

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 698
4 May 1984

25p

Miners' dispute

See pages:
3, 4, 5, 6

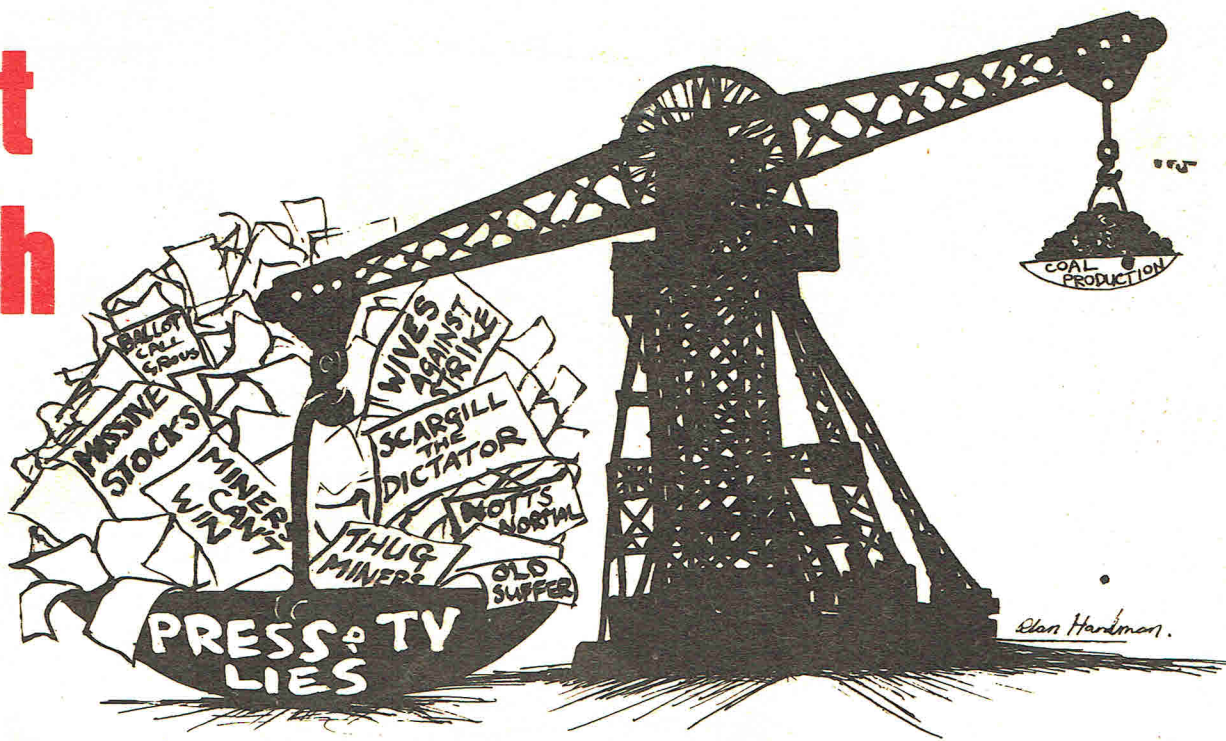
**1926
General Strike**

See pages: 8, 9



BACK THE MINERS

**Support
Scottish
Day of
Action**



THE MINERS' strike is the most important dispute for years. After five years of Tory government which has seen the destruction of Britain's industry, striking miners are determined to call a halt. Our strike is not just for the country's miners, it is for every worker, and every working class family, for jobs for school leavers and for future generations.

By Chris Herriot
(Monktonhall miner and
Chairman, Mid and East
Lothian Trades Council)

Despite the press propaganda, the overwhelming majority of miners are on strike. Even in Nottinghamshire, coal production has plummeted. The press and TV put all their attention on non-striking miners, as in the Mansfield demonstration this week. They are trying to intimidate strikers into a return to work, but the press are seriously underestimating our determination to win.

Continued on back page

● **Build the Triple Alliance**

● **Stop all coal**

● **Rail, steel and mines - together, we can win**

Take us one step nearer . . . A DAILY MILITANT

MILITANT SUPPORTERS will have a very special reason to remember May Day 1984! Last Tuesday was the day lawyers agreed the final terms on the purchase of a building in which a Marxist Daily will be produced!

£35,000 from the Marxist Daily Building Fund has been handed over in the form of a deposit. It "only" remains to raise the remainder of the cash!

Luckily we have negotiated an extra month before we have to pay the bulk of the asking price. But we must still aim to get a total of £175,000 into the Marxist Daily Building Fund by the end of May. Money has been coming in slowly in the last few weeks (see page 6). But

now the signing of contracts means we cannot wait.

Imagine what a tremendous stride forward the purchase of this building will be for Marxism. It will be the foundation on which a daily paper will be built. Such a paper could carry a fantastic amount of new material and give up to date Marxist coverage of the hundreds of events involving workers, as they develop, not just in Britain but throughout the world.

To make this possible we need the maximum possible support from you, our readers. If YOU have not yet donated to the Marxist Daily Building Fund, send us as large a donation as you

can manage straight away! Even if you have already given once, or even twice, work out a way of giving yet again!

Our supporters have made tremendous sacrifices to enable us to reach the magnificent sum of £142,857 so far. As the special letter from *Militant's* editors explains: "Comrades have scraped together what they have and given willingly for their future.

"Those who had money saved for holidays, furniture, even homes—gave as much as £1,000, even £2,000. Those who had no money have collected from others and even sold personal possessions to contribute to this historic step."

Tens of thousands of miners are

already sacrificing their holidays this year in their battle against the Tories. Readers should consider cutting back on their expenditure out of solidarity and donate a large lump sum to our funds. Only with real sacrifices will we raise the necessary money.

When we do, then the forces of Marxism within the working class will be that much stronger. Then, with your further help, we will move very quickly towards a more frequent workers' paper to arm us in our fight against the bosses and the capitalist system.

By Nick Wrack

Bosses squeal at Labour's stand

THE UNANIMOUS decision of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to call for a 50p weekly donation from each Labour Party member has been greeted with tremendous enthusiasm by the labour and trade union movement.

Arthur Scargill has taken up this initiative, which was first put forward to the NEC by Steve Morgan, Labour Party Young Socialists representative on the NEC, and called for all trade unions to follow the Labour Party's example. After weeks of equivocation by the Labour leadership this bold step will be seen by working people as a clear sign of Labour's support for the miners.

Until Neil Kinnock spoke at the Scottish TUC, when he came out against McGregor's attempt to starve the miners back to work the Labour leadership viewed the miners' strike as an "embarrassment". Thus Brian Walden in his article in the *London Evening Standard* a few weeks ago could comment ironically that when asked for his views on the strike in the first weeks of the conflict Neil Kinnock merely gave his views on the outrageous price of EEC butter!

Now the Labour leadership under pressure of an aroused labour and trade union movement has taken a stand in support of the miners. Predictably this has been greeted with shrieks of protest from the capitalist press.

Thus the *Daily Express* (27 April), foaming at the mouth, declared, "from Neil and Glenys Kinnock down, Labour will now bear considerable responsibility for the intimidation, the destruction, the law breaking and the hardship unleashed by the union militants. Every stone thrown, every illegal picket line, every miner and policeman injured will bear the label 'paid for by the Labour Party'."

Capitalist press

The *Daily Telegraph* belatedly: "It is difficult to imagine a better demonstration of Labour's unfitness to govern". It's sister paper the *Sunday Telegraph* declared: "Mr Kinnock has undone all these months of charming behaviour by throwing his party support behind the striking miners."

These reactions of the capitalist press indicate that Labour has taken a correct step in supporting the miners. How dare the Labour Party—which was built upon the shoulders of the unions including the mine workers—give such open financial support to the miners! After all, reason the spokesman of capitalism, Mrs Thatcher was given a crushing "mandate" last year to crush the miners, and throw thousands on the scrap heap of unemployment.

The constant refrain of these creatures of the bosses has been that "the ballot box decides". Yet these worthies are whistling a different tune when it comes to the local elections in Liverpool.



Roy Hattersley

Photo: Militant



Neil Kinnock

Photo: Militant



Arthur Scargill

Photo: Militant

The sheer hypocrisy of the organs of capitalism was shown by the comments of *The Times* (30 April) in anticipation of a Labour victory in Liverpool: "Let no one pretend that the 'people' are always right... it would be wrong for the electors of Liverpool... to condone the programme being set before them by Mr Derek Hatton and the Labour Party majority. His utopianism is dangerous".

Following the 1953 East Berlin uprising the Stalinist government issued a leaflet in which they said that the government had lost confidence in the people. The great satirist Bertold Brecht replied, "If the government has lost confidence in the people then why don't they dissolve the people!"

This step is beyond even the present Thatcher government so they have opted for the next best solution. If Labour wins in Liverpool on 3 May and remains firm in defence of jobs and services they probably will suspend the council and impose dictatorial Tory commissioners on the city.

Finance is a vital,

sometimes a decisive, component in war. The Tory government is conducting a vicious class war against the miners. They understand the vital role of finance in this struggle. That is why they are deducting £15 from the social security payments to the miners.

It is indeed heartening that the Labour leadership have rejected the attacks of the capitalists on the solidarity of the NEC with the miners. However, even this step has been undermined by the statements of Deputy Leader, Roy Hattersley on the *London Weekend World* programme.

Hattersley 'support'

He gave "support" for the strike even declaring that if he was a Nottingham miner he would come out on strike. This represents a progressive leap for a prominent spokesman on the right wing. However this "support" is couched with so many qualifications and hesitations that its net effect is to cast doubt on support for the strike.

Thus Hattersley expressed fears that the miners' strike would inflict "electoral damage" on Labour. In particular, he separated himself from Arthur Scargill by declaring that the strike was "not political".

In the miners' strike and in every serious struggle in Britain today, working people come slap up against the resistance not just of the employers but of the generalised representatives of the employers in the form of the government standing behind them.

Political character

There has never been a clearer demonstration of the political character of a conflict than the present miners' strike. It is quite clear that Thatcher in consort with McGregor provoked the miners' strike.

Thatcher representing the ruling class as a whole looked on the defeat of the miners as an industrial Falklands which would cower and intimidate all sections of the working class. It is for this reason that the whole labour and trade union movement including the leadership of the movement should come firmly behind the miners in this struggle.

One of the most shameful aspects of the strike has been the virtual silence of the general secretary of the TUC.

Mr Murray has now announced his retirement. Miners and other trade unionists could be forgiven for thinking Len Murray retired months ago!

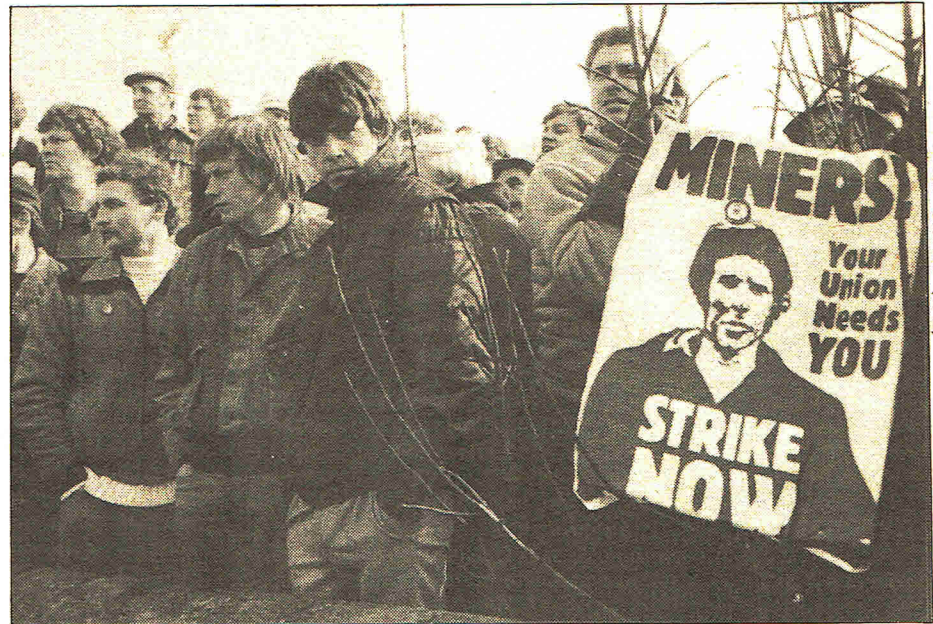


Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Looking for support from the movement. Miners in Nottinghamshire on the picket line.

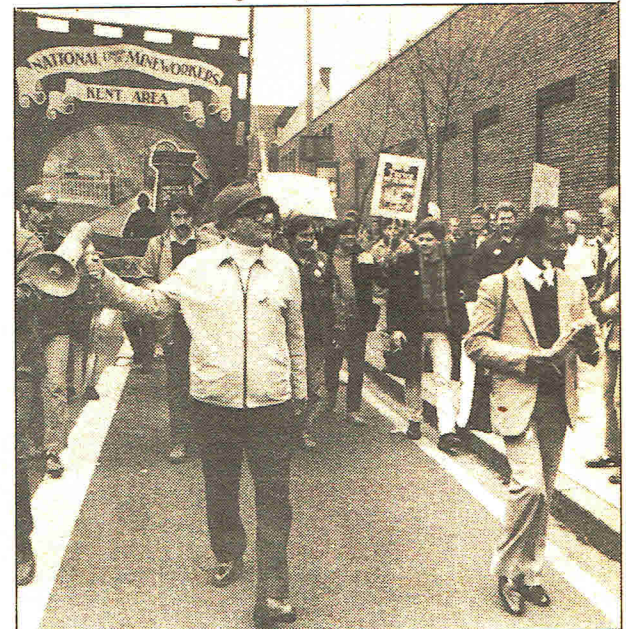
LPYS moved levy plan

ANYONE watching *Weekend World* last Sunday would have been taken aback on hearing Roy Hattersley referring to the resolution supporting the miners passed at the last Labour Party NEC. He told Brian Walden it was "not a Bennite Resolution. In fact I had more to do with drafting it than

Tony Benn."

To put the record straight it was Steve Morgan (LPYS rep on the NEC) who drafted the resolution and moved it at the full NEC. Tony Benn seconded it. As far as we know Roy Hattersley hardly said a word.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)



Support for miners is there. Londoners applaud Kent miners marching to the Midlands.

The capitalist press will of course picture support of the miners as a factor in the alleged drop in support for Labour in the opinion polls. But the real poll will be the local elections and the forthcoming by-elections. But even if Labour has lost electoral ground this is because of the prevarication and hesitation at the top in supporting the struggles of working people.

Equivocation

This equivocation results in the worst of all possible worlds for Labour. It does not satisfy the working class. In fact it is quite evident that until Neil Kinnock made his statement at the Scottish TUC there was enormous rumblings of discontent amongst the miners and other sections of the labour movement at the refusal of the Labour leadership to give outright support.

At the same time the equivocal stand of the Labour leaders also irritates the ruling class. Nobody was fooled by the Labour leadership's "skilful" concentration on police harassment while refusing to take a clear position in support of the miners. That police harassment was sanctioned by Leon Brittain and the Tory government. The attack on the miners was part of the overall attack to drive down and pauperise the British working class.

The whole philosophy of the Labour leadership since the general election is that a policy of "low key moderation" is the way to win over the middle ground, the so-called "yuppies" beloved of Professor Hobsbawm. These yuppies—the young, up-

wardly mobile—it is argued will be alienated by a clear class and socialist stand by Labour.

Middle layers

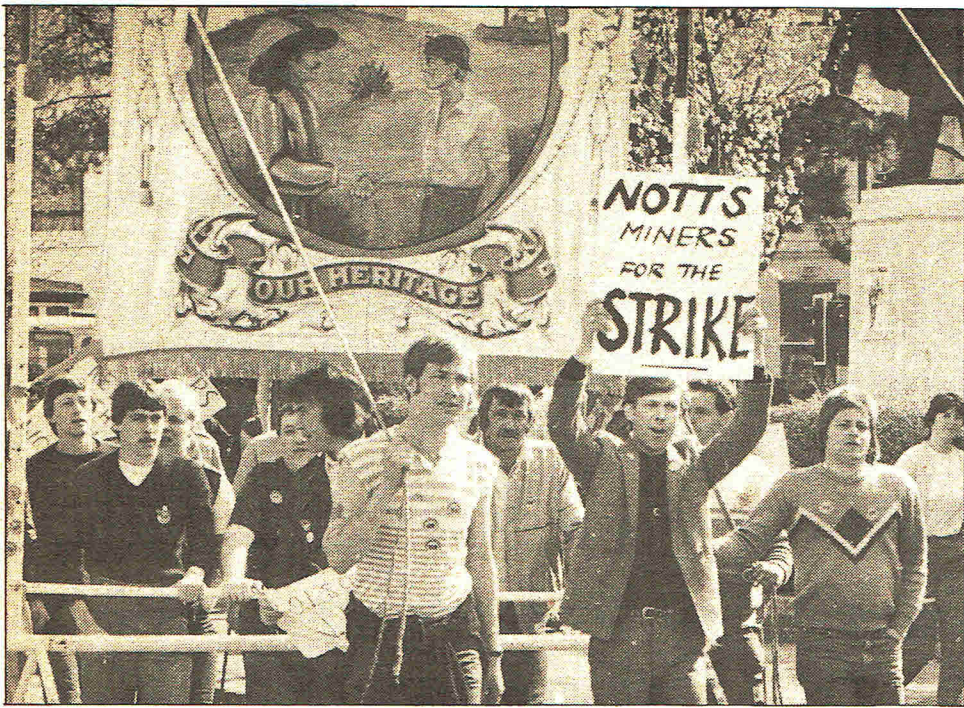
Yet these so-called "yuppies" rather than moving upwards are becoming "downwardly mobile" as the threat of a teachers' and civil servants strike demonstrates. Millions of the intermediate layers in society have themselves come under attack from the Tory government. The way to win these sections is not to stand in the allegedly middle ground, but to make a bold challenge to the government in support of the miners, linking that to a socialist campaign for the defeat of the government and the election of a socialist government.

Liverpool demonstrates how to win the middle layers in society. At the same time it has given a graphic

demonstration of how to establish a firm electoral base amongst working people. One of the most striking features of the struggle in Liverpool is that the movement has been able to attract the support of shop keepers and arouse sympathy even amongst the police.

The only way to guarantee a massive rejuvenation of Labour and the defeat of the Tories in a general election is to establish Labour as a firm champion of all the victims of Thatcher and capitalism. This will not be achieved by diplomacy, by equivocation or by half-hearted support for workers in struggle. Only a bold, socialist leadership can prepare the labour movement to defeat the Tories and elect a socialist Labour government.

The success or failure of Labour in the next period is organically linked to the success of this struggle. The miners must win.



Striking Notts miners on march in Cardiff on 28 April. Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Lancs headquarters occupied

THE DECISION by striking miners from the Sutton Manor and Bold collieries to occupy the Lancashire area NUM Headquarters over the weekend shows the hardening attitude of the men. They have declared the Lancashire Strike Committee Headquarters and they refused to leave until the whole of Lancashire is out on strike.

Over the weekend meetings took place at the various pits that are still not prepared to strike. Parkside Newton-le-Willows declared for strike action; Parkside is

the largest pit in that coalfield. At other meetings the call was rejected, on one occasion by as little as two votes.

Northumberland

On Monday night 400 Northumberland miners arrived in Lancashire to a total stoppage. The mood of the Lancashire pickets who have

Miners' demo and Gala St Helens Lancashire May 12 Saturday. Assemble 11 am Birchley St. Near St. Helens Town Hall. Speakers include Peter

been on strike for several weeks was lifted tremendously by this show of support and solidarity from fellow miners from around the country.

By Steve Sullivan
(Sutton Manor NUM, personal capacity)
and Gerry Lerner

Heathfield, (General Secretary NUM) Bring the Kids and the banners. March to Sherbley Park for rally.

Notts demo hides truth

ON 1 May two demonstrations took place in Mansfield. One, organised with the connivance of the Coal Board, opposed the strike. It attracted about 2000 to 3000 workers plus all the media publicity.

They were given a rest day by the NCB, which usually takes about a week but in this case it was pushed through at a day's notice. Some banners read "we want democracy" others such rubbish as "Adolf Scargill".

They were met by almost an equal number of pro-strikers who had come to support their union policy, saying "To hell with Maggie, the fight goes on". The large

turn out for the strike was achieved despite many miners even those from Notts mines, being stopped by the police.

Only three profitable pits

Brian Walker of Newstead pit told the miners that a few months back Newstead, together with Bentinck and Annesley had had a joint meeting over threatened reductions of manpower and voted afterwards for a strike.

There were no calls for a ballot when it was about saving Notts jobs. "If Notts area are not prepared to strike, the NCB will see where the weak link is. They'll come in hard on us if they think we won't fight."

Ray Chadburn warned that only three pits in South Notts are profitable. The rest would go under the present doctrine. The NCB statement reiterated recently to South Notts pits that one in ten jobs would go in the next year showed the importance of a every area joining the fight for the coal industry.

By Wayne Jones



Miners' rally in Cardiff.

Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (HFL)

Young Yorkshire miners

THROUGHOUT THE Barnsley area, the LPYS and local Militant supporters have had a tremendous response.

Already miners are joining the LPYS. Older miners have been inspired by the energy of the younger members.

One at South Kirby summed it up: "We knocked the younger lads in the past for not being interested in the union, for only being concerned with money, bikes, cars and booze etc. But without them now, this union would be on its knees."

Bradford Trades Council has adopted the Barnsley Area and following a speaking tour of Bradford workplaces by Houghton Main miners last week, the Trades Council delivered a van load of food to Barnsley NUM yesterday.

Last Friday young NUM members and others from

the LPYS collected the magnificent sum of £438 in the Barnsley shopping precinct which they delivered to Jack Taylor at the Barnsley NUM offices.

Many miners are determined that they and their workmates must remain active, not only in the NUM, but in the LPYS afterwards.

By Martin Elvin

MacGregor banned

"IN 1603-61 and again in 1693-1775, it was against the law to be called MacGregor and anyone so named was liable to have their land and possessions seized, be exiled, or tried for treason and executed. Anyone sheltering or helping a MacGregor was liable to a heavy fine."
—from the NALGO journal 'Public Service' (May issue).

Blackburn witch-hunter quits Labour

Michael Gregory, whose allegations have been used to justify the expulsions of six Militant supporters from Blackburn Labour Party, has resigned from the Labour Group on Blackburn Council.

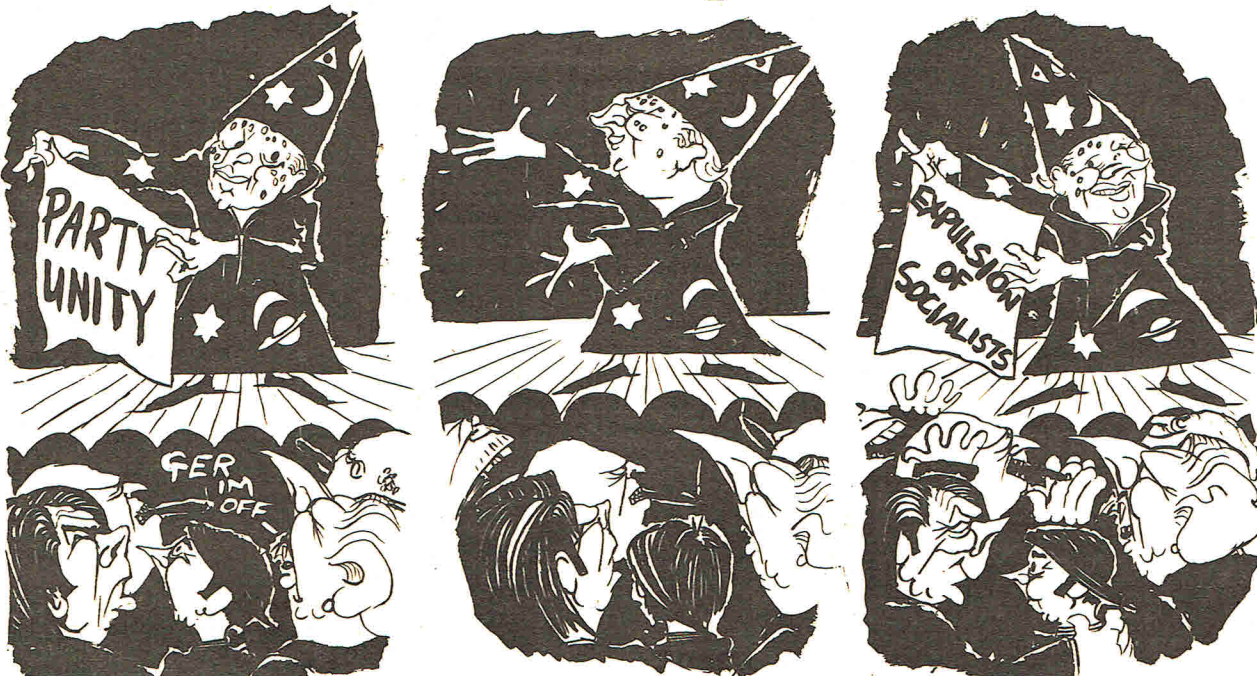
His resignation coming as it did one week before the Local elections has been seized on by the media to highlight the divisions within the Labour Party.

On 1 May the Blackburn Evening Telegraph headlined a demand by Gregory that unless the Labour Group agreed to one of his ultimatums he would sit on the Council as an independent.

His resignation now means that the Labour Group in Blackburn no longer has a majority in the council and cuts and job losses could result in a direct housing and building works department if substantial gains are not made for Labour in this week's municipal elections. What has not been publicised however, is the fact that Michael Gregory voted seven times at the last council against the Labour Group.

Jack Straw intervention

It has also been reported by one Labour Party member locally that Michael Gregory did in fact actually resign from the Labour Party and that it was only through the intervention and persuasion of Jack Straw MP, who has fully supported the witch-hunt, that Gregory remained in the Labour Party. As Jack Straw was one of the first people to declare in the local and national press his support for



NOW YOU SEE IT — NOW YOU DON'T Alan Handman

Gregory, we wonder why he has been so silent over these recent matters.

Could it be that now that the six have been expelled on the basis of Gregory's uncorroborated evidence that having served his purpose for the right wing he is of no further use? It is however now crystal clear that Gregory far from being a Militant mole is actually a mole of reaction.

Newham parallel

Similarities have been commented on locally with the situation in Newham in 1975-76 when two more ex-public school boys Lewis and McCormick in their attempts to support Reg Prentice (a Labour MP who later joined the Tories)

was serving writs and swearing affidavits against loyal Labour Party activists. Lewis showed his true colours last year when he stood as a Tory Parliamentary candidate.

Labour Party members should also remember the activities of Shirley Williams, David Owen and Bill Rodgers who themselves took on the Militant before ending up by stabbing the party in the back by joining the SDP. It is crucial that Labour Party and Trade union activists are not fooled again by such sweet-talkers.

The closeness of the NEC vote by only 14 to 12 to reject our appeals against expulsion, reflects a growing awareness in the party that we were the subject of a political witch-hunt on the basis of allegations made by an individual whose

whole motive towards the Labour Party has been shown to be very dubious.

We have been calling for the last 15 months since the Gregory report was first published for unity in the party. Particularly in view of these recent local events and the need for maximum support for the miners, we believe that the majority of GMC delegates would not have voted for our expulsion. Alongside petitions and public meetings that put our case we will be rebuilding our efforts in order to call for a special GMC to be reconvened in order that our expulsion be rescinded and that we are reinstated immediately into the party.

By Peter Harris

Rash of attacks on left-wing

★ Oldham Central and Royton EC has disbanded one ward and launched an investigation. On Thursday the LPYS delegate to the EC was refused admittance to the meeting and the next day in the local newspaper it was reported that the EC had uncovered a plot by Militant to take over Waterhead Ward—although there is only known to be one Militant supporter in the ward.

★ In the Rhondda CLP an LPYS member is to be interviewed by the EC. Supposedly for having brought the CLP into disrepute—the only evidence that has so far emerged is that he was seen selling Militant at a demo in Cardiff—on these grounds the right wing have called for his expulsion.

★ In Pontypridd another LPYS member has been threatened for selling the paper and the Regional Office of the Labour Party replied to an enquiry by the CLP stating "If anyone is a known Militant supporter then that person is ineligible to be a member of the Labour Party."

Miners' dispute

From the picket line

Arrested and fined

CHRIS AND Gary, miners at Littleton colliery told *Militant*:

"Coaches carrying miners to work were coming at us without stopping yesterday (30 April) so we had a peaceful demonstration sitting down in the road. We said, look, we're stopping this now and linked arms.

"A police Inspector said 'arrest the scum'. We saw two miners being pulled by policemen; they were playing tug of war with them. We said 'you shouldn't do that'. One of us was sitting down in the road and got arrested

under Section 62. Chris wasn't even in the road, so he was arrested under Section 5, for Breach of the Peace.

"Today (1 May) police were kicking hell out of pickets. We were shouting at scabs. A policeman starts laying into one miner—policemen, including an inspector, got another bloke upside down and started kicking him. Complaints were made about the Inspector but the policeman at Cannock station told us "I won't be able to handle it as I was on the picket line myself. Anyway, I'd stick up for them."

"Gary was arrested by two constables but the charge sheet said he was

obstructing an inspector! We were taken into court handcuffed like criminals; they dropped the obstruction of the police charge but we got fined £15 plus £10 costs.

"The union held a peaceful protest outside the police station, and one union member wanted to give information. He was told if he didn't vacate the place he'd be done.

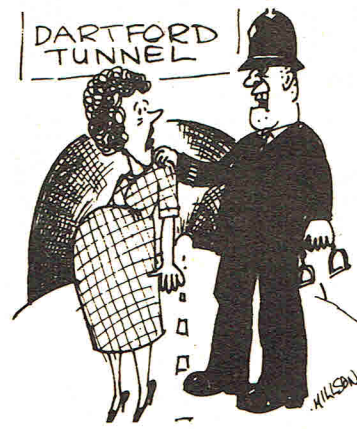
"The NUM bloke said, just to wind him up that he was in possession of drugs, the money he had on him came from a burglary and immoral earnings. The police told him to go away. In other words if I'm a thief, a junkie or a pimp I'm OK but if I sit on these steps you'll arrest me."

Threat to child

ON THE after shift at Bentinck colliery Nottinghamshire one sunny afternoon, a picket took his 2 year old child on to the picket line on his shoulders.

A police superintendent told him not only that he could be arrested for breach of the peace but that he would ring the Social Services Department to have the child taken into care.

"You must be joking" said the picket. "No" said the policeman "you've got ten minutes to leave the picket line."



"I am arresting you because I have reason to believe that you intend giving birth to a son who will grow up to be a Kent miner who will then proceed to go picketing in the north of England."

'MacGregor won't crucify us!'

ANDY WOOD, is an NUM member at Sherwood colliery. His father and grandfather were miners and his brother was killed in the pit at the age of 31.

Despite NCB propaganda, two-thirds of Sherwood's miners are out (back page). Like every picket, Andy has stories about police harassment though he stresses that some policemen have been OK.

Miners were arrested for handing out a leaflet produced in South Wales which included Jack London's famous definition of a scab. According to a policeman I spoke to, someone had complained they found the leaflet offensive. The leaflet was an "offense" under the Breach of the Peace Act 1936, Section 5!

Support now

Andy originally appeared on the picket line with posters appealing to Sherwood men to "support your union before it's too late. Act Now." Unfortunately the Branch Secretary did act, by tearing up the poster and telling Andy to "f... off

home". Andy's reply was "you keep ripping them up but I'll keep writing them and I've got plenty of rolls of wallpaper at home."

Andy was one of the few pickets at Sherwood originally but now the picket lines are well manned at all four entrances and a strike HQ set up in the nearest Labour hall. Andy sees it first as a battle to save jobs but also for wages. He is an underground worker but not on the face and "I can't remember the last time I took home more than £90."

Necessities

He has a daughter and to get even partially tolerable wages, his wife Diane has to work from 5 to 9.30 at night for £30 which is vital to the family budget. Andy's wife explained that most women at this hosiery firm are miners' wives, working for necessities not extras.

Finance of course is tight but Andy remains solid and is "not prepared to be crucified without a trial for the greater glory of MacGregor, the NCB and the Tories."

Lies on Sunday

"A PACK of lies utterly without foundation" is the only way to describe an article entitled "Pit wives blackmail" which appeared on the front page of the *Mail on Sunday* on 29 April.

In yet another attempt by the Fleet Street gutter press to spread malicious lies about the miners' strike; it stated: "Supermarket chiefs gave into blackmail tactics by a group of miners' wives planning to picket their store in Barnsley yesterday" and of course it claimed just for good measure that Arthur Scargill's wife, Anne was involved.

In fact the shop involved, Simco DIY and Food Store in Barnsley, have issued a press statement to put the record straight and it says: "We make available on a regular basis a small area of our supermarket to local

By a *Militant* Reporter

charities and good causes; this area is known as Charity Corner. Following a call last Friday from Mrs Harris of Barnsley Labour Party, the company agreed to make the Charity Corner available to Barnsley Labour Party for three days for charitable purposes.

"We understood this to be used to request food for the miners' families. We and the company neither condemn or support the miners' strike but we have no objection to our facilities being used for what is obviously a local



Scargill (whose wife Anne was named in the *Mail* article left) speaking at the Cardiff rally last Saturday where 10,000 marched in support of the miners.

cause. Although reports of union pressure, picket lines, etc have been made, we have not been pressurised in any way."

Good response

The *Mail on Sunday* article also tried to suggest that the collection would be un-

popular in Barnsley of all places, in fact Barbara Harris from Barnsley Labour Party together with local LPYS members and miners' wives had a very good response to their appeal for food and were also given money too, which they spent in Simco on more food for miners' families.

National solidarity

Barnsley

THE FIGHTING spirit of the Yorkshire mining communities was displayed at a packed joint NUM/LPYS meeting in Barnsley. 150 people, mainly miners, attended the meeting called by Barnsley LPYS and Church Lane Dodworth NUM Lodge.

NUM speakers from Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and

Scotland gave the facts and figures behind the dispute. The LPYS speaker Chris Weldon was applauded when he said this dispute was a class battle, between our class and the ruling class.

Jean Miller spoke on behalf of Barnsley Women Oppose Pit Closures. She had two sons on strike at Woolley Colliery. She called upon women to get involved with the women's group. The meeting gave a standing ovation to the marvellous

work of the pit canteen women, miners wives and daughters who have been working to keep the strikers' canteen operating for nothing, serving hundreds of strikers.

The meeting also gave a warm reception to Geoff Curry, a Notts miner from Bevercoates. As chairman Eric Richardson said, it takes guts to stand up and argue on your own on a picket line.

Coventry

WELL OVER 3,000 marched from Coventry and Nuneaton to rally in Bedworth in support of the miners last week. In Nuneaton where two nearby pits are mainly working, there was tremendous support for the strike among workers on the street.

Most sizeable workplaces in Coventry were represented, and donations—including one of £7,000 from Massey Ferguson—were handed over at the rally. There was a tremendous

response to the speeches of Dave Nellist MP and Peter Heathfield, NUM General Secretary.

London

COACHLOADS OF LPYS, Labour Party and trade union members travelled down to Snowdown Colliery in Kent a couple of Saturdays ago to show our solidarity with miners.

Dave Webb, on behalf of LPYS branches in East London handed over food and £103 in cash raised amongst YS members beforehand.

By Jackie Walsh (Hackney North LPYS)

Manchester

TO THE slogan "one out, all-out support the NUM" 600 people snaked around the busy shopping streets of Manchester recently. The march was led by delegations from Bold and Sutton Manor miners, but also included miners from Hem Heath (Staffs) Silverwood & Maltby (Yorks) and striking miners from Golborne (Lancs).

Many people joined the demo as it went through town and many youth filled in cards to join the LPYS.

By Dave Farrar



Labour Party demonstration in Greenwich (above) and a highly successful social in the evening raised hundreds of pounds for the miners.

him: "Henry, you're a bloody scab".

S. Wales

THE last meeting of Cardiff North Labour Party's management committee agreed to a resolution from a *Militant* supporter that a donation be made to assist the miners. This was despite opposition from a leading right-wing councillor.

By Chris Peace (Cardiff North CLP)

Workshop

IN AN emotional speech to a rally in Workshop, Henry Richardson, the secretary of the Notts area coalfield admitted that mistakes had been made in the beginning. Even his wife had said to

Scotland

THE DISTRICT Committee of the TGWU gave unanimous support for the miners, donating £100 to their funds. Support was given for the Scottish TUC Day of Action and said it should be turned into a 24-hour general strike. May Day rallies should be used to build support for such a call, it was added. A message of solidarity was also extended to the fight by Liverpool City Council.

By Andy Martin (TGWU Glasgow District Committee)

Photo: M Shakeshift (IFL)

Photo: S Cagnoni (IFL)

FACE TO FACE

Please send your comments, experiences and views about the strike and the industry to:
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

THE MAIN theme that ran throughout the annual conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists held over Easter weekend was the struggle of the miners.

The NUM were well represented at conference, with 200 miners visiting the event, discussing their fight and collecting money for the strike fund—raising over £1200.

The LPYS conference pledged to continue its support and carry on with joint LPYS/NUM activities. Every area is holding local meetings and Young Miner bulletins are being produced by Young Socialists and young miners in the Yorkshire, Kent and Northern areas.

Young miners at conference talked about their experiences on the picket lines, how the strike is building and the harassment they face from the police.

Reports by Bob Harker, Bob Wade and Roger Shrivess

BARRY PENDER, Bates pit NUM, Northumberland:

We've been out from the week after Yorkshire and we've got solid support. We've picketed Blyth power station, where 24 pickets were arrested three or four weeks ago, including five Scots lads. We reckon there's at most six weeks stocks in there.

We've been to a very good rally organised by NUPE and a big demo through

JOHN HOLLAND, Snowdown NUM Kent:

The conference was very good. There are quite a few miners from Kent here. We've been picketing in Leicestershire, London and the Dartford area.

We had no trouble until the police in Leicestershire. They stopped us at three in the afternoon. We'd been out since four in the morning, with nothing to eat. 'If you move an inch we'll arrest you' they said. We moved and got taken to Coalville Police Station. The police told the Inspector we were

STEPHEN SMITH, Mardy NUM:

The police have now told us that if we get arrested a second time—after being bound over and ordered to keep away from NCB property—we'll be remanded in custody in Risley Remand centre until August.

No money

I've been told if I'm arrested again I'll get six months. I was arrested for 'breach of the peace'. I'd only been on the picket line for five minutes. I'd just got there and there was a surge from the back and the next thing I knew the coppers had jumped on me. They thrust my arm up my back and ripped my coat. They grabbed my hair and kept banging my head on a car bonnet.

I'd like to thank the Rhondda LPYS for sponsoring me to come to conference. Its been a good break for me—I've had no money for the past six weeks.

Ashington of about 300-400. But the area officials seem way behind the movement. They've not organised any support from Triple Alliance unions and they stopped the LPYS going round trading estates in Ashington and Blyth because it wasn't sanctioned.

Our branch on the other hand was unanimous in going for a rule change for the simple majority and there have been no moves to go back.

being done for obstruction but they told a solicitor who rang up they couldn't tell him why we were arrested.

We were there 2½ hours, the sergeant told us it was for secondary picketing but we told them we're in the same area, the South Midlands. They rang up our parents to confirm where we lived and had to let us go.

But they told us if we were caught picketing again they'd arrest us.

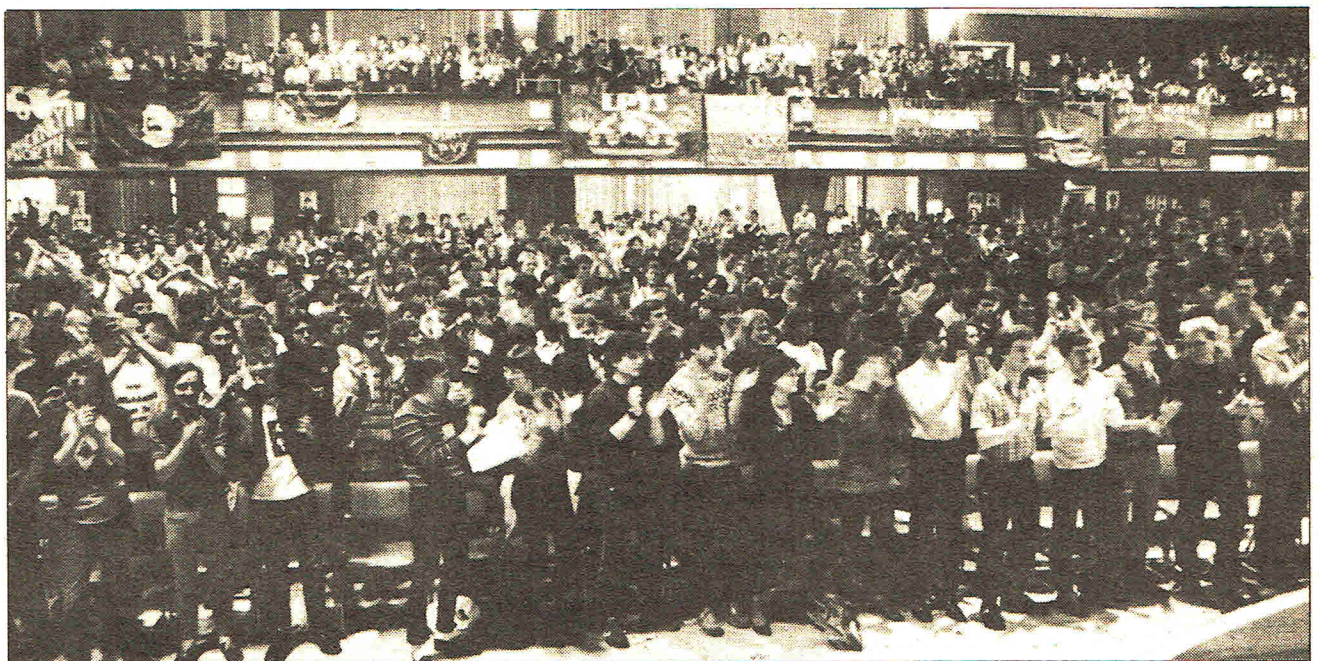


Stephen Smith, Mardy NUM, on the picket line at Port Talbot.

TERRY DAVIES, youth rep Cynheidre NUM:

I've been picketing Port Talbot steel works and the Point of Ayr pit, in North Wales. When we first went to Port Talbot there were only about 100 pickets and all lorries were getting through. But by the Tuesday we were 400 strong and got a 95% turn back. It was very peaceful.

The next Tuesday 200 extra police turned up and tried to stop us being too successful; that's what caused the violence, it became im-



There was enthusiastic support for the struggle of the NUM at LPYS Conference.

Photo: Tina Carroll

ANDY FISHER, Clipstone NUM, Notts:

In Nottinghamshire we have a co-ordinating committee which represents at least 17 pits with two delegates from each branch, mainly from the rank and file.

At Clipstone we came out on Monday, but it wasn't until Friday that an official stood on the picket line. At the union meeting on Sunday it was 280 to 200 against the rule changes, but one miner, Johnny Lowe made an appeal that 'any red blooded miner should walk out' and about 200 of us did.

The Broad Left in Notts, the Notts Miners Forum,

was very secretive. Militant supporters in the area wanted to open it out, it can't just be an election machine. If it had been functioning properly it could have held massive meetings and got support.

High bonuses

Even before we came out I never passed pickets. Once two pickets had been held down the road so we went home. We'd be discussing with the lads in the pits when we were working. Everybody claimed they had voted 'Yes'. Just like no one will admit now they voted Tory.

Conditions in the Notts coalfields are part of the

reason why Notts haven't fully come out. Bonuses are highest and men think they have too much to lose. But on the picket line you've got lads with £10,000 mortgages and cars. They know they've got to fight to keep it.

On the other hand Mansfield colliery, one of the most threatened collieries. One of the difficulties is that there has been an influx of people from outside mining who don't realise that any gains we got didn't drop from the skies.

But only the diehards are going in now and management have claimed pits are working 'normally' if two

lads are sweeping the yard!

About two thirds of Clipstone are out. Relations with the police are quite good now Notts lads are picketing. We have three men to every entrance and a lot of 'demonstrators'. The police gave us two carrier bags full of pork pies, crisps etc.

Production down

It's having an effect. Last Tuesday we found production down by 6000 tonnes. After the decision of the Notts leadership I hope we'll get the rest out.

DARREN MOORE, Bagworth colliery, Leicester NUM:

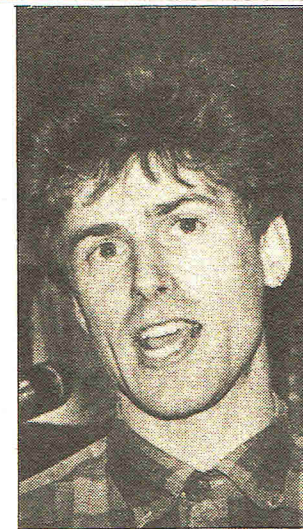
The response to the strike is bad at our pit. There's only 20 of us on strike out of 800. The problem is the area leadership—Jack Jones. A few of the men are anti-strike—they've threatened to kick our faces in—but the majority are not hostile towards those of us on strike. They say we're entitled to our opinion and entitled to argue our case.

But the area leadership is not just not backing the strike, but actually whipping up bad feeling against us.

The police presence has been incredible. In one convoy we saw two great big artics—you can bet they had riot shields, tear gas, the works in the back of them.

TAM DURY, Trent NUM strike committee:

Scotland is solid. We've now got to get the rest 100%. We would have been out in Scotland anyway over Polmaise. There's no way we'll go back until we get satisfaction. We'll never get our jobs back if we give up.



Darren Moore, Bagworth NUM, speaking at conference.

Photo: Mick Carroll

EDWIN LIDDLE, Easington NUM, Durham:

The young lads at Easington are more united now than they have ever been. There's a tremendous feeling of solidarity and all the young miners throughout the Durham field support the strike 100%.

I came down to this conference to see what the LPYS is like and what they think about the miners' strike. I've enjoyed everything I've heard. The support from the Young Socialists has been magnificent, they've backed us all the way and that's exactly what we need.

LPYS reports ● LPYS reports ● LPYS reports

GLAD TO see how the old tactic of the 'foot-beat bobby' works. On a Saturday recently when comrades from my YS were collecting money for the miners in Brixton High Street (we collected £50) we witnessed this technique first hand.

YS member to general public: "Support the miners—give us your spare change for their strike fund"

Bobby: "Who are you collecting money for?" (there goes his career as a detective!)

YS member: "Kent miners."

Bobby: "Do you have authorisation? You know you need a permit to collect money on the street? I'll have to move you on."

And so the day wore on. But while the policeman 'kept a friendly eye' on us the shoe shop next to us had a crisis—someone stole some shoes, legged it out of the shop hotly pursued by a shop assistant and a fight ensued.

A crowd gathers on the pavement watching the spec-

tacle. Where's the good old foot patrol policeman? Still watching us of course! He eventually went over to help out at the shoe shop—after someone had come and asked.

And I thought the police were here to protect property.

By Lesley Philips
(Vauxhall LPYS)

OVER 80 people came to Hull LPYS meeting in support of the miners. Speakers included Frank Cave, Yorkshire NUM official and Ray Duffil for the LPYS. Ray spoke of the work already carried out. NUM members have been taken to 50 workplaces and had addressed 30 Labour Party branches. A total of £2,500 had been raised in a few weeks. ***

GRIMSBY AND Cleethorpes LPYS have thrown themselves behind the miners' struggle since the first day of the strike.

We have concentrated our efforts on getting around the local labour movement to win financial and moral support for the miners.

However, one problem we face is that in many of the local factories, the workers are taken straight into the site by coach.

So we decided to stop the coaches before they went into the factories. We mobilised the local LPYS branches, took placards, leaflets and collecting tins and stood in the road outside the factories.

As the coaches appeared we refused to move, forcing the driver to pull up. As soon as they did, on jumped a YS member and walked down the aisles, leafletting and collecting money.

Another comrade addressed the workers over a megaphone, urging support for the miners and announcing the time and venue of a YS meeting on the miners.

By Patrick Howard
(Grimsby LPYS)

Miners' dispute

Coal industry's wasted wealth

MACGREGOR AND the Tories are pushing the coal industry back into the last century. Coal production for the past 10 years or so has always hovered around the 100 million tonnes mark.

Its lowest yield was 1864 when it was 94.3 million.

The MacGregor plan wants to reduce the current figure by chopping off 2 million tonnes every year until 1990, pushing production back to 19th Century levels and cutting 100,000 mining jobs.

The Tories have continuously bleated during this strike that they are having to cut back the industry because it has become 'unprofitable' and losing money—therefore cutbacks have to be made in the workforce and working conditions to push up profitability.

Coal subsidies

When miners point out that other countries heavily subsidise their coal, the Tories declare that the British coal industry has had massive

by Dave Nellist MP



Ian MacGregor, NCB Chairman.

'investment'. So where is this money going?

The fact is that money pushed into the industry is not investment in the real sense but a loan—a loan that has to be paid back and is accompanied by massive interest charges. This only furthers the 'unprofitability' of the coal industry.

Government grants are around only £6-700 million a year. The 'real' money comes in the form of government and big business loans—the National Coal Board now owes a total of £3,740 million. Added to this is the spiralling cost of interest charges. They have risen steadily since the Tories came to power. (See chart.)

Five years of interest charges would swallow up more than two years of government grants.

Millions spent on Stockpiling

At the same time millions are being spent by the NCB on stockpiling coal. Despite Tory denials, this tactic is obviously used to break the industrial action of the miners, as history shows. In 1970 coal stockpiles stood at 6.3 million tonnes. In 1972 when the Tory Heath government foresaw the coming miners' strike, these had

risen to 12.1 million tonnes. The Thatcher government learnt this lesson. In 1979 coal stocks were at 12 million tonnes. Yet by 1981, when the Tories braced themselves for a strike led by the South Wales miners, this had risen to 20.9 million. The coal board have added to this figure in preparation for the current strike.

Year	Amount paid out by NCB in interest charges
1979	£138 million
1980	£185 million
1981	£258 million
1982	£341 million
1983	£366 million

risen to 12.1 million tonnes.

Before the NUM overtime ban, pithead stockpiles stood at 25 million tonnes, with an equal amount held by users.

Stockpiling is another drain on the industry. The BBC 2 programme *Money Week* (March 25) estimated that that 25 million tonnes stockpiled was costing the NCB £200 million in storage costs and interest charges.

Added to this is the £1½ million being spent a

day for the police operation which the Tories hope will break the action.

The Tories continuously prattle on about 'good housekeeping', making the industries 'more efficient' and cutting costs. Yet they are prepared to squander millions in their attempt to break the miners—the backbone of the trade union movement—and pour massive amounts of money down the throats of their big business friends in the banks and finance houses, through burdening the coal industry with crippling interest charges.

What 'real' investment would mean

Facts like these make all the more urgent the

Labour Party policy of nationalising the banks. This could then free the industry from the parasitic burden of interest charges, and *real* investment could begin. New technology could be brought in, not to cut jobs, but instead to cut the working week and bring in earlier retirement. Miners could be given a well earned, decent wage—the money currently wasted on stockpiling could give miners an extra £20 a week.

Also a socialist plan of production would push up the demand for coal. Demand for coal has fallen, not because of coal's unprofitability, but because the Tories have decimated a fifth of British industry.



Pickets at Hobart House.

Photo: Paul Traynor

MacGregor HQ picketed

PICKETS AT Hobart House, the NCB's headquarters in London have prevented GPO deliveries and telephone maintenance by POEU members. No outside trade union members are crossing their line, say the Kent pickets.

The NCB employees are continuing to work, but some are sending out sandwiches and drinks.

"MacGregor comes in and out at such a rate you can't see the bugger", said Frank MacMahon from Snowdon colliery.

The police are taking no chances, allowing only four pickets on each entrance, and two of those are suppos-

ed to stand in a 'cage' of crowd-control barriers. The cage now carries a notice: 'Nearly extinct species—the miner'.

Despite the small picket presence, two have been arrested for obstruction. The men are allowed to use the toilets inside the building but only one at a time! The men are in high spirits and say that the picket will continue until the strike is won. Graham Ghost of Betteshanger colliery said: "We're definitely on a winner. There's no way we can lose with the support we've got, and it's still rolling. The sooner the government realise that the better."

The bosses in the NCB

By Jim Chrystie

THE INTERESTS of the members of the National Coal Board are light years away from the lives of the miners whose destinies they control.

Between them the eleven NCB Directors are involved in over 1,000 companies. None of them are ex-miners. None of them are elected. Yet they decide which pits should close, which communities die.

Top of the pile is the hatchet-man himself, Ian MacGregor. From 1966-77 he was Chairman and Chief Executive of Amax Inc, an American coal mining company whose industrial relations were second to anyone's. If you want to see how American companies treat their miners see the film "Harlam County USA".

American firms

MacGregor's deputy is James Cowan OBE. He's risen through the ranks from being a colliery manager in 1945 to directorship of six companies, many of which the NCB run in co-operation with large multi-nationals. Cowan is Chairman of the Scottish Brick Corporation, which is owned by the NCB and Aurora Holdings, the big multi-national, private steel and engineering firm.

At 57 Brian Harrison CBE is a strapping youngster amongst the full-time members of the Board. An accountant, his directorships include Phthalic Anhydride Chemicals, which through NCC Energy is a subsidiary of the American multi-national Cook Industries Inc.

It is a similar story for the other two full-time members, Donald Davies CBE and the unfortunately named Harry Merrick-Spanton OBE. Both of them began as colliery managers in the early 1950's and are now directors of ten companies. Mr Merrick-Spanton also finds time to serve on the CBI's Overseas Committee, where perhaps he can enjoy his favourite pastime, travelling.

No miners on NCB

Six people can only spare some of their time to savage the miners. Six of the Board are only part-time; the rest is spent on their other business interests. Again none of them are miners or ex-miners. That would be far too dirty an occupation for say the likes of Ronald Thomas Stewart Macpherson CBE. This member of the British aristocracy, brother of ex-Tory Minister Baron Drumalbyn, is far too busy being a member of the Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland (Royal College of Archers).

His recreations of course include shooting (with bows and arrows?) and his club is the MCC. He's got more companies than there are pits in Britain, mostly through his former chairmanship of the chemical and manganese Mallison-Denny Group. In his spare time he serves on the CBI's Council and is Vice-President of the London Chamber of Commerce.

Far more prosaic are three other members, Sir Melvyn Rosser, Colin Barker and

More coal, less pits, more deaths

LAST YEAR British miners produced exactly the same amount of coal as five years before. Yet there are forty thousand fewer miners and forty less pits working. They paid for this extra productivity in lives and increased accidents.

National Coal Board figures show that for 1982-3 the miners produced 120.9m tonnes, exactly the same as in 1977-8. But by 1982-3 there were only 207,600 miners in 191 pits, compared to

240,500 in 231 pits five years before.

Much of the increased productivity came after the introduction of the bonus schemes. But warnings that this would lead to loss of life have been proved correct.

In 1979-80 there were 31 deaths in the mines; in 1982-3 there were 44. Over that period the figure for major injuries has almost doubled from 0.87 per 100,000 man-shifts to 1.69.

RC Michael CBE. Although Sir Melvyn, a member of the Welsh Regional Council of the CBI, was considered by the last Labour government to be just the man to serve on the Prime Minister Advisers' Committee on Outside Business Appointments.

Last year saw the appointment of DL Donne to the Board. He should get on well with Ronald Macpherson. Donne's recreations include gundogs and sailing with the Royal Thames Yacht Club.

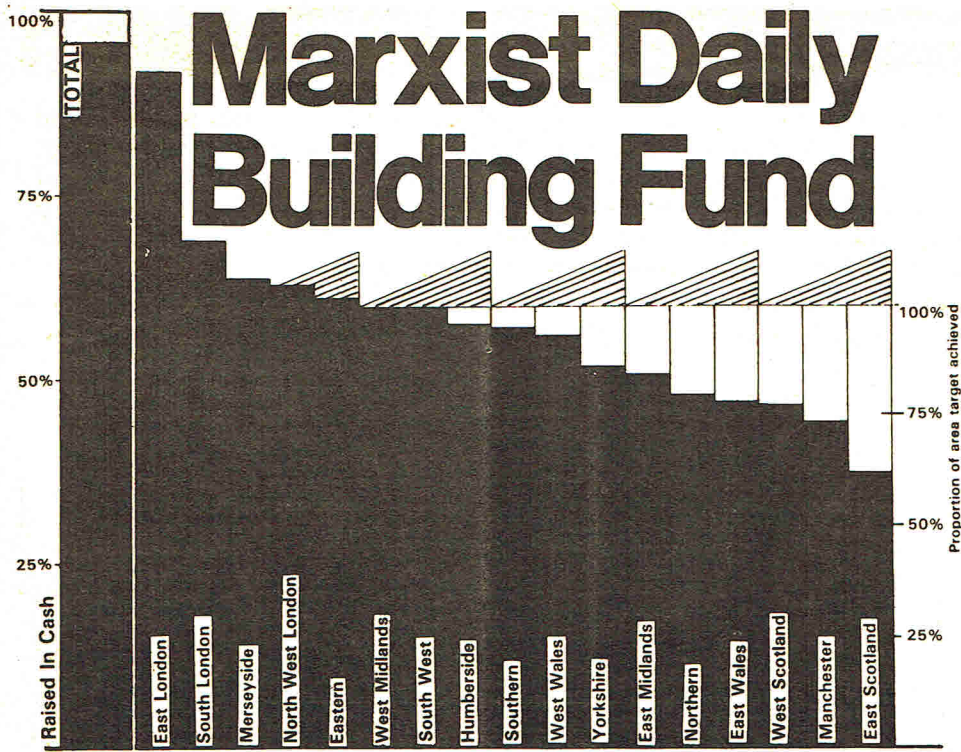
Privileged interests

As Chairman of the massive Dalgety Group, with over 30 subsidiaries world-wide; it's a miracle he has any time left to close down mines.

Last and by all means least is last month's appointee, David Kennedy Newbigging OBE. Up until last year he had spent his entire business life working for the Hong Kong conglomerate Jardine Matheson. But, as *Militant* pointed out, 13 April, although Hong Kong may have no mines, Jardine Matheson has had very close relations with the Thatcher's family business interests.

Profits

He's an appropriate recruit for this gang of international businessmen who run the coal industry—in the interests of profit, not the public, and of privilege, not the miners.



IN LAST week's paper we explained that we need to raise a total of £175,000 by the end of May. The reason for this is that the bank has lent us £25,000 less than we needed so we will have to raise it ourselves. We have a total of £142,857 in the bank which means we have to raise a further £32,143.

Following last week's special appeal from the editors of the *Militant* to all readers to donate to the Marxist Daily Building Fund we have had a further indication of the dedication and commitment of our supporters. By not lending us the full amount we were asking for, the bank has proved once again that the only people we can really rely on are those in the working class who need to see the need for a socialist change.

LPYS members returning from last week's National Conference showed where our support comes from. On the coach returning to South

By Nick Wrack

East London £450 was promised for payment before the end of May. On the East London coach £400 was promised; Essex £270; West London £145. No doubt this success was repeated in many of the other areas. Supporters in Mid-Glamorgan have promised to raise a further £1,600 by the end of May.

International support is again shown this week with \$20 sent by a reader in Boston, USA and £20 sent by a reader in Sweden.

LPYS branches have contributed, including Littleborough LPYS, £30 and Hackney North YS, £20. These examples should be followed by every other YS branch. R Bennett, Nottingham has given £100, Liz Winders, West London, £50; P Todd East London and A M Foster, Tyneside, each gave £20.

Special appeal

To ensure the extra amount is collected we have to take the special appeal to every reader, every Labour party branch and every TU branch. On the basis of the support that exists for a daily Marxist paper we should be able to raise the money. Nothing is easy but if we match the determination of the contributors so far we will meet this new target.

ADS

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

Classified

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, Harehills, Leeds 8, or phone: (0532) 493440.

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

'Militant Turn Left for Workers' Unity and Socialism' T-shirts—£6.75—white, yellow, 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.

SRI LANKA: The tasks today. New pamphlet from the Nava Samaja Party (UK Branch). Obtainable from World Socialist Books (see address below). Price 75p plus 10p postage.

WOMEN'S MINING PAMPHLET

Militant Miner—"Women Fight to Save the Pits"—printed and published by Aylesham Women. 70p (incl p+p) from Robbie Segal, 10 Westbourne Gardens, Folkestone.

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

STOKE: North Staffs Trades Council Miners Support Committee rally in support of the miners. Saturday 5th May. Speakers: Dennis Skinner MP, Ray Buckton (ASLEF), Bob Arnot (President Wolstanton NUM), John Lockett (West Mids TUC), Mark Fisher MP and LPYS and Miners Wives Support Committee. Assemble 11 am Hanley Great Park. Rally 2-4 pm Kings Hall Stoke.

DERBY: March to Silk Mill Gates. 150th anniversary of Derby lockout. Assemble market place 10am Saturday 5th May. Speaker Ray Buckton.

MILITANT PAMPHLET—"The General Strike: 1926 and Now" by Lynn Walsh, (reprinted from MIR No 11, August 1976) Price 50p each or for 10 to 19 copies 40p each, and for 20 or more copies 35p each. Order your copy from Dave Backwith, 10c Anchor Close, Bear Cross, Bournemouth. BH11 9HY. Please make cheques payable to 'Militant Fighting Fund'.

West Yorkshire Militant Supporters Easter draw prizewinners:

1st prize A. Tomlinson, Doncaster. 2nd prize Iris Walters, Leeds. 3rd prize R. Ashworth, Bradford. 4th prize Dick X, Bradford. 5th prize R. Healey, Bradford. 6th prize T. Brown, Hull. 7th prize Tel. Bradford 572811. 8th prize Jayne Birkett, Bradford. All prizes will be delivered as soon as possible.

"RAISE POLITICS at work! Buy a *Militant* mug." £1.50 + 45p p&p from 56 Hartley Avenue, Leeds LS6 2LP. Cheques payable to: Chris Hill. All proceeds to FF.

Meetings

For events in your area contact your local Militant seller.

BRISTOL: "Support the miners. Support Liverpool Council". Speakers: Ian Isaacs (South Wales NUM Executive, personal capacity), Derek Hatton (Deputy Leader Liverpool Council) at 7.30 pm, Wednesday, 9 May at Church Hall, Central, Old Market, Bristol.

BLACKPOOL: JOINT UCW, IRSF, SCPS CONFERENCE MEETING.

Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*) and union speakers. Tuesday 15, 7.45 pm at Black Central Library, Queen Street, Blackpool.

DERBY: "Support the Miners" Speakers Wayne Jones and Mark Cheatham (Notts NUM) at Spotted Horse, Town Centre, Derby Wednesday 9th May 7.30pm.

DONCASTER: Marxist Discussion Groups. Thursday, 10 May: "What *Militant* Stands For". Speaker: Bob Edwards. Thursday, 24 May: "Marxism and the trade unions". Speaker: Jeff Bright. Discussions held at 7.30 pm, Corporation Brewery Taps, Doncaster.

BLACKBURN Friday, 11 May at 7.30 pm, Trades Club, St Peter's Street, Blackburn. "Support the miners". Speakers: Lynn Walsh, (*Militant* Editorial Board), Peter Harris.

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

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



May Day march in London this year.

Photo: Jacob Sutton

FIGHTING FUND

This week: £4,829

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	306		2700
East Midlands	140		3050
Humberside	54		1700
London East	60		3500
London West	159		2100
London South	13		2850
Manchester & Lancs	220		3700
Merseyside	301		4800
Northern	224		4050
Scotland East	85		2450
Scotland West	72		3300
Southern	210		4400
South West	82		2050
Wales East	15		2100
Wales West	23		1950
West Midlands	232		3800
Yorkshire	133		4500
Others	4121		12000
Total received	6452		65000

THIS WEEK a magnificent £4,830 was raised—taking the overall total to £6,452. But still a long way off the £65,000 target.

Most of the money this week came from the cash collected at the Militant Readers Meeting at LPYS National Conference (The final figure was actually £6,894; unfortunately for Militant, but fortunately for the Marxist Daily Building Fund, some cash intended for the Building Fund was mistakenly included with the fighting fund) and the NUT Conference, which raised £327 before expenses. Thanks to all supporters

who donated at both events—but if you've got an IOU outstanding please try to redeem it as soon as possible—if everyone redeems their promise it will mean a further £2,397! Worthwhile though they are we cannot buy new equipment with IOU's.

With trade union annual national conferences upon us get your shop stewards committee trade union branch or trade union members to donate to the fighting fund—follow the good example of NUT Conference. Our campaign for a daily can only begin once we have the resources and the resources can only be acquired with cash—your cash—send us a donation now! The Summer Draw

tickets are also now available.

THIS WEEK contributions include: Sponsored walk by Blackpool comrades £29 with money to come; Flea market stall Burnley £18; another donation from the workers at British Gas Easington £11; John Haworth Blackburn £7; Overseas Telegraph branch West London POEU £5; Doug Norton Cliftonville £5; Connie Dixon Cliftonville £4.80; Rattling tins Kidderminster £3.92; J Halford Notts ASTMS £3; Jim Hunter Leicester NGA £3; a CND supporter on a march in London gave £2 for a paper; P. Scott Stoke NUPE £1.50; T Higgins Hammersmith AUEW £1; Eric Nicholls unemployed Kidderminster £1; A. de Jong Clwyd £1; S Murphy Chesterfield UCATT £1; D. Matthews Creswell NUM 55p and Steve Ryder Nottingham 25p.



Militant

May Day greetings from CENTRAL BRANCH, NEWHAM NORTH EAST LABOUR PARTY

May Day Greetings from: LONDON PRESS BRANCH EETPU. L.C. Stevens Secretary J. Rowse Chair

May Day greetings from OLDHAM MILITANT SUPPORTERS. "Expel the Tories, not the socialists"

General Strike: 1926



Rations being unloaded for sailors working at a London power station.

FIFTY-EIGHT years ago, in the first week of May, the most famous of all the miners' great struggles led to the 1926 General Strike. Then too they were faced with a Tory government prepared to starve them back to work. Many lessons for today can be gained from that experience. So we are reprinting an edited version of a major article written by TED GRANT in the *Militant* of 27 April, 1973.

IN 1926, the position of the ruling class was that of a direct assault on the wages of the working class. The Tory Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, had declared at a meeting with the Miners' Union on 30 July, 1925: "All the workers in this country have got to take reductions in wages to help put industry on its feet."

The miners were to accept a reduction of 13% in starvation wages and to work an extra hour. This attack on the miners and on all sections of the working class because of the decline of British capitalism, she could only succeed in maintaining a hold on world markets in the face of more modern and up to date rivals at the expense of the working class.

It is a similar situation which the working class in Britain is facing at the present time. The British capitalist class wishes to put the burden of its own inefficiency and incapacity onto the shoulders of the working class.

Conflict loomed

The working class in solidarity with the miners and in defence of its own living standards, was prepared to resist. The transport unions and other sections issued instructions to black the handling and transportation of coal if the coal owners carried out their threat to lock out the miners. The shadow of conflict loomed.

Despite the complaints of the backwoodsmen of the Tory Party in Parliament, 300 of whom moved a resolution of protest, Baldwin and the government prepared a temporary retreat in order to thoroughly prepare for a showdown with the miners and the whole of the working class. A £23 million subsidy was given for nine months to allow the government time to complete its preparations.

At the same time the Samuel Commission was appointed to go into the question of the mining dispute. At the end of the nine months they recommended increased hours, lower wages and direct agreements, a policy which the

miners and the trade union movement generally had already rejected!

The Tory government prepared an 'Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies' (OMS), a civil guard, which the British Fascists joined, Special Constables, and an elaborate network for each county in Britain to confront the TUC and the working class.



Thomas (centre), one of the most right wing TUC leaders leaves Downing Street talks.

The working class in Britain had been swinging to the left after the coming to power of the Baldwin government in 1924 on the basis of the notorious 'Zinoviev Letter' (forged instructions supposedly from Zinoviev, head of the Comintern, to the British Party, used in the October 1924 election to create a red scare to oust the Labour government). The expression of this move to the left was the organisation of the Minority Movement in the trade unions, with a left wing programme, which succeeded in organising in its ranks up to 1,250,000 members, or a quarter of the organised trade union movement.

Radical gestures

The leaders of the left wing in the TUC made far more radical speeches and gestures than the left wing at the present time. An 'Anglo-Russian Committee' of Russian and British trade union leaders, to cement an alliance allegedly to fight war, was organised, on which the left wing leaders

of the general council were prominent.

The left leaders were immensely popular throughout the working class, and gave very fiery speeches, some even calling for the 'socialist revolution'. They reflected the pressure of the masses, thoroughly aroused and alarmed at the threatened attacks on an already low standard of living.

committee to try to negotiate with the Conservative Government.

They were prepared even to accept a cut in wages for the miners as the price of a 'negotiated settlement'. In the Cabinet, the extreme right wing, were exerting pressure for a showdown. Under this pressure, Baldwin used the pretext of the *Daily Mail* printers' refusal to print a vicious attack on the unions and the miners, to break off negotiations.

After the TUC, with great difficulty, had succeeded in getting the printers reluctantly to print the editorial, they returned to the negotiations with the Prime Minister at Downing Street in the early hours of Sunday morning, where they were told "Mr Baldwin has gone to bed and cannot be disturbed."

Thus the ruling class deliberately provoked and precipitated the General Strike as a means of defeating the workers and forcing them to accept a lower standard of living.

No preparation

They got more than they bargained for! Hoping against hope for some sort of agreement, the TUC tremblingly had made no preparations for the strike whatsoever. But the magnificent capacity of the trade union and labour movement to improvise and organise came as a surprise to the government and even to the union leaders themselves. The first sections to be called out were the miners, dockers, seamen and workers in transport, heavy chemicals, building (except housing) and production of electric light and gas for industrial purposes.

The leaders of the Seamen's Union refused to join the strike and organised blacklegging. But in spite of this, the strike was absolutely solid, and the rank and file of the seamen supported the strike.

There was initiative and improvisation from below. The Trades Councils in every area formed Councils of Action, and strike committees. In some areas the Co-ops and Labour Parties

were involved, and in many less, also the Communist Party. Prominent leaders and individuals were co-opted to the Strike Committees.

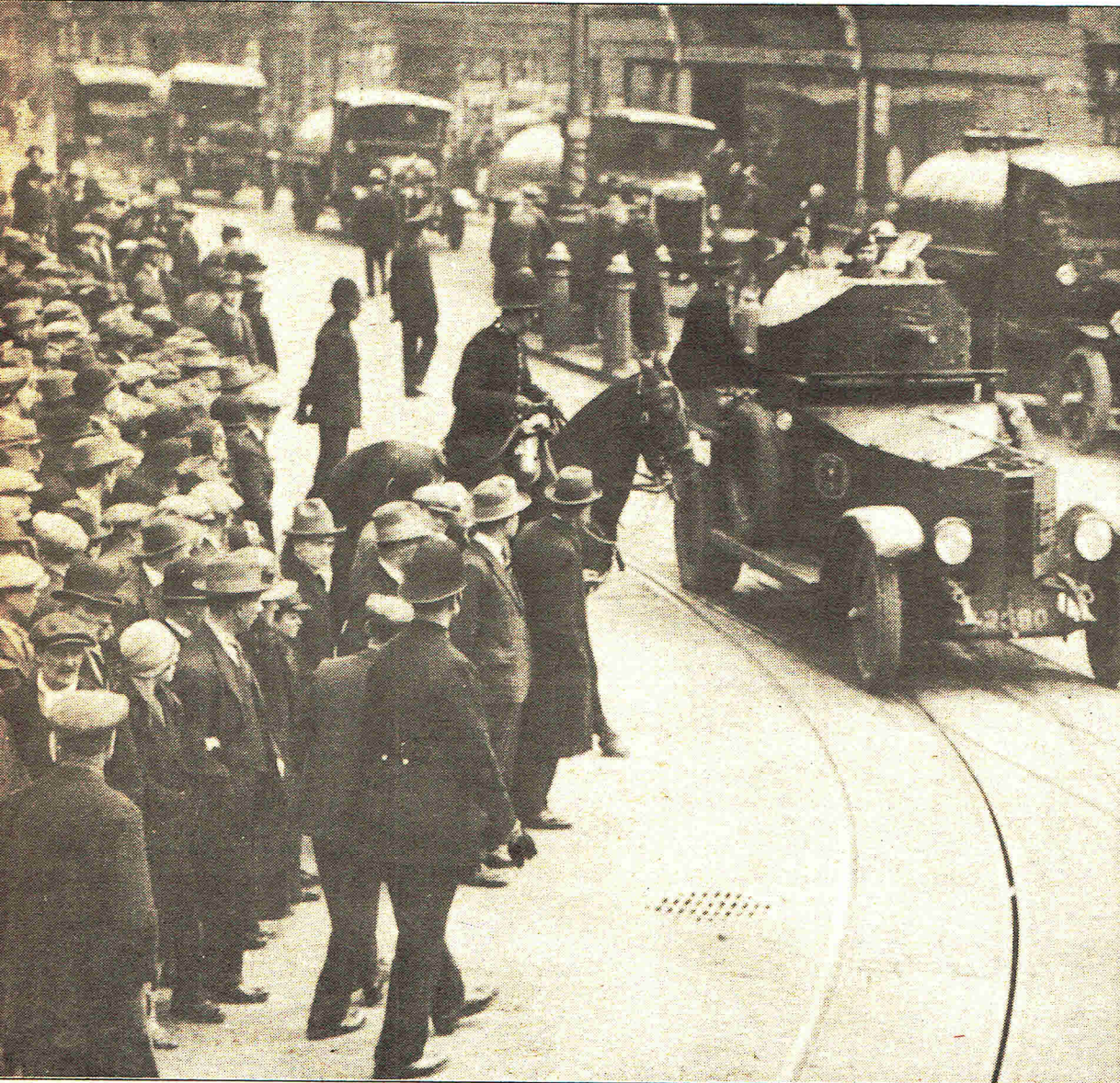
The organisation of the strike in the North East, for example, was to form committees in each area with an overall committee for Durham and Northumberland. Transport, food, a workers' defence force, publicity and permits were organised. In a sense these were the elements of an alternative government appearing to confront the so-called "legal" government.

The working class was caught completely by surprise by the betrayals of the "left" as well as the right wing leaders. This was especially so with regard to the Communist Party, where at that time not only the rank and file but also the leadership were interested in developing a revolutionary Party and preparing for the socialist revolution. Why then were they disarmed and unprepared by these events? They were caught by surprise because of the policy of Stalin and the Russian leaders who dictated the policy of the then Communist International.

The Anglo-Russian Committee, they had been taught, was a mobilisation of the British and Russian Trade Unions to fight war. They took at face value the speeches of the "left" leaders. At least they were instructed by Moscow to do so and accepted the policy.

In the strike, the rank and file of the Party had naturally been among the most active sections of the workers. After the immobilisation of their press, they reacted by bringing out duplicated papers with a total circulation of over 100,000.

But an examination of these papers indicate that they gave no perspective, either in their speeches or in writing, during the strike. There was no guidance, no perspective for the struggle beyond support for the strike and for the General Council.



Red cars were used to escort scab lorry drivers, moving in convoy for safety.

Many of the police were sympathetic and troops were held in reserve. Two submarines were used in the Thames for the purpose of providing light on the docks. But a warship which appeared in the Tyne was withdrawn after threats by the Council of Action to withdraw the safety and emergency men. So powerful was the Council of Action of Tyneside that Kingsley Wood, the representative of the government in the area, was compelled to negotiate with the Tyneside Regional Council of Action for permits for the transport of food.

Non-unionists joined in the struggle and joined the unions in droves; in some cases non-unionists even preceded the union workers in coming out on strike! There were militant demonstrations and processions in all the main towns and baton charges were used by the police. There were about three thousand arrests.

The brunt of the repression was felt by the then revolutionary Communist Party. Before the strike, twelve of their main leaders had been sentenced to imprisonment, and were safely out of the way on charges of "sedition".

The *Workers' Weekly* was raided and the press was immobilised by taking away key parts of the machinery. Up and down the country Communists were also being arrested, along with thousands of workers, who were charged with incitement and jailed for terms of six weeks to two months.

The ranks of the workers were solid, and each day more were coming out. But the very success of the strike provoked more fear in the General Council than in the government! They were terrified of the movement they had called into being on May 3rd.

On the eighth day there was a call-out of the engineers and other sections, although in many cases these were already coming out before the call to action. Thus on the eighth and ninth days the strike was extending.

Back door negotiation

But behind the scenes the General Council were "negotiating" with Sir Herbert Samuel, the chairman of the Samuel Commission who had recommended drastic cuts in wages, an added hour on the miners' day and district agreements.

Without consulting the miners, the General Council informed Samuel that the miners would accept a cut in wages. Samuel had no "official standing" with the government. Yet with no guarantees that the terms of the miserable agreement would be carried out, the "the lefts" as well as the rights on the General Council agreed precipitately and asked to see the Prime Minister, who accepted "surrender" terms.

Why was the General Council prepared to capitulate to the government when the strike was actually developing and the ranks of the working class were becoming more solid every day? Every day that passed there was a hardening of the attitude of the rank and file, as well as the lower leaders in all the districts in Britain.

J.H. Thomas, the then "leader" of the railmen put it in the crudest

terms: "God help Britain in any challenge to the Constitution unless the government won."

For Thomas, Labour leader Macdonald and the right wing leaders of the TUC, a victory of the government and thus of the employers was preferable to a victory of their own class. The "lefts" had no alternative to offer when it was no longer a question of woolly phrases, but of the concrete reality.

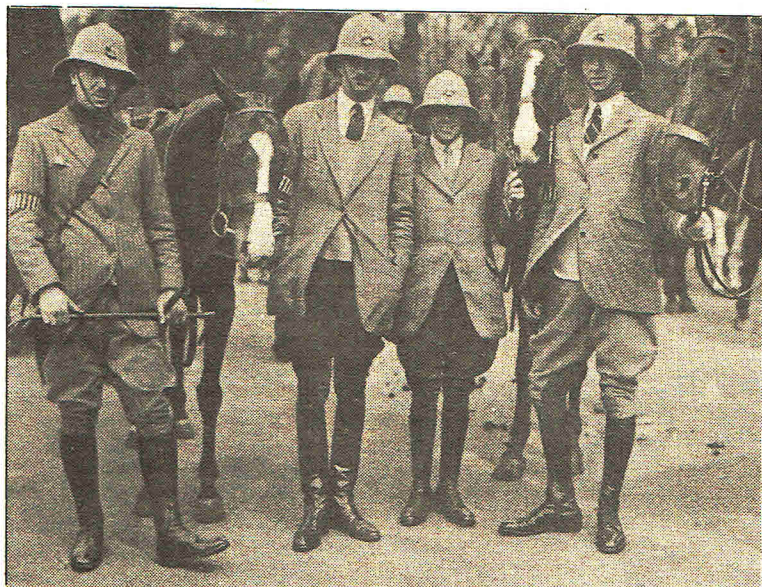
The problem of power had been clearly posed. In addition to that, the organisation of the strike was entirely in the hands of the lower ranks throughout the country. The General Council in effect was a passive recipient of the accomplished actions of the Councils of Actions and Strike Committees, whatever they were called in the localities. Each day that passed saw a strengthening of the power, initiative and resource of the committees in the localities.

Leaders' fears

The spectre that haunted the General Council and gave them sleepless nights was the possibility of their replacement in the struggle by the lower ranks who would threaten to by-pass them. In his book on the General Strike, Julian Symons, was compelled to remark: "They (the General Council) were not rash but feebly timid; they hoped for the collaboration of their opponents and never really trusted the mass of their supporters. They feared the consequences of complete victory more than those of a negotiated defeat." (My emphasis).

"The General Council was torn by conflicting desires. First, it wanted to make the strike effective; second, it wanted to make certain that control of it did not pass into the hands of revolutionary agitators." (My emphasis).

He quotes Thomas: "What I dreaded more than anything else, was this; if by any chance it should have got out of the hands of those who would be able to exercise some control, every sane man knows what would have happened... That danger, that fear, was always in our minds, because we wanted, at least, even in this struggle to direct a disciplined army."



Upper-class Empire builders all decked out to 'teach the blighters a lesson'.

In their panic to call off the strike, at a time when it was expanding and growing, the union leaders did not even put forward the elementary demand of every strike that there should be no victimisation and that every worker must be taken back. In his speech on the radio, Baldwin implacably declared that there were no "conditions" and that it was unconditional surrender in the strike. The scabs taken on must have first claims on the jobs. This was a signal for the employers to try to wreck, weaken or destroy union organisation.

The rank and file had greeted the decision to call off the strike with indignation and resentment:-

"We've been twisted"—Long Eaton Trades Council. "The men were like rock; the first man to bring the news was the sub editor of the *County Express* and after giving us the news he asked us what we were going to do about it. The answer was **double the pickets**".—Stourbridge. "The strike was 100% strong and could not get any stronger in that respect. But in organisation it was getting stronger and more efficient every day."—Blaina. "We were not at our maximum when the strike was called off—another 12 hours would have a position the like of which in our wildest moments we have never imagined."—Coventry. "The ranks of the strikers strengthened daily."—Goodwich. "Non-Unionists joined up at the end of each (engineering) shift"—Lincoln. "Everything was going perfectly when the bombshell fell"—Ramsgate. "The fight was just about to begin"—Wellinborough. "Every prospect of it growing stronger... Bitter feeling among the rank and file at the calling off."—Woking.

They felt themselves betrayed by the leadership. And it was the local leadership and this rank and file which was to save the situation from developing into a rout. When they heard of the conditions being offered by the employers, the railmen, dockers, engineers and other sections renewed the strike. In fact, two days after the General Strike was officially called off there were 100,000 more on strike!

The leaders of the different unions then issued instructions to their members to come out on strike—which they were already doing—and not to accept any terms in relation to wages and conditions worse than before the strike. There would be no going back unless there was no victimisation by the employers and the government.

Workers' fury

Faced with the veritable fury of the working class and the possibility of large-scale clashes in the localities, Baldwin then came forward in his hypocritical role of a "conciliator". He broadcast that the employers must take back the workers on the old terms, and that he would not countenance any attempt to break up the unions. The

employers consented. The railway unions negotiated an agreement with the railway leaders that there would be no victimisation, but they refused to take back any worker who was guilty of "intimidation or violence". The printers agreed not to hold any more meetings in work time, and on this concession the printers went back.

Thus what had begun as a tremendous movement ended up in defeat, and was only saved from rout by the solidarity and militancy of the local leaders and of the rank and file who stood shoulder to shoulder against the attempts of the employers to weaken the organisations of the working class.

From the first day the General Council had issued a statement to the ranks to "trust the leadership". During the course of the strike, there was not a single word of warning in all the agitation and propaganda of the Communist Party. They were caught completely unprepared and on one foot.

Had they been prepared, even in those days, they would have undoubtedly won over thousands of the best workers.

People learn far quicker under fire and in the heat of events, especially the active layers of the working class. But the howl of the CP of "betrayal", which was entirely unforeseen and unprepared for, came too late to have any effect except to demoralise their own ranks.

No criticism

They had been taught not to offer any real criticism of the "left" leaders, or even of the General Council, whom they saw as leaders of the struggle. They did not pose a single idea beyond the winning of the strike until it was too late. Moreover, they had not prepared in any way for this inevitable turn of events, given the situation, and the fact that without Marxist perspective and Marxist understanding the "left" leaders had no other course to take, except to join in the betrayal with their right wing colleagues.

The working class being caught completely unprepared by the betrayal from the top, and the CP leadership having failed utterly to warn against this before and during these great events, it was the Communist Party and revolutionary methods which were discredited.

Instead of enormous gains which should be inevitable in a period like that, on the basis of correct policies, strategy and tactics, the back of the Communist Party was broken. The Minority Movement disappeared.

By 1927 the trade union leaders, "lefts" and rights, having contemptuously cast aside the Anglo-Russian Committee, by breaking off relations, had turned to 'collaboration' with the employers in the Mond-Turner discussions. They could do this because of the mood of apathy and indifference which pervaded the trade union movement.

After the collapse of the general strike of 1926—too late—the CP tried to make a change and criticise the left union leaders—theoretically and practically. Palme-Dutt, their leading 'theoretician' at the time quoted the criticism of the left leaders made in 1924! Not a sentence, not a word could he find in 1925, or 1926, explaining in theoretical or practical terms the role of the left in the material published by the Communist Party.

Brazil, Bolivia, Pakistan

Generals hold on- but for how long?

FACED WITH relentless demands for direct presidential elections, the federal congress in Brasilia had a straight choice on 25 April.

Either they could allow the concession of direct presidential elections in 1985 or risk being swept out of office by the Brazilian people.

The constitutional amendment though, was too much for the generals who have dominated Brazil for two decades. It failed by just 22 votes to gain the two-thirds majority needed. But the big demonstrations outside the Chamber of Deputies showed that the fight would go on. Some opposition leaders and protestors were talking of a general strike, and demonstrators shouted defiantly the "people on the street will overcome the dictatorship".

Nearly half a million had marched in Sao Paulo in January with other huge

By David Churchley

protests in Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and other cities. The government's political problems are made worse by the 210% inflation, and what is expected to be a \$100,000 million debt by the end of the year.

Hunger riots

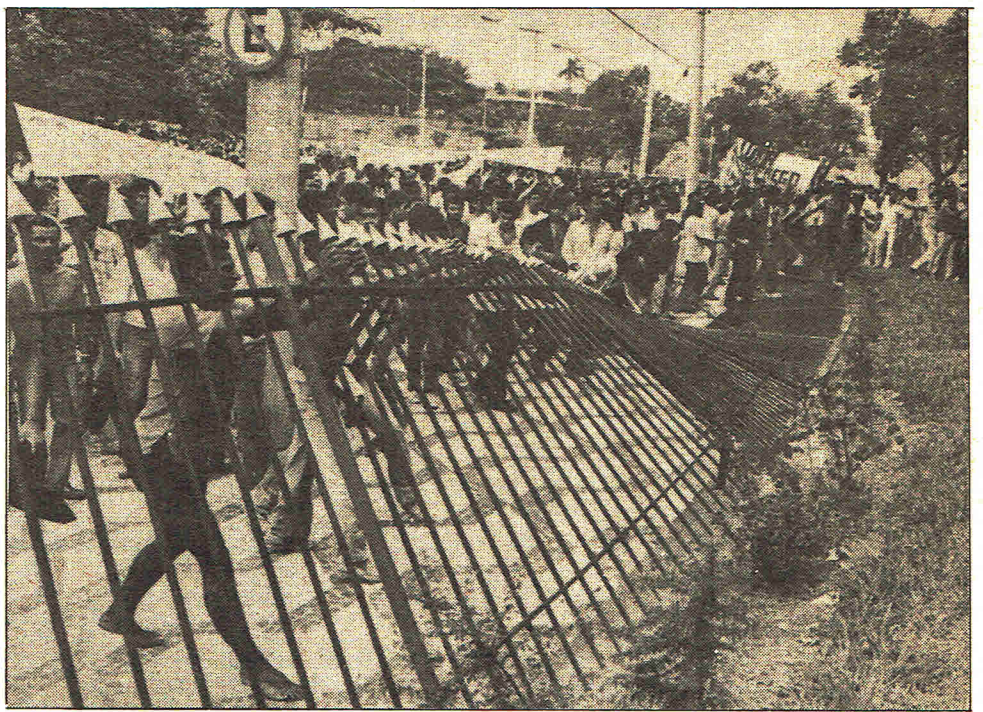
The hunger riots of 1983 are likely to become more commonplace; stores in the bigger cities are now regularly looted. In the drought rid-

Poverty is increasing. Staple diet foods such as haricot beans have slumped by 45% while the production of dollar earning export crops such as coffee has soared by 80%. According to UNICEF 53% of all children in Brazil are starving. This predicament and the elections in Argentina have led to the demands for accountability through direct elections.

den North East, infant mortality has reached about 25%.

The opposition has so far co-ordinated political demonstrations but it is the calls for a general strike which worry the military, many of whom would be happy to step aside and let someone else drink from the poisoned chalice.

The top military bosses



Rioters in Sao Paulo last year.

declared in February that they could no longer tolerate the insults being aimed at President Figueiredo by "bad Brazilians who devote themselves entirely to agitation". They fear the fighting spirit of the workers who are forced to struggle by the wages falling below the basic \$50 a month and the rise of food prices.

Strike wave

Over 40,000 of Brazil's most militant industrial workers, the metal workers of Sao Paulo state have returned to work after a week of strikes for higher pay. Last year, similar

demonstrations saw hundreds injured and thousands arrested. Last year's strike forced the government to try wage indexation, but these measures have not aided workers.

Workers in Argentina are learning that "democracy" in the guise of a capitalist politician like Alfonsin does not by itself put food on the table. Brazilian workers may have to go through that experience themselves to appreciate this but it is clear that workers have overwhelming power if it was channelled into a battle to overthrow the society the generals represent.

Some of the American ruling class realise this. Senator

Frank Church, mulling over the Central American crisis cast his eyes beyond Nicaragua. "Somehow, some day, this country has got to learn to live with revolution in the third world. It's endemic.

Revolution

"It's relatively easy to suppress revolution in Grenada so we congratulate ourselves. It's more difficult to suppress in Nicaragua or Central America, so we fret about that. But it will be impossible when it comes to Argentina or Brazil."

The generals in Brazil may see the truth of this statement very soon.

Bolivian workers show their power

THE CONFEDERATION of Bolivian Workers (COB) has threatened a 72-hour general strike from 30 April unless the austerity programme of President Hernan Siles Zuazo is withdrawn.

This follows a demonstration of at least 70,000 in La Paz and a three day general strike from 13 to 16 April which according to the *Financial Times* "paralysed transport and closed shops, cinemas and theatres in La Paz".

Political instability

Siles' "national recovery" plan included a 75% devaluation of the peso, a 400% rise in petrol prices and an average 200% increase in basic food products. The President is now in his fifth cabinet in only 18 months of rule. The Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) rejoined his government on 11 April, having left it 14 months before.

Significantly, Siles can only survive through a "Popular Front" government including the small Bolivian Communist Party in the two key ministries of Mining (the main industry) and Labour. He obviously hopes class collaboration can



Soldiers in La Paz. Capitalist class fear effect of a military coup.

produce what military dictatorship could not, a docile working class!

Bankruptcy

Price rises in January and February alone would, over a year reach 2000%. The budget deficit now accounts for 18% of national output. Bolivia's foreign debts are small by Latin American standards. At \$4.5 billion it

is only 5% of Brazil's, but this debt is causing enormous concern because it is not being "serviced" i.e. paid back.

"It could be the first time a sovereign state went bankrupt" said the UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, while the *Wall Street Journal* feared that "a financial debacle in Bolivia could affect the credit rating of its neighbours."

In other words, Bolivia

Pakistani socialist in danger

ACCORDING TO reports from Pakistan, Mr Ghulam Abbas has suffered a severe heart attack in Lahore's notorious torture centre, the Royal Fort. He has still not been admitted to hospital.

Ghulam Abbas, a leading left winger and deputy secretary general of the Pakistan People's Party Punjab was arrested in January and taken to Royal Fort for investigation. His brother told the press reporters in April that his condition is very bad and that he had been tortured.

The arrest coincides with the release of most of the right wing leadership of PPP

arrested during anti-Zia mass movements last year. Ghulam Abbas an ex-student leader had been attacked several times in the past by religious fanatic students who wanted to kill him because of his magnificent stand against the right wing religious parties and the dictatorship.

After working underground and a period of exile, he took a leading role in organising young people and students in the anti-Zia movements last August.

Mr Abbas has been branded a "terrorist" by the junta but they really fear him because of his tour of Europe last year which was widely reported by the press

at that time. An interview published in *Struggle*, the Pakistan Marxist paper was banned by the military rulers.

Ghulam Abbas has always fought the dictatorship with political methods and the terrorist charges against him are ridiculous. Members of the PPP have already demanded his release.

Letters of protest from the British labour movement demanding Ghulam Abbas' release should be sent to Punjab Martial Law Authorities, Provincial Assembly Building, Lahore, Pakistan, with copies to, *The Struggle*, Box 46, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8.

could be the short fuse to massive Latin American explosions, hence the austerity programme to get the debt paid and to persuade the Communist Party to hand out the medicine.

Siles was elected in 1980 after a general strike but the military stopped him taking office. *The Wall Street Journal* explained "two years later, a general strike, along with a US cut off of all aid, forced the military to relinquish power after nearly two decades in which a succession of generals ran both the government (usually badly) and the cocaine smuggling business (very profitably).

"Washington, which wants the fledgling democracy here to survive, is concerned enough to have authorised US ambassador, Edwin Corr, to intervene twice in recent months to squelch coup plots... the coup talk these days, however, has a new

element—fear. Government officials, opposition leaders, labour chiefs, businessmen and diplomats worry that the next overthrow attempt could plunge Bolivia into a bloody civil war."

Coup threats

American imperialism is not concerned for human life. They fear the constant threats of coups because the existence of capitalism could be threatened by an insurrection of the working class along the lines of the 1952 revolutionary movement. The colossal struggles of the Bolivian working class are burned into the history of Bolivia.

There have been four general strikes in the last six months. August 1983 saw a demonstration in La Paz of 100,000 demanding amongst other things the nationalisation of the banks. On 21

November there was a 24 hour general strike while a 48 hour strike in December brought the Cabinet's resignation. A further strike was held at the beginning of April.

The will of the Bolivian workers clearly can not be crushed but a demoralising alliance of workers parties with the strike breakers of the capitalist parties only prepares the ground for a bloody reckoning by the military with the working class.

However, if the COB adopted a socialist perspective, to use the power of the working class not just to threaten capitalism but to overthrow it, Bolivia could be the first of the Socialist United States of America.

By Mike Waddington

France, Dominican Republic

French unions fight "Socialist" government

THE SUCCESSFUL 24-hour general strike in the province of Lorraine, at the beginning of April, and the series of one-day strikes by different sections of French workers show the 'honeymoon period' given to the Socialist/Communist government by the French working class has come to an end.

For a period following the wage freeze of June-September 1982 and the announcement of the Delors plan (the government's austerity programme) in March 1983 it seemed the working class was prepared to accept the arguments of government ministers and the leaders of the left parties and trade unions that certain sacrifices were necessary to help the government overcome the enormous economic problems left by previous right wing administrations.

Indeed, despite the continuing pressure on wages and the inexorable increase in unemployment under the left government the number of days lost through strikes in 1983 was the lowest figure since 1965.

Jobs destroyed

However, now the consequences of the government's austerity programme are being clearly seen and felt by millions of working people and their families, growing numbers of workers are taking to struggle to defend the gains of the past.

Bank workers, and civil and public servants, have both been involved in two separate 24-hour national strikes for the defence of wages this year.

However, it is around the struggle to defend jobs that the largest mobilisation of workers have taken place. Shipyard workers, miners, and most recently the Lorraine steelworkers and iron-ore miners have all "marched on Paris" to protest against job losses. The steel industries will be particularly hard hit by the plans to "restructure" key industrial sectors to serve the interests of French capitalism.

The recently announced 'steel plan' involves up to 30,000 job losses in an industry already decimated by the crisis of the capitalist system. Between 1974 and 1983, 63,000 steelworkers had already lost their jobs. Lorraine, whose economy is largely based on the steel industry, is fast becoming an industrial wasteland.

Workers in other important branches of French industry are to suffer the same treatment. 30,000 jobs (out of a total workforce of 57,000) are to go from the coal industry before 1990, at least 5,000 in shipbuilding by 1986 (out of a total of 20,000), and 16,000 in the chemicals industry. 6,000

job losses have just been announced at Citroën, and 5,000 more will go at Michelin, France's second largest private company. Renault, the state-owned car firm, is expected to reduce its workforce by over 7,000. Despite the government's makeshift measures to contain unemployment, the number of jobless is rapidly accelerating. 50,000 jobs were lost in March alone, following the even more catastrophic figure of 58,000 jobs in February.

Mitterrand's radical speeches before May 1981 now sound like a sick joke to the mass of workers. "Our objective is not to modernise capitalism... but to replace it by socialism", announced the then leader of the Socialist Party at the party congress at Metz in 1979.

Today Mitterrand stresses the need to help "increase companies' profit margins" to give a boost to investment. Yet, were it not for the massive amounts of public money handed over to big business, investment levels under the left government would be below zero.



Georges Marchais.

With the rising opposition of the labour movement to the government's austerity measures, the leaders of the PCF (the French Communist Party) have been forced on occasion to openly criticise government policy, despite there being four 'Communist' ministers in the left government. Putting forward the position of his party on the 'steel plan', Georges Marchais declared that the government's industrial policy is "leading to a complete failure".

But on no occasion do PCF 'leaders' explain the basic, fundamental, socialist arguments that the struggle to defend jobs and living standards must be linked to

the wider struggle to break the grip of big business over the French economy.

Instead they repeat the worn-out argument that what is needed is a new period of economic 'growth'. The truth is, however, that so long as ownership, control and management of the key levers of the French economy remain monopolised by the profiteers, a prolonged period of regular growth remains a utopia.

Despite the minority position of the PCF ministers within the government, non-Communist workers increasingly identify the 'Communist' Party with the government's anti-working class policy. Opposition to continued participation of the four 'Communist' ministers in the government is mounting within the ranks of the party and reflected by the growing tension in the higher echelons of the party apparatus. When asked how the 'steel plan' would affect the relations between the PCF ministers and the rest of the government, André Sainjon, the general secretary of the CGT metalworkers' federation and a member of the PCF's Central Committee, replied bluntly, "that's their problem!"

However, the overriding factor determining the party leaders' behaviour is their understanding that should the PCF be seen to withdraw support from the government, this would be taken as the green light for an even more generalised mobilisation of the working class against the government's policy.

The 'Communist' Party leaders are absolutely terrified of finding themselves at the head of a mass movement of opposition to the government. They are therefore determined not to break with the Socialists.

But the 'Communist' leaders will not be able to escape the pressure of the class struggle indefinitely. With two more years of austerity before the Parliamentary elections in 1986 they can only remain in government at the risk of seriously discrediting the PCF in the eyes of the French working class. It is likely, but by no means definite, that, as a result of the mounting pressure among the rank and file of the party, the PCF leaders will sooner or later be forced to do an abrupt about-turn and break with the Socialists.

For this process to be reversed, a real Marxist leadership and a fighting socialist programme, linking the day-to-day struggles of the French working class to the need to overthrow the capitalist system, are urgent requirements.



Police face demonstrations in Longwy, the steel centre of Lorraine.

DESPITE THE nationalisation of six big industrial groups and almost the entire banking sector, by far the majority of the French economy remains in private hands.

Of the 318 industrial, commercial and service-sector groups that employ over 2,000 workers or have an annual turnover superior to 800 million francs (about £70 million) only 42 are state owned. The public sector is responsible for 28% of GNP

and employs 23% of the active population.

The nationalised industries are far from being models of socialist management. During the early days of the Left government the Minister for Industry explained to the heads of the nationalised industries, "the normal methods of management for industrial companies will fully apply to your groups... and the profitability of capital invested will have to be normal".

An argument often used by the 'Communist' Party leaders is that the government "must lean more on the nationalised industries and the banking sector" to give an impulse to the whole French economy. The Marxists explain, however, that so long as the public sector remains subordinate to the much larger private sector, it is the capitalists who have overall control of the economy and of society as a whole.

A model of instability

ON 17 APRIL, the Wall Street Journal recommended the Dominican Republic as a model of stability for the Caribbean.

Six days later, six people were killed in the capital, Santo Domingo and 300 arrested in protests against price increases averaging 80% on basic foodstuffs. The increases were imposed by the government of Salvador Jorge Blanco (whose party the PRD is affiliated to the Socialist International!) after negotiations with the IMF for the renewal of a £450 loan.

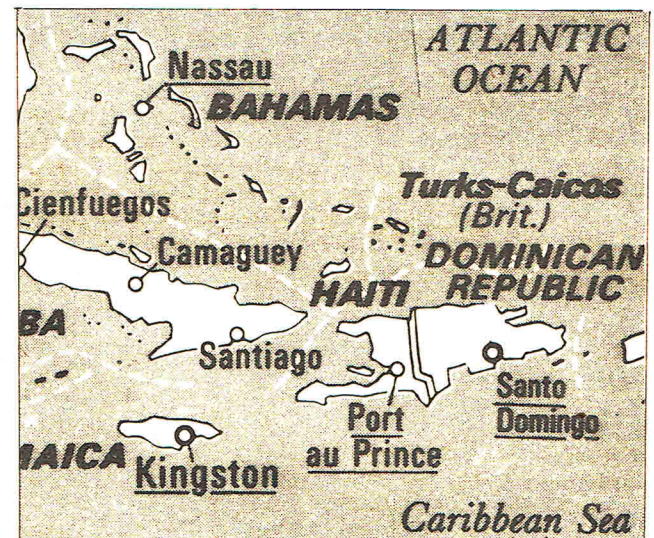
After three days the death toll had reached 50, with 300 injuries and 5,000 arrests, including the secretary-general of the Dominican Trades Union Federation.

IMF make the workers pay

There has not been such violence on the streets since the United States invasion of the country in 1965. The riots not only affected Santo Domingo but also spread to other towns.

The IMF austerity programme, demanded as the price for the loan, is the traditional answer of the bosses to the crisis in the system—make the workers pay. The crisis in this area has been developing for some time.

The Dominican Republic used to produce up to a million tonnes of bauxite a year, but the Aluminium Company of America ended its operations there. "The company just does not need the ore. We have had to abandon bauxite mining in the country and we have not shipped any ore in the past 18 months". *The Times* explained.



The armed forces are said to have issued a statement of support for the government's programme but the previously mentioned laudatory article in the *Wall Street Journal* pointed to real instability. They mention the poverty, illiteracy and health problems, and say that while rumours continue about the "possibility of a military coup, the United States is sending a direct message in support of those who defend the democratic process".

US supports 'democracy'

There can be no question of a return to vicious military dictatorship similar to the Trujillo regime which ruled the country between 1930 and 1961. That is why the United States is supporting the 'democratic process', because they fear for the future. An attempted armed forces' coup would undoubtedly bring workers once again out on the streets and the very existence of capitalism on the island would be brought into question. Best for the time being to allow a "socialist" to administer the punishment.

The decline of the bauxite industry has had severe repercussions for all Caribbean countries and as the *Financial Times* said (27 April, 1984), "This week's riots in the Dominican Republic sparked by economic policies designed to fulfil the terms of an IMF loan, will force several neighbouring governments to think more than twice about their relations with the fund...".

"The prospect of running battles in the street over food prices, however, could embolden the region's recipients of credits from the fund to ask for some stay in executing unpopular economic changes... some governments in the region which might see a warning in the carnage and destruction in Santo Domingo, are pressed for time whether to consider an IMF programme."

A shock for Reagan

If Reagan thought the Grenada invasion had becalmed the Caribbean, this week will have made him reconsider.

Letters

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

Levy for miners now

Dear Comrades,
The magnificent strike of the miners had engendered support and enthusiasm from all sections of the labour movement. That a decisive, qualitative change in the mood and consciousness of the working class has taken place, there can be no doubt. This mood was perfectly captured in the atmosphere of the recent BLOC conference and given its fullest expression by the Marxist delegates.
The point is, I think, that there is now a firm belief amongst workers, that our class can win and go on to greater victories in the future; a belief which perhaps many workers have

not had over the last few years. Many millions of workers not only want the miners to win, but want to materially assist the struggle. The miners' fight, they conclude, is every worker's fight.
At a crucial juncture such as this, leadership becomes a sober duty, not an honour. The call for a trade union levy to support the strike and extend its effect must be made by the leadership. Many workers would willingly give £2, £3, £5 or even £10 a week in order to assist the struggle. This would be a decisive answer to the attempt by the NCB and the Tories to starve the miners into submission.
David Robinson
Bradford Moor LPYS
and NUT

No soft pedal from police

Dear Comrades,
Picketing at 'Lea Hall, Staffordshire, there was this Inspector diverting traffic in the middle of the road. A bloke on a bike came down the road.
Both of them tried to get away from each other, mov-

ing about like bees, but they collided and fell down. The bloke on the bike hit his head on the floor. Two coppers came to his rescue, helping him to the side of the road.
After he recovered, the inspector took his notebook out and gave the cyclist a ticket!
Yours fraternally
Dave Watson
Whitwell NUM

Why I support the miners

Dear Comrades,
Reading the article on working in the mines—"Dirty, dangerous, but vital" the other week, reminded me of a visit to a colliery near Wolverhampton on a school trip.

I remembered the warm air and the cold air. There was no air at the face. The dust was thick in the air and I couldn't see my friend walking in front of me. That's why I support the NUM.
Patrick Westmore
Vice-chair
Isle of Wight CLP

Tory tipples

Dear Comrades,
The SDP are not the only ones partial to claret. On a recent picket of our local Tory Association, we observed three big refuse sacks full of discarded bottles of wine, some only half empty.
Perhaps this is why wine drinkers were so favoured by the Tory budget last time!
Yours fraternally
Laurence D Church
Hastings LPYS

Hard-up support

Dear Comrades,
At our recent Ward meeting a letter was read out asking branches to consider putting May Day greetings in *Militant* (the letter was passed on from the YS).
The majority of Ward members agreed that I should write to you saying that although we agree with *Militant's* struggle for socialist policies, and are opposed to the witch-hunt, at the present time we are not able to help you financially.
However, the majority of us agree with what you are fighting for and many of us take *Militant* every week. We hope that we will be in a better position to help you when we have resolved our financial problems.
Yours fraternally
Dawn Churchill
Secretary
Derwent Ward LP
Derby

The Russians are coming?

Dear Comrades,
The Russians are coming. There will be 130,000 of our men involved altogether. Of that lot 58,000 will be specially transported across the channel to West Germany. The rest of the numbers will be made up from our forces already stationed on the continent.
Of the contingent going across the Channel 35,000 go by air and the rest in 82 sailings from southern ports. Yes, in September our boys will be "over there".
Don't tell anyone but it is all secretly codenamed "Lionheart '84" and we are getting it for bargain basement prices. A mere snip of £31



Young Socialists have a history of fighting back against cheap labour schemes. Above—lobby of Parliament in 1982.

Sandwich board employment—a sign of the times

Dear *Militant*,
While out campaigning for CND on the main street in Ashington, I rubbed my eyes in disbelief on seeing a youth of about 17, wearing a sandwich board around his shoulders.
Looking more like a grotesque parody of bygone years, than a product of the technological age, his 'job' was to parade the main

shopping area, advertising a national supermarket chain.
It appears that the 'upwardly mobile' supermarket management consider such a degrading practice a cheap and effective form of advertising. What is more worrying, however, is that people are now drifting back into a serf mentality, with a proportionate drop in self esteem.

Divide and rule, or degrade and rule; the end result can only spell disaster for the disinherited members of an increasingly inhumane society.
Resignation to the 'inevitable' is an apathetic, fatalistic response that should be challenged at every opportunity. Media hypnosis must be effectively countered.

If the thought of beggars returning to the streets of Britain seems a laughable proposition to the sophisticated, so would the thought of sandwich boards a couple of years ago.
Yours faithfully
Derek Seely
Wansbeck CND

Booked for selling

Dear *Militant*,
On Saturday 24 March we were stopped by a policeman and booked in Sunderland town centre for selling papers without a street traders licence. Under the Tyne and Wear Act it is a criminal offence for street traders to sell without a permit. However, in Newcastle paper sellers are exempt.

The police have passed us selling before without stopping us. So when we asked why the policeman had chosen today, he said: "My sergeant told me when I left that if I saw the *Militant* lads selling—or any other sellers—to book them".
Obviously the police can use this by-law as an excuse for intimidation and victimisation when it suits them. So much for democracy and freedom of speech. We can't afford a

licence for selling papers although the local bosses' rag, the *Sunderland Echo* wouldn't have any difficulty paying for licences for its paper sellers.
The Labour-controlled borough council is responsible for deciding whether to prosecute so we will be campaigning to reverse this disgraceful position.
Yours fraternally
Bob Young and Fred Gent
Sunderland North LPYS

Don't ask me

Don't ask me
About the miners
I couldn't say I had a clue
Politics is way beyond me
There's nothing you or I can do.

Don't ask me
To vote for you lot
Tell me really: what's the point?
You're all the same: just full of promise.
That wouldn't buy the Sunday joint!

Don't ask me
To join the union
I get paid to come to work
You're just a bunch of idle loafers
Look at me: I never shirk!

Don't ask me
... To join the dole queue?
I've worked bloody hard for you!
There must be some misunderstanding
What on earth am I to do?

Don't ask me
To sit and shiver
While they cut my benefits.
And to think I voted Tory!
What a bunch of hypocrites!

Don't ask me
To work for peanuts.
I'm as skilled a man as you!
You shouldn't be allowed to pay
The dreadful wages that you do.

Boom, what boom?

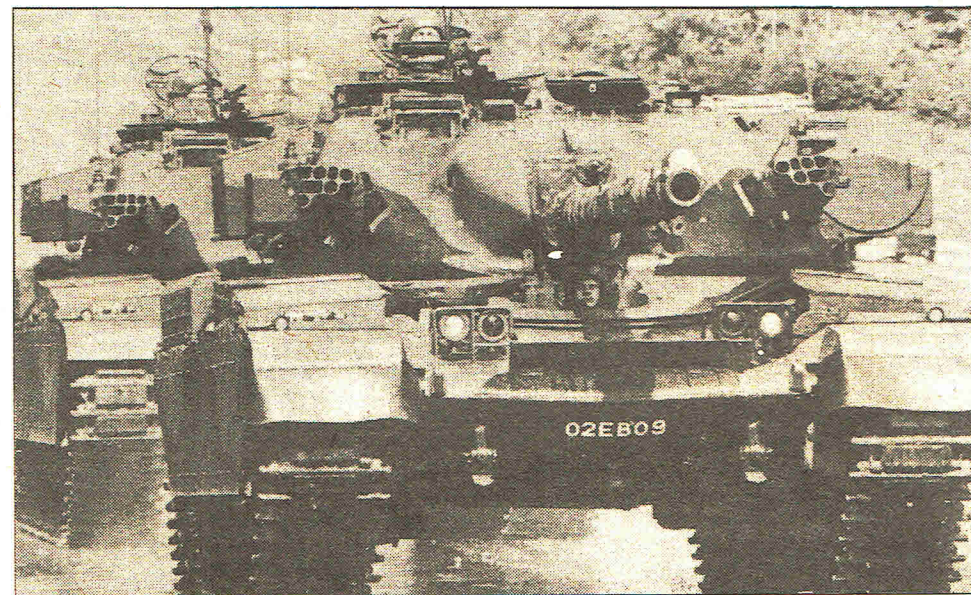
Comrades,
Thatcher's economic revival continues apace in the West Midlands. In the last few weeks, 1,200 redundancies have been announced at Lucas's in Birmingham; 400 at Servis Washing Machines in Darlington, 110 at GKN Sankey in Bilston; 85 at Old Hall Tableware, Bloxwich and 40 at Electric Construction, Wolverhampton. That's nearly 2,000 jobs in 2 weeks, and they're only the ones that I've heard about. If this is what happens during the 'boom', what's the next recession going to be like?
Yours
Nick Worth
West Bromwich East CLP

Burnt offering?

Dear Comrades,
I recently read in *The Times* that Ian MacGregor, the NCB chairman, had proposed a 'toast' in the name of England at a recent Honourable Artillery Company dinner. The reality of industrial England is that with Ian MacGregor and his capitalist allies running Britain, the toast is more likely to be burnt with the workers having to scrape for a living.
Yours fraternally
Dave Hardy
Nottingham and District NUR

Di's clothing secrets

Dear Comrades,
Hardly a day goes by without us having the latest update on Princess Di's wardrobe. "How does she do it?" "What's her secret?"
She does it by spending over two thousand pounds a week on clothes, and on that budget who needs any secrets? Has anyone seen her wear the same thing twice?
Who do they think wants to know about Lady Di's stockings while the miners' strike and Liverpool's struggle is going on?
Yours fraternally
J. Prince (no connection I hope) Rotherwell LP



Government priorities mean spending £millions on 'wargames' not on peoples' needs.

million will cover the total cost. It might be a long way to Tipperary but it costs a bit more to get our boys "over there".
It's marvellous isn't it. It is all being done to safeguard our rights to read the *Express*, the *Sun* and other fine examples of free speech.
Capitalism isn't the language of priorities. As you know, there isn't a penny more for Liverpool. Michael Heseltine, the present Minister of Defence, knows the score. He went to Toxteth after the riots. Remember, he found out all about the problems, the deprivation and the poverty of Liverpool then. But the Russians are coming...
Yours fraternally
Bob Wylie
Glasgow

Liverpool Council keeps its promises

Below is Derek Hatton's (Deputy Leader) speech to Liverpool Council on 25 April, which took up the Liberals' proposals and put forward Labour's alternative.



IT IS very interesting the small gathering of Liberals on the front bench, discussing what they were going to do about the Tories' amendment. It is very interesting that the comment that came out from Tony Loftus (Liberal). What he said was, "hold on a minute, we can't agree, because if we do it will come out as a Tory/Liberal deal."

The point of the matter is they can call it what they like. Not only do we know what it means, the people of Liverpool also know what it means, since the results of last May.

Liberal-Tory alliance

I think that there has been much talk at the beginning of this debate about the question of a 171% or 76% rate increase. Certainly we have never denied the fact that if somebody attempted to actually manage the books of this authority, under the control of the government, they would have to increase the rates by that sort of amount.

We have never denied that! What we have said though, is that we are not prepared to manage the books, under the Tory dictates, that have been imposed upon us from Whitehall.

We are not prepared to do what the Liberals have done in this city, and that is Thatcher's dirty work for her, when they complied with the Tory governments' exigencies. That is not what we are prepared to do.

Our rate increase, that we are putting forward, is there in black and white, as 9% unlike other political parties. The amount that we are suggesting is not 171%. Neither is it the 25%, coming out now from the Liberals and Tories.

Winning the battle

I think that it has got to be said that to talk about a 25% rate increase on the back of the people of this city, would, in many ways, put them below the poverty line. What they (the Liberals) are literally talking about is pushing people further down the factory road, faster than Thatcher would do herself. That's the reality of this sort of rate increase, which is being proposed this morning.

As well as the rate increase, there are the local authority employees, who

now fully understand the lies and distortions of the Liberals. They are no longer kidded, no longer conned, by the sort of threats that have been made here by the Liberals. They understand exactly what it would mean if they did anything else but support the Labour Party at this moment.

It is very interesting the comment made before about the last 12 months being a wasted year.

It certainly wasn't a wasted year for the seven or eight hundred people who got brand new jobs with the local authority. It certainly wasn't a wasted year for the 11,000 families who will be moving into brand new council housing as a result of Labour control.

Wasted year?

It won't be a wasted year for those council house tenants who got the highest rents outside of London, when it was under Liberal control, who have now got some decoration allowance to compensate for this.

It certainly won't be a wasted year for thousands of young people in this city, who have never had any possibility, any hope, any future whatever. It won't be a wasted year for any of these sections of Liverpool society.

They understand what it is about, and are responding in the way that they are. Because we are told further Liberal lies today.

They have told us there will be no job losses under their particular budget. As has been explained, not only by members of our party, but also by the city treasurer himself, that these proposals they are putting forward are unworkable. What it will mean is that those 800 people who have started work will be thrown on the dole at the end of their 12 months.

It will mean that the 130 people who have been taken on permanently, from the building workers union, will



Lobby of council meeting, 25 April.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

be put out on the dole. It will mean that something like 1,000 people, not only through "natural wastage", which is a contradiction in terms, but because your proposals are unworkable, will be thrown on the dole at the end of their 12 months.

National leadership

We are talking about something like over 5,000 people being made redundant, because of your par-

ty and elsewhere, on the basis of not only what we saw on 29 March, but also in other cities as well.

There is no way that this Tory government could ever walk into Liverpool to talk about getting rid of jobs, let alone actually come into it. The working people of this city will stop Thatcher and her commissioners coming in, not some cobbled together deal between the Tories and Liberals today. That's the way we will stop that particular action actual-

up with something, then getting together as they have done in the last 10 years. At the end of the day because of certain renegades in our own party, we are not able to get through our own particular budget.

We are not prepared to put forward any compromise, on the basis of no loss of jobs, no loss of services, and no massive rate increases. People can be forgiven for being bemused by what is happening today.

What we say quite clearly is on the basis of May 3 is that with the massive swing to Labour, we are finding on the door step, on the basis of a whole front-bench disappearing, we will be coming back here, to the annual general meeting of the council, with a much increased majority.

We will have at least 60 seats, this side of the chamber (applause). Saying clearly as we did, to the people of Liverpool last year, that not only do we make promises before the election, we carry them out after the election! (applause)

Not standing alone

In conclusion, we are now moving to a position, where Liverpool is not standing alone. More and more Labour authorities, more and more trade unions, up and down the country, more and more workers in struggle, are understanding and testing that they have to take the fight on. When the NUM are successful, it will be like the Seventh cavalry of the

trade union movement, coming to the support of this particular struggle.

Certainly, we are in a position, and we understand absolutely, that Liverpool should not, and cannot, stand alone, in the struggle against Thatcher. We link up with the NUM, we link-up with the workers at GCHQ, we link-up with other Labour local authorities who are faced with exactly the same position.

Linking-up struggles.

Unlike the Liberals, who since 1972 have simply complied with successive Tory governments, and since '79 have done Thatcher's work for her, we are saying to this Tory government, we are not prepared to do your dirty work for you. The people of Liverpool are saying that a Labour Council has kept its promises, and we are prepared to support it even more.

When we do return on May 3, we will carry out our promises, just like this year, with an increased majority. The Tory government will have to understand that! I am confident when that happens, that we will be in a position then where we will be able to push forward a budget!

After the battle has been won, it won't be about an illegal budget, but it will be a legal budget on the basis the we have won the battle, and got the money off the government. (Applause)

National conference Saturday, 23 June Liverpool

Organised by Merseyside Labour and Trade Union Campaign to discuss:
Defence of local authorities, support for Liverpool council, save Metropolitan councils, support miners
(Details in later issue)

ticular budget (applause from visitors).

We hear talk about what our national leadership is doing, or not doing. Today the NEC of the LP is considering a resolution, that was passed unanimously, by its local government subcommittee, supporting the Liverpool position. When that goes through, Neil Kinnock, who is the servant of the party, will come out totally, in support of the Liverpool position.

Who'll be a commissioner?

He is not like David Steel, whose party says we support nuclear disarmament, and he goes on the TV, and says I don't care what they say (applause). That's the sort of dishonesty and deceit we saw from that man, who yesterday tried to claim how he was going to be the saviour of Liverpool.

We believe in democracy; and we see democracy in our own ranks, unlike in your party (Liberals). Comments have been made today that by September seven and a half thousand jobs will go.

Let me tell you what will happen by September. By then, there will have been such a mobilisation in this ci-

ly happening.

It has got to be said as well, I think it's got to be asked as well, the Liberals are talking today, that a commissioner is going to come in.

I'll tell you what; it was reported to us by the national leaders of our party, that even Patrick Jenkin himself, put his hands in the air when approached by John Cunningham, and said, "who on earth could I put into Liverpool as a commissioner anyway? Even MacGregor wouldn't take that!" Maybe the Liberal party has someone to take the job, someone like Clarke, Croft, Kemp, (Liberal front bench), maybe they would do it! (Applause)

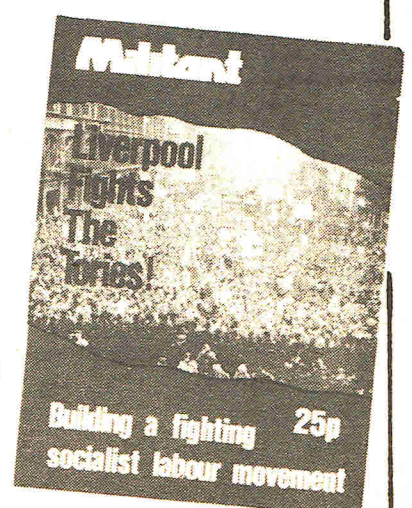
Chairman, a lot of people in the council chamber, a lot of people outside as well are very bemused as well, as to why the Liberals and Tories have called this meeting today. Really, it is an actual repeat of what happened on the 29 March. We said that it would be a repeat of what happened then.

Workers will stop Thatcher

What you would see was the Liberals come up with something, the Tories come

NEW
MILITANT
PAMPHLET
ON
LIVERPOOL
articles on the
struggles and
how the
movement has
been built.

25p (40p post included) 5 or more copies post free from
Militant,
1 Mentmore
Terrace, London
E8 3PN





FRATERNAL
 May Day
 greetings
 from
INOABA YA
BASEBENZI,
 journal of the
 Marxist
 Workers
 Tendency of
 the ANC of
 South Africa.
 Forward to
 International
 Socialism,
 Workers of
 the world
 unite!



Sheffield
 Hillsborough
 LPYS
 Fight for a socialist
 Labour victory

Blackpool LPYS
 May Day
 greetings to all
 comrades from
 Blackpool LPYS
 'lets turn the
 lights out on
 the bosses and
 their system.

GMBATU
Sunderland
No.2
Boilermakers
Section

"The great appear
 great because we
 are on our knees.
 Let us rise."
 Fraternal Greetings
 A. Carty President
 J. Hall Secretary

A future for South
 Wales—a socialist
 plan for coal "on
 strike until we eat
 grass"
PONTYPRIDD
 LPYS

Mansfield Labour
 Party Young
 Socialists
 Miners and
 workers unite
 and fight for a
 future with a
 socialist Labour
 government

West Wales
 AUEW
 Broad Left
 Open up our
 Broad Left—
 Make '84 the
 year the
 right-wing start
 to go!

THE CAMPAIGN GROUP OF LABOUR MP'S

Chair: Joan Maynard MP
Secretary: Alan Meale
Treasurer: Bob Clay MP

**Support the Miners
 —levy your members**

Send money to:
 Miners Solidarity Fund
 Co-op Bank PLC
 West St
 Sheffield
 A/C No: 30000009
 Sorting code: 08.90.75
Fraternal Greetings

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union send May Day greetings to the labour movement

J Marino General Secretary
D Ruffle Vice President
T O'Neill National President



May Day
 greetings to
 all our friends:
**EALING-
 SOUTHALL
 CLP**

**FINANCE
 WORKERS
 BROAD LEFT**
 for a strong and
 active BIFU
 Send socialist
 greetings
 Nationalise the
 banks under
 workers control
 and management

Burnley Militant
 Supporters
 Greetings to all
 comrades
 nationally and
 internationally
 forward to a
 world socialist
 federation.

●●●●●●●●●●
**CHAPEL-
 GREEN LPYS**
 Give us a
 future, save
 our pits. Bury
 Thatcher,
 bury
 MacGregor.
 Marxism is
 the way
 forward.
 Labour to
 power on a
 socialist
 programme.
 ●●●●●●●●●●

*On the 150th
 Anniversary
 of the Derby
 Silk Mill Lock
 Out,
 comrades
 from DERBY
 NORTH LPYS
 send fraternal
 greetings to
 all workers.*

"Behind police
 brutality there is
 social brutality,
 economic brutality
 and political
 brutality."
 Eldrige Cleaver.
 Victory to the
 miners.
**BURRAGE WARD,
 WOOLWICH
 LABOUR PARTY**

**LITTLEHAMP-
 TON 1/186
 BRANCH
 TGWU.**
 Support the
 miners. Kick the
 Tories out.
 Labour to
 victory on
 socialist
 policies.

**BINLEY &
 WILLENHALL
 LABOUR
 PARTY,
 COVENTRY
 SOUTH
 EAST.**
 Fight together
 and beat
 MacGregor.
 Greetings to the
 miners and the
 Militant.

**May Day
 Greeting
 POOLE CLP**

150 years ago 6 Dorset farm
 labourers, called the Tolpuddle
 Martyrs, raised the banner of
 trade unionism and took on the
 bosses. Today it is the miners
 who are continuing the
 struggle. With the same
 courage and determination as
 our forefathers the fight for
 socialism goes on.

**Victory to the miners
 Victory to all workers in
 struggle.**

**May Day Greetings
 from
 Broadgreen
 Constituency Labour
 Party**

and full support to
 Liverpool Council's stand
 against the Tory
 government.

**May Day
 greetings to
 workers
 everywhere. Get
 Militant with the
 Blue and Orange
 Tories.**

Support Liverpool City
 Council, miners and their
 families and all those
 who struggle for peace
 and freedom.
 For 'workers control' of
 the labour and trade
 union movement!
**Ryde Branch Labour
 Party and**
 Cathy Wilson, Newport LP
 Dave Phillips, Newport LP
 Ian Reynolds, W Cowes LP
 Chris Dillow Sandown/
 Shanklin LP
 Vic and Mara Dale,
 Sandown/Shanklin LP
 Chris and Deena Sullivan
 Sandown/Shanklin LP
ISLE OF WIGHT

Wales TUC—launch campaign for action to support miners

THE WALES TUC is meeting at the time when the whole labour and trade union movement should be rallying round the miners. Words of support have to be translated into action and the Wales TUC should follow the lead of their brothers and sisters in Scotland by calling for a 24 hour general strike in Wales with mass rallies and meetings to show the enormous support for the miners.

Hard hit

Wales, especially the industrial south, has been

decimated under the Tories, with engineering steel and transport jobs lost by the thousands.

Tory law

Many resolutions on this year's agenda point to the misery that working people face under capitalism but few spell out a clear socialist alternative.

The government's employment legislation is taken up most clearly by the NGA and Teeside Trades Council, who remind the General Council of the 1982 Wembley conference deci-

sion to support any affiliated union which comes under attack even, as Teeside Trades Council points out, if 'sometimes this will mean that the Trade Unions in Wales will be outside the Tories' industrial laws'.

Youth

Lliw valley Trades Council recognises that YTS 'does nothing to solve the problem of youth unemployment'. However the resolution also correctly argues that where YTS schemes already exist there is a duty on the trade union move-



Cardiff demonstration in support of miners.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

ment to fight for 'full trade union rates of pay and for a job at the end of the scheme for trainees'. One positive way the Wales TUC can assist in the plight of the youth is by adopting the Llanelli Trades Council resolution of holding an annual youth conference with

'an elected steering committee to meet between conferences to co-ordinate the involvement and activities of young trade unionists.'

Wales can lead

The Wales TUC have the opportunity to give a lead to

the trade union movement—they must grasp it with both hands and help ensure the bringing down of a Tory government and the return of a socialist Labour government.

By Bernard Roome
(Delegate Swansea Trades Council)

APEX executive shaken

ONE EXECUTIVE committee member at the APEX conference pleaded 'Let's take a break from the new craze going round faster than video games, 'Defeat the EC'.'

With 340 delegates and 344 visitors, this year's APEX conference showed a decline of 50% in attendance compared with 1979, the last rules revision conference, reflecting the loss of 50,000 members in the last five years.

Strike ballot

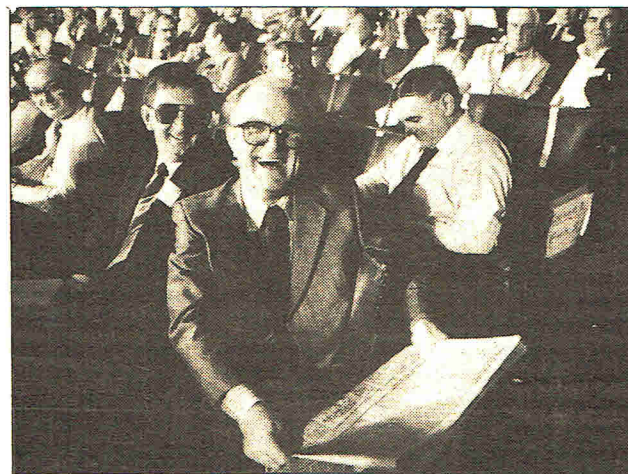
The Executive Council (EC) suffered a significant number of defeats. A rule change put forward by the EC to get Dennis Howell on the Labour Party delegation by the back door if he failed to get on Labour's NEC was seen through by conference and voted down.

The most crushing blow to the EC was a rule change

relating to industrial action. At present a ballot has to be organised, at the EC's leisure. Now the area executive or EC have to organise a ballot within five working days of the request for industrial action and inform the workforce of the result within another five working days.

This is a step forward in stopping prevarication by the EC which allows enthusiasm for strike action to dissipate. Also disciplinary action can now only be taken after a breach of the rules rather than the previous open-ended rule which was 'interpreted' by the EC. The Rules Revision conference will now be held every three years instead of every five years.

The rule against repeating motions in following years was dropped and motions will no longer be taken as amendments to the EC report, which



APEX General Secretary Roy Grantham at Labour Party conference—not laughing now.

gave the EC right of reply but not the mover of the resolution.

All these were passed despite opposition from the EC.

Disarmament

For the first time the EC supported a resolution against Cruise missiles and for unilateral disarmament. Conference agreed to give £2,000 to the miners and an appeal to the branches raised forty times that amount.

This year's conference further confirms the underlying trend towards involving younger union members who are pressing for change and are not prepared to rubber-stamp the leadership's actions as in the past. Roy Grantham found himself locked in the toilets on the second day of conference. *Militant* supporters deny any responsibility.

By Brian Debus
(in Scarborough)

Crown agents strike against privatisation

STAFF OF the Pensions Division of the government fringe body, the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations in East Kilbride, are on all-out, indefinite strike—more than 130 out of 158 staff are out. The strike has been going on since 4 April with official backing from the three unions involved—CPSA, SCPS, CSU.

conditions

The strike to stop commercialisation of pay and terms of service and against privatisation proposals. The unions

want civil service terms and conditions of service for their members and want the pensions service put into the civil service.

Organise support

Write to your MP showing your opposition to privatisation and letters of support and/or donations to the trade union strike committee at the address below: Trade Union Strike Committee, Crown Agents (East Kilbride), Queensway Motel, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, G75, Scotland. Telephone: East Kilbride (03552) 32435.

New mood at USDAW

USDAW CONFERENCE in Eastbourne this week has seen a dramatic change in mood from previous years, overturning the executive eight times as we go to press. The Broad Left (BL) has made a tremendous impact.

A rule change to introduce election of the deputy general secretary was carried against the executive's recommendation. BL policy of £100 for 35 hours has been adopted. The executive was so rattled it backed a motion supporting Liverpool city council. The motion, which included sanctioning industrial action was bitterly attacked by USDAW full-time official Bill Snell, one of the four right wing Labour renegades on Liverpool council.

The Broad Left has done better than ever in the elections, getting six members on the TUC delegation and four on the Labour Party conference delegation (where Broad Left chair George Williamson came got second top vote for a lay member).

The Broad Left members meeting adopted national officer Bill Connor as candidate for general secretary. Both Bill and presidential candidate Jeff Price spoke with Tony Benn to a packed Broad Left public meeting of over three hundred.

Arrests at Barking hospital picket

THE 90 domestic workers at Barking hospital are still on strike, over plans by Crothalls Ltd. to reduce hours by one third, cut holidays from four to two weeks and cut sick pay (see issue 694). The dispute has been to ACAS but no agreement was reached.

NUPE's London Health Committee, representing over 35,000 health workers called on all NUPE members in London to take supportive action on 1 May.

The pickets are on a twenty four rota and the response from local unions has been good, with no rubbish being collected, and over £5,000 has been raised for the strike fund.

The hospital management has tried various tactics to in-

timidate the woman on strike. The latest one is to issue a letter evicting the pickets from hospital grounds. Three pickets were arrested on Tuesday.

The 15 scab cleaners have been given police escorts to the hospital and they are being paid £130 per week plus bonus, a lot more than the domestics receive.

The hospital has been examined by a health inspector and the hygiene level has been criticised. On 1st May a large march was organised from the hospital to Barking Town Hall with local unions NUPE and GMBATU leading the group.

By John White
(Barking CLP)

Teachers prepare pay fight

THIS YEAR'S NUT conference had a different mood to previous years. The conference was volatile, not trusting the National Executive Committee implicitly, as a large majority of delegates have done in the past. It has failed to safeguard living standards and jobs.

Flat rate increase

On the first day of conference it was decided that if the government does not offer a substantial increase on the existing 3% pay offer industrial action will take place from 9 May and preparations for further action will be considered.

After the breakdown of pay negotiations the NUT leadership brought to conference a resolution which proposed industrial action for one day—9 May. The resolution also included a threat of extended strike action if necessary.

The position at the end of conference was that next years' pay claim may have as its basis a flat rate increase but

this will be decided by a special salaries conference. Conference would not blindly accept the word of the national executive committee.

Many conference delegates are beginning to draw the conclusion that only industrial action will shift this government.

Militant supporter Felicity Dowling, in her speech to conference said that decisive action for a flat rate pay increase was the only thing which could cut across the cynicism of younger teachers who did not believe in the union's ability to protect them.

Non-cooperation

Teachers are set on a course of industrial action which includes refusal to cover for absences which are known in advance or for any other unexpected absences; withdraw from lunch time supervision of children and administrative and accounting tasks in connection with the school meals service; refuse to attend staff meetings, departmental and year meetings and other



Felicity Dowling.

meetings of such a character which are held outside the times of the normal school sessions; refuse to attend any parents meetings or consultations with parents held outside the times of the normal school; withdraw goodwill from any activities outside school hours connected with the administration, organisation or management of the school.

Possible escalation

The motion also called upon all local associations to arrange meetings of their

members on May 9 to consider further appropriate action in support of the claim, including extended strike action. Conference stopped short at disrupting the summer 1984 public examination or the preparations of candidates for these examinations. There is no doubt, however, that if the government remains intransigent further industrial action will almost certainly hit the examinations beginning soon.

Build Broad Left

One of the priorities arising from conference is for the building of a fighting left leadership for the National Union of Teachers. Teachers who attended the recent Broad Left Organising Committee Conference in Sheffield on March 24, can see the need for a Broad Left in the NUT which can take on the task of replacing the present leadership. In the coming weeks and months *Militant* supporters will be to the fore in building that leadership.

By Bill Boyle

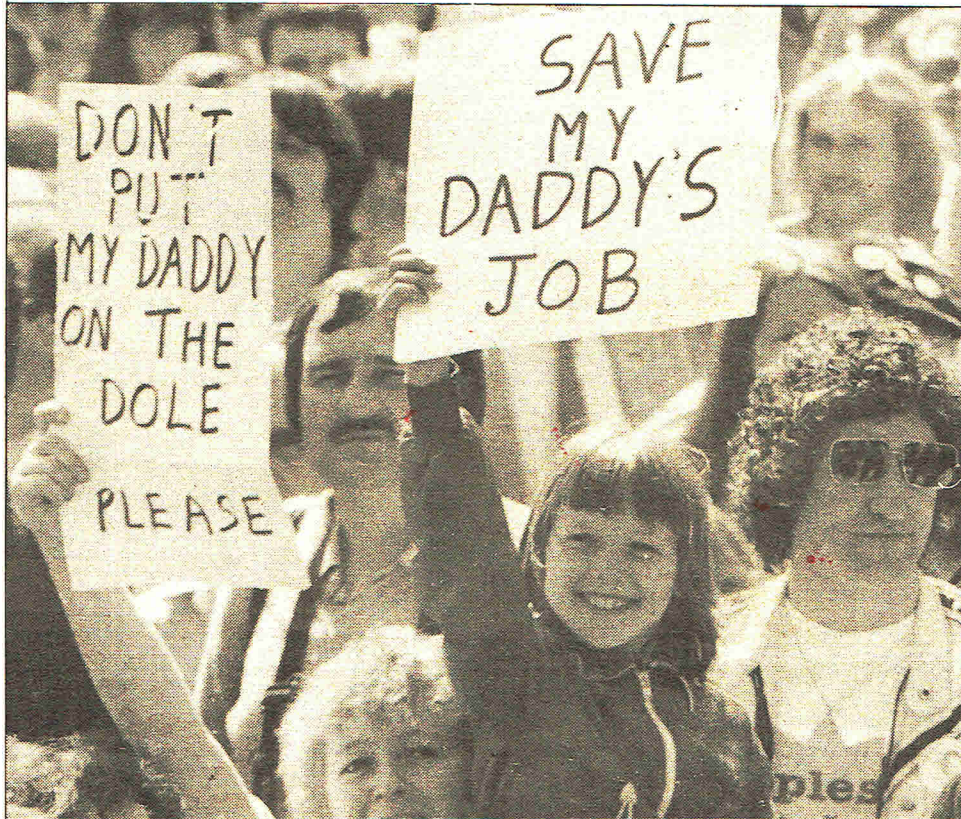
Militant

Nottingham coalfield THE TRUE STORY

THE Notts Area Coal Board claim that all pits are working normally. The Tory media repeat this story. IT IS A LIE.

Thousands of Notts miners are **not** working, teams are short, production is down and picket lines are growing. *Militant* gives the true story—from first-hand reports from striking Notts miners on the picket lines. In all cases, miners are picketing their own pits and most pits have strike committees.

- ★ **Blidworth:** Majority out. Strike HQ to be set up. Miners' wives are organising.
- ★ **Bolsover:** 80% out (ie 650 men) and have been for the past seven weeks.
- ★ **Bevercotes:** Two-thirds out. No night shift.
- ★ **Bilthorpe:** Thirty young miners now picketing.
- ★ **Bentinck:** A picket of 20/30 young miners determined to support their union.
- ★ **Clipstone:** A third out solidly. Coal production down by a half. Many facemen out.
- ★ **Calverton:** Picket line on. Increasingly effective. Some turning back but only one branch official respecting the picket line and striking.
- ★ **Cresswell:** Many not working, many empty cars. No coal coming out of the pit.
- ★ **Cotgrave:** Strike committee formed. A hard-core of 50 remain on strike and picketing continues.
- ★ **Hucknall:** All three shifts being picketed and some success although a minority out at this stage. The pickets will not give up and are confident of victory.



The fight is for this generation's job—and the next.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.



Photo: Jacob Sutton.

★ **Linby:** 50% out. Mass picketing at each shift. Majority out are faceworkers and craft-

smen so there is a substantial loss in production.

- ★ **Newstead:** Coal production at a standstill. Majority on strike including virtually all production workers.
- ★ **Mansfield:** A vote of no confidence had been passed against Henry Richardson and Ray Chadburn but now a picket line has been set up manned by over 35 young miners fighting for their future. They have had some success and the pit is NOT working normally.
- ★ **Ollerton:** 700 out. Pickets on and shifts down from 3 to 2.
- ★ **Rufford:** About 100 on strike.
- ★ **Silverhill:** About 50 actively picketing, about 50% of every shift not turning in.

- ★ **Sherwood:** About two-thirds not going in. Only two shifts.
- ★ **Sutton:** Strike gaining every day. Over half stopped away morning shift, about 70 of the 120 on afters.
- ★ **Thoresby:** 400 out. Every shift picketed and down to two shifts.
- ★ **Welbeck:** 70—75% out. Heavy picketing and no night shift being operated.
- ★ **Pye Hill:** 30 out on strike.
- ★ **Annesley:** 100 pickets on.

Not every pit has been included due to lack of time to get full information, but all are based on conversation with striking miners actively picketing their own collieries. Most are based on the situation on Monday 30 April.

Save the Chilean prisoners

IN CHILE, 12 prisoners of the Pinochet regime are about to face the death penalty for so-called terrorist offences. Confessions have been extracted under torture and with the introduction of new anti-terrorist laws and a 'war' tribunal being established, any opponents of the regime can be classed as terrorists and tried under military law.

One of the 12 prisoners is Rolando Cordova. He along with the others is being held in solitary confinement in the 'penitenciera' of Santiago and has

been imprisoned for three years. The relatives of the 12 were on hunger strike in a Santiago church but this has now ended as permission has been given for one of the families to visit the prisoners.

The support of the labour and trade union movement is vital as they could be shot within 10 days. Messages of support to Mrs A Alvarez, 8 Daines Court, Marina Gardens, Fishponds, Bristol. Telephone: 0272 650 885.

By Tim Neave
(Kingswood LPYS)

Back miners

Continued from front page

The Tory lies have not stopped solidarity.

Railworkers have given magnificent aid to the strike in stopping the movement of coal; even in Notts it has been highly effective. Now members of rail unions face their own battles to save the engineering works at Swindon and jobs at Derby, Crewe, Doncaster and Wolverton. The fate of the coal, rail and steel industries are firmly tied together.

Just imagine the effect if workers in these three industries stuck together and struck together. Mass meetings must be held to convince Notts miners of the threat to their jobs, particularly the plans to run-down jobs in South Notts announced last week.

Similarly, rail and steel workers must be convinced of the need to join the miners' fight. If miners, railworkers and steel workers came out together, the effect would be enormous and the Tories would be forced to back down.

The Triple Alliance of coal, rail and steel unions must be activated at all levels, national, regional and local. If one of our industries is threatened, it puts at risk jobs in all sectors.

Workers must be motivated to join the fight by mass meetings which put forward clear demands for a

new investment strategy for vital heavy industries. The strike must now be strengthened.

Marvellous support has been forthcoming from dockers and from many lorry drivers. A first priority now must be for a huge campaign of mass meetings in the TGWU to go to every depot, to convince every lorry driver not to cross picket lines. No coal must move without the agreement of the NUM.

The Scottish TUC have taken a great initiative in calling for the Day of Action in Scotland on 9 May. Unions such as the post officer workers, UCW, have called on their members to support even if it means breaking the law and teachers will be offering their backing.

This initiative will be supported by many other workers not just in Scotland but in Wales and England. The Wales TUC are debating a call for a one-day regional strike. The AUEW conference have called for a similar day of action nationally. The support which has already been shown in finance and messages of support must be built on.

The TUC must start planning now for a national one-day general strike, but remembering the role of the TUC in recent disputes, the call must go up for a conference of executives of the left trade unions to organise solidarity.

With the whole trade union movement organised behind us, the miners can gain a great victory for all workers.



BECOME A
Militant
SUPPORTER!

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

Name

Address

SUBSCRIBE!

BRITAIN & IRELAND	EUROPE (by air)	REST OF WORLD (by air)
13 issues . . . £5.00	26 issues . . £11.00	26 issues . . £16.00
26 issues . . £10.00	52 issues . . £22.00	52 issues . . £32.00

Name

Address

Make cheques payable to *Militant*, and return to the Circulation Department, *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Donate

I would like to donate
£ . . . p each week
/month to the fighting
fund.

Sell

I would like to sell
papers per week
(minimum 5) on a sale or
return basis.