

Militant

Miners' strike
—historic
turning point
Pages 8-9



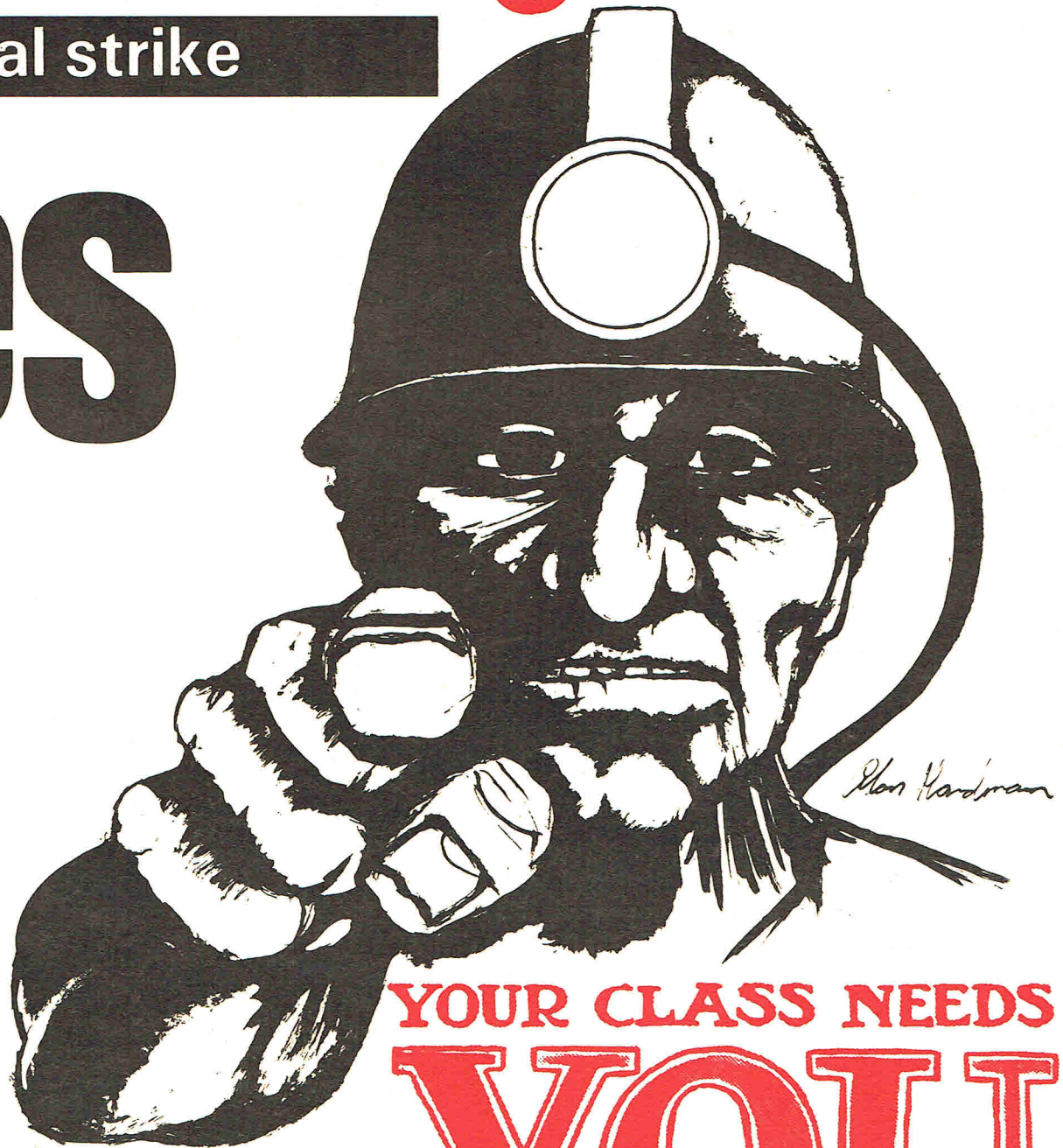
The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

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For a 24-hour general strike

Tories the real enemy



YOUR CLASS NEEDS
YOU

AS THE miners' strike enters its 20th week, panic grips the Tories and their advisors. The ruling class confidence after Thatcher's victory in 1983 has completely evaporated, as the government shambles from one crisis to another, splitting in all directions.

In desperation, they have orchestrated a vicious propaganda campaign to vilify the miners and their leaders. The Tory leader called up the spirit of the Falklands war and compared the "enemy without" (the fascist junta) to the "enemy within" (the miners), saying both were a danger to liberty and democracy! Similar attacks are being made by Walker, Gummer and King.

They have used nearly everything to break the strike—propaganda, massive redundancy incentives, police violence, financial hardship, but the miners'

By Rob Sewell

determination has only been dramatically reinforced. With over 120,000 on strike only 384 have returned to work since 2 July! At that rate North Derbyshire (where the NCB has made a concerted drive) would return to normal in two years!!

Economic collapse

Some commentators say "peace talks" broke down because of the NCB's insistence that closures can take place where "no further mineable reserves... can be

beneficially developed". If miners accepted this, it is claimed, the Coal Board would withdraw the closure plan. But for the NCB "beneficially", means "economically" giving the Coal Board a green light for slaughter of jobs when it felt necessary.

Thatcher has now staked her credibility on crushing the miners. Long gone are the boom days when the capitalists could afford concessions to the working class. The economic collapse of British capitalism has forced the bosses to claw back concessions from the past.

The labour movement must give full support to the miners' strike.

The slump, and Thatcher's policies, have destroyed a fifth of British industry. British capitalism is now a third-rate power with investment collapsing by over a third under the Tories. If it wasn't for North

Sea oil (which begins to run out next year) Britain would be engulfed in a titanic disaster!

"Barrage of abuse"

Thatcher's language reflects this desperation. But, compared with Conservatives strategists of the past, Thatcher is a particularly shortsighted representative of capitalism. Her co-thinker, Samuel Brittan of the *Financial Times*, denounced "appeasement" and asked "who governs Britain?". Saying "ex-

tremism against evil is itself no evil", he calls on the NCB to start closing pits now! A *Times* editorial says: "There is a war on".

CONTINUED ON
PAGE TWO

Dockers show strength

THE NATIONAL docks strike was the most solid that anybody can remember, with not only registered dock workers out but also ancillary staff, shore gangs, tug boat men and office staff taking action.

Even non-registered ports like Dover and Felixstowe supported the dispute; there is no doubt that victory was assured. The ruling class were in a state of panic with miners, dockers and seamen out, with railmen and other workers taking sympathy action.

Yet unfortunately, despite this background union leaders did not make the most of the possibilities by forging closer links with the miners' fight.

The end of the dispute came suddenly in the early hours of 20 July. Yet the employers agreed only that they would request local employers not to breach the scheme again. We have won a respite but there can be no doubt that the employers will make another attempt to smash the scheme.

The Chairman of the National Port Employers, Donald Stringer, put it quite bluntly to the *Guardian* (22

July): "We still want to change the scheme but after the last two weeks it isn't the right climate to talk about it."

The good thing to come out of the dispute however is that for probably the first time ever all sections of workers employed on the docks came out as one which shows that our class are raring to have a go.

If we had a fighting leadership directly accountable, subject to regular elections and on the average wage of the workers they represent, we would be assured that no opportunities would be missed to defeat the Tories!

* See also page 14 feature on dockers and seamen.

By Jim Scully
(Branch Sec., 6/611,
docks branch, TGWU,
Liverpool,
personal capacity)

Miners' dispute

Tories the real enemy

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

The *Financial Times* itself, on the one hand, representing another, more far-sighted section of the capitalists, warns against such an approach. It reports on "a view within the NCB itself" that "a barrage of abuse from Conservative ministers aimed at the NUM and Labour could unify the miners behind their leaders—the opposite effect to that intended!"

Resentment

And an editorial, in the same issue as Samuel Brittan's diatribe (23 July), warns of a "genuine resentment about pit closures" and says, "the government has to reckon with a residue of public sympathy with the miners and their way of life." It concludes that "it is not helpful for the dispute to be presented in ideological terms."

This section would also like to crush the miners and the movement in general, but recognise that 1984 is not 1926.

In 1926 the capitalist class planned and provoked the General Strike to deal the workers a lasting blow. They granted concessions to the miners in 1925 and used the breathing space to prepare for 'civil war' with the labour movement. Relying on the treachery of the union leaders, the ruling class provoked and defeated the General Strike, starving the miners back to work.

Today, Thatcher too has made preparations to beat the workers' "advance guard"—the mineworkers.

She expected that within a month the miners would return with their tails between their legs! But miners and their families, showing magnificent courage and determination will fight well into 1985 if necessary. The working class and their organisations are a hundred times stronger than in 1926.

White collar sections, who scabbed then, now hold collections for the miners and have become unionised themselves. Seamen's leader, Havelock Wilson, openly scabbed in 1926. Today the NUS threaten industrial action over Sealink!

During October, November and December coal stocks will drop drastically in the power stations. Even by late August, the government will need emergency measures. Under the 1920 or 1964 Emergency Powers Act, troops could be used to move coal. Any desperate attempts to use troops to move the 22 million tonnes of coal at the pit heads will meet the full force of the movement from below.

The dock strike, with the prospect of a "second front", forced the employers to make concessions (see front page and page 14) but the dispute didn't lead to united action with the miners. This raises forcefully the need for the miners to step up the call for a national campaign.

General strike

The NUM should appeal to the left unions to take part in a 24-hour general strike, and then it should be taken to the TUC. The lobby organised by BLOC will be crucial in this. If campaigned for in the factories, such a weapon could unite the struggle to defeat the Tories.

Linked to this must be a big new drive in the movement for cash and food to stop the miners being starved to defeat.

The Thatcher government could be driven from office this winter. Far from the strike hurting Labour, opinion polls now put Labour four points in the lead. Labour could gain a landslide victory as in Spain, Greece, France and now New Zealand. The point then is to ensure that unlike previous Labour governments this one acts with determination in the interests of the working class, not the bosses.

Rally for *Militant* — Tony Benn speaking

DURING THE last general election, Thatcher boasted to the Young Tories; "when could Labour ever fill Wembley Conference Centre?"

Militant supporters have already done so twice, and this year's *Militant* Rally, with Tony Benn MP, Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe, and workers from the American and international labour movement speaking, will be the biggest ever.

The date, Saturday 20 October is the twentieth anniversary of the first issue of *Militant*.

At that time *Militant* was a four-page monthly. Today our sixteen-page weekly is in-

adequate to cover the struggles of the working class, the activities of the labour movement, and to keep up with the growing demand amongst workers for socialist analysis and answers to the problems that they face. We now stand on the verge of a gigantic step for Marxism—the move towards a twice weekly paper, as a preparation for a daily in the future.

This rally, marking twenty years of *Militant* will be an historic event. Make sure you are there!

Please note the number of tickets is limited and will be issued on a first come first served basis! Rush your order in now!

We would like . . . ticket/s and enclose £ (cheques to *Militant* Rally, tickets £2.00 each).

Name Organisation

Address

Please return to *Militant* Rally, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



Miners on the march from Worksop to London for the hardship fund for strikers' children.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Scots pickets defy police

LAST WEEK, miners in Mid and East Lothian turned their attention to a private mine near Gorebridge, where some 15 NUM men had been reporting for work.

The pit, run by the Blinkbonny Coal Company Ltd, employs a total of 75 workers.

Faced with the continued refusal of the van carrying the workers to stop, last Thursday pickets managed to block the entrance road with boulders from a dry-stone wall. Six times the police cleared a passage, six times the pickets blocked it.

Only by using a decoy van did they manage to smuggle the scabs in through another entrance.

CB radios

The following day the pickets brought in CB radios and manned both entrances in order not to be decoyed again. A senior police officer, enraged by this tactic, grabbed a CB set and smashed it to the ground. "He is the head one up here" said striking miner, Gordon Scott, "and he's very rough; he's caused a lot of bother on the picket lines up here. He asked one of his sergeants to push the men into a ditch and onto a barbed

wire fence, and the sergeant refused".

Ten miners were arrested; six were held on charges of "rioting". "That's a jailing offence", explained Gordon, "and they have been in all weekend". It is the first time this charge has been used in Scotland during the strike; when told of this, the NUM's solicitor couldn't believe it.

The men believe this was done to intimidate men from picketing at Bilston Glen which was due to reopen on Monday after the annual holiday. "They used that charge to try and frighten the pickets off", said Gordon. "I think they think we're going to give in, but we'll never

give in now; the miners are as determined as ever up here."

In the event on Monday, there were further arrests at both pits, 14 at Bilston Glen, where less than half reported for work than before the holiday, and 28 at Blinkbonny, when, after using similar tactics to last week, the pickets returned to their bus, at which the police moved in and arrested the entire bus load, charging them with breach of the peace and resisting arrest.

By Chris Herriot (Monktonhall NUM)

Strikers denied tax refunds

MINERS ARE being fiddled out of a total of millions of pounds in tax refunds, says the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, the tax workers' union.

The IRSF says that miners are due refunds for the period of four weeks between the start of the strike and the end of the financial year.

It calculates that the refund would be around £64.50 for a married man and £41.10 for single men. Overall the union estimates that the government is withholding about £6.8m.

Under Section 29 of the Finance Act 1981, described by the IRSF as an "appalling piece of legislation", the government can stop payment of tax refunds when unemployment benefit is be-

ing received or the employee is involved in a trade dispute.

The IRSF describes the situation as a "gross scandal", and suggests the TUC Employment Committee presses the government to amend the Finance Bill.

By a *Militant* reporter

Danger! Scabs at work

REPORTS HAVE reached the NUM that safety standards are being neglected on shaft and rope examination at Golborne, Colliery, Lancs, in an attempt to keep the pit "working normally". On Thursday 21 June, a man was stranded for six hours in a cage, mid-shaft, of No.2 upcast shaft at Golborne.

The man, an underground diesel locomotive fitter was enlisted to assist shaftmen doing their statutory examinations. Apparently, on completion of the examinations, both shaft cages were lowered to a mid-shaft position, as is normal at the end of a shift, with the man still inside!

He remained there for six hours. Until the night shift required the cages and found him, no one knew he was missing. Not wishing to be in breach of the national overtime ban still in operation, management gave the man Friday off with pay. What will happen next?

By a Golborne NUM spokesman

Around the country

Thirty striking miners, their wives and girlfriends attended the first every *Militant* Readers' Meeting in KIRKBY IN ASHFIELD, near Mansfield. Steve Bale (Annesley COSA), Jeremy Birch (for *Militant*) and Adrian Bird (Bentnck NUM) spoke, and £13 was raised for the fighting fund. (John Hoare reports)

CARLISLE Labour Party collected over £150 for the miners. Six boxes were filled with food. People donated whole carrier bags of food. The Executive of the local Labour Party had refused to implement the 50p weekly levy in May, but in June a collection at the General Committee raised £32.50 for the miners' welfare fund.

The lead singer of the Flying Pickets donated £1 to help LPYS members collect £100 in BRIXTON recently. (Alan Beacham reports).

Clare Labour Youth in the Republic of IRELAND discussed the miners' strike and have sent a resolution of support to the NUM. (Mary Lehane reports)

East Ham LPYS have held regular Saturday morning collections on the High Street, raising an average of £20 a week. We were recently berated by an old Tory who claimed the collection was illegal. But the more he jumped up and down, the more money went into the bucket. The day was rounded off by a Labour Party member giving £50 to the LPYS for the miners' strike fund (reports Maureen Wade).

ABERYSTWYTH LPYS held a successful joint meeting with Maerdy NUM. Over 40 people heard Julian Akers (LPYS), Mary Coombs (Maerdy Miners' Wives Committee), and Harry Coombs (NUM). Over £100 was raised for the strike fund. After the meeting many of the Maerdy visitors said they were disgusted with the witch-hunt against Rhond-day LPYS and *Militant* supporter Brychan Davies. (Julian Akers reports)

Collections from CPSA and SCPS members at EUSTON DHSS raise an average £34 per week for the miners. Many members donated a half day's pay recently, raising £151.83. (Simon Dennison, CPSA reports)

Miners' dispute

Police hijack strikers bus

THE BOLD NUM (Lancs) bus was impounded and the 78 pickets aboard arrested on Tuesday 17 July. The men were returning from picketing and were stopped by the police near Leigh, after an alleged incident where scab buses were stoned. Pickets Ian Williams and John Arnold describe their treatment:

By Lesley Holt

"They've been after us for weeks. They wanted to grab some of us on suspicion of criminal damage. We said if you take one, you take all, so they did.

"They put us in the slammer, 15 in a cell for 5, 9ft by 7ft, for almost ten hours. The sweat was rolling off the walls. One of our big lads had to stand in the cell toilet—it was the only place there was any room for him. He had to be taken out in the end as he's on tablets which were at home, or he'd have collapsed on top of us.

"We got let out for a couple of minutes every couple of hours, but you can imagine what the smell was like in the cells.

"When we got let out some of us were warned—if more than 6 of us gathered outside, we'd be taken back in.

"It was an excuse to get hold of our bus. It's still impounded. The police gave it an MOT and failed it to get it off the road."

The pickets were charged mainly with 'suspicion' of criminal damage, some were arbitrarily charged with criminal damage. Bold miners remain undeterred—the lads were all back on the picket line the following morning. Now police are carrying out spot checks on cars, but that won't stop the miners.

By DAVID NORRIS, Industrial Correspondent
A MAN known only as the 'Silver Birch' is spearheading a back-to-work movement in Britain's coalfields.

Daily Mail, Wednesday, July 25, 1984



Leicester coal lorries must be stopped

ON THURSDAY 19 July Leicestershire hit the national news with 17 arrests outside Desford colliery (which closed last year). About 200 pickets from Leicestershire, South Derbyshire, South Wales, Durham and local supporters had tried to prevent coal movement by lorry, train movements have been blacked for weeks.

A small barricade was built but removed by police. The police refus-

ed to let the pickets talk to the drivers so when the first convoy went in the leading lorry was blocked by pickets.

Police waded in arresting 17. Each was individually handcuffed to the arresting officer and three mini-bus loads went to Coalville police station to be greeted by cheers from pickets as they went inside.

Afterwards police were talking about whether they arrested one, like fighter-pilots chalking one up on the

fuselage, during the war.

Earlier in the week 80 miners had picketed the Leicestershire NUM offices, when an area council was due. Only Jack Jones, area secretary went in, and he saw a delegation of three strikers.

On Monday and Tuesday (16 & 17 July) coal had moved in fairly large quantities from Nailstone Wood. Jones said no coal would move from there Wednesday and Thursday. Un-

fortunately it seems he doesn't have the will to stop it from elsewhere.

It is vital all lorry movements in Leicestershire are stopped. With only 35 men out on strike from 2,500 the stopping of rail movements is a testimony to these NUM fighters and the rail unions. The end of lorry movements will be yet another morale booster.

By Gary Freeman



Message at Durham Miners' Gala—last month the police charged someone with the 'offence'.

Fitzwilliam curfew protest

THE PIT village of Fitzwilliam, near Wakefield, is rallying around youths victimised by the police. Last week over 350 people—a tenth of the adult population—packed a protest meeting called to demand the lifting of a 7 pm to 7 am curfew imposed on the youths—most of them LPYS or Labour Party members—and to demand the withdrawal of outside police.

The meeting was held at 6.00 pm to allow those under curfew to leave early. At 6:55 pm they left the meeting 'en bloc' to loud cheers. As Dennis Doody, one of the victimised said: "Leaving the meeting as we did brought the message home to the people at the meeting. A curfew denies access to political meetings and is a massive intrusion on civil liberties." Another, Lee Morris said: "With all that

going on you don't feel on your own."

Encouraging headway has been made—two days after the meeting magistrates altered the curfew hours to 10 pm to 4 am, and holidays are allowed. The next objective is the total lifting of the curfew and the dropping of all trumped up charges. (For full report see page 6)

By Jon Ingham

NUM women get stuck in

WHICH MEMBERS of the National Union of Mineworkers earn less than £60 a week? Answer: the female canteen workers. Julie Ross and Ann Cowie both work at the Monkwearmouth colliery in Sunderland. They work 8½ hour shifts, with only a 30 minute break.

When the strike started they weren't keen on taking industrial action, but now they are both heavily involved in the support groups, and are working at the strike headquarters preparing food for the pickets. They have both seen what the mining industry has done to the people who work underground.

Equal pay

Beside the normal lung problems, many miners suffer from back problems and they have to take lighter jobs in the pits which mean a reduced wage. Ann's husband who has worked as a

power loader for 30 years now earns less than her son who has only worked underground for 6 years.

When the strike is over, they believe that the men must stand by them and get them equal pay with the surface workers. They are not even entitled to the concessionary coal which many miners get.

Julie is chair of the Wearmouth support group, and is now a determined militant: "We should have had someone like Arthur Scargill 20 years ago", she said. 18 weeks is not a very long time in anyone's life but the strike has opened the door to a new world and it will never be closed again.

By a Militant reporter

Miners visit Ireland

Dublin

ON 17/18 JULY, two miners from Northumberland came to Dublin to raise cash and speak to workers.

Despite the fact that workers in Ireland have only seen the biased media coverage of the strike, the mood everywhere was of support.

The main meeting of the visit was organised by two branches of the Post and Telecoms Workers' Union. Almost £950 was donated by the branches, and at least another £300 is on the way from the third branch.

At the Guinness Brewery they met representatives of nearly 2,000 workers. Complete solidarity was the message, and the stewards are organising collections. Several other workplaces were visited and hundreds of pounds collected or promised.

Waterford Trades Council in conjunction with the NUS has organised a holiday for 25 miners' children (and six adults) in Ireland. Waterford Glass Company has raised £2,000 for the strike fund. The recent conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions donated £5,000 and a collection among the 400 delegates raised £800.

By Ray McLoughlin

Belfast

THE VISIT of three striking Notts miners to Belfast provoked a great display of support from the trade unions.

The three from Ollerton NUM came to Belfast to explain that they and thousands of other Notts miners are on strike in support of their union.

Their visit was a preliminary one, to establish an itinerary for a later tour. Through the Labour and Trade Union Group they met leading figures from the ATGWU, sheet metal workers' union, seamen's union, GMBATU, EETPU, Northern Ireland Bakers' Federation and Belfast Trades Council, and addressed a shop stewards' meeting in the Royal Victoria Hospital.

They were invited over again by Belfast Trades Council and were promised the fullest co-operation of the CSEU and the ATGWU on their return.

It is no exaggeration to say that the message of the Notts strikers, nailing the media's lies about the number of miners working, made this group doubly welcome.

By Gerry McShane
(Belfast Trades Council, personal capacity)

The price of coal -

IF YOU were to believe the statements of Margaret Thatcher and Peter Walker, the Energy Minister, you would think that the world had no more need for coal and that coal consumption and production were in decline.

If you were to believe NCB Chairman, Ian MacGregor you would think that the British coal mining industry was the most inefficient in the world, that the industry cannot compete on world markets and that massive subsidies from the taxpayer are necessary to keep the pits open.

DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THEM. All the available evidence from objective sources shows that none of these statements are true.

Take the question of future coal consumption—is the demand for coal in decline? The International Energy Agency (IEA) regularly takes a look at likely world demand for the primary energy sources: oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear and hydro-electric power. In a recent study it concluded that oil supplies would remain relatively static at the present 50-53m barrels a day level which would be insufficient for future energy needs.

The IEA argue that "world oil demand would tend to exceed available supplies and notional world excess demand could range from 9m to 21m barrels per day by the end of the century". The advanced capitalist countries are advised to look for substitutes for oil by the IEA, given oil's limited reserves and the

unpredictability of price and supply from the Middle East.

The IEA predicts a rise in total energy consumption of around 2% a year up to the year 2,000. Other authorities see this prediction as on the low side. However, even on this basis coal is expected to take an increasing share of total world energy consumption. While oil's share will fall to around 31-36% compared to over 45% in 1973 and nuclear energy and natural gas will be unchanged at around 10-11% and 20% respectively, coal's share will rise sharply to near 30%. "On balance", they say, "coal use in the OECD countries could increase by 80-110% by the end of the century". Coal consumption will rise

because it is cheaper than oil and gas and safer than nuclear energy (which also requires heavy investment in technology and plant). Oil import costs have risen by three times since Thatcher came to office while coal prices have only risen 1½ times.

Electricity is the fastest growing fuel source for industry and will be heavily used by the new high technology industries. Already over 60% of power plants world-wide burn coal. That is why the IEA advocates that "the conversion of oil-fired power plants to coal or their early retirement should be pursued vigorously... industries should be encouraged to recognise the advantages of using coal instead of oil... efforts should be made to develop coal mines and transport infrastructure in line with growing demand".

Demand rising

How different IEA policy is from the objectives and plans of the Thatcher government. Far from advocating an expansion of coal-fired power stations, the Tories have called on the Central Electricity Generating Board to run down coal-fired stations and switch to the import of nuclear-fuelled electricity through the grid from France!

What has been the reaction of the major coal producers to this expectation of expanding demand? Since 1977 there has been an annual increase in world output of 2%. In some countries like China and India, production has grown around twice as fast as that, making China in 1984 the largest coal producer in the world.

However there have been some dismal exceptions to this record of growth. Out of the top ten coal producing nations only the USSR and UK have shown a decline in production, with the sharpest fall in British coal output.

Under MacGregor's closure plan another 4m tonnes of mining capacity is to be lost and production is to be reduced to 97m tonnes. This reduction in output not only coincides with a growth in the demand for coal on a world-scale but despite everything, an increase



NUM President, Arthur Scargill.

Photo: Militant

in demand in the UK itself to 112m tonnes this year. Yet instead of British coal miners meeting that demand, the government intends to increase coal imports.

The government and MacGregor justify this cutback because they say that the British mining industry is inefficient, that British miners are paid high wages and 'uneconomic' pits are kept open through government subsidies. Once high cost pits are closed and subsidies ended then what's left can try and compete—says MacGregor.

Again the evidence tells a different story. During the same period that British coal production was declining, productivity of the British miner at the coal face rose by 27%, according to a new report by the Technical Change Centre. So production certainly did not decline because British miners worked less hard.

British coal miners are not heavily subsidised by the taxpayer. The figures show that UK subsidies are the lowest in Europe.

AT £46 (\$59) a tonne British coal

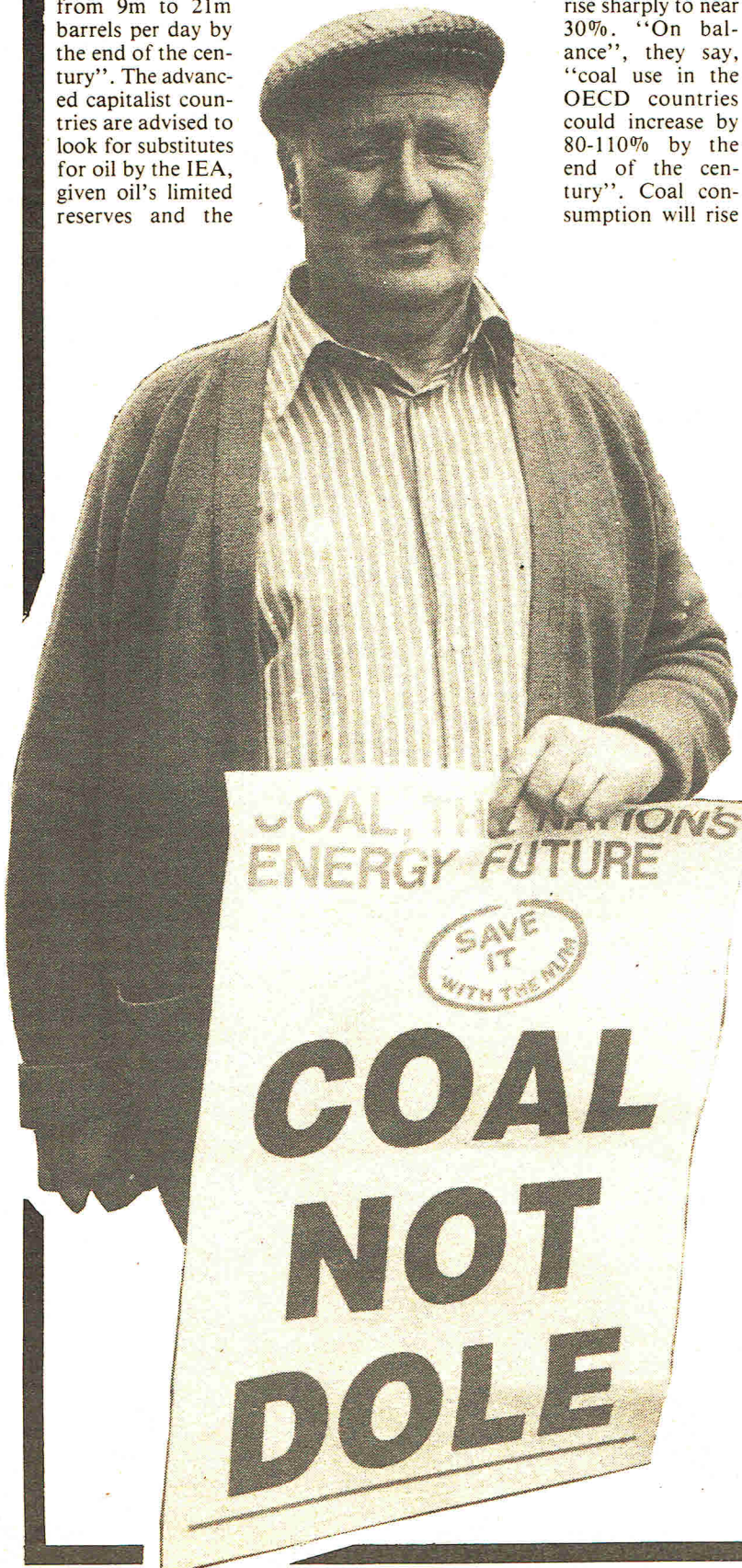
is also the cheapest in Europe. But is British coal the cheapest in the world?

A recent study by Don Barnett of Macquarrie University in Sydney, Australia, throws light on this thorny statistical problem. Barnett found that the cheapest pithead coal was that mined by the super-exploited black miners of South Africa in open-cast (i.e. on the surface) mines—at just \$12 per tonne and from New South Wales, Australia at \$21.

Imports expensive

At first glance this would prove MacGregor's point when compared to UK costs at \$59 (including interest costs and subsidies which balance each other out). However, there is no way that imports from South Africa, Australia or the USA can match UK prices when the costs of transporting coal to Europe or the UK are taken into account.

The full cost of importing South African coal then reaches \$50 per



Bosses' behind nu

THE TORIES' anti-coal, pro-nuclear energy policy is being increasingly exposed.

As the evidence mounts up, it becomes clearer every day that their policy is not based on the claimed economic or technical arguments they use as propaganda white wash.

It is a crude political ploy to smash the power of the NUM by moving away from energy produced by coal. It is reinforced by the pressure of profit-hungry big business firms who stand to make millions out of government expenditure on an unnecessary and dangerous nuclear programme.

The strategy adopted by the CEBG for the development of nuclear power in Britain over the past 20 years has been a shambles. In the '60s it was decided to replace the obsolete Magnox reactors with the Advanced Gas Cooled reactor (AGR). This would have been largely British made. This decision was re-affirmed in 1972.

In 1973 however, the Chairman

By Pete Dickinson

of the CEBG, Sir Arthur Hawkins, called the AGR "a disaster we must not repeat" and informed a House of Commons Select Committee that he wished to order 32 Pressurised Water reactors from the giant American multinational Westinghouse. After a barrage of criticism this plan was rejected and it was decided to build yet another type of British reactor, a heavy water type, the SGHWR.

In the mid '70s the conclusion was reached that the SGHWR was of obsolete design and a modified version of the AGR was proposed (AGR2). In the '80s the CEBG have now decided that the best option is the PWR and are defending this idea at the Sizewell inquiry. There is a strong lobby developing however, backed by the South of Scotland Generating Board, to

return to the AGR2. This saga has made the top management of the CEBG a laughing stock in the energy industry.

It is not just a question of bungling however. The different multinationals who stand to gain if a particular scheme is adopted have been lobbying hard all the time.

The National Nuclear Corporation was formed in 1973, with a very strong initial involvement of GEC, who were to be given management responsibility. Lord Weinstock's company is a major manufacturer of turbines for the Westinghouse designed PWR including a "research reactor" built in South Korea.

Coal cheaper

Since the Tories came back to power the Department of Energy have switched their support from the AGR to the PWR. GEC have made, or have orders for, the turbines for 19 water cooled reactors representing billions of dollars, according to the latest issue of GEC

fact and NCB fiction



NCB Chairman, Ian McGregor.

Photo: Jacob Sutton

tonne and their limited supplies have run out for 1984 world-wide. The full cost of importing non-union US coal is the same as UK prices at \$59, while the cost of importing union-mined US or Australian coal reaches \$75 per tonne.

So expensive are these alternatives that the Rotterdam spot market (the auction centre for spare coal supplies) does not even bother to price US coal, while Australian coal is priced well below the cost of mining it to try and compete with European prices. As the main demand for coal comes from Europe and the USA, Australian and US exporters must transport their coal long distances to take a share of the import market, thus making them as costly or even more costly than UK-produced coal.

The evidence shows that British coal prices are no greater than competitors in the world market, particularly producers of deep-mined coal. And yet Macgregor insists on trying to drive down the cost levels

of British coal at the pithead to the levels of open-cast mines in South Africa worked by exploited black workers.

The modern Selby pit area could produce coal at \$25-30 per tonne but it is not possible for MacGregor to lower the cost of the rest of British pithead coal to South African levels without decimating the industry.

Tory logic

His present closure plan envisages closing 23 pits, losing 20,000 jobs and cutting production. But the costs saved will only reduce the average pithead cost of coal by around £5 a tonne. If subsidies were completely removed that would raise the price £3 to around £44 (about \$57)—still \$30 more expensive at the pithead than Australian coal.

The most important lesson is that all this cost cutting is totally unnecessary because British coal is already competitive on world markets once transport

costs are taken into account.

The experts predict expanding world demand for coal for the rest of the century. All other major coal producers are increasing production. International energy authorities are calling on national governments to switch to coal to fuel industry and for electrical energy. Yet the Thatcher government wants to cut production and switch electricity to oil or nuclear power.

The British coal industry is efficient by world standards, lowly subsidised, and its coal is competitively priced. Yet the NCB and the government demand further cuts in costs, making large numbers of pits 'uneconomic' and losing thousands of jobs necessary to the economy.

The only conclusion that can be reached is that the government is not really aiming to make the British mining industry efficient, but is trying to break the power of the National Union of Mineworkers and destroy the coal industry. The government wants a capitalist economy that is not dependent on NUM coal for its profits but instead can rely on more well controlled, even secretive, nuclear and oil-based energy sources. It could even implement privatisation of the remainder of the industry, already hinted at by Norman Tebbit, the Trade Minister, given the profitable future for coal.

What evidence also shows is that a socialist plan for coal and other energy sources could contribute substantially to the wealth of Britain and the world. Under a socialist plan, coal production would be expanded as in other countries.

With sufficient investment in the mining industry, increased productivity would not only lead to higher output, but also to a reduction in the working week and earlier retirement. The demand for coal is going to increase world-wide over the next two decades, both to generate electricity and to supply fuel direct to industry. Only a victory for the miners in their struggle with the NCB and only the implementation of a socialist energy policy can ensure the production that is needed by industry will be created.

A programme for coal

- Open NCB books to trade union inspection.
- Cancellation of NCB debts.
- Immediate programme of full and adequate investment in all pits and workshops as identified by the NUM.
- Maintain every mining job. No redundancies. No selling jobs. No manning losses.
- Share out the work round the pits. A 4-day week for all miners with no loss of pay.
- NUM veto on all pit closures.
- A living basic wage for all miners with automatic increases to compensate for all increases in the cost of living.
- Workers' control and management of the NCB. The board should consist of one third elected by the workers in the industry through the unions, one third elected through the TUC to represent the working class at large, and one third to be appointed by the government.
- Nationalisation under workers' control and management of the mining industry suppliers and distributors.
- Integrated fuel policy under workers' control and management.
- An integrated plan for all nationalised industries.
- Drive out the Tories.
- Bring to power at the earliest possible moment a Labour government committed to socialism.
- Nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management of the top 200 monopolies with compensation based upon proven need.

clear policy

Engineering.

The supporters of the PWR claim that it produces much cheaper electricity than coal fired power stations. The latest evidence contradicts this view.

The most important index in calculating the economics of nuclear power is the load factor. The load factor is the efficiency rating of the nuclear plant. Past studies of the economics of nuclear power have assumed load factors of 75% or 80%, but as more PWR

reactors have come into use it has been possible to measure their actual performance. Load factors have typically been in the 50-55% range.

This has transformed the economics of the PWR, and it has been claimed that a coal fired station ordered now will produce electricity twice as cheaply as nuclear power.

HEALTH WARNING

THE MOST important argument for the halting of Britain's nuclear programme, that of safety and the threat to the very existence of life on the planet receives new support from a government inquiry held inside the Department of Health and Social Security.

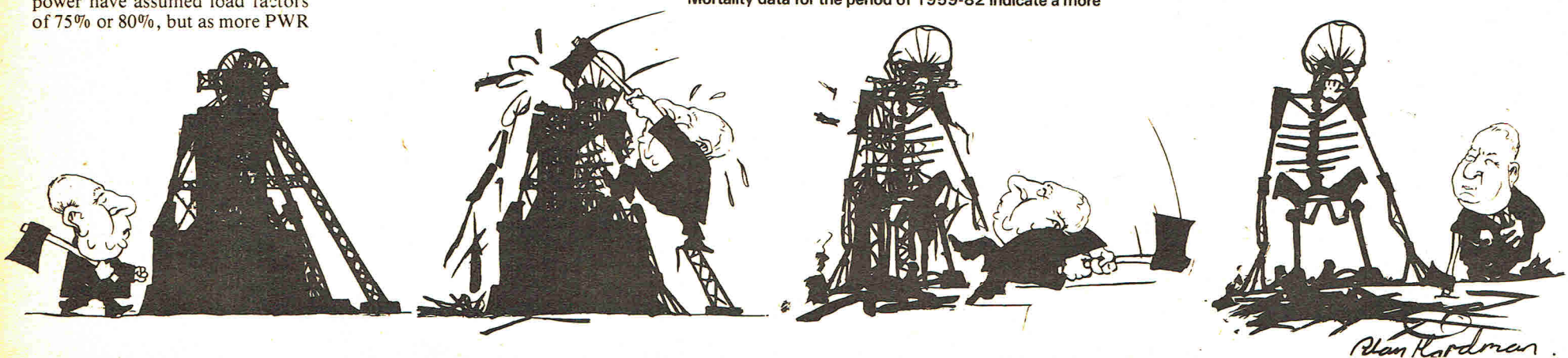
The *Guardian* has reported (20 July) confidential minutes which show the inquiry believes there is sufficient evidence to justify an inquiry into the incidence of leukaemia and other cancer related diseases in the past 25 years in the area affected by the Sellafield (formerly Windscale) nuclear processing plant.

Yorkshire Television recently revealed that the incidence of leukaemia in children under ten in the town of Seascale, just over a mile from the plant was ten times the national average. For the 15-24 age group in Seascale and surrounding villages it is nine times. The quotes which the *Guardian* provided from the leaked minutes are quite damning: "Mortality data for the period of 1959-82 indicate a more

than doubling of the death rate from leukaemia among young persons under the age of 25 in Millom Rural District compared to figures for England and Wales", says the report.

"The excess compared with the expected is statistically significant. Among 152 similar-sized rural districts throughout England and Wales, Millom Rural District had the second highest leukaemia death rate during the years 1968-78."

Sir Douglas Black, who headed the inquiry was wheeled out last Monday to counter these revelations. He described his report as "qualified reassurance" and that barring accidents he believed the people of Seascale were at no greater risk than other people! The published report, however, still expressed concern that Sellafield's discharges of alpha-radiation are "significantly in excess of those from similar countries". Very 'reassuring'.



Fitzwilliam - 'we stand together'

THE MOOD at the public meeting called by Fitzwilliam LPYS last week was electric.

With 10% of the adult population of the mining villages of Fitzwilliam and Kinsly present, it was the most representative meeting held during this strike.

The local LPYS called the meeting after the struggle of the local community against police attacks (see *Militant*, issues 708 and 709). As a result of police action, members of Fitzwilliam LPYS are on a 7 pm - 7 am curfew.

Police attack

The audience hung onto every word of Brendon Conway, chairman of the LPYS and a member of South Kirby NUM, who gave a graphic account of police violence.

This was re-emphasised by Mick Conway, of Acton Hall NUM, who described the police attack on the Fitzwilliam Hotel pub where the

police marched on it in military fashion, drawing their batons over 50 yards away.

Mick attacked the Tory press saying the only newspapers that had been their friends in the dispute were the *Miner* and *Militant*.

Nick Toms and Willie Griffin brought messages of support from the national LPYS—a great boost for the local Fitzwilliam branch which had only been formed eight days before the riots. As one young miner put it: "If we had not built the LPYS branch in Fitzwilliam we would not have been able to pull the community together. Then the police would have continued coming back for us one at a time".

The meeting had been brought forward, starting at 6 pm, so those under curfew could attend at least the

opening of the meeting. When it came to 6.55 and the people under curfew had to leave, the audience gave them long and loud applause, showing they were not alone.

South Africa

The meeting continued with the film, *We live like dogs*, which portrayed the struggle of the South African trade unionists. This was followed by a speaker, Tyrone, from the Southern African Labour Education Project. Tyrone struck a cord with the meeting when he described how he had suffered nine months of solitary confinement in a South African gaol, as well as being placed under night time house arrest for five years, until he escaped from the country.

Tyrone finished off by outlining the current struggle of the South African National Union of Mineworkers and encouraged all present to send them messages of support.



Members of Fitzwilliam LPYS and friends.

AFTER THE meeting, members of Fitzwilliam LPYS and their supporters gave their views:

"A curfew is seen as totally unacceptable. It means you are guilty until proven innocent. If 'our crime' warranted internment, why aren't we in prison?"

—Denis Doo...

"The meeting was really well attended. The section on South Africa opened

local people's eyes. No longer will they be seen as coloureds—but as people. *We live like dogs* ought to be compulsory viewing. We share a common bond and a common enemy—capitalism".

—Peter Doody

"The response to the LPYS petition has been immense—1,000 have signed so far. Before we had some petitions duplicated, people were coming to mine for the wording and started their own petitions. The peti-

tions have gone as far as Wakefield where it was taken up by textile workers."

—Brendon Conway

"The LPYS meeting was very good, at least for the small time I was there before my curfew. There was a lot of united people that night. Its been tremendous for a village like this—its united Fitzwilliam, people are talking about their views."

—Peter Hurst

Asian Youth success

THE ASIAN Youth Conference, called by the Labour Party Young Socialists and the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation in Bradford, on 14 July discussed in detail the many problems facing Asian youth and their communities.

With 240 youth attending it took up many issues such as police harassment, deportations and the Indian sub-continent. Guest speakers Dave Nellist MP and a member of the Newham 7

Defence Campaign were both well received.

Class unity

One theme that was prevalent through the conference was the desire for working class unity in the face of the Tory onslaught. There was controversy over the setting up of constitutionally separate sections for black workers in the Labour Party. The majority of the conference saw this as divisive and could cut across the unity of black and white workers.

This feeling was repeated in the discussions following the film on the struggle of Asian workers at Aire Valley Yarns. They won a victory for union recognition against a repressive management. The film expressed the solidarity shown between the Aire Valley workers and their white brothers and sisters at the Hindle Gears dispute in Bradford, who have been on strike for 16 months.

By Anil Singh
(Bradford North LPYS)

Maidstone workers oppose NF



The racist banner at the head of the National Front march through Maidstone, Kent, on 14 July. Thirty people were arrested as the police gave the NF protection.

OVER 250 people marched in Maidstone on 14 July in opposition to a National Front march through the town on the same day.

The counter-demo itself was initiated by the Maidstone LPYS; despite being interviewed by the Maidstone Police who attempted to ban the counter-demo only. We took legal advice from the National LPYS and were told that a ban on only one march was in contravention of the Public Order Act.

As one of the counter-demo organisers I was interviewed by the local media.

All of them asked about our 'intimidation' and what about 'democratic rights' for all political persuasions? But what more intimidating than the thugs of the NF marching through the streets proclaiming, as they did, "Keep Maidstone White"?

NUM

It is essential that the NF's policies of racial hatred and violence are combatted by the labour movement and the whole community. Unfortunately the Maidstone Constituency Labour Party voted against supporting the counter-demo. They must have been quite embarrass-

ed, as only the night before at a public meeting on the miners' dispute, Dick Richardson, of the NUM gave an utter condemnation of fascism, saying we should, "throw the NF in the River Medway".

The Kent NUM supported the counter-demo and their banner led the march. The Kent miners had an extra incentive to give support. Only a week or so before a benefit fete had been held in Jubilee Gardens in Dover. A group of NF attacked this and beat up people who were there.

By a Militant reporter

Fighting racism in the schools

ONE OF the liveliest debates at the Asian Youth Conference was on the situation faced by Asian school students in Bradford today.

In this city racial attacks and abuse are an added burden in an area which has already one of the worst records for education spending in the country. On top of this have been the racist remarks made by local headmaster, Roy Honeyford. The result has been school-student strikes and disturbances at a number of schools.

'Halal' battle

Also, animal rights campaigners have opened up a whole new debate that racialists have exploited. By opposing 'Halal' meat, meat that is slaughtered without pre-stunning and which is served in Bradford's schools, they have played into the hands of racists.

The state education system is crumbling. The response to this problem from some sections of the Asian community has been to look for separate Muslim schools, believing them to be free from racial attack, domination by Christianity and lack of funding. Implicit in this idea is also separate education of Asian girls. These then, were some of the

By Peter Watson
(Bradford South CLP)

themes taken up in a discussion on 'Race and Education'.

Hamid Khayam, for the LPYS condemned the massive cuts in public spending. The slashing of education budgets had created enormous strains on the state education system. Racism was rooted in the poverty and unemployment existing under capitalism. The fight against education cuts and racism in schools was therefore a naked fight of working people for a better deal and for socialism.



People should be allowed to practise their religion in their own time. It was wrong however, that any education system should be dominated by religion whether it be Christian, Muslim, or any other. A properly funded comprehensive education system would remove the fears that lead to the idea of separate schools.

Hamid explained that the LPYS were opposed to separate Muslim schools. They would become targets for fascist attack and would only serve to divide working class youth. Separate education for girls would only encourage the idea that they were being 'trained' to become second class citizens.

School strike

In the discussion, one speaker pointed out that separate schools were not an issue—the vast majority of parents had already rejected the idea. Most of the debate centred around how to overcome racial prejudice in schools.

One speaker from Batley described conditions at one local school. There was a virtual apartheid system where Asian youth were put in one particular class—the result had been a school student strike there.

Hamid in his summing up, made the basic point that the problem that schools faced could not be divorced from what was going on in society. The fight for decent schooling, free from racial attack was a fight that must involve school students, both black and white, the teaching unions, the LPYS and the wider labour movement. And it was a fight that must continue until we achieve socialism.

Right threaten Labour unity

'One member, one vote'— what it really means

THE MOST important argument against "one member one vote" is that it disenfranchises the trade unions and severs the historic link between them and the Labour Party.

From the beginning the Labour Party has been the trade unions' political arm and served to represent them in Parliament. For that reason, workers have paid the political levy and unions have affiliated to the party in order to have the major say in choosing their representatives.

On the General Management Committee, the representatives of the unions are relative to the size of their affiliated membership and thereby have a major say in choosing a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate.

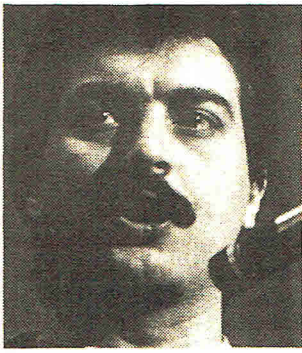
Union votes

Under the new method they would represent no more voting power than any ordinary member. Their affiliated membership would therefore have no effective say in the choice of an MP. This would be a gift to the Tory propaganda machine, especially at a time when they are attempting to bring in legislation to make it easier for trade unionists to opt out of paying the political levy to the Labour Party.

The right wing try to maintain that this will encourage trade unionists to become full party members in order to have a vote. A major recruitment campaign in the unions is needed, but to base that on breaking the links between the party and the unions is obvious madness. It is especially rich coming from those on the right who frequently obstruct the development of workplace branches in fear that they move to the left.

These proposals were originally supported by SDP renegade David Owen (currently calling for the defeat of the miners). Indeed, these moves will be viewed with anger and disbelief by party members, especially as Labour's popularity was continuing to rise. The task at hand is stepping up support for the miners and other workers in struggle.

As Thatcher's popularity plummets, Fleet Street has been handed the ammuni-



By Steve Morgan
(LPYS rep, NEC, personal capacity)

tion with which to paint the Labour Party as divided and ineffective. Local and national media campaigns will now be launched to get constituency parties to adopt these new "democratic" proposals as opposed to old "undemocratic" ones, and to defend right wing Labour MPs whose political views are closer to those of the capitalist press barons than those of rank and file socialists.

The truth is that "one member one vote" already exists in the selection of Prospective Parliamentary Candidates. All party members can participate in the selection of MPs by attending their wards, trade unions, LPYS and Women's Sections, hearing the views and nominating, or giving preference for, a particular candidate.

Democratic

Their delegate to a special meeting of the General Management Committee, although not officially mandated, is expected to vote accordingly. Decisions are taken following a full airing and discussion of the candidate's views and talents. Party members are able to hear different sides of an argument, put questions to the candidates, discuss the issues with other party members and thereby form a more balanced view.

On the basis of the new system, however, party members could be casting their votes by post without attending meetings, and

ON WEDNESDAY the 'honeymoon' period of party unity ended when proposals for the introduction of the 'one member one vote' method of reselecting MPs were passed by the NEC, with Neil Kinnock's full support. It was narrowly voted through by 15 votes to 12.

In the preceding days, the capitalist press belloved out support for Kinnock, presenting these as an "extension of democracy" which could save Labour from rack and ruin. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. The bleatings of the right wing and their media allies will cut no ice with the party membership.

Tories' fear

The real motive for the press hysteria was revealed by *The Times*

(24 July). After deploring the "undemocratic nature of Labour's present procedures, the narrowness of the party's base", it says: "Pendulums swing and it would be rash to suppose that there are no circumstances in which the pendulum could swing to Labour despite the fact that the left had seized all the inner citadels and was ready to act as the dominant force once the party had taken over. It is therefore in the national as well as the party interest that Labour should remain as broad-based as possible, and as democratic. Mr Kinnock's effort, belated and half-hearted though it is, deserves support."

So despite telling us how desperately unpopular these "lefts" are, *The Times* admits that there is a good chance that they could lead

the party to victory. The great defender of democracy wants to make sure that even after a democratic election, a Labour government could still be undermined by a constitution which would give *The Times* and the Fleet Street dailies the chance to manipulate the party's procedures for its own ends.

Reforms pushed back

The NEC's move is intended to roll back the democratic reforms won in the past, and save the cushy Parliamentary careers of many prominent Labour right wing MPs who are threatened with reselection for not adequately representing party policy. It amounts to a declaration of civil war by Kinnock and the rest of the right wing.



Delegates vote at last year's Labour Party conference. The right wing want to interfere with Labour's current democratic structure to safeguard their own careers. Photo: Militant

Support left on NEC vote

NOMINATIONS FOR the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party which have now closed include a slate of candidates put forward by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, to which we urge our readers to give their support.

Supporters of *Militant* who have stood for

the NEC in the past have decided not to allow their names to be put forward this year, in order to help maximise support for this left slate and to prevent any seats being lost to the right wing.

Militant urges all its readers to do all they can to ensure a big vote for the left.

Conference wants to take on Tories

THE resolutions to this year's Labour Party conference show the growing isolation of the right wing at the head of the labour movement.

The ranks of the movement want to take up the burning issues of the moment. One of the largest discussions at conference will be the fight of local authorities against Tory cut backs and the threat of rate capping. Twelve resolutions congratulate the action of Liverpool city council, while a further 22 resolutions call for a firm stand against the Tories, many pointing out that coun-

cils will have no alternative but to break the law.

There will also be major discussions on the Womens organisation and Black sections, with 28 and 19 resolutions respectively on these issues.

Of the resolutions that take up the question of reselection, not one supports the present campaign by Neil Kinnock and the right wing. Indeed, the constituency parties of two right wing MPs prominent in the campaign, John Evans (St Helens North) and Michael Cocks (Bristol South) oppose

the move.

There is clearly no wish for a return to the disunity of the witch-hunt. Not one resolution calls for a witch-hunt. While one resolution attacks the LPYS (from Plymouth Drake CLP) this view is not shared by many other CLPs who have submitted resolutions on YTS, the economy and local government, supporting the policies the LPYS have been campaigning for over the past decade and a half. Other resolutions attack the cuts in the LPYS budget.

Liverpool celebrates Jenkin's defeat

A VICTORY rally organised by Liverpool *Militant* supporters attracted over 500 people to celebrate the City Council's defeat of Jenkin and the Tory government.

The best received speech of the evening was Peter Taaffe's, the editor of *Militant*. He told the meeting Liverpool had not just beaten the Tories but had exposed those right wing leaders of the labour and trade union movement who had attacked Liverpool for their firm stand.

A collection for the *Militant* fighting fund raised over £500, which included money donated by striking miners.

By Lynne Gallagher
(Liverpool Broadgreen LPYS)



The audience at the Liverpool rally.

The Miners' Strike-

historic turning point

THE MINERS' strike marks a fundamental turning point in the struggle between the Tory government and the organised labour and trade union movement. Under the impact of this strike, the entire landscape of British society is being redrawn. When it is over, nothing—socially, industrially or politically—will have been left untouched.

Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution, wrote of the profound effect of strikes:

"They remind the capitalist that it is the workers and not they who are the real masters—the workers who are more and more loudly proclaiming their rights. Every strike reminds the workers that their position is not hopeless, that they are not alone...."

"Every strike means privations that can only be compared to the calamities of war"...and yet... "despite all these sufferings, the workers despise those who desert their fellow workers and make deals with the employers."

Lenin added: "It is often enough for one factory to strike for strikes to begin immediately in a large number of factories." He explained also the effect of strikes upon workers' class consciousness:

"Every strike brings thoughts of socialism very forcibly to the worker's mind, thoughts of the struggle of the entire working class for the emancipation from the oppression of capital."

"It has often happened that before a big strike the workers of a certain factory or a certain branch of industry or a certain town knew hardly anything, and scarcely ever thought, about socialism; but after the strike study circles and associations become more widespread among them and more workers become socialists."

Those words were written in 1899 about the strike movement in Czarist Russia; they could have been written only yesterday about the present miners' strike.

Industrial Falklands

Thatcher hoped for an "Industrial Falklands", a short sharp spectacular victory that would spread demoralisation throughout the trade unions, rekindle the rapidly declining prestige of the Tory government, and restore her own personal fortunes. After their retreat from the miners in 1981, Thatcher and the Tories prepared carefully to take their revenge on the miners at a moment of their choosing. They set up a special unit tied to 10 Downing Street, empowered to make all the necessary contingency arrangements for defeating a miners' strike.

Massive stocks of coal and oil were assembled. Lavish redundancy payments were introduced. And the management team at the NCB was stiffened by the appointment of MacGregor, fresh from butchering the jobs of steel workers. Secret behind-the-scenes preparations also took place to ensure that the entire

By Brian Ingham

national weight of the police could be mobilised to limit the effectiveness of picketing.

The long summer months lay ahead Thatcher and McGregor, buoyed up by the cowardly attitude of the right-wing trade union leaders over the NGA dispute with the *Stockport Messenger* and over the GCHQ affair, decided that the moment had arrived for a show down with the miners.

We are now reaching the twentieth week of this dispute. The Tories have been denied the short sharp humiliating victory over the miners which they rashly anticipated. On the contrary the miners are dug in, they sense the panic in government circles and they feel they are on the road to an historic victory. The strike was a monumental miscalculation on the part of Thatcher, the Tory cabinet, MacGregor and big business generally. They failed to understand the mood building up within the working class.

Mood of anger

Marxists had explained, in answer to the Tories, and to the cynics within the labour movement, that the working class was far from broken or dispirited. On the surface there was doubt, hesitation, unease and caution when it came to the possibility of industrial action. Under the surface, however, a pent-up mood of anger, resentment and bitterness was becoming more explosive and more general as each day passed.

Marxists predicted, against a chorus of gloom that at times seemed to echo everywhere within the left of the labour movement, that this was one of the most volatile periods in the entire history of British capitalism. Sudden flare ups of industrial struggle were inevitable, that would take the Tories and even trade union leaders by surprise, and which would dramatically alter the outlook and understanding of rank-and-file trade unionists. The miners' strike has vindicated totally these confident perspectives.

Miners have faced mass arrests and brutal harrassment. They have undergone hardship and grave personal difficulties. Yet the strike goes on. In Nottingham, where the strike was weak from the start, where the hesitation and vacillation of the leadership in the early days of the strike added to the difficulties, there has been a drift back



No section of society have been more radicalised by the strike than the young. Like these on the march through Birmingham.

to work. But the Coal Board is resigned to the fact that there is little they can do that will break the resolve of the 4,000 or so Nottingham miners who are proudly and defiantly continuing the fight.

One young miner said in a *Militant* public meeting that, during this strike, socialism had literally been knocked into his skull! Most miners have understood also that, whatever the outcome, this strike will not be the last. There were victories in 1972, 1974 and 1981. That was not the end of the matter. Thousands upon thousands of miners have come to realise that there is no end to struggle, so long as capitalism remains. Hundreds of miners have gone further; they have become firm committed supporters of *Militant*.

It has raised the morale and combativity of the entire trade union movement. Teachers, car workers, postal workers, civil servants and seamen have all taken action in recent weeks. There has been a spate of small strikes throughout manufacturing industry. Workers in many of these companies have begun to feel firmer ground under their feet due to the small temporary upswing in manufacturing production. Order books became more healthy, requests from management for overtime came more frequent, and in some cases, new recruits were taken on.

For workers in many companies facing these developments, the miners' strike has acted as an example and inspiration, dissolving the last reserves of caution left over

from the TUC General Council and Len Murray has resigned as TUC general secretary.

The new general secretary of NALGO had to face fierce criticism for not supporting the NGA. NALGO also decided to back any council which passed an illegal budget, though this was also due to the magnificent struggle led by the Liverpool council which in the last few months has unfolded side-by-side with the miners' strike. First Liverpool workers showed the way to the miners; then the miners moved into action lifting and strengthening the battle in Liverpool; then victory in Liverpool lifted the miners. Thatcher had been beaten!

At the NUR conference the leadership refused to give full sup-

"The miners will not be starved back"

There has been a similar change in the attitude of the wives of miners. Miners' wives' support groups have mushroomed in every coalfield, organising kitchens and the distribution of food. Miners' wives have also stood shoulder to shoulder with miners on the picket lines and marches, equally determined to fight for victory. Politically, they are also now in the very front rank of the British working class.

The significance of this strike, though, extends far beyond the boundaries of mining communities.

from the more harsh economic climate of the last few years.

This strike has also given a new added impetus to the movement to the left within the trade unions. The right wing had already been thrown onto the defensive by the reaction to their shameful role over the last year. 300 motions of censure appeared on the agenda of the CPSA Conference against Alistair Graham and the old right wing executive. At the USDAW conference, the executive was beaten no less than 11 times. Alistair Graham has now been removed

port to the battle inside the Labour Party against the expulsion of socialists in Blackburn, and for the re-instatement of the five expelled members of the *Militant* Editorial Board. Nevertheless, this conference was light-years removed from the conferences dominated only a few short years ago, by Sidney Weighell.

The NUR conference passed a resolution moved by a *Militant* supporter which called for a 35 hour week with no loss of pay, a £100 minimum wage and the nationalisation of the top 200

In the heartland of the strike there is no weakening whatsoever. Striking miners are determined to stay in this fight for as long as it takes to win. Many of the most active miners had never before been to a union branch meeting. The "young lions" especially, are largely new to trade union activity. Many used to consider themselves uninterested in politics.

In the last 20 weeks they have picketed, marched and lobbied. Thousands have attended political meetings. The strike itself has been an education. Illusions in the "fairness" of the police and the law courts have been driven out. The state has demonstrated viciously that, in the last analysis, it is the instrument of the ruling class against the working class, of the minority who own the wealth in society against the majority who create the wealth.

ranks of the Tory MPs, a state of emergency was threatened and Tory ministers talked of sending in the troops. An already charged situation was becoming ever more charged as each hour passed.

The dockers have now returned to work, and, as a result, the atmosphere has been, to an extent, defused; but, for how long? The longer this strike goes on, the more it will eat into the very fabric of society.

Youth unemployment

The hooligan activities of the police in local mining communities have provoked almost insurrectionary moods in areas of Yorkshire. Sections of the ruling class are now concerned that these battles may spill over into larger towns, both inside and outside mining areas. They have drawn the conclusion that with the school holidays beginning, with mass youth unemployment already an epidemic and with widespread feelings among the youth that they have been written off by this society, any further clashes with the police in mining areas could well spark off the kind of rioting which took place on the streets of Brixton and Toxteth in the summer of 1981.

On the industrial front, the telecom engineers are entering the first stages of industrial action over pay. Firemen are beginning to consider taking industrial action against compulsory redundancies and, once the summer is over, the Autumn pay round begins. BL management, in particular, are trembling at the prospect of a national struggle on pay. BL workers want to recoup on their basic wage what they have lost out of bonus payments, and their confidence for action has been boosted by the fact that BL now has new more popular models. A continuing miners' strike will feed the militancy of BL workers and their readiness to take strike action.

The Tories are on the horns of a dilemma. This strike has blasted apart the idea that the Tory government is firmly and confidently in control of economic and political affairs. The Tories now are worried that any actions they take could produce disastrous repercussions.

The chorus of venom from Tory ministers unleashed last weekend against Arthur Scargill and the miners reflects the desperation of the Tories. Under the hammer blows of this strike the facade of unity within the Tory Party has been shattered. More and more open criticism of Thatcher has surfaced. Talk in the capitalist press of her being removed has also been resumed.

Wider support

Sections of the capitalist class would like to cut their losses and end this strike as quickly and quietly as possible. But so much is at stake for Thatcher personally and for the circle around her that at present



Photo: Tina Carroll

Miner's wives are now in the front rank of the British working class.

they are refusing to surrender. The NCB has made significant concessions already to the NUM, but, as yet, Thatcher has not allowed MacGregor to concede one of the central demands: no pit closures except on grounds of proven exhaustion.

Thatcher still hopes that the strike may collapse from below. All the indications, however, are exactly the opposite. The miners will not be starved back. They have the support of their families, their communities and the wider labour movement. Their attitude is that although there may be more financial problems, the strike has gone on too long to end without victory. The nearer the strike goes towards winter, the more miners will begin to feel that victory is imminent.

As long as the strike continues the possibility will remain of a more generalised struggle developing behind the miners. If it is still under way during the TUC then massive pressure will come to bear for the whole labour movement to support the miners, at least in a one-day general strike. A generalised struggle could also break out earlier if the Tories turn to the troops to move coal or if they decide to stake all on a legal assault through the anti-trade union laws.

A general strike would reveal the enormous latent power of the trade unions. It would rouse to action millions of workers, many who have drawn back from fighting over their own separate problems; some would be involved who have been affected by the propaganda of the media against the miners.



"The strike has gone on too long to end without victory"

Backward ideas and prejudices would be swept aside as such a movement gathered momentum.

But, however this strike unfolds, a crushing defeat for the NUM now seems almost inconceivable. In reality the union is being rebuilt. A new generation of miners has been blooded in battle. In the short run in Nottingham and the other non-striking coalfields, the right will seem to strengthen their hold. This will not last. In the near future striking miners will have become the leaders of the non-striking coalfields.

In society at large, the effects of this strike will never be undone. The unbridgeable chasm which this strike has revealed between the classes cannot be hidden or healed; it will instead deepen and intensify in the years ahead, possibly even in

the months or weeks ahead. Miners are looked upon as the Brigade of Guards of the British trade union movement, but, where they have moved today, workers in all industries will move tomorrow. Workers who are being inspired by miners will soon be inspiring miners.

The last five years of Tory rule has hardened and stiffened the working people of Britain, preparing the way, not just for new strikes but for the wider and deeper political struggle to end forever the capitalist system. As one layer of the working class follows another into action, the ideas of socialism will become ever more deeply embedded in the ranks of the working classes, they will become the property, not of thousands, but of millions.

But, if this strike has shown the strength of the working class at rank-and-file level, it has also revealed glaring weakness at the very highest level of the trade unions and the Labour Party. If the Labour and trade union leaders had been prepared to mobilise the full weight of the labour movement behind the miners, Thatcher would have already been defeated. By now we could have been well on the way to the return of a Labour government.

This strike has revealed therefore the central task facing the working class: in the years ahead the labour movement must be rearmed thoroughly with a leadership which is fully worthy of the rank and file.



Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (IFL)

Tory mayhem

The ruling class treats the present right wing leadership of the trade unions with even more open contempt. Nevertheless, because of the added power of the trade unions, and their far greater specific weight in society, the Tories are not only fearful of a general strike, they have lived in dread throughout this dispute at the thought of even one other powerful group of workers joining hands with the miners in struggle.

Thatcher intervened personally to ensure that there would be no rail strike on pay during the miners' strike. Tory anti-trade union legislation has also been put on ice in case it provoked a wider movement of solidarity behind the miners.

The docks strike caught the Tories totally unawares. Suddenly their worst fears had been realised—dockers and miners were on strike simultaneously. Immediate mayhem broke out in the

India

Punjab - Gandhi creates a new problem

THE FIRST part of this article (*Militant* 20 July) outlined the threat of the disintegration of India under the impact of the deep capitalist crisis.

In the second part, reprinted from the Indian Marxist journal *Indian Left Review*, the authors look at the way Gandhi's murderous attacks on the Sikhs and the execution of Bhindranwala have managed to create demands for secession even amongst such a relatively privileged group as the Sikhs.

ONLY A month before the attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Indira Gandhi was publicly defending her own Sikh protegee, Bhindranwala, saying he was no "extremist" but a "religious leader".

Gandhi's Congress (I) government was "appeasing" Bhindranwala almost to the last.

The new-found "toughness" of Mrs Gandhi in no way refutes our appraisal of the Indian state as impotent and doomed, while India remains within the framework of a decaying capitalist system. A weak character will sometimes lurch querulously into a foolhardy adventure.

Senile British imperialism under the effete Eden stumbled into the Suez fiasco in 1956, in the pathetic quest to recapture earlier glory. Mrs Thatcher was luckier in the Falklands war but her hour of glory was brief and expensive, and for Mrs Gandhi, trying to pull off another Bangladesh, this military victory will nevertheless come to haunt her.

Reactionary movement

The movement in Punjab, as in Assam, is emphatically **not** a genuine national movement, uniting a people against national oppression. On the contrary, it is a completely reactionary communal phenomenon, with the aim of ruthlessly dividing people of different religions (in Assam, languages and culture), tearing communities asunder, amputating territory following a bloody terror campaign to physically separate communities that formerly—**especially in Punjab**—lived in complete harmony.

It is a grotesque parody of the Pakistan movement of 1947, but without the slender justification of discrimination. By no token can the Sikhs claim to be persecuted or oppressed.

And yet such is the decay of an Indian national consciousness, the reality has to be faced that Sikh communalism has grown from an indulgence of terrorist gangsters to a mass phenomenon—a process speeded up and exacerbated by the constant opportunist inconsistency and mistakes made by Gandhi's party Congress (I).

The people of Punjab were subjected during the army operation to the hardships of prolonged curfew (up to 60 hours' unbroken curfew, followed by a paltry two-hour scramble for provisions), of a total press ban, and of course the humiliation and profanity of armed assault on the Golden Temple, which revolted the entire Sikh community.

With daily communal assassinations and sabotage raids being launched by Bhindranwala's thugs from the Golden Temple, and throughout the state, the government was forced to drag itself towards a military confrontation.

The first response of worker militants will not be to condemn



A Sikh protest in Amritsar earlier this year.

the sacrilege of the assault on the Temple—for they will support the unity of India and indeed of the entire sub-continent and have no truck with communal fanatics—but to state clearly that Mrs Gandhi and the ruling class have neither the will nor the authority to hold the country together.

That is why the entire Sikh people are now irrevocably alienated. The army generals knew very well that it is not now a question merely of a "bunch of criminals" hiding in the temple.

The reason why the army opened fire on the temple and stormed it relatively quickly, abandoning original plans to extend the siege far longer to exhaust the beleaguered enemy, was that a mass uprising was in the making.

Civil war threat

30,000 Sikhs had converged in a nearby village determined to defend the temple. If action had been delayed for a few mere days, the army would have had to cope with a full-scale civil war. It would have been the same situation as that faced by West Pakistan in Bangladesh in 1971.

That prospect still remains possible. To send the army in will prove much easier than to pull it out. An occupation army will breed not only new terrorist movements, but smouldering mass resentment. A mass uprising and a movement towards Khalistan, accompanied by communal bloodshed to drive out Hindus and enforce partition, is a nightmare made more real by the government's actions.

Our prediction of mutiny and desertions in the Indian army was borne out. According to official figures, 4,500 Sikh troops deserted from barracks as far apart as Bihar and Maharashtra, making for Punjab and Delhi. This outbreak was quickly put down; but with 100,000 Sikhs in the Indian army, it does not take much imagination to guess what will be the state of army morale later, in conditions of a long, bitter war of attrition by an occupation army bogged down in Punjab like the British army in Northern Ireland or the Spanish in the Basque Country.

In such conditions, the army could break into pieces, leading not only to a Sikh Khalistan but to

countless more communal and secessionist upsurges and the creation of a patchwork of breakaway states. In the process, war with Pakistan over the issues of Kashmir and Punjab will also become more probable.

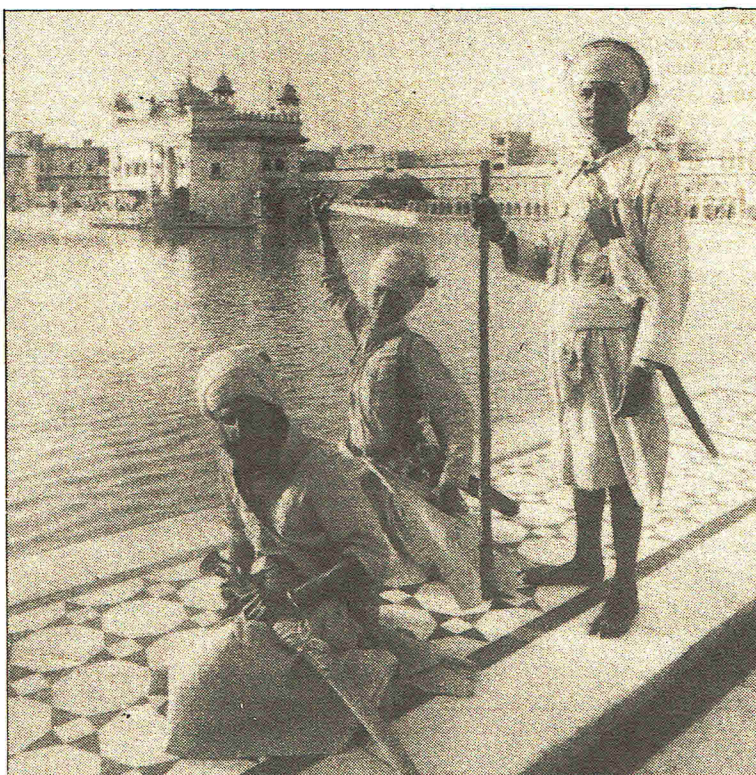
And in conditions of a divided and demoralised army, with Bangladesh now also to be counted as a hostile factor, India could not hope for an outcome along the lines of 1965 or 1971. Paradoxically, such a war would lead to revolution on both sides.

India will never be the same following these two upheavals. Despite the fact that Mrs Gandhi appears to have lost the south, the Sikhs, Bombay and (to judge by recent by-elections) the minorities in the Hindi belt, she will have no realistic alternative but to hold elections, probably without attempting to tinker with the constitution, and still probably form the next government, with a reduced majority or even as a minority government

breaks out within the next six to nine months, then we can no longer rule out the possibility of a new Emergency. Or alternatively the rushing through of legislation establishing the present Lok Sabha as a Constituent Assembly, followed by a plebiscite establishing a presidential bonapartist semi-dictatorship.

However, even in this less probable variant, this will provide no solution. The government and the ruling class will prove incapable of establishing its authority or checking the inevitable disintegration of the Indian state. **Only the proletariat is capable of safeguarding even these fragile gains of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the very existence of an Indian national state—and that only as part of its own mission to overthrow landlordism and capitalism and establish the rule of workers' and peasants' government on a socialist programme.**

The ruling class—effete, corrupt,



The murdered Sikh leader Bhindranwala (left) outside the Golden Temple.

depending on the support of a ragbag of parties, etc.

But if events hurtle forward at accelerating speed—if communal mayhem, civil war in Punjab, war with Pakistan, a major crisis in Kashmir, or some such major crisis

parasitical—cannot fulfill its own ambitions. Even in its brief hour of victory it is terrified of provoking opposition. The Blimpish Sandhurst-style general who threatened mass executions of deserters was hastily repudiated.

The response to these mutinies (in which at least one officer was shot by his troops) was one of "sympathy and understanding" for the "misguided"—and no wonder, considering the shattering effect on the unity of the army in the event of even a single execution, never mind a couple of thousand! The superficial toughness of the government masks real nervousness and awareness of its weaknesses.

The organisations of the working class have an urgent responsibility. One of the most shameful features of the recent communal riots in Bombay was the abject cowardice of the trade union leaders, their outright refusal to intervene to defend the working class from Fascist gangs. Having taken a timid and faltering step towards "deploring" communalism, they finally shrank back from even a clear verbal statement.

This is an outrageous stain on the honour of the Bombay labour movement. Bombay is the most militant proletarian stronghold of the most militant working class in the world (see previous issues). Yet when workers came under attack, the trade unions—the only force capable of defending the livelihoods and ultimately the very lives of the workers—did nothing.

It was their duty to call a one-day Bombay *bandh* against Shiv Sena thuggery, to mobilise thousands of trade unionists and physically demonstrate at one of the flash points, to physically defend the slum-dwellers and teach the Shiv Sena an elementary lesson in class politics, if necessary defying the law on the grounds that the police have proved unworthy of confidence in their ability to defend the community.

If nothing else, that would have resulted in unionisation of the power-loom workers of Bhiwandi (one of the flash points) who had played a strike-breaking role in the prolonged textile strike. It would have renewed the loyalty of tens of thousands of other trade unionists. When to its honour the Maharashtra unit of UTUC proposed this programme at a joint trade union action committee, it was laughed out of court.

But in the terrible convulsions impending throughout India, the workers' organisations will be shaken again and again; we are confident they will rise to the challenge of history.

Israel's crisis election

IT IS not yet clear who will form the new Israeli government after the close result in the 23 July elections. But the election and events of the past few years show the loss of support by the right wing Likud coalition since the last election in 1981.

After four years in power, Menachem Begin, then the Likud leader, was not confident of victory in 1981. Labour were bitterly disappointed at Begin's victory then.

But the tactics of the Likud contained the germs of their later collapse. Likud capitalised on the fears and prejudices of the group who constitute the majority of Israelis, the Sephardim, Jews of Middle Eastern or North African origin.

Ultra-Zionist

The Labour opposition was unable to counter Likud's ultra-Zionist ideas as they could not answer the fears which underlay the prejudice. Labour politicians often held the Sephardim in contempt.

The Labour Party leadership has never put forward class policies to safeguard the interests of all Israeli workers, Jewish and Arab. The labour movement, in-



Likud leader Shamir trying to retain support.

on security. But many Israelis now realise that military superiority can not guarantee safety for Israel's Jews any more than it has for the country's Palestinians or for their Arab neighbours. At the last election the muscle flexing on the Lebanon border and the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor gave short term dividends to Likud.

But today the Lebanon

war has left 600 Israelis dead and ruined Israel's economy and self image. The revelations of the Kagane report on the massacres at Chantilla and Sabra refugee camps have speeded up the process of disillusionment.

Massive inflation

Without the "charismatic" Begin, who was welcomed with chants of "Begin, King of Israel" in 1981, Likud have had less chance of diverting attention from the economic situation. Even back in 1978 when Likud had been in power for only a year, an Israeli told me "Under Labour we had a cosy devaluation every so often but when Likud devalue by 7% at a stroke we begin to worry".

Now the situation is way out of hand. Inflation has made the shekel meaningless and all significant transactions are in the far more reliable dollar, despite moves by the Central Bank to

bolster the natural currency.

Naturally this has increased class tensions. This last year has seen a rash of strikes involving both Jewish and Arab workers. In the last month power stations, ports, airports, and banks have stopped and engineers and public service workers have taken action. Many of these strikes have been unofficial at the initiative of the rank and file, not the leaders.

Socialist federation

The working class have shown their power, and offer the only hope for the people of Israel and the Middle East. But only on the basis of a socialist policy taking up the fight against Zionism and for a socialist federation of the Middle East. Events will make such ideas grow in Israel regardless of the complexion of the incoming government.

The victims of capitalism

ACCORDING TO the Population Bulletin of the United Nations 1982, there are over 1,500 million children under 15 in the world, in other words about 36% of the total population.

In the industrialised world only 26.7% of the people are under 15, but in the "third world" this rises to an incredible 40.8%. However, these figures don't mean a thing unless you go beneath the surface.

Impossible challenge

For the poorest countries which have been ensnared by the international oligarchy with debts of \$820,000 million, to have four fifths of your population of school age or younger poses a challenge which is impossible to fulfil for the rotten bourgeois leaderships. Many millions of kids, 300 million undernourished children in the non-industrial countries, are left alone without education, without hope in this "free world".

For instance 201 million of the world's children between 7 and 12 are in school, but a majority, 224 million, cannot get a school place. By 1985 there will be 350 million in school but 375 million with no school to go to.

This great poverty, characteristic of all the third world, is a vicious circle; poverty leads to poor mental and physical development which in turn leads to school failure, poor work opportunity and continues the poverty into the next generation.

The effects are very great in early life and according to American psychiatrists, "cheat children of their right to develop their potentiality". In Latin America alone, one child in six is in what is called an "irregular situation" either abandoned or suffering from a physical or mental problem. There are 600,000 such children in Chile alone according to the chief of the Chilean Mental Health service.

Exploitation

And this is unlikely to improve while Latin America stays capitalist with the huge debts whose interest repayments alone drain hundreds of thousands from our countries.

When even in the world's richest country, the USA 700,000 children are denied food clothing and shelter for their welfare, what can a reform programme staying within capitalism give to Latin America?

We must say no to "aid" programmes to "solve" our problems which allow our exploitation to continue. The transformation of society is the only hope for the masses of our continent.

By a Latin American correspondent

By Leon Green

cluding the agricultural cooperatives Kibbutzim and Moshavim, has been dominated by the better off European Jews, and workers regard the party as part of the "establishment".

Likud was then able to cynically exploit the fears of the mass of the population



Labour leader Peres. His party gained most seats without an absolute majority.

French Communists leave government

THE COMMUNIST Party (PCF) has withdrawn its four ministers from the "left government" in France after the Prime Minister, Mauroy, resigned and was replaced by Laurent Fabius.

The issues underlying the resignation and the CP pulling out were the failures of the Mitterrand government.

After the election collapse of the Socialist Party (PS) to 21% of the vote, due to the government's anti working class austerity measures, the PS leaders' response has been to move further to the right, to "broaden the appeal" by taking the "middle ground". In effect, the austerity programme of finance minister Delors will be continued by his successor, Beregovoy.

The PCF withdrew in response to their vote dropping to 11% and the wave of strikes against capitalist and government plans. The Communists felt their support move beneath their feet.

In the extract below from a letter written before the elections and the CP withdrawal, Philippe Roland looked at the record of the PCF leaders. A future article will examine the implications for French workers of the latest developments.

"The profits system is leading society to ruin. In the next period, the labour movement must find the road to the socialist transformation of society.

"Before the 1981 election, the PS leaders spoke of the necessity for such a transformation, but in practise they tried to solve the crisis on the basis of capitalism.

"Many activists of the PCP, with the largest working class base saw in the government's U-turn a confirmation of their suspicions concerning the Socialist leaders.

Role of PCF leaders

"But from the beginning, PCP leaders have gone along with government policy. The Communist ministers, eager for a cosy relationship with their partners, have never once seriously contested the policies. Even when the wage freeze of June 1982 came up for discussion in the Council of Ministers, the PCF ministers said not a single word in opposition, not even the mildest reservation. The subsequent criticisms, timid enough in themselves, were never followed up by action.

"The Party leadership always justified subservience by its majority position within the Government. "We only have four ministers" they explain; the PCF is obliged to accept the will of the majority. By this means PCF leaders try to throw responsibility for the austerity policy on to the Socialists alone.

"However, in reality, without the support of the



The PCF paper L'Humanité after the Euro-elections: a "serious setback".

PCF and through it, of the CGT, the present Government policy would be impossible.

"A capitalist journal asked the virulent anti-communist Gaston Defferre, on the right wing of the government if he minded sitting in the Elysée with Communist ministers. "Not at all, I am convinced that if they were not in the government we would be faced with grave difficulties".

"The Socialist Party alone could never have gained acceptance for the policy of counter-reform. The PCF leaders alone carried sufficient authority with the workers for that and they accepted the role of a transmission belt for this policy within the workers movement.

"Faced with growing discontent within the party, the union bloc CGT, and the working class as a whole, party leaders began last year to voice opposition to government policy. The in-

creased strikes showed workers patience was running out. They simply cannot afford the 'austerity'. In particular, coal, steel, cars, shipbuilding, and many other sectors are threatened with catastrophe.

Socialist solution

"Had the party leaders based themselves upon the movement of the workers to lead a counter-offensive against the bosses, they would have gained enormous support and the party would have recovered much ground lost by tail-ending government policy. But they contented themselves with a purely verbal opposition. No attempt was made to mobilise the movement against de-industrialisation and counter-reform.

"What use are radical speeches that lead to nothing? The Party leaders denounced the plans to run down the coal industry, and then voted for them in the

Letters

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

Bitter lessons

Dear Comrades,
In previous letters to the paper I have written about the superstore I worked at and the harassment I faced from management. I fought a long battle over a ballot for my election as shop steward, three months in all.
Well, I recently returned from a week's holiday to be told that I was redundant and would have to vacate the premises—this was at 9 am. It had taken my college six

months to get this company to take me on. What's more the company are currently building a £4½ million extension, so they can't claim poverty for the reason for my sacking.
As you can imagine I am very bitter, not just against the actions of the bosses, but the weakness of my union who are supposed to fight on our behalf.
Yours fraternally
Mike King
USDAW
Southampton

Police brutality

Dear Comrades,
A member of the Fire Brigades Union, Dave Buckney, told me how on July 12 he witnessed the most clear cut case of police brutality against the miners he ever saw:



Nearly 4,000 miners have been arrested in the current dispute.

"It was approximately 7 am and the pickets were beginning to disperse when for no reason whatsoever a group of things dressed in

uniform charged the pickets' double decker bus, kicking and punching their way through the bus. They succeeded in wilfully vandalising the doors and in arresting one totally innocent miner.
"The remaining contingent of police, outnumbering the pickets four to one were not to be outdone. They began pushing and punching out at the rest of us, deliberately trying to force a confrontation. The look of disappointment when the tactics did not work was easily recognisable on their faces.
"The disgraceful behaviour of the so-called 'keepers of the peace' should be forever etched shamefully on their consciences. Unfortunately I seriously doubt they possess such a quality as conscience. This display of violence and hatred had to be seen to be believed."
Yours fraternally
Carol Dean
Wigan LPYS

Daily paper

Dear Comrades,
In the *Local Government Chronicle* (June 22) Anne Jacobs reports: "Liverpool councillors are likely to back down from their threat to levy an illegal rate". The *Municipal Journal*, published on the same day, reads: "Liverpool—no deal yet despite more talks with Jenkin". This article reports: "...the gulf that separates the council leadership and the government is as wide as ever".
Also in the *Municipal Journal* there seems to be a fuller account of the comments made by Councillor Derek Hatton. He is reported to have said: "The meeting has been fruitful only in that it has indicated steps forward". Unlike the report in the *Local Government Chronicle*, which just stated that both sides had said that the talks had been fruitful.
This is yet another example of the doctoring of facts, by people who would find themselves more at home writing scripts for

Jackanory, in an attempt to mislead the public. The media did its best to discredit the Labour councillors in their battle with the Tories.
This and the performance of the media during the present miners' dispute can only highlight the need for a daily workers' paper, to cut through the distortion and lies thrust upon the workers every day from the pages of the capitalist press. The miners' dispute has shown how a weekly paper is inadequate to cover the increasing pace of events.
A daily paper is a necessity if workers are to be armed with the solutions to the problems they face every day under the present system. Every class conscious worker understands the need and the great steps forward that would be taken when a daily workers' paper is printed. Let's take the next step in reaching the building fund target and establish a daily paper as a weapon against the bosses.
Yours fraternally
John Wildish
Secretary Harlow LPYS

Support from Austria

Dear Comrades,
Despite the attempt of the bourgeois press to ignore the struggle of the British workers to defend their jobs, we are watching the miners' strike very carefully.
Although the unemployment in Austria is not as high

as in other industrial nations (4.9%), the Austrian trade union federation has demanded the 35 hour week and also supported the strike of West German trade unions for the 35-hour week. The attacks against the British miners are not only attacks against the British working class, but also against the working class as a whole.

Raising the banner of socialism



The LPYS contingent on the recent Durham miners' gala. The LPYS has received great support when it marches on miners' demonstrations. Photo: D Pearson

Dear Comrades,
It appears that unity and solidarity only goes so far. At the recent miners' march and gala in Edinburgh, the LPYS were told to assemble in a side street to ensure the miners and other union branches came first in the march.
Once the LPYS were "rounded up", we were told by stewards that the march was "non-

political" and we could not display our banners. These stewards disclaimed responsibility for this decision, informing us that it was down to the Gala Day Committee (the majority of which were Communist Party members).
Not wishing to cause trouble, we turned to the march with our tale of woe. We were immediately told by local miners

and sympathetic stewards to "stop messing about and get the bloody thing up". The Musselburgh LPYS banner was unfurled to the delight of these and other marchers, soon to be followed by the LPYS branches.
No further attempt was made to remove us and the march and gala were enjoyed by all who attended and participated. Some people, however,

were still confused at the decision to apparently ban the LPYS from the march. Musselburgh LPYS are confused as to the whereabouts of our banner, which mysteriously disappeared in the latter part of the gala, and has not, as yet, been recovered.
Yours fraternally
Peter Gillan
Musselburgh LPYS

GCHQ ruling

Dear Comrades,
Alistair Graham, the right-wing General Secretary of the CPSA, should realise that just because the High Court has declared the union ban at GCHQ illegal, it doesn't mean that the judiciary is just and fair. It should be understood that the judge found in favour of the unions as a cosmetic attempt to pretend that the law is unbiased, due to the fear that the public will have lost confidence in the rule of law, after the recent numerous

legal attacks on unions in struggle.
Furthermore, it shows the disapproval that Thatcher and the Tory leadership are getting from the very class that they are representing—namely the ruling class of which the judges are part and parcel.
In the words of a Tory back-bencher, Thatcher is no longer slipping on banana skins, but falling over fully grown melons.
Yours fraternally
Dave Thompson
Southampton LPYS

Reselection

Dear Comrades,
The latest attack on the politically aware in the Labour Party demanding that we should now accept one member one vote, would mean in effect that the trade unions, Co-op party, Fabians and other affiliated bodies will be left without a vote on reselection.
The MPs who are calling for the new procedure never complained at the time of their selection, that the system was 'undemocratic'. They are demanding 'wider franchise' only now in order to prolong their careers, after they have been rejected by the rank and file of the Labour Party who want

socialist fighters at the front of the movement and not insipid, right-wing has-beens.
Yours fraternally
Alf Ackhurst
Hornchurch CLP

Collections

Dear Comrades,
We have seen over the recent month's the role of the right wing union leaders in dealing with the NGA, GCHQ and the miners' dispute. This reminded me of when Cowley car workers were on strike over washing up times.
I was pushing for financial support to be given from our workers. At the same time one of the senior managers was retiring from my factory. My convenor actually came round asking for money to buy him a send-off present, in preference to making a collection for the Cowley workers.
It is clear to me that we must transform our unions from top to bottom in order to secure organisations prepared to fight in the interests of the workers and not of the ruling class.
Yours fraternally
Charles Taylor
Freight Rover Worker
Small Heath, Birmingham



Weighell's of fortune

On 'Brain of Britain' 21 June, one contestant was asked who succeeded Sid Weighell as General Secretary of the NUR rail union last year. Back came the confident reply—Peter Taaffe.

Jenkin goes ape

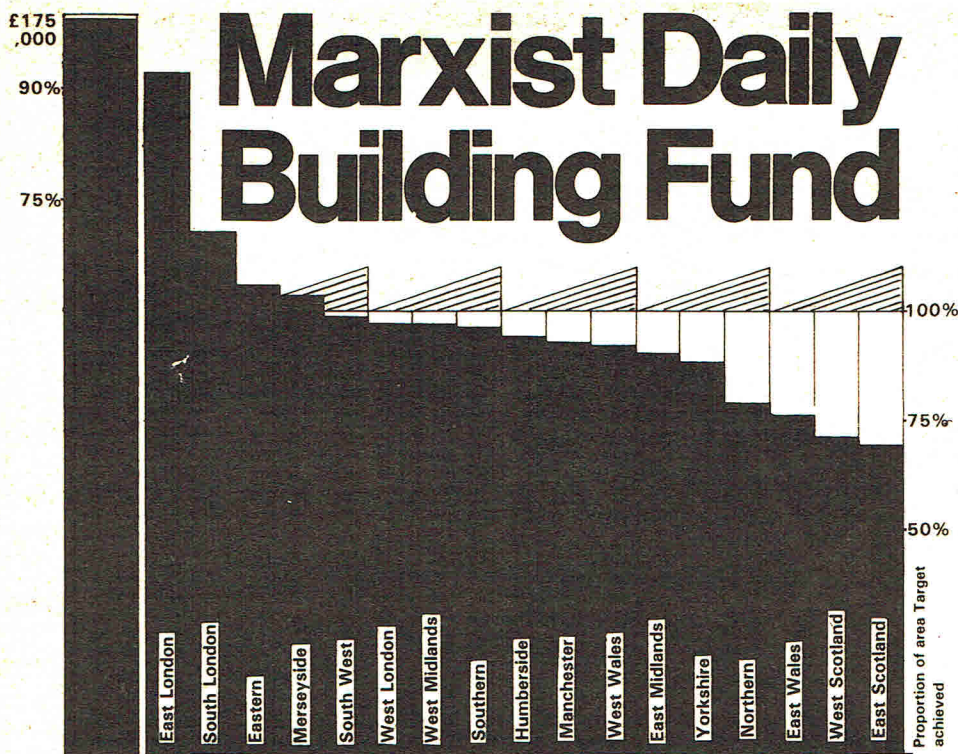
The Environment minister Mr Patrick Jenkin keeps telling Liverpool City Council that they didn't really have a victory and they would have got all that money anyway. He took a different tone in Parliament on July 18 however. In a debate on local authority spending, he told the Labour benches: "If anyone thinks they are going to get something by aping the antics of Liverpool in going to the brink of bankruptcy, they have got another thing coming." Like £60 million perhaps?

Streets of London

Homayoun Mazandi, an extremely wealthy friend of the Royal family and Tory MPs, is moving out of her mansion in Belgravia. She will be greatly missed by local taxi drivers. According to the *Daily Mail* (19 July), when she first moved to London, the chauffeur of her Rolls Royce did not know his way around town. So whenever Mrs Mazandi wanted to go anywhere, she'd hire a taxi which she duly followed in her chauffeur driven Roller. Obviously buying an A to Z for a pound was too much effort.

Good housekeeping

The Audit Commission, which investigates local government finances, claims that many councils are wasting money through overpaying for items. Its latest report says £200 million is 'squandered' through inefficient spending on items by councils. However, it also has praise for two councils who are among the most efficient at 'good housekeeping'—Liverpool City Council and the GLC.



THE MARXIST Daily Building Fund has now reached £173,941, only £1,059 short of our target of £175,000. If you have not yet sent your donation, or if you can now send something extra, then send it off to us immediately, and we should then be able to announce the fantastic achievement of £175,000 in next week's paper!

The half-yearly circulation figures of all the National Daily papers have just been published. The *Daily Express* has widened its gap over the *Daily Mail*, due to Sir Larry Lamb producing according to the *Sunday Times* "a harder-hitting, more news-orientated, more macho-minded paper." The *Mail* has been trying to entice its readers back by starting a new money game which offers £50,000 a day! We cannot offer the

readers of *Militant* massive prizes, but we can attract more and more workers to buy our paper, as we offer the truth about events as it is experienced by workers throughout the labour and trade union movement.

£1,059 needed

However, we appeal to all the areas that have not met their target yet to keep sen-

ding donations in, and match the achievements of those areas that have reached the 100% mark. We will give details in future issues of *Militant* on how the money is being spent, and on what we still need money for in order to build for a Marxist Daily.

This weeks contributions include: Kevin Myers, Ellesmere Port, £35; Frank Whewell, Liverpool, £80; M Harrison, a tech student from Gwent, £15; Ted Merry, Birkenhead, £50; Millbank College Labour Club, £5, and John Singh, Leicester, £10.

By Judy Beisham

SELLING Militant

OUR COVERAGE of the miner's strike and especially events in the Fitzwilliam/Hemsworth area so impressed one retired docker from Avonmouth that he rang up and ordered 20 papers for sale to his friends and neighbours.

The police action against the miners and their families in the Fitzwilliam/Hemsworth area (see page 3 and page 7) has not only provoked a mass and determined reaction from the local people but has boosted our paper sales no end. At the beginning of the strike we had no sales in the area but last weekend alone over 100 copies were sold.

Send reports

The new sales in this area are echoed throughout South Yorkshire mining villages where sales have doubled during the dispute. Sales at the demos in support of the miners have also been significant with 200 being sold in Birmingham and hundreds being sold in Manchester and Liverpool on their day of action, with South East Lancs sellers actually selling out of papers.

The Notts and Durham miners galas also netted good sales and many donations were gained in the new collecting tins, 60 papers were also sold at the Asian Youth Conference. Now that Thatcher has openly declared war on the "enemy within" we have to step up our operations on the streets and factory sales in a bid to counter Thatcher's fighting talk. Please send in reports



'The enemy without'. Paper seller at Durham Miners Gala.

of your successes so we can feature them in this column.

Newsagents/bookshops. A successful drive is underway to get the paper sold in bookshops and newsagents. Five new orders have been gained in the London area in the past 2 weeks and this example can be followed in other areas. Approach your local bookshop/newsagent and ask them to sell *Militant*. Offer them a discount if required. Many more people would read *Militant* if it was easily available—let's give them the opportunity!

Introductory letters are available from the Circulation Department. In the last week new orders have been gained from Deal, Bradford

and Kettering where 50 papers were ordered.

To quote James Cannon, the American workers' leader, "it is the task of socialists not to leave other workers on strike dependent on the capitalist press".

Become a seller

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By Dave Farrar

ADS

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MAIDSTONE LPYS Public Meeting: 'Support the Miners'. Speakers from NUM, TGWU (docks) and LPYS. Shepway Community Hut, Northumberland Ave., 8 pm, Friday 10th August.

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

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Talks on: Marxism and the trade unions, Central America, Ireland, Middle East and Marxism and the Labour Party.

Cost only £12.50 per person (including snacks). £2.50 per child (5-16 yrs) FREE UNDER 5's. Day trippers a minimum of £3 donation per day to the Fighting Fund. Venue—Horton, Gower, Near Swansea.

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We are offering a discount to organisations that advertise in both issues. The rates are as follows: Please tick box.

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Deadline for Labour Party Conference issue 17 September, 1984 and combined adverts. Deadline for 20th Anniversary adverts 8 October, 1984.

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This week

£1,991

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	52		2900
East Midlands	56		3550
Humberside	43		1850
London East	93		3200
London West	164		2150
London South East	47		1950
London South West	127		1650
Lancashire	33		1950
Manchester	36		2200
Merseyside	384		6100
Northern	85		4400
Scotland East	43		2950
Scotland West	190		3650
Southern	323		5100
South West	8		2150
Wales East	0		2550
Wales West	14		2050
West Midlands	133		4300
Yorkshire	141		5350
Others	20		5000
Total received	1991		65000

THE RECESSION imposed upon us by the harsh rigours of the Tory regime is taking its toll of the bosses too.

Quoted here are several examples taken from a leading national newspaper:—BSR chairman, Bill Wyllie, had an increase of 434% in his salary from 1981-83 while profits in the same period increased 955%; Eric Sharp at Cable and Wireless had a salary increase of 918% while profits rose by 152%; similarly Ralph Halpern chairman of Burtons, which had a profit increase of 165%, had his

wages increased by 97%!

And to quote from that same paper "for many a chairman or highly paid director his salary is simply the loose change in his pocket." (my emphasis) It's unfortunate that some of that "loose change" doesn't fall into the pockets of workers, especially considering the wage restraint forced upon us by the Tories. Is this the recession then, 7% wage increase for the nurses—918% increase for the bosses?

Rich experience

From the pennies to the fivers and tenners all donations received by us

guarantee a fightback—workers will continue to see the importance of parting with their cash to campaign against this ridiculous Tory regime. But while the Tories get richer in cash the workers get richer in experience as our growing finances bear testament—and that experience coupled with sacrificed cash will guarantee the battle for a socialist future—a future for all.

So send us a donation now. 'Official' Militant rattling tins are now available (see advert) for those who want to cash in on the easiest ever way to raise money.

By Kim Waddington

Seamen and dockers feature

Sealink sale threatens jobs

**All out
action
needed**

'SALE OF the century' was how Ken Siddle, head of European Ferries, described the purchase of Sealink by Sea Containers for just £66m.

European Ferries, owners of rival Townsend Thoresen were prepared to pay an estimated £80m-£100m for the nationalised company (so they could get a near monopoly!) Even that would have been a bargain.

Bargain price

Sealink have 58 vessels and own major harbours at Parkstone Quay Harwich, Folkstone, Newhaven, Fishguard, Holyhead, Heysham and Stranraer, plus six minor harbours and piers. Last year the harbours alone earned £6.2m, almost as much as the ferries which brought an operating profit of £6.2m.

Sea Containers an American-controlled, Bermuda based group, was founded in 1965 and is now the world's largest container leasing enterprise with current assets of more than £600m. The company owns and leases out about 250,000 marine cargo containers, 4,000 container shassies and a number of port cranes. But it only owns seven container

ships, all sailing under flags of convenience.

The company doesn't fall into a familiar category within the shipping industry; it is container-lesser, it owns container ships but is not a line operator. It is possible that net profits for 1984 could rise to \$34 million from \$24 million in 1983. 75% of Sea Container shares are held in the US and the rest are scattered around the world's financial centres.

There can be little doubt upon which part of Sealink's business Sea Containers will concentrate—freight. Last year, whilst Sealink and European Ferries carried virtually the same percentage of cross-Channel passengers, 34%-35% respectively, European Ferries took 50% of freight, a full 13% more than Sealink.

Chasing freight

Freight is where the profits are made. In Belgium where similar privatisation is on the cards the purchasing company doesn't even want the passenger ferries at all, only the freight. Within hours of acquiring Sealink, James Sherwood, chairman of Sea Containers, announced the 'problem child' the Channel Island route would be cut. (see article on this page).

Sea Containers is refusing to give any firm guarantees

of no redundancies: "We have to make sure that our overall manning costs are competitive" said Mr Sherwood. James Sherwood was described by Lloyd's List as "one of the most dynamic and ingenious minds in the shipping industry, quick to react to changing market conditions". In other words if there is not enough profit to be made from Sealink under the British flag he won't hesitate to switch to a flag of convenience and routes and services will also be slashed.

Flags of convenience

Sealink have not been bought to provide public service to safeguard jobs; these gangsters are only interested in profits. Given the world crisis in the shipping industry profits can only be made by enormous job losses and driving down pay and conditions. If there was an integrated transport policy, with the major firms under democratic public ownership, routes could be planned to serve the community and jobs and services maintained and improved.

But in the 'dog eat dog' world of private enterprise, everybody suffers. Sealink can only be made more profitable by cutting jobs and passenger routes. Its expansion (into freight) will be to



Photo: M. Pinder

Sealink workers at Weymouth (above) will be first in the firing-line from the new owners.

the detriment and expense of workers in Townsend Thoresen, P&O and other ferry companies.

Last week both the seaman's union, NUS, and the NUR rail union executives condemned the sale of Sealink to Sea Containers "at a fraction of its real value." They resolved "that any threat to existing jobs, services and agreements will be met with resolute and determined industrial action, with members in all Sealink ports providing mutual support".

Joint action

It is now vital that that commitment is build upon and preparations made for an all-out seamen's strike. Sea Containers can afford to bide their time, allow the mood of militancy and anger

to subside and then axe the more vulnerable ports later next year.

Take initiative

Seamen and dockers potentially have as much, if not more, power than the miners. During the dock strike, the Port of London Authority alone was losing £250,000 a week in cargo revenue. Within days of the dockers' strike the government were talking of declaring a state of emergency. If the NUS delegation, which is to meet the new employers, is not given written guarantees on jobs, services and agreements then the NUS, supported by the NUR, should call an all-out strike.

By Julie Harris
(Poole CLP)

Dockers prepare for next battle

THE TORIES were scared by our power. That is why whilst Thatcher blustered about sending in troops, Transport Minister Ridley rushed round promising that there were no plans to amend the Docks Labour Scheme.

Even many dockers were surprised by the power we displayed. There was a real mood of confidence on the picket line. All registered, and most of the unregistered, docks were out. In these circumstances the strike missed a golden opportunity to win a better deal for all dock workers.

We should have insisted that the government gave us cast-iron guarantees that the Scheme would not be tampered with.

It was a great achievement to get the unregistered docks out, but they started drifting back because they didn't see the dispute as developing into anything directly to do with them.

Union policy is for all docks to become part of the registered Scheme. Last Monday, Hull dockers called for that to be part of our demands during the strike.

It is important that we now go on the offensive and pick our time to go for the extension the scheme. In Hull we have already begun looking at the jobs current-



Dockers showed their power, as 80% of the country's trade comes through the ports.

Photo: Militant

ly done in the industry. Some of the jobs should be dockers' jobs, but 'ghosting' is happening, with non-dockers using equipment, because dockers have not been trained to use it.

New confidence

We are now determined that dockers are properly trained, so that outside contractors are not used. It will be a long struggle to get Local Docks Labour Boards to agree, but the response to the strike has given us all a new measure of confidence.

Nationally we need to build up the National Ports' Shop Stewards' Committee, an unofficial body, but one that links delegates from

most of the major ports—Liverpool, London, Felixstowe, Hull, Southampton, Bristol and many ports in Scotland and Wales. We must campaign for the extension of the scheme to all ports and to all dock workers.

In this it is important that the Docks Delegate Conference changes from being an advisory to a decision making conference.

The strike showed an amazing display of strength and solidarity. We must now build upon our new-found confidence and win improvements in jobs and conditions for all dock workers.

By Paul Spooner
(Hull TGWU, Docks)

Channel Islands

SEA CONTAINERS have made clear their plans to devastate the Channel Islands' routes taken over from Sealink. Apparently they are "a problem child", and the solution is drastic discipline. No passenger ferries will run out of Portsmouth and only daytime passenger sailings will now take place from Weymouth.

The implications are a loss in jobs, trippage, tonnage and services. Whereas a two-crew passenger-freight ship needs 104 ratings, a freight-only ship can operate with only nine men, 4 ABs and 5 stewards.

Cuts proposed

The cancellation of night-time services will further cut jobs, and affect many holidaymakers, who find the eight-hour crossing best done at night. But the new owners don't care. These tax-dodging pirates from Bermuda feel under no social obligations to the Channel Islands—their only social obligation is to their shareholders.

Portsmouth, Weymouth and the Channel Islands will be hit

hard by the new owners. Sea Containers are interested in the profitable Dover and Irish routes, not the Channel Islands, Isle of Wight or Newhaven routes.

Mobilise union

We must now ensure that all the resources of our union are mobilised to defend jobs and services. Our union's annual conference promised the full backing of the union in the battle to defend Sealink workers. And our general secretary Jim Slater said after the announcement of Sealink's sale: "We hereby serve warning on Sea Containers that any move to cut manning, axe routes, or tear up union agreements will be met by the full industrial force of the NUS."

Brian Pagan
(Chair, Weymouth and
Portsmouth Ports
Committee)
spoke to Julie Harris

Sealink ships will now fly the Bermudan flag of convenience which will mean a major threat to the 3,000 NUS jobs on Sealink. Bitter experience has taught us that ships flying flags of convenience very rapidly ignore long-standing agreements and reduce manning levels.

The companies who operate under the flag of convenience avoid Board of Trade regulations and employ primarily 'slave' labour from the third world. Flags of convenience are in reality a "convenient" way of amassing profits for the ship owners at NUS expense.

Thatcher has certainly looked after her friends. Sealink was estimated to be worth around £200 million yet Sea Containers pay just £66m of that sum and it must be an even bigger public swindle than the De Lorean rip-off.

Escalate dispute

For example, just one of Sealink's 58 ships, the St. David, cost £15m. If we are to preserve jobs then the time has come to stand up be counted!

The membership in West Wales would, I believe, be prepared to support all-out action to save our jobs and the Swansea branch is 100% behind any escalation of the dispute which the EC will decide upon in the future.

The British Merchant Navy fleet is being destroyed by the Tories far more effectively than a dozen Falklands campaigns could ever have achieved.

When Labour is returned to office, irrespective of the outcome of this dispute, we must rationalise all the vessels which the Tories have privatised.

Labour must ensure that the merchant navy receives the investment required which will ensure it serves the interests of working people instead of lining the pockets of Thatcher's parasites.

By Joe Barlow
(NUS full-time official
for West Wales,
personal capacity)

JOURNAL OF THE
Unity BLOC
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE
For a fighting socialist Trade Union leadership
Donations welcome
Support the miners
The BLOC has now launched its own journal *Unity*. It hopes that *Unity* at first will appear quarterly and provide news and comments on what's happening in the Trade Union movement and what Broad Left supporters in the various unions are doing. To sustain its vital activities and to publish the journal it needs money. We ask every trade unionist to either take out an individual subscription (£5 per annum) or get your organisation (£10 per annum) to subscribe. Send off to G. Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Barking Hospital privatisation

SINCE 19 MARCH, 92 domestic workers at Barking Hospital have been organising 24-hour, 7 days a week picket lines in their fight to maintain jobs and conditions.

Hospital cleaning at Barking is contracted out to a private company, Crothalls Ltd, who this year are attempting to cut clearing hours by 876 each week at this one hospital.

Cleanliness

This means women who in the past earned £67 a week, full time (including weekend work) are being offered two days' work a week for £17, as well as cuts in holiday and sick pay entitlement. Wards

usually cleaned by two will be covered by one domestic — apart from the loss of livelihood to the cleaners.

It is the thin edge of the wedge as far as hygiene standards are concerned. Since cleaning has been done by scabs; there have been three reports by the Community Health Council condemning the kitchens at Barking Hospital.

Lynne Hawley, one of the strikers, told Newham NE Labour Party that they recognised this was a test case against privatisation throughout the Health Service, and that in spite of intimidation and harassment by police, and scabs waving pay packets with double and triple their regular wages,

their determination is still solid. The strikers had the last laugh though—one week when they heard the scabs' wages had been stolen!

Support

Support the Barking Hospital workers. Picketing is 24-hours a day but help is especially appreciated early morning at 7 am and Sundays in particular. Messages of support and donations to Barking Hospital Strike HQ, AUEW House, 588 Rainham Road South, Dagenham, Essex.

By Jen Pickard
(Newham NE LP
Women's Section)

Fourth week out in Birmingham



Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Asian workers at Handsworth, Birmingham rag trade factory have joined the TGWU and are fighting for their rights.

NALGO resists Labour cuts

NALGO MEMBERS are on strike against the Labour controlled Hartlepool Borough Council.

The dispute arose from amalgamation of the architects and planning departments into a single technical services department. Prior to the reorganisation NALGO reps were assured that the council would honour its no redundancy agreement.

As a result of the reorganisation one NALGO

member, Arun Sathe, was left without a job. He was given no work to do by the council then offered a temporary job, and has been subjected to harassment in order to pressurise him into accepting "voluntary" redundancy. Arun refused to be made redundant and NALGO attempted to take his case through procedure calling on the council to honour the no redundancy agreement.

Due to the council's refusal to negotiate, NALGO held a one day strike of all its members on Friday 6 July. The technical services department are out on indefinite strike. Labour Group leader Hanson has stated that the Council must be flexible regarding its no redundancy agreement. That means he would like to scrap it.

NALGO need the backing of other council unions,

days and both were successful.

Jobs and service

Things came to a head on Thursday when a particularly arrogant supervisor was on duty (we call him feührer) and tried to move someone to another job. Management have also lapsed jobs in an

GCHQ—Fight for union rights continues



GCHQ trade unions celebrate Thatcher's court reversal. The Tories now have to decide whether to obey "The rule of law".
Photo: John Harris (IFL)

USDAW general secretary to quit — Left prepares

THE ANNOUNCEMENT by Bill Whatley, USDAW General Secretary, of his early retirement at the end of next year, adds to the ever-growing list of general secretaries of trade unions leaving prematurely.

Left candidate

The USDAW Executive Council has decided to commence the election procedure for the successor earlier than expected—in January 1985. This decision will no doubt be met with excitement and determination by USDAW activists and supporters of the Broad left as a golden opportunity to elect a Broad Left general secretary in this traditionally right wing union.

The USDAW Broad Left candidate is Bill Connor, a national officer of the union, who represents many

workers in big retail multiples in national negotiations. Bill is widely known throughout the union as a Marxist and a fighter, often in very difficult circumstances given the 'moderate' outlook of the union's leadership.

The nomination period will be next January and February with the election period itself during March and April. The USDAW Broad Left is calling on all USDAW members to attend their USDAW branch meetings and vote for Bill Connor—but to also come forward and campaign for him.

By Mick Wainwright
(North Western
Divisional Councillor,
personal capacity)

Tory Wandsworth

WANDSWORTH TORY council, notorious for its fetish for privatisation, has put out a tender for private contractors to run the borough's toilets.

Yet the staff are already amongst the lowest paid on the borough's pay roll and have already had their hours of work cut back. The only way a private firm would take on the contract would be to reduce working conditions further.

Despite the staff's

isolation they have organised a campaign through their stewards, culminating in a lobby of Wandsworth Town Hall. Staff have been distributing leaflets to people using the toilets, asking them to send their comments to the council. So far 3,000 have been received and this is expected to rise to 10,000 in early September when the council make a decision on the tender.

By Bob Mckee

No post in Leicester

LEICESTER POSTAL workers are on strike. Frustration and anger has been developing for some time. Leicester is due to become a mechanised letter office and there has been a lot of building work going on. Conditions at work have been terrible. The management have refused to pay any disturbance money.

There has also been a concerted attempt by postal headquarters to put the screws on. We feel that the second delivery is under threat. We have had massive cancellations of the second delivery in Leicester. Nationally there has been a spate of strikes to defend jobs. Coventry and Sheffield have been out for about ten

attempt to get us to do more than one job, so the strike is about the defence of jobs and the second delivery, which is a service to the public.

The nightshift walked out and the parcels on their own shift refused to do our work. A meeting was held in the canteen and 99% supported the strike so we are out until the management meet our demands. Coventry and Sheffield won so we are confident we will.

By a Leicester postal worker

BLOC

BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

LOBBY THE TUC

Monday September 3rd 1984
8.30 am onwards at Conference
Centre Brighton

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- Defend unions against Tory anti-union laws.
- For a fighting, democratic, socialist leadership in the trade unions.

Coaches to BLOC lobby of TUC from South East London. Cost £3. Book from Steve Mackenzie—01 310 4082.

Militant

Right wing threaten Labour unity—Page 7

"One member, one vote?"—Page 7

Victory for the Young Socialists

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists won a major victory at the Labour Party National Executive meeting on 25 July, when plans by the right wing to attack the LPYS were defeated.

In their first attack, Labour's right wing wanted to suspend Blackburn LPYS for three months and re-establish it "on a proper basis of financial accountability to the Constituency Labour Party" because the LPYS donated money to the *Militant* fighting fund, and the Marxist Daily Building Fund, and took out a £6 advert of greetings to the Labour Party conference in *Militant*.

"Crime" to back Militant!

This recommendation was not endorsed, but referred back to the Appeals Committee. The NEC was also asked to instruct all regional organisers to report "on the financial arrangements of three LPYS branches in their region chosen at random". The right wing wanted to investigate YS finances and stop donations to *Militant*!

This was also not endorsed; it was referred instead to the Youth Committee. Reference back of these proposals was moved by LPYS representative Steve Morgan and seconded by Joan Maynard. The vote was 14 to 12. Both Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley voted against the LPYS.

In the middle of the miners strike, with Labour four points ahead in the opinion polls, workers are looking to the Labour Party for a fighting alternative to Thatcher. They want action to ditch this punch-drunk government.

Neil Kinnock and his right wing advisors were preparing

By John Hird
(National Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists)

to shoot Labour in the foot by starting to witch-hunt its own young members who have been in the front line in support for the miners and campaigning against the Tories.

DH/NS

The defeat for the right's plans was due to pressure from the YS. Hundreds of tele-messages are reported to have arrived at party headquarters in Walworth Road and the telephone lines were blocked following a short report on the right wing's intentions in Tuesday's *Guardian*. 100 angry Young Socialists arrived at Walworth Road with banners to lobby the NEC members. LPYS national committee members signed a statement and were preparing a mass lobby of the next



Part of the 100-strong LPYS lobby outside Labour's NEC meeting on 25 July protesting at attacks on the LPYS.

NEC. This undoubtedly swayed the minds of NEC members. This undoubtedly swayed the minds of NEC members. This undoubtedly swayed the minds of NEC members. 25 July, 1984.

Jumping the gun!

TO: REGIONAL ORGANISERS

Dear Colleague,

The National Executive Committee at its meeting today gave consideration to the Report of the Enquiry into the finances of the Blackburn Branch of the LPYS and in particular the extent of its financial support of the *Militant* tendency during 1983.

I have to inform you that it was resolved as follows:

"That the Branch be disbanded for a period of three months and re-established on a proper basis of financial accountability to the Constituency Party."

I enclose a copy of the report submitted to the NEC on the Blackburn Branch and it should be used as the basis for your Report on three Branches in your Region.

Yours sincerely,

David Hughes
National Agent.

SHOWING UTTER contempt for the democratic structure of the Labour Party, the full-time officials at Walworth Road had already written the above memo, before the NEC had even discussed the issue.

Advance planning is not to be condemned, but are they so quick off the mark to instruct regional organisers to campaign for conference policies? It demonstrates the need for constant vigilance by Labour's ranks to ensure that their officials serve the members and not vice-versa.

etc., to deluge Labour Party headquarters with resolutions. The Labour Party would gain nothing from another witch hunt. Instead the LPYS should be given more resources to win young people to Labour's banner and to campaign to get rid of this Tory government.

Militant Rally 20 October

Tony Benn has agreed to speak at the Wembley rally to celebrate 20 years of *Militant*.

Show your support

MANY OF our supporters will be angry at the scandalous, undemocratic attacks Labour's right wing tried to make *Militant's* finances and the LPYS.

These organisational manoeuvres will never work—how dare the right wing of the Labour Party decide who can and who cannot donate to our funds!

The Labour Party should follow our examples, not undemocratically deny supporters within the movement

the right to donate, LPYS branches have been donated to us for more than 20 years! Enthusiasm, confidence and a bold, socialist programme is what wins supporters and therefore secures our finances.

To all our supporters, including those in the LPYS, we urge you to continue to support us financially. Show your support for *Militant*. All YS's, all supporters—send us your cash!

By Kim Waddington



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