



## No coalfield is safe

# ALL OUT to save jobs

By Graham Naylor

(NUM Bilsthorpe Colliery, Notts,  
personal capacity)

BRITAIN'S MINERS are striking not just to save their own jobs, not even just to save their own industry, but for the jobs and the livelihood of future genera-

tions of workers as a whole. There is anger and deep bitterness at the Tory plans to butcher the mining industry (see reports on pages 14 and 15) and it is every mining area that is at risk.

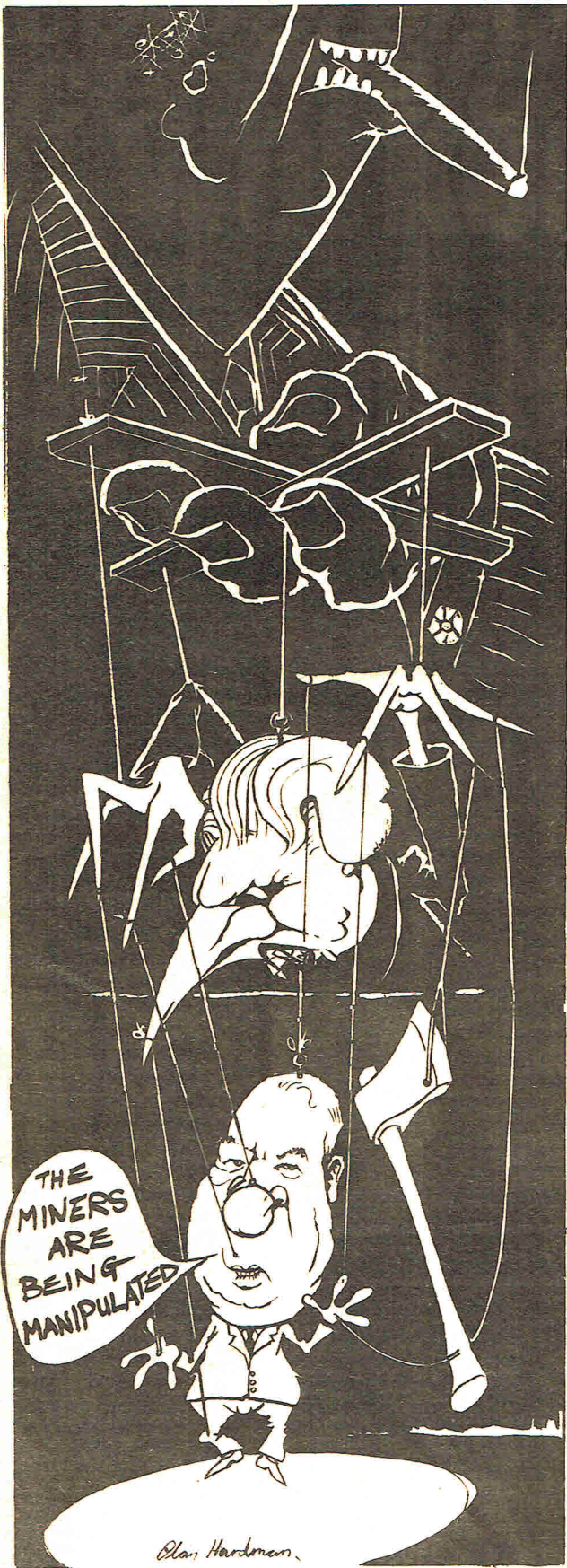
The Coal Board have tried to split away areas like Nottinghamshire through lies and misleading arguments to the effect that our jobs are safe. But Notts is threatened just as much as any other coalfield.

An article in *New Statesman* (6 April) confirms what the NUM has been saying all along, that jobs in big-volume modern pits are no more secure than in any others.

### High technology

Up to now, we have not seen the level of closures and redundancies of some other areas, but the very fact that Notts is the "high technology" area with the highest investment in automation, makes jobs in the future especially vulnerable. The *New Statesman* estimates that with the full implementation of just one mine

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## NCB new boy... made in Hong Kong

The Tories' latest recruit to the coal industry comes from Hong Kong.

Mr David Kennedy Newbigging OBE, who took up his position as part-time member of the National Coal Board on Monday, was until recently head of the giant Hong Kong trading conglomerate Jardine Matheson.

Hong Kong has no mines and till now Mr Newbigging has not been noted for his first-hand knowledge of the British coal industry.

He joined Jardine Matheson straight from English public school (Oundle) in 1954 and by the time he was 41 in 1975 had become Chairman and

Senior Managing Director. He was not a total success. Last year, as profits fell by 80% he got the sack.

The *Daily Mirror*, 29 March, published an account of the Thatcher family's Hong Kong connections. Mark Thatcher's first job after leaving Harrow was with Jardine Matheson, and that was not the end of indirect contact with the Thatchers.

Two years ago Jardine Matheson took a 50% share in Blakedown Hong Kong, a landscaping company. The other 50% were taken by an offshoot of Chipmans, (Chairman Denis Thatcher). Two months ago Jardine Matheson sold off 50% of

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PHOTO: MILITANT



Miners march for jobs in Mansfield, 7 April.

## Police violence on picket line

TWENTY pickets were arrested on Monday at the Cresswell colliery in Derbyshire and charged under the Public Order Act.

One of them, John Dunn, a miner from Markham colliery and a supporter of *Militant* was trying to help a fellow picket get back with the rest when he was struck on his head from behind. Turning round, he saw a policeman with raised truncheon.

He was taken to the police van and left to bleed for a bit before being taken to hospital where he needed

three stitches for an inch long gash. Like the others, he was only granted bail on condition that he undertook to take no further part in picketing.

This is one of many such incidents during the miners' strike. Once again the blatant role of the police in this dispute has been exposed, and will only make the miners more determined than ever not to be intimidated into giving up their fight.

By a Derbyshire NUM member

# Militant

## Press hypocrisy over miners' ballot

The Tories campaign over an NUM ballot is no more than a smoke-screen to cover their hatred and contempt for miners.

The entire propaganda machine of Fleet Street has swung into action against the miners who are on strike for their jobs.

Backed by all the other mouthpieces of the ruling class, the main thrust of this barrage has been to steam-roll the National Union of Mineworkers into a ballot, which would then be conducted in a climate of press hysteria, lies and distortion.

But the real argument is not about 'democracy'. Hiding behind all their two-faced declarations about the miners' "right to work" the ruling class are in fact campaigning to destroy miners' jobs. They want to rub the noses of the mineworkers in the dirt, and through that, to deliver a blow to the whole of the organised working class.

The capitalist class have no sentimental attachment to "democracy". For them ballots are simply devices to be used or abused according to their own class interests. It is only necessary to look back at previous ballots to see the contradictory and hypocritical way they are used to suit the enemies of the labour movement.

In 1977, despite ballot and national conference decisions clearly against, the then right-wing National Executive Committee of the NUM tried to push through an incentive bonus scheme. When Kent miners sought a court injunction to stop another ballot, the judiciary at every stage found for the NEC.

A ballot of all members, one judge pontificated, was "the very essence of the democratic process".

Yet when the ballot result once again showed opposition to incentive bonuses the

NEC still agreed to sanction such payments on an area-by-area basis. Once again the issue was taken to court.

What was the reaction of the judiciary this time to the "essence of democracy"? Mr Justice Watkins now discovered that: "The result of the ballot, nationally conducted, is not binding upon the National Executive Committee... it has no great force or significance."

### National solidarity

In the light of these experiences, exploited by the right wing area leaders and right wing executive members of the NUM to break national solidarity, miners can be forgiven if they are sceptical about ballots. It is clear that the judiciary, not to mention the Tory Party and their Press agents in Fleet Street, view the whole issue of democracy from the standpoint of what suits them.

What is good for them—dividing and weakening workers in struggle—is "democratic". What is bad for them—giving solidarity and strength to workers—is "dictatorship".

Over the years the unions have been condemned for being too centralised or too decentralised, for having too much leadership or too little leadership, for consulting with members or not consulting with them... in other words the unions could never win.

The miners and the labour movement must not be diverted by the hysteria of the capitalist press. The majority of miners have seen what the issues are and have already voted with their feet.

The living democracy of the strike, initiated and developed by discussions and mass meetings among the miners, has far more validity than a ballot could ever have, conducted under a pall

of misinformation and deception engineered by the millionaires' press.

The National Union of Mineworkers and the trade union movement as a whole are founded on principles far more democratic than their critics: they have absolutely nothing to learn on democracy from the unelected Fleet Street Press barons, from the Tory Party or from the heads of the National Coal Board.

A ballot now is a diversion, interrupting a serious struggle for jobs. Non-striking miners can still be won over if there were discussions and mass meetings at their pits with miners from the striking coalfields putting their case.

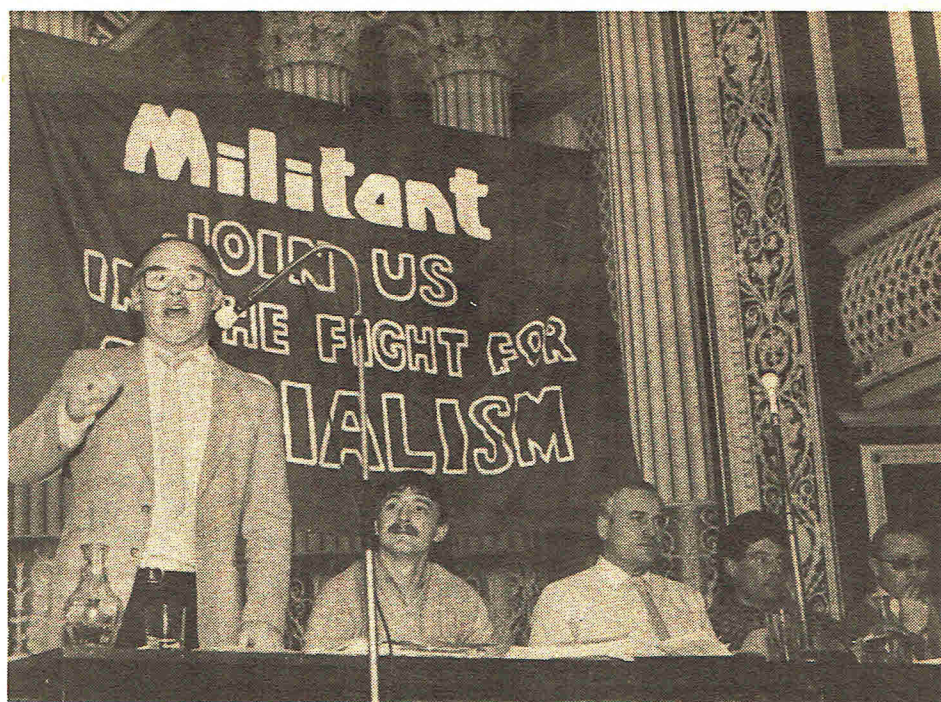
### Miners' political traditions

Because of the enormous political traditions and the strategic industrial position of the miners, their fight will have a crucial bearing on the fortunes of all workers.

MacGregor's attack on the livelihood of miners has been planned in close collaboration with the Tory government. After having beaten other sections of workers and having drawn back from a clash three years ago, the Tories have now decided that the time has come for a show-down with the miners.

They calculate that if the miners can be beaten, then no section of workers can stand in the way of a generalised reduction in living standards and democratic rights.

For the sake of the miners, therefore, and for the sake of all workers, the labour movement must rally round and give their full backing to the miners' strike. The fight is not about "democracy". It is about workers' jobs, wages and conditions. It is a fight the miners must win.



Peter Taaffe addressing the rally. Others on the platform are (from left to right), miner Steve Sullivan, chairman Tony Mulhearn, deputy council leader Derek Hatton and Terry Fields MP. Photo: Jacob Sutton.

## Mass rally cheers Liverpool

AFTER last week's historic general strike and demonstration in defence of Liverpool City Council on March 29, Merseyside *Militant* supporters organised a tremendous rally with a record attendance of over 500 people.

The power and the energy of the working class in Merseyside was reflected by the mood of confidence at the meeting. The platform speakers reflected the key role that *Militant* supporters have played in the struggle to defend Liverpool City Council.

Representing the miners, Steve Sullivan of Sutton Manor NUM contrasted the leadership given to the miners in Lancashire by Sidney Vincent to that given by the City Council. The 'advice' they had received had caused confusion: "One week we must cross picket lines, next week we must not, the next week we were on strike, the following week we were not."

Steve's marvellous contribution was followed by an equally magnificent donation of £30 to the *Militant* fighting fund from miners at Sutton Manor.

Terry Fields, MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, in his contribution explained how working people had learned through their own struggles the exploitation that

capitalism represents.

Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool City

**THE LOCAL Government Sub-committee of the Labour Party National Executive have backed the stand of Liverpool City Council, which refuses to implement cuts or massive rent and rate rises.**

The committee supported a resolution moved by Eric Heffer MP and David Blunkett, leader of Sheffield City Council, which blamed the Tories and the previous Liberal/Tory administration for the crisis facing the city.

It added: "In these circumstances we believe that Liverpool have acted within the spirit of Labour's conference policy, and therefore, we pledge ourselves to give all the support we can to resolve the present impasse."

Although some of the right wing committee members were not present the only vote against was Charles Turnock of the NUR.

council, described the struggle they were fighting and took up Labour's right-wing: "I would ask Cunningham and Straw, when they talk about 'brave and sensible' councillors, what is brave about putting 2,000 on the dole, what is sensible about cutting housing?"

Speaking for the LPYS, Sheila Kearney said: "The Tories are trying to use our generation as an army of scabs" and she received a tremendous response when she said they would fail.

The best reception however came for Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*. He took up those who talked about *Militant* wanting to break the law: "I am a very lawful man, Derek Hatton is a very lawful man. We believe in law. We believe in morals. But to us what is lawful and what is moral is what defends the rights and conditions of the working class. Those laws and morals which are opposed to the rights and conditions of the working class deserve to be broken."

This historic meeting ended with a tremendous collection for the fighting fund of over £500.

By Dave Cotterill

## Students - look to Labour

THE NATIONAL Union of Students meet at their annual conference this week at a time when the Student Union is under attack.

Already at Warwick University and Coleg Harlech we have seen Student Unions fined for anti-Tory protests and demonstrations against students' conditions.

### Ultra-vires rule

At Sussex University, college authorities paid the legal costs for Tory students to take out an injunction against union payments to women at Greenham Common.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Through the use of the 'ultra-vires' ruling, the Tories are saying it is now illegal for Student Unions to pay for transport to demonstrations on issues that do not "directly concern students"—their interpretation would no doubt include for example CND and unemployment marches.

These attacks on student union

autonomy are linked to the assault on the education service as a whole. Already 20,000 academic and ancillary staff have been thrown on the dole. Now the Tories are preparing the way for the next round of cuts.

The *Leverhulme Report* has talked of two year degree courses and loans for students instead of grants. The under secretary for education, Peter Brooke, at a higher education finance conference recently talked of university and Polytechnic closures, while Sir Keith Joseph himself announced that "Polytechnics and local authority colleges will now be allowed to engage in commercial activity."

### Tory intentions

These clear intentions by the Tories to dismantle the education system must be met by solid opposition from the NUS. But rather than seeking to try and persuade Tories through lobbying, no mat-

ter how skillful, the NUS must take up a strong campaign of determined opposition linked to the public sector unions, who are fighting the same battle.

The most important question therefore facing delegates this week at the conference will be the election of a leadership of the union capable of meeting these demands.

### Labour support

A wealth of goodwill still exists towards the National Organisation of Labour Students, as thousands of students—particularly from FE colleges—look to Labour for a lead. NOLS must take this opportunity to break with the past policies of 'pluralism' and forming alliances with so-called 'progressives' in the Liberals and Tories, and instead place the NUS firmly on the side of the labour and trade union movement.

By Dave Read  
(Liverpool University)

## Trade Unionist held

AN IRISH trade unionist was detained at Birmingham airport for four hours on Monday, after being held by police under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Eamonn McCann, political correspondent for the *Sunday World*, was on his way to Loughborough university to attend the annual delegate conference of the National Union of Journalists, as delegate for the Dublin Freelance NUJ branch (the NUJ organises in Ireland as well as Britain).

Strong protests from the Irish NUJ delegation, the NUJ leadership and Dave Nellist MP followed his detention.

This incident, alongside the current wide use of police powers against striking miners, illustrates the growing threat against the right of trade unions to organise.

By Pat Smyth  
(ADM delegate, Dublin NUJ)  
Police state strategy used against miners—see page 7.

### Calling London LPYS branches

London coaches for national LPYS conference will be leaving from Cleopatra's Needle, Embankment at 9.30am, Friday, April 20. Return tickets £11—must be booked in advance. Contact Kevin Miles, LPYS London Regional Committee.

# Miners on the march

## Mansfield YS demonstration

THREE THOUSAND miners, their wives and trade unionists swelled the ranks of a Labour Party Young Socialists march in Mansfield on Saturday.

"Miners, unite to save the pits!" This was the message of the miners and their wives from Kent, South Wales, Derbyshire and York, brought to Mansfield in the heart of the Notts coalfield.

The march, a thousand strong as it set off, grew as it wound its way through the market place. About 150 striking Notts miners joined the demonstration.

### Wives' support

The main feature of the march was undoubtedly the hundreds of miners' wives who urged the Notts miners to join the national strike to save jobs and defend the NUM. An example of the effect this had was one Notts miner who said he was amazed by this demonstration of support and would be on strike from Monday.

"Our fight is your fight" said Kate Sutcliffe, the Kent women's organiser at the ral-

ly. Other speakers included MP's Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner, who said: "It was time the leadership of the Labour Party saw it was their duty to get behind the 80% of miners on strike."

Mark Cheatham, Sutton NUM urged young miners to "join the Young Socialists and get rid of the Thatchers and MacGregors of this world."

Over 100 Militants and Socialist Youths were sold. After the march everyone went into the community centre in the nearby Derbyshire village of Doe Lea, where within a few hours notice local miners' wives did a tremendous job putting on a reception for the marchers.

By Chris Ridge and John Blisset (Chesterfield LPYS)



Three thousand miners, their wives, Young Socialists and trade unionists joined the LPYS march through Mansfield to build support for the strike in the Notts area.

## Kent wives build support

MINERS' WIVES, relatives and friends have been active in every mining area, forming Women's Action Groups and organising activity in support of the men.

Last Saturday, women from coalfields all over the country gathered for the LPYS march through Mansfield, calling on all miners to join those on strike.

Sue Sleith from Aylesham in Kent, the wife of a Betteshanger miner spoke to Militant about their activity:

"We're well organised and meet frequently, working with the local union. We go up to the Welfare Club every morning for news and any help or advice we need.

We met some Yorkshire wives while in Leicestershire. They rang us and suggested a march in Nottinghamshire, where their husbands were.

We got in touch with Action Groups in South Wales and Scotland. We took at least three busloads. The police stopped our bus on the way.

At Mansfield it was fantastic. We thought we had no support in Nottinghamshire—the media is to blame.

The impression we got was that a lot of men there are working only because the local union leaders say they should. We met miners from Ollerton who aren't working.

Then we went to Bolsover pit. 700 out of 800 men are out unofficially. The hundred men working are only working an afternoon shift and we were told they were on double or treble bonus.

We're hoping to do something local in the future. We're thinking of ideas for fund raising—it's not easy in a small village where everyone is involved in

the strike. The LPYS put on a country and western social the other night to raise money for the union.

Betteshanger women held a jumble sale and raised £300. At one of our meetings last week we got a letter from

### Spirits high

some Rochester dinner ladies. They were in a dispute some time ago and the miners had wished them well. They hadn't forgotten and sent a cheque for £10.

Wives, daughters, relatives and friends are solid behind the strike. We're fighting for the whole community. Our spirits are high.

Any donations to Kent miners' wives should be sent to: The Treasurer, Margaret Davies, 12 Bevan Way, Aylesham, Kent.

## Miners' trek welcomed

THIRTY KENT miners are marching to Nottinghamshire to show their determination to get through despite police blockades.

They're raising money and gaining support as they go. On Friday they arrived in Peckham, South London, and spent the evening in the Labour Club. We all went down the club to show our support and offer a bath and a bed to any miner who wanted them.

The march was organised at very short notice as Tony Stevenson of Snowdown colliery explains: "We decided on Tuesday to leave the next day.

"The response so far has been magic, that's the only word for it. All this talk of no support for us is rubbish. We collected over £3,000 in the first few days—you don't get that with no support.

"My grandfather walked from Wales to Kent for our future, now we're marching for the future of the industry."

On the following Saturday a hastily organised march from Camberwell Green to a rally at County Hall in London attracted over 2,000

people despite hardly any publicity.

The miners deserve the active support of every socialist and trade unionist. Even in areas like ours, where the only pits are the ones we live in, there is still a role to play in the dispute:

### Act now!

- ★ Contact the NUM office nearest to you and ask if you can help.
- ★ Organise support from local trade unions and Labour Parties—not just resolutions but cash and material help.
- ★ Organise visits to local workplaces with a NUM speaker where possible.
- ★ Offer flying pickets accommodation and transport.
- ★ Organise local meetings to get the miners' message over to trade unionists—especially rail and transport workers. The miners are fighting for all of us. Make sure you back them all the way.

By Paul Traynor (Peckham CLP)

## SUPPORT THE MINERS

NUM DEMONSTRATIONS  
**SUNDERLAND:** Saturday 14 April. Assemble 10.30 am, at Mowbray Park. Buses leaving Northumberland area from Gray Arms, Red Row 8.15 am, Ashington bus station 8.45 am, Morpeth Town Hall 9 am. Speaker: Dennis Skinner MP.

**MANCHESTER:** Saturday 14 April. Assemble 1 pm at All Saints, Oxford Road, Manchester. Organised by Manchester LPYS branches, supported by Sutton Manor NUM, Bold NUM, Salford CLP and Dick

Pickering, President GMBATU.

**CHESTERFIELD:** Saturday 14 April, 10 am. Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP and Jack Taylor (Yorkshire NUM)

**NOTTINGHAM:** Saturday 14 April, 3 pm. Speakers: Tony Benn MP and Jack Taylor (Yorkshire NUM)

Militant Miner Badges  
 Two designs  
 Save the Pits. Father and son cartoon.  
 McGregor/Peter Rabbit cartoon



Miner on the London march.

Photo: Paul Traynor.

## 'Come out and fight'

Christine Sullivan, Annette Jenkins and miners' wives from Aylesham composed this song which they sang on the Mansfield demo:

Come out you Notts miners,  
 Come out and fight with us,  
 We need your full support,  
 To break MacGregor's fort.  
 We done it once before  
 In '72 and '4,  
 Isn't it a pity,  
 We can't get your support.

We've all come up today  
 We hope you'll think our way  
 We don't want to get you vexed  
 'Cos you could be next.  
 It won't be long you know  
 When you run out of coal,  
 It'll be a pity,  
 When we're all on the dole.

20p each + SAE.  
 50 badges £8.50 and £1 p+p.  
 All proceeds to the Fighting Fund.



Cheques/P.O.'s payable to J G Douglas, 48 Beetwell Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

## 'SAVE THE PITS SUPPORT THE NUM' PUBLIC MEETINGS

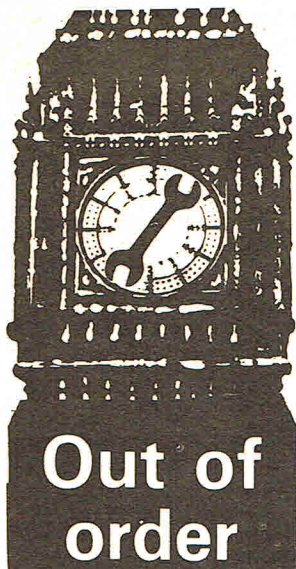
**SUNDERLAND:** Militant Readers Meeting, Wednesday 25 April. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP and Stan Pierce (Monkwearmouth NUM, personal capacity) 7.15 pm at Transport Club, North Bridge Street, Sunderland.

**GRAYS:** Militant Readers Meeting, Monday 16 April. Speakers: John McKay (LPYS) and NUM speaker. 7.30 pm at Bricklayers Arms, Grays, Essex.

**GLASGOW:** Militant readers meeting Friday 13 April. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor Militant) and Chris Herriot (Monkton Hall NUM youth delegate, personal capacity). 7.30pm at McLellan Gallery, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.

**MAESTEG:** LPYS/St John's Lodge NUM joint public meeting. Friday April 13. Speaker: Terry Fields MP.

**EALING:** Ealing/Acton LPYS public meeting Monday 16 April. NUM speakers. 7.30pm Ealing Town Hall.



## Out of order

MILITANT LAST week took up the so-called 'Communist Party' after John Blevin's comments on the situation in Liverpool in the Morning Star. The five Liverpool MPs—Bob Parry, Bob Wareing, Eric Heffer, Eddie Loyden and myself—have now written to the Morning Star. We made the following points:

"John Blevin's article is a calculated attempt to undermine the stand of the Labour Group on Liverpool City Council. There is hardly a paragraph in that article which does not either directly or indirectly seek to attack the majority of Liverpool Labour Councillors."

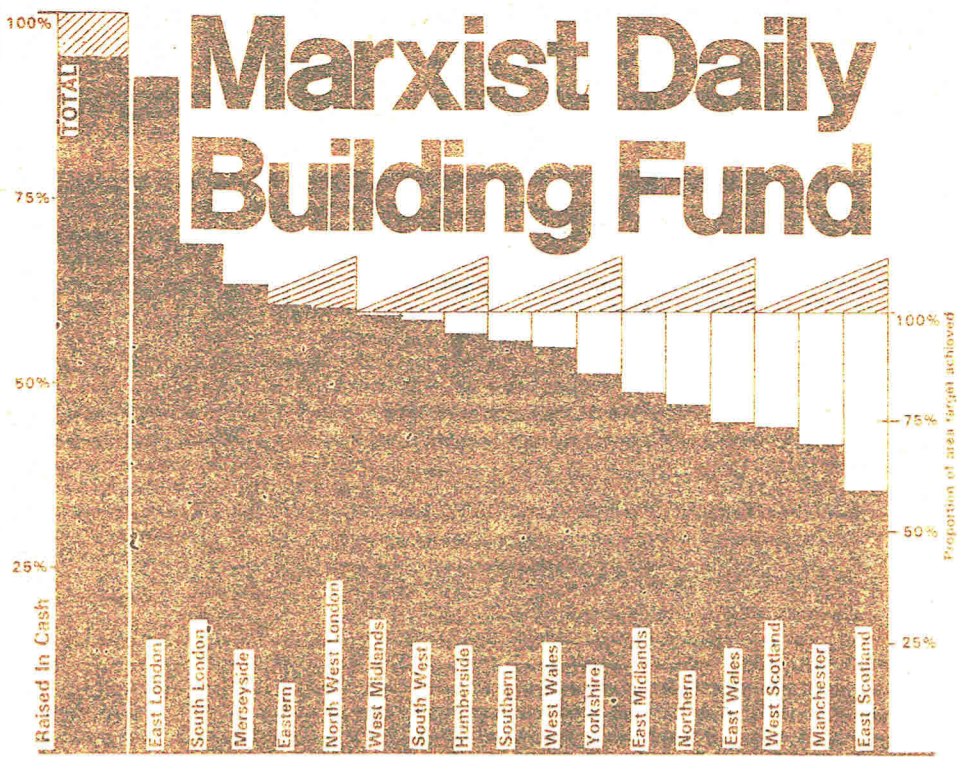
The letter points to the massive support given to the council by Liverpool workers and asks how Blevin can claim "the Council has chosen to create anti-Tory struggle virtually in isolation"?

The letter continues: "Blevin implicitly backs those councillors who have refused to support the stand of the Liverpool labour movement. Although Blevin is careful not to spell out what policy the Labour Council should adopt, presumably he agrees with the Communist Party member Jim Ferguson who moved a motion calling for a 70% rate increase at the City Council Joint Shop Stewards Committee, a motion which was defeated.

"Contrary to what Blevin claims there has been widespread consultation by the Liverpool labour movement as to what should be done. As well as dozens of workplace meetings, two mass meetings—overwhelmingly working class in character—were held within one month to help prepare for the battle. The first on February 27, was attended by 1,200 and addressed by Liverpool Labour leaders and Ron Todd of the TGWU; the second, on March 26, had over 1,000 present and Tony Benn MP as the guest speaker.

"Liverpool is in the front line in the battle with the Tories and it has every right to expect support from the rest of the labour movement. We do not expect uncritical support but neither do we expect to see back-stabbing reports in a paper which is appealing at the moment for the labour movement to help it survive."

By Terry Fields MP



**THE PRESENT miners' dispute, like every other national dispute, shows the urgent need for a daily Marxist paper.**

The constantly changing situation up and down the country brings home how essential it is to be able to respond immediately to every new development. We need to have a paper which can report on all the experiences of the miners and other workers during the course of the strike.

**Daily answer needed**

The labour and trade union movement is crying out for a daily answer to these lies. We need to carry the views of the workers themselves. The sooner we move into new premises, the sooner we will be able to produce such a paper.

The contributions to our Building Fund show how workers can see the importance of arming themselves with a daily paper which explains what is going on and what needs to be done from the workers' point of view.

Our total has moved on to £140,028. This in itself is a tremendous achievement.

**By Nick Wrack**

With all the events taking place at the moment our readers have not lost sight of the need to build for a Marxist Daily. It is essential that with the level of activity around the miners' strike the money continues to be sent in.

Especially in those areas where the targets have still to be reached the Building Fund should be given an extra special push. Just think how much easier and fruitful our work will be with a daily paper. Given the success of the fund so far no area should fail to reach 100%. In fact, as the top regions show, it is quite possible not only to exceed the targets but even to double them.

**Tremendous achievement**

If all goes well and we raise the remaining £9,972 then there is a very good chance of us moving into ideal new premises sometime

in May. What a tremendous achievement that would be for the supporters of Marxism!

But everything still depends on us raising the outstanding amount. So all those areas with money still to raise must follow the example of the areas shown above and join them at the top of the table.

**This weeks' donations**

Some of the donations we have received in the last week include: £10 from a YTS worker in Manchester and £10 from L Common, an unemployed member of Gedling CLP. £19 has been sent in by a reader in Australia. Theo Simon, Plymouth, has sent in £100 as has Duncan Bowdler, Thames Valley and Mike Burton, Manchester. M Newton, Cambridge, and Steve Davison, Keighley, have each given £50. George Miles, a county councillor in Greys, Essex has given £25 and Linda Somerville, a student in Edinburgh has sent in £20.

*Classified Advertisement*

**NO POLICE BILL  
NO POLICE STATE**

Black and Irish people, gays and lesbians, Greenham Women, NGA pickets... and now the miners. Who's next? The Police Bill will legalise and extend already repressive police powers. It must be stopped.

**National march to oppose the Police Bill**

from HYDE PARK (Speakers' Corner) to JUBILEE GARDENS  
SATURDAY 19 MAY (assemble 12 noon)  
speakers from: Labour Party, trade unions, Greenham Women, GLC, Black and Irish organisations, gay and lesbian groups.

**Half-day workshop:**

**"Defending democratic rights"**

THURSDAY 26 APRIL at 1 pm,  
Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1

**Labour movement conference  
to oppose the Police Bill**

SATURDAY 12 May at 1 pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2  
speakers from: Labour Party, NUM, NGA, CPSA, NUR and others

Details: The National Campaign Against the Police Bill,  
50 Rectory Road, London N16 7QY (01 249 8334)

**ADS**

**Meetings**

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

"*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.

CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year.

Also now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issues 668-692. Send either six blank C-90 cassettes or £5.40 payable to 'Militant Tapes' to: 'Militant Tapes', 25 Aston Terrace, Harshills, Leeds 8, or phone: (0532) 493440.

CONGRATULATIONS to Maggie and Rob on the birth of their baby Lucy on Saturday 24 March.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED in South/Central or South East London. Contact 'Militant Circulation'.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED for LPYS conference (approx 6 or more places), preferably self-catering. Phone: 01-515 1718 (evenings or weekends).

WANTED—Room in shared flat or house near centre of London. Contact Mike, 67 Ness Rd, Burwell Cambridge. Phone Newmarket 741471.

NEW ISSUE of *Struggle*. The new English edition of *Struggle* (Pakistani Marxist paper) includes analysis of the Pakistan People's Party, the anti-dictatorship movement in Sind, why Bhutto was hanged, heroin—a profitable seller, imperialism's grip on Pakistan, Kashmir, conditions of the movement in Pakistan and Asians in Britain.

Available from: Post Box 46, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8. Price 50p each including postage and package. The *Struggle Perspective* book in Urdu 'Socialist Revolution and Pakistan' is also available from the above address, price £1.50 plus 50p postage and package.

For events in your area contact your local Militant seller.

BLACKBURN: Tuesday 17 April, 7.30 pm, Regency Hall, Northgate, Blackburn.  
Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*), Terry Fields MP and Derek Hatton (Deputy Leader, Liverpool Council).

HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING: Marxist discussion group-held every Monday, 7.30pm. Programme for March and April includes: What is Marxism; Is Russia Socialist?; Parliamentary road to socialism—is it possible?; Role of the state; The Marxist view towards terrorism and violence. For further details ring (0783) 653994.

SUNDERLAND: "A workers' MP on a worker's wage".  
Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, Stan Pearce (NUM, Wearmouth Lodge, personal capacity), a Labour Party Young Socialist. At the Transport Club, North Bridge Street, Sunderland on Wednesday 25 April, 7.15 pm.

CLOWNE: Marxist Discussion Group, Monday 16 April, 7.30 pm: "Marxists and the Labour Party". Phone Chesterfield 810978 for details.

"The Workers Press—Lenin and Trotsky".

£1 including postage, bulk copies over 10 at 75p. Available from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

**SPRING ISSUE—MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW—JUST OUT**

Articles on: Andropov and after  
Lenin's last struggle  
1983 Belgian General Strike  
Buy it from your Militant seller, 75p or order from World Socialist Books 90p (incl. p&pp), 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

**FIGHTING FUND** £3217 this week

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	1495	59.8%	2500
East Midlands	1294	67.6%	2900
Humberside	923	61.5%	1500
London East	2032	73.3%	3250
London West	776	38.0%	2050
London South	1679	81.4%	2650
Manchester & Lancs	1056	30.2%	3520
Merseyside	1610	40.3%	4000
Northern	1602	47.2%	3350
Scotland East	910	43.3%	2150
Scotland West	1095	36.5%	3000
Southern	2352	54.8%	4300
South West	782	39.1%	2000
Wales East	1050	58.3%	1880
Wales West	827	51.5%	1650
West Midlands	1380	69.0%	3500
Yorkshire	2539	72.5%	4100
Others	1308	65.4%	2000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>24710</b>		<b>50,000</b>

Once again we congratulate the tremendous efforts made by our supporters towards reaching this quarter's target, especially considering the huge sacrifices made by many of our supporters towards the Marxist Daily Building Fund.

Not many Marxist papers could claim the success we have had—£140,028 for the Marxist daily Building Fund and £24,710 for the Militant Fighting Fund; it's a testament—thousands of workers sacrificing for a future workers daily paper.

And with the miners' strike the need for a daily is clear—we urgently need a paper that will put the workers' case. The Fighting Fund can help provide the resources necessary to take that step.

Most of the money we received this quarter came from: sympathisers,

regular donations, Appeal Sheets, rattling tins; and from the labour movement; an increasing number of LPYS branches donated, many factories and trade union branches donated as did a number of CLP's and Women's Sections—a big thank you to you all. Without your continuing financial support we could not have come this far nor could we consider continuing the campaign for the future—for a socialist future.

Kim Waddington

Donations this week included: Amanda Lane CPSA Bristol £30; Brixton DHSS workers London £26; Bob Nash CPSA Bristol £15; North Tyne Labour party £14; J Ship CPSA Milton Keynes £12; Cwm Lodge NUM for accommodation in Coventry £10; Connie Dixon £9.75 Thanet; Dave Moscrop Bristol £10; Rattling tin from one day's sale Blackwood mining town; GMBATU Branch No 1 Brighton £5; Maggie Wilson BIFU Herts; D Curtis ASLEF Herts, Joe Barlow NUS (Seamen) Full-time official, Martha McCarney Cathcart £3; Dave Larner Uwist Labour Club Cardiff £2; C. Allom Ryde OAP £1; Brian Walker NUM East Midlands 50p; Trades Council collection Bradford £1.80; Doreen Gibson Durham £1; H Worsnop Leeds £1; Malcom Griffiths Nottingham 75p.

# What future for CND?

**IN THE aftermath of the installation of Cruise missiles and the ruthless expulsion of women from outside Greenham Common it is vital that CND adopts a clear strategy for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In this, the last of a three-part series on peace movements in Britain since the First World War DAVE FARRAR looks at the reasons behind the growth of CND and maps out a way forward.**



On the Greenham picket line a couple of days before the eviction (centre Glensy Kinnock).

FROM THE mid sixties to the end of the seventies CND's membership never rose much above 3,000.

It was reduced to a hard core with Quakers providing the backbone. Nevertheless the Aldermaston marches continued and 20,000 people attended a Festival for life in Hackney in 1970. Yet it would be true to say that CND had been reduced to a sect. For the mass of workers it was almost as if it no longer existed.

The leaders of CND today can find no real answer as to why the movement died during that period. As I argued last week the main reason for CND's decline was its failure to take a class orientation.

## Re-birth

Its re-birth was tied in with the disillusion with the Callaghan government of 1974-1979 and the growing tension which arose from economic and social crisis in both 'East' and 'West'. Fears of world war and nuclear annihilation returned. The crisis over Afghanistan and Iran were skilfully used by Reagan and Thatcher to create a 'cold war' atmosphere.

The Labour Party and

trade unions, dominated by right wing leaders, failed to point a way forward. In this social vacuum a new campaign against the arms race mushroomed. Membership of CND suddenly grew from 4,000 to 50,000 in three years, with 30,000 joining in 1982 alone.

It was amongst young people that CND found its biggest echo. Opinion poll after opinion poll found that most young people expected to see a nuclear war in their life-time.

The sincerity of CND members' desire for peace, is beyond doubt but unfortunately the leadership of CND have not learnt the lessons of their own history; they refused to see that winning the peace was a class issue demanding socialist action. For them it is purely a moral question which can be solved by appeals to government leaders or by the "moral pressure" of mass demonstrations. What they fail to do is explain the actions of world leaders by the social interests they represent. Social forces—the contradictions of capitalism, and the fundamental antagonism between the capitalist West and state-owned economies in the

East—need to be overcome if nuclear weapons are to be removed.

Three events in the last two years have shown the inadequacy of relying upon a pacifist or a moral approach. First there was the Falklands war. When confronted by an actual war, all the headsteam of the peace movement evaporated.

## Three crises

Because they were unable to explain the social forces, the class interests behind the conflict, (see *Militant's* pamphlet on the Falklands) they were reduced to appealing for a UN solution. Whilst CND had been able to mobilise hundreds of thousands for its anti-nuclear weapons demonstrations, during the Falklands war peace demonstrations were very small. A pacifist position was seen as impractical and Utopian by many of CND's own supporters when confronted by a real war.

The second recent event which showed the limitations of CND's approach was last year's general election. "Make it the nuclear election", CND posters proclaimed. But nowhere did

they point out the difference in class interests of the two main parties and why people should back Labour.

CND remained fixed in its "non-political" stance. The leadership welcomed Tory voters into its ranks and was especially proud of a "CND Tories" group. At no time during the election did the CND leadership unambiguously call for a Labour victory. They did not want to disturb their "broad-based, non-class orientated coalition".

And how they have fared since the the election? The third limitation of their dogmatic, 'non-political' strategy has been thrown into further doubt by the introduction of Cruise missiles. All the mass demonstrations—and last October's was the biggest ever—proved unable to stop the Tories and their NATO allies from installing the missiles.

CND have recently made a slight tactical retreat in their demands. They now call for a nuclear freeze rather than unilateral nuclear disarmament. But put forward in a political vacuum, unlinked to any demands for the social transformation of society, it makes little real

difference; it is just as utopian.

It is as remote from political reality as their calls for the capitalist states in the West and the Stalinist regimes of the East to come together and make Central Europe 'nuclear free'.

The dead-end of purely moral protest is mirrored by the current splits in West Germany's Green Party. Like CND it brought together anyone who disagreed with the government's defence policy.

Now this broad-based, classless coalition is splitting apart. One section favours an independent nuclear capability and others a purely conventional alternative.

If CND is not to repeat either Green's history or its own and peak for a few years before declining for a second time, it is vital that it links up the questions of nuclear disarmament with the struggle to change society.

## Change society

The issues must be raised and fought for throughout the labour movement.

The Tory attacks on the rights of GCHQ members to belong to a union, should be tied to a campaign amongst

defence workers for the ideas of socialism and against the bosses' war plans. The battles against the dumping of nuclear waste shows how the labour movement and the day-to-day lives of workers can be linked to the dangers of nuclear weapons.

It is essential that CND addresses itself to these and other political questions as part of a socialist alternative. The struggle for peace and for socialism are inextricably linked. They should be one and the same struggle.

In the past, Marxists used to point out that capitalist society would either be replaced by socialism or would relapse into terrible barbarism. Seventy years ago, that forecast ran red on the blood-stained fields of Flanders. The failure of the workers' movement to change society could conceivably lead in the future to the establishment of a military-police state more horrible even than anything seen to-day—and with that there arises the threat of nuclear war. That would mean an even more horrific slaughter. The choice is clear—either the planet is transformed on socialist lines or humanity faces nuclear annihilation.

## Risky business

A conference is being organised this May on "World Political Risks". It doesn't talk about butcher MacGregor, Thatcher or Reagan; this conference is for big business. It will provide "both an overview of global trends and specific coverage of countries currently posing particular risks (and opportunities) for international business."

Citizen Advice Bureau for multinationals will cost you £380. For that you get a whole weekend's waffle and a monthly update for one of the regions of the world for four months. As the press are always telling us *Militant* are the main political risk to capitalism, perhaps the organisers should ask us to speak (proceeds to the Fighting Fund). But for anyone who can't afford £380, a year's subscription to *Militant* is far cheaper. We're far more reliable and we're also on your side.

## A (k)night out with the boys

Sir Donald MacDougall has retired as chief economic adviser to the CBI. So what you might ask, does the retirement of an inefficient adviser to a bankrupt system have to do with the working class? His retirement reception was attended by the usual riff raff, Lords and Knights, bankers and bosses.

Only one person in *The Times* list of attendance wasn't a member of the ruling class, Len Murray of the TUC. He was also the only one there without a gong of any kind. Still it's only a matter of time, isn't it?

## Save Our Health Service



## Out of sight, out of care

Recently I met an old friend who told me of an elderly relative who had had to go into hospital for a hip operation. A few weeks later the relative was moved to a hospital some miles away. The family were under the impression this was for convalescence purposes. They have since been informed the ward is for long stay patients.

Over the past few months the family have been shocked at the conditions they have seen and the lack of communication vis a vis the nursing staff to themselves, regarding their relative's condition. Only after considerable insistence was it disclosed that the relative had suffered a stroke after the hip operation—the family were unaware of this fact.

## A conflict of interests?

THE TORIES want to tie the health service administrators even closer into private business. It was recently revealed that one DHSS official has been seconded to a private company competing for NHS contracts. Mr Dick Clements had been working on DHSS policy on privatisation. He was seconded seven months ago to the Care Services Group in Shipley, where he is a director of one of the group hospital cleaning subsidiaries.

I decided to visit the hospital to see conditions for myself. My first impression was the strong smell of urine. The ward is old, paint is chipped, floors and walls are grimy; I also noticed dirty bed linen.

## "Work until you're worked out"

At 3.30pm two student nurses began changing patients into their nightwear. One nurse was overheard lying to a patient about the time so the patient would comply with their wish to be undressed.

That day there were two student nurses on duty plus a ward sister. I did not see the ward sister; she probably has a full time job coping with the office work. A nurse confided that there had been an enquiry into this ward in

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the past, but nothing came of it. Is this what society has come to when we treat our elderly people this way? People who have spent a lifetime working and producing for society. Is this just not part and parcel of the capitalist philosophy—work until you're worked out, then "who cares?"

By Health Authority employee (name and address provided)

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

# Police-state strategy used against miners

**UP TO 8,000 police a day from forty-one out of Britain's forty-three authorities have been mobilised by the Tory government in the biggest strike-breaking operation since the 1926 general strike.**

Going far beyond any previous post-war government, Thatcher is deploying the police, para-military fashion, as a political weapon to carry through pit closures and enforce anti-trade union laws.

The police chiefs claim their strike breaking tactics come within the realm of "operational" decisions. But there is no doubt that the action of the police, which go further than existing legal powers, are the result of a political decision. Police have been deployed all over the country, without any reference to local police committees and with the Home Secretary disclaiming any responsibility.

Miners have been arrested at police road-blocks, under trumped-up "common law" powers, hundreds of miles away from any picket lines. In an attempt to intimidate miners, some of those arrested have been grilled about their political opinions by plain clothes officers. Snatch-squads have been used to arrest pickets, in some cases with the help of undercover provocateurs posing as miners.

"Secondary picketing", which under Tory laws has merely lost its immunity from civil actions, has been treated by police almost as if it were a capital offence. All the laws customarily used by the police to frustrate picketing—from obstruction to public order offences—are being enforced with a vengeance.

## Stop peaceful picketing

The last thing pickets are allowed to do, of course, is "peacefully persuade" miners not to work. Enormous forces have been mobilised to prevent pickets from getting anywhere near lorry drivers and coach-loads of still-working miners.

For the police chiefs, this operation is an attempt to

By Lynn Walsh

exact long-awaited, well-prepared revenge for 1972. The success of the flying pickets then, particularly their decisive victory at Saltley gates, sent a shudder of horror through the ruling class. They had come face to face with the irresistible power of the organised workers once they were mobilised.

## Prospect of general breakdown

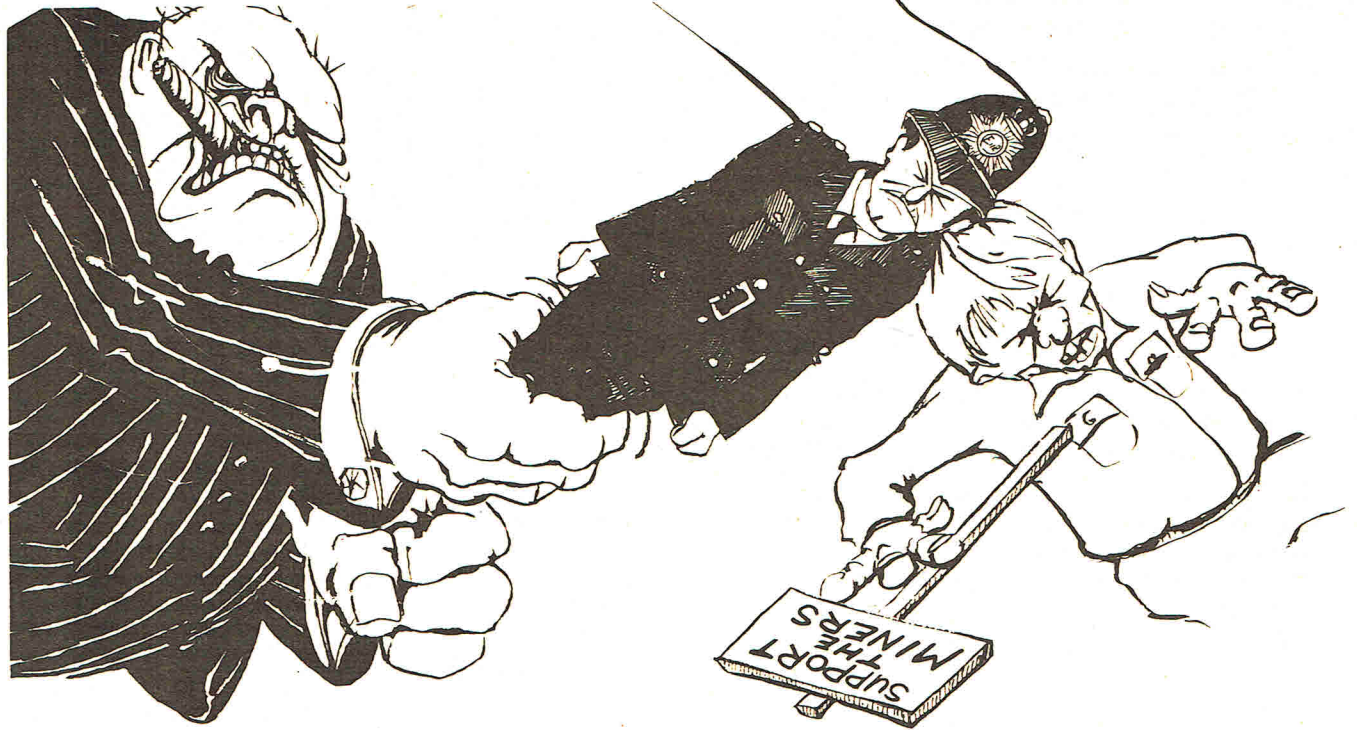
"At the time", relates one of the Heath government's top advisers, Brendon Sewill, "many of those in positions of influence looked into the abyss and saw only a few days away the possibility of the country being plunged into a state of chaos... with the prospect of the breakdown of power supplies, food supplies, sewerage, communications, effective government and law and order... it was fear of that abyss which had an important effect on subsequent policy."

The six-day struggle to close the Saltley depot, the biggest coal stock-pile in the country, was the decisive episode in the 1972 strike. Once closed, the crucial blockade of the power stations was clinched.

Every day, more and more pickets battled with police at the gates, gradually cutting down the lorries getting through. Predictably, the police also increased their numbers. Finally, however, West Midlands car and construction workers turned out to reinforce the picket.

Fifteen thousand workers blocked gates guarded by 800 policemen. Faced with this, the Chief Constable, Sir Derrick Capper, withdrew his men and declared the Saltley gates closed.

Afterwards, both he and the Home Secretary,



Reginald Maudling, were bitterly criticised by Tories and businessmen for retreating. However, confrontation—Maudling told his critics—would have meant defeat for the police.

Asked why he had not sent the troops in, Maudling said: "If they had been sent in, should they have gone in with their rifles loaded or unloaded? Either course could have been disastrous."

## Counter mass picketing

Ever since, police have seen their defeat at Saltley as a demon to be exorcised. The need to counter mass picketing has been a major pre-occupation of the police chiefs, generals, and top civil servants who, behind the scenes, have been busily preparing for new states of emergency.

After 1972, the government set up a National Security Committee (blandly renamed the Civil Contingencies Committee by the Labour government in 1975) to review all aspects of maintaining the *status quo*. Its main task has been to plan strike-breaking operations on a massive scale.

This involves plans to minimise the effect of strike action by workers in key sectors of the economy (power and water workers, firemen, etc) through training military personnel to take over key functions and stock-piling essential supplies (like fuel, food, etc) at crucial locations. It also means planning massive military or para-military operations to undermine, if not stop mass picketing.

These preparations clearly involved the army. Manoeuvres on the streets of Britain have been justified as "anti-terrorist" operations.

The first line, however, is undoubtedly the police. There has always been strong resistance to the idea of a "third force", a special riot police like the CRS who have recently been seen in action against striking workers in France. But since the 1972 security review, sections of the police, like the SPG, have been transformed into

a para-military force, equipped with fire-arms and riot gear. Other sections of the police, moreover, can rapidly be put onto a para-military footing.

## Iron fist

The "iron fist" policy of hard-line police chiefs such as McNee and his Metropolitan replacement, Newman, like Anderton in Merseyside, is now dominant. Preparing for a reaction against their policy of creating mass unemployment and driving down living standards, the Tory government has pushed up police numbers and massively increased their pay.

Fighting crime is police routine. But the statements of police chiefs leave no doubt that they regard the labour movement as their main enemy.

In remarks later echoed by Anderton, Sir Robert Mark, formerly head of the Met, said in 1977: "I do not think that what we call 'crimes of violence' are anything like as severe a threat to the maintenance of tranquility in this country as the tendency to use violence to achieve political or industrial ends. As far as I am concerned, that is the worst crime in the book. I think it is worse than murder".

## Jobs defence 'worse than murder'

Of course, to the police chief's mind, the mobilisation of trade union power in defence of jobs and living standards is "violence". The closure of pits, the destruction of mining communities, is "tranquility". The law, backed up by police power, must be used to limit picketing to six men outside the strikers' immediate place of work. Meanwhile, MacGregor and other bosses should be allowed, without let or hindrance to starve pits of investment or switch their capital around, at home or abroad, in search of the fattest profits.

The police chiefs have shown that they are well prepared to confront miners'

pickets. They have deployed massive forces across the country completely evading any accountability for their action.

Officers deployed in another county, came under the control of the chief constable there. Later, the police committee of the authority from which they are borrowed will not be able to question their role.



Photo: J Harris (IFL)

At Thoresby pit, 15 March, when mines held a two-minute silence for a colleague who recently died, the police rushed the day shift in, injuring picket (above).

The police are much better prepared than 1972. Nevertheless, it is the political factors which are decisive.

Today, there is still enormous sympathy with the miners. But the divisions within the NUM, the fact that flying pickets have clashed with other miners, have hampered the fight to build up solidarity.

For all their emergency planning, the Tories are not even confident that they could withstand a national strike by any key section of workers, like the power or water workers, or even the miners if they were united.

The capitalists know that they risk being rendered powerless in the face of a general strike, something which could easily be provoked at a certain stage in response to provocative strike-breaking measures by the state. In recent years even military dictatorships like the Shah's regime in Iran, have been shattered by general-strike action by the working class.

The balance of power in

society still lies overwhelmingly on the side of the working class, which has been enormously strengthened in the post-war period. The reserves of the capitalist class, who represent a small minority of wealthy exploiters, have been steadily undermined.

Undoubtedly, the state remains a powerful weapon in their hands, and it will be used ruthlessly by the Tories. But the coercive apparatus of the state remains effective only while the working class remains unconscious of its own power.

Even the apparently powerful forces built up by the Tories in recent years would become a puny instrument in the face of a working class united around clear class aims. The undemocratic arm of the ruling class would crumble in front of a mass working class organisations mobilised in defence of the living standards and democratic rights of the great majority of people.

## Buying illusions

Whatever the outcome of the present battle, the eyes of many miners, and other workers too will have been opened. Any illusions that the police are a neutral force committed to upholding impartial justice will be buried for ever.

The call for democratic accountability of the police, as part of a socialist programme, must be brought to the fore. While the need to defend trade union rights against attack will rightly be uppermost in workers' minds, the labour movement must renew its demand for trade union rights for the police ranks.

They are now being used as a battering-ram against workers. But history shows that the police will not be left unaffected by workers' struggles and by the massive radicalisation of British society that is now only in its early stage.

One of the lessons already, is that the role of the state and the need for a socialist policy on the state, must be brought home to the ranks of the labour movement.

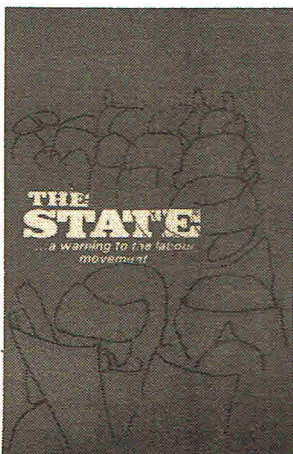
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# Bitterness turns

**BLOC**

ON MARCH 24 this year the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC), an umbrella organisation of Broad Lefts in the unions, brought together the largest number of trade union militants for many years—over 2,200 from every major TUC affiliated union—crowded into the Octagon Centre in Sheffield to debate the way forward for the unions. We reprint below extracts from four key speeches.

## Class, unions and leadership

**Pat Wall, President, Bradford Trades Council, an Evertonian on his way to Wembley.** In the early hours of the day following the general election I and other activists in the Bradford North constituency addressed some two or three hundred workers who remained to speak to us after that defeat.

We made the point that we felt that defeat was bitter, not as individuals, not in one constituency, but because we saw the defeat of the right-wing leadership in the Labour Party by the Tories as a defeat for our class. Just as we see any defeat for a right-wing trade union leadership by the employers as a defeat for our class.



Pat Wall.

our class at the treatment we've received over the course of the last few years.

One victory would imbue confidence in millions of workers, unemployed and employed, women and men, black and white, to struggle against the Tories and this system.

**BLOC**  
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

We said that the arena of struggle had moved from parliament, because of the massive Tory majority, into the struggle of workers in industry, and the struggle of communities, like the struggle of Liverpool City Council at the present time.

In less than one year we see, in my opinion, a decisive change in the mood of our class. We are only at the beginning. But if we weren't at the beginning of a change in mood there wouldn't be three overspill meetings at this conference; if we weren't in a change of mood Tony Benn wouldn't have defeated the national Tory press in the Chesterfield by-election; if we weren't in a change of mood we wouldn't have the magnificent struggle waged by the Yorkshire and other miners at the present time.

That marks the beginning of a decisive change as far as the feelings of our class are concerned. And I'll add to what several other speakers have said—it takes one victory, one victory only, to profoundly change that mood—to approach flood tide. Because there is a reservoir of hate, of bitterness, in

But I think in the Broad Left we also have to draw the lessons of the past. If we talk about the miners and the victories of '72 and '74 we have to recognise how that took place. That they took place out of unofficial strikes in '70 and '71 in Yorkshire and South Wales in an effort by the rank and file to push the leadership into a fight. And those rank and file struggles, which were defeated, altered the balance of opinion inside the NUM to conduct the 1972 and 1974 battles and out of them the victories which the miners obtained.

It's that relationship between the struggles of the ranks to change the opinions and actions of the leadership, and the fact that when the leadership calls for action it obtains a much bigger response than we can ever get as rank and file

**Alistair Tice, NUPE Hull hospital central branch chairman.** I've come to the rostrum to try to counter some of the lies that have been put about by the Tories in their propaganda aimed at working people, which unfortunately is being swallowed by certain of our trade union leaders, particularly on the General Council of the TUC.

The Tories have used their election victories of '79 and '83 to support the argument that only through us tightening our belts again and again can we get the economy leaner and fitter in order to produce real jobs. And that we can all move to a prosperous future with the economy made more competitive.

Because of their election victories—with an increased majority last year—they say that workers are accepting this "new realism"—that they accept the logic of the capitalist system.

They have also put forward the argument, echoed in the press day

militants—that's the struggle that we are in at the present time.

I'd go further. One of the things that saddens those of us who have spent so much of our lives of sat in smoke filled conferences of the unions and the Labour Party over the years, and which the Broad Left has to understand, is that for far too long we have used ourselves as an electoral machine, to get this person or that person onto an executive, as general secretary or leader.

We have to have troops on the ground. No matter how good a socialist Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill or anyone else may be, unless they are held responsible to the rank and file of this movement, because they are under enormous pressures, and anyone in leadership suffers those pressures, the possibility exists of them bending and giving way in difficult situations.

The demand of the Broad Left, not the niceties of this or that word of a document, is for the maximum amount of unity in action, for that we must hold our leaders responsible and accountable.

I just want to make two further points. The Broad Left has to look a bit outside itself, it has to look a bit outside the organised workers, it has to look at unemployed workers and housewives who after

## Health of the unions

in day out, that the trade unions are unpopular. They even produce figures of a decrease in union membership to prove that point.

The last speaker talked about the state of the unions in the light of recession and mass unemployment. Let's make a sober assessment of exactly what the situation is.

We have got to be honest that the Tories have had a certain success with their propaganda—not just with the tops of the labour movement but also amongst a certain section of workers. It is true

all have the time, though many don't want that time, to carry out activities.

We also have to look to the youth. We all have our favourites as to what the biggest betrayal of the TUC leadership has been in the post war period. In my opinion it's YTS...

**BLOC**  
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

We have to face the fact that 1½ million young people in this country under the age of 25 will have no convenors, no shop stewards, no trade union branches, will see little political leadership offered them. If we don't lead them and if we don't show them that we fight for their interests then our movement faces a harvest of bitterness. I believe this is a very important part of the struggle of the Broad Left in the unions.

I want to finish with one little story to pick up just after where I started in my contribution.

When the dockers were arrested in the early '70s, that was a dispute that started as an inter-union dispute, the Tories and press are trying to make the miners' strike out to be an inter-union dispute, but in the 1970's that dispute was between transport workers and

that last year there were less days lost in strikes than in any year since 1967.

But that is not the end of the story. Strike statistics can reveal a lot, but they don't always reveal the underlying trends and processes going on in the minds and attitudes of workers.

Look at the effects of recession over the course of the last few years compared with the great depression at the beginning of the 1930s. Output has actually fallen more in the first two years of Tory government in '79-81 than it did from 1929-31. Despite massive unemployment,

dockers. But when they brought the law in, and the police, and the capitalist courts—that unified our class. That's what led to the official solicitor being brought in and the victory at that time.

Now in an English Electric factory on the East Lancashire road in Liverpool, there was a very good shop stewards' committee at that time. They heard on the radio that the dockers had been arrested and they held a stewards meeting.

They got into the stewards room and discussed it, and they said, "Well they won't come out, I don't think we'll get 'em out". But they decided by a majority that whether the workers in that factory would come out or not, they had to call them out.

And they came out of the stewards room and the whole factory was empty. The workers had already gone.

I'd say to you that it may not be this month, it may not be next month; but in the next six or twelve months, even the optimists in this hall will be surprised at the response our class will give—if they get any sort of leadership whatsoever.

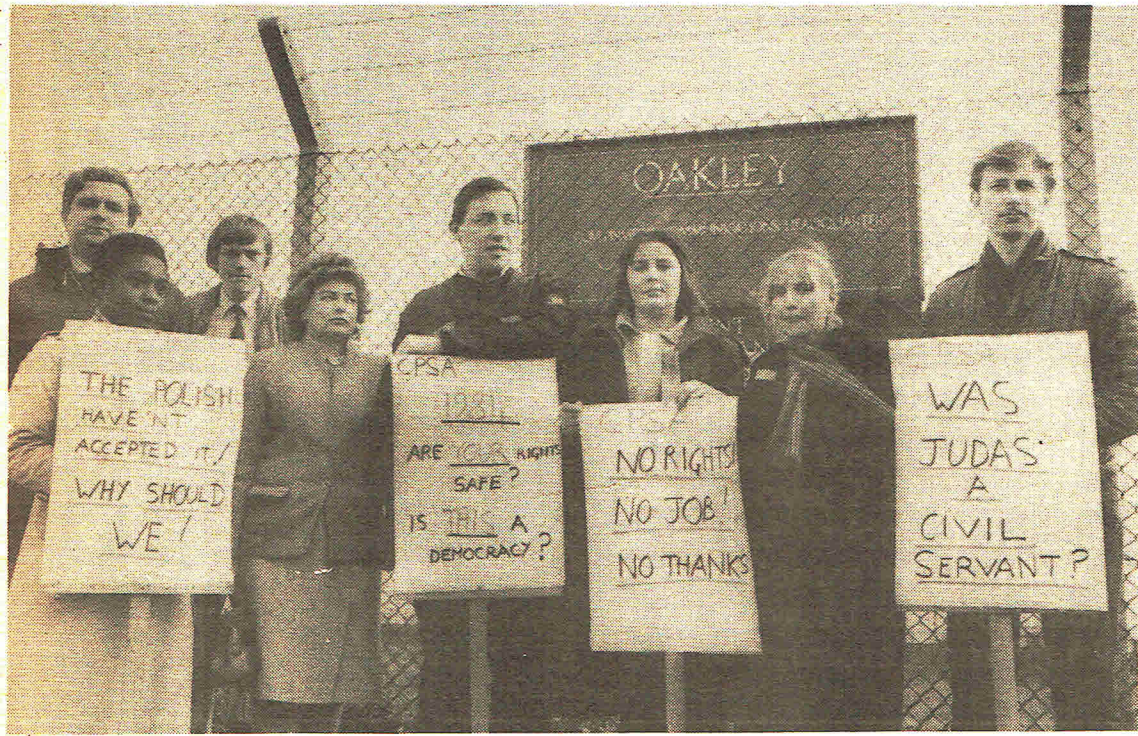
**BLOC**  
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (FL)



Police ruthlessly attacked pickets at Eddie Shah's scab printing operation in Warrington, and smashed the NGA control van seen in the background here.

# to fighting mood



The denial of trade union membership rights to GCHQ workers should be final proof to the labour movement that only a massive mobilisation of workers' power will stop this rabid Tory government.

despite setbacks and even defeats I would contest that the organised labour movement remains the most powerful force in society.

In the present recession the trade unions have lost something like two million members. But we still have a force organised in the TUC of over ten million. That fall in membership from its peak of twelve and a half million is mainly accounted for by the rise in jobless, particularly in manufacturing industry, which has been worst hit by recession and which has been the section traditionally most highly organised.



Most of the loss of members is accounted for by the increase in unemployment. There has been a marginal, and only a marginal, fall in the percentage of workers organised in trade unions. Com-

pare that with the '20s and '30s when the number of trade unionists, not just through recession, but through demoralisation and victimisation, particularly after the defeat of the general strike, was actually halved.

I spoke earlier about the underlying trends and processes that are going on behind the strike figures, the small drop in the numbers in the unions, and I would like to relate the experience I have undergone in the last ten years working inside the health service.

We have not exactly been free of industrial disputes. Whilst the big battalions of the class have taken a certain battering over the recent period, at the same time, travelling in the opposite direction, the social reserves of capitalism, sections of society that the bosses relied on in the past have been eroded.

For example, women workers were the most forceful, the most militant of all the workers on the picket lines at Hull Royal Infirmary

during the summer of 1982, and, I'm sure, throughout the rest of the country.

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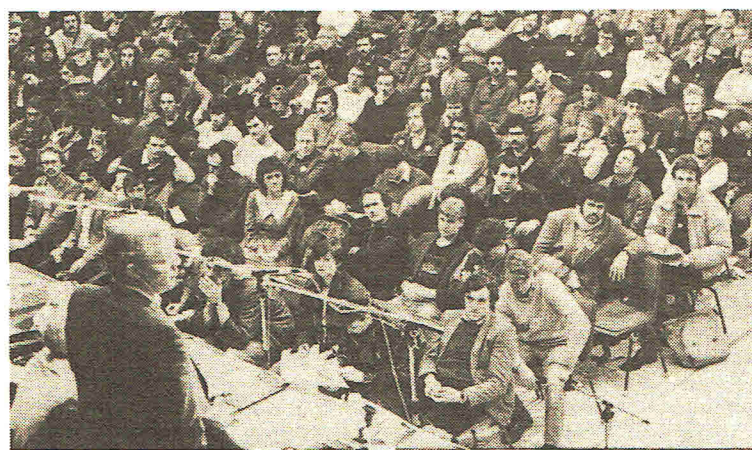
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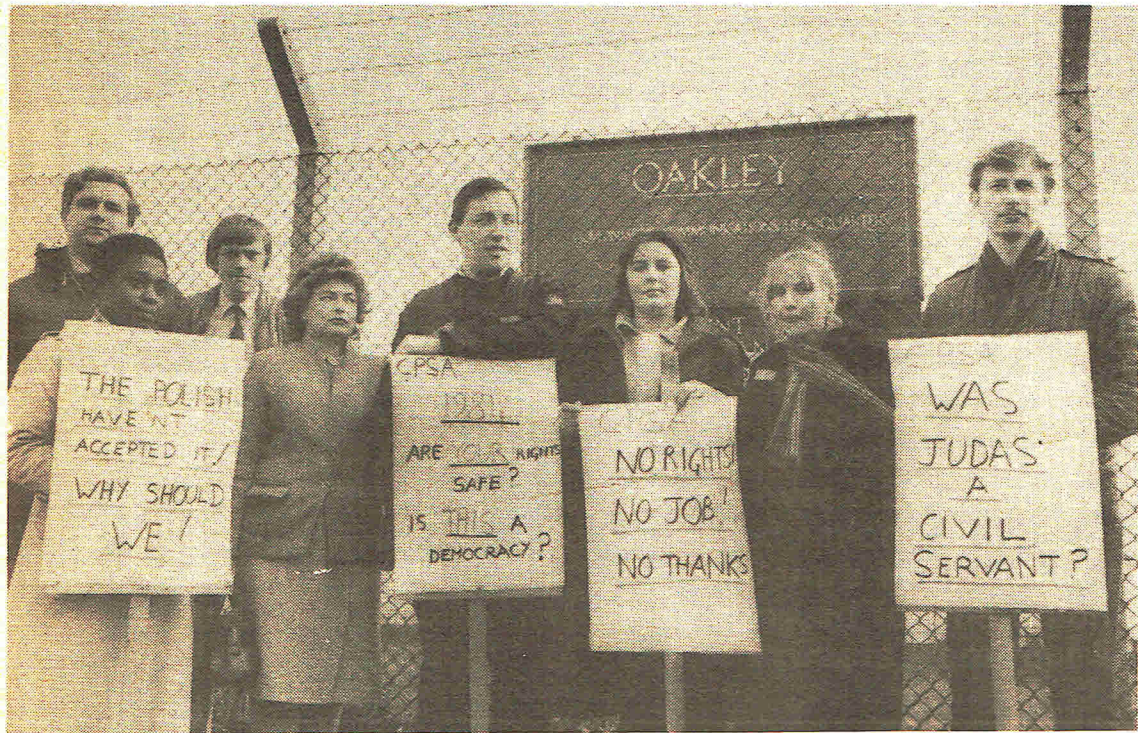
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# to fighting mood



The denial of trade union membership rights to GCHQ workers should be final proof to the labour movement that only a massive mobilisation of workers' power will stop this rabid Tory government.

despite setbacks and even defeats I would contest that the organised labour movement remains the most powerful force in society.

In the present recession the trade unions have lost something like two million members. But we still have a force organised in the TUC of over ten million. That fall in membership from its peak of twelve and a half million is mainly accounted for by the rise in jobless, particularly in manufacturing industry, which has been worst hit by recession and which has been the section traditionally most highly organised.



Most of the loss of members is accounted for by the increase in unemployment. There has been a marginal, and only a marginal, fall in the percentage of workers organised in trade unions. Com-

pare that with the '20s and '30s when the number of trade unionists, not just through recession, but through demoralisation and victimisation, particularly after the defeat of the general strike, was actually halved.

I spoke earlier about the underlying trends and processes that are going on behind the strike figures, the small drop in the numbers in the unions, and I would like to relate the experience I have undergone in the last ten years working inside the health service.

We have not exactly been free of industrial disputes. Whilst the big battalions of the class have taken a certain battering over the recent period, at the same time, travelling in the opposite direction, the social reserves of capitalism, sections of society that the bosses relied on in the past have been eroded.

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## Middle East

# Socialism or catastrophe

**THE WHOLE** of what is loosely termed the Middle East—stretching according to different usages, from the Atlantic coast of North Africa to Iran or Afghanistan—is an area of enormous turmoil, volatility and instability.

**There is not one state or one corner of the Middle East that is not racked by war, social upheaval or crisis in one form or another.**

In the West, Morocco faces a long, bloody and expensive war with the Algerian-backed Polisario guerrillas in the Western Sahara. Just as the 1904-1906 Russo-Japanese war accelerated all the processes leading to revolution in Russia, so the mammoth drain of scarce resources in an unwinnable desert campaign will impel Moroccan society in the same direction.

Already, workers have come into open opposition to the regime of King Hassan. Last year, weeks after the example set by their fellow workers in Tunisia, along the Mediterranean coast-line, Moroccan workers in their hundreds of thousands were involved in strikes and demonstrations, forcing concessions from the Government. These are the first heat-lightnings of the approaching revolutionary storms in North Africa.

## Wars and revolts

To the South, another intractable guerilla war threatens the stability of the Numeiry regime in Sudan, precariously propped up by its giant neighbour Egypt. Urban riots in the North and the war in the South have demoralised the Sudanese armed forces to the point where they would collapse but for outside help.

Egypt, with a population of 40 million, has a working class with long traditions of organisation and struggle, and while it has all the outward appearances of stability, like Iran in the period before the revolution of 1978, it possesses deep undercurrents of discontent and opposition.

The development of revolution in Egypt would send shock waves around the whole Middle East, toppling other Arab regimes and probably having a wider impact on the world balance of forces even than the Iranian revolution of six years ago.

Further to the East, the instability of the region is underlined by the monstrous slaughter of the Iran/Iraq war. This bloody affair, which has lasted now for 3½ years, has cost a quarter of a million lives, and now brings out World War I—style battles, complete with trenches, 'human-wave' tactics and the horror of poison gas attacks.

The part of the Middle East that most often holds the attention of the labour movement is the area of conflict between Israel and the surrounding Arab states. The expulsion of the Palestinians 35 years ago, the denial of their democratic and national rights, and the creation of an artificial Jewish state have been a recipe for continuous wars, as was predicted by Marxists at the time Israel was set up.

The Arab-Israeli conflict, the 'cockpit' of other Middle East conflicts, has resulted in 5 major wars in just over a generation, and there seems every chance of further international conflicts developing in the future.

For the whole Middle East, therefore, capitalism and landlordism offers only a long, agonising and enduring nightmare. There is not one capitalist state that does not suffer the chronic instability typical of the entire region.

## National oppression

It is absolutely fundamental that Marxists should recognise that not a single one of the national or social conflicts can be solved on the basis of the existing social relations. Poverty, disease, landlessness, urban squalor and mass unemployment—all the horrible products of capitalism—are worsening year by year and exacerbate all the various forms of national oppression which the system has already spawned.

Under present conditions there is nowhere in the Middle East, from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic, where there is any perspective of an economic or political development even remotely peaceful or harmonious. The overwhelming preoccupation of the Imperialist powers not to mention of the reactionary Arab leaders themselves, is their fear of social unrest. But all attempts to contain social explosions will be vain.

The Middle East as a whole demonstrates the classic conditions described by Trotsky in his Theory of the Permanent Revolution. Unlike their cousins in the West in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the capitalists in this part of the world are too effete, too tied to landlordism and too weak economically to provide any progressive social movement.

The fundamental historic tasks achieved by capitalism in the West—the establishment of the unified nation-state, land reform, economic modernisation and social progress—these are beyond anything the local ruling classes can gain. They can have no progressive historic role.

All the states to one degree or another are constrained within their national and economic limitations. Syria since the revolutionary movements of the 1960's, has a planned state-owned economy, modelled on the bureaucratically-deformed workers' states of Eastern Europe. But even such so-called 'progressive' states are unable to satisfy the basic needs of the population and they also creak at the seams with their own internal tensions and pressures.

## Arab reunification

The only social force in the entire world that is capable of delivering the mass of the Middle East population from the dead-end of capitalism and landlordism is the international labour movement.

The historic goal of the workers' movement must be the reunification of the Arab nation, torn apart and hemmed into artificial states by the Imperialist powers in the past. Such a union is possible in the context of a Socialist Federation of Middle East States, including the autonomous socialist states of Israel and Kurdistan. There cannot be any solution to the problems



Iran-Iraq war—3½ years duration and half a million dead.

faced by workers and peasants in any single Middle East country, outside of such an international and socialist solution.

A Socialist Federation would incorporate the right of self-determination to all the nations in the area, at the same time providing genuine guarantees to protect the democratic rights of all national and religious minorities. Such a Federation, employing the enormous resources of the Middle East, working in co-operation with a Socialist Europe could swiftly transform society and overcome all the social ills and national contradictions endemic to capitalism.

## Power of the working class

The social position of workers and their methods of struggle—strikes, occupations, demonstrations—inevitably raise the questions of workers' democracy and soliarly. Moreover, even in the Middle East, where the workers are a minority within society, their strategic position in the economy gives them a political significance far greater than their numbers alone would suggest.



Destruction in Basra.

The revolution in Iran, demonstrations in Egypt in 1977 and the recent strikes and demonstrations in Tunisia and Morocco show the potential power of the workers, as the strongest force in society.

The seizure of power by the working class in even one Middle East country would alter the whole balance of class forces in the region and internationally. It would transform the whole situation.

A healthy workers' state, basing itself on genuine workers democracy and internationalism, would rapidly spread its influence, leading to social revolution elsewhere in the Middle East and beyond. That must be the perspective that marxists must have.

The perspective before the mass of the population would be transformed by socialism—from decay to development, from despair to hope. But there is no force capable of achieving such a transformation, other than the in-

ternational labour movement, and a precondition for the achievement of such a goal, is the establishment of Marxist leaderships in the various workers' organisations in the Middle East and internationally.

**The instability in the Middle East as a whole is nowhere more evident than in the Lebanon, where it assumes a concentrated form. Splintered by sectarian civil war, unable to reestablish any unity or stability.**

Modern Lebanon was always an artificial creation, a product of French Imperialism after World War 1. The Maronite Christian area, which was traditionally an autonomous province within 'Greater Syria', had grafted onto it large chunks of Muslim, 'Syrian', areas (the coast, the North and the Bekaa valley) to form the modern state.

For a brief period after the Second World War, Lebanon managed to achieve a certain degree of stability, based especially on income from commerce and banking.

hardly be a wall left standing that is not pock-marked with the signs of street fighting, hardly a road still open that has not, several times over, been cleared of rubble and the spewings of bomb damage.

On a capitalist basis there is no possibility in the foreseeable future of reunification.



The Iran-Iraq war, First World War type trench warfare.

Syria is entrenched in the North, around Tripoli and in the Bekaa Valley, areas historically more 'Syrian' than Lebanese anyway. To the South, despite the economic costs and growing opposition at home, Israel will probably continue in occupation of a large area for military-strategic reasons. The Maronite Christian enclave in the hinterland around Beirut forms its own little statelet, while the rest of Lebanon is divided between the various sectarian war-lords—Shi'ite, Druze and Christian—holding their own areas with their own militias.

## Socialist Federation

The recent conference in Lausanne in Switzerland failed utterly to arrive at any new agreement between the various factions. The Syrian representative tried to save some face for President Gemayel, who in reality only controls a few square miles of Lebanon, but he came up against the irreconcilable opposition of his 'allies' the Druze and Shi'ite representatives.

The former show-piece state of the Middle East, therefore, has been smashed into half a dozen separate pieces.

The whole course of development of the last 8 years, however, would have been entirely different if there had been an independent movement of the working class at the beginning of the civil war in 1975. But because there was no such movement to put its stamp on events, Lebanon as a unitary state has been destroyed. It will now need the intervention of the international labour movement, placing the question of Lebanon in the context of the overall Middle East problem, before any kind of permanent stability can be achieved.

The socialist transformation of Lebanon and a Socialist Federation of Middle East states is now a burning necessity for the solution of the grave social and national problems faced by the mass of the people.

Lebanon became the gateway for the trading and financial connections between the Arab world and the West.

By Arab standards, Lebanon achieved a relatively high degree of prosperity. Beirut boasted the largest number of banks, the best telecommunications, the biggest airline, and all the best and most modern facilities—as befitted the capital of the "Switzerland" of the Middle East.

## A decade of civil war

Yet now, after nearly ten years of civil war, Lebanon as a state no longer exists. 100,000 have been killed, countless more maimed and injured. Hundreds of thousands are homeless, many families being made refugees for the fourth or fifth time in a single generation.

Beirut, once a modern thriving city, now has acres of shattered and bombed-out buildings. There can

## Lebanon

# Lebanese state in splinters

**IN 1975 Lebanon was in the throes of protracted economic and social crisis, made worse, but not caused, by the presence of 400,000 Palestinian refugees and freely-operating PLO militias.**

The civil war began as a *social revolution* encompassing a struggle of the most downtrodden—predominantly but not exclusively Shia Muslims—against the vested interests of capitalism, and landlordism—predominantly but not exclusively Maronite Christians.

Even the correspondents of capitalist newspapers have acknowledged the *social* character of the civil war in its early stages. "Grafted on to all this (sectarian conflict)" noted the *Financial Times*, "is the growing ideological struggle, spearheaded by the left, to level the power of the rich and produce a socialist solution. This has powerful appeal among huge numbers of deprived Shias who see the rich getting richer" (September 13 1975).

## Class issues at beginning

Even the *Economist*, inadvertently perhaps, pointed to the class issues behind the conflict: "Certainly the majority of the commercial firms are in Christian hands, but much of the real estate and the expanding industrial projects are held by Sunni Muslims. That wealthy Muslim class would normally tend to side with the conservative Christians were it not for the divisive outside issues.

"Similarly the poor Christians—and there are many—might side with the Shia Muslims in South Lebanon and the Bekaa who make up the majority of the poorest sections of the population, were it not for the traditional Christian fear of Muslim domination." (*Economist* 26 January 1974).

One Maronite Liberal described the situation as a struggle "between the underprivileged of both religions, on the one hand, and the Christian and Muslim bourgeoisie on the other, who are flaunting their wealth. The Phalange," he continued, "is a fascist party which is helping to hem Christians in a ghetto and split them off from the Muslims with whom they had perforce to live."

At first the Palestinian militias tried to keep out of the fighting—the PLO leadership explaining that they were merely "guests" in Lebanon and were not in a position to interfere in its internal affairs. But the attacks of the right-wing and Phalangist forces on districts and refugee camps occupied by Palestinians increasingly forced the PLO militias into the fighting, until eventually they were fully involved as the allies of the Lebanese left.

## Sectarian developments

The development of the war, however, increasingly assumed a *sectarian* character because of the pogroms committed by both sides and, above all, by the absence of a labour movement capable of offering a decisive *class* alternative.

After the Maronite forces had suffered a series of defeats, the Lebanese government appealed for Syrian intervention.

Population distribution:	
Maronite Christian	900,000
Orthodox Christian	250,000
Armenians	175,000
Other Christians	50,000
Greek Catholics	150,000
Shi'ite Moslem	1,100,000
Sunni Moslem	50,000
Druze	200,000
Palestinians	425,000

These figures include Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon where there are about 250,000 Palestinians and 350,000 Shi'ite)



Devastation in Beirut.

## Military forces in Lebanon

**SYRIA:** 40,000 troops.  
PLO militias which mutinied, now under command of Abu Saleh: ca 5,000 under Syrian control.

**'LEBANESE FORCES'**—Phalangists or the Kata'ib:  
10,000 + Christian units from former Lebanese army of Gemayel.

**DRUZE:** (mainly from the so-called 'Progressive Socialist Party'): 5,000.

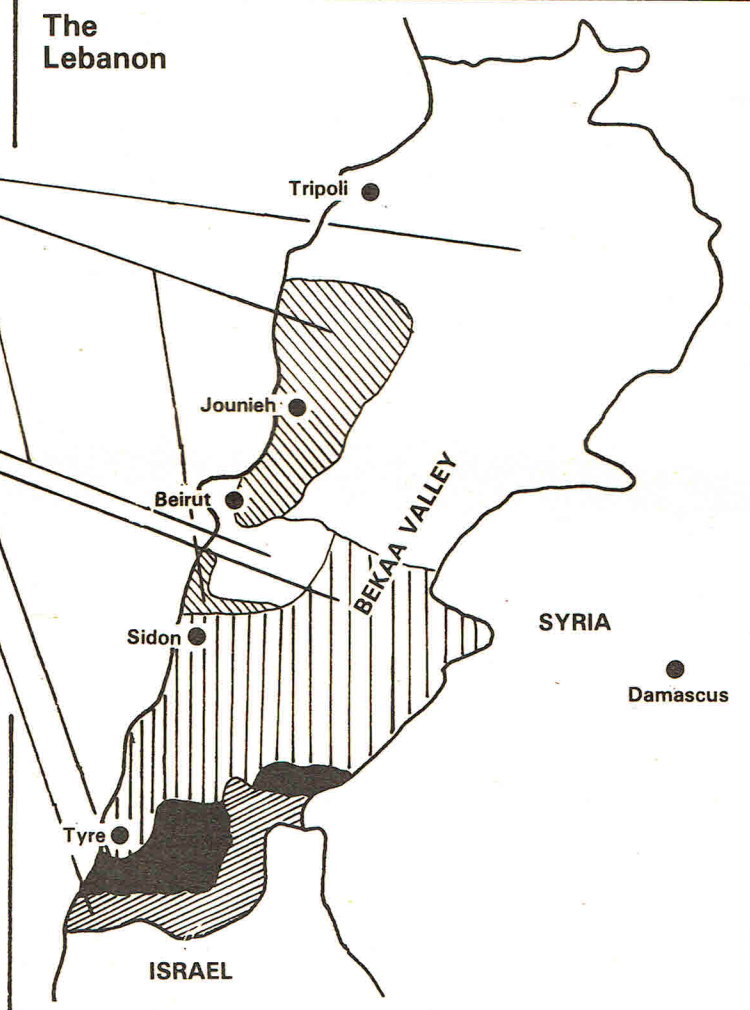
**AMAL:** (Shi'ite Moslem) 10,000 + soldiers broken from the army.  
A small independent section of Amal militia, based in the Bekaa valley in the Syrian area, was thought to be responsible for the 'lorry' bombs that killed US and French marines.

**ISRAEL:** 20–25,000 troops.

**UNIFIL:** (United Nations Intervention Force in Lebanon)  
Sent in the wake of the 1978 Israeli invasion. Units from ten countries. Completely impotent politically and militarily. Could only stand aside and take the numbers of lorries as the Israelis invaded again in 1982. 5,000 troops.

**CHRISTIAN MILITIA:** (Israeli controlled): 1,500.

**MOURBITOUN:** Sunni militia. Now plays a minor role.



The Syrian bureaucracy was motivated by their desire to stabilise Lebanon under their own domination. They were not prepared to see a victory of the Christian militia because of the danger of a pro-western, pro-Israeli state being consolidated on its western border. There would also have been considerable damage to the prestige of Syria which paraded itself as the custodian of Palestinian and Arab interests.

But neither was Damascus prepared to see a defeat of the right-wing forces, which could have opened the door to unpredictable revolutionary developments and possibly Israeli intervention.

## Crisis in Israel

Syria wanted to impose its own *Pax Syriana* on Lebanon. To do this they were quite prepared to do battle with the militias of the Lebanese left and the Palestinians—and at one point laid siege to the refugee camp at Tel-al-Zataar, during which they bombarded the camp inhabitants with no more mercy than did the Phalangists or, later, the Israelis. Syria in 1976 thus occupied the whole of Northern and Eastern Lebanon, leaving the south to the Palestinian militias and leaving a northern enclave to the Christians—more or less the same lines of partition that were confirmed in the period since.

The continuing presence of Palestinian militias in the south however was the excuse used by Israel to invade and occupy Southern Lebanon briefly in 1978 and then to launch the massive invasion four years later.

The Israeli Prime Minister Begin and defence Minister Sharon justified the invasion as an attempt to clear a twenty mile "security zone" on Israel's northern border, but they had clearly planned from the beginning to drive north to Beirut to clear the PLO out of Lebanon. Another important fac-

tor was their hope that the destruction of the PLO would facilitate the subjugation of the Palestinian population of the occupied West Bank.

Israel however, seriously miscalculated. Their aim of clearing out the PLO did succeed in so far as the only militias remaining now are in Syrian-occupied areas under strict control. But the opposition to the invasion from within Israel itself assumed an unprecedented ferocity, leading to the biggest demonstrations in Israel's whole history.

The war has given a huge impulse to the gathering social crisis in Israel, adding one more element of instability to an already unstable situation. Israel, therefore, has become seriously bogged down in an occupation of southern Lebanon which is very expensive—costing one million dollars a day—and very unpopular. Yet for military-strategic reasons, Israeli capitalism is extremely reluctant to withdraw.

The United States also seriously miscalculated in its intervention. Reagan, like Begin hoped to prop up the unrepresentative government of Amin Gemayel, in order to guarantee the primacy of pro-capitalist and western interests.

But Gemayel, brought to power under the guns of the Israeli army, after its initial invasion, never had any base of support other than in the minority Maronite community, and especially with the Phalangist forces.

Against the combined militias of the Shi'ites, now the biggest confessional group in the country and the Druze, the supposed 'national' army of Gemayel broke and disintegrated on sectarian lines.

Short of an all-out war by the USA or Israel—and neither were prepared to go along that road for domestic reasons—there was no way of preserving Gemayel's regime except, as Syria now may do in its own interests, as a *shadow* of a government. Reagan, therefore,

decided to get out while the going was good, before more American marines were killed.

The only real victor in the war in Lebanon has been Syria which has consolidated its grip on the one third of the country it already occupied, and has extended its influence over other parts of Lebanon, effectively bringing the remaining PLO militias—or its remnants—under its control.

The Damascus government armed and sponsored the Shi'ite and Druze militias in order to break the power of Gemayel, but now, having achieved that, they are happy to use the vestiges of his "authority" to legitimise their own position in Lebanon.

## Workers' internationalism

At the recent Lausanne peace conference Syria declared in favour of the continuation of the Gemayel government with only a slight constitutional concession to Muslims. But this proposal was vetoed by the Druze and Shi'ite representatives.

As they did after 1975, the Syrians may be prepared to play off one interest against the other. Having broken Gemayel, Syria may now try to use him to get some leverage over its "allies"—its aim being the extension of influence in the rest of Lebanon.

But one thing is absolutely clear: the Lebanon that existed before 1975 is completely broken. In the short-term it is possible that Lebanon could face a new and even bloodier round of civil war,

perhaps involving the shift of large populations from their present homes to other areas where their own particular confessional group is in a majority.

The collapse of the peace talks in Switzerland has led to the further consolidation of the various *de facto* mini states. But these are economically unviable so the fracture of Lebanon will only add to the economic decay and neglect. "Lebanon has ceased to function as a nation state." The *Financial Times* commented. "It is a mosaic of communities, each with its own private army, sources of revenue and foreign allies. In practice, the country has become little more than a geographical expression." (March 22 1984).

Without a movement on class lines, a movement basing itself upon socialist change and the internationalism of the labour movement, there is no possibility of the re-unification of Lebanon.

Neither can there be any lasting solution within the confines of the area of what is, or rather was, the state of Lebanon. The fortunes of the Lebanese workers and peasants, as well as the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians resident in the area are unavoidably linked with each other, with the fortunes of other Arab workers, and those of Israeli workers to the South.

A Socialist Federation of Middle East States can and one day will open the door to a genuine and harmonious solution of the nightmare of sectarian and social conflicts in the area. No other road is open.

# TGWU election: left victory vital

1.5 million members of the TGWU will shortly be voting for a successor to Moss Evans, the retiring General Secretary. This election comes at a crucial time in the history of trade unionism in Britain.



The twin evils of Thatcherism and capitalist recession have fallen heavily on the shoulders of TGWU members.

Over 700,000 members have been lost since 1978, mainly due to closures and redundancies. T&G members have seen living standards, jobs, union rights under attack—and moreso with the re-election of Thatcher last year and the assaults on the NGA and civil servants at GCHQ.

The issues are starkly posed. Either we stand up and defend ourselves or we will be smashed. We must ask certain questions: who will offer a fighting lead against these attacks? who will place the union in the forefront of the battles that lie ahead? which candidate is most likely to fight for the extension of democracy within the union and stand by decisions of Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC)?

## Straight political choice

There are five candidates but the election is almost certain to be a two horse race between Ron Todd, National Officer, and George

Wright, Region 5 (Wales) secretary. *Militant* supporters in the union will be supporting the left candidate, Ron Todd.

## The strategy required

We have major disagreement with Ron Todd over programme, strategy and tactics for the union and the labour movement. A more decisive, determined and open stand in defence of living standards and jobs is urgently required.

Nevertheless, it is essential to defeat a serious threat from the right which could set back the possibility of a united fight against the bosses and the Tories.

Speaking recently at a packed meeting in Birmingham, Ron Todd spoke about the need for solidarity with any group of workers confronting the Tories' anti-union laws. He condemned the empty rhetoric of trade union leaders at the Wembley Conference in 1982, which was not backed up with action when the NGA looked for support.

Rejecting the arguments of those on the right of the movement, who claim that the unions must move to the centre to win back support, Todd spelled out the real alternative—for a socialist

Labour government pursuing socialist policies with the same conviction as Thatcher pursues her policies: "No longer should we be propping up the capitalist system."

This is the message that must be hammered out during the course of a bold and enthusiastic campaign in the coming months, at meetings and rallies organised in all areas of the country and industry.

The future for T&G members and whole of the working class calls for a fighting, democratic leadership, which will campaign to win over millions of people to the only answer to Thatcherism—socialist policies.

Many in the union will be confused by George Wright's claim to be 'left of centre', and to be a solid supporter of T&G policy. The truth is somewhat different.

Larry Smith who has withdrawn his candidature and urged members to support Todd has warned that a victory for Wright could see a return to 'Deakinism'. Arthur Deakin was a past right-wing general secretary who ruled the union in an authoritarian and autocratic manner.

Any move in this direction would be resisted by the rank and file, who see the need for



Moss Evans, outgoing general secretary and Ron Todd, national officer, the left's candidate.

more democracy and control over full time officers, not a return to the "patronage" of the Bevin-Deakin era, when the general secretary had tremendous power. But it cannot be ruled out that if Wright were elected he would attempt to steer the union in that direction.

## Reject backward step

He has been reported as saying at a recent meeting that, "the union has to be managed, after the weak leadership of Moss Evans", and that "the experiment in collective leadership has failed". It was also reported that at the same meeting Wright attacked what he called, "the confrontation tactics" of some left trade union leaders in their opposition to the Tory government.

Many T&G members will justifiably be concerned for the future of the union if George Wright were elected. Although one man does not make a union, the history of the TGWU under autocratic leaders such as Bevin and Deakin shows that the power the general secretary wields can be enormous.

A recent article in the *Financial Times*, amidst glowing reports of Wright's abilities and his "vision of change" commented, "the impact of the recession, unemployment and legislation against the unions, has been to reduce the union's once mighty influence, with its members, employers, with the TUC, and with the government. Mr Wright accepts that to regain that influence the union may have to move to the political centre."

This sounds very much like the much like the "new realism" expressed by Len Murray and other right wing trade union leaders, which has led down the road of collaboration with the Tories

and abandonment of workers in struggle.

In the same article Wright was at pains to dismiss the charge of 'Deakinism', implicitly recognising the strength of left wing criticisms of the record of the right wing, and to prove his commitment to democracy and change within the union.

An example of his "mission of change", given in the same article, is for branch ballots to take the decision over Labour leadership elections instead of the Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC).

**Militant supporters will energetically work for the election of Ron Todd as TGWU general secretary. We will also be arguing for a fighting, democratic union with a socialist programme.**

On the question of the union's effectiveness and policy making, Wright is quoted as saying, "We are not now seen as the most effective union. We are now seen as the union with the biggest block vote and we have to change that image. What has been happening for the last few years is we have decided policy a long way away from the members."

From this it can be inferred that his ideas for change would include an attack on the present decision and policy-making lay bodies such as the BDC, General Executive Council, National Committees, whose members are all elected from the rank and file of the union.

There is undoubtedly a need for greater democracy and rank and file participation in the running of the union, but any attempt to move away from BDC being the "supreme" policy maker, would be resisted by the rank and file.

Many in the union, *Militant* supporters included, would argue that democracy must begin at the top, with

accountability and election and regular re election of all full time officers, who should also live on the average wage of TGWU members.

The only full time officer in the union who is elected is the general secretary, and if Wright were to win, we might have to wait until the year 2001 before having the opportunity to participate in an election for general secretary again.

The necessity of moving this massive union, with over 600 full time officers, over one hundred and fifty of-

ficers, and 1.5 million members, in the battles to defend jobs, wages and conditions, and even the very right to be a union member, also requires far greater democracy at every level of the union. The election campaign must be about these issues and not just the question of who will be general secretary, although that is crucial.

## Test ideas

The election must also be seen as a platform to test ideas. Throughout the campaign *Militant* supporters in the TGWU, will be energetically supporting Ron Todd. We will also be hammering out the need for a fighting union with a socialist programme, coupled to the democratic changes needed. Only these policies will enable the TGWU to defend the membership, ridding us of this hated Tory Government and playing a leading role in building a socialist Britain.

by John McLelland (TGWU)

## How the union elects its leadership



# Dirty dangerous but vital - working in the mines

**THE MINERS are once more at the forefront of the labour movement. Society as a whole owes a debt to the miners for doing a dirty, dangerous, but vital job. The series of articles which begins today, based on an interview with KENNY SUMMERSGILL, a miner at Monktonhall Colliery near Edinburgh, gives a glimpse into the life of a miner.**

"Before becoming a miner I had worked in different places, mainly light engineering. I went to the Coal Board looking for security, because at that time, four years ago, we were promised security for years to come! "It was the first time I had ever been down a pit in my life. I was amazed at the start that we had only 20 minutes of a break and no sanitary conditions at all except a chemical toilet, and no washing facilities. You are asked to take your piece with dirty hands and soaking wet.

## Working conditions

"You're working in mud and dust and spitting black, just pure dirt. Sometimes you're not even near a chemical toilet—you just urinate in a corner somewhere, and this is where people are working all the time!

"You're in bad air. If you are in what's called the 'return' side, where the air is going out of the pit, the air is warmer and there must be faces in Britain where you're working in 80-90 degrees of heat. When it gets to summer naturally it gets warmer. At the place where I work you just have to walk about and the sweat is pouring off you and your clothes are soaking wet; you don't even have to be working. It's bad air too, that has been used all round the pit. You feel clammy and dirty all the time and you can't wait to get a shower.

"When you leave the warm air you come into the cold air at the pit bottom and you're freezing. You don't get any heavy coats for this. All they give are thin cotton clothes. If

you ask for a jacket you're told to bring a jumper or a coat from your house. But you can't keep bringing jumpers or coats because you're going to run out of them—they won't last long down a pit. They'll get stinking and you can't bring them home because they'll just wreck the washing machine.

"When you come up at the end of the shift you're spitting black; in the showers you've got to clean your nostrils of black dust. And then after you get the shower, you go home, you sit and eat your dinner. If you don't get up and do something, you go to sleep. You just can't keep your eyes open and that is the effect of not getting good air.

"I got permission to take ten firemen, not pit firemen, but men from Newcastle Fire Station, to go down the pit. Four said they would never put their foot down a pit again. There was no way they would work down there.

"Some men have been down the pit 30 years; the longest I have known was 42 years, working in a lot worse conditions than we have got now. And they're done, men of 50 who are old men before their time. Now 50 in this day and age is not old, but these men are just knackered at 50 and so they have to take on a light job.

"It takes them years to get a light job and then they are told they have to go down to a lower wage, after maybe 30 years on the hardest job at the face. In any other industry that just doesn't happen. And then they're sent to the surface, and it can still be hard enough working there. You still get coal dust working in the 'prep' plant and you still get dirty handling stuff up from the pit, yet they are getting paid a pittance.

## Coal Board breach on safety

"We've had six or seven accidents at Monktonhall, including two accidents two days in a row in the same place, when there has been no management representation whatsoever at the subsequent safety meetings to discuss the accidents. That's a serious breach by the Coal Board, because they have the last word in the pit on safety matters, but they just don't want to know.

"Generally the men themselves are responsible for safety. You are always on the lookout for anything happening, but you can still never be as aware when you've only got a wee lamp on your head as you can in daylight or a well-lit factory. You can only see what is in your beam and you depend upon your mates. Sometimes I've fallen and bumped my head and if it hadn't been for my safety helmet I would have had a bad cut.

"You're dependent on your neighbours more than anything, and your union men. There are a whole lot of things going on in a pit that just aren't safe practice, the proper lifting equipment not being there for instance. The union does its best; if they come across anything they try to make sure that the proper equipment gets down the pit or they'll not allow the job to go on. But with both the men and the deputies under pressure, things are often not acted upon. It's your mates who look after you; their experience is your real safety.

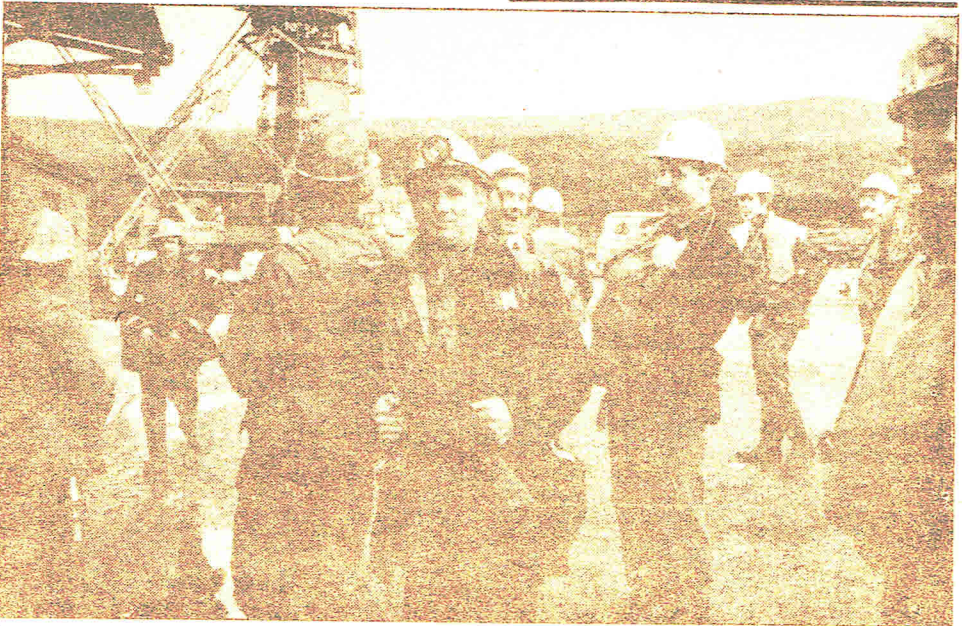
"If I was going on face training, I'd feel safer with a man who's been 20 or 30 years at it than with one who has been working on-

ly two or three years. At Monktonhall there was no face training for two or three years, so you've got this gap when there were no new men being trained for face working. No experience was being gained in these jobs in that period. You're not going to have enough experienced men, and that's bound to lead to an accident somewhere along the line.

"When I first started I was put with a man who had been down the pit for 40 years. During that 20 days I was not to lift a shovel, not to work but get used to the atmosphere.

"But I was in the pit only three years and I got a boy put along with me. What the hell are they putting a young boy along with me for? It was because older men had started to leave by then. I can give him an idea and orientate him with things, but how long is it before you have a 19-year old along with a 21-year old lad, a 17-year old with an 18-year old to orientate him in the pit? When two young laddies get together, it's mayhem.

(Continued next week)



Working conditions and strong traditions have forged miners' comradeship and solidarity.

# Letters

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

## Police priorities

Dear Comrades,

Our local Constituency Labour Party is sending a letter to the Humberside Chief Constable about not policing our housing estates properly, yet making sure there are busloads of policemen for the miners' picket lines, in an effort to break the strike.

When you need a policeman, you can't find one. Around our local Willows housing estate

(forget the 'Willows' bit—its a vandalised housing prison like most council estates!) you only see a policeman in a panda car flashing past about once a day if you're lucky. The police tear up to the scene of the crime like a bolting horse when its too late.

The Dixon of Dock Green image is a million light years away from our local police force. We need to control and unionise the police force.

Yours  
Steve Draper  
Grimby Labour Party

## Broadsheet needed

Dear Comrades,

Being an octogenarian pensioner, and thus not out to work, I was able to listen to Radio 4's *Tuesday Call* on 20 March, in which Arthur Scargill, in the face of the open hostility of Judith Chalmers in the chair, gave prompt, clear and factual information in reply to all questions.

Admirably, he also remained remarkably cool when the snide remarks from the chair had brought me to boiling point.

One supporter of the miners' cause suggested that a pamphlet should be brought out, giving the facts and figures about produc-

tion in the mining industry, the "uneconomic" mines, the handicaps imposed by the government, etc. I suggest to you that, for the general public, there should be a broadsheet, as simple as possible, tabulating the facts and figures, which not many of us have been able to keep at our finger-tips, unlike Bro Scargill.

Throughout the programme Judith Chalmers pig-headedly ignored the facts which had been given, and repeated the media's propaganda. Arthur Scargill pointed out that these facts and figures came from government sources, that they were on record, and could be reproduced if necessary.

Finally she fell back on the

question: "why wouldn't he (my emphasis) agree to a national ballot", now, as it was two years since one was held on the question? (For God-sake, why don't we have another referendum on the Common Market? How many years will it be before this government resigns and calls a general election?)

Arthur asked her how many ballots were held on BBC personnel and programmes.

What do you think of the idea and the possibility of the NUM sending out a simple broadsheet, tabulating facts and figures, which could be understood by anyone.

Yours in the fight  
Kathleen Jones  
Ludlow CLP

## MP backs Liverpool

Dear Comrades,

Liverpool City Council must be congratulated for standing firm in its defence of services, jobs and living standards. Anything less, in my view, simply means that local representatives end up doing the dirty work for the Tories—and that's not my idea of democracy!

Although the Liverpool budget will be decided at a later date, the British labour and trade union movement have a responsibility to rally support for the council, using the organised strength of the working class.

If this is done, there is no doubt that many more local authorities will have the courage to oppose Thatcher and her cohorts.

Yours  
Ron Brown MP  
Leith

## Nuclear power dangers

Dear Comrades,

In reply to R. Murray's letter concerning *Militant's* bias on the nuclear power debate (issue 688).

The introduction of PWR's or any form of nuclear power is at the present time unthinkable. There are no advantages from a nuclear power programme. Wherever we have nuclear power plants in this country there is always the threat of an accident—and that is socially unacceptable.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission of the USA reports that a major accident at a nuclear plant could result in 3,300 deaths immediately and 45,000 cancer

cases in the 40 year period afterwards. This scale of suffering has no place in a socialist power programme.

The issue of coal causing more damage than nuclear power is pathetic. The dangers in coal mining are well known and usually restricted to the work force. While the strength of the miners union keeps safety standards high. Therefore an accident in a coal mine restricts injury to the miners. Can you say that about an accident at a nuclear power plant?

The acid rain argument is well known and can be overcome by the introduction of Fluidised Bed Combustion. Acid rain is caused by the release of nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide gases during the combustion stage in a

power station. By using a deep FBC which involves burning the coal in a hot churning bed of sand, these gases are eliminated.

Pollution can also be contained by the development of processes to remove solid particles as well as by using bag filters and cyclones.

Coal reserves can last for over 300 years at current production levels. The opportunities are there for the development of FBC, the introduction of combined heat and power and district heating schemes, alongside the technology to turn coal into liquid fuel. What more of a balanced socialist plan do we need?

Yours  
Richard Clarkson  
Pontefract NUM  
(personal capacity)

## YS in Kent

Dear Comrades,

Aylesham, Kent's largest mining village with many residents working at Snowdown colliery, is firmly behind the strike. Buses of strikes' wives were featured on television demonstrating in Leicestershire in support of their sons and husbands who were picketing up there.

At a recent Labour Party public meeting 75 people from the village said they were interested in the LPYS.

## Poster party

Dear Comrades,

I put a 'Join the Labour Party Here' and 'Buy Militant Here' posters up in my front window. In one week I have had four people joining the Labour Party and one of them buying *Militant* every week.

Since then YS members have visited these people, getting a tremendous response.

A group of these people are interested in forming a branch of the LPYS in the village and, with the assistance of local branches, have organised an informal meeting to judge the extent of local interest. From the canvassing carried out so far it looks like being a major success.

Yours fraternally  
Paul Sweeney  
Canterbury LPYS

If everyone in the Labour Party did this, how many members could we have? Some comrades have made jokes about bricks through the window, but I'll take the risk! Every comrade should try it.

Fraternally  
Varessa Loraine  
Stockton South CLP  
Teesside

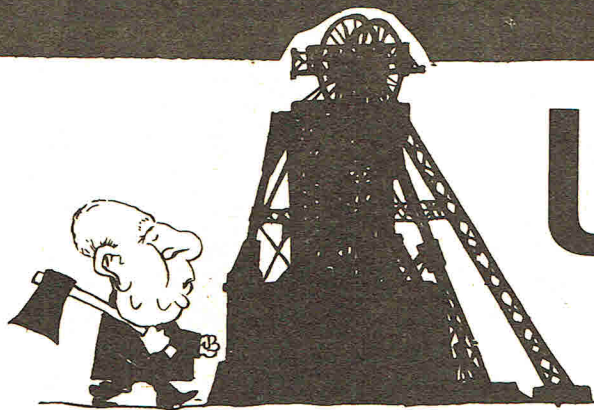
## Class attacks on legal aid

Dear Comrades,

Changes in Legal Aid contributions will cut financial help for defendants and lead to more guilty pleas. It will drag us back to the days when the law was open, like the Ritz Hotel, for anyone who could pay for it.

The changes will come into force later this month meaning a quarter of a defendant's income over £42 a week will go towards offsetting the cost of Legal Aid. If this dinosaur-brained government keep hammering away at the working class much longer the nail will break and pierce the hand that drives it down.

Fraternally  
Mike King  
Southampton



# Unite and fight - the o

## Sheffield railmen black coal

BOTH THE ASLEF and NUR at Tinsley marshalling yard, Sheffield have been united in giving effective support for the miners.

From the time of the first approaches by the NUM picket lines have been in operation at the BSC Orgreave coking plant and the movement of all coke to Scunthorpe has been frozen.

This has been maintained in spite of threats of sackings, injunctions and harassment by the railway police. The recent decision by both the NUR and ASLEF nationally to black the movement of all coal makes the situation much simpler and must be made effective in all areas.

### Explain threat

Support for the miners among members at Tinsley is not due to any special militancy but because the leadership locally have explained again and again that colliery closures mean railway redundancies. For example at Tinsley, which is primarily a steel rather than coal moving depot, over one hundred jobs would be lost if the pits in our area which are already threatened are allowed to close.

All areas are now falling in line with the 'blackening' directive. In any that aren't, special meetings should be convened with both NEC members and spokesmen from the striking miners in attendance to make it clear just what is at stake—if the miners are defeated our own fight will be much more difficult.

### Defeat intimidation

As the temperature of the dispute rises it is vital that the railway unions take a clear position over management disciplining members for refusing to move coal. Many depots will have already done as Tinsley has and called joint NUR/ASLEF committees to discuss a local response to increasing management provocation.

No branch or depot should be allowed to be isolated. Management will attempt to divide us by using different tactics in different areas. Any further attempts to prevent us from supporting the miners must be met with the full, united strength of the unions nationally.

By Geoff Bright  
(Chairman Tinsley NUR)



Leaders of the seamen's and train drivers' union Jim Slater and Ray Buckton greet Kent miners marching through London to Nottingham last Saturday.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

## Workers can beat Tory stooges

**BRITISH RAIL Board chairman Reid, member of the Tory party and friend of Transport Secretary Ridley, promised at the start of the miners' strike to take a hard line with any staff who do not work normally.**

Initially any staff who refused to work normally, and 'normally' included crossing picket lines, were sent home. In recent weeks the true relationship of forces has begun to emerge. Last week nothing

By a TSSA member

would happen to drivers who moved coal trains but would not cross picket lines, only drivers who refused to move

coal trains would be sent home.

However, signalmen at the Saltley Power signalbox in Birmingham not only said they would stop any train moving coal, but if any did, they would close the signalbox and stop all trains.

What was the reaction of strongman Reid? It was to do

nothing, and not to move any coal wagons in the area.

Railworkers have been offered a miserable 4% along with productivity schemes for driver-only-operation of suburban passenger and freight trains. There will never be a better time to forge the triple alliance. What will be left for rail workers if the miners are defeated? The miners fight is our fight. Pit closures mean coal, rail and steel jobs lost.



## Durham faces near extinction

SINCE nationalisation Durham Coalfield has seen the closure of one hundred and twenty pits with the loss of 90,000 jobs. It faces the possibility of virtual extinction.

DAVE ANDERSON, JOHN HOWE, KEITH LAMB explain why Hetton is on strike.

In the past our pit has been a moderate pit, but for this strike we got the best response for years. Usually we've only had a 30 per cent vote for strike action, but this time we got 60 per cent.

Eppleton was geared up to meet the Plan for Coal in 1974. But now that plan has gone and jobs are to go with it. At this pit there are 1,021 miners. Within twelve months management want to reduce this to 200. That means compulsory redundancies as there is not much chance of going to

other pits.

Every pit in the country is going to lose production. How can you transfer men to pits when other pits will be forced to shed miners? Victory is vital. 'Secure' pits are now a thing of the past. A month before the strike NCB told us we had ten years work left at this pit. Two days before the strike it was down to three—seven years work wiped out in less than a month—a sure sign we have to win this strike.

One shaft at Eppleton was closed for ventilation. We were assured it would be reopened. Then we were told that the coal would be mixed for Houghton pit, but Houghton closed in 1981. Then the Coal Board used the excuse that the shaft was flooded and was therefore useless—but they flooded it! Now they tell us that there is no coal in the shaft.

## Birkenhead dock solidarity

PICKETS FROM Yorkshire were picketing a coal dump at Vittoria dock in Birkenhead on Friday 6 April. Even though the miners had been on the go since 5 am they were in good spirits and greatly encouraged by the support local Birkenhead people had given.

The day before local binmen were in dispute with their private pirate employers, Waste Management Ltd., and 200 of them had joined the miners in their picket line for the day.

When we were on the picket local trade unionists arrived with donations from their branches (TGWU NUR ASLEF), the pub over the road was sending soup over and at dinner time a couple from the trades council arrived with a load of pie and

chips. Passers-by were stopping and joining us even if only for 15 minutes.

### Coal shrinkage

Coal was still getting loaded and transported by a firm of hauliers from West Houghton to Radcliffe paper mill. The local TGWU branch phoned around to try to prevent it being off-loaded. Even though the dump was moving it was shrinking hourly because the pilot boat was not bringing coal ships in to dock.

It is this kind of solidarity goodwill and comradeship that convinces me that the miners will win.

By Mick Gaskell  
(Wallasey CLP)

## Divisive bonus scheme

IT'S THE bonus scheme which is the background to this dispute. It's taken eight years to prove what Scargill was saying, "It will set man against man, pit against pit, area against area."

In Nostell (North Yorkshire Area) we have to cut 2½ strips about 720 yards to get us basic bonus, that's in a 36 inch seam. You might do right well for two or three days but then you have a breakdown.

Since the overtime ban all breakdowns have been in our own time and therefore you end up getting no bonus. We've still not got £135 basic

wage which was called for in 1979. My basic wage after tax is £85 per week.

When the bonus scheme first started the NCB played down the safety aspect but in our pit, accidents have increased. One lad is still off work when he was first injured back in October 1983. We were put to work on a fault with 30 pot cavities.

### Bad conditions

We were kept on contract despite these bad conditions therefore we had to try harder to get some decent money.

## Ashington demo

IN RESPONSE to police brutality on picket lines at Blyth Power Station in Northumberland a spontaneous demonstration of miners poured through the streets of Ashington last Tuesday.

It swelled from 300 to 500 as local people joined in, marched from the union HQ to the police station. The streets of Ashington resounded to the shouts of "Maggie Maggie Maggie, Out Out Out".

As the march passed the police station, miners chanted "Sieg Heil" and made nazi salutes. On three occasions the whole march stopped and sat down in the road singing and shouting, once outside the police station and again at the town's main crossroad, stopping the flow of all traffic.

The police were powerless to do anything, it was only

when they implored the area NUM president to ask miners to move that the march moved on.

The Young Socialist placards and stickers were accepted warmly. Miners shouted slogans like "Maggie's Puppets", "Thatcher's Snatchers", "We hate Thatcher."

The mood was electric. The miners of Northumberland probably learnt more on Tuesday about their power as a class in one hour than the previous ten years.

The march finished with an appeal by the NUM President for everyone, miner, unemployed, and other workers to get to Blyth Power Station for the next mass picket.

By Peter Marsden

This lad was hit by falling rock while trying to secure a cavity with timber. On this unit four accidents took place within two weeks. I nearly lost my leg. For four out of five months on this unit we got no bonus.

One of the injustices of this bonus system is that in the same pit one team can be getting 72p a day bonus while another gets £20 a day. You can be working just as hard as one another but in different conditions. That's why we should consolidate the bonus into our basic wage. One job, one wage.

The other injustice is that management can call in time and motion people after a day if they think the target on the bonus is too easy whereas if we want a change in the target because of bad conditions then

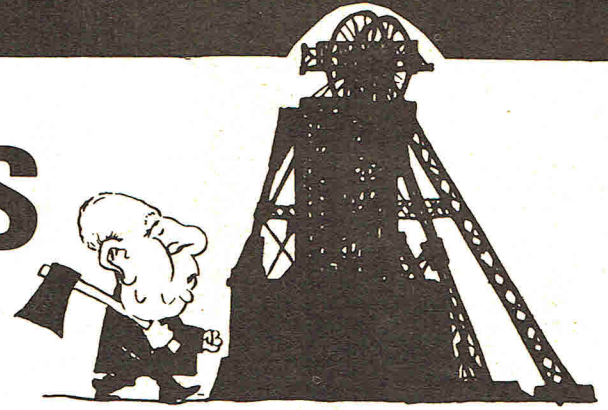
it takes a month before time and motion people come. The agreements are stacked against miners. Management is always referring to a bonus agreement that was signed by Gormley.

### No argument

It's the bonus system that has caused this split in the Notts area. We must now stand together. The Nostell lads tried to discuss with the Notts men at the pit head, but were stopped by police so instead went to the pubs and clubs to discuss with them. I'm sure if we could put our case to them then there would be no argument, they would be straight in with us.

By Graham Wilkinson  
(Nostell NUM)

# Only way to save jobs



Lobby of Nottingham NUM delegate meeting in Mansfield.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

## Not so moderate Notts

CONTRARY TO the impression given by the press and media not every pit within the Nottinghamshire area of the NUM is working.

They have been careful to avoid mention of the Bolsover pit which has now been out for the last few weeks. Bolsover pit is actually in Derbyshire but became part of the Nottinghamshire NUM when the old Spencer's union merged with the Nottinghamshire Miners' Association.

It is ironical therefore that this pit, once the stronghold of right wing company unionism

is now leading the fray in this area. **Jeff Poulter, Bolsover branch**, explained the issues and their actions to *Militant*.

### Occupation

We occupied the area office's of the Nottinghamshire NUM to press the area leadership to make our strike official. We have received messages of support from miners at Blidworth, Bebercotes, Ollerton, Cresswell and Cotgrave, to name but a few Nottinghamshire pits who support what we are doing.

With the decision by ASLEF and the NUR to give us support I believe it would be a kick in the teeth for them if we don't support our national union. My personal view is that those who are shouting 'have a ballot', should not hide behind a cross on a piece of paper.

I believe it is morally wrong to hold a ballot on whether other people should lose their jobs. There are enough Coal Board officials trying to sack us, without ballots.

Since Derbyshire made their decision to call an official

strike our members have refused to cross picket lines. Had the area made the strike official at the start there would not have been the injuries

### No scabbing

The police laid in and even arrested one man for kicking a car after he had been knocked over by it. Men have been arrested for shouting scab, but there would not be any one shouting scab if others had not crossed picket lines and gone in.

We need to take action now before they close another pit. We cannot afford to let down the railway men who have put their jobs on the line to support us.

## South Notts

ALL MINERS are affected by MacGregor's plans whether they know it or not. Craftsmen's jobs are threatened by "downskilling" planned by the NCB.

They reckon there are 41,000 "surplus" craftsmen. In South Notts, no apprentices have been taken on for three years. Cotgrave colliery which has been taking men from pits scheduled for closure, last year took no one on from outside the industry.

In their efforts to keep Cotgrave miners away from pickets, the police have accomplished a miracle the NUM branch has been demanding for years. A walking track between the village and

the pit has been made into a road, so that cars don't have to go to the main entrance on the far side of the pit.

They are also dictating the working hours. The twilight shift has been stopped so that there aren't too many different starting times. The state can finance this massive police operation but they can't find the money to save the coal industry!

**Bill Watt**  
(Cotgrave NUM)  
**and Gary Birkin**  
(Moor Green Workshops)  
**both of South Notts**  
**NUM spoke to Tony**  
**Cross**

## Re-unite miners

THE NUM does not need Thatcher's or the media's advice on democracy. Nor Jack Jones and the 'moderates' holding secret meetings to over-rule the national executive's existing decision to support areas where strike action is called.

Look at the percentage of miners not working, there is

no question, there is no need for a ballot. If the incentive scheme and bonus were abolished all miners would be in the same position, we would be together again, fighting as one family as we always were.

By **P Holden** Kent NUM picket, Shoreham power station

## Steel workers' future

### Lanarks steel

STEEL WORKERS at both DL (Dalzeol) and Clyde Bridge works in Lanarkshire have been on strike since Monday over a dispute concerning management's use of subcontractors to do work which BSC Clyde Bridge normally undertakes for DL.

The Clyde Bridge men went on strike last Thursday and threw a picket up around DL. The situation escalated when management sent home three men for refusing to load and unload the lorries of the subcontractor.

### Steel pickets

Following this, the night shift men on Monday were faced with a lock-out for not guaranteeing the lorries could get through the picket lines. Mass meetings at DL supported the strike call.

Picketing has now also begun at the nearby Ravenscraig plant and the possibility is that with both steelworkers and mineworkers on the picket line it will come out too.

The feeling amongst the men is that management are trying to introduce a production bonus scheme by backdoor methods, a scheme which the workforce at DL and Clyde Bridge have already rejected. The situation has been aggravated by the sending home of the men and the lockout.



Picket of Port Talbot steelworks, South Wales

Photo: Dave Sinclair

### Ravenscraig

A MEETING of the Triple Alliance at the giant Ravenscraig steel works was convened last week to consider a plea by ISTC shop stewards that Ravenscraig be given special dispensation from the affects of the miners' strike.

Miners on the picket line made it clear that no sell out would be tolerated. "No coal moves," was the slogan. The miners were from Polkemmet colliery. Predominantly young they were in no mood for a sell out, although the mood was jovial, good natured and friendly. They made it clear to the union officials who attended that they

were determined to struggle until they won. The past few days revealed serious arguments between the NUM and ISTC—who have been quoted as saying "We are prepared to accept blackleg coal in lorries to keep Ravenscraig open".

At the moment an uneasy compromise has been reached allowing enough coal to keep the furnaces working. Ironically the response of the steel workers themselves to the miners' picket has been very good, with almost everybody giving financial and political support.

Reports by **Colin Fox**  
Motherwell South LPYS

### Port Talbot

THE MINERS' dispute is a marvellous opportunity for steel workers to repay old scores and send the steel butcher MacGregor packing.

If steel workers do not give full solidarity, it will be all the easier to shut major steel mills like Ravenscraig, Llanwern or Port Talbot in the future despite the recent investment.

If the economy depresses even further, the demand for steel would be reduced, no matter how 'competitive' a steel plant may be. If the product can't be sold, the plant will shut, it's as simple as that.

We have the crazy situation in Port Talbot where subsidised coal is imported from around the world when we have untapped resources of best quality coking coal on our doorstep in Margam. Unfortunately this case has not been explained to steel workers at Port Talbot by union leaders.

The local press glorified the decision made by these leaders not to back the miners, yet no meetings had been held by any union to consult the membership.

There is enormous sympathy for the miners which has to be converted into action. Steel workers will fight if a clear strategy for steel and coal is explained to combat the lies and distortions of the Tory press.

By **Richard Morgan**  
(ET EETPU British Steel Corporation, Port Talbot personal capacity)

## Llanwern—sympathy for miners

GARY FINCH (ISTC Branch Committee-Llanwern Hot Strip Mill Finishing Non Supervisory Branch) talked to Dave Reid on Tuesday 3 April.

"We have approximately 35000 tons of coal a week in and use about 25000 tons, but since the coal strike began we have had no coal in whatsoever. At the moment there's about a fortnight's coal left before they have to start damping down the furnaces and have enough coal to keep them from cooling down and falling in. Production will start to be reduced at the beginning of next week. (ie Monday 9 April-Ed)

The general mood in the works is that the men have sympathy with the miners. However there is a fear that the future of the works is in jeopardy because of the strike. The general view in our industry is that we're hanging on to the jobs that we've got and any disruption is seen as another nail in the coffin.

### Divide and rule

But steelworkers have got to support the miners for the future of steel. Llanwern steelworks can only use Welsh coal—it only uses a certain mix of coal. You only need to put two and two together. With talk of a major steelworks being closed, it looks ominous for Welsh

mines and Llanwern steelworks. The two go together—if one goes so does the other. I've been trying to get it over that the miners' fight is our fight.

The government is playing on fear in order to set workers against each other. They're doing exactly the same at Ravenscraig. They're feeling the pinch there as well.

### Leadership

The leadership of the steel unions have not helped at all. The question being asked by the active members at Llanwern is, where's this triple alliance? They put out this pamphlet at the time. They said that if a major steel plant or mine was threatened then they'd fight. Two or three years weeks into the coal strike and you've got Bill Sirs making statements against the NUM.

The full time officials of the ISTC are going into these meetings with the NUM not to help but only to get dispensation. That seems to be the only word that they know "dispensation".

What we're trying to get over is that the time is nigh that we should go out with them. If steel workers are laid off during the coal strike then I think they should join the miners on the picket lines and push for a national campaign by the triple alliance to win the miners strike.

# Militant

Photo: Jacob Sutton



LPYS speaker Sheila Kearney speaking at the Liverpool Militant Rally which raised £500 for the Fighting Fund.

## LPYS conference Young workers - get organised!

**YOUNG** miners, and other workers in factories, shops and offices are coming to the Labour Party Young Socialists annual conference this Easter.

They see this conference as an essential part of the fight to save their jobs and improve their living standards.

Young striking miners who come to conference will get free visitors' tickets and, if required, a £10 subsidy.

There is also a huge army of unemployed young people in Britain. And they see the importance of fighting for socialism if they are ever going to find real employment.

Marie Atkinson is 18, unemployed, and a member of Wallsend LPYS on Tyneside. "I've been unemployed for nearly a year now and I

wanted to get involved politically to help change this country because the government we're under at the minute is no good".

"I joined the YS and now I'm going to national conference. I have heard a lot about it. I went to the regional one in Durham and learned a hell of a lot. It was very educating just listening to what others had to say, much better than sitting down with a pile of books."

"At national conference, I've heard it's even better. That's why I'm going" Why don't you do the same? The conference lasts from 20th to 23rd April at Bridlington. For information contact your local LPYS branch or write to Andy Bevan, Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.



Young Kent miners march through South London. Come to LPYS conference. Photo: Paul Traynor

### Help build a workers' paper

**THE TOTAL** Fighting Fund this quarter reached £27,361. This is a tremendous achievement considering the fantastic efforts and sacrifices made by the many Militant supporters in raising the Building Fund, an essential step towards a workers' daily paper.

Our supporters have given thousands during the recent Day of Action in support of GCHQ and now the miners' strike, all essential help to workers fighting for a decent future.

Thanks to all of you—your donations to Militant

represent another step forward towards that future—socialism.

The total in the Marxist Daily Building Fund stands at an excellent £140,028. But we must continue to get money in. We have achieved miracles in raising these funds but we still need £9,992 to reach the target and put us into new premises.

Do not let us miss the opportunity we have to move. If EVERY area responds, Militant could be making its historic move during May!

### All out to save jobs

Continued from page 1

automation system, MINOS, 44% of all Notts jobs could go!

Indeed the NCB have referred to the introduction of a "two-man face" by 1987, which would mean a much higher level of job loss. On top of this is the danger from nuclear power. The next nuclear power station after Sizewell is planned for the Trent Valley, reducing the demand for Notts coal still further.

### Coal demand

And even in those pits which survive all this, there hangs the threat of denationalisation, which Tebbit has been hinting at. The "super pits" which survive MacGregor's axe will be on any shopping list for selling off. And the prelude to any privatisation has always been a huge slimming down of the workforce to make the product more attractive to big business sharks.

Notts miners should not be fooled by Tory propaganda. Our jobs are threatened; even our "carrots", the high bonuses, are turning rotten. We were originally promised 25% extra on our earnings for achieving the standard tonnage. This has been cut to about 18.7%, meaning a loss of £25 a week to the Notts miners.

They have been lying about the bonuses; they are lying about our future jobs. So join the fight! The argument needs to be taken to every miner in every area, and to other trade unionists through mass meetings, leaflets and posters. Even in the striking areas, support should never be taken for granted. All miners must be actively involved in regular mass meetings, discussions and activity.

If we build a united fight, the magnificent backing we have already received from other workers will be multiplied many times over. Other workers' jobs are directly linked to ours, as in transport and steel.

The POEU in Swansea, offering their support to the miners, made the point that if the MacGregor plan were implemented in South Wales, it would have the same effect on the telecommunications industry as tearing out a dozen pages from the telephone directory.

In South Wales now, the whole community is being drawn into the struggle in a much broader way, with public meetings being held every day to raise funds and co-ordinate action throughout the labour movement.

In every area, the miners, the Triple Alliance, the trades council and Labour Parties should be organising solidarity committees to further support for the strike. United in this way, the miners can win a great victory, and the trade union movement as a whole can win a greater one still.

### NCB new boy

Continued from page 1

its shares in another company to Cementation Ltd, in the news recently after their successful contract to build a University in Oman.

None of this has made Mr Newbigging ineligible for his new post, but the qualifications which actually led him to be appointed are shrouded in mystery. For although the Tory leadership call for the miners to ballot, they do not believe democracy should apply to the NCB

management.

No-one elected Newbigging, MacGregor or any of the other nine members of the Coal Board, no member of a public, nationalised industry has been publicly elected. Yet they make decisions which affect the lives of millions. They decide which pits should close, and which communities should die.

None of the NCB members are ex-miners. Eight are businessmen, who mostly only serve on the NCB in a part-time capacity. The other three are accountants and ex-coliery managers. Their interests are light years away from the

miners whose lives they control.

For example there is part-time member DL Donne, chairman of Dalgety, a multinational firm with over 300 subsidiaries, who lists his reaction in "Who's Who" as gun dogs and his club as Royal Yacht. Then there's Ronald Thomas Stewart MacPherson CBE who is Vice President of the London Chamber of Commerce; is on the CBI's Council and is in line to inherit the title Baron Drumalbyn from his brother. Between them the directors of the NCB are involved in the affairs of over 1,000 outside companies.

The latest recruit, David

Newbigging is no exception. Amongst his other directorships is Rennie Consolidated Holdings of South Africa, who successfully squeezed 50% more profit from its workforce last year.

What a ridiculous situation. The mines should not be under the control of international businessmen. They should be run under democratic control of the workforce and society. Then there could be an energy policy which put people before profit, and did not close pits unnecessarily and destroy communities.

By Jim Chrystie



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