Once again the bosses' propaganda machine has been wheeled out to try to brainwash the shopfloor at Longbridge not to take strike action.

**By a T&GWU
member
BL Longbridge**

The AUEW's inquiry into the sacking of Derek Robinson has, after three months, finally come out in his favour. But the Leyland management are still determined not to take him back. "Get Lost Robbo" was how the 'Sun', in its classic journalistic style, put it.

This is not, as the press would have us believe, a personal conflict between Edwardes and Robinson. The dismissal of the convenor at British Leyland's biggest plant is a savage attack on the shop stewards' movement and on trade unionism in Leyland. And it doesn't stop there.

Judging by the rapturous response Edwardes got at the CBI—the bosses' union—conference, if he is successful his example will be followed in the rest of industry too. That's why Derek Robinson must be reinstated, not just as a Leyland employee but as a shop steward and convenor.

It has now been left to the Birmingham West District Committee of the AUEW to organise calling out their members at Longbridge. If the Longbridge engineers do strike to protect their basic trade union rights, however, the battle cannot be left just to the AUEW or to Longbridge alone.

An all-Leyland strike was undoubtedly developing in November in response to Robinson's dismissal. If the

union leaders had shown the same determination as the shopfloor and called an official strike, rather than using the inquiry to postpone the day of judgement, Edwardes would have been forced to back down. Not even this Tory government would have allowed him to carry out his empty threat of closing the whole of Leyland.

Now there can be no prevarication—a company-wide strike is the only way to teach Edwardes that he cannot ride rough-shod over car workers.

Unfortunately, the AUEW executive seems to be going out of its way to pour cold water on Leyland workers' militancy. Although they found that Robinson was unfairly dismissed, they have not called out their members in the rest of Leyland, nor are they asking the T&GWU and other Leyland unions to take action with them.

The Executive came out against the sacking on the grounds that disciplinary procedure had technically been breached. They made no mention of the threat to the basic right to organise, or that Robinson, as the elected chairman of the Leyland combine, had every right to put his name to a document expressing the views of the Combine Committee as a whole—rejection of closures and unemployment.

Apparently, to reject the Edwardes' Plan was not in line with AUEW policy. How



Derek Robinson—he must be reinstated

Photo: J Sturrock (Report) II

can 50,000 redundancies be acceptable to a union that submitted a motion to the Labour Party conference condemning "the present high rate of unemployment especially among young people, and warns the Conservative government that the labour movement will not tolerate any increase in the number of people unemployed."?

The company use as justification for Robinson's sacking the seven to one ballot majority for the Edwardes Plan. The AUEW Executive saw fit to support a 'yes' vote in that ballot. But most Leyland workers now agree that if the details of Edwardes' planned new working methods had been revealed before the vote the majority would have been the other way round. No-one would vote themselves into a labour camp—and that's what the Company are after.

When even the TUC has called for recognition of combine committees the AUEW inquiry, whilst calling for Robinson's reinstatement stated "he had no right as an AUEW convenor to put his name to this booklet without the prior approval of the District Committee and thereafter of the Executive Council... And he certainly has no right as our convenor to call for disruptive action in other districts. This is interference in the constitutional rights of our District Committees."

Even worse, AUEW President Terry Duffy has said that "we reserve the right to hold our own inquiry into Mr Robinson's conduct after he has been reinstated." With friends like that, who needs enemies!

Terry Duffy has gone to great pains to explain that it's up to the workers themselves whether they come out and that no-one will be dealt with by the union if they cross the picket line. So if the majority at Longbridge decide to strike, scabbing is voluntary. But when it comes to writing pamphlets adherence

All three of the infamous Longbridge 'back to work' leaders, who attempted to break the engineers' strike by mobilising anti-union marches in contempt of union decisions, have left the company in the last three months. "The mood of the shop floor is so hostile towards them that they had to go," explained one Longbridge worker.

Mike Savage, who emerged from obscurity during the Confed dispute, has left for a job at a non-union firm, and is setting up his

own mis-named organisation 'Workers' Aid', to offer help to scabs in other companies. So much for the trade union loyalty of these 'moderates'.

Peter Watts has also just left Longbridge. He had been disciplined by the union more than once for his activities and had just been before his union branch as a result of his behaviour during the engineers' strike.

Ron Hill, the most notorious of them all, has been involved in organising 'back-

to-work' marches in every dispute in most of our memories. For someone with no union position whatsoever, he was regularly given enormous amounts of publicity in the press. He left on Friday 8th, also for a non-union firm, and conveniently avoided yet another disciplinary appearance before his trade union branch for his antics during the strike in support of Derek Robinson in November 1979.

to the Executive line is compulsory.

This fight, for workers' right to elect representatives of their own choice, is crucial for the upholding of independent trade unionism at BL. Trade unionists throughout the company, including AUEW members, are determined that this fight is not sabotaged.

We must ensure that the issues at stake are clearly explained to every Leyland worker. Mass meetings and discussions must be organised in every plant to prepare for national action.

Management and those opposed to strike action are hoping that the steam has

been taken out of the workers' willingness to fight back. But the reverse could be the case.

On the wages' issue, real anger has built up against the insulting 5% offer. That's exactly one quarter the rate of inflation. When the management organised their own mass meetings to explain their case, the response was one of utter contempt.

When stewards at Rover wanted to organise their own genuine mass meetings, they were threatened with the sack if caught addressing such a meeting. That's the extent of the war that Edwardes has declared on trade unionism.

If, when the latest ballot result comes out this week,

the 5% offer is rejected, Leyland workers will be looking to the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee to lead strike action in pursuit of their £24 a week claim. Leyland workers have no alternative now but a fight on two fronts: in defence of their trade union rights, for Robinson's reinstatement and for the defence of their living standards by demanding the full claim is met.

In this fight, which is not just against the BL management but against Joseph, the Tories and Fleet Street as well, they have the right to expect full and unflinching support from their union leaders.

ALAN SMITH PICKET BITES

"Couldn't wait for your appeal sheets—knew you couldn't wait for financial aid" said the letter with the first donation to the Alan Smith Group strike fund.

It came from Adamson Containers shop stewards' committee, who have just won a similar battle to ours. Financial aid has come from union district committees, shop stewards and LPYS branches, but we urgently need more.

Members walked out in support of their right to pick their own convenor and shop stewards—labelled 'reds' by management because they are 'Militant' supporters (see M 488).

Our picket is effective; when dustmen refused to cross some of the management and a scab came running out carrying dustbins. "Put your

lot in and we'll let them take you, willing", shouted one picket.

Management brought in a private "security firm" who told pickets "don't mess about with us or else...". Using these thugs has really shown up the management for what they are. The incident was reported to the police, who said they could do nothing.

I wonder how many pickets have been arrested this year for "behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace"? Better ask Lord Denning! Support urgently needed—please rush donations to Alan Smith strike committee c/o, 95 Brownlow Drive, Rise Park, Nottingham.

By Roy Bennett
(AUEW Convenor,
Alan Smith, Notts)

CPSA P&T Conference:

Delegates assemble this weekend in Blackpool for a special CPSA Post and Telecommunications (P&T) group conference around the issue of grade restructuring.

Since 1968 Post Office management have set their sights firmly on improved efficiency and flexibility by a simplification of the present grading structure.

CPSA and other Post Office trade unions have agreed to this aim, in the belief that members' pay and conditions would be improved. The schemes proposed in 1975 and February 1979 have, however, for a variety of reasons met with open hostility from the unions.

In the early months of 1979 CPSA took action due to the proposed 'under-valuing' of clerical grades. Then, in 1979, we achieved a pay settlement involving a move onto a common pay spine, which is regarded as a commitment towards regrading.

LOSSES OUTWEIGH GAINS

In December 1979 management again submitted proposals, which will form the basis of discussion at this conference. The mood of CPSA members is such, however, that delegates are likely to reflect opposition to the proposals if taken as a whole.

In their present form they aim at a much reduced number of grades, which 'Militant' has long supported. But they also involve commitments to: recruiting part-time staff, promotion on the basis of suitability rather than seniority, bonuses, job evaluation, reductions of staff complement and that "there should be progressive movement towards a position where any member of a particular grade should be able to perform any work proper to that level..." (Management proposals, December 1979).

The losses would far outweigh the gains: in their present form, these proposals

are totally unacceptable.

Union members will welcome this conference, which will enable activists to voice members' opinion following branch meetings. Many members are appalled, however, that "the nature of the conference means that it will not be able to reach binding decisions" (Telecommunications Grade Restructuring document to be presented to conference).

No motions or voting rights! In other words, as Brian Kenny, GEC member, spelt out, the conference is a talking shop.

The GEC's case for a consultative conference is extremely weak, and undoubtedly this will be made clear in the form of censure motions at the annual conference in May.

CPSA P&T Special Conference Militant Public Meeting.
"What Militant Stands For"
Speakers: Steve Higham (CPSA P&T group Liverpool) Gerry Lerner, Paul Crane (Blackpool LPYS) Chairman: Dave Bell (CPSA P&T group executive) Saturday February 16th, Labour Rooms, Blackpool.

Meccano

The announcement that Airfix have given an 'honoured' agreement to pay 90 days' redundancy money was greeted with scepticism by Meccano workers at Monday's mass meeting.

The fight for jobs carries on at the Meccano factory. Mike Egan, the G&MWU official, described the prospective buyers as "like vultures waiting for the best price."

The stumbling block is still the lack of national union backing. The argument given is that the union rule books exclude support for such an occupation. Surely union rules are there to aid the fight against the bosses, rather than to hinder it? At the end of the meeting, a unanimous vote of confidence was given to the shop stewards' committee.

Messages of support to Meccano workers, c/o 99 Edge Lane, Liverpool, or phone 051-228 1088/4333/2171.

By Richard Knights
(Wavertree LP)

STEEL STRIKE WEEK 7:

20 PER CENT AND NO REDUNDANCIES!

POLICE BRUTALITY IN BIRMINGHAM

On Wednesday, 60 pickets from Shelton, Corby and Rotherham assembled at Pressed Steel Fisher, Castle Bromwich in Birmingham. An ISTC official who was present, told Brian Debus:

"We arrived on the line at 9.45 pm. and at that time there were no police present. The convenor of the T&GWU (at Pressed Steel) was contacted about the picket and agreed that nothing would move, but then stated he wanted confirmation from a higher authority re Moss Evans' telex (instructing the drivers not to cross the ISTC picket lines).

"After subsequent discussions, the convenors of the BRS waggons said they were interpreting the Moss Evans' telex not to include car bodies, as these were considered finished products.

"The picket marshalls made it clear to the drivers that this was unacceptable. As a consequence, the shift management called out the police in force.

"The police arrived and they marshalled the waggons into a convoy and escorted them out of the plant. At this point three pickets were arrested for alleged criminal damage and resisting arrest.

"A group of SPG arrived later and stayed in the commissionaires gate-house.

The police marshalled another ten or fifteen lorries into a convoy and forced the pickets to make a gang-way for the lorries to pass through. During the course of this, several pickets were pushed to the ground and kicked by the police.

"One picket was dragged by his ears through the police cordon into the gate-house, where the ten to twelve SPG were located. Apparently, the manager locked the door behind them.

"The picket was then coshed and beaten by the

police until he was unconscious. He was then dragged from the gate-house, literally dumped in a police van and taken to Good Hope hospital in Sutton Coldfield.

"Police refused to let any visitors see the injured picket. Six policemen stood guard around his examination cubicle. Incidentally, you do have a legal right to see someone in hospital, even if under arrest. The doctor, in collusion, said he was too ill and it would delay his examination if seen by fellow pickets.

"After examination he was discharged into police custody by the doctor. Then he was whisked out of the back entrance to Erdington police station, where he was charged with assaulting a police officer during the course and execution of his duty.

"The police were unable to photograph the picket because they allege that they had run out of film, although a new film had been put into a camera for the three previous pickets who had been arrested.

"The picket suffered severe facial bruising and bruising to the body, with a possibility of a hair-line fracture of the ribs. During the course of this incident, two other pickets were injured, ie. nose bleeds, etc.

"It was alleged by the police that two police had suffered head injuries due to kicking but no police went to the hospital. To the best of the pickets' knowledge the allegations of the (Birmingham) 'Evening Mail' and the national press re police injury are completely false."

The injured picket is 46 years old, and, even before this incident, he looked older. The ISTC regional organiser has registered an official complaint with the Chief Constable about police brutality.

At a mass meeting of craftsmen in Sheffield on Friday 8th, over a thousand workers unanimously endorsed their stand for 20% and no strings. Despite reassurances from members of the National Craftsmen's Co-ordinating Committee [NCCC] that "we're with you," a national delegate conference will be held by the NCCC to decide on the 14% offer. Already the I&GWU has rejected the offer.

The South Yorkshire

craftsmen are determined that they will not cross picket lines or return to work until all unions, including production workers, have settled. Already BSC are offering 'plenty of work' for craftsmen, even if the ISTC and NUB stay out—in other words, scab work.

South Yorks craftsmen's leaders are contacting other areas to find out what their reaction is to the offer and to the need for a united stand by all steel workers.

At Hadfields, the biggest private steel producer in Sheffield, ISTC members who had decided to break the strike were smuggled in to work before their usual starting time. The two hundred pickets outside on the first day were undeterred, in spite of the massive and heavy handed police presence.

A handful of workers were turned back, and no finished steel is being allowed out. Picketing is to be stepped up. The joint strike committee

has ruled out union officials' suggestion that they give 'special dispensation' for Hadfields. As Stan Sheridan chairman of the strike committee pointed out, Hadfields are not 'special'—if they were given dispensation it would merely open the floodgates to all the other private firms, bawling their loss of profits and demanding to be exempted.

'Where the hell will we go?'

Welsh workers face another savage attack from BSC. On top of the massive 11,300 redundancies in Port Talbot and Llanwern, BSC has demanded a further 1500 jobs less in the South Wales tinplate plants.

The bulk of the cut-backs are planned for Trostre, Velindre and Ebbw Vale tinplate plants. Bryn Gwyn [Gorseinon] and Cwmfelin [Swansea and Neath] are also likely to be included.

Mr Stan Biddiscombe, Welsh divisional officer of the

ISTC, said, "We have been doing deals with the BSC in the tinplate section to reduce manning. We thought we had reached an absolute minimum but BSC seem to have an unsatisfiable appetite for cutting men out. When are they going to stop asking for more men?"

"We will be fighting these as strongly as we are fighting the other redundancies."

"It hits once more at basic industry," said Mr Don Evans, chairman of Llanelli ISTC strike committee. "I wonder where the hell are we all going to be employed in the future?"

By Mike Williams (AUEW shop steward, Bryn Gwyn works, Gorseinon personal capacity)

AROUND THE COUNTRY

JARROW

The news that the eleven craft unions involved in the British steel strike have settled for 10% plus a 4% productivity deal, met with a swift response from the strikers last weekend.

At the BSC rolling mill in Jarrow, no-one could be found in agreement with the settlement. They were unanimous in believing that if the settlement went to a secret ballot, it would be thrown out. Those who expect a big press campaign for such a ballot, however, will wait in vain.

members have refused to join the strike, pickets felt that these workers lacked the heritage of workers in traditional heavy industry areas.

"The workers at Sheerness feel their jobs are dodgy, but so are ours at Consett, what's new about that? In Consett the strike has been solid from the first day. The whole community supports the strike, which they see as a fight to keep Consett open."

The task next week, they explained, will be to step up picketing at stockholders and docks in London. Coachloads of reinforcements will be arriving from Teesside, South Yorkshire and Wales.

John Lee and other Consett ISTC members spoke to Martin Elvin [ASLEF] and Ian Gelman [LPYS]

If the Tories and BSC hope that this settlement will weaken the strike, they will also wait in vain. No-one will cross the picket lines they have helped to man for five weeks. Not in Jarrow, anyway. There will be no return to work until the full dispute is settled.

There is little information about the details of the settlement, but as was pointed out, a productivity deal for maintenance workers could pit them against their fellow-workers. If you're making bonus by repairing a machine, the very fact that it is broken means that production are losing bonus. In other words, these sort of deals can lead to splits on the factory floor.

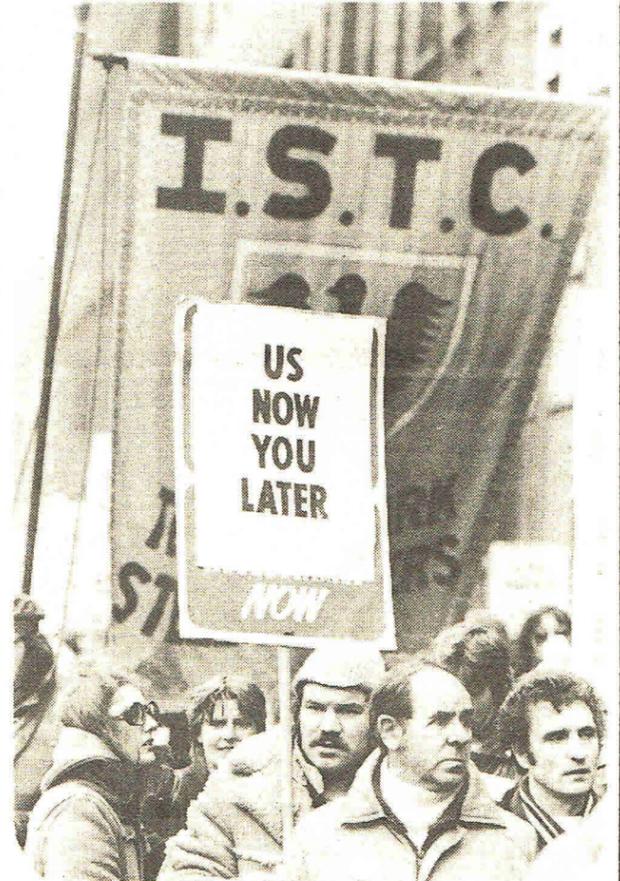
Craft workers feel that this settlement is premature. They cannot go back until the ISTC and NUB settle, and if production workers get more, they are stuck with an inferior agreement.

Jeff Price

CONSETT

On Friday 8th, in foul freezing fog, a mass picket of at least 300 strong from all over the region assembled at the BSC works. At the gates SIMA members' tried to get in: their cars were pushed back by the weight of numbers.

On a march through the town afterwards, against the threat of closure, support was clear everywhere. One bakery



Steelworkers spell out the Tory threat on their march through Sheffield last month. Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

CARDIFF

The strike at GKN Cardiff, one of the largest private steel plants in Britain, is 100 per cent effective, despite management provocation. The workers recognise the disastrous effect a defeat for BSC workers would have on their own impending struggles on wages and jobs.

The mood and consciousness of the workers has developed rapidly since the dispute started. "Our union branch will never be the same again," commented one ISTC member. He praised the recent article in 'Militant' on the private steel firms: "It hit the nail right on the head," was his reaction.

Workers on the picket line were also angry about the questionnaire issued by management to all employees, asking if they would support

secret ballots being held before any future industrial action. This attempt to divide and confuse the workforce shows GKN management are clearly looking to the future.

They can only be countered by the union leadership fully involving every worker in the dispute, including a campaign of explanation and propaganda to ensure that every private steelworker understands the importance of winning this dispute.

ISTC members at GKN spoke to Brian Jones (Cardiff North Labour Party)

NEW 'MILITANT' PAMPHLET 'A Socialist Strategy for Steelworkers' 20 pence plus 10p postage From: World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LONDON

The strike has now been brought right into Central London, with pickets on the gates of the Macready's steel stockholders in Pentonville Road, Kings Cross. Macready's, incidentally, is owned by Glynwed Steel Co., which gave £10,000 to the Tory Party in 1978.

John Lee and other ISTC members from Consett explained the situation:

"There have been 150 steelworkers in London all week, picketing stockholders and the docks, although most have gone down to Sheerness today (Thursday).

"The co-operation from workers in Macready's, mem-

bers of the T&GWU, has been excellent. The 23-man picket we had at the start of the week, now only needs to be token.

"Support from the local labour movement has also been good. Camden Trades Council have offered 200 pickets. Ford's, Dagenham, shop stewards have offered accommodation for twenty-one steel strikers. Financial and practical support and invitations to meetings have come from the NUT, NUJ, Fleet Street unions and the LPYS.

"One man stopped his car in pouring rain and gave £6 to strike funds and tins of beer to every picket."

Commenting on the situation at Sheerness, one private steel works where ISTC

a song he wrote on the fight of the steelworkers.

When 'News at One' came on, with reports of the breakdown in negotiations, everyone in the pub was unanimous in attacking the BSC. The whole town is determined to save Consett and defeat the Tory boot-boys at British Steel.

By Bill Hopwood (Thornaby Labour Party)

Leyland workers reject 5% UNITED ACTION TO SAVE LEYLAND

Despite the massive propaganda campaign by management and their kept press, BL workers have voted by nearly 60 to 40 per cent to back their union's rejection of the company's wages and conditions offer.

Now is the time for action. The trade unions, in the leaflets issued by British Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee, and Sir Michael Edwardes himself have made it clear that rejection would mean a strike. There can be no back-tracking.

Further negotiations should not be used as an excuse to stall—only national strike action now can win our full claim of £24. The steelworkers have proved that commitment to a strike grows once it has started. The ballot for the 1972 miners' strike showed only 55 per cent in favour, but their struggle was decisive and victorious.

The BLJNC should now be preparing the most effective methods to win this struggle, with all plants setting up

By Bill Mullins
 (Senior Steward, SD1 Rover, Solihull)

strike committees immediately.

Leyland's latest threat, just before the ballot result was announced, to lay off 50,000 workers, is an obvious attempt to panic our union leaders into postponing any action. This threat makes it more imperative that we carry out effective picketing of all Leyland's stocks, both at the car plants and "in the field".

A strike on wages, however, must be linked to the reinstatement of Derek Robinson and the complete withdrawal of the vicious 92-page conditions document. There is a danger that if the union

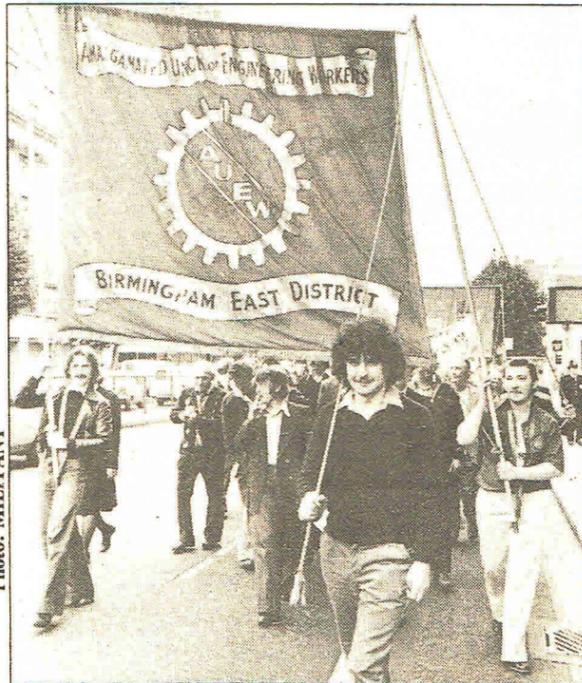


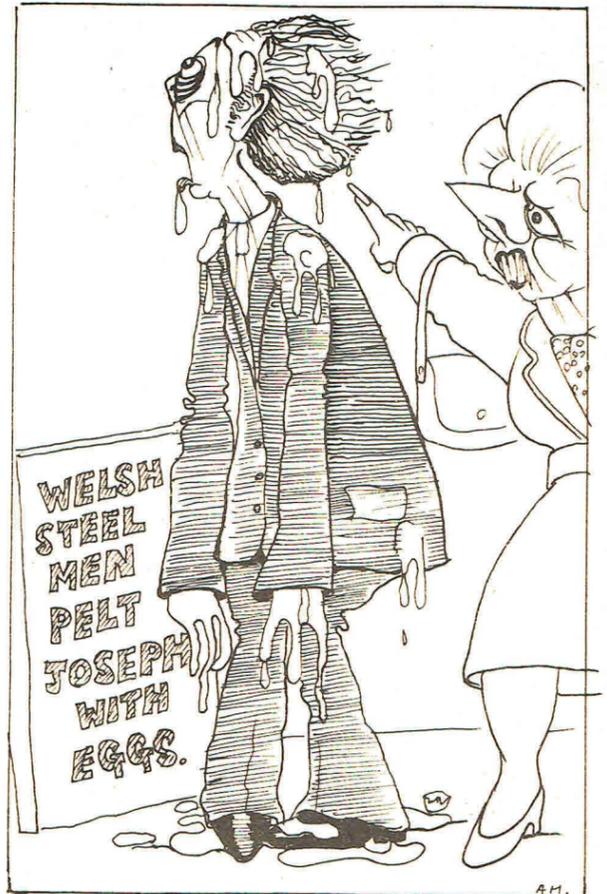
Photo: MILITANT

Leyland workers on October demonstration against redundancies

leaders drag out the situation, management will go ahead and introduce the most offensive parts of this document, causing confusion and demoralisation.

For Leyland workers the time has now come for acting together to prove that despite recent setbacks, our determination and strength of organisation has not been eroded.

- ★ All out for the full trade union claim: £24 across the board, linked to the cost of living and a 35-hour week.
- ★ No to victimisation—reinstate Robinson.
- ★ Fight all redundancies and plant closures.
- ★ Sack Edwardes—full workers' control and management of British Leyland.



AH, SIR KEITH, NOW I WANT YOU TO GO AND SORT OUT THOSE DAMNED SEWERAGE WORKERS

Good news

Good News!

This week, Militant's fighting fund got the £1,666 it needs every week [see report, page 13]. But it will take a lot more effort yet to reach our goals!

Help fight off the witch hunt with the special 'Build Militant' appeal sheets. Take them where-

ever you go. The £1s, 'fivers' and 'tenners' are just waiting to be collected! Follow through with the Militant collector's cards for the smaller amounts every week!

Rush money to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN and give us a success story every week!

CIA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

when it was directed against the left, is now being denounced as an inquisition.

The 'Militant' two weeks ago republished a thoroughly documented article that was commissioned for 'The Sunday Times' colour magazine in 1972, but which the editor, Harold Evans, refused to publish on the grounds that it would be too embarrassing to his right-wing friends. This article set out ample evidence of CIA funding for right-wing journals, groupings and leading Parliamentary personalities in the Labour Party.

Since then, further evidence has emerged of interference in the Labour Party by the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

At the Sub-committee meeting Tony Benn himself recalled that the security services had objected to his proposal to consider the appointment of Jack Jones, former General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, as chairman of the National Enterprise Board.

Tony spoke of the "absurd situation" in which "the security services told me that he was a 'security risk' and could not be given the post.

The security forces are out of control!"

Tony Benn also successfully moved that the NEC itself should not take responsibility for the publication of Lord Underhill's documents, and that they should be left to him to publish the evidence himself.

Right-wing MPs have reacted violently to the Sub-committee's decision. This is not surprising when groups like the so-called Campaign for Labour Victory, the Social Democratic Alliance, and the Manifesto Group are well-financed organisations operating in the Labour Party—all with secret funds.

The rank and file of the party must continue vigorously to fight against the continuing right-wing attempts to orchestrate a purge against the left.

This new proposal from the organisation sub-committee to reconsider Lord Underhill's allegations should be decisively rejected.

At the same time, the proposal for an enquiry into CIA and other intelligence and police penetration into the party should go ahead, with a thorough investigation to expose the under-cover activities of the labour movement's enemies.

UNIONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

The split in the Tory ranks over anti-trade union measures has been brought about, on the one hand, by the enormous pressure of the labour movement and, on the other hand, by the open admission by some leading Tories that Thatcherite economic policies are doomed to failure.

"At the source of these divisions," comments the 'Guardian' [11 February], "is a mounting belief that the government's overall economic strategy is not succeeding, and cannot be expected to succeed."

The Tory leaders were deluded into thinking that their victory last May reflected mass support for Thatcherite policies, while in reality it mainly reflected a disillusionment with the pro-big business policies of the last Labour government.

They have begun to realise that workers, and even sections of the middle class, are not prepared to sit back while the 'welfare state' is destroyed by savage spending cuts. They are learning that electoral victory does not give the Tories the right to impose poverty-level wages on the

majority of British workers.

They are discovering once again, as Edward Heath discovered to his cost, that trade unionists will not sit back while fundamental democratic rights are abolished by a Tory government.

The Tories made a gigantic mistake when they took on the steel workers, thinking that because they had accepted redundancies in the past and were led by 'moderate' leaders, they could get away with imposing a real wage cut and further massive redundancies. The magnificent action of the steel workers has shaken the Tories in their boots.

The day of action in Wales, on the 28 January—and the proposed general strike in Wales on 10 March, has struck fear into the hearts of the Tories and their big business pay-masters.

The 28 January day of action showed the strength and determination of workers to actively fight the Tories. The TUC must make plans to widen this struggle with a call for a national 24-hour general strike.

If linked to a clear socialist alternative, this could be the first stage in the return of a Labour government committed to the ending of attacks on workers' living standards, through the implementation of socialist policies.



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