



Miners fight for all jobs

EIGHTEEN WEEKS into the strike there has been no let up in the collections, solidarity and support given by workers to the miners.

In practically every region of the country in the last few weeks—not just in mining areas like the North East and South Wales but in areas like the South West and South East—thousands of workers from all major unions have come out on 'Days of Action' in sympathy with the NUM struggle for jobs.

National day of action

Events like this give the lie to the Tory myth peddled by Fleet Street that the miners' strike is "unpopular". Workers have shown their admiration for the fighting spirit and determination of the miners to save their communities from the death sentence imposed by Thatcher and Mac Gregor.

Now is the time to turn this support into effective backing. The press have been jubilant at the failure of the steel unions nationally to stop production of steel. But at the steel works themselves there is great support for the miners strike. Hundreds of pounds are being collected regularly by steel workers for the strike fund at Llanwern amongst others.

The task now is to convince steel workers who have lost many thousands of jobs under the Tories that action by the miners and other trade unionists can save their jobs. The unions must counter the lies of BSC management.

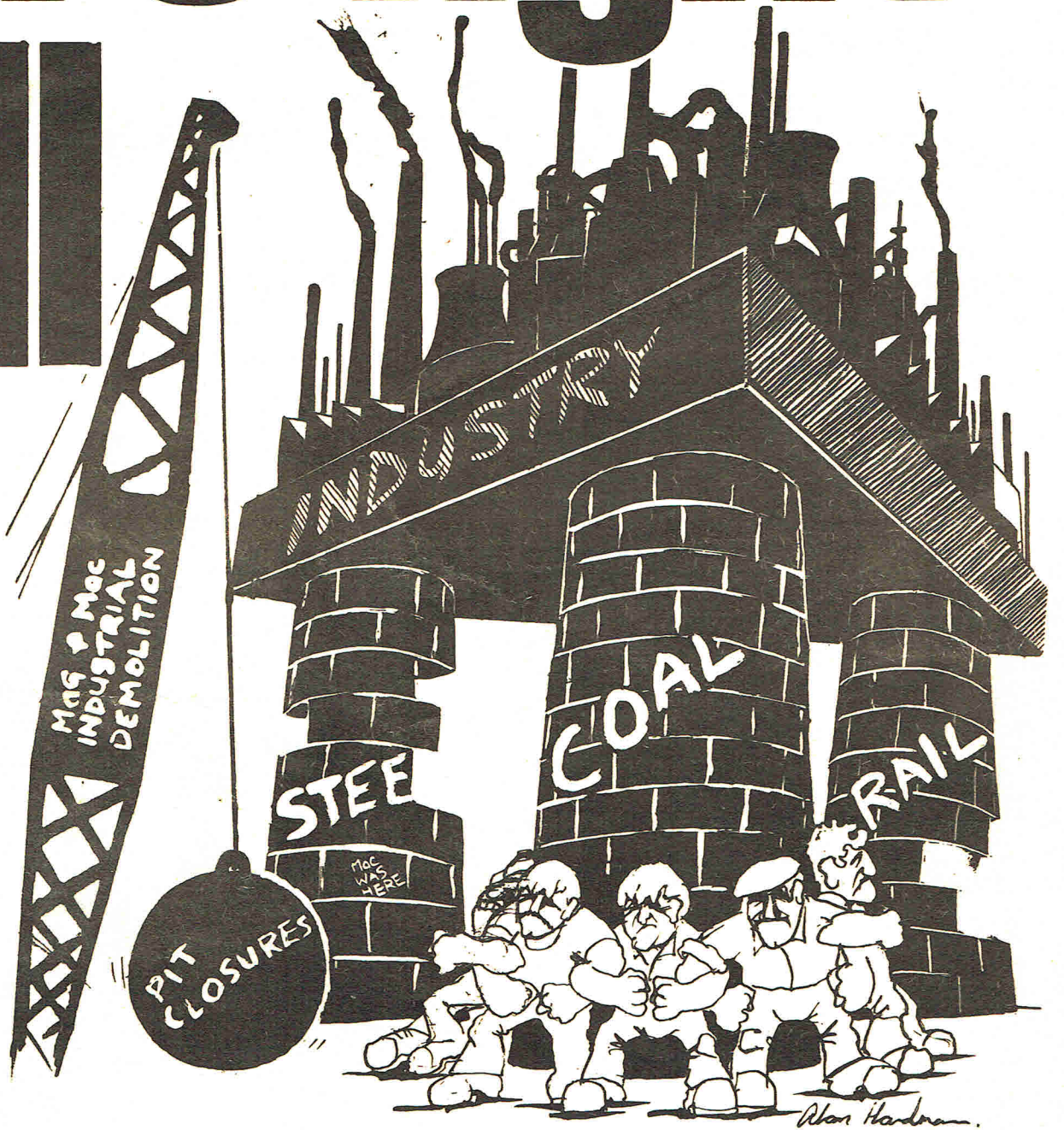
Railworkers have shown their practical support as have members of the seamen's union. But the strike has reached a crucial stage and must now be extended.

The National Union of Mineworkers should take the action further than regional days of support. The NUM conference on July 11/12 must name a Day of Action on a national basis. The support gained on these regional activities could be added together and multiplied tenfold with the extra momentum and enthusiasm of a national event.

Workers in all industries and services would respond to a one-day national strike, a day of solidarity with the miners, if the NUM itself gave the call.

The miners are understandably suspicious of the right wing leadership of the TUC:

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NCB talks: no pit closures!

THE NATIONAL Coal Board have begun an expensive and provocative media campaign just at the time they have been forced to re-open talks with the leaders of the mineworkers.

Full-page adverts in all the national dailies have claimed that miners have been 'misled'. True—but they've been misled year-in and year-out by the management of the National Coal Board.

Investment guarantees

Miners have been pushed from one colliery to another to keep their jobs. The Coal Board denied up until recently that there was any closure programme at all, when the NUM leadership announced its existence.

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Turn anger into cash

THERE'S NO time to lose! We're living in a rapidly decaying, class-ridden society and big explosions are on their way.

The Duke of Devonshire sells pictures at Christies and gets £20 million in one go. Families in Birkenhead are seen scratching for food and clothes on rubbish tips and get their Social Security payments docked as a result!

If this makes you angry and you want to fight—protest with cash! *Militant* doesn't mince words. We point a way in which anger and desperation can be channelled into a successful fight to end the obscene system of capitalism. Our Fighting Fund is urgently needed to help us reach wider and wider layers of workers and youth with the socialist

policies on which to conduct such a fight.

We are a long way short of our Fund target (see page 6) and must reach it by first post this Wednesday. You, as a *Militant* reader, will not have the riches of the Duke of Devonshire to donate. But if you think you are hard up, remember the families who are already literally on the scrap heap.

Help us help you to point your anger in the right direction and to fight back!

Rush us a donation so big that it hurts—a week's wages or even a fiver from your dole cheque. Better to step up a socialist fight now than allow a complete return to barbarism!

By Clare Doyle
(*Militant* Editorial Board)

Militant

Miners and steelworkers — fight together

THE TORIES will be rubbing their hands with glee over the decision of the TUC steel committee not to cut steel production during the miners' strike. The Government and the NCB—assisted by the Fleet Street lie machine—are constantly probing and pushing to sow divisions in the trade union movement, between steelworkers and miners, between different mining areas, or even within the NUM leadership itself.

Any public dispute between trade union leaders is grist to the mill for Thatcher and company: the arch hypocrites who are personally responsible for the destruction of tens of thousands of steel jobs, and who now want to do the same to the miners. But understanding the role of the Tories will not by itself solve the problem of the unity of the Triple Alliance unions. The question hinges largely around the approach of the NUM area and national leadership.

The miners have to overcome the legacy of an ISTC leadership that has been a bulwark of the right wing in the TUC, supporting for example, the grovelling policy of "new realism". It is a leadership which has signally failed to protect jobs in the past or inspire confidence in its members that it will protect them in the future.

The overwhelmingly majority of rank and file steelworkers support the miners. At Llanwern, for instance, £2000 is collected every week for the miners. But what the miners have to take into the reckoning is the steelworkers fear for their jobs.

It may be correct, therefore, as Arthur Scargill has said, that in any industrial dispute like this there are "casualties", although it should be made clear that the responsibility for this lies with the NCB and the Tory Government who provoked the strike. But it is not enough simply to call upon the steelworkers to show the same solidarity to the NUM as the miners showed the steelworkers in their fight in 1980. "We have come a long way since then", the steelworker might say in reply, "and, after losing 50,000 jobs, we are afraid for the few we have left... besides which, the bulk of coal production still went ahead during our steel strike."

What should the reply of the miner be? "We understand your fears", he should say, "But we believe we are fighting for *all* jobs. The Tories have turned entire steel communities like Corby, Shotton and Consett, into industrial deserts. We are fighting to stop them doing the same to our mining areas.

"Even your reduced steel industry is not safe. Whether we had gone on strike or not, the Tories still want to close Ravenscraig, Port Talbot or Llanwern. Our fight is your fight."

"We need to make a firm bargain. We believe you should black all coal and coke and cut steel production to the absolute minimum necessary to keep the furnaces alive. At area and local level we can discuss and agree on the scale of production, in such a way as to prevent BSC playing off one steelworks against another.

"In return, we will support you. We will urge our fellow trade unionists in road and rail to stop the movement of any steel from stockholders and to stop imports. In return for your concrete support, we will give a pledge to strike in your support if there are any attempts to close any steelworks.

"By our action and our joint work with the railway unions, we can prevent the slaughter of our basic industries and forge a genuine Triple Alliance of coal, steel and rail."

If the National Union of Mineworkers were to approach steelworkers nationally and locally in these terms, with joint meetings and with a campaign of leafletting, a solid alliance of unions could be built. The miners would be rid of any diversionary arguments and freed to press on to the power stations and to victory. A successful rout of the Tory onslaught on the mines, especially if it is achieved with the active support of steelworkers, will be the best possible guarantee of jobs in steel, rail and elsewhere.

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Photo: Mick Carroll

Tens of thousands marched through London in the largest miners' solidarity demonstration yet in the capital. The day of action on Wednesday 27 June was called by the South East Region of the TUC and thousands answered SERTUC's call for a one day stoppage. Two minutes silence was observed in Fleet Street for the two miners killed on picket line duty. Many marchers carried red carnations in their memory.

Strikers defy Agecroft scabs

120 NUM members are on strike at Agecroft, Lancs, despite the rotten leadership of the branch committee who are all working.

The strikers have set up a strike committee but have not been allowed to attend official branch meetings.

Nevertheless we have received wide support from

the labour and trade union movement who are upholding trade union principles.

We're well organised now, in spite of the fact that none of us have done this before—we're learning as we go along.

On June 29, a delegation from Agecroft strike committee was invited to the Lancs. area NUM conference.

The meeting was opened

and a motion was passed that if Agecroft branch officials took part in the meeting, then everybody else would leave. Agecroft officials would not leave the meeting so it was closed.

Everybody walked out of the meeting except the Agecroft scabs, so feeling ran high. Then about 30 pickets decided to eject them. This was achieved without anyone seriously hurt.

This is not a fight for so-called democracy and never has been—it is a fight for the right to work. The men working should realise it's not just NUM members, but everybody's right to work. I wish they would come out and join us.

By Steve Howells
Agecroft Strike Committee Co-ordinator.



Photo: Rick Matthews (FLI)

Miners successfully stopped rail supplies to Ravenscraig steel works from Hunterston (above).

Nuclear plant under pressure

DUNGENESS NUCLEAR power station in Kent is under growing pressure after a continuous picket of the site by the Kent NUM. Lorries carrying CO2 and caustic soda have refused to cross the line. As this is vital to the running of the plant, pickets believe management at the power station may begin to fly in the supplies. If this is tried the miners say they will picket the nearby airport.

Nuclear waste from the

station is being blacked by the NUR. This follows a request from the NUM, and also fears that one railworker has been contaminated. He has demanded a medical. Support for the picket has been very good with most trade unionists refusing to cross the line. Construction workers on the site have held discussions with the miners and are paying a levy to the strike fund.

By Eric Seagal

Working miners low morale

MORALE OF working miners in Nottinghamshire is low. This was admitted by a manager at Linby pit in conversation with a striking miner. "The performance of men at work leaves a lot to be desired," he said. He went on to explain how Linby normally budgets for 45 machine shifts per week

(three coal faces, three shifts per day, five day week).

Yet last week only 27 operated. Bill Chaplin, one of the striking miners, calculates that production is probably about 50% down. He also reckons that the machinery must be falling to bits. He should know, he's an electrician.

Gala planned for Nottingham strikers

ON SUNDAY July 8 striking miners in Nottinghamshire are having their own gala.

"It's to show the miners and their families that they have got support throughout the country and aren't alone in this fight", said Terry Martin, of the Notts Strike Committee.

In a fine display of

solidarity, Sheffield Trades Council are sending a food convoy to Notts. Women's support groups from Yorkshire will be coming with it and visiting the pit villages first before making their way to the Forest in Notts. "It's really a day of fun and games for the wives and kids," said Terry. "There will be live bands, including a West Indian steel

band, stalls and a five-a-side competition. The PA has been donated and we are trying to get sponsors for the four marquees needed. We are also getting fruit from a local green grocer, Glyn Thomas, who gives us stuff every week. I'd like to thank the ethnic minority groups—they have done their bit, Ian Juniper, secretary of the Trades

Council for the sterling work he has done, women from the support groups and others too numerous to mention. We expect about 5,000 people. I've had people phone up from London and throughout the country asking for details. Venue: The Forest, Nottingham. Starts 1 pm, Sunday July 8.

Coventry striker sacked

ANOTHER MINER has been added to the list of those victimised by the NCB. A mass meeting of striking miners at Coventry Colliery resolved not to resume work 'till Clive Ham—the miner concerned—has been reinstated.

Militant readers may recall

Clive's name. Some weeks ago we reported that he'd been arrested along with his baby son, who was kept at the police station with him for several hours. It's because of the allegations levelled against him, which have not yet been brought to court—let alone prov-

ed, that Clive has been sacked.

He was not even allowed witnesses to back up his case at the interview where the sacking took place. As well as the NUM, the NACODS branch has protested strongly against this scandal.

By Tony Cross

Feudal law revived

FOURTEENTH century law makers must have been very far-seeing. They managed to frame a law which police are using to dictate the use of loud-speakers today.

Miners from Coventry colliery were detained for several hours and charged with intimidation, conspiracy and "breaking the Queen's peace on the Queen's highway"—the latter under a law dating from 1361! They had been using loudspeakers to visit workplaces and the police pulled them in after objecting to a phrase they claim was used to address a scab: "So if you've got a complaint about ice cream wagons, you know what law to use!" said Les Allen, one of the arrested miners.

Collect cash not coppers

TIRED OF playing cat and mouse with the coppers when doing a bucket collection for the miners in your town centre? Sick of giving your name and address and date of birth to the boys in blue? Fed up to the back teeth with being cautioned about collecting money for starving miners' families without a permit? Your problems could be solved!

All of these things have happened to us several times in Brum city centre, so we went to the local (Labour) City Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee, just walked straight in and asked for charity status. Within a week we had got our permits for collecting Monday to Friday in the city centre. Each individual collector must have a permit. Today we didn't get hassled as much as normal from the coppers and one even surreptitiously dropped 50p in the collection.

The lessons are:

- 1) Get a permit from the local council.
- 2) Use sealed collecting tins as opposed to buckets (it's the law apparently).
- 3) Don't stand more than two together (three constitutes a riot, and four is mass insurrection).
- 4) Be nice to policemen and you just might get some cash off the ones that remember which class they belong to.

Get a licence and make it legal!

By Dermot Garney
(Erdington LPYS)

Thousands march in Tolpuddle



A large turnout marked the 150th anniversary Tolpuddle Rally. The LPYS was the largest contingent among the 15,000 marchers. The delegation of GCHQ trades unionists were particularly well received. Over 260 banners were carried from all over the country, 10,000 BLOC leaflets were given out, and over 500 Militants sold.

Photo: Mark Pinder

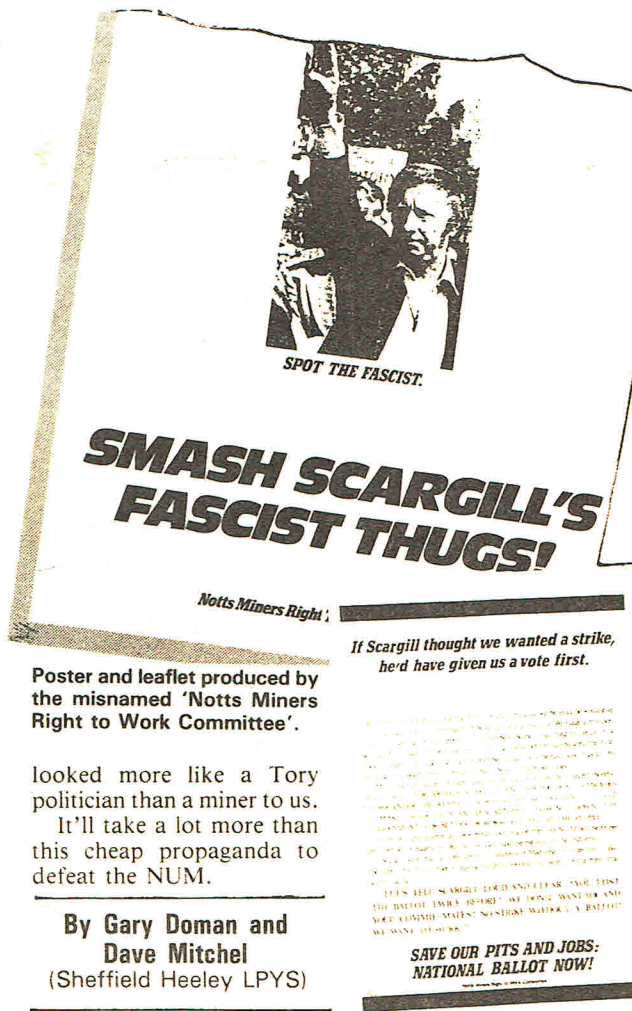
Crude smear campaign

Crude strikebreaking propaganda is being circulated by an organisation calling itself the 'Notts Miners' Right to Work Committee'. A poster depicts Arthur Scargill in the infamous, rigged 'Sieg Heil' pose with the caption 'spot the fascist'.

A leaflet talks of Communist bully boys and Scargill's 'commie mates'... Scargill is therefore both a fascist and a communist, an unusual political position! This squalid, personal smearing is dressed up as a call for a ballot and democracy.

We came across this material on a YS day of action. A well dressed man threw one of our comrades an envelope with it in. He didn't stop to discuss the dispute with us.

We don't know if anyone has come across this 'committee', but this gentleman dashed back in the direction of Sheffield Town Hall, and



Poster and leaflet produced by the misnamed 'Notts Miners Right to Work Committee'.

looked more like a Tory politician than a miner to us.

It'll take a lot more than this cheap propaganda to defeat the NUM.

By Gary Doman and
Dave Mitchel
(Sheffield Heeley LPYS)

Miners meet press

Miners' get a rare chance to grill the press, on TV's Union World programme (Saturday July 7, 7.30pm on Channel 4). A delegation of miners from the three Kent pits—Snowdown, Betchanger, and Tilmanstone—and a miner's wife, are taken on a tour of Fleet Street.

The idea of the programme was for the group to meet the editors who decide what gets printed, but most

of the national newspaper editors refused to meet the miners. One even asked for a £2000 fee!

The delegation does have the chance to put grievances to the editors of the *Mail on Sunday* and the *Guardian*, and conservative columnists Woodrow Wyatt, Ed Pearce and Charles Moore.

By Militant reporter

Strikers' rescue

STRIKING Nottinghamshire miners were collecting money outside COHSE conference in Blackpool last week when an old lady collapsed in the Winter Gardens. The miners dropped everything and rushed her off to hospital in their car. One human interest story on the miners strike that didn't get front page treatment in the papers for some reason.

Around the country

EAST KILBRIDE Miners Aid Committee has had outstanding success in fund raising. Collections have been organised in the town centre raising over £1700 in two weeks, and several vanloads of food. Door-to-door collections and collecting points are now organised on the housing estates. East Kilbride LPYS is active helping the committee and has had two public meetings on the dispute. (Steve Wright, USDAW and Miners' Aid Committee reports).

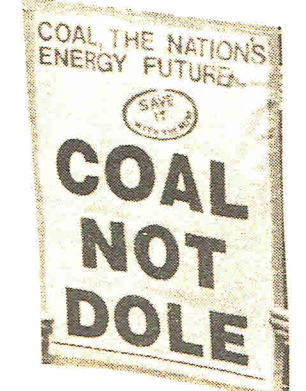
LIVERPOOL Broadgreen LPYS are out collecting for the miners four times a week. (Dave Carline reports). They've visited Sutton Manor and Bold pits to deliver over £200. In recent football matches against the miners the YS were beaten 4-3 by Sutton Manor and thrashed 7-0 by Bold, but they're planning revenge. More important, food and money goes up with them.

An excellent £55 was raised at a **CASTLE VALE Militant** youth public meeting on the pits. Steve Bale of South Notts NUM described the police state and the hunger of miners' families in his area and Mark Meredith of the LPYS National Committee urged trade unionists to join the Labour Party.

A NUPE manual worker in **SOUTHWARK**, Jim Larkin, is doing his celebrated namesake proud. Members of the Camberwell General branch have been active collecting for the miners. Jim alone has raised over £400 via a collecting jar in Peckham Labour Club, a sponsored walk and collections. Any James Connollys out there doing the same?

LPYS members in **HASTINGS** report an excellent response to street collections. A van load of food has been sent to Betchanger colliery (Kent) and another is on the way.

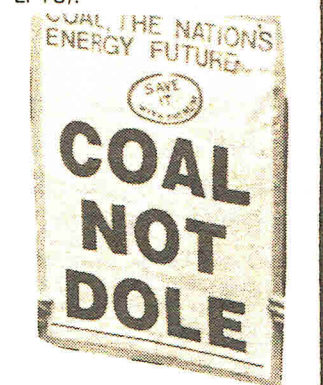
THANET NORTH LPYS held a successful public meeting on the miners—the first in Margate. Over 30 people heard Malcolm Pitt, Kent NUM president, and Martin Cox, Southern Region LPYS. (Barry Lewis reports)



A public meeting in **LEYLAND**, Lancs, attracted over 250 people. NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield, Dennis Skinner MP and Len Brindle, Secretary of Sefton Confed (CSEU) spoke. Peter Heathfield applauded the tremendous sacrifices in support of the miners, and told the story of a man who came into the Sheffield offices with a brown paper parcel and said: "Give this to Arthur". Suspecting it might be a bomb they examined it carefully, only to discover it contained £10,000 in notes! A collection at the meeting raised £25. (Reports Joan Beale).

A miners' solidarity group in **LICHFIELD** has adopted the local Lea Hall pit. £39 was raised at a public meeting addressed by Ken Livinstone. Lichfield LPYS has adopted Lea Hall and another local pit, Littleton, both in South Staffs. Over £50 has been raised so far. Two young miners are to speak at the next LPYS meeting. (Robert Littlely reports).

PORTSMOUTH had a separate demonstration on SERTUC's Day of Action in support of the miners. PD Fuels (Corralls) have been bringing in coal boats since the strike begun. Several hundred people turned up to the rally and many more joined in as we marched up to Corralls Depot. Corralls management were clearly alarmed at the sight of the South Wales NUM banner coming towards them and called in the police. Train drivers and other workers looked on as management scurried about and lorry activity was suspended for the day. The real depth of support for the miners in this City should be built on and all these coal imports stopped. Now is a real opportunity to overcome years of backwardness and complacency and give the trade union movement in Portsmouth a leg up. (Reports Basher Benfield, Portsmouth LPYS).



When the children of a worker's family in **Lubeck, WEST GERMANY** heard that miners in Britain had very little money, Michael, aged 7 said: "I want to give all my savings to the miners. They have been striking for so long I want to help them". Linda, aged 9, wanted to do the same. So they clubbed together and sent 10 DM (about £2.50) to the NUM.

A convoy carrying food donated by the MEDIA UNIONS NUJ, NGA and SOGAT left London for Kent on 30 June. Contributions of food and money included a donation of £50 from the NGA's Unemployed Chapel in London.

Collections in **GLASGOW'S** East End are going well (Frank Morton reports). The East End Support Committee has collected cash and food approaching £5,000, including the profit from a concert at the Kelvin Hall. All cash is given to NUM organisers at Cardowan colliery.

Four hundred people attended a **BRISTOL** Miners' Support Rally recently. Speakers were Peter Heathfield, General Secretary NUM, Mervin Halin (Chair TGWU Region 3), two miners' wives from South Wales, a CND speaker, Jack Evans from Bristol TUC, and Matt Reed for the LPYS. Bryan Beckingham of Bristol Miners' Support Group made the financial appeal which raised over £2,300, including many workplace collections brought to the rally. To date the support group has channelled about £18,000 and growing quantities of food to South Wales.

Photo: Militant

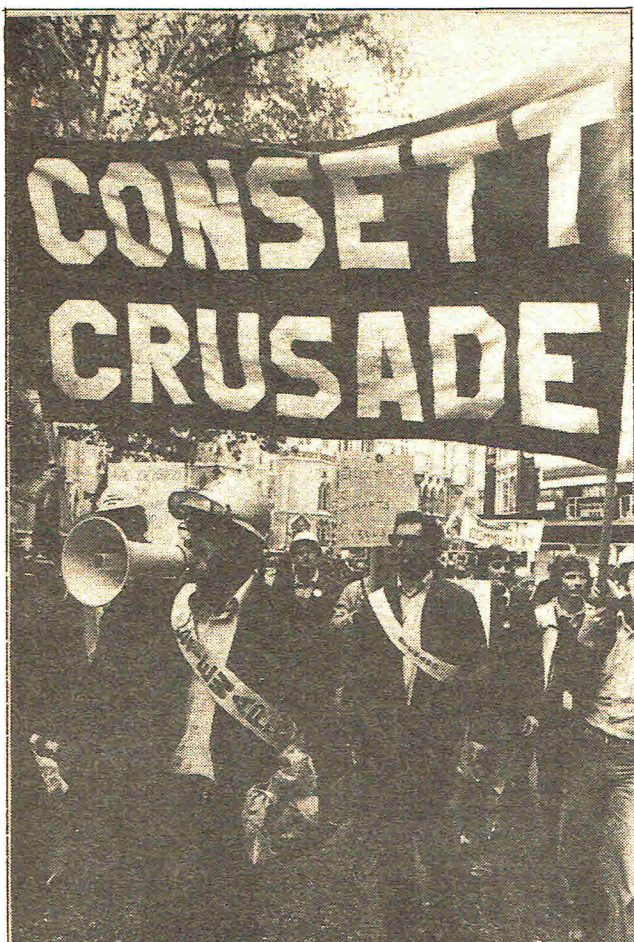


Photo: Andrew Ward



Photo: Militant



Bill Sirs talks about the miners' strike endangering steel jobs but each photo above tells the story of a local campaign to save a steel works and community. Each one failed thanks to a total lack of fight nationally. Employment in BSC has been cut from 254,000 in 1969 to 220,000 in 1975 to 70,000 today. The only way to save steel jobs is to ensure the miners win.

Save steel: join the

IF THE Triple Alliance unions had struck with the miners seventeen weeks ago the Tories would have capitulated already. Instead the government has been trying to set sections of workers against each other. Notts miners, the rail pay award, the manoeuvres in British Steel—the government has seized every chance to weaken the miners' strike.

It has to be said that the pitched battles at Orgreave, fighting at the gates of Ravenscraig, sporadic stopping of trains to Llanwern will be nails in the coffin of the Triple Alliance unless the common interests and traditional unity of steelworkers and miners are reasserted at once.

The NUM has correctly called for a national agreement between steel and coal. Such an agreement should have been made months ago in anticipation of a pit strike. As recently as Christmas the Triple Alliance unions in steel, coal and rail were holding joint rallies.

A national agreement then would have been a demonstration of workers' power, showing that the unions and not the bosses were in control of events. Both the National Coal Board (NCB) and British Steel Corporation (BSC), as well as the Tory government, have been in mortal fear of such a development and have set themselves to prevent it.

It is vital that steelworkers, miners and transport workers draw the lessons of the tragic developments which flowed from that failure to make a national agreement.

Orgreave absorbed the energy of the NUM for many weeks. Recently, chief executive Scholey claimed that BSC used Orgreave as a diversion while it shipped coking coal to Scunthorpe via the Immingham terminal. Whether true or not Scholey's claim indicates that both the BSC and NCB wished to disrupt the understanding between the NUM and steel unions which

By an ISTC member

had been more effective at Scunthorpe than anywhere else.

Scunthorpe had willingly worked at a third of output for some time and it was the panic call of BSC management for extra coking coal to prevent damage to the blast furnaces which led to the call on Orgreave. The rage of NUM pickets at scab drivers taking coke from the plant was understandable; it was a deliberate provocation and the police, as in Nottingham, were preventing them from exercising their legal right to talk to those crossing the picket lines.

It was a similar story at Llanwern. Production had been curtailed by an agreement in South Wales between the steel unions and the NUM. Llanwern is the only BSC plant using only local coal. Again management has been instrumental in disrupting the unions' agreement. The result has been the appalling sight of not only coal lorries but ore lorries entering the works in convoy.

The sight of miners fighting steelworkers at Ravenscraig has filled many labour activists with despair. In the weeks and months before the Yorkshire miners' strike, following the start of the national overtime ban, the Triple Alliance in Scotland was at its strongest point in the whole country.

Causes of division

There had been a series of rallies and meetings bringing the unions together. It seemed that this unity would prevent further losses of industry and jobs in Scotland. It now appears to be in ruins. It is only by understanding the real causes of the dispute at the gates of Ravenscraig steel works that a solution can be achieved.

NCB chairman Ian MacGregor and his successor as BSC chairman Bob Haslam, as well as Prime



Pickets clash with police outside Port Talbot steel works, 4 April. Coal and ore imported into Port Talbot's dock is now being run by road to Llanwern.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

Minister Thatcher, have made it clear they see this as an opportunity to drive a wedge into the labour movement's support for the miners. It also has to be said that some steel trade union leaders seem to share this position. No lie has been untold, no expense spared, in the effort to convince steelworkers that they are surplus to requirements.

Port Talbot, Llanwern and Ravenscraig each process imported iron ore which is treated together with coke manufactured in the BSC's own coke ovens from coking coal (much of it imported) into steel. That is produced in strips for such steel-based products as the bodies of motor cars, as well as tinplate and goods for the home and so on.

A propaganda campaign has been waged to convince steelworkers to 'slim down', that they had to permit management to take further control over the work

process. BSC and the government have taken every possible measure to weaken potential opposition to the closure of one of the works in a general attack on the steel industry, these three strip mills and Ravenscraig in particular.

In 1982 an outright attempt at closure of Ravenscraig was defeated by a broad campaign of united opposition. It was so effective that it brought a threat of resignation from the secretary of state for Scotland George Younger.

No national lead

Forced to back down on this front, the government, with Ian MacGregor, turned to an attempt to merge Ravenscraig and its cold mill outlet at Gart Cosh with the decrepit Fearless works of the United States Steel Corporation. That further attempt to get rid of Ravenscraig collapsed at the end of 1983.

This was a victory for the unity of Ravenscraig steelworkers, miners, railworkers and other trade unionists who had consistently opposed closure or hiving off of the works. It was based on a clear understanding of the common interests of miners who supply much of the coal that goes into Ravenscraig, railworkers who transport coal and iron ore to the works and steelworkers who produce the steel.

The national background, however, has been less promising. As a result of the set-back of the national steel strike in 1980 huge changes have taken place in all three strip mills. BSC pursued a conscious strategy of taking back gains that the workers had achieved in the post-war period. Competition has been fostered between the three works, with each seeking to outbid the others in terms of output produced per man-year.

There has been no lead from the ISTC nationally in the fight against steel closures. On the contrary,



Alan Handman.

NOTHING WILL STOP ME RUNNING—SAYS MAN OF STEEL SIR.

miners' fight



Photo: Militant

Bill Sirs at the massive Welsh TUC Day of Action during the 1980 steel strike. Overcome with enthusiasm he pledged: "We can't allow any more sackings... I commit my union to a fight to the death". Did he mean the miners?

while a formal opposition to closures has been maintained, the leadership has shown very clearly that it is not prepared to take the steps necessary to keep works open.

Shop stewards and workers at Ravenscraig and to a slightly lesser extent perhaps, the other two strip mills, have drawn the conclusion that their survival is in their own hands. It may be that Ravenscraig's long-standing opposition to the policies of the union leadership has accentuated their feeling of vulnerability to being sold out.

Arising from these trends shop stewards at Ravenscraig and Port Talbot defied a national instruction in 1982 not to sign productivity agreements. They wrongly did so because each feared that failure to sign these agreements with the BSC would lead to closure of their own works. BSC was making threats to that effect.

In the absence of any confidence in the willingness of the national leadership to wage an effective fight on their behalf there was a tendency for the works to turn against each other. It is these failures and subsequent divisions for which we and the miners are paying now.

Ravenscraig shop stewards, facing the possible closure of their works due to inadequate coal supplies as a result of the miners' strike, could have little confidence that Bill Sirs and the national steel union leaders would intervene to prevent Port Talbot and Llanwern

managements stealing Ravenscraig customers while Ravenscraig was temporarily shut. Permanent closure might well soon follow.

In this sense the conflict seen on the television screens between steelworkers and miners at the gates of Ravenscraig is a proxy fight between steelworkers in Scotland and steelworkers in South Wales. It is just as disastrous for our industry and jobs as steel worker literally fighting steelworker.

This is the biggest and most important industrial battle since the war. To defeat the Tories and give workers in the rest of heavy industry a future the miners must hinder, hamper and stop the movement of coal wherever it is needed. To accept a delivery of coal into Ravenscraig beyond what is necessary to preserve plant is an affront to the steelworkers, miners and the working class of this country. The same applies to all steel plants.

There can be no doubt about the government's aim in this dispute. MacGregor has stated he wants a clear cut victory no matter how long it takes. A currently decisive section of the NUM leadership—unlike so many others in recent years—has the same will to victory. Other sections of the trade union leadership are frightened of the example a victory gained by militant action would provide to their own members.

The steel union leaders seem to be running away from making an agreement with the miners. Yet such an agreement would lift the pressure on individual plants and release pickets to do their proper job: stopping the production and movement of coal. Above all, moving on to stop power supplies.

The details of a national agreement between steelworkers and miners are not decisive. We only need to see the glee with which the Tories are exploiting the present disunity to recognise its urgency. Edwards, the Welsh secretary of state, and Thatcher, have congratulated the steelworkers for "their stand." They are hoping to blunt the cutting edge of the miners' strike.

One act—the signing of a na-

tional agreement—would destroy the Tories' hopes. Steelworkers are not fools or scabs and do not wish to be used as a lever against the miners. At the same time the miners must recognise that a minimal intake of coal is needed to prevent damage to the steel plants which themselves create so much coal demand.

Workers' power

Past miners' strikes and the 1980 steel strike refute the claims made by the NCB, Bill Sirs and others about the levels of steel production required to avoid major damage to plant. That can easily be worked out between steelworkers and miners once a national agreement is signed. To cut across competition between plants melting pot tariffs should be established, as used successfully at Hartlepool Plate Mills. The average weekly tonnage produced over a comparable period is worked out and no work in excess of that allowed to be accepted. It can also be the basis of working out a reduction in production.

It is correct to demand reduced steel production—that will be the consequence of reduced energy supplies anyway. In return the steelworkers should be given a blockade on the movement of all steel including steel imports, a step which would require the transport union leaders to pass beyond present gestures and establish practical solidarity from their docker and lorry driver membership.

That would be workers' power. Its prospect terrifies the Tories. It would signal victory for the miners. Such steps must be taken now. The implication for our industries of defeat for the miners are too terrible to contemplate. Transport to steel works would have been taken away from the unionised railways and given to scab lorry drivers; steelworkers would be thrown into the arms of management and left easy prey to further closures.

Given the prospect of a miners' victory, with all it would mean for the defence of industry and jobs, there can be no doubt of the right choice for steelworkers.

Coal and steel stand together

- ★ full support for a miners' victory
- ★ stop all coal movement
- ★ salute the railworkers' blacking of coal and ore movements. Steelworkers and lorry drivers must also take solidarity action
- ★ rebuild the triple alliance—for local and national meetings, rallies, leaflets and propaganda to win inactive or even strike-breaking workers to solidarity action
- ★ a national agreement between steel unions and the NUM to end the divisions being used by the Tories
- ★ stop all movement and import of steel
- ★ united action to bring down the Tories
- ★ return a Labour government on a socialist programme
- ★ no steel closures
- ★ nationalise private steel, including stockholders
- ★ a national plan for steel
- ★ workers' control and management of nationalised industries—boards to be composed of one third elected from unions in the industry, one third from the TUC, one third from a Labour government.
- ★ nationalisation of the top 200 firms which dominate the British economy in the interests of profit
- ★ a socialist plan for the economy
- ★ a massive investment programme into industry

Llanwern

ALTHOUGH MOST steel workers agree with the leaders that coal and ore should be going into Llanwern there is still a huge amount of support for the miners. £2,000 a week is collected at Llanwern for the miners' food fund.

The steel union leadership have done nothing to explain to our members the implications of this strike. Going down the road that we are going now we won't save the steelworks at Llanwern or Ravenscraig or anywhere else. If the miners were to lose then who will support the steelworkers when we ask for support for Llanwern?

The question has to be asked why is this government prepared to incur so much cost to keep Llanwern open when they have refused to invest the necessary amounts in the past? They are only spending that much to break the miners strike. They don't give

a damn about Llanwern.

The very fact that they needed more coal and iron ore to keep the furnaces and coke ovens open than during the steel strike in 1980 shows how the plant has been allowed to deteriorate. Without investment you cannot be competitive and we've not had any major investment for years. Llanwern needs Concast (continuous casting) to stand a chance for a long term future but BSC haven't even asked the government for the money for it.

It is said that we cannot afford to lose our markets but that can't override the need for the miners to win the strike. If we did have to stop production and were laid off then we should protect our market. We wouldn't just sit back—we would prevent all steel being imported—picket the docks and road transport.

By Robert Hancock

AUEW shop steward at Llanwern steel works (personal capacity)

Ravenscraig

THE FIRST convoys carrying iron ore arrived at Ravenscraig on Tuesday. It is estimated that the plant requires 400 lorry loads of coal and iron ore daily to keep it going. Whilst the prospect of further mass picketing by miners looms there are signs that the steel men inside the works are increasingly unhappy with the way events are unfolding.

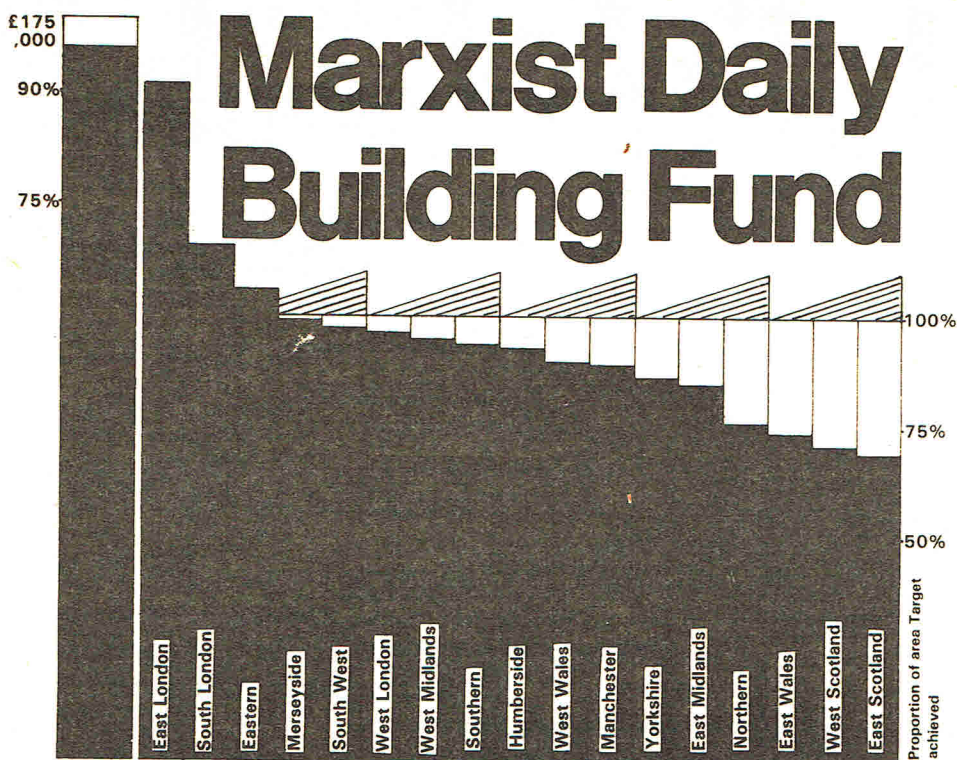
One steel man told me "There's a lot of men in there disgusted with what's happening, we are the Tories' pals all of a sudden and they are the real threat to the future of the works." For many the position they find themselves in as trade unionists arguing their own management's case is a bitter pill to swallow.

But as it becomes clear that production bonuses have been paid to the men at Ravenscraig during the last few weeks of between 10% and 20% there is anger inside the plant. "Earning bonuses whilst we are supposed to be helping the miners—I'm ashamed and so are a great many others."

The full effect of the miners' strike on steel workers is not being reported by the media. Many lessons are being learned from these events. A campaign of education and persuasion amongst the steelworkers by militants in the industry and the miners could provide the leadership so badly lacking.

By Colin Fox

(Motherwell LPYS)



Marxist Daily Building Fund

BY REGISTERED letter we received an unopened wage packet containing £81.53 from C Hick, a print worker in Scarborough. This comrade has worked all week and donated all that time and effort to the future of Marxism.

This is the sort of contribution that will put us into new premises very soon. With this determination there is no holding us back.

Week's wages

We have had another good week with £2,465 in, taking our total to £168,051. This leaves only £6,949 to raise to see us achieve a historic milestone.

The letter (below) was received showing how we

can even get an immediate response from workers when out on the streets selling the paper.

Also contributing this week were D Webb, Stevenage, who sent us £90, R Backhouse, East London £70; D McDonald, Tyneside, £100; C Broomhead, Sheffield, £100; B Wynn, Blackpool, £50; an IRSF member, £25; A Ingham, Worsley, a further £25. Keep the money rolling in. Follow the tremendous example of those who have given a full week's income and ensure our success.

"Dear Militant, During Saturday's paper sale in Carlisle we sold a paper and a "Support the Miners" badge to a man from Nottingham. He said

he was ashamed to say he was from Nottingham, because of the actions of the scabs there. He gave us all his loose change, wished us the best of luck and left.

Ten minutes later he returned and gave us £5 towards the Building Fund. He explained that he had just been made redundant for the second time in four years—an experience which had really politicised him. He'd joined the Labour Party and started reading Militant—"What we need is a marxist daily" he said—with more comrades like him joining the struggle the day won't be far off when we do, Yours fraternally Ian Wright PS. I enclose his £5 plus £2 from myself."

FIGHTING this week FUND £2176

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 7 July
Eastern	1490		2700
East Midlands	1046		3050
Humberside	959		1700
London East	1529		3500
London West	842		2100
London South	1450		2850
Manchester & Lancs	1532		3700
Merseyside	1741		4800
Northern	1169		4050
Scotland East	815		2450
Scotland West	1078		3300
Southern	1892		4400
South West	702		2050
Wales East	608		2100
Wales West	644		1950
West Midlands	1706		3800
Yorkshire	1411		4500
Others	11239		12000
Total received	31853		65000

The deadline for the quarter has been extended to first post Wednesday 11 July so cash from last minute events can be sent down—this is your last chance to help us reach the target.

Many articles have appeared in the Tory press over the last few weeks concerning our finances. We must therefore pull out all the stops this week in an effort to break all previous records and to show the Tory press just what raising money is all about.

Send down all donations to really prove who is best at fund raising, not because our supporters know how to organise socials but because they are committed to fighting for a socialist future

By Kim Waddington

and know that cash is a very necessary part of that battle. All donations sent down to us are a testament to workers waging that battle.

Raffle

Many of our supporters have sent in a week's wage already—how many readers would be prepared to match the £100 donations already sent down? All raffle ticket stubs must be in to us by first post Saturday 7 July; the draw ticket stubs must be in to us by first post Saturday 7 July; the draw takes place at an East London social. There are a couple of days left to sell any left over tickets and get the stubs sent down—the total of £120 of

raffle tickets sold at British Gas Construction Site, Eastington has still to be beaten. Get collecting now and get the cash sent down to us.

Over £175 was collected at the Liverpool Fightback Conference, a Birkenhead social raised £32 and a Leeds Bar BO £29; Gibby Black Perth £20; Shuja Sheikh Hackney £30; A Jay Cathcart £12; Knowsley NALGO Liverpool £10; Workers at British Gas, Eastington £7; Kilburn Careers Office £6; P Shepherd Brighton £5; D Potter Hayes £5; A Boardman Worsley LPYS £5; Noel Wylie Perth LP £5; S Rolfe branch Secretary Southend NUPE £5; J Johnson Stoke CATU £3; Ian Pringle Perth £3.50; T. Walker Gedling TGWU £3.60; B Blackwell Aylesham Kent NUM £2; G Hargreaves Handsworth LP £1.50; and R Buchanan UCATT Gedling £1.

ADS

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

"SOCIALIST YOUTH" badges 20p each or 15p each for 10 or more. Available from "Socialist Youth", c/o LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London, SE17 1JT. Cash with orders.

WALLSEND WOMEN'S Section. Weekend School 25/26 August. Crèche and accommodation provided. For further details, phone: Sandra Thompson (0632) 634889.

"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.

MIKE KING's sponsored parachute jump. All proceeds to the Militant Fighting Fund. Sponsors needed. Details from: Mike King, 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing, Southampton.

YOUNG MINER: issue number 3, out now. Available from Wakfield LPYS, 16 Vicarage Street, Wakefield. 10 copies, 1.00 + 30p p&p. Cheques payable to R. Clarkson. Articles about: Power station stocks, South African miners, Sandinista supports NUM, Look back at 1926. A must for all 'YS branches.

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 9Y. Please make cheques payable to Militant Fighting Fund.

Registered Promoter: D. Smith, 14 Station Road, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex.

MILITANT SUMMER DRAW

1st Prize — £500 Holiday in resort of your choice

2nd Prize - Video worth £300 3rd Prize - Camera worth £100

4th Prize — 5 individual prizes of £20 worth of socialist books

PRICE OF TICKET 10 PENCE

All cash, counterfoils and unsold tickets to be returned to 1, Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PN by first post Saturday 7th July 1984. The draw takes place on Saturday 7th July 1984.

Printed to conform to Part II of the Lotteries and Amusements Act, 1976 & regulations made thereunder and registered by the Promoter Also all other Lottery Acts in Force.

McKay's Printing Service (T.U.) 72-74 Camberwell Road, London SE5 0EQ Telephone: 703 5825/6

Nº 018171

Get your raffle tickets from your local Militant seller

MILITANT TRADE UNION PACK

A bargain pack for all active trade unionists, for a limited period only:—

Edwards—How Trade Unionism came to Pressed Steel Militant and the trade unions

Militant—Import controls or socialist planning?

Militant—Liverpool fights the Tories

Militant—Women: positive discrimination or class action?

Taaffe—Militant: What we stand for

Trotsky, Grant and Taaffe—General strike

Cover price £2.75

Yours for only £2, including postage from World Socialist Books, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Militant

Meetings

Send us details of your Militant meeting (no charge). All copy must arrive here by Saturday.

GREATER MANCHESTER Militant Women's Day School. Saturday 21 July. Details to follow.

SUNDERLAND: Marxist Discussion Group. At: The Labour Party rooms, 5 Grange Crescent (Stockton Road).

Thursday 12 July at 7.30pm—Northern Ireland.

For further details, contact Kath Eglington at 4 Alice Street, Sunderland.

LINCOLN: Marxist Discussion Group. Every Tuesday at the Victoria Pub, Union road, Lincoln, 7.30 pm. For further details tel: (0522) 27922.

MARXIST NORTHERN WEEKEND SCHOOL 7-8 JULY

Courses on Marxism, State, Trade Unions, Trotsky Cost £7.50 (£4.00 unwaged) at Clarendon Building, Southfield Road, Middlesbrough. Crèche provided—when booking give ages of children. Send your booking with cheques/PO to: Norman Hall, 30 Aske Road, Middlesbrough.

DURHAM MINERS GALA: Any Militant supporters going to the gala should contact Ray Physick for information. Ring 0783-653-994.

Militant pamphlet

"The Crisis—where is Britain going" by Ted Grant. First written in August, 1983, this new Militant pamphlet analyses the main political and economic developments in Britain. Price 40p (plus 10p, p+p) from World Socialist Books, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Come to South Wales Summer Camp



1983 Welsh Summer camp

Photo: Mick Carroll

IT'S 2.30 pm. The temperature is up in the late 70's the kids are splashing around in the tide, and that old familiar sizzle on the tarmac of the car park is there.

You would think this was a page from last year's holiday; on the contrary this is June at Port Eynon Beach—the area we are having our annual summer camp.

The tour operators reckon it is going to be a bumper year for overseas package holidays. But why pay £100's to fly to the Riviera etc. when for £12.50 per adult you can enjoy the beauty of the Gower peninsula. Not only are the political discussions centred around the struggles of the international working class, this year's

football and cricket internationals (Wales are yet again odds on favourites with the bookies) will have a winners trophy and medals. There will also be runner's up plaques.

Book now

With the 16 hour-a-day operating creche complete with video (adults no entry except for child minders)...the childrens fancy dress ball and disco...and now world famous camp play...together with the other entertainments planned...this should give you a flavour of the camp.

I've not had time to mention food snacks and morning tea provided free.

It's no wonder that we have already received bookings from as far afield as

Durham. A word of friendly warning to our regulars, do not run the risk of coming on the August Holiday weekend itself without informing us early on.

Last year we were at our full capacity, this year given the fabulous weather and magnificent surroundings we don't want to be in the unfortunate position of turning any one away. Do not be disappointed, book now.

Cost adult £12.50 children £2.50 (5-16 yrs) under 5's free. Cheques payable to 'Swansea Summer Camp'—181, Hanover Street, Swansea. SA1 6BP Tel Swansea (0792) 463 623. During day phone Swansea 466 631.

By Roy Davies (Camp Organiser)

Asian Youth fightback

THE ASIAN Youth Conference being organised by the LPYS in Bradford on July 14 comes at a time when the labour movement and the Asian community in Bradford have responded magnificently in solidarity with the miners.

Already over £4,000 has been collected. A food collection at one Mosque filled two vans to overflowing—this was estimated to be worth over £700.

Joint meetings

The Bangladeshi Youth Organisation have already held public meetings with the LPYS in support of the miners and have also held their own food and money collections.

But there are thousands of young Asians in Bradford who either have no political involvement or have been pushed away from the Labour Party by the record of right-wing leaderships of the past on Immigration controls, cutbacks and wage restraint. This is a position that the LPYS cannot tolerate and our position is being put across

on the streets of Bradford.

The response so far has been brilliant. Asian shop-keepers have not only taken posters to advertise the coming conference but have also taken leaflets and there have been individual donations towards the cost.

Trade unions and Labour Parties have given sponsorship to the event but the response within the Asian areas has been quite inspiring. Some shopkeepers gave donations of £25 towards the cost of the event without even needing time for discussion, such is the recognition that this event is attracting.

But it won't end here. The LPYS in Liverpool have demonstrated what can be done. The recent concert featuring local bands attracted over 3,000 people so we can see what can be achieved. The Asian Youth Conference is just the beginning. Our aim in Bradford is to organise ALL youth behind the LPYS and unite for socialism.

By Greg Moran
(Bradford North CLP)

The struggle in Bradford

THE BATTLE against racism has always been a paramount issue for the Asian workers and the labour movement in Bradford.

The Labour Party Young Socialists are no newcomers to this fight. In 1974 the LPYS organised a 5,000 strong demonstration after increasing racial attacks in the town.

Asian youth and workers have been in the forefront of tremendous struggles in the area; the Bradford 12 campaign, the campaigns against deportations, and the victorious Aire Valley Yarns dispute (a film of which will be shown at the Asian Youth Conference).

Over recent months the struggle against racism has taken place in the schools, particularly against the racist outpourings of local reactionary headmaster, Roy Honeyford.

Earlier this year 200 school students walked out in protest over racism in the schools.

Newham Seven campaign

ASIAN YOUTH in the East London borough of Newham are once again at the forefront of the battle against racist attacks and police harassment.

The Newham Eight Defence Campaign has been re-activated to defend seven more youths whose 'crime' has been to defend themselves.

There has been a new spate of attacks against Asians in Newham. Unmesh Desai of the Newham Monitoring Project said: "Newham and Tower Hamlets are the worst areas in England, if not Western Europe, for racist attacks." The project team link the new attacks to the re-establishment of the NF in the area.

The situation came to a head on 7 April. There was a whole series of attacks that Saturday, including a partially disabled 16 year old boy being dragged into a car and then beaten with a hammer.

Fascist groups have re-emerged carrying out vicious attacks on black people. In Batley, fascist thugs attacked eight year olds leaving a school presentation day (see issue 702). NF graffiti and attacks on Asian shops have increased.

The racism is being given a 'respectable' veneer by right wing Conservative headmaster Roy Honeyford.

Gutter politics

His poisonous writings can be found in the journal of the reactionary right of the Tory Party, *Salisbury Review*. According to him Asians are of a "hysterical political temperament", and are "obstinately backward and cannot cope with democracy". He links the dramatic rise in Heroin abuse not with mass youth unemployment but with Asian workers.

Honeyford has made a re-hash of the oldest gutter-level arguments that black people are to blame for the ills of

The arrests of the seven followed an incident during the evening, when Asian youth fought back in self-defence against a gang of racist thugs outside a pub.

Police arrived on the scene and immediately arrested an Asian youth. Then over the following week more arrests took place, with five of the youth being put on remand. At first the charges were criminal damage and possessing offensive weapons, but these have been changed to more serious 'conspiracy' charges.

The campaign has now begun to defend these youths. As the Defence Campaign point out: "The campaign again faces the task of mobilising local support for our youths. It was that support which ultimately proved to be crucial in the Newham 8 case and which is needed now".

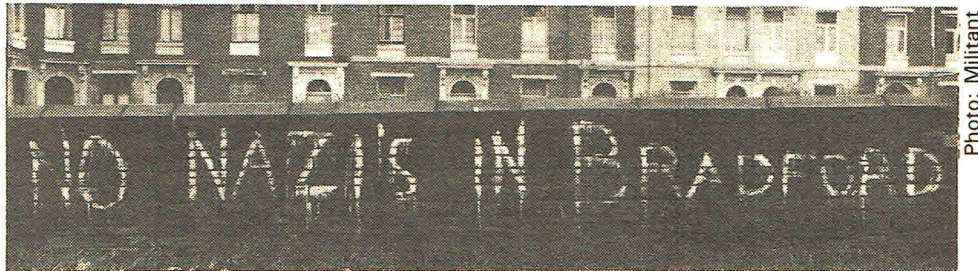


Asian youth are in the forefront of the struggle against racism and police harassment. Asian youth demonstrate in defence of the Newham 8 last year. Now a new campaign is underway. (see report this page).

Photo: Militant

LPYS ASIAN YOUTH CONFERENCE. SATURDAY JULY 14 QUEENS HALL, BRADFORD

Morning: Speakers—Max Madden MP, Pat Wall, Anil Singh & Hashida Dev (LPYS). Discussion on general conditions.
Afternoon: Women and race, education—Hashida Dev and Hamid Khayah (LPYS)
Indian sub-continent—
Dave Nellist MP, Farooq Tariq PPP, Bob Lee, Chris Weldon.
Details contact: Anil Singh, Flat 24, 5 Oak Avenue, Bradford.



Bradford has been at the centre of the fight against fascism.

Photo: Militant

the capitalist system.

Not surprisingly he has been built up as a hero in the local rags, such as the *Telegraph and Argus*—which has published many pro-Honeyford letters from members of the fascist British National Party and other racists—and in national papers such as the reactionary *Daily Mail*.

Yet incredibly, Honeyford is headmaster of a school where 86% of the children are of Asian origin!

The Tory press support for Honeyford furthers their attempts to use racism to divide and rule the working

class. By blaming black people for problems such as unemployment or slum housing, the capitalists escape the responsibility for the situation, and weaken the labour movement.

Racism

Workers taken in by racist propaganda should beware—once the venom against black people is exhausted, the reactionaries then always turn on the workers. Honeyford is a classic example. He is now attacking the role of working

class parents in education, showing the true nature of his Conservative philosophy.

The boom years of capitalism have gone, and as the crisis deepens so the capitalist class will resurrect the divide and rule tactics of racism. They must be answered with clear socialist demands that expose their lies, and show the only real solutions to the problems that workers, black and white, face today.

By Anil Kumar
(Bradford North LPYS)

Book now for LPYS Summer Camp

APPARENTLY, WHEN the world famous 'gentleman gardener' Roddy Llewelyn sustained a bad sunburn one summer, his good friend and companion Princess Margaret commented that she sympathised with his problem because she had had the same trouble when she sunbathed for more than six months at a time!

In Britain today 7 million families cannot afford to go on an annual holiday. To have a break from the longest working hours in Europe or for the youth to escape from the four walled boredom of the dole. A holiday in the sun remains a dream.

LPYS Summer Camp to the rescue!

Summer Camp provides you with the opportunity to recharge your batteries and take part in political discussions led off by the best speakers in the labour movement both in Britain and internationally. There will be sessions on all aspects of LPYS campaigning work, also debates on international subjects from Nicaragua to Poland and evening rallies

By John Hird
(LPYS National Chairman)

on the miners strike, women and the fight for socialism and 'jobs not drugs'.

Summer Camp is the place where you can relax and take part in the best and most comprehensive political education possible in one week. There will also be plenty of time to indulge in your favourite sport and every night there will be a disco, club night or band.

If you usually go to Mustique for your hols don't bother coming to Summer Camp because you are probably a Tory and a boss and we will be spending most of our time condemning your disgusting system and planning the most effective and quickest way of ending it!

● **WHEN IS IT?** A week starting Saturday, 28 July until Saturday, 4 August 1984.

● **WHERE IS IT?** At the Brelford Campsite, near Coleford, in the Forest of Dean, Gloucester. The

nearest railway station is Lydney.

● **WHO'S IN CHARGE?** You are! Each village at the camp elects its own council to supervise its affairs. The camp is run by an elected Camp Council—a week of socialism in practice!

● **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?** £27—and that includes the camp fees, your admission to films, discos, and other events. The use of a full range of sporting equipment from cricket to volley ball is free.

● **WHAT DO YOU BRING?** A tent, sleeping bag, stove, cooking utensils. The LPYS shop on site supplies food etc. Bring a complete change of clothing, wellies and a kagool, just in case it rains (although socialist planning should take care of that).

● **WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?** Bring them—they have a better time than anyone else! There's a professional creche provided. And there's pony-trekking, swimming, and lots more to keep them happy (Children under 3—free; 3-12 years—£13.50).

us?

about

what

Thatcher's dictatorial regime

THE TORY Government have shown in a number of respects an urgent desire to curtail many of the democratic rights long established by workers. A battery of anti-trade union legislation already on the statute book will soon be added to, and this, if rigorously applied, would rule out all effective trade union activity. The outright banning of the trade unions at GCHQ is only the extension of a trend in Tory policy.

Currently, the miners are experiencing the deployment of, in effect, a national police force, with special riot equipment and training, as well as the blatant interference in miners' civil rights, in an attempt to break the back of the NUM.

In the first of a two-part feature, LYNN WALSH examines aspects of Thatcher's moves towards the concentration of power into her own hands, and the increasing use of authoritarian measures to stifle political opposition.

IN HIS recently published book *The Politics of Consent*, Francis Pym attacks her "presidential" style. Thatcher's methods indicate a tendency towards *parliamentary bonapartism* where behind the forms of parliamentary democracy the Premier, using her control of the state apparatus, exercises increasingly autocratic control.

No opposition allowed

When Thatcher says "I will not be dictated to by the mob" at least some of her lackeys take this to be a reference not to the miners but to her cabinet! From his own experience as the first Foreign Secretary to be dismissed in 200 years, Pym wryly comments that Thatcher expects Ministers to echo her ideas and obediently implement her policies. She regards opposition in Cabinet not as a means of clarifying policies, but as an obstacle to be overcome.

On crucial issues such as the Falklands only a small handful, an inner inner cabinet, were involved in key decisions. When Thatcher moved to ban trade unions at GCHQ, it appeared that the majority of Ministers were not fully informed of developments. Even on the central issues of economic policy the full cabinet was not involved.

"The 1981 Budget", Pym writes, "was rigidly deflationary and thus highly controversial at a time of deep recession, yet the strategy behind it was never discussed in Cabinet and was revealed to the full Cabinet only on Budget day itself. One can guess the reason: the Chancellor and the Prime Minister concluded that the Cabinet might well insist on some changes." In reality, only a minority of her Cabinet supported the Budget proposals in full.

When she first became Prime Minister in 1979, although Heath himself was excluded, some of the old guard who had held positions

under Heath were given posts. However, those who were less than enthusiastic about hard-line monetarist policies were continually asked: "Are you one of us?"

One by one, her critics—brutally dubbed the "wets"—were pushed out of the Government: Norman St John Stevas, Sir Ian Gilmore, Pym himself. Prior was sent into exile as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

At the same time, the hard-line monetarists were given more senior positions: Howe, Chancellor, was promoted to Foreign Secretary, Lawson to become Chancellor, Leon Brittan to become Home Secretary, Tebbit and Biffen, both union-bashing monetarists, have kept key positions.

As his "final criticism of the government", Pym complains "that its style of operation has steadily become less flexible and

Wets like Pym have no real alternative to Thatcher's policies. In his book Pym accepts that when the post-war boom "fizzled out" the "social democratic consensus ran into a brick wall".

He accepts the need for "rationalisation" (job losses) in industry, for cuts in social spending, for increased defence spending, and he welcomes privatisation.

Pym hostile to labour

But he opposes the "abrasive style" and the ruthless methods of Thatcher's government. This reflects fear of the social and political consequences of savage deflationary policies; a fear that, notwithstanding Thatcher's "landslide" last year, support for the Tories will be catastrophically undermined. And they fear that at-



Francis Pym (left), sacked by Thatcher for his 'wetness', unlike Keith Joseph (centre) and Geoffrey Howe (right). Photo: Militant.

more centralised. This process stems from the Prime Minister's tendency to think that she is always right. In turn, this leads her to believe that she can always do things better than other people, which then encourages her to try to do everything herself.

Direct control

"The two consequences of this are, first, that central government now exercises direct control over more and more aspects of our lives and, second, that within the government the Prime Minister exercises direct control over more and more departments."

tacks on workers' living standards and trade-union rights will provoke a massive class movement and political upheaval.

Pym and his friends are no less hostile to the labour movement than Thatcher, and they are desperately searching for a way out of the crisis for the capitalist class. But they see that the ascendancy of Thatcher reflects domination of the Tory party and the government by a "narrow and dogmatic faction".

Far from reflecting the strength of the political representatives of capitalism, this conceals a growing political isolation and an underlying weakness which poses enormous dangers for the ruling class.



The miners have r Here, Arthur Scarg

Taming the civil

IN REALITY, Thatcher's drive to concentrate ministerial power in her own hands and transform the whole civil service into a subservient instrument goes even further than Pym indicates.

Thatcher, he says, "would ideally like to run major departments herself and tries her best to do so—not just in terms of overall policy, but in strategic detail".

Faced with the problem of grasping all the factors concerned, "her response has been to expand Downing Street staff to include experts in every major area, thus establishing a government within a government. In most cases, people have been chosen to reinforce her point of view rather than challenge it, which produces a greater rigidity of outlook than encountered in the civil service".

Civil Service Establishment

Pym denounces Thatcher's methods as "a system that

deliberately pits Downing Street against individual departments, breeds resentment amongst ministers and civil servants and turns the Prime Minister into a president. I do not like the growing tendency for ministers (and indeed civil servants) to be accountable to Downing Street, and only accountable to Parliament as agents of the Prime Minister".

Pym does not go into detail. But in fact Thatcher has carried out a massive purge of top civil service positions and put bureaucrats of her own choice in charge of the machine.

Labour governments have always come up against a Chinese Wall of civil service obstruction, an impenetrable barrier to any radical reform which cuts into the power, privileges and profits of big business. Nevertheless, when Thatcher became Prime Minister she too regarded top civil servants as suspect. They were wedded, in her eyes, to the "debilitating consensus" of the boom period, to ever-growing public expenditure, support for industry, and to (moderate) social reforms. Second only to the workers themselves, it is civil servants who, for the Thatcherites, are responsible for Britain's decline.

This view was reflected last year

Thought control

"Where there is error, may we bring truth" (Thatcher, entering 10 Downing Street, May 1979)

"THE FACTS of life do invariably turn out to be Tory," proclaimed *The Right Approach*, the Conservatives' 1976 policy document.

Thatcher & Co, however, are not completely reckless. Just in case the facts inconveniently turn out to contradict Tory "truth" they believe in taking precautions.

"Guidelines for YTS"

Nowhere is this more evident than in education and science. Discarding the liberalistic stance of the past, Thatcher, and more particularly her loony guru Sir Keith Joseph, have openly attacked courses and research which they fear may refute their propaganda or stimulate criticism and opposition to Tory policies.

Gagging YTS: With one in two school leavers without work more and more 16 and 17 year olds are

inevitably asking what kind of system it is that dumps them straight onto the dole. Questioning the status quo, however, is not on so far as the Tory government is concerned.

Acting on orders from Tebbit, Mr Peter Morrison, a junior minister at the Department of Unemployment, last September drew up "guidelines" for YTS schemes.

His memorandum said: "Matters related to the organisation and functioning of society in general should be excluded unless they are relevant to trainees' work experience. Some matters proper for inclusion," the memo conceded, "may be potentially controversial; such issues should be handled in an objective and neutral manner"—so as not to offend Tory ministers!

The memo warned that there should be no participation in marches or demonstrations; no intervention in industrial disputes (not relevant to work experience?); and no printing of any posters or magazines with "any political or publicly controversial material".

"The propagation of political opinions is not permitted," the



...suddenly borne the brunt of Thatcher's authoritarian measures, with the police clamping down on their civil rights. is seen being arrested outside Orgreave. Photo: John Harris (IFL).

service

in a broadside on the civil service from Sir John Hoskyns, a former computer tycoon and previous head of Thatcher's Policy Unit. He blasted the Whitehall establishment as "shallow, conformist and lacking in rigour". They were too preoccupied, he said, with preserving their own influence (and pensions) and with covering up past mistakes.

Top selection committee

True enough, to be sure. But who should be moved in to implement new (Thatcherite) policies? Despite the decay and collapse of British business, Hoskyns concluded "my experience... has convinced me that the way businessmen think and act is more relevant than that of most of the politicians, civil servants, academics and commentators who have concerned themselves with the nation's problems thus far." (*Guardian*, 30 September, 1983)

Fortunately for Thatcher, many of the key permanent secretaries who had major government departments were coming up for retirement. She quickly abolished the Civil Service Department and through her Cabinet secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong,

who was put in charge of the top selection committee, she ensured that she got the types she wanted in key positions.

Maggie's new mandarins are committed monetarists, they are market and profit-orientated, they are prepared to implement drastic cuts in social spending, and behind their inscrutable Whitehall masks they are out-and-out Tories.

The new permanent secretaries are expected to "colonise" their departments with the same types. And in case their zeal should begin to fade—and they relapse into empire-building to bolster their own importance—Thatcher brought in Sir Derek Raynor, a former Marks and Spencer boss, to ensure that the big business mentality prevailed in Whitehall.

Lower down the hierarchy, civil servants—apart from the direct threat of the sack through cutbacks—are to be kept in line through unprecedented political control enforced by disciplinary threats.

The banning of trade unions at GCHQ was only the most blatant move to impose conditions of secrecy on civil servants and squash any expression of opposition to current policies. During the campaign against the ban, union representatives were ordered not to appear on TV programmes discussing the issue and were prevented from putting their case to the all-party Select Committee on Employment.

In 1980, Trevor Brown, a civil servant at the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, expressed concern on a TV programme about the health and safety standards there. He was given a severe reprimand for "publicly expressing views on official matters and making use of official experience". Threatened with transfer, he decided on early retirement.

In October 1983, Ministry of Defence management at Royal Ordnance Factories threatened shop stewards with disciplinary action in an attempt to prevent unions campaigning against privatisation.

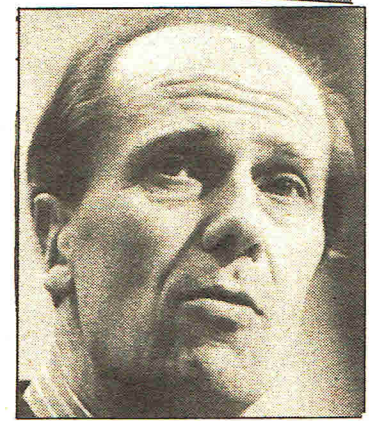
In March last year, two employees of the Properties Services Agency were threatened with disciplinary action over articles they wrote for their union journals criticising cuts in the Agency.

Curtailed political rights

Political vetting of Ministry of Defence staff has been intensified to an unprecedented extent. However, civil servants whose work is in no way connected with defence have been warned that they may be sacked if they give support to CND.

In the 1982 Employment Act, moreover, the Tories have narrowed the definition of an industrial dispute while widening the definition of political activity. This means that trade union action against govern-

ment policies which threaten their pay and conditions, like the POEU's action against privatisation of British Telecoms, becomes "political" and therefore liable to legal threat.



Top left and clockwise: Iain Gilmore, sacked by Thatcher, Norman St John Stevas, sacked, James Prior, 'exiled' to Northern Ireland, and Norman Tebbit, Thatcher's blue-eyed boy. Photos: Militant.

ment policies which threaten their pay and conditions, like the POEU's action against privatisation of British Telecoms, becomes "political" and therefore liable to legal threat.

These steps under Thatcher shatter the myth of an impartial civil service, that it is merely a neutral instrument to implement the policies of elected governments.

Thatcher's government has also shown the idea that the judiciary is impartial and independent of the government to be a fairy tale. The brutal six-month sentence imposed on Sarah Tisdall for leaking a memo on Heseltine's public relations ploy on the arrival of Cruise missiles, demonstrated that the judiciary is ready to back-up Thatcher.

However, the biggest blow to the notion of judicial independence came from press revelations that senior civil servants, through meetings arranged by Sir Geoffrey Howe, had been involved in consultations with the Master of the Rolls, Sir John Donaldson. They asked Sir John's advice on the Tories' proposals for further legislation to curb trade union rights and activities.

Donaldson reportedly counselled caution in relation to giving the courts wider powers. But in the course of the discussions he made a damning admission. He confessed that when he had presided over the National Industrial Relations Court set up by the Heath government, he

had become very conscious that "the legal system was not in practice even-handed as between employers and unions; current functions put the courts almost entirely in the business of restricting or penalising the latter, and not remedying their grievances." (*Guardian*, 30 November, 1983)

Donaldson promoted

Shortly after the revelations in the press, the government announced "that they had sacked a junior civil servant in the Department of Employment for allegedly leaking a memo on Sir John's views".

On the other hand, the incident appears to have done Donaldson himself no harm. Already rapidly promoted to become Master of the Rolls by Thatcher, Donaldson—who is already eligible for a full index-linked judicial pension—is now rumoured to be front-runner for the £62,000 a year Lord Chancellor's job as soon as Lord Hailsham is eased into late retirement.

We can only conclude that Thatcher and Co see nothing unusual about consulting with a senior judge—the only lapse was the embarrassing public disclosure!

in education

memo warned, and "failure to observe this guidance... may well result in the closure of (any offending) scheme."

Work-place discipline

In her New Year message for 1984, Mrs Thatcher pronounced that "Orwell was wrong!" But what is the YTS "guidance" but an attempt at thought-control of the kind envisaged in Orwell's novel?

The clamp-down on YTS, moreover, is part of the Tory campaign to turn education for working class children back to nineteenth century norms—strict preparation for the discipline and routine of the workplace and the minimum training needed for unskilled jobs. It is summed up in the phrase "relevant to work experience". The Tories are openly abandoning the idea of rounded-out education aimed at developing children's abilities.

Morrison spelt this out in a speech last year. He said he wished the words "education" and "training" could be merged. "In the present economic climate sub-

jects such as drama, music, peace studies and sociology should be relegated to their proper place as leisure and fringe activities while money and effort was concentrated on the more mundane but essential subjects to produce more employable youngsters." (*The Times*, 13 October, 1983).

Cracking-down on "subversive" facts: Sociology is a particular bugbear for the Tories, especially for Sir Keith Joseph. He has long believed that the growth of social studies fostered radicalism in the universities and polytechnics, poisoning the minds of the guided youth against capitalism in general and the Tories in particular.

Even the most obscurantist, apolitical sociologists, moreover, have a tendency to produce studies which refute hallowed Tory myths. For instance, there is hardly a sociologist who doesn't consider that there is a link between the growth in crime and high unemployment, or that poverty is bad for people.

This has not prevented Sir Keith Joseph attacking courses run by the Open University for

their so called 'Marxist' bias. Any scientifically-based sociology course is a threat to Tory orthodoxy.

When the Tories came to office in 1979, they rapidly reduced the funds of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC)—the body which channels government funds to social science teaching and research by 25% in real terms. Later, when Sir Keith arrived at the Department of Education he called in Lord Rothschild to investigate the SSRC—clearly with a view to winding it up.

Hitler and Pinochet burned "subversive" books: Joseph was out to stop them being written.

But Lord Rothschild produced a raspberry. He rejected the idea that social studies could be "market-orientated" and that research should only be funded if it was considered *useful* to big business or to ministry bureaucrats. The SSRC, his report concluded, was doing a good job.

This was a slap in the face for Joseph, who does not think so at all.

Anti-union bias

However, the SSRC was reprieved for the time being, but with its activities under close Thatcherite scrutiny. The attack on the SSRC highlights the determination of

Thatcher and Co to neutralise, undermine, or abolish any government-funded body which without necessarily questioning capitalism, challenges Tory policies.

One of the SSRC-funded bodies which came under attack even after Rothschild's report was the Industrial Relations Unit at Warwick University. The attack was launched by Lord Beloff, head of the private, Tiru university Tory Buckinghamshire, who accused the unit of pro-trade union bias—despite lavish praise for its work from the CBI and Coventry employers! After yet another enquiry, the Unit was cleared of favouring the unions—but there is no doubt in this case, as in others, the academics will now be leaning over backwards to prove their academic and political respectability.

Both the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) and the Cambridge Economic Policy Group directed by Wynne Godley, which have criticised Thatcher's economic policies from a Keynesian standpoint, have had their SSRC grants drastically reduced. At the same time all monetarist study groups have all received greatly increased grants.

Last year, moreover, the government Think Tank, the CPRS previously headed by Lord

Rothschild, itself got the chop. Created by Heath when prime minister, the CPRS has never been particularly independent. But Mrs Thatcher prefers to rely on her own Policy Unit. "Mrs Thatcher is a particularly difficult client for such an analytical organisation," commented Tessa Blackstone (*Observer*, 31 July 1983), a former member of CPRS's staff! "...she does not relish being distracted by other options or by apparently faint-hearted assessments of the cost."

In the past the representatives and top servants of British capitalism were renowned for taking a broad view, for weighing up their class interests from all points of view.

Irreversible decline

No more. The irreversible decline of British capitalism has left them no room for manoeuvre. Determined to off-load the crisis onto the working class, this government is not interested in alternatives which are unviable from the point of view of big-business profits.

Next week's article will explain more generally this movement of Thatcher and her wing of the Tory Party towards greater authoritarian policies.

France

Why the left vote collapsed

THE EUROPEAN Election result is a severe defeat for the workers' parties in France. Victory at the polls went to the common list of the main capitalist parties, the RPR and the UDF.

The extreme right-wing *Front National* led by Jean-Marie Le Pen won 11% of the vote, only 56,000 votes less than the most powerful working class organisation the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF), which suffered its worst electoral defeat since 1928. The *Parti Socialiste*, the biggest party in the French parliament, also suffered a serious setback.

This crushing victory of the Right is explained by the complete failure of the Socialist-Communist government to deal with the crisis of capitalism. Unemployment is rising steadily. In three months from 1 February to 1 May this year, 17,000 jobs were lost every day. A quarter of youth under 25 are out of work.

The government-backed 'industrial modernisation' project will take official unemployment figures towards 3 million by early 1985. In Paris, 50,000 people roam the streets every night without shelter. The Salvation Army soup-kitchens have been started up again, and are the main source of sustenance for thousands of unemployed youth.

The austerity measures of the Left government have provoked the biggest movement of French workers since the stormy events of 1968. Miners, shipyard, steel and car workers, teachers, civil servants and bank workers have all been involved in strike action.

Desperation

The growing desperation of the population accounts for the progress of the *Front National*. The contradiction between the flowery speeches and smug complacency of the Socialist leaders, with their promises of a bright future, and the callous imposition of the austerity programme, wrecking the lives of millions, has driven people into the arms of Le Pen. The *Front National* made particular progress in eastern France, where the collapse of industry has transformed Lorraine into an industrial wasteland.

On a national scale, around 17% of the FN vote came from industrial workers. The support for the FN came mainly from the middle class, the professions, managerial groups, and also, at the other end of the scale, from the growing and increasingly desperate *sous-prolétariat*, the jobless, the most downtrodden, exploited, and demoralised layers of society.

Of the FN vote, only 34% voted for the extreme right in previous elections. Previous supporters of the RPR and the UDF made up 25% and

By Philippe Roland
(Confédération Générale du Travail)

9% of the FN vote respectively. 11% of former voters for the left voted for Le Pen this time.

Front National propaganda is skilfully carried out. Pointing to the impotence of the 'politicians' the FN presents itself as the 'popular' and 'national' opposition as opposed to the purely 'parliamentary' opposition of the RPR and the UDF.

Racist poison

The organisation concentrates its attack on the immigrants. "2 million unemployed means 2 million immigrants too many! Put French people first!" is their main slogan.

The left leaders have no effective answer to this racist poison, as they themselves have enacted some of the most repressive legislation against immigrant workers in French history. Immigrant workers, even of the second and third generation, have no voting rights. The left government backed down on its election programme on this point. In areas such as the 20th Arrondissement in Paris, with a high immigrant population, Le Pen was elected to the municipal council last year in an election fought over the heads of the immigrant workers, immigration being the main issue of the campaign.



Jean Marie Le Pen, leader of the extreme right wing *Front National*.

Le Pen lacks neither money nor publicity. The media, and the traditional right-wing parties, themselves becoming more and more extreme, have striven to give the FN a 'respectable' image. But the party machine of the FN is still very weak. Even in Dreux, where the FN won 17% of the vote in a by-election last year, the local organisation was based on a band of a dozen or so hooligans, attacking Arab youth in local cafés, boasting of their guns for 'hunting wogs', and daubing

swastikas on walls.

The FN has no solid basis. With the almost certain return of a RPR-UDF government in 1986, it will probably fade away as rapidly as it has sprung up, sharing the fate of the National Front in Britain after Thatcher's victory in 1979. Already the leaders of the RPR and the UDF, who encouraged Le Pen in the past, have begun to turn on their extremist bloodhound, who they see as becoming too dangerous a rival to their ambitions in 1986.

The workers' parties continue to lose support, following the trend set in the March 1983 municipal elections. The PS fell to lower than its 1979 score, with only 20.76% of the vote, but the greatest blow was delivered to the Communist Party whose vote fell to the same level as during the years of the disastrous "Third Period" policy between 1929 and 1934. At the time, the PCF, following Stalin's directives, pursued a highly sectarian policy, branding all other parties as "fascist", and reducing the PCF to an isolated 'revolutionary' sect.

Communist decline

In the present elections, only 6% of the electorate turned out to vote Communist, giving the PCF 11.28% of votes cast, only half of the 1979 figures. Of young people between 18 and 20 years old voting for the first time, only 6% voted for the PCF.

The Party itself has suffered a serious decline. In 1982, it closed down 500 factory branches through lack of support. The party branches have suffered the same decline. "When I first join-

ed a few years ago, we used to get sixty people to meetings of the *Cellule*" says Marc B, a young PCF member in Paris, "now we're lucky to get six or seven along. Of the JC's (members of the Communist Youth organisation) hardly any take their card as full party members."

The explanation is the role of the Communist Party in the Left government. Despite falling support, the PCF remains the most influential party of the French working class. Firmly rooted in the factories and



Communist Party members celebrate the Left election victory and "Four communist Ministers" at a PCF festival in 1981—the Mitterrand government austerity programme has led to serious reversals for the left.

Election Results as a percentage of votes cast

Party	1979(EURO)	1981 Legislative Elections	EURO 1984
PCF	20.52	16.16	11.28
PS	23.53 (+L.Radicals)	37.51 (+L.Radicals)	20.76
PCI (Extreme Left)	—	—	0.90
LO (Extreme Left)	3.08	1.33	2.06
PSU-CDU (Left Reformist)	0	—	0.72
Left Radicals	—	—	3.31
Ecologists	4.39	1.08	3.37
RPR-UDF	43.92 (Scores of sep. lists added)	40.00 (Scores of sep. lists)	42.88
FN	—	* —	11.00
Various Right	—	2.80	6.96

*FN did not stand, having too little support to qualify.

workplaces, with powerful support in the biggest union confederation CGT and a long tradition of struggle, it is by far the foremost party of the industrial proletariat, with enormous prestige amongst the most class conscious workers.

Under pressure from the ranks and the CGT, the PCF has been increasingly critical of the government's policies. The PCF only has four ministers out of forty, and the leadership complains of the inability of these four to influence government policy in any serious way, but justifies staying in the government and voting for austerity measures by the need to maintain 'the unity of the left'. Verbal support is given to workers in struggle against these policies whilst their practical support goes to the government in carrying them out.

By their campaign of criticism, Georges Marchais and the PCF leaders hope to put the whole responsibility for these policies on the shoulders of the Socialists. In reality, however, the PS leaders alone could never have gained even a temporary acceptance of the austerity programme. The PS lacks the authority which the Communist Party has in the workers' movement. Without the PCF collaboration in government, the austerity policy would have been impossible to carry out.

Reflation call

The PCF leadership offers no practical alternative to Mitterrand and Mauroy's monetarist policies. They call for a policy of reflation. But this has already been tried by the Socialists themselves in the first months of the Left government with disastrous results.

"The Communist Party claims to stand for an alternative programme", many

workers say to themselves, but "since this programme cannot be acted upon for fear of violating Left Unity and government solidarity, what use is it?". In a period of big struggles against government policy, the PCF, for all its 'criticisms' has lost support! In traditional strongholds, the party vote has fallen through massive abstentionism.



Georges Marchais, PCF leader.

The day after the results came out, the headline on the Party paper, *Humanité*, read "A Serious Warning". Pressure from the ranks to end the 'double talk' is growing, and the Central Committee is now split on participation in government. But what lessons will the leading group of the PCF draw from the defeat? Statements of the Political Bureau call for a 'debate' about the reasons for the defeat in the party, knowing full well that the 'debate' would take place in any case!

The leadership has reaffirmed its commitment to government participation, in order to "respect the will of the people expressed in '81". The official explanations for the defeat mention neither

government policy nor PCF participation, but explain falling support as the consequence of having broken with blindly following the Soviet Bureaucracy 'too late' (thus putting the blame on the old leadership).

It will need time, the review *Révolution* explains, for the electorate to be fully convinced of the correctness of the new orientation of the

party. According to the leaders then, the policy is right, but the fault lies with the workers in not having understood its correctness! Big struggles will inevitably develop within the PCF in the next period. All the talk in intellectual circles and in the capitalist press about the 'historic decline' of the PCF destined to wither away, is so much nonsense.

On the basis of the class struggles ahead, especially under a future right-wing government, the PCF will recover lost ground. But a thorough internal renovation is necessary. The PCF must return to the fighting class policies upon which it was founded. Communists in France must work towards this end.

South Africa, Uruguay, USA, West Germany

Black miners ready for struggle

SOUTH AFRICA may be on the verge of a national strike by black miners in the gold and coal fields.

Since Botha's apartheid regime was forced to recognise trade unions which could organise blacks five years ago, more and more workers have joined the non-racial unions. But the bosses in the mining industry have probably resisted organisation there more than any other industry.

Gold, and to a lesser extent, coal are vital to Africa's economy. But more than that, the migrant labour system which operates there is the economic and political heart of apartheid.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was founded in August 1982 and was only recognised by the employers' authority, the Chamber of Mines, last year. The union put in a claim for a 25% pay rise this year. It was in reality very modest. Even the government admit that the lowest paid mineworkers (on £60 a month) need at least 40% to reach the subsistence rate, and the average wage for black miners is only £185 a month plus keep.

Apartheid law

The Chamber of Mines offered 13-14% and have now decided to introduce that increase unilaterally. At least some of the bosses seem set on breaking the union before it can gain any more strength. Already despite the difficult conditions 70,000 miners are organised out of about 480,000. The employers give this small percentage as the reason why they have stuck to their small rise. But some capitalist commentators in South Africa are counselling the mine owners to be cautious.

Organisation is very difficult. 97% of black workers in the mines are migrants forced by apartheid law to live in bachelor lodgings on the mine compounds. Their

families are left behind in tribal reserves in South Africa and some even in Lesotho or Mozambique. These workers are forced to return to their areas regularly. But the workers are not just a steady stream of raw new recruits; many have had experience of the compounds before and recent history shows massive outbreaks of protest.

Striker killed

The work is dangerous. 831 mineworkers died in mining accidents in 1983 and 729 in 1982. The wages are terrible (particularly to support families many miles away) and part of the pay is deferred by management and only released at their discretion. Long hours, gross overcrowding, lack of privacy and poor food all add to the anger.

There have been many strikes on a local level in the last decade over wages and conditions. They have been suppressed with many workers shot dead and many others dismissed. Already in the early stages of this dispute at least one miner has been killed, seemingly by white vigilantes, at Coronation colliery in Natal; tear gas and dogs were used against strikers. The colliery was owned by the huge Anglo-American Corporation.

The formation of the NUM came nearly forty years after the last attempt to form a black miners' union which organised 76,000 miners. This was mercilessly crushed by the police who literally bludgeoned strikers back down the mines in 1946.

The miners are likely to have more success today, thought just as bloody a fight. The vast majority of miners work in the goldfields and gold is very profitable accounting for 45% of SA's



Gold miners in Transvaal. Black workers are beginning to show their potential power.

export earnings. Anglo-American Gold Fields alone made £238 million in the year to February, and mine ownership is concentrated in the hands of a very small number of individuals and institutions. Coal is also growing in importance in exports having overtaken the USA in the big West German

market.

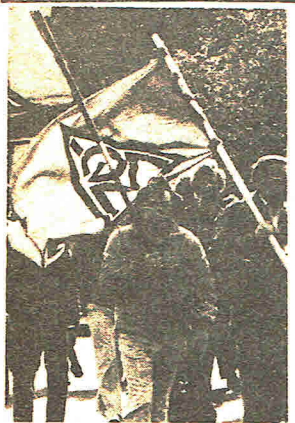
But this vast wealth certainly does not make the bosses charitable. They will want to fight the workers. Whether the bosses will risk a massive strike in mining to smash the union is not clear; they may prefer to try some form of compromise.

But whatever happens the

existence of the non-racial unions will galvanise the struggle throughout South Africa. The organised working class have given notice that they will lead the fight against apartheid and capitalist exploitation.

By Roger Shrikes

West Germany



THE STRIKE by West German engineering workers for a 35-hour week has ended, though the compromise deal agreed has left many trade unionists disappointed.

The strike, concentrated in the Stuttgart and Frankfurt areas, caused a large loss of profit for Germany industry. The new deal allows for a 1½ hour cut to 28½ hours a week with "flexibility" for firms who claim to be in trouble. A fuller analysis will appear in a future issue of *Militant*.

America's militant mineworkers

IT IS not unknown, even in the last decade, for American pitmen to be on strike for up to two years supported by contributions from sympathisers at home and abroad yet miners have stubbornly defied all attempts by the state to break their union.

Mines, whether coal or ore, are not nationalised and employers use hired thugs and criminals as 'security operatives', 'company police' etc to violently dissuade strikers from picketing. These 'goons' are known to be responsible not only for killing striking miners and union officials, but also for the murder and maiming of strikers' wives and children.

Appalling crimes against miners have gone unpunished. Indeed, because of the local set-ups in many mining states where sheriffs, police and Mayors of mining towns and counties are often virtually Company nominees, they have been connived at between Goons and the local State. The National Guard,

a volunteer force armed to the teeth rather like the old 'B' Specials in Northern Ireland, are at times completely at the beck and call of the employers.

Loyalty Oaths or 'Iron Clad' contracts were common during the last century. To get, or even keep, employment men had to sign documents promising, on pain of instant dismissal, never to join a union or associate with union sympathisers. Such contracts (Yellow Dogs) are still in use today where organization is still, temporarily, weak. Yet the American strikers' maxim 'Today's scabs are tomorrow's strikers' has proved over and over again to be true.

American miners prepare for industrial battle as thoroughly as Generals fighting a war. Iron discipline is maintained amongst the union's 'soldiers' on picket duty—alcoholic drink is banned and weapons are not carried. There is a 'No First Use' agreement amongst pickets

as a general rule which would, if broken, legitimise the use of State force against them in the eyes of other workers.

Retaliatory violence against the State force and/or the goons could never be described as casual.

The counties of Harlan, Perry and Hazard in the mountainous Kentucky coalfield represent something like Tonyandy in the history of struggle. 'Bloody' Harlan—a name gained in the 1960s was the scene of almost unbelievable violence against miners on strike to which the forces of 'Law and Order' turned a convenient blind eye.

Poverty

Dormant feuds were rekindled during the UMA strike during the Carter administration—in addition the strikers disdainfully ignored the invocation of the Taft-Hartley Act (like Heath's Industrial Relations Act combined with Tebbit's Law).

Conditions at home are

still primitive for many many miners. The lack of running water or other mains services are quite common. The poor medical and educational provision combined with company housing long past its useful life show their effects in all barometers of living standards. The infant mortality rate is much higher than elsewhere in the state.

After the dispute in Britain comes to an end, miners will be discussing the lessons. The idea which grew after the victory over the Heath government in 1972 and 1974 that industrial muscle without political action can permanently ward off attacks will be seriously questioned by the newly blooded workers.

American miners have not yet seriously moved away from their syndicalist roots—the industrial struggles which they see through to the bitter end are not linked to the political struggle. But the class struggles ensure they will do.

By Bob Stothard
(TGWU 8/401)

URUGUAY Workers against the junta

ON 27 June at 24-hour "civic strike", paralysed all of Uruguay. It was the largest of a series of protests and strikes in the past year. This was the 11th anniversary of the military coup which started a decade of mass murders, imprisonment and torture.

The strike, the biggest since the coup was in protest at government economic policies, at delays in confirming the general elections promised in November and at political imprisonments. The main opposition leader Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, a landowner who heads the Blanco party, was arrested for treason when he returned from exile for telling the United States Congress about civil rights abuses.

Standstill

The riot police were reportedly almost the only people on the streets of Montevideo, the capital, as the mass of the population stayed at home. Only two shops in the main street opened, there were no newspapers and emergency service only on the telephones.

After a similar day of action in Chile recently, General Pinochet was reported to have been taken up in a helicopter ride to see for himself the extent of dissatisfaction. If General Alvarez, Uruguay's dictator had a similar bird's eye view he would not only have seen the power of the workers but the limitations of the state forces. After the government ordered public transport to run normally, troops occupied Montevideo's main bus terminus but they could run very few buses.

"Guided democracy"

The ruling class are beginning to realise the junta is on its last legs but the military government want to "guide" the process towards "democracy", insisting on a toughened constitution to ban parties like the Communists with foreign links.

The so-called middle of the road "Colorado" party backs this, trying to appease the military. The "Blancos" with more popular support demand no talks with the government until Ferreira is released.

But the actions of the working class have done more to isolate the regime and end the dictatorship than months of polite discussions by the middle class or upper class politicians. If the leaders of the workers movement were worthy of the heroism shown by the masses it would not only be the Latin American juntas which would topple but the entire capitalist system.

Letters

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

Alliance down the pan

Dear Comrades,

On a paper sale during the Portsmouth by-election we were suddenly surrounded by the SDP election machine and the nation's press. David Steel patted babies on the head and tried to avoid the issues that affect workers as much as possible.

Our sellers immediately took up cries of "Buy the *Militant* for the only real alternative to misery under the Tories" and "Put Thatcher on the dole, buy the

Militant". The effect was immediate.

The lavatory attendant came rushing out with her 25p demanding a copy and muttering something under her breath about Liberals being Tories in disguise, and the SDP—well, I'm sure she would have found a use for them in the toilets.

We were then faced with a succession of people wanting to buy the paper and ended up selling seven in the space of about fifteen minutes.

Yours fraternally
Eddie Truman
Portsmouth

Support for Kinnock

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I write to say that I disagree with Ray Murray from Derby (Letters, issue 705). If we seriously want nuclear disarmament then we must be prepared to pay the price, which is to increase defence spending on our conventional forces because

these will then be our only means of deterrence and defence.

I for one believe we should support our great leader Neil Kinnock. The only way we are going to beat the Tories is if we remain united behind our elected leader. Remember, unity is strength.

Yours truly
David Drazek
Preston LPYS



Striking miners talk to lorry drivers on the picket line at Port Talbot. Photo: Dave Sinclair

New law — time limit on talking

Dear Comrades,

Just to let you know of a new police law—you can't speak for more than three and a half minutes!

The other day on picket duty I was talking to a lorry driver and having a good conversation with him, when this Inspector came up and said: "You have been talking to him now for three and a half minutes, that's long enough". I turned and said what right have you got to

tell me how long to speak to anyone?

Anyway the driver went in, and the Inspector then said to me, "you're going in". I immediately shouted to the other pickets: "Hey, I'm going to be arrested for speaking for three and a half minutes!" There were jeers from the pickets and the Inspector went away blushing.

Half an hour later another policeman told me the driver had heard enough of what I

was saying. Again I turned round and said: "That's up to the driver to tell me that, not you. Your job is supposed to be neutral".

After about five minutes we put him under so much pressure they had to take him from the picket line, to the clapping of the pickets.

Yours fraternally
Nick Platek
Littleton Colliery NUM
Staffs

The truth is that information is not freely reported and we must change this state of affairs. We can buy lies, bias and anti-working class propaganda in any newsagents, any day of the week. It's time we were able to buy information that has not been twisted and which, for a change, supports working people. *Sun* and *Times* move over, make way for *Militant*.

Yours in a militant mood,
C James
Llandaff
Cardiff

Move over for Militant

Dear Comrades,

I'm at home recovering from flu and today I was able to listen to a debate on Radio 4 on the press. Tony Benn argued that the press is biased and that information is withheld from the public. His opponents argued: "... somehow or other people do manage to find out what's going on" and that "nothing of real importance is kept from them".

I teach children from mining families and have seen their hunger and deprivation but I have not read about this in the popular press. My neighbours were shocked when I told them about these youngsters, yet we live only 12 miles from the South Wales coalfield.

So Fleet Street, where is the information supposedly reported so freely. How is it that intelligent, generally well-informed people don't know that there are hungry children living a few miles away from them?

Effects of strike

Dear Comrades,

Every day we hear from the media 'how futile' the miners' strike is, how it is having 'absolutely no effect' etc. Well, you only have to hear it from the horse's mouth to find out what lies these are.

Ever since some friends of mine sent off to *Energy Manager* (a bosses' magazine) claiming I was a general manager, I've had copies of their journal through the door. A recent issue gave an insight to the real situation.

An article on the strike,

headed "Industry faces boiler switch off" begins by saying: "British companies could be closing down by mid-May for lack of fuel" (we presume they were bailed out by imported coal). Yet the media had been repeatedly telling us we'd have to wait until next year before any effects are felt.

The journal explains that since the overtime ban the government had advised bosses to "... take contingency measures against the possibility of a coal dispute." But despite this the miners' dispute with the NCB is now "hitting all sectors of production... In all sectors, production is down

to between a third and a quarter of normal output".

Furthermore even during the overtime ban the magazine admits coal movement was only "... 40-50% of its normal seasonal quota" and that "the amount of coal arriving at power stations was thought to be 50% of the seasonal average."

It's absolutely clear the bosses are worried about the effect of the present dispute. If the entire movement backs the miners then there will be no worries for our class. We should ensure victory.

Yours fraternally
Paul Ursell
Sittingbourne LPYS

Irish support for miners

Dear Comrades,

On a recent trip to Ireland (expenses met before commencement of the strike) our local LPYS branch secretary and myself had the opportunity of putting the case of Britain's NUM forward.

We attended two public meetings organised by Galway West and Dublin Labour Youth respectively. In Galway we spoke to individual branch meetings of the Federated Workers Union of Ireland and the Galway Trades Council. We also met and spoke to Michael D Higgins—National Chairman of the Labour party and the area's Euro candidate.

In each case people expressed solidarity with the NUM as well as giving further financial support. This confirmed the international as well as national support we have. Thanks to our Irish comrades for their hospitality and forward to their struggle in attempting to break the political "rag bag" of a coalition to ensure the Labour Party represents its class and doesn't prop up the Tory Fine Gael government.

Yours Fraternally
John Durkin
North Yorkshire NUM

NCB propaganda backfires

Dear Comrades,

The NCB tried to get us back to work with an urgent order for coking coal from Chicago. For years they've been running down local pits like Herrington with prime coking coal claiming there's no market. As soon as we strike they find a market.

Now they're buying the coal from Europe to sell. They must be making a loss. I think it was just a propaganda exercise which has backfired.

The NCB has poured all its marketing and machinery into 'soft coal'. The shearing machines they've got are great in four foot seams of soft coal, but are useless in hard coal seams up here. That coal is rubbish but its very profitable and that's all the NCB are interested in.

Yours fraternally
Gregg Fellows
NUM Mechanics
Wearmouth Colliery
Sunderland



Youth opportunities at a Coventry Job Centre.

Exams— for what?

Dear Comrades,

You will have recently read about Keith Joseph's proposals to abolish the old CSE and GCE exams and replace them with a single exam, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).

However, we must have no illusions in this as a kind of good reform. What will it mean for youth? In a word, nothing.

The only difference for young workers is that instead of rotting on the dole with scraps of paper with CSE and GCE on them, they will

be rotting on the dole with a piece of paper marked GCSE.

The *Daily Mail* editorial (21 June) says the "new single exam system (will)... stretch children of all abilities". The Tories are simply trying to gain the respect of youth by talking about "all abilities" etc. We know it is up to us to teach the youth at schools all around the country not to be conned by these Tory lies. The only way of obtaining decent education for all, with jobs when you leave, is to fight for socialism today.

Yours fraternally
Andrew Divall
High Peak LPYS



Shock horror in Parliament

There were unruly scenes in the House of Commons on 27 June, the day of the South East TUC march through London. The Tory MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge, John Stokes, complained to the Deputy Speaker: "On a point of order... Are you aware that striking miners are on the Terrace of the Houses of Parliament and are selling a newspaper that I believe is called *Militant* Tendency? Is that in order?" Stokes got his reply, ironically, from Labour Shadow Home Secretary, Gerald Kaufman: "Perhaps the honourable gentleman should hurry down to the Terrace, as he might learn something that would broaden his point of view".

Militant examination

Readers may be interested to know that *Militant* has received yet another accolade—we get a mention in one of this year's 'A' level examination papers. Any members of the LPYS doing the British Government and Politics paper shouldn't have been short of things to say. Let's hope that the authorities aren't weeding out the reds even before they got to college or university. No—don't worry all you jittery sixth-formers we're only kidding. It hasn't got to that stage—yet.

Kids sacked for backing miners

Militant supporters from Gateshead report an example of the Tory philosophy on the 'right to work' in action. Lynne has four children and her husband is unemployed. Their only income is social security and pocket money that two of the children get from their paper round. However, the two children recently handed out leaflets advertising a miners' demonstration. A coal merchant complained and the two children were promptly sacked from their newspaper rounds.

From the horse's mouth

The *Financial Times* has a reputation for telling the facts. Their readership in big business institutions need accurate information, and not the selective news of the rest of Fleet Street. Their review of Michael Crick's new book *Militant* was no exception. Crick has written in the forward that: "This book is not meant to be a hatchet job on *Militant*. The *FT* has a different interpretation of the book's intentions. In their review (28 June) they bluntly state: "This book will provide ammunition for those who would like to see a more rigorous purge".

MacGregor's dead letter

There was a great hoo-hah in the Tory press about MacGregor's letter to the miners. But they have quietly forgotten to report the response. The *Daily Mirror* (28 June) reports that of the 180,000 sent out (at a cost of £28,800) the NCB have only received 167 replies so far. Of these, up to 40 were returned unopened. Many had little messages on them for Mr MacGregor.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Oppose privatisation

THE JOINT Shop Stewards Committee at St Bernards hospital in Ealing, West London is considering a report drawn up by NUPE member Jan McLelland against privatisation in the health service.

The report points out: "We believe that privatisation represents an attack on the founding principles of the NHS which were to provide a comprehensive and efficient service to all at the point of need, managed in the interest of the patients and not as a business concern."

The report outlines the factual evidence against privatisation. On the question of profits, it quotes Crothalls, the firm at the centre of the Barking hospital dispute. They stated in a document to Medway District Health Authority members: "...our price includes a contribution towards out central costs and a profit of £40,000 per an

Profits first

num." Yet profit made by private firms is money that would be better spent on services which are lacking in the authority.

Pay and conditions for workers are also hit. Crothalls won the contract at Barking hospital by cutting 846 cleaning hours a week at

By a Militant reporter

the hospital. For domestics, the hours cut meant a drop in pay from £57 a week to £17.

Also NHS ancillary workers are widely seen as important members of the patient care team, sometimes helping in rehabilitation work. But as a letter to the

Patient care

Guardian (22/2/83) from a former employee of a private company in the NHS pointed out: "...we were explicitly instructed by the management not to talk to patients in the firm's time."

The competence of private contractors is questionable. At Cheltenham General Hospital, the Sunlight private firm said they could no longer launder foul and infected linen, which was dumped on NHS laundries. When the authority tested some linen done by Sunlight they found only 16 out of 100 pillowcases and 27 out of 100 sheets matched official standards for whiteness. There are many other



Laundry work, one of the targets for privatisation. Standards are higher under the NHS.

cases of sub-standard practices:

- The North West Thames authority has hired two cleaning firms in the past year and fired three due to poor standards.
- "More than 20 contracts have been awarded recently to firms which undercut the cost of 'direct labour'. Although reports are still to be made on most of the contracts awarded, four hospitals are already in difficulties..." (*Sunday Times*, June 17)

Infection

- Dr Terry Nelson of High

Royds hospital, head of medical services, has complained to managers about erratic standards of contract cleaners.

● At Hitchingbrooke Geriatric Hospital, a report by bacteriologist Dr W Newson, revealed high levels of dust in clinical areas and said there was a risk of patients being infected.

Added to this is the fact that many private firms are financially unstable—often surviving from year to year on massive bank loans—and have bad industrial relations records.

As the report to the JSSC

concludes: "This is an intolerable situation which the workforce will not stand for. We foresee intense industrial

Dangerous gamble

disputes over issues ranging from recognition to basic rates and conditions, in which the authority would be a helpless spectator.

"Tendering is nothing less than a highly dangerous gamble based on faulty logic and brazen injustice. We as a staff side will be fighting privatisation every inch of the way."

Cutbacks—the real cost

WITH THE growth in private medicine, ambulance services will be under growing pressure from private ambulance companies.

In the Northern region, management intend to introduce a "two tier" ambulance service by October 1984 which many suspect will pave the way for privatisation. ED WAUGH spoke to two ambulancemen on what the two tier service will mean for the people of the Northern Region:

Two tiers

The introduction of the two-tier system will mean that instead of there being fully kitted out ambulances to deal with domestic, accident and emergency patients there will be "ambulances" to deal specifically with domestic patients i.e. ambulances that have been completely gutted of life saving gear and without trained personnel. In effect, a vehicle to move patients regardless of their needs. Their total emergency equipment will be six blankets!

An example of this was just last week when I was on domestic work driving a "guttled" ambulance. I had to drive past an accident. How can you save lives with six blankets?

It's heartbreaking. I fought for decades to get up-to-date equipment but today this equipment is held under lock and key. Its like before the NHS when ambulances had no equipment, just four wheels and sides. Even the purpose built wheelchair vehicle with a tail lift for paraplegics was deemed to be "unsafe" and had to be done away with. The real reason is that being a specialist vehicle it cuts down on the number of people to be carried and is consequently slower, or in the words of management, "less efficient".

No humanity

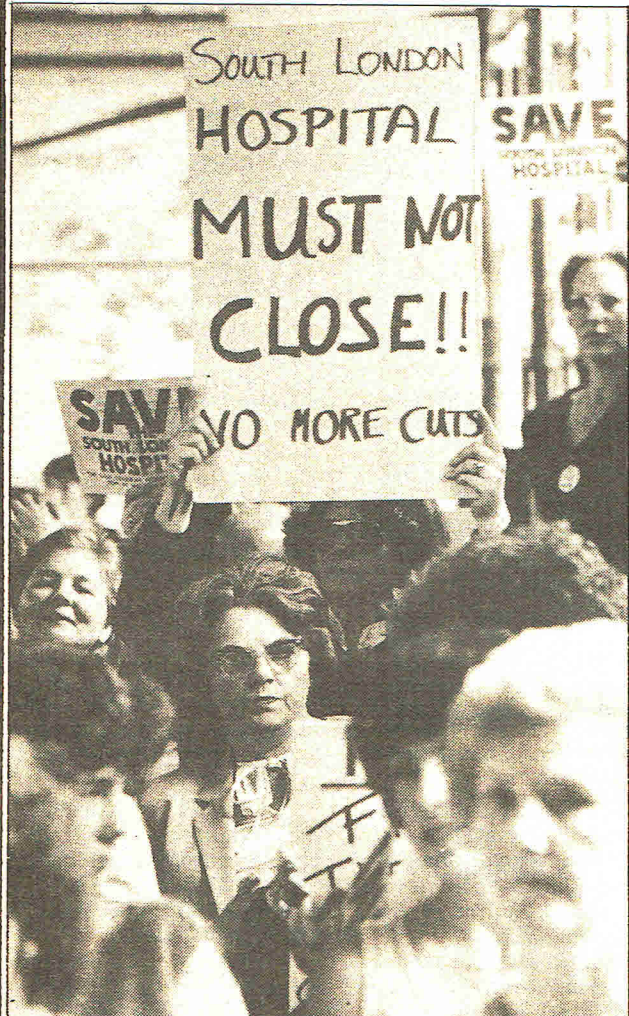
Management regard patients as a package, not humans, something to be transferred from A—B, with no humanity. This isn't what the ambulance service is about, if it is then I've wasted a lifetime! One patient in Wallsend has crepitus, chronic arthritis. You can feel the bones moving together when you lift her, and to move her in the slightest puts her in extreme agony.

With the new ruling on the non-use of the special vehicle her husband won't let her be lifted onto the ambulance. He therefore wheels her to and from the hospital in Newcastle, a round trip of 12 miles! It's heartbreaking, especially when you pass them on the road—all this to save money.

The whole labour movement must fight back against these attacks on our health service. A full campaign including public meetings, petitions and days of action to highlight Tory attacks on our health service is to get underway immediately. 9

Letters of support c/o Rus Gray, 1 James Terrace, Wallsend, Tyne + Wear.

South London Hospital occupied



HEALTH WORKERS have occupied the South London Women's Hospital in a bid to fight closure. The hospital at Clapham Common has been under threat for the past 18 months and the workers, members of NUPE, decided to act against its imminent closure. Donations and messages of support to: South London Women's Hospital Campaign, 19 Vardens Road, London SW11.

Strike on July 18

THE overwhelming theme running through this year's conference of the health workers' union COHSE was solidarity. The union has called a one-day strike in the NHS for Wednesday, 18 July in defence of workers in struggle against privatisation at Hammersmith Hospital in West London.

Terry Thomas, vice president of South Wales NUM, got a thunderous standing ovation from conference after a fiery speech. Immediately after that £25,000 was agreed as a donation to the miners' strike fund.

On the Monday afternoon, *Militant* supporters successfully got a young miner to address conference. His speech was the most emotional moment of the

week, telling of life on strike and his own experience of police brutality. It resulted in a substantial sum of money being donated to striking miners.

Miners' support

The help given to the miners throughout the conference convinced this young miner and his fellow strikers of the need for socialism and that the ideas of *Militant* were the only way forward for the working class.

Militant supporters made a great impact on the conference in trying to change COHSE into a fighting, campaigning union. These calls met with considerable support by a large minority of the delegates who were

determined to carry on this fight.

A considerable number wanted to sell *Militant* in their own areas, and the *Militant* readers' meeting was the biggest ever. Speakers were Derek Hatton on the struggle in Liverpool, and a young miner. It raised over £700 for the fighting fund, increased to £770 through donations from other delegates and visitors.

This year's conference was a step forward for the left. New advances should be made in coming months with two more *Militant* supporters set to join the existing *Militant* supporter on the COHSE National Executive.

By Mick Barwood
(Joint National Convenor,
Group '81,
COHSE Broad Left)

Lessons of Southampton

THE STRIKE at the Southampton General Hospital ended after three weeks with management refusing to recognise the sacked shop steward, Steve Ferris, who had been taken on by NUPE as a full-time representative for the Hospital's sites as a compromise to him being reinstated.

This in itself proves that the hospital bosses were out to break the union as a prelude to privatisation. The lessons of the dispute must be taken on board to ensure victory against the Tories in the disputes they will provoke in the future.

In the first week of the strike there was great determination by the 400 ancillary workers with picketing leaving the Hospital almost totally cut-off.

However workers have complained that organisation and communication, which are essential to the success of any strike, weren't adequately attended to. Many workers felt that poor picketing rotas meant that lorries turned back from one gate travelled round the hospital and entered an un-manned gate.

Problems

Bad communications between the officials and the bulk of the strikers on day to day events meant that most workers relied upon second hand information and rumours. Some unfortunately believed the stories of a back to work exodus put out by the management. These factors meant a proportion of workers believed the strike wasn't going forward and was losing momentum, which resulted in a gradual drift back

to work by the third week.

The strike was isolated as the NUPE national leadership treated it as a localised affair rather than part of the Tories' strategy for privatisation of picking off one area at a time, in preparation for a major confrontation.

The ancillary workers, while accepting the battle was lost, made it clear the war wasn't. They stated that they intended to go back and campaign amongst those who failed to come out in support, outlining exactly what privatisation would mean to jobs, wages and the quality of services provided, so when the hospital bosses launch another attack on the union they will meet a united workforce, that will be in no mood to compromise on the gains they have won through bitter struggle.

By Gary Holland
(Southampton LPYS)

Support the Liverpool strategy

THIS SATURDAY Labour Councillors will meet in Sheffield to take stock of the campaign against Tory attacks on local authorities. Dominating the Conference will be the lessons of Liverpool's tremendous fightback and the need to rally behind the city and co-ordinate a national campaign against the withdrawal of Rate Support Grant and the abolition of the Metropolitan authorities.

By Steve Morgan
(LPYS rep. on Labour's National Executive)

the May local election results confirmed that. This and not the "Pontous Pilate" strategy of Cunningham, Straw and Kinnock should be the aim of a national fightback.

National fightback

Councils like Newcastle who have washed their hands of their responsibility to defend jobs and services and instead have carried out the Tory's dirty work should be roundly condemned by the conference. Moreover, individuals or groups of councillors who have refused to vote for job loss, cuts or massive rate increases and who have been expelled from right-wing Labour groups should be warmly applauded for their principled stand.

John Cunningham and Neil Kinnock have argued that councils should not take "the Liverpool road" thereby risking the suspension of the council with the possibility of commissioners being sent in. Rather they should stay in office and somehow carry out the cuts 'humanely', putting the onus for the cuts onto the Tories.

It has even been suggested that Liverpool council has put the old, sick and needy in the frontline of Tory attacks. Such statements are deplorable.

The Tories nationally



want council spending nationally, 1984-5, to be cut by 7% in real terms.

If just half those cuts were carried through, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities estimate it would mean:

★ 26,000 fewer meals on wheels.

★ 6,000 fewer residential places for the elderly, mentally handicapped and children.

★ 4,000 fewer day nurseries and elderly day centres.

It is precisely those least able to defend themselves who are protected by a principled stand such as Liverpool.

Wide support

Massive rate increases to compensate for cuts cannot provide an answer. In the first instance unemployment would inevitably rise as small business would be affected.

Even in a city like Liverpool where 70% of people could claim rate rebates, the burden would fall on skilled workers and the middle classes and Labour's support would evaporate amongst these sections. The result would be the same as under the previous Labour administration in Liverpool when a 50% rate increase was levied and subsequently the Liberals and Tories were returned to office.

The support shown for the strategy of the present administration by small businessmen, shopkeepers, and even policemen, has shown that a bold socialist appeal can win over the middle classes. The strategy of the Communist Party of alliances with Tories and Liberals together with a 70% rate increase, is a blind alley to capitulation and class collaboration which would serve to propel the middle classes back into the arms of the Liberals and Tories.

Liverpool council will be forced to levy an illegal budget on 11 July. They will be demanding the Tories give back the £30 million they have had taken from them in penalties. Council leaders made it clear that in negotiations with Jenkins the bottom line is—no job losses, no cuts and no massive rate increases to compensate for Tory cuts. The councillors have put their homes and possessions under threat of surcharge and themselves in threat of imprisonment.

There are many possible scenarios which could develop after 11 July. However, what is certain is that Liverpool needs national backing from other local authorities.

It is clear that the Tories have been shaken by the opposition which exists to the abolition of the GLC and the widespread support for Liverpool. This must now be built upon with other local



Key to Liverpool's success has been winning support of local authority workers. (Above) Support for the council at the April meeting.

authorities taking "the Liverpool road".

This does not only mean putting forward 'illegal' budgets when forced to by the Tory government, but also to take 'the Liverpool road' in terms of building mass support amongst the local authority trade unions and workers in general. If the Tory government was confronted by just six major city councils united in defence of jobs and services, and backed by strike action and possibly a national local authority workers' strike, then they could quickly be forced to back down.

Strike action

From this standpoint the declaration by leaders of six London councils is a big step forward. Ted Knight and others have stated, in a discussion document for this weekend's local government conference, that they will not become agents of the Tory government. They recognise that Liverpool's "defiance of Tory policies has shown that a broad fight can be mobilised around the struggles of a local Labour council."

However while considering a number of possible courses of action open to the

balance but which includes a rate) would be divisive because different councils would become bankrupt at different times due to different financial circumstances.

Knight mistaken

On the surface this argument might seem attractive and novel. Liverpool City Councillors have already considered it as a possible option. They threw it out because it would play into the hands of the Tories. Knight and others fail to see that the key to Liverpool's success and the unity which has been built in the local labour movement has been the result of its political campaign amongst the local authority workers and the wider public, and because it has used the correct tactics.

In embarking on an unavoidable confrontation with the government the council has needed to win the support of the broadest layers of the population. It is necessary to reach those who have not been involved politically before and who are isolated from the Labour and trade union movement and most open to the influence of the capitalist media.

deliberately bankrupt the city they would have played right into the hands of the Tory propaganda machine. The council instead of the Tories would appear to be to blame, and to be putting jobs at risk.

Considerable confusion would be caused amongst the middle classes and even large layers of workers. This would be especially so in councils like Lambeth where people have faced massive rate increases over the last few years.

Unity at a local and national level will only be achieved through raising the political level and morale of local authority workers and wider public along the lines of Liverpool. Refusing to levy a rate or tactics such as mass resignations in order to force by-elections are no substitute for a proper political campaign which exposes the Tory government and raises the political understanding of the working class.

Political campaign

Liverpool's success in this was illustrated by May's local election after which the Tory Party in Liverpool was reduced to the position of a large sect. If the same campaign and the same tactics were pursued by all the other councils in a united fight with Liverpool, then not only would the government be forced to back down on the penalties imposed on councils and the abolition of the Metropolitan councils overturned, but it could pave the way to bringing down the Tory government and reducing them to the position of a party of the seaside resorts and rural backwaters throughout the country.

The Sheffield conference should:

- demand no councils cuts jobs or services or rate rises massively to compensate for Tory cuts.
- give full support for Liverpool Council.
- organise campaigns similar to that of Liverpool with rallies, public meetings, factory gate meetings and youth events, to develop and mobilise a national campaign against withdrawal of rate support grant and the abolition of the Metropolitan authorities.

Tories in disarray after Lords' vote

THE LORDS' defeat of the government's plans to abolish next year's elections for the Metropolitan Councils is a major setback for the Tories. They are now talking of extending the current GLC for a further year. Even Thatcher's own constituency of Finchley would go over to Labour if a poll was held now.

Workers in London know what abolition would mean. They have already seen the chairman of the new transport authority, which has taken over the running of the tubes and buses from the GLC, announce that fares will rise by twice the inflation rate and that thousands of jobs will have to go.

At the June meeting of the London Labour Party Executive (held before the Lords' vote) the party agreed that if elections were cancelled, four Labour GLC members, representing seats which the Tories won in the '83 general election, would resign and force by-elections. Whilst Militant supporters on the executive agreed with

this plan, we think it would be a wasted opportunity to fight them purely on the basis of 'defending democracy'. After all these seats were won in 1981 on the basis of the entire programme of the London Labour Party. They should be fought again on this basis.

It is now vital that the campaign which has been purely orientated towards parliamentary manoeuvre, is turned towards winning rank and file trade unionists support.

So far the whole weight of the London labour movement has not been brought to bear. If the House of Lords bends before the 'weight' of opinion polls, then the whole of the government's plans could have been stopped and could be still, if the full power of the workers' opposition was mobilised.

By George Williamson
(London Labour Party Executive, personal capacity)

Photo: Mark Pinder



Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader, and John Hamilton, Leader of Liverpool Council.

councils in 1985, they dismiss the levying of an illegal budget along the lines of Liverpool by other authorities. Instead they suggest that a group of local authorities should refuse to levy a rate at the beginning of the financial year. No money at all would be raised and the councils would simultaneously go bankrupt, and this it is suggested would provide the basis for unity.

Ted Knight argues that the Liverpool strategy of voting through an illegal budget (ie. a budget which does not

The first task, therefore, was to clearly explain how the Tories were to blame for the crisis in Liverpool. It was to demand that the government give back the money taken or there would be job losses and cuts. By posing it in this fashion the Tories have been thoroughly exposed and their propaganda about the 'Militants' deliberately provoking a confrontation has fallen flat.

However, if the council instead of using these tactics had simply refused to levy any rate and was seen to

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

In brief

ECM, Norwich

SALES STAFF are fighting for union recognition at Eastern Counties Magazines in Norwich.

Eight workers have been sacked after taking industrial action to gain recognition for the NGA in a bid to improve pay and conditions. The company say they did not want their workers to join the NGA or any other union.

A picket is now on and the firm has been blacked by the NGA, with Post Office and Telecom workers refusing to cross the picket line. Visiting miners have joined the strikers giving moral support.

The firm employed a security guard to guard the premises when the picket line was on. However, after a 15 hour shift with only one cup of coffee and his Alsatian going sick, the security man himself went for better conditions. He was told that his services were no longer required—he is now supporting the pickets!

Smeaton Bros.

DAVE VENTURA, GMBATU shop steward at Smeaton Brothers, a small bedding manufacturer in Rotherham has been sacked for organising a union. Victorian management refused to recognise Dave as spokesman even though 28 out of 36 workers had joined the union. All the union members followed Dave out.

Management have sent warning letters to all strikers and advertised for new staff at rates well below those paid before. Pickets have turned some applicants away and all deliveries have been stopped. One recruit said he was given an application form by a police constable and told he ought to apply!

Reliance

MEMBERS OF the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers are on strike at Reliance Hosiery, a sock makers in Halifax.

On June 25, 200 workers walked out after management gave a final warning to an employee who had been off sick with depression. The steward ripped up the warning, and was then threatened with the sack and given a final written warning himself. The strike was made official on June 28.

Kewal Bros.

FIFTEEN TGWU members came out on strike on May 16 over the sacking of three workmates at the Kewal Bros. clothing factory in the West Midlands.

Management claimed the workers were sacked because of a short fall in orders, but the workers see it as an attack on the union. The shop steward had written to the boss in India asking for recognition of the union but this was refused.

The boss refused to take back the three workers so the strike was continued. The workers are very poorly paid. In 1980 a skilled worker only received 80p an hour—since union organisation this has gone up to £1.50.

Significantly despite the recent events in the Punjab all the Asian workers at Kewal, despite religious differences, have remained united. Shop steward Rajinder Kumar said: "My enemies are not workers of different races, but the bosses no matter what colour or creed."

A mass picket is being held every Friday at 3-5pm. Messages of support and donations to Rajinder Kumar, 1 Spring Gardens, off Gilbert Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands.

Tower Hamlets— Council let off the hook

AFTER THREE weeks out on strike twelve hundred NALGO members employed by Tower Hamlets Borough Council in London's East End returned to work.

The strike followed the suspension of 49 librarians for taking limited industrial action. Their crime was to refuse to collect library fines as part of a protest against the closure of two local libraries.

The worst part of the story is that Tower Hamlets is a Labour controlled council, and that the local NALGO leadership did an about turn in the face of the council's intransigence.

On 11 June the librarians received letters from management telling them to leave their place of work and that they would not receive

Strike vote

any pay as they were in breach of contract. This was before the action had even started. The council claim this was not a suspension!

However, the rest of the librarians saw through this and backed their suspended colleagues.

At a mass meeting on 13 June of all NALGO members 601 voted to strike against 232 and 3 abstentions—a remarkable result for a section of workers who have never before taken all-out action—even during the year-long strike of Tower Hamlets' social workers.

Official

The Emergency committee of NALGO's NEC declared the dispute official.

Unfortunately, the local leadership backed down on Tuesday, July 3, recommending a return to work despite the refusal of the council to withdraw their 'right' to suspend workers who take industrial action. Even so, the vote was only 530 for a return to work with 310 against. There was much anger at the meeting at the lack of fight from the top, and bitterness at the council.

The librarians have been reinstated but the council



Striking NALGO members on picket duty in Tower Hamlets, East London.

can still use the 'suspension' threat against council workers who threaten any form of industrial action in the future. The claim by the leadership—that the council will not do this because they have seen the strength of feeling of NALGO—is not good enough. Rather, as Tower Hamlets council come under increasing pressure from the Tory government, as they have shown they will be more willing to put the burden on their workers rather than fight back, as they have seen they can get away with it.

The tragedy of the dispute was caught in the words of an ex-docker, now a NALGO member, who told a mass meeting how several of the council leaders were

militant trade unionists when he worked with them on the docks. He felt ashamed, he said, that they should now use the same tactics against workers that the docks' employers had used against them.

The strength of feeling shown in the dispute is the product of a long history of bad industrial relations—

Labour Party

reflected in a flood of new members since the strike began.

Fortunately there are signs that the Labour Party is working to overcome some of these problems. The local Labour Parties backed the strikers against the right wing council majority, pro-

viding Labour Party rooms for use as strike headquarters, inviting speakers to meetings and putting pressure on the Labour Group to withdraw the suspensions.

Disillusionment must not be allowed to set in. Workers who took action for the first time, despite their bitter disappointment, must get active in the union and the Labour Party to ensure the local movement acts in the interests of those it is supposed to.

By John Considine

(Tower Hamlets NALGO Strike Committee, personal capacity and Bethnal Green & Stepney LPYS)

Save our Sealink

Julie Harris (Poole CLP) interviews Brian Fagan (Chairman, Weymouth and Portsmouth NUS Ports Committee)

There'll be stoppages at our port this week, because of privatisation. In addition Belgian seamen will be out because their government wants to privatise services. Our stoppages are because of the visit of Sealink's managing director, Leonard Merry-Weather.

He's not only head of Sealink, he's also involved in the consortium favoured by the government to take over the public company. He's now going round the ports to 'explain' what is happening.

Routes

The key for our members is jobs. Management say that there will be no redundancies. But one of their private documents talks about £5.6m in redundancy payments, of which they are prepared to contribute about £2.9m—that's about 2-3,000 jobs gone.

Sealink is being sold off as a whole. We know they'll be big changes on the Channel Islands, the Irish and Isle of Wight routes. They are all vulnerable. Anyone coming in wants to take



Weymouth Sealink termin

Photo: Militant

the Dover route.

At present Sealink fulfills some social obligations—that'll go with privatisation. The criteria of 'profits alone' will mean that they'll take ships away or reduce tonnage on some routes. This will hit the travelling public and communities such as the Channel Islands. Whenever we stop for a day they scream like stuffed pigs about the problems caused but privatisation would cut routes in half.

We need to stop the Tory plans. We need an all-out stoppage linked in with other unions. The 48 hour strike by all ferry-men was a success. The next logical step is all-out. At our Conference the full backing of

the union was thrown behind this dispute—not just the Sealink seamen. Everything we have done in this dispute has been upfront and open.

United action

Our union has given clear leadership. But it's not just our fight. Railmen are in the firing line even more than us. The rank and file know the score. We had the NUR Branch Secretary carrying our banner on the Tolpuddle march on Sunday.

We'll have railmen from the Channel Islands over this week for our meeting. We need co-ordinated action now from all the unions involved to win this dispute.

charged £20, promising to let you off the extra next time."

Most pickets see the issue as part of a general drive by the Gas Board against workers' interests. Unfortunately at Coventry the fitters voted not to come out in support, partly because of ill feeling hanging over from past disputes.

Militant supporters in the fitters branch after discussion with the pickets are fighting to get the fitters to back the meter readers.

By Tony Cross

Gas workers defend services

METER READERS for West Midlands Gas are on strike supported by other workers in the white collar unions NALGO and MAT-SA. At the Coventry depot, a large picket supported the 13 meter readers and "slot-ers" who refused to operate new work practices enforced by management.

Workers see the practises as meaning customers get fewer visits which would mean fewer jobs. For the customer, having your meter read less often would not mean fewer bills, only more estimates. As one worker said: "Its like going to the supermarket, buying £10 worth of groceries and being

BAC technology strike

ON MONDAY June 25, 3,000 AUEW/TASS members at British Aerospace, Warton division voted unanimously to strike in support of 36 staff who had been sacked.

Their sacking followed a previous decision by all TASS members from the three sites—Warton, Preston and Sarnesbury—to boycott new technology equipment until agreement on their use was reached. The Walton division is part of the British Aerospace aircraft group which works on the Tornado project and Jaguar aircraft. Work on the EAP/ACA experimental aircraft project is affected.

The issue over payments for operating new technology was brought to a head when management introduced a nine week computer programming course for all employees and offered up to £850 to clerical and manual workers but nothing to technical and administrative staff.

Provocation

On completion of the course management attempted to place these trainees in technical areas without agreement with TASS. This provocative action was fought by TASS members in the areas affected.

Management refused additional payments to TASS members already operating new technology leaving them over £800 worse off than those who had just completed the course.

It was decided at a mass meeting on 18 June to cease working on new technology

equipment until a satisfactory settlement was reached. The management then began to indiscriminately suspend TASS members in a campaign of threats and intimidation.

Staff sacked

On Friday, 22 June, 36 TASS members were singled out and sacked. One of those received his dismissal notice at home—he'd been on holiday since the dispute started!

Since the sacking all three sites have been heavily picketed with Warton site blockaded on a number of occasions. Most of the 3,000 members have been involved in the picketing even though most of them have not been involved with an industrial dispute before.

As one senior rep. said: "Their resolve and commitment has been tremendous and will prove to be the deciding factor in this dispute".

Letters have been sent to all the strikers offering reinstatement of the 36 and lifting of suspensions on other workers if they return and "work normally". This has been refused and the workers are demanding unconditional reinstatement and more money to operate the new technology. They also want an undertaking from management that they'll never again sack individuals in a collective dispute.

Preston Trades Council has set up a strike fund and recommended all affiliated unions to give full support.

By an Aerospace worker

Militant

Save steel—join the miners fight

Pages 4,5

The lesson from Liverpool . . .

Fight council cuts

THIS WEEKEND the Labour Party's recall Local Government Conference is being held, to discuss how to deal with Tory attacks on local government finance.

Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool council, told *Militant* how the labour movement on Merseyside had fought the threat of savage cuts imposed by the Tories and the previous Liberal-Tory administration.

"It's almost become a cliché that what Liverpool has faced in the last twelve months, every other Labour authority will face this year. The more we see Labour councils trying to find a way out of the crisis, the more it's proved true. Other authorities are going to find themselves in Liverpool's situation.

Working class campaign

"Last weekend in Liverpool a major conference of 2,000 or more delegates from Labour Parties and trade union branches all round the country said that Liverpool's stand needs to be echoed by other Labour councils taking on the struggle against Thatcher.

"The national local government conference needs to understand the position Labour authorities are in and the tactics and cam-

paigned adopted by Liverpool. It's all very well to say that no rates will be levied, no jobs lost, no services cut, but if there is no campaign behind them, such claims can be just hot air. Organising within the local authority unions, the wider trade union movement and the working class as a whole was the key to Liverpool's success.



Derek Hatton.

"The main reason we are confident of winning this dispute is the support we have seen in Liverpool virtually from Day One. That sort of campaigning must be taken up throughout the rest of the country by local authorities and Labour Parties. Thatcher must be made

to understand that working people are not prepared to see services and jobs destroyed.

"We did not get ourselves into this battle because we woke up one morning and thought it would be a good idea to take on Thatcher. We would rather have waged the struggle alongside every other local authority. Unfortunately given the history of Liverpool, the massive Tory government cutbacks and particularly the massive destruction of services and jobs incurred by Liverpool's Liberals before May 1983, we didn't have the luxury of choosing the year we took the plunge. We had to take the battle on when it confronted us.

"Certainly, now every local authority faces these problems a united fight needs to be worked out. But words and phrases need to be backed up by a movement of the workers in the local areas linked up on a national basis.

Community support

"We have had local authority shop stewards meetings; depot and work-site meetings. All areas of the local authority met and councillors and shop stewards explained to union members the position of the council and the campaign.



Liverpool Labour councillors on 29 March demonstration.

"Meetings have also been held at factory gates, at stewards committees meetings in outside industry and in the community. 18 public meetings prior to 29 March attracted 3,000 people. We are now going through the whole round of meetings again to explain the current situation.

"Community groups, tenants associations have all been involved, city wide newspapers have been given out regularly. Nobody in Liverpool could fail to understand exactly what they were doing when they voted

Labour in the May elections.

"Thatcher always talks about the need for a secret ballot in the miners' strike. Liverpool has had four secret ballots in the past fifteen months and all of them have said 'No' to Thatcher and 'yes' to the Labour council. She's not taken any notice of them.

We will win

"We've got to rely on our own class. Like the NUM strikers we are saying we will win."

Articles on Liverpool and the GLC—page 13

Liverpool Council fringe meeting at Labour Party Local Government Conference Saturday 7 July 12.30-1.15. Graves Cinema, University of Sheffield. Speakers: John Hamilton (Leader Liverpool council), Derek Hatton (Deputy Leader).

Miners Fight Continued from page one

but the National Union of Mineworkers, with the left industrial unions that support it, could mobilise enormous support. The NUM could convene a conference of all the left unions to plan and mobilise such a national day of action, a 24-hour general strike.

The miners are fighting for all jobs and for everyone's future. They must be supported by the whole trade union movement.

The media have shown the depth of their class hatred of the miners throughout this strike. It is now getting, if anything, more venomous and more personalised against Arthur Scargill. The bosses can see the determina-

tion of the miners and, they can see the increased effect the strike is having on the economy. They are desperate, therefore, to split the NUM leadership before the damage becomes too great.

But already stockbrokers Philips and Drew have forecast even greater over-running of the government deficit, and many big business forecasters are scal-

ing down their predictions for fat profits for their friends this year as a result of the strike.

The bosses are already scared. They will start to put serious pressure on the Coal Board and government if solidarity action is stepped up. Action to support the miners must be the first priority for the entire trade union movement.

NCB Talks Continued from page one

the intervention of a handful of Labour Parliamentarians.

The miners must now ensure that if talks go ahead, there must be cast-iron guarantees from the Board about keeping open pits, except on grounds of exhaustion. There must be guarantees of investment.

Area and local miners' officials must be party to any agreement, by discussing and identifying investment needs in their areas. The miners have fought for eighteen weeks with a determination and tenacity second to none and they are not about to give up the fundamental aims on which they launched the strike.



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