

DEFEND THE NHS

The Labour government must restore the cuts now and implement socialist policies to provide the resources for a dramatic improvement of health and welfare services.



By Ian Burge
Secretary, Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, The London Hospital, Whitechapel

Emergency treatment is needed to revive the stricken body of the National Health Service!

The crisis in the NHS was again highlighted this week by a report from the Royal College of Nursing.

This body represents senior nursing staff and is certainly not known for its militancy. But the clear message of their angry report is: nurses have had enough. They cannot tolerate a further deterioration in the hospitals.

Lack of resources, low

pay, long hours and now—not surprisingly—a shortage of nurses has created a dangerous situation in the hospitals.

"In some cases this [shortage of nurses] has resulted in positively dangerous standards of care," warns their report.

In blunt language: people are dying as a consequence of the cuts.

Last year saw a serious 4,595 fall in the number of new student nurses over 1976. This was partly the result of a deliberate cut-back—and

partly because school leavers are not prepared to put up with the scandalously low nurse's wages.

In London this week two of the country's leading children's hospitals—Great Ormond Street and Queen Elizabeth's, Hackney—are turning away serious cases because of a shortage of theatre staff.

While the NHS still provides a marvellous service, largely free, to millions of people who could not possibly afford private treatment, Britain is steadily slipping

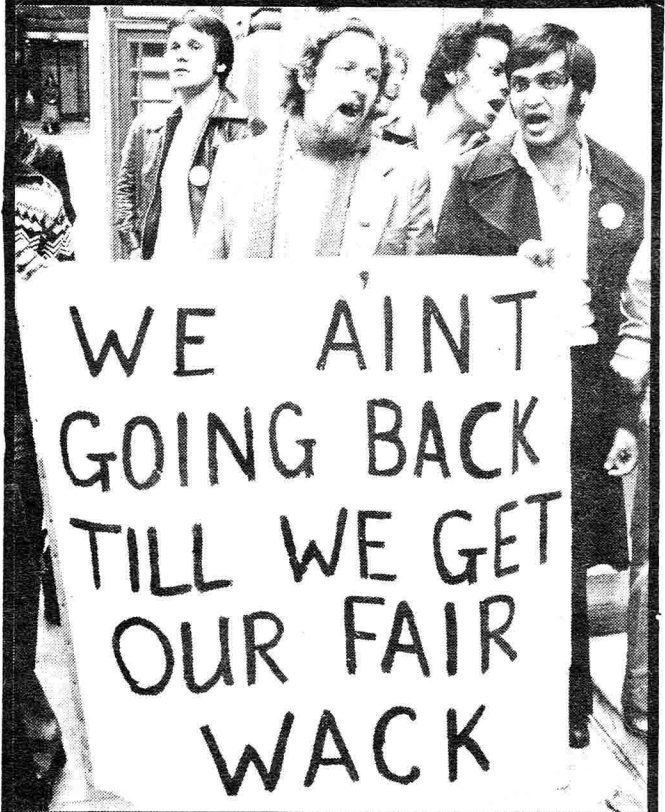
down the world league tables in vital areas like infant mortality.

Waiting lists have reached unprecedented lengths. Seriously ill patients can wait literally years for an operation that means life or death.

The capitalist press and the television are now shedding giant crocodile tears over the crisis in the NHS. But these same mouthpieces of big business clamoured and screamed for

Continued on back page

FORD STRIKE ENTERS WEEK 7



Reports from the plants/14/Meetings/4/ Stop Press/16/ photo: Julian McKittrick

WE AINT GOING BACK TILL WE GET OUR FAIR WACK

Nobel peace prize Begin - Sadat share £80,000



The leaders are at this moment reported to be deciding how the money should be spent. Alan Cartman

YOUNG SOCIALISTS PLAN EUROPE-WIDE ACTION AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

Thirty-seven percent of the unemployed in the EEC are under 25 years of age.

That is the background to a seminar organised by the International Union of Socialist Youth [IUSY] held in London on 27-29 October on "Youth Unemployment in Europe".

Many IUSY affiliates, including the LPYS, the Austrian Young Socialists and the German 'SJD-Die Falken', have been pressing for IUSY to organise a European-wide campaign against youth unemployment on the basis of the resolution passed by the IUSY Congress in Stuttgart in August, 1977. The London seminar was held to discuss this.

In deciding to organise an



British Labour Party Young Socialists joint IUSY protest against unemployment, Stuttgart, West Germany, August 1977.

international "Week of Action" in April/May 1979 around a common manifesto

and main demands, the seminar which was attended by delegates from twelve

organisations, marked a major advance for IUSY.

"If these proposals are

acted on," said LPYS representative Tony Saunois [LPYS representative on Labour's National Executive], "it will mean a shift away from IUSY's old style in the direction of a campaigning youth international."

The proposals from the seminar now have to go forward to a full IUSY European meeting in Lisbon in December for ratification. The proposed text of a joint IUSY Manifesto on youth unemployment has been agreed as a "core" document which affiliates will be able to emphasise and supplement as they see fit.

The main demands are: "Jobs for all school leavers," "A guaranteed right to education—including for the unemployed," "Control over technology and its development by

workers' organisations," "Shortening of working hours with no loss of pay," and "Replacement of private ownership by common ownership of the means of production."

The IUSY General Secretary, Ove Fich, has also been asked to approach the ETUC [European Trade Union Congress] and the ICFTU [International Confederation of Free Trade Unions] to sound out their views on holding an international demonstration against youth unemployment.

The final session of the seminar voted unanimously to send a message of support to the British Ford workers and £15 was collected from delegates for the strike fund.

Youth Campaign Against Unemployment: Action reports, pages 2 & 3

EDITORIAL

BERWICK - WHAT THE RESULT MEANS

The result of the Berwick and East Lothian by-election represents an important victory for Labour and a decisive rejection of Thatcherism by Scottish workers.

On a lower poll, Labour received its highest majority in Berwick for 30 years with an increased percentage of the vote compared to 1974! The right-wing Labour leadership has proclaimed the result as a vote of confidence in its policies of "wage restraint" and the 5% norm. It has, they claim, confirmed the Gallup poll which gave a vast majority of the population as supporters of "incomes policy".

The barrage of propaganda by the media over the past years blaming wages for price increases has undoubtedly had an effect. The rate of increase in prices has gone down during a period when wages have been held in check by the government.

In reality, the drop in the rate of inflation has had nothing to do with "wage restraint". It has been the fall in world inflation, the drop in world commodity prices in particular, and the rise in the value of the pound which has caused Britain's rate of inflation to fall. Even those like 'The Times', which in the past blamed wage increases for price rises and poured out a torrent of abuse and threats against the trade unions, now recognise that this is not the case: "Direct controls on wages do not control wages or prices but do distort them" [28 October].

But the years of lies and distortions have left their mark in the outlook of the workers. In their eyes Thatcher represents the danger of a million more unemployed and a return to hyper-inflation. It was this nightmare that Scottish workers voted against rather than positive support for the government's policies.

In the past, big majorities have been recorded in opinion polls for the general idea of "incomes policy". But as the 'Sunday Times' remarked: "Most people think they are good for the country but many people think they are bad for them personally" [29 October].

A more accurate reflection of the mood of the working class is shown in the Ford strike, and in action by the hospital technicians and others who are in battle, or are about to go into battle, against the 5%. The eventual settlement at Ford's will be well in excess of the 5% limit. The hospital technicians have received 15% over a period of months.

Similar increases will have to be given to the local government workers and civil servants in order

to prevent strikes. In other words, in action the working class has rejected the 5%.

For the government to use the Berwick result as the green light for continuing with its present policies could mean a winter of discontent and a head-on confrontation with the trade union movement. This could result in disaster for the labour movement.

Evidence has emerged that the strategists of capital have anticipated the possibility of a clash between the government and the unions which could result in a national government.

Peregrine Worsthorpe, the political correspondent of 'The Sunday Telegraph', in an article entitled "The Road to a National Government" [8 October], blurted out that the Tory leadership had discussed the possibility of some of the right wing in the Cabinet making an offer to the Tories to join a national government.

Heath and his supporters, who undoubtedly calculate on such developments restoring them back to a position of influence and power, would eagerly accept the invitation. But even Thatcher would find it difficult not to enter a national government, speculates Worsthorpe, particularly if those who finance the Tory Party, the capitalists, consider that this would be in their best interests.

A national government, and the splitting of the Parliamentary Labour Party which this would entail, would only be possible after strikes and big conflicts. But the fact that the capitalists are once again discussing it seriously should forewarn the labour movement. Yet even if a national government does not come to pass, for the government to carry on with its present policies could result in defeat at the general election.

Berwick has shown the enormous reservoir of support for Labour among the working class. Workers who in the past voted SNP in protest at the policies of the government have swung back to support their traditional party, partly because of the government's devolution proposals, but mainly because of the fear of a rabid right-wing Tory government coming to power.

But this fund of goodwill towards Labour could be rapidly used up in a series of confrontations between the government and the unions.

In the wake of the by-elections, the rank-and-file should raise its voice to ensure that this does not happen by demanding an end to wage restraint and the drawing up of a socialist manifesto.

YCAU

IMPLEMENT A 35hr BILL

This year's Labour Party Conference showed an overwhelming demand for a bold programme to tackle rising unemployment and falling living standards. Now the party is committed to fight for a shorter working week, a minimum wage and an end to wage restraint.

Broadly the demands of the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment are beginning to be taken up. Now we have the task of ensuring that the party campaigns for its demands in a programme of bold propaganda and agitation.

The slight decrease in unemployment in October can give little relief to the workers who are threatened with redundancy and the one and a half million still left on the stones. To deal with this urgent problem, the party must take up a joint stance with the TUC in their campaign for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay and a minimum wage.

If the government were to introduce a maximum basic working week with no wage reduction, it would be an enormous lever in the battle against unemployment. Even the Department of Employ-

By Phil Frampton
(LPYS National Chairman)

ment admits 500,000 jobs could be created. Such a law like the historic Ten Hours Bill could be implemented easily by mobilising the 12 million strong trade union colossus which would be at Labour's disposal. If defeated by the bosses' representatives in Parliament, the party could take the issue to an election. It would get support from the unemployed and millions of organised workers.

But only if pressure is applied now by every local Labour Party and union branch actively campaigning for the 35 and sending resolutions to the NEC of the Labour Party can we hope to see its introduction.

The big business lobby's



influence on the decisions of the Labour government can thus be eroded. Their message will be that they can't afford it. Our's must be that the workers can't afford not to have it.

If their system is so rotten that it can't even give workers the only chance they have left to earn a living, then the

labour movement must replace it. Under a socialist plan of production technology would be harnessed to give the right to work.

This is the clear alternative which Labour must give if the age-long pampered industrialists and financiers continue with their cruel destruction of workers' lives.

- ★ For a 35-hours Bill to be introduced by the Labour government.
- ★ Trade union mobilisation for the 35-hour maximum working week with no loss of pay
- ★ For a £70 minimum wage and an end to wage restraint to remove the need for overtime work.

CAMPAIGN ROUND-UP

Space limits the reports here but in future issues we hope to have all areas included. Donations to aid the campaign have come in from many bodies including South Sefton £5, Wavertree £5, and Brighton £10.

In Birmingham, the T&G-WU at Rover, Solihull, don-

ated £20. In Newcastle, stewards at Austin Pickersgill collected £8 at their meeting.

Over 80 of the 35 hour badges have been sold to workers at Bowaters in South London. Another 50 have been taken by a NUPE rep in the Royal Free Hospital,

North London.

In Manchester, 45 delegates attended a YCAU meeting with delegations from the LPYS, FBU, NUPE, AUEW, TGWU and TASS. The Brighton YCAU committee has grown to include delegates from the LPYS, Hove LP, Brighton LP, five ward LPs, POEU and TGWU.

The campaign committee in Eastbourne includes the Labour Party, the LPYS,

NUPE, AUEW and TGWU. The local press considered it so important that they sent a reporter and photographer to the meeting. Litchard and Coity LP has decided to support the campaign and send six delegates to the Welsh conference.

Other new sponsors include ASTMS Divisional Council No 9, Bro Dilks (USDAW NEC) and Pargan Singh, President of the Derby Indian Youth Association.

INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCES

The following meetings will be held on Saturday November 25th:

BRIDGEND: 11 am-4.30 pm. Ogmere CLP Rooms, Bridgend. Speakers include: South Wales NUM EC speaker; Murie! Browning (Leyland Shop Steward); Chris Richards (Cardiff POEU); Ted Grant (Militant Editorial Board)

PLYMOUTH: 11 am-4.30 pm. Scott Lecture Hall, Plymouth Central Library. Speakers include: Albert Bennett (Sec. Plymouth Trades Council); Bob Labi (Treasurer YCAU)

LONDON: 11 am-5 pm. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road (opposite Euston Station). Speakers include: Eric Heffer MP (LP NEC); Norman Atkinson MP (LP NEC); Pat Byrne CPSA NEC; Phil Frampton (Nat. Chairman LPYS)

BRISTOL: 11 am-5 pm. Shepherds Hall, Old Market. Speakers include: Ron Thomas MP; John Sharpe (Sec. TASS Youth Committee, Rolls Royce); John Blackley (AUEW Convenor, Rolls Royce); Glenys Ingham (Editor, 'Left')

GLASGOW: 10 am-5 pm. McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. Speakers include: Dennis Canavan MP; Pat Wa! (President, Bradford Trades Council); Jim Brookshaw (AUEW)

NEWCASTLE: 1 pm-5 pm. Curtis Auditorium, Newcastle University. Speakers include: Joe Mills (Reg. Org. TGWU); Bi!! Connors (Nat. Org. USDAW); Tony Carty (Bakers' Union); Brian Ingham (Industrial Editor, Militant)

SHEFFIELD: 11 am-5 pm. Graves Cinema, University of Sheffield. Speakers include: Dennis Skinner MP (LP NEC); Bob Wright (Asst. General Sec. AUEW); Walter Greendale (TUC General Council); Peter Taaffe (Editor Militant)

LEICESTER: 11 am-5 pm. AUEW Hall, Vaughan Way. Speakers include: Stan Newens MP; Nick Bradley (YCAU Sec.)

BIRMINGHAM: 1 pm-5 pm. Digbeth Civic Hall, Digbeth. Speakers include: Audrey Wise MP; Ken Cameron (Nat. Org. FBU); Sid Harraway (TGWU Convenor, Ford, Dagenham); Tony Sauniois (LP NEC); Emyln Williams (South Wales NUM Executive and LP NEC)

The following meeting will be held on Sunday November 26th.

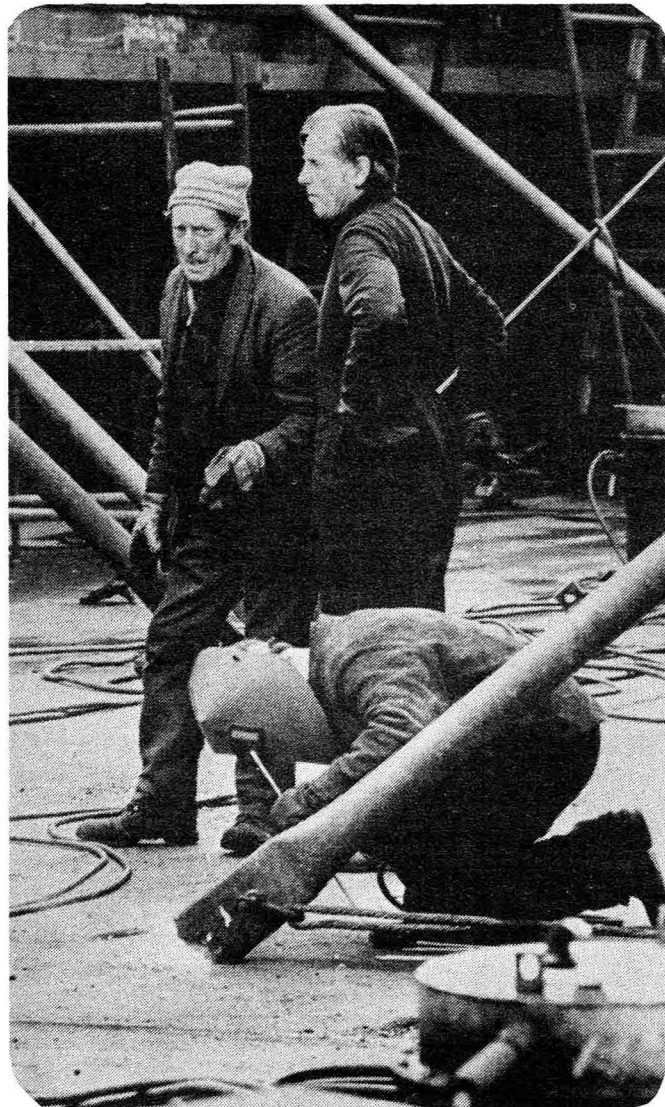
LIVERPOOL: 11 am-5 pm. St Georges Hall. Speakers include: Frank A!aun MP (Nat. Chairman LP); Joe Marino (Bakers' Union EC); Kevin Roddy (CPSA NEC)..

MERSEYSIDE AND SCOTTISH WORKERS FIGHT SHIPYARD JOBS THREAT

Shipbuilding and shiprepairing are important industries in Dundee, and so it is appropriate that at our meeting to launch the 35-hour week campaign, there were four representatives of the workers of Western Shiprepairers, Birkenhead. The workers there are providing a shining example of how to take a stand against unemployment, instead of adopting the easy option of taking redundancy and letting the jobs disappear.

Kevin Skully, Vice Chairman of the Westerns Action Committee, told the meeting how the workers had padlocked all the gates and stopped anything moving in or out of the yard—determined to

hold out until they had won their demand for the nationalisation of the firm and the incorporation of the yard into the adjoining British ship builders yard. Western's, and indeed the whole industry, pro-



Shipyards workers in Dundee's Robb-Caledon yard

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

vides one of the best arguments for the 35-hour week—the absurd contradiction of workers facing

the dole queue, while others work 40 or even more hours in order to get a decent wage.

By Alex Allan

(Time Trades Convenor, Robb-Caledon, Dundee)

Quite correctly the central demand of the Western's workers has been the nationalisation of the shiprepair industry under workers' control and management. Without the nationalisation of the shipbuilding industry, many yards would undoubtedly already have closed.

That certainly has not meant, however, that shipyard jobs are no longer in jeopardy. Nationalisation alone cannot guarantee jobs, as the experience not only of British Shipbuilders but of British Steel, the Post Office and other publicly-owned concerns testifies.

Never has the future for shipbuilding looked bleaker. The EEC Commission has just published a report by Viscount Davignon on the industry's prospects. It estimates that of the present 165,000 shipbuilding jobs in the EEC countries, 75,000 will be lost by the early 1980s!

Of these, 15,000 will disappear through "natural wastage", which means 15,000 fewer jobs for school leavers. That leaves 60,000 redundant workers looking for alternative jobs, plus an estimated 30,000 workers in industries directly related to shipbuilding!

What chance is there under the present system of 90,000 workers, mostly skilled, being found jobs? Even a 35-hour week would be hard pushed to provide enough; we need a 20-hour week.

The great value of the 35-hour campaign is that it provides a basis for uniting

workers who might otherwise be fighting to save their jobs at the expense of each other. In Dundee at the moment there is an alarming example of this danger. The dockers, employed by Dundee Stevedores and Porters Ltd., have been in dispute with both Robb-Caledon shipbuilders and Kestrel Marine Ship-repairers over the unloading of materials being brought to the yards by sea.

The National Dock Labour Board has supported the claim by both the dockers and their employers that this is dock work. It is being opposed by the shipyard workers and their employers, as a threat to a part of their job.

Nothing can be gained by workers joining their bosses in a fight for jobs at the expense of other workers. Instead, the workers should unite for the shorter working week, to provide work for all, at the full rate for the job. It is, after all, the workers whose skills have produced all the new technology which now threatens them with the sack.

Nationalisation of the major industries has to be the starting point. But if the working week is to be cut and industry planned so that jobs can be guaranteed, wages increased and more wealth created, then workers' control and management is urgently needed, so that industry can be planned for the benefit of the workers themselves and for the whole of society.

London post office and hospital workers back campaign

Dave Reid

(Paddington LPYS)



Young POEU members from North West London on the march for a 35-hour week. Now several branches are backing the YCAU.

Photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

The Youth Campaign Against Unemployment West London last week. In preparation for the YCAU fight for a 35-hour week started well in North November 25th Young

Socialists have visited trade unionists in factories, bus depots, telephone exchanges and

hospitals across the area.

The response from the workers has been enthusiastic, particularly from those in

the front line of the struggle for the 35-hour week. At the Hendon branch of the POEU, for example, a LPYS member has been invited to speak at the next branch meeting and the secretary will speak at the next LPYS meeting.

At the Middlesex Hospital a representative from the local LPYS branch explained the demands and aims of the YCAU to the COHSE Shop Stewards' Committee. There will also be a LPYS speaker at the next branch meeting and an article introducing the YCAU in the next edition of the branch journal, and a delegation is to be elected to the Conference in November.

The attitude of workers is clear and is shown by the eager way in which unions and shop stewards are inviting YCAU speakers to their meetings. It is now necessary to go back to the factories already visited, this time with leaflets, posters and badges to press home the points of the campaign.

This activity can be drawn together and concentrated in London by the Week of Action planned for November 11th-18th. On this basis, many young workers will be drawn into political activity for the first time at the Conference.

That is why every area should now push for delegates from the union branches, shop stewards' committees, Labour Parties and Young Socialists.

CLAUSE FOUR

"A Hollison [Hawarden CM Staff] felt there was more hypocrisy than complicity in the movement. Five years ago he had demonstrated on Merseyside against 600,000 on the dole under the Tories. Yet with 900,000 more under Labour 'We're sitting here just talking about it'.

"The time had come for radical steps: if the system needed a reserve army of one-and-a-half million unemployed it was time the system was changed. Socialism was the only answer. Certainly a Labour government must be returned, but it has to have full-blooded socialist policies to implement Clause 4 and take over the 200 monopolies.

"Clause 4 isn't there just to be printed on your membership card, but to employ the 300,000 jobless building workers on replacing the slums. He hoped other branches of the union would, like the Corby Joint Committee, sponsor the Labour Party Young Socialists Youth Campaign Against Unemployment."

ISTC Conference 1978
Official ISTC Report

FORD WORKERS GAIN SUPPORT



LONDON

A recent visit by John Aitken, EETPU convenor, Ford's, Dagenham to the City and East London Labour Club met with great support from the audience.

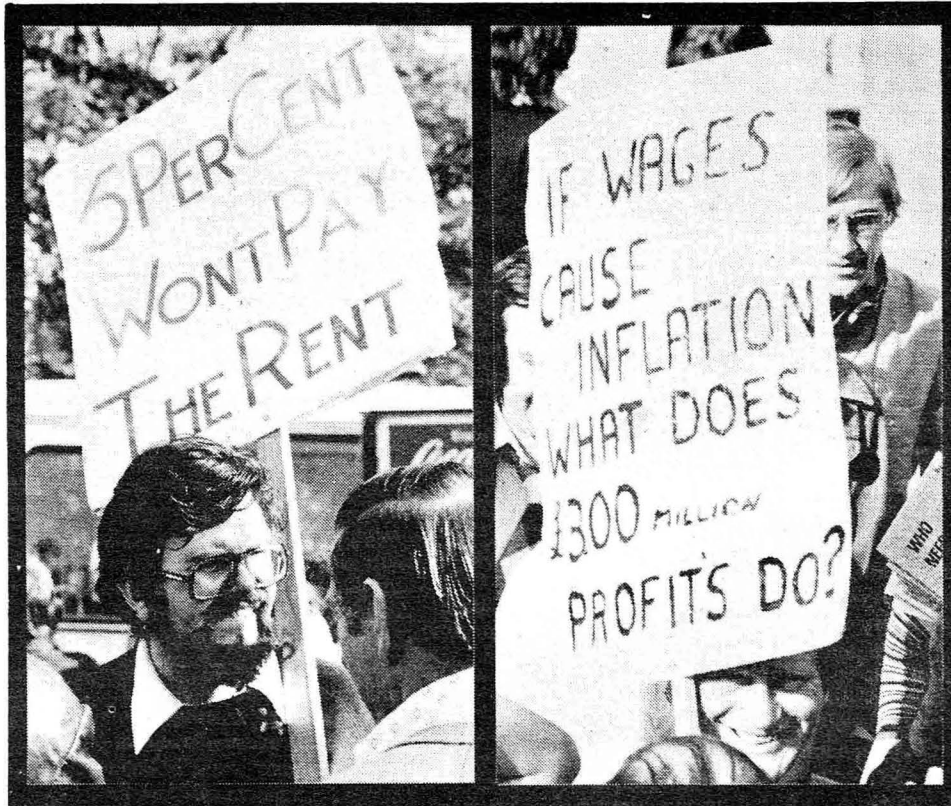
John spoke about the claim put forward to Ford management in July which was met with a complete refusal by Ford management to negotiate. As a result 18,000 workers immediately struck. It could quite clearly be seen that the management were hiding behind the government's skirts (the 5% guideline) in their attempt to keep wages steady and profits rising. Ford made profits of £121m in 1976, £240m in 1977 and a projected £300m in 1978.

John then outlined the tremendous support the Ford workers have had in their struggles and the effect of the Labour Party Conference motion which was passed opposing any wage controls, moved by 'Militant' supporter Terry Duffy.

The struggle of the strongest sections of the working class is a struggle on behalf of the weakest sections, and unions have been instrumental in the support of the unemployed. They are fighting to achieve a better social system, John answered in reply to one comrade who questioned the attempts by Ford workers to support those receiving supplementary and other state benefits.

The meeting ended with a speaker from the floor appealing for all students present to support the Ford strikers in whatever way possible and immediately by buying badges produced by Ford workers "5% is a fraud". John Aitken, in summing up, stressed the need for Labour Party members to press for implementation of Clause 4 to achieve a decent society for all.

Dave Todd



John Aitken at demonstration (left). Ford workers attack profit system (right)
Photos on this page by Julian McKittrick

POOLE

On Wednesday 18th October John Kelly, a Southampton Ford worker addressed a public meeting in Poole organised by 'Militant' supporters.

After outlining the structure of the pay claim which proved the workers were justified in their demands, he spoke of the need to smash the 5% for everyone. "We have to smash it as wide open as possible. What we don't get will go into the pockets of a small number of shareholders not to the poorer workers elsewhere."

A clear message from the discussion afterwards was for other workers presently in dispute not to sit back and watch the outcome at Ford. They should join them now to help boost these workers' morale and the margin by which the 5% is broken for all the working class.

Steve Sibley
(Dorchester LP)

TORY 'FREEDOM'

For the rich only

Nearly 30 Young Socialists turned up at a recent debate with the Young Conservatives organised by Joint Cardiff LPYS, on the issue of "capitalism or socialism?" It was noticeable that only two Young Conservatives were at the debate [including their speaker!].

Speaking for the Young Conservatives, Nigel Davies (Chairman of the Welsh YCs) blamed the present high levels of unemployment and falling living standards on the "socialist policies of the Labour Government", and claimed that since the war, Tory governments had spent more on the social services than Labour, and that living standards under the Tories had risen ten times faster than under Labour.

Mr Davies maintained that the system of profit is capable of providing homes, jobs and a good standard of living for all. However, beyond the call for "tax cuts and strict control of public spending", he made no specific economic proposals, nor did he attempt to justify with facts his claim concerning the profit system. But he discussed at great length "freedom of choice for the individual", and expressed his desire for the maintenance of a "national security force to protect the freedom of the individual" (!).

Chris Burns, Chairman of the Wales Regional LPYS, spoke next. Chris pointed out that it was only through the struggles of the working class that democratic rights for all

had been gained in Britain. It was the Tories who in the past had transported Labour movement activists such as the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and sent troops against the miners

at Tonypany. More recently, it was the Heath regime that had tried to put the trade unions in a strait jacket with the Industrial Relations Act. As for "freedom of choice",

Chris said that for the Tories this meant "freedom for the rich to buy private health and education while working class families have to rely on the ailing NHS and education callously wanted to cut back."

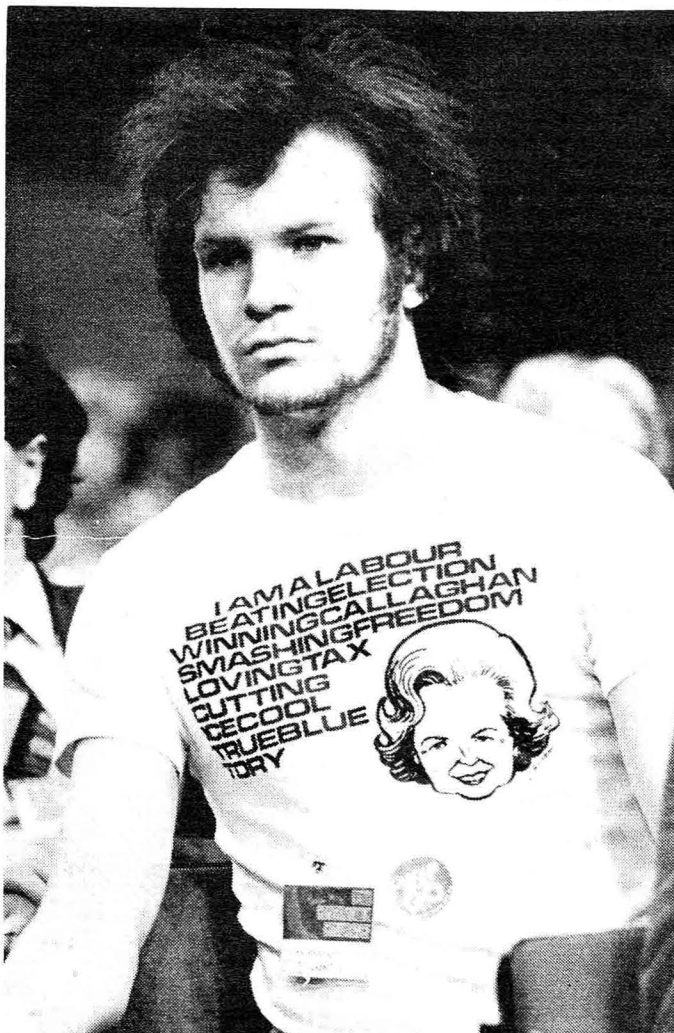
Chris pointed out that "despite an average doubling of profits last year, the capitalist still don't invest. Only a planned socialist system of production where wealth is created according to need and not private profit could provide jobs, homes, and public services for everyone."

"After all, factories aren't being closed down, and workers thrown on the dole because goods, homes and services aren't needed. It's because there isn't enough profit in it for the private owners of industry—the cap-owners of industry."

One of the most interesting points raised from the floor was a review in Militant International Review of Tory MP Ian Gilmour's book 'Inside Right'—in which he drops some clangers on the Tory attitude to democracy if a socialist government were elected in Britain. This really showed the hypocrisy of his party.

The debate was a great success, and newcomers to the YS were left in no doubt as to who had the most appeal for youth. Every YS branch should consider holding such a debate.

Richard Bartlett



Young Tory, rare species spotted at Tory Party Conference

GROWING NEED FOR MARXISM

"We are now moving into a more turbulent period of class struggle," explained Peter Taaffe, the editor of 'Militant', at a meeting in Oxford.

After much hard work by local 'Militant' supporters, 60 people heard Peter show the burning need for Marxist ideas to explain recent developments and give a clear lead to the working class.

In eloquent and fighting fashion, he analysed the shift in the mood of the labour movement in the wake of Labour Party Conference, and outlined trends for the future.

He pointed to the spontaneous action of the Ford shop-floor workers which transformed conference and gave a lead to all sectors of the working class. He stressed the decisive role that 'Militant' supporters had played in arguing for the composite rejecting the 5% limit, extending the respect for the ideas of Marxism in the movement.

In the discussion which followed workers in the NHS outlined the effects of the cuts on working people—pointing to the queues and the waiting

lists as a stark reminder that the society we live in cannot provide for the most elementary needs whilst the bosses are in control.

But two subjects especially highlighted the role that 'Militant' must play in the future. The first concerned new technology; how was it possible someone asked, that a bankrupt capitalism was able to make these tremendous advances in micro-processors and so forth. The point was immediately answered—capitalism will use these techniques not to increase production nor to increase the standards of living of working people but to cut costs, lay people off and restore its profits.

In his summing-up Peter picked up on points raised about internationalism and the experience of the Soviet Union. With the world crisis of capitalism the solutions can only be on an international scale and fought on the basis of workers democracy.

The struggle for Marxist ideas in the labour movement is a vital role that 'Militant' supporters must continue to play in the future.

Daniel Lewis

Left & Right

A healthy profit

While millions of people suffer from hospital cuts and closures, some people are increasingly benefitting from the NHS. The multinational drug company Hoffman La Roche are investing £140 million in a vitamin C factory in Ayrshire; aided by £46 million in regional aid and special assistance from the government.

This to a firm whose profiteering on Valium and Librium a few years ago earned a rap even from the capitalist press. Drug prices boomed during 1976-77. Hoffman's Valium went up 51% and Mogadon 75% during this period.

Money paid to private drug companies is one of the biggest drains on NHS finances. Hoffman's plant will employ an estimated 430 people. But these jobs could be supplied and thousands more if the drug companies were taken over, run as a public service, and the savings ploughed back into the NHS.

Fleet St intimidation

The press have been cock-a-hoop at the decision of a mass meeting of the Vauxhall workers at Luton not to take strike action. The 'Daily Express' particularly sees the moral as being the need for compulsory and secret strike ballots. The press described the pro-strike stewards as 'loud-mouthed', 'weasel-faced' etc. and accused them of manipulating and intimidation.

So the free discussion and weighing of the issues at a public meeting open to all union members is 'undemocratic'. The bosses want us to vote on strike action individually with only the intimidation of loud-mouthed professional advisors like Woodrow Wyatt. The labour movement needs no advice on democracy from them.

Man of the people?

Workers will be relieved that in the two recent by-elections at Pontefract and Berwick and East Lothian, the Tory candidates were heavily defeated. However, the views and interests of the Labour victor at Berwick give some cause for concern. John Home Robertson, a relative of former Tory Prime Minister Lord Home, is a wealthy local landowner and farmer.

He joins an unfortunately expanding group of Labour MPs who come from backgrounds remote from the working class. Perhaps not surprisingly, Robertson claims to identify very closely with the constituency's previous Labour MP, the late John Mackintosh, who was on the extreme right wing of the party. The miners, fishermen and agricultural workers who form the basis of his electoral support will be on the alert to ensure that their interests are taken up, and that they are not offered a watered-down form of Toryism.

Bureaucracy 'helpless'

The overthrow of capitalism in the USSR makes it possible to avoid the waste of resources created by the chase for profits. But the lack of real workers' democracy in Russia and Eastern Europe causes tremendous and crippling problems of bureaucratic waste, as a recent report in 'The Times' shows.

The Ukraina official paper 'Pravda Ukrainy' reported that in the Odessa region, 30,000 tons of goods have been abandoned at railway stations after being ordered by collective farms and factories. Piles of chemical fertiliser have been washed away by the rain while a nearby warehouse is empty. Gravel and reinforced concrete needed for vital roadbuilding works have been left unused for months.

The local transport organisation has a plan of targets and incentives based largely on the distance travelled by hired lorries. So the lorry drivers find it more advantageous to make a large number of journeys with small loads. The Ukrainian authorities feel helpless in the face of such large-scale inefficiency. A political revolution transferring power from the bureaucracy to the working class is the only way to allow rational planning in the Soviet economy.

EVIDENCE UNKNOWN



Rehearsals for civil war in Central London?

Photo: Mike Sheridan (IFL)

Do you consider yourself to be one of "a group of idealistic persons who would take positive steps to overthrow society"? If so, take care! Detective Superintendent Bradbury of the Anti-Terrorist Squad considers this good reason to have you thrown inside.

In July, six Anarchists were arrested and held in Brixton prison. With one exception they are still there now. They are all charged with "conspiracy with persons unknown" to cause explosions, together with various charges of possessing firearms, dishonest handling of air guns and in one case, armed robbery.

The only evidence offered for the explosions charge is that weedkiller and electric wire were found in a defendant's flat. The police say they are still collecting evidence for the charges.

The weekly hearings at Lambeth Magistrates' court are staged to give the impression that there exists a major threat of left-wing terrorism and armed rescue bids. The court is surrounded by armed police and people visiting the court are searched and harassed.

The entire case is being used to impress the media and the public that anti-terrorist legislation and forces are needed to protect the country from dangerous left-wing extremists. This comes at a time, however, when the need for the Anti-Terrorist Squad had been questioned in parliament and its numbers greatly reduced.

It should be pointed out that the police are not claiming that any explosions connected with those charged have actually taken place. On the other hand, as we all know, there has been an alarming number of parcel and letter bombs aimed by

fascist elements at left-wing bookshops, newspapers, and activists. No one has been arrested or charged in connection with these!

A disturbing feature of the case has been the treatment of the prisoners—who have only been charged, not convicted or even brought to trial. The five held have been restricted in regard to visits and in facilities for preparing their defence.

Worst is the treatment of Iris Mills, the only woman defendant. She was originally kept in solitary confinement in Brixton prison until the arrival of another woman prisoner, an Arab who speaks little English. She is not allowed to meet with the others held on remand and visits by family and friends are restricted.

This attack by the state on a small group of anarchists should alert the labour movement to the dangers it will have to face in the future. As

the ruling class becomes more desperate to defend its privileges it will be prepared to resort to methods of civil war being rehearsed now under the guise of "anti-terrorism". Repressive legislation will be used against the working class as a whole when the labour movement moves to take "positive steps to overthrow society".

For this reason we must demand the release of the prisoners together with the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the disbanding of the Anti-Terrorist Squad and the Special Patrol Group.

[Messages of support and donations should be sent to 'Persons Unknown Support Group', Box 123, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N.1.]

Bill Joyce

Portrait of power

Review by Geoff Jones

'Citizen Kane' made by Orson Welles in 1940, was recently reshowed on TV. Over the years, critics have regularly selected it as one of the best films ever made. On the other hand, it never made much money. Does it deserve the acclaim?

In a huge lonely mansion a rich hermit, Charles Foster Kane, dies, uttering his last word—"Rosebud". In a studio we see a newsreel describing Kane's life, how he had built up a chain of newspapers with massive power, stood for the Governorship of New York, and had been defeated by revelations about his private life; how he had taken a young singer and tried to make her a star and finally retired to exile in a fabulous mansion "Xanadu".

Newsreel reporters discuss the film. They are intrigued by Kane's last word. One of them is given the job of finding who or what was "Rosebud". He interviews Kane's old cronies and his ex-wife. A picture is built up

which fills out the surface of the newsreel. But at the end the newsman is no wiser. "Rosebud must have been just part of the jigsaw."

The audience sees more than the reporter and the film digs into the depths of what made Kane first a millionaire playboy, then a crusading journalist, then a populist politician and an opera impresario, finally a lonely recluse.

Impact

Why did it make such an impact? To start with, 'Citizen Kane' was technically years ahead of its time in its use of film, sound, lighting etc. This is not so obvious now as TV has made us all more sophisticated and familiar with the techniques that can startle the eye, carry the story on, illustrate a character etc. But in 1940 it was a daring departure from the staid conventions of Hollywood.

It tells the story of one man from birth to death by a search, jumping from one

view to another, ferreting out facts just as one would build up a picture in real life. Finally, the man it portrays seems real—repulsive sometimes, an egotist but a human being.

The film caused a furore. It was believed to be based on the life of William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper tycoon. In many ways it parallels his life, but this is not particularly important. The importance is the portrayal of the power given to one man by money, the ability to twist lives and countries

with as little compunction as a child torturing a fly.

Ironically, the only reason Welles could make the film was because the studio RKO was going bankrupt. Welles had made a name in the theatre and radio and they gave him a blank cheque to make a film which would restore their fortunes.

No profit

He produced a masterpiece, but it did not make much money. He never got the same chance again.

The rest of Welles' career has been a ceaseless struggle to get backing to make films. Banks have only one question: "Will my money make a profit?" Welles could only answer, "No, but it might make a masterpiece." For capitalism that is no answer.

MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

WINTER 1978

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HEALTH & SAFETY ACT

- THE PITFALLS

On October 1st the long awaited and much heralded regulations governing the role of safety representatives and safety committees took effect.

These regulations are a landmark in the history of the TU movement. For the first time a trade union can now appoint its own watchdog who has the legal right to put the place of work under thorough examination.

Regular inspections can be carried out to root out hazards and dangerous practices. Reps can visit the scene of an accident and examine its causes, and demand from management and the Health and Safety executive a wide range of information necessary for the job. The safety representative is entitled to time off with pay to perform these tasks and attend safety courses.

Step forward

Undoubtedly, these new regulations represent a tremendous step forward for the eight million workers now covered and for all those affected by industrial pollution and hazards, whose health has for so long been in the hands of lawyers and safety officers appointed by management. Industrial accidents—estimated to cause 1,400 deaths and over 300,000 serious injuries each year—and diseases, have become subjects of increasing concern not only to trade unionists and environmentalists but to the population as a whole.

But these regulations are being met with stiff opposition from sections of the TU movement who regard it as a retrograde step. The major bone of contention centres on section 7 of the Act which transfers to the worker responsibilities already established under previous legislation, such as the Factories Act, as solely the responsibility of the employer.

Responsibility

For example, the Act calls upon every employee to take reasonable care not only of the health and safety of himself but of other employees. **In fact, it is now a criminal offence to put oneself or others at risk!** If the employee fails to comply, improvement notices and even prohibition notices can be served, which carry a maximum penalty of £1,000.

In other words they can be sacked on the grounds that they represent a potential hazard to themselves and to other workers! Management, it is claimed, could use this section to avoid paying compensation, and even dismiss workers. Since the passing of the Act, there have been many reports of employers asking workers to sign written declarations that they are responsible for their own safety. It is quite evident that many employers will attempt to exploit every loophole to dilute the duties that this legislation imposes on them.

Another contentious issue

centres on the definition of the phrase 'reasonably practicable' which occurs in every section of the Act. This is defined in terms of the cost of improving health and safety

as balanced against the risk of injury or ill health. If the risk is insignificant compared to the cost then it would not be 'reasonably practicable' to do anything about it.



G&MWU delegate Bro. Burlison speaking at the TUC this year on the exclusion of government employees from the new Health and Safety regulations photo: Julian McKittrick (Militant)

Trade unionists must ensure that employers do not use loopholes to avoid implementing the new regulations.

By
**Ronnie
Sookhdeo**

photo: John Sturrock (Report)

The ILEA, London's largest employer, has just been forced to issue a statement clarifying the meaning of the phrase but even this is ambiguous. In their bulletin 'Health and Safety at work' they note that the phrase 'reasonably practicable' occurs a great many times in the Act and many staff are unclear about its implications.

There can be no general definition; the factors involved (eg. cost, risk) vary widely in different circumstances. Only the courts will have the power to authoritatively interpret this phrase, in dealing with cases referred to them. It is likely that over the years a good deal of case law on this point will build up!

Finally, there is nothing in either the regulations or the Code of Practice that commits the employers to do anything about the reports from the safety reps or committees. Trade unionists will need to be vigilant, and ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the Act and its limitations. We must use the power we have won to the full, while fighting for day-to-day trade union control of the workplace to end the bosses' rule of 'profit before safety'.

CHILDREN'S CANCER UNIT FACES THE AXE

By Dave McGinley

(ASTMS, Hope hospital, Salford)

The child cancer unit at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital is recognised as one of the best in Europe. However, the Regional Health Authority now plans to close this facility and spend £1m to build a unit at the Christie Holt Radium Centre in Manchester.

This £1 million was a special grant from the Department of Health and Social Security, first given in 1972. At that time the staff agreed to the move, but on the basis of wrong information.

The Regional Health Authority said that one of the conditions of the grant was that it should be spent at the Christie Institute. The condition was in fact not that the money should be spent at the Christie Institute, but at an unspecified 'centre of excellence' in cancer medicine.

The RHA say that the staff made a decision to allow the transfer and must stick to it. We say that any decision based on our being incorrectly informed is invalid.

We do not dispute the fact

that the Christie Institute is a centre of excellence in adult cancer care. However, we claim that the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital is a centre of excellence in child cancer care, so it would be within the terms of the grant for the money to be spent at the Manchester Children's Hospital. We cannot understand £1 million being spent to duplicate facilities instead of improving existing facilities.

However, the most essential point has not yet been touched upon. In expressing their support for our position, the World Health Authority said that wherever possible children should be treated in children's hospitals.

This may sound like a very simple statement but the

reasons behind it are more complex. The Regional Health Authority maintain that there were no problems in the earlier transfer of the adult cancer care to the Christie Institute, so the children can be transferred just as easily. Unfortunately they miss the point. Children are not merely little adults and cannot be treated as such.

Special care

Children's medicine must be conducted in an atmosphere conducive to co-operation and peace of mind for the children. To create this atmosphere takes many years and highly trained staff.

Children must have con-

tinuity or they become unsettled. It is therefore imperative that their surroundings and nursing care be as constant as possible. A children's hospital should have a large grounds and good play facilities.

At the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, over the years the experience of handling children and learning from the mistakes has led to a high standard of care. To open a children's unit at Christie's would mean that this traumatic experience for the staff and children would have to be gone through again.

There is widespread support for our point of view, the most notable being the staff of the hospitals in the Salford area health authority, the

child cancer consultant for the Manchester area, the World Health Organisation, and most importantly, the parents of the children. A petition has been printed by the Action Committee and has been very well received by the local people of Manchester and Salford.

The campaign has the support of Salford Trades Council, local Labour Parties and Salford District Council.

We would be grateful if the matter could be raised in your union branch, and if any reader wants a copy of the petition or to send messages of support, write to:—Mr A Ashurst, Microbiology Dept., Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Pendlebury, Manchester.

NEXT WEEK: LONDON CRISIS / the fight against hospital closures.

Scanlon retires.....
 Toolroom strike.....
 Right wing in control.....
 Broad Left in disarray.....
 Amalgamation with EETPU?

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE AUEW?



Right winger Terry Duffy becomes President...

The victory of Duffy in the Presidential elections in the AUEW has meant an almost total takeover of the union by the right wing so far as nationally-elected positions are concerned.

It poses serious issues for every union member. Why did the right-wing victory take place? What are the lessons? Where do we go from here?

It was the non-socialist policies of the Labour government — holding down wages and cutting living standards and allowing unemployment to rise — which caused disillusionment among engineering workers who had shown their mettle in battles against the Tories. But it was the failure of the left in union offices and in Parliament to seriously fight for a socialist alternative which turned this into relative inactivity in the official trade union movement and increased fragmentation where industrial action broke out.

Faced with a lack of determined leadership which had failed to organise a campaign within the labour movement and in the factories to halt the retreat of the Labour government, the workers had little enthusiasm for a victory of the old left wing.

The attitude was that Scanlon and the traditional lefts had done 'nowt for us'. The observation was made to me, on arguing for Bob Wright's candidature as a better alternative than Duffy, that it was not too long

ago that people were saying the same about Hugh Scanlon.

'Con Trick'

So the confidence was not there for a left victory, and the left's machinery broke down in apathy where it mattered—at the grass roots. Apathy is the only reason the right-wing win—and it was shown in abundance because of the official lefts' past



...as left winger Hugh Scanlon retires

record. Without this factor, the mass media could not have played the role it did.

Now, after the event, the official lefts have raised criticism of the past record of the leadership. The Broad Left 'Engineering Gazette' accuses Scanlon of being taken in by the Social 'Con-Trick' and that other left leaders decided not to rock the boat and pinned their hopes on Scanlon. Perhaps, it is suggested, they now regret this.

But these points were not stressed when it mattered—long before the election for President! On the contrary, principled criticisms were then met with accusations of 'sectarianism' and 'splitting the ranks'.

Toolmakers

In Sheffield, for example, which traditionally has a strongly left District Committee, far from disassociating from those responsible for wage restriction, a vote of thanks was sent to Wilson on his retirement as Prime Minister "for his services to the movement"—while beyond the eleventh hour, refusing to make concrete criticisms of Scanlon's role.

However, the victory of the right wing is already producing a reaction. It has produced a hardening of the ranks.

Those pessimists who saw another long Carron-type regime, are already being disproved by events. The new leadership rests on shaky foundations indeed.

The undignified retreat before the toolmakers, after all the bluster about expulsions, shows the weakness of the leadership. The threat of expulsion for the SU Carburettor toolroom workers produced such a reaction, that if the expulsion threat had been taken to its ultimate Duffy would have fallen before he had properly started. On my own shop stewards' committee, even right wingers were out for his blood.

Sheffield reflected the mood nationally. Branch after branch in the District sent in resolutions not so much supporting the toolmakers' policies as completely



opposing all threats of expulsions.

The hapless leadership had to send round circulars to all branches and shop stewards' committees explaining the retreat. It shows what happens when the rank and file move to action through the union machinery.

The Ford dispute only underlines the point. This ultra-moderate leadership has already had to declare official the first serious challenge to wage restraint.

The coming period, with the great battles looming over the social contract, will put intolerable pressures on the leadership. And if Thatcher wins the General Election, the pressure will be redoubled.

This places key importance again on the position of the lefts, as to how far the lessons have been learnt from the past, to go forward with a positive programme.

Election machine

It cannot be said that the Broad Left was so much thrown into confusion by the election of Duffy, but rather it accelerated the confusion that already existed. The Broad Left has traditionally been merely an election machine rather than a policy generating body. That was its crucial weakness. Now it cannot be said even to be a good election machine.

Thus, even before the Presidential election, in my own Division we had the spectacle of two 'Left Unity' candidates fighting each other for the same full-time position! This is by no means unique.

It is a reflection of policy differences, but unfortunately as these are not honestly and openly debated, they are shown in purely electoral differences. The Broad Left is now in decay precisely because it has not seriously attempted to involve activists in discussing and forging policy, upon which adequate candidates can be thrown up.

Now we are faced with the question of amalgamation with

the EETPU. Although this is obviously supported by the right wing leadership as an opportunity to weaken the democratic constitution of the AUEW, thus reducing the accountability of officials to the membership and strengthening the right-wing grip on the union, amalgamation cannot be opposed outright by the left. It has a profound industrial logic, can lead to a more powerful union, and blind opposition to it would push us into so many separate groups that it would be achieved on the right wing's terms.

The question of union democracy has to be brought to the forefront. The response of branches, through to DCs, on the SU Carburettor issue, shows in itself how crucial these bodies are for the rank and file, and we have to strongly resist any attempt to dissolve these branches and DCs in any proposed amalgamation.

The Broad Left should be organising debates between AUEW and EETPU activists on the whole question. It would be useful if this were debated by the left on the broadest possible basis.

There has to be a principled defence of democracy—particularly the election of full-time officials. This must encompass all sections of the union—including TASS where the left here is leaving itself wide open to hypocritical criticism from the right wing because of their refusal to introduce the election of full-time officials.

Principles

Above all, it is necessary to seize the great opportunities that will open up. The Broad Left has to be transformed into an area for open discussion and debate on policy and action, and not merely an ineffective election machine where, as all too often is the case, the decisions are all cut and dried before the meetings.

If the left is to return, and return successfully, it must be based on principles and a

concrete programme not on blind faith in personalities. The most demoralising aspect of the recent past was the blind faith in Scanlon on the social contract—expecting him to pull something from his sleeve and "work the oracle".

The left should take up the fight to defend the democracy of the union. Let us demand the full facts on the secret negotiations which are (as far as we know) taking place with the right wing leaders of the EETPU on the future of our union. Let us demand the retention of our District Committees, our final appeals court and above all the election of our officials.

Pay battle

But the main issue which will face our union in the weeks ahead is that of pay. After pressure from the shop floor, and the subsequent decision of the National Conference, a claim for a £20 rise and a 35-hour week has been submitted by the Confed on behalf of all engineers.

The AUEW is by far the largest body on the Confed. What our union does in pursuit of that claim will be decisive. Through the districts and the branches a thorough campaign must be launched.

The left in the union should give the lead. District-wide stewards' meetings should be called as a matter of priority, specifically to discuss the claim, to show the extent of the support it has, and to prepare the membership for any necessary action. If the strength of the union is harnessed by drawing the active members together in such a campaign then the room for manoeuvre of the right will dwindle and the chances of a just pay settlement for engineers will significantly improve.

Dave Staniforth

(Sheffield AUEW District Committee, personal capacity)

The German Revolution

WHEN POWER RESTED

Sixty years ago this week the carnage of death and destruction of the First World War was put a stop to—not by a military victory of the Allies as the history books tell us, but by the action of the German workers in and out of uniform.

Following the example of their Russian brothers a year earlier, the German workers, soldiers and sailors brought down the monarchy, ended the war and were ready to sweep aside capitalism with workers' democracy. The Socialist United States of Europe could then have become a reality.

"Tens of thousands of workers burst into wild cheering. Never have I seen anything like it again...The world revolution had come. The mass of the people heard its iron tramp. Our isolation was over." With these words, the Bolshevik Karl Radek described the impact made in revolutionary Russia by the news of the German revolution.

Over every barracks and every ship in the German Imperial Navy flew a red flag. A government of People's Commissars had been appointed by the Central Executive Committee of the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Councils.

Alongside this government issuing feeble decrees, workers' councils ruled all the cities of Germany and its patrols were on the streets. The army had melted away.

The Hohenzollerns and soon afterwards the Hapsburgs were following the Romanovs into oblivion. Another age-old absolutism had collapsed. The Kaiser had fled, preceded by the rulers of all the 27 German kingdoms, duchies and principalities.

King Ludwig III of Bavaria, for instance, upon being respectfully informed that a republic had formed under the leadership of a Jewish revolutionary socialist, simply packed his bags and left. The King of Wurtemberg requested only that no red flag should fly over his palace after his departure.

The German High Command was sitting in a railway carriage discussing surrender terms with the Allies. In reply to the demand that all 30,000 German machine guns be surrendered forthwith, the German delegation plaintively pointed out that if this was agreed "there would not be enough left to fire on the German people should this become necessary".

Under the weight of this most compelling of arguments, the Allies conceded that 5,000 could be retained for this purpose. They had drawn the same conclusion as the workers of revolutionary Russia: that world capitalism was facing a common enemy in the workers of Germany.

The social calm that had enveloped Europe between the bloody defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871 and the end of the economic upswing in 1912, during which the working class had accumulated enormous power and built trade unions and mass Social-Democratic

parties, came to a sudden end, with a wave of strikes, the holocaust of the world war, and the world's first victorious socialist revolution in Russia. These shocks began an era of violent class battles unparalleled in history, shaking Europe to its foundations and reverberating far beyond its revolutionary aftermath.

Today, after another three decades' respite in the advanced capitalist countries, another prolonged upswing has ground to a halt, and a new generation of workers, again immeasurably strengthened, has been forced into battle, rediscovering its mission and its power to change society.

Impotent without a clear perspective and bold programme.

The birth, life and death of the German Revolution in 1918-33 is rich in lessons for the present generation. From the moment when the revolution thrust power into the unwilling hands of the leaders of the German Social-Democracy (SPD)—who confessed themselves "seized with deathly fear" at the occasion—to the crushing under Hitler's iron heel of every particle of independent working-class activity, it was proved that even the most formidable organisational machine is ultimately impotent without a clear perspective and bold programme.

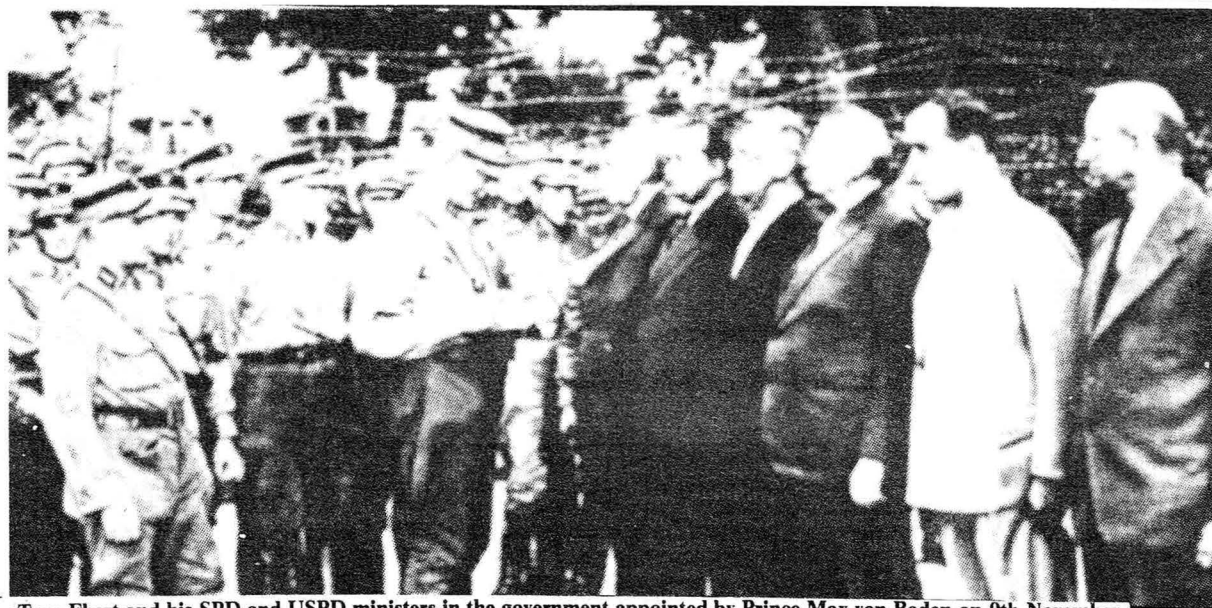
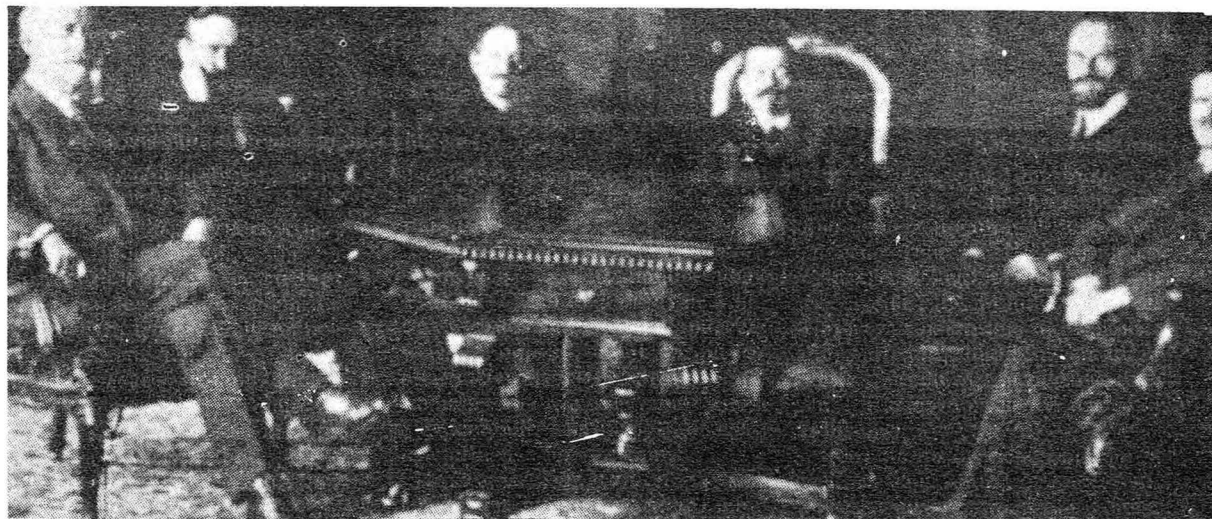
For the German Social Democracy was the pride of the world labour movement. By 1912 the SPD had a million members, 15,000 fulltimers, assets worth 20 million gold marks, 90 daily papers, numerous weeklies and monthlies,

Yet capitalism remained, and 15 years later brought in Hitler to destroy the labour movement and plunge mankind into an even more terrifying holocaust. What went wrong?

In this article Roger Silverman recounts the events of 1918. Coming articles in 'Militant'—including eye-witness accounts from veteran German comrades—will show the tenacity of the German workers in absorbing the lessons of this defeat and struggling over the following five years for a workers' democracy.

- and
the

Social Democrats handed it back



Top: Ebert and his SPD and USPD ministers in the government appointed by Prince Max von Baden on 9th November 1918 to restore 'law and order' for the ruling class. Bottom: where the policies of respect for capitalist 'law' led the SPD—Ebert and his colleagues in one of Hitler's concentration camps, 1933

its own press agency, a vote of 4,300,000 (more than one-third of the electorate), and an affiliated trade union membership of 2½ million.

It was incomparably stronger than the Bolsheviks had been on the eve of the October revolution. And yet by its policies it abused the trust of the masses and handed power back to the capitalists, thus releasing the spring that unwound relentlessly over fifteen years to the devastation of all the power that the German workers had painfully built up, and to the most hideous tyranny in history.

The course of the German revolution also demonstrates, through the failure of currents and parties to the left of the SPD—the Spartacists, Independents, and especially the Communist Party—that correct tactics are ultimately no less essential than correct strategy. Eventually the German revolution, greeted as potentially the decisive step towards a worldwide socialist transformation, became the decisive defeat which plunged Europe into barbarism.

Lenin said: "It is an absolute truth that we shall go under without the German revolution...Even if it were necessary for us to go under to ensure the success of the German revolution, we should have to do it." Workers' democracy in an industrially developed country such as Germany could have withstood for far longer the inevitability of bureaucratic degeneration that was seen to swamp backward Russia in its isolation.

A Germany ruled by workers' councils would have changed the face of Europe and spared humanity the horrors of subsequent decades. The German revolution did give the infant workers' state in Russia, fragile and unhealthy, the crucial breathing space it needed to survive. But its betrayal and the final victory of Fascism imperilled the very existence of the USSR twenty years later.

Germany was the cradle of Marxism and the SPD was the embodiment of the German workers' revolutionary traditions. But its meteoric growth during the prolonged upswing had blunted its edges.

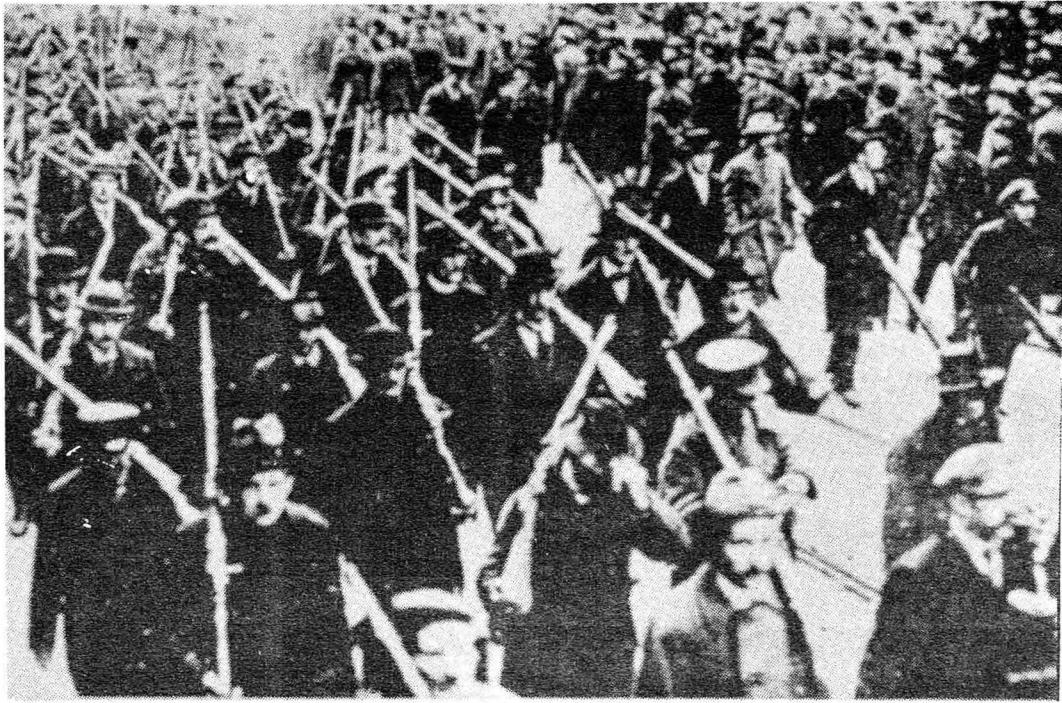
The SPD and the trade unions had become rich and powerful institutions harbouring careerists at every level. An entire social layer was created which paid lip-service to Marxism but had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, and remaining an indispensable instrument of mediation in the class struggle, while economic conditions still permitted mediation.

The first outbreak of the cancer came at the turn of the century, when Bernstein challenged the "shibboleths" of Marxism to which he accused the other SPD leaders of clutching hypocritically. He was the first of a long line of reformist theoreticians who justified their practice of compromise with allusions to the obsolescence of the class struggle, the democratisation of the state, the growing influence of the Social-Democracy, capitalism's proven ability to smooth over the earlier unfortunate contradictions...all this on the eve of two world wars, the slump and Nazism!

Kautsky and the other high priests of the SPD responded with horror: "we dare not renounce our

revolution 1918

IN WORKERS' HANDS



Berlin November 9th 1918: soldiers join the general strike and turn their guns on their officers



Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

heritage! And yet they continued to busy themselves with the practical negotiations of the day without a thought to the hidden, accumulating tensions that were so soon to erupt in war and revolution.

Their 'Marxism' was thus a blind conservatism. The discussion remained academic, as is customary with centrists, for whom Marxist theory always remains divorced from practical politics.

The great events of the war and mounting working-class pressure played a strange trick. Both Bernstein and Kautsky were forced to the left of the new breed of bureaucrats of the stamp of the artisans Ebert, Noske and Scheidemann who had eventually floated to the top of the SPD like scum in a stagnant pool.

When the SPD voted for the Kaiser's war credits in August 1914, after the ringing words of the Socialist International in 1912 threatening a general strike against imperialist war, it stunned the world. Even Lenin suspected the SPD publication in question as a forgery by the German General Staff. The International was shattered at a single blow.

Only Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg of the Spartacist League braved persecution to raise the banner of internationalism. By sheer will-power they accomplished a miracle, rallying the best worker militants to their cause. What could they have done, once the tide had turned, if they had had a clear perspective before the event, and an organised tendency?

For despite the SPD's betrayal, within two years the workers were becoming disillusioned in the ugly and futile reality of the war. On May Day 1916, 10,000 workers demonstrated in Berlin, and on Liebknecht's arrest for anti-war agitation, 50,000 downed tools. In November, 30,000 workers demonstrated in Frankfurt.

The hungry winter of 1916-17 was called "turnip winter". The following year, rations were cut to 70 ounces of bread and two ounces of fat per week. Average adult consumption was 1,000 calories a day, and child mortality shot up by 50%.

Under this pressure, and the inspiration of the downfall of Tsarism in Russia, the SPD split and the Independent Social-Democratic Party (USPD) was formed in March 1917. Despite its political confusion—it formally brought into a single party Bernstein, Kautsky and Liebknecht—within three months it won 62 local SPD

branches in all the industrial cities and founded 19 new ones.

In April, 200,000 workers struck in Berlin and Leipzig, and in January 1918 over a million munition workers struck, alongside those of Austro-Hungary, in support of the Russian demands for an immediate peace without annexations or indemnities, a mark of Trotsky's brilliant use of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations as a platform for international agitation.

Against this rising tide of revolt, the feeble-minded Kaiser, guided at first by 'Rasputin', General Ludendorff (later to join Hitler's beerhall putsch), retaliated by mobilising worker-militants into the army and sending them to the front. In vain! He thus only ensured their ideas would infect the troops.

Finally the cold decision was taken to send the entire High Seas Fleet on a suicide mission against the British Grand Fleet. At one stroke, the rebellious sailors were to be massacred; some bargaining leverage might be gained with the Allies; and at worst the fleet would be scuppered before the inevitable surrender rather than swelling British naval power.

But the sailors said no! Two warships mutinied at Kiel harbour and the scheme was hastily dropped. Fire was concentrated instead on quelling the mutiny.

In reply, on 3rd November 20,000 sailors and dockers surged through the streets and a Workers' and Sailors' Council was elected. Carrying torches and singing the Internationale, they broke into the armouries.

By 4th November, red flags flew over every ship, the civil governor was held hostage, and Kiel was in the workers' hands. On 6th November, Workers' Councils had taken over in Hamburg, Bremen and Lubek. On 7th and 8th, Dresden, Chemnitz, Magdeburg, Brunswick, Frankfurt, Cologne, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Munich, and Leipzig had followed suit.

On 9th November, Berlin was paralysed by a general strike. All fourteen regiments in the garrisons refused to open fire. The crack Jugers—the German 'Cossacks' rushed in from Finland—deposed their officers and disbanded. The First Guards Reserve Regiment handed over their arms to the workers. The garrisons emptied. A soldiers' council was set up right in the Supreme Headquarters.

The approach of the revolution had struck panic into the ruling cabal. Governments fell in rapid succession. In a desperate conces-

sion thrown to appease the masses, Liebknecht was released in an amnesty.

Scheidemann exclaimed in horror that he was "carried shoulder-high by soldiers decorated with the Iron Cross!" He warned the palace: "We have done all within our power to keep the masses in check", and demanded the Kaiser's abdication as a symbolic sacrifice to bolster their influence for restraint.

Noske was sent to Kiel by the palace to contain the revolt...and was cheered ecstatically by the sailors. Out of his slavish worship of 'order' and the imperial officer caste, he exceeded his authority by taking charge of the revolt and tricking the sailors into submission. His daily telegrams to the palace testify to his chosen role as a conscious traitor to the working class.

"We have done all within our power to keep the masses in check"

Prince Max approached Ebert with the question: "If I should succeed in persuading the Kaiser, do I have you on my side in the battle against the social revolution?" Ebert replied with the immortal rejoinder: "If the Kaiser does not abdicate, the social revolution is inevitable. I do not want it—in fact I hate it like sin."

The fawning courtiers had for years acted on the principle that "his Majesty must hear nothing but good news". This, and the historical law that saves doomed rulers from coming to grips with their own demise (eg. Louis XVI, Nicholas II) explains the Kaiser's rantings.

Had he not commanded the troops that "if ever again Berlin should presume to rise up against its master...the regiment will repress with the bayonet the impertinence of the people towards their King"? Had not the troops "sworn an oath to their colours and their Warlord"? Only the hard-headed General Groener had the courage to answer: "Today these are only words...Sire, you no longer have an army."

For days the SPD leaders respectfully urged that without abdication they could not dam the final flood. The Ministers regretfully concurred. And still the Kaiser refused. As one city after another fell to Workers' Councils, he graciously consented to think it over "after a good lunch and a good cigar".

But, faced with the reality of armed workers roaming Berlin, and finally the resignation of the SPD in chagrin from the Government, Prince Max had to anticipate the Kaiser's decision for him. Hence the Kaiser was astonished to hear news of his own abdication! In vain did he rage: "Barefaced, outrageous treason!" For he remained Kaiser only in his own eyes.

Revolutions have their humour as well as their drama. The rolling waves of history dwarf the comical delusions of those who imagine that history obeys their dictates. The picture of the Kaiser strutting around expounding to a morose audience of Generals his grand plan to march back to Germany at the head of his troops is no less amusing than the antics of the SPD trying to cramp the revolution into their neat schemas.

As the masses poured on to the stage of politics, exactly the same phenomenon was seen as in Russia in February 1917. The most self-sacrificing minority of workers had fought alongside the Spartacists and Independents against the war. But once the millions of previously inert workers had burst on the scene, they did not discriminate between the different shades of rival socialists.

Trotsky commented that "since the Mensheviks and SRs comprised infinitely larger ranks of the intelligentsia—who came pouring in from all sides—and thus got into their hands immediately an immense staff of agitators, the elections gave them an enormous majority." If that was true in Russia, where the Mensheviks in 1912 had comprised only a fifth of the labour movement, how much more support could the SPD expect?

In her history of the German labour movement, "Hammer or Anvil", Evelyn Anderson stressed that "out of sheer loyalty, hundreds of thousands of workers stuck to their old Party which they helped to build, no matter how violently they disagreed with its policy...Loyalty to his organisation has become a matter of instinct for the worker. All organised workers feel that their strength and the progress they have made are much more due to their organised coherence than to prin-

ciples or programmes."

Only over a longer period does the predominance of policy assert itself, as the defeat of the German Revolution proved.

The SPD represented in the eyes of the masses a continuity with the traditions of Social Democracy which had awakened them to political life, and so in spite of the treacherous role of its leaders in 1914 and 1918, the revolution still gave them the initiative, with the Independents in an important secondary role.

As a gigantic crowd besieged the Chancellery and an army truck mounting a machine gun and a red flag drove down the Wilhelmstrasse, Prince Max hastily handed over the power to Ebert. Meanwhile, Scheidemann called in at the restaurant in the Reichstag (Parliament) building for a bowl of potato soup.

As he sipped his soup, a huge crowd gathered in the Platz outside. On learning of this, he ran up to the French windows and announced to the cheering crowd that Ebert was Chancellor. "Then, to great applause and almost as an afterthought, he had cried, 'Long live the great German Republic!' Having thus proclaimed a republic, he had returned to his soup." (From "The Kings Depart" by Richard Watt, an account of the German revolution).

When Ebert heard of this, "his face turned livid...He banged on the table with his fist. He was furious at Scheidemann's presumption... 'You have no right to proclaim a republic! And yet nobody ever dared to retract this step, dictated like the Kaiser's abdication by the revolution itself."

Ebert's first revolutionary proclamation was "Fellow-citizens! I beg of you urgently: stay away from the streets. See to it that there is law and order!"

But within months the SPD champions of legality had Liebknecht and Luxemburg kidnapped and brutally murdered; and sent to kill thousands of workers in Berlin and the provincial cities the sinister mercenary gangs the Freikorps, who adopted the regalia of the swastika and the title of Stormtroops which later became notorious. It is ironic that their own Social Democratic successors were to perish, at the hands of Fascist gangs, the nucleus of which they had themselves set up in the interests of 'restoring order'.

By Roger Silverman

GREECE

GREEK VOTERS DESERT KARAMANLIS

By Bob Labi



PASOK leader Andreas Papandreu

The Greek local elections showed the government's continuing unpopularity and the masses are searching for a party which will seriously fight the miseries of capitalism.

PASOK must campaign on Socialist programme

Every Greek election since November 1974 has revealed a steady decline in support for the capitalist, 'New Democratic' government. Last year's General Election saw the New Democracy vote fall by a quarter to 41.8% while the workers' parties' vote increased from 24% to over 36%.

PASOK, the Socialist Party led by Andreas Papandreu, raised its vote from 13.6% to 25.3% and the number of its MPs from 15 to 92.

The recent local elections in Greece have shown again a further fall in the government's support in all the major centres. In the middle of Athens George Plytas, who resigned his Cabinet seat to fight the election, got only 42.72% compared with the 57.28% won by the joint opposition candidate Demetrios Beis in the second, final, round of voting for the mayor's position on October 22nd.

But despite these reverses the local elections were not as big a defeat for the Karamanlis government as they could have been. This was a result of the failure of the leaders of PASOK and the KKE (the pro-Moscow 'Exterior' Communist Party) to lead an ongoing campaign against the government in the months before the election; the limitation of their election campaigns to local issues; and their support of candidates put forward by the remains of the liberal capitalist Centre Union, EDIK.

Both the PASOK and KKE leaders were determined to secure alliances with the EDIK leaders. Papandreu has been calling for 'unity at all costs' since last April and the KKE leader Florakis has called for the 'rallying of the broad anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly forces' and for 'broad, constructive co-operation with the opposition democratic forces, including those of the bourgeoisie.'



that in many areas workers were faced with the choice of voting for a PASOK and/or KKE list of candidates including capitalist politicians, or abstaining.

But while the elections were a further setback for the New Democracy they were also a blow to PASOK. Although PASOK's vote was up compared with the last local elections in 1974 they were down compared with its results in last November's General Election.

We have explained before how the PASOK leaders have tried to move to the right (see issues of September 8th and 15th, 1978). The election results have shown that while PASOK leaders thought they would gain votes from the middle class by moving right in fact in many areas PASOK lost votes to the KKE, which has at least presented a more militant image, despite its leaders' drive for similar electoral deals.

'Interior's' decline

In about 40 municipalities where they stood separately PASOK lost badly to the KKE. The combined vote of PASOK, the 'Eurocommunist' Communist Party of the 'Interior' and EDA, the former communist front organisation, was generally between 10% to 25%, while their national average last November was 28%.

The KKE generally won between 20% and 40% of the vote in these areas. To give an extreme example of the

swing, in Elefsis, a solid working class area with a steel works, the KKE won the mayor's position in the first round with 60%, PASOK trailed behind with 10%. In last year's General Election PASOK won 25% and the KKE 20%.

In Piraeus, Athen's port, both PASOK and the KKE supported George Kyriakakos, an unpopular former mayor associated with the right wing of EDIK. In the last local elections PASOK had accused him of co-operating with the Colonel's Junta, while the KKE had supported him against the common candidate of the other opposition parties!

The support of the workers' parties for this man so angered the people of Piraeus that there was an abstention rate of 38% in the first round, which allowed Aristides Skylitis [the mayor appointed by the Junta] to lead by 48.7% to 45.7%. In the second round the abstention rate dropped to 28% as workers were grudgingly forced to vote for Kyriakakos to keep the openly pro-Junta Skylitis out by 53.43% to 46.57%.

In many areas there was an increase in the votes of the right wing candidates supported by the various pro-Juntaist organisations. This was not an indication of rising support for the fascist groups, but rather was the result of the fact that the New Democracy did not stand in many areas. The Government did not run its own candidates openly for fear of exposing how far its support has fallen.

This meant that many Juntaists won much of the 'normal' New Democracy votes, though in some places they were able to split the New Democracy down the middle where a ND candidate was standing. Karamanlis may now try to use this increase in the far-right vote to revive his November 1974 election slogan of 'It's me or the tanks' to try to rally support and undermine the workers' parties.

Apart from Athens, PAS-

OK did not win as many councillors as its election results last November indicated that it could. In many places it won less councillors than the KKE. In Salonika the KKE won 10, PASOK 7; in Patras KKE 10, PASOK 7; in Volos KKE 7, PASOK 4, and Iraklion, Crete (a PASOK stronghold) KKE 7, PASOK 7.

These results were the outcome of PASOK's refusal to provide a clear direction forward after last March 1st's General Strike and the fact that its leadership was prepared to put forward any old candidate, whether they were old discredited right-wingers, opportunists who joined the party a few months before the elections or personalities from EDIK.

Members revolt

In one Athens PASOK Area Committee it was reported that 8 out of the 20 branches in its district were in outright rebellion against the candidates imposed on them by the Party Headquarters. The Party leadership even tried to avoid printing in the PASOK weekly whether the candidates they were supporting were party members or not!

Because many of the candidates were so-called 'independents' and 'friends' of the parties the election results in many areas are difficult to interpret exactly, but nevertheless the following points are clear—the Government is continuing to lose support and the KKE has gained support at PASOK's expense. This has provoked a major crisis inside PASOK already as its members demand an explanation for their setback.

In the week between the first and second round of voting the PASOK leaders held emergency meetings of the Area Committees and Branch Executives and appealed to them not to begin criticising the party's policy until after the elections were over. Now special party meetings are being held in every area. Many PASOK members are correctly seeing this setback as a direct consequence of the leadership's rightward march.

So deep is the dissatisfaction with the leadership's behaviour both before and during the election campaign that some PASOK members are drifting towards the KKE, attracted by its militant posturing.

In Piraeus the PASOK Area Committee has collapsed after its Secretary and two other leading members joined the KKE just before the elections.

This was in spite of the fact that in Piraeus the KKE not only supported Kyriakakos along with the PASOK, but also, backed him in the 1974 local elections. In this way the policy of the KKE leaders in the past few months of appearing to be tougher, more determined than PASOK (despite having in reality a more right-wing programme than PASOK's conference decisions) has succeeded in attracting some militants towards it and increasing its vote.

Stalinist defeats

The creation of PASOK in September 1974 marked an important step forward for the Greek working class. It represented a major breach in

the grip which Stalinism had over the Greek labour movement since the late 1920s which resulted in the two terrible defeats in the Civil War and the 1960s.

Masses of workers, especially the youth, flocked towards PASOK and pushed it to the left. The PASOK leaders were forced to speak in the language of 'Marxism' and 'revolution' or else faced losing their position.

Pressure

But ever since then the PASOK leaders have never lost an opportunity to try to push the party rightwards towards reformist and nationalist policies, which has given rise to terrific struggles within the party. For a long time the leadership attempted to contain opposition by wholesale expulsions in the worst Stalinist tradition.

But now the questioning and opposition is so widespread in PASOK that the leadership cannot hope to batten down the hatches with expulsions. The leaders are being increasingly called to account and this election setback will only intensify the pressures which are bound to be reflected at PASOK's Area Conferences due to be held next January.

In spite of its more militant image the KKE has proved itself to be incapable of giving a socialist lead to the Greek working class, indeed its recent Congress decisions are steeped in the ideas of gradually transforming capitalism in a series of stages. On the other hand the PASOK members forced their leaders to accept a programme calling for the socialisation of industry and a socialist Greece, something which the KKE used to denounce as adventurist!

The task now for the PASOK members is to draw the balance sheet of the past period and to fight for the party to seriously campaign on its socialist programme. There is no doubt that Greece is on the verge of a renewed period of struggle as workers in the next wage round clash with the Government's austerity plans.

The elections showed the Government's continuing unpopularity and the masses are searching for a party which will seriously fight the miseries of capitalism. The task is to give a clear lead and put a concrete plan of action into practice to fight against the bosses' government and for a PASOK-KKE government committed to nationalising the banks and monopolies under workers' control and management, carrying through the socialist transformation of society.



RHODESIAN RAIDS

A fortnight ago Rhodesian forces launched a series of raids into Zambia against ZAPU camps. In an orgy of bullet-ridden bodies and corpses blown to pieces the Smith regime continues its desperate struggle against collapse.

But despite its violent threshing, his government will drown in the sea of African blood and misery it has created.



Rhodesian raid into Zambia: DESPERATE MURDERER LASHES OUT

Over 1,500 people died in the assaults made by Smith's troops over the weekend, in addition to those killed in the attack the previous Thursday just north of the Zambian capital, Lusaka.

Noticeably absent from the 'free', 'impartial' media have been the sensational headlines and dramatic news bulletins, the gory pictures of innocents murdered by savages, which are reserved for reports of attacks by Zimbabweans against the white racists. The story was presented, as have all such Rhodesian raids, as "defensive strikes" against "terrorist" encampments.

By Dave Griffiths

(Stafford and Stone LPYS)

Since then they have been silent because evidence shows that the camps were not military or guerrilla establishments but refugee camps! Even the most diehard British Tory supporter of Smith would find it hard to believe that attacks on guerrilla encampments would leave 1,500 guerrillas killed to only one Rhodesian soldier.

Kaunda, president of Zambia, described the attacks as "barbarous". He said he was expecting attacks on military institutions but "Alas, the dastardly enemies attacked innocent people."

For Zambia the attacks have been a clear exposure of the weakness of Kaunda's leadership. It was especially ironic that a couple of days after the events, Zambia should celebrate its 14th anniversary of independence.

Despite the raids, Kaunda has said that there will be no retaliation or change in his policy towards Smith. He will continue to solve the dispute peacefully.

He remains committed to the Angola-USA proposals. Yet in statements made to explain his humiliation he said he did not retaliate for fear of escalating the conflict



Rhodesian troops defending "civilisation" as they know it and bringing in the West in support of Salisbury!

This statement exposes the real goal of the western powers in Southern Africa. They are not gallant fighters for equal rights, but mighty powers protecting their interests. To them the 'loss' of Rhodesia would be a mortal blow—a further step to the 'loss' of South Africa and their interests across the whole of Southern Africa.

But more still, if Zambia is just an expendable ally—as she was cynically used in the infamous oil sanctions—what does this make of Kaunda's entire programme for Zambia? While he claims that the Western powers really back Salisbury and that in effect they are saying to Smith: "We don't mind what you do," with the other breath he is shocked and chastises the powers for leaving him power-

less to face Rhodesian attacks.

What worries me," he said, "is this complicity between the Western countries and racists. I suppose this is the meaning of imperialism, capitalism [but] I don't know how people who profess to be Christians can do such things"!!

In the light of his policies this statement beggars belief. For while he points out that as long as imperialism has its clutches in Africa genuine independence is impossible, he has remained under the skirts of the Western powers.

Because of the cynical manoeuvring of the capitalists, Zambia is economically and militarily weak; Rhodesia's attacks have merely underlined this. Sanctions imposed by Zambia—while oil flowed freely—put a great strain on the weak economy

and Kaunda had just reopened the railway with Rhodesia. This allowed the Rhodesian government to believe it held the whip hand.

The failure to break with capitalism and to take the socialist road has meant that 14 years of independence, of black nationalism, has led the Zambian masses nowhere.

But embarrassment to Kaunda aside, these events are in no way a victory to Rhodesia. The attacks were launched to try to curb the guerrillas before the favourable rainy season begins. But in this they have failed. There are 15,000 waiting to enter from Mozambique and 12,000 in Zambia, a further 10,000 are preparing inside Rhodesia.

This latest development has greater political implications than immediate military ones however. Britain and the USA have sought an all-party conference aimed at bringing about a negotiated solution of reforms because they fear the inevitable movement of the Zimbabwe masses would go beyond removing Smith and would demand socialist measures.

Guerilla struggle

They realise the regime cannot survive the pressure of the guerrillas, when already in a limited struggle "Fighting, the breakdown of normal services, the deaths of innocent citizens, martial law, curfews, detention without trial have become the Rhodesian way of life." (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace). They see the growing militancy of ZANU and ZAPU, and ideally they seek a moderate black government as the best guarantee of their interests.

But at every stage the

Rhodesian leaders have been an obstacle and every further frantic move by them further endangers Western plans. In an attempt to out-do their efforts Smith grafted some black puppets into a so-called government which is called the Internal settlement, but this is only the shallowest of disguises for more naked repression.

Their latest measure, which Muzorewa has swaggered about, was a supposed end to, all racial discrimination. Now blacks can legally use all the facilities the whites do.

There's just one snag, they can't afford it. As 'Militant' (18 August) pointed out previously: "The wage differential between white and black workers is on average eleven to one." The rich/poor division almost entirely coincides with the white/black division and so the end result is the same.



Kaunda

Smith says he will negotiate on these lines and not on the preconditions of the Anglo-USA proposals. The attacks on the ZAPU camps were intended to force them away from talks, leaving him in the position of the reasonable man who would talk as opposed to the warmongers of the Patriotic Front. This 'ruse' has certainly succeeded. Nkomo, ZAPU leader, said: "The all-party conference is on the battlefield."

But this is a Pyrrhic victory which must leave Carter and Owen tearing their hair out as Smith further impels Rhod-

esia, and the Western capitalists with him, down the road to disaster. Britain will now probably arm Zambia to avoid Kaunda turning to Moscow (as Nkomo has already done) and in an attempt to seal off Zambia and force Smith to the conference table.

However, Rhodesia's latest adventure may well throw any hope of the negotiated settlement out of the window. Even if they force Smith to attend it would be very difficult for Nkomo and Mugabe to attend following these attacks. African experts in America disconsolately "doubt whether the Patriotic Front leaders now have any incentive to bargain for what they will soon enough gain by force of arms, and questions whether Rhodesia is any longer negotiable." It is now possible that Nkomo may commit his troops to join Mugabe's in Rhodesia.

Hence the apartheid regimes that were so profitable to the imperialist nations have now pitched them into an insoluble crisis. Imperialism has been incapable of controlling its bastard offspring.

The only danger for the Zimbabwean and African masses is the failure of ZANU and ZAPU to clarify the aims of the armed struggle. They believe in two phases of the revolution, that is a 'national democratic' stage before the struggle for a socialist society some time in the future. But the example of Zambia with Kaunda's capitalist programme should be well learnt: either their struggle moves to end capitalism or even an independent Zimbabwe will be dominated and exploited by imperialism.

If the Patriotic Front linked the taking over of land and industry to their struggle for political rights, then this socialist approach would win enormous support and defeat the power of international capitalism, and mean real independence and freedom from oppression and poverty for the African masses.

LETTERS

School sit-in

Dear Comrades
Recently at my school, Blacon High, there was a 'sit-in' on the playground by members of the fifth year protesting about the compulsory wearing of school uniform.

The sit-in had only taken place as a last resort. To begin with a petition was handed in against the idea of school uniform. This was ripped up straight away.

Due to lack of organisation, only twenty to twenty five students participated. Soon after the 'sit-in' began, the year tutor and two of his bouncers marched in. They broke up the demonstration. In the process, one boy was hurt.

I have now decided, with some comrades and the backing of the LPYS to set up a branch of the NUSS in this school. I urge more school students who are exploited to do the same and strengthen the Young Socialists and campaign for more rights in schools.

Yours fraternally
Simon Swinnerton
Chester LPYS

No joke

Dear Comrades
I overheard the following conversation between two rather middle class ladies in a local butcher's shop:

First lady: "Hello, how are you getting on with your fund raising?"

Second lady: "Oh, we've given up raising money for kidney machines. We find that when people have got them they can't afford to run them."

It would be quite funny if it wasn't true.

Yours fraternally
Margaret Edwards
Harlow CLP

Too old to live—
at 57

Dear Comrades

Having just read of David Ennals' scare tactics alleging that lives have been lost because of the hospital supervisors' work-to-rule, I felt I had to write and tell you that on the same day the social workers in Liverpool voted to strike, the 'Liverpool Echo' reported that 30 patients at a city hospital have been allowed to die over the last 8 years.

One of these patients was a 57-year-old widow with a teenage son, who died of kidney failure five days after admission to hospital. She would have survived if she had received treatment, but she was left to die because doctors had given an undertaking not to treat patients over 55.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that the directive was due to financial problems and the workload, and agreed that lives were being lost because of a lack of resources. Although he also said: "I am as sad about it as anyone else!"

So yet again we see the double standard of capitalism which, to provide more profits, starves the NHS of funds, which leads to loss of lives, and then accuses the workers in the NHS of callousness!

Yours fraternally
D R Clark

Bosses fear
trade union education

Dear Comrades

Today's *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* had an illuminating report about the Association of Yorkshire and Humber Chambers of Commerce.

The reason? At their next meeting they were to discuss a campaign to be launched by them to call for the closing down of Northern Colleg in Wentworth near Barnsley, a trade union college which was only opened in September this year.

According to a spokesman "It is feared that the college courses will increase militancy among the trade unionists and lead to more disruption of industry." Presumably trade union courses on how bosses flaunt Health and Safety and Factory Acts, avoid paying tax and exploit workers, is too much for these

spokesmen of big business.

Perhaps the trade union movement could make a suggestion to these people concerning the majority of schools and colleges which teach capitalist economics and politics, "churning out" people for one purpose only, to work for industry in a subservient role.

Such as a socialist education policy, under which education would be taken out of the grasp of these parasites and placed under the control of the labour and trade union movement, so more colleges like the one in Wentworth would prosper.

Yours fraternally
Geoff Stout
Bradford LPYS

Working women—watch out!

Dear Editor

Working women will be reassured by Tory plans for them, as revealed in 'The Guardian', Friday 20th October.

If you are being used as cheap labour and struggling to get your kids into nursery take comfort from Tory spokesman Lynda Chalker, who says: "Some women at home feel...that everything is done for the working woman."

"Everything" to the Tories means that having a law on paper for equality is good enough. If you have a lousy job and lousy pay that's your problem—"the practice [of the Equal Pay Act] must be left to the individual," says Lynda.

Our Tory friend doesn't see why the government should subsidise nurseries or playgrounds for us greedy

women who go to work for a living. "If someone is going out to work and has taken a decision to have children as well, the financial responsibility for that child must, in total, be theirs." She doesn't seem to realise that most working mothers are forced out to work by inadequate living standards, to spin out the family budget, and can't afford the £25.40 'The Guardian' mentioned it might cost—how many women even earn that?

The Tories disapprove of maternity leave, as "tiny babies" should be looked after by their mothers, "to make women think harder about the decision they are making." The "babies" can't be looked after by fathers though, because paternity leave would "disrupt industry."

All educationalists agree

Harlow
Council
LP mem-
ber replies

Dear Comrades

Councillor Ray Collyer (letters, 27 October) points out the the many advances Harlow Council has made in furthering working-class interests, and many more could be added.

However, I do not accept that the overall good record of the Council can in any way excuse the way the Council acted toward the dustmen. They had suspended one crew (including NUPE stewards) without giving reasons and with no NUPE official present (against their agreement with NUPE): this was the cause of the strike.

Roy Collyer claims the strike would have ended "sooner but for the deliberate stoking of the problem" by the report that appeared in 'Militant'. In fact the strike ended before the report appeared.

The strike lasted a week because that was the time it took for the Council to come to its senses and start negotiating with NUPE.

The report did not refer, as Roy Collyer claims, to Harlow Council as 'George Wards', 'right wing' and 'breakers of union'. It said that some councillors seem determined to act in this way in this dispute. The comment reflected what the NUPE members had said, and if they had been quoted directly the comments would have been a lot sharper!

By concentrating on this point Roy Collyer has missed the real issue. The Council's actions caused deep resentment from not only the dustmen but from many other NUPE workers who had gone on one-day token strikes because, as they saw it, their union had been attacked.

Yours fraternally
Brian Bostock
Harlow Labour Party

Tories put human
rights last

Dear Comrades

Our Labour Party Young Socialists' branch recently sent a letter to Patrick Wall, our Tory MP, in which we asked him to support the call in the House of Commons to cancel the government sale of eight Hawk aircraft to the repressive government in Indonesia which is currently engaged in genocide.

The Tories, through the capitalist press, continually try to put across that they are the defenders of human rights everywhere. But Wall's reply really showed up the Tories for the hypocrites they are.

Said Patrick Wall: "While I agree that human rights is hardly a dominant feature of the Indonesian government's policy...it is a large country and its present government, whatever its faults, is favourable to the West—it occupies

a very important strategic position in Asia...I believe such policies [government refusal to supply arms to countries whose policy it disapproves of] are as foolish as any form of boycott or economic sanction and should only be imposed on a country openly declared an enemy of the West."

This reply should act as a warning to workers around the world: don't look to capitalist imperialism for help. They are just interested in the effects on their profits and strategic defence positions! Only the working class, with international unity and armed with a socialist programme, can provide a way forward for workers in backward countries.

Yours fraternally
John Rubenstein
Haltemprice LPYS, Hull

The affluent South?

Dear Comrades

Seventy workers at Portslade have lost their jobs at the Shanklynn Dyers and Spinners leather factory. At its peak it employed 120 workers, although it was never noted for good money. Seven years ago Thorn Electrical Industries took them over.

In the last ten years over 300 similar leather factories have gone out of business nationally. If any of them were like this plant, over 100 years old, a few bits of modern equipment and the rest motley industrial antiques, it's not surprising.

Most of the labour force at the factory has as a matter of policy been recruited from around the factory. And the trade unions have never got within a sniff of the place. Now Hove has lost another 70

jobs.

No doubt Thorns will make a killing on the property market with this large site.

Already 500 jobs are to go at the Green's Sponge Mixture factory, counting part-time staff (who have only been supplementing their husbands' low pay, here in the south. So much for moderation and wages policies).

The whole area of Hove and Brighton is taking on the air of depression: empty shops or at best junk or antiques.

It's time the trade unions took up the question of a real socialist programme for Britain. Because capitalism and pragmatic socialism have nothing to offer in the way of jobs, shorter working week, housing, hospitals etc.

Yours comradely
Hove factory worker

National Front threat:
Indian Youth look to
labour movement

Dear Comrades

The National Front is becoming more active in Derby—a traditional Labour area. The immigrant community is expecting more trouble from them in the winter time.

Recently an Asian family had "NF" painted on their door and excrement posted through their letter box. On calling the police, the police officer who came stunned everyone standing around, when he made the following remarks: "Believe me all Indians are clever, but let me tell you they're all rubbish."

He went on to say that he had worked in Birmingham and London, that he was quitting the force and one of

the reasons was that he was "sick and tired of wogs." The way he would deal with Asians would be to intimidate them by "placing joints of beef, pork and bacon throughout the rooms in their house."

What sort of help can we expect from the police in the Derby area? No action has been taken against this officer so far.

Derby Indian Youth Association will be leafletting against the Nazi NF and turning to the workers' organisations to eradicate racialism and fascism.

Fraternally
Pargan Singh
President, Derby
Indian Youth Association

Keep the money rolling in : this week £901.58

NO CUT BACKS

Leading financiers and businessmen have been summoned by the Governor of the Bank of England to a meeting at 'his place' this Tuesday.

The subject under discussion? — waning financial support for the National Institute for Economic and Social Research — as 'The Sunday Telegraph' puts it "a once highly influential body which produces quarterly economic forecasts."

The reason? — apart from cut-backs in the government's contribution? The NIESR piper hasn't been playing the tunes the big business paymasters want to hear!

NIESR has been advocating policies of increasing public spending (to the tune of £2,500 million even in 1972) to reflate the economy and bring down unemployment. It has by no means turned into a socialist monster, biting the capitalist hand that feeds it. On the contrary, it operates entirely with the best interests of capitalism at heart.

But such policies are not top of the popularity chart with the ungrateful City of London. They still want billions slashed from public spending...except when it comes to them! Hence the lack of enthusiasm for giving money to the NIESR.

The 'Militant' advocates massive increases in public spending and explains the socialist measures necessary for their implementation. It wages a tireless war against the hold of big business firms over the lives of workers and their families, their control of

the mass media and even the institutions for 'scientific research'!

'Militant's' policies are as 'music to the ears' of many a self-sacrificing class fighter, not as lullabies but as clarion calls to action. Their enthusiasm is expressed in increasing financial support for the 'Militant'.

A reader from Peterborough, sending £6 for the 'Militant' points out that "this time last year we had £28,500 in the Fighting Fund; this year we are £21,000 ahead of that figure. Some growth! But, as you say, we need more."

We certainly do! This week's total has dropped below the £1,000 mark and without all of the £70,000 by the end of the year, our voice in the labour movement will not reach its full force.

If you want to hear the programme of 'Militant' loud and clear, give it a financial boost! Follow the examples below: Once again Blyth supporters show the way with a 'Militant' appeal sheet—18 donations amounting to £19.15 and ranging from 5p from YS members J & C Stott, through 20p, 50p and £1s (inc. one from PPC, S Bell) to several £2s. One reader K Batchelor, signed twice, for £2 each time and, along with three other members of the LP Young Socialists has undertaken to donate that amount every week! An example indeed!

Young Socialists elsewhere are raising cash for the 'Militant'. Southgate YS had a raffle to give £3.20, an appeal at Chester's meeting raised £2. But imagine £2 from every LPYS member

who likes the 'Militant', or even £2 from every YS branch in the country that wants to see it grow.

If you're not rich, take initiatives. Bridlington YS organised a meeting at the recent Firemen's Conference and raised £3.65 for the 'Militant' in the process. Well done!

Also many thanks to those ASLEF members in Edinburgh No.1 branch who voted a donation to 'Militant' "Hoping that it will help in some way". Of course it will, especially if it sets every other trade unionist who reads the 'Militant' thinking about how to raise cash through his or her branch and shop stewards or office committee.

We are hoping for a flood of donations in appreciation not only of 'Militant's' coverage of the numerous disputes breaking out, but in particular, its campaigning approach on the issue of the 35-hour week and the need for immediate socialist measures to slash unemployment.

Students also welcome this campaign and give cash to the 'Militant' to step up the fight. Here again regular donations are as important to the 'Militant' as the big efforts. If like G Bottomley of the South Bank Poly, you have managed to collect sums like £15 with the help of an appeal sheet (and the lump payment of termly grants!), go back for more!

Get promises for weekly amounts, even if some of them are only 10p (rather than the £1 you asked for) and use the 'Militant' collectors cards to keep track. (New stocks available).

Follow up with the 'rattling tin' as well. One shaken at

FIGHTING FUND - TARGET £70,000

Area	Target	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,400		2,615.79
Hants & IOW	2,100		2,314.16
Humberside	2,200		1,640.00
Lancashire	1,500		646.70
London: North	7,700		5,742.13
London: South	3,800		3,059.68
Manchester & Dist	2,900		1,820.13
Merseyside & Dist	4,500		2,618.19
Midlands East	4,400		2,680.09
Midlands West	7,400		5,274.73
Northern	4,900		3,096.39
Scotland East	2,500		1,592.31
Scotland West	2,900		1,635.37
South East	2,300		2,173.42
South West	2,300		1,955.69
Thames Valley	1,700		1,527.74
Wales East	2,000		2,011.58
Wales West	2,300		2,011.58
Yorkshire	5,200		2,824.91
Others	3,000		5,433.18
Total	70,000		51,993.48

'freshers' (new students) in Stafford for example 'yielded' £3.40 in small donations of loose change.

Big or small, we'll take them all (!) and a special thank-you must go to the anonymous donor in Bradford who gave an enormous £100. However he or she 'came into' this, parting with it indicates the kind of dedication that builds the 'Militant'.

Our thanks to every contributor this week, listed or unlisted:

G Matthews (S London) for two 'tenners', C Heemskerck (Leeds) for one and J Riley from Brighton for the £7.50 'in appreciation of the help in winning compensation for a National Front attack.'

P Singh (Derby Indian Youth Assoc.), H Sandhu (Notts IWA), N Reid (Lambeth CLP) M Top (Scunthorpe) and P Cowley (Hackney YS) for their 'fivers'.

W Hepburn (TASS Co Durham), K Albion (Old-

ham), R Allen (Southgate LP), G Hold (Peckham YS) and 'A Skelmersdale Trade Unionist' for their £2 donations.

The many readers who gave £1 including: two 'anons' (Bridgend and Fife), T Howard (Stafford YS), R Batten (Hem Heath NUM), C Rowe (Oldham), P Rowe (Claydon T Squires of Peckham YS), M Hyde of Handsworth for £4.15, J Lake of Bridlington for £3 and all those who contributed to the large amounts sent in from W Wales and Sefton, Sheffield, Stirling and Coventry.

Readers at a public meeting in Leicester who boosted our funds by £38.30 and all those who contributed at other Readers' meetings and Discussion Groups.

Those from Rochdale who walked through the 'Three Peaks' and those in London who 'did' ten bridges—between them contributing further sponsorship money of

over £17.

Finally, thanks to those who tried just some of the other 101 ways of raising cash for their paper—organising discos and socials, cooking curries in Brighton and goulashes in Cardiff, charging for bed and breakfast in popular resorts like Walthamstow (!), selling books in Liverpool, cups (?) in Salford, pontoon tickets in Birmingham and football cards in Stafford and buying 'Militant' a drink in York and parts other papers apparently cannot reach—with their appeals for cash.

Help increase the volume of material needed for daily use in the labour movement by turning up the volume of your contribution to the 'Militant'.

Strengthen the voice of Marxism!

Rush cheques and POs to 'Militant' Fighting Fund', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

NEVER SAY NO!—to a trading stamp! Take it, stick it in a book and send it to the Militant!

NEVER LET GO!—of a cigarette coupon! Rescue it from an empty box, ash-try or pavement and send it to the Militant!

Get your friends, neighbours, workmates to pass things on to you, to collect and to help build Militant!

Militant NEVER SAYS NO!

—to anything—savings certificates, premium bonds, gift vouchers, record or book tokens, luncheon vouchers, plane tickets...

Militant NEVER LETS GO! of anything like rare coins and stamps...until the price is good enough!

Whatever YOU'VE got, PASS IT ON! to the 'Militant Fighting Fund'.

ADS

RATES

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

MILITANT MEETINGS

COVENTRY Militant Readers' Meeting. 'The Fight Against Low Pay'. Speakers: Dave Patchett (Local Authority TGWU Shop Steward); Dave Griffiths (Stafford CLP delegate to LP Conference, seconded NUPE's successful motion against low pay). Wednesday November 8th, 7.30 pm. Venue: 'Elastic Inn', near Pool Meadow Bus Station, Coventry

STEVENAGE Militant Readers' Meeting. 'The Gathering Crisis in Southern Africa'. Speaker: Jim Chrystie (former LP adviser of S Africa). Stevenage Leisure Centre, Thursday 16th November 7.45 pm.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

SUNDERLAND Marxist Discussion Group. Wednesday November 15th, 8.00 pm. Subject: Northern Ireland. For further details contact Diane English, Sunderland 44365

RHONDDA Trade Union Discussion Group. Every Tuesday, Star Pub, Ystrad, Rhondda (Back bar), 7.30 pm

CLASSIFIED

CONNECTIONS: BRITAIN & SOUTH AFRICA. A one-day conference for trade unionists and youth, sponsored by NWTUC, chaired by Colin Barnett. Workshops on Action in the Workplace, Action in the Labour Party, an ABC of Southern Africa, Soweto and Youth, Women Under Apartheid, the Media. Venue: Abraham Moss Centre, Crumpsall, Manchester. Saturday November 11th, 10 am-6 pm. Crèche provided. Details from Manchester Anti-Apartheid, 59 Tintern Avenue, Manchester M20 8ND. Tel: 061-434 7549.

PARTY Saturday 4th November. 138 Balmoral Road, Gillingham. Bring a bottle. All welcome.

DAGENHAM LPYS Special Meeting. 'Support the Ford Workers'. 2.30 pm, Sunday afternoon, November 5th, Main Hall, Labour Hall, Green Lane, Dagenham.

Speakers: Ron Todd (National Organiser of the T&GWU); Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer); Dennis O'Flynn (AUEW Shop Steward, Foundry Section, Ford Dagenham); John Aitken (EETPU Shop Steward and member of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee)

SOUTHAMPTON Youth Campaign Against Unemployment Public Meeting. Wednesday 15th November at 7.30 pm, Labour Party Rooms, 81 Bedford Place, Southampton. Speakers: Nick Bradley (YCAU Secretary); John Kelly (TGWU Ford's Southampton).

WEST LEWISHAM LPYS Firework Party Saturday November 4th, from 7.30 pm 43 Sunderland Road, Forest Hill, S.E.23. Tickets £1 (includes food, fireworks and disco) Bar available

'OCCUPATIONS, Criminal Trespass and the Use of the Law'—CACTL National Conference. Saturday November 11th, Conway Hall, London W.C.1. Credentials £2 (claimants £1). Details from Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law, c/o 35 Wellington Street, London W.C.2. 01-289 3877.

WORLD BOOKS

R Silverman: Coming Revolution in India... 10p + 5p post

P Taaffe: Cuba... 10p + 5p post

Inflation and the Financial System... 20p + 5p post

Order from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN Send for comprehensive booklist

Youth Campaign Against Unemployment CAMPAIGN FOR A 35-HOUR WEEK

Order now from YCAU, 435 New Cross Road, London SE 14.

Badges, £1.10 for 10 Four-page Broadsheet, with poster, 4p each

Pamphlet, 20p each OUT SOON. ORDER NOW!

'Fight for 35 hours now'

Penal Clauses Rejected

Last week the pay talks between the Ford Motor Company and the unions resumed, following approaches by the secretary and chairman of the National Joint Negotiating Council, full-time union officials Reg Birch [AUEW] and Ron Todd [T&GWU], to Ford Chairman Beckett.

In a letter, Reg Birch requested "a direct meeting with representatives of the Council (our emphasis) to discover a way through what can only be described as a ghastly mess." The two officials had meetings with Ford's 'employee relations' director, and reported back to the NJNC. Negotiations, with the full Council present, were reconvened on Friday 27th.

The full negotiating council includes convenors from all 23 Ford plants in Britain, as well as union officials. Democratically elected shop floor representation was only achieved this year.

This representative negotiating body, fought for as a result of the bitter experiences of past struggles, is an important step. Ford shop

stewards are determined that all decisions will be made through the full body.

With the International Metalworkers' Federation backing the strike, trade unionists from Belgium predicting total lay-off in one Belgian plant affecting 11,000 workers, Cologne and Saarlouis plants in Germany due to close, lay-offs and short-time working in Spain and Portugal, Ford management had little alternative but to reconvene talks.

They have already lost sales worth more than £250 million and over 65,000 vehicles.

But their latest offer, made last Friday, is more like calculated provocation!

They proposed an "attendance payment plan", paying between £2.84 and £3.52 a day conditional on time-keeping, 'justifiable' absenteeism, good discipline and no unofficial or 'unconstitutional' industrial action. This would mean a return of the 'penal clauses' firmly rejected by Ford workers in the past.

After eight hours of talks, the offer was rejected. "We have not rejected the money. We have rejected the setting," said Ron Todd.



Ron Todd, Chairman of the NJNC, talks to strikers at Moscow Place

photo: Julian McKittrick
(Militant)



They wonder where the goodwill is

Brian Allan TGWU Shop Steward at Ford Southampton spoke to Martin Elvin

The main building at Southampton is pre-war and in bad condition. The machinery is antique. Certain presses are going to have to be removed because they are so old and so noisy that they can no longer be repaired.

The factory was designed to build war-time aircraft, not Transit vans.

The company tried to get a phosphate system (for spraying the first protective layer onto the van bodies) installed in the plant in three weeks. The men worked day and night to install it. But you're talking about millions of pounds worth of equipment, which I have known take up to one year to install properly.

There was mishap after mishap, until one night three men were nearly killed when a body fell down. In the end I pulled the blokes off the job and told the management that either they brought in contract labour, or else the whole plant would stop.

We were hanging around for weeks, waiting for the phosphate plant to be set up properly. We get 80% lay off pay if there is trouble with the machinery. But oh no, the men were kept at work sweeping up, decorating and even painting the fences at the front of the factory.

Then the company wonder where the goodwill is.

■ A NON-STARTER ■

WE DECIDE

The banners and placards of the Ford workers lobbying the negotiations again reflect the mood in Southampton, Langley, Dagenham and Daventry. "We made £246m without attendance bonus—come off it."

The EETPU lads have had no strike pay for six weeks. S Reynolds, a snark in the Southampton plant reads last week's article. "The estimates of £10 to £12 [single

Back to '69

Steve Stanford, Convenor, Southampton, spoke to Bob Faulkes at Moscow Place

How do you see this attendance money offer?

It basically means nothing. 80% of us wouldn't even get it. It's like going back to the 1969 battle over penalty clauses.

They've offered a bonus if you took no part in unconstitutional action—in other words, you've only got to have an argument with a foreman and you're considered not working properly. In my opinion it's a non-starter. We want an increase on the basic rate.

What do you think of Reg Birch's letter?

It was a mistake, it was wrong to send it. The "ghastly mess" was seized on by the media. We are not in a "ghastly mess" but the Ford company are.

man's benefit] is a bit high. It's more like £6 to £8.50—the most I've had is £8.10."

Some of the Ford management return from lunch. The chant goes up "What do we want?—£20. How many hours?—35. Who's in a mess?—Ford. Who's the strongest?—We are. Who's going to win?—we are."

Two of the TU side come in for some strong words as they make their way back. Reg Birch AUEW and Secretary of the National Joint Negotiating Council puts his head down and manages to get through.

Lew Britz EETPU full time official is blocked. He's accused of "selling out".

The last few of the management come walking down. "Come on, you're late, you'll lose your £3 allowance if you're not careful".

An ITN announcer is heard to make a comment about the "fantastic new offer". One of the TV crew with a posh accent bravely jumps in to defend the unbiased nature of ITN.

He's surrounded. "You represent big business". "You slant the news—you distort". He insists—"we have to reflect all sides".

The Southampton men use the example of the so-called wives' revolt. ITN and the BBC completely ignored the hundreds who turned out in opposition to the seven wives.

"What about the march of Ford workers a couple of weeks ago through London—

not a mention" says one worker.

John Kelly from the Southampton plant reads the latest report from the *Evening Standard*, to much laughter and shouting.

Wives determined

Christine Kelly, 'Militant' supporter and wife of a Southampton Ford worker was interviewed on local radio about the wives' view.

After their feeble attempt to break the solidarity of the Ford strike, one of the so-called 'rebel' wives, Sue Charlton went on the local and national news.

When I objected to the impression this woman gave of representing the majority of Ford workers' wives, the local news programme said they would like to interview me.

The interviewer asked if I thought this group of women had a lot of support. I believe that most of the Ford wives support their husband's strike action. I said the impression that they gave of having a lot of support was not only misleading but factually incorrect.

Of course we didn't like being on strike, but I and a lot of other Ford wives are prepared to endure whatever

Ford workers gain support
—meeting reports see page 4

Bob Faulkes [Hackney Central Labour Party] spoke to Ford workers lobbying negotiators

'See you at Easter'

Tom Dillon, G&MWU shop steward, Dagenham Body Plant [Press Shop] [in personal capacity]

This is rubbish. It's going back to the early days when we were all presented with a form to fill in after the 1962 strike, that we would stick to the procedure (no unofficial strikes etc.).

"Some of us had to sign at the gates before they even let us in," interjects Tommy Osman, "not me—I didn't sign, I sneaked in the back way." We got rid of the penal clauses and now they want to bring them back.

A lot of the blokes say if we don't get the 35 hours we won't work on Friday nights. We're all strong on this one, it's a priority for all the union.

The mood is terrific, nobody wants to go back. Everybody I meet usually says 'Cheerio Tom, see you at Christmas.' When they read this document it might be 'I'll see you at Easter.'

Tommy Osman, AUEW, Joint Works Committee and 25 years at Dagenham.

I'm glad if that's all they offered. It would get slaughtered at a mass meeting.

I had a chat with Reg Birch. He told me "I'm answerable to the EC for my actions. You can't negotiate with 40 people!" [the full NJNC]. I said to him "you aren't going short but we are, and at the end we decide."

He says: "Don't worry, we are as strong as an army." I said "there's nothing wrong with the army but some of the generals are a bit suspect."

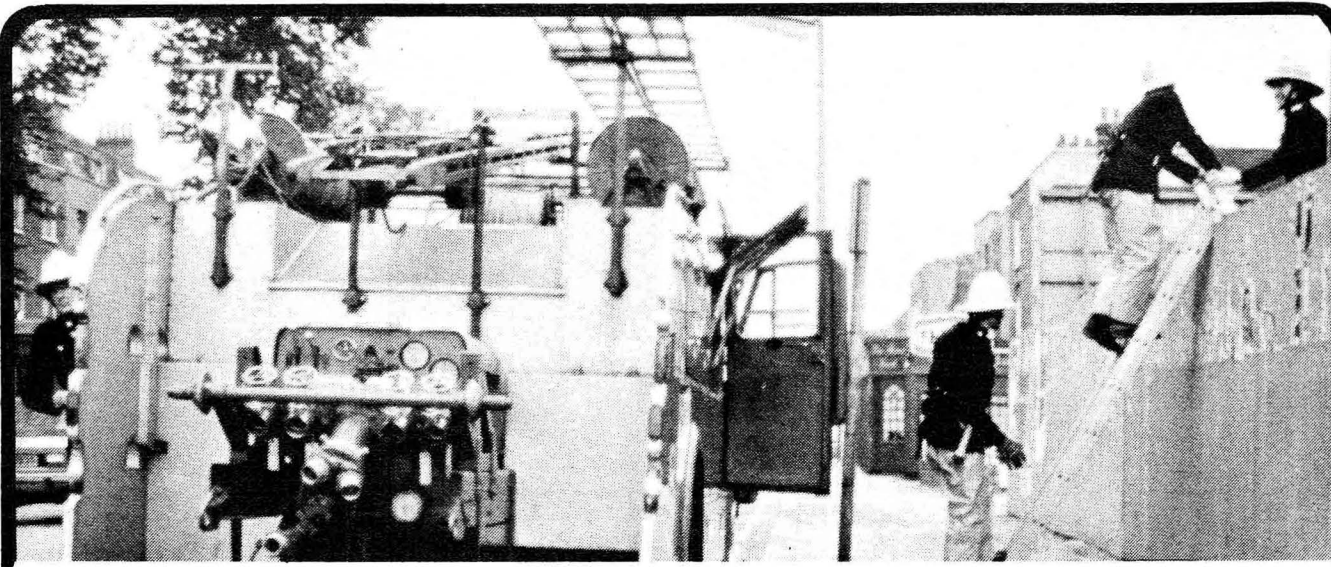
What do you think of this offer?

It's the penalty clauses with a vengeance. We fought it in the past, then it was based only on holiday pay. Behind it is an attempt to cut out unofficial strikes.

I was at Dagenham all day Thursday [when benefits are paid and most workers get their strike pay]. Not one bloke told me he wants to go back.

The pickets look settled for life. At night they get the old eggs and bacon going; they say we can't afford to lose this one.

If these talks break down, Rootes said this morning other measures will have to be used. The boys will turn out in force if he does. We've got quite a few things we could do that we haven't done.



Fire fighting—42 hours a week cannot be introduced on the cheap

CUT HOURS - NOT SERVICES

says FBU Divisional Chairman

Most firemen thought that a 42-hour week was signed and sealed last January, and would be delivered this October. Howard Pulsford, chairman 'A' division, West Midlands FBU, explained the real situation to Brian Debus, for 'Militant'.

Is the 42-hour week still being negotiated?

Yes! But we have been doing this for the last ten months without getting anywhere.

What does the employers' 42-hour offer mean?

Reduced cover through trying to do it on the cheap. Aston, the busiest station in our area apart from Birmingham Central, is facing the prospect of one machine being removed, with the loss of 15-20 men.

Reducing Central fire station from 36 to 18 men—a cut of half. Taking a pump away from Sutton Coldfield. Taking a pump from Harborne: the big risk here is that the Queen Elizabeth hospital and the Woodgate Valley housing estate would be affected.

The FBU disagree with the employers' document from front to back. Agreement would mean no redundancies. But the 42 hours would be operated on the cheap and

this would mean no jobs for the young unemployed. A reduction in the working week of 6 hours—12½%—should mean a comparable increase in manpower.

The negotiations to date confirm my mistrust of the employers. The quicker they are nationalised the better.

My job is not profit-making: it's the people of Birmingham who will suffer in the end.

BOWWATERS

35 -HOURS NOW

The workers at Bowwaters, Summerstown (S London) have decided that a 35-hour week is something worth fighting for. Even an offer of more money for the same hours would not hold them back now.

A mass meeting open to all unions on 22nd October agreed unanimously to operate an immediate overtime ban and not to accept any half-way step. It was 35 hours or nothing.

No fobbing off the shop stewards with arguments about Bowater House having to agree to it for the whole company! If they want to spread it, fair enough.

£60 was collected at the meeting to send delegations of stewards round the other factories in the packaging group and so far we have had an excellent response. At the meeting the workers showed they were not going to be intimidated, either, by the threat of complete closure (made before the action started!). It just makes it even more urgent to forge links throughout the combine!

The action began to bite

straight away. Management were not even bothering to offer overtime.

For reasons best known to themselves, the printers have gone back on the united decision, but they can't work at weekends without maintenance on the site and the AUEW blokes are with us. GMWU members are refusing to work on the same machine as a printer doing more than his 40 hours.

The idea of an extra five hours' leisure and finishing at 8 instead of 10 on the late shift is something the workers have got hold of and won't let go. The mood is extremely militant and the management know it! The supervisors were shaken, even before the mass meeting, to see a rash of '35 hours now' badges break out all over the factory! 80 were snaffled up in two days!

So the fight is on and it can only be stepped up if management doesn't concede in the coming week!

Mick Rogers

(GMWU Convenor, Summerston)

FIGHT DOLE THREAT

Workers at Rotherham's are faced with the threat of 22 immediate redundancies and the possibility of more to come in the New Year.

Rotherham's is one of Coventry's oldest firms. A few years ago it had 300 employees. This has gradually been reduced, and now the remaining 100 jobs are threatened.

About 8 months ago 60% of the shares were bought by Armstrong's Engineering Group. There is a growing suspicion that management are preparing to close down the factory and sell off the site which is in the highly valued Parkside industrial area of Coventry. (Rolls Royce are rumoured to be planning expansion in this area.)

Over the past few years management have been slow to win new orders and many long-standing orders have been lost. Hardly any of the profits have been re-invested in new machinery to enable the firm to keep up with its competitors.

How can we defend our jobs? A short term possibility is that shop stewards at other Armstrong-owned factories where there are excess orders for components could put pressure on their management to send orders to Rotherham's.

In the long run, though, only nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management as part of a socialist planned economy can safeguard the future of Rotherham's workers.

By an AUEW steward, Rotherham's

US air bases strike power wins

On Sunday 8th October the shop stewards from the US Air Force bases journeyed to the Midlands and the North to get support for their dispute.

The response was tremendous. In three days they had addressed nine different mass meetings and received 100% support from all the AUEW (Construction) and Boilermakers Union workers from Humber suspension bridge, Flixborough, S. Kirby Colliery, Shirebrook, Scunthorpe steelworks, Draclow and Radcliffe power stations, W. Burton, Cottham and High Marnham.

A one day token stoppage was agreed for Friday 13th, plus financial support and a resolution to the AUEW (Construction) General Secretary, John Baldwin, demanding a one day national stoppage in support.

Solidarity

Naturally management were furious. The Industrial Relations Officer from Flixborough was in touch with the full-time official in the area demanding to know why the shop stewards from the south were trying to cause so much trouble. He was told to take it up with the Employers' Federation!

When the shop stewards returned to Alconbury on Thursday 12th they found that Carter Horsley had been taken off the contract and that the union officials were meeting Costains and the new sub-contractor, Stevensons of Norwich (subsidiary of Cleveland Bridge).

The employers had obviously been shaken by the determination of the strikers and the support they were

getting. At the beginning of the strike they thought they could get away with importing scab labour!

Shop stewards were eventually allowed to join in the talks, and after much deliberation it was agreed that the workers would be fully reimbursed, have the right to re-employment and work on the second phase of the selters. In fact they now had a better deal than before the dispute, because they knew that Carter Horsley had no intention of re-employing them on phase two.

At a mass meeting the report was given to the men and after a proposal from the

floor they unanimously agreed to return to work on Monday 23rd. This has been a major victory for these men thanks to the tremendous support they have had up and down the country from the labour and trade union movement.

Their own solidarity, in spite of the problems of organising on scattered rural sites, was a major factor in their victory. The confidence they had in the support of their brother trade unionists, when the issues were explained, is a valuable lesson for every trade unionist.

In spite of this tremendous victory, the mis-management



Show your support. Badges available from YCAU, 435 New Cross Road, London S.E.14 Price 15p each + 10p p&p

and racketeering will not be forgotten. All sections of the movement must demand a full enquiry into the workings of Carter Horsley—a subsidiary of the Northern Engin-

ering Industries monopoly, and the organisation of government and NATO contracts under a Labour government.

New mood in Walsall

The explosion of disputes in this industrial town north of Birmingham reflects the new mood of militancy sweeping the Black Country, Britain's industrial heartland.

Jon Stanley [Walsall South LPYS] talked to workers on the picket line.

ALUMINIUM BRONZE DISPUTE

The union has put in a claim for a wage increase of 12%—which isn't a tremendous amount—a 35-hour week and an increase in the death grant from the present paltry £300.

Management's reply was an offer which would mean just 15 pence extra for indirect workers, and £2.20 per week for direct workers. The Managing Director has built up a lot of resentment by his heavy-handed, anti-union attitude even on simple issues like the provision of safety clothing.

In the machine shop, where I work, a meeting was held and we unanimously decided to walk out on Tuesday night, such was the feeling of anger. There is no militant background at all; the action results from anger and frustration at pay restraint.

All the Wednesday morning shifts joined us, and the morale on the picket line is great.

At the mass meeting on Wednesday, out of 300 there were 15 votes for a return to work.

When people elected the present government, they expected policies to benefit working people, not the present anti-working class ones. The Labour Party conference showed that the rank and file are not behind Callaghan and his present Tory policies. I shall be joining the LPYS to add my weight to the campaign for the Labour Party to adopt a socialist programme.

At TRW Valves, where the manual workers are on strike for a substantial rise in pay, the mood is firm: 5% is not enough and they won't go back until a better offer is on the table.

The mood is no less militant among the public sector unions who held a meeting in Wolverhampton on the campaign against low pay. The demands for a £60 minimum and a 35-hour week were unanimously supported by the 200 or so present.

TRW VALVES

NALGO SOCIAL WORKERS CALL FOR RESOLUTE ACTION

A Hackney social worker reports on the angry mood of NALGO members

Social workers in Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham, Liverpool and Newcastle have been on strike for 11 weeks. As yet, there is no sign of settlement because of the stand taken by the national employers.

Several hundred social workers from as far away as Liverpool and Newcastle on 18 October picketed their own NALGO national headquarters.

Some branches, like Hackney, were asking the national Emergency Strike Operations Committee to give the go ahead for a ballot (as in Newcastle and the London Boroughs of Southwark and Tower Hamlets) for strike action.

Others, like the Newcastle social workers who have now been on strike for several months, were demanding further action and support from the NEC.

After several hours of picketing and progress reports from different areas, it was made clear that nobody from the NEC who were meeting that day, or the NESOC, was prepared to come down and address the picket.

A decision was made to enter the building to see personally the officials responsible for strike operations. Despite threats that the police would be called, we occupied

a committee room and began a discussion on the situation.

Members from several branches relayed their experiences. The common thread was the attitude of the NEC and the full-time officials—ranging from deliberately slowing things down by insisting on further branch meetings to actually organising against strike action.

The mood of the meeting was depressed by news of an extremely low ballot in Wandsworth and only small majorities in favour of strike action in other areas. This was seen as a result of the leadership's failure to campaign for support for action. Although much yet depends upon the NEC's attitude towards the employers' awaited offer, several lessons can be drawn from what has happened so far.

The demand for local negotiations is undeniably a reflection on the lack of consistent leadership from NALGO's NEC. Many social workers now feel that they can best achieve results through local negotiations and local



Picket of NALGO HQ, 18 October. Brent members were protesting against the extraordinary efforts made to get the whole branch membership [mostly not social workers] to meet in work time (!) to vote for an official's recommendation to take no action—against the wishes of social workers in the branch.

action where necessary.

The London Borough of Haringay provides one precedent. The local strategy, however, has resulted in areas submitting differing claims, and branches have become isolated through lack of a unified campaign with common objectives.

NALGO must also come to terms with the variety of workers represented by the union. Workers in other unions who have mostly refused to cross picket lines are amazed that other

NALGO members are allowed to cross social workers' picket lines!

Involvement in this fight has made many more NALGO members aware of the need to democratise the union, with rank-and-file control over full-time officials. The battle also shows the need for NALGO to have a political voice to explain why pay and conditions are being eroded and to campaign for alternative socialist policies.

FORD STOP PRESS

After nearly twelve hours of talks on Tuesday 31st, the Ford National Negotiating Council unanimously rejected management's latest offer.

The Company was willing to increase their basic offer by only £1. They offered more

money as part of their 'attendance payment plan', but this is conditional on a string of penalty clauses. [see page 14].

The company rejected outright the claim for a 35-hour week, stating "We'll be here till 1999 before we give in on

that."

Union negotiators say the offer proves the money is available. But the penalty clauses attached make it unacceptable. Convenors will be reporting on the latest negotiations to mass meetings this Friday.

SAVE NHS

continued from front page

the spending cuts which are the real cause of the NHS crisis.

In 1974 the Labour government pledged itself to the expansion and improvement of a free and comprehensive NHS. Yet under this same government—at the dictates of big business—the NHS is being bled dry.

Since 1975 capital spending is down nearly 40%! Current spending has risen by only 6%: not enough to cover rising costs and therefore, in reality, a cut.

On top of this, "cash limits" imposed by the Treasury have resulted in a disastrous £3,700 million underspending of the already slashed health and welfare budgets.

The Labour government must change this situation at once. All the cuts must be restored. Enough resources must be allocated to bring about a dramatic improvement of hospital and community health care.

It is not only the nurses who

are rightly demanding a substantial pay increase.

Hospital auxiliary workers are among the lowest paid workers in Britain. Many are getting only £42.40 basic (less than the government's official minimum wage!) and are forced to work excessive overtime to make ends meet.

The National Union of Public Employees has put in a claim for a £60 minimum with a 35-hour week. It is essential, not only for these workers, but for the health of the NHS that the government meets this claim in full.

Big business, which thinks only of its own profits, would like to scrap the NHS. The ultra-right-wing 'Daily Express' (9 October) recently called for a prescription charge of £2 and hotel

charges for hospital patients. This would mean the end of the NHS as we know it.

They are also calling for strikes by NHS workers to be made illegal.

"We have become," ranted the 'Express', "a poor country by the standards of the developed world...we lack the wealth to cover such a service [as the NHS]."

"We" means "big business". If these people who bear the real responsibility for Britain's catastrophic economic mess cannot afford an NHS to provide for the health needs of the new-born, the sick and the aged, we certainly can't afford them and their rotten system!

A socialist change has become a matter of life and death!

VAUXHALL WORKERS - PAY BATTLE NOT OVER

Steve Palmer [Chester LPYS] spoke to shop stewards at Vauxhall, Ellesmere Port

Tory gloating over the Vauxhall workers' rejection of strike action and their apparent acceptance of the government's wage policy has received a sharp slap in the face.

Not only have 8,000 manual workers (3,000 T&GWU and 5,000 AUEW) at the Ellesmere Port plant decided in principle on strike action but unofficial representatives of 14,000 tradesmen in the three main plants and General Motor subsidiaries have now given 14 days' notice of strike action.

Management have proposed rises within 5% of from £3 to £5.20 for hourly-paid manual workers, with an additional £1.28 'attendance bonus' offered as part of a productivity scheme. The lowest grade would then be on £68.08 a week before tax; and H4 grade (the biggest category) on £76.28.

This can hardly be described as generosity!

After the much-publicised decisions at Luton and Dunstable, Ellesmere Port shop stewards decided to defer strike action (originally proposed for 1st November) until further mass meetings were held.

Workers at the two southern plants—which do not have the same tradition of organisation as Ford's or the Ellesmere Port plant—apparently preferred to await further developments at Ford's, and perhaps a clearer

indication of the Vauxhall management's intentions, before committing themselves to any action.

Ellesmere Port stewards definitely feel that the company could afford to improve its poor offer. They dismiss talk of "dire financial straits" as baloney, and don't take very seriously management's claim that Ellesmere Port has made a loss in 8 out of the last 9 years.

The first step in any serious negotiations should clearly be the opening of the company's books to the shop stewards.

Vauxhall's latest offer to skilled workers (which would reportedly raise top rates to £84.20 on the day shift and £112.26 on the night shift) already breaches the 5%.

But it has been rejected by the General Motors Combine Craft Committee on the grounds that it does not restore the level of skilled differentials previously promised by the company.

Last year, a six-week strike by craftsmen led to a complete shut-down of Vauxhall's, and, although Ellesmere Port manual workers have put off strike action for the time being, the company clearly cannot ignore the skilled workers' demands.

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