

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

Pensioners, unemployed, low paid, victims of . . .

Tory rent robbery

THE TORIES' proposals for cuts in Housing Benefits have revealed them as modern day Shylocks demanding a pound of flesh from the poorest and weakest sections of society.

By Dave Cotterill

By backdoor methods, which initially were even concealed from back bench Tory MPs they have introduced legislation which will affect millions of families.

When the effects of these measures are felt, a whirlwind of opposition will develop. Even at this stage 130 welfare organisations have objected to the cuts, and signs are that some Tory

back benchers may "revolt". These are the Tory plans: -

★ Cuts in Housing Benefit affecting five million people. £230 million "saved"

★ Half a million households will lose their Housing Benefit altogether.

★ 1¼ million pensioners will be affected. Some will lose £4 to £5 a week. The average loss will be 80p per week. This is equivalent, over a year, to two weeks' expenditure on food.

★ If the current rent rebate is less than £1 or the rate rebate is less than 50p, then they will be stopped.

This incessant cutting and whittling down of benefits heaps misery upon misery on those relying already on a mere pittance. But the Tories are not satisfied. To balance their attacks on pensioners and social security recipients they

also intend to introduce measures against the youth:

★ From 2 April unemployed 18 to 20 year olds will have their dole cut by £3.10, leaving them with £21.45. This measure already applies to those aged between 16 and 18.

★ For those aged 16 to 20 and in work, the Housing Benefit for the family will be cut.

The philosophy of the Tories is simply to ask the poor to share their poverty with other members of their families. And the Tories... they will look after the rich.

INSIDE
Miners overtime ban—P.14
Guerillaism—no alternative to workers struggle—P.8-9

Six expelled in Blackburn

By Lynn Walsh

"IT WAS an ugly meeting and a very ugly decision!" This was just one of the angry comments of party activists after Monday's decision by Blackburn Labour Party to expel six *Militant* supporters.

The comrades defended themselves against a barrage of fabricated stories, smears and outright lies and argued very effectively, forcefully rebutting all the allegations. In the minds of many regular General Management Committee delegates, the six won the argument and would have won the vote with the usual GMC attendance.

But Monday's meeting was packed with "dead" votes, with about 25 to 30 people who had never been seen before.

One of the six said: "it was like trying to reason with political zombies. They just weren't interested. They weren't even listening, and at the end they just rubber-stamped a decision that had already been taken before the meeting".

5 minutes to reply

After giving the six comrades who appeared a mere five minutes (with a brief opportunity to answer questions), to reply to all the allegations and lies in the so-called "Gregory report", the GMC voted by between 42 and 54 votes to between 28 and 40 votes for the expulsions.

Ironically, Micky Thornton who was "reprieved", made perhaps the most biting and damning remarks on the political dishonesty, bullying tactics, and the dirty manoeuvres of the right wing. Even they didn't have the gall to expel a comrade with a record of 50 years of activity in the labour movement!

There has been an excellent response to the local campaign against the witch-hunt, which has brought marvellous support for *Militant* from trade union activists who are disgusted at the reactionary policies of the right wing councillors who dominate Blackburn Labour Party. But the seven were not entirely surprised by the outcome.

Local support for *Militant* has increased dramatically since the witch-hunt began over a year ago but there has not yet been enough time to overcome the legacy of the past.

But Blackburn *Militant* supporters are confident that the trade unionists and young people now increasingly active in the local party will rapidly change its character. Dead votes can swing a meeting or two, but they won't build an active, campaigning party, and they won't go out to win workers and young people to socialism.

If the right wing and the "neo-Stalinists" helping them to organise their manoeuvres think that local support for *Militant* will be undermined by six expulsions they are very mistaken. The battle is far from over!

The six will continue their activity in the labour movement, and they will still be organising local *Militant* Readers' Meetings and Marxist Discussion Groups for local activists.

The six will also appeal to the National Executive against their expulsions, which have been carried through in an arbitrary, undemocratic manner. They will undoubtedly gain the active support of Labour party and union branches up and down the country, who are not prepared to sit back and allow socialists to be purged from the party for their ideas.

£184,000 for Militant in '83

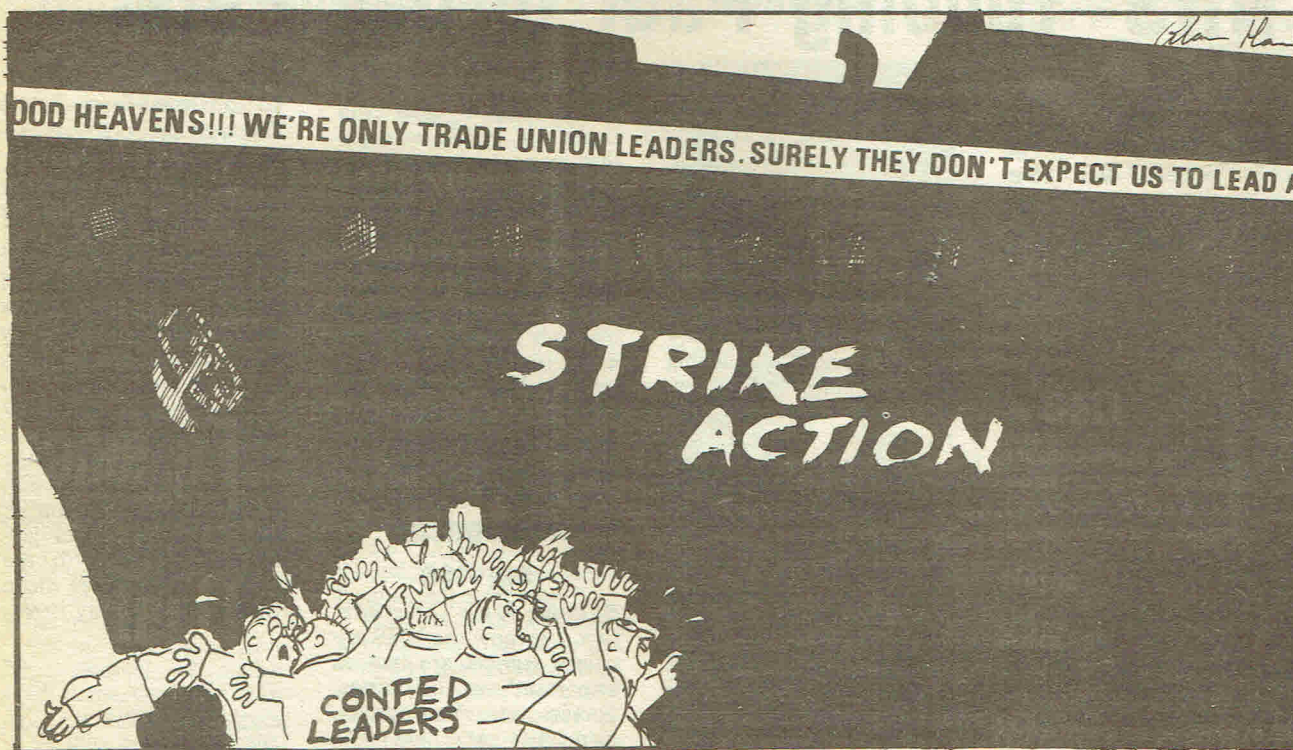
ONCE AGAIN the strength of support for *Militant* has been shown. Our readers have responded magnificently to our fighting fund appeal and sent £5,709 in the last few days for Fighting Fund and Building Fund.

No other tendency in the labour movement can match the ability of *Militant* to raise finance. This reflects the confidence workers have in the ideas of Marxism as explained in the pages of the paper.

The total raised in the fighting fund in the last six months was £75,704 which meant that £151,973 was collected in the course of the whole year. Which other paper could match that dedication?

On top of this, £32,984 has been sent in to our Building Fund. This really is a double sacrifice on the part of our supporters who want to see *Militant* become a daily and fight the lies of the millionaires' press.

But there is no time to pause. We have to concentrate on meeting the target of £150,000 for the Building Fund by the end of January. Continue the success of 1983 by making sure we carry on breaking all records. Send in your donations and put *Militant* into new premises in 1984.



I NAME THIS SHIP—GOD HEAVENS!!! WE'RE ONLY TRADE UNION LEADERS. SURELY THEY DON'T EXPECT US TO LEAD A STRIKE.

See articles page 13 and 15.

Militant

Trade union support vital for Labour

TRADE UNIONS are a "diminishing force in British political and industrial life... the 'dependency' of the party on (them) is something on which I do not believe we can rely in the future as we could in the past."

These comments were delivered by deputy Labour Party leader Roy Hattersley to a recent academic gathering of the Fabian Society.

His comments come at a time when the working class has never been more in need of its trade union organisations. With their backs to the wall against the savage onslaught of the Tories, the trade unions are seen as a vital defence.

Of course, trade union membership has declined but this is mainly because of mass unemployment. Workers have been forced out of their unions by the economic situation. They have not left voluntarily.

Hattersley believes that the influence of the trade unions will decline because of the fall in the numbers of the manual working class, and because of the effect of the Tories' trade union bill on the political levy.

But while the proportion of industrial workers in the overall economy has changed, the power of the industrial working class remains. All the modern developments of capitalism have enhanced this power; the monopolisation of industry, the inter-dependence of one industry on all others; small groups of workers can affect the destinies of whole industrial empires if they strike. And one group of workers after another can affect not just companies but the entire economy.

In many sectors, white collar workers have replaced blue collar workers—but they are still workers.

If we are to believe the trade unions are no longer an effective force in society, why have the Tories spent so much effort on legislation to shackle the workers' organisations?

The reason is clear—they understand that the latent power of the unions is still the strongest potential force in society.

Yet this situation remains a closed book to the sceptics and jeremiahs of the labour movement, who through their ideas try to undermine the confidence of workers in their strength and ability to change society.

Even in relation to the Tories' legislation on the political levy, Hattersley takes it as an accepted and accomplished fact which now has to be bowed down to.

Rather than taking this negative stance, the Labour leaders should be raising the confidence and morale of workers by dogged opposition to every assault by the Tories on the labour movement.

A first step could be taken in this direction by the Labour leaders standing four-square alongside unions such as the NGA when they are under attack—as opposed to the hesitant statements that came from the parliamentary leadership during the recent print dispute.

Drawing blood from one section of the movement will not pacify the Tories. They are now preparing an offensive on the Labour Party itself through attempting to impose "contracting in" within the unions for the

political levy, in a deliberate attempt to undermine the Labour Party's finances.

But again, if the Labour leaders have the will this measure can rebound on the Tories. If a campaign was mounted to explain the class nature of this measure workers could be encouraged to join the party and thus strengthen the link between the trade unions and the Labour Party. The Labour leadership could begin with a mass campaign to build workplace branches, a policy agreed by party conference.

The same applies in relation to the composition of the working class. If more workers belong to white collar unions—which in general are not affiliated to the Labour Party—the obvious conclusion to draw is to campaign to get their affiliation, not simply to write them off. Unfortunately this seems utterly foreign to Hattersley who is more intent on predicting the "diminishing" role of the unions.

A start could be made by declaring whole-hearted support for councils such as Liverpool who are fighting the Tory cuts.

'Practical' and 'common sense' policies of this type would inevitably speed up the process of the affiliation to the Labour party of such unions as NALGO. A similar defence of government services facing Tory

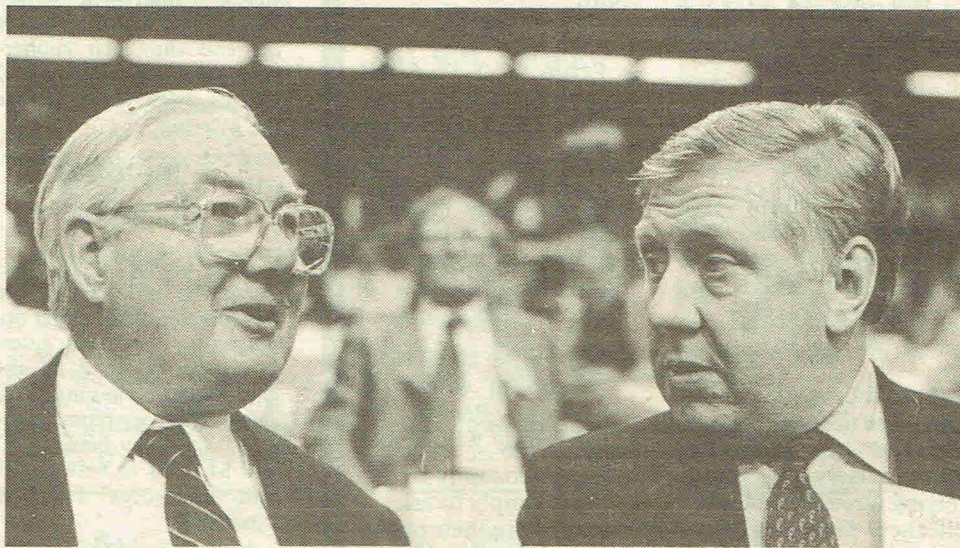
cuts would attract the civil service unions.

Recession, mass unemployment and cuts in living standards may have weakened the numerical strength of the unions. But it has also had the effect of radicalising them—reflected in the adoption of left wing policies at the annual conferences of many trade unions, many of them former bastions of the right wing.

As always, the workers in Britain have turned to their traditional organisations—reflected firstly in the unions. However, the very nature of capitalist crisis will engrave on the consciousness of workers that trade unions by themselves are not sufficient to solve the problems workers face. Political solutions are also needed.

In defence of living standards, in fighting against cuts and mass unemployment workers will learn through their experience of the necessity of socialist ideas. Drawing on such conclusions, workers in their mass will be ultimately propelled towards the Labour Party.

The aim of the Labour leadership should be to show a willingness to support and fight alongside workers in their daily struggles, and at the same time point out the need for the socialist transformation of society as the only lasting solution.



Hattersley with former Prime Minister James Callaghan—the '74-'79 Labour government attempted to impose wage control on the trade unions. Photo: Militant

Teachers and Students Beware!



BIG DUFFER IS WATCHING YOU

Cruise memo leak — clerk charged

A CLERK in the Foreign Office, Sarah Tisdall, has been charged under the Official Secrets Act with leaking a memo from defence minister Heseltine to Thatcher, giving the date of arrival of Cruise missiles.

This Act is used to prevent people knowing what the government is up to. In this case, with a permanent camp of women protesters at Greenham Common the date of arrival could hardly have been kept secret for very long.

The document was sent to the *Guardian* which published the full text. Last month the Court of Appeal ordered the *Guardian* to return the document to the Defence Ministry so they could track the leak.

British capitalist justice

fined the NGA for mass picketing, claiming the law was acting in defence of freedom of the press. It was now telling a leading newspaper to divulge the source of its information, thereby making investigative journalism liable to legal attacks.

The *Guardian* complied with the court order. The code of practice of the NUJ lays down clear guidelines to protect sources of information, and the *Guardian* claims it agrees with these procedures. But it was not prepared to fight the legal command. A real campaign to defend Sarah Tisdall and stop what amounts to government censorship of the press can only come from the trade union movement.

YS fund threat

ON JANUARY 16 the Labour Party's Finance and General Purposes Committee meets to discuss staffing and departmental budgets in the face of the Party's grave financial crisis.

In order to try to eliminate the party's £500,000 overdraft two proposals were initially put forward, recommending redundancies of either 50 or 20 staff at the national headquarters at Walworth Rd, together with cut backs in expenditure.

Under pressure from the Left however, it was agreed that any decision on redundancies should be delayed until the trade unions at Walworth Road had the opportunity to put forward alternative savings to avoid redundancies.

Young Socialists and party members will also be angered by proposals for savage cuts in the youth budget for 1984. It has been

proposed that the allocation be cut from £15,200 to £9,000. This would make the LPYS the most poorly financed socialist youth movement in Europe.

Following the disastrous lack of support for Labour amongst youth during the General Election Labour should be pouring more not less money into the LPYS. Instead the right-wing are proposing that the LPYS be allocated nothing whatsoever for campaign purposes.

At the last NEC Youth Committee, these proposals were decisively rejected and instead a motion calling for £20,000 increase was carried. Despite the dire financial crisis and the threat of redundancies it is vital that the LPYS can at least hold onto the same budget as 1983. Any cuts will cause a whirlwind of opposition from the ranks of the LPYS, Constituency Labour Parties and the trade unions.

NHS—robbing Paul to pay Peter

THE TORIES are once again turning the screw on the already battered National Health Service.

Social Services minister Norman Fowler claims that the £83 million increase in funds for the NHS announced this week amounts to a "real growth" for the service. He is attempting to hood-wink people.

1% increase

In reality the 'increase' amounts to a growth of only 1%. Extra funds will only be allocated to ten health regions—the London and South East regions, which cover the most populated area of the country and where services are already under great stress, will get no increase.

A 1% 'increase' for selected areas is not enough. The NHS is not like, for example, manufacturing industry—it cannot stand still for a period and wait for better times. The very nature of the health service means it needs a regular input of funds to keep pace with rising costs and the changing face of medical technology, medicines etc need regular replacement.

The Tories are even boasting that this £83 million will restore the cuts made by Chancellor Nigel Lawson six months ago. This begs the question why the hell the cuts were made in the first place! Swinging the ace one minute and then drawing it back can only destabilise the health service. The Tories carelessly juggle statistics, disregarding the fact that they are playing with people's lives.

The biggest blow will come to NHS workers themselves. Even though pay negotiations are far off, Fowler has already imposed a 3% pay limit on these workers who are amongst the lowest paid in Britain.

One of Fowler's repeated claims is that the Tories are switching resources from other areas to 'patient care'—with the latest proposals Tory minister Kenneth Clarke talked of creating more district nurses.

Unbalanced service

By doing so the Tories infer that somehow the NHS ancillary services are 'not as important' as the nurses, doctors, etc. Yet porters, domestics and ancillary workers play an essential role in the health service; they are an important back-

up team to the medical side. The medical staff are certainly undermanned, but the health service as a whole will not be improved simply by creating more nurses etc, if it means even longer delays for clean laundry, repairs left undone and dirtier wards through cuts in the ancillary side. This would lead to imbalance in the health service.

The NHS must be expanded in all directions—all the Tories are doing is playing one region and one section of staff off against another. When the Tories talk of 'giving more money' to the NHS, in reality they mean robbing Paul to pay Peter.

By Bob Wade

Labour council uses Tory tactics

By Sue Ayton
(Wakefield LPYS)

THE RIGHT wing Labour council in Wakefield has incredibly taken one of its own Labour councillors to court.

Cllr Chris Heinitz was one of four protestors occupying a nursery who was served with a summons by the council. Cllr Heinitz had joined local mothers in occupying the Sandal Hall nursery, which is threatened with closure by the council.

However, the local labour movement is rallying to Cllr Heinitz' support. The right-wingers on Wakefield Council have been embarrassed by the leader of nearby Leeds Council, George Mudie. He has challenged them to serve a summons on him, as he has also taken part in the occupation.

Wakefield District Council decided to axe £4½ million from the council budget to comply with the dictates of the Tory government. At its November meeting, they agreed to the closure of the Sandal Hall and Langthwaite Grange

nurseries as part of the cuts, despite the abstention of 11 Labour councillors at the meeting.

These are no ordinary nurseries. The 138 children coming to them are often from one parent families or where they would cause enormous problems if they were left at home all day. The staff at the nurseries have special training to deal with disturbed children.

The action of the mothers has been mainly directed in defence of Sandal Hall nursery. It is due to be bulldozed (a scandalous waste of resources) and the land sold for private housing development. The council is obviously eager to make a quick sale and get cash in the bank. But how much would they actually save? At the moment the two nurseries cost the council £200,000 per year. If all the children were put into care the cost would be £138,000 per year—hardly a saving. The council would also lose the regular

revenue from H E students who rent accommodation in the same building.

Cllr David Hinchcliff said "In my opinion the Labour controlled councils should be defending council services. In making a package of cuts which affects such services as the day nurseries, the Wakefield Labour Group is clearly in breach of the NEC guidelines on local government cuts. It is also Labour Party policy that labour Councils should not make compulsory redundancies where it affects the elderly and children; in Wakefield it affects both."

Wakefield Young Socialists have been heavily involved in the campaign with YS members joining with parents in the occupation and using their links with the trade unions to further the campaign to save the nursery and put pressure on the council to reverse the cuts.

Children support the occupation of the Sandal Hall nursery threatened with closure by Wakefield council.



Photo: Sue Ayton

Tories' backdoor surveillance

DETAILS HAVE now emerged that every adult in Britain will, over the next few years, be issued with a plastic National Insurance card.

This card, could in effect, be used as a national identity check. With the development of computers, it means that within minutes the state authorities could run a check on any individual. Even included in the insurance card is a thin magnetic strip on which invisible messages can be contained.

Linked to this is the introduction of a "machine readable" page in British passports, which takes place in the next decade.

At present the immigration authorities and MI5 have a highly secret "suspect" list of 18,000

names. Included on these lists are passengers who have been to a Communist country, passengers in possession of Communist or other subversive literature. Of course, the definition of 'subversive literature' leaves a very broad opening.

But if passports contain information which can be read by computer machinery it opens up the possibility of linking up with other government departments and obtaining a wide range of information on a much greater number of people.

One internal report from the Home Office (reported in *New Scientist*, January 5, 1984) states that putting the suspect list onto computer will "assist the immigration officer in obtaining very fast and effective checks against

a much larger suspect index." (emphasis added).

With computer technology it is now possible to build up confidential files on the whole population and then gain access through machine-readable National Insurance cards or passports.

The dangers to the labour and trade union movement are clear. Anyone who is labelled as a dissident, activist, agitator or member of a pressure group can find themselves listed.

This prospect is now clear to most people—a recent survey in the *Sunday Times* showed that 84% of the population are against the use of confidential files on individuals or the use of phone-taps.

Rodgers—"how I helped the bosses."

WHILST HE was Labour Minister of Transport, Bill Rodgers secretly advised road transport employers that they should set up a strike fund to take on the transport workers' union.

Writing in *The Guardian*, (7 January), Rodgers—now one of the leaders of the SDP—is clearly proud of how he acted for the interests of business within the labour movement: "(In 1977) I had discovered the complete inability of the RHA (Road Hauliers Association) to stand up to intimidation by the Transport and General Workers Union.

"A loose grouping of a large number of mainly small firms, the RHA lacked a tradition of strong leadership or sophisticated industrial relations skills. Quite improperly as it would have seemed for a Labour

minister, I had suggested to the chairman that a strike fund should be created to match the resources of the TGWU. But members of the RHA, competitive amongst themselves, were not attracted by the idea that unity was strength. Soundings were taken but the answer was no."

When the following year lorry drivers took industrial action Rodgers' attitude was clear. In the same *Guardian* article he states: "Only one practical course was available: an open attack on the irresponsibility of the TGWU and the spinelessness of the TUC coupled with an unqualified determination to keep supplies moving".

Marxists have previously pointed out that the right wing and their political ideas within the labour movement act, either consciously or not, in the interests of the bosses. It is rare though for right wingers to admit it.

But whilst Rodgers has ad-



Photo: Militant

Bill Rodgers—former Labour minister turned SDP renegade.

mitted his true class allegiances, how many other right wingers remain in the Labour Party who are on the side of the bosses and only see the party as a means of furthering their careers?

By Jim Chrystie

ILEA—Unity essential

ALONGSIDE parents and trade unionists employed by the Inner London Education Authority, London teachers are preparing for their battle to defend ILEA from the Tory onslaught.

Large meetings have already been held at schools and colleges across London as the campaign moves into top gear, in preparation of the one day strike on January 24.

Along with the abolition of the GLC, the Tory government wants to scrap ILEA. Like London Transport and the GLC itself, ILEA will be replaced by a proliferation of 'quangos' through which the Tories will push massive cuts in services.

The campaign to save ILEA has been linked to the fight to defend the GLC and London Transport. Trade union instincts of workers within ILEA and the GLC demand that there is maximum unity in this fight.

Save services

This is despite apparent desire of some voices in the unions to keep the issues separate. They believe that the education service is more 'popular' and thus easier to preserve than those provided by the 'unpopular' GLC.

There are also deficiencies in the 'non-political, multi-party' approach of the ILEA leadership. They hope to

THE BUILD up for the one day strike in London on January 24 in defence of the GLC and the Inner London Education Authority is gaining momentum.

The GLC Staffs Association have voted for strike action on the day, as have members of NALGO and the building workers union UCATT within the GLC. The Fire Brigades Union have also decided to take action, answering emergency calls only.

save ILEA by gaining support from enough SDP and Tory GLC councillors and MPs, against the government proposals.

But many fear the price of support from these characters will be agreement to cuts in jobs and services. The ILEA leadership seem to believe that saving the structure of ILEA is the main task. Yet ILEA will get support from employees and parents, not because of its administrative machinery, but because of the services it provides. That support is essential if the Tories are to be defeated. But if services are cut then that support will be undermined.

ILEA must therefore give a firm commitment not to cut any jobs or services. Similarly to ensure maximum unity within ILEA against the Tories' pro-

posals, it must settle those grievances with its own employees. A case in point is the long running dispute with ILTA (the NUT's inner London association) over compulsory redeployment.

Resolve issues

This dispute stems from ILEA's plans to move 'surplus' teachers from schools where roles have fallen, to schools where posts exist. Yet in reality most school roles have fallen so those teachers deemed as 'surplus' are not actually moved—yet their contracts are altered so they become 'supernumary' (extra to the school's curriculum). This leaves teachers in a far from secure position, causing widespread anxiety and hostility from teachers towards ILEA.

It would be a gift to the Tories if, while campaigning to save ILEA, the authority was engaged in a serious dispute on this issue with its own employees.

With these issues resolved the ILEA leadership and its employees could go forward on a united basis, linking up with GLC and LT campaigns, and stop the Tories' in their tracks.

By Bob Sulatycki
(NUT, West London Association, personal capacity)

Glasgow Labour fights cuts

AT A stormy meeting of the Glasgow District Labour Party on January 9, the party narrowly adopted a new policy for the May elections. By 40 votes to 38 the party accepted a position of a freeze on rents, a freeze on rates with no cuts, and to demand more funds

from the government.

In the past the District Council has accommodated the demands of Younger, the Tory Scottish secretary. More recently however, it has been generally accepted that the District Labour Party will give policy guidelines to the council.

FIGHTING FUND

NEW RECORD

WITH YOUR help *Militant* has yet again achieved a new record. When combined with the £32,894 for the new premises, the overall amount raised last year was £184,866.

The final figure for the six month period just ended was £75,704; this includes the £1,433 profit from the Winter Draw. This means a total of over £151,973 was raised in actual Fighting Fund over the whole year! Money poured in over the last ten days, especially on the raffle;—the total for the last week was £7,993 (the final chart will appear next week); for a list of raffle winners see advertisement column.

Going Forward

There is no stopping us! With so much support we can only go forward. With new premises expected some time this year there is no telling how close behind a daily paper will be. And the nearer we get the more incentive to reach even new heights and set even better records.

Thank you to all our supporters and all our readers who helped us achieve the new record. Your continuing support especially as the hardships of the Tory system have worsened has been tremendous.

The support is for *Militant* and socialism. That's what has ensured our success.

Workers will fight to ensure a decent future for themselves and their families. But that future can only be guaranteed under socialism.

Militant is the only Marxist newspaper going forward; that's because it's prepared to fight for every worker, every housewife, youth and especially those on the dole. Keep sending the money in and join the fight with us.

1984 is going to see even bigger achievements, starting with the new premises. So thanks to all those who sent us donations this week including:

Swansea supporters who raised over £95 from "Xmas" donations, Mike Campbell (University Ward Labour Party, Leeds) £39, George and Sue Blackmore (London) £12, C Thorpe (AUEW, Birmingham) £10, a miner from Polkemit (Edinburgh) £5, Barry Williams (Catshill Labour Party, Birmingham) £5, a Southwark NUPE supporter £2.50, Mrs Arnold (an OAP, Nottingham) £2 a month, C Oliffe (unemployed, Worksop) £1, Wendy and also Michael from Stockport both pay 50p for their papers

as does K McKay Barrhead Labour Party 50p.

A number of trade unionists donated this week: AUEW, EETPU and UCATT members from East London donated a total of £33, BIFU executive members donated £5, Glasgow CPSA members £5 and NHS workers at Hull Royal Infirmary £1.70.

Appeal sheets raised £11.20 for Selly Oak supporters. Collecting tins raised £10 for Battersea and Putney, while 'pints for the *Militant*' raised £1.20 from Sheffield. Comrades in other areas should take up these ideas for their own area if they haven't done so already.

New premises

But we still haven't got the new premises yet so the funds will still need to be raised. If 1984 is going to see those better achievements, the funds need to be raised continuously. The campaigns must go on. We need cash pouring in every week of the year. Help us make this year an even better success.

By Kath White

CLASSIFIED: 10p per word, minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

BADGE: *Militant* enamel stud badge—£1.00 p&p
CALENDAR: 1984 poster calendar—£1.00 p&p
Cheques made payable to *Militant*. Send to 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

HACKNEY Militants present: Jackies party! Saturday 4 February through until Sunday 5 February. "All weekend long" until the drink runs out. So bring a crate! Venue: 53 Durlston Road, Hackney E5. All proceeds to the fighting fund.

FOR HANDICAPPED READERS

Cassette tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year. Write to: 'Militant Tapes', 26 Aston Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8, or phone (0527) 73795.

BOLSHEVIK Poster Calendars. Send 50p (includes p&p) to S. Davies, 2 Keswick Avenue, Roath Park, Cardiff. All proceeds to Fighting fund.

BIKE FOR sale. Raleigh RFW 3, small wheeled model. Needs new tyres, hence £25 ONO. Buyer to collect. All proceeds to the Building Fund. Ring Iain, 01-689 4690.

FOOTBALL programmes bought—Any quantity. Excellent way of raising money for fighting fund/Building Fund. Contact: M. Ingram, 206 Honeysuckle Rd, Southampton, Hampshire. Or ring (0703) 551420.

SELF CONTAINED two-bedroomed flat in Acton, West London. Available from mid-January. Close to bus and tube. Low rent—would suit two to four *Militant* supporters. Phone 01-749 7903 evenings.

ROOM IN shared flat. £15pw + bills in Forest Gate, London E7. Phone Jane on 01 552 3204.

"*Militant* Turn left for workers unity and socialism"

T-shirts—£3.50-white, yellow, navy black.
Sweatshirts—£6.75—grey, pale-blue, navy, dark green.

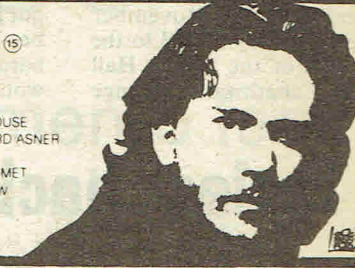
Small 32"-34" chest medium 34"-36" large 36"-38" extra large 40-42"

All proceeds to *Militant* Fighting Fund. All cheques and postal orders with size and colour preference to R. Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancs.

CALLING ALL Marxist athletes. Have you past the finishing post for your pledge for the Building Fund? No? Then start training for the *Militant* Marathon! Join this fund raising event to be held in early spring. Contact Paul Henry, c/o 10 Kensington Road, Chorlton, Manchester.

DANIEL

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DIRECTED BY SIDNEY LUMET



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Militant MEETINGS

HARTLEPOOL: Marxist discussion groups. Held weekly. Ring Malcolm Fallow, Peterlee 867789.

COVENTRY: "Central America". Speaker: Laurence Coates. Venue: Renolds Chain, Spon End. Thursday, 19 January at 7.30 pm.

MAIDSTONE: *Militant* Readers' Meeting. "Lessons of the NGA dispute". Speakers: Wayne Jones + NGA speaker. Brickmakers Arms, Perryfield Street, Maidstone on Thursday 12 January at 7.30 pm.

THANET: *Militant* Readers' Meetings are held on alternative Monday evenings. For further details phone (0843) 291293.

PUBLIC MEETING on Pakistan called by *The Struggle*, Pakistan socialist paper. Speakers include: Pat Wall, Max Madden MP at 3 pm, Sunday 15 January at Scout Hall, off Church Street, near Liberty Cinema, Bradford 8.

MILITANT STICKERS. Still available. 200 for £2.30; 500 for £5.60; 1,000 for £11.00. Contact: 'Militant Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Learning from the past

IT IS now a hundred years since the founding of the Social Democratic Federation which, despite its sectarian attitude, played an important role in the founding of the Labour Party. Its members showed great enthusiasm for selling its paper, *Justice*. Copy their example. Is *Militant* sold in your High Street? If not, why not?

The following two excerpts from party members are taken from *Labour's turning point, 1880-1900* by Eric Hobsbawm:

"Those were the days when none of us were above doing anything. We distributed bills, took collections, bawled ourselves

hoarse at street corners and sold *Justice* down Fleet Street and the Strand. This was really a most extraordinary venture.

"It was a curious scene. Morris in his soft hat and blue suit, Champion, Frost and Joynes in the morning garments of the well-to-do, several working men comrades and I myself, wearing a new frock-coat in which Bernard Shaw said I was born, with a tall hat and good gloves, all earnestly engaged in selling a penny socialist paper during the busiest time of the day in London's busiest thoroughfare..."

"*Justice* appeared on 19 January 1884... Its greatest "snag" was distribution.

Wholesalers agents would scarcely look at it. It had mainly to rely upon sales at meetings. Those who could manage it took copies to newsagents one week and collected the unsold copies and the money due—when there was any—the following week.

"I did that job for six months, and on some occasions I had all the copies and no money! When three or four copies were sold at one newsagents I was simply delighted. It was not every newsagent who would take on the sale of the paper, even when it was brought to him, and some dropped it like hot cakes when they found it had more to do with revolution than with the law!

By Dave Farrar

"I went dinnerless each Thursday for six months, and I was not at all sorry to give it up when the three newsagents in my group who still took the paper were able to get it earlier through one of the smaller wholesalers.

"What I did was typical in a small way of what a number of other members did in London and the larger provincial centres. For instance, a member of the Marylebone branch, T Finn, would stand outside Gower Street Station on Thursday mornings to catch the people on their way to work. He worked up a small regular sale of *Justice* by the very persistence with which he stuck to it."

RAFFLE WINNERS

- 1st Prize: D Hayward—Hailsham 844261
2nd Prize: Jean Danney—Hengoed 813393, Mid Glam, South Wales.
3rd Prize: Anne Cooper 579921
4th Prize: Lynne Divers 041 649 2563
R. Baxter 78, Torquay Crescent, Stevenage,
G Lerner 0772 561070,
Smith 97 Bluebell (Sweiyhling?),
Kevin Gent Bishop Auckland 762972.

Could the above contact *Militant* to arrange the collection of their prize.

Rush cash now for Building Fund

THE CAMPAIGN for a daily *Militant*, begun in 1983, continues into the New Year with the Building Fund target of raising £150,000 by 31 January. There is no let up for the Marxist movement in the day to day work of explaining the ideas of socialism.

We need to be able to put out a daily workers' paper. However, before we can do this we have to acquire premises suitable to house the press, machinery and staff necessary to produce such a paper.

We cannot afford to go to the money sharks in the building societies with their outrageous interest rates. We can only rely on the sacrifice of our readers. Everyday produces yet more examples of the financial support that our readers are prepared to give.

So far £32,894 has come in to redeem pledges already made. Remember, you have until the end of the month to pay off your promise. If you

have not yet made a pledge to our fund then fill in the slip below and send it in straight away.

We are not like the building societies which make millions of pounds in profit from the deposits of workers and then pay their managers' vast salaries.

We cannot promise wages like that but we can promise the best labour movement coverage if you give us the backing we need. The return on your investment will be the best possible. The deadline is not far away. Make sure we can start 1984 with a record fund raising feat and see *Militant* move into new premises.



1983 was a highly successful year for *Militant* despite attacks from the right-wing. Record funds raised a wider backing from workers. (Above) Last September's Rally.

YTS—One big worry

KIRK IS 16 years old and into his third month on YTS in Gateshead. His mother Lynne spoke to Margaret Reavey about the problems this causes for Kirk and his family:

LIFE IS just one constant worry. No one in the family is starving, but it's so hard to manage.

When Kirk left school and heard he was going to get £25 a week on YTS he thought it was a fortune—now he knows it's nothing. In fact it's worse than nothing. Him starting that scheme has meant the family losing £5 family allowance and £10 from my husband's invalidity benefit. Then there's his lunches—he was getting free meals at school and on top of that there are his fares. Our family is actually worse off now.

One day a week he has to go to a college in Durham. It costs £3 every time and on Monday this bombshell arrived—a letter saying he has to go there every day

next week. That means we have to find £15 in fares.

I rang the so-called training officer and he said "What's the problem—you'll be reimbursed". They don't understand—we just don't have that amount of money. I told him and he said, "Well doesn't Kirk budget?—he should do" I don't know how I restrained myself!

And just look at the course programme. All he'll be doing there is laying grass, cutting grass and digging fields—exactly what he's doing on his horticulture course here in his home town. I said that to his training officer and he said Gateshead doesn't have the facilities. What a joke! All you need is a shovel and field or park—we've plenty of those.

The letter he got from the college is laughable. It tells you things like where to park your car. Best of all it says how they hope he will "participate freely in all discussions". The MSC inspector saw Kirk the other day and asked what he thought of his training. Kirk told him he thought it was rubbish, and the bloke said he should be grateful he had a job.

He only got on the scheme by accident in the first place. We went to the Job Centre and gave this man all kinds of information. Then he asked for our phone number. I told him we couldn't afford one so he said that really we were wasting our time since placements are usually only made by phone. You're discriminated against because you can't afford a phone. It just so happened that we bothered to look at the boards in the Job Centre and found this particular scheme. Others would have just walked out of the door.

I feel really angry for the kids—they leave school with such big plans for the future. Kirk can't even afford to go out. And he was going to buy all sorts of clothes and things with all this money—he's managed to buy one jumper in three months, poor kid.

Him and all his mates know they're being used—doing jobs that used to belong to properly paid people, but they're frightened to complain in case they're victimised.

He's dreading the winter and so am I, working outside in all that terrible weather. They gave him a pair of wellies but that's all. No doubt the training officer will tell him he should budget for warm, rainproof clothing out of his £25! People don't realise what's going on. Our kids are being treated like mindless robots. When they reach 18 years that's it—you're past it at 18. It's a disgrace.

Fascists halted in Bradford

NEWS REPORTS have recently carried items about the 'increase in racism' in schools in Bradford. Activists have pointed out that there have been incidents of racism in the schools for some time, but the press have only just discovered it.

However, with the recent publicity, the fascists have tried to move in and further sow the seeds of racial hatred. The fascist British Na-

tional Party attempted to hold a meeting last week in a Bradford hotel, calling for the "establishment of apartheid in Bradford schools"!

Fortunately, they received a swift reply for the local labour movement. At very short notice, 150 labour activists including many LPYS members, blockaded the hotel. The three fascists who turned up had to be escorted away by police.

Catch 22 in Hackney

THE INNER city borough of Hackney in East London is now recognised as one of the most socially deprived areas in the country. Hackney has always lagged behind the rest of the country in terms of social conditions, but its position has been exacerbated by the Tories. By 1980, the unemployment rate was 44% higher than the rest of the country. Today, nearly 20% of the population are out of work—'One in Five' as the banner stretched across Hackney Town Hall angrily declares.

Members of Hackney North LPYS described some of the problems they face:

BEING UNEMPLOYED in Hackney means having a restricted social life. Your transport difficulties are such that you either do a lot of walking or you're restricted to staying in Hackney—in this heavily populated area we don't have any underground stations.

You're stuck and have to look for jobs here, which have lower rates of pay. If you can get a job outside the area, what you'd gain you lose in fares.

Sugar pill

One positive, although not particularly socialist activity, is the council's provision of Arts, Entertainment, and sports and leisure facilities e.g. famous personalities appearing at free concerts every now and then. Actually, this is typical of Hackney council's palliative view of socialism, although of course its better than a Tory council anyway.

By a Hackney North LPYS member

Hackney also has co-operative development schemes, but they are often criticised for being small scale and restricted to trendy craftsmen.

They do sometimes include building co-ops, but this does little to help the large number of such workers in Hackney.

In order to set up a co-op, you have to know various like-minded people. But being unemployed, you are inevitably isolated from other contacts. The lack of large scale industrial emphasis in this policy means that unionisation is further weakened at a time when union strength is under attack.

The council has displayed plans for a residential development, asking for comments—this was on the site of the Metal Box factory which was one of Hackney's

major employers that was closed with hundreds redundant. As an ex-Metal Box worker told me, it would have been the perfect opportunity for the council to set up a large scale workers' co-op on the site.

Long waits

The other problems we unemployed face are: the isolation from previous workmates, suspiciously long waits for our giros despite computerisation, and lengthy waiting in dole queues because of staff shortages.

Hackney does have a trade union/council backed Unemployed Centre, but the emphasis is on recreation and advisory services. Nothing wrong with that, but I do feel their should be more emphasis on the politicisation and organisation of the unemployed, uniting us together with the employed, unionised workers in the area.

Education's slow death by cuts

I AM a student at a Hackney comprehensive school, and can see how the Tories are slowly reducing schools and education levels. More and more teachers seem to be getting sacked, department budgets are being axed—we even have cases where teachers are having to dip in to their pockets in order to keep their departments going.

We have situations of one teacher having to look after 30 to 40 pupils because the school cannot employ even a part-time teacher.

If we lose an exercise book we are forced to pay for it.

The teachers are always telling us, "We haven't got paper to waste".

Sponsored events are becoming an every day occurrence. "We need money to help build a chapel so we are going to have a sponsored spell", our headmistress told us less than a year ago.

From this event, £2,000 was raised, but so far all that has happened is that they have built a wooden barrier between the main hall and one of the rooms. The school students have done all the paintwork. The majori-

ty opinion is that it looks good, but it could not have cost £2,000. So where did the money go?

"To pay outstanding bills", has been the common reply. But we ask, why can't the Inner London Education Authority do that? ILEA can't pay because the government is slowly but surely draining ILEA of all its resources. The teachers know it, we know it, so why don't the teachers tell us?

By Mark Hatchell
(Hackney North LPYS)



Hackney Town hall—this inner city borough is now recognised as being the most socially deprived in the country.



YOUNG WORKERS from the Lefrays factory in South Wales picket outside Abertillery magistrates court—all of those pictured have now joined the Labour Party Young Socialists. They were there for the trial of ten pickets arrested during the recent dispute. Two pleaded guilty to obstruction and were fined £40. The rest will appear on 12 January. The strike at Lefrays is now over, with the workers winning union recognition. However, the workers are not returning as a group because of seasonal lay-offs so their union, the TGWU, must maintain a close watch on Lefrays' management to ensure they abide by the agreement.

Photo: Dave Sinclair



GEORGE ORWELL 1984

Mouldering glory

EILEEN SHORT
reviews
Burmese Days
(available £2.00
inc. p&p) from:
World Socialist Books,
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

BURMESE DAYS is Orwell's first novel. The atmosphere is powerful and there's a passion of description and feeling rare in his other novels.

This is the Burma of the 1920s; the British Empire running to seed. It's acutely observed, deeply-felt.

It bears all the marks of first-hand experience—Orwell had followed his father into the Indian Imperial Service and from 1922 until his resignation in 1927 was a police officer in Burma.

Orwell's Burma is restless, mistrustful, uneasy.

The Europeans are ruled by the code of the 'pukka sahib'. Their insecurity and fear festers and erupts in bigotted outbursts at 'The Club'.

Racism

The central character, Flory, feels an outsider. He can't stomach the racism at 'The Club'.

Flory's secret friendship with the Indian doctor tests him and finds him wanting: he lacks the will and courage to break out of the trap, to stand by his liberalism. He has been sapped, corroded by his status, by isolation, by drink.

Contemporaries complained this picture of the English abroad was over-drawn. But Orwell's characters might have been quoting Sir Herbert White, former Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, who in 1913 described "our mission in Burma" as to bring "law and order to parts of barbarity".

Allowing 'blacks' to join the European Club, which provokes so much uproar in the novel, was indeed a contentious issue in Orwell's



From school to Empire. Orwell (top left) at Eton.

time.. The Governor had ordered that clubs should accept at least some senior native officials as members.

In 1924 a Burmese member of the English Bar made up the numbers for an army garrison rugby team. After the game, he was refused use of the showers. Only Europeans they told him could use the club house.

For Orwell there were many parallels. Even after the 1919 reforms in India, Burmese were refused any participation in elections. The police force had native constables, but for years refused to promote native officers.

The novel records what Orwell the police-officer saw. The non-European characters: Dr Veraswami, the cultured Indian and U Po Kyin the corrupt and malicious Burmese magistrate, aspire to the same end: the status of honorary black in the white man's world.

Conscious or not, there are some acute observations of the nascent native middle class under colonialism, seen as corrupt, fawning, sly and inefficient but in fact moulded by the pukha sahibs themselves; all products, all

trapped in the web of imperialism.

Orwell's selective picture jars. Where are the struggling Burmese nationalists? The dignified peasantry? But this story is not about the Burmese.

It is about colonialism as a corrosive influence, under which no-one could be 'decent'. Most of all it is about the false meaningless lives of the English middle classes; Orwell's recurring theme.

Burmese Days is essentially the white man's story; Kipling and Eton still ringing in his ears as he confronts the sordid reality: the lower middle classes, Scots and Cockneys, second-rate imperialists far from home posturing on behalf of the British Raj, seeing nothing and understanding nothing.

Imperialism

Early on in the book we are given a short, bitter analysis of imperialism: Flory asks the doctor:

"How can you make out that we are in this country for any purpose except to steal! It's so simple. The official holds the Burman down while the business-man

goes through his pockets."

And of 'Pax Britannica': "Of course we keep the peace in India, in our own interest, but what does all this law and order business boil down to? More banks and more prisons."

It is a bit simplistic—and odd to have an Englishman explaining it—but the analysis lacks nothing in fundamentals.

This is not a book to turn to for an account of the Burmese struggle against British rule, or a political autopsy on imperialism. Orwell had resigned his post and returned to Europe before the anti-colonial battles of the 1930's.

On this level, it cannot be compared with his view of Spain in *Homage to Catalonia*.

But if you want a worm's eye view of the British empire in its mouldering glory, a feel for the lonely bitterness of the ageing 'Anglo-Indians' who now inhabit out of season hotels in Brighton, for the experiences that moulded George Orwell and radicalised a whole layer of the 1930s intelligentsia, you could do a lot worse than *Burmese Days*.

My new club is really super

WRITING IN the MPs' own journal, *The House Magazine* a new Tory member gives a revealing account of the cosy life he now enjoys. Clearly for him Parliament is just a social continuation of public schools and private clubs. His letter is published in reply to an earlier 'advice to a new member':

Dear Tom,

What a place! You are absolutely right that the Palace is the best club in London but its practices and traditions, its accommodation and services, above all, its occupants are unlike those of any club I know—they are quite simply untrue—and that is not necessarily a compliment!

Like any institution it is difficult for a new member to feel comfortable, but unlike most clubs, I have never known a greater willingness to help from the older members and staff.

Heady sense of history

I readily admit to a feeling of awe that floated over me on entering to take the oath. To walk into that chamber by right, to take one's place in this Mother of all Parliaments, to find oneself rubbing shoulders in a living Madame Tussaud's of Parliamentary history fills me with a great sense of pride and fulfilment—until the next morning when one feels very much less special, unrecognised, battling against the shoals of fourth-formers fresh from a chewing gum raid on the dispatch box—few sharing my heady sense of history...

I also felt surprise at the friendliness of the police, the attendants, the badge messengers and the staff

generally in the palace. You can see that they share with us a pride in working here and very often are just as in the dark as we are about what is going on, but they exude that confidence that Warrant Officers, the old style bobby and the really good waiter always possess...

But my first experience I will never forget. I was sitting with another new boy having lunch when a leading member of the Cabinet sat beside me. He passed a few compliments at my recent election victory and then because of the size of my majority, one of the smallest, proceeded to give me excellent advice as to how to hold onto a marginal seat.

Thank you sir

I replied, as I have been taught over the last thirty years to call my elders and betters sir, 'Thank you sir'. 'The second thing I would like to tell you is that you call nobody here sir. We are equal, you are the Member of Parliament for your constituency and I am the Member of Parliament for mine'.

'Thank you, Brian', I replied. 'Secretary of State is proper!' he said, amongst the guffaws of my fellow luncheon colleagues (names have been changed to protect my future)...

You were also right, Tom, never to confuse the opposition with the enemy. One surprise of the last few months has been the friendships I have made with opposition members of Parliament, particularly on my one trip abroad so far. Yet I am surprised that now, nearly six months after the general election, I am still only on nodding terms with some of my own colleagues. I really must try harder.

Yours, John.

LEFT and RIGHT

Government Insurance Department goes broke

The Thatcher government has completely underestimated the scale of the world's recession—and that's official. To safeguard British companies trading overseas there is the Export Credit Guarantee Department: in effect this acts as insurance cover for the companies. But now such are the demands for payment that unless more funds are provided in the next few months ECGD will go broke, for the first time in its history.

As the recession bites in the mis-named 'Third World', countries are defaulting on contracts. Last financial year British companies claiming compensation from ECGD for political action rose 20%. Since then it has got worse and the head of ECGD has reported that he expects his department to go broke "early in 1984".

And despite all the froth on the Stock Market about a boom, the ECGD reported this month that they see no sign of, or prospect of, an economic recovery in the industrialised world.

Bankers' advice—borrow more

The *Wall Street Journal's* advice to the Nigerian ruling-class was that it should have borrowed more. The American business paper stated, 30 December, 1983:

"Had it borrowed more, like Brazil with its \$90 billion debt, Nigeria might find its bankers more compliant. Banks have lent so much to Brazil and other Latin American countries that they must agree to rescheduling or lose all hope of being repaid. In Nigeria banks are less exposed and so ironically can afford to drive a harder bargain".

As the old saying has it, if you owe the bank £1, you've got a problem; if you owe them £100 million, they've got a problem.

Editor runs scared of NGA

During the *Stockport Messenger* dispute Andrew Neil, Murdoch's new editor at *The Sunday Times*, had numerous secret phone calls with owner Eddie Shah to offer his support. He lobbied Home Secretary Leon Brittain for more police help. His contacts with Shah were kept hidden from journalists on *The Sunday Times*.

But although Neil might have been urging Shah to fight on, he was running scared of the NGA print union chapel at *The Sunday Times*. The *New Statesman*, 6 January, revealed that NGA members forced him to rewrite his editorial.

Compare the differences between the first and second editions: (parts in italics omitted in second

edition): "If decent and industrious entrepreneurs such as Mr Eddie Shah cannot survive and prosper... But it was ever thus on Fleet Street, which is why the likes of the NGA still hold the whip hand... (*union* was substituted in for words in italics).

"Mr Kinnoch wants to give Labour a spruced up, high-tech image. Yet his party supports a Luddite union... Their industry and the country have been diminished as a result. But the logic is irresistible. *It has taken Mr Shah to remind us.*"

Culture must be limited

Some time ago a 'free entry' policy was adopted at the Prado art gallery in Madrid. However more recently a new 'limit' has been brought into force, 'as a measure in defence of the interests of lovers of the Prado'. *The Times* reported that ABC, the Madrid daily which has often criticised the free entry policy has welcomed the restrictions. It said that the restrictions "would stop the Prado from becoming a favourite place for a family Sunday outing, with children munching sandwiches as they gaze at a Velasquez".

Perish the thought! Art, science and culture as common property? Never! Why should it be any different from ownership of industry? Still, it's good to know that art etc are safe and sound—and worth a lot of money—in the hands of those who so ably are also restricting industry, jobs, services and the rest of our lives generally.

How safe is the Pill?

VIVIAN SEAL (Manchester Labour Women's Council) examines last autumn's controversy over the safety of the contraceptive pill

WOMEN USING oral contraceptives are 75% more likely than women using an IUD (coil) to get cervical cancer. That is if a study reported in *The Lancet*, (22 October, 1983) was correct—and it involved a large sample of women (10,000) over a ten year period.

The risk is trebled for women using the Pill for eight years or more. Another study reported in the same journal (based on a much smaller sample of 600 women) suggested that women who began taking certain pills before the age of 25, and who took them for five or more years, had four times the normal risk of breast cancer.

Comments published in the *Sunday Times* on 13 November called into question the second study (but not the first). Far from lulling our fears (and the rates of breast cancer have not been called into question, only the variation in risk between pills), women are only more than ever convinced that very little is actually known about the safety of drugs in general and the Pill in particular.

Yet it has now been on the market for 25 years. Seven years ago *The Lancet*, (7 October 1977) reported that women's chances of dying from a circulatory disease (eg a

heart attack or stroke) were multiplied five times as a result of taking the Pill; the risk being greatest for over 35s, smokers and women who had used the Pill for more than 5 years.

Sixteen years ago, Vessey and his co-workers (the people who did the recent cervical cancer study) reported the first conclusive evidence of side effects when they showed that seven times the mortality rate from thrombo-embolic diseases (those caused by blood clots) existed among Pill users than non-users.

Only months before Vessey's first report in the *British Medical Journal* in 1968, an eminent doctor had rushed into print with a book which "dispelled the traditional, often irrational, arguments that the pill causes cancer, diabetes or thrombo-embolic disease." He was the Biological Director of G D Searle & Co., the first company to market a contraceptive pill nine years earlier. In those days it was perfectly true to say that no relationship had been established between the Pill and cancer, thrombosis or any other disease: because so little research into side effects had been done that it was impossible to say either way.

The US Food and Drug Administration passed the first Pill on the strength of just

132 case histories examining side effects. Later studies automatically excluded women who had given up the Pill within 2 years as a result of side effects.

The Pill is big business. You can imagine how the directors of G D Searle reacted when they realised they had a drug to sell to healthy, not sick women, who might take it for over twenty years. They made 38.9% return even in the year that the side effects were first acknowledged.

In 1969 a number of brands were withdrawn as a result of a possible cancer link. Now, out of forty-five brands on sale in Britain, all but eight are suspect as a result of one or other of the reports published last October: while the criticisms of one of these reports has made it less clear which pill, if any, may be considered safe. No wonder the pressure is on to persuade doctors to say "keep on taking the Pill".

Women need access to information about side effects of the Pill, and about the advantages and disadvantages of different contraceptive methods (in jargon-free language) so we can make up our own minds about the risk of pregnancy compared to the risk of the contraceptive methods available. We also need to be able to recognise what might be symptoms of side effects at an early stage.

But who reads *The Lancet*? Probably not even a majority of doctors, never mind their patients.

When the latest reports linking cancer and the Pill were published, it was not proposed that any oral contraceptives be withdrawn. But it was recommended that cervical smear tests and breast examinations be done regularly on all past and present pill users.

Yet as the *Sunday Times*, 23 October, 1983, pointed out: "if women follow advice on what to do now, the NHS will not be able to cope. The facilities for screening women for cervical cancer are already over stretched and under funded."

GPs have only ever been paid by the NHS to perform routine cervical smear tests ever five years and on women over 35 or women who have had three or more pregnancies. The increased risk associated with the Pill applies specifically to younger women, some of whom could die before being eligible for a routine smear test.

And now cuts have reduced the availability of smear tests, while during the years 1973-9 cervical cancer increased at the rate of 60% in women aged 25-34. It is no exaggeration to say that Thatcher's cuts are killing women, especially working class women.

Cancer—the hidden killer at work

In this, the first part of a two-part article, RONNIE SOOKDHEO shows how cancer is almost entirely an 'environmental disease'. The second part will examine how chemical companies have tried to brush the issues under the carpet, and what the attitude of the labour movement should be.

IF FOUR hundred people were killed each day in Britain as a result of the plague or another infectious disease it would be considered a major epidemic. The government would immediately declare an emergency.

Yet, today cancer—an industrial disease—claims as many lives daily, often in prolonged and agonising pain, and it is claimed that nothing can be done. But irrefutable evidence now exists, from Britain and abroad, identifying the principal causes of this dreaded disease.

It is now established that cancer is almost entirely an occupational disease. Government reports, research findings and trade union studies all conclude that 80-90% of cancers originate from cancer causing agents—carcinogens—which are present in the environment in general and the workplace in particular. Reports have indicated: the lack of safety precautions, absence of industrial hygiene, and inadequate legislation to control the testing, use and emission of toxic chemicals including radioactive substances.

The disease could largely be prevented. Yet cancer is now endemic—killing and disabling on an ever increasing scale. One in four people can now expect to contract cancer and one in five will die from it.

It is now the biggest killer in the 5-54 age range and the second biggest overall after heart disease. Certain types of cancer, notably bladder, lung and pancreas, have all shown an explosive increase.

Even more disturbing is the incidence of leukaemia, especially among the young. 'Cancer maps' now available have identified these cancers with particular industries.

The most notorious is the nuclear power industry. Leukaemia amongst children near the Windscale plant is an incredible ten times the national average. Workers in the dye industry are more susceptible to bladder cancer than workers in heavy metal industry, and asbestos workers are a hundred times more prone to cancer than any other group of workers. Such horrendous statistics represent a searing indictment of the gross misuse and perversion of science and technology in capitalist society.

Serious danger

When profit is the ultimate motive for development, risks of serious danger to health and damage to the environment are secondary considerations.

But, for many people today, cancer is an emotive topic because of pessimism about a cure. Diagnosis can mean a death sentence! As a subject, cancer has remained shrouded in mystery, with all kinds of eccentric theories being advanced for its causes.

This has been further compounded by the lack of public debate. Occasionally it makes headline news when a so-called 'miracle' cure is announced. The responsibility for this monstrous situa-

tion must lie at the door of the scientific establishment.

The information is there but remains locked away behind the corners of medical journals. All the hazards associated with many chemicals have been known for years.

So what is cancer? How is it caused? And how can it be prevented?

With the industrialisation of society, it has been known that many dusts, metals and a wide range of petroleum chemicals can enter the body and interfere with its complex biochemical processes. Chemicals are more dangerous for they can interact with proteins and essential salts.

Some can completely destroy the body's defence system and others modify vital enzymes which control these processes. The net effect would be a serious

malfunction of organs. In cancer, the carcinogenic substances cause gross deformation of the cellular structure of the body.

The human body is composed of millions of cells, each containing a nucleus which determines their precise co-ordination. A normal condition of the cell is that they continually grow and divide, to produce identical cells to replace those damaged or destroyed.

The nucleus is made up in turn from a complex material called DNA, which imparts definite characteristics in the individual. Through a complex code DNA also controls the growth and development of the cell.

Carcinogenic substances

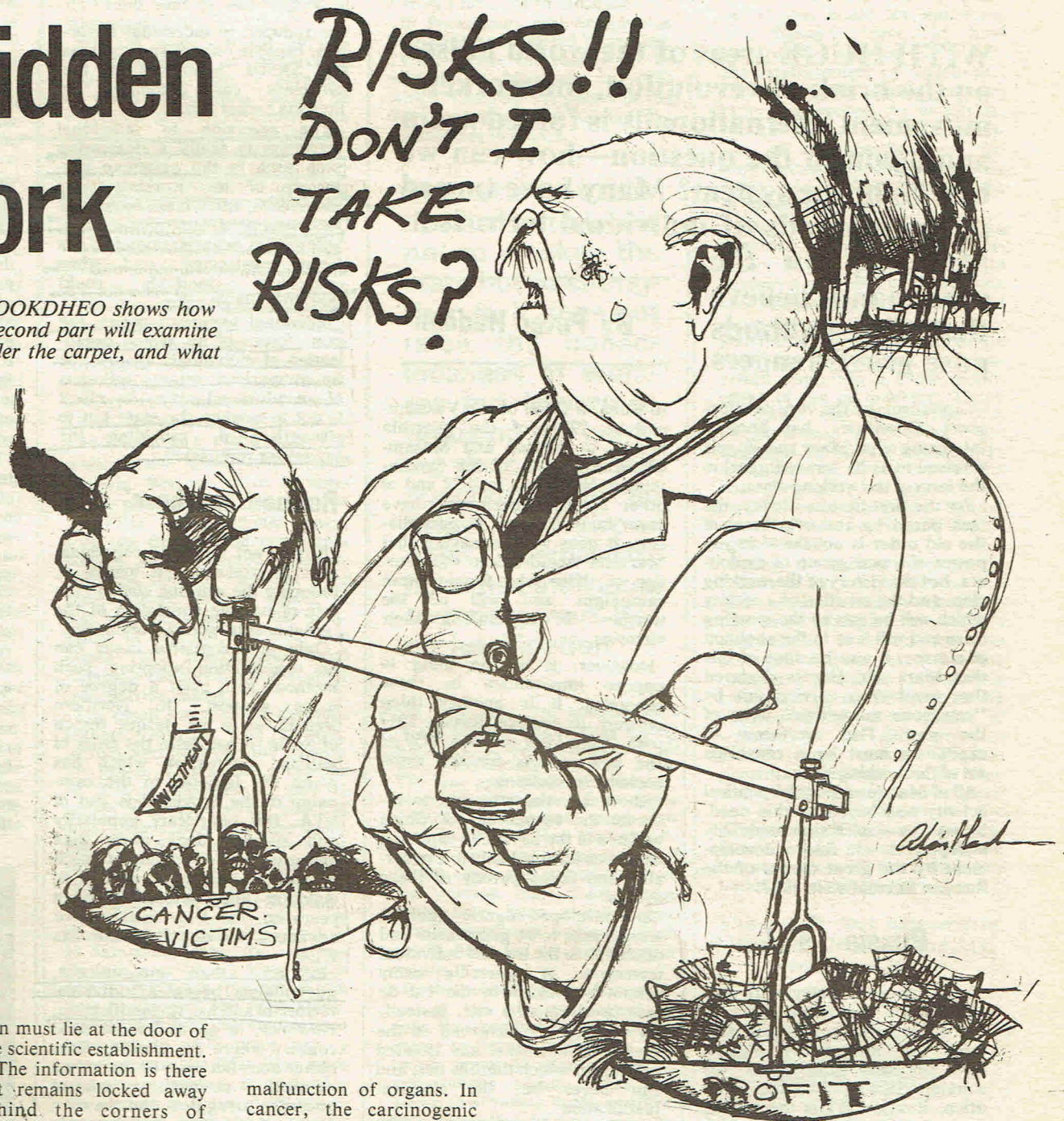
can interact with DNA and irreversibly alter its structure. It makes the cell into a mutant. When this happens these cells will stop receiving and responding to signals.

They begin to grow and proliferate without reference to the needs of the body. They will eventually travel to distant sites and grow into tumours or cancers. The faster the rogue cells grow and divide, the more primitive they become and the more malignant the tumour.

Asbestos, certain metals and a wide range of solvents, chemicals used in paints, the dye and rubber industries are

all able to induce cancers through this pathway. Moreover, it is now known that certain chemicals previously thought of as harmless, can become carcinogenic through radiation, other chemicals or even by the body's own system. Some affected cells can stay dormant over a long period and then become activated by a variety of factors.

The only dissenting voice to these facts are commercial interests. They want to resist legislation which would enforce the stringent testing of chemicals now in circulation and if necessary order their withdrawal from the market.



Guerrilla warfare no alternative to mass struggle

WITH HUGE areas of the world poised on the brink of revolution, the workers' movement internationally is forced again and again to the question—how can we best fight the system? Many have turned to the methods of individual terrorism. Marxists, on the other hand, believe that these methods pose grave dangers.

Capitalism, by the very development of industry, has brought into being what Marx and Engels referred to as its 'gravedigger' in the form of the working class.

For the first time in history, the task posed by the overthrow of the old order is not the rising to power of a new group of exploiters, but the victory of the working class and the creation of a society which will be run by the working class and will lead to the abolition of classes. It was because of this that Marx and Engels declared that revolutions carried out by "conscious minorities" were of the past. The overthrow of capitalism must be a conscious act of the working class.

All of Marx and Engels' political activity was based on this need. It was a conclusion indelibly stamped on all future development by the great events of the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Russia 1917

In a backward country, with only 10% of the population living in the cities, where the peasants were the numerically biggest force, it was nonetheless the working class who led the revolution. Russia 1917 is the model, as yet the only model which history has provided, of a successful socialist revolution, where for the period before the Stalinist degeneration, power was democratically exercised by the working class. The only difference between the balance of forces in Russia in 1917 and world conditions today is that the working class is now much stronger.

By the end of this century, 25% of the population of Africa will live in the cities. In Latin America it will be 75%. For most of the colonial world, as for the advanced countries, the model of the Russian Revolution, far from having dimmed, glows brighter and more relevant than ever.

Yet in recent decades other apparent 'models' have emerged. The victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, of Castro

in Cuba in 1959, of the Vietnamese in 1973, of the guerrilla armies in Angola and Mozambique in 1974/5, of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979 and of other similar movements, have sown huge illusions in guerrillism. It goes without saying that Marxists would salute the courage of those who fought these campaigns and will be the warmest in applauding their victories.

However, it is one thing to oppose imperialism in these struggles. It is another thing entirely to replace Russia 1917 with China 1949 or Cuba 1959 as the new models for the world socialist revolutions.

Above all, the attempts to recreate the revolutions of China or Cuba in the advanced capitalist countries have led only to a miserable and failed parody of these events.

In a developed country, guerrillism ceases to be guerrillism and descends to the level of individual terrorism. A guerrilla army cannot be hidden in the cul de sacs or alleys of a city. Instead, all that can be achieved is the lunacy of individual and isolated actions for which there is not, and can never be, the slightest justification.

Across the borders of South Africa the ANC operates bases and exists as a guerrilla force exactly as did ZANU and ZAPU in Mozambique and Zambia during their campaign against the Smith regime of white Rhodesia. In Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) there was only a limited base for guerrillism. In South Africa there is none. Of its 29 million people, nine million are wage earners and two million are unemployed. The rural population are land labourers, forming a rural proletariat, not peasants.

There the ANC camps which have existed since the 1960s are creating a guerrilla force which can only be a guerrilla force in exile and provided it does not fight. When it comes to practice, where ANC units infiltrate across the border they

are reduced to individual terrorism, capable only of such acts as the SASOL bombings or the senseless car bombings in Pretoria earlier this year.

The reversion to individual terrorism is really a despairing step back to the primitive pre-history of the working class movement, when class consciousness was at an embryonic stage, when mass organisations had not been constructed, and when anarchistic methods could therefore get an echo.

Individual terrorism places the puny forces of an armed organisation of individuals against the (in comparison) mighty colossus of an advanced state. Its effect is not to weaken the state but to strengthen it, providing the excuse for repression.

Reduce workers' role

It does not raise the consciousness of workers, but lowers it, reducing the working class to the role of passive spectators of the 'great events' which it organises.

Only in exceptional cases can an organisation adopting such methods gain even a degree of mass support. In Northern Ireland, as in the Basque region of Spain, it has been the twist of national oppression which has given the impetus to the campaign of the Provisionals and of ETA. But temporary popularity and support does more than obscure the direction of such campaigns, which is always to isolation and defeat. Thirteen years on, the Provisionals have advanced not one step, nor has ETA.

In an urban environment, guerrillism becomes individual terrorism and has no justification. However, in an underdeveloped country where the working class either does not exist or has only a nominal strength, peasant guerrilla struggles can have a certain legitimacy as the only method of struggle available.

Conditions of existence determine the character of class struggle. Capitalism brought the working class together in the factories and into the cities. It deprived them of any means of survival other than their ability to sell their labour power.

Out of these common conditions workers internationally have learned to fight together. Across the globe they have drawn the same conclusions - to build trade unions, political organisations, to strike, to demonstrate and to engage in other forms of mass united action. Only through forms of mass action, initially more limited, can the working class become conscious of both the need to change society and their ability to do so.



Salvadorean guerrillas training in an area liberated from the government.

Guerrillism is a form of struggle of the peasantry. It stems naturally from the scattered existence of this class, and from the individualistic ambition of each peasant to own their own plot of land. Guerrilla methods are alien to the entire mode of existence of the working class. It is not possible to work alongside thousands of others for 40 hours a week in a factory and then go off to the country, rifle in hand, to wreak vengeance on the system.

To do so, a worker would have to give up his/her job and quite simply would no longer be a worker. Just as a worker in a guerrilla army rejects his tools and his place on the factory floor, so a revolutionary strategy based on such methods is a rejection of the working class as the force to change society, and as such is a rejection of marxism.

The country always follows the town. The peasantry plays no independent role in history but eventually tailends one or other class force in the cities. At very best, peasant guerrilla struggles, where they break out, can play a role as an auxiliary to the revolutionary movements of the

working class in the towns or in the more developed countries.

To given support to peasant guerrilla war, or to back guerrilla armies in countries like El Salvador, is one thing. To advocate, as has been done in El Salvador, South Africa and elsewhere, that the working class leave the cities to take up these methods is something entirely different.

In most countries in which reactionary, right-wing regimes have been toppled by guerrilla methods, it would have been possible to carry out the socialist revolution in the manner and with the results of Russia 1917 - 23.

When the proletariat of China, especially Shanghai, rose in 1927 they were betrayed by Stalin's false policy of an alliance with the nationalist Kuomintang. In fact for five months after his forces had slaughtered the workers of Shanghai, Stalin advocated that the Chinese Communist Party continue to collaborate with Chiang Kai-Shek.



The policies of ETA, of individual terrorism, have not advanced its aims an inch.



provided a huge pole of attraction for millions of the poor in the colonial and semi-colonial world. In the West a silence appeared to have descended over the class struggle. Nowhere did there exist any genuine mass parties of marxism to explain events and play the role of the Bolsheviks in Russia.

Meanwhile, the horrors of capitalism and landlordism were even more keenly felt. At the moment, for example, 800 million people in the less developed countries face starvation or semi-starvation. Faced with such conditions, the colonial masses could not await some future revolution in the West. As in China and Cuba, the road of mass struggle again and again was blocked by the failures of the mass organisations, especially the mass Stalinist parties.

With the examples of China and Cuba, and with no other examples it was inevitable that in some countries the colonial revolution would take a distorted path. In Nicaragua, for example, the Communist Party split in 1961 and the Sandinistas developed as a revolutionary force. But the only example they could find on the whole Latin American continent was that of Cuba, 1959. Hence, they retreated to guerrilla methods. Time and again this situation has been repeated.

The weakening of imperialism after the war was a decisive factor in permitting the victory of guerrilla armies in some areas. The war resulted in the defeat of Japanese imperialism and the removal of the Japanese armies from China. No imperialist force could fill the vacuum. It was this

which opened the way to Mao's victory.

In Vietnam too the weakening of US imperialism was decisive in bringing the war to an end at the beginning of the 1970s. The anti-war mood in America and the demoralisation of the US troops forced the US to withdraw. US imperialism, its fingers burnt in Iran, could only look on while its friend Somoza was toppled in Nicaragua.

But the factors which applied in Mozambique or Nicaragua, especially the state of paralysis of world imperialism 'cannot be recreated in every circumstance. Guerrilla struggle carries no certain prescription of success.

Irish history bears out a clear lesson on this. The guerrilla campaign of the IRA of 1919-21, contrary to popular mythology, was not successful. The IRA leaders were forced to the conference table and the ranks were forced to accept a settlement which included the partition of the country and was more favourable to British imperialism.

In Zimbabwe, a very similar set of circumstances occurred. There, the guerrilla war of ZANU was fought to a stand still. The white Smith government could not win. Nor was there an immediate prospect of victory for the guerrillas. With 30,000 dead, with one third of the population herded into protected villages, with one third of the total herd killed; there was a mood of war weariness among the peasantry. In addition, the front line states of Mozambique and Zambia were threatening to close the guerrilla camps.

The result was that the guerrilla leaders, Mugabe and Nkomo, were forced to attend the Lancaster House talks at the invitation of British imperialism, and to accept a settlement for short of what their supporters were fighting for. Now, although white rule has gone, capitalism still rules in Zimbabwe, albeit through the black face of Robert Mugabe.

All these questions are well illustrated by the struggles in El Salvador. There, the working class is a powerful force which could have taken power several times in the past few years alone. One third of the GNP comes from industry. In 1977 there was a general strike. In 1980 there were two general strikes. In each case the leaders of these mass movements held back from seizing power because they had the disastrous perspective that such struggles could only be a backup to the campaign of the guerrillas in the countryside.

No prospect of victory

By standing reality on its head they have opened up a terrible situation. 300,000 people at least have died in a struggle which, despite the unlimited heroism of the guerrillas, offers no immediate prospect of victory. And now, unlike in Nicaragua, it appears that US imperialism would be prepared to intervene should the guerrillas near victory. The situation is at a bloody impasse. In any case, any much hailed

"THE TIME of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of the unconscious mass is passed. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organisation, the masses themselves must also be in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for, body and soul. The history of the last fifty years has taught us that."

FREDERICK ENGELS, from the introduction to Marx's pamphlet *The Class Struggle in France* (1895).

"guerrilla victories" have not been guerrilla victories but have only been won when the struggle has developed beyond guerrilla means. In each case it has only been when hit and run methods have been put to the side and a full scale military offensive begun that the old regimes have been overthrown. In 1949 Mao crossed the Yangtze on a 300 mile front, hardly a hit and run skirmish!

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas campaign had faltered by the late 1960s. It was the risings of the workers of Managua in 1979 which crumbled the pillars of the Somoza regime and hoisted the Sandinistas to power.

The effect of individual terrorism is not to weaken the state but to strengthen it. it does not raise the consciousness of workers but lowers it, reducing the working class to passive spectators. In an urban environment, 'guerrillaism' becomes individual terrorism and has no justification.

In each case the gordian knot of the old order was only finally broken by mass uprisings, or all out conventional war, or both. The ten, and sometimes twenty, years of courageous but costly guerrilla campaigns need not have happened. Had the revolutionary forces been concentrated in the cities and a leadership of the working class built, these could have been a much less painful overthrow and one which would have led to much better results.

In the colonial world bonapartism is the normal method of rule. Bonapartism means that the state apparatus, balancing between opposing class interests, rises above society, uses the sword to arbitrate in the conflict, but in the last analysis rules in the interests of one class or another.

The colonial bonapartist regimes balance between the rival pressures of world imperialism and stalinism on the one side, and the discontented masses at home on the other.

The victory of peasant guerrilla armies means the toppling of the old state machine and its replacement by a ready-made military state apparatus. In some cases, as in Zimbabwe, or Algeria, these newly formed bonapartist regimes succumb to the pressures of imperialism and lean into that camp.

Elsewhere, as in China, Cuba, Vietnam, Angola, the old state, and with it landlordism and capitalism, has been abolished and regimes of proletarian bona-

partism have been established. These are the very best that can result from the strategy of guerrilla war.

As Engels explained, the socialist revolution must be a conscious act of the working class. The tasks of the working class to manage and control society cannot be performed by another class. Hence, the caricatures of socialism, of China and Cuba, while an enormous step forward, leave the final tasks of the socialist revolution, the establishment of soviets and the creation of workers democracy, unanswered. As in Russia, the question of political revolution, of the overthrow of the bureaucratic elite who sit on their backs, now confronts the masses in these countries.

Marxism does not advocate guerrilla methods as an alternative to the class struggle. In advanced countries such methods are impossible. In the colonial world there is an alternative. In Iran the bloody dictatorship of the Shah was overthrown by mass action, especially a three month strike of the oil workers. Today in Chile and Argentina the dictatorships, are being dismantled by similar means. To date, none of these revolutions has gone all the way to the establishment of socialism but the power of the working class has been shown.

Today a single victory as in Russia in 1917 anywhere on the globe would provide an inspiration and example to workers everywhere. It would end the distorted course taken by the colonial revolution. Guerrilla struggles could no longer be substituted in the minds of workers as an alternative to united mass action. Peasant guerrilla uprisings, where they occur would take their true place as at best auxiliaries to the movements of the working class. It is for such a victory that the genuine forces of marxism internationally must struggle.

This article first appeared in Militant Irish Monthly, November 1983.

Militant Pamphlet

MARXISM

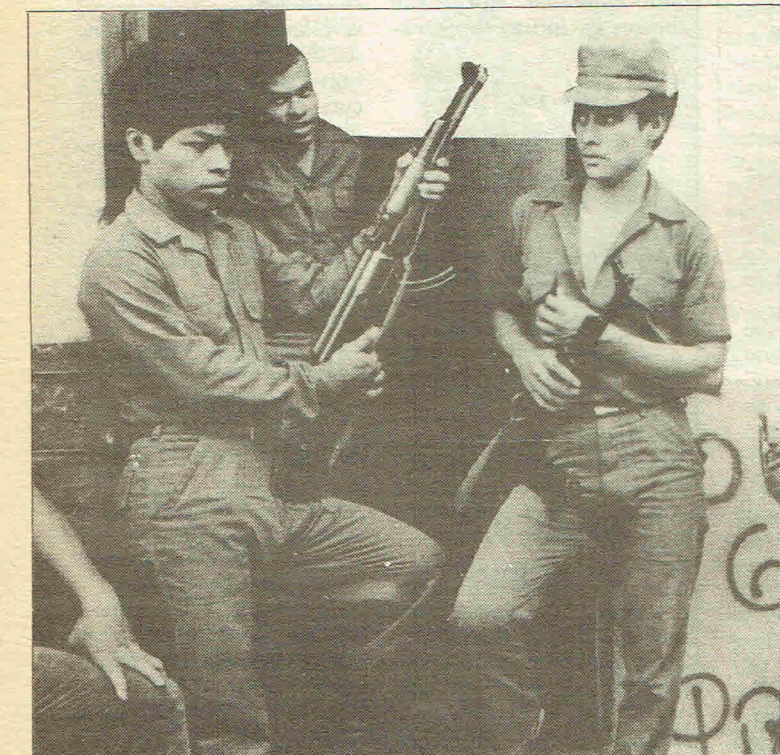


INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM

Marxism Opposes Individual Terrorism

By Leon Trotsky and Peter Taaffe
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The risings of the workers in Managua in 1979 pushed over the pillars of the Somoza regime, and brought the Sandinistas (above) to power.

USA,

South Africa,

Canada,

Standing up to the giant

THE AFL-CIO (America's TUC) once boasted a 34% organised membership of the US workforce.

It is now down to 15%, with a drive by corporation and government appointed bodies to push it out of business altogether. They believe that conditions are ripe to get rid of the unions.

So-called "experts" on labour union affairs predict that mass unemployment, loss of union membership, imported goods, technological changes and "Reaganomic" pressures will make unions more submissive and inclined to cooperate with employers.

They are wrong. A chain of bitter strikes has swept across the country—such as Greyhound Bus Co, Phelps Dodge, Continental Airlines, and many others. One focal point is the struggle of many unions against Littor Industries, a giant conglomerate.

Employers ignore laws

When Littor shareholders meet on 10 December in Los Angeles, they were greeted by a mass mobilisation not just of the unions but of churches, professional, and community organisations, drawing national attention to the fact that this huge conglomerate violates every provision of US labour laws. Reagan rewards the Littor plants with contracts on supplies to the government totalling more than two billion dollars.

Littor is following the footsteps of JP Stevens. The nationwide strike against that giant textile outfit is still

remembered here. For seventeen years that company arrogantly ignored dozens of decisions of the National Labour Relations Board, (NLRB) and the courts right up to the Supreme Court.

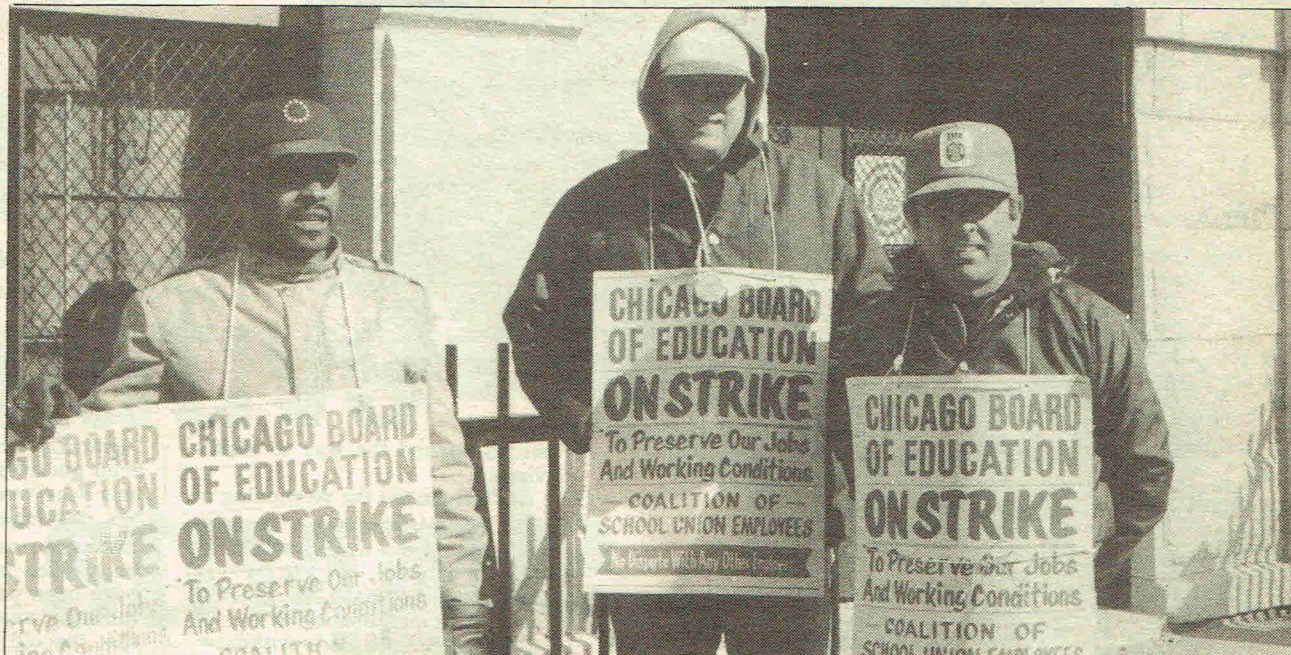
JP Stevens, like Litton today was favoured with government contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars under both Republican and Democratic Administrations. It finally gave in partially, more to prevent market losses than a real change of heart about collective bargaining with the union.

To this day, 50 of its sixty plants are still non-union. JP Stevens has settled all disputes regarding union contracts at ten of the company's plants. These contracts have been pending for three years since that giant company submitted to negotiations. That leaves fifty more plants to go.

Packed courts

The strategists for Littor Industries are following the Stevens formula. Looking at our high unemployment they believe that conditions offer an even better chance than

By Betty Traun
in New York



In all sections, trade unionists are having to fight. Here teachers take action in Chicago.

JP Stevens had to beat unions especially in the light of a Reagan-packed NLRB and Supreme Court.

One reason why that struggle lasted so long was that the leadership of the textile union did little more than wage a battle in the courts and in the NLRB.

Mass union mobilisations

During much of the campaign, it was a contest between lawyers for the company and the lawyers of the union. And the company made the most of loopholes, delays and trickery, by legal means.

Only in the final stages of

the struggle, when the textile union and the clothing union merged, did nationwide mass tactics involving all unions and the active support of other community groups take place for a real change. Then the battle was won.

Such a course is apparently developing in the Littor Industries' struggle which may well equal the broad movement which stood up to JP Stevens. The Industrial Union Division of the AFL-CIO is leading the co-ordination of all its unions.

Mass mobilisations are more important today than ever before because the National Labour Relations Board, and the courts are more clogged now than ever.

Reagan made it his business to pack the NLRB with a 100% pro-employer body. In fact, some of its members are officials of the Right to Work Committee (which in America is not an anti-unemployment group but an anti-union group).

Stalking tactics

The NLRB is in no hurry to settle cases. Union representatives complain that the Board actually kills some unions by taking years to settle issues. The backlog of unsettled cases has now reached 1,581, five years ago it was 674 cases.

Certification of a union

after successful election now takes four years. There is, in fact, a deliberately built-in delay mechanism in the NLRB system. For ten years, 850 employees of Harvard Medical Group have been deprived of union recognition after winning an election because of an assortment of NLRB delays designed to wear out the workers.

Into action

The most effective remedy for workers is full mobilisation for mass action. Only that can force the government and legal apparatus to take workers' claims seriously.

Apartheid violence in the village

FROM THE beginning of capitalist rule in South Africa, black people have been denied the right to live anywhere. That way the ruling class got land, cheap labour and prevented competition from any black farming class.

In the past twenty years alone, one million black people have been forcibly removed from the so-called "white land". The "resettlement programme" of the apartheid regime is continuing as the following appeal for support from the international labour movement, by veteran trade unionist RITA NDZANGA, demonstrates:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
I am writing to highlight the crisis facing villagers who have occupied the land Zwartkop (Mogopa) for over 70 years. The land was bought by their forefathers during the year 1912. The villagers hold a freehold title to the land.

Suddenly, in June 1983, government officials came to the village and demolished schools and churches, and then disconnected the water

pump. These were not bought by the government, but by the tribe, who donated money to buy the pumps and build the schools, and different congregations donated monies to build the churches.

The Bakwena Tribe were merely ordered to move, and then the bulldozer followed and demolished the houses as a few people moved. Some of the people moved in order to get their children schooling. But a greater number of the villagers refused to move.

The removal threat still hangs over the heads of the villagers. The farm Zwartkop (Mogopa) still belongs to the people.

Please raise this forced removal among all working people. Ask them to send letters to protest to Mr Piet

RITA AND LAWRENCE NDZANGA
SECRETARY OF the Toy Workers Union and an active leader of the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union alongside her husband, Lawrence, Rita was banned from trade union activity in 1964.

In 1969, she was charged under the Terrorism Act, acquitted and re-arrested along with 21 others. Rita is one of the countless detainees who has given evidence of torture while under interrogation.

Police worked in shifts, questioning her day and night, in the course of which a white policeman picked her up by the hair and dropped her onto a gas pipe. When she screamed in pain the police merely closed the windows.

In 1976, Rita was once again detained and it was during this time that Lawrence was murdered in detention. The state continued its brutal attack on these courageous trade unionists by barring Rita from attending her own husband's funeral.

From *Organise or Starve* (History of SACTU).

Koornhof, The Hon. Minister of Co-operation and Development, Co-operation Building, Jacob Maree Street, Pretoria 0001, and tell him to leave the BAKWENA BA MOGOPA villagers living 16km from Ventersdorp in peace.

These people will never "develop". They are very old to develop. Write a similar letter to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Private Bag, Ventersdorp, 2710, South Africa, the man

responsible for these removals. Ask him to rebuild the schools and return the villagers' water pump, so that the people and their animals can get water.

I belong to the tribe although I was born and brought up in Johannesburg. Please give this first priority. Messages of support etc. to P.O. Box 6914, Johannesburg 2000.

Sincerely
Rita Ndzanga

INQABA YA BASEBENZI

Journal of the Marxist Workers Tendency of the African National Congress. Quarterly subscription rates yearly: Surface mail (all countries) £2.80. Airmail £7.90. From BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.

Vancouver turmoil

"IT'S THE same the whole world over." Throughout the capitalist world the bosses are hitting the working class.

Land of lost opportunity

Even in British Columbia, Canada, an area once called the land of opportunity the government has launched a major onslaught.

As the Premier said, they had the aim of "making BC a place where business and industry will find it profitable". They have introduced 26 pieces of legislation and a new budget to rob the poor and give to the rich.

Wages and conditions

The aim is to attack the unions, reduce democratic control of industry, planning and education, and cut back on human rights. The provincial minimums for workers in the private sector are reduced, hitting hours of work, maternity leave and

By Bill Hopwood

severance rights. The public sector workers face reductions in union rights, pay cuts and the prospect of mass sackings.

The value of life is reduced with the abolition of vehicle safety checks (like the British MOT), the Rental office, the Drug and Alcohol Commission, and the Human Rights Commission.

Demonstrations

At the same time business has been boosted by tax concessions and planning control reductions. These proposals have resulted in a wave of opposition, described by a local newspaper as "political turmoil".

The wave of opposition has included several mass demonstrations, in Vancouver over 50,000, the largest in decades. BC's Premier, who models himself on Thatcher, will find the Canadian working class will put up fierce resistance.

Grenada, France

Labour condemns Grenada invasion

AT THE last meeting of the Labour Party National Executive the following resolution, from the Labour Party Young Socialists was passed.

"This National Committee condemns the military invasion of Grenada by the US. The recent coup was used as a pretext for US intervention.

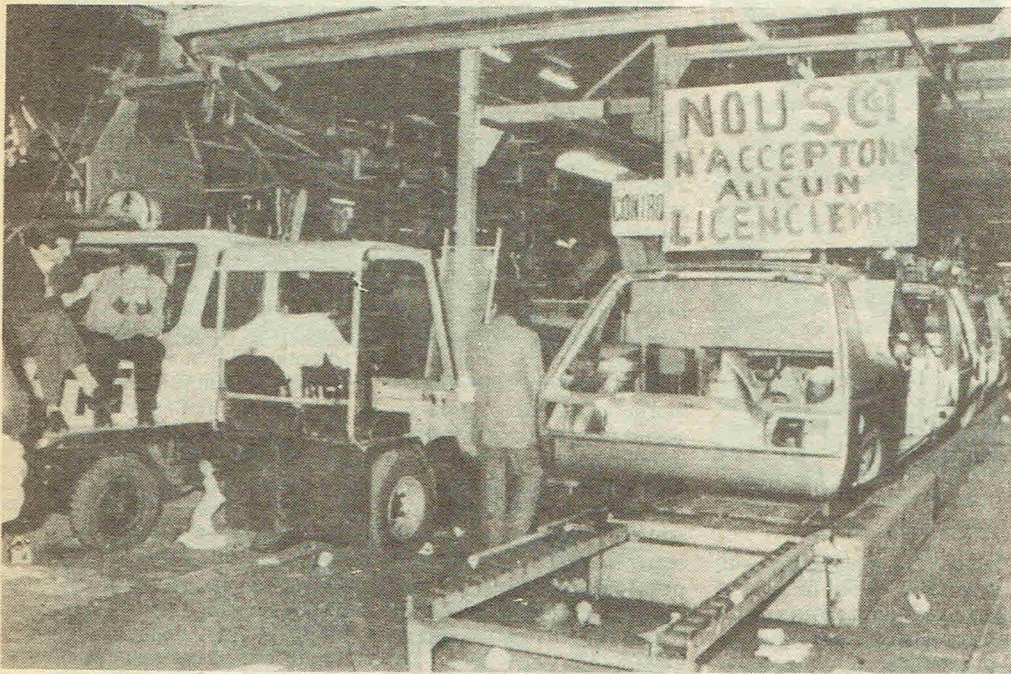
"The revolutionary government of the New Jewel Movement has been a thorn in the side of the US since 1979, with its radical policies which brought unemployment down from 49% to 14%. The New Jewel Movement had enormous support among the mass of the Grenadian people.

"The true reason for the invasion of Grenada was the strategic position of

Grenada. This shows graphically that the capitalist class internationally are motivated by their own class interests and not by any allegiance to 'freedom' or 'democracy'.

"The labour movement must recognise that a future Labour Government in Britain, committed to representing the real interests of the working class, could face the danger of US interference on the same pretext of defending their interests i.e. the interests of big business as has been used for the invasion of Grenada."

Neil Kinnock spoke against the motion calling it a "Militant resolution". It was passed on the casting vote of chairman Eric Heffer.



Strikers at Poissy in December.

Peugeot-Talbot strike over

THE MONTH-long strike at Peugeot's Talbot works in Poissy, west of Paris, has ended. Workers had been fighting mass redundancies.

Peugeot, like other French motor manufacturers have been increasing production over the last year. But instead of employing more workers, they announced that about 3,000 of the 17,000 workforce would be sacked. This was later reduced to 2,000.

Redundancies are growing all over France as industry sheds labour. Over 30,000 a month are being made redundant. Capitalism is the culprit but blame is falling on the Socialist Party government, which is taking no action to prevent the decline.

Threat to immigrant workers

For many Poissy workers, the problem was even bigger, as a majority are immigrant workers, mainly from North Africa. They were fighting Peugeot's plans but also demanding compensation to help them return home if they lose their jobs.

management were forced with a split workforce, due to the actions of the CSL which has a history of collaboration with the employers.

The Communist Party union federation CGT had caused even more confusion by not backing the fight for jobs and accepting the redundancies as a 'compromise'. There is a glaring need for a united union leadership which will fight redundancies. The fact that these attacks came under a Socialist Party government is bewildering many workers. Mitterand's government is taking no action to control what Peugeot does, in fact it is actively pursuing capitalist policies and adding to the dole queues.

Opposition will grow

With the racist overtones of the opposition to the CFDT strike and the electoral growth of the far-right National Front, the only people to benefit from such a situation have been the right-wing and the bosses.

But the determination shown by the Poissy strikers is a sure sign that opposition to the government's slide to the right will grow in the workers' movement.



Francois Mitterand.

It was mainly immigrant workers who went on strike in December and they were backed by the Socialist Party-linked union federation, the CFDT. A small so-called 'independent' union CSL has been the main opponent of the dispute. Their non-strikers attacked the strikers who resisted and barricaded themselves in the factory. 55 people were wounded, some seriously.

Earlier the success of the strike had led to Peugeot reducing the redundancies required, and to new offers on retraining. Now the

Tunisia,

Tunisia's price rise riots

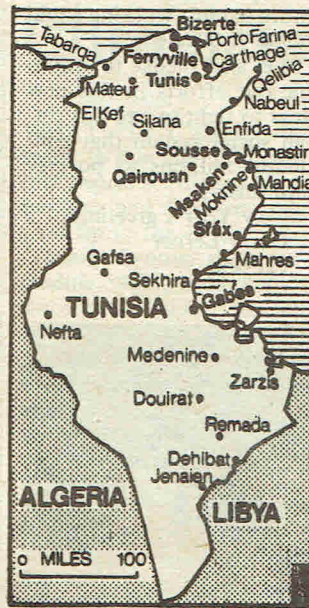
ONE WEEK of riots throughout Tunisia has forced the government to drop their proposals for enormous price rises for the time being.

At the New Year the government of Habib Bourguiba announced that the price of bread and other wheat products, the staple diet in Tunisia, was being doubled. Protests started in the south, the area of highest unemployment and spread quickly to other areas. The government wanted to reduce subsidies to food, but most people depend on these subsidies to survive.

The rioters showed who they saw as the main enemies, supermarkets were attacked at the start. The state of emergency and dusk to dawn curfew failed to quell the riots. So did the state violence which left up to 100 dead.

Demonstrations continued and reporters wrote of a Mercedes driver who was pulled from his car and asked to set light to it. Expensive cars were a sign of the ostentatious lives of the rich.

By Roger Shriver



involved in the disturbances. After the mass support for the protests, they criticised police and army presence on the streets and threatened a general strike unless sufficient compensation was paid to those hit hardest by the price increases.

The government veers between "tolerating" the unions and total repression. After a strike and riots in 1978 the UGTT leader Habib Achour was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for incitement, as were other leading trade unionists and rank and file working class fighters.

Continued pressure from the working class forced Achour's release and pardon. The strength of the working class also

forced some changes in the despotic government, allowing opposition parties to stand in elections.

Until the last few years Tunisia was one of the more stable countries in North Africa. Bourguiba has been president since 1957. The country had a small but fairly steady growth rate, helped by finds of oil. Now the oil is slowing up, industrial development has created a working class and the peasant population are poor and angry.

The government are unable to solve the rural problems. They are politically and economically dependent on the large landowners who rent state land at very little cost but reinvest only in property and industry. The international crisis of capitalism will only make all these problems worse in the next few years.

The strength of protest forced concessions first of handouts to the poorest sections of the population, eventually the rescinding of the price rises. But the government and the capitalist rulers will come back for more. This battle will be the first of many in Tunisia.

No more stability

Wages are very low and unemployment is high. Every year, there is a job shortage of an extra 25,000 (in a population of six million). City slums are further swollen by immigrants from the even poorer countryside. The economy relies on a small and decreasing quantity of oil, phosphates, tourism and money sent home from immigrants in France and workers in the Libyan oilfields. The wave of redundancies in France threatens part of this source of income.

In the beginning the main union, the UGTT begged their members not to get

Eye-witness in Gafsa

AN EYE-WITNESS account of last week's riots in Tunisia by KEITH SIMPSON, Lothian Regional councillor.

"I WAS in Gafsa, a southern town in the middle of Tunisia's extensive phosphate producing region when the demonstrations against price rises erupted there on 2 January.

"I was staying with a Tunisian family in the town's popular quarter. Out with their father the previous day I had encountered several groups of men involved in angry discussions on the proposed demonstrations. So on the morning of the 2nd we set out to see what was happening. It soon became apparent that this was unlike anything I had ever witnessed in Britain.

"As we headed towards the main street we heard a succession of gunshots mingled with the shouts of the demonstrators. Approaching the crowds, we

saw clouds of smoke from several sources. The shots came from the police who had opened fire on the demonstrators, who had responded by hurling rocks at the police and succeeded in driving them back.

"This was followed by protestors creating road barriers with large boulders, setting fire to overturned police vans and other vehicles. The police opened fire again and sent the people running for cover, carrying the wounded and dead to a small local clinic as the police fired indiscriminately into the crowds.

"This scene was repeated in many areas of the town and included the sacking and burning of dozens of public offices, hotels, banks and the offices of the large phosphate company.

"The situation was considerably quietened in the afternoon with the arrival of the military in a convoy of armoured cars. They took control of the situation by stopping the police firing on

the demonstrators and establishing themselves at strategic points throughout the town.

"The confusing relationship between military and police at the time was vividly illustrated by a soldier shooting a policeman who had just shot a demonstrator. In the neighbourhood I was observing, the protestors positively welcomed the military who they saw as protecting them against the police. Such demonstrations took place throughout the whole of Tunisia with widespread destruction and shootings.

"From my observation, the protests were supported by the vast majority of the people—and little wonder when many people earned less than £2 a day with no unemployment benefit. After a week of such riots and strikes the government gave in and rescinded the massive price rises in bread and other products. So I was able to catch the plane I feared I would miss.

"The taxi driver who took me to the airport summed it up 'this fight has been won by the power of the people, but we've got a lot more fights to come'."

Letters

Write to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Engels valid today

Dear Editor,

In the pamphlet entitled *Socialism Utopian and Scientific* F. Engels wrote:

"The possibility of securing for every member of society, through social production, an existence which is not only perfectly adequate materially and which becomes daily richer, but also guarantees him the completely free development and exercise of his physical and mental faculties—this possibility is now present for the first time."

Written 104 years ago, the words above are more valid today than ever before. The potential for raising the stan-

dards of mankind using to the full modern technology is greater than ever.

Contrast those words with the following small item in the *Financial Times* (3 January): "Children born to long-term unemployed are smaller, a report commissioned by the Health Department and printed in *New Health Magazine* showed. Two-year olds with one or more parents working could be an inch taller."

Let's all pledge to redouble our efforts in this new year to fight to end this rotten social system that condemns millions to poverty and misery.

New Year's greetings.
Gerry Lerner
Preston

A drop in the ocean

Dear Comrades,

The unemployed from the coast towns of Northumberland have a unique way of dealing with DHSS snoopers.

Many of the unemployed in the area make ends meet by collecting sea coal. In scenes reminiscent of the thirties, it is not unusual to see horse and carts or bicycles

with sea coal on the road from Druridge Bay.

Of late, DHSS snoopers have taken to following the sea coal collectors about, trying to catch them selling coal. Imagine the sight of a well dressed DHSS snooper sneaking about the sand dunes, with camera and notebook taking photographs. As one ex-

aminer who collects sea coal remarked: "Its damned hard work, wading around in the freezing sea collecting coal. Most people burn it themselves, but even if we do sell it to the neighbours it only gives us a bit of extra beer money."

But recently a group of coal collectors, sick and tired of one particular persistent

snooper, decided they had had enough. First the camera, then the notebook and finally the snooper finished up in the North Sea. That was the last they saw of him.

Yours comradely
P D Marsden
Ashington

Len Murray defended

Dear *Militant*,

I have been a socialist and a member of my union for sixty years, a member of my local Labour Party for nearly forty years, and a reader of *Militant* for the last twelve months.

I cannot agree with you that it is Len Murray and the TUC who are letting us down; the real culprits are the millions of trade unionists who voted for the Tories last June. What we must do is show these people, and also the millions who voted for the SDP, that it is only through the Labour Party that socialism can be established in Britain.

We must therefore do everything we can to ensure that they vote Labour at the next election. This will not be done by advocating the breaking of the law. It is true that they are very bad laws, but the only sure way of tackling the situation is to repeal them, so we must win the next election.

Merely to advocate breaking the laws is more likely to alienate many voters who would otherwise support the Labour Party. It would be playing into Thatcher's

Photo: Militant



Len Murray—skilled strategist?

hands. Imagine the glee with which she would be able to label the Labour Party as the party which breaks the law and believes in violence.

We cannot win the next election that way. We may, as you say on the front page, have lost a serious battle, but the very fact of that defeat should be used as an argument in the campaign to win the next election. There are millions of votes to be ob-

tained from professional people and others who believe that only socialism can bring about a really just and caring society.

What we need is a thoroughly convincing and attractive publicity campaign, giving the Labour Party a better, more comprehensive image, and showing that the whole trend of Tory policy, besides being an attempt to deprive the unions of all their funds and means of protecting their wages and working conditions, is really an attack, not only on the freedom, rights and standard of living of trade unionists and other workers, but also of professional people too, all in the interest of the wealthy, big business and the banks.

I believe Len Murray realises this, and is a much better strategist than you appear to think. Merely to call his attitude disgraceful is harmful to the party, and is getting us nowhere. If anything is disgraceful, it was the cartoon on your front page. (Issue 680). Our all-embracing aim must be to win the next election.

Yours hopefully
Leonard Hobley
Hove CLP

Not all Christmas cheer

Dear Comrades,

For many people this Christmas has been a happy one. Many parents have had a great time seeing their children's happy faces as they open their presents. However, for millions of people it has been a time of stress.

There are children wanting the highly-priced toys advertised on the TV, but their parents can't afford them thus bringing sadness to both children and adults. A single parent told me how she had broken down and cried because she couldn't afford the presents she wanted.

In London, soup and bread has been given out to the homeless, so providing a little relief for them; some people get small 'Christmas bonuses' from charity, but Xmas, for a great many people still reinforces their hardship or poverty.

I was walking down the road on Boxing Day when a pale, quite thin woman asked me for a match. She started asking me did I have a nice Christmas etc. When I asked her if she'd had a nice Christmas, she burst out with: "No, I have no friends, no clothes on my back, nothing." With the rapidly increasing number of people like this you can see why many (1 in 4 women, 1 in 8 men) crack up under the strain.

Celebrations and festivities like Xmas, should be very enjoyable for everyone. Under socialism we can make sure there will be no old people alone and cold, parents desperate to provide for their children or any other disaster that capitalism causes.

So let's start fighting for socialism with that extra enthusiasm in the New Year—it's an absolute necessity for the working class.

Yours fraternally
Rachel Harris
Plymouth LPYS

Photo: P.A.



Ratings load up supplies during the Falklands War. It is tins of Double Diamond for the ranks, cocktail parties for the officers.

HMS Invincible—floating factory

Dear Comrades,

Marxists have always argued that the class divisions that exist in society are mirrored in the armed forces. The recent complaints made by ordinary seamen aboard HMS *Invincible* are further evidence of this. Over Christmas these complaints anonymously went into national newspapers, complaining that the crew were being treated like 'skivies' and that discipline was too strict and conditions poor.

Threats were made that some crew would walk off the ship (mutiny) as they had been given extra duties over

Christmas whilst the officers held cocktail parties.

It all sounds like the factory where the boss refuses to raise the wages whilst he pushes off to Ascot for the racing or buys himself a new Rolls Royce. One rule for him and one for the workers.

What does the Royal Navy say? They have received no complaints through 'official' channels (surprise, surprise) and the crew should think themselves lucky they didn't have to spend Christmas in the Falklands. They point out that the ship's Captain runs a happy ship—happy maybe for those looking at it through a cocktail glass!

Yours fraternally
Andy Allenby
Portsmouth LPYS

How the other half live

Dear Editor,

Whilst visiting some friends in the Manchester area for the first time recently, I bought a paper from one of your sellers. After reading it, initially I thought some of your demands and expectations were unrealistic, and couldn't be met given the economic crisis the country is facing.

Later my friend took me on a tour of parts of the city. I was shocked and sur-

prised, not only at the terrible old housing conditions, but also how appallingly run-down the so-called 'new' flats and maisonettes were. This is in complete contrast to my own area where there appear to be many rich and well-off people. I understand now how the other half live in Thatcher's Britain.

I am now contemplating joining the Labour Party, and look forward to taking your paper regularly.

Yours faithfully
G N Johns
Leicestershire

Christian viewpoint

Dear Editor,

I've always liked to consider myself a Christian socialist and have tried to devote the past thirty years of my life, as a primary school headmaster, to spreading the principles of co-operation and tolerance among the little ones in my care. As far as I can see the only true Christians are socialists too.

You can imagine my surprise when I saw this filmstrip.*

Last week on my shopping trip I bought your paper for the first time and I liked it very much. Surely both Christians and socialists try to live with tolerance, understanding and love for

their fellow-creatures, despite the implications in this filmstrip. I intend to buy *Militant* regularly now and try to set up a Labour Party branch in my village.

God's greetings to all your readers

Edgar Thrumpeter
Ingarsby
Northants

*The film strip Mr Thrumpeter refers to is a new educational programme available for teachers titled 'Karl Marx and Keir Hardie'. Even the *Times Educational Supplement* has criticised the programme's anti-Marxist slant, saying, "Teachers who want a sustained and calculated criticism of Marx, combined with a warm, almost reverential

treatment of Hardie need look no further." They also criticise the author Harry Addison's "unequivocal personal statement" towards the end of the programme. The *TES* points that the filmstrip claims, "the chief obstacle to the building of a new society is not obsolete social and economic structures but obstinate human nature... We learn that the legal and social restraints which Tony Crosland and Roy Jenkins sought to remove in the area of personal liberty were in fact expressions of the Christian ethic. We learn that the tactics of the Militant Tendency are a vivid illustration of the meaning in action of communist morality."

No knight in shining armour!

Sir,

We think that the following information is of interest in the light of British Railways decision that the Goole to Hull rail link (Kings Cross-Hull) be closed under their 'Rationalisation Plans'.

The line of course, plays an integral part of the economy of Humberside and Sir Paul Bryan, Tory MP for Boothferry, has 'committed himself' to fight this closure.

Yet Paul Bryan is a director in the Granada group, whose subsidiaries have, in our opinion, a vested interest in seeing this rail link closed: Granada Motels, Granada Petrol Services, Granada Motorway Services.

We feel that these motorway services could and would be developed in this area because of an increase in traffic that would materialise when the rail link goes.

In 1983 Sir Paul became a director of the Furness & Withy Group. This group's

subsidiaries include Saxon House Motor Hotels, and in the field of heavy goods; T Craig Haulage, Litherland Transport, Manchester Liners Transport, Wardell and Waugh Road Services.

However, the main beneficiary of the destruction of all long distance rail lines is the domestic airlines. Typical of this is Air UK, who operate from many regional airports, including Humberside, although their Humberside to London service is, at present, operated by Gen Air, an associate of

Air UK.

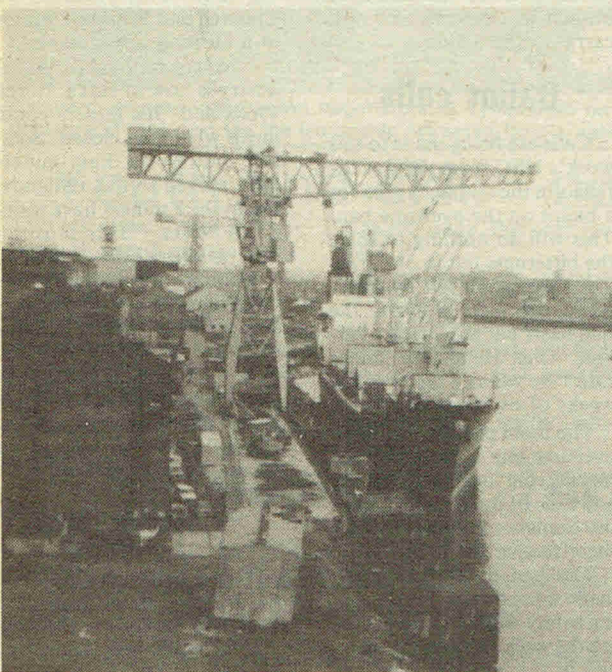
The chairman of Air UK is Sir Nicholas Cayzer, who is also chairman of the Scottish Life Insurance, of which Sir Paul is a fellow director.

In conclusion how can Sir Paul Bryan help to secure this rail link when he is directly or indirectly involved with elements that would most certainly profit from its closure?

Yours
M Kenny
R Rodgeron
Goole

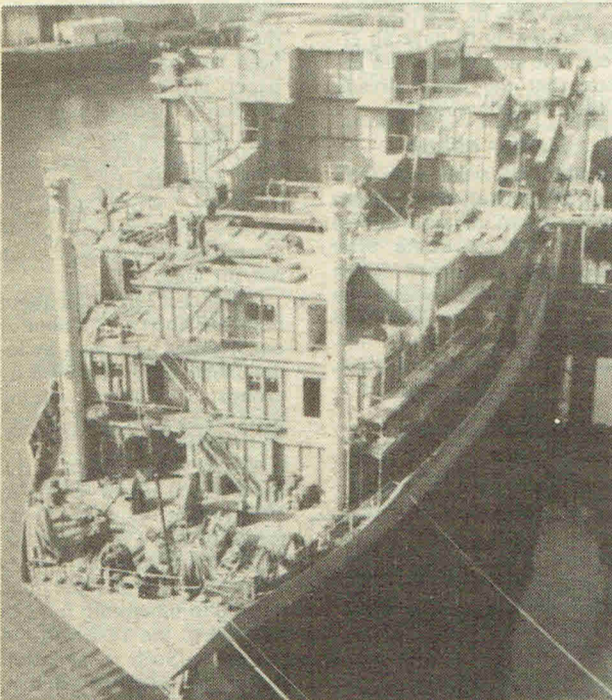
Tyne decline: who's to blame?

'A ship building strike would be folly — workers continue to destroy industry' — said the propaganda barrage last week. RAY PHYSICK from the North East tells a different story.



Photos: Ray Physick

Above and below — scenes from the once bustling shipyards of the North East.



WHEN THE British Shipyards were nationalised in 1977 by the then Labour government most workers were under the impression that their jobs would be safe.

Within twelve months a bill was presented to parliament (The Draft Shipbuilding Redundancy Payments Scheme) which dangled before them enhanced severance payments. Some, very few, were persuaded to sell their jobs. The carrot was up to £10,400 (spread over two years), including redundancy payment, money in lieu of notice, holiday pay, etc.

In fact the average payment in July 1979 (Department of Industry figures) was a meagre £1,428 per employee.

Initially the scheme was designed to prune the industry of workers the employers decided were no longer necessary. Each individual employee who applied was first vetted before being allowed to take his redundancy. However this vetting process didn't last long because the response they were hoping for didn't materialise and so enforced redundancies were used.

Enforced redundancies

First they asked employees to volunteer without vetting and when that failed they enforced redundancies by other tactics, ie victimising individuals by giving them the worst jobs, harassment on the job, transferring men to other yards away from their homes, where travelling to and from work took the form of an extra shift without pay.

Poor wages were also a feature as overtime was cut back—reducing the only way of making a decent living wage. At the same time the bonus system was changed from "Gross Tonnage Produced" to "Welded

Length", this unfair bonus system reduced wages still further.

A new attitude developed amongst the workforce, one of "let's get out while we can". In the hope of finding jobs elsewhere many workers took their redundancy, some undoubtedly found work, but for the vast majority it was the dole queue or casual employment along and around the river.

Demoralisation had now set in and this wasn't helped by the election of a Tory government in May 1979. We knew that we were in for a hard time bearing in mind that the Tory-ruled House of Lords had tried to "scuttle" the Shipbuilding Act of 1977.

Thousands put on dole

What wasn't realised was the severity with which we on the Tyne were going to be hit. Closures put thousands of shipyard workers and many workers in dependent industries on the dole.

There can be little doubt that the major cause of the collapse of the shipbuilding and ship repairing industry was lack of investment over a period of many years.

It says seem incredible to workers outside of our industry but shipyard workers still work with machinery sometimes almost a hundred years old. Even in the so-called modern yards most of the machinery is 20-40 years old. Our ability to compete with ultra-modern yards in Japan, Korea and Western Europe has been massively undermined.

Workers used as scapegoats

British shipyard workers were accused of slackness, idleness and inefficiency—the truth was they were to be used as the scapegoat for the lack of investment in modern machinery which should

have kept pace with the technological development in shipbuilding which was happening worldwide.

It also has to be said that the decline in our industry was hastened by the shipowners, who dropped their 'usual' patriotic stance and placed over 50% of new

orders in foreign yards simply to make use of the massive subsidies being offered.

Naturally they blamed this on the workers too. Lack of investment in any industry results in an eventual closure. The Tyne was to be no exception!

Chronicle of closure

WHAT ISN'T realised by many is that the Tyne was the "world's" biggest shipbuilding and ship repairing river up to the 1970s.

Many famous ships, including "high technology" ships, eg the liners of the '30s and '40s, culminating in the 1970s with the building of the luxury liner the *Vistjafiord* at the Neptune shipyard, and sophisticated warships like the *Ark Royal*, *Illustrious*, *Newcastle*, *Bristol* and *Cardiff*. Europe's largest LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas) tanker was built at Hawthorn Leslie in the early '70s and many more too numerous to mention.

Now, just ten years later the noise of the yards has been silenced. A much demoralised workforce remains, but nevertheless a workforce recognised the world over as being second to none in the shipbuilding and ship repairing industry.

SOUTH SHIELDS

BRIGHAM & COWANS

Then: a private yard 'till nationalisation in 1977, regarded by many as having one of the best dry docks on the river. A new 715 feet dry dock, fitting shop and improved platers' shed were opened in 1956.

Now: stripped of useful machinery and closed.

TYNE DOCK ENG. Ltd

Then: a small private company with good traditions going back almost 90 years, the yard was placed in the hands of the receiver in 1980 and closed.

Now: re-opened in 1981 with a much-reduced workforce.

MIDDLE DOCK

Then: the yard was taken over by the Court Line group in the 1970s, the venture failed. The then Labour government immediately nationalised the yard and about a thousand jobs were saved, this was before the nationalisation of 1977.

Now: most of the workers from the other closed repair yards are employed here and the future of the yard is bleak. British Shipbuilders have said the yard must close in February 1984. However two of the present management team wish to buy the yard because they think they can make a go of it. Strange that they are unable to do so now!

READHEADS SHIPREPAIR

Then: a busy yard with over a century of trading traditions, closed in the late '70s

Now: a small group of entrepreneurs have re-opened the dock and are buying it from British Shipbuilders, again like TDE with a much-reduced workforce.

READHEADS SHIPYARD

The proud past of this yard is world renowned. It is now closed.

MERCANTILE DRY DOCK, JARROW

A medium sized yard but with hopelessly outdated machinery severely hampering its workforce from competing on an even basis, now closed.

PALMERS DOCK, HEBBURN

Sold by Vickers to Swan Hunter for use as a building dock, it was nationalised in 1977 and later merged with Hawthorn Leslies next door. The workforce is much depleted.

HAWTHORN LESLIES, (HEBBURN SHIPYARD)

A fine shipyard which was regarded by many to be the best ship finishers in the world and the builders of many famous ships. The future looks desperate. The workforce is down from 2,000-2,500 to about 650 with no orders.

RB HARRISONS: BILL QUAY

Then: a small privately owned shipyard and slipway specialising in the smaller vessels, trawlers, tugs, etc.

Now: closed.

WALKER NAVAL YARD, WALKER

Then: a very large yard, as the name suggests builders of warships as well as merchant ships.

Now: closed.

NEPTUNE SHIPYARD, WALKER

Along with Swan Hunters of Wallsend they now build mainly warships for the Royal Navy. It would appear that British Shipbuilders are deliberately centralising the industry here in an attempt to provide a higher wage (through overtime) than the other yards thereby using their usual tactics of setting man against man in their efforts to close even more Tyne yards.

WALLSEND DRY DOCK, WALLSEND

The future here looks bleak with British Shipbuilders threatening the closure of the yard.

SWANS YARD, WALLSEND

Commonly called the "big yard" because of the size of the vessels built. Up to 250,000 tonne supertankers have been built here. Currently building through-deck cruisers (aircraft carriers) for the Royal Navy.

WALLSEND SLIPWAY

Closed.

CLELANDS, WILLINGTON QUAY

This small shipbuilder in the British Shipbuilders Tyne group looks very likely to close in the near future if BS gets its way.

SMITHS DOCK, NORTH SHIELDS

A private yard, once the world's largest ship repairer with dry docks stretching over a mile along its riverfront. A major employer until recently but with some of its docks now closed the workforce has been reduced to only a few hundred and its future looks uncertain.

Trade unions and the law

Old response to new century

LAST WEEK'S article in this series by David Brandon on the history of trade union legislation described how the bosses organised to smash the new union power which emerged from the 1880s.

THE BOSSES had more strings to their bow than lock-outs and regiments of blacklegs. They also had the law. Violence understandably sometimes occurred during strikes where blackleg labour was introduced.

Judges, almost to a man hostile to the unions, increasingly concluded that unions ought to have legal responsibility for actions taken by their members and officials in the course of dispute—especially where a dispute injured a third party.

In 1896, for example, the Court of Appeal allowed a firm to recover damages from a building workers union which had put them on a black-list. In the case of Lyons versus Wilkins an employer obtained an injunction against a union of

leather-workers involved in a strike, even though no violence had been used. This appeared to make even peaceful picketing illegal.

Unofficial rail strike

Far worse was to follow. In 1900 an unofficial strike took place on the Taff Vale railway. At this time only one railway company, the North Eastern, recognised trade unions. The others argued that unions were incompatible with the semi-military discipline they claimed was necessary to operate railway services. The Taff Vale company was therefore typical of railway managements—determined to fight the unions in general

and strikes in particular with every weapon it could muster.

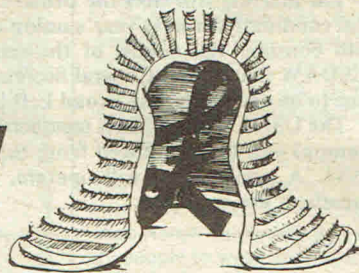
The company quickly recruited enough blacklegs to maintain services. The union, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, had not yet made the dispute official but decided to provide strike pay. Its general secretary went to South Wales to try to dissuade the company's blacklegs. With the pickets being justifiably hostile to the blacklegs there were some cases of violence, which the union in no way instigated, authorised or condoned.

Apart from prosecuting individual strikers, the Taff Vale company decided to go in for the kill against the ASRS, thereby striking a symbolic blow against the power of labour. A court injunction was obtained to

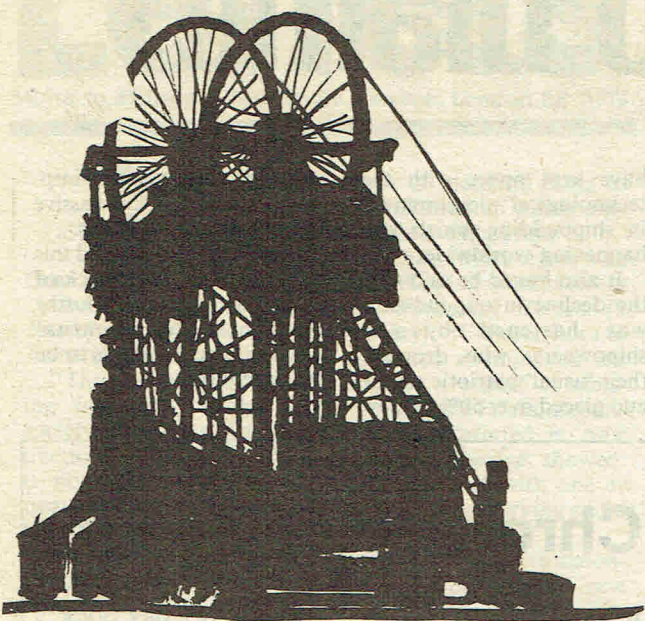
restrain the union and its officers from committing acts calculated to damage the company or its business, ie. it was illegal for the union to try to stop blacklegs.

In addition the union was sued for damages caused by the action of its officers and members. The company got £23,000 in damages from the union, the decision being upheld by the House of Lords after a succession of appeals.

These judgements shocked the labour movement to its core. They were part of a concerted attack by the ruling class on the gains made by the trade unions since the 1870s. Legislation had apparently given trade unions a restricted but definite legal status, including the right to sue or be sued in the courts and to take action to make strikes effective.



INDUSTRIAL REPORTS



South Wales holds fast

Ian Isaac, a member of the South Wales NUM Executive spoke to *Militant* (in a personal capacity) about the situation in South Wales:

The ban has been well organised. There are emergency lodge committees linked to area emergency committees to deal with requests for permission to save pits or ensure they aren't shut too long.

In a few cases emergency work has been allowed to stop flooding or avert substantial damage to shafts and important equipment. We estimate production to have been cut by about 12%.

In South Wales there is general support for the union and the ban is holding fast. We have to emphasise the aim of the ban—not allow the media to divert attention from the real issues. The action is about the survival of the industry and winning a substantial pay rise for our members.

A key issue facing us is the election of a new general secretary. In South Wales there is wholehearted support for Peter Heathfield as the candidate to faithfully serve the interests of the members.

Durham—bite the Board

Durham miners talked to *Militant* about the overtime ban.

ARTHUR OXLEY, Vane Tempest NUM Delegate:

"The ban is biting. At our pit the board is starting to move coal-stocks; how much is not clear.

"The attitude of the membership is that they are prepared to follow the union's lead, to carry out the overtime ban to the full. Despite all the talk in the press about inter-union wrangles I feel that with a strong lead from national level the men will stick together.

"The men at colliery level have to realise that what they read in the press isn't true. The reason the ban was imposed was to change the Coal Board's attitude towards the run down and closures of 'uneconomic' collieries. The ban must be kept on until the attitude of the Tory-backed NCB changes and the future of the mining industry is clear.

"The press are pushing us to have a secret ballot but the Coal Board offer was discussed and voted on at special lodge meetings throughout the areas and the decision was that the JNNC should go back and

re-negotiate a higher award. In my opinion there is no need for a secret ballot on the present offer."

"The overtime ban is not just about wages. The board's reply to the NUM's wages request makes it clear that the only way that they are prepared to concede 5.2% is by linking the offer to a major run-down in the mining industry.

DAVEY MOUNTFORD, Dawdon Lodge Committee:

"The overtime ban should be linked to a work-to-rule—the right gear for the right job. The effect would be immediate."

STEWART COOK, Merton pit:

"I used to work twelve, sometimes twenty-four hours overtime on a weekend; now I'm feeling the pinch as my wages have dropped. But I'm all in favour of the action. The ban is doing a good job, it's supposed to do. Already, stockpiles are diminishing, we have heard that the board are about to import even more coal. The unions should make sure that all coal imports are stopped while we are in dispute and until our jobs are safe."

Broad Left Organising Committee

national delegate conference

Saturday 24 March, Octagon Centre, Western Bank, Sheffield 10.

Any bona-fide trade union body welcome to send up to five delegates. For credentials and further information contact George Williamson, Organising Secretary, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH

A concerted campaign is being waged to break the miners' overtime ban as a prelude to further attacks on their union and industry. Miners around the country explain the real situation in the pits.

THE WEEKEND saw the hardening of attitudes at Staffordshire coal field over the present overtime ban. Forty-one winders who have their own branch of the NUM Power Group decided to break the national overtime ban by reporting to work on Saturday morning.

They were calling for a national ballot over the ban and were cynically used by management and the press to try and make out there is a split in the union developing over the ban.

Members of both the NUM and power group picketed the pits; 100 Hemheath, 250 Florence, 30 Silverdale, 50 Wolstanton and 20 Holditch, to persuade the winders not to break the ban.

There could have been many more if the picketing had been properly organised by the union. Out of the 41 winders only two crossed the picket line—one at Silverdale and one at Wolstanton. The national press were trying to make out that the NUM would split down the middle but that wasn't the case.

Tempers rise

Little support was shown for the winders at the pits. As one miner pointed out—it's all right for those who do overtime to complain about losing money but not 20% of miners actually work regular overtime so the winders' action has cost all miners at least a day's pay.

The winder who went to work at Wolstanton hadn't worked at that pit for two years. He had been transferred to a dis-used mine to operate there. While he was crossing the picket line tempers rose when police reinforcements heavy-handedly arrested the secretary of Wolstanton power group. He has been charged with assaulting a police officer.

Management at Wolstanton could have avoided this trouble if they had discussed the situation with the union as they had been doing over the past ten weeks. Hypocritically, on Monday the winders staged a 24-hour strike causing 6,000 men to be laid off at four pits. The fifth, Silverdale, is a drift mine and is just not dependent on the winders.

Overwhelming vote

What was not reported in the Tory press was the attitude of the deputies, who at two pits at least promised not to travel in cages operated by the rebel winders. At Hemheath the deputies promised to come out if any winder crossed the line. The deputies are themselves in dispute with management over the recent 4½% pay offer which has been overwhelmingly rejected at Hemheath the largest N Staffs pit by an 87% vote.

'Traitors'

In a separate dispute Littleton colliery was picketed by 100 members of the power group to prevent safety work being done by NUM members. The response to these "traitors to the NUM", as one power group official called them remains to be seen. Already the NEC of the power group has agreed to suspend the winders for a month and have abolished their branch of the power group. Whether this is enough to cut across the bitterness of the majority of miners is questionable.

The winders have said they will wait until after this week's NUM NEC meeting on Thursday but if they are not happy then they will even consider raising funds to maintain their branch in existence and will carry on the action.

Ballot calls

Calls are being made to this week's NEC from various officials in the Midlands area for a ballot on the overtime ban. This will do nothing to solve the bitterness felt in our area. The frustration felt by many NUM members is not at the ban itself but at its lack of effect. One Hemheath miner said "we will not sacrifice ten weeks of overtime for that".

The main problem with the overtime ban is inconsistency in carrying out safety work and lack of information from the branches and areas about the effect of the ban.

The ban could have been made more effective by ensuring safety work was done during the week. Serious emergencies at the weekend could of course be covered. This is already happening at some pits but not at others.

Ten weeks of overtime ban are beginning to have an effect. The union must now ensure that the unity already shown is maintained.

STOP PRESS:

SINCE THIS article was written, 900 miners at Silverdale colliery in Staffordshire came out on strike after refusing to work with winders who they saw as sabotaging the national overtime ban.

By Dave Cliff
(Hemheath
NUM branch committee,
personal capacity)

Heathfield militant

MINERS ELECT a new General Secretary on 20 January. The left wing candidate is Peter Heathfield, Derbyshire Area Secretary. He outlined his policies to Creswell and Whitwell miners at a meeting last weekend.

The very survival of the industry is now at stake. In the 1960s and '70s miners could move when pits closed. Scottish and North East miners have moved to the Midlands. Derbyshire miners have moved to Notts. "This prospect now no longer exists," he said.

Compulsory redundancies were inevitable with the present policy of the NCB. They want rid of 70,000 miners' jobs—with only 50,000 miners over the age of 50. That means 20,000 miners with mortgages, HP and kids—who would get no golden handshakes.

Popular ban

The overtime ban has caused an 18% fall in production in Derbyshire. It is binding and is supported by the big majority of miners, he said. A *Daily Mail* opinion poll, published just before Christmas, found 76.1% of NUM members in favour of the ban. Since then there has been less propaganda in the papers about how unpopular the ban is amongst miners!

In fact 50% never worked overtime anyway, and only 10% regularly get a lot of overtime. Work done by miners in overtime could create 2,000 new jobs—though not for long.

"Thatcher talks a lot about individual liberty—but none of our liberties were won by individuals. They were won by groups of workers joining together to fight for freedom and democracy".

Miners have fallen from third in the wages league in 1979 to ninth now and fourteenth by April if the present NCB offer is accepted. This is a repeat of the fall from third in 1960 to nineteenth in 1970 that led to the 1972 and '74 struggles. Such a situation cannot be tolerated—miners must combine together to fight for a decent living.

"If fighting for better pensions, pay, holidays and conditions makes somebody a militant then I'm guilty of being a militant".

By Ian Whyte
(Whitwell NUM)
& John Dale

USDAW Broad Left

The USDAW Broad Left is holding a national meeting on Sunday, 22 January 1984 at the Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham (opposite the coach station and five minutes walk from New Street B.R. station) commencing at 2.00pm.

The meeting will elect the Broad Left Presidential candidate for next year's union elections, and will consider the details of the selection of the USDAW Broad Left General Secretary candidate, due to be decided by the Broad Left later this year.

The USDAW Broad Left membership fee (£2 per annum) will be introduced from this meeting for 1984. A pooled fare will operate. All USDAW members are welcome.

BROADSIDE
20p WINTER '83/84

END LOW PAY - NOW



Broadside, journal of USDAW Broad Left. Order from, 14 Johnson Road, Blackpool, Lancs FY4 4DD.

Workers Notebook

A SURVEY by European Management Forum (an independent non-profit foundation) highlights facts about British capitalism's performance which have a different message to easy talk in the press about a new boom. Britain's annual real GDP growth rate from 1977-82 was the lowest in the OECD at 0.35%. In a 'competitiveness' league table it is down to 14th (out of 22). You know what the Tories say about lame ducks.

ACCORDING TO government figures British living standards rose sharply last autumn. Real disposable income for the whole population, including the unemployed, was 2½% higher in July-September

1983 than in the same period of 1982. This follows a long period of decline and stagnation in after-tax spending. For some time the real take-home pay has been rising but the figures have been dragged down by the rate of increase in unemployment.

J S GUMMER, responsible for industrial relations, the TU Bill employee rights, employee participation, international matters, financial and staff management in the DE, dock labour redundancy payments, Health and Safety Commission, pay, wages councils, holidays, and, you might have guessed, job satisfaction. He's also the Tory party chairman.

Guinless and jobless

IN THE two years or so since "Deadly Earnest" Saunders took over Guinness at Park Royal, the company began "rationalisation".

About 150 jobs were dispensed with initially and threats to tear up existing agreements were made unless the workers accepted radical changes in working practices. Having succeeded in this the company have now announced a further 400 redundancies at Park Royal and 120 at the Runcorn site.

As is usual in big business, the perennial excuse of poverty is being given. Yet large cars continue to be delivered to higher management and £7 million has just been set aside for an advertising campaign

which so far has been little short of embarrassing.

Recent events, however, illustrated Saunders' true intention, which is to sack as many people as possible and replace them with non-union casual labour. To achieve this, he has decreed that virtually all the transport section and the entire security staff are to be replaced by contractors, as are a number of jobs in the draught stout area.

By Colin Mackie
(AUEW, Guinness, Park Royal, personal capacity)

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Shipbuilding survival—in workers' hands



Shipyard workers lobby union negotiators at Tynemouth on 28 October last year. Despite pressure of rank and file the leadership retreated from a national strike

Photo: Mark Pinder

LAST FRIDAY, with only a few hours left before a national strike was due to begin, the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee (SNC) representing all Confed unions in shipbuilding decided to back off from all-out action.

It must be made clear that the lay delegates did not endorse calling off the strike, the decision was made by the SNC in conjunction with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU or Confed).

This decision marks a serious setback for all shipyard workers. Calling the strike off in effect means accepting the 'survival plan'.

The SNC used as a pretext for calling off the strike the

split vote in the clerical unions and in the EETPU. But the fact remains that the overwhelming majority of manual workers voted to strike, and that is where the power lies.

The press have put great stress on the issue of demarcation, at times they have tried to make the unions look absurd. But the main points of the 'survival plan' are compulsory lay offs, compulsory redundancies, transfers, temporary contracts and money. These crucial lessons have been completely ignored but the fact is that these points remain and pose a great threat to many shipyards.

Even before the working party has met, management

have begun to impose their will. Sunderland Shipbuilders have told thirty outfitters that they are to be laid off from week eight to week thirteen of this year. Already guaranteed employment is being threatened.

Acceptance of the 'survival plan' will mean that the weakest yards go to the wall. However, it is not too late. The workforce must refuse to accept compulsory redundancies, compulsory lay-offs, transfers or temporary contracts and take up the demand for the full £7 plus a substantial wage increase from April 1984.

If BS insist upon imposing their 'survival plan' then an all-out strike should be called immediately.

Youth and skill—no vacancies

IN THE platers' shed at Hebburn shipyard on the Tyne there are about forty apprentices learning the fundamentals of the boiler-makers' trade.

However, in the same shed there are 325 YTS workers. They are also learning the fundamentals of the boiler-

makers' trade. But only for a year.

In effect BS are laying the foundation for having no apprenticeships—turning the British shipbuilding workforce into a casual and unskilled labour force.

The South Shields boiler-

makers no 2 branch has an unemployment level of 40%. The proposed deal with BS adds to this total. In effect men over forty will be too old and those remaining will have to work under the new work practices. A bright future indeed.

Management's Tory strategy

Essentially what British Shipbuilders want is full interchangeability between trades which means that skilled tradesmen would no longer exist.

Boiler-makers for example will be expected to undertake their own servicing and outfitting as necessary. Caulking, drilling, tack stud and other non structural welding, Hilti nailing, buffing and grinding, burning, slinging, removing and refitting of pipes, cable supports, panels, cabinets etc., small areas of painting and paint preparation, good housekeeping and upkeep of equipment and similar activities.

The outfitting trades will have to undertake similar tasks while ancillary workers will in effect be scrapped.

Health and safety

To attain this interchangeability British Shipbuilders want composite work groups which would be able to undertake all the tasks necessary to shipbuilding. These work groups would also have to erect and strip staging up to a height of 2 metres—a serious threat to health and safety.

Work patterns would also

change—British Shipbuilders wanting a 3 shift system and continuous manning. At the moment we have guaranteed employment but this will also go in favour of a pool of casual labour who will work when required.

It is clear that the above proposals are a serious threat to thousands of shipyard workers yet the union leadership has not dismissed it completely but have only taken issue over the speed of implementation. It should be made clear however, that these proposals are a recipe for further decimation of an already badly handled industry—with a wage freeze to boot.

Korean-style

The Tory government of course are backing British Shipbuilders to the hilt. Thatcher has often commended the shipyards in Korea as the example to follow. Workers in Korean yards work 10 hours a day, six days a week and often work early morning, late night

or Sunday overtime. Wages are about 1/3 of the level in Britain. Strikes are illegal and unions are mostly formed by management.

The utilisation of cheap labour in part explains why Korea has jumped from 70th in the shipbuilding league in 1974 to second in 1981. The fundamental reason however is investment.

No retreat!

Since nationalisation British Shipbuilders has invested a total of £840 million. Korea however invests £400 million a year while Japan, the world leader, invested £620 million last year. Therein is the reason why British shipbuilding lags behind.

The management of course dangle the threat of mass closures if a strike takes place. But it must be said that only a victorious national strike can save British Shipbuilding. A substantial wage increase and a commitment from the government to build ships can only come by a clearcut victory. Climb down and compromise will only see further decline in British Shipbuilding.

Scots Bakery occupation

FOUR HUNDRED workers at Scots Bakery in Netherton, Liverpool, have occupied the plant. Management presented workers last week with a demand for fifty-eight redundancies and a change in to twelve hour day and night shifts.

Last week they actually put the rotas up on the boards, said that workers would have to do them and went round to get volunteer redundancies. A branch meeting was held last Wednesday at which the branch rejected any redundancies and any change in shift pattern.

On Sunday the company appeared to back down somewhat, saying that workers could come back on the old manning levels for two weeks. When workers refused to accept that, the company told them to go home, so the workers occupied instead.

The case comes up at the High Court in London on Wednesday morning. Nevertheless, the whole branch is solid. They have backing from the URTU, the drivers' union. There has been

no crossing of picket lines by anybody. Bread is coming in from outside Liverpool though the branch is confident that it can be stopped.

Every year in Liverpool national management have come back and asked for more job losses and changes. The directors actually said 'you can stay out'. They wanted to change shifts at the C plant so that there was just a day shift. Workers have rejected this because it's possible the C plant will be shut.

On 13 January in London there is an Executive Council meeting of the Bakers' Union from which full support is expected. The strike was made official on Sunday afternoon.

A notice was put outside by management stating that there was an injunction but the pickets took that notice down and burnt that as well as the writs.

Donations should be sent to the Bakers' Union, Eddie Pritchard, Priory Road, Liverpool 4.

Support sacked steward

By Mick Slater (Wigan)

WOMEN WORKERS at S. Morris & Sons, Wigan have been on strike now in support of their sacked shop steward, Colleen Catterall, for over seven weeks.

The company probably expected the dispute to collapse after the Christmas holidays, but the workers have returned to the picket line just as determined as before the break and with a new year's resolution—to carry on until they win.

Blacking and support

The strike is still 100% solid, with only a handful of management and non-production workers crossing the picket line. Support for the dispute has been tremendous. The company's product has been blacked by USDAW, the union organising workers in the large catalogue firms which are the company's main customers.

Most of the unions from local workplaces have been giving financial and moral support. A collection was even taken in a non-unionised workplace. The workers have also been collecting around the Labour clubs, where the local support has been reflected in collections adding up to several hundred pounds.

The next major event will be a mass picket, to be held on Friday 20 January, starting at 12 noon. The factory is in Great George Street, off Wallgate, just outside the town centre in Wigan. Send messages of support and donations to Mrs J Atherton, 37 Sycamore Avenue, Beech Hill.

Getting warm at Wellglaze

AFTER EIGHT weeks ten young members of the TGWU are still on strike for union recognition at Wellglaze at Buntingford in Hertfordshire.

Nearly all deliveries from suppliers have been stopped by pickets. The only firms successfully crossing the picket line have been customers taking goods out.

The company is running short of some materials and has been forced to get eight Blue Arrow employment agency people to work with scabs.

Scabs have received many benefits. In previous years the company's Christmas bonus consisted of a bottle of sherry and a bottle of whiskey. This year scabs have received bonuses of £100. Although three strikers went back to work two weeks before Christmas the remainder stay solid.

One picket was assaulted and almost run over by a scab in a car. The police were called but took 1½ hours to reach the factory. When the company complained of mass picketing the police arrived in a few minutes.

The factory is being picketed round the clock, and TGWU branches are being encouraged to send representatives to mass pickets every Monday. A demonstration is planned for 21 January in Buntingford town centre.

Messages of support and donations to Geoff Dilley, TGWU 1/755 branch, 102 Gunville Crescent, Stevenage, Herts.

By David Herinx (Hertford and Stortford LPYS)

No Co-op job insurance

NEARLY A hundred cleaning staff at the CIS (Co-operative Insurance Society) building in Manchester were made redundant last week as a result of the cleaning firm Reckitt and Coleman losing the contract, when they were undercut by ICC, International Cleaning Contractors.

In the past when the cleaning contract changed hands it was normal practice to keep the same staff. In this case only ten of the old staff were offered jobs. Some, like Emily Cupitt, who has worked as a cleaner at the CIS building for the last 21½ years, were not even offered an interview.

ICC, who already have a reputation for low pay, as *Panorama* viewers will be

aware, were only able to enter a low tender by bringing in non-union labour who are prepared to work for less pay without rest breaks with annual holidays reduced from five weeks to two weeks.

The cleaning staff, mostly women are determined to win back their jobs. They have been picketing and a mass picket is being organised for Monday.

By Mark Daview (Manchester Central LPYS)

Photo: John Smith (IFL)



110 TGWU members are on official strike over pay at Phillips Rubber Co. in Manchester. They work an eight to ten hour day with one twenty minute break for basic wage of £48.50. They are striking for the average wage in the rubber industry—£70 plus bonus but have only been offered 4%. This is the first strike at Phillips in eighty-two years.

LAND ROVER

TEN THOUSAND workers in BL's Land Rover factories are due to strike from 13 January for a wage claim of £12 across the board.

The increased confidence of the mass meetings is a result, after years of cut-backs, of an improvement in the vehicle market.

Last year 1.8 million cars were sold on the British market, the highest since 1979.

The *Birmingham Post* has commented on, "the sound of fury gaining strength" in BL.

Land Rover workers rejected with contempt the company's miserable offer of £3.26 in new money. They have pointed to "the vast improvement in productivity, with 9,700 workers producing 50,000 vehicles per year, compared to 14,200 workers four years ago, producing the same output.

No new jobs

"The Freight Rover division (the Sherpa van) took more than 22% of its market, an improvement of 6% on 1982. "All this increased productivity and production has led to no new jobs. On the contrary, the company proposed to sack 1,500 workers in a rationalisation and privatisation plan.

The anger was voiced

By Bill Mullins

in an interview with Ian Schofield, deputy senior steward Range Rover, and Peter Carolan, shop steward Land Rover, both *Militant* supporters.

Management rejected claim

IAN: Our annual claim from 1 January was £12 across the board and consolidation of £7.50 of the bonus, a reduced working week and other fringe benefits.

PETER: Last year we got £3 in real money, plus some consolidation of bonus, which meant a cut in reality. It was the same the year before.

MILITANT: What was the company's reply?

IAN: Abysmal. Grade 3, the majority of production workers, were offered £2.76 plus consolidation of £3.75 of the bonus. We get the bonus

Productivity up ... Sales up ... Pay up!

anyway, after stoppages it would be worth £1.75. The company rejected out of hand all our other points.

All they talked about was Japanese competition. They eventually increased the offer by 50p. This talk of consolidation is rubbish, it's like taking money from your right hand pocket and putting it into your left! It still only amounts to 3%. The lowest offer to any group of car workers.

All out strike

The joint negotiating committee rejected that and reported back to the plant shop stewards meetings, without any recommendation of the way forward. At Solihull (the biggest plant) I moved rejection and recommended all-out strike. This was unanimously carried.

At a delegate conference of all ten plants,

the Solihull resolution was supported with only four against. Since then, all plants have had mass meetings. Solihull voted 2,800 for the strike and 200 against. Total voting was 2 to 1 for the strike.

MILITANT: What was the mood at the mass meetings?

IAN: Despite the wave of management leaflets and propaganda, warning us against the strike, it was good. They especially jeered the company's suggestion of potential bonus earnings of £30.

MILITANT: What about the reports of national officers saying that 5% would settle it?

PETER: The claim of £12 was drawn up by a democratic conference of shop stewards. 5% won't settle it.

MILITANT: How should the strike be run?



Pickets at Rover in 1980. BL have a history of enforcing miserable offers.

PETER: A number of basic points are vital. 1) No settlement without approval of a delegate conference and planned mass meetings. 2) Effective picketing of all plants and vehicle compounds. 3) Strike committees at

each plant co-ordinated by the Joint Negotiating Committee. 4) Regular report-backs to shop stewards' meetings. 5) Regular mass meetings in the event of a prolonged strike. If our leaders stand firm we can win!

Closure threat at Dagenham

ALL NATIONAL union officials at Fords have been called to a meeting on 16 January which is expected to announce the proposed closure of the Thames Foundry at Dagenham.

Four thousand jobs at the car plant are at risk, and up to 400 at a satellite plant in Woolwich.

The foundry has already lost about 2,000 jobs over the past few years. Fords,

Dagenham as a whole has declined by 7,000 to 17,000 since 1979 and the company's entire British concern has gone down by 15,000 in the same period.

But in the years 1978 to 1982, Ford Britain made £980 million profit, nine times as high as Ford Europe while Ford USA made no profit. But very little has come the way of the workers who have kept the company afloat.

Ford in fact started the Sierra on the interest on the pension fund. Workers' con-



Photo: Militant

tribution to this fund doubled in the past three or four years while the employer's contributions rose by under 50%. A whole new range, vastly profitable, but no reward for Ford workers, not even better pensions.

Wasted Sacrifice?

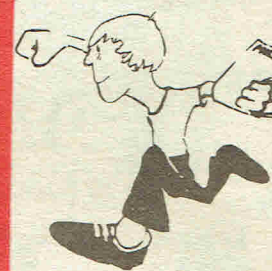
The only thanks are this closure, ironically due to the Sierra range financed by Ford employees' sacrifices. The Dagenham foundry produces iron but the next Sierra engine is expected to be made of aluminium, so foundry work will be done in the Cologne plant in West Germany.

After their vast profits from the unpaid labour of their workers, presumably Ford "can't afford" to change the Dagenham foundry to aluminium production or to prepare for technological developments by building a plastics research section, as the unions have argued.

Even when the motor industry is expanding, the employers still look for ways to cut costs further—at our expense. These closures must be fought.

By a Militant reporter

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