

Rail solidarity action bites

Coal movement slashed

MILITANT can reveal exclusively that coal stocks moved by rail to power stations have slumped dramatically—from a normal level of nearly two million tonnes a week to 100,000 by mid July and only 10,000 tonnes by early August.

By Ian Isaac

(South Wales NUM executive, personal capacity)

and *Militant* reporters

Rail deliveries of coal have stopped entirely in almost every region of the country, except the London-Midland area which covers Nottingham.

But in this area, movements have fallen by 90% from an average of about 100,000 tonnes a week in mid-July to just over 10,000 tonnes a week at present.

This cut is due only in part to holidays: it mainly reflects growing solidarity action for the miners among railway workers.

Government lies

Despite all the government propaganda against the miners and their lies about coal stocks, these figures show irrefutably the tiny scale of coal movements, particularly compared to the normal movement of around 2 million tonnes a week.

The disastrous figures also explain the current panic among the bosses of the British Rail Board, urging their workers not to become involved in any fresh industrial action over their own jobs.

On the basis of such low coal movements, even government figures would suggest power stations will face a crisis earlier than anticipated—probably around the second week in September, just at the time when NUR and ASLEF members are planning their own industrial action. (See also in-depth analysis of coal stocks on page 5).

Continued on back page

Death in Belfast

THE ROYAL Ulster Constabulary's rampage into a peaceful rally in Belfast on Sunday must be condemned by the labour movement.

The vicious attack by the RUC—where they fired off plastic bullets at point blank range and indiscriminately batoned defenceless men, women and children—left one man, Sean Downes, dead and many others badly injured.

Sean Downes is the fourteenth person killed by the use of rubber and plastic bullets in Northern Ireland since 1972. Six of the dead were children.

Among those injured by plastic bullets on Sunday was a Belfast *Militant* supporter who had been observing the Sinn Fein rally. Ironically he is a cousin of Brian Stewart, a 13 year old killed by a plastic bullet in 1976.

This attack is a class issue. *Militant* is opposed to Sinn Fein and has consistently opposed the individual terrorism pursued by the paramilitary groupings in Northern Ireland. But this brutal action, like Bloody Sunday in 1972, must be unreservedly condemned.

It is a further warning to the labour movement. If the police are allowed to murder with impunity in Northern Ireland then the same methods—plastic bullets and all—will be used against workers in Britain.

Eye witness report—and how the labour movement should react—page 7.

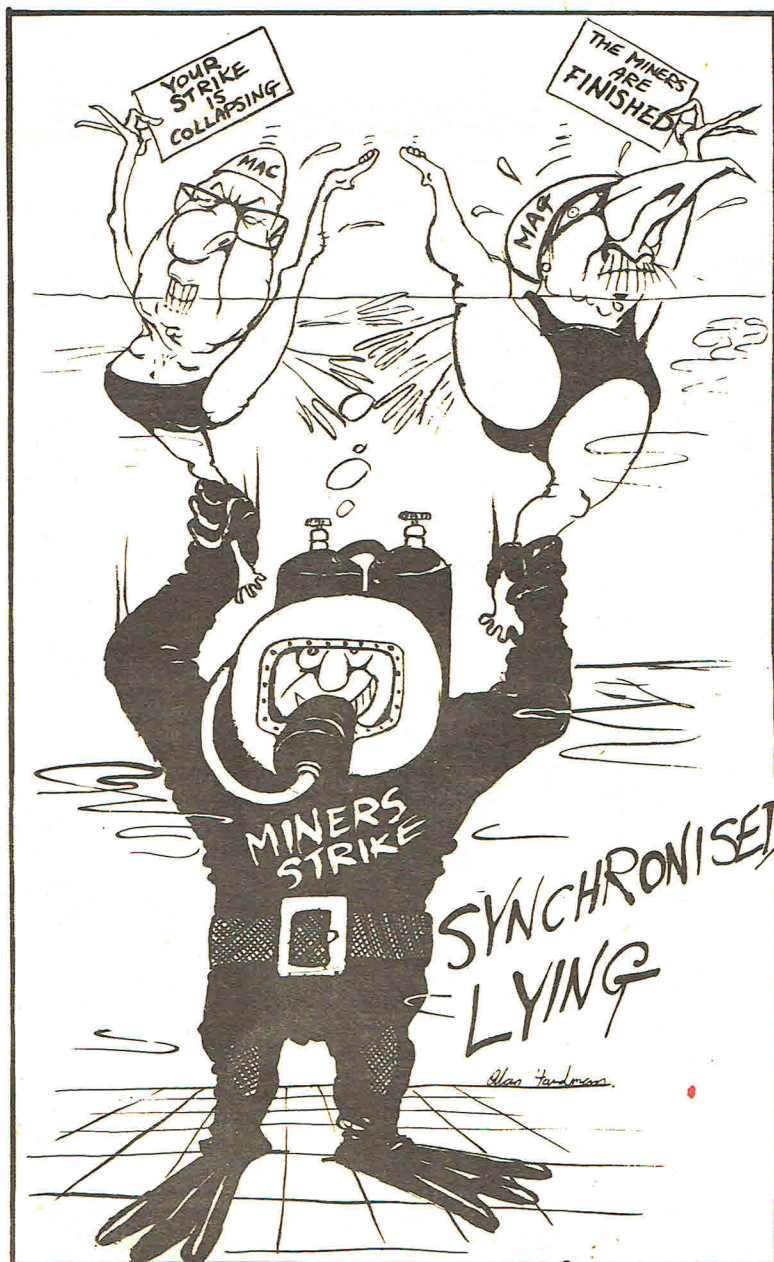


Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

Police with plastic bullets at the Belfast rally

For a 24 hour general strike

Militant

Tory class war— meet fire with fire

THE TORY Cabinet does not just want to defeat the miners' strike, they want to grind the union down as an example to other workers who might wish to defend their living standards and jobs.

The frenzy of Thatcher and MacGregor is reflected in *The Times*, once the most sober mouthpiece of the British ruling class. "There is a war on", its editorial ranted on 20 July. "Most private estimates suggest that in addition to Mr Scargill's few thousand shock troops, there might be at least 50,000 more members of the NUM whose militancy will be difficult to overcome while on strike... Mr Scargill will survive any settlement and will hope to preserve his shock troops, duly radicalised, to fight another day."

The Times' conclusion was that "... this strike must only end in circumstances where such a recurrence is recognised to be wholly unrealistic."

A week later the same newspaper called for the NCB offer to be unilaterally withdrawn and replaced by a programme of pit closures, repeating the point that a condition of settlement must be an assurance that the strike "cannot and will not be repeated". Then, last week, it declared once again that any settlement must be "punitive".

There could be no clearer proof than these statements that the Tories and the ruling class see the strike from the desperate point of view of their own class interests. They understand that this strike has a deep significance for all workers, faced with the inexorable drive of the government to cut living standards.

The British ruling class no longer have any coherent or long term economic strategy except to salvage profit from the living standards of workers. Profit is the unpaid labour of the working class.

Given the irreversible decline and crisis of British capitalism, the ruling class can have no other policy but cutting living standards to the bone, even if that means attacking all the standards established in the last thirty-five years, the curtailment of civil liberties and the elimination of democratic trade union freedoms.

A small taste of what would follow a miners' defeat is contained in last week's Institute of Directors' document urging that all strikes should be illegal, with all workers subject to compulsory arbitration. These bosses would willingly agree to the introduction of Latin American-style regulations on union rights in Britain.

Twenty-four weeks into the strike there must be no let-up whatsoever in the support given to the miners by the labour and trade union movement. Like *The Times*, but from the opposite class standpoint, most trade union members see the significance of the miners' strike as a class struggle. Its importance extends well beyond the coalfields themselves.

It is all the more disgraceful, therefore, that Labour leader Neil Kinnock should try to throw a wet blanket on the miners' attempts to get solidarity action from the forthcoming TUC Congress. Referring in an interview to the proposals for a 24-hour general strike he retorted that "neither the union leadership nor the members would go for it".

"That is not the way British trade unionism works", he said, "it would be importing ideas from the United States or the Continent which British trade unionism has never been prepared to accept". An almost identical statement was made by Victor Feather, TUC General Secretary, just before the jailing of the dockers and the TUC call for a 24-hour general strike in 1972.

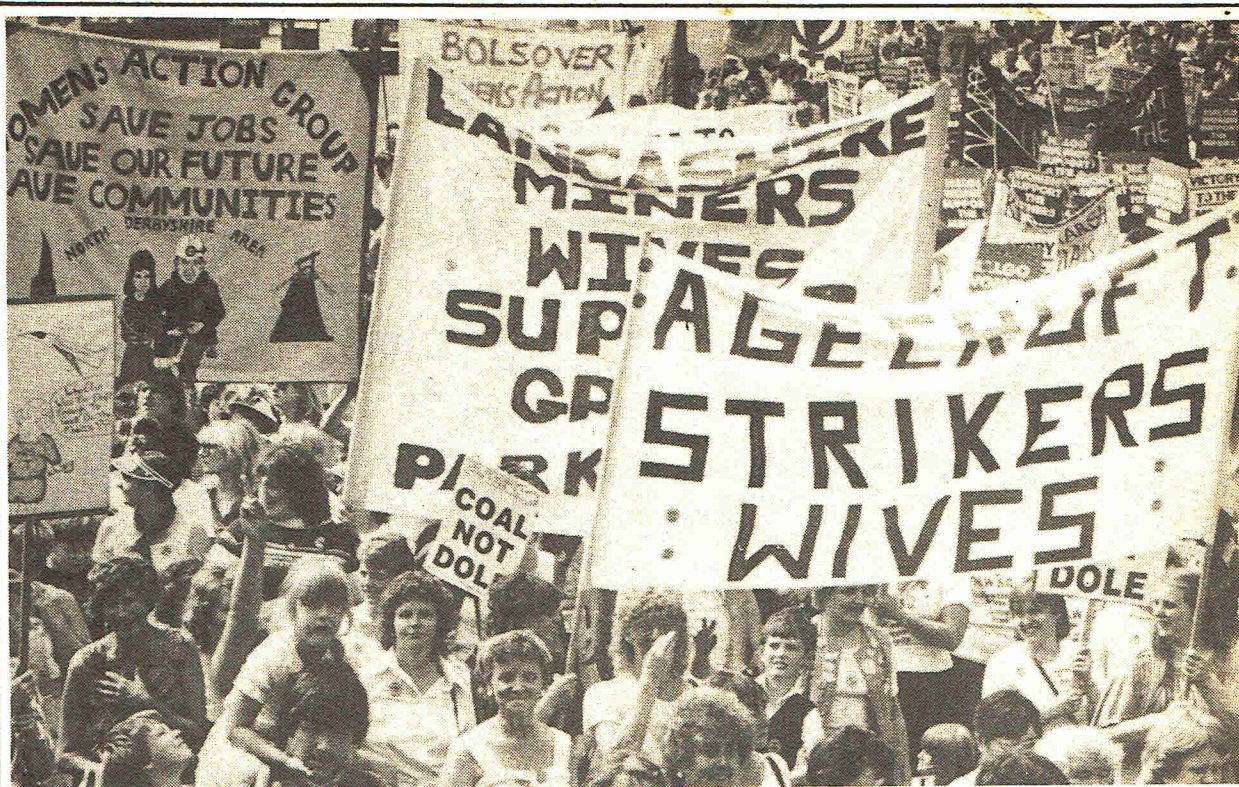
But leaving aside Kinnock's ignorance of international and British labour history, it would have been better to say nothing than put a spoke in the miners' wheel just as they were trying to gather support before the TUC. The miners have fought long and hard; they deserve better than this from Labour's leadership.

The only possible response the unions can make to the Tories' attacks on the miners and their use of class laws to stifle trade unionism is the mobilisation of industrial power. A 24-hour general strike would give the chance for an unprecedented show of opposition to Toryism and could begin a movement that would catapult the Tories out of office, and return a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Coming, as it would, at the very time the weather gets colder and coal stocks run out, a massive show of solidarity by the labour movement would be the best guarantee of a victory for the miners—and all workers. The Tories understand what is at stake. The rank and file must make sure that the leaders of the labour movement do also, and that they act accordingly.

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Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Militant; printed by Cambridge Heath Press (TU) Ltd., 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. ISSN 0144-9275



A woman's place — on the march!

MINERS WIVES, daughters and sisters staged a magnificent display of solidarity, when 20,000 marched through the streets of London on Saturday 11 August, in a good natured demo. Despite the wishes of the organisers the demonstration was very definitely political. The march was determined. The Iron Lady had met her match, thousands of iron ladies who will not rest until she is defeated. The support of the women in the mining communities will not end with providing food, important though that is. They understand it is a political struggle and are playing their part in campaigning for support for the strike.

The children chanted slogans on our coach 'Maggie out' and 'MacGregor out' and they sang the Red Flag — they know who is fighting for their future. We are supporting the "Dirty Thirty", thirty miners in Leicestershire who are out on strike and ostracised from the rest of their community. Over 200 *Militant Miner* pamphlets were sold. With the demonstration over, there is a need to link up the miners' wives support groups into a National Federation where strong areas can help the weak. National links need to be made now, other battles will be fought even after this strike is over. The women in mining areas will continue to play their part in the coming battles of the working class. (HEATHER RAWLING REPORTS)

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

Betws 'damage' — management lies

MANAGEMENT AT the Betws "super pit" in the Amman Valley, South Wales, are claiming that structural damage has been caused by the miners' strike. The men who work at the colliery are angered at the biased media coverage based on management lies.

Lodge Chairman Dilwyn Davies and Vice Chairman Tom Phillips spoke to Muriel Browning from Llanelli CLP, and Pam Woods, Gwauncaegurwen Labour party (both personal capacity).

Tom stated: "This is obviously a ploy to frighten the men back to work. We have made periodic face checks throughout the dispute and recorded the measurements each time. The tenth check has been made today.

"On one occasion, we agreed with management that emergency work needed to be done, and this was carried out. The roof has come down 2 inches in 22 weeks on the South side of the pit.

"We had told manage-

ment that this place was not safe to work in prior to the dispute. Two weeks before the strike men refused, despite managements' insistence, to work this part of the pit. As a result of this refusal management sent home the entire workforce, including the haulage and safety men.

Management change story

"Now the story has changed. Before the strike management claimed the face was workable, now they say it is unsafe.

"One haulage plane on the West side should be 5 foot 9 inches. This is the minimum allowed by law. I

work there myself, I am a big man and I have to work on my belly. As long as coal is being produced conditions don't enter into it as far as management are concerned.

"Once, there was not enough air flow in one of the roadways to disperse the gas (there have always been gas problems in Betws) to allow the men to breathe. Management in their wisdom installed a fan, which then meant that men worked in gale force conditions—it was freezing cold and the men had to wear masks and goggles because of the dust.

"Photographs shown in the press have been taken from angles to give a distorted view, and are of faces already worked which are supposed to be allowed to collapse anyway. I saw the original of one photograph which was later printed in a local paper and saw that they had cut off the bottom of the photograph to give a false

impression."

At this point Dilwyn returned from an inspection of the pit. He agreed with all the points that Tom had made and went on to add that the union had been refused permission to take their own cameras down to take a true record of the conditions: "As far as the men in Betws are concerned", he said, "we will not allow these conditions to prevail, we will not go back to work in the same conditions as before.

Danger

"Betws is portrayed as one of the showpieces of the British coal fields (the management office looks nothing like the "S2"!), but visitors are never taken into those areas of the pit where the men are suffering hardship and danger to their health. The men in Betws say enough is enough."

Unity vital to save St Johns

THE PRESS have tried to label the action at St John's colliery in South Wales over the supervisors in the overmen's union NACODS as "intimidation". The facts show what nonsense this is.

NUM members have lobbied NACODS members for months now. The supervisors were refusing to recognise picket lines of two or three people. They wanted a larger picket line because if they got stopped by pickets they could get paid even though they couldn't go in to work.

The lodge wanted them to come out actively on strike particularly as this pit is one of the six in South Wales down for closure.

95% of NACODS members at St Johns voted to strike when they held a ballot and the majority want to come out but the union official there is holding them back. They have a meeting every morning before work and go in as a convoy. On Monday (13 August) there was a lobby including the women's support group to try and shame them out on strike.

Shamefaced

The overmen went in, even if they were shamefaced, but NUM members spontaneously organised to get up there in the afternoon, again including women. We barricaded the road with trees, chains, telegraph poles and so on, but it was entirely peaceful. There were about 150 from the union, then about 300 police turned up.

The NACODS members refused then to come out even under a police escort as long as there was a lobby there, their official repeating just what the management said, they wanted to come out "with dignity".

They then said they had decided to have a "stay-in". In reality they were too ashamed to come out.

The lobby was on all night, and the press have been up here. The NUM were determined they'll be seen openly to come out. We want NACODS to make an open stand with our fight.

We made our point peacefully despite the press bleating about intimidation. The police numbers went down from about 300 to about a dozen so even they couldn't label this as violent. We produced a leaflet to appeal to NACODS men too.

At 5.45 on Tuesday even-

ing the president of the NACODS area spoke to lodge committee members and told us they would leave the pit peacefully and that only nine NACODS members would now turn up as previously agreed. They would then negotiate with the Coal Board and local NUM lodge.

Stand together

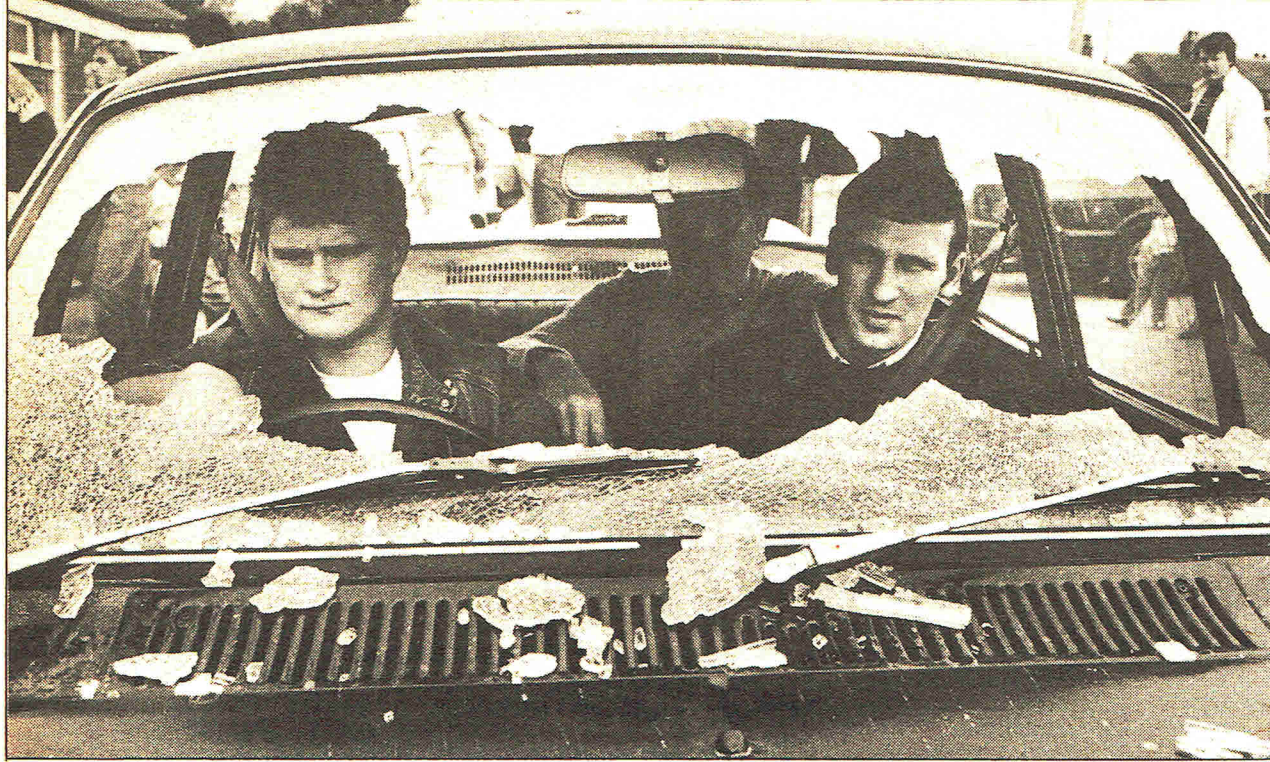
We see this as a victory by the miners and the support group and we've told NACODS as long as only nine men work there will be no more lobbies. Our wish is to stand shoulder to shoulder with them against pit closures.

By Phillip White
(Compensation Secretary,
St Johns NUM)

Miners' dispute

Riot police smash pickets' cars

Photo: John Harris (IFL)



Miner Geoff Northcliffe at the wheel of his wrecked car with passengers Malcolm Wood (front) and Geoff Wilkie (back).

A DOZEN miners had their car windcreens smashed and 26 pickets were arrested in a police ambush in Nottinghamshire on Monday 13 August 1984.

The Yorkshire miners had been turned back at 3.30 am by a road block at the village of Cuckney, and were deciding what to do when riot police charged them. One of the car drivers Geoff Northcliffe, told *Militant* what happened:

"We are making our way to Warsop colliery in a con-

voy of about 30 cars and had been stopped at the road block. It was the usual thing, they took our names and addresses and told us to go back. We drove a little way back and then there were cars stopping, turning around, as we all discussed what to do next, planning to go to Cresswell colliery.

"Then about five police vans drove up opposite the road block, and police in riot gear jumped out and formed up, about four or five deep. We were blocked off at both ends. They began walking up, tapping their

shields with their truncheons like Zulus. Then they started running up at us screaming abuse.

Cut by glass

"They started denting the cars and smashing windows. I heard a crash and my side window went, and then the back window. I saw a policeman hit another window once and then again until it broke. My mate Geoff Wilkie, who was in the back, was cut by flying glass.

"I could see another

Escort get its side panelling kicked in, and then they dragged the driver out, threw him to the floor and handcuffed him. I sat in the car, covered with glass, waiting for my turn. I was scared to death. Eventually I went to get out but a policeman shouted: "Get back in that f...ing car. If you move you'll be arrested."

"I have never seen anything like this. We've been stopped at roadblocks many times, but there's been nothing like this. The police just went wild."

Lone scab blocked in South Wales

THE MEDIA discovered a new 'hero' last week—Monty Morgan of Garw pit, South Wales, who decided to try and break the miners' solidarity—the only man in the coalfield to attempt it! He has now publicly abandoned his efforts.

When he tried to go back to work on Thursday 9 August, an immediate mobilisation of miners from the Garw and other pits, brought 300 pickets including wives and children, blockading the pit at the head of the valley by 2 pm. They were not going to let anyone out of work. The police immediately commandeered 200-300 policemen from all over South Wales.

He was stopped from coming out until 5 pm and one of the reasons for this was that the bus driver was an ex-miner and a strong trade unionist. He refused to cross the picket line and drive him out of work.

After a couple of hours and much fighting and arrests, they managed to finally clear the way.

Commandeered

The police commandeered the bus without the permission of the bus firm or the driver, and drove it back, guarding Monty Morgan on all sides. By the time he got to his house in Bettws, near Bridgend, over 200 people had gathered including families and children from that estate.

The police immediately stopped the bus. With police cars on either side and vans driving up behind they rushed him in, pushing people to the ground in the process, including women and children.

All the families and pickets gathered outside the house chanting slogans and songs. The whole of the Bettws estate mobilised.

Many of the people on the picket lines and outside the house felt extremely bitter, because Morgan had been included on picket duty up until the Sunday before he went back to work. He'd been given a food parcel every week for the last 10 weeks, and also been given £200 to help him with financial problems. He'll not be forgotten.

Lodge committee men appealed to him not to go back to work. He said that he would attempt to go back to work on Friday and it was agreed that a picket line would be set up at the pit and near his house.

The police then threatened to invoke a law passed in 1837 which would have imposed a curfew on the whole of the area. Nobody would have been allowed out of their houses, or within a mile of the estate if they lived outside it.

On Friday the police had sealed off the main road into the valley but the bus driver again wouldn't cross the picket line and Morgan was driven back home.

The NCB and the police were embarrassed by the effort and pressure over one man. The police were stretched—whilst they were up in that area more successful picketing was carried out on the convoy down in Margam. It has only rallied the whole community and Morgan's attempts have failed.

By Ken Smith

(Chairman, Maesteg and Afan Valley Miners' Support Group)

Scots drift to work—fantasy not fact

THE COAL Board, the Tory press and the TV news have been claiming a dramatic rise in the number of miners reporting for work in Scottish pits. 90% of these claims are more fantasy than fact. In most pits the strike is still solid.

Organised campaign

Even at Bilston Glen, Midlothian, a well organised and well publicised campaign, involving 'Silver Birch', has led to no more than 36 men out of a

workforce of 1,800 crossing the picket lines.

In retaliation the union has withdrawn the safety cover which they had been allowing to continue throughout the strike. Claiming that there is "an emergency", management are using men with only a few hours training to do some of this work. Some deputies are becoming concerned about this.

Exaggerated through it is by the media, this small drift back to work could be a serious threat. A campaign is needed urgently to involve the deputies around the issue of safety, and to broaden the

picketing at Bilston Glen into a mass rally of the trade union movement.

Tough line

Coinciding with the return to work campaign has been a tougher line by management, police and the courts. Michael Hogg, youth delegate at Bilston Glen, was fined £500; both he and Davy Costello, SCEBTA delegate at Newbattle Workshops have been sacked for "gross industrial misconduct"—i.e. being arrested on the picket line.

On Monday two pickets

were arrested at Bilston Glen, Sandy Coultts from Newtongrange, Midlothian, and George Tait from Oakley in Fife, were arrested on minor charges but remanded in Saughton Prison in Edinburgh for fourteen days, for breaking bail conditions from previous arrests. If they are not released immediately the whole movement needs to be mobilised in a demonstration outside the jail to demand their release.

By Chris Herriot
(Newtongrange Strike Committee)

Fife miners out till victory

FIFE AND the Longannet complex comprises the biggest coalfield in Scotland. The NCB has been recently making a concerted effort to break the strike. A letter was sent out timed to coincide with the end of the holidays, urging the men to pressure their leaders for a return to work. Eight buses were run during the week, but there was not one person on them. Each bus stop was picketed by strikers.

At the Longannet complex

6 men turned up for work on Monday, but the 200 pickets turned them back. Since then only one man has been reporting to work. The mood among miners in Fife is to see things through to victory. At a recent meeting to organise a return to work only four people turned up.

'Trouble'

When the 'trouble' was reported, the BBC turned up to interview miners who'd been 'intimidated' and

wanted to return to work. They could get none to say they'd return and were driven to interview people in the street—not miners.

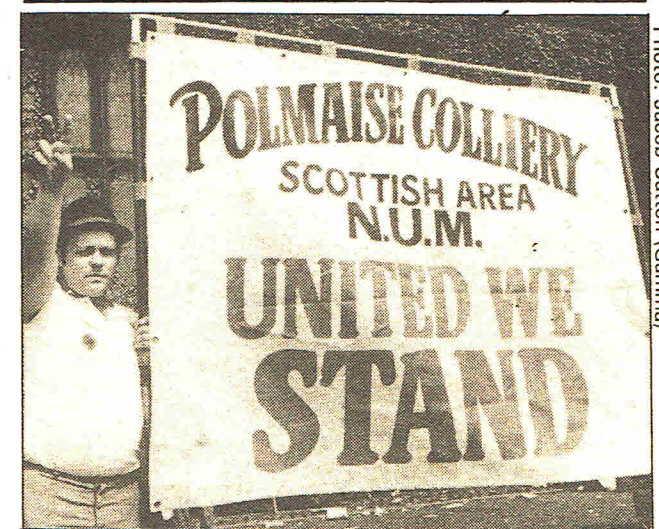
Support from the community in Fife has been solid. Collections go very well and there is a clear message for the media's NCB propaganda—no return to work without victory.

By Davey Brown

Lobby TUC for action

WE NEVER wanted this sequestration order but now it has come it is the very boost we needed—it's like someone trying to take something away from your home—particularly when they started taking money from the relief fund. It threatens everyone who is involved in the strike.

Straight away we had people phoning in guaranteeing the replacement of any funds taken, within 48 hours. We will see a rapid increase in the money coming in.



Miners from Polmaise colliery with a message for the NUM special conference in Sheffield on 10 August.

Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

NEC of the union.

I put no trust in Len Murray but the rank and file must use the TUC Congress as an opportunity, as a rallying point, we will be lobbying conference to ensure they support us.

The Labour leaders have been very disappointing. There is only one side they can support. They must come clean and give their 100% support for the working class.

By Tyrone O'Sullivan
(Secretary, Tower Lodge, NUM, personal capacity)

Miners' dispute

No joy for back to work woman

LAST WEDNESDAY three women representing women's support groups in the South Wales Valleys met Joy Watson who is trying to organise a "back-to-work" movement in South Wales. She has received massive local media coverage in the last few weeks for the 'stand' she has taken against the NUM.

Her activities and statements have incensed the South Wales women involved in support groups so much that an anti Joy Watson demonstration was organised in her home town of Aberdare which was well attended by over 500.

She and her supporters were invited but she declined to appear, despite guarantees for her safety from the organisers. She said she was too busy.

However, an article appeared in the local paper saying she was now on holiday and at 'our disposal', so we took her up on her offer.

We met on neutral ground in a pub in Aberdare. The landlord was very upset at the idea of a back to work group meeting in his pub, but we reassured him that this was not the case, and he very generously provided free drinks for us.

Our discussion started at just after 1 o'clock with myself, Brenda, the secretary of Oakdale Women's Support Group and Hazel, representing the Cynon Valley Joint Women's Support Group. Joy Watson and two reporters from local newspapers were present.

Watson questioned

We asked her to state why she had taken the position she had on the strike, why she felt the need for the miners to return to work? Her answer predictably enough was the question of the ballot.

She said that up until the 19th week of the strike she had sat back and done nothing but she kept bumping into people who were saying things like "is there no end to this strike," and began to form the opinion that other people thought as she. She said she saw miner versus miner, miner versus the policemen, she saw horrific scenes of violence on the TV and when Scargill said 'we can bring this government down' "well", she said, "that was it". She 'snapped', contacted the local BBC and bingo! A

back to work movement was in the offing.

However, when pressed, Joy Watson declined to tell us the number of supporters she had, she would give us no evidence of her support other than we could see the letters of support she had received. When we asked her where did she think the thousands of miners would get work if MacGregor's plans for coal went ahead, she didn't want to discuss this as this was 'political'.

Vague terms

Throughout the meeting she used very vague terms—'a man I spoke to here', 'a telephone call from a woman from somewhere', 'I met a woman in Tesco's' and so on, no concrete support.

She claims that if the pickets were taken off the gates then men would return to work in droves. But this is not so. In many areas there are only token pickets, on some there are none at all.

Anyway if, as Joy Watson states, 90% of men wish to return to work, then who is doing the picketing? She wouldn't comment.

By this time we were beginning to get fed up of Joy Watson who was losing her temper. She stormed off out of the room at 2.15 pm despite us still asking questions and putting points over.

Outside she was jeered by several striking miners and their wives who had accidentally come across our meeting. Joy Watson told press and cameramen alike that speaking to us about democratic ballots was like showing the cross of Jesus to vampires.

On one thing we did agree—the meeting was a waste of time. Joy Watson is not naive, she knows what she is doing. Unfortunately for her she is having no effect on the mood and determination of the South Wales miners and their families.

By Lynne Cuthbert
(Secretary, Rhymney Valley Women's Support Group, personal capacity)



Media told to tell the truth; NUM women's demo in London.

Collecting cash in London

AS A mother of three young children, living in London, I felt there wasn't much I could do to help the miners, apart from occasional donations and encouraging others I knew to do the same.

Then I read the *Militant Miner Women Organise* pamphlet, and hearing that a vanload of stuff was going up to Nottinghamshire at the weekend, I decided to ask round and see if anyone else would contribute.

Enthusiastic

To my delight, virtually all the mothers at my toddler's playgroup were enthusiastic, so I asked the local Community Centre (where the playgroup meets) if they would act as a collection point, which they immediately agree to.

Then we ran off a few leaflets and my young daughter, Belinda, and I distributed them in the immediate neighbourhood. On the way home we passed a group of blacks enjoying a drink outside a pub, so I gave

them the leaflets and asked if they'd like to help the miners. "Oh sure," was the reply and on reading the leaflet repeated the final appeal: "Don't let the Tories starve them back! Yes, that's just it, we can't let them do that. We've seen the police beating them up, just like they do our lads." I explained about the Community Centre and they said they'd ask around and see what they could get.

In the meantime, they fished in their pockets and gave me £3. "Who shall I say it's from?", I asked. "Just say it's from the lads in the Front Line, Sandringham Road."

Before the van left the next day, there were quite a few donations of food, groceries, clothes as well as money. If this sort of response is possible on such a limited appeal, imagine what could be done if the Labour Party and Trades Councils were to organise seriously in every Borough!

By Lynne Faulkes
Hackney South & Shoreditch LP



NUM women's demo in London, 11 August.

Miners help Phillip's strikers

MANCHESTER LABOUR Women's Council adopted Walkden Workshops' strikers after a successful meeting with a miner's wife speaking and a speaker from the Phillips Rubber strikers.

Since then we have taken cash every week to the Walkden Strike Committee. We also put them in touch with a supplier of fresh fruit and vegetables.

We collected cash to provide pop and crisps for a trip to Southport for children from Walkden, Agecroft and other Lancashire pits,

organised by the women's support group.

We've also helped to raise cash for buses for the 11 August demonstration and mobilised support from women in Manchester.

As a result of the links made between miners and the Phillips Rubber strikers, miners turned out in force on mass pickets at Phillips and helped turn scabs back for the first time in many weeks.

By Margaret Manning
(Chairperson, Manchester Women's Council)

South Coast support

A PACKED meeting in the small seaside town of Littlehampton, Sussex on 2 August heard calls from the members of the audience for a one-day strike in support of the miners.

Dave Jenkins, from Betteshanger Colliery in Kent said that before the threatened closures of the Kent pits he had never dreamed of going on strike: "We want to work" he said, "but with the threat of the loss of

your livelihood and your children's future at stake, you have no option but to fight."

£23 a week

He was married with three children, and their total income each week was now £23. "We have lost everything", Dave Jenkins said, TV sets, furniture and everything worth selling had now gone and this was the case with all his workmates, "We've nothing more to lose, we will never surrender".

After an appeal for funds the collection raised nearly £150 and two large boxes of food were also handed over. The chairman announced that this collection had now brought the total amount sent to the miners from Arundel constituency to over £1,000, and appealed to the public to keep the money coming in so that no miner's child could starve during the strike. This was the fifth meeting organised by Arundel Labour Party and the LPYS in aid of the miners.

Married couple both on strike

WEARMOUTH MINER Keith McDonald has been on strike since the dispute started. In the middle of June his wife Karen, who works at Washington Child Benefit Centre, also came out on strike. They explain why, despite the hardship, they're both determined to win:

Keith: I used to work at MFI before the pit, there wasn't a union there. You are much better off with a union, I know this from experience. Every time there has been a ballot I have voted to strike. So far in this strike I've been out every day picketing.

Karen: I only joined the union in January when I was transferred to the computers. This is my first time on strike and I find myself on the strike committee. It was a hard decision to go on strike. Before my strike we were semi-poor, now we are really poor. But I'd rather be out as in.

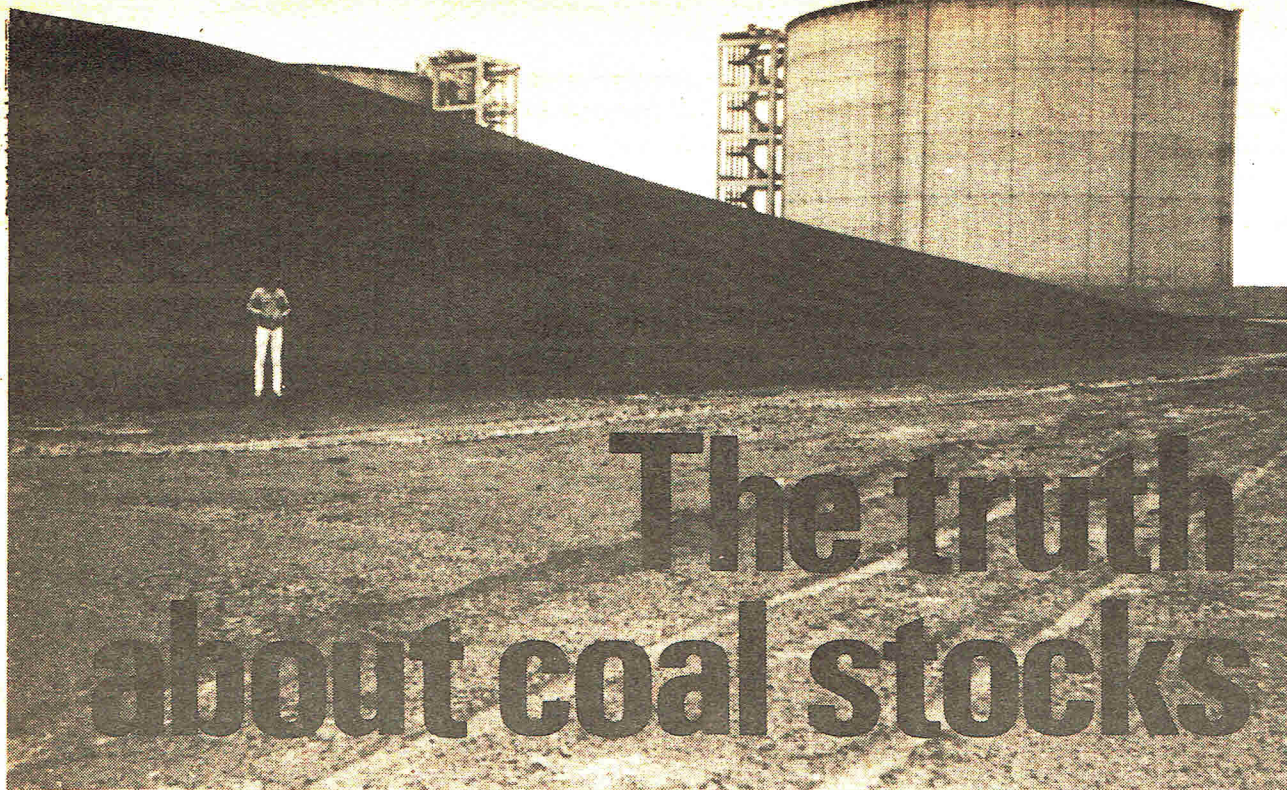
Keith: I want to keep my job but I'd rather see every pit close than go back on their terms. Without a job you're nobody, but I want job security. A job should give you comfort.

I want to go back to less hours of work; higher pay and more holidays.

Karen: For months and months people have been frightened to strike, they were just satisfied with having a job. Now the miners have shown the way it seems easier to go on strike.

We now realise our strike is about the survival of our union. If they beat us they'll certainly muck everybody else up.

Keith: If the trade unions wanted to get rid of this government we could do it. It is in the palm of the hand of the unions—all they have to do is to stay together.



State of the stockpiles

EVEN IF the Tories manage to move some or all of the pithead stocks, they will find that their problems are not over.

Thatcher might find that moving the stocks was an empty victory because the condition of the coal had deteriorated to such an extent to make it worthless.

Coal deteriorates when it is stockpiled due to several factors, the most important being the reaction of the coal with the air causing oxidation. In this chemical reaction heat is produced which under certain circumstances can cause the temperature of the heap of coal to rise to the critical 70–80°C; when this point is reached the coal ignites and is burnt up.

Standard precautions are taken, under normal circumstances, to minimise the damage caused by storage. To stop the coal burning up it is recommended that a stockpile should be less than nine feet high, the coal should be stored in the open on firm ground, fresh coal should not be stacked on old, and contact with air reduced by uniform stacking.

At present, pithead stocks stand at 21 million tonnes which is nearly three times the normal figure. It is highly likely that because of this the guidelines for preventing burn-up of the coal have not been complied with, due to a lack of suitable storage sites, poor handling facilities on makeshift sites and inadequate monitoring and supervision of the stacks.

There is also nothing the NCB or CEEB can do to prevent the breakdown of the coal due to the weather. This is dependent only on the length of time in store, which for some stockpiles must be several years—an unprecedented situation.

(*Militant* would be grateful to readers in mining areas for estimates or actual measurement of coal stockpiles—circumference, height, size of location etc)

Consequences of storage

Other serious consequences of prolonged storage are: loss of 'coking power' (this measures how easy it is to make coke from the coal), reduction of calorific value (which means a single lump of coal will produce less heat), and finally break-up of the coal due to weather and effects of mechanical handling. Break-up of the coal can cause major problems in the power stations, meaning the loss of small coal through the grate in steam raising plant, reducing output.

Problems of movement

IF THE Tories try to move the pithead stocks they will find that they will have bitten off more than they can chew. Apart from the explosion of anger from the labour movement, the logistics of the operation will prove to be a nightmare.

The power stations usually burn 1.8 million tonnes of coal per week in the autumn, over two million tonnes in a cold spell. If power station stocks were already depleted the government would have to try to move this full amount every week. Their scope for substituting oil-

burning stations would be limited because of the need to maintain spare capacity to cover peak demand.

Massive job

If troops or scab drivers were used to move the coal by road they would have to make 180,000 trips every week, assuming an average 10 tonne load, since the number of larger coal transporters is limited. This would need about 25,000 scab HGV drivers and 15,000 lorries working round the clock for months on end!

THE TORIES' proclaimed confidence that there are sufficient coal stocks to wear down the miners is bluff. Firstly, a critical situation at the power stations will be reached in early October. Secondly, moving the pithead stocks would prove a logistical nightmare not-

withstanding the explosion of anger and solidarity action it will provoke in the labour movement. And finally, even if they succeed in moving some of the stocks, the coal itself may well be useless. PETE DICKINSON details the Tory nightmare:

Arithmetic of the crisis

TORY MINISTERS and the CEEB pretend that there is no problem and stocks will last until next spring. Examination of their own statistics shows that serious disruption of the electricity supply could occur in October, if not before.

The threat to the National Grid comes from three sources: dwindling coal stocks at the power stations and the enormous difficulty in moving pithead stocks, deterioration of the stockpiled coal itself, and operational difficulties in the power stations due to the switch to oil-burning and other factors.

12m tonnes left

Since they reached a peak at the end of last year, coal stocks at the power stations will have fallen from 33 million tonnes to an estimated 12 million at the end of this month. The last official figure available is 18 million at the end of May.

Usual consumption of coal during June, July and August averages about 5.5 million tonnes per month. This is being offset by an increased amount of oil being burned, equivalent to about 2.3 million tonnes of coal per month.

It is also possible that there is a slightly increased output from nuclear power of 200,000 tonnes of coal equivalent. This increased output from oil and nuclear power stations could cause breakdowns due to insufficient maintenance. After allowing for the extra burn in the oil and nuclear stations, the net amount of coal burned

is three million tonnes per month.

In May it was calculated that 1.29 million tonnes of coal was delivered to the power stations, mainly from the Notts areas. Since then, solidarity action of the railworkers has reduced this flow to perhaps one million, tonnes, even on pessimistic estimates. (Extremely so in the light of new information on revealed exclusively in *Militant*—see page one—Ed.)

Allowing for this, the net reduction of stocks per month is two million tonnes. This means that on past trends at the end of August coal stocks will be 12 million tonnes. In September demand for coal increases to an average of 6.8 million, and as the seasonal demand for oil also increases, the extra oil burn which is currently compensating for reduced coal usage will fall

to two million tons. Similarly, no extra output will be available from nuclear power.

Stocks would now fall by 4.8 million tonnes (from 6.8m to 2m) if no extra coal was moved in. Assuming, however, that one million will still be moved from the Notts area the net reduction in stocks will be 3.8 million tonnes, bringing the power station stocks down to 8.2 million at the end of September.

The CEEB admit that the critical figure is six million tonnes. Below this, unplanned and widespread disconnections will occur. This point will be reached in early October according to the above calculations—although if all coal movement was stopped now the critical point could be reached in mid-September.



Dockers and miners picket a private wharf in South Wales. Dockers' solidarity will prevent large scale imports of coal.

Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (IFL)

Inside the power industry

THE NORTH East Region of the CEEB is seriously effected by the NUM dispute. Highly efficient plant and whole power stations are lying idle to conserve what coal stocks they have left, after record coal stocks earlier on in the year. Most Yorkshire power stations have only got 6-8 weeks' supply of coal left.

By a power worker

CEGB approached the ESI (Electricity Supply Industry) Unions with a plan to mothball them. That means to put everything under wraps and de-man them, virtually close them down because they are far more expensive to run than coal. These stations stayed open because the unions refused to accept the de-manning situation.

The situation gets more desperate as each day goes by, for as the nights are lengthening, demand is slowly but surely rising.

These oil fired stations now find themselves running flat out. All are vastly undermanned, some as high as 10% short of the correct

manning levels. Massive overtime is being worked to make up for this enforced de-manning, at a time of mass unemployment.

Cost of oil

The cost of oil, weight for weight against coal is approximately twice as much. It is my belief that the CEEB, at the insistence of the government, will want the cost of the whole dispute passed on to the customer. That is if we have not already paid for it. Earlier this year the government insisted that the price of electricity went up despite opposition from the electricity council and the unions.

Thatcher and the CEEB had planned this campaign many months before the

dispute started. Coal stocks were at their highest levels ever. Six months' strategic stores were purchased. A massive building programme was undertaken to increase power station capacities for holding essential stocks.

But things are not going her way. The newly synchronised Hartlepool nuclear power station is also having manning level troubles. The workers are at present operating an overtime ban in protest against the CEEB's operations manning levels. We hear through the grapevine that a recent main plant failure at this nuclear station was due to a routine bearing inspection not taking place because of the lack of personnel.

At the time of writing this article virtually the whole of



NUM pickets at Eggborough power station.

Yorkshire power stations are lying idle. The newly constructed Drax, to be the biggest in Europe, is closed

down, as is Ferrybridge C and Eggborough. Some have been shut down until further notice.

Photo: Richard Clarkson



Local government trade unionists march in London in January against the Tories' interference with local authority spending and the abolition of the GLC and Metropolitan counties.

Stop the Tories' council blitz

What rate-capping will mean for Lewisham

UNDER THE rate capping proposals Lewisham in South East London, will lose £13.4 million. This will cause enormous problems.

The local council's plans did not include any growth anyway, so it will mean huge cuts.

Lewisham is a poor borough, officially reckoned the 17th worst off in the country, with the lowest wage for males in London; it has 17% unemployment, 27% in Deptford. By any standards Lewisham needs more money not less. In social provision and housing repairs, government figures say we are worse off than Liverpool.

Since 1980 the borough has lost £100 million, a decline of 6% a year so it's not increased spending that's pushed up the rates. Now this cut represents a direct threat to every department. In order to raise £13.4 million even if you put up the rates by 49%, rents would have to go up by

£1.50-£2 a week at least, and still you would have massive cuts in services and 1,500 to 2,000 compulsory redundancies. But of course raising the rates is ruled out under these rate capping proposals.

Huge redundancies

If rates go up a small amount you're liable to big penalties and any Lewisham rate payer could sue the council if they passed a big increase. So the emphasis would be on even bigger cuts in services and loss of jobs, probably about 2,500 to 3,000. Industry in this area has just vanished. Another local factory, Molins has just announced enormous redundancies, there's been nothing here since the docks went. Losing these jobs as well would be disastrous.

The areas for chop would be services which councils don't legally have to provide. We've got two central and 17 district libraries plus a mobile for

handicapped people and OAPs. By law you only have to provide one. You're not legally bound to provide swimming pools, leisure centres, kids playgrounds in parks. Social Services don't have to provide Meals on Wheels; Lewisham was a pioneer in this field. Home helps could be cut as would housing maintenance, repairs, street lighting and cleaning amongst others.

The council has a position of no cuts in services and no compulsory redundancies. But we need to have a fight from our Labour council and a campaign by the unions. The councillors have to get out of the council chamber and wage a joint fight with the unions and alongside ILEA, GLC, the Fire Brigade, London Regional Transport, and other boroughs. We're all in the same fight.

By Gordon Hull
(Lewisham NALGO steward, personal capacity)

WITH THE resignation of four Labour GLC councillors, including the GLC leader Ken Livingstone, by-elections for the four seats. Hayes and Harlington, West Lewisham, Edmonton and Paddington, will be held on September 20.

These by-election campaigns present an excellent opportunity for Labour in London to demonstrate the enormous opposition that exists among workers to the Tories' plans. A recent poll indicated that if a full GLC election was held across London, Labour would win 53% of the vote, its highest share for decades, with the Tories even losing Finchley, Thatcher's own constituency.

A bold and energetic campaign must now be launched, taking up the question of democracy for London, but particularly stressing the concrete issues of the threat to jobs and services, and linking up with the fight against unemployment and all the Tories' attacks on liv-

ing standards.

Already in the four constituencies preparations are being made for the campaigns. Teams of LPYS members from all over London will be making a special effort to win the support of youth for Labour. Edmonton CLP has already agreed to produce a special youth leaflet.

A resounding victory in these by-elections for Labour will be a major propaganda weapon and a blow to the Tories.

But the by-elections will not be the end of the matter. They must be seen as a means towards publicising the building of a mass movement based on the trade union movement and with the active participation of local authority workers. The struggle in Liverpool has shown how the Tories can be beaten.

By Kevin Miles
(Greater London LP Executive Committee, personal capacity)

Glasgow will fight

FOLLOWING THEIR defeat at the hands of Liverpool City Council, the Tories have announced a massive cutback in the expenditure of Scottish Local Authorities, totalling £90 million.

Unlike England and Wales, Scotland's millionaire Secretary of State, George Younger, has the power to directly clawback the Rate Support Grant this year by simply cutting the size of the monthly cheque paid to councils.

Breathing space

Already Glasgow District Council has declared that its election pledge of "no rent/rate increases, no cuts in services and no redundancies" will be maintained. The Council's ploy, however, in borrowing this year to cover the deficit, can only be seen as providing a breathing space, allowing the Labour Party to build the type of campaign that we witnessed in Liverpool.

It is certain that when the budgets for next year are finalised local authorities will either have to confront Younger or concede defeat through massive rent increases, cuts and job losses. Liverpool's victory

however has revitalised the combative mood of Labour activists. Glasgow District Labour Party has already organised a 'fightback conference' for October and meetings are taking place between the four cities (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen) in order to establish a united front.

With Regional Authorities such as Strathclyde being cut by £38.5 million, Labour must also ensure that a link-up is established here.

On returning from Liverpool Jean McFadden, leader of Glasgow's Labour Group, commented: "Six months ago I met Derek Hatton and predicted that his council's confrontation with the government would fail. I am delighted that their determination, courage and tenacity has proved me wrong".

Glasgow, and other authorities must now show the same qualities in the fight with Younger and above all else they should display confidence in the ability of our class to take on this struggle.

By Larry Flannagan
(Glasgow DLP executive, personal capacity)

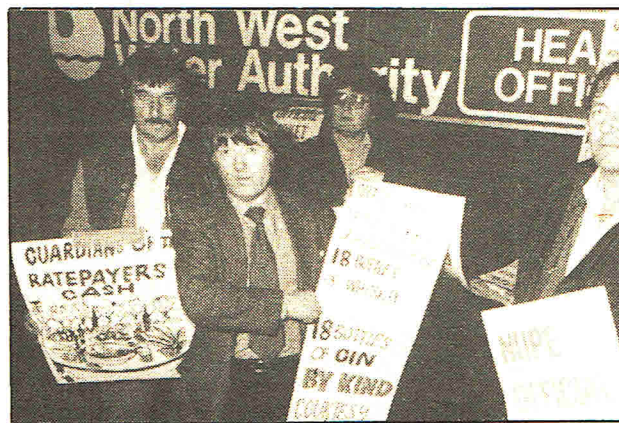
Water, water everywhere . . .

BRITAIN SEEMS to be a country in which water falls in abundance for most of the year, but as soon as the sun shines, there is not a drop to drink.

More than 8 million people in South Wales, the South West, Manchester and Yorkshire have faced water shortages. Yet some of these areas have the highest annual rainfall in the country.

There has been talk, but no progress, of a national water grid for many years. This would undoubtedly be a step forward. One 70 mile pipe from the Tees to Yorkshire would allow surplus water from the Keilder reservoir to be pumped from the Tyne to Tees and southwards to alleviate the shortage in Yorkshire and the Midlands.

The Keilder reservoir was originally built to supply the steel and chemical industries on the Tees. Now that the capitalist recession has devastated this area, 'demand' for water has shrunk. In the unplanned anarchy of Britain's regionalised water industry, the Northumbria Water Authority have sought to recoup their falling revenues from industry by



Waste in the water industry. Last year water workers picketed a slap up meal, at the ratepayers expense, held by North West water authority management.

exporting water to the Mediterranean!

As well as vulnerability to drought, we have deteriorating treatment plants and mains systems in many areas. This has already led to outbreaks of sickness from contaminated water. Then there is Britain's Victorian, and now crumbling, sewerage systems which suffer several collapses per day.

Many river systems need cleaning up: the Mersey, for example, will need £2 billion (and 20 years) to clean, according to a report in *Water Bulletin* (25/3/83). There is also a question mark over the safety of Britain's 1,800

large dams and reservoirs. A half of these are over 100 years old.

Yet capital expenditure is now below 50% of its 1974 levels in real terms. *Water Bulletin* reported in 1983 that just to maintain current levels of service, the industry needs £140m a year on water supply and £310m on sewerage, yet only £90m and £205m, respectively, are being spent.

There are 80,000 bursts a year costing £25m to repair and 85,000 complaints costing £12m. At current levels of spending, it will take 70 years to deal with those mains over 40 years

old—in other words the problems are getting out of control.

The Tory Government's answer has been to dissolve the National Water Council, remove all local authority representatives from the Regional Water Authorities and create new, smaller, even less accountable boards of government appointees. Investment is grinding to a halt, and even maintenance programmes are being cut back.

Even much publicised projects (the Tyneside sewerage system, Keilder etc) have only burdened the industry with huge debts and massive interest charges. In 1980/81 £764m—an astonishing 43% of all revenue expenditure—went to service the debts. The figure is probably higher now.

For socialists what is required is clear: remove the debt burden, put huge injection of resources in research and development to solve the industries problems; nationalise the private water companies, with workers' control and management of the industry as a whole.

By Gavin Dudley
(Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company, NALGO)

RUC Andersonstown rampage—

Oppose state terror

Photo: Derek Spiers (Report)



The RUC attack on Sunday. A Landrover drives into people sitting on the ground, while police indiscriminately wield batons and prepare to use plastic bullet guns.

ON JANUARY 30, 1972 paratroopers shot dead 13 unarmed demonstrators in Derry in the event which will be remembered as Bloody Sunday. Last Sunday, 13 August, 1984, although only one person died, also deserves the title Bloody Sunday.

The result of the vicious police terror in Andersonstown, Belfast—where lethal plastic bullets fired into a peaceful crowd—was one man, Sean Downes, dead, and many hospitalised and injured.

Later police accounts of what happened were bare-faced lies. The RUC claimed that they fired plastic bullets only to protect themselves and that they were "attacked and obstructed by groups in the crowd".

The truth is the RUC waded through the crowd firing plastic bullets in all directions and wielding batons. Sean Downes was behind a group of policemen, one of whom turned and shot him point blank in the chest.

Cover-up

The statement of the Chief Constable that he was a rioter is a disgraceful lie. Likewise the accusation that the police were "attacked and obstructed" by groups within the crowd is ridiculous. The demonstrators were men, women and children sitting on the road. They were charged on all sides by the RUC and could not get out of the way. Hence the pandemonium and panic. The plastic bullets were fired directly at people sitting, standing and even those trying to shield themselves by lying on the ground.

The events of last Sunday rank alongside the worst of the state terror which has become part and parcel of life in Northern Ireland over the last decade and a half. Northern Ireland has always been used as the training ground to perfect methods which could later be used against the labour movement both there and in Britain. The miners' strike is the living proof of this.

But there is a warning for the entire labour movement in what happened last Sunday. Even the severe repression experienced by the miners is still mild compared to what the state forces are getting away with in Northern Ireland. Plastic bullets are not yet used to break picket lines, let alone are they fired at people's heads and bodies, including at children, from a distance of a few feet.

The British ruling class dare not introduce these and other techniques used in Northern Ireland against the labour movement in Britain as yet. But if they are allowed to get away with these things on the streets of West Belfast, they will find it easier to introduce them to Britain, perhaps first to deal with riots such as Toxteth or Brixton, and then later to deal with

strikers and pickets.

Neither in Northern Ireland nor in Britain can the labour movement let events like last Sunday go unchallenged. The ferocious police assault on a peaceful crowd and the murder of Sean Downes was for the sole purpose of preventing Martin Galvin of Noraid from speaking—what was challenged by this action was the right to free speech and the right to peacefully demonstrate.

Since Sunday the general response of the labour and trade union leadership has been one of silence. Labour's Northern Ireland spokesman, Clive Soley, while talking of excessive police force has also given the police an excuse for what they did, by saying they were put in an "impossible situation". To ignore or give any semblance of credence to state terror is the most dangerous and irresponsible position for the labour movement to adopt. The miners' strike should have been enough to educate the leaders of the movement that as far as the ruling class are concerned, it is Northern Ireland today and the British working class tomorrow.

To oppose repression is not to give any degree of support to the Provisionals or any other para-military group. It has been the futile and divisive methods of the Provos which has provided the state with the excuse to step up repression. It is a fact that last Sunday's anti-internment march, organised by Sinn Fein, was a small demonstration of a couple of thousand people, including a large number from Britain and America. It was completely divorced from the labour movement in Northern Ireland.

Were the labour and trade union movement to clearly campaign against repression in Northern Ireland, the result would *not* be to boost the Provos. On the contrary, it is the present position of silence, of half support to the state actions, which gains support for the Provos.

The history of the Northern Ireland troubles has shown that the efforts of the Provos, Sinn Fein or any other sectarian or para-military group cannot resist repression. It is only the labour and trade union movement, by using its industrial muscle which can force the ruling class to retreat on its methods.

Yet the thousands of people roused by anger to attend Monday night's black flag march to the scene of Sean Downes' death in West Belfast heard no condemnations from the labour and trade union leaders. They see no struggle against repression being fought by the unions' leaders. Hence they are pushed, by the lack of any alternative, behind the protests of Sinn Fein.

The result of the repression of last Sunday and the lack of response by the labour movement will be to give a boost to Sinn Fein. Twelve years ago the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry prompted thousands of Catholic

youth to flock to the Provisionals. Today the futility of the Provisionals' tactics is much clearer even to Catholic youth. Nonetheless, the danger is that, because they are given no alternative means of struggle, a number of youth will again turn to these methods.

It is not sufficient for the labour and trade union movement to condemn these youth. The movement has a responsibility to show them that there is an alternative and better way to fightback against the capitalist system which spawns this repression.

The labour movement is on record as opposing the use of plastic bullets. A resolution to this effect moved by Derry Trades Council, was passed two years ago by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. It is now time that the labour movement in Britain and Ireland mounted a serious campaign to have these weapons banned. By campaigning independently of all sectarian-based groups and by explaining the class implications of these weapons and of repression in general, the movement can unite Catholic and Protestant workers in Northern Ireland with workers in Britain on this question.

Last Sunday has shown that the British ruling class have no solution to the problems of Northern Ireland. Behind all the smoke screen of talks and government 'initiatives' lies the reality of rule by repression.

Workers' unity

However, the sectarian and para-military organisations represent no way forward either. While defending the right of people like Martin Galvin to speak, the labour movement must also explain the blind alley represented by the right wing, nationalist and sectarian ideas of such people.

The only way forward in Northern Ireland lies through the unity of the working class and the struggle for a socialist solution. Only within and around the labour and trade union movement can this unity be achieved.

Last Sunday must be taken by the labour movement as a signal that the time has come to advance its own class alternative. It must oppose the methods of the army and police who cannot protect workers. The movement should stand for the withdrawal of troops, the disbandment of the RUC and their replacement by a trade union defence force to ensure that sectarian attacks do not take place.

It should immediately move to build a political base in Northern Ireland, a socialist Labour Party, which could provide this generation of youth, who want to struggle against the miseries of capitalism, with the vehicle in which to do so. In this way the movement can concretely show to the youth both Catholic and Protestant, that there is an alternative to the sectarians and the para-militaries.

By Peter Hadden

Eye witness report— An unprovoked attack

A MILITANT supporter, who observed the Sinn Fein rally in Andersonstown, Belfast, was a victim of the RUC rampage. He was shot in the back with a plastic bullet. He describes what happened:

BEFORE THE march had ended there was a lot of tension, with small outbursts of stonethrowing. The police fired some plastic bullets.

But everything quickly settled down again as the people waited outside the Provisionals' headquarters for the speeches.

It was apparent the RUC was planning something. They surrounded the meeting, blocking all the exit roads with jeeps and riot police, equipped with batons and plastic bullet guns. A group of soldiers and police took over the roof of a block of shops opposite the platform. I saw one of the cops very publicly stockpiling his supply of four inch plastic bullets along the roof for use in rapid fire.

When Martin Galvin appeared there was a huge cheer from the crowd which immediately changed to cries of fear as the police attacked. Police drove their jeeps into the crowd and the riot squad trampled over people, swinging their batons and firing plastic bullets at point blank range. The result of

the attack was immediate panic as the crowd, which contained large numbers of family groups of men, women and children, tried to get away. This was impossible—everytime any group moved they were fired upon and told to lie down on the ground.

Where I had been a section of the crowd immediately fell to the ground. Everyone was scared because cops were firing large numbers of these bullets. At least two people in the group I was lying down with were hit for no other crime than trying to get out of the police's line of fire. One man facing me was hit in the face by a plastic bullet fired from the top of the shops about 20 feet behind us.

Then, still lying on the ground, I was hit in the shoulder blade by a plastic bullet, knocking me face down. The only thing I can compare it to is getting hit by a 6lb hammer on the back of the neck. After, I think, about 10 minutes lying there, covering the back of my neck in case he fired again, I was able to get away to relative safety.

According to medical people who had a look at me afterwards I was lucky the cop's aim wasn't brilliant. If it had been an inch over it would have removed the back of my head.

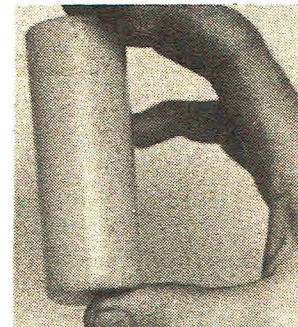
Ban plastic bullets

AS A Protestant with relatives in the RUC and the British Army, I feel it is my duty to give an honest account of what happened on the Internment rally on Sunday 12 August.

Out of curiosity I decided to go to West Belfast to watch the rally. What I saw there totally horrified me. The police and army used brutal repression on the crowd, which consisted of old age pensioners, men, women and children. Plastic bullets were fired indiscriminately into the crowd at very close range. Everyone, including myself, ran blindly looking for shelter.

Violence

The violence used by the police was totally unjustified as the demonstration was peaceful. It was a miracle only one person was killed. The situation was pure hell.



A plastic bullet.

Every worker reading this should go to their trade union, councillors and MP to demand the banning of plastic bullets.

I would also like to say that Sinn Fein and Provisional IRA by their activities only serve to further divide the working class in Northern Ireland. What we need is workers' unity in order to achieve socialism, only then will we have peace.

By a Militant supporter,
East Belfast

Experts in repression

THE BRITISH ruling class are expert at methods of repression.

British forces developed the use of Water Cannons and CS Gas against anti-colonial movements in Cyprus and Guyana. Similarly the 'baton round'—the predecessor of the plastic bullet—was first introduced in Hong Kong, during the riots of the mid-'60s. These were made of teak and caused appalling injuries as the wood often splintered. Their use in the Hong Kong riots left one girl dead and many injured.

The Hong Kong round was replaced by the rubber bullet, later replaced by the plastic bullet. Their use on the streets of Northern Ireland has left 14 dead, six

of whom were children. Many others have been blinded or left with brain damage.

Militant has always pointed out that the ruling class have used Northern Ireland as a training ground to perfect these weapons for future use against the British working class. Riot shields, the 'hele-tele' (helicopters equipped with high intensity cameras) and para-military police tactics, now increasingly seen on picket lines especially during the current miners strike, were all developed in Northern Ireland over the past decade. Now—in what must be a dire warning for the labour movement—15 British police forces have a stock pile of over 20,000 plastic bullets.

Photo: Militant



If An we SOC

IN AUGUST 1940 Leon Trotsky was murdered by one of Stalin's agents. This week *Militant* re-publishes major excerpts from an article he wrote in 1934 for an American magazine *Liberty*. This article shows the fundamental divide between the principles of Marxism, for which Trotsky fought and was killed, and the bureaucratic gangsters who have usurped the Russian revolution. Here Trotsky answers the genuine fears of workers who want socialism, but don't want the kind of dictatorship witnessed in Eastern Europe. So worried were the owners of *Liberty* about the impact of Trotsky's argument, even after some approved revisions, that his article carried an editorial caption saying—"Don't believe a word of this. Read the reply of former Secretary of Labor Davis next week".

SHOULD AMERICA go communist as a result of the difficulties and problems that your capitalist social order is unable to solve, it will discover that communism, far from being an intolerable bureaucratic tyranny and individual regimentation, will be the means of greater individual liberty and shared abundance.

At present most Americans regard communism solely in the light of the experience of the Soviet Union. They fear lest Sovietism in America would produce the same material result as it has brought for the culturally backward peoples of the Soviet Union...

They shudder lest Americans be regimented in their habits of dress and diet, be compelled to subsist on famine rations, be forced to read stereotyped official propaganda in the newspapers, be coerced to serve as rubber stamps for decisions arrived at without their active participation or be required to keep their thoughts to themselves and loudly praise their soviet leaders in public, through fear of imprisonment and exile.

Different from Russia

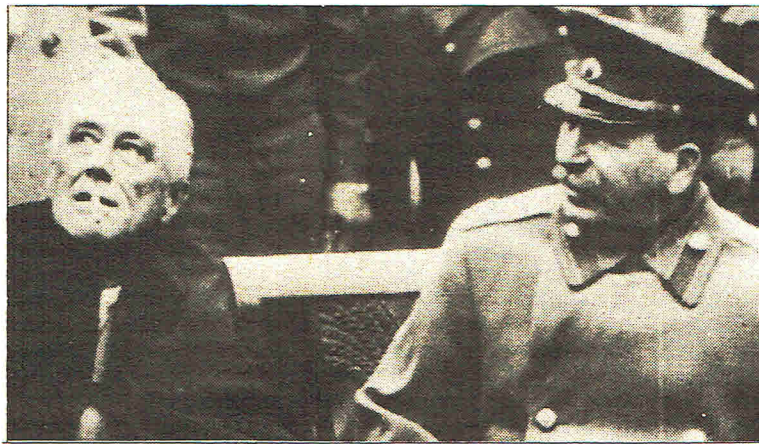
They fear monetary inflation, bureaucratic tyranny and intolerable red tape in obtaining the necessities of life. They fear soulless standardisation in the arts and sciences, as well as in the daily necessities of life. They fear that all political spontaneity and the presumed freedom of the press will be destroyed by the dictatorship of a monstrous bureaucracy.

And they shudder at the thought of being forced into an uncomprehended glibness in Marxist dialectic and disciplined social philosophies. They fear, in a word, that Soviet America will become like the counterpart of what they have been told Soviet Russia looks like.

Actually American soviets will

be as different from the Russian soviets as the United States of President Roosevelt differs from the Russian Empire of Czar Nicholas II. Yet communism can come in America only through revolution, just as independence and democracy came in America.

The American temperament is energetic and violent, and it will insist on breaking a good many dishes and upsetting a good many apple carts before communism is firmly established. Americans are enthusiasts and sportsmen before they are specialists and statesmen, and it would be contrary to the American tradition to make a major change without choosing sides and cracking heads.



To accommodate his Western allies, Stalin wound up the Communist International in 1943. (Above Roosevelt and Stalin).

However, the American communist revolution will be insignificant compared to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, in terms of your national wealth and population, no matter how great its comparative cost. That is because civil war of a revolutionary nature isn't fought by the handful of men at the top—the five or ten percent who own nine-tenths of American wealth; this handful could recruit its counter-revolutionary armies only among the lower middle classes.

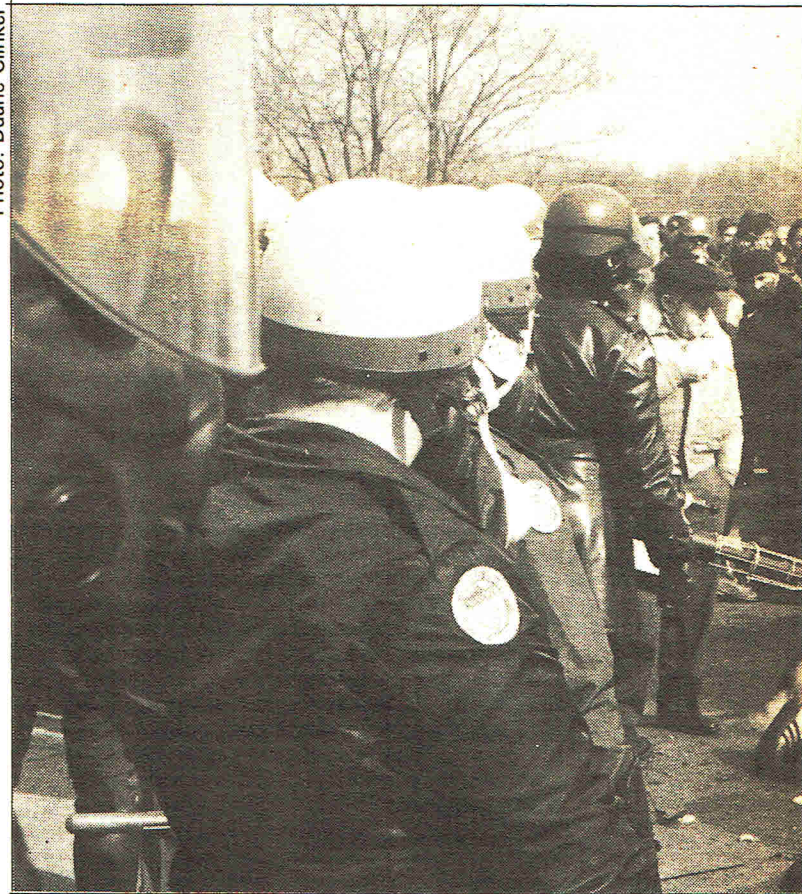
Even so, the revolution could easily attract them to its banner by showing that support of the soviets alone offers them the prospect of salvation. Everybody below this group is already economically

prepared for communism.

The depression has ravaged our working class and has dealt a crushing blow to the farmers, who had already been injured by the long agricultural decline of the post war decade. There is no reason why these groups should counterpose determined resistance to the revolution; they have nothing to lose, providing of course, that the revolutionary leaders adopt a far-sighted and moderate policy toward them.

Who else will fight against communism? Your corporal's guard of billionaires and multimillionaires? Your Mellons, Morgans, Fords and Rockefellers? They will cease struggling as soon as they fail to

Photo: Duane Clinker



Tear gas being used against US strikers during a 1982 dispute.

your entire economic system.

The results will be stupendous. Costs of production will be cut to twenty percent, or less, of the present figure. This, in turn, would rapidly increase your farmers' purchasing power.

To be sure, the American soviets would establish their own gigantic farm enterprises, as schools of voluntary collectivisation. Your farmers could easily calculate whether it was to their individual advantage to remain as isolated links or to join the public chain.

The same method would be used to draw small businesses and industries into the national organisation of industry. By soviet control of raw materials, credits and quotas of orders, these secondary industries could be kept solvent until they were gradually and without compulsion sucked into the socialised business system.

Winning support

Without compulsion! The American soviets would not need to resort to the drastic measures that circumstances have often imposed upon the Russians. In the United States, through the science of publicity and advertising, you have means for winning the support of your middle class that were beyond the reach of soviets of backward Russia with its vast majority of pauperised and illiterate peasants.

This, in addition to your technical equipment and your wealth, is the greatest asset of your coming communist revolution. Your revolution will be smoother in character than ours; you will not waste your energies and resources in costly social conflicts after the main issues have been decided; and you will move ahead so much more rapidly in consequence.

Even the intensity and devotion of religious sentiment in America will not prove an obstacle of the revolution. If one assumes the perspective of soviets in America, none of the psychological brakes will prove firm enough to retard the pressure of social crisis.

This has been demonstrated more than once in history. Besides, it should not be forgotten that the Gospels themselves contain some pretty explosive aphorisms.

As to the comparatively few opponents of the soviet revolution, one can trust to American inventive genius. It may well be that you will take your unconvinced millionaires and send them to some picturesque island, rent-free for life, where they can do as they please.

You can do this safely, for you will not need to fear foreign interventions. Japan, Great Britain and the other capitalistic countries that intervened in Russia couldn't do anything but take American communism lying down. As a matter of fact, the victory of communism in America—the strong-

America nt cialist



hold of capitalism—will cause communism to spread to other countries. Japan will probably have joined the communistic ranks even before the establishment of American soviets.

The same is true of Great Britain. In any case, it would be a crazy idea to send His Britannic Majesty's fleet against Soviet America, even as a raid against the southern and more conservative half of your continent. It would be hopeless and would never get farther than a second-rate military escapade.

International revolution

Within a few weeks or months of the establishment of the American soviets, Pan-Americanism would be a political reality. The governments of Central and South America would be pulled into your federation like iron filings to a magnet. So would Canada.

The popular movements in these countries would be so strong that they would force this great unifying process within a short period and at insignificant costs. I am ready to bet that the first anniversary of the American soviets would find the Western Hemisphere transformed into the Soviet United States of North, Central and South America, with its capital at Panama. Thus for the first time the Monroe Doctrine would have a complete and positive meaning in

world affairs, although not the one foreseen by its author...

The average man doesn't like systems or generalities. It is the task of your communist statesmen to make the system deliver the concrete goods that the average man desires: his food, cigars, amusements, his freedom to choose his own neckties, his own house and his own automobile. It will be easy to give him these comforts in Soviet America.

Most Americans have been misled by the fact that in the USSR we had to build whole new basic industries from the ground up. Such a thing could not happen in America, where you are already compelled to cut down on your farm area and to reduce your industrial production.

As a matter of fact, your tremendous technological equipment has been paralysed by the crisis and already clamours to be put to use. You will be able to make a rapid step-up of consumption by your people the starting point of your economic revival.

You are prepared to do this as is no other country. Nowhere else has the study of the internal market reached such intensity as in the United States. It has been done by your banks, trusts, individual businessmen, merchants, travelling salesmen and farmers as part of their stock-in-trade.

Your soviet government will simply abolish all trade secrets, will combine all the findings of these



The US labour movement has a long history of struggle. During the Boston General Strike of 1919, even the police came out in solidarity. So the Governor had to call in the National Guard (above) to try and defeat the workers.

researches for individual profit and will transform them into a scientific system of economic planning. In this your government will be helped by the existence of a large class of cultured and critical consumers. By combining the nationalised key industries, your private businesses and democratic consumer cooperation, you will quickly develop into a highly flexible system for serving the needs of your population.

This system will be made to work not by bureaucracy and not by policemen but by cold, hard cash. Your almighty dollar will play a principal part in making your new soviet system work...

In all this, you will not need to imitate our standardised production for our pitiable mass consumers. We have taken over from czarist Russia a pauper's heritage, a culturally undeveloped peasantry with a low standard of living. We had to build our factories and dams at the expense of our consumers. We have had continual monetary inflation and a monstrous bureaucracy.

Soviet America will not have to imitate our bureaucratic methods. Among us the lack of bare necessities has caused an intense scramble for an extra loaf of bread, an extra yard of cloth by everyone. In this struggle our bureaucracy steps forward as a conciliator, as an all-powerful court of arbitration.

You, on the other hand, are much wealthier and would have little difficulty in supplying all of your people with all of the necessities of life. Moreover, your needs, tastes and habits would never permit your bureaucracy to divide the national income. Instead, when you organise your society to produce for human needs rather than private profits, your entire population will group itself around new trends and groups, which will struggle with one another and prevent an overweening bureaucracy imposing itself upon upon them.

Avoiding bureaucracy

You can thus avoid growth of bureaucratism by the practice of soviets, that is to say, democracy—the most flexible form of government yet developed. Soviet organisation cannot achieve miracles but must simply reflect the will of the people.

With us the soviets have been bureaucratized as a result of the political monopoly of a single party, which has itself become a bureaucracy. This situation resulted from the exceptional difficulties of socialist pioneering in a poor and backward country.

The American soviets will be full-blooded and vigorous, without need or opportunity for such measures as circumstances imposed upon Russia. Your unregenerate capitalists will, of course, find no place for themselves in the new set

up. It is hard to imagine Henry Ford as the head of the Detroit Soviet.

Yet a wide struggle between interests, groups and ideas is not only conceivable—it is inevitable. One-year, five-year, ten-year plans of business development; schemes for national education; construction of new basic lines of transportation; the transformation of the farms; the programme for improving the technological and cultural equipment of Latin America; a programme for the stratosphere communication; eugenics—all of these will arouse controversy, vigorous electoral struggle and passionate debate in the newspapers and at public meetings.

For Soviet America will not imitate the monopoly of the press by the heads of Soviet Russia's bureaucracy. While Soviet America would nationalise all printing plants, paper mills and means of distribution, this would be a purely negative measure. It would simply mean that private capital will no longer be allowed to decide what publications should be established, whether they should be progressive or reactionary, puritanical or pornographic.



John Reed, one of the early leaders of the U.S. Communist movement.

Soviet America will have to find a new solution for the question of how the power of the press is to function in a socialist regime. It might be done on the basis of proportional representation for the votes in each soviet election. Thus the right of each group of citizens to use the power of the press would depend on their numerical strength—the same principle being applied to the use of meeting halls, allotment of time on the air and so forth.

Thus the management and policy of publications would be decided not by individual chequebooks but by group ideas. This may take little account of numerically small but important groups, but it simply means that each new idea will be compelled, as throughout history, to prove its right to existence.

Rich Soviet America can set aside vast funds for research and invention, discoveries and ex-

periments in every field. You won't neglect your bold architects and sculptors, your unconventional and audacious philosophers.

In fact, the Soviet Yankees of the future will give a lead to Europe in those very fields where Europe has hitherto been your master. Europeans have little conception of the power of technology to influence human destiny and have adopted an attitude of sneering superiority toward "Americanism", particularly since the crisis. Yet Americanism marks the true dividing line between the Middle Ages and the modern world.

Hitherto America's conquest of nature has been so violent and passionate that you have had not time to modernise your philosophies or to develop your own artistic forms. Hence you have been hostile to the doctrines of Hegel, Marx and Darwin. The burning of Darwin's works by the Baptists of Tennessee is only a clumsy reflection of the American dislike for the doctrines of evolution.

New era opens

This attitude is not confined to your pulpits. It is still part of your general mental makeup. Your atheists as well as your Quakers are determined rationalists.

And your rationalism itself is weakened by empiricism and moralism. It has none of the merciless vitality of the great European rationalists. So your philosophic method is even more antiquated than your economic system and your political institutions.

Today, quite unprepared, you are being forced to face those social contradictions that grow up unsuspected in every society. You have conquered nature by means of the tools that your inventive genius has created, only to find that your tools have all but destroyed you.

Contrary to all your hopes and desires, your unheard-of wealth has produced unheard-of misfortunes. You have discovered that social development does not follow a simple formula. Hence you have been thrust into the school of the dialectic—to stay.

There is no turning back from it to the mode of thinking and acting prevalent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the romantic numbskulls of Nazi Germany are dreaming of restoring the old race of Europe's Dark Forest to its original purity, or rather its original filth, you Americans, after taking a firm grip on your economic machinery and your culture, will apply genuine scientific methods to the problem of eugenics. Within a century, out of your melting pot of races there will come a new breed of men—the first worthy of the name of Man.

One final prophecy: In the third year of soviet rule in America, you will no longer chew gum!

Poland, France

Workers condemn strike breaking

MILITANT HAS reported (20 July) on the strike-breaking role of the Stalinist government in Poland during the British miners' strike. Despite the repression of the independent union *Solidarnosc* by the military authorities, Polish workers have spoken out against the government's policy.

On 17 June, the Underground Provisional Co-ordinating Committee of Solidarity miners issued an unequivocal statement in support of the British miners' fight for jobs. The statement also condemned the policy of the Polish government in selling off coal cheaply on world markets, thereby putting the jobs of miners in other countries at risk.

The Co-ordinating Committee statement was read out by the Solidarity underground radio station in Upper Silesia, Poland's main coal mining region.

The statement read as follows:

"The Underground Provisional Co-ordinating Committee of Solidarity miners vigorously protest against the present policy of the Polish People's Republic on the management of our major source of wealth—coal.

"Selling it on foreign markets at competitive prices (ie. at less than world market prices) is first of all a violation of the Jastrzebie Agreements (August 1980) in which it was clearly established that coal is a national resource which must be used rationally. The above-mentioned pricing policy transforms investment in the mines into a straight economic loss.

"Secondly, the Polish government's policy blatantly contradicts official propaganda which declares respect for the miners' dignity and endeavour. Thirdly coal distribution and trade is organised outside of any social control.

"The Polish government has no right to behave like a mine-owner and to dispose of the national wealth as it pleases. Only the damned capitalists and dictators act in this way. Fourthly, the Polish government's policy in this field affects the basic interests of brother miners from other countries who lose their jobs as a result.

"We hope the Party authorities and parliament—who say they represent the people—explain what is really going on.

"To the striking miners of Great Britain: The Underground Provisional Co-ordinating Committee of Solidarity miners sends you fraternal greetings and our support and solidarity for your struggle for the right to work.

"We know from our own experience what it means to lose a job. For this reason we will do everything possible to support your struggle, including in action. The protest we have sent to the Polish government and parliament is an initial measure taken in support of your struggle."

Why the 'Communists' departed

ON 19 July, the leadership of the French Communist Party (PCF) announced its decision to end participation in the government.

After the disastrous European election results, giving the PCF its lowest vote since 1928 (11%), mounting pressure from the rank and file of the Party and of the Communist union grouping, the CGT has finally forced the PCF leadership to move into opposition to Mitterrand's austerity policies.

Following the election defeat, after 10 days of virtual silence on the part of the leadership, the PCF Central Committee passed "unanimously" (CC decisions are always "unanimous"), a resolution expressing the point of view of the majority of the *Bureau Politique*.

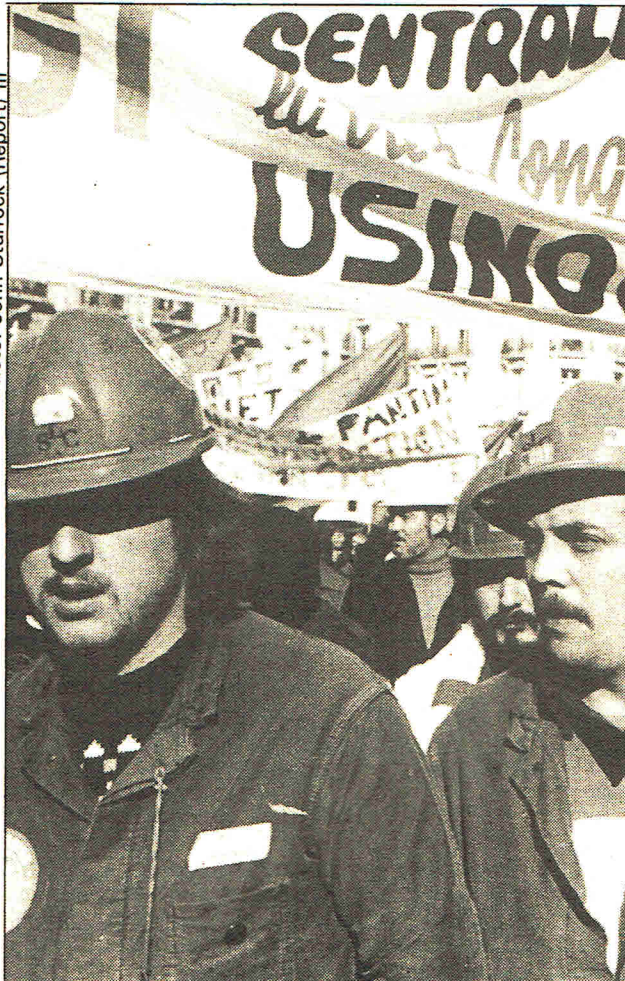
Austerity measures

The resolution and the report of the *Bureau Politique* acknowledged that in spite of all the verbal criticisms of the austerity measur-

Philippe Roland
(Confédération Générale du Travail, Paris)

had cost the party dearly in terms of membership and influence. On occasions, in the name of "government solidarity" the PCF and CGT leaders were prepared to play an openly strike-breaking role, such as in the Talbot strike at the beginning of this year. Whilst making 'left' noises, the PCF leaders acted as the policemen of the industrial working class.

The fact that even the most right-wing Socialist leaders, unlike in 1947, wanted the PCF to remain in the Government is proof of the vital role of the PCF ministers in smoothing the path for the austerity measures. Significantly, it was that section of the PCF bureaucracy which is based



CGT steel union members in Lorraine

es, "we are in reality considered as co-responsible... for government policies." Nonetheless the party was to remain in the government.

Clearly, the rank and file of the party drew very different conclusions, and within less than three weeks this same Central Committee was to vote, again "unanimously", to leave the government.

The mood for a more aggressive policy had even spilled over into the Communist press. The "double talk" of the party leadership

on the CGT which fought most insistently for withdrawal from the government.

Fabian replaced by Fabius

The occasion for the split was provided by the change of the prime minister, Pierre Mauroy being replaced by Laurent Fabius, and the announcement of a referendum, due to take place in September. These moves were in response to pressure from the right-wing parties and the capitalists.



French workers will fight government attacks.

The right-wing, anxious to conceal its economic and social policies, have centred their attack on the government around the so-called 'liberties' which they claim are threatened by the Left government, especially the 'liberty' of state-subsidised religious and private education for the better off.

Because of the failure of the Socialist leaders to explain the issues, and against the background of general discontent with government policies, the right wing RPR, the UDF, the fascist *Front National* and the Church, backed by enormous financial means, have been able to mobilise hundreds of thousands of youth on this issue.

Bonapartist move

Mitterrand has tried to placate the Right on the education issue by watering down the Savary (education) Bill so much that it was virtually meaningless. Now as a further concession he has withdrawn the Bill altogether. At the same time, he announced the 'referendum on referendums', whereby the population will be asked to approve changes in the Constitution allowing referendums to be called over questions of 'civil liberties'.

By this bonapartist manoeuvre, Mitterrand hopes to steal the thunder of the Right, posing as a champion of the peoples' rights. He hopes to lift himself above the contending classes, calling for 'National Unity', using referendums as a means of consolidating his position.

In the short term, Mitterrand hopes to put the right-wing in the difficult position of having to vote 'No' to a popular measure, or else, in calling for a 'Yes' vote, allow Mitterrand to appear to have regained lost popularity. However, the crisis of capitalism leaves no room for the 'national consensus politics' pushed by Mitterrand.

The new government heralded in the reactionary press as 'a step in the right direction', marks a further shift to the right in policy. Fabius



PCF rank and file members have put pressure on their leaders.

symbolises this shift. Mauroy, at least, was a man with a certain basis in the Socialist Party, and played a role in building the PS during the 1970s. Fabius, however, comes from a family of millionaires, and has a reputation as an upper-class dandy, frequenting the most expensive clubs and salons that bourgeois Paris can offer.

Hated amongst the workers for his role as Minister for Industry, throwing hundreds of thousands of workers out of their jobs, Fabius got where he is by being Mitterrand's lap dog. He once boasted that 'not even a cigarette paper' could be slipped between his views and those of the President. And if the President changed his views, it made absolutely no difference!

Job destruction

Fabius has a new round of anti-working class measures in store. The 1985 budget will hit the poorest section of the population the hardest. The government will press ahead with the destruction of 'unprofitable' industries. In the next few years, 70,000 jobs are threatened in the car industry alone!

The re-entry into the government of Jean-Pierre

Chevènement, eccentric leader of the left-wing CERES fraction of the PS, and the promotion of Huguette Bouchardeau of the PSU (*Parti Socialiste Unifié*, formerly more left-wing than the PS), will do nothing to disguise the real character of this new administration.

Radicalising effect

Now in opposition, and with a left-wing policy, the PCF is likely to recover lost ground. The CGT will make advances also. The opposition of the Communists will have a radicalising effect on the PS and the CFDT union bloc. The flood of literature 'proving' the so-called 'Historic Decline' of the PCF will be shown to be so much wishful-thinking.

But there are serious weaknesses in PCF policy. The leadership continues to put its faith in the reflationary policies and half-measures which the Socialists were forced to abandon in 1982. The Communist and CGT rank and file have many hard struggles ahead of them. In the course of these struggles, they must find their way to Marxism, and to the militant class policies upon which the PCF was founded.

West Germany, Sri Lanka

The battle over working hours



WHEN THE West German steel workers first took up the fight for a 35-hour working week in 1978, East German radio commented regularly on the struggle and the six-day strike which ensued.

These broadcasts neglected to mention the cause of the strike, of course. How could they admit that, when their own workers still had a six-day week?

The recent strike which shook West Germany and affected the car industry in Austria, Britain, Sweden and other European countries was scarcely referred to this time. The subject has become too dangerous and East and West, neither bosses or bureaucrats have any wish to talk about striking workers. Yet the effects—both economic and political—were far-reaching.

At the turn of the century German workers, like their brothers and sisters elsewhere, still laboured eleven hours a day. They achieved a reduction to 10 hours in the midst of the strikes in the First World War, while the eight-hour day (first demanded by the First International) was only gained in the course of revolution.

Support surprises bosses

By comparison this fight to achieve a one and a half hour reduction in hours plus a pay increase of 3.3% from July, followed by a 2.2% increase from April 1985, was a mild one, but it has marked a new era in labour history. To the surprise of the bosses approximately 80% of the metal workers were in favour of the strike.

Naturally many trade unionists feel cheated or disappointed with the negotiated settlement. There is much room for criticism of the way the leadership conducted the strike, of the tactic of selective strikes and the restriction of strike action to two regions.

But, quite apart from the real gains that this strike has achieved (directly affecting some 3,600,000 workers), many important lessons have been drawn which will strengthen the unions in the years to come. It should not be forgotten that at the outset the employers had adamantly ruled out the possibility of conceding even a minute off the working week.



One of the strike sheets produced by IG Metall

The IG-Metall—with 2.6 million workers Europe's largest union—had campaigned for the 35-hour week on the basis that it would create half a million jobs. But even if this claim had been met in full, like all "agreements" it would only be on paper. The unions would have been forced to struggle at a local and national level to ensure that it was not mis-used by the employers in an attempt to rationalise, ie sack workers.

This is still the case because the settlement allows for plant-level agreements in a 37 to 40 hour range and the employers undoubtedly see this as an opportunity to weaken the centralised negotiating structure which has existed here since the war. They imagine that this could even lead to a weakening of the unions themselves. But they are mistaken.

Local negotiation

The departure from centralised to plant-level negotiation will, in this case, merely draw in more workers into the debate about hours, conditions, productivity, the employment of apprentices, etc., because so many workers were spectators to the struggle rather than active participants they will feel more frustrated than defeated by the recent outcome of the strike.

The fact that 200,000 workers were locked out in

areas outside the striking regions proved once more how the ruthless bosses will react. Many thousands were locked out in the strike region of Hesse—despite this practice being illegal under Hesse's constitution. A large number of those locked-out received no social security payments. Thus the myth of West Germany's "model" legal and welfare system was laid bare.

The battle over working hours is not over yet. The Secretary of the International Metalworkers' Federation, Herman Rebhahn, said after the strike: "The 40-hour week is now in the dustbin of history". Works' councillors and shop stewards have already begun to calculate how many new jobs could be created under the new conditions and will undoubtedly now face the opposition of the employers.

The union hopes that overall this settlement will lead to 70,000 new jobs but this is very little in face of the recent increase in unemployment, which is expected to top 2.5 million by Christmas. Hans Janssen of the IG—Metall Executive has had to promise that the fight for 35 hours will be taken up again in 1986.

Of the six (now seven)

West German trade unions pledged to this demand only three have so far taken effective strike action. Although the remaining unions do not have the strength of the IG-Metall nor the strike experience of the printers, they will try to at least match the achievements of the recent strikes.

On a European scale the strike will encourage other workers. The Norwegian metal workers already achieved a 37½ hour week last April (to take effect over the next 2 years), while many workers in Belgium and France now work between 35 and 39 hours. But as West Germany is generally regarded by employers as the pacesetter (how often have British workers been told about the industrious, ie efficient German workers) the new regulations will make workers in other countries even more sceptical about pleas to increase their sacrifice in the interests of the national economy.

The next round of collective bargaining in Belgium (due to begin next year) will certainly see the Socialist unions placing the demand for a 35-hour week high on the list of priorities.

The employers have obviously resorted to their usual arguments that they cannot afford the 6.5% increase in costs which they estimate such a reduction in hours would bring. Likewise, they now argue that the fruits of the economic upswing in West Germany have been "ruined" by the metal workers strike which caused output to fall by 2.5% in April and May. It can be expected that



On the picket line at a computer factory.

any agreements wrested from the employers will involve productivity deals and other manoeuvres.

It was for this reason that the print workers resisted the so-called "fleximodel" accepted by the metal workers. The print industry has experienced a drastic fall in the numbers employed and union membership has fallen as a consequence. But despite the fact that many workers have been disappointed—and it should be noted that only just over half of the metal workers voted for the agreement (under German industrial law only 25% is required)—the unions will not have not been weakened by this experience.

One current affairs magazine gloomily reported that even mass resignations from the unions (which did occur to some relatively minor extent in 1978) would only strengthen resolve because it would leave the unions in the hands of the "more aware and class-conscious members". They

added that this would lead to the moderates being in the minority and "English (British) conditions as can be seen in the radicalisation of the miners".

And that day may not be so far away. Fourteen days after the strike the DGB (the West German TUC) produced a strategy paper which spelt out their perspectives under the CDU government: growing long-term unemployment, inhuman working conditions, inadequate safety and health regulations at the workplace, inadequate workers' participation and unequal educational and training opportunities.

German workers will not take that lying down. They will struggle to defend the gains made in the years of economic upswing and when they do move, you won't hear East German radio saying very much about it, but it will shake Europe to its foundations.

By Sue Powell
in Hamburg

Fighting the dictator

THE GOVERNMENT of Sri Lanka is now notorious for its dictatorial and reactionary policies. After having encouraged ultra-nationalist pogroms in 1983 against the minority national grouping the Tamils, the government then used the riots as an excuse to ban left parties and groupings.

The dictator, JR Jayawardene tried to blame the left for the riots. Jayawardene has a friend and military provider in the British Prime Minister, Thatcher who will visit Sri Lanka in October. The left parties find their help in Britain in the working class movement.

Vickramabahu Karunaratne, the general secretary of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) who has been in Britain speaking at a number of meetings was interviewed

THE WAY forward for the Sri Lankan working class lies in the unity of Tamil and Sinhalese workers to overthrow Jayawardene's dictatorial government.

At the meeting at London's County Hall, Vickramabahu Karunaratne (NSSP general secretary), Ronnie Perera (secretary, United Federation of Labour) and V Subramanian (general secretary, United Lanka Estate Workers' Union) explained how the Sri Lanka labour movement was regaining its strength.

by Militant. The NSSP was itself banned after the pogroms. Comrade Vickramabahu explained that the NSSP were campaigning on a number of demands at present.

"The main demands are to lift the ban on the NSSP and on the JVP, another of the banned parties. We demand an end to the bitter oppression of the Tamil people.

Despite the defeat of the 1980 general strike and the communal riots of 1983 the labour movement had regrouped. The tea plantation workers, mainly Tamil, had secured a victory through mass class action.

The speakers stressed that they supported and defended the national liberation demands of the Tamils—indeed the NSSP was the first party in Sri Lanka to do so.

But history and the recent events in Jaffna in the north of the island had shown that the

methods of individual terrorism favoured by sections of the oppressed Tamil people were proving counter-productive. The struggle of the plantation workers in the south, on the other hand had united Tamil and Sinhalese workers around class demands and inflicted effective damage on the government.

In the collections, where Ninesh Muttiah described the sacrifice and repression of the speakers on the platform, over £200 was raised for the NSSP.

We call for the re-employment of workers thrown out after the 1980 general strike.

"In Sri Lanka, workers' organisations who support the NSSP's ideas are campaigning on the removal of two punitive taxes imposed as a result of government talks with the International Monetary Fund, the water tax and rehabilitation tax

which takes money out of workers' pockets for the damage caused by the pogroms that the UNP government encouraged!

"In Britain, Sri Lankan socialists are calling for an end to the military links between the Thatcher government and Jayawardene. We need to build links between workers in Britain and Sri Lanka."

Letters

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

Ripping yarn

Dear Comrades,

I, a striking miner, was walking down the road to my colliery, Point of Ayr in North Wales, to collect wage slips (for Social Security reasons).

I and two friends were stopped by two policemen, one sergeant number 701, and told that if we walked any further we'd be arrested. I told him nearly everyone on strike goes to collect wage slips nearly every Thursday with no trouble at all. This sergeant wasn't having it and threatened to arrest us.

I continued walking and told him he was out of order stopping us. A scuffle started. I ended up on the ground with sergeant 701's arm around my throat and

his knee pressed into my spine. My shirt sleeve was almost ripped off.

Fortunately my mate had a camera and has taken plenty of pictures to verify the incident. We were forced back up the road the way we came.

I asked an Inspector if he had any objections to me going to collect my pay slips. I carried out my business at the pit. When I came back I showed the Inspector the rip in my coat and he told me to write the Chief Constable, as I have done.

If I get a satisfactory answer from him and if he pays for a new coat or repairs to the one I've got, then watch your heads 'cause pigs will be flying!

Yours
Tony Bargielowski
Point of Ayr NUM

Benefits system—terrible failings

Dear Comrades,

Working in the DHSS, we see the worst hit victims of capitalism. Investigating a recent claim for funeral expenses from a woman who wished to send her brother's dead body home to Ireland, it emerged that the man had drowned himself.

He had been forced by his landlord to pay his rent from his Supplementary Benefit whilst waiting for his Housing Benefit to arrive. The

day after he drowned, a Housing Benefit cheque arrived for just over £1,000.

Because of this, the claim for funeral expenses will probably be rejected as the woman will be judged to have enough capital to pay herself.

While this is just another example of the terrible failings of the present system, it shows most clearly who are fighting for and who we are fighting against.

Yours fraternally
(Name withheld)
CPSA Broad Left member

Daily Maxwell

Dear Comrades,

Robert Maxwell's takeover of the *Daily Mirror* is obviously bad news for the labour movement. Judging by the hysterical campaign over the past couple of weeks against the left wing of the Labour Party and in favour of the "one member, one vote" rule change in the reselection process, it looks like Maxwell thinks he has bought the right to run the Labour Party as well.

Maxwell tries to portray himself as a great patriot who has the interests of the

ordinary British people at heart. He has even introduced a new front page heading which says "Forward with Britain". But it seems that Maxwell isn't such a patriot when it comes to money. The *New Statesman* (27 July) revealed that Maxwell's parent company, Pergamon Holdings, is registered in Lichtenstein, for tax purposes. As usual with the capitalists, patriotic talk designed to confuse workers is cheap but they're not prepared to put their money where their mouths are!

Fiona Winders
Newham South LPYS

'Illegal' collections

Dear *Militant*,

On Tuesday 7 August, 40 LPYS members, miners, trade unionists and supporters of the Medway Trades Council Miners' Solidarity Committee lobbied Gillingham councillors as they went into the council meeting to discuss the question of granting us a licence to collect for the miners. Initially the General Purposes Committee rejected the application on the casting vote of the Tory chair.

The Tories faced a hostile reception from the lobbyists outside, and the Labour councillors continued the onslaught on the inside attacking the blatantly political decision of the committee. All this was to no avail and the council voted by 21-14 against giving us a licence. The decision by the council caused such an uproar that the council meeting had to be adjourned for five minutes so that the "troublemakers"

could be removed. Despite this decision we will carry on collecting illegally even though the police have confiscated £30 from two separate collections.

Yours fraternally
Marc Green
Gillingham LPYS

Sticking together

Dear Comrades,

Bill Sirs wrote in the *Daily Mail* why he could not bring his men out on strike to support the miners.

Frank Chapple has said that miners who cause damage to property should be punished severely.

With these kind of men who criticise the miners and its leadership, who needs enemies?

I have nothing but admiration for the miners, for they have shown what unions are about: **sticking together no matter what.**

Yours fraternally
Paul Sparks
Epsom and Ewell LPYS



Mass picket at South Wales NUM HQ, Pontypridd, 1 August.

Support for miners in Ponty

Dear Sir,

I run a shop in Pontypridd town, and I strongly support the miners in their fight. My dad worked underground since the end of the Second World War, until his death in '76. My un-

cle was burned to death in the Tower Colliery explosion when I was a child.

My mother's second husband died of pneumoconiosis five years ago. I would be grateful if you could get in touch with me as

regards selling *Militant* etc, and any anti-Tory literature, posters, etc.

When Pontypridd was in the news last week (miners defending the NUM building in Ponty against sequestration of funds), miners from other

parts of the country walked here with posters of Maggie covered in red V signs like the space film that ran as a serial recently. If you had those made up, they'd be really popular round here.

Mrs J Sutton
Pontypridd

Some leadership!

Dear Comrades,

Is this what we mean by leadership? Neil Kinnock remained conspicuously on the fence in the struggles in Liverpool and now the vitally important coal dispute, copping out, leaving others to put their necks on the line by providing the real leadership.



Labour leader, Neil Kinnock.

Now he has decided to assert his 'authority'. By doing what? By re-opening old constitutional wrangles and handing on a plate a weapon to our enemies to beat us with.

Yours fraternally
Ian Hunter
Sacriston Labour Party

Times rejects new realism

Dear Comrades,

I was surprised to find a rejection of the the policy of 'new realism' in a *Times* editorial recently. Headed the "Heirs of the Warsaw Uprising" it stated: "Of course party propaganda draws the lesson of realism from the failure. 'Realism' is opposed to insurrectionary 'romanticism'. The comparison is false since realism in their (the Polish bureaucracy's) vocabulary is a code word for abject collaboration. Why should it be unrealistic for the Polish people to demand control

Fabian tolerance

Dear Sir,

On Friday 29 June three Labour Party members were ejected from a public meeting organised by the Bournemouth Fabians after having paid their 75p entrance fee.

Their crime? ... selling *Militant*. Nothing surprising about that you might say; until you consider that their removal occurred just after guest speaker Dennis Skinner MP, who only minutes earlier had made his own position on the issue of 'witch-hunts' quite clear, had left the meeting to catch a train back to London.

It would appear that Fabians love listening to left-wingers but then do exactly the opposite. Is such hypocrisy typical of 'democratic socialists', and is this an example of the tolerance we have now to expect from the newly 'united' Labour Party.

Yours somewhat bewildered
A Zakrzewski
Political Education Officer
Poole CLP
personal capacity

Women and society

Dear *Militant*,

The theory that "it is capitalism that exploits women", swallowed by Mandy Beckingham (p6 *Militant*, 171) and many young women in the movement, does not fit in with the Marxist view of history, as *Militant* leaders must know, even if the LPYS has had no opportunity to study it.

The exploitation of women began with the change from a hunter-gather society to an agricultural economy, in which the concept of private property

emerged. It was rife in feudal times. It will not automatically end with capitalism.

Unless women keep their eyes open and unite in the Women's Action Committees fight to make the Women's Section a semi-autonomous organisation within the Labour Party, they will be ditched when they have served their purpose. Lenin's government banished Alexandra Kollontai, their only woman member, declared immoral for claiming equal moral standards for men and women.

Yours in the fight
Kathleen Jones
Ludlow CLP



Silver birch in a state

"Silver Birch" strike-break 'leader' was interviewed on Radio 1 news at 4.30 on 6 August: "All these men have to do is to ring the pit manager and he will arrange the police state, err, police protection for them to go into work". By the 5.30 news this had been deleted.

UK pay great for tourists

Extract on Britain from the 1984 Frommers Europe on 25 Dollars a Day...

"Low cost restaurants and inexpensive night spots are astonishingly abundant at prices that would shame their American counterparts, because they are geared to the low (for America) wages of the overwhelming bulk of the British population".

New game for all the family

There is a new childrens' game being played in London play grounds, it's called 'Police versus the Picket'. Nobody wants to be the policeman and their job is to try and get past the picket.

FIGHTING FUND

This week: £1,167

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	532		2900
East Midlands	396		3550
Humberside	216		1850
London East	322		3200
London West	310		2150
London South East	228		1950
London South West	306		1650
Lancashire	138		1950
Manchester	376		2200
Merseyside	763		6100
Northern	290		4400
Scotland East	153		2950
Scotland West	571		3650
Southern	594		5100
South West	88		2150
Wales East	94		2550
Wales West	147		2050
West Midlands	370		4300
Yorkshire	413		5350
Others	512		5000
Total received	6819		65000

WE ARE now nearly half way through the quarter but nowhere near half way towards reaching the target.

This week only £1,167 was raised—we need to treble this NOW! If we are going to reach the target we must get fund raising events and activities going straight away; we must go out and appeal to the labour movement and all our supporters too for large and small donations.

There are thousands of opportunities and ideas that can be taken up; we should be able to sail over the target—it's up to YOU!

Use the summer holidays to your advantage—organise outside activities, local sponsored sports events, picnics,

barbecues, a street party. Make sure your area has got plans underway for a big event towards the end of the quarter—a jumble sale, a bazaar, or a disco. Don't leave the plans to the last minute.

Appeal sheets

Go out NOW and ask all readers and supporters who buy the paper for a donation—use appeal sheets, rattling tins—ask for £10, £5, £1 for the paper. The majority of our supporters are willing to donate if asked.

We can only go forward if we have the financial resources. If we organise properly now there will be no question of us being held back, no problems with us taking gigantic steps—help

us this week and regularly make a donation or help organise a local event.

By Kim Waddington

Glasgow SOGAT branch £20; Roethling GMBATU Shop Stewards' expenses £20; L Loving Horsham £10; M Neill LPYS Blackburn £6.75; C Holt Bethnal Green £6; Workers British Gas Easington Hull £9.60; AUEW "Sandusky" Glenrothes; Ernie Roberts MP Hackney £5; B Gales Wolves LPYS £5; Pontefract first ever Video Night £5; Hull AUEW No 12; branch members £3.50; A Smith, Coventry SW LPYS £1.25; a striking miner from Hull £1; Walthamstow Dust Depot £1; J Eddie Macclesfield unemployed 50p; D Smith Preston £1; P Cortesi Ventnor IOW 50p; Romsey and Waterside LPYS 50p and G Edwards Bedworth LPYS 50p.

SELLING Militant

I AM what is known as 'a lamp post seller', what some comrades sell in half an hour might take me two hours.

As a Leeds United fanatic, Saturday sales were unpredictable, so I put more time into selling during the week. I work shifts and so was able to try different times. Working two bus rides away, I buy a monthly bus pass which helps because otherwise it might seem a waste spending an 80p bus fare to sell papers, with no guarantee of selling any.

I have become so keen on selling the paper that when I'm on nights on Thursdays and Fridays I go to bed for two hours, do my dinner time sale then back to bed and on Saturday mornings after finishing the Friday

night shift, go home, read the morning papers get breakfast then back to town to sell.

Dinner time sales are probably the best and often a Wednesday or Thursday will be as good as a Friday or Saturday. It's often when I have had doubts about selling because of the weather or possibly an out of date headline that the best sales occur.

Beat the 'Sun'

I do get some abuse, but just as many good comments. A few weeks ago a stranger offered to buy me an ice cream as I stood for a couple of hours on a very hot day; during the winter—soup, coffee, even a drink of whisky have helped to keep me going—given by passers-by, and it really

cheers you up.

Some of my friends think that I'm mad to put all of that time into paper sales, but I think that its worth it even if I just sell one, you don't know what could come from that one sale. I also often see people selling socks etc on the shopping precinct, darting into the market to avoid the police and if they are willing to risk a fine for a few pounds in their pockets the least we can do is put some time into spreading the ideas of Marxism.

On average I sell 25 copies a week, I know it's not many, but on a couple of days recently sales of *Militant* have been above that of the *Sun*, and I'm looking forward to the time when we outsell the *Sun*, even when its in full production.

By Mick Fallon

Build your paper

AS WE reported last week we have passed the huge target of £175,000 for the Building Fund. This tremendous achievement came about through the determination and sacrifice of *Militant* supporters everywhere—in Britain and around the world.

We have had donations from thousands of workers over the last eleven months but there are thousands more who will be prepared to help—if they are asked. Already our success has been reported in the Tory *Daily Telegraph* and *Times*. No doubt they fear competition from a daily *Militant*!

contracts on the new premises and *Militant* will have a new home by our 20th anniversary rally. We still need at least a further £25,000 to pay for necessary repairs and alterations, giving an opportunity to those areas which have not yet met their target to catch up!

We need to approach every section of the labour

movement for a donation to the fund explaining what a giant step forward a Marxist daily will be for all workers.

Money is still coming in and we will keep our readers informed on progress. Our success so far shows the vast potential still remaining. Thanks this week to Andrew Mash, unemployed from Banstead, £50; Tuebrook LP, £30; Liverpool NGA, £50; Keith Bratley, Birkenhead, £30; Dundee University *Militant* supporters, £40.

By Nick Wrack

ADS

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

WALLSEND LPYS Miners Support Group Youth Festival, Saturday 18 August, 7.30pm, Bescot Sidings, Timothy Teapot & The Electric Kettles, Souls in Torment plus disco and speakers from the NUM, LPYS at the Digbeth Mutual Social Club, Stafford Street, Walsall. Entrance £1 waged, 50p unwaged.

'OFFICIAL' *Militant* rattling/collecting tins, 75p each + p&p. Available from *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Money with order please.

LEICESTER MILITANT INTERNATIONAL RALLY
Britain: Save the Pits
—Speaker: John Dunn, Markham NUM North Derbyshire (personal capacity)

Sri Lanka and the dictatorship
—Speaker: Ronnie Peraro Secretary, United Federation of Labour

Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, 7.30 pm.
Entrance: 20p, 10p unwaged.

WALSALL LPYS Support the Miners Rally at Walsall Town Hall. Ian Isaac (South Wales NUM Executive) Derek Hatton (Liverpool Labour Council) plus big name bands. Friday 31 August.

ROTHERHAM MINERS' Solidarity March: Saturday, 18 August, assemble 10.30 am for march at 11 at Bardsley Moor Lane, through Rotherham to Herringthorpe Playing Fields. Speakers: Jack Taylor (President, Yorkshire NUM), Eric Clarke (Secretary, Scottish NUM), Sean Hillyard (Regional Secretary, NUPE), Will Proudfoot (NUR), Bill Ronsley (ASLEF), Sid Vincent (Lancashire NUM). Organised by Rotherham Trades Council and Rotherham Miners' Support Group. Supported by Rotherham area NUM, NUR, ASLEF and NUPE.

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

STIFFORD AND EXMOUTH Tenants' Association: Saturday 18 August, 11 am - 7 pm, Drayford Square, London E1. Many attractions, raffle in aid of St Joseph's Hospice.

MILITANT sales poster based on Alan Hardman's 'V' cartoon now available from *Militant* circulation department, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN 25p each or 10 for £2 (post included).

MIKE KING is planning a parachute jump in September for the Fighting Fund and would like sponsors. Contact him at 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing, Southampton.

SE LONDON LABOUR MOVEMENT Miners march & rally, 2pm, Sat 8th September, Abbey Wood Station. Rally, 3.30pm, General Gordon Sq., Woolwich. Speakers: Mick McGahey (NUM), Joan Maynard, MP, Frances Curran (LPYS), John Austin-Walker, and others. Tickets: £1.50 in advance, £2 on door. Unwaged: 75p.

ROCK FOR THE MINERS
The Redskins,
Dub poet Tipa Naphtali
See you in Vegas
Stoke Newington Town Hall,
Church Street, London N16.
Saturday 18 August, 7.30 pm 'till late

Malcolm Pitt, President, Kent area NUM, speaking.
Miners' Support Committee, Hackney. Sponsored by Kent Area NUM, South Wales NUM, Notts Miners' Forum, Hackney Borough Council, Hackney Trades Union Council, Hackney North Labour Party, Hackney South Labour Party.

NORTH SHIELDS: Marxist Discussion Group every Sunday 11.30 pm (Mick Handley), 258 Waterville Road, North Shields. For further details contact, Norman Hogg, North Shields 584485.

TUC CONGRESS 1984
Campaign Group of Labour MP's meeting, Saturday 1 September, 7.30 until 9.30pm at Clarence Room, Metropole Hotel, Brighton. Speakers: Mick McGahey, Peter Heathfield, Dennis Skinner MP, Eric Heffer MP, Joan Maynard MP. on 'The Tory Threat'

BIRKENHEAD Marxist What we stand for: Speaker Martin Lee, Wednesday 22 August, 7.30 pm, 70 Grovesnor Road, Clauton, Birkenhead, Information 051-652-0112.



Photo: Militant

Thanks to *Militant* for the support you have given to Liverpool over the last few months of struggle to defend jobs and services in our city.

Better to break the law than to break the poor.

Tony Mulhearn, President Liverpool DLP (City councillor).
Terry Harrison, Vice President Liverpool DLP.
Eddie Loyden MP
John Hamilton JP, Treasurer (City councillor).
Felicity Dowling, Liverpool DLP Secretary (City councillor).
On behalf of Liverpool District Labour Party.

Advertisement

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Organise national rail strike

DESPITE CONCESSIONS won in this year's pay negotiations there has been no let up in the assault on rail. Jobs are still going (see reports below on the BREL day of protest) and one man operation is being pushed through. Enormous reductions in clerical staff have taken place and further contraction is on the way. Decisive action now by the rail unions can smash the Tory plans for a long time

The planned one-day strike in London and the South East on 12 September against redundancies on London Transport provides a perfect opportunity to mount all-out action against all the attacks on rail workers. It is also vital to link up with the miners, extending the already outstanding solidarity. 60% of all rail freight is coal—a defeat for the miners would lead to massive pit closures therefore further cuts in rail jobs, lower demand for wagons and further cuts in BREL, as well as an offensive on every front by an emboldened management.

A victory for miners and rail workers out of united action against the Tory attempt to slash pit and rail is the only sure way to defend our industries. Extending the 12 September action into a national rail strike as part of the preparation of a one-day general strike will help unite rail workers, miners and the whole movement in a show of strength which will terrify the Tories.



Jimmy Knapp and Ray Buckton leaders of the two main rail unions lead the Derby demonstration against British Rail workshop closures—unity of NUR and ASLEF in a historic step forward—now it can go forward in decisive action to save rail jobs.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

West Midlands

THE NUR is being forced to fight on several fronts at the same time against the management and the Tories. In the West Midlands we are still solidly blacking coal despite management's attempts to break our action.

On July 30 I was contacted by one of our signalmen on the Cannock line about a mystery train coming out of Rugeley Power station. As the driver would not tell him his destination the signalmen held the train up. Apparently a rogue ASLEF driver and a scab guard had been taken there by car to move a coal train. They didn't succeed

thanks to the prompt action of our signalmen. The train was only allowed to move back to its depot at Bescot.

That night I attended the Walsall branch that covers the line to get a reaffirmation of the blacking of coal and to congratulate our members on their solidarity. We are also campaigning against the rationalisation of the workshops. We organised meetings in all of the workshops in the West Midlands to build up for the 10 August one day strike. On the day there was 100% support.

The success of the workshop dispute shows that where we campaign for a

stoppage, the membership responds. The same would be true nationally. The workshop battle needs to be brought into campaign to save all BR jobs. The philosophy of Reid and the BR Board is no different to that of MacGregor. In the West Midlands we have called for the 1-day strike in London and the South East on September 12th to be made a national one-day rail strike with threat of further more extensive action if the Board does not abandon its attacks.

By Mick Atherton
(President West Midlands NUR)

Slade Green

“WE'RE SICK and tired of the job threats from the British Railways Board.” This comment, from George Swann (Slade Green NUR) summed up the feelings of pickets, 25 of whom were posted outside the gates of the Slade Green Depot on the 10 August day of action.

“We know what's happened to Ashford, Horwich, Temple Mills, Shildon and part of Glasgow already. The BRB have said there'll be no closures, but these

closures prove that they're liars. Now we've heard another rumour that Slade Green could lose 400 out of 700. For four years we've been denied the overtime which used to supplement low wages. In the repair shop there's more—in the inspection shed it's every other week—management has usened this to divide the membership. What's needed is one union for the railway industry.

“Support here has been

100% today and indications are that the Selhurst and Chart Leacon depots will be as well. This is only one of many days of protest to come.”

The presence of three Snowdown NUM members on the picket went down well. The one-day strike on the railways on 12 September will be fully backed at Slade Green.

By Tim Harris

Swindon

OF THREE thousand workers at the Swindon yard only thirty went into work so the picket finished by 8am.

BR management cancelled the train which was to go to the demonstration in Derby with the excuse that they hadn't got enough stock.

The truth is they were worried about the potential size of the demonstration. Hundreds still turned up at the station and

thousands would have gone on the demo given the chance.

There has been a lot of demoralisation as a result of the Confed union's failure to lead a national fight back but the mood is changing. As one worker said to me: “I'm a carriage fitter; if they sack me where can I get another job as a carriage fitter?”. A national lead would get a great response.

By Angela Anderson

Neath

IN NEATH in Mid Glamorgan all transport practically ground to a halt. The trains were out because of the NUR day of action, it was estimated that only a quarter of the trains in the whole of Wales were running. The local South Wales transport depot also took a day's strike. They were protesting at the threatened closure of the depot and the loss of jobs. There was a picket on with placards stating “Some Won't Travel and Swansea Won't Talk” and the strike also affected some national travel services which turned back at the Neath border.

At one stage management called the police, but the strike was solid and the men received a good response from the local people in their fight to save services.



Massed ranks of rail workers on the Derby demo, Friday 10 August.

Photo: Stephano Cogsoni (IFL)

ASLEF's new mood at Waterloo

TWO YEARS to the day after ASLEF members returned to work following betrayal by the TUC, a resurgence of militancy is in evidence.

By Andy Flett
(Waterloo ASLEF)

A recent branch meeting was informed of management's arbitrary decision to pay or not pay sick pay. Management demanded that drivers must inform management of sickness prior to their signing on time. Bearing in mind that train crews sign on right round the clock, this was just not on. Apparently management

ment assume that all staff have telephones at home purely for management's benefit and that if they don't then they are married and can send their wife out in search of a call box, at two in the morning!

Waterloo is not the only station where management have tried this on, unfortunately it has been allowed to happen without any action from the national leadership. However it was not going to succeed here. The branch instructed the LDC (Local Departmental Committee) to call a 24 hour strike if management did not back down.

The next day (Tuesday) management again put off

negotiations telling the LDC that they would meet on Friday. The LDC immediately told management that this was not suitable and that we would be on strike on the Friday.

On Wednesday management called a meeting for Thursday at which they conceded. Indeed the matter was clarified, giving us a better agreement than before.

Past disunity

Management had decided to take on Waterloo because they thought that we were weak. This was possibly due to an uncharacteristic disunity that had prevailed since

the TUC debacle. There had only been minimal support for the TUC day of action over GCHQ and there was not 100% support for the SERTUC “day of solidarity” with miners. However the blame for this was not within the branch but against the failure of the national leadership to give a positive lead.

Most of those who did work on the SERTUC day put extra money into the miners' collection and many more came out than the right wing at the depot had expected after an attempt by some to personalise the issue. Witchhunts don't work, it is the issues that count. Indeed, regular collections and

the SERTUC day have given rise to much debate and new and increasing awareness of the class nature of the miners' battle with this government and its agents, the NCB.

At the same branch meeting a motion was moved condemning Neil Kinnock for his failure to give full support to the miners in the way Thatcher has to her class. An amendment “calling for support for the miners from Neil Kinnock” instead of “condemning” him was rejected and the original motion was carried.

Waterloo is not alone in this new mood, other branches on the division have new people taking up office

Branches must put pressure on the leaderships of ASLEF and NUR to mount a campaign to save jobs in the face of continued productivity demands from management and privatisation of our profitable sections by this government.

The leadership of the rail unions must step up their support of the miners to bring this dispute to a swift and successful conclusion. If MacGregor is allowed to decimate the coal industry as he did steel then it will only be a matter of time before he takes the hot seat at Rail House to dust off and implement the Serpell Report.

Merseyside Closure conspiracy

"A DELIBERATE conspiracy to bleed Merseyside dry" was how USDAW steward John Culklin reacted to the closure of Merseyside Foods.

Two hundred and fifty eight jobs are threatened at the Regent Road factory in Liverpool.

By R Knights

Yet again a stunned workforce face the blow of closure. Many workers openly wept at the announcement, one office worker stated that she had been made redundant at three other companies.

Vestey

Merseyside Foods is part of the giant Vestey Empire—like many other companies it built its fortune in Liverpool, now it wants to pull out.

Workers put the responsibility for closure on the

shoulders of management. Peter Thompson, AUEW steward said: "We believe the management of the factory must take a lot of blame for this". Management's claim of massive investment, was ridiculed by workers who pointed out that money had only been spent on a new warehouse and new oil tank, the margarine factory had seen no big investment for ten years.

Liverpool District Labour Party has pledged full support and Liverpool City Council will be assisting the struggle for jobs.

Fire Brigades Union saves jobs by national action

"NO redundancies in the Fire Service!" was the message from members of Strathclyde Fire Brigades Union when they voted overwhelmingly to protect eighteen Fire Service control operators' jobs.

The Labour-controlled Regional Council has said the jobs need to go as a result of cuts in the rate support grant. The operators involved became supernumerary as a result of a new computerised control room built at Johnstone in Strathclyde.

National policy

The attempt to redeploy them into other jobs within the region failed and the other option of voluntary redundancy also failed due to the majority being young. The council issued them with redundancy notices.

FBU national policy on redundancies is for immediate emergency recall of the national conference with

a clear mandate for national strike action. The General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union was called in and Strathclyde Regional Council was faced with the fact that the redundancies would cause a national strike. They backed off and the jobs were saved.

Cuts to come

10,000 more jobs will go if Labour tries to meet the proposed cuts of £38.5 million required by the Secretary of State in clawbacks. Where does it end? As a member of the Labour Party my advice to the council is that they must go to the voters and organise a campaign of resistance with the support of the Strathclyde working class. That way they can and will succeed—not only defeating Tory policies in Scotland but returning a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

By a Strathclyde
FBU member

Five hundred jobs threatened at Birmingham University

ON FRIDAY, 13 August, non-academic staff at Aston University, Birmingham, walked out over a threatened forty redundancies. Management have been planning to lose 500 jobs at the site through voluntary redundancies, but when the budget came around in July they realised not enough redundancies could be found and they attempted to force them through.

The staff, mainly

members of ASTMS and NALGO fought back with industrial action, occupying the university's corridors and holding a two-hour silent vigil. Support has already been voiced from 27 other universities around the country. The workers fear that YTS schemes will be used to replace the jobs lost, alongside privatisation of university services.

By Kath Burns

Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (IFL)



Occupation at British Aerospace, Bristol, 8 August.

British Aerospace

'This factory belongs to me'

SHEM HOGAN, shop steward at British Aerospace Aircraft where 2,000 workers are occupying over parity with other sites spoke to Roger Thomas and Chris Parry, Bristol North West Labour Party.

"Support this morning has been magnificent. The company seems content to sit back at the moment using the threat of the injunction which it was granted last Wednesday by the High Court. We called for support from the rest of Aerospace

and reinforced the picketing on a 24-hour basis.

"We are prepared for the management, the police and bailiffs. Morale remains high and the men are especially determined following last week's meeting with McKinley, the Aircraft group director, where he threatened us and told us to get back to work with no concessions.

United action

"If we are removed from the building we will simply picket the front gate. Either way no planes are going to be built. As one bloke said,

echoing a growing mood of determination. "I have worked here for fifteen years, this factory belongs to me."

Also occupying are Flitton Dynamics workers with 470 workers on site. The feeling is one of anger and bitterness towards a management they believe has broken its promises. Chairman of the Dynamics group joint Shop Stewards Committee, ALAN GLEADLE said "This is not a militant work force, there has never been an all out strike. At the most we have had an overtime ban. But management's attitude has stiffened the

resolve. We are all determined to stick it out till we get what we are due."

Injuries

Anger deepened when senior management attempted to force their way into the space research establishment during the first week of the dispute and pickets were injured in the resulting clashes. That split became much wider when the company took legal action last Wednesday, "The violence was one thing but then the writ upset a lot of people."

Insurance strike a big success

FOR THE first time ever, one-day strike action has been taken by staff members of ASTMS employed by Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd.

Chester, Exeter and Cardiff offices were out on the 17 July; Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Bradford offices on the 18 July; Birmingham on the 19th and Southampton and Newcastle on the 20 July. All reports so far indicate tremendous support for the action which followed a 73% rejection of a 6½% offer.

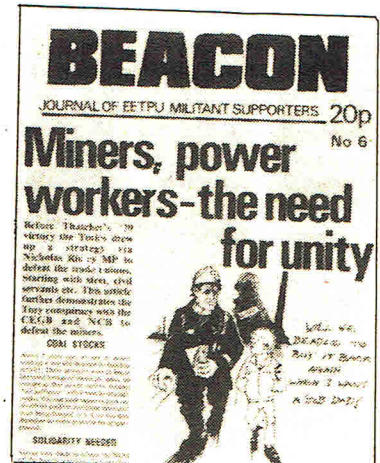
At our Glasgow office only the branch manager crossed the picket line out of nearly forty staff. The ASTMS staff section does not negotiate for

branch managers and above. Similar at the Chester office, only the branch manager and two staff crossed the picket line (and one of these is not a union member).

The union is also demanding a published non-discriminatory mortgage scheme (we have been negotiating for this for ten years—only one female member of staff has a company mortgage), and an immediate joint review of pay scales. The action is due to continue.

By Terry Crow

(Secretary, ASTMS, MMI Combine, personal capacity)



Available from: World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN
20p + 15p p&p

BLOC and the TUC

Swansea Trades Council

SWANSEA TRADES Council reacted quickly to the announcement that South Wales NUM were having their funds sequestered by organising an emergency meeting of shop stewards and trades council delegates. Despite the holiday period a well attended meeting enthusiastically supported the call for 24-hour general strike, recognising the need to give physical as well as financial support to the South Wales miners.

The BLOC lobby of the TUC on 3 September will be an important step in mobilising trades unionists to defeat the Tories and put a bit of back-bone into the TUC. Swansea Trades Council will be fully supporting the BLOC lobby and sending representatives along to Brighton to show our solidarity with the miners.

By Bernard Roome

(Secretary, Swansea Trades Council)

Transport to lobby

Contact:

Bristol: Roger Thomas 0454 615275
Plymouth: Mike Sheaff 0752 551526
West Glamorgan: Phil Lloyd (Swansea) 584252
Mid Glamorgan: Alan Short (Bridgend) 60684
East Wales: Andy Price (Cardiff) 462168
West Wales: Muriel Browning (Llanelli) 50208
London East: Pat Atkinson 01-985 9475
London Central: Dave Crack 01-689 0970
London South East: Steve McKenzie 01-310 4082
London West: Brian Blake 01-575 6120
Brent LPYS: John Dolan 01-452 5305
Liverpool: Jimmy Hollinshead 051-734 2131
Birmingham and Wolverhampton: Bill Murray 021-551 3090
Nottingham: Dave Jones 0602 298272
Portsmouth: Chris Pickett 0705 695932
Cambridgeshire: Keith Wyatt 0481 830000
Hull: Alan Shadforth 0482 218071

Militant

Next issue

There will be no issue of *Militant* next week in order to give staff a summer break. The next issue dated 31 August will cover the vital TUC conference.

3 SEPTEMBER

Lobby for TUC action

LABOUR MPs in the Campaign Group have called for support of the BLOC lobby on 3 September.

"We, the undersigned members of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs support the lobby of the TUC conference called by the Broad Left Organising Committee on Monday 3 September in Brighton. We support the aims of this lobby to express to conference the need for the TUC to give full backing to the miners in their fight for jobs.

"We also support the other aim of the lobby; to convince conference that all Tory anti-union laws must be totally opposed, in particular the clauses attacking Labour Party funds, which we believe are a blatant attempt to financially strangle the only party that can sweep the Tories out of power and run the country in the interests of working people."

Terry Fields
Derek Fatchett
Harry Cohen
Dave Nellist
Max Madden

Eddie Loyden
Dennis Skinner
Bob Litherland
Joan Maynard

Photo: Ben Eastop



Fleet Street electricians show their support for the miners. Build support through BLOC.

Coal movement slashed

Continued from front page

These revelations about the blacking of coal movement should harden the miners' determination even more, and intensify our efforts to get maximum solidarity from all other sections of the working class. Our fight is a fight for all workers.

If the Tories were allowed to get away with using anti-trade union laws to stifle our union, if they were allowed to crush the NUM, then no worker's job, wage or livelihood would be safe.

As South Wales Miners' President, Emlyn Williams said in the interview in *Militant* last week, miners should support the call for a 24-hour general strike. The NUM should itself name the day for the strike to rally workers around the miners, to express their opposition to the Tories' class laws and to begin a campaign against the Tory government.

The maximum solidarity must now be forged. Against the increasing weight and viciousness of the Fleet Street campaign against the striking miners, we have to get our message across in the labour movement. The miners must organise teams of members to approach workplaces everywhere, to speak to shop stewards and mass meetings, to make collections, to explain the issues and to mobilise support.

Those tactics and methods have to be brought to the fore that will maximise the support for the strike among the mass of the working class. The support and sympathy is there: we now have to approach workers to turn that sympathy into concrete solidarity action.

The nearer we get to September and the cooler weather, the more hysterical will become the media campaign, but the more determined will the miners become. We have not gone 24 weeks just to pack it in when the coal stocks are about to run out!

Ours has been a long, hard and bloody fight. But with the support of the labour movement, we will gain an historic victory.

20 October: Celebrate 20 years of *Militant*

BOOKINGS ARE already flooding in for the *Militant* 20th Anniversary Rally on 20 October at which Tony Benn, Peter Taaffe, and Ted Grant will be speaking.

Comrades from Brighton write, "Please find enclosed £34 in payment for 17 tickets... within two weeks we will have sold the remaining 18 and will need more tickets."

Over 120 tickets have already been paid for, and with attendance limited to

nearly 3,000 it will be a full house. And no wonder! The rally will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the launching of *Militant*, and also celebrating the move to new premises which will enable more regular production of the *Militant*.

The first issue of *Militant* set a fund-raising target of £500 which took a number of years to reach. We have now raised £175,000 for the Building Fund in addition to £150,000 for the Fighting

Fund in the past year. That growth in financial support reflects the growth in political support for ideas which have been proven correct in difficult times and in periods of struggle such as the present.

October the 20th will mark the opening of a new era of Marxism in the labour movement—steps towards a daily paper. Make sure you are there! Order your tickets and book your transport now!



Monday 3 September, 1984 from 8 am at Conference Centre, Brighton

- ★ Full support for the miners.
- ★ For a fighting, democratic, socialist leadership in the trade unions.

Coaches have been booked in most areas—details on page 15.

Rally: 3 September, The Level, Brighton. Speakers include Dennis Skinner MP, Kent miners' leader Jack Collins and Kevin Roddy, CPSA NEC. Time 1.00 pm.

One week to *Militant* camp

9th South Wales *Militant* summer camp August Bank Holiday, Friday 24 August—Monday 27 August

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 years) FREE UNDER 5's. Day trippers a minimum of £3 donation per day to the Fighting Fund. For every ten places booked, you get one free. Venue—Horton, Gower, Near Swansea.

Further details from, and cheques made payable to "Swansea Summer Camp"—181 Hanover Street, Swansea SA1 6BP. Tel: Swansea (0792) 463523. During day phone: Swansea 466631.

Smash Pinochet

THE LONDON region of the Labour Party Young Socialists have called a rally on Tuesday 11 September, the eleventh anniversary of the military coup in Chile.

After 11 years of repression, tortures, mass murders and "disappearances" under the Pinochet regime, the workers have begun the fightback despite the continued vicious military rule.

With 35% unemployment and no state benefit, an average wage of £80 a month and a third of all Chileans homeless, the rebuilding of the labour movement is vital. But such conditions also

make it a gigantic task and Chilean workers need financial solidarity desperately.

The rally aims not only to raise the issue of Chile among labour and trade union movement activists but also to raise money to send to trade unionists inside Chile.

For more information and speakers contact Lesley Phillips, National Committee, Chile Socialist Defence Campaign (London), c/o 5 Alverstone House, Kennington Park Road, London SE11.

By Andy Nutter (Deptford LPYS)

Chile meeting 11 September

LONDON LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS Smash Pinochet rally.

8.00 pm Tuesday 11 September, Central Hall, Westminster.

Speakers Tony Benn MP, Ian Isaac (South Wales NUM Executive), Terry Fields MP + others.

50p entrance



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