

## Tories' 200-day war

# Put power behind miners

"Mrs Thatcher is treating this strike as another Falklands" — Tory Minister



"WE WENT on the river with a little boat and a banner. A boat came in and we put the banner up saying 'This is an NUM picket line.'

"We got talking to the lads on the ship as we pulled up alongside. They agreed not to bring any more oil in that day until we had words with their boss."

Ronnie Campbell and Kevin Beddoes, miners from Bates colliery in Blyth, Northumberland, explained to *Militant* how they took to the water and set about stopping scab oil going into Blyth power station.

"We had thirty pickets arrested there, very early in the miners' strike. They stopped the coal scab lorry drivers were bringing in. The workers inside who weighed and tipped the coal refused to touch it. Management said they would do it themselves, estimating the loads. The workers inside said that if management did that they would close the power station in two or three days."

By Kevin Miles

"The workers agreed that if any scab coal came in they would close the power station down. That's been the position for the duration of the strike. But they have had extra oil." That's how Ronnie and Kevin came to take picket power on to the water.

"The day the TUC decided to back the miners," Ronnie said, "was the day I decided to picket the oil."

Though they haven't yet stopped oil, due to scabbing by Merchant Navy officers, their initiative is an example to the entire movement. With that kind of determination and flair the miners can build a mass campaign to stop coal and oil going into the power stations. Such a campaign would rapidly bring the Tories to their knees.

Last Monday four hundred miners staged the first mass picket of a power station—at Eggborough in Yorkshire. These workers are showing the way to

Continued on back page

## Deputies ballot to join strike

THE NEWS that the union representing pit deputies, NACODS, are to vote on whether to join the strike will be welcomed by all NUM members.

The vote at the end of the month needs a two thirds majority. An earlier vote was 54% in favour of striking. But relations between NACODS and NCB management have got much worse since the bosses told deputies that if they didn't cross picket lines they would lose pay.

If the deputies did walk out, it could enormously increase the effect of the strike by hopefully bringing non-striking areas, particularly in the Midlands, to a halt.

The decision by this traditionally moderate group will make miners all the more confident that Thatcher and MacGregor's attacks can be beaten. We will not return without safeguarding our jobs and our future.

- ★ No closures except on grounds of proven exhaustion.
- ★ Genuine investment guarantees, spelling out pit by pit, area by area, the plans for expansion of our industry.
- ★ Abolition of the divisive incentive bonus scheme, with the bonuses consolidated into a substantial pay rise.
- ★ A 4-day working week to maintain jobs for this and future generations.

Labour Party Young Socialists

## Young Miners Rally for Victory and Socialism

6 pm Sunday, 30 September, Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool.

Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP

Comrades travelling to Blackpool are urged to support Labour CND march assembling at 1 pm at Cenotaph. Speakers: Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn.

THATCHER'S plans to smash the NUM have been thwarted by our determination, particularly seen in the young miners.

NUM members in the Labour Party Young Socialists are now organising a rally for victory and socialism before Labour Party conference on 30 September. Make sure young miners, NUM branches, LPYS members get to Blackpool. Make sure coaches are booked and finances raised to make sure the Pavilion Theatre is full to capacity.

By Gary Knowles  
(Bold NUM Lancashire)

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# Militant

## Miners want victory not armistice

Every day that passes brings winter and a miners' victory nearer. Even senior Tory ministers are now beginning to prepare themselves psychologically for a defeat. They are saying in private that there can be "no winners", but after having invested so much political and economic capital to win in this dispute their failure to close pits and crush the miners would be a massive defeat for them.

It has been the intention all along of the NCB and the Government to decimate the mining industry, with no thought of the consequences to local communities or to job prospects. Ever since the Heath Government was brought down by the 1974 miners' strike, and more specifically, since Thatcher was forced to back down over pit closures in 1981, the Tories have been determined to smash the power of the mineworkers.

If they were able to cut the miners down to size, they believed no trade union would be able to stand up against their relentless assault on living standards and trade union rights.

Never before in the history of the labour movement has there been such a colossal and carefully orchestrated campaign—involving the police; NCB management; the press, radio and TV and the courts—to break the will of one section of workers in struggle.

But the miners have taken everything the Tories have thrown at them in the last twenty-eight weeks and are more resolute than ever. Even within the management of the NCB there is deep pessimism about their 'back to work' campaign.

A MORI poll conducted among Derbyshire miners on behalf of *Panorama* has confirmed this, although naturally enough it was not featured anywhere in the national press. It indicated that the miners were no longer interested in a ballot, that even if there was a ballot they would support the strike, but above all that they were determined to stay out to win.

Moreover, for many miners it is no longer just a question of jobs. The strike is already breaking endurance records; it is not likely to be repeated in the near future. Miners therefore want other issues to be settled now: with their guarantee of jobs and investment they want a 4-day week and the abolition of the divisive incentive scheme.

The leadership of the NUM are in an increasingly strong position, as the balance tips in favour of the miners. Quite correctly, they seem to be avoiding pressure for independent mediation which would mean losing in a meeting what the miners and the families have won on the picket line.

Arthur Scargill has said that at the end of the day the agreement reached must be only between the NUM and the NCB. That can only mean a miners' victory. It should be the miners themselves, the footsoldiers of the strike, who have the final say over the terms of their victory. Mining areas and individual branches must have complete assurances as to levels of investment and job security in their area or pit.

The Trades Union Congress have a responsibility now to put on the pressure. The miners must be given support when they approach power station workers. All coal, coke and oil movements must be blacked. The job of the TUC is not to stand to one side as an impartial umpire urging a "settlement" but to help win a miners victory.

The greater the degree of solidarity extended to the mineworkers, the earlier and the more decisive will be their victory. The greater the miners' victory, the better the future for all workers.

As fast as the Tories are shifting their ground and getting used to the idea that they cannot win, the miners themselves are digging in for a victory. They are less prepared to go back now, than they were for example in April, May or June. As one Derbyshire miner commented on the *Panorama* programme, "Why should we accept an armistice, when we can have a victory?"

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# Cracks open in Cabinet

**NOW THAT the miners' strike looks like stretching into the winter cracks are beginning to open up in the Cabinet.**

The *Times*, 17 September, reported that Ministers are divided over whether or not they can really win a victory over the miners.

Few Ministers reportedly have any hope that the 'back to work' tactics will have any success. Even in the newly reshuffled Cabinet of cloned Thatcherites, some Ministers are worried that the Prime Minister will be forced to retreat because of winter power cuts.

Special criticism is reserved for Tebbit because he is adopting a 'gung-ho attitude' "encouraging her whenever she shows the slightest sign of faltering." Whilst some Ministers clearly want a settlement, others are determined to fight on for total victory.

The *Economist* 15 September reported that "the government's worst nightmare is that a tired Mr MacGregor might agree to some compromise dreamed up by his industrial relations staff. The Home Secretary, Mr Leon Brittan, did his best to avert a settlement. Right in the middle of the delicate talks he reassured Notts Conservatives that there was

no limit to the prison sentences that could be imposed for riot or affray."

As the strike goes on, the stakes get higher. If Thatcher is forced to give in to the miners under the pressure of power cuts, then her own days as Premier are numbered. Tebbit's militancy may not be unrelated to the challenge he is now facing as Thatcher's heir-apparent from the likes of Lawson and Brittan.

But Thatcher's departure would herald a new period. Workers throughout the country would be encouraged to move into action.

Although she would in all probability be replaced by a 'wet', no leading Tory wants

to see their party defeated by the miners. That is why there is concern inside the party about the course ahead. One Cabinet Minister told the *Times* that he was worried that Thatcher was treating the dispute like the Napoleonic war.

The parallel could not be more apt. It was Napoleon's winter retreat from Moscow which heralded his downfall and showed he could be beaten. It is the possibility that a similar nightmare could be inflicted on our modern-day, would-be Bonaparte which is now glimpsed by the Generals of the Tory Party.

By Jim Chrystie

# Sensation - woman has baby

MONDAY 17 September was a strange day for the *Sun*. There were no nudes on page 3. But anyone who thought no nudes was good news, was disappointed.

Instead they had a picture of what looked like a poached egg wrapped up in a blanket which the *Sun* told us was the third person in line for the throne of Britain, one Prince Henry Charles Albert David, already a great and very rich man at the age of one day.

He was born in the private wing of St. Marys Hospital at a cost of £140 a night (you could hire Ian MacGregor as a midwife for that). Princess Di was in labour for some hours the press told us, but she won't have to labour much afterwards as the Prince has a relay of nannies and nurses.

Harry is very important. In future he could constitutionally have power of veto over governments which do naughty things like implementing socialist policies. He won't be needed just at the moment, but his family are already very useful. Charles and Di got engaged just after Thatcher gave in to the miners in 1981, got hitched just after the distur-



bances in Toxteth and had their second kid during the miners' strike. But if they're going to have such a diversion every time workers fight for their rights, Prince Charles' polo team will become a football eleven. We think the Princess should be told.

In the meantime, the com-

ics produce horoscopes for the royal infant, and the *Sun* asks other Harrys what they think of the name. A few weeks back the *Express* speculated on who Prince William, aged two, would marry, so there's plenty of mileage left yet.

Meanwhile in a street in London two young unroyal

looking people were discussing the 85th showing of the Happy Event on TV. "It's a load of monarchs", they said.

At least I think they said monarchs.

By Harry Kiri (no relation)

# MP slams subsidies

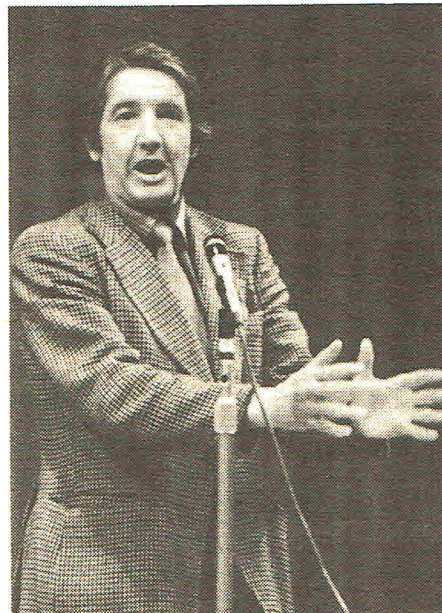
**IN A speech in his constituency last Friday Dennis Skinner MP exposed the Tories' double standards over subsidies.**

He pointed out that the Bank of England had recently announced it was organising £400m to bail out the private manufacturers Dunlops. This was more than the losses made by "scores of pits in South Wales, Scotland or elsewhere."

Last week as well it was announced that the government was allowing Mexico to have an extra 14 years to pay off the \$6,000m owed to British banks. Dennis Skinner wondered "if Thatcher and Lawson will make similar arrangements for the accrued debts of miners' families. Will they be allowed to settle their electricity bills, rents and other debts over the next fourteen years? Not likely. This government is only interested in propping up the City and bailing out bankers."

Skinner listed the vast subsidies given to farmers (£20,000 each) Nissan (£200m), private hospitals, North Sea Oil companies, to illustrate his accusation that "the Grantham grocer-shop mentality" is now only a figment of Mrs Thatcher's imagination as more and more subsidies are cast to her Tory friends.

"One day the British workers have a right to expect that all these BBC 'uneconomic' units, and the rest of the subsidised media,



Dennis Skinner

Photo: Militant

will reveal the hypocrisy of this government—it talks for the right to work, but practices massive intervention using other people's money for their banking and business allies".

By Militant reporter

# New Tory plan

THE GOVERNMENT is to introduce sweeping new powers to increase its direct control over nationalised industries. Legislation, likely to be introduced in the next parliamentary session, will greatly strengthen ministers' powers to order the sale of assets and set profit and performance targets.

The Tory plans were revealed in a document leaked to the Liberal Party. Officials made no effort to deny such legislation is likely.

Secretaries of State would also have the power to dismiss members of the Boards of nationalised industries, to remove any potential opposition. The proposals are part of the Tories' battle plan to destroy the trade unions and restore 'profitability'. The government will have the power to directly carry out their asset stripping of the public sector, 'privatising' profitable sectors for the benefit of their boardroom friends.

By Paul Traynor

## Miners' dispute

## Miners' strike - a 'red plot'?

**THE TORY Daily Express has no doubts what has caused the miners' strike. Not Ian MacGregor's plans to butcher the coalfields. It is all due to Arthur Scargill, and behind him stands Moscow!**

The *Express*' lead story on 14 September says that the Kremlin has ordered a "peace organisation" in the USSR to "raise roubles for Arthur Scargill's strikers."

In fact trade unions in other countries, often very "moderate" ones, have given cash to the NUM. Donations have come from workers throughout Europe and as far afield as Australia. Is the *Express* claiming that governments and union leaders in Holland, Denmark and Australia are getting Russian gold? The *Express* are clearly at their old red scare tricks. Distastefully the so-called "socialist" countries of Russia and Eastern Europe, far from helping striking miners are aiding Thatcher and MacGregor.

One of the key exports which is keeping the Polish economy from going under is coal. And since the beginning of the strike in Britain, Polish coal has been arriving at small non-union ports to keep supplies for British industry.

The Polish authorities are not just honouring old agreements, they have sent officials to negotiate new supplies, which could now reach 200,000 tonnes this year.

What is more the same day's *Guardian* reports that another

By Roger Shrivess

"Communist" country, East Germany, had agreed to sell smokeless fuel to British coal merchants at prices below the British equivalent, Phurnacite.

It is already on sale in Northern Ireland where merchants see it as a way of avoiding dependence on the NCB supplies—no coal has arrived in the area since the strike began. The Kremlin has not rapped any knuckles in East Berlin or Warsaw about these deals.

The Russian government may have started this cynical aid to the miners so as not to lose face totally with trade unionists who see them as 'socialists'. The USSR, Poland and East Germany are Stalinist societies. Capitalism has been abolished but there is no

workers' control or even involvement in running the planned economy. There aren't even any independent unions.

It was Solidarity members who opposed the Jaruzelski government deal (see *Militant* August 17) but solidarity has been driven underground. A small clique of officials (military men in Poland) take all the decisions.

They act to maintain "their own" national economies and their own privileged positions, regardless of workers' interests at home or abroad.

Certainly the miners should take any money offered. The *Express* makes no exposures of where the "working miners" get their cash from. But miners should be under no illusions.

When workers take matters into their own hands in the coming political revolution in Eastern Europe, the *Daily Express* won't like it. There will be no return to capitalism and the government strike breakers and their Kremlin friends will be on their way out.

## CP turns down Polish appeal

The Communist party newspaper, *Morning Star* has refused to publish an appeal by MPs and trade unionists to the Polish government, calling for an end to coal imports during the miners' strike on the

grounds that they do not accept political adverts. They claim they intend to publish the protest as a letter but at the time of writing (17 September) no such letter has appeared.

## Union drivers back NUM

DURING THE miners' dispute, road haulage drivers have been painted as a shower of cowboy's and scabs, running through picket lines, taunting miners with wagepackets and union cards.

The position of the vast majority of TGWU road haulage drivers is clear; we do not cross picket lines! We support the miners in their fight for jobs—there is a clear link between the survival of the mining industry and the industries they serve, clear links that the likes of Sirs and Chapple ignore.

The position of T&G drivers in Liverpool is also clear. Their support for the miners has been tremendous. Thousands of pounds have been collected. The 6/541 (T&G Liverpool road haulage branch), have in conjunction with the NUM and dockers, taken action against firms who have been identified crossing picket lines anywhere throughout the country.

Yuill and Dodds, the firm seen crossing picket lines at Ravenscraig steel works in Scotland, have been blacked out of operating anywhere through-out the Merseyside area, quite a significant action, as Yuill and Dodds were involved mainly in bulk haulage of grain out of the grain terminal at Seaforth.

Similar action will be taken against any firm who scabs during the miners' dispute.

The road haulage branch in Liverpool understands the significance of convincing our members that the miners' strike is vital in defending the TU movement and the working class. An article from the *Economist* published in 1978 (reprinted by the *Guardian* on August 27) which maps out the bosses intentions to break the unions, has been circulated throughout Merseyside.

Drivers do and should understand the deliberate intention of this government. Our leaders should understand their responsibility to the workers they represent.

By Dave Williams  
(TGWU 6/541 personal capacity)

## END POLICE OCCUPATION

DEMONSTRATE!

DATE: WEDNESDAY 19th SEPTEMBER  
TIME: 2.00 PM  
ADDRESS: OLD GREEN, ELVINGTON.  
SPEAKERS FROM:  
Kent Area N.U.M.  
Barnesdon N.U.M.  
Tilmanstone N.U.M.  
Tilmanstone N.U.M.  
Labour Party Youth Socialists  
Home & Support Groups  
Dover District Council  
(Labour Group)  
Labour Party  
National Executive Committee  
P.P. LEEDS & DISTRICT



The LPYS leaflet for the joint LPYS/NUM demonstration in Elvington on Wednesday.

## Dubious claims on Coal stocks

THE CEBG have leaked some highly dubious and selective figures on coal stocks to the Tory papers. They claim that stocks rose by 50,000 tonnes last week at power stations due to warm weather and other factors. A *Sunday Times* article (September 16) says that over the summer stocks have been depleted only when the working miners have taken their holidays.

Even the official figures

show a fall in coal stocks of nearly 2m tonnes in June, and in the working miners holidays, stretched over most of July and August. The *Sunday Times* statement actually means that stocks have fallen throughout the summer except for (they claim) last week.

To back up their story the CEBG are claiming that coal is moving into the power stations at a rate of nearly 5m tonnes a month, according

to the *Financial Times* (September 15).

*Militant* is currently doing a survey of movement of coal into power stations and we would appreciate information from workers in the stations and from pickets.

Our initial results indicate that the CEBG's claims are highly dubious. If the CEBG are so confident why don't they say what the current stock levels are?

## NACODS solidarity action

MEMBERS OF the deputies union NACODS at a Northumberland colliery have taken action against scab labour in local NCB workshops. This is even before the ballot of NACODS members about joining the NUM strike.

On 18 September two workers entered Ashington workshops, assisted by police, as is the norm.

The police had an agreement with the NUM that any vehicles carrying scabs would be stopped. Again they reneged on this agreement and the police drove the van at NUM officials.

Pickets from surrounding collieries were massed at the gates to stop any further scabs from entering the workshops.

The NUM locally also has

an agreement with NACODS that any scab labour would mean the withdrawal of safety cover from Ashington colliery, this was brought into force with the result that management had no choice but to send the two scabs home.

By Mick Streener  
(Ellington NUM)

## Liberals say neigh

PARTY POLITICAL differences were graphically shown at a meeting in Teignmouth, Devon. Young Socialists collected cash for striking miners, Young Conservatives for the working miners, and the awfully radical Young Liberals, displaying their usual political horse sense, collected for pit ponies.

## True blue scab

HARRY FETTES is leader of the 'working miners' at Bilston Glen colliery in Midlothian, and spokesman for the so-called Working Miners' Committee. He has just announced that he is to stand in a council by-election in Edinburgh, as the official candidate of the Conservative Party.



Thousands took to the streets of Glasgow last Saturday in support of the Scottish NUM. The LPYS staged a street theatre on the march which proved very popular, with 120 names taken for the YS, and over 70 attended an LPYS public meeting in the evening. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL).

## Mass arrests in Kent

THE COAL Board's attempt to create a 'back to work' movement in Kent has backfired. There are now 200 more men on strike than a few weeks ago.

The numbers of those who returned to 'work' (all they do is play cards) has significantly diminished. The lone working miner in Aylesham has come back out on strike, the number of working miners at Tilmastone is believed to have fallen to single figures, and only four are in at Betteshanger.

This 'back to work' fiasco was headed by Robert and Irene McGibbon. Irene is a former Tory council candidate, and she and her husband were both involved in organised scabbing at BL Cowley in 1976. They are believed to have links with right-wing organisations. Such is their concern for the Kent coalfield, that they are moving to Australia after the strike. The Kent NUM has forwarded their names to the Australian trade unions.

With the failure of the 'back to work' move, there has been a massive police presence in the coal field.

They have stopped or arrested miners driving along roads, outside NUM offices and in their communities. Even the police were embarrassed when they arrested severely handicapped Ricky Rooney for 'besetting'. They later released him with no charges.

The worst events have been in the small mining village of Elvington. Here old and young alike have been told to move on. Last week on Tuesday seven people were arrested on a street corner for no reason—one was just rolling a cigarette. The next day myself and two other LPYS members had

By a Sittingbourne Militant supporter.

our names and addresses taken just for walking in the village. But when a working miner fired a shotgun over the head of local people, he was just rebuked by police.

With over 200 miners arrested already, the police are using mass arrests to deplete the picket lines.

However, the Kent mining communities will not be provoked. At mass pickets against scabs, if they get in the men then walk away, leaving hundreds of police lined up against thin air. In Elvington local people patrol the streets at night to show they will not be intimidated.

The LPYS have been at the forefront of the political debate this situation has provoked. Successful joint meetings with the NUM have been held with 40 people attending in Deal, and 80 in Ramsgate. In Elvington a meeting addressed by Labour Party National Youth officer Andy Bevan and John Moyle of the NUM attracted nearly 150 people—a quarter of the community.

At a *Militant* Readers Meeting in Aylesham nearly a 100 heard Ray Apps, and Ian Isaac of the South Wales NUM executive.

This political action has so far culminated with a tremendous LPYS demonstration through Elvington on Wednesday September 19. With this fighting spirit the miners march to victory can be ensured.

## Miners' dispute

# Picket power - the miners' next step

The decisive task now facing striking miners is to stop coal and oil movements into the power stations. This is a very different question to the earlier attempt to hit steel production. The power industry is vital to every other sector of the economy—to cut power supplies is to cut production and disrupt everything else. That is understood by every miner and every other worker. It is the direct line to victory and will get an enthusiastic response. Power workers' jobs are not threatened by such action. They have none of the steel workers' fears about government plans to destroy their industry, or demoralisation over recent defeats. The decision of the TUC to black strikebreaking coal and oil movements gives the miners an important lever in seeking the co-operation of other workers. Steps must be taken now to turn these words into action. A combination of solidarity action by official approaches to the unions concerned and a determined attempt by the miners and other workers to stop scab lorries moving coal into vital power stations will ensure victory. In this full page feature PETE DICKINSON explains the situation in the power industry and pinpoints the key areas. Below he explains the facts behind NCB hypocrisy over pit damage.

ELECTRICITY IS produced in Britain by generators in power stations powered by coal, oil, nuclear or hydro-electric means. A small number of gas fired plants exist to cope with peak demand.

All the electricity produced is pooled on a national basis by a grid of high voltage transmission lines and switching stations. (See diagram). This means that if demand is high in one part of the country or a power station in a particular area breaks down, electricity can be drawn from power stations in other areas to fill the gap.

The grid is not infinitely flexible however. Power can be transmitted only over a maximum of 60 miles, so a national network of power stations must always be kept in operation to avoid cuts in supply.

Control and operation of the grid system is based on a national control centre in London and seven regional centres in Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham, Birmingham, St Albans, East Grinstead and Bristol.

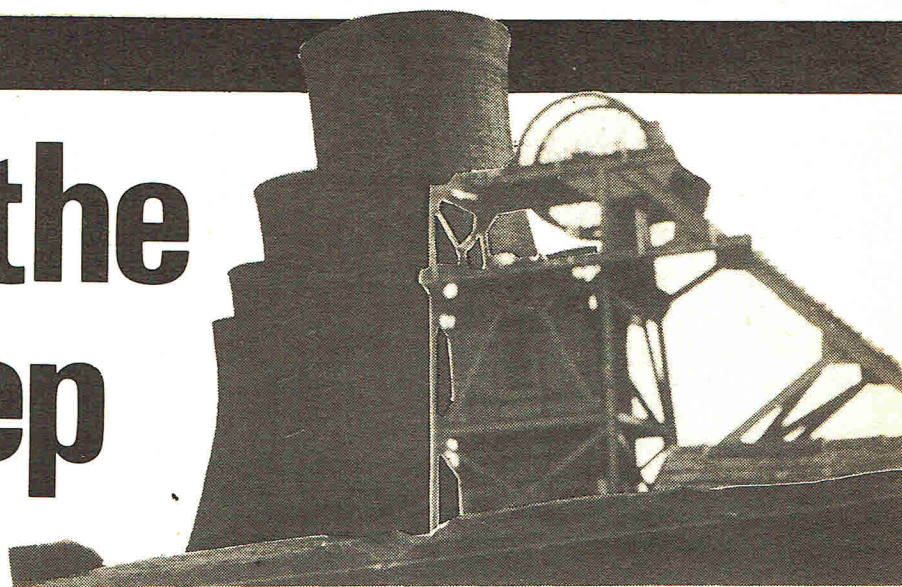
One of the problems faced by the CEBG is meeting peak demand for electricity. The diagram shows that demand for electricity at 4pm is double that at 6 am. To cover this situation small gas fired generators are used which can be started up quickly. Longer term variations in demand are met by keeping some power stations mothballed during the summer and bringing them 'on stream' during particularly cold spells in the winter.

Old oil fired stations are normally used for this, but during the strike they have been used flat out to cover 'base load' demand. Now

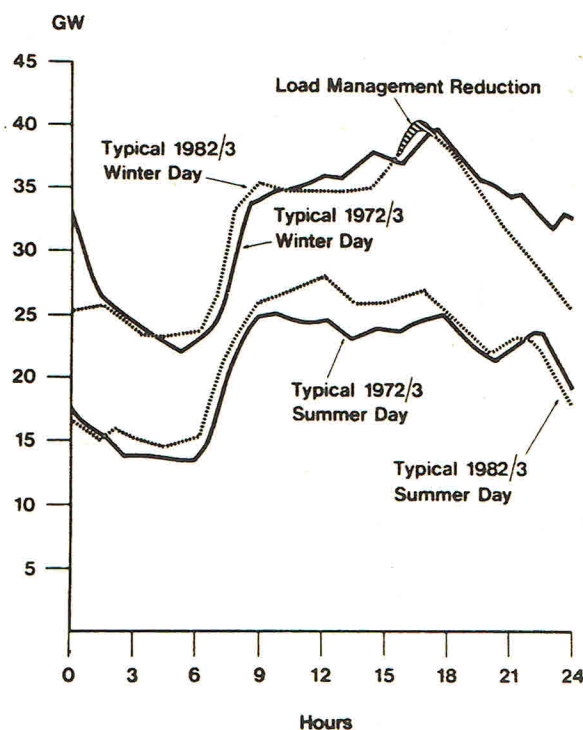
that winter is approaching the CEBG will again have to make provision for peak loadings. Their 'flexibility' will be reduced to substitute oil for coal because large coal fired stations are the least suitable technically to cope with sudden peaks in demand.

## Output concentrated

The backbone of the National Grid is provided by the output of a relatively small number of huge power station complexes. The 400KV network is mainly supplied from stations in Yorkshire like Drax and Ferrybridge, the Trent Valley and those round Manchester. In fact, a network of about 15 stations in these areas provide nearly 2/3 the capacity of the national grid in normal times.



SUMMER AND WINTER DEMAND ON THE CEBG SYSTEM 1972/3 AND 1982/3



Since the strike began oil and nuclear stations have been producing 40% of electricity and coal fired stations in striking areas have been mothballed as reported in *Militant* previously. The top priority for the Tories has been to keep the large coal fired stations in the working or partly working areas of the Trent Valley fully operational.

The power stations in the

Notts coalfield are obviously top of the list. The big ones here are Ratcliffe, a few miles from Nottingham (the largest in the country), Cotnam and West Burton near Retford. The majority of the coal produced and stockpiled in the Notts area since the strike began has been moved into these, and another few key stations, at first by rail but since June mainly by lorry.

The other key stations in partly working areas are Drakelow near Burton on Trent, Rugeley and Ironbridge in Staffordshire and Fiddler's Ferry near Warrington. These few stations could have accounted for 70% of the 15GW capacity available from coal fired stations during the summer. (1 GW is 1000 million watts or the power of 1 million electric fires)

The stopping of coal movements into these stations would have an enormous effect on coal stocks because the CEBG would be forced to burn off the remaining stockpiles at stations where there is little possibility of replenishment, which could result in disruptions in the power supply within weeks.

At many of the power stations in the Trent Valley there are inadequate facilities for handling the coal delivered by road. This work is done mainly by GMBATU and T&G members working under difficult conditions and undoubtedly unhappy at handling scab coal delivered by road.

An approach now by the miners to the shop stewards of all unions in these stations is a vital necessity. In the light of the TUC decision to give full backing to the miners many stewards will give the NUM a sympathetic hearing and a positive response when the issues are explained.

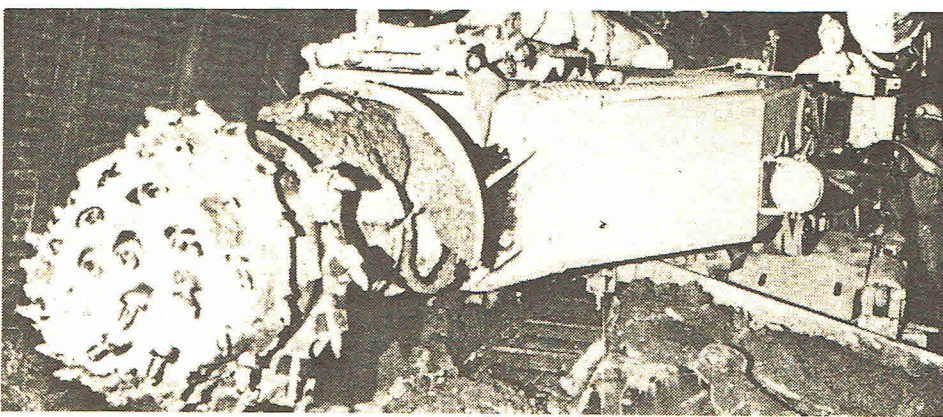
## Pit damage - NCB hypocrisy

THE PROPAGANDA campaign against the miners has reached a new crescendo as the critical period for coal stocks approaches. The NCB are trying to frighten the miners back to work by giving massive publicity to pits alleged to be at risk, claiming that 60 faces will be lost. Several pits in Scotland, which faces special problems as Pat Craven explained in *Militant* last week, have come under threat.

This scare tactic has been tried before at the Betws pit in South Wales (see *Militant* 7/13) where management and the media distorted the true situation to try to stampede the miners back to work. At Castlehill the local NCB officials tried the same tactic, saying that the coal faces had deteriorated to such an extent to be irrecoverable. The area strike committee pointed out however, that both faces would have closed regardless of the strike.

The NUM have maintained cover on both threatened faces throughout the dispute. The loss of the faces is due to geological faults, natural exhaustion and bad planning by the NCB.

It is hypocritical of management to claim that



Without safety cover cutting equipment like this can be trapped at coal faces.

their only interest is in keeping the pits in good condition. They pressed ahead with construction of the Selby 'super pit' regardless of the dangers inherent in the project which were pointed out beforehand. The result was severe flooding at the coal face, water at one stage was pouring in at the rate of 750 gallons per minute at the Wistow mine.

Much of the rock strata, under which the Selby field is dug, contains huge amounts of water under high pressure. The NCB ignored the warnings, given by the Institute of Geologists, of severe flooding in the coalfield. Management

calculated that each miner would produce five times as much coal as workers in other pits.

They were as short sighted as any private capitalist company in their quest for a quick 'return'. Before the problems began the NCB and the main contractors Thyssen, were congratulating themselves on the speed with which the mine was sunk.

When the flooding started the Board said they were bitterly disappointed. But the North Yorks Area Director was quoted as saying: "Even with the benefit of hindsight we do not think there was any way this affair could have been predicted".

However, the Institute of Geologists in its evidence to the Commission on Energy and the Environment, had pointed out earlier that: "The Selby coalfield will lower the ground surface adjacent to the Yorkshire Ouse so that large areas will subside below the present groundwater level...we believe that the risk of long periods of extensive flooding has now been advanced to the extent that parts of the Selby mine could be, in effect, sub-aqueous (ie. underwater-Eds)". The NCB chose to ignore this warning and further severe flooding in the Selby field is now likely.

## Facts about faces

POSSIBLE deterioration of the coal face or approach tunnels inaccessible, escape of firedamp, which is an explosive gas, spontaneous combustion of coal or coal dust due to a reaction with oxygen in the air, and flooding which occurs to a greater or lesser extent in all pits.

Firedamp, comprised mainly of methane which is highly explosive, is absorbed in the coal and in the seams and worked areas of the pit. It is released when the coal is mined or the adjacent rock is fractured by mining. It is unlikely to be a major problem when a pit is not being worked, as at present, if routine safety cover is provided.

The NCB claim that convergence is the main problem. It is generally accepted that when coal is removed from a face the overlying rock forms a cantilever, ie. it is suspended over the coal face and the area that has already been mined.

Movement of the cantilever is inevitable but total collapse is prevented by the supporting action of the rock broken up behind the coal face and from earlier operations. The rock immediately next to the face is supported by props which can withstand loads of more than twenty tonnes. It is possible to work out the convergence of the ceiling and bed of the face with considerable accuracy. If props are correctly positioned the movement of the rock can be accurately predicted in advance.

There is no reason, if safety cover is provided, for a face to be lost due to convergence, if proper precautions are taken by management, at least in the great majority of cases. The NCB claims of emergencies and convergence at coal faces, all occurring coincidentally within a few weeks can be seen for what they really are, a desperate attempt to scare miners back to work.

## Nottinghamshire coalfield feature

# Notts strikers win wide support

**Terry Martin describes how striking Notts miners have organised, and the work of the South Notts strike centre.**

**AT THE beginning the striking miners had a meeting in the North, at Ollerton Welfare, and set up a hardship fund. Everyone went across putting their cases but there wasn't the money available**

So it was decided by Jim Robinson (Cotgrave), Brian Walker (Newstead) and Brian Todd (Gedling) to set a South Notts Strike Centre. Offices were made available by the AUEW, telephones installed, and the centre took off, with a donation of £500 from Kent.

At first it was absolute turmoil—pits were just going out and getting money for themselves. When the centre got set up we tried to co-ordinate visits, fund-raising and food distribution. I think it's been a great success. Now it's running like a Rolls Royce engine, though we get the odd hiccup.

One of the things we started was a "sales department". We sell lamps with striking miners' logos on, key rings, ties, necklaces to raise funds 'cos you know in Nottinghamshire our funds have had a court injunction slapped on them and we've never

received a penny piece from Area.

All we've had is little donations from National. Kent have been very good. I think they've sent £28,000. Without that we'd be in a lot of trouble.

Contributions from other unions into the centre have been astounding. For example, SOGAT have donated thousands of pounds worth of food to Notts and other areas. Labour Parties are collecting food outside supermarkets which goes to the food kitchens to feed the wives and children.

We've got fund raisers the length and breadth of the country. London, Liverpool, Luton, Peterborough, Harlow, Ireland, Scotland, Durham, Wales—all over.

## Help from Yorkshire

People in these places recognise the special situation in Notts and they've been fantastic. Even though they are on strike themselves they've donated food and clothing.

The food kitchens in Yorkshire made a one-off payment from their money to help us through the most difficult period. We can't thank the people of Yorkshire enough for the support and solidarity they've shown Notts miners.

We've had offers of holidays for children from round the country and abroad. Miners from France have taken quite a lot of children. They've all been taken up and are much appreciated.

The morale of the lads who are out has never been higher. We'll stick together through thick and thin. We'll not be intimidated by the Board, police or the courts 'cos we're fighting a just case.

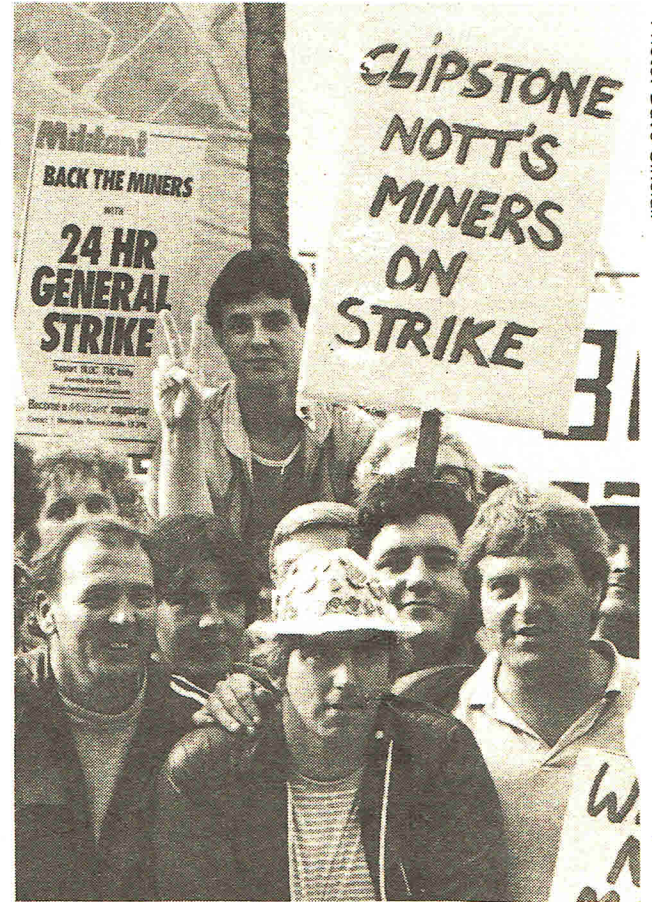
When Ian MacGregor was at BSC and Leyland they only had to send one letter to get them back to work. Up to now we've received four. But he can save his money, his stamps and envelopes. We're not going back 'till we've won.

On the women's situation in Notts, you've got to go back to '72 and '74 to get the full impact. Then they didn't play a really active part, maybe worked in the kitchens giving out food and washing dishes. In this strike they've really come alive.

Women who've never had a chance to go out and speak on public platforms have gone out, raised money and are doing as good a job as the men. The ordinary working woman of this country is becoming more politically aware of what Thatcher and her thugs are doing to the working class.

Finally I'd like to say what role *Militant* have played that I know personally. At my own colliery *Militant* were the first people up on the picket line giving money towards the strike.

They did this not at one colliery but at lots of collieries, where they saw deprivation, to help the wives and children buy food. But money's not always the first thing we need, it's the support of a newspaper that tells the truth.



Striking Notts miners at lobby of TUC in Brighton.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

## Women arrested on Gedling picket

AT GEDLING Colliery, South Notts, over 50 women from the Sheffield Womens Support Group joined striking miners for their usual night shift picket. Also present was a team of spectators from the National Council of Civil Liberties.

The women began singing picketing songs, when an elderly woman shouted 'scabs'. Policemen tried to make a grab for her, but the women quickly closed ranks making it impossible for them to arrest her. A copper was overheard saying to

another: "Don't let her out of your sight."

Later on that night scuffles began breaking out between pickets and police. But it was after these had died down that the snatch squads moved in and arrested four women. There were five police women there who could have done the same thing. I bet the NCCL observers didn't see that.

By Lindsay Common  
(Gedling LPYS)

## Dirty tricks of DHSS

PAT KENNY left Gedling pit, Notts, before the strike and is unemployed. At first he was getting his £27.50 a week dole money but 8 weeks ago his money was stopped.

The dole office has decided he is an unemployed striking miner and the DHSS has told him he won't get any money till the strike is over and the overtime ban is lifted.

Pat has appealed against the decision but has been told he will have to wait

weeks for the decision as his appeal is at the bottom of the pile. That's despite the fact he's had a letter from the Personnel Manager at the pit saying he's not on strike and who's told him there's no chance of getting his job back!

Pat's mother, Pam, is treasurer of Gedling wives support group. Is this a case of the son of someone who supports the strike being victimised by the DHSS?

By Chris Ridge

## Strikers join Labour

MANSFIELD LABOUR Party is to vet new members before allowing them to join. This decision was taken at a meeting where the NUM delegate, striking miner Graham Naylor, said that many of the applications at the meeting were from striking miners and their wives who weren't satisfied with the way the party was run.

Not surprising since in a previous meeting MP Don Concannon had said that there were other places for people to donate money rather than implement the NEC decision to collect a

50p levy from local party members.

Striking miners and their wives in Notts have enough problems without being attacked by the Labour Party as well. But the local Labour Party is treading on thin ice.

Any move by an NUM sponsored MP to block applications by NUM members because they are on strike would be met by a tidal wave of opposition from the labour movement nationally.

At the September meeting of Mansfield Woodhouse ward over 20 striking miners and wives applied to join.

## Strike stalled by local officials

**THE SITUATION in Notts could have been avoided at the start of the dispute if the regional leadership had given a proper lead. I think 90% of the men would have come out.**

As it was, one of the first things our branch treasurer did was instruct the men to meet at the top of the hill facing pit, where they would form a phalanx and march through the pickets to work.

The area leadership created confusion too. We had one of the daftest letters from Henry Richardson, the Notts area secretary.

In one letter it said we should, 1) come out and support our union, 2) but we didn't have to, and 3) shouldn't cross picket lines!

For the three weeks that the strike was official at the beginning, there was only 250 working out of 1,275 men at Wellbeck. And those

ones working knew they were doing wrong.

There were some coming in at 4 am to start a 7 am shift. Another bloke smuggled himself in the boot of his father in law's car!

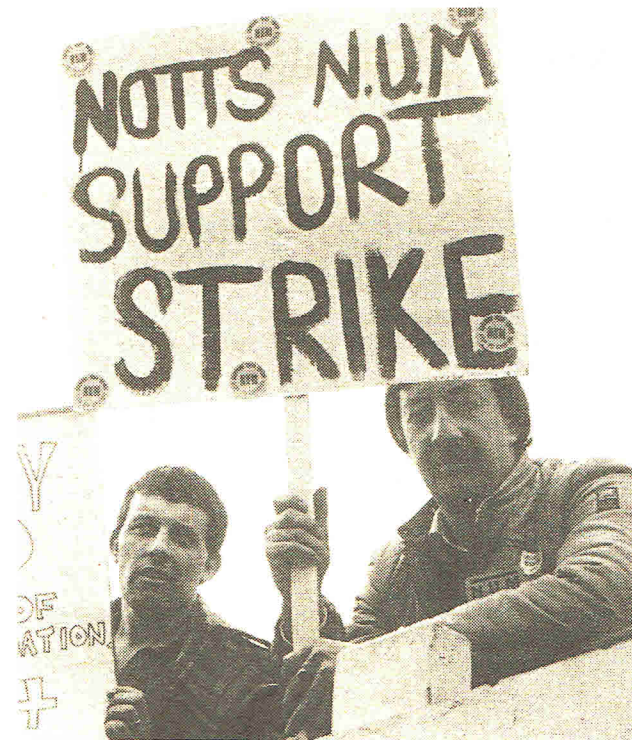
### Financial pressure

But with the financial pressures, but more importantly the role of the area leadership, there was a slow drift back and now between 800-900 are going in.

For us strikers the problem is the police, who don't let us anywhere near the working miners to persuade them to strike.

The geography of Wellbeck colliery makes it so easy for the police to seal it off. The Yorkshire lads, when they come down to help us, call it Fort Knox.

By Bill Davies  
(Wellbeck NUM personal capacity)



Support for the strike in the first weeks—much of the responsibility for the strike-breaking lies with the shabby and confused area leadership.

Photo: Jacob Surton (Gamma)

## Wellbeck fight for strike facilities

**ONE OF the major problems that faced striking miners and their supporters in Wellbeck was the lack of facilities for a strike centre and kitchen. The miners and their wives have been particularly infuriated by being refused use of the village hall as a kitchen.**

The hall is leased to CISWO, the trustees who control social and welfare facilities for the miners who pay 50p of their wages every week.

This refusal runs even to the playing fields where striking miners have been threatened by the police with

arrest if they play football on it.

The miners' wives decided to act, and occupied the village hall. The women later won the use of facilities elsewhere from the council, but not before intimidation from the police. A Wellbeck striker describes what happened when he was arrested at the hall:

### Hundred coppers

"There was a few of us there to support the women when at about 2.30 am on the Thursday six coppers came to question six of us over an earlier incident.

"We didn't resist because

of the women in the occupation. It was a good job we did that—there was over a hundred coppers out there!

"We were taken to the police station where we were interrogated individually. It was the usual political stuff, but then one CND man hinted to me that if I named names about certain incidents, it would get the NUM good coverage in the press!

I explained to him that no matter what miners did, it would make no difference to the press—they picked and chose what they would print and just told blatant lies.

"One of the lads said that in his 'interview' he was even

offered money. We were kept until the Friday and then released without any charge.

### Pamphlets

When I went to pick up my personal effects the copper commented on my *Militant* pamphlets. A half hour discussion followed over socialism and democracy. I don't think I convinced the copper. His last words were, 'when you take power I'll be the first one on a plane out of here'."

By Militant reporter

# USA-The lesson of leadership

**THE STRIKE** against two major San Francisco department stores, Macys and The Emporium, ended this week with most workers accepting a contract ridden with concessions.

The contract included a two-tier wage system which means that new employees will be paid at a lower rate and will not receive certain benefits like double time and shift differentials.

Union members reluctantly accepted this package for fear of being starved back to work as well as being left out in the cold by the Union bureaucracy. Little if any effort was made by the Union "leaders" to involve the trade union movement as a whole in the strike.

## Bosses "solidarity"

One reason Macy bosses were able to hold out as long as they did was that their stores around the San Francisco Bay area were making money and no attempt was made to picket them also.

While the Macy workers went on strike, the Emporium employees were locked out because they

belong to the same union as their brothers and sisters at Macys. This was a fine example of capitalist class solidarity; workers are forbidden here to show class solidarity in the same fashion as sympathy strikes are outlawed by an act of Congress!

As a participant on the Macy and Emporium picket lines, I attended a mass rally at the Emporium on 28th July and the atmosphere was electrifying for a few moments. The cops started to arrest workers because we ignored an injunction by one of the bosses' judges that forbade us from picketing in front of the store entrances.

As the cops started to take people away, a section of the workers broke from the picket line and started following them. We were screaming at them to let our comrades go and some of us surrounded the police car to prevent them from leaving

but they drove right at us.

By this time the workers were shouting at the cops who were arresting a brother in his mid fifties and whose wife was crying and pleading with them to let him go. The brutal way the cops were handling our comrades was angering the pickets. Workers like these become "Our Boys" when they're required to fight wars for the ruling class.

What was clearly lacking during this strike was correct leadership. A union bureaucrat and a "pro labor" Democrat were on the scene but did not take the offensive. Had there been the leadership present that was willing to go on to the attack workers were certainly ready to fight and we could have entered the store and staged a sit down or similar actions.

I'm sure that crucial lessons were learned by the young workers on this picket line, not least the lesson of leadership and when to take the offensive when the situation demands it.

By a San Francisco correspondent, August 20th.



Reagan speaks in Washington in the 1980 election campaign. The organised working class are the real opposition to the President.

**TWO significant national strikes appear almost inevitable in the USA—in coal and auto.**

The American auto industry is having a banner year. Sales of General Motors cars in June, for example, were 280,044, up 21% from a year ago. Chrysler experienced a 12.4% increase. Second quarter profits for the "Big Three" auto manufacturers are expected to be \$3.1 billion, an increase of 64% over last year. This pace has continued through July and August (whose sales rate was up 32.1% over last year).

Despite these profits and equally massive bonuses for executives in the last year, and despite the \$3 billion given in contract concessions nearly 3 years ago (or maybe because of them), GM and Ford's initial contract proposals would keep wages the same for three years and cut into the cost of living allowances (COLA) as well as health and welfare payments. They are also demanding a two-tier wage plan, with lower wages for new employees. The union termed the proposals "unacceptable" and called a strike on 15 September.

In the coal industry, with

seven major strikes in the last 30 years, negotiations were broken off by the Bituminous Coal Association on August 22. The BCOA is trying to drive the miners' wages down to that paid by their non-union competitors (about 75% of union scale). The United Mineworkers, on the other hand, with a \$45 million Strike fund, has taken the position of "no concessions".

## Tied to Democrats

Perhaps both industries' negotiators are inspired by organized labor's unreserved, no-strings-attached support for Presidential candidate Walter Mondale, and think that the unions' leadership would be reluctant to organize a serious strike at this time.

The UAW's officials "realize they would impose a great liability on (Mondale) by shutting down the entire industrial Midwest in the middle of the (election) campaign," claimed Peter Pestillo, Ford's vice president for labor relations. Workers may have other ideas.

By John Reimann  
Carpenters Local 36,  
(personal capacity).  
Oakland, California.



Strikers in the Greyhound bus dispute last autumn faced the same police support for the bosses as did the Macy's strikers.

# Defying apartheid laws

IN MILITANT, 14 September, Nimrod Sejake, a leading member of the steelworkers union in South Africa in the '50s, described how workers who were denied by law the right to trade unions organised at the African Lamps factory.

Here he takes up the story after he had been arrested for "trespass" while negotiating with management. The workers had downed tools on his arrest.

"When it became clear that the workers were not going to end their strike, the police decided they could not take any action against me. My arrest was dropped even though I was breaking the

Bantu Labour Settlement of Disputes Act 1953.

"The next week, the workers met and we discussed strategy and tactics for the new offensive. We then received an indictment. I was accused number one. But we found out a very funny thing; every time we went to court, the factory stopped because everyone was in the

union.

"The Rand Daily Mail which covered our court case said that the iron and steel workers were the first African union to break the 1953 Act, so we felt our tactics were right but we were

## Unity is strength

convicted nonetheless and fined £3 each. We had decided the day before to go to jail rather than pay the fine. We would say we had no money, because we knew we would have no scabs in our workplace so the factory could not work.

"The employer was forced, not by the law, but by the conditions we had created, to pay our fines himself! We knew he couldn't raise the same number of workers with the same skill and expertise overnight.

"But the employer thought it was all right to deduct a certain amount from our pay packet every week until the £3 was paid back to him. He did that but we appealed to the Supreme Court in Pretoria, which found against the employer who had to refund every worker their £3! What is

more, wages went up, only by a penny an hour but by the standard of wages for black workers in South Africa then it was something to be proud of.

"We had beaten the bosses in their own court, the Supreme Court, after conviction in the magistrates court. But more importantly we had won with our own weapon, the strike.

"We learnt that when workers were properly organised, they were strong; they could beat the bosses at the factory, they could get an official out of the clutches of the police so the law was not all powerful".

Nimrod Sejake will be one of the speakers at Militant's 20th anniversary rally on 20 October.

## Bangalore welfare strike

GC Jagadish is a union activist in the Postal and Telegraph department of the Indian central government in Bangalore. Satish Kumar was elected general secretary of the Goodyear Employees Union after his dismissal by the company, and works in Faridabad, an industrial suburb of Delhi.

They recently told Militant about the problems faced by trade unionists and socialists in India. We will be publishing parts of the interview within the next few weeks.

"A bitter dispute is going on in Bangalore. The factory, Gaitri Women's Welfare assembles watches for a public sector factory, Hindustan machine tools.

"This is supposedly a charitable body run by elite women, wives of prominent members of the Janata party who are the ruling party in Karnataka state. They employ destitute women, handicapped, deaf, and dumb women and so on.

"The public sector employees on the same job get 1,000 to 1,200 rupees (£65 to £80) per month, but these women are paid 250 to 300 rupees, all in the name of welfare! Naturally enough, the workers formed a union to make the factory keep its promises. Management had told them that after they took loans of some 1.6 million rupees the employees would get jobs in the main factory and their salaries would be increased.

"The factory started in 1976 and every year production was going up but nothing was coming to the workers. After they started a union the first five members were sacked.

"But 90% of the 100 or 120 workers rejected the intimidation; they wanted a union to fight for them. They are all from villages, with no political or trade union background but they have gone on the offensive and the struggle has been going on now for a year and a half.

"Now the Janata government is being exposed in Karnataka where it is in power. They cannot raise the salaries from 250 to 400 rupees. 'Our hands are tied, only the central government can act' they say. There is no proper lead but workers are being politicised.

"Just imagine the scene, in the Labour Commissioners office with eight workers, destitute, deaf, dumb and handicapped sitting in for a whole day. They were locked up and there was a hullabaloo in the city's papers.

"Unfortunately the workers are not getting very far, but so many things are being shown up by this dispute, it is very clear for instance that management are cheating the government by giving them wrong accounts. Most of all it shows the mood growing even amongst the unorganised section of the working class."

# Councils face up to Tory threat

## Hackney prepares to fight back

**VERY SHORTLY** after the government hit-listed Hackney as one of the London Boroughs to be rate-capped, the trade unions representing all workers in the Housing Directorate, and Chair of Housing John Bloom, responded by holding meetings with the workforce.

**By Nigel Bloch**  
(Hackney Council Joint Shop Stewards Committee and NUPE, personal capacity)

The horrific threat to jobs and services in 1985/86 was spelt out. Nearly every worker in the Directorate attended one of the seven meetings held during work time in one week. John Bloom shared the platform with a speaker and chair from the unions.

The speakers explained in detail the effects of rate-capping, and why it had to be fought through the involvement of all council workers.

### £30m 'gap'

John Bloom explained that the meetings were not one-off, but only the start of several during the following nine months to discuss the very real fight that lay ahead. The Labour councillors had unanimously taken the decision to maintain jobs and services in 1985/86. Hackney needed to spend at least £112 million, but the government target was £82 million—a £30 million gap.

The Council was not considering a cuts exercise on its budget. Whether its result would be 1,000 job losses (out of nearly 7,500 workers) or 3,000 as roughly estimated by the Director of Finance the council's policy was that there should be no redundancies.

The Council would not raise the rents by the £15 a week that would find something towards making up the £30 million gap.

Nor could it raise the rates

instead by roughly 80% because even if it wanted to, the new laws prevented this. John Bloom said that in any event he personally had argued the previous years against raising the rates by more than the level of inflation. He was against large rate rises, which took money out of working class pockets to pay for cutbacks in the Tories' Rate Support Grant to Hackney.

The Council was, together with other boroughs, forced into uniting to fight the Tories. This would mean a Liverpool style confrontation and a so-called illegal budget. He personally was prepared to fight all the way and if it meant he would be surcharged, then so be it.

### Rate-capping

John spent much of his speech putting rate-capping in the context of the Tories' general policy of making massive cuts in working class living standards. The Tories were a capitalist party interested in profit and greed, not democratic rights and social need.

The Tories wanted to destroy the trade unions and local democracy. He gave many examples to illustrate this: the use of the law and police in the NGA and NUM disputes; GCHQ, the threatened abolition of



Tony Benn addressing a rate-capping protest meeting in Lambeth, Monday 17 September. He spoke alongside Andy Pink, representing Liverpool City Council, Peter Heathfield, NUM General Secretary, and other speakers.

## Dilemma for local Tories

**FOR SIX** years the Tory controlled London Borough of Hillingdon has slashed services to the bone, sold off or are planning to sell nearly all public assets in a slavish pursuance of government policies—"all to protect the ratepayers".

But instead of plaudits from their friends in Westminster, they have received a massive slap in the face.

Because of penalties they are faced with the task of finding an extra £8 million to carry on next year—a 44.2% rate increase; which in turn would incur further penalties in the rate support grant.

Councillor Terry Dicks (also Tory MP for Hayes and Harlington) at a policy meeting attended by about 150 members of the public, said: "We're confused. We don't know what is going to happen from day to day."

Their proposals to sell off

GLC; and the attacks on the DLO through the Land and Planning Act which tried to encourage privatisation.

The government had been told by Liverpool Council that if commissioners went into the city to take over the elected Council's power and make cuts, then a strike throughout Liverpool would make it impossible for them.

John emphasised the need for co-operation between the council and the workforce on the issue of rate-capping,

school playing fields were quickly withdrawn in the face of fierce opposition from many parents, some of whom had voted Tory only last year. They want to sell off some libraries; increase the size of classes; close the adult education centre; withdraw funding from the Citizens Advice Bureau, close a childrens home, close some old peoples homes etc, and introduce front gate collections of refuse with the loss of 38 jobs.

The Tory councillors are desperate to distance themselves from the government. This compelled the Tory leader to say: "The rating system implemented by the government is doing the opposite to what is intended". He called it a "cockeyed system".

When he asked what the alternatives to the cuts or a rate rise should be he was greeted with shouts from the

whatever the other differences, if the fight was to be won.

In Hackney, plans for meetings of councillors with all sections of the workforce are now under way. The meetings in Hackney provided much valuable experience in how to organise them, and has drawn attention to many problems that need to be tackled. They have provided an excellent start to the campaign to defend jobs and services.

public to "Do a Liverpool!" All this in the green and pleasant fields of Tory Hillingdon!

Peter Denman, the Branch Secretary of the TGWU manual workers, pointed out the irony of the proposed front gate collections: "Besides hurting the elderly, sick and incapacitated, the Tories main supporters in Northwood would have to carry their dustbins—in

some cases a quarter of a mile—to their front gate."

The local labour movement, led by the local authority unions is organising a massive campaign to defeat the Tories in their heartland. The slogan for victory must indeed be "do a Liverpool".

**By Wally Kennedy**  
(TGWU 1/854, personal capacity)

## Learning Liverpool's lessons

**OVER 200** attended a Leicester District Labour Party meeting on the question of rate-capping earlier this month. Council leader Peter Soulsby explained that Labour won 42 out of 56 Council seats in the election on a programme of no cuts, no job losses and for general improvements. He pledged the City Council would fight government cuts that could mean 500 job losses.

Tony Byrne, chair of finance in Liverpool, explained how Liverpool beat the Tories through Labour Party, trade union and local electorate involvement. But the most important factor he said was agreeing correct policies—you could not win support through higher rates.

In Leicester there are appalling housing problems; the Saffron Lane estate has

a thousand houses falling to pieces. Leicester needs at least £29 million to rebuild on existing foundations, but the government allocation for all housing this year is just £17 million. Yet over 50% of the cost of a dwelling paid by the Council goes in debt charges.

Leicester has bled enough—we must stand for no cuts, no redundancies, fill all unfilled vacancies, no rent increases and no rate increases to compensate for government cuts.

Another rate-capping conference has been called for September 29. Meetings of all authority shop stewards must be called to ensure an even larger attendance, particularly from the manual sector.

**By Gary Freeman**  
(Leicester West CLP)

## Tower block fire danger

**THE RECENT** fire tests in Ronan Point and other tower blocks in Newham has brought home the dangers of fire to these buildings.

I witnessed the danger of fire to tower blocks firsthand when the block opposite mine, Thornhill Point on the Kingshold Estate in Hackney, caught fire. I was sitting in my living room when I saw the smoke. I was about to dial 999 when I heard the sirens.

Because of the confusing layout of the estate the fire engines had great difficulty finding their way to the block. By the time they got there the fire had a strong hold on an eighteenth storey

flat. The smoke was pouring into the flats above it and flames were spreading upwards via the balcony and the structural joints. Fortunately the Fire Brigade put the fire out before anything more serious occurred.

This happened only a week after another fire in a Hackney tower block on the Wyke estate.

### Fire escapes lacking

Living in a tower block on a rundown estate is a problem in itself, but fire is a particular nightmare. A Thornhill tenant told me about their fears. The tower blocks consist of six flats on each floor, but only four have 'fire escapes'; that is

doors connecting balconies to the next flat. The two outside flats have no connecting balcony. The panels dividing the living room from the balcony consist of just glass and wood. The balcony ceiling is wood, the door hardboard. It is easy, as was seen with Thornhill Point, for fires to spread from the balcony upwards.

Whats more, the balconies are unsafe. The tenant told me that one day a workman turned up at their flat saying he had to repair the balcony. He spent the whole day drilling and putting bolts through the balcony into the walls. The lifts are a major complaint too, they are nearly always out of order and people regularly get stuck in them.

The kids around here don't have much to do so they're always starting fires. Besides the obvious danger tenants also have to put up with the resulting mess. The tenant told me when she first came here over four years ago there was a fire on the ground floor. Fortunately it didn't spread but no repairs have been done ever since. It hasn't even been repainted.

Many people on the estate are on the transfer list to move out, and there's lots of empty flats here because no one wants to move in. These tower blocks should be demolished.

**By Tim White**  
(Hackney South LPYS)

Photo: Militant.



The fire at Thornhill Point, Hackney. Photo: Mick Carroll

# The making of

MANY Labour Party members were appalled at the speech made by Neil Kinnock at TUC Congress when he condemned "picket violence". In fact from the very beginning of this historic strike miners have been disturbed at the Labour leader's hesitations and equivocations on the issue, which his TUC speech seemed only to confirm.

After he had given a rousing defence of the coal industry and the case for sustaining the pits and their communities, he launched into a long tirade implicitly denouncing miners' pickets: "But we must put that case without violence", he said "...violence distracts attention from the central issues of the dispute... violence has given the government its only bone of excuse to gnaw on... violence... disgusts opinion and divides union attitudes... it provides opportunities to our enemies."

Thus Kinnock himself provided a marvellous "opportunity to the enemy" by his own speech. There were no ringing denunciations of police violence, or the curtailment of civil liberties, no pounding the table over the harassment and intimidation of striking miners. Not surprisingly the press had a field day.

By this kind of speech, Neil Kinnock not only fails to support miners fighting for their jobs and communities, he gives full credence to the vicious press smears against the mineworkers. He unwittingly gives succour to all those newspapers and Tories calling for judicial vengeance in the form of hefty prison sentences and fines on the many miners unjustly arrested in the last six months.

Even before TUC Neil Kinnock's standing among miners was damaged by his statement made last year, only recently publicised, to the effect that Arthur Scargill was destroying the coal industry single-handed.

No doubt at the forthcoming Labour Party conference many delegates will comment on the record of the Hattersley-Kinnock leadership elected only a year ago. Their leaders' behaviour in the miners' strike will be seen by many workers as being especially significant, perhaps a pointer to their stance in future struggles.

As a contribution to that discussion, in the run-up to the Party conference, Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, here reviews a recent biography of Neil Kinnock, giving some insight into the Labour leader's background and politics.



"Honourable gentlemen opposite have bemoaned picketing. If they had been on strike for 5 weeks, if their families' total income was £7 a week Social Security benefits, if they were worried about smoking their next cigarette, if they were worried about paying the rent, and they saw some cowboy coming along driving a bald-tyred wagon without a road-fund licence, what would their reaction be?"

"What would be the instinct of any red blooded man in the House, having put his family to all that inconvenience and near misery, if he saw somebody riding roughshod over his picket line? I know what my attitude would be. In fact I should be worried if it were not the case."

These are not the words of some 'wild eyed' supporter of *Militant*. It is Neil Kinnock answering Tory charges during the 1972 miners strike about "violent picketing".

Similar statements which flatly contradict Neil Kinnock's more recent utterances are contained in a biography *The making of Neil Kinnock* written by journalist Robert Harris.

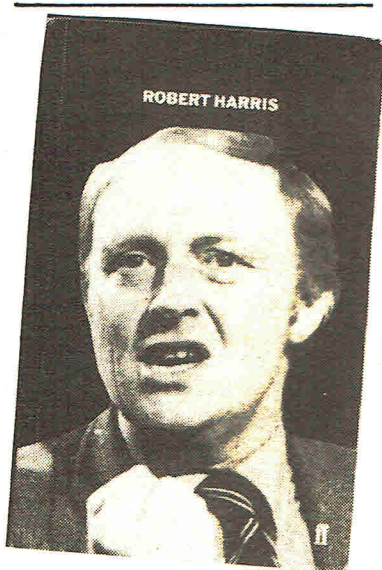
## Moved right

The book shows in some detail just how far to the right Neil Kinnock moved on becoming Labour leader. While it fails to give any adequate explanation as to the objective basis which allowed Neil Kinnock to rise to the leadership of the Labour Party, it is very good in describing what, to say the least, is the inconsistency of the man.

It shows that one of the individuals responsible for Kinnock becoming MP for Bedwellty was a long standing *Militant* supporter, Terry Burns. This comrade as well as other *Militant* supporters were rewarded with Kinnock's support for the expulsion of the *Militant* Editorial Board from the Labour Party.

According to the author, the leader of the Labour Party is now scathing about ambitious young men and women who try to get into Parliament: "when I meet kids at universities today who say they intend 'to make a career' in politics I want to kick their arses. People who think of politics as 'a career' are repulsive".

Every genuine socialist within the Labour movement would echo



*The making of Neil Kinnock*  
By Robert Harris. Faber and Faber £4.95 paperback

such sentiments. However his wife Glenys is quoted as confirming "Neil always wanted to be an MP. We used to talk about it at University". Three years out of college, Neil was selected in one of the safest Labour seats in South Wales.

The book details his chequered history both in relation to policy and on the key question of the democratisation of the Labour Party. Like many previous Party leaders he has attacked "capitalism". He denounced the spending cuts announced by the Wilson Government in 1975, commenting to his Constituency Party in Bedwellty "it was not the task of Labour to salvage and re-establish capitalism."

That white paper was, he said, one of the most reactionary ever to be introduced by a Labour government. It was "too much to take".

However, when he was offered a job as Education spokesman by Callaghan after the defeat of Labour in the 1979 general election there was a remarkable transformation in Neil Kinnock's public stance on Labour's policy. Robert Harris explains that the reason for his promotion was that "above all, he (Callaghan) was in desperate need of a left winger to help placate radical critics in the Party."

To the delight of the right-wing "the former scourge of Healy and the IMF now warned MPs (in 1980) that it would be "hopelessly dishonest" to promise full restoration of the cuts which he said could amount to £10,000 million by the time of the next general election". He repeated this before his own General Management Committee which provoked resolutions condemning him.

This *Volte Face* of Neil Kinnock was but one of many that are outlined in this book. Thus, he supported the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) while contriving at one and the same time to be, mostly in secret, opposed to mandatory re-selection!

In the tradition of many who started off on the left he gained a position on the National Executive Committee by supporting the demands of the *Tribune* left within the Party. Once having gained that position he evolved towards the right at a speed which astonished his *Tribune* friends.

## Poverty of reformism

However, the Marxists were not taken unawares by this development. The history of the labour movement is littered with many examples of former left-wingers, many far to the left of Neil Kinnock even in his most left phase, who subsequently ended up on the right of the Party.

McDonald started off as a Left and ended by stabbing the labour movement in the back in 1931. Harold Wilson was originally a Bevanite with impeccable left-wing

credentials. So were the infamous Woodrow Wyatt and Reg Prentice. Both ended up as extreme right-wingers but started off as *Tribune* supporters!

Their degeneration is not at all due to whatever personal deficiencies they have. Reformism by its very nature is contemptuous of theory. It cannot comprehend that capitalism is in capable of giving lasting concessions to the working class.

It has failed to take on board that it is the irreversible decline of British capitalism which explains the ferocity of the Thatcher Government's attacks on all the past conquests of the British working class.

"Honourable gentlemen opposite have bemoaned picketing. If they had been on strike for 5 weeks, if their families' total income was £7 a week... and they saw some cowboy coming along driving a bald-tyred wagon without a road-fund licence, what would their reaction be?"

—Neil Kinnock  
February 1972

"Violence distracts attention from the central issues of the dispute... violence disgusts opinion... it provides opportunities to our enemies"

—Neil Kinnock  
September 1984

In the long term reformism will prepare a disaster for the labour movement. Neil Kinnock, on becoming leader, was extended an enormous fund of good will by the rank and file of the Party. However, in clinging to the myth that lasting improvements are possible within the confines of British capitalism, he could suffer the same fates as previous leaders of the Labour Party.

Some started out on the left but ended up, contrary to all their original expectations, as loyal props of capitalism. Kinnock denounces the "kindly capitalism" of the SDP. But the logic of his position is precisely to seek to render capitalism "more humane and less ferocious" in its attacks on the living standards of working people.

His rightward shift even before becoming leader evoked *hosannahs*

from the most vicious right-wing spokesman within the Labour Party. Thus the arch right-wing Witch-hunter General, John Golding, confessed during the leadership campaign: "I think I shall vote for Kinnock. He inspires confidence. I think he will make it all the way to Downing Street".

Neil Kinnock also earned the plaudits of Frank Chapple. And yet the right-wing were the architects of Labour's catastrophic 1979 and 1983 election defeats.

This book reminds us of the ineptitude, bordering on outright sabotage, which emanated from these circles in the run up to the 1983 Election. Thus we had the pulping of leaflets printed on the

press which prints the *Militant* during the Bermondsey by-election.

Most Labour workers are familiar with this incident. But what is not so well known is that the party's eve of poll leaflet in the General Election was so bad that one regional office of the Labour Party received 80,000 but refused to distribute them. Instead, they handed them over to a couple of local unemployed men who set up a paper recycling business. One full time official stated "our biggest contribution to the 1983 election was to save a tree".

However, the erratic zig-zags which Neil Kinnock has described in his political career would be of mere passing interest if he had now learnt from past mistakes. Yet as we have detailed in the *Militant*, in the wake of the 1983 General Election, he and many others embrac-



# Neil Kinnock

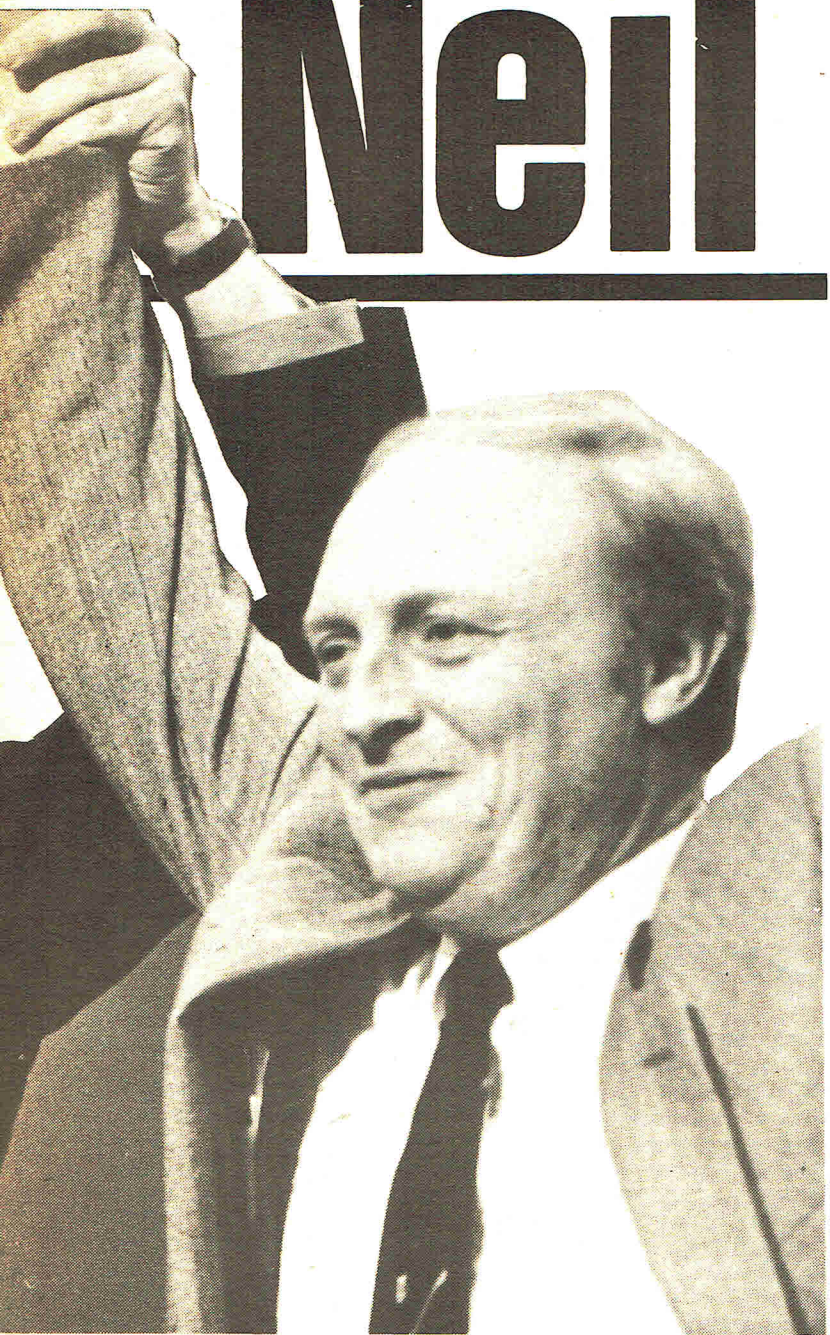


Photo: Militant

## Dead rats, a gun and a door kicked in

ANY BIOGRAPHY of Neil Kinnock and its subsequent reviews would be bound to feature the Party leader's support for the expulsion of the editorial board of *Militant*.

Part of the campaign to discredit *Militant* at the time was an attempt to distort the ideas of Marxism and to cloud the political issues with a smokescreen of lies and innuendo about the activities of the paper's supporters.

A review of Robert Harris' biography of Neil Kinnock, in last week-end's *Sunday Express*, manages not only to repeat one of the worst allegations, made by Neil Kinnock himself, but by cleverly presenting it alongside quite separate events appears to make it worse.

Graham Lord (*Sunday Express*, September 16) writes of Kinnock: "He has had threats to his life and his property. His door has been kicked in. An opponent once pulled a gun on him on his own doorstep. And Kinnock claims members of *Militant* have stuck dead rats through his letterbox."

"Kinnock, as his wife says, both gets very angry himself and makes other people angry in return", says Harris.

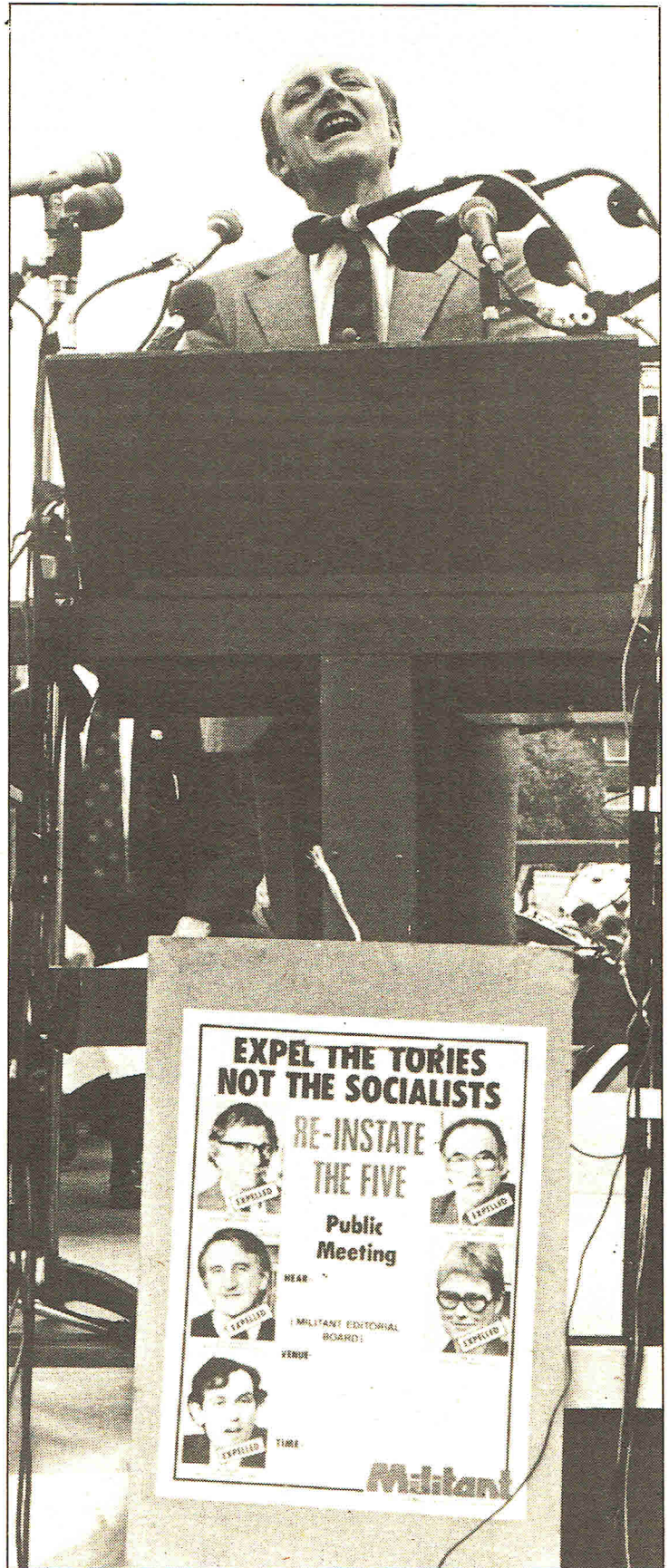
The references to Kinnock's "angry" character appear on page 68 of the biography. The story about the door being kicked in and the gun are both on page 102 where the biographer is dealing quite explicitly with opposition to Kinnock from *Welsh Nationalists*.

Tucked in between these two—and from page 175—is the reference to "members of *Militant*". Thus by their association together, *Militant* is not only linked with allegations about dead rats, but also to doors being kicked in and threats with a deadly weapon.

But what about the "dead rats" allegations?

This outburst took place at a GMC meeting in December 1981 when Bedwellty CLP was discussing three resolutions on NEC actions: the refusal of Party membership to Tariq Ali; the refusal to endorse Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey and the decision to set up an enquiry into "Militant tendency".

According to Robert Harris, GMC member and *Militant* supporter Terry Burns heard Neil Kinnock shout, "I know what they're like. They once stuck a dead rat and a used sanitary towel through my door." Another GMC member also claims to have heard Kinnock make the remark. One



Neil Kinnock at the Durham Miners' Gala, 1983. His support for the witch-hunt will not be easily forgotten. Photo: Militant

delegate, another *Militant* supporter, burst into tears. "My brother Tony asked him point blank if he was suggesting we'd done it," says Terry Burns. "Kinnock denied it. There was absolute uproar. He'd gone way over the top."

In other words there was never at any time the slightest bit of evidence to give substance to Kinnock's wild allegations that night...but it has not stopped

the gutter press from repeating them since.

As for the membership of Bedwellty GMC, they also thought their MP had gone "way over the top". On the first two resolutions, the NEC and the position of Neil Kinnock were endorsed. On the vote on the *Militant* enquiry, "perhaps as a result of his outburst about dead rats", he was defeated by 22 votes to 18.

ed enthusiastically the utterly pessimistic and false ideas of Professor Hobsbawm.

According to the latter the Trade Unions had been irretrievably weakened. The working class had been seduced by videos and cars and away from the ideas of class struggle and socialism. Labour was therefore faced with a long decline.

Marxism, in the words of Trotsky, shows "the advantage of foresight over astonishment". *Militant* has answered Hobsbawm's arguments many times, predicting a colossal outbreak of class struggle, including the possibility of a miners' strike. It is the crisis of this system that demands that the Tories attempt to defeat the miners as a means of driving down the living standards of the working class.

The terrible long term crisis of British capitalism will also confront a new Labour Government. Those who predict that Labour will never be returned in a General Election, including the author of this book, completely fail to understand the enormous reaction of working people to the ferocity of the Thatcher onslaught.

These sages point out that Labour will need to capture 143 seats in the next election, which is "a virtually unassailable" target. However, they fail to see the colossal swings in opinion that now take place in Britain which itself is a reflection of the economic, social and thereby political instability which now exists.

In Spain we have seen an enormous swing towards the Socialist Party since the demise of the Franco dictatorship in 1975. In Greece we have seen a virtual quadrupling in the support for PASOK the socialist party, since 1974. In France 3 years ago we saw the victory of the Socialist and Communist Party with more than 55% of the vote.

In a much shorter period the working class of Britain, moving from the industrial plane on to the political plane, will direct their energy and their attention towards

the return of a new Labour Government. The Tory Party will be shattered in the period that we are going into, not only in the North, but also in the alleged "soft South".

The SDP will be ground between the mill-stones of a revived Labour movement and a rightwards moving Tory Party. The Liberals will be preserved perhaps as a little refuge for disenchanting Tories.

### Swing to Labour

It is therefore most likely that there will be a swing back to Labour and a return of a new Labour Government, although a new witch-hunt could cut across this prospect.

Can Neil Kinnock satisfy the demands and aspirations of working people? With the fresh experience of the Mitterand Government in France, of the Gonzales Government in Spain, and the Papandreou Government in Greece, the ruling class do not now fear the coming to power of Socialist Parties which have pledged that they will remain within the framework of capitalism.

A future Labour Government which did not carry through a fundamental change would come under the remorseless pressure of capitalism to carry through counter-reforms on a more devastating scale than 74-79. At a very early stage the capitalists would attempt to split a Labour Government, pressuring some right-wing figure, possibly even Neil Kinnock himself, to stab Labour in the back and form a new version of the National Government of 1931.

If there are any lessons to be learnt from this book it is that only by the adoption of a clear socialist policy can Labour avoid a catastrophe in the future.

## Chile, Mexico, France

# On the streets of Chile

**THE WORKING class and youth of Chile are now looking for the struggle against Pinochet's vicious military rule to be taken to a higher level. The task is no longer to protest but to overthrow the regime.**

A two-day national protest was called by all the main opposition groupings, the Movement for Popular Democracy and the Christian-Democratic dominated Democratic Alliance for 4 and 5 September. Once again thousands took to the streets in defiance of brutal repression.

The protest began at 12.00 on the 4th with a call for a mass demonstration in the centre of Santiago. Thousands of youth turned up and participated. Dividing themselves into groups they roamed the streets and main shopping centres of the city shouting anti-government slogans.

## Riot police chase

For four hours they played a cat and mouse game with the hated riot police (Pacos) in the centre of Santiago. Moving from one street to the next pursued by water cannon with the police beating anyone they could get hold of.

At two in the afternoon, following the instructions of the small traders' association most shops in the centre shut in support of the protest. However it was not simply the youth and shop-keepers who joined the protest. From the banks and offices in the centre, clerical workers and even managers were to be seen clapping, whistling and joining the chants of the youth against the police and government.

By 5pm the centre of Santiago was completely deserted as the youth and workers returned to the workers' districts and *poblaciones* to prepare for the real protest which takes place at night. However on this first day of protest there could be noted an extremely important development.

Without a clear call for a general strike, the MDP reported that 22 factories had taken industrial action. 90% of school students were absent and all universities closed until 23 September.

At 8.30 the first protests began for the evening. In the middle class areas the clatter of pots and pans was to be heard throughout the city, a well known act of defiance against Pinochet and a clear indication that all sectors of Chilean society have moved into opposition

## From a correspondent in Santiago

to the regime.

Between 9 and 10pm, the real protests began in the workers' districts. Barricades were thrown up throughout the city. Behind them assembled the most active participants in the struggle against the regime. Ready with Molotov cocktails and other weapons, the thousands of mainly young protesters waited for the police to arrive.

As usual they came fully equipped with tear gas, flares, pellets and machine guns. In every sector of the city it was the same, San Miguel, Pudahuel, Maipn', Conchali, the police attacked and major battles took place. At 8.00 the radio announced that all news was censored. Radio Cooperativa y Chilera were only allowed to read "official" statements because they had "attacked the government."

Participation in the protest was high but not as great as in the 27 March day of protest. This in no way reflects less willingness to fight from the workers and youth of Chile. The responsibility must lie with the leaders of the workers' movement.

For a year or more they have called protest after protest. But for the working class, another day of demonstration is clearly not enough to overthrow the regime. No clear instructions were given for the protest; no call or campaign for a general strike, simply calls to have a "peaceful protest" on the first day and to "stay in your house" on the 5 September!

Within the workers movement, though, there is increasing pressure in support of a General Strike whose objective is not to protest but to overthrow Pinochet.

However on the September days of protest, events were to dramatically change. After one night of battles the police attacked with enormous repression in the South of Santiago. In all 9 people were killed and over 400 arrested by the police. Amongst those killed in the *Poblacion La Victoria*, was a French priest, Andres Jarlan, assistant to another Priest, Dubois.

Both were enormously popular, continuously attacking the regime,



The workers of Chile have protested regularly at Pinochet's regime, its repression and the desperate poverty it has caused. Small traders have joined the protests.

speaking of the appalling social conditions which exist and also participating in the struggles of the youth on the days of protest. This death incensed the youth and *pobladores*. Andres Jarlan was actually inside his house and was killed as indiscriminate shots were fired. Dubois and other witnesses are adamant that the police are responsible. As could be expected, the government denies this.

In the south of the city, protests continued for days. Barricades were again thrown up. This time, thousands flooded onto the streets on the night of the 5th. Such was the force of the protest that in many areas of the South the police stopped but didn't attack.

## Youth offensive

This was despite the youth and *pobladores* inviting them to, "Come on you dogs, tonight we are ready for you" was the shout from various barricades to the police buses as they stopped in front of the crowds. To this the police simply fired tear gas and drove on. It was not possible to pass without the permission of the local workers. As one reporter commented in the daily *El Mercurio*, it was only possible for the press to pass with an escort of three *pobladores*.

However so bitter and incensed were the youth that they moved on to the offensive. Supermarkets were attacked and food taken for those with no money and an empty stomach. A bus garage that had continued working in the protest was burned down.

This was the furious answer to the vicious repression in the South of Santiago. The Chilean Revolution is unfolding with increasing vigour. The leadership of the workers movement must reflect the heroism and determination to struggle with a clear programme based not on alliances with Chilean capitalists but a struggle to carry through the Socialist Revolution.

## London YS rally

THE RALLY organised by London Labour Party Young Socialists on 11 September, the eleventh anniversary of Pinochet's coup, was a great success. Over 500 people attended and raised £658.

The Secretary of the Chile Socialist Defence Campaign, Italo Savastio, explained the reasons for building the campaign and the plans to help Chilean dockworkers. Ian Isaac a member of the South Wales NUM pointed out that the British

ruling class were certainly not "too civilised" to try to emulate Pinochet's coup, showing the police state tactics in the coal dispute.

Tony Benn got a tremendous response when he stressed that socialist internationalism would end capitalist internationalism—no faith could be put in the born-again democrats of "liberal" capitalism—only workers unity could throw out Pinochet.

By Ramesh Perinparaja

## France's coal industry attacked



FRENCH MINERS have been shocked to hear the plans of the publicly owned coal group, Charbonnages de France.

At present there are 51,000 workers in the industry, an enormous drop from the 300,000 about 30 years ago. In one important coal area in the North they have been told by France's MacGregor, Michel Hug, that no coal at all will be produced. The total workforce would be 25,000 in the whole country.

Miners in Lorraine, an area already hit by steel closures demonstrated recently. They have given a sign that the government's austerity and unemployment programme may now meet strong resistance.

# A New Deal in Mexico?

IN THE world of debtors, Mexico is second only to Brazil. Last week, in the biggest rescheduling deal ever seen, the Mexican government were given 14 years to pay back debts of \$48.7 billion, more than half of the total.

The interest level on most of this will be paid by Mexico at a rate lower

than the US prime rate used before. Rises in these rates had already added enormously to Mexico's problems.

## When the boom ends

The International Monetary Fund will not be setting any direct conditions on the loan as they will not be lending

money. But they will be "monitoring" progress to ensure that capitalism, both home-made and foreign is treated right. They assume Mexico's capitalist leaders will control themselves in order to be able to borrow more money later. That will mean more attacks on the working class.

In the wake of the

economic boom in the USA, Mexico has recovered from the huge slump of 1981-3 but production is still below 1982 figures. Even Mexico with its enormous oil and other wealth will find it impossible to run a thriving profit system, particularly if America's boom runs out of steam after the presidential elections.

The bankers have been forced to take that risk. Cutting off any further cash to the debtors would not work; for one thing it would be a sure path to revolution.

But Labour's former deputy leader, Denis Healey, along with a number of other capitalist commentators have warned that even the previous method of rescheduling with stringent IMF conditions could do the same. The Western bankers' expectations of massive increases in growth rates,

and low inflation are impossible with the high interest rates and restrictions on trade caused by the recession.

Healey warns that "sado-monetarist" politicians like Reagan, Thatcher and Kohl "are likely to go down in history as the grave diggers of the very capitalism they claim to defend". He fears they will force underdeveloped and semi-developed countries on the road to revolution. Even the latest Mexico deal will not halt that process for long.

Workers struggles worldwide

USA, India, South Africa

# USA-The lesson of leadership

**THE STRIKE** against two major San Francisco department stores, Macys and The Emporium, ended this week with most workers accepting a contract ridden with concessions.

The contract included a two-tier wage system which means that new employees will be paid at a lower rate and will not receive certain benefits like double time and shift differentials.

Union members reluctantly accepted this package for fear of being starved back to work as well as being left out in the cold by the Union bureaucracy. Little if any effort was made by the Union "leaders" to involve the trade union movement as a whole in the strike.

## Bosses "solidarity"

One reason Macy bosses were able to hold out as long as they did was that their stores around the San Francisco Bay area were making money and no attempt was made to picket them also.

While the Macy workers went on strike, the Emporium employees were locked out because they

belong to the same union as their brothers and sisters at Macys. This was a fine example of capitalist class solidarity; workers are forbidden here to show class solidarity in the same fashion as sympathy strikes are outlawed by an act of Congress!

As a participant on the Macy and Emporium picket lines, I attended a mass rally at the Emporium on 28th July and the atmosphere was electrifying for a few moments. The cops started to arrest workers because we ignored an injunction by one of the bosses' judges that forbade us from picketing in front of the store entrances.

As the cops started to take people away, a section of the workers broke from the picket line and started following them. We were screaming at them to let our comrades go and some of us surrounded the police car to prevent them from leaving

but they drove right at us.

By this time the workers were shouting at the cops who were arresting a brother in his mid fifties and whose wife was crying and pleading with them to let him go. The brutal way the cops were handling our comrades was angering the pickets. Workers like these become "Our Boys" when they're required to fight wars for the ruling class.

What was clearly lacking during this strike was correct leadership. A union bureaucrat and a "pro labor" Democrat were on the scene but did not take the offensive. Had there been the leadership present that was willing to go on to the attack workers were certainly ready to fight and we could have entered the store and staged a sit down or similar actions.

I'm sure that crucial lessons were learned by the young workers on this picket line, not least the lesson of leadership and when to take the offensive when the situation demands it.

By a San Francisco correspondent, August 20th.



Reagan speaks in Washington in the 1980 election campaign. The organised working class are the real opposition to the President.

**TWO significant national strikes appear almost inevitable in the USA—in coal and auto.**

The American auto industry is having a banner year. Sales of General Motors cars in June, for example, were 280,044, up 21% from a year ago. Chrysler experienced a 12.4% increase. Second quarter profits for the "Big Three" auto manufacturers are expected to be \$3.1 billion, an increase of 64% over last year. This pace has continued through July and August (whose sales rate was up 32.1% over last year).

Despite these profits and equally massive bonuses for executives in the last year, and despite the \$3 billion given in contract concessions nearly 3 years ago (or maybe because of them), GM and Ford's initial contract proposals would keep wages the same for three years and cut into the cost of living allowances (COLA) as well as health and welfare payments. They are also demanding a two-tier wage plan, with lower wages for new employees. The union termed the proposals "unacceptable" and called a strike on 15 September.

In the coal industry, with

seven major strikes in the last 30 years, negotiations were broken off by the Bituminous Coal Association on August 22. The BCOA is trying to drive the miners' wages down to that paid by their non-union competitors (about 75% of union scale). The United Mineworkers, on the other hand, with a \$45 million Strike fund, has taken the position of "no concessions".

## Tied to Democrats

Perhaps both industries' negotiators are inspired by organized labor's unreserved, no-strings-attached support for Presidential candidate Walter Mondale, and think that the unions' leadership would be reluctant to organize a serious strike at this time.

The UAW's officials "realize they would impose a great liability on (Mondale) by shutting down the entire industrial Midwest in the middle of the (election) campaign," claimed Peter Pestillo, Ford's vice president for labor relations. Workers may have other ideas.

By John Reimann  
Carpenters Local 36,  
(personal capacity).  
Oakland, California.

more, wages went up, only by a penny an hour but by the standard of wages for black workers in South Africa then it was something to be proud of.

"We had beaten the bosses in their own court, the Supreme Court, after conviction in the magistrates court. But more importantly we had won with our own weapon, the strike.

"We learnt that when workers were properly organised, they were strong; they could beat the bosses at the factory, they could get an official out of the clutches of the police so the law was not all powerful".

Nimrod Sejake will be one of the speakers at Militant's 20th anniversary rally on 20 October.



Strikers in the Greyhound bus dispute last autumn faced the same police support for the bosses as did the Macy's strikers.

# Defying apartheid laws

IN MILITANT, 14 September, Nimrod Sejake, a leading member of the steelworkers union in South Africa in the '50s, described how workers who were denied by law the right to trade unions organised at the African Lamps factory.

Here he takes up the story after he had been arrested for "trespass" while negotiating with management. The workers had downed tools on his arrest.

"When it became clear that the workers were not going to end their strike, the police decided they could not take any action against me. My arrest was dropped even though I was breaking the

Bantu Labour Settlement of Disputes Act 1953.

"The next week, the workers met and we discussed strategy and tactics for the new offensive. We then received an indictment. I was accused number one. But we found out a very funny thing; every time we went to court, the factory stopped because everyone was in the

union.

"The Rand Daily Mail which covered our court case said that the iron and steel workers were the first African union to break the 1953 Act, so we felt our tactics were right but we were

## Unity is strength

convicted nonetheless and fined £3 each. We had decided the day before to go to jail rather than pay the fine. We would say we had no money, because we knew we would have no scabs in our workplace so the factory could not work.

"The employer was forced, not by the law, but by the conditions we had created, to pay our fines himself! We knew he couldn't raise the same number of workers with the same skill and expertise overnight.

"But the employer thought it was all right to deduct a certain amount from our pay packet every week until the £3 was paid back to him. He did that but we appealed to the Supreme Court in Pretoria, which found against the employer who had to refund every worker their £3! What is

## Bangalore welfare strike

GC Jagadish is a union activist in the Postal and Telegraph department of the Indian central government in Bangalore. Satish Kumar was elected general secretary of the Goodyear Employees Union after his dismissal by the company, and works in Faridabad, an industrial suburb of Delhi.

They recently told *Militant* about the problems faced by trade unionists and socialists in India. We will be publishing parts of the interview within the next few weeks.

"A bitter dispute is going on in Bangalore. The factory, Gaitri Women's Welfare assembles watches for a public sector factory, Hindustan machine tools.

"This is supposedly a charitable body run by elite women, wives of prominent members of the Janata party who are the ruling party in Karnataka state. They employ destitute women, handicapped, deaf, and dumb women and so on.

"The public sector employees on the same job get 1,000 to 1,200 rupees (£65 to £80) per month, but these women are paid 250 to 300 rupees, all in the name of welfare! Naturally enough, the workers formed a union to make the factory keep its promises. Management had told them that after they took loans of some 1.6 million rupees the employees would get jobs in the main factory and their salaries would be increased.

"The factory started in 1976 and every year production was going up but nothing was coming to the workers. After they started a union the first five members were sacked.

"But 90% of the 100 or 120 workers rejected the intimidation; they wanted a union to fight for them. They are all from villages, with no political or trade union background but they have gone on the offensive and the struggle has been going on now for a year and a half.

"Now the Janata government is being exposed in Karnataka where it is in power. They cannot raise the salaries from 250 to 400 rupees. 'Our hands are tied, only the central government can act' they say. There is no proper lead but workers are being politicised.

"Just imagine the scene, in the Labour Commissioners office with eight workers, destitute, deaf, dumb and handicapped sitting in for a whole day. They were locked up and there was a hullabaloo in the city's papers.

"Unfortunately the workers are not getting very far, but so many things are being shown up by this dispute, it is very clear for instance that management are cheating the government by giving them wrong accounts. Most of all it shows the mood growing even amongst the unorganised section of the working class."

## LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to Militant at 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



## Kinnock—hiding behind windy rhetoric

Dear Militant,

At a time when class conflict in Britain has reached an intensity not seen since the thirties, it seems tragic that the Labour Party should be so wretchedly led. In every way Neil Kinnock has failed to rise to the level of events.

In Liverpool the Labour Councillors inflicted a serious defeat on the Thatcher government because they were prepared to defy the law to save their city's services. At the height of the battle Kinnock tried to sabotage their efforts by urging them to do nothing illegal.

On the miners' strike his support was slow in coming and lukewarm when it arrived. Continually he has tried to hide the poverty of his commitment to the struggles of the working class behind windy rhetoric.

Meanwhile the one cause to which he has given unstinted support is the witch-hunt within the Labour Party.

As far as I am concerned Benn and Scargill are now the de facto leaders of the labour movement.

Yours fraternally,  
Paula Watson,  
Westminster South CLP.

## Only obeying orders?

Dear Comrades,

Due to what I have witnessed on the picket lines and in my own village, where I have seen police attack and beat lads up several hundred yards from the pit and attacked men and women in their homes, I have come to the conclusion that there is no limit to the atrocities many of our police officers are willing to commit while 'obeying orders'.

There should be no doubt that when the police are able to use this kind of verbal

abuse and threatening behaviour to workers going about their normal and legal business, we are living in a police state.

Whenever I have challenged a police officer on whose authority he is acting, they always say "my chiefs". What frightens me about this answer is that I remember the Nuremberg trials in 1946 when the only excuse many of the Nazis gave was: "I was only obeying orders..." Just how far will our police go?

Yours fraternally  
Bert Whittle  
NUM and South Yorks  
County Councillor

major ports on strike.

I asked one of the lads where his political allegiances lay? "Oh, I'm on the left, but not an extremist". "What about you (me)?" "I'm a supporter of *Militant*, a marxist." "Oh, you believe in dialectical materialism, don't you?" At this point, I nearly fell off my stool.

The lads agreed to come along to an LPYS public meeting in support of the miners and were interested in joining the YS and becoming supporters of *Militant*.

The moral of this story is this, be prepared, always take your work home with you, into the pubs etc. (not to be used as an excuse to go drinking!), have a bit of a joke and build support for Marxism.

Gavin Marsh  
Yours fraternally  
Southampton LPYS.

## Socialist scholars

Dear Comrades,

Down the pub with my brother and some of his friends the conversation changed to politics and the miners' strike.

I was amazed at how these lads saw through the lies of the media and the press at the real motives behind the strike.

"It's obvious the strike is political", . . . . "There are going to be explosions and riots later this year if the strike continues" . . . . "It's all leading to a general strike" . . . "Arthur Scargill has got an army behind him," this was just some of the discussion.

After refreshing my vocal chords we went on to discuss the national dock strike, as Southampton is one of the

## Hindles record

The Hindles workers, on strike since March 11th 1983, have produced a record to help with their funds. They are receiving no national strike pay or local levy—please buy the record to keep their fight going! The tracks are the old Strawbs song "Part of the Union" and

their own composition "Year and a bit". Please send £2 for one and £1.50 for each additional record; cheque/P.O. payable to Hindle Pickets TBE Fund together with name and full address to:

Stuart Firth,  
21 Throxenby Way,  
Clayton.  
Bradford BD14 6EU Tel:  
0274-816157

## Health cuts and Labour

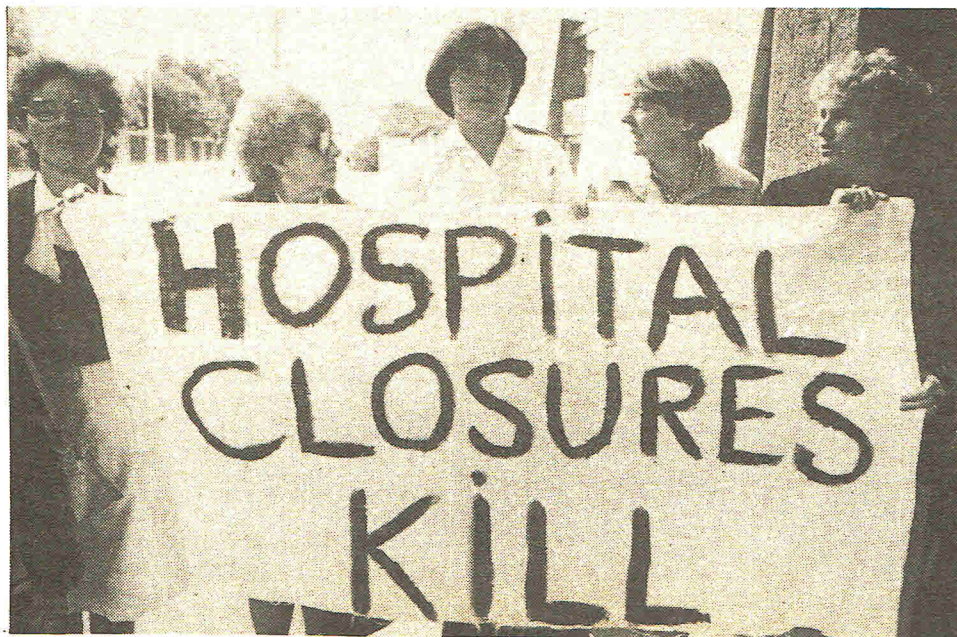
Dear Comrades,

The recent outbreak of salmonella at Stanley Royd and now at nearby Pinderfields hospital makes you realise that the health service is far from being safe in the Tories hands.

This is not the first time that this has occurred. Before the present outbreak, Stanley Royd has had to deal with scabies and I myself am currently dealing with a case of one of our members contracting Legionnaire's disease.

We are particularly hit hard in Wakefield because the same man who leads our Labour Group also chairs the health authority. Supposedly a socialist, Sir Jack Smart has been rabid in his implementation of Tory cuts.

Going against the majority of the district Labour Party he has consistently gone against Labour Party policy by closing nurseries, closing hospitals etc. In fact, even though health authorities do not have to put out their ancillary services to private



. . . and so do spending and staff cuts.

tenders ours was one of the first to do so.

My own constituency Labour Party has voted to send two *Militant* supporters to the Labour Party conference this year and I have every confidence that within the next five to ten years we will see a Labour Group worthy of the title of Labour representatives

Warmest fraternal greetings  
Mick Griffiths  
Branch secretary COHSE  
285-Pinderfields

## Forced to hustle

Dear Comrades,

Last week I really learnt what indignities women suffer. A single mother told how she was sat at home with no food and only 50p. The meter ran out and in went the 50p. So with no money you have to go out and get it. Now the children are clothed but it is a sick society that forced her onto the street. All the indignities inflicted upon women by the Tory capitalist system

whether it is hustling, being battered or 'just' being treated as a second class citizen on low wages being discriminated against will be repaid with interest against this system. The most fervent fighters for a decent socialist society will be the most oppressed in this. There is no alternative.

Yours Comradely  
Gary Freeman  
Leicester

## Brixton revisited

Dear Comrades,

On Channel 4 last Sunday night (Sept 9) there was a programme about Lord Scarman, the judge appointed to report on the Brixton Riots of '81, returning to Brixton.

The programme revealed that unemployment had doubled since 1981 to 26,000 in the borough of Lambeth where Brixton is situated.

The underlying theme that ran through the programme was the total cynicism and scepticism of young blacks. One black lad who was interviewed said what was need-

ed was some more riots.

But the comment that stood out for me was at the beginning of the programme when Lord Scarman remarked what happened in 1981 surprised and dismayed people.

Well, anybody who's lived in Brixton or knows the area or the black population would tell you that it wasn't a question of if there was going to be riots but when they would occur.

Three years on there is growing anger and frustration among both black and white youth which hasn't fully come to the surface. When it does the riots of '81 will seem like a garden party.

Mike Vickers  
Edgbaston LPYS

## Jim's priorities

Dear Comrades,

Isn't it amazing what rewards can be obtained for a few years service to the cause of capitalism in our democratic institutions.

It was announced on Friday September 7 that James Prior would be giving up his place in Thatcher's cabinet, and taking over as Chairman of GEC, one of our largest home grown multinationals.

In this capacity he will be paid £50,000 per annum whilst continuing to draw his salary as a back bench MP.

It was reported on the six o'clock news on BBC1 that the money was not impor-

tant to him as he is already extremely wealthy due to his ownership of two large firms.

Why then is he accepting the post?

Could it be that representing the interests of his constituents in the House of Commons does not keep this conscientious public servant busy enough to prevent the onset of boredom?

I wonder what the unemployed workers in Prior's constituency make of the fact that he has two extremely well paid jobs while they can't even get one.

Yours fraternally  
I P Hagle  
Sunderland  
PS At least Varley resigned his seat first!



## Monarchs for stalinism

Britain has a new economic wizard—the Duke of Edinburgh. Last week he called for the abolition of income tax, because it was not only a tax on the employee, but also on the employer. Cynics might think that the Duke's ideas are based upon class identifications and his wish to see all money raised through taxing goods, which hits the poorest hardest. But perhaps it is more sinister. About the only country in the world which does not have income tax is the Soviet Union. Given the KGB's record in recruiting heavily from the British upper-class, is the Duke's proposal part of a wider plot. We think we should be told.

## Maxwell undermined

Perhaps Maxwell's *Mirror* should be retitled 'the paper that backs away from labour'. *City Limits* magazine, (7-13 September) reports some of his comments to striking miners lobbying the TUC. First he showed his wide knowledge of the dispute by telling a miner from Cortonwood pit (whose closure started the strike): "Well you've got no problems then". Then he told them he didn't want miners to win. "If you want a victory over her (Thatcher) that's a bad thing for the country". And just to show where his loyalties lay, the millionaire owner, when asked about his dispute with print unions at the *Radio Times* said, "(print workers) were looking for a victory over me just like this brother is looking for a victory over her."

## The good soldier Clerc

In Switzerland, even though conscientious objection is illegal, there is a growing number of youth wanting to be exempted from conscription (where they do not serve a continuous period but have to put in so many weeks training a year.) Out of the 2,500 called up in the Fribourg region last year, 420 asked for exemption. Amongst them was Private Clerc, a 26 year old farmer. His exemption was rejected, so he reported to the barracks along with eleven of his cows. He explained this was the only way they would get milked. His commanding officer got the message, and granted Clerc a dispensation.

# Organise sales drive now

THE LAUNCHING of the *Militant* sales drive for October has already had a good response from our sellers. In Scotland in response to a series of *Militant* meetings extra papers have been ordered including Dunfermline who upped their order from 25 to 125. Glasgow and Dundee also had to order extra with Stirling supporters taking 300 extra papers for a demo this weekend.

Yorkshire mobilised for the NUM demo in Barnsley, taking 300 extra papers. On recent miners demos in Dinnington and South East London 75 each were sold. Our sellers in Wigan have increased their order for the next 4 weeks and hope to increase their sales by 50%. Hull are having a sales campaign this week hoping to boost sales with their intervention in the docks dispute. Two new orders have come in this week from

Mountain Ash in Mid Glamorgan and Crayford in Kent. Pride of place goes to Bolsover sellers who sold 35 on Friday during the day. Give your sales a boost get a mention in this column. Send details of your plans for the sales campaign for October, but don't wait till then to step up your sales! If you are not a seller why not contact *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986-3828.

## FIIGHTING FUND This Week £4040

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	1081		2900
East Midlands	827		3550
Humberside	585		1850
London East	924		3200
London West	666		2150
London South East	359		1950
London South West	617		1650
Lancashire	375		1950
Manchester	659		2200
Merseyside	1085		6100
Northern	642		4400
Scotland East	346		2950
Scotland West	911		3650
Southern	1369		5100
South West	249		2150
Wales East	247		2550
Wales West	1318		2550
West Midlands	680		4300
Yorkshire	1031		5350
Others	4678		4500
<b>Total received</b>	<b>18649</b>		<b>65000</b>

THE TOTAL for this week is over £4,000—an excellent week and more in line with what we should be achieving every week. The overall total now stands at £18,649; still a long way off the target.

However don't despair. We've got plenty of ideas how to reach the targets locally and nationally. This week we've had some excellent donations including a student from Lancs donating his £5 birthday money. How many other supporters are prepared to do the same? An anti-smoking campaign in Southampton has raised £26 while an "Italian Evening" in Ipswich raised over £53! Two ideas that other areas can take up. Some areas are planning to hold video nights; bazaars; raffles; quizzes; disco's. Some areas have already had sponsored parachute jumps; sponsored press-ups; pantomines; jumble sales. There are 101 different events, "variations on a theme" that will generate lots of cash. Hull supporters have already raised £60 from ap-

Donations this week include: Andover LPYS 25p; Stockton North LPYS 25p; G Fox Clowne LP 50p; NUM Cresswell 95p; Mrs Shawcroft Mansfield £1; Paul Caston Merton £1; Paddy McConville Dundee West LPYS £1; Paul Reynolds unemployed Oxford £2; Worsley Manchester LPYS £2.40; TGWU 5/826 branch Birm-

ingham £3; Kitty Rea NUPE Black country £3.75; CPSS DHSS HQ Militant supporters South London £3.80; T McGuire Middleton £4; Mr and Mrs Arnold Nottingham OAP's £4; members AUEW No 12 branch Hull £4.20; Attercliffe, Yorkshire LPYS £5; Kempy Rotherham £5 and G Garner Hayes CPSS £10. proaching all members of just two Labour Party wards! This week Selly Oak supporters raised £4.50 at their LP meeting with a rattling rin. These ideas MUST be taken up by every area, NOW! Many LPYS branches are now responding to the attacks on their finances by actually donating to the FF. One branch has donated 25p. However small all these donations are priceless. Get your YS to follow these examples. Whether a donation from an organisation, an individual or cash from an event all these initiatives have one thing in common—a determination to raise FF no matter what; an understanding of the need to raise FF for a more fre-

quent paper to guarantee our fightback for a socialist future. Even if our supporters and readers are penniless they find all sorts of ways of raising cash. Can YOU do the same? All areas are getting an EXTRA THREE WEEKS to reach this quarter's target. The end of the quarter is being extended to the 31 October. This change is due to the fourth quarter being changed to encompass all of January and hopefully result in more FF coming in in that period. So let's prove that no other organisation can match our financial achievements by making this a record quarter—we can do it with your help.

By Kim Waddington

## Build Militant's future

WHILE MANY of our readers have been struggling to find the money to donate to our Building Fund Mrs Thatcher shows how the other half manage. She has put her Chelsea house on the market and is asking for offers of over £250,000. Any takers? I expect not. This is just one small example of how a tiny handful

of the wealthy can live in luxury while millions are homeless or live in substandard accommodation. Well, Thatcher is not the only one to be moving. Much more important is the move of *Militant* to its new home. With this move and the future prospect of a daily paper we can step up the fight to remove the imbalance represented by Thatcher and her like. We might

not have the resources of the Tories in terms of cash but in commitment and sacrifice we beat them every time. Keep the money coming in. Ask your trade union branch or Labour Party for a donation. We need the support of the organised labour movement to complete our move. With your help we will reach £200,000 by the end of the year.

# ADS

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

BOW AND POPLAR *Militant* Social Saturday 22 September, '8 till late'. 47 Winford House Joddrell Rd E3. Admission £1 (includes food).

"COVENTRY YOUTH Fight Back" Demonstration, organised by Coventry SE LPYS branches. Make sure you're there! Assemble 11.30 am, Humber Rd Green, off Binley Rd. on Sat. Oct. 6th

Wanted. Co-op stamps and stamp books. All proceeds to the Fighting Fund. Send to Dave Farrar, c/o 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

RESULT SE Essex Raffle: 1st prize Bottle of Whisky, Steve Cox (Rayleigh) No 243. 2nd Prize Diane Dramm Benfleet No 264 four old records.

HACKNEY NORTH LPYS Miners' Benefit, Crown and Castle Dalston Junction. Friday 21st September 8 till 12 (late Bar) music from Little Red Band + Disco. Admission £1.50 (£1.00 unwaged).

NORTHERN AREA Regional Rally to celebrate *Militant's* 20th Anniversary. Venue: YMCA Hall, Ellison Place, Newcastle, 11 October, starts 7 pm. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor: *Militant*), Terry Fields MP (Liverpool Broadgreen), Chris Herriot (NUM). All labour movement and trade union activists welcome.

CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year. Now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issues 668-692. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* Tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone 0532-455936.

FOR SALE LPYS T-shirts, 'LPYS say Fight the Tories'. Sizes—very large, slightly large, large £3.75 inc. p&p from L. Phillips, 5 Alverstone House, Kennington Park Road, London SE 11. (cheques to London LPYS Campaign Fund)

FURTHER EDUCATION Labour Students—new leaflet out now, attacking Tory cuts and advertising the FELS conference on 10/11 November. Order from Louise James, Organising Secretary FELS, 24 Higgins House, Whitmore Road, Shoreditch, London N1.

INQABA YA BASEBENZI, Journal of the Marxist Workers Tendency of the African National Congress. No. 14 now available. "The Southern African Revolution after the Nkomati accord." Supplement: "The coming world revolution." Please send payment with orders 75p (inc. p+p) to BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.

Flat-share available for student supporter coming to Newcastle Polytechnic (£12 + perweek). Contact: Paul Scullion, 44 Ellesmere Road, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne—or ring: 0632-614-881.

MILITANT '85 pocket diaries 60p. 10 or over 50p each. Fighting Fund donations to Mike King 10 Rodney Ct. Anson Drive Sholing Soton SO2 8RU. 432 480.

# Militant

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

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

HUMBERSIDE 20th Anniversary Rally with main speaker—Peter Taaffe (Editor: *Militant*), Friday 21 September, 7.30 pm. Trades and Labour Club, Beverley Road, Hull.

LEEDS *Militant* Public Meeting, Labour Party Conference 1984. Back the miners—adopt socialist policies. Speakers: D Nellist MP, Nigel Pearce (YS & NUM). Leeds Trades Club, Monday September 24 at 7.30pm.

BRADFORD *Militant* 20th anniversary rally. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, Pat Wall. Tuesday 25 September 7.30pm. Carlton Bolling School, Undercliffe Lane, Bradford.

### Militant Teacher Weekend School

October 13-14th  
Venue: 21 Star Street, London W.2 (near Paddington Station)  
Pooled Fare, Accommodation and Creche available.  
Sessions on: Rate capping and local Govt. Industrial and NUT perspectives Education struggles in S. Africa  
Speakers include Derek Hatton.  
Registration fee £4 payable to Militant Teacher asap to P. Gorman, 58 Holmewood Gardens, London SW2 3NB. For further info ring 01-743-2993

### Greet *Militant's* October Rally

- Semi-display 3 column centimetres £6
- 6 column centimetres £10
- Display one-sixteenth page £15
- One-eighth £35
- One-quarter £50

Deadline for 20th Anniversary adverts 8 October, 1984. Cash with copy. Cheques payable to *Militant*. Return to Circulation Department, *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

BOOKINGS ARE now coming in thick and fast for the *Militant* Rally on 20 October. Already coaches are being organised and some areas are offering all-in-one coach/rally tickets. Speakers will include Tony Benn, Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, and Ted Grant.

We can also confirm that Nimrod Sejake, an activist in the South African steelworkers union in the 1950s will be on the platform. We carry an interview with Nimrod this week on page 11. Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool City Council, and Frances Curran, LPYS representative-elect on the Labour Party NEC will also speak.

Finally Ian Isaac, a member of the EC of the South Wales NUM, and a miner's wife will give their personal reflections on the struggles of the mining community this year.

So order your ticket now to be at the Labour movement event of the year!



1964 Militant 1984

## Anniversary Rally Saturday 20 October

10.30am—5.30pm. Wembley Conference Centre  
Speakers include: Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe, Tony Benn MP, Terry Fields, Ian Isaac, Frances Curran.

Film "The Wobblies" 5.30-7 pm.  
Tickets £2. First Come, First Served!

Booking Form: We would like ..... tickets and enclose ..... (payable to Militant rally)

Name .....

Organisation .....

Address .....

CRECHE (Please Book Now)

We will be bringing the following children.

Name ..... Age .....

Address .....

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

## INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

# NALGO pay campaign

NALGO's Local Government Group Meeting on 31 August, voted overwhelmingly to back the recommendation of the National Local Government Committee and reject the employers' pay offer of 4½%, with no shortening of the working week and no increase in holidays.

**Roger Bannister**  
(Secretary, Knowsley  
NALGO)

The National Committee will meet the employers again on 21 September to seek an increase in the offer, and if no increase is forthcoming, the National Committee are instructed to reconvene the Group Meeting with proposals for industrial action to force the employers to concede.

This year's pay claim is for 7%, so it is essential that any settlement is weighted towards the low-paid members of the union, since there is not a great deal of point in a worker earning less than £100 per week taking industrial action for the difference of between 4½% and 7%, which would only produce a little over £1 per week extra after stoppages.

## Selective action

Moreover, the National Committee plans a course of selective strike action by workers, backed by overall non-cooperation and a levy

of all local government members, which may well serve as a useful starting point, but will have to be backed by further action if the struggle is to be successful.

The lesson of the miners' strike must surely be that the Thatcher government will not easily give in to any industrial action, let alone the partial industrial action of local government workers. Consequently, when the action plan is drawn up, it should include fairly swift escalation towards an all-out strike if partial action is not immediately successful, as well as interim escalation designed to hit those councils, (largely Tory and Alliance), which refuse to support the claim within the employers' organisations.

With such a realistic programme of action and a campaign by the leadership to secure support, the resistance of local government employers would quickly weaken.

# Chubb locks

400 WORKERS at EE Marshall, Wolverhampton, (manufacturers of car door locks), have walked out on strike for the first time since 1979. They are angry at the company's miserly pay offer of between £4.22 and £5.25.

Even non-union members have joined the strike. What particularly angers them is that after years of rises failing to keep pace with inflation their demand for parity with the sister factory (£15/£20 ahead) has been completely ignored. The strike came after a secret ballot rejected the offer by 2 to 1.

In spite of a large police presence. Lorry drivers are refusing to cross the picket line.

Dennis, T&G Shop steward for the toolmakers, and Ken, T&G Shop steward for the casters, believe that the reason for management's stubbornness is that the parent company, Chubb Locks, is just about to be taken over by Racal Electronics. Other parts of Chubb Locks are also facing strikes by their workers.

If this is the case then the possibility exists of joint action for the first time for decades. Messages of support to Bro' Dilbag Singh Baggi, TGWU Convenor c/o TGWU Office, Berry St., Wolverhampton.

By Bill Mullins



Mass rally outside Cammell Lairds in Birkenhead in support of occupation.

# Support Cammell Lairds

**CAMMELL LAIRDS Occupation Committee, held a mass picket on 13 September outside the gates to show the solidarity of the labour movement on Merseyside with the men who are occupying the vessels in the yard.**

Miners, dockers, council workers, unemployed, all joined shipyard workers from Lairds and delegations from Swan Hunters on the Tyne and Yarrow on the Clyde.

At the meeting held outside the gate after the picket, Eddie Loyden, MP for Liverpool Garston, and Bob Parry, MP for Liverpool Riverside, gave their backing to the occupation. Billy Albertina, Chairman of the Occupation Committee, explained how most of the men occupying the vessels were under 30 and so they had to fight because the only alternative was the dole. All along they had carried out the policy of the Confed to resist enforced redundancies.

The Back to Work Committee offered nothing. He explained how they held their meetings in the yard and management had provided a coach for

them to go to the Conservative Trade Unionists' meeting in Brighton. If the Back to Work Committee was allowed to win the day it would mean the end of the nationalised industries, as privatisation would go through unhindered.

The convenor from Swan Hunters stated that they faced an identical position to Lairds as they expected the announcement of 1,000 redundancies at their yard at the end of this year. Therefore they saw that it was important to back the Lairds' fight and so they had come down to show their solidarity for the Cammell Lairds workers in occupation.

## Recall shipbuilding conference

The delegate from the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards Committee said that the dockers, miners and Lairds fight was the same fight. He also emphasised that if, after the speech of Leon Brittan, life sentences were passed on trade unionists, then the whole of the trade union movement must be called out.

The representative of Bold NUM expressed the same sentiments and said that if the workers stuck together they

would be bound to defeat "this oppressive government."

After the meeting one of the men there from Yarrow's said that they would be taking the message back to their yard to get further support from Lairds. The men from Lairds, Yarrow's and Swan Hunters agreed to call for the re-convening of the shipbuilding conference to get the support of all the yards for the occupation at Lairds.

The secretary of the Occupation Committee, said that now it was a question of wait and see. A writ had been taken out by the company but the men were barricaded on board the two vessels. Even if the bailiffs did manage to evict them from the yard, then they would picket the gates and call for a massive response from the labour movement.

To support the Lairds occupation Birkenhead LPYS have organised a march and rally on Saturday 22 September assembling at 11 am at Cammell Lairds main gate (by the Rock Ferry by-pass roundabout).

By Dave Clark  
(ASTMS)

# Seventy-nine weeks — two Hindle records

**HINDLE STRIKERS are record makers in more than one sense. They have now been on strike for 79 weeks—certainly the longest running dispute in the country and probably one of the longest in British history.**

By Kirstie Maclean

Twenty men are still continuing their struggle for reinstatement in spite of tremendous financial difficulties. The AUEW rules state that strike pay can on-

ly be paid for 12 months and unfortunately the district levy has also been removed.

If support had been forthcoming from other union members within the Hindle group (eg Perkins) the strike could have been successful. Even at this late stage this support could have a decisive effect.

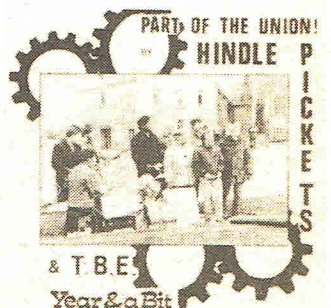
Hindle other record is of the plastic, 45 RPM variety.

The lads have produced this record both to publicise the dispute and to raise funds. On one side is a rous-

ing version of the traditional sone "Part of the union" and on the other side a song they have written themselves "A year and a bit". The sound is very professional, and apart from supporting an excellent cause, it is a worthwhile addition to any socialists' record collection.

There is a danger that with the tremendous efforts going into fund raising for the miners the Hindle strikers will be forgotten. Donations and orders for the record (£1.50 + postage) should be

sent to: Hindle Strike Committee, c/o AUEW District Office, 2 Claremont, Bradford.



**Unity** JOURNAL OF THE  
**BLOC**  
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE  
For a fighting socialist Trade Union leadership  
Donations welcome

## Support the miners

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

# Shopworkers' day out

SHOPWORKERS might be interested to know of the retail trade's magazine *Supermarketing* Annual conference at the end of next month.

The conference is intended for directors, top executives and other captains of industry in the retail and supermarket business. The major discussions will be on ensuring continued growth, efficient and profitability in the giant supermarket

chains, and conference will also be addressed by the Tory consumer affairs minister, Alex Fletcher MP. Can't wait to go?

Well, the cost for the two-day conference in London's exclusive Cafe Royal is £225 plus VAT.

This does not include accommodation, meals or travel, so bring an extra few quid if you don't have an expense account. Surprisingly, no one in the shop where I

work seemed very interested in this opportunity to discuss the future of their industry.

Though it might have something to do with the fact that the average take home wage for a shop assistant over eighteen in my company is less than £60 per week for 39 hours.

By Stephen Wright  
(USDAW, East Kilbride  
LPYS)

## USDAW Broad Left

Elections for General Secretary and President of the union are imminent. The Presidential campaign starts in October. Election of a new general secretary is due early next year. Support the BL candidates Bill Connor and Jeff Price. contact: 7 Co-operative Terrace, Brunswick Village, Wide Open, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

# Civil Service pay

Photo: Dave Sinclair



Kevin Roddy speaking at the lobby of the TUC in support of the miners.

THE CPSA Civil Service executive committee at its meeting on 3 September decided to recommend acceptance of the government's 1984 pay offer.

The *Militant* supporters on the CSEC argued for another attempt to be made at launching a campaign of industrial action to achieve improvements in the offer, however the Committee decided to settle. It is unfortunate that the CPSA membership were never given the chance to vote upon any proposed industrial action to back the pay claim. Blame for this year's failure must lie squarely with last year's right wing executive which agreed a totally inadequate claim of only 7% and then refused to attempt any action for securing it.

It is now almost certain CPSA members will reluctantly agree to settle, especially with the terms of

By Kevin Roddy  
(CPSA NEC, personal capacity)

the circular which Alistair Graham, General Secretary, sent out to branches, urging them to vote only if they disagreed with the NEC! The executive must turn its attention immediately to 1985 living standards, particularly those of the lowest paid, which have been cut dramatically since the Tories came to power in 1979. The 1985 claim must address itself to this problem as well as picking up the long neglected conference claims on annual leave and the shorter working week. The Broad Left National Executive must immediately begin a massive campaign on 1985 pay. Only this will convince members that the Broad Left can do anything to regain the ground lost since 1979.

The Civil Service executive must now confirm that a special pay conference will be held in December, when a claim must be drawn up. The basis of this claim should be a £15 per week pay rise; six weeks leave for all, and the introduction of the 35 hour week without loss of pay into the Civil Service.

This claim must be taken to the Council of Civil Service Unions with the demand for a real campaign for 1985. The work which has been done on building a

public sector alliance must continue with a view to reaching an agreement on a common claim.

However we must also recognise that the only language this government understands is conflict. Major industrial action in the Civil Service next year will be necessary to achieve this claim. The work must begin now to build the mood and determination of the membership for a fight on pay next year.

## INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

### London Post Office stoppage

LAST MONDAY, 17 Sept, saw a one day stoppage throughout London involving all counter and administrative staff in the Post Office (PO).

Refelcting the enormous anger and pressure from rank and file members, against Post Office closures, the leadership of our union made the action official.

The stoppage was called as a direct response to the latest proposed closure of Cable Street PO in East London. Over 300 postal workers marched in pouring rain from Cable Street to the Eastern District Head PO to show their anger at the proposals.

The fight against Post Office plans to close 70 or 80 main Post Offices nationally, including 30 in London, represents one of the biggest and most crucial battles our union has faced. Not only is this government-backed attack on the PO network a blatant attack on the jobs of

our members and the services to the public as a whole, it is also undoubtedly, as Tebbit has indicated in government plans, a preparation for privatisation.

Despite the support given to the action on Monday, many members are questioning the effectiveness of just calling one-day stoppages when a closure comes up. There has been little national leadership on the question of closures, jobs and services, or of the need to link the action in London to other areas under attack.

If the union is going to halt such plans, a national campaign must be waged amongst the members, with an official call for a national strike and demonstration, leading to more extensive action in the coming months.

By Phil Waker  
(Ass. Sec Eastern District, C.C.S. Counter and Clerical Staff)

#### Advertisement

★  
NUPE National Broad Left  
Saturday 22 September  
10.00 am, Friends House,  
Euston Square

★  
POEU Broad Left  
Saturday 22 September  
10.00 am, County Hall  
London

★  
Public Debate organised by  
Ealing Health Joint Shop  
Stewards Committee  
"What future for the NHS"  
Speakers: Tom Sawyer—  
Deputy General Secretary  
NUPE v Tory speaker

"WELL WE'LL just have to start again, learn the lessons of this dispute and get ready for the next time." That was the view of some of the dockers who came to lobby, after hearing the decision of the national docks delegates conference to call off the second national dock strike this year.

Delegates voted by 76 votes to 8, with 6 abstentions in favour of a formula recommended to them by the national committee of the docks and waterways trade group of the TGWU as a basis for ending the action. Under this deal the British Steel Corporation have given an assurance that the registered boatmen, tugboat men and dockers who are TGWU members will be used for berthing and despatching ships and for cleaning out coal in the holds of vessels. However, BSC refused to unequivocally guarantee this under all circumstances. They reserve the right to employ alternative labour (ie scab labour) in the case of the registered men being unable or unwilling to carry out the work.

#### Poor leadership

BSC gave very similar assurances last May then reneged on them. Also as part of the deal struck, the quota of coal to be allowed into Ravenscraig is to rise from 18,000 tonnes per week to 22,500 tonnes per week over the next two months; the amount originally demanded by the British Steel Corporation.

The majority of dock workers will not be happy with the terms upon which we are returning to work. This deal doesn't meet the demands which we went out for. Even the national officials who negotiated and



Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (IFL) II

The T&G leadership of the dockers failed to explain the link between solidarity with the miners and defence of their own jobs.

recommended it, admit publicly that it is a compromise by the union.

Despite the large margin to accept the deal, the vast majority voted in favour because they doubted the effectiveness and success of the strike so far, were not confident of being able to spread and strengthen the action, and in some cases were not convinced of being able to keep their own membership out. Many therefore felt it better to go back united and intact now and prepare for the future.

That preparation will have to start immediately and the lessons learned quickly. Both the government and the port employers are preparing for a full scale attack upon the Dock Labour Scheme in the near future and signs of weakness displayed this time

round will have encouraged them.

Despite the patchy nature of the strike, with virtually all non-registered ports working, the majority of registered dockers were out. Already this partial strike was having an important effect upon the economy. The cost of trying to re-route goods was becoming phenomenal. Raw materials were beginning to run down. The late rallying of the pound (currently at an all time low) only happened as a result of our strike ending yesterday. That is the power we have.

Where strike activity and picketing was well organised locally, successes were achieved. Effective picketing, seen for instance with striking dockers from Hull and elsewhere actually

getting onto the docks to speak to working dockers at Grimsby and Immingham, was successful in winning their support, where previously they had been most reluctant to join. Liverpool dockers succeeded in winning support from unregistered dockers at Mostyn. These examples show what can be achieved.

#### Expect attacks

Above all we must take the necessary steps to ensure improvements in the way future struggles on the docks are conducted nationally. Next time there must be far more preparation of the membership, far more explanation of precisely what we are fighting for, and once

the action has started, far more national co-ordination and direction.

A start needs to be made now to alert every member to the attacks likely to be made upon the Scheme. Serious breaches of it occurred during this dispute. Furthermore a campaign against the encroachment of scab labour in and around the docks must now begin, and a halt put to the spread of non-registered docks and wharves.

The best way to ensure the Scheme's future is to campaign for it to be extended into every port so that every docker can enjoy the benefits, and we'll fight united for a better deal in the future. It is essential that we rebuild the National Port Shop Stewards Committee. This body played a vital part in our successes in the 1960s and early 1970s. We need such a body now to link all ports and docks together, to help to bring badly needed fresh blood into some docks, and at every other level, and to bring pressure to bear upon the national leadership of the TGWU and other unions with membership on the docks.

We must fight for:  
★ No more scab labour  
★ Defend the Dock Labour Scheme.  
★ Extension of the scheme to all dock workers and to all ports, docks and wharves.  
★ Develop the National Ports Shop Stewards Committee.

## Docks strike off — repair and prepare

# But Tilbury out again

By Paul Spooner  
(Hull docks district committee, Secretary TGWU 10/15 branch personal capacity)

DOCK EMPLOYERS clearly think that now is the time to take on the unions. When Tilbury returned to work on Wednesday 19 September, the twelve shop stewards in my department found the union portakabin locked and were informed by management that they were no longer full-time stewards.

Everyone at Tilbury also got a letter on Wednesday from the Port of London Authority telling them of new working arrangements. Tally clerks were so annoyed about the new manning reductions that they came out on strike.

The PLA are now trying to get dockers to work without tally clerks. Management have indicated that they are prepared to put up with a couple of weeks disruption if they can force through manning cuts they've had in mind for a few years.

By Roger Gow  
(ACTSS, shop steward Tilbury, personal capacity)

# Militant

Miners Reports

See pages 3-6

## Cowley workers warn car bosses

**WORKERS AT BL Cowley have had to take many attacks since the Tories and management started their offensive some years ago. But we are now fighting back.**

Management have seen that there is a new predominantly young workforce with a chronic shortage of shop stewards on the Montego assembly plant. They have tried to take advantage of this but the events of the last weeks show their intimidation days are coming to an end.

The workforce at Cowley have been recalled from strike at present but the main dispute remains unresolved. "Peace negotiations" with management are still in progress and a formula could be put to workers today (Wednesday).

The dispute revolves around our low bonus. Production has never been higher but our bonus has never been lower. In January 1984, the body plant got £27.86 but by 30 June this had dropped to £1.83. They have had continually low bonuses.

### Drop in wages

This is a drop of £26 real wages and £18 lower than 1983. In two years we have lost 3 minutes washing up time and faced a massive speed up to 36 cars an hour. Only our determination stopped this being 37 cars.

Workers at BL have stopped some of the worst attacks. Now Cowley workers have seen through the management's bonus lies. At two mass meetings we recognised that strike action will be needed. Workers backed the call for an overtime ban on all except cleaning and contractual overtime to keep production going.

Management then tried to break the overtime ban by threatening suspensions and taking workers off the clock unless they worked extra overtime. The paint shop refused and were sent home,

By a Cowley TGWU assembly worker

and the night shift walked out in support.

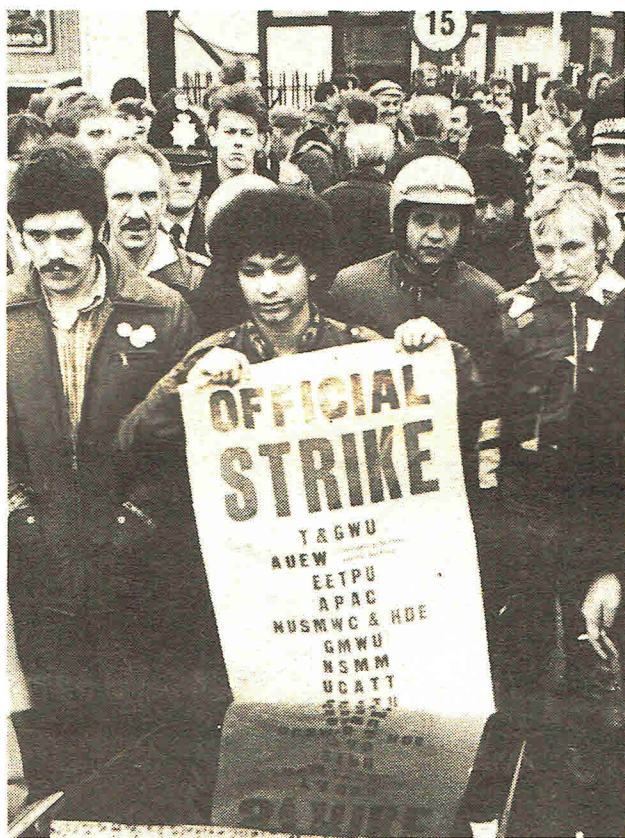
The shop stewards committee, after a long discussion, recommended to mass meetings that the paint shop should work the extra non-contractual time but met massive opposition from workers angry that demands had been overturned in only six days. The vote was 70%.

### Keep the overtime ban

The main concern of Cowley unions now workers have been recalled must be to ensure that there is no relaxing of the overtime ban, and that the paint spray shop, can now work a straight 39 hours, no overtime, without being taken off the clock.

The bosses' press say the stewards voted unanimously to ask management to recall the workforce. Some stewards report that the meeting actually opposed a 'return to work' call which the convenor was pushing for. Whatever happened, the stewards must understand there can be no more concessions to the bosses and no dropping of the overtime ban.

The recall changes nothing until the original dispute is resolved. Cowley stewards have an enormous responsibility to carry out the demands of last weeks mass meeting to bring management to heel. This dispute is one more opportunity for BL unions to unite the workforce in a fight to regain the rights and conditions taken from the shop floor. It must not be wasted.



Strikes at Cowley, in 1981 (above) and 1983 (below). Years of attacks have built up anger at BL car plants.



## On our way to Wembley

THE announcement that the *Militant* Rally on 20 October would reveal plans for a more frequent *Militant* has amazed the Tory press.

The rally will celebrate 20 years of our paper. In the early years the Tory press did not take us seriously. Now they do, but only in order to attack us regularly in their trashy little sheets!

Now, after years of sacrifice by our sellers, in the face of constant attacks, the prospect of a more frequent *Militant*, leading up to a daily paper is no longer just a dream of the distant future. A Marxist daily can become a reality.

We have astounded the press by raising £175,000 for the Building Fund to buy a premises capable of producing every day. Come and celebrate at Wembley on 20 October. (Details and application form on page 13).

Leading speakers include Tony Benn, together with Peter Taaffe and Ted Grant, editor and political editor of *Militant*. Don't delay. Today's the day you should book your place, tickets are going very fast.

It may not be possible to buy tickets on the day, so see your local *Militant* seller or send in the form on page 13 with cash. A crèche will be available and only children who are booked in can be accepted. So act now!

BRISTOL: Leaves from Transport House at 8 am, tickets £5.50, £3 unwaged.

LEICESTERSHIRE: Leaves Humberstone Gate, Leicester at 7.45 am, calling at Market Harborough. £8 or £5 unwaged, includes Rally ticket.

NOTTINGHAM: Leaves Salutation Inn, Maid Marion Way, Nottingham, at 8 am. £6 or £3 unwaged, free to striking miners and families. Contact 0602-607498 for details.

**STOP PRESS:** The cabinet in Sri Lanka has lifted the ban on the socialist Nava Sama Samaja Party which the dictator imposed in July 1983. Fuller report next week.

### Put power behind the miners

Continued from page 1

victory. The discussions between power unions and the NUM, based on the decision of the TUC to black coal and oil, are an important step forward.

But words must be turned into action. The TUC must put power behind its commitment to solidarity. If miners and power workers work out a joint strategy and establish local liaison committees, this can be achieved.

The task now must be to identify the key areas which the Tories are using to supply the national grid and mount a mass campaign of explanation and action.

This is the way to bring the strike to a speedy and successful conclusion. Such a campaign would win the mass support necessary to

defeat the vicious rearguard action the Tories would undoubtedly wage, against mass picketing of power stations and to try to move stockpiled coal.

The miners will have been on strike for 200 days next week. Two hundred days too long. Their struggle to stop the Tories destroying their industry, jobs and communities, is also a struggle to defeat the Tory assault on all workers.

They deserve and must demand the support of every union and every worker. Decisive action now will achieve that. It will also end the two hundred day war which the Tories and police have waged against the mining communities—a proxy war against the trade union movement and working class as a whole.

Article on power stocks page 4



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