

Miners organise

to win Coal Board cooks the books

DESPITE AN unprecedented media campaign against them, the overwhelming majority of miners are determined to stay out to win. The Press heap mountains of lies and vilifications on the miners and

blow up the numbers of miners going back to work. But they carefully play down the many acts of solidarity demonstrated by other workers, and the increasing effect of the strike on the economy, and more immediately, on the power industry.

The resolution of the miners can be gauged by the mass meetings that took place only this week in Northumberland. Four big pits there, Whittle, Ashington, Bates and Ellington, all voted overwhelmingly against a ballot.

The right-wing attempt to get the miners back—because that is what it was—was defeated. At two of these collieries it was literally by hundreds of votes to only a handful.

The miners are also resisting the disgraceful attempts to bribe them back with money that should be theirs by right. Those who are going back are trying to snatch a

defeat from the jaws of victory and they will regret having done so when the mass of miners win.

An analysis of the accounts of the National Coal Board, published by a group of experts, show how the Tories and the NCB bosses have distorted the finances of the coal industry. Everything the miners have argued—about the political character of the closures and the arbitrary way the Coal Board designates pits as “uneconomic”—have been shown to be true.

The special report, to be published in next month's issue of *Accountancy*, was prepared using information from within the Board's own accounts. Pressure from the NCB has already led to its publication being suspended for a month because of its conclusions. Even using the Coal Board's own figures—leaving aside the important social costs of closures—it shows that pit closures are uneconomic. Even Cortonwood, the pit that started the strike, is shown to be making a profit. (See details of the report on page 3)

These revelations will stiffen the resolve of miners to go on with their justified fight.

The support of the labour movement and the working class as a whole will see the miners and their

Continued on back page



TGWU fined: Executive must act now

TRANSPORT AND General Workers Union members must bring the might of the union to bear in order to defeat the £200,000 fine and the expected sequestration order. Failure to act boldly will spur the Tory judges on to even more draconian attacks on the funds of our union.

We must immediately make a fighting reality of our union's principled policy of opposition to these anti-trade union laws. Unfortunately—at present—it seems that the TGWU leadership is taking a passive attitude.

The TGWU alone, with its weight throughout industry, could smash this legislation merely by lifting its little finger.

The General Executive Council meets next week. Branches, stewards committees and all official bodies of the union meeting in the next few days should apply all possible pressure on the leadership for a Special Emergency Delegate Conference to organise co-ordinated action in defence of the union.

The union leadership must call stewards meetings, mass meetings



and branch meetings to prepare for action immediately the call comes for a recall BDC.

The time for clever tactical manoeuvring is over. Now is the time for action. TGWU members must demand that the GEC leads the way.

By Bill Mullins

Witch hunt beaten

IN A decision that represents the first important defeat for Neil Kinnock and the right wing, the Labour Party NEC voted against the expulsion of Young Socialist Brychan Davies from Rhondda Labour Party.

The recommendation to expel came from the Appeals and Mediation Subcommittee but Frances Curran, LPYS representative on the NEC, moved reference back and after a considerable debate it was carried by 14 votes to 13. Alex Kitson and John Evans voted with the left for reference back, while, predictably, Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley voted against.

Although this should mean that Rhondda CLP will be instructed then to reinstate Brychan, Party members need to be vigilant to make sure the decision is carried out. Before the meeting, LPYS members turned up to lobby the NEC and, addressing them from the steps of the Party HQ, Eric Clarke of the Scottish miners praised them: “If we'd as much support from the labour movement as we've had from the LPYS, we'd have won the strike by now.”

Next week. Feature on Durham miners support group.

Cash! Cash! Cash! Militant needs your help

THIS IS a historic issue of *Militant*, the first one produced at our new premises, bought with the money you raised.

We are still struggling to get the necessary equipment to develop our paper. Our bills and running costs are going to be higher than ever. The next step we want to take is a more frequent paper to give an even better coverage of news and opinion.

Your help is still needed more than ever. Keep the finance rolling in to the Fighting Fund.
See page 13.

Militant

Left TU leaders must respond

FOLLOWING THE collapse of the Austin-Rover strike, management at the Cowley plant have followed through very quickly with a disgraceful letter threatening victimisation of any workers involved in unofficial actions in the future. In the same week the Law Lords confirmed the ban on trade unions at GCHQ, raising the possibility of sackings there. Finally, and for the fourth time in a year, a trade union has been fined a massive sum by the Tory courts, and now faces the legalised plundering of its members' funds.

These events, each one a setback for the labour movement, have left the capitalist press crowing about the government's apparent success in using the law to tame the trade union movement. But they are not at all a reflection of the true class balance of forces. They are due to the weakness of the leadership of the trade unions.

Trade union activists have no great expectations of the right wing of the TUC, some of whom are actively plotting to undermine the Brighton Congress decision and pull the rug from under the miners. Hardly a week goes by without some right-wing trade union leader or Labour leader making damaging comments about the miners, thus giving aid and comfort to the Tories in their attacks upon the trade unions.

But on the other hand, the left leaders of the TUC, including the Transport and General Workers Union, must also bear some responsibility for the present state of affairs. They have given verbal and financial backing to the miners and have set their faces against the Tories' anti-trade union legislation. But this is not enough.

By their own speeches and comments, the trade union lefts understand that they face an historic struggle for workers' rights. This is no "ordinary" industrial dispute. The miners are bearing the brunt of an assault directed against the democratic rights and working conditions of all workers. It has a huge significance for all trade unions.

The left trade union leaders cannot defeat these class laws by merely "turning the other cheek" or by dignified but passive opposition. Indeed, members of the TGWU will be staggered at what seems to be a breathtaking complicity among their leaders over the fine and Austin-Rover's pursuit of damages.

It is clear that "ordinary" campaigns are not enough. The left union leaders must put the whole apparatus and machinery of their trade unions on a war footing to campaign among their members for industrial action to support the miners and defeat the Tories' anti-union laws.

The national leadership of the TGWU, for example, should by now have gone in person to the East Midlands, where a key TGWU road-transport committee is in effect ignoring national union policy. Special meetings should have been arranged, there and in other areas, involving work-place representatives of lorry and tanker drivers. Such a campaign, involving all the resources of the union, especially the personal intervention of the national officials, would by now have sealed off all road transport to the mines and power stations, steering the miners' strike to a victory weeks or months ago.

Had the trade union lefts taken seriously their own words about the historic significance of the miners' struggle and the threats posed by the Tory laws, then the whole course of the last few months would have been different. Not only would the miners have already won, but the climate of the victory would have changed the course of the Austin-Rover and other disputes. Moreover, the whole question of trade union laws and fines would be in the balance.

If this Tory government has succeeded—up to a point—with its anti-union legislation, it is only because it has not yet experienced its "1972", when mass strikes brought about the release of the Pentonville Five and the virtual suspension of anti-union laws.

Yet the opportunities so far missed have not gone altogether. There is still time for the left trade unions to dramatically change the course of events. If it is necessary, they should organise together outside the formal restraints of the TUC.

Joint meetings of national officers and executives of the TGWU, NUM, ASLEF, NUR, NUS and other unions can hammer out a strategy of action to defend trade unionism. With the perspective and a strategy of victory before them, the rank and file would come together locally and carry through the action needed.

The left leaders of the trade union movement must respond to the seriousness of the challenge they face. Leading their members boldly from the front, as they should, they can make sure the overblown confidence of the Tories and the bosses is very short-lived.

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Liverpool workers back Race Unit

THE APPOINTMENT of Sampson Bond to head Liverpool's Race Relations Unit continues to attract support from the local community. Black organisations, individuals, and trade unions have already come forward, even before Sam begins work, to arrange meetings on the work of the Unit.

Meanwhile, those opposing the Unit and Sam Bond's appointment continue to plumb new depths. In a leaflet sent to NALGO members by a number of local officials, virtually every sentence is inaccurate.

The leaflet accuses the Labour Group of the MacGregor-style tactic of "sending letters direct to council employees, bypassing the union." But what the leaflet failed to point out was that the Labour Group's "open letter" was a reply to an open letter from the NALGO officials.

Boycott refused

Local officials initially requested NALGO's National Emergency Committee to boycott the position of Principal Race Relations advisor, now held by Sam Bond. Their request was refused as was a subsequent request for the NEC to "instruct" NALGO members to boycott the post.

By Bob Lee

The NEC did, however, concede that it would not prevent local NALGO officials who oppose the unit from "urging" their members to boycott the post. But it was made clear that to do this would require the support of the NALGO membership, which plainly has not been forthcoming.

The NALGO officials base their case on the claim that there was discrimination against the three unsuccessful local candidates who are members of the 'Black Caucus', of local black activists. But they have failed to provide a shred of evidence to back this. This objection was raised rather belatedly by the NALGO trade union observer (also a member of the Black Caucus) who made no objections known at the time of the interview.

The leaflet claims that members of the Black

Caucus raised objections to Sam Bond's inclusion on the original short-list of candidates. This is untrue.

It is also claimed that the members of the Black Caucus withdrew from the interview before Sam Bond was appointed. This is also untrue. They only withdrew when their own favourite was not appointed.

The real reason for the objection to Sam Bond's appointment is clear: supporters of the Black Caucus, who virtually had a monopoly of the "Race Relations" jobs in Liverpool, are angry because one of their supporters was not appointed.

This fact has already become apparent to rank and file trade union members, and has led the Joint Shop Stewards Committee to reverse their initial support for the boycott.

True feeling

The true feeling of rank and file NALGO members is not reflected in the leaflet. The impression is given that there is widespread support for the boycott, but this is not the case.

The leaflet states that the Borough Solicitors Office, the department most closely connected with the work of

the new Race Relations unit, is backing the boycott. However, at a meeting of the members of that department the NALGO official refused to allow a vote to be taken because the overwhelming majority of members present were opposed to boycotting the unit.

The leaflet was particularly vicious in the personal attacks made on Derek Hatton, deputy council leader. It claimed that he reneged on an "agreement" to readvertise the post, but fails to point out that the so-called "agreement" was made while he was forcibly held hostage in his office.

NALGO members will be disgusted at this kind of leaflet. Sam Bond was appointed because he was clearly the best person for the job.

Instead of impeding the setting up of the new race relations Unit NALGO officials should be putting themselves in the forefront of the fight against racism. The Labour Party recently replied to fascist provocation by mobilising local workers in a mass display of opposition. This is precisely the kind of action that NALGO officials should be taking up and building support for among their members.



Lancashire miners occupy offices of North Wales NUM who claim they can no longer support the strike.

Photo: John Smith (FL)

Neil Kinnock badly out of touch

NEIL KINNOCK'S remarks in Moscow about the miners' strike have compounded the damage already done by his refusal to attend the NUM rallies.

Reacting to Russian reports about the hardships suffered by the mining communities, he suggested that it was "somewhat misleading" to say that there was deep deprivation or starvation.

Press lies

He told the Russians that there had been little police violence, and that "mining communities and the labour movement" had condemned the pithead violence, which "responsible union officials" were trying to restrain. The clear inference from that is that he agrees with the press lies that it is the miners, albeit "a very

small minority", who are responsible for the violence.

Miners and their families who have faced empty bellies and police batons for nine months will be sickened by his ignorance of the reality of life in a pit village. A few months on Social Security (less £16 "deemed strike pay") would show him how the miners are suffering.

A few mornings on the picket lines would educate him in the reality of violence, of police charges, with horses, dogs, batons and now even Transit vans.

Worst of all however, were his thoughts on a miners' defeat. Not only did he appear to accept that this was now quite likely, but talked of it as a minor setback: "It would be a mistake to think that the whole trade union movement had been defeated or decisively weakened. That is a cataclysmic interpretation, and I do not agree with it."

What an insult to the heroes of the nine-month strike, to suggest that a defeat wouldn't really be too bad. What about those older miners who will lose their jobs and never work again? What about the school-leavers whose future will be even bleaker than it is already?

Out of touch

What about the deep wounds that would be inflicted on the trade union movement as a whole? Of course, workers, the miners especially, will live to a fight another day, but at a terrible cost. A defeat of the miners will be the signal for a bosses' assault on the rights, all the gains, all the dignity and self respect which generations of trade unionists have fought for, many starved for and some have died for.

Kinnock has proved himself to be utterly out of touch with either the feelings of the miners, or the political reality of this strike. If a defeat would not be too bad, why is Thatcher striving so hard to bring one about? The answer is that she understands and fights for the interests of her class. She is not talking philosophical about the consequences of defeat for her side. She is going all out for total victory.

Kinnock should be showing the same loyalty and commitment to the class which his party represents. Though whether he does or not, the miners will not be defeated, however little help they get from their political "leader". Their own determination and the solidarity of other workers will make sure of that.

By Pat Craven

Our strike is solid

Ayrshire

THE COAL BOARD'S "bribe" of offering the miners their own money has resulted in about 5% of Ayrshire miners back at work, if Albert Wheeler, the NCB director in Scotland, is to be believed.

Even by their own terms, their attempt to break the fight for jobs is a failure. The activists have visited more miners than ever before, and more of them are on the picket lines.

The bosses have used every trick in the book to break the will of the village communities in Ayrshire to struggle—phone calls at all hours of day and night to persuade them to come back, the deadline to entitlement to magnificent bonuses continually being extended, police by the bus load to escort the broken few back to work, villages being patrolled by the strikebreakers in uniform preventing any conversation with the working miners, lies told of the numbers coming back and other black propaganda to persuade mineworkers the struggle is over.

One local paper even had the headline "The strike is crumbling", in an attempt to cover the facts—more than 95% of mineworkers in Ayrshire are on strike and don't want to go back without victory.

Typical comments from the miners were—"40 crossed the line the first Monday of the NCB's 'big push', yet the board announced it as 31, so as to use the figure of 40 on the Tuesday to support their theory of a 'drift back to work.'" "Miners who are weakening are

North Yorkshire

IN A week when the Coal Board nationally has been lying constantly about the actual numbers of miners who are working, they are still claiming less now than they were in June.

Several more scabs returned to sit about—they certainly aren't working—at the Prince of Wales pit, Pontefract. The actual figures aren't known because the union is no longer allowed in to speak to them. On Friday the union knew four by name. The Coal Board claim 14, in one van.

Reinforcements

There have been 17 arrests and 3 injuries, the majority of the arrests as a result of a massive police operation to ensure the scabs' right to sit about last Wednesday.

About 150 pickets had gathered and because they wouldn't stand behind the police cordon like good boys and were walking up and down the road, the Superintendent in charge sent to South Yorks for reinforcements.

Riot police with long shields were followed by more with short shields, who

phoned and told 'come back on Wednesday. We'll pay you the whole week'. This is to propogate the 'fresh faces every day' lie."

All miners received a letter the other day preying on families worried about debt and couched in terms of defending their jobs, families and communities, and inviting them to fill in the tear-off slip, return it freepost to the NCB so that transport and police escort could be arranged when there were enough numbers in certain areas.

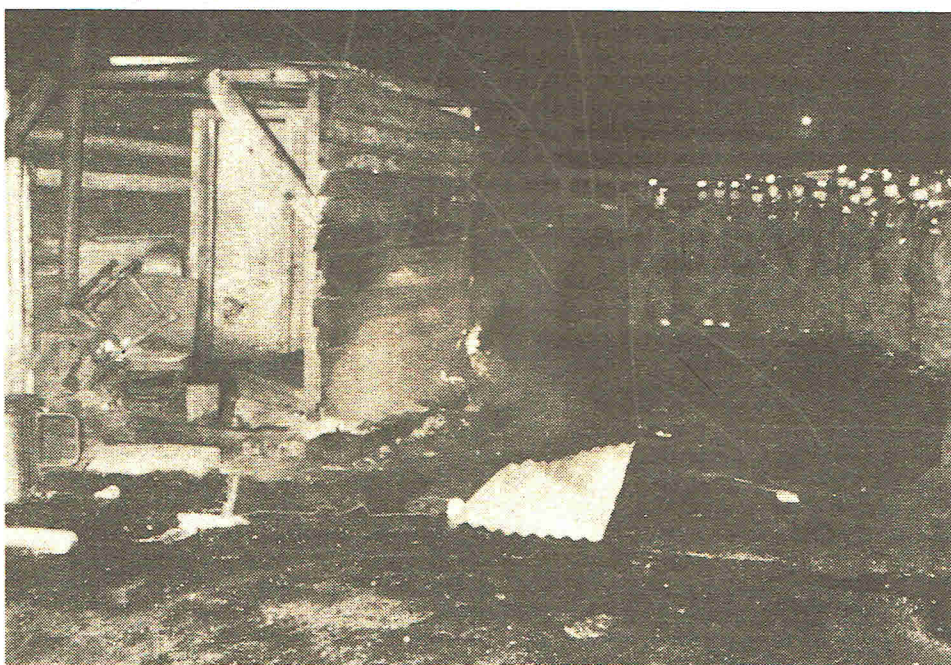
There are many people in Glasgow who'd be glad of these same police escorts (most of whom are sent from the police stations covering Glasgow's housing schemes) to catch the heroin pushers in the schemes with the same enthusiasm.

The letter has infuriated the community, with all its hypocritical nonsense of "defending their future", when everybody knows they want to put more than half Ayrshire miners on the dole in the next year.

The 'surge' has slowed and many miners are now turning their attention to going on the attack, approaching the power workers and others for solidarity action. Last week when the NCB used scab drivers and lorries to move concessionary coal from the pits to Ayrshire docks for the Western Isles, the dockers refused to handle it, despite the moral blackmail impressed upon them.

The management in Scotland seem cock-a-hoop at the moment. Their arrogance is hollow. The miners will be spurred on to greater activity, and through solidarity, win.

By Ronnie Stevenson



Picket hut burns at Askern colliery near Doncaster, as police stand by. Only the police were present when the fire started.

were then followed by transits which covered the full width of the road and mowed the pickets down. Police with dogs rounded up stray pickets. The scabs went in, but only after the police had charged into pickets in the park opposite the pit, truncheoned and arrested one lad and taken away another.

The police then divided up the pickets and those on the lower half of the road were attacked. They were driven down the road half a mile to



Jim Parker and Craig (aged 2), Donald Crawford and Billy (aged 2) picketing at Killoch colliery, Ayrshire. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Fife

To illustrate the "surge back to work" in Scotland, a further...wait for it...one scab crossed the line at Castlehill on 14 November.

This brought the "outstanding" total of scabs at the pit up to the frightening figure of 8—out of a workforce of almost 1,100.

What an answer to the poisoned lies and propaganda of the NCB and the media. The men, along with the indispensable support of their wives and girlfriends, remain solid in the face of increasing treachery and bribery from the NCB and

the Thatcher government.

To think that these men could choose to cross the picket line and claim sums up to £1,300. This shows the real character and principles of these men.

For what have we within the ranks of the scabs, Thatcher's "brave men": The first two to cross the line were men who had been transferred to Castlehill from Cardowan and who had just finished lengthy stays on "insurance"—off the insurance and across the line!

Another bloke is only working because he needs NCB references to leave for a job in South Africa, while another was sacked for sleeping on the job and only got his job back when the

NUM fought and won an industrial tribunal for him.

These are the "principled" and "brave" men that Thatcher and MacGregor are fond of quoting.

Yet something else that needs to be brought to the fore with the strike well into its eighth month is the high level of spirits still prevailing on the line. The young miners especially are proving to be Thatcher, MacGregor, Media and Police resistant.

But as Pat and Rab, 19 and 20 respectively, have been asking—when will we, the miners, and other

workers in struggle receive the kind of backing and leaders we need and deserve from the TUC and the Labour Party.

These men are the greatest class fighters, more than worthy of a TUC and Labour Party leadership prepared to represent the fight as tenaciously for the working class as Thatcher and Co have done for theirs.

By Brian, Jan and Tommy
(Stirling LPYS)

Accounts bombshell

THE REPORT published by a group of leading accountants on the finances of the NCB is a bombshell. It's not surprising the Coal Board tried to suppress its publication considering the damage that it does to their case for pit closures. They objected that its publication would be inappropriate "at such a politically sensitive time."

The team of expert accountants, led by the Professor of Accounting the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, studied the NCB accounts and had access to "privileged" information. Their report concluded that the Board's standard accounting procedure was "fundamentally flawed" and that it "does not provide a sensible basis for pit closure decisions or public debate on them."

The NCB methods, the report went on, "fail to form an adequate basis for informed management decisions" ... just what the NUM have been saying for years!

There are a number of reasons for the accountants' conclusions, including the close interdependence of the parts of the energy industry, and the difficulty of appraising the relative contribution

of different pits (let alone different coal faces). Not all "costs", they pointed out, were really related to coal production.

The net result, however, is that management assessments "run the considerable risk of becoming self-fulfilling prophecies." In other words, the Coal Board deliberately run down those pits they wrongly deem to be uneconomic and starve them of investment which then goes to pits they deem to be economic.

The accountants took the specific example of Cortonwood, which in 1981-82 was supposed to have made a loss of £6.20 a tonne. But, they point out, a quarter of the "costs" would not be saved even if the pit closed, so in reality Cortonwood in that year contributed £5.50 a tonne profit to NCB funds!

These revelations will only increase the demand among miners, long since advocated by the Marxists within the movement, for workers' control and management within the nationalised industries and for the books to be open to the inspection of trade union representatives. But in the short term, they will also give public weight to the miners' case and increase their determination to fight on to a victory.

By a Yorkshire striking miner.

Miners' dispute

Power cuts on the way

THERE IS more evidence that power cuts are not far off. With support from the rest of the trade unions, the miners are still in a strong position to force the Tories to their knees.

The biggest problem facing the CEBG is in supplying enough lighter fuel oil to coal-fired power stations. This oil is vital to start the generators up and its consumption has shot up during the strike.

This is because under normal conditions, coal-fired stations meet "base load" requirement, ie. they are running continuously. During the strike however, oil fired stations are meeting base load needs and the coal-fired plants are switched on to cope with peak demand.

Big stations like Drax, which normally run continuously through the winter

By Pete Dickinson

are now being switched on and off most days, leading to increased consumption of oil.

A major factor in the success of the '72 and '74 strikes was the blacking of this oil; solidarity action now by tanker drivers delivering the oil would have a very rapid effect on the operation of many key power stations like Drax, Fiddlers Ferry and Didcot.

The Tories are very worried by this situation, as was shown by their unsuccessful attempt to build a pipeline

into Drax to try to bypass any action by tanker drivers.

At the very least, the NUM should ask the TGWU tanker drivers to stick to the TUC guidelines and not deliver any extra oil. This by itself would have a very significant impact.

The power supply picture in the South West is becoming critical. At the two big oil fired plants in the region, Pembroke and Fawley, one out of the four generating sets is out of action and the other three at Pembroke are giving considerable trouble. At the nuclear-fired station at Hinkley Point, the CO2 tanks are leaking and tanker drivers are refusing to deliver any extra. This will cause major problems very shortly if the unit isn't taken out for repair.

These operational difficulties and the approach of winter have forced the CEBG to start burning significant quantities of coal at Didcot power station, near Oxford, where stocks are already low. The management have made attempts to move coal in by road and rail which, up to the time of writing, have been unsuccessful.

Suspended

The pressure is on though and support for the workers inside the station is vital. There are unconfirmed reports that the convenor at the plant has been suspended for refusing to accept fresh coal deliveries.

In the North West the pic-

ture is moving in favour of the miners. At Fiddlers Ferry, the biggest coal-fired station in the region, a third generator has been brought into operation which will mean the 600,000 ton stockpile will run out in about six weeks, sooner if there are severe weather conditions. The smaller coal fired station at Westwood has been brought into service for the first time since the summer.

The rate at which the coal runs out depends significantly on the weather. Given average temperatures, coal will run out at big coal-fired stations like Drax and Fiddlers Ferry by mid January. If this happens, power cuts will inevitably occur, initially affecting the late afternoon peak demand period.

The Tories are already planning to meet this crisis. In Doncaster, which will be the centre of the most affected area, some firms are voluntarily closing down on certain days on a rota basis to try to even out the demand for electricity and prevent power cuts.

The decisive period for the Tories is likely to be around Christmas. They must move coal by then into key power stations to be able to prevent power cuts in January.

The miners and their supporters should be preparing for this, so as not to be taken off guard in a holiday period—the outcome to the strike could depend on the response of the movement at this time.

Xmas appeal

NOW THE colder weather is starting to bite and the prospect of power cuts looms nearer, the Tories are pulling out all the stops to entice striking miners back to work.

With the ongoing saga of "return to work by Monday (or Friday, or the following week...)" and "we'll give you £££", "be good lads and we'll give you £125 out of your next pay claim", the latest thing from the dirty tricks department is to fiddle £1 a week more away from state benefits given to miners and their families.

Well, the London Labour Party Young Socialists are just as determined—to keep up the collections to give the miners the material means to stay out and win their strike.

Our "Give the Miners Kids a Merry Xmas" campaign is getting a really good response on the streets and estates. When my YS went collecting on an estate which we had leafleted two days before, we were well received. Only two people actually refused to give anything; the majority of the rest came to the door with money already to hand over.

People are still more than keen to show their support for the miners; it's up to us to go out and collect their donations.

This weekend is to be a really big boost for the campaign: On Saturday (1st) we're asking comrades to meet at 12 noon at Hanover Square, W1 to go out on a mass collection amongst the

Xmas shoppers in the West End—come along and give us a hand!

Other YS members should have collections in their local shopping centres, using placards and loud hailer to let passers-by know who we're collecting for and why. On Sunday (2nd) all the YS branches must follow up Saturday's success with door-to-door collections in their area.

Can you help our campaign by having a collection amongst your friends, neighbours or workmates? Send all monies to "LPYS Miners Kids Xmas Fund" c/o 5, Alverstone Hse, Kennington Park Road, London SE11 5TS. If you have any toys to donate let us know so we can arrange collection.

We're taking the toys to Northumberland miners families on December 15/16. If you would like to come up with us, contact the above address—don't forget the YS which raises the most for the collection get 2 free tickets for the trip!

With 21 days left for the campaign, the only message is—get out there on the streets and collect that money!

By Lesley Phillips
(LPYS National Committee)

STOP PRESS:
Bow and Poplar LPYS have raised £140 in one week in street collections. Can your LPYS match that?

Support from Limerick

IT IS with great pride that I write and tell of our recent fundraising efforts for the miners.

Labour Youth and *Militant Irish Monthly's* supporters organised a rock gig with three local bands who gave their services for free. We collected over £100 altogether. During a break between the bands Clem McCloskey, a MIM supporter gave the miners' side and the reception was very enthusiastic.

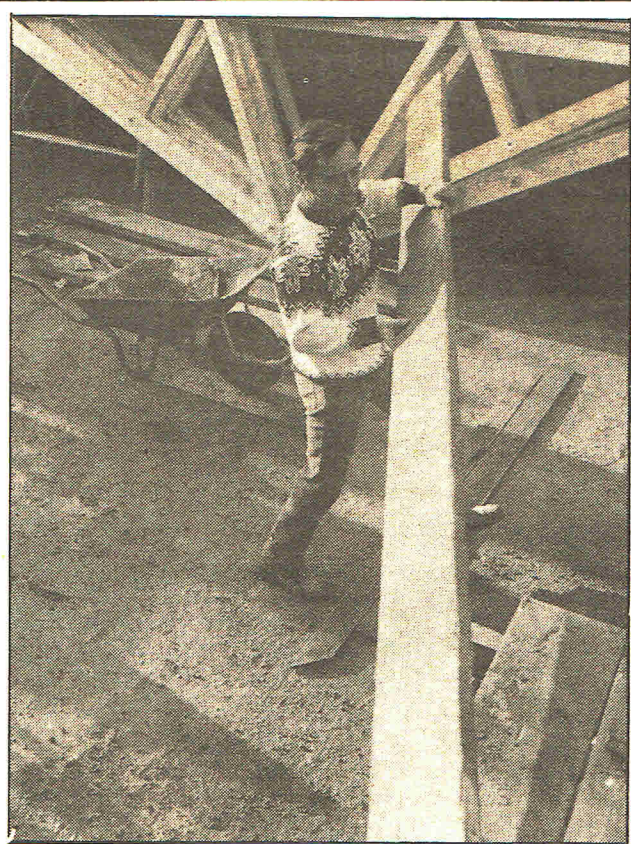
Also Brendan Conway from Yorkshire recently

spoke at a successful rally.

To the miners on strike, although hundreds of miles away we are solidly behind you. The capitalist curse of unemployment is embedded in our community. We all look up to the NUM and have only hatred for the Tories both here and over there.

Without the *Militant* we'd all be in the dark! Keep up the fight.

By Ambie Malone
(Limerick Labour Youth)



Bilston Glen miner, Rob Skelton at work on the leukaemia unit, Edinburgh. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Strikers help the sick

AT A recent LPYS public meeting held in West Edinburgh, amid all the Tory propaganda that miners do nothing but cause violence on picket lines, a female member of the public announced that striking miners were at the present moment digging the foundations of a

research unit for Leukaemia, at Edinburgh's sick children's hospital. She said they had been doing this for four months. Who said the miners weren't human?

By Susan Riley
(West Edinburgh LPYS)

Deliver promises

AFTER THE blow to morale caused by some Warwickshire miners returning to work, Arthur Scargill and other speakers at a rally last Saturday had the several hundred strikers who attended on their feet and ready to keep fighting.

Nev Bell of the Coventry Colliery strike committee was applauded when he called for the establishment of a permanent solidarity fund at the pit when the strike is over.

Miners' wives interrupted Kath Chaplin of the wives' committee to agree with her comparison of their struggle to that of the South African workers.

Cokeworkers' leader Ed-wil Morgan asked where

NACODS and the NUM would find an independent body in Britain today to judge the closure of pits impartially. "The only time we've had anything," he exclaimed, "is when we've been prepared to break the law of the land."

Arthur Scargill mocked the NCB's "drift-back" figures. Calling for solidarity, he said: "I appeal to workers in steel and in power to deliver the promises that were given to us from the rostrum at the TUC."

"If Bill Sirs had spent a tenth of the time fighting for jobs in steel that he has attacking me, he would have saved 100,000 of them!"

By Tony Cross

Power station blacking

WEST THURROCK is the first power station to be taken off the National Grid due to solidarity action with the miners, though the press have kept absolutely silent about it, preferring to highlight the one or two scabs who have gone back to work.

At a Miners' Support Group public meeting on 23 November Bill Hodge T&G shop steward at West Thurrock power station explained that as a result of abiding by the TUC guidelines on the use of coal and oil, the station had been taken off the National Grid on occasions, and for the past three weeks it has been operating at between 10 and 20% capacity.

Workers at West Thurrock have also blacked a pipeline from an oil terminal, which, when finished would make the blacking of oil deliveries difficult. It has therefore not been completed within the grounds of

the power station.

On the jetty, where the "Sten" has not been unloaded, each shift of about 6 lads, who refuse to unload the Sten are intimidated by management, who regularly send out threatening letters. NUS members who have blacked oil deliveries since the beginning of the dispute are frequently sent home by their management.

It is important for all sections of the labour movement to show their solidarity with the actions taken by the power workers at West Thurrock. Please send messages of support as a matter of urgency to the: Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Bill Hodge, 38 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex.

By Anne McKay



Mass demonstration at West Thurrock power station on 12 November. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Solidarity

SEAMEN ON the Sten, who are refusing to unload its cargo of oil into West Thurrock power station have been threatened with writs, and the ship's officers are beginning to unload the oil. But the seamen's support for the miners has not been shaken; they are sitting in the ship to prevent non-union labour being brought on.

Their fears are justified; non-union labour has been used on the Kindrence which is attempting to unload 3,000 tonnes of Cumbrian coal at Shoreham power station. NUS members were recently laid off both the Kin-

drence and its sister-ship the Luminence. The owners, Crescent Shipping, are breaching the closed-shop agreement between the NUS and the General Council of British Shipping.

Other union members have been sacked for refusing to unload oil at Blyth power station and non-union labour has been used to bring it up the river in barges, and unload.

The seamen's solid support for the miners, putting their own jobs on the line rather than break the TUC guidelines, is a shining example to the rest of the trade union movement of how the strike can be won.

Miners' dispute

Women and the strike

THE IMPACT of the miners' strike on the women who have become involved has been greater than on the miners themselves. Wives, mothers and daughters of miners, and other women in the community have not only become actively involved in the kitchens and on the picket lines, but have totally changed their outlook on life.

Here are just three examples of women's reaction to the strike.



Barnsley miners' wives demonstrating their support for the strike.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

I've been forced to change

WHEN THE strike was announced in March, the first thoughts that entered my head were, how on earth are we going to manage? Bills to pay, two young children to clothe, things I had hoped to buy for the house. I was panic stricken.

By Christine Fielding

Obviously my first thoughts were for material things, which, seven months later, I realise was being selfish. There was much more at stake.

My husband patiently explained everything to me. I decided the strike had to be and that I also needed to be involved in any way I could. I joined Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures and then formed a group in our own local area.

Looking back to seven months ago, I am an entirely different person. This strike has taught me much. It is common knowledge that there can only be one government to favour the working class and to work with our best interests at heart, and it isn't the Conservatives.

Thatcher has been planning this strike for years. I should think the vast majority of the public are shocked at the new powers the police have been given without knowing a thing about it.

It makes me sick when the media give a full five minutes on an injured policeman (who has a job to look in pain for that long) and a fleeting second to the pickets.

Who can say which order

of sequence the news items are shown, which came first, the stone throwing or the baton charge? I have no faith at all in any of the media any more. They are all Maggie's men and as biased as she is.

I have been on picket lines. One pig will tell you one thing is law, along comes another pig and the law changes. We can never be one step ahead of them, they make up the law as they go along to suit themselves and the situation.

Bruised husband

Once you taught your children to seek a policeman in times of trouble. Now you tell them to hide if they see one coming. They can lift you off the streets for absolutely nothing, and it's legal. My kids will never trust the law, they haven't got anyone to teach them to.

How can you tell them how good and kind the pigs are and your husband comes home with a bruise the size and shape of a baton on his back? Everyone likes to think they know a bit about

politics. It has taken this strike to make me politically aware. Looking back I was as apathetic as the majority of this country. I not only want us to win this strike, I also want to change the way this country is run.

Killing jobs

Thatcher must be kicked out or we will be back to the days of peasants and lords. I am now aware of the number of unemployed and the way they are forced to live, not temporarily as in a strike, but month after month, year after year. It is disgusting and degrading. Not satisfied with killing jobs, she is slowly killing the people by keeping them below the headline and by giving them no future prospects of work. (Easier to see when you are in danger of becoming another statistic of the unemployed).

The main aim of this government is to smash the trade union movement. Without the unions there will be no Labour Party and consequently no opposition. If that ever comes about, I would gladly shoot myself. We would be back to working longer hours for less pay, awful conditions would re-emerge.

In short we would be put back 100 years. It's time the country wakened up to what this government is doing; more people should become

active and start doing something about it.

I am still learning about the world outside my own four walls and I don't like the majority of what I am being taught. But I realise they are all facts of life that have to be learned.

I also realise that a lot more people have seen what is going on with this tyrannical government and by the end of this strike I can only hope that we have all learned enough and are strong enough, together, to get this government out. She can't be allowed to get away with it any longer.

Hardship

If you had told me seven months ago I would be doing the things I am and talking like I do, I would have laughed in your face. Through sheer desperation and hardship, I have been forced to change. I'm glad I have; I'm stronger and more alert to life around me. I will never be able to go back to my old way of life; it will never be enough to slip back into apathy.

At the moment, my total conviction is the strike, my time consumed with the food kitchen, picketing etc. After the strike? Well, there will always be some fight to be fought whenever Thatcher is in power.



Miners Women's Support Group rally in Abertillery.

I AM a deputy's wife, mother of 21 year-old miner, whose savings ran out long ago.

I feel degraded with him and for him when he asks for 20p in order to get his day over in his mate's father's scrap yard. Most days he doesn't earn anything, but it's somewhere to go.

Others here are not so fortunate—they stand together or sit on a bench at the crossroads, mainly to get out of the wife's way. I've seen them sharing a fag. I know some of them are poaching, stealing copper and fuel from the coking plant.

Certain gardens in the village are burning bright at night and there is a pungent smell of rubber, and a hell of a lot of hammering during the day. I'm turning a deaf ear and fast losing my sense of smell. Hear all, see all and say nowt is still the best Yorkshire quote I can bring to mind.

Arrears

I have seen at first hand a family of seven sharing a 3/4 lb home made mince pie thickened up with vegetable soup. They have been pestered with letters from the YEB over arrears for electricity. The father agreed to pay £5 weekly and still they end up putting a meter in. The clock twirls round very fast. They are now worse off than before.

Another family of three (father a miner, son newly apprenticed, mother at

home) receive a cheque for £7.75. Out of this they are supposed to pay the water rates. Their son-in-law buys them food, pays the electricity bills. Rotherham council give them all a rent and rate rebate. Thank god for small mercies.

We started a hot dinner kitchen at the OAP centre. The men gather at the crossroads about 12ish. It takes them a while to bury their pride and get across to us. Once in they tuck in with relish and enjoy each others' conversation.

British Steel unions sent representatives to take note of our situation before they donated. They brought with them cans of beer and fruit for the children. The lads at the crossroads came across double fast when they heard about the beer. Quite a party in there on Friday.

I think what's needed now is a fund set up to provide mining families with the wherewithall to give their children a normal Xmas. Perhaps a turkey and toy fund would be appropriate. They all have debts which will take years to pay off. We need caring people like yourselves to get organised and donate, however little you can afford. They still have a sense of humour here and the community spirit has returned. I've been into homes I wouldn't have spoken to more people, ordinary men like yourselves who just want to work.

By Betty Frost
(Rotherham)

Women kicked and beaten

POLICE ON picket lines in Lancashire have singled out women for arrest and beatings. Early in November, Lancashire miners organised mass pickets in response to the NCB's "back to work" propaganda. At Sutton Manor pit on 7 November a Liverpool Special Squad were on duty. A small push started and a number of police waded into the pickets.

Carol Dean, a member of Wigan LPYS, was left in no doubt as to where the violence came from. She was

dragged to the ground by the throat, leaving a thumb mark on her neck.

While on the ground she was kicked deliberately in legs and arms several times.

The most vicious attack was by a policeman who moved in and aimed a kick straight at her head. Fortunately another picket managed to deflect the kick.

This attack has not deterred Carol from attending pickets, but made her all the more determined to see a victory for the NUM.

Later on at the Kirklees

Workshop the police started singling women out and arresting them as the picket grew. One woman was beaten about the face with a police helmet, suffering bruising and shock.

Leaders like Hammond and Kinnock should be on the picket lines rather than rubbing shoulders with the CBI or clouding the issues. They would learn more in two hours than throughout their political "careers".

By Alex Pandolfo

French block scab coal

FRENCH MINERS blocked railway lines into Calais on 22 November to stop nearly 5,000 tonnes of coal being exported to Britain by the strike breaking Charbonnages de France, the nationalised coal board.

The miners occupied the wagons and dumped coal across the railway lines, blocking the port for several days. A few days earlier, another coal train had been stopped in the Mediterranean port of Fos.

Rhondda - now right attack YS

BIG Brother is watching you! Well, at least in the Rhondda he is.

Following the attempted expulsion of Rhondda LPYS Chairman Brychan Davies the LPYS branch is now under attack.

We are under a three month 'review' (spelt 'scrutiny') for having a speaker the constituency officers disapproved of and having the audacity to hold to our beliefs. By the way, this attack is not an extension of the witch-hunt. We were instructed to make that point clear.

The officers of Rhondda LPYS were accused of many things including lying, being manipulated by "a person no longer a member of this party"

and harassing non-Militant supporters in the LPYS.

Our last chairman was accused by the constituency secretary of saying he had been a member of the Labour Party "long enough to see how rotten the Labour Party is", when what he said was that he'd been a member "long enough to see what you're up to." A witness to this conversation, who had agreed with our chairman on his version, was the constituency secretary's son.

One left winger in Rhondda Labour Party told me that the Rhondda had got into the sorry state where the GMC was no longer a democracy, a

state where the constituency officers, or rather the constituency secretary, dictates to the GMC. Also, another left winger was harassed at a ward meeting for opposing Brychan Davies' expulsion.

Being in Rhondda Labour Party is a real eye opener; to see the pathetic attempts by the right wing to stifle socialism is like watching a spider trying to climb up a plughole only to get washed away.

Since the witch-hunt there are more Militant supporters in the Rhondda than ever. The right wing in the Rhondda are in control now, but they're on the way out.

They don't like you to speak up about the bad things in the Labour Party and try to change them for the better. So after writing this I'll probably be expelled.

But, comrades, no matter what they try and do, they can never stifle or expel socialist ideas from the Labour Party. And to quote from something heard a lot on picket lines and demonstrations recently: "We will win! We will win! We will win!"

By Michelle Tree
(Secretary, Rhondda LPYS, personal capacity)

No evidence to back Daily Mail slur

AT THE last meeting of Swansea Labour Association (15 November), three resolutions attacking the Daily Mail slur that Militant supporters collected money which was meant for the miners during a miners' demo were "noted", on the recommendation of the EC.

Despite assurances that all the money collected in the Militant rattling tins was for the payment of Militant, and demands that the alleged "culprits" be identified, no-one from the right-wing could come forward with any names.

Amid heated exchanges, the constituency president ruled that Militant supporters would not be allowed to move a resolution calling for the allegations to be withdrawn from the NEC despite the fact that no witnesses could be found to substantiate this mudslinging claim.

With this "success" under the belts the right wing also attempted to curtail the achievements of the Labour Party Young Socialists who intended holding a public debate with the Tories on a large working class estate in the city.

Delegates from the ward complained that the ward hadn't had the opportunity to discuss the issue and even though the LPYS had complied with all the rules of the party, a resolution was pass-

ed referring the LPYS public meeting back to the ward for their observations. Unfortunately the ward is meeting two weeks after the planned debate!

The irony of this fiasco was that the same ward was later explaining that it was the only ward in the city not carrying out recruitment drives because its members were too elderly to canvass. Shouts of "let the YS help you" were met by silent embarrassment.

However, not everything went the right wing's way. Against the recommendation of the Executive two resolutions condemning Neil Kinnock's refusal to speak at the miners' rallies were overwhelmingly passed.

Almost all of the delegates who spoke remarked that his actions were damaging the Labour Party—"How can we knock on people's doors and ask them for food and toys for the miners' families and ask them also to join the Labour Party? Their reply will be—"what's Kinnock doing to support the miners?"

The feeling of the meeting was that the leader of the Labour Party should be fully behind the miners and it's time he stopped trying to appease the establishment and get stuck in with the miners.

By Swansea Militant supporters

Marxist gain at Women's conference



Photo: Militant

Cathy Wilson, elected onto the Southern Region Women's committee.

AT THE Southern Region Women's conference on November 17 two Militant supporters, Cathy Wilson and Val Pearce, were elected onto the regional committee.

The conference also adopted Marxist resolutions.

The Isle of Wight resolution, which was also carried, called for one extra seat on the National Executive of the Labour Party, to be elected

at the national Women's conference, alongside the right for the women's section to submit one resolution and amendment to Party conference.

Over £80 was raised for the miners after an appeal by miner's wife Kay Sutcliffe.

By Jacqui Mendoza
(Bracknell CLP)

Poole school picket

LAST WEEK a hundred fifth formers at the Henry Harbin school in Poole picketed the school gates in a protest over school 'privileges'. Many other students backed the fifth formers, reflecting the general bitterness of the students towards the school administration.

Police were called and two fifth formers were arrested for calling the officers 'pigs'. Twelve others have been suspended. However, under

pressure from the students the school administration have now agreed to set up a school council to discuss problems, a demand LPYS members raised previously in leaflets to the school.

By Siobhan Barnsley
(Poole LPYS)

LPYS Public Meeting "Organising schools" Tuesday, 4 December Poole Labour Club, Skittle Alley, Poole

West Ham fans cheer Labour bus

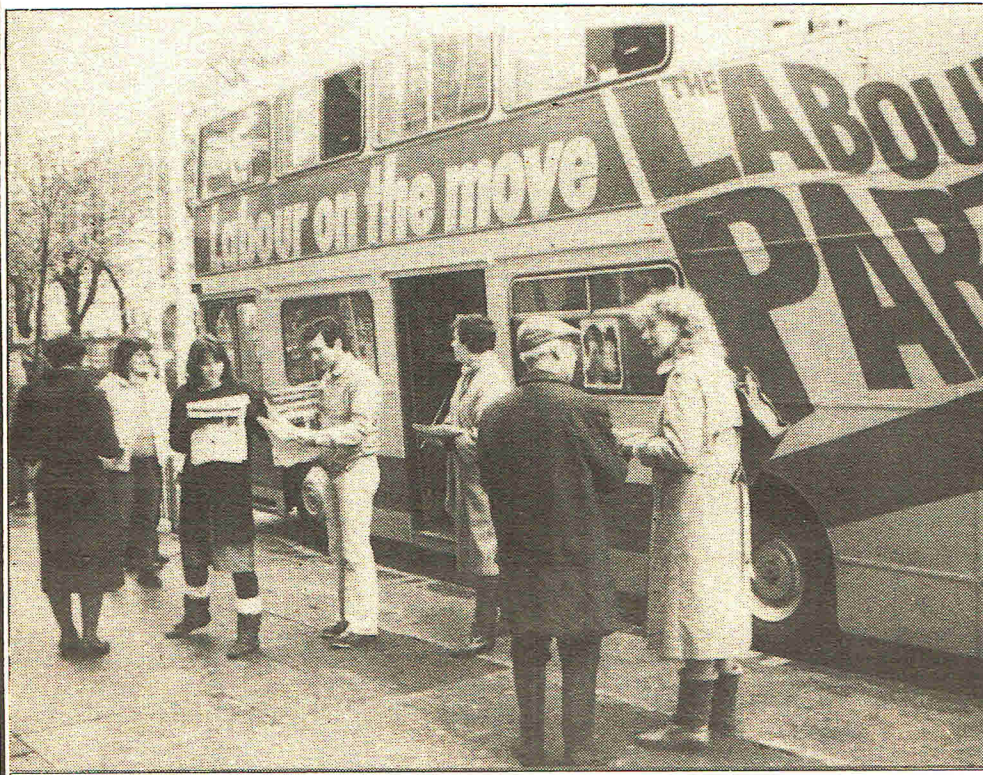


Photo: Peter Wharton

LABOUR PARTY Young Socialists held a recruitment campaign in London's East End on November 17, using the Labour Party's Campaign bus. There was a good response as the bus made its journey around the borough of Newham, with West Ham supporters cheering as it drove by the Upton Park ground.

Chair of Newham North West LPYS Mark Avis said: "We collected over £40 for the miners and over 50 people, mainly young workers, expressed interest in joining."

By Peter Wharton
(Newham North East CLP)

London YS backed on NL Poly

THE GREATER London Labour Party Regional Executive backed an LPYS motion demanding that National Front Student organiser Patrick Harrington be expelled from the North London Poly.

The campaign by the students to rid themselves of this NF member has unfortunately not been matched by the actions of the Labour led National Union of Students, or the Labour controlled Inner London Education Authority. In fact, against the background of cuts in education spending nationally and the GLC's 'anti-racist year', ILEA has offered individual tuition to Harrington, providing him with the best pupil-teacher ratio in the country!

The LPYS motion was carried by 17 votes to 4, despite the vocal opposition of Frances Morrell, leader of ILEA. The resolution also demanded that no facilities be provided for known fascists at ILEA funded colleges, and that the ILEA guarantee job security of any staff who refuse to provide facilities for Harrington.

By Kevin Miles
(LPYS rep, Greater London LP Executive)

FELS conference adopts charter

"IT'S A refreshing change to meet people who are prepared to do something rather than just talk".

These were the sentiments of Andy Jones, a delegate from Woolwich college to the conference of Further Education Labour Students held in Liverpool on November 10/11.

Andy explained that he had never been happy with the Labour Party in the past, but speakers at the conference had convinced him to join, and fight to make it a campaigning, socialist party.

It was the need for students to orientate towards the labour movement in defending the education services that was the main theme of the two-day con-

ference. Attended by 240 delegates from Further Education College Labour Clubs, the main discussions were around how to implement the demands of the FELS charter (see Militant 724). One of the best debates was on black youth and fighting racialism in FE colleges.

Conference also took up the miners' strike, with a Notts miner from Ollerton NUM addressing the delegates.

Delegates went on to discuss how FELS would function, electing a 13-strong group to co-ordinate national work. A collection raised £250 for FELS funds.

During the conference, delegates gave me their impressions:

Lisa Fitzpatrick from Woolwich said she was par-

ticularly impressed by the debate on women and agreed that the present economic system used women as a pool of cheap labour. Stuart Gregg, an audio-visual technician on a day release course at South Thames College, was pleased that FELS recognised the need to link with college trade unions, as he felt that it was only by students and workers fighting together that Tory attacks on education could be defeated.

As the conference closed it was clear delegates had enjoyed the conference and would support and campaign for the ideas and policies within the FELS Charter.

By Paul Hillard
(Goldsmiths' College Labour Club)

Fitzwilliam 9/Newham 7 campaign

MEMBERS OF the Fitzwilliam Nine are touring London this week publicising their case and raising money for the miners.

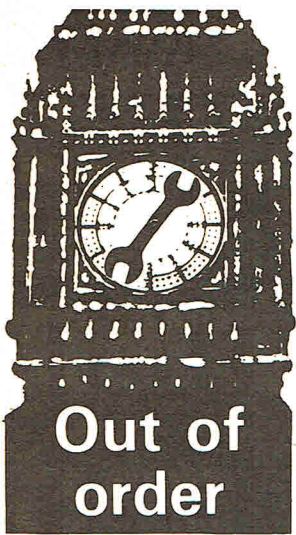
The Fitzwilliam Nine—members of the NUM and the LPYS arrested during a police riot in their Yorkshire village—have linked up with the Newham Seven—Asian youths picked up by police in the East London borough after defending themselves

against racist attacks—to show that young workers face the same struggle.

The Fitzwilliam and Newham speakers have addressed LPYS meetings in Woolwich, Southall and Hackney, and during the day have raised cash for the miners with donations coming in from Hounslow LPYS and the Bakers' union in East London.

The week's campaign will

culminate in a rally called by Newham LPYS on Saturday 1 December. The rally will include a 'trial of the police', speakers from the LPYS and NUM plus a video on South Africa, followed by a disco and local bands. The rally starts at 1.30pm, at the Kensington Youth Centre, Wordsworth Avenue, East Ham. (Fitzwilliam see front page).



Out of order

THE PRESS widely reported the demonstration by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs during Fowler's speech on Wednesday November 21. Much has been made of my ripping up of Fowler's speech. Indeed, everywhere I go in Parliament now the Tories hide their papers! To read the newspapers you'd think ripping up a few bits of paper was more of a crime than stealing money from children—which is exactly what the Tories are doing with their latest attacks on the miners.

But the Tory press are as always very selective in their news coverage—no mention was made of the continual interruptions I received during my speech the night before (reported on this page).

It was getting on for midnight and the Tories, as Labour MP Alex Eadie pointed out, had clearly just come from a "very good dinner". Tory MP Anthony Beaumont-Dark gave the Deputy Speaker a lot of trouble. Hansard records the high level of debate: Deputy Speaker: "Order, the hon. Member for Birmingham Selly Oak must restrain himself..."

Beaumont-Dark: "He (Dave Nellist) is not restraining himself!"

DS: "Order. The hon. Member must not shout at me from a sedentary position."

BD: "I will shout at you standing up!"

Sucks boo to you too. Beaumont-Dark went on to shout 'rubbish' at the Deputy Speaker, the greatest of all the sins in the Commons, but surprise, surprise he wasn't thrown out.

Nor was the Tory MP for Great Yarmouth who, complained the Deputy Speaker also kept "interrupting from a sedentary position". That means sitting down by the way.

And people wonder why some MPs are against proceedings in Parliament being televised.

Dennis Skinner came up with a solution to the Tory rabble. He asked the speaker; "Can you give an assurance that all the bars in this place have been kept open? If they have not, it might not be a bad idea if you made the necessary arrangements to get them open so that the Tories can get back where they came from and carry on drinking."

By Dave Nellist MP

'Miners will not be beaten'

—a speech in the House of Commons by Dave Nellist MP

THE TORIES and the bosses may have sought comfort from Neil Kinnock's defeatist talk during his visit to Moscow last week.

But the real situation facing the miners—and a more accurate reflection of the determined mood of the miners and their supporters in the rank and file of the labour movement—was forcefully put by Dave Nellist MP in a speech in Parliament during the late hours of 19 November.

Dave Nellist's speech clearly hit home—he was continually interrupted by Tory MPs who howled with rage as the truth was pointed out to them.

Below are extracts from Dave Nellist's speech which praised the sacrifice and resolution of the miners:

Tory Members of Parliament, as shown by their peals of laughter, have no chance of understanding the sacrifice of the past nine months, when families have sold cars, houses, furniture, televisions and videos and told children: "There are no birthdays this year. There is no Christmas coming up and there will be no holidays." The sacrifice that those families have made on behalf of themselves and their class is something that Tory MPs with their salaries and their family background, would never understand.

This generation of miners has refused the bribes handed out by the Tory government. They have refused to be bought off by redundancy payments—the lump sum social security benefits—which in recent months have been dangled as carrots in front of miners. The miners have resisted the government's attempts to starve miners and their families back to work, with the criminal removal of £15 a week from the benefits to be paid to the families of striking miners. The families of strikers are worse off than the families of those who have committed major crimes—murder and so on—who now rest in the prisons. They have resisted the government's attempts for nine months with the magnificent



Ian MacGregor, head of the NCB. Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

support of ordinary workers and their families in the rest of their class, whose collections of food and money, especially in the period up to Christmas, have helped to alleviate some of the suffering and to sustain the families.

If Tory Members wish to take some comfort from this afternoon's figures from the Coal Board, I offer them figures to destroy their case. In Scotland 225 miners returned to

work making a total of 1,258 miners at work trying to weaken the strike. That is 9.5 per cent of the workforce; 90.5 per cent remain on strike. In Yorkshire—Tory members seem to be overjoyed about this—450 went back, according to the National Coal Board. That makes 1,785 at work according to the NCB, and means 3 per cent of the work force. It means that 97 per cent of the miners are on strike.

In South Wales, according to the NCB, nine miners went back this morning. That makes 85 miners at work—less than 0.5 per cent. It means that 99.6 per cent of the miners are on strike.

When do we hear government spokesmen, the press or other parts of the media use figures of 90, 97 or 99.6 per cent of miners on strike as a demonstration of the strength of the dispute? It is an illustration of the misinformation that pours out of the "tube" daily. Those figures do not give confidence to the Tory government. It is a sign that time is running out for them.

If a Member asks a Minister of the Department of Energy whether he will answer questions on the consequences of the strike at power stations, to gain an admission about the power stations that have already closed because of the strike, the simple answer is no. The Minister is afraid to tell the truth.

Hiding the Truth

When we ask about the depth and penetration of oil imports over the past 12 months—where they are coming from, and how much they cost the government—the information, apparently, is unavailable. Either the government are not telling the truth when they say that the information is not available, or they ought to organise the Departments better, because senior civil servants are being paid a great deal of money not to collect information to give the government a picture of what is happening.

Then there are all the questions that the Department of Energy will not even take from the Table Office. The Department is not prepared to say what happened on 5 November, when there was a yellow alert and the grid was in a state of partial emergency.

The blame for the dispute rests not with the miners, who have conducted a heroic struggle in the past nine months, nor with the NUM leadership, but squarely with the Cabinet and the government. The government planned for the dispute seven or eight years ago when they were in Opposition.

But all that preparation has not succeeded—despite those who worked throughout the dispute and are rightly described as scabs, and despite pressure from the government's starvation policies and direct pressure from the police.

Miners in my area of Warwickshire have experienced that

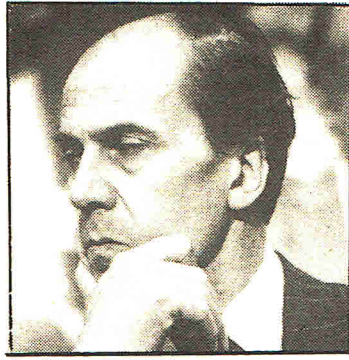


Dave Nellist shares a platform with Arthur Scargill during the 1983 General Election Campaign in Coventry.

pressure in the past two or three days with threats that unless individual miners went back to work the police would press more severe charges to ensure that they got sacked.

The Government's preparation has failed largely because of the heroic role played by the women in the coal mining areas. In the first week of the dispute, MacGregor said that he would like to hear from the miners' wives. He said that once and he never said it again because there are now 170 support groups established by the women in those areas.

After the dispute is over, there will be a legacy of women who were previously trapped within four walls



Norman Tebbit, Tory minister for industry.

listening to interviews with the Prime Minister on the Jimmy Young show and being told their only role was as providers for their menfolk and their children without any political or industrial role in the community. They have learnt what it is to struggle, to sacrifice and to organise and they will put those talents to use when the strike is over by coming into the organised labour and trade union movement.

So far, the Government has been prepared to spend £4,000 million attacking the miners and their families. They say that there is not enough money for houses or for education. That £4,000 million would be enough to provide an increase of £25 a week for everyone registered as being on the dole. It would be enough to provide a tax cut of £4 a week for every insured worker.

Rebirth of socialism

Yet the Tories say that there is not enough money to give benefits such as that, but they have the money to attack the National Union of Mineworkers, because the dispute is not about economic and uneconomic pits. It is about attacking a trade union and attempting to destroy it as a preface to weakening the rest of the trade union movement. It is not about the sequestration of NUM funds. In the words of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, it is about the castration of the NUM. It is about neutering the trade union movement.

In the past nine months I have been proud to stand on picket lines shoulder to shoulder with miners. It is where every socialist, every trade unionist and every Labour Member from the bottom to the top of the tree ought to have been.

The Tories have tried to isolate the NUM from the rest of working people using the media, the police and cuts in benefit. The miners will not be broken and the Tories will reap a whirlwind from the dispute. They are responsible for the rebirth of socialist traditions in the NUM and the trade union movement as a whole.

Cut in miners' benefit provokes fury

THE OUTRAGEOUS proposals by the Tories to raise the amount they deem the miners to be receiving in strike pay, provoked an angry demonstration by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs in Parliament on Wednesday November 21.

Thirty MPs surrounded the Minister responsible, Norman Fowler, while Dave Nellist ripped up his notes and Hackney North MP Ernie Roberts threw a £1 note at him.

The Tories have declared that money miners are deemed to be receiving in strike pay will be raised from £15 to £16—of course the miners do not actually receive a penny of strike pay. But this figure is deducted from the benefits they can claim. This rise will negate the latest increases in social security payments announced by the Tories, supposedly to keep them in line with inflation.

Thatcher claimed in parlia-

ment that 85% of miners families would still get an 'increase' from the new level of benefit payments, but the £1 ruling will mean they will not receive as much as they should have.

For a miner's family with two children under two the increase will only amount to a miserly 90p increase. 6,000 miners' families will receive no increase at all, while over 100 miners—single miners with children, the most in need—will actually receive a cut

in benefit.

The irony is that in most coalfields the miners' strike has been declared unofficial by the law courts—yet the Tories still deem the miners to be receiving strike pay. The Tories' latest proposals clearly prove they are persecuting the miners and attempting to force them back to work by attacking the wives and children.

Hattersley attacks

Gaitskell 1959



"...it's most unlikely that we shall ever again suffer from the great booms and slumps of the pre-war period..."

IT IS 25 years since Hugh Gaitskell, then leader of the Labour Party, tried to ditch its socialist objectives.

When he argued that capitalism could solve its own problems and that socialism was therefore unnecessary, it was at least in the context of an expanding economy.

Roy Hattersley's attempt to resurrect the same theory, 25 years later, in his speeches at the Socialist Economic Review (23 September), the Aneurin Bevan Memorial Lecture (14 October) and the Small Business Research Trust (16 October) comes at a time of massive capitalist crisis.

Adopted in 1919

Clause IV (4) of the Labour Party's constitution is printed on every member's card. It was adopted at the 1919 annual conference in the aftermath of the Russian revolution, when socialist ideas were sweeping across Europe.

Many industrial trade unions have a similar clause relating to their industry in their constitutions. Ever since 1919 public ownership of the major industries, the banks and the land has been seen by party workers as the key to the socialist transformation of society.

Today, Marxists within the Party have maintained that policy, in the form of the demand for the nationalisation of the 200 top monopolies which dominate the economy, under workers' control and management and with compensation on the basis of proven need.

Gaitskell failed to rid of the Party of this commitment, and the Party's ranks will ensure that Hattersley meets the same fate.

"TO SECURE for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

(Clause IV Part 4, Labour Party Constitution)

Feature by Mike Waddington

Hattersley's answer to the problems of the unemployed and low paid is to make capitalism more efficient—"Profits are an essential feature of a successful socialist economy... a Labour government would seek to ensure that companies made high profits and that those were directed towards investment" (*Financial Times*, 15 October, 1984). He would also drop the commitment to nationalisation on the grounds that "a society in which a higher percentage of productive capacity was owned by the state was unlikely to be highly efficient or truly free" (*The Times*, 25 September).

Press editorials

The implications of this was not lost in the editorials of the capitalist press. The *Financial Times* praised Hattersley's "internally consistent and intellectually honest" approach. *The Times* (25 September) spelt it out. "Gaitskell fouled up his initiative by impugning Clause IV of the party scripture; so 25 years later it is still necessary for Mr

Hattersley to begin where Gaitskell began, by weaning his party away from that model of nationalisation".

Hattersley's prescription is a challenge to the fundamental socialist aims of the labour movement, aims which the right wing would like to ditch. In the Bevan memorial lecture (full marks for bare-faced cheek), he said:

"The truth is... that workers in continuous employment who earn above-average wages have not done badly under five years of Conservatism. To help the lower paid and the unemployed, a Labour government would need an agreement with unions to restrain the increase in wages for the more fortunate" (*Financial Times*, 15 October).

Before even arriving in office, Hattersley is threatening to cut wages—as always in the name of some mystical process of helping the low paid and unemployed. His policies are of course aimed at boosting profits. But how will these profits be "directed" to the low-paid, or into investment? Hattersley remains silent. By abandoning public ownership, he abandons the only way real decisions on the direction of investment can be made.

When Gaitskell tried to 'modernise' Labour

THE 1959 General Election was the third in a row that Labour had lost, and the fourth in which they had lost seats.

Labour had 258 seats and 12.2 million votes (compared to the highpoint of 1945—393 seats and 11.9 million votes) The arguments used to explain the defeat at the time make interesting reading today.

Gaitskell opened his contribution to the 1959 Party conference with an apology, saying that as the NEC had not discussed his proposals—"this afternoon I speak for myself alone". As he later found out this apology had an unfortunate double meaning.

He continued: "I must say flatly that I believe our programme was excellent—well thought out, moderate, practical, and fully in tune with our socialist convictions...I conclude, then, that it was not bad organisation; (Labour had 252 full time agents) or a poor programme, or too late a start, which lost us the election. I believe that we must look for more fundamental influences.

"What has caused this adverse

trend? It is, I believe, a significant change in the economic and social background of politics. First, there is the changing character of the labour force...it is an inevitable result of technological advance. But it means that the typical worker of the future is more likely to be a skilled man in a white overall, watching dials in a bright new modern factory than a badly paid operative working in a dark and obsolete 19th century mill..."

Capitalism changed

As if this is not enough, he then gave a vote of confidence for the future of capitalism: "The second great change is the absence of serious unemployment or even the fear of it...is not this only a temporary phenomenon? Is not another slump just around the corner?...I can only say that in my opinion capitalism has significantly changed, largely as a result of our own efforts...in my opinion it's most unlikely that we shall ever again suffer from the great booms and slumps of the pre-war

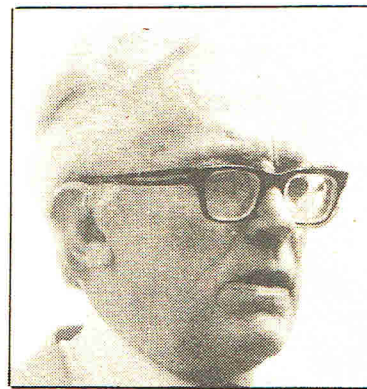
period..."

He rounded out his view with a patronising attack on the gains made by the working class: "In short, the changing character of Labour, full employment, new housing, the new way of living based on the tele, the fridge, the car and the glossy magazines—all these have had their effect on our political strength..."

He then proposed and instantly rejected three remedies—alliance with the Liberals, changing the party name and breaking with trade unions—which puts him to the left of some of the socialist surgeons of the 1980's! "We have to show (the electorate) that we are a modern twentieth century party looking to the future, not to the past..."

Finally Gaitskell arrived at his conclusion "nationalisation...lost us votes". "Public ownership is a means to an end", he said and it was time therefore to modernise, ie. drop clause IV:

"We have long ago come to accept, we know very well, for the foreseeable future, at least in some form, a mixed economy; in which case, if this is our view...had we



Foot: 'mobilise resources of community.'

better not say so instead of going out of our way to court misrepresentation?" The party would have to abandon its socialist objectives if it was to survive, was Gaitskell's prescription.

He had a rough ride from conference, remarking: "I would rather forego the cheers now in the hope that we will get more votes later on...it is no use waving the banners of a bygone age..." Gaitskell then ventured the prediction that if the National Executive came



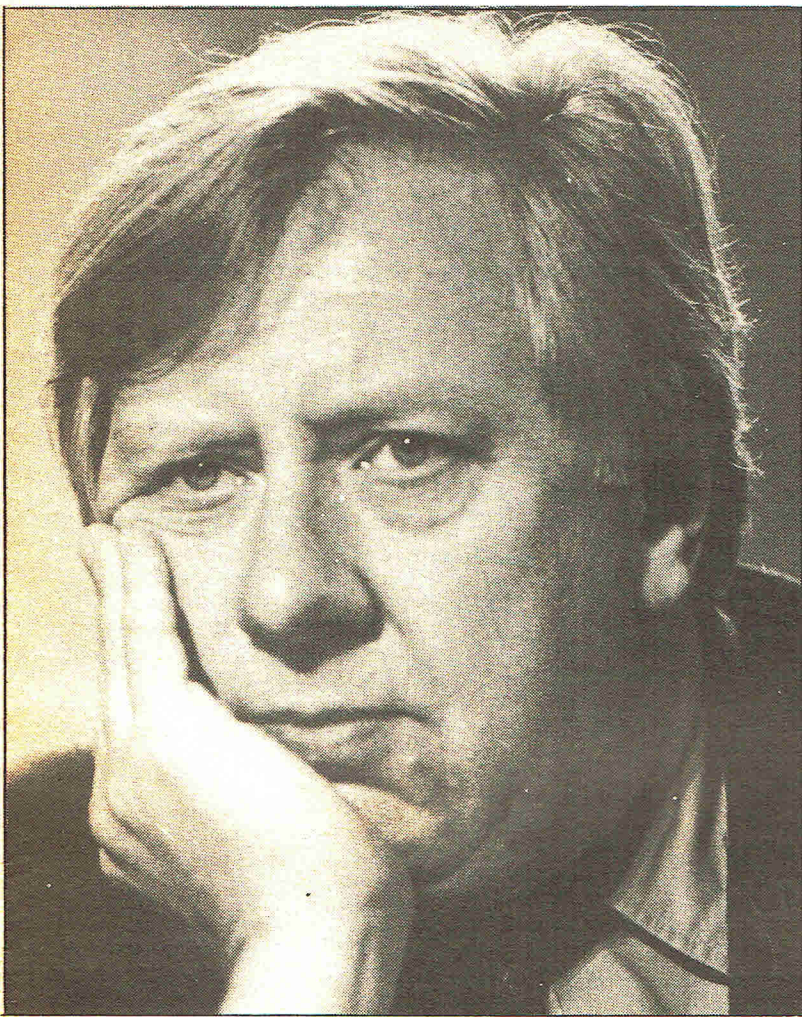
Howell: supported Gaitskell argument.

up with a new constitution, it would, "tilt the balance to the future rather than the past, so that what is decided will be, and will be seen, relevant in 1970—even if you like, in 1980. After that we can have another look at it again"

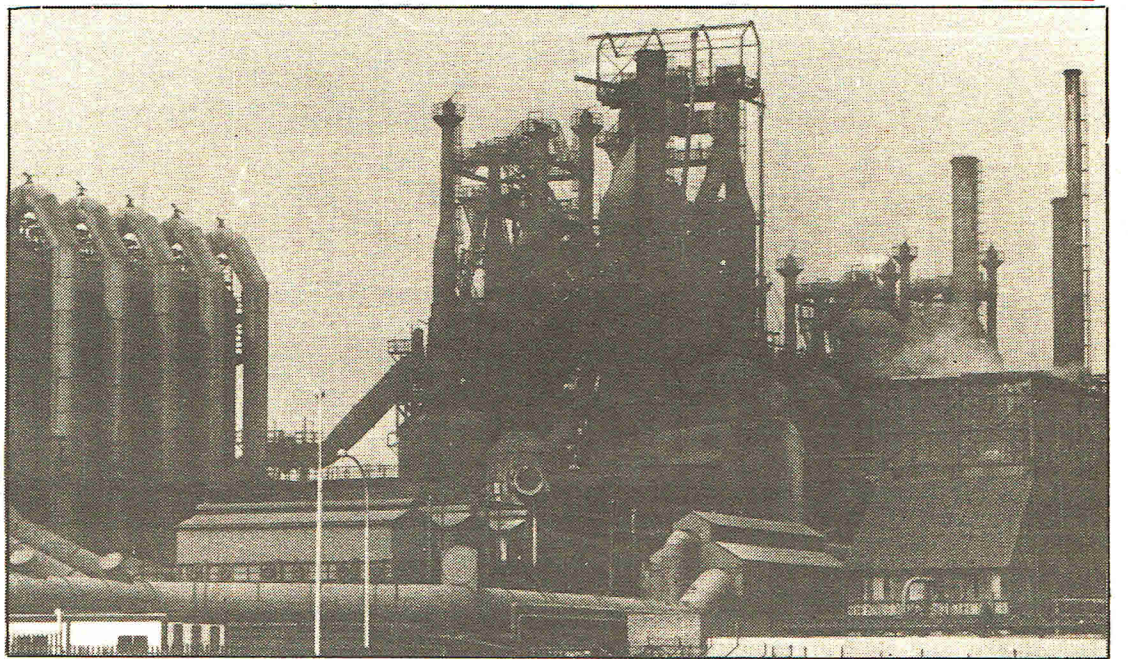
The first delegate into the debate (from Bury and Radcliffe) set the tone, "now we have Mr Gaitskell who talks about the mixed economy. What the heck is a mixed economy? We have a capitalist economy and where is this tri

Clause IV

Hattersley 1984



“...a Labour government would seek to ensure that companies made high profits...”



Economic planning, even for state owned industries, is impossible while the bulk of the economy remains in private hands. Since nationalisation in 1967 British Steel has lost 72% of its workforce. Above, Corby steel works, now closed.

Planning and democracy

“PLANNING” remains a utopia whilst the majority of the economy remains in the hands of the capitalists.

Under their system, the only way to increase investment is to cut wages, shed labour and increase profits. That is the reality of “restraint”.

Thatcher has tried to achieve this by allowing “the market” to dictate. Hattersley has actually deluded himself into thinking he can succeed where Thatcher has failed, by using government measures to enforce the same policies. Economic policy based on capitalism means nothing but an offensive against the working class.

As Nye Bevan, speaking at the 1950 Labour Party conference, said: “Our main case is and must remain that in modern complex society it is impossible to get rational order by leaving things to private economic adventure. Therefore I am a socialist. I believe in public ownership”.

Public ownership alone, however, is not sufficient. Tradi-

tional “Morrisonian” bureaucratic nationalisation is unpopular—not least with the workers who have lost their jobs! Since nationalisation in 1967, British Steel has lost 72% of its workforce, BL 51% since 1975, British Shipbuilders 44% since 1977, Rolls Royce 39% since 1971 (*FT*, 6 August).

Workers control

Workers’ control and management however, would transform a state capitalist concern into a democratic planned industry. Hattersley’s reference to “freedom” is an obvious attempt to link nationalisation with the “socialist planning” of the bureaucratic totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe. Marxists, however, call for the return of workers’ democracy in those societies as well.

Not only must nationalised industry be under democratic workers’ control and management, but the former owners should no longer receive lavish compensation, which they then invest elsewhere and continue to reap huge

dividends. Compensation must be solely on the basis of need.

Nor should these industries be lumbered with the massive debts and interest repayments, with which many are still crippled today. And there must be no more private companies supplying components and services which can milk profits from the public concern.

Despite all their failings, those industries nationalised by the 1945–1951 Labour government have survived and flourished to a degree that was never, and could never be, achieved under private ownership.

They have been far less successful than they could have been, and unpopular with workers, precisely because they have been run on capitalist lines, with highly paid directors appointed by the government to make profits.

Basic industries, supplying fuel, transport, etc which were bankrupted by their former capitalist owners, but which provide essential services for the still profitable industries, are kept going by the state but run solely for the benefit of the private sector.

A minority of nationalised industries within a capitalist market economy are not “socialist”. Their “inefficiency” arises from the much greater inefficiency of the economic system in which they are forced to operate.

Millions die

Millions are dying of hunger alongside food mountains, £25,000 million is spent keeping workers unemployed in Britain. The profit system will never mobilise its resources for where they are needed, but only towards where they are profitable.

Unless capitalism is overthrown, more repression and even state terror will be used against the working class—and the British working class can expect no historical privilege in this regard. The demands of capitalism respect neither history, tradition nor borders.

Hattersley’s “new way” amounts not to a radical device for economic recovery, but to the abandonment of socialism as an objective. Clause IV is the route to a truly “free and efficient” society for all, in which nationalisation is the essential first step to the planned exploitation of the world’s resources for the benefit of the world’s people. That is why it must be kept in the constitution, and implemented by the next Labour government.

What we stand for:

- ★ Defend Clause IV
- ★ Nationalise the 200 major monopolies which control 80-85% of the economy.
- ★ Compensation to shareholders only on the basis of need.
- ★ Cancellation of debts inherited from former owners.
- ★ Workers’ control and management.
- ★ Boards democratically elected from the unions in the industry, the TUC and the government.
- ★ A democratic plan of production for need not profit.

getting us about a mixed economy which is non-existent?”

Gaitskell was supported by Denis Healey MP, Denis Howell: (“Whether we like it or not, the number of people who think they are members of the working class is a declining factor”) and amongst others Shirley Williams and Dick Taverne.

Taverne, later to resign his seat and fight as an independent against Labour, spelt it out: “Nationalisation did possibly more than anything else to lose the last election. As the electorate become more middle class, I do not think it can be for a moment supported that nationalisation is going to be more popular, however good our propaganda”.

Michael Foot, not then an MP, argued against Gaitskell: “Many of the ends Hugh Gaitskell described at the end of his speech are in such general terms that the Tories could agree with them...it is a fallacy to try to separate the ends and means because socialism in my view, is a doctrine which reveals that only by mobilising the resources of the community can you achieve the ends. That is what socialism is”.

Frank Cousins of the TGWU, spoke in general agreement with Gaitskell, but added significantly: “But if as I gather, rule four is

likely to be revised to make a different reference to our attitude towards public ownership, I would suggest, with the greatest respect to our leader, that no way—Douglas Jay’s or any other way—is going to change that one”.

This really sealed the matter. The ranks of the Labour movement would cling to the ideas of socialism—they would not give up that fundamental struggle, repeated in virtually every rule book of the trade union movement.

Move to crisis

However, it was only the Marxists, who explained, especially Ted Grant in his 1961 pamphlet *Will there be a slump?* that capitalism had not “fundamentally changed” and inevitably would move into crisis. It is easy to fault Gaitskell, with hindsight, as the arch-enemy of the now discredited ideas of the right wing. But the real praise belongs to the rank and file who held on to the socialist objectives of the Labour Party despite their leadership and to the even smaller group of Marxists who predicted the return of crisis to the capitalist economy and the subsequent radicalisation of the working class that would follow.

Mao's Long March

China and the permanent revolution

FIFTY YEARS ago the encircled Chinese Red Army broke through the tightening stranglehold of the surrounding nationalist forces and set off on the Long March.

By the time they reached their final destination a year later their actual achievements had gone far beyond the wildest fantasies of Indiana Jones.

They had marched over 6,000 miles (the equivalent of from Britain to the tip of S. Africa), over 18 mountain ranges (five of them permanently snow-capped), 24 rivers and through 12 provinces. En route they had captured 62 cities and towns and broken through the armies of ten provincial warlords.

On average they fought one skirmish a day and on fifteen days they had major pitched battles. They made 235 day marches and eighteen night marches, covering about 26 miles a day. Even the days of halt were often taken up by fighting.

The incidents of heroism and bravery would fill volumes, but one example will suffice to show the hazards overcome. The only way across the Tatu river was a bridge of iron chains.

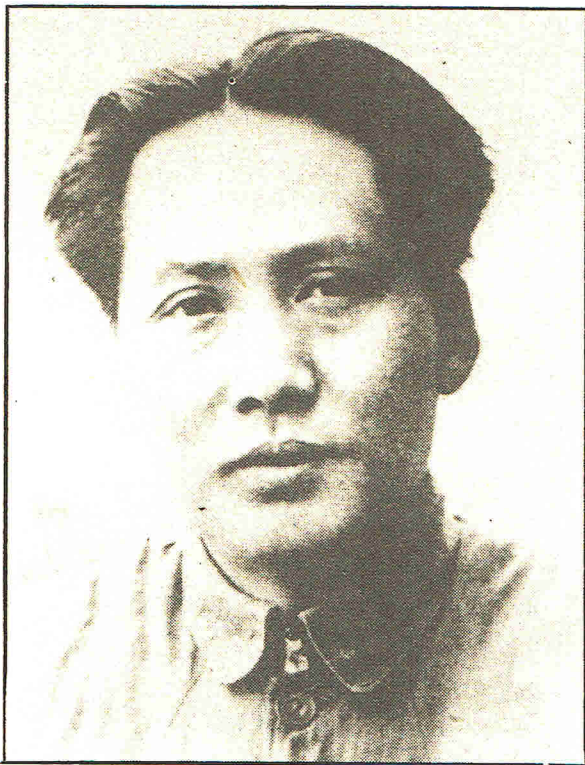
An enemy force occupied the other bank and had removed the bridge's wooden planks. So, under machine gun fire, a commando force crawled across, placing planks as they went. Many were shot and plunged to their deaths 300 feet below. But eventually they got across; the way to the north was clear.

It is incidents such as that which have created the legend of the Long March. It has been used to argue that guerrilla warfare is a model to follow in the Third World and that determination can overcome all obstacles—after all did the Chinese Communist Party not come to power just fifteen years after the Long March?

The magnificent heroism of the participants cannot be questioned, but what is the Long March's political significance? Is guerrilla warfare the model to follow and does it show that a peasant-led war is the best way to defeat capitalist regimes in the 'Third World'?

The Long March can only be understood in its historical context, especially in the aftermath of the failure of the 1925-7 Chinese revolution. The Chinese Communist Party had entered into alliance with the capitalist nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) movement, headed by Chiang Kai-Shek.

At that time the country was divided between warring provincial warlords. The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, backed by Stalin, clung to the belief that the Chinese revolution would have to go through



Mao (above) did not become undisputed leader of China's Communist Party until the Long March. Subsequently he edited out all his praise for Chiang Kai Shek, and rewrote articles published in his collected works, whilst claiming they were original.

two stages.

First, bourgeois-democratic (ie capitalist) revolution, which would unite the country, modernise industry, end feudalism in the countryside and get rid of foreign imperialist domination.

During this phase, they said, the role of the Chinese Communist Party was to give overall support to the KMT. Then when capitalism had been firmly established, the second phase, the struggle for socialism, could begin.

Trotsky and the Left Opposition in Russia argued that the whole idea of separate stages in an economically backward country was wrong and that implementation of such a strategy would prove disastrous for the Communist movement.

In an economically backward country the capitalist class was too weak to play the same role achieved over decades in Western Europe and America. They would not be able to carry through the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

In their weakness they were tied to the interests of feudal landowners and foreign capitalists. The only class capable of ending feudalism, resisting imperialism and developing the economy was the working class, backed up by the peasantry.

But in carrying through those tasks the workers would not stop at any arbitrary "bourgeois-democratic stage". They would go on, uninterrupted, using the power in their hands to get rid of capitalism altogether and establish a socialist society.

No alliance with the capitalist class could be trusted. They would use the workers' movement and then turn round and crush it,

because it was an immediate rival.

In their weakness the capitalists could not tolerate any alternative. The predictions of Trotsky were tragically borne out by the events of the Chinese Revolution of 1927.

As the KMT armies moved north, Communist agitation in the towns and villages helped mobilise the mass of Chinese people against the warlords. But once they had achieved their purpose the KMT crushed the Communists.

On 12 April 1927 the massacre of Chinese Communists in Shanghai began. Almost all the leaders were killed and hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants slaughtered.

In despair the CCP mostly withdrew from the cities and retreated to the countryside. In 1927 58% of CCP membership was proletarian; by 1931 less than 1% of its shattered membership were workers. It is in the period of retreat from the cities that Mao first came to prominence establishing a government in the southern province of Kiangsi.

This could have provided an opportunity for regroupment before returning to work in the cities. But Mao and others thought of it as a base for spreading peasant guerrilla warfare and then with a secure base entering into negotiations with the Kuomintang. But Chiang Kai Shek was not interested in negotiation and tried to crush the Kiangsi Soviet.

Heroically the peasants defeated his armies four times. But on the fifth campaign the KMT finally managed to encircle the Red Army. On 16 October 1934 they broke out and began the Long March.

Although they succeeded in avoiding destruction by



(Above) On the Long March. (Below) Kuomintang execution squad hunts for Communists, Shanghai, 1927.

the KMT the Long March could not be considered a political victory. Less than one in ten survived.

When the Red Army staggered into Shensi Province in the north, a year after leaving Kiangsi, only about 7,000 of the original 100,000 had survived. The prospects for the Red Army were bleak. It is probable that neighbouring provincial warlords would have supported Chiang in a final campaign to eliminate the Red Army.

But in ironic fashion, Trotsky's permanent revolution came to Mao's rescue. The KMT had been totally incapable of carrying out the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The peasantry suffered horrific rents and rule by the landlords. The economy re-

and numbers in the Civil War which broke out after the surrender of Japan in 1945, KMT soldiers rallied to communist calls for land reform, "land to the tiller". Chiang's army often refused to fight.

Peasants were no longer prepared to put up with the massive rents. Imperialism was powerless to intervene. Mao's peasant armies swept all before it, but Mao ignored the workers; the cities were to be liberated from the outside. The CCP told Peking workers before they captured the city: "Those who strike or destroy will be punished." Mao's proclaimed aim was not to establish socialism, but to bring in controlled capitalism.

His 'New Democracy' envisaged a lengthy period of capitalism, but it was

tional and Chinese situation after the war.

Instead of the peasant army leaders fusing with the business class and a capitalist development taking place, it was inevitable that private enterprise would be overthrown because of the exhaustion and bankruptcy of Chinese capitalism and the weakness of imperialism on a world scale after the second world war. With the greatly increased strength of Stalinism, the CCP leaders had in Stalin's Russia the model of the kind of society they wished to create.

In Mao's China, just as in Stalin's Russia, there was no democratic control by workers, and no genuine Soviets. Power rested in the hands of the bureaucracy.

The experience of the Chinese revolution had shown the limitations of guerrilla warfare in the 'Third World'. In a distorted fashion Trotsky's prognosis of the Permanent Revolution had been carried through. China showed that given the extreme weakness of the capitalist class in the 'Third World' and the incapacity of imperialism to sustain it, capitalism can be ended without the working class leading the revolution and establishing their own state.

But the process does not end there. Absence of democratic workers' control of the state means an inevitable growth of a totalitarian, bureaucratic ruling caste. That also means that a further revolution becomes necessary—a political revolution—to establish workers democracy and carry through the transition to genuine socialism.

The years since the Red Army's triumph have seen the first stirrings of that revolution, with conflict between the new economic base of society and the undemocratic political system.

China shows capitalism can be ended in the 3rd world without workers leading the revolution. But the result is a vast bureaucratic dictatorship and a second, political, revolution to establish workers democratic control becomes necessary.

mained stagnant. The country was still not unified, with provincial warlords wielding great power.

Moreover, the KMT was incapable of resisting imperialism. In 1936-7 Japan stepped up its military attacks on China and all-out war broke out. When Chiang tried to move against the Communists, the provincial warlords, who saw Japan as the greater threat kidnapped Chiang and in effect handed him over to the CCP.

Once again the CCP entered into an alliance with the KMT. The CCP leadership clung to the illusion that they could negotiate an agreement with Chiang, until October 1947, when they finally called for his overthrow.

By then the rottenness of Chiang's regime was clear. It was collapsing from within. Although the KMT armies were superior in equipment

economic and political nonsense. The reality of the Permanent Revolution was to force itself yet again upon the actual course of the Chinese Revolution.

After the overthrow of the KMT in 1949 there was no sizeable capitalist class. The landlord class was linked, often in the same family, with bankers in the towns. So to carry through land reform the CCP regime had to take over the capitalists. And when imperialism began to stir up counter-revolution during the Korean War, the CCP leadership had no alternative but to export capitalism. Power rested in the hands of the CCP leadership.

Before the war Trotsky had raised the possibility that a peasant Red Army might, as had happened before in Chinese history, oust the ruling dynasty, whilst keeping the same social system. This was ruled out by the interna-

By Jim Chrystie

USA, Spain, New Zealand

American coal: Profit v jobs

FOR THE first time in 18 years, mineworkers in the USA settled their contract negotiations without a strike. The new contract, signed by all but a few companies, gave miners a substantial pay rise.

By John Chapman
(Houghton Main NUM)

Where the companies held out, the miners' union UMWA were in a strong position because of the \$40 million collected in the strike fund. This new contract is of little consolation, though, to the 55,000 UMWA members now laid off. Many have been unemployed for over a year and some much longer.

Now more miners are being added to the ranks of the unemployed. As in Britain, the US coal companies had prepared for a strike by increasing stocks; which are now piled above ground waiting for customers.

Dale Lockhart from Pennsylvania is one of the miners recently laid off, writes "In the area

where I live over 2,000 men are out of work. Since we had no strike the companies had plenty of coal stockpiled. My mine shut down on 27 September. We were laid off and only 70 men were kept as maintenance workers."

This is just one tactic American coal companies use in their quest for profit. The *Sunday Times* recently gave two more.



An American coal miner shreds an old "give-back" contract.

In one case a mining company bought six small mines from a private electricity firm. When the deal was completed they closed down all six mines so that production could be maximised at the company's other pits. As a result 800 miners were laid off. At another mine the local union official was told their pit had a promising future. Two days later the men were assembled in the car park and told. "That's it boys. That's all. See you later".

Non-union labour

The UMWA's strength in any fight has been weakened, first by high levels of unemployment and secondly because over half the coal produced is dug by non-union labour. Recent changes in production are largely responsible for the fall in union coal. In the last two decades the industry has moved West. The new highly productive strip

mines are well away from the union's old power base in the Appalachians. They are highly profitable and at present able to pay above union rates. They have so far successfully resisted UMWA's attempts to organise.

But the union is starting to catch up. Last year the fifth largest mine in the United States voted for the UMWA. The mine at Decker, Wyoming, produces 11 million tons a year and is one of a group of mines in the Powder River basin which annually produce no less than 90 million tons.

Before the miners voted for UMWA a small company union, the so called Progressive Mineworkers of America (PMWA) held sway. But miners at Decker say the PMWA refused to handle grievances, they signed contracts before the members had a chance to vote on them, they had no safety provisions and fail-



The bosses' reaction to previous strikes has often been violent as here in Virginia 1978.

ed in every way to represent the membership.

Even with the PMWA's dismal record the UMWA still had a job cutting across the bosses' lies to get the vote. Radio advertisements and rallies were amongst the tactics used by the union. But most importantly rank and file union members worked as organisers writing letters and holding individual discussions. When the vote came only 4 out of 330 miners voted against the UMWA.

Revival

Reagan's economic revival, while it lasted, may have boosted profits

in arms and service industries but it has had little impact on the US working class. Miners looking to protect themselves will turn as they did at Decker, to the UMWA. This year from a position of weakness it has at least halted the trend to "give back" contracts which lost workers their previous advances.

The UMWA has, in the past, been in the forefront of America's labour movement. As it regains its strength, the miners' voice will again be powerful in putting the working class into American politics instead of leaving it to the millionaire union busters.

'Socialist' government, Thatcherite policies

WHEN THE Police blockaded the Euskadura shipyard in Bilbao in Spain's Basque province using armoured cars and shields, shipyard workers started on the defensive. Protest meetings and demonstrations were held daily from 12 November.

When the police brutality was maintained, workers stepped up their measures to firing nuts and bolts from slings and Molotov cocktails. On Friday 16 November, one of the yard's mobile cranes was used against the blockade.

As reported in previous issues of *Militant*, the shipyards are under threat of drastic reductions in jobs in an already terrible situation of 20% unemployment. The Socialist Party (PSOE) government and Socialist union (UGT) claim that new jobs will be created to substitute for those lost but we are still waiting for the 800,000 jobs which the PSOE assured us would arrive in the 1982 election campaign, or even the 630,000 they said would be "more realistic" in 1983.

Unemployment

Since PSOE came to office, unemployment has gone up by 600,000 and job stability is a thing of the past. More people are on temporary contracts than ever before and the Spanish working class is more like a casual workforce than permanent.

Meanwhile the government is actually boasting of its policy's "success" in raising profits by 14%. They look on this as the only way to boost investment. The

By Pedro Rodriguez
(CCOO)

capitalist class are undoubtedly grateful for this, but they are not likely to start investing, even though the share of wages in the national income has declined from 55% to 52%.

How are the working class expected to believe anything this government says? It is called a Socialist government but that does not give us any confidence in them. They confess their policies are the same as Thatcher's, admitting that they pin all their hopes on a recovery of capitalist investment by taking capitalist measures against the workers.

No doubt *Accion Popular (AR)* the hard right conservative party and the CEOE (the Spanish CBI) are giving Felipe Gonzales all the encouragement they can. If workers either abstain or redistribute their votes and the middle class can even swing over to AP in the next election, because of the dirty work PSOE are doing for capitalism, they will gain. In that case we could have a hard right wing AP government prepared to carry out the present government's programme—and far worse—with a lot more vigour.

Meanwhile our own leaders give us no choice. We fight. At the beginning of

this government's term of office there were general strikes and huge demonstrations in El Ferrol (200,000), Gijon (80,000) to protest at the "reconversion" policies. But the failure of the union leaders to take up the struggle at a national level has already allowed the government to close down the steel plant at Segunto (Valencia).

Promises

Now again in the shipyards, the union leadership is dragging its feet. The UGT have actually negotiated and signed away the jobs of half the workforce, supporting plans to reduce the tonnage to 250,000. Present maximum capacity is near 750,000 tons.

Nobody believes the government promises not to close any of the yards or to provide a lasting stable alternative in newly created industries. Shipyard workers are angry. Over the last four months street barricades have been up regularly in Bilbao, Gijon, Santander, Vigo and El Ferrol. The workers at risk know they can not win alone, they must extend the struggle. A general strike has already paralysed El Ferrol, another is due in Galicia on 29 November.

"We are not children" say the workers "we were the vanguard of the struggle against the Franco dictatorship, our jobs don't go easily." The main question is how to go forward. The UGT leadership is quite hostile to the fight. The



PSOE supporters greet the Gonzales government victory in 1982.

Workers Commissions (CCOO) together with the Basque and Galician unions ELA-STV and CTG support the fight. They have to go ahead with the Galician general strike and even extend it to other shipbuilding provinces.

No sackings or closures!

This should be the basis for a national 24 hour general strike to force this government to carry out its programme. No sackings or closures. Create the 800,000 jobs, reduce working hours, lower retirement age and eliminate overtime, pay a living wage to the unemployed.

New Zealand: Labour's honeymoon ending

THE LABOUR government in New Zealand was elected only four months ago on 14 July. Faced with enormous economic problems, one of the first acts of the government was to devalue the dollar by 20% which caused prices to rise massively.

Now the Prime Minister, David Lange wants to limit wage rises in the December-January wage round to between 4 and 5 per cent. The biggest trade union organisation, the Federation of Labour has walked out of meetings with the govern-

ment and threatened to stop Lange's plans. They want at least 11.2%

Militancy

Whether any official movement is built or not, Lange will not have the long honeymoon of Bob Hawke's Labour government in Australia. New Zealand is not such a wealthy country, its problems are greater and it was the militancy of the working class which caused the downfall of the right-wing National Party.

LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London. E9 5HB

Tremendous support

Dear Comrade,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the *Militant* for the tremendous support it has given to the miners during the present dispute.

But I write this letter in disgust at the so-called popular press, who have done nothing but condemn the NUM for calling this strike.

Withdrawal of labour is the only action that this government will take notice

of and that probably explains why Thatcher throws anti-Trade Union laws on anyone who will not toe the line with her "I'll protect my money friends" policies.

The miners don't care what the Maxwells or Murdochs think of us; we are fighting for the right to work and the rights of others to work too. The press would do well to take note of the fact.

Yours faithfully,
John Wills
Allerton Bywater NUM,
Yorks)

Power lies in class

Dear Letters Editor, *Militant*,

The problems facing the miners, who have been on strike for nine months, are the problems confronting all the working people in Britain. They do not intend to join the other 3½ million unemployed people. They are demanding job security. Arthur Scargill and the executive committee of the NUM are carrying out a policy, not only in the interests of the miners, but of all the people.

The Tory government are passing laws destroying hard won democracy and the Trade Union movement. Britain has become a police state. All sections of the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement, especially the leaders, will do well to

take note of this warning of Tory intentions. Whining about upholding parliamentary democracy, and condemning striking miners' picket line violence, which is caused through Tory dictatorship and destruction of democracy, may be alright for Mr. Neil Kinnock and other leaders; they can shout until they are blue in the face at Mrs Thatcher in Parliament. It won't make any difference; she need not worry with her majority.

The sooner Mr. Kinnock and others realise that their power lies, not so much in Parliamentary democracy, but in the grass roots of the working class, like the miners struggling for the right to secure jobs. Socialist Democracy will not come by just putting questions to Mrs. Thatcher.

Yours sincerely,
Tom Hopkins
(Retired miner,
Caerphilly)



Sikhs demonstrating in Amritsar.

Sikh and Hindu workers unite!

Dear Comrades,

As you know, we've all been experiencing mass media coverage on the current plight of India. Gandhi's assassination seems to have provoked further mass communal massacres, but in reality this has been going on for months.

A relation of ours has just returned from war-torn Amritsar and she told us that there still lie dead bodies within the kitchens and storerooms in the Golden Temple.

This is further proof of how Gandhi's press/media

protected her reputation and hid away the true reality within the storming of the Golden Temple. The Indian government's TV pictures showed the police tidying the floors of the temple after the killing of Bhindranwale as if everything had become so hunkadory at the time.

However, although Gandhi seemed to have deceived her 700 million democracy, she hadn't quite fooled the Sikhs, who, in return, made her pay for her recklessness.

It must be pointed out that, although Gandhi ordered the troops into the

temple, it was her president, Zail Singh who carried out these orders. Therefore, being a Sikh himself, surely he should have realised what kind of situation was going to arise afterwards.

It is this type of political and religious ignorance among India's leaders that has led the country into turmoil, and if the government honestly believes that an RAF pilot with 3½ years of political experience can dramatically restore order, then comrades, the Indian government's ideals are nothing more than utopian.

India's problem cannot be solved by restoring the role of the Gandhi dynastic empire, which incidentally will be lucky to survive until Xmas, but only through workers' unity, Sikh and Hindu, behind socialist perspectives.

Capitalism has shown what it can do in India, so the answer is lying straight in the faces of the Indian leaders—build a powerful Indian working class—forward to socialism—the only obvious answer.

Yours sincerely,
Sat Dhadli

OBITUARY—Kenny Wilson

ON THE 18 November 1984, Kenny Wilson aged 25, died whilst having a night out with friends. This has been a sad blow to *Militant* supporters in Perth and North East Scotland as a whole, who offer their condolences to all his family.

Kenny was one of the first militants in Perth, who gave the last four years of his short life campaigning for the ideas of Marxism in this area. In the initial period, he was one of the very few Marxists in North East Scotland, and he played a leading role in building support for the ideas of *Militant*. He was an active member of the LPYS in Perth, and two years ago was a delegate to the Scottish Labour Party Conference.

During election campaigns, he was always to the fore and during the 1983 general election he was out canvassing every single night. He was an industrial worker, and an active member of the T&GWU until about two years ago when he was sacked in what was a blatant act of victimisation against his political and trade union activities.

He was on the dole for over a year. During this time he gave a tremendous amount of time fighting for his beliefs. In the first months of the miners' strike Kenny was out on the streets raising cash and campaigning for their cause. About 6 months ago he got a job working on a by-pass which involved working long hours outside in terrible conditions. This meant he became less active during this period, but as the days shortened and he was finishing earlier he was looking forward to getting back into the struggle.

On the Thursday before Kenny died, he met other comrades and told them he would be at the forthcoming YS meeting on the Monday night and at the GMC on the Wednesday night to argue in defence of the YS who are under attack for organising a so-called "illegal" public meeting.

Sadly that was never to happen, as Kenny collapsed and died in the early hours of Sunday morning. This was a tremendous shock to all of us, as we were close personal friends, but must also be seen as a real setback for Marxism in this area. Kenny was an unselfish and undiluted fighter for the working class. He understood totally the need to change society and looked forward to the day it would happen. He will no longer see that day but one thing is for sure, his memory, his inspiration and his courage will be carried on inside every single one of us.

By Ronnie Cutting and Terry Devaney

At a meeting in Edinburgh at the weekend, £88 was collected for the fighting fund in Kenny's memory. A further collection was to be held in Perth on Wednesday.

No to NATO

Dear Comrades,

Having read your excellent article on Nicaragua, I would urge you, particularly those allowed to remain in the Labour Party, to actively oppose the Party's hypocritical foreign policy, with its affirmation of "loyalty" to NATO, while at the same time it professes support for the Central American people's struggle against US aggression!

MP loses a fiver

Dear Comrades,

Teddy Taylor MP is a nice man, in the personal sense. He speaks in a quiet voice, politely, and shakes your hand when he meets you, even when you are to the left of Tony Benn and he is just to the left of Attila the Hun.

I spoke to him at a television studio recently when I was accompanying Derek Hatton, the Deputy leader of Liverpool City Council. Teddy, who is one of Thatcher's favoured sons, told us that he was astonished by the amount of money Patrick (ed. Jenkin the Environment Secretary) had given Liverpool. But then in his unassuming manner he explained that it was justified politically. It was part of the strategy to stop any second fronts.

He had discussed it all with others in the Cabinet. No second front with the railwaymen, no second front with Liverpool and no second front with the dockers. As simple as ABC. Teddy then said quite matter of factly, "And now we will get

By demanding the removal of US nuclear bases from this country, attempt is being made to appease the CND, which resolved to demand withdrawal from NATO. But the LP still intends to retain US military bases in this country, thus supporting the USA's aggression.

The main aim of the USA is to establish a world economic empire, which would intensify the contrast between rich and poor, already producing depriva-

tion, even starvation, alongside bloated affluence, while installing and maintaining cruelly oppressive governments to keep the people in subjection.

This prospect of an international wealthy class ruling an abject and defeated world population is as terrifying as the danger of a nuclear holocaust, and perhaps more likely.

At a recent, well attended general meeting of our Bishops Castle Branch of the Ludlow CLP, the resolution:

"Branch is in favour of leaving NATO" was carried, with one dissentient and no abstentions. This resolution now goes to the CLP. It is essential for all meetings of the LP, trade unions and other affiliated organisations to let the leadership know the real grassroots opinion of the USA and NATO.

Yours in the fight,
Kathleen Jones
Ludlow CLP

Scargill". He offered the opinion that with the miners isolated, the strike would fizzle out by the third week in November.

I was struck by his confidence, by his absolute assurance of victory. No it wasn't assurance, it was arrogance. Like Thatcher and the rest of her acolytes, Teddy does not understand. He has not looked into the eyes of miners and their wives. He has not smelled the coalfields.

I bet Teddy a fiver. No way it will be finished in November by the miners going back. No way. Easy money.

Bob Wylie

Infantile disorder

Dear Comrades,

Early on the first morning of ASTMS' annual conference, our long corridor of comrades selling *Militant* and *BLASTMS* (ASTMS Broad Left journal) caused quite a stir. Clive Jenkins and the rest of the NEC looked somewhat rattled as they ran the gauntlet of smiling delegates and visitors offering them the real Marxist

alternative.

During the conference debate on the Labour Party, Brother Clive launched into a tirade against the 'Trotskyite termites' in their midst who were trying to destroy the labour and trade union movement. Being a well educated man, he quoted Lenin by criticising our ideas as "infantile leftism"!



Clive Jenkins.

Soon after the debate, Brother Clive approached me with his chest puffed out and his thumbs behind the lapels of his quality tailored suit. Not sure whether he was trying to frighten me or seduce me, I bravely propped up my copies of *Militant* between our converging chests.

Eventually, I realised he was pointing to a badge on

his lapel. He had made it himself and it read 'Defend the Termites (very selectively)'.

Later still, I saw another NEC member with a badge which said 'Long live the ant-eaters'. Comrades, I ask you *who* is being infantile?

Fraternally,
Ginny Armstrong
London Publishing
Branch, ASTMS

Double standards

Dear Comrades,

At the start of the miners' strike when the Tory media were baying for a ballot, the strikers answered this by saying they didn't need one, they'd voted with their feet.

After the ballot at Bersham Colliery (*Militant* 725) it appears the scabs have ignored the result and carried on working. The reply of the pit manager to this is, "These men don't need a ballot, they've voted with their feet."

More Tory double standards?

Yours fraternally
Kevin Conway
Crosby LPYS

Miner sells 50 a week

ALEX WYLIE, a miner on strike from Hem Heath Colliery, is currently selling roughly fifty papers every week. He first came across the paper during the strike. He told Ruth Campbell:

"It seemed to me that *Militant* was a paper that told the truth. I was sick of the government controlled media and not getting the full story. I knew *Militant* was going to tell me the truth.

"I like the letters page best, it gives people's personal views—real people like me who want to give their personal opinion.

"I sell the papers here in

my local pub. I've been using this pub for years, everybody knows me in here and I just go around asking them to buy a copy. It only takes me about a quarter of an hour.

Pub Sales

"Generally, it is very well received. I would say that at least 32 out of the 50 sales are made to people genuinely interested in the sorts of ideas put forward in *Militant*. I think the rest buy it partly because I ask them.

"I have sold the paper to working miners. For instance, I went up to two

NACODS men, asked them to buy a copy of *Militant*. Both of them refused so I said: 'What's the matter, don't you want to read what the opposition has got to say?' Then one of them said, 'Go on then, I'll buy one, we've got to have both sides of the story.'

"I think more *Militant* sellers should sell in their 'local'. I also try and explain to the people I sell to, that the struggle has got to continue after we have won this victory. I want to try and use the ideas in the *Militant* to organise around, after this battle is won."

'Last issue was brilliant'

JOHN MCKENNA, member of Cowpen Bates branch of Northumberland Colliery Mechanics Association:

"I started to read the *Militant* through the miners' strike. I've never read anything political before, because I've only ever been interested in my own pit. I started reading about the miners' strike and the true facts which weren't in the national press and media.

"It's been a big problem in the strike that we haven't been able to get the true facts across to our members. The information about selling

union rights at Bilston Glen and the real back-to-work figures are kept off the telly and out of the national newspapers. Only the *Militant* told us the truth. It has not been afraid of telling the truth about police brutality either.

Lodge orders

"The last copy I read, it was brilliant; I couldn't put it down until I had read the whole paper. Not just about the miners, but Austin Rovers, India and the Rus-

sian revolution, everything. So I decided to approach our lodge secretary to see if we could purchase a bulk order of the *Militant* to distribute at our meetings. I explained to him why I thought it was important and he agreed.

"I've since approached members of the NUM lodges to try to do the same. Our wives' support group are taking out a regular order as well. If we could get this commitment from all sections of the working class, we could have a daily *Militant* giving the workers' side of the story."

This week:

£2,047

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	267		2900
East Midlands	255		3550
Humberside	284		1850
London East	425		3200
London West	476		2150
London South East	57		1950
London South West	71		1650
Lancashire	156		1950
Manchester	407		2200
Merseyside	219		6100
Northern	504		4400
Scotland East	141		2950
Scotland West	110		3650
Southern	420		5100
South West	107		2150
Wales East	108		2550
Wales West	59		2050
West Midlands	482		4300
Yorkshire	631		5350
Others	1708		5000
Total received	6885		65000

IN HARLOW alone £33,000 has been raised so far for the miners. The cuts in benefits, the sequestration of union funds, the Xmas bonus bribes will not stop the miners.

It is that same spirit

which keeps *Militant* growing from strength to strength—and no attempts to financially strangle the movement will stop us either. Our ideas are continually gaining more and more ground and that means

more supporters and organisations to appeal to for cash. Continue the fight with us—make a donation now.

By Kim Waddington

Donations

POEU National Conference collected from Readers Meeting and donations £345 after expenses; ASTMS National Conference £270 after expenses; Stockport jumble sale £47; T. Raw Blyth Northumberland £25; Perth Video Night £18; John Ship CPSA Milton Keynes £15; S Park and A Logie Benton CPSA £10; reader from Ibstock Leics £5; Dougie Blackley Perth LPYS £5; Charlie Bell Eppleton Colliery NUM £5; Dave Anderson Durham colliery NUM £5; one comrade from Washington has responded to the Xmas present appeal and donated £5; collection at Birmingham West LP branch meeting £4.25; Pete Close Bath AUEW student £2; Nick Jones Birmingham donated £1 from his pocket money; Paul Mason Leicester CPSA 75p.

paper on these premises—something we still have to look forward to.

In the meantime, and that means by the end of the year, we still have to raise a further £20,000. The money needed is for essential repairs and installations to make the building fully operational and secure. We especially need donations from the organised labour movement which will be greatly assisted by the existence of a daily paper arguing the cause of socialism.

£20,000 needed for Building Fund

THIS IS a historic week for the Marxist Daily Building Fund. This issue of *Militant* is the first to be produced in the new premises bought with the money raised for the Fund.

Every reader who contributed can be proud of this tremendous achievement. Certainly no other group of people could have made this possible. This is really the first step towards the production of a daily Marxist

ads

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

SUPPORT THE MINERS
Westminster Trades Council and SERTUC Public Meeting, Main Speaker Tony Benn MP, Wednesday 5 December 6.00pm Venue Bishopsgate EC2. Opposite Liverpool St. Station.

Militant

Meetings

UPPER RHONDDA Marxist Discussion Group. Meeting every Sunday at 7.00 pm in the Red Cow, High Street, Treorchy. Phone Steve Brown on Treorchy 773455 for more details.

ELTHAM MILITANT Marxist Discussion Groups are held every Thursday, at 8.00pm, in the Lionel Road Community Centre, Westhorpe Avenue, Eltham. 29 Nov: Is Russia socialist?

RUGELY *Militant* Miner discussion group. Red Lion, Market Street, Rugby. Fri 30 Nov 12.15 pm. *Militant* and trade union democracy. (Meetings every Friday at same place).

Mineworkers' Defence Committee SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE
Speakers: Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn and others
Sunday, 2 December,
Camden Town Hall, London NW1
(opposite St Pancras station)
11.30 - 4.30

This conference will be a mass rally, combined with a working conference designed (a) to strengthen the fantastic response already made by Labour Parties, trade unions, support committees and other bodies, and (b) to help co-ordinate and focus the swift implementation of TUC policy with respect to the halting of all movements of coal or substitute fuels.

Within a matter of weeks, troops may be used to attempt to shift coal stocks from pit-heads to the power stations, and massive escalation of picketing may be required. We cannot leave the whole burden to the miners: they have provided the leadership; it is now up to the rest of us to follow. We urge you to support this conference.

Ken Livingstone (Secretary, Mineworkers' Defence Committee)

I agree/my organisation agrees to sponsor the solidarity conference. I/we enclose a registration fee of £2 for the first delegate, and £1 for each additional one (no limit on numbers). We enclose an additional sum of £... as a contribution towards organising costs.

Name (Block capitals please)

Address

Organisation

(Please add names and addresses of additional delegates on back and return to: Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16. Please hurry; speed is essential).

For further details, phone: 01-981 3289

Militant pamphlet. *Kent women fight for socialism*. Articles and interviews by working class women in Kent, in the mining communities and elsewhere. Price 40p + 20p postage and packing. From Robbie Segal, 10 Westbourne Garden Folkestone Kent.

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 issue 693-721. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* Tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone: (0532) 455936.

BADGES—1" button badge with 20th anniversary slogan 20p each (10p each for orders over 20)—1" button badge—'Militant' on coloured background (white/yellow/green/blue) 20p each. Enamel stud badges—'Militant for Labour and Youth' 75p each. All orders for badges must be accompanied with minimum 25p for p&p. Cash with order. Cheques made payable to 'Militant' send to 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London. E9 5HB

LABOUR LAND CAMPAIGN: Development Land Policies in Paris—speaker George Nicholson (Chair GLC Planning Committee) 5 Dec, 8pm. GLC County Hall. LLC. 01 267 2245.

The Debate of the year! "Young people in the '80s—what do the political parties offer us? Speakers from Labour Party Young Socialists, Young SDP, Young Conservatives. Plenty of time for questions! All welcome! Manning Hall, University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1. Tuesday 11 December, 7.30pm.

REVOLUTION GRAPHICS

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British TELECOM

Paradise for parasites

"FROM Tokyo to Toronto investors scramble for BT shares" is the headline in the *Financial Times*. The rich are not doing badly in Tunbridge Wells and Torquay either.

For all the talk about "the people" getting a chance to own British Telecom, only a small minority will buy shares in this profitable company which used, at least in theory, to belong to all of us. Only a very small minority will own enough shares to make a real killing.

Privatisation

Already the paraphernalia of selling BT, adverts, glossy brochures and legal red tape, is making a tidy sum for bankers, brokers and business consultants. Advisers like Kleinwort Benson and SG Warburg are not doing their jobs for nothing,

nor are the big city bankers and other institutions underwriting the deal. The total cost of this operation is likely to be over £200 million.

£7.5 million has already been spent in advertising and another £8.4 million in internal spending. A nice little black market for shares has been reported. Ten per cent of the shares have been set aside for BT employees to try to convince them that privatisation is in their interest when it is precisely the opposite. Not all this 10% are likely to be taken up and only 39% is available for non-institutional investors.

For the capitalists who have systematically

squandered the industrial resources built up by the labour of the working class, this enormous sale is a godsend, profits without effort. £3.9 billion of assets which will within a few months be concentrated in a very few hands as in previous privatisations.

Renationalise

The new owners of BT will be the rich, and they will be getting richer. On the other hand 13,000 BT jobs have vanished since 1982. More could be on the way as the articles below point out. It is time for a fight back by BT unions for no more redundancies and by the labour movement for renationalisation of all of BT with compensation only on the basis of need.

Shortages and stress

WHILE SOME 25,000 remain unemployed in Coventry, clerical staff at British Telecom here are having to cope with the pressures created by artificially low staffing levels.

Staff who resign have not been automatically replaced. In some cases people have been pressured into taking work home (which means technically they could be breaching the confidentiality rules!) or working beyond agreed hours without taking time off in lieu. In practice this means that the true nature of staff capacity is being camouflaged.

The stress factor is also high, with girls breaking down into tears, sick leave on the increase and mounting paperwork threatening to lift the roof off. Fed up with management's refusal to recruit, virtually the entire membership of 400 of the Coventry CPSA voted for a programme of sanctions, including selective industrial action. Although this forced management concessions in the form of 15 extra staff (though only four are to be permanent), there is widespread agreement that only industrial action will force management to meet its obligations.

Members voted in a secret ballot to provisionally accept management's offer and to suspend, not rescind, their action. In one department alone there are actually 12 permanent vacancies, so the offer will not cure the problem, but as only a few weeks ago management would not recruit one person, we have already secured a moral victory without having to take the ultimate action, but we still have that in reserve, if needed.

By Stuart Miller
(CPSA, British Telecom)



POEU members fight for a 35 hour week in 1978. With mass unemployment and BT cuts threatened, a shorter working week is more vital than ever.

Photo: Militant

National backing for Glasgow fight

AFTER TEN weeks of our overtime ban the POEU National Executive Council have given full support to Glasgow Branch who have shown magnificent solidarity in defence of jobs.

The branch received the news with sustained applause. Many workers had been rightly worried about the dangers of isolation. Management in other parts of the Scottish region, notably the Edinburgh area, made substantial concessions to avoid similar action being taken. Obviously no second fronts were to be allowed. All executive members must rally support in every branch for our stand.

BT attacks

Some weeks ago, the NEC condemned the way in which the Job Security Agreement (JSA) has been misused by management to hide job cuts

(see *Militant*, 9 November). At no time during the man-power negotiations in Glasgow has management shown interest in any provisions of the JSA except the voluntary redundancy paragraph.

No attempt at reducing 'contract work'. No serious attempt at redeployment, and perhaps most significantly for other branches yet to be faced with our situation, a complete dismissal of the concept of reductions in overtime being equated with jobs. If the Job Security Agreement means anything other than wholesale voluntary redundancy the NEC have to ensure that the spirit of the national agreement is upheld.

BT locally will now intensify attacks on the branch. If, as a result, any members were suspended we would be forced into a total stoppage. If this arises, the Glasgow



The one day strike against BT privatisation showed the way to stop Tory plans.

Photo: Militant

A strategy for winning

ONLY A few months after its battle against privatisation of British Telecom, the Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) is once again preparing to take action against the massive threat to jobs.

A special two-day conference on 14 and 15 November debated a 'Broad Strategy' document presented by the National Executive Council outlining the effect on jobs of privatisation, competition, new technology and the reorganisation of the industry under an aggressive and hostile management.

Central to the strategy is an immediate demand for a 32hr 4 day week. Conference recognised that 'only by a reduction of hours on this scale with a campaign to reduce and control overtime would jobs be protected'. Resolutions from branches have instructed the executive to mount 'an intensive and vigorous' campaign amongst the membership to unite them behind the strategy and to 'draw up a programme of industrial action up to and

including an all out stoppage to put before a future conference if negotiations fail to make progress.'

The membership has learnt the lessons of the privatisation battle. We must be prepared for an all out strike if negotiations or partial industrial action fail to achieve our objective of a shorter working week. The National Executive must immediately start the campaign amongst the membership with mass meetings and rallies up and down the country explaining the threat to jobs and winning members' support for the unions' strategy.

Massive campaign

Also in the strategy is commitment to campaign in the wider trade union and labour movement for the renationalisation of British Telecom within the framework of an integrated communications-based industry. This is in line with the Labour Party's own conference decision to set up a working party to investigate how a nationalised integrated communications in-

dusty would operate and be controlled.

POEU conference agreed to remit a resolution from the PO Railway & Postal Mechanisation branch that the future communications industry will need to be responsible and accountable to the needs of the community. This can best be done by the establishment of a full time policy making board consisting of 1/3 nominees of the trade unions in the industry, 1/3 from nominees from the TUC, 1/3 from nominees of government.

Unions in the communications industry and Labour Party branches should send resolutions to their respective national executive councils for consideration by the Labour Party working party. Nationalisation under workers control and management with a socialist plan of production would secure the jobs of POEU members and all workers for the future.

By Roy Wemborne,
Branch Chairman, Post Office Railway and Postal Mechanisation Branch POEU (personal capacity)

if the Broad Strategy document agreed at conference is to defend jobs then the campaign must begin now. We can't allow battles now being fought to be defeated whilst the long term strategy is being planned.

Overtime ban

Sadly, the General Secretary's letter says that "the Manpower Committee has made it clear that if a more substantial reduction in the surplus was available it would have been prepared to settle the dispute." Negotiators have to be flexible but workers who have fought arbitrary cuts for ten weeks now should be consulted as to whether they consider any reduction acceptable. Members will question the tactics of the Manpower sub-committee of the Executive whose recommendation to the full Executive

that the overtime ban be called off was overturned.

A positive lead must now be given throughout the union to convince every member of the importance of defending every job. The threat to jobs is NOW. So the Broad Strategy must begin NOW. The overwhelming support for the action by mass meetings of Glasgow branch show members are prepared to fight. A campaign to unite the union in defence of branches like Glasgow will give members confidence in the leadership and lead to secure jobs and a shorter working week.

By Ian Cuthbert
(Glasgow Branch Committee, POEU, personal capacity)

Future jobs

That is really the nub of the question. Since March 1982, through natural wastage and failure to recruit apprentices, BT have shed 13,000 jobs without any real fight by the unions. Again,

Cowley - anger smoulders on

AFTER TWO and a half weeks on strike, workers at Cowley voted by three to one to return to work. As in the washing up time dispute of last year, the leadership offered no clear way forward, no strategy for winning the dispute.

By Dave Carr

Management tactics during the strike were modelled on the NCB. Firstly they cooked the figures of those returning to work. Using this inflated figure, an intensive media campaign was launched. Letters by the thousand, personal phonecalls to strikers etc. And to cap it all, the few hundred blokes that scabbed on Monday night were sent home at midnight, on pay, in order that they

could get some rest before attending the mass meeting on Tuesday morning.

The backbone of the strike had been the young pickets. Many of them picketed the plant from day one, morning and night.

Apart from the inevitable disappointment at the result of the mass meeting, there was much anger expressed at the handling of the strike by the union's leadership. At the body plant many pickets criticised the way in which the convenor moved the recommendation to continue the strike: "He made it sound like an obituary."

Leadership

There was also talk of members leaving the AUEW and joining the T&G. Militant supporters in BL have consistently argued however, that the only realistic strategy is to stay and fight

to change the leadership of the AUEW. Of course, frustration with the AUEW leadership is understandable. The strike was not made official by the AUEW leadership—Ken Cure called the strike "ill advised" and BL's derisory pay offer "reasonable". This abdication of leadership allowed management to drive a wedge between the workforce. Despite this division a substantial number of AUEW members remained alongside the T&G pickets.

Although the T&G to their credit refused to comply with BL's High Court injunction, none the less their only strategy was to get the membership to 'sit it out'. The question of building wider solidarity action and escalating the strike was never raised throughout BL.

The return to work at Cowley isn't the last word. Management have just ob-

tained a 'contempt' ruling from the High Court and have fined the T&G £200,000 (see editorial, page 2). In addition they see Tuesday's vote as the green light to introduce double-day shift working and a harsher disciplinary code. Already they've sent out a letter to all the workforce saying that stoppages of work will lead to dismissal.

Angry mood

These actions will be like pouring petrol on a smouldering fire. BL thought they had the workforce licked last year, after doing away with washing up time, only for the workforce to come back in 1984. Indeed, the prevalent mood amongst the workers isn't one of defeat but of anger and bitterness.

GEC bosses go over the top

THE FIVE week long pay strike at GEC Traction, Manchester is solid. Every attempt by management to demoralise the 220 workers has failed.

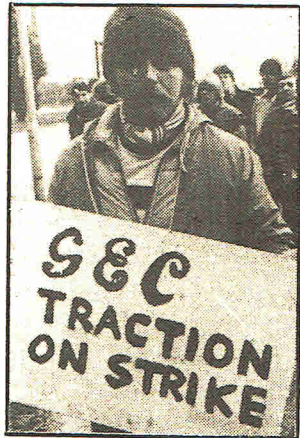
Arnold Weinstock, the GEC boss, is following Thatcher's iron fist policies—but to the point of comedy. When the strikers secured a hut and a brazier for the picket, management called a dozen police cars, two police vans, police dogs, seven security guards, a fire engine, and a fire chief. The firemen refused to extinguish

the brazier though, but management destroyed the hut. One week later a hut and brazier were back—but now a portable one to avoid the police.

"I used to be a moderate," said Cliff Gaunt of the Strike Committee. "In the past I agreed with what went on, I realise now that we have been 2½ years without a wage increase, we have lost half our workforce, now we are in a battle for the future of the union. We could have brought this on ourselves by trying to help management through the hard times. We helped and some of our members now have to claim benefits to top up their wages. Management took it as a sign of weakness and walked all over us."

Support has been tremendous—even sales reps have turned away from the picket lines. Blacking is being carried out by other GEC sites. If this support is stepped up by unions in the Combines, it could win a famous victory.

By Phil Frampton



A picket at GEC. Photo: John Smith (IFL) II

Ford women hit production

THE STRIKE of 270 women machinists in Ford's Dagenham for "recognition of skill" has a long history. They were out in 1968 for three weeks and again two years ago when Ford management promised that they would be mentioned in the wage structure. They've not heard a thing since.

"Ours is a highly-skilled job," said Lil Thompson, TGWU steward. "We have to do years of training to be able to produce seat covers of a high quality. Not only that, we can be called upon to do "indirect" work like spot-welding, but the "indirect" workers (they take work to and from the machinists), can't do our job. We want that to be

recognised with an increase in our grading."

As of 22 November, management hadn't called any meeting, yet the importance of the work the machinists do can be seen by the lay-off of nearly ten thousand assembly workers and the loss of thousands of cars.

Support

Asked about the attitude of the male workers at Ford's, Lil said it had been great; "No abuse from anyone and all the Ford's lorry drivers have refused to cross our picket line".

By Maggie McGinley

British Shipbuilders.

Yarrow strike

AT YARROW shipbuilders 3,500 workers are now on strike in defence of a victimised member in a dispute over work shop times. Without proper consultation, the shop stewards had agreed to a cut in work shop times. But the workforce overthrew this at a mass meeting.

Nearly 2-300 workers implemented the mass meeting decision, and management disciplined over a dozen members, including a well known trade union militant. Members are now out until all disciplinary charges are lifted.

Management appear to be back-tracking already. They have offered to reconsider disciplinary actions. But this is not good enough. The mass

meeting decision must be fought for.

'Modernisation'

This action by management is in keeping with a recent move towards privatisation. Already Yarrow management have announced plans to spend £1.8 million on a modernisation programme to be spent by March 1985, before the end of the financial year. This is no more than a government ploy. They now modernise this long neglected industry in order to sell it off to their rich friends.

By Hugh Watson
(AUEW Shop Steward,
Yarrow, personal capacity)

Photo: Mark Pinder



Hebburn yard workers join other shipyard workers to lobby their union leadership for action to defend jobs last year.

Privatisation plans for Swan Hunter

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS want to axe 2,100 jobs at Swan Hunter on the Tyne. If they don't get enough 'volunteers' then compulsory redundancies will follow.

Even if they get their pound of flesh this time the feeling amongst shop stewards is that a second phase of redundancies will follow in April 1985 because of a 'lack of work'.

Such is the short sightedness of management that they intend to mothball Walker and Hebburn yards. Therefore even if new orders were won there wouldn't be enough men and facilities to build ships there. If Swan is privatised then they will have off these yards too.

G&M steward at Swan Hunters, Alan Ward, spoke to Ed Waugh about the workers' plans to fight back:

Hebburn

"It is doubtful that management are even bothering to tender for new contracts at Hebburn and Walker. We are waiting to see what sort of response management have to voluntary redundancies, we'll know by the end of December.

"In the meanwhile we have had mass meetings and a ballot which gave us a 72% vote in

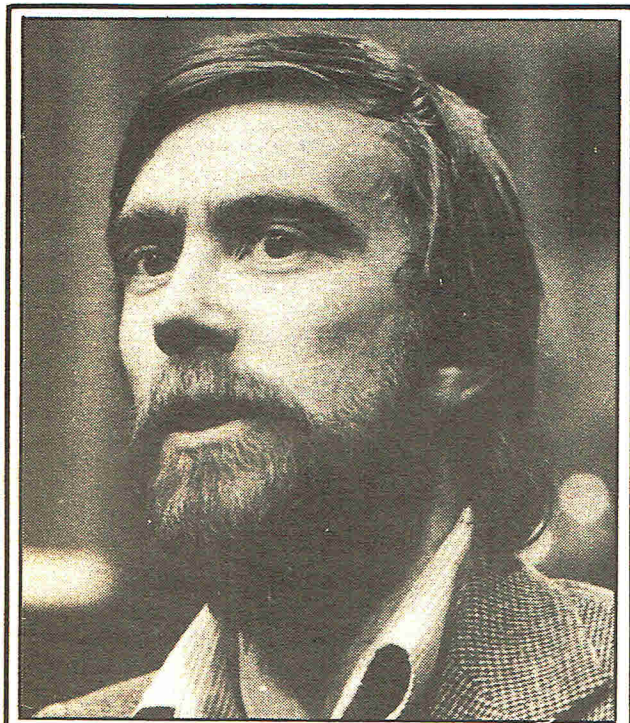
favour to fight compulsory redundancies and privatisation.

"Earlier this month the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee endorsed any action to fight against compulsory redundancies. We've got to hold them to this. As an alternative to enforced redundancies the shop stewards are calling for layoffs at 75% of pay, as in the national agreement, to invoke the National Transfer System and to retain enough workers to build ships at Hebburn and Walker.

BS directors

"But how can we have discussions to save jobs when the very people you are talking to intend to take us over. Alex Marsh and Dr Vaughn are both directors employed by British Shipbuilders at Swan Hunters to run Swan, but they have put in a tender to buy us. Marsh over the last 18 months has been all over the world spending British Shipbuilders money looking for orders but he has been unsuccessful. We are therefore asking—how can he get orders when we are privatised?

"If compulsory redundancies are introduced then there must be an all-out strike and an occupation of the ship yards."



THERE IS still over a week left for nominations to be received by USDAW Central Office. Has your branch nominated Jeff Price (above), the Broad Left candidate in the presidential elections? If your branch meets over the next week and has not yet made any nominations—go along and get it to nominate Jeff Price for the presidency.

The closing date for nominations is 10 December—so get yours in now! If you would like more details about the USDAW Broad Left's election campaign phone Mick Wainwright on 0253-693516 or Jeff Price on 0632-367000.

EETPU—blow to right wing

MANY EETPU members will be aware of the scandalous political attack on Edinburgh Lodge members (see Militant 3 August) and of the unjust charges brought against Jim Greer, Secretary and Ronnie McQueen, chairman.

The disciplinary committee (five executive councillors) have now reached a decision on these charges—3½ months after the hearing!

It was six months after the charges were brought that a date was fixed for the hearing. This, however, was the result of a national campaign of resolutions which attracted an enormous response from rank and file EETPU members. This pressure, on the most right wing leadership in the British trade union movement, forced them to set a date.

The result—after nine and a half months of being suspended from office with Edinburgh Lodge placed in

the hands of a right wing appointed full-time official to collect contributions only—was a *censure* on the secretary and chairman! Censure is the weakest of all decisions and is tantamount to saying there is no case. This is a political defeat for the right wing leadership and a victory for all EETPU members.

Even so, an appeal is to be made to the TUC General Secretary Norman Willis who will "nominate three persons to hear the appeal" (Rule 27). If the "three persons" are clear thinking, the evidence speaks volumes for itself. Edinburgh Lodge members are also demanding that the Lodge be reopened now and are preparing to take action including legal action. Rank and file EETPU members are confident of another victory.

By a Militant reporter

Miners organise

to win Coal Board cooks the books

DESPITE AN unprecedented media campaign against them, the overwhelming majority of miners are determined to stay out to win. The Press heap mountains of lies and vilifications on the miners and blow up the numbers of miners going back to work. But they carefully play down the many acts of solidarity demonstrated by other workers, and the increasing effect of the strike on the economy, and more immediately, on the power industry.

The resolution of the miners can be gauged by the mass meetings that took place only this week in Northumberland. Four big pits there, Whittle, Ashington, Bates and Ellington, all voted overwhelmingly against a ballot. The right-wing attempt to get the miners back—because that is what it was—was defeated. At two of these collieries it was literally by hundreds of votes to only a handful. The miners are also resisting the disgraceful attempts to bribe them back with money that should be theirs by right. Those who are going back are trying to snatch a

By John Pickard

defeat from the jaws of victory and they will regret having done so when the mass of miners win.

An analysis of the accounts of the National Coal Board, published by a group of experts, show how the Tories and the NCB bosses have distorted the finances of the coal industry. Everything the miners have argued—about the political character of the closures and the arbitrary way the Coal Board designates pits as “uneconomic”—have been shown to be true.

The special report, to be published in next month's issue of *Accountancy*, was prepared using information from within the Board's own accounts. Pressure from the NCB has already led to its publication being suspended for a month because of its conclusions. Even using the Coal Board's own figures—leaving aside the important social costs of closures—it shows that pit closures are uneconomic. Even Cortonwood, the pit that started the strike, is shown to be making a profit. (See details of the report on page 3)

These revelations will stiffen the resolve of miners to go on with their justified fight.

The support of the labour movement and the working class as a whole will see the miners and their

Continued on back page



TGWU fined: Executive must act now

TRANSPORT AND General Workers Union members must bring the might of the union to bear in order to defeat the £200,000 fine and the expected sequestration order. Failure to act boldly will spur the Tory judges on to even more draconian attacks on the funds of our union.

We must immediately make a fighting reality of our union's principled policy of opposition to these anti-trade union laws. Unfortunately—at present—it seems that the TGWU leadership is taking a passive attitude.

The TGWU alone, with its weight throughout industry, could smash this legislation merely by lifting its little finger.

The General Executive Council meets next week. Branches, stewards committees and all official bodies of the union meeting in the next few days should apply all possible pressure on the leadership for a Special Emergency Delegate Conference to organise co-ordinated action in defence of the union.

The union leadership must call stewards meetings, mass meetings



and branch meetings to prepare for action immediately the call comes for a recall BDC.

The time for clever tactical manoeuvring is over. Now is the time for action. TGWU members must demand that the GEC leads the way.

By Bill Mullins

Witch hunt beaten

IN A decision that represents the first important defeat for Neil Kinnock and the right wing, the Labour Party NEC voted against the expulsion of Young Socialist Brychan Davies from Rhondda Labour Party.

The recommendation to expel came from the Appeals and Mediation Subcommittee but Frances Curran, LPYS representative on the NEC, moved reference back and after a considerable debate it was carried by 14 votes to 13. Alex Kitson and John Evans voted with the left for reference back, while, predictably, Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley voted against.

Although this should mean that Rhondda CLP will be instructed then to reinstate Brychan, Party members need to be vigilant to make sure the decision is carried out. Before the meeting, LPYS members turned up to lobby the NEC and, addressing them from the steps of the Party HQ, Eric Clarke of the Scottish miners praised them: “If we'd as much support from the labour movement as we've had from the LPYS, we'd have won the strike by now.”

Next week. Feature on Durham miners support group.

Cash! Cash! Cash! Militant needs your help

THIS IS a historic issue of Militant, the first one produced at our new premises, bought with the money you raised.

We are still struggling to get the necessary equipment to develop our paper. Our bills and running costs are going to be higher than ever. The next step we want to take is a more frequent paper to give an even better coverage of news and opinion.

Your help is still needed more than ever. Keep the finance rolling in to the Fighting Fund.

See page 13.