

# Defend NUM

**FIVE LEADERS** of the miners' union are under threat of imprisonment. The High Court writ for contempt of court, served on the floor of Labour Party conference, poses the biggest challenge to the labour movement since the Pentonville Five dockers were jailed in 1972 under the Heath government's Industrial Relations Act.

## Editorial statement

Then, a spontaneous movement from the unions' ranks secured their release. Now, there must be a similar response.

Twelve workers from the Cammell Laird shipyard occupation are already locked up in Walton Prison, Liverpool. Thirty more on the gas rig inside the yard face the same fate at any time. These legal attacks on trade unionists reveal the naked class nature of the courts.

The judges are trying to do to the miners what the NCB has failed to do by bribes of redundancy pay, the DHSS has failed to do by deducting £15 from benefits, the Tory press has failed to do through insidious propaganda, and the police have failed to do by brute force on the picket lines—break the strike. They must not succeed!

It is a sign of desperation by the ruling class that they are prepared to resort to such drastic remedies. Dwindling coal stocks and the NACODS ballot for strike action are isolating the NCB and turning the dispute decisively in the



Arthur Scargill—threatened with jail or sequestration.

union's favour.

It is open to the judge on Thursday to create a new Pentonville Five, by jailing the NUM leaders for an indefinite period. Such a drastic measure is not the most likely course of action, but the alternatives are little better. The court can impose massive fines and sequester all the funds of the union.

The only way to escape any "punishment" is for the NUM leaders to "purge their contempt" by publicly apologising for refusing to agree with the judge that the miners' strike is not official and undertaking not to condemn or take any action against those breaking the strike.

No genuine workers' leaders could ever give such undertakings, so there is no way that some form of punitive action by

the court can be avoided.

The whole movement, which has pledged its support at both the TUC and Labour Party conferences, must now be prepared to deliver that support in the form of deeds, in a mass mobilisation of its forces.

Any penalties imposed by the court must lead to an immediate 24-hour general strike as a show of strength, to warn the Tory government and their class-brothers in wigs that workers are not prepared to stand for legal attacks on those who lead our movement.

## Massive campaign

The Labour conference, which will be still in session when the case comes to court, can give the lead. An emergency resolution, calling for this concrete action must be moved by the left trade union leaders, who have a special responsibility to take on this task. If "procedural" reasons make this impossible at the conference then the 24-hour strike should be organised by the unions immediately after.

If any of the leaders are jailed on Thursday, or at any later date, there needs to be a movement from below to spread the action to an immediate all-out general strike until they are freed. Urgent action is needed immediately to prepare for this, by convening emergency mass meetings at every level within the movement—the shop floor, union branches, district committees, trades councils, confeds, etc to explain the issue to every worker.

A campaign on this scale will convince the overwhelming mass of working people that every right they have won, all the advances achieved by their parents and grandparents over years of struggle, will be taken back if the bosses get away with incarcerating the leaders of a seven month strike.

The trade union movement cannot sit back and let

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# Prepare for action

## Follow Liverpool

"Conference salutes the stand taken by Liverpool City Council and calls on other councils, as well as the national leadership, to take an equally unequivocal stand in defence of the working class." This is now official Labour Party policy, after a composite resolution was passed overwhelmingly on a show of hands, after the movers had refused the NEC's request to remit it.

The resolution supported "any councils which are forced to break the law as a result of the Tory government's policies."

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Militant  
Rally!**

Wembley, Saturday  
October 20th.  
Details page 6.



# Militant

## What Kinnock didn't say

BEFORE THE Labour Party Conference, the press were speculating on the possibility of Neil Kinnock using his authority as leader to chastise the miners, and push through one-person-one-vote for parliamentary re-selection. But the press did not calculate on the enormous strength of feeling of the Party rank and file. As at the TUC conference a month ago, the miners' strike puts its indelible stamp on the whole of the proceedings. The Conference overwhelmingly and unequivocally threw its support behind the miners, leaving only a handful, such as the EETPU leadership, out on a limb.

The platform obviously hoped that by having all the controversial issues on Monday afternoon they would get them out of the way more easily, but that only added to their un-doing. The miners' debate created an electric atmosphere that also put its mark on the police debate which followed in which the platform was defeated twice.

The same was true on re-selection, which showed the iron determination of the Party rank and file not to go back on the gains achieved in the past.

It was therefore a much chastened Neil Kinnock who rose to give the leader's parliamentary report on Tuesday afternoon. Although the speech received the obligatory standing ovation, it was a much more polite affair, without the spontaneous cheering and football crowd enthusiasm that had greeted Arthur Scargill 24 hours earlier.

Throughout his 40 minute contribution Neil Kinnock made many stinging attacks on the record of the Tory government. In contrast to his TUC speech, he blamed the government for the violence of the miners' strike and made at least a passing criticism of the police. But even on this basis many delegates were dissatisfied.

The miners' strike has hardened the attitude of workers on many issues, not least on the political questions facing the Labour Party. The Labour Party membership need more than a few empty words from the leadership. Yet there was little if any concrete policy or programme in the speech. The only categorical and decisive statements were those in defence of "democracy" and "legality". Party members are entitled to more than this.

Where was the economic strategy? What precisely will the next Labour government do to get the economy moving and reduce unemployment? What is the programme on nationalisation or on the re-nationalisation of industries hived off by the Tories? What steps will be taken to control the enormous power of industry, finance, to control the outflow of currency? What precisely will the next Labour government do to reduce the working life and working year, mentioned by Neil Kinnock? There were no answers to any of these questions.

The fundamental theme in Neil Kinnock's speech was entirely false. Now he said "there is a different breed of Toryism." "Thatcherism is a personal fixation turned into a system of government", "Thatcherism is prejudice made statute". Stirring stuff. But what he should have explained is that "Thatcherism" is a reflection of the decay and decline of British capitalism. It is an economic system in an impasse. It is not simply a personal whim of the current Tory leadership. The party leader should be exposing the capitalist system itself and rallying the Party ranks to fight for the socialist transformation of society.

The miners' strike is an historic turning point. As a result of their experiences, many workers will have been politicised. They understand, often instinctively, that there is no future for them under capitalism except endless horrors of unemployment, low pay, economic hardship and social upheaval. Society must change if it is to guarantee workers a real, decent living in the future.

This realisation is reflected in the growing mood among workers, particularly among the more active and advanced sections of the class. It would have been far better for the Labour Party, and for his own authority within the Party, if the leader had given voice and conscious expression to the will of workers and the instincts of the rank and file of the Party to change society.

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# Scots rough justice

**FINES totalling £400 were imposed on Chris Herriot, NUM Youth Delegate at Monktonhall Colliery, Midlothian, at the Edinburgh Sheriff Court last Wednesday. £200 was for breaking bail conditions for "breach of the peace", an offence which normally leads to a fine of £10 or £20.**

The difference of course is that Chris is a striking miner. As another miner put it in *The Scotsman* newspaper: "As soon as a Sheriff sees it's a miner he sticks a nothing on the end of the fine."

## Mass picket

The "offence" took place during a mass picket at Bilston Glen on 25 June, when the management were trying to organise their back-to-work campaign just before the summer holiday. At the time of his arrest, Chris was the only member of the Mid and East Lothian Central Strike Committee who had not already been arrested that morning, and he was attempting to regroup and organise the pickets and

restrain some of those suggesting an invasion of the colliery premises.

This was stated in court and not disputed. As Chris said afterwards: "I was guilty for an incident which, according to the prosecution, took place in 45 seconds". The sentence is blatantly political, an attempt to intimidate other miners.

## 'Disorderly crowd'

And it is only one of many such sentences on miners at the Edinburgh Sheriff Court. George Purcell, acting Chairman of the Loanhead Strike Committee, was fined £200 for an incident alleged to have occurred that same morning at Bilston Glen. Christopher Morrison from Ayrshire was fined £300 for "forming part of a disorderly crowd" there two days later.

Other Scottish miners have fared little better. At Perth Sheriff Court, five Fife miners were fined a total of £400, plus a £200 compensation order, for "being involved in rowdy scenes" in Perth. Kilmarnock Sheriff Court has refused legal aid for all but nine out of 46 cases, and Dunfermline has



Chris Herriot

turned down every single application, in over 130 cases.

What makes these court decisions even worse is that it is the policy of the Scottish NCB to sack any miner found guilty. Indeed, according to George Purcell: "Even if you are just charged with an offence, that's fed back to Bilston Glen and you are sacked... people have been charged outside that pit and then been sacked an hour after the offence happened. How can he be sacked before he's been proved guilty? You're supposed to be innocent until proved guilty; with picket line of-

fences you're guilty until you prove yourself innocent".

Jackie Aitcheson, NUM Branch Secretary at Bilston Glen, was sacked for standing, as an official picket, inside a white line drawn by the pit management across the entrance. Lothian Highways Dept claim that the bit of land in question is theirs and not NCB property, yet he was sacked under the regulation that safety helmets and boots must be worn on NCB property!

## Re-instatement

All but two of the branch committee at Bilston Glen have now been sacked, and Mid Lothian miners are adamant that there will be no return to work until all those sacked have been re-instated. As Martin Rogan, Treasurer of the Newtongrange Strike Committee declared: "All the boys here are not going back until everybody's been re-instated; that's how strongly we feel. We wouldn't even think of going back to work; we wouldn't even discuss it!"

By Pat Craven

# Rochester demo

Marc Green  
(Gillingham LPYS)

Radio Kent reported recently that Rochester police station had been stormed by an angry mob following a march in support of the striking miners. As usual, the truth is completely different.

The incident happened following a demonstration of 500 people in the pouring rain through the Medway towns. The police had agreed with the Kent area NUM that money collections could be taken within the body of the march, but this did not stop them wading in to arrest miner Bill Martin for collecting cash in a bucket. He was taken away leaving his young daughter in tears.

Shocked and angry, about 150 of the marchers decided to go to Rochester police sta-

tion to demand his release. Standing on the entrance steps outside the station, they were charged by 20 to 30 police who stormed out of the station pushing men, women and children down the steps. The 'storm-troopers' arrested four and then released Bill Martin without charge.

## Beaten up

The demonstrators stayed on until the other four were all released. One AUEW member came out with a gash on his head and clearly shaken. Many demonstrators saw this man beaten up through the window of the station. He is charged with disturbing the peace.



Miner Bill Martin—arrested for collecting cash—then released after protests.

# No ambush at Silverwood

ACCORDING TO news reports pickets 'ambushed' 20 policemen driving in a nine van convoy near South Yorkshire's Silverwood colliery in the early hours of Friday, 28 September. Alf Robinson of Wooley NUM was one of the miners who went to picket the pit and he describes to *Militant* what really happened:

## Kept from pit

"We got there about 2.30am. The scabs were due to be taken in at 3.00. We went to picket but the police would not let us anywhere near the pit. I didn't see the pit gates all the time we were there.

"We got to the top of the hill and the police were all

across the road waiting for us. They let the dogs out on leashes—nobody would go forward with dogs there. One dog got loose and went crazy, even biting the police.

"A barricade was built at the top of the road to stop more police coming up. Then the police convoy came and had to stop at the barricade. It couldn't turn round because of all the pickets around it. That's when the trouble started.

"Once the police had regrouped and removed the barricade, one police van drove at full speed weaving around up and down the road which was full of about 2,000 pickets. Lads were jumping over walls on either side to get out of the way. It was lucky no one was killed.

"As we retreated two lads were found up a tree trying to get away from a loose police dog. Someone from a house fired a 12 bore shot gun at them. The police then came down banging their shields and chanting and chased pickets though a nearby housing estate.

## Cars smashed

Some lads had cars parked at the top of the hill and police smashed the car windows. Things were peaceful when they parked. If they had planned to ambush they would not have left their cars there. We left just after 3.00am. All this had happened in just three quarters of an hour."

## £1000 in a day

Two young Yorkshire miners ended a tour of Ireland with a tremendous collection on the streets of Dublin. Brendan Conway and Tony Healy, with 25 Labour Youth members, raised £1000 on Saturday 29 September, to return home to Fitzwilliam on a high note.

## Power shut down

TUCKED AWAY in a five-line article in the *Daily Telegraph* is a piece of news to strengthen the miners' confidence: "A rundown of coal stocks has forced the closure of Alcan's private power station at its aluminium smelter at Lynemouth, Northumberland." (2.10.84)



# Full support for miners

MONDAY WAS miners' day at the Labour conference at Blackpool. The fighting spirit of the picket lines invaded the Winter Gardens and infected the whole conference. There was a determination and confidence that the miners must, can, and will win their heroic battle for jobs, communities and the democratic rights of the whole movement.

The delegates massively rejected the "advice" of the

Tory press and some fainthearts on the NEC that too close an identification with the miners would be electorally harmful to Labour. Instead, in an atmosphere of fervent solidarity, the political and industrial wings of the British labour movement fused together, in the struggle to defeat the Tories and fight for a socialist programme for Labour to win the next election.

THE LEADERS of the Labour Party were given the unmistakable message from conference that the rank and file of the party support the miners, and that they also must do the same.

In scenes reminiscent of the recent TUC conference, NUM president Arthur Scargill was given a rousing standing ovation both before and after his speech. To the cheers of delegates, he slammed the Tories' blatantly political appointment of Ian MacGregor. "There are no uneconomic pits", he said, "there are only pits starved of investment". "We are asked what shall we do with the coal? We can show some compassion—give it to the pensioners in the twilight of their lives". "The cost of closure is twice the cost of keeping the pits open. The jobs belong to future generations. Miners are not only winning this fight; they are winning it for you".

## Ovation

Arthur Scargill was given a spontaneous standing ovation after his speech, an explosion of support, affecting even delegates in traditionally right-wing unions, and about half the Members of Parliament.

Arthur Scargill was backed up by Ron Todd, Jim Slater, Ray Buckton and other trade union leaders. David Basnett, however, attracted the anger of some delegates when he introduced a discordant note. "Arthur," he said, "it would help others to help you, if you said to your members 'do not let them provoke you!' Nevertheless, he reaffirmed the commitment he had already given of support by GMBATU. "The TUC commitment puts a special responsibility on a few trade unions," he said, "the GMBATU accepts that responsibility".

Theresa Wrack, *Militant* supporter and delegate from Dulwich CLP, one of only two who were not called to the rostrum by name, got a tremendous echo when she applauded the role of youth, including young miners and women in the dispute. Theresa pointed out that women workers and miners' wives had stood shoulder-to-shoulder with miners in the



Miners' leader Arthur Scargill responds to the explosive ovation after he addressed conference.

## Writ served in conference

IN AN emotionally charged meeting called by the *Labour Herald*, Arthur Scargill powerfully expressed NUM defiance to Tory judicial intimidation.

He told a packed audience on Monday: "At 4.30 this afternoon a representative of the High Court walked into the conference, with no visitors or delegates credentials, and served me with a writ for contempt of court."

It said that if he didn't comply he could be sent to Pentonville prison within

dispute, and had faced the same harassment and threat of arrest by the police.

"Thousands of women have become active in the course of this dispute. The common cause of working class men and women has been spelt out in practical example; life will never be the same for these women. The eyes of miners, their wives and the most active parts of the labour movement will be on this conference and will be looking for the Labour Party leadership to give a lead," she said.

In contrast, Eric Hammond of the EETPU was given a rough ride when he repeated his attack on the NUM. Once again, he

four days. Writs were also served on the Vice President, General Secretary and the Derbyshire and Yorkshire area leaderships.

### Contempt of court

Arthur Scargill said: "My NEC met tonight in the full knowledge that if they declared the strike official they too would be in contempt of court." To a standing ovation and massive applause cheers and whistles, he said, "at 7.30 tonight our NEC reaffirmed that this

equated his opponents with fascism, by quoting directly from Oswald Mosely in the 1920s. When he finished, only a handful in the entire audience could be heard to clap, among the boos and jeers echoing through the hall.

### "Murdered my pit"

Mrs Muriel Williams from Maesteg, a miner's widow and the mother of two miners also brought the hall to its feet when she explained how the pit in her valley had been destroyed by lack of investment. "They murdered my pit... My boys are like gypsies. They say

strike is official".

At the meeting Arthur Scargill took up the question of violence. He explained that on the picket lines over 8,000 miners had been arrested, 3,000 injured, 5 killed and two left on life support machines. During a magnificent collection for the NUM Arthur Scargill brought up the parents of 23 year old David Jones who was killed on the picket line. In a very emotional scene the audience stood and applauded these two working-class parents.

that you can move to get a job, but who is going to buy their homes in these valleys?" she said.

After Tony Benn summed up on behalf of the Executive, there was no doubt that the NEC statement and the composite resolution moved by the NUM would be carried.

The mood and temper of the delegates was overwhelmingly in favour of the miners and the miners' strike. And in that sense, the decision was a strong rebuff to those right-wing leaders who have so badly failed so far to give total backing to the miners.

## Labour 84 Conference

Conference reports from Blackpool by John Pickard, Bob Wade and Ted Grant.

## Police violence condemned

IN THE debate on the role of the police, the platform was defeated on two key composites. One delegate after another described the reality of police conduct during the strike.

The press were also condemned for their failure to highlight the real situation in Yorkshire, Nottingham and other mining areas.

Composite 66, calling for the Labour government to "enact legislation to make the police play no part in industrial disputes," was passed against the wishes of the NEC on a show of hands.

### Police and unions

Another composite calling for the right of the police to join unions affiliated to the TUC, and for the election of local authority committees responsible for the physical resources of the police, but also for "operational questions", was also passed

against the wishes of the NEC on a card vote, by a majority of 1.6 million votes.

In moving this composite, Sue Ayton, an LPYS member and delegate from Wakefield, said the Tories had been preparing since 1972 for this dispute.

### Plastic bullets

Many authorities, she explained, have stockpiles of plastic bullets: "How long will it be before they are used against the miners?"

Sue described the position in Fitzwilliam, where riot police invaded the village, breaking into the local pub with truncheons drawn, and arresting miners, including LPYS members: "There must be democratic local authority committees which must have the right to determine the day-to-day policies of the police."

## Heathfield exposes Tory hypocrisy

NUM GENERAL Secretary Peter Heathfield made a searing attack on the hypocrisy of the Tories on the question of violence and the miners strike. He told a thousand strong rally called by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs: "I am not going to debate with anyone about miners' violence, unless the accusers are prepared to talk about police violence."

He outlined many of the incidences of violence and repression inflicted on strikers: 'agents provocateurs' among mass pickets who start the throwing of stones and then point out miners to be arrested; the attacks on strikers by working miners in Nottinghamshire which police ignore; stringent bail conditions—one miner has been barred from using the M1; restricted freedom of movement—a football club from Derby was stopped travelling into Notts for a



NUM General Secretary, Peter Heathfield.

match, as were a party of Derbyshire anglers, who were turned back as they tried to travel through Notts to Lincolnshire.

Peter Heathfield added that he had even seen a parish priest frisked by police before being allowed into a meeting.

## NEC election results

ERIC CLARKE, General Secretary of the Scottish miners, regained his seat on the Labour Party National Executive Committee, two years after losing it as a result of Sid Weighell, former General Secretary of the NUR, switching his vote against the mandate of his union.

He replaced Roy Evans of the ISTC, a clear gain by the left in the NEC's trade union section. The constituency party section remained firmly in the hands of the left wing of the party. Only in the Women's section was

there a move in the opposite direction, with Ann Clwyd replaced by Anne Davis. The treasurer, Albert Booth MP was defeated by the seamen's leader Sam McCluskie.

Overall there is therefore little change in the political complexion of the committee, but there will be great satisfaction that anti-*Militant* witch-hunter John Golding failed to regain his seat, a clear message to the new NEC that the party ranks want to see no more attacks on Marxist activists within the party.

## Tory eviction threat

TORY COUNCILLORS in North Nottinghamshire are doing their best to harass striking miners back to work by threatening some of them with eviction.

The Tory controlled authority Broxtowe District Council have said they will evict striking miners who do not keep up with their council mortgage repayments.

One family affected is that of Paul and Joyce Birkin. They were shocked to receive a letter from the council

demanding that after six months on strike they start mortgage repayments once again with an additional amount each month to clear arrears. This is despite being told at the start of the strike that they could suspend payments until the dispute is over.

### Unreasonable

Paul and Joyce, who have an eight month old baby, have to live off £49.50 a

week benefit and have told the council it is unreasonable to expect them to keep up the repayments. The interest alone on the mortgage is £15 a week.

An attempt by the Labour council to overturn the Housing Committee's decision has been defeated and despite pleas to the council, Broxtowe show no sign of withdrawing their threat.

By Joanna Slattery



Witch-hunter Golding failed to regain his seat.



# Youth rally for miners

**YOUNG MINERS** in the LPYS got the week off to a rousing start when they held an eve of conference rally in support of the miners. Chaired by Bill Pye (NUM Youth rep. St John's lodge) 1200 attended.

Over half the audience were miners many of whom had travelled from all over the country for the rally. The banners of Polkemmet, North Western and Llynfi Valley lodges decorated the hall.



Ian Isaac (NUM S. Wales Exec) speaking at youth rally, 30 Sept.

Speaker after speaker took up the question of who caused the violence on the picket lines. Ian Isaac of the South Wales NUM Executive explained that of the 5,000 plus miners who had been arrested, 90% were charged with non-violent offences. He applauded the result of the NACODS ballot and said to cheers; "I appeal to the leadership to call their members out in support of the pit closure issue."

Rita Aspinall of the Bold miners wives, spoke of the massive support they had received, not only throughout the country but internationally as well. She described meeting two Norwegian policemen who couldn't believe the level of police violence. Rita said "They are visiting us soon, and we are going to take them on a picket line dress-

ed in jeans, jumper and miners stickers and they will see for themselves where the violence comes from."

Frances Curran, the new LPYS representative on the NEC, announced a new LPYS campaign against police violence. It will call for:

- ★ Charges against miners, their families and supporters arrested in this dispute, to be dropped. Those imprisoned should be released.
- ★ Police withdrawn from the mining communities.
- ★ Stringent bail conditions, which for many miners means a virtual curfew, to be lifted.

## Mood raised

Tony Benn stressed that the miners' struggle had lifted the mood of the movement. Confirming a point that *Militant* has argued before he said; "The Hobsbawm philosophy has been swept away by the miners". He also congratulated the LPYS "who have done a tremendous job in bringing young miners into the political arena".

Sammy Thompson, vice president of the South Yorkshire NUM, was cheered when he made a fearsome attack on "those scabs, yellow backs, those

black legs" he said; "they call these people courageous?" and then pulled a paper bag on his head and roared, "this is what they will have to wear for the rest of their lives. Such is their shame and dishonour."

He exposed the Tories latest think-tank proposals. These suggested the NCB should lose its rights to licence open cast and small mines which would pave the way for making Selby and the Vale of Belvoir private. He said "We are not just striking for jobs, we are striking against privatisation."

Other speakers included Colin De Freitas for black YS members, and Tyrone Simpson of SALEP who described the plight of South African miners. Joe Owens of Polkemmet NUM said to cheers; "we must make it clear to Kinnock that if he expects the support of working people, he should earn their support and fight for their rights."

The meeting ended with Dennis Skinner who spoke in his usual positive, barnstorming fashion. He called for more support for the miners; they were winning and winter was on its way. He urged trade unionists to take supporting industrial action and put in decent siz-

# Labour 84 Conference

Photos by Dave Sinclair, Militant



Guess who? Sammy Thompson (vice-president S Yorks NUM) displays the headwear scabs will have to use after the strike.

ed wage claims this year because, "Thatcher can't handle many more on her plate". He added to laughter and cheers, "and after 6 pm switch everything on; watch tele, do the ironing, and if you work in a big building make sure you leave the lights on when you go home!"

A collection led by Alex Shanks from Monktonhall NUM raised over £300, a good figure considering half of the audience were miners while many other delegates had given their donations the night before at the Campaign Group meeting, which raised £1,110.



CND march, 30 September.

## Nuclear power threat to coal

Welsh miner's wife May Davies made a tremendous speech on behalf of the Womens' Support Groups at the Labour CND march and rally on Sunday: "Ours is a dirty village, with a dirty river running through it—well actually it is crystal clear at the moment—but it's our village, our community and we want to stay in it together."

"Thatcher thought she could drive us down but what has actually happened is that our community has come alive and spirited again. "There used to be 44 pits in the South Wales Valleys; now there are only 26, with 20 up for closure. What the Tories want to do is replace the pits with nuclear power stations and put the nuclear waste down

into the empty collieries, but we don't want to sit on top of a time bomb.

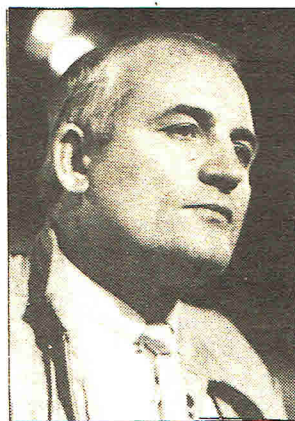
"My husband is a miner, my brother is a miner, my son-in-law a miner and I hope my grandson will want to become a banker or something! but with the job situation at present we need to defend miners jobs so at least we know we will have a job in the pit guaranteed."



LPYS on CND march 30 September.

## YS on CND demo

OVER 2,000 people attended the Labour CND march on Sunday; 500 Young Socialists made up the liveliest and most youthful contingent on the march, marching behind the 'Save the Pits, Give Youth a Future' banner. In strong winds the march battled along the sea front to a rally addressed by Glenys Kinnock and other Labour movement speakers. Euro MP Bob Cryer, reiterated Labour's unilateralist stand and said; "If some of those in the leadership want to argue about this they should get off the front bench and go to the back benches."



Liverpool councillors and delegates left the conference early on Monday morning to join the mass picket at Cammell Lairds. When they returned Tony Mulhearn (above), delegate from Garston CLP, moved an emergency resolution in support of the occupation.

In opening the conference, chairman Eric Heffer attacked the SDP: "They describ-

ed themselves as 'tough and tender', but it's more like 'tripe and treacherous'. They were a carbuncle on the movement and since we got rid of them we are a lot healthier."



In the debate on housing Liverpool councillor Felicity Dowling (below) was applauded when she described how the council had pledged in the election to build 1,000 council houses—the council now has 2,300



houses on stock. But she added, this was just the beginning and that the "Labour Party must mobilise against the Tories and make sure it backs up councils that take on the government." Earlier, delegate Mr Hughes of Caerphilly Labour Party described the chronic housing shortage in Wales. There are over 100,000 slums, most of which were owner occupiers and two-thirds of these households were unwaged.

## FE Labour Students organise

I HAVE just started at Kingsway Princeton College in North London. Many of the students, like me have gone straight from school to college to escape overcrowded sixth forms. Some are YTS trainees, some are part-time unemployed students, some on block release and the others full-time.

Only about 10% of the full-time students receive a grant. I am one of the lucky one in ten. I get the maximum maintenance grant, a measly £8 a week. I can't even keep my cat on £8 a week!

There's no way my mother can keep feeding me and paying the bills with the help of £1 a day so I've had to look for a job that pays enough for me to help out. Most students at my college are black and working class, a lot of them full-time and

have to depend on evening and Saturday jobs as their sole income.

But as if these conditions aren't bad enough for FE students, the Tories' rate-capping bill would mean a £75 million cut in education in London alone. If the bill goes through we'll be seeing soaring canteen prices, staff redundancies and the end to a number of courses. One Young Tory said, "I don't see the need for luxuries such as school libraries." Colleges too would have to close, but obviously the Tories think

education for the working class is just a luxury.

But the Tories won't be planning for the fightback necessary to defeat them. We have to plan for it now. That opportunity will arise on 10/11 November at a conference for FE students in Liverpool. Make sure you're there and start the fightback now.

By Nicola Pieterse  
(Kingsway Princeton Labour Club and Hampstead LPYS)

Founding conference of Further Education Labour Students (FELS). Starts Saturday 10 November 12 noon. Sunday 11 November. New venue; Liverpool Polytechnic, James Parsons Building, Byron St. Sessions on Ratecapping, black youth, YTS etc. Further details from Louise James, 24 Higgins House, Whitmore Road, Shoreditch, London N1 5RA.



# Reselection-victory for democracy

**THE MOST serious defeat for the right wing leadership of the Labour Party, and Neil Kinnock personally, was in the debate over reselection.**

The Tory press and the right-wing had been pushing to bypass the Party GMC's in order to forestall the possibility of MPs being deselected in the following 12 months. The NEC had hurriedly brought forward a major constitutional amendment, designed to 'introduce "one person one vote" in the reselection procedure. But these attempts were firmly and decisively rejected by the conference.

Peter Heathfield moved an emergency resolution on behalf of the NUM, calling for the consultation to be extended until 1985 when a decision would be made. He nevertheless spoke against

the principle of change embodied in the NEC amendment.

"There was no compelling reason" he said "to change the present system. The majority of constituencies were against the change and I notice that of the three constituencies in favour, none of them have a Labour MP."

John Evans on behalf of the NEC moved the amendment, in which he tried to explain how "delegate democracy" does not exist at the present time. To the groans of "hear hear" from the MP's, he explained that the present GMCs were wholly undemocratic, and that one-member-one-vote would be some kind of stimulus to recruitment.

He was answered by the delegate from his own constituency party, St Helens North. Speaking during the debate John Duncan quoted from Hansard, when Evans spoke against the Tory Trade Union Bill in such a way that

would have justified the present electoral system of the party. It showed how Evans had defended the democratic method and tradition in trade union organisation in the election of trade union executives, regional committees etc.

## Accountability

Moving composite 36, which, in effect, reaffirmed the status quo, May Quin, from Eltham CLP, said "Members of Parliament have got to be accountable to the party. If they are not, they must go". Mick Reynolds, *Militant* supporter from Glasgow Pollock CLP, got sustained applause when seconding. "I speak as a council worker," he said, "and I speak in an attempt to stop the trade unions from being disenfranchised in the reselection of and control of MPs.

"For the last 6 years, the Tory government has mov-



ed heaven and earth to break the links between the Labour party and the trade unions—the political levy—and also to impose postal ballots, to try to break the links between the leadership and the rank and file. Whether they are aware of it or not, the right wing of this party wish to do the same thing, because their proposals to change the rules on reselection will effectively eliminate the accountability of Labour MPs and achieve the same end that the Tories are pursuing.

"I am a delegate from the GMBATU to the CLP. We cannot be asked to go out and campaign to retain the political levy and our affiliation to the Labour Party, and then tell the brothers and sisters in the trade union

branches at local level that they will have no contribution to make in deciding the parliamentary candidate in their constituency."

When it came to the vote all resolutions were lost, which meant that the status quo remained.

As Roy Hattersley was forced to admit on the TV news, the reselections will now go ahead according to the present rules.

The platform had tried to crowd all the controversial issues into one afternoon's debate. But the miners' debate inevitably carried over and put its stamp on the sessions which followed—on the police and on reselection, reflecting the mood of the rank and file in this the fiercest industrial dispute since the war.

## Twisting the news

**BBC news coverage of Labour Party Conference has combined biased value judgements, omission of news and misleading graphics.**

On the first day of conference, Sue Lawley introduced the *Six o'clock news* by stating, "It's been a difficult, some would say damaging, day at Labour Party conference". After setting this overall tone the report from Blackpool by political reporter David Coss began: "His (Kinnock) dilemma began with one man—Arthur Scargill".

In the report which followed, prominence was given to criticism of the miners by Hammond and Basnett. Support for the miners was sneered at, calling it "rank and file adoration for Scargill". (emphasis in original)

Then it turned to the question of police violence. The conclusions of Labour's conference were shown, but not the arguments. None of the debate was shown, which detailed the specific acts of violence by the police. Instead all we were given were comments denouncing the Labour Party from Tory MPs Leon Brittan and Eldon Griffiths and the Chief Constable of Nottingham.

On other issues they showed more subtle bias. They represented the reselection debate by graphics, showing the "left" supporting a system of 70 members—picture of cold seminar room—in contrast to the right which wanted to expand it to all members—picture of workers.

The next day was no different. We got a report from a conference of police superintendents denouncing Labour conference. We were shown Tory Minister Giles Shaw getting a standing ovation for criticising Labour policy.

But elsewhere publicity had been given to an instance of police violence displaced at conference by Jo Richardson. It was a picture of a mounted policeman at Orgreave, truncheon raised galloping down on a woman, Lesley Boulton (see *Militant*, 22 June and interview with Lesley Boulton, 20 July).

Finally, the day after the debate and three and a half months after the incident, the BBC interviewed Lesley Boulton. Not to ask her what happened though. All that was shown in the TV interview were her replies to questions which let us know she backed the miners—the implication was clear—she was biased and the incident could be ignored.

It takes time and conscious effort to represent all these debates in such a biased light—can we expect the same next week at Tory conference?



Left: Maxwell, millionaire owner of the *Mirror* speaking on *Labour Weekly* platform is questioned by *Militant* reporter, John Pickard (right).

## Millionaire cuckoo in Labour's nest

Labour Party members who wonder what is wrong with *Labour Weekly* need look no further than the disgraceful fringe meeting of that newspaper, where the main speaker was none other than Robert Maxwell, multi-millionaire press baron, who was allowed ample time to voice his unsavoury and cynical ideas.

SOGAT 82 delegate, John Sutton called upon the meeting to refuse him the right to speak. "I personally object to allowing Maxwell to address a platform of *Labour Weekly* or any other Labour movement meeting," he said, explaining how Maxwell had used Tory anti-union laws against his union and sacked about 5,000 SOGAT and NGA members. John Sutton had worked himself for 23 years for the *Radio Times* before he was made redundant last November.

### Sacked printers

But despite the objections, chairman Eric Moonman, an NGA member insisted that the meeting go on.

Before Maxwell spoke, another worker, the NGA FOC of the *Observer* machine chapel, also tried in vain to object to Maxwell speaking without the right of

reply from a *Radio Times* worker. Maxwell accused the trade unions of destroying jobs. He equated the print workers in the audience with fascists. He tried to imply that his paper was the only hope Labour had for a mass paper, then bluntly told the meeting that he would not support Labour if Tony Benn was leader.

Much of his ranting was directed against *Militant* supporters, who he said, he would fight implacably. So much was this the case in fact that, some delegates present began to object to the discussion centring too much around *Militant*.

The speakers from the floor were overwhelmingly hostile to Maxwell and his pretence to own a 'Labour paper'. One, a *Militant* supporter from Liverpool, slammed into Maxwell for his scurrilous attack on *Militant* last week, objecting to being called a 'maggot'. Another *Militant* supporter condemned *Labour Weekly* for allowing as the main speaker a man who has

shown such utter disregard for other workers' livelihoods. The *Daily Mirror*, he said, is attacking *Militant* today, but it will be attacking the left of the Labour Party tomorrow and the whole of the Labour Party the day after."

The overall effect of the meeting was to leave Labour Party delegates and visitors appalled that this cynical and self-centred millionaire should have the right to strut and posture on a *Labour Weekly* platform.

## Double standards

*Militant* sellers faced not only the usual harassment reserved for them alone, but this year also faced physical threats. Grabbing one seller by the lapels and pushing him up against a wall, one large steward was heard to say "I've been a fighter for 10 years. Do you want a fight now?" Another seller was manhandled and physically removed from the Winter Gardens. Meanwhile, while this went on, there were not such problems for Robert Maxwell who stalked around the Winter Gardens as if he owned the place (he may well do) giving out free copies of the *Daily Mirror*.

## Liverpool—how we won

LIVERPOOL councillors received a rousing reception when they held a 200-strong lunch-time on meeting Monday to explain the council's campaign.

Leader John Hamilton described the Tories' two-pronged attack on public services—denationalisation and the abolition of the County Councils. Yet £750,000 was being spent redecorating the Brighton Grand Hotel for Thatcher and Tory party conference: "If they can spend that on Thatcher for one week, then all depressed areas of the country deserve the £30 million that Liverpool got".

Councillor Tony Byrne, Finance Chairman explained that no-one on the platform had ever said that Liverpool had won a total victory—if it had been a total victory Thatcher would not be in power.

He condemned Kinnock, Jack Straw and John Cunningham of the Labour leadership who had told them to keep within the law.

Derek Hatton, deputy leader, took up that point and explained that Liverpool council actually broke the law five times during their fight.

He pointed out that Liverpool's victory was the

greatest since the Tories backed down to the NUM in 1981. But there was a lesson in that Thatcher went away from that defeat to regroup, pick her time and then launch her present attack on the NUM. "In the same way she'll come back for us". So it was urgent for all Labour councils to fight a united campaign and mobilise the Labour movement.

Some of Labour's leadership had tried to make out that it was their negotiations that had won Liverpool's victory. Nothing was further from the truth. Derek explained that if you look at Jenkin's statements throughout the struggle he always adopted a more conciliatory position after mass protests in the city such as the local general strike on March 29 and the victorious May election results. It was the mobilisation of the Liverpool labour movement that made the Tories back down.

He concluded: "Our message to other authorities is that there are no short cuts in beating Thatcher. The defence of the local authorities rests on the mobilisation of the labour and trade union movement in both the public and industrial sectors."



# Labour 84 Conference

# 500 attend Militant readers meeting

## GREETING

Brighton Labour Party Moulsecoombe branch  
Victory to the NUM! Step up the fight for socialism

Brighton LPYS Only socialism and the programme of *Militant* offers youth a future

Congratulations on your 20th anniversary Keep the red flag flying Wessex Co-operative Party

No witch-hunts! Reinstate the Blackburn 6 Burnley LPYS

Conference greetings from Welsh Labour Students fighting for socialism and democracy in NOLS

Black sections are here to stay! Support our resolution! VAUXHALL CLP

Socialism NOT tokenism VAUXHALL LPYS

**THE** conference *Militant Readers' Meeting* to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our paper met in an electric atmosphere of victory and confidence.

The 500-strong audience that packed into the Cliff Hotel in Blackpool was made up of striking miners, trade union and constituency delegates, black and Asian youth and young unemployed. Each speaker was met by rapturous applause.

Liverpool councillor, Tony Mulhearn, outlined the fight of the City Council. He explained that in the local government debate at conference the Labour leadership had chosen a particular

form of wording that avoided the issue of councils breaking the law to defend local services. He said the movers would not be here today if they hadn't broken laws in the past.

Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, explained how the meeting was the nineteenth held at Labour Party conference. That first meeting he said was held in a part of a room and attended by three men and a dog.

### Foresight

The *Militant* had built its strength because it used the foresight of Marxism to predict the coming crisis of capitalism. As such the right-wing's derision of Marxism in the early '60s had turned to organised suppression of

*Militant* supporters today. Peter also explained that the miners' strike had crushed the so-called 'theory' of Professor Hobsbawm being peddled at last year's conference.

Terry Fields MP, condemned Neil Kinnock for his speech in which said Terry: "He succumbed to the advice of a senile aristocrat known for shooting his friends!"

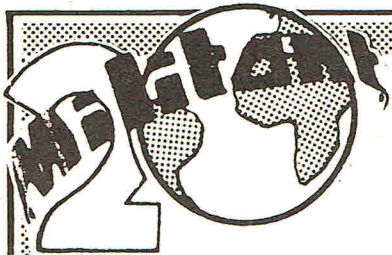
Ted Grant, political editor of *Militant*, graphically illustrated the collapse of capitalism internationally and its total inability to find a solution. He described how there could be no way out on the basis of capitalism. He cited the example of France—the Socialist/Communist government had come to power with massive support in a

country a third richer than Britain, and had even nationalised the banks.

Yet because they had not changed the economic system they had left themselves open to the dictates of capitalism, alongside the open sabotage of the ruling class. As such their reforms had turned to counter-reforms. The only solution internationally was to break with capitalism and go forward to a socialist society.

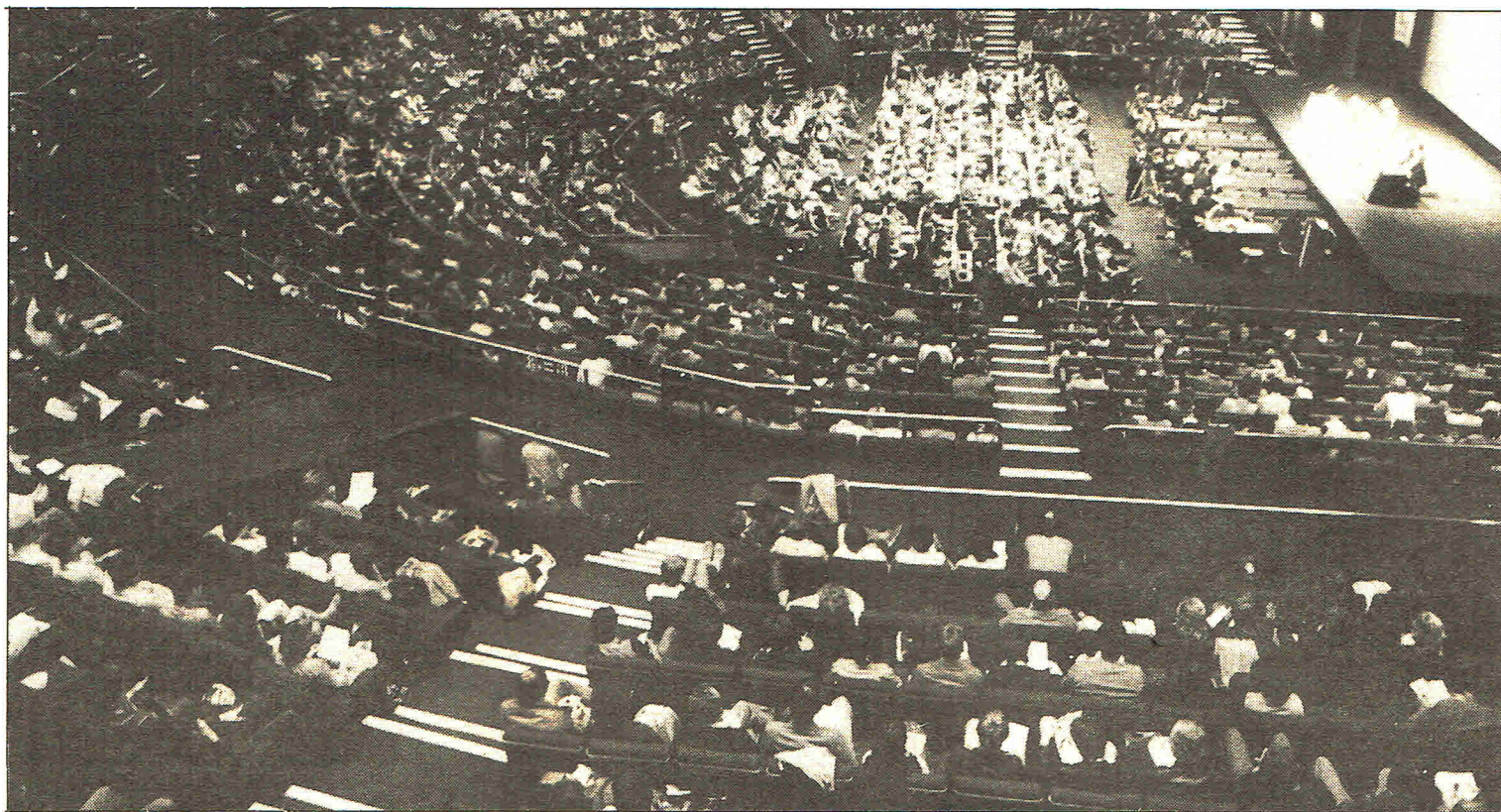
### £1,500 raised in collection

A fantastic collection followed, raising nearly £1,500, with tenners and fivers coming in from striking miners, large donations from *Militant* supporters in the POEU, NUR and USDAW delegations—there was even reportedly a fiver from Michael Crick!



# Celebrate 20 years of Militant

Come along to our anniversary rally, 20 October  
10.30 am—5.30 pm, Wembley Conf. Centre, London  
Speakers include: Tony Benn, Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe



Last year's mass *Militant* rally at Wembley Conference Centre—this year will be even bigger and better.

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Plenty to see and do! Slides; Two films; Displays on the growth of *Militant* and the history of trade unionism in Zimbabwe; Alan Hardman's cartoons; Bookstall; Photo exhibition of miner's strike; Cardiff Red Choir.

Put this up on your notice board

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

Name . . . . .

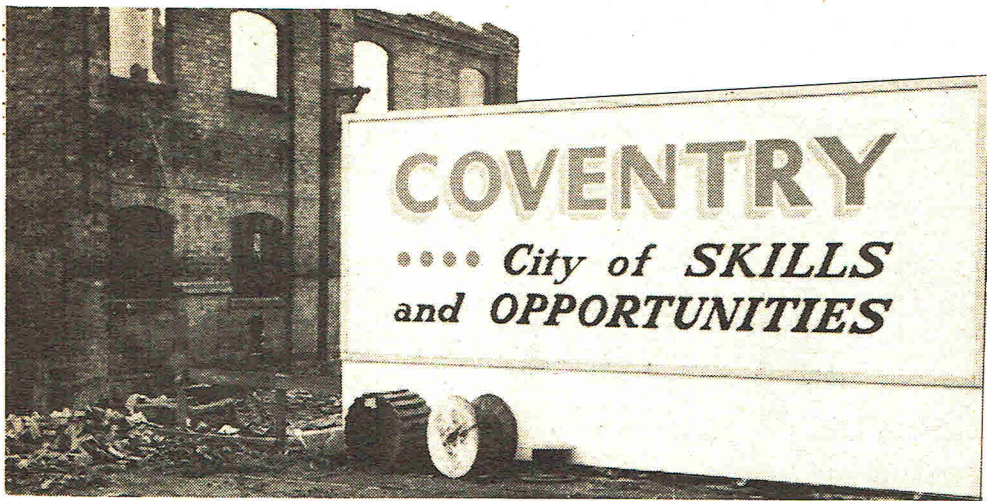
Organisation . . . . .

Address . . . . .

Number and age of children for creche . . . . .

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





# Council must adopt Youth Charter

TEN YEARS ago Coventry could boast in its publicity hand-outs that it was the city of opportunity. Now it is more aptly called Giro City.

A local comprehensive school recently reported that only 17% of school leavers over the past three years had found stable employment; 30,000 are now unemployed, the best that the Job Centre can offer is the YTS slave labour schemes. The bosses' crisis has been a catastrophe for the youth of Coventry.

On top of this has been the horrendous Tory cuts imposed on Coventry council. The council could be the focus of a fightback for the hard-hit workers of Coventry. Unfortunately instead of following Liverpool's example and fighting these government cuts, Coventry council has attempted to implement them in a humane way.

This has meant that while the waiting list for council accommodation is now 8,000 plus the council will start no new houses this year, except for some sheltered accommodation.

The council have started closing schools. Bell Green is only the first, with more to come. Two secondary schools, a minimum of two primary and two special schools for handicapped kids will go in the future. So much for humane cuts.

By Councillor  
John Mutton

I think it is a criminal disgrace that a so-called Labour council and people who profess to be socialists should be acting in this manner. Coventry Council should follow Liverpool's lead and mobilise the workers to stop the Tories and save jobs and services.

I hope that the Young Socialist demonstration on 6 October is a success. I fully support the Young Socialists' Charter and agree that it is about time that the council did something for young people in the city... I will be raising the points in the charter at council meetings in the future.

STOP PRESS: Councillor John Mutton, together with Councillor Fran Falconer, have just been expelled from the Labour Group for voting against the 11% rent increase.

**LPYS  
Demonstration  
Saturday 6 October  
Assemble 11 am,  
Humber Road Green,  
Coventry.**

# MP keeps promises

THE DECISION of the Labour Party NEC to launch an enquiry into Coventry Labour Party has been greeted with anger by all activists in the area. At a time when our leaders should be spending their time and energies supporting the miners, they seem more concerned with attacking good socialists.

By Tom Smith  
(Chairman Coventry CLP)

One of the main aims of this investigation seems to be to attack Dave Nellist MP for Coventry SE. The right wing are attempting to achieve by witch-hunts and manoeuvres what they could never achieve by political argument. They will not succeed.

Since his election in 1983 Dave has built a font of support from constituents and even the begrudging respect of political opponents who admire the fact that he has kept his election promises. Since being elected Dave

has lived on no more than the average wage of a skilled worker not on the inflated salary of an MP. The rest of his income has been donated to the labour movement (details, *Militant*, issue 711, 3 August, 1984). Dave is in touch with what life is like for ordinary workers in Tory Britain.

He has consistently spoken up for young people. It was his private members bill in Parliament that forced the Tories to include health and safety provision

for YTS trainees. He has supported workers' struggles internationally from Sri Lanka to South Africa.

He has consistently backed the miners' struggle to save jobs and donated over £1,000 to the miners from his own pocket. Constituents in Coventry SE can be pleased they have an MP that will fight for them. Dave has dealt personally with hundreds of their problems, most of which have been satisfactorily resolved.

Whether in Parliament or at the hundreds of meetings he has spoken at Dave has proved a model MP for the labour movement. The right wing will unleash a hornets' nest of opposition if they attempt to undermine Coventry SE Labour Party or its MP Dave Nellist.

# Free crèche and nurseries

YOUNG WORKING class women have been at the forefront of the Coventry Youth Fightback Campaign. The Coventry Youth Charter includes the demand for free crèche and nursery provision in every area—which would be a tremendous step forward for young mothers in Coventry who at the moment have to scrape together the pennies to pay nursery fees.

Melanie Storer and Kerry Wooton are two young single parents who both joined the Labour Party Young Socialists in Coventry because they saw it as the on-

ly youth organisation which takes up the problems facing young mothers.

Melanie is unemployed and lives on her own with her two-year old daughter, Gemma, in a council flat at Tile Hill. She found the Job Centre a waste of time. All they could offer were "schemes" for 12 months, and no job afterwards. "If you've a kid, like me, they just don't want to know—they seem to think that young mothers just want a job for pin money, but what they can't see is that we need a wage to survive and to feed and clothe our kids".

Kerry got married when she was 17. After she'd had her son Trevor, she was stuck at home seven days a week. Now she's separated, and says she's relatively lucky, as her parents will look after Trevor if she wants to go out now and again.

"I joined the LPYS because I agreed with the policies, and wanted to find out more about what the LPYS stands for. What we have to do now is to get round the estates, and explain in plain, simple terms what socialism means to ordinary people—once they

know what we stand for, then I know they'll join".

The demands in Coventry's Youth Charter for free bus passes for the unemployed, for free entrance to all council facilities, and for a decent youth centre, offer a tremendous step forward for young unemployed mothers. If the City Council takes up these demands, young mothers would be able to break away from the isolation of the home, and have the chance to meet other young people.

By Liz Floyd

# Bus passes for unemployed

BUS PASSES in Coventry are intolerably high, and it's impossible to get from one place to another on dole money; bus passes are £11 a month. The demand in the Coventry Youth Charter put forward by the LPYS for free bus passes from the unemployed has found a huge echo.

Equally popular is the demand for free entrance to council facilities which is a reflection of the isolation which the dole instills.

Rather than sit at home all day or hang around the precinct, give us somewhere decent to go and the resources to get there with. The Coventry Youth Charter, by taking up these demands, shows that the LPYS is at the forefront of fighting for a future for working class youth.

By Larry Miller  
(Coventry South West  
LPYS)

# £30 week for all students

"MY DINNER every day is a plate of soggy old chips. What with the cost of getting to college, and buying books for my classes, by the end of the week I've got no money to go out with at all".—Tech student at Butts College.

Coventry LPYS argue that the council should provide a grant of £30 a week for all tech, FE and school students over the age of 16. The council would have to fight to force the Tories to make that money available. There is no

doubt, however, that there would be enormous support for the council if it did campaign.

Some students get as little as £6 a term. This is peanuts! "How are we supposed to buy the books and paper we need?"

By Paul Tutchings  
(Lower Stoke LPYS)

# Liverpool begins to clear slums

LABOUR WON control of Liverpool in May '83 on a firm commitment to build houses, and pull down some of the worst housing in Western Europe.

By Councillor  
Felicity Dowling  
(Secretary, Liverpool  
District Labour Party)

Across the City of Liverpool bulldozers and demolitions gangs are at work. More than 1,000 houses have been built in the 18 months of Labour control and the council has the largest building programme in the country.

The proudest achievement of the city council, for many



Some of the worst housing in W Europe starts to come down.

though, is the destruction of tenement blocks like Tommy Whites Gardens, where, when Labour took control, hundreds of families lived in squalor.

To each and every family in this block Labour has kept

its word—the whole block is empty and being torn down, to be replaced by a new housing estate.

Across the city similar blocks are being destroyed. Very few people believed this could be achieved in less

than two years.

Much remains to be done to clear the slums in Liverpool but the destruction of Tommy Whites, Cresswell Mount and others should be celebrated by all the supporters of the city council.

# Southwark's strategy

SOUTHWARK LABOUR Party's Local Government Committee called a consultative conference on 24 September to discuss the issues facing the authority as a rate capped borough.

Despite the fact that only GMC delegates had received written notice, about 150 people attended. Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth Council and Tony Ritchie, leader of Southwark council, outlined their strategy of fighting the 'rate-capping' proposals.

making a budget but refusing to levy a rate. Both speakers opposed the Liverpool strategy and argued that Liverpool had won concessions from the government, but only at the expense of other local authorities!

An alternative moved by *Militant* supporters was to follow the Liverpool strategy to formulate a deficit budget and to wage a major cam-

paign rallying the support of the wider movement.

Despite the opposition of the leader of the council the "Liverpool strategy" was passed by the conference and included, "a clear commitment to no cuts in services or excessive increases in charges. No reduction in staffing levels and opposition to councils keeping vacancies unfilled."

The amendment argued for a clear, bold campaign taking the issues out to the wider movement, organising workplace meetings, estate meetings etc explaining the issues and winning support of the wider movement. The conference agreed that all rate-capped authorities making a deficit budget on the same day and publicly demanding the short-fall from the government would have an enormous effect and put the blame where it belongs—at the Tory door!



# Women fight for future

The initiative, energy and determination of the women in miners' support groups has been an inspiration to working people everywhere. Thousands of working class women have moved into labour movement action—often for the first time. As the articles on these pages show, the political and organisational experience gained in the hard school of this strike will not be wasted. The women will be in the forefront of the movement to transform society, their communities and their lives.

## Learning through experience

**THE WASHINGTON Miners Wives Support Group was born 10 weeks into the strike. It was when it became clear that the dispute was to be prolonged that the women felt the need to react.**

Labour Party activists Liz Roddy and Marie Bell together with Stan Pearce, lodge Committee member of Wearmouth NUM, sounded out opinion amongst strikers' wives and arranged a meeting. Kath Cotterill and Margaret Reavey who had founded the support group in Gateshead were invited to give practical advice and assistance.

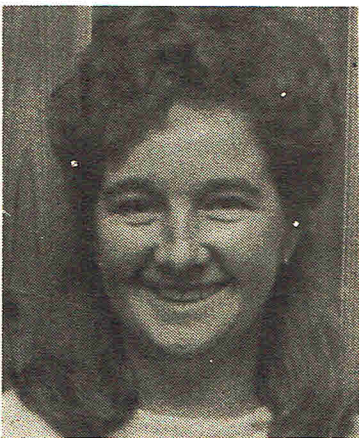
The meeting elected Kath Hagen to the Chair, Liz Roddy as secretary and Marie Bell as treasurer on a pro-tem basis later ratified at the first full meeting. None of the women who were to become involved had ever taken part in such a task and it was clear that problems would only be solved by trial and error.

### Nervous

**Kath Hagen:** "I knew nothing about chairing meetings and I was badly nervous at the first one. I'm nervous yet and cannot stand up to speak—I have to sit down! We knew that at first the men were sort of ashamed to collect the parcels—but now when they come they have a bit of a laugh and carry on—they accept the situation and accept us and what we are trying to do.

"The first meetings were chaotic with everyone trying to speak at once but they are much better now and have the respect of the audience. It's clear that the strike has hardened peoples' attitudes the longer it goes on.

"At our first meetings it was not very political and any political views expressed got little response. That seems to have changed now and the traditional hatred of the Tories in this area is even stronger."



Kath Hagen

Kath's husband, Arthur, has been picketing since day one of the strike and was recently arrested for "threatening behaviour". Kath is only surprised that it took 23 weeks for this to happen. She worried whether Arthur will be beaten up once in police custody: "My heart aches for Arthur being unable to picket his own pit—a condition of his bail. I've supported the NUM and the Wearmouth Lodge's policy before the strike and know we will be victorious. In addition, I'm joining the Labour Party—my husband is already a member—to try and make it a better fighting organisation for the working class of this country."

Kath, as well as her support group duties and looking after five children, works around 18 hours weekly as a home help. Her eldest daughter has just left school while the youngest is 5. Despite all the ac-

tivity and the the physical demands of house and family she says the strike actually gives her energy and enthusiasm.

**Carol Leadbitter**, a mother with two children and Support Group Committee member, is equally adamant on the prospect of victory: "We hoped that Neil Kinnock would have been a bit better in supporting the miners. I didn't know who Roy Hattersley was until this week but I think what he has been saying is a disgrace. Some of these politicians just don't know what it is like for ordinary people.

### Lifted twice

"My husband Jimmy has been lifted twice. Once at Redcar steelworks for a 'breach of the peace' and once at his own pit (Wearmouth) for 'threatening behaviour'. My brother Fred has also been lifted twice at Redcar with Jimmy and once at Bilston Glen in Scotland. Our local MP, Roland Boyes, spoke at one of our meetings and has been excellent in supporting the strike in other ways.

"The support group gets you out of the house and involved in something worthwhile. I've learned a lot since I became active and I think we all discuss politics a lot more—the strike has opened our eyes. At our Wednesday meetings we have political speakers and videos from the Miners Campaign series which seem to go down very well. There is any amount of room for more women to get involved.

"Occasionally we can feel isolated but we are in touch with other support groups in the region. The rallies such as the Durham Big Meeting and the August 11 London Rally were marvellous and gave everybody a lift. We had a social for visiting



Carol Leadbitter

miners at the Durham Big Meeting from Kent and Scotland and found that excellent as well.

"We are very proud of what we have achieved in our group and that it's all been done with ordinary working people. Thank goodness the trendy feminists have kept away—we're involved with a serious class struggle and have more confidence in ourselves as a result. If anyone has said I'd have been doing something like this six months ago I'd have said they were mad!"

**Marie Bell**, the group's treasurer, is a bank clerk whose husband is a Sunderland Borough Councillor representing a Washington ward: "Although I've been a Labour Party member for many years this is the first time I've been involved in anything like this. The comradeship amongst the lasses is tremendous and you can see the confidence of the women growing week by week.



Marie Bell

"A dozen years ago Washington had 5 collieries. Now all the men have to travel to the coastal pits such as Wearmouth. Youth and male unemployment is so high that



Photo: D Pearson

no one has a chance to work. Capitalism has murdered our region—that is why it is so important that the strike is successful. A victory would sink Thatcher—our worry then would be if the next Labour government would be serious in attempting to improve conditions for the working class."

**Liz Roddy** is group secretary. Her husband, Kevin, is a CPSA NEC member: "At first Marie and I were hesitant about taking up any positions in the Support Group because our husbands weren't miners although our fathers were. The lasses, however, said our contribution was the thing that mattered and so we seem to have become part of the brick and mortar. I am secretary of my local Labour Party ward and so I had some experience with agendas etc.

### Broadening issues

"I see my major role as broadening out the issues of the strike. For instance I went down to Durham House and spoke to the striking Civil Servants at the Washington Child Benefit Centre to offer support from the group and we recently arranged a disco with proceeds to be split between the support group and the Civil Servant strikers. It's vital that any group of workers see clearly the role of the state and begin to mobilise in the Labour Party to defend ourselves and work for socialism.

## Energy and determination

**STOCKTON NORTH and Stockton South LPYS have twinned with Easington Colliery, Durham.**

I talked to Heather Woods who is the women's regional organiser of the money and food distribution, and the rallies and demos that the women take part in.

"We generally feed 400-500 people one meal a day, five days a week. During the school holidays it was chaos with up to 800 adults and children coming in. There are usually 10 or 12 women in the kitchen preparing all the meals. Mickey, a striking miner, also works in the cafe every day.

"He is not allowed on the picket line due to his heart condition. His

medicine is paid for out of the food money as the DHSS has refused to pay for it.

"Any striking miner and family is welcome at the pit no matter which pit they are from. The families get one good meal a day and food parcels are sent out on a rota basis.

"There are 2500 striking miners and families but only enough money to make up 150 parcels a week. Many people still go hungry.

"All the shops, bar one, give money every week to the welfare fund. Leaflets of thanks have been sent out to all the shops, which

have been stuck up in the windows.

"There has been no violent intimidation of the one shop that won't support us, as the press would have you believe—people in the village naturally boycott the shop, that's all."

### Threats of violence

Some of the miners who had a copy of the 'police state' poster in the window were sent a letter saying that if the posters were not taken down the windows would be smashed and their families would

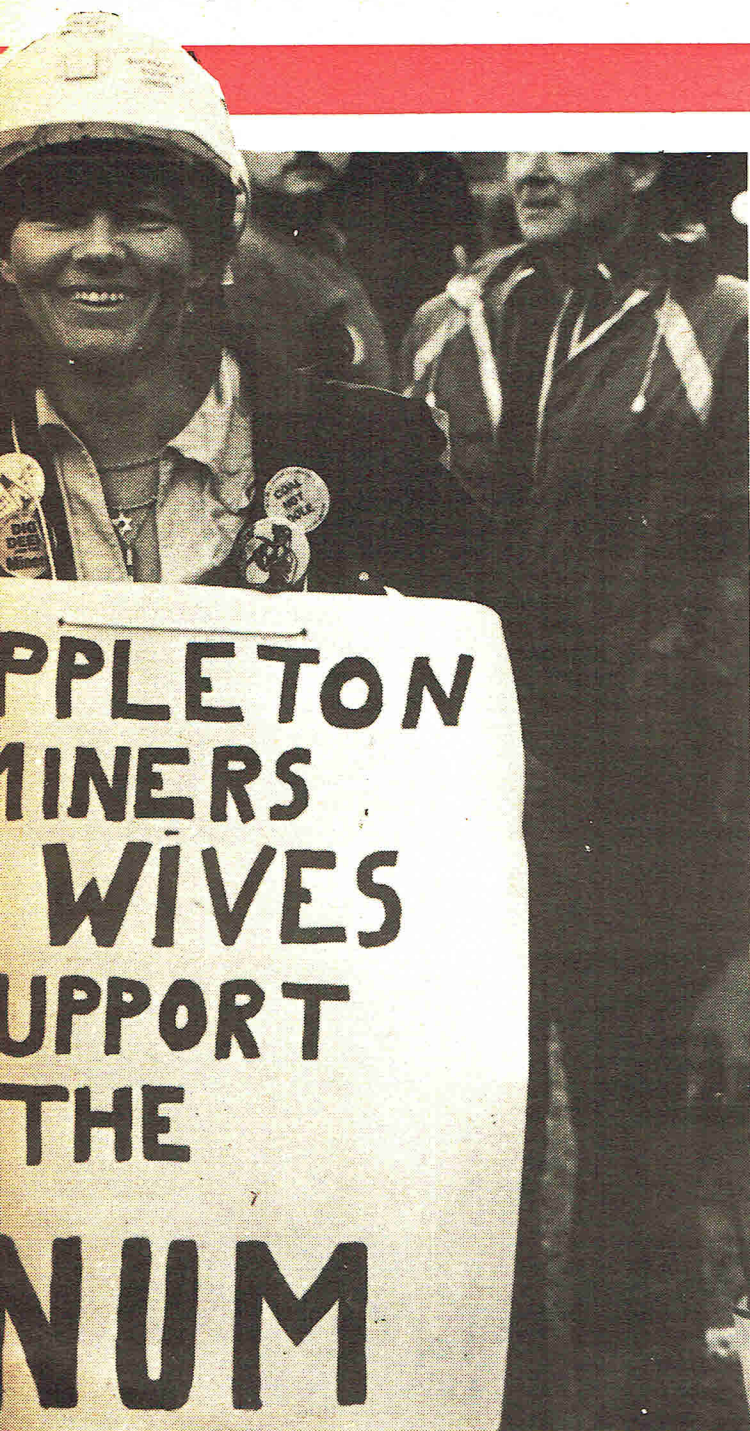
be in danger, signed the Silver Birch Committee.

"Everyone is well aware that the Silver Birch is getting his backing from the bosses who are really behind the threats."

Posters have been plastered up all over the Durham area with NUM at the top, but when the women went up to read them, thinking they were union ones, they found they read 'You don't have to wait for anyone else to be the first—go back to work.'

These posters have been going up overnight when only the police have freedom of movement. You





## We are the iron ladies

**OUR MEN** were not prepared to sit back and let this government finish our coal industry. We as miners' wives have been behind our men from the start. We will go down in history as a workforce that put up a fight for the right to work and won.

The Nottingham miners who refused to come out with their own union members will never be able to hold their heads up. Their attitude is "I'm all right Jack". They're earning good bonuses and are in good modernised pits. They think they're sitting pretty.

When this strike is over their

workmates will look at them with contempt. The miners working want a ballot so that they can hide behind a piece of paper to sell out our men's jobs that are on strike.

### Die on its feet

There were three pits in this valley—Caerau, Coegnant and St Johns. There is only one pit left, St Johns. If this pit closes our community will die on its feet.

We as miners' wives have been active from the beginning. We've organised dances, coffee mornings, collecting around the houses, jumble sales and picketing—you name it, we've done it. We're making 500 hampers a week and will never be

starved back.

We need all the money we can get. I'm pleased to say that we are getting donations of food and money from all over the country.

We're out to win this one. We have not suffered seven months on strike for nothing. This fight is everyone's fight. We're fighting for the right to keep you in a job.

If Maggie Thatcher says she will stick this strike out if it takes a year, then so can we. She is no Iron Lady. The iron ladies are the miners' wives. We've got the guts to stick it out and win.

By Mrs Theresa Parry  
(Convenor,  
Maesteg Support Group)

## No wavering—out for victory

**OUR GROUP** was formed because we women are 100% alongside our men in their struggle, which we know is a fight not only to protect our jobs, but our communities and our future. But we also know that we must not waver but carry on to ultimate victory.

If we lost then it is the beginning of the end for the trade union movement. To try and pinpoint the jobs that would be affected would be an almost impossible task. The tentacles of the capitalist octopus would reach out with a stranglehold that was shaken off by the struggles of our forefathers. We will not allow that to happen.

"Mag the Hag" appointed her puppet Mac (the knife) MacGregor and took on the miners. But don't be misled—she had been preparing since the 1972 and 1974 strikes. Paramilitary policing—state benefit cuts, you name it—she had planned it! If we can't starve them back to work—we'll beat them back!

### Thatcher's nightmares

What a sad mistake she made! This person (I will not call her a woman) has never known hardship or poverty. She cannot in her wildest nightmares (because believe me she's having them now) begin to realise the true grit which is bred in a mining community.

You can build up an immunity to disease by taking certain drugs—well in the past under capitalist rule the miners have swallowed large doses and we have become immune to the dreaded disease she is attempting to spread among us.

We will fight like a cornered animal fighting to protect its young. This is what the fight is for—not monetary gain but human dignity, to which we are entitled.

Looking back in history in our locality, the suffering and degradation in 1904 and 1926 was inhuman. Whole families evicted, their belongings tossed into the streets, open to the elements. Some were classed as being lucky—forced to live in tents in appalling conditions. Still they fought on!

We as a generation are these brave people's children and grandchildren, who in turn have now got families to succour and defend, and this we shall do—with a tenacity that will make the Iron Maiden seem pliable as putty!

I myself as a child had to share a pair of shoes with my sister, three days at school for me, two days for her (until I realised that I was doing one extra day. I soon did something about that!). One egg shared by two children—none for mum and dad who pretended they would eat later. But children are

astute and incidents are impressed on their minds.

We are where we are today because of these past struggles and no way will we relinquish the rights which were handed down to us! This would be betrayal to those that fought for the basic right to belong to a trade union—openly—not in secret with the risk of deportation or death!

With these thoughts in our minds our group was formed, not only to provide meals, but to give moral support to our men. They toil five days a week in the bowels of the earth to support us and our children.

gets stronger!

Our primary aim was to feed single men who are denied any benefits whatsoever, but we decided to feed nursery age children (who do not qualify for free school lunch) and married men.

As yet, we have been unable to feed our womenfolk due to lack of funds, but feel that we are at least easing the worries of the women by providing this main meal. If at any time our funds allow it we shall include them too.

On average we provide between 250 to 300 meals daily—Monday to Friday. For single men, this is the only subsistence they receive. This



On the march in Mansfield

Photo: Dave Sinclair

We are a tough breed who don't too often show our deepest affections, but we do realise the dangers—not only from fires, gasses, explosions or accidents—but from the risk of never living a full and happy retirement due to lungs set solid with black dust. Nevertheless this is our way of life. So we stand **alongside** our men, not **behind** them.

Having no pit in our community (it was closed some years ago) but hundreds of miners, we circulated our local tradespeople pubs and clubs asking for help in our aim to provide a daily meal. The response was fantastic! But in our 7th month of struggle and with a lack of spending power, our resources are drained.

We have travelled further afield to obtain support from those who appreciate and sympathise with our struggle, and only these donations, given so generously, are allowing us to carry on with our efforts. We never thought that we would beg with buckets in public houses etc, but we have done so and will continue to do so.

We begged, borrowed and loaned our own utensils, the Alpha Working Men's Club obtained two second-hand cookers from the Town Council along with £100, and they also allowed us use of their club premises as our centre. The first donations arrived and along with many willing hands we were on our way with a show of community spirit and solidarity that has never flagged and in fact

involves many hours preparing, plus cooking, not to mention raising the money to do it.

We as a mining community know the meaning of the slogan "United we stand—divided we fall" and the women of our group intend to be united with our men until we can feel a sense of security once again concerning jobs, communities and trade unions. We shall work to rid this country of the blight of capitalism bordering on fascism and return a true socialist government who are of the people and for the people.

### Victory

When we have gained our victory, we shall rejoice with our menfolk, but stay together to help those in less fortunate circumstances than ourselves, whether it be in Britain or abroad. Where in the past we have sympathised, the happenings of this struggle have made us realise, because it has been happening on our doorsteps.

A union is a brotherhood—let us be as brothers and sisters and defend our rights. Today it is the miners—which group of workers are in Maggie's crazy dreams to crush next? It could be yours! Show solidarity now, you may need it tomorrow!

We will win!

By Jean Margetson  
(Chairwoman, Hemsworth  
Miners' Wives Support Group)

You Dirty Bastard you fat  
Caw you stand need to  
be expecting another baby  
when your man is on strike  
that's all he can do drop  
another when you cant look  
after your other kids proper cull  
your self a mother I'm going

The women have resisted all kinds of pressure and intimidation—above part of a crude threatening letter sent to a striker's wife at Ollerton in North Notts.



Liz Roddy

"We have all learned lessons in organisation, political theory and practice, psychology and industrial relations the hard way—by experience.

"What we're asking the men to do now is support their lodges to

the hilt. When this strike is won the demands raised by the left and put forward by the *Militant* for workers' control of the mining industry including the support and supply industries should be implemented."

What of after the victory? What will these women do? Kath Haggan explains: "We hope to continue in some form to assist other groups of workers in struggle. We can give practical assistance and advice and hope other women will learn from our experiences. The days of leaving politics to the men is over for us! If there are no struggles to involve ourselves in this country then we can, perhaps, do something for workers in struggle abroad—South African miners for example."

Interview and photos Bob  
Stothard  
(T&GWU 8/401)

Heather Woods is starting to write a book about the strike. She is fully aware of the politics behind it which she will be including as well as impressions, anecdotes, and stories funny and sad from throughout the strike.

Many of the women, including Jackie, Joan and Lorna have written marvellous poems and songs that will become part of the community's history.

By Vanessa Loraine  
(Stockton)

can draw your own conclusions. The police have been going up to the striking miners' children, offering them sweets and then showing them photographs of miners, asking the kids for names.

### Long memories

"People round here used to get along well with the local bobbies. We used to have respect for them. But now there is deep-seated hatred which will never go away. Mining communities have long, long memories."



## Sri Lanka, Poland, World financial crisis

# Why dictator lifted NSSP ban

THE SRI Lankan Cabinet have lifted the ban on the socialist Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP). This was not due to the dictator Jayawardene becoming converted to "liberalism".

The NSSP was declared illegal in July 1983 and blamed for the anti-Tamil pogrom then engulfing the island. It was the massive campaign from the working class and peasantry of Sri Lanka, aided by Marxists internationally that forced the Sri Lankan cabinet to lift the ban on 19 September.

The authority of the NSSP was enormously raised in the eyes of the masses due to the persistent repression meted out to the leading party members and other supporters. This standing was heightened further by the continuous activities meetings and protests held and literature produced by party members during the period of illegality.

For instance in the six weeks prior to 19 September the NSSP, (in the name of its trade unions), held ten public rallies around the island which attracted over 27,000 people. These meetings ranged in size from 3,000 in the highlands town of Kandy, to 4,000 in urban Colombo, and even 6-7,000 in the rural area of Eheliyagoda. At each rally 40-50 workers expressed willingness to join the NSSP—although the party was still illegal!

Massive opposition exists

amongst workers, peasants and the Tamil minority to the Jayawardene regime. The dictatorship cannot solve the national question or 'provide even the barest economic necessities of life. But the transformation of this mood into an active organised opposition movement has been thwarted on a number of occasions by the reformist workers' parties.

When students were killed by police earlier this year, the opposition parties preferred a helicopter trip to Anuradhapura to discuss the deaths over a cup of tea with the Prime Minister rather than take up the NSSP's demand for a day of action.

In contrast to this, the NSSP union at the Unilever factory took decisive action in August to physically eject government ministers Cyril Matthew and Gamini Dissanayake from the factory premises when they attempted to set up a company union and split the workforce. The NSSP has shown the kind of decisive leadership required on a national scale from other workers' leaders to defeat the capitalists

### Troops attack Tamils

The situation in the mainly Tamil north has reached unbearable proportions. The NSSP Jaffna District Organiser has reported how: "Troops nowadays go right into the villages and people, including women with babes in arms have to flee their homes to avoid the attacks or possible death by

shooting. Then it is a luxury just to be alive. Bomb explosions have become a regular feature. This is resorted to more by the Navy. People can hardly sleep with any degree of peace".

This needs an active response. However, the methods used by guerrilla groups offer no solution to the Tamil masses. Their tactics have been to take revenge for the murderous acts of the armed forces by blowing up army and police

### Workers' action needed

personnel and installations. But such methods could provoke a massive racial pogrom of Tamils in the Sinhalese-dominated south which could result in enormous pressure on the Indian government to invade.

These tactics have allowed Jayawardene's United National Party (UNP) government to try and divert the oppositional masses of the south along nationalist and chauvinist lines. Tamil guerrilla groups have threatened to take their bombing and assassination campaign to the south. This would have a disastrous effect for the workers' movement, driving the Sinhala masses into the arms of the UNP reactionaries.

The NSSP has argued for mass actions of the Tamils in the north together with mass struggles in the south commencing with a day of strike actions and peasant protests—a hartal.



NSSP members on a protest in London. International support together with the party's regular campaigning forced Jayawardene to lift the ban.

The lifting of the ban opens up the possibility of rapid growth in the NSSP and co-ordinated working class action to bring down the present regime and replace it with a socialist workers' and peasants' government. This govern-

ment would end all repression and discrimination of Tamils and accede the right of self-determination for the Tamils.

More and more Sri Lankans realise that this is the only hope for the future of the Sinhalese, Tamils and

Muslims of the country. A socialist society in Sri Lanka linked to a socialist federation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh could develop the massive resources of the sub-continent in the interests of all the workers and peasants of the region.

## Polish crackdown

POLAND'S military dictatorship are cracking down on working class opposition. After the "amnesty" to celebrate 40 years of "socialism", two *Solidarity* activists were re-arrested in Wroclaw.

They were accused of disturbing the peace by making political speeches. There has also been talk of exiling oppositionists.

Poland is not and never has been a "socialist country". It has a planned economy, but a privileged bureaucracy takes all the decisions and receives all the perks. As a result there is a complete lack of democracy and the economic gains of

ending capitalism have been very largely eroded.

The Polish currency the Zloty, has been devalued twice this year, pushing up prices. Sales abroad of manufactured goods are way behind the state plan. The officialdom do not want independent unions who would insist on making demands on the Stalinist system.

But exports of two goods have pushed Poland's hard currency receipts up. One is copper. The other is coal, which has been sent by various routes to try to break the British coal strike. *Solidarity* have made it clear they oppose Jaruzelski's at-

tempted strike breaking (See *Militant* 17 August).

The regime have introduced new "workers councils" to try to defuse anger at the end of real unions. But even there members seem to be victimised if they take trade unionism too seriously.

The new unions are not popular, only 15% of the workers at the old *Solidarity* stronghold in Huta Warszawa steelworks are members of the new unions.

The determination which led Polish workers to challenge for real power in 1980-81 will rise again, but this time with a clearer leadership which will end the rule of Stalinism completely.

## Dollar strong - capitalism weak

BEHIND the scenes finance ministers are furious at the USA. High American interest rates yank up rates all over the world.

To get them off his back Reagan has got one of the major US banks to shave a whisker off their rates. This has provoked speculation that the dollar has 'peaked'. All this is window dressing for the opening of the IMF summit. This crisis will not go away.

Scenes of wallies running around on stock exchange floors and headlines of national currencies fluctuating violently against each other seem remote from the problems of working people.

But the crisis of world money markets reflects the crisis of the system and the sharpening of inter-imperialist competition.

### Inflationary

Since 1980 the value of the £ against the US dollar has halved from \$2.45 to \$1.22. What this means is it now takes twice as many £s to buy American imports as it did four years ago. Goods

By Mick Brooks

from the USA or even British oil, which is denominated in dollars will cost twice as much. The added cost of imports is bound to knock the Tories' 'anti-inflation' policy sideways.

That fact that 'our' oil will now cost more just because the dollar has gone up will bring the government one benefit—higher petrol prices means more taxes from North Sea oil, an extra £100 million for every one per cent fall in sterling. But the economy will lose out. Petrol enters into the production cost of almost everything through freight charges, energy bills, and as a feedstock for basic chemicals. And if the British economy and British people are out of pocket then the loss of taxation to the Treasury will probably outweigh their windfall profit.

Though the weakness of sterling reflects the abysmal performance of British capitalism on the world market, the striking feature of the present instability is that the dollar is soaring up against all rival currencies.

Why should this be so when the trade deficit of American capitalism this year may well be \$130 billion—which makes That-

### US deficit

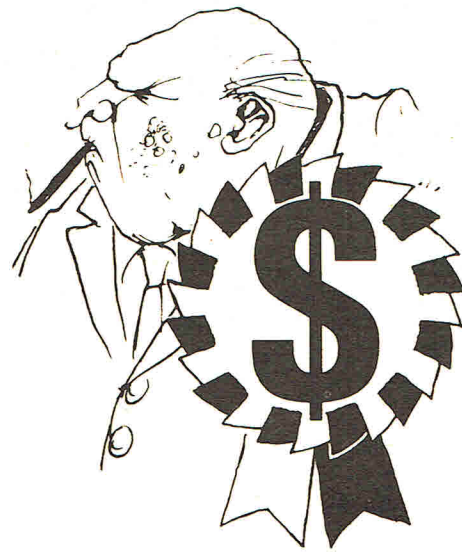
cher's problems look like chickenfeed? The answer is to be found in the topsyturvy world of 'Reaganomics'. Basically the US administration has cut taxes on the rich but increased spending on arms. As a result it will have to borrow \$185 billion this year to make ends meet. All the savings in America can't come up with that sum. So Reagan has had to yank up interest rates to a record 13%—a rate which is pushing mortgage prices beyond working people's reach and crunching up manufacturers' profits.

But the \$130 billion trade deficit is balanced by a \$100 billion inflow of foreign money capital from financiers greedy to sit at home and watch the bonanza plop through their letterboxes.

Reagan has traded the short term advantage of a pre-election boom for a historic reversal in America's economic performance. Despite its enormous investments abroad, which tie up whole continents in subservience the USA is on the verge of becoming a debtor nation—like Argentina or Zaire!

High interest rates prop up the dollar. But the fact that imports from Europe and Japan are less than two-thirds the price they were four years ago has meant a flood of imported goods, devastating the 'rust bowl' of traditional US manufacturing industry. Hence that whopping trade deficit.

For the time being America is booming. Moreover, since the rising dollar cuts the cost of imports, inflation is below 4%. As long as this lasts till the



Presidential election in November, Reagan will sit tight.

### Next slump

The world economy was bound to pick up after the 1979 recession anyway. But the methods used by the US government to 'prime the pump' are fundamentally unsound.

At the present time we cannot tell whether still further US interest rate rises will

throttle the recovery or the prospect of massive and growing deficits for years to come will finally provoke a run on the dollar, or whether the impossible strains on American manufacturing will trigger steps towards a full-scale trade war.

What we can say for sure is that the Reagan experiment will leave its mark, by contributing to the depth and savagery of the next world slump.



South Africa, Belgium, Hong Kong

# Mineworkers union gains confidence

**UNDER THE** threat of strike action, the Chamber of Mines, South Africa's biggest and most powerful employer, made a last-minute concession to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

On 16 September it added 2.3% to the 13% wage increase it had announced on 1 July. Even though this did not meet the NUM's initial demand of a 60% increase (or its revised demand of 25%), it was an important victory for the 500,000 black mineworkers in South Africa.

For the first time in the long history of large-scale mining in the country, union organisation and workers' power has forced concessions from the bosses—though at the cost of at least 9 lives and over 700 injured.

While the bosses are well-

**THE STRIKE** was the first organised by a union since 1946, when a strike by 73,000 black mineworkers was brutally repressed by the police, and the African Mineworkers Union was smashed. For both the mining bosses and the young NUM (formed in November 1982 and with a current membership of some 90,000) the present confrontation was viewed as a test of strength.

To amass their huge profits, the mining monopolies (in which British capitalists

have a big stake) have exercised unchallenged domination over their migrant black workforce, who are paid abysmal wages, housed in cramped military-style 'compounds', separated from their families. Miners toil long hours in intense heat, dust and noise underground, in unsafe and unhealthy conditions. Now, with the rise of union power among black industrial workers, the Chamber has been reluctantly compelled to "allow" union organisation on the mines.

the regime's cumbersome legal 'procedures' to test whether this would restrain the bosses. Despite this, one mining company, Gold Fields of South Africa, issued a pamphlet to workers warning that "management will not tolerate a strike and strikers will be dismissed whether the strike is legal or illegal."

But workers came out solidly in mines where the

Orange Free State. On Tuesday, at least six workers were shot dead and 140 injured at Johannesburg Consolidated Investment's Western Area mine. The next Saturday a further two workers were shot dead and 160 injured at General Mining Company's West Rand Mine.

Then at Anglovaal's Hartbeestfontein mine, 10,000 out of 12,000 workers who struck demanding union recognition were threatened with instant dismissal. Here, too, police were called in, and attacked workers and rubber bullets, teargas, and whips.

## Police brutality

The Chamber blames police brutality on "violence" from the mineworkers. Spokesmen for Anglo-American Corporation, supposedly SA's "liberal" capitalist monopoly, hypocritically asserted that "The police acted with restraint over a period of time and it was only when serious trouble seemed inevitable that they were forced to take stronger action... It is deeply regretted that many workers sustained injuries, some serious, during the dispute."

In reality the bosses vicious repression shows their fear of strong organisation among black mineworkers who produce the gold that accounts for half of South Africa's export earnings—and who can inflict severe blows against the whole apartheid system of cheap labour.

The migrant workers are militant, points out NUM general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa, because "in many senses they have nothing to lose. If management threatens them with loss of food or jobs, well they don't seem to care that much. In this country they don't have a lot at stake. Nothing belongs to them anyway... they feel that we must go all the way."

The NUM is still in dispute with the Chamber at its Johannesburg hospital, at the Rand Refinery, at the Johannesburg branch of the mine recruiting organisation, as well as at two non-Chamber coal mines. Further strike action in the near future is not ruled out.

Beyond this the NUM will



Black miners are demanding their rights.

now aim to build stronger industry-wide organisation, rooted in committees of shaft-stewards, before next year's negotiations. The strike proved the NUM had the support of the workers, Ramaphosa said "in future negotiations our union will not settle for compromises at the last hour. Once we have taken the decision to strike we will go ahead."

At stake will be the demand, from the 1983 NUM conference, for a living wage for black mineworkers—set then at R450 per month. In addition, the NUM has put forward demands around hours of work, overtime rates, an end to job privilege for whites, accident and death benefit insurance schemes, and mine safety.

The bosses and police intimidation and violence against striking mineworkers must be resisted. The bosses claim that they could immediately recruit 33,000 currently unemployed mineworkers to replace fired strikers. But this would be totally inadequate to keep mines in operation against an all-out national strike.

Moreover, Ramaphosa has stated, dismissed workers could simply occupy the hostels, depriving the bosses of accommodation for scabs.

## Maximum support

The bosses should be warned that any death or injury of workers in the course of an industrial dispute will be met by a 24-hour national general strike. With the formation of a new democratic trade union federation in South Africa, likely in the next months, this will become a real possibility.

Black South African mineworkers, faced with difficult tasks, need the maximum support from workers' internationally. Links must be built and exchange visits organised. British miners, now tasting the bitter medicine inflicted on black South African mineworkers for generations, will undoubtedly take a lead in this.

## Democracy and socialism

Organised and united around a clear programme, South African mineworkers will have a vital role in the struggle against cheap labour, and for democracy and socialism.

The National Union of Mineworkers can be contacted at: PO Box 10928; Johannesburg 2000; South Africa.

**INQABA YA BASEBENZI**, the journal of the Marxist Workers Tendency of the African National Congress, gives regular coverage of developments in Southern Africa. Issue number 14 now available. "The Southern African revolution after the Nkomati accord". Supplement, "The coming world revolution". Please send payment with orders 75p (including post and package) to BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.

**"WE LIVE LIKE DOGS"** Now on video. The struggle of black migrant workers in the South African mines. LPYS and women's sections. Hire fee £10. Sale £20. Labour Party and trade unions hire fee £20. Sale £30. From Southern African Labour Education Project, 28 Martello Street, London E8 3PE.

## Belgian miners fight closures

**WINTERSLAG** Colliery in Limbourg province, close to the Dutch border is one of only six pits left in Belgium. The unions have said they will call a strike throughout the Belgian coal industry if the government confirms reports that the colliery will close in 1987.

Protests started with a one-day strike on 12 September supported by about 20,000 miners.

Belgium's coal production has gone down by three-quarters in the last two decades and it has been subsidised at the rate of £19 a tonne last year, nearly six times the rate of British subsidies.

The "MacGregor solution" has obvious attractions for the government in Brussels but none at all for the miners. Union leaders have so far only demanded jobs for all miners not due for retirement, not an all-out fight for keeping Winterslag open.

The government found out to their cost the militancy of the Belgian working class in the general strike of 1983 and had to rely on the timidity of many union leaders. They may soon regret it if they take on the miners.

## Hong Kong

**FOR MANY** years the British ruling class have known that the colony of Hong Kong would return to China by 1997. Their main concern has been to save their highly profitable investments in the colony.

Now a joint declaration between Britain and China has been issued. Hong Kong, it says, will return to Chinese control in thirteen years time but the island's "capitalist system and life style" will be unchanged for fifty years afterwards.

Business interests in Hong Kong and London thought it was the best they could have hoped for, while the Chinese Stalinist leadership are keen to keep the colony as an outlet for Chinese goods and a source of the latest new technology and of foreign currency. But the agreement may be made null and void before 1997. When Mao Tse Tung's peasant-based army was gaining power in China he had similar ideas about maintaining capitalism but events proved otherwise.

Hong Kong has since 1842 been run by British imperialism for British imperialism. There is a total lack of democracy with an imposed governor-general. Its capitalist "success" is based on very low wages. The riots last winter (see *Militant*, 27 January) showed the anger of the slum dwellers and youth at rising unemployment and the contrast of mass poverty and the huge wealth of the foreign and native capitalists.

The working class of Hong Kong will want to decide on what social system they live under and their ideas may not be to the liking of either the British bosses or the Stalinist bureaucrats of Beijing.



The labour of mineworkers produces half of South Africa's export earnings.

organised, the NUM has had to battle mine by mine to win members, organise meetings, get subscriptions, and claim negotiating rights. In the present dispute the Chamber refused until the eleventh hour to conduct serious negotiations on the grounds that the NUM was "unrepresentative". Some bosses though reportedly wanted to try to break the union by provoking it into a premature strike.

## Resisting intimidation

The NUM leadership prepared carefully, consulting regularly with the members—also abiding by

NUM was strongly organised—and in a number of others as well. At least 50,000 and probably over 100,000 workers were involved, including many who were not yet union members. Strike action began on Sunday night's shift, and, it is clear, continued on a number of mines for several days.

Using the excuse that the NUM leaders had accepted the revised offer, the mining bosses took ruthless retribution, calling in the police. On Monday 17th, 111 workers were injured as a result of police shooting at Rand Mines' Durban Deep mine, and more than 250 at an Anglo American mine in the



# LETTERS

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

## Moderates now and then

Dear Comrades,  
Having recently purchased Anthony Burton's book *The Miners*, it would appear that nothing has altered, regarding the scabs and such like. I quote a small passage, a letter from a working miner during a strike in Yorkshire in 1858: "If we act with care and caution, and go about the business in a proper and legitimate way,

we may persuade our masters not to be hard on us". Could this man have been the grandfather or great grandfather of our present Silver Birch?

Needless to say, this letter was printed in the *Colliery Guardian* having a firm management line—they showed evident approval to this "moderate" miner.

Shades of the *Sun*, *Mail* etc.

Yours  
Mr NJ Griffiths  
Chester

## Pub Sales

Dear Comrades,  
While sitting in the pub with some comrades after a meeting I was asked what *UNITY* was, and how much it cost, I explained what *UNITY* was (BLOC paper) and it was a donation price. He gave me 50p for a copy and asked if we were collecting for the miners, so I told him how much Stockton North and South LPYS (with the help of local *Militant* supporters and Labour Party activists and Easington miners) had raised off our

market stall, £4,275 so far. He gave me 50p for the miners, telling us how much he hated Thatcher and her system, how he was unemployed and had no chance of getting a job.

We told him about the *Militant* and the work we are doing to fight Thatcher, he bought a copy and asked me to deliver a copy every week.

Always to carry a copy of the paper and keep it on display!

Yours Fraternally  
J Walker  
Secretary Stockton North LPYS

## Another tyrant is dead

Dear Editor,  
The No.2 bureaucratic tyrant in the Soviet Union, Deputy Prime Minister Leonoid Konstantov, died in East Germany while visiting the Leipzig International Trade Fair. He was killed by heart attack.  
The problems of a deformed workers' state (of

Stalinism) are enormous. Bureaucratic tyranny and individual regimentation (which have nothing to do with Marxism), take their toll not only among the politically oppressed and exploited workers, but also among the parasitic bureaucratic caste.

Good riddance to bad rubbish.

Chiwake Ranau  
Kano  
Nigeria

## Fighting to save lives

Dear Comrades,  
My youngest daughter who nurses at the Brighton General Hospital telephoned me last week to say she was now an SRN, having received her examination results that day.

I was astonished to learn that for that privilege a fee of £50 must now be paid, along with £30 for a silver (?) buckle for her uniform. I am not sure if other comrades are aware of this legislation, after three years of hard training, bad living conditions and an appalling salary, once again the Tory system proves to be the "bloodsucker" of the working class.

I am pleased to learn from

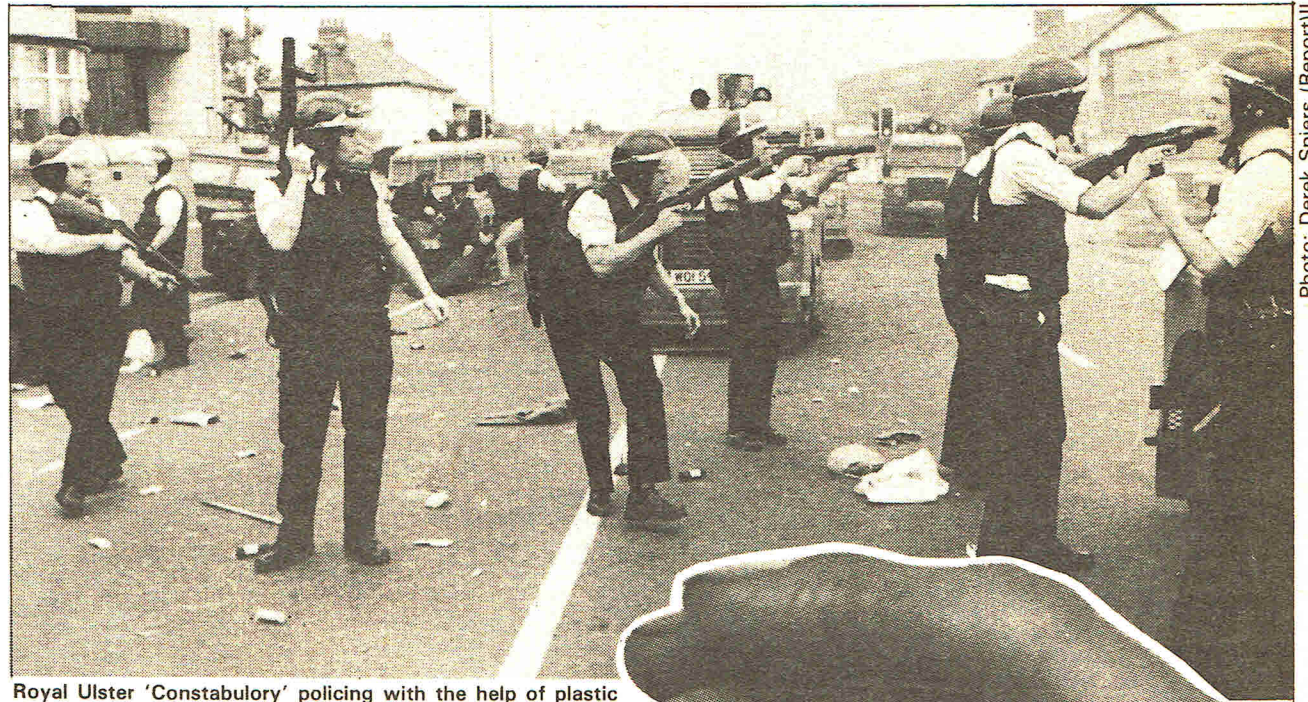
my daughter she has decided to go to India to practise her new "bought status", for as she herself explains: "It won't be for money, the poverty stricken and ill community I shall be in, won't have any! At least I shall feel that I am helping the working class of that country, not for gain, but to feel that those three years, plus £80 may help to save even one life!"

She leaves me in the New Year, a sad, but very proud mother.

Fraternally  
Anne Ursell  
Sittingbourne

## Great response to collection

Dear Comrades,  
I am one of a team who



Royal Ulster 'Constabulary' policing with the help of plastic bullets.

## Plastic bullets

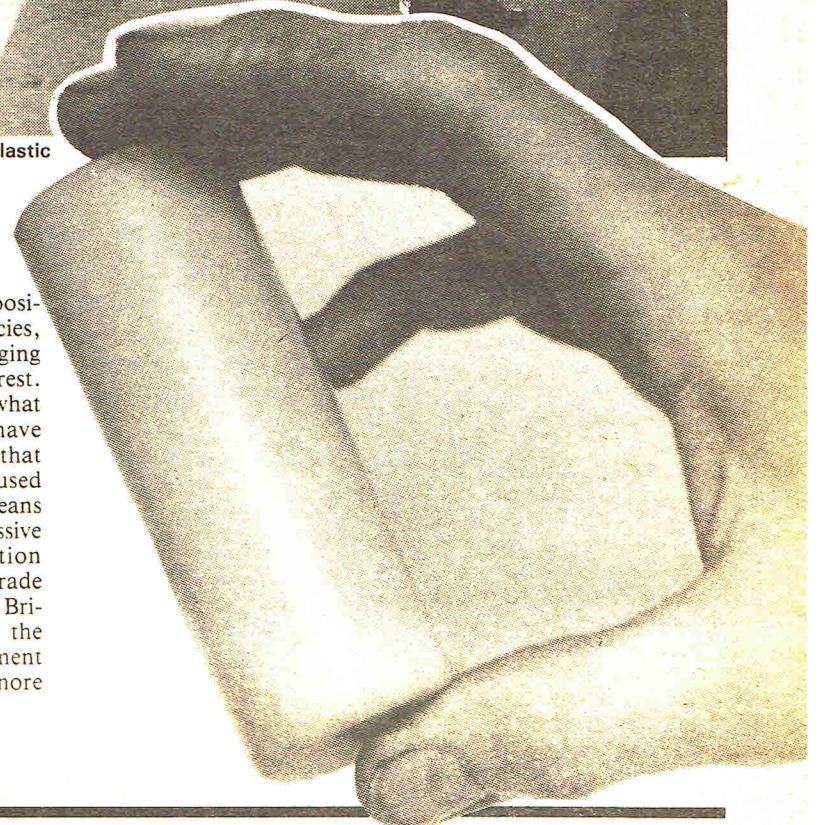
Dear Comrades,  
The recent warning by Eldon Griffiths that police may use plastic bullets against striking miners shows only too well the lengths to which this Tory Government will go to in their obsession to smash the NUM.

The threat of plastic bullets is not only an admittance by the Tories that their Spring offensive to break the NUM has collapsed outright and that the on-coming winter campaign favours the union, but it proves that they are quite willing to use every means at their disposal in

order to crush any opposition to their rotten policies, even at the risk of plunging the country into civil unrest.

It is also proof that what *Militant* supporters have been saying for years, that the ruling class have used Northern Ireland as a means to test out various oppressive measures in preparation against the labour and trade union movement here in Britain. Something which the leadership of the movement have either chosen to ignore or rejected outright!

Yours Fraternally  
Bob Harker  
Gateshead East CLP



## Respect for the miners

Dear Comrades,  
I'm 67 years old, I don't need telling what it was like to live in the '30s with all the social deprivations and massive hardship, I experienced it.

It sickens me when any people condemn the miners when all their criticism should be directed at the Tories, the real enemy.

Talking to some of my friends who were discussing the royal birth, they seemed surprised when I said if any royalty walked in the room I certainly would not stand up, but if a striking miner and his family walked in I would show my respect by not just standing but also applauding.

Mrs E Grewar  
Hull

carry out a food collection campaign. We leaflet two days and we collect on two evenings. I called at a house and explained I was from the Binley and Willenhall Labour Party Ward, and I was on a food collection campaign for the miners and their families. I asked the man if he had any spare tins of food he said he hadn't, but he would give some money to "them gallant miners" to help in their fight against Thatcher.

He and his wife came out and they each gave a cheque for £25 and his wife told me that she was giving this money to help the brave miners in their struggle. It's really great to see the enormous response we get.

Yours fraternally  
Sam Mayne  
Coventry

## LEFT and RIGHT

### A partial press

TWO NATIONAL newspaper reports of a poll commissioned by the South Wales Echo would 'tend to suggest' that a bit of independent sampling into newspaper selectivity, not to mention downright distortion, might be in order.

The *Times* headlined its version: "Six out of ten miners in Wales want to return", and reported 65% of wives and mothers wanted the miners to go back; that 46% of the miners and 37% of "their women-folk" thought Arthur Scargill had handled the dispute well. They didn't quite have the gall to draw the implied conclusion for their readers.

The *Financial Times* headline was: "Scargill gets poll support". Their report informed us that Arthur Scargill would get 75% of South Wales miners' votes if he stood for re-election as NUM president; that only 2% thought MacGregor had handled the dispute well: 81% badly. You pays your money and takes your choice.

### The collapsing fence

THE DISPUTE at Hunterston in Scotland which provoked the last dockers' strike saw Motherwell's Labour MP, Jeremy Bray, taking a clear class stance. His press statement explained: "As Ravenscraig had to get the coal, I supported the berthing of the Ostia. Since however the consequence was a national dock strike, I urged on Mr Dunbar (Works Director, Ravenscraig) and trade union representatives at Ravenscraig their responsibility in the interests of British industry as a whole to offer any reasonable understanding with the TGWU which would settle the original issue and resolve the strike." Bray's attitude has been quite consistent: "At an early stage in the miners' strike I met Mr Haslam, Chairman of BSC, by chance(!), I said he seemed to be leaving his local management to look after Ravenscraig and they were doing very well." Enough said?

## Right to choose

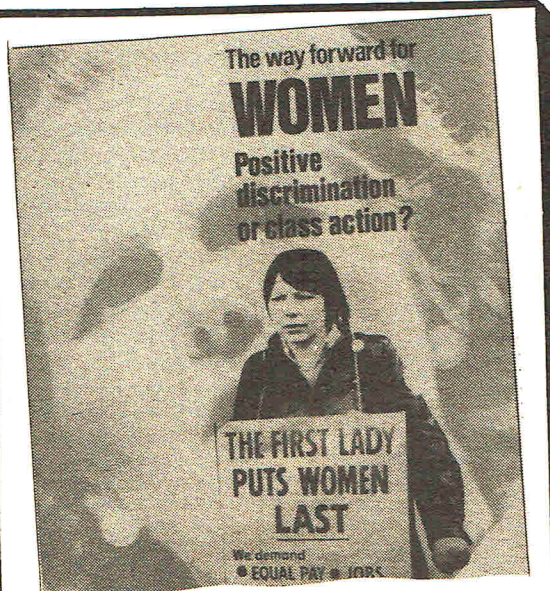
Comrades,  
Why can parents not decide for themselves who is to look after a child after it's born? This was one of the points raised at a recent Young Socialist branch meeting on 'Positive Discrimination versus Positive Action'. This point was raised in connection with the programme for women in the *Militant* pamphlet *Positive Discrimination versus Class Action*. The demands in relation to parents were that mothers should have six months paid maternity leave and fathers, two weeks paid paternity leave after the baby is born. Our branch believes that these demands automatically assume that the mother

will stay at home and look after the baby for six months while the father will resume his role as 'bread winner' after two weeks.

Apart from the fact that sometimes it is more economically viable for a mother to return to work (because she may be earning more than a father), surely parents should be able to decide for themselves which partner can stay at home and look after the baby.

Overall we thought this was an excellent pamphlet, dealing with the problems facing women and how they can get involved industrially and politically in the struggle for socialism.

Fraternally  
Kate O'Hanlon  
North Belfast YS



Pamphlet available from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Price: 75p + 20p postage and packing.



# Labour 84 Conference

## GREETING

Brighton Labour Party Moulsecombe branch  
Victory to the NUM! Step up the fight for socialism

Brighton LPYS Only socialism and the programme of *Militant* offers youth a future

Congratulations on your 20th anniversary Keep the red flag flying Wessex Co-operative Party

No witch-hunts! Reinstate the Blackburn 6 Burnley LPYS

Conference greetings from Welsh Labour Students fighting for socialism and democracy in NOLS

Black sections are here to stay! Support our resolution! VAUXHALL CLP

Socialism NOT tokenism VAUXHALL LPYS

# 500 attend Militant readers meeting

**THE** conference *Militant Readers' Meeting* to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our paper met in an electric atmosphere of victory and confidence.

The 500-strong audience that packed into the Cliff Hotel in Blackpool was made up of striking miners, trade union and constituency delegates, black and Asian youth and young unemployed. Each speaker was met by rapturous applause.

Liverpool councillor, Tony Mulhearn, outlined the fight of the City Council. He explained that in the local government debate at conference the Labour leadership had chosen a particular

form of wording that avoided the issue of councils breaking the law to defend local services. He said the movers would not be here today if they hadn't broken laws in the past.

Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, explained how the meeting was the nineteenth held at Labour Party conference. That first meeting he said was held in a part of a room and attended by three men and a dog.

### Foresight

The *Militant* had built its strength because it used the foresight of Marxism to predict the coming crisis of capitalism. As such the right-wing's derision of Marxism in the early '60s had turned to organised suppression of

*Militant* supporters today. Peter also explained that the miners' strike had crushed the so-called 'theory' of Professor Hobsbawm being peddled at last year's conference.

Terry Fields MP, condemned Neil Kinnock for his speech in which said Terry: "He succumbed to the advice of a senile aristocrat known for shooting his friends!"

Ted Grant, political editor of *Militant*, graphically illustrated the collapse of capitalism internationally and its total inability to find a solution. He described how there could be no way out on the basis of capitalism. He cited the example of France—the Socialist/Communist government had come to power with massive support in a

country a third richer than Britain, and had even nationalised the banks.

Yet because they had not changed the economic system they had left themselves open to the dictates of capitalism, alongside the open sabotage of the ruling class. As such their reforms had turned to counter-reforms. The only solution internationally was to break with capitalism and go forward to a socialist society.

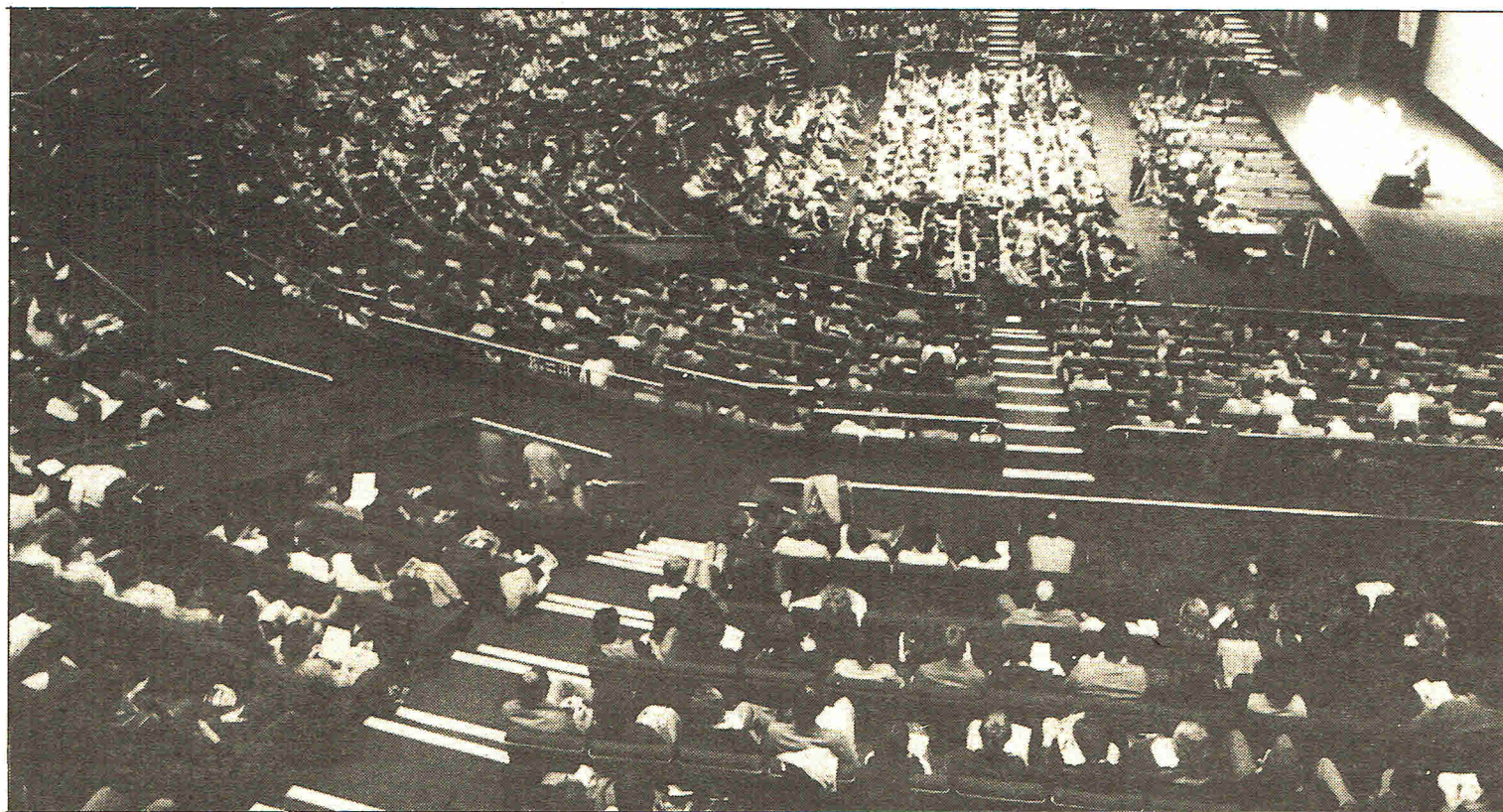
### £1,500 raised in collection

A fantastic collection followed, raising nearly £1,500, with tenners and fivers coming in from striking miners, large donations from *Militant* supporters in the POEU, NUR and USDAW delegations—there was even reportedly a fiver from Michael Crick!



# Celebrate 20 years of Militant

Come along to our anniversary rally, 20 October  
10.30 am—5.30 pm, Wembley Conf. Centre, London  
Speakers include: Tony Benn, Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe



Last year's mass *Militant* rally at Wembley Conference Centre—this year will be even bigger and better.

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Plenty to see and do! Slides; Two films; Displays on the growth of *Militant* and the history of trade unionism in Zimbabwe; Alan Hardman's cartoons; Bookstall; Photo exhibition of miner's strike; Cardiff Red Choir.

Put this up on your notice board

Booking Form:  
We would like . . . tickets and enclose . . . . . (payable to Militant rally)  
Name . . . . .  
Organisation . . . . .  
Address . . . . .  
Number and age of children for creche . . . . .  
Please return to Militant Rally, 1 Mentmore Terr., London E8 3PN.



# FIIGHTING FUND

This week  
£1,902

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	1351		2900
East Midlands	1007		3550
Humberside	964		1850
London East	1196		3200
London West	745		2150
London South East	410		1950
London South West	766		1650
Lancashire	429		1950
Manchester	799		2200
Merseyside	1307		6100
Northern	1037		4400
Scotland East	365		2950
Scotland West	1229		3650
Southern	1582		5100
South West	388		2150
Wales East	278		2550
Wales West	1326		2550
West Midlands	863		4300
Yorkshire	1269		5350
Others	5076		4500
<b>Total received</b>	<b>22389</b>		<b>65000</b>

**HUMBERSIDE** continue to show what can be done raising money for the Fighting Fund. Following the success at Easington construction site reported two weeks ago they have had a tremendous meeting to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of *Militant*.

Alistair Tice reports: "125 people heard Hamid, an Iranian comrade from Bradford, explain the crisis of capitalism and Stalinism internationally. Paul Spooner, a Hull docker, spelled out the lessons of the recent docks strike and Jean Margetson, chair of Hemsworth Miners Wives Support Group, gave a very moving speech about the effects of the strike on miners, their wives and children.

"Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, then explained the growth of *Militant's* in-

fluence and support against the background of economic crisis.

"No less than £360 was raised in the collection for the Fighting Fund. Over £100 was donated by Tony Davison, Trevor Cwear and over 80 workers from Easington construction site. Three miners wives donated £1 each! Forward to a Daily *Militant*."

### Massive fund drive

A further recognition of the fantastic work that *Militant* supporters are doing during the miners strike comes in a donation of £14 from NUM Killoch pit in Ayrshire. *Militant* supporters have been working hand in hand with these miners to raise money for soup kitchens. Several

thousands of pounds have been raised and the donation is a tremendous acknowledgement of this.

With four weeks to go before the end of this Fighting Fund period we need a massive drive from every area. Events should be organised, and readers asked for contributions. With *Militant* celebrating its 20th birthday this month what better way of celebrating than by giving a much needed present.

THOSE CONTRIBUTING to the Fighting Fund this week include:

J. Dobbins Shettleston £50, J&N Ward Newham £10, J Donnelly Glasgow £10, M Beer Islington OAP £4.75, Abbey Wardleworth (10 years old) Dagenham 50p, Jumble Sale, Felling £52.04, Readers Meeting Chorley £23, Robin (unemployed) Poplar £1, Marion (NUPE St Andrews Hospital) 50p, P Murray Stockport £1.75.

## SELLING *Militant*

OUR SALES campaign got off to a flying start in Derby where they not only sold out their normal order and a hundred extra by Sunday night but also ordered a further 100 for the rest of week.

Hundreds of papers were sold in Blackpool in the two days before Labour Party conference both on the CND demo and at the Young Miners' Rally. We hope to break all records for paper sales this week at Blackpool.

As all our sellers are pulling out the stops this week we print below an article from Bradford, who claim to have a sales campaign all year round! Apologies to all

areas who received their papers late last week, we had a couple of technical problems that delayed production.

### Hitting the streets

"On street sales we always try to work as a team—one seller shouting slogans, others selling to different flows of people; always on the look out for places with bottlenecks of people. We have a bit of socialist competition amongst the sellers—but it's the overall sale that counts.

"An idea for improving estate sales was to drop off

old copies of *Militant* wrapped in letters explaining the need for a more frequent workers' paper. Duncan Woodhead this week dropped off thirty old papers like this and got seven regular sales. With this technique even the newest seller can begin building regular sales in their own street.

"Every reader should attempt to sell the paper; we mustn't keep our ideas to ourselves. *Militant* is the only answer to the bosses' rags we have—FORWARD TO A DAILY!"

By Malcolm Walton  
(Bradford North CLP)

## October 11th—Get Tories worried

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists are organising a lobby, demonstration and rally on Thursday 11 October outside Tory party conference in Brighton. We want thousands of workers, Young Socialists and miners to come to Brighton to show our anger at the Tories.

Already local labour movement activists have pledged support for the demo. Below they explain why:

### Come to Brighton!

"After all this time on strike and facing abuse from the Tories, I'm dying to get down to Brighton to tell the

Tories what I think of them. All miners should come down to Brighton...to celebrate our victory and show our thanks to the LPYS".

—Andy Kemp, Betteshanger Branch, Kent NUM

"The Tories have hit the education of youth. Grants have fallen, courses cut. The Sussex NUS will be lobbying

Tory conference to show the Tories that students have had enough".

—Kevin Williams, Sussex Area NUS Convenor

"Fresh from our success in organising for TUC conference we are now determined to ensure that we get fully behind the youth in campaigning for a decent job and a decent wage".

—Mick Barwood, BLOC National Committee

For further information contact: Martin Smith, 64 Franklin Road, Brighton, BN2 3AE. Tel: Brighton 698757.

## ads

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

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.

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.

WANTED: Female comrade to share house in East London in East London. Own room. £25 per week, including bills. Phone Liz: 01-486 5811 x409 (day); 01-402 4161.

"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

## MERSEYSIDE BLOC CONFERENCE

Saturday 13th October  
Central Hall, Renshaw S1.  
10.00 am—4.00 pm.

Speakers: T. Fields MP  
E. Heffer MP  
S. Sullivan NUM  
B. Connor USDAW  
G. Williamson BLOC

## Greet *Militant's* October Rally

Semi-display 3 column centimetres	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 column centimetres	£10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Display one-sixteenth page	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
One-eighth	£35	<input type="checkbox"/>
One-quarter	£50	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.

HINDLES RECORD.  
"Part of the Union"  
Send £2 for one & £1.50 for each additional record to: Stuart Firth, 21 Throxenby Way, Clayton, Bradford BD 14 6EU.  
Tel: 0274-816157.

Chile Solidarity Campaign  
**INTI ILLIMANI**  
in concert for Chile & Central America

Monday October 15th  
CARDIFF Joint Students' Union

Tuesday October 16th  
BIRMINGHAM Digbeth Civic Hall

Wednesday October 17th  
BRISTOL Colston Hall

Friday October 19th  
LIVERPOOL Royal Philharmonic Hall

Saturday October 20th  
EDINBURGH Playhouse

Sunday October 21st  
NEWCASTLE City Hall

Monday October 22nd  
MANCHESTER Free Trade Hall

Tuesday October 23rd  
LEEDS Town Hall

Wednesday October 24th  
SHEFFIELD Octagon Centre

Friday October 26th  
LONDON Royal Festival Hall

for tour information phone 01 249 3334

Chile Solidarity Campaign

## inti-illimani

IN CONCERT  
FOR CHILE &  
CENTRAL AMERICA

PHILHARMONIC HALL  
Hope Street,  
**LIVERPOOL**

Friday, 19th October  
at 7.30pm. TICKETS £4, £3, £2  
FROM Philharmonic Hall Box Office  
051 709 3789  
For further details ring 01 249 3334  
or 051 523 5562

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

## Building fund—£20,000 to hit the roof

THE TORIES' press have been very unhappy about our purchase of a massive new premises in which we will be able to produce a daily Marxist paper.

The millionaires have been howling with anger and disbelief in their propaganda sheets. Despite all their lies and hysterical attacks we are not going away! Far from it!

Our support grows daily

as more and more workers see the need to fightback. When we go daily we will be a voice of workers' struggle not bosses' bingo!

Our success in raising the money for the new building has been entirely due to the self sacrifice of ordinary working people who are dedicated to achieving a socialist society to replace the horrors they experience under capitalism.

The parasitic newspaper owners cannot abide the idea of workers having an independent socialist mouthpiece to challenge their monopoly. Well, they'll have to get used to the idea. To show them just how much we can do, we intend to raise a further £20,000 to carry out re-roofing and installations. With your support we will do it.

## Militant

### Meetings

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.

TED GRANT speaking at the following meetings:

BIRKENHEAD: Tuesday 9 October, 7.30pm TGWU Office, Berner street. Ted Grant and Tony Mulhearn (President of Liverpool DLP).

LIVERPOOL: Wednesday 10 October, 7.30pm AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant. Harry Smith (City Councillor) and Shareen Blackhall (LPYS).

St HELENS: Thursday 11 October, 7.30pm. Bold Miners' Institute, Fleet Lane, St Helens. Colin Lenton (Bold NUM) and a miners' wife, Paul Fahey (LPYS and Sutton Manor NUM).

BARNESLEY: *Militant* Public Meeting: Speakers: Pat Wall (Bradford Trades Council) and Notts miners. Tuesday 9 October, 7.30 pm at Mitchells and Darfield Miners' Welfare, Wombwell, Barnsley.

PRESTON: *Militant* public meeting. Speakers: Keith Dickinson (*Militant* Editorial Board), Gary Knowles (Bold NUM, personal capacity), Tony Wilkinson (Preston NUR). Tuesday 9 October, 7.30 pm at Preston Trade Union Centre, Ribbleson Lane (nr prison), Preston.



## Austin & Pickersgill

# Wearside shipyard another Tory sell-out?

**AUSTIN AND Pickersgill, the Sunderland shipbuilders, is facing closure. Our committee believe that the yard is to be systematically run-down in preparation for privatisation. As an industry core facility the plant could be moth-balled and then offered to private enterprise for buttons, with the Tories then offering massive incentives to their rich pals to reopen.**

**By Tony Carty**  
(Chairman, A&P Shop Stewards' Committee, personal capacity)

Our suspicions are increased by the fact that all work has been dovetailed so that all trades finish at the same time in 11 short weeks.

We are unable at present to take any action to safeguard jobs as the only information we can get is from British Shipbuilders through the yard management. They are able to play ducks and drakes with the workforce. We should be able to inspect the books and have access at all times to information concerning our livelihoods.

Since June this year we have been subject to an order for two vessels being waved in front of our faces. A German shipping company has negotiated with A&P, a Yugoslavian yard and a Brazilian yard for this work.

### World trade

Very recently it seems all the Brazilians had to do was sort out their economic package to get the order. They have, not surprisingly, bearing in mind the mess the Brazilian military have created, been unable to do this and A&P have been invited to resubmit their tender along with the Yugoslavs.

Even so, should these orders be gained by A&P they would create only 33 weeks' work. We, the shop stewards, are now expecting the Tory government to honour their promise of 27 June when Minister Lamont told the Commons that any owners who cared to build in Britain would be subsidised over the limit set by the European Intervention Fund for shipbuilding, and go right ahead and place orders.

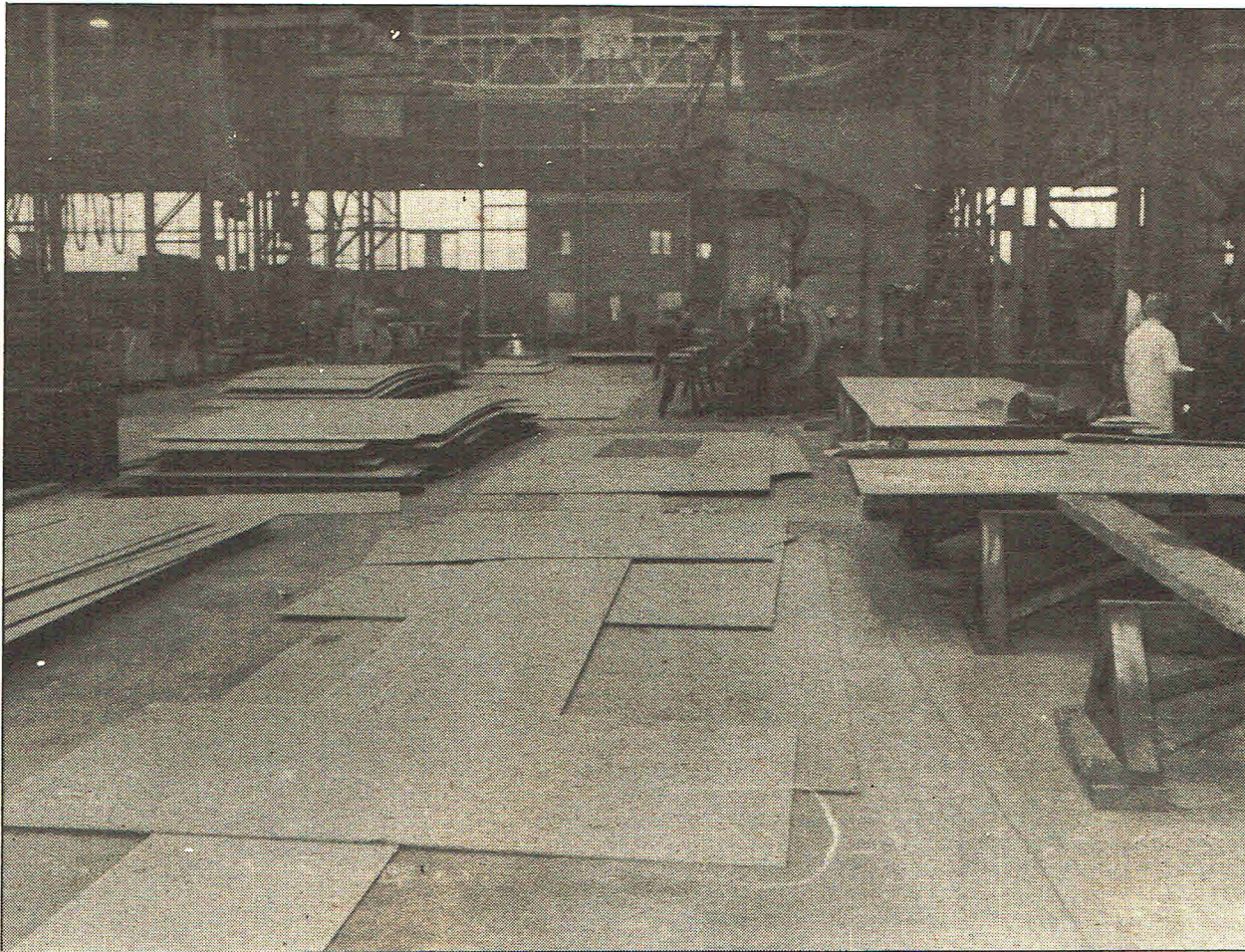
The decline of shipbuilding mirrors world recession. A&P, for example, built 12 vessels in 1974, nine vessels in 1980, and only four vessels this year. During the last four years the workforce has been reduced from 3,000 to 1,800.

On the wages front A&P workers were second in the league for all industries in 1978, we are now 24th. In the industry we have had a wage freeze since 1982 until April this year when we received a miserly £5, and they still want to close the yards.

The issue of wages has always been paramount with our committee since we argue that nobody is going to fight hard to keep a job that pays them slightly more than they would receive off the state. The issue of wages and the fight to save jobs cannot be separated.

The Tories plainly do not see the need for a merchant

**The run down of British Shipbuilding is a symptom of the historic decline of British capitalism. The ruling class has presided over a collapse of industry and trade. Their failure to invest in shipbuilding, as in virtually every other sector, has speeded up decline, with catastrophic results for the working class. Nationalisation of shipbuilding in 1977 has done nothing to reverse that trend. Now the Tories want to finish off what remains.**



The skills of shipbuilding workers are thrown on to the scrap heap by a campaign of closures and privatisation.

shipbuilding capacity. Tebbit claims that ships can be bought cheaper and more quickly from other countries. But to satisfy some of the more dissident Tories on the back benches they have included in their privatisation plans Swan and Hunter on the Tyne, which is able to build both navy and merchant vessels. The privatisation of all naval yards has to be going by March 1985 and complete by 1986.

### Run down

Already on the River Wear, BSET the engine builders are under threat of closure, the Deptford yard of Sunderland Shipbuilders has work only until February 1985 and Sunderland Forge which has only oil related

work, offered for private sale with attendant job losses.

Our river neighbours, Sunderland Shipbuilders, are the most modern yards in Europe—modernised and purchased at public expense ready for the hawks to swoop.

If the Tories do not wish to see the total destruction of shipbuilding on the Wear then their plan can only be to drive down wages and conditions to a level that appeals to private buyers. They would then offer work to the private owners and claim nationalisation doesn't work.

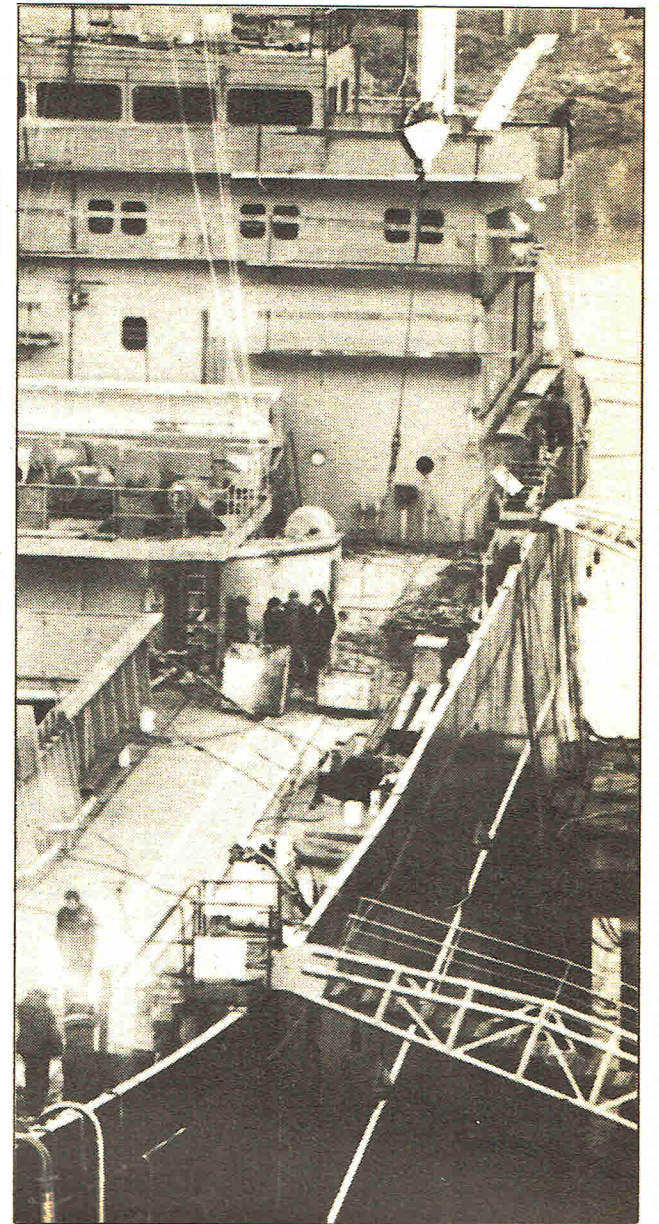
They have done this on a small scale on the Tyne at Tyne Ship Repairers, which was recently sold through lack of orders. Now they have an abundance of work;

but at a cost to the men. We understand short term contracts of three to four weeks are the thing at TSR with men working on a Friday night with their cards in their pockets to complete their job. That is a return to the pre-1969 situation in the industry where casual work was the norm.

### Campaign

On a larger scale Scott Lithgow on the Clyde was bought by Trafalgar House who were able to set on 1,000 men and give them a substantial increase in wages. The Tories are in the game of knocking them down to set them up for their rich friends.

Our MP Bob Clay has been of great value to our



build' policy. There are many vessels on the high seas which are unsafe, we foresee the situation where bodies like the EEC for example, create regulations where unsafe vessels are refused berth at any dock.

In addition there are environmental considerations for ships carrying perilous or dangerous cargoes where 'double skinning' or similar methods can be introduced to safeguard the contents in case of accidentally grounding, hitting obstacles or collisions, etc.

### Side effects

A good many of these ships are unsafe not only for the population generally but for the crews in particular. Flag of convenience vessels are notorious for bad wages and conditions of crew, but less well known are the great dangers the ships' conditions hold in physical terms.

We are campaigning through our Trades Council, through our MP, through our Labour Parties and through our two Labour councils who have already started a "save our shipyards" campaign. We have to try to reach the whole community and involve the whole community in the fight.

We accept this will be difficult in a town already punch drunk on the closure of major employers in the last decade. We support the miners morally and financially (Wearmouth pit is a mile up the road). Coles Cranes across the river is in the hands of the receiver with 1,500 jobs at stake. If the shipbuilding capacity of the town is lost there is another 5,000 jobs gone and with the ancillary industries, it means that anything up to 20,000 jobs including the buses, corner shops and all the rest of it.

We are organising a lobby of the Labour Party conference and urge any delegate there to give what support they can.

campaign. He has organised meetings, used his contacts to our advantage, continually questioning management spokesmen and so on. Through the re-selection process we in the Labour Party have elected him to fight our corner, and that is what he is doing.

As for our campaign we are seeking three major points:

- 1) In the short-term to secure additional financial aid and guarantee the future of the industry;
- 2) To maintain nationalised shipbuilding and nationalise the shipping lines, and owners thus creating one industry which will guarantee work in the yards for merchant vessels in the same way as naval yards receive their orders from the government;
- 3) Introduce the 'scrap and



## INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

# Teachers' pay demands—now for campaign

THE SPECIAL salaries conference of the NUT, which met last Saturday, adopted the most radical salaries position for years.

The significance of this should not be underestimated despite some set-backs for the left in the conference. It is a demonstration of the weakness of the leadership that they feel forced to adopt, even if with no conviction, the argument of the left.

## Claim details

In particular, despite the ritual pleas from some on the right, "not to tie our hands", an amendment was carried with executive support barring next year's claim going to arbitration—which has failed the membership so badly in the past.

The claim for 1985 is for: a) a £1,200 increase for all teachers. b) rejection of the current scales hierarchy in favour of a unified salaries scale. The

union is now committed to fight for the latter as part of next year's claim—not as part of the salaries restructuring talks, through which the employers and government have attempted to link salary reform with entry grades, merit payments and redefinition of conditions of service.

This is all extremely welcome, but the question of how precisely such a claim is going to be won was not really discussed. The executive has a plan, conference was informed, which will be revealed at a later date.

This is not really good enough. Such a claim demands that the membership are involved at every stage of the campaign. The government, and the local employers, will not lightly concede a massive pay increase—especially in view of government-imposed cash limits, let alone the impending ratecapping measures.

School and association NUT branches must start organising meetings now to explain the claim and prepare for the fight ahead.

Links must be forged with other public sector unions at local and national level. Combined pay dates would make our claim much more effective.

Attainment of the claim will be doubly difficult if teachers are left fighting alone. If the government can take on the NUM for eight months, they will be quite happy to hold the line against a much weaker section of the trade union movement to prevent a massive breach of pay targets.

## No diversions

The obvious danger is that the executive will try to divert the claim into the blind alley of "an independent review"—which would be an escape route for the executive. The full claim can and must be won. It will only be won on the basis of an effective campaign starting now.

By Bob Sulyaticki  
(West London NUT,  
personal capacity)

## Sheffield council face indefinite strike

The 630-strong workforce at Sheffield housing department have for the last three weeks been taking indefinite strike action.

Labour controlled Sheffield city council, decided to tear up a new technology agreement which had worked perfectly well for both management and NALGO members for over 2½ years.

The council are trying to push through their own document labelled 'Responding to Change'. One of the major differences between the two documents is that the old agreement protected workers from having to implement new technology unless it was first agreed by the union. This has been scrapped in an attempt to replace it with a clause stating that negotiations take place between management and NALGO for up to six months only. If at the end of this time no agreement is

reached management retain the right to impose new technology.

A major fear of NALGO members is that the council's document provides them with the opportunity to cut both jobs and services rather than oppose the government's ratecapping proposals.

Rather than taking a lead from Liverpool City Council, where both unions and councillors worked together to fight ratecapping, it is feared that Sheffield has decided to attack its own workforce.

## Divisive

A leading left-wing councillor has recently decided that NALGO members are 'overpaid, underworked and should think themselves lucky to have a job,' hardly an attitude conducive to building a united front against ratecapping. The strike was precipitated by the aggressive tactics of management when 13 NALGO

members were suspended for refusing to implement new technology which had not been agreed by the union.

All 630 members in the housing department were balloted for supportive measures. A majority of 3-1 voted for indefinite strike action. The normally moderate housing department staff have been incensed by the appalling working conditions and the intransigent attitude of management to open negotiations.

A speedy and successful conclusion to this dispute will only be achieved through intense pressure being brought to bear on the council. The surest way to achieve this is to call for an indefinite strike by all Sheffield branch NALGO members.

By Peter Danieluk  
(work site rep.)  
and Susan Shaw  
(Strike committee,  
personal capacities)

## Chubb

800 CHUBB Lock employees are now in the second week of their strike for a 9% wage increase and one week extra holiday. At a mass meeting on Thursday there was 100% support for the strike.

In the words of Ray Wilkes the lock and metal workers convenor: "It is up to the board to increase their offer."

## Print

Solidarity action between NGA and SOGAT members on the Portsmouth Evening News has forced a climb-down by the employers who provoked the dispute in an attempt to smash the union.

Management were refusing to negotiate a promised new productivity agreement in the light of new technology being introduced.

Militant can reveal that the Newspaper Society intervened in the dispute and told the employers to back down. It is obvious that the ruling class trembled at the thought of a provincial newspaper dispute blowing up in their faces. Possibly leading to national action.

With both the NGA and SOGAT taking a strong line in Portsmouth resulting in non-union office staff coming out in sympathy.



A lobby of EETPU leaders by members of London Central contracting against their branch being 'merged'. Coincidentally Chris Hill was a member of the branch and it had a left leadership

## EETPU attack own member

THE RIGHT wing leadership of the EETPU are taking action against another Militant supporter.

Chris Hill will go before the union's disciplinary committee in November, to answer the accusation that he attempted to disrupt June's national industrial conference. He was ordered out of the conference whilst attempting to ask a question regarding the failure of the union to organise the membership within the electrical contracting industry.

## Unquestionable

This followed the contribution from the EC member, Gallagher, who regaled conference with a "tale of woe", explaining how the leadership had failed to negotiate a satisfactory

deal for the 1984 claim: "We looked to Scotland...we looked to the north...we looked to the Midlands... finally we looked to London, but even there was no sign of a fight".

Chris Hill highlighted Gallagher's statement by showing the disintegration at rank and file level within the company where he is a shop steward. Significantly it was at this conference that general secretary elect Eric Hammond chose to mount a vehement and wholly personal attack on the miners, characterised by his 'nursery revolutionaries' remark. It was whilst drawing a contrast between the organisation of the miners and that of the EETPU, that Chris was ordered off the rostrum.

Clearly the medicine was unpalatable for the conference chairman, however, the sixty shop stewards who

had bothered to attend were prepared to listen patiently to the viewpoint. Unfortunately the Standing Orders Committee did not share the stewards' attitude and proceeded to exclude Bro Hill from the conference.

## Build Broad Left

The intolerance of the right wing knows no bounds. They will destroy the union rather than let opposition express its views. The Broad Left must begin to build an alternative leadership to the right, going directly to the membership at the workplace. The fight to democratise the EETPU must be stepped up a gear, attacks on union activists must not go unanswered.

By an EETPU member

## No BT pay cut

POEU members in Glasgow are now into the third week of an overtime ban in response to management's attempts to reduce the workforce.

The decision to fight this attack was taken at a special branch meeting despite a recommendation from the committee for acceptance. Clearly there is a determination amongst more and more workers that BT will not be sold at the expense of our jobs.

The response from the membership has been magnificent. Management have flatly refused to accept the tried and tested method of dealing with life or death emergencies such as breakdowns in hospital switchboards or lines. These would have been readily sanctioned by the union. It would appear that to prove they have the right to manage the business, lives must be put in jeopardy.

## Few volunteers

No doubt shaken by the solidarity of the branch, they

have resorted to taking volunteers to work on a bank holiday and have launched a series of staff meetings seeking candidates for early voluntary retirement. Both actions have been dismal failures. The branch has also taken the decision that in the event of any members being suspended or victimised there will be a total stoppage. The day cannot be far off when management test that resolution.

By Ian Cuthbert  
(Glasgow POEU)



# Militant

Feature on  
Sunderland shipyards  
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## Action to free shipyard workers

**JAILED FOR fighting to save their jobs, that is what has happened to, so far, twelve workers from Cammell Laird Shipyard in Birkenhead.**

On 10 October, the day Arthur Scargill was threatened with prison, 12 Lairds workers were thrown in Walton jail for a month. This, one of the worst attacks on union rights since the Pentonville dockers must be answered by the full organised power of the shipyard unions and the wider movement.

40 Lairds workers have been occupying the Royal Navy destroyer and gas accommodation rig for 13 weeks protesting at compulsory redundancies. They were threatened with jail unless they gave up their struggle by 30 September.

The workers occupying were not even offered the golden but poisonous carrot of redundancy, they were sacked, though at the last

By Richard Venton and Dave Clark

minute the bosses tried to buy them off with redundancy money reputedly up to £8000-£9000 for some. To their credit this Judas money was unanimously voted down. They would stay in

ployed, LP members, LPYS contingents and many others. Liverpool council said no disciplinary action would be taken against council workers who joined the picket and arrived late at work.

Over the CB radio Billy Albertina on the gas rig said that it looked like a Chelsea match with all the police there, but they were determined to stick it out. He didn't fancy the idea of going to jail, but he didn't want

now surrounded the gas rig with a barbed wire barricade and have full climbing gear on, ready to scale the scaffolding. But the 30 in occupation aren't impressed with the coppers' climbing skills. They've been seen doing the conga on the platform. They already have a rota for Christmas Day and have a turkey ready in shortage!

It would be criminal, though, if the union leadership allowed these men to be isolated. A 24 hour picket has been set up but workforces we have visited with Lairds workers have asked "what are the shipyard unions doing?" Big sections of workers would take strike action if the call was made.

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC) of the Liverpool council workforce have come out in support of the occupation and called for the immediate release of the 12 and offered any form of support the Lairds occupation committee ask for.

Management have broken the Blackpool agreement on no compulsory redundancies. Lairds Occupation Committee are merely putting trade union policy into action. The occupation, though, has suffered from the lack of a clear call for solidarity action by the national leadership of the shipyard unions. The sympathy and verbal support is there but this must become a thoroughly organised campaign for strike action against imprisonment, otherwise the Tories and BS bosses will continue to pick off yards one at a time.

Birkenhead is already a virtual ghost town with 85% unemployment on the big Woodchurch estate. The Lairds occupation struggle could give hope to these people if the union leaders take action to secure release from

prison and an end to compulsory redundancies.

Workers from Lairds and Liverpool council are lobbying leaders like David Basnett to immediately call strike action. The Cammell Lairds occupation committee are calling for a recall lay delegates conference of the shipyard unions, a call supported by Liverpool JSSC executive.

Squads of shop stewards from Lairds and other yards supporting this call should be organised to visit other yards to put the case. The conference should preferably be held in Birkenhead to show solidarity. The conference should call for decisive strike action in all yards to bring management and the government to their knees.

### Left's duty

This could be a kick start for a fightback nationally around redundancies. Orders are running to an end in all but a few warship yards. If the national confederated leaders don't act quickly, the left union leaders have a duty to convene the conference, or even several shop stewards bodies. Already North East stewards we have contacted are sympathetic.

With the yards out and teams visiting Merseyside workplaces, a second front of opposition to the Tories could start alongside the miners. Mass picketing could stop office staff crossing the picket line. Scabbing is in any case a suicide mission for white collar workers. Will the shipyard keep on 600 office staff for a mere 1750 workers?

The shipyard bosses believe they can ride roughshod over workers' rights, using the full force of the state. A united fight back by the workers can stop them.

## Cammell Laird

occupation.

Billy Albertina occupation leader said "we're here to fight for jobs not redundancy pay". A mass picket on Monday included workers from Swan Hunter, miners, council workers, unem-

to spend the rest of his life on the dole either.

Hordes of police swarmed round the entrance and moved in to arrest the workers including the regional chairman of GMBATU, Jimmy McCarthy. The police have



Photo: Militant

Lobbying shipyard union leaders against closures, redundancies and low pay in 1983.

### Coal stocks

EVIDENCE IS growing that Scotland and North East England are the crisis areas in maintaining electricity supplies.

The evidence in the leaked document from the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) (See *Militant* 28 September) put coal stocks at 14 million tonnes at the beginning of September. This has now been supported by the government's own statistics.

The Energy Department's 'Energy Trends' figures show that at the start of September coal stocks in Scotland and the North East were 4.5 million tonnes. Normal coal burn in September in these areas is 2.4 million tonnes which on past trends would run stocks out by the end of this month. The ability of generating boards to switch to oil burning is very limited in these areas.

A power crisis may well be imminent unless the government make plans very soon to move in fresh stocks to power stations like Blyth, Ferrybridge, Drax and Longannet. The unions must be prepared to take action to stop the Tories.

### YS attacked

DUNFERMLINE West Labour Party have voted to suspend the local Young Socialist Branch to look into "constitutional malpractice", ie. *Militant* supporters flyposting for a public meeting in support of the miners and daring to sell *Militant* on the streets and the estate.

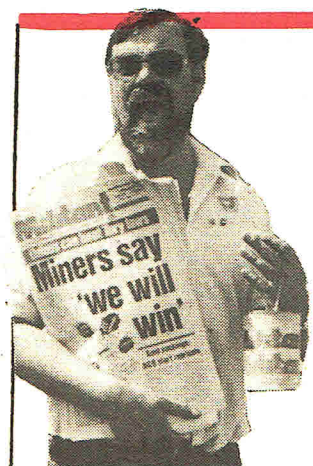
LPYS members have said they will fight the suspension and are mobilising support for a lobby outside the investigative meeting on 9 October.

### Miners

from page one

this happen. For workers, what is "right" is not what a wiggled representative of the ruling class decrees, but what advances the cause of our movement. That is a higher morality than the class-biased laws of the courts.

An injury to one is an injury to all! The miners are not just fighting for themselves but for all the trade unions and the liberties and living standards of all working people and their families. They must not be defeated!



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